

# Combinatorics of Dyadic Intervals: Consistent Colourings

by

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**Summary.** We study the problem of consistent and homogeneous colourings for increasing families of dyadic intervals. We determine when this problem can be solved and when it cannot.

**1. Introduction.** Combinatorics of coloured dyadic intervals refers to a set of techniques created for the study of operators defined through their action on the Haar system. We refer to the treatment of averaging projections by P. W. Jones [5], the proof of the vector-valued  $T(1)$  theorem by T. Figiel [1, 2], the use of the stripe operators in J. Lee, P. F. X. Müller and S. Müller [7], and the study of rearrangement operators on  $L^p$  spaces by P. F. X. Müller [9], K. Smela [11] and A. Kamont and P. F. X. Müller [6].

Here we study a very natural colouring problem on dyadic trees. We start out with a coloured collection  $\mathcal{C}$  of dyadic intervals, where we assume that the colours are distributed homogeneously over  $\mathcal{C}$ . Given any collection  $\mathcal{H}$  containing  $\mathcal{C}$  we ask if there exists an equally homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H}$  that preserves the colours of  $\mathcal{C}$  (a consistent colouring of  $\mathcal{H}$ ). The nature of this problem depends very much on what we agree to call a homogeneous distribution of colours. Our choice of homogeneity is very restrictive, and consequently in working on the problem of consistent colouring we encountered delicate combinatorial questions.

Let  $\mathcal{D}$  denote the collection of dyadic intervals in the unit interval  $[0, 1]$ , and let

$$\mathcal{D}_j = \{I \in \mathcal{D} : |I| = 2^{-j}\}.$$

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We consider a large collection  $\mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ . We assume that the intervals in  $\mathcal{C}$  are painted with  $d$  distinct colours, giving rise to a decomposition

$$\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{C}_1 \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d.$$

It is intuitively clear what it means that the colours  $\{1, \dots, d\}$  are homogeneously distributed among the intervals of  $\mathcal{C}$ . For instance, we would demand that there exists  $\eta > 0$  so that

$$(1.1) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i|,$$

where  $|\mathcal{C}_i|$  denotes the cardinality of the collection  $\mathcal{C}_i$ . A much stronger measure of homogeneity arises when we ask for (1.1) to hold over the prespecified collection of testing intervals

$$\mathcal{T} = \{J \in \mathcal{D} : |J| > 2^{-j}\}.$$

Specifically, if  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| > d$ , we would demand that there exists  $\eta > 0$  such that

$$(1.2) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \quad \text{for each } L \in \mathcal{T},$$

where

$$\mathcal{C}_i \cap L = \{I \in \mathcal{C}_i : I \subset L\}.$$

We use an additional rule to express homogeneity with respect to testing intervals that satisfy  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| \leq d$ . The necessity of such a rule arises from the fact that the cardinalities  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L|$  take values in  $\mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ , hence if  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| < d$ , then (1.2) has to fail. Thus, there are two regimes: high cardinality and low cardinality of  $\mathcal{C} \cap L$ , with transition at  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| = d$ . The following definition contains the homogeneity conditions for both regimes, and it addresses the discrete nature of our gauge functions

$$\mathcal{C}_i \mapsto |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L|, \quad L \in \mathcal{T}.$$

**DEFINITION 1.1.** Let  $\mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ , and fix  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $0 < \eta \leq 1/2$ . Let  $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{C}_1 \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d$  be some decomposition of  $\mathcal{C}$ . This decomposition is called an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}$  if for each  $L \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $|L| \geq 1/2^j$  one of the following holds:

*Either*  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| > d$ , and then

$$(1.3) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L|,$$

*or else*  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| \leq d$ , and then

$$(1.4) \quad |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq 1 \quad \text{for each } 1 \leq i \leq d,$$

**REMARK.** We remark that for each (uncoloured)  $\mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ ,  $d \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $\eta = 1/2$  there is always an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring that can be obtained

as follows: Enumerate the intervals in  $\mathcal{C}$  from left to right, and simply put

$$(1.5) \quad \mathcal{C}_r = \{I_l \in \mathcal{C} : l = r \bmod d\}, \quad 1 \leq r \leq d.$$

Later, we refer to this colouring as the *colouring modulo  $d$* .

The use of this colouring rule—applied to intervals of equal length—appeared in a context similar to ours in [4, p. 200] (see also [3, p. 359] and [10, p. 199]).

*The problem of consistent colouring.* The problem we treat in this paper is the following. We are given two disjoint collections  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ . Assume that the collection  $\mathcal{C}$  is coloured, that is, it is given an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring

$$\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{C}_1 \cup \cdots \cup \mathcal{C}_d.$$

The collection  $\mathcal{U}$  consists of uncoloured intervals. We would like to colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U}$  using the same colours  $\{1, \dots, d\}$ , that is, to decompose  $\mathcal{U}$  as

$$\mathcal{U} = \mathcal{U}_1 \cup \cdots \cup \mathcal{U}_d$$

in such a way that the union  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$  has an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring given by

$$\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H}_1 \cup \cdots \cup \mathcal{H}_d, \quad \text{where} \quad \mathcal{H}_i = \mathcal{C}_i \cup \mathcal{U}_i \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

That is, we want to obtain an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \supset \mathcal{C}$  keeping the pre-existing  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}$ .

We refer to this question as *the problem of finding a colouring of  $\mathcal{H}$  consistent with an existing colouring of  $\mathcal{C}$* . Our treatment of this problem is as follows:

1. We isolate a condition on  $\mathcal{U}$  and  $\mathcal{C}$  (previsibility; see Definition 2.1) implying that the problem of consistent colouring for  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$  has a solution (see Theorem 2.2).
2. We give examples where the problem of consistent colouring for  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$  has just one solution. Moreover, we give examples (of  $\mathcal{C}$ , its decomposition  $\{\mathcal{C}_i\}$  and  $\mathcal{U}$ ) for which the problem of consistent colouring for  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$  does not have a solution (see Proposition 3.1).
3. In Section 4 we reformulate the problem of consistent colouring as a two-person game. Our results—Theorem 2.2 and Proposition 3.1—translate into winning strategies for the respective players.

For the appearance of successive colourings of dyadic intervals in the context of averaging projections see [5, pp. 871–875]. In [6] we constructed supporting trees for some rearrangement operators and thereby proved their boundedness on vector valued  $L_p$  spaces. Initially, our approach to defining the supporting trees was via inclusion-exclusion principles and consistent colourings as studied in the present paper.

**2. Constructing a consistent colouring.** In the following we isolate a criterion which guarantees the existence of a consistent colouring. To formulate this criterion, we use a dyadic interval  $L \in \mathcal{D}$  together with its immediate dyadic successors  $L', L''$ , i.e. intervals  $L', L'' \in \mathcal{D}$  such that  $L = L' \cup L''$  and  $|L'| = |L''| = \frac{1}{2}|L|$ . The problem of consistent colouring leads us to the following condition: We are given disjoint collections  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$  and  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ . We say that the pair  $(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U})$  is *d-previsible* if with  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$ , the conditions

$$|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d, \quad \mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset, \quad \mathcal{U} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$$

imply

$$|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| \geq d.$$

For ease of reference in the argument below, we give the following—equivalent—definition.

**DEFINITION 2.1.** Let  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ ,  $\mathcal{C} \cap \mathcal{U} = \emptyset$ . Let  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ . The pair  $(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U})$  of collections is called *d-previsible* if for every  $L \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $|L| \geq 1/2^{j-1}$  and its dyadic successors  $L', L''$ , the following holds:

$$|(\mathcal{U} \cup \mathcal{C}) \cap L'| < d \quad \text{and} \quad |(\mathcal{U} \cup \mathcal{C}) \cap L''| \geq d$$

implies

$$\mathcal{U} \cap L'' = \emptyset \quad \text{or} \quad \mathcal{C} \cap L'' = \emptyset.$$

Now, the following theorem gives a sufficient condition for existence of consistent colourings.

**THEOREM 2.2.** Fix  $d \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $0 < \eta \leq 1/2$ . Let  $\mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ , and let  $\{\mathcal{C}_i : 1 \leq i \leq d\}$  be a fixed  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}$ . Let  $\mathcal{U} \subset \mathcal{D}_j$  be such that the pair  $(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U})$  is *d-previsible*. Then there is a colouring  $\{\mathcal{U}_i : 1 \leq i \leq d\}$  of  $\mathcal{U}$  such that  $\{\mathcal{H}_i = \mathcal{C}_i \cup \mathcal{U}_i : 1 \leq i \leq d\}$  is an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$ .

**REMARK.** A first attempt to prove Theorem 2.2 by an inductive argument would be the following: Find first an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap K$  for  $K \in \mathcal{D}_{j-\alpha}$ , where  $2^\alpha \leq d < 2^{\alpha+1}$ . Then carry over these colourings—inductively and backwards in time—to larger collections  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$ ,  $L \in \mathcal{D}_s$  with  $s > j - \alpha$ , as follows: Assume that for a dyadic interval  $L$  with successors  $L', L''$ , separate  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colourings of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L'$  and  $\mathcal{H} \cap L''$  are fixed. Then check that the union of these colourings gives an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of the union  $\mathcal{H} \cap L = (\mathcal{H} \cap L') \cup (\mathcal{H} \cap L'')$ . If this procedure worked, at stage  $s$  we would have produced an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap K$  for each  $K \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $|K| \leq 2^{-s}$ . However, such a deterministic approach cannot work, as the following example shows.

**EXAMPLE.** Take  $d = 3r$ ,  $r \in \mathbb{N}$ , and fix a dyadic interval  $L$  with successors  $L', L''$ . Assume that collections  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U}$  are such that  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L'| = |\mathcal{C} \cap L''| = r$

and  $|\mathcal{U} \cap L'| = |\mathcal{U} \cap L''| = r$ . Take an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C} \cap L$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L'| &= 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq r, & |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L'| &= 0 \quad \text{for } r+1 \leq i \leq 3r, \\ |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| &= 1 \quad \text{for } r+1 \leq i \leq 2r, \\ |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| &= 0 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq r \text{ and } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r. \end{aligned}$$

Note that then

$$|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| = 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq 2r, \quad |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| = 0 \quad \text{for } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r.$$

Next, we can choose colourings of  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} |\mathcal{U}_i \cap L'| &= 1 \quad \text{for } r+1 \leq i \leq 2r, \\ |\mathcal{U}_i \cap L'| &= 0 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq r \text{ and } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r, \\ |\mathcal{U}_i \cap L''| &= 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq r, \quad |\mathcal{U}_i \cap L''| = 0 \quad \text{for } r+1 \leq i \leq 3r. \end{aligned}$$

Then, knowing the colouring of  $\mathcal{C} \cap K$  and  $\mathcal{U} \cap K$  for  $K = L', L''$  with  $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{U}$  we have

$$|\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| = 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq 2r, \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| = 0 \quad \text{for } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r,$$

so we have separate  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colourings of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L'$  and  $\mathcal{H} \cap L''$ . However, by taking their union we get a colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$  such that

$$|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = 2 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq 2r, \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = 0 \quad \text{for } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r,$$

which is not  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous.

Note however that the above example does not contradict the assertion of Theorem 2.2. In fact, given  $\mathcal{C}$  and its colouring as above, it is quite easy to obtain a colouring of  $\mathcal{U}$  so that the conclusion of Theorem 2.2 holds. For  $K = L', L''$ , we put

$$|\mathcal{U}_i \cap K| = 0 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq 2r, \quad |\mathcal{U}_i \cap K| = 1 \quad \text{for } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r.$$

Taking the union with the colouring of  $\mathcal{C} \cap K$ , we find that  $0 \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \leq 1$ , so we have an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap K$ ,  $K = L', L''$ . Finally,

$$|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq 2r, \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = 2 \quad \text{for } 2r+1 \leq i \leq 3r,$$

so we have a  $(1/2, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$ . ■

In response to these examples, we will introduce a stopping time argument—running backwards in time—that produces the  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of Theorem 2.2. At stage  $s$  of our inductive argument, we will produce consistent  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colourings of collections  $\mathcal{H} \cap K$  for  $K \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $K \leq 2^{-s}$  provided that  $K$  satisfies

$$|\mathcal{H} \cap K| \geq d \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{C} \cap K \neq \emptyset.$$

*Proof of Theorem 2.2.* We are going to define a colouring of  $\mathcal{U}$  by an inductive argument. Let  $\alpha$  be such that  $2^\alpha \leq d < 2^{\alpha+1}$ . Let us observe that

if  $1/2^j \leq |L| \leq 1/2^{j-\alpha}$ , then  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| \leq 2^\alpha \leq d$ . Thus, if the homogeneity conditions (1.4) respectively (1.3) are satisfied for  $L \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $|L| \geq 1/2^{j-\alpha}$ , then they are satisfied for each  $L \in \mathcal{D}$  with  $|L| \geq 1/2^j$ . Therefore, in our procedure of colouring  $\mathcal{U}$  we consider only  $L \in \mathcal{D}_k$  with  $k \leq j - \alpha$ .

The inductive argument is used to prove the following statement at each stage  $s$  with  $j - \alpha \geq s \geq 0$ :

*Inductive hypothesis at stage  $s$ :* Let  $K \in \mathcal{D}_s$ . If  $|\mathcal{H} \cap K| < d$  or  $\mathcal{C} \cap K = \emptyset$ , then intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap K$  are still uncoloured. If  $|\mathcal{H} \cap K| \geq d$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap K \neq \emptyset$ , then all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap K$  are coloured, and the colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap K$  is  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous; as  $|\mathcal{H} \cap K| \geq d$ , this means that  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \geq 1$  and

$$(2.1) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap K|.$$

**I. Start of the induction.** Let  $L \in \mathcal{D}_{j-\alpha}$ . Then either  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| < d$  or  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| = d$ .

**I.1.** If  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| < d$  or  $\mathcal{C} \cap L = \emptyset$ , then all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$  are left uncoloured.

**I.2.** If  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| = d$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L \neq \emptyset$ , then also  $|\mathcal{C} \cap L| \leq d$ , which implies that  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq 1$  for  $1 \leq i \leq d$ . In that case it is possible to colour all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$  so that  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = 1$  for  $1 \leq i \leq d$ .

**II. Inductive step.** Let  $\nu < j - \alpha$ . The inductive assumption states that there is a colouring at stage  $\nu + 1$ . We need to prove that there is a colouring at stage  $\nu$ . For this take  $L \in \mathcal{D}_\nu$ . Then  $L = L' \cup L''$  with  $L', L'' \in \mathcal{D}_{\nu+1}$ ,  $\nu + 1 \leq j - \alpha$ . Each interval in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L$  or  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$  is included in  $L'$  or  $L''$ , so we have

$$\begin{aligned} |\mathcal{C} \cap L| &= |\mathcal{C} \cap L'| + |\mathcal{C} \cap L''|, \\ |\mathcal{U} \cap L| &= |\mathcal{U} \cap L'| + |\mathcal{U} \cap L''|, \\ |\mathcal{H} \cap L| &= |\mathcal{H} \cap L'| + |\mathcal{H} \cap L''|. \end{aligned}$$

Then we have two main cases:

**II.1.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| < d$  or  $\mathcal{C} \cap L = \emptyset$ . If  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| < d$  then also  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'|, |\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . If  $\mathcal{C} \cap L = \emptyset$ , then also  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' = \emptyset$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' = \emptyset$ . In both cases, by the induction hypothesis, all intervals in both  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are uncoloured.

If  $\nu > 0$ , then leave the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$  uncoloured.

If  $\nu = 0$ , then  $L = [0, 1]$ , and the induction ends. This means that  $|\mathcal{H}| < d$  or  $\mathcal{C} = \emptyset$ . If  $|\mathcal{H}| < d$ , then it is enough to assign to elements of  $\mathcal{U}$  colours different from colours of elements of  $\mathcal{C}$ . If  $\mathcal{C} = \emptyset$ , then it is enough to colour  $\mathcal{H}$  by the modulo  $d$  method (see (1.5)).

**II.2.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| \geq d$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L \neq \emptyset$ . It follows that at least one of  $\mathcal{C} \cap L', \mathcal{C} \cap L''$  must be nonempty. Now we isolate next two subcases:

**II.2.A.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| \geq d$ ,  $\mathcal{C} \cap L \neq \emptyset$  and both  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' \neq \emptyset$ ,  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ .

**II.2.B.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L| \geq d$ ,  $\mathcal{C} \cap L \neq \emptyset$ ,  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' = \emptyset$ , but  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ . (The case  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' \neq \emptyset$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' = \emptyset$  is symmetric, and there is no need to treat it separately.)

We first deal with II.2.A, and then with II.2.B. Each of these cases splits into subcases. Case II.2.B is treated by reducing its subcases to appropriate subcases of II.2.A.

**II.2.A.1.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| \geq d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d$ . Recall that  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' \neq \emptyset$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ . Then by induction hypothesis all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are already coloured, i.e. all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$  are coloured. Moreover, by (2.1), for  $1 \leq i, k \leq d$ ,

$$\eta|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = \eta|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L'| + \eta|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L''| \leq |\mathcal{H}_k \cap L'| + |\mathcal{H}_k \cap L''| = |\mathcal{H}_k \cap L|.$$

Of course, we also have  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \geq 1$ .

**II.2.A.2.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| < d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . Then by induction hypothesis all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are uncoloured, but the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L$  are coloured.

Now, we need to colour all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L = (\mathcal{U} \cap L') \cup (\mathcal{U} \cap L'')$ . To simplify notation, let

$$m = |\mathcal{C} \cap L|, \quad n = |\mathcal{C} \cap L''|, \quad x = |\mathcal{U} \cap L'|, \quad y = |\mathcal{U} \cap L''|.$$

We have

$$\begin{aligned} 0 \leq m, n \leq d-1, \quad 0 \leq m+x, n+y \leq d-1, \\ d \leq |\mathcal{H} \cap L| = m+x+n+y \leq 2(d-1). \end{aligned}$$

First consider the case  $m+n < d$ . Then

$$0 \leq |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq 1 \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

For simplicity, assume that the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'$  have colours  $1, \dots, m$ , and the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L''$  have colours  $m+1, \dots, m+n$ . Now, we colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L$ . First, colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  using colours  $m+n+1, \dots, d$ , continuing if necessary (i.e. if  $x > d - (m+n)$ ) with  $x - (d - (m+n))$  colours from among  $m+1, \dots, m+n$ ; since  $m+x < d$ , in this way we assign colours to all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$ . Next, we assign colours to intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$ . If  $m+n+x < d$ , then first assign colours  $m+n+x+1, \dots, d$ , then continue with  $1, \dots, m$ , and finish if necessary with  $m+n+1, \dots, m+n+x$ . If  $m+n+x \geq d$ , then just choose  $y$  different colours from  $1, \dots, m$  and  $m+n+1, \dots, d$ . With such a colouring of intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  we find that both

$$|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L'| \leq 1 \quad \text{and} \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L''| \leq 1, \quad 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

This implies that if  $K \subset L'$  or  $K \subset L''$  then  $|\mathcal{H} \cap K| < d$  and  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \leq 1$ .

Moreover, we get  $1 \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq 2$ , which implies

$$\eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq \frac{1}{2} \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L|.$$

It remains to consider the case  $m + n \geq d$ . Then the homogeneity assumption on the decomposition of  $\mathcal{C}$  ((1.4) for  $L'$ ,  $L''$  and (1.3) for  $L$ ) implies

$$1 \leq |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L'| + |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \leq 2, \quad 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

For simplicity, assume that the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'$  have colours  $1, \dots, m$  and the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L''$  have colours  $m + 1, \dots, d$  and  $1, \dots, m + n - d$  (note that  $m + n - d < m$ , since by assumption  $n < d$ ). To colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  choose  $x$  colours from  $m + 1, \dots, d$ . To colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  choose  $y$  colours from  $m + n - d + 1, \dots, m$ . This is possible since  $m + x < d$  and  $n + y < d$ . Observe that in this way we get

$$0 \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L'|, |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L''| \leq 1 \quad \text{and} \quad 1 \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq 2, \quad 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

Therefore, if  $K \subset L'$  or  $K \subset L''$  then  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \leq 1$ , while for  $L$  we have

$$\eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq \frac{1}{2} \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L|.$$

**II.2.A.3.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| < d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d$ . Recall that  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' \neq \emptyset$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ , by the defining condition of case II.2.A. Then by induction hypothesis all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  are uncoloured, but the intervals in  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'$  are coloured. Since the pair  $(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{U})$  is  $d$ -previsible, we have  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'' = \emptyset$ . Therefore,  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| = |\mathcal{C} \cap L''|$ , and by condition (1.3) of the  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneity for  $\mathcal{C}$ , we get  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L''| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \geq 1$  and  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''|, 1 \leq i \leq d$ , satisfy (2.1).

If  $\mathcal{U} \cap L' = \emptyset$  as well, then all intervals in  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$  come from  $\mathcal{C} \cap L$ , and there is nothing to do.

Let  $|\mathcal{U} \cap L'| = x > 0$ . We need to colour the  $x$  intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$ . To simplify notation, let  $m = |\mathcal{C} \cap L'|$ . Note that  $1 \leq m + x < d$ . Let

$$S = \{i: |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L'| = 1\} \quad \text{and} \quad T = \{i: |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L'| = 0\}.$$

Let  $t_1, \dots, t_{d-m}$  be an ordering of  $T$  such that

$$(2.2) \quad |\mathcal{C}_{t_1} \cap L''| \leq \dots \leq |\mathcal{C}_{t_{d-m}} \cap L''|.$$

Since  $x < d - m$ , there are more colours in  $T$  than intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$ . Now attach the colours  $t_1, \dots, t_x$ , bijectively, to intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$ . Then  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L'| \leq 1$ . Consequently,  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap K| \leq 1$  for each  $K \subset L'$ .

The colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L'' = \mathcal{C} \cap L''$  is  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous by the assumption. It remains to check that the  $|\mathcal{H}_i \cap L|$  satisfy (2.1). Since  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'' = \emptyset$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d$  we have

$$|\mathcal{C} \cap L| \geq |\mathcal{C} \cap L''| = |\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d.$$



Consequently, since the colouring of  $\mathcal{C}$  is  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous, we see that  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \geq |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \geq 1$  and

$$(2.3) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''|,$$

$$(2.4) \quad \eta \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L|.$$

Moreover,

$$(2.5) \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| + 1 \quad \text{for } i \in S,$$

$$(2.6) \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| + 1 = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| + 1 \quad \text{for } i = t_1, \dots, t_x,$$

$$(2.7) \quad |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \quad \text{for } i = t_{x+1}, \dots, t_{d-m}.$$

Let  $k$  be such that  $\max_i |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| = |\mathcal{H}_k \cap L|$ . Then  $k \in S$  or  $k \in T$ .

If  $k \in S$ , then  $|\mathcal{H}_k \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_k \cap L|$  by (2.5), and (2.1) is satisfied for  $L$  and  $\mathcal{H}$  in view of (2.4) and the inequality  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L| \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L|$ .

If  $k \in T$ , then we have either  $k \in \{t_1, \dots, t_x\}$  or  $k \in \{t_{x+1}, \dots, t_{d-m}\}$ . The ordering defined by (2.2) implies that  $k = t_x$  in the former case and  $k = t_{d-m}$  in the latter. If  $k = t_{d-m}$ , then (2.1) is satisfied for  $L$  and  $\mathcal{H}$  in view of (2.3), (2.7) and the inequality  $|\mathcal{C}_i \cap L''| \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L|$ . If  $k = t_x$  and  $|\mathcal{H}_{t_x} \cap L| > |\mathcal{H}_{t_{d-m}} \cap L|$  then we need to check that

$$(2.8) \quad \eta |\mathcal{H}_{t_x} \cap L| \leq |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

For  $i \in S$  inequality (2.8) is satisfied by (2.3) combined with (2.5) and (2.6). For  $i = t_1, \dots, t_x$  it is satisfied by (2.4) and (2.6). When  $|\mathcal{H}_{t_x} \cap L| > |\mathcal{H}_{t_{d-m}} \cap L|$ , then (2.6) and (2.7) combined with the ordering (2.2) imply

$$|\mathcal{C}_{t_x} \cap L''| = |\mathcal{C}_{t_{x+1}} \cap L''| = \dots = |\mathcal{C}_{t_{d-m}} \cap L''|.$$

Therefore  $|\mathcal{H}_{t_x} \cap L| = |\mathcal{C}_{t_x} \cap L''| + 1 = |\mathcal{H}_i \cap L| + 1$  for all  $i = t_{x+1}, \dots, t_{d-m}$ , so inequality (2.8) is satisfied, even with  $1/2$  on the left-hand side, for  $i = t_{x+1}, \dots, t_{d-m}$ .

**II.2.A.4.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| \geq d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . This case is analogous to II.2.A.3.

Next, we proceed with case II.2.B.

**II.2.B.1.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| \geq d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d$ . Recall that—by the condition defining case II.2.B— $\mathcal{C} \cap L' = \emptyset$  and  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ . Then by the induction hypothesis all intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are already coloured, but those in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  are uncoloured.

We need to colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$ . It is enough to colour them modulo  $d$  (see (1.5)). After this, we get a colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$  such that both  $L'$  and  $L''$  satisfy (1.3). To check that  $L$  satisfies (1.3) as well, we proceed as in case II.2.A.1.

**II.2.B.2.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| < d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . The induction hypothesis states that the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are uncoloured. Now we proceed as in case II.2.A.2.

**II.2.B.3.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| < d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| \geq d$ . Recall that  $\mathcal{C} \cap L'' \neq \emptyset$ . Therefore, by the previsibility assumption,  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'' = \emptyset$ . Since  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' = \emptyset$ , by the induction hypothesis the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  are uncoloured, and we need to colour them in case  $\mathcal{U} \cap L' \neq \emptyset$ . This is done as in case II.2.A.3.

**II.2.B.4.**  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L'| \geq d$  and  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . Recall that  $\mathcal{C} \cap L' = \emptyset$ . In this case the induction hypothesis says that the intervals in both  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  and  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  are uncoloured. We need to colour them all. First, we colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L''$  by giving each of them a different colour which was not used to colour  $\mathcal{C} \cap L''$ . This is possible since  $|\mathcal{H} \cap L''| < d$ . Then we colour the intervals in  $\mathcal{U} \cap L'$  by the modulo  $d$  method as in (1.5), but starting with colours which have not been used to colour intervals in  $\mathcal{H} \cap L''$ . In this way we get a modulo  $d$  colouring of  $\mathcal{H} \cap L$ , which is  $(1/2, d)$ -homogeneous, hence also  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous.

This completes the proof of Theorem 2.2. ■

**3. A colouring problem without solution.** Here we analyze the role of the previsibility assumption in Theorem 2.2.

Throughout this section we take  $d = 2^a$ ,  $a \in \mathbb{N}$ , and  $\eta = 1/n$  with  $n \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $j \geq n + a + 1$ .

We will define a sequence of collections  $\mathcal{C}(0) \subset \mathcal{C}(1) \subset \dots \subset \mathcal{C}(n) \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ , of size  $|\mathcal{C}(k)| = k + d$ . The initial collection  $\mathcal{C}(0)$  is of size  $d$ , hence—up to permutation—it has a unique  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring. Then we will check that for  $1 \leq k \leq n - 1$ , there is a unique  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(k)$  keeping the previously determined  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(k - 1)$ . Finally, we will see that there is no  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  keeping the previous  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n - 1)$ .

In our example below, the parameter  $d$  determines the size of the initial collection  $\mathcal{C}(0)$ , while the parameter  $\eta$  determines the number of steps needed to arrive at a problem of consistent colouring without solution.

To define the desired sequence of collections, take a chain of dyadic intervals

$$L_1 \subset \dots \subset L_{n+2}, \quad L_i \in \mathcal{D}_{j-a-i+1}.$$

Then  $|L_i| = \frac{1}{2}|L_{i+1}|$ , and let  $P_i$  be the dyadic brother of  $L_i$  in  $L_{i+1}$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, n + 1$ . Thus  $P_i = L_{i+1} \setminus L_i$ .

Now, take two sets of intervals from  $\mathcal{D}_j$ :

$$\begin{aligned} I_1, \dots, I_{d-1} \in \mathcal{D}_j & \quad \text{such that} \quad I_i \subset L_1 \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, d-1, \\ J_1, \dots, J_{n+1} \in \mathcal{D}_j & \quad \text{such that} \quad J_i \subset P_i \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, n+1. \end{aligned}$$

Consider the following sequence of collections:

$$(3.1) \quad \mathcal{C}(k) = \{I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}\} \cup \{J_{n-k+1}, \dots, J_{n+1}\} \quad \text{for } k = 0, \dots, n.$$

PROPOSITION 3.1. *The sequence of collections  $\mathcal{C}(k)$ ,  $0 \leq k \leq n$ , defined by (3.1) is increasing and it has the following properties:*

(A) Stage 0. *There exists exactly one—up to permutation— $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(0)$ ,*

$$\mathcal{C}(0) = \mathcal{C}_1(0) \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d(0).$$

(B) Stage  $k$ ,  $1 \leq k \leq n - 1$ . *Let*

$$\mathcal{C}(k-1) = \mathcal{C}_1(k-1) \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d(k-1)$$

*be the  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(k-1)$ , obtained at stage  $k-1$ . Then there exists exactly one  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(k)$ ,*

$$\mathcal{C}(k) = \mathcal{C}_1(k) \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d(k),$$

*such that*

$$\mathcal{C}_i(k-1) \subset \mathcal{C}_i(k) \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

(C) Stage  $n$ . *Let*

$$\mathcal{C}(n-1) = \mathcal{C}_1(n-1) \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d(n-1)$$

*be the  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n-1)$ , obtained at stage  $n-1$ . There does not exist an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n)$ ,*

$$\mathcal{C}(n) = \mathcal{C}_1(n) \cup \dots \cup \mathcal{C}_d(n),$$

*such that*

$$\mathcal{C}_i(n-1) \subset \mathcal{C}_i(n) \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq d.$$

*Proof. Verification of (A).* Consider possible colourings of  $\mathcal{C}(0)$ . Take  $L_{n+2}$  as a testing interval. Observe that  $|\mathcal{C}(0)| = |\mathcal{C}(0) \cap L_{n+2}| = d$ , so if we want to have  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneity, we must have (1.4) and therefore  $|\mathcal{C}_i(0) \cap L_{n+2}| = 1$  for  $i = 1, \dots, d$ . Without loss of generality we can assume that  $J_{n+1}$  has colour 1, and each  $I_i$  with  $i = 1, \dots, d-1$  has colour  $i+1$ . Therefore for  $\mathcal{C}(0)$  and each testing interval  $L \subset L_{n+2}$  we have  $|\mathcal{C}_i(0) \cap L| \leq 1$  for  $1 \leq i \leq d$ .

*The basic observation.* Our example is based on iterating the following basic observation. Let  $k \leq n$ . Assume that  $\mathcal{C}(k)$  has an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous decomposition into  $\mathcal{C}_1(k), \dots, \mathcal{C}_d(k)$ , so that

$$\mathcal{C}_1(0) \subset \mathcal{C}_1(k), \quad \dots, \quad \mathcal{C}_d(0) \subset \mathcal{C}_d(k).$$

Then necessarily

$$(3.2) \quad J_{n-k+1} \text{ must have colour 1.}$$

*Verification of (3.2).* We already know that  $J_{n+1}$  has to have colour 1. To check the claim for  $J_{n-k+1}$ ,  $k = 1, \dots, n$ , we consider the pair of collections  $\mathcal{C}(0) \subset \mathcal{C}(k)$ :

$$\mathcal{C}(k) = \mathcal{C}(0) \cup \{J_{n-k+1}, \dots, J_n\},$$

and the testing interval  $L_{n-k+2}$ . Elements of  $\mathcal{C}(0)$  included in  $L_{n-k+2}$  are  $I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}$ . In addition,  $J_{n-k+1} \subset P_{n-k+1} \subset L_{n-k+2}$ , while  $J_{n-k+2}, \dots, J_n \not\subset L_{n-k+2}$ . Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} |\mathcal{C}(0) \cap L_{n-k+2}| &= d - 1, & |\mathcal{C}(k) \cap L_{n-k+2}| &= d, \\ \mathcal{C}_1(0) \cap L_{n-k+2} &= \emptyset, & |\mathcal{C}_i(0) \cap L_{n-k+2}| &= 1 \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, d. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, (1.4) of the  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneity condition for  $\mathcal{C}(k)$  implies that  $J_{n-k+1}$  is of colour 1.

*Verification of (B).* Recall that for  $0 \leq k \leq n$ ,

$$\mathcal{C}(k) = \{I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}\} \cup \{J_{n-k+1}, \dots, J_{n+1}\}.$$

Moreover, by (3.2), the only possible  $(1/n, d)$ -homogeneous decomposition of  $\mathcal{C}(k)$  is

$$\mathcal{C}_1(k) = \{J_{n-k+1}, \dots, J_{n+1}\}, \quad \mathcal{C}_i(k) = \{I_{i-1}\} \quad \text{for } 2 \leq i \leq d.$$

Let us check that for  $0 \leq k \leq n - 1$ , the above decomposition of  $\mathcal{C}(k)$  is indeed  $(1/n, d)$ -homogeneous. We present a detailed proof for  $k = n - 1$ , since the cases  $k \leq n - 1$  are fully analogous.

First, take  $L_s$ ,  $s = 3, \dots, n + 2$ , as a testing interval. Then the elements of  $\mathcal{C}(n - 1)$  included in  $L_s$  are  $I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}$  and  $J_2, \dots, J_{s-1}$ . Therefore

$$|\mathcal{C}(n - 1) \cap L_s| = s + d - 3,$$

and

$$|\mathcal{C}_1(n - 1) \cap L_s| = s - 2, \quad |\mathcal{C}_i(n - 1) \cap L_s| = 1 \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, d.$$

Therefore

$$\frac{1}{n} \max_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i(n - 1) \cap L_s| \leq \min_{1 \leq i \leq d} |\mathcal{C}_i(n - 1) \cap L_s|, \quad s = 3, \dots, n + 2.$$

Next take  $L_2$  as a testing interval. Then the elements of  $\mathcal{C}(n - 1)$  included in  $L_2$  are  $I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}$ , so  $|\mathcal{C}(n - 1) \cap L_2| = d - 1$ ,

$$\mathcal{C}_1(n - 1) \cap L_2 = \emptyset, \quad |\mathcal{C}_i(n - 1) \cap L_2| = 1 \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, d.$$

Therefore  $L_2$  also satisfies (1.4) of the  $(1/n, d)$ -homogeneity condition for  $\mathcal{C}(n - 1)$ . Consequently,  $L_1, P_1 \subset L_2$  also satisfy these conditions.

Finally, take  $P_k$ ,  $k = 2, \dots, n + 1$ , as a testing interval. The only element of  $\mathcal{C}(n - 1)$  included in  $P_k$  is  $J_k$ , so  $|\mathcal{C}(n - 1) \cap P_k| = 1$ , and more precisely

$$|\mathcal{C}_1(n - 1) \cap P_k| = 1, \quad \mathcal{C}_i(n - 1) \cap P_k = \emptyset \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, d.$$

Thus,  $P_k$  (and hence each testing interval included in  $P_k$ ) satisfies (1.4) of the  $(1/n, d)$ -homogeneity condition for  $\mathcal{C}(n-1)$ .

*Verification of (C).* Consider  $\mathcal{C}(n-1)$  and  $\mathcal{C}(n) = \mathcal{C}(n-1) \cup \{J_1\}$ . Recall that

$$\mathcal{C}(n) = \{I_1, \dots, I_{d-1}\} \cup \{J_1, \dots, J_{n+1}\}.$$

Take  $L_{n+2}$  as a testing interval. All intervals from  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  are included in  $L_{n+2}$ , and the colouring yields

$$|\mathcal{C}_1(n) \cap L_{n+2}| = n+1, \quad |\mathcal{C}_i(n) \cap L_{n+2}| = 1 \quad \text{for } i = 2, \dots, d.$$

For  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  and  $L_{n+2}$  we have to consider (1.3) of the  $(1/n, d)$ -homogeneity condition. But the above formulae mean that for  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  and the testing interval  $L_{n+2}$ , the condition (1.3) is satisfied with  $\eta' = 1/(n+1)$ , but not with  $\eta = 1/n$ . ■

REMARK. For  $0 \leq k \leq n-1$ , the pair of collections  $(\mathcal{C}(k), \mathcal{U}(k))$ , where  $\mathcal{U}(k) = \mathcal{C}(k+1) \setminus \mathcal{C}(k)$ , is not  $d$ -previsible. Nevertheless, the colouring problem has a solution for  $0 \leq k \leq n-2$ .

The examples of Proposition 3.1 grew out of counterexamples to classical martingale inequalities (see [12, p. 105], or [8, p. 156]).

**4. A two-person game.** The problem of consistent colourings gives rise to the following two-person game. The game is played by two players with collections of coloured dyadic intervals in  $\mathcal{D}_j$  for a fixed  $j \in \mathbb{N}$ . It starts by fixing  $\eta > 0$ ,  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ , and a subcollection

$$\mathcal{C}(0) \subset \mathcal{D}_j$$

with an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring

$$\mathcal{C}_1(0), \dots, \mathcal{C}_d(0),$$

according to Definition 1.1. The rules of the game are as follows:

1. In the first stage, Player A chooses a collection  $\mathcal{C}(1)$  with  $\mathcal{C}(1) \supsetneq \mathcal{C}(0)$  and  $\mathcal{C}(1) \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ . Player B determines an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(1)$  that preserves the colours of  $\mathcal{C}(0)$ .
2. At stage  $n$ , Player A chooses  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  with  $\mathcal{C}(n) \supsetneq \mathcal{C}(n-1)$  and  $\mathcal{C}(n) \subset \mathcal{D}_j$ . Player B determines an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  preserving the colours of  $\mathcal{C}(n-1)$ .
3. The game stops at stage  $n$  if either  $\mathcal{C}(n-1) = \mathcal{D}_j$ , and then Player B is the winner, or else if there does not exist an  $(\eta, d)$ -homogeneous colouring of  $\mathcal{C}(n)$  that preserves the colours of  $\mathcal{C}(n-1)$ , in which case Player A is the winner.

The results of this paper enable us to predict the outcome of the game as follows. If we do not pose any constraints on the choice of the collections

$\mathcal{C}(k)$ , then the example in Section 3 and Proposition 3.1 describe a realization of our game where Player A has a winning strategy.

However, if we restrict the moves of Player A by imposing that  $(\mathcal{C}(k-1), \mathcal{C}(k) \setminus \mathcal{C}(k-1))$  is  $d$ -previsible, then with the aid of Theorem 2.2 and its proof, Player B always has a winning strategy. In case the moves of Player A are restricted by  $d$ -previsibility, we modify the stopping rule accordingly: Player B is the winner at stage  $n$  if there does not exist  $\mathcal{C}(n) \subset \mathcal{D}_j$  such that  $\mathcal{C}(n) \not\supseteq \mathcal{C}(n-1)$  and the pair  $(\mathcal{C}(n-1), \mathcal{C}(n) \setminus \mathcal{C}(n-1))$  is  $d$ -previsible.

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