Economics 101A
(Lecture 10, Revised)

Stefano DellaVigna

September 25, 2003

Outline

1. Labor Supply

2. Intertemporal choice

1 Labor Supply

- Nicholson Ch. 22, pp. 606–613.

- Labor supply decision: how much to work in a day.

- Goods: consumption good c, hours worked h

- Price of good p, hourly wage w

- Consumer spends $24 - h = l$ hours in units of leisure

- Utilify function: $u(c, l)$

- Budget constraint?

- Income of consumer: $M + wh = M + w(24 - l)$

- Budget constraint: $pc \leq M + w(24 - l)$ or

$$pc + wl \leq M + 24w$$

- Notice: leisure l is a consumption good with price w. Why?

- General category: **opportunity cost**

- Instead of enjoying one hour of TV, I could have worked one hour and gained wage w.

- You should value the marginal hour of TV w!

- Opportunity costs are very important!

- Example 2. CostCo has a warehouse in SoMa

- SoMa used to have low cost land, adequate for warehouses

- Price of land in SoMa triples in 10 years.

- Should firm relocate the warehouse?

- Did costs of staying in SoMa go up?

- No.

- Did the opportunity cost of staying in SoMa go up?

- Yes!

- Firm can sell at high price and purchase land in cheaper area.

- Let's go back to labor supply

- Maximization problem is

$$\max u(c, l)$$
$$s.t.\ pc + wl \leq M + 24w$$

- Standard problem (except for $24w$)

- First order conditions

- Assume utility function Cobb-Douglas:

$$u(c, l) = c^{\alpha} l^{1-\alpha}$$

- Solution is

$$
\begin{aligned}
c^* &= \alpha \frac{M + 24w}{p} \\
l^* &= (1 - \alpha)\left(24 + \frac{M}{w}\right)
\end{aligned}
$$

- Both c and l are normal goods

- Unlike in standard Cobb-Douglas problems, c^* depends on price of other good w

- Why? Agents are endowed with M AND 24 hours of l in this economy

- Normally, agents are only endowed with M

2 Intertemporal choice

- So far, we assumed people live for one period only

- Now assume that people live for two periods:

  - $t = 0$ – people are young

  - $t = 1$ – people are old

- $t = 0$: income M_0, consumption c_0 at price $p_0 = 1$

- $t = 1$: income $M_1 > M_0$, consumption c_1 at price $p_1 = 1$

- Credit market available: can lend or borrow at interest rate r

- Budget constraint in period 1?

- Sources of income:
  - M_1
  - $(M_0 - c_0) * (1 + r)$ (this can be negative)

- Budget constraint:

$$c_1 \leq M_1 + (M_0 - c_0) * (1 + r)$$

or

$$c_0 + \frac{1}{1+r} c_1 \leq M_0 + \frac{1}{1+r} M_1$$

- Utility function?

- Assume

$$u(c_0, c_1) = U(c_0) + \frac{1}{1+\delta} U(c_1)$$

- $U' > 0$, $U'' < 0$

- δ is the discount rate

- Higher δ means higher impatience

- Elicitation of δ through hypothetical questions

- Person is indifferent between 1 hour of TV today and $1 + \delta$ hours of TV next period

- Maximization problem:

$$\max U(c_0) + \frac{1}{1+\delta} U(c_1)$$
$$s.t.\ c_0 + \frac{1}{1+r} c_1 \leq M_0 + \frac{1}{1+r} M_1$$

- Lagrangean

- First order conditions:

- Ratio of f.o.c.s:

$$\frac{U'(c_0)}{U'(c_1)} = \frac{1+r}{1+\delta}$$

- Case $r = \delta$
  - $c_0^* \quad\quad c_1^*$?
  - Substitute into budget constraint using $c_0^* = c_1^* = c^*$:
    $$\frac{2+r}{1+r}c^* = \left[M_0 + \frac{1}{1+r}M_1\right]$$
    or
    $$c^* = \frac{1+r}{2+r}M_0 + \frac{1}{2+r}M_1$$
  - We solved problem virtually without any assumption on U!
  - Notice: $M_0 < c^* < M_1$

- Case $r > \delta$
  - $c_0^* \quad\quad c_1^*$?