

# ON DESIGNING AN EFFICIENT CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS CAP AND TRADE SYSTEM

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## BACKGROUND

- ▶ Since the late 1960's, the U.S. federal government has:
  1. regulated nationwide an ever-expanding set of air pollutant emissions from fossil-fueled electricity generating facilities.
  2. proceeded piecemeal, pollutant by pollutant, to control TSP, SO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>x</sub>.
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- ▶ Source-specific, technology-based emission standards initially were dominant regulatory tools.
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- ▶ The federal government is now pressured to add CO<sub>2</sub> to the existing set of criteria air pollutants.
  1. Supreme Court ruled USEPA has the authority to regulate CO<sub>2</sub>.
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- ▶ Coal switching and flue gas desulphurization (FGD) systems are the principal methods used to reduce  $\text{SO}_2$  emissions from coal-fired plants.
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  1. The performance of the electrostatic precipitators used to capture particulates is enhanced by greater flue gas sulfur content.
  2. Low-sulfur coal produces less heat per unit of coal → more coal burned to produce a given amount of electricity.
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  1. Amine-based technology is the currently favored technology to capture CO<sub>2</sub> at coal-fired power plants.
  2. Because amine-based sorbents absorb all acid gases, not just CO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> emissions may be well below allowable SO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  3. This may cause SO<sub>2</sub> marginal control costs to greatly exceed marginal benefits.
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▶ Example # 3: Shutting down old, dirty plants to meet the  $\text{SO}_2$  cap:

1. If the shift is to new coal-fired plants,  $\text{NO}_x$  will also be reduced, since new plants have lower  $\text{NO}_x$  per Btu.
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▶ Conclusion for Examples 1-3 :

1. While utilities do not directly control CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, We find considerable jointness across SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  2. This implies that the separability approach will not equate the marginal cost of controlling each pollutant within power plants and across plants.
- ▶ Additional implication: about 50% of states apply rate-of-return (ROR) regulation to electricity production and distribution.
1. Fowlie (2009) finds that utilities in states with ROR regulation over-capitalize in NO<sub>x</sub> pollution control equipment rather than fuel-switch.
  2. These concerns for CO<sub>2</sub> scrubbers are magnified by an order of magnitude, since their costs are 10-fold or more than the costs of existing scrubbers.

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# BASIC APPROACH

- ▶ In this paper, we examine the U.S. electricity industry
  1. the largest sector in terms of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions
  2. accounts for 41 percent of total emissions.
- ▶ We estimate for the electric utility industry:
  1. a multiple-input, multiple-output production function
  2. that produces good and bad outputs
  3. from good and bad inputs.
- ▶ We wish to estimate
  1. technical efficiency,
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  1. two good outputs— residential and industrial-commercial kilowatt hours (Kwh)
  2. the three bads:  $SO_2$ ,  $CO_2$ , and  $NO_x$ .
- ▶ Using:
  1. one bad input, sulfur (S),
  2. four good inputs—fuel, production capital, pollution control capital, and labor.
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## DIRECTIONAL DISTANCE FUNCTION

► Let:

1.  $\mathbf{x}$  be good inputs
2.  $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$  be bad inputs
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4.  $\tilde{\mathbf{y}}$  be bad outputs

- ▶ Following Chambers et al. (1998), we define the technology directional distance function as

$$\vec{D}_T = \sup\{\beta : (\mathbf{x} - \beta\delta_x, \tilde{\mathbf{x}} - \beta\delta_{\tilde{x}}, \mathbf{y} + \beta\delta_y, \tilde{\mathbf{y}} - \beta\delta_{\tilde{y}}) \in P\}. \quad (1)$$

- ▶  $P(\mathbf{x}, \tilde{\mathbf{x}})$  is the output set of goods and bads that can be produced with  $(\mathbf{x}, \tilde{\mathbf{x}})$ .
- ▶ The technology directional distance function decreases good inputs, bad inputs, and bad outputs in the direction  $(-\delta_x, -\delta_{\tilde{x}}, -\delta_{\tilde{y}})$  and increases good output in the direction  $(\delta_y)$  in order to move to the frontier of  $P$ .
- ▶ We assume maximization of shadow profits based on input and output quantities that the firm would like to produce if it could maximize profits. This allows for restrictions on inputs and outputs due to regulations.

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- ▶ We impose three important properties of the technology directional distance function:
  1. non-negativity,
  2. the translation property (analogous to linear homogeneity of a cost function),
  3. and g-homogeneity (double direction and halve the estimated distance).



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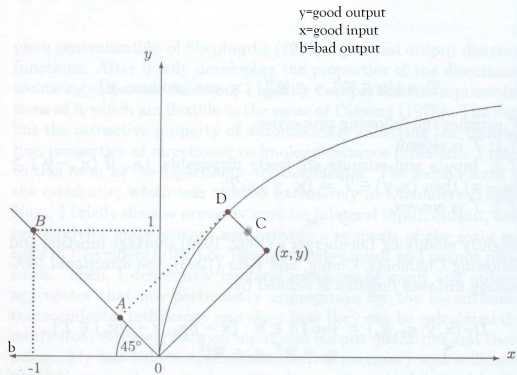


Figure 6.1 The Directional Technology Distance Function

- ▶ A two-sided error is appended to the quadratic form of the directional distance function:

$$\epsilon_{it} = (v_{it} - u_{it}), \quad (2)$$

1. a one-sided component,  $u_{it}$ ,
  2. and a standard noise component,  $v_{it}$ , with zero mean.
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    1. a directional technology distance function and
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- ▶ The directional distance function is approximated using a quadratic function of input and output quantities.
- ▶ What direction to use?
  1. An environmentalist might believe that increasing good output is less important than reducing bad output. Hence, he might choose a directional vector of  $(\mathbf{g}_y, \mathbf{g}_{\bar{y}}) = (.85, -1)$  for good and bad outputs.
  2. A stockholder in a utility might believe the opposite and choose the vector  $(\mathbf{g}_y, \mathbf{g}_{\bar{y}}) = (1, -.85)$  instead.

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## BAYESIAN IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Due to the large number of estimated parameters and the need to impose monotonicity, we employ a Bayesian Generalized Method of Moments estimator with instruments, implemented with MCMC.
- ▶ Details are in Atkinson and Dorfman (2005).
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## DATA AND RESULTS

- ▶ Our sample is a balanced panel of 77 U.S. electric utilities from 1988-97.
- ▶ At the utility level, we employ the:
  1. Quantities of good outputs(Kwh) for residential and industrial/commercial users plus their prices,
  2. Bad outputs—SO<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>x</sub>. No prices.
  3. Bad input is S. We know total S burned. No price.
  4. The price and quantity of all good inputs: labor (L), capital for production ( $K_{prod}$ ), capital for pollution control ( $K_{pol}$ ), and energy for production (E).
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- ▶ Over time,  $\text{SO}_2$  emissions have fallen, but  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_x$  emissions have risen.
- ▶ TC can logically decline, since emissions have risen.
- ▶ Examine four direction sets:
  1. direction set 1:  $g_y = .85; g_{\tilde{y}} = g_x = g_{\tilde{x}} = -1$
  2. direction set 2:  $g_y = 1; g_{\tilde{y}} = g_x = g_{\tilde{x}} = -.85$
  3. direction set 3:  $g_y = 1; g_{\tilde{y}} = g_x = g_{\tilde{x}} = -.75$
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- ▶ For the last direction set, the posterior median technical efficiency rises over time from .61 in 1988 to .64 in 1997.
- ▶ For the last direction set, we observe slight allocative inefficiency:
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## *PC, TC, and EC*

- ▶ Productivity change (PC), technical change (TC), and efficiency change (EC) are defined as:

$$PC = TC + EC, \quad (3)$$

1. where TC is rate of outward movement of the frontier.
  2. and EC is the rate by which firms catch up with the frontier.
- ▶ For the last direction set, PC is less than one percent and increases slightly over the sample period.
  - ▶ TC is slightly negative early in the sample, but switches to small positive levels in later years.
  - ▶ EC remains positive throughout the sample period.

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- ▶ Shadow prices of bad outputs do not exist outside of relatively thin markets for  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_x$  emission permits.
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## *Total Derivatives:*

### *Outputs wrt Outputs Using the implicit function theorem*

- ▶ Reducing  $SO_2$  does appear to cause a small increase in  $CO_2$  for some firms with existing technology: median  $dCO_2/dSO_2 = -.143$  with s.d.=.239.
- ▶ A reduction in  $NO_x$  reduces  $CO_2$  substantially for most firms with existing technology: median  $dCO_2/dNO_x = .738$  with s.d.=.258.
- ▶ A reduction in  $NO_x$  reduces  $SO_2$  substantially for most firms with existing technology: median  $dSO_2/dNO_x = 1.548$  with s.d.=1.318.
- ▶ The Industrial/Commercial and Residential output total derivative is almost exactly -1 as expected with very small s.d.=.024.



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- ▶ In the long run, reductions in  $CO_2$  due a  $CO_2$  standard will also (assuming amine-based technology is employed) reduce  $SO_2$  below the standard.
- ▶ Reducing  $NO_x$  causes a substantial reduction in  $CO_2$  and  $SO_2$  for most firms, due to improvements in production technology over the sample.
- ▶ Isolated Control strategies have been developed for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
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- ▶ Control strategies cannot be least-cost when policy makers ignore the substantial interdependence that we have observed.
- ▶ Both  $NO_x$  and  $SO_2$  will be over-controlled if an independent  $CO_2$  cap-and-trade strategy is adopted.



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GRACIAS!

**Table 9: Total Derivatives–Outputs (by column)  
With Respect to Outputs (by rows)**

*Direction :  $g_y = 1, g_{\bar{y}} = g_x = g_{\bar{x}} = -1$*

	<i>R</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>SO<sub>2</sub></i>	<i>CO<sub>2</sub></i>	<i>NO<sub>x</sub></i>
<i>R</i>	0.000 ( 0.000)	-1.076 ( 0.024)	0.398 ( 0.490)	0.232 ( 0.088)	-0.263 ( 0.124)
<i>IC</i>	-0.929 ( 0.020)	0.000 ( 0.000)	0.351 ( 0.464)	0.214 ( 0.082)	-0.239 ( 0.115)
<i>SO<sub>2</sub></i>	0.545 ( 0.953)	0.576 ( 1.003)	0.000 ( 0.000)	-0.143 ( 0.239)	0.267 ( 0.248)
<i>CO<sub>2</sub></i>	3.823 ( 1.257)	4.104 ( 1.377)	-1.495 ( 1.820)	0.000 ( 0.000)	1.139 ( 0.309)
<i>NO<sub>x</sub></i>	-2.844 ( 1.471)	-3.016 ( 1.567)	1.548 ( 1.318)	0.738 ( 0.258)	0.000 ( 0.000)

**Table 10: Total Derivatives – Outputs (by rows)  
with respect to Inputs (by columns)**

*Direction :  $g_y = 1, g_{\bar{y}} = g_x = g_{\bar{x}} = -1$*

	<i>R</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>SO<sub>2</sub></i>	<i>CO<sub>2</sub></i>	<i>NO<sub>X</sub></i>
<i>K<sub>prod</sub></i>	0.615 ( 0.056)	0.659 ( 0.064)	-0.258 ( 0.300)	-0.138 ( 0.053)	0.168 ( 0.077)
<i>L</i>	0.726 ( 0.048)	0.770 ( 0.054)	-0.329 ( 0.362)	-0.162 ( 0.061)	0.195 ( 0.091)
<i>E</i>	0.668 ( 0.049)	0.711 ( 0.048)	-0.251 ( 0.296)	-0.147 ( 0.057)	0.167 ( 0.078)
<i>K<sub>pol</sub></i>	0.651 ( 0.418)	0.689 ( 0.442)	-0.322 ( 0.400)	-0.097 ( 0.116)	0.165 ( 0.148)
<i>S</i>	-2.127 ( 1.003)	-2.235 ( 1.057)	1.114 ( 0.890)	0.473 ( 0.282)	-0.529 ( 0.380)

**Table 11: Total Derivatives – Inputs (by rows)  
with respect to Inputs (by columns)**

*Direction :  $g_y = 1, g_{\tilde{y}} = g_x = g_{\tilde{x}} = -1$*

	$K_{prod}$	$L$	$E$	$K_{pol}$	$S$
$K_{prod}$	0.000 ( 0.000)	-0.877 ( 0.083)	-0.845 ( 0.099)	-0.378 ( 0.167)	0.241 ( 0.106)
$L$	-1.117 ( 0.110)	0.000 ( 0.000)	-0.907 ( 0.089)	-0.443 ( 0.181)	0.289 ( 0.128)
$E$	-1.093 ( 0.130)	-1.040 ( 0.101)	0.000 ( 0.000)	-0.350 ( 0.164)	0.260 ( 0.113)
$K_{pol}$	-0.989 ( 0.613)	-0.920 ( 0.576)	-0.893 ( 0.615)	0.000 ( 0.000)	0.075 ( 0.098)
$S$	3.376 ( 1.622)	3.059 ( 1.422)	3.163 ( 1.503)	3.726 ( 2.555)	0.000 ( 0.000)