

**Chapter §9.C in MWG: Beliefs and
Sequential Rationality**

**Chapter 15 in Tadelis: Sequential
Rationality with Incomplete Information**

- The problem with subgame perfection
- Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium
- Sequential Equilibrium

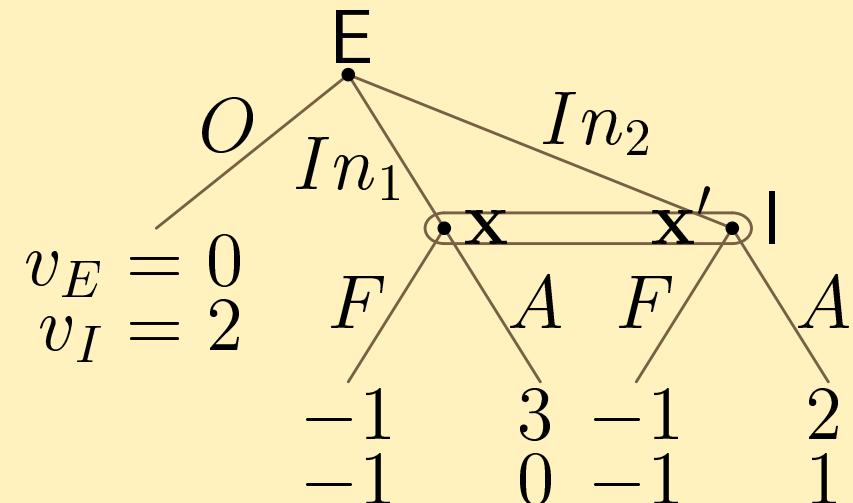
Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

15.1 The problem with subgame perfection

§9.C Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Example 9.C.1 No subgame except for the whole game.

E/I	F	A
O	0, 2	0, 2
In ₁	-1, -1	3, 0
In ₂	-1, -1	2, 1



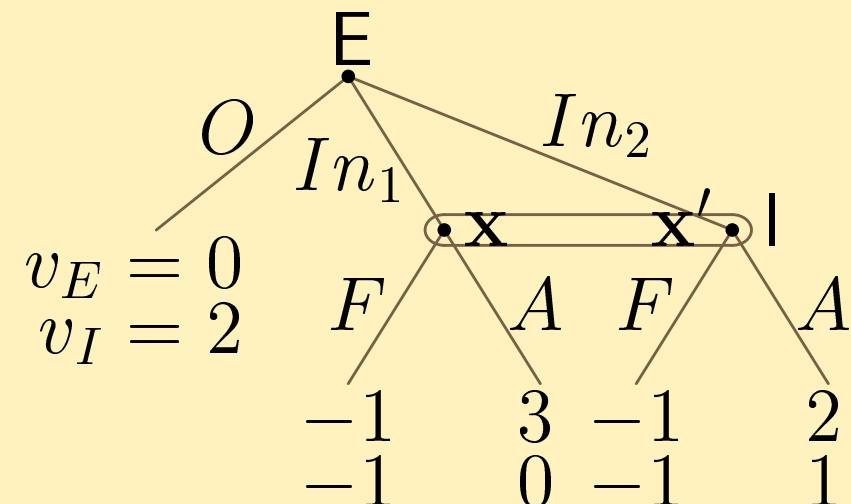
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Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

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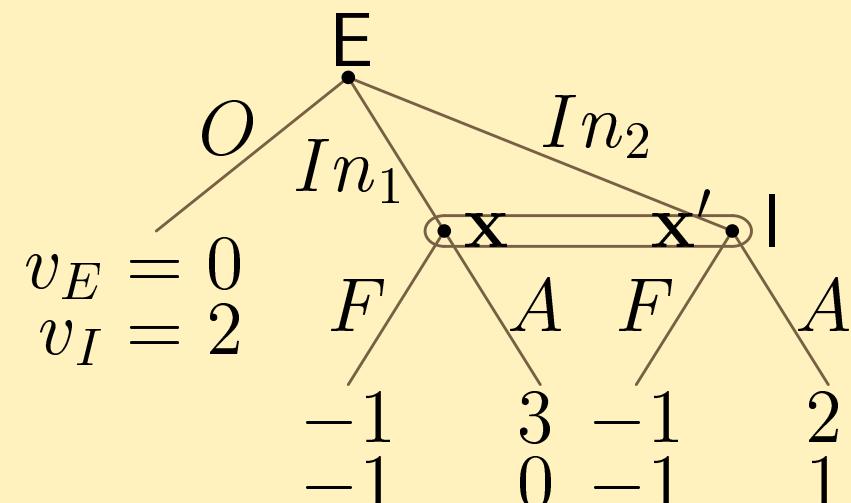
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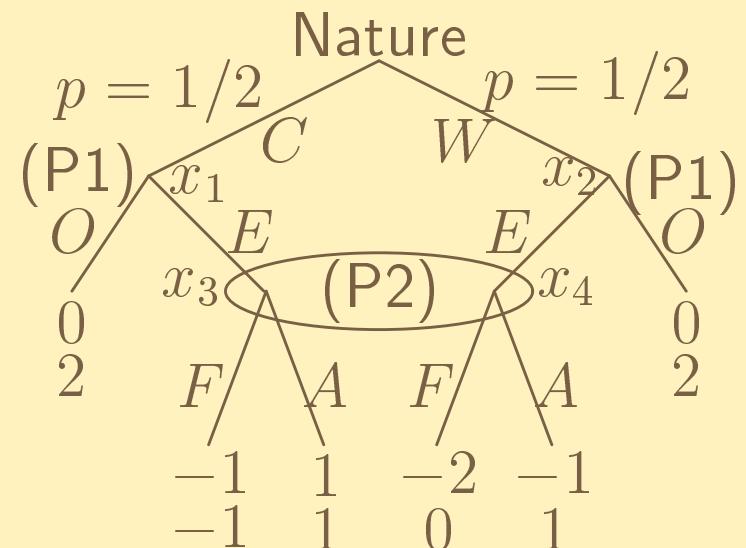
There are two subgame perfect Nash equilibria. However, once player E enters, whether plays *In*₁ or *In*₂, it is optimal for player I to play *A*. Thus, (O, *F*) is NOT consistent with the spirit of sequential rationality.

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

§9.C Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Figure 15.2 No subgame except for the whole game.

P1/P2	<i>F</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>OO</i>	0, 2	0, 2
<i>OE</i>	$-1, 1$	$-\frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}$
<i>EO</i>	$-\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}$
<i>EE</i>	$-\frac{3}{2}, -\frac{1}{2}$	0, 1



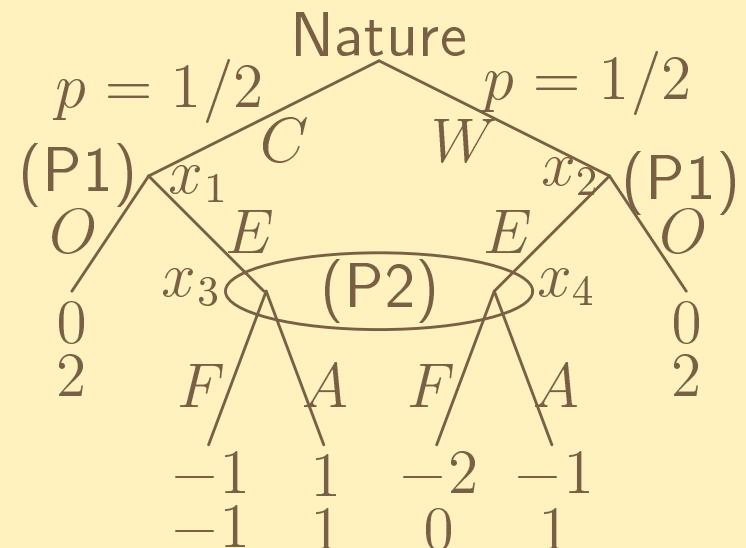
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<i>OE</i>	-1, 1	$-\frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}$
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There are two subgame perfect Nash equilibria. However, once P1 enters (*E*), it is optimal for P2 to play *A* irrespective of Nature's choice.

15.2 Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium

Definition 15.1 Let $\sigma^* = (\sigma_1^*, \dots, \sigma_n^*)$ be a Bayesian Nash equilibrium profile of strategies in a game of incomplete information.

An information set is **on the equilibrium path** if given σ^* and the distribution of types, it is reached *with positive probability*.

An information set is **off the equilibrium path** if given σ^* and the distribution of types, it is reached *with zero probability*.

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Definition 15.2 A **system of beliefs** μ of an extensive-form game assigns a probability distribution over decision nodes to every information set.

That is, for every information set $h \in H$ and every decision node $x \in h$, $\mu(x) \in [0, 1]$ is the probability that player i who moves in information set h assigns to his being at x , where

$$\sum_{x \in h} \mu(x) = 1,$$

for every information set $h \in H$.

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

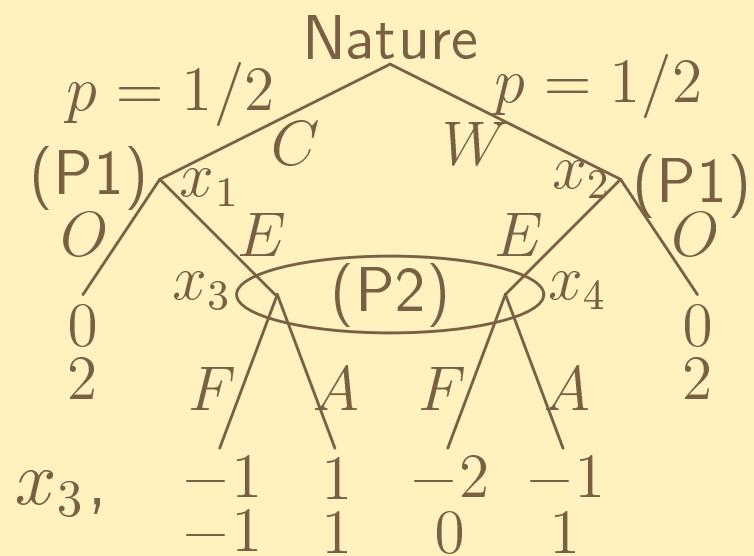
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Player 2's belief ($\mu(x_4) = 1 - \mu(x_3)$)
 $\mu(x_3)$: Player 2's belief that he is at x_3 ,
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Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

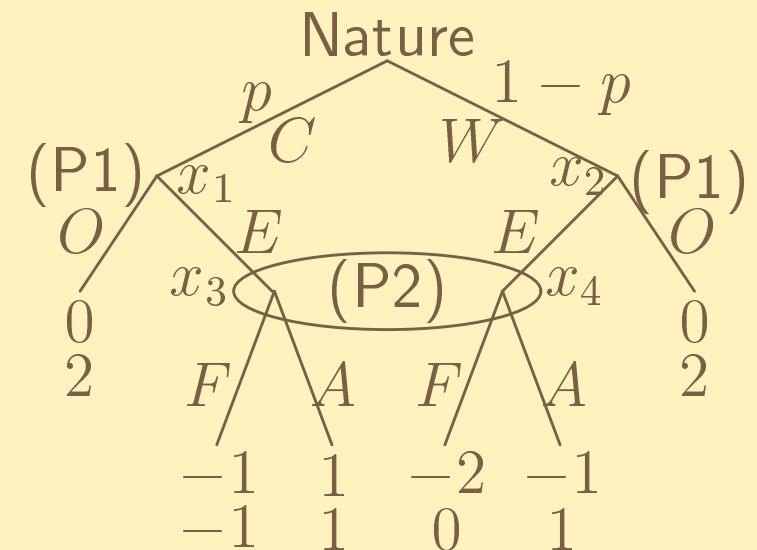
Requirement 15.1 Every player will have a well-defined belief over where he is in each of his information sets. That is, the game will have a *system of beliefs*.

How do we determine the beliefs?

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Requirement 15.1 The game will have a *system of beliefs*.

If P1's strategy is EO , $\mu(x_3) = 1$.



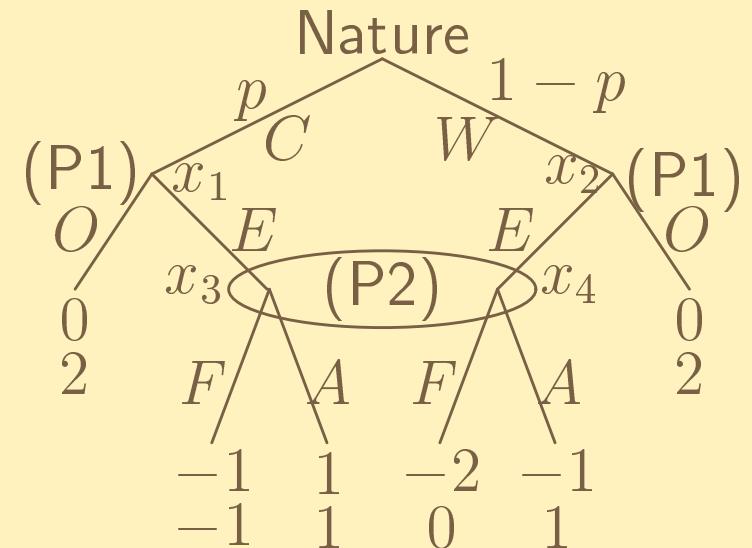
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If P1's strategy is (σ_C, σ_W) , where σ_k is the probability that he plays E when he is k ($k = C, W$),

$$\mu(x_3) = \frac{p\sigma_C}{p\sigma_C + (1 - p)\sigma_W}.$$



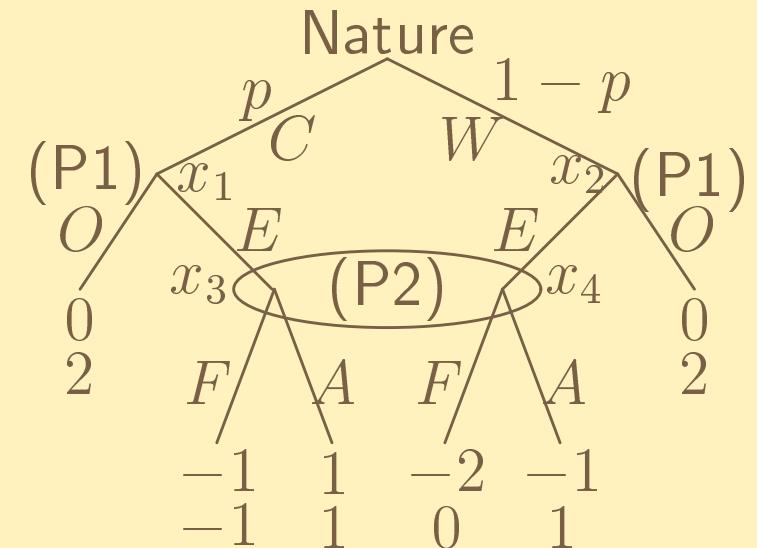
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Requirement 15.2 Let $\sigma^* = (\sigma_1^*, \dots, \sigma_n^*)$ be a Bayesian Nash equilibrium profile of strategies. We require that in all information sets **beliefs** that are **on** the equilibrium path be consistent with *Bayes' rule*.

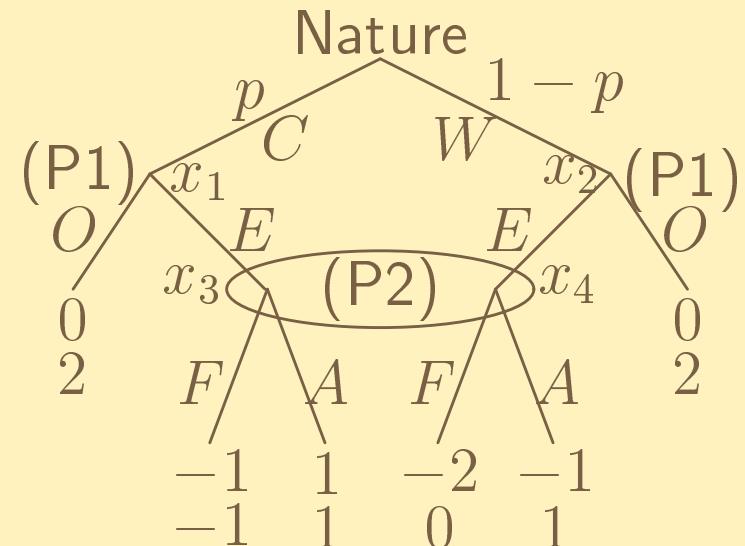
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If P1's strategy is $(\sigma_C, \sigma_W) = (0, 0)$ (that is, OO), the information set of P2 is off the equilibrium path.



Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

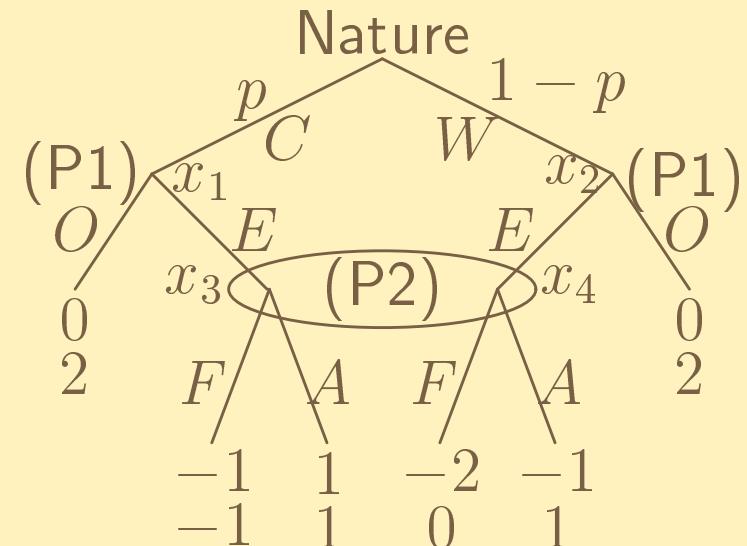
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Requirement 15.3 At information sets that are **off** the equilibrium path, **any belief can be assigned**.

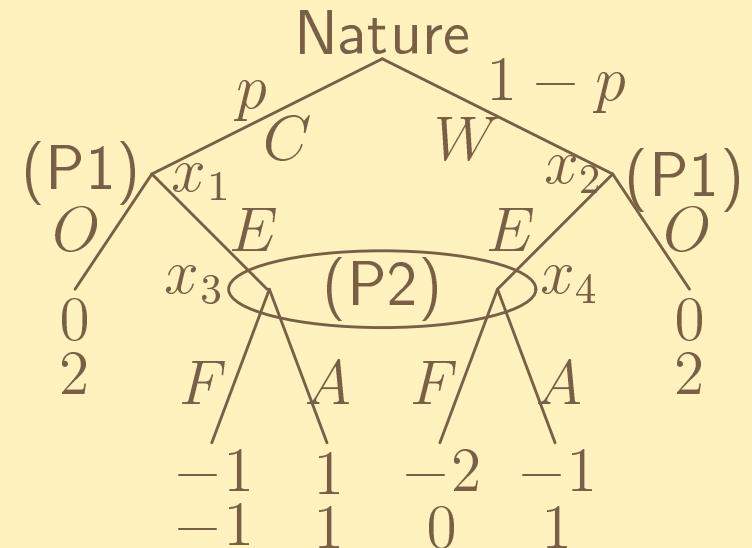


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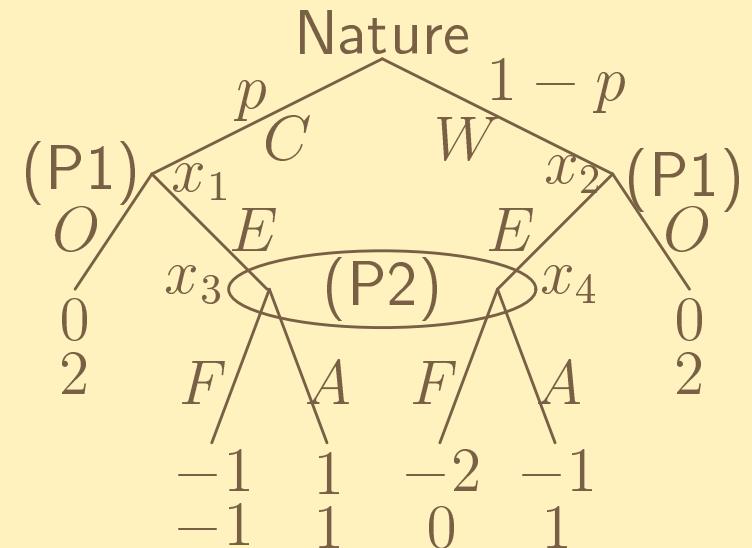
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Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

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Requirement 15.2 In all information sets **beliefs** that are **on the equilibrium path** be consistent with *Bayes' rule*.

Requirement 15.4 Given their beliefs, players' strategies must be **sequentially rational**. That is, in every information set, players will play a best response to their beliefs.

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Def. Expected utility $E[v_i(\sigma_i, \sigma_{-i}, \theta_i) | h, \mu]$

Player i 's expected payoff starting at his information set h if the belief is given by μ , if player i follows σ_i and others follow σ_{-i} , and if his type is θ_i .

$\iota(h)$: the player who moves at information set H .

Def. 9.C.2 A strategy profile σ of an extensive-form game is **sequentially rational** at information set h given a system of beliefs μ if $\forall \hat{\sigma}_{\iota(h)} \in \Delta(S_{\iota(h)})$,

$$\begin{aligned} & E[v_{\iota(h)}(\sigma_{\iota(h)}, \sigma_{-\iota(h)}, \theta_i) | h, \mu] \\ & \geq E[v_{\iota(h)}(\hat{\sigma}_{\iota(h)}, \sigma_{-\iota(h)}, \theta_i) | h, \mu]. \end{aligned}$$

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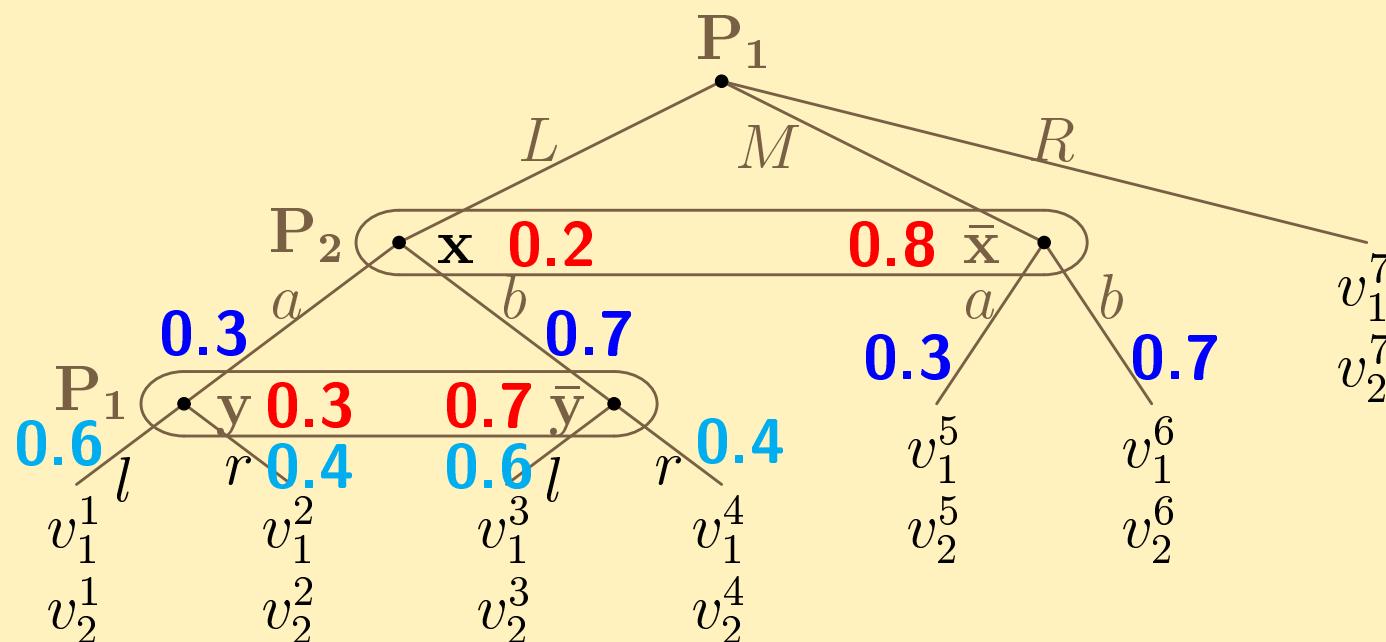
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A strategy profile σ is **sequentially rational given μ** , if σ is sequentially rational at any information set h given μ .

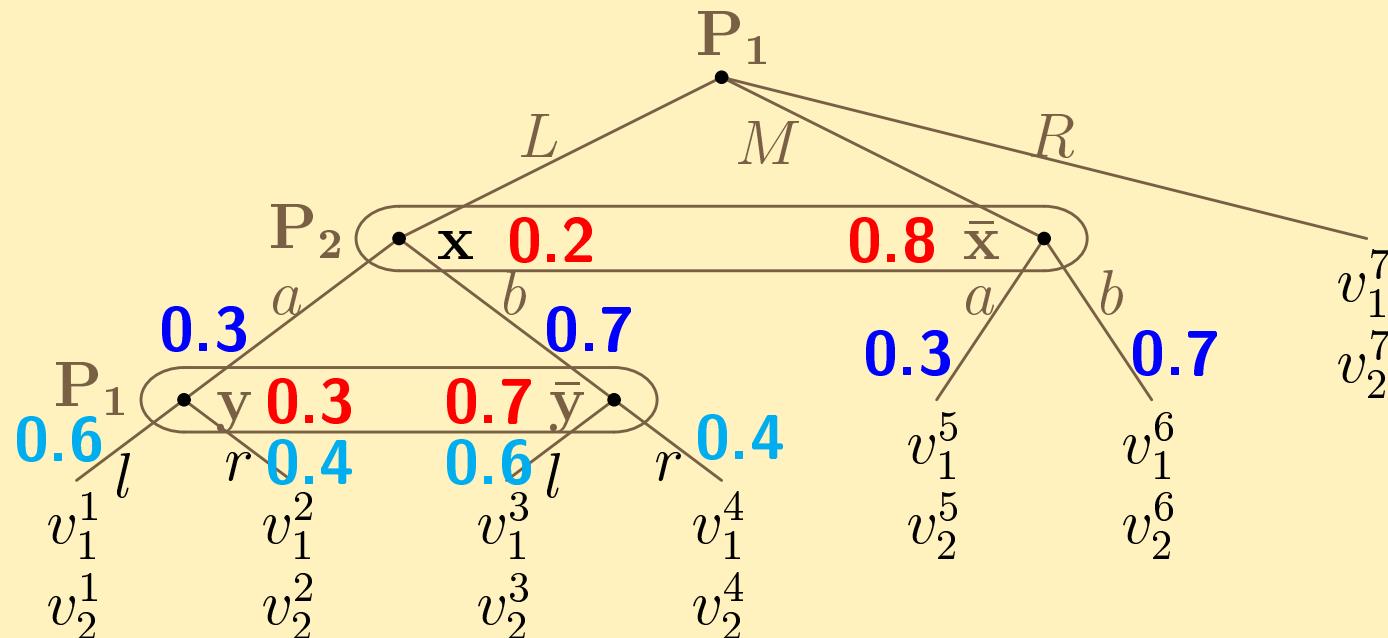
Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Calculation of expected utility $E[v_i(\sigma_i, \sigma_{-i})|h, \mu]$



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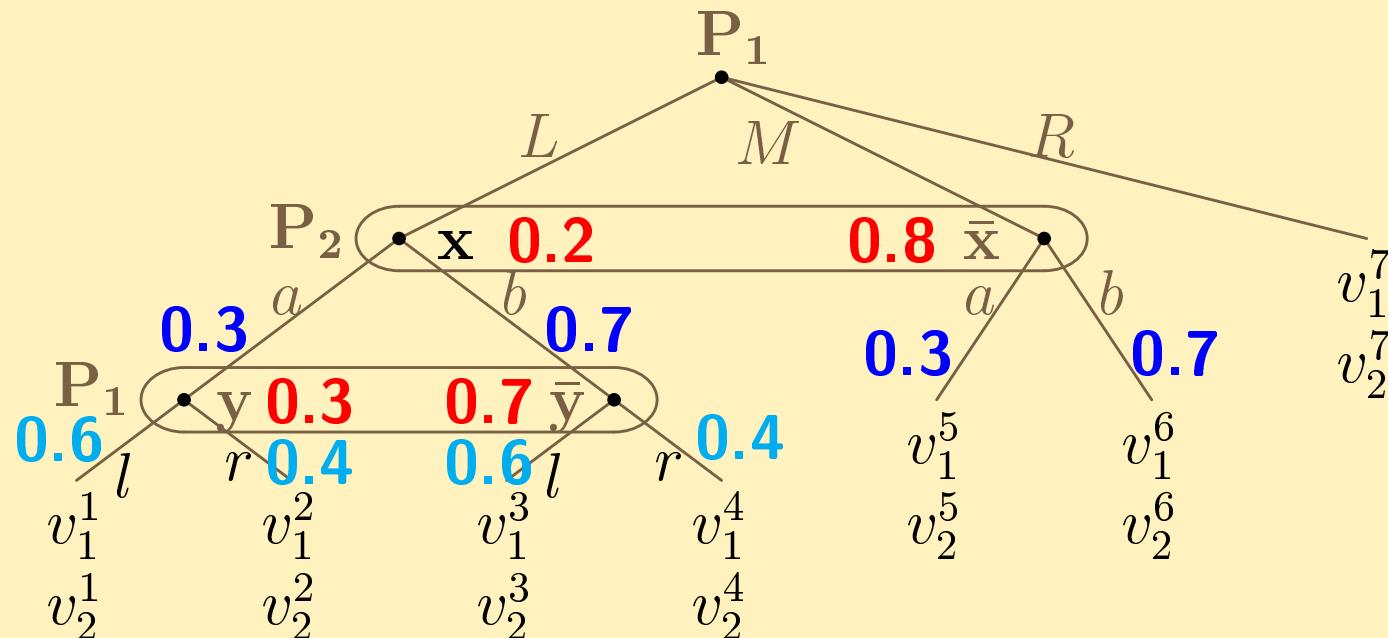
$$\iota(h_x) = P_2, \iota(h_y) = P_1.$$

$$\mu(x) = 0.2, \mu(\bar{x}) = 0.8, \mu(y) = 0.3, \mu(\bar{y}) = 0.7.$$

$$\sigma_1(l) = 0.6, \sigma_1(r) = 0.4, \sigma_2(a) = 0.3, \sigma_2(b) = 0.7.$$

Beliefs and Sequential Rationality

Calculation of expected utility $E[v_i(\sigma_i, \sigma_{-i})|h, \mu]$



$$E[v_1(\sigma_1, \sigma_2)|h_y, \mu] = 0.6[0.3v_1^1 + 0.7v_1^3] + 0.4[0.3v_1^2 + 0.7v_1^4],$$

$$\begin{aligned} E[v_2(\sigma_1, \sigma_2)|h_x, \mu] = & 0.3[0.2(0.6v_2^1 + 0.4v_2^2) + 0.8v_2^5] \\ & + 0.7[0.2(0.6v_2^3 + 0.4v_2^4) + 0.8v_2^6]. \end{aligned}$$

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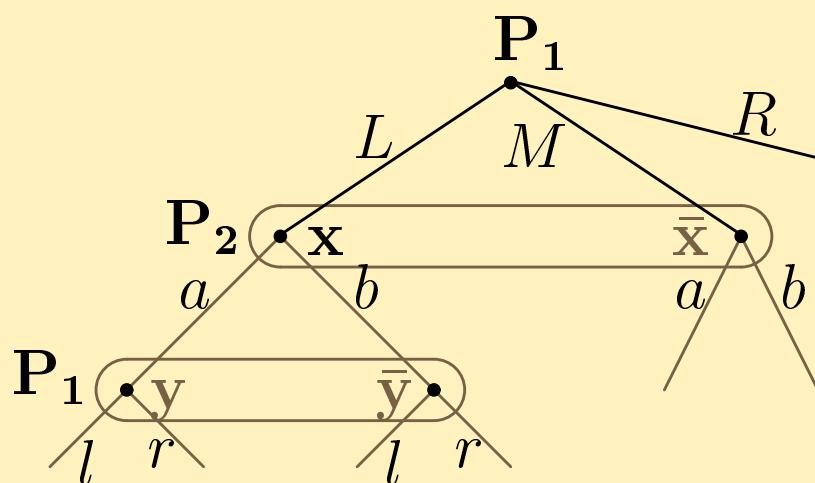
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$\Pr(x|h, \sigma) = \frac{\Pr(x|\sigma)}{\sum_{x' \in h} \Pr(x'|\sigma)}$: Cond. Prob. of being at x given that σ and the play reached h .

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$$\begin{aligned}\Pr(y|h_y, \sigma) &= \frac{\Pr(y|\sigma)}{\Pr(h_y|\sigma)} \\ &= \frac{\sigma_1(L)\sigma_2(a)}{\sigma_1(L)\sigma_2(a) + \sigma_1(L)\sigma_2(b)} \\ &= \frac{\sigma_2(a)}{\sigma_2(a) + \sigma_2(b)}.\end{aligned}$$

(weak) Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium

Def. A system of beliefs μ is **(weakly) consistent with σ** if for all information set h with $\Pr(h|\sigma) > 0$ and all $x \in h$, $\mu(x) = \Pr(x|h, \sigma)$.

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Definition 15.3 A Bayesian Nash equilibrium profile σ^* together with a system of beliefs μ constitutes a **(weak) perfect Bayesian equilibrium** for an n -player game if

1. σ^* is sequentially rational given μ (Req. 15.4).
2. μ is weakly consistent with σ^* (Req. 15.1-3).

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Prop. 9.C.1 A strategy profile σ is a Nash equilibrium of Γ iff there is a system of beliefs μ such that

1. σ is sequentially rational given μ **at all information sets h such that $\Pr(h|\sigma) > 0$,**
2. μ is weakly consistent with σ .

(weak) Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium

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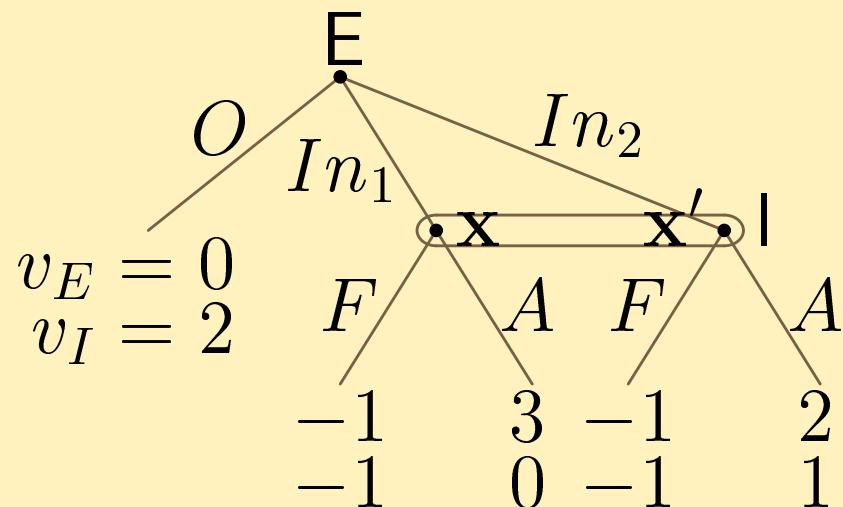
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Prop. 15.1 If a strategy profile σ^* is a Bayesian Nash equilibrium of a Bayesian game Γ , and if σ^* induces all the information sets to be **reached with positive probability**, then σ^* , together with the belief system μ^* uniquely derived from σ^* and the distribution of types, constitutes a perfect Bayesian equilibrium for Γ .

Example

Example 9.C.1 Since A is a strictly dominant strategy, whatever μ is, only A is sequentially rational. Nash eq. (O, F) is NOT a weakly perfect Bayesian equilibrium.

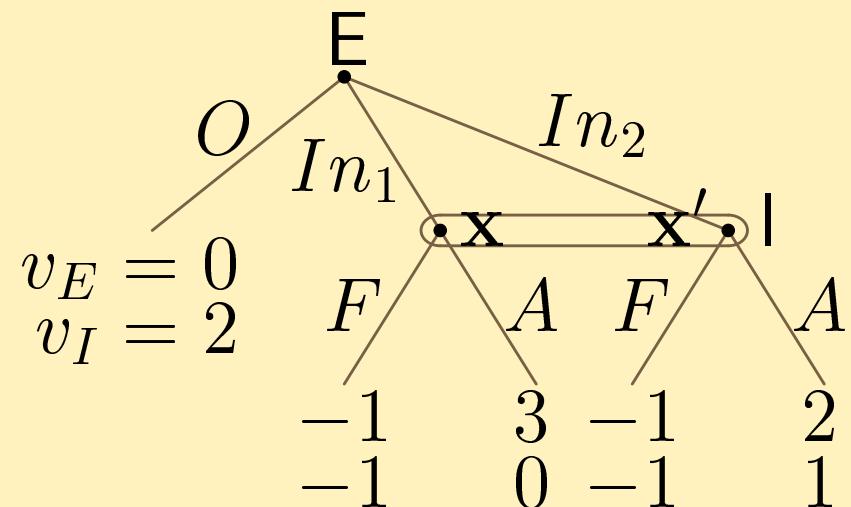
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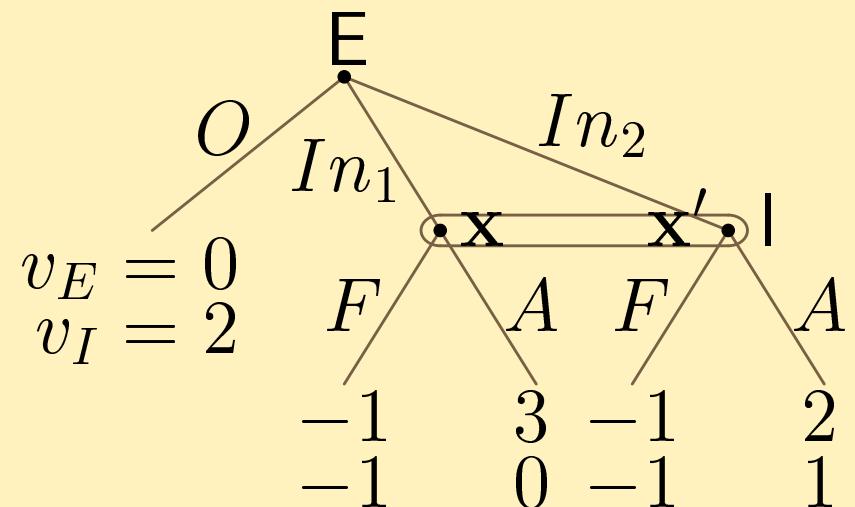


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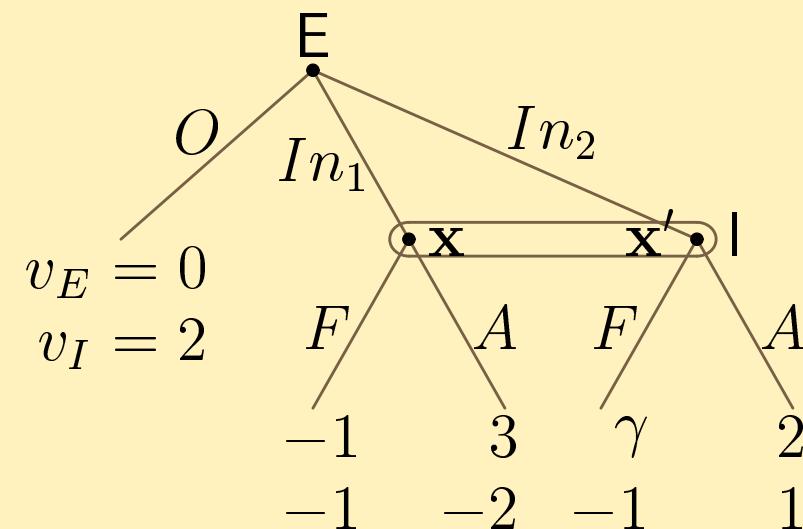
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Given that E chooses $\sigma(O) = 1$, there is NO requirement for the belief of I . However, for any μ , A is a strictly dominant strategy.

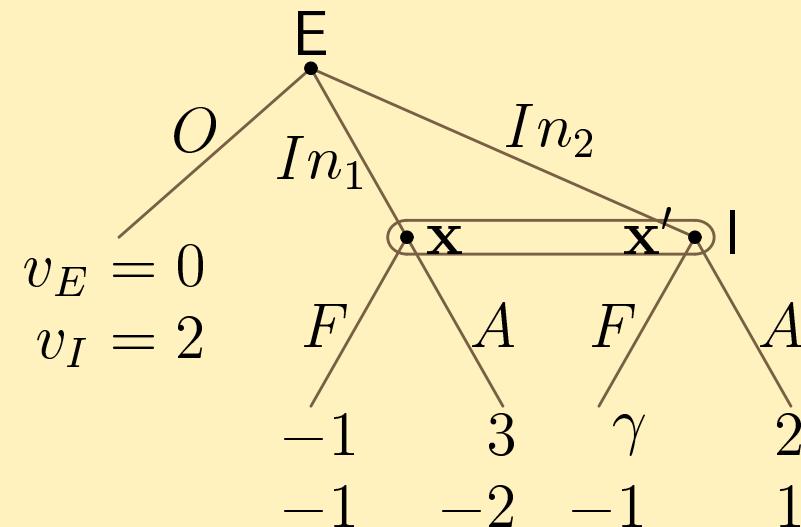
Example

Example 9.C.3 $(\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0)$



Example

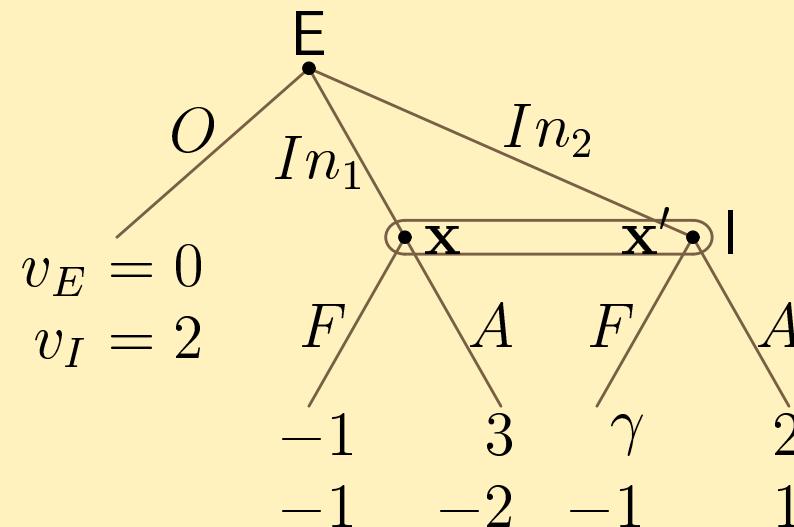
Example 9.C.3 $(\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0)$



$$E[v_I(F, \sigma_E) | \mu] \gtrless E[v_I(A, \sigma_E) | \mu] \Leftrightarrow \mu(\mathbf{x}) \gtrless 2/3.$$

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



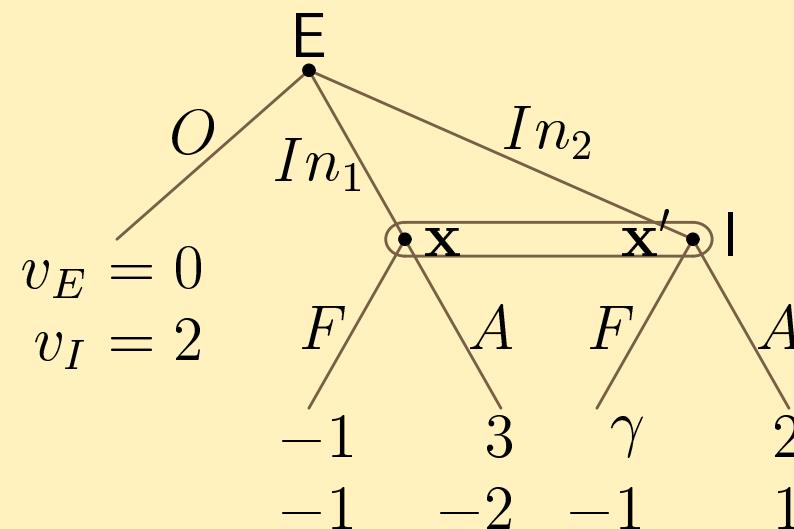
$$E[v_I(F, \sigma_E)|\mu] \gtrless E[v_I(A, \sigma_E)|\mu] \Leftrightarrow \mu(\mathbf{x}) \gtrless 2/3.$$

$(\gamma > 0)$:

$$\mu(\mathbf{x}) > 2/3 \Rightarrow \sigma_I(F) = 1 \Rightarrow \sigma_E(In_2) = 1 \Rightarrow \mu(\mathbf{x}) = 0.$$

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



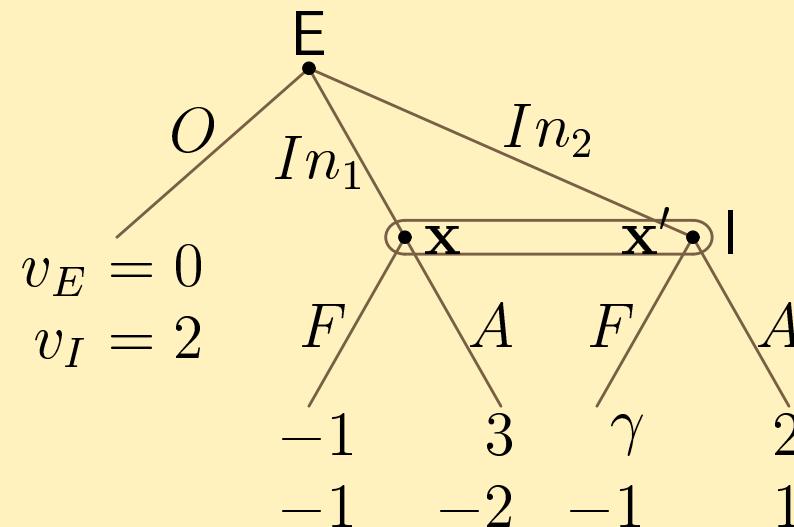
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$(\gamma < 0)$:

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Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



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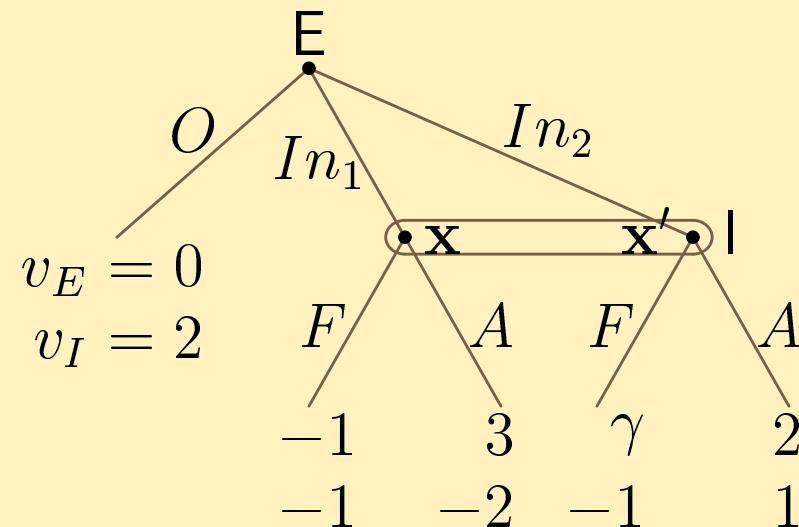
$(\gamma < 0)$:

$$\mu(\mathbf{x}) > 2/3 \Rightarrow \sigma_I(F) = 1 \Rightarrow \sigma_E(In_1) = \sigma_E(In_2) = 0.$$

* If $\gamma < 0$, $\sigma_E(O) = 1$ and $\sigma_I(F) = 1$ with $\mu(\mathbf{x}) \geq 2/3$.

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



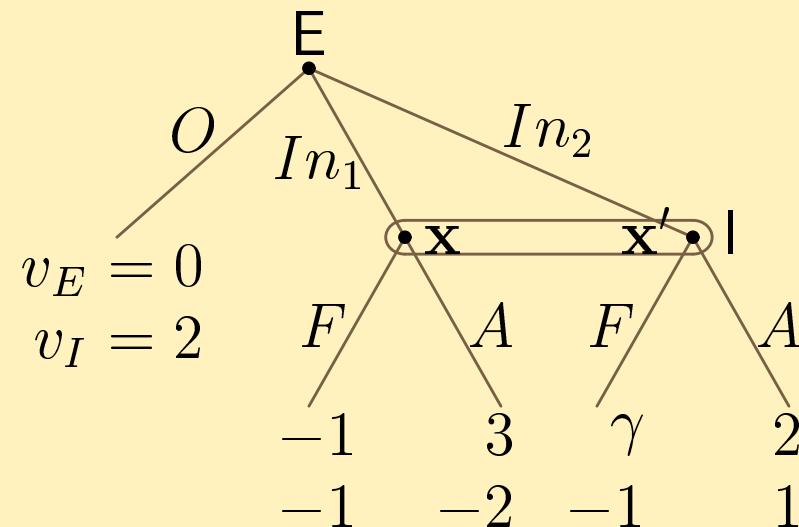
$$E[v_I(F, \sigma_E)|\mu] \gtrless E[v_I(A, \sigma_E)|\mu] \Leftrightarrow \mu(\mathbf{x}) \gtrless 2/3.$$

* If $\gamma < 0$, $\sigma_E(O) = 1$ and $\sigma_I(F) = 1$ with $\mu(\mathbf{x}) \geq 2/3$.

$\mu(\mathbf{x}) < 2/3 \Rightarrow \sigma_I(F) = 0 \Rightarrow \sigma_E(In_1) = 1 \Rightarrow \mu(\mathbf{x}) = 1$.

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)

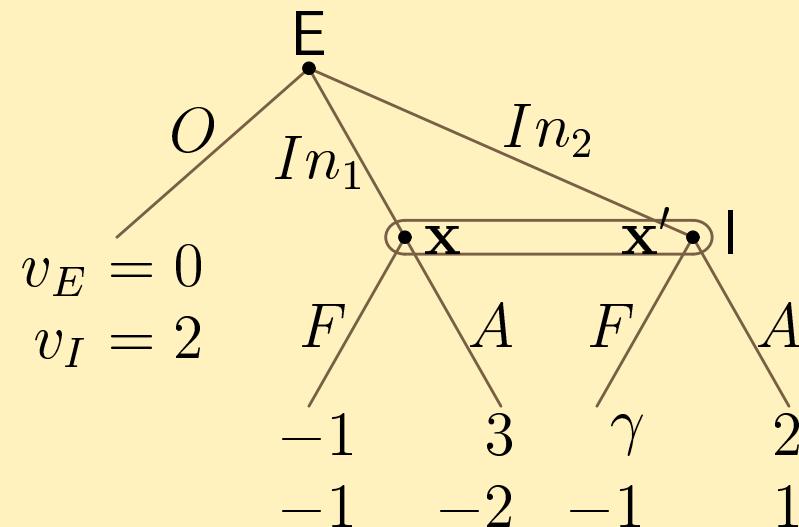


* If $\gamma < 0$, $\sigma_E(O) = 1$ and $\sigma_I(F) = 1$ with $\mu(\mathbf{x}) \geq 2/3$.

$\mu(\mathbf{x}) = 2/3$, then $E[v_{\textcolor{blue}{E}}(\sigma_I, In_1) | \mu] = E[v_{\textcolor{blue}{E}}(\sigma_I, In_2) | \mu]$.

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



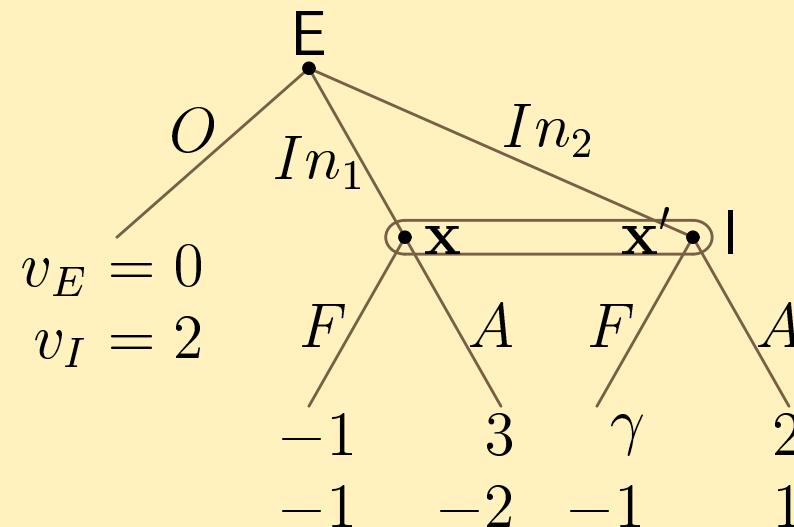
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$\mu(\mathbf{x}) = 2/3$, then $E[v_E(\sigma_I, In_1) | \mu] = E[v_E(\sigma_I, In_2) | \mu]$.

$\sigma_I(F) \times (-1) + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 3 = \sigma_I(F) \times \gamma + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 2$.

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



* If $\gamma < 0$, $\sigma_E(O) = 1$ and $\sigma_I(F) = 1$ with $\mu(\mathbf{x}) \geq 2/3$.

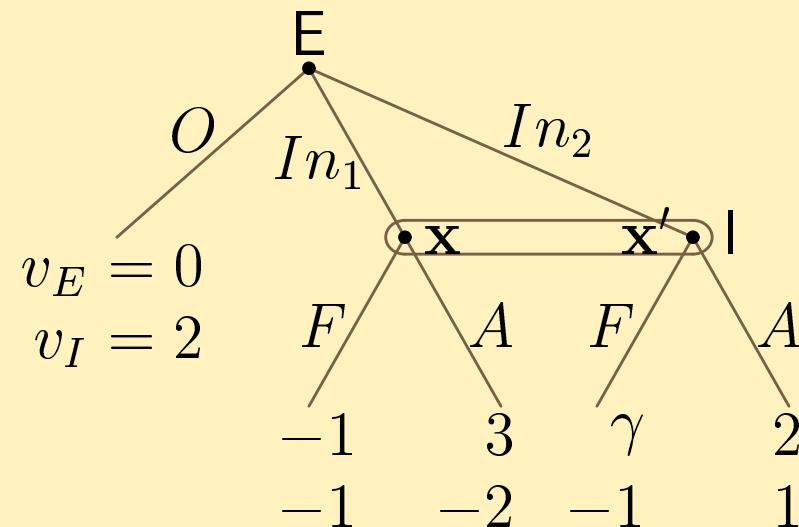
$$\sigma_I(F) \times (-1) + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 3 = \sigma_I(F) \times \gamma + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 2.$$

Solving it wrt $\sigma_I(F)$, we obtain

$$\sigma_I(F) = 1/(\gamma + 2), \quad E[v_E(\sigma_I, In_1) | \mu] = (3\gamma + 2)/(\gamma + 2).$$

Example

Example 9.C.3 ($\gamma > -1, \gamma \neq 0$)



- * If $\gamma < 0$, $\sigma_E(O) = 1$ and $\sigma_I(F) = 1$ with $\mu(\mathbf{x}) \geq 2/3$.

$$\sigma_I(F) \times (-1) + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 3 = \sigma_I(F) \times \gamma + (1 - \sigma_I(F)) \times 2.$$

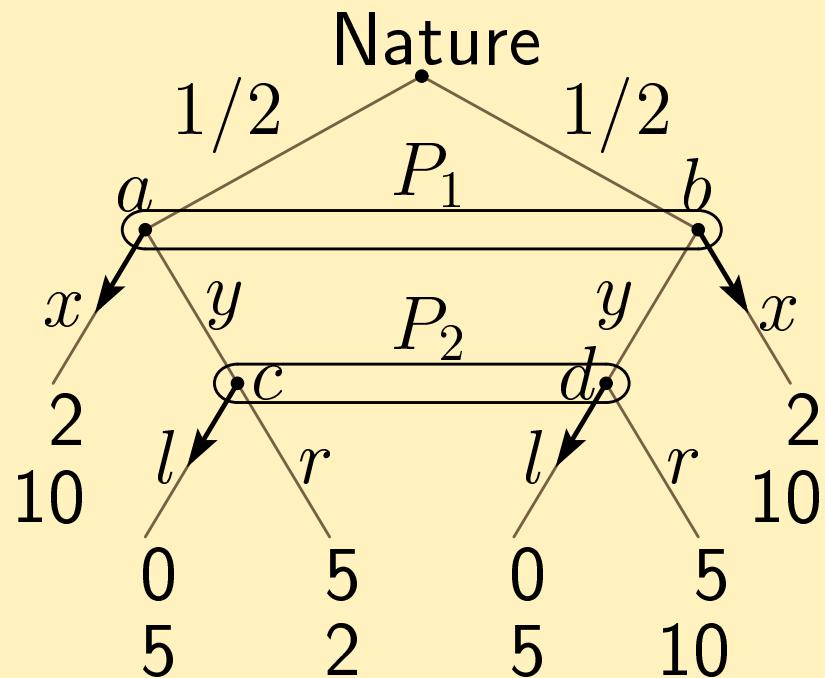
$$\sigma_I(F) = 1/(\gamma + 2), \quad E[v_E(\sigma_I, In_1) | \mu] = (3\gamma + 2)/(\gamma + 2).$$
- * If $\gamma \geq -2/3$, $\sigma_E(O) = 0$, $\sigma_E(In_1) = 2/3$, $\sigma_E(In_2) = 1/3$.

Strengthening the wPBE concept

Strengthening the wPBE concept (9.C.4)

$$\mu(a) = 1/2, \mu(b) = 1/2, \mu(c) = 9/10, \mu(d) = 1/10.$$

The arrows in the figure indicate the strategies.

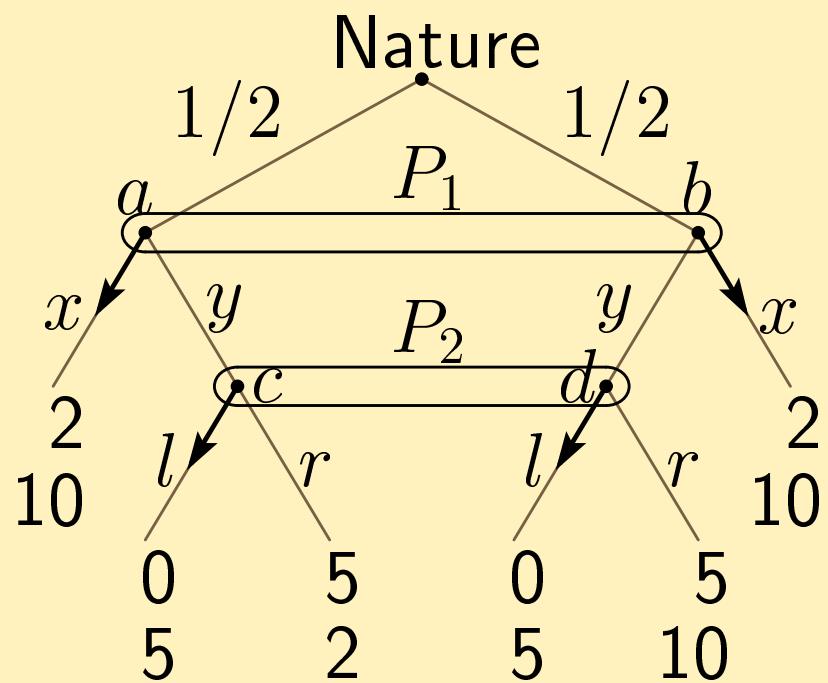


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No restrictions at all are placed on beliefs **off the equilibrium path** (see Req. 15-3).

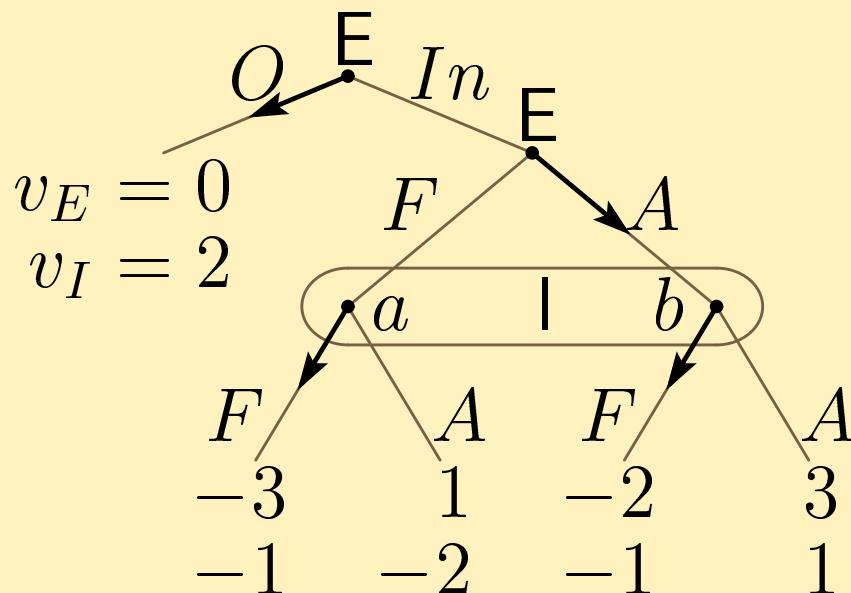
However, $\mu(c) = 9/10$ seems to be structurally inconsistent.

Strengthening the wPBE concept

Strengthening the wPBE concept (9.C.5)

$$\mu(a) = 1, \mu(b) = 0.$$

The arrows in the figure indicate the strategies.

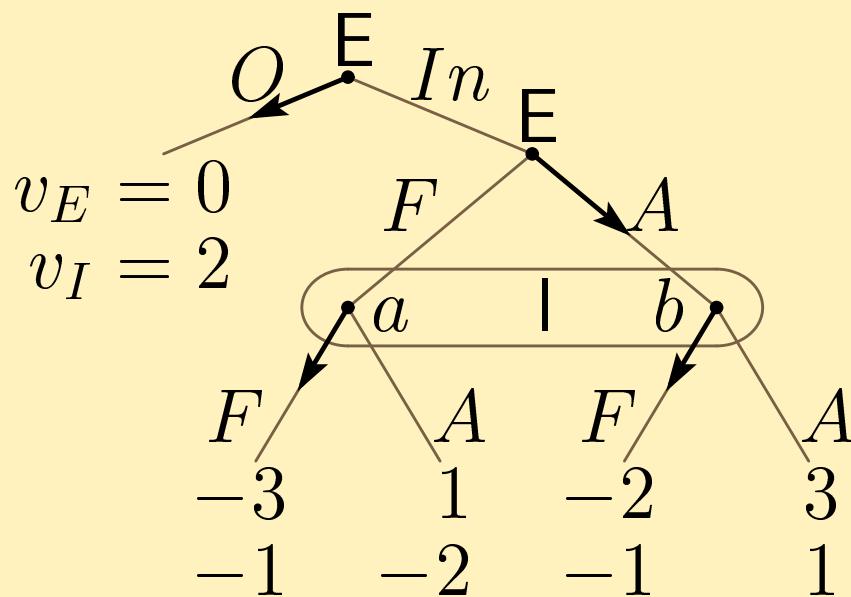


Strengthening the wPBE concept

Strengthening the wPBE concept (9.C.5)

$$\mu(a) = 1, \mu(b) = 0.$$

The arrows in the figure indicate the strategies.



E/I	F	A
F	$-3, -1$	$1, -2$
A	$-2, -1$	$3, 1$

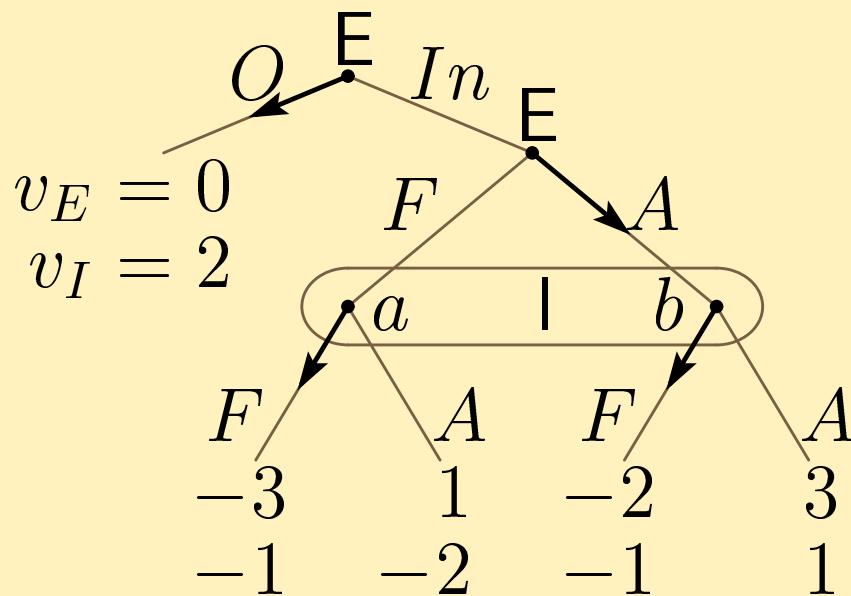
No restrictions at all are placed on beliefs **off the equilibrium path**.

Strengthening the wPBE concept

Strengthening the wPBE concept (9.C.5)

$$\mu(a) = 1, \mu(b) = 0.$$

The arrows in the figure indicate the strategies.



E/I	F	A
F	-3, -1	1, -2
A	-2, -1	3, 1

No restrictions at all are placed on beliefs **off the equilibrium path**.

This outcome is NOT a SPNE outcome.

Sequential equilibrium

Definition 15.4 A system of beliefs μ is **consistent with σ** if there is a sequence $\{\sigma^k\}_{k=1}^{\infty}$ of total mixed strategies such that

$$1. \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \sigma^k = \sigma, \quad 2. \mu = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \mu^k,$$

where for all k , μ^k is the system of beliefs derived from σ^k by Bayes' rule.

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Definition 15.5 A pair (σ, μ) of strategy profile and system of beliefs is a **sequential equilibrium** if

1. σ is sequential rational given μ .
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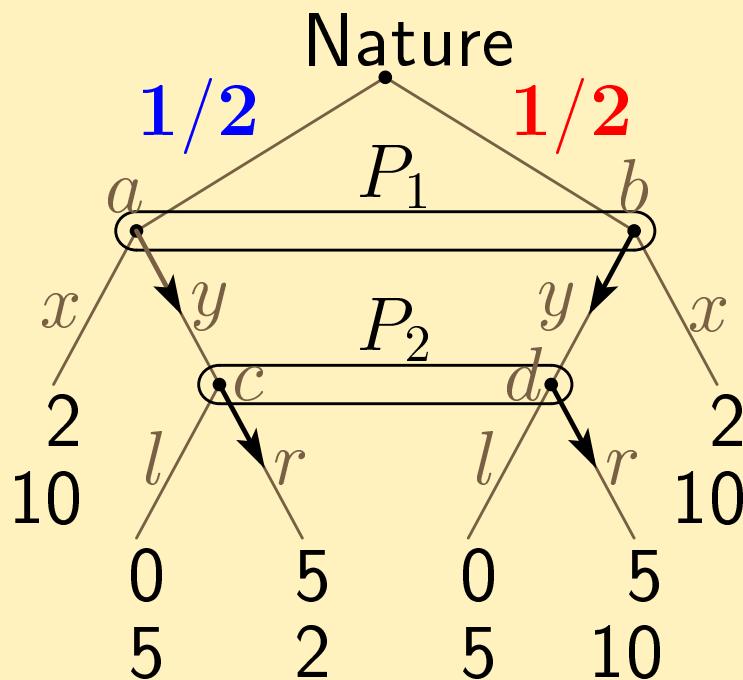
Prop. 9.C.2 In every sequential equilibrium (σ, μ) of Γ_E , a strategy profile σ is a subgame perfect Nash equilibrium of Γ_E

Example

Ex. 9.C.4 Reconsidered

Let (σ, μ) be a sequential equilibrium. Let $\sigma^k \rightarrow \sigma$.

$$\forall k, \mu^k(a) = \frac{1}{2} \text{ and } \mu^k(c) = \frac{0.5\sigma_1^k(y)}{0.5\sigma_1^k(y) + 0.5\sigma_1^k(y)} = \frac{1}{2}.$$

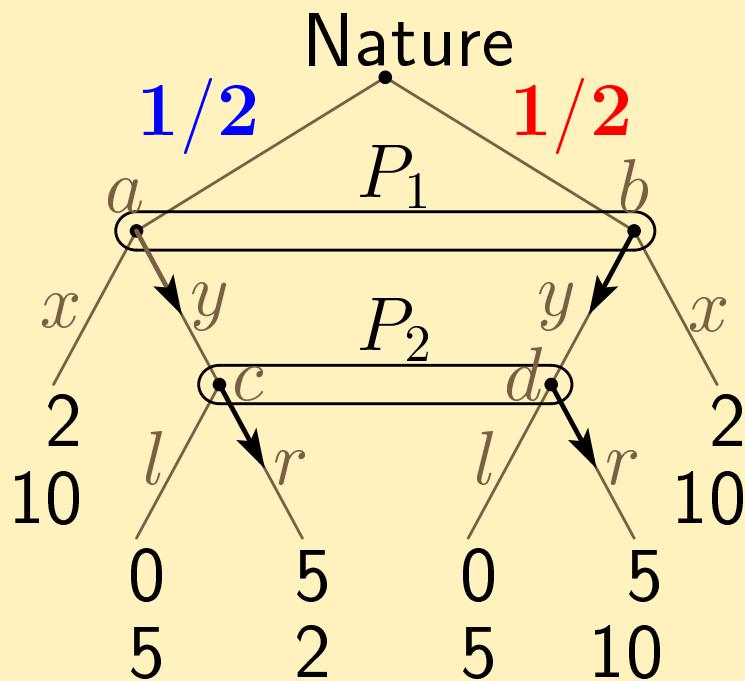


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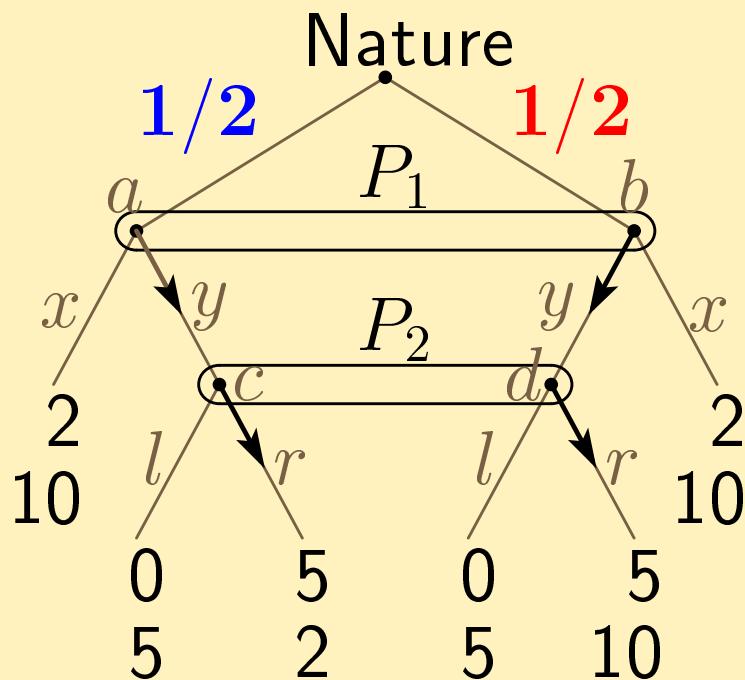
$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \mu^k(a) &= 1/2, \\ \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \mu^k(c) &= 1/2. \end{aligned}$$

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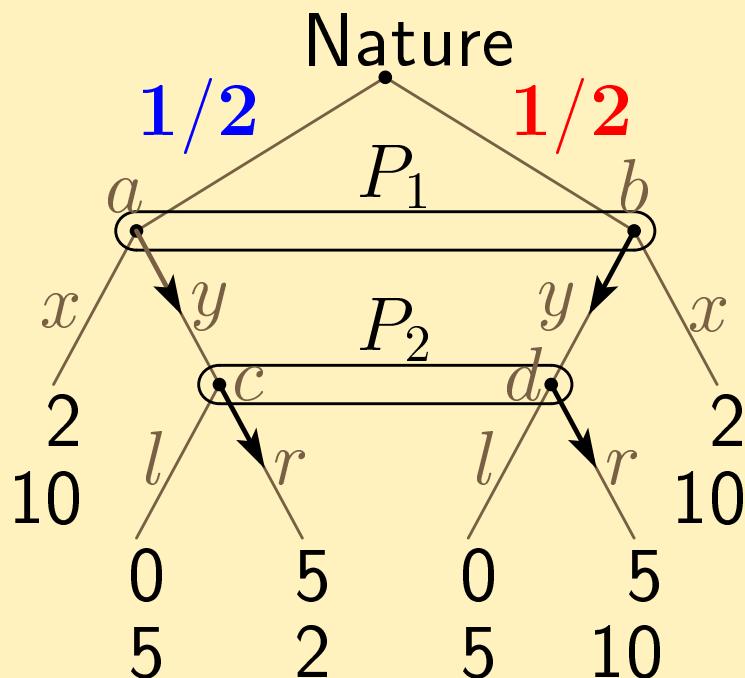
$$E(u_2|H_2, \mu, \mathbf{r}, \sigma_1) > E(u_2|H_2, \mu, \mathbf{l}, \sigma_1). \\ \Rightarrow \sigma_2(r) = 1, \sigma_2(l) = 0.$$

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$$E(u_1|H_1, \mu, \mathbf{y}, \sigma_2) > E(u_1|H_1, \mu, \mathbf{x}, \sigma_2). \\ \Rightarrow \sigma_1(y) = 1, \sigma_1(x) = 0.$$

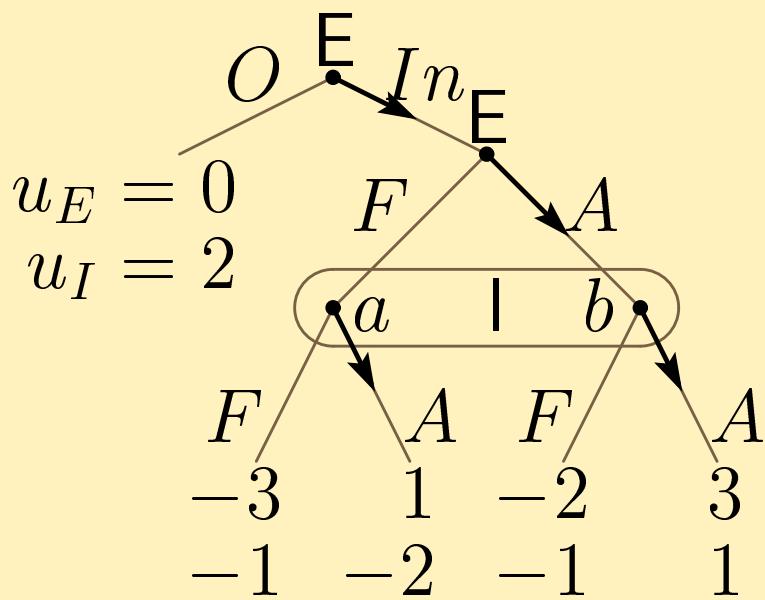
Example

Ex. 9.C.5 reconsidered

Let (σ, μ) be a sequential equilibrium. Let $\sigma^k \rightarrow \sigma$.

$$\forall k, \mu^k(a) = \frac{\Pr(a|\sigma^k)}{\Pr(H_I|\sigma^k)} = \frac{\sigma_E^k(Ind) \times \sigma_E^k(F)}{\sigma_E^k(Ind)} = \sigma_E^k(F).$$

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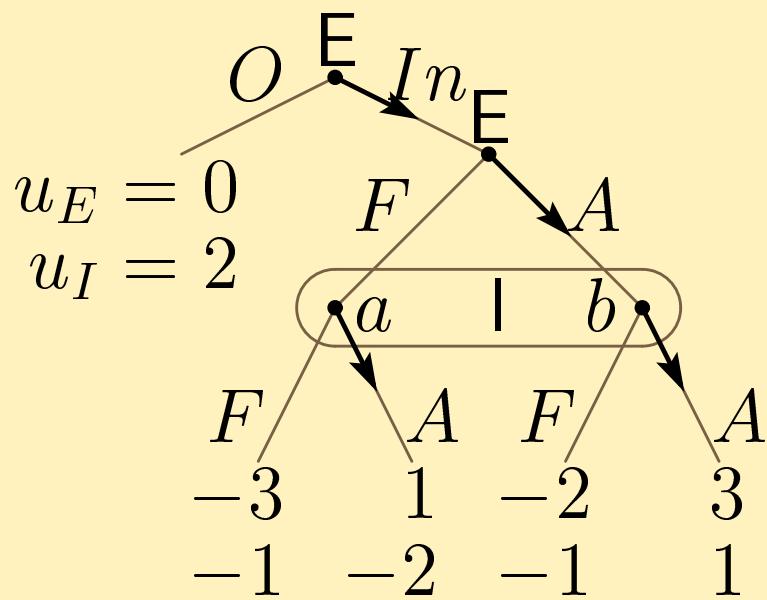
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$$E(u_E|H_2, \mu, \sigma_E(\text{In}), \mathbf{F}, \sigma_I) \\ < E(u_E|H_2, \mu, \sigma_E(\text{In}), \mathbf{A}, \sigma_I).$$

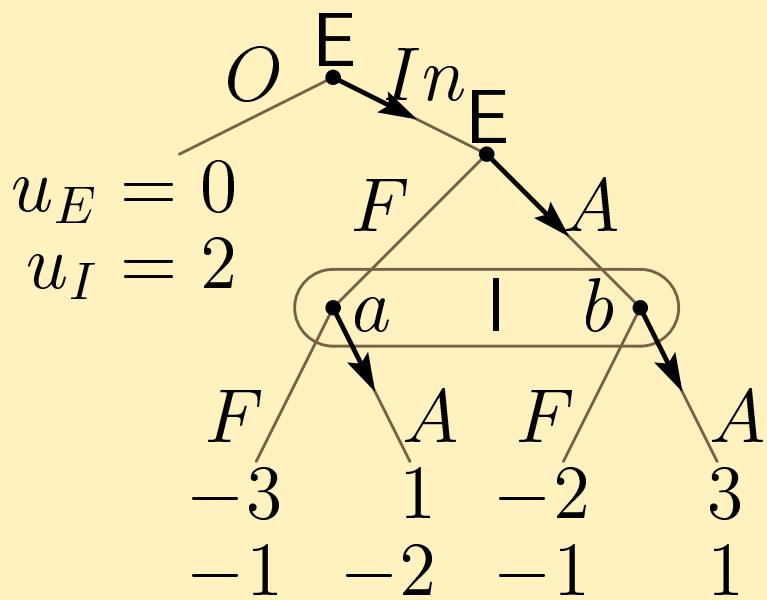
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$$\begin{aligned}
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 \Rightarrow & \sigma_E(F) = 0, \sigma_E(A) = 1.
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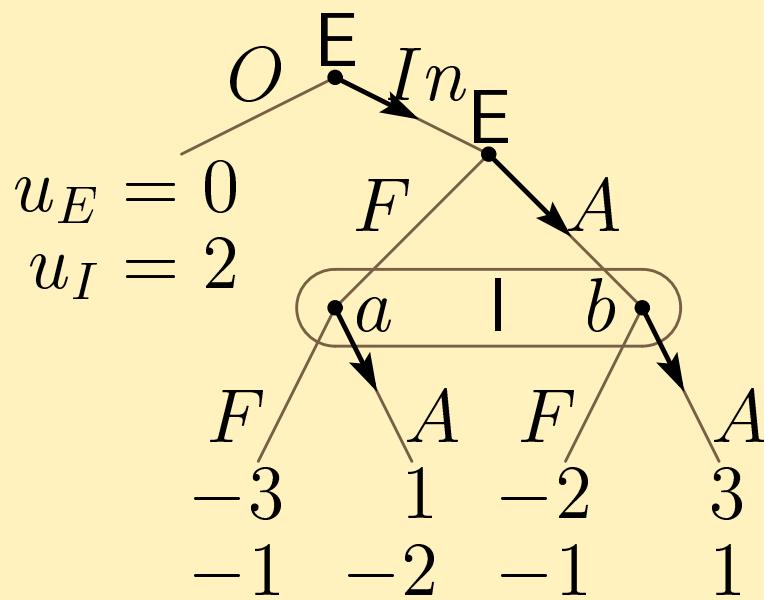
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$$\sigma_E(F) = 0, \sigma_E(A) = 1.$$

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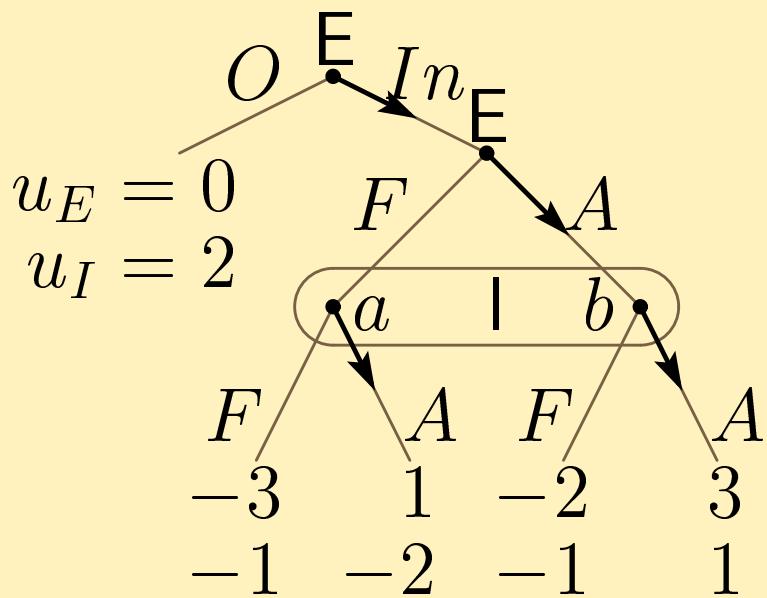
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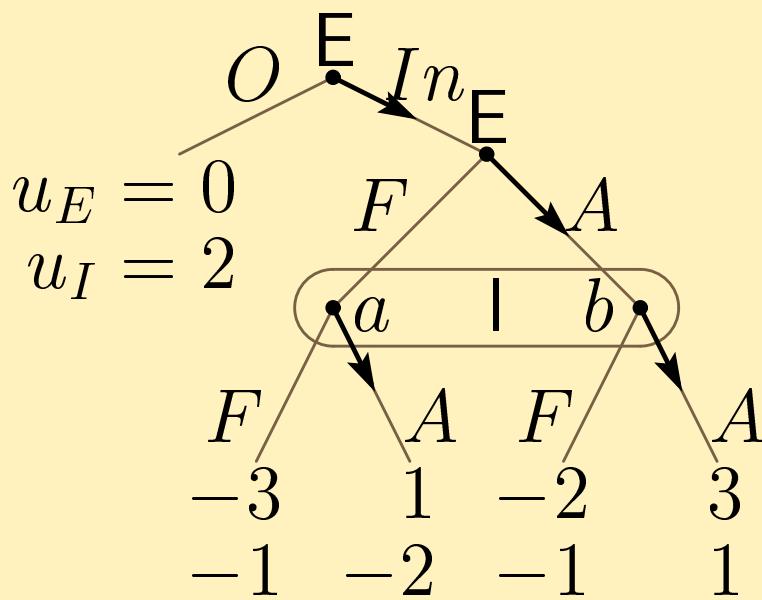
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$$E(u_E|H_1, \mu, \sigma_I, \text{Out})$$

$$< E(u_E|H_1, \mu, \sigma_I, \text{In}).$$

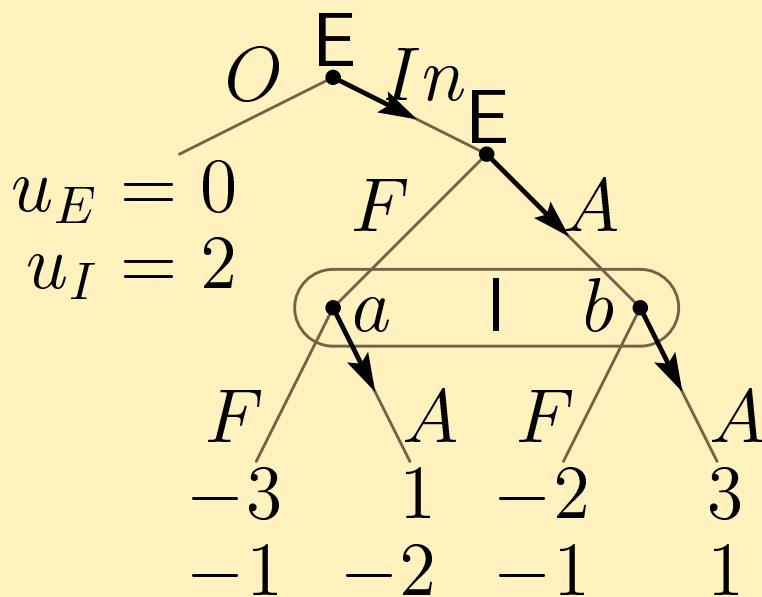
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$$E(u_E|H_1, \mu, \sigma_I, \text{Out})$$

$$< E(u_E|H_1, \mu, \sigma_I, \text{In}).$$

$$((\sigma_E, \sigma_I), (\mu(a), \mu(b)))$$

$$= (((\text{In}, A), A), (0, 1)).$$