

Exchange Rates and Prices: Evidence from the 2015 Swiss Franc Appreciation[†]

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We dissect the impact of a large and sudden exchange rate appreciation on Swiss border import prices, retail prices, and consumer expenditures on domestic and imported nondurable goods, following the removal of the EUR/CHF floor in January 2015. Cross-sectional variation in border price changes by currency of invoicing carries over to consumer prices and allocations, impacting retail prices of imports and competing domestic goods, as well as import expenditures. We provide measures of the sensitivity of retail import prices to border prices and the sensitivity of import shares to relative prices, which is higher when using retail prices than border prices. (JEL E21, E31, F14, F31, L11)

In this paper we study how prices and consumer expenditures respond to exchange rate movements based on the large and sudden appreciation of the Swiss franc (CHF) on January 15, 2015. Using data on prices and invoicing currency at the border, as well as Nielsen “homescan” data on retail prices and purchases by Swiss households, we present a range of facts that shed light on the sources of incomplete exchange rate pass-through and the role of nominal rigidities in price adjustment, the extent of expenditure switching by households, and the allocative implications of invoicing currency in international trade. We also provide estimates of the sensitivities of retail prices to border prices and import shares to relative prices, which are important elasticities in open economy models.

The Swiss experience provides a unique setting to study the consequences of a large policy-driven change in the nominal exchange rate. On September 6, 2011, after a sharp appreciation of the Swiss franc, the Swiss National Bank (SNB) introduced a minimum exchange rate of 1.20 CHF per EUR. In late 2014 and early 2015, foreign developments such as anticipation of a large-scale quantitative easing

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program in the euro area raised the perceived cost of sustaining this policy (see, e.g., SNB 2015, Amador et al. 2020), prompting the SNB to unexpectedly abandon the minimum exchange rate on January 15, 2015.¹

The subsequent appreciation episode is unique in a number of ways.² First, it followed a period of remarkable exchange rate stability, with the EUR/CHF exchange rate fluctuating in the range of 1.2–1.22 in the last six months before January 15, 2015. It is hence unlikely that the price dynamics we examine reflect adjustment lags due to prior exchange rate movements. Second, the exchange rate movement was large in magnitude relative to standard short-term exchange rate fluctuations in advanced economies, which have been a main focus of the literature.³ EUR/CHF appreciated by more than 20 percent on the day of the policy change, 14.0 percent by the end of March relative to January 14, 14.7 percent by the end of June, and 10.6 percent by the end of December 2015 (see panel A of Figure 1).⁴ The CPI-based bilateral real exchange rate followed a similar path to the EUR/CHF nominal exchange rate, as shown in online Appendix Figure A.1. The real appreciation was prolonged, with the EUR/CHF real exchange rate returning to its December 2014 level only by the end of 2017. Third, the appreciation occurred against the backdrop of a stable Swiss economy (online Appendix Table A.1 shows that Swiss economic aggregates were remarkably stable in 2012–2016) and reflected a policy response to foreign events.⁵

Following the 2015 CHF appreciation, there was a large decline in average import prices, more so at the border than at the consumer level, and a muted response in average prices of Swiss-produced goods (which we refer to interchangeably as domestic goods), as shown in panel B in Figure 1 using aggregate price indices from the SNB and the Swiss Federation Statistical Office (SFSO). To examine in more detail the response of these prices, as well as consumer expenditures, we combine several micro-level data sources, described in Section I. Information on border prices and invoicing currency is from the good-level survey underlying the calculation of the official Swiss import price index. The transaction-level information on

¹The SNB had reiterated its commitment to the minimum exchange rate throughout late 2014, arguing as late as December 1 that it “remains the key instrument for ensuring appropriate monetary conditions” (see Jordan 2014). Of 22 economists surveyed between January 9 and January 14, 2015, none expected the SNB to get rid of its minimum rate during the course of 2015 (see Catherine Bosley, “SNB Unexpectedly Gives Up Cap on Franc, Lowers Deposit Rate,” *Bloomberg*, January 15, 2015). Forward rates the day before the appreciation show that investors expected a flat profile of the exchange rate, as illustrated in panel A in Figure 1. Jermann (2017) argues that option prices before January 15 revealed a low probability of abandoning the exchange rate floor.

²A number of related papers also examine this episode. Bonadio, Fischer, and Saure (2019) document the response of unit values at the border, Efing et al. (2016) examine the effects on the valuations of publicly listed Swiss firms, and Kaufmann and Renkin (2017, 2019) study the price and employment response of Swiss manufacturing firms and the response of export prices.

³There are many papers that resort to large devaluations in developing countries: see, for example, Burstein, Eichenbaum, and Rebelo (2005); Alessandria, Kaboski, and Midrigan (2010); Cravino and Levchenko (2017); and Gopinath and Neiman (2014). However, these episodes tend to be accompanied by other macroeconomic developments that can confound the effects of exchange rate movements. Cavallo, Neiman, and Rigobon (2015) use microdata on prices to show how a large monetary shock in a non-crisis context, i.e., Latvia’s euro area accession, impacts international relative prices.

⁴The Swiss franc appreciated less markedly against other currencies such as the yen or the pound sterling, as is evidenced by the effective exchange rate index shown in panel A in Figure 1.

⁵The price movements we focus on are unlikely to be the lagged result of safe-haven capital inflows while the minimum rate was in place. Foreign safe-haven demand for CHF was largely channeled through branches of foreign banks and invested in sight deposit accounts at the SNB (see, e.g., Auer 2015). Moreover, the CHF real exchange rate did not appreciate much in that period, and when it did in 2015, the growth rate of real GDP and real consumption fell slightly relative to 2014 (see online Appendix Table A.1).

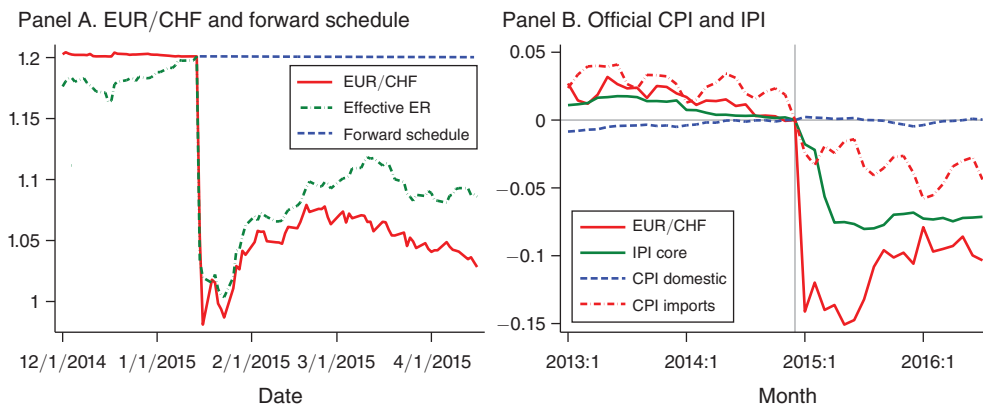


FIGURE 1. THE 2015 CHF APPRECIATION

Notes: Panel A shows daily nominal EUR/CHF exchange rates and effective CHF nominal exchange rates (Switzerland's 59 main trading partners) between December 1, 2014 and April 30, 2015, and forward exchange rates on January 14, 2015 (overnight 1 week, 1, 2, and 3 months). Panel B shows monthly EUR/CHF nominal exchange rate, core import price index, and consumer price index for imports and for domestic goods and services, all relative to December 2014.

Sources: Bank for International Settlements (2016), Swiss National Bank (2016), Datastream (2015)

nondurable retail prices and expenditures is from the Swiss Nielsen homescan data, which we augment with data on the origin of the purchased goods. We exploit variation across product categories in currency of invoicing to trace the role of invoicing from border prices to retail prices and, further, to expenditure allocations.

We start our analysis in Section II by documenting the response of border prices in the aftermath of the appreciation and how this response varies across goods by invoicing currency. The decline in border prices was much larger for EUR-invoiced goods than for CHF-invoiced goods, even conditioning on nonzero price changes, consistent with findings in Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Rigobon (2010) for border prices in the United States. However, estimated differences in conditional price changes attenuate over time and become statistically insignificant about one year after the CHF appreciation. These patterns are qualitatively consistent with models of endogenous invoicing (e.g., Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Rigobon 2010). We perform simple accounting exercises to quantify the impact on border prices of hypothetical changes in the currency of invoicing from CHF to EUR and changes in the degree of nominal price stickiness. We conclude from these exercises that over short horizons (during which border price stickiness in the currency of invoicing is quantitatively relevant), counterfactual shifts in the currency of invoicing have larger effects on border prices than do counterfactual shifts in the degree of nominal price stickiness.

In Section III we examine the response of retail prices. After documenting in the homescan data a decline in the retail price of imports relative to Swiss-produced goods, we provide evidence that variation across goods in invoicing currency at the border has a sizable impact on retail price changes faced by consumers. According to our estimates, in the first two quarters after the appreciation, retail import prices in product categories that are (hypothetically) fully invoiced in foreign currency fell by roughly 7 percentage points more than in product categories (hypothetically) fully

invoiced in CHF. While previous evidence on the role of invoicing currency is based on import and export price changes at the border (see, e.g., Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Rigobon 2010; Fitzgerald and Haller 2014; Gopinath 2016), our results establish that differences in border price changes associated with the currency of invoicing carry over to consumer prices.⁶

We estimate the sensitivity of import prices at the retail level with respect to changes in border prices, leveraging heterogeneity in border price changes induced by variation in pre-appreciation EUR invoicing shares. These estimates imply that, after two quarters, a 1 percentage point larger reduction in import prices at the border resulted in a roughly 0.55 percentage point larger price reduction for imported products at the retail level.⁷

Even though the response of retail prices of Swiss-produced goods was on average very muted, we show that prices fell more in border product categories invoiced in EUR relative to those in CHF, conditioning on the expenditure share of competing imported goods in the same product category. Relatedly, prices of domestically produced goods fell by more in product categories with larger declines in retail prices of imported goods conditioning on import shares. We argue that, under a certain exclusion restriction, these observations point to the presence of pricing complementarities that imply that domestic producers react to changes in prices of competing imported retail products.⁸

We further examine the response of the extensive margin of adjustment of retail prices. We show that the average decline in retail import prices in 2015 was partly accounted for by an increase in the fraction of nominal price changes, which can in turn be decomposed into a large increase in the frequency of price reductions and a smaller decline in the fraction of price increases. We provide aggregate time series evidence as well as cross-product evidence exploiting variations in invoicing currency and in the magnitude of changes of border prices. Specifically, the increase in the frequency of price reductions was larger for imported products with a larger share of EUR invoicing and with larger price reductions at the border. That is, differences in border price changes associated with the currency of invoicing carry over to consumer prices not only for average changes but also for the extensive margin of price adjustment.⁹

Finally, in Section IV we examine the extent of consumer expenditure switching in response to the appreciation. On average during the year following the

⁶The invoicing currency and response of border and consumer prices to exchange rate movements is an important ingredient of optimal exchange rate policy (see, e.g., Engel 2003, Devereux and Engel 2007, Egorov and Mukhin 2020).

⁷Berger et al. (2012) use the micro price data underlying the official US import and consumer price indices of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics to match identical items at the border and retail levels, estimating the evolution of good-specific distribution shares. For related work studying pass-through at different layers of the distribution chain, see, e.g., Nakamura and Zerom (2010) and Goldberg and Hellerstein (2013).

⁸These results complement evidence of strategic complementarities in Gopinath and Itskhoki (2011); Auer and Schoenle (2016); and Amiti, Itskhoki, and Konings (2019), using retail price data and in the context of a well-identified exchange rate shock. Relatedly, Cavallo et al. (forthcoming) and Flaaen, Hortaçsu, and Tintelnot (2020) show that US domestic producers increased retail prices in response to the recent increase in US tariffs on competing Chinese imports.

⁹For related work documenting the role of the extensive margin of price adjustment in response to large aggregate shocks, see, e.g., Gagnon (2009) in the context of Mexico's 1994 devaluation, Karadi and Reiff (2019) in the context of VAT changes in Hungary, and Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Neiman (2012) in the context of the trade collapse during the 2008 Great Recession.

appreciation, expenditure shares of imported goods rose by roughly 4 percent (or by 1 percentage point, from 0.26 to 0.27). Import shares rose substantially even at short horizons after the appreciation. Leveraging cross-sectional variation along the invoicing dimension, we show that expenditure shares on imported goods increased by more in product categories in which imports are invoiced in EUR than in those categories invoiced in CHF. Hence, differences in invoicing currency at the border matter also for consumer allocations.¹⁰ To estimate the sensitivity of import expenditure shares with respect to changes in relative prices, we instrument import price changes across product categories using EUR invoicing shares at the border. Estimated price elasticities of import shares are close to 1 based on border-level measures of import prices, and much higher (ranging between 2 and 5) based on retail-level measures of import prices, but also less tightly estimated given large idiosyncratic movements in consumer prices. The large gap in estimated elasticities based on the measure of import prices is partly explained by lower exchange rate pass-through into retail prices compared with border prices.¹¹

I. Data Description

In this section we provide an overview of the border and retail data that we use in our analysis. We provide additional details in online Appendix Section B. In the replication package we provide contact information to obtain the proprietary data.

A. Import Prices at the Border

We base the analysis of border prices on the microdata used by the SFSO to calculate the Swiss Import Price Index (Swiss Federal Statistical Office 2016). The data are a survey-based panel of Swiss import prices similar to the US import price data studied in Gopinath and Rigobon (2008). The survey asks firms¹² to quote the price and invoicing currency of the goods accounting for the firm's highest volume of imports.¹³ Since most consumer goods are surveyed on a quarterly basis, we focus on this time horizon. Surveys are carried out by the SFSO in the first two weeks of each quarter. In the exposition, we refer to the last pre-appreciation quarterly observations (first two weeks of January 2015) as 14Q4, and to the first

¹⁰Differences in currency of invoicing at the border also carry over to allocations in the export side. In the context of the CHF appreciation, Auer et al. (2019) show that export growth in 2015 was larger in industries with higher EUR invoicing of export border prices. Cravino (2017) uses data on Chilean exports to estimate the differential response of exports to exchange rate shocks according to the invoicing currency of the transaction. Amiti, Itskhoki, and Konings (2018) study the differential response of Belgian exports across heterogeneous firms within sectors.

¹¹Our estimates based on retail prices are on the high range of elasticity estimates in the literature based on time-series variation and using border prices to measure import prices (see, e.g., Feenstra et al. 2018, and references therein).

¹²The SFSO data contain an importing firm identifier, which we use in sensitivity analysis of border price pass-through. However, since we do not observe firm characteristics of Swiss importers or foreign exporters, we do not study the fundamentals that drive heterogeneous invoicing patterns as in, e.g., Devereux, Dong, and Tomlin (2017) and Amiti, Itskhoki, and Konings (2018).

¹³For each good invoiced in foreign currency, we have information on the price expressed in foreign currency and the price expressed in CHF. Given that for some observations there are large disparities between exchange rates implied by these two prices and official exchange rates (that are likely due to errors by contractors performing the conversion), we perform robustness exercises in which we convert foreign currency prices into CHF using official exchange rates.

post-appreciation quarterly observations (first two weeks of April 2015) as 15Q1. Since we observe weights by product categories only starting in December 2015 (after a major resampling of products), our baseline border price regressions are unweighted. For regressions that use the subset of categories matched to the retail data, we weight according to consumer expenditures.

Table 1 displays, for the sample of non-commodity goods (commodities include agricultural products, coal, petroleum, metals, electricity, and gas), the number of border price observations and the share of observations by currency of invoicing per year between 2013 and 2016. The share of observations invoiced in either CHF or EUR is close to 95 percent over the whole period, with CHF accounting for the highest share but falling over time.¹⁴ USD invoicing is quite limited (the United States accounted for 7 percent of Swiss goods imports in 2015).¹⁵ In our baseline regressions, we exclude goods invoiced in foreign currency other than EUR because other currencies fluctuated vis-à-vis CHF and EUR before January 15, 2015.

The SFSO assigns imported goods to industries based on the industry of the importing firm using a classification similar to the 4-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code in the United States. Our sample of non-commodity products covers 188 such product categories, of which 43 are consumer good categories that can be matched to retail categories as described below. For our analysis tracing currency of invoicing at the border to retail prices and expenditures, we calculate a pre-appreciation measure of invoicing intensity by border product category. We define the EUR invoicing share by product category as the fraction of border prices invoiced in EUR (relative to those invoiced in CHF or EUR) across all four quarters in 2014. In online Appendix Table B.5 we report the list of matched border product categories and retail product categories, as well as the EUR invoicing share of each category.

Given our prior that EUR invoicing shares by category are less tightly inferred for categories with a low number of border price observations, we exclude from our baseline analysis 6 (out of 43) border product categories for which we observe 7 or fewer border prices per quarter on average in 2014.¹⁶ Across the baseline sample of 37 border categories, the EUR invoicing share in 2014 varies between 0 and 0.74, with a median of 0.13 and a mean of 0.25.

¹⁴The rise over time in the share of EUR-invoiced goods is largely due to entry of new goods into the sample that are invoiced in EUR. For continuing products, the fraction that switches invoicing currency between quarters is very low, on average roughly 0.5 percent per quarter in 2015 (see online Appendix Figure B.1).

¹⁵As reported in online Appendix Table B.1, invoicing shares are very similar if we weight border product categories using NAICS two-digit weights in December 2015, which is the first period the SFSO reports weights. We note that Bonadio, Fischer, and Saure (2019) and Federal Customs Administration (2015) report invoicing shares for imports based on more comprehensive customs data, allowing transactions to be weighted by import volume. In Federal Customs Administration (2015), import invoicing shares in 2014 are 31.6 percent for CHF, 54.9 percent for EUR, and 10.6 percent for USD.

¹⁶The 6 categories we drop account for roughly 12 percent of retail expenditures on imported goods in 2014. In the sensitivity analysis, we consider a more restrictive sample that drops 9 categories with 8 or fewer observations per quarter, and a less restrictive sample that drops 2 categories with 4 or fewer observations per quarter. We also discuss which results are robust to keeping all border categories, including those with only 2 observations per quarter.

TABLE 1—BORDER DATA SUMMARY STATISTICS

	Observations	Percent CHF-invoiced	Percent EUR-invoiced	Percent US\$-invoiced
2013	14,666	68.5	28.7	2.4
2014	14,789	65.8	31.3	2.4
2015	17,381	56.1	38.1	4.7
2016	17,976	51.5	42.0	5.2

Note: This table shows the number of observations and the share of observations invoiced in CHF, EUR, and US\$ for various years in the non-commodity border price sample.

B. Retail Prices and Expenditures

The analysis of retail prices and expenditures is based on Nielsen homescan data covering a demographically and regionally representative sample of around 3,000 households in Switzerland in the period January 2012 to June 2016 (Nielsen Switzerland 2016). Participating households record purchases in supermarkets and drugstores, scanning goods such as food, non-food grocery items, health and beauty aids, and selected general merchandise. Individual products are classified into one of 256 product classes (which are narrower than border product categories) such as apple juice, shampoo, and toilet paper.¹⁷

In the raw data, an observation is a transaction including the household identifier, bar code (European Article Number, or EAN) of the product purchased, quantity purchased, price paid (net of good-specific discounts due to, e.g., coupons), date of the shopping trip, and the name of the retailer. In the three months after the CHF appreciation, we observe on average 85 transactions per household. The data include 17 distinct retail stores. Since we do not observe the location of the retailer in a transaction, we assign it to one of 23 regions where the household lives (for more details, see the online Appendix). We exclude purchases made in other countries via cross-border shopping.

We augment these data with information on the country of production of individual goods. Whereas EAN codes provide information on the country in which a product has been registered, in many instances this is not the country in which the product has actually been produced. However, that information is disclosed in the label of each product. We collect label information from codecheck.info, a Swiss health information portal with a large database of products sold in supermarkets, drug stores, and pharmacies (Codecheck 2016). Coverage is not complete and notably excludes goods that are only occasionally sold in grocery stores, such as toys, clothing, or household electronics. We drop observations for which we do not observe the country of origin.¹⁸

¹⁷In the online Appendix we describe additional adjustments we make to the data, such as dropping newspapers, magazines, and non-prepackaged fresh fruits and vegetables products, and dropping transactions with errors in the entered price.

¹⁸We accessed codecheck.info between October 2015 and March 2016, searching for all goods in the Nielsen data. We also cross-checked the results from codecheck.info with information on web sites of the various retailers. To get a sense of coverage, there are 5,444 unique goods in the Nielsen dataset that are observed in each of the 18 months before and after the appreciation. We found 3,481 of these goods on the web, accounting for 72 percent of all expenditures in this balanced sample of goods in 2014.

TABLE 2—NIELSEN DATA SUMMARY STATISTICS

	Non-balanced	Balanced yearly	Balanced monthly
Number of imported goods	4,545	2,682	937
Number of EU imported goods	4,134	2,362	794
Number of domestic goods	3,865	3,748	2,189
Expenditure share imports 2014	27	26	23
Expenditure share EU imports 2014	23	22	19
Number of product classes	233	217	172
Number of product classes (imports)	215	188	132
Number of transactions: imports	803,273	762,331	598,423
Number of transactions: domestic	2,396,208	2,390,273	2,106,375

Notes: The *Non-balanced* sample consists of EAN goods with information on country of origin (imports or domestic) that can be matched to border product categories with more than seven border prices per quarter in 2014 (which we use in the baseline regressions). The *Balanced yearly* sample is a subsample of the first one that only includes goods observed each year between 2013 and 2015. The *Balanced monthly* sample is a subsample of the first one that only includes goods observed every month from mid-2013 to mid-2016. *Number of imported goods* and *Expenditure share imports* are, respectively, the number of imported goods and the expenditure share of imported goods in total expenditures in 2014. We report separately imports from the EU. *Number of product classes* and *Number of product classes (imports)* are the number of unique Nielsen product classes with positive expenditures on imports or domestic goods, and only on imports, respectively. *Number of transactions: imports* and *Number of transactions: domestic* are the number of underlying transactions at the household level over imports and domestic goods, respectively.

Table 2 provides basic summary statistics of the Nielsen data, for three different samples. The first sample (*Non-balanced*) consists of goods with information on country of origin (imports or domestic) that can be matched to border product categories with more than seven border price observations per quarter in 2014. The second sample (*Balanced yearly*) is a subsample of the first one that only includes goods observed each year between 2013 and 2015. The third sample (*Balanced monthly*) is a subsample of the first one that only includes goods observed in each of the 18 months before and after the appreciation. We use the first and second samples in our analysis of expenditure allocations. We use the third sample in our analysis of retail prices. For each sample we provide the number of unique imported and domestic products, product classes, transactions, and import shares in 2014. The share of expenditures on imports relative to expenditures on all goods for which we observe country of origin is 27 percent in the non-balanced sample (and 23 percent in the monthly balanced sample).¹⁹ The import share is 23 percent in the non-balanced sample if we restrict the sample to goods imported from the European Union (EU). In our baseline results we include all imports because we do not observe the country of origin of imports in the border price data.

II. Exchange Rate Pass-Through to Border Prices

In this section we report the impact of the 2015 CHF appreciation on border prices, first at the level of individual goods and then at the level of product categories. We then document the extent of price flexibility and exchange rate pass-through by currency of invoicing, conditioning and not conditioning on nominal price changes.

¹⁹For comparison purposes, the share of imports in total consumption reported in SFSO (2014) is 26.7 percent in 2014. Since services are mostly locally sourced, this means that the import share in our sample is lower than in overall consumption of goods.

Finally, we perform simple accounting exercises to quantify the impact on border prices of counterfactual shifts in invoicing from CHF to EUR and changes in the degree of nominal price stickiness.

A. Changes in Average Border Prices by Currency of Invoicing

We first document the differential response of average changes in border prices by currency of invoicing after the CHF appreciation. We denote by p_{it}^{bor} the log of the border price (in CHF) of imported good i in quarter t . Keeping in mind our date convention, we refer to the period prior to the CHF appreciation as 14Q4. We consider panel regressions of the form

$$(1) \quad p_{it}^{bor} = \sum_{s \neq 14Q4} \beta_s \times \mathbf{1}_{s=t} \times EURinv_i + \alpha_t + \lambda_i + \varepsilon_{it},$$

over the period $t = 13Q1, \dots, 16Q2$, where $\mathbf{1}_{s=t}$ is the time period indicator function, $EURinv_i = 1$ ($= 0$) if product i is invoiced in EUR (CHF) in quarter 14Q4, α_t is a time fixed effect, and λ_i is a product fixed effect.²⁰ Observations are equally weighted since we do not observe import values per product. Standard errors are clustered at the level of border product categories.

Panel A of Figure 2 displays estimates of α_t and $\alpha_t + \beta_t$ between 2013 and 2016, representing average cumulative changes, relative to 14Q14, in CHF-invoiced and EUR-invoiced border prices, respectively. CHF- and EUR-invoiced goods display similar price dynamics before January 2015, a period of stability of the EUR/CHF exchange rate. In contrast, EUR-invoiced prices fall significantly relative to CHF-invoiced prices in the post-appreciation period. As summarized in the top rows of Table 3, the EUR appreciated by 14.0 percent in the first three months and by 14.7 percent in the first six months after December 2014. EUR-invoiced border prices fell by 12.4 percent and 13.8 percent in the first and second quarters, respectively (implying exchange rate pass-through rates of 89 percent and 94 percent, respectively). CHF-invoiced border prices fell by 3.4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively, during the same time (implying pass-through rates of 24 percent and 31 percent, respectively).

Average differences in price changes by currency of invoicing (i.e., β_t) fall over time from roughly 9 percent in 15Q1 to 5.5 percent in 15Q4, explained in part by a gradual decline in CHF-invoiced prices and in part by overshooting of the EUR/CHF and EUR-invoiced prices. Estimates of β_t are similar if we include time fixed effects or time \times category fixed effects, as shown in panel C of Figure 2. Online Appendix Table C.2 reports estimates and standard errors of β_t for each quarter after 14Q4, as well as the average effect in the first three quarters of 2015 calculated by imposing a single β over this time period. In online Appendix Section C.1 we report a wide range of sensitivity analysis.

²⁰We consider a balanced panel of products with price data every quarter in the two-year period 13Q4–15Q3. We do not include 15Q4 in the balanced panel because the SFSO conducted a major re-sampling of products in December 2015. Moreover, for every quarter we exclude a small number of observations for which the currency of invoicing differs from 14Q4.

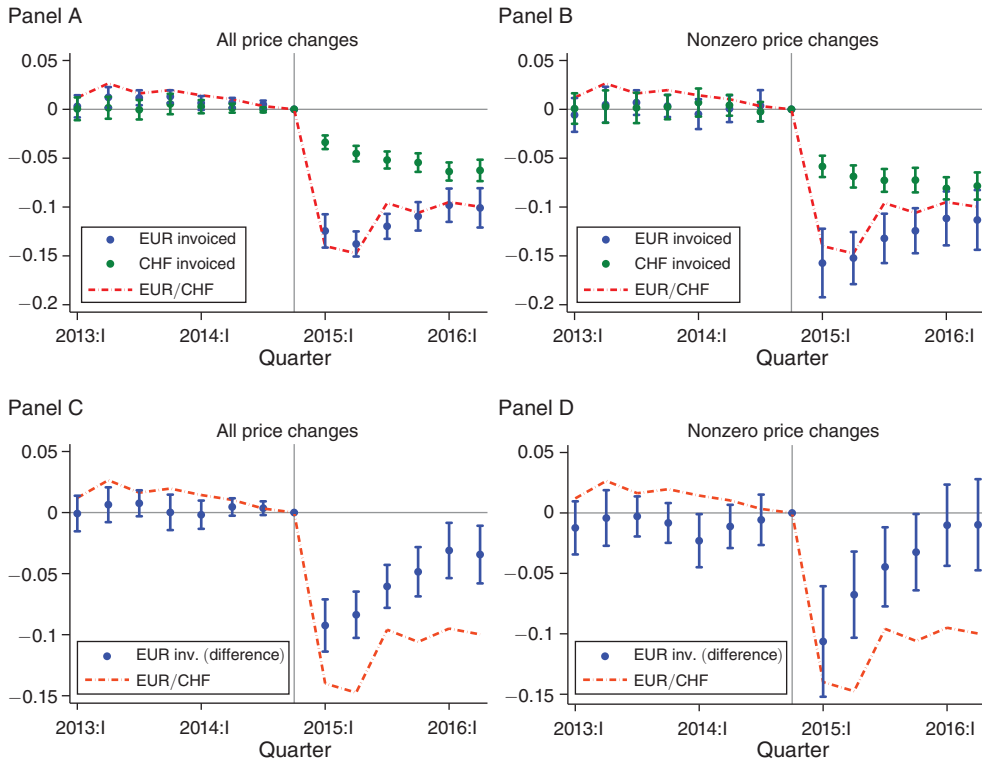


FIGURE 2. BORDER PRICE CHANGES BY INVOICING CURRENCY

Notes: This figure presents the EUR/CHF exchange rate and border price changes compared with 14Q4 based on estimates of equation (1). Panels A and B display average price changes by currency of invoicing, either all price changes (A) or nonzero price changes (B). Panels C and D show the difference in the average price change of EUR-invoiced goods and CHF-invoiced goods including time \times category fixed effects, either all price changes or nonzero price changes. Whiskers indicate the bounds of a 95 percent confidence interval, calculated clustering at the level of border product category.

B. Invoicing and Price Changes across Product Categories

We next show that the differential response of border prices by invoicing currency that we document above helps explain part of the variation in average border price changes across product categories. We exploit this relationship when we match individual retail goods to product categories at the border.

We estimate

$$(2) \quad p_{gt}^{bor} - p_{g14Q4}^{bor} = \alpha_t + \beta_t \times EURshare_g + \varepsilon_{gt},$$

where p_{gt}^{bor} denotes the simple average of border prices in border category g at time t (including prices in all invoicing currencies), $EURshare_g$ denotes the fraction of border prices in category g invoiced in EUR across all quarters of 2014, and α_t is a time fixed effect.

Table 4 reports estimates of β_t between 15Q1 and 16Q2 for different sets of product categories and weighting schemes. We consider the baseline dataset of

TABLE 3—BORDER AND RETAIL PRICE CHANGES AND IMPLIED PASS-THROUGH RATES

	Changes				Rates			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. EUR/CHF	-14.0	-14.7	-9.6	-10.6				
2. All EUR invoiced	-12.4	-13.8	-12.0	-11.0	88.9	93.5	124.9	103.4
3. Nonzero price changes	-15.7	-15.2	-13.2	-12.4	112.4	103.3	137.7	117.3
4. All CHF invoiced	-3.4	-4.5	-5.2	-5.5	24.1	30.7	54.1	51.5
5. Nonzero price changes	-5.8	-6.9	-7.3	-7.2	41.7	46.6	75.8	68.4
6. Retail imports	-1.3	-2.9	-2.7	-3.9	9.3	19.4	28.6	36.6
7. Retail domestic	-0.3	-0.7	-0.4	-0.8	2.2	4.6	4.2	7.5

Notes: The left panel displays changes in CHF/EUR in each quarter of 2015 relative to 14Q4 (row 1) and average changes in various prices: EUR-invoiced border prices (row 2) and the subset with a nonzero price change (row 3), CHF-invoiced border prices (row 4) and the subset with a nonzero price change (row 5), and retail price changes of imported and domestic goods from the Nielsen data (rows 6 and 7) described in section 4. The right panel reports exchange rate pass-through percentage rates, calculated as ratios to row 1.

TABLE 4—BORDER PRICE CHANGES AND EUR INVOICING INTENSITY ACROSS BORDER PRODUCT CATEGORIES

	Non-commodity	Nielsen unweighted	Nielsen weighted
15Q1	-0.067 [0.019]	-0.060 [0.038]	-0.110 [0.029]
15Q2	-0.080 [0.018]	-0.076 [0.030]	-0.135 [0.033]
15Q3	-0.053 [0.022]	-0.066 [0.027]	-0.107 [0.036]
15Q4	-0.031 [0.025]	-0.037 [0.024]	-0.042 [0.026]
16Q1	-0.016 [0.028]	-0.015 [0.029]	-0.008 [0.029]
16Q2	-0.011 [0.028]	-0.018 [0.030]	-0.023 [0.030]
Observations	888	220	220
Adjusted R^2	0.22	0.27	0.48
Average effect 15Q1–15Q3	-0.066 [0.011]	-0.067 [0.018]	-0.117 [0.019]
Observations	544	128	128
Adjusted R^2	0.34	0.39	0.62
Border categories	150	32	32

Notes: This table displays estimates of β_t in equation (2) between 15Q1 and 16Q2 for different sets of product categories and weighting schemes. The first column uses all non-commodity product categories, while the second and third columns use the baseline sample of border categories in our retail price analysis. The first and second columns show results from unweighted regressions, whereas the third column weights according to Nielsen consumer expenditures in 2014. The upper panel shows estimates of β_t between 15Q1 and 16Q2. The bottom panel shows the average effect (imposing a common β_t) in 15Q1, 15Q2, and 15Q3. Estimates of (2) by quarter in 15Q1, 15Q2, and 15Q3 imply R^2 of 0.35, 0.4, and 0.29, respectively. Standard errors clustered by border category are shown in brackets.

non-commodity categories and the restricted set of consumer good categories that we match to our Nielsen data and that hence can be used in our retail price and expenditure analysis below. For the sample of Nielsen categories, we consider unweighted and weighted estimates (using 2014 consumer expenditures by category). In online Appendix Section C.2 we report additional sensitivity analysis.

Estimates of β_t are negative and highly significant in the first three quarters of 2015 (except in Q1 of the unweighted Nielsen border sample), indicating that

border prices fall more, on average, in product categories with more EUR invoicing. Estimates of β_t in the first three quarters are largest in the weighted Nielsen sample, in spite of the low number of categories. The weighted Nielsen-based estimates imply that a category that is fully invoiced in EUR experiences in the first three quarters of 2015 a decline in border prices that is between 11 percent and 13.5 percent larger relative to a category that is fully invoiced in CHF. These differences are slightly larger than those based on individual product prices (that combine within and between category variation) reported in online Appendix Table C.4. Variation across product categories in 2014 invoicing shares explains (in terms of R^2) between 29 percent and 40 percent of cumulative changes in border prices across Nielsen categories in each of the first three quarters of 2015. This relationship is much weaker starting in 15Q4, when the border price sample size declines due to product resampling by the SFSO.

Regression (2) constitutes the basis of the first stage in the 2SLS regressions we consider below. The results above anticipate that the first stage is strong in the first three quarters of 2015.

C. Price Stickiness and Border Price Changes

We begin by measuring the quarterly frequency of price changes and showing that for CHF-invoiced goods it increases substantially after the CHF appreciation. We then show that differences in border price changes by currency of invoicing persist when we condition on nominal price changes in the invoicing currency.

The top panels of Figure 3 display, by invoicing currency, the fraction of products for which the price (in its currency of invoicing) in any quarter differs from the price in Q4 of the previous year.²¹ For CHF-invoiced products, the fraction of products with a price change in 2014 (relative to Q4 of 2013) is roughly 41 percent in Q1 and 52 percent in Q2. These measures are similar in 2013. EUR-invoiced prices change less frequently.²²

In 2015, after the CHF appreciation, there is a marked increase in the fraction of price changes for CHF-invoiced goods, even though prices are still far from fully flexible. The fraction of price changes (relative to Q4 of the previous year) rises from 41 percent in 14Q1 to 58 percent in 15Q1, from 52 percent in 14Q2 to 66 percent in 15Q2, from 57 percent in 14Q3 to 71 percent in 15Q3, and from 61 percent in 14Q4 to 75 percent in 15Q4.²³ The bottom panels of Figure 3 show that the increase in the fraction of price changes for CHF-invoiced goods is achieved through a large and long-lasting (i.e., not driven by temporary sales) increase in the fraction of price

²¹ We exclude observations with price imputations due to product replacements, as well as observations in which the currency of invoicing differs from Q4 in the previous year.

²² The average fraction of price changes from one quarter to another when pooling all quarters between 2013 and 2015 is roughly 35 percent for CHF-invoiced goods and 25 percent for non-CHF invoiced goods. To put these numbers in perspective, the average monthly frequency of border price changes for differentiated imported and exported goods in the US reported in Table IV of Gopinath and Rigobon (2008) is roughly 0.15, implying a quarterly frequency of $1 - 0.85^3 = 0.39$ (assuming that the probability of a price change is independent across months).

²³ In online Appendix Table C.10 we additionally show that the degree of price flexibility is a characteristic that varies persistently across goods. For any given horizon, products for which price changed in 2013 (2014) are more likely to display a price change in 2014 (2015). The likelihood of a price change rises in 2015 irrespective of whether the price changed in previous years.

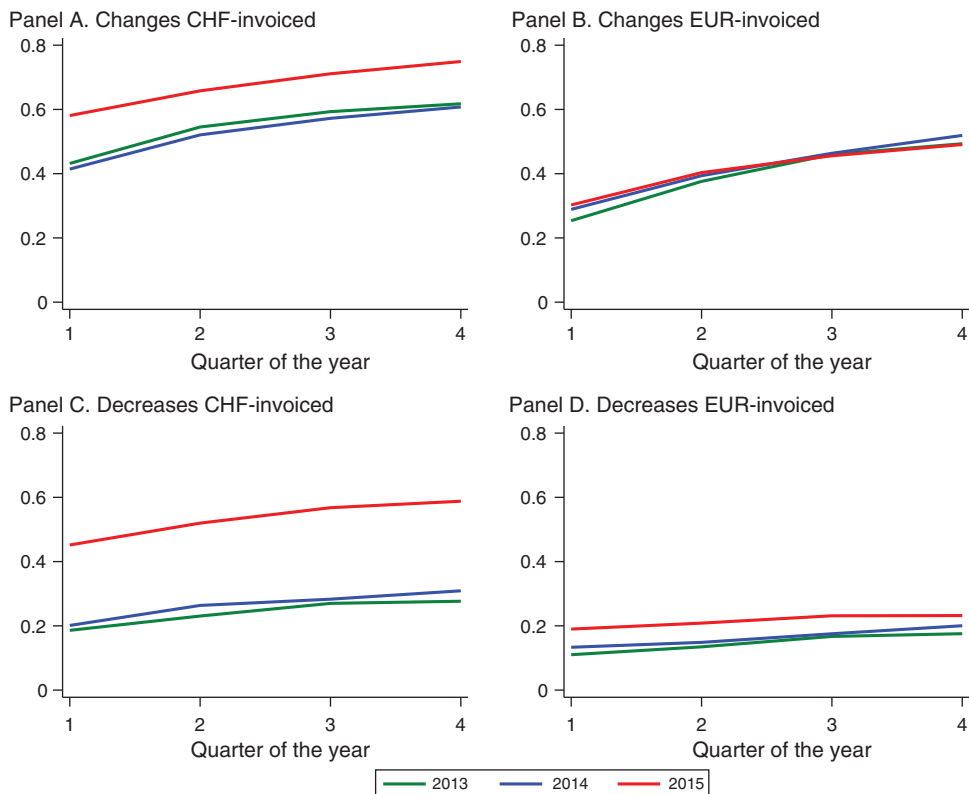


FIGURE 3. FRACTION OF BORDER PRICE CHANGES BY CURRENCY OF INVOICING

Notes: Panels A and B display for each quarterly horizon the fraction of products with changes in the price compared with Q4 of the previous year, for years 2013, 2014, and 2015, for CHF-invoiced goods (panel A) and EUR-invoiced goods (panel B). Panels C and D display, in a similar format, the fraction of price declines compared with Q4 of the previous year.

reductions and a small decline in the fraction of price increases (the latter is shown in online Appendix Figure C.1). For EUR-invoiced products, the fraction of products with a price change or a price decrease does not change much in 2015.

We next return to regression (1), conditioning on nonzero price changes as in Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Rigobon (2010). Panel B of Figure 2 displays average cumulative price changes by currency of invoicing. CHF-invoiced prices in 2015 fall relative to 14Q4, by 5.8 percent in Q1, 6.9 percent in Q2, and 7.2 percent in Q3 and Q4 (exchange rate pass-through rates of 42 percent and 47 percent in Q1 and Q2, respectively, and roughly 70 percent in Q3 and Q4). Note the gradual decline in CHF-invoiced reset prices in spite of EUR/CHF overshooting. In contrast, EUR-invoiced prices (expressed in CHF) fall by slightly more than the EUR/CHF exchange rate (note, however, that standard errors are much larger due to smaller sample size).

Estimated differences in nonzero price changes by currency of invoicing (i.e., β_t) fall over time from 10 percent in Q1 to 5 percent in Q4. Allowing for time \times category fixed effects, estimates of β_t (displayed in panel C of Figure 2 and in online

Appendix Table C.2) are as large initially but attenuate more rapidly over time and become insignificant in 2016. In sensitivity analysis in online Appendix Section C, we show that, for certain sample choices, estimates of β_t become insignificant as early as Q3 of 2015.

In online Appendix Section C.1, we show that independently of invoicing, prices of commodities (excluded from our baseline analysis) change much more frequently than those of non-commodities. Moreover, differences in price changes by invoicing currency (including time \times category fixed effects) are small and mostly insignificant. These results are consistent with the view that currency of invoicing is quantitatively relevant for price changes only for products with sticky prices in their currency of invoicing.

The fact that pass-through rates conditional on price changes are significantly smaller for CHF-invoiced products than for EUR-invoiced products, but only in the earlier quarters after the CHF appreciation, is qualitatively consistent with models of endogenous invoicing as in Gopinath, Itskhoki, and Rigobon (2010). Specifically, in those models the choice of invoicing currency is determined by a discounted sum of future desired pass-through conditional on non-price adjustment. Hence, currency choice puts a higher weight on conditional pass-through rates in earlier periods after the exchange rate shock, which is precisely when estimated differences in conditional pass-through rates between invoicing currencies are larger in our data.²⁴

D. Accounting-Based Counterfactuals

What would have been the average change in border prices had these been fully invoiced in CHF or in EUR? How do counterfactual changes in invoicing currency compare with counterfactual changes in the degree of price stickiness? We answer these questions by performing simple accounting exercises.

The average change in CHF-invoiced border prices in quarter t relative to 14Q4 is $p_{Ct}^{bor} = f_{Ct} \times s_{Ct}$, where f_{Ct} denotes the fraction of CHF-invoiced prices that change between 14Q4 and t , and s_{Ct} denotes the average size of these nonzero price changes (reset prices). The average change in EUR-invoiced border prices (expressed in CHF) is $p_{Et}^{bor} = f_{Et} \times s_{Et} + (1 - f_{Et}) \times e_t$, where f_{Et} denotes the fraction of EUR-invoiced prices that change (in EUR) between 14Q4 and t , s_{Et} denotes the average size of these nonzero price changes (expressed in CHF), and e_t denotes the EUR/CHF change in this time period. The average change in border prices including both invoicing currencies (roughly 2/3 CHF and 1/3 EUR) is $p_t^{bor} = 2/3 \times p_{Ct}^{bor} + 1/3 \times p_{Et}^{bor}$. Row 1 of Table 5 reports p_{Ct}^{bor} , p_{Et}^{bor} , and p_t^{bor} for the first and last quarters of 2015 (quarters 2 and 3 are reported in online Appendix Table C.12).²⁵

²⁴We leave for future research whether an endogenous currency choice model is quantitatively consistent with the profile of pass-through rates and the increase in the fraction of nonzero price changes we document for this large and unanticipated exchange rate shock.

²⁵The average change in EUR-invoiced prices, p_{Et}^{bor} , reported in Table 5 differs from that in Table 3 (by roughly 2.1 percentage points in 15Q1). This is due to sample differences (in our sticky price calculations we drop observations with price imputations arising from product replacement) and because we impose that for EUR-invoiced goods with zero price changes the change in price (expressed in CHF) is equal to the change in the EUR/CHF, e_t , which is not always the case in the raw data due to errors in exchange rate conversion. In online Appendix Section C.4 we show that results do not vary much when using prices that are converted into CHF based on the official quarterly EUR/CHF rate. We also report sensitivity to using a smaller CHF invoicing share when calculating p_t^{bor} .

TABLE 5—COUNTERFACTUAL CHANGES IN BORDER PRICES

	15Q1			15Q4		
	CHF	EUR	$\frac{2}{3}$ CHF $\frac{1}{3}$ EUR	CHF	EUR	$\frac{2}{3}$ CHF $\frac{1}{3}$ EUR
1. Actual	-3.4	-14.5	-7.1	-5.4	-11.5	-7.4
2. All sticky	0.0	-14.0	-4.7	0.0	-10.6	-3.5
3. All flexible	-5.8	-15.7	-9.1	-7.2	-12.4	-9.0
4. All flex – all sticky			-4.5			-5.4
5. All CHF	-3.4	-9.1	-5.3	-5.4	-9.3	-6.7
6. All EUR	-11.5	-14.5	-12.5	-8.9	-11.5	-9.8
7. All EUR – all CHF			-7.2			-3.1

Notes: See main text for a description of each counterfactual. Quarters 2 and 3 are reported in the online Appendix.

Rows 2 and 3 consider counterfactual degrees of price stickiness given actual average reset price changes by currency of invoicing. Specifically, row 2 (*All sticky*) sets $f_{Ct} = f_{Et} = 0$, so that $p_{Ct}^{bor} = 0$ and $p_{Et}^{bor} = e_t$. Row 3 (*All flex*) sets $f_{Ct} = f_{Et} = 1$ and actual s_{Ct} and s_{Et} , so that $p_{Ct}^{bor} = s_{Ct}$ and $p_{Et}^{bor} = s_{Et}$. In the *All flex* scenario we are assuming that, for products with unchanged price in 2015 (due to, e.g., menu costs, information costs, or inattention) the price would change, if given the opportunity to do so, as much as observed reset prices in the data.²⁶ We do not take into account equilibrium changes in reset prices in each counterfactual scenario, as could be the case in the presence of pricing complementarities across price setters.

In 15Q1, the average decline in border prices is -4.7 percent under *All sticky* and -9.1 percent under *All flex*. This implies that a counterfactual shift from *All sticky* to *All flex* would result in a 4.5 percentage point (pp) larger reduction in border prices in 15Q1 (row 4). To understand these results, note that if $s_{Ct} = 0$ and $s_{Et} = e_t$, a shift from *All sticky* to *All flex* would have no impact on average border price changes. In practice, reset prices fall by much less (but not zero) for CHF-invoiced than for EUR-invoiced goods, so changes in the degree of price flexibility have a limited impact on border price changes. The difference between CHF and EUR price changes, which is 14 percent under *All sticky*, is as large as 9.9 percent under *All flex*.

Rows 5 and 6 consider counterfactual invoicing choices. We assume that the degree of price stickiness is a characteristic of the invoicing currency, while the size of nonzero price changes (expressed in CHF) is a characteristic of the product and not of the invoicing currency, as in models in which invoicing currency choice on a product is shaped by its conditional pass-through rate. Specifically, in row 5 (*All CHF*) we assume that EUR-invoiced goods are counterfactually invoiced in CHF, so that for these goods $p_{Et}^{bor} = f_{Ct} \times s_{Et}$. In row 6 (*All EUR*) we assume that all CHF-invoiced goods are counterfactually invoiced in EUR, so that $p_{Ct}^{bor} = f_{Et} \times s_{Ct} + (1 - f_{Et}) \times e_t$. Note that if prices were fully flexible, then these counterfactual shifts in currency of invoicing would have no impact on average border price changes.

²⁶In the online Appendix we provide suggestive evidence that the size of price changes in 2015 is independent of the degree of price flexibility in previous years. Specifically, in Table C.11 we show that the size of price changes in 2015 does not vary systematically across products with the likelihood of a price change in previous years (a measure of the product's price flexibility).

Evaluated at the degree of price flexibility in the data, the average decline in border prices in 15Q1 is -5.3 percent under *All CHF* and -12.5 percent under *All EUR*. This implies that a counterfactual shift from *All CHF* to *All EUR* would result in a 7.2 pp larger reduction in border prices in 15Q1 (Row 7).²⁷

Comparing rows 4 and 7, we observe that a shift in invoicing from *All CHF* to *All EUR* (given the observed degree of price stickiness) has a bigger impact on average border price changes than a shift from *All sticky* to *All flex* (given the observed fraction of goods by invoicing currency). This is also the case in 15Q2, as shown in online Appendix Table C.12. In contrast, in 15Q4 (as well as in 15Q3) a shift in invoicing has a smaller impact on average border prices than a shift in price flexibility. Currency of invoicing of border prices matters less over time because at longer time horizons border prices are more flexible and the EUR/CHF appreciation is smaller.

III. Retail Price Response

In this section we examine the response of Nielsen-based retail prices to the CHF appreciation. After reporting average changes in retail prices of imports and Swiss-produced goods, we examine how these changes vary in the cross section by invoicing currency at the border and import penetration. We then estimate the sensitivity of retail import prices to border prices, and the sensitivity of Swiss-produced retail prices to import retail prices. Finally, we document changes in the extensive margin of price adjustment, first on average for imports and Swiss-produced goods, and then across goods that vary in their currency of invoicing at the border.

We denote by P_{irst}^{ret} the retail price of product i (EAN) in region r , retailer s , and month t , averaged across households, weeks, and stores in triplet rst . We then average P_{irst}^{ret} across regions and retailers in month t to obtain a measure of the retail price of product i in month t , P_{it}^{ret} . To smooth out idiosyncratic product-level shocks or temporary price discounts, we construct quarterly log prices as a simple average of monthly log prices. We base our analysis on a balanced sample of goods sold in at least one store and retailer every month in the three-year period between June 2013 and May 2016.²⁸

A. Average Price Changes for Imports and Swiss-Produced Goods

Consistent with the official consumer price inflation estimates displayed in Figure 1, retail import prices in the Nielsen data fell in 2015 relative to Swiss-produced goods.

Figure 4 displays time fixed effects of log retail prices, p_{it}^{ret} , by quarter relative to 14Q4 (October 15, 2014–January 14, 2015) for all imports and Swiss-produced

²⁷If we assume that both the fraction and size of nonzero price changes is a characteristic of the currency choice and not of the product (in contrast to models of endogenous invoicing currency), then, $p_{Et}^{bor} = p_{Ct}^{bor}$ under *All CHF* and $p_{Ct}^{bor} = p_{Et}^{bor}$ under *All EUR*. The impact of a shift from *All CHF* to *All EUR* is 11.1 pp in 15Q1, which is even larger than 7.2 pp under our baseline assumptions.

²⁸In online Appendix Section D.2, we report robustness of our invoicing on retail price regressions to calculating P_{irst}^{ret} by aggregating prices within rst using median or mode instead of average, and to calculating P_{it}^{ret} by aggregating prices P_{irst}^{ret} across regions and stores using median instead of average. We also report estimates using monthly rather than quarterly prices. Finally, we consider longer and shorter balanced samples.

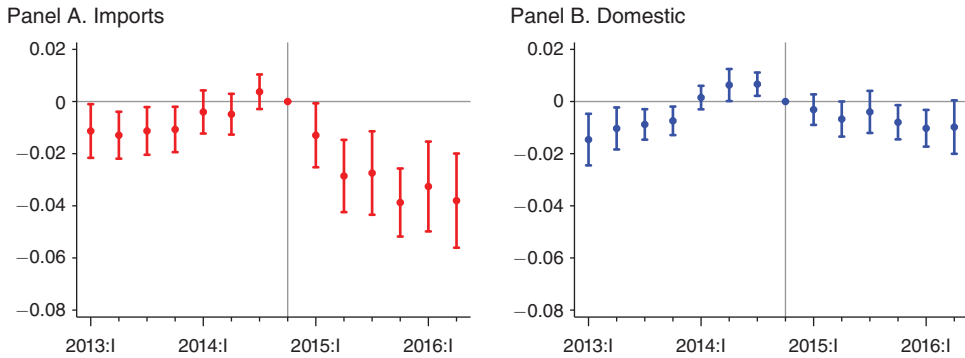


FIGURE 4. AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE CHANGES

Notes: This figure displays time fixed effects (or cumulative average price changes) relative to 14Q4 of imports in panel A and Swiss-produced goods in panel B, weighting goods by 2014 expenditures. Whiskers indicate the bounds of a 95 percent confidence interval, calculated clustering at the level of retail product class.

goods, weighting individual goods by expenditures in 2014. There are no strong pre-trends in prices in the period 2013–2014. Starting in 15Q1, there is a marked decrease in retail import prices while the response of Swiss-produced goods is more muted. As summarized in the bottom two rows of Table 3, the cumulative decline in retail import prices is 1.3 percent in 15Q1 and 3.8 percent in Q4. The implied exchange rate pass-through rate rises from 9 percent in 15Q1 to 36 percent at the end of the year. Swiss-produced retail prices fell by less than 1 percent cumulative in 2015 (i.e., the implied pass-through rate is less than 10 percent).²⁹

B. Currency of Invoicing, Border Prices, and Retail Import Prices

We document the differential response of retail prices according to the EUR invoicing share of the corresponding border product category. To do so, we consider panel regressions of the form

$$(3) \quad p_{it}^{ret} = \sum_{s \neq 14Q4} \beta_s \times \mathbf{1}_{s=t} \times EURshare_{g(i)} + \alpha_t + \lambda_i + \varepsilon_{it},$$

over the period $t = 13Q1, \dots, 16Q2$, where $g(i)$ denotes the border category associated with retail product i , $EURshare_{g(i)}$ denotes the fraction of border prices in category $g(i)$ invoiced in EUR across all quarters in 2014, α_t is a time fixed effect, and λ_i is a product fixed effect. In all cross-sectional regressions using retail price data, observations are weighted by expenditures in 2014 and standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product classes.³⁰

Figure 5 displays estimates of β_t for imported goods (left column) and Swiss-produced goods (right column). Online Appendix Table D.1 reports estimates and standard errors by quarter, as well as the average effect (imposing a common β)

²⁹Online Appendix Figure D.1 shows similar (but more volatile) patterns based on monthly prices relative to December 2014. Figure D.2 shows that import prices from the EU fell slightly more than prices of all imports.

³⁰We cluster by retail product class because it is the level of variation of regressors in many of the regressions below. In the online Appendix we report for the main results specifications that cluster standard errors at the level of border product categories.

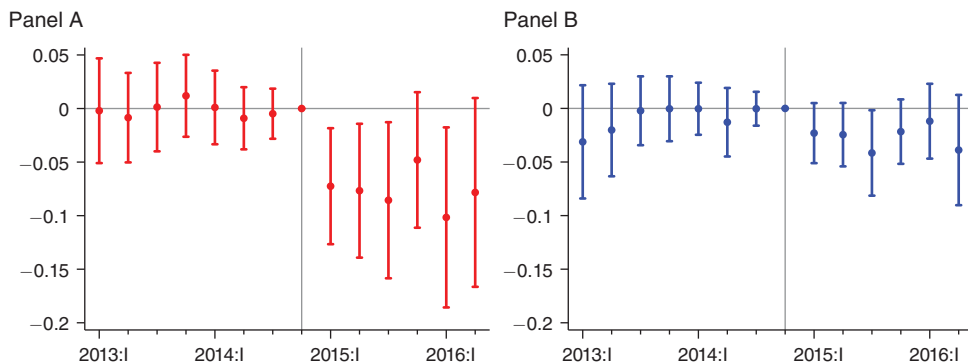


FIGURE 5. INVOICING AND RETAIL PRICES

Notes: This figure reports estimates of β_t from equation (3), for all imports (panel A) and Swiss-produced goods (panel B). The dependent variable is log retail price by quarter. Independent variables include time dummies, time dummies interacted by EUR invoicing intensity in 2014 of the corresponding border category, and EAN fixed effects. Whiskers indicate the bounds of a 95 percent confidence interval, calculated clustering at the level of retail product class.

in the first three quarters of 2015. For both imports and domestic goods, there are no significant pre-trends in the period 2013–2014. For domestic goods, estimates of β_t in 2015–2016 are negative but small and statistically insignificant. For imported goods, estimates of β_t are negative and much larger than for domestic goods, significant at the 1 percent level in 15Q1, at the 5 percent level in 15Q2, 15Q3, and 16Q1, and at the 10 percent level in 16Q2. For 15Q4, the estimate is negative but less tightly estimated. These estimates imply that retail prices decline by roughly 7.3 percentage points more in 15Q1 for goods belonging to border product categories that are (hypothetically) fully invoiced in EUR compared with goods in product categories (hypothetically) fully invoiced in CHF currencies. The estimated average effect in the period 15Q1–15Q3 is 7.8 pp. In online Appendix Section D.2 we report extensive sensitivity analysis.

We next leverage cross-product variation in price changes and in invoicing currencies at the border to measure the sensitivity of retail prices of imported goods to changes in border prices in the corresponding border product category. Specifically, for every quarter in 2015 we consider the regression

$$(4) \quad p_{it}^{ret} - p_{i14Q4}^{ret} = \alpha_t + \beta_t \times (p_{g(i)t}^{bor} - p_{g(i)14Q4}^{bor}) + \varepsilon_{it},$$

over imported goods i , where $p_{g(i)t}^{bor}$ denotes the simple average of border prices at time t in the border category associated with retail product i , $g(i)$, and β_t is the average sensitivity of retail prices to border prices across goods at time t . The rate of pass-through from border prices to retail prices, β_t , reflects a combination of changes in the cost of distribution services and changes in retail markups.

Given the concern that other drivers of retail prices in 2015 (such as category-specific demand shocks) may be correlated with border prices, we instrument border price changes in 2015 by the fraction of EUR-invoiced products in border category $g(i)$ in 2014, $EURshare_{g(i)}$. This instrument is valid if EUR invoicing shares by product category in 2014 are uncorrelated with other category-specific drivers of retail price changes in 2015 including (i) shocks to product demand or

TABLE 6—SENSITIVITY OF RETAIL IMPORT PRICES TO BORDER PRICES

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
$\Delta p_{g(i)t}^{bor}$	0.527 [0.182]	0.609 [0.197]	0.472 [0.169]	0.568 [0.214]	0.355 [0.235]	0.951 [0.378]	0.374 [0.242]	1.741 [1.094]
Observations	937	937	937	937	937	937	937	937
First stage F		82.5		78.6		22.1		2.5
Estimation	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS

Notes: This table reports estimates of β_t from equation (4). The dependent variable is the cumulative change in the retail price of imported goods relative to 14Q4, $\Delta p_{it}^{ret} = p_{it}^{ret} - p_{i14Q4}^{ret}$. Under OLS, the independent variable is the change in the border price of the corresponding border category over the same time window, $\Delta p_{g(i)t}^{bor}$. Under 2SLS, the border price change is instrumented with EUR invoicing intensity in 2014 of the corresponding border category. Standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product class.

retail costs, and (ii) good-specific sensitivity of retail prices to border prices. Note that this restriction does not require that EUR invoicing shares in 2014 are uncorrelated with border price exchange rate pass-through in 2015: in fact, our instrument builds on this correlation.³¹

While we believe that this instrument somewhat alleviates endogeneity concerns, we cannot a priori rule out violations of the exclusion restriction. For example, one could build a model featuring variation in additive retail distribution costs across product categories in which, as in Corsetti and Dedola (2005), the level of retail distribution costs shapes border to retail price pass-through as well as desired exchange rate to border price pass-through. In this case, the exclusion restriction would be violated if the choice of invoicing between EUR and CHF in 2014 was endogenously determined by desired exchange rate pass-through, since product categories with higher retail distribution costs would feature lower border to retail price pass-through and more CHF invoicing.³²

Table 6 reports OLS and 2SLS estimates of (4) for each quarter in 2015. Based on OLS, retail import prices fall by roughly 0.53 pp more in product categories with a 1 pp larger decline in border prices in 15Q1, and by 0.47 pp more in 15Q2. In the third and fourth quarters, the estimates are around 0.35, but less tightly estimated. The positive comovement between border and retail import prices suggested by these OLS estimates is a feature of the data not only after January 2015 and, more importantly, does not establish a causal impact of border to retail import prices.³³

The first stage of the 2SLS is significant in the first three quarters of 2015 (see F -statistic reported in the bottom row), as revealed also by estimates of equation (2)

³¹ Wooldridge (1997) provides a detailed discussion of 2SLS in models with random coefficients (in our setting, variation in β_t across goods: $\beta_{g(i)t} = \beta_t + v_{g(i)t}$). In addition to the standard exclusion restriction, consistency of 2SLS requires that $v_{g(i)t}$ is conditionally mean independent with respect to $EURshare_{g(i)}$, and that the covariance between $v_{g(i)t}$ and $(p_{g(i)t}^{bor} - p_{g(i)14Q4}^{bor})$ is conditionally independent with respect to $EURshare_{g(i)}$ (but this covariance need not be zero).

³² If distribution cost inputs and imported goods are combined in a Cobb-Douglas fashion (rather than additive), then the level of retail distribution costs shapes border to retail pass-through but not exchange rate to border price pass-through. So, in this case the exclusion restriction would not be violated.

³³ Estimating the OLS relationship between changes in border and retail import prices in each quarter of 2013 and 2014 (a period of EUR/CHF stability) relative to the fourth quarter of 2014 results in three quarters (out of a total of 7) with positive and significant coefficients. Moreover, all 2SLS estimates are close to zero and not statistically significant.

displayed in Table 4. The estimated 2SLS estimates of β_t are 0.61 in 15Q1 and 0.57 in 15Q2 with standard errors of roughly 0.2. The point estimate in 15Q3 is 0.95 (with a standard error of 0.3) and the estimate in 15Q4 is insignificant.³⁴ In online Appendix Section D.3 we report a range of sensitivity analysis.

C. Invoicing, Import Penetration, and Retail Prices of Domestic Goods

Whereas there is at most a weak relationship between changes in prices of Swiss-produced goods and the EUR invoicing share (see Figure 5), we next show that this relationship is stronger once we condition on the expenditure share of competing imported goods in the same product category. We argue that, under certain exclusion restrictions and in combination with estimates of comovement between Swiss-produced and import retail prices, these results point to the presence of pricing complementarities between domestic and imported retail products (i.e., domestic producers react to changes in price of competing imported retail products).

We consider panel regressions of the form

$$(5) \quad p_{it}^{ret} = \sum_{s \neq 14Q4} \mathbf{1}_{s=t} \times ImpShare_{g(i)} \times (\gamma_s + \beta_s \times EURshare_{g(i)}) + \alpha_t + \lambda_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

for imported goods and domestic goods separately, where $ImpShare_{g(i)}$ denotes the import expenditure share in retail category $g(i)$ calculated over 2014. We include in the regression the interaction between import shares and EUR invoicing share because we expect a higher sensitivity of domestic prices to import prices in product categories with a large participation of imported products, as in the model of variable markups we consider in online Appendix Section D.6.

Figure 6 presents estimates of β_t for imported goods (panel A) and Swiss-produced goods (panel B). Online Appendix Table D.17 reports estimates and standard errors by quarter, as well as the average effect in the first three quarters of 2015. While estimates of β_t in 2013–2014 are largely insignificant, they are negative and significant in 2015 not only for imports but also for Swiss-produced goods. Evaluated at the median import share of 23 percent across product categories, our point estimates imply that retail prices of domestically produced goods decline in 15Q1 (Q2 and Q3) relative to 14Q4 by 2.7 pp (3.8 and 5.6) more for goods in border product categories that are (hypothetically) fully invoiced in EUR compared with goods in product categories fully invoiced in CHF. In online Appendix Section D.4 we report sensitivity analysis.

Motivated by these results, we aim to estimate the sensitivity of retail prices of Swiss-produced goods to changes in retail prices of imported goods in the same retail product category. For every quarter in 2015, we consider a regression of the form

$$(6) \quad p_{it}^{ret} - p_{i14Q4}^{ret} = \alpha_t + \beta_t \times ImpShare_{g(i)} \times \left(p_{g(i)t}^{retimp} - p_{g(i)14Q4}^{retimp} \right) + \varepsilon_{it}$$

³⁴ 2SLS estimates throughout the cross-sectional regressions can be higher or lower than OLS estimates. On the one hand, measurement error in prices and invoicing shares can lead to attenuation bias, while on the other hand endogeneity can lead to upward biases in OLS estimates.

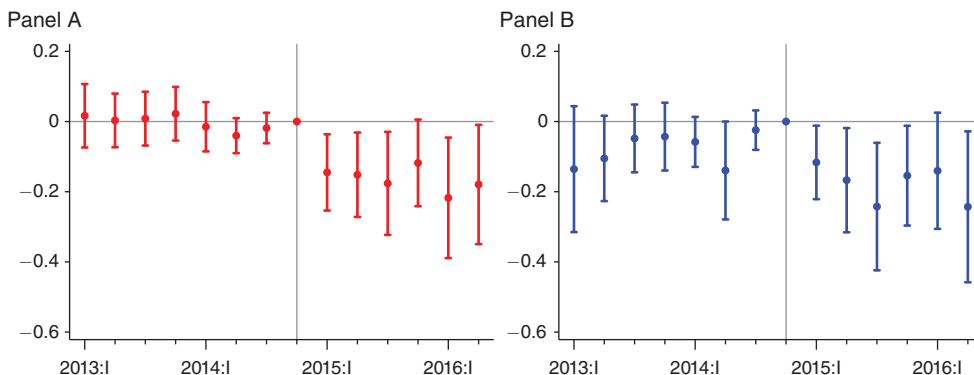


FIGURE 6. INVOICING, IMPORT PENETRATION, AND RETAIL PRICES

Notes: This figure reports estimates of β_t from equation (5), for imports (panel A) and Swiss-produced goods (panel B). The dependent variable is log retail price by quarter. Independent variables include time dummies, time dummies interacted with import expenditure shares in 2014 of the corresponding product class, time dummies interacted with the product of import expenditures by product class and EUR invoicing intensity by border category in 2014, and EAN fixed effects. Whiskers indicate the bounds of a 95 percent confidence interval, calculated clustering at the level of border product category.

over Swiss-produced goods i , where $p_{g(i)t}^{retimp}$ denotes average retail price of imports in product class $g(i)$ (weighted by 2014 expenditures). The coefficient β_t captures the average sensitivity of retail prices of Swiss-produced goods to changes in retail prices of imported goods in the corresponding product category at time t .

OLS estimates of β_t , shown in Table 7, are positive in every quarter of 2015 with varying statistical significance, implying that prices of domestically produced goods fall by more in product categories with larger price reductions of retail prices of imported goods. This is not necessarily evidence of strategic complementarities in pricing between domestic and competing foreign products since domestic and import prices within a product category could also comove due to correlated changes in demand or production costs.³⁵

In the absence of direct measures of domestic marginal costs that we can use as a control, we address the endogeneity concern by instrumenting $ImpShare_{g(i)} \times (p_{g(i)t}^{retimp} - p_{g(i)14Q4}^{retimp})$ by $ImpShare_{g(i)} \times EURshare_{g(i)}$, where these shares are calculated in 2014. The exclusion restriction, following the same logic as in the discussion after equation (4), is that the product of import share and EUR invoicing share by product category in 2014 is uncorrelated with other category-specific drivers of domestic retail price changes in 2015 including (i) shifts in product demand or in production costs, and (ii) good-specific sensitivity of domestic retail prices to import retail prices. This restriction does not require that EUR invoicing in 2014 is uncorrelated with border price exchange-rate pass-through in 2015.

³⁵ Since products in our sample consist mostly of nondurable final consumer goods such as shampoo, cheese, and mineral water, it is unlikely that domestically produced goods within a product category make intensive intermediate input use of imported goods in the same product category. However, domestically produced and imported goods within a product category may employ common inputs in production that induce a correlation in cost changes, as in Amiti, Itskhoki, and Konings (2019).

TABLE 7—SENSITIVITY OF DOMESTIC RETAIL PRICES TO IMPORT RETAIL PRICES

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
$ImpShare_{g(i)} \times \Delta p_{g(i)t}^{reimp}$	1.240 [0.372]	0.939 [0.489]	0.937 [0.315]	1.250 [0.518]	0.668 [0.438]	1.518 [0.553]	0.739 [0.336]	1.119 [0.533]
Observations	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972	1,972
First stage F		23.0		38.4		35.4		25.6
Estimation	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS

Notes: This table reports estimates of β_t from equation (6). The dependent variable is the cumulative change in the retail price of Swiss-produced goods relative to 14Q4, $\Delta p_{it}^{ret} = p_{it}^{ret} - p_{i4Q4}^{ret}$. Under OLS, the independent variable is the product of import expenditure share in 2014 and the change in retail import prices over the same time horizon for the corresponding product class, $ImpShare_{g(i)} \times \Delta p_{g(i)t}^{reimp}$. Under 2SLS, the import share-interacted change in retail import prices is instrumented by the import share-interacted EUR invoicing intensity in 2014 of the corresponding border category. Standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product class.

Once again, we cannot a priori rule out violations of the exclusion restriction. However, the weaker relationship between EUR invoicing shares and domestic retail price changes in 2015, unless we interact it by import share of final goods in the corresponding category, casts some doubt on the hypothesis that Swiss-produced goods in EUR-invoiced categories use more imported inputs, which would violate the exclusion restriction.³⁶ Similarly, suppose that the exclusion restriction was violated because the sensitivity of domestic retail prices to import retail prices is higher in product categories with higher border price pass-through, which also shapes the choice of invoicing between EUR and CHF in 2014. Then we would expect a stronger relationship between EUR invoicing shares and domestic retail price changes in 2015, even without conditioning on import shares.

The 2SLS estimates of β_t , reported in Table 7, are positive with significance varying by quarter (10 percent in Q1, 5 percent in Q2 and Q4, and 1 percent in Q3). Based on Q2 and Q3 estimates, the decline in domestic prices is roughly 0.3 pp larger in product categories with the median import share and 1 pp larger decline in retail import prices. In online Appendix Section D.5 we report a range of sensitivity analysis.

D. Invoicing and the Extensive Margin of Retail Prices

We next examine how the degree of retail price stickiness responded to the CHF appreciation. The decline in retail import prices in 2015 is partly accounted for by a large increase in the fraction of nominal price changes, which can itself be decomposed into an increase in the frequency of negative price changes and a decrease in the frequency of positive price changes. We first provide aggregate time series

³⁶Online Appendix Figure D.5 shows that there is very little Swiss value added contained in imports from the euro area, both for the aggregate of manufacturing industries and for the food, beverage, and tobacco industries (which are more closely related to the set of final consumption goods examined in this paper). These low shares speak against the possibility that marginal costs (and prices) of Swiss producers and foreign exporters are correlated due to local and foreign firms using identical Swiss inputs. Unfortunately, we do not have a good measure of the Swiss share of imported intermediate inputs by industry.

and then examine the cross-sectional relationship with currency of invoicing at the border.

We do not construct a measure of price flexibility at the level of individual goods and stores because, at such a disaggregated level, our scanner data are very sparse over time. Instead, we aggregate prices for each good i , region r , retailer s , and month t according to the modal price across households, weeks, and stores within the quadruplet $irst$. We then calculate, for each good i , year $y = 13, 14, 15$, and monthly horizon $h = 1, \dots, 12$, the fraction of region-retailer tuples for which the modal price in month h of year y differs from the modal price in December of the previous year. We denote this fraction by f_{iyh} . We further decompose the fraction of price changes into the fraction of increases (+) and decreases (-): $f_{iyh} = f_{iyh}^+ + f_{iyh}^-$.³⁷

The top row in Figure 7 displays the fraction of modal price changes f_{iyh} averaged across goods (weighting goods by expenditures in 2014) for imports (panel A) and Swiss-produced goods (panel B). For every monthly horizon in 2013 and 2014, the degree of price flexibility is similar for imported goods and for Swiss-produced goods. The fraction of price changes is roughly 20 percent at the one-month horizon in 2013 and in 2014. That is, modal prices change in roughly 20 percent of region/retailer pairs between December 2013 and January 2014 (and between December 2012 and January 2013). This fraction rises to roughly 40 percent at 12-month horizons in 2013 and 2014.³⁸

In 2015, at every monthly horizon, the average fraction of modal price changes for imported goods rises significantly compared with 2013 and 2014. At the one-month horizon, the average f_{iyh} for imports rises from 20 percent in 2013–2014 to 30 percent in 2015. At the 12-month horizon, it rises from 40 percent to 60 percent. In contrast, there is little change in the fraction of price changes by time horizon for Swiss-produced goods.

The increase in the fraction of price changes for imported goods following the January 2015 appreciation is almost completely driven by price reductions. The bottom row in Figure 7 shows that the average f_{iyh}^- rises from roughly 10 percent in 2013 and 2014 to roughly 40 percent in 2015 at either the one-, the two-, or the three-month horizon. The fraction of price decreases at longer horizons is also much higher in 2015 than in 2013 or 2014. This suggests that the 2015 price reductions were not short-lived sales. Online Appendix Figure E.1 shows that there was only a small decline in the fraction of price increases for imported goods.³⁹ The evolution

³⁷More formally, let p_{irshy} denote the log of the modal price across households, weeks, and stores within region r , retailer s , month h , year y , and let p_{iyh} be the average of p_{irshy} over r, s pairs. Changes in log prices between December of year $y - 1$ and month h of year y are $p_{iyh} - p_{iy-1,12} = f_{iyh} \times s_{iyh}$ where f_{iyh} is the fraction of r, s observations with nonzero price changes in this time period, and s_{iyh} is the average size of nonzero price changes. Note that, in the presence of temporary price changes, f_{iyh} does not need to increase monotonically over time. We can further decompose changes in prices as $p_{iyh} - p_{iy-1,12} = f_{iyh}^+ \times s_{iyh}^+ - f_{iyh}^- \times s_{iyh}^-$, where f_{iyh}^+ (f_{iyh}^-) denotes the fraction of observations with a price increase (decrease) between month t and December of the previous year, and s_{iyh}^+ (s_{iyh}^-) denotes the average size of these price increases (decreases).

³⁸Online Appendix Figure E.2 displays the monthly fraction of price changes from one month to the other between 2013 and 2016. The fraction of price changes per month is on average roughly 0.2. Nakamura and Steinsson (2008) report that the average monthly fraction of price changes (inclusive of sales) in the United States CPI is roughly 0.25 for all goods and for processed food goods, and 0.21 for household furnishings. The fraction of price changes is roughly half as large when sales are excluded, as is the case in our retail price data when we exclude temporary price reductions.

³⁹In online Appendix Section E.1, we document that, accompanying the increase in the fraction of price reductions of imported goods, there was a significant decline in the absolute size of retail price reductions for imported

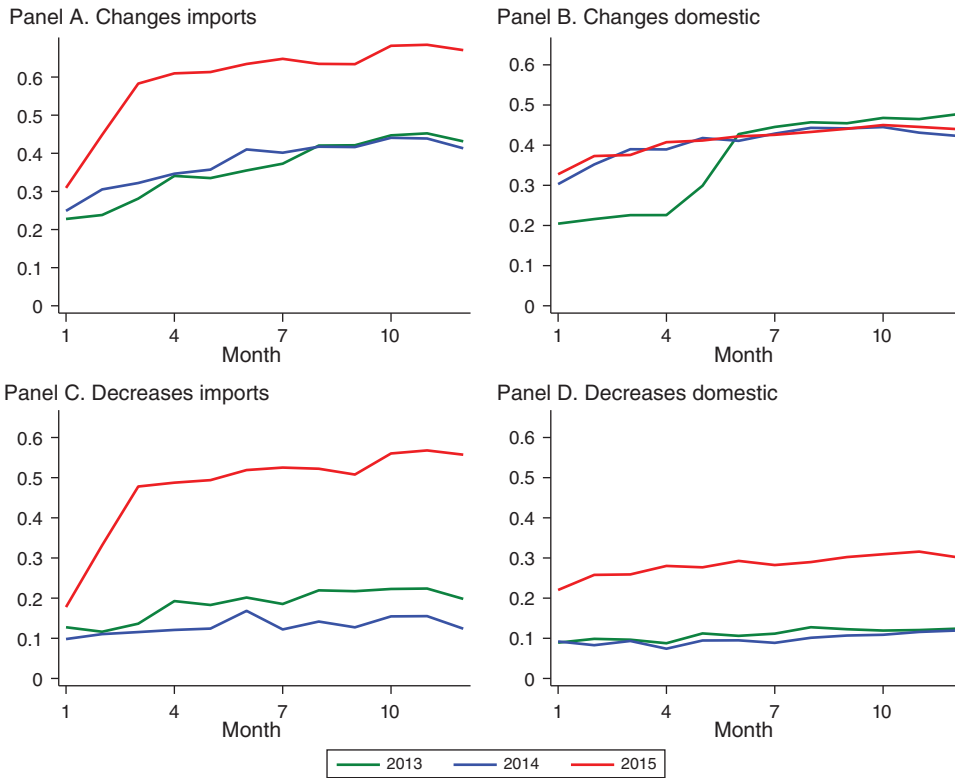


FIGURE 7. FRACTION OF PRICE CHANGES COMPARED WITH DECEMBER OF PREVIOUS YEAR

Notes: Panels A and B display the weighted average fraction of changes in modal prices relative to December of the previous year, f_{iyh} , for 1–12 month horizons. Panels C and D show the same statistic for price decreases, f_{iyh}^- . Panels A and C consider imported goods and panels B and D consider Swiss-produced goods.

of retail price stickiness varies systematically across imported goods by currency of invoicing and price changes at the border. The impact of the appreciation on the extensive margin and especially on the fraction of price reductions was more pronounced in border product categories with higher EUR invoicing shares. For a given monthly horizon h , we consider panel regressions of the form

$$(7) \quad f_{iyh}^+ \text{ or } f_{iyh}^- = \sum_{y'=13,15} \beta_{y'h} \times \mathbf{1}_{y'=y} \times EURshare_{g(i)} + \alpha_{yh} + \lambda_{ih} + \varepsilon_{iyh}.$$

The dependent variable is either the fraction of price increases or the fraction of price decreases by product. The variables α_{yh} and λ_{ih} denote year and product fixed effects, respectively, that can vary by monthly horizon h .

goods in early 2015. We then show in Section E.4 that a simple Ss pricing can generate this seemingly puzzling negative co-movement between the change in the frequency of price adjustment and the change in the absolute size of price changes of imported goods. Specifically, in response to a decline in the CHF-denominated cost of imported goods, the absolute size of price reductions falls if new price changes (i.e., those that would not have occurred in the absence of the shock) are sufficiently small relative to the size of typical price reductions, which depends on the assumed distribution of idiosyncratic shocks.

TABLE 8—INVOICING CURRENCY AND THE EXTENSIVE MARGIN OF RETAIL PRICE CHANGES

	Decreases			Increases		
	1m (1)	2m (2)	3m (3)	1m (4)	2m (5)	3m (6)
<i>Panel A. Imported goods</i>						
<i>EURshare</i> × 113	−0.031 [0.068]	0.048 [0.058]	−0.004 [0.098]	−0.105 [0.078]	−0.119 [0.112]	−0.291 [0.121]
<i>EURshare</i> × 115	0.284 [0.095]	0.651 [0.169]	0.574 [0.181]	−0.267 [0.106]	−0.279 [0.126]	−0.363 [0.109]
Observations	2,537	2,508	2,506	2,537	2,508	2,506
Unique products	884	881	877	884	881	877
Adjusted R^2	0.11	0.19	0.24	0.19	0.18	0.21
<i>Panel B. Domestic goods</i>						
<i>EURshare</i> × 113	0.063 [0.057]	−0.065 [0.029]	−0.021 [0.036]	−0.031 [0.179]	−0.112 [0.202]	−0.272 [0.228]
<i>EURshare</i> × 115	0.356 [0.278]	0.284 [0.292]	0.318 [0.298]	−0.255 [0.218]	−0.308 [0.260]	−0.472 [0.290]
Observations	6,223	6,145	6,121	6,223	6,145	6,121
Unique products	2,138	2,125	2,113	2,138	2,125	2,113
Adjusted R^2	0.12	0.12	0.14	0.17	0.15	0.20

Notes: This table displays estimates of β_{13h} and β_{15h} in equation (7). Panel A reports estimates for imported goods, while panel B reports those for Swiss-produced goods. Columns 1–3 report estimates for price decreases. Columns 4–6 report estimates for price increases. Standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product class.

Table 8 reports estimates of β_{13h} and β_{15h} for price decreases (−) and increases (+), separately for imports and Swiss-produced goods. We consider monthly horizons $h = 1, 2, 3$, since these horizons experience the largest changes in aggregate fractions of price changes. We report results for $h = 4, 5, 6$, as well as other sensitivity analysis in online Appendix Section E.2.

Consider our estimates for 2015. For price reductions, estimates of β_{15h} are positive and significant at the 1 percent level in each of the horizons we consider. At the three-month horizon (between December and March), the fraction of price reductions is 57.4 percentage points higher in 2015 (compared with the same three-month horizon in 2014) for goods in product categories with border prices that are (hypothetically) fully EUR-invoiced compared with product categories fully invoiced in CHF. For price increases, estimates of β_{15h} are negative and significant at the 1 percent or 5 percent levels, depending on the monthly horizon. That is, the fraction of price increases fell by more in 2015 (compared with 2014) for imported goods in product categories with more EUR invoicing.⁴⁰

For Swiss-produced goods, in contrast, estimates of β_{15h} are not significantly different from zero for either the fraction of price decreases or the fraction of price increases. Similarly, our estimates for 2013 are small and largely insignificant, suggesting that there are no pre-trends in the relationship between the fraction of price

⁴⁰Point estimates for price increases are lower in absolute terms than those for price decreases. For example, at the three-month horizon, $\beta_{15h} = 0.57$ for price decreases whereas $\beta_{15h} = -0.36$ for price increases. This is consistent with the fact, shown in Figure 7, that the overall fraction of price changes rose in 2015. In online Table E.2 we report estimates of equation (7) based on the overall fraction of price changes, $f_{iyh} = f_{iyh}^+ + f_{iyh}^-$, as the dependent variable. Estimates of β_{15h} are positive, which is consistent with the fact that point estimates are higher in absolute terms for the fraction of price decreases than for the fraction of price increases, but only statistically significantly different from zero at the two-month horizon.

increases or decreases and currency of invoicing of border prices between 2013 and 2014.

We further show, in online Appendix Section E.3, that the extensive margin of retail price adjustment for imported goods is strongly associated with changes in border prices in the corresponding product category. Under both OLS and 2SLS (instrumenting border price changes by 2014 EUR invoicing shares in the corresponding border category), we show that categories with a larger border price reduction in 2015 display significantly more price decreases and fewer price increases.

IV. Expenditure Switching to Imports

In this section we show that the changes in relative prices described above are associated with changes in retail expenditures on imported goods. We document the dynamics of the aggregate import share and then examine variation across individual goods.

A. Aggregate Import Share

We denote the aggregate import share by S_{yh} , defined as the sum of expenditures on imports over $h = 1, \dots, 17$ months starting in January of year $y = 2013, 2014, 2015$ relative to the sum of expenditures on imports and Swiss-produced goods over the same time horizon. We compare import shares across years over comparable time horizons, rather than comparing monthly or quarterly import shares relative to the last month or quarter of 2014, due to seasonalities of imports in our data.⁴¹

Figure 8 documents that aggregate import shares in 2014 are similar to those in 2013 for each time horizon. In 2015, there is a clear increase in import shares at each time horizon, even in the early months after the CHF appreciation. As shown in Table 9, the rise in the import share over different time horizons (corresponding to our quarterly price measures) ranges between 0.8 and 1.3 percentage points relative to the average between 2013 and 2014, or between 3.1 and 4.9 log percent differences. The increase in the import share is larger at longer time horizons.⁴²

The increase in the aggregate import share is partly accounted for by an increase in import shares within product categories and partly by reallocation of expenditures across product categories. The within component, calculated by fixing the weights of individual product categories at the level of import expenditures in 2014 (reported in Table 9), is between 45 percent and 70 percent as large as the overall increase in the aggregate import share. The within component is quantitatively more important at longer time horizons.

⁴¹ We display in online Appendix Section F.1 import shares by month. In constructing S_{yh} , our choice of the longest horizon, $h = 17$, is based on the latest month in the Nielsen dataset, May 2016. For $h > 12$ and $y = 14$, we include the first $(h - 12)$ months of the year rather than including post-appreciation months in 2015. Recall that in our baseline we consider products that can be matched to border product categories with more than 7 border prices per quarter in 2014. We report in the Appendix results based on more and less restrictive product-category samples.

⁴² As shown in online Appendix Table A.1, while real imports of goods and services rose in 2015, the ratio of aggregate nominal imports to GDP fell (in contrast to the rise in the aggregate import share for nondurable consumer goods in our data). Blaum (2019) examines how the response of intermediate goods imports (which are not included in our data) to exchange rate movements may differ from that of final goods imports.

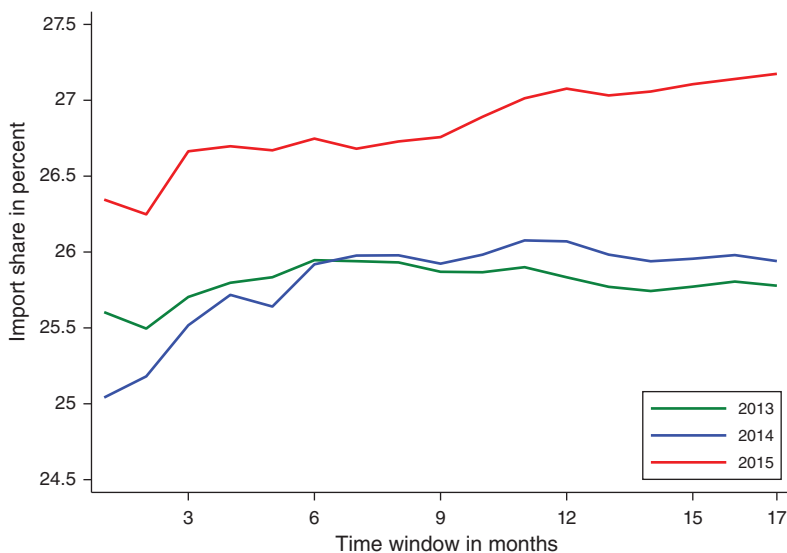


FIGURE 8. AGGREGATE IMPORT SHARE IN TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Notes: This figure reports the aggregate import share, $S_{y,t}$, for years 2013, 2014, and 2015 and horizons $h = 1, \dots, 17$ months. The aggregate import share is the total sum of expenditures on imported goods over the corresponding monthly time horizon in the year divided by the sum of total expenditures (imports and Swiss-produced goods) over the same time period.

TABLE 9—AGGREGATE EXPENDITURE SWITCHING

Monthly horizon	Aggregate import share			Aggregate import share, fixed category weights			Ratio aggregate import share diff/price diff	
	Average		log diff 15	Average		log diff 15	Imp. price measure	
	13–14	15	versus 13–14	13–14	15	versus 13–14	Border	Retail
3	25.6	26.7	4.0	25.8	26.2	1.8	-0.9	-5.4
6	25.9	26.8	3.1	26.1	26.5	1.7	-0.6	-2.6
9	25.9	26.8	3.3	26.0	26.5	2.0	-0.6	-2.4
12	26.0	27.1	4.3	25.9	26.6	2.6	-0.9	-2.7
15	25.9	27.1	4.7	25.9	26.7	3.1	-1.0	-2.9
17	25.9	27.2	4.9	25.9	26.8	3.4	-1.0	-2.9

Notes: This table reports import shares and their evolution over various monthly horizons. The first three columns report, in turn, the 2013–2014 average import share, the 2015 average import share, and the log percent difference between 2015 and 2013–2014. The next three columns repeat the first three columns weighting product categories by import expenditures in 2014. The last two columns report the ratio of log changes in aggregate import shares (from column 3) with respect to changes in relative prices (obtained from Table 3).

How large are changes in aggregate import shares compared with changes in relative prices? We calculate the log change in relative prices as the log change in import prices minus the log change in prices across all goods (weighing imports and Swiss-produced goods by 2014 expenditures). For import prices we use changes in either border prices or retail prices, as described in the previous section. We then calculate the ratio of log differences in aggregate import shares with respect to log changes in relative prices by monthly time horizon in 2015.

As shown in Table 9, based on retail import prices, this ratio is 5.4 at the three-month horizon and ranges between 2.4 and 2.9 at horizons longer than three

months. In contrast, based on border import prices this ratio ranges between 0.6 and 1. The ratio of import share changes relative to relative price changes is smaller based on border prices because retail import prices fell by much less and more gradually than border prices. This pattern is especially pronounced at the three-month horizon. The cross-sectional results that follow below display a similar pattern.

B. Changes in Import Shares and Currency of Invoicing at the Border

We next analyze variation in import share changes across goods and relate these to invoicing currency. We then leverage this cross-sectional variation to provide an alternative measure of sensitivity of import shares to relative prices.

We first estimate the relationship between changes in expenditure shares on imported goods within product categories and pre-shock EUR invoicing in the corresponding border category.

For this, we define the share of expenditures on imported good i within its retail product class, S_{iyh} , as the sum of expenditures on good i over h months starting in January of year $y = 2013, 2014, 2015$ relative to the sum of expenditures on imports and Swiss-produced goods in retail product class $g(i)$ over the same time horizon. We consider panel regressions of the form

$$(8) \quad s_{iyh} = \sum_{y'=13,15} \beta_{y'h} \times \mathbf{1}_{y'=y} \times EURshare_{g(i)} + \alpha_{yh} + \lambda_{ih} + \varepsilon_{iyh},$$

for monthly horizons $h = 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17$ and imported goods i , where $s_{iyh} = \log(S_{iyh})$. For each horizon, we consider a balanced sample of products for which s_{iyh} is observed in all three years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

We also consider a second version of equation (8) using import share-adjusted EUR invoicing shares, $(1 - ImpShare_{g(i)}) \times EURshare_{g(i)}$, both calculated in 2014. To understand this formulation, note from equation (9) that for a given change in the price of imports, the magnitude of the change in the import price relative to the product category price is decreasing in the import share. In the limit, in a product category with import share equal to 1, relative import prices and import shares are constant over time. We use import share-adjusted EUR invoicing shares as an instrument in the 2SLS regression below. Finally, we consider a third specification in which, in addition to the interaction term, we also include $(1 - ImpShare_{g(i)})$.

Table 10 presents estimates of β_{13h} and β_{15h} for each monthly time horizon and specification. Estimates of β_{13h} are small and largely insignificant across all specifications and time horizons, indicating no strong relationship between changes in import shares and EUR invoicing before 2015.

Estimates of β_{15h} , in contrast, are positive and statistically significant at most horizons and specifications. Our point estimates imply that the expenditure share of imported goods rises by roughly 12 percent more in (hypothetically) fully EUR-invoiced categories than in categories that are fully CHF-invoiced at three- and six-month horizons in 2015, significant at the 5 percent and 1 percent levels, respectively. If we consider the interaction term in the regression in the bottom two

TABLE 10—EXPENDITURE SWITCHING AND INVOICING

	3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	17m
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A. EUR-invoicing share</i>						
<i>EURshare</i> × 113	0.033 [0.056]	0.090 [0.052]	−0.008 [0.063]	0.024 [0.047]	0.036 [0.051]	0.037 [0.054]
<i>EURshare</i> × 115	0.119 [0.057]	0.127 [0.047]	0.080 [0.047]	0.111 [0.048]	0.115 [0.055]	0.096 [0.058]
Adjusted R^2	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93
<i>Panel B. Interaction of import share with invoicing</i>						
<i>EURshare</i> × (1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 113	0.077 [0.069]	0.096 [0.061]	0.006 [0.067]	0.007 [0.055]	0.035 [0.058]	0.040 [0.059]
<i>EURshare</i> × (1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 115	0.207 [0.073]	0.179 [0.058]	0.143 [0.057]	0.179 [0.058]	0.191 [0.064]	0.175 [0.067]
Adjusted R^2	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93
<i>Panel C. Import share and interaction of import share with invoicing</i>						
(1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 113	0.063 [0.060]	−0.003 [0.057]	0.048 [0.063]	0.000 [0.039]	−0.001 [0.042]	0.000 [0.045]
(1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 115	−0.033 [0.044]	−0.038 [0.041]	0.017 [0.038]	0.007 [0.042]	0.003 [0.046]	0.014 [0.051]
<i>EURshare</i> × (1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 113	0.007 [0.104]	0.099 [0.098]	−0.046 [0.111]	0.006 [0.077]	0.036 [0.082]	0.040 [0.085]
<i>EURshare</i> × (1 − <i>ImpShare</i>) × 115	0.244 [0.093]	0.221 [0.079]	0.124 [0.077]	0.172 [0.077]	0.188 [0.086]	0.159 [0.093]
Adjusted R^2	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93
Observations	6,279	7,068	7,563	8,046	8,118	8,160
Unique products	2,093	2,356	2,521	2,682	2,706	2,720

Notes: This table reports estimates of β_{13h} and β_{15h} from equation (8) for each monthly time horizon and specification. The dependent variable is the log of expenditure share of each imported good within retail product class. The independent variable is the EUR invoicing share (interacted with the 2013 or 2015 dummy) in panel A, the EUR invoicing share times domestic expenditure share in panel B, and the EUR invoicing share times domestic expenditure share and the domestic share on its own in panel C. Standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product class.

panels, estimates remain largely significant. Estimates using interacted invoicing shares imply that, evaluated at the median import share of 23 percent across product categories in 2014, the rise in expenditure shares of imported goods in fully EUR-invoiced categories relative to CHF-invoiced categories ranges between 13 percent and 18 percent at three- and six-month horizons in 2015. We report sensitivity analysis in online Appendix Section F.2.

C. Sensitivity of Import Shares to Relative Prices

To measure the sensitivity of import expenditure shares to relative import prices within a product class, we consider the following regression:

$$(9) \quad \Delta s_{i15h} = \alpha_h + \beta_h \times \left[\Delta p_{i15h}^{imp} - ImpShare_{g(i)14} \times \Delta p_{g(i)15h}^{imp} - (1 - ImpShare_{g(i)14}) \times \Delta p_{g(i)15h}^{dom} \right] + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where for any variable x_{i15h} , $\Delta x_{i15h} = x_{i15h} - x_{i14h}$. We estimate this equation in the balanced sample of all imported goods i for $h = 3, 6, 9, 12$ and, in the online Appendix, also for $h = 15, 17$.

In order to examine the sensitivity of import shares to prices at different layers between the border and the retail levels, we consider three alternative measures of import prices, p_{iyh}^{imp} and category-level prices $p_{g(i)yh}^{imp}$. First, we use border prices of the corresponding border category, $p_{g(i)yh}^{bor}$, for both p_{iyh}^{imp} and $p_{g(i)yh}^{imp}$. Second, we use for both p_{iyh}^{imp} and $p_{g(i)yh}^{imp}$ a measure of retail import prices given by “distribution services”-augmented border prices, $p_{g(i)yh}^{bor+dis}$.⁴³ Third, we use import retail prices, p_{iyh}^{ret} , for p_{iyh}^{imp} and then construct category-level prices, $p_{g(i)yh}^{imp}$, as the weighted average (using 2014 expenditures) of retail import prices within the corresponding retail product class.

We consider two alternative measures of domestic prices, $p_{g(i)yh}^{dom}$. First, we calculate a weighted average (using 2014 expenditures) of retail domestic prices within the corresponding product category. Second, we use an aggregate (as opposed to good-specific) price of domestic goods, given by the official CPI for Swiss-produced goods.⁴⁴ For each specification of equation (9), we report estimates of β_h based on each of the three measures of import prices and two measures of domestic prices, resulting in a total of six estimates for each time horizon.

Motivated by the findings in Section IVB, we leverage heterogeneity in pre-shock import shares and EUR invoicing shares in border product category $g(i)$ as driver of heterogeneous responses of relative prices to the appreciation. We consider 2SLS estimations of equation (9) where the first stage relates import-adjusted EUR invoicing shares in 2014, $EURshare_{g(i)} \times (1 - ImpShare_{g(i)})$, to relative price changes. The exclusion restriction, following the same logic as in the discussion after equation (4), is that import-adjusted EUR invoicing shares in 2014 are uncorrelated with other drivers of retail quantity changes in 2015 including (i) shifts in demand, and (ii) good-specific sensitivity of expenditures to prices. Once again, while we believe that this instrument somewhat alleviates endogeneity concerns, we cannot a priori rule out violations of the exclusion restriction.⁴⁵

We report 2SLS estimates in Table 11. The first stage is highly significant, except for the specification using the combination of good-specific retail import prices and product category-specific retail domestic prices, for which F -statistics are around 6 at three-, six- or nine-month horizons. Note, F -statistics are higher (close to or above 10) when weighting all observations equally (or when weighting observations equally within border product category) or when using modal prices to aggregate

⁴³ Specifically, we assume that retail import prices p_{iyh}^{imp} and $p_{g(i)yh}^{imp}$ are weighted averages of border prices, $p_{g(i)yh}^{bor}$, and an aggregate price index of private services (Private Dienstleistungen) in the Swiss CPI. We assume a weight on border prices of 0.59 and on services of $(1 - 0.59)$, where 0.59 corresponds to the average sensitivity of retail import prices to border prices reported in Table 6 during 15Q1 and 15Q2.

⁴⁴ A rationale for this second measure of domestic prices based on the CPI for Swiss-produced goods (Inlandgüter) is that retail domestic prices by product category are the sum of an aggregate component and measurement error. This second measure of domestic prices results in stronger first stage power and point estimates that are within confidence bands of those based on the first measure.

⁴⁵ For example, one could build a model featuring endogenous invoicing currency choice that is based on desired pass-through by exporters, and where the latter is related to the demand elasticity at the retail level, which varies across product categories. Note, however, that in standard models of variable markups conditional pass-through is determined not by the demand elasticity level but by the curvature of the demand elasticity.

TABLE 11—SENSITIVITY OF IMPORT SHARES TO RELATIVE PRICES

	3m		6m		9m		12m	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Border import price	-1.21 [0.45]	-1.12 [0.41]	-1.02 [0.34]	-0.98 [0.33]	-0.95 [0.39]	-0.87 [0.35]	-1.43 [0.47]	-1.27 [0.42]
First stage F	126.7	237.6	123.7	243.2	85.4	183.9	59.6	142.6
Border + distr. imp. price	-2.27 [0.89]	-1.97 [0.73]	-1.89 [0.66]	-1.75 [0.60]	-1.87 [0.81]	-1.59 [0.64]	-2.90 [1.07]	-2.31 [0.77]
First stage F	48.1	231.1	41.8	230.5	27.8	167.5	18.3	129.8
Retail import price	-5.10 [2.68]	-3.81 [1.61]	-4.23 [2.09]	-3.60 [1.59]	-3.81 [2.30]	-2.79 [1.41]	-5.84 [3.63]	-3.85 [1.84]
First stage F	6.1	16.9	6.5	13.3	5.2	12.8	3.6	10.8
Observations	2,092	2,092	2,352	2,352	2,517	2,517	2,677	2,677
Aggregate domestic price	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: This table presents estimates of β_h in equation (9), as well as first stage F -statistics. The dependent variable is the log change from 2014 to 2015 within a time horizon in the market share of good i in its retail product class, Δs_{i15h} . The independent variable is the log change in the price of imported good i relative to the product class price index, instrumented by import-adjusted EUR invoicing shares in 2014. To measure changes in prices of imported goods, the top panel uses border prices, the second panels adjusts border prices for changes in the official CPI for private services (assuming a weight on the latter of 41 percent), and the third panel uses retail prices of imported goods. To measure changes in domestic prices, odd-numbered columns use a weighted average of retail domestic prices within the corresponding product class, and even-numbered columns instead use the CPI for Swiss-produced goods. Standard errors are clustered at the level of retail product class. Results for 15- and 17-month horizons are reported in the online Appendix.

prices within regions, retailers, and weeks, as reported in online Appendix Section F. For these alternative choices, point estimates of β_h are similar to our baseline.⁴⁶

Estimates of β_h based on border prices as the measure of import prices are statistically significant at the 1 percent level and close to 1 at three-, six-, and nine-month horizons, implying that a 1 percent decline in the relative border price of imported goods is associated with an increase in import shares (within product categories) of around 1 percent. Point estimates at nine-month or higher horizons are slightly higher, close to 1.5. Point estimates are very similar under the two measures of domestic prices.

When we consider distribution-augmented border prices as the measure of import prices, the estimated sensitivity of import shares to relative import prices is higher than that based on border prices. At the three-, six-, and nine-month horizons, estimates of β_h are close to 2, with significance ranging between 1 percent and 5 percent. Estimates of β_h at longer horizons are close to 2.5 with significance between 1 percent and 5 percent. The degree of expenditure switching is higher because prices of private services, which we use to construct distribution-augmented border prices, fall by less than border prices.

⁴⁶We note that OLS estimates of β_h , reported in online Appendix Table F.11, are close to zero and largely insignificant. As discussed in Feenstra et al. (2018), OLS estimates of the elasticity of substitution between domestic and imported goods may be downward biased due to measurement error in prices and endogeneity from demand shocks that are correlated with prices.

Next, we consider good-specific retail prices as the measure of import prices. This measure of relative prices is closer to the measure one would use to estimate demand elasticities at the retail level, but implies more noisy estimates (and weaker first stage F -statistics using product category-specific retail domestic prices) given the large degree of idiosyncratic movements in good-level prices. Point estimates of β_h are higher than those based on distribution-augmented border prices and subject to larger standard errors. The estimated sensitivities of import shares to relative prices within a product category range between 3.8 and 5.8 if we use good-specific domestic prices, with significance between 5 percent and 10 percent in horizons up to 9 months. If we use aggregate domestic prices, estimates sensitivities range between 2.7 and 3.7, with lower standard errors and significance between 1 percent and 5 percent at 12-month horizons or less. The point estimates based on the two alternative measures of domestic prices are within the confidence intervals of each other. Finally, we note that point estimates are larger at the three-month horizon (consistent with the aggregate results in Table 9), but differences across time horizons are not statistically significant given large standard errors.

We report in online Appendix Section F.3 additional sensitivity analysis of our 2SLS estimates. While the magnitude and significance of the estimates differs across specific time horizons and measures, the two main takeaways are quite robust. First, there is a significant degree of expenditure switching away from domestic goods and to imports, observed both on aggregate import shares and cross-sectional variation in import shares across individual goods. Second, in terms of magnitudes, the sensitivity of expenditure shares to changes in relative prices (instrumented by import-adjusted invoicing shares) is around one for the border-level measure of import prices, and at least twice as high for the retail-level measure of import prices. Import shares are more sensitive to relative prices at the retail level than at the border level due to a muted decline in retail prices compared with border prices.

V. Taking Stock

In this paper, we provide a range of facts on how prices and expenditures of consumer goods in Switzerland responded to a unique exchange rate shock: the SNB's removal of the lower bound on the EUR/CHF exchange rate on January 15, 2015. This policy change happened against the backdrop of a stable macroeconomy and resulted in a large, unanticipated, and lasting appreciation of the Swiss franc. To investigate its impact, we examine border data on prices and invoicing, as well as household-level data on prices and expenditures of nondurable consumer goods. This allows us to link currency of invoicing to border prices, retail prices, and expenditure allocations at the consumer level.

We first document large differences in border price pass-through by invoicing currency in the first year after the appreciation, even when conditioning on nonzero price changes. However, differences dissipate at longer time horizons. These observations are consistent with models of endogenous invoicing based on desired pass-through at early time horizons. Via simple accounting exercises we argue that, given differences in desired pass-through across goods, counterfactual shifts in currency of invoicing at the border have a bigger impact on the aggregate

rate of pass through than counterfactual changes in the degree of nominal price stickiness.

Second, we show that differences across border product categories in price changes by invoicing currency at the border carry over to consumer prices and allocations. Specifically, after the appreciation, EUR invoicing at the border is associated with: (i) larger reductions in retail prices of imported goods, (ii) larger increases (decreases) in the frequency of price decreases (increases) of imported goods, (iii) larger reductions in retail prices of Swiss-produced goods (in categories with substantial import competition), and (iv) larger increases in import shares in the corresponding product category.⁴⁷

Third, leveraging the exchange rate shock and invoicing variation across product categories, we measure the sensitivity of retail import prices to border prices at roughly 50 percent after two quarters. We also measure the sensitivity of import shares to relative prices within product categories at roughly unity based on border import prices, and at least twice as high based on retail import prices. Elasticity estimates are higher using retail prices than using border prices because of the muted response of retail prices compared with border prices. A similar logic may apply for estimates of trade elasticities based on tariff variation.

Since we have limited our analysis to nondurable consumer expenditure data, we have not focused on the aggregate impact of the 2015 CHF appreciation on the Swiss economy. As shown in online Appendix Table A.1, the growth rate of Swiss real GDP was lower in 2015 compared with 2013 and 2014, but other forces may have contributed to the observed aggregate fluctuations. The measures that we provide may help discipline key elasticities in general equilibrium models designed to perform counterfactuals on the macroeconomic impact of nominal exchange rate movements. The 2015 CHF appreciation episode may also be informative about additional margins of adjustment beyond consumer import expenditure switching, including cross-border shopping and import substitution at the level of intermediate goods.

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⁴⁷The last observation on allocations complements our findings in Auer et al. (2019) that EUR-invoiced products experienced less of a decline in export values when compared with CHF-invoiced industries. Interestingly, the link between invoicing and export response shown in Auer et al. (2019) is stronger at longer horizons, whereas the link between invoicing and import share changes that we document in this paper is stronger at shorter horizons.

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