

A Rational Expectations Theory of Kinks in Financial Reporting

Ilan Guttman; Ohad Kadan; Eugene Kandel

+ Author & Article Information

The Accounting Review (2006) 81 (4): 811-848.

<https://doi.org/10.2308/accr.2006.81.4.811>

Share ▾

Tools ▾

Cite ▾

We present a rational model of earnings management. An informed manager, whose compensation is linked to the stock price, trades off the benefit of boosting the stock price by inflating the reported earnings against the costs of such manipulation. The investors rationally interpret his actions and adjust the price accordingly. When the distribution of true earnings and the compensation scheme are smooth, the conventional equilibrium in this signaling framework is also smooth and fully revealing. In this paper, we show that in the same “smooth” environment there exist equilibria in which kinks and discontinuities emerge endogenously in the distribution of reported earnings. The manager optimally chooses a partially pooling strategy, introducing endogenous noise into his report. The resulting vagueness enables the manager to reduce the average manipulation costs. The equilibrium has perfect revelation of earnings in the right and left tails of the distribution, while for intermediate earnings realizations, we get one or more pools that manifest themselves as discontinuities in the distribution of reported earnings. We study the properties of these partially pooling equilibria and suggest applications to financial reporting.

This content is only available via PDF. Note: Supplemental materials and Teaching Notes are not available for Early Access articles. Links within the PDF will be activated once the article has been compiled and published in an issue.

American Accounting Association

You do not currently have access to this content.

Sign in

Don't already have an account? [Register](#)

[Skip to Main Content](#)
Member Login

Log in

Pay-Per-View Access
\$25.00

AAA Members: Please log in for free access to content. Note, Teaching Notes are a full member benefit and are not available to student members.

 [Buy This Article](#)



[View Metrics](#)

Citing Articles Via

Web Of Science (77)

Google Scholar

CrossRef (120)

Email Alerts

Article Activity Alert

Publish Ahead of Print Alert

New Issue Alert

[Information for Authors](#)

[Authorship Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Data Integrity Policy](#)

[Citing Corrected Articles Policy](#)

[Minimizing Overlapping Decision Rights Policy](#)

[Prior Publication Policy](#)



[Cookie Policy](#) [Accessibility](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Get Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

© Copyright 1998 - 2025 American Accounting Association. All rights reserved.