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DEMOCRACY, FREE TRADE, AND BACKLASH MITIGATION

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Democracy, Free Trade, and Backlash Mitigation*

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Abstract

How do democratic governments promote free trade while facing strong domestic resistance? Influential theories posit that governing parties primarily use executive, bureaucratic, and international channels to liberalize trade. This paper contends, by contrast, that governing parties may take advantage of the legislative branch as an instrument of insulation to mitigate the impact of backlash on policy-making processes. The paper examines Japan as an unlikely case of agricultural liberalization, leveraging transfers of power concurrent to deliberations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership and its subsequent Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement to identify the effects of governing status. Evidence shows that parties in government are less likely to advocate for agricultural interests in deliberations on the agreements, while election cycle dynamics also deepen the practice of insulation. These findings shed light on the strategic significance of democratic accountability in maintaining resilience in the liberal economic order.

Keywords: Democratic accountability, legislatures, representation, trade liberalization.

JEL Classification: F13, F14, N75.

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1 Introduction

From Ricardo (1817) to Rickard (2018), more than two centuries of studies have examined the dynamics of trade liberalization in democracies. A cautiously emerging consensus holds that democratic governments maintain more liberal trade policies than do autocratic regimes (Betz and Pond 2019; Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff 2000, 2002; cf. Kono 2006, Naoi 2015).¹ Yet, many major democracies have continued to experience considerable domestic backlash against their engagement in international economic institutions, especially in recent decades (Albertoni 2018; De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter 2021; Kim, Naoi, and Sasaki 2022; Mansfield, Milner, and Rudra 2021; Milner and Kubota 2005; Naoi 2020; Rudra, Nooruddin, and Bonifai 2021; Walter 2021).²

How do democratic governments manage to promote free trade while facing strong resistance from protectionist groups in society? Influential theories emphasize that governing parties make use of executive authority (Bailey, Goldstein, and Weingast 1996; O'Halloran 1994; Lohmann and O'Halloran 1994; Schaede and Grimes 2003), bureaucratic delegation (Krauss 2003; Johnson 1982; Stanescu 2020), as well as international institutions through implementing issue linkage strategies (Davis 2003, 2004, 2019) and escalating the costs of nonengagement and abrogation (Solís 2017). An enduring assumption posits that the legislative branch is the weakest link in free trade promotion: drawn-out deliberations polarize elites and voters, undermining the likelihood of successful ratification.

However, while growing evidence shows that political calculations impact the conditions under which legislators push for free trade (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997; Lee and Osgood 2019; Naoi 2015), prior scholarship has neither theorized nor tested governing parties' use of the national legislature as an instrument of insulation. Deepening understanding of the legislative branch's role is crucial: it recenters the most foundational incentives facing legislators in debates over the democracy-enhancing and democracy-diminishing properties of the liberal economic order: reelection and majority control.³

¹Kono's (2006) theory of optimal obfuscation stresses that democracy has heterogeneous effects on different types of trade policies (tariff barriers vs. core nontariff barriers like quotas vs. quality nontariff barriers like product standards). Naoi (2015, 5-6) emphasizes that the real variance scholars should seek to explain is not liberalization across countries but over time.

²Domestic backlash has impeded the ability of some key governments to accede to, or remain in, institutions that underwrite the rules-based liberal economic order. Recent examples include the U.S. (which withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership), the U.K. (which withdrew from the European Union), India (which decided not to accede to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), and Thailand (which has delayed its decision to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership).

³The two sides of the debate are respectively documented by Keohane et al. (2009) and Gartzke and Naoi

This paper develops a theory of legislative insulation to explain why parties' governing status affects their advocacy for protectionist interests in parliament. Drawing insights from scholarship on insulation and economic voting (e.g., Bailey, Goldstein, and Weingast 1996; Fiorina 1978; Johnson 1982; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Lohmann and O'Halloran 1994; Powell and Whitten 1993), the paper posits that parties in government are less likely to advocate for protection-seeking groups during deliberations on trade agreements, relative to parties in opposition. This is because governing parties are uniquely under electoral pressure to stimulate national economic growth,⁴ while parties in opposition do not bear a comparable burden.

To test this theory, the paper examines Japan as an unlikely case of agricultural liberalization. Prior scholarship posits that Japan's electoral institutions, the persistence of malapportionment, and the presence of a centralized agricultural lobby explain the country's long history of implementing protectionist policies (Hayes and Kawaguchi 2015; Mulgan 2013, 2015). This paper's focus on domestic deliberations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and its subsequent Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement (CPTPP)—both of which entail significant liberalization requirements—should hence render its empirical tests more stringent (Gerring 2007; Levy 2008).

Our analysis assesses the behavior of elected officials who served in the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan.⁵ The analysis draws from a new 13-year dataset (2009-2021 inclusive) that was compiled using legislative transcripts of 7,906 speeches relating to the TPP and CPTPP. In particular, it leverages transfers of power as an identification strategy to show that governing status leads parties to curtail their advocacy for agricultural interests.

The paper's use of deliberation data complements the long-dominant method of studying legislative position-taking on trade policy through roll-call votes (Bailey and Brady 1998; Baldwin and Magee 2000; Fordham and McKeown 2003; Holian, Krebs, and Walsh 1997; Milner and Tingley 2011). The comparative advantage of deliberations is that they show how legislative environments conditioned by high party discipline may still enable legislators to represent special interests strategically. Legislative insulation is one of many instruments in the toolkit of legislators who seek to promote liberalization while facing a high probability of

⁴There is mixed empirical evidence that greater trade openness necessarily promotes economic growth. See, e.g., Rodríguez and Rodrik (2000) for a relevant meta-analysis, and Solís (2017) for discussions relating to the Japanese government's push for liberalization in order to reinvigorate the productivity of domestic industries.

⁵Studies on the legislative branch of the Japanese government commonly concentrate on the more powerful Lower House. Most bills move from the Lower House to the Upper House, and the latter's ratification patterns are generally the same as those of the former. See, e.g., Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies (1998).

electoral punishment.⁶ Legislators may also use adjustment assistance (Rickard 2012a, 2018; Rudra 2008), side-payments in the form of pork barrel projects (Naoi 2015; cf. Mayer 1992), and tax reforms (Bastiaens and Rudra 2016), among other options that are consistent with the present argument. Compared to these instruments, however, legislative insulation possesses the unique advantage of being able to impact coalition-building in parliament directly, while also allowing for an efficient pursuit or abandon of protection.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews prior scholarship on the domestic determinants of trade openness, while emphasizing the merits of deliberation data. Section 3 introduces a theory of legislative insulation and its main hypothesis. Section 4 explains the paper’s empirical approach in terms of case selection; it also provides details on the dataset and relevant variables. Section 5 reports the paper’s main results, and offers illustrative cases that capture the dynamics of insulation inside and outside the national legislature. To conclude, Section 6 discusses the paper’s main findings and their broader implications.

2 Domestic Sources of Trade Openness

For over a century, it has been accepted wisdom that trade policy yields a redistribution of income and wealth across sectors in society (Edwards 1997; Fischer 2001; Heckscher 1919). In democratic contexts, elected officials are sensitive to redistributive effects because they seek reelection (Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974), and are under electoral pressure to ensure that their constituents’ interests are protected, especially if these constituents are net losers of trade. Hence, as discussed by some studies (e.g., Naoi 2015), much of existing scholarship uses the insulation thesis to posit that the promotion of trade liberalization proceeds more smoothly through non-legislative channels—namely through the executive branch, the bureaucracy, and international institutions.

Promotion through the executive branch entails that heads of government in parliamentary or presidential systems take advantage of executive authority to fast-track the implementation of trade agreements (e.g., Bailey, Goldstein, and Weingast 1996; O’Halloran 1994; Lohmann and O’Halloran 1994). In theory, this route eliminates the drawn-out legislative process that is often seen to exacerbate cross-fire among party factions and interest groups, polarizing the electorate.

⁶Beyond trade, it is also well established that legislators devise strategies based on the incentive structures of electoral institutions in order to preempt or minimize electoral punishment. See, e.g., Catalinac (2016a, 2016b) and Motolinia (2021).

Increasing trade openness through the bureaucratic apparatus brings ministries to the forefront. Ministries may design a phase-by-phase sequence of liberalization in order to better protect domestic industries (Johnson 1982; Okazaki 2011). They may also use other policies, such as exchange-rate policy, as a means of protection (Okazaki 2011).

International institutions have also been shown to play a crucial role in trade liberalization. Issue linkage strategies allow governments to broaden what is at stake during negotiations, thereby increasing the likelihood of reaching a compromise even in the presence of powerful protection-seeking interest groups (Davis 2003, 2004, 2019). International institutions may moreover escalate the costs of nonengagement as well as abrogation, making stable participation more attractive to governments (Solís 2017).

In cases where executive, bureaucratic, or international institutional insulation is neither possible nor desirable due to competing motivations, such as the goal of signaling credibility and commitment through legislative ratification (Martin 2005), studies turn to explain variance in trade policy preferences and outcomes using the delegate model of representation (cf. Mansbridge 2003; Naoi 2015). In broad terms, these studies tend to assume that politicians representing export-oriented districts are more likely to support trade liberalization, while those representing import-competing districts are more inclined to favor protectionist policy, *ceteris paribus*. The presence of interest groups that offer campaign donations may also affect elite preferences on trade policy (Grossman and Helpman 1994; cf. Bailey and Brady 1998; Baldwin and Magee 2000; Fordham and McKeown 2003). Taken together, however, the insulation thesis sidesteps the possibility for strategic legislative maneuvers to address and reduce backlash.

2.1 Trade policy preferences of elected officials

There exists a long tradition of scholarship that measures representatives' trade policy preferences through roll-call votes (e.g., Bailey 2003; Bailey and Brady 1998; Bailey et al. 1997; Baldwin and Magee 2000; Hiscox 2002; Fordham and McKeown 2003; Milner and Tingley 2011). Studies on roll-call voting necessarily assume that elected officials' one-shot positions on bills explain their preferences across time. However, this stringent assumption of time-invariance – i.e., that a vote cast at t_1 also reflects preferences at t_2 or t_{-2} – runs counter to the standard assumption of strategic legislative behavior in position-taking (e.g., Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997).

Another limitation is that votes offer uninformative signals of elected officials' resolve toward

a particular bill or policy area, given that voting is a required procedure in most national legislatures around the world, and that those in office have to vote regardless of individual interest or true position. Some studies (e.g., Yoshinaka and Grose 2011) find that legislators engage in ideological hedging and vote inconsistently on purpose when they are uncertain about the preferences of their constituents. Although there are substantively meaningful approaches to model roll-call votes as ideological scores across policy areas (e.g., Poole and Rosenthal 1997), the binary “yea” or “nay” nature of voting outcomes does not allow researchers to identify empirical regularities in terms of which groups are represented in the policy-making process, and which groups are marginalized.

Viewed in this light, dynamic forms of representation such as deliberative speeches remain under-leveraged in the study of trade policy preferences. Their empirical advantage is that they allow researchers to relax the assumption of time-invariance. This relaxation creates space to examine, and explain, variance in the representational characteristics of elected officials as they deliberate over trade policy, and the implications these characteristics have on the democratic accountability of governments.

Table 1. Typology of policy representation

	Non-binding	Binding
Static	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Campaign websites · Election manifestos · Press releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Roll-call voting
Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Media interviews · Policy deliberation · Social media engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bill (co-)sponsorship · Petition (co-)sponsorship

Source: Author’s compilation. *Note:* Certain parliaments allow non-binding votes.

Table 1 provides a typology of policy representation along the dimensions of time variance and legality. With specific regard to Japan, roll-call votes essentially offer no intra-party variation due to high levels of party discipline required in all legally binding forms of representation (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993). Party-line voting is known to be strictly enforced, especially where cabinet-sponsored bills are concerned (ibid., 94-95). These bills constitute the majority of bills passed in the national legislature of Japan (Shimizu 2011, 9). If legislators fall short of demonstrating party loyalty, they face the risk of punishment. For instance, they may not receive a strong endorsement from the party for their candidacy, or be considered for promotion

to cabinet positions (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993, 95). Given these circumstances, it would be misguided to assume that the lack of (or limited) variation in roll-call votes necessarily reflects high levels of intra-party cohesion on trade policy.

2.2 How legislative deliberations contribute

There has been growing use of legislative deliberations to understand foreign economic policy-making, namely with regard to international trade.⁷ This paper joins prior studies in contending that deliberations offer crucial insight into the trade policy-making process. As trade has distributional consequences, insofar as it creates winners and losers in society (Edwards 1997; Fischer 2001; Heckscher 1919), dynamic forms of representation better capture the finer tensions that legislators have to navigate. Moreover, scholars of Japan's trade policy face the inability of using roll-call voting data to impute individual executives' or legislators' preferences due to party-line voting (e.g., Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993, 94-95).

In methodological terms, deliberations promise to provide greater intra-party variation, as well as within- and between-legislator differences in behavioral outcomes across time. When compared to campaign platforms and election manifestos (e.g., Adams et al. 2016; Catalinac 2016a, 2016b, 2018; Lo et al. 2016), deliberations may serve as an equally informative – but also more frequently observable – indicator of legislators' preferences. In Japan and in many other mature democracies, the transcripts of legislative deliberations are publicly available; certain parliamentary sessions may even be televised. Hence, elites should be readily held accountable for their claims, and we may expect them to refrain from delivering non-credible pledges.

⁷The most-similar study in the literature is by Fujisue (2011); he analyzes two years' worth of legislative transcripts relating to FTAs, but his study does not put forward a particular theoretical framework. In Naoi's (2015) book, there are analyses of testimonies by protectionist groups in the National Diet and detailed references to parliamentary debates, though the book does not track different topics that emerge in these debates quantitatively. Among studies on international security, some use these transcripts to explore threat perception and alliance risk (e.g., Katagiri, n.d.; Oren 2020). In comparative politics research, some studies (e.g., Goplerud and Smith 2021) have used deliberations to examine the effects of electoral reform on legislative behavior, while others (e.g., Kage 2017; Matsumoto and Matsuo 2011) focus on the political dynamics in legislative committees. Beyond the Japanese context, some studies (e.g., Kim and Pelc 2021) have used data on floor speeches to measure elites' trade policy preferences.

3 Theory of Legislative Insulation

This section develops a theory of legislative insulation to address how elected officials may promote the liberalization of sensitive sectors through the legislative branch. Our theory counters the premise of the original insulation thesis, which posits that liberalizing sensitive sectors will lead to attempts by interest groups to thwart its implementation, and that it is thus most feasible—if not only possible—through non-legislative channels. In foreclosing consideration of the legislative branch’s ability to insulate backlash, the original thesis assumes perfect legislative delegation, i.e., legislators representing import-competing districts will relay protectionist demands, while legislators of export-oriented districts will convey pro-trade demands (cf. Naoi 2015).⁸ The thesis thus sidesteps heterogeneity in district-level characteristics (Bailey and Brady 1998), and omits the possibility of strategic legislative maneuvers due to conflict among party agendas, constituent interests, and legislators’ own career ambitions.

Our theory’s foundational assumption is that of strategic legislative behavior, which builds on the dynamic model of strategic positioning, the globalization as legislation model, and the legislative testimony model. The first model has shown that, in order to mediate between party agendas and constituent interests, legislators may alter the timing of when they announce their position on a trade agreement based on the strength and congruence of signals they receive from constituents (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997). If legislators’ own position is aligned with that of their constituents, they will announce earlier relative to when the roll-call vote is held; if positions are misaligned or ambiguous, they will announce closer to the vote or potentially not at all.

Along a complementary vein, the globalization as legislation model advances that party leadership may offer side-payments in the form of pork barrel projects to “buy off” party members who face high political costs in supporting pro-trade legislation (Naoi 2015; cf. Mayer 1992). Side-payments help to resolve the collective action problem, while building and maintaining pro-trade coalitions in parliament regardless of the industrial orientation of legislators’ districts.

Similarly, the legislative testimony model posits that legislators may invite pro-trade individuals and interest groups to testify favorably on the effects of trade liberalization. Such activities serve to bolster the chances of passing additional agreements, again regardless of district-level industrial orientation (Lee and Osgood 2019). In practice, there is a strong rationale

⁸Naoi (2015) challenges the assumption of perfect delegation, arguing that party leaders may buy off individual legislators through side-payments.

for legislators to encourage insulation, since circumvention through the executive branch or bureaucracy is not always possible. States may be motivated to tie their legislative hands in order to signal credibility and commitment to a trade agreement, or they may be obliged to do so due to the agreement's provisions (Martin 2005; Naoi 2015).

We turn to bridge these insights with classic theories of economic voting. We adopt their key expectation that legislators prioritize the promotion of economic growth and efficiency, because they inherently seek reelection and need to demonstrate responsiveness to voters who evaluate them on the basis of economic conditions (Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974). However, legislators do not face the same incentives in government as they do in opposition. The governing party is evaluated on national economic performance, while opposition parties are not (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001; Powell and Whitten 1993). Governing parties should thus be incentivized to bolster national economic performance, whereas opposition parties should be less motivated to do so.

As a corollary, the main observable implication in the context of trade policy is that, based on their governing status, parties should strategically practice insulation against demands lodged by protectionist groups (see Figure 1). This practice is key to building pro-trade coalitions at both intra- and inter-party levels, and facilitate the ratification of related agreements.⁹

Governing parties are *less likely* to advocate for protectionist interests during trade deliberations, relative to opposition parties, *ceteris paribus*.

⁹These goals are highlighted in Naoi's (2015) theoretical framework, but she is more critical of the classic insulation thesis.

4 Empirical Approach

4.1 Case selection

To test our main hypothesis, this paper examines the case of Japan. As discussed, Japan is a relative latecomer to free trade despite its status as one of the world’s largest economies (Davis 2019; Grimes 2020; Katada 2020; Solís and Katada 2015; Yoshimatsu 2006). The Japanese government only began to negotiate bilateral economic partnership agreements with smaller economies like Singapore and Mexico in the late 1990s and early 2000s, entailing sector-specific liberalization (Auslin 2012; Davis 2003, 2019; Katada 2020; Solís 2017; Solís and Katada 2007, 2015). Prior research understands Japan’s gradualist approach to be the outcome of (i) electoral institutions that favored narrow interests like agriculture, (ii) persistent malapportionment, and (iii) the presence of a centralized agricultural lobby group (Hayes and Kawaguchi 2015; Mulgan 2013, 2015). We take advantage of these conditions to leverage Japan as an unlikely case and difficult test of theory (Gerring 2007; Levy 2008). In so doing, we assess whether the claims put forward by these prior studies are consistent with our evidence.

Moreover, the paper’s focus on the TPP and CPTPP renders its empirical tests more stringent. The agreements comprise high tariff-reducing requirements, and the negotiating administration under Prime Minister Abe had to commit to the highest liberalization requirements in Japan’s history, where 82% of its agricultural products were subject to tariff reduction (MAFF 2020; Naoi and Urata 2013; Kobayashi 2012; Solís and Katada 2015). In addition, the TPP was incredibly unpopular and spurred the largest series of trade-related protests in Japan’s modern history, even when compared to mobilization against the Uruguay Round negotiations.¹⁰ In light of these reasons, it should be all the more unlikely for governing parties to practice legislative insulation in relation to the (CP)TPP.

Figure 2 shows that the most severe waves of protest movements occurred in late 2010 and 2011, when the Democratic Party of Japan was the governing party. After the LDP returned to power in December 2012, and after the Abe administration formally announced in March 2013 that Japan would participate in TPP negotiations, protests became less frequent and turnout gradually decreased. In terms of geographical dispersion, Figure 3 shows that many of these protests were held in agriculturally dominant areas, but they also targeted the capital.

¹⁰Based on data collected from various newspapers, the cumulative protest turnout was 150,080 for the Uruguay Round negotiations, and 184,140 for the TPP. See Appendix A-2 for further comparisons with other trade agreements and institutions.

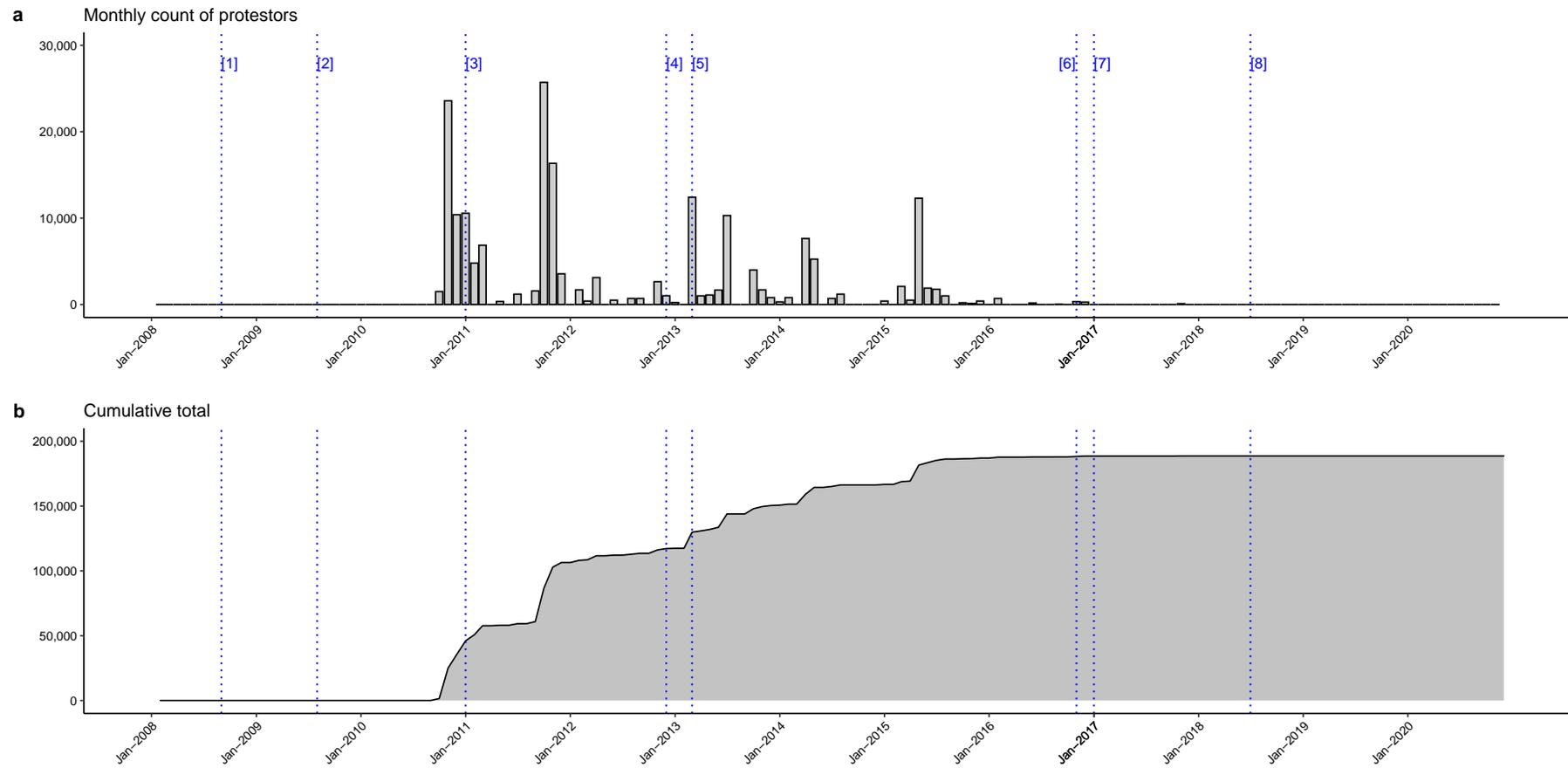


Figure 2. Anti-TPP protests in Japan, 2010-2017.

Source: Author's dataset based on news reports by Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, Reuters, and Yomiuri Shimbun; and press releases by Japan Agricultural Cooperatives. *Notes:* [1] TPP negotiations are announced to take place between the United States and the Pacific-4. [2] The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) suffers a historic loss in the August 2009 general election. [3] The governing administration under Prime Minister Kan announces its interest in participating in TPP negotiations. [4] The LDP wins the December 2012 general election. [5] Prime Minister Abe announces in March 2013 that Japan will join TPP negotiations. [6] Japan ratifies the TPP agreement. [7] President Donald Trump signs an executive order to withdraw the U.S. from the TPP agreement. [8] Japan ratifies the CPTPP.

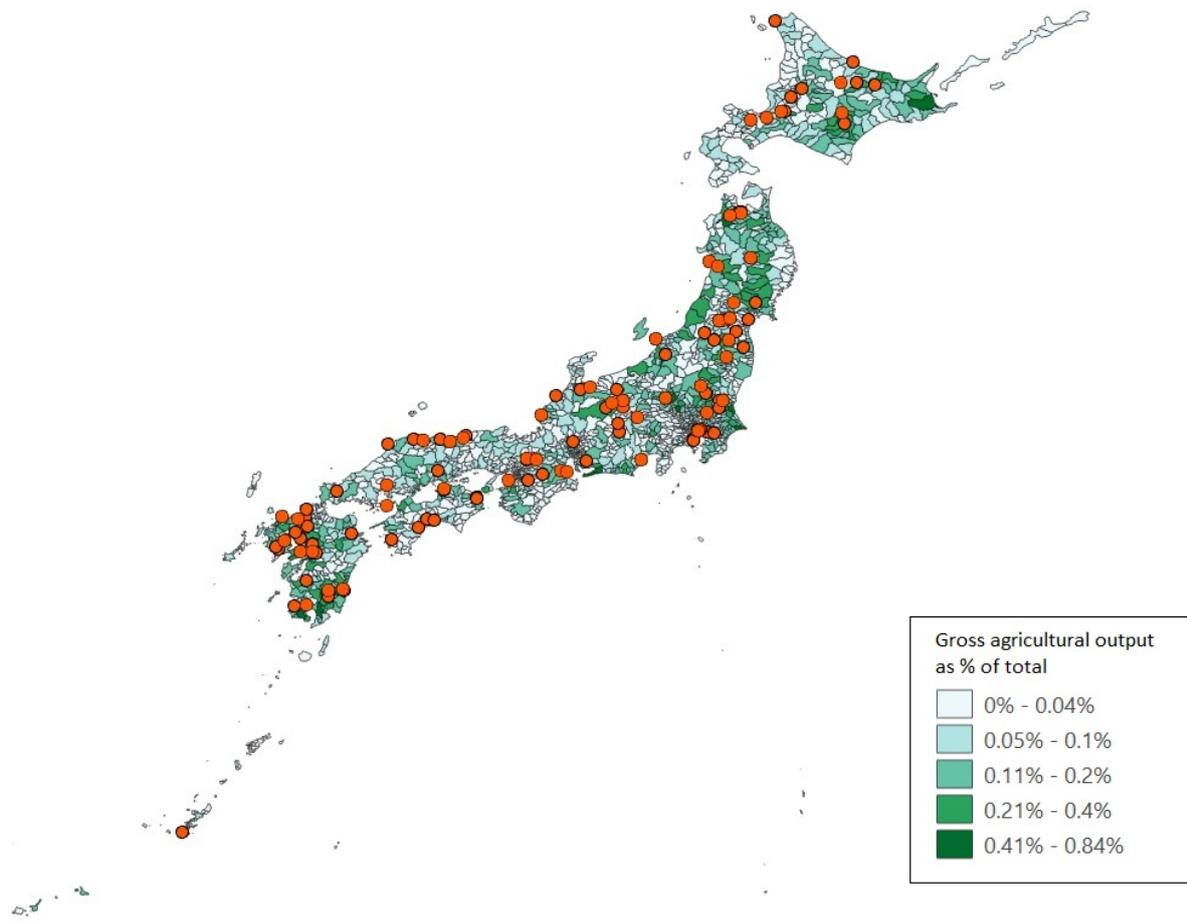


Figure 3. Geographical dispersion of anti-TPP protests in Japan, 2010-2017.

Sources: Author's dataset based on news reports by Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, Reuters, and Yomiuri Shimbun; press releases by Japan Agricultural Cooperatives; and municipal statistics on gross agricultural output released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. *Notes:* (1) The map is compiled using ArcGIS Pro. (2) Protests are represented by the red dots, and they have been geolocated by the author using ArcGIS Pro.

4.2 Dataset

A 13-year dataset was constructed to examine deliberations on the TPP and CPTPP in the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan. The dataset draws from transcripts of legislative sessions and meetings archived by the National Diet Library.¹¹ It spans the period from September 16, 2009 (i.e., the start of the 172nd Diet) to December 21, 2021 (the end of the 207th Diet), covering 7,904 speeches on the TPP and CPTPP altogether. This timeline covers the core period of TPP and CPTPP deliberations (2009-2018) and the period after the legislative ratification of the CPTPP (2018-2021).

The unit of analysis is party-session. The dataset aggregates speeches from the legislator level to the party level, and matches them with key characteristics of the 10 main parties that were involved in deliberations on the agreements (see Table 2). The primary empirical challenge we face is the inability to construct a balanced panel for the period under study. While the LDP, Komeito, the Japan Communist Party, and the Social Democratic Party were electorally active and retained seats in the House of Representatives throughout the period under study, the remaining six emerged after the start of the period and/or became de facto defunct before the end of the period.

Table 2. Parties included in the dataset

Party name	Speech data
1. Constitutional Democratic Party (<i>Rikken Minshutō</i>)	2017.11 - 2021.12
2. Democratic Party (<i>Minshintō</i>)	2016.03 - 2017.09
3. Democratic Party for the People (<i>Kokumin Minshutō</i>)	2018.05 - 2021.12
4. Democratic Party of Japan (<i>Minshutō</i>)	2009.09 - 2015.09
5. Japan Communist Party (<i>Nihon Kyōsantō</i>)	2009.09 - 2021.12 *
6. Japan Innovation Party (<i>Ishin</i>)	2014.11 - 2021.12
7. Komeito	2009.09 - 2021.12 *
8. Liberal Democratic Party (<i>Jiyū Minshutō</i>)	2009.09 - 2021.12 *
9. Party of Hope (<i>Kibō No Tō</i>)	2017.11 - 2020.05
10. Social Democratic Party (<i>Shakai Minshutō</i>)	2009.09 - 2021.12 *

Note: *Data are available throughout the period under study.

¹¹See National Diet Library, *Kokkai Kaigiroku*, available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>.

4.2.1 Dependent variable

Advocacy for agricultural interests is measured at the party-session level. It refers to the number of speeches in which legislators from a particular party advocate for agricultural interests, as a percentage of all of their speeches relating to the (CP)TPP, during a Diet session. Occurrences of “agriculture” (*nōgyō*) in legislative transcripts were first tracked and then classified into true and false positives. True positives are instances where TPP and agriculture are logically connected and involve clear attempts by legislators to advance agricultural interests. False positives are cases where the two topics co-occur in a legislator’s speech but are logically unrelated.

Counting the number of speeches is a sharper measure than counting committee meetings or plenary sessions since legislators could intervene multiple times in a meeting without necessarily invoking agricultural interests every time.

4.2.2 Independent variable

Governing status is measured in two standard ways. The first measure captures the seat share of a party during a given Diet session. The values are repeated from the session immediately after an election to the final session before the following election. Based on our dataset, the range of values extends from 0.42% (i.e., the Social Democratic Party from the 182nd to 194th Diet sessions) to 64.17% (i.e., the Democratic Party of Japan from the 172nd to 181st Diet sessions).

The second measure is a binary variable coded “1” when a party is either the governing party or in the governing coalition; and coded “0” when it is in opposition. Using the LDP as an illustration, the period of December 2012 - December 2021 is coded “1,” while the remaining periods are coded “0.”¹²

We should note that these two measures are highly correlated ($r = .785$, $p < .001$). The outliers relate to Komeito: while it is coded “1” from December 2012 to December 2021, its seat share remained low and fluctuated between 6.24% and 7.37%. In our regression analysis, the continuous and binary measures of governing status are included in separate models due to multicollinearity considerations.

¹²The Democratic Party of Japan was the ruling party from September 2009 to December 2012, while the LDP and Komeito formed the ruling coalition from December 2012 to December 2021, the end of our dataset. The remaining parties remained in opposition throughout this period. Many parties—such as the Democratic Party of Japan—ceased electoral activities during the period under study. Due to the coding method, these developments (de facto dissolutions) are not problematic.

4.2.3 Control variables

To increase confidence in the statistical robustness of our results, the following control variables are incorporated into our main specifications:

Election proximity. This continuous variable captures the number of days until the next election. The signs have been flipped: the higher the value, the closer the next election.

Terms in office (mean). This continuous variable captures the average number of terms served by legislators in a given party. It is calculated using data from the University of Tokyo-Asahi Shimbun (UTAS) surveys conducted in 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2021.¹³

Agriculture as top-3 issue. This continuous variable tracks the percentage of legislators from a party who consider agriculture as a top-3 issue. It is also calculated using UTAS data by drawing from legislators' responses to the question of which three policies they prioritize the most.¹⁴ We should be cognizant, however, that legislators' responses to the survey prompt at the pre-election stage may not necessarily reflect their position after the election. This is especially likely for legislators in government who are given cabinet positions that require them to focus on other issue areas.

Annual change in employment in the agricultural sector. This continuous variable captures the annual percentage change in employment in the agricultural sector. Data are collected from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' *Labor Force Surveys*.¹⁵

U.S. presence in negotiations. This binary variable captures whether the U.S. was present during TPP negotiations during a given Diet session. The period from September 2009 to January 2017 is coded "1," while the remaining period is coded "0."

Legislative ratification. This binary variable captures the two Diet sessions during which the TPP and CPTPP were respectively ratified in the House of Representatives. Hence, the 192nd and 196th Diet sessions are coded "1," while the others are coded "0."

Duration of Diet session. This continuous variable captures the duration of each Diet session during the period under study, expressed in days.

¹³Data are collected from: <http://www.masaki.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/utas/utasp.html>.

¹⁴The original question is worded as follows: "Konkai no senkyo ni saishite, anata ga mottomo jūshisuru seisaku wa dore deshō ka."

¹⁵Available at: <https://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/longtime/03roudou.html>.

5 Results

5.1 Legislative insulation during TPP and CPTPP deliberations

Table 3 presents the main statistical tests for our hypothesis. Random-effects regression is used to examine an unbalanced panel of 10 political parties in Japan.¹⁶ Our hypothesis is examined in Models 1-4. Models 1 and 2 consider the 2009-2018 period, while Models 3 and 4 cover the 2009-2021 period, addressing whether the effects hold if we include Diet sessions after the ratification of the CPTPP in July 2018.

In line with the hypothesis, governing status has a consistently negative and robust effect on advocacy for agricultural interests. Based on the behavior of parties during the 2009-2018 period, Model 1 reports that every percentage point increase in seat share is associated with a 0.3-point decrease in advocacy for agricultural interests in TPP and CPTPP negotiations ($p < .001$). As Model 2 further shows, the switch from being in opposition to being in government is associated with a 9.6-point decrease in advocacy for agricultural interests ($p < .05$).

Next, we consider the effects of governing status when including the period after the CPTPP was ratified. As evidenced by Models 3 and 4, the effects remain robust even though the coefficients are marginally smaller. These results may present some surprise because the relaxing of protectionist demands should become less costly to governing parties after ratification from an electoral standpoint, leading to the possibility to greater discussion of agricultural interests. Nonetheless, the robust results suggest that the practice of insulation may not only relate to parties' desire to promote the ratification of major trade agreements like the (CP)TPP, but also reduce the likelihood of domestic renegotiations.

Multilateral trade agreements—and especially those like the (CP)TPP that face the prospects of further enlargement—present opportunities for incoming and existing members to renegotiate their terms. While rather routine in the modern history of international trade (Crowley, Exton, and Han 2018; Hoda 2018 [2001]), renegotiations introduce political and economic uncertainty that could be undesirable to governing parties.

In sum, results from all four models converge with the expectation that governing status affects parties' advocacy for agricultural interests. As discussed in earlier sections, voters judge parties in government on their ability to promote economic growth and efficiency (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001; Powell and Whitten 1993). This likely

¹⁶Hausman tests fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that random-effects regression is more appropriate than fixed-effects regression in light of the specification.

motivates parties in government to want to facilitate building pro-trade coalitions (Naoi 2015). To achieve this goal, they diminish advocacy for agricultural interests. On the other hand, being in opposition rids parties of the burden of having to center growth priorities. This allows them to put protection-seeking constituents' interests at the heart of their speeches. Taken together, results reported in Table 3 lend support to the view that legislative insulation is a function of careful electoral calculations and that its implementation is strategic.

Several control variables are consistently significant predictors and deserve further discussion. For instance, election proximity is negatively correlated with advocacy for agricultural interests. All else equal, this indicates that as an election approaches, parties become less likely to advocate on behalf of agricultural interests in trade-related deliberations. These results may be surprising in light of the fact that agricultural groups constitute a core constituency of the LDP, and are also important to some smaller parties like the Japan Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. But the results may be interpreted to mean that the LDP and other parties are more likely to prioritize other issues as they deliberate on trade agreements in the run-up to an election.

Another control that has exercised a consistently significant effect on the outcome variable is U.S. presence in TPP negotiations. This is a binary variable that captures U.S. involvement in negotiations until January 2017, after which the Trump administration decided to withdraw through executive order. The coefficients are positive across the board, which suggest that pressure exerted by the Obama administration on Japan to participate in and ratify the TPP is associated with more frequent legislative advocacy for agricultural interests, all else equal.

Table 3. The effects of governing status on advocacy for agricultural interests during (CP)TPP deliberations

	Advocacy for agricultural interests (%)			
	2009.09 - 2018.07		2009.09 - 2021.12	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Seat share	-0.318*** (0.094)		-0.249* (0.111)	
Governing party or coalition		-9.565* (4.622)		-8.870* (4.053)
Election proximity	-0.017* (0.007)	-0.016* (0.007)	-0.020*** (0.006)	-0.018** (0.006)
Terms in office (mean)	-1.032 (1.903)	-0.649 (1.975)	0.031 (2.078)	1.172 (1.796)
Agriculture as top-3 issue	0.418* (0.202)	0.298 (0.205)	0.618** (0.215)	0.283 (0.191)
Annual change in agri. employment	1.823 (2.024)	1.639 (2.116)	-0.443 (1.265)	-0.540 (1.328)
U.S. presence in negotiations	17.953* (7.203)	17.044* (7.512)	12.668** (4.640)	13.806** (4.733)
Legislative ratification	-12.519 (7.678)	-11.757 (8.001)	-8.818 (6.547)	-8.463 (6.855)
Duration of Diet session	-0.114*** (0.029)	-0.109*** (0.030)	-0.086*** (0.024)	-0.083** (0.026)
Parties	10	10	10	10
Observations	94	94	125	125
R ²	0.346	0.293	0.294	0.257
Adjusted R ²	0.285	0.227	0.245	0.206

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Models are estimated with random-effects regression using the `p1m` package.

5.2 Illustrative cases

While results presented in the previous section lend support to our theoretical expectations, it remains crucial to understand how legislators were able to practice insulation without necessarily suffering electoral punishment. To this end, we examine the cases of two senior LDP politicians to reveal how they managed to navigate the process of practicing insulation. In theory, senior politicians—especially from the LDP—should be unlikely to suffer the consequences of insulation, especially relative to junior non-LDP legislators. Nonetheless, these illustrative cases show that senior LDP legislators devote much energy to maintaining responsiveness to their constituents *outside* the Diet while practicing insulation *inside* the Diet.

These cases show, in sum, that governing legislators adopt a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, they reduce their advocacy for protectionist interests in the national legislature. On the other, they maintain responsiveness to these interests outside the national legislature, and continue to attend rallies and other relevant events to support local groups.

5.2.1 Case #1: Shigeru Ishiba

The first illustrative case relates to Shigeru Ishiba, a senior LDP politician who has run for party leadership a number of times, and who served as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under the Asō administration (September 2008 to August 2009). Ishiba has represented Tottori prefecture’s first electoral district since the mid-1990s. Tottori is among the more rural and sparsely populated in Japan; and the district that Ishiba represents has been an LDP stronghold since the 1994 electoral reform.

During the years when the LDP was in opposition (September 2009 to December 2012), Ishiba attended anti-TPP protests in his district and in other prefectures such as Fukui. At one such protest in December 2010, Ishiba emphasized that “Japan should not participate in the TPP if it could not even have a proper debate about the rules for protecting the cultivation of rice” (author’s translation).¹⁷ In the National Diet, he also lodged similar complaints, and criticized the DPJ for being “extremely irresponsible” (*kiwamete musekinin na shisei*) in favoring participation in TPP negotiations despite having claimed that the party would “protect agriculture, farmers, and farming households,” and despite farmers’ growing anxiety about the

¹⁷Yomiuri Shimbun, “TPP gen dankai fusanka o’ Fukui no shūkai de Yamada zen nōshō-ra = Fukui,” 5 December 2010. The original quote was, “Ishiba seichō kaichō wa ‘Nihon no inasaku wo mamoru rūruzukuri no giron ga dekinai nara, ima no jōkyō de no sanku wa arienai’ to kyōchōshita.”

negative effects of the agreement.¹⁸ To synthesize, when the LDP was in opposition, Ishiba did not attempt to shield protectionist demands from reaching the National Diet. Instead, he directly relayed damning concerns about the TPP from his district or other agriculturally dominant prefectures.

By contrast, when the LDP regained governing-party status after the election of December 2012, the insulation effect gradually emerged. In parliament, Ishiba's deliberations on agriculture shifted from relaying concerns about the TPP's negative effects to a focus on agricultural revitalization (*nōgyō saisei*). For Ishiba and many other LDP legislators, the shift in framing occurred in the spring of 2013, after Prime Minister Abe formally announced that Japan would join the TPP negotiations.¹⁹ Another common frame adopted by “newly” pro-TPP legislators in government was to highlight the win-win scenario for producers and consumers, where the government would protect sacred products but also bring down the overall costs of agricultural products to benefit consumers.²⁰

In terms of district-level engagement, Ishiba continued to give speeches at campaign rallies and TPP-specific assemblies. He reiterated the message of protection, such as the motto that “we will protect what we need to protect in TPP negotiations,”²¹ and that “we will guarantee the survival of agricultural products, rural areas cannot survive without adequate income.”²² Ishiba even held national political briefing sessions (*kokusei hōkokukai*) in other agriculturally dominant parts of Japan, such as Akita prefecture.²³ Such briefings informed the general public about what was being discussed about the TPP in parliament, in order to quell concerns that the negotiation process was insufficiently transparent.

¹⁸House of Representatives, “Legislative Transcript of the Plenary Session on 16 November 2010.” Available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=117605254X00920101116&spkNum=5¤t=9>.

¹⁹House of Representatives, “Legislative Transcript of the Plenary Session on 24 June 2013.” Available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=118305254X03520130624&spkNum=37¤t=4>.

²⁰House of Representatives, “Legislative Transcript of the Plenary Session on 28 January 2014.” Available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=118605254X00220140128&spkNum=11¤t=2>.

²¹The original quote was: “TPP kōshō de mamoru mono wa mamoru.” Yomiuri Shimbun, “Akita de Jimin Ishiba kanjichō enzetsu = Akita,” 19 May 2013.

²²The original quote was: “Nōsanpin no saiseisan ga kakuhosare, shotoku ga nakereba chihō wa ikinokorenai.” Asahi Shimbun, “Save agricultural products – JA emergency rally on the TPP” [‘Nōsanpin mamore’ JA kinkyūshukai TPP], 21 February 2014.

²³Ibid.

Case #2: Tomomi Inada

The second illustrative case relates to Tomomi Inada, another senior LDP politician who has expressed interest in running for party leadership, and who served as Minister of Defense under the Abe administration (August 2016 – July 2017), among other key positions. She has represented the first district of Fukui prefecture since 2005, and has been reelected five times as of November 2021.

The case of Inada presents us with a striking illustration of how far legislators may go to amplify their advocacy for agricultural interests when their party is in opposition. In October 2010, Inada crafted a highly impassioned speech to advocate for agricultural interests. In this speech, she equated Japan's agricultural sector with the entirety of Japan:

“Mr. Prime Minister, while you seek to promote EPAs and FTAs, and while you consider participating in TPP negotiations, you have not mentioned agriculture at all. In the DPJ's manifesto for the House of Representatives election last year, it was stated that your party would conclude a free trade agreement with the United States. When farmers rebelled, your party amended the manifesto. In short, it shows that the DPJ will sacrifice agriculture in order to achieve trade liberalization. However, agriculture is not merely an industry. It plays an extremely vital role in protecting regions, protecting culture, and protecting tradition. Rice is the staple food of the Japanese people, rice cultivation is part of Japanese culture, and paddy fields are a symbol of Japanese beauty. Protecting agriculture is, in other words, protecting Japan.”²⁴ (Author's translation)

Outside the National Diet, Inada participated in many events that expressed opposition to the TPP. For instance, in the run-up to the December 2012 election, she campaigned on an agriculture-centric platform in her district, and received the endorsement of a local JA chapter by reiterating her opposition to the TPP.²⁵

Crucially, after the LDP regained power in December 2012, Inada no longer displayed comparable efforts to advocate for agricultural interests in the National Diet. Among the more effective examples was a statement she made in March 2013, a week after the Abe administration announced that it would participate in TPP negotiations:

²⁴House of Representatives, “Legislative Transcript of the Plenary Session on 6 October 2010.” Available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=117605254X00220101006&spkNum=9¤t=23>.

²⁵Yomiuri Shimbun, “2012 Shūin-sen kōji 3 senkyo-ku ni saita 13-ri genpatsu seisaku 3-ku 4-shi gekitotsu = Fukui,” 5 December 2012.

“I don’t think that TPP negotiations are only about agriculture, because there are 21 product areas altogether.”²⁶ (Author’s translation)

Outside the National Diet, Inada maintained her agriculture-centric platform. For instance, in the run-up to the 2014 election, she continued to campaign in her district with the slogans of “Tradition and Creativity” and “Protect Fukui’s Agriculture.”²⁷ Moreover, in response to survey questions on the TPP, she was the only one among all of Fukui candidates to have chosen the option of “cannot say either way.”²⁸

The cases of Ishiba and Inada illuminate the dynamics of legislators’ dual strategy when their party is in government. On the one hand, they strategically adjust their representation of protectionist interests in order to promote the ratification of a major trade agreement in parliament. On the other, they reduce the electoral costs by maintaining district-level engagement and repeating campaign slogans about protection.²⁹

While these two illustrative cases do not provide an exhaustive account of all the forms of district-level activities that legislators organized with regard to the TPP, they are supportive of the claim that legislators develop various sophisticated and strategic ways to preempt or reduce punishment by protectionist groups for supporting a major trade agreement. Taken together, the practice of legislative insulation does not mean lack of responsiveness to district-level concerns when elected officials interact with their constituents. Rather, as we have explored, it often involves a sophisticated game of two fronts.

²⁶The original quote was: “TPP kōshō ga nōgyō dake no mondai janai toiu no wa, nijū-ichi bunya desu kara sono tōri da to omoimasu.” House of Councilors, “Legislative Transcript of the Meeting for the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry on 21 March 2013.” Available at: <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=118314080X00220130321&spkNum=100¤t=13>.

²⁷Yomiuri Shimbun, “2014 Shūin-sen kōji shin 1-ku 3-shi ga gekitotsu nōgyō ya ene seisaku de zessen = Fukui,” 3 December 2014.

²⁸Yomiuri Shimbun, “Shūin-sen rikkōhōsha ankēto kaitō = Fukui,” 6 December 2014.

²⁹Some legislators mainly engaged their own districts, while others such as Ishiba visited their own and other prefectures to convey the message of sustained protection of the agricultural sector. Canonical studies (e.g., Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974) explain such variance by focusing on the type of ambition that legislators have. Those who seek cabinet positions tend to be responsive to the entire country as an integral constituency, while those who do not seek such positions prioritize their own district.

6 Conclusion

With the resurgence of backlash against liberal economic institutions, it is of import to sharpen understanding of how backlash may be mitigated (Milner 2021). This paper has argued and shown that elected officials may attenuate the effects of backlash by strategically calibrating their advocacy on behalf of protectionist demands. Insulation against agricultural interests allows legislators in government to build pro-trade coalitions that will in turn support legislation for economic growth through increasing trade openness. Even when trade agreements entail stringent liberalization requirements and potentially high electoral costs, ratification is rendered possible in a country long known for its protectionist policies.

Countering the conventional view that insulation is only feasible through the executive branch, the bureaucracy, or international institutions, this paper has shown that legislatures may also play a crucial role. Legislative insulation is an instrument that complements other policy tools to solve the collective action problem that legislators face in promoting liberalization, due to the heterogeneity in district-level characteristics. In their toolkit, legislators may choose to disburse subsidies or other forms of adjustment assistance to districts that are most adversely affected (Rickard 2012a, 2018; Rudra 2008). Party leadership may offer side-payments, such as pork-barrel projects, to co-partisan legislators who face the greatest political costs in an upcoming election (Naoi 2015). Governments may implement tax reforms through international financial institutions to recover losses in tax revenue (Bastiaens and Rudra 2016). These alternative tools are consistent with this paper's argument.

However, the strategic dimension to legislative insulation sheds new light on prior scholarship. Our results suggest that legislators' genuine loyalties to interest groups may be more conditional on governing status than previously thought (cf. Mulgan 2013, 2015). If the party that builds pro-trade coalitions loses its majority status, our findings suggest that it may be inclined to (re)align with protectionist groups and oppose trade agreements that involve liberalizing sensitive sectors.

This paper also has normative implications for the study of trade liberalization. Few works on compensatory or buyoff mechanisms discuss the social challenges facing the losers of trade. Over the past decade, in countries such as Japan, the United States, and India, the share of suicides committed by agricultural workers has increased (CDC 2020; Meek and Khadse 2022; National Police Agency 2021). In Japan, this occupational group contributes to the largest share

of suicides among the self-employed (National Police Agency 2021). Based on the findings of this paper, it appears more likely that opposition parties will be the ones to raise awareness about such challenges in the policy-making process, but it is also vital for governments to develop better policy measures that help the workers of sectors most harmed by liberalization (Solís 2017).

Some avenues for further investigation arise from this research. While the paper has examined how governing parties strategically address a sector that, across many democracies, has had a long history in lodging protectionist demands, there is growing evidence that coalitions of losers have broadened to encompass non-import-competing sectors (Naoi and Kume 2011). It is thus crucial to better understand the factors that motivate insulation against (or amplification of) demands depending on the nature of the backlash-initiating group.

In addition, this paper provides a single-country analysis of the functioning of legislative insulation, but it is important for future work to test the generalizability of findings across democracies with different constitutional structures (cf. Cheibub et al. 2002). As theorized and shown in recent research (Kim, Naoi, and Sasaki 2022), constitutional structures affect the credibility and enforceability of compensation promises that governments deliver to voters who are harmed by liberalization. It is vital to better understand how legislative advocacy complements different forms of compensation, and especially whether the latter may serve as substitutes for the former.

What single-country studies lose in breadth may arguably be gained in depth (Pepinsky 2019). This paper has situated Japan as a difficult test of theory and assessed the dynamics of domestic deliberations over one of the most significant trade agreements ratified to date. Despite waves of protectionist backlash, the paper shows how incentives for reelection and majority control motivate elected officials to promote free trade and identify new ways to fight backlash.

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Democracy, Free Trade, and Backlash Mitigation

Supplementary Appendices

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Appendix A-1

Timeline of key events relating to the TPP and CPTPP, 2008-2022

Date	Development
2008/9/22	TPP negotiations are announced between the Pacific-4 and the United States.
2008/11	Australia, Vietnam, and Peru indicate their interest in joining the TPP negotiations.
2009/8/30	The Liberal Democratic Party suffers a historic loss in the general election. The Democratic Party of Japan takes office.
2010/10	Malaysia indicates its interest in joining the TPP negotiations.
2010/11	Anti-TPP protests and assemblies begin to emerge across Japan, especially in agriculturally dominant prefectures such as Hokkaido.
2011/1/1	Prime Minister Naoto Kan's New Year speech in the National Diet conveys support for Japan's participation in the TPP negotiations.
2012/12/16	The LDP wins a landslide victory against the DPJ.
2012/12/26	Abe is sworn in as Prime Minister of Japan for the second time since his first 2006-2007 term.
2013/3/15	The Abe administration formally announces its intention to join the TPP negotiations.
2013/4/20	The 11 other participating countries recognize Japan's intention to join the TPP negotiations.
2013/7/23	Japan formally joins the TPP negotiations.
2016/2/4	The TPP agreement is signed among 12 member-countries. Only Japan and New Zealand end up ratifying TPP-12.
2016/6-10	Both U.S. presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, voice reticence toward the TPP during their campaign.
2016/11/8	Donald Trump is elected president of the United States.
2016/11/10	Japan's House of Representatives ratifies the TPP bill. The supporting parties are the LDP and Komeito.

Date	Development
2016/11/21	Prime Minister Abe delivers a speech in Buenos Aires, where he says that “the TPP would be meaningless without the United States” (“Beikoku nuki dewa imi ga nai”).
2016/12/9	Japan’s Upper House ratifies the TPP bill, and the parliament completes ratification procedures.
2017/1/23	Trump signs an executive order to withdraw the U.S. from the TPP.
2017/5/11	New Zealand’s parliament ratifies the TPP.
2018/1/23	The 11 members of the CPTPP conclude negotiations.
2018/3/8	The CPTPP is signed by its 11 members in Santiago, Chile.
2018/4/18	At a joint press conference with Prime Minister Abe in Mar-a-Lago, Florida, President Trump indicates that the U.S. may rejoin the TPP if “they offer us a deal that we cannot refuse,” but clarifies that his preference is to sign a bilateral trade deal with Japan.
2018/6/15	Colombia formally requests to join the CPTPP.
2018/6/28	Mexico’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP, the first member-country to do so.
2018/7/6	Japan’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP.
2018/7/19	Singapore’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP.
2018/10/7	Shinzo Abe conveys to Theresa May that the U.K. is welcome to join the CPTPP after Brexit.
2018/10/17	Australia’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP.
2018/10/24	New Zealand’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP.
2018/10/29	Canada’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP.
2018/11/12	Vietnam’s parliament ratifies the CPTPP, the 7th member-country to do so.
2018/12/30	The CPTPP enters into force, covering 13.5% of global GDP and around 500 million consumers.
2020/2/17	Thailand announces that it will decide whether to join the CPTPP by April 2020.

Date	Development
2020/6/11	Thailand's Ministry of Commerce sets up a committee to consider membership in the CPTPP.
2020/8/7	Yasutoshi Nishimura, Japan's Minister for Economic Revitalization, expresses support for Thailand and the UK to join the CPTPP. Thailand delays its decision due to domestic political turmoil.
2020/8/26	Thai sources indicate that the government is unlikely to join the CPTPP in the foreseeable future.
2020/9/9	The UK holds online talks with the 11 CPTPP members about joining the agreement. British international trade secretary, Liz Truss, states that the agreement would "put [the UK] in a stronger position to reshape global trading rules alongside countries who share [its] values."
2020/11/7	Joe Biden is formally declared president-elect of the United States. He did not provide specific policy guidance on the CPTPP during his campaign.
2020/11/20	President Xi expresses interest in joining the CPTPP.
2021/1/3	Prime Minister Suga notes that it would be difficult for China to join the CPTPP under the country's current regime.
2021/6/2	The U.K. joins CPTPP negotiations.
2021/9/16	China applies to join the CPTPP.
2021/9/22	Taiwan applies to join the CPTPP.
2022/4/15	South Korea announces its intention to join the CPTPP.
2022/5/23	The Biden administration launches the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) during his visit to Tokyo, but does not signal any clear intention to rejoin the CPTPP.

Appendix A-2

Mobilization against trade agreements and institutions

Protests against the TPP, 2010-2017

This section provides further details on protests against the TPP that took place in Japan from 2010 to 2017. Activities included rallies, marches, and sit-ins. Relevant data were collected from the archives of three major national newspapers: *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, and *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

The search terms of *shūkai*, *demo*, and *suwarikomi* plus “TPP” were used to identify relevant articles. Turnout figures are recorded if at least two of the three newspapers corroborate the occurrence of a particular protest. In cases where minor discrepancies exist between the reported turnout figures, the smaller figure is recorded. Based on these newspapers’ reporting, an estimated 184,140 protestors took part in 212 protests during the period from 2010 to 2017. The first reported protest took place in Tottori prefecture in October 2010, while the last took place in Kumamoto prefecture in November 2017.

Protests are counted at the site-day level. The table below shows the top-10 prefectures by protest frequency. Based on reporting by the three aforementioned newspapers, we should note that the CPTPP did not appear to have spurred any mobilization.¹

Rank	Prefecture	Protest frequency	Share (%)
1	Hokkaido	22	10.4
2	Tokyo	14	6.6
3	Miyagi	12	5.7
4	Yamagata	11	5.2
5	Aomori	10	4.7
6	Fukuoka	10	4.7
7	Nagano	9	4.2
8	Kumamoto	9	4.2
9	Akita	8	3.8
10	Iwate	7	3.3
Subtotal		112	52.8
Total		212	100.0

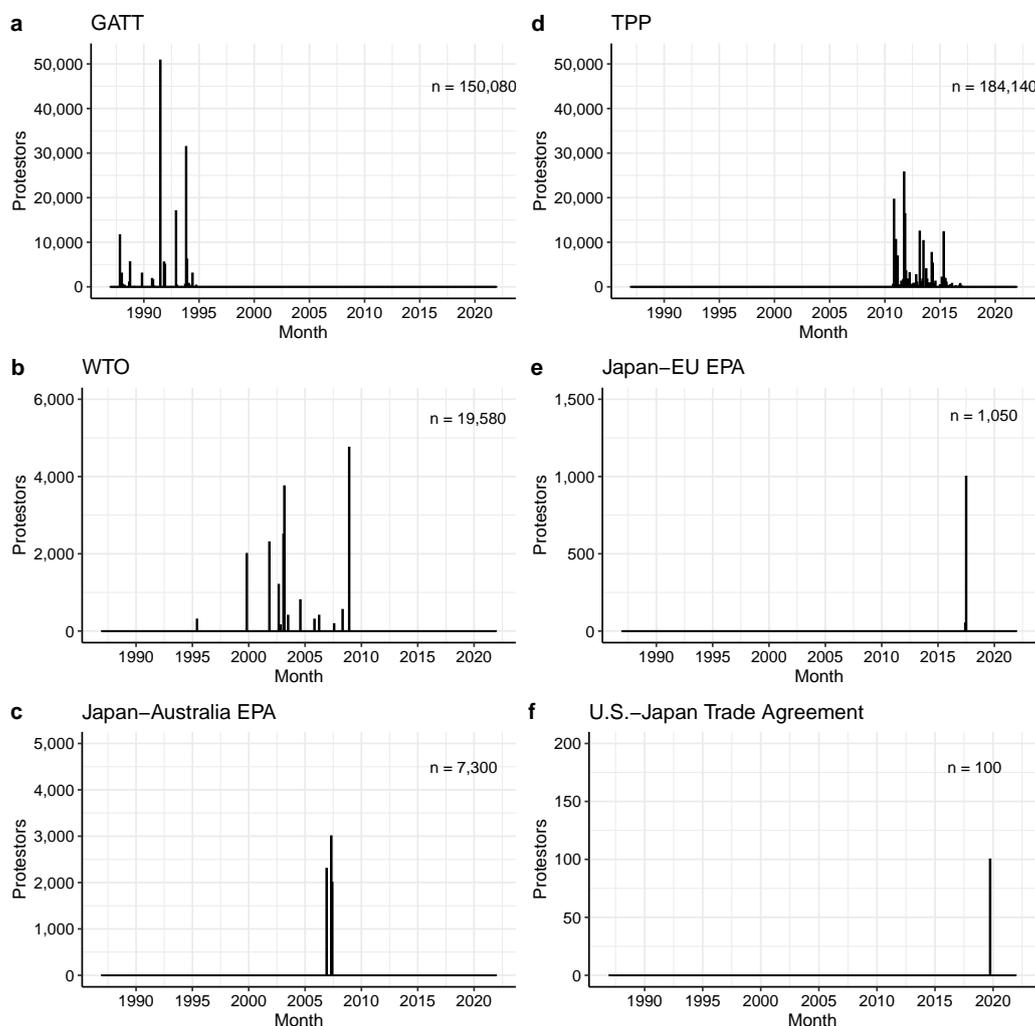
Source: Author’s dataset based on news reports by *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, and *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The digital archives of these newspapers—i.e., Kikuzo II, Maisaku, and Yomidas Rekishikan—were used.

¹The final protest in November 2017 targeted the TPP rather than the CPTPP.

Protests against the TPP in comparative perspective, 1987-2021

This section considers the scale of mobilization against the TPP relative to instances of mobilization against other trade agreements and institutions. If we assume that the relationship between reporting on protests and actual protests does not significantly change over time, we may note that the TPP is likely to have generated the largest degree of mobilization in Japan's recent history.

The panels in the figure below respectively visualize estimated turnout figures for protests targeting the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (including the Uruguay Round negotiations), the World Trade Organization (including the Doha Round negotiations), the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, the TPP, the Japan-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement, and the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement.



Source: Author's dataset based on news reports by *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, and *Yomiuri Shimbun*. *Note:* Due to vast differences in estimated turnout figures, visually it may not be helpful to use the same y-axis scale across these plots.