

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, March 25, 2019

Where: 340 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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Arbitrary Fairness

ABSTRACT:

People often hold strong but superficial moral beliefs. For example, many people believe that resources should be assigned in an equitable fashion. The same effort should be compensated the same, and the similar violations should be fined in the same way. Missing in this belief, however, is the unit in which these outcomes should be expressed. Whatever is the same in time spent does not have to be the same in money earned and vice versa. Here we show that people generally fail to take the interchangeability of units into account when judging and assigning fair punishments and rewards. As a consequence, judgments about the fairness of punishments and rewards as well as distributions of resources are strongly influenced by arbitrary decisions about which unit to express them in.

