Kinks and Corners, with Applications

Econ 50 | Lecture 7 | January 26, 2016

Lecture

- Kinks and corners
- Buying and selling
- Intertemporal consumption and interest rates

Group Work

- Trading game

Part I: Kinks and Corners

The Good Case

IF

- The consumer's preferences over goods X and Y are **continuously differentiable, strictly monotonic**, and **strictly convex**
- The indifferences curves **do not cross the axes**
- The budget constraint is a **simple straight line**

THEN THE SOLUTION…

- will be an **interior solution** (involve strictly positive quantities of X and Y)
- can be found using the **Lagrange method**
- is characterized by:
  $MRS_{x,y} = P_x/P_y$
  $P_x x + P_y y = I$

The Good Case

Corner Solution with Smooth Preferences

IF

- The consumer's preferences over goods X and Y are **continuously differentiable, strictly monotonic**, and **strictly convex**
- The indifferences curves ~~do not~~ **cross the axes**
- The budget constraint is a **simple straight line**

THEN THE SOLUTION…

Might

- ~~will~~ be an **interior solution** (involve strictly positive quantities of X and Y)
- can be found using the **Lagrange method**

Might be

- ~~is~~ characterized by:

$$MRS_{x,y} = P_x/P_y$$

$$P_x x + P_y y = I$$

Corner Solution with Smooth Preferences

Corner Solution with Smooth Preferences

Corner Solution with Smooth Preferences

Approach for Smooth Preferences with Potential Corners

IF

- The consumer's preferences over goods X and Y are **continuously differentiable, strictly monotonic**, and **strictly convex**
- The indifferences curves **do not cross the axes**
- The budget constraint is a **simple straight line**

THEN…

- Use the **Lagrange method** to find the point of tangency
- (the point characterized by:)
  $MRS_{x,y} = P_x/P_y$
  $P_x x + P_y y = I$
- ***If that point lies outside the domain of the budget constraint, go to the "closest corner"***

Kinked Budget Constraints

IF

- The consumer's preferences over goods X and Y are **continuously differentiable, strictly monotonic**, and **strictly convex**
- The indifferences curves ~~do not~~ **cross the axes**

may or may not

- The budget constraint is NOT a **simple straight line**

THEN THE SOLUTION…

?

Kinked Budget Constraint

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Kinked Budget Constraint

Approach for Kinked Budget Constraints

IF

- The consumer's preferences over goods X and Y are **continuously differentiable, strictly monotonic**, and **strictly convex**
- The indifferences curves ~~do not~~ **cross the axes**

may or may not

- The budget constraint is NOT a **simple straight line**

THEN…

- Analyze each segment of the budget constraint
- In each case, the solution may be interior to the segment, or at the end (corner) of the segment
- Compare the sub-solutions and take the one with the highest utility.

```
optimalBundle(budget:BudgetConstraint) {
    var u = this;
    var candidateBundles: TwoGoodBundle[] = budget.budgetSegments.map(
        function(segment) { return u.optimalBundleAlongSegment(segment)}
    );
    var maxUtilityBundle = candidateBundles[0];
    candidateBundles.forEach(function(bundle) {
        if(u.utility(bundle) > u.utility(maxUtilityBundle)) {
            maxUtilityBundle = bundle;
        }
    });
    return maxUtilityBundle;
}

optimalBundleAlongSegment(budgetSegment:BudgetSegment) {
    var u = this;
    var constrainedX, unconstrainedX;
    unconstrainedX = u._unconstrainedOptimalX(budgetSegment);
    constrainedX = budgetSegment.xDomain.closestValueTo(unconstrainedX);
    return {x: constrainedX, y: budgetSegment.linear.yValue(constrainedX)};
}
```

When all else fails:
Compare **MRS** to the **price ratio**

$$MRS_{x,y} > \frac{P_x}{P_y}$$

YOU LIKE X RELATIVE TO Y
MORE THAN THE MARKET
AT YOUR CURRENT BUNDLE

MOVE RIGHT ALONG
THE BUDGET CONSTRAINT

$$MRS_{x,y} < \frac{P_x}{P_y}$$

YOU LIKE X RELATIVE TO Y
LESS THAN THE MARKET
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MOVE LEFT ALONG
THE BUDGET CONSTRAINT

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THE BUDGET CONSTRAINT

Everything goes wrong, Example 1: Kinked Budget Constraint and Perfect Complements

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Everything goes wrong, Example 2: Kinked Budget Constraint and Perfect Substitutes

Everything goes wrong, Example 2: Kinked Budget Constraint and Perfect Substitutes

Part II: Endowment Economies

Endowment Budget Constraint

- Instead of starting with money income (I),
  you start with an **endowment of X and Y**

- You can buy and sell **X** and **Y** for prices $\boldsymbol{P_x}$ and $\boldsymbol{P_y}$

- If you sold your endowment for money, you would get:

- Therefore your budget constraint may be written:

Endowment Budget Constraint

Endowment Budget Constraint : Different Prices for Buying and Selling

Part III: Intertemporal Consumption and Interest Rates

Intertemporal Choice

- Instead of goods X and Y, our goods are
  "**Consumption this year**" and "**Consumption next year**"

- You have an endowment of
  "**Income this year**" and "**Income next year**"

- You can spend more than this year's income (C1 > I1)
  by **borrowing** against next year's income

  OR

  You can spend more than next year's income (C2 > I2)
  by **saving** some of this year's income

Savings Budget Constraint

Borrowing Budget Constraint

INTERTEMPORAL BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

For Savings:

$$(1 + r)c_1 + c_2 = (1 + r)I_1 + I_2$$

"Future Value"

If save 100%:

$$c_2 = (1 + r)I_1 + I_2$$

For Borrowing:

$$c_1 + \frac{c_2}{1 + r} = I_1 + \frac{I_2}{1 + r}$$

"Present Value"

If borrow 100%:

$$c_1 = I_1 + \frac{I_2}{1 + r}$$

Intertemporal Budget Constraint

Intertemporal Budget Constraint : Different Interest Rates for Saving and Borrowing