

Partial Identification of Structural Models

Francesca Molinari

Presented by Qihong Ruan

Nov 26, 2019

3.1 Discrete Choice in Single Agent Random Utility Model

- ▶ \mathcal{I} : a population of decision makers
- ▶ $\mathcal{Y} = \{c_1, \dots, c_{|\mathcal{Y}|}\}$: a set of finite potential alternatives (feasible set)
- ▶ c^* : is chosen from

$$\mathbb{P}(c \in^* C) = \mathbb{P}(\pi_i(c) \geq \pi_i(b) \forall b \in C)$$

for all $c \in C$, $C \subset \mathcal{Y}$, $i \in \mathcal{I}$. π_i is a random utility function.

- ▶ Example:

$$\pi_{ij} = \beta x_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

i indexes decision makers, j indexes alternatives, x_{ij} is a vector of observed variables relating to alternative j for person i .

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_{ij} &= \mathbb{P}(y_{ij} = 1) = \mathbb{P}(\pi_{ij} \geq \pi_{ik} \forall k \neq j) \\ &= \mathbb{P}(\epsilon_{ik} - \epsilon_{ij} \leq \beta x_{ij} - \beta x_{ik} \forall k \neq j) \end{aligned}$$

3.1.1 Semiparametric Binary Choice Models with Interval Valued Covariates

Identification Problem 3.1

- ▶ Observe (y, x_L, x_U, w) in $\{0, 1\} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^d$, $d < \infty$
- ▶ $x \in \mathbb{R}$ is unobservable
- ▶ $y = 1(w\theta + \delta x + \epsilon > 0)$, ϵ is continuous conditional on (w, x, x_L, x_U)
- ▶ Suppose $\delta > 0$, normalize $\delta = 1$
- ▶ R is the joint distribution function of $(y, x, x_L, x_U, w, \epsilon)$
 - ▶ $R(x_L \leq x \leq x_U) = 1$
 - ▶ $R(\epsilon | w, x, x_L, x_U) = R(\epsilon | w, x)$
 - ▶ $R(\epsilon \leq 0 | w, x) = \alpha$

Problem:

Observe (y, x_L, x_U, w) , x is unobservable, $y = 1(w\theta + x + \epsilon > 0)$. What can we learn about θ ?

Observe (y, x_L, x_U, w) , x is unobservable, $y = 1(w\theta + x + \epsilon > 0)$. What can we learn about θ ?

$$y = 1 \Rightarrow \epsilon > -w\theta - x_U$$

$$y = 0 \Rightarrow \epsilon \leq -w\theta - x_L$$

$$-w\theta - x_U \leq -w\theta - x_L$$

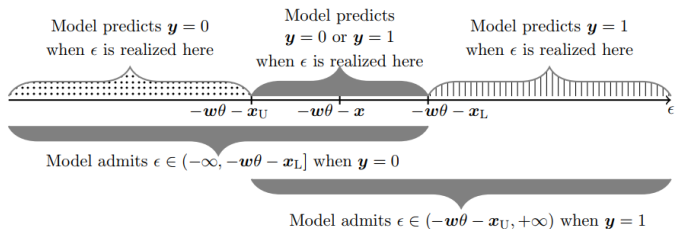


Figure 3.1: Predicted value of y as a function of ϵ , and admissible values of ϵ for each realization of y , in Identification Problem 3.1, conditional on (w, x_L, x_U) .

Note: when x is observed, the prediction is unique.

Why does this set-valued prediction hinder point estimation?

$$\begin{aligned}P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U) &= \int R(y = 1|w, x, x_L, x_U)dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \\ &= \int R(\epsilon > -w\theta - x|w, x)dR(x|w, x_L, x_U)\end{aligned}$$

The first equation uses the Law of Iterated Expectation; the second equation uses the assumption that $R(\epsilon|w, x, x_L, x_U) = R(\epsilon|w, x)$.

- ▶ Since $R(x|w, x_L, x_U)$ is unspecified, we can find multiple values for θ satisfying the assumptions in Identification Problem 3.1 and yielding the observed value of $P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U)$
- ▶ However, not all $\theta \in \Theta$ can be paired with some R
- ▶ Thus, θ is partially identified

THEOREM SIR-3.1: The sharp identification region for θ

Under the Assumptions of Identification Problem Problem 3.1, the sharp identification region for θ is

$$\mathcal{H}_P[\theta] = \{\vartheta \in \Theta : P((w, x_L, x_U) : \{0 \leq w\vartheta + x_L \cap P(y = 1 | w, x_L, x_U) \leq 1 - \alpha\} \cup \{w\vartheta + x_U \leq 0 \cap P(y = 1 | w, x_L, x_U) \geq 1 - \alpha\}) = 0\}. \quad (3.1)$$

Proof. The set of possible values for ϵ given (y, w, x_L, x_U) is

$$\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \equiv \mathcal{E}_\theta(y, w, x_L, x_U) = \begin{cases} (-\infty, -w\theta - x_L] & \text{if } y = 0, \\ [-w\theta - x_U, +\infty) & \text{if } y = 1. \end{cases}$$

If the model is correctly specified,

$$(\epsilon, w, x_L, x_U) \in (\mathcal{E}_\theta(y), w, x_L, x_U)$$

- ▶ Molchanov and Molinari (2018) show that $(\epsilon, w, x_L, x_U) \in (\mathcal{E}_\theta(y), w, x_L, x_U)$ occurs if and only if

$$R(\epsilon \in C | w, x_L, x_U) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset C | w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall C \in \mathcal{F},$$

where \mathcal{F} denotes the collection of closed subsets of \mathbb{R} .

- ▶ Using the Law of Iterated Expectation,

$$\int R(\epsilon \in C | w, x, x_L, x_U) dR(x | w, x_L, x_U) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset C | w, x_L, x_U)$$

- ▶ Using $R(\epsilon | w, x, x_L, x_U) = R(\epsilon | w, x)$,

$$\int R(\epsilon \in C | w, x) dR(x | w, x_L, x_U) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset C | w, x_L, x_U)$$

- ▶ Recall the assumption $R(\epsilon \leq 0 | w, x) = \alpha$. Let $C = (-\infty, 0]$, then

$$\alpha \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset (-\infty, 0] | w, x_L, x_U)$$

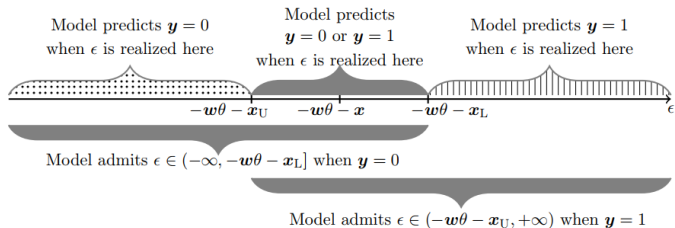


Figure 3.1: Predicted value of y as a function of ϵ , and admissible values of ϵ for each realization of y , in Identification Problem 3.1, conditional on (w, x_L, x_U) .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \alpha &\geq \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset (-\infty, 0] | w, x_L, x_U) \\
 &= \mathbb{P}(y = 0 \cap -w\theta - x_L \leq 0 | w, x_L, x_U) \\
 &= \mathbb{P}(y = 0 \cap w\theta + x_L \geq 0 | w, x_L, x_U)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\alpha \geq \mathbb{P}(y = 0 | w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall (w, x_L, x_U) \text{ such that } w\theta + x_L \geq 0$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 1 - \alpha &\leq 1 - \mathbb{P}(y = 0 | w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall (w, x_L, x_U) \text{ such that } w\theta + x_L \geq 0 \\
 &= \mathbb{P}(y = 1 | w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall (w, x_L, x_U) \text{ such that } w\theta + x_L \geq 0
 \end{aligned}$$

Use $\int R(\epsilon \in C|w, x) dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset C|w, x_L, x_U)$ and $R(\epsilon \leq 0|w, x) = \alpha$ again, let $C = [0, +\infty)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - \alpha &\geq P(\mathcal{E}_\theta(y) \subset [0, +\infty)|w, x_L, x_U) \\ &= P(y = 1 \cap -w\theta - x_U \geq 0|w, x_L, x_U) \\ &= P(y = 1 \cap w\theta + x_U \leq 0|w, x_L, x_U) \end{aligned}$$

$$1 - \alpha \geq P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall (w, x_L, x_U) \text{ such that } w\theta + x_U \leq 0. \quad (3.2)$$

$$1 - \alpha \leq P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U) \quad \forall (w, x_L, x_U) \text{ such that } w\theta + x_L \geq 0. \quad (3.3)$$

Any given $\vartheta \in \Theta$, $\vartheta \neq \theta$, violates (3.2) or (3.3) if and only if

$$\begin{aligned} P((w, x_L, x_U) : \{0 \leq w\vartheta + x_L \cap P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U) < 1 - \alpha\} \\ \cup \{w\vartheta + x_U \leq 0 \cap P(y = 1|w, x_L, x_U) > 1 - \alpha\}) > 0 \end{aligned}$$

Notice that when $w\vartheta + x_U > 0$ and $w\vartheta + x_L < 0$, i.e., $-x_U < w\vartheta < -x_L$, ϑ does not violate (3.2) or (3.3), thus ϑ is not distinguishable from θ .

Identification Problem 3.2: Parametric Regression with Interval Covariate Data

- ▶ Observe $(y, x_L, x_U, w) \sim P$ in $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^d$, $d < \infty$
- ▶ $x \in \mathbb{R}$ is unobservable
- ▶ R is the joint distribution of (y, x, x_L, x_U) . $R(x_L \leq x \leq x_U) = 1$;
 $\mathbb{E}_R(y|w, x, x_L, x_U) = \mathbb{E}_Q(y|w, x)$
- ▶ $\mathbb{E}_Q(y|w, x) = f(w, x; \theta)$; f is known and weakly increasing in x

Problem: What can we learn about θ ?

The sharp identification region for θ is

$$\mathcal{H}_P[\theta] = \{\vartheta \in \Theta : f(w, x_L; \vartheta) \leq \mathbb{E}_P(y|w, x_L, x_U) \leq f(w, x_U; \vartheta)\} \quad (3.8)$$

► *Proof. (Following the proof of Theorem SIR-2.4)*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_P(y|w, x_L, x_U) &= \int \mathbb{E}_R(y|w, x, x_L, x_U) dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \\ &= \int \mathbb{E}_Q(y|w, x) dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \\ &= \int f(w, x; \theta) dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \end{aligned}$$

Here we use the Law of Iterated Expectation,

$$\mathbb{E}_R(y|w, x, x_L, x_U) = \mathbb{E}_Q(y|w, x), \text{ and } \mathbb{E}_Q(y|w, x) = f(w, x; \theta).$$

- Since f is weakly increasing in x , and $x_L < x < x_U$,
 $f(w, x_L; \theta) \leq \int f(w, x; \theta) dR(x|w, x_L, x_U) \leq f(w, x_U; \theta)$
- When $f(w, x_L; \vartheta) \leq \mathbb{E}_P(y|w, x_L, x_U) \leq f(w, x_U; \vartheta)$, ϑ is observationally equivalent to θ

3.1.2 Endogenous Explanatory Variables

Identification Problem 3.3 (Discrete Choice with Endogenous Explanatory Variables)

- ▶ Observe random variables $(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) \sim P$ in $\mathcal{Y} \times \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Z}$
- ▶ $v \equiv (\epsilon_{c_1}, \dots, \epsilon_{c_{|\mathcal{Y}|}})$, $v \perp\!\!\!\perp \mathbf{z}$, $v \sim Q$, $Q \in \mathcal{T}$, \mathcal{T} is a specified family of distributions
- ▶ The conditional distribution $S(v|\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z})$ is continuous on (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z})
- ▶ The utility function $\pi_i(c) = g(\mathbf{x}_c; \delta) + \epsilon_c$, g is known, $\delta \in \Delta \subset \mathbb{R}^m$, $\forall c \in \mathcal{Y}$
- ▶ Normalize $g(\mathbf{x}_{c_{|\mathcal{Y}|}}; \delta) = 0$
- ▶ Given $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}, v)$, suppose \mathbf{y} is the utility maximizing choice in \mathcal{Y} , what can we learn about (δ, Q) ?

- For any $c \in \mathcal{Y}$ and $x \in \mathcal{X}$, c is chosen if and only if v realizes in the set

$$\mathcal{E}_\delta(c, x) = \{e \in \mathcal{V} : g(x_c; \delta) + e_c \geq g(x_d; \delta) + e_d \forall d \in \mathcal{Y}\}$$

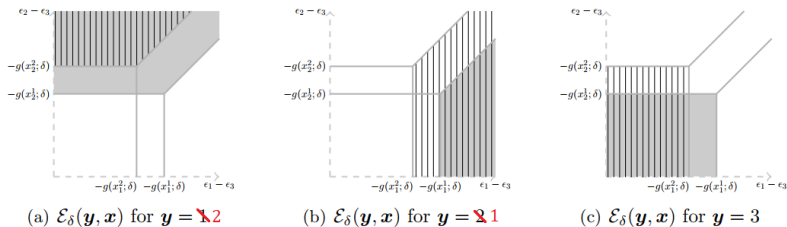
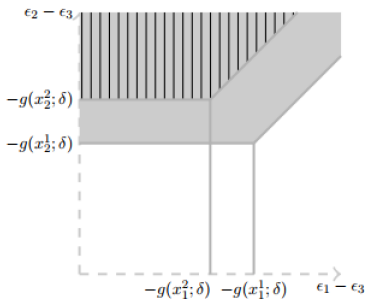


Figure 3.2: The set \mathcal{E}_δ in equation (3.9) and the corresponding admissible values for (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) as a function of $(\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_3, \epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3)$ under the simplifying assumption that $\mathcal{X} = \{x^1, x^2\}$ and $\mathcal{Y} = \{1, 2, 3\}$. The admissible values for (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) are $\{(c, x^1)\}$ in the gray area, and $\{(c, x^2)\}$ in the area with vertical lines. Because the two areas overlap, the model has set-valued predictions for (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) .

Figure 3.2 plots the set $\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x})$ when $\mathcal{Y} = \{1, 2, 3\}$ and $\mathcal{X} = \{x^1, x^2\}$, as a function of $(\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_3, \epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3)$



(a) $\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x})$ for $\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{x}^2$

$$\mathbf{y} = 2 \iff g(x_2; \delta) + \epsilon_2 \geq g(x_1; \delta) + \epsilon_1, \quad g(x_2; \delta) + \epsilon_2 \geq \epsilon_3$$

$$\iff \epsilon_1 - \epsilon_2 = (\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_3) - (\epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3) \leq g(x_2; \delta) - g(x_1; \delta), \quad \epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3 \geq -g(x_2; \delta)$$

$$\iff \epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3 \geq -g(x_2; \delta) + g(x_1; \delta) + (\epsilon_1 - \epsilon_3), \quad \epsilon_2 - \epsilon_3 \geq -g(x_2; \delta)$$

- ▶ When \mathbf{x} changes from x^1 to x^2 , the region changes. In this case, $g(x_1^2; \delta) > g(x_1^1; \delta)$, $g(x_2^2; \delta) < g(x_2^1; \delta)$, and $g(x_3^1; \delta) = g(x_3^2; \delta) = 0$

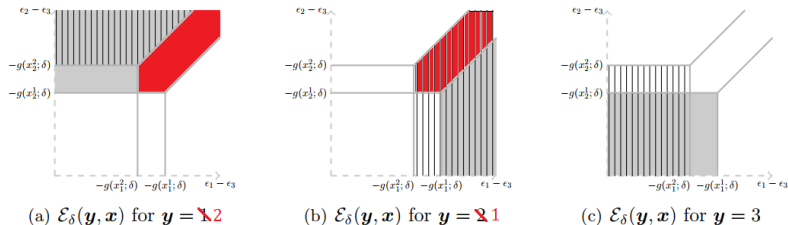


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- ▶ When v is realized at the red area, we have two possible (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) :

$$(x^1, 2), (x^2, 1)$$

- ▶ Recall that in Problem 3.1, the model predicts $y = 0$ or $y = 1$ for some ϵ , and hence partial identification results

Compared with Identification Problem 3.1

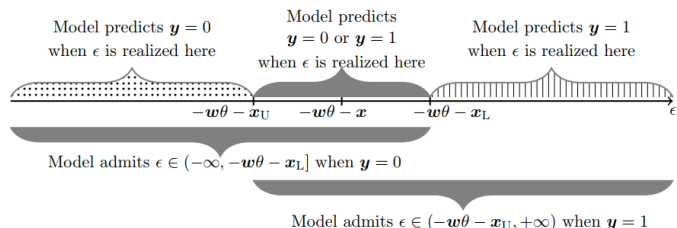


Figure 3.1: Predicted value of y as a function of ϵ , and admissible values of ϵ for each realization of y , in Identification Problem 3.1, conditional on (w, x_L, x_U) .

- ▶ Problem 3.1: Model predicts multiple values of y for some ϵ
- ▶ Problem 3.3: Model predicts multiple values of (x, y) for some ϵ
- ▶ The set-valued prediction results in partial identification of parameters of interest

The Sharp Identification Region for (δ, Q)

$$\begin{aligned} P(\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F | \mathbf{z}) &= \sum_{c \in \mathcal{Y}} \mathbf{1}(\mathcal{E}_\delta(c, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F) \cdot P(\mathbf{y} = c | \mathbf{z}) \\ &= \int_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \sum_{c \in \mathcal{Y}} \mathbf{1}(\mathcal{E}_\delta(c, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F) \cdot P(\mathbf{y} = c | \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) dP(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z}) \end{aligned}$$

For given $F \in \mathcal{F}$ and $\delta \in \Delta^m$. \mathcal{F} is the collection of closed subsets of \mathcal{Y} , and \mathcal{Y} is the sample space of $v \equiv (\epsilon_{c_1}, \dots, \epsilon_{c_{|\mathcal{Y}|}})$.

- ▶ This probability can be learned from the observed data $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z})$
- ▶ Under the assumptions of Identification Problem Problem 3.3, the sharp identification region for (δ, Q) is

$$\mathcal{H}_P[\delta, Q] = \{\delta \in \Delta, Q \in \mathcal{T} : Q(F) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F | \mathbf{z}), \forall F \in \mathcal{F}\} \quad (3.13)$$

Theorem SIR-3.3 (Discrete Choice with Endogenous Explanatory Variables)

Under the assumptions of Identification Problem Problem 3.3, the sharp identification region for (δ, Q) is

$$\mathcal{H}_P[\delta, Q] = \{\delta \in \Delta, Q \in \mathcal{T} : Q(F) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F | \mathbf{z}), \forall F \in \mathcal{F}\} \quad (3.13)$$

Proof.

Notation: $\mathcal{E}_\delta \equiv \mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x})$, $(\mathcal{E}_\delta, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) = \{(\mathbf{e}, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) : \mathbf{e} \in \mathcal{E}_\delta\}$.

- ▶ $(v, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) \in (\mathcal{E}_\delta, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z})$ for the data generating value of (δ, Q) as long as the model is correctly specified
- ▶ By Theorem A.1 and Theorem 2.33 in Molchanov and Molinari (2018), this occurs if and only if

$$S(F | \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F | \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}), \forall F \in \mathcal{F}$$

- ▶ Integrate \mathbf{x} out at both sides, and use the fact that Q does not depend on \mathbf{z} , we have $Q(F) \geq P(\mathcal{E}_\delta(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) \subseteq F | \mathbf{z})$

Why does partial identification result?

$$M(c|\mathbf{x} \in R_z, \mathbf{z} = z; \delta) = \int_{\mathbf{x} \in R_z} S(\mathcal{E}_\delta(c, \mathbf{x})|\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z} = z) dP(\mathbf{x}|z), \forall R_z \subseteq \mathcal{X} \quad (3.10)$$

$$Q(F) = \int_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} S(F|\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z} = z) dP(\mathbf{x}|z), \forall F \subseteq \mathcal{Y} \quad (3.11)$$

- ▶ The joint distribution of (\mathbf{x}, v) conditional on z is left completely unrestricted (except for (3.11), we can find multiple (δ, Q, S) satisfying the maintained assumptions and such that $M(c|\mathbf{x} \in R_z, \mathbf{z} = z; \delta) = P(c|\mathbf{x} \in R_z, \mathbf{z} = z) \forall c \in \mathcal{Y}$ and $R_z \subset \mathcal{X}$)
- ▶ McFadden's 1973 conditional logit model yields point identification of δ when $\mathbf{x} \perp\!\!\!\perp v$
- ▶ When \mathbf{x} is endogenous, $S(v|\mathbf{x}, z)$ may change across realizations of \mathbf{x}
- ▶ For given realization of v , the model admits sets of values for endogenous variables (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{x}) , partial identification results

Insights: Models with Endogenous Variables as Incomplete Models

- ▶ Chesher, Rosen, and Smolinski (2013) show that one can frame models with endogenous explanatory variables as incomplete models
- ▶ Incompleteness here results from the fact that the model does not specify how the endogenous variables \mathbf{x} are determined
- ▶ One can then think of these as models with set-valued predictions for the endogenous variables
- ▶ Random set theory can again be leveraged to characterize sharp identification regions

Insights: Point and Partial Identification

- ▶ Manski (1985): When (y, w, x) is observed,

$$w\theta + x > 0 \Leftrightarrow P(y = 1|w, x) > 1 - \alpha$$

using $y \equiv 1(w\theta + x + \epsilon > 0)$ and $R(\epsilon \leq 0|w, x) \equiv \alpha$.

- ▶ Hence, θ is identified relative to $\vartheta \in \Theta$ if

$$P((w, x) : \{w\theta + x \leq 0 < w\vartheta + x\} \cup \{w\vartheta + x \leq 0 < w\theta + x\}) > 0. \quad (3.4)$$

- ▶ Manski and Tamer (2002): When x is unobserved, but $x \in [x_L, x_U]$, the collection of values that cannot be distinguished from θ is

$$\{\vartheta \in \Theta : P((w, x_L, x_U) : \{w\theta + x_U \leq 0 < w\vartheta + x_L\} \cup \{w\vartheta + x_U \leq 0 < w\theta + x_L\}) = 0\}. \quad (3.5)$$

- ▶ The reasoning of point identification can be extended to partial identification

Introduce the Instrument Variable

- ▶ Magnac and Maurin (2008) assume that an instrumental variable z is available
 - ▶ ϵ is independent of x conditional on (w, z) , and $\text{Corr}(z, \epsilon) = 0$
 - ▶ x is continuous with support $[v_1, v_k]$
 - ▶ $\mathbb{P}[x \in [v_i, v_{i+1}) | w, z] > 0 \forall i = 1, \dots, k - 1$
- ▶ If x were observed, follow Lewbel (2000), let

$$\tilde{y} = \frac{y - \mathbf{1}_{x > 0}}{f_x(x | w, z)}$$

then

$$\theta = \mathbb{E}_P(zw^T)^{-1} \mathbb{E}_P(z\tilde{y}) \quad (3.6)$$

- ▶ If x are interval valued, let x^* takes value $i \in 1, \dots, k - 1$ if $x \in [v_i, v_{i+1})$, $\delta(x^*) = v_{x^*+1} - v_{x^*}$, $y^* = \frac{\delta(x^*)}{\mathbb{P}(x^*=i | w, z)} y - v_k$, then the sharp identification region for θ is

$$\mathcal{H}_P[\theta] = \mathbb{E}_P(zw^T)^{-1} \mathbb{E}_P(zy^* + zU) \quad (3.7)$$