

9. Application: International Trade

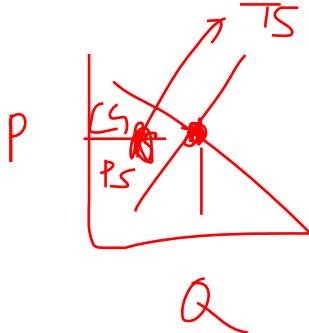
Seoul National University

What this chapter is about

- ▶ Welfare analysis of free trade in a good that a country exports, relative to no trade.
- ▶ Welfare analysis of free trade in a good that the country imports, relative to no trade.
- ▶ Welfare analysis of a tariff, relative to free trade in a good the country imports.
- ▶ The most common arguments for restricting imports.

The equilibrium without trade

- ▶ Only domestic buyers and sellers
- ▶ Equilibrium price and quantity
 - ▶ Determined on the domestic market
- ▶ Total benefits
 - ▶ Consumer surplus
 - ▶ Producer surplus



Allow for international trade?

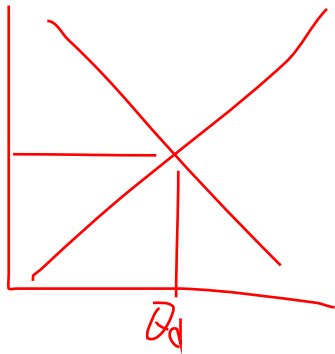
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- ▶ Price and quantity sold in the domestic market?
- ▶ Who will gain from free trade; who will lose, and will the gains exceed the losses?
- ▶ Should a tariff be part of the new trade policy?

The Determinants of Trade

- ▶ World price (P_W)
 - ▶ Price of a good that prevails in the world market for that good
- ▶ Domestic price (P_D)
 - ▶ Opportunity cost of the good on the domestic market
- ▶ Compare domestic price with world price
 - ▶ Determine who has comparative advantage
 - ▶ If $P_D < P_W$
 - ▶ The country has comparative advantage
 - ▶ Export the good
 - ▶ If $P_D > P_W$
 - ▶ The world has comparative advantage
 - ▶ Import the good



The Small Economy Assumption

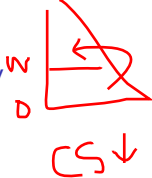
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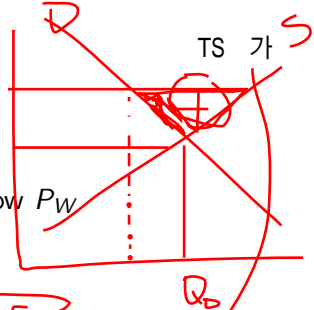
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- ▶ A small economy is a price taker in world markets: Its actions have no effect on P_W .
- ▶ Not always true—especially for the U.S.—but simplifies the analysis without changing its lessons.
- ▶ When a small economy engages in free trade, P_W is the only relevant price:
 - ▶ No (domestic) seller would accept less than P_W , since she could sell the good for P_W in world markets.
 - ▶ No (domestic) buyer would pay more than P_W , since he could buy the good for P_W in world markets.

Exporting country



P_W
 P_D



$$P_D < P_W$$



$PS \uparrow$

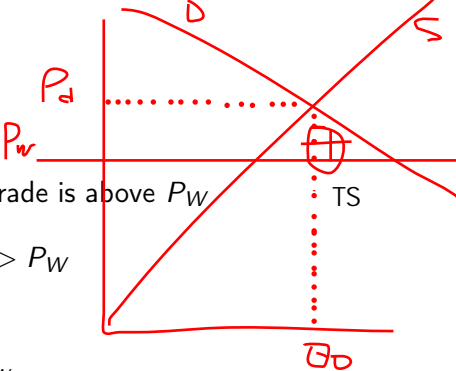
- ▶ Domestic equilibrium price before trade is below P_W
- ▶ Once trade is allowed
 - ▶ Domestic price rises to equal P_W
 - ▶ Domestic quantity supplied is greater than domestic quantity demanded
 - ▶ The difference: exports
- ▶ With international trade
 - ▶ $CS \downarrow$, $PS \uparrow$, $TS \uparrow$ (i.e. the economic well-being of a nation \uparrow)
 - ▶ Gains of the winners exceed the losses of the losers

$$P_D < P_W$$

$$P_D > P_W$$

$$P_D' = P_W$$

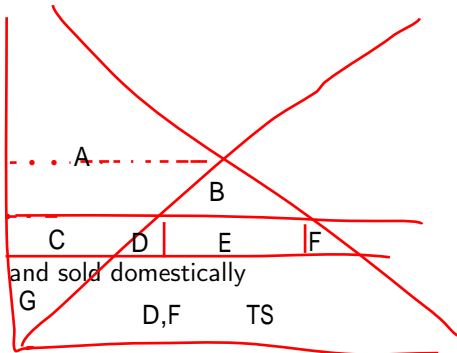
Importing country

- ▶ Domestic equilibrium price before trade is above P_W
- 
- $P_D > P_W$
- ▶ Once trade is allowed
 - ▶ Domestic price drops to equal P_W
 - ▶ Domestic quantity supplied is less than domestic quantity demanded
 - ▶ The difference: imports
 - ▶ With international trade
 - ▶ $CS \uparrow$, $PS \downarrow$, $TS \uparrow$ (i.e. the economic well-being of a nation \uparrow)
 - ▶ Gains of the winners exceed the losses of the losers

$$P_D' = P_W \quad \text{가}$$

Tariff

- 가 H 가 . P_0
 $P_W + H$
 P_W
- ▶ Tariff
 - ▶ Tax on goods produced abroad and sold domestically
 - ▶ Free trade
 - ▶ $P_D' = P_W$



- ▶ Tariff on imports
 - ▶ Raises domestic price above world price
 - ▶ By the amount of the tariff

$$P_W + H \leq P_D$$

가

	X	O
CS	A,B,C,D,E,F	A,B
PS	G	C,G
가	0	E

The effects of a tariff

- ▶ Price rises by the amount of the tariff
- ▶ Domestic quantity demanded decreases
- ▶ Domestic quantity supplied increases
- ▶ Reduces the quantity of imports
- ▶ Moves the domestic market closer to its equilibrium without trade
- ▶ Domestic sellers are better off
- ▶ Domestic buyers are worse off

The effects of a tariff

- ▶ Before the tariff
 - ▶ Consumer surplus
 - ▶ Producer surplus
 - ▶ Government tax revenue = 0
- ▶ After the tariff
 - ▶ Consumer surplus is smaller
 - ▶ Producer surplus is bigger
 - ▶ Government tax revenue > 0
 - ▶ Total surplus is smaller

Other benefits of international trade

- ▶ Consumers enjoy increased variety of goods.
- ▶ Producers sell to a larger market, may achieve lower costs by producing on a larger scale.
- ▶ Competition from abroad may reduce market power of domestic firms, which would increase total welfare.
- ▶ Trade enhances the flow of ideas, facilitates the spread of technology around the world.

Trade agreements and the WTO

- ▶ World Trade Organization, WTO, est. 1995
- ▶ Unilateral approach to achieve free trade
- ▶ Multilateral approach to free trade
 - ▶ North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
 - ▶ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
 - ▶ During the Great Depression, tariff↑
 - ▶ Successfully reduced the average tariff among member countries from about 40% to 5%
 - ▶ 2009: 153 countries; 97 % of world trade

Arguments For Restricting Trade

- ▶ Recall one of the Ten Principles from Chapter 1:
 - ▶ *Trade can make everyone better off.*
- ▶ The winners from trade could compensate the losers and still be better off. !
 - ▶ Yet, such compensation sometimes does not occur.
- ▶ The losses are often highly concentrated among a small group of people, who feel them acutely.
- ▶ The gains are often spread thinly over many people, who may not see how trade benefits them.
- ▶ Hence, the losers have more incentive to organize and lobby for restrictions on trade.

Arguments For Restricting Trade

- ▶ The domestic producers
 - ▶ Oppose free trade
 - ▶ Believe that the government should protect the domestic industry from foreign competition

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Arguments For Restricting Trade

- ▶ The jobs argument: “Trade with other countries destroys domestic jobs”
- ▶ The national-security argument: “The industry is vital for national security”
- ▶ The infant-industry argument: “New industries need temporary trade restriction to help them get started”
- ▶ The unfair-competition argument: “Free trade is desirable only if all countries play by the same rules”
- ▶ The protection-as-a-bargaining-chip argument: “Trade restrictions can be useful when we bargain with our trading partners”