



Supply Chain Disruptions, the Structure of Production Networks, and the Impact of Globalization

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BUSINESS

Tesla to Halt Production in Germany as Red Sea Conflict Hits Supply Chains

Disruption related to attacks on ships by Houthi rebels raise risk of supply-chain crisis in Europe

By [William Boston](#) [Follow](#), [Costas Paris](#) [Follow](#) and [Benoit Faucon](#) [Follow](#)

Updated Jan. 12, 2024 1:45 pm ET

BERLIN—[Tesla](#) [TSLA](#) **-3.67%** ▼ plans to halt production at its only large factory in Europe for two weeks because of a lack of parts, a sign of how the [fallout from recent attacks on ships in the Red Sea](#) is starting to ripple through the global economy.

Yemen-based, Iran-backed Houthi fighters have launched successive attacks on commercial ships navigating the crucial trade route in recent months,

This Paper



Tractable model of (global, complex) supply chains to:

- characterize short-run impact of a shock,
- contrast with long-run impact,
- investigate how impacts depend on network/complexity,
- examine impact of globalization on fragility.

Some Related Literature



- **Foundational work:** Leontief (1936), Long Jr and Plosser (1983), Acemoglu, Carvalho, Ozdaglar, and Tahbaz-Salehi (2012)
- **Surveys:** Bernard (2018), Carvalho and Tahbaz-Salehi (2019), Baqaee and Rubbo (2022), Antràs and Chor (2022), Elliott and Golub (2022), Baldwin and Freeman (2022).
- **Production networks:** e.g., Dhyne et al. (2015); Magerman et al. (2016); Brummitt et al. (2017); Baqaee (2018); Oberfield (2018); Acemoglu and Tahbaz-Salehi (2020), Acemoglu and Azar (2020), Baqaee and Farhi (2021), Carvalho et al. (2021), Kopytov et al. (2021), Di Giovanni et al. (2022); Bernard et al. (2022), Elliott et al. (2022), Bui et al. (2022), König et al. (2022), Pellet and Tahbaz-Salehi (2023), Grossman et al. (forthcoming, 2023a,b)
- **Trade networks:** e.g., Furusawa and Konishi (2007); Chaney (2014); Bernard et al. (2019); Grossman et al. (2021)
- **Micro network structure:** e.g., Bimpikis et al. (2018), Bimpikis et al. (2019), Amelkin and Vohra (2020)

Outline



- 1 Introduction
- 2 Model**
- 3 The Impacts of Shocks: Contrasting Short and Long Runs
- 4 Complexity, Fragility, Globalization

Model



- $n \in \{1, \dots, N\}$ countries,
- $m \in \{1, \dots, M\}$ intermediate goods,
- $f \in \{1, \dots, F\}$ final goods,
- L_n units of labor country n ,
- T_n (finite) set technologies country n .

Example: Technologies

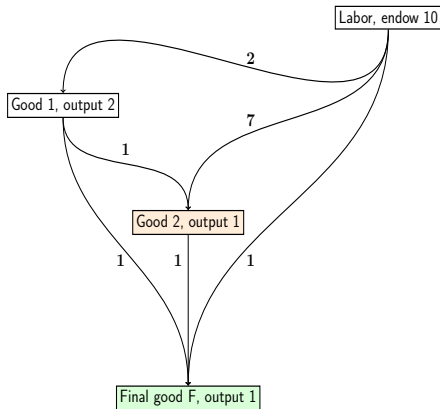
Cobb Douglas Example



$$\tau_1 = (\underbrace{-1}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{1}_1, \underbrace{0}_2, \underbrace{0}_F)$$

$$\tau_2 = (\underbrace{-7}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{-1}_1, \underbrace{1}_2, \underbrace{0}_F)$$

$$\tau_F = (\underbrace{-1}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{-1}_1, \underbrace{-1}_2, \underbrace{1}_F)$$

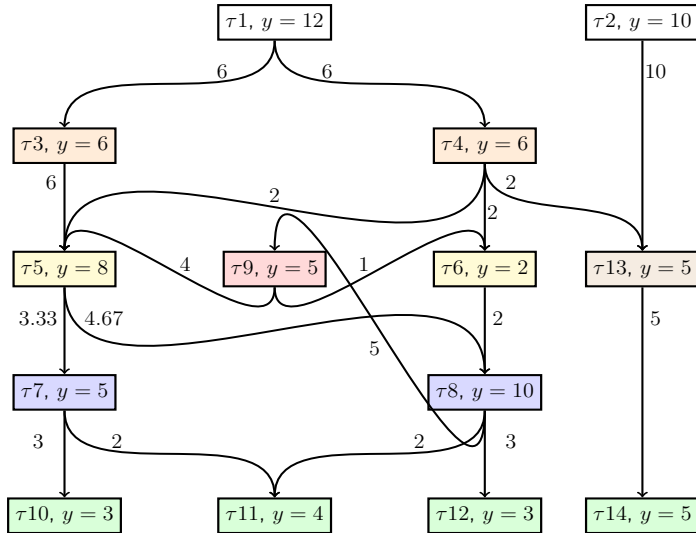


Equilibrium



- Laborers/Consumers
 - ▶ supply labor inelastically, L_n in country n ;
 - ▶ maximize homothetic preferences for final goods, $U(c_1, \dots, c_F)$.
- Producers
 - ▶ maximize profits $p_\tau y_\tau - \sum_{\tau'} p_{\tau'} x_{\tau'\tau}$,
 - ▶ s.t feasible production: $-\tau_k y_\tau = \sum_{\tau': O(\tau')=k} x_{\tau'\tau}$.
- Markets clear - standard Arrow-Debreu equilibrium.

Example w Cycles (Labor Omitted, Final Goods in Green)



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Impact of Shock



For τ with output k , we normalized $\tau_k = 1$.

Let's vary τ_k to capture shocks/disruptions

Analyze/contrast:

- **Long run:** new equilibrium using shocked technologies,
- **Short run:** work with existing supplies/shortages.

Long-Run: Hulten's Theorem



Proposition (Hulten's Theorem)

Consider a generic equilibrium and technology τ , with $O(\tau) = k$, used in positive amounts in equilibrium. Then

$$\frac{\partial \log(U)}{\partial \log(\tau_k)} = \frac{\partial \log(GDP)}{\partial \log(\tau_k)} = \frac{p_\tau y_\tau}{GDP}.$$

Long-Run: Hulten's Theorem



$$\frac{\partial \log(U)}{\partial \log(\tau_k)} = \frac{p_\tau y_\tau}{GDP}$$

- Sufficient statistic: *fraction of GDP spent on shocked technology.*

Long-Run: Hulten's Theorem



$$\frac{\partial \log(U)}{\partial \log(\tau_k)} = \frac{p_\tau y_\tau}{GDP}$$

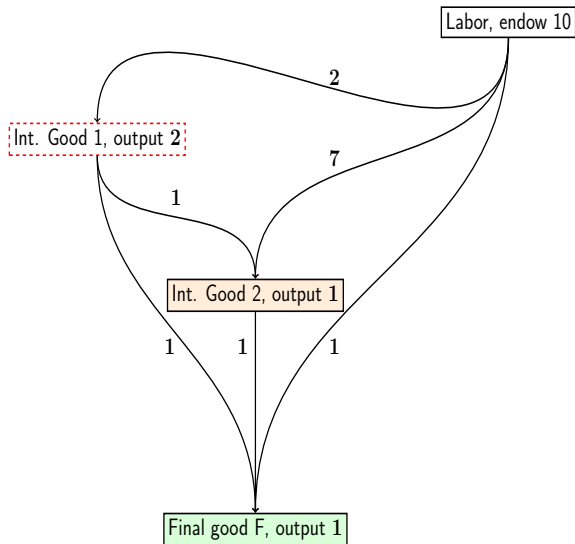
- Sufficient statistic: *fraction of GDP spent on shocked technology.*
- Intuition—adjust by sourcing more of that input at its cost.

Long-Run: Hulten's Theorem



$$\frac{\partial \log(U)}{\partial \log(\tau_k)} = \frac{p_\tau y_\tau}{GDP}$$

- Sufficient statistic: *fraction of GDP spent on shocked technology.*
- Intuition—adjust by sourcing more of that input at its cost.
- Network matters in background as it determines equilibrium
 - ▶ but don't need to see network to estimate long-run impact.



$$p = \left(\underbrace{\frac{1}{10}}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{10}}_{\text{Int.1}}, \underbrace{\frac{4}{5}}_{\text{Int.2}}, \underbrace{1}_{\text{Final}} \right)$$

$$p_1 y_1 = 1/10 * 2;$$

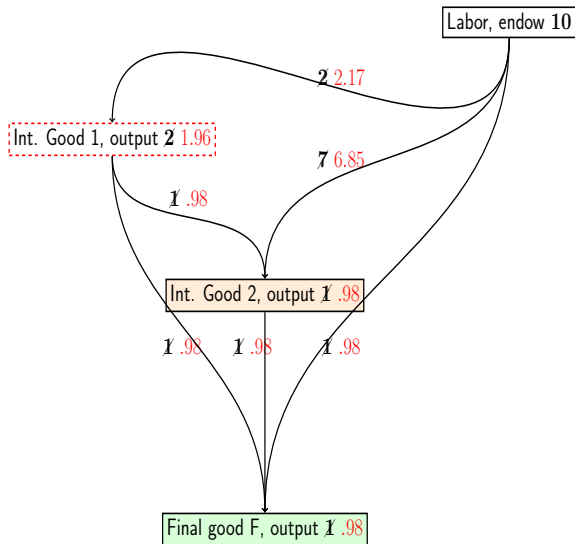
$$GDP = \sum_f p_f c_f = 1;$$

Marginal impact:

$$\frac{p_1 y_1}{GDP} = \frac{1}{5}$$

Extrapolating for a 10% shock,
(source more)

Long Run impact: 1/50th of GDP



$$p = \left(\underbrace{\frac{1}{10}}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{10}}_{\text{Int.1}}, \underbrace{\frac{4}{5}}_{\text{Int.2}}, \underbrace{1}_{\text{Final}} \right)$$

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Long Run impact: 1/50th of GDP



"There would be a set of economists who would sit around explaining that electricity was only 4% of the economy, and so if you lost 80% of electricity, you couldn't possibly have lost more than 3% of the economy...[However,] we would understand that [...] when there wasn't any electricity, there wasn't really going to be much economy."

Short-Run Impact of a Shock



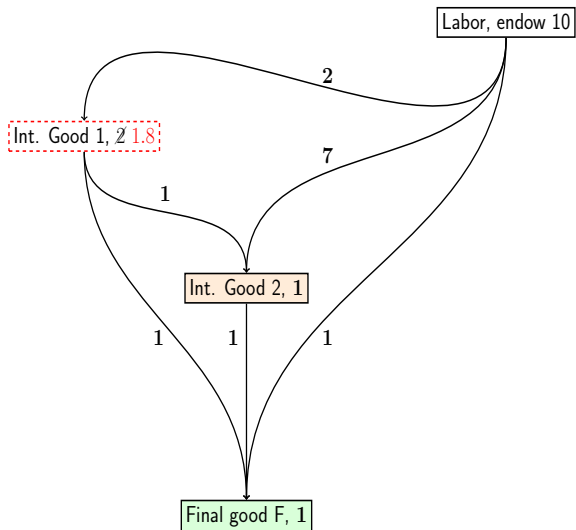
Hulten: Production is perfectly flexible and fully adjusts.
(Marginal result.)

Now: Opposite benchmark with no adjustments.
(Our result holds away from the margin.)

- Cannot adjust the technologies being used.
- Cannot source additional units from alternative suppliers.
- Prices cannot adjust—rationing of disrupted goods is proportional

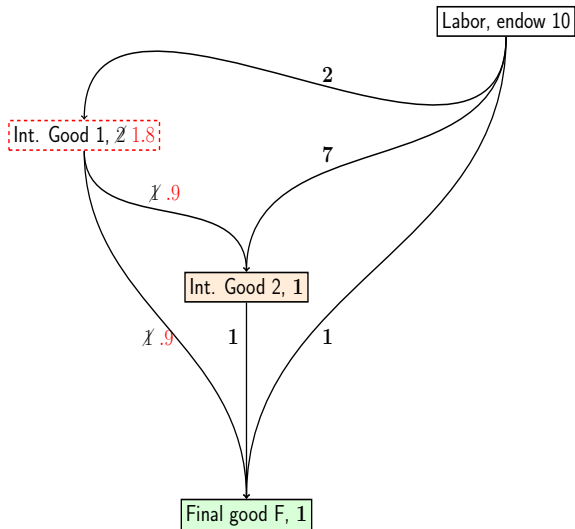


Short Run Disruption 10%



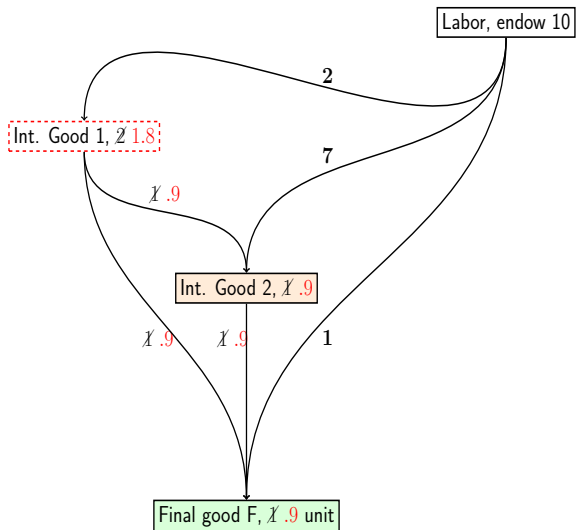


Short Run Disruption 10%



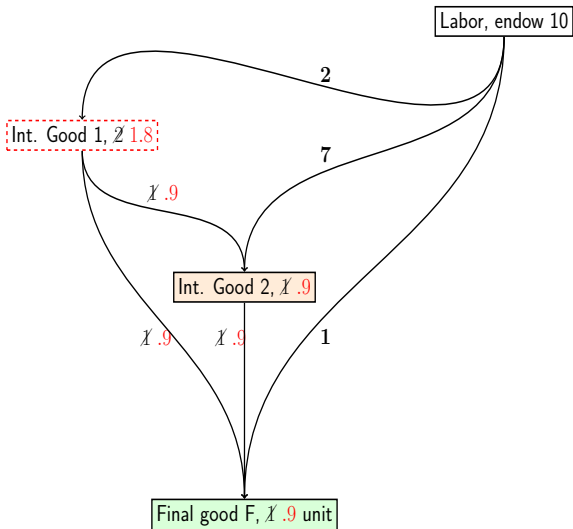


Short Run Disruption 10%





Short Run Disruption 10%



Long Run Disruption 2%

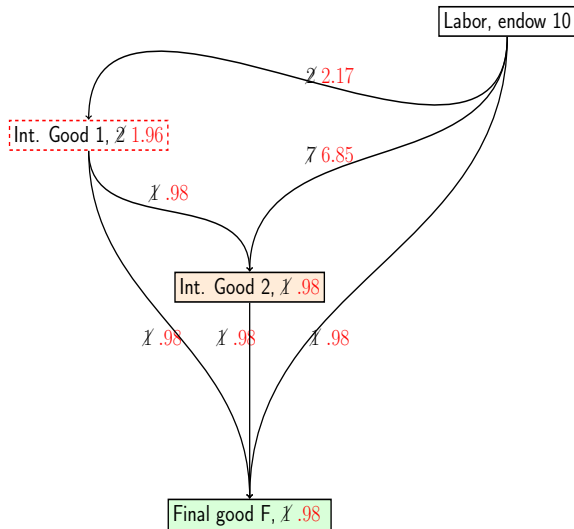


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm

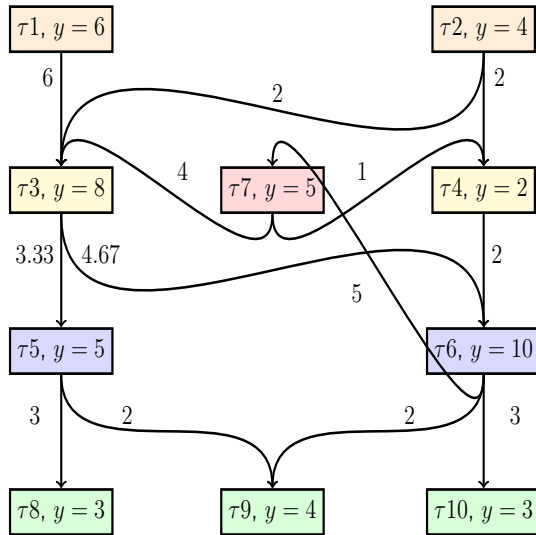


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm

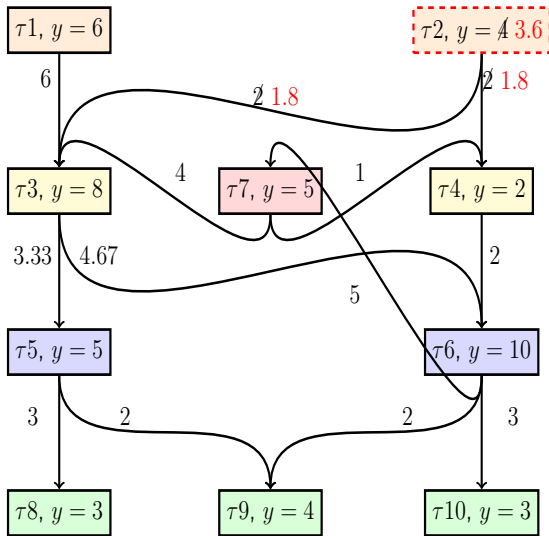


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm

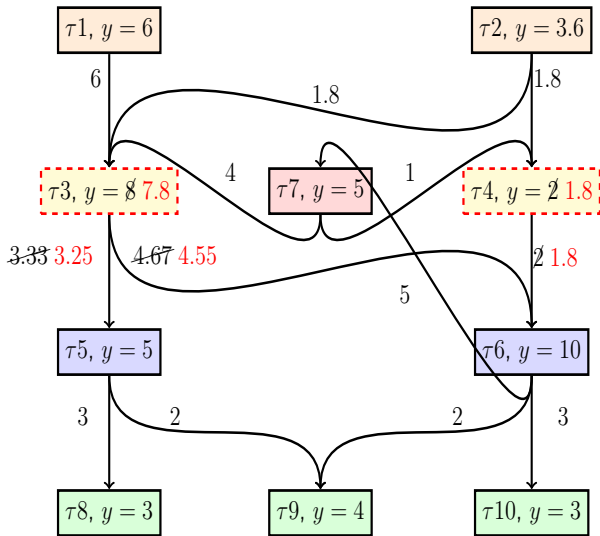


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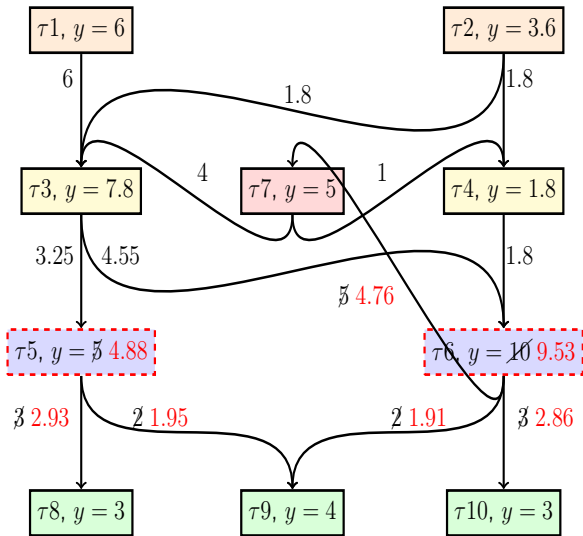


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm

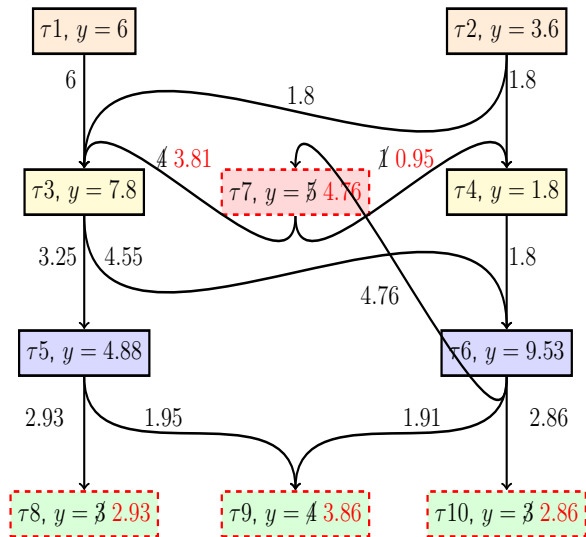


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm

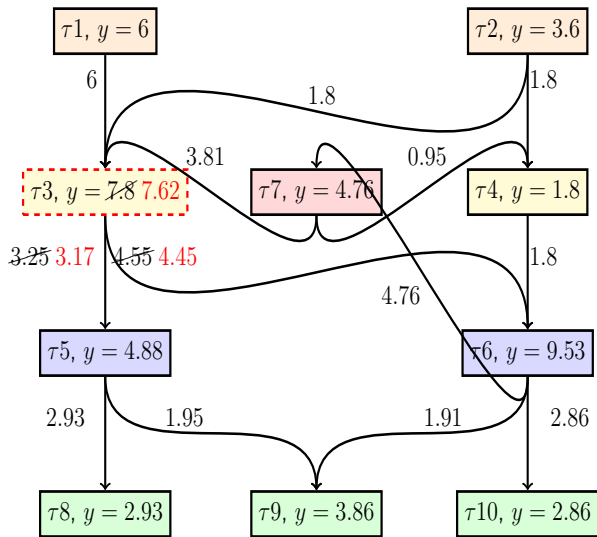
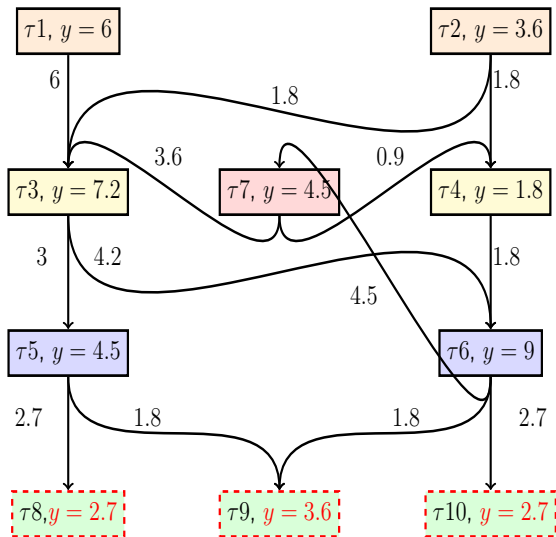


Figure: Shock Propagation Algorithm



Short-Run Impact: The Minimum Disruption Problem



$$\max_{(\hat{y}_\tau)_\tau} \sum_{\tau: O(\tau) \in F} p_\tau \hat{y}_\tau$$

subject to

- ❶ shock constraints: $\hat{y}_\tau \leq \lambda y_\tau$ for all $\tau \in T^{shocked}$,
- ❷ technology constraints: $\hat{y}_\tau \leq \left(\min_{\text{Inputs used by } \tau} \frac{\text{New input level}}{\text{Original input level}} \right) y_\tau$ for active τ ,
- ❸ proportional rationing: $\hat{x}_{\tau\tau'} = x_{\tau\tau'} \left(\frac{\hat{y}_\tau}{y_\tau} \right)$ for active $\tau' \tau$,
- ❹ inactive technologies stay inactive.

Shock Propagation Algorithm



Define an algorithm that traces shock (like example): it converges to a solution of the minimum disruption problem.

Let $F(T^{shocked})$ be the final goods on directed paths from shocked technologies.

Proposition (Upper Bound)

Consider a shock that reduces the output of technologies $\tau \in T^{shocked}$ to $\lambda < 1$ of their original levels. The proportion of lost GDP is bounded above by

$$(1 - \lambda) \left(\frac{\sum_{f \in F(T^{shocked})} p_f c_f}{GDP} \right).$$

Sufficient Conditions for Bound to Bite



- All producers of given good and any “substitute” for it in a supply chain are shocked.
- Globalization/Low shipping costs: for low enough transportation costs generically get unique technologies used.
- Other sufficient conditions (graph-cut) in paper.

Short Run vs Long Run



Long Run, Hulten's Theorem,

$$\frac{\partial \log(U)}{\partial \log(\lambda)} = \frac{\partial \log(GDP)}{\partial \log(\lambda)} = \frac{(1 - \lambda) p_{\tau} y_{\tau}}{GDP}.$$

Short Run, when bound bites

$$\frac{\Delta \log(U)}{\Delta \log(\lambda)} = \frac{\Delta \log(GDP)}{\Delta \log(\lambda)} = \frac{(1 - \lambda) \sum_{f \in F(\tau)} p_f c_f}{GDP}.$$

Short Run vs Long Run



Long Run, Hulten's Theorem,

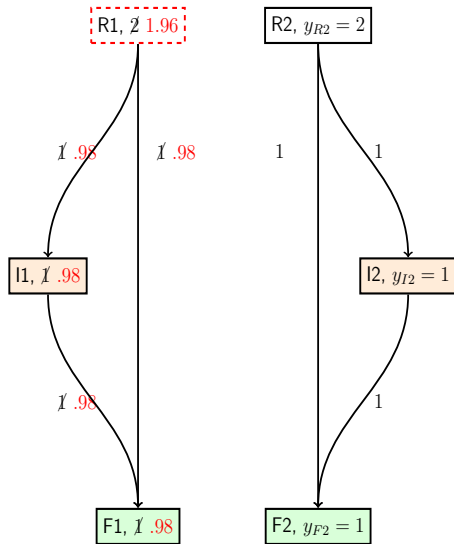
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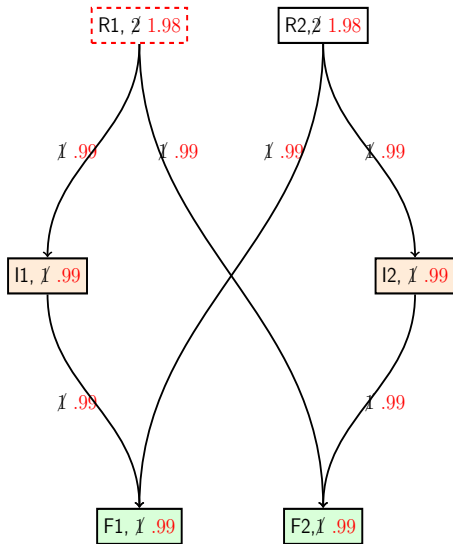
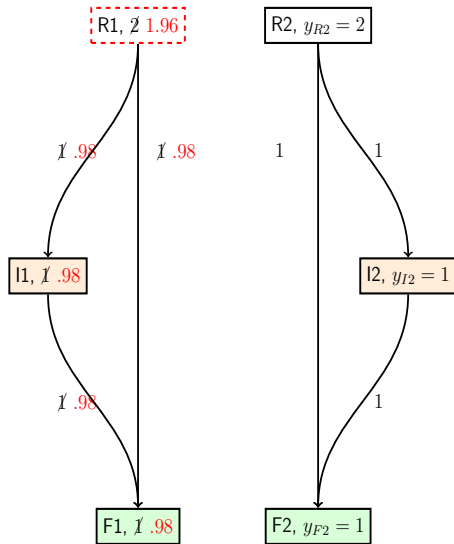
$$\frac{\Delta \log(U)}{\Delta \log(\lambda)} = \frac{\Delta \log(GDP)}{\Delta \log(\lambda)} = \frac{(1 - \lambda) \sum_{f \in F(\tau)} p_f c_f}{GDP}.$$

- Long Run: shocking more expensive technologies has a larger impact.
- Short Run: shocking technologies that are used in more final goods has a larger impact.

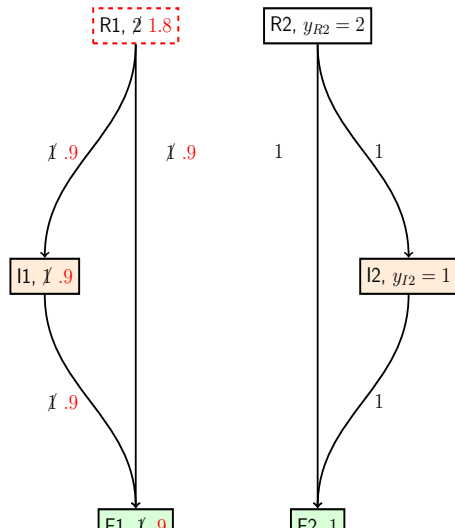
Long Run: Network Irrelevant, Impact 1%



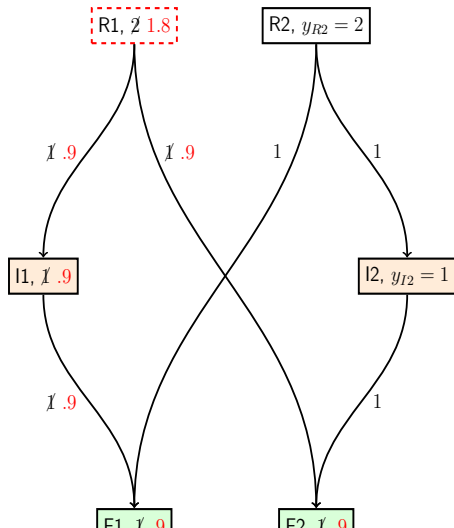
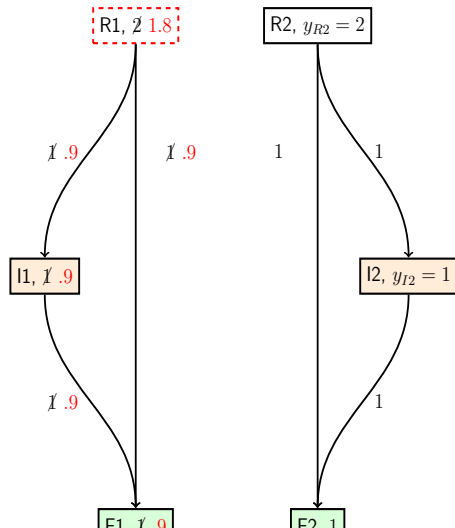
Long Run: Network Irrelevant, Impact 1%



Short Run: Network Matters, All Downstream Goods Impacted 5% or 10%



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Short Run vs Long Run



Short Run:

- Network position matters,
- Disrupt all final goods downstream

Long Run:

- (Much) cheaper than Short Run,
- Relative cost of input matters,
- Network matters, but only to extent changes costs.

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Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Under the bound, randomly disrupt any technology to $\lambda < 1$:

- Probability π disrupt any given intermediate technology, independent.
- S = complexity: average $\#$ inputs used produce a final good.

Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Proposition (Complexity and Fragility)

For small π

$$\text{Short-Run } \mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\Delta GDP}{GDP} \right] \approx -S\pi(1 - \lambda),$$

$$\text{SR } 1\pi(1-\lambda)$$

$$\tau 1, y_{\tau 2} = 1$$



$$F1, y_{F1} = 1$$



SR $1\pi(1-\lambda)$

$\tau 1, y_{\tau 2} = 1$

$F1, y_{F1} = 1$

SR $4\pi(1-\lambda)$

$\tau 1, y_{\tau 1} = 1$

$\tau 2, y_{\tau 2} = 1$

$\tau 3, y_{\tau 3} = 1$

$\tau 4, y_{\tau 3} = 1$

$F1, y_{F1} = 1$





$$\text{SR } 4\pi(1 - \lambda)i$$

$$\text{SR } 1\pi(1 - \lambda)$$

$$\tau 1, y_{\tau 2} = 1$$

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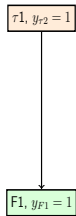
$$\tau 2, y_{\tau 2} = 1$$

$$\tau 3, y_{\tau 3} = 1$$

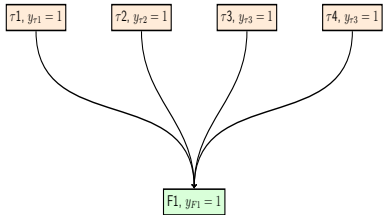
$$\tau 4, y_{\tau 3} = 1$$

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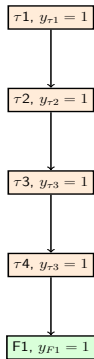
SR $1\pi(1-\lambda)$



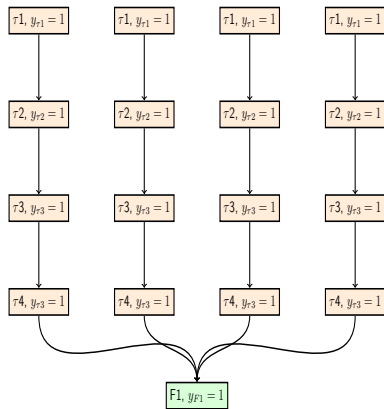
SR $4\pi(1-\lambda)$



SR $4\pi(1-\lambda)i$



SR $16\pi(1-\lambda)$



Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Under the bound, randomly disrupt any technology to $\lambda < 1$:

- Probability π disrupt any given intermediate technology, independent.
- S = average # inputs used produce a final good.
- $RC = E[(\text{cost of random input})/(\text{costs of final goods impacted})]$.

Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Proposition (Complexity and Fragility)

For small π

$$\text{Short-Run } \mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\Delta GDP}{GDP} \right] \approx -S\pi(1 - \lambda),$$

$$\text{Long-Run } \mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\Delta GDP}{GDP} \right] \approx -S\pi(1 - \lambda)RC$$

Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Proposition (Complexity and Fragility)

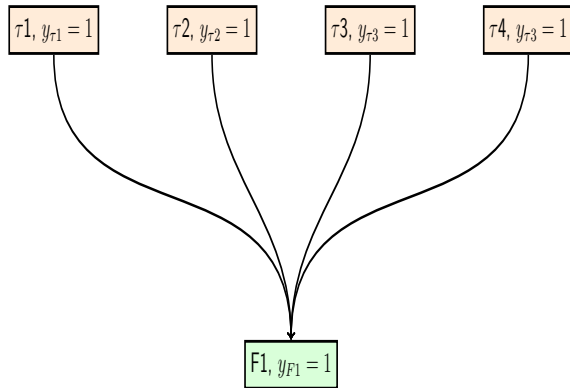
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$$\text{Long-Run } \mathbb{E} \left[\frac{\Delta GDP}{GDP} \right] \approx -S\pi(1 - \lambda)RC$$

Same probabilities of disruption, but different expected costs (much lower in long run)

Horizontal Supply Chain (all labor inputs = 1)



Labor endowment: 5

$$p = \left(\underbrace{\frac{1}{5}}_{\text{labor}}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{5}}_{\tau 1}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{5}}_{\tau 2}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{5}}_{\tau 3}, \underbrace{\frac{1}{5}}_{\tau 4}, \underbrace{1}_F \right)$$

Complexity inputs/final good: $S = 4$.

Average input cost / final good cost: $q = .2$

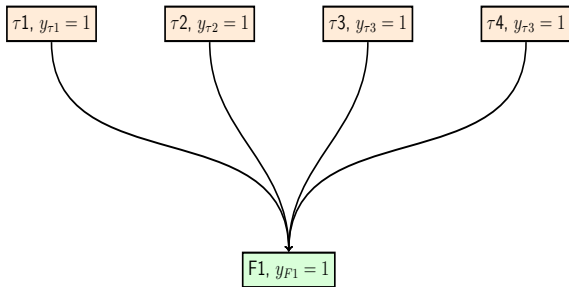
Short Run expected impact: $4(1 - \lambda)\pi$

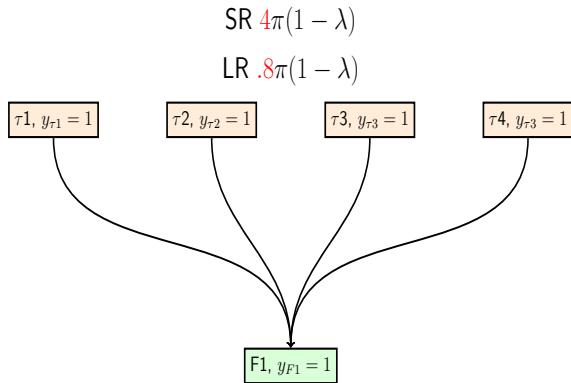
Long Run expected impact: $.8(1 - \lambda)\pi$



SR $4\pi(1 - \lambda)$

LR $.8\pi(1 - \lambda)$





SR $4\pi(1 - \lambda)$

LR $2\pi(1 - \lambda)$

$\tau 1, y_{\tau 1} = 1$

$\tau 2, y_{\tau 2} = 1$

$\tau 3, y_{\tau 3} = 1$

$\tau 4, y_{\tau 3} = 1$

$F1, y_{F1} = 1$



Supply Chain Complexity and Disruption



Short Run:

- *shape (breadth vs depth) of supply chain is irrelevant (S matters),*
- More final goods, lower S , impact compartmentalized.

Long Run :

- *shape of supply chain matters as it affects relative costs,*
- number of final goods does not matter, relative costs of inputs does.

Trade Costs and Globalization



$\theta_{\tau\tau'} \geq 1$ units of $O(\tau)$ shipped from τ for 1 unit to get to τ' .

Effects of dropping costs:

- Increased specialization: only most efficient technology is used.
- Increased complexity: new technologies/goods become viable that source more inputs from more locations.

Trade Costs and Globalization



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Example:

- $\sim 90\%$ of most advanced computer chips assembled in Taiwan,
- Very complex supply chain and some materials cross borders > 70 times before final assembly.

Fragility and Globalization: Consolidating Supply chains



Consider two supply chains for some final good f , and shocks that are independent across technologies with the same proportional disruption.

Proposition

If the set of technologies that lie on a directed path to τ_f is smaller in chain 2 ($\mathcal{G}^2(\tau_f) \subsetneq \mathcal{G}^1(\tau_f)$), then the probability of a disruption to τ_f is lower, but the expected short-run impact conditional on disruption is higher in chain 2 than 1.

Fragility and Globalization: Consolidating Supply chains



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Lower transportation costs lead to specialized production and consolidation (and the bound holds).

Consolidating supply chains leads to fewer chances of disruption, but each technology then accounts for a larger fraction of that input, and hence a larger disruption.

Fragility and Globalization



- More specialized production—fewer, larger producers,
- Larger shocks, but fewer producers and so (possibly) less frequent.
- As cross more borders, could face more political/transport risk...

Summary



- Short and long run can differ dramatically, both very tractable.
- Short run depends on all downstream goods, long run only on cost of shocked goods
- Short run network 'rewiring' matters, not in long run
- Medium run depends on relative values of downstream goods
- Increasingly complex chains are more vulnerable
- Globalization/specialization leads to less likely but bigger shocks

Externalities!



- Competition is inefficient (missing markets)
- Competition pushes to cheaper sourcing, low inventories
- Unless compensated for resilience, leads to excessive specialization/fragility
- Policy implications of model:
 - ▶ Short run:
 - ★ target 'central' technologies
 - ★ build inventories, substitutes (decrease centrality)
 - ★ build parallel chains
 - ▶ Long run:
 - ★ target 'expensive' technologies
 - ★ support diverse technologies for same goods
 - ★ favor technologies enabling shallower supply chains



Discussion

Medium Run



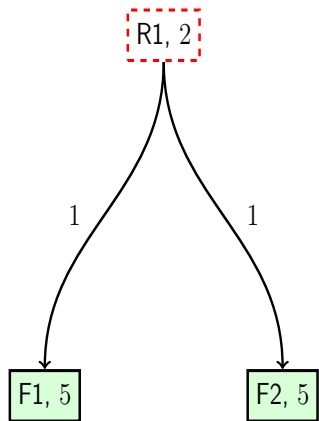
No new sourcing: existing supply chains in place

Prices can steer rationed goods to most needed technologies

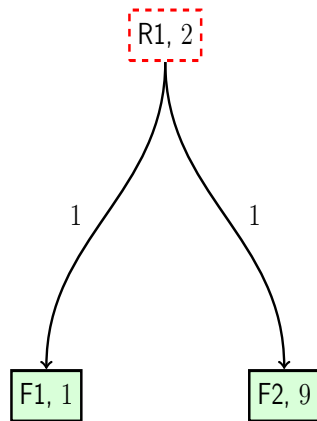
If multiple flows affected:

- Different supply chains have similar final good values: looks like short run,
- Different supply chains have very different final good values: looks more like long run, only disrupt lowest value chains.

Medium Run Shock Impact

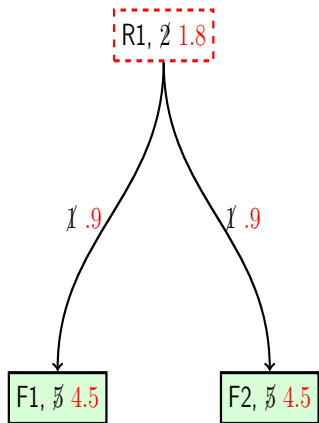


Equal-Valued Final Goods

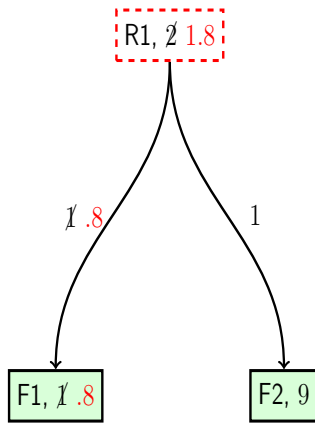


Unequal-Valued Final Goods

Medium Run Shock Impact



Impact 1/10
Same as Short Run



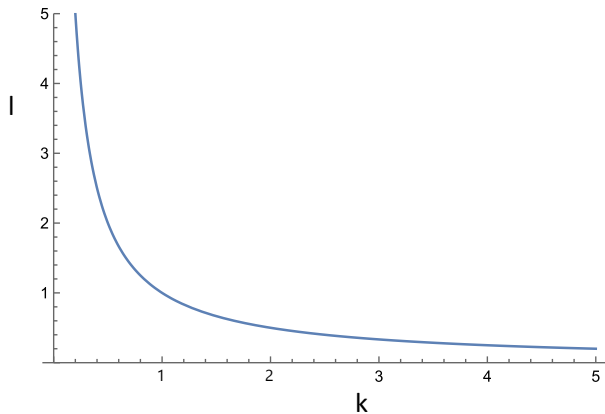
Impact 1/50
Close to Long Run

Arrow-Debreu (1954) Technologies



Suppose country n can produce according to $y = L^\alpha K^{1-\alpha}$

Then $T_n = \{(-l, -k, 1) : l^\alpha k^{1-\alpha} = 1\}$

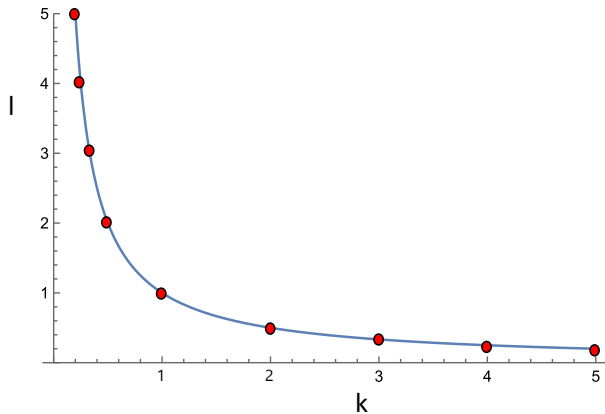


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Then $T_n = \{(-l, -k, 1) : l^\alpha k^{1-\alpha} = 1\}$



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