

Derivative of functions over lattices as a basis for the notion of interaction between attributes

Michel GRABISCH

Université Paris I - Panthéon-Sorbonne

email `Michel.Grabisch@lip6.fr`

Christophe LABREUCHE

Thales Research & Technology

Domaine de Corbeville, 91404 Orsay Cedex, France

email `Christophe.Labreuche@thalesgroup.com`

Abstract

The paper proposes a general notion of interaction between attributes, which can be applied to many fields in decision making and data analysis. It generalizes the notion of interaction defined for criteria modelled by capacities, by considering functions defined on lattices. For a given problem, the lattice contains for each attribute the partially ordered set of remarkable points or levels. The interaction is based on the notion of derivative of a function defined on a lattice, and appears as a generalization of the Shapley value or other probabilistic values.

Keywords: interaction index, Shapley value, capacity, game, lattice, discrete derivative.

1 The concept of interaction: an introduction

Let us consider a set N of criteria describing the preferences of a decision maker (DM) over a set X of objects, alternatives, etc. We assume that for any object $x \in X$, we are able to build a vector of *scores* (a_1, \dots, a_n) describing the satisfaction of the DM for x , w.r.t. each criterion. For this reason, and in order to remain at an abstract level, we call this vector a *tuple*, which we identify with the object or alternative. We may suppose for the moment that scores are given on the real interval $[0, 1]$, with 0 and 1 having the meaning of “unacceptable” and “totally satisfying” respectively.

We make the simplifying assumption that the preference of the DM is solely determined by *binary* tuples, i.e. whose scores are either 0 or 1 on each criterion, the preference for other tuples being more or less an interpolation between binary tuples. More precisely, denoting by $(1_A, 0_{A^c})$ the binary tuple having a score of 1 for all criteria in $A \subseteq N$, and 0 elsewhere, this amounts to assigning an overall score $v(A)$ in $[0, 1]$ to $(1_A, 0_{A^c})$. Doing this for all $A \subseteq N$, we have defined a set function $v : 2^N \rightarrow [0, 1]$.

Although this is not essential in the sequel, we may impose to v some natural properties. First, we may set $v(\emptyset) := 0$ and $v(N) := 1$, since $A = \emptyset$ (resp. N) corresponds to

a binary act having all its scores being equal to 0 (resp. 1). Second, considering $A \subseteq B$, this leads to two binary tuples of which one *dominates* the other, in the sense that on each criterion one is at least as good as the other. Then it seems natural to impose $v(A) \leq v(B)$. This is called *isotonicity*. A set function v satisfying these two conditions is called a *capacity* [3] (also called *fuzzy measure* [20]).

Let us now consider the case $n = 2$ in some detail. There are 4 binary tuples $(0, 0)$, $(0, 1)$, $(1, 0)$ and $(1, 1)$, and we know already that the first and last have overall scores $0 = v(\emptyset)$ and $1 = v(N)$. What about the 2 remaining ones ? There are two extreme situations, under isotonicity.

- $v(\{1\}) = v(\{2\}) = 0$, which means that for the DM, both criteria have to be satisfactory in order to get a satisfactory tuple, the satisfaction of only one criterion being useless. We say that the criteria are *complementary*.
- $v(\{1\}) = v(\{2\}) = 1$, which means that for the DM, the satisfaction of one of the two criteria is sufficient to have a satisfactory tuple, satisfying both being useless. We say that the criteria are *substitutive*.

Clearly, in these two situations, the criteria are not independent, in the sense that the satisfaction of one of them acts on the usefulness of the other in order to get a satisfactory tuple (necessary in the first case, useless in the second). So we may say that there is some *interaction* between the criteria¹.

What should be a situation where no interaction occurs, i.e. criteria act independently ? It is a situation where the satisfaction of each criterion brings its own contribution to the overall satisfaction, hence:

$$v(\{1, 2\}) = v(\{1\}) + v(\{2\}).$$

Note that in the first situation, $v(\{1, 2\}) > v(\{1\}) + v(\{2\})$, while the reverse inequality holds in the second situation. This suggests that the interaction I_{12} between criteria 1 and 2 should be defined as :

$$I_{12} := v(\{1, 2\}) - v(\{1\}) - v(\{2\}) + v(\emptyset). \quad (1)$$

This is simply the difference between binary tuples on the diagonal (where there is strict dominance) and on the anti-diagonal (where there is no dominance relation). The interaction is positive when criteria are complementary, while it is negative when they are substitutive. This is consistent with intuition considering that when criteria are complementary, they have no value by themselves, but put together they become important for the DM.

In the case of more than 2 criteria, the definition of interaction is more tricky but follows the same idea (see below). In fact, when $n > 2$, we may define the interaction between 3, 4, ..., n criteria as well. The general definition of interaction for capacities has been given in [8], and has been axiomatized in [12].

The above story for introducing interaction can be made fairly more general. Let us first take interval $[-1, 1]$ instead of $[0, 1]$ for expressing scores, and consider that

¹For further discussion on substitutive and complementary criteria, see Marichal [16].

for the DM, values -1 , 0 and 1 are particular because they express respectively total unsatisfaction, neutrality and total satisfaction. Then we are led to consider *ternary* tuples $(1_A, -1_B, 0_{(A \cup B)^c})$, whose overall score is denoted by $v(A, B)$. It is convenient to denote by $\mathcal{Q}(N) := \{(A, B) \mid A, B \subseteq N, A \cap B = \emptyset\}$. Now v is defined on $\mathcal{Q}(N)$, and as for capacities, it seems natural to impose $v(N, \emptyset) := 1$, $v(\emptyset, \emptyset) := 0$, and $v(\emptyset, N) := -1$. Also using the dominance argument, we should have, if $A \subseteq A'$, $v(A, B) \leq v(A', B)$ and $v(B, A) \geq v(B, A')$. Such a v is called a *bi-capacity* [10, 9]. The interaction for bi-capacities, called *bi-interaction* in [9], has been defined accordingly, and follows the same principle. When $n = 2$, since we have 3 particular levels -1 , 0 and 1 , the square $[-1, 1]^2$ is divided into 4 small squares and has 9 ternary tuples. In each small square, we apply the same definition as with capacities, i.e. Eq. (1). Hence, we have *four* interaction indices to describe interaction with $n = 2$, namely (see Figure 1):

$$\begin{aligned}
I_{\{1,2\},\emptyset} &:= v(\{1,2\}, \emptyset) - v(\{2\}, \emptyset) - v(\{1\}, \emptyset) + v(\emptyset, \emptyset) =: I(\{1,2\}, \emptyset) \\
I_{\emptyset,\{1,2\}} &:= v(\emptyset, \emptyset) - v(\emptyset, \{1\}) - v(\emptyset, \{2\}) + v(\emptyset, \{1,2\}) =: I(\emptyset, \emptyset) \\
I_{1,2} &:= v(\{1\}, \emptyset) - v(\emptyset, \emptyset) - v(\{1\}, \{2\}) + v(\emptyset, \{2\}) =: I(\{1\}, \emptyset) \\
I_{2,1} &:= v(\{2\}, \emptyset) - v(\{2\}, \{1\}) - v(\emptyset, \emptyset) + v(\emptyset, \{1\}) =: I(\{2\}, \emptyset).
\end{aligned}
\tag{2}$$

The notation $I_{A,B}$ means that criteria in A are positive, while criteria in B are negative.

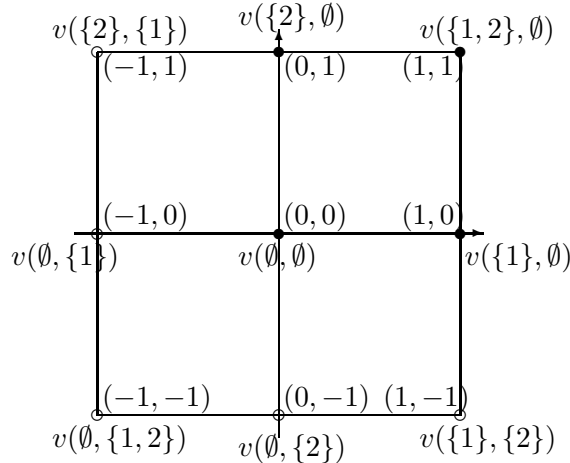


Figure 1: Ternary tuples when $n = 2$

As it will become clear later, a better notation is $I(A, B)$, where (A, B) is the ternary tuples corresponding to the upper right corner of the square in consideration (i.e. the best possible tuple in the square).

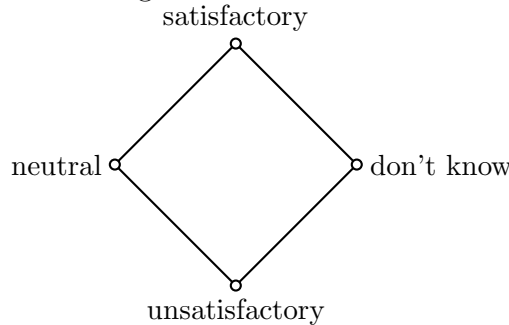
Let us now take a general point of view. We consider n -dimensional tuples in $X := X_1 \times \dots \times X_n$, where it is assumed that each X_i is a partially ordered set, whose order relation is denoted by \leq_i . We consider that on each dimension X_i , there exist *reference levels* $r_1^i, \dots, r_{q_i}^i$, which for the problem under consideration, convey some special meaning of interest, describing e.g. some particular situation, and that these reference levels form a lower locally distributive lattice (L_i, \leq_i) . Denoting by $L := L_1 \times \dots \times L_n$ the product lattice with the product order, we define a real function $v : L \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, assigning a real value to any combination of reference levels on each dimension.

Let us give some instances of this general framework.

voting games and ternary voting games: defining $N := \{1, \dots, n\}$ as the set of voters, for each voter there exist two or three reference levels, which are: voting in favor, voting against (case of classical voting games), and abstention (case of ternary voting games [6]). For classical games, we have $L_i = \{0, 1\}$, $\forall i \in N$, with level 1 corresponding to voting in favor, so that $L = 2^n$, and $v(A) = 1$ if the bill is accepted when A is the set of voters voting in favor, or $v(A) = 0$ if the bill is rejected. For ternary voting games, we have $L_i = \{-1, 0, 1\}$, with 0 corresponding to abstention and -1 to voting against. Then $L = 3^n$, and it is convenient to denote an element of L by a pair (A, B) , where A is the set of voters in favor, and B the set of voters against. As before, $v(A, B) = 1$ (the bill is accepted) or 0 (the bill is rejected). Note that here X_i coincides with L_i , $\forall i \in N$.

cooperative games and bi-cooperative games: we replace voters by players. Reference levels in the case of cooperative games are 0 and 1, corresponding to non participation and participation in the game. Hence $L = 2^n$, and $v(A)$ is the asset that the coalition A of players will win if the game is played. For bi-cooperative games, $L = 3^n$, and $v(A, B)$ is the asset that A will receive when coalition A plays against coalition B , the remaining players not taking part in the game. Classically, here also X_i coincides with L_i , although one may consider any degree of participation between full participation and non participation (fuzzy games), which leads to $X_i = [0, 1]$.

multicriteria decision making: this corresponds to the framework given in the introduction. We have $L_i = \{0, 1\}$ for all $i \in N$ if we consider only two reference levels “unacceptable” and “totally satisfying”, which leads to capacities, and $L_i = \{-1, 0, 1\}$ if a neutral level is added, which leads to bi-capacities, as explained above. Let us remark that our general framework allows one to be much more general: one may have more than 3 levels, adding for example intermediate levels such as “half satisfactory”, etc., or even introduce non comparable levels, provided the lattice structure is preserved. For example, the level “don’t know” may be incomparable with “neutral”, but smaller than “satisfactory” and greater than “unsatisfactory”, thus leading to the lattice 2^2 .



In addition, we may consider different L_i for each criterion. The function v defines the overall score given to an tuple having various reference levels on criteria.

data analysis: the construction is the same as for multicriteria decision making, but the meaning conveyed by the dimensions and the reference levels can be much

more general, depending on the kind of data, being for example “high”, “medium”, “low”, etc. We do not even need to have numerical dimensions, so that ordinal data analysis can be done. The meaning of $v(x)$ for $x \in L$ depends on the aim of the analysis. We propose three main examples:

- evaluation of x . For example, x is some kind of prototypical product, and a user or consumer gives an evaluation of it, which defines $v(x)$ (subjective evaluation).
- classification in some category. $v(x)$ is the label of the category, or takes value 0 or 1 (does not belong or belongs to a given category: in this latter case we need as many functions v as the number of categories) (pattern recognition).
- the number of items identical or similar to x in the data set (data mining). Suppose we have a large set D of data with some distance defined on it. $x \in L$ defines a particular prototypical datum. Then $v(x)$ is the cardinality of the set of data $x' \in D$ within a given distance of x , or $v(x)$ is the sum of the inverse distances from any $x' \in D$ to x .

We propose in this paper a general definition of interaction, which can be applied to the above defined framework, and encompasses already existing definitions of interaction for capacities and bi-capacities. The precise meaning of interaction is governed by the meaning of the function v . In game theory, it describes the synergy between players or voters, the interest to forming or not forming certain coalitions. In multicriteria decision making, it tells which criteria play a key role (and how), which criteria are redundant (with which one) in the decision process. In data mining, when v is a counting function as above, the interaction has a statistical flavor close to correlation. Indeed, since the interaction index is roughly speaking a difference of the diagonal and anti-diagonal, a positive (resp. negative) interaction corresponds to a positive (resp. negative) correlation. In pattern recognition, interaction is very informative for feature selection (see an application of interaction in this topic in [7]).

Clearly, the interaction is a key concept in knowledge discovery, and has a strong descriptive power. We detail its construction and properties in the sequel, after recalling classical results.

For simplicity, the cardinality of sets A, B, S, \dots will be denoted by the corresponding lower case a, b, s, \dots , and we will often omit braces for singletons. We put $N := \{1, \dots, n\}$.

2 Importance and interaction indices for $L = 2^n$ and $L = 3^n$

We recall in this section the classical definition for $L = 2^n$, (which corresponds to capacities, or more generally set functions, pseudo-Boolean functions [14]), and the one for $L = 3^n$ (bi-capacities, bi-cooperative games).

Let $v : 2^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, with $v(\emptyset) = 0$ (game). As it will become clear, the interaction index is a generalization of the *power index* or *importance index* $\phi^v(i)$, $i \in N$, which expresses to what extent an element $i \in N$ (attribute, dimension) has importance or power for the

problem under consideration. The general form is:

$$\phi^v(i) = \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus i} \alpha_s^1 [v(S \cup i) - v(S)], \quad (3)$$

$\alpha_s^1 \in \mathbb{R}$. The value of the coefficients α_s^1 has to be determined by additional requirements. The most important example is the *Shapley index* [19], where

$$\alpha_s^1 = \frac{(n-s-1)!s!}{n!}, \quad s = 0, \dots, n-1, \quad (4)$$

obtained by the following property: $\sum_{i=1}^n \phi^v(i) = v(N)$, expressing a sharing of the total value among all elements, according to their importance (*efficiency axiom*). Another classical example is the Banzhaf index [1], where $\alpha_s^1 = \frac{1}{2^{n-1}}$, $s = 0, \dots, n-1$.

The *interaction index* [8] expresses the interaction among a coalition (group) $S \subseteq N$ of elements:

$$I^v(S) = \sum_{T \subseteq N \setminus S} \alpha_t^s \Delta_S v(T), \quad (5)$$

where $\alpha_t^s \in \mathbb{R}$, and $\Delta_S v(T)$ is the *derivative* of v w.r.t. S at T for $S \subseteq N \setminus T$, and defined recursively as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_{\emptyset} v(T) &:= v(T) \\ \Delta_i v(T) &:= v(T \cup i) - v(T) \\ \Delta_S v(T) &:= \Delta_i(\Delta_{S \setminus i} v(T)), \quad |S| > 1. \end{aligned}$$

Observe that $I^v(\{i\}) \equiv \phi^v(i)$, hence an interaction index is a generalization of an importance index. It is possible to define recursively the interaction index from the importance index [12]. Then, choosing a particular importance index (hence the coefficients α_s^1) defines uniquely the coefficients α_t^s . Let us introduce some notations, borrowed from game theory. The *restricted game* $v^{N \setminus K}$ is the game v restricted to elements (players) in $N \setminus K$, hence $v^{N \setminus K}(S) = v(S)$ for any $S \subseteq N \setminus K$, and is not defined outside. The *reduced game* $v^{[K]}$ is the game where all elements in K are considered as a single element denoted by $[K]$, i.e. the set of elements is then $N_{[K]} := (N \setminus K) \cup \{[K]\}$. The reduced game is defined by, for any $S \subseteq N \setminus K$:

$$\begin{aligned} v_{[K]}(S) &= v(S) \\ v_{[K]}(S \cup \{[K]\}) &= v(S \cup K). \end{aligned}$$

The recursion axiom writes

$$I^v(S) = I^{v^{[S]}}([S]) - \sum_{K \subseteq S, K \neq \emptyset, S} I^{v^{N \setminus K}}(S \setminus K). \quad (6)$$

Its meaning is simple when $|S| = 2$. Indeed, the formula can be written as

$$I^{v^{[i,j]}}([i,j]) = I^{v^{N \setminus i}}(j) + I^{v^{N \setminus j}}(i) + I^v(i,j).$$

It means that the importance of elements (e.g. players) i, j taken together is the sum of individual importances when the other is absent, and the interaction they have between

them. Hence a positive interaction means that the *overall* importance of i, j is greater than the sum of their respective *marginal* importances (see [12] for another equivalent axiom).

This axiom leads to the following formula for $\alpha_s^t(n)$, the argument indicating the number of players in the game

$$\alpha_s^t(n) = \alpha_s^1(n - t + 1), \quad \forall s = 0, \dots, n - t, \quad \forall t = 1, \dots, n - 1. \quad (7)$$

When ϕ^v is the Shapley index, we obtain the *Shapley interaction index*, whose coefficients are, using (7):

$$\alpha_t^s := \frac{(n - s - t)!t!}{(n - s + 1)!}.$$

We have generalized the above notions to the case of bi-capacities and bi-cooperative games [9, 11], and given an axiomatization [11, 15]. As explained in Section 1, we have to consider all combinations between positive and negative parts of the X_i 's (see Eq. (2)), and following the notation introduced there, we denote by $I_{S,T}$, $(S, T) \in \mathcal{Q}(N)$, the interaction among elements when S is the set of positive elements, and T is the set of negative elements. The Shapley index divides into two indices $I_{\{i, \emptyset\}}$ and $I_{\{\emptyset, i\}}$, defined by:

$$I_{\{i, \emptyset\}} := \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus i} \frac{(n - s - 1)!s!}{n!} \Delta_{i, \emptyset} v(S, N \setminus (S \cup i)) \quad (8)$$

$$I_{\{\emptyset, i\}} := \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus i} \frac{(n - s - 1)!s!}{n!} \Delta_{\emptyset, i} v(S, N \setminus S) \quad (9)$$

where the derivatives are defined by:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_{i, \emptyset} v(S, T) &:= v(S \cup i, T) - v(S, T), \quad (S, T) \in \mathcal{Q}(N \setminus i) \\ \Delta_{\emptyset, i} v(S, T) &:= v(S, T \setminus i) - v(S, T), \quad (S, T) \in \mathcal{Q}(N), S \not\ni i, T \ni i. \end{aligned}$$

$\Delta_{i, \emptyset} v(S, T)$ is the contribution of element i when it acts as a positive element, while $\Delta_{\emptyset, i} v(S, T)$ is the (negative) contribution of i when acting as a negative element. Hence the two above Shapley values are average contributions of an element when it acts as a positive or as a negative element.

The coefficients are obtained through an efficiency axiom which reads:

$$\sum_{i \in N} [I(i, \emptyset) + I(\emptyset, i)] = v(N, \emptyset) - v(\emptyset, N).$$

As above, the derivative $\Delta_{S,T}$ can be defined recursively from these equations, and the definition of the Shapley interaction index is:

$$I_{S,T} := \sum_{K \subseteq N \setminus (S \cup T)} \frac{(n - s - t - k)!k!}{(n - s - t + 1)!} \Delta_{S,T} v(K, N \setminus (K \cup S)).$$

3 Mathematical background and general framework for interaction

We try now to have a general view of previous definitions, thanks to results from lattice theory. We first introduce necessary definitions (see e.g. [2, 4, 13]).

Let (L, \leq) be a lattice, we denote as usual by $\vee, \wedge, \top, \perp$ supremum, infimum, top and bottom (if they exist). If x and y in L are incomparable, we write $x \parallel y$. $Q \subseteq L$ is a *downset* of L if $x \in Q$ and $y \leq x$ imply $y \in Q$. For any $x \in L$, the *principal ideal* $\downarrow x$ is defined as $\downarrow x := \{y \in L \mid y \leq x\}$ (downset generated by x). For $x, y \in L$, we say that x *covers* y (or y is a *predecessor* of x), denoted by $x \succ y$, if there is no $z \in L, z \neq x, y$ such that $x \geq z \geq y$. (L, \leq) is *lower semi-modular* (resp. *upper semi-modular*) if for all $x, y \in L$, $x \vee y \succ x$ and $x \vee y \succ y$ imply $x \succ x \wedge y$ and $y \succ x \wedge y$ (resp. $x \succ x \wedge y$ and $y \succ x \wedge y$ imply $x \vee y \succ x$ and $x \vee y \succ y$). A lattice being upper and lower semi-modular is called *modular*. A lattice is modular iff it does not contain N_5 as a sublattice (see Fig. 2). A lattice is *distributive* when \vee, \wedge satisfy the distributivity law, and it is *complemented* when each $x \in L$ has a (unique) complement x' , i.e. satisfying $x \vee x' = \top$ and $x \wedge x' = \perp$. A modular lattice is distributive iff it does not contain M_3 as a sublattice (see Fig. 2). A lattice is *linear* if it is totally ordered. A lattice is said to be *Boolean* if it has a top and bottom element, is distributive and complemented. When L is finite, it is Boolean iff it is isomorphic to the lattice 2^n for some n .

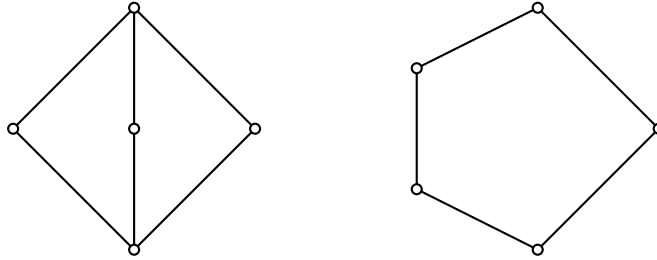


Figure 2: The lattices M_3 (left) and N_5 (right)

(L, \leq) is said to be *lower locally distributive* if it is lower semi-modular, and it does not contain a sublattice isomorphic to M_3 . Equivalently, it is lower locally distributive if for any $x \in L$, the interval $[\bigwedge_{y \prec x} y, x]$ is a Boolean lattice (see [17] for a survey).

An element $i \in L$ is *join-irreducible* if it cannot be written as a supremum over other elements of L and it is not the bottom element. When L is finite, this is equivalent to i covers only one element. Let us call $\mathcal{J}(L)$ the set of all join-irreducible elements of L .

In a finite distributive lattice, any element $y \in L$ can be decomposed in terms of join-irreducible elements. The fundamental result due to Birkhoff is the following.

Theorem 1 *Let L be a finite distributive lattice. Then the map $\eta : L \longrightarrow \mathcal{O}(\mathcal{J}(L))$, where $\mathcal{O}(\mathcal{J})$ is the set of all downsets of \mathcal{J} , defined by*

$$\eta(x) := \{i \in \mathcal{J}(L) \mid i \leq x\} = \mathcal{J}(L) \cap \downarrow x$$

is an isomorphism of L onto $\mathcal{O}(\mathcal{J}(L))$.

We call $\eta(x)$ the *normal decomposition* of x , we have

$$x = \bigvee \eta(x).$$

The isomorphism says that $x \leq y$ iff $\eta(x) \subseteq \eta(y)$, hence $\eta(x \vee y) = \eta(x) \cup \eta(y)$ and so on.

The decomposition of some x in L in term of supremum of join-irreducible elements is unique up to the fact that it may happen that some join-irreducible elements in $\eta(x)$ are comparable. Hence, if $i \leq j$ and j is in a decomposition of x , then we may delete i from the decomposition of x . We call *minimal decomposition* the (unique) decomposition of minimal cardinality, denoted by $\eta^*(x)$. *Atoms* are join-irreducible elements covering \perp . A lattice is *atomistic* if all join-irreducible elements are atoms. A finite distributive atomistic lattice is Boolean.

As shown by Dilworth [5], any $x \in L$ has a unique join-irreducible minimal decomposition iff it is lower locally distributive.

A useful result is the following

$$\downarrow x = \{y \mid \eta(y) = \bigcup_{j \in K} j, \quad K \subseteq \eta(x)\}. \quad (10)$$

When $L = 2^n$, join-irreducible elements are simply atoms (i.e. singletons of N). When $L = 3^n$, join-irreducible elements are (i, i^c) and (\emptyset, i^c) , $\forall i \in N$.

Let (L, \leq) be a locally finite partially ordered set, and a function $g : L \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$. Consider the following equation

$$g(x) = \sum_{y \leq x} f(y). \quad (11)$$

There is a unique solution $f : L \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ to this equation, called the *Möbius transform* of g (see Rota [18]). Note that in a sense, f could be considered as the derivative of g .

As said in the introduction, our general framework for the definition of interaction will be to consider finite lower locally distributive lattices L_1, \dots, L_n , with top and bottom of L_i denoted by \top_i, \perp_i , $i = 1, \dots, n$, and the product lattice $L := L_1 \times \dots \times L_n$ with the product order. Sometimes, we will need in addition that the L_k 's are modular (hence they are distributive). We set $N := \{1, \dots, n\}$. A *vertex* of L is an element $x = (x_1, \dots, x_n)$ of L where x_i is either \top_i or \perp_i , for $i = 1, \dots, n$. We denote by $\Gamma(L)$ the set of vertices of L . Note that if L is a Boolean lattice, then $L = \Gamma(L)$. For $\mathcal{Q}(N)$, vertices are of the form (A, A^c) , $A \subseteq N$.

Since L_i is finite and lower locally distributive, it can be represented by join-irreducible elements. Then join-irreducible elements of L are simply of the form

$$i = (\perp_1, \dots, \perp_{j-1}, i_0, \perp_{j+1}, \dots, \perp_n),$$

for some $j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ and some $i_0 \in \mathcal{J}(L_j)$. Hence, there are $\sum_{j=1}^n |\mathcal{J}(L_j)|$ join-irreducible elements in L .

4 Derivative of a function over a lattice

Let (L, \leq) be a finite lower locally distributive lattice, and $f : L \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ a real-valued function on it.

Definition 1 Let $i \in \mathcal{J}(L)$. The derivative of f w.r.t. i at point $x \in L$ is given by:

$$\Delta_i f(x) := f(x \vee i) - f(x).$$

Note that $\Delta_i f(x) = 0$ if $i \leq x$. We say that the derivative $\Delta_i f(x)$ is *Boolean* if $[x, x \vee i]$ is the Boolean lattice 2^1 , otherwise said $x \vee i \succ x$. Differentiating two times w.r.t two join-irreducible elements i, j such that $i \parallel j$ (i and j are incomparable) leads to:

$$\Delta_i(\Delta_j f(x)) = \Delta_j(\Delta_i f(x)) = f(x \vee i \vee j) - f(x \vee i) - f(x \vee j) + f(x).$$

We call this quantity the *second derivative* w.r.t i, j or the derivative w.r.t $i \vee j$, denoted by $\Delta_{i \vee j} f(x)$. Note that allowing $i \leq j$ leads to $\Delta_{i \vee j} f(x) = -\Delta_i f(x)$.

Using the minimal decomposition, the derivative w.r.t any element y can be defined.

Definition 2 Let $x, y \in L$, and $y = \bigvee_{k=1}^n i_k$ be the minimal decomposition of y into join-irreducible elements. Then the derivative of f w.r.t y at point x is given by:

$$\Delta_y f(x) = \Delta_{i_1}(\Delta_{i_2}(\cdots \Delta_{i_n} f(x) \cdots)).$$

The derivative is *Boolean* if $[x, x \vee y]$ is the Boolean lattice 2^n . The derivative is 0 if for some k , $i_k \leq x$. The following lemma gives practical equivalent conditions.

Lemma 1 Let $x, y \in L$.

(i) The derivative $\Delta_y f(x)$ is 0 whenever $\eta(x) \cap \eta^*(y) \neq \emptyset$.

(ii) The derivative $\Delta_y f(x)$ is Boolean iff $\eta(x \vee y) = \eta(x) \cup \bigcup \eta^*(y)$.

Proof: (i) Let $k \in \eta(x) \cap \eta^*(y)$. Since $k \in \eta(x)$, all join-irreducible elements below k are also in $\eta(x)$, hence $\eta(k) \subseteq \eta(x)$. By Th. 1, this is equivalent to $k \leq x$, which in turn implies that the derivative is 0 since $k \in \eta^*(y)$.

(ii) Let us consider first $y = i \in \mathcal{J}(L)$, and suppose $\Delta_i f(x)$ is Boolean. Since $x \vee i \succ x$, by isomorphism, we have $\eta(x \vee i) \succ \eta(x)$, which means that there exists some $k \in \mathcal{J}(L)$ such that $\eta(x \vee i) = \eta(x) \cup \{k\}$. Since $\eta(x \vee i) = \eta(x) \cup \eta(i)$, $k \in \eta(i)$, and all other $j \in \eta(i)$ belong also to $\eta(x)$. Hence $k = i = \eta^*(i)$ since $\eta(i) = \{j \in \mathcal{J}(L) \mid j \leq i\}$. The converse is clear. Applying recursively this result proves (ii). ■

As a consequence of (ii), the lattice $[x, x \vee y]$ is isomorphic to $(\mathcal{P}(\eta^*(y)), \subseteq)$.

We express the derivative in terms of the Möbius transform of f .

Proposition 1 Let i be a join-irreducible element such that $\Delta_i f(x)$ is Boolean. We denote by m the Möbius transform of f . Then

$$\Delta_i f(x) = \sum_{y \in [i, x \vee i]} m(y).$$

Proof: We have:

$$\Delta_i f(x) = \sum_{y \leq x \vee i} m(y) - \sum_{y \leq x} m(y) = \sum_{y \in \downarrow(x \vee i) \setminus \downarrow x} m(y),$$

since $\downarrow x \subset \downarrow(x \vee i)$. Using Lemma 1 (ii), we have $\eta(x \vee i) = \eta(x) \cup \{i\}$. Applying (10), we get

$$\downarrow(x \vee i) \setminus \downarrow x = \{y \mid \eta(y) = \bigcup_{j \in K} j \cup \{i\}, \quad K \subseteq \eta(x)\} = [i, x \vee i]$$

since we get i for $K = \emptyset$, and $x \vee i$ for $K = \eta(x)$, and the set is clearly an interval. \blacksquare

Based on this, we can show the general result:

Theorem 2 *Let $x, y \in L$, such that $\Delta_y f(x)$ is Boolean. Then*

$$\Delta_y f(x) = \sum_{z \in [y, x \vee y]} m(z).$$

Proof: We proceed by recurrence on $|\eta^*(y)|$. The result is already shown for $|\eta^*(y)| = 1$. Let us suppose it holds for some y , and consider $y' = y \vee i$, with $i \notin \eta(y)$ and $\Delta_{y'} f(x)$ being Boolean. We have:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_{y'} f(x) &= \Delta_i(\Delta_y f(x)) \\ &= \Delta_y f(x \vee i) - \Delta_y f(x) \\ &= \sum_{z \in [y, x \vee y \vee i]} m(z) - \sum_{z \in [y, x \vee y]} m(z) \\ &= \sum_{z \in [y, x \vee y \vee i] \setminus [y, x \vee y]} m(z). \end{aligned}$$

Since $[y, x \vee y] = \{z \mid \eta(z) = \eta(y) \cup \bigcup_{j \in J} j, J \subseteq \eta(x)\}$ and $[y, x \vee y \vee i] = \{z \mid \eta(z) = \eta(y) \cup \bigcup_{j \in J} j, J \subseteq \eta(x) \cup \{i\}\}$ we get

$$[y, x \vee y \vee i] \setminus [y, x \vee y] = \{z \mid \eta(z) = \eta(y) \cup \bigcup_{j \in J} j \cup \{i\}, J \subseteq \eta(x)\} = [y', y' \vee x],$$

the desired result. \blacksquare

The close link between our derivative and Möbius transform is not surprising since the Möbius transform has already a meaning of derivative.

Let us apply these results to the case of usual capacities and bi-capacities. It suffices to check if formulas coincide for join-irreducible elements. For capacities, we have for any $i \in N$, $\Delta_i v(A) := v(A \cup i) - v(A)$, so that we recover the definition above. Note that this coincides with the notion of derivative for pseudo-Boolean functions [14]. For bi-capacities, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_{(i, i^c)} v(A, B) &= v(A \cup i, B) - v(A, B) = \Delta_{i, \emptyset} v(A, B) \\ \Delta_{(\emptyset, i^c)} v(A, B) &= v(A, B \setminus i) - v(A, B) = \Delta_{\emptyset, i} v(A, B), \end{aligned}$$

which again coincides with the definition given above, although notation differs.

5 Interaction: the general case

As seen in Section 2, the definition of the derivative is the key concept for the interaction index. Using our general definition of derivative with new notation, let us express the interaction when $L = 3^n$ using the notation $\Delta_{(S,T)}$. Imposing the same argument to I and Δ , we are led to:

$$I^v(S, T) = \sum_{K \subseteq T} \frac{(t-k)!k!}{(t+1)!} \Delta_{(S,T)} v(K, N \setminus (K \cup S)), \quad (12)$$

with the correspondence $I_{S,T}^v = I^v(S, (S \cup T)^c)$. Observe that these two notations precisely correspond to those introduced in Eqs. (2).

We remark that the derivative in the above expression is taken over some vertices of $\mathcal{Q}(N \setminus S)$. Also, the importance index corresponds to derivatives w.r.t. join-irreducible elements. Based on these observations, we are now in position to propose a definition using our general framework (see Section 3). Roughly speaking, the interaction index w.r.t. $x \in L$ is a weighted average of the derivative w.r.t. x , taken at vertices of L “not related” to x . The weights can be determined recursively from the cases where x is a join-irreducible element, and the coefficients for these cases are determined by some normalization condition (e.g. efficiency-like condition in the case of the Shapley index).

5.1 Definition of interaction

We begin by defining the importance index, i.e. interaction index w.r.t. a join-irreducible element.

Definition 3 *Let $i = (\perp_1, \dots, \perp_{j-1}, i_0, \perp_{j+1}, \dots, \perp_n)$ be a join-irreducible element of L . The interaction w.r.t. i of v is any function of the form*

$$I(i) := \sum_{x \in \Gamma(\prod_{k=1}^{j-1} L_k) \times \{\underline{i}_0\} \times \Gamma(\prod_{k=j+1}^n L_k)} \alpha_{h(x)}^1 \Delta_i v(x), \quad (13)$$

where \underline{i}_0 is the (unique) predecessor of i_0 in L_j , $h(x)$ is the number of components of x equal to \top_l , $l = 1, \dots, n$, and $\alpha_k^1 \in \mathbb{R}$ for any integer k .

Observe that the constants $\alpha_{h(x)}^1$ do not depend on i . Also, the derivative is Boolean.

Let us show that this definition encompasses the case of capacities and bi-capacities. For capacities, $L_k = \{0, 1\}$ for all k , with 1 as unique join-irreducible element, join-irreducible elements of $L = 2^n$ are singletons, all elements in L are vertices, and $h(x)$ is the cardinality of sets. Thus we get for a singleton $j \in N$:

$$I(j) = \sum_{A \subseteq N \setminus j} \alpha_{|A|}^1 [v(A \cup j) - v(A)]$$

as desired. For bi-capacities, $L_k = \{-1, 0, 1\}$ for all k , with $\mathcal{J}(L_k) = \{0, 1\}$. The height function is $h(A, B) = |A|$. Let us consider first the case where the join-irreducible element

in $L = 3^n$ is (j, j^c) , or in vector form $(-1, \dots, -1, 1, -1, \dots, -1)$, where 1 is at the j th place. Then $\Gamma(3^{j-1}) \times \{0\} \times \Gamma(3^{n-j})$ corresponds to vertices of $\mathcal{Q}(N \setminus j)$. Thus we obtain

$$I(j, j^c) = \sum_{A \subseteq N \setminus j} \alpha_{|A|}^1 \Delta_{(j, j^c)} v(A, N \setminus (A \cup j))$$

which has the required form. Let us examine now the case of (\emptyset, j^c) , which is, in vector form, $(-1, \dots, -1, 0, -1, \dots, -1)$. This time $\Gamma(3^{j-1}) \times \{-1\} \times \Gamma(3^{n-j})$ is $\Gamma(L)$, after removal of vertices (A, A^c) with $j \in A$. In summary, we obtain:

$$I(\emptyset, j^c) = \sum_{A \subseteq N \setminus j} \alpha_{|A|}^1 \Delta_{(\emptyset, j^c)} v(A, N \setminus A)$$

which has again the required form.

Let us generalize Def. 3 to a class of elements of L denoted by \tilde{L} and defined as follows: $\tilde{L} := \bigcup_{K \subseteq N} \tilde{L}_K$, with

$$\tilde{L}_K := \{x \in L \mid \forall k \in K, \exists! \underline{i}_k \in L_k \text{ such that } \forall i \in \eta^*(x_k), i \succ \underline{i}_k, \text{ and } x_k = \perp_k \text{ if } k \in N \setminus K\}$$

In words, it is the set of elements whose coordinates are either bottom or such that the minimal decomposition covers a unique element. Observe that for the case where L_k is a linear lattice or an atomistic one (i.e. practical cases of interest), $\tilde{L} = L$.

Definition 4 Let $K \subseteq N$, $x \in \tilde{L}_K$, and denote as above by \underline{i}_k , for all $k \in K$, the element covered by all $i \in \eta^*(x_k)$. The interaction w.r.t. x of v is any function of the form

$$I(x) := \sum_{y \mid y_k = \top_k \text{ or } \perp_k \text{ if } k \notin K, y_k = \underline{i}_k \text{ else}} \alpha_{h(y)}^{|K|} \Delta_x v(y) \quad (14)$$

where $h(y)$ is the number of components of y equal to \top_l , $l = 1, \dots, n$.

The derivative is Boolean if in addition the L_k 's are modular (and hence distributive), by application of the following Lemma.

Lemma 2 If L_k is distributive, $k = 1, \dots, n$, then for any $K \subseteq N$, any $x \in \tilde{L}_K$, $\Delta_x v(y)$ is Boolean for any y such that $y_k = \top_k$ or \perp_k , $k \notin K$, and $y_k = \underline{i}_k$, where \underline{i}_k is the element covered by all $i \in \eta^*(x_k)$.

Proof: We have to prove that $[y, x \vee y]$ is isomorphic to $2^{|\eta^*(x)|}$, with y defined as above. It suffices to prove that $[y_k, x_k \vee y_k]$ is isomorphic to $2^{|\eta^*(x_k)|}$ for each coordinate k . If $k \notin K$, then $[y_k, x_k \vee y_k] = \{y_k\} \cong 2^0$. If $k \in K$, then y_k is covered by all i in $\eta^*(x_k)$. Hence $[y_k, x_k \vee y_k] = [\underline{i}_k, x_k]$, which is atomistic. Since it is also distributive, it is Boolean and isomorphic to $2^{|\eta^*(x_k)|}$. ■

5.2 Expression with the Möbius transform and efficiency

Let us express $I(x)$ w.r.t the Möbius transform. First we recall the result for bi-capacities, which writes [9, 11]:

$$I(S, T) = \sum_{(S', T') \in [(S, T), (S \cup T, \emptyset)]} \frac{1}{t - t' + 1} m(S', T').$$

We have the following general result.

Theorem 3 *Let $K \subseteq N$, and assume distributivity holds for every L_k , $k \in K$. The expression of the interaction index for $x \in \tilde{L}_K$ in terms of the Möbius transform is given by:*

$$I(x) = \sum_{z \in [x, \tilde{x}]} \beta_{k(z)}^{|K|} m(z),$$

with $\tilde{x}_k := (\top_k)$ for $k \notin K$, $\tilde{x}_k = x_k$ else, and $k(z)$ is the number of coordinates of z not equal to \perp_l , $l = 1, \dots, n$. Moreover, the real constants $\beta_{k(z)}^{|K|}$ are related to the $\alpha_{h(x)}^{|K|}$'s by:

$$\beta_{k(z)}^{|K|} = \sum_{l=0}^{n-k(z)} \binom{n-k(z)}{l} \alpha_{(k(z)-|K|+l)}^{|K|} \quad (15)$$

Proof: Since the derivative is Boolean by Lemma 2, we can apply Th. 2, and we get:

$$I(x) = \sum_{y | y_k = \top_k \text{ or } \perp_k \text{ if } k \notin K, y_k = \underline{i}_k \text{ else}} \alpha_{h(y)}^{|K|} \sum_{z \in [x, y \vee x]} m(z). \quad (16)$$

Then for any y such that $y_k = \top_k$ or \perp_k if $k \notin K$, and $y_k = \underline{i}_k$ else, $(y \vee x)_k = x_k$ when $k \in K$, other coordinates being \top_k or \perp_k , in any combination. Hence for all possible such y , z takes any value in $[x, (\top_{N \setminus K}, x_K)]$, where $(\top_{N \setminus K}, x_K)$ has coordinate \top_k when $k \notin K$, and x_k else. Denoting by \tilde{x} the right bound of this interval, we get

$$I(x) = \sum_{z \in [x, \tilde{x}]} \beta_z m(z).$$

It remains to express β_z in terms of $\alpha_{h(x)}^{|K|}$. Let us take a fixed $z \in [x, \tilde{x}]$ and examine for which y 's in (16) it belongs to $[x, y \vee x]$. Note that $z_k = x_k$ for all $k \in K$. Since y_l , $l \notin K$ is either \perp_l or \top_l , we must have $y_l = \top_l$ whenever $z_l \neq \perp_l$, the other coordinates not in K being free. The result is then:

$$\beta_z = \sum_{y | y_l = \top_l \text{ if } z_l \neq \perp_l, l \notin K} \alpha_{h(y)}^{|K|}.$$

Denoting by $k(z)$ the number of coordinates not equal to \perp_l , we get

$$\beta_z = \sum_{l=0}^{n-k(z)} \binom{n-k(z)}{l} \alpha_{k(z)-|K|+l}^{|K|}$$

Remarking that β_z depends only on $k(z)$ and $|K|$, we get the desired result. \blacksquare

Let us check if we recover the coefficients for bi-capacities and Shapley index. For $(S, T) = (i, i^c)$ and (\emptyset, i^c) , we have $\beta_{(S', T')} = \frac{1}{n-t'}$. We apply (15), noting that (S', T') has $n - t'$ coordinates different from bottom:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{(S', T')} &= \sum_{l=0}^{t'} \binom{t'}{l} \alpha_{n-t'-1+l}^1 \\ &= \sum_{l=0}^{t'} \binom{t'}{l} \frac{(n-t'-1+l)!(t'-l)!}{n!} \\ &= \sum_{l=0}^{t'} \frac{t!(n-t'-1+l)!}{l!n!}.\end{aligned}$$

In [11], the following combinatorial result was shown:

$$\sum_{i=0}^k \frac{(n-i-1)!k!}{n!(k-i)!} = \frac{1}{n-k}.$$

Applying the above formula with $i = t' - l$, we get the desired result.

It is possible to find easily the $\beta_{k(z)}^1$ coefficients if we consider a normalization condition as for the Shapley index. Let us define *efficiency* as

$$\sum_{i \in \mathcal{J}(L)} I(i) = v(\top) - v(\perp), \quad (17)$$

and call *Shapley interaction index* the resulting interaction index. Applying Th. 3, we get:

$$\sum_{i \in \mathcal{J}(L)} I(i) = \sum_{i \in \mathcal{J}(L)} \sum_{z \in [i, \check{i}]} \beta_{k(z)}^1 m(z).$$

Let us take m such as it is non zero only for a given $z \in L$, say z_0 , such that for all coordinates z_l different from bottom, we have $z_l \in \mathcal{J}(L_l)$. Since $\sum_{x \in L} m(x) = v(\top)$, we have necessarily $m(z_0) = v(\top) - v(\perp)$. Observe that z_0 belongs to all intervals $[i, \check{i}]$ such that $z_0 \geq i$ and $z_0 \leq \check{i}$. Recalling that $i = (\perp_1, \dots, \perp_{j-1}, i_0, \perp_{j+1}, \dots, \perp_n)$ and $\check{i} = (\top_1, \dots, \top_{j-1}, i_0, \top_{j+1}, \dots, \top_n)$, if z has only coordinate $z_l \neq \perp_l$, then only i such that $i_l = z_l$ is suitable. More generally, if z has only k coordinates different from bottom, then we have only k choices for i . Hence, for such z

$$\beta_{k(z)}^1 = \frac{v(\top) - v(\perp)}{k(z)[v(\top) - v(\perp)]} = \frac{1}{k(z)}.$$

Let us apply this to the Shapley index for bi-capacities. We get:

$$\beta_{(S', T')}^1 = \frac{1}{n-t'}.$$

Suppose the $\beta_{k(z)}^1$'s are determined by some rule, as above. Since $k(z)$ takes values in $\{1, \dots, n\}$, there are n coefficients $\beta_{k(z)}^1$, while for $\alpha_{h(x)}^1$, $h(x) \in \{0, \dots, n-1\}$, so that there are also n coefficients. Th. 3 tells us that $\alpha_0^1, \dots, \alpha_{n-1}^1$ can be computed from $\beta_1^1, \dots, \beta_n^1$ by solving the triangular linear system (15). Since there is no 0 on the diagonal of the matrix, there is always a unique solution to this system.

Applying this observation to the Shapley interaction index, we get the following result.

Theorem 4 *When L_k is distributive, for all $k = 1, \dots, n$, the coefficients $\alpha_0^1, \dots, \alpha_{n-1}^1$ of the Shapley interaction index $I(i)$, $i \in \mathcal{J}(L)$ (i.e. satisfying Def. 3 and (17)) are given by:*

$$\alpha_k^1 = \frac{(n-1-k)!k!}{n!}.$$

5.3 The recursion axiom for the linear case

Let us generalize the recursion axiom (6) to compute $I(x)$, with the following additional restriction: all L_k 's are linear lattices. Hence, all previous results apply. Also, all derivatives involved are Boolean.

Let $J \subseteq N$, and consider x such that $x_k = \perp_k$ if $k \notin J$, and $x_k = i_k$ else, for some $i_k \in \mathcal{J}(L_k)$. We denote as before by \underline{i}_k the unique predecessor of i_k . We introduce additional notations. For any $K \subseteq J, K \neq \emptyset, J$, the function v restricted to $\prod_{k \in N \setminus K} L_k$ is denoted by $v_x^{N \setminus K}$ and defined by:

$$v_x^{N \setminus K}(y) := v(y'), \text{ with } y'_k := \begin{cases} \underline{i}_k, & \text{if } k \in K \\ y_k, & \text{else} \end{cases}, \quad \forall y \in \prod_{k \in N \setminus K} L_k.$$

The function v reduced to x is a function $v^{[x]}$ defined on $\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k \times \{\perp_{[x]}, \top_{[x]}\}$ by:

$$v^{[x]}(y) := v(\phi_{[x]}(y)), \quad \forall y \in \prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k \times \{\perp_{[x]}, \top_{[x]}\},$$

and $\phi_{[x]} : \prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k \times \{\perp_{[x]}, \top_{[x]}\} \longrightarrow L$ is defined by

$$\phi_{[x]}(y) := y', \text{ with } y'_k := \begin{cases} i_k, & \text{if } k \in J \text{ and } y_{[x]} = \top_{[x]} \\ \underline{i}_k, & \text{if } k \in J \text{ and } y_{[x]} = \perp_{[x]} \\ y_k, & \text{if } k \notin J. \end{cases}$$

We propose the following recursion formula:

$$I^v(x) = I^{v^{[x]}}(\perp_{N \setminus J}, \top_{[x]}) - \sum_{K \subseteq J, K \neq \emptyset, J} I^{v_x^{N \setminus K}}(x|_{N \setminus K}), \quad (18)$$

where $\perp_{N \setminus J}$ stands for the vector $(\perp_k)_{k \in N \setminus J}$, and $x|_{N \setminus K}$ is the restriction of x to coordinates in $N \setminus K$.

Let us check if we recover (6) for capacities. Taking $S \subseteq N$, the restricted game $v_S^{N \setminus K}$ for $\emptyset \neq K \subset S$, is defined by $v_S^{N \setminus K}(T) = v(T)$ if $T \subseteq N \setminus K$, and does not depend

on S . The reduced game is defined over $N \setminus S \cup \{[S]\}$, and $\phi(T) = T$ if $T \not\supseteq [S]$, and $T \setminus \{[S]\} \cup S$ else. Now observe that $(\perp_{N \setminus J}, \top_{[x]})$ writes $[S]$ in our case, so that the formula is recovered.

The following result holds.

Theorem 5 *Denoting by $\alpha_k^j(n)$ the coefficients α_k^j involved into (14), the recursion formula (18) induces the following recursive relation:*

$$\alpha_k^j(n) = \alpha_k^1(n - j + 1), \quad \forall k = 0, \dots, n - j, \quad \forall j = 1 \dots, n. \quad (19)$$

Proof: We prove the result by recurrence on $j := |J|$. It is obviously true for $j = 1$, and let us assume it is true up to $j - 1$. Simplifying notations, the left term in (18) writes:

$$I^v(x) = \sum_{\substack{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k) \\ y_J = \underline{i}_J}} \alpha_{h(y)}^j(n) \Delta_x v(y) = \sum_{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k)} \alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^j(n) \Delta_x v(y_{N \setminus J}, \underline{i}_J)$$

where y_A indicates the vector y restricted to coordinates in A , and \underline{i}_J is the vector with coordinates \underline{i}_k , $k \in J$. Using similar notations, the right term writes:

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{\substack{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k) \\ y_{[x]} = \perp_{[x]}}} \alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^1(n - j + 1) \Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y) \\ & - \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \sum_{\substack{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k) \\ y_{J \setminus K} = \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}}} \alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^{j-k}(n - k) \Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y) \\ = & \sum_{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k)} \alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^1(n - j + 1) \left[\Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y_{N \setminus J}, \perp_{[x]}) - \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y_{N \setminus J}, \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}) \right] \end{aligned}$$

where equality comes from the recurrence hypothesis. Hence, Eq. (18) is equivalent to:

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{y_{N \setminus J} \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k)} \left[\alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^j(n) \Delta_x v(y_{N \setminus J}, \underline{i}_J) - \alpha_{h(y_{N \setminus J})}^1(n - j + 1) \left[\Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y_{N \setminus J}, \perp_{[x]}) \right. \right. \\ & \quad \left. \left. - \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y_{N \setminus J}, \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}) \right] \right] = 0 \end{aligned}$$

Since the equality holds for any v , we should have for any $y_0 \in \Gamma(\prod_{k \in N \setminus J} L_k)$:

$$\alpha_{h(y_0)}^j(n) \Delta_x v(y_0, \underline{i}_J) - \alpha_{h(y_0)}^1(n - j + 1) \left[\Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y_0, \perp_{[x]}) - \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y_0, \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}) \right] = 0$$

We are done if we prove that

$$\Delta_x v(y_0, \underline{i}_J) - \Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y_0, \perp_{[x]}) + \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y_0, \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}) = 0. \quad (20)$$

The derivative $\Delta_x v(y_0, \underline{i}_J)$ is the sum of terms $\pm v(z)$, with $z_j = i_j$ or $z_j = \underline{i}_j$ whenever $j \in J$. We may assume w.l.o.g. that $J = \{1, \dots, j\}$. We associate to each such z a set $K \subseteq J$ containing the coordinates where $z_j = i_j$, and denote with some abuse of notation $v(z)$ by $v(K)$. Hence $\Delta_x v(y_0, \underline{i}_J)$ can be represented by the sum:

$$\begin{aligned} v(J) - v(J \setminus \{1\}) - v(J \setminus \{2\}) - \dots + v(J \setminus \{1, 2\}) + \dots (-1)^{|K|} v(J \setminus K) + \dots (-1)^{|J|} v(\emptyset) \\ = \sum_{K \subseteq J} (-1)^{|K|} v(J \setminus K). \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, we have $\Delta_{\top_{[x]}} v^{[x]}(y_0, \perp_{[x]}) = v(J) - v(\emptyset)$ by definition of $v^{[x]}$, and

$$\Delta_{x_{N \setminus K}} v_x^{N \setminus K}(y_0, \underline{i}_{J \setminus K}) = \sum_{L \subseteq J \setminus K} (-1)^{|L|} v(J \setminus (K \cup L)).$$

Using the last 2 expressions, the right side of (20) writes:

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{K \subseteq J} (-1)^{|K|} v(J \setminus K) - v(J) + v(\emptyset) + \sum_{\emptyset \neq K \subset J} \sum_{L \subseteq J \setminus K} (-1)^{|L|} v(J \setminus (K \cup L)) \\ &= \sum_{K \subseteq J} \sum_{L \subseteq J \setminus K} (-1)^{|L|} v(J \setminus (K \cup L)) - v(J) \\ &= \sum_{K' \subseteq J} v(J \setminus K') \sum_{k=0}^{k'} \binom{k'}{k} (-1)^{k'-k} - v(J) \\ &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

■

Note that $\alpha_k^j(n)$ depends only on k and $n - j$.

Using (19), we are now able to give the coefficients for the interaction index, which coincide with those of (12):

$$\alpha_k^j = \frac{(n - j - k)! k!}{(n - j + 1)!}.$$

6 Concluding remarks

We end the paper by giving some interpretation of our definition of interaction, and indicate perspectives.

Taking a particular combination of reference levels for dimensions in $K \subseteq N$, denoted by x in Def. 4, we compute the “difference with alternate signs” between the value of the function v at this point x and point \underline{i}_K , which is the combination of levels obtained by just removing one after the others the join-irreducible elements composing x . Now, for dimensions outside K , we consider only the combination of extreme values \perp_k, \top_k , $k \notin K$, instead of all possible combinations of reference levels, which would have been too much complicated. The interaction index $I(x)$ is just the weighted average of all these “difference with alternate signs” between x and \underline{i}_K , computed over all possible

combinations of \perp_k, \top_k , for $k \notin K$. To our opinion, this is the simplest possible way to define it, encompassing classical cases of $L = 2^n$ and 3^n . Observe however that our definition cannot be applied for all $x \in L$, but only to \tilde{L} (see definition in Sec. 5). This restriction seems however of little effect, since it does not concern linear or atomistic lattices (which include, e.g., Boolean lattices and the partition lattice), the most useful cases in practice.

Results on the particular form of α_k^1 remain simple and identical to the classical cases whenever the L_k 's are distributive, since in this case derivatives become Boolean, hence the underlying structure of computation is identical to the classical case $L = 2^n$. For other cases, specific computations have to be done.

Lastly, the recursion axiom permits to derive all coefficients α_k^j from the α_k^1 's, provided all L_k 's are linear. A further way of research would be to propose a more general formula, which seems however at first sight, difficult.

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