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SOCIAL CHOICE AND EQUITY THEORY: SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD AS A COMMON GROUND

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The communication of basic mathematical and physical notions is generally accepted as one of the very first concepts that will be exchange between civilisations, since math and physics appear universal. However, such concepts only reflect a small fraction of a much larger body of knowledge that might be shared between civilisations. Notoriously, no obvious scheme for exchanging knowledge has been proposed for social sciences, which unlike physical sciences, are not mathematically formalised.

However, some branches of social science have been mathematically formalised. Social choice theory, which deals with the seemingly simple but fundamentally complex problem of finding the optimal “common good” from individual choices, offers a direct path to discuss to notion of democracy. Equity theory, which treats the complex problem of sharing goods or chores, is a very powerful tool to explain the notion of distributive justice.

Since democracy and justice provide many societal advantages, such notions are probably universal. Due to the importance of these tools for the survival of civilisation, they are probably among the most useful information to share with another civilisation.