Mathematical Economics Continuous time: optimal control problem

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Continuous time optimal control problem

Find the **state** variable $x^* = (x^*(t))_{0 \le t \le T}$ and the **control** variable $u^* = (u^*(t))_{0 \le t \le T}$ that solve the problem:

$$\max_{u} \int_{0}^{T} F(t, x(t), u(t)) dt$$

subject to

$$\dot{x} = \mathit{G}(\mathit{t}, \mathit{x}(\mathit{t}), \mathit{u}(\mathit{t}))$$

- given $x(0) = \phi_0$
- ullet given the horizon T
- and constraints on the terminal value of x(T)
 - (P1) $x(T) = \phi_T$
 - (P2) x(T) free
 - (P3) $h(T)x(T) \ge 0$.

Hamiltonian function

• We introduce the Hamiltonian function

$$H(t, x, u, \lambda) \equiv F(t, x, u) + \lambda g(t, x, u)$$

where $\lambda(t)$ is the **co-state** or **adjoint** variable,

its derivatives as regards the control variable

$$H_u(t, x, u, \lambda) \equiv \frac{\partial H(t, x, u, \lambda)}{\partial u} = F_u(t, x, u) + \lambda G_u(t, x, u)$$

• and the state variable

$$H_x(t, x, u, \lambda) \equiv \frac{\partial H(t, x, u, \lambda)}{\partial x} = F_x(t, x, u) + \lambda G_x(t, x, u)$$

Pontriyagin's maximum principle

Proposition (Necessary first order conditions)

Let (x^*, u^*) be a solution to the OC problem. Then there is a piecewise continuous function $\lambda(t)$ such that (x^*, u^*, λ) satisfy:

• the optimality condition

$$H_u(t, x^*(t), u^*(t), \lambda(t)) = 0, \ 0 \le t \le T$$

• the adjoint equation

$$\dot{\lambda} = -H_x(t, x^*(t), u^*(t), \lambda(t)), \ 0 < t \le T$$

• the admissibility conditions:

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x}^* = G(t, x^*(t), u^*(t)) & 0 < t \le T \\ x^*(0) = \phi_0, & t = 0 \end{cases}$$

• the terminal or transversality condition

$$(P1) x(T) = \phi_T, (P2) \lambda(T) = 0, (P3) \lambda(T)x(T) = 0.$$

Optimal control: autonomous discounted infinite horizon problem

Find (x^*,u^*) where $x^*=(x^*(t))_{0\leq t<\infty}$ and $u^*=(u^*(t))_{0\leq t<\infty}$ that solve the OCIH problem:

$$\max_{u} \int_{0}^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} f(x(t), u(t)) dt$$

subject to

$$\dot{x}(t) = g(x(t), u(t))$$

- and $x(0) = \phi_0$
- alternative terminal conditions
 - (P2) $\lim_{t\to\infty} x(t)$ free
 - (P3) $\lim_{t\to\infty} h(t)x(t) \ge 0.$

Current-value Hamiltonian

• We define a **time-independent** current-value Hamiltonian function:

$$h(x, u, q) = f(x, u) + qg(x, u) =$$

= $e^{\rho t}H(t, x, u, \lambda) =$
= $f(x, u) + qg(x, u)$

- as the capitalised value of the discounted Hamiltonian function $H(t, x(t), u(t), \lambda(t))$
- The current-value co-state variable is

$$q(t) = e^{\rho t} \lambda(t)$$

Pontriyagin maximum principle

Proposition (Necessary conditions for the OCIHP)

Let $(x^*, u^*) = (x^*(t), u^*(t))_{t \in [0,\infty)}$ be the solution of the OCIH problem. Then there is a co-state variable q(t) such that the solution (x^*, u^*) verifies the following conditions:

• the optimality condition

$$h_u(x^*(t), u^*(t), q(t)) = 0, \ 0 \le t < \infty$$

• the adjoint equation

$$\dot{q} = \rho q(t) - h_x(x^*(t), u^*(t), q(t)), \ 0 < t < \infty$$

• the admissibility conditions:

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x}^* = g(x^*(t), u^*(t)) & 0 < t < \infty \\ x^*(0) = \phi_0, & t = 0 \end{cases}$$

• the terminal or transversality condition

(P2)
$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} q(t) = 0$$
(P3)
$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} q(t) x(t) = 0.$$

Example: Resource depletion problem

• The problem (N is non-renewable resource endowment)

$$\max_{C} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} \ln \left(C(t) \right) dt, \ \rho > 0$$

subject to

$$\begin{cases} \dot{N}(t) = -C(t), \ t \in [0, \infty) \\ N(0) = N_0, \ \text{given} \\ \lim_{t \to \infty} N(t) \ge 0 \end{cases}$$

• Current-value Hamiltonian

$$h = \ln(C) + q(-C)$$

• First order conditions:

$$C(t) = 1/q(t)$$

$$\dot{q} = \rho q(t)$$

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} q(t) N(t) = 0$$

$$\dot{N} = -C(t)$$

$$N(0) = N_0$$

Example: Resource depletion problem

• The maximized Hamiltonian dynamic system (MHDS)

$$\dot{C} = -\rho C(t)$$

$$\dot{N} = -C(t)$$

$$N(0) = N_0$$

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} \frac{N(t)}{C(t)} = 0$$

- To solve the MHDS:
 - 1st step: let z(t) = N(t)/C(t) and solve

$$\begin{cases} \dot{z} = -1 + \rho z \\ \lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} z(t) = 0 \end{cases} \Rightarrow z(t) = \frac{1}{\rho}, \ t \in [0, \infty)$$

• 2nd step: substitute in the dynamic constraint

$$\begin{cases} \dot{N} = -C(t) = -N(t)/z(t) = -\rho N(t) \\ N(0) = N_0 \end{cases} \Rightarrow N(t) = N_0 e^{-\rho t}, \ t \in [0, \infty)$$

Example: Resource depletion problem

• Characterization of the solution

$$N^*(t) = N_0 e^{-\rho t}$$
 for $t \in [0, \infty)$

• there is asymptotic extinction

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} N^*(t) = 0$$

• speed of the adjustment: half-life of the process

$$\tau \equiv \left\{ t : N^*(t) = \frac{N(0) - N^*(\infty)}{2} \right\} = -\frac{\ln(1/2)}{\rho}$$

if $\rho = 0.02$ then $\tau \approx 34.6574$ years

The MHDS

- In sufficiently smooth cases we have qualitative results on the optimal path for (x, q) (or for (u, x))
- If $\frac{\partial^2 h}{\partial u^2} \neq 0$, we can solve the optimality condition for u, $u^* = u(x^*, q)$
- then we get the modified Hamiltonian dynamic system:

$$\begin{cases} \dot{q} = \dot{q}(q, x) = \rho q - h_x(x, u(x, q)) \\ \dot{x} = \dot{k}(q, x) = g(x, u(x, q)) \end{cases}$$

- Assume the MHDS has a fixed point (\bar{q}, \bar{x}) .
- In the neighbourhood of (\bar{x}, \bar{q}) we can approximate the MHDS by the linear system

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{q}(t) \\ \dot{x}(t) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial \dot{q}}{\partial q} & \frac{\partial \dot{q}}{\partial x} \\ \frac{\partial x}{\partial q} & \frac{\partial \dot{x}}{\partial x} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} q(t) - \bar{q} \\ x(t) - \bar{x} \end{pmatrix} = J \begin{pmatrix} q(t) - \bar{q} \\ x(t) - \bar{x} \end{pmatrix}$$

The MHDS

• If we write $h^*(x, q) = h(x, u(x, q), q)$ then The Jacobian has the structure

$$J = \begin{pmatrix} \rho - a & b \\ c & a \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \rho - h_{xq}^*(\bar{x}, \bar{q}) & -h_{xx}^*(\bar{x}, \bar{q}) \\ h_{qq}^*(\bar{x}, \bar{q}) & h_{qx}^*(\bar{x}, \bar{q}) \end{pmatrix}$$

• has trace and determinant (for most cases):

$$tr(J) = \rho > 0$$
, $det(J) = a(\rho - a) - bc < 0$

- Interpretation:
 - the equilibrium point (\bar{x}, \bar{q}) is a saddle point. The stable manifold associated with (\bar{x}, \bar{q}) is the solution set of the OC problem.
 - this means that the solution to the OC problem is unique.

The Ramsey model

• The problem: find the optimal allocation of savings through time in order to maximize the time aggregate of the discounted value of consumption (in utility terms), when there is a technology of production displaying decreasing marginal returns:

$$\max_{C} \int_{0}^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} U(C(t)) dt, \ \rho > 0,$$

subject to

$$\dot{K}(t) = F(K(t)) - C(t), \ t \in [0, \infty)$$

- $K(0) = K_0$ given and $\lim_{t\to\infty} e^{-\rho t} K(t) \ge 0$
- Utility and production functions, u(C) and F(K); are increasing, concave and Inada:

$$U^{'}(.) > 0, \ U^{''}(.) \le 0, F^{'}(.) > 0, \ F^{''}(.) \le 0$$

 $U^{'}(0) = \infty, \ U^{'}(\infty) = 0, \ F^{'}(0) = \infty, \ F^{'}(\infty) = 0$

The Ramsey model: optimality conditions

• The current-value Hamiltonian

$$h(C, K, Q) = U(C) + Q(F(K) - C)$$

• The Pontriyagin's f.o.c

$$U'(C(t)) = Q(t)$$

$$\dot{Q} = Q(t) \left(\rho - F'(K(t))\right)$$

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} Q(t) K(t) = 0$$

$$\dot{K} = F(K(t)) - C(t)$$

$$K(0) = K_0$$

The Ramsey model: the non-linear MHDS

• The MHDS

$$\dot{C} = \frac{C(t)}{\sigma(C(t))} (r(K(t)) - \rho)$$

$$\dot{K} = F(K(t)) - C(t)$$

$$K(0) = K_0 > 0$$

$$0 = \lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} U'(C(t)) K(t)$$

where
$$r(K) \equiv F'(K)$$
 and $\sigma(C) \equiv -\frac{U''(C)C}{U'(C)}$

- The MHDS has no explicit solution: we can only use qualitative methods:
 - determine the steady state(s)
 - linearize the system around the candidate steady states
 - solve the linearized MHDS

• The steady state (if K > 0 and C > 0)

$$F^{'}(\bar{K}) = \rho \Rightarrow \bar{K} = (F^{'})^{-1}(\rho)$$

 $\bar{C} = F(\bar{K})$

• Linearized system

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{C} \\ \dot{K} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \frac{\bar{C}}{\sigma(\bar{C})} F^{\prime\prime}(\bar{K}) \\ -1 & \rho \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} C(t) - \bar{C} \\ K(t) - \bar{K} \end{pmatrix}$$

 \bullet The jacobian J has trace and determinant:

$$\operatorname{tr}(J) = \rho, \ \det(J) = \frac{\bar{C}}{\sigma(\bar{C})} F^{\prime\prime}(\bar{K}) < 0$$

then (\bar{C}, \bar{K}) is a saddle point

• There is one unique interior steady state (satisfying K > 0 and C > 0)

$$F^{'}(\bar{K}) = \rho \Rightarrow \bar{K} = (F^{'})^{-1}(\rho)$$

 $\bar{C} = F(\bar{K})$

It exists and is unique because of the Inada properties of the production function

- Define the variations as regards the steadys state: $c(t) = C(t) \bar{C}$, $k(t) = K(t) \bar{K}$
- The linearized or variational MHDS is

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{c} \\ \dot{k} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \frac{\bar{C}}{\sigma(\bar{C})} F^{\prime\prime}(\bar{K}) \\ -1 & \rho \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c(t) \\ k(t) \end{pmatrix}$$

The linearized MHDS and the solution to the Ramsey problem

• The linearized MHDS and the solution to the Ramsey problem is

$$\dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \mathbf{J}\,\mathbf{x}(t)$$

where J is the Jacobian of the MHDS evaluated at the steady state

- To find approximate solutions to Ramsey model that satisfy the transversality condition in the neighborhood of the steady state,
 - we solve the linearized system (general solution)
 - find the particular solution such that: (1) there is convergence to the steady state; (2) it starts from $K(0) = k_0$ implying $k(0) = k_0 \bar{K}$.
- it is useful to draw the phase diagram

The general solution of the linearized MHDS

• The general solution is

$$\begin{pmatrix} c(t) \\ k(t) \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{x}(t) = h_{-}\mathbf{P}_{-}e^{\lambda_{-}t} + h_{+}\mathbf{P}_{+}e^{\lambda_{+}t}$$

where λ_{\pm} are the eigenvalues and \mathbf{P}_{\mp} are the associated eigenvectors of matrix \mathbf{J}

- Finding the eigenvalues
 - The jacobian **J** has trace and determinant:

$$\operatorname{tr}(\mathbf{J}) = \rho, \ \det(\mathbf{J}) = \frac{\bar{C}}{\sigma(\bar{C})} F''(\bar{K}) < 0$$

• then the eigenvalues of J (solutions of det $(J - \lambda I_2) = 0$,

$$\lambda_{-} = \frac{\rho}{2} - \sqrt{\Delta} < 0, \ \lambda_{+} = \frac{\rho}{2} + \sqrt{\Delta} > \rho$$

where the discriminant of J is

$$\Delta = \left(\frac{\rho}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{\bar{C}}{\sigma(\bar{C})} F^{\prime\prime}(\bar{K}) > \left(\frac{\rho}{2}\right)^2$$

• Then (\bar{C}, \bar{K}) is a saddle point

The general solution of the linearized MHDS

• Eigenvector matrix of J

$$\mathbf{P} = (\mathbf{P}_{-}|P_{+}) = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_{+} & \lambda_{-} \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

where \mathbf{P}_i , i = -, +, is calculated the solution to

$$(\mathbf{J} - \lambda^i \mathbf{I}_2) \mathbf{P}_i = \mathbf{0}, \ i = -, +$$

• Then

$$\begin{pmatrix} c(t) \\ k(t) \end{pmatrix} = h_{-} \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_{+} \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{\lambda_{-}t} + h_{+} \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_{-} \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{\lambda_{+}t}$$

The particular solution of the linearized MHDS

- We have to determine the constants: h_- and h_+ such that the the solution converges to the steady state and the initial value for $K(0) = K_0$ is satisfied:
 - convergence to the steady state

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} c(t) = \lim_{t \to \infty} k(t) = 0 \Leftrightarrow h_{+} = 0$$

• starting from $k(0) = K_0 - \bar{K}$

$$k(t)|_{t=0} = K_0 - \bar{K} \Leftrightarrow h_- = K_0 - \bar{K}$$

• Therefore, the linearized solution is

$$\begin{pmatrix} c^*(t) \\ k^*(t) \end{pmatrix} = (K_0 - \bar{K}) \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_+ \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{\lambda_- t}$$

The Ramsey model: the approximate solution

• The approximate solution to the Ramsey model is, therefore,

$$\begin{pmatrix} C^*(t) \\ K^*(t) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \bar{C} \\ \bar{K} \end{pmatrix} + (K_0 - \bar{K}) \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_+ \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{\lambda_- t}, \ t \in [0, \infty)$$

• Solution at t=0

$$\begin{pmatrix} C^*(0) \\ K^*(0) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \bar{C} + \lambda_+ (K_0 - \bar{K}) \\ K_0 \end{pmatrix}$$

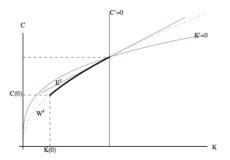
the initial value of consumption is determined endogenously

Asymptotic solution

$$\lim_{t\to\infty} \begin{pmatrix} C^*(t) \\ K^*(t) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \bar{C} \\ \bar{K} \end{pmatrix}$$

the solution tends to the fixed point of the MHDS.

Ramsey model: phase diagram



Exact solution (stable manifold - W_-), linearized solution (stable eigenspace - E_-).

Close to the steady state W_{-} has slope equal to to the slope of E_{-} , and they are higher than the slope of the isocline $\dot{K}(C,K)=0$

$$\left. \frac{dC}{dK} \right|_{W_{-}} = \left. \frac{dC}{dK} \right|_{E_{-}} = \lambda_{+} > \left. \frac{dC}{dK} \right|_{\dot{K}} = F'(\bar{K}) = \rho$$

Principle of the Dynamic Programming

• Consider again the infinite horizon discounted optimal control problem

$$\max_{u} \int_{0}^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} f(x(t), u(t)) dt$$

subject to

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x} = g(x, u), & 0 \le t < \infty \\ x(0) = \phi, & t = 0 \\ \lim_{t \to \infty} h(t)x(t) \ge 0 \end{cases}$$

Principle of the Dynamic Programming

Proposition

Let (x^*, u^*) be a solution of the discounted infinite horizon optimal control problem. Then for every $t \in [0, \infty)$, $x^*(t) = x$, and $u^*(t) = u$ satisfy the Hamilton-Jacobi-Bellman equation

$$\rho \, V(x) = \max_{u} \left[\mathit{f}(x,u) + \, V^{'}(x) \mathit{g}(x,u) \right]$$

We call $u^* = h(x) = \arg\max_{u} \{f(x, u) + V'(x)g(x, u)\}$ the policy function.

Application: the consumption-investment problem

A representative household (or economy) wants to find the trajectories for consumption and asset holdings, $(C(t))_{t=0}^{\infty}$, and $(W(t))_{t=0}^{\infty}$ that solve the problem:

$$\max_{C} \int_{0}^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} \ln \left(C(t) \right) dt,$$

subject to

$$\begin{cases} \dot{W} = rW - C & \text{(budget constraint)} \\ W(0) = W_0 & \text{(initial wealth} \\ \lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-rt} W(t) \ge 0 & \text{(NPG constraint)} \end{cases}$$

Application: (cont.)

• First step: Write the HJB equation

$$\rho V(W) = \max_{C} \left[\ln (C) + V'(W)(rW - C) \right]$$

• Second step: find the policy function for consumption

$$\frac{1}{C^{*}} - V'(W) = 0 \Leftrightarrow C^{*} = (V'(W))^{-1}$$

• Third step: substitute it into the HJB equation

$$\rho V(W) = -\ln(V'(W)) + V'(W)rW - 1$$

Application: (cont.)

- Fourth step: solving the HJB equation by using the method of undermined coefficients (i.e., a and b)
 - put forward a **trial function** v.g.

$$V(W) = a + b \ln(W) \Rightarrow V'(W) = \frac{b}{W}$$

• substitute into the HJB equation

$$\rho(a + b \ln(W)) = -\ln(b) + \ln(W) + rb - 1$$

• separate terms with $\ln(W)$

$$(\rho b - 1) \ln (W) = -\ln (b) + rb - 1 - \rho a$$

 determine the coefficients such that both sides are equal to zero: then

$$b = \frac{1}{\rho}$$
 and $a = \frac{1}{\rho} \left(\ln \rho + \frac{r}{\rho} - 1 \right)$

• Then our conjecture was correct and

$$V(W) = \frac{1}{\rho} \left(\ln \rho + \frac{r - \rho}{\rho} + \ln (W) \right)$$

Application: (cont.)

• Fifth step: obtain the optimal consumption rule

$$C^* = (V'(W))^{-1} = \rho W$$

• Sixth step: substitute in the budget constraint and define the optimal forward equation (back to the time domain)

$$\begin{cases} \dot{W} = (r - \rho) W \quad W(0) = W_0 \end{cases}$$

• Seventh step: solve the initial value problem to obtain the solution

$$W^*(t) = W_0 e^{(r-\rho)t}, \ t \in [0, \infty)$$
$$C^*(t) = \rho W_0 e^{(r-\rho)t}, \ t \in [0, \infty)$$

Application: characterizing the solution

• Eigth step: (optional) make sure the NPG is satisfied

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-rt} W^*(t) = \lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-\rho t} W_0 = 0$$

- \bullet This holds for any values of r and ρ , although we may have the following solutions
 - if $r < \rho$ then the financial wealth and consumption converge to zero

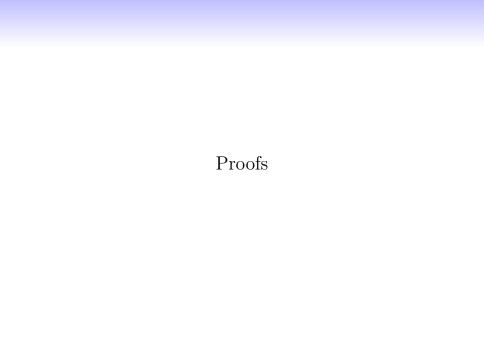
$$\lim_{t \to \infty} W^*(t) = \lim_{t \to \infty} C^*(t) = 0$$

• if $r > \rho$ then the financial wealth and consumption will grow forever

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} W^*(t) = \lim_{t \to \infty} C^*(t) = \infty$$

• if $r = \rho$ then the solution is stationary

$$W^*(t) = W_0, \ C^*(t) = \rho W_0, \ \text{for every } t \in [0, \infty)$$



Proof of proposition 1

• The value functional is for any paths (x, u)

$$\begin{split} V(x) &= \int_0^T f(u(t), x(t), t) \, dt = \text{(definition of } H \text{ function)} \\ &= \int_0^T H(u(t), x(t), t) - \lambda(t) \dot{x}(t) \, dt = \text{(integration by parts)} \\ &= \int_0^T \left(H(u(t), x(t), \lambda(t), t) + \dot{\lambda}(t) x(t) \right) \, dt + \lambda(0) x(0) - \lambda(T) x(T) \end{split}$$

• The value at the optimum is

$$V(x^*) = \int_0^T f(u^*(t), x^*(t), t) dt =$$

$$= \int_0^T \left(H(u^*(t), x^*(t), \lambda(t), t) + \dot{\lambda}(t) x^*(t) \right) dt + \lambda(0) x^*(0) - \lambda(T) x^*(T)$$

$$(+\mu h(T) x^*(T) \text{ (for case P3))}$$

Proof of proposition 1 (cont.)

- Now we introduce perturbations in the state and co-state variables $x(t) = x^* + \epsilon \ d_x(t)$ and $u(t) = u^* + \epsilon \ d_u(t)$
- The perturbations are admissible if $d_x(0) = 0$ and, for (P1) $d_x(T) = 0$, and $d_x(T)$ is free for (P2) and (P3).
- The optimal should satisfy

$$\delta V(x^*) = \lim_{\epsilon \to 0} \frac{V(x^* + \epsilon h_x) - V(x^*)}{\epsilon} = \frac{dV(x^*)}{d\epsilon} = 0.$$

Proof of proposition 1 (cont.)

• But, writing $H^*(t) = H(u^*(t), x^*(t), \lambda(t), t)$

$$\frac{dV(x^*)}{d\epsilon} = \int_0^T \left[\frac{\partial H^*(t)}{\partial u} h_u(t) + \left(\frac{\partial H^*(t)}{\partial x} + \dot{\lambda}(t) \right) d_x(t) \right] dt + \lambda(0) d_x(0)$$

$$-\lambda(T) d_x(T) \text{(for cases P1 and P2)}$$

$$(+((\mu h(T) - \lambda(T)) h_x(T) \text{ (for case P3)})$$

for case P3 the Kuhn-Tucker condition $\mu h(T)x^*(T) = 0$ for $\mu \geq 0$ should also hold.

• Then

$$\delta V(x^*) = 0 \Leftrightarrow \frac{\partial H_t^*}{\partial u} = \frac{\partial H_t^*}{\partial x} + \dot{\lambda} = 0$$

and $\lambda(T) = 0$ for case P2, and $\lambda(T)x^*(T) = 0$ for case P3.

