

Optimal Anti-Poverty Programs

An Application to the Brazilian *Bolsa Família*

Juan Rios

February 16, 2016

Motivation

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 - Individuals below annual income of US\$ 528

The Research Question

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- In this talk:
 - What are the elasticities of reported and real income?

Related Literature

- 1 Optimal Income Maintenance Programs (Besley and Coate 1992 and 1995, Kleven and Kopczuk 2011)
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 - Disentangle real responses from mis-reporting responses
- ④ Taxation in Developing Countries (Gordon and Li 2009, Pomeranz 2013, Best et al 2014, Naritomi 2015, Bachas and Soto 2015)
 - Focus here on cash-transfer programs (negative taxes).

Outline

1 Institutional Background

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- 2 Data

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- 3 Elasticities Estimation

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- 4 Implications for the Optimal Program

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 - Interviews on any business day
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- Audits
 - Take away benefits
 - Vary with the gov. budget
 - Geographical variation

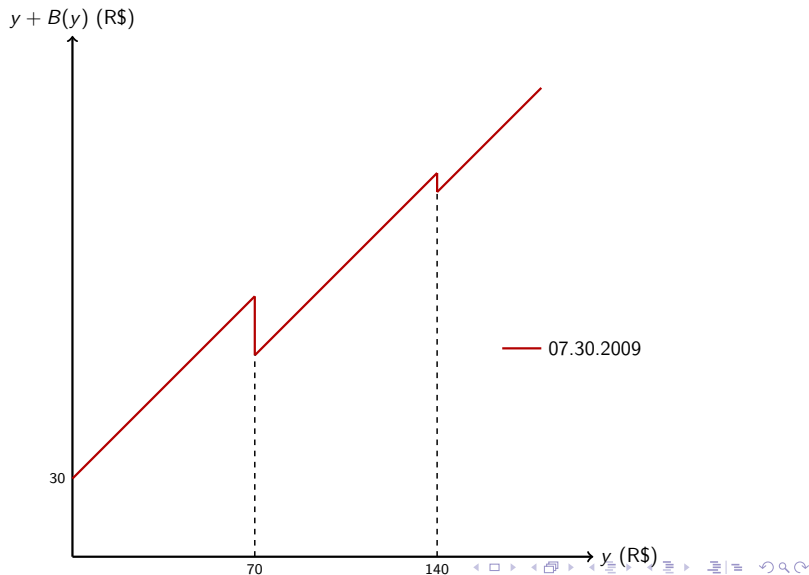
Households with 3 Members and 1 Child

$y + B(y)$ (R\$)

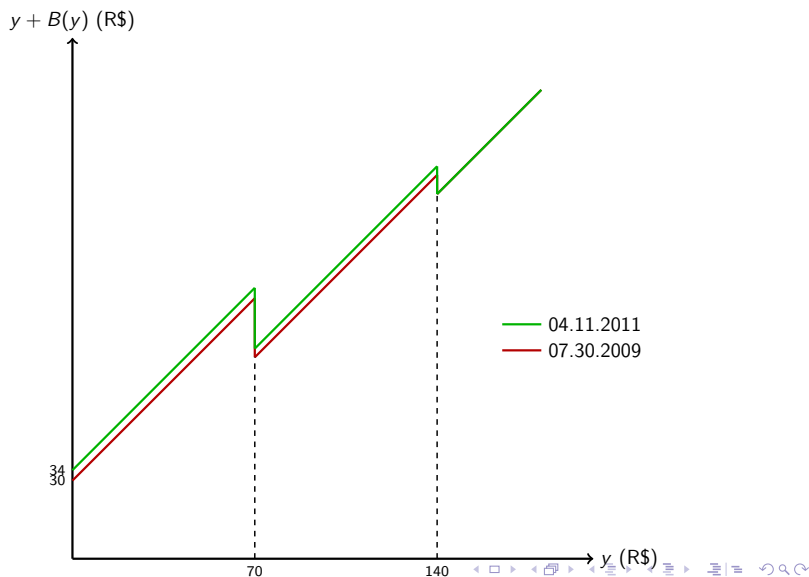


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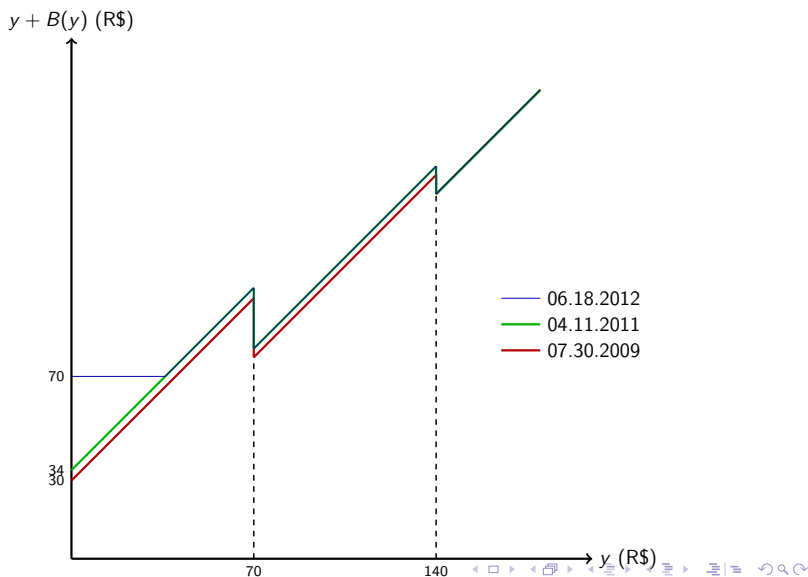
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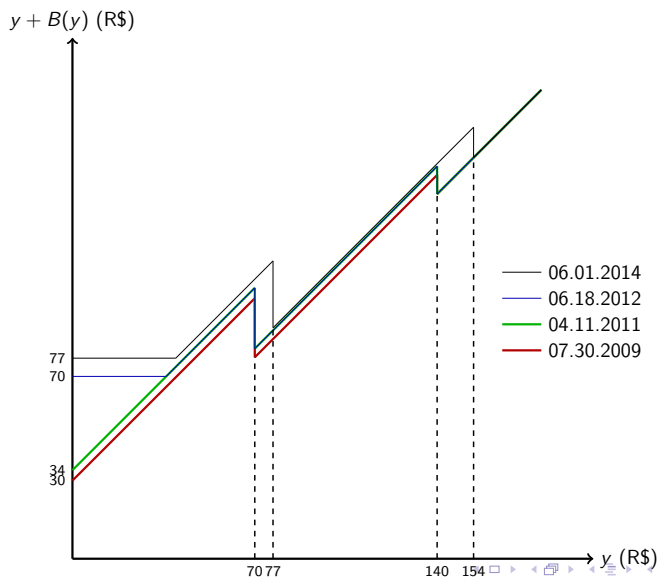
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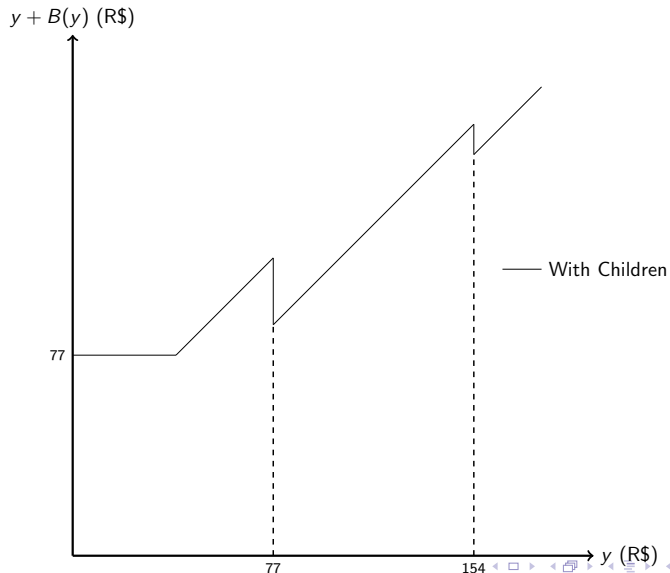
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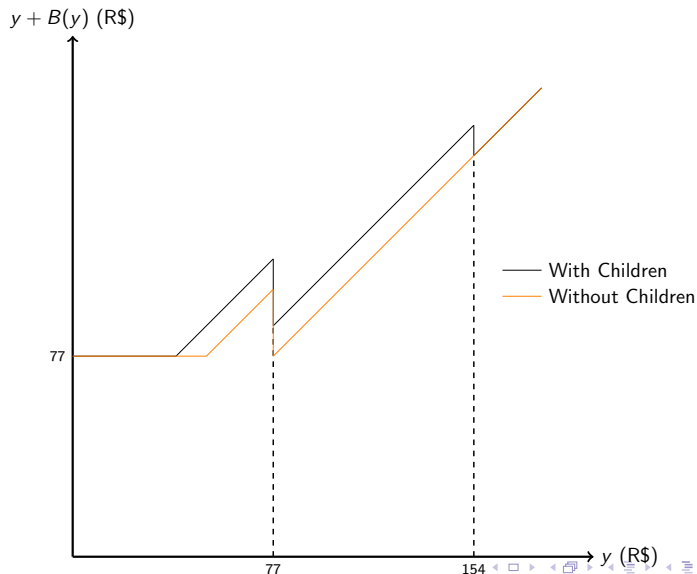
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Households with 3 Members after Last Reform



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Data

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- Bolsa Família Administrative Data for 2012-2015 (only 2015 today)
 - Panel with the self-reported income
 - Family Composition
 - Date of the Income Update

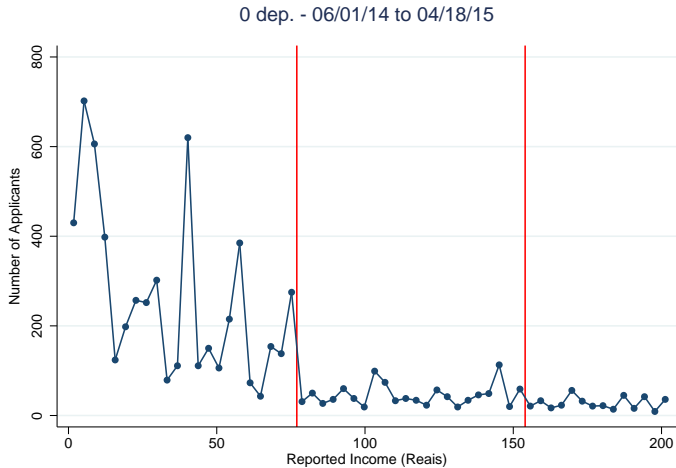
Data

- Bolsa Família Administrative Data for 2012-2015 (only 2015 today)
 - Panel with the self-reported income
 - Family Composition
 - Date of the Income Update
- RAIS
 - Universe of all formal employees in Brazil from 2002-2014
 - Monthly income
 - Individual level identifier

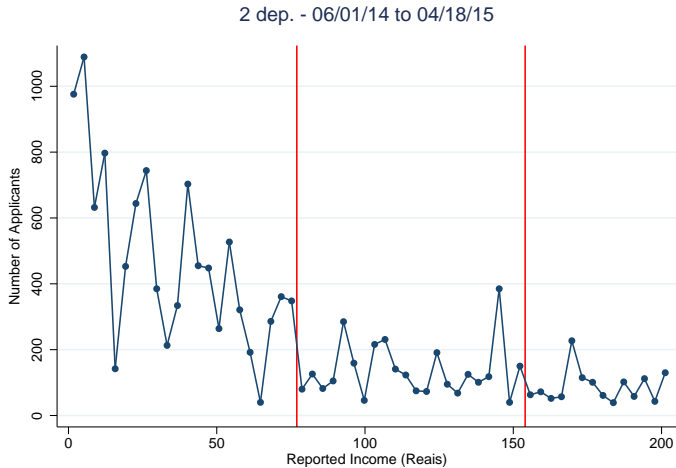
Table : Selection

	Only BF	Formal Empl.	Total
Individuals	2560438 (84.9%)	455495 (15.1%)	3015933 (100%)
Hhs (1 formal empl)	634088 (63.8%)	359267 (36.2%)	993355 (100%)
Hhs (All formal empl)	746007 (75.1%)	247348 (24.9%)	993355 (100%)

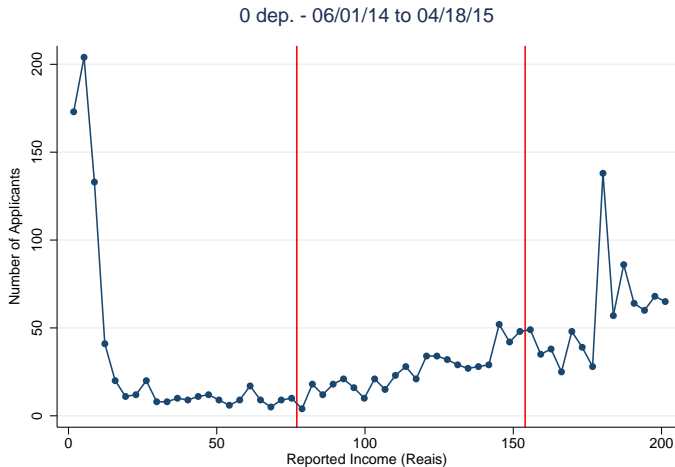
Reported Income Distribution (0 children)



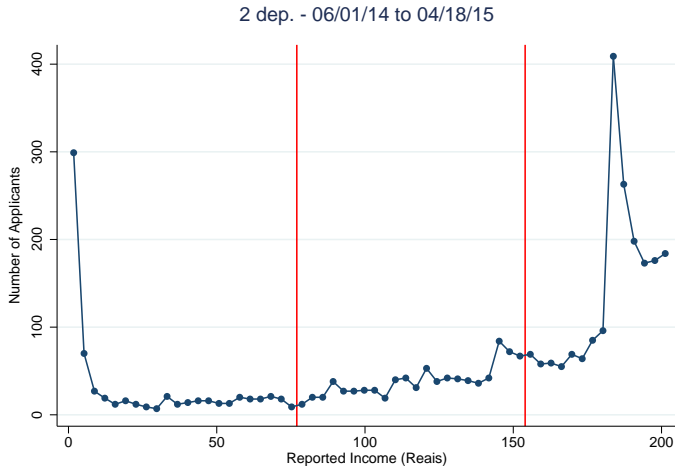
Reported Income Distribution (2 children)



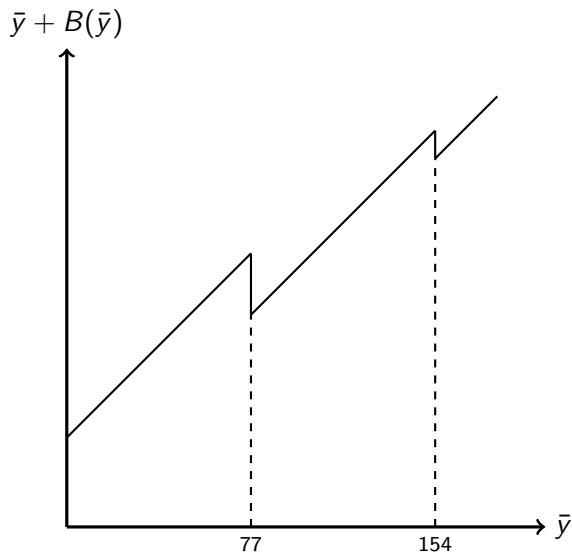
3rd Party Reported Income Distribution (0 children)



3rd Party Reported Income Distribution (2 children)

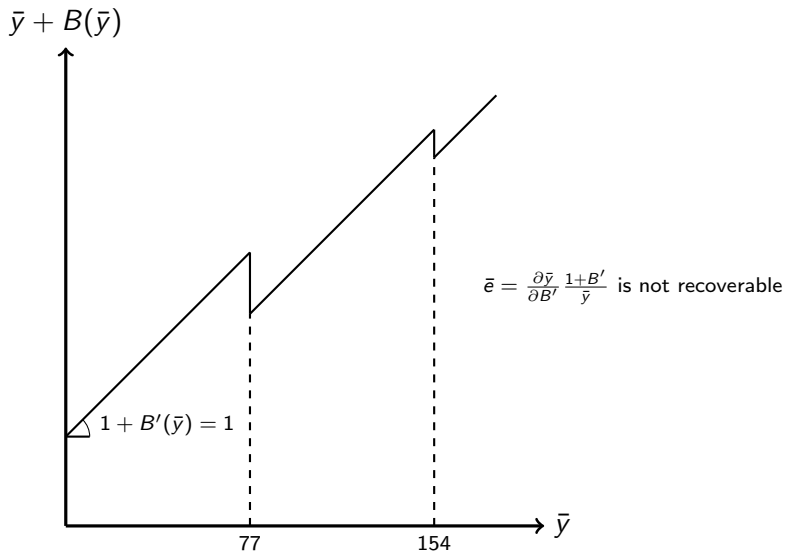


Program Schedule

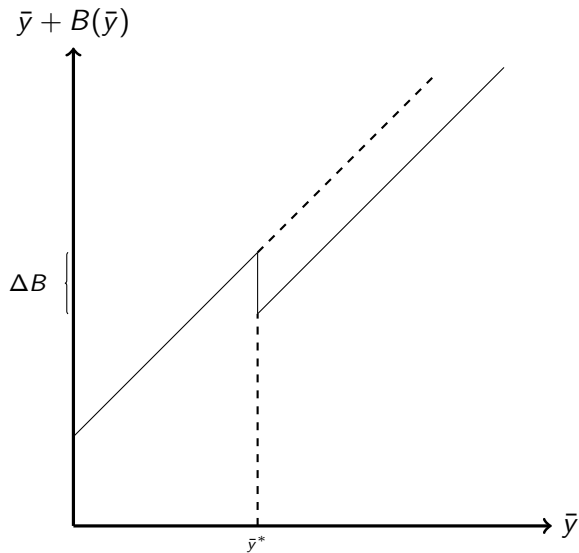




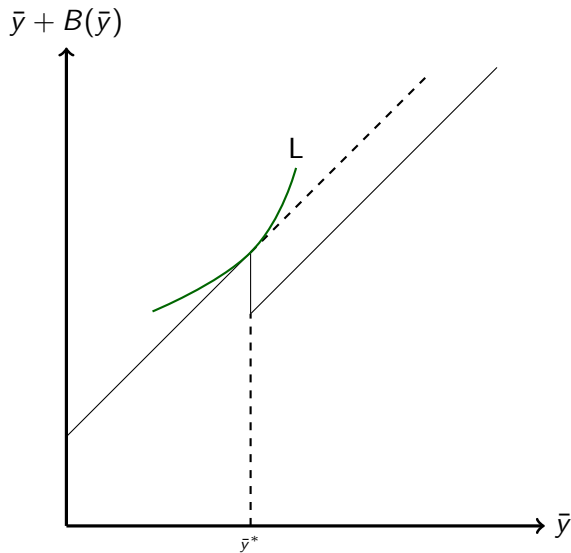
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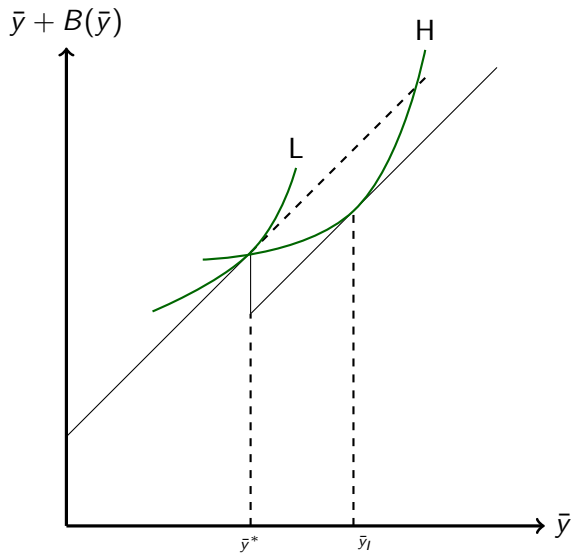
Reduced-Form Bunching



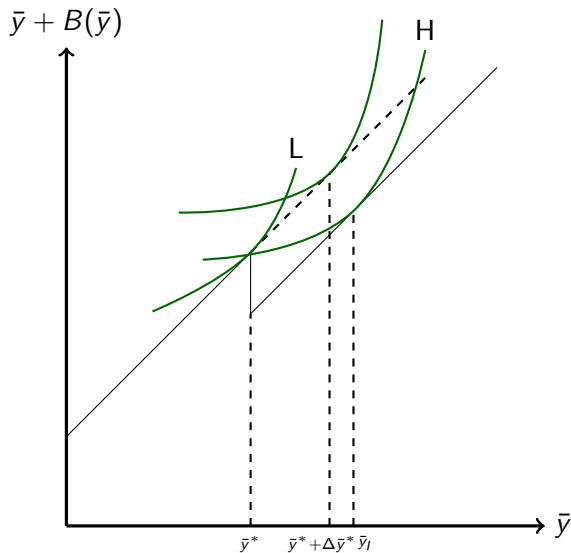
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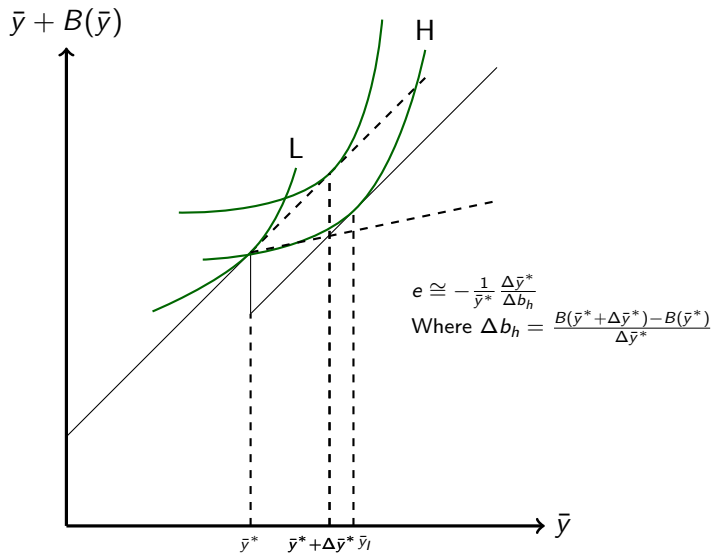
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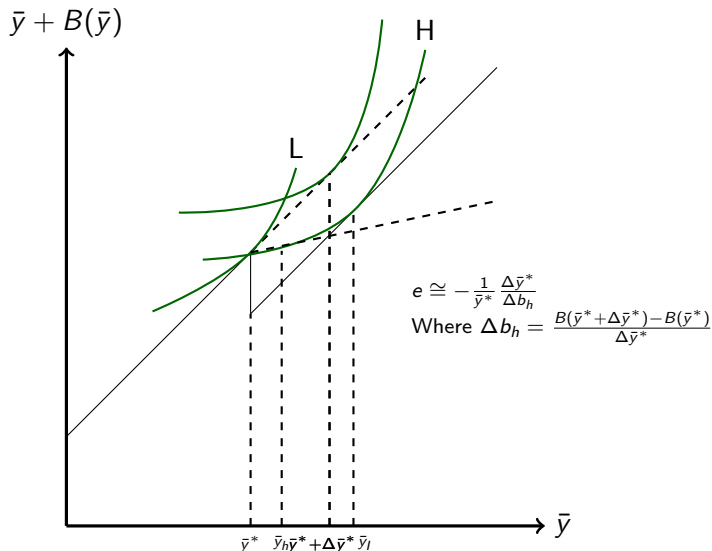
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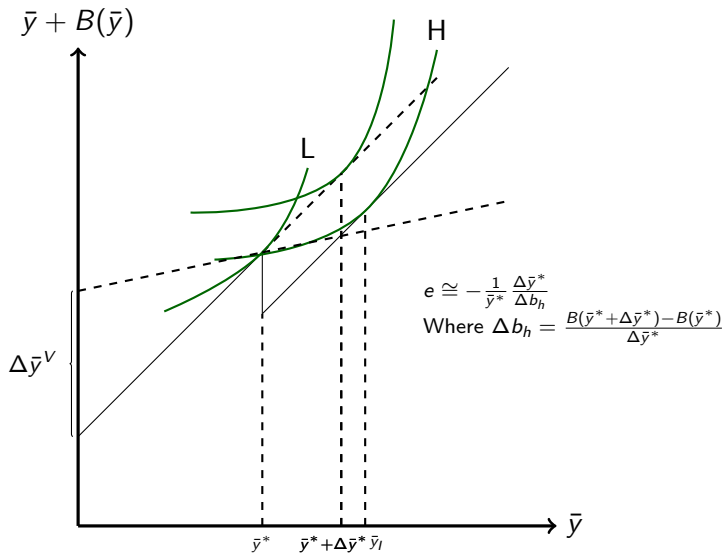
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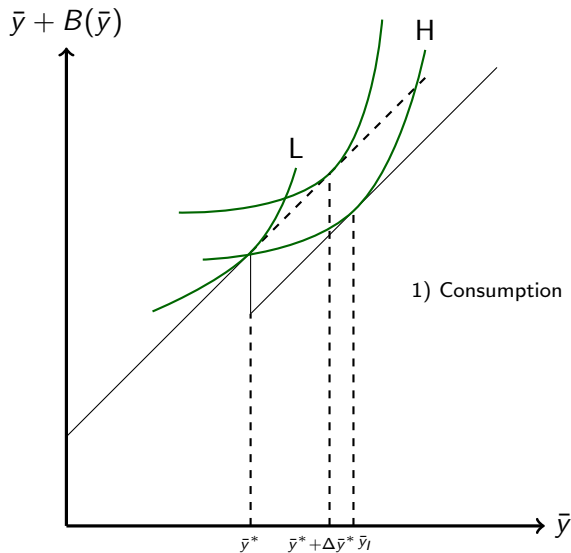
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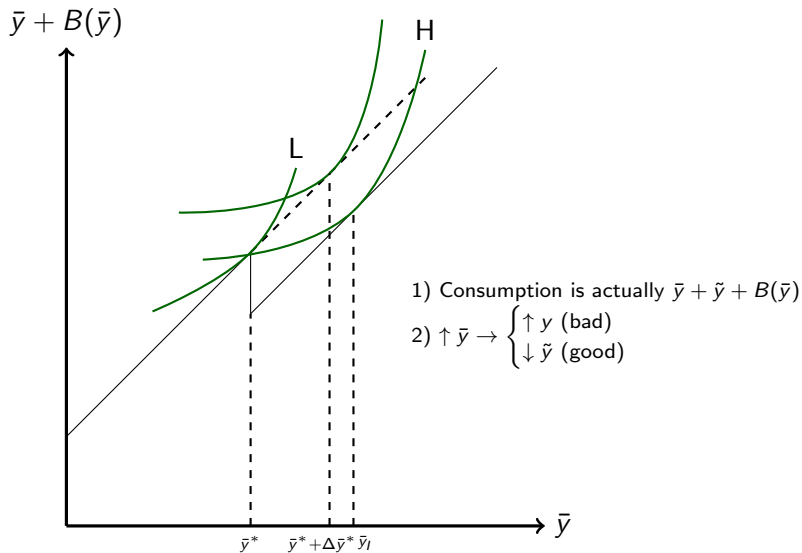


Reduced-Form Bunching



1) Consumption is actually $\bar{y} + \tilde{y} + B(\bar{y})$

Reduced-Form Bunching



Adjusted Bunching Method

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$$U(\bar{y}, \tilde{y}; e, \tilde{e}, n) = \bar{y} + \tilde{y} + B(\bar{y}) - \frac{n}{1 + 1/e} \left(\frac{\bar{y} + \tilde{y}}{n} \right)^{1+1/e} - \frac{\tilde{y}^{1+1/\tilde{e}}}{1 + 1/\tilde{e}}$$

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- n : Ability

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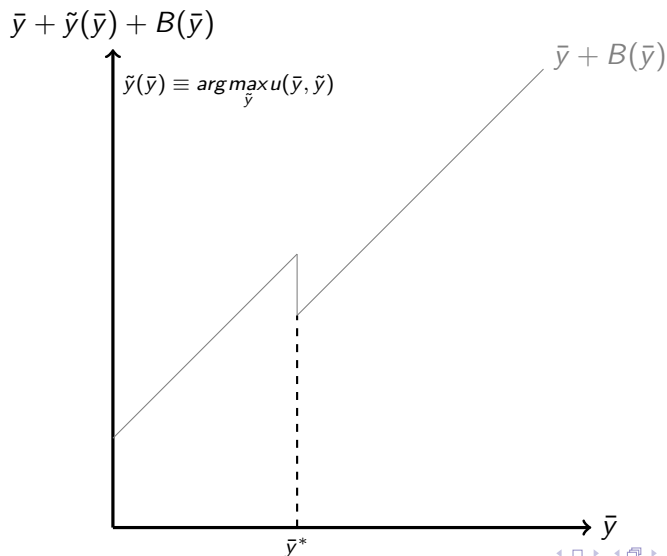
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- $e = \frac{1+B'}{y} \frac{\partial y}{\partial B'}$: Elasticity of Real Income
- $\tilde{e} = \frac{1}{\tilde{y}} \frac{\partial \tilde{y}}{\partial \tilde{B}'}$: Hidden Income Response

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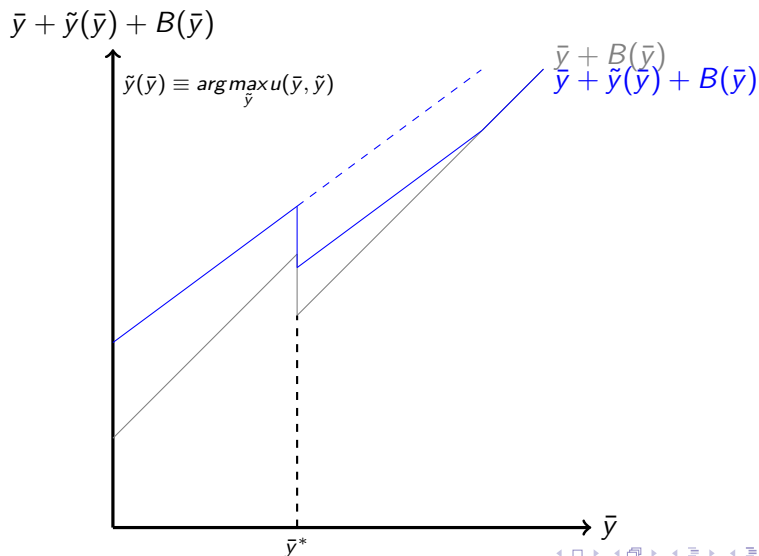
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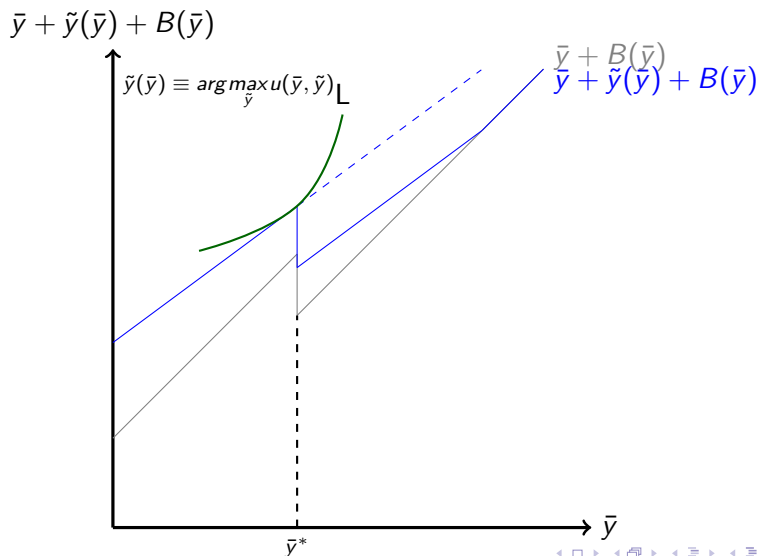
Adjusted Bunching Method (Reported Income)



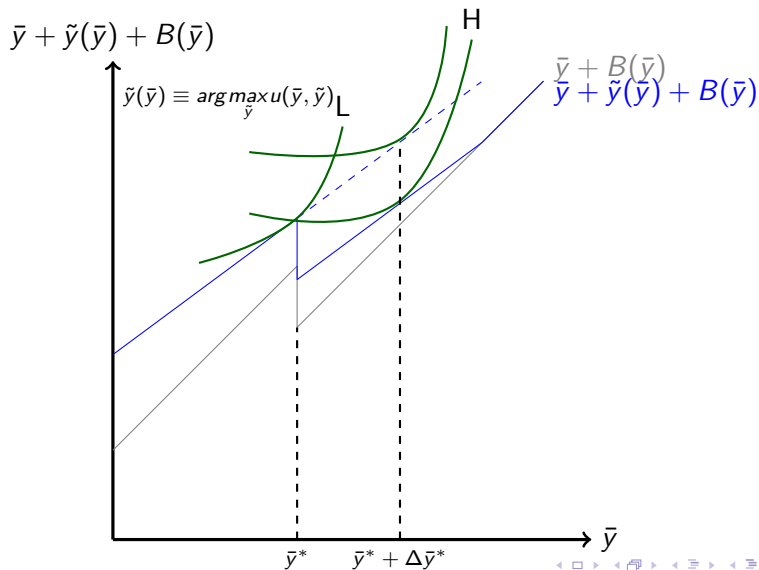
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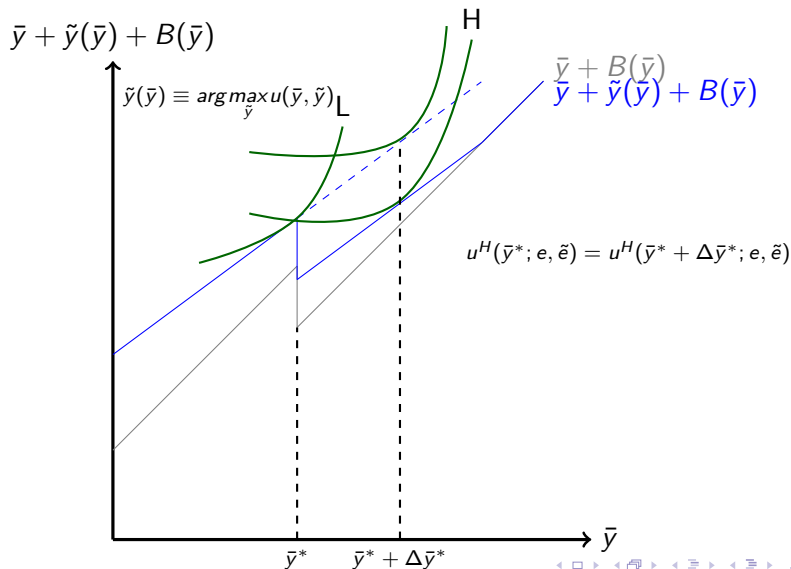
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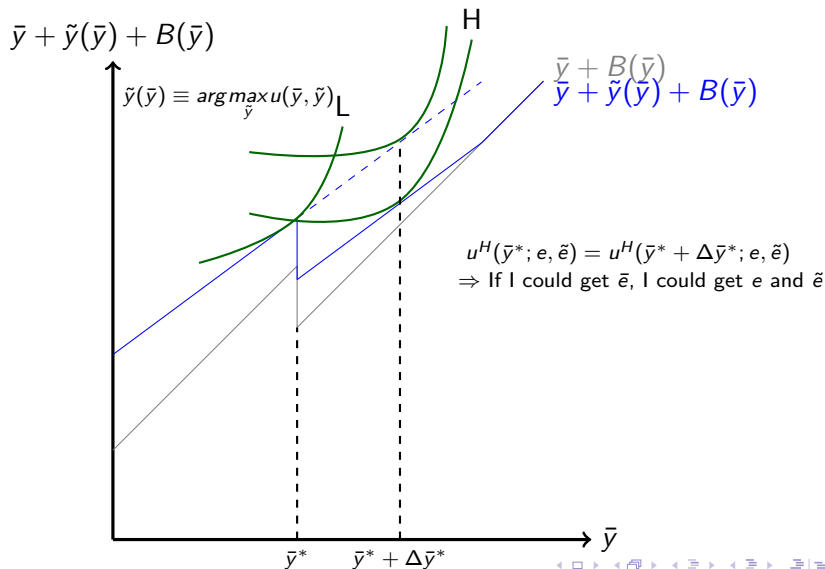
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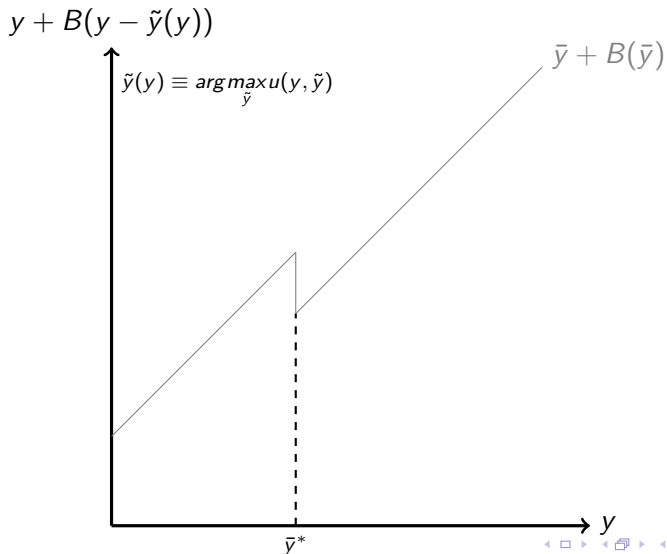
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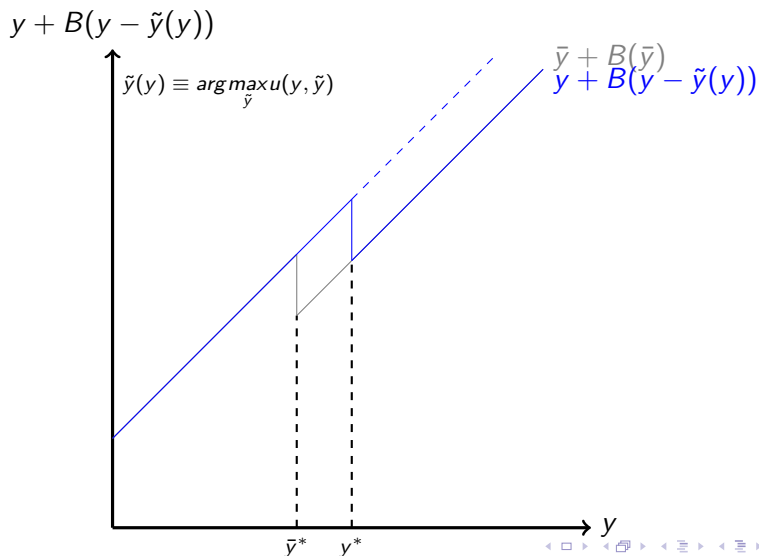
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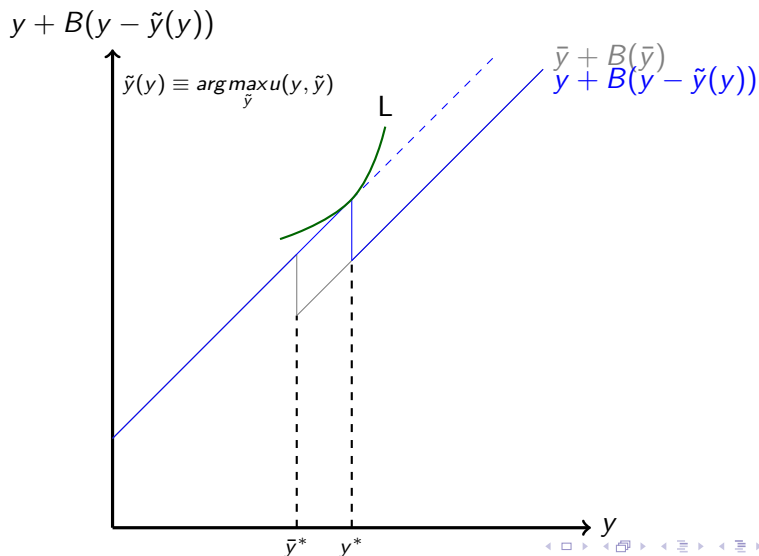
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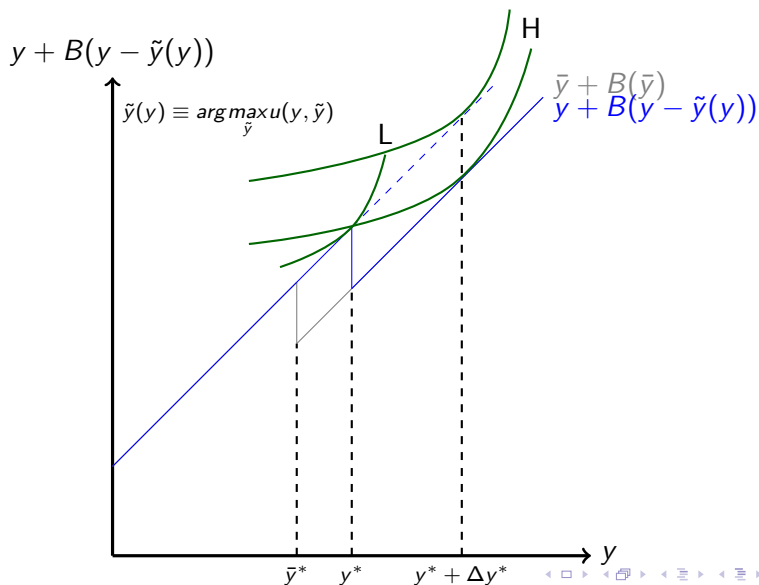
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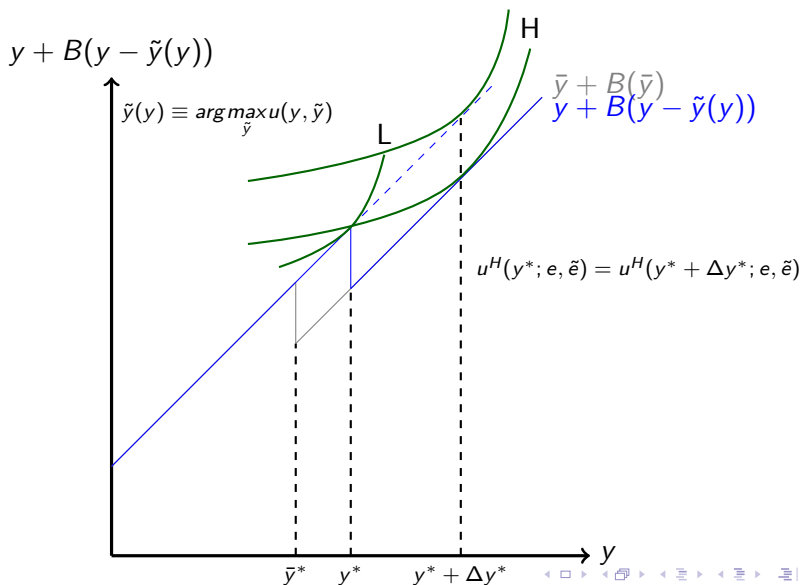
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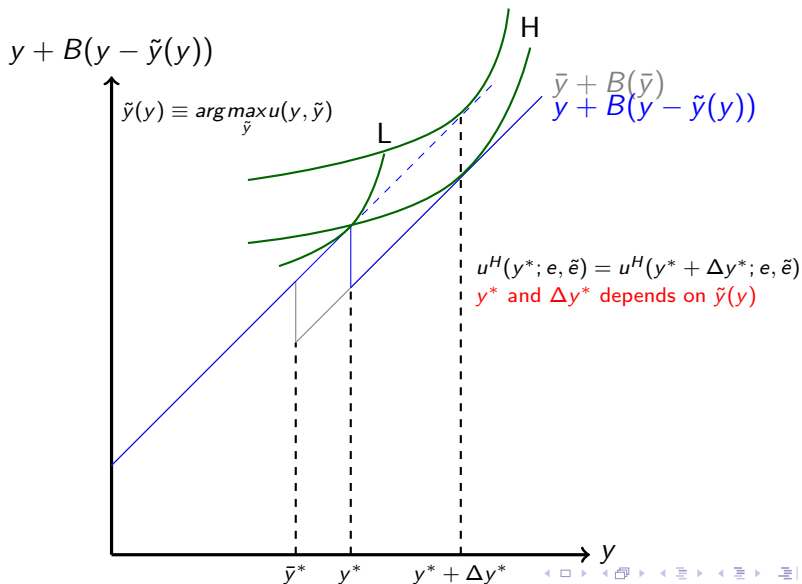
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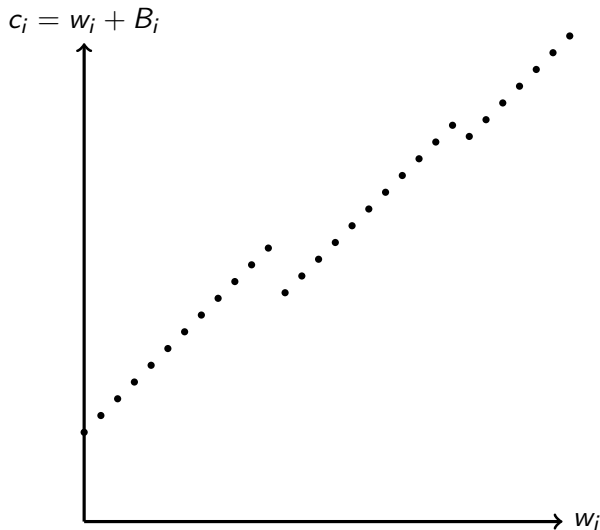
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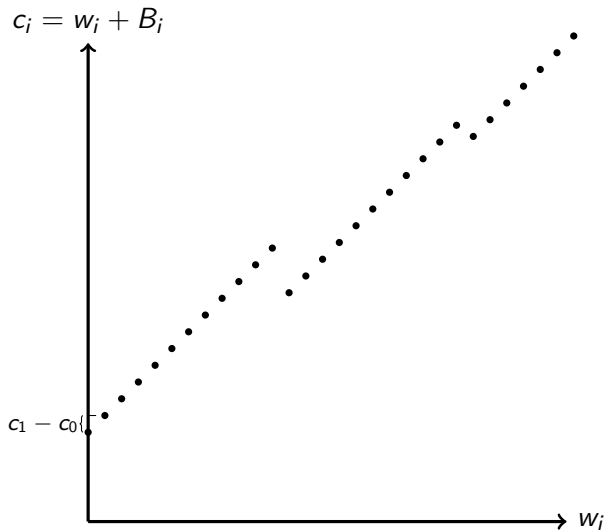
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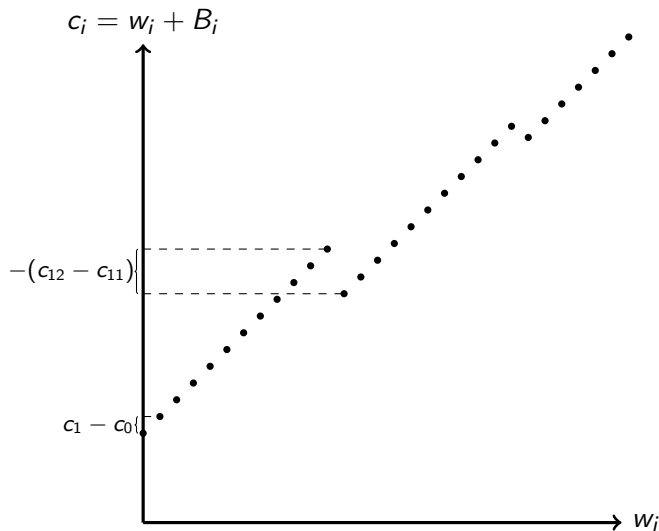
Discretized Program Schedule



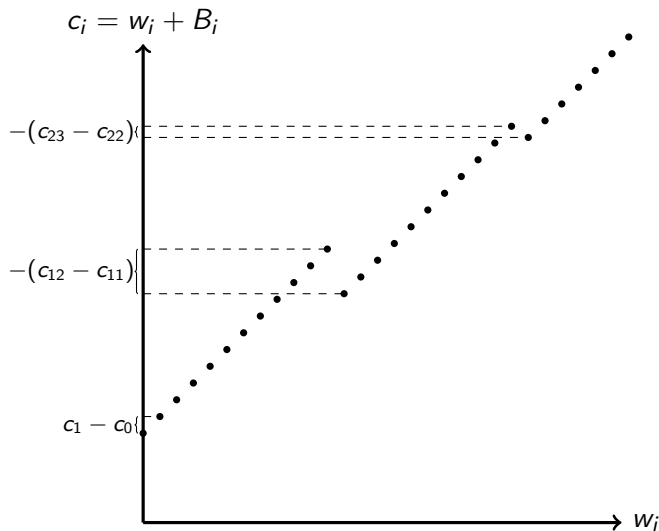
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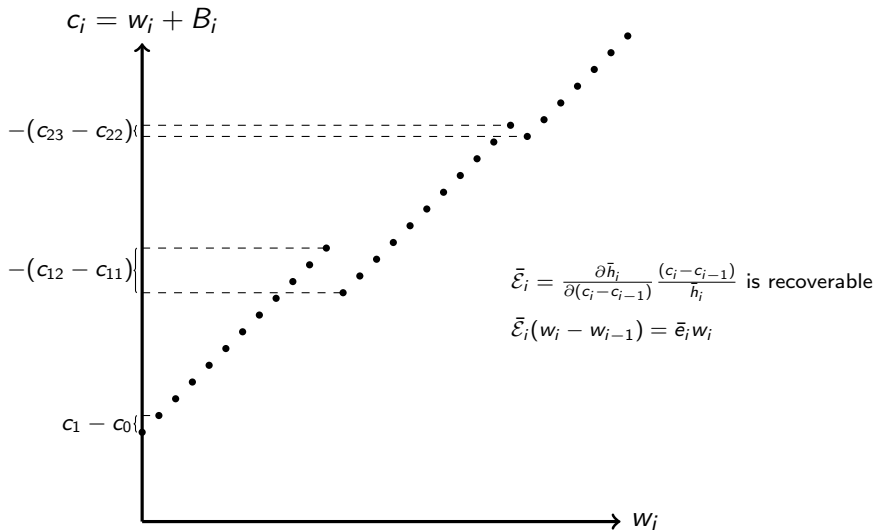
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Empirical Strategy

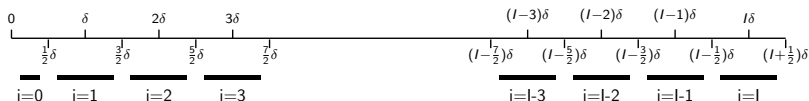
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Empirical Strategy

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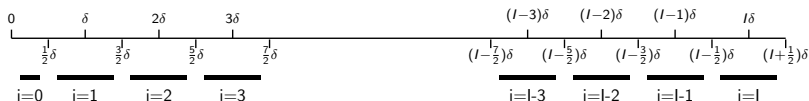
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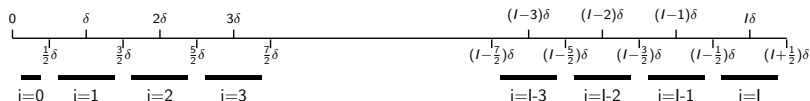
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- $h_{ijt} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{hh } j \text{ reports } i \text{ in } t, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$ “equilibrium” income level

Identifying $\eta_i = \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial (c_i - c_0)} \frac{c_i - c_0}{h_i}$ and $\mathcal{E}_i = \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial (c_i - c_{i-1})} \frac{c_i - c_{i-1}}{h_i}$

- $\bar{y}_{jt}^* = \sum_{i=1}^I \beta_i d_{ij} \ln(c_i - c_{i-1})_{jt} + \sum_{i=1}^I \gamma_i d_{ij} \ln(c_i - c_0)_{jt} + \lambda_j + v_{jt}$

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- $\frac{\beta_i}{i\delta} = \mathcal{E}_i$ and $\frac{\gamma_i}{\delta} = \eta_i$

▶ [Link to Proof](#)

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▶ [Link to Proof](#)

Identification Assumptions:

- 1 Reporting decisions would change in the same way with the reform across households with different household compositions.
- 2 Elasticities vary across income levels but not across household composition.

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- If there are fines \Rightarrow elasticities of reported and real income are sufficient statistics

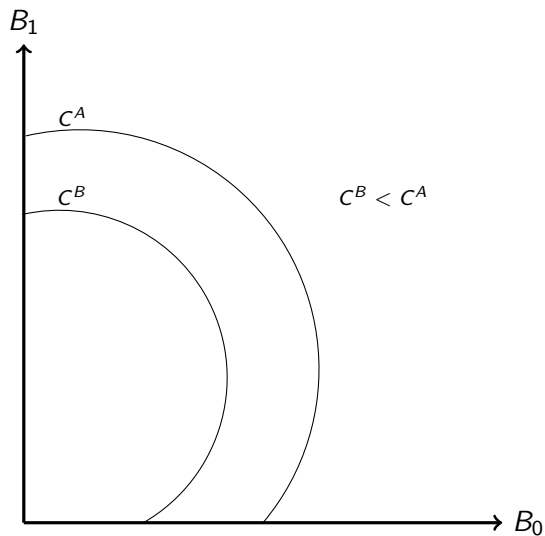
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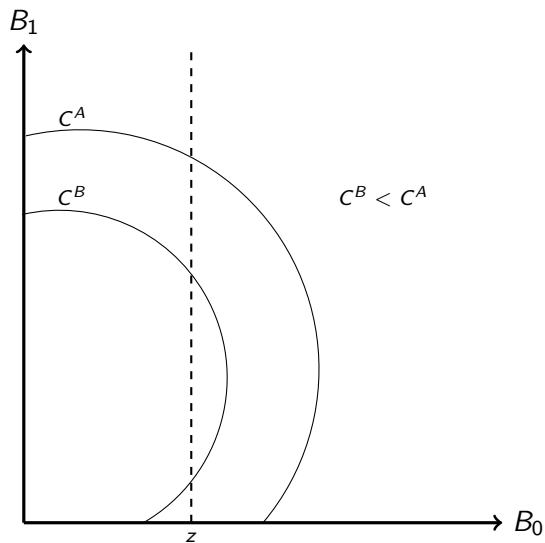
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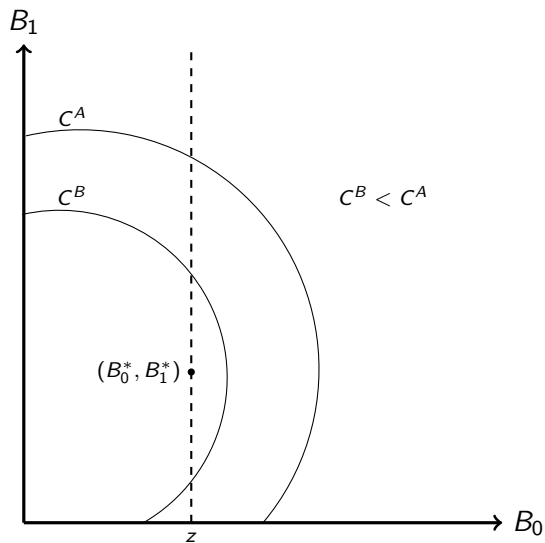
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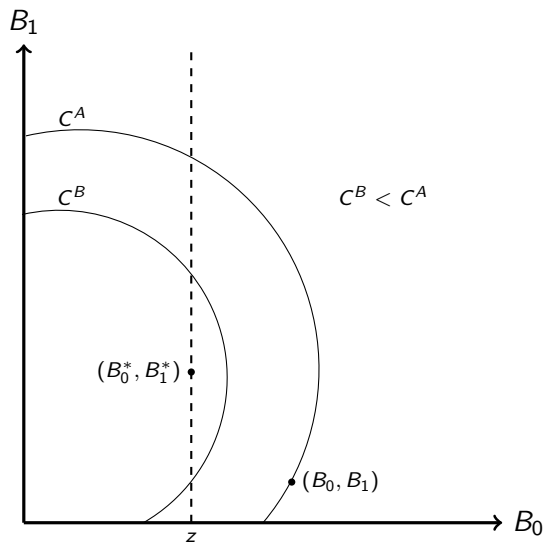
- If there are no fines \Rightarrow elasticities of reported income are sufficient statistics
- If there are fines \Rightarrow elasticities of reported and real income are sufficient statistics
- These are elasticities under the optimal schedule
- The elasticities under the observed schedule are sufficient statistics for the optimal reform

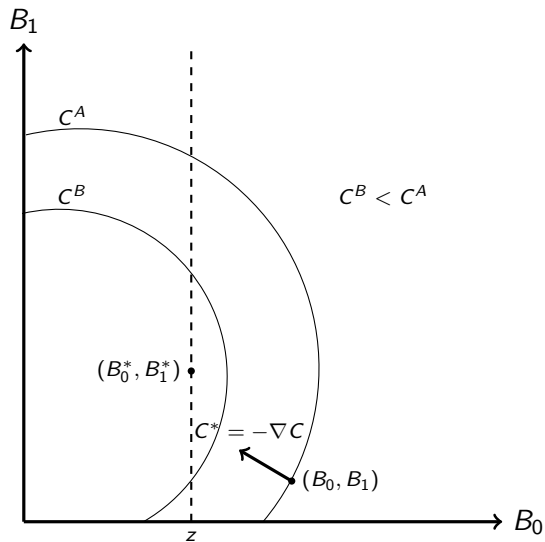
[▶ Link to Discrete Model](#)[▶ Link to the Government's Problem](#)[▶ Link to the Optimal Program](#)[▶ Link to the Optimal Reform](#)

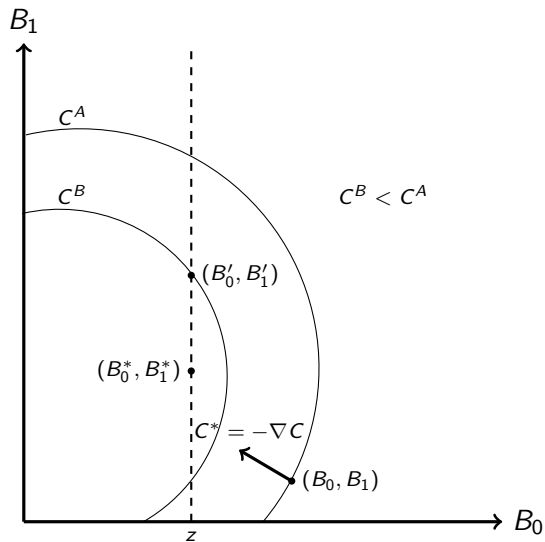


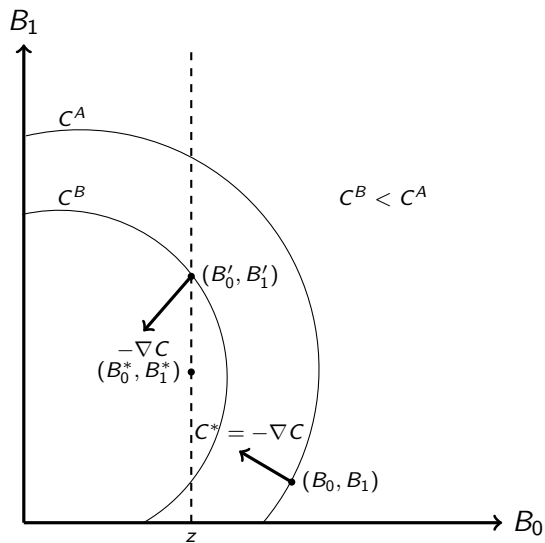


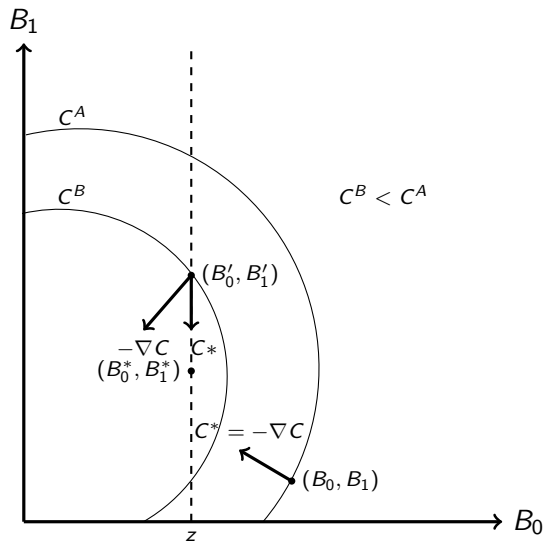












Recap

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- Recover elasticities of reported and real income from bunching and reforms variation

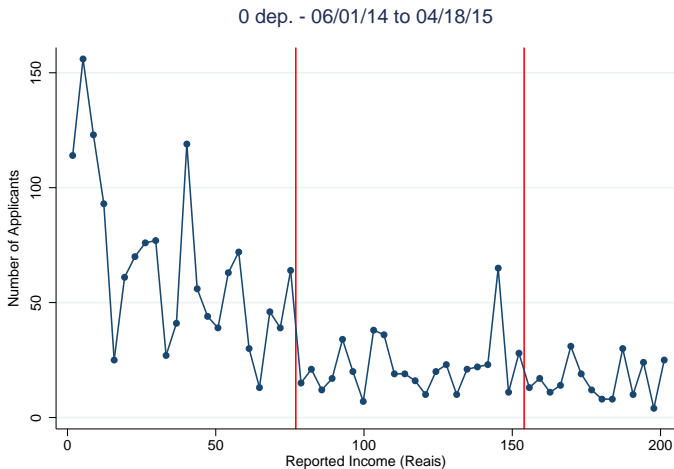
Recap

- Recover elasticities of reported and real income from bunching and reforms variation
- Those elasticities are the sufficient statistics for the Optimal Anti-Poverty program

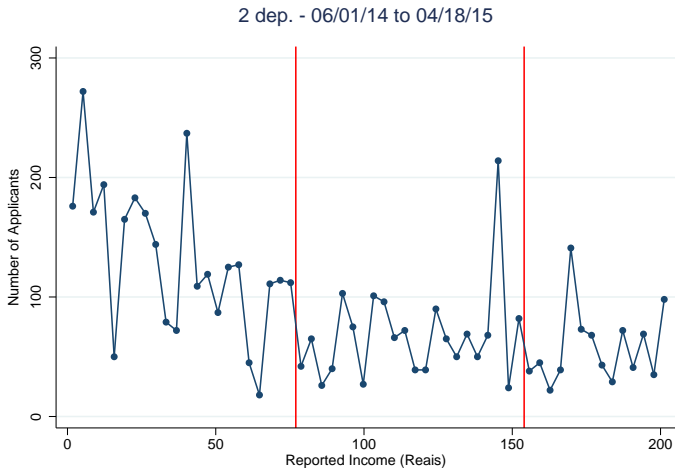
Recap

- Recover elasticities of reported and real income from bunching and reforms variation
- Those elasticities are the sufficient statistics for the Optimal Anti-Poverty program
- The optimal reform can be written as a function of elasticities under the observed schedule

Reported Income (0 children) - Selected Sample



Reported Income (2 children) - Selected Sample



- $y_{jt}^* = \sum_{i=1}^I d_{ij}(w_i * h_{i,j,t} + w_{i-1} * h_{i-1,j,t}) + \lambda_1 + u_{jt},$
- $h_{ijt} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } h_{ijt}^* > 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases} \quad \text{where } h_{ijt}^* = f(\underbrace{(c_i - c_0), (c_i - c_{i-1})}_{X_{jt}}) + \epsilon_{ijt},$
- $E(h_{ijt}|X_{jt}) = Prob(h_{ijt}^* = 1|X_{jt}) = Prob(\epsilon_{ijt} > -f(X_{ijt})) = 1 - G(f(X_{ijt}))$
- $\Rightarrow h_{ijt} = 1 - G(f(X_{ijt})) + \lambda_2 + \nu_{ijt}$
- $y_{jt}^* = \sum_{i=1}^I \beta_i d_{ij} \ln(c_i - c_{i-1})_{jt} + \sum_{i=1}^I \gamma_i d_{ij} \ln(c_i - c_0)_{jt} + \lambda + \nu_{jt}$

$$\beta = \frac{\partial E(y_{jt}^* | d_{ij} = 1)}{\partial \ln(c_i - c_{i-1})_t} = w_i \frac{\partial E(h_{i,j,t} | d_{ij} = 1)}{\partial \ln(c_i - c_{i-1})_t}$$

$$\eta_i = \frac{1}{P(h_{ij} = 1)} \beta$$

Theoretical Framework

$$U^E = w_{\bar{i}+\tilde{i}} + B_{\bar{i}} - p_{\bar{i}}f_{\tilde{i}} - \psi(\bar{i} + \tilde{i}, \tilde{i}, m)$$

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- 2 *Expected utility*
- 3 *Some types cannot work*

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Assumptions

- 1 *No income effect.*
- 2 *Expected utility*
- 3 *Some types cannot work*
- 4 *Type m reports either level 0, $i(m) - 1$ or $i(m)$:*

Cost Minimizing Objective

- \bar{h}_i : Proportion of households reporting level i in equilibrium
- \tilde{h}_i : Proportion of households producing i but reporting $i - 1$.
- \tilde{H}_i : Proportion of households producing i but reporting 0.

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$$\min_{\{B_i\}_{i=0}^I} \sum_{i=0}^I \{ \bar{h}_i B_i - p_{i-1} f_1 \tilde{h}_i - p_0 f_i \tilde{H}_i \}$$

st $c_0 \geq z$ and $B_i \geq 0 \forall i$.

Definitions

Reported income elasticity in the extensive margin:

$$\bar{\eta}_i \equiv \frac{c_i - c_0}{\bar{h}_i} \frac{\partial \bar{h}_i}{\partial (c_i - c_0)},$$

Reported income elasticity in the intensive margin:

$$\bar{\varepsilon}_i \equiv \frac{c_i - c_{i-1}}{\bar{h}_i} \frac{\partial \bar{h}_i}{\partial (c_i - c_{i-1})}.$$

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► [Back to Implications](#)

Proposition

Assuming that $\hat{\eta}_i^* \leq \frac{c_i^* - z}{z}$ for $i \geq v$, the cost minimizing schedule $\{B_i^*\}_{i=0}^l$ is:

$$B_0^* = z$$

$$\frac{B_i^* - B_{i-1}^*}{c_i^* - c_{i-1}^*} = -\frac{1}{\hat{\mathcal{E}}_i^*} \sum_{j=i}^l \left(\bar{h}_j^* + \hat{\eta}_j^* \frac{B_j^* - z}{c_j^* - z} \right) \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, v-1$$

$$B_i^* = 0 \text{ for } i = v, v+1, \dots, l.$$

Where $\hat{\eta}_i^* \equiv (1 - M_{\bar{n}(i)})h_i^*\eta_i^* + M_{\bar{n}(i)}\bar{h}_i^*\bar{\eta}_i^*$,

$\hat{\mathcal{E}}_i^* \equiv (1 - \mu_{\bar{m}(i)})h_i^*\mathcal{E}_i^* + \mu_{\bar{m}(i)}\bar{h}_i^*\bar{\mathcal{E}}_i^*$ and v is the smallest i such that the B_i^* implied by the second bracket is less or equal to zero.

[▶ Back to Implications](#)

[▶ Link to Proof](#)

[▶ Link to Lemma](#)

[▶ Link to Welf Prob](#)

[▶ Link to Efficiency](#)

Problem: Elasticities under the optimal schedule \Rightarrow Non-recoverable.

Proposition

The cost minimizing local reform is a vector of perturbation in the benefit schedule $\Delta B = -(C_0, \dots, C_l)$ where:

$$C_0 = \begin{cases} \bar{h}_0 - \sum_{i=1}^{v-1} \frac{B_i - B_0}{c_i - c_0} \hat{\eta}_i & \text{if } B_0 > z \\ 0 & \text{if } B_0 = z \end{cases}$$
$$C_i = \bar{h}_i + \frac{B_i - B_0}{c_i - c_0} \hat{\eta}_i + \frac{B_i - B_{i-1}}{c_i - c_{i-1}} \hat{\epsilon}_i - \frac{B_{i+1} - B_i}{c_{i+1} - c_i} \hat{\epsilon}_{i+1} \quad 1 \leq i \leq v$$

for $i = 1, \dots, v-1$

$$C_i = \min \left\{ \bar{h}_i - \frac{B_0}{c_i - c_0} \hat{\eta}_i - \frac{B_{i-1}}{c_i - c_{i-1}} \hat{\epsilon}_i, 0 \right\} \quad \text{for } i = v, \dots, l$$

v : lowest level with zero benefits

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Here all the parameters are recoverable from the data.

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Since there are households that cannot work $\Rightarrow B_0^* = z$

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① $ME = dB \sum_{j=i}^l h_j.$

② $BEIM = dh_i^{int}(B_i - B_{i-1}) = (dk_i^{int} - de_i)(B_i - B_{i-1})$

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$$\textcircled{3} BEEM = \sum_{j=i}^l dh_j^{ext}(B_j - B_0) = \sum_{j=i}^l (dk_j^{ext} - dE_j)(B_j - B_0)$$

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At the optimum: $ME + BEIM + BEEM + FE = 0$.

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$$\begin{aligned} BEIM + FEIM &= dk_i^I(B_i - B_{i-1}) + de_i[(B_{i-1} - B_i) - p_{i-1}f_1] = \\ &= dk_i^I(B_i - B_{i-1}) + de_i\mu_{\bar{m}(i)}(B_{i-1} - B_i) = \\ &= \left[(1 - \mu_{\bar{m}(i)})dk_i^I + \mu_{\bar{m}(i)}dh_i^I \right] (B_i - B_{i-1}) \end{aligned}$$

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$\bar{\eta}_i^* \leq \frac{c_{i-z}^*}{z}$ for $i > v$ ensures $B_{i-1}^* \geq B_i^*$ and hence $B_i^* = 0$. □

$$U^E = w_{i+\tilde{i}} + B_i \underbrace{-p_i f_{\tilde{i}}}_{\text{transfer cost}} - \psi(i + \tilde{i}, \underbrace{\tilde{i}}_{\text{util. cost}}, m)$$

- $\bar{m}(i)$ indifferent between reporting i and $i - 1$, given real income is i
- $\bar{n}(i)$ indifferent between reporting i and 0 , given real income is i
- $\mu_{\bar{m}(i)} \equiv \frac{\psi(i, 1, \bar{m}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{m})}{p_i f_1 + \psi(i, 1, \bar{m}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{m})}$: Share of utility cost in the int. margin
- $M_{\bar{n}(i)} \equiv \frac{\psi(i, i, \bar{n}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n})}{p_0 f_i + \psi(i, i, \bar{n}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n})}$: Share of utility cost in the ext. margin

Lemma

The wedge between the marginal benefit and marginal fine cost of misreporting (the marginal utility cost) can be written as:

$$(B_{i-1} - B_i) - p_{i-1} f_1 = (B_{i-1} - B_i) \mu_{\bar{m}(i)}$$

$$(B_0 - B_i) - p_0 f_i = (B_0 - B_i) M_{\bar{n}(i)}$$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned}w_i + B_{i-1} - p_{i-1}f_1 - \psi(i, 1, \bar{n}) &= w_i + B_i - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n}) \\ \Rightarrow (B_{i-1} - B_i) - p_{i-1}f_1 &= \psi(i, 1, \bar{n}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n})\end{aligned}$$

Multiplying the RHS by $\frac{B_{i-1}-B_i}{p_{i-1}f_1+\psi(i,1,\bar{n})-\psi(i,0,\bar{n})}$, we get the 1st relation.

$$\begin{aligned}w_i + B_0 - p_0f_i - \psi(i, i, \bar{n}) &= w_i + B_i - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n}) \\ \Rightarrow (B_0 - B_i) - p_0f_i &= \psi(i, i, \bar{n}) - \psi(i, 0, \bar{n})\end{aligned}$$

Multiplying the RHS by $\frac{B_0-B_i}{p_0f_i+\psi(i,i,\bar{n})-\psi(i,0,\bar{n})}$, we get the 1st relation. □

► Back to Proposition

Welfarist Objective

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Welfarist Objective

- δ^m : Welfare weight on households of type m
- \tilde{i} : hidden income so that $i + \tilde{i}$ is the real income level
- $\nu(m)$: Measure of households with type m .
- R : Anti-poverty program's budget
- The government solves:

$$\begin{aligned} \max_{\{B_0, B_1, \dots, B_I\}} & \int_M \delta^m u^m(w_{i+\tilde{i}} + B_i, i + \tilde{i}, \tilde{i}) d\nu(m) \\ \text{subject to} & \sum_i h_i B_i \leq R \text{ and } B_i \geq 0 \forall i \end{aligned}$$

Proposition

Assuming that $\eta_i^* \leq (1 - g_i^*) \frac{c_i^* - B_0^*}{B_0^*}$ for $i > v$ and that there are no income effects, the welfare maximizing schedule $\{B_i^*\}_{i=0}^I$ is:

$$\frac{B_i^* - B_{i-1}^*}{c_i^* - c_{i-1}^*} = -\frac{1}{h_i^* \mathcal{E}_i^*} \sum_{j=i}^I h_j^* \left(1 - g_j^* + \frac{\eta_j^* (B_j^* - B_0^*)}{c_j^* - c_0^*} \right) \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, v-1$$

$$B_i^* = 0 \text{ for all } i = v, v+1, \dots, I$$

$$\text{such that } \sum_{i=0}^I h_i^* B_i^* = R.$$

Where $g_i = \frac{1}{h_i} \int_{m:i(m)=i} \delta^m \frac{\partial u^m(w_{i+\tilde{i}} + B_i, i+\tilde{i}, \tilde{i})}{\partial c_i} dv(m)$ and v is the smallest i such that the B_i^* implied by the second bracket is less or equal to zero.

Proof.

$$\text{FOC: } \int_{M_i^*} \delta^m \frac{\partial u^m(w_{i+\tilde{i}+B_i^*}, i+\tilde{i}, \tilde{i})}{\partial c_i} dv(m) - p \left[h_i^* + \sum_{j=0}^i B_j^* \frac{\partial h_j^*}{\partial c_i} \right] = 0$$

$$\text{Let } g_i = \frac{1}{ph_i} \int_{M_i} \delta^m \frac{\partial u^m(w_{i+\tilde{i}+B_i}, i+\tilde{i}, \tilde{i})}{\partial c_i} dv(m)$$

$$\text{FOC becomes: } (1 - g_i)h_i^* = - \left[(B_i - B_0) \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial (c_i - c_0)} + (B_i - B_{i-1}) \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial (c_i - c_{i-1})} - (B_{i+1} - B_i) \frac{\partial h_{i+1}}{\partial (c_{i+1} - c_i)} \right]$$

Summing over i , we get the first equation of the proposition.

$\eta_i^* \leq (1 - g_i^*) \frac{c_i^* - B_0^*}{B_0^*}$ for all $i > v$ guarantees that the incremental benefits are negative for these income levels. □

Why the Reported Income is the Sufficient Statistic for the Welfarist Problem?

- The Optimal Anti-Poverty Program Problem has three parts:
 - 1 Distorting incentives with marginal taxes:
Workers already maximizing \Rightarrow Second Order Effects
 - 2 Government Revenue:
It depends on Reported Income
 - 3 Targeting low ability people:
The reported income is the targeting instrument

► Back to Proposition

Efficiency of Cost Minimizing Allocation

- The objective function is concerned with income and not welfare

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- The objective function is concerned with income and not welfare
- If the poorest cannot work, caring about his income is equivalent to caring about his utility
- Equivalent to a Rawlsian Social Planner with a budget equal to the minimum cost

Table : Income Maintenance Objectives

Gov. cares for\ Productive	Everyone	Not Everyone
Only Poorest	Not Efficient	Efficient
Below Poverty Line	Not Efficient	Not Efficient

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Proposition

Assuming that households respond only in the extensive margin, the optimal transfer program would be:

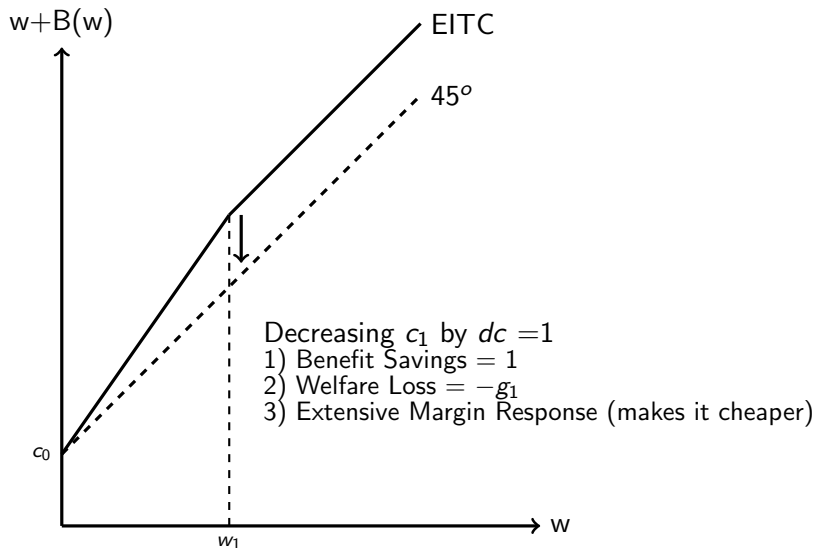
$$\begin{aligned} B_0^* &= z, \\ \frac{B_i^* - B_0^*}{c_i^* - c_0^*} &= \frac{1}{\eta_i^*} (g_i^* - 1), \\ B_i^* &= 0 \text{ for all } i = v, v + 1, \dots, l. \end{aligned}$$

Where v is the smallest i such that the B_i^ implied by the second bracket is less or equal to zero.*

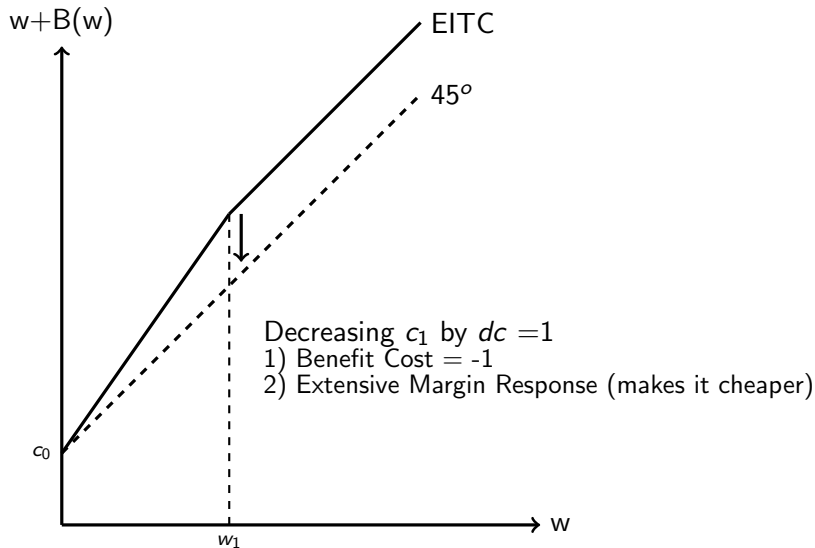
Implications

- 1 If $g_i^* > 1$ EITC is optimal ($B_1^* > B_0^*$)
- 2 EITC is never cost minimizing ($g_i^* = 0$ for all $i > 0$)

Welfare Maximizing



Cost Minimizing



Proof.

Consider $dB_i = \dots = dB_I = dB$. The change in the cost of the program due to intensive margin responses in the discrete model is:

$$(B_{i-1} - B_i)dh_i - f_1 de_i = [(1 - \mu_{\bar{m}})dk_i + \mu_{\bar{m}}dh_i](B_{i-1} - B_i) =$$

$$[(1 - \mu_{\bar{m}})\mathcal{E}_i^R k_i + \mu_{\bar{m}}\mathcal{E}_i h_i] \frac{B_i - B_{i-1}}{w_i - w_{i-1}} \frac{dB}{c_i - c_{i-1}} (w_i - w_{i-1})$$

In the continuous model, let $b_i = \frac{B_i - B_{i-1}}{w_i - w_{i-1}}$ and $f_i = \frac{p_{i-1} f_1}{w_i - w_{i-1}}$ be the marginal benefit and expected fines faced by individual with $\bar{y} = w_i$. The same perturbation $db_i = dB/(w_i - w_{i-1})$ will reduce the reported income of individuals reporting w_i by $d\bar{y} = dy - d\tilde{y}$. So the total effect on cost is:

$$\{(1 - \mu_{\bar{m}})[wi + \tilde{y}(w_i, m)]e_i + \mu_{\bar{m}}\bar{e}_i\} \frac{db_i}{1 + b_i} h_i b_i$$

Equating the terms multiplying $(1 - \mu_{\bar{m}})$ and $\mu_{\bar{m}}$, we get the relations.