Optimal Switching Games in Emissions Trading

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Outline

1. Cap-and-Trade: Producer Perspective
2. Switching Games
3. Correlated Equilibria in CO_2 markets
4. Numerical Illustrations
5. Open Problems

Emissions Trading

- Major new initiatives are underway to introduce CO_2 cap-and-trade schemes that will create new commodity markets.
- AB32 proposal in California; various federal proposals; EU ETS.
- The estimated size of the market is in the hundreds of billions or even trillions of dollars.
- Key regulatory details are still unresolved and undergo active public debate.
- Crucial to understand the financial implications of these initiatives on energy producers.

A New Commodity Market

Compared to existing markets, cap-and-trade is fundamentally different:

- A finite resource is initially allocated and subject to exhaustion.
- A well-defined horizon (e.g. 1 year) exists for each allocation.
- The permit prices converge to deterministic values as horizon approaches.
- Price formation is driven by participant strategies: must be endogenous to any model.
- Game-theoretic aspects emerge in the emissions market.

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Effect on Producers

- The foremost constituency affected by cap-and-trade would be energy producers.
- The net profit of energy production would change from the spark-spread to the clean spread.
- Commodity prices (input fuel, output fuel) are stochastic.
- Must take into account (dynamic) strategies of other participants.
- Feedback between production policies and carbon prices.

Related Literature

- Real Options: Dixit and Pindyck (1994), Dockner et al. (2000).
- Analysis of Cap-and-Trade: Carmona et al. (2008,2009), Cetin and Verschuere (2008), ...
- Optimal Switching Problems (single-agent): Zervos (2003), Hamadène and Jeanblanc (2005), M.L. and Carmona (2008, 2009), Hu and Tang (2008).
- Optimal Stopping Games: Ohtsubo (1987,1991), Shmaya and Solan (2004), Ferenstein (2005,2007), Ramsey and Szajowski (2008).
- Stochastic Differential Games: Bensoussan, Friedman, Hamadène, Lepeltier,...

Model Setup

- We focus on the timing optionality within a real-options framework.
- Consider a duopoly – two producers (representing different sets of power plants).
- Each one sells electricity into a stochastic market at price P_t.
- Need emission permits to produce. Must buy CO_2 permits on the market at price X_t.
- Take a reduced-form price-impact model for (X_t) (do not explicitly model the remaining supply of permits).
- Simplify the strategy set: at each time epoch either produce, or stay offline, $\xi_i(t) \in \{0, 1\}$.
- Each producer's policy influences changes in X; $\Rightarrow$ the scheduling decisions of agents affect each other.
- Discrete-time model.

Objective

- (P_t) is exogenously given.
- Mean increments of (X_t) are controlled by $\vec{\xi}(t)$; correlated with increments of (P_t).
- Changes in ξ_i are expensive: fixed switching costs $K_{i,\xi_i(t-1),\xi_i(t)}$; induce inertia and hysteresis.
- Fixed horizon T: expiration date of the permits.
- Each producer attempts to maximize

$$V^i(0,p,x,\vec{\zeta}) = \mathbb{E}\left[\sum_{t=1}^{T}\Big(\xi_i(t)(a_i P_t - b_i X_t^{(\xi)} - c_i) - K_{i,\xi_i(t-1),\xi_i(t)}\Big)\right].$$

Dynamic Decision-Making

- At each step, each producer decides whether to produce or not.
- The chosen action results in immediate date t-payoff, as well as different continuation values on $[t+1, T]$.
- Leads to a repeated 2×2 stochastic game.
- Bellman's Principle is replaced by a game Nash Equilibrium (NE).
- Pure Nash equilibria might not exist.
- Existence: Need mixed equilibria.
- Might also have multiple Nash equilibria.
- Uniqueness: equilibrium refinement.

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Classification of 1-Period 2×2 Games

Three equivalence classes:

- A single dominating pure equilibrium (unanimity).
- A competitive game (essentially zero-sum) which admits a unique mixed Nash eqm.
- A (anti-) coordination game which admits two pure eqm's, a mixed one and a continuum of correlated eqm's – *"battle-of-the-sexes"* as above.
- Profitable for each one to emit separately; not profitable to emit together.
- Which producer will yield??

Correlated Equilibria

- Nash equilibrium: given the eqm strategy of the other player, maximizes your expected payoff.
- Overall payoff distribution is a product measure on the payoff space.
- A correlated equilibrium (γ^{jk}) is a general probability distribution on the payoff space. Known to all and fixed in advance.
- Achieved by introducing a third (fictitious) agent, (regulator).
- The regulator sends a private signal $\mu_i(\gamma) \in \{0, 1\}$ to player i.
- Given the signal (and implied strategy of the second player), optimal to act according to μ_i.
- Conditional on signal, equilibrium action is pure.

Stopping Games

- A stopping game: each agent chooses a stopping time τ_i, $i = 1, 2$. Stopping corresponds to action '1'.
- Payoff structure $(\mathcal{Z})$; agent i receives $(\tau \equiv \tau_1 \wedge \tau_2)$

$$\left(\sum_{t=0}^{\tau-1} Z_i^{00}(t)\right) + Z_i^{10}(\tau) 1_{\{\tau_i < \tau_j\}} + Z_i^{01}(\tau) 1_{\{\tau_i > \tau_j\}} + Z_i^{11}(\tau) 1_{\{\tau_i = \tau_j\}}.$$

- Starting with known values at T move back in time; each period yields a 2-by-2 game with payoffs corresponding to conditional expectation of next-period value.
- Let $Val_\gamma(\mathcal{Z}_t)$ be an equilibrium of a 2-by-2 one-period game with payoffs

$$\mathcal{Z}_t = \begin{pmatrix} (\tilde{Z}_1(t), \tilde{Z}_2(t)) & (Z_1^{01}(t), Z_2^{01}(t)) \\ (Z_1^{10}(t), Z_2^{10}(t)) & (Z_1^{11}(t), Z_2^{11}(t)) \end{pmatrix}.$$

- Stopping game values solve $(V_1(t), V_2(t)) = Val_\gamma(\mathcal{Z}_t)$, with $(\tilde{Z}_1(t), \tilde{Z}_2(t)) \equiv (\mathbb{E}[V_1(t+1)|\mathcal{F}_t] + Z_1^{00}(t), \mathbb{E}[V_2(t+1)|\mathcal{F}_t] + Z_2^{00}(t))$.

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Nash Equilibria in Stopping Games

- To show existence of a pure Nash equilibrium need restrictive assumptions (e.g. Dynkin zero-sum games, non-zero-sum monotone games where $Z_i^{01} \leq Z_i^{11} \leq Z_i^{10}$).
- In general, must allow randomized stopping times.
- This is an $(\mathcal{F}_t)$-adapted stochastic process $p = (p_t)$ with $0 \leq p_t \leq 1$ a.s.
- $\tau(p) \triangleq \inf\{t : \eta_t \leq p_t\}$ where $\eta_t \sim Unif(0,1)$ i.i.d.. p_t is the probability of stopping at date t, conditional on not stopping so far.
- $\tau(p)$ is not $(\mathcal{F}_t)$-adapted. Enlarge the filtration: $\tau(p)$ is a $(\mathcal{F}_t \vee \sigma(\eta_t))$-stopping time.
- Shmaya & Solan (2004): any discrete-time stopping game admits a mixed NE.
- Ferenstein (2005) gave a construction using backward recursion. Solution relies on recursive Nash equilibria and conditional expectations.

CE in Stopping Games

- A correlation law $(\gamma^{jk}(t))$ is a function of (t, P_t, X_t) and fixed/known in advance. Gives a CE for any payoff structure $\mathcal{Z}_t$.
- At each state t, agent i receives a private signal $\mu_i(t; \gamma)$.
- Resulting randomized stopping time is $\tau_i(\gamma)$. τ_i, τ_j are dependent!
- At each stage $\gamma^{jk}(t)$ induces a CE – no incentive to deviate given $\mu_i(t; \gamma)$.
- Admissible overall strategies are $\mathcal{G}^i$-stopping times τ_i, with $\mathcal{G}^i_t = \sigma(P_s, X_s, \mu_i(s), 0 \leq s \leq t)$.
- Game is non-cooperative; no possibility of threats, etc. Even if deviate continue to receive future messages and no changes are made.

Switching Game I

- We have a switching game. This is a sequential stopping game: can repeatedly "stop" to alter production regimes in response to changing electricity prices, permit prices or other agent's actions.
- Player i: value function $V_i(t, P_t, X_t, \vec{\xi_t})$.

$$(V_1(t,\vec{\zeta}), V_2(t,\vec{\zeta})) =$$
$$Val_\gamma \begin{pmatrix} (\mathbb{E}^{\vec{\zeta}}[V_1(t+1,\vec{\zeta})|\mathcal{F}_t] + Z_1(t), \mathbb{E}^{\vec{\zeta}}[V_2(t+1,\vec{\zeta})|\mathcal{F}_t] + Z_2(t)) & (V_1(t,\zeta_1,\bar{\zeta_2}), V_2(t,\zeta_1,\bar{\zeta_2}) - K_{2,\zeta_2}) \\ (V_1(t,\bar{\zeta_1},\zeta_2) - K_{1,\zeta_1}, V_2(t,\bar{\zeta_1},\zeta_2)) & (V_1(t,\bar{\zeta_1},\bar{\zeta_2}) - K_{1,\zeta_1}, V_2(t,\bar{\zeta_1},\bar{\zeta_2}) - K_{2,\zeta_2}) \end{pmatrix}$$

where $Z_i(t) \triangleq (a_i P_t - b_i X_t - c_i)\zeta_i$.

- Overall play:
  - Observe current state $(P_t, X_t, \vec{\xi}_{t-1})$;
  - Regulator carries out randomization;
  - Receive private signals $\mu_i(t;\gamma)$;
  - Choose private actions;
  - Joint action $\vec{\xi_t}$ is revealed, update state variables for next period;

Switching Game II

- Sketch of proof: Restrict strategy sets so that agents can only use up to (n, m) switches.
- Translates into an iterative stopping game with payoffs corresponding to $(n-1, m)$, $(n, m-1)$ or $(n-1, m-1)$ cases.
- Fixing the strategy of one player; the other player solves a switching problem with respect to the enlarged filtration $\mathcal{G}^i$.
- By definition of γ this gives a CE in the switching game.
- Take $n, m \to \infty$ to obtain a coupled pair of value functions as above.

Digression: Single Player Case

- Fix the strategy of one producer and consider the optimization of the other one.
- This becomes an optimal switching problem as studied in Carmona-M.L. (2008).
- The price impact leads to significant hysteresis effect.
- If the price impact is severe enough, will always stay offline (or at least with very high probability) – “blockading”.
- From player’s 1 perspective, the actions of player 2 are randomized: continuation values are unknown, optimal stopping in “random environment”.
- Otherwise, standard optimal stopping problem in the enlarged filtration $(\mathcal{G}_t^i)$ that incorporates CE.

Numerical Solution

- To solve for the game values numerically need to
  - Be able to compute equilibria in 2×2 games;
  - Compute conditional expectations.
- Have explicit formulas for CE of 2×2 games (answer depends on CE choice).
- Need approximation; recall that (P, X) have continuous space.
- Need to work with four different prob. measures $\mathbb{P}^{\vec{\zeta}}$ due to the price impact.

Least Squares Monte Carlo

- Could use Markov Chain approximation, see Kushner (2007).
- To compute the conditional expectations, another robust algorithm is to use Monte Carlo simulation.
- Simulate paths of (P, X) for each of the four possible emission regimes $\vec{\zeta}$.
- Continuation values are approximated through a cross-sectional regression.
- If the optimal decision is to switch to another regime, then use the approximate continuation value; else recursively update the future path-value.
- Extends the Longstaff-Schwartz method for American option pricing (a single optimal stopping problem).
- A single-agent switching problem was solved in Carmona-M.L. (2008).
- Straightforward extension to randomized stopping ... and to 2-player game.

Example

- $P_{t+1} = P_t \cdot \exp(2(50 - \log P_t) \ + 0.4\epsilon_t^P)$;
- $X_{t+1} = X_t \cdot \exp(3(\log(12 + 8\xi_1(t) + 4\xi_2(t) - \log X_t) + 0.25\epsilon_t^X)$ with $\mathbb{E}[\epsilon^P \epsilon^X] = 0.6$;
- Revenues: $Z_1(t) = P_t - 2X_t - 10$;
  $Z_2(t) = 2P_t - X_t - 80$;
- $T = 1$, 26 periods ($\Delta t = 1/26$); $K \equiv 0.2$.
- Using the simulation solver:
-

Correlation Law	$V_1(0, P_0, X_0)$	$V_2(0, P_0, X_0)$
Utilitarian	5.30	4.14
Egalitarian	5.33	4.20
Preferential 1	5.39	4.11
Preferential 2	5.02	4.24

Date-t Equilibria

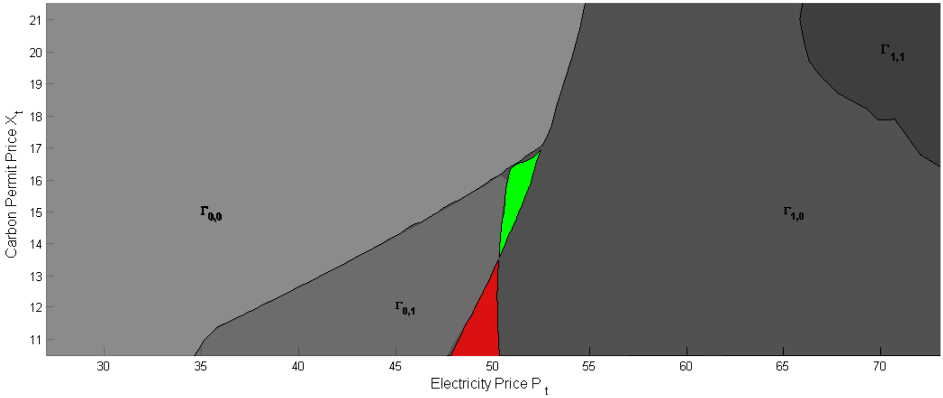

Figure: Optimal game strategy ξ^* as a function of (P_t, X_t) for $t = 0.25$. Here $\vec{\zeta} = (0, 0)$. The green region denotes the anti-coordination CE and the red region denotes the competitive mixed NE.

A Realized Equilibrium Path

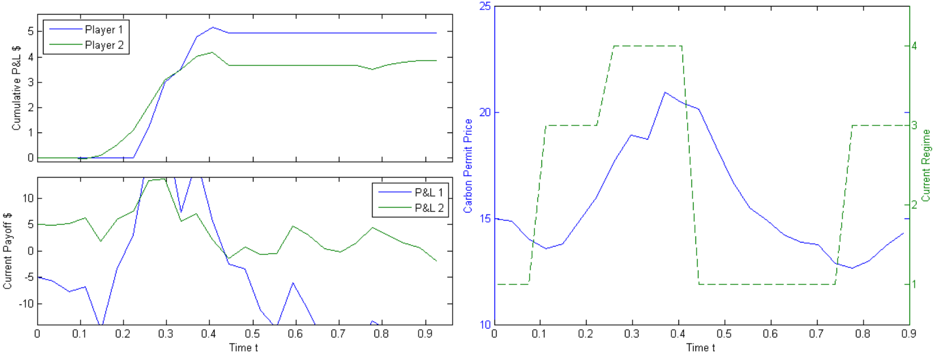

Figure: Sample path of the controlled X_t, including the corresponding strategy $\xi^* \in \{00, 01, 10, 11\}$. The top left panel shows the cumulative P&L of each player; the bottom left panel shows the raw P&L for each time period. Finally, the right panel shows the evolution of the controlled X_t, as well as the implemented strategy (ξ_t^1, ξ_t^2). Note as ξ_t increases, emissions rise and X_t tends to increase.

Conclusion

- Stochastic games naturally occur in studying oligopolies.
- The emission market would be a new important class of such problems.
- Investigate the simplest possible scenario where the game is non-trivial: a new model of an optimal switching game.
- Already the problems of equilibrium-refinement and computational tractability arise.
- To Do: incorporate initial permit allocations/trading of permits. Allow for endogenous price formation.
- Continuous time formulation of correlated equilibria in stopping games??

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Formal 2×2 Game

- Payoffs $H = \begin{pmatrix} (\alpha^{00}, \beta^{00}) & (\alpha^{01}, \beta^{01}) \\ (\alpha^{10}, \beta^{10}) & (\alpha^{11}, \beta^{11}) \end{pmatrix}$.
- A policy is $(\vec{\pi}, \vec{\rho})$ whence π_i (resp. ρ_j) is the prob. that player 1 (player 2) chooses action i.
- Value of a policy to players is $Val(H; \vec{\pi}, \vec{\rho}) := \begin{pmatrix} \sum_{i,j} \pi_i \rho_j \alpha^{ij} \\ \sum_{i,j} \pi_i \rho_j \beta^{ij} \end{pmatrix}$.
- $\gamma = (\gamma^{ij})$ is a CE if

$$\begin{cases} \gamma^{00}\alpha^{00} + \gamma^{01}\alpha^{01} \geq \gamma^{00}\alpha^{10} + \gamma^{01}\alpha^{11}, & \gamma^{11}\alpha^{11} + \gamma^{10}\alpha^{10} \geq \gamma^{11}\alpha^{01} + \gamma^{10}\alpha^{00} \\ \gamma^{00}\beta^{00} + \gamma^{10}\beta^{10} \geq \gamma^{00}\beta^{01} + \gamma^{10}\beta^{11}, & \gamma^{11}\beta^{11} + \gamma^{01}\beta^{01} \geq \gamma^{11}\beta^{10} + \gamma^{01}\beta^{00}. \end{cases}$$

- Leads to game values $Val_\gamma(H) := \begin{pmatrix} \sum_{i,j} \gamma^{ij}\alpha^{ij} \\ \sum_{i,j} \gamma^{ij}\beta^{ij} \end{pmatrix}$.