

The Optimal Macro Tariff

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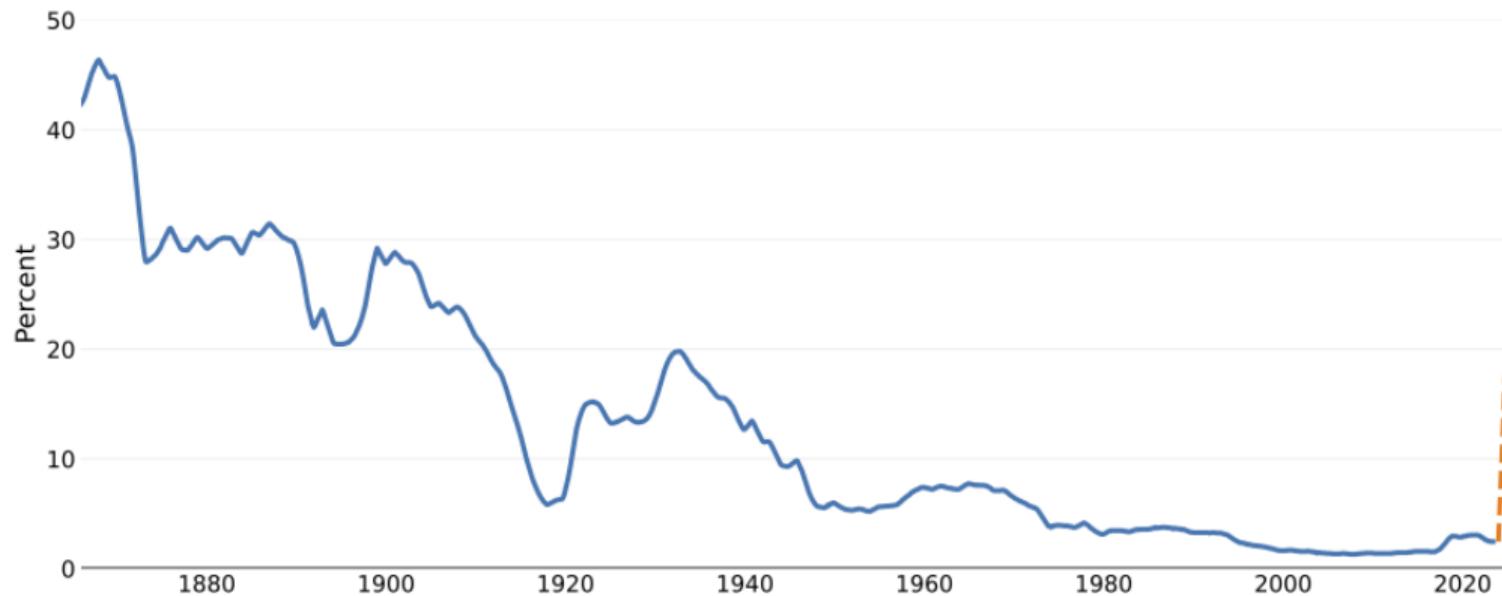
LSE

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Motivation

US effective tariff rate

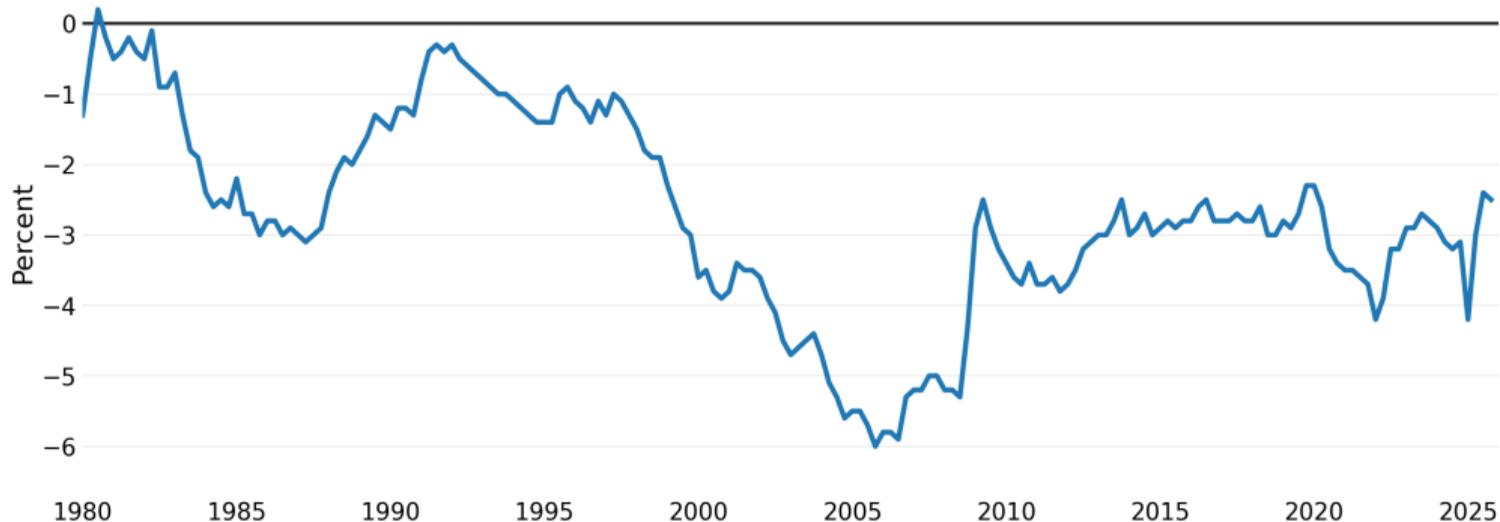


Source: FT chart

Motivation

US net exports of goods and services

Share of GDP, quarterly



Source: BEA via FRED series A019RE1Q156NBEA.

Motivation

1. Can tariffs **close permanent trade deficit**?
2. Do larger trade deficits imply higher **optimal tariff**?
3. Do tariffs undermine U.S. **“exorbitant privilege”**?

Country Budget Constraint: Taxonomy of Models

Long-run **trade deficit** is determined by the country's **financial position**:

$$\underbrace{-\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \bar{R}^{-t} NX_t}_{\text{permanent trade deficit}} = \underbrace{\bar{R} B_{-1}}_{\textcircled{0} \text{ exogenous initial NFA}} + \underbrace{(\mathcal{R}_0 - \bar{R}) B_{-1}}_{\textcircled{1} \text{ on-impact valuation effect}} + \underbrace{\sum_{t=1}^{\infty} \bar{R}^{-t} (\mathcal{R}_t - \bar{R}) B_{t-1}}_{\textcircled{2} \text{ future excess returns}}$$

where B_{-1} are initial net foreign assets, \bar{R} is risk-free rate, and \mathcal{R}_t are portfolio returns

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2. Tariffs generically affect exchange rates and generate **valuation effects** $\textcircled{1}$
 - tariffs can close imbalances, optimal tariff depends on external asset positions
3. “Convenience yields” / “exorbitant privilege” \Rightarrow **systematic excess returns** $\textcircled{2}$
 - tariffs result in retrenchment and erode exorbitant privilege

Related Literature

- ▶ **Classics:** Lerner (1936), Baldwin (1948), Johnson (1950, 1953), Gros (1987), Jones (1967), Razin and Svensson (1983), Diamond and Mirrlees (1971), Dixit and Norman (1980), Helpman and Krugman (1989), Bagwell and Staiger (1999), Ossa (2016), Caliendo and Parro (2022)
- ▶ **Recent:** Auray, Devereux, Eyquem (2024, 2025), Ignatenko et al. (2025), Alessandria et al. (2025), Rodríguez-Clare, Ulate, Vasquez (2025), Kalemli-Ozcan, Soylu, Yildirim (2025), Ostry, Lloyd, Corsetti (2025), Bai, Lu, Wang (2025)
- ▶ **Imbalances:** Lorenzoni (2019), Aguiar, Amador, Fitzgerald (2025), Reyes-Heroles (2016), Cuñat, Zymek (2024), Pujolas, Rossbach (2024), Costinot, Werning (2025), Davila et al. (2025), Caliendo, Kortum, Parro (2025), Hassan et al. (2025), Jiang et al. (2025)
- ▶ **Tariffs and MP:** Bergin and Corsetti (2023), Bianchi and Coulibaly (2024), Monacelli (2025), Auclert, Rognlie, Straub (2025), Werning, Lorenzoni, Guerrieri (2025)
- ▶ **Other:** Gourinchas and Rey (2007), Farhi, Gopinath, Itskhoki (2014), Itskhoki and Mukhin (2022), Lloyd and Marin (2023), Aguiar, Itskhoki, Mukhin (2024)

BALANCED TRADE

Setup

- ▶ **Two countries:** Home (US) and Foreign (RoW*)

- ▶ **Two goods:**

$$Y = C_H + C_H^* \quad \text{and} \quad Y^* = C_F + C_F^*$$

- ▶ **CES preferences** with elasticities $\theta, \eta > 1$ and home bias

$$u(C_H, C_F) = \left[(1 - \gamma)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_H^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} + \gamma^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_F^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} \right]^{\frac{\theta}{\theta-1}}$$
$$u^*(C_H^*, C_F^*) = \left[\gamma^{*\frac{1}{\eta}} C_H^{*\frac{\eta-1}{\eta}} + (1 - \gamma^*)^{\frac{1}{\eta}} C_F^{*\frac{\eta-1}{\eta}} \right]^{\frac{\eta}{\eta-1}}$$

Decentralized Equilibrium under Financial Autarky

Given tariffs $\{\tau^I, \tau^E\}$, allocation $\{C_H, C_F, C_H^*, C_F^*\}$ and prices $\{P_H, P_F, P_H^*, P_F^*\}$ satisfy

- ▶ LOP deviations due to tariffs:

▶ prices

$$P_F = \tau^I P_F^* \quad \text{and} \quad P_H^* = \tau^E P_H$$

- ▶ Household optimization:

$$\frac{u_F}{u_H} = \frac{P_F}{P_H} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{u_F^*}{u_H^*} = \frac{P_F^*}{P_H^*}$$

- ▶ Country's budget constraint (balanced trade):

$$P_H^* C_H^* = P_F^* C_F$$

- ▶ Market clearing:

$$Y = C_H + C_H^* \quad \text{and} \quad Y^* = C_F + C_F^*$$

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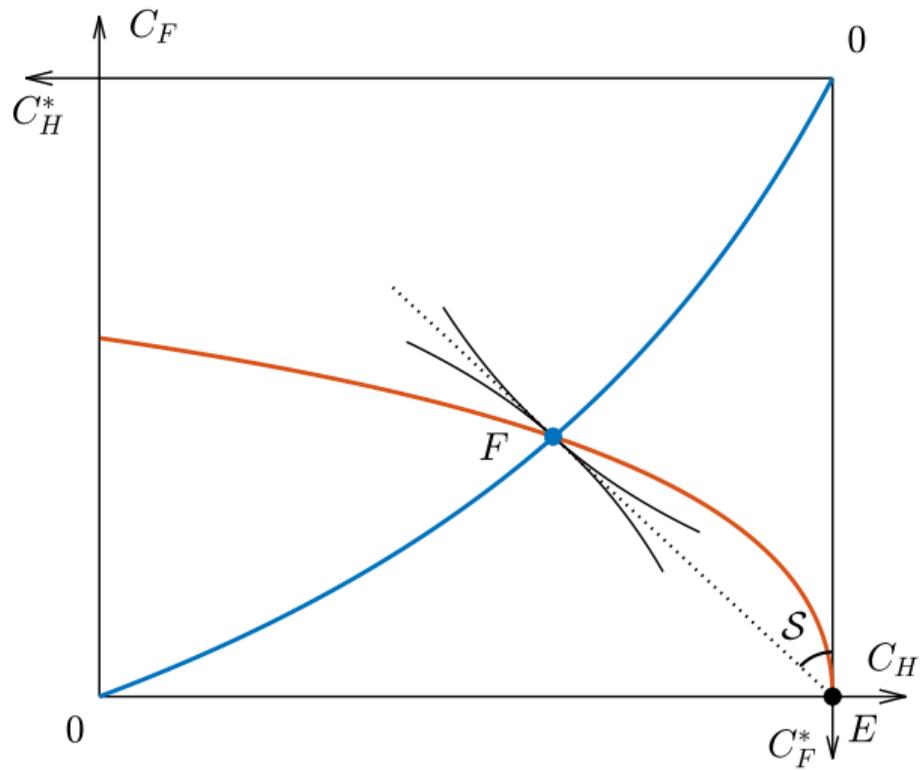
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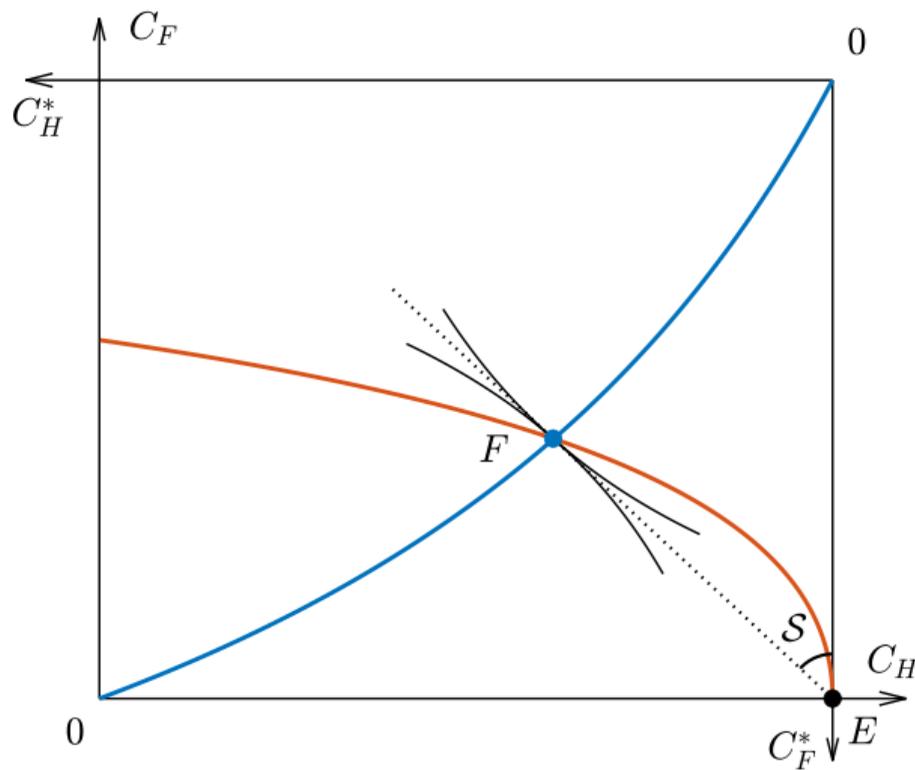
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Balanced Trade



Balanced Trade



► **Lerner symmetry:** only overall tariff $\tau \equiv \tau^I \tau^E$ matters for allocation

— same **terms-of-trade** $S \equiv \frac{P_F^*}{P_H^*}$, different (producer price) **real exchange rate** $Q \equiv \frac{P_F^*}{P_H}$

GLOBAL IMBALANCES

Two Tariffs

- ▶ **International portfolios:** $NFA = \text{FC assets} - \text{LC liabilities} = P_F^* B_0^* - P_H B_0$
- ▶ **Result:** cross-border positions in nominal/real bonds, equities and FDI can be mapped into NFA with B_0, B_0^* invariant to tariffs and all valuation effects summarized by the (producer-price) real exchange rate Q

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 1. Lerner symmetry between τ^I and τ^E does not hold
 2. Any balanced-trade equilibrium, including trade autarky, can be implemented
 3. Optimal policy engineers max transfer (VA) with unbounded τ^I, τ^E, Q , but finite S

Can Import Tariff close Trade Imbalance?

- ▶ Constraints when export tax is not available $\tau^E = 1$:

$$\left(C_H^*/\mathcal{S} - C_F\right) + \left(B_0^* - B_0/\mathcal{Q}\right) = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{Q} = \mathcal{S}$$

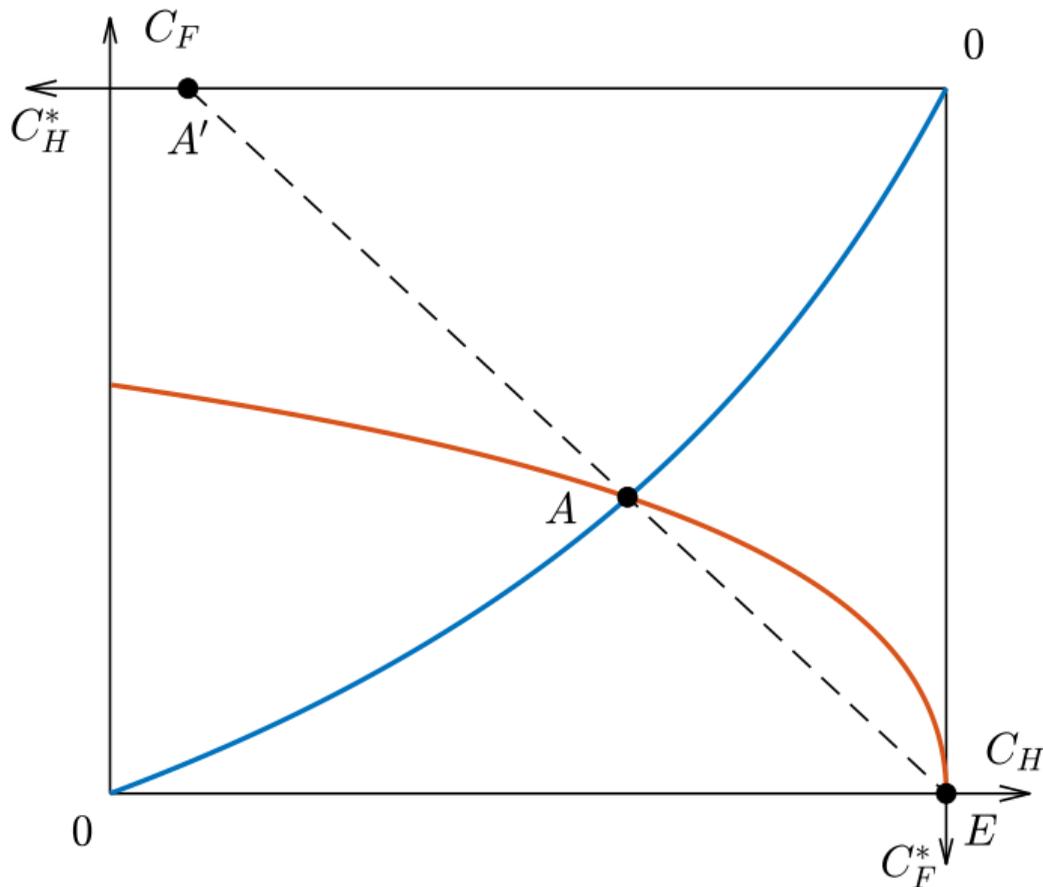
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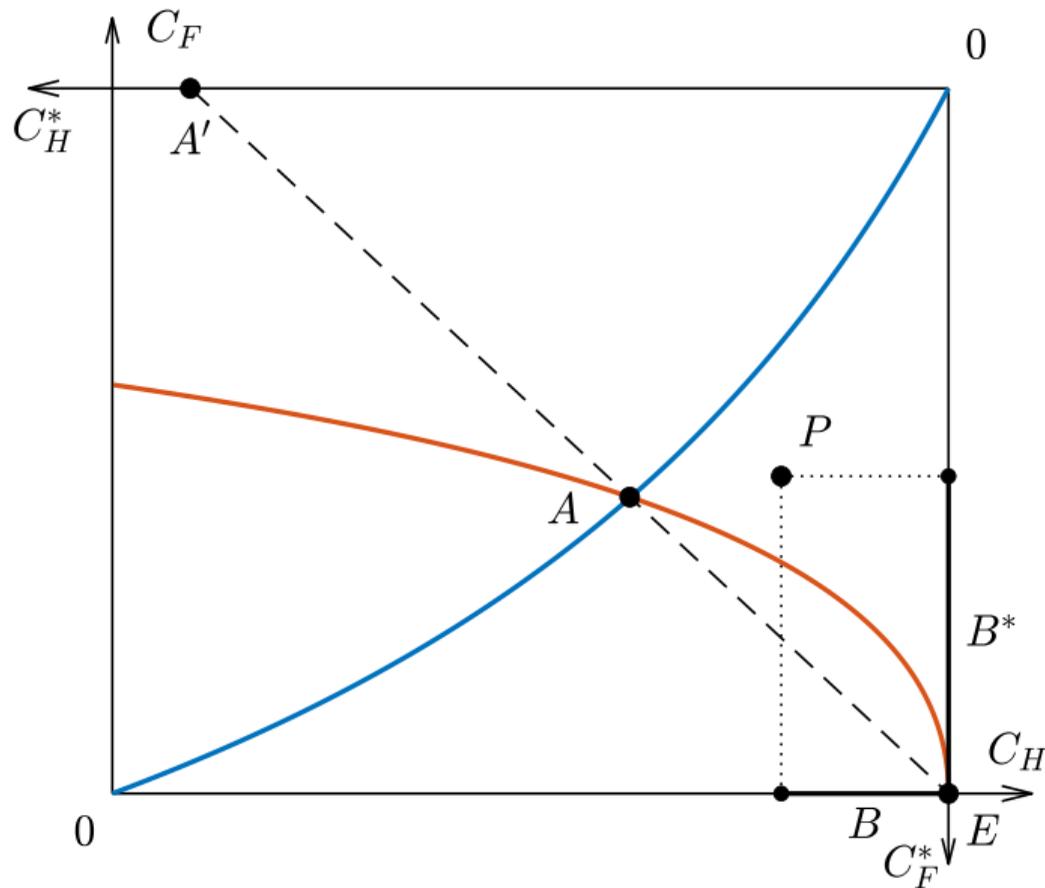
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▶ $NX > 0$ figures

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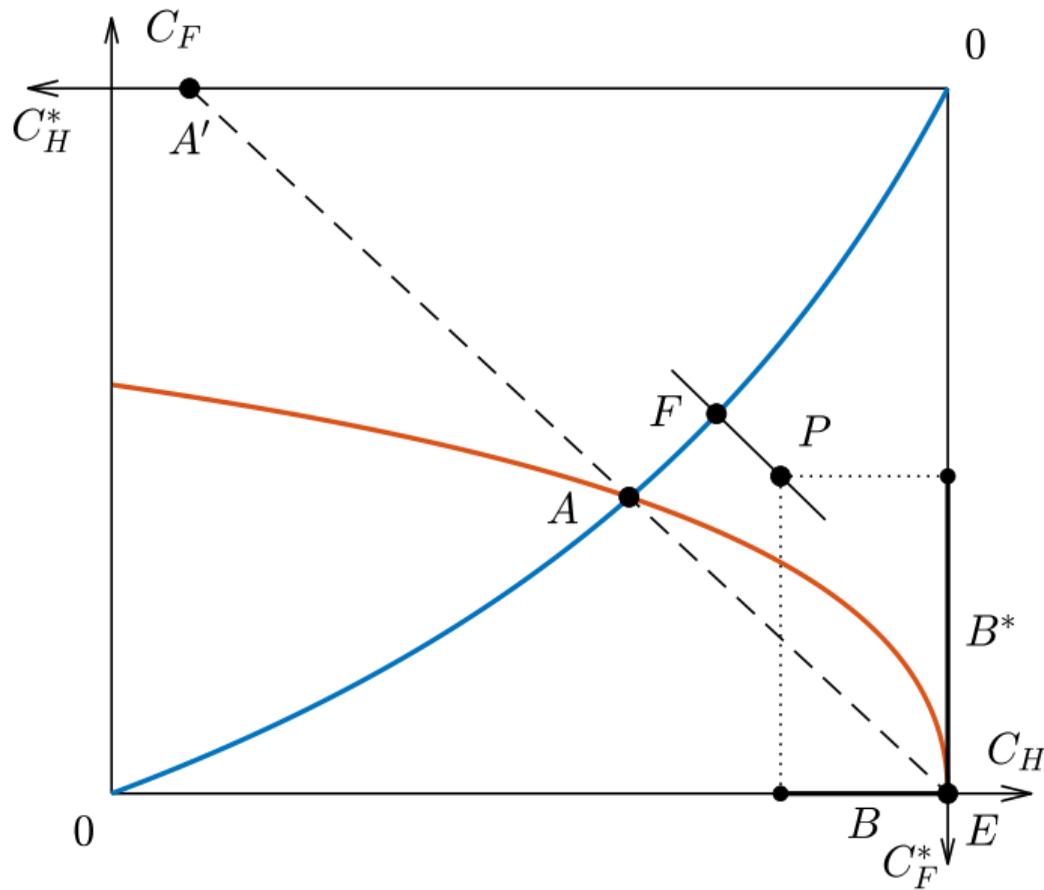
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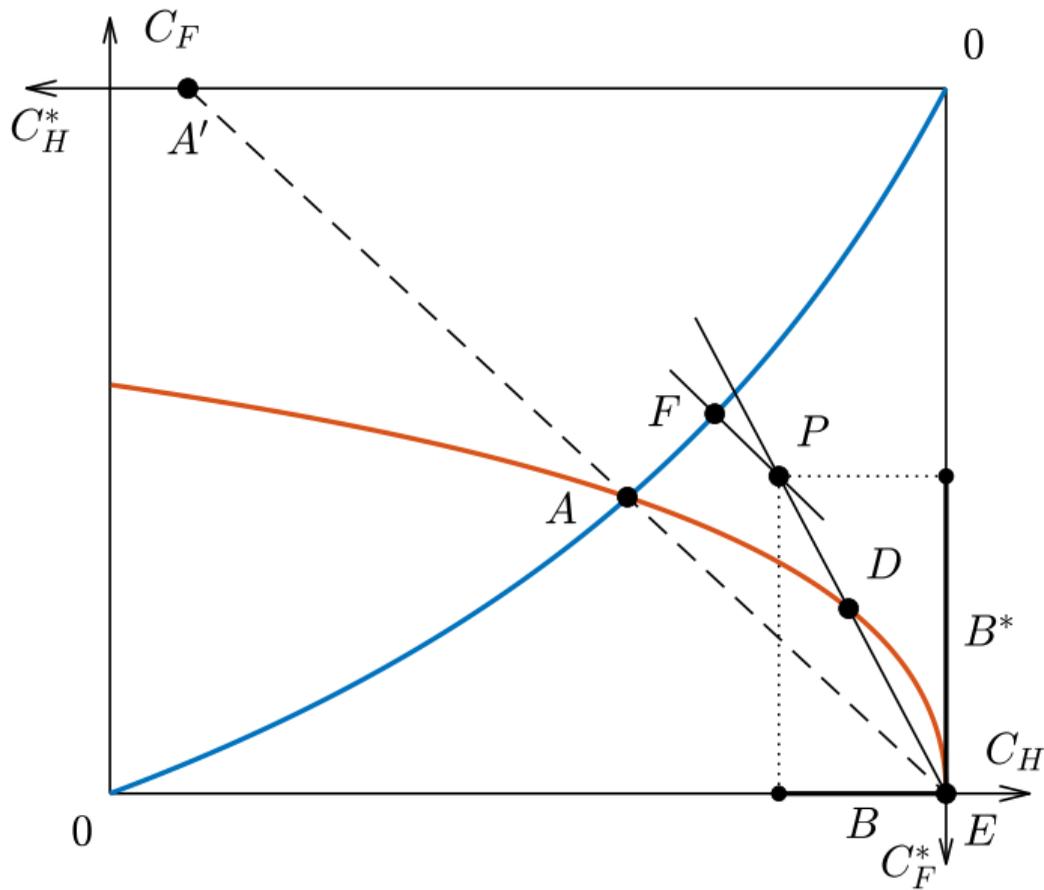
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— $\theta = \eta = 4$, $\frac{NX}{GDP} = -2\%$, $\frac{B_0}{GDP} = 4\% \cdot 175\% = 7\% \Rightarrow \frac{B_0^*}{GDP} = 9\%$

— $\tau^I = 64\%$, $Q \downarrow$ by 22%, $C \downarrow$ by 1.6%, $T \uparrow$ by 2.8% of GDP, tradable sector \downarrow

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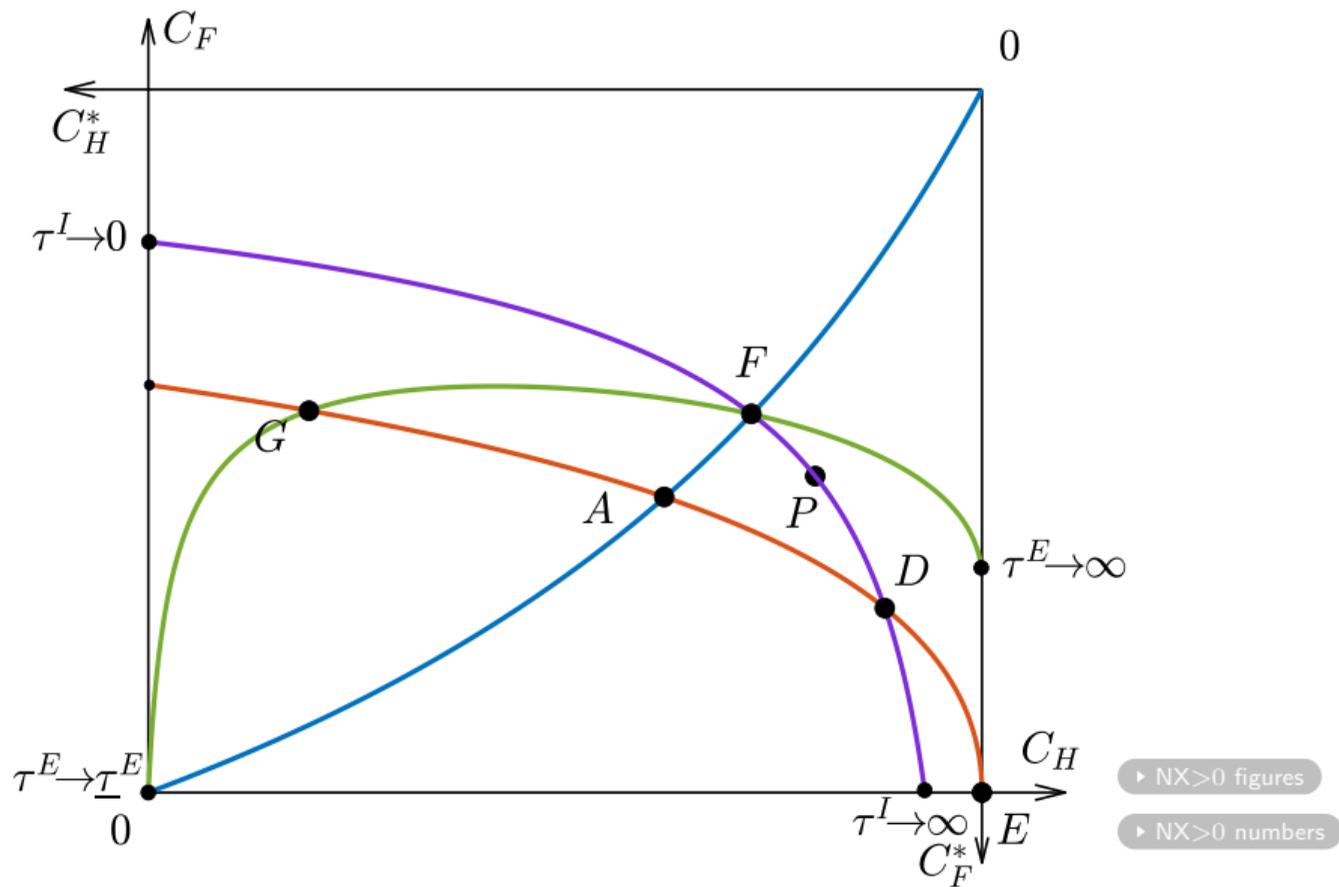
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3. same can be achieved with **export subsidy** $\tau^E < 1$, unlike Lerner symmetry

- though the resulting ToT and allocation are different

Can Import Tariff close Trade Imbalance?



Is Optimal Tariff Higher under Trade Deficit?

- ▶ Budget constraint:

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$$\tau^I = 1 + \frac{1}{\eta \left(1 + \frac{\mathcal{B}}{EX - \mathcal{B}}\right) - 1} \cdot \frac{1}{\Lambda^*}, \quad \text{where } EX = P_H^* C_H^*, \quad \mathcal{B} \equiv P_H^* B_0$$

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 - unrelated to trade flows, requires counterfactual $B_0 < 0$
 - in general, $NX < 0$ neither necessary nor sufficient for higher τ

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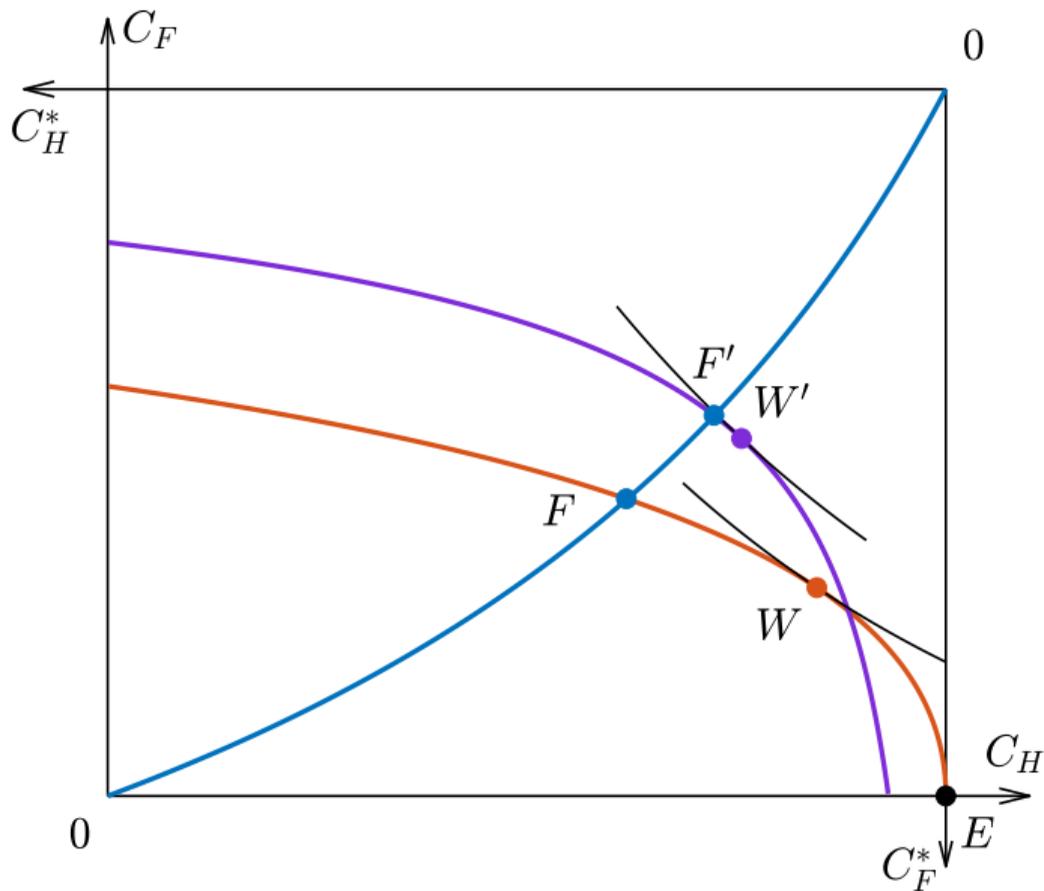
- ▶ US: $B_0 \gg 0$ reduces τ^I from 35% to 9%, welfare gains from 1% to 0.1%

- ToT manipulation vs. valuation effect ($\tau \uparrow \Rightarrow Q \downarrow \Rightarrow NFA \downarrow$)

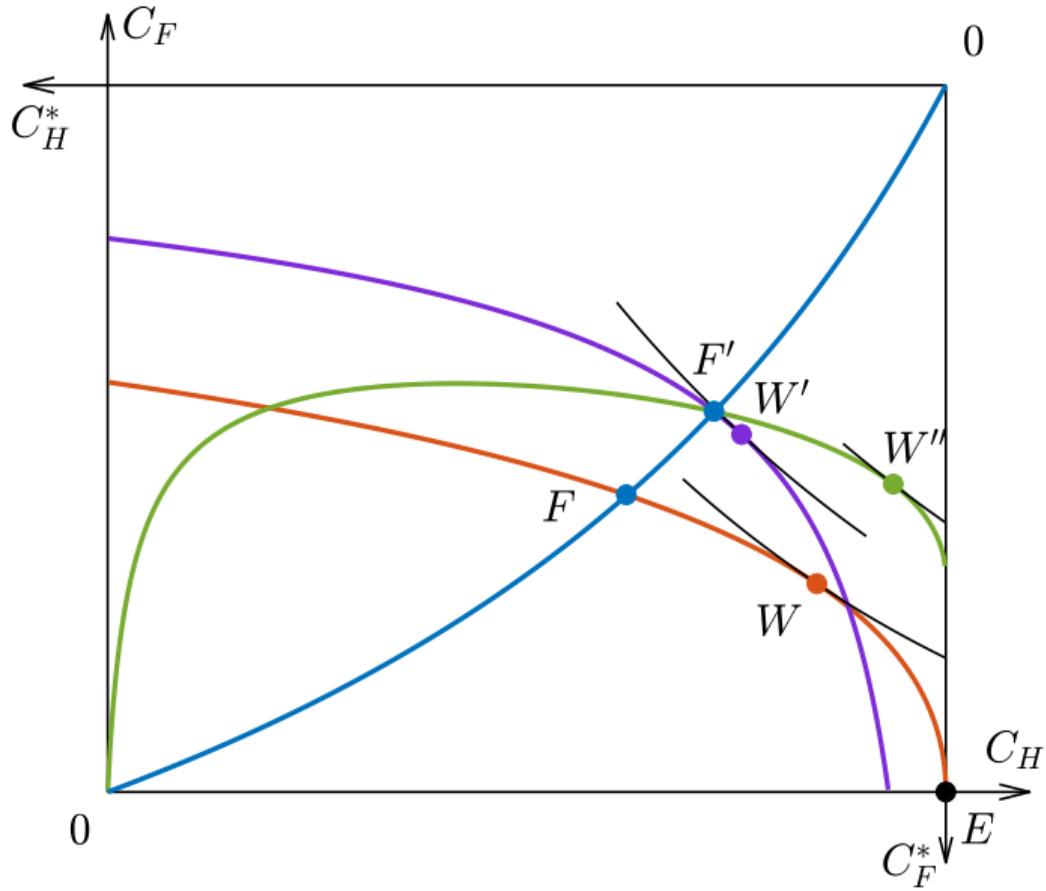
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▶ figures

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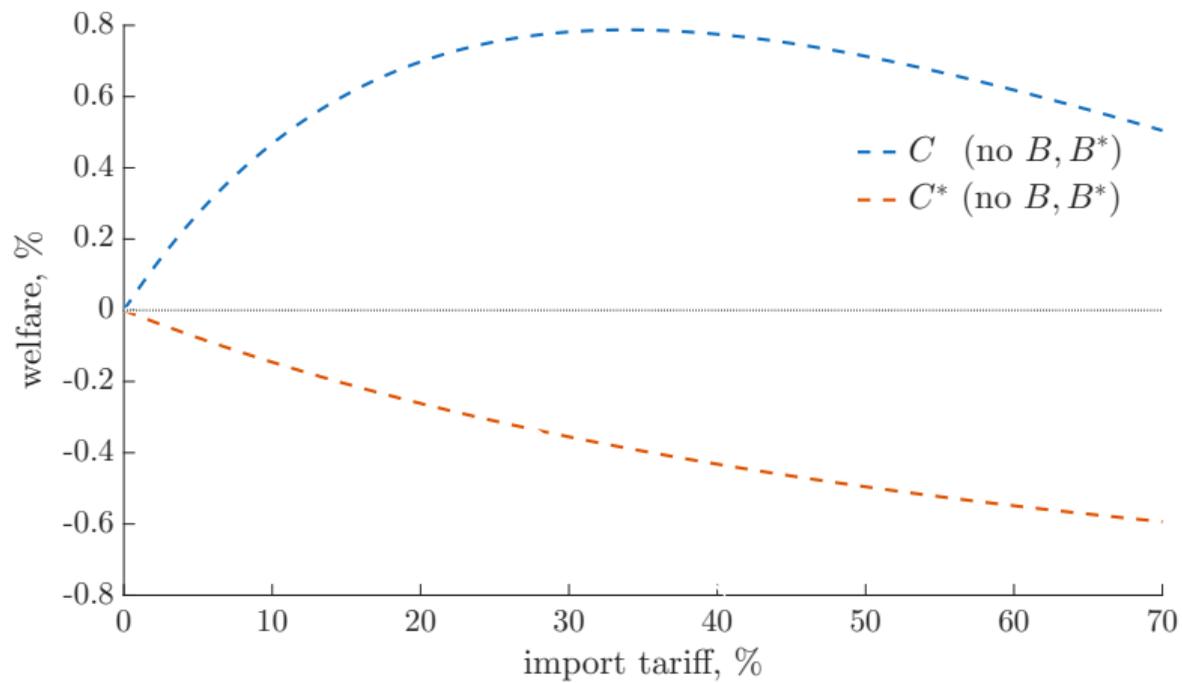
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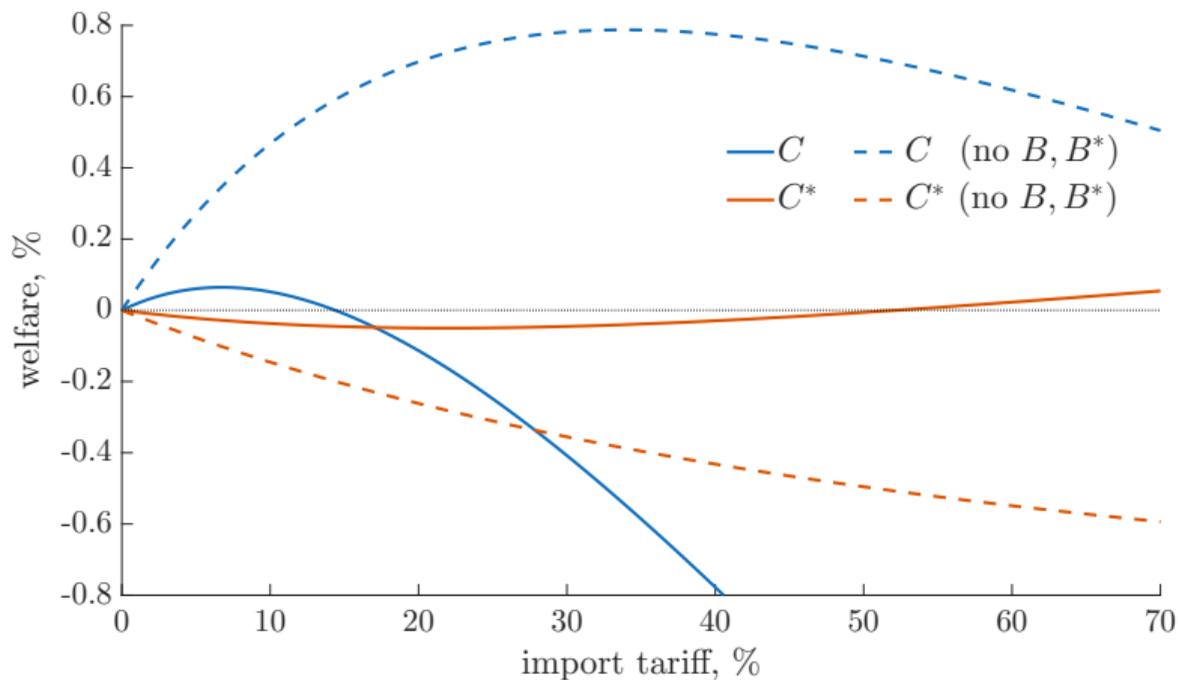
- ▶ Optimal export tariff:

$$\tau^E = 1 + \frac{1}{\eta - 1} \cdot \frac{1}{\Lambda^*} + \frac{\eta}{\eta - 1} \frac{1}{\theta} \cdot \frac{1}{\Lambda} \cdot \frac{\mathcal{B}}{IM} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{Q} = \tau^E \mathcal{S}$$

Retaliation and Trade War



Retaliation and Trade War



- ▶ High U.S. import tariff benefits the RoW via valuation effects
 - ⇒ no retaliation might be needed

Retaliation and Trade War

- **Nash equilibrium tariffs** have the same structure as unilateral ones:

$$\tau^I = 1 + \frac{1}{\eta \left(1 + \frac{\mathcal{B}}{EX - \mathcal{B}} \right) - 1} \cdot \frac{1}{\Lambda^*} \quad \text{and} \quad \tau^{I*} = 1 + \frac{1}{\theta \left(1 + \frac{\mathcal{B}^*}{IM - \mathcal{B}^*} \right) - 1} \cdot \frac{1}{\Lambda}$$

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1. tariffs are **strategic substitutes** with $\tau^I < \tau^W$, $\tau^{I*} < \tau^{W*}$

► figure

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3. $B^* > B$ make trade war more costly for the RoW despite its larger size

	$B_0 = B_0^* = 0$				$B_0^* > B_0 > 0$			
	τ^I	τ^{I*}	C	C^*	τ^I	τ^{I*}	C	C^*
Unilateral	35.3	0.0	0.95	-0.46	8.8	0.00	0.10	-0.05
Trade war	34.9	40.5	-1.61	-0.29	6.7	6.8	-0.08	-0.02

(all in percent)

▶ details

ENDOGENOUS PORTFOLIOS

Dynamic Model with Portfolio Choice and Convenience Yield

- ▶ Main assumptions:
 - stochastic Y_t, Y_t^* , internationally-traded equities
 - separable preferences, $\eta = \theta = 1/\sigma$
 - convenience yield on US assets, $\chi \in (\beta, 1]$
 - focus on constant import tariff τ

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- ▶ Preferences:

$$\max_{\{C_{Ht}, C_{Ft}, b_{t+1}, b_{t+1}^*\}} \mathbb{E}_0 \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t \left[(1 - \gamma)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_{Ht}^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} + \gamma^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_{Ft}^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} \right]$$

- ▶ Budget constraint:

$$\begin{aligned} P_{Ht}C_{Ht} + P_{Ft}C_{Ft} + \chi \mathcal{V}_t(1 - b_{t+1}) + \mathcal{V}_t^* b_{t+1}^* \\ = (\mathcal{V}_t + P_{Ht}Y_t)(1 - b_t) + (\mathcal{V}_t^* + P_{Ft}^*Y_t^*)b_t^* + T_t \end{aligned}$$

Mapping into Static Model

- **Definition:** The permanent component of quantities $X \in \{Y, C, C_H, C_F\}$, prices P_J for $J \in \{H, F\}$, trade values $M \in \{EX, IM\}$ and foreign counterparts are given by:

$$X \equiv \left((1-\beta) \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t X_t^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} \right)^{\frac{\theta}{\theta-1}}, \quad P_J \equiv \left((1-\beta) \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t P_{Jt}^{1-\theta} \right)^{\frac{1}{1-\theta}}, \quad M \equiv (1-\beta) \mathbb{E} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t M_t$$

Mapping into Static Model

- ▶ **Result** [Dynamic \rightarrow Static]: The permanent components of allocations and prices satisfy the static equilibrium system and the country budget constraint generalized as:

$$(C_H^*/\mathcal{S} - C_F) + (B_0^* - B_0/\mathcal{Q}) + \Omega \cdot (C_H^*/\mathcal{S} - B_0/\mathcal{Q}) = 0,$$

where $B_0 = b_0 Y$, $B_0^* = b_0^* Y^*$, $\Omega \equiv \frac{\mathbb{E} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} (\beta/\chi)^t Y_t^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}}}{\mathbb{E} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t Y_t^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}}} - 1 \geq 0$ is exorbitant privilege

Mapping into Static Model

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- ▶ **Result** [Static → Dynamic]: Denote with $\hat{X} = \frac{\Delta X}{X}$ change in variable X (allocation, price or trade value) in response to unexpected permanent τ . Then for all $t \geq 0$:

$$\hat{X}_t = \hat{X} \quad \text{and} \quad \Delta NX_t = \Delta EX_t - \Delta IM_t = EX_t \cdot \widehat{EX} - IM_t \cdot \widehat{IM}$$

Tariff Equilibrium

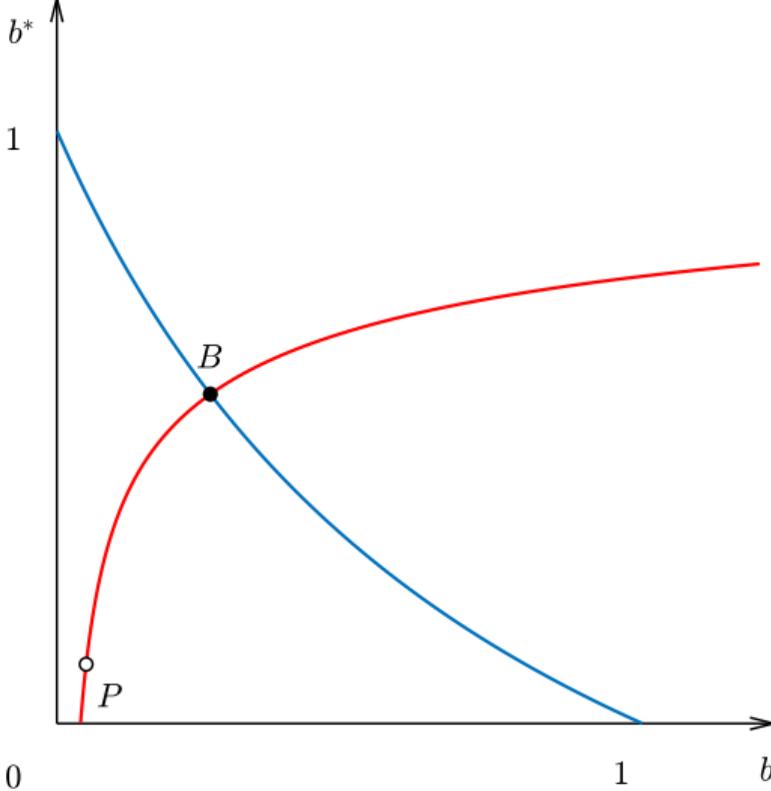
- **Proposition:** Equilibrium portfolio and consumption shares (b, b^*) are constant

$$C_{Ht} = (1 - b)Y_t, \quad C_{Ht}^* = bY_t, \quad C_{Ft} = b^*Y_t^*, \quad C_{Ft}^* = (1 - b^*)Y_t^*$$

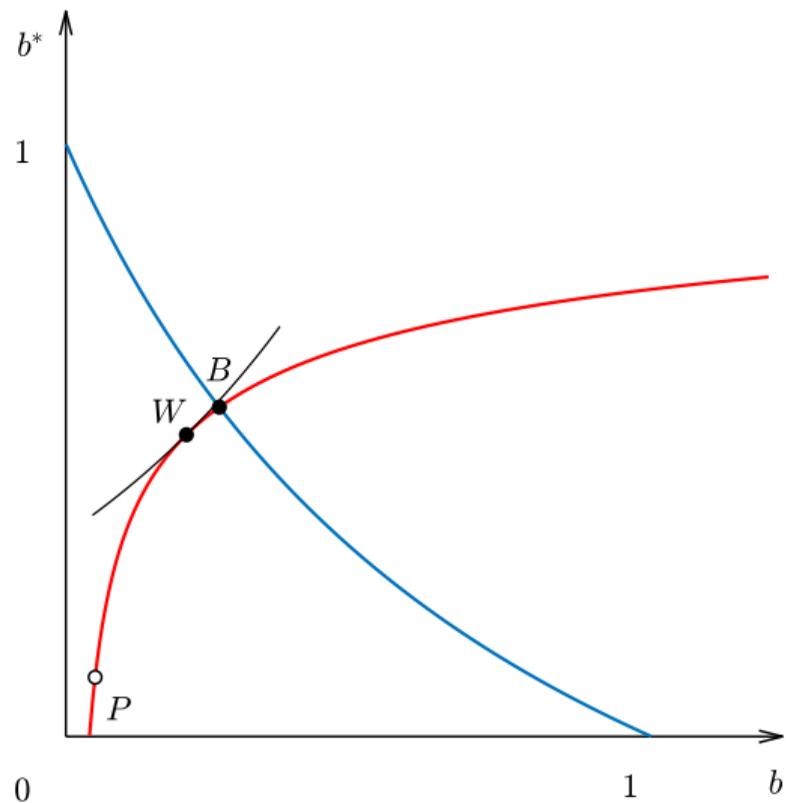
and determined by **contract curve** and **ex-ante budget constraint**:

$$\frac{b^*}{1 - b^*} = \frac{\tau^{-\theta} \gamma \gamma^*}{(1 - \gamma)(1 - \gamma^*)} \frac{1 - b}{b}, \quad b^* - b_0^* = \left(\frac{\gamma^*(1 - b^*)}{(1 - \gamma^*)b} \right)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} \frac{\mathbb{E} \sum \left(\frac{\beta}{\chi} \right)^t Y_t^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}}}{\mathbb{E} \sum \beta^t Y_t^{*\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}}} (b - b_0)$$

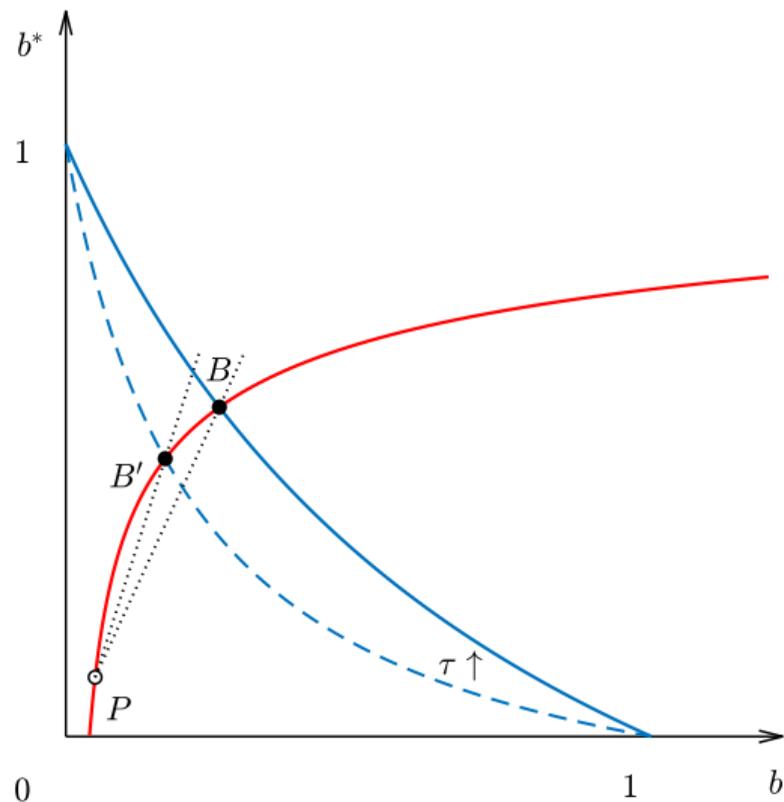
Tariff Equilibrium



Tariff Equilibrium



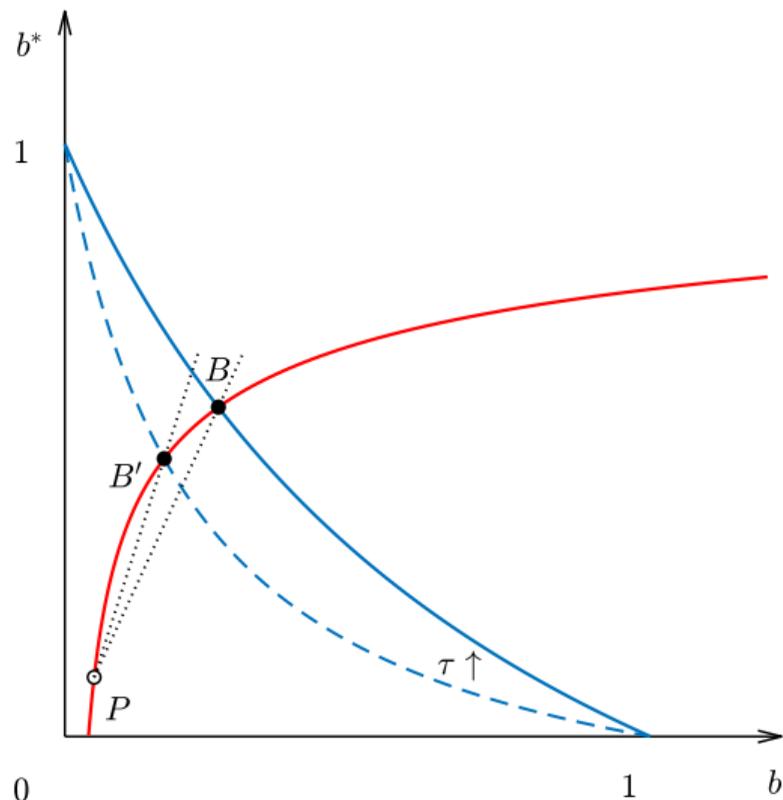
Tariff Equilibrium



1. b as a hedge against trade war for the RoW

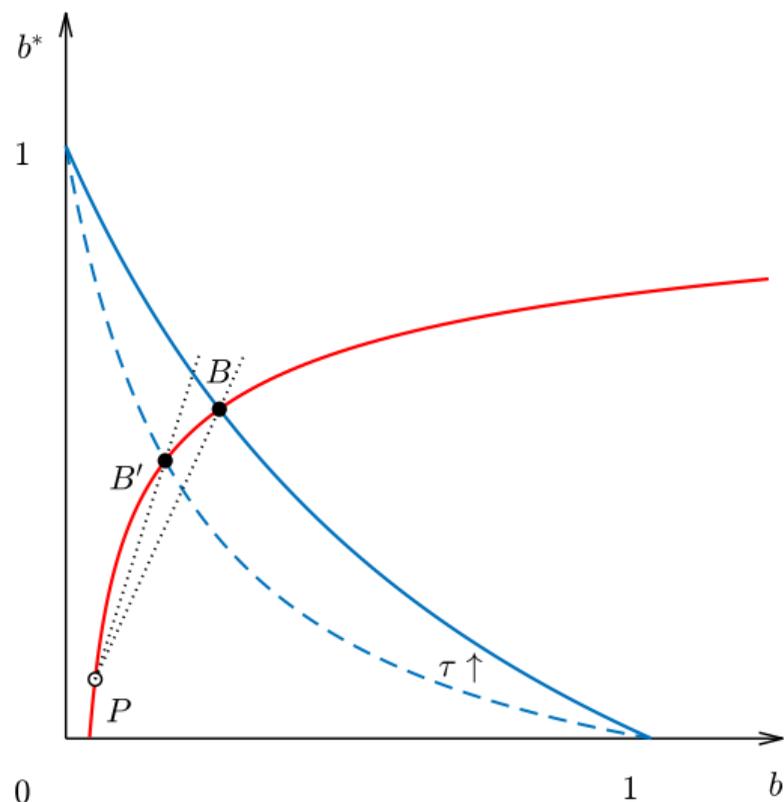
— both ex ante/strategically and ex post

Tariff Equilibrium



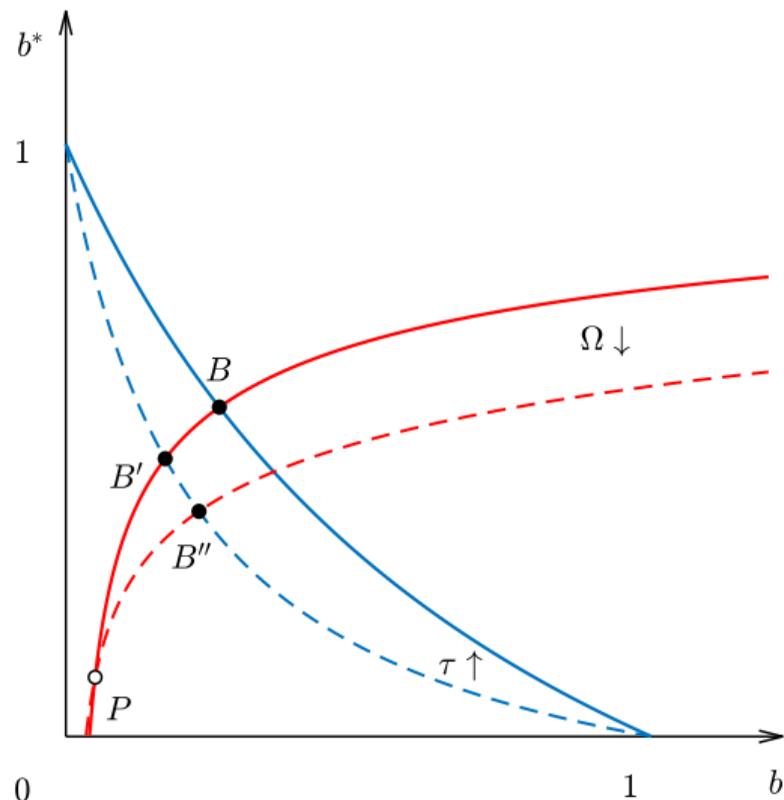
1. b as a hedge against trade war for the RoW
 - both ex ante/strategically and ex post
2. retrenchment $b, b^* \downarrow$ and fall in privilege
 - even if CY Ω does not change

Tariff Equilibrium



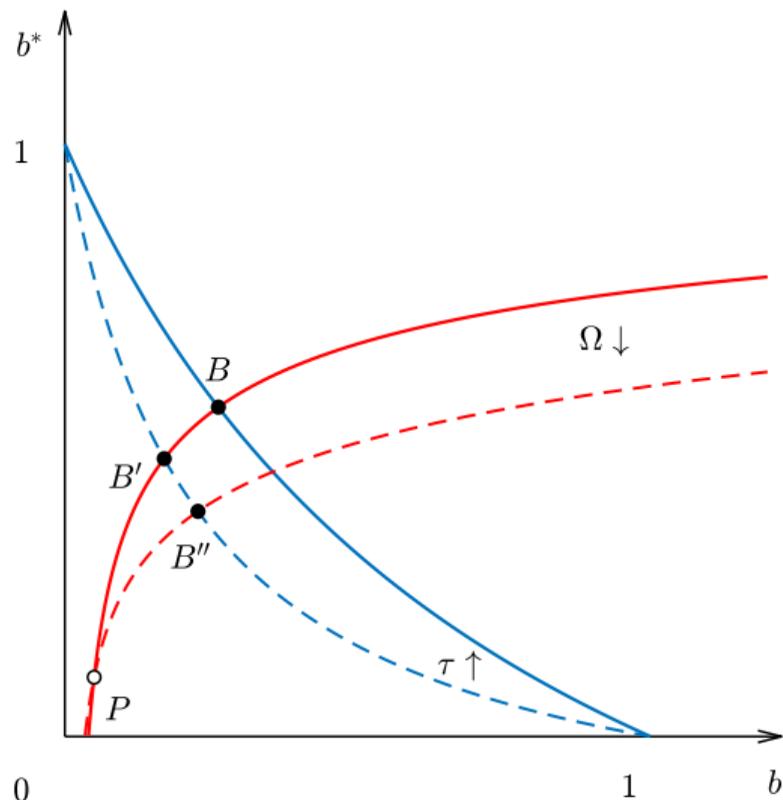
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 - can explain USD depreciation

Tariff Equilibrium



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- additional losses if CY deteriorate $\Omega \downarrow$
 - can explain USD depreciation

* all work towards closing trade deficit, only $\chi \uparrow$ via depreciation

Conclusion

1. Can tariffs permanently close trade imbalances?

— yes... but only via valuation of international asset positions

2. Is optimal tariff higher under trade deficit?

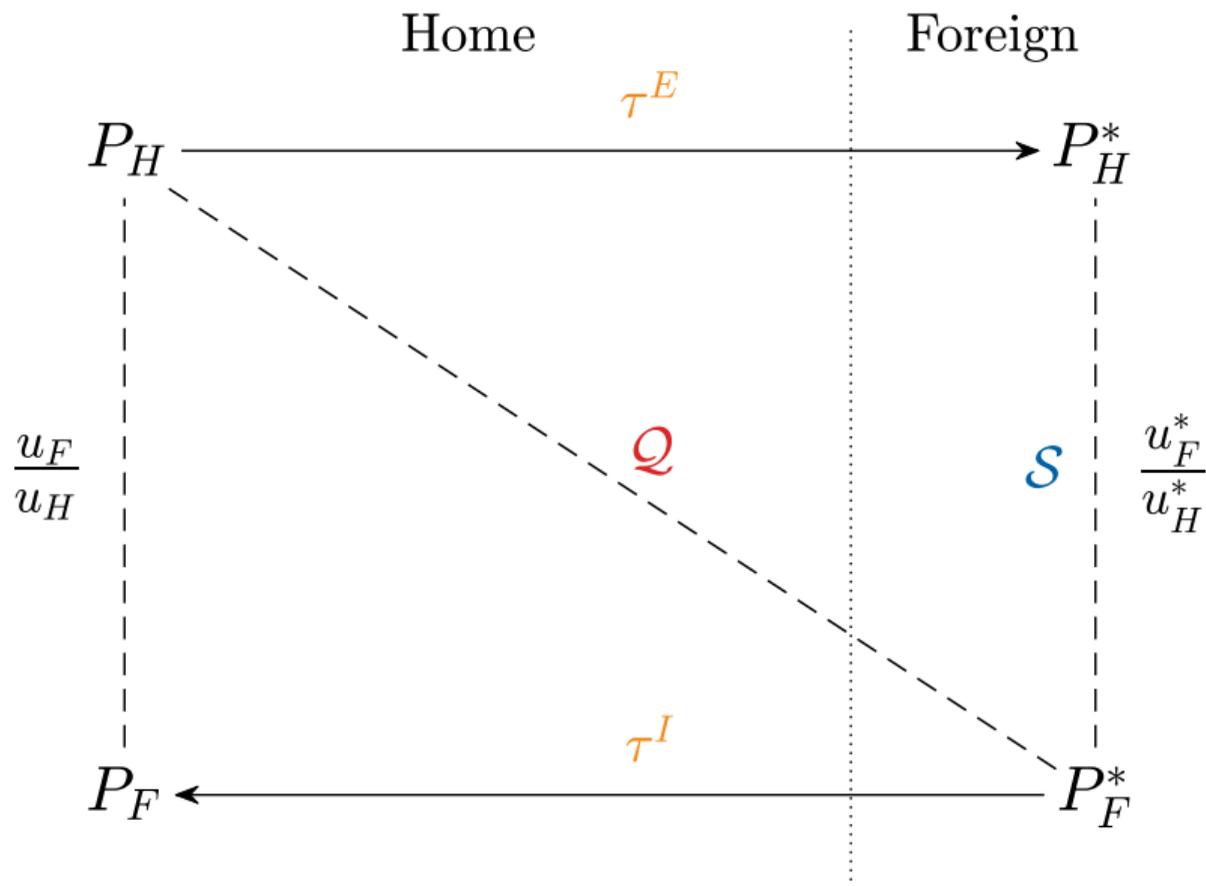
— no... optimal tariffs much lower with cross-border asset holdings

3. Do tariffs undermine U.S. “exorbitant privilege”?

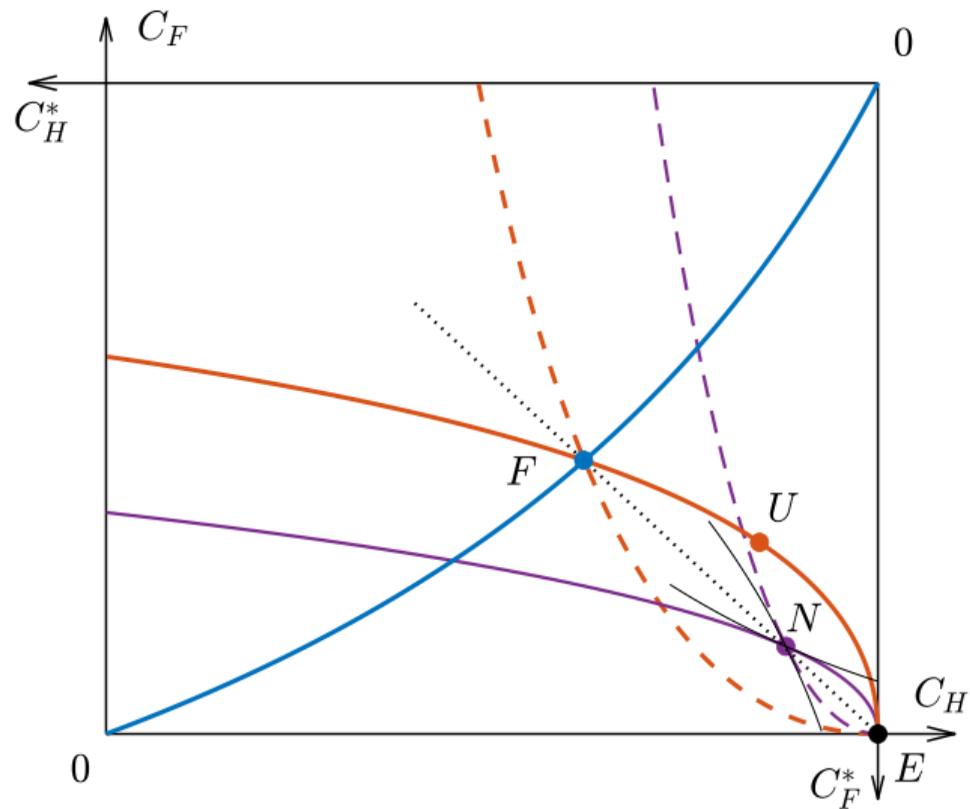
— retrenchment of cross-border positions and smaller privilege

APPENDIX

Relative Prices



Trade War Nash



▶ back

Manufacturing Employment

- ▶ Tradables and non-tradables:

$$u = \frac{\rho}{\rho - 1} \left(\kappa C_N^{\frac{\rho-1}{\rho}} + C_T^{\frac{\rho-1}{\rho}} \right), \quad C_T = \left[(1 - \gamma)^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_H^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} + \gamma^{\frac{1}{\theta}} C_F^{\frac{\theta-1}{\theta}} \right]^{\frac{\theta}{\theta-1}} \quad \rho \leq \theta$$

- ▶ Production economy:

$$C_N = Y_N = F_N(L_N), \quad Y = F_T(L_T), \quad L_N + L_T = L$$

Manufacturing Employment

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- ▶ Production economy:

$$C_N = Y_N = F_N(L_N), \quad Y = F_T(L_T), \quad L_N + L_T = L$$

- ▶ Labor market equilibrium:

$$\frac{P_H}{P_N} = \frac{W/F'_T}{W/F'_N} = \frac{F'_N(L - L_T)}{F'_T(L_T)} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{P_H}{P_N} = \frac{u_H}{u_N} = \frac{u_H(F_T(L_T) - g(C_F), C_F)}{u_N(F_N(L - L_T))}$$

Manufacturing Employment

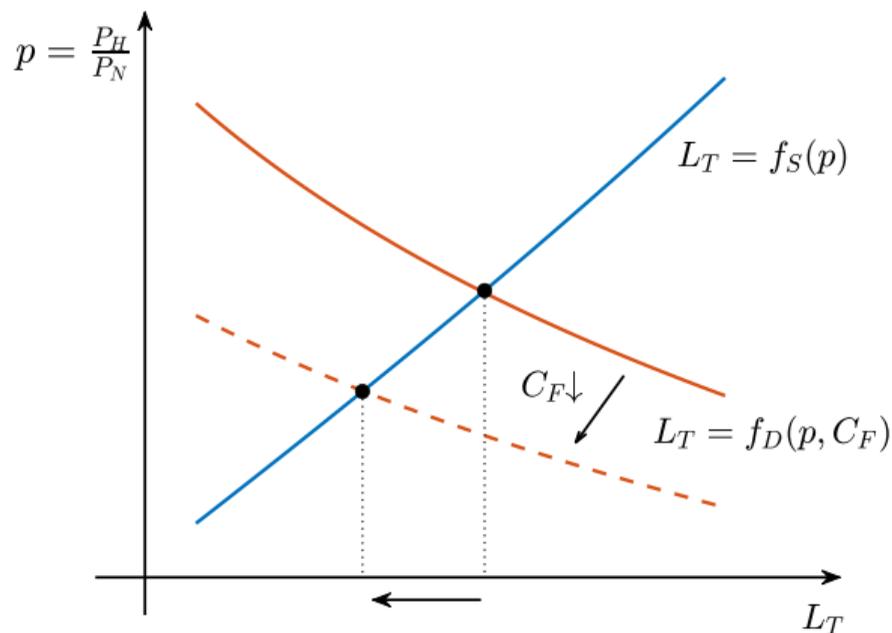


Figure: Tradable-sector employment

- ▶ Both a “China shock” ($Y^* \uparrow$) and tariff τ reduce tradable employment L_T
- ▶ **Proposition:** To increase L_T , the planner needs to use **trade subsidy**

▶ back

Global Imbalances

- ▶ General restriction on **long-run trade imbalance** from country budget constraint
- ▶ In any t , B_{t-1}^j , $j \in J_{t-1}$ are asset holding paying dividend D_t^j and valued at Q_t^j , with realized return $R_t^j \equiv (Q_t^j + D_t^j)/Q_{t-1}^j$
- ▶ \bar{R}_t is the risk-free interest rate between t and $t + 1$ (known at t)
- ▶ The value of new asset positions at t : $B_t \equiv \sum_{j \in J_t} Q_t^j B_t^j$
- ▶ The pay-out on entire NFA position: $\mathcal{R}_t B_{t-1} \equiv \sum_{j \in J_{t-1}} (Q_t^j + D_t^j) B_{t-1}^j$
- ▶ Flow budget constraint:

$$B_t - \mathcal{R}_t B_{t-1} = NX_t$$

- ▶ **Lemma:** If there is no arbitrage in J_t , then there exists SDF Θ_{t+1} such that:

$$\mathbb{E}_t\{\Theta_{t+1}(\mathcal{R}_{t+1} - \bar{R}_t)\} = 0.$$

Long-run Trade Imbalance

- ▶ **Proposition:** Long-run trade deficit is determined by the financial position:

$$\underbrace{-\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \beta^t NX_t}_{\text{long-run trade deficit}} = \underbrace{\bar{R} \mathcal{B}_{-1}}_{\text{exogenous initial NFA}} + \underbrace{(\mathcal{R}_t - \bar{R}) \mathcal{B}_{-1}}_{\text{on-impact valuation effect}} + \underbrace{\sum_{t=1}^{\infty} \beta^t (\mathcal{R}_t - \bar{R}) \mathcal{B}_{t-1}}_{\text{future realized excess returns}},$$

where $\bar{R} = 1/\beta$ is the unconditional average risk-free rate.

- ▶ **Corollary:** If there is no arbitrage $\forall s \geq t$, then expected long-run trade deficit:

$$-\sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \mathbb{E}_t\{\Theta_t NX_t\} = \bar{R} \mathcal{B}_{-1} + (\mathcal{R}_0 - \bar{R}) \mathcal{B}_{-1}, \quad \text{where } \mathbb{E}_0 \Theta_t = \beta^t.$$

- ▶ Tariffs do, in general, have valuation effects on a country's international portfolio
 - ▶ but not shaped by trade shares, trade elasticities, or terms of trade
 - ▶ there is an optimal tariff even without the effect on the LR trade imbalance

Exchange Rate Response to Tariffs

Proposition

Suppose home runs a trade deficit under free trade, $NX_0 = -NFA_0 < 0$. Then there exists a unique balanced-trade equilibrium that can be implemented with an import tariff, $\tau^I > 1$, via the resulting real exchange rate appreciation.

$$\Delta \log Q = -\frac{(1-\gamma)\theta}{(1-\gamma)\theta + (1-\gamma^*)\eta + (1-\gamma-\gamma^*)[\frac{\mathcal{B}}{EX} - 1]} \Delta \tau^I \approx -\frac{1}{2} \Delta \tau^I$$

while the real appreciation needed to close trade deficit $\Delta Q/Q = NX_0/\mathcal{B}_0 < 0$

Exchange Rate Response to Tariffs

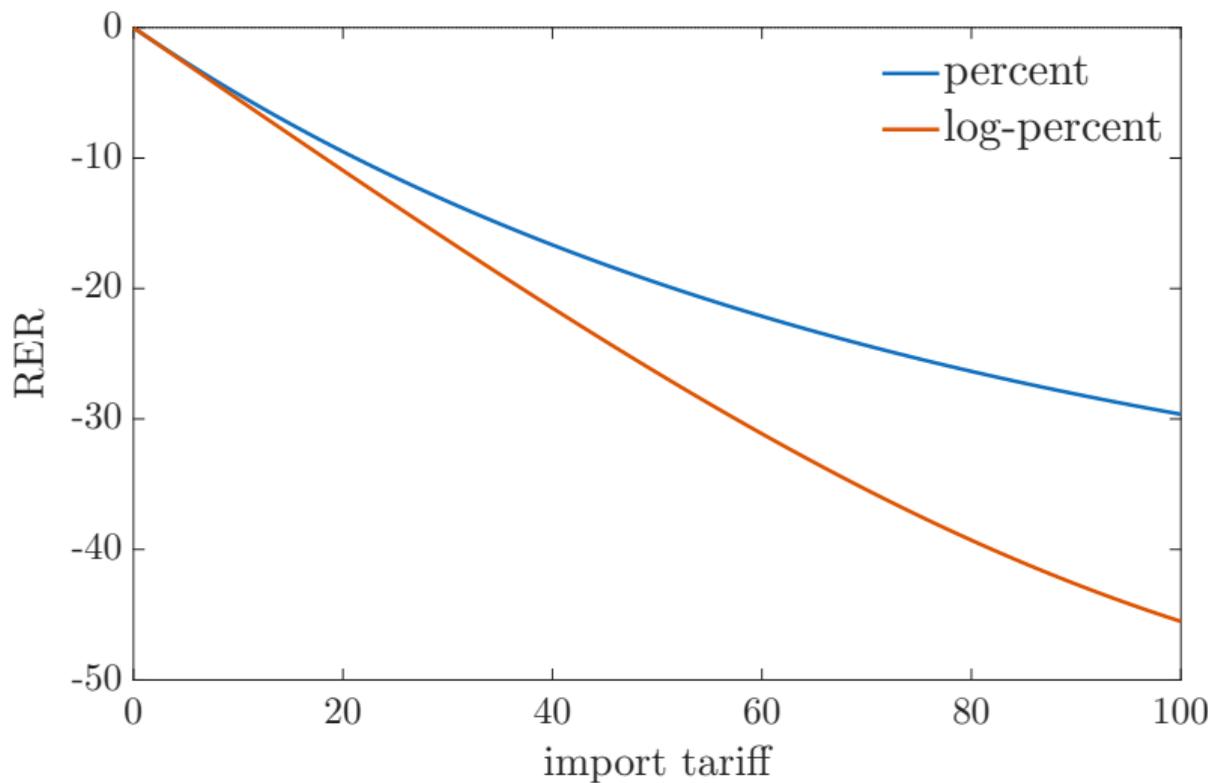


Illustration: Closing Trade Surplus

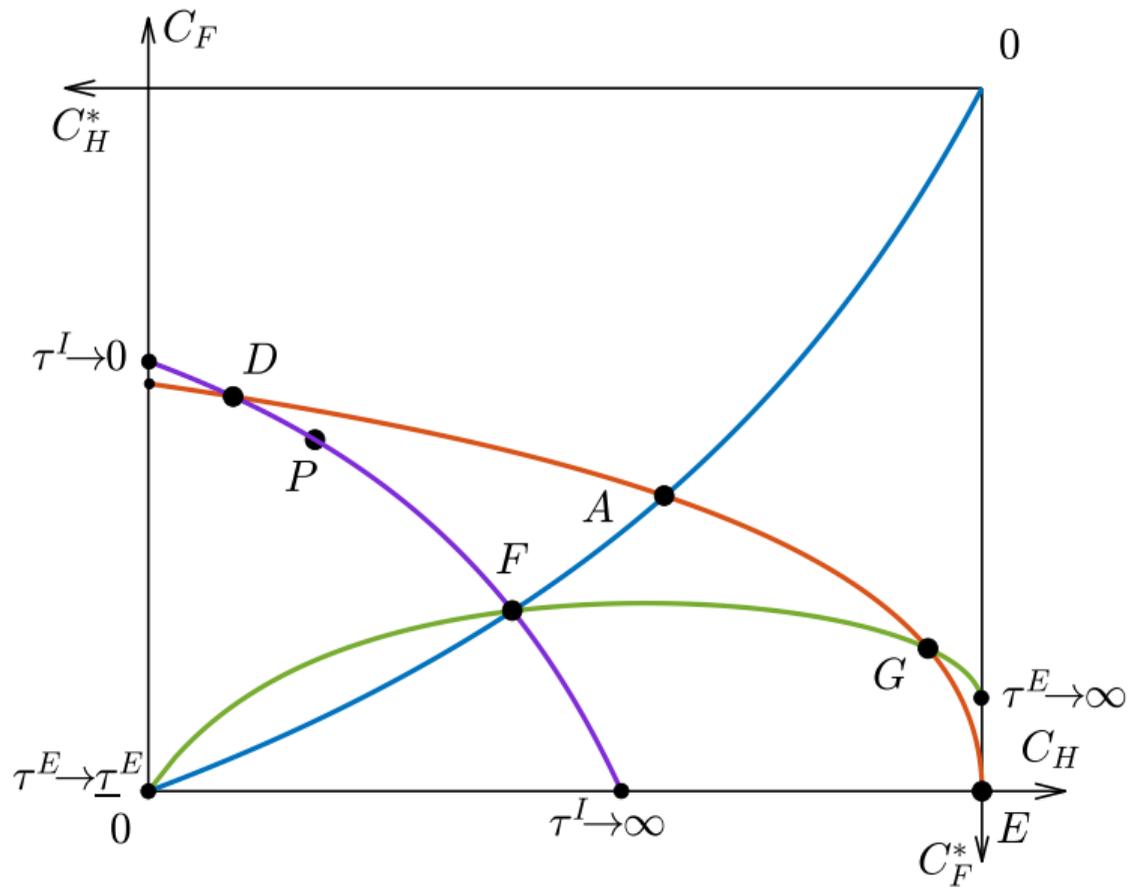
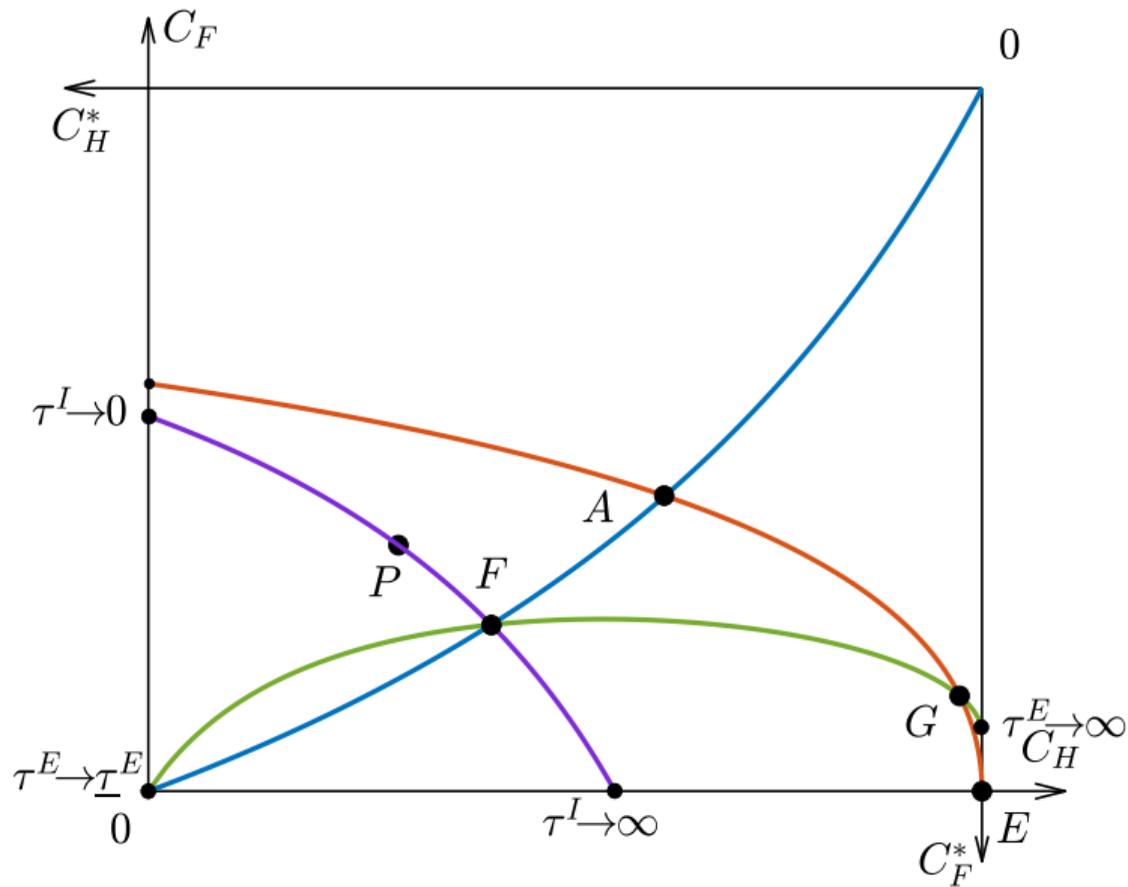


Illustration: Closing Trade Surplus



Multiple Assets

Proposition

Assume that monetary policy in each region stabilizes prices of local goods. Then cross-border asset positions in nominal and real bonds, equity and FDI can be mapped into B_0 and B_0^* that are invariant to tariffs, and the allocation-relevant asset valuation effects of tariffs equal:

$$\Delta(NFA/P_F^*) = \underbrace{\frac{\Delta Q}{Q}}_{\text{real depreciation}} \times \underbrace{B_0/Q_0}_{\text{pre-tariff real value of external liabilities}},$$

where $\Delta Q/Q \equiv (Q - Q_0)/Q$ is the tariff-induced depreciation.

$$\blacktriangleright NFA_0 = P_{F0}^* B_0^* - P_{H0} B_0 \quad \rightarrow \quad NFA = P_F^* B_0^* - P_H B_0$$

Multiple Assets

asset	returns		
	nominal	in F goods	given MP
Home nominal bond	1	$\frac{1}{p_F^* \mathcal{E}}$	$\frac{1}{\tau^E \mathcal{S}} = \frac{1}{\mathcal{E}}$
Home real bond	p_H	$\frac{p_H}{p_F^* \mathcal{E}}$	$\frac{1}{\tau^E \mathcal{S}} = \frac{1}{\mathcal{E}}$
Home equity	$p_H Y$	$\frac{p_H}{p_F^* \mathcal{E}} Y$	$\frac{Y}{\tau^E \mathcal{S}} = \frac{Y}{\mathcal{E}}$
Foreign nominal bond	\mathcal{E}	$\frac{1}{p_F^*}$	1
Foreign real bond	$\mathcal{E} p_F^*$	1	1
Foreign equity	$\mathcal{E} p_F^* Y^*$	Y^*	Y^*

Multiple Countries

- ▶ The method with implementability generalizes to multiple countries

$$\max_{\{C_j^*\}} u(\{Y_j - C_j^*\}_{j=0}^N) \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \sum_{j=0}^N u_j^*(\{C_j^*\})(Y_j^* - C_j^*) = 0.$$

- ▶ **Proposition:** Optimal import tariffs are determined by the system

$$\tau_j = \frac{1}{\Lambda_j^*} \left[\frac{1}{\theta} \bar{\tau}_j + \frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_{ji} \bar{\tau}_i \right], \quad \text{where} \quad \bar{\tau}_i \equiv \sum_{j=0}^N s_{ji} \tau_j, \quad \alpha_{ji} \equiv \frac{C_{ji}}{Y_j}, \quad \Lambda_j^* \equiv 1 - \alpha_{j0}$$

- ▶ If foreign countries share consumption risk, then the optimal tariff for country j is:

$$\tau_j = 1 + \frac{1}{\theta - 1} \frac{1}{\Lambda_j^*}, \quad \text{where} \quad \Lambda_j^* \equiv \frac{C_j^*}{Y_j}$$

Many Countries w/ Quasi-Linear Preferences

- ▶ Multiple countries indexed by $i = 0, 1, \dots, N$, with $i = 0$ as the U.S.
- ▶ Each country has endowment Y_i of its unique good and Y_{mi} of a common commodity m :

$$u_i = \frac{\theta - 1}{\theta} \sum_{j=0}^N \gamma_{ji}^{1/\theta} C_{ji}^{(\theta-1)/\theta} + C_{mi}$$

- ▶ Price of m normalized to one and no tariffs on m , no asset positions
- ▶ **Optimal tariffs:**

$$\tau_i^E = \frac{\theta}{\theta - 1} \quad \text{and} \quad \tau_i^I = 1 + \frac{1}{\theta} \frac{1 - \Lambda_i}{\Lambda_i}, \quad \text{where } \Lambda_i \equiv \frac{Y_i - C_{i0}}{Y_i}.$$

- each tariff is independent of the availability of other ones
- total tariff the same as in the baseline model $\tau_i^I \cdot \tau_i^E = 1 + \frac{1}{\theta-1} \frac{1}{\Lambda_i}$
- bilateral balance does not affect optimal tariffs, but matters for retaliation

Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

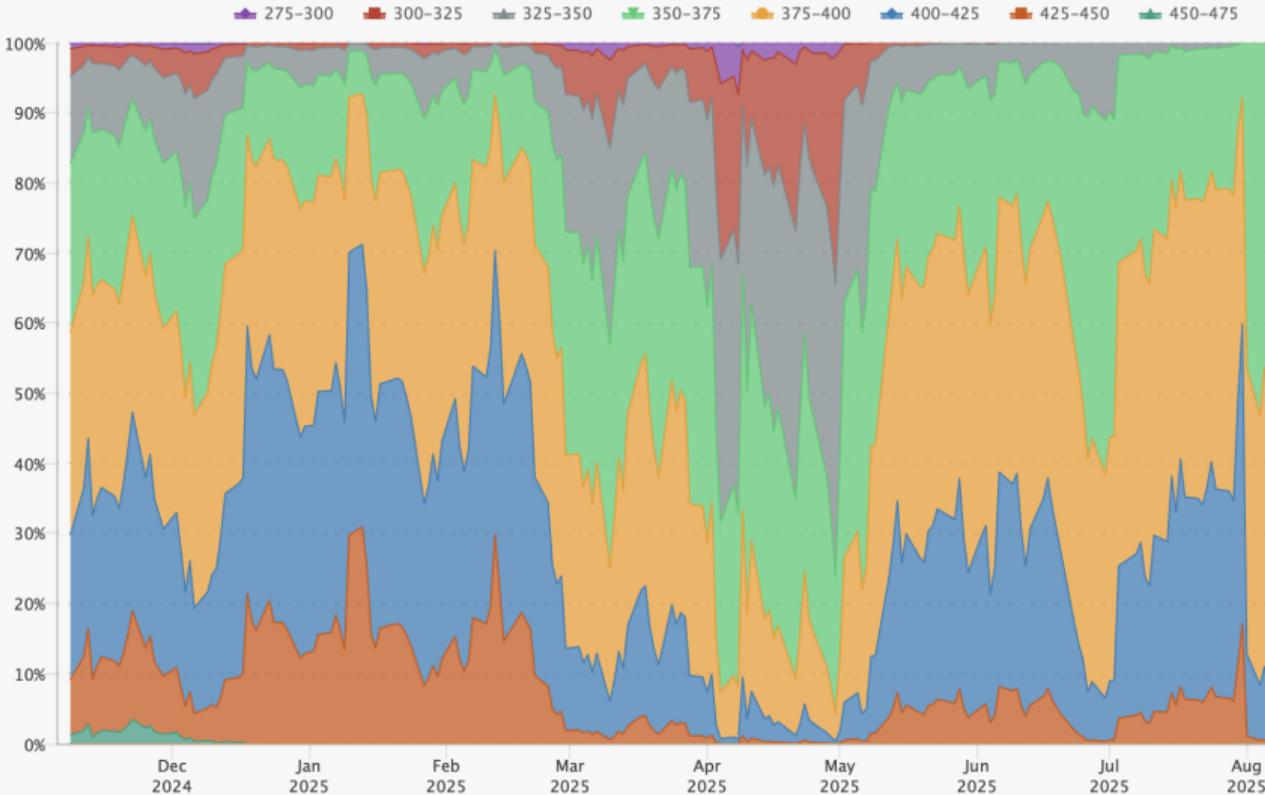


Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

1. **Monetary policy:** expectations about lower interest rates

Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

Target Rate Probability History for Federal Reserve Meeting on 10 Dec 2025



Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

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 - stock market meltdown, increase in UST yields, dollar depreciation on April 2, 2025

Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

US yields and dollar have parted company

Rising US yields typically support the dollar, as do geopolitical tensions (as the dollar is often seen as a haven asset). Since Donald Trump unleashed his trade war, however, US yields have soared and the dollar has plunged.

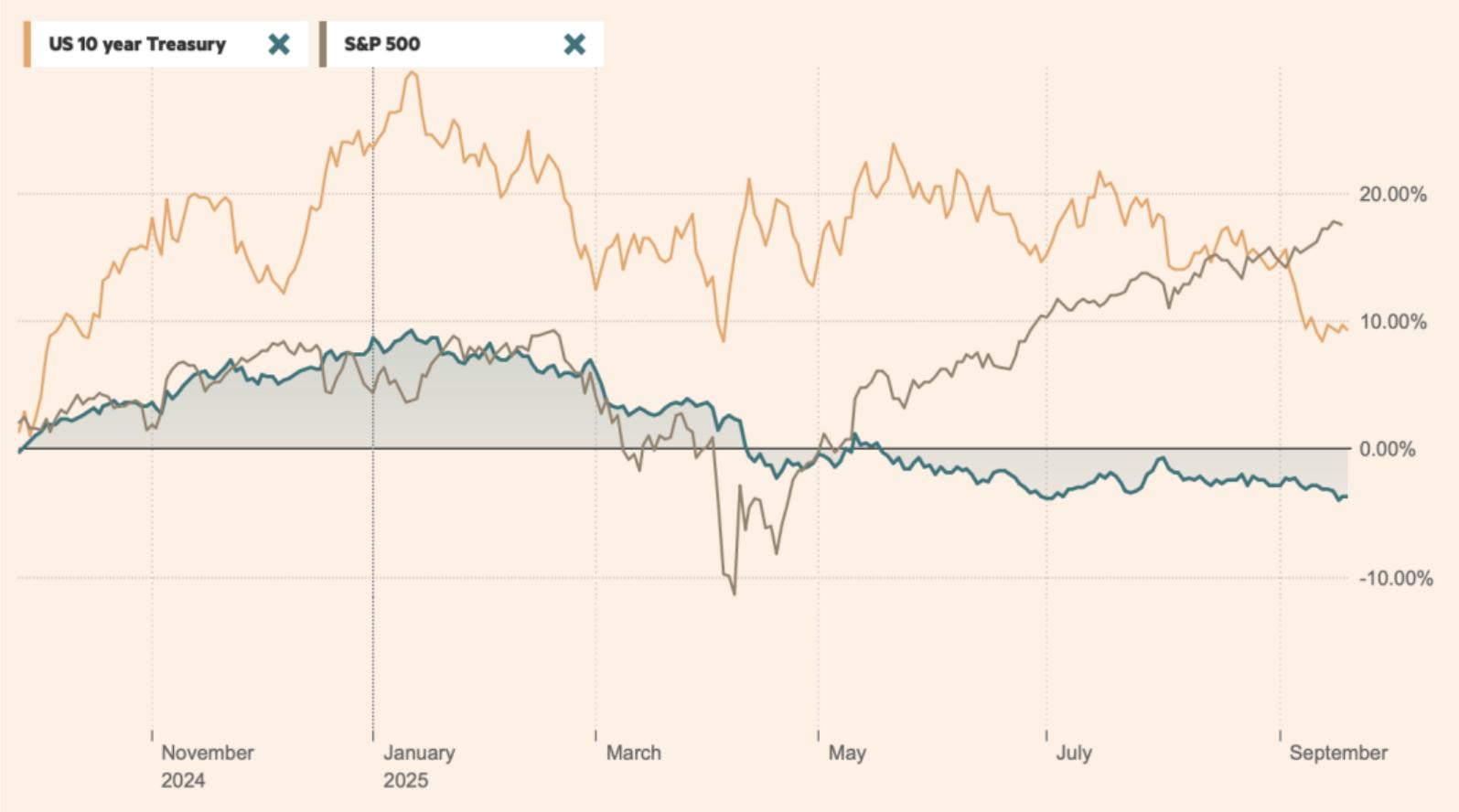
The **dollar** usually moves in lockstep with **US yields**... until 'liberation day'



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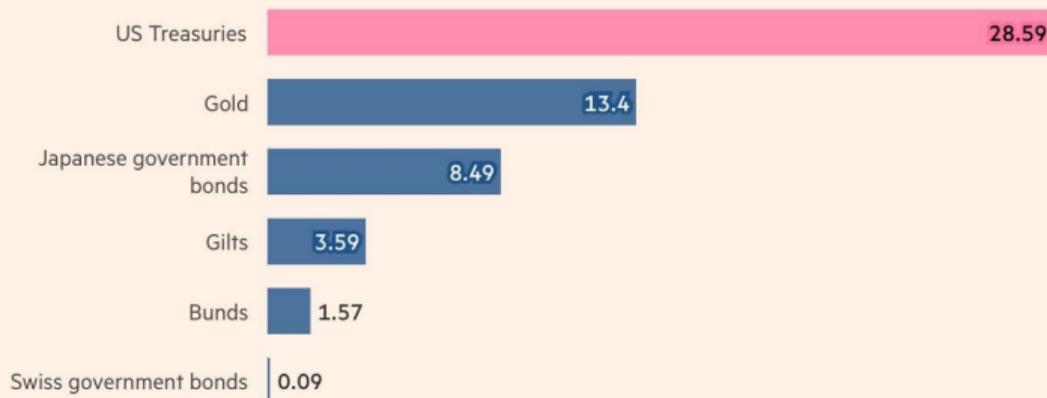
Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?



Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

US Treasuries are a much larger market than other haven assets

Market size (\$tn), by asset



Source: US Department of the Treasury, Japan's Ministry of Finance, UK Debt Management Office, Deutsche Bundesbank, Swiss National Bank, World Gold Council, FT calculations • US Treasuries include all marketable Treasury securities outstanding. Gold refers to total above-ground stock, including bars and coins, gold-backed ETFs, central bank holdings, and other forms, excluding jewellery. Bond values are converted using exchange rates on Apr 30, and gold is estimated at \$3,500 per ounce. Data as of Mar 2025 for US Treasuries and Swiss government bonds; Apr 2025 for gilts and bunds; and Dec 2024 for gold and JGBs

©FT

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Why Did the Dollar Depreciate?

US dollar [+ Add to myFT](#)

Foreign investors in US assets rush for protection against swings in dollar

Sharp increase in hedging comes amid broad rethink on exposure to greenback

Hedged ETF flows into US assets now surpass **unhedged**

Foreign-domiciled ETF inflows into US assets

Rolling three-month (\$bn)



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 - however, small capital outflows from the U.S. and quick reversion in asset prices
 - instead, demand to hedge U.S. assets against the dollar \Rightarrow FX risk premium
- **Loss of exorbitant privilege** \Rightarrow weaker dollar + rebalancing of trade

$$NX(\mathcal{S}) + NFA(\mathcal{Q}) + CY(\mathbf{X}) = 0$$

Numerical Results

	τ	τ^*	C	C^*	Q	S	T	NX
BASELINE CALIBRATION								
Closing imbalance τ^I	63.81	0.00	-1.60	-0.04	-22.22	-22.22	2.86	0.00
Closing imbalance τ^E	-41.71	0.00	-12.90	1.87	-22.22	33.44	-15.31	0.00
Optimal τ^I	8.76	0.00	0.10	-0.05	-4.37	-4.37	1.02	-1.61
Optimal τ^E	67.47	0.00	1.80	-0.93	19.45	-28.67	2.13	-3.75
Trade war τ^I	6.75	6.78	-0.08	-0.02	-0.22	-0.22	0.76	-1.98
Fiscal tariff τ^I	64.93	0.00	-1.64	-0.03	-22.47	-22.47	2.86	0.02
FINANCIAL AUTARKY								
Optimal τ	35.31	0.00	0.95	-0.46	-15.14	-15.14	2.60	0.00
Trade war τ	34.90	40.48	-1.61	-0.29	3.55	3.55	1.48	0.00
Fiscal tariff τ	81.62	0.00	0.41	-0.74	-27.98	-27.98	3.14	0.00
NO IMBALANCES								
Improving balance τ^I	122.53	0.00	-3.49	-0.05	-28.57	-28.57	2.15	2.00
CONVENIENCE YIELDS								
Closing imbalance τ^I	14.36	0.00	-1.58	0.36	-5.11	-5.11	1.41	0.00
Optimal τ^I	-31.19	0.00	2.53	-1.25	17.96	17.96	-10.47	-11.19
Optimal τ^E	-1.82	0.00	0.02	-0.01	-0.92	0.92	-0.23	-2.12

Alternative Objectives

1. Manufacturing employment:

▶ details

- ▶ tradable-employment-maximizing tariff... is a trade subsidy, i.e. $\partial L_T / \partial \tau < 0$
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Tariff		τ^I	C	Q	$\frac{Taxes}{GDP}$
Optimal	(balanced trade)	35.31	0.95	-15.14	2.60
Revenue-maximizing	(balanced trade)	81.62	0.41	-27.98	3.14

(all in percent)

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Revenue-maximizing	(w/ imbalances)	64.93	-1.64	-22.47	2.86

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