

Pandora's Box: The Politico-Philosophical Implication of Social Choice Theory

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Abstract

Democracy has been often interpreted as a social practice in which the collective will of the majority is largely reflected in political decisions. This article argues that this conception of democracy is undermined by observations in the field of social choice theory. These observations include the cycle of collective preference, the dependence of decision outcomes upon decision rules, and the possibility of strategic manipulation. After examining the implications that these findings have on the standard interpretation of democracy, this article suggests an alternative view, which is based on the idea of the right to pursue both resultant and participatory values through political participation.