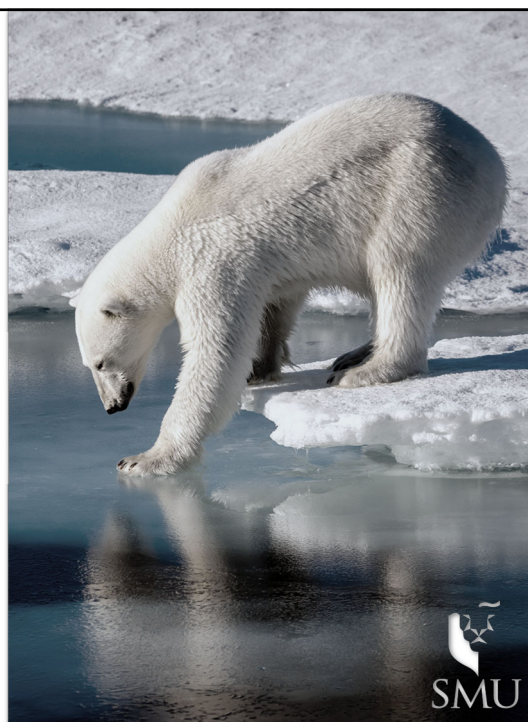


Kosmas Marinakis, Ph.D.

Lecture 6

Market Failure &
Government Intervention

Economics
& Society



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Previously in E&S

- ★ Monopolistic Competition ▶
- ★ Cournot Oligopoly
- ★ Bertrand Oligopoly
- ★ Collusion ▶
- ★ Kinked demand model ▶

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Market Failure & Government Intervention



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Market failure

> Market failure

- ★ Market failure is the situation when the market **outcome** is **socially undesirable**
- ★ Different societies have **different preferences**:
 - ▶ In Singapore
 - ▶ In L.A.
 - ▶ In Tehran
 - ▶ In Amsterdam
- ★ Market failure is a **subjective** notion

Types of market failure

> Market failure

- ★ Monopolies are known to cause economic **inefficiency** and are socially **disliked**
- ★ But even PC outcomes, which are **100% efficient**, are socially disliked at times
- ★ There are **7 main types** of market failure:
 1. Market prices may fail to reflect the **real cost** or the **real benefit** of the product
 2. The market may fail to **allocate** the good to those who value it the most
 3. The market may fail to produce the good at the **min opportunity cost**
 4. The market may produce a good that fails to **cover the real needs** of the society
 5. The market may fail to control the abuse of **monopoly power**
 6. Consumers may **fail to evaluate the consequences** of the use of a product
 7. The market may fail to **equilibrate** for various reasons.

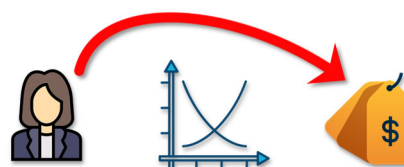
Response to market failure

> Market failure

★ There are **2 approaches** to regulatory intervention:

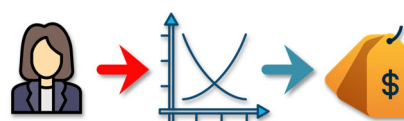
1. **Direct** intervention:

- ▶ The regulator overrides the market and directly **sets the desired outcome**
- ▶ For example, setting **prices**, product **specifications** or product **variety**.



2. **Indirect** intervention:

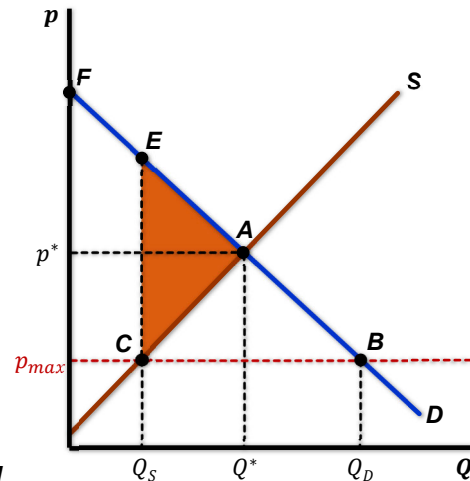
- ▶ The regulator **adjusts the market rules** to steer clear of failing outcomes
- ▶ For example, **antitrust** or **other legislation** that enables the market to yield the desired outcome. ▲▲



Price ceiling

> Price control > Competition

- ★ Market equilibrates at A with price p^*
- ★ If a **maximum price** p_{max} is imposed:
 - ▶ Quantity demanded **increases** from Q^* to Q_D
 - ▶ Quantity supplied **decreases** from Q^* to Q_S
 - ▶ A shortage equal to $Q_D - Q_S$ is created.
- ★ Producers
- ★ Consumers along EA
- ★ Consumers along FE
- ★ This policy creates **winners and losers**
- ★ Intervention decreases price but creates a **DWL** ▲



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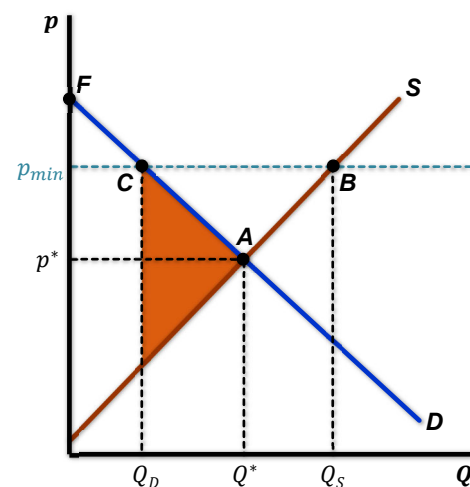
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Price floor

> Price control > Competition

- ★ Market equilibrates at A with p^*
- ★ If a **minimum price** p_{min} is imposed:
 - ▶ Quantity supplied **increases** from Q^* to Q_S
 - ▶ Quantity demanded **decreases** from Q^* to Q_D
 - ▶ A surplus equal to $Q_S - Q_D$ is created.
- ★ Producers
- ★ Consumers along CA
- ★ Consumers along FC
- ★ The policy creates **winners and losers**
- ★ Intervention comes at an **efficiency cost** ▲▲



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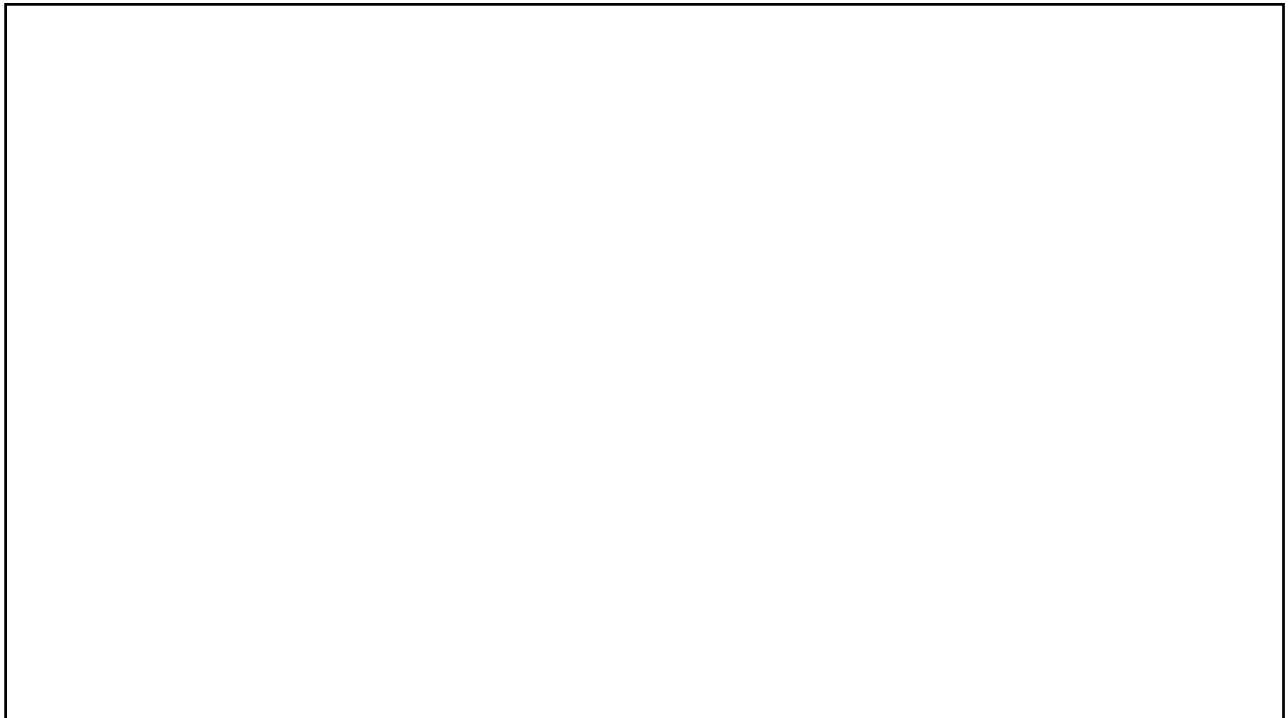
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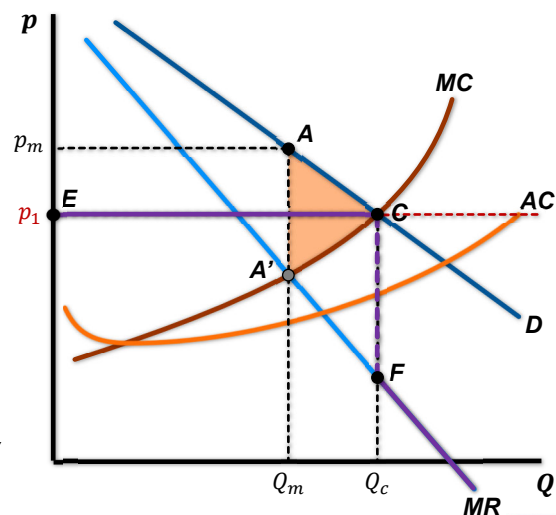


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Price regulation in monopoly !

> Price control > Market power

- ★ If **left alone**, the seller charges p_m
 DWL ACA' exists in the market
- ★ The regulator may **impose** max price p_c :
to **raise** quantity to Q_c ; **eliminate** the DWL
- ★ For quantities up to Q_c :
 - ▶ D yields prices **above** p_c
 - ▶ D and MR **do not apply** with regulation
 - ▶ The seller **takes** p_c from the regulator
 - ▶ **Demand** and **MR** are line EC .
- ★ Above Q_c , original demand and MR **apply**
- ★ Monopolist indeed **wants to produce** Q_c ▲



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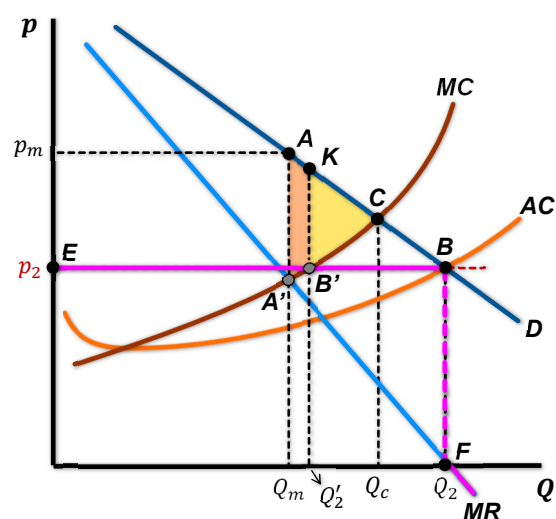
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Price regulation overshooting !

> Price control > Market power

- ★ If **left alone**, the seller charges p_m
 DWL ACA' exists in the market
- ★ The regulator may **impose** max price p_2
to cause **quantity to increase** to Q_2
- ★ With regulation, **MR curve** becomes EBF
- ★ At Q_2 the monopolist has **zero profit**
- ★ Monopolist **maximizes profit** at Q'_2
- ★ Regulation is **unsuccessful**:
 - ▶ **Limits quantity** to $Q'_2 < Q_c$
 - ▶ **Yields significant** DWL KCB' ▲▲



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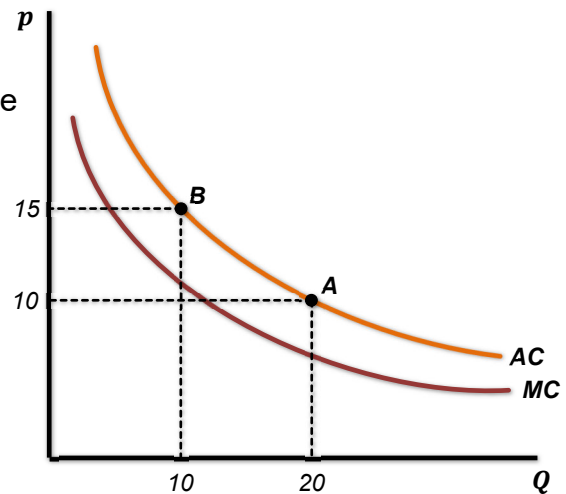
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Natural monopolies

> Price control > Market power

- ★ Some production processes may exhibit **intense Economies of Scale**
- ★ In this case, a single firm could produce the entire output at **lower cost** than if production was split over several firms
 - ▶ A monopoly would produce 20 units with cost $20 \cdot \$10 = \200
 - ▶ If the 20 units were split between 2 firms, cost would be $10 \cdot \$15 + 10 \cdot \$15 = \$300$.

★ Examples:



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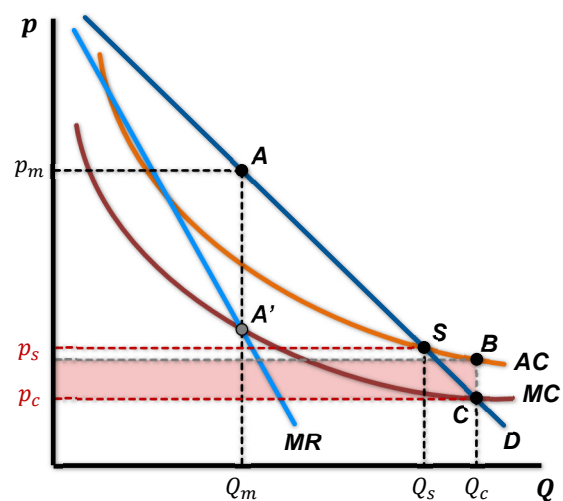
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Regulating a natural monopoly

> Price control > Market power

- ★ Unregulated monopolist would produce Q_m and charge p_m
- ★ Regulation at p_c yields the **maximum market efficiency** but at **losses** access to the good is **maximized**
- ★ Regulation at p_s allows the monopolist to **break even** and offers **self-sufficiency** however, access to the good is **reduced** ▲▲



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Thank you!

(you are welcomed to stay for consultation or discussion)

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⚠ WARNING! ⚠

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