Algorithmic game theory

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3rd lecture

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Proof of the Minimax Theorem

The Minimax Theorem

The Minimax Theorem (Theorem 2.21)

For every zero-sum game, worst-case optimal strategies for both players exist and can be efficiently computed. There is a number v such that, for any worst-case optimal strategies x^* and y^*, the strategy profile (x^*, y^*) is a Nash equilibrium and $\beta(x^*) = (x^*)^\top M y^* = \alpha(y^*) = v$.

Figure: John von Neumann (1903–1957) and Oskar Morgenstern (1902–1977).

Sources: https://en.wikiquote.org and https://austriainusa.org

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- Recall that $\beta(x) = \min_{y \in S_2} x^\top My$ and $\alpha(y) = \max_{x \in S_1} x^\top My$ are the best possible payoffs of player 2 to x and of player 1 to y, respectively.
- Also, the worst-case optimal strategy $\overline{x}$ for player 1, satisfies

$$\beta(\overline{x}) = \max_{x \in S_1} \beta(x).$$

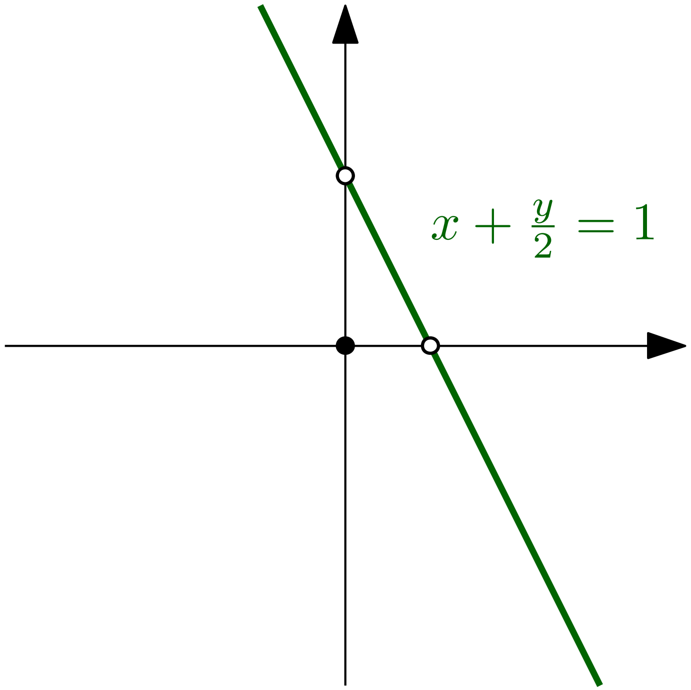
- The worst-case optimal strategy $\overline{y}$ for player 2, satisfies

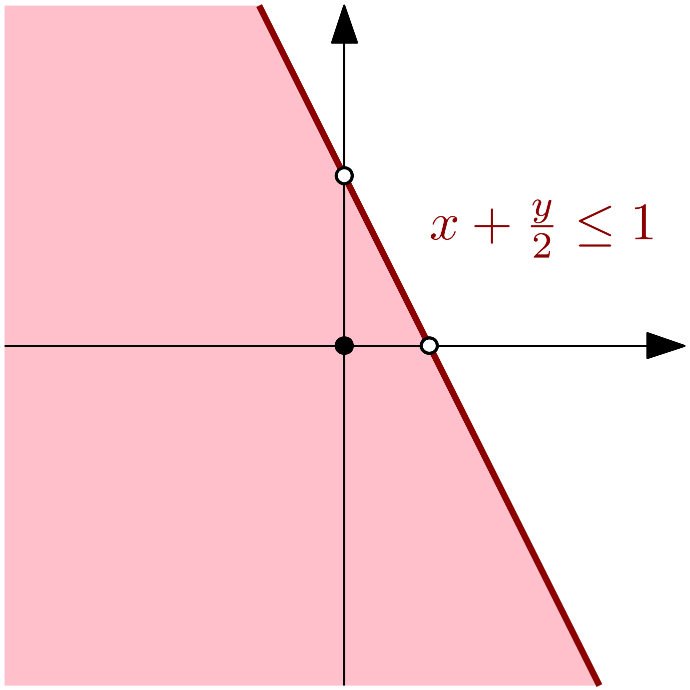
$$\alpha(\overline{y}) = \min_{y \in S_2} \alpha(y).$$

- We prove the theorem using linear programming.

Preliminaries from geometry

- A hyperplane in $\mathbb{R}^d$ is a set $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \colon v^\top x = w\}$ for some $v \in \mathbb{R}^d$ and $w \in \mathbb{R}$.
- A halfspace in $\mathbb{R}^d$ is a set $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \colon v^\top x \leq w\}$.

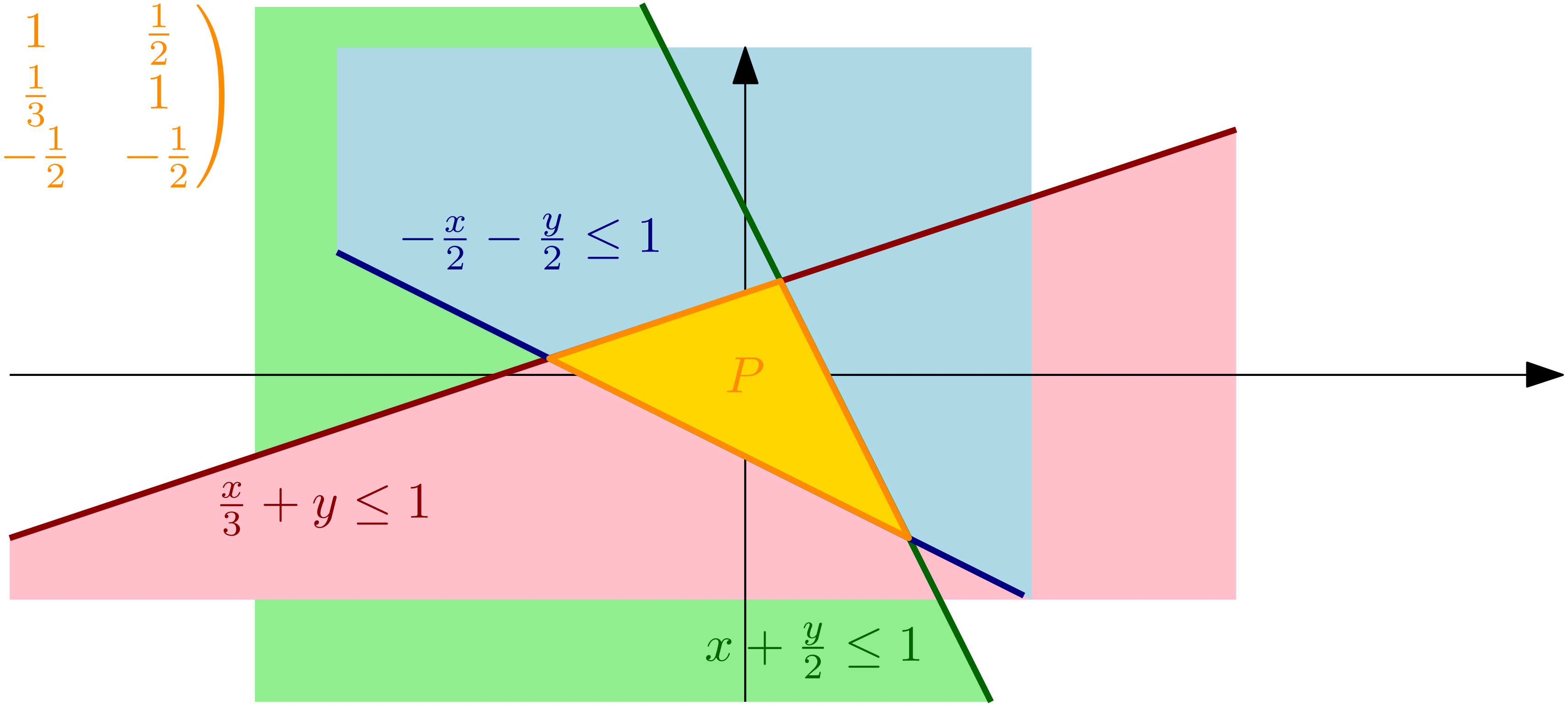




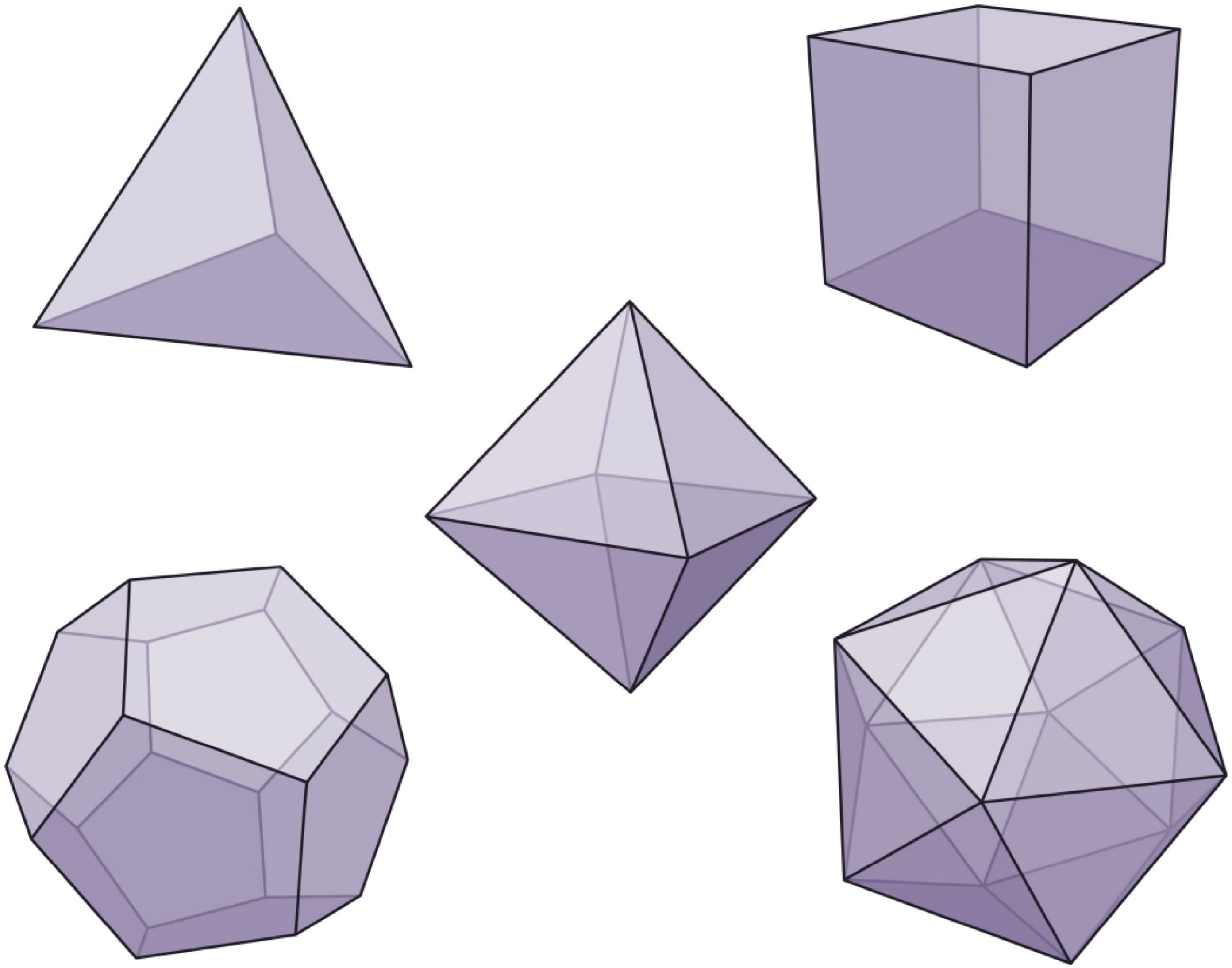
Preliminaries from geometry

- A (convex) polyhedron P in $\mathbb{R}^d$ is an intersection of finitely many halfspaces in $\mathbb{R}^d$. That is, $P = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \colon Vx \leq u\}$ for some $V \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times d}$ and $u \in \mathbb{R}^n$, where n is the number of halfspaces determining P.
- A bounded polyhedron is called polytope. A d-dimensional polytope is simple if all its vertices are adjacent to exactly d edges.

$$V = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \frac{1}{2} \\ \frac{1}{3} & 1 \\ -\frac{1}{2} & -\frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

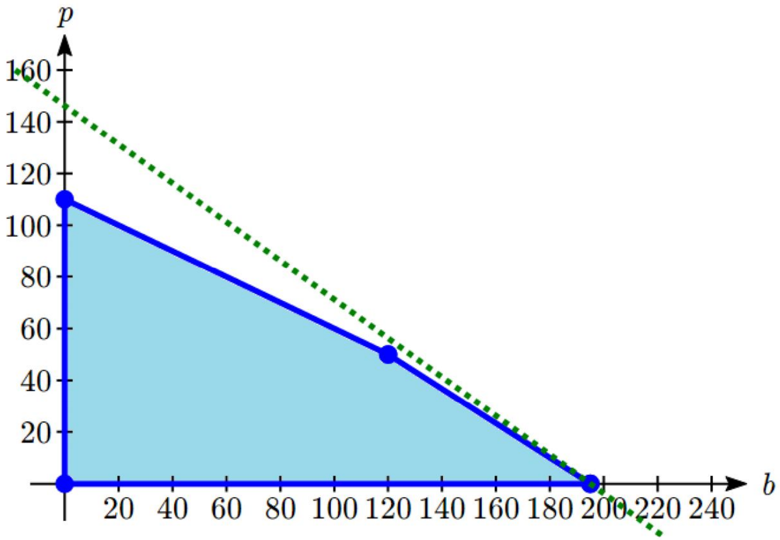


Examples of polytopes in $\mathbb{R}^3$



Linear programming

- A linear program (LP) is an optimization problem with a linear objective function and linear constraints.
- Every linear program P can be expressed in the canonical form: given $c \in \mathbb{R}^m$, $b \in \mathbb{R}^n$, and $A^{n \times m}$, we want to maximize $c^\top x$ subject to the constraints $Ax \leq b$ and $x \geq \mathbf{0}$.
- LP can be solved in polynomial time. In practice, the Simplex method works, although it does not have a polynomial worst-case running time. The Ellipsoid method runs in polynomial time even in the worst-case.
- Solving linear programs graphically:



Sources: https://ua.pressbooks.pub/

General recipe for duality

	Primal linear program	Dual linear program
Variables	$x_1, \ldots, x_m$	$y_1, \ldots, y_n$
Matrix	$A \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times m}$	$A^\top \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$
Right-hand side	$b \in \mathbb{R}^n$	$c \in \mathbb{R}^m$
Objective function	$\max c^\top x$	$\min b^\top y$
Constraints	ith constraint has $\leq$	$y_i \geq 0$
	$\geq$	$y_i \leq 0$
	$=$	$y_i \in \mathbb{R}$
	$x_j \geq 0$	jth constraint has $\geq$
	$x_j \leq 0$	$\leq$
	$x_j \in \mathbb{R}$	$=$

Table: A recipe for making dual programs.

Proof of the Minimax Theorem I

- We now proceed with the proof of the Minimax Theorem.

The Minimax Theorem (Theorem 2.21)

For every zero-sum game, worst-case optimal strategies for both players exist and can be efficiently computed. There is a number v such that, for any worst-case optimal strategies x^* and y^*, the strategy profile (x^*, y^*) is a Nash equilibrium and $\beta(x^*) = (x^*)^\top M y^* = \alpha(y^*) = v$.

- We want to compute x^* such that $\beta(x^*) = \max_{x \in S_1} \beta(x)$ where $\beta(x) = \min_{y \in S_2} x^\top M y$ using LP. We first show how not to do it.
- Naive straightforward approach with variables $x_1, \ldots, x_m$:

$$\text{maximize } \beta(x) \text{ subject to the constraints } \sum_{i=1}^{m} x_i = 1 \text{ and } x \geq \mathbf{0}.$$

- This is not LP! (the objective function $\beta(x) = \min_{y \in S_2} x^\top M y$ is not linear in x) What can we compute with LP?

Proof of the Minimax Theorem II

- For fixed $x \in S_1$, we can compute a best response of 2 to x.
- We use the following linear program P with variables $y_1, \dots, y_n$:

$$(P) \quad \text{minimize } x^\top M y \text{ subject to } \sum_{j=1}^{n} y_j = 1 \text{ and } y \geq \mathbf{0}.$$

- Its dual is the following LP D with a single variable x_0:

$$(D) \quad \text{maximize } x_0 \text{ subject to } \mathbf{1} x_0 \leq M^\top x.$$

- By the Duality Theorem, P and D have the same optimal value $\beta(x)$.
- Thus, if we treat $x_1, \dots, x_m$ as variables in D, we obtain the following linear program D' with variables $x_0, x_1, \dots, x_m$:

$$(D') \quad \text{maximize } x_0 \text{ subject to } \mathbf{1} x_0 - M^\top x \leq \mathbf{0}, \sum_{i=1}^{m} x_i = 1 \text{ and } x \geq \mathbf{0}.$$

- The optimum x^* of D' is a worst-case optimum strategy for 1!

Proof of the Minimax Theorem III

- Analogously, we can compute a worst-case optimum strategy y^* for 2 using this linear program P' with variables $y_0, y_1, \ldots, y_n$:

$$(P') \quad \text{minimize } y_0 \text{ subject to } \mathbf{1}y_0 - My \geq \mathbf{0}, \sum_{j=1}^{n} y_j = 1 \text{ and } y \geq \mathbf{0}.$$

- So we, proved the first part of the Minimax Theorem. It remains to show that (x^*, y^*) is NE and $\beta(x^*) = (x^*)^\top My^* = \alpha(y^*) = v$.
- Using the general recipe for duality, we see that P' and D' are dual to each other! (Exercise)
- By the Duality Theorem, P' and D' have the same optimal value

$$\beta(x^*) = x_0^* = y_0^* = \alpha(y^*).$$

  This value v is attained in any worst-case optimal strategy.
- By part (c) of Lemma 2.20, (x^*, y^*) is NE, that is, we have $\beta(x^*) = (x^*)^\top My^* = \alpha(y^*)$. $\square$

Nash equilibria in bimatrix games

Bimatrix games

- Since zero-sum games are solved now, we try to efficiently find Nash equilibria in bimatrix games, that is, games of 2-players (not necessarily zero-sum).
- Example: Prisoner's dilemma

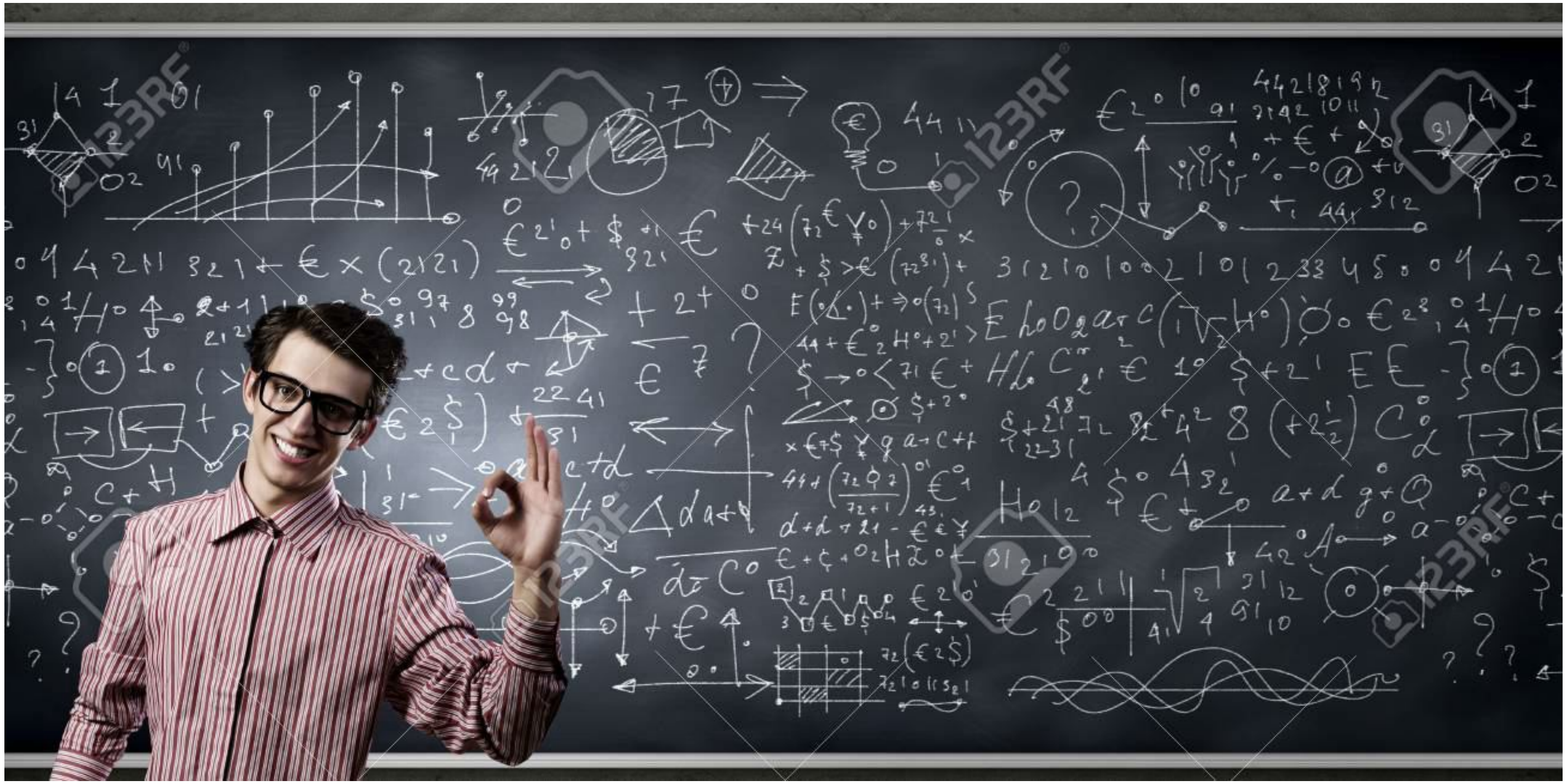
	Testify	Remain silent
Testify	(-2,-2)	(-3,0)
Remain silent	(0,-3)	(-1,-1)

Sources: https://sciworthy.com/

Bimatrix games examples: collaborative projects

Source: https://filestage.io/

Bimatrix games examples: education, knowledge sharing



Source: https://www.123rf.com/

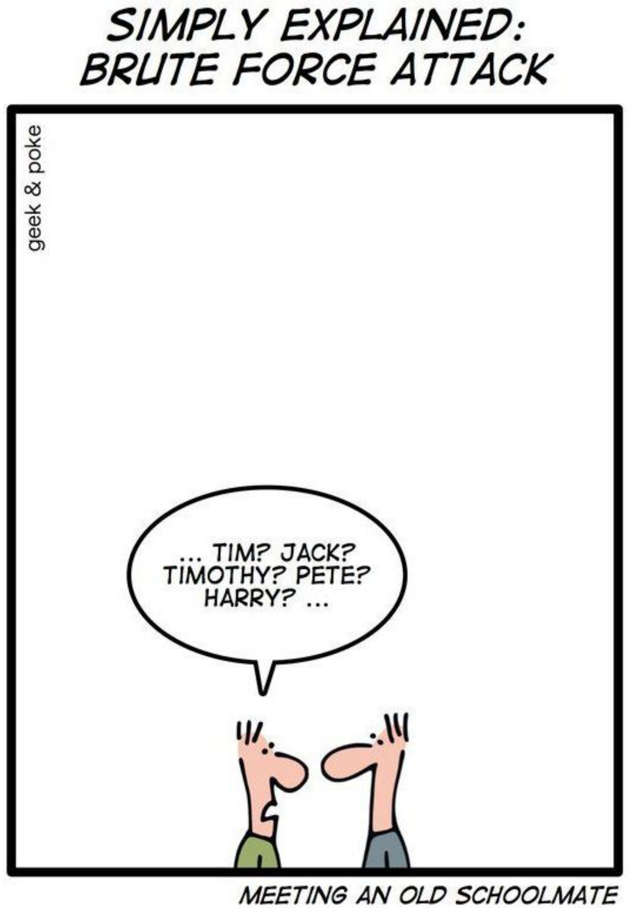
Bimatrix games examples: the battle for Gotham's soul

	Cooperate	Detonate
Cooperate	(0,0)	(0,1)
Detonate	(1,0)	(0,0)

Sources: https://www.cbr.com/

Nash equilibria in bimatrix games by brute force

- We try to design an algorithm for finding Nash equilibria in games of two players (bimatrix games).
- We state some observations that yield a brute-force algorithm.



Source: https://pinterest.com

- Later, we show the currently best known algorithm for this problem.

Best response condition

- We first state the perhaps most useful observation in our course.
- The support of a mixed strategy $Supp(s_i) = s_i$ is $\{a_i \in A_i : s_i(a_i) > 0\}$.

Best response condition (Observation 2.23)

In a normal-form game $G = (P, A, u)$ of n players, for every player $i \in P$, a mixed strategy s_i is a best response to s_{-i} if and only if all pure strategies in the support of s_i are best responses to s_{-i}.

- Thus, the problem of finding NE is combinatorial problem, not a continuous one.
- The hearth of the problem is in finding the right supports.
- Once we have the right supports, the precise mixed strategies can be computed by solving a system of algebraic equations (which are linear in the case of two players).

Proof of the Best response condition

- First, assume every $a_i \in Supp(s_i)$ satisfies $u_i(a_i; s_{-i}) \geq u_i(s_i'; s_{-i})$ for every $s_i' \in S_i$. Then, for every $s_i' \in S_i$, the linearity of u_i implies

$$u_i(s) = \sum_{a_i \in Supp(s_i)} s_i(a_i) u_i(a_i; s_{-i}) \geq \sum_{a_i \in Supp(s_i)} s_i(a_i) u_i(s_i'; s_{-i}) = u_i(s_i'; s_{-i}).$$

- Second, assume s_i is a best response of i to s_{-i}. Suppose there is $\overline{a}_i \in Supp(s_i)$ that is not a best response of i to s_{-i}. Then, there is $s_i' \in S_i$ with $u_i(\overline{a}_i; s_{-i}) < u_i(s_i'; s_{-i})$. Since s_i is a best response to s_{-i}, we get $s_i(\overline{a}_i) < 1$. By the linearity of u_i, there is $\hat{a}_i \in Supp(s_i)$ with $u_i(\hat{a}_i; s_{-i}) > u_i(\overline{a}_i; s_{-i})$. We define a new mixed strategy $s_i^* \in S_i$ by setting $s_i^*(\overline{a}_i) = 0$, $s_i^*(\hat{a}_i) = s_i(\hat{a}_i) + s_i(\overline{a}_i)$ and keeping $s_i^*(a_i) = s_i(a_i)$ otherwise. Then, by the linearity of u_i

$$u_i(s_i^*; s_{-i}) = \sum_{a_i \in A_i} s_i^*(a_i) u_i(a_i; s_{-i}) > \sum_{a_i \in A_i} s_i(a_i) u_i(a_i; s_{-i}) = u_i(s),$$

a contradiction. □

Best response condition in bimatrix games

- We can use this simple observation to design a brute-force algorithm for finding NE in bimatrix games.

- Let $G = (\{1,2\}, A = A_1 \times A_2, u)$ be a bimatrix game.
- Let $A_1 = \{1,\ldots,m\}$ and $A_2 = \{1,\ldots,n\}$ (later considered disjoint).
- The payoffs u_1 and u_2 can be represented by matrices $M, N \in \mathbb{R}^{m\times n}$ as $M_{i,j} = u_1(i,j)$ and $N_{i,j} = u_2(i,j)$ for every $(i,j) \in A_1 \times A_2$.
- The expected payoffs of s with mixed strategy vectors x and y are then

$$u_1(s) = x^\top My \quad \text{and} \quad u_2(s) = x^\top Ny.$$

- By the Best response condition, x is a best response to y iff

$$\forall\, i \in A_1 : x_i > 0 \implies M_{i,*}y = \max\{M_{k,*}y : k \in A_1\}. \qquad (1)$$

- Analogously, y is a best response to x iff

$$\forall\, j \in A_2 : y_j > 0 \implies N^\top_{j,*}x = \max\{N^\top_{k,*}x : k \in A_2\}. \qquad (2)$$

NE by support enumeration I

- We consider only special bimatrix games (the reason will be clear later).
- A bimatrix game is nondegenerate if there are at most k pure best responses to every mixed strategy with support of size k.
  - "Most bimatrix games are nondegenerate" and there are perturbation methods to deal with degenerate games.
- Let $I \subseteq A_1$ and $J \subseteq A_2$ be supports in a nondegenerate game G.
- We define $|I| + |J|$ variables x_i for $i \in I$ and y_j for $j \in J$ that will represent non-zero values in mixed strategy vectors x and y.
- We define equations $\sum_{i \in I} x_i = 1$ and $\sum_{j \in J} y_j = 1$, and $|I| + |J|$ equations to ensure that the expected payoffs are equal and maximized at the support:

$$\sum_{i \in I} N^{\top}_{j,i} x_i = v \quad \text{and} \quad \sum_{j \in J} M_{i,j} y_j = u,$$

where u and v are two new variables. Note that they attain values $u = \max\{M_{i,*} y \colon i \in I\}$ and $v = \max\{N^{\top}_{j,*} x \colon j \in J\}$.

NE by support enumeration II

- We have a system $S(I, J)$ of $|I| + |J| + 2$ variables $x_1, \dots, x_{|I|}, y_1, \dots, y_{|J|}, u, v$ and $|I| + |J| + 2$ linear equations.
- If the numbers in the solution are all non-negative and satisfy (1) and (2), then we have a NE by the Best response condition. If G is nondegenerate, then such a solution is unique (if it exists).
- It follows immediately from the Best response condition that supports of strategies in NE of a non-degenerate game have the same size.
- This suggests a simple algorithm for finding NE of G: go through all possible supports $I \subseteq A_1$ and $J \subseteq A_2$ of size $k \in \{1, \dots, \min\{m, n\}\}$ and verify whether the supports I and J yield NE by solving the system $S(I, J)$ of linear equations.
- The running time is then about 4^n for $m = n$.

Example: Battle of sexes

- We show the brute-force algorithm on the Battle of sexes game.

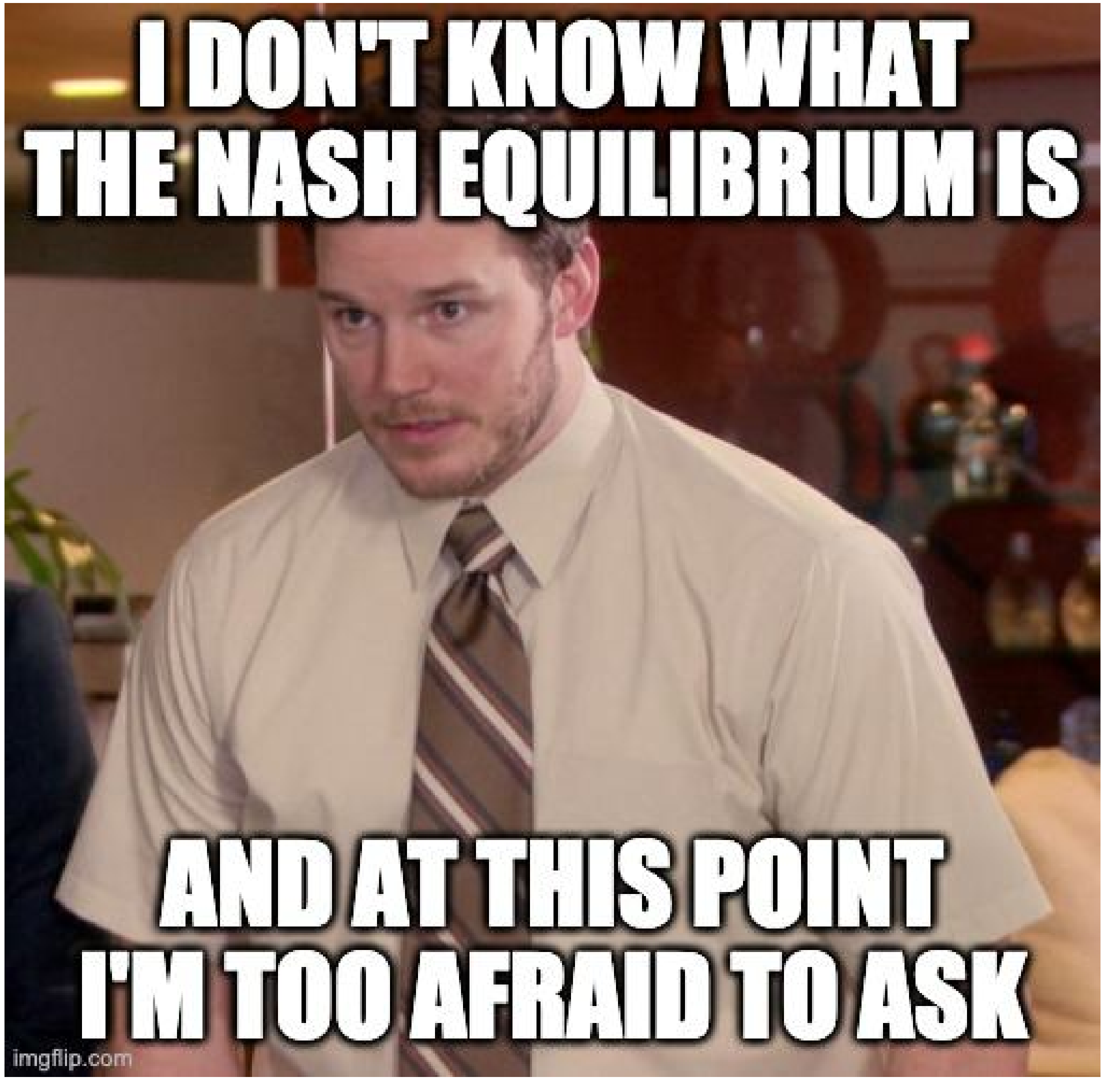
	Football (1)	Opera (2)
Football (1)	(2,1)	(0,0)
Opera (2)	(0,0)	(1,2)

- That is, we have $M = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ and $N = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix} = N^\top$.
- If $I = \{1, 2\}$ and $J = \{1, 2\}$, then we want to solve the following system of 6 equations with 6 variables x_1, x_2, y_1, y_2, u, v:

$$x_1 = v, \quad 2x_2 = v, \quad x_1 + x_2 = 1$$
$$2y_1 = u, \quad y_2 = u, \; ; \; y_1 + y_2 = 1$$

- This yields a unique solution $(x_1, x_2) = (\frac{2}{3}, \frac{1}{3})$ and $(y_1, y_2) = (\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3})$. Since $x, y \geq \mathbf{0}$ and there is no better pure strategy, we have NE.

- Next lecture we learn the Lemke–Howson algorithm, the best known algorithm to find Nash equilibria in bimatrix games.



Thank you for your attention.