Financial Heterogeneity and Monetary Union

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Abstract

We analyze the business cycle and welfare consequences of forming a monetary union among countries with varying degrees of financial market distortions and where firms price to market because of customer markets considerations. In response to an adverse financial shock, firms in financially weak countries (the periphery) try to maintain current cashflows by raising prices and sacrificing their market share, while firms in countries with greater financial capacity (the core) lower prices, undercutting their financially constrained foreign competitors to gain market share. Because the core country firms do not internalize the effects of a price cut on the union-wide demand, a monetary union of countries with heterogeneous financial capacities creates a tendency toward internal devaluation for the core countries, leading to chronic current account deficits in the periphery. While complete risk sharing between the core and the periphery can undo the distortion brought about by the system of fixed exchange rates, such an arrangement involves a large transfer of wealth from the core to the periphery. Depending on the degree of pecuniary externality not internalized by the predatory pricing strategies of core country firms, a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery can improve the union’s overall welfare.

JEL Classification: E31, E32, F44, F45

Keywords: financial shocks, monetary union, inflation dynamics, fiscal devaluation, fiscal union

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1 Introduction

The consensus in both academic and policy circles is that the eurozone’s recent economic woes stem from a classic balance-of-payment crisis, which can be traced to the toxic mix of excessive credit growth and loss of competitiveness in the euro area “periphery.” Following the introduction of the euro in early 1999, periphery countries such as Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal went on a borrowing spree, the proceeds of which were used largely to finance domestic consumption and housing investment. Foreign investors’ widespread reassessment of risks during the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, along with a growing recognition of an unsustainable fiscal situation in Greece, precipitated a sharp pullback in private capital from the euro area periphery in early 2010. This further tightening of financial conditions significantly exacerbated the already painful process of deleveraging, through which the periphery economies were attempting to bring domestic spending—both government and private—back into line with domestic incomes.\(^1\)

As shown in Figure 1, this narrative accords well with empirical evidence. The median current account deficit in the euro area periphery reached almost 10 percent of GDP on the eve of the global financial crisis, with some countries running current account deficits as high as 15 percent of their GDP (panel (a)).\(^2\) The evidence of overheating that led to the crisis is provided in the next two panels: Between 1999 and 2007, periphery economies saw their real GDP growing persistently above its potential, whereas their counterparts in the core registered a much more balanced pattern of economic growth (panel (b)). As a result, prices in the periphery increased at a much faster pace during this period compared with those in the core countries (panel (c)). Given these developments, real exchange rates in the periphery appreciated substantially (panel (d)), eroding these countries’ competitiveness and producing large trade deficits, which were easily financed by foreign capital inflows against the backdrop of the convergence in domestic interest rates across the euro area.

In a monetary union comprised of countries in a dramatically different economic condition, with limited labor mobility, and no common fiscal policy, the crisis had to be resolved largely through a significant downward adjustment of the overvalued real exchange rates in the periphery. In the euro area, however, this adjustment has occurred very slowly. Although the periphery has endured significant disinflation since 2010, a noticeable gap remains, on balance, between the general level of prices in the core and periphery. As a result, real effective exchange rates in the periphery have tended to remain above those of the core euro area countries.

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\(^1\)As emphasized by Auer (2014) and Higgins and Klitgaard (2014), the tightening of financial conditions was not as severe as might have been expected given the scale of capital flight from the periphery. The withdrawal of capital was tempered importantly by cross-border credits to central banks in deficit countries, extended by other euro area central banks through the so-called TARGET2 system, a mechanism for managing payment imbalances among eurozone member countries. In combination with policies to supply liquidity to banks in the periphery, this balance of payments financing helped offset the drain of funds abroad.

\(^2\)Throughout the paper, we use the following definition of the euro area core and periphery. Core countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, and Netherlands. Periphery countries: Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. We omit the Eastern European countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) from the periphery because they adopted the euro relatively recently. Our analysis also excludes Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Malta because of limited data in some instances and because of their very specialized economies. All told, our sample of countries accounts for about 95 percent of the eurozone’s total economic output.
Figure 1 – Macroeconomic Performance of the Euro Area (1995–2015)

(a) Current accounts

(b) Output gaps

(c) Prices (GDP price deflator)

(d) Real effective exchange rates

Note: The solid lines depict the evolution of the cross-sectional median of the specified macroeconomic series, while the shaded band denotes the corresponding cross-sectional range. Periphery countries: Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Core countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, and Netherlands.

Source: AMECO database (European Commission); and Bank for International Settlements.
What economic forces are responsible for such a slow adjustment in the price levels between the core and periphery countries? Why have firms in the periphery—given the degree of resource underutilization in these economies—been so slow to cut prices? By the same token, why have firms in the core been reluctant to increase prices, despite an improvement in the economic outlook and highly stimulative monetary policy? In fact, some prominent commentators have argued that it is the core countries that are exporting deflationary pressures into the periphery, a dynamic contrary to that needed to reverse the real exchange rate appreciation that has eroded the periphery’s competitiveness (see Krugman, 2014).

To help answer these questions, we build on Gilchrist et al. (2016), GSSZ hereafter, and introduce the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions into an otherwise standard international macroeconomic framework. Specifically, we augment the conventional multi-country model featuring home bias, firms that price-to-market, and a low Armington elasticity of substitution between foreign and domestic goods with two new assumptions: First, we assume that firms operate in customer markets—both domestically and abroad.3 And second, we assume that foreign and domestic firms are subject to differing degrees of financial market frictions in the form of costly external (equity) finance.

We show that in such an environment firms from the “core”—that is, firms with a relatively unimpeded access to external finance—have a strong incentive to expand their market share at home and abroad by undercutting prices charged by their “periphery” competitors, especially when the latter are experiencing financial distress. By contrast, firms from the “periphery”—that is, financially constrained firms—have an incentive to increase markups in order to preserve internal liquidity, even though doing so means forfeiting some of their market share in the near term.

The general idea that firms set prices to actively manage current versus expected future demand in an environment of imperfect capital markets is not new to macroeconomics (see Gottfries, 1991; Chevalier and Scharfstein, 1996). Our main contribution lies in bringing the interplay of customer markets and financial frictions into the international context and studying the implications of this interaction within a two-country dynamic stochastic general equilibrium model. As we show below, this pricing mechanism generates time-varying markups and import price dynamics that differ significantly from those in the international macro literature (see Dornbusch, 1987; Kimball, 1995; Yang, 1997; Bergin and Feenstra, 2001; Atkeson and Burstein, 2008; Gopinath and Itskhoki, 2010a,b; Burstein and Gopinath, 2014; Auer and Schoenle, 2016).4 Specifically, this literature

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3By customer markets, we mean markets in which a customer base is “sticky” and thus an important determinant of firm’s assets and its ability to generate profits. Various microeconomic mechanisms that can lead to sticky customer base include costly switching (Klemperer, 1987), costly search (Hall, 2008), or idiosyncratic preferences (Bronnenberg et al., 2012). As emphasized by Phelps and Winter (1970) and Bils (1989), firms’ pricing decisions in such environment are a form of investment that builds the future customer base. Recent work by Foster et al. (2016) and Hottman et al. (2014) shows that customer markets feature prominently in the U.S. manufacturing and retail sectors. Moreover, Roberts et al. (2012), Eaton et al. (2015), and Fitzgerald et al. (2016) document that customer markets considerations importantly shape the pricing decision of exporting firms in both advanced and emerging market economies. The available evidence thus indicates that customer markets are a pervasive feature of the economic landscape.

4By exploiting the open economy setting, this literature tries to explain the firms’ pricing behavior by analyzing the responsiveness of international prices to fluctuations in exchange rates.
shows that following an adverse exchange rate shock, firms do not pass fully the resulting cost increase into import prices, but instead absorb some of this cost shock in their profits by lowering markups. In our model, by contrast, financially constrained firms, when hit by adverse shocks, try to maintain their cashflows by increasing markups in both the domestic and export markets, in effect trading off future market shares for current profits.

When applied to the European sovereign debt crisis, the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions helps explain several phenomena that are difficult to reconcile using conventional open-economy macro models. Most importantly, the pricing mechanism implied by this interaction is consistent with the empirical evidence presented below, which shows that the acute tightening of financial conditions in the euro area periphery between 2009 and 2013 significantly attenuated the downward pressure on prices arising from the emergence of substantial and long-lasting economic slack. The tightening of financial conditions during this period is also strongly associated with a significant decline in real unit labor costs in the periphery—or equivalently, an increase in markups—which is exactly the pattern predicted by our model.\(^5\) Thus our framework can explain why the periphery countries have managed to avoid a potentially devastating Fisherian debt-deflation spiral in the face of massive and persistent economic slack. It also helps us to understand the chronic stagnation in the euro area periphery and how the “price war” between the core and periphery has impeded the adjustment process through which the latter economies have been trying to regain their competitiveness.

The general equilibrium nature of our analysis also allows us to compare the desirability of alternative exchange rate arrangements. As it is well known, under a flexible exchange rate regime, monetary authorities in the periphery should be able to largely offset the real economic effects of an asymmetric financial shock by aggressively cutting policy rates, inducing a significant depreciation of nominal exchange rates in the periphery (see Friedman, 1953). And although the price levels between the core and periphery move in opposite directions because of customer markets considerations in our model, the policy-induced currency devaluations can be sufficiently large to cause real exchange rates to depreciate, thereby boosting exports of firms in the periphery and helping to stabilize the contraction in output.

In a monetary union, this policy option is, of course, not available. The pricing behavior of firms in the core in response to an asymmetric financial shock in the periphery implies a real exchange rate depreciation vis-à-vis the periphery, which causes a small export-driven boom in the core countries and a deepening of the recession in the periphery.\(^6\) The divergent economic trajectories between

\(^5\)Our theoretical framework is also supported by the work of Antoun de Almedia (2015), who finds a strong negative relationship between firms’ internal liquidity positions and sectoral producer price inflation in the euro area periphery during the crisis and by Baller et al. (2015), who document that financially constrained German firms were more likely to increase prices, compared with their unconstrained counterparts. Moreover, our model is consistent with a significant increase in the estimated price-cost margins documented by Montero and Urtasun (2014) among Spanish firms that faced tight credit conditions or were operating in industries with a low degree of product market competition during the European sovereign debt crisis. Similar evidence for the United States is provided by GSSZ and Gilchrist and Zakrajšek (2016) and by Kimura (2013) for Japan.

\(^6\)Broadly speaking, this pattern is also consistent with the stylized facts of the euro area crisis. Although Germany was hit severely by the 2008–2009 financial turmoil, its economy rebounded quickly on the back of resurging current
the core and periphery present a dilemma for the union’s central bank because monetary policy cannot be targeted to just one region. According to our simulations, common monetary policy in a situation when members of a monetary union are experiencing different economic conditions can lead to an endogenous increase in macroeconomic volatility that is double that obtained in the case of flexible exchange rates, even when the volatilities of shocks hitting the economies are the same. This translates into a welfare loss for the union as a whole, with the loss borne disproportionately by the periphery.

Given the union’s problem with a “one-size-fits-all” monetary policy, we consider two fiscal policy alternatives that have received significant attention from the policymakers and the press: a fiscal union and a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery. First, we show how a complete risk-sharing arrangement among union members can remedy the distortion brought about by fixed exchange rates. In principle, such cross-country risk-sharing arrangement can be achieved by forming a fiscal union, a point emphasized by Farhi and Werning (2014). However, our numerical simulations indicate that such a union involves a large transfer of wealth from the core to the periphery, casting doubt on its political feasibility.

As an alternative, we consider the macroeconomic implications of a fiscal devaluation. Recent work by Adao et al. (2009) and Farhi et al. (2014) explores the stabilization properties of certain fiscal policy mixes, intended to replicate the effects of nominal devaluation in a fixed exchange rate regime. As emphasized by these authors, what makes such fiscal devaluation policies desirable is the fact that they can be implemented unilaterally by the periphery countries encountering economic weakness. However, it is not clear why the core countries should welcome such unilateral policy interventions—in many instances, core countries have joined the monetary union precisely to avoid the manipulation of nominal exchange rates by the monetary authorities in the periphery.

A natural question that emerges in this context is whether the periphery can carry out unilateral fiscal devaluations without worrying about a retaliatory reaction from the core countries. Our simulations show that a fiscal devaluation by the periphery can be beneficial even to the core, provided that the aggregate demand externality generated by the international predatory price war is not remedied by the union’s policymakers. When firms in the core countries cut prices to expand their market shares, they do not internalize the pecuniary externality—in which driving out their foreign competitors by undercutting prices to an excessive degree—can also reduce aggregate demand for their own products. As shown by Farhi and Werning (2016), in such situations, a distortionary taxation can help firms from the core internalize this externality, and fiscal devaluations provide an effective means of achieving this goal. Furthermore, we show that benefits to the core resulting from such a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery increase with the degree of financial market distortions that generate the pecuniary externality.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we provide some empirical evidence, which shows that price and markup dynamics in the eurozone periphery during the recent account surpluses. Importantly, as documented by Bibow (2013), the increase in Germany’s surplus position was primarily vis-à-vis non-EU trading partners, as the euro area sovereign debt crisis and the concomitant deep recession squeezed Germany’s surplus position within Europe.
financial crisis were influenced importantly by the severe tightening of business credit conditions. Section 3 presents our model and Section 4 discusses its calibration. Section 5 contains our baseline simulation results, while Section 6 explores the welfare implications of a fiscal union and fiscal devaluations. Section 7 concludes.

2 Inflation, Markups, and Financial Conditions

Through more than half of a century of evolution, the Phillips curve has provided macroeconomists with an increasingly coherent determination of aggregate inflation dynamics. In all of its reincarnation, one of its key predictions is that a high level of resource underutilization should cause inflation to decline over time. However, the absence of significant deflation in the euro area periphery during the recent financial crisis and its aftermath poses a significant empirical challenge to this central tenet of most macroeconomic models. In this section, we provide new empirical evidence, which shows that inflation and markup dynamics in the euro area periphery between 2009 and 2013 were influenced importantly by the severe disruptions in the credit-intermediation process.

We begin by examining the extent to which inflation forecast errors implied by the canonical Phillips curve relationships during the eurozone’s financial crisis are systematically related to difference in the tightness of credit conditions across countries. We do so in two steps. First, we use our panel of 11 euro area countries to estimate the following two Phillips curve specifications:

\[ \pi_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_{\pi_{i,t-1}} + \lambda \text{gap}_{it} + \phi \Delta \text{VAT}_{it} + \psi_1[i \in \mathcal{E}] + \epsilon_{it}; \]  

(1)

and

\[ \pi_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_f E_t \pi_{i,t+1} + \beta_b \pi_{i,t-1} + \lambda \hat{m}_c_{it} + \phi \Delta \text{VAT}_{it} + \psi_1[i \in \mathcal{E}] + \epsilon_{it}, \]  

(2)

where \( i \) indexes countries and \( t \) represents time (in years). In both specifications, \( \pi_{it} \) denotes inflation as measured by the log-difference of the (implicit) GDP price deflator; \( \text{gap}_{it} \) is a measure of economic slack; \( \hat{m}_c_{it} \) is a proxy for marginal cost; \( \Delta \text{VAT}_{it} \) is the change in the effective value-added tax (VAT) rate; and \( 1[i \in \mathcal{E}] \) is an indicator variable that equals one when country \( i \) adopts the euro and thereafter.

Specification (1) is the traditional “accelerationist” Phillips curve (APC), which assumes that inflation expectations are proportional to past inflation. Although Phillips curves of this sort tend to fit the data quite well, their major theoretical shortcoming involves the assumptions of adaptive inflation expectations. Accordingly, we also consider its New Keynesian variant (NKPC)—

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7Two broad explanations have been advanced in an effort to explain the absence of a pernicious deflation cum recession spiral in advanced economies during the recent global financial crisis and its aftermath (see Simon et al., 2013). The first argues that much of the rise in unemployment during the crisis and its aftermath was structural—as a result, persistently high levels of unemployment exert less downward pressure on wages and prices than in the past. The second points to the strengthening of central banks’ credibility and their success in maintaining a low and stable inflation environment over the past decade or so, which, is argued, has led to more stable inflation expectations. We view the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions as a complementary mechanism to these two explanations, which far from settling the case of “missing deflation,” are nonetheless supported by the data.
Table 1 – Estimated Phillips Curves in the Euro Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variables</th>
<th>APC-1</th>
<th>APC-2</th>
<th>NKPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\pi_{i,t-1}$</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.883</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
<td>(0.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(u_{it} - \bar{u}_{it})$</td>
<td>-0.263</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>-0.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.114)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})$</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.103)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E_t\pi_{i,t+1}$</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\Delta VAT_{it}$</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1[i \in \mathcal{E}]$</td>
<td>-0.672</td>
<td>-0.900</td>
<td>-0.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.297)</td>
<td>(0.370)</td>
<td>(0.415)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adj. $R^2$</th>
<th>Pr $&gt; J^a$</th>
<th>Equal coeff. on $\pi_{i,t-1}^b$</th>
<th>Equal coeff. on $(u_{it} - \bar{u}_{it})^c$</th>
<th>Equal coeff. on $(y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})^d$</th>
<th>Equal coeff. on $\Delta VAT_{it}^e$</th>
<th>Equal coeff. on $1[i \in \mathcal{E}]^f$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.840</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta VAT_{it}$</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
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<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1[i \in \mathcal{E}]$</td>
<td>.</td>
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</table>

Note: Sample period: annual data from 1970 to 2008; No. of countries = 11; Obs. = 338. The dependent variable is $\pi_{it}$, the log-difference of the GDP price deflator of country $i$ from year $t-1$ to year $t$. Explanatory variables: $(u_{it} - \bar{u}_{it}) =$ unemployment gap; $(y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it}) =$ output gap; $VAT_{it} =$ effective VAT rate; and $1[i \in \mathcal{E}] =$ indicator variable that equals 1 once country $i$ joins the eurozone. APC-1 refers to an accelerationist Phillips curve with constant slope coefficients; APC-2 refers to an accelerationist Phillips curve with country-specific coefficients on all explanatory variables; and NKPC refers to a New Keynesian Phillips curve with constant slope coefficients. The entries in columns (1) and (2) denote the OLS estimates of the coefficients associated with the specified explanatory variable—in columns (3) and (4), the entries correspond to the average of the estimated OLS coefficients across the 11 countries; the entries in column (5) denote the corresponding GMM estimates. All specifications include country fixed effects (not reported). Robust asymptotic standard errors reported in parentheses are clustered in the time dimension.

$b$-p-value for the test of equality of country-specific coefficients on $\pi_{i,t-1}$.
$c$-p-value for the test of equality of country-specific coefficients on $(u_{it} - \bar{u}_{it})$.
$d$-p-value for the test of equality of country-specific coefficients on $(y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})$.
$e$-p-value for the test of equality of country-specific coefficients on $\Delta VAT_{it}$.
$f$-p-value for the test of equality of country-specific coefficients on $1[i \in \mathcal{E}]$.

equation (2)—which incorporates into the process of inflation determination both rational expectations as well as more explicit microfoundations (see Galí and Gertler, 2000; Galí et al., 2001).

To ensure that our estimates of the Phillips curves are not unduly influenced by the unusual inflation dynamics during the recent global financial crisis, we estimate equations (1) and (2) using annual data from 1970 to 2008—that is, before the full-blown onset of the crisis in the euro area. To measure economic slack, we use either the unemployment gap—denoted by $(u_{it} - \bar{u}_{it})$—the difference
between the unemployment rate and the estimate of the NAIRU, or the output gap—denoted by \((y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})\)—defined as the difference between the log-level of real GDP and the estimated log-level of potential output (all data come from the AMECO databases maintained by the European Commission). In columns (1) and (2) of Table 1, we report estimates of the coefficients of the APC using the unemployment and output gap as measures of economic slack, respectively, and imposing common coefficients on all explanatory variables (APC-1 specifications). In columns (3) and (4), we repeat the same exercise, except that we allow the coefficients on explanatory variables to differ across countries (APC-2 specifications). And lastly, column (5) reports coefficient estimates of the NKPC with common coefficients, using the output gap as a proxy for marginal cost.\(^8\)

As indicated by the entries in the table, the degree of resource utilization—regardless of how measured—is an economically and statistically important determinant of inflation dynamics in all four APC specifications. Note that the estimated sensitivity of inflation to economic slack is, on average, somewhat higher in the APC-2 specifications, which allow for a greater degree of heterogeneity in the inflation processes across countries; all APC specifications, however, explain about the same proportion of the variability in annual inflation rates in the euro area. The estimates of the NKPC also indicate a statistically and economically significant effect of the output gap—our proxy for marginal cost—on inflation outcomes. These estimates also point to a significant forward-looking component in the euro area inflation, though the inflation processes appear to be also characterized by substantial inertial behavior, a result consistent with that of Benigno and López-Salido (2006).

As noted above, our interest is not in these estimates per se. Rather, we are interested in whether deviations of actual inflation from the trajectories implied by these Phillips curve specifications during the crisis are systematically related to differences in the tightness of credit conditions across countries. To test this hypothesis, we first use the estimates in Table 1 to generate inflation prediction errors over the 2009–2013 period. In the second step, we estimate the following regression:

\[
\hat{\epsilon}_{it} = \alpha + \theta_1 CC_{it} + \theta_2 CC_{it} \times 1[i \in P] + \chi 1[i \in P] + u_{it},
\]

where \(\hat{\epsilon}_{it}\) denotes the inflation residual from one of the estimated Phillips curves in Table 1, CC\(_{it}\) is a measure of the tightness of credit conditions, and \(1[i \in P]\) is an indicator variable that equals one if country \(i\) is in the periphery. The parameters \(\theta_1\) and \(\theta_2\) thus measure the extent to which differences in the evolution of financial conditions between the core and periphery countries during the crisis can explain deviations of inflation trajectories from those implied by the standard Phillips curve specifications.

To measure changes in credit conditions across euro area countries, we rely on the Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises (SAFE), a comprehensive semi-annual survey of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union conducted by the European Central Bank.

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\(^8\)The APC-1 and APC-2 specifications are estimated by OLS; in the case of APC-2 specifications, we report the average of each coefficient across the 11 countries in our panel. The NKPC is estimated by GMM, treating \((y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})\) and \(E_t \pi_{t+1}\) as endogenous and instrumented with lags 1 to 3 of \((y_{it} - \bar{y}_{it})\) and \(\pi_{it}\), and lags 0 to 2 of the log-difference of commodity prices. Note that all specifications include country fixed effects.
and the European Commission. As emphasized by Lane (2012), the European sovereign debt crisis originated over concerns related to the solvency of national banking systems in the periphery. The fact that SMEs—virtually all firms in the European Union—are highly dependent on bank financing makes this survey uniquely suited to measure differences in the tightness of credit conditions faced by businesses in the euro area.

We focus on firms’ responses to the following survey question:

Please indicate how the level of interest rates on bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts, and credit lines, has changed over the past six months.

The possible answers are: (1) was increased by the bank; (2) remain unchanged; (3) was decreased by the bank; and (4) do not know or not applicable. Firm-level responses for each country in the survey are aggregated into a net proportion of respondents that indicated that banks increased interest rates, defined as a fraction of firms answering that banks have increased interest rates over the survey period, less a fraction of firms indicating that banks have decreased interest rates.

The left panel of Figure 2 shows these net percentages for the five periphery countries in our sample, while the panel to the right shows the same information for the six countries in the euro area.

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9 Given the SMEs economic relevance in the European Union, the European Central Bank and the European Commission decided in 2008 to collaborate on a survey that is used to assess developments in financing conditions and credit availability for firms in the union countries. Twice a year (in March and October), thousands of businesses in Europe are contacted and asked about their ease of access to various forms of external finance and about financing conditions. For survey details see http://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/money/surveys/sme/html/index.en.html

10 See Question 10a in Section 4: “Availability of Finance and Market Conditions.” As noted above, SAFE is a semi-annual survey and is conducted in March and October of each year. To align the survey with annual macroeconomic data, we use responses from the March Survey of year \( t \) to measure how business financing conditions have changed from year \( t - 1 \) to year \( t \).
Table 2 – Phillips Curve Prediction Errors and Business Credit Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>( CC_{it} )</th>
<th>( CC_{it} \times 1[i \in P] )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APC-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.011, 0.005]</td>
<td>[0.018, 0.034]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.014, 0.005]</td>
<td>[0.021, 0.033]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.011, 0.008]</td>
<td>[0.006, 0.031]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.014, 0.006]</td>
<td>[0.039, 0.046]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKPC</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.015, 0.003]</td>
<td>[0.019, 0.030]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample period: annual data from 2009 to 2013; No. of countries = 11; Obs. = 55. The dependent variable is \( \hat{\epsilon}_{it} \), an inflation prediction error of country \( i \) in year \( t \) implied by the specified Phillips curve (see the text and notes to Table 1 for details). The entries denote the OLS estimates of the coefficients associated with an indicator of business credit conditions \( (CC_{it}) \), the net percent of firms in country \( i \) reporting that banks have increased loan interest rates in year \( t \) (see Figure 2 and the text for details). All specifications include a constant and \( 1[i \in P] \), an indicator for whether country \( i \) is in the euro area periphery (not reported). The 95-percent confidence intervals reported in brackets are based on the empirical distribution of coefficients across 5,000 replications, using the wild bootstrap clustered in the time \((t)\) dimension (see Cameron et al., 2008).

core. Clearly evident is the massive tightening of business credit conditions in the euro area periphery during the sovereign debt crisis of 2009–2013. By contrast, the tightening of credit conditions in the core countries—with the exception of Finland and Netherlands—was substantially less severe and considerably more short lived.

Table 2 details how these differences in the evolution of financial conditions affected euro area inflation dynamics during this period.\(^{11}\) Our results indicate that in the eurozone periphery, changes in business credit conditions during the crisis are systematically related to the deviations of inflation from the dynamics implied by canonical Phillips curve-type relationships. The positive point estimates of \( \theta_2 \), the coefficient on the interaction term \( CC_{it} \times 1[i \in P] \), imply that a tightening of business credit conditions in the periphery is associated with inflation rates that exceed those predicted by our various estimated Phillips curves. The 95-percent confidence intervals bracketing the point estimates of \( \theta_2 \) exclude zero, an indication that this relationship is statistically significant at conventional levels. For the core euro area countries, by contrast, there appears to be no systematic relationship between inflation residuals and changes in business financing conditions.

\(^{11}\)We estimate equation (3) by OLS. However, the associated statistical inference that relies on the usual asymptotic arguments is likely to be unreliable, given a relatively small number of observations, especially in the time-series dimension. Accordingly, we report the 95-percent confidence intervals for coefficients \( \theta_1 \) and \( \theta_2 \), based on the time-clustered wild bootstrap procedure of Cameron et al. (2008), which is designed for situations in which the number of clusters or the number of observations within each cluster is relatively small.
Figure 3 – Business Credit Conditions and Inflation in the Euro Area Periphery (2009–2013)

Note: The solid line in the left panel depicts the average inflation—measured by the log-difference of the GDP price deflator—across five euro area periphery countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain); the dotted and dashed lines in the same panel show the estimated effect of business credit conditions on average inflation in the euro area periphery, using the APC-2 (column 3 in Table 1) and APC-2 (column 4 in Table 1) specifications of the accelerationist Phillips curve. The dotted and dashed lines in the right panel depict the corresponding effects on the GDP price deflator.

Source: Authors’ calculations using data from the AMECO database and the Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises.

The economic significance of these results for the euro area periphery is summarized in Figure 3. The solid line in the left panel show the average inflation in the five periphery countries during the crisis. The dotted and dashed lines depict the estimated effects of the tightening in business credit conditions on average inflation implied by the APC specifications that allow for country-specific regression coefficients (rows 3 and 4 under the APC-2 heading in Table 2). According to these estimates, which span the range of estimates of the coefficient $\theta_2$ reported in Table 2, the tightening of business credit conditions at the nadir of the crisis in 2011 contributed between 2 and 5 percentage points to average annual inflation in the euro area periphery.

In the right panel, we translate the cumulative effect of the tightening in business credit conditions during the 2009–2013 period on the average price level in the periphery. Our estimates imply that in the absence of these financial forces, the average price level in the eurozone periphery would have been between 8 and 20 percent lower by the end of 2013, an outcome entailing a rate of deflation with potentially devastating economic effects, given the high levels of debt—both private and public—in the periphery countries.

In our last empirical exercise, we turn directly to the behavior of markups during the crisis. As shown by Galí et al. (2007), the price markup can, under reasonable assumptions, be measured (up to an additive constant) as minus the log of real unit labor costs (RULC). Figure 4 shows the evolution of RULC in the eurozone periphery (left panel) and in the core countries (right panel) since the introduction of the euro in 1999. In the decade leading to the crisis, RULC in the eurozone
periphery have, on balance, trended higher, while those in the core countries have generally moved down, a pattern that has been interpreted as indicating a loss of competitiveness in the periphery vis-à-vis the core. After 2009, this pattern is abruptly reversed: In the periphery, RULC started to decline steadily, on balance, while in the euro area core, they remained essentially unchanged.

To examine how changes in business credit conditions during the crisis affected the behavior of markups, we re-estimate regression (3) using the log-difference in RULC as the dependent variable. As indicated in Table 3, the tightening of financial conditions is associated with a statistically significant decline in RULC—that is, an increase in markups—in the euro area periphery. In economic terms, a net tightening of business credit conditions of one standard deviation—about 30 percent in the periphery—is estimated to boost the rate of increase in markups in those countries more than a full percentage point.

In sum, the results presented in this section add to the growing empirical evidence, which strongly supports the notion that financial conditions of firms in the euro area affected their pricing decisions during the European sovereign debt crisis (see Montero and Urtasun, 2014; Antoun de Almedia, 2015; Baller et al., 2015). As we show below, combining the theory of customer markets with financial market frictions provides a natural way to understand these new findings. The pricing mechanism implied by this interaction predicts exactly the differences in the behavior of prices and markups between the eurozone core and periphery documented above: In response to an adverse financial shock in the periphery, the tightening of credit conditions causes firms—in an effort to preserve internal liquidity—to boost prices by raising markups, thereby losing market share to their financially healthy competitors from the core.

Our last piece of empirical evidence does not involve any econometrics. The following quote
from Sergio Marchionne, the CEO of Fiat Chrysler, in mid-2012 paints a visceral picture of the price dynamics implied by our theory:

> Mr. Marchionne and other auto executives accuse Volkswagen of exploiting the crisis to gain market share by offering aggressive discounts. “It’s a bloodbath of pricing and it’s a bloodbath on margins,” he said.


### 3 Model

#### 3.1 Preferences

The economy consists of two countries, referred to as home (h) and foreign (f), where foreign country variables are denoted by asterisks. In each country, there exists a continuum of households indexed by \( j \in N_c \equiv [0, 1], c = h, f \). Each household consumes two types, \( h \) and \( f \), of differentiated varieties of consumption goods, indexed by \( i \in N_h \equiv [0, 1] \) in the home country and by \( i \in N_f \equiv [1, 2] \) in the foreign country. Consistent with the standard assumption used in international macroeconomics, the home country only produces the \( h \)-type goods and the foreign country only produces the \( f \)-type goods. In this two-country setting, \( c_{i,f,t}^j \) denotes the consumption of product \( i \) of type \( f \) by a home country consumer \( j \), while \( c_{i,f,t}^* \) denotes its foreign counterpart—that is, the consumption of product \( i \) of type \( f \) by a foreign country consumer \( j \).

For simplicity, we assume that labor is perfectly immobile. The preferences of household \( j \) in the home country are given by

\[
E_t \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \delta^s U(x_{t+s}^j, h_{t+s}^j); \quad (0 < \delta < 1).
\]

\( ^{12} \)In our notation, \( c_{i,f,t}^j \) denotes consumption of an imported good by a home country household \( j \), while \( c_{i,f,t}^* \) denotes consumption of a domestically produced good by a foreign household \( j \).
The household’s per-period utility function \( U(\cdot, \cdot) \) is strictly increasing and concave in the consumption bundle \( x_t^j \) and strictly decreasing and concave in hours worked \( h_t^j \). Standard open economy models allow for home-bias in consumption by combining Dixit-Stiglitz preferences with an Armington aggregator of home and foreign goods. We introduce into this framework a sticky customer base via the Ravn et al. (2006) “deep habits” preference structure. This yields the consumption/habit aggregator

\[
x_t^j = \left[ \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k \left[ \int_{N_k} \left( \frac{c_{i,k,t}^j}{s_{i,k,t-1}^\theta} \right)^{1-\frac{1}{\eta}} di \right]^{\frac{1}{1-\eta}} \right]^{\frac{1}{1-\eta}} ; \quad \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k = 1,
\]

where \( \eta > 0 \) and \( \varepsilon > 0 \) are the elasticities of substitution within a type of goods produced in a given country and between the two types of goods, respectively, and the parameter \( \Xi_k \) governs the degree of home bias in the household’s consumption basket in the steady state.

Define \( c_{i,k,t} \) as an average consumption level of good \( i \) in country \( k \)—that is, \( c_{i,k,t} = \int_0^1 c_{i,k,t}^j dj \), for \( k = h, f \). As in Ravn et al. (2006), \( s_{i,k,t} \) denotes the good-specific habit, which evolves according to

\[
s_{i,k,t} = \rho s_{i,k,t-1} + (1 - \rho) c_{i,k,t}; \quad (0 < \rho < 1) \quad k = h, f.
\]

In this formulation, habits are external to the household and country specific.\(^{13}\) When \( \theta < 0 \), the stock of habit formed by past consumption has a positive effect on the utility derived from today’s consumption, making the household desire more of the same good. This creates an incentive for firms to lower prices in order to build their customer base.

In equilibrium, all households within a country choose the same consumption basket. The cost minimization associated with equation (4) implies the following demand function for good \( i \) (of type \( h \) or \( f \)) in the home country:

\[
c_{i,k,t} = \left( \frac{P_{i,k,t}}{\tilde{P}_{k,t}} \right)^{-\frac{\eta}{\theta(1-\eta)}} s_{i,k,t-1}^{\theta(1-\eta)} x_{k,t}; \quad k = h, f,
\]

where the welfare-based price index \( \tilde{P}_{k,t} \) and the consumption/habit basket \( x_{k,t}^j \) are given by

\[
\tilde{P}_{k,t} = \left[ \int_{N_k} \left( c_{i,k,t}^j / s_{i,k,t-1}^\theta \right)^{1-\frac{1}{\eta}} di \right]^{\frac{1}{1-\eta}} \quad \text{and} \quad x_{k,t}^j = \left[ \int_{N_k} \left( c_{i,k,t}^j / s_{i,k,t-1}^\theta \right)^{1-\frac{1}{\eta}} di \right]^{\frac{1}{1-\eta}} ; \quad k = h, f.
\]

In equation (6), \( \tilde{P}_{k,t} \) and \( x_{k,t}^j \) should be interpreted as the habit-adjusted price index and the habit-adjusted consumption/habit basket of type-\( k \) goods in the home country, respectively.

\(^{13}\)As a result, households take the habit stock as given and do not internalize the effect of their own consumption on future demand; see Nakamura and Steinsson (2011) for the analysis of firms’ pricing-setting behavior implied by good-specific internal habits.
In equilibrium, the consumption/habit basket \( x_{k,t} \) is equal to

\[
x_{k,t} = \Xi_k \left( \frac{\tilde{P}_{k,t}}{P_t} \right)^{-\epsilon} x_t; \quad k = h, f, \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{P}_t = \left[ \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k \tilde{P}_{k,t} \right]^{\frac{1}{1-\epsilon}}, \tag{7}
\]

where \( \tilde{P}_t \) denotes the welfare-based aggregate price index of the home country. Due to the symmetric structure of the two countries, the foreign country analogues of \( c_{i,k,t}, x_{k,t}, \) and \( \tilde{P}_t \) can be expressed simply by adding a superscript with an asterisk symbol to the respective variable. For later use, we also define the consumer price index (CPI)

\[
P_t \equiv \left[ \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k P_{k,t} \right]^\frac{1}{1-\epsilon}, \quad \text{where} \quad P_{k,t} \equiv \left[ \int_{N_k} \left( P_{i,k,t} \right)^{1-\eta} \, di \right]^\frac{1}{1-\eta}; \quad k = h, f, \tag{8}
\]

is the CPI corresponding to a \( k \)-type category of goods.

### 3.2 Technology

The production technologies in the home and foreign countries are given by

\[
y_{i,t} = \left( \frac{A_t}{a_{i,t}} h_{i,t} \right)^\alpha - \phi \quad \text{and} \quad y_{i,t}^* = \left( \frac{A_t^*}{a_{i,t}^*} h_{i,t}^* \right)^\alpha - \phi^*; \quad (0 < \alpha \leq 1),
\]

where \( A_t \) and \( A_t^* \) are the country-specific aggregate technology shocks and \( a_{i,t} \) and \( a_{i,t}^* \) are idiosyncratic “cost” shocks to home and foreign firms, respectively. We assume that the idiosyncratic cost shocks in both countries are distributed according to an identical symmetric log-normal distribution—that is, \( \log a_{i,t} \overset{iid}{\sim} N(-0.5\sigma^2, \sigma^2) \) and \( \log a_{i,t}^* \overset{iid}{\sim} N(-0.5\sigma^2, \sigma^2) \).

The key feature of our setup are the parameters \( \phi \geq 0 \) and \( \phi^* \geq 0 \), which represent the country-specific fixed costs of operation. The presence of these fixed costs makes it possible for firms to incur operating losses and hence find themselves in a liquidity squeeze if external financing is costly or, as in the crisis, simply unavailable. As shown by GSSZ, in combination with financial market frictions, these fixed costs provide a tractable and parsimonious way to model heterogeneity in financial capacity across firms.

### 3.3 Frictions

For fixed costs to play a role in creating uncertainty and liquidity risk for firms, we introduce several frictions to the firm’s flow-of-funds constraint. First, we adopt a timing convention, whereby in the first half of period \( t \), firms collect information about the aggregate state of the economy. Based on this aggregate information, firms post prices, take orders from customers, and plan production based on expected marginal cost. In the second half of the period, idiosyncratic uncertainty is resolved, and firms realize their actual marginal cost. They then hire labor to fulfill the agreed-upon orders.
and produce period-\( t \) output.

We also assume that firms pay out all realized operating profits as dividends within a given period—that is, we rule out corporate savings. Because of fixed costs, however, the firm’s operating profits may, ex post, be too low to cover the total cost of production. In that case, the firm must issue—within period \( t \)—new shares. Because of agency problems in capital markets, such equity financing involves a constant dilution cost per share issued, denoted by \( 0 < \tilde{\varphi} < 1 \) and \( 0 < \tilde{\varphi}^* < 1 \), which can differ between the home and foreign countries.

The firm’s objective is to maximize the present value of its dividend flow, \( \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} m_{t,t+s} d_{i,t+s} \right] \), where \( d_{i,t} = D_{i,t}/P_t \) denotes the real dividend payout when positive and real equity issuance when negative. We assume that the firms are owned by households, and that they discount future cashflows with the stochastic discounting factor of the representative household, denoted by \( m_{t,t+s} \), in their respective country.\(^{14}\) The dilution cost associated with the newly issued equity implies that when a firm issues a notional amount of equity \( d_{i,t} < 0 \), the actual amount of funds raised is given by \(- (1 - \tilde{\varphi}) d_{i,t} \).

Consistent with the fact that core euro area countries have deeper and more developed capital markets than the eurozone periphery, we assume that the dilution costs in the home country strictly exceed those in foreign country—that is, \( 0 \leq \tilde{\varphi}^* < \tilde{\varphi} \). Despite this difference in the degree of financial frictions between the two countries, we assume that firms in the home country cannot avoid the higher external financing costs by issuing equity abroad. In combination with the higher operating leverage of firms in the home country, this implies that firms in the home country are more exposed to liquidity risk than their foreign counterparts.

In addition to financial market frictions, we also allow for nominal rigidities by assuming that firms incur costs when adjusting nominal prices. Following Rotemberg (1982), these costs are given by

\[
\gamma_{p} \left( \frac{P_{i,h,t}}{P_{i,h,t-1}} - \tilde{\pi} \right)^2 c_t + \gamma_{p}^* Q_t P_{t}^* \left( \frac{P_{i,h,t}^*}{P_{i,h,t}^* - \tilde{\pi}} \right)^2 c_t; \quad (\gamma_{p}, \gamma_{p}^* > 0),
\]

where \( Q_t \) denotes the nominal exchange rate; in principle, the degree of price stickiness is allowed to differ between the two countries, as indicated by the fact that \( \gamma_{p} \) does not necessarily equal \( \gamma_{p}^* \).\(^{15}\) Using the type-specific CPIs \( P_{h,t} \) and \( P_{h,t}^* \) (see equation 8), we can express the above price

\(^{14}\)An implicit assumption of our setup is that the equity markets of the two countries are fully segmented—only domestic (foreign) households invest in the shares of domestic (foreign) firms. In our model, such market segmentation occurs if the agency problem underlying the dilution of newly issued shares is disproportionately larger for cross-border equity holdings. In fact, even an arbitrarily small disadvantage associated with cross-border equity financing is large enough to generate a perfect home bias because the perceived supply of domestic funding, at the given level of equity dilution costs, is infinitely elastic. As a result, the stream of dividends is discounted with the stochastic discount factor of the representative household in the local country. Empirical evidence of significant home bias in equity holdings is provided by French and Poterba (1991), Tesar and Werner (1995), and Obstfeld and Rogoff (2000).

\(^{15}\)Note that the price adjustment costs are proportional to local consumption—that is, \( c_t \) and \( c_t^* \). This assumption is made solely to preserve the homogeneity of the firm’s problem and has no first-order consequences for dynamics of the model.
adjustment costs as

\[
\frac{\gamma p}{2} \left( \frac{p_{i,h,t}}{p_{i,h,t-1}} \pi_{h,t} - \bar{\pi} \right)^2 c_t + \frac{\gamma p}{2} q_t \left( \frac{p^*_i h,t}{p^*_i h,t-1} \pi^*_h,t - \bar{\pi}^* \right)^2 c^*_t,
\]

where \( p_{i,h,t} = P_{i,h,t}/P_t \) and \( p^*_i h,t = P^*_i h,t/P^*_t \); \( \pi_{h,t} = P_{h,t}/P_{h,t-1} \) and \( \pi^*_h,t = P^*_h,t/P^*_h,t-1 \) denote the (gross) CPI inflation rates; and \( q_t = Q_t P^*_t/P_t \) is the real exchange rate.

### 3.4 The Firm’s Problem

We now turn to the problem of the firm, which to conserve space, we describe from the vantage point of the home country. A home country firm maximizes the present value of real dividends, subject to a flow-of-funds constraint:

\[
d_{i,t} = p_{i,h,t} p_{h,t} c_{i,h,t} + q_t p^*_i h,t P_{h,t} c^*_i h,t - w_t h_{i,t} + \varphi \min \{0, d_{i,t}\} - \frac{\gamma p}{2} \left( \frac{p_{i,h,t}}{p_{i,h,t-1}} \pi_{h,t} - \bar{\pi} \right)^2 c_t + \frac{\gamma p}{2} q_t \left( \frac{p^*_i h,t}{p^*_i h,t-1} \pi^*_h,t - \bar{\pi}^* \right)^2 c^*_t,
\]

where \( w_t = W_t/P_t \) is the real wage; and a production constraint:

\[
\left( \frac{A_t}{a_{i,t}} h_{i,t} \right)^\alpha - \phi \geq c_{i,h,t} + c^*_i h,t.
\]

Formally, the firm is choosing the sequence \( \{d_{i,t}, h_{i,t}, c_{i,h,t}, c^*_i h,t, s_i h,t, s^*_i h,t, P_{i,h,t}, P^*_i h,t \}_{t=0}^{\infty} \) to maximize the following Lagrangian:

\[
\mathcal{L} = \mathbb{E}_0 \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} m_{0,t} \left\{ d_{i,t} + \kappa_{i,t} \left[ \left( \frac{A_t}{a_{i,t}} h_{i,t} \right)^\alpha - \phi - (c_{i,h,t} + c^*_i h,t) \right] + \xi_{i,t} \left[ p_{i,h,t} p_{h,t} c_{i,h,t} + q_t p^*_i h,t P_{h,t} c^*_i h,t - w_t h_{i,t} - d_{i,t} + \varphi \min \{0, d_{i,t}\} \right. \right.
\]

\[
\left. - \frac{\gamma p}{2} \left( \frac{p_{i,h,t}}{p_{i,h,t-1}} \pi_{h,t} - \bar{\pi} \right)^2 c_t + \frac{\gamma p}{2} q_t \left( \frac{p^*_i h,t}{p^*_i h,t-1} \pi^*_h,t - \bar{\pi}^* \right)^2 c^*_t \right] + \nu_{i,h,t} \left[ (p_{i,h,t})^{-\eta} P_{h,t}^{\eta(1-\eta)} S_{i,h,t-1} c_{i,h,t} \right] + \nu^*_{i,h,t} \left[ (p_{i,h,t}^*)^{-\eta(1-\eta)} P_{h,t}^{\eta} S_{i,h,t-1}^* c^*_i h,t \right] + \lambda_{i,h,t} \left[ \rho s_{i,h,t-1} + (1 - \rho) c_{i,h,t} + s^*_{i,h,t} \right],
\]

where \( \tilde{p}_{h,t} = \tilde{P}_{h,t}/P_{h,t} \) and \( \tilde{p}^*_{h,t} = \tilde{P}^*_{h,t}/P^*_{h,t} \); \( \kappa_{i,t} \) and \( \xi_{i,t} \) are the Lagrange multipliers associated with the production constraint (10) and the flow-of-funds constraint (9), respectively; \( \nu_{i,h,t} \) and \( \nu^*_{i,h,t} \) are the Lagrange multipliers associated with the domestic and foreign demand constraints (equation 6 and its foreign counterpart), while \( \lambda_{i,h,t} \) and \( \lambda^*_{i,h,t} \) are the multipliers associated with the domestic and foreign habit accumulation processes (equation 5 and its foreign counterpart).
Under the timing assumptions of our model, dividend payout (or equity issuance) and labor demand are determined after the realization of the idiosyncratic shock $a_{i,t}$. Given the assumption of a constant marginal issuance cost, the shadow value of internal funds satisfies

$$\xi_{i,t} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } d_{i,t} \geq 0 \\ 1/(1 - \varphi) & \text{if } d_{i,t} \leq 0. \end{cases}$$

(11)

We can express the efficiency condition for labor hours as

$$\kappa_{i,t} = \xi_{i,t} a_{i,t} w_t \left( \phi + c_{i,h,t} + c_{i,h,t}^* \right)^{1-a}/\alpha,$$

where the right-hand side represents the realized marginal cost, valued using the realized shadow value of internal funds $\xi_{i,t}$.

The firm’s choices of $p_{i,h,t}$ and $p_{i,h,t}^*$, in contrast, are made prior to observing the idiosyncratic cost shock $a_{i,t}$ and hence $\xi_{i,t}$. As a result, these optimality conditions involve the expected shadow value of internal funds $E^t \left[ \xi_{i,t} \right] = \int_0^\infty \xi_{i,t}(a_{i,t}) dF(a)$, where the information set of the conditional expectations operator $E^t \left[ \cdot \right]$ includes all aggregate information up to time $t$, but excludes the realization of the idiosyncratic shock. Similarly, when choosing their labor input, firms compute expected marginal cost $E^t \left[ \kappa_{i,t} \right]$ by taking expectations $E^t \left[ \xi_{i,t} a_{i,t} \right] = \int_0^\infty \xi_{i,t} a_{i,t} dF(a)$.

### 3.5 Equilibrium and the Firms’ Pricing Behavior

With risk-neutral firms and i.i.d. idiosyncratic costs shocks, our timing assumptions imply that all firms in a given country are identical ex ante. As a result, we focus on an equilibrium that has a number of symmetric features. Specifically, all home country firms choose identical relative prices ($p_{i,h,t} = p_{i,h,t}^* = 1$), scales of production ($c_{i,h,t} = c_{h,t}$ and $c_{i,h,t}^* = c_{h,t}^*$), and habit stocks ($s_{i,h,t} = s_{h,t}$ and $s_{i,h,t}^* = s_{h,t}^*$).\(^{16}\)

The symmetric equilibrium condition $p_{i,h,t} = p_{i,h,t}^* = 1$ implies that firms in the home country set the same relative prices in domestic and foreign markets vis-à-vis other competitors from the same origin.\(^{17}\) Similarly, foreign firms make pricing decisions among themselves, both in the domestic and foreign markets, such that $p_{i,f,t} = p_{i,f,t}^* = 1$. The asymmetric nature of financial conditions induces differences in the firms’ internal liquidity positions and causes home and foreign firms to adopt different pricing strategies. As a result, $p_{h,t} = P_{h,t}/P_t \neq 1$, $p_{h,t}^* = P_{h,t}^*/P_t^* \neq 1$, $p_{f,t} = P_{f,t}/P_t \neq 1$, and $p_{f,t}^* = P_{f,t}^*/P_t^* \neq 1$, implying that $p_{h,t} \neq p_{f,t}$ and $p_{h,t}^* \neq p_{f,t}^*$, in general. As we show below, the relatively weaker financial positions of home firms forces them to maintain higher prices and markups in the neighborhood of the nonstochastic steady state, such that $\bar{p}_h > \bar{p}_f$ and $\bar{p}_h^* > \bar{p}_f^*$.

To see more explicitly how financial frictions affect the firms’ pricing decisions, consider for a

\(^{16}\)However, the distributions of labor hours ($h_{i,t}$) and dividend policies ($d_{i,t}$) among firms in the home country are non-degenerate in equilibrium and depend on the realization of idiosyncratic cost shocks.

\(^{17}\)Recall that $p_{i,h,t}$ and $p_{i,h,t}^*$ are relative prices measured against average prices charged by firms in the home country. These are different from the relative prices against local and foreign CPIs, which are averages of prices of both domestic and imported goods (see equation 8).
moment a version of the model with completely flexible prices (and wages). In that case, after imposing the relevant symmetric equilibrium conditions, the internal funds of the firm are given by the revenues less production costs:

\[ p_{h,t}c_{h,t} + qtph_{h,t}c_{h,t}^* - wt \frac{a_{i,t}}{A_t} (\phi + c_{h,t} + c_{h,t}^*)^{\frac{1}{\alpha}}, \]

where the conditional labor demand is determined by the production function. Clearly, the firms must resort to costly external finance—that is, issue new shares—if and only if

\[ a_{i,t} > a_t^E = \frac{A_t}{w_t} \left[ \frac{p_{h,t}c_{h,t} + qtph_{h,t}c_{h,t}^*}{(\phi + c_{h,t} + c_{h,t}^*)^{\frac{1}{\alpha}}} \right]. \]

Using the above definition of the equity issuance trigger \( a_t^E \), we can rewrite the first-order conditions for dividends (equation 11) as

\[ \xi_{i,t} = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } a_{i,t} \leq a_t^E \\
\frac{1}{1 - \varphi} & \text{if } a_{i,t} > a_t^E,
\end{cases} \tag{12} \]

which states that because of costly external financing, the shadow value of internal funds jumps from 1 to \( 1/(1 - \varphi) > 1 \) when the realization of the idiosyncratic cost shock \( a_{i,t} \) exceed the threshold value \( a_t^E \). Let \( z_t^E \) denote the standardized value of \( a_t^E \) (that is, \( z_t^E = (\log a_t^E + 0.5\sigma^2)/\sigma \)). From equation (12), it then follows that the expected shadow value of internal funds is given by

\[ \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}] = \int_0^{a_t^E} dF(a) + \int_{a_t^E}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1 - \varphi} dF(a) = 1 + \frac{\varphi}{1 - \varphi} [1 - \Phi(z_t^E)] > 1, \]

where \( \Phi(\cdot) \) denotes the standard normal CDF. Thus, the expected shadow value of internal funds is strictly greater than one as long as equity issuance is costly (\( \varphi > 0 \)) and future costs are uncertain (\( \sigma > 0 \)). As emphasized by GSSZ, this makes firms de facto risk averse when making their pricing decisions: A strategy of setting a low markup and committing yourself to fulfilling the resulting large number of orders exposes the firm to operating losses, which must be covered by issuing costly new equity.

In our context, \( \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}] \) directly captures the firm’s ex ante valuation of an additional dollar obtained from increasing marginal revenue. As discussed above, the firm’s ex ante internal valuation of marginal cost depends on \( \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}a_{i,t}] \). From the assumption that \( \mathbb{E}_t^A [a_{i,t}] = 1 \) and properties of the log-normal distribution (see Kotz et al., 2000), it follows that

\[ \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}a_{i,t}] - \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}] = \text{Cov}[\xi_{i,t}, a_{i,t}] = \frac{\varphi}{1 - \varphi} [\Phi(z_t^E) - \Phi(z_t^E - \sigma)] > 0. \]

Because the realized shadow value of internal funds covaries positively with the cost shock, the ex ante internal valuation of marginal cost exceeds the ex-ante valuation of marginal revenue, which implies that \( \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}a_{i,t}] / \mathbb{E}_t^A [\xi_{i,t}] > 1 \).
To bring into focus the implications of this financial distortion for the firms’ pricing behavior, it is instructive to abstract from customer markets considerations (that is, \( \theta = 0 \), in which case \( \lambda_{i,h,t} = \lambda_{i,h,t}^* = 0 \)). In this case, we can express the firm’s optimal (static) pricing rule in the domestic market as

\[
p_{i,h,t} = \frac{\eta}{\eta - 1} \frac{E^A_t[\xi_{it}a_{it}]}{E^A_t[\xi_{it}]} \left[ \frac{W_t}{P_{h,t}} \left( c_{ht} + c_{h,t}^* + \phi \right) \right]^{-\frac{1-\alpha}{\alpha}},
\]

(13)

and in the export market as

\[
p_{i,h,t}^* = \frac{\eta}{\eta - 1} \frac{E^A_t[\xi_{it}a_{it}]}{E^A_t[\xi_{it}]} \left[ \frac{W_t/(Q_tP_{h,t}^*)}{\alpha A_t} \left( c_{ht} + c_{h,t}^* + \phi \right) \right]^{-\frac{1-\alpha}{\alpha}},
\]

(14)

where the real wage \( w_t \) is constructed by deflating the nominal wage \( W_t \) by local market prices charged by home firms.\(^{18}\)

Equations (13) and (14) show that the pricing rules in both markets follow the conventional strategy: a constant markup over real marginal cost inclusive of the expected financing cost \( E^A_t[\xi_{it}a_{it}]/E^A_t[\xi_{it}] \). During an economic downturn, \( E^A_t[\xi_{it}a_{it}]/E^A_t[\xi_{it}] \) increases, which exerts direct pressure on markups. With \( p_{i,h,t} = p_{i,h,t}^* = 1 \) in the symmetric equilibrium, this implies that for equations (13) and (14) to hold, real marginal costs have to fall, or equivalently, the accounting markup, defined as

\[
\mu_t = \left[ \frac{W_t}{\alpha A_t} \left( c_{ht} + c_{h,t}^* + \phi \right) \right]^{-1},
\]

has to increase, thus implying countercyclical markups. For later use, we also define a financially adjusted markup, denoted by \( \tilde{\mu}_t \), as

\[
\tilde{\mu}_t = \frac{E^A_t[\xi_{it}]}{E^A_t[\xi_{it}a_{it}]} \mu_t.
\]

As we show below, fluctuations in the financially adjusted markup play a crucial role in inflation dynamics.

### 3.6 Inflation Dynamics

To explore the full implications of our model for inflation dynamics, we now return to a setup that includes nominal price rigidities and customer markets—that is, deep habits. Imposing the symmetric equilibrium conditions on the first-order conditions governing the price-setting behavior

\(^{18}\)In deriving this, we make use of the following identities: \( w_t/p_{h,t} = (W_t/P_t)/(P_{h,t}/P_t) = W_t/P_{h,t}; \) and \( w_t/(q_{P_{h,t}^*}) = (W_t/P_t)(P_t/(Q_tP_{h,t}^*))/(P_{h,t}^*/P_{h,t}^*) = W_t/P_{h,t}^* \).
of home country firms yields the following Phillips curve in the domestic market:

\[
\gamma_p \pi_{h,t}(\pi_{h,t} - \bar{\pi}) = p_{h,t} \frac{c_{h,t}}{c_t} - \eta \frac{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} \frac{c_{h,t}}{c_t} \\
+ \gamma_p \mathbb{E}_t \left[ m_{t,t+1} \frac{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t+1}]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} \pi_{h,t+1}(\pi_{h,t+1} - \bar{\pi}) \frac{c_{t+1}}{c_t} \right];
\]

(15)

and in the export market:

\[
\gamma_p q_t \pi_{h,t}^*(\pi_{h,t}^* - \bar{\pi}^*) = q_t p_{h,t} \frac{c_{h,t}^*}{c_t^*} - \eta \frac{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}^*]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} \frac{c_{h,t}^*}{c_t^*} \\
+ \gamma_p \mathbb{E}_t \left[ m_{t,t+1} \frac{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t+1}]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} q_{t+1} \pi_{h,t+1}^*(\pi_{h,t+1}^* - \bar{\pi}^*) \frac{c_{t+1}^*}{c_t^*} \right].
\]

(16)

Note that the first terms on the right-hand side of equations (15) and (16) are different from one because \(p_{h,t} \neq 1\) and \(c_{h,t} \neq c_t\). This is because the two Phillips curves characterize “sectoral” inflation dynamics, rather than those of the aggregate inflation in each country.\(^{19}\)

More importantly, equations (15) and (16) imply several important departures from the canonical New Keynesian Phillips curve. First, the firms’ dynamic liquidity positions influence the inflation trajectory in both the domestic and export markets. This can be seen from the fact that the ratio of the shadow value of internal funds today versus tomorrow—the term \(\mathbb{E}_{t+1}^A[\xi_{i,t+1}]/\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]\)—enters the two Phillips curves as an additional discounting factor. However, to a first order, this does not affect inflation because in steady state of the linearized model \(\pi_{h,t+1} - \bar{\pi} = 0\) and \(\pi_{h,t+1}^* - \bar{\pi}^* = 0\).

The key departure from the New Keynesian framework involves the presence of the terms \(\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}]/\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]\) and \(\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}^*]/\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}^*]\) in equations (15) and (16). Focusing on the domestic market and abstracting from deep habits, \(\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}]/\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] = p_{h,t} - 1/\mu_t\) is simply a measure of one-period real marginal profits, where \(1/\mu_t\) is the expected real marginal cost inclusive of financial costs. With customer markets, however, \(\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}^*]\) and \(\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}^*]\) measure not only the current profit margins, but also future margins due to the habit formed by the current consumption. Moreover, the sequence of cashflows implied by changes in the firm’s market share needs to be evaluated against the firm’s internal liquidity position, properly measured by the sequence of expected values of internal funds. In Appendix A, we show that the first-order conditions imply

\[
\frac{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} = p_{h,t} - 1/\mu_t + \chi \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \sum_{k=t+1}^{t+\infty} \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \frac{\mathbb{E}_s^A[\xi_{i,s}]}{\mathbb{E}_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} (p_{h,s} - 1/\mu_s) \right];
\]

(17)

\(^{19}\)The overall inflation dynamics in the two countries are determined by

\[
\pi_t = \left[ \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k (p_{h,t-1} \pi_{k,t})^{1-\varepsilon} \right]^{1/\varepsilon} \quad \text{and} \quad \pi_t^* = \left[ \sum_{k=h,f} \Xi_k (p_{h,t-1}^* \pi_{k,t}^*)^{1-\varepsilon} \right]^{1/\varepsilon}.
\]
and
\[
\frac{E_t^A[\nu^*_{i,h,t}]}{E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} = qt p_{h,t}^* - \frac{1}{\mu_t} + \chi E_t \left[ \sum_{s=t+1}^{\infty} \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \frac{E_s^A[\xi_{i,s}]}{E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}]} \left( q_s p_{h,s}^* - \frac{1}{\mu_s} \right) \right],
\]

where \( \chi = (1 - \rho)\theta(1 - \eta) \) and the growth-adjusted, compounded discount factors \( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \) and \( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s}^* \) are given by

\[
\tilde{\beta}_{t,s} = m_{s,s+1} g_{h,s+1} \prod_{j=1}^{s-t} (\rho + \chi g_{h,t+j}) m_{t+j-1,t+j}, \quad \text{with} \quad g_{h,t} = \frac{s_{h,t}/s_{h,t-1} - \rho}{1 - \rho} ;
\]
\[
\tilde{\beta}_{t,s}^* = m_{s,s+1} g_{h,s+1}^* \prod_{j=1}^{s-t} (\rho + \chi g_{h,t+j}^*) m_{t+j-1,t+j}, \quad \text{with} \quad g_{h,t}^* = \frac{s_{h,t}/s_{h,t-1} - \rho}{1 - \rho} .
\]

Note that \( E_t^A[\nu_{i,h,t}]/E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] \) and \( E_t^A[\nu^*_{i,h,t}]/E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] \) enter their respective Phillips curves with a negative sign. Hence, when the present values given by the right-hand sides of equations (17) and (18) increase, the firm will lower prices in both the domestic and export markets. Holding the sequence of profits fixed, the size of the price cuts will depend on two competing discounting factors: \( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \) (\( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s}^* \), if the relevant market is the foreign country) and \( E_t^A[\xi_{i,s}]/E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] \). Note that \( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \) measures how much the firm’s (domestic) market share can be expanded over time by lowering the product’s current price at the margin; thus, when \( \tilde{\beta}_{t,s} \) is expected to increase, the firm lowers its current price. The ratio \( E_t^A[\xi_{i,s}]/E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] \), on the other hand, measures the firm’s future financial strength relative to its current liquidity position. Consequently, when \( E_t^A[\xi_{i,s}]/E_t^A[\xi_{i,t}] \) is expected to decline, the firm discounts more heavily the value of its future market share and increases the product’s current price in order to improve its immediate liquidity position.

### 3.7 The Household’s Problem

To streamline notation, we omit the household index \( j \) and analyze the problem of the representative household. We begin by describing an environment with incomplete risk sharing and flexible exchange rates. We then impose restrictions that deliver the baseline model of a monetary union. We also develop an alternative version of the model that allows for complete risk sharing, which we use to analyze the welfare implications of different exchange rate regimes.

The representative household in the home country works \( h_t \) hours. It allocates its savings between shares of the home country firms and state-noncontingent government bonds that are available in zero net supply. We denote the home country’s holdings of international bonds issued in home and foreign currency units by \( B_{h,t+1} \) and \( B_{f,t+1} \), respectively, while \( B_{h,t+1}^* \) and \( B_{f,t+1}^* \) denote their foreign counterparts.\(^{20}\) The respective (gross) nominal interest rates on these securities are denoted by denoted \( R_t \) and \( R_t^* \).

We assume that investors in both countries face identical portfolio rebalancing costs. Focusing

\(^{20}\)Note that our notation implies that \( B_{h,t+1} + B_{h,t+1}^* = 0 \), where \( B_{h,t+1} \) and \( B_{h,t+1}^* \) are denominated in home currency—as denoted by the subscript \( h \)—and are held by the home and foreign country residents, respectively.
on the home country, these costs are given by
\[ \frac{\tau}{2} P_t \left[ \left( \frac{B_{h,t+1}}{P_t} \right)^2 + q_t \left( \frac{B_{f,t+1}}{P_t^*} \right)^2 \right] ; \quad (\tau > 0). \]

Under these assumptions, the marginal cost of borrowing in home currency is given by \( R_t/(1 + \tau B_{h,t+1}/P_t) \), which is strictly greater than \( R_t \) if \( B_{h,t+1} < 0 \). The marginal return on foreign lending in home currency is given by \( R_t(Q_t/Q_{t+1})/(1 + \tau B^*_{h,t+1}/P_t^*) \), which is strictly less than \( R_t(Q_t/Q_{t+1}) \) if \( B^*_{h,t+1} > 0 \). Thus, \((1 + \tau B_{h,t+1}/P_t)^{-1}\) represents a welfare loss, not only to the borrowers, but also to the lenders. As pointed out by Ghironi and Melitz (2005), the role of such portfolio rebalancing costs is to pin down the steady-state levels of international bond holdings, as varying \( \tau \) does not modify the model dynamics in any significant way.

The number of outstanding shares of home country firm \( i \) is given by \( S_{i,t} \), while \( P^S_{i,t-1,t} \) is the period-\( t \) per-share value of the shares outstanding as of period \( t - 1 \) and \( P^S_{i,t} \) is the (ex-dividend) per-share value of shares in period \( t \). The last two terms are related through the accounting identity \( P^S_{i,t} = P^S_{i,t-1,t} + E^S_{i,t} \), where \( E^S_{i,t} \) is the per-share value of new equity issued in period \( t \). Because of equity dilution costs, \( E^S_{i,t} = -(1 - \bar{\varphi}) \times \min\{D_{i,t}, 0\} \). Using this relationship and the fact that \( \int_{N_h} P_{i,k,t} c_{i,k,t} di = \tilde{P}_{k,t} x_{k,t} \), for \( k = h, f \) (see Appendix A), we can express the household’s budget constraint as
\[ 0 = W_{h,t} + R_{t-1} B_{h,t} + Q_t R^*_{t-1} B_{f,t} + \int_{N_h} (\tilde{D}_{i,t} + P^S_{i,t}) S_{i,t} di - \sum_{k=h,f} \tilde{P}_{k,t} x_{k,t} \]
\[ - B_{h,t+1} - Q_t B_{f,t+1} - \frac{\tau}{2} P_t \left[ \left( \frac{B_{h,t+1}}{P_t} \right)^2 + q_t \left( \frac{B_{f,t+1}}{P_t^*} \right)^2 \right] - \int_{N_h} P^S_{i,t} S_{i,t+1} di, \]  
\[ (19) \]

where \( \tilde{D}_{i,t} \equiv \max\{D_{i,t}, 0\} + (1 - \bar{\varphi}) \times \min\{D_{i,t}, 0\} \).

Let \( \Lambda_t \) denote the Lagrange multiplier associated with the budget constraint (19). Then maximizing the representative household’s utility function (see equation 4) subject to the constraint (19)

[21] Costly equity financing in our model takes the form of sales of new shares at a discount. Because the owners of old and new shares are the same, there is no direct wealth effect associated with equity dilution costs, as the losses of the old shareholders are exactly offset by the gains of the new shareholders.
yields the following first-order conditions:

\begin{align*}
    x_{h,t} : & \quad \Lambda_t \tilde{P}_{h,t} = \Xi_h \frac{x_t}{x_{h,t}} U_{x,t}; \quad (20) \\
    x_{f,t} : & \quad \Lambda_t \tilde{P}_{f,t} = \Xi_f \frac{x_t}{x_{f,t}} U_{x,t}; \quad (21) \\
    h_t : & \quad \Lambda_t W_t = -U_{h,t}; \quad (22) \\
    B_{h,t+1} : & \quad \Lambda_t(1 + \tau b_{h,t+1}) = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \Lambda_{t+1} R_t \right]; \quad (23) \\
    B_{f,t+1} : & \quad \Lambda_t(1 + \tau b_{f,t+1}) = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \Lambda_{t+1} R^s_{t+1} \frac{Q_{t+1}^s}{Q_t} \right]; \quad (24) \\
    S_{i,t+1} : & \quad \Lambda_t = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \Lambda_{t+1} \left( \frac{P^A_{t+1} \tilde{D}_{i,t+1} + P^S_{t+1}}{P^S_{t+1}} \right) \right], \quad (25)
\end{align*}

where \( b_{h,t+1} = B_{h,t+1}/P_t \) and \( b_{f,t+1} = B_{f,t+1}/P^s_t \), and we exploited the fact that \( P^s_{i,t} = P^s_t \) in the symmetric equilibrium.

Equations (20) and (21) together imply that \( \Lambda_t \sum_{k=h,f} \tilde{P}_{k,t} x_{k,t} = x_t U_{x,t} \). The accounting identity \( \sum_{k=h,f} \tilde{P}_{k,t} x_{k,t} = \tilde{P}_t x_t \) (see Appendix A) further implies that the first-order conditions (20) and (21) reduce to the efficiency condition \( \Lambda_t \tilde{P}_t = U_{x,t} \). Substituting \( \Lambda_t \tilde{P}_t = U_{x,t} \) into equations (23) and (24) implies

\[
1 + \tau b_{h,t+1} = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \frac{U_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}_{t+1}}{U_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}_{t+1}} \frac{R_t}{\pi_{t+1}} \right] \quad \text{and} \quad 1 + \tau b_{f,t+1} = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \frac{U_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}_{t+1}}{U_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}_{t+1}} \frac{R^s_{t+1}}{q_t \pi_{t+1}} \right].
\]

The bond market clearing conditions are given by

\[
0 = b_{h,t+1} + b^*_{h,t+1} \quad \text{and} \quad 0 = b_{f,t+1} + b^*_{f,t+1},
\]

where foreign holdings of international bonds denominated in home and foreign currencies—\( b^*_{h,t+1} \) and \( b^*_{f,t+1} \), respectively—satisfy

\[
1 + \tau b^*_{h,t+1} = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \frac{U^*_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}^*_{t+1}}{U^*_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}^*_{t+1}} \frac{q_t}{\pi_{t+1}} \frac{R_t}{\pi_{t+1}} \right] \quad \text{and} \quad 1 + \tau b^*_{f,t+1} = \delta \mathbb{E}_t \left[ \frac{U^*_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}^*_{t+1}}{U^*_{x,t+1}/\tilde{p}^*_{t+1}} \frac{R^s_{t+1}}{q_t \pi_{t+1}} \right].
\]

Assuming that the portfolio rebalancing costs are transferred back to the household in a lump-sum fashion, imposing the stock market equilibrium condition \( S_{i,t} = S_{i,t+1} = 1, i \in N_h \), and dividing the budget constraint through by \( P_t \), equation (19) then implies the following law of motion for the bond holdings in the home country:

\[
b_{h,t+1} + q_t b_{f,t+1} = \frac{R_{t-1}}{\pi_t} b_{h,t} + \frac{R^s_{t-1}}{\pi^s_t} q_t b_{f,t} + \omega_t h_t + \tilde{d}_t + \tilde{p}_t x_t,
\]

where \( \tilde{d}_t = \tilde{D}_t/P_t \); the corresponding law of motion for the bond holdings in the foreign country is
Again, to close the model, equation (28) yields

\[
\begin{aligned}
\frac{1}{q_t}b_{h,t+1}^* + b_{f,t+1}^* = & \frac{R_{t-1}}{q_t\pi_t}b_{h,t}^* + \frac{R_{t-1}^*}{\pi_t^*}b_{f,t}^* + w_t^*h_t^* + \tilde{d}_t^* - \tilde{p}_t^*x_t^*,
\end{aligned}
\]

where \( \tilde{d}_t^* = \tilde{D}_t^*/P_t^* \). Multiplying equation (28) by \( q_t \), subtracting the resulting expression from equation (27), and imposing the bond market clearing conditions given in equation (26) yields

\[
\begin{aligned}
b_{h,t+1} + q_t b_{f,t+1} = & \frac{R_{t-1}}{\pi_t}b_{h,t} + \frac{R_{t-1}^*}{\pi_t^*} q_t b_{f,t} \\
+ & \frac{1}{2} (w_t h_t - q_t w_t^* h_t^*) + \frac{1}{2} (\tilde{d}_t - q_t \tilde{d}_t^*) - \frac{1}{2} (\tilde{p}_tx_t - q_t \tilde{p}^*_tx_t^*). \tag{29}
\end{aligned}
\]

Closing the model requires us to specify a monetary policy rule. In the case of flexible exchange rates, we assume that monetary authorities in the home and foreign countries set prices of government bonds in their respective countries using an interest-rate rule of the form:

\[
R_t = R^{1-\psi_r} \left[ R_{t-1} \left( \frac{y_t}{y_f} \right)^{\psi_y} \left( \frac{\pi_t}{\pi_f} \right)^{\psi_{\pi}} \right]^{\psi_r} \quad \text{and} \quad R_t^* = R^{*1-\psi_r} \left[ R_{t-1}^* \left( \frac{y_t^*}{y_f^*} \right)^{\psi_y} \left( \frac{\pi_t^*}{\pi_f^*} \right)^{\psi_{\pi}} \right]^{\psi_r}, \tag{30}
\]

where the reaction coefficients \( \psi_r, \psi_y, \) and \( \psi_{\pi} \) are the same across the two countries.

### 3.7.1 Monetary Union

In a monetary union, all products and financial assets are denominated in units of common currency. As a result, the nominal exchange rate \( Q_t \) is not defined. In addition, a single monetary authority sets the interest rate, denoted by \( R^U_t \), and all investors, regardless of their country of origin and current location, earn the same nominal return on their bond holdings.\(^{22}\) Again, to close the model, we assume that monetary policy in the union is conducted in a manner that reflects the economic fundamentals of both countries:

\[
R^U_t = (R^U)^{1-\psi_r} \left[ R_{t-1}^U \left( \frac{y_t^U}{y_f^U} \right)^{\psi_y} \left( \frac{\pi_t^U}{\pi_f^U} \right)^{\psi_{\pi}} \right]^{\psi_r},
\]

where the union-wide variables are constructed as weighted averages of country-specific aggregates, with the weights given by the steady-state share of output.\(^{23}\)

\[
y_t^U = y_t \left( \frac{\bar{y}}{\bar{y} + \bar{q}y^*} \right) + q_t y_t^* \left( \frac{\bar{q}y^*}{\bar{y} + \bar{q}y^*} \right) \quad \text{and} \quad \pi_t^U = \pi_t \left( \frac{\bar{y}}{\bar{y} + \bar{q}y^*} \right) + \pi_t^* \left( \frac{\bar{q}y^*}{\bar{y} + \bar{q}y^*} \right).
\]

\(^{22}\) However, the real returns on international bond holdings will differ in equilibrium, depending on the reference location of investors. This divergence in real returns reflects two factors. First, the two countries have different consumption baskets in the long run, owing to the presence of home bias in consumption. Second, at any point in time, the law of one price does not hold in the monetary union because two consumers residing in different countries have accumulated different stocks of habit for an identical product. Because firms price their products to markets—the so-called pricing to habits (Ravn et al., 2007)—inflation rates are not equalized across countries, despite the adoption of a single currency and common monetary policy.

\(^{23}\) The model dynamics are robust to alternative weighting schemes (real time or lagged weights, and so on).
Because there is no longer any distinction between bonds issued in home or foreign currency, the bond market clearing conditions (see equation 26) drop out of the system of equations, and there are only two, instead of four, Euler equations characterizing the equilibrium in the international bond market. From the definition of the real exchange rate, we have

\[
\frac{q_t}{q_{t+1}} = \frac{Q_t}{Q_{t+1}} \frac{\pi_t}{\pi_{t+1}},
\]

and because \(Q_t/Q_{t+j} = 1\), for all \(j \geq 1\), in the monetary union, these two Euler equations may be expressed as

\[
1 + \tau b_{h,t+1} = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{U_{x,t+1}}{U_{x,t+1} - \tilde{p}_{t+1} \pi_t} \right];
\]
\[
1 + \tau b_{h,t+1} = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{U_{x,t+1}^*}{U_{x,t+1}^* - \tilde{p}_{t+1} \pi_t} \right].
\]

Finally, the monetary union implies that the combined law of motion for the international bond holdings given in equation (29) may be expressed as

\[
b_{h,t+1} = \frac{R_{t+1}}{\pi_t} b_{h,t} + \frac{1}{2} \left( w_t h_t - q_t \tilde{p}_t x_t \right) + \frac{1}{2} \left( \tilde{d}_t - q_t \tilde{d}_t \right) - \frac{1}{2} \left( \tilde{p}_t x_t - q_t \tilde{p}_t x_t^* \right).
\]

3.7.2 Complete Markets

As a policy exercise, we examine the welfare gains implied by complete risk sharing under both flexible exchange rates and a monetary union. We model complete risk sharing by allowing for state-contingent bonds that are traded internationally along with government bonds that are in zero net supply. Furthermore, with complete risk sharing, we no longer need to rely on imperfections in the government bond market to induce a long-run stationary equilibrium—accordingly, we set \(\tau = 0\). As shown in Appendix A, the presence of a complete set of state-contingent bonds implies the following risk-sharing condition:

\[
q_t = q_0 \frac{\tilde{U}_{x,t}}{\tilde{U}_{x,t}},
\]

where

\[
q_0 = \frac{\tilde{U}_{x,0}}{\tilde{U}_{x,0}^*} \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{U}_{x,t} = \frac{U_{x,t}}{\sum \sum k_{h,f} \Xi_{k,h,f} \tilde{p}_{k,t} \left( \frac{1-\varepsilon}{\tau - \varepsilon} \right) \frac{\theta(1-\varepsilon)}{\tau - \varepsilon}}.
\]

This risk-sharing condition replaces the bond holding condition (29), which was derived under incomplete markets.

With flexible exchange rates, setting \(\tau = 0\) implies that the first-order condition of the home investor in the government bond market can be rewritten as

\[
1 = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{\tilde{U}_{x,t+1}}{\tilde{U}_{x,t}} \frac{R_t}{\pi_{t+1}} \right] = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{\tilde{U}_{x,t+1}^*}{\tilde{U}_{x,t}^*} \frac{R_t}{\pi_{t+1}} q_t \right].
\]
while that of the foreign investor in the foreign government bond markets is given by
\[ 1 = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t+1} R^e_t}{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t} \pi^e_{t+1}} \right] = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t+1} R^e_t}{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t} \pi^e_{t+1}} q_{t+1} \right]. \]

Equation (35)—the risk-sharing condition that holds under the floating exchange rate regime—must also hold in the monetary union. However, only one of the two consumption Euler equations can be included in the system of equations that characterize the equilibrium of a monetary union. This is because the combination of common monetary policy and the assumption of complete risk sharing introduces linear dependence into the two Euler equations. Hence, only the following efficiency condition enters the equilibrium system of equations in the monetary union:\(^{24}\)
\[ 1 = \delta E_t \left[ \frac{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t+1} R^e_t}{\tilde{U}^e_{x,t} \pi^e_{t+1}} \right]. \]

4 Calibration

Our calibration strategy follows closely that of GSSZ, while expanding the set of parameters to the international setting. Unless noted otherwise, our calibration is symmetric—that is, we use the same parameter values for the home and foreign countries. Given the quarterly frequency of the model, we set the time discount factor \( \delta = 0.995 \). The deep habit parameter \( \theta = -0.9 \), a value close to that used by Ravn et al. (2007). To highlight the tension between the firm’s maximization of its market share and its maximization of current profits—the key mechanism in our model—we choose a fairly persistent habit-formation process, so that only 10 percent of the habit stock depreciates within a quarter. The CRRA parameter of the representative household’s utility function is then set equal to 1, given that our deep-habit specification provides a strong motive to smooth consumption. We set the elasticity of labor supply to 1/3, while the aggregate technology shock is assumed to follow a first-order autoregressive process \( A_t = (1 - \rho_A) + \rho_A A_{t-1} + \epsilon_{A,t} \), with the persistence parameter equal to 0.9.

The elasticity of substitution between goods of a given type (\( \eta \)) is the key parameter in our customer market environment: The greater the firm’s market power, the greater the incentive to invest in customer base. We set \( \eta = 2 \), a value that is virtually identical to the median of the point estimates of the elasticity of substitution among differentiated goods estimated by Broda and Weinstein (2006) on the post-1990 U.S. data; this choice is also broadly consistent with the structural estimates of the elasticity obtained by Ravn et al. (2010). With regard to \( \Xi_h \) and \( \Xi_f \), the weights of domestic and foreign goods in the utility function, we choose these two parameters such that the share of imported goods in the steady-state consumption basket is equal to 0.4, the middle of the range of the ratios of imports to GDP for the euro area countries since 2000.\(^{25}\) As for the elasticity

\(^{24}\)If both consumption Euler equations were satisfied, then common monetary policy and complete risk sharing would imply that \( \pi_{t+s} = \pi^e_{t+s} \), for all \( s \), which cannot be satisfied in equilibrium.

\(^{25}\)Note that \( \Xi_f \) itself does not equal the ratio of imports to GDP; rather, it is set to a value such that \( \Xi_f = \)
of substitution between goods from different countries, we set $\varepsilon = 1.5$, in order to stay close to the near-unit Armington elasticity estimated by Feenstra et al. (2014).\textsuperscript{26}

Financial capacity of home country firms is influenced significantly by the fixed operating cost $\phi$, a parameter determined in conjunction with the returns-to-scale parameter $\alpha$. Consistent with the international macroeconomics literature, we assume constant returns-to-scale ($\alpha = 1$) and then choose $\phi$ so that the dividend-payout ratio (relative to operating income) is equal to 2.5 in the steady state, a value corresponding to the post-WW2 average dividend-payout ratio in the U.S. nonfinancial sector.\textsuperscript{27} Together with $\alpha = 1$ and $\eta = 2.0$, this calibration strategy yields a gross markup of 1.19 in the steady state. To emphasize the implications of differences in financial capacity between countries in a monetary union, we let $\phi^* = 0$, that is, production by firms in the foreign country is not subject to any fixed operating costs.

To calibrate the degree of financial distortions in the economy, we follow Cooley and Quadrini (2001) and set equity dilution cost parameters $\bar{\psi} = \bar{\psi}^* = 0$. The volatility of the idiosyncratic cost shocks is set to 10 percent at an annual frequency, implying that firms in both countries are exposed to a moderate degree of idiosyncratic uncertainty. In the absence of fixed operating costs in the foreign country, setting $\bar{\psi}^* = 0$ results in a minimal distortion to foreign capital markets because the likelihood that a foreign firm will require costly external finance is very small.

With regards to nominal rigidities, we set the parameters governing the costs of adjusting nominal prices $\gamma_p = \gamma_p^* = 10$. For the ease of exposition, our presentation of the model above treated nominal wages as completely flexible. In the numerical implementation of the model, however, we introduce nominal wage rigidities along the lines of Bordo et al. (2000) and Erceg et al. (2000). Consistent with the symmetric treatment of nominal price rigidities, we assume that households supplying differentiated labor have identical market power in both countries, while firms face identical quadratic costs—parameterized by $\gamma_w = \gamma_w^* = 30$. Overall, our calibration of nominal wage and price rigidities is close to $p_f c_j / \sum_{k=h,f} p_k c_k$.\textsuperscript{28}

As long as $\varepsilon$ is greater than one, its value does not affect our main results. For example, setting $\varepsilon$ very close to one reduces, in a monetary union, the impact of a financial shock on aggregate output to two-thirds of that implied by our baseline calibration of $\varepsilon = 1.5$. This attenuation reflects the fact that lower elasticity of substitution between domestic and imported goods reduces the intensity of the “price war” between financially strong foreign firms and their weaker domestic counterparts in response to an adverse financial shock in the home country. However, even in this case, the qualitative features of the equilibrium remain the same.

\textsuperscript{26}It is worth noting that decreasing returns-to-scale in our framework enhance the link between financial frictions and the firms’ pricing decisions.
the values of $\gamma_p = 14.5$ and $\gamma_w = 41$ estimated by Ravn et al. (2010), who show that deep habits substantially enhance the persistence of inflation without a reliance on an implausible degree of adjustment frictions in nominal prices.\textsuperscript{28}

Lastly, we set the inertial coefficient in the interest-rate rule (30) $\psi_r = 0.85$ and the response coefficient on the inflation gap $\psi_\pi = 1.5$, values consistent with those of Taylor (1993). The value for the response coefficient on the output gap, by contrast, is less obvious. In the traditional New Keynesian models, this coefficient does not play an important role because of the “divine coincidence,” the fact that a strong reaction to inflation, in general, makes the response to the output gap redundant, or even inefficient. As emphasized by GSSZ and Gilchrist and Zakrajšek (2016), however, this is not the case in our framework, as the combination of customer markets and financial frictions can break the divine coincidence in certain situations. In particular, adverse financial shocks imply negative comovement between inflation and output, thereby presenting monetary authorities with a nontrivial dilemma in those circumstances. As a result, we set $\psi_y = 0.25$, the mid-point of the range suggested by Taylor (1993). (Table A-1 in Appendix A conveniently summarizes our baseline calibration of the model.)

5 Model Simulations

In this section, we use the calibrated model to study the macroeconomic consequences of home and foreign countries forming a monetary union—and hence being subject to common monetary policy—in an environment where the two countries are subject to differing degrees of financial market frictions and the home country is hit by a severe financial shock. We assume that the two countries are unable to achieve a complete risk-sharing arrangement, either through cross-border transfers of funds or cross-border labor mobility. Using this setup, we analyze standard international macroeconomic dynamics under both a floating exchange rate regime and monetary union.

5.1 The Impact of Financial Shocks

To study the effects of financial instability on macroeconomic performance under various monetary frameworks, we introduce an exogenous disturbance that temporarily elevates the cost of external equity financing in the home country. As in GSSZ, we assume that the cost of issuing new shares is subject to a random shock $\epsilon_{f,t}$, according to

$$\varphi_t = \bar{\varphi}_t f_t, \text{ where } \log f_t = 0.90 \log f_{t-1} + \epsilon_{f,t} \text{ and } \epsilon_{f,t} \overset{iid}{\sim} N(-0.5\sigma_f^2, \sigma_f^2).$$

\textsuperscript{28}The presence of nominal wage rigidities does not modify the dynamics of main macroeconomic aggregates in any appreciable way. It does, however, induce an empirically plausible degree of volatility in the real exchange rate. The more volatile real exchange rate reflects the fact that the countercyclical dynamics of markups in the country subject to an adverse financial shock owe importantly to an increase in product prices, rather than to a decline in nominal wages, as would be the case if wages were completely flexible.
FIGURE 5 – An Asymmetric Financial Shock: Floating Exchange Rates

(a) Real GDP  
(b) Consumption  
(c) Hours worked  
(d) Interest rate  

(e) Exchange rate  
(f) Inflation  
(g) Exports  
(h) Current account

Note: The panels of the figure depict the model-implied responses of selected variables to an adverse financial shock of 1 standard deviation in the home country in period 1. Unless noted otherwise, solid lines show responses of variables in the home country, while dashed lines show those of the foreign country. Exchange rates (panel (e)) are expressed as home currency relative to foreign currency.

This reduced-form assumption of an unanticipated increase in the cost of external finance can be thought of as a “Minsky moment,” a sudden realization on the part of investors in the home country that agency problems in domestic capital markets are much more severe than previously believed (see Eggertsson and Krugman, 2012).

We set the volatility of this financial shock (the variance $\sigma^2_f$) so that an $\epsilon_{f,t}$ realization of one standard deviation causes equity issuance costs in the home country to increase to $2\bar{\varphi}$ upon impact. Under our calibration, a shock of this magnitude immediately increases the expected shadow value of internal funds for firms in the home country from 1.16 to 1.5; the tightening of financial conditions then dissipates gradually, according to the autoregressive dynamics specified above. While firms in the home country experience this persistent tightening of financial conditions, equity issuance costs in the foreign country are assumed to remain unchanged—that is, $\varphi^*_f = \varphi^* = 0.3$, for all $t$.

To highlight the essential features of our mechanism in an international setting, Figure 5 traces out the macroeconomic implications of such an asymmetric financial shock in the case of floating exchange rates between the home and foreign countries. The interaction of customer markets and financial frictions causes firms in the home country to increase their prices significantly (panel (f)) in an effort to preserve internal liquidity and avoid issuing costly new shares. Indirectly, the shock
also raises inflation in the foreign country through the international trade dynamics at work in general equilibrium, though the increase in prices in the foreign country is notably less pronounced.

As emphasized by GSSZ, financial disturbances in this framework resemble cost-push shocks that can lead to sizable and persistent declines in output. In the absence of nominal exchange rate depreciation, the differential responses of inflation in the two countries would imply a substantial real appreciation for the home country. However, the nominal exchange rate depreciates significantly in response to such an asymmetric shock (panel (c)). In fact, the depreciation is strong enough that the real exchange rate also depreciates, despite the countervailing effect of the movement in relative price levels. Thus as in the data, the short-run dynamics of real exchange rates are dominated by fluctuations in nominal exchange rates, rather than by changes in relative prices.\footnote{In all simulations, we assume that the initial value of the nominal exchange rate is equal to one, an arbitrary but innocuous assumption, as only changes in the nominal exchange rate are a well-defined concept in our model. Note also that the nominal exchange rate shown in panel (e) returns to its steady-state value in the long run. However, this is simply a coincidence because our framework does not pin down the level of nominal exchange rate, just as it does not pin down the price level.}

The sharp depreciation of the nominal exchange rate generates an initial gain in exports (panel (g)), which explains why real GDP in the home country (panel (a)) declines only modestly, despite the significant and persistent tightening of domestic financial conditions.\footnote{Real GDP in the model is defined as (real) domestic consumption plus (real) net exports (that is, }p_{h,t}c_{h,t} + q_t p_{h,t} c_{h,t} - p_f c_{f,t}), which does not equal the volume index of aggregate output }y_t.

As shown in Figure 6, macroeconomic dynamics following an asymmetric financial shock in the home country are completely different in a monetary union. First, the declines in real GDP, consumption, and hours worked in the home country (panels (a), (b), and (c)) are about twice as large as those under a flexible exchange rate regime. Second, the trough in exports and the peak current account deficit (relative to GDP) of the home country are substantially more severe when the two countries share a common currency (panel (g)). Third and perhaps most strikingly, the deep recession induced by a financial shock in the home country is accompanied by a modest boom in the foreign country: Foreign real GDP, consumption, and hours worked all increase in the near term; similarly, exports from the foreign country to the home country rise markedly, and the foreign country registers a sizable current account surplus during the first year or so of the crisis in the home country.

What accounts for such stark differences in international macroeconomic adjustment patterns between these two monetary frameworks? In both environments, firms in the home country, when confronted with a significant tightening of financial conditions, have a strong incentive to raise prices more than their foreign counterparts. In fact, the behavior of inflation in the two countries when they are in a monetary union (panel (f) of Figure 6) hardly differs from that under a flexible exchange rate regime (panel (f) of Figure 5). As discussed below, the critical difference involves
Figure 6 — An Asymmetric Financial Shock: Monetary Union

The panels of the figure depict the model-implied responses of selected variables to an adverse financial shock of 1 standard deviation in the home country in period 1. Unless noted otherwise, solid lines show responses of variables in the home country, while dashed lines show those of the foreign country. Exchange rates (panel (e)) are expressed as home currency relative to foreign currency.

With flexible exchange rates, the efficiency conditions governing sovereign bond holdings in the home country imply the following no-arbitrage condition:

$$\tau (b_{h,t+1} - b_{f,t+1}) = \mathbb{E}_t \left[ m_{t,t+1} \left( \frac{R_t}{\pi_{t+1}} - \frac{q_{t+1}}{q_t} \frac{R^*_t}{\pi^*_t} \right) \right].$$

Given the relatively small portfolio rebalancing costs $\tau$, the left-hand side of the above expression is close to zero in equilibrium, which means that $R_t/\pi_{t+1} - (q_{t+1}/q_t)(R^*_t/\pi^*_t)$ should also be close to zero in expectation. As shown in Figure 5, differences in the responses of nominal interest rates between the two countries (panel (d)) are smaller than differences in the corresponding responses of inflation (panel (f)). This implies a lower real interest rate in the home country than in the foreign country, a result consistent with the fact that the former is experiencing an economic downturn. In the absence of capital controls, the above no-arbitrage condition implies that the real exchange rate should appreciate over time (that is, $q_{t+1}/q_t < 1$) so as to prevent the outflow of capital from the home country. In turn, this requires the nominal exchange rate to depreciate today.
In a monetary union, however, the equilibrating forces arising from the free capital account are absent. In that case, the bond market efficiency conditions (equations 32 and 33) impose no restrictions on dynamics of the real exchange rate. Differences in real interest rates induced by a financial shock in the home country do not have to be arbitrated away by expected changes in the nominal exchange rate. As a result, any differential in inflation rates is reflected immediately in the real exchange rate. Because firms in the home country optimally choose higher relative prices in response to the tightening of financial conditions, the real exchange rate appreciates substantially and exports of the home country firms drop sharply, as does real GDP. In comparison, the decline in consumption is noticeably less severe because international borrowing—while subject to costly portfolio rebalancing—allows consumers in the home country to smooth out the effects of the financial shock to a certain extent. The foreign economic boom is simply a mirror image of the home country’s economic plight and is reminiscent of the dichotomy in economic outcomes between the eurozone core and periphery during the recent financial crisis.

Another interesting result that emerges from the above analysis is that despite the significantly worse economic performance of the home country in a monetary union, inflation dynamics in both countries in those circumstances are very similar to those under floating exchange rates. The nearly
identical behavior of home and foreign inflation in response to an asymmetric financial shock across these two very different monetary frameworks reflects the offsetting effects of the international price war, sparked by the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions. As shown in Figure 7, the financial shock in the home country induces a significant dispersion in relative prices in both countries, regardless of the monetary arrangement between the two countries (panels (a) and (d)). Note that the sharp and persistent increase in the cost of external finance causes home country firms to raise relative prices in both their domestic and export markets. Foreign country firms, in contrast, optimally follow the opposite strategy and lower relative prices in both markets in order to steal market share from their financially constrained home country counterparts (panels (b) and (e)). Gauging by the degree of endogenous dispersion in relative prices, this “predatory” price war is much more intense when the two countries share a common currency—in that case, home country firms are unable to rely on the depreciation of their currency to improve their internal liquidity positions.

In a monetary union and with floating exchange rates, foreign firms cut export prices—that is, prices they charge in the home country—notably more than their domestic prices. This pricing strategy lies at the heart of the interaction between customer markets and financial frictions, which provides an especially strong incentive to “steal” market share from competitors in financial distress. As a result, the large increase in relative prices by firms in the home country (domestic prices in the home country) is partially offset by an aggressive price discount offered by foreign firms (import prices in the home country), which attenuates the upward pressure on the overall inflation in the home country arising from the financial “cost-push” shock. These opposing forces also result in aggregate inflation dynamics that in both countries differ very little between the two institutional frameworks.

According to the above results, an asymmetric financial shock implies a strongly countercyclical markup in the home country, irrespective of whether the two countries share a common currency or have floating exchange rates. The model-implied dynamics of markups in the home country in response to a financial shock are thus consistent with the behavior of real unit labor costs in the eurozone periphery during the European sovereign debt crisis shown in Figure 4. It is also worth noting that the deleterious effects of a monetary union on the volatilities of macroeconomic variables are not confined to asymmetric financial shocks. As shown in Appendix B, the same conclusion emerges in the case when a home country is hit by a technology shock.

An aspect of the macroeconomic dynamics shown in Figure 6 that appears at odds with the sequence of events characterizing the European sovereign debt crisis is the fact that following the financial shock, imports to the home country (that is, exports from the foreign country) increase notably (panel (g)), causing a deterioration in the current account deficit of the home country (panel (h)). After about eight quarters, this pattern is reversed, and the home country begins to register an improvement in its external position. During the actual crisis, however, the current account deficits in the periphery countries started to improve immediately, owing primarily to a sharp decline in imports. This discrepancy in the timing of external adjustment patterns should
not be taken as evidence that the model-implied crisis dynamics are inconsistent with the data. The impulse responses are expressed as deviations from the steady state—that is, the experiment assumes the two economies are at their respective steady states prior to being hit by a shock, a situation that is unlikely to characterize the euro area on the eve of the crisis (see Figure 1 and the associated discussion). Moreover, in Appendix C, we show how a sequence of positive demand shocks—a proxy for the buoyant economic sentiment that prevailed in the eurozone periphery prior to the crisis—followed by an asymmetric financial shock can generate current account reversal dynamics that are consistent with the data.

An important prediction of our model concerns the relative behavior of market shares in response to an asymmetric financial shock in the home country (solid lines in panels (b) and (e) in Figure 7). According to these simulations, foreign firms, by undercutting prices charged by their home country counterparts, significantly expand market shares in both the domestic and export markets. To examine whether such patterns are consistent with the data, we use the Eurostat trade data to construct relative import shares by major product groups defined on the basis of Broad Economic Categories (BECs)—our proxy for market shares in different industries—for the eurozone core and periphery.\footnote{The seven categories are BEC-1: Food & Beverages; BEC-2: Industrial Supplies; BEC-3: Fuels & Lubricants; BEC-4: Capital Goods (excluding transport equipment); BEC-5: Transport Equipment; BEC-6: Consumer Goods; and BEC-7: Goods, not elsewhere specified.}

Specifically, for each eurozone region—that is, core (C) and periphery (P)—and BEC (indexed by $k$), we calculate an import share as

$$
\text{ImpShr}_{t,P \rightarrow C}^k = \frac{\text{Imp}_{t,P \rightarrow C}^k}{\text{Imp}_{t,C}^k} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{ImpShr}_{t,C \rightarrow P}^k = \frac{\text{Imp}_{t,C \rightarrow P}^k}{\text{Imp}_{t,P}^k},
$$

where $\text{Imp}_{t,P \rightarrow C}^k$ is the value of imports (in BEC $k$) by the core countries from the periphery ($P \rightarrow C$) in year $t$, $\text{Imp}_{t,C \rightarrow P}^k$ is the value of imports (in BEC $k$) by the periphery countries from the core ($C \rightarrow P$) over the same period, and $\text{Imp}_{t,C}^k$ and $\text{Imp}_{t,P}^k$ denote total imports (in BEC $k$) by the core and periphery countries, respectively. We use the relative growth in import shares between the periphery and core, defined as

$$
\Delta \log \text{RelImpShr}^k_t \equiv \Delta \log \text{ImpShr}_{t,C \rightarrow P}^k - \Delta \log \text{ImpShr}_{t,P \rightarrow C}^k,
$$

as a proxy for changes in relative market shares between the two regions.

The left panel of Figure 8 shows the cumulative relative growth in import shares between the periphery and core for the seven BECs. With the exception of BEC-2 (Industrial Supplies)—a category of goods for which the relative import share between the eurozone periphery and core was about unchanged—the relative import shares for all other categories declined markedly during the crisis. Although in BEC-7 (Goods, not elsewhere classified), the sharp drop in the relative import share was fairly transient, the relative import shares in the remaining categories registered appreciably more persistent declines.
To gauge the aggregate implications of these trade patterns, the right panel shows the cumulative trade-weighted average and the trade-weighted median of the relative growth in import shares across the seven BECs, using total trade flows between the two regions as weights. Both measures paint the same picture: As the European sovereign debt crisis unfolded, imports by the periphery countries from the core countries—normalized by the periphery’s total imports—declined by considerably more than the imports by the core countries from the periphery, normalized by the total imports of the core countries.\(^{32}\) Such dynamics in relative import shares are consistent with our model, which predicts that in periods of financial distress, firms in the home country will lose their market share—both at home and abroad—to their financially stronger foreign counterparts.

5.2 Financial Heterogeneity as a Propagation Mechanism

In a monetary union, differences in the degree of financial distortions between the home and foreign countries play a critical role in propagating the effects of an asymmetric financial shock in the home country. When firms in the home country experience a tightening of financial conditions, the relative financial strength of foreign firms allows them to engage in a predatory price war in an effort to drive out their home country competitors from both the domestic and foreign markets. A question that then emerges is whether the model can generate the same degree of endogenous propagation if the two countries were identical in terms of financial capacity and the composition of shocks hitting

\(^{32}\)The aggregate patterns are qualitatively the same if instead of total imports by each region, imports from the periphery and core and vice versa are normalized by the relevant region’s nominal GDP.
To answer this question, we consider an alternative calibration of the model, in which firms in both countries have the same fixed operating costs ($\phi = \phi^* = 0.08$) and both economies are perturbed by a financial shock of the type considered above ($\epsilon_{f,t} = \epsilon^*_{f,t} > 0$); given the equal degree of financial distortions between the two countries ($\bar{\phi} = \bar{\phi}^* = 0.3$), this implies that both economies have the same financial capacity. The dashed lines in Figure 9 show the impulse responses of selected variables under the alternative calibration, while the solid lines show the corresponding responses under our baseline calibration that features an asymmetric financial shock in the home country ($\phi = 0.08; \phi^* = 0.00; \epsilon_{f,t} > 0$; and $\epsilon^*_{f,t} = 0$). Note that our baseline exercise allows for a greater financial capacity for the monetary union as a whole, as well as for less financial distress in the aggregate, compared with the alternative calibration; the baseline exercise, however, features more heterogeneity in financial capacity across countries compared with the “symmetric” calibration.

The results clearly indicate that the home country would prefer the alternative economic environment, in which firms in the foreign country also have limited financial capacity and are subject to the same degree of tightening in financial conditions. Although the dynamics of inflation and
markups in the home country (panels (c) and (d)) are quite similar across the two calibrations, the recession in the home country is considerably less severe (panels (a) and (b)) in the case where members of the monetary union are homogeneous with respect to their financial capacity and all countries are hit by the same adverse financial shock.

This seemingly paradoxical results reflects the fact that under the alternative calibration, firms in the foreign country are also experiencing a liquidity squeeze and are thus unable to engage in the predatory pricing behavior, which exacerbates the downturn in the home country in the baseline case. In response to the tightening of their own financial conditions, foreign firms raise markups in order to maintain current cashflows, and foreign inflation dynamics mirror those in the home country (panels (g) and (h)). Consequently, there is no movement in the real exchange rate, and the foreign country undergoes the same contraction in economic activity as the home country, a result that stands in stark contrast to the baseline case in which the foreign country experiences an export-driven boom (panels (e) and (f)), while the home country falls into a deep recession.

### 6 Welfare Analysis and Policy Implications

#### 6.1 Welfare Consequences of a Monetary Union

The above simulations show that when financial markets of countries in a monetary union are subject to a differing degree of distortions, the financially weaker members of the union undergo a much more severe recession when hit by an exogenous shock, compared with a monetary arrangement characterized by flexible exchange rates. In this section, we examine formally the welfare implications of forming a monetary union among countries whose economies have different financial capacities.

To highlight the welfare effects of such a political choice, we adopt a stylized calibration strategy, in which we assume that the home and foreign countries are subject to only two types of country-specific aggregate shocks: technology shocks and financial shocks. We calibrate the standard deviation of aggregate technology shocks to 4 percent (annualized) and then set the standard deviation of financial shocks so that they account for one-half of the variance in the real GDP of the home country.\footnote{With financial shocks playing such an outsized role in economic fluctuations, this calibration clearly does not provide the most realistic representation of the two economies. However, our main conclusions are qualitatively the same under alternative calibrations, whereby the business cycles are driven primarily by the aggregate technology shocks.}

To compare welfare across different monetary frameworks, we approximate the value functions of the representative households in the two countries up to a second order and report their analytical first moments in panel (a) of Table 4.

Clearly forming a monetary union results in lower welfare in both countries. To provide an economic context for these welfare losses, we also report the consumption equivalent (CE), which is formally defined as a percent change in consumption per period—holding hours worked constant—that is required to make the representative household in each country indifferent with transitioning from a floating exchange rate regime to a monetary union. While the sign of the certainty equivalent
Table 4 – Welfare Consequences of a Monetary Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Welfare</th>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Floating</th>
<th>CE (%)(^{a})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>−274.86</td>
<td>−274.37</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>−217.86</td>
<td>−217.37</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo: Both countries</td>
<td>−492.82</td>
<td>−491.48</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Volatilities</th>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Floating</th>
<th>Ratio(^{b})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std. deviation of real GDP (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. deviation of consumption (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In panel (a), the entries under the column headings “Union” and “Floating” denote the welfare of the representative households in the home and foreign countries under different institutional frameworks; in panel (b), the entries denote the standard deviations of the specified macroeconomic aggregate. Union = monetary union; and Floating = floating exchange rate regime.

\(^{a}\) The consumption equivalent, a change in the average consumption per period (holding hours worked constant) that is required to make the representative household in the specified country—under a floating exchange rate regime—no worse off when the two countries form a monetary union.

\(^{b}\) The ratio of the standard deviation under the floating exchange rate regime to that under the monetary union.

change in consumption is intuitive, the degree of welfare loss is, at least according to this metric, quite small in both countries.

It may be that the above welfare calculations do not paint a complete picture of the costs associated with forming a monetary union—because they are based on the representative household, aggregate uncertainty tends to understate the uncertainty facing heterogeneous households without perfect insurance. As a result, we also report in panel (b) the volatilities of real GDP and consumption under the two institutional arrangements. According to these alternative metrics, the cost of forming a monetary union is considerably greater compared with the standard welfare calculations: By dissolving the union and re-establishing a floating exchange rate regime, the home and foreign countries would see declines in output volatility of about 30 percent and 40 percent, respectively, while the volatility of consumption in both countries would be more than halved.

### 6.2 Fiscal Union

Because dissolving the monetary union may be difficult for political reasons, a natural question that emerges is whether there exist other policy options that could remedy the distortions induced by the interaction of financial frictions and customer markets, while preserving the common currency. A standard approach to analyze this question, which also provides a benchmark against which to judge the efficacy of other policy proposals, is by assuming that the households of the two countries in the union can trade a full set of state-contingent bonds—that is, a complete risk-sharing arrangement or, equivalently, a fiscal union.
The dashed lines in Figure 10 trace out dynamics of the key macroeconomic aggregates in response to an asymmetric financial shock in the home country under a complete risk-sharing arrangement. To conserve space, we show responses of only real GDP and consumption (panels (a) and (b)), the real exchange rate (panel (c)), and the state-contingent transfers between the two countries (panel (d)); for comparison purposes, solid lines in panels (a)–(c) replicate responses from Figure 6, which considers the same experiment, but without risk sharing among the union members.

As shown in panel (b), allowing households of the two countries to trade a full set of state-contingent bonds clearly spreads the deleterious effects of the financial disruption in the home country. Relative to the baseline consumption trajectories, the representative households of the two countries experience about the same degree of improvement or sacrifice—depending on their domicile—in response to a financial shock in the home country. Because in a fiscal union production is organized so as to equalize the marginal costs across the two countries, insurance is achieved by redistributing the proceeds between the households. According to panel (d), this requires a substantial amount of wealth transfer between the two countries— in this particular simulation, the
amount of wealth transferred from the foreign to the home country peaks at about 1.25 percent of GDP a year or so into the financial crisis in the home country.

The fact that risk sharing works primarily through cross-border wealth transfers—rather than through changes in the countries’ production shares—is consistent with the pattern of output trajectories in the two countries (panel (a)), which differ little across the two allocations; that said, a fiscal union does reduce the volatility of real GDP somewhat in both countries. Finally, the formation of a fiscal union does not significantly alter the dynamics of the real exchange rate (panel (c)). These results are consistent with the recent literature, which shows that the assumption of complete risk sharing in standard open-economy macro models has little effect on the behavior endogenous quantities, including the real exchange rate (see Steinsson, 2008).

Welfare consequences of forming a fiscal union are shown in Table 5. According to the first column, a complete risk-sharing arrangement between the two countries substantially improves welfare of the representative household in the home country, while reducing welfare in the foreign country. For the union as a whole, the welfare gain in the home country outstrips the loss in the foreign country, as joint welfare increases somewhat with the formation of a fiscal union. As shown in the last column, this outcome requires a substantial cross-border transfer of wealth: In terms of the certainty equivalent changes in consumption, a fiscal union increases steady-state level of consumption in the home country by about 10 percent, while lowering that in the foreign country by roughly the same amount. In combination with the results shown in Figure 10, these welfare calculations underscore the political difficulties of forming a fiscal union, as residents of the foreign country are unlikely to agree with the size of such transfers.

### 6.3 Fiscal Devaluations

Given the likely political obstacles and the lengthy process of forming a fiscal union, we now turn to a potentially more feasible and frequently advocated policy option in the context of the European sovereign debt crisis: a budget-neutral fiscal devaluation by the periphery countries. As emphasized by Adao et al. (2009) and Farhi et al. (2014), the aim of such policies is to use a mix of fiscal measures to replicate the effects of a nominal exchange rate depreciation in a fixed exchange
rate system, in order to improve competitiveness and support the rebalancing of external accounts. Fiscal measures can, for example, include a combination of import tariffs and export subsidies or a shift from labor to consumption taxation.\footnote{Farhi et al. (2014) provide an in-depth analysis of various policy mixes that can under various asset market conditions replicate the effects of a given size of nominal exchange rate depreciation.}

A particular form of fiscal devaluation that received a lot of attention in policy circles during the crisis involved the following (budget neutral) combination of fiscal measures in the periphery: a reduction in employers’ social security contributions, coupled with an increase in the VAT rate (see Puglisi, 2014).\footnote{A reduction in employers’ social security contributions would directly lower labor costs of firms in the periphery countries. If lower labor costs were to be passed through to producer prices—and if wages were not to fall—domestically produced goods would become less expensive, which would reduce relative export prices and induce a depreciation of the real effective exchange rate vis-à-vis the core. At the same time, the increase in the VAT rate would not be fully offset by the reduction in labor costs because only final consumption would be taxed at a higher rate. With a decline in relative export prices and an increase in relative import prices, the domestic demand for imports would fall. Because consumer prices for domestically produced goods would have remained essentially unchanged—as the VAT hike and a cut in employers’ social security contributions more or less offset each other—the increase in the VAT rate would have fallen primarily on imports, causing a shift towards domestic production. In effect, such fiscal devaluation would stimulate exports and lower domestic import demand, factors that would in the short run improve external competitiveness of the periphery countries and lead to an improvement in the trade balance.}

Within the eurozone, however, the non-cooperative nature of a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery could potentially have negative spillover effects on the core countries, especially if the latter viewed the adoption of the euro as a way to avoid the manipulation of nominal exchanges rates by the monetary authorities in the periphery. In addition, any short-term improvements in external competitiveness resulting from a fiscal devaluation will be diminished as more periphery countries engage in this policy simultaneously. Hence a natural question to ask is whether the eurozone periphery can carry out such a fiscal devaluation without the fear of retaliation from the core?

To provide a qualitative insight into this question within our general equilibrium framework, we consider a situation, whereby the home country introduces a payroll subsidy ($\varsigma_P^t$) that is financed by a VAT ($\tau_V^t$).\footnote{We stress the qualitative nature of this exercise because the effectiveness of a fiscal devaluation depends importantly on a variety of country-specific factors: the degree of price and wage rigidities, the degree of price passthrough, the elasticity of labor supply, the size of the economy, its trade openness, and the share of labor as variable production input.} With these policies, the marginal revenue of a home country firm selling its product in the domestic market becomes $(1 - \tau_V^t) p_{ht} p_{ht}$, while its marginal labor cost is equal to $(1 - \varsigma_P^t) w_t$. We assume that the home country firms are not subject to the same VAT in the foreign country and that the foreign country does not respond to the unilateral adoption of these fiscal measures by the home country. In addition, we assume that the government of the home country uses these fiscal policies to stabilize the economy by following linear policy rules:

$$
\tau_V^t = \varsigma_P^t = \frac{\Delta t}{1 + \Delta t}, \text{ where } \Delta t = \alpha^{FD} \times \log \left( \frac{y_t}{\bar{y}} \right);
$$

that is, the size of fiscal devaluation $\Delta t$ depends linearly on the output gap in the home country. In this context, a countercyclical policy corresponds to $\alpha^{FD} < 0$.

Using the same calibration strategy as above, we perform an extensive grid search to find
Figure 11 – Welfare Implications of a Fiscal Devaluation in a Monetary Union

The lines depict the changes in welfare for the home and foreign countries as a function of $\alpha^{FD}$, the parameter governing the size of a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the home country (see the text for details). Welfare differentials are measured relative to a baseline of no fiscal devaluation—that is, $\alpha^{FD} = 0$. The vertical lines correspond to various local minimums and maximum.

The value of $\alpha^{FD}$ that maximizes the second-order approximation of the value function of the representative household in the home country. Figure 11 traces out the implications of this exercise on the welfare of the two countries. As shown by the right-most vertical line, the welfare of the home country is maximized with the size of a fiscal devaluation given by $\alpha^{FD} \approx -1.0$. At that point, however, the welfare of the foreign country—as a function of $\alpha^{FD}$—is still increasing, which implies that the foreign country has an incentive to help pay for the unilateral fiscal devaluation in the home country.

The macroeconomic stabilization properties of this “optimal,” from the perspective of the home country, fiscal devaluation are shown in Figure 12, which compares the dynamics of real GDP (solid lines) and consumption (dashed lines) in response to an asymmetric financial shock in the home country in three different situations: monetary union with the optimal unilateral fiscal devaluation by the home country (panel (a)); monetary union without a fiscal devaluation (panel (b)); and a floating exchange rate regime (panel (c)). According to panel (a), the adoption of a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the home country results in a significant reduction in the volatility of output and consumption in both countries, especially when compared with the benchmark monetary union simulation shown in panel (b). Judging by this metric, the efficacy of this policy is such that the dynamics of consumption in response to an asymmetric shock are very similar to those under a floating exchange rate regime (panel (c)).

This striking result reflects the fact that the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions creates an important pecuniary externality in our model: When foreign firms aggressively cut prices at the time when home country firms are experiencing financial distress, they treat the general price level as given—that is, they do not internalize the effects of their predatory pricing.
behavior on the real exchange rate. Consequently, foreign firms lower prices to excessively low levels, a strategy that is, of course, individually rational, but one that does not take into account the fact that driving out their home country competitors will have an adverse effect on aggregate demand. As shown by Farhi and Werning (2016), a distortionary taxation can make private agents internalize pecuniary externalities in those circumstances, and in our model, a fiscal devaluation provides just such a mechanism.

To highlight this aspect of our model, Figure 13 shows how varying the strength of the pecuniary externality affects the welfare of the representative household in the foreign country. The left panel considers versions of the model where we progressively decrease the operating efficiency of home country firms by increasing the size of fixed operating costs (that is, the parameter $\phi$). The right panel, in contrast, considers versions of the model with progressively greater degree of financial market distortions in the home country, as measured by the increase in the steady-state value of equity dilution costs (that is, the parameter $\varphi$). In each version of the model, the remaining parameters are kept at their benchmark values. The different lines trace out the welfare differentials for the foreign country as a function of the parameter $\alpha_{FD}$, which governs the size of a unilateral fiscal devaluation carried out by the home country.

Consistent with the above discussion, the potential welfare gains for the foreign country resulting from such a policy move by the home country increase steadily as the pecuniary externality becomes more severe. This result holds regardless of whether we expose the home country firms to greater liquidity risk by lowering their operating efficiency, which increases the shadow value of internal funds for a given volatility of the financial shock (left panel); or if we directly increase the volatility of financial shocks hitting the home country (right panel).\(^37\) Moreover, as indicated by the leftward movement of the solid circles, the size of the unilateral fiscal devaluation carried out by the home

\(^{37}\)Because the financial shock is modeled as $\phi_t = \varphi f_t$, with $\log f_t = 0.90 \log f_{t-1} + \epsilon_{f,t}$, increasing the steady-state value of equity dilution costs $\varphi$ directly raises the variance of the shock.
country that maximizes foreign welfare—as measured by the corresponding absolute values of $\alpha^{FD}$—increases as the pecuniary externality induced by the interaction of customer markets and financial frictions becomes more acute. Thus according to our model, a unilateral fiscal devaluation by a country experiencing financial distress offers an effective macroeconomic stabilization tool, which, in principle, should not invoke a retaliatory response from the other union members.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we present a dynamic multi-country general equilibrium model and use it to analyze the business cycle and welfare consequences of forming a monetary union among countries with different degrees of financial market distortions and where monopolistically competitive firms price to market because of customer markets consideration. We show that in such an environment, firms from the country with relatively undistorted financial markets have an incentive to expand their market share at home and abroad by undercutting prices charged by their competitors from the country marked with a high degree of financial frictions, especially when the latter are experiencing financial distress. Firms located in the country with distorted financial markets, in contrast, increase markups during the crisis in an effort to maintain cashflows, even though doing so means forfeiting some of their market share in the near term.

When applied to the recent European debt crisis, the interaction of customer markets and
financial frictions helps explain several phenomena that are difficult to reconcile using conventional open-economy macro models. First, the pricing mechanism implied by this interaction is consistent with our empirical evidence, which shows that the acute tightening of financial conditions in the euro area periphery between 2009 and 2013 significantly attenuated the downward pressure on prices arising from the emergence of substantial and long-lasting economic slack. And second, the tightening of financial conditions during this period is strongly associated with a significant decline in real unit labor costs in the periphery—or equivalently, an increase in markups. Hence our framework can explain why the periphery countries have managed to avoid a debt-deflation spiral in the face of massive and persistent economic slack and how the price war between the core and periphery has impeded the adjustment process through which the latter economies have been trying to regain their external competitiveness.

In our model, the pricing behavior of firms in the core in response to a financial shock in the periphery implies a real exchange rate depreciation vis-à-vis the periphery, which causes a small export-driven boom in the core countries and a deepening of the recession in the periphery. The one-size-fits-all aspect of monetary policy—an inherent feature of a monetary union—is especially ill-suited to deal with such situations. According to our simulations, common monetary policy when union members are experiencing different economic conditions leads to an endogenous increase in macroeconomic volatility that is double that implied by a floating exchange rate regime. This translates into a welfare loss for the union as a whole, with the loss borne disproportionately by the periphery.

To overcome limitations of common monetary policy, we consider two fiscal policy alternatives: a fiscal union and a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery. We show that a complete risk-sharing arrangement among union members—or equivalently, a fiscal union—can remedy the distortion brought about by the system of fixed exchange rates. However, our numerical simulations indicate that forming a fiscal union would involve large transfers of wealth from the core to the periphery. Given the likely lack of political appetite for such cross-border transfers, we then consider the macroeconomic effects of a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery. Our results indicate that such a unilateral policy action offers an effective macroeconomic stabilization tool that can be beneficial even to the core. This finding reflects the fact that when firms in the core countries cut prices to expand their market shares, they do not internalize the pecuniary externality, whereby driving out their foreign competitors by undercutting prices to an excessive degree can also reduce demand for their own products. A distortionary taxation in the form a unilateral fiscal devaluation by the periphery helps firms from the core internalize this externality, leading to an improvement in the union’s overall welfare.

References


Appendices – For Online Publication

A  Model Appendix

[To be completed.]

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Note: The entries in the table denote the values of the model parameters used in the baseline calibration; see the text for details.

B  The Impact of Technology Shocks

[To be completed.]

C  The Boom-Bust Cycle

In this section, we show how an economically plausible sequence of shocks can generate external adjustment patterns in the home country that closely resemble those experienced by the periphery countries in the period surrounding the European sovereign debt crisis. As discussed in the main text, periphery countries borrowed heavily in the years preceding the crisis, primarily to finance
domestic consumption and housing investment. As a result, real exchange rates in the eurozone periphery appreciated significantly, eroding these countries’ competitiveness. These developments also produced large trade deficits among periphery countries, which in the years leading to the crisis were easily financed by foreign capital inflows, facilitated by the convergence in domestic interest rates across the euro area.

To capture the buoyant economic sentiment that prevailed in the eurozone periphery prior to the crisis, we introduce demand shocks in our model by modifying the preferences of household $j$ in the home country (see equation 4 in the main text) as

$$E_t \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \delta^s U(x_{t+s}^j - \omega_t, h_{t+s}^j); \quad (0 < \delta < 1),$$

where $\omega_t$ denotes a disturbance that alters the marginal utility of current consumption. In this context, we consider an experiment under our baseline calibration, whereby the home country first experiences a sequence of gradually increasing positive demand shocks—the pre-crisis economic boom—which is then followed by an asymmetric financial shock. Specifically, in calibrating this scenario, we assume a sequence of demand shocks in periods $1, \ldots, 12$, such that $\omega_t$ gradually increases to 5 percent of its steady-state value; in period 13, we hit the economy with a one-time financial shock that raises the steady-state level of agency costs of external finance $\varphi$ from 0.3 to 0.5 upon impact.

As shown in Figure C-1, this sequence of events generates external adjustment patterns in the home country that correspond closely with those experienced in the eurozone periphery in the period surrounding the crisis. In the years immediately preceding the financial shock, imports-to-GDP (panel (a)) increase notably, while exports-to-GDP (panel b) fall, trade dynamics that are consistent with the erosion in the home country’s competitiveness as evidenced by the appreciation of the real exchange rate during this period (panel (d)). When the home country is hit by the financial shock, these patterns are abruptly reversed: With imports falling and exports rising, the current account deficit (panel (c))—which reached 2 percent of GDP at the eve of the crisis—begins to shrink immediately. Thus with an economically plausible sequence of shocks, the model is able to replicate the kind of current account reversal dynamics experienced by the eurozone periphery during the crisis.
Figure C-1 – The Boom-Bust Cycle in the Home Country

Note: The solid lines depict the model-implied responses of selected variables in the home country, when the country experiences a sequence of positive demand shocks in periods 1, . . . , 12 and in period 13 is hit by a one-time financial shock. The real exchange rate is expressed as home currency relative to foreign currency.