Proposal

Typically, we face the problem of solving

$$V_0(x_0) = \sup_{\mathbf{c}_0} \mathbb{E}[\sum_{t=0}^{T-1} \delta^t u(X_t, c_t) + U(X_T)\delta^T]$$

such that $\mathbf{c}_0 = \{c_0, c_1, ...c_{T-1}\}$ and the state evolves according to

$$X_{t+1} = g(X_t, \epsilon_t) \in \mathbf{R}^d$$

[1] exogenous shocks $\epsilon \in \mathbf{R}^d$.

Rewriting in the Bellman equation format, we have

$$V_t(x) = \sup_{\mathbf{c}_t} u(x, c_t) + \mathbb{E}[V_{t+1}(X_{t+1})|X_t = x]$$

with the boundary condition

$$V_T(x) = U(x).$$

In order to solve this, the dynamic problem start at $T-1$, one needs to solve the optimization problem at each time and iterate the valuation backwards. In simple dynamic program, problems arise when the dimension d is large. At each time, t, the $\mathbb{E}_t$ is conditioning on $\sigma(X_t)$, one cannot easily derive it analytically, hence making the optimization cumbersome to solve. Numerical approximation schemes, e.g. Monte-Carlo, can be used together with dynamic problem for solving this type of problems, but its numerical performance and theoretical properties are highly dependent on the structure of the problem considered.

[1] In most cases, the control also affects the evolution of states. A simple change of variable condition allows us to “push-out" the control of the state evolution.

Instead, we consider a single index

$$Y_t = s(X_t, \beta_t) \in \mathbf{R}$$

and rewrite the Bellman equation into

$$V_t(y) = \sup_{\mathbf{c}_t, \beta_t} u(y, c_t) + \mathbb{E}[V_{t+1}(Y_{t+1})|Y_t = y] \text{ for } \beta_t = \{\beta_t, \beta_2, ..., \beta_T\} \tag{1}$$

with the boundary condition

$$V_T(y) = U(y).$$

such that

$$Y_{t+1} = s(g(X_t, \epsilon_t), \beta_{t+1}).$$

We have now effectively reduced the d-dimensional problem into one, and know the problem becomes to finding the distribution $F_t(y; \beta_t)$ of Y_t in order to evaluate the integral. Our idea is to use the empirical distribution $F_t^n(y; \beta_t)$.

Suppose given this empirical distribution, the optimal controls in equation (1) can be solved exactly. We would like to analysis the convergence behaviour of the resulting $V_0(x_0)^n$ to the true $V_0(x_0)$.

Problem to Solve

- Conditions for the validity of equation (1)
- Given \$ F^n_t\$, can we evaluate $\mathbb{E}_t$.