Managerial Economics & Business Strategy

Chapter 10. Game Theory: Inside Oligopoly

Modified 11/12 by DF

McGraw-Hill/Irwin

Overview

Game Environments

- Players' planned decisions are called strategies.
- Payoffs to players are the utilities (e.g., profits or losses) resulting from the chosen strategies.
- Order of play is important:
  - Simultaneous-move game: each player makes decisions with no knowledge of other players' decisions.
  - Sequential-move game: players may observe strategies of players who move earlier.
- Frequency of rival interaction
  - One-shot game: game is played once.
  - Repeated game: game is played more than once; either a finite or infinite number of interactions.

Simultaneous-Move, One-Shot Games: Normal Form Game

- A Normal Form Game consists of:
  - Set of players $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots n\}$.
  - Each player's strategy set lists her feasible action plans. E.g.,
    - Player 1's strategies are $S_1 = \{a, b, c, \ldots\}$.
    - Player 2's strategies are $S_2 = \{A, B, C, \ldots\}$.
  - Payoffs.
    - Player 1's payoff: $\pi_1(a,B) = 11,\ldots$
    - Player 2's payoff: $\pi_2(b,C) = 12,\ldots$

A Normal Form Game

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

Normal Form Game: Scenario Analysis

- Suppose 1 thinks 2 will choose "A".

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

Normal Form Game: Scenario Analysis

- Then 1 should choose “a”.
  – Player 1’s best response to “A” is “a”.

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

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Normal Form Game: Scenario Analysis

- Suppose 1 thinks 2 will choose “B”.

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

10-8

Normal Form Game: Scenario Analysis

- Then 1 should choose “a”.
  – Player 1’s best response to “B” is “a”.

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

10-9

Normal Form Game Scenario Analysis

- Similarly, if 1 thinks 2 will choose C….
  – Player 1’s best response to “C” is “a”.

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

10-10

Dominant Strategy

- Regardless of whether Player 2 chooses A, B, or C, Player 1 is better off choosing “a”!
- “a” is Player 1’s Dominant Strategy!

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

10-11

BR and Dominant Strategy

- A player’s best response (BR) gives the highest possible payoff to a **given** strategy profile chosen by other players.
- A dominant strategy is a BR to **every** strategy profile chosen by other players.
- If “a” is a dominant strategy for Player 1 in the previous game, then:
  – $\pi_1(a,A) > \pi_1(b,A)$, $\pi_1(c,A)$, i.e., is a BR to A; and
  – $\pi_1(a,B) > \pi_1(b,B)$, $\pi_1(c,B)$; i.e., is a BR to B; and
  – and $\pi_1(a,C) > \pi_1(b,C)$, $\pi_1(c,C)$, i.e., is a BR to C.

10-12

Putting Yourself in your Rival's Shoes

- What should player 2 do?
  - 2 has no dominant strategy!
  - But 2 should reason that 1 will play "a".
  - Therefore 2 should choose "C".

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

10-13

The Outcome

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
a	12,11	11,12	14,13
b	11,10	10,11	12,12
c	10,15	10,13	13,14

- This outcome is called a Nash equilibrium:
  - "a" is player 1's best response to "C".
  - "C" is player 2's best response to "a".

10-14

Two-Player Nash Equilibrium

- The Nash equilibrium is a profile of strategies in which no player can improve her payoff by unilaterally changing her own strategy, given the other players' strategies.
- Formally, with 2 players, the profile (s_1^*, s_2^*) is a Nash equilibrium if these two conditions hold:
  - $\pi_1(s_1^*, s_2^*) \geq \pi_1(s_1, s_2^*)$, all s_1 so s_1^* is a BR to s_2^*
  - $\pi_2(s_1^*, s_2^*) \geq \pi_2(s_1^*, s_2)$, all s_2 so s_2^* is a BR to s_1^*

10-15

Key Insights

- Look for dominant strategies.
- Put yourself in your rival's shoes.

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A Market-Share Game

- Two managers want to maximize market share: $i \in \{1,2\}$.
- Strategies are pricing decisions
  - $S_1 = \{1, 5, 10\}$.
  - $S_2 = \{1, 5, 10\}$.
- Simultaneous moves.
- One-shot game.

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The Market-Share Game in Normal Form

Manager 2

Manager 1

Strategy	P=$10	P=$5	P = $1
P=$10	.5, .5	.2, .8	.1, .9
P=$5	.8, .2	.5, .5	.2, .8
P=$1	.9, .1	.8, .2	.5, .5

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Market-Share Game Equilibrium

Manager 2

Manager 1

Strategy	P=$10	P=$5	P = $1
P=$10	.5, .5	.2, .8	.1, .9
P=$5	.8, .2	.5, .5	.2, .8
P=$1	.9, .1	.8, .2	.5, .5

Nash Equilibrium

Comment

- Game theory can be used to analyze situations where "payoffs" are non monetary
  - The bar scene in "A Beautiful Mind" is a (bad) example
- We will usually focus on situations where businesses want to maximize profits.
  - Hence, payoffs are measured in monetary units.
  - Expected NPV in $millions, say.

Coordination Games

- In many games, players have competing objectives: One firm gains at the expense of its rivals.
- However, some games result in higher profits by each firm when they "coordinate" decisions.

Examples of Coordination Games

- Industry standards
  - size of memory cards.
  - size of usb ports.
- National standards
  - electric current.
  - traffic laws.

A Coordination Game in Normal Form

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
1	0,0	0,0	$10,$10
2	$10,$10	0,0	0,0
3	0,0	$10,$10	0,0

A Coordination Problem: Three Nash Equilibria!

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B	C
1	0,0	0,0	$10,$10
2	$10,$10	0,0	0,0
3	0,0	$10, $10	0,0

Comments.

- Not all games are games of conflict.
- Communication can help solve coordination problems.
- Sequential moves can help solve coordination problems.
- We'll play some games in class that are mainly coordination and others that involve conflicts of interest.

10-25

Games With No Pure Strategy Nash Equilibrium

Player 2

Player 1

Strategy	A	B
1	-100,100	100,-100
2	100,-100	-100,100

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Strategies for Games With No Pure Strategy Nash Equilibrium

- In games where no pure strategy Nash equilibrium exists, players find it in there interest to engage in mixed (randomized) strategies.
  - This means players will "randomly" select strategies from all available strategies.

10-27

An Advertising Game

- Two firms (Kellogg's & General Mills) managers want to maximize profits.
- Strategies consist of advertising campaigns.
- Simultaneous moves.
  - One-shot interaction.
  - Repeated interaction.

10-28

A One-Shot Advertising Game

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

10-29

Equilibrium to the One-Shot Advertising Game

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

Nash Equilibrium

10-30

Can collusion work if the game is repeated 2 times?

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

10-31

No (by backwards induction).

- In period 2, the game is a one-shot game, so equilibrium entails High Advertising in the last period.
- This means period 1 is "really" the last period, since everyone knows what will happen in period 2.
- Equilibrium entails High Advertising by each firm in both periods.
- The same holds true if we repeat the game any known, finite number of times.

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Can collusion work if firms play the game each year, forever?

- Consider the following "trigger strategy" by each firm:
  - "Don't advertise, provided the rival has not advertised in the past. If the rival ever advertises, "punish" it by engaging in a high level of advertising forever after."
- In effect, each firm agrees to "cooperate" so long as the rival hasn't "cheated" in the past. "Cheating" triggers punishment in all future periods.

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Suppose General Mills adopts this trigger strategy. Kellogg's profits?

$\Pi_{Cooperate} = 12 + 12/(1+i) + 12/(1+i)^2 + 12/(1+i)^3 + \ldots$

$= 12 + \boxed{12/i}$ ← Value of a perpetuity of \$12 paid at the end of every year

$\Pi_{Cheat} = 20 + 2/(1+i) + 2/(1+i)^2 + 2/(1+i)^3 + \ldots$

$= 20 + 2/i$

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

10-34

Kellogg's Gain to Cheating:

- $\Pi_{Cheat} - \Pi_{Cooperate} = 20 + 2/i - (12 + 12/i) = 8 - 10/i$
  - Suppose $i = .05$
- $\Pi_{Cheat} - \Pi_{Cooperate} = 8 - 10/.05 = 8 - 200 = -192$
- It doesn't pay to deviate.
  - Collusion is a Nash equilibrium in the infinitely repeated game!

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

10-35

Benefits & Costs of Cheating

- $\Pi_{Cheat} - \Pi_{Cooperate} = 8 - 10/i$
  - 8 = Immediate Benefit (20 - 12 today)
  - 10/i = PV of Future Cost (12 - 2 forever after)
- If Immediate Benefit - PV of Future Cost > 0
  - Pays to "cheat".
- If Immediate Benefit - PV of Future Cost ≤ 0
  - Doesn't pay to "cheat".

General Mills

Kellogg's

Strategy	None	Moderate	High
None	12,12	1, 20	-1, 15
Moderate	20, 1	6, 6	0, 9
High	15, -1	9, 0	2, 2

10-36

Key Insight

- Collusion can be sustained as a Nash equilibrium when there is no certain "end" to a game.
- Doing so requires:
  - Ability to monitor actions of rivals.
  - Ability (and reputation for) punishing defectors.
  - Low interest rate.
  - High probability of future interaction.

10-37

Real World Examples of Collusion

- Garbage Collection Industry
- OPEC
- NASDAQ
- Airlines
- Lysine Market

10-38

Garbage Collection Industry

- Homogeneous products
- Bertrand oligopoly
- Identity of customers is known
- Identity of competitors is known

10-39

Normal-Form Bertrand Game

Firm 2

Firm 1

Strategy	Low Price	High Price
Low Price	0,0	20,-1
High Price	-1, 20	15, 15

10-40

One-Shot Bertrand (Nash) Equilibrium

Firm 2

Firm 1

Strategy	Low Price	High Price
Low Price	0,0	20,-1
High Price	-1, 20	15, 15

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Potential Repeated Game Equilibrium Outcome

Firm 2

Firm 1

Strategy	Low Price	High Price
Low Price	0,0	20,-1
High Price	-1, 20	15, 15

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Simultaneous-Move Bargaining

- Management and a union are negotiating a wage increase.
- Strategies are wage offers & wage demands.
- Successful negotiations lead to $600 million in surplus, which must be split among the parties.
- Failure to reach an agreement results in a loss to the firm of $100 million and a union loss of $3 million.
- Simultaneous moves, and time permits only one-shot at making a deal.

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The Bargaining Game in Normal Form

Union

Management

Strategy	W = $10	W = $5	W = $1
W = $10	100, 500	100, 500	100, 500
W=$5	-100, -3	300, 300	300, 300
W=$1	-100, -3	-100, -3	500, 100

10-44

Three Nash Equilibria!

Union

Management

Strategy	W = $10	W = $5	W = $1
W = $10	100, 500	100, 500	100, 500
W=$5	-100, -3	300, 300	300, 300
W=$1	-100, -3	-100, -3	500, 100

10-45

Fairness: The "Natural" Focal Point

Union

Management

Strategy	W = $10	W = $5	W = $1
W = $10	100, 500	100, 500	100, 500
W=$5	-100, -3	300, 300	300, 300
W=$1	-100, -3	-100, -3	500, 100

10-46

Lessons in Simultaneous Bargaining

- Simultaneous-move bargaining results in a coordination problem.
- Experiments suggests that, in the absence of any "history," real players typically coordinate on the "fair outcome."
- When there is a "bargaining history," other outcomes may prevail.

10-47

Single-Offer Bargaining

- Now suppose the game is sequential in nature, and management gets to make the union a "take-it-or-leave-it" offer.
- Analysis Tool: Write the game in extensive form
  - Summarize the players.
  - Their potential actions.
  - Their information at each decision point.
  - Sequence of moves.
  - Each player's payoff.

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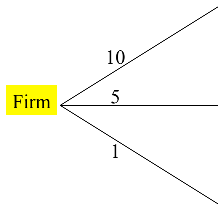
Step 1: Management's Move



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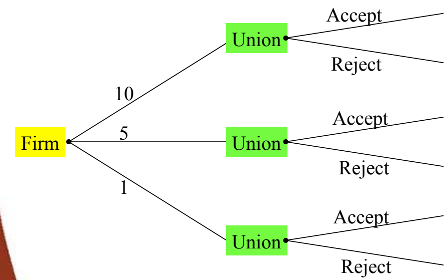
Step 2: Add the Union's Move



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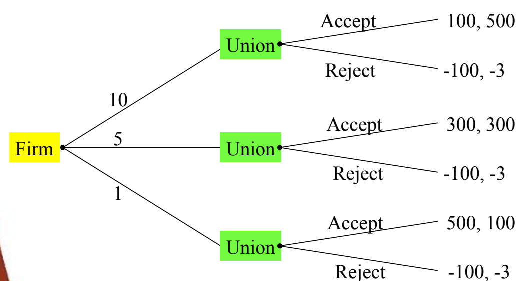
Step 3: Add the Payoffs



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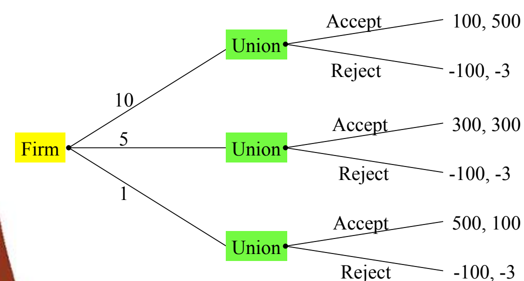
The Game in Extensive Form



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Step 4: Identify the Firm's Feasible Strategies

- Management has one information set and thus three feasible strategies:
  - Offer $10.
  - Offer $5.
  - Offer $1.

10-53

Step 5: Identify the Union's Feasible Strategies

- The Union has three information set and thus eight feasible strategies (2^3=8):
  - Accept $10, Accept $5, Accept $1
  - Accept $10, Accept $5, Reject $1
  - Accept $10, Reject $5, Accept $1
  - Accept $10, Reject $5, Reject $1
  - Reject $10, Accept $5, Accept $1
  - Reject $10, Accept $5, Reject $1
  - Reject $10, Reject $5, Accept $1
  - Reject $10, Reject $5, Reject $1

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Step 6: Identify Nash Equilibrium Outcomes

- Outcomes such that neither the firm nor the union has an incentive to change its strategy, given the strategy of the other.

Finding Nash Equilibrium Outcomes

Union's Strategy	Firm's Best Response	Mutual Best Response?
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	\$5	Yes
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	\$10	Yes
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	\$5	Yes
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	\$10, \$5, \$1	No

Step 7: Find the Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium Outcomes

- Outcomes where no player has an incentive to change its strategy, given the strategy of the rival, and
- The outcomes are based on "credible actions;" that is, they are not the result of "empty threats" by the rival.

Checking for Credible Actions

Union's Strategy	Are all Actions Credible?
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	No
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	No
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	No
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	No
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	No
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	No
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	No

The "Credible" Union Strategy

Union's Strategy	Are all Actions Credible?
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	No
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	No
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	No
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	No
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	No
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	No
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	No

Finding Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium Strategies

Union's Strategy	Firm's Best Response	Mutual Best Response?
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	\$5	Yes
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Accept \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	\$10	Yes
Reject \$10, Accept \$5, Reject \$1	\$5	Yes
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Accept \$1	\$1	Yes
Reject \$10, Reject \$5, Reject \$1	\$10, \$5, \$1	No

Nash and Credible | Nash Only | Neither Nash Nor Credible

To Summarize:

- We have identified many combinations of Nash equilibrium strategies.
- In all but one the union does something that isn't in its self interest (and thus entail threats that are not credible).
- Graphically:

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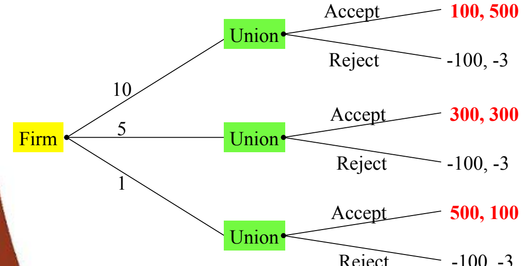
There are 3 Nash Equilibrium Outcomes!



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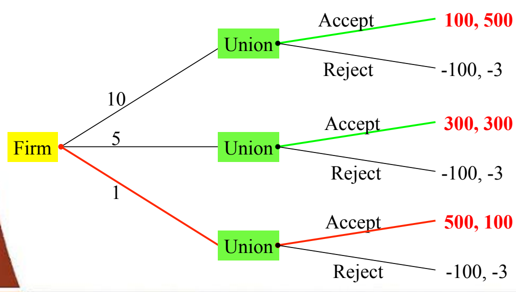
Only 1 Subgame-Perfect Nash Equilibrium Outcome!



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Bargaining Re-Cap

- In take-it-or-leave-it bargaining, there is a first-mover advantage.
- Management can gain by making a take-it-or-leave-it offer to the union. But...
- Management should be careful; real world evidence suggests that people sometimes reject offers on the the basis of "principle" instead of cash considerations.

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Pricing to Prevent Entry: An Application of Game Theory

- Two firms: an incumbent and potential entrant.
- Potential entrant's strategies:
  - Enter.
  - Stay Out.
- Incumbent's strategies:
  - {if enter, play hard}.
  - {if enter, play soft}.
  - {if stay out, play hard}.
  - {if stay out, play soft}.
- Move Sequence:
  - Entrant moves first. Incumbent observes entrant's action and selects an action.

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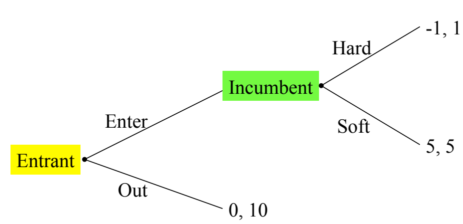
The Pricing to Prevent Entry Game in Extensive Form



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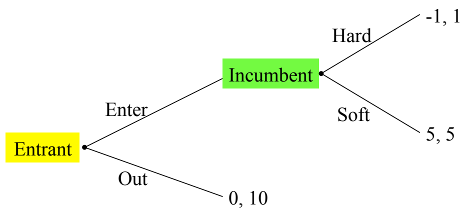
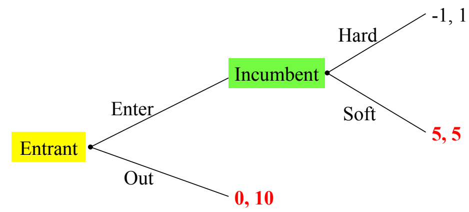
Identify Nash and Subgame Perfect Equilibria

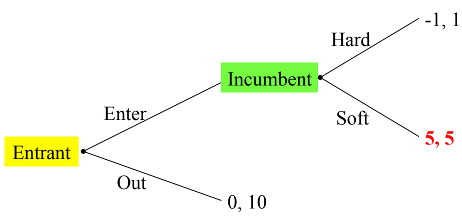


Two Nash Equilibria



Nash Equilibria Strategies {player 1; player 2}:
{enter; If enter, play soft}
{stay out; If enter, play hard}

One Subgame Perfect Equilibrium



Subgame Perfect Equilibrium Strategy:
{enter; If enter, play soft}

Insights

- Establishing a reputation for being unkind to entrants can enhance long-term profits.
- It is costly to do so in the short-term, so much so that it isn't optimal to do so in a one-shot game.

Holdup Problem Revisited

- Sunk cost investments create quasi-rents
  - These can be appropriated
  - This would create a loss on the investment
- Hence the investment might not be made
  - And the opportunity is lost
- Examples include
  - UCSC buys enterprise software from PAS...
  - NASA contracts with Obing Corp..
  - Many Dilbert episodes

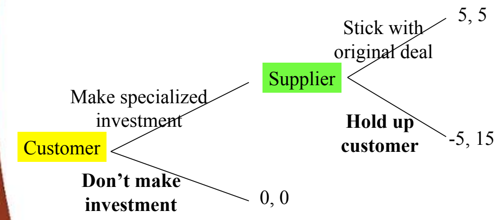
A typical scenario

- Customer can make investment (cost=5) in specialized software that will enhance productivity (benefit=15)
- Original deal: customer keeps 10 of benefit and nets 5, supplier gets the other 5.

A typical scenario

- Customer can make investment (cost=5) in specialized software that will enhance productivity (benefit=15)
- Original deal: customer keeps 10 of benefit and nets 5, supplier gets the other 5.
- **Hold up:** Supplier can later demand an extra amount (at most 10) to keep software working.

The Holdup Problem in Extensive Form



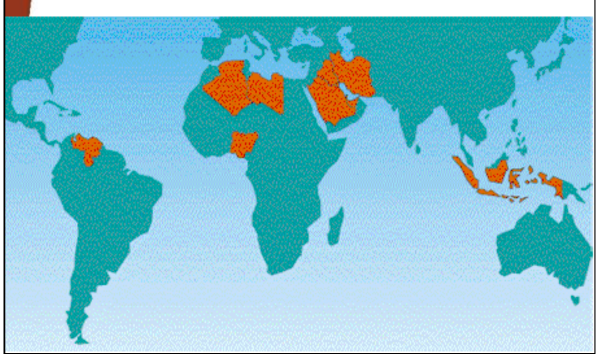
Missing piece of theory: mixed strategies

- It's third down and 3 yards to go for the SF 49ers…should they run or pass? Should the Seahawks stack the defense against the run or pass?
- No Nash equilibrium in pure strategies.
- The NE: mix it up!
- See text for short discussion, and any game theory book for a long discussion.
- Theorem: every "regular" game has at least one NE, but it may involve mixed strategies.

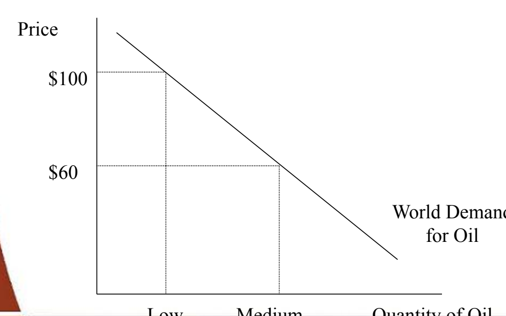
OPEC

- Cartel founded in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela
- Currently has 11 members
- "*OPEC's objective is to co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers…*" (www.opec.com)
- Cournot oligopoly
- Absent collusion: $P^{Competition} < P^{Cournot} < P^{Monopoly}$

Current OPEC Members



Effect of Collusion on Oil Prices



Cournot Game in Normal Form

Venezuela

Saudi Arabia

Strategy	High Q	Med Q	Low Q
High Q	5, 3	9,4	3, 6
Med Q	6, 7	12,10	20, 8
Low Q	8, 1	10, 18	18, 15

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One-Shot Cournot (Nash) Equilibrium

Venezuela

Saudi Arabia

Strategy	High Q	Med Q	Low Q
High Q	5, 3	9,4	3, 6
Med Q	6, 7	12,10	20, 8
Low Q	8, 1	10, 18	18, 15

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Repeated Game Equilibrium*

Venezuela

Saudi Arabia

Strategy	High Q	Med Q	Low Q
High Q	5, 3	9,4	3, 6
Med Q	6, 7	12,10	20, 8
Low Q	8, 1	10, 18	18, 15

* *(Assuming a Low Interest Rate)*

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Caveat

- Collusion is a felony under Section 2 of the Sherman Antitrust Act.
- Conviction can result in both fines and jail-time (at the discretion of the court).
- Some NASDAQ dealers and airline companies have been charged with violations
- OPEC isn't illegal; US laws don't apply

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