Economics 232c — Spring 2003

International Macroeconomics

Problem Set 1

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Due: **Tue, April 22**
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1 Productivity Shocks with Initially Unbalanced Current Accounts

There are two periods and two countries. Home produces with $Y = AF(K)$ and Foreign with $Y^* = A^*F(K^*)$, where A and A^* are productivity parameters. Both countries' representative agents have the same period utility so that $U_1 = u(C_1) + \beta u(C_2)$ and $U_1^* = u(C_1^*) + \beta u(C_2^*)$. Assume period utility $u(\cdot)$ to be *isoelastic*. International financial market clearing $S + S^* = I + I^*$ determines the world interest rate r.

1. Suppose Home runs a current account surplus $CA_1 > 0$ during period 1. How does an increase in Foreign productivity A_2^* during period 2 affect the current accounts in period 1?

2. Suppose again Home runs a current account surplus $CA_1 > 0$ during period 1. How does an increase in Home productivity A_2 during period 2 affect the current accounts in period 1?

3. Consider equal proportional increases in Home and Foreign productivity A_2 and A_2^*. How does this change affect world-wide investment $I_1 + I_1^*$ during period 1? Does the answer depend on the elasticity of intertemporal substitution?

2 Exponential Period Utility

There are two periods. A country's representative household has the exponential period utility function

$$u(C) = -\gamma \exp(-C/\gamma)$$

with $\gamma \in (0, \infty)$ and maximizes lifetime utility $U_1 = u(C_1) + \beta u(C_2)$ subject to

$$C_1 + RC_2 = Y_1 + RY_2 \equiv W_1,$$

where $R \equiv 1/(1 + r)$ is the price of tomorrow's consumption in terms of today's consumption and W_1 is initial wealth. The value of W_1 depends on R.

1. Derive the Euler equation and solve it for C_2 as a function of C_1, R and β.

2. What is the optimal level of C_1 considering W_1, R and β as given?

3. Differentiate this consumption function of C_1 with respect to R (differentiate W_1 with respect to R too) and show that

$$\frac{dC_1}{dR} = -\frac{C_1}{1+R} + \frac{Y_2}{1+R} + \frac{\gamma}{1+R}\left(1 - \ln(\beta/R)\right)$$

4. Derive the intertemporal elasticity of substitution of the exponential period utility $(-u'(C)/Cu''(C))$.

5. Use this result to show that the derivative dC_1/dR in part 3 can be expressed as

$$\frac{dC_1}{dR} = \frac{\sigma(C_2)\,C_2}{1+R} - \frac{C_2}{1+R} + \frac{Y_2}{1+R}.$$

Interpret the three additive terms in this derivative.

3 Stochastic Current Account Model

There are infinitely many periods. A country's representative household has the linear-quadratic period utility function

$$u(C) = C - \frac{a_0}{2}C^2$$

with $a_0 \in (0, \infty)$ and maximizes lifetime utility

$$U_1 = \mathbb{E}\left[\sum_{s=t}^{\infty} \beta^{s-t} u\left((1+r)B_s - B_{s+1} + \tilde{Z}_s\right)\right]$$

subject to

$$\sum_{s=t}^{\infty} R^{s-t} C_s = (1+r)B_t + \sum_{s=t}^{\infty} R^{s-t}\tilde{Z}_s,$$

where $R \equiv 1/(1+r)$ and $\tilde{Z}_t (\equiv Y_t - G_t - I_t)$ is *random* net output.

1. Derive the stochastic Euler equation and show that C_t satisfies

$$C_t = rR\left((1+r)B_t + \sum_{s=t}^{\infty} R^{s-t}\mathbb{E}[\tilde{Z}_s]\right)$$

2. Show that then $CA_t \equiv B_{t+1} - B_t = \tilde{Z}_t - \mathbb{E}[\tilde{Z}_t]$.

3. Define $\Delta\tilde{Z}_t \equiv \tilde{Z}_t - \tilde{Z}_{t-1}$ and show that the quantity

$$CA_t - \Delta\tilde{Z}_t - (1+r)CA_{t-1}$$

is uncorrelated with CA_s and $\Delta\tilde{Z}_s$ for all $s < t$. Is this finding related to the Hall's (1978) famous result that consumption follows a random walk?

4 Current Account and Terms of Trade

In a small open economy, the representative individual maximizes the lifetime utility function

$$U_t = \sum_{s=t}^{\infty} \beta^{s-t} \frac{\left(X_s^{\gamma} M_s^{1-\gamma}\right)^{1-1/\sigma} - 1}{1 - 1/\sigma},$$

where X is consumption of an exported good and M consumption of an imported good. The country completely specializes in production of the export good. The endowment of this good is constant at Y. The representative individual faces the fixed world interest rate $r = (1-\beta)/\beta$ in terms of the real consumption index $C = X^{\gamma} M^{1-\gamma}$ (so a loan of 1 real consumption unit today returns $1 + r$ real consumption units tomorrow). There is no investment or government spending.

1. Let p bet the price of the export goods in terms of the import good. So, a rise in p is an improvement in the terms of trade. Show that the consumption-based price index P in terms of imports is

$$P = p^{\gamma}/\gamma^{\gamma}(1-\gamma)^{1-\gamma}.$$

2. Show that the home country's current account identity is

$$B_{t+1} - B_t = rB_t + \frac{p_t(Y - X_t)}{P_t} - \frac{M_t}{P_t}.$$

   What is the corresponding intertemporal budget constraint for the consumer?

3. Derive the first-order conditions of the consumer's problem. (Hint: Reformulate the utility function and budget constraint in terms of real consumption C.) What are the optimal paths for X and M?

4. Suppose initial expectations are that p remains constant over time. There is an unexpected *temporary* fall in the terms of trade from p to $p' < p$. What is the effect on the current account $CA_t = B_{t+1} - B_t$ from part 2?

5. No suppose foreign net wealth B is indexed to the import good M rather than to real consumption. Accordingly, let r denote the own-rate of interest in imports but assume again that $r = (1-\beta)/\beta$. How does a *temporary* fall in the terms of trade from p to $p' < p$ affect the current account now? How do you explain differences, if any, to part 4?