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Market-specific Sunk Export Costs: The Impact of Learning and Spillovers

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1. INTRODUCTION

RECENT years have seen the emergence of a literature, which incorporates sunk export costs in models of international trade. This literature shows that, in the presence of such costs, not all firms export (see Melitz, 2003 or also Medin, 2003 for a model with firms with equal marginal production costs). Several empirical studies find evidence of sunk export costs by analysing export persistence in firm-level data (Roberts and Tybout, 1997; Bernard and Jensen, 2004). These studies focus on firms' decisions of whether or not to export as such and hence on global sunk export costs.¹

As Melitz and Redding (2014) underline, the nature of trade costs is potentially important but remains 'underexplored' (p. 14).² If sunk export costs are country and/or product specific, firms will typically serve different sets of markets, and persistence will be country and/or product specific. Therefore, country- and product-specific sunk export costs may influence aggregate trade patterns. A few studies find evidence of country-specific sunk export costs, but, to our knowledge, no studies have investigated the importance of sunk costs of exporting a particular product to a particular country.³ We refer to such costs as 'market specific'. Analysing

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¹ In the presence of such costs, temporary export promotion policies or macroshocks (such as exchange-rate fluctuations) may have persistent effects on aggregated trade flows (Baldwin, 1988; Baldwin and Krugman, 1989; Dixit, 1989). Generally, there is evidence of positive effects from export promotion policies (see Hiller 2012 for an overview of the literature).

² They write: 'The implications of different microfoundations for trade costs in models of firm heterogeneity remain under-explored, including whether trade costs are sunk, fixed or variable'.

³ Meinen (2015) estimates the importance of country-specific sunk costs. Moxnes (2010), Morales et al. (2011) investigate the role of country-specific versus global sunk export costs. Evidence in Gullstrand (2011) suggests that country-specific sunk export costs vary with firm characteristics.

	
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1 only the export decision as such or the decision to export to a particular country misrepresents
2 sunk export costs when they are market specific.⁴

3 The first aim of this paper was to study the importance of market-specific sunk export costs.
4 This is performed in a new data set of particular interest due to its high level of detail: we have
5 11 years of customs declaration panel data covering *all* Norwegian seafood exporters, the
6 countries they export to and the products they export. We do not therefore have to rely on sur-
7 vey data as do many other studies. Norway is one of the world's largest exporters of seafood,
8 with an annual export value of 35.7 billion NOK in 2007 (approx. 6.09 billion US\$). The
9 industry is highly internationalised, with exports of a wide range of products to almost 200
10 countries. Approximately 90 per cent of all Norwegian seafood production is exported.⁵ The
11 sector is therefore an interesting case for a study of international sales activity.

12 Our second aim was to study whether learning and spillovers effects lead to reductions in
13 market-specific export costs.

14 Schmeiser (2012) develops a theoretical model where learning about exporting from export
15 experience in other countries reduces a firm's entry costs to a given country, denoting it
16 'learning to export'. In this paper, we allow for a range of learning effects like this: intra- and
17 intercountry as well as intra- and interproduct. If this type of learning is important, it will
18 have consequences for export promotion policies: benefits from such policies can be larger
19 than expected because export promotion can boost export to other countries or of other prod-
20 ucts than were initially targeted.

21 Krautheim (2012) presents a theoretical model where knowledge acquired by other exporters
22 in a particular destination country may spill over to potential exporters and reduce their costs of
23 exporting to that country. In this paper, we investigate such spillover effects in destination coun-
24 tries. We study spillovers ~~in~~ both within and between products. Earlier empirical evidence is
25 mixed regarding spillovers that reduce global sunk export costs.⁶ If, on the other hand, market-
26 specific spillovers are important, then policies aimed at exploiting spillovers could benefit from
27 encouraging exports to certain markets rather than exports in general. Furthermore, firms target-
28 ing the same market could benefit from organising themselves in 'exporting societies'.

29 We find evidence of several different learning and spillover effects. Other recent studies
30 have also found indications of market- or country-specific learning and spillovers, but these
31 studies differ from ours in the type of variables included and the econometric method applied
32 (see Section 5c for an overview).

33 Most other studies have focused on either learning or spillovers. We include both in the
34 same regression, as it is conceivable that both effects could influence export costs at the same
35 time. We also include in the same regression discrete variables on firms' lagged *presence* in
36 markets, capturing the extensive margin, and continuous variables on firms' lagged export
37 *value* to markets, capturing the intensive margin. We find that learning and spillover effects
38 are stronger along the extensive margins than the intensive margins.

41 ⁴ See Chaney (2008), Arkolakis and Muendler (2010), Bernard et al. (2011) for (static) theoretical mod-
42 els of country- and/or product-specific sunk export costs. In the presence of such costs, only the large
43 and most productive firms find it profitable to export many products to many countries. Das et al. (2007)
44 discuss export promotion policies in the presence of fixed and sunk costs, but they do not incorporate
45 market-specific effects.

46 ⁵ Figure based on information from the Norwegian Seafood Council.

47 ⁶ See e.g. Clerides et al. (1998), Bernard and Jensen (2004) for dynamic frameworks; and Aitken et al.
(1997), Barrios et al. (2003), Greenaway et al. (2004) for static frameworks.

Furthermore, most other studies of learning and spillovers at the country and/or product level focus on how learning and spillovers may affect *sunk* export costs and include only *entrants*, that is firms that did not export the product to the country the previous year. We believe that learning and spillovers can also affect *fixed* export costs. For example, costs related to filling out customs declaration forms are largely fixed, but can be reduced over time as the firm gains experience. We therefore also include firms that exported the product to the country the previous year (*continuing exporters*). By including interaction variables, we allow the effects to be different for the two types of firms. We know of no other paper that distinguishes between entrants and continuing exporters like this. The results indicate that not only sunk but also fixed export costs are affected, and there is no general indication of stronger effects for entrants than for continuing exporters. Consequently, it is important to include both groups in order to capture the full effect from learning and spillovers.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: The next section presents the theoretical background for the estimation equation. Section 3 gives a more detailed presentation of the export data and the sample used for regression analyses. Section 4 offers a description of the econometric method applied. Results are presented in Section 5, with concluding remarks offered in Section 6.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We follow Roberts and Tybout (1997) in modelling firms' export decisions in the presence of sunk export costs. They construct a multiperiod model of firms' export participation decisions. Whereas Roberts and Tybout (1997) only consider the exporting decision as such, we consider firms' export participation with one or more products to one or more destination countries. Our variables are therefore given in four dimensions: firm (i), product (v), destination country (j) and time (t). Furthermore, we allow for market-specific *fixed* in addition to *sunk* export costs in the analysis, and we allow both to be affected by learning and spillover effects. This is described in detail below.

If there are no sunk costs, firm i will export product v to country j in period t as long as variable profits in period t are larger than fixed export costs, M_{ivjt} . Sunk export costs (G_{ivjt}) occur only when the firm enters the market, not if it is already present there. Following Roberts and Tybout (1997), the firm's decision of exporting to a given market is given by:

$$y_{ivjt} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \pi_{ivjt} \geq (1 - y_{ivjt-1})G_{ivjt} + M_{ivjt} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

y_{ivjt} takes the value of 1 if firm i exports product v to a country j in period t and 0 otherwise. π_{ivjt} is firm i 's maximised expected profits from selling product v in country j in period t net of sunk and fixed export costs. It is the solution of a Bellman equation, where the firm takes into account that its export decision today will affect the entire path of future expected profits.⁷ The equation shows that the decision to export to a given market today depends on

⁷ In the Appendix S1, we provide details of the dynamic profit-maximising problem. We assume constant marginal costs to treat each firm's export volumes in each market independently. Furthermore, we assume that the price received by firm i for product v in country j is independent of export activities in other markets. And we assume that any effects of other firms' export on the price received by firm i are external. In the Appendix S1, we also describe how the profit function can be constructed on the basis of standard CES preferences, monopolistic competition and constant marginal costs. In that case, the firm's operating profits is proportional to sales in each market.

previous export status, y_{ivjt-1} . A firm that exported to the market the previous year would be more likely to export this year than a firm that did not because the former has already paid the sunk export costs, G_{ivjt-1} . Consequently, in the presence of market-specific sunk export costs, we would observe persistence in market-specific exports.⁸ In the regression analysis, the effect of lagged export status on today's export decision is interpreted to indicate the importance of market-specific sunk export costs (see Section 4).

We depart from Roberts and Tybout (1997) in allowing learning and spillovers to affect G_{ivjt} and M_{ivjt} . The effects are modelled by allowing G_{ivjt} and M_{ivjt} to depend on learning effects from the firm's own experience and spillovers from other firms' experience. In addition, G_{ivjt} and M_{ivjt} consist of fixed elements (G^0 and M^0) that are common for all firms and independent of learning and spillovers. We further depart from Roberts and Tybout (1997) in distinguishing the effects on G_{ivjt} from those on M_{ivjt} . While effects on sunk costs are present only for entrants (for which $y_{ivjt-1} = 0$),⁹ effects on fixed costs are present for both entrants and continuing exporters (for which $y_{ivjt-1} = 1$), as both will benefit from reduced M_{ivjt} . In other words, sunk costs are important for the decision to enter markets, whereas fixed costs also influence the decision to stay in a market. Taking this into account, the export decision can be formulated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_{ivjt} \geq & (1 - y_{ivjt-1}) \left(G^0 - G_j^L y_{iv'jt-1} - \mathbf{G}^L \mathbf{y}_{ij't-1} - \mathbf{G}^S \mathbf{y}_{i'jt-1} \right) \\ & + \left(M^0 - M_j^L y_{iv'jt-1} - \mathbf{M}^L \mathbf{y}_{ij't} - \mathbf{M}^S \mathbf{y}_{i'jt-1} \right), i \neq i', j \neq j', v \neq v'. \end{aligned}$$

The effect of market-specific sunk costs is given by $G^0 y_{ivjt-1}$.¹⁰ We allow for various types of learning effects to affect G_{ivjt} and M_{ivjt} : $y_{iv'jt-1}$, $v' \neq v$, is an indicator variable denoting the firm's presence in the same destination country with any other product. G_j^L and M_j^L hence denote the reductions in market-specific sunk and fixed costs due to firm i 's experience from exporting other products to the same country (consequently they can reflect country-specific sunk and fixed costs in addition to learning). The vector $\mathbf{y}_{ij't-1}$, $j' \neq j$, contains variables for the activities of firm i in other countries. The vectors \mathbf{G}^L and \mathbf{M}^L thus denote the reductions in market-specific sunk and fixed costs due to firm i 's learning from own export experience in other countries. Similarly, we also allow for various types of spillover effects: the activities of other firms in the same destination country (within and across products) are denoted with the vector $\mathbf{y}_{i'jt-1}$, $i' \neq i$. \mathbf{G}^S and \mathbf{M}^S are therefore vectors for reductions in market-specific sunk and fixed costs due to spillovers in the destination country. Re-arranging the export decision can be formulated as follows:

⁸ Note that for simplicity, we assume that the full sunk cost recurs if the firm exits the market one year and then re-enters later. Other authors, such as Roberts and Tybout (1997), Bernard and Jensen (2004), Gullstrand (2011), Meinen (2015), discuss the possibility that only part of the sunk costs recurs if the firm re-enters the market. Some authors also include exit costs in their theoretical formulation. Roberts and Tybout (1997) find that most of the sunk cost must be repaid after one period of exit.

⁹ If $y_{ivjt-1} = 1$, then $G_{ivjt} = 0$, so no variables can reduce G_{ivjt} further.

¹⁰ If the firm learns through its own export activities in the same market, we should have included $-M_{ivjt-1}^0$ at the right-hand side of the equation. However, this effect cannot be separated from the effect of market-specific sunk costs (denoted by G_{ivjt-1}^0). Effectively, these reductions in fixed costs due to learning are sunk costs. Both effects are captured by y_{ivjt-1} in the regression analysis (see Section 4). Timoshenko (2015), however, distinguishes between sunk costs and learning by imposing different functional forms of the two in her regressions.

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_{ivjt} - G^0 - M^0 \geq & -G^0 y_{ivjt-1} - G_j^L (1 - y_{ivjt}) y_{iv'jt-1} - G^L (1 - y_{ivjt}) y_{ij't-1} \\ & - G^S (1 - y_{ivjt-1}) y_{ij't-1} - M_j^L y_{iv'jt-1} - M^L y_{ij't-1} - M^S y_{ij't-1}, i \neq i', j \neq j', v \neq v'. \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

3. DATA

The export data cover the full universe of Norwegian seafood exports disaggregated on firms, products, countries and time. They are provided by Statistics Norway. An advantage of our data is that they are not based on a sample, but contain all firms that export. In addition, they are based on what firms actually do; thus, we do not have to rely on survey answers as do many other studies.

Our data have another great advantage over many other studies: in addition to containing firms that export their own production, they also contain pure trading companies that buy all the seafood they export from other producers. We have reason to believe that these pure traders constitute around 30 per cent of all seafood exporters (Melchior and Medin, 2002). Their export decisions are therefore an important part of the total picture. They are also likely to create spillovers and engage in learning because their speciality is trade transactions as such.

Unlike earlier studies of sunk export costs, we do not have data on firm characteristics such as production or factor productivity. Other empirical studies of sunk export costs often find such characteristics important for entry into the export activity. Nevertheless, they are probably less important for our study because, as explained below, we concentrate on market-specific export entry, not global export entry. We also proxy for differences in the ability to export by correcting for unobserved heterogeneity, by including firm dummies and by using information about firms' export behaviour (see Section 4 for the first and Section 5e for the two latter).

Most other studies have focused on firms in the manufacturing sector, and we believe that we make an important contribution by investigating whether sunk costs, learning and spillovers are also present in another sector, namely seafood. Yet a fair question is whether the results from our study can be generalised. Admittedly, seafood has some specific characteristics. For one thing, some seafood product groups are necessarily quantity restricted, as fishing rights for caught fish are distributed by quotas. In the accompanying Appendix S1, we argue that our results are also valid when the quantity of a given export volume across countries is restricted, but that they may be underestimated. In addition, important product groups in our data are farmed fish, and these are not quantity restricted to the same extent as caught fish. Furthermore, many manufacturing sectors are also characterised by varying degrees of quantity restrictions. Much seafood constitutes more homogeneous product groups than manufactured products. Some findings indicate that sunk and fixed export costs are more important for heterogeneous products than for homogeneous ones (Rauch, 1999). We expect sunk costs, for example related to adjustment to different product and veterinary standards, to be present also for seafood exporters. However, Melchior (2003) shows that the sunk costs of exporting are far lower for seafood than for IT products. If anything then, our results should be expected to underestimate the general impact of market-specific sunk and fixed costs.

Table 1 shows some summary statistics of the whole data versus the sample used for regression. In a given year, one observation represents export of one product from one firm to one country; we refer to this as an *export market channel*. As can be seen from the table, the number of observations in the data is huge and in fact prohibitively large for data computation purposes.

TABLE 1
Summary Statistics of the Whole Data Set Versus the Sample

	<i>No of Firms^a</i>	<i>No of Products^a</i>	<i>No of Countries^a</i>	<i>No of Observations per Year^b</i>	<i>Period Covered</i>	<i>% Coverage of Total Export</i>	<i>% Coverage of Markets where Exports are Positive</i>
Whole data set	1,242	376 ^c	196	37,112,704 ^d	1996–2007	100	100
Sample	116 ^e	18 ^f	144	38,952 ^g	1997–2007 ^h	49	66

Notes:

(i) The export data are given in four dimensions: firm, country, product and year.

(ii) ^aNumbers refer to the whole period covered.

(iii) ^bIn a given year, one observation represents the export status of one firm exporting one product to one country.

(iv) ^cProducts at eight-digit HS level.

(v) ^dNo of firms \times no of products \times no of countries.

(vi) ^eIncludes only firms that export at least one product during all sample years.

(vii) ^fAggregated product groups.

(viii) ^gNo of firm–product combinations \times no of countries. No of firm–product combinations = 268 and not 116 \times 18, as only firm–product combinations with positive export during the whole sample period are included.

(ix) ^hThe first year is used to construct lagged variables.

We therefore aggregated the eight-digit HS-level products into 18 groups containing fairly homogeneous products in terms of product characteristics and exporting conditions.¹¹ Some countries are also dropped from the analysis as export data were merged with data for countries from several other databases with various coverages (see Section 5e). Furthermore, it is not adequate to include all the remaining observations in the regression analyses:

We include only firm–product group observations with positive export all years during the sample period, as our purpose is to study firms' export to specific markets, not firms' export as such. Several different kinds of sunk costs can accrue when starting to export: global, product, country and market specific. By focusing on the last (and also on the second but last), we can disregard starting to export as such or starting to export within new product groups. Hence, we can analyse market-specific sunk export costs separately (and also country-specific ones), without running the risk of incorrectly interpreting them as global or product-specific sunk export costs.

¹¹ These groups are as follows: whitefish (fresh whole, fresh fillet, frozen whole and frozen fillet), farmed salmon/trout (fresh whole, fresh fillet, frozen whole and frozen fillet), clipfish/stockfish/salted whitefish, pelagic (fresh whole, fresh fillet, frozen whole and frozen fillet), salted herring, shellfish and similar (fresh, frozen and conserved) and smoked salmon. In the aggregation, we also dropped some products for various reasons. The dropped products were classified into seven residual product groups. One residual group was dropped because the products have a much higher processing level than the rest (Manufactured products). Two other residual groups were dropped because products are very heterogeneous and thereby difficult to classify (meal/oil/industry products and miscellaneous products). We expect sunk costs for these three product groups to differ considerably from those for the rest. The remaining four groups were dropped because the deviations between six- and eight-digit HS levels of these groups are severe. (Caught whole salmon/trout, fresh and frozen; and farmed fresh whitefish, whole and fillet.) Exports of these products are marginal. We need six- and eight-digit levels to fairly correspond due to the merge with import data from the Comtrade database, where products are given at the six-digit level (see Section 5e).

There are three additional advantages of reducing the sample in this way. First, we do not risk incorrectly interpreting sunk production costs as sunk export costs. If a firm starts exporting as such or starts exporting new product group, we cannot know whether this is due to production start-up or export start-up since we do not have information about firms' production. Second, we get a more homogeneous sample, and we reduce bias from omitted variables and unobserved heterogeneity. Thirdly, it allows us to deal with acquisitions: if one firm acquires another, it is reasonable that the price includes, and therefore reflects, the already-paid sunk costs. Thus, these costs are reflected in an observation of increasing market coverage due to acquisitions. Firms that are acquired by other firms represent exits in the data set and are not included in our sample.

Compared to the whole dataset, the sample is biased towards larger firms that export more products to more countries. Although the number of firms is highly reduced in the sample, it still covers around half of the total of Norwegian seafood export value during the period and about two-thirds of all markets where exports were positive. Obviously, this is not a representative sample of all exporting firms, but since our focus is on market (or country-) specific entry, our aim is to study the behaviour of permanent exporters (i.e. firms with positive export from at least one product group during the whole sample period) and not that of all firms. In this paper, the entire population of permanent exporters, small as well as large, producers as well as pure trading companies are included, as are most countries in the world.¹²

A first glance at the data gives some indications of market-specific sunk export costs. In the presence of such costs, we should expect firms to export to a limited number of markets and stay in the same markets year after year (see discussion on persistence in Section 2). On average, only 5.5 per cent of all export market channels are positive each year, and most firms only sell a few products in a few countries. There is also persistence: the entry as well as the exit rates amount to approximately 25 per cent.¹³ Furthermore, firms and export values tend to concentrate in a few countries and markets. In the regression analysis, we include variables that control for market attractiveness (see Section 5e). As will be shown, evidence of persistence and clustering in a limited number of markets remains (see Maurseth and Medin (2012), for a more thorough presentation of preliminary evidence).

4. EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

In line with several other studies (e.g. Roberts and Tybout, 1997), we specify a reduced form of the latent variable $\pi_{ivjt}^n - G^0 - M^0$ from equation (1). We approximate the profit function with an expression containing exogenous variables along one or more of the four dimensions *firm* (*i*), *product* (*v*), *country* (*j*) and *time* (*t*), summarised with the vector **z**. Based on equation (1), we thereby specify the binary choice equation as follows:

$$y_{ivjt} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } 0 \leq \alpha_0 y_{ivjt-1} + \alpha_1 (1 - y_{ivjt-1}) y_{iv't-1} + \alpha_2 y_{ivjt-1} y_{iv't-1} \\ & + \alpha_3 (1 - y_{ivjt-1}) y_{ij't-1} + \alpha_4 y_{ivjt-1} y_{ij't-1} \\ & + \alpha_5 (1 - y_{ivjt-1}) y_{i'jt-1} + \alpha_6 y_{ivjt-1} y_{i'jt-1} + \mathbf{z}_{ivjt} \boldsymbol{\eta} + e_{ivjt} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

¹² Many studies of sunk costs apply samples that are biased towards more successful firms or markets. Often, only firms that are operational during the whole sample period are included, and several studies do not include small firms (e.g. Roberts and Tybout, 1997; Bernard and Jensen, 2004). Further, some studies include only the most important importing countries (Moxnes, 2010).

¹³ With the observed percentage of positive export market channels, these rates should be 94.5 per cent if firm-product combinations chose countries randomly.

1 Above, e_{ivjt} denotes noise.

2 We hence have a model where the dependent variable lagged one period is among the
3 explanatory variables. Its coefficient is α_0 . A positive α_0 implies that having exported to the
4 market in the previous year increases the probability of exporting to the same market this
5 year, and it is interpreted as the sunk cost parameter of serving that single market (but, as
6 indicated in footnote 10, it may also capture learning from own experience in the market in
7 question). In Roberts and Tybout (1997), this was the variable of prime interest. Here, we are
8 also interested in the other α s, which reflect learning (α_1 – α_4) and spillover (α_5 and α_6) effects
9 described in Section 2.

10 Most other studies of learning and spillovers at the country and/or product level focus
11 on *entrants*, that is firms that did not export the product to the country the previous year.
12 These studies thereby assume that learning and spillovers only affect sunk costs. However,
13 if fixed costs are also affected, we should include firms that did export the product to the
14 country the previous year, that is the *continuing exporters*. Only by including both types
15 of firm, we will capture the full effect of learning and spillovers (see Section 2). In equa-
16 tion (2), we do precisely that. In addition, we allow for the effect on the two types of
17 firms to differ by interacting the learning and spillover variables with categorical variables
18 for *entrants* ($1 - y_{ivjt-1}$) and for *continuing exporters* (y_{ivjt-1}). Effects for entrants may be
19 interpreted as combined effects on fixed costs and sunk costs. These are captured by α_1 ,
20 α_3 and α_5 . These coefficients are, respectively, for the effects of experience of export-
21 ing different products in the same country, the experience of exporting to different coun-
22 tries and spillovers from other firms in the same country. The two latter are vectors as
23 they capture the effect of either exporting the same product or of exporting other
24 products. Effects for continuing exporters may be interpreted as effects solely on fixed
25 costs and are captured by α_2 , α_4 and α_6 . Their interpretations are analogous to those for
26 entrants.

27 The α s in equation (2) denote the effects from presence in different markets (the extensive
28 margin). We also include learning and spillover variables along the intensive margin (export
29 value in different markets). For simplicity, only the variables along the extensive margin are
30 shown in equation (2) (but both types are part of the regression analysis). More details on the
31 various variables are given in the discussion of the regression results in Section 5. Further-
32 more, the Appendix contains a table with exact definitions of all variables included in the
33 regression, including the content of the vector \mathbf{z} .

34 Unobserved heterogeneity is likely to create persistence in the dependent variable. For
35 example, firms may differ in their ability to export to a specific market, for example, due to
36 knowledge possessed by their employees. If this is not corrected for, α_0 will be overestimated.
37 To handle this problem, we estimate equation (2) using a random effects probit model. This
38 is in accordance with most other studies of sunk export costs.¹⁴ In that model, unobserved
39 heterogeneity is modelled at the firm–product–country level; thus, the error term is given by
40 $e_{ivjt} = \varepsilon_{ivj} + u_{ivjt}$. ε_{ivj} captures unobserved heterogeneity that is time invariant and specific to
41 the firm–product–country combination. Remaining noise is captured by u_{ivjt} . There may also
42 be unobserved heterogeneity at other levels. To correct for this, we also include firm, year,
43 product and year–product dummies.

44
45
46 ¹⁴ See e.g. Roberts and Tybout (1997), Clerides et al. (1998), Campa (2002), Bugamelli and Infante
47 (2003), Bernard and Jensen (2004), Gullstrand (2011).

1 An important problem is the *initial conditions* problem (see Heckman, 1981 and Wool-
 2 dridge, 2012 p. 626–627). The problem concerns how to treat the first observation of the
 3 lagged dependent variable. Simply including y_{ivj0} as an explanatory variable for y_{ivj1}
 4 implies treating y_{ivj0} as exogenous and hence assuming it to be uncorrelated with ε_{ivj} . This
 5 is unlikely to be the case. We have argued above that factors such as export ability (cap-
 6 tured by ε_{ivj}) are likely to affect y_{ivjt} for $t \geq 1$. Similarly, they must be expected to influ-
 7 ence y_{ivj0} . However, if y_{ivj0} and ε_{ivj} are correlated, the estimate of α_0 will be biased.
 8 Several solutions have been proposed in the literature. Here, we use a variant of the
 9 method proposed by Wooldridge (2005)¹⁵ We include as auxiliary explanatory variables
 10 for every year in the regression the within means of all time-variant variables in equa-
 11 tion (2) (except y_{ivjt}), $\bar{\mathbf{x}}_{ivj}$, together with y_{ivj0} .¹⁶ Then, we run a standard random effects
 12 probit regression.¹⁷ Using this approach implies considering the unobserved heterogeneity as fol-
 13 lows:

$$\varepsilon_{ivj} = \lambda_0 + \lambda_1 y_{ivj0} + \lambda_2 \mathbf{x}_{ivj} + \mu_{ivj},$$

14 where λ_1 and λ_2 are coefficients to be estimated. μ_{ivj} is remaining noise which is assumed
 15 *iid* $N[0, \sigma_\mu^2]$. We estimate equation (2) using the random effects Wooldridge method as
 16 described above. This model (WREP) is the preferred one as it corrects for the initial
 17 conditions problem. However, for comparison, we also estimate a standard random effects
 18 probit estimation (REP) and a WREP regression that also includes country dummy vari-
 19 ables (WREP country).
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 24

5. RESULTS

25 The main results from the preferred model, WREP, and the comparison models, REP and
 26 WREP country, are presented in Tables 2–4 (see Section 4 for descriptions of the models).
 27 The three tables, therefore, report results from the *same* regressions. Table 2 reports results
 28 on variables that reflect market-specific sunk costs and learning, whereas Table 3 reports
 29 results for the spillover variables. Results for other explanatory variables are reported in the
 30 Table 4.¹⁸ In comparing the magnitude of the coefficients of the WREP model with those of
 31 the REP model, the coefficients should be scaled with the models' estimate of $\sqrt{1-\rho}$.¹⁹ The
 32 estimated ρ s are also reported in Table 2. It is evident that the WREP approach is important
 33
 34

¹⁵ An advantage of the Wooldridge method is that it also allows us to correct for another potential
 35 source of bias in α_0 originating in the possible violation of the assumption of no correlation between the
 36 other explanatory variables (apart from y_{ivj0}) and ε_{ivj} that lies behind a standard random effect probit
 37 model. The model thus corrects for potential serial correlation in u_{ivjt} caused by any such correlation
 38 (see Mundlak, 1978; Chamberlain, 1984). Another advantage of the Wooldridge model is that it reduces
 39 the variance of the unobserved heterogeneity, σ_ε^2 . As pointed out by Heckman (1981), a large σ_ε^2 may
 40 overestimate the effect of the lagged dependent variable.

¹⁶ We also tried the variant proposed in Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2013), including also the initial
 41 period explanatory variables, \mathbf{x}_{ivj0} , as additional regressors. Results were almost identical to those
 42 reported here.

¹⁷ The within means of learning and spillover variables are interacted with y_{ivj0} and $(1 - y_{ivj0})$, in accor-
 43 dance with Wooldridge (2005).

¹⁸ The Appendix S1 reports results for the time independent averages in the WREP models.

¹⁹ ρ is the proportion of total variance contributed by the constant cross-period variance due to unob-
 44 served heterogeneity. It is given by $\rho = \sigma^2/(\sigma^2+1)$, where $\sigma = \sigma_\varepsilon$ in the REP model and $\sigma = \sigma_\mu$ in the
 45 WREP model (see Wooldridge, 2005; Arulampalam and Stewart, 2009).
 46
 47

TABLE 2
Regression Results, Sunk Costs and Learning

	<i>WREP</i>		<i>REP</i>	<i>WREP country</i>
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>APE</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
Market export status	1.124*** (0.053)	0.07064	1.802*** (0.053)	1.112*** (0.052)
Market export value	0.017*** (0.003)	0.00056	0.024*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.003)
Country export status, other products (1 - y)	0.173*** (0.024)	0.00584	0.735*** (0.021)	0.154*** (0.024)
Country export status, other products y	0.543*** (0.035)	0.02404	0.35*** (0.031)	0.540*** (0.035)
Export intensity, same country, other products (1 - y)	-0.001* (0.001)	-0.00004	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001* (0.001)
Export intensity, same country, other products y	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.00006	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)
Number of other countries, same product (1 - y)	0.03*** (0.002)	0.00100	0.044*** (0.002)	0.031*** (0.002)
Number of other countries, same product y	0.016*** (0.003)	0.00053	0.031*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.003)
Average export intensity, other countries, same product (1 - y)	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.00011	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)
Average export intensity, other countries, same product y	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.00008	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)
Number of other countries, all products (1 - y)	0.001 (0.002)	0.00005	-0.014*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Number of other countries, all products y	0.002 (0.002)	0.00007	-0.017*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Average export intensity, other countries, all products (1 - y)	0.001 (0.002)	0.00004	0.000 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Average export intensity, other countries, all products y	0.001 (0.002)	0.00002	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Rho	0.047*** (0.007)		0.278*** (0.009)	0.028*** (0.006)

Notes:

(i) Standard deviations in parentheses.

(ii) (1 - y) and y denote interacted with entrance and continuance, respectively.

(iii) Number of observations is 424,512.

(iv) Value variables are in million NOK.

(v) Year dummies, product dummies, firm dummies, regional dummies and product-year dummies were included in the regressions but are not reported.

(vi) Random effects are for firm-product-country.

(vii) The number of firm-country-product observations is 38,592.

(viii) Log-likelihood and sigma for WREP are -27,294 and 0.221.

(ix) Log-likelihood and sigma for REP are -31,670 and 0.620.

(x) For the WREP country model, the numbers are -27,041 and 0.170, respectively.

(xi) Average predicted probability of exporting a product to a country (APP) is 5.4% in the WREP model.

(xii) *, ** and *** correspond to significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels.

for dealing with unobserved heterogeneity. By applying the WREP model instead of REP, the estimate of ρ is substantially reduced, from 0.278 to 0.047. This demonstrates that the Wooldridge model reduces possible bias of α_0 due to large σ_ε .

TABLE 3
Regression Results – Spillovers

	<i>WREP</i>		<i>REP</i>	<i>WREP Country</i>
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>APE</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
Number of other firms, same product (1 – y)	0.022*** (0.002)	0.00072	0.044*** (0.001)	0.023*** (0.002)
Number of other firms, same product y	0.017*** (0.002)	0.00055	0.034*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.002)
Average export intensity, other firms, same product (1 – y)	0.025*** (0.005)	0.00081	0.057*** (0.004)	0.036*** (0.003)
Average export intensity, other firms, same product y	0.03*** (0.007)	0.00099	0.065*** (0.006)	0.036*** (0.005)
Number of other firms, all products (1 – y)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.00014	0.003*** (0.000)	0.004*** (0.001)
Number of other firms, all products y	0.002* (0.001)	0.00006	0.001 (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
Average export intensity, other firms, all products (1 – y)	0.006 (0.005)	0.00019	0.010*** (0.003)	0.004 (0.005)
Average export intensity, other firms, all products y	–0.011** (0.006)	–0.00037	–0.004 (0.004)	–0.008 (0.006)
Country value, other firms, same product (1 – y)	–0.001*** (0.000)	–0.00003	–0.002*** (0.000)	–0.001*** (0.000)
Country value, other firms, same product y	–0.001*** (0.000)	–0.00003	–0.002*** (0.000)	–0.001*** (0.000)
Country value, other firms, all products (1 – y)	0.000*** (0.000)	–0.00001	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Country value, other firms, all products y	0.000 (0.000)	0.00000	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)

Note:

See note for Table 2.

In addition to the coefficients and their standard errors, we report average partial effects (APEs) for the WREP model. These are calculated using coefficients scaled with $\sqrt{1-\rho}$, as described in Wooldridge (2012, p. 628).²⁰

a. Sunk Costs and Learning

(i) Market-specific sunk costs

The effect of sunk export costs is captured by the variable *market export status* (the indicator variable for the firm–product–country observation the period before). The estimated α_0 is positive and significant in all regression models, lending support to the hypothesis of market-specific sunk costs. The probability of serving a market increases with lagged export status in that market. As expected, the coefficient is overestimated in

²⁰ For dummy variables, the APEs indicate the average of the difference in the predicted probability as the dummy changes from 0 to 1. The percentage change is evaluated relative to the predicted probability when the dummy is set equal to 0. The other variables are evaluated relative to the average predicted probability of serving an export market, which is equal to 5.4 per cent.

TABLE 4
Regression Results – Other Variables

	<i>REP₁</i> Coefficient	<i>REP</i> Coefficient	<i>WREP Country</i> Coefficient
Leader, market	0.076*** (0.015)	0.250*** (0.014)	0.070*** (0.014)
Leader, country	0.037*** (0.006)	0.067*** (0.005)	0.036*** (0.06)
Leader, product	0.009*** (0.003)	0.007*** (0.003)	0.009*** (0.03)
Size	0.012 (0.015)	-0.023 (0.015)	0.012 (0.015)
Appreciation	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
GDP	0.095 (0.200)	0.109*** (0.007)	0.147 (0.201)
GDP <i>per capita</i>	0.150 (0.200)	0.010 (0.014)	0.086 (0.203)
GDP growth	0.012*** (0.003)	0.006** (0.002)	0.012*** (0.003)
Regulatory quality	0.008 (0.046)	0.149*** (0.027)	-0.001 (0.047)
Rule of law	-0.008 (0.057)	0.069** (0.033)	0.004 (0.058)
Control of corruption	0.113*** (0.042)	-0.123*** (0.026)	0.108* (0.042)
Import-adjusted	0.043 (0.014) ***	0.011 (0.005) **	0.042 (0.014) ***
EU	-0.024 (0.106)	-0.184*** (0.036)	-0.023 (0.098)
USA	-0.039 (0.057)	-0.190*** (0.073)	
FTA	-0.055 (0.056)	-0.003 (0.034)	-0.056 (0.055)
FTAEEA04	0.163 (0.115)	0.019 (0.045)	0.156 (0.108)
FTAEEA07	0.161 (0.138)	0.288*** (0.062)	0.143 (0.133)
Distance	-0.130*** (0.023)	-0.162*** (0.025)	

Note:
See notes for Table 2.

the REP model, where it is equal to 1.53 when scaled appropriately.²¹ This underlines the importance of adequately correcting for unobserved heterogeneity, as is performed in the WREP model, where the scaled estimated coefficient is 1.10. According to the APE from the WREP model, the probability of exporting to a market increases by 7.1 per cent

²¹ As explained in the introduction to this section, when comparing the coefficients, we must multiply them with the estimates of $\sqrt{1-\rho}$, which are equal to 0.976 in the WREP model, 0.850 in the REP model and 0.986 in the WREP country model.

1 points, or more than 180 per cent (from 3.9 to 11.0 percentage points) if the firm
 2 exported to the market, the previous year as compared to if it did not. As a comparison,
 3 Moxnes (2010) found that, on average, the probability of exporting is roughly six times
 4 higher if the firm exported to the country last year. It is no surprise that the effect of pre-
 5 vious export experience is larger in his analysis than in ours: He includes only the five
 6 most important export destinations. Furthermore, country-specific effects are likely to be
 7 larger than market-specific ones (see footnote 23). Our results seem quite robust. We
 8 experimented with excluding the 5 per cent smallest or largest firms, without this altering
 9 the results much.²²

11 (ii) Market-specific Learning

12 As noted in Section 4 and footnote 10, it is not possible to distinguish the effect of mar-
 13 ket-specific sunk export costs from the effect of market-specific learning. Thus, the positive
 14 coefficient for *market export status* may also indicate that the firms' export costs have been
 15 reduced through learning. We analyse additional learning from export intensity in the market
 16 separately by including the *market export value*. Its estimated effect is positive and signifi-
 17 cant, but small compared to *market export status*. Comparing the APEs, the estimates indicate
 18 that, in order for *market export value* to match the effect from the mere presence in the mar-
 19 ket, market-specific exports must be about NOK 125 million. As a comparison, median export
 20 value from a firm to a market is only NOK 0.36 million.

22 (iii) Country-versus Market-specific Sunk Costs

23 The variable *country export status, other products* equals 1 if firm i exported other
 24 products to country j in the last period and 0 otherwise. For entrants (i.e. when inter-
 25 acted with $1 - y_{ivjt-1}$), the coefficient is given by α_l and may capture the effect of
 26 country-specific sunk costs that come in addition to market-specific sunk costs. For
 27 example, costs related to setting up of a sales office or acquiring information about a
 28 country's business culture and legislation are specific to the country rather than to the
 29 market. If the firm exported other products to country j in the last period, then G_j^L
 30 is already paid, making it less costly to start exporting product v . α_l is positive and signifi-
 31 cant. If this effect is not taken into account, it will erroneously be captured as market-
 32 specific effects.²³

34 (iv) Country-specific Learning

35 Firms may learn about exporting a given product to a given country from their experience
 36 of exporting other products to the same country. For example, knowledge about a country's
 37 culture acquired by exporting one product may facilitate the export of other products to the
 38

40 ²² We also ran separate regressions for various product categories. Lagged export status was significant
 41 for most categories. An exception is fresh white fish. Furthermore, it was highest for clipfish/stockfish/
 42 salted whitefish – not surprising, as this is a more heterogeneous product group where quality differences
 43 are important.

44 ²³ Comparable regressions where we excluded the *country export status, other products* (interacted with
 45 dummy for entry as well as continuance) resulted in estimates of α_0 which were greater than those
 46 reported in Table 1. The importance of country-specific sunk costs also becomes evident when we run
 47 regressions on the country dimension only. Such regressions yield larger coefficients for the lagged
 dependent variable as compared to our baseline firm-product-country regressions.

1 same country.²⁴ In addition to capturing country-specific sunk export costs, the variable *country export status, other products* also captures learning effects like these. For entrants, it is
 2 not possible to distinguish them from country-specific sunk costs. They are both captured by
 3 α_1 . α_2 captures learning effects for continuing exporters. Also, estimates of α_2 are positive and
 4 significant. The APEs indicate that having exported another product to a country in the previ-
 5 ous year increases the probability of entering the country with a new product this year by
 6 11.5 per cent (from 5.2 to 5.8 per cent points). The probability of continuing to export a partic-
 7 ular product to the country increases by 49.0 per cent (from 4.9 to 7.3 per cent points).
 8 Medin and Melchior (2002) also present qualitative evidence on such intracountry learning:
 9 from interviews with Norwegian seafood exporters, they found that different products were
 10 often sold to the same customers and that costs of introducing a new product in a country
 11 were significantly lower if the firm exported other products to the country.

12 As for market experience, there may be an additional learning effect from export intensi-
 13 ty. In this case, firm i 's export value of other products to country j should reduce its
 14 costs of exporting product v to country j . The effect is captured by the variable *export*
 15 *intensity, same country, other products*. Our results indicate no additional effects, as the
 16 coefficients are negative (partly significant). This may indicate that firms tend to remain
 17 specialised in their export markets, given high export values. One reason for such speciali-
 18 sation effects may come from the supply side: firms may have limited production capacity,
 19 so that the export value of other products does not increase the probability of exporting a
 20 given product.
 21

22 (v) Learning from Export Experience in Other Countries

23 As emphasised in the model by Schmeiser (2012), firms may also learn about exporting to
 24 a specific market from their own experience in other countries. Demand patterns, customs pro-
 25 cedures and competition legislation may be similar across countries, so export experience in
 26 other countries can make it easier to export to a given country.²⁵ The coefficient vectors for
 27 these effects are α_3 (entrants) and α_4 (continuing exporters) in equation (2). The effects are
 28 likely to increase with the number of other countries to which the firm exports. Some effects,
 29 like learning about demand patterns, may be product specific, while others, like learning about
 30 business culture, may be more general. We therefore distinguish between general effects, cap-
 31 tured by the variable *number of other countries, all products*, and additional intraproduct
 32 effects, captured by the variable *number of other countries, same product*. Again, there may
 33 also be learning effects from export intensity in other countries.
 34

35 The results show positive effects of having product-specific experience from other coun-
 36 tries: the estimated coefficients for *number of other countries, same product* are positive and
 37 significant for entrants as well as continuing exporters. The APEs indicate the effects from
 38
 39

40 ²⁴ A related notion is economies of scope: consider a firm that pays for undertaking a market analysis
 41 for frozen fillet of cod. The costs may be lower if it has already undertaken a market analysis for frozen
 42 whole cod, because a more limited analysis is then sufficient. Consequently, the costs of exporting a pro-
 43 duct to a country decline with the number of other products exported. Such mechanisms are described
 44 in, for example, Arkolakis and Muendler (2010). Country-specific sunk or fixed costs represent a type of
 45 economy of scope.

46 ²⁵ Again, there can be economies of scope in the sense that average export costs of a product to a coun-
 47 try decline with the number of countries the firm exports to, for example because a marketing analysis
 undertaken in one country can give information about demand in other, similar countries.

1 increasing the number of other countries a firm exported a product to last year by 1. This
2 leads to an increase in the probability of starting to export by 0.1 per cent points, or 1.9 per
3 cent (when evaluated relative to the APP, see footnote 21; and an increase in the probability
4 of continuing to export by 0.053 per cent points, or 1.0 per cent of the APP.²⁶ The results
5 indicate the presence of intraproduct learning effects across countries. Yet these effects are
6 considerably smaller than the intracountry effects.

7 There is no evidence of learning across product groups from other countries, as the esti-
8 mated coefficient for the *number of other countries, all products* is not significant. Neither
9 does there seem to be any additional learning effects along the intensive margins, either
10 within product groups (captured by *average export intensity, other countries, same product*)
11 or in general (captured by *average export intensity, other countries, all products*).

12 Do our learning variables capture actual learning or Could there be other explanations for
13 the results? One possibility is that the variables capture exporting ability rather than learning.
14 We correct for unobserved heterogeneity and include several variables to control for this (see
15 Sections 4 and 5e). Another possibility is that increasing returns that reduce marginal costs in
16 production are erroneously taken for learning effects. However, decreasing returns or quantity
17 restrictions would work in the opposite direction. The revealed learning effects presented here
18 are net of such effects.

19 20 *b. Spillovers from Other Exporters*

21
22 Firms' export experience in a country generates knowledge that may spill over to other
23 firms and reduce their export costs. Spillover effects are likely to be stronger the larger the
24 number of other exporters in the country. Some spillovers, such as information about demand,
25 may be product specific, whereas others, such as information about business culture, may be
26 more general. The coefficient vectors for these effects are α_5 (entrants) and α_6 (continuing
27 exporters) in equation (2). The regression results are reported in Table 3.

28 Along the extensive margin, general spillover effects are captured by the variable *number of*
29 *other firms, all products*, while additional intraproduct effects are captured by *number of other*
30 *firms, same product*. Estimated coefficients are positive and significant. The APEs show that an
31 additional firm exporting a product to a country increases the probability of another firm export-
32 ing the same product to the same country by approximately 1 per cent of APP (for entrants as
33 well as for continuing exporters). There is also some evidence of spillovers across products, but
34 effects are smaller. It should be noted that these revealed spillover effects are net of any competi-
35 tion effects, which would tend to reduce the coefficients. The results are in line with findings in
36 Medin and Melchior (2002), where interviews with Norwegian seafood exporters showed that
37 firms considered it advantageous if there were other Norwegian exporters present in a market.

38 Regarding spillovers along the intensive margin, we find evidence of intraproduct spil-
39 lers (captured by *average export intensity, other firms, same product*), but not of general
40 spillovers (captured by *average export intensity, other firms, all products*). We also included
41 the total value of other firms' export of the same or all products as possible sources of spil-
42 lers (*country value, other firms, same/all products*), but most estimated coefficients are neg-
43 ative and significant. We interpret this as dominating competition effects.

44
45 ²⁶ These results confirm the qualitative results from interviews with Norwegian seafood exporters in
46 Medin and Melchior (2002). They found evidence on learning from experience in other countries, but
47 the effect was less important than experience within the same country.

1 One risk is that our spillover variables capture market attractiveness rather than actual spil-
2 lovers. To control for this, we included several indications of market attractiveness (see Sec-
3 tion 5e and the Appendix). In addition, we ran a separate regression with country dummy
4 variables included to investigate the sensitivity of the results (third set of results in Table 1).
5 The results for the spillover variables (and also other variables) remained very similar in the
6 two regressions, indicating that these results do not reflect country characteristics. The only
7 exception is *average export intensity, other firms, all products* for continuing exporters (high-
8 lighted with bold letters in the table) where the estimated negative coefficient from the main
9 analysis is insignificant in the regression with country dummies.

11 *c. Comparison with Other Studies*

12
13 Summing up, the results on learning from own export experience seem to indicate that
14 such effects are strongest within the same country. A firm's presence with a product in a
15 country seems to stimulate the export of other products to that country. There are also learn-
16 ing effects within product groups across countries, but no effects across products *and* coun-
17 tries. Learning from own export experience in other countries takes place through the
18 extensive margin (number of other countries to which the firm exports), not the intensive mar-
19 gin (the firm's average export value to other countries). There is some evidence of learning
20 from own export intensity in the same market, but effects are small.

21 We find strong indications of intraproduct spillovers along the extensive margin (number
22 of other firms exporting a particular product to the same destination country) as well as the
23 intensive margin (their average export value). There is also some evidence of spillovers across
24 products along the extensive margin (number of other firms exporting any product to the
25 country), but not along the intensive margin. We find no evidence of spillovers from total
26 export value of other firms to the country. All in all, most learning and spillover effects seem
27 to take place through the extensive margin (presence in markets) rather than the intensive
28 margin (market export value).

29 We find evidence of learning and spillovers for continuing exporters as well as for entrants.
30 Whereas effects for entrants capture reductions in both sunk and fixed export costs, effects for
31 continuing exporters capture reductions in fixed export costs only. Our results therefore imply
32 that learning and spillovers not only reduce sunk export costs, but also fixed export costs.²⁷
33 Furthermore, there is no general indication of stronger effects for entrants than for continuing
34 exporters. Most other studies of market-specific learning and/or spillovers include only
35 entrants in the analysis, and they differ from ours in the econometric method applied.²⁸ Our
36 results show that continuing exporters should also be included to capture the full effect from
37 learning and spillovers.

38 Some other studies have also documented learning effects from exporting to particular
39 countries or markets. Some, among them Eaton et al. (2008), Lawless (2009), Alborno et al.
40 (2012), Schmeiser (2012), find that export expands through gradual entrance, possibly caused
41 by learning. Others find that export experience in other countries or markets increases the
42

43
44 ²⁷ The effects could also reflect reductions in variable export costs. However, since we only study the
45 decision to export, not how much to export, studying variable trade costs is less relevant here.

46 ²⁸ The only exceptions we know of are Gullstrand (2011), Meinen (2015), but they do not distinguish
47 between effects for entering and continuing exporters within the same regression as we do. Moreover,
they only focus on learning, not spillovers.

1 probability of exporting to a particular country or market (see Castagnino, 2011; Gullstrand,
2 2011; Fabling et al., 2012; ; Alvarez et al., 2013; Lawless, 2013; Chaney, 2014; Morales 7
3 et al., 2014; Meinen, 2015). Most other studies that look for spillovers that affect country- or 8
4 market-specific export costs are affirmative. Requena Silvente and Castillo Giménez (2007),
5 Koenig (2009), Lawless (2013) find that spillovers affect country-specific export costs; while
6 Koenig et al. (2010), Fabling et al. (2012), Alvarez et al. (2013) find that spillovers affect
7 market-specific sunk export costs.

8 The above-mentioned studies define learning and spillover variables somewhat differently
9 than we do and do not include such a rich variety of different effects. Few of them include
10 both learning and spillovers in the same regression, and few discuss effects along both the
11 extensive and intensive margins.

12 13 *d. Internalised Learning and Spillover Effects*

14
15 We have, like most of the studies referred to here, assumed that learning and spillover
16 effects are external to firms. It may be, however, that learning effects are internal. A firm
17 may want to start exporting to a market not only because it believes that this market is prof-
18 itable, but also because it knows that it will learn from exporting and therefore takes into
19 account that entry into other markets later will become easier (for example by reducing uncer-
20 tainty). In this case, a firm's entries across markets are interdependent. Schmeiser (2012)
21 argues that firms first enter large and close countries with characteristics similar to their
22 domestic market. The issue is also discussed in Albornoz et al. (2012), who analyse sequential
23 exporting and argue that firms internalise learning effects, especially for the first market they
24 enter. We have not modelled the decision to enter into export activity as such since we
25 include only firm-product observations that are positive all years of the sample period. When
26 learning effects are particularly important for the *first* export destination, possible problems of
27 assuming that learning effects are external to the firm are not important in our investigation.
28 Furthermore, if learning is internalised into the firms' decision problem, it is not clear whether
29 the resulting interdependence would alter our results since the sequence of entry into new
30 markets could well be the same.

31 It is also possible (but perhaps to a lesser degree) that spillover effects are internalised:
32 firms may take into account that their export decisions make it more likely that other firms
33 will follow. A firm may, for instance, choose countries or markets where spillovers are less
34 likely to materialise (to prevent other firms from benefitting from its knowledge) – or markets
35 where spillovers are more likely to materialise (to benefit from mutual spillover effects).
36 Krautheim (2012) argues that spillovers tend to magnify gravity and distance effects in aggre-
37 gate trade patterns. This follows from clustering effects that we have identified as significant
38 effects in this paper. Krautheim also argues that these effects are likely to materialise at the
39 extensive and not at the intensive margin. We find support for this view for inter-product spil-
40 llovers: they are present along the extensive margin but absent or negative along the intensive
41 margin. Regarding intraproduct spillovers, however, there is no support for Krautheim's view
42 in our study: they are present along both the extensive margin and intensive margins.

43 44 *e. Other Independent Variables*

45
46 Our regressions include a range of other explanatory variables. Table 4 reports regression
47 results. Here, we offer only a short description of these. All variables are listed in the Appendix.

1 Other studies on sunk export costs often find that firm characteristics reflecting productiv-
 2 ity, such as firm size, are important for the export decision (see, e.g. Roberts and Tybout,
 3 1997). Our data lack firm characteristics beyond those related to export. Since we concentrate
 4 on market-specific export entries, not global export, data on firm characteristics are probably
 5 less important than in studies of export decisions as such. Nevertheless, it is a concern that
 6 our results on persistence, learning and spillovers may capture unobserved firm-level differ-
 7 ences in ability to export rather than the presumed effects. We therefore compensate for the
 8 lack of such characteristics in various ways. First, to capture time-varying effects, we use the
 9 information embedded in the export data. Firms' total export value is used as a proxy for firm
 10 size. The firm's specific competitive advantage is proxied for by variables reflecting the firm's
 11 relative position among Norwegian firms in the market, country and, for the product, *leader*
 12 *market*, *leader country* and *leader product*. Second, to capture time-invariant effects, we
 13 include random effects at the firm–product–country level, as described in Section 4. Ideally,
 14 we should have included fixed rather than random effects. This would have corrected for all
 15 time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity in all combinations of the three dimensions. How-
 16 ever, this is not possible in a non-linear model with a lagged dependent variable like ours
 17 (see discussion in Bernard and Jensen, 2004). Therefore, we include firm dummies.²⁹ These
 18 approaches ensure that we can control for fixed firm effects and firm dynamics, such as firms
 19 on a growing curve.

20 Another concern is that our results on persistence, learning and spillovers may capture mar-
 21 ket attractiveness rather than the presumed effects. We include several variables to correct for
 22 country characteristics. Data for log of GDP, log of GDP *per capita* (in current NOK) and
 23 GDP growth (in fixed US dollars, three-year moving average) are provided by the World
 24 Bank (from the World Development Indicators, WDI).³⁰ Log of import (from all countries) of
 25 product v to country j is taken from the COMTRADE database.³¹ Taken together, these vari-
 26 ables capture demand and demand differences for each product within and between countries.
 27 We also include changes in the country-specific exchange rates, taken from the CIA World
 28 Factbook. The governance qualities of a country may influence its attractiveness as a market.
 29 We include three measures of good governance provided by the World Bank from the World-
 30 wide Governance Indicators (WGI): *regulatory quality*, *rule of law* and *control of corrup-*
 31 *tion*.³² Trade costs are proxied for by log of distance.³³ We also include several dummies
 32 reflecting market differences as follows: (i) products, to capture supply and demand side
 33

34 ²⁹ We would have liked to include firm–product and firm–country dummies, but this would have yielded
 35 a prohibitively large number of independent variables for data computational purposes.

36 ³⁰ WDIs, for the Faroe Islands, lack GDP growth data for the whole period and GDP for 1997, so we
 37 use data from the Statistics Faroe Islands instead. Growth data are based on current US\$. WDIs lack
 38 data for GDP for Brunei for the year 2007, so we have estimated that. WDIs for Qatar lack growth data
 39 for the years 1996–2000, so we have supplemented with growth data from the IMF.

40 ³¹ A problem with the COMTRADE data is that some countries fail to report import of certain products
 41 in certain years, even if import was positive. It is not possible to distinguish these missing observations
 42 from observations that are in fact zero. In the case where import of product v to country j was positive
 43 at least one year during the sample period, we replace the zero observations with the mean of the posi-
 44 tive observations from the years these were reported. If import of product v to country j was zero all
 45 years, these remain zero. Nevertheless, results from the regression analysis are robust to alternative
 46 methods, such as treating all missing observations as zero.

46 ³² Data for the Faroe Islands and Greenland are lacking in the WGIs, so we have set figures for these
 47 countries equal to those for Denmark.

47 ³³ Great-circle distances in kilometres based on coordinates for the capitals (Gyldendal, 1970).

1 differences across products; (ii) product–year, to capture production and demand cycles; (iii)
2 regions³⁴; (iv) EU countries; (v) the USA³⁵; and (iv) countries with which Norway has a
3 free trade agreement.³⁶ Of the above-mentioned variables, only the *leader* variables, *import*
4 *adjusted*, *GDP growth*, *control of corruption* and *distance* proved to be significant. All have
5 the expected signs.

6 Although our analysis includes many standard gravity variables capturing differences
7 between countries, a concern in interpreting the results is that persistence in market-specific
8 export, learning, and spillovers may be due to unobserved characteristics of countries. We
9 therefore ran a sensitivity analysis including country dummies as described in Section 4.
10 Results, reported in the last column of Tables 2–4, are very similar to those from the main
11 regression.

12 6 CONCLUSIONS

13
14
15 In this paper, we have investigated the importance of sunk export costs by examining per-
16 sistence in firms' export behaviour. Unlike earlier studies, which have focused on global or
17 country-specific sunk export costs, we have concentrated on the costs to already established
18 exporters of entering a particular market. We find that exporting to a particular market the
19 previous period increases the probability of exporting to the same market in the current period
20 by more than 180 per cent as compared to not having exported to the market. We interpret
21 this as an indication of market-specific sunk export costs.

22 Furthermore, we have investigated how market-specific export costs are affected by learn-
23 ing and spillovers. We have looked for a wide range of learning and spillover effects, intra-
24 and interproduct as well as intra- and intercountry. Our evidence indicates that firms learn
25 about exporting to a particular country from their export experience both in the country in
26 question and other countries. Learning effects appear to be strongest for presence within one
27 and the same country: the export of another product to a given country in the previous year
28 increases the probability of starting to export a given product to that country this year by 11.1
29 per cent and continuing to export by 49.6 per cent. Our results further indicate that learning
30 effects are present within product groups across countries, but absent across countries and
31 products.

32 We also provide evidence of spillovers. We focus on spillovers in the destination country,
33 and our results indicate that the presence of other Norwegian exporters in a given country last
34 period increases the probability of a given firm exporting to that country this period. We find
35 clear indications of intraproduct spillovers and also some indications of spillovers across prod-
36 ucts. There is no evidence of spillovers from total Norwegian export value to a country. Most
37 learning and spillover effects take place through the extensive margin (presence in markets)
38 rather than through the intensive margin (market export value).

39 Learning and spillovers effect continuing exporters as well as entrants; thus, these effects
40 not only reduced sunk, but also fixed export costs. Consequently, both types of firms should
41 be included in the analysis to capture the full effects from learning and spillovers.

42
43
44 ³⁴ Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

45 ³⁵ Anti-dumping duties have been imposed on Norwegian exports of salmon in the US market.

46 ³⁶ Separates dummies are included for the European Economic Area (EEA), and for countries that
47 became EU members in 2004 and in 2007 (FTAEEA04 and FTAEEA007). Norway had generous free
trade agreements with these countries (for seafood) that became void when they joined the EU.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Appendix S1. XXXXXXXXXXXX. 17

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12 MIT Press).

16

13 APPENDIX
14 TABLE A1
15 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

16 <i>Independent Variable</i>	17 <i>Description</i>
18 Market export status	19 Lagged export status (y_{ivjt-1}). A dummy equals to 1 if firm i exported 20 product v to country j . It reflects the importance of market-specific sunk 21 exporting cost or learning.
22 Market export value	23 The firm's export value of product v to country j the previous year. 24 Reflects additional learning effects from being deep in the market and 25 corresponds to <i>market export status</i> .
26 Country export status, 27 other products	28 A dummy equals to 1 if firm i exported other products to country 29 j last year ($y_{iv'jt-1}$). Reflects the importance of country-specific sunk 30 costs and learning from own experience of exporting other products to 31 country j . ^a
32 Export intensity, same 33 country, other products	34 The export value of other products (not including product v) from firm i 35 to country j the previous year. A learning variable corresponding to 36 <i>country export status</i> . ^a
37 Number of other countries, 38 same product	39 Number of other countries (not including country j) firm i exported 40 product v to last year. Reflects learning from experience in other 41 countries. ^b Part of the vector $y_{ij't-1}$.
42 Average export intensity, 43 other countries, same 44 product	45 Export value of product v from firm i to other countries (excluding 46 country j), divided by <i>number of Other countries, same product</i> . A 47 learning variable corresponding to <i>number of other countries, same product</i> . ^b
48 Number of other countries, 49 all products	50 Number of other countries (not including country j) firm i exported any 51 product last year. Reflects learning from experience from exporting to 52 other countries. ^{a,b} Part of the vector $y_{ij't-1}$
53 Average export intensity, 54 other countries, all products	55 Export value of all products from firm i to other countries the previous 56 year, divided by <i>number of other countries, all products</i> . A learning 57 variable corresponding to <i>number of other countries, all products</i> . ^{a,b}
58 Number of other firms, same 59 product	60 Number of other Norwegian firms (not including firm i) that exported 61 product v to country j the previous year. Reflects market-specific 62 spillovers. ^c Part of the vector $y_{i'jt-1}$
63 Average export intensity, 64 other firms, same product	65 <i>Country value, other firms, same product</i> divided by <i>number of other 66 firms, same product</i> . A spillover variable corresponding to <i>number of 67 other firms, same product</i> . ^c

TABLE A1 *Continued*

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Number of other firms, all products	Number of other Norwegian firms (not including firm <i>i</i>) that exported any product to country <i>j</i> the previous year. Reflects country-specific spillovers from other exporters. ^c Part of the vector $y_{i;jt-1}$
Average export intensity, other firms, all products	<i>Country value, other firms, all products</i> , divided by <i>number of other firms, all products</i> . A spillover variable corresponding to <i>number of other firms, all products</i> . ^{a,c}
Country value, other firms, same product	Export value from other Norwegian firms (excluding firm <i>i</i>) of product <i>v</i> to country <i>j</i> the previous year. An additional spillover variable ^c
Country value, other firms, all products	Export value from other Norwegian firms (excluding firm <i>i</i>) to country <i>j</i> the previous year. An additional spillover variable ^{a,c}
Leader, market	Export value of product <i>v</i> from firm <i>i</i> to country <i>j</i> , divided by Norway's export value of product <i>v</i> to country <i>j</i> . Lagged 1 year
Leader, country	Export value of all products from firm <i>i</i> country <i>j</i> , divided by Norway's total export value to country <i>j</i> . Lagged 1 year ^a
Leader, product	Export value of product <i>v</i> from firm <i>i</i> to all countries, divided by total Norwegian exports of product <i>v</i> . Lagged 1 year ^b
Size	Log of firm <i>i</i> 's export value. A proxy for firm size. Lagged 1 year ^{a,b}
GDP	Log of GDP. In 1,000 current NOK
GDP <i>per capita</i>	Log of GDP <i>per capita</i> . In 1,000 current NOK
Growth in GDP	3-year moving averages of growth rates in GDP (fixed UD\$)
Appreciation	Growth in the exchange rate between NOK and the local currency
Distance	Log of distance from Norway to country <i>j</i> . Great circle distance in km
Import	Log of import of product <i>v</i> in country <i>j</i> . In 1,000 current NOK. Missing observations are replaced by mean
Regulatory quality	Perceived quality of a government's regulatory quality, normally distributed for country ranking
Rule of law	Perceived quality of rule of law, normally distributed for country ranking
Control of corruption	Perceived control of corruption, normally distributed for country ranking
Dyear	Dummy equal to 1 for all years except, 2007
Dregion	Dummy equal to 1 for all regions, except Africa
Dproduct	Dummy equal to 1 for all products, except fresh fillets of whitefish
Dfirm	Dummy equal to 1 for all firms, except one
Dyear-product	Dummy equal to one for all year-product combinations, except fresh fillets of whitefish in 2007
DUSA	Dummy equal to 1 for USA
DEU	Dummy equal to 1 for EU member countries
DFTA	Dummy equal to 1 for countries with which Norway has free trade agreements
DEEA	Dummy equal to 1 for EFTA countries
DFTAEEA04	Dummy for new EU member countries in 2004 with which Norway previously had free trade agreements
DFTAEEA07	Dummy for new EU member countries in 2007 with which Norway previously had free trade agreements

Notes:

- (i) Values are in millions NOK (learning and spillover variables) or 1,000 NOK (other variables).
(ii) Learning and spillover variables are interacted with *market export status* and (*1-market export status*).
(iii) ^aInclude all 25 product groups, not just the 18 groups included in the sample.
(iv) ^bInclude all countries in the data, not just sample countries.
(v) ^cInclude all firms in the data, not just sample firms.

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