

International Transport costs:
New Findings from modeling additive costs
Online Appendix (Not for Publication)

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A. Three models: Comparison

The paper compares the empirical performances of two models: one with only ad-valorem costs (Model (A)) and one with where both ad-valorem and additive costs (Model (B)). In the interest of comprehensiveness, we also estimate the model with only additive costs (Model (C)), in which case the estimated equation is:

$$\ln \left(\frac{p_{ik}}{\tilde{p}_{ik}} - 1 \right) = \ln \left(\frac{t_i + t_{s(k)}}{\tilde{p}_{ik}} \right) + \epsilon_{ik}^{add}$$

This section is devoted to presenting the results. Precisely, we first compare the estimates of the transport costs components under the three models. In a second step, we report quality of fit tests for the three models.

A.1. Estimation results

In this section, we report the estimation results of the three models: Model (A) (with only ad-valorem costs), Model (B) (with both additive and ad-valorem) and Model (C) (with only additive costs). Table A.2 reports the results for air transport, Table A.3 for vessel transport.

Table A.1: Estimation results of the three models (Air, 3-digit level)

Year	1974	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
# obs.	14955	16118	19908	24958	31037	35027	41806	40279	39351
# origin countries	152	165	169	181	207	208	211	210	210
# sectors	203	204	207	212	217	218	217	216	212
Model (A) - Iceberg transport costs only ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$)									
Mean (in %)	6.93	5.41	6.08	5.03	4.61	3.60	4.10	4.19	3.36
Median (in %)	5.43	3.79	5.47	4.37	3.80	2.47	3.12	3.41	2.92
Standard Deviation	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
Model (B) - With additive and ad-valorem transport costs									
<i>Multiplicative term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$)</i>									
Mean (in %)	3.64	2.32	2.46	2.38	2.05	1.66	2.00	2.57	1.70
Median (in %)	2.71	1.57	1.79	1.60	1.39	1.20	1.57	2.24	1.72
Standard Deviation	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
<i>Additive term (t/\tilde{p})</i>									
Mean (in %)	2.56	2.04	2.83	1.83	1.64	1.30	1.43	1.13	1.01
Median (in %)	1.13	0.54	1.30	0.84	0.68	0.45	0.53	0.43	0.47
Standard Deviation	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
Model (C) - With additive transport costs only (\hat{t}^{add}/\tilde{p})									
Mean (in %)	6.88	4.82	5.99	4.44	3.80	3.09	4.00	4.49	3.29
Median (in %)	4.45	1.82	3.36	2.27	1.72	1.39	1.93	2.72	2.06
Standard Deviation	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.05

Results for Models (A) and (B) are identical to those reported in the paper. Unsurprisingly, the estimated size of overall transport costs under Model (C) is of same order of magnitude as in Models (A) and (B). We also observe a downward trend of transport costs over time, in particular since 1980.

A.2. Quality of fit diagnostic tests

To go further into the comparison of the empirical relevance of our three empirical models (A), (B) and (C), we compare quality of fit diagnostic tests in this section. Table A.4 reports the results for air transport, and Table A.5 those for vessel transport. In both tables, we report the values of the R^2 , the Standard Error of Regression (SER), the AIC

Table A.2: Estimation results of the three models (Air, product at 5-digit level, sector at 3-digit level)

	year (baseline, air)					
	1974	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Data						
# obs.	14,955	16,118	24,958	35,027	40,284	202,298
# sectors	203	204	212	218	216	175
# origin countries	152	165	181	208	210	213
<i>Observed transport costs</i>						
Mean	0.053	0.040	0.041	0.028	0.031	0.022
Median	0.033	0.016	0.019	0.014	0.019	0.015
Standard deviation	0.067	0.064	0.060	0.048	0.052	0.038
<i>Multiplicative term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$)</i>						
Mean	1.036	1.023	1.024	1.017	1.026	1.022
Median	1.027	1.016	1.016	1.012	1.022	1.020
Standard deviation	0.032	0.025	0.021	0.016	0.023	0.013
<i>Additive term (\hat{t}/\hat{p})</i>						
Mean	0.026	0.020	0.018	0.013	0.011	0.006
Median	0.011	0.005	0.008	0.005	0.004	0.001
Standard deviation	0.040	0.041	0.033	0.028	0.024	0.018
$\hat{\beta}$						
Mean	-0.339	-0.335	-0.327	-0.310	-0.214	-0.127
Median	-0.303	-0.282	-0.295	-0.298	-0.183	-0.061
Standard deviation	0.241	0.229	0.208	0.204	0.175	0.155

Table A.3: Estimation results of the three models (Vessel, 3-digit level)

Year	1974	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
#obs.	19007	17356	23348	28383	32146	36090	41319	37748	38473
# origin countries	154	163	171	179	201	206	206	198	203
# sectors	239	232	232	232	228	230	231	226	224
Model (A) - Iceberg transport costs only ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$)									
Mean (in %)	9.79	6.53	6.88	5.67	5.14	5.10	5.47	3.99	3.60
Median (in %)	9.58	5.50	6.33	4.63	4.29	4.85	4.90	3.56	3.28
Standard Deviation	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
Model (B) - With additive and ad-valorem transport costs									
<i>Multiplicative term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$)</i>									
Mean (in %)	5.42	3.08	4.02	3.31	2.79	2.49	2.68	1.95	2.22
Median (in %)	4.93	2.42	3.60	2.81	2.53	2.07	2.08	1.76	1.82
Standard Deviation	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
<i>Additive term (\hat{t}/\hat{p})</i>									
Mean (in %)	5.08	3.38	3.19	2.73	2.73	2.80	3.02	2.47	1.46
Median (in %)	2.94	2.27	2.06	1.70	1.82	2.19	2.16	1.89	0.76
Standard Deviation	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02
Model (C) - With additive transport costs only (\hat{t}^{add}/\hat{p})									
Mean (in %)	14.51	10.05	10.47	14.62	8.37	8.02	8.41	6.40	5.23
Median (in %)	9.53	6.69	7.16	6.22	4.68	4.93	5.74	3.87	3.57
Standard Deviation	0.24	0.17	0.18	0.30	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.10

criterion and the log-likelihood (LL) value. We also report the value of the log-likelihood ratio that tests the quality of fit of the global model (Model (B)) compared to the other two models.

Table A.4: Quality-of-fit diagnostic tests of the three models (Air, 3-digit level)

Year	1974	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
R^2									
Model (A)	0.297	0.267	0.302	0.251	0.142	0.318	0.460	0.421	0.313
Model (B)	0.594	0.646	0.635	0.627	0.658	0.640	0.593	0.513	0.419
Model (C)	0.489	0.543	0.531	0.517	0.546	0.518	0.464	0.339	0.295
SER									
Model (A)	0.791	0.860	0.831	0.811	0.798	0.844	0.837	0.857	0.920
Model (B)	0.674	0.715	0.692	0.675	0.641	0.697	0.727	0.787	0.847
Model (C)	1.610	1.778	1.736	1.699	1.700	1.786	1.783	1.776	1.723
AIC criteria									
Model (A)	35675.0	41171.0	49315.0	60715.6	74386.4	87492.5	103983.0	102297.7	106130.6
Model (B)	31387.3	35738.4	42535.8	52098.9	61343.7	74954.9	92758.6	95887.1	100155.4
Model (C)	40808.1	45138.5	55214.8	69458.5	83958.6	100040.8	123592.1	129359.0	127399.2
Log-likelihood									
Model (A)	-17530.5	-20253.5	-24315.5	-29977.8	-36811.2	-43341.3	-51648.5	-50746.8	-52690.3
Model (B)	-15125.6	-17263.2	-20686.9	-25393.5	-30036.9	-36788.4	-45768.3	-47277.5	-49419.7
Model (C)	-20074.1	-22217.2	-27251.4	-34355.3	-41634.3	-49625.4	-61533.0	-64339.5	-63316.6
Test LL									
Stat LL ratio (B vs A)	4809.7	5980.6	7257.3	9168.7	13548.7	13105.7	11760.4	6938.6	6541.2
\# restrictions	355	369	376	393	424	426	428	426	422
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stat LL ratio (B vs C)	4948.4	4954.0	6564.5	8961.8	11597.4	12837.0	15764.7	17062.0	13896.9
\# restrictions	355	369	376	393	424	426	428	426	422
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table A.5: Quality-of-fit diagnostic tests of the three models (Vessel, 3-digit level)

Year	1974	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
R^2									
Model (A)	0.450	0.415	0.427	0.456	0.438	0.401	0.378	0.350	0.339
Model (B)	0.612	0.575	0.571	0.590	0.611	0.571	0.541	0.491	0.462
Model (C)	0.424	0.401	0.374	0.429	0.456	0.431	0.417	0.358	0.349
SER									
Model (A)	0.576	0.620	0.569	0.592	0.615	0.652	0.673	0.740	0.758
Model (B)	0.484	0.528	0.493	0.514	0.512	0.551	0.578	0.656	0.684
Model (C)	1.271	1.339	1.283	1.326	1.302	1.319	1.336	1.392	1.410
AIC criteria									
Model (A)	33328.81	33010.27	40275.70	51142.62	60414.92	71365.89	85051.02	84789.89	88191.87
Model (B)	27331.52	28067.31	34170.52	43664.74	49275.33	60475.91	73020.09	76161.33	80873.72
Model (C)	46082.40	44370.26	58829.71	71461.52	77052.41	88746.51	103310.93	101166.91	104290.27
Log-likelihood									
Model (A)	-16287.40	-16129.13	-19767.85	-25169.31	-29790.46	-35263.95	-42122.51	-41998.95	-43692.93
Model (B)	-12985.76	-13353.65	-16398.26	-21171.37	-23905.66	-29490.96	-35844.04	-37418.66	-39751.86
Model (C)	-22674.20	-21814.13	-29045.86	-35403.76	-38125.20	-43963.25	-51245.46	-50348.45	-51783.14
Test LL									
Stat LL ratio (B vs A)	6603.28	5550.96	6739.18	7995.88	11769.59	11545.98	12556.94	9160.56	7882.15
# restrictions	393	395	403	411	429	436	437	424	427
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stat LL ratio (B vs C)	19376.88	16920.95	25295.20	28464.79	28439.08	28944.59	30802.84	25859.58	24062.55
# restrictions	393	395	403	411	429	436	437	424	427
p-value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

For all years and whatever the transport mode considered, the model with additive costs only (Model (C)) is consistently dominated (in terms of quality of fit properties) by the model with multiplicative costs only (Model (A)), which is itself consistently dominated by the complete model (Model (B)), whatever the type of diagnostic test considered. That justifies our choice to disregard Model (C) in the main text.

B. Transport Cost Estimates: Yearly Detailed Results

In this section, we complement Table 1 of the main text by reporting the year-to-year results of the estimation driven at the 3-digit classification level. Table [B.1](#) reports the results for each year over 1974-2013 for air transport; Table [B.2](#) reports similar results for vessel. In both cases, we report the estimated values of the transport costs (weighted mean and median) when only ad-valorem costs are modeled (Model (A)) and when both additive and ad-valorem costs are modeled (Model (B)).

Table B.1: Air: Transport costs estimates, all years, 3-digit

Year	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Model (A) - With only Ad-Valorem Trade Costs ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$, in %)																				
Mean	6.9	7.5	7.2	7.7	6.9	6.1	5.4	6.0	6.4	6.9	7.2	6.1	6.4	6.6	5.7	5.3	5.0	5.1	4.9	5.1
Median	5.4	6.4	6.9	7.1	6.3	5.3	3.8	4.9	5.3	6.1	6.7	5.5	5.9	6.3	5.3	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4
Model (B) - With Additive & Ad-Valorem Trade Costs																				
<i>Ad-valorem term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.2	3.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.6	3.3	2.5	3.2	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.4	2.7	2.2	2.4
Median	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.1	2.4	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.7	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6
<i>Additive term (\hat{t}^{add}/\tilde{p}, in %)</i>																				
Mean	2.6	3.0	2.3	3.1	2.6	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.9	1.7	4.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9
Median	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.8
# observations	14955	15299	11397	10707	15222	15684	16118	16864	17322	18180	20644	19908	20695	20793	24663	25197	24958	25156	26191	28296

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Model (A) - With only Ad-Valorem Trade Costs ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$, in %)																				
Mean	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.4
Median	3.7	3.8	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.1	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.9
Model (B) - With Additive & Ad-Valorem Trade Costs																				
<i>Ad-valorem term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.2	2.2	1.7
Median	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.7	1.9	1.7
<i>Additive term (\hat{t}^{add}/\tilde{p}, in %)</i>																				
Mean	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.0
Median	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
# observations	29948	31037	32187	33502	33492	33523	35027	34885	35159	35891	36990	41806	42554	40858	40159	38275	40279	41190	40909	39351

Continued

As mentioned in the paper, the estimates for air transport costs in 1989 show a surprisingly high value for the additive component (the additive cost is estimated to amount to 4.6% of the export price, whereas it amounts to 2.5% on average between 1974 and 1988, and to 1.7% over the following decade 1990-2000). This can be attributed to the presence of outliers in the distribution of the additive costs estimates. The maximum value for \hat{t}/\tilde{p} is 10,000% in 1989, whereas it amounts to 1,690% on average over 1974-1988 and to 1,500% on average over 1990-2000. Accordingly, in the paper we discard this year 1989 when we report the average values over the period of the transport costs estimates in air transport.

Still, this does not make much difference. When 1989 is included, the weighed mean transport cost value amounts to 1.9% for the ad-valorem component, vs 1.8% when 1989 is excluded. The weighed median value is left unchanged at 2.9% whether 1989 is included or not.

Table B.2: Vessel: Transport costs estimates, all years, 3-digit

Year	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Model (A) - With only Ad-Valorem Trade Costs ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$, in %)																				
Mean	9.8	9.9	8.9	8.3	8.1	7.5	6.5	6.0	6.3	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.7	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.0	5.2
Median	9.6	8.5	8.0	7.3	7.1	6.5	5.5	5.0	5.9	5.7	6.1	6.3	7.0	6.3	5.7	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.7
Model (B) - With Additive & Ad-Valorem Trade Costs																				
<i>Ad-valorem term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	5.4	4.8	5.4	5.2	5.9	4.6	3.1	3.3	3.4	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.6	4.0	3.0	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.9
Median	4.9	4.1	4.8	4.4	5.4	4.0	2.4	2.9	2.9	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.0	3.5	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.6
<i>Additive term ($\hat{\tau}^{add}/\tilde{p}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	5.1	5.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	3.1	3.4	2.9	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7
Median	2.9	3.6	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.7	2.3	1.5	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6
# observations	19007	18710	13615	12826	16601	17274	17356	17788	18075	18883	21650	23348	23729	23626	27661	29106	28383	28095	29050	30839

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Model (A) - With only Ad-Valorem Trade Costs ($\hat{\tau}^{ice}$, in %)																				
Mean	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.8	5.2	5.4	5.5	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.6
Median	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.5	4.9	4.6	4.1	4.8	5.1	4.9	4.2	4.2	3.8	4.1	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.3
Model (B) - With Additive & Ad-Valorem Trade Costs																				
<i>Ad-valorem term ($\hat{\tau}^{adv}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.2
Median	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.6	2.3	1.9	2.8	2.2	1.9	2.3	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.8
<i>Additive term ($\hat{\tau}^{add}/\tilde{p}$, in %)</i>																				
Mean	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.5	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.6	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.5	1.9	1.9	1.5
Median	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.8	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.6	0.8
# observations	31865	32146	32344	33181	33986	34585	36090	36407	37255	37672	37757	41431	41763	39604	38950	37332	37748	38562	38387	38473

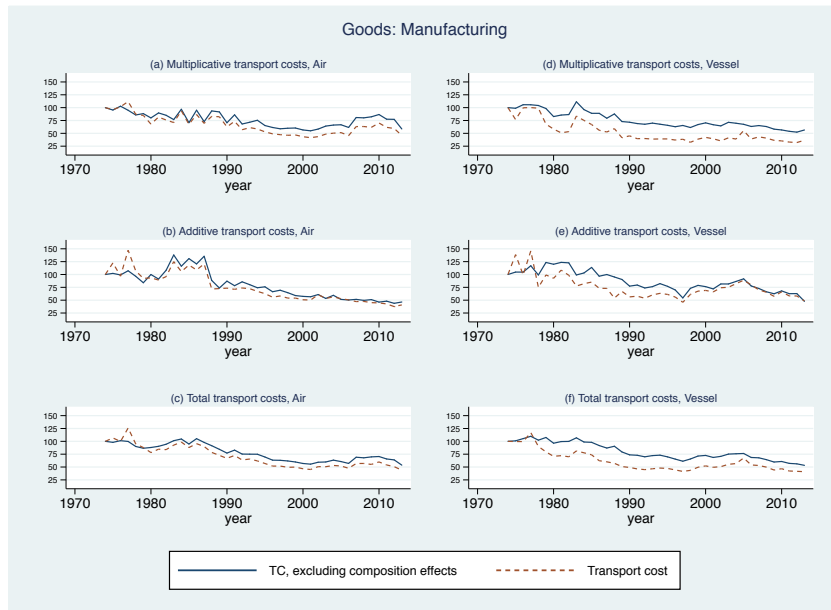
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C. Eliminating the composition effects: Primary vs. Manufacturing sector

In this section, we refine the characterization of the evolution of international transport costs by distinguishing primary goods trade flows and manufactured goods trade flows. The evolution in transport costs over time, by transport mode (overall transport costs and composition effects excluded) are reported in Figure C.1 for the manufacturing sector, and in Figure C.2 for the primary goods. For easing comparison, we also report the results obtained on the whole range of trade flows (i.e., Figure 2 of the paper), in Figure C.3.

The classification retained to categorize trade flows follows the UNCTAD classification (on SITC Revision 3)¹. Are considered as “primary goods” all flows recorded as “Food and live animals” (First digit “0” in the SITC Classification), “Beverages and tobacco” (First digit “1”), “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (First digit “2”), “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials” (First digit “3”), “Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes” (First digit “4”), “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (Classified “667” in the SITC Classification) and “Non-ferrous metals” (classified “68” in the SITC Classification).

Figure C.1: Transport costs (with and without composition effects), Manufacturing



As reported in Figures C.1 and C.2, both the “pure” transport costs and the unfitted measure, in the red dashed have regularly declined over the period in both sectors, by roughly the same order of magnitude (50% in air, 60% in vessel for overall transport costs, panels (c) and (f)). However the role of trade composition effects in accounting for this trend pattern differs depending on the sector.

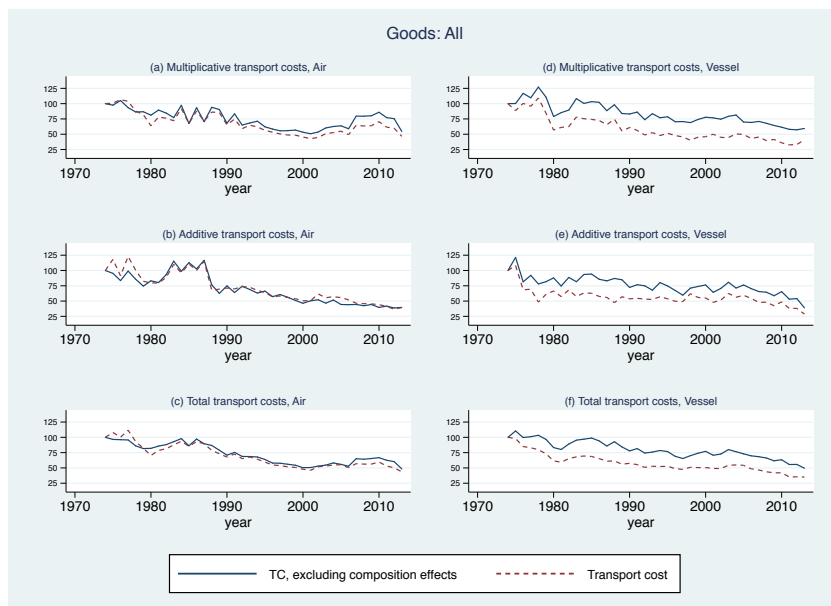
In the manufacturing sector, Figure C.1 reports a very similar time trend decomposition than what is obtained on the whole range of goods (Figure C.3). In air transport, most of the decrease can be imputed to the reduction of “ceteris paribus” transport costs (the blue continuous line), trade composition effects playing virtually no role (Figure C.1, left-hand panels (a), (b) and (c)). Trade composition effects matter more in vessel transport (Figure

¹See “UNCTAD product groupings and composition (SITC Rev. 3)” in <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications.html>, accessed September 2018

Figure C.2: Transport costs (with and without composition effects), Primary goods



Figure C.3: Transport costs (with and without composition effects)



C.1, right-hand panels (d), (e) and (f)), primarily in the ad-valorem component. As for the whole range of flows, the 60% decrease in the unfitted transport costs in vessel can be decomposed in a 50% decrease in the “ceteris paribus” transport costs (fitted), the 10% remaining to trade composition effects.

The situation is strikingly different for primary goods only. In this case, it is in air transport that composition effects do matter (Figure C.2, left-hand panels (a), (b) and (c)), while we observe not much role for them in vessel transport (Figure C.2, left-hand panels (d), (e) and (f)). Furthermore, in air transport, composition effects matter by partially offsetting the decrease in the “ceteris paribus” transport costs (ie, implying a reduction in the “raw” transport costs over time much less pronounced than the fitted transport cost measures).

One explanation for the similarity between the results for the manufacturing goods trade and for total trade can be found in the share of primary goods in total flows as reported in Figure C.4. In air transport, the share of primary goods in the total value of US imports is very small, around 10%. Primary goods make a higher proportion of trade flows in vessel transport, especially over 1974-1982 (between 40% and 60%). On the following sub-period though, their share has fallen to 20-30%. Given the modest proportion of primary goods in total import flows of the US economy compared to the manufactured sector, it is hence not surprising that the diagnosis made about the time trend of transport costs when all types of flows are considered is driven by the trend patterns that occur within the manufacturing sector.

Figure C.4: Share of primary goods in the value of total US imports

