

Coalitions in Cooperative Games

Def A coalitional game with transferable payoff (or utilities) consists of $\langle N, v \rangle$

N = finite set of players.
 v called the characteristic function of the game.
 $(v(S) : S \subseteq N)$ $v(S) \in \mathbb{R}$ $v(S)$ is the
worth of coalition S .
 (set $v(\emptyset) = 0$)

Interpretation In a strategic form games

often a group of players can get better payoffs for themselves by cooperation. $v(S)$

represents what the players within S can

achieve on their own. The set N itself is called

the grand coalition. A question addressed in this

theory is when there exists transfer payments so players have incentive to cooperate in grand coalition.

Definition $\langle N, v \rangle$ is cohesive if

$$v(N) \geq \sum_{k=1}^k v(S_k) \text{ for every partition } (S_1, \dots, S_k) \text{ of } N.$$

Henceforth we restrict attention to cohesive characteristic functions.

Def A vector of payoffs, $(x_i : i \in S)$ for

a coalition S is S-feasible if $\sum_{i \in S} x_i \leq v(S)$

A vector of N -feasible payoffs is called feasible.

Def The core of the coalitional game

$\langle N, v \rangle$ with transferable payments is the set

of $(x_i)_{i \in N} \in \mathbb{R}^N$ such that

(1) (x_i) is feasible

(2) $\sum_{i \in S} x_i \geq v(S)$ for all S (i.e. can't be best in S by an S -feasible payoff vector.)

C3

Example $N = \{1, 2, 3\}$ (3-player majority game.)
 $v(\{i\}) = 0$ all i
 $v(\{1, 2\}) = v(\{1, 3\}) = v(\{2, 3\}) = \alpha$
 $v(\{1, 2, 3\}) = 1$ (where $0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$)
 is fixed

Core x_1, x_2, x_3 Need $x_i \geq v(\{i\}) = 0$

$$x_i + x_j \geq v(\{i, j\}) = \alpha \quad i \neq j$$

$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = \alpha > 0$$



If x is in the core, then

$$1 = x_1 + x_2 + x_3 \geq \frac{1}{2} \{ (x_1 + x_2) + (x_1 + x_3) + (x_2 + x_3) \}$$

$$2\alpha - x_1 - x_2 \geq \alpha$$

$$2x_1 \leq \alpha$$

$$x_1 \leq \frac{\alpha}{2}$$

$$\geq \frac{3}{2}\alpha$$

$\therefore$ Core is empty if $\alpha > \frac{2}{3}$

If $0 \leq \alpha \leq \frac{2}{3}$ then the core is not empty e.g. vectors

$(1 - \alpha, \frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2})$, $(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3}, \frac{1}{3})$ are in core
 if $\alpha \leq \frac{2}{3}$

Example Production economy

c = capitalist, owns factory

W = set of workers

If capitalist cooperates and m workers work,

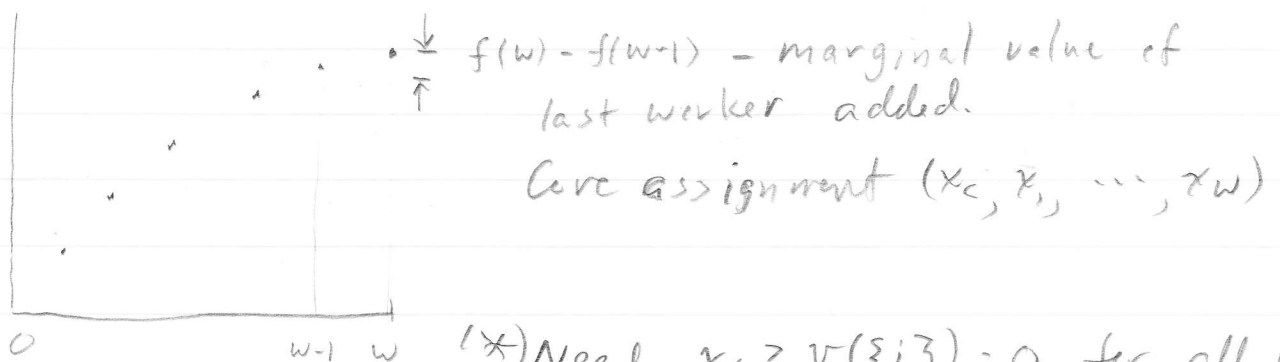
worth is $f(m)$, where $f(0) = 0$, $f: \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ is

concave.

$$\text{set } N = \{c\} \cup W$$

$$v(s) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } c \notin s \\ f(|s \cap W|) & \end{cases}$$

Let's find core. (Answer: $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : 0 \leq x_i \leq f(W) - f(W-i), x_c + x_1 + \dots + x_W = f(W)\}$.)



- (*) Need $x_i \geq v(\{i\}) = 0$ for all i .
 (**) Need $x_i \leq f(W) - f(W-i)$ for all $i \neq c$, else
 $v(N-j) > v(N) - x_j = \sum_{i \in N-j} x_i$.

Conditions (*) + (**) + feasibility are sufficient for.

CS

CS Function v is called convex (super modular)

if $v(S) + v(T) \leq v(S \cup T) + v(S \cap T)$ (still $v(\emptyset) = 0$)

let $S_i = \{1, \dots, i\}$ $1 \leq i \leq N$ (could use any increasing sequence of coalitions) then,

if v is convex: $x_i = v(S_i) - v(S_{i-1})$

defines a vector in the core.

Proof Need for any coalition R ,

$$x(R) \triangleq \sum_i x_i \geq v(R)$$

Let $R = \{i_1, \dots, i_g\}$ with $i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_g$.

Then
$$\begin{aligned} v(R) &= \sum_{j=1}^g v(\{i_1, \dots, i_j\}) - v(\{i_1, \dots, i_{j-1}\}) \\ &\geq \sum_{j=1}^g \underbrace{v(\{i_j\} \cup S_{i_j-1}) - v(S_{i_j-1})}_{x_j} = x(R) \end{aligned}$$

Core is nonempty iff the optimal value for the following linear optimization problem is $v(N)$:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize } \sum_{i \in N} x_i \\ & x \text{ such that } \sum_{i \in S} x_i \geq v(S) \quad \forall S \subseteq N \end{aligned} \quad \leftarrow \text{L.M. } \lambda_S.$$

Consider dual

$$\text{optimal value} = \min_x \max_{\lambda \geq 0} x(N) + \sum_S (v(S) - x(S)) \lambda_S$$

$$= \max_{\lambda \geq 0} \min_x \sum_S v(S) \lambda_S + \sum_{i \in N} x_i \left[1 - \sum_{S: i \in S} \lambda_S \right]$$

$$\begin{aligned} & = \max_{\lambda \geq 0} \sum_S v(S) \lambda_S \\ & \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \sum_{S: i \in S} \lambda_S \leq 1 \text{ for all } i \end{array} \right. \end{aligned}$$

λ is a balanced collection of weights

Core is not empty iff this value = $v(N)$

- Result called Bondareva-Shapley theorem

Here $\sum_S v(S) \lambda_S$ is a fractionalized

version of $\max_{\text{partitions } S_1, \dots, S_k} \sum v(S_k)$

C7

Back to example.

$$N = \{1, 2, 3\}$$
$$v(S) = \begin{cases} 1 & |S| = 3 \\ \alpha & |S| = 2 \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$$

Need $\frac{1}{2}v(1,2) + \frac{1}{2}v(1,3) + \frac{1}{2}v(2,3) \leq 1$

$$\frac{3}{2}\alpha \leq 1 \quad \alpha \leq \frac{2}{3} \quad \checkmark$$

So Banzhaf-Shapley gives same result we observed earlier.

Definition $(v(S): S \subseteq N)$ (with $v(\emptyset) = 0$) is
super additive if

$$v(S_1 \cup S_2) \geq v(S_1) + v(S_2) \text{ for all } S_1, S_2 \subseteq N \\ \text{with } S_1 \cap S_2 = \emptyset$$

(Implies cohesiveness).

Given the interpretation of a coalition game

$\langle N, v \rangle$, it is reasonable to assume v is

super additive. Moreover, if v is cohesive,

then the core of v and the core of the least subadditive majorant of v are the same.

If v is not cohesive, it makes sense to replace v by its least subadditive majorant.

Given a coalition game (N, v) , the game
 (from Myerson sect. 9.3, result of Koneko and Weeders '82)
 the k -fold replicated game has set of players
 $N' = N \times \{1, \dots, k\}$, with k players of each type

For $S \subset N'$ let $w(S) = w(S)$ if S'
 consists of exactly one player of each type in
 S for some $S \subset N$, and $w(S') = \min_{i \in N} v(\{i\})$
 else. let v be the least subadditive
 majorant of w .

Proposition (Koneko + Weeders '82) For some integer $k \geq 1$.

the core of the k -fold replicated game is not empty
 for every k that is a positive multiple of k .

The proof is based on the fact

$$\begin{aligned} \max_{x: x(S) \geq v(S)} \sum_{i \in N} x_i &= \max_{\lambda \geq 0; \sum_{S: i \in S} \lambda_S \leq 1 \text{ for all } i} \sum v(S) \lambda_S \end{aligned}$$

and solutions (x^*, λ^*) exist with λ_S rational.

So $\lambda_S = \frac{k_S}{K}$ for some $K \geq 1$ and $(k_S: S \subset N)$.



Example Suppose $\frac{2}{3} < \alpha < 1$ and consider

Coalition game $N = \{1, 2, 3\}$, $v(S) = \begin{cases} 1 & |S| = 3 \\ \alpha & |S| = 2 \\ 0 & \text{else.} \end{cases}$

Recall core is empty. The two fold replicated game have $N' = \{1, 1', 2, 2', 3, 3'\}$, $v'(N') = 3\alpha$

$$v'(N') = 3\alpha = v'(\{1, 2\}) + v'(\{1', 3\}) + v'(\{2', 3'\})$$

(Note $v'(N')$ is not simply $2v(N)$). Check that

$(\frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2}, \frac{\alpha}{2})$ is in the core of the 2-fold

replicated game.

Market with transferable utilities

(Gives rise to an important family of coalitional games)

Such market is a 4-tuple $(N, l, (w_i), (f_i))$

consisting of

- finite set N of agents

- $l \geq 1$ number of goods

- $w_i \in \mathbb{R}_+^l$ for each i - initial endowment

- $f_i: \mathbb{R}_+^l \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ - production function

(aka utility function or happiness function)
assumed increasing, continuous, concave.

Can model as a coalition game with

characteristic function v defined by

$$v(S) \triangleq \max \left\{ \sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i) : z_i \in \mathbb{R}_+^l, \sum_{i \in S} z_i = \sum_{i \in S} w_i \right\}$$

= worth of coalition S - the

maximum production achievable by

coalition S on its own.

Idea is that agents can benefit through cooperation.

(N, v) is cohesive: $v(N) \geq \sum v_i(S_i)$

why? (Easy) $S_1, \dots, S_k$ any partition of N .

Maximum welfare allocation

$$\max_{z \geq 0} \sum_i f_i(z_i)$$

$$\sum z_i \leq \sum w_i$$

↑ same result using $\leq$

use $p \in \mathbb{R}_+^l$ as Lagrange multiplier

Use duality again (Slater condition is satisfied if $w_i > 0$ coordinate wise)

$$\text{optimal value} = \max_z \min_p \sum_i f_i(z_i) + \sum_i p^T(w_i - z_i)$$

$$= \min_p \sum_i \max_{z_i} \{f_i(z_i) - p^T(z_i - w_i)\}$$

payoff of agent i
subject to price vector p .

Solution (p^*, z^*) is called a competitive equilibrium in classical economies.

- That is z^* is an allocation: $\sum z_i \leq \sum w_i$

- For each i , $z_i^* \in \arg \max_{z_i} \{f_i(z_i) - p^T(z_i - w_i)\}$

(or Walrasian equilibrium)

Claim The payoff vector for any competitive equilibrium is in the core
 (in particular, core is nonempty -- which could also be established using Bondareva-Shapley thm.)

Proof Need for any S ,

$$\sum_{i \in S} x_i \geq v(S)$$

where

$$x_i = f_i(z_i^*) - p^T(z_i^* - w_i)$$

$$v(S) = \max \left\{ \sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i) : z_i \in \mathbb{R}_+^l, \sum_{i \in S} z_i = \sum_{i \in S} w_i \right\}$$

Or for any S and any $(z_i : i \in S)$ with $\sum_{i \in S} z_i = \sum_{i \in S} w_i$,

$$\sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i^*) - p^T(z_i^* - w_i) \stackrel{?}{\geq} \sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i)$$

Know

$$\sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i^*) - p^T(z_i^* - w_i) \geq \sum_{i \in S} f_i(z_i) - p^T(z_i - w_i)$$

Sum over i is nonnegative also

? is "yes"



Example of an Exchange economy E with transferrable payments.

$N=2$, $l=1$
of agents # commodities

$\omega_1 = \omega_2 = 1$ (endowments)

$$f_1(z) = \ln(z)$$

$$f_2(z) = 4 \ln(z)$$

$$V(\emptyset) = 0$$

$$V(\{1\}) = \ln(1) = 0$$

$$V(\{2\}) = 4 \ln(1) = 0$$

$$V(\{1, 2\}) = \max_{\substack{z_1, z_2 \\ z_1 + z_2 \leq 2}} \ln(z_1) + 4 \ln(z_2)$$

$$\frac{1}{z_1} = \frac{2}{z_2} = p$$

$$\frac{z_1}{3} = \frac{16}{3}$$

$$= \ln(0.4) + 4 \ln(1.6) = 0.9637$$

$$-0.9163$$

$$1.8800$$

Core

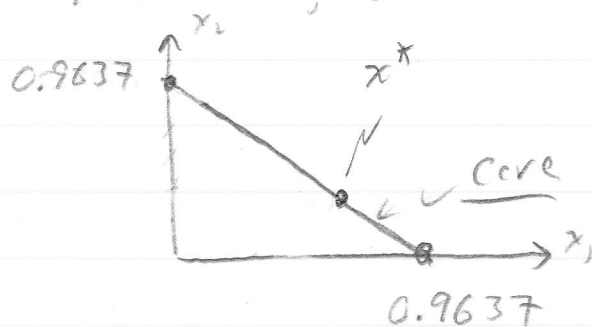
$$x_i \geq V(\{i\}) = 0$$

$$x_1 + x_2 = V(\{1, 2\})$$

$$(z_1^*, z_2^*) = \left(\frac{2}{3}, \frac{4}{3}\right)$$

is the efficient allocation

Requires transfer of 0.6 units of endowment from agent 1 to agent 2



p^* Competitive equilibrium price $f'_1(z_1) = \frac{1}{0.4} = \frac{4}{1.6} = 2.5$

Under p^* , agent 1 pays $(0.6)(2.5) = 1.5$

So (p^*, z^*) is the competitive equilibrium. Its payoff vector is $x^* = (\ln(0.4) + 1.5, 4 \ln(1.6) - 1.5) = (-0.9163, 0.3800)$

Now consider the economy kE obtained by k -fold replication of the market E , consisting of k agents of type 1 and k agents of type 2 (This is not same as k fold replication of the corresponding coalitional game because coalitions with more than one agent of a given type generate worth by exchange among themselves.)

It is easy to see that the competitive equilibrium for kE has the same price p^* vector as for $k=1$ and allocation vector $z^{*'} = (z_1^*, \dots, z_1^*, z_2^*, \dots, z_2^*)$. So $(x_1^*, \dots, x_1^*, x_2^*, \dots, x_2^*)$ is in the core of kE for all $k \geq 1$. The point (x_1^*, x_2^*) is the only point in the core of E with this property.

For the example, with $k=1$ (see p. C14) the

point $(\bar{x}_1 = 0.1, \bar{x}_2 = 0.8937)$ is in the core of E .
However,

$x' = (\underbrace{\bar{x}_1, \dots, \bar{x}_1}_{k\text{-terms}}, \underbrace{\bar{x}_2, \dots, \bar{x}_2}_{k\text{-terms}})$ is not in the core
of the k -fold replicated market for any $k \geq 2$.

In deed, let

S' = a coalition with two type 1 agents
and one type 2 agent.

$$\text{Then } x'(S') = 0.1 + 0.1 + 0.8937 = 1.0937$$

$$\text{while } v'(S') = \max_{\substack{z'_1, z'_2, z'_3 \\ z'_1 + z'_2 + z'_3 = 3}} \log(z'_1) + \log(z'_2) + 4 \log(z'_3) \\ \text{eg } (\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, 2)$$

$$\geq \log(\frac{1}{2}) + \log(\frac{1}{2}) + 4 \log(2)$$

$$= 2 \log(2) = 1.3863$$

$$> x'(S') \quad \therefore x' \text{ is not in core.}$$

Basically, the type 1 agents are underpaid, so a group of them can form a coalition with a smaller number of type 2 agents to violate core constraint.

Still for the same example, let (x_1, x_2) be any point in the core of E , and for $k \geq 1$ let $x' = (\underbrace{x_1, \dots, x_1}_{k \text{ times}}, \underbrace{x_2, \dots, x_2}_{k \text{ times}})$

We'll show that if x' is in the core of E for all $k \geq 1$ then $x = x^*$, ($x^* =$ competitive equilibrium payoff vector)
 let $v(i, j)$ be the worth of a coalition of i type 1 agents and j type 2 agents, ($i+j \geq 1$)

$$v(i, j) = \max_{\substack{z'_1, \dots, z'_{i+j} \\ \sum_{a=1}^{i+j} z'_a \leq i+j}} f_1(z'_1) + \dots + f_1(z'_i) + f_2(z'_{i+1}) + \dots + f_2(z'_{i+j})$$

Solution $z'_1 = \dots = z'_i = z_1$
 $z'_{i+1} = \dots = z'_{i+j} = z_2$

where $f_1(z_1) = f_2(z_2) = p(\theta)$

call this $\varphi(\theta)$

let $\theta = \frac{i}{i+j}$
 = fraction of type 1 agents

$$= (i+j) \cdot \max_{z: \theta z_1 + (1-\theta) z_2 = 1} \theta f_1(z_1) + (1-\theta) f_2(z_2)$$

$$= (i+j) \varphi(\theta)$$

For $f_1(z_1) = \ln(z_1)$ and $f_2(z_2) = 4 \ln(z_2)$ we find

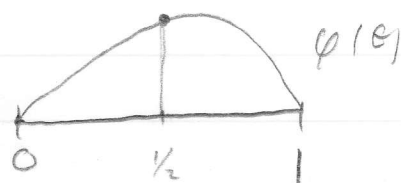
$$z_1(\theta) = \frac{1}{\theta + 4(1-\theta)}, \quad z_2(\theta) = 4z_1(\theta)$$

(The value of the corresponding Lagrange multiplier is

$$p(\theta) = f'_1(z_1(\theta)) = f'_2(z_2(\theta)) = 4 - 3\theta$$

Also, $\varphi'(\theta) = x_1(\theta) - x_2(\theta)$ where $x_1(\theta) = f_1(z_1(\theta)) - p(\theta)z_1(\theta) = w_1$

(see next page. $\theta = \frac{1}{2}$ corresponds to welfare maximization for the entire market, $i=j \leq k$.)



C18

(Proof that $\phi'(\theta) = x_1(\theta) - x_2(\theta)$)(Use $z_1 = a, z_2 = b$)

$$\phi(\theta) = \max_{z=(z_1, z_2) \geq 0} \left\{ \theta f_1(z_1) + (1-\theta) f_2(z_2) \right\}$$

$$z=(z_1, z_2) \geq 0$$

$$\theta z_1 + (1-\theta) z_2 \leq 1$$

$$\theta + (1-\theta)$$

$$= \max_{z \geq 0} \min_{p \geq 0} \theta f_1(z_1) + (1-\theta) f_2(z_2) + p[1 - \theta z_1 - (1-\theta) z_2]$$

$$= \min_{p \geq 0} \left[\underbrace{\theta \max_{z_1} \{f_1(z_1) - p(z_1 - 1)\}}_{x_1(\theta) \text{ (or } x_1(p(\theta))\}} + (1-\theta) \underbrace{\max_{z_2} \{f_2(z_2) - p(z_2 - 1)\}}_{x_2(\theta)} \right]$$

The solution $(p(\theta), z(\theta))$ is the competitive equilibrium for a market with fraction θ of type 1 agents and fraction $(1-\theta)$ of type 2 agents. Let $(x_1(\theta), x_2(\theta))$ be the corresponding payoff vector.

$$\phi(\theta) = \theta x_1(\theta) + (1-\theta) x_2(\theta) \quad \left(= \frac{x_1^* + x_2^*}{2} \text{ at } \theta = \frac{1}{2} \right)$$

$$\phi'(\theta) = x_1(\theta) - x_2(\theta) + \theta x_1'(\theta) + (1-\theta) x_2'(\theta)$$

$$= x_1(\theta) - x_2(\theta) + \left(\theta \frac{dx_1}{dp} + (1-\theta) \frac{dx_2}{dp} \right) p'(\theta)$$

$$\boxed{\phi'(\theta) = x_1(\theta) - x_2(\theta)}$$

zero at
minimizer, $p(\theta)$

(Above, x_i is a function of p and p is a function of θ , so indirectly x_i is a function of θ . Same for x_2 .)

Suppose $(x_1, \dots, x_1, x_2, \dots, x_2)$ is
in the core of kE . Then

$$\begin{aligned} kx_1 + kx_2 &= v(k, k) \\ (k-1)x_1 + kx_2 &\geq v(k-1, k) \end{aligned}$$

So $x_1 \leq v(k, k) - v(k-1, k)$

$$\begin{aligned} &= 2k \varphi\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) - (2k-1) \varphi\left(\frac{k-1}{2k-1}\right) \\ &= 2k \varphi\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) - (2k-1) \left(\varphi\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) + \varphi'\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) \left(-\frac{1}{2(2k-1)}\right) + o\left(\frac{1}{k^2}\right) \right) \\ &= \varphi\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) + \frac{1}{2} \varphi'\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) + o\left(\frac{1}{k}\right) \\ &= \frac{x_1^* + x_2^*}{2} + \frac{x_1^* - x_2^*}{2} + o\left(\frac{1}{k}\right) \\ &= x_1^* + o\left(\frac{1}{k}\right) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{k-1}{2k-1} &= \frac{1}{2} \\ &= \frac{2(k-1) - (2k-1)}{2(2k-1)} \\ &= -\frac{1}{2(2k-1)} \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, $x_2 \leq x_2^* + o\left(\frac{1}{k}\right)$. Now $x_1 + x_2 = x_1^* + x_2^*$

So $x_i = x_i^* + o\left(\frac{1}{k}\right)$ for $i=1, 2$.

$\therefore$ If $(\underbrace{x_1, \dots, x_1}_{k \text{ times}}, \underbrace{x_2, \dots, x_2}_{k \text{ times}})$ is in the core of kE

for all $k \geq 1$, then $x_1 = x_1^*, x_2 = x_2^*$ (in this sense, the core shrinks to the payoff vector of the competitive equilibrium of E as $k \rightarrow \infty$.) $\square$

The Shapley Value

Return to the setting of a general coalitional game $\langle N, v \rangle$. An alternative to considering the core is to somehow assign a feasible payoff vector $(x_i : i \in N)$ to any such game. (Feasible means $\sum_{i \in N} x_i = v(N)$). The Shapley value can be given as follows.

Let P_n denote the set of $n!$ orderings of $N = \{1, \dots, n\}$ (aka permutations)

For $R \in P_n$, let $S_i(R) = \{j \in N : j \prec i\}$ (not including i)

$\Delta_i(S) = v(S \cup \{i\}) - v(S)$ for a coalition with $i \notin S$. So $\Delta_i(S)$ is the marginal worth of i in the coalition $S \cup \{i\}$

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Shapley value definition} \\ x_i \triangleq \frac{1}{n!} \sum_{R \in P_n} \Delta_i(S_i(R)) \end{array} \right]$$

(See Chap. 14 of ORR for other allocation notions for coalition games.)

Note If $\langle N, v \rangle$ is convex ($v(S, U_{S_2}) + v(S, N_{S_2}) \geq v(S_1) + v(S_2)$)

Then $(x_i) = (\Delta_i(S(R)))_{i \in N}$

(as we saw earlier) is in the core of $\langle N, v \rangle$ for any R . Since the core of $\langle N, v \rangle$ is convex, the Shapley value is in the core for any convex coalitional game with transfers.

Shapley showed the mapping

$$v \xrightarrow{F} x^{\text{shapley}} \quad (N \text{ fixed})$$

is the unique one subject to three axioms for a given set N .

- linear: $F(v_1 + v_2) = F(v_1) + F(v_2)$
 - symmetric: with respect to permutations of agents
 - no value to dummies: $F_i(v) = 0$ if $v(S) = v(S \setminus i)$ for every coalition S with $i \notin S$.
- (see O+R for proof)

Example

Consider a majority coalition formed in a parliament, consisting of three blocks with 20, 30, 50 seats respectively. Suppose the threshold for a majority coalition is 65 seats. Thus, if the blocks are s, m, l respectively, $v(\{s, l\}) = v(\{m, l\}) = v(\{s, m, l\}) = 1$.

To compute Shapely value

R	$(\Delta_i(S; R))$
$s \ m \ l$	$(0, 0, 1)$
$s \ l \ m$	"
$m \ s \ l$	"
$m \ l \ s$	"
$l \ s \ m$	$(1, 0, 0)$
$l \ m \ s$	$(0, 1, 0)$

$$x_{\text{shapely}} = \left(\frac{1}{6}, \frac{1}{6}, \frac{2}{3}\right)$$

Core = $\{(0, 0, 1)\}$ — $(0, 0, 1)$ is in core because any winning coalition includes l . If $x_l > 0$ then $x_s + x_m < v(\{s, m\}) = 1$ so $x_s = 0$ for vectors in core. $x_m = 0$ as well.