Rational Partiality and Objective Value

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Ghent University

Rational Constraints on Preference

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State	Guided by	According to
belief	truth	Plato, Aristotle, et al.

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Lewis (1980): the Principal Principle

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Lewis (1980): the Principal Principle
Me: the *Preferential* Principal Principle

The Preferential Principal Principle (PPP)

Preference: $w \succ w'$

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$$\begin{aligned} \text{Preference:} \quad & w \succ w' \\ & \text{guided by} \\ \text{Objective value:} \quad & w \succ^{\circ} w' \end{aligned}$$

The Preferential Principal Principle (PPP)

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'Objective': perspective invariant

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'Objective': perspective invariant

Fine print:

$$EU(A|B) = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{R}} C(EV(A) = x\text{v}|B \wedge E) \cdot x\text{u}$$

where $EU(\cdot|-)$ is (conditional) expected utility, A and B are propositions, E is one's total 'admissible' evidence, C is (rational) credence, EV is objective expected value (i.e. sum of the values of the possible outcomes weighted by the objective chance that they obtain if the relevant proposition does), and v and u are units of objective value and subjective utility that have zero and unit points calibrated with each other.

Plan

Introduction

The Preferential Principal Principle

I. The Problem: Rational Partiality

The Gerrymandering Solution

And Why it Fails

II. The Solution: Centered Objective Value

De Se Preferences and Centered Worlds

Centered Betterness, Two Ways

Reconciling Rational Partiality and the PPP

PART I
The Problem

The Problem of Partiality

Impartiality: all that matters in determining what it is rational to prefer is how one takes things to be in a given world, ignoring which position in that world one would occupy.

The Problem of Partiality

PPP $\longrightarrow$

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PIP $\longrightarrow$

Impartiality: all that matters in determining what it is rational to prefer is how one takes things to be in a given world, ignoring which position in that world one would occupy.

The Problem of Partiality

w_1: my child drowns, but I rescue two other children
w_2: I rescue my child, but two other children drown

$$w_1 \succ^{\circ} w_2$$

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$$w_1 \succ^{\circ} w_2$$
$$w_1 \prec w_2$$

Gerrymandering

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Gerrymandering

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$$w_1 \prec^{\circ} w_2$$
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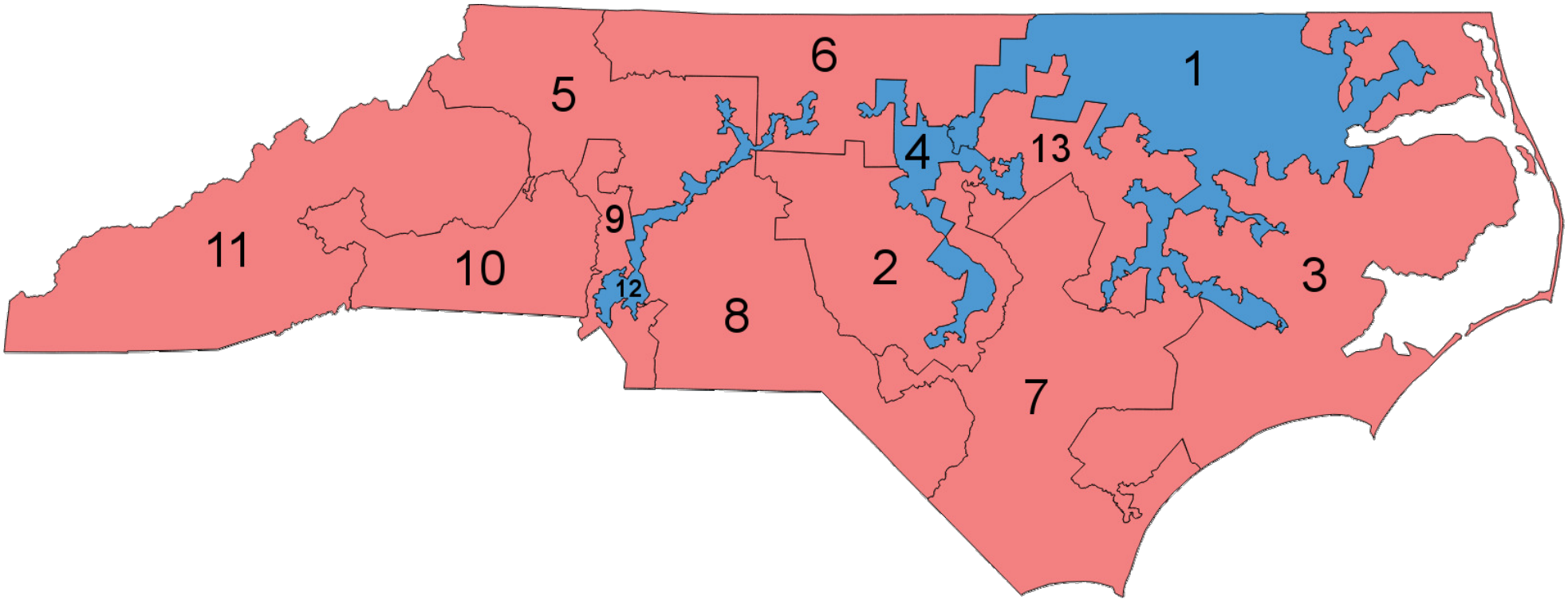
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Intra-world Partiality (or, Why Gerrymandering Fails)

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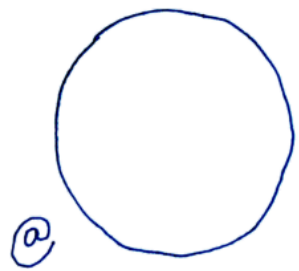
Preferring to be Oneself: My life in the actual world has gone pretty well so far. But many people have led or are leading truly terrible lives. In particular, there have been plenty of morally vicious tyrants who have deliberately caused much needless suffering to innocent people and have done nothing to redeem themselves. Pick an arbitrary one of these tyrants; let's call him Terry the Tyrant. I strongly prefer living my life as it actually is (and will be) to living Terry the Tyrant's life as it actually was, I'd much rather be me than him.

Intra-world Partiality (or, Why Gerrymandering Fails)



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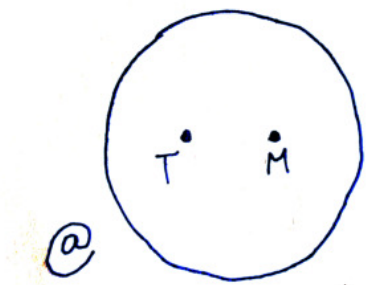

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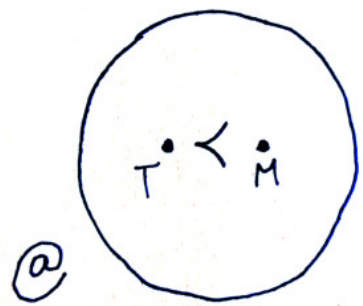

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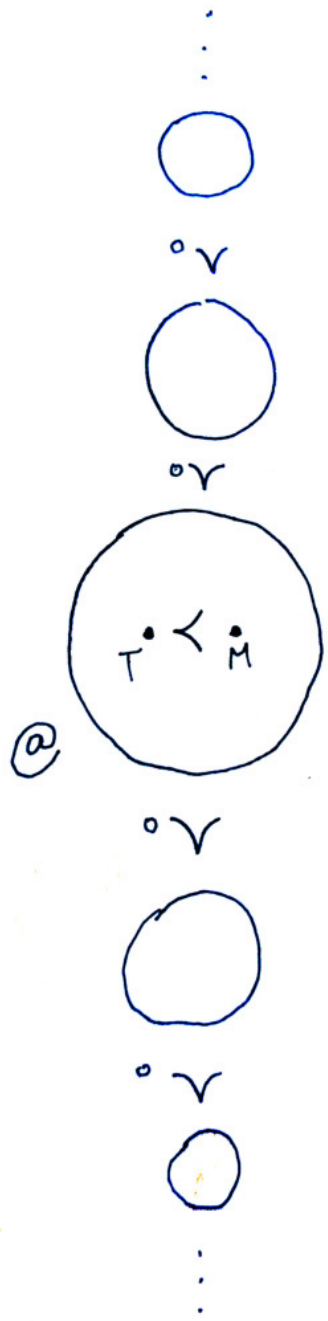

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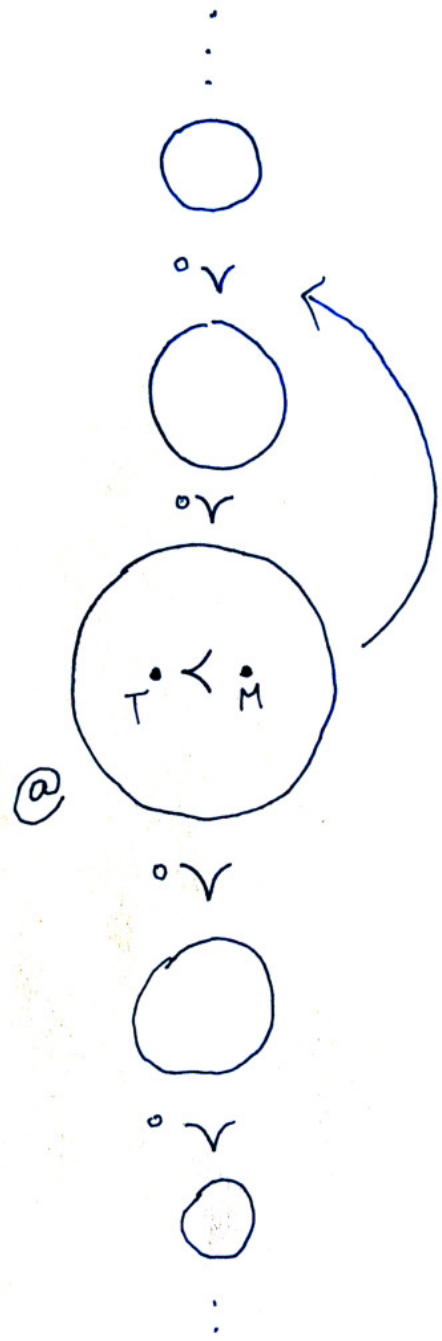

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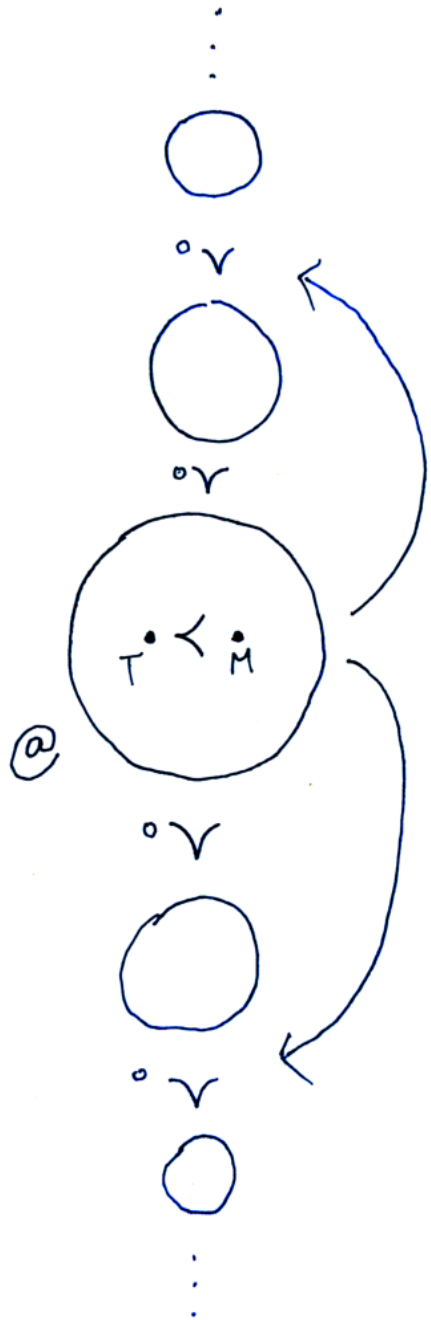
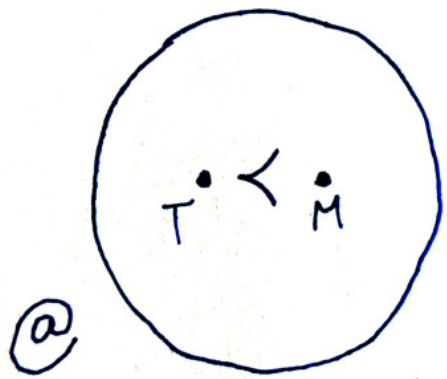


PART II

The Solution

De Se Preferences and Centered Worlds



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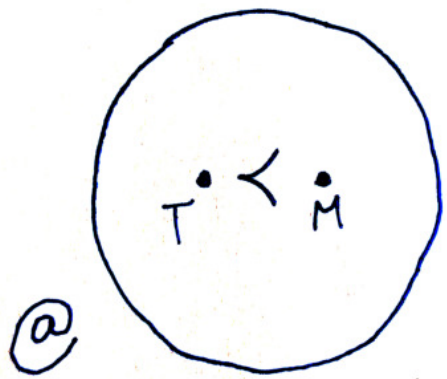
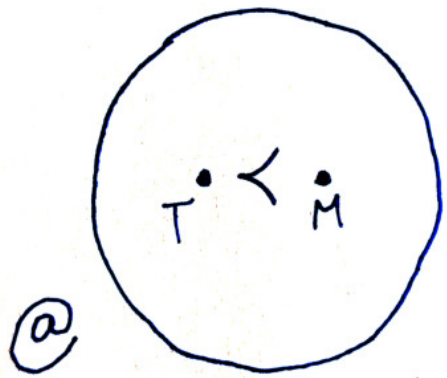


$?? \prec ??$

De Se Preferences and Centered Worlds



$?? \prec ??$

$@ \prec w?$

De Se Preferences and Centered Worlds

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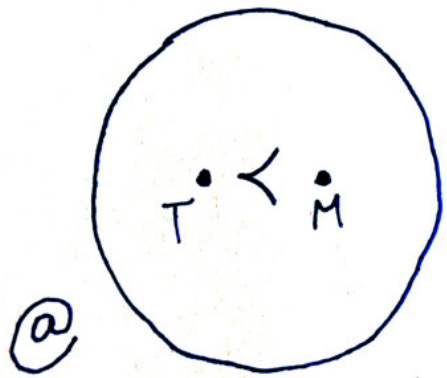

$?? \prec ??$

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$T \prec M?$

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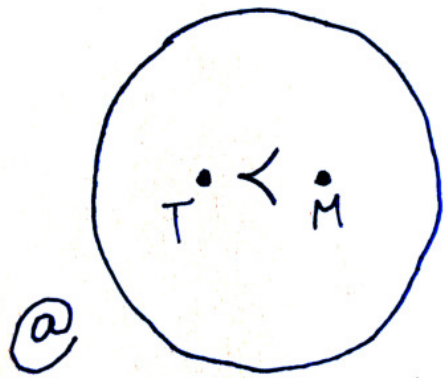

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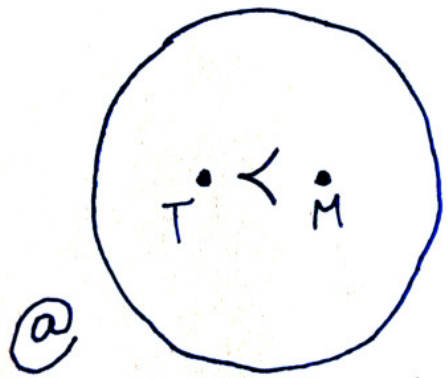

$$?? \prec ??$$
$$@ \prec w? \quad \times$$
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$$\langle @, T \rangle \prec \langle @, M \rangle$$

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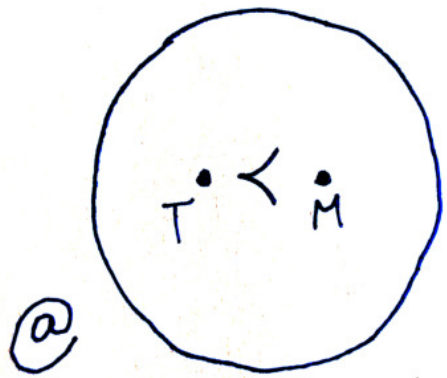

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$$\langle w, T\rangle \succ \langle @, M\rangle$$

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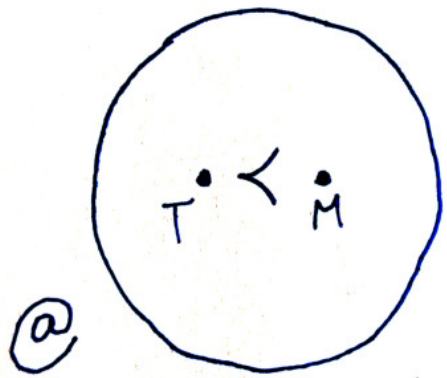

$$?? \prec ??$$
$$@ \prec w? \quad \text{✗}$$
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$$\langle @, T\rangle \prec \langle @, M\rangle$$
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Lewis (1979),
Quine (1969)

What about the PPP?

Preference: $\langle w, i \rangle \succ \langle w', i' \rangle$

guided by

Objective value:

What about the PPP?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Preference:} \quad & \langle w, i \rangle \succ \langle w', i' \rangle \\ & \text{guided by} \\ \text{Objective value:} \quad & \langle w, i \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle w', i' \rangle \end{aligned}$$

Centered Betterness, Two Ways

$$\langle w, i \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle w', i' \rangle$$

Centered Betterness, Two Ways

???

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Centered Betterness, Two Ways

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Perspectival: w is better from i's perspective than w' is from i''s
(cf. Sen (1982))

Centered Betterness, Two Ways

$$???$$

$$\langle w, i \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle w', i' \rangle$$

Perspectival: w is better from i's perspective than w' is from i''s (cf. Sen (1982))

Individual: it is better to be i (in w) than it is to be i' (in w')

Reconciling Partiality and the PPP

$$\langle w, i \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle w', i' \rangle$$

Individual: it is *objectively* better to be i (in w) than it is to be i' (in w')

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PPP $\rightarrow$ Impartiality

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PPP $\not\Rightarrow$ Impartiality

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PPP $\not\Rightarrow$ Impartiality

Intra-word partiality: $\langle @, M \rangle \succ \langle @, T \rangle$ and $\langle @, M \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle @, T \rangle$

Reconciling Partiality and the PPP

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Normal partiality: $\langle w_2, M \rangle \succ \langle w_1, M \rangle$ and $\langle w_2, M \rangle \succ^{\circ} \langle w_1, M \rangle$

THANKS!

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