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Aggregation without the Aggravation? Nonparametric Analysis of the Representative Consumer

by Laurens Cherchye, Ian Crawford, Bram De Rock, Frederic Vermeulen
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Abstract:

In the tradition of Afriat (1967), Diewert (1973) and Varian (1982), we provide a revealed preference characterisation of the representative consumer. Our results are simple and complement those of Gorman (1953, 1961), Samuelson (1956) and others. They can also be applied to data very readily and without the need for auxiliary parametric or statistical assumptions. We investigate the application of our characterisation by means of a balanced microdata panel survey. Our findings provide robust evidence against the existence of a representative consumer for our data.

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