Thammasat

Markets Failure

EE311

Chayun Tantivasadakarn

Faculty of Economics,

Thammasat University

Topics to be Discussed

- Why markets fail
- Asymmetric information
  - Adverse selection problems
  - Moral Hazard problems
- Externalities
  - Negative externalities
  - Positive externalities
- Public goods and free rider problems

Why Markets Fail

1. Market Power

Those with market power choose the price and quantity

Less output is sold than in competitive markets -->

Inefficiency

- Let X be a monopolized market, but Y be competitive

Firms in X produce until $P_X > MR_X = MC_X$. Firms in Y produce until $P_Y = MR_Y = MC_Y$. Hence,

$$|MRS_{XY}| = \frac{P_X}{P_Y} > \frac{MR_X}{MR_Y} = \frac{MC_X}{MC_Y} = |MRT_{XY}|$$

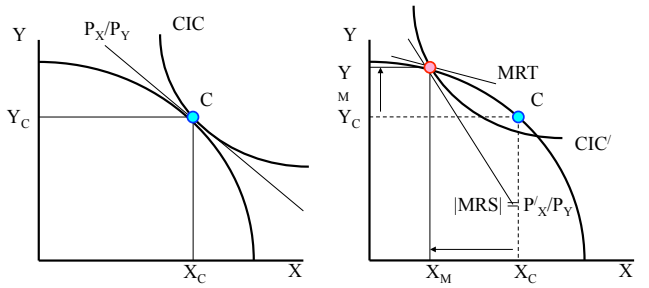
Imperfect competition and market failure

If X and Y are competitive

$|MRT| = P_X/P_Y = |MRS|$

If X is monopoliszed Y is competitive

$|MRT| < P'_X/P_Y = |MRS|$



Why Markets Fail

2. Incomplete Information
   - Consumers must have accurate information about market prices or production quality for markets to operate efficiency
   - Lack of information can change supply and demand
     - Too much goods with low quality
     - Consumers can't find enough goods with sufficient quality
   - Some markets may never develop

Why Markets Fail

3. Externalities
   - Consumption or production has indirect effect on other consumption or production not reflected in market prices
   - Market prices do not always reflect the activities of either producers or consumers
4. Public Goods
   - Nonexclusive, nonrival good that, once available, is difficult to prevent others from consuming
   - Example: Company thinking about researching a new technology if can't get patent

Asymmetric Information

- Asymmetric information: a buyer and a seller knows different information about a transaction
- The one who knows more is the informed party and the one who knows less is the uninformed party. -> opportunistic behavior
- Asymmetric information leads to
  - Adverse selection: Unobserved characteristics
  - Moral hazard: Unobserved actions

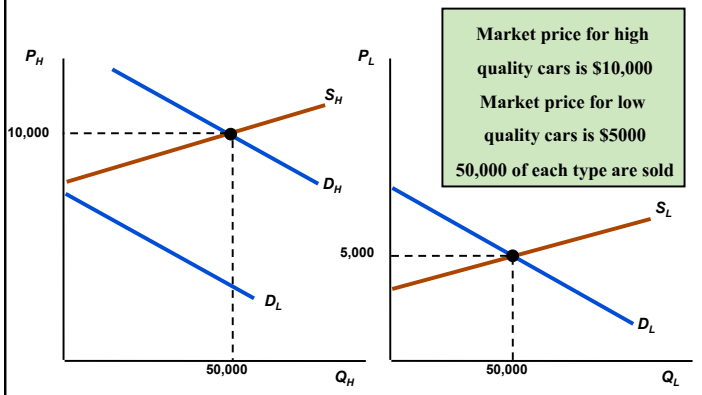
Adverse selection and the Market for Lemons

- Adverse selection: Low quality goods drive high quality goods out of the market because unobserved characteristics
- Examples
  - The lack of complete information when purchasing a used car increases the risk of the purchase and lowers the value of the car.
  - Markets for insurance, financial credit and employment are also characterized by asymmetric information about product quality

Used Cars and lemon problem

- Assume: Two kinds of cars – low quality (lemons) and high quality (plums)
- If buyers and sellers can distinguish between the cars ->There will be two markets – one for high quality and one for low quality
- High quality market
  - S_H is supply and D_H is demand for high quality
- Low quality market
  - S_L is supply and D_L is demand for low quality

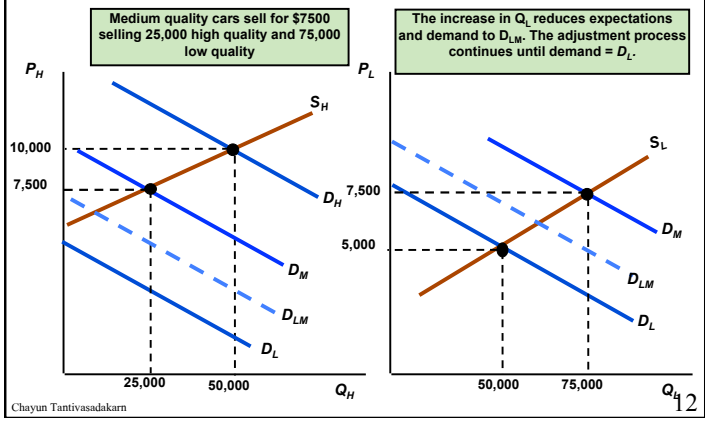
The Lemons Problem



The Market for Used Cars

- S_H is higher than S_L because owners of high quality cars need more money to sell them
- D_H is higher than D_L because people are willing to pay more for higher quality
- Sellers know more about the quality of the used car than the buyer
- Initially buyers may think the odds are 50/50 that the car is high quality
  - Buyers will view all cars as medium quality with demand D_M
- However, fewer high quality cars (25,000) and more low quality cars (75,000) will now be sold
- Perceived demand will now shift

The Lemons Problem



The Market for Used Cars

- With unobserved characteristics:
  - Low quality goods drive high quality goods out of the market- the lemons problem.
  - The market has failed to produce mutually beneficial trade.
  - Too many low and too few high quality cars are on the market.
  - Adverse selection occurs; most cars on the market will be low quality cars.

Market for Insurance

- Older individuals have difficulty purchasing health insurance at almost any price
- They know more about their health than the insurance company
- Because unhealthy people are more likely to want insurance, proportion of unhealthy people in the pool of insured people rises
- Price of insurance rises so healthy people with low risk drop out – proportion of unhealthy people rises increasing price more

Market for Insurance

- If auto insurance companies are targeting a certain population – males under 25
- They know some of the males have low probability of getting in an accident and some have a high probability
- If can't distinguish among insured, it will base premium on the average experience
- Some with low risk will choose not to insure and with raises the accident probability and rates

Market for Credit

- The Market for Credit
  - Asymmetric information creates the potential that only high risk borrowers will seek loans.
  - Can end up with lemon problem again
  - However, banks and credit agencies use credit histories to gauge risk of borrowers

Solutions to adverse selection problems

- Control: force insurance -> pool risks
- Reputation: credit history, "open since .."
- Standardization and Certification
  - Chains that keep production the same everywhere – McDonalds
- Screening: testing the product
- Third-party Comparisons
- Market signaling:
  - must be credible: warranties
  - high quality producers must have low signaling cost
  - not works if all sending the same signal

Market Signaling

- The process of sellers using signals to convey information to buyers about the product's quality.
- For example, how do workers let employers know they are productive so they will be hired?
- Weak signal could be dressing well
  - Is weak because even unproductive employees can dress well
- Strong Signal
  - To be effective, a signal must be easier for high quality sellers to give than low quality sellers.
  - Example: Highly productive workers signal with educational attainment level.

Moral Hazard

- Moral hazard occurs when the informed parties exploit the uninformed parties due to unobserved action. Examples:
  - If my home is insured, I might be less likely to lock my doors or install a security system
  - Financial institutions was less prudent because they know that central bank would help them
  - Teachers can't promise all students who attend classes to get at least B
  - Principal-Agent problems

Moral Hazard

- Determining the Premium for Fire Insurance
  - Warehouse worth $100,000
  - Probability of a fire:
    - .005 with a $50 fire prevention program
    - .01 without the program
  - If the insurance company cannot monitor to see if he program was run, how do they determine premiums?

Moral Hazard

- With the program the premium is:
  - .005 x $100,000 = $500
- Once insured owners purchase the insurance, the owners no longer have an incentive to run the program, therefore the probability of loss is .01
- $500 premium will lead to a loss because the expected loss is now $1,000 (.01 x $100,000)

Exercise

- Thai Tour operators often compete for Chinese tourists so much such that they offer “zero dollar tour package”.
- Use the theory about asymmetric information to explain this situation.

The Principal – Agent Problem

- Principal-agent problem arises when welfare of the principal depends on the unobserved performance of the agent
  - Owners cannot completely monitor their employees
  - Share holders cannot completely monitor the effort of the manager
  - Voters cannot easily remove politicians who do not keep their promises

Reducing Moral Hazard

- Price discrimination by historical records
  - Bad drivers pay higher premium
- Partial liability
  - deductible: auto-insurers take partial liability in case of their own carelessness
- Profit sharing
- Efficiency wage contract

Efficiency Wage Theory

- In a competitive labor market, all who wish to work will find jobs for a wage equal to their value of marginal product.
  - However, most countries' economies experience unemployment.
- The efficiency wage theory can explain the presence of unemployment and wage discrimination.

--> One way to solve Principal-agent problem.

Efficiency Wage Theory

- The shirking model can be better used to explain unemployment and wage discrimination.
  - Assumes perfectly competitive markets
  - However, workers can work or shirk.
  - Since performance information is limited, workers may not get fired.

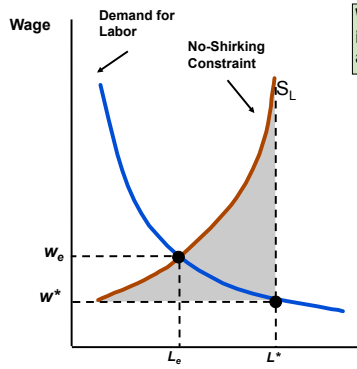
Efficiency Wage Theory

- If workers paid market clearing wage w^*, they have incentive to shirk
- If get caught and fired, they can immediately get a job elsewhere for same wage
- Firms have to pay a higher wage to make loss higher from shirking
- Wage at which no shirking occurs is the efficiency wage

Efficiency Wage Theory

- Firms will offer more than market clearing wage, w^*, say w_e (efficiency wage)
- In this case workers fired for shirking face unemployment because demand for labor is less than market clearing quantity

Unemployment in a Shirking Model



Without shirking, the market wage is w^*, and full-employment exists at L^*

The no-shirking constraint gives the wage necessary to keep workers from shirking.

At the equilibrium wage, W_e the firm hires L_e workers creating unemployment of $L^* - L_e$.

Efficiency Wages at Ford Motor Company

- Labor turnover at Ford
  - 1913: 380%
  - 1914: 1000%
    - Average pay = $2 - $3
    - Ford increased pay to $5
- Results
  - Productivity increased 51%
  - Absenteeism had been halved
  - Profitability rose from $30 million in 1914 to $60 million in 1916.

Externalities

- Externalities arise between producers, between consumers or between producers and consumers
- Externalities are the effects of production and consumption activities not directly reflected in the market
  - They can be negative or positive

Externalities

- Side effects which producers or consumers impose on the third parties
- Negative externalities: Action by one party imposes costs on the third parties
  - Plant dumps waste in a river affecting those downstream
  - Car users release air pollution into the atmosphere
  - Both have no incentive to account for the external costs that they impose on others

Externalities

- Positive externalities: Action by one party benefits the third parties
  - Large universities generate large customer base for shops located nearby
  - A vaccinated tourist does not contract contagious disease and help preventing it to spread out
  - Both did not take the external benefits into account when deciding to plant or vaccinate

Negative Externalities and Inefficiency

- Scenario – paper plant dumping waste
  - Marginal External Cost (MEC) is the increase in cost imposed on fishermen downstream for each level of production.
  - Marginal Social Cost (MSC) is MC (Marginal private cost) plus MEC.
  - We can show the competitive market firm decision and the market demand and supply curves

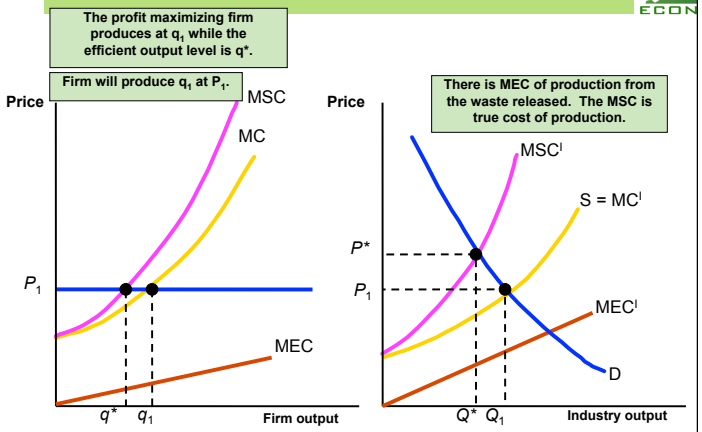
Negative Externalities and Inefficiency

- Assume the firm has a fixed proportions production function and cannot alter its input combinations
  - The only way to reduce waste is to reduce output
- Price of paper and quantity of paper initially produced is at the intersection of supply and demand

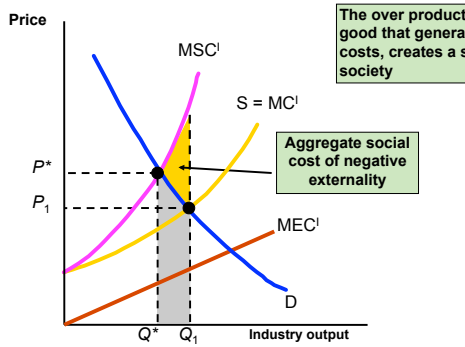
Negative Externalities and Inefficiency

- The MC curve for the firm is the marginal costs of production
- Firm maximizes profit by producing where MC equals Price in a competitive firm
- As firm output increase, external cost on fishermen increases measured by the marginal external cost curve
- From a social point of view, negative externality cause over production

External Costs



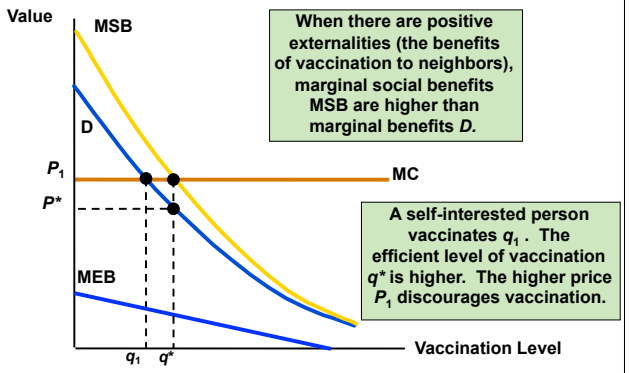
External Costs



Positive Externalities and Inefficiency

- Positive externalities result in too little production, as can be shown in an example of vaccination.
- Vaccination generates external benefits to the neighbors
  - Show by the Marginal External Benefit curve (MEB)
  - Marginal Social Benefit (MSB) curve adds MEB +D

External Benefits



Question

- Why do department stores often set some areas for rent to small shops and have their own food court?
- [Hint: Compare the Central Department store at Wang Burapa and at Ladprao.]

When do externalities create problems?

Requires two conditions

- Activities of on party reduces or increases welfare of the third parties
- The third parties do not received compensation for their welfare reduction or

The party that increase others welfare does not receive compensation

When do externalities create problems?

- Problems
  - Polluted wastes from plants
  - Massage parlors near schools
  - Liquor or cigarettes advertisement
  - Counterfeits of programs, songs, and movies
- No problems
  - Bee keepers and orchards
  - Department stores and food courts

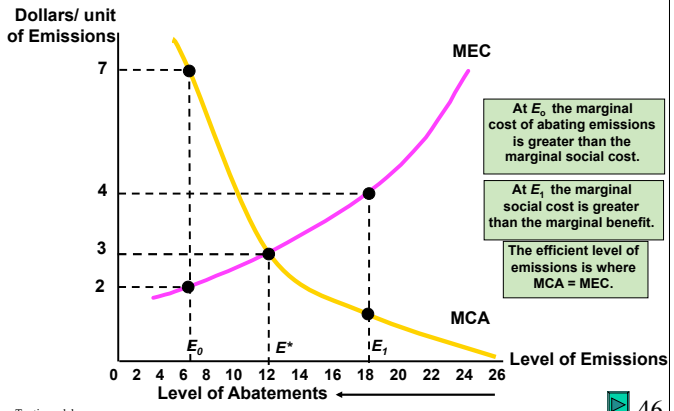
Ways of Correcting Market Failure due to externalities

- Assumption: The market failure is pollution
  - Output decision and emissions decision are independent
  - Firm has chosen its profit-maximizing output level
  - MEC is marginal external cost of emissions
    - Equivalent to MEC from before
    - Upward sloping because of substantially increasing harm as pollution increases

Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- MCA is marginal cost of abating emissions
  - Additional cost to firm of controlling pollution
  - Downward sloping because when emissions are high, little cost to controlling them
    - Large reductions require costly changes in production process

The Efficient Level of Emissions



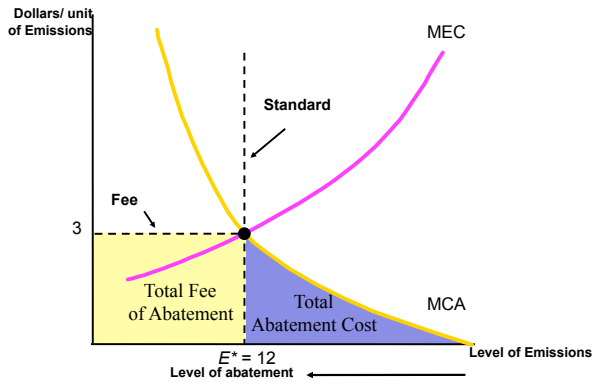
Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- If the firm does not consider abatement, their profit maximizing level is 26 units of emissions
  - Level where MCA is zero
- The socially efficient level of emissions is 12 where the MEC equals the MCA
- Firms can be encouraged to reduce emissions to the efficient level in three ways
  - Emissions standards
  - Emissions fees
  - Transferable emissions permits

Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- Options for Reducing Emissions to E*
  - Emission Standard
    - Set a legal limit on emissions at E* (12)
    - Enforced by monetary and criminal penalties
    - Increases the cost of production and the threshold price to enter the industry
  - Emissions Fee
    - Charge levied on each unit of emission

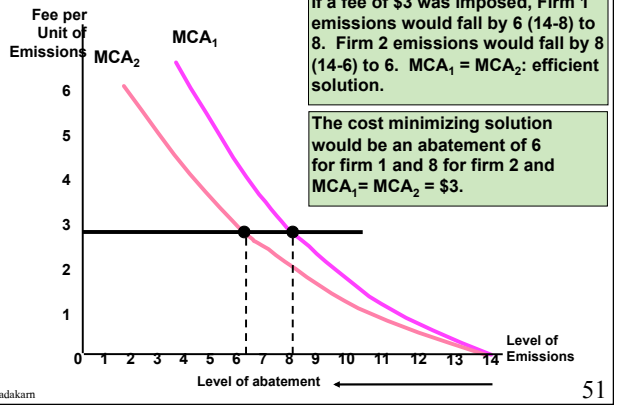
Standards and Fees



The Case for Fees

- Assume two firms
  - Total emissions is 28 units
  - Same marginal social cost curve
  - Different marginal abatement cost curves
    - MCA_1 and MCA_2
- Emissions fees are preferable to standards in this case
  - We want to reduce total emissions by 14 units
  - The cheapest way to do that is for firm 1 to reduce by 6 and firm 2 by 8 units

The Case for Fees



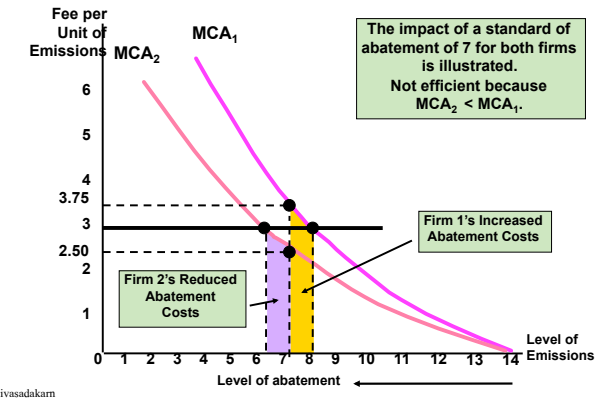
If a fee of $3 was imposed, Firm 1 emissions would fall by 6 (14-8) to 8. Firm 2 emissions would fall by 8 (14-6) to 6. $MCA_1 = MCA_2$: efficient solution.

The cost minimizing solution would be an abatement of 6 for firm 1 and 8 for firm 2 and $MCA_1 = MCA_2 = \$3$.

The Case for Fees

- What if the regulatory agency forces each firm to cut emissions by 7 units
  - MAC for firm 1 increases to $3.75
  - MAC for firm 2 decreases to $2.50
- This is not cost minimizing because one firm can reduce emissions at a lower cost than the other firm
- *Marginal cost of abatement must be equal between firms for reductions to occur at minimum cost*

The Case for Fees



Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- Advantages of Fees
  - When equal standards must be used, fees achieve the same emission abatement at lower cost.
  - Fees create an incentive to install equipment that would reduce emissions further.
  - Fees generate income to used to subsidize cleaner technology

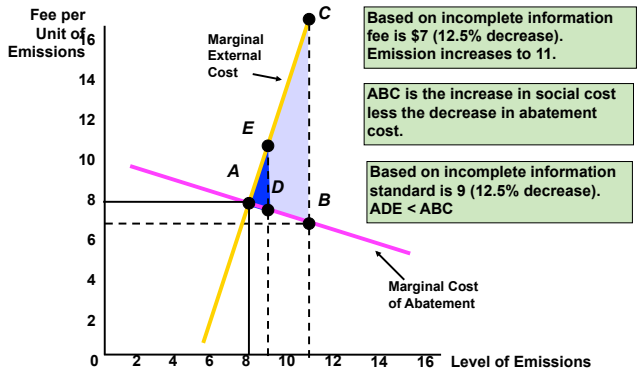
The Case for Standards

- Assume we have
  - Steep marginal external cost curve
  - Flat marginal cost of abatement
  - An emissions fee of $8 would be efficient but because of limited information, fee is set at $7
  - Firms emissions increase and with steep MEC, this will lead to significant additional social costs

The Case for Standards

- What if standard is used instead and has the same percentage mistake
  - Standard set at 9 instead of 8
  - Increase in social cost and decrease in abatement costs
  - Net increase in social costs is smaller than with fees

The Case for Standards



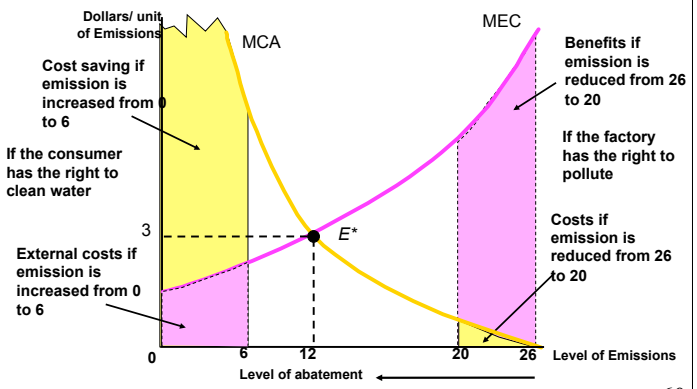
Summary: Fees vs. Standards

- Standards are preferred when MSC is steep and MCA is flat.
- Standards (incomplete information) yield more certainty on emission levels and less certainty on the cost of abatement.

Property rights and Coase Theorem

- Property Rights
  - Legal rules describing what people or firms may do with their property
- Bargaining and Economic Efficiency
  - Economic efficiency can be achieved without government intervention when the externality affects relatively few parties and when property rights are well specified.

Property rights and Coase Theorem



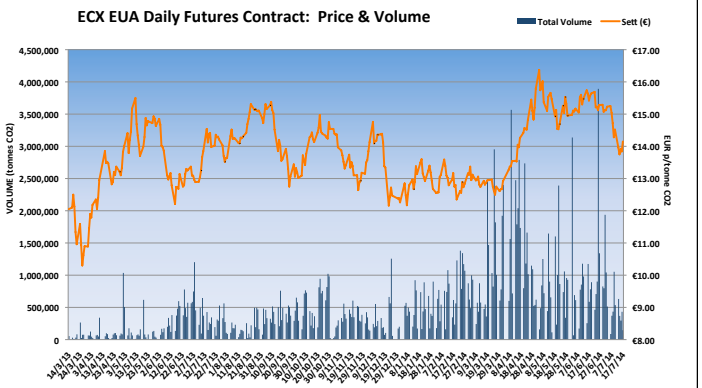
Property rights and Coase Theorem

- The party that has no property rights can compensate the other party and moves toward the efficient outcome
- Conclusion: Coase Theorem
  - When parties can bargain without cost and to their mutual advantage, the resulting outcome will be efficient, regardless of how the property rights are specified.
- But transaction cost can be prohibitively high when there are many parties.

Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- Transferable Emissions Permits
  - Permits help develop a competitive market for externalities.
    - Agency determines the level of emissions and number of permits
    - Permits are marketable
    - High cost firm will purchase permits from low cost firms
    - Need competitive market

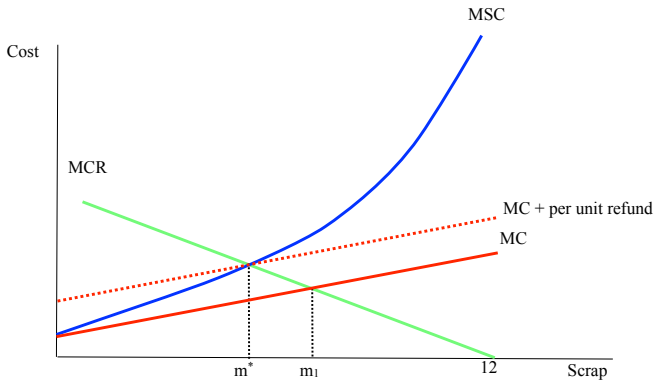
European Climate Exchange



Ways of Correcting Market Failure

- Recycling
  - Households can dispose of glass and other garbage at very low cost.
  - The low cost of disposal creates a divergence between the private and the social cost of disposal.
- Marginal private cost likely constant for fixed amount of garbage

The Efficient Amount of Recycling



Recycling

- Social cost of disposal includes the harm to environment from littering and injuries caused by litter
- Without market intervention, the level of scrap will be at m and $m_1 > m^*$
- With refundable deposit, MC increases and MC = MSC = MCR

Public Goods: Characteristics

- Nonrival
  - For any given level of production the marginal cost of providing it to an additional consumer is zero.
- Nonexclusive
  - People cannot be excluded from consuming the good, so that it is difficult or impossible to charge for their use
  - Example – use of lighthouse by a ship, national defense, radio wave, fireworks

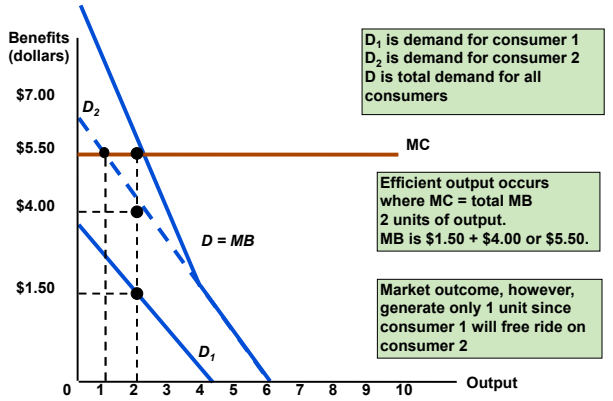
Public Goods

	Exclusive	Nonexclusive
Rival	Private goods: car, cloth	Common property: forest, fish stock
Nonrival	Semi-Public goods: cable TV, sport club	Public goods: national defense, radio wave

Efficiency and Pubic Goods

- Efficient level of private good is where marginal benefit equals marginal cost
- For a public good, the value of each person must be considered
  - Can add demand of all those who value good
- Must equate the vertical sum of these marginal benefits to the marginal cost of production

Efficient Public Good Provision



Public Goods and Market Failure

- Nonexclusive ->Free Riders
  - There is no way to provide some goods and services without benefiting everyone.
  - Households do not have the incentive to pay what the item is worth to them.
  - Free riders understate the value of a good or service so that they can enjoy its benefit without paying for it.
- Provision of public goods suffer from Prisoners' Dilemma.

Common Property Resources

- Characteristics
  - Everyone has free access
  - Likely to be over utilized
  - Examples
    - Air and water
    - Fish, forest and animal populations
    - Minerals

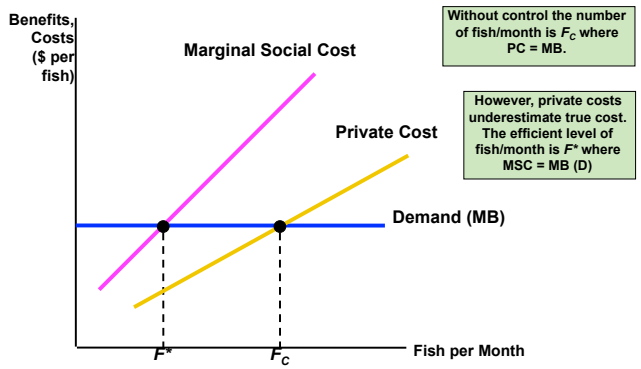
Common Property Resources

- Consider a lake where people fish
- Each fisherperson takes fish up to the point where the marginal benefit to them equals the marginal cost
- There is no reason that any one fisherperson take into account how their taking fish affects others experience

Common Property Resources

- Private cost underestimates the true cost to society
  - More fishing reduces the stock of fish
  - Less is available to others and too low of a stock will completely deplete the fish
  - Too many fish are caught

Common Property Resources



Common Property Resources

- Solution
  - Private ownership
  - Owner will set fee for use of resource equal to the marginal cost of depleting the stock
  - Fishermen will no longer find it profitable to catch more than the efficient amount of fish
  - It is often the case that private ownership is not possible, the government steps in