What made mercantilist warfare effective in its own terms, i.e. by crippling trade of defeated powers? Our paper uses the Anglo-French experience during the 18th century to disentangle the effects of successful trade war strategies to curtail enemy's trade.

Thanks to a new database of French trade statistics, we were able to analyse the impact of a prolonged period of mercantilist warfare, not only on aggregate trade, but also on its structure, narrowing down our analysis to fourteen distinct product categories.

We quantify the disruptive effects of different elements, such as naval supremacy, colony loss, policy towards neutral countries, activities of privateers and British Navy and Army budget.

Despite not being able to determine a specific cause of success in inflicting major post-war losses, we identify a clear link between long lasting changes in trade structure and trade losses; an effective trade war caused a longer lasting shift in trade composition.