

Impact of US Tariffs on Transportation Imports

A Difference-in-Differences Analysis

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Research Question

How do tariffs affect imports and exports in the US?

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**How do tariffs affect imports and exports in the US?
Specifically what happens to the trucking industry?**

Why This Research?

Personal Motivation

I was an owner-operator for 2 years

During that time, I heard consistent complaints from fellow truckers:

- ▶ **“Work is drying up at the ports”**
- ▶ **“Truck prices are through the roof”**
- ▶ **“Parts and maintenance costs keep rising”**

These weren't just complaints—they were patterns

The Questions That Drove Me

- 1. Were tariffs causing the port slowdown?**

i From Experience to Analysis

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2. Why were equipment costs exploding?

- ▶ New trucks + \$25-30K more expensive

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4. **What's the full economic picture?**

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4. **What's the full economic picture?**
 - ▶ Winners, losers, and why?

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What I Did

Data

- ▶ **10 years** of monthly imports (2015-2025)
- ▶ **3 countries:** China, Mexico, Canada
- ▶ **Focus:** Transportation equipment
- ▶ **Source:** Federal Reserve (FRED), Census Bureau

Method

- ▶ **Difference-in-Differences** approach
- ▶ **Treatment:** China (tariffs applied)
- ▶ **Control:** Mexico & Canada (smaller tariffs)
- ▶ **Natural experiment:** Section 301 (2018) + Universal (2025)

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i Why Difference-in-Differences?

Compares how Chinese imports changed **relative to** control countries, isolating the causal effect of tariffs