

# Brief Introduction to Game Theory

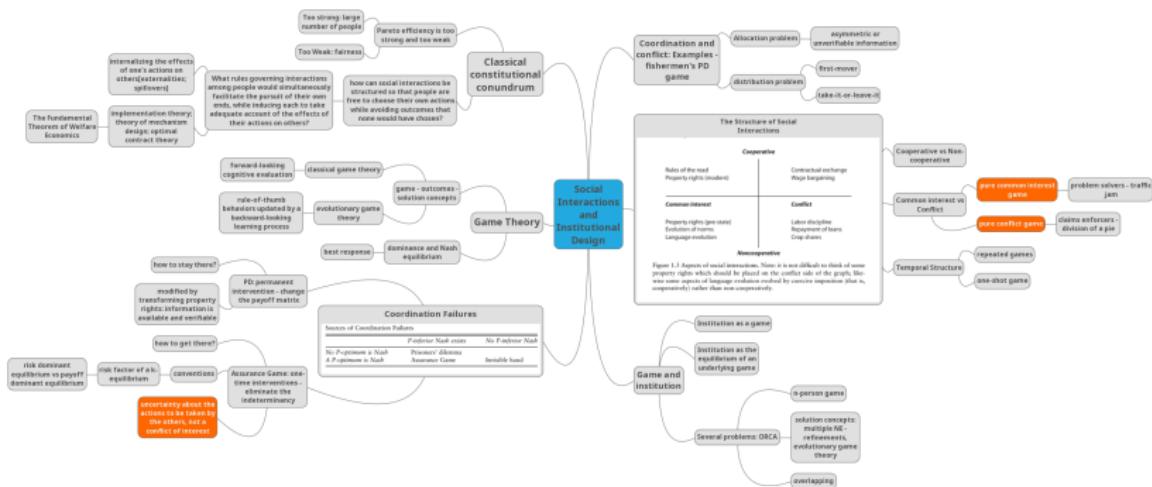
## Econ 700 Tutorial

Weikai Chen

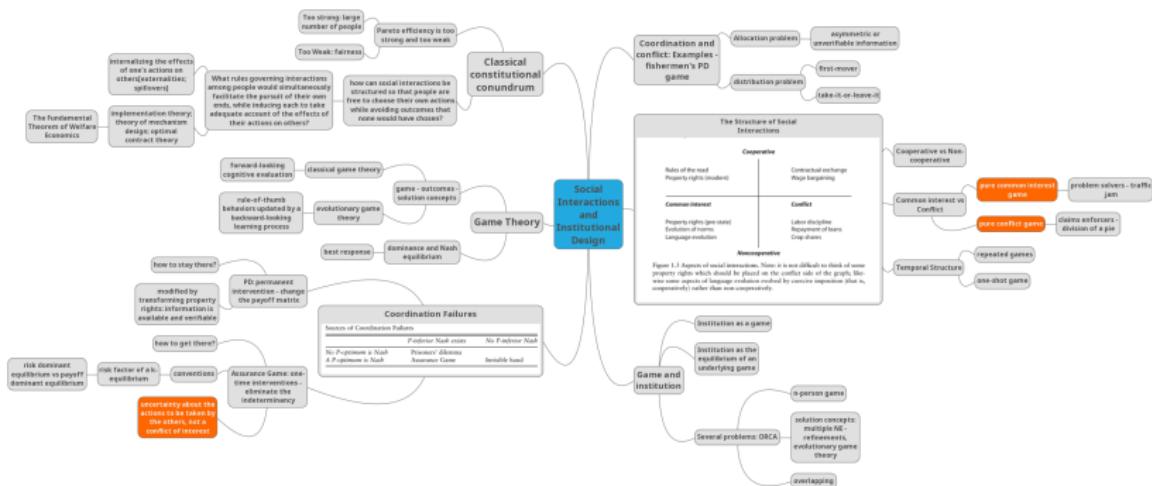
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Sep 11, 2019

# Map for Chapter 1



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# Introduction

## 1 Introduction

## 2 Game Theory and Games

- Game Theory: Definition and History
- Normal Form Games

## 3 Solution Concepts

- Dominance
- Nash Equilibrium

## 4 Problem-Solving: How to find the Nash Equilibrium

## 5 Summary



# Game Theory

What is it?

Game Theory models situation in which multiple agents make *strategically interdependent* decision.

- classical & evolutionary
- noncooperative & cooperative
- normal form & extensive form (strategic & dynamic)



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# History of (Noncooperative) Game Theory

- 1 Cournot (1838), Bertrand (1883)
- 2 John von Neumann & Oskar Morgenstern (1944)
- 3 John Nash (1950)
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# Normal Form Games

The game in normal (or strategic) form

$$\Gamma = (\mathcal{N}, (S_i)_{i \in \mathcal{N}}, (u_i)_{i \in \mathcal{N}})$$

has three elements:

- **Players**  $i \in \mathcal{N} = \{1, \dots, N\}$ . Denote all players other than player  $i$  by  $-i$
- **Pure-strategy space** for each player  $i$ ,  $S_i$ .
- **Payoff functions**  $u_i(s) : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  where  $s \in S = S_1 \times \dots \times S_n$



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# Finite Two-Player Games

- We focus our attention on **finite games**, that is, games where  $S$  is finite.
- Strategic forms for finite two-player games are often depicted as matrices.

Example (**Prison Dilemma**)

		Player 2	
		C	D
		C	1, 1    -1, 2
Player 1	D	2, -1	0, 0

Then  $\mathcal{N} = \{1, 2\}$ ,  $S_1 = S_2 = \{C, D\}$ , and for  $(C, D) \in S_1 \times S_2$ , we have  $u_1(C, D) = -1$ .



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# Mixed Strategy: Definition

- A *mixed strategy*  $\sigma_i$  is a probability distribution over pure strategies. Denote the set of mixed strategies by  $\Sigma_i$  and

$$\Sigma = \Sigma_1 \times \cdots \times \Sigma_N$$

with element  $\sigma$ .

- The *support* of a mixed strategy  $\sigma_i$  is the set of pure strategies to which  $\sigma_i$  assigns positive probability.
- Player i's payoff to profile  $\sigma$  is

$$\sum_{s \in S} (\prod_{j=1}^N \sigma_j(s_j)) u_i(s)$$

- Note that the set of mixed strategies contains the pure strategies.



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$$\sigma_1 = \left(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\right), \sigma_2 = (1, 0)$$

Then

$$u_1(\sigma) =$$



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Then

$$u_1(\sigma) = \frac{1}{2}(1 \cdot 1 + 0 \cdot (-1)) + \frac{1}{2}(1 \cdot 2 + 0 \cdot 0) = \frac{3}{2}$$



# Solution Concepts

- Solution concepts are the rules for predicting how a game will be played.
  - Dominance
  - Nash equilibrium and its refinements
  - Maximin solution
  - Rationalizability
- Different assumptions on rationality and information are used with different solution concepts.
- Which one is better depends on the context.



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# Dominated Strategy

We would like to vary the strategy of a single player  $i$  while holding the strategies of others fixed.

- Let  $s_{-i} \in S_{-i}$  denote a strategy selection for all players but  $i$ , and write  $(s'_i, s_{-i})$  for the profile

$$(s_1, \dots, s_{i-1}, s'_i, s_{i+1}, \dots, s_N)$$

- For the mixed strategies, we let

$$(\sigma'_i, \sigma_{-i}) = (\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_{i-1}, \sigma'_i, \sigma_{i+1}, \dots, \sigma_N)$$



# Dominated Strategy

Pure strategy  $s_i$  is **strictly dominated** for player i if there exists  $\sigma'_i \in \Sigma_i$  such that

$$u_i(\sigma'_i, s_{-i}) > u_i(s_i, s_{-i}), \quad \forall s_{-i} \in S_{-i}$$

It is **weakly dominated** if the inequality holds with weak inequality, and the inequality is strictly for at least one  $s_{-i}$ .



# Prison Dilemma: continued

## Example (Prison Dilemma)

No matter how player 2 plays, D gives player 1 a strictly higher payoff than C does.

		Player 2	
		C	D
		C	<b>1, 1</b>
Player 1	C	<b>2, -1</b>	<b>-1, 2</b>
	D	<b>0, 0</b>	

Then strategy C is said to be **strictly dominated**.



# Dominated Strategy: Example

## Example

		Player 2	
		L	R
		U	2, -1   -1, 0
Player 1	M	0, 0   0, 0	
	D	-1, 0   2, 0	

Strategy M strictly dominated and L is weakly dominated, why?



# Dominated Strategy: Example

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Strategy M strictly dominated and L is weakly dominated, why?



# Nash Equilibrium

A mixed-strategy profile  $\sigma^*$  is a **Nash equilibrium** if, for all players i,

$$u_i(\sigma_i^*, \sigma_{-i}^*) \geq u_i(s_i, \sigma_{-i}^*) \quad \forall s_i \in S_i$$

- A *pure-strategy Nash equilibrium* is a pure-strategy profile that satisfies the same conditions.
- If a player uses a mixed strategy, she must be indifferent between all pure strategies in the *support* of mixed strategy (to which she assigns positive probability). (Why?)



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# Strict Nash Equilibrium

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Nash equilibria are “consistent” predictions of how the game will be played, in the sense that *if all players predict that a particular NE will occur then no player has an incentive to play differently.*



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# Best Response Correspondence/Function

Player i's **best response correspondence**,  $b_i$  maps each strategy profile  $\sigma$  to the set of mixed strategies that maximize player i's payoff when her opponents play  $\sigma_{-i}$ . That is

$$b_i(\sigma) = \arg \max_{\sigma'_i \in \Sigma_i} u_i(\sigma'_i, \sigma_{-i})$$

- The profile  $\sigma^*$  such that  $\sigma_i^* \in b_i(\sigma^*)$  for all player i is a Nash equilibrium.
- Define the correspondence  $\mathbf{b} : \Sigma \rightarrow \Sigma$  to be the Cartesian product of the  $b_i$ . A **fixed point** of  $\mathbf{b}$  is a  $\sigma^*$  such that  $\sigma^* \in \mathbf{b}(\sigma^*)$ . Thus a NE is a fixed point of  $\mathbf{b}$ .
- Therefore, every finite strategy-form game has a mixed-strategy equilibrium, guaranteed by the so-called Kakutani's fixed point theorem.



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# Best Response Correspondence: Example

Example (**Matching Pennies**)

		Player 2	
		H	T
Player 1		H	1, -1
		T	-1, 1

- Example of the nonexistence of a pure-strategy equilibrium.
- The **Monitor and Work Game** (Problem 3 on p.503) has the same structure.



# Best Response Correspondence: Example

		Player 2	
		H	T
		H	1, -1
Player 1		T	-1, 1
			1, -1

Suppose  $\sigma_1 = (q, 1-q)$ ,  $\sigma_2 = (p, 1-p)$ , then

$$u_1(H, \sigma_2) = p \cdot 1 + (1-p) \cdot (-1) = 2p - 1$$

$$u_1(T, \sigma_2) = p \cdot (-1) + (1-p) \cdot 1 = 1 - 2p$$



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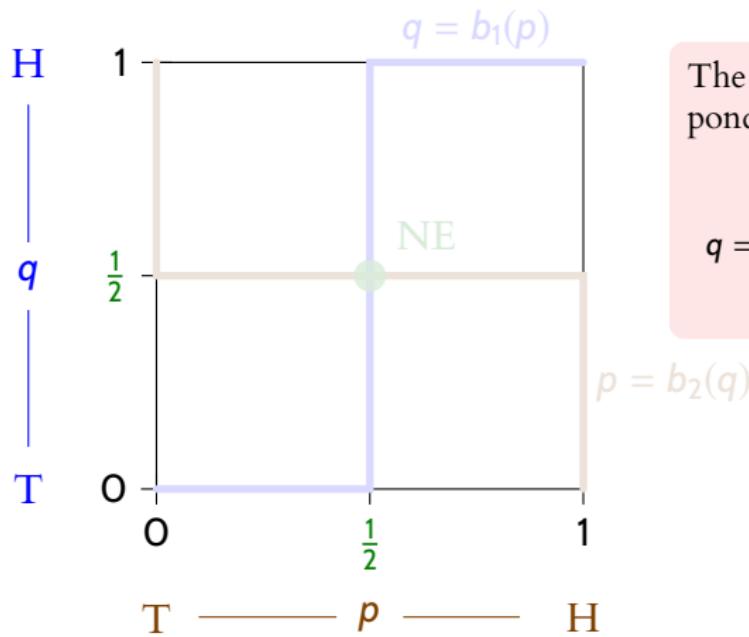
Therefore, 1's best response correspondence is

$$q = b_1(\sigma_2) = \begin{cases} 1, & p > \frac{1}{2} \\ [0, 1] & p = \frac{1}{2} \\ 0, & p < \frac{1}{2} \end{cases}$$



# Best Response Correspondence: Example

Figure: Best response correspondences in the Matching Pennies Game



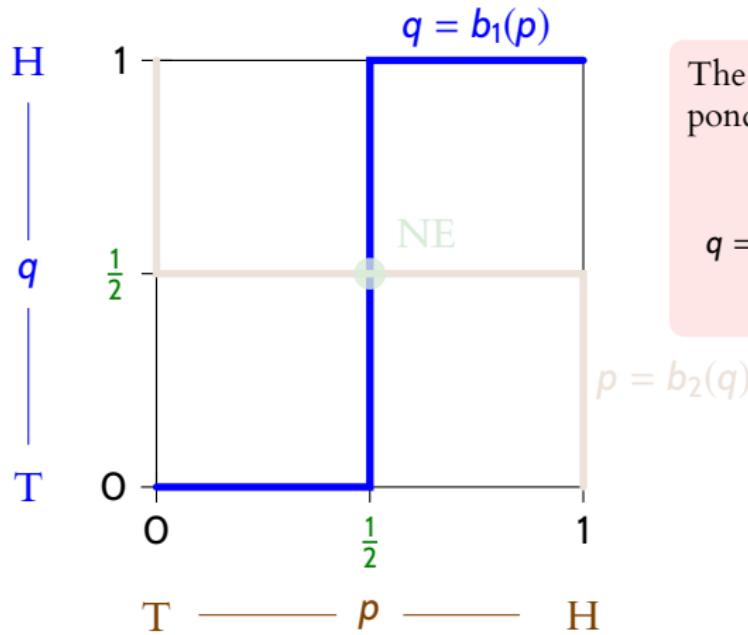
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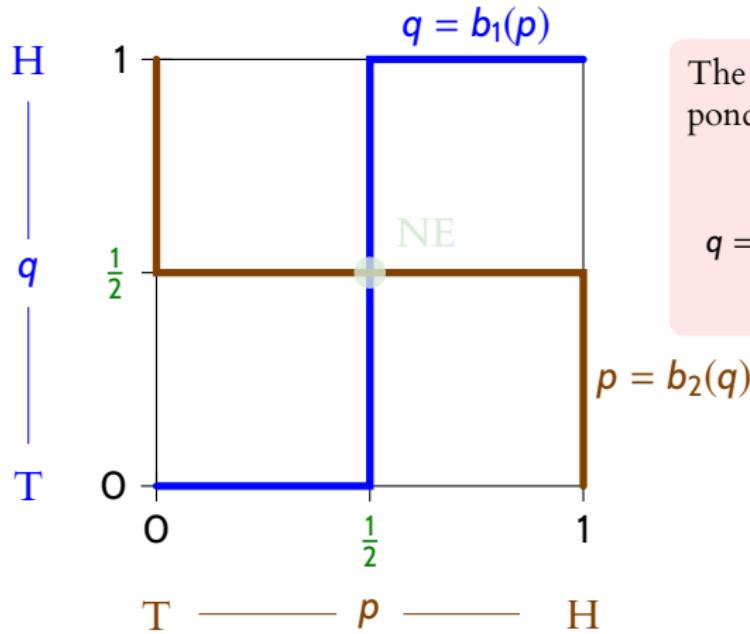


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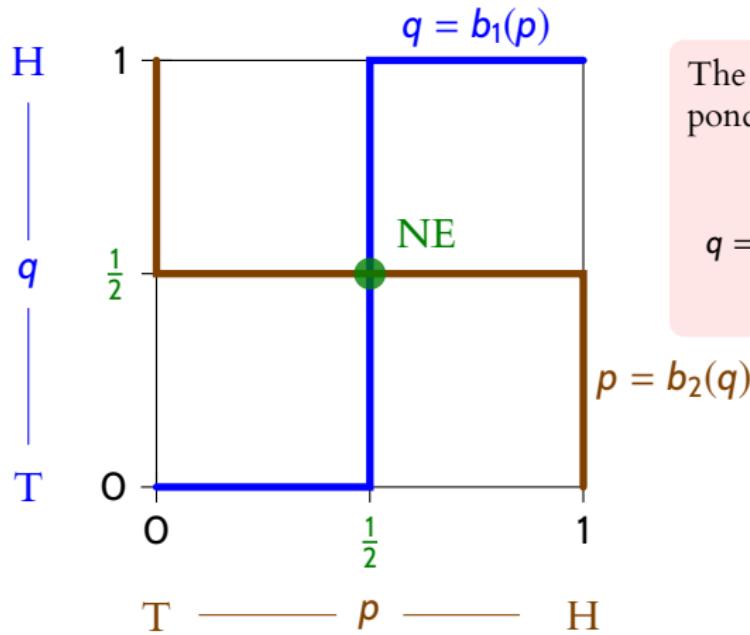


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# Exercise

Find all the Nash equilibria.

Planting in Palanpur

		Player 2	
		Early	Late
Player 1	Early	4, 4	0, 3
	Late	3, 0	2, 2

What would be the Maximin Solution?



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What would be the Maximin Solution?



# Application: the household public goods problem

- The action,  $a_i$ , is a contribution of the public good, e.g. cleaning the house.
- Individual utility function  $u_i = f \ln(\sum_i a_i) - ga_i$
- FOC:

$$\frac{\partial u_i}{\partial a_i} = \frac{f}{\sum_i a_i} - g = 0$$

- Best Response:

$$a_i^{BR} = \frac{f}{g} - \sum_{j \neq i} a_j$$

- Two individuals in a couple,  $i = 1, 2$

$$a_1^{BR} = \frac{f}{g} - a_2$$

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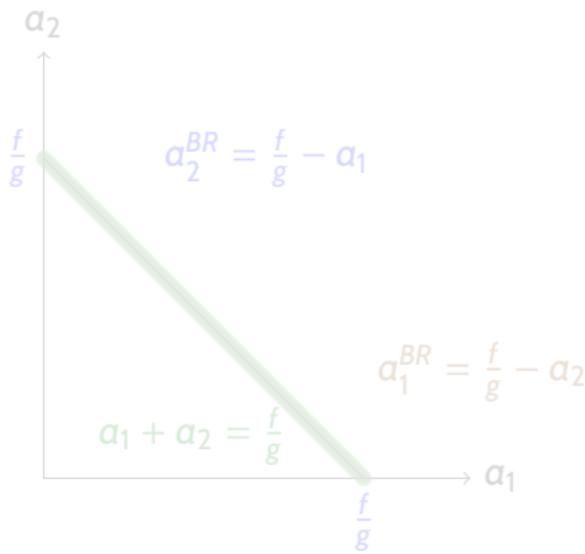


Figure: Best response function in the Household Public Good Problem



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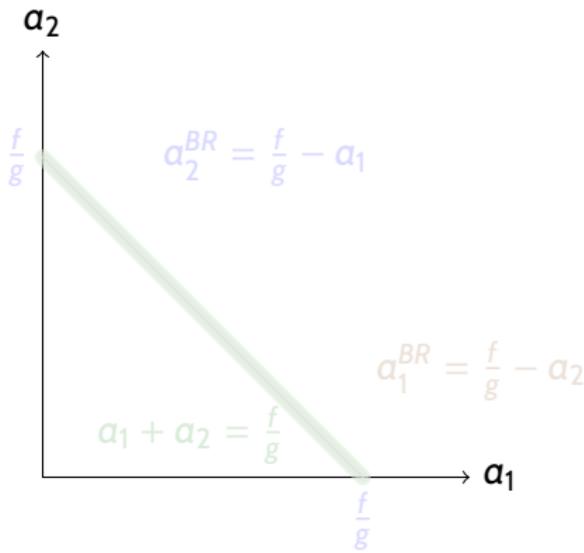


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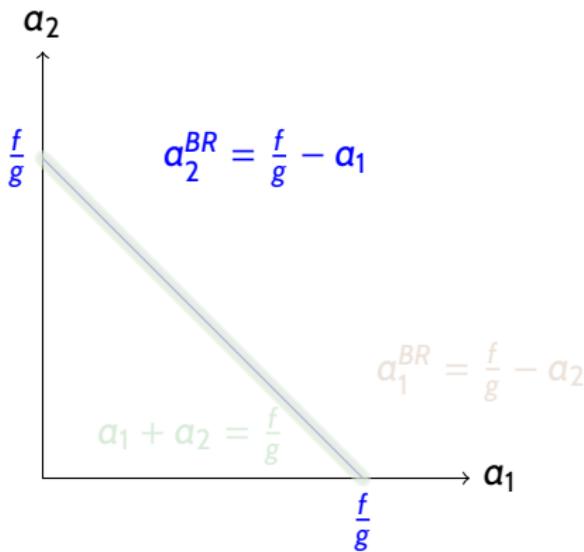


Figure: Best response function in the Household Public Good Problem



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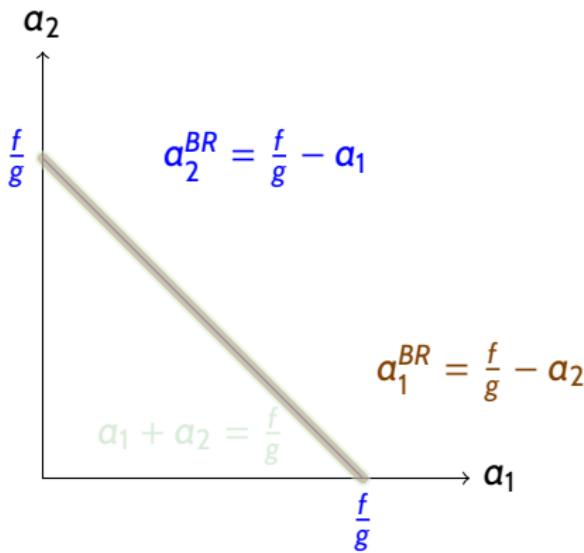


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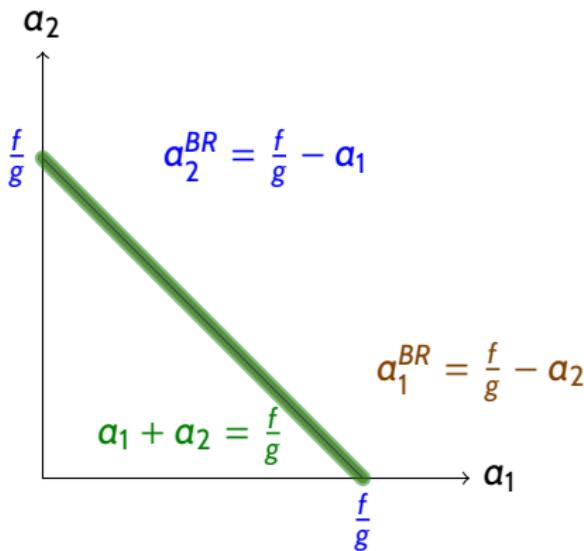


Figure: Best response function in the Household Public Good Problem



# Allocation and Distribution: First Mover Advantage in the Household Public Good Problem

Suppose Player 1 is the first mover, what would be the outcome?

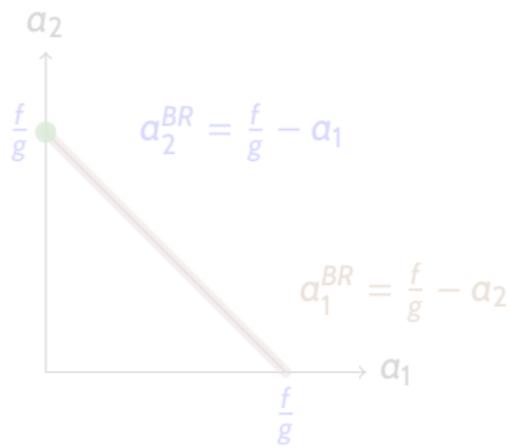


Figure: The first mover advantage in the Household Public Good Problem



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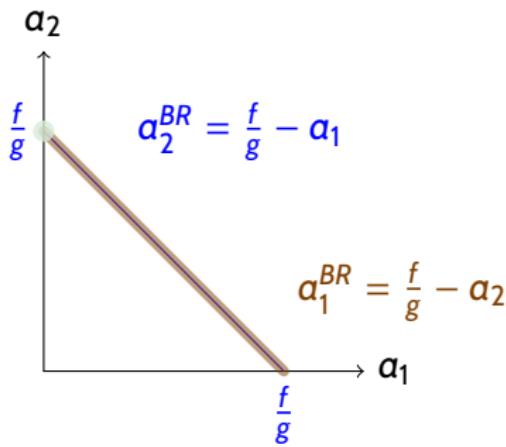


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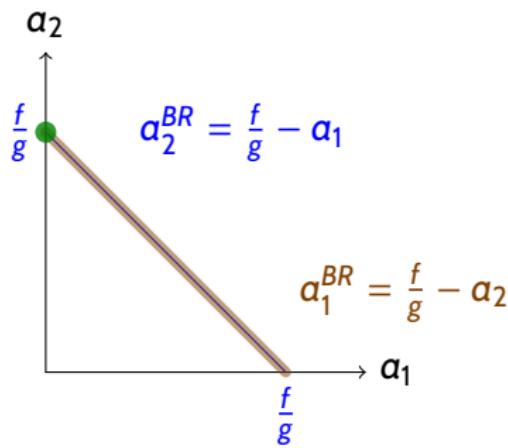


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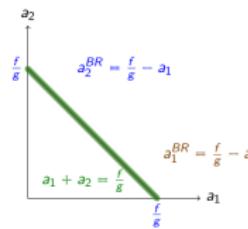


# Summary

- Strategic (or normal) Game:  $\Gamma = (\mathcal{N}, (S_i)_{i \in \mathcal{N}}, (u_i)_{i \in \mathcal{N}})$
- Dominant Strategy Equilibrium and Nash Equilibrium
- Find pure-strategic NE using payoff matrix

	L	R
U	4, 3	0, 2
D	3, 4	2, 3

- Find mixed NE in finite game
- Find NE using best-response function with continuous strategic space





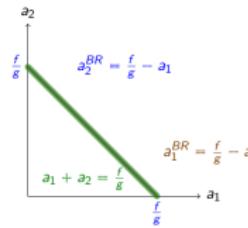
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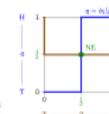


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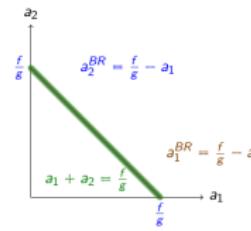
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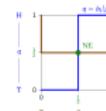


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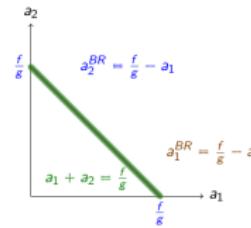
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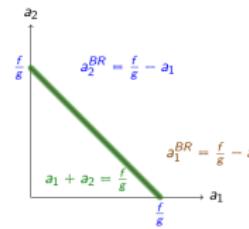
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# Textbooks Recommendation

## Classical Game Theory:

- Maschler, M., Zamir, S., & Solan, E. 2013. *Game Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Osborne, Martin J., and Ariel Rubinstein. 1994. *A Course in Game Theory*. MIT Press.
- Myerson, Roger B. 1991. *Game Theory : Analysis of Conflict*. Harvard University Press.
- Fudenberg, Drew., and Jean Tirole. 1991. *Game Theory*. MIT Press.



# Textbooks Recommendation

## Evolutionary Game Theory:

- Sandholm, William H. 2010. *Population Games and Evolutionary Dynamics*. MIT Press.
- Maynard Smith, John. 1982. *Evolution and the Theory of Games*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weibull, Jorgen W. 1995. *Evolutionary Game Theory*. MIT Press.