

# Reactive strategies with longer memory

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## 1 Formal Model

We consider infinitely repeated games among two players, player 1 and player 2. Each round, they engage in the donation game with payoff matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} b-c & -c \\ b & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (1)$$

Here  $b$  and  $c$  denote the benefit and the cost of cooperation, respectively. We assume  $b > c > 0$  throughout. Therefore, payoff matrix (1) is a special case of the prisoner's dilemma with payoff matrix,

$$\begin{pmatrix} R & S \\ T & P \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2)$$

where  $T > R > S > P$  and  $2R > T + S$ . Here,  $R$  is the reward payoff of mutual cooperation,  $T$  is the temptation to defect payoff,  $S$  is the sucker's payoff, and  $P$  is the punishment payoff for mutual defection.

We assume in the following, that the players' decisions only depend on the outcome of the previous  $n$  rounds. To this end, an  $n$ -history for player  $i \in \{1, 2\}$  is a string  $h^i = (a_{-n}^i, \dots, a_{-1}^i) \in \{C, D\}^n$ . An entry  $a_{-k}^i$  corresponds to player  $i$ 's action  $k$  rounds ago. Let  $H^i$  denote the space of all  $n$ -histories for  $i \in \{1, 2\}$ . Set  $H^i$  contains  $|H^i| = 2^n$  elements. A pair  $h = (h^1, h^2)$  is called an  $n$ -history of the game. We use  $H = H^1 \times H^2$  to denote the space of all such histories. This set contains  $|H| = 2^{2n}$  elements.

A *memory- $n$*  strategy is a vector  $\mathbf{m} = (m_h)_{h \in H} \in [0, 1]^{2^{2n}}$ . Each entry  $m_h$  corresponds to the player's cooperation probability in the next round, depending on the outcome of the previous  $n$  rounds. One special case of memory- $n$  strategies are the round- $k$ -repeat strategies for some  $1 \leq k \leq n$ . Player 1 uses a *round- $k$ -repeat strategy*  $\mathbf{m}^{k\text{-Rep}}$  if in any given round, the player chooses the same action as  $k$  rounds ago. That is, if the game's  $n$ -history is such that,

$$\begin{cases} m_h^{k\text{-Rep}} = 1, & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = C \\ m_h^{k\text{-Rep}} = 0, & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = D. \end{cases}$$

Two additional special cases of memory- $n$  strategies that we will be discussing in this work are, reactive- $n$  and self-reactive- $n$  strategies. A *reactive- $n$  strategy* for player 1 is denoted by a vector  $\mathbf{p} = (p_h)_{h \in H^2} \in [0, 1]^n$ . Each entry  $p_h$  corresponds to the player's cooperation probability in the next round, based on the co-player's actions in the previous  $n$  rounds. Therefore, reactive- $n$  strategies exclusively rely on the co-player's  $n$ -history,

independent of the focal player's own actions during the past  $n$  rounds. On the other hand, *self-reactive- $n$*  strategies only consider the focal player's own  $n$ -history, and ignore the co-player's. Formally, a self-reactive- $n$  strategy for player 1 is a vector  $\tilde{\mathbf{p}} = (\tilde{p}_h)_{h \in H^1} \in [0, 1]^n$ . Each entry  $\tilde{p}_h$  corresponds to the player's cooperation probability in the next, depending on the player's own actions in the previous  $n$  rounds. From hereon, we will use the notations  $\mathbf{m}$ ,  $\mathbf{p}$ , and  $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}$  to denote a memory- $n$ , a reactive- $n$ , and a self-reactive- $n$  strategy.

Let players 1 and 2 use memory- $n$  strategies  $\mathbf{m}$  and  $\mathbf{m}'$ . Then one can represent the interaction as a Markov chain. The set of states of the chain is the space of all possible histories  $H$ . The  $2^{2n} \times 2^{2n}$  transition matrix  $M$ , describes the transition probabilities between all possible histories. For  $h = (h^1, h^2), \tilde{h} = (\tilde{h}^1, \tilde{h}^2) \in H$ ,

$$M_{h, \tilde{h}} = \begin{cases} m_h \cdot m'_h & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = C \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = C \\ m_h \cdot (1 - m'_h) & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = C \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = D \\ (1 - m_h) \cdot m'_h & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = D \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = C \\ (1 - m_h) \cdot (1 - m'_h) & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = D \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = D \\ 0, & \text{if } ((a_{-(n-1)}^1, \dots, a_{-1}^1), (a_{-(n-1)}^2, \dots, a_{-1}^2)) \neq ((\tilde{a}_{-n}^1, \dots, \tilde{a}_{-2}^1), (\tilde{a}_{-n}^2, \dots, \tilde{a}_{-2}^2)) \end{cases}$$

The final case ensures that the only reachable states are those in which the outcomes of these states match the previous outcomes in the 'next' state.

Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_h)_{h \in H}$  be an invariant distribution of this Markov chain. Based on the invariant distribution  $\mathbf{v}$ , we can also compute the players' payoffs. To this end, let  $\mathbf{S}^k = (S_h^k)_{h \in H}$  denote the vector that returns for each  $h$  the one-shot payoff that player 1 obtained  $k$  rounds ago,

$$S_h^k = \begin{cases} b - c & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = C \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = C \\ -c & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = C \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = D \\ b & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = D \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = C \\ 0 & \text{if } a_{-k}^1 = D \text{ and } a_{-k}^2 = D \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

Then we can define player 1's repeated-game payoff  $s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{m}'}$  as

$$s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{m}'} = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{S}^1 = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{S}^2 = \dots = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{S}^n. \quad (4)$$

The equalities  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{S}^1 = \dots = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{S}^n$  correspond to the intuition that it does not matter which of the past  $n$  rounds we use to define average payoffs. The payoff  $s_{\mathbf{m}', \mathbf{m}}$  of player 2 can be defined analogously.

Let's provide definitions for some additional terms that will be used in this manuscript.

**Definition 1.1** (Nash Strategies.). A strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  for player 1, is a *Nash strategy* if,

$$s_{\mathbf{m}', \mathbf{m}} \leq s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{m}} \quad \forall m' \in [0, 1]^{2n}. \quad (5)$$

**Definition 1.2** (Nice Strategies.). A player's strategy is *nice*, if the player is never the first to defect. A nice strategy against itself receives the mutual cooperation payoff,  $(b - c)$ .

**Definition 1.3** (Partner Strategies.). A *partner strategy* is a strategy which is both nice and Nash.

Partners strategies are of interest because they are strategies that strive to achieve the mutual cooperation payoff of  $(b - c)$  with their co-player. However, if the co-player doesn't cooperate, they are prepared to penalize them with lower payoffs. Partner strategies, by definition, are best responses to themselves [Hilbe et al., 2015]. All partner strategies are Nash strategies, but not all Nash strategies are partner strategies.

## 2 An Extension of Akin's Lemma

The work of [Akin, 2016] focuses on the case of memory-one strategies, thus for  $n = 1$ . A memory-one strategy of player  $p$  is represented by the vector  $\mathbf{m} = (m_{CC}, m_{CD}, m_{DC}, m_{DD})$ , and when played against a co-player with strategy  $\mathbf{m}'$ , the resulting stationary distribution is denoted as  $\mathbf{v} = (v_{CC}, v_{CD}, v_{DC}, v_{DD})$ . Akin's lemma states the following,

Assume that player 1 uses the memory-one strategy  $\mathbf{m} = (m_{CC}, m_{CD}, m_{DC}, m_{DD})$ , and  $q$  uses a strategy that leads to a sequence of distributions  $\{\mathbf{v}^k, k = 1, 2, \dots\}$  with  $\mathbf{v}^k$  representing the distribution over the states in the  $k^{\text{th}}$  round of the game. Let  $\mathbf{v}$  be the associated stationary distribution, then,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n \mathbf{v}^k \cdot (\mathbf{m} - \mathbf{m}^{1-\text{Rep}}) = 0, \text{ and therefore } \mathbf{v} \cdot (\mathbf{m} - (1, 1, 0, 0)) = 0. \quad (6)$$

With the same method as in [Akin, 2016], one can show *Akin's Lemma*: For each  $k$  with  $1 \leq k \leq n$ , the invariant distribution  $\mathbf{v}$  satisfies the following relationship,

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot (\mathbf{m} - \mathbf{m}^{k-\text{Rep}}) = \sum_{h \in H} v_h (m_h - m_h^{k-\text{Rep}}) = 0. \quad (7)$$

The intuition for this result is that  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{m}$  and all  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{m}^{k-\text{Rep}}$  are just different (but equivalent) expressions for player  $p$ 's average cooperation rate. For example,  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{m}$  corresponds to a setup in which one first draws a history  $h$  according to the invariant distribution  $\mathbf{v}$ ; then one takes player  $p$ 's probability  $m_h$  to cooperate in the next round; the expectation of this procedure is  $\sum_{h \in H} v_h m_h$ .

*Proof.* The probability that  $p$  cooperates in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  round, denoted by  $\hat{v}_C^{(n)}$ , is  $\hat{v}_C^{(n)} = \hat{v}_1^{(n)} + \hat{v}_2^{(n)} + \hat{v}_5^{(n)} + \hat{v}_6^{(n)} + \hat{v}_9^{(n)} + \hat{v}_{10}^{(n)} + \hat{v}_{13}^{(n)} + \hat{v}_{14}^{(n)} = \hat{\mathbf{v}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{12}$  where  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{12} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0)$ . The probability that  $p$  cooperates in the  $(n+1)^{\text{th}}$  round, denoted by  $\hat{v}_C^{(n+1)} = \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(n)} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{p}}$ . Hence,

$$\hat{v}_C^{(n+1)} - \hat{v}_C^{(n)} = \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(n)} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{p}} - \hat{\mathbf{v}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{12} = \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(n)} \cdot (\hat{\mathbf{p}} - \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{12}) = \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(n)} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{p}}.$$

This implies,

$$\sum_{k=1}^n \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(k)} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{p}} = \sum_{k=1}^n \hat{v}_C^{(k+1)} - \hat{v}_C^{(k)} \Rightarrow \sum_{k=1}^n \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(k)} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{p}} = \hat{v}_C^{(n+1)} - \hat{v}_C^{(1)}. \quad (8)$$

As the right side has absolute value at most 1,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n \hat{\mathbf{v}}^{(k)} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{p}} = 0. \quad (9)$$

□

**Zero-determinant strategies.** Based on Akin's Lemma, we can derive a theory of zero-determinant strategies analogous to the case of memory-one strategies. In the following, we say a memory- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  is a zero-determinant strategy if there are  $k_1, k_2, k_3$  and  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma$  such that  $\mathbf{m}$  can be written as

$$\mathbf{m} = \alpha \mathbf{S}^{k_1} + \beta \tilde{\mathbf{S}}^{k_2} + \gamma \mathbf{1} + \mathbf{m}^{k-\text{Rep}}, \quad (10)$$

where  $\mathbf{1}$  is the vector for which every entry is 1. By Akin's Lemma and the definition of payoffs,

$$0 = \mathbf{v} \cdot (\mathbf{m} - \mathbf{m}^{k-\text{Rep}}) = \mathbf{v} \cdot (\alpha \mathbf{S}^{k_1} + \beta \tilde{\mathbf{S}}^{k_2} + \gamma \mathbf{1}) = \alpha s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{m}'} + \beta s_{\mathbf{m}', \mathbf{m}} + \gamma. \quad (11)$$

That is, payoffs satisfy a linear relationship.

One interesting special case arises if  $k_1 = k_2 = k_3 =: k$  and  $\alpha = -\beta = 1/(b+c)$  and  $\gamma = 0$ . In that case, the formula (8) yields the strategy

$$m_h = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a_{-k}^q = C \\ 0 & \text{if } a_{-k}^q = D \end{cases} \quad (12)$$

That is, this strategy implements Tit-for-Tat (for  $k = 1$ ) or delayed versions thereof (for  $k > 1$ ). These strategies are partners strategies that also satisfy a stronger relationship. By Eq. (9), the enforced payoff relationship is  $s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{m}'} = s_{\mathbf{m}', \mathbf{m}}$ .

Another interesting special case arises if  $k_1 = k_2 = k_3 =: k$  and  $\alpha = 0, \beta = -1/b, \gamma = 1 - c/b$ . In that case Eq. (8) yields the strategy

$$m_h = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a_{-k}^q = C \\ 1 - c/b & \text{if } a_{-k}^q = D \end{cases} \quad (13)$$

That is, the generated strategy is GTFT (if  $k = 1$ ), or delayed versions thereof (for  $k > 1$ ). By Eq. (9), the enforced payoff relationship is  $s_{\mathbf{m}', \mathbf{m}} = b - c$ . In particular, these strategies are partner strategies.

### 3 Reactive Partner Strategies

A *reactive- $n$  strategy* is denoted by a vector  $\mathbf{p} = (p_h)_{h \in H^q} \in [0, 1]^{2^n}$ . Each entry  $p_h$  corresponds to the player's cooperation probability in the next round, based on the co-player's action(s) in the previous  $n$  rounds. Therefore,  $n$ -bit reactive strategies exclusively rely on the co-player's  $n$ -history, remaining unaffected by the focal player's own actions during the past  $n$  rounds. From this point onward, we distinguish between memory- $n$  strategies and reactive- $n$  strategies, using notations  $\mathbf{m}$  and  $\mathbf{p}$  respectively for each set of strategies.

To begin, let's introduce some additional notation. Suppose player  $p$  adopts a reactive- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{p}$ , and suppose player  $q$  adopts an arbitrary memory- $n$  strategy. Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_h)_{h \in H}$  be an invariant of the game between the two players. We define the following marginal distributions with respect to the possible  $n$ -histories of player  $q$ ,

$$v_h^q = \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, h^q)} \quad \forall h^q \in H^q. \quad (14)$$

These entries describe how often we observe player  $q$  to choose actions  $h^q$ , in  $n$  consecutive rounds (irrespective of the actions of player  $p$ ). Note that,

$$\sum_{h \in H^q} v_h^q = 1. \quad (15)$$

Similarly, the cooperation rate of player  $q$  can also be defined irrespective of the actions of player  $p$ . Let  $H_k^q$  be the subset of  $H^q$ , for which,

$$H_k^q = \{h \in H^q : h_{-k} = C\}. \quad (16)$$

Let  $\rho_{\mathbf{m}}$  be the cooperation rate of player  $q$  playing an arbitrary memory- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  when playing against player  $p$  with a reactive strategy,

$$\rho_{\mathbf{m}} = \sum_{h \in H_1^q} v_h^q = \sum_{h \in H_2^q} v_h^q = \dots = \sum_{h \in H_n^q} v_h^q. \quad (17)$$

Equality (15) correspond to the intuition that it does not matter which of the past  $n$  rounds player  $q$  cooperated to define the cooperation rate.

We can also express player  $p$ 's average cooperation rate  $\rho_{\mathbf{p}}$  in terms of  $v_h^q$  by noting that,

$$\rho_{\mathbf{p}} = \sum_{h \in H^q} v_h^q \cdot p_h. \quad (18)$$

Because we consider simple donation games, we note that these two quantities,  $\rho_{\mathbf{m}}$  and  $\rho_{\mathbf{p}}$ , are sufficient to define the payoffs of the two players,

$$\begin{aligned} s_{\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{m}} &= b \rho_{\mathbf{m}} - c \rho_{\mathbf{p}} \\ s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{q}} &= b \rho_{\mathbf{p}} - c \rho_{\mathbf{m}}. \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

### 3.1 Sufficiency of Self reactive strategies

To characterize all partner reactive- $n$  strategies, one would usually need to check against all pure memory- $n$  strategies McAvooy and Nowak [2019]. However, we demonstrate that when player  $p$  uses a reactive- $n$  strategy, it is sufficient to check only against self-reactive- $n$  strategies. This is a direct outcome of Lemma 3.1.

*Self-reactive- $n$*  strategies are also a subset of memory- $n$  strategies. They only consider the focal player's own  $n$ -history, and ignore the co-player's. Formally, a self-reactive- $n$  strategy is a vector  $\tilde{\mathbf{p}} = (\tilde{p}_h)_{h \in H^p} \in [0, 1]^{2^n}$ . Each entry  $\tilde{p}_h$  corresponds to the player's cooperation probability in the next, depending on the player's own action(s) in the previous  $n$  rounds.

**Lemma 3.1.** Let  $\mathbf{p}$  be an reactive- $n$  strategy for player  $p$ . Then, for any memory- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  used by player  $q$ , player  $p$ 's score is exactly the same as if  $q$  had played a specific self-reactive memory- $n$  strategy  $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}$ .

*Proof.* □

Note that Lemma 3.1 aligns with the previous result by Press and Dyson [2012]. They discussed the case where one player uses a memory-one strategy and the other player employs a longer memory strategy. They demonstrated that the payoff of the player with the longer memory is exactly the same as if the player had employed a specific shorter-memory strategy, disregarding any history beyond what is shared with the short-memory player. The result here follows a similar intuition: if there is a part of history that one player does not observe, then the co-player gains nothing by considering the history not shared with the short-memory player.

More specifically, the play of a self-reactive player solely relies on their own previous actions. Hence, describing the self-reactive player's play can be achieved through a Markov process with a  $2^n \times 2^n$  transition matrix  $\tilde{M}$  instead. The stationary distribution  $\tilde{\mathbf{v}}$  of  $\tilde{M}$  has the following property:

$$\tilde{u}_h = u_h^q \forall h \in H^q. \quad (20)$$

From hereupon we will use the notation  $\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{p}$ , and  $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}$  to denote memory- $n$ , reactive- $n$ , and self-reactive- $n$  strategies.

### 3.2 Reactive-Two Partner Strategies

In this section, we focus on the case of  $n = 2$ . Reactive-two strategies are denoted as a vector  $\mathbf{p} = (p_{CC}, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$  where  $p_{CC}$  is the probability of cooperating in this turn when the co-player cooperated in the last 2 turns,  $p_{CD}$  is the probability of cooperating given that the co-player cooperated in the second to last turn and defected in the last, and so forth. A nice reactive-two strategy is represented by the vector  $\mathbf{p} = (1, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$ .

**Theorem 3.2** ("Reactive-Two Partner Strategies"). A reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p}$ , is a partner strategy if and only if, it's nice ( $p_{CC} = 1$ ) and the remaining entries satisfy the conditions:

$$p_{DD} < 1 - \frac{c}{b} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{p_{CD} + p_{DC}}{2} < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b}. \quad (21)$$

There are two independent proves of Theorem 3.2. The first prove is in line with the work of [Akin, 2016], and the second one relies on Lemma 3.1. Here, we discuss both.

**Proof One.** Suppose player  $p$  adopts a reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p} = (p_{CC}, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$ . Moreover, suppose player  $q$  adopts an arbitrary memory-2 strategy  $\mathbf{m}$ . Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_h)_{h \in H}$  be an invariant distribution of the game between the two players.

We define the following four marginal distributions with respect to the possible two-histories of player  $q$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} v_{CC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CC)} \\ v_{CD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CD)} \\ v_{DC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DC)} \\ v_{DD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DD)}. \end{aligned} \tag{22}$$

These four entries describe how often we observe player  $q$  to choose actions  $CC$ ,  $CD$ ,  $DC$ ,  $DD$  in two consecutive rounds (irrespective of the actions of player  $p$ ). We can define player  $q$ 's average cooperation rate  $\rho_{\mathbf{m}}$  as

$$\rho_{\mathbf{m}} := v_{CC}^q + v_{CD}^q = v_{CC}^q + v_{DC}^q. \tag{23}$$

Here, the second equality holds because it does not matter whether we define player  $q$ 's cooperation rate based on the first or the second round of each 2-history. In particular, we can use this equality to conclude

$$v_{CD}^q = v_{DC}^q. \tag{24}$$

Similarly, we can express player  $p$ 's average cooperation rate  $\rho_{\mathbf{p}}$  in terms of  $v_{CC}^q$ ,  $v_{CD}^q$ ,  $v_{DC}^q$ ,  $v_{DD}^q$  by noting that

$$\begin{aligned} \rho_{\mathbf{p}} &= v_{CC}^q p_{CC} + v_{CD}^q p_{CD} + v_{DC}^q p_{DC} + v_{DD}^q p_{DD} \\ &= v_{CC}^q p_{CC} + v_{CD}^q (p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + v_{DD}^q p_{DD}. \end{aligned} \tag{25}$$

Here, the second equality is due to Eq. (22).

*Proof.* A reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p} = (p_{CC}, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$  can only be a Nash equilibrium if *no* other strategy yields a larger payoff, in particular neither AllD nor the Alternator strategy must yield a larger payoff, where AllD = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0) and Alternator = (0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1). Thus,  $\mathbf{p}$  can only form a Nash equilibrium if

$$\pi(\text{AllD}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b - c \quad \text{and} \quad \pi(\text{Alternator}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b - c,$$

or equivalently, if

$$p_{DD} \leq 1 - \frac{c}{b} \quad \text{and} \quad p_{CD} + p_{DC} \leq 1 + \frac{b - c}{c}. \tag{26}$$

Now, suppose player  $q$  has some strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  such that  $s_{\mathbf{m},\mathbf{p}} > b-c$ . It follows that

$$\begin{aligned}
0 &< s_{\mathbf{m},\mathbf{p}} - (b-c) \\
&\stackrel{\text{Eq. (17)}}{=} b\rho_{\mathbf{p}} - c\rho_{\mathbf{m}} - (b-c) \\
&\stackrel{\text{Eqs. (21),(23),(13)}}{=} b \left( v_{CC}^q p_{CC} + v_{CD}^q (p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + v_{DD}^q p_{DD} \right) - c \left( v_{CC}^q + v_{CD}^q \right) - (b-c) \left( v_{CC}^q + 2v_{CD}^q + v_{DD}^q \right) \\
&= v_{CC}^q b (p_{CC} - 1) + v_{CD}^q \left( b(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + c - 2b \right) + v_{DD}^q \left( bp_{DD} - (b-c) \right).
\end{aligned} \tag{27}$$

Condition (25) can hold only if,

$$b(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + c - 2b > 0, \quad bp_{DD} - (b-c) > 0. \tag{28}$$

Thus, Eq. (24) reassures that  $\mathbf{p}$  is Nash strategy, and given that  $p_{CC} = 1$ , it is a partner strategy. □

**Proof Two.** Suppose player  $p$  adopts a nice reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p} = (1, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$ . For  $\mathbf{p}$  to be a Nash strategy,

$$s_{\mathbf{m},\mathbf{p}} \leq (b-c), \tag{29}$$

must hold against all pure memory-2 strategies ( $\mathbf{m} \in \{0, 1\}^{4^2}$ ). Due to Lemma 3.1, it is sufficient to check only against pure self-reactive strategies, and in the case of  $n = 2$  there can be only 16 such strategies. We refer to them as  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i$  for  $i \in 1, \dots, 16$ . The strategies are as follow,

• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^0 = (0, 0, 0, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^4 = (0, 1, 0, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^8 = (1, 0, 0, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{12} = (1, 1, 0, 0)$
• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^1 = (0, 0, 0, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^5 = (0, 1, 0, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^9 = (1, 0, 0, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{13} = (1, 1, 0, 1)$
• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^2 = (0, 0, 1, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^6 = (0, 1, 1, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{10} = (1, 0, 1, 0)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{14} = (1, 1, 1, 0)$
• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^3 = (0, 0, 1, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^7 = (0, 1, 1, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{11} = (1, 0, 1, 1)$	• $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{15} = (1, 1, 1, 1)$

*Proof.* Suppose player  $p$  plays a nice reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p} = (1, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$ , and suppose the co-player  $q$  plays a pure self-reactive-two strategy  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}$ . The possible payoffs for  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}} \in \{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^0, \dots, \tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{16}\}$  are:



$$\begin{aligned}
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= b \cdot p_{DD} & \text{for } i \in \{0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CD} + p_{DC} + p_{DD})}{3} - \frac{1}{3} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{1, 9\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CD} + p_{DC} + p_{DD} + 1)}{4} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{3\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CD} + p_{DC})}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{4, 5, 12, 13\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CD} + p_{DC} + 1)}{3} - \frac{2}{3} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{6, 7\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= b - c & \text{for } i \in \{8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15\}
\end{aligned}$$

Setting the payoff expressions of  $s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}}$  to smaller or equal to  $(b - c)$  we get the following unique conditions,

$$p_{DD} \leq 1 - \frac{c}{b} \quad (30)$$

$$\frac{p_{CD} + p_{DC} + p_{DD}}{3} \leq 1 - \frac{2}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad (31)$$

$$\frac{p_{CD} + p_{DC}}{2} \leq 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad (32)$$

$$(33)$$

Note that condition (30) is the sum of conditions (29) and (31). Thus, only conditions (29) and (31) are necessary. □

### 3.3 Reactive-Three Partner Strategies

In this section, we focus on the case of  $n = 3$ . Reactive-three strategies are denoted as a vector  $\mathbf{p} = (p_{CCC}, p_{CCD}, p_{CDC}, p_{CDD}, p_{DCC}, p_{DCD}, p_{DDC}, p_{DDD})$  where  $p_{CCC}$  is the probability of cooperating in round  $t$  when the co-player cooperates in the last 3 rounds,  $p_{CCD}$  is the probability of cooperating given that the co-player cooperated in the third and second to last rounds and defected in the last, and so forth. A nice reactive-three strategy is represented by the vector  $\mathbf{p} = (1, p_{CCD}, p_{CDC}, p_{CDD}, p_{DCC}, p_{DCD}, p_{DDC}, p_{DDD})$ .

**Theorem 3.3** (“Reactive-Three Partner Strategies”). A reactive-three strategy  $\mathbf{p}$ , is a partner strategy if and only if, it's nice ( $p_{CCC} = 1$ ) and the remaining entries satisfy the conditions:

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC}}{3} < 1 - \frac{1}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \frac{p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}}{3} < 1 - \frac{2}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad p_{DDD} < 1 - \frac{c}{b} \quad (34)$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}}{4} < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \frac{p_{CDC} + p_{DCD}}{2} < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad (35)$$

Once again, there are two independent proves of Theorem 3.3, and we will present both.

**Proof One.** Suppose player  $p$  adopts a reactive-three strategy  $\mathbf{p}$ , and suppose player  $q$  adopts an arbitrary memory-three strategy  $\mathbf{m}$ . Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_h)_{h \in H}$  be an invariant distribution of the game between the two players.

We define the following eight marginal distributions with respect to the possible three-histories of player  $q$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}
v_{CCC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CCC)} \\
v_{CCD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CCD)} \\
v_{CDC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CDC)} \\
v_{CDD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, CDD)} \\
v_{DCC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DCC)} \\
v_{DCD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DCD)} \\
v_{DDC}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DDC)} \\
v_{DDD}^q &= \sum_{h^p \in H^p} v_{(h^p, DDD)}.
\end{aligned} \tag{36}$$

These eight entries describe how often we observe player  $q$  to choose actions  $CCC$ ,  $CCD$ ,  $CDC$ ,  $CDD$ ,  $DCC$ ,  $DCD$ ,  $DDC$ ,  $DDD$  in three consecutive rounds (irrespective of the actions of player  $p$ ). We can define player  $q$ 's average cooperation rate  $\rho_{\mathbf{m}}$  as

$$\rho_{\mathbf{m}} := v_{CCC}^q + v_{CCD}^q + v_{DCC}^q + v_{DCD}^q. \tag{37}$$

In the case of  $n = 3$  the following equalities hold,

$$v_{CCD}^q = v_{DCC}^q \tag{38}$$

$$v_{DDC}^q = v_{CDD}^q \tag{39}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
v_{CCD}^q + v_{DCD}^q &= v_{CDC}^q + v_{DDC}^q \Rightarrow \\
v_{CCD}^q &= v_{CDC}^q + v_{CDD}^q - v_{DCD}^q
\end{aligned} \tag{40}$$

The average cooperation rate of  $p$ 's is given by

$$\begin{aligned}
\rho_{\mathbf{p}} &= v_{CCC}^q p_{CCC} + v_{CCD}^q p_{CCD} + v_{CDC}^q p_{CDC} + v_{CDD}^q p_{CDD} + v_{DCC}^q p_{DCD} + \\
&\quad + v_{DDC}^q p_{DDC} + v_{DDD}^q p_{DDD} \\
&\stackrel{\text{Eqs. (36), (37)}}{=} v_{CCC}^q p_{CCC} + v_{CCD}^q (p_{CCD} + p_{DCC}) + v_{CDC}^q p_{CDC} + v_{CDD}^q (p_{CDD} + p_{DDC}) + \\
&\quad + v_{DCD}^q p_{DCD} + v_{DDD}^q p_{DDD}
\end{aligned} \tag{41}$$

*Proof.* A reactive-three strategy  $\mathbf{p}$  can only be a Nash equilibrium if *no* other strategy yields a larger payoff, in particular neither AllD nor the following self-reactive-three strategies,  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{15} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1)$ ,  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{17} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 1)$ ,  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{51} = (0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1)$  and  $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{102} = (0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0)$ . Thus,  $\mathbf{p}$  can only form a Nash equilibrium if

$$\pi(\text{AllD}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b-c \quad \text{and} \quad \pi(\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{15}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b-c \quad \text{and} \quad \pi(\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{17}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b-c \quad \text{and}$$

$$\pi(\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{51}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b-c \quad \text{and} \quad \pi(\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{102}, \mathbf{p}) \leq b-c$$

or equivalently, if

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC}}{3} < 1 - \frac{1}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \frac{p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}}{3} < 1 - \frac{2}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad p_{DDD} < 1 - \frac{c}{b} \quad (42)$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}}{4} < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \frac{p_{CDC} + p_{DCD}}{2} < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad (43)$$

Now, suppose player  $q$  has some strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  and player  $p$  has a reactive-two strategy such that  $s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{p}} > b-c$ . It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &\leq s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{p}} - (b-c) \\ &\stackrel{\text{Eq. (17)}}{=} b\rho_{\mathbf{p}} - c\rho_{\mathbf{m}} - (b-c) \\ &\stackrel{\text{Eqs. (39), (13)}}{=} b \left( v_{CCC}^q p_{CCC} + v_{CCD}^q (p_{CCD} + p_{DCC}) + v_{CDC}^q p_{CDC} + v_{DDC}^q (p_{CDD} + p_{DDC}) + v_{DCD}^q p_{DCD} + v_{DDD}^q p_{DDD} \right) \\ &\quad - c \left( v_{CCC}^q + 2v_{CCD}^q + v_{DCD}^q \right) - (b-c) \left( v_{CCC}^q + 2v_{CCD}^q + v_{CDC}^q + 2v_{DDC}^q + v_{DCD}^q + v_{DDD}^q \right) \\ &= b v_{CCC}^q (p_{CCC} - 1) + v_{CCD}^q (b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} - 2)) + v_{CDC}^q (b(p_{CDC} - 1) + c) + \\ &\quad v_{DCD}^q (b(p_{CDD} + p_{DDC} - 2) + 2c) + v_{DDC}^q (b(p_{DDC} - 1)) + v_{DDD}^q (b(p_{DDD} - 1) + c) \\ &\stackrel{\text{Eq. (38)}}{=} b v_{CCC}^q (p_{CCC} - 1) + v_{DDD}^q (b(p_{DDD} - 1) + c) + v_{CDC}^q (b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} + p_{CDC} - 3) + c) + \\ &\quad v_{DCD}^q (b(p_{CDD} + p_{DDC} + p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} - 4) + 2c) + v_{DDC}^q (b(p_{DDC} - 1) - b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC}) - 2) \\ &\quad (44) \end{aligned}$$

Condition (42) holds only for,

$$\begin{aligned} &b(p_{DDD} - 1) + c < 0, \quad b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} + p_{CDC} - 3) + c \\ &b(p_{CDD} + p_{DDC} + p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} - 4) + 2c < 0 \Rightarrow -b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} - 2) > b(p_{CDD} + p_{DDC} - 2) + 2c \\ &b(p_{DCD} - 1) - b(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC}) - 2 < 0 \Rightarrow b(p_{DCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DDC} - 3) + 2c < 0. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, conditions Eq. (40) reassure that  $\mathbf{p}$  is Nash strategy, and given that  $p_{CC} = 1$ , it is a partner strategy.  $\square$

**Proof Two.** Consider all the pure self-reactive-three strategies. There is a total of 256 such strategies. These are given in the Section 5. The payoff expression for each of these strategies against a nice reactive-three strategies can be calculated explicitly. We use these expressions to obtain the conditions for partner strategies similar to the previous subsection.

*Proof.* The payoff expressions for a nice reactive-three strategy  $p$  against all pure self-reactive-three strategies are as follows,

$$\begin{aligned}
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= b p_{DDD} & \text{for } i \in [0, 2, 4, 6, \dots, 250, 252, 254] \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD})}{4} - \frac{1}{4} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{1, 9, 33, 41, 65, 73, 97, 105, 129, 137, 161, 169, 193, 201, 225, 233\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD})}{5} - \frac{2}{5} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{3, 7, 35, 39, 131, 135, 163, 167\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CDC} + p_{DCD})}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{4-7, 12-15, 20-23, 28-31, 68-71, 76-79, 84-87, 92-95, 132-135, 140-143, 148-151, 156-159, 196-199, 204-207, 212-215, 220-223\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD} + 1)}{6} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{11, 15, 43, 47\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC})}{3} - \frac{1}{3} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{16, 17, 24, 25, 48, 49, 56, 57, 80, 81, 88, 89, 112, 113, 120, 121, 144, 145, 152, 153, 176, 177, 184, 185, 208, 209, 216, 217, 240, 241, 248, 249\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC})}{4} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{18, 19, 22, 23, 50, 51, 54, 55, 146, 147, 150, 151, 178, 179, 182, 183\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + 1)}{5} - \frac{3}{5} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{26, 27, 30, 31, 58, 59, 62, 63\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD})}{7} - \frac{3}{7} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{37, 67, 165, 195\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD} + 1)}{8} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{45, 75\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC})}{6} - \frac{1}{2} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{52, 53, 82, 83, 180, 181, 210, 211\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + 1)}{7} - \frac{4}{7} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{60, 61, 90, 91\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC})}{3} - \frac{2}{3} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{96-103, 112-119, 224-231, 240-247\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= \frac{b \cdot (p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC} + 1)}{4} - \frac{3}{4} \cdot c & \text{for } i \in \{104-111, 120-127\} \\
s_{\bar{q}^i, p} &= (b - c) & \text{for } i \in [128, 255]
\end{aligned} \tag{45}$$

Setting these to smaller or equal than the mutual cooperation payoff  $(b - c)$  give the following ten conditions,

$$p_{DDD} \leq 1 - \frac{c}{b}, \quad \frac{p_{CDC} + p_{DCD}}{2} \leq 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \quad \frac{p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}}{3} \leq 1 - \frac{2}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \tag{46}$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC}}{3} \leq 1 - \frac{1}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \quad \frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}}{4} \leq 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \tag{47}$$

$$\frac{p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}}{4} \leq 1 - \frac{3}{4} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \tag{48}$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}}{7} \leq 1 - \frac{4}{7} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \tag{49}$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}}{5} \leq 1 - \frac{3}{5} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \tag{50}$$

$$\frac{p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}}{6} \leq 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \tag{51}$$

Note that only conditions (44) and (45) are unique. The remaining conditions can be derived from the sums of two or more of these conditions.  $\square$

### 3.4 Reactive Counting Partner Strategies

A special case of reactive strategies is reactive-counting strategies. These are strategies that respond to the co-player's actions, but they do not distinguish between when cooperations/defections occurred; they solely consider the count of cooperations in the last  $n$  turns. A reactive-counting- $n$  strategy is represented by a vector  $\mathbf{r} = (r_i)_{i \in [0, n]}$ , where the entry  $r_i$  indicates the probability of cooperating given that the co-player cooperated  $i$  times in the last  $n$  turns.

**Reactive-Counting-Two Partner Strategies.** These are denoted by the vector  $\mathbf{r} = (r_2, r_1, r_0)$  where  $r_i$  is the probability of cooperating in after  $i$  cooperations in the last 2 turns. We can characterise reactive-counting-two partner strategies by setting  $r_2 = 1$ , and  $p_{CD} = p_{DC} = r_1$  and  $p_{DD} = r_0$  in conditions (19). This gives us the following result.

**Lemma 3.4.** A nice reactive-counting-two strategy  $\mathbf{r} = (1, r_1, r_0)$  is a partner strategy if and only if,

$$r_1 < 1 - \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \text{and} \quad r_0 < 1 - \frac{c}{b}. \quad (52)$$

**Reactive-Counting-Three Partner Strategies.** These are denoted by the vector  $\mathbf{r} = (r_3, r_2, r_1, r_0)$  where  $r_i$  is the probability of cooperating in after  $i$  cooperations in the last 3 turns. We can characterise reactive-counting-three partner strategies by setting  $r_3 = 1$ , and  $p_{CCD} = p_{CDC} = r_2, p_{DCC} = p_{DDC} = r_1$  and  $p_{DDD} = r_0$  in conditions (32). This gives us the following result.

**Lemma 3.5.** A nice reactive-counting-three strategy  $\mathbf{r} = (1, r_2, r_1, r_0)$  is a partner strategy if and only if,

$$r_2 < 1 - \frac{1}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \quad r_1 < 1 - \frac{2}{3} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad \text{and} \quad r_0 < 1 - \frac{c}{b}. \quad (53)$$

In the case of counting reactive strategies, we generalise to the case of  $n$ .

Given a reactive-counting- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{r} = (r_n, r_{n-1}, \dots, r_0)$ , in the strategy's eyes the game can end up in  $n$  states. Each  $u_i$  state represents the state that the co-player cooperated  $i$  times in the last  $n$  turns with,

$$\sum_{i=0}^n u_i = 1 \Rightarrow \sum_{k=0}^n u_{n-k} = 1. \quad (54)$$

Thus the cooperation ratio of the strategy is,

$$\rho_{\mathbf{P}} = \sum_{k=0}^n r_{n-k} \cdot u_{n-k}. \quad (55)$$

the probability of cooperating given that the co-player cooperated  $i$  times. The co-player can use any self-reactive- $n$  strategy, and thus the co-player differentiates between when the last cooperation/defection occurred. However, we can still express the co-player's cooperation rate as a function of  $u_i$ . More specifically, the co-player's cooperation rate is,

$$\rho_{\tilde{\mathbf{P}}} = \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{n-k}{n} \cdot u_{n-k}. \quad (56)$$

With this we have all the required tools to prove the following theorem.

**Theorem 3.6** (“Reactive-Counting Partner Strategies”). A reactive-counting- $n$  strategy  $\mathbf{r} = (r_i)_{i \in [0, n]}$ , is a partner strategy if and only if, the  $r_i$  entries satisfy the conditions:

$$r_n = 1, \text{ and } r_{n-k} < 1 - \frac{k}{n} \cdot \frac{c}{b}, \text{ for } k \in [1, n]. \quad (57)$$

*Proof.* Consider a set of alternating self-reactive- $n$  strategies that defect after cooperating  $i$  times. Since  $i \in [0, n]$ , there can be only  $n + 1$  such strategies. We will denote this set as  $A = \{\mathbf{A}^0, \mathbf{A}^1, \dots, \mathbf{A}^n\}$ . The payoff of an alternating self-reactive- $n$  against a counting-reactive- $n$   $\mathbf{r}$  is given by,

$$s_{\mathbf{A}^i, \mathbf{r}} = b \cdot r_i - \frac{i}{n} \cdot c \text{ for } i \in [0, n]. \quad (58)$$

The intuition behind Eq. (56) is that in the long term of the game the strategies end up in a state where  $\mathbf{A}^i$  has cooperated  $i$  times in the last  $n$  turns. Thus, here the co-player will cooperate, and provide the benefit  $b$  with a probability  $r_i$ . Whilst in return the alternating strategy cooperated  $\frac{i}{n}$  and pays the cost. As we have already discussed previously, a strategy can only be Nash if the payoff of the co-player does not exceed  $(b - c)$ . Thus for  $\mathbf{p}$  to be Nash against each strategy in set  $A$  (for  $i \in [0, n]$ ),

The intuition behind Eq. (56) is that in the long term, the strategies end up in a state where  $\mathbf{A}^i$  has cooperated  $i$  times in the last  $n$  turns. Thus, the co-player will cooperate and provide the benefit  $b$  with a probability  $r_i$ , while in return, the alternating strategy has cooperated  $\frac{i}{n}$  times and pays the cost. As we have already discussed previously, a strategy can only be a Nash equilibrium if the payoff of the co-player does not exceed  $(b - c)$ . Therefore, for  $\mathbf{p}$  to be a Nash equilibrium against each strategy in set  $A$  (for  $i \in [0, n]$ ),

$$s_{\mathbf{A}^i, \mathbf{r}} \leq b - c \quad (59)$$

$$b \cdot r_i - \frac{i}{n} \cdot c \leq b - c \quad (60)$$

$$r_i \leq 1 - \frac{i}{n} \cdot \frac{c}{b} \quad (61)$$

Now, suppose player  $q$  has some strategy  $\mathbf{m}$  and player  $p$  has a reactive-counting strategy such that  $s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{p}} > b - c$ . It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &\leq s_{\mathbf{m}, \mathbf{p}} - (b - c) \\ &\stackrel{\text{Eq. (17)}}{=} b\rho_{\mathbf{p}} - c\rho_{\mathbf{m}} - (b - c) \\ &\stackrel{\text{Eqs. (52), (53), (54)}}{=} b \sum_{k=0}^n r_{n-k} \cdot u_{n-k} - c \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{n-k}{n} \cdot u_{n-k} - (b - c) \sum_{k=0}^n u_{n-k} \\ &\quad u_n \left( b(r_n - 1) \right) + \sum_{k=1}^n u_{n-k} \left( b \sum_{k=1}^n r_{n-k} - c \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} \frac{n-k}{n} - (b - c) \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} 1 \right) \end{aligned} \quad (62)$$

This condition holds only if,

$$\left(b r_{n-k} - c \frac{n-k}{n} - (b-c)\right) < 0 \Rightarrow \quad (63)$$

$$b(r_{n-k} - 1) + \left(1 - \frac{n-k}{n}\right)c < 0 \Rightarrow \quad (64)$$

$$r_{n-k} < 1 - \frac{n}{k} \cdot \frac{c}{b}. \quad (65)$$

for  $k \in [0, n]$ . Thus, any counting strategy that satisfies conditions (57) is Nash, and if it is nice, it's also a partner strategy.  $\square$

## 4 Prisoner's Dilemma

To characterise partner strategies for the general prisoner's dilemma, we can use the method based on Lemma 3.1. Here we discuss this result in the case of  $n = 2$ .

There are 16 pure-self reactive strategies in  $n = 2$ . To calculate the explicit payoff expressions for each pure strategy against a nice reactive-two strategy  $\mathbf{p} = (1, p_{CD}, p_{DC}, p_{DD})$  we use the method discussed in Section 3.1. More specifically, for a self-reactive strategy  $\mathbf{q}$ , we calculate where the strategy is in the long term using the transition matrix,

$$\tilde{M} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{p}_1 & 1 - \tilde{p}_1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \tilde{p}_2 & 1 - \tilde{p}_2 \\ \tilde{p}_3 & 1 - \tilde{p}_3 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \tilde{p}_4 & 1 - \tilde{p}_4 \end{bmatrix} \quad (66)$$

Using the stationary vector  $\tilde{\mathbf{v}}$  we can define the payoffs in the general prisoner's dilemma as follows:

$$\mathbf{s}_{\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p}} = a_R \cdot R + a_S \cdot S + a_T \cdot T + a_P \cdot P, \quad \text{where}$$

$$\begin{aligned} a_R &= \tilde{v}_{CC} p_{CC} \tilde{q}_{CC} + \tilde{v}_{CD} p_{CD} \tilde{q}_{CD} + \tilde{v}_{DC} p_{DC} \tilde{q}_{DC} + \tilde{v}_{DD} p_{DD} \tilde{q}_{DD}, \\ a_S &= \tilde{v}_{CC} p_{CC} (1 - \tilde{q}_{CC}) + \tilde{v}_{CD} p_{CD} (1 - \tilde{q}_{CD}) + \tilde{v}_{DC} p_{DC} (1 - \tilde{q}_{DC}) + \tilde{v}_{DD} p_{DD} (1 - \tilde{q}_{DD}), \\ a_T &= \tilde{v}_{CC} (1 - p_{CC}) \tilde{q}_{CC} + \tilde{v}_{CD} (1 - p_{CD}) \tilde{q}_{CD} + \tilde{v}_{DC} (1 - p_{DC}) \tilde{q}_{DC} + \tilde{v}_{DD} (1 - p_{DD}) \tilde{q}_{DD}, \\ a_P &= \tilde{v}_{CC} (1 - p_{CC}) (1 - \tilde{q}_{CC}) + \tilde{v}_{CD} (1 - p_{CD}) (1 - \tilde{q}_{CD}) + \tilde{v}_{DC} (1 - p_{DC}) (1 - \tilde{q}_{DC}) + \tilde{v}_{DD} (1 - p_{DD}) (1 - \tilde{q}_{DD}). \end{aligned}$$

This gives the following payoff expressions:

$$\begin{aligned}
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= P(1 - p_{DD}) + Tp_{DD} & \text{for } i \in \{0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{-P(p_{CD} + p_{DC} - 2) + Rp_{DD} - S(p_{DD} - 1) + T(p_{CD} + p_{DC})}{3} & \text{for } i \in \{1, 9\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{P(1 - p_{CD}) + R(p_{DC} + p_{DD}) - S(p_{DC} + p_{DD} - 2) + T(p_{CD} + 1)}{4} & \text{for } i \in \{3\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{P(1 - p_{DC}) + Rp_{CD} - S(p_{CD} - 1) + Tp_{DC}}{2} & \text{for } i \in \{4, 5, 12, 13\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{R(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) - S(p_{CD} + p_{DC} - 2) + T}{3} & \text{for } i \in \{6, 7\} \\
s_{\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= R & \text{for } i \in \{8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15\}
\end{aligned}$$

Setting the above expressions to smaller than  $R$  gives the following conditions,

$$\begin{aligned}
(P - T)p_{DD} &< P - R, \quad (T - P)(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + (R - S)p_{DD} < 3R + S - 2P, \\
(T - P)p_{CD} + (R - S)(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) &< 4R - 2S - P - T, \quad (R - S)p_{CD} + (T - P)p_{DC} < 2R - S - P \\
(R - S)(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) &< 3R - 2S - T
\end{aligned}$$

Consider the case where  $T = 1$  and  $S = 0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}
(P - 1)p_{DD} &< P - R, \quad (1 - P)(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) + Rp_{DD} < 3R - 2P, \\
(1 - P)p_{CD} + R(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) &< 4R - P - 1, \quad Rp_{CD} + (1 - P)p_{DC} < 2R - P \\
R(p_{CD} + p_{DC}) &< 3R - 1
\end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned}
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CDD}+p_{DCD}+p_{DDC})+3P+(R-S)p_{DDD}+S}{4} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)p_{CDC}+P+(R-S)p_{DCD}+S}{2} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= -P(p_{DDD}-1)+Tp_{DDD} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD}+p_{DDC})+3P+(R-S)(p_{CDC}+p_{DCC}+p_{DCD}+p_{DDD})+4S+T}{8} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)p_{DCC}+P+(R-S)(p_{CDC}+p_{CCD})+2S}{3} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DDC})+3P+(R-S)(p_{CDC}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCD})+3S}{6} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{DDC})+2P+T+(R-S)(p_{CDC}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DCD})+4S}{7} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCC})+3P+(R-S)(p_{DDC}+p_{DDD})+2S}{5} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{DCD}+p_{DDC})+2P+(R-S)p_{CDD}+S}{3} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= R & \text{for } i \in [128-255] \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)p_{CCD}+P+T+(R-S)(p_{CDD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DDC})+S}{5} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{DCC})+2P+(R-S)(p_{CDD}+p_{DDD})+2S}{4} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)p_{CDC}+2P+T+(R-S)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DDC})+4S}{7} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CDC}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCD})+3P+T+(R-S)(p_{CCD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DDC}+p_{DDD})+4S}{8} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CDC}+p_{DDC}+p_{DCD})+3P+T+(R-S)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD}+p_{DDC})+3S}{6} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DDC})+4P+(R-S)(p_{CDC}+p_{DCD}+p_{DDD})+3S}{7} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{T+(R-S)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDC}+p_{DCC})+3S}{4} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CCD}+p_{CDD})+2P+T+(R-S)(p_{DCC}+p_{DDC}+p_{DDD})+3S}{6} & \text{for } i \in \\
s_{\tilde{q}^i, \mathbf{p}} &= \frac{(T-P)(p_{CDC}+p_{CDD}+p_{DCC}+p_{DCD})+4P+(R-S)(p_{CCD}+p_{DDC}+p_{DDD})+3S}{7} & \text{for } i \in
\end{aligned}$$

$(T - P)(p_{CDD} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}) + (R - S)p_{DDD}$	$< 4R - 3P - S$
$(T - P)p_{CDC} + (R - S)p_{DCD}$	$< 2R - P - S$
$-P(p_{DDD} - 1) + Tp_{DDD}$	$< R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DDC}) + 3P + (R - S)(p_{CDC} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDD}) + 4S + T$	$< 8R$
$(T - P)p_{DCC} + P + (R - S)(p_{CDC} + p_{CCD}) + 2S$	$< 3R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}) + 3P + (R - S)(p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCD}) + 3S$	$< 6R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{DDC}) + 2P + T + (R - S)(p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD}) + 4S$	$< 7R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC}) + 3P + (R - S)(p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}) + 2S$	$< 5R$
$(T - P)(p_{DCD} + p_{DDC}) + 2P + (R - S)p_{CDD} + S$	$< 3R$
$(T - P)p_{CCD} + P + T + (R - S)(p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}) + S$	$< 5R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC}) + 2P + (R - S)(p_{CDD} + p_{DDD}) + 2S$	$< 4R$
$(T - P)p_{CDC} + 2P + T + (R - S)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}) + 4S$	$< 7R$
$(T - P)(p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCD}) + 3P + T + (R - S)(p_{CCD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}) + 4S$	$< 8R$
$(T - P)(p_{CDC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DCD}) + 3P + T + (R - S)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DDC}) + 3S$	$< 6R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DDC}) + 4P + (R - S)(p_{CDC} + p_{DCD} + p_{DDD}) + 3S$	$< 7R$
$T + (R - S)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDC} + p_{DCC}) + 3S$	$< 4R$
$(T - P)(p_{CCD} + p_{CDD}) + 2P + T + (R - S)(p_{DCC} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}) + 3S$	$< 6R$
$(T - P)(p_{CDC} + p_{CDD} + p_{DCC} + p_{DCD}) + 4P + (R - S)(p_{CCD} + p_{DDC} + p_{DDD}) + 3S$	$< 7R$

## 5 Pure Self-Reactive-Three Strategies

The 256 pure self-reactive-three strategies and their vectors are as follows,

- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^0 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^1 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^2 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^3 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^4 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^5 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^6 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^7 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^8 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^9 = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{10} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{11} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{12} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{13} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{14} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{15} = (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{16} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{17} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{18} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{19} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{20} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{21} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{22} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{23} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{24} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{25} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{26} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{27} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{28} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{29} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{30} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{31} = (0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{32} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{33} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{34} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{35} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{36} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{37} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{38} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{39} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{40} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{41} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{42} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{43} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{44} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{45} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{46} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{47} = (0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1)$

[illegible]

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- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{242} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{243} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{244} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{245} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{246} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{247} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{248} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{249} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{250} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{251} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{252} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{253} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{254} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0)$
- $\tilde{\mathbf{q}}^{255} = (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1)$

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