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Endogenous tariffs and trade adjustment assistance

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Abstract

This paper examines whether trade adjustment assistance is an effective tool for blunting political opposition to trade liberalization. The traditional argument is that adjustment assistance bribes labor unions so that they will accept reduced tariff protection. In this way, a trade adjustment assistance program should help the government lower tariffs and increase social welfare. This paper introduces trade adjustment assistance into a political economy model of endogenous tariff formation. The model shows that adjustment assistance reduces policy makers'™ incentives to press for trade liberalization and may slow down the pace of reform and lower social welfare under certain plausible conditions.



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Keywords

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