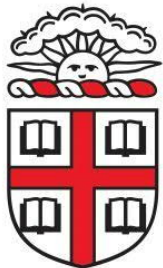


It's Baaack: The Surge in Inflation in the 2020s and the Return of the Non-Linear Phillips Curve

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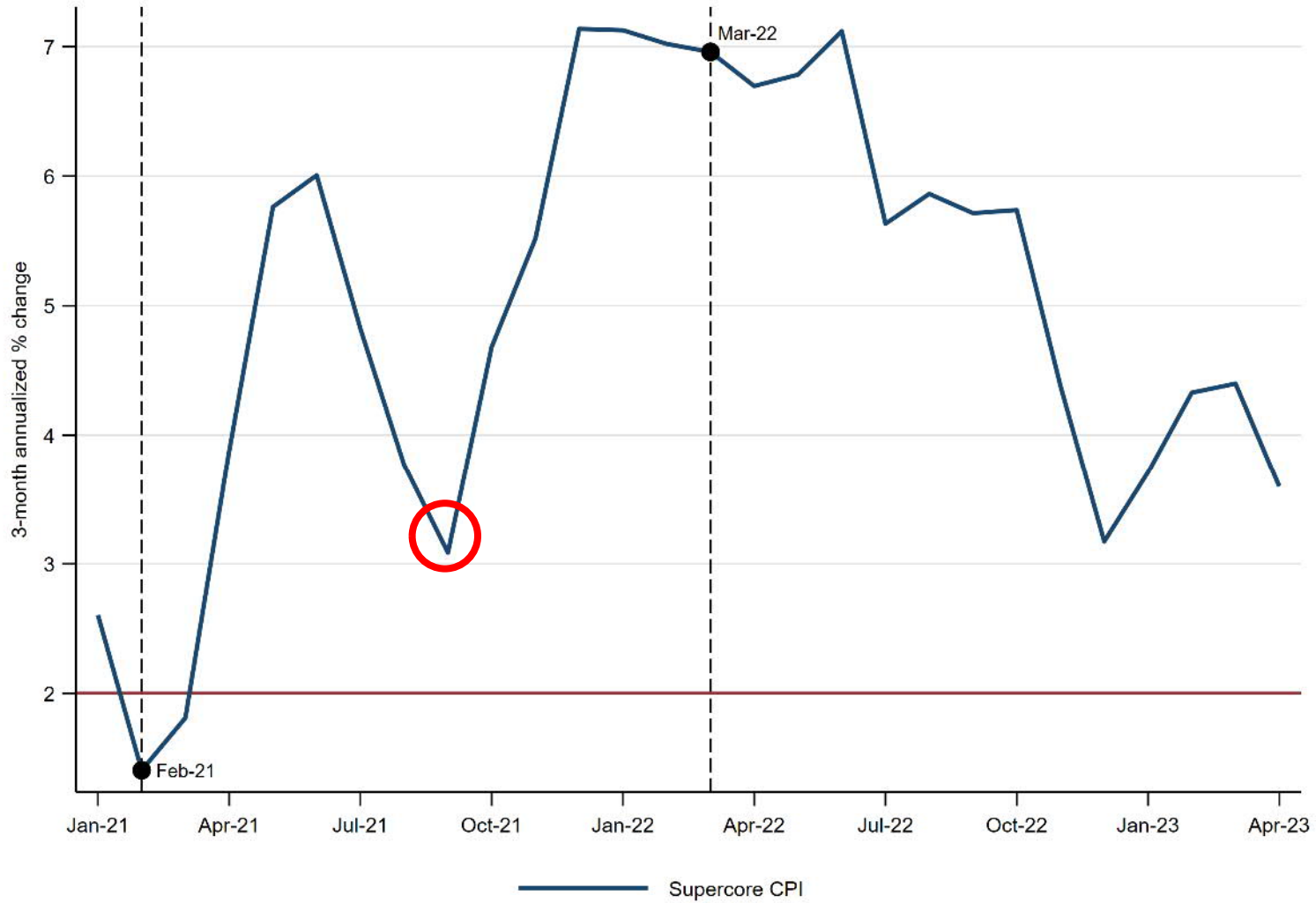
Perhaps, time Permitting:
The Role of 2020 Policy Framework

Summary

- Replace The Canonical NK Phillips Curve with and **Inverted-L NK Phillips curve**.
- Explains the sharp unexpected increase in inflation starting 2021.
- Provide “Empirical Motivation” in favor of highly nonlinear Phillips Curve
- Predicts a “soft landing” – less output lost for every percentage decrease in inflation relative to Volcker Recession

Broader
Historical
Context

“Super-Core” CPI which excludes shelter, food, energy and used cars.



How did we get it so wrong?

$$\pi_t = \kappa x_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1} + u_t$$

Estimated to be very-very-very low

Driving Inflation

Hazell, Herrano, Steinsson, Nakamura, QJE, 2022:

$u \uparrow 1\%$ \longrightarrow $\pi \downarrow 0.34\%$



Leal Brainard Fall 2020:

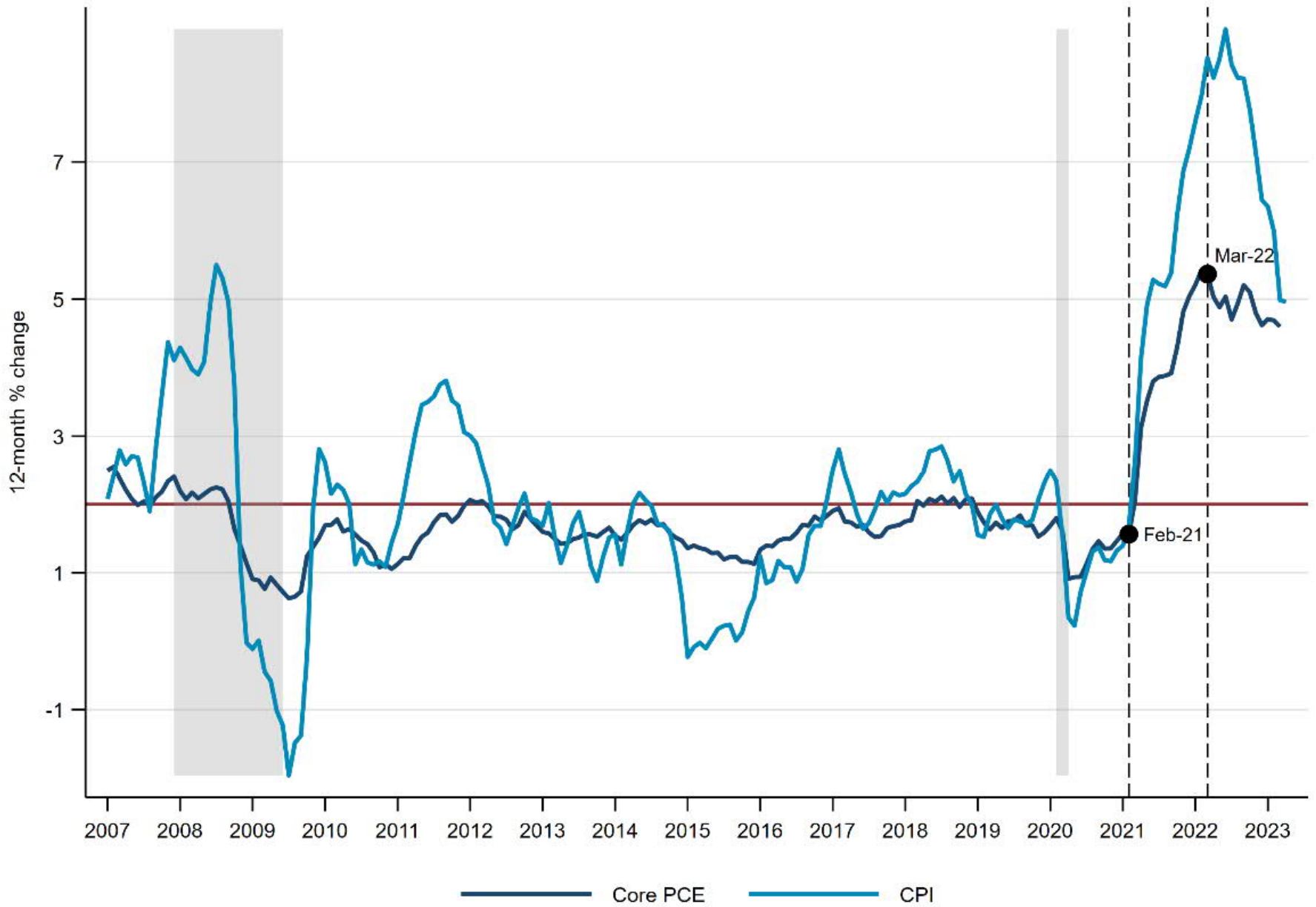
“sensitivity of price inflation to labor market tightness is very low”

“a flat Phillips curve has the important advantage of allowing employment to continue expanding for longer without generating inflationary pressures”

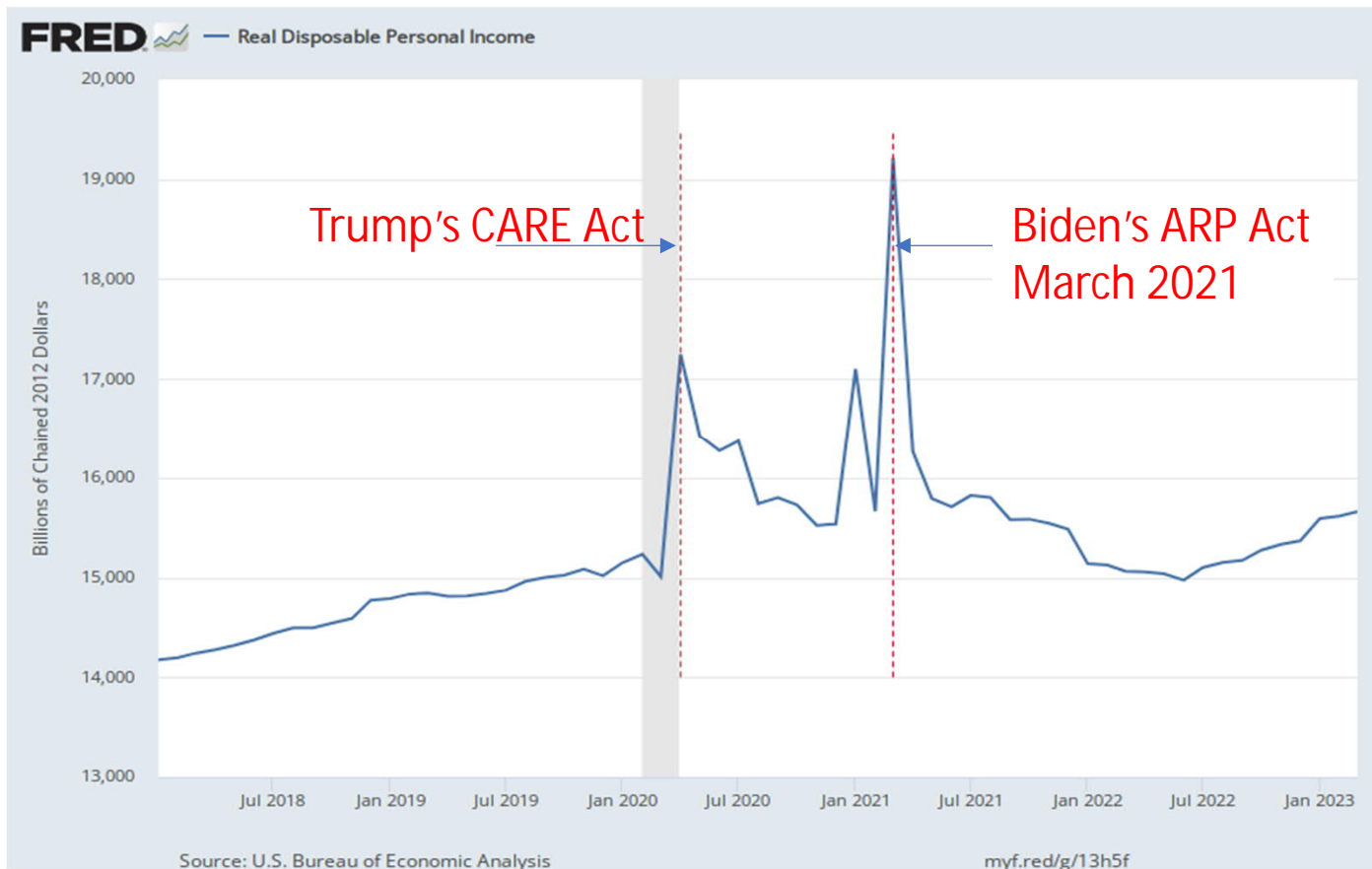
Policy Framework 2020

$$L_{2020} = E_p \begin{cases} (\pi - \pi^*)^2 + \lambda_- (l - l^*)^2 & \text{if } l \leq l^* \\ (\pi - \pi^*)^2 + \lambda_+ (l - l^*)^2 & \text{if } l > l^* \end{cases} \quad L_{2012} = E_p \{(\pi - \pi^*)^2 + \lambda(l - l^*)^2\}$$

In setting monetary policy, the Committee seeks **over time** to mitigate **shortfalls of employment from the Committee's assessment of its maximum level** and deviations of inflation from its longer-run goal ~~and deviations of employment from the Committee's assessments of its maximum level.~~

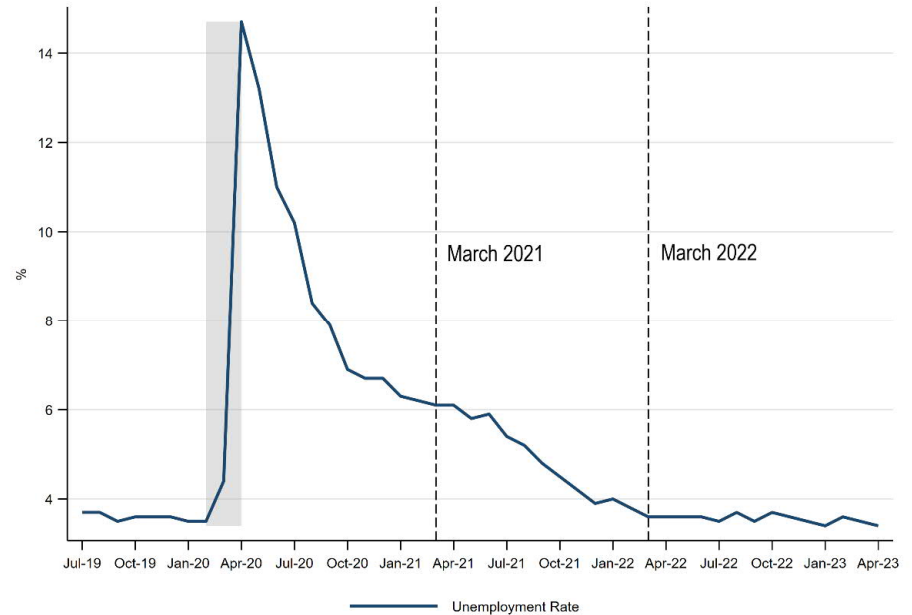
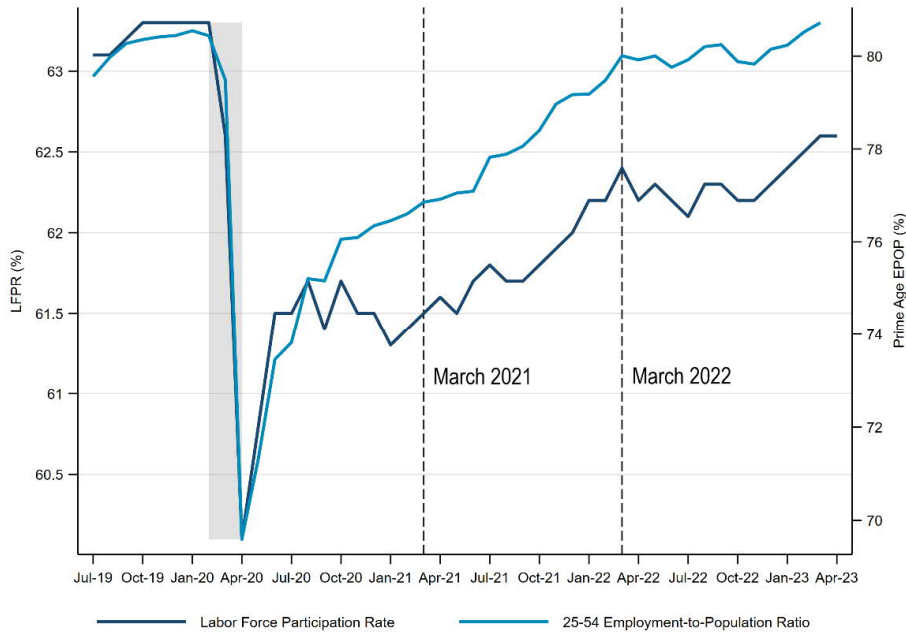


Why February 2021?



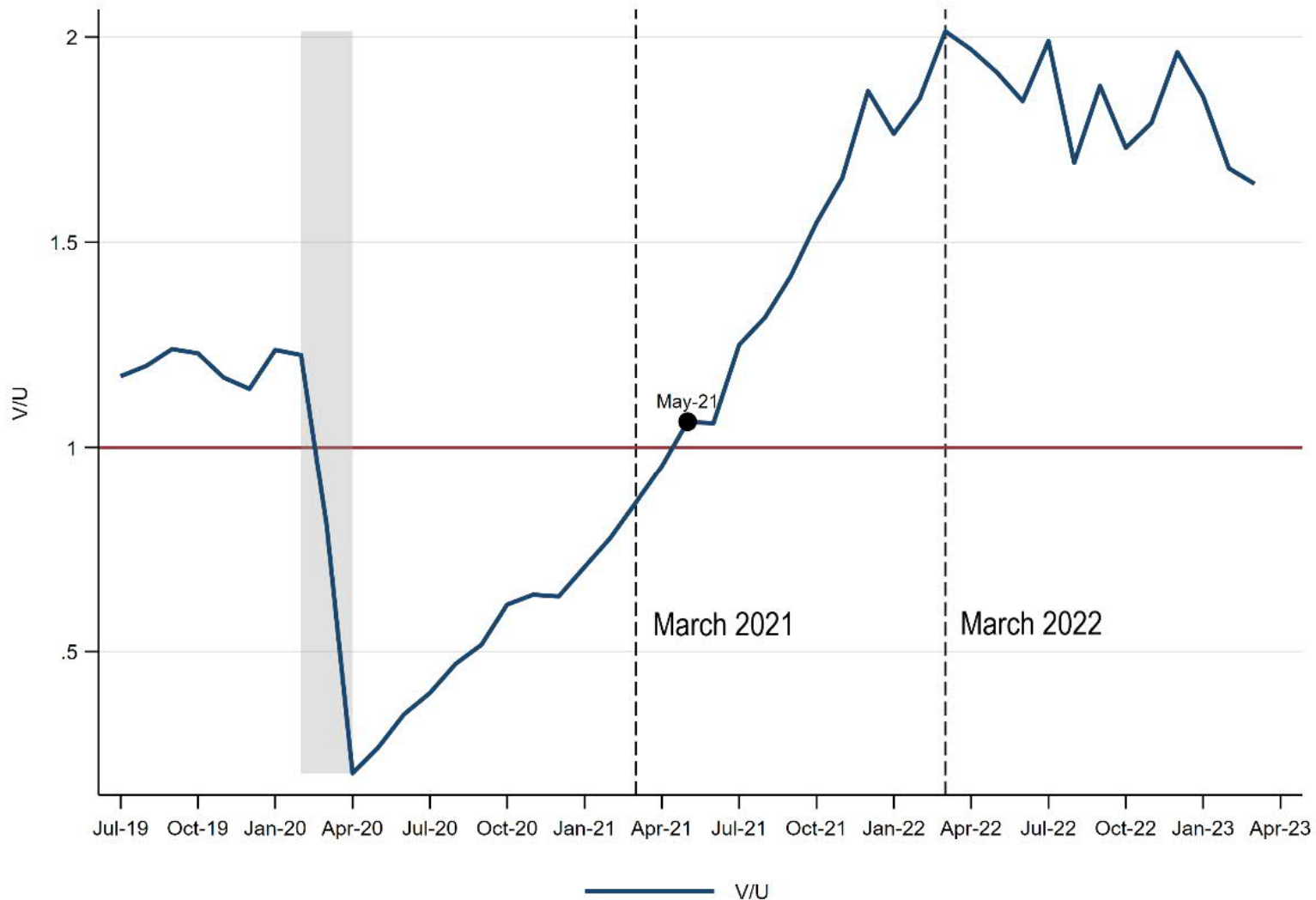
What went wrong?

Fed believed in low κ , and focused on labor market, following 2020 Policy Framework



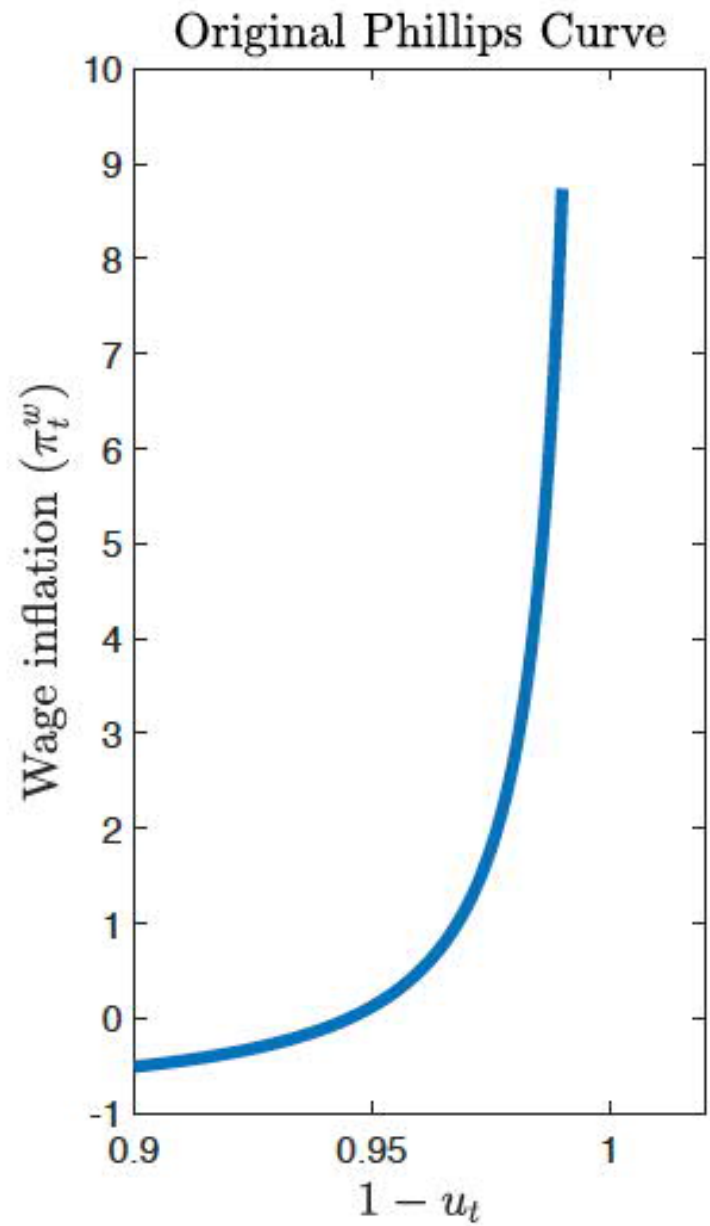
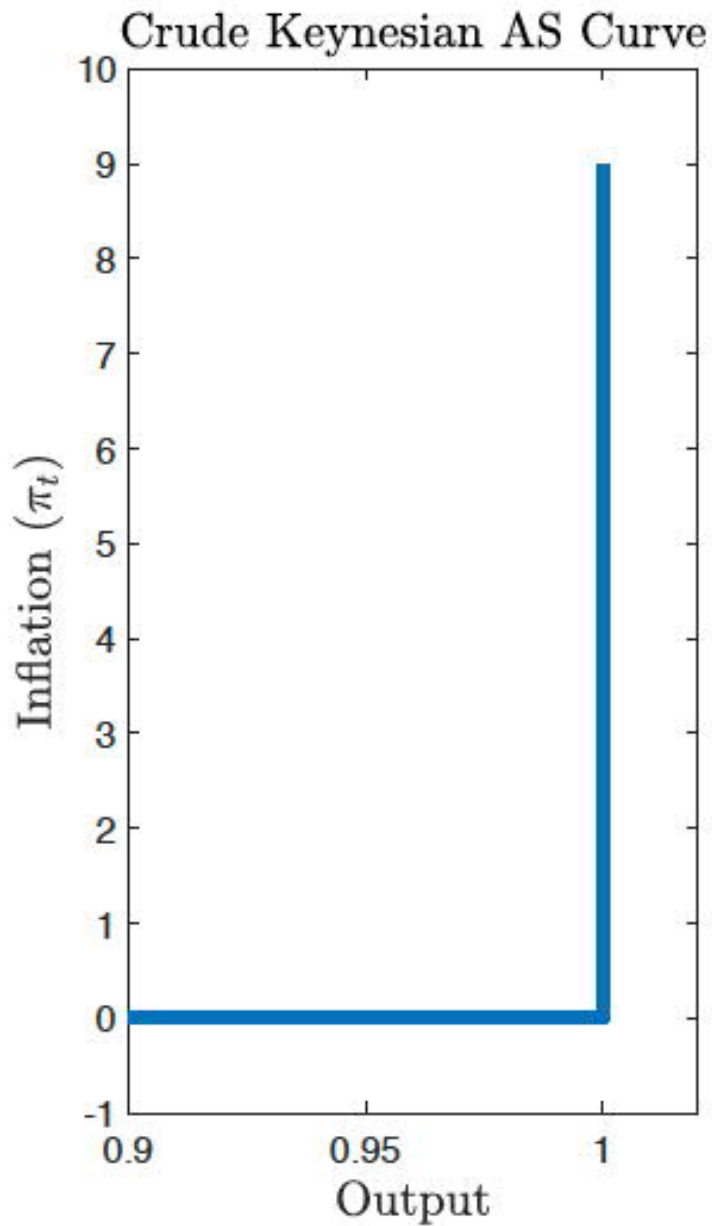
Conventional measures of labor market blinking red Beveridge (1944)

v/u



My Motivation ...

... in a few pictures



Coming to America!

Solow Samuelson (1960)

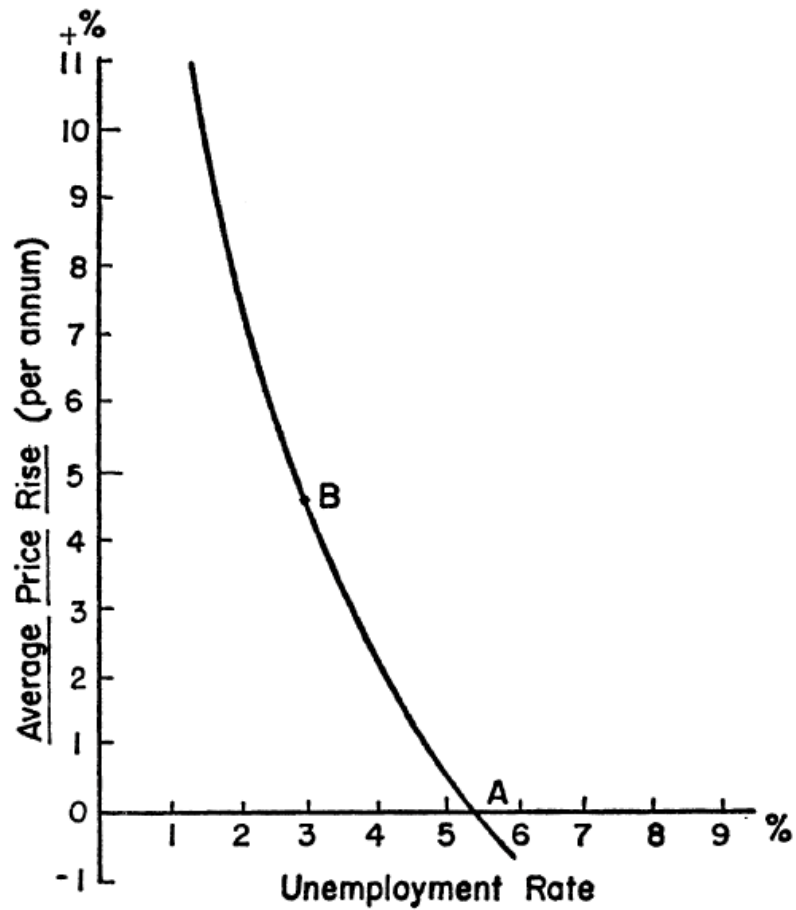
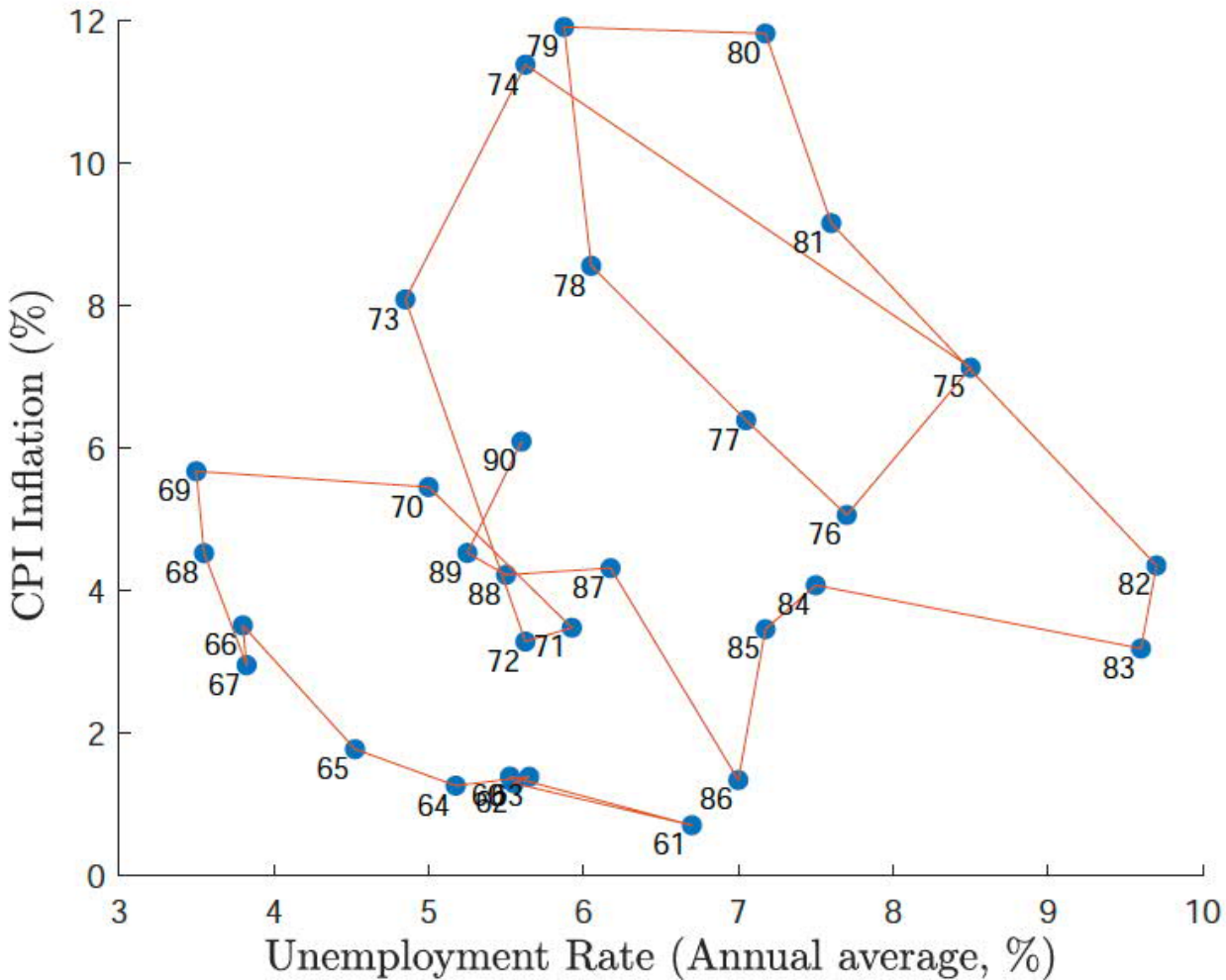


FIGURE 2

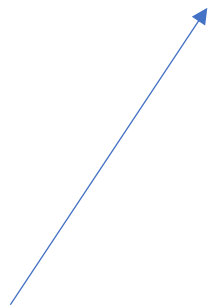
MODIFIED PHILLIPS CURVE FOR U.S.

Friedman and Phelps's Prophecy



1970's Consistent with Conventional Wisdom

$$\pi_t = \kappa x_t + u_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1}$$



1970's
consistent with
very low κ

The Great Inflation was
triggered by expectation
going all over the place
and supply shocks

But now expectation *relatively*
well anchored

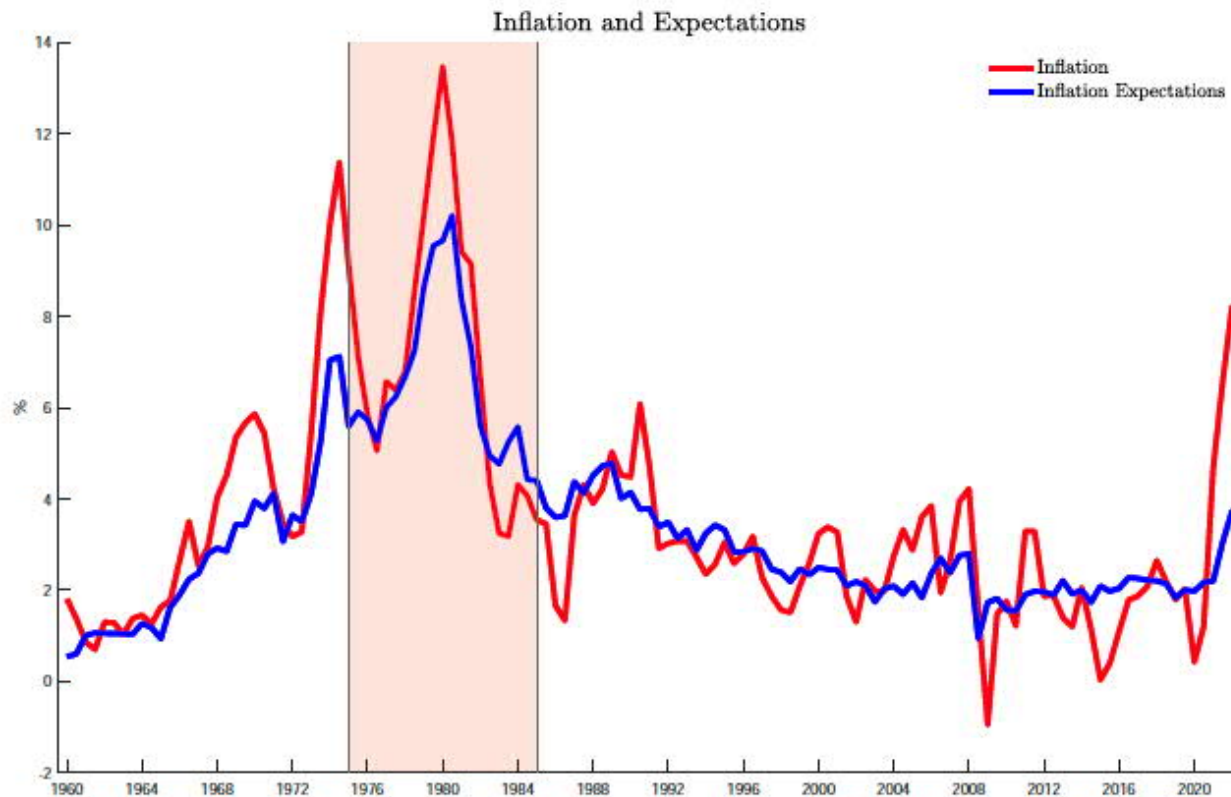
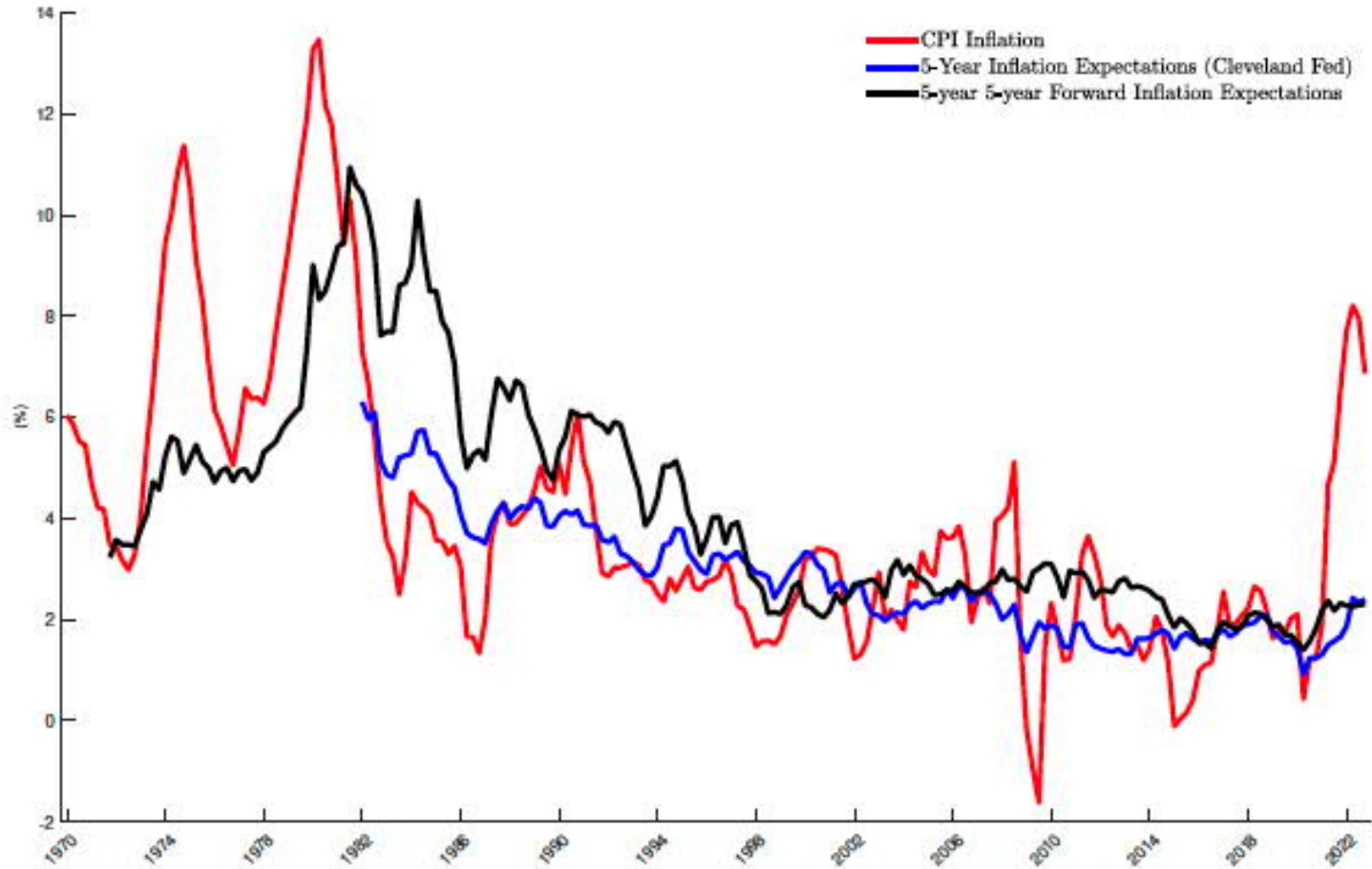
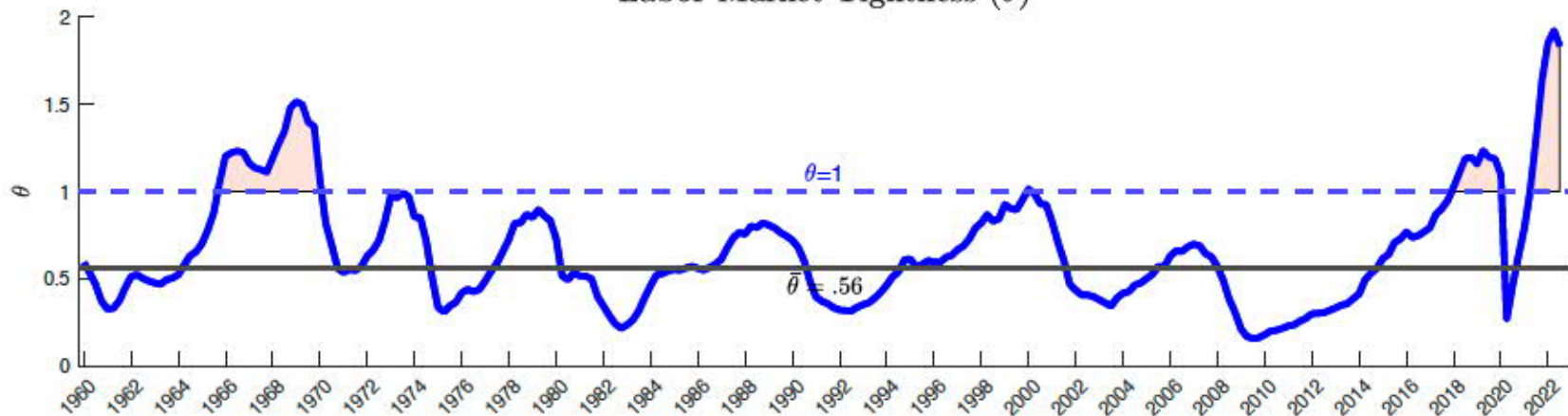


Figure 2: Inflation: CPI inflation rate at annual rates. 12-month Livingston inflation expectations.

Longer Term Expectations



Labor Market Tightness (θ)



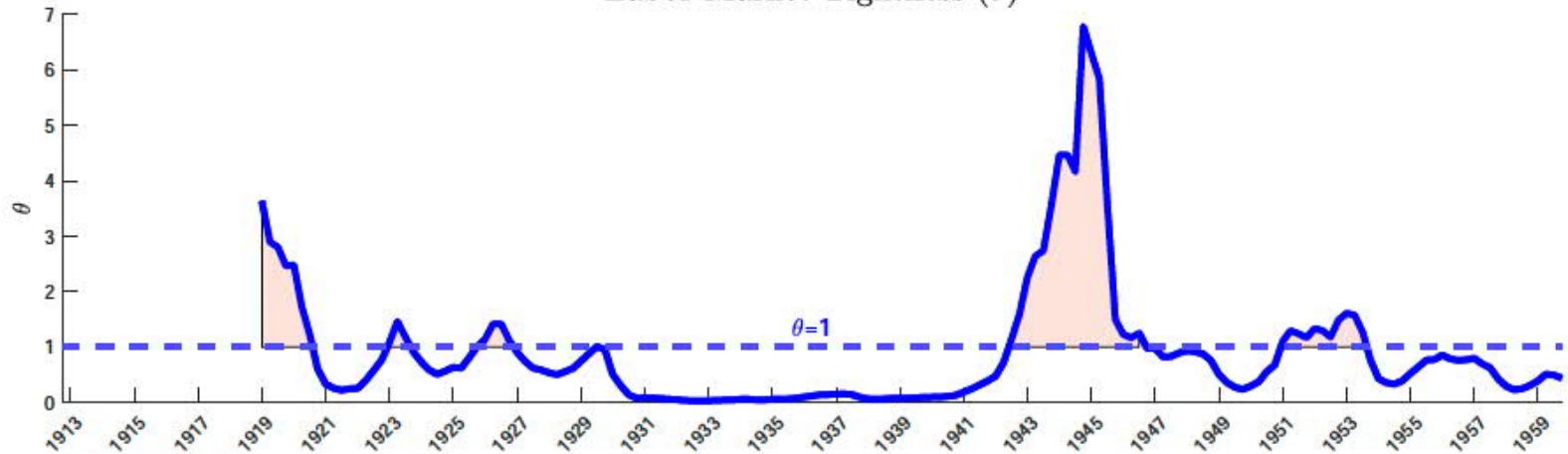
Vietnam War

COVID-19

Inflation Rate



Labor Market Tightness (θ)



World War I

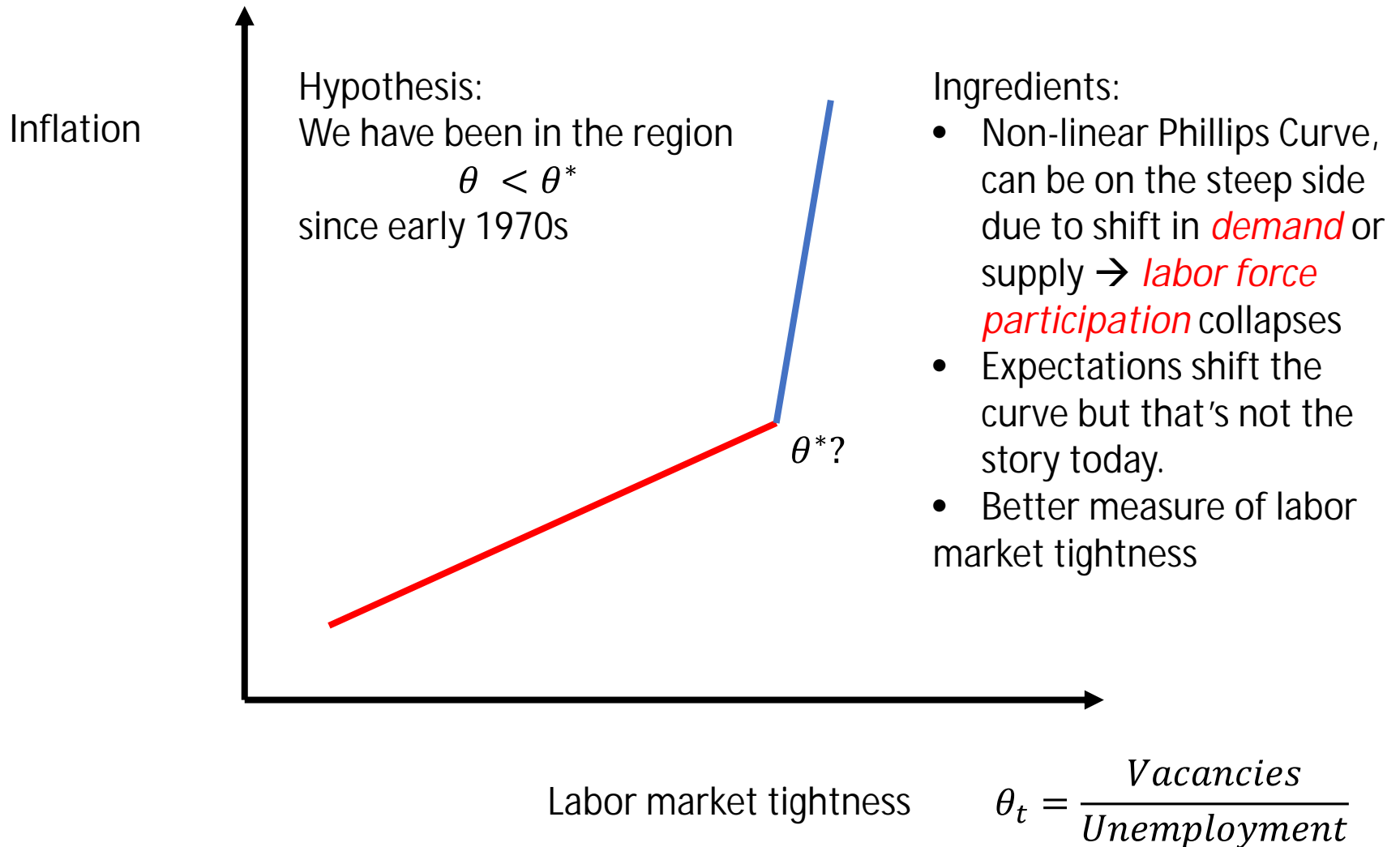
World War II

Korean War

Inflation Rate



Key Idea



Rest of Talk

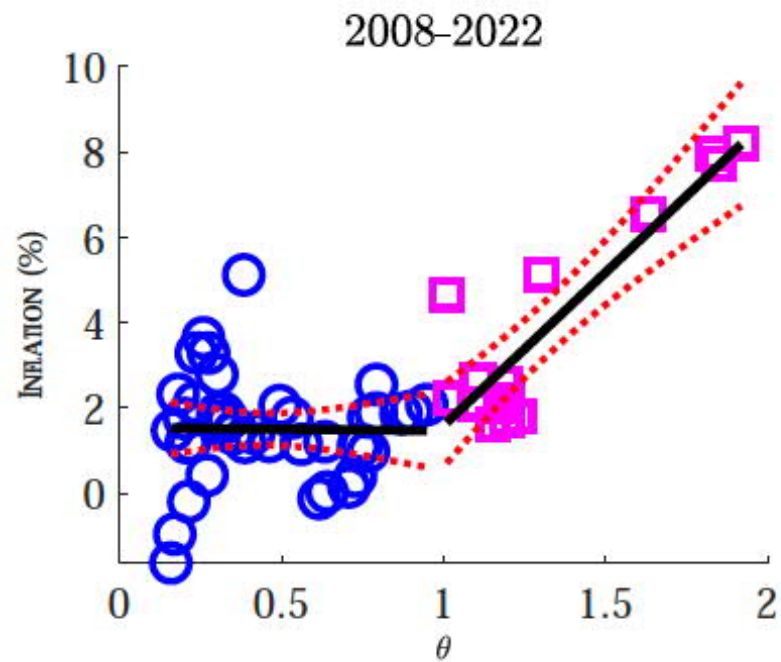
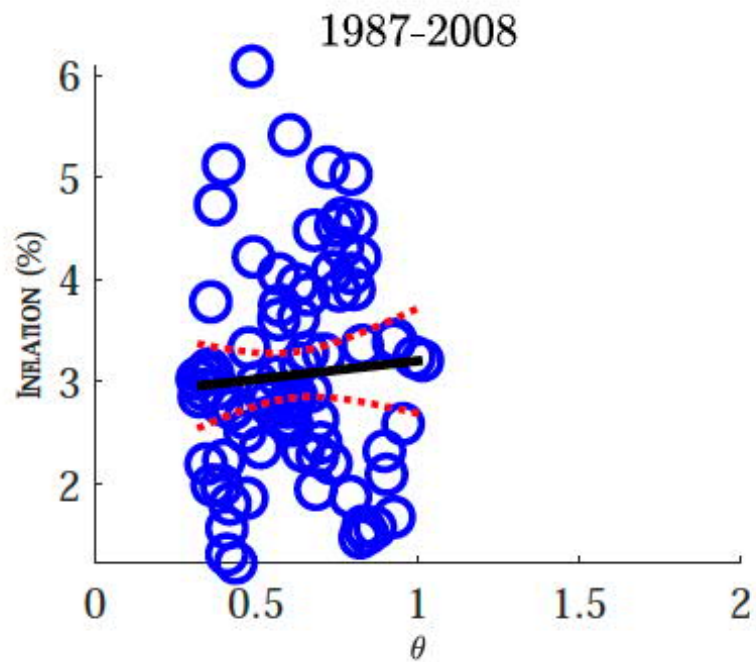
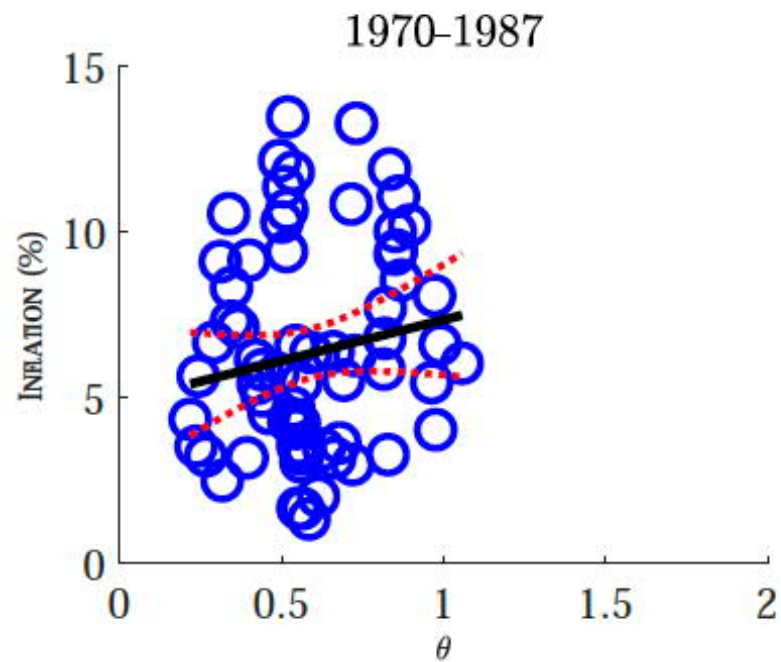
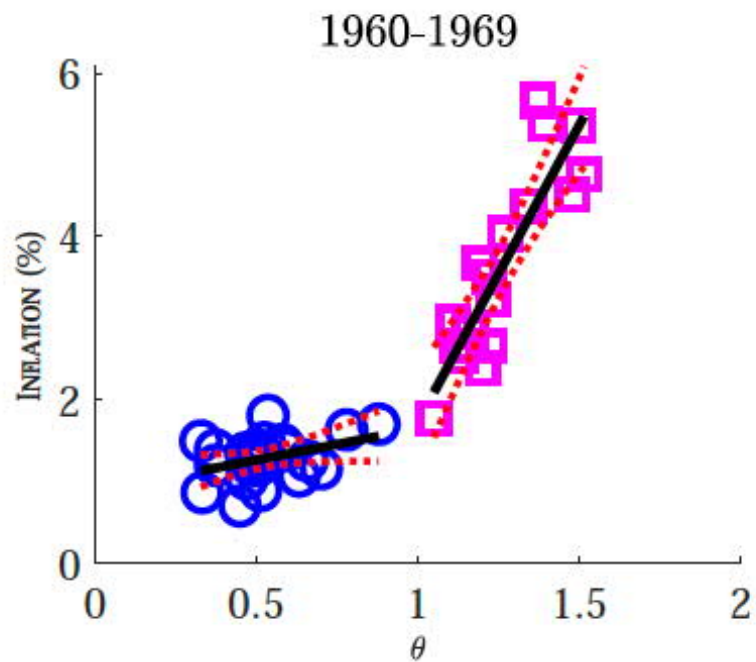
1. Empirical Motivation

2. Model

Simple search model of

- labor force participation
- search and matching

1. Empirical Motivation



$$\pi_t = \beta_c + \beta_\pi \pi_{t-1} + (\beta_\theta + \beta_{\theta_d} D_t) \ln \theta_t + \beta_\mu \mu_t + \beta_{\pi^e} \pi_t^e + \varepsilon_t$$

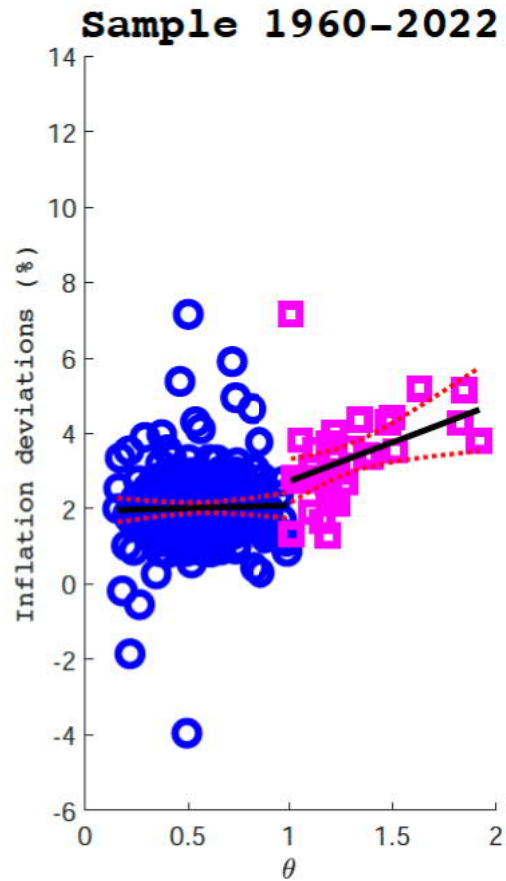
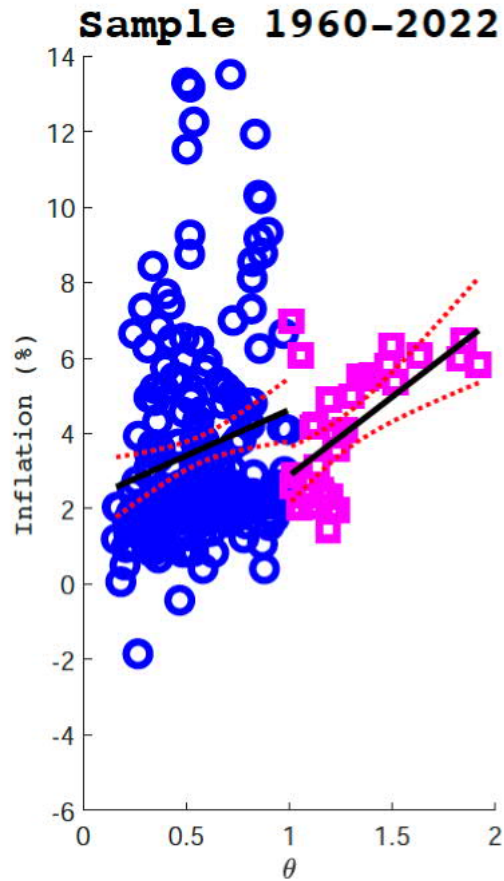


Table 1: Phillips Curve Estimates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	1960-2022	2008-2022	1960-2022	2008-2022
<i>Lagged inflation</i>	0.3690*** (0.0965)	0.2758 (0.2560)	0.2623*** (0.0928)	0.0322 (0.2348)
$\ln \theta$	0.6493*** (0.1887)	0.6909* (0.3791)	0.2220 (0.1930)	0.4864 (0.3670)
$\theta \geq 1$			3.8957*** (0.8231)	4.2684*** (1.3704)
<i>Supply shock</i>	0.0390** (0.0192)	0.0126 (0.0381)	0.0469** (0.0198)	0.0170 (0.0390)
<i>Inflation expectations</i>	0.6614*** (0.1085)	1.0470 (0.6228)	0.7991*** (0.1020)	0.5274 (0.6776)
<i>Constant</i>	0.5423*** (0.1630)	1.0146** (0.4662)	0.1922 (0.1652)	0.4680 (0.4146)
R^2 adjusted	0.816	0.463	0.827	0.511
Observations	251	57	251	57

· ***, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent level, respectively.

· Newey-West standard errors.

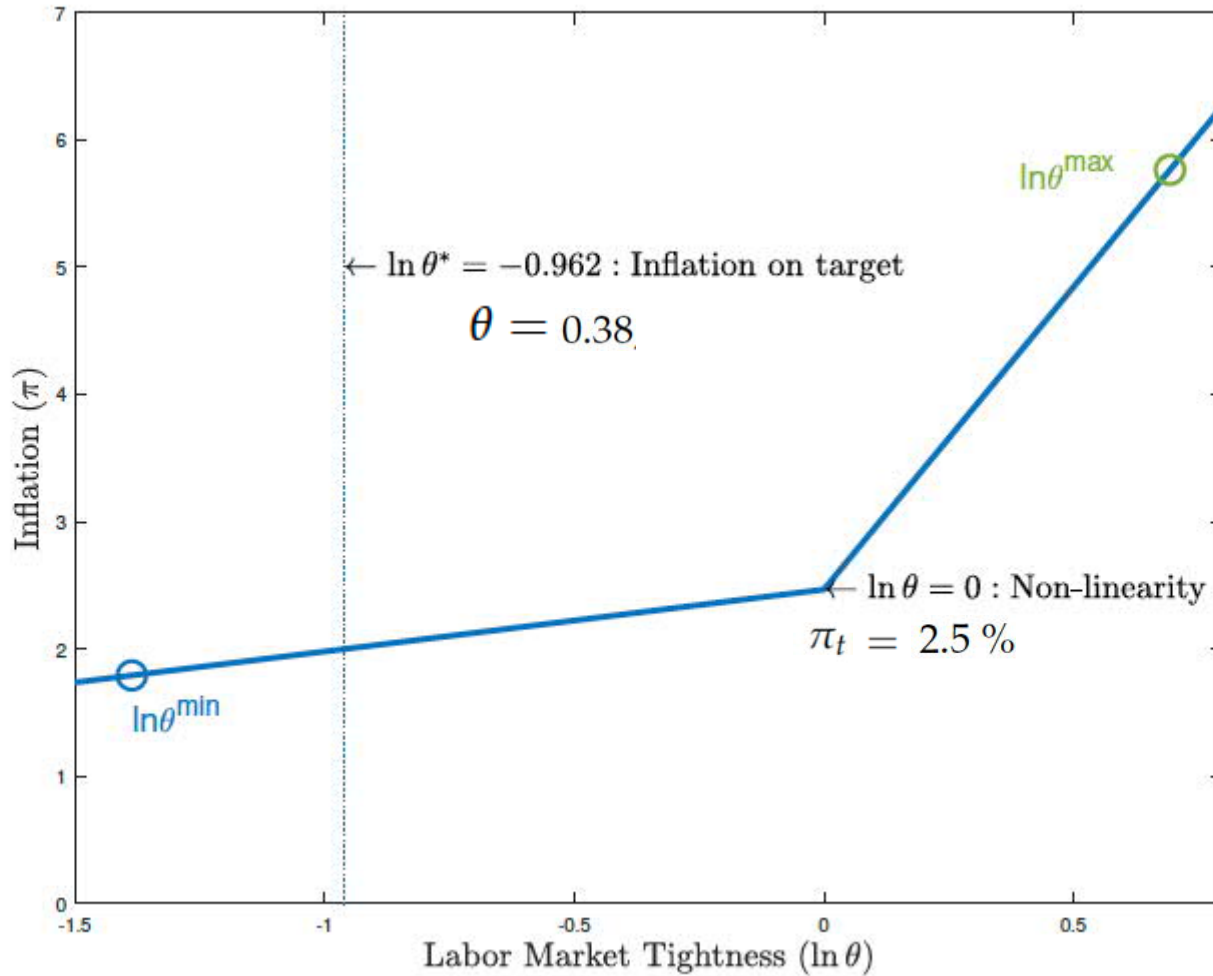
· (1) and (3): sample 1960 Q1 – 2022 Q3

· (2) and (4): sample 2008 Q3 – 2022 Q3

2. Model

Bottom-line:

$$\pi_t = \begin{cases} \kappa^{tight} \hat{\theta}_t + \kappa_u^{tight} \hat{u}_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1} \\ \kappa_w \hat{w}_{t-1} + \kappa \hat{\theta}_t + \kappa_u \hat{u}_t + \kappa_\beta E_t \pi_{t+1} \end{cases}$$



Model

$$U(C_t, F_t, \chi_t, \Psi_t, \xi_t) = \frac{1}{1-\sigma} \left(C_t - \chi_t \int_0^{F_t} f^\omega df + \Psi_t \right)^{1-\sigma} \xi_t$$

F_t is the number of people in the household

disutility f^ω from working as in Galì (2012)

$$\int_0^{F_t} f^\omega df = \frac{F_t^{1+\omega}}{1+\omega}$$

$$F_t = N_t + U_t$$



People employed by firms



People unemployed after
searching in period t

Beginning of period

$$F_t$$

$$1 - s$$

$$s$$

Attached to firm and belong to N_t

Search for jobs in period t $U_t^b = sF_t$

$$M_t = m(U_t^b)^\eta V_t^{1-\eta}$$

$$\theta_t \equiv V_t / U_t^b$$

Number of people at time t that are unemployed at the beginning of the period but *certified as employable by matching technology*

Tightness

In equilibrium

$$M_t = H_t$$



"New" hires in period t

Probability of an unemployed person at the beginning of period t
be hired in that period:

$$\frac{H_t}{U_t^b} = m\theta_t^{1-\eta} = f(\theta_t)$$

$$N_t = (1 - s)F_t + sF_t f(\theta_t) = F_t(1 - s + s f(\theta_t))$$

Household's problem

$$\max_{C_t, B_t, F_t} \left(\frac{C_t - \chi_t \frac{F_t^{1+\omega}}{1+\omega}}{1-\sigma} \right)^{1-\sigma} \equiv \lambda_t$$

s.t.

$$B_t = (1 + i_{t-1})B_{t-1} + (1 - s + (1 - \gamma_b)s f(\theta_t))F_t W_t + Z_t^p + Z_t^h - P_t C_t$$

Optimal Labor Force Participation

$$F_t = \left(\frac{(1 - s + (1 - \gamma^b)s f(\theta_t)) W_t}{\chi_t P_t} \right)^{\frac{1}{\varepsilon}}$$

Firms

$$E_t \sum_{T=t}^{\infty} Q_{t,T} \left\{ p_T(i) y_T(i) - W_T N_T(i) - \frac{\phi}{2} \left(\frac{p_T(i)}{p_{T-1}(i)} - 1 \right)^2 P_T Y_T - \psi_t(i) \right\}$$

$$y_t(i) = \left(\frac{p_t(i)}{P_t} \right)^{-\epsilon_t} Y_t \qquad y_t(i) = A_t N_t(i)^\alpha$$

$$(\Pi_t - 1) \Pi_t = \frac{\epsilon_t - 1}{\phi} \left(\frac{1}{\alpha} \frac{\epsilon_t}{\epsilon_t - 1} \frac{W_t}{P_t} \frac{N_t^{1-\alpha}}{A_t} - 1 \right) + \beta E_t \left\{ \left(\frac{X_{t+1}}{X_t} \right)^{-\sigma} \frac{Y_{t+1}}{Y_t} (\Pi_{t+1} - 1) \Pi_{t+1} \right\}$$

Employment agency

maximize

$$\gamma^b w_t M_t - \gamma^c V_t$$

$$M_t = m(U_t^b)^\eta V_t^{1-\eta}$$

Assumption: The agency will never match more people to people able to work than the firm is willing to hire.

$$M_t \leq H_t^d$$



Upper bound on how many people firms want to hire. Can be binding in a demand constrained equilibrium

Up-til now

- We can define an equilibrium under flexible wages

$$\pi_t = \kappa^{tight} \hat{\theta}_t + \kappa_u^{tight} \hat{u}_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1}$$

$$\max_{\theta_t} \left(\gamma^b w_t U_t^b f(\theta_t) - \gamma^c U_t^b \theta_t \right)$$

$$\text{s.t.} \quad U_t^b f(\theta_t) \leq H_t^d$$

Interior solution

$$\underbrace{\gamma^b w_t^{flex} f'(\theta_t)}_{\text{Marginal benefit}} = \underbrace{\gamma^c}_{\text{Marginal cost}}$$

$$w_t^{flex} = \frac{1}{m(1-\eta)} \frac{\gamma^c}{\gamma^b} \theta_t^\eta$$

Constrained solution

$$\psi_t = \frac{\gamma^b w_t^{norm} f'(\theta_t) - \gamma^c}{f'(\theta_t)}$$

$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}$
Marginal value of a new hire

Introducing Phillips wage norm

$$W_t = \begin{cases} W_t^{norm} \\ P_t w_t^{flex} \end{cases} \quad \text{if } P_t w_t^{flex} - W_t^{norm} > \Gamma_t$$

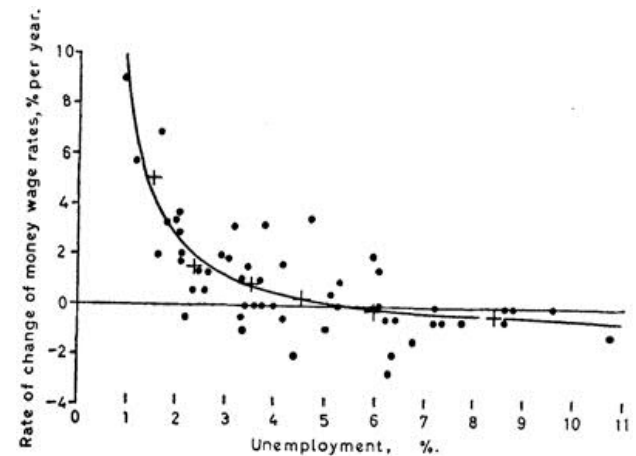
Example 1: $\Gamma_t = 0$

$$W_t = \max(W_t^{norm}, P_t w_t^{flex})$$

Example 2: Γ_t such that

$$W_t = \begin{cases} W_t^{norm} & \theta_t \leq 1 \\ P_t w_t^{flex} & \theta_t > 1 \end{cases}$$

Phillips 1958



Introducing Phillips wage norm

- Traditional notion of labor market tightness dating back to Beveridge (1944)
- Rees (1957):
Firms looking for workers $>$ number of workers looking for jobs

$$\theta_t > 1 \quad \text{“labor shortage”}$$

$$w_t^{flex} = \frac{1}{m(1-\eta)} \frac{\gamma^c}{\gamma^b} \theta_t^\eta$$

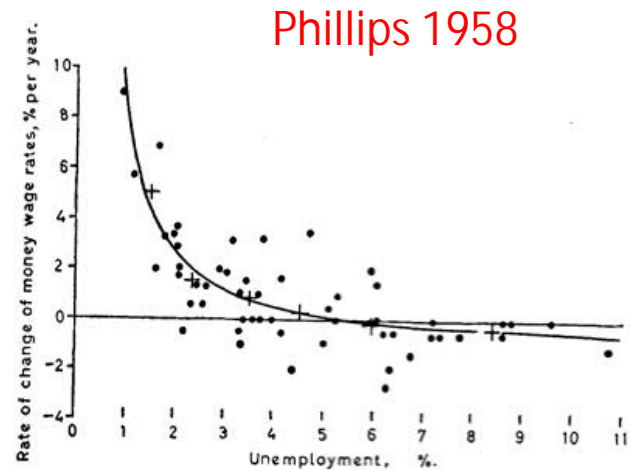
But what if $\theta \leq 1$?

$$W_t^{norm} = (W_{t-1}(\Pi_{t+1}^e)^\delta)^\lambda (P_t w_t^{flex})^{1-\lambda}$$

Example: $\lambda = 1, \delta = 0$

Keynes Norm

$$W_t^{norm} = W_{t-1}$$



Key Asymmetry

$$w_t = \begin{cases} w_t^{flex} & \text{for } \theta_t > 1 \\ (w_{t-1}\Pi_t^{-1})^\lambda (\Pi_{t+1}^e)^{\delta\lambda} (w_t^{flex})^{1-\lambda} & \text{for } \theta_t \leq 1. \end{cases}$$

Phillips Curve with kink

$$\pi_t = \frac{(\epsilon - 1)}{\zeta} (\hat{w}_t - \hat{A}_t + \hat{\mu}_t) + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1}$$



Key source of kink: Is the labor market "hot" or not

Flexible wages

Wage norm binding

$$\hat{w}_t^{flex} = \eta \hat{\theta}_t$$

$$\hat{w}_t^{norm} = \lambda (\hat{w}_{t-1} - \pi_t + \delta E_t \pi_{t+1}) + (1 - \lambda) \hat{w}_t^{flex}$$

Phillips Curve with kink

Labor shortage

$$\pi_t = \kappa^{tight} \hat{\theta}_t + \kappa_u^{tight} \hat{u}_t + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1}$$

Normal

$$\pi_t = \kappa_w \hat{w}_{t-1} + \kappa \hat{\theta}_t + \kappa_u \hat{u}_t + \kappa_\beta E_t \pi_{t+1}$$

Simple AS-AD: Characterization

$$\hat{Y}_t - \hat{G}_t = E_t \hat{Y}_{t+1} - E_t \hat{G}_{t+1} - \sigma^{-1}(\hat{i}_t - E_t \pi_{t+1} - \hat{r}_t^e)$$

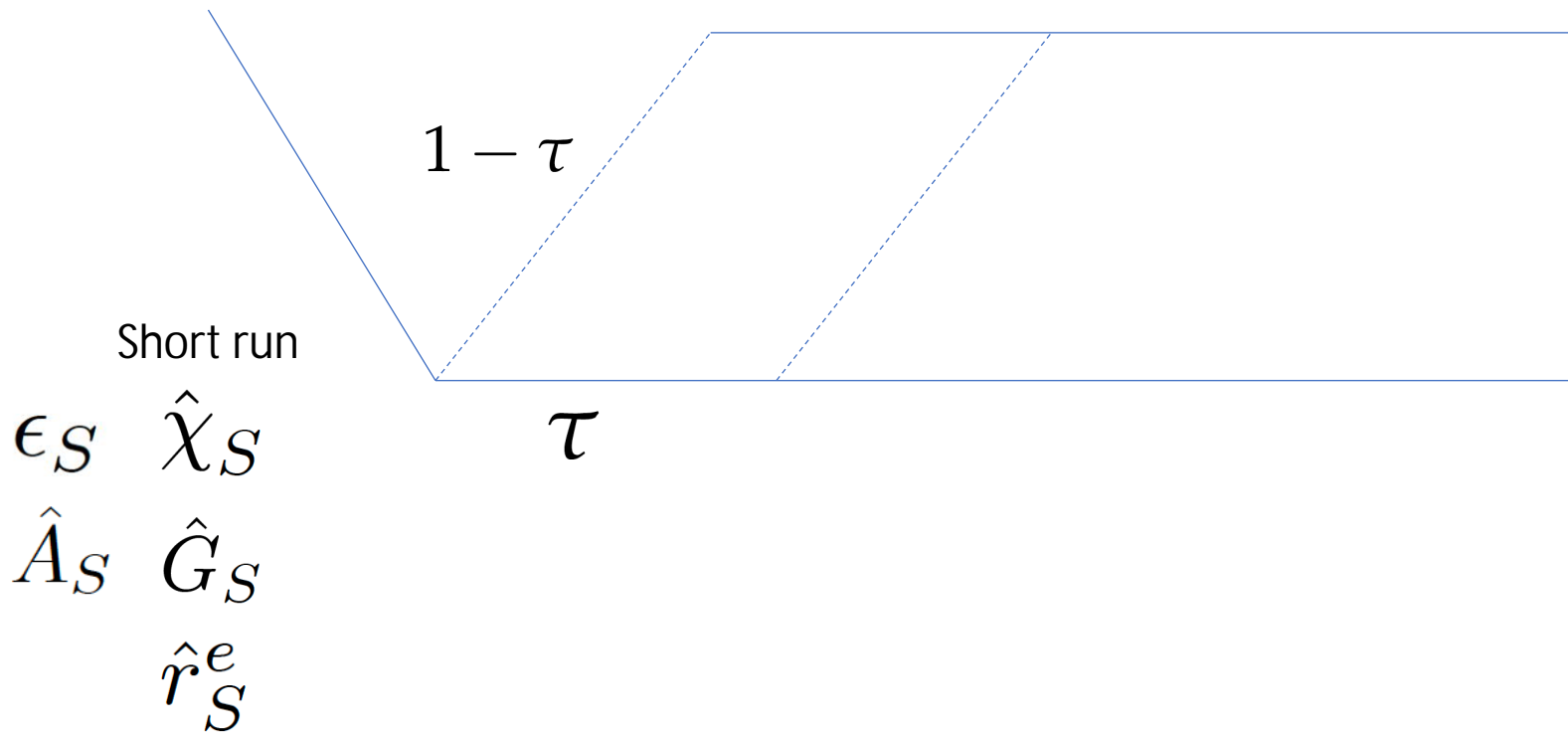
$$\pi_t = \begin{cases} k^{tight}(\hat{Y}_t + \omega^{-1}\hat{\chi}_t - \hat{A}_t) + k_{\mu}^{tight}(\hat{\mu}_t - \hat{A}_t) + \beta E_t \pi_{t+1} & \text{if } \hat{\theta}_t > \theta^* \\ k(\hat{Y}_t + \omega^{-1}\hat{\chi}_t - \hat{A}_t) + k_{\mu}(\hat{\mu}_t - \hat{A}_t) + k_{\beta} E_t \pi_{t+1} & \text{if } \hat{\theta}_t \leq \theta^* \end{cases}$$

$$\hat{i}_t = \hat{r}_t^e + \phi_{\pi}(\pi_t - \pi^*) + \epsilon_t$$

Form of uncertainty

$$\pi_L = \pi^* \text{ and } \hat{Y}_L = 0$$

$$\pi_L^e > \pi^* \quad \text{Long Run}$$

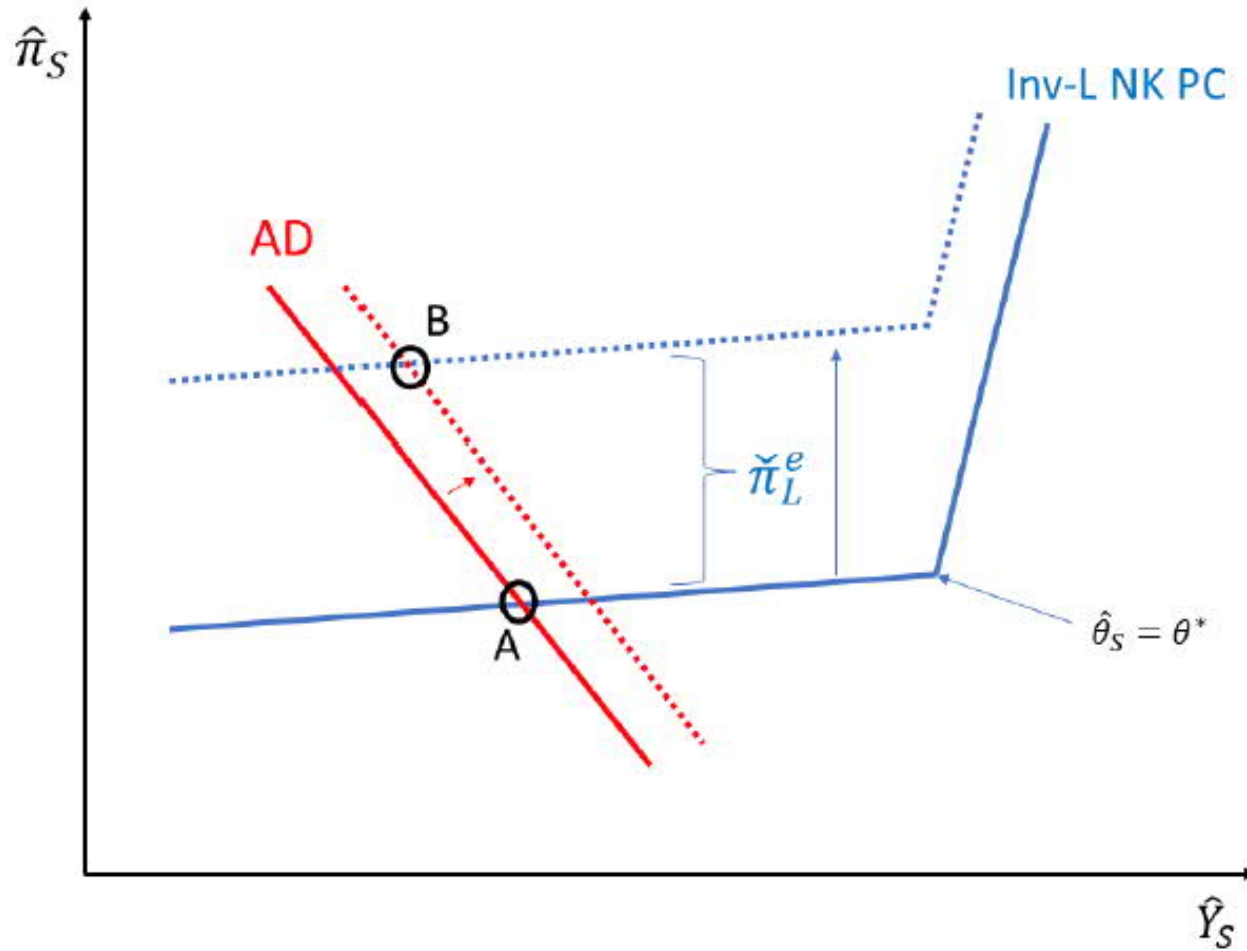


Close form Characterizatio

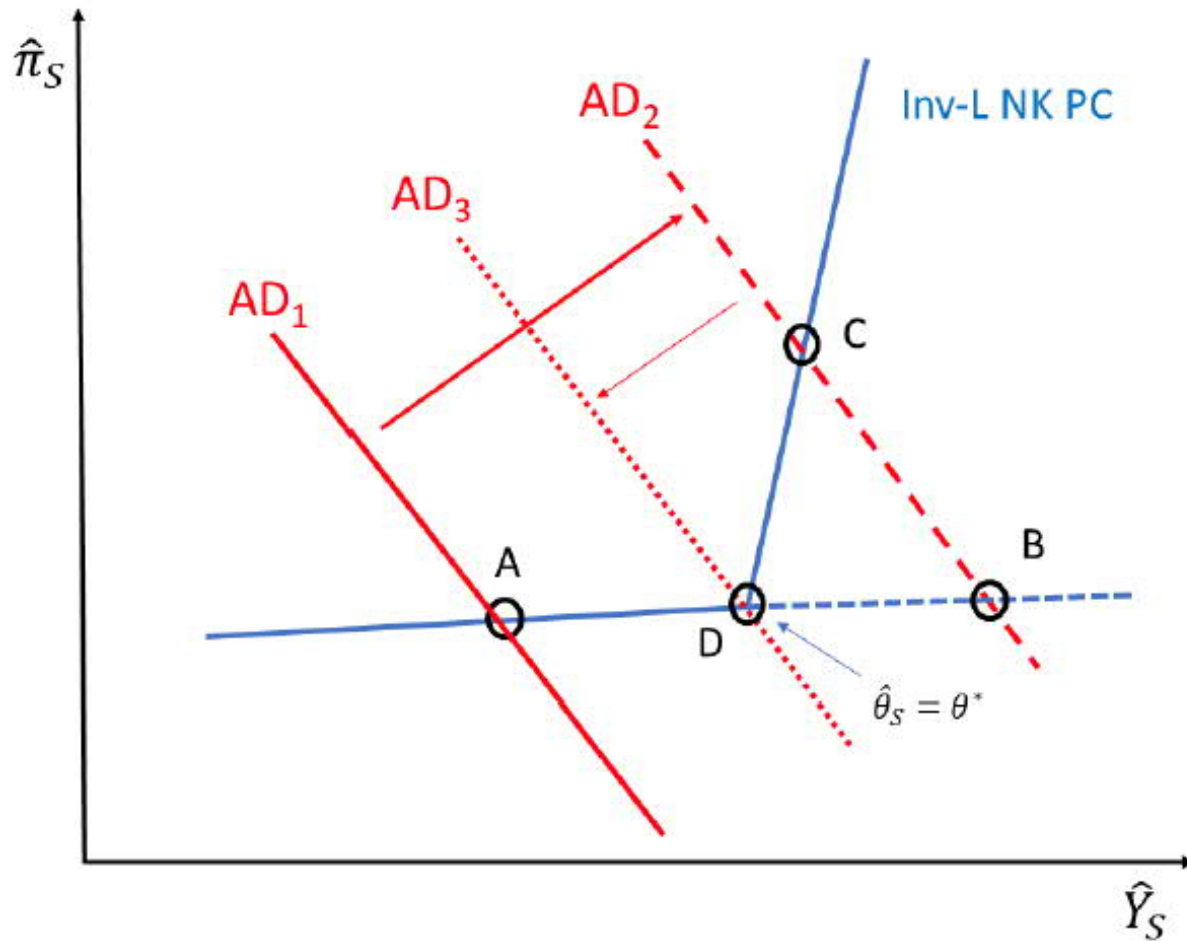
$$\text{AD} \quad \hat{Y}_S = -\sigma^{-1} \frac{\phi \pi - \tau}{1 - \tau} (\pi_S - \pi^*) + \sigma^{-1} (\pi_L^e - \pi^*)$$

$$\text{PC/AS} \quad \pi_S - \pi^* = \begin{cases} \frac{k^{tight}}{1-\tau} \hat{Y}_S + \frac{k_\mu^{tight}}{1-\tau} \hat{\mu}_S + \pi_L^e - \pi^* & \hat{\theta}_t \geq \theta^* \\ \frac{k}{1-\tau} \hat{Y}_S + \frac{k_\mu}{1-\tau} \hat{\mu}_S + \pi_L^e - \pi^* & \hat{\theta}_t < \theta^* \end{cases}$$

The 1970's



Today's inflation spike is different



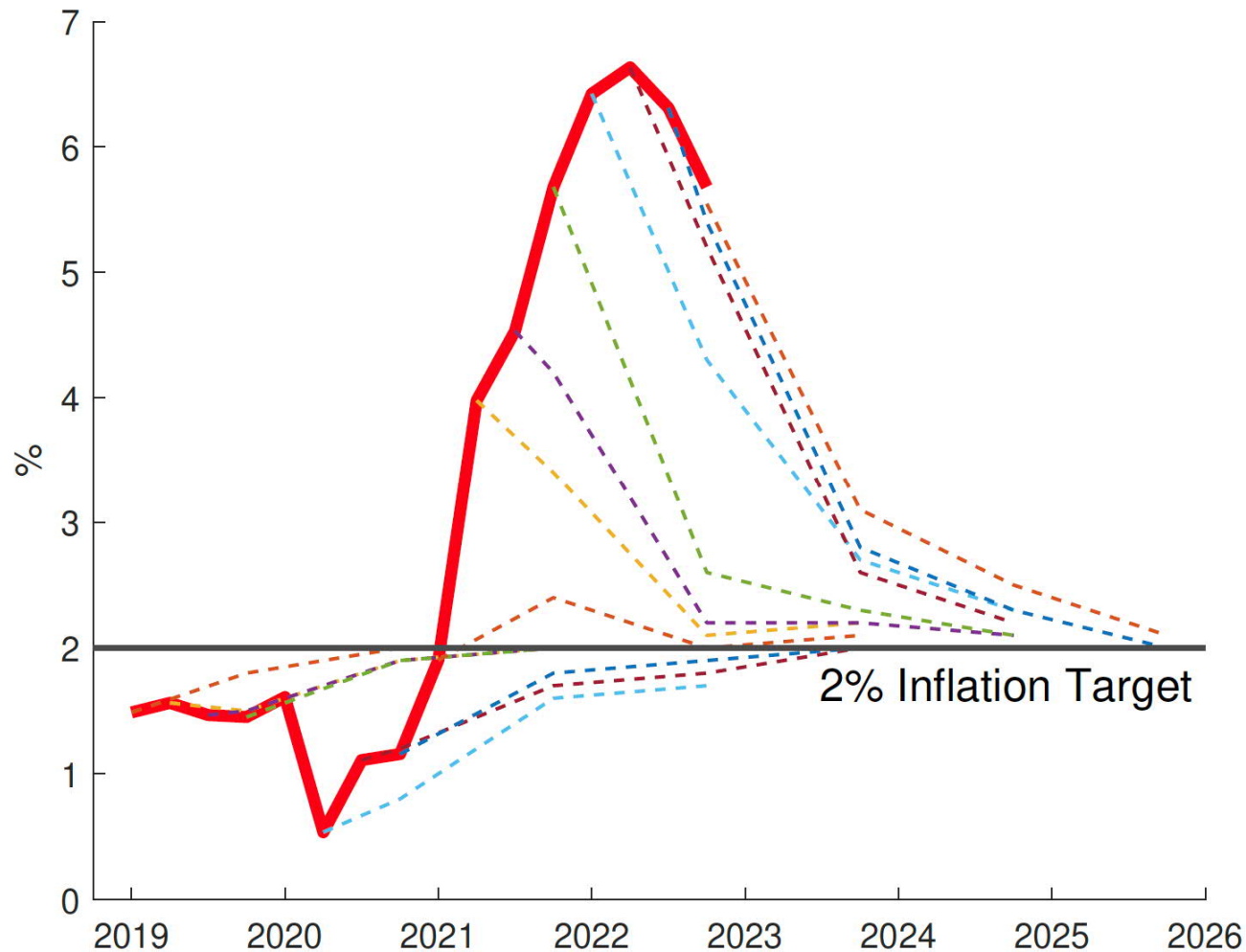
Implications for policy

- Easy up – easy down
- Provided the Fed does not overtighten, a key prediction is a “soft landing”.
- This could look a lot more like the inflation spike following the Korean War

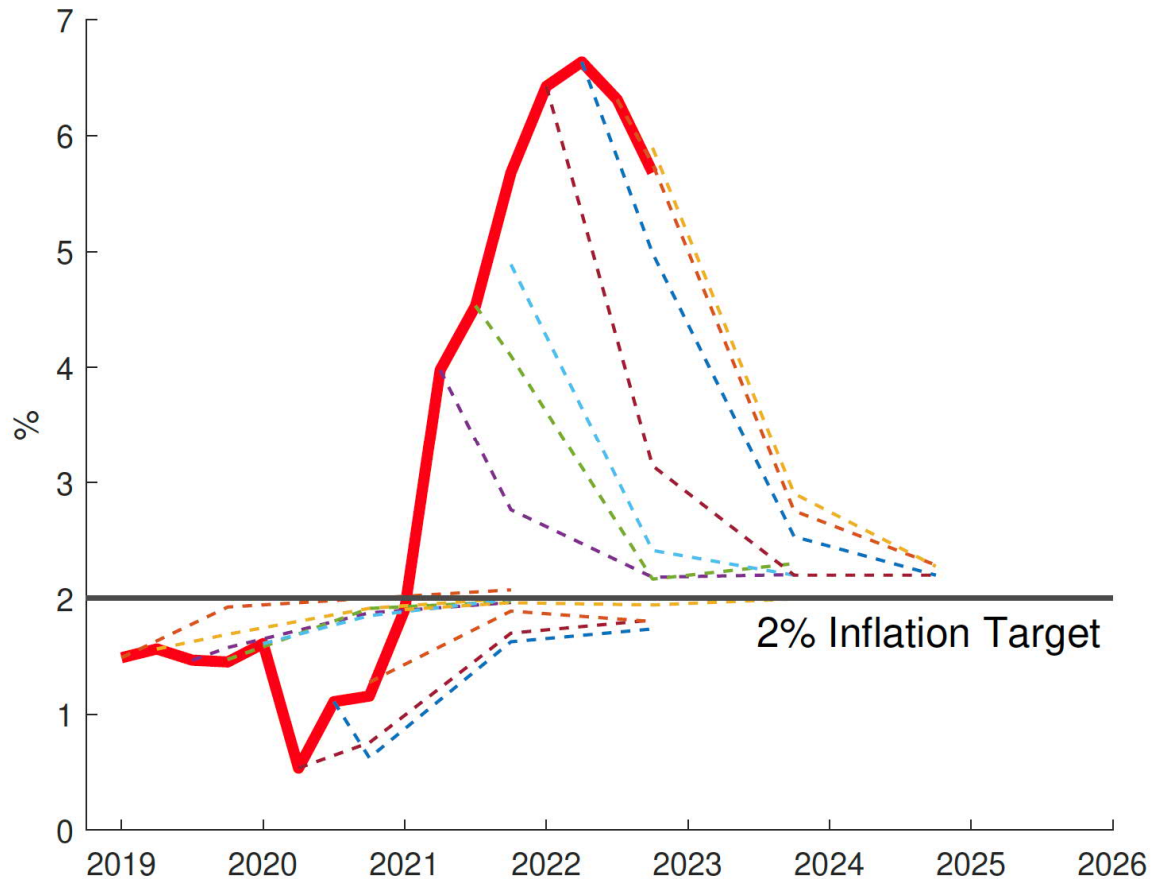
Conclusion

- New Framework to understand inflation spike replacing the NK Phillips Curve with the INV-L NK Phillips Curve with θ_t
- Some suggestive evidence
- Interesting Policy Implications

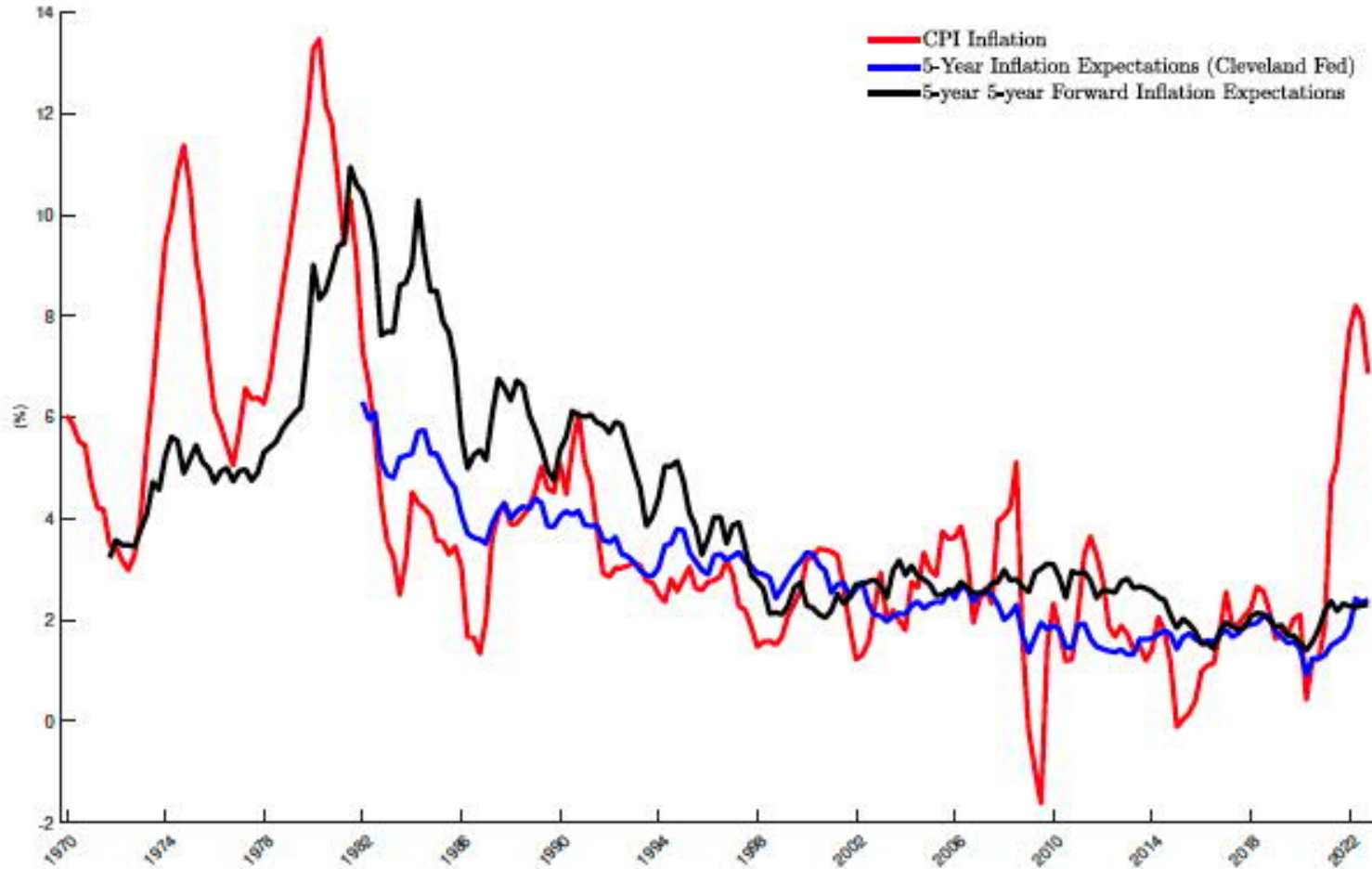
Summary of Economic Projections (SEP)



Survey of Professional Forecasters (SPF)



Longer Term Expectations



The Phillips curve, 2001-2022

