

# Bayesian Games

J. Leite (adapted from Kevin Leyton-Brown)

# Auctions

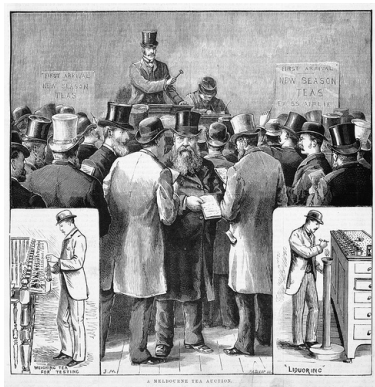


Figure: Tea Auction, Melbourne, Australia, 1885

# Auctions



Figure: Bluefin Tuna Auction, Tokyo, Japan, 2008

# Auctions



Figure: Auction of seized horses, Dixon, IL

# Auctions

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**Virgin Mary In Grilled Cheese NOT A HOAX ! LOOK & SEE !** Item number: 5535890757

Bidder or seller of this item? [Sign in](#) for your status [Email to a friend](#) | [Watch this item](#) in My eBay

**Note: This listing is restricted to pre-approved bidders or buyers only.**  
[Email the seller](#) to be placed on the pre-approved bidder/buyer list.



[Larger Picture](#)

Current bid: **US \$7,600.00**

Time left: **3 days 23 hours**  
7-day listing  
Ends Nov-22-04  
17:22:07 PST

Start time: Nov-15-04 17:22:07 PST

History: [4 bids](#) (US \$3,000.00 starting bid)

High bidder: User ID kept private

**Seller information**

[dltdesigns2002](#) ( [47](#) ★ )

Feedback Score: 47  
**Positive Feedback: 96.1%**  
Member since Jul-03-02 in United States

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**Financing available** NEW

No payments until April, and no interest if paid by April

# Auctions



Figure: A silent auction – looks suspiciously like a game

# Section 1

## Bayesian Games

# Fun Game

- ▶ Choose a phone number none of your neighbours knows; consider it to be ABCDEFGHI
  - ▶ take "DE" as your valuation
  - ▶ play a first-price auction with three neighbours, where your utility is your valuation minus the amount you pay
  - ▶ now play the auction again, same neighbours, same valuation
  - ▶ now play again, with "FG" as your valuation
- ▶ Questions:
  - ▶ what is the role of uncertainty here?
  - ▶ can we model this uncertainty using an imperfect information extensive form game?
    - ▶ imperfect info means not knowing what node you're in in the info set
    - ▶ here we're not sure what game is being played (though if we allow a move by nature, we can do it)



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# Introduction

- ▶ So far, we've assumed that all players know what game is being played. Everyone knows:
  - ▶ the number of players
  - ▶ the actions available to each player
  - ▶ the payoff associated with each action vector
- ▶ Why is this true in imperfect information games?
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# Example

- ▶ Consider the payoff matrix shown here

	$L$	$R$
$T$	$100, a$	$1 - \epsilon, b$
$B$	$2, c$	$1, d$

- ▶  $\epsilon$  is a small positive constant
  - ▶ Agent 1 knows its value
- ▶ Agent 1 doesn't know the values of  $a, b, c, d$ 
  - ▶ Thus the matrix represents a set of games
  - ▶ Agent 1 doesn't know which of these games is the one being played
- ▶ Agent 1 wants a strategy that makes sense despite this lack of knowledge
- ▶ If Agent 1 thinks Agent 2 is malicious, then Agent 1 might want to play a maxmin, or "safety level" strategy
  - ▶ minimum payoff of  $T$  is  $1 - \epsilon$
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# Bayesian Games

- ▶ Suppose we know the set  $G$  of all possible games and we have enough information to put a probability distribution over the games in  $G$
- ▶ A Bayesian Game is a class of games  $G$  that satisfies two fundamental conditions:
  - Condition 1** All possible games have the same number of agents and the same strategy space for each agent; they differ only in their payoffs.
  - Condition 2** Agent's beliefs are posteriors, obtained by conditioning a common prior on individual private signals.

# Bayesian Games: Condition 1

- ▶ All possible games have the same number of agents and the same strategy space for each agent; they differ only in their payoffs.
- ▶ This condition isn't very restrictive. Other types of uncertainty can be reduced to the above, by reformulating the problem
- ▶ Suppose we don't know whether player 2 only has strategies  $L$  and  $R$ , or also an additional strategy  $C$ :

Game  $G_1$ :

	$L$	$R$
$T$	1, 1	1, 3
$B$	0, 5	1, 13

Game  $G_2$ :

	$L$	$C$	$R$
$T$	1, 1	0, 2	1, 3
$B$	0, 5	2, 8	1, 13

- ▶ If player 2 doesn't have strategy  $C$ , this is equivalent to having a strategy  $C$  that's strictly dominated by other strategies:

Game  $G'_1$ :

	$L$	$C$	$R$
$T$	1, 1	0, -100	1, 3
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# Bayesian Games: Condition 2

- ▶ Agent's beliefs are posteriors, obtained by conditioning a common prior on individual private signals.
- ▶ The probability distribution over the games in  $G$  is common knowledge (i.e., known to all the agents).
- ▶ The beliefs of the different agents are posterior probabilities
  - ▶ Combine the common prior distribution with individual "private signals" (what's "revealed" to the individual players)

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# Bayesian Games

- ▶ So a Bayesian game defines
  - ▶ the uncertainties of agents about the game being played,
  - ▶ what each agent believes the other agents believe about the game being played
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  - ▶ based on Information Sets
  - ▶ based on Extensive Form with Chance Moves
  - ▶ based on Epistemic Types

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# Definition 1: Information Sets

- ▶ **Bayesian game**: a set of games that differ only in their payoffs, a common prior defined over them, and a partition structure over the games for each agent.

## Definition (Bayesian Game: Information Sets)

A **Bayesian game** is a tuple  $(N, G, P, I)$  where

- ▶  $N$  is a **set of agents**,
- ▶  $G$  is a **set of games** with  $N$  agents each such that if  $g, g' \in G$  then for each agent  $i \in N$  the strategy space in  $g$  is identical to the strategy space in  $g'$ ,
- ▶  $P \in \Pi(G)$  is a **common prior** over games, where  $\Pi(G)$  is the set of all probability distributions over  $G$ , and
  - ▶ **common**: common knowledge (known to all the agents)
  - ▶ **prior**: probability before learning any additional information
- ▶  $I = (I_1, \dots, I_N)$  is tuple of **information sets** i.e. a tuple of partitions of  $G$ , one for each agent.

# Definition 1: Example

	$I_{2,1}$	$I_{2,2}$																
$I_{1,1}$	<table><tr><td colspan="2">MP</td></tr><tr><td>2, 0</td><td>0, 2</td></tr><tr><td>0, 2</td><td>2, 0</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.3</math></td></tr></table>	MP		2, 0	0, 2	0, 2	2, 0	$p = 0.3$		<table><tr><td colspan="2">PD</td></tr><tr><td>2, 2</td><td>0, 3</td></tr><tr><td>3, 0</td><td>1, 1</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.1</math></td></tr></table>	PD		2, 2	0, 3	3, 0	1, 1	$p = 0.1$	
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- ▶ Suppose the randomly chosen game is MP
- ▶ Agent 1's information set is  $I_{1,1}$ 
  - ▶ 1 knows it's MP or PD
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$$Pr(MP|I_{1,1}) = \frac{Pr(MP)}{Pr(MP) + Pr(PD)} = \frac{3}{4}$$

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## Definition 2: Extensive Form with Chance Moves

- ▶ Add an agent, “Nature,” who follows a commonly known mixed strategy, according to the common prior, and has no utility function.
- ▶ At the start of the game, Nature makes its move.
- ▶ The agents receive individual signals about Nature's choice
  - ▶ Some of Nature's choices are revealed to some players, others to other players
- ▶ Thus, reduce Bayesian games to extensive form games of imperfect information.
- ▶ This definition is cumbersome for the same reason that IIEF is a cumbersome way of representing matrix games like Prisoner's Dilemma
  - ▶ however, it makes sense when the agents really do move sequentially, and at least occasionally observe each other's actions.
  - ▶ extensions exist where Nature makes choices and sends signals throughout the game.
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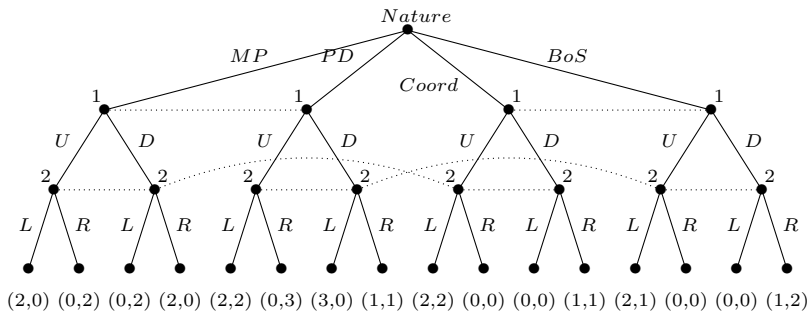
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## Definition 2: Example

- Same example as before, but translated into extensive form





## Definition 3: Epistemic Types

- ▶ Recall that we can assume the only thing players are uncertain about is the game's utility function.
- ▶ We can directly represent uncertainty over utility function, using the notion of **epistemic type**.
- ▶ An agent's **epistemic type** consists of all the information it has that isn't common knowledge, e.g.,
  - ▶ The agent's actual payoff function
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  - ▶ Any other higher-order beliefs

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## Definition 3: Epistemic Types

### Definition

A **Bayesian game** is a tuple  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$  where

- ▶  $N$  is a set of agents,
  - ▶  $A = A_1 \times \dots \times A_n$ , where  $A_i$  is the set of actions available to player  $i$ ,
  - ▶  $\Theta = \Theta_1 \times \dots \times \Theta_n$ , where  $\Theta_i$  is the set of possible types of player  $i$ ,
  - ▶  $p : \Theta \rightarrow [0, 1]$  is the common prior over types,
  - ▶  $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n)$ , where  $u_i : A \times \Theta \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is the utility function for player  $i$ .
- 
- ▶ All this is common knowledge among the players, and each agent knows its own type.

# Definition 3: Example

- ▶ Agent 1's possible types:  $\theta_{1,1}$  and  $\theta_{1,2}$

- ▶ 1's type is  $\theta_{1,j} \Leftrightarrow$  1's info set is  $I_{1,j}$

- ▶ Agent 2's possible types:  $\theta_{2,1}$  and  $\theta_{2,2}$

- ▶ 2's type is  $\theta_{2,j} \Leftrightarrow$  2's info set is  $I_{2,j}$

- ▶ Joint distribution on the types:

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) = 0.3; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,2}) = 0.1$$

$$Pr(\theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,1}) = 0.2; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,2}) = 0.4$$

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- ▶ Conditional probabilities for agent 1:

$$Pr(\theta_{2,1}|\theta_{1,1}) = 0.3/(0.3+0.1) = 3/4; \quad Pr(\theta_{2,2}|\theta_{1,1}) = 0.1/(0.3+0.1) = 1/4$$

$$Pr(\theta_{2,1}|\theta_{1,2}) = 0.2/(0.2+0.4) = 1/3; \quad Pr(\theta_{2,2}|\theta_{1,2}) = 0.4/(0.2+0.4) = 2/3$$

- ▶ Conditional probabilities for agent 2:

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}|\theta_{2,1}) = 0.3/(0.3+0.2) = 3/5; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,2}|\theta_{2,1}) = 0.2/(0.3+0.2) = 2/5$$

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.1/(0.1+0.4) = 1/5; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,2}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.4/(0.1+0.4) = 4/5$$

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0, 0	1, 1																	
$p = 0.2$																		
BoS																		
2, 1	0, 0																	
0, 0	1, 2																	
$p = 0.4$																		

- ▶ Conditional probabilities for agent 1:

$$Pr(\theta_{2,1}|\theta_{1,1}) = 0.3/(0.3 + 0.1) = 3/4; \quad Pr(\theta_{2,2}|\theta_{1,1}) = 0.1/(0.3 + 0.1) = 1/4$$

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- ▶ Conditional probabilities for agent 2:

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}|\theta_{2,1}) = 0.3/(0.3 + 0.2) = 3/5; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,2}|\theta_{2,1}) = 0.2/(0.3 + 0.2) = 2/5$$

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.1/(0.1 + 0.4) = 1/5; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,2}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.4/(0.1 + 0.4) = 4/5$$

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- ▶ Agent 1's possible types:  $\theta_{1,1}$  and  $\theta_{1,2}$ 
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- ▶ Joint distribution on the types:

$$Pr(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) = 0.3; \quad Pr(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,2}) = 0.1$$

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	$\theta_{2,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$																
$\theta_{1,1}$	<table><tr><td colspan="2">MP</td></tr><tr><td>2, 0</td><td>0, 2</td></tr><tr><td>0, 2</td><td>2, 0</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.3</math></td></tr></table>	MP		2, 0	0, 2	0, 2	2, 0	$p = 0.3$		<table><tr><td colspan="2">PD</td></tr><tr><td>2, 2</td><td>0, 3</td></tr><tr><td>3, 0</td><td>1, 1</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.1</math></td></tr></table>	PD		2, 2	0, 3	3, 0	1, 1	$p = 0.1$	
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	Coord																	
2, 2	0, 0																	
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	$\theta_{2,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$																
$\theta_{1,1}$	<table><tr><td colspan="2">MP</td></tr><tr><td>2, 0</td><td>0, 2</td></tr><tr><td>0, 2</td><td>2, 0</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.3</math></td></tr></table>	MP		2, 0	0, 2	0, 2	2, 0	$p = 0.3$		<table><tr><td colspan="2">PD</td></tr><tr><td>2, 2</td><td>0, 3</td></tr><tr><td>3, 0</td><td>1, 1</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><math>p = 0.1</math></td></tr></table>	PD		2, 2	0, 3	3, 0	1, 1	$p = 0.1$	
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	Coord																	
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 $Pr(\theta_{1,1}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.1/(0.1 + 0.4) = 1/5$ ;  $Pr(\theta_{1,2}|\theta_{2,2}) = 0.4/(0.1 + 0.4) = 4/5$

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	$\theta_{2,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$																
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2, 2	0, 0																	
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2, 2	0, 0																	
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2, 0	0, 2										
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2, 2	0, 0										
0, 0	1, 1										
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$a_1$	$a_2$	$\theta_1$	$\theta_2$	$u_1$	$u_2$
U	L	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	2	0
U	L	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	2	2
U	L	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	2	2
U	L	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	2	1
U	R	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	0	2
U	R	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	0	3
U	R	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	0	0
U	R	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	0	0

$a_1$	$a_2$	$\theta_1$	$\theta_2$	$u_1$	$u_2$
D	L	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	0	2
D	L	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	3	0
D	L	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	0	0
D	L	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	0	0
D	R	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	2	0
D	R	$\theta_{1,1}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	1	1
D	R	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,1}$	1	1
D	R	$\theta_{1,2}$	$\theta_{2,2}$	1	2

## Section 2

### Analyzing Bayesian games

# Bayesian (Nash) Equilibrium

- ▶ A plan of action for each player as a function of types that maximize each type's expected utility:
  - ▶ expecting over the actions of other players
  - ▶ expecting over the types of other players



# Strategies

Given a **Bayesian game**  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$  with finite sets of players, actions, and types, strategies are defined as follows:

- ▶ **Pure strategy:**  $s_i : \Theta_i \rightarrow A_i$ 
  - ▶ a mapping from every type agent  $i$  could have to the action he would play if he had that type.
- ▶ **Mixed strategy:**  $s_i : \Theta_i \rightarrow \Pi(A_i)$ 
  - ▶ a mapping from  $i$ 's type to a probability distribution over his action choices.
- ▶  $s_j(a_j|\theta_j)$ 
  - ▶ denotes the probability under mixed strategy  $s_j$  that agent  $j$  plays action  $a_j$ , given that  $j$ 's type is  $\theta_j$ .

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- ▶ **Mixed strategy**:  $s_i : \Theta_i \rightarrow \Pi(A_i)$ 
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  - ▶ denotes the probability under mixed strategy  $s_j$  that agent  $j$  plays action  $a_j$ , given that  $j$ 's type is  $\theta_j$ .

# Strategies

Given a **Bayesian game**  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$  with finite sets of players, actions, and types, strategies are defined as follows:

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# Expected Utility

Three meaningful notions of expected utility:

- ▶ *ex-post*
  - ▶ the agent knows all agents' types.
- ▶ *ex-interim*
  - ▶ an agent knows his own type but not the types of the other agents;
- ▶ *ex-ante*
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# Ex-post expected utility

## Definition (*Ex-post* expected utility)

Agent  $i$ 's **ex-post expected utility** in a Bayesian game  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$ , where the agents' strategies are given by  $s$  and the agents' types are given by  $\theta$ , is defined as

$$EU_i(s, \theta) = \sum_{a \in A} \left( \prod_{j \in N} s_j(a_j | \theta_j) \right) u_i(a, \theta).$$

- ▶ The only uncertainty here concerns the other agents' mixed strategies, since  $i$  knows everyone's type.
- ▶ In a Bayesian game, no agent will know the others' types. So why is this notion useful?
  - ▶ Because it is used in defining the other notions of expected utility.
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# Ex-interim expected utility

## Definition (*ex-interim* expected utility)

Agent  $i$ 's *ex-interim* expected utility in a Bayesian game  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$ , where  $i$ 's type is  $\theta_i$  and where the agents' strategies are given by the mixed strategy profile  $s$ , is defined as

$$EU_i(s, \theta_i) = \sum_{\theta_{-i} \in \Theta_{-i}} p(\theta_{-i} | \theta_i) EU_i(s, (\theta_{-i}, \theta_i)).$$

or, equivalently:

$$EU_i(s, \theta_i) = \sum_{\theta_{-i} \in \Theta_{-i}} p(\theta_{-i} | \theta_i) \sum_{a \in A} \left( \prod_{j \in N} s_j(a_j | \theta_j) \right) u_i(a, \theta_{-i}, \theta_i).$$

- ▶  $i$  must consider every  $\theta_{-i}$  and every  $a$  to evaluate  $u_i(a, \theta_i, \theta_{-i})$ .
- ▶  $i$  must weight this utility value by:
  - ▶ the probability that  $a$  would be realized given all players' mixed strategies and types;
  - ▶ the probability that the other players' types would be  $\theta_{-i}$  given that his own type is  $\theta_i$ .

# Ex-ante expected utility

## Definition (*Ex-ante* expected utility)

Agent  $i$ 's **ex-ante expected utility** in a Bayesian game  $(N, A, \Theta, p, u)$ , where the agents' strategies are given by the mixed strategy profile  $s$ , is defined as

$$EU_i(s) = \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) EU_i(s, \theta)$$

or equivalently as

$$EU_i(s) = \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) \sum_{a \in A} \left( \prod_{j \in N} s_j(a_j | \theta_j) \right) u_i(a, \theta).$$

# Bayesian Equilibrium or Bayes-Nash Equilibrium

## Definition (Bayesian Equilibrium)

A **Bayes-Nash equilibrium** is a mixed strategy profile  $s$  that satisfies

$$s_i \in \arg \max_{s'_i} EU_i(s'_i, s_{-i} | \theta_i).$$

for each  $i$  and  $\theta_i \in \Theta_i$ .

- ▶ The above is defined based on interim maximization. It is equivalent to an ex-ante formulation:
- ▶ If  $p(\theta_i) > 0$  for all  $\theta_i \in \Theta_i$ , then this is equivalent to requiring that

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- ▶ The idea is to construct a payoff matrix for the entire Bayesian game, and find equilibria on that matrix

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- ▶ Next, compute the ex ante expected utility for each pure-strategy profile

$$EU_i(s) = \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) u_i(s, \theta)$$

- ▶ For example:

$$\begin{aligned}
 EU_2(UD, LR) &= \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) u_i(UD, LR, \theta) \\
 &= p(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) u_2(U, L, \theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) + \\
 &= p(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,2}) u_2(U, R, \theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,2}) + \\
 &= p(\theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,1}) u_2(D, L, \theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,1}) + \\
 &= p(\theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,2}) u_2(D, R, \theta_{1,2}, \theta_{2,2}) = \\
 &= 0.3(0) + 0.1(3) + 0.2(0) + 0.4(2) = \\
 &= 1.1
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$$EU_i(s) = \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) u_i(s, \theta)$$

- ▶ For example:

$$\begin{aligned}
 EU_2(UD, LR) &= \sum_{\theta \in \Theta} p(\theta) u_i(UD, LR, \theta) \\
 &= p(\theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) u_2(U, L, \theta_{1,1}, \theta_{2,1}) + \\
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	<i>LL</i>	<i>LR</i>	<i>RL</i>	<i>RR</i>
<i>UU</i>	2, 1	1, 0.7	1, 1.2	0, 0.9
<i>UD</i>	0.8, 0.2	1, <b>1.1</b>	0.4, 1	0.6, 1.9
<i>DU</i>	1.5, 1.4	0.5, 1.1	1.7, 0.4	0.7, 0.1
<i>DD</i>	0.3, 0.6	0.5, 1.5	1.1, 0.2	1.3, 1.1

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# ex-post Equilibrium

Ex-post utilities allows for a stronger equilibrium:

## Definition (*ex-post* equilibrium)

A **ex-post equilibrium** is a mixed strategy profile  $s$  that satisfies  $\forall \theta, \forall i, s_i \in \arg \max_{s'_i \in S_i} EU_i(s'_i, s_{-i}, \theta)$ .

- ▶ Note that this notion does not presume that each agent actually does know the others' types.
- ▶ Instead, it says that no agent would ever want to deviate from his mixed strategy **even if** he knew the complete vector  $\theta$
- ▶ somewhat similar to **dominant strategy**, but not quite
  - ▶ EP: agents do not need to have accurate beliefs about the type distribution
  - ▶ DS: agents do not need to have accurate beliefs about others' strategies

## Section 3

### Bayesian Games: Example

# A Sheriff's Dilemma

A sheriff faces an armed suspect and they each must (simultaneously) decide whether to shoot the other or not, and:

- ▶ the suspect is either a criminal with probability  $p$  or not with probability  $1 - p$ .
- ▶ the sheriff would rather shoot if the suspect shoots, but not if the suspect does not.
- ▶ the criminal would rather shoot even if the sheriff does not, as the criminal would be caught if does not shoot.
- ▶ the innocent suspect would rather not shoot even if the sheriff shoots.

*Sheriff*

<i>Innocent</i>	<i>Shoot</i>	<i>Not</i>
<i>Shoot</i>	-3, -1	-1, -2
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# Summary: Bayesian (Nash) Equilibrium

- ▶ Explicitly models behavior in an uncertain environment
- ▶ Players choose actions to maximize their payoffs in response to others accounting for:
  - ▶ strategic uncertainty about how others will play and
  - ▶ payoff uncertainty about the value to their actions