

### Fair Shares?

A wealthy patron of the arts Phelio has two sons, Aqualo and Lipido. Aqualo likes water colors and Lipido likes oils. Phelio has  $n$  water color paintings whose values are  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n$  where  $a_i \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ . Similarly, Phelio has  $n$  oil paintings whose values are  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  where  $b_i \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ .

Phelio has decided to choose two non-empty sets  $A, B \subseteq \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  and give water color paintings  $i \in A$  to Aqualo and oil paintings  $i \in B$  to Lipido. There is a constraint. The values of the two sets of paintings are  $W = \sum_{i \in A} a_i$  and  $O = \sum_{i \in B} b_i$ . If  $W \neq O$  there will be all hell to pay. Can Phelio always make a gift that avoids such a catastrophe?

### Solution:

Phelio can always make a gift that avoids such a catastrophe:

Without loss of generality, let us assume that

$$\sum_{i=1}^n a_i \geq \sum_{i=1}^n b_i. \quad (1)$$

(Otherwise swap A and B)

Now, for any  $j$  it is always possible to express  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i$  as  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i + R_j$   $R_j \in [0, n-1]$  for some  $k = k(j) \in [0, n]$ . (When  $k = 0$  this means that  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i \in [0, n-1]$ ). This is true because all the elements in A and B belong to the set  $[1, n]$ . Indeed, either  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i < a_1$  and then we can directly see that  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i = R_j < a_1 \in [1, n]$ . Otherwise, take the largest  $k$  such that  $S_k = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i - \sum_{i=1}^k b_i \geq 0$ . Now  $k < n$  by assumption (1). If  $S_k \geq n$  then  $S_{k+1} \geq 0$ , contradiction.

Consider the set of values  $R_j$ , for  $j \in [1, n]$ . If  $R_j = 0$ , for some  $j$  then we are done since  $\sum_{i=1}^j b_i = \sum_{i=1}^{k(j)} a_i$ . If not, there are only  $n-1$  possible values for the  $n$  quantities  $R_1, \dots, R_n$  and so there exist  $j_1 < j_2$  such that  $R_{j_1} = R_{j_2}$ . But then

$$\sum_{i=1}^{j_1} b_i - \sum_{i=1}^{k(j_1)} a_i = R_{j_1} = R_{j_2} = \sum_{i=1}^{j_2} b_i - \sum_{i=1}^{k(j_2)} a_i$$

and therefore,

$$\sum_{i=j_1}^{j_2} b_i = \sum_{i=k(j_1)}^{k(j_2)} a_i.$$

Hence, it is always possible for Phelio to make a gift to avoid a catastrophe of unfair shares. In fact Phelio can give a contiguous sub-set, which would make Aqualo and Lipido all the more happy.

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