

Interjurisdictional Spillovers, Decentralized Policymaking, and the Elasticity of Capital Supply

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Research Question

Question addressed in this paper

Can decentralized policymaking in the presence of interjurisdictional spillovers be efficient?

Main motivation: climate policy

- GHG create interjurisdictional spillovers (externalities)
- climate summits all (more or less) failed to implement centralized (efficient) policy (no Super-Kyoto)
- is there hope that decentralized climate policy is efficient?

Intuitive answer: NO!

- spillovers are not internalized and
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Answer in previous literature: YES!

- Oates/Schwab (1988, JPubE): decentralized choice of taxes on mobile capital with identical jurisd./local pollution efficient
- Ogawa/Wildasin (2009, AER): efficiency also with non-identical jurisdictions and global pollution (spillovers)
note: fixed capital supply; emissions proportional to capital (*)

Two contributions of our paper

- in Ogawa/Wildasin: environmental externality due to spillovers
+ fiscal externality due to mobile capital
→ because of (*) both externalities just neutralize each other
- extension: elastic capital supply → total emissions endogenous
→ environmental ext. not enough to compensate fiscal ext.
→ decentrally chosen capital tax rates inefficiently low

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Basic Structure, Firms and Households

Basic Structure

- $n \geq 2$ countries; country indices: i, j
- a representative firm + household in each country

Firm in country i

- after-tax profit: $\pi_i = F(k_i) - (\rho + t_i)k_i$ (1)

with: $k_i =$ capital, $\rho =$ interest, $t_i =$ tax in i , $F'' < 0 < F'$

- FOC: $F'(k_i) - t_i = \rho$ (2)

Household in country i

- utility: $u_i = U(\bar{k} - s_i) + (1 + \rho)s_i + \pi_i + t_i k_i + V(e_i)$ (3)

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Capital Market and Pollution

Capital market

- equilibrium $\sum_{i=1}^n k_i = nS(\rho)$ together with (2) yields:

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t_i} < 0, \quad \frac{\partial k_i}{\partial t_i} < 0, \quad \frac{\partial k_j}{\partial t_i} > 0, \quad \frac{\partial k_i}{\partial t_i} + (n-1) \frac{\partial k_j}{\partial t_i} = \frac{S'}{F''S' - 1}$$

- fixed supply ($S' = 0$): $t_i \uparrow \rightarrow$ relocation of capital
- elastic supply ($S' > 0$): $t_i \uparrow \rightarrow$ same + reduction of capital

Pollution

- pollution in i : $e_i = \alpha k_i + \beta \sum_{j \neq i} \alpha k_j$ ($\beta > 0$: spillovers)

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Government and Externalities

Government in country i

- maximizes u_i from (3) wrt t_i s.t. (1), $s_i = S(\rho)$ and comparative statics of capital market and emissions
- takes as given $t_j \rightarrow$ Nash game between n countries
- equilibrium tax: $t^* = \frac{\alpha[(1 - \beta)(n - 1) - nF''S']V'}{nF''S' - (n - 1)} > 0$

Externalities

- fiscal: $FE = \frac{\partial(t_j k_j)}{\partial t_i} = -\frac{t^*}{n(1 - F''S')F''} > 0$
- environmental: $EE = V' \frac{\partial e_j}{\partial t_i} = \frac{\alpha(\beta - 1 - \beta n F'' S')V'}{n(1 - F'' S')F''} \stackrel{>}{\ll} 0$

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Main Results (use t^*)

Sum of externalities

$$EE + FE = \frac{\alpha\beta n S' V'}{n F'' S' - (n-1)}$$

Fixed capital supply ($S' = 0$)

- then: $EE + FE = 0 \rightarrow$ tax rates efficient
- reason: $FE > 0$, $EE < 0$ and $-EE = FE$
- put differently: total capital and total emissions are fixed!

Elastic capital supply ($S' > 0$)

- then: $EE + FE > 0 \rightarrow$ tax rates inefficiently low
- reason: $FE > 0$, EE smaller in absolute term; $-EE < FE$
- put different: total emissions and total capital fall; EE becomes absolutely smaller; not enough to compensate FE

Main Results (use t^*)

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- then: $EE + FE > 0 \rightarrow$ tax rates inefficiently low
- reason: $FE > 0$, EE smaller in absolute term; $-EE < FE$
- put different: total emissions and total capital fall; EE becomes absolutely smaller; not enough to compensate FE

Main Results (use t^*)

Sum of externalities

$$EE + FE = \frac{\alpha\beta n S' V'}{n F'' S' - (n-1)}$$

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