

# Games of Partial Information in Cyber-Physical Systems Security

*João P. Hespanha*

*Work in collaboration with  
Denis Garagic, Guosong Yang, Radha Poovendran*



## Partial information games

### ➔ Sensor manipulation

- Sensor-reveal game
- Existence/computation of Nash equilibrium
- Data-driven approach to detection

with D. Garajic (BAE)

[based on CDC'20, WeC09.4]

### ➔ Asymmetric information

- online learning of the attacker's best response

with G. Yang (UCSB),  
R. Poovendran (UW)

[based on CDC'20, FrB09.3]





# Adversarial Detection

Problem formulation:

$$\theta = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{attack active} \\ 0 & \text{no attack} \end{cases}$$

detection system wants to estimate  $\hat{\theta}(y)$

cyber sensor logs

to minimize  $J_{\text{detec}} := A P(\hat{\theta} = 1, \theta = 0) + B P(\hat{\theta} = 0, \theta = 1)$

cost of false detections

cost of missed detections

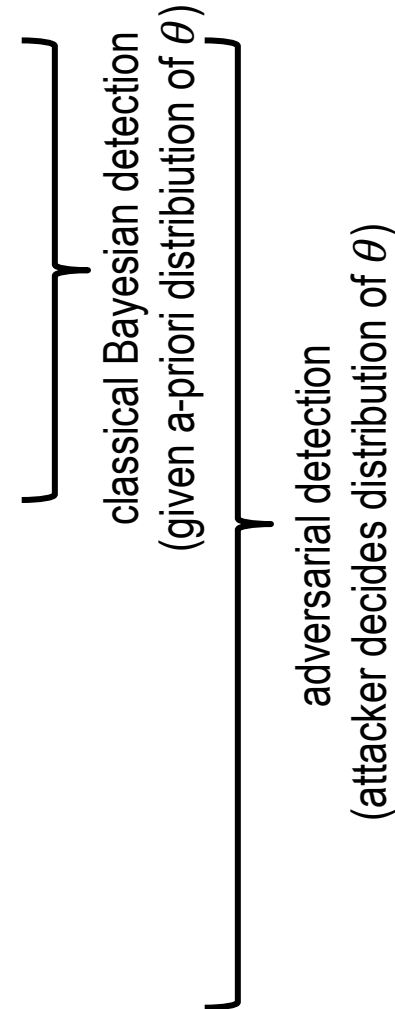
attacker wants to maximize

$$J_{\text{attack}} := R\theta - C P(\hat{\theta} = 1, \theta = 1) + F P(\hat{\theta} = 1, \theta = 0)$$

reward for attack

penalty for getting caught

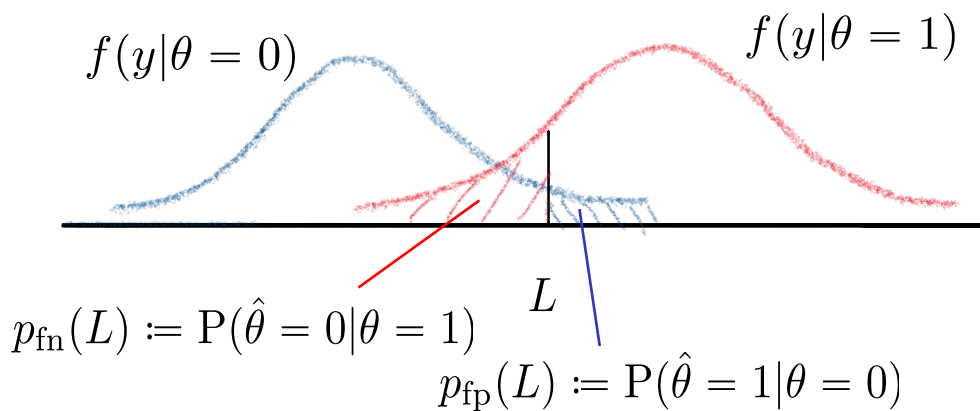
reward for false detections  
(compromise confidence on detection mechanism)



*Problem formulation:*

$$\theta = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{attack active} \\ 0 & \text{no attack} \end{cases}$$

*1-D example:*



Detector picks  $L$  in

$$\hat{\theta} = \begin{cases} 0 & y \leq L \\ 1 & y > L \end{cases}$$

to minimize

$$A P(\theta = 0)p_{\text{fp}}(L) + B P(\theta = 1)p_{\text{fn}}(L)$$

attacker wants to select  $P(\theta = 1)$  to maximize (mixed policy)

$$J_{\text{attack}} := R P(\theta = 1) - C(1 - p_{\text{fp}}(L)) P(\theta = 1) + F p_{\text{fn}}(L) P(\theta = 0)$$

reward  
for attack

penalty for  
getting caught

reward for  
false detections

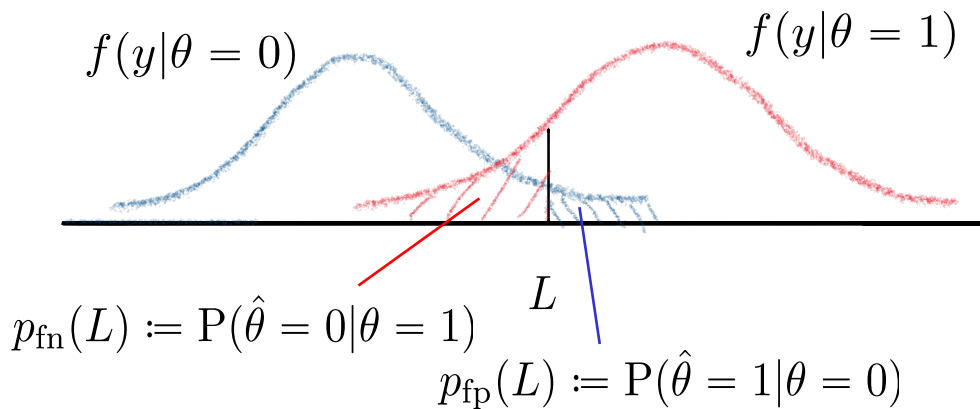
# Adversarial Detection

Problem formula

$\theta =$

- Classical/adversarial formulations assume given & fixed distribution of data  $y$  (given  $\theta$ )
- but...
- In attacks detection, opponent will likely manipulate data (e.g., disable logs, engage in “diversions”)

1-D example:



Detector picks  $L$  in

$$\hat{\theta} = \begin{cases} 0 & y \leq L \\ 1 & y > L \end{cases}$$

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reward  
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penalty for  
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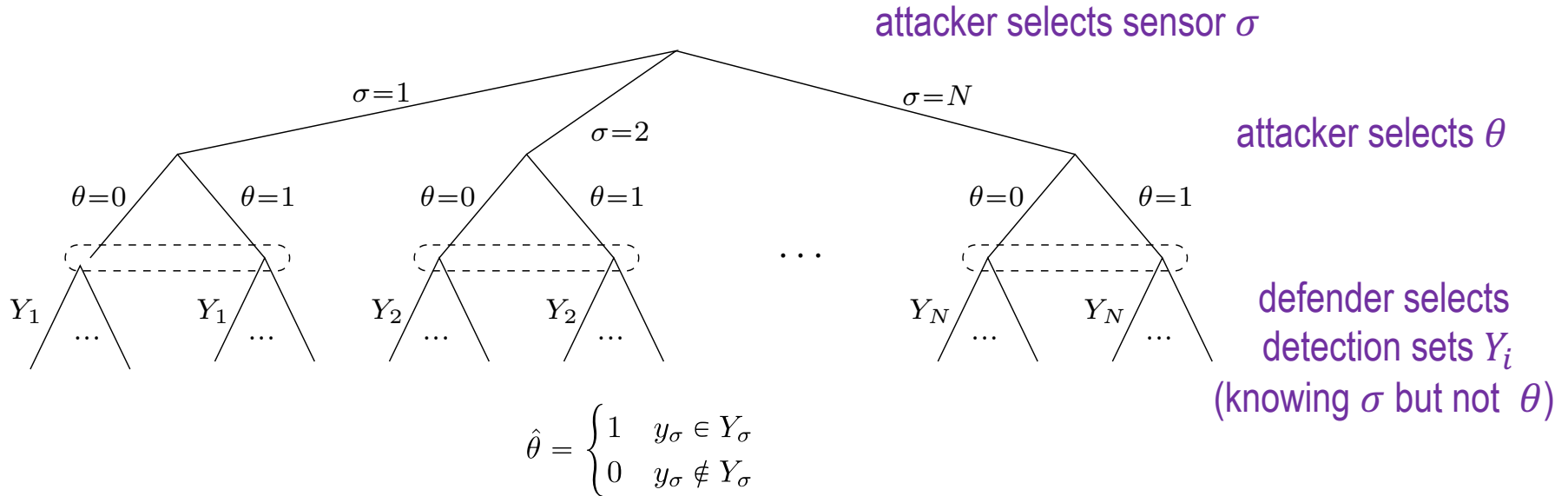
reward for  
false detections







# Extensive Form Representation



On each branch  $\sigma = i$ , we have a 2-player nonzero sum game

attacker plays rows:

$$A_{\text{att}}^i := \begin{bmatrix} -S_i & F-S_i & Fp_{\text{fp}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^1) - S_i & \dots & Fp_{\text{fp}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^M) - S_i \\ R-S_i & R-C & S_i - R + C(1 - p_{\text{fn}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^1)) - S_i & \dots & R - C(1 - p_{\text{fn}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^M)) - S_i \end{bmatrix}$$

← selects  $\theta = 0$

← selects  $\theta = 1$

$$B_{\text{def}}^i := \begin{bmatrix} 0 & A & Ap_{\text{fp}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^1) & \dots & Ap_{\text{fp}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^M) \\ B & 0 & Bp_{\text{fn}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^1) & \dots & Np_{\text{fn}}^i(\mathcal{Y}_i^M) \end{bmatrix}$$

← selects  $\theta = 0$

← selects  $\theta = 1$

defender plays columns:

$Y_i = \emptyset$   
always pick  
 $\hat{\theta} = 0$

$Y_i = \text{"all"}$   
always pick  
 $\hat{\theta} = 1$

intermediate options for  $Y_i$ :

$\mathcal{Y}_i^1, \mathcal{Y}_i^2, \dots, \mathcal{Y}_i^M$

(finite enumeration for simplicity)

# Main Results

**Theorem:** Consider only 3 detection sets ( $\emptyset$ , “all”,  $Y_i$ )

For each sensor selection  $\sigma = i$ , the game has mixed Nash eq. with detection policy of the form

$$z_{\text{def}}^* = \begin{cases} \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\bar{C}^i - R}{\bar{C}^i} \\ 0 \\ \frac{R}{\bar{C}^i} \end{bmatrix} & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{R - \bar{C}^i}{C + F - \bar{C}^i} \\ \frac{C + F - R}{C + F - \bar{C}^i} \end{bmatrix} & \bar{C}^i < R \end{cases}$$

ignore Y and declare no attack  
 ignore Y and declare attack  
 $Y_i$ -dependent decision

detection cost:

$$J_{\text{def}}^i = \begin{cases} \frac{AB}{A+B \frac{1-p_{\text{fn}}^i}{p_{\text{fp}}^i}}, & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \frac{AB}{B+A \frac{1-p_{\text{fp}}^i}{p_{\text{fn}}^i}}, & \bar{C}^i < R \end{cases}$$

$$\bar{C}^i := C(1 - p_{\text{fn}}^i) + F p_{\text{fp}}^i$$

detection-set  $Y_i$  selected to maximize

$$\begin{cases} \frac{1-p_{\text{fn}}^i}{p_{\text{fp}}^i}, & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \frac{p_{\text{fn}}^i}{1-p_{\text{fp}}^i}, & \bar{C}^i < R, \end{cases}$$

*very different from Bayesian case, where detection-set  $Y_i$  is selected to maximize*

$$A P(\theta = 0) p_{\text{fp}} + B P(\theta = 1) p_{\text{fn}}$$

*but not surprising because now attack probabilities adjust to  $p_{\text{fp}}$ ,  $p_{\text{fn}}$*

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attacker's reward:

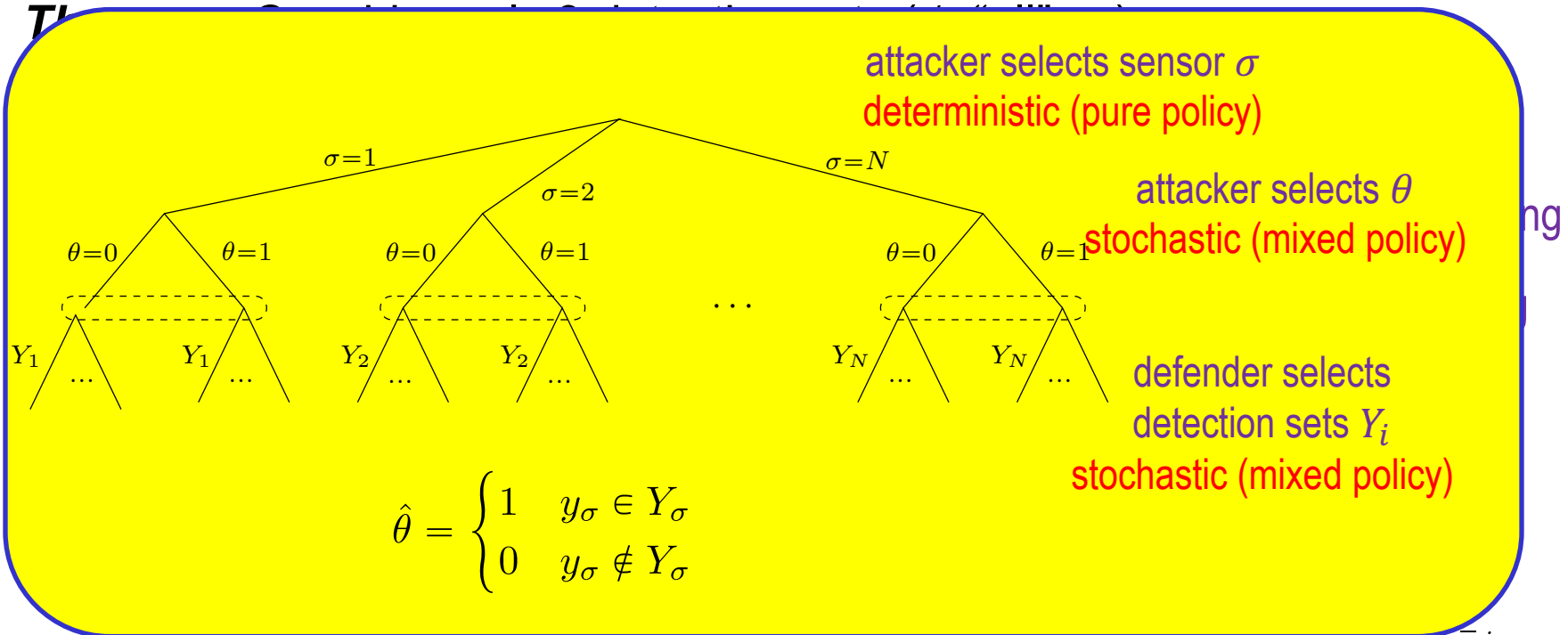
$$\bar{C}^i := C(1 - p_{\text{fn}}^i) + Fp_{\text{fp}}^i$$

$$J_{\text{att}}^i = F \begin{cases} \frac{Rp_{\text{fp}}^i}{\bar{C}^i} - S_i, & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \frac{(R - C)(1 - p_{\text{fp}}^i) + Cp_{\text{fn}}^i}{C + F - \bar{C}^i} - S_i, & \bar{C}^i < R \end{cases}$$

Attacker's reward determines (deterministic) optimal sensor selection form attacker

$$\sigma = \arg \max_i F \begin{cases} \frac{Rp_{\text{fp}}^i}{\bar{C}^i} - S_i & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \frac{(R - C)(1 - p_{\text{fp}}^i) + Cp_{\text{fn}}^i}{C + F - \bar{C}^i} - S_i & \bar{C}^i < R, \end{cases}$$

# Main Results



$$J_{\text{def}}^{i*} = \begin{cases} \frac{A+B \frac{R}{p_{\text{fp}}^i}}{p_{\text{fn}}^i}, & \bar{C}^i < R \\ \frac{AB}{A \frac{1-p_{\text{fp}}^i}{p_{\text{fn}}^i} + B}, & \bar{C}^i < R \end{cases} \quad J_{\text{att}}^{i*} = F \begin{cases} \frac{R p_{\text{fp}}^i}{\bar{C}^i} - S_i, & \bar{C}^i \geq R \\ \frac{(R-C)(1-p_{\text{fp}}^i) + C p_{\text{fn}}^i}{C+F-\bar{C}^i} - S_i, & \bar{C}^i < R \end{cases}$$

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Annotations:

- ignore Y and declare no attack (points to  $\frac{\bar{C}^i - R}{\bar{C}^i}$ )
- ignore Y and declare attack (points to  $\frac{R}{\bar{C}^i}$ )
- $Y_i$ -dependent decision (points to the bottom matrix)

detection cost:

*But this policy depends crucially on opponent's goal...*

$$J_{\text{attack}} := R\theta - C P(\hat{\theta} = 1, \theta = 1) + F P(\hat{\theta} = 1, \theta = 0)$$

$$\bar{C}^i := C(1 - p_{\text{fn}}^i) + F p_{\text{fp}}^i$$

*Over repeated instances of the game, defender keeps track of*

$$\bar{y}^i(t) = \begin{bmatrix} \text{fraction of times } \theta = 0 \text{ in } [0, t] \text{ when } \sigma = i \\ \text{fraction of times } \theta = 1 \text{ in } [0, t] \text{ when } \sigma = i \end{bmatrix}$$

*at time  $t + 1$  defender makes optimal Bayesian decision assuming*

$$\begin{bmatrix} P(\theta = 0) \\ P(\theta = 1) \end{bmatrix} = \bar{y}^\sigma(t)$$

empirical distribution  
observed so far for sensor  
 $\sigma(t + 1)$  is the correct prior

## **Theorem:**

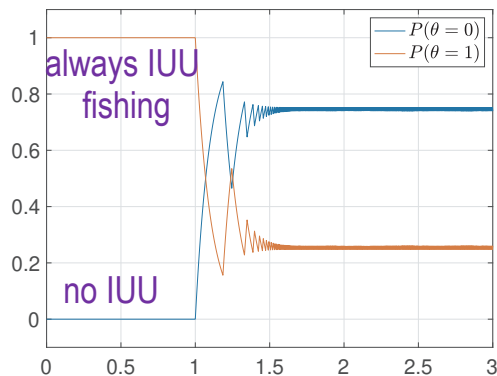
1. If attacker is using a fixed policy (Nash or not), then  $\bar{y}^\sigma(t)$  converges to optimal best response
2. If attacker is also using fictitious play based on the observation of detectors policy, then  $\bar{y}^\sigma(t)$  converges to optimal best response

trivial  
non-trivial, based on results of  
convergence of 2xN player games

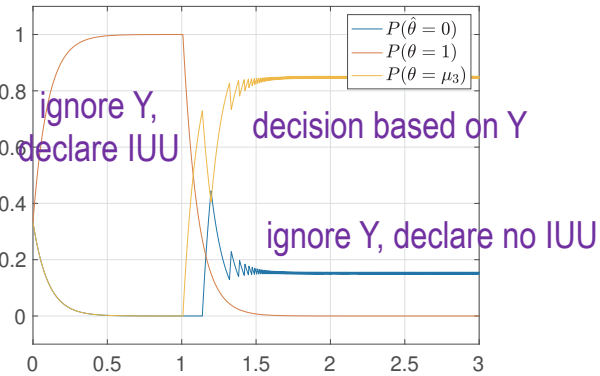
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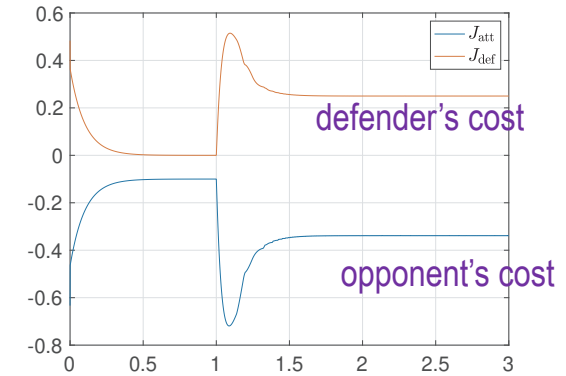
attacker's mixed policy



defender's mixed policy



player's costs



defender adjusts to  
opponent's policy,  
regardless of optimal or not

opponent uses fixed  
(non optimal) policy

opponent uses  
optimal policy





## Partial information games

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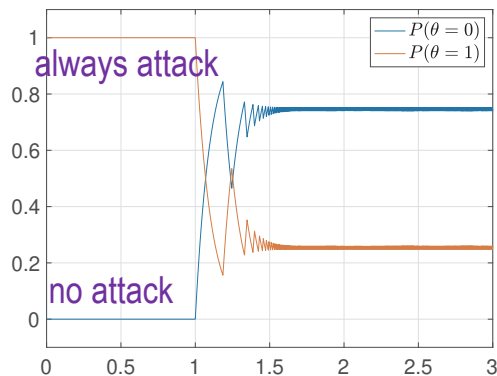
[based on CDC'20, FrB09.3]

## Impact:

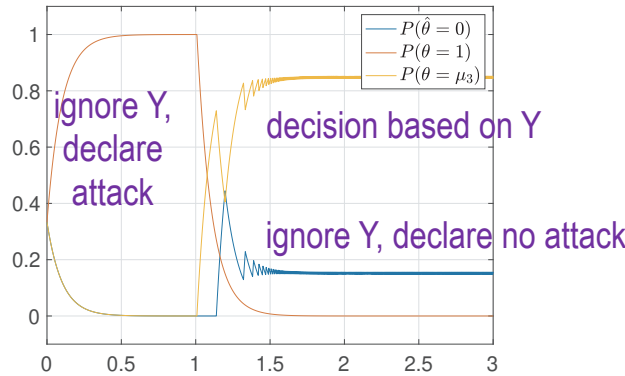
- Robustify attack detection with respect to potential sensor manipulation
- Algorithm adapts to changes in opponent's intent

2. If attacker is also using fictitious play based on the observation of detectors policy, then  $\bar{y}^\sigma(t)$  converges to optimal best response

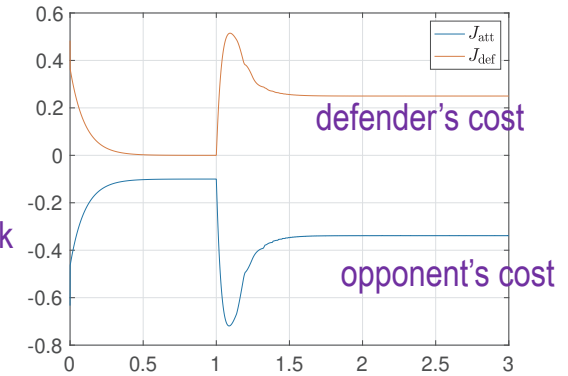
attacker's mixed policy



defender's mixed policy



player's costs



defender adjusts to opponent's policy, regardless of optimal or not

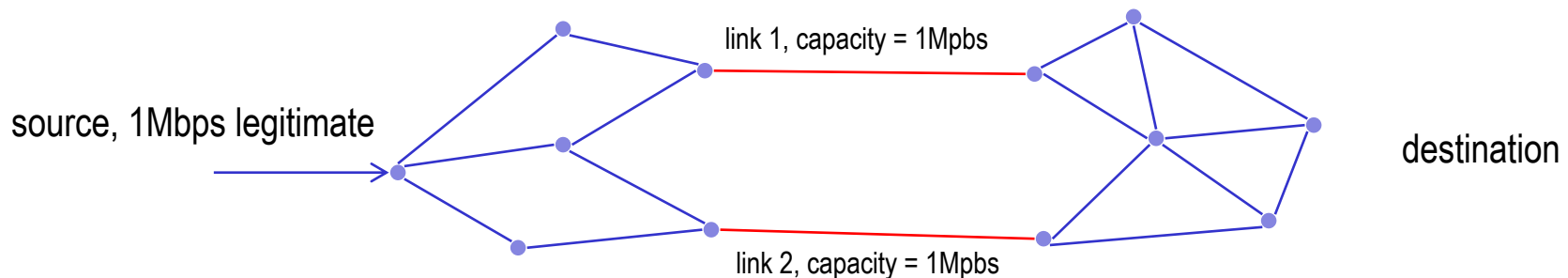
opponent uses fixed (non optimal) policy

opponent uses optimal policy

- Defender often unaware of the attack objective ahead of time
- Attacker can observe/probe the defense strategy prior to attack

↳ Lack of no-regret policies for defender

*routing game example (based on cross fire attack [Kang-Lee-Gligor-13])*



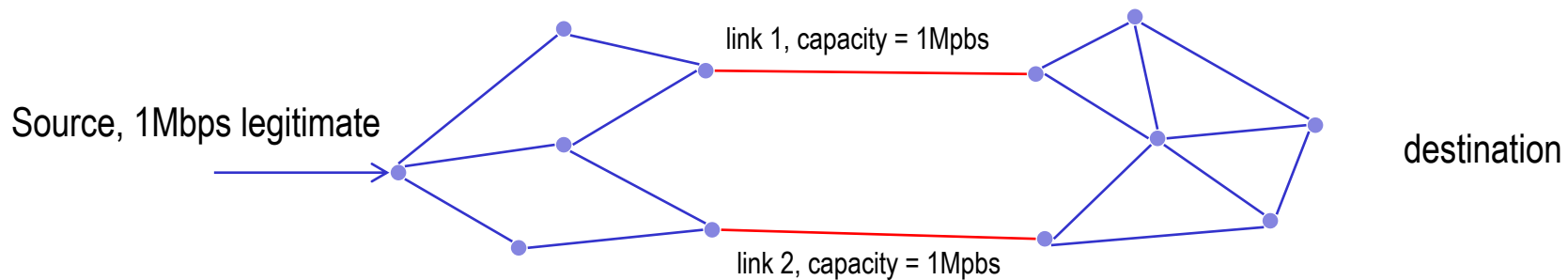
- *attacker has resources to create 1Mbps traffic through links 1, 2, or a combination*
- *router must decide how to route 1Mbps of traffic through links 1, 2, or a combination*

# Asymmetric Information

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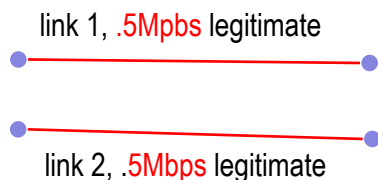
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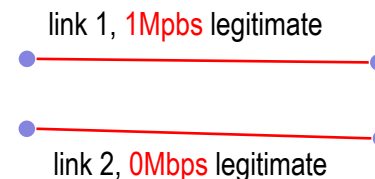
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option I



Optimal attack floods link 2 and compromises .5Mbps of legitimate traffic

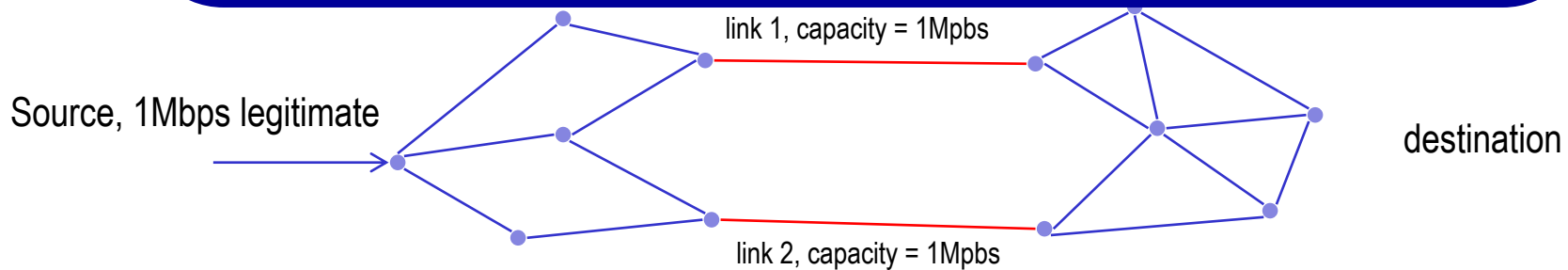
option II



Optimal attack floods link 1 and compromises 1Mbps of legitimate traffic

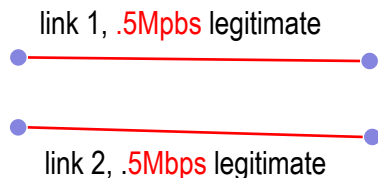
1. Option I is optimal for router but leads to regret:  
*“if router knew link 2 was going to be flooded, it would have routed all legitimate traffic through link 1”*
2. But option II also leads to regret...

Asymmetric information  $\Rightarrow$  regret



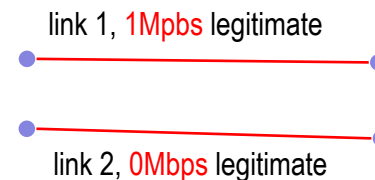
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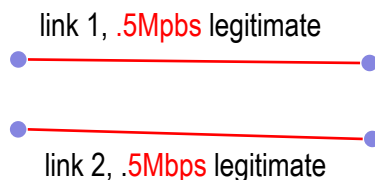
# Asymmetric Information

- Defender often unaware of the attack objective ahead of time
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- ☹️ *Naif defender that reacts to “current” environment regrets choice (no Nash equilibrium, fictitious play will not converge)*
- 😊 *Defender must learn attacker’s “response” and plan accordingly (need to consider Stackelberg equilibrium)*

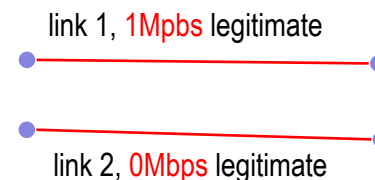
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## option II



Optimal attack floods link 1 and compromises 1Mbps of legitimate traffic

# Stackelberg equilibrium

$$u^* = \arg \min_{u \in \mathcal{U}} J_u(u, \beta(u))$$

defender's (leader) cost

defender's action space

$$\beta(u) := \arg \min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$$

attacker's best response

attacker (follower) cost

attacker's action space

*Challenge in CPS sec.:* attacker's best response  $\beta(\cdot)$  is unknown to defender

- attacker's intent  $J_a(\cdot)$  not known a priori
- attacker's capabilities  $\mathcal{A}$  not known a priori

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*Online learning approach:*

1. estimate best response function  $\hat{\beta}(\cdot)$  based on observation of attacker's actions  $a$
2. select defender action

$$\hat{u}^* = \arg \min_{u \in \mathcal{U}} J_u(u, \hat{\beta}(u))$$



# Stackelberg learning

defender's  
(leader) cost

$$u^* = \arg \min_{u \in \mathcal{U}} J_u(u, \beta(u))$$

attacker  
(follower) cost

$$\beta(u) := \arg \min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$$

Assume

$$\beta(\cdot) \in \left\{ f(\theta, \cdot) : \theta \in \Theta \right\}$$

linearly parameterized function  
approximator on compact set  $\mathcal{U}$   
(results extend to only approx. match)

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(results extend to only approx. match)

attack best-response learning rule:

$$\dot{\theta} = -\lambda_e(t) \left[ \nabla_{\theta} \left\| f(\theta, u) - a \right\|^2 \right]_{T_{\Theta}}$$

hysteresis switching  
stops adaptation when error  
 $\|f(\theta, u) - a\|$  is smaller than  $\varepsilon/2$

gradient descent learning with projection

- can be computed without knowing  $\theta$
- can be computed without even observing  $a$ , just  $J_u(u, a)$

guarantees:

$$\lambda_e(t) := \begin{cases} \lambda_{\theta} & \text{if } \|f(\theta, u) - a\| \geq \varepsilon; \\ \lim_{s \nearrow t} \lambda_e(s) & \text{if } \|f(\theta, u) - a\| \in (\varepsilon/2, \varepsilon); \\ 0 & \text{if } \|f(\theta, u) - a\| \leq \varepsilon/2 \end{cases}$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} \|\theta - \theta^*\|^2 \leq -2\lambda_e \|f(\theta, u) - a\|^2 \leq 0$$

$\|\theta - \theta^*\|$  is monotonically decreasing;  
stops only if  $\|f(\theta, u) - a\| < \varepsilon$   
↳ will prove: stops in finite time

# Stackelberg learning

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attack best-response learning rule:  $\dot{\theta} = -\lambda_e(t) \left[ \nabla_{\theta} \left\| f(\theta, u) - a \right\|^2 \right]_{T_{\Theta}}$

defender's adaptation rule:  $\dot{u} = -\lambda_u \left[ \nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u)) \right]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}}$

gradient descent with  
projection  
(can be generalized  
by other adaptation  
mechanisms)

guarantees:

$$\dot{\theta} = 0 \implies \frac{d}{dt} J_u(u, f(\theta, u)) \leq -\lambda_u \left\| \left[ -\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u)) \right]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}} \right\|^2 \leq 0$$

leader's cost  $J_u(u, f(\theta, u))$  is monotonically decreasing;  
stops only if  $\left[ -\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u)) \right]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}} = 0$   
↳ will prove: convergence

□ Follower:  $\min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$       Best response:  $\beta(u) := \arg \min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$

□ Leader:  $\min_{u \in \mathcal{U}} J_a(u, \beta(u))$       Assume  $\beta(\cdot) = f(\theta^*, \cdot) \in \{f(\theta, \cdot) : \theta \in \Theta\}$

□ Est.:  $\dot{\theta} = \lambda_e(t) [-\nabla_{\theta} \|f(\theta, u) - a\|^2]_{T_{\Theta}}$       Opt.:  $\dot{u} = \lambda_u [-\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u))]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}}$

hysteresis switching:  
stops only if error is smaller than  $\varepsilon > 0$

## Theorem.

1. After finite time  $T$ , estimate will accurately predict  $a(t)$

$$\|f(\theta(t), u(t)) - a(t)\| < \varepsilon \quad \forall t \geq T$$

2. Leader will converge to 1<sup>st</sup>-order optimality condition

$$[-\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u))]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}} \rightarrow 0$$

3. One can use probing to guarantee correct estimation

$$\|\theta(t) - \theta^*\| < \varepsilon_{\theta} \quad \forall t \geq T$$

generalize Barbalat's lemma  
for hysteresis switching

establish invariance principle  
for projected gradient  
descent

persistent excitation (PE)

$$\int_t^{t+\tau_0} \nabla_{\theta} f(s)^{\top} \nabla_{\theta} f(s) ds \geq \alpha_0 I$$

$$\varepsilon_{\theta} = \varepsilon \sqrt{\tau_0 / \alpha_0}$$

□ Follower:  $\min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$       Best response:  $\beta(u) := \arg \min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} J_a(u, a)$

□ Leader:  $\min_{u \in \mathcal{U}} J_a(u, \beta(u))$       Assume  ~~$\beta(\cdot) = f(\theta^*, \cdot) \in \{f(\theta, \cdot) : \theta \in \Theta\}$~~   
 $\exists \theta^* \in \Theta : \max_{u \in \mathcal{U}} \|f(\theta^*, u) - \beta(u)\| \leq \varepsilon_f$

□ Est.:  $\dot{\theta} = \lambda_e(t) [-\nabla_{\theta} \|f(\theta, u) - a\|^2]_{T_{\Theta}}$       Opt.:  $\dot{u} = \lambda_u [-\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u))]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}}$

hysteresis switching:

stops only if error is smaller than  $\varepsilon > \kappa \varepsilon_f$

## Theorem.

1. After finite time  $T$ , estimate will accurately predict  $a(t)$

$$\|f(\theta(t), u(t)) - a(t)\| < \varepsilon \quad \forall t \geq T$$

2. Leader will converge to 1<sup>st</sup>-order optimality condition

$$[-\nabla_u J_u(u, f(\theta, u))]_{T_{\mathcal{U}}} \rightarrow 0$$

3. One can use probing to guarantee correct estimation

$$\|\theta(t) - \theta^*\| < \varepsilon_{\theta} \quad \forall t \geq T$$

generalize Barbalat's lemma  
for hysteresis switching

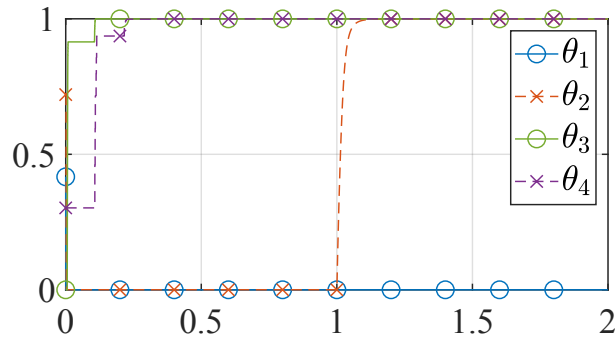
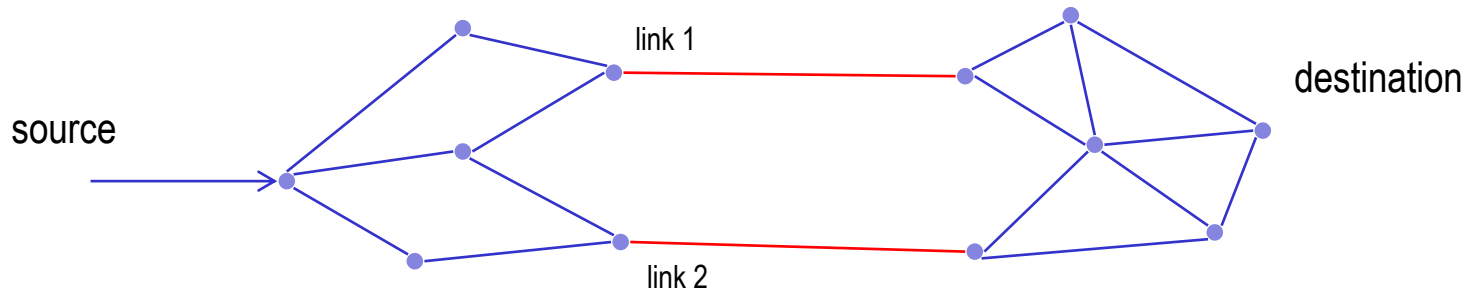
establish invariance principle  
for projected gradient  
descent

persistent excitation (PE)

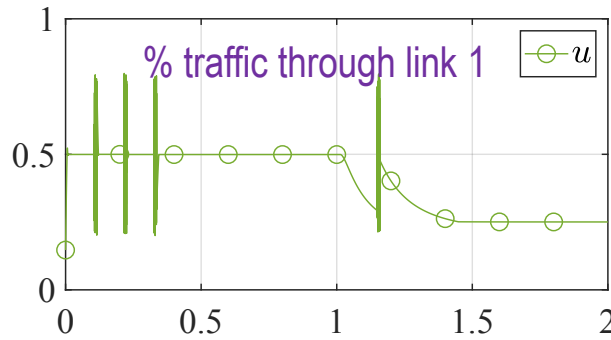
$$\int_t^{t+\tau_0} \nabla_{\theta} f(s)^{\top} \nabla_{\theta} f(s) ds \geq \alpha_0 I$$

$$\varepsilon_{\theta} = 2\kappa\varepsilon_f \sqrt{\tau_0/\alpha_0} > 0$$

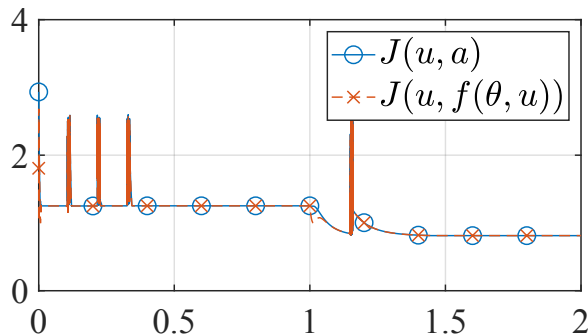
# Routing game example



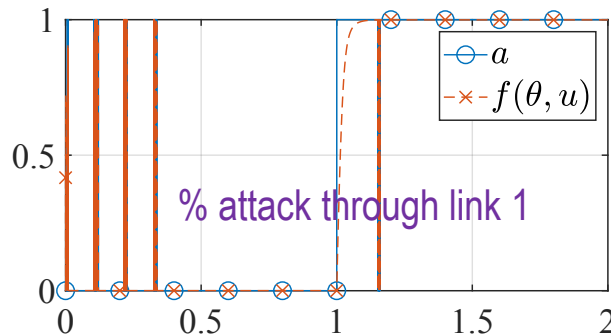
(a) Parameter estimate



(b) Router's action



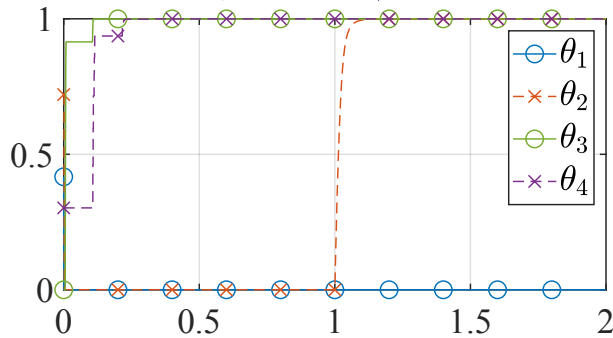
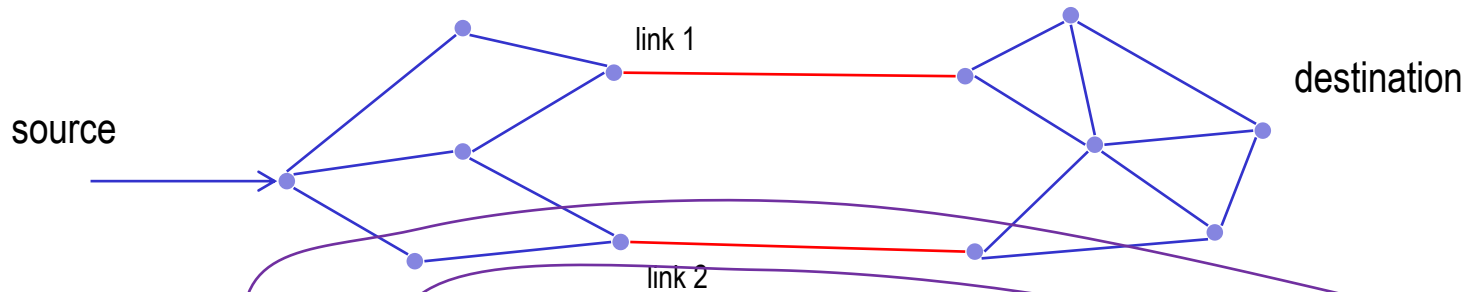
(c) Router's cost and estimate



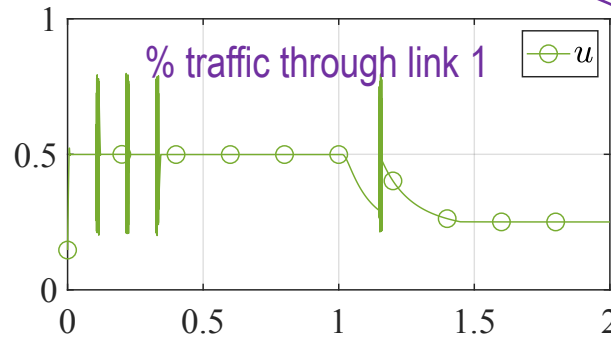
(d) Attacker's action and estimate

- initially attacker wants to disrupt both links equally
- router's policy adjusts to balance traffic

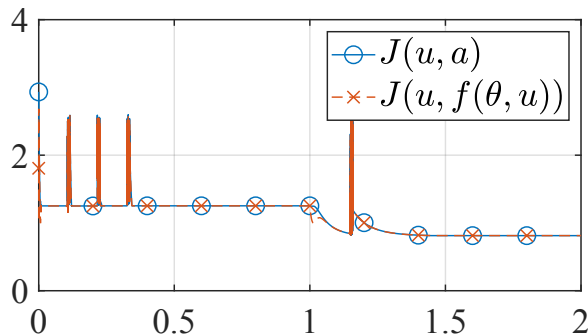
# Routing game example



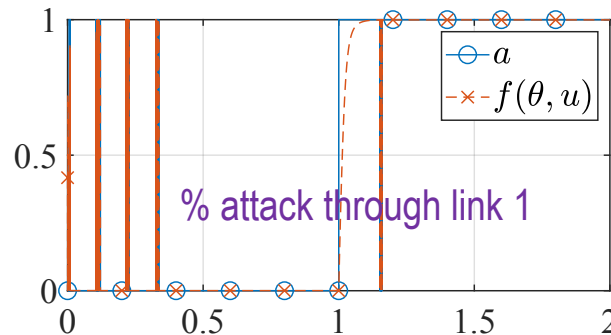
(a) Parameter estimate



(b) Router's action



(c) Router's cost and estimate



(d) Attacker's action and estimate

- initially attacker wants to disrupt both links equally

router's policy adjusts to balance traffic

- at time 1, attacker's goal changes to disrupt link 1

router's policy shifts more traffic to link 2

On both cases, attacker's best response is to focus all attack traffic on single link, but router learns intent through probing



## Partial information games

### ➔ Sensor manipulation

- Sensor-reveal game
- Existence/computation of Nash equilibrium
- Data-driven approach to detection

with D. Garajic (BAE)

[based on CDC'20, WeC09.4]

### ➔ Asymmetric information

- online learning of the attacker's best response

with G. Yang (UCSB),  
R. Poovendran (UW)

[based on CDC'20, FrB09.3]