

Class 9 slides

Unit 7. Competition Economics

Part 2. Markets and Market Equilibria

Merger Antitrust Law

Georgetown University Law Center

Dale Collins

Substitutes, Complements, and Elasticities

Substitutes/Complements

■ Substitutes

- *Definition*: Two products or services are *substitutes* if, when consumer demand increases for one product, it will decrease for the other product

- Symbolically:

$$\frac{\Delta q_2}{\Delta q_1} < 0$$

- Examples

- Coke and Pepsi
- iPhone and Galaxy S series mobile phones
- Nike and Adidas shoes
- Hertz and Avis rental cars
- *Horizontal mergers* involve combinations of firms that offer substitute products

Substitutes/Complements

- Substitutes

- Substitutes and prices

- If products 1 and 2 are substitutes, then as the price of 1 increases the demand for 2 increases:

$$\frac{\overset{(-)}{\Delta q_2}}{\Delta q_1} \frac{\overset{(-)}{\Delta q_1}}{\Delta p_1} = \frac{\overset{(+)}{\Delta q_2}}{\Delta p_1} > 0$$

Substitutes/Complements

■ Complements

- *Definition:* Two products are *complements* if, when a consumer demand increases for one product, consumer demand also will increase for the other product
- Symbolically:

$$\frac{\Delta q_2}{\Delta q_1} > 0$$

□ Examples

- *Vertical mergers* involve complements
 - Television LCD screens and TV sets
 - Car engines and cars
 - Cable TV programming and cable TV distribution (AT&T/Time Warner)
 - Drug manufacture and drug distribution
- But some conglomerate mergers can also involve complements
 - Printers and ink cartridges
 - Razors and razor blades
 - Computers and computer software

Substitutes/Complements

- Complements

- Complements and prices

- If products 1 and 2 are complements, then as the price of 1 increases the demand for 2 decreases

$$\frac{\overset{(+)}{\Delta q_2}}{\Delta q_1} \frac{\overset{(-)}{\Delta q_1}}{\Delta p_1} = \frac{\overset{(-)}{\Delta q_2}}{\Delta p_1} < 0$$

Elasticities

- Own-elasticity of demand

- *Definition:* The percentage change in the quantity demanded divided by the percentage change in the price of that *same* product

The Greek letter epsilon (ϵ) is the usual symbol in economics for elasticity

$$\epsilon = \frac{\% \Delta q_i}{\% \Delta p_i}$$

Percentage change q_i in the quantity of product i demanded
Percentage change p_i in the price of product i

- These are sometimes called *elasticity of demand* or *price elasticity of demand*
- Examples:
 - If price increases by 5% and demand decreases by 10%, then the own-elasticity is -2 (= -10%/5%)
 - If price increases by 3% and demand decreases by 1%, then the own-elasticity is -1/3 (= -1%/3%)

Technically, these are called *arc elasticities* because they give percentage changes for discrete changes in prices and quantities.

Elasticities

- Own-elasticity of demand
 - Relationship to the slope of the demand curve:

$$\varepsilon = \frac{\Delta q_i}{\Delta p_i} \frac{p_i}{q_i}$$

that is, the own-elasticity at a point on the demand curve is equal to the slope of the demand curve at that point times the ratio of price to quantity at that point

- Proof

$$\varepsilon = \frac{\% \Delta q_i}{\% \Delta p_i} = \left(\frac{\frac{\Delta q_i}{q_i}}{\frac{\Delta p_i}{p_i}} \right) \left(\frac{q_i}{1} \right) \left(\frac{1}{q_i} \right) \left(\frac{1}{p_i} \right) = \left(\frac{\Delta q_i}{\Delta p_i} \right) \left(\frac{1}{q_i} \right) \left(\frac{1}{p_i} \right) = \frac{\Delta q_i}{\Delta p_i} \frac{p_i}{q_i}$$

This fraction is equal to 1

Slope of the (residual) demand curve:
Always negative

- Mathematical note (optional)

- In calculus terms:

$$\varepsilon = \frac{dq_i}{dp_i} \frac{p_i}{q_i}$$

This deals with the continuous case

Elasticities

$$\varepsilon = \frac{\Delta q_i}{q_i} \frac{p_i}{\Delta p_i}$$

For intuition only
(NOT technically correct,
but it is usually the
intuition that is important)

■ Some important definitions

- *Inelastic demand*: Not very price sensitive

$$|\varepsilon| = \left| \frac{\% \text{change in quantity}}{\% \text{change in price}} \right| < 1$$

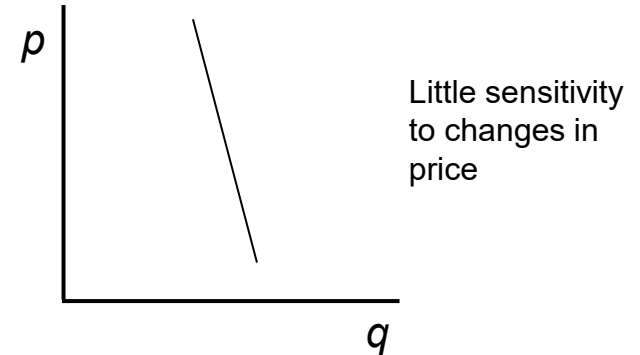
- *Unit elasticity*:

$$|\varepsilon| = \left| \frac{\% \text{change in quantity}}{\% \text{change in price}} \right| = 1$$

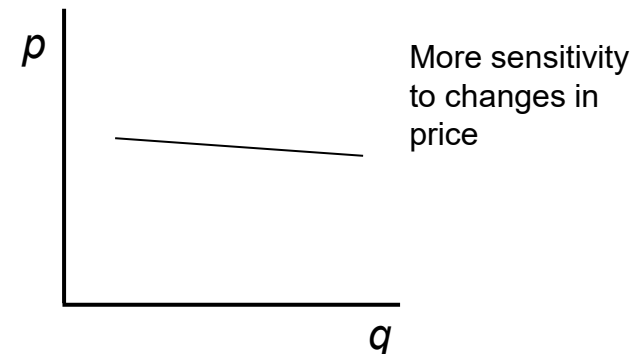
- *Elastic demand*: Price sensitive

$$|\varepsilon| = \left| \frac{\% \text{change in quantity}}{\% \text{change in price}} \right| > 1$$

Inelastic demand



Elastic demand



Note: $|x|$ is the *absolute value* of x , which is the magnitude of x without the sign. So $|3| = |-3| = 3$.

Elasticities

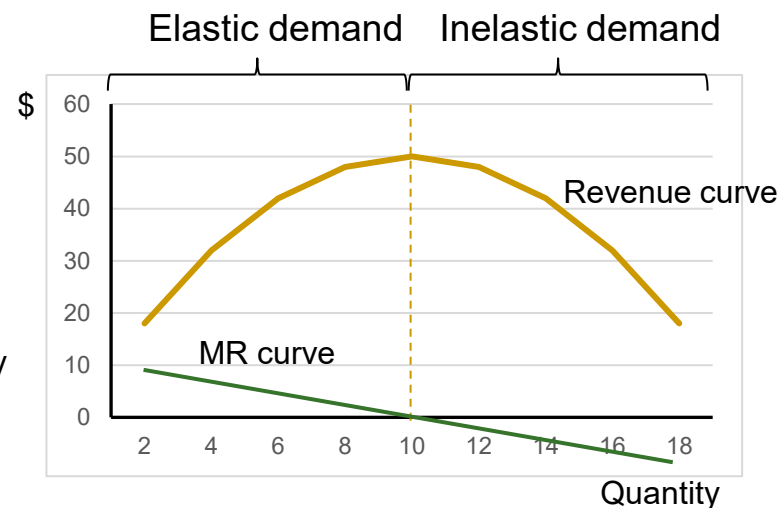
$$\varepsilon = \frac{\Delta q_i}{q_i} \frac{p_i}{\Delta p_i}$$

- Elasticity of demand and the slope of the demand curve
 - Even when the demand curve is linear (so that the slope is constant), elasticity varies along the demand curve

Inverse demand curve:
 $p = 20 - 2q$

p	q	Slope	p/q	ε	Total revenue
1	18	-2	0.0556	-0.1111	18
2	16	-2	0.1250	-0.2500	32
3	14	-2	0.2143	-0.4286	42
4	12	-2	0.3333	-0.6667	48
5	10	-2	0.5000	-1.0000	50
6	8	-2	0.7500	-1.5000	48
7	6	-2	1.1667	-2.3333	42
8	4	-2	2.0000	-4.0000	32
9	2	-2	4.5000	-9.0000	18

Inelastic demand
 Unit elasticity
 Elastic demand



← Increasing elasticity

General rules:

Elasticity decreases as quantity increase and prices decrease
 Elasticity increases as quantity decrease and prices increase

Cross-elasticities

- Cross-elasticity of demand

- *Definition:* The percentage change in the quantity demanded for product j divided by the percentage change in the price of product i .

$$\varepsilon_{ij} = \frac{\% \Delta q_j}{\% \Delta p_i}$$

Percentage change q_j in the quantity of product j demanded
Percentage change p_i in the price of product i

- With a little algebra (as before):

$$\varepsilon_{ij} = \frac{\Delta q_j}{\Delta p_i} \frac{p_i}{q_j}$$

Positive for substitutes
Negative for complements

- Mathematical note (optional)

- In calculus terms:

$$\varepsilon_{ij} = \frac{dq_j}{dp_i} \frac{p_i}{q_j}$$

Cross-elasticities

■ Cross-elasticities—More definitions

□ *High cross-elasticity of demand:*

- A small change in the price of product i will cause a large change of demand to product j
- As a result, product j brings a lot of competitive pressure on product i

Make sure you understand why!

■ *Think of it this way:*

- In a two-firm market, a high cross-elasticity means a large number of *marginal customers* who will abandon product i when its price increases and will divert to product j
- It also means a correspondingly smaller number of *inframarginal customers* who will stay with product i in the wake of a price increase)

□ *Low cross-elasticity of demand:*

- A large change in the price of product i will cause only a small change of demand to product j
- As a result, product j brings little competitive pressure on product i

Make sure you understand why!

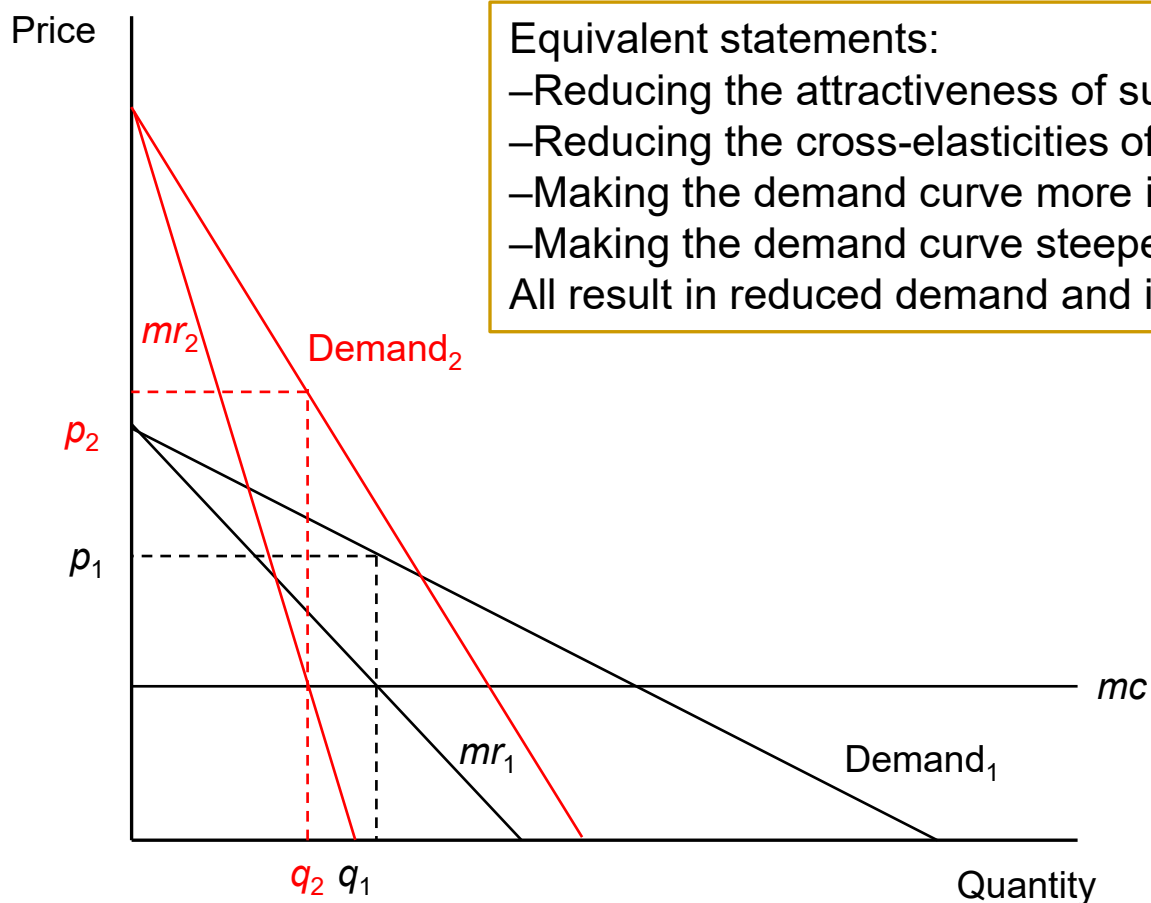
A important relationship

- Relationship of own-elasticities to cross-elasticities
 - Intuitively, the higher the cross-elasticities with the other products, the more elastic is the own-elasticity
 - Consequently, if a merger has the effect of decreasing the cross-elasticities of one or more substitute products, then the own-elasticity also decreases
 - *Key result:* All other things being equal, decreasing the cross-elasticity of demand of substitute products shifts the intersection of the marginal revenue curve and the marginal cost curve to the left, leading the firm to decrease output and increase prices

Let's look at a graph to see why

A important relationship

- Relationship of own-elasticities to cross-elasticities



Equivalent statements:

- Reducing the attractiveness of substitutes
 - Reducing the cross-elasticities of demand
 - Making the demand curve more inelastic
 - Making the demand curve steeper
- All result in reduced demand and increased prices

A important relationship

- Relationship of own-elasticities to cross-elasticities
 - Technically:

$$|\varepsilon_{11}| = 1 + \frac{1}{s_1} \sum_{i=2}^n \varepsilon_{i1} s_i$$

where ε_{11} is the own-elasticity of product 1 and ε_{i1} is the cross-elasticity of product i with respect to product 1

- Takeaways
 - As the cross-elasticities on the right-hand side decrease, the demand for product 1 become more inelastic ($|\varepsilon|$ becomes smaller)
 - This allows Firm 1 to exercise market power and charge higher prices
 - Competitors with larger market shares have more influence in constraining the price of Firm 1 for any given cross-elasticity

Diversion ratios

- *Definition:* Diversion ration (D)

$$D_{12} = \frac{\text{Units captured by Firm 2 as a result of Firm 1's price increase}}{\text{Total units lost by Firm 1 as a result of Firm 1's price increase}} = \left| \frac{\Delta q_2}{\Delta q_1} \right|$$

- NB: By convention, diversion ratios are *positive*. Since $\Delta q_1/\Delta p_1$ is negative (the demand curve is downward sloping), we need to look at the absolute value
- Thinking about diversion ratios
 - Think of D_{12} as $D_{1 \rightarrow 2}$, that is, the number of units lost by Firm 1 that are “diverted” to Firm 2 (which produces a substitute product) as a result of Firm 1’s price increase when Firm 2’s price stays constant
 - This heuristic assumes that there is a one-to-one switch between Firm 1’s and Firm 2’s products

Diversion ratios

- Relation to cross-elasticities
 - Diversion ratios are closely related to cross-elasticities: both measure the degree of substitutability between two products when the relative prices change
 - Elasticities measure substitutability in terms of *percentages*: the percentage increase in Firm 2's unit sales for a percentage increase in Firm 1's price
 - Diversion ratios measure substitutability in terms of *units*: the unit increase in Firm 2's sales as a percentage of all units lost by Firm 1 as a result in Firm 1's price increase
 - Modern antitrust economics still speaks in terms of cross-elasticities when it often means diversion ratios
 - For example, products with high diversion ratios are said to have high cross-elasticity

We will see diversion ratios again in implementations of the hypothetical monopolist test and in the unilateral effects theory of anticompetitive harm

Markets and Market Equilibria: Perfectly Competitive Markets

Perfectly competitive markets

- *Definition*: A market in which no single firm can effect price, meaning:

- The firm perceives its residual demand curve as horizontal
- The firm perceives that it can sell any amount of product without affecting the market price

- $\frac{dp}{dq} = 0$ (as perceived by the firm)
- $p = \frac{dc}{dq}$ (i.e., price = marginal cost)

These four bullets are just different ways of saying exactly the same thing

- Some more definitions

- “*Price taking*”: Competitive firms are called *price-takers*, that is, they take price as given and not something that they can affect
- *Perfectly competitive equilibrium*: A market equilibrium where:
 - Aggregate supply equals aggregate demand, *and*
 - Each firm chooses its level of production so that the market-clearing price is equal to the firm’s marginal cost of production

Perfectly competitive markets

- What could cause a market to be perfectly competitive?
 - *Traditional theory*: Each individual firm's production is very small compared to aggregate demand at any price, so that individual production changes cannot move significantly along the aggregate demand curve
 - This implies that there are a very large number of firms in the market
 - *Modern theory*: Competitors in the market place react strategically but non-collusively to price or quantity changes by a firm in ways that maintain the perfectly competitive equilibrium

Competitive firms

■ Three take-aways

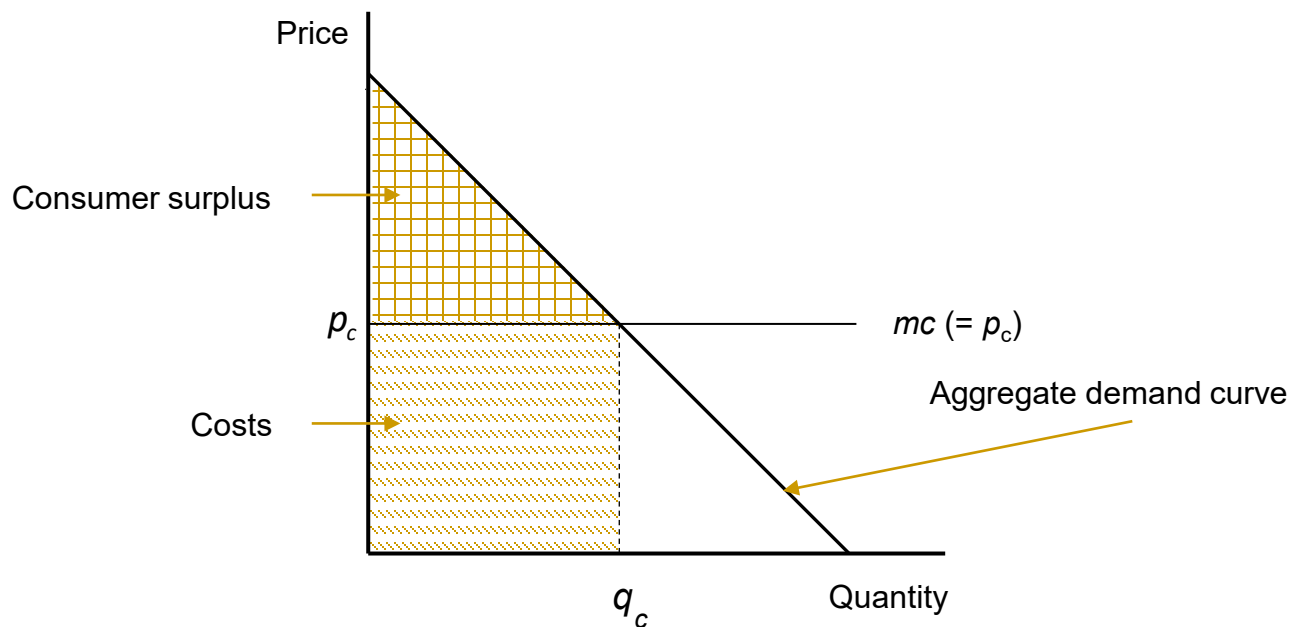
1. Competitive firms do not perceive that their output decisions affects the market-clearing price
 - That is, each firm perceives that it faces a horizontal residual demand curve
 - In fact, their individual output decisions do affect the market-clearing price but because the effect is so small no individual firm perceives this
 - In the aggregate, however, the output of all competitive firms does affect the market-clearing price
2. Competitive firms chose their output so that $p = mc$
 - Competitive firm, like all other firms, choose output so that marginal revenue is equal to marginal cost ($mr = mc$)
 - Since a competitive firm does not perceive that its output decisions affect the market-clearing price, the firm does not perceive that there is any downward adjustment in market price when it expands its output
 - Therefore, the firm perceives—and makes its output decision—on the premise that its marginal revenue is equal to the market price
 - Hence, the firm selects an output level so that $p = mc$

Competitive firms

■ Three take-aways

3. A competitive market maximizes consumer surplus¹

- A competitive market exhausts all gains from trade



¹ We are assuming a simple market where there is only one product that sells at a single uniform price (i.e., there is no price discrimination).

Perfectly Monopolized Markets

Perfect monopoly

■ Basic concepts

- In a perfect monopoly market, there is only one firm that supplies the product
 - This is an economic concept
 - In law, a monopolist need not control 100% of the market

In economics and in law, a firm that faces a downward-sloping residual demand curve and therefore has some power to influence the market-clearing price for its product is said to have *market power*. In antitrust law, a firm that has very significant power over the market-clearing price is said to have *monopoly power*. In economics, a monopolist is the only firm in the market.

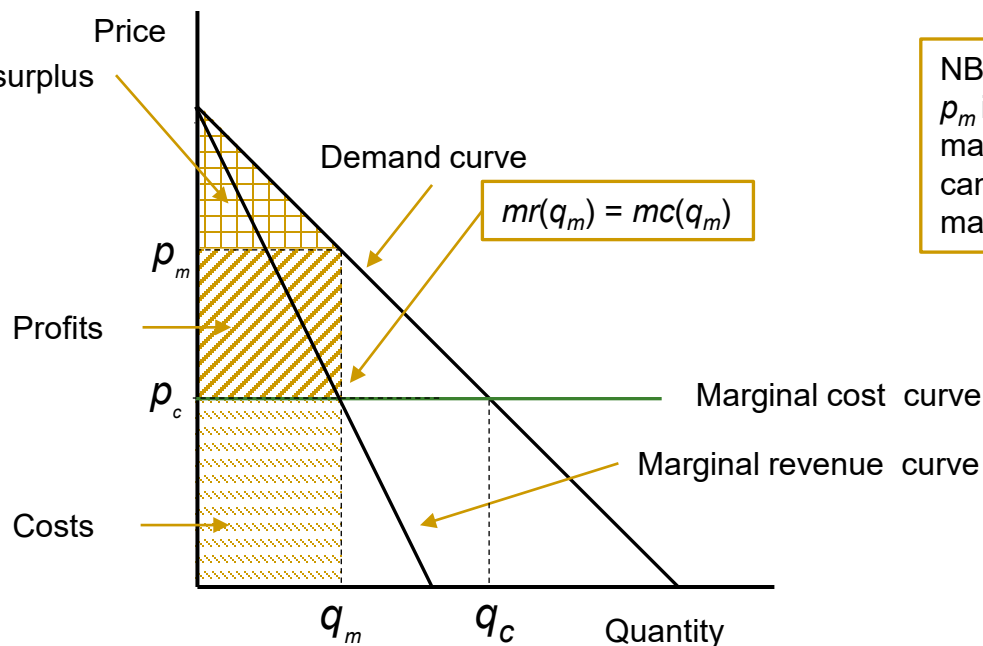
- The aggregate demand curve defines the residual demand curve facing the firm
 - The demand curve is still downward-sloping (as opposed to vertical), so that there are some substitutes for the monopolist's product—just not very good ones

Monopolist firm

- A monopolist's chooses output q_m so that $mr(q_m) = mc(q_m)$
 1. A monopolist charges a higher price than a competitive firm

$$p_m > mr(q_m) = mc(q_m) = p_c$$
 2. A monopolist produces a lower output than would a competitive firm facing the same residual demand curve ($q_m < q_c$)

NB: $q_m = \frac{1}{2} q_c$, where the monopolist and the firms in the competitive market face the same aggregate demand curve and have the same constant marginal costs.



NB: The monopolist price p_m is the price at which the maximum available profits can be drawn from the market.

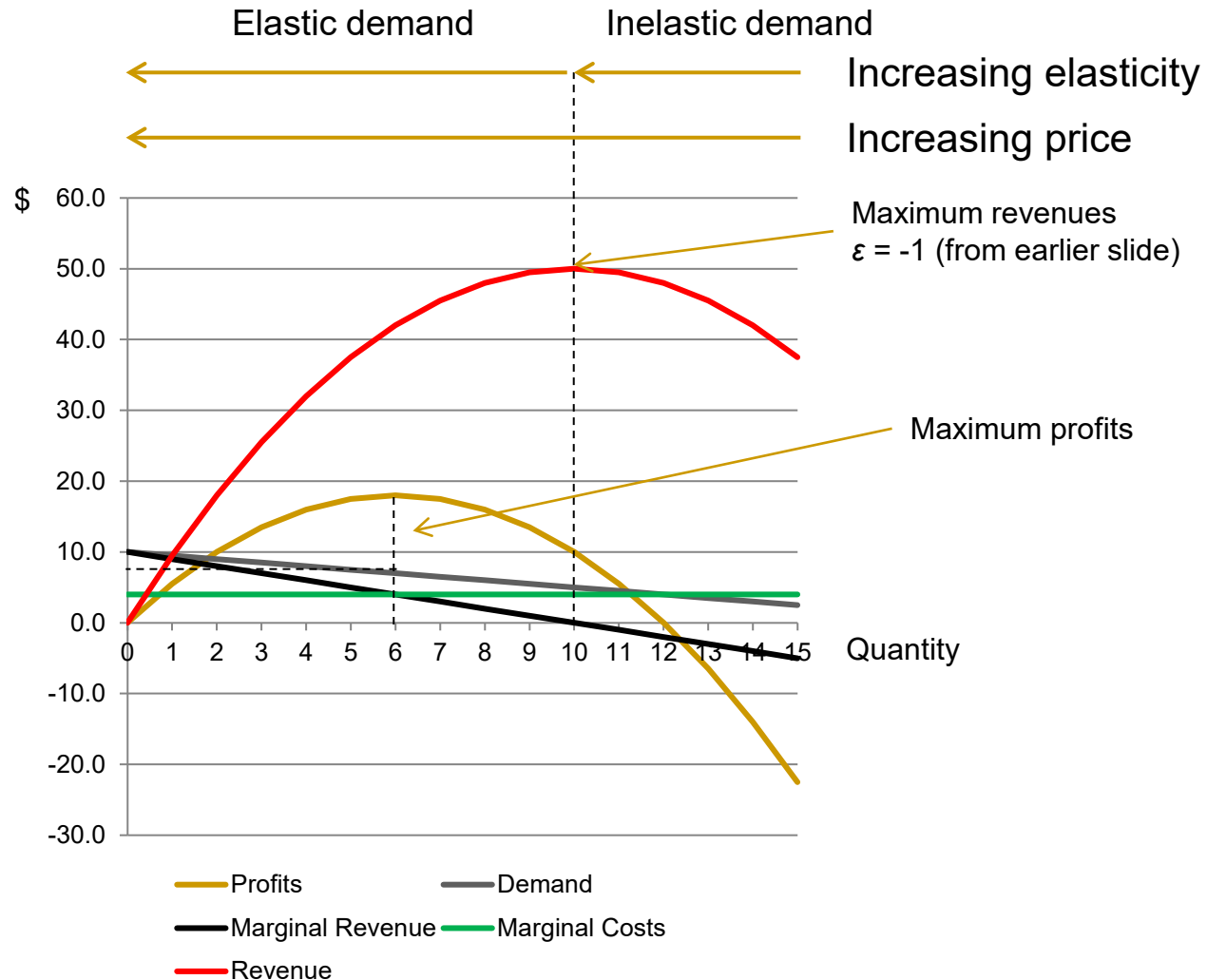
Monopolists and elasticities

■ Proposition

- A monopolist will not operate in the inelastic portion of its demand curve

Remember:

$$\varepsilon = \frac{\Delta q_i}{\Delta p_i} \frac{p_i}{q_i}$$



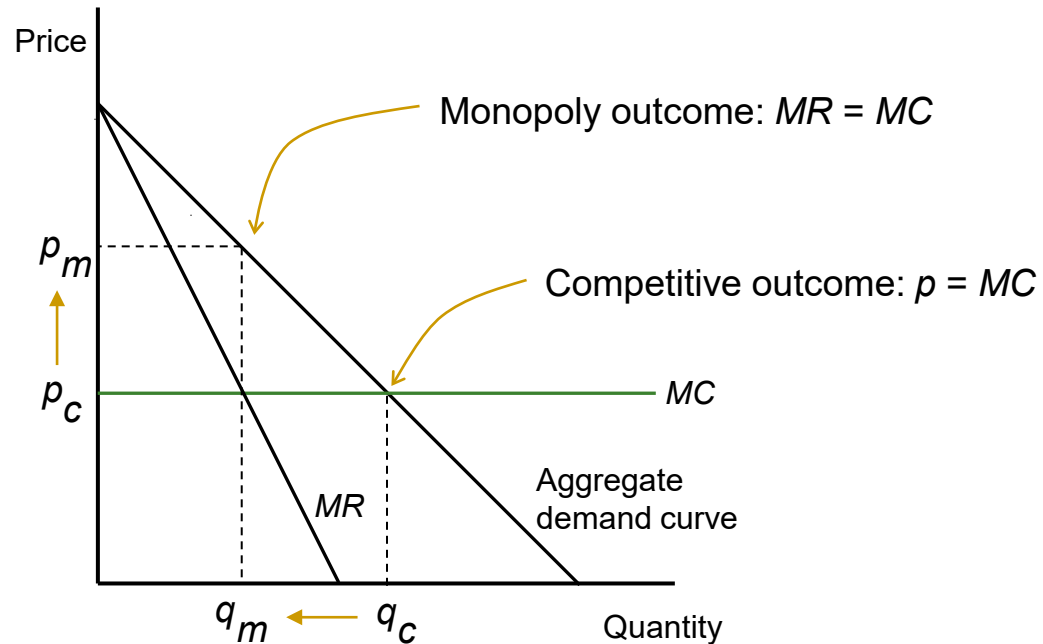
Review: Public policy on monopolies

- Modern view on why monopolies are bad:
 - Increase price and decrease output
 - Shift wealth from consumers to producers
 - Create economic inefficiency (“deadweight loss”)

 - May (or may not) have other socially adverse effects
 - Decrease product or service quality
 - Decrease the rate of technological innovation or product improvement
 - Decrease product choice

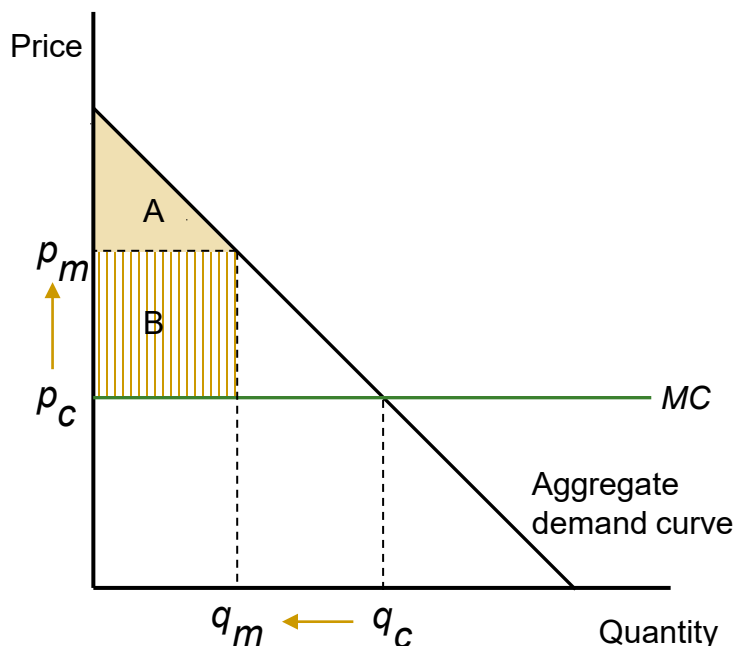
Review: Public policy on monopolies

- Output decreases: $q_c > q_m$
- Prices increase: $p_c < p_m$



Review: Public policy on monopolies

- Shift in wealth from inframarginal consumers to producers*
 - Total wealth created (“surplus”): $A + B$
 - Sometimes called a “rent redistribution”

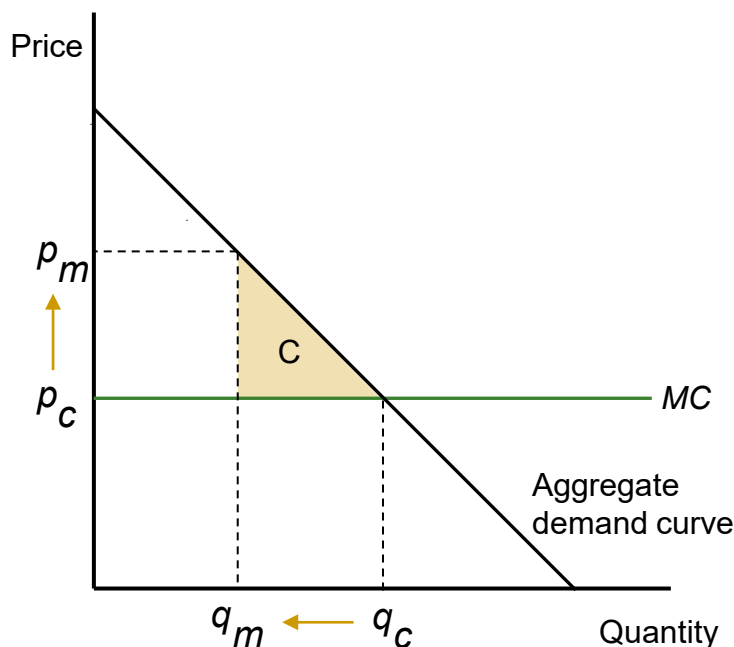


	Competitive	Monopoly
Consumers	$A + B$	A
Producers	0	B

* Inframarginal customers here means customers that would purchase at both the competitive price and the monopoly price

Review: Public policy on monopolies

- “Deadweight loss” of surplus of marginal customers*
 - Surplus C just disappears from the economy
 - Creates “allocative inefficiency” because it does not exhaust all gains from trade

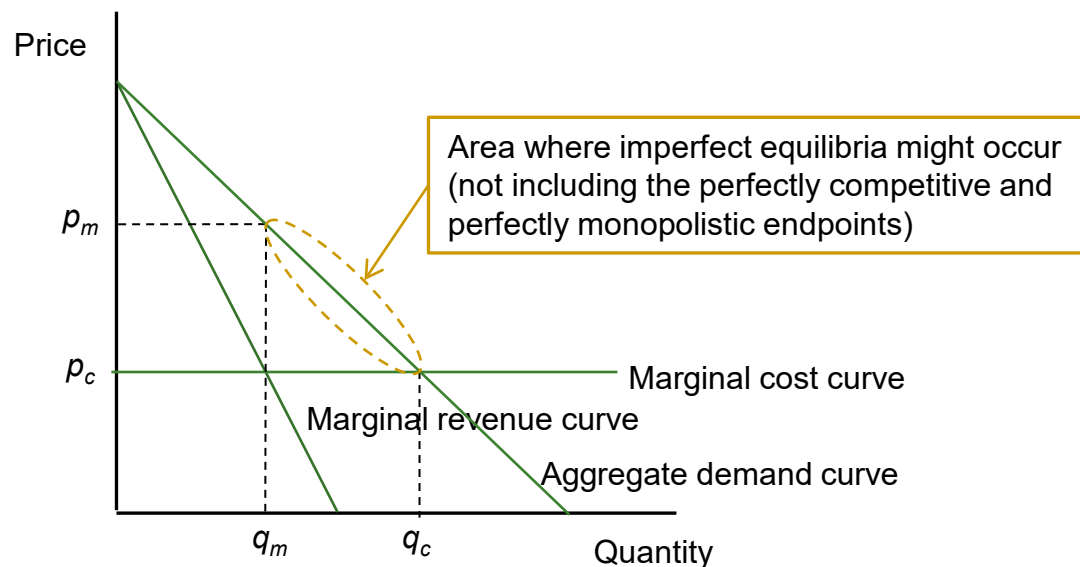


* Marginal customers here means customers that would purchase at both the competitive price and the monopoly price

Imperfectly Competitive Markets

Imperfectly Competitive Markets

- Range of imperfect equilibria
 - An imperfectly competitive equilibrium occurs when the equilibrium price and output on the demand curve falls strictly between the perfect monopoly equilibrium and the perfectly competitive equilibrium



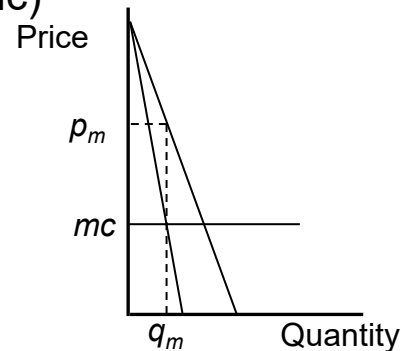
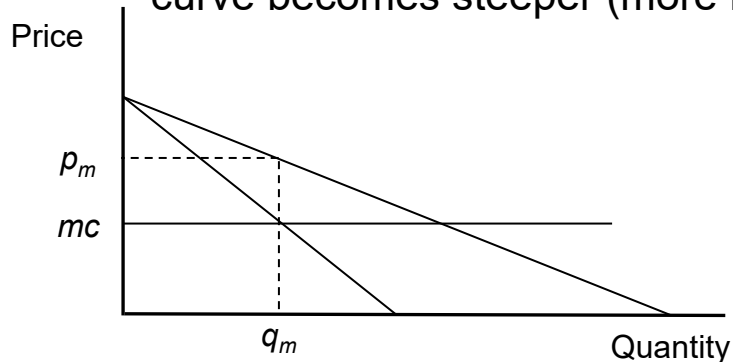
Market power

■ Measuring market power

- Economically, market power is the power of the firm to affect the market-clearing price through its choice of output level
- The traditional economic measure of market power is the *price-cost margin* or *Lerner index* L , which is a measure of how much price has been marked up as a percentage of price:

$$L = \frac{p - mc}{p}$$

- In a competitive market, $L = 0$ since because $p = mc$
- In a perfectly monopolized market, L increases as the aggregate demand curve becomes steeper (more inelastic)



Homogeneous product models

- Homogeneous product models
 - Assumes that products are undifferentiated (that is, *fungible* or *homogeneous*) in the eyes of the customer
 - Common examples:
 - Ready-mix concrete
 - Winter wheat
 - West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil
 - Wood pulp
 - Two properties of homogeneous products
 - Customers purchase from the lowest cost supplier → This forces all suppliers in the market to charge the same price
 - Since the goods are identical, their quantities can be added:

$$Q(p) = \sum q_i(p)$$

- Adding all individual consumer demands at price p gives aggregate demand
- Adding all individual firm outputs at price p gives aggregate supply

Cournot oligopoly models

■ The setup

- The standard homogenous product model is the *Cournot model*
- In a Cournot model the firm's control variable is *quantity*
 - The (downward-sloping) demand curve gives the relationship between the aggregate quantity produced Q and the market-clearing price p

$$p = p(Q), \text{ where } Q = \sum_{i=1}^N q_i,$$

- The profit equation for firm i is:

$$\pi_i = p(Q)q_i - c_i(q_i), \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

Each firm i chooses its level of output q_i , but the aggregate level of output determines the market prices

- First order condition:

$$m\pi_i(q_i) = mr_i(q_i) - mc_i(q_i) = 0$$

This generates n equations in n unknowns and can be solved for each q_i

Cournot oligopoly models

- Production levels in Cournot models

- A simple example

- Compare the competitive, Cournot, and monopoly outcomes in this example

Demand curve: $Q = 100 - 2p$

	Price	Quantity
Perfectly competitive	5 (= mc)	90
Cournot ($n=2$)	20	60
Perfect monopoly	27.5	45

- When demand is linear and there are n identical firms in a Cournot model, then:

$$Q_{Cournot} = \frac{n}{n+1} Q_{Competitive}$$

$q_{competitive}$	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
n	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1
$q_{cournot}$	81	80	78.8	77.1	75	72	67.5	60	45	45

Cournot oligopoly models

- Relationship of the Lerner index to the HHI

1. Define the firm i 's Lerner index to be: $L_i = \frac{p - mc_i}{p} = \frac{s_i}{\varepsilon}$

where s_i is the market share of firm i and ε is the own-elasticity of demand of the aggregate demand curve and p is the market equilibrium price

2. Define the market Lerner index as the sum of the share-weighted individual firm Lerner indices. Then:

$$L \equiv \sum_{i=1}^n L_i s_i = \sum_{i=1}^N \left(\frac{s_i}{\varepsilon} \right) s_i = \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{s_i^2}{\varepsilon} = \frac{HHI}{\varepsilon}$$

where L is the market-share weighted sum of the L_i of the individual firms in the market.

- *Key result:* In a Cournot model, the degree of exercise of market power in the market is a function of market concentration as measured by the HHI
- The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), which is the principal measure of market concentration, is the sum of the squares of the markets shares of the firms in the market. That is:

$$HHI = s_1^2 + s_2^2 + \dots + s_N^2 = \sum_{i=1}^N s_i^2$$

Bertrand oligopoly models

■ The setup

- In a Bertrand model the firm's control variable is *price*
 - Compare with the Cournot model, where the firm's control variable is *quantity*
 - The (downward-sloping) residual demand curve gives the relationship between the firm's choice of price and the quantity consumers will demand from the firm at that price
- The profit equation for firm i is:

$$\pi_i(p_i) = p_i q_i(p_i) - C_i(q_i(p_i)), \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, N$$

This is the demand function

To see the first order conditions in operation, let's first look at profit-maximization for a monopolist whose control variable is price

Bertrand oligopoly models

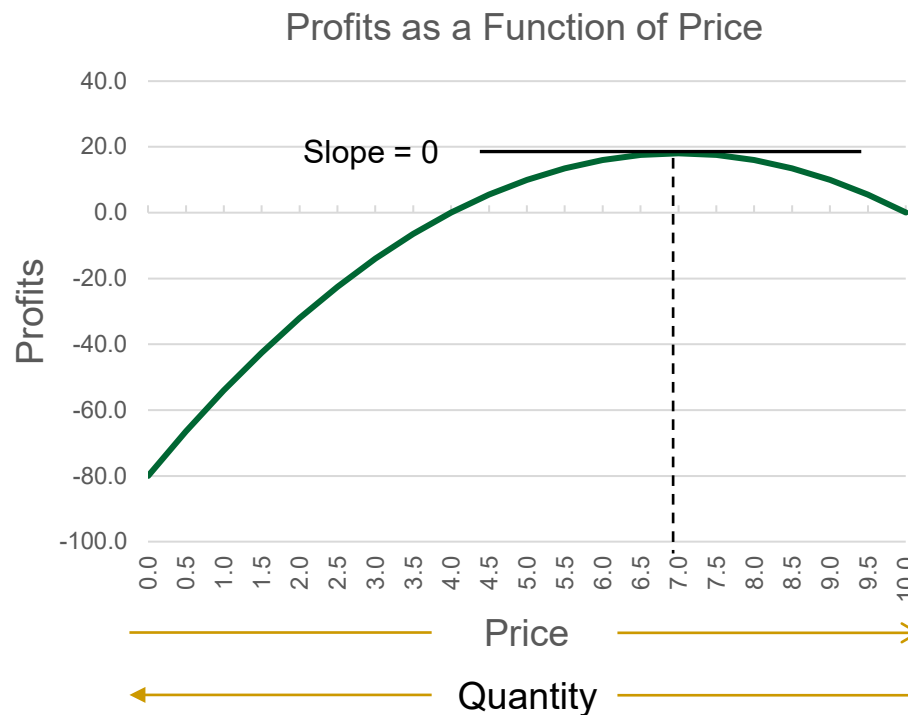
- Profits as a function of price: Example for monopolist

Price p	Quantity q	Revenues r	Costs C	Profits Π
0.0	20	0.0	80	-80.0
0.5	19	9.5	76	-66.5
1.0	18	18.0	72	-54.0
1.5	17	25.5	68	-42.5
2.0	16	32.0	64	-32.0
2.5	15	37.5	60	-22.5
3.0	14	42.0	56	-14.0
3.5	13	45.5	52	-6.5
4.0	12	48.0	48	0.0
4.5	11	49.5	44	5.5
5.0	10	50.0	40	10.0
5.5	9	49.5	36	13.5
6.0	8	48.0	32	16.0
6.5	7	45.5	28	17.5
7.0	6	42.0	24	18.0
7.5	5	37.5	20	17.5
8.0	4	32.0	16	16.0

Demand: $q = 20 - 2p$

Fixed costs = 0

Marginal costs = 4



Bertrand oligopoly models

■ Observations

- The profit curve for a monopolist as a function of price is a parabola
 - Although different in shape than the profit curve as a function of quantity
- The profit maximum is when the slope of the profit curve is zero
- So:
 - Marginal profits (as a function of price)
 - = Marginal revenues (as a function of price)
 minus marginal costs (as a function of price)
 - = 0

Bertrand oligopoly models

■ Profit-maximization when a monopolist sets price: Example

Demand: $q = 20 - 2p$ Marginal costs ($mc(q)$) = 4
Fixed costs = 0

□ Revenues:

$$\begin{aligned}\pi(p) &= pq(p) \\ &= p(20 - 2p) \\ &= 20p - 2p^2\end{aligned}$$

This describes the parabola on the prior slide

□ Marginal revenues:

$$mr(p) = 20 - 4p$$

Remember, if $y = a + bx$ is the function, then the marginal function of xy is $a + 2bx$

□ Cost

$$\begin{aligned}mc * q(p) &= mc(20 - 2p) \\ &= 4(20 - 2p) \\ &= 80 - 8p\end{aligned}$$

□ Marginal cost:

$$mc(p) = -8$$

NB: This is marginal cost as a function of p (not q). Why is it a negative number?

□ FOC:

$$mr(p) = mc(p)$$

$$20 - 4p = -8$$

$$\text{So } p^* = 7 \text{ and } q^* = 6$$

Bertrand oligopoly models

- Homogeneous products case with equal cost functions
 - Consider two firms producing homogeneous (identical) products at constant marginal cost c and use price as their control variable
 - Consumers also purchase from the lower priced firm; if both firms charge the same price, they split equally consumer demand
 - Profit function for firm i :

$$\pi(p_i) \begin{cases} = p_i Q(p_i) - c(Q(p_i)) & \text{if } p_i < p_j \\ = \frac{p_i Q(p_i) - c(Q(p_i))}{2} & \text{if } p_i = p_j \\ = 0 & \text{if } p_i > p_j \end{cases}$$

- That is, firm i gets 100% of market demand $Q(p_i)$ at price p_i if p_i is the lower price of the two firms, the two firms split the market demand if their prices are equal, and firm i gets nothing if it has the higher price
- *Equilibrium*: $p_1 = p_2 = mc$, so that both firms price at marginal cost (i.e., the competitive price) and split equally market demand and total market profits

Bertrand oligopoly models

- Homogeneous products case with asymmetric cost functions
 - Now consider two firms producing homogeneous (identical) products but with different cost functions costs, with firm 1 have lower marginal costs than firm 2 (i.e., $mc(q(p)) < mc(q(p))$)
 - The profit function is the same as before:

$$\pi(p_i) \begin{cases} = p_i Q(p_i) - c(Q(p_i)) & \text{if } p_i < p_j \\ = \frac{p_i Q(p_i) - c(Q(p_i))}{2} & \text{if } p_i = p_j \\ = 0 & \text{if } p_i > p_j \end{cases}$$

- *Equilibrium*: Firm 1 prices just below firm 2 and captures 100% of market demand
- *Idea*: Firm 1 and Firm 2 compete the price down to firm 2's marginal cost as in the symmetric cost case. Then firm 1 just underprices firm 2 and captures 100% of the market demand

Bertrand oligopoly models

- Differentiated products case
 - When products are differentiated, a lower price charged by one firm will not necessarily move all of the market demand to that firm
 - Consider a market with only red cars and blue cars.
 - Some consumers like blue cars so much that even if the price of red cars is lower than the price of blue cars there will still be positive demand for blue cars
 - Moreover, if the price of blue cars increases, some (inframarginal) blue car customers will purchase blue cars at the higher price while some (marginal) customers will switch to red cars
 - This means that the demand for red cars (and separately for blue cars) is a function both of the price of red cars and the price of blue cars
 - It also means that the price of blue cars may not equal the price of red cars in equilibrium

Bertrand oligopoly models

- Differentiated products case

- Simple linear model

- Firms 1 and 2 produce differentiated products and face the following residual demand curves:

$$q_1 = a - b_1 p_1 + b_2 p_2$$

$$q_2 = a - b_1 p_2 + b_2 p_1$$

NB: Each firm's demand decreases with increase in its own price and increases with increases in the price of the other firm

Assume that $b_1 > b_2$, so that each firm's residual demand is more sensitive to its own price than to the other firm's price

- Assume each firm has a cost function with no fixed costs and the same constant marginal costs:

$$c_i(q_i) = cq_i$$

- Firm 1's profit-maximization problem:

$$\max_{p_1} \pi_1 = (p_1 - c)(a - b_1 p_1 + b_2 p_2)$$

NB: This formulation does not take into account firm 2's reaction to a change in firm 1's price. It assumes that Firm 2' price is constant.

- Solving for the Bertrand equilibrium:

$$p_1^* = p_2^* = \frac{a + cb_1}{2b_1 - b_2}$$

You do not need to know this. What is important is how the model is set up.

Dominant firm with a competitive fringe

- The setup
 - Consider a homogeneous product market with
 - a dominant firm, which sees its output decisions as affecting price and so sets output so that $mr = mc$, and
 - a fringe of firms that are small and act as price takers, that is, they do not see their individual choices of output levels as affecting price and therefore price as competitive firms (i.e., $p = mc$)
 - Choice question for the dominant firm: Pick the profit-maximizing level for its output given the competitive fringe
 - The model requires some constraint on the ability of the competitive fringe to expand its output. Otherwise, the competitive fringe will take over the market.
 - The constraint usually is either limited production capacity or increasing marginal costs

Dominant firm with a competitive fringe

■ The model

- At market price p , let $Q(p)$ be the industry demand function and $q_f(p)$ be the output of the competitive fringe. Then the residual demand $q_d(p)$ for the dominant firm is $Q(p) - q_f(p)$.
- The dominant firm's profit maximization problem:

$$\max_p \pi_D = p \times [Q(p) - q_f(p)] - C(q(p))$$

The dominant firm does not control market price directly, it in this model it can determine the price at which it would maximize its profits, and then back out the quantity it should produce using the aggregate demand function

Dominant firm with a competitive fringe

- Dominant oligopolies

- The model can be extended to the case where the dominant firm is replaced by a dominant oligopoly
- The key is to specify the solution concept for the choice of output by the firms in the oligopoly (e.g., Cournot). You then create a residual demand curve for the oligopoly and apply the solution concept to that demand curve.

- Fringe firms

- As we saw in Unit 2, the DOJ and the FTC typically ignore fringe firms. The dominant oligopoly model with a competitive fringe provides a theoretical justification.