

# Free Trade Agreements and Domestic Politics: The Case of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

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What is the role of domestic politics in facilitating or constraining a government's decision to participate in free trade agreements (FTAs)? This paper seeks to answer this question by focusing on the domestic politics in Japan over the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). In particular, we ask why the opposition to the TPP encompasses a much broader segment of society than is predicted by trade theorems. We show that a broader protectionist coalition can emerge through persuasion and policy campaigns by the elites, in particular, powerful protectionist interests expending resources to persuade the uncertain public.

**Key words:** domestic politics, free trade agreement, Japan, Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, public opinions

**JEL codes:** D72, F13, P48

## 1. Introduction

What is the role of domestic politics in facilitating or constraining a government's decision to participate in free trade agreements (FTAs)? This paper seeks to answer this question by focusing on the domestic politics in Japan over the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). In particular, we ask why the public debate over Japan's participation in TPP has been so polarized and divided, using new survey data. The TPP is a comprehensive FTA, which seeks to achieve drastic trade liberalization (removal of tariffs on all products), and also includes agendas such as the liberalization of the service trade, investment, and regulatory issues (e.g. intellectual property rights, government procurement, competition policy, labor, and environment). Currently, 11 countries participate in the TPP negotiations, including the USA and Australia.<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan announced his intention of joining the TPP negotiations on March 15, 2013. The comprehensiveness of the TPP differs from the past 13 FTAs Japan has participated in, which excluded much of the politically sensitive, agricultural commodities.

Due to the high level of trade liberalization and regulatory issues the TPP aims to cover, the TPP issue has been highly salient among the Japanese citizens that it is described as the “debate dividing the nation into two.” It took the Japanese government 2

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years and 4 months to make the decision formally, since Prime Minister Naoto Kan of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) indicated an interest in joining the TPP negotiations in November 2010. Indeed, opposition to the TPP encompassed a much broader segment of society than what trade theories would predict.

This paper attempts to analyze how public opinion, which has an important influence on the formulation of TPP and FTA policies, is formed in Japan. Understanding public attitudes toward trade agreements is a critical but often neglected issue in the literature, which commonly emphasizes the role of business and political elites. Yet, public opinion powerfully constrains the political elites' policy options, as reelection is the prime motive for the politicians. The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews Japan's FTA policies and identifies their notable characteristics. Section 3 examines Japan's agricultural policies. Section 4 undertakes an in-depth analysis of the factors forming the Japanese public's opinion about the TPP, that is, pro- or anti-TPP, by using the results of an originally fielded public opinion survey. Section 5 presents few concluding remarks.

## 2. Japan's FTAs

Japan became interested in FTAs at the end of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Japan's first FTA was with Singapore, and it came into force in November 2002. Following this, Japan's FTA negotiations centered on the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and as of June 2013, 13 FTAs had come into effect, 12 bilateral FTAs, each with Singapore, Mexico, Malaysia, Chile, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Switzerland, Vietnam, India, and Peru (in the given order), as well as one regional FTA with the ASEAN (see Table 1). Japan is currently negotiating FTAs with South Korea, Australia, the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Mongolia, Canada, China-South Korea (CJK FTA), the European Union (EU), 10 ASEAN member countries, and five countries including China, South Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). FTA negotiations with South Korea began in December 2003, but were broken off in November 2004 due to opposing opinions on the negotiation framework and have not restarted thereafter. In the cases of the CJK FTA, Japan-EU FTA, and RCEP, there were political and economic obstacles to the agreement in the prospective FTA partner countries to start negotiations, but with one reason being Japan having indicated strong interest in joining the TPP, these were overcome. These prospective FTA partners were eager to include economically influential Japan through FTAs before Japan joined the US-led TPP negotiations.

Traditionally, Japan's trade policy proceeded under the principle of nondiscrimination between all member countries in the framework of the GATT/World Trade Organization (WTO) multilateral trade system, although there were exceptional cases where special trade measures such as voluntary export restraints were adopted bilaterally with the USA to deal with trade frictions. However, it now proceeds in a multilayered manner, pursuing discriminating frameworks resulting from bilateral/regional FTAs, which are recognized under certain conditions by GATT and the WTO. There are a number of

Table 1 Japan's FTAs

	FTA partners	Start of negotiations	Signing of agreement	Enactment of agreement	
In action	Singapore	January 2001	January 2002	November 2002	
	Mexico	November 2002	September 2004	March 2005	
	Malaysia	January 2004	December 2005	July 2006	
	Chile	February 2006	March 2007	September 2007	
	Thailand	February 2004	April 2007	November 2007	
	Indonesia	July 2005	August 2007	July 2008	
	Brunei	June 2006	June 2007	July 2008	
	ASEAN	April 2005	April 2008	December 2008	
	Philippines	February 2004	September 2006	December 2008	
	Switzerland	May 2007	February 2009	September 2009	
	Vietnam	January 2007	December 2008	October 2009	
	India	January 2007	February 2011	August 2011	
	Peru	May 2009	May 2011	March 2012	
	In negotiation	South Korea <sup>†</sup>	December 2003 <sup>†</sup>	NA	NA
		GCC	September 2006	NA	NA
		Australia	April 2007	NA	NA
		Mongolia	June 2012	NA	NA
		Canada	November 2012	NA	NA
		Colombia	December 2012	NA	NA
		China-Japan-S. Korea	March 2013	NA	NA
EU		April 2013	NA	NA	
RCEP		May 2013	NA	NA	
TPP			NA	NA	
Applied to join negotiation					

Notes: <sup>†</sup>Negotiations with South Korea was suspended in November 2004. RCEP is Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership including ASEAN members, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and newspaper reports. ASEAN, Association of Southeast Asian Nations; EU, European Union; FTA, free trade agreement; GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council; NA, not applicable; TPP, Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

causes behind Japan becoming interested in FTAs. One is the rapid increase in FTAs in various regions of the world. Under the circumstances of virtually stalled WTO trade liberalization negotiations, many countries with an interest in liberalization have started establishing FTAs. As a result, Japan has also become interested in FTAs in order to secure export markets. Furthermore, the international movements of investment and people, for which rules under the WTO have not been established, have intensified in international economic activities, and so Japan and other countries have a heightened interest in FTAs in order to set the rules on them.

By concluding FTAs with developing countries such as the ASEAN countries, where the barriers to trade and investment are still high despite the progress of liberalization, it is possible to establish an environment in which it is easy for Japanese firms that have entered into these countries to conduct business activities. Also, there are hopes that FTAs, which further an opening up to other countries, can play a complementary role in promoting the domestic structural reforms necessary for activating the Japanese economy. Furthermore, in the FTAs with developing countries in East Asia such as the ASEAN and India, there is also the intention to aid the economic development of partner countries through economic cooperation. By actualizing the high latent growth potential of the East Asian countries, not only can an increase in Japanese exports be expected, but social and political stability in the East Asian region can also be realized. In addition to economic motives, there is the noneconomic motive to concluding FTAs of building close political and social relations with FTA partner countries.

Two important observations regarding Japan's FTAs should be noted. First, the FTA coverage ratio, that is, the proportion of trade covered by FTAs for Japan, is small. As noted earlier, Japan has enacted 13 FTAs with 15 countries. The proportion of trade with these 15 countries in Japan's overall trade stood at 18.6% based on the statistics for 2010. This FTA coverage ratio for Japan is substantially lower compared with the USA (38.8%), South Korea (34.0%), and ASEAN (60.0%), while it is slightly higher compared with China (16.2%) and India (17.9%). Japan's low FTA coverage ratio is due to the absence of FTAs with its large trading partners such as the USA, China, and the EU. Difficulties in liberalizing the agriculture market, which is demanded by many potential FTA partners, has precluded Japan from establishing FTAs with those countries. If all the FTAs, which are currently being negotiated, are successfully enacted, Japan's FTA coverage ratio would rise to approximately 80%.

Another notable characteristic of Japan's FTAs, which is related to the observation just made, is the low level of trade liberalization. Japan has excluded politically sensitive agricultural products from trade liberalization. Table 2 depicts the FTA liberalization rate, defined as the share of imports for which tariffs have been eliminated in total imports vis-à-vis FTA partners, on a product basis and an import value basis. For Japan's FTAs, the FTA liberalization rate on a product basis is around 85%, and is no greater than 90%. Although not shown in the table, the liberalization rates of the FTAs of developed countries including the USA, the EU, Australia, and New Zealand range from around 95% to 100%. There is a prevailing view that the TPP will require a liberalization rate of at least 95%, making it difficult for Japan to join the TPP. Looking at the

**Table 2** Trade liberalization ratios for Japan's FTAs

FTA partners	Tariff line	Trade value			Data years used for the computation
	Japan	Japan	Partner	Total†	
Singapore	84.4	94.7	100	99	2005
Mexico	86.0	86.8	98.4	96	2002
Malaysia	86.8	94.1	99.3	97	2004 (Japan), 2003 (Malaysia)
Chile	86.5	90.5	99.8	92	2005
Thailand	87.2	91.6	97.4	95	2004 (Japan), 2003 (Thailand)
Philippines	88.4	91.6	96.6	94	2003
Brunei	84.6	99.99	99.9	99.9	2005
Indonesia	86.6	93.2	89.7	92	May 2004–April 2005
ASEAN	86.5	93.2	91†	–	2006 (Japan), 2005/2006 (ASEAN)
Switzerland	85.6	99.3	99.7	99	2006
Vietnam	86.5	94.9	87.7	92	2006
India		97.5	90.3	94	2006
Peru		99.7	99.9	99.8	2008

Notes: Proportion of tariff lines/import values in total tariff lines/import values within 10 years.

†Means approximate figures. Sources: Data on tariff lines come from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and data on import values come from Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. ASEAN, Association of Southeast Asian Nations; FTA, free trade agreement.

liberalization rate on a trade value basis (since it is not easy to obtain information regarding the liberalization rate on a product basis for Japan's FTA partners), it can be seen that in many cases, the FTA liberalization rate for Japan is lower than that of Japan's partner countries.

### 3. Agricultural Protectionist Policies

Japan began to liberalize imports of many goods in accordance with the "Basic Plan for Liberalization of Trade and Foreign Exchange" adopted in 1960, and liberalization proceeded not only for industrial products, but for agricultural products as well.<sup>3</sup> Trade liberalization for agricultural products generally took the following sequence: tariffication (i.e. shift commodities from import quota restrictions to tariff restrictions), and then the reduction of tariff rates. The number of agricultural products subject to quota restrictions dropped from 81 in 1962 to 0 in 1995. Japan liberalized agricultural imports partly because of its commitments made at international arenas such as the GATT and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and partly because of external pressure imposed mostly by the USA.

It was the Uruguay Round (1986–1994), the final round under GATT, that had significant impacts on Japan's trade policy in agricultural products. In the Uruguay Round, the

agricultural sector, which in previous rounds had not seriously been handled, was denoted as being one of the most important items. The agreement that was finally concluded adopted a US proposal to replace all nontariff barriers such as import quotas with tariffs (tariffication), as a means to reduce import barriers. In the Uruguay Round agreement, Japan was most interested in the problem of the tariffication of rice. Due to strong domestic opposition, Japan elected measures to defer the tariffication in the case of rice, and in exchange accepted minimum access requirements, while all other nontariff measures were replaced by tariffs. However, the imports of wheat, barley, powdered skim milk, and butter were continued in the form of state trading by the (then) Food Agency and the Agriculture & Livestock Industries Corporation, in order to protect domestic producers.

As a result of trade liberalization, Japan's tariff rate for agricultural products as an average value is not high compared with that of other agricultural-product-importing developed countries. Specifically, comparing the simple average of the tariff rate for agricultural products in 2011, the rate in Japan was 23.3% while other countries had higher rates: South Korea at 48.6%, Norway at 55.8%, and Switzerland at 43.5%.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, as an agricultural-product-exporting country, the US rate was 5.0%, and the EU's rate was 13.9%, each much lower than Japan's rate. A characteristic of Japan's agricultural product protection policy has been applying extremely high protection to a small number of agricultural products. Table 3 indicates the agricultural products for which high tariffs are imposed as important items of Japanese agriculture. Rice, wheat, barley, and certain dairy products are traded under the state trading system, and imports of starch, various beans, peanuts, and konnyaku potato are carried out under a tariff quota system, where the import up to a set quantity is subject to a low tariff, while the import of a quantity exceeding the set level is subject to an extremely high tariff. Furthermore, a gate price system is used for imports of pork, in a manner so that imports do not affect domestic prices.

The important agricultural products listed in Table 3 have been liberalized, but they are still subject to strong protectionism, and the situation has virtually not changed since before the liberalization. In the backdrop to these circumstances lies the situation that production of these items, excluding rice, wheat, and barley, are heavily concentrated in a few regions, and thus protection supports the regional economies of Hokkaido, Kyushu, Okinawa, and the like. In other words, the remaining agricultural protectionist policies are regional economic protectionist policies. On the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries considers sustaining the multifunctionality of agriculture, such as the inheritance of culture, and the preservation of the land and the natural environment, to be important motives for the protection of agricultural products such as rice, wheat, barley, and the like, which are produced across a wide region. It is important to point out that agricultural protection is supported by vested interest groups such as farmers, politicians, bureaucrats, agricultural cooperatives, and construction companies.

In the discussion regarding Japan's FTA strategy in the previous section, it was indicated that Japan had a low level of liberalization in its FTAs currently in force. The fact that agricultural products are eliminated from being the subject of liberalization is a

Table 3 Important agricultural products in Japan's agriculture

	Specific tariff (yen/kg)	Ad valorem tariff rate equivalent (%)	Domestic production (1000 tons)	Number of producing farms (1000)	Value of production (100 million yen)	Shares in agricultural production (%)	Major production areas	Volume of imports (1000 ton)	Import/ domestic production (%)
Rice	341	778	8474	1445	17,950	21.92	Tohoku, Hokkaido, Hokuriku	869	9.3
Wheat	55	252	674	86	585	0.71	Hokkaido,	5354	88.8
Barley	39	256	168	35	169	0.21	Kita-Kanto Kita-Kanto,	2084	92.5
Powdered skim milk	21.3%+396yen	218	170	22	6623	8.09	Kita-Kyushu Hokkaido	9	5.0
Butter	29.8%+985yen	360	82				Hokkaido	0	0.0
Starch	119	583	250	36	139	0.17	Hokkaido, Hokkaido,	136	35.2
Peanuts	617	500	20	12	98	0.12	Kagoshima Chiba, Ibaraki	78	79.6
Konnyaku potato	2796	990	67	2	142	0.17	Gunma	410	86.0
Sugar	103.1	328	859	40	839	1.02	Hokkaido, Okinawa, Kagoshima	1560	64.5
Pork	-	4.3	1318	7	5085	6.21	Minami Kyushu, Tohoku	1034	44.0
Beef	-	38.5	516	74	4406	5.38	Hokkaido, Minami Kyushu	679	56.8

Source: Added to Shimizu *et al.* (2012) by the authors.

cause of this. In fact, Japan's policy toward liberalization of agricultural products in FTA negotiations is to eliminate tariffs that are effectively zero and not to concede more than the WTO concessions in other areas. As a result, even in the FTA with Singapore, which has almost no exports of agricultural products, many such products were excluded from liberalization. In the FTAs that Japan has concluded to date, the partner countries have been developing countries, and so Japan has avoided agricultural liberalization by providing technological cooperation in the field of agriculture in FTAs with such countries. However, in the FTAs currently being negotiated with agricultural-product-exporting countries such as Australia and Canada, the old strategy is not effective, and so the negotiations are proceeding with difficulty. Also, since agricultural liberalization is difficult, the Japanese government had difficulty in deciding whether or not to participate in the TPP negotiations, where the elimination of tariffs for all products is the basic principle.

#### 4. Politics of FTA Policy Discussions: A Case of the TPP

##### 4.1 Winners and losers from the TPP

The TPP aims to promote trade liberalization and economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. It pledges to eliminate tariffs on all items without exception within 10 years from the conclusion of the agreement. If this pledge is credible, there should be no room for uncertainty about the distributional effects of the TPP on Japanese citizens.

In a broad-brush summary, a sector-based trade model (i.e. Ricardo-Viner model) would predict that winners will be export-oriented manufacturing industries, who will have better access to export markets.<sup>5</sup> Other big beneficiaries would be consumers, who will experience vast reduction in prices, especially food prices, due to tariff elimination. Income benefits for these winners are substantial. The OECD (2010) estimates that Japanese consumers pay roughly 1.5 times higher food price than the world market price (without any government subsidies, price support or tariffs) to support farmers, which is the equivalent of a 66% food consumption tax and an extra 26,000 yen in monthly food expenditure for a household of four. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has also estimated that Japanese manufacturing industries will lose 10.5 trillion yen which is equivalent to 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 0.8 million jobs by not joining the TPP.<sup>6</sup>

The biggest losers would be farmers, who incur vast reductions in tariffs, especially for highly protected commodities such as rice and butter, as was shown in Table 3. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery estimated the costs of joining the TPP to be 7.9 trillion yen and 3.4 million jobs lost. Import-competing manufacturing industries could also suffer from Japan's participation in the TPP, yet, their losses are expected to be small, as the levels of existing tariffs for manufacturing industries are low to begin with (e.g. 0.2% for electronic machineries), and major manufacturing industries have shifted their production locations abroad since the 1970s. Indeed, as of 2010, around 18.4% of Japanese manufacturing production value was generated abroad.



In sum, the conventional wisdom about the domestic politics of trade agreement in Japan (and elsewhere in developed economies) is that its politics pitches the interests of free-trading manufacturing sector and consumers against protectionist farmers.

#### 4.2 Broad-based support for anti-TPP

Contrary to the seemingly clear distributional implications of Japan's participation in the TPP, the coalition opposing Japan's participation in the TPP has been much broader and powerful. Despite the fact that the number of farmers only amounted to 2.6 million in 2011, agricultural cooperatives collected more than 11 million petitions against Japan's participation in the TPP within a 10-month period since 2011, which constituted more than 10% of Japan's total eligible voters. Putting the magnitude of this mobilization in context, the campaign to mobilize 10 million petitions for an antinuclear energy policy after the Fukushima nuclear plant accident has collected less than one-third of the anti-TPP petitions, that is, 3.2 million.

Table 4 shows how the proportions of TPP supporters and opponents have changed over time, since the agricultural cooperatives and legislators mobilized major anti-TPP policy campaigns in December 2010. Before the campaign, an overwhelming 61% of respondents from a nationally representative sample supported Japan's participation in the TPP, while around 18% opposed it (Table 4). This ratio shifted in favor of the protectionists over time. During December 2012, when the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-led protectionist campaign soared during the 2012 Lower House election, opposition rose to account for 34% of total respondents.

The anti-TPP coalition was also broad at the elite level: as of 2011, 232 out of 480 Lower House legislators signed a petition letter to oppose the TPP which was organized by the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA). Opponents to the TPP included 97 DPJ legislators (32% of total DPJ Lower House legislators) and 92 LDP legislators (85% of total LDP legislators). The high proportion of "defections" within the DPJ was surprising, given that Prime Minister Noda explicitly stated that the DPJ's position was to join the TPP.

This poses a major puzzle. If the domestic politics of trade agreements is simply about a head counting of the potential winners and losers predicted by trade theorems, why would not the pro-TPP interests triumph over the protectionist interests by now? The survey evidence discussed in detail later also challenges the established wisdom about powerful farmers blocking the government's participation in the TPP. Opposition to the TPP encompasses a substantial bulk of nonfarmers. We argue that a broader protectionist coalition can emerge given the presence of two interrelated conditions in domestic politics: (i) uncertainty regarding the forthcoming distributional effects of the agreement, which generates the bulk of "uncertain losers" – that is, voters and interest groups that are unclear about their losses from the agreement; and (ii) the presence of the biggest potential losers of the agreement, who are well-organized and resourceful, allowing them to build a protectionist coalition with uncertain losers through persuasion and policy campaigns. Below, we describe the process in which the broad protectionist coalition was mobilized in Japan by using the case of the TPP.

**Table 4** Swaying public opinion about TPP (%)

Month/Year	Support	Oppose
November 2010	61	18
December 2010	58	27
January 2011	57	24
October 2011	51	23
December 2011	50	30
December 2012	44	34
May 2013	55	28

Source: *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

#### 4.3 Distributional expectations about TPP in reality: sources of uncertainty

There are two sources of uncertainty regarding how the TPP would affect the Japanese economy and citizens. The first relates to the inherent nature of trade agreements: uncertainty regarding the negotiation outcome itself. Despite TPP pledges to eliminate tariffs on all commodities, without exception, there is a looming question about whether politically sensitive products can be excluded from the negotiations. Indeed, recently, major newspapers have reported that Prime Minister Abe and President Obama have agreed that the “TPP is not premised on ‘no exception’ rules and excluding sensitive products is possible.”<sup>7</sup> Two days later, *Asahi* reported again that Japanese Communist Party chief had said: “There is nothing in the Japan-U.S. joint statement that indicates they agreed on ‘sacred space.’”<sup>8</sup>

FTAs today cover issues beyond tariffs: investment protection, intellectual property rights, labor, and the service trade. This complexity can vastly increase the uncertainty about the TPP’s distributional effects, especially among service sector employees and consumers. Indeed, the popular anti-TPP campaign slogans have been “TPP is not just a trade agreement” (Mitsuhashi, 2011) and “TPP destroys communities, agriculture, and our lives” (Agricultural Cooperatives, 2011).<sup>9</sup> The information that the TPP negotiations consist of 24 working groups, covering issues such as migration (labor), government procurement, intellectual property rights, and cross-border dispute resolution, has been quickly circulated in the media and the Internet between November 2010 and early 2011, when the JA started its anti-TPP campaigns.<sup>9</sup> It has been also rumored that the USA will put the deregulation of Japan’s National Healthcare system on the TPP agenda, pressuring Japan to mix the National Healthcare system with a market-oriented pricing of medical care and drugs. Despite the fact that there is no document or interview evidence that suggests this, and US Trade Representative’s Wendy Cutler, as well as government’s officials explicitly denying such intentions, the opponents of the TPP had quickly proceeded to discuss “how the TPP will destroy national healthcare.”

The second source of uncertainty is politics: the majority of citizens can only learn about the forthcoming distributional effects of trade agreements through the elites, such

as the media, economists, bureaucracies, and politicians. Furthermore, information released by these actors are often biased and politicized to justify their preferred policy.<sup>10</sup> We call this effort to justify their preferred policy a “policy campaign.” Legislators and political parties have two district incentives to engage in policy campaigns: to mobilize votes and campaign contributions to secure their reelection (Grossman & Helpman, 1994), and the majority requirement in a parliament to ratify or block the ratification of a trade agreement (Naoi, 2013).

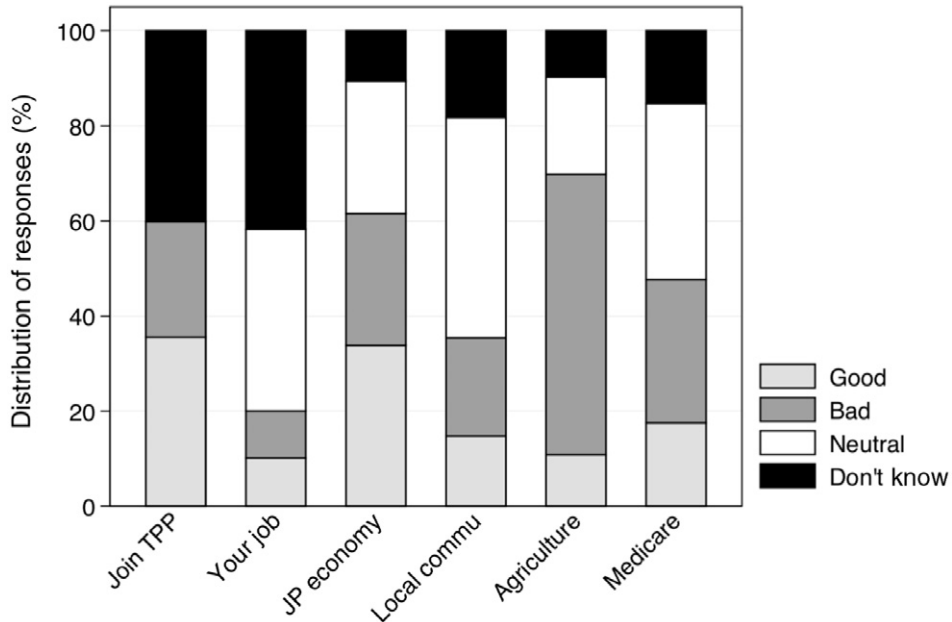
The next section will discuss the results of originally designed public opinion survey on the TPP, and why public opinions diverge from the predictions obtained from trade theorems.

#### 4.4 The determinants of public attitudes toward Japan’s participation in the TPP

We used a public opinion survey on citizens’ attitudes toward the TPP conducted by Ikuo Kume and Megumi Naoi during January of 2012 that has 3798 respondents from ages 20 to 69, in order to discern people’s views/opinions about the TPP. The survey was conducted using the Internet survey company Macromill, which has the largest number of registered online monitors (2.5 million) in Japan.<sup>11</sup> The sampling ensured that respondents were representative of the 2010 National Census in terms of gender, age, and the prefecture of their residency. The sample was also representative of the occupational profiles recorded in the *National Labor Force Survey* in 2010 in the following key sectors: manufacturing sector (18%), construction (11%), retail and services (17%), and medical and welfare service (9%). The nontrading sectors (such as the medical and construction industries), were chosen to test the effects of anti-TPP campaigns, which encompassed both facts and rumors about the TPP’s potential effects on these service sectors. Respondents’ reported employment status (temporary contract, regular employment contract, or no job) were also representative of the 2010 *Labor Force Survey*.<sup>12</sup>

To gauge respondents’ attitudes toward the TPP, we used two types of survey questions. The first is a policy question: “Do you support or oppose the Japanese government’s participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement?” Respondents were asked to choose an answer from the following four options: Support, Oppose, Don’t know, or No particular opinion. The second set of questions relate to the respondent’s assessment of the TPP’s forthcoming distributional effects on various aspects of their lives. We asked: “What effect do you think the TPP will have on the following things?” in which items included “Japanese economy,” “Your job,” “Your family’s jobs,” “Your community,” “Agriculture,” and “Medical care.” Respondents were asked to respond on a five-point scale ranging from “good,” “somewhat good,” “cannot say one way or the other,” “somewhat bad,” “bad,” and “don’t know.”

Two patterns stand out in Figure 1. First, respondents were most tenuous about the effect of the TPP on their own jobs. Around 40% of respondents responded “Don’t know,” and another 40% chose “Cannot say one way or the other” (“neutral” position) about the TPP’s effects on their jobs. In essence, a total of 80% of respondents were unclear about the distributional effects of the TPP on their own jobs. Second, the proportion of “Don’t know” answers for the TPP’s effect on respondents’ jobs (40%) is four



**Figure 1** The distribution of citizens' attitudes toward the TPP.

Source: Macromill online survey on TPP conducted by Ikuo Kume and Megumi Naoi, funded by the Japanese Government's grants-in-aid for scientific research.

Note: The survey question on whether respondents support the Japanese government's participation in the TPP ("Join TPP") had a dichotomous response option (Yes, No, and Don't know) and offered no "Neutral" option. The rest of the questions on the TPP's effects on various aspects of respondents' lives (their jobs, the Japanese economy, the respondents' local community, agriculture and medicare) had five-point scale responses (1, Bad; 2, Somewhat Bad; 3, Cannot say one or the other; 4, Somewhat Good; and 5, Good).

times the proportion of "Don't know" responses regarding the TPP's effect on the Japanese economy (10%). This is surprising given the established literature's emphasis on occupational, self-interests as determinants of trade attitudes (O'Rourke & Sinnott, 2001; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001a,b; Naoi & Kume, 2011). Although the proportion of pro- and anti-TPP respondents for the TPP's effect on the "your job" question were evenly split (around 10% each), they constitute a very small fraction of the total respondents (see Figure 1).

The finding is surprising given the emphasis on self-interests in the existing literature on trade attitudes, but it is consistent with Mansfield and Mutz's (2009) survey evidence from the USA. They found that American citizens' attitudes toward trade policy are more likely to be formed through their perception of how trade affects the national economy rather than how trade affects their individual well-being. They call this mechanism "socio-tropic" formation of public opinion, in contrast with individual formation of it. Although Mansfield and Mutz (2009) did not directly test the sources of these

socio-tropic preferences, they alluded to an informational argument that the mass media reporting on the national economy (e.g. the unemployment rate and the stock market) shapes citizens' socio-tropic trade preferences. Yet, even though Japan's big media companies (e.g. the Yomiuri and Asahi Shimbun as well as their associated television companies) had more or less endorsed their support for Japan's participation,<sup>13</sup> as Figure 1 suggests, respondents' assessments of the TPP's effects on the Japanese economy are quite polarized, with roughly 35% saying it has "good" effects and 25% assessing that the TPP has "bad" effects on the national economy.<sup>14</sup>

In the following section, we demonstrate that policy campaigns by policymakers and special interest groups substantially shape citizens' attitudes toward trade. Uninformed citizens learn about the distributional effects of the TPP through these policy campaigns by the elites, through media reporting of *politics, not the economy*. In other words, it is not media's reporting on the TPP's effect on the national economy (such as unemployment and exporting industries), but rather, the media's reporting on the partisan politics regarding the TPP that substantially shape citizens' attitudes toward the TPP.

Political candidates and parties strategically express policy positions on the TPP in order to achieve two goals. First, legislators express (or hide) support for or opposition to the TPP in order to mobilize votes and campaign contributions, which help them get reelected. Second, trade agreements in democracies need to be ratified by a majority in a parliament. This means that party leaders need to mobilize majority support (over 51% of the legislators attending a given parliamentary session) in order to make the TPP agreements effective or to block this ratification by voting Nay (Naoi, 2013). This majority requirement in democracies makes the role of political persuasion – convincing uncertain winners or losers about the forthcoming distributional effects of a given policy – critical. Indeed, the results of our probit analysis estimating respondents' support for Japan's participation in the TPP suggest that this partisanship matters more than anything else.

Table 5 summarizes the results of a probit analysis of the determinants of public support for joining the TPP negotiations. We tested the effect of respondents' income, educational attainment, sector of employment, as well as whether their firms' foreign market engagements (export, import, and foreign direct investment [FDI]), gender, and their self-assessed job security and skill specificity. The first model estimates the probability of a respondent supporting the TPP (TPP Support = 1), with opposition to TPP as a base category (TPP Support = 0), and treats "Don't know" responses as missing data. The second model estimates the same model with opposition and "Don't know" as a base category (TPP Support and DK = 0). The third model estimates the same model as the model 1, but with two additional variables (*Trust Internet* and *Trust Newspapers*) which capture the respondent's answer to the following question: "What sources of information regarding the TPP do you trust? Choose all sources that apply."<sup>15</sup> *Trust Internet* is a 0–1 dummy variable taking the value 1 when the respondent chose the Internet as a trustworthy source of information on the TPP and 0 otherwise, and *Trust Newspapers* is 0–1 dummy variable taking the value 1 when the respondent chose newspapers as a trustworthy source of information on the TPP and 0 otherwise. Thirty-three percent of

**Table 5** Determinants of Japanese public attitudes toward TPP

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Base category	TPP support (1) Oppose (0)	TPP support (1) Oppose + DK (0)	TPP support (1) Oppose (0)	TPP DK (1) Support and oppose (0)
College and beyond	0.083*** -0.03	0.118*** -0.02	0.080*** -0.03	-0.110*** -0.02
Low income	-0.024 -0.03	-0.031 -0.03	-0.027 -0.03	0.015 -0.03
High income	0.031 -0.04	0.057** -0.03	0.027 -0.04	-0.071** -0.03
Manufacturing	0.03 -0.03	0.009 -0.03	0.031 -0.03	0.023 -0.03
Farmers	-0.231 -0.15	-0.168 -0.13	-0.237 -0.14	-0.045 -0.12
Construction	-0.005 -0.41	-0.018 -0.03	0.002 -0.04	0.035 -0.03
Medical service	-0.067 -0.05	-0.039 -0.04	-0.069 -0.05	0.003 -0.04
Export, import, FDI	0.104*** -0.03	0.122*** -0.02	0.105*** -0.03	-0.096*** -0.03
Skill specificity	-0.022** -0.01	-0.004 -0.01	-0.023** -0.01	-0.014* -0.01
Possible job loss	-0.021** -0.01	0.002 -0.01	-0.018* -0.01	-0.026*** -0.01
Temp	-0.001 -0.04	0.01 -0.03	-0.008 -0.04	-0.008 -0.03
Female	-0.064** -0.03	-0.101*** -0.02	-0.066** -0.03	0.103*** -0.02
Age	0.007*** 0	0.005*** 0	0.006*** 0	-0.001 0
LDP	-0.042 -0.03	0.021 -0.03	-0.045 -0.03	-0.098*** *0.03)
DPJ	0.183*** -0.04	0.214*** -0.03	0.167*** -0.04	-0.179*** -0.03
Trust internet			-0.073*** -0.03	
Trust newspapers			0.094*** -0.03	
N	1473	2345	1473	2345
Log-likelihood	-913.11	-1430.55	-903.48	-1453.33
Pseudo R-SQR	0.072	0.084	0.0814	0.061

Notes: Models 1–3 estimate respondents' support for Japan's joining TPP negotiations. Model 4 estimates respondents' propensity to choose "Don't know (DK)" answers to the TPP question. Standard errors are shown below estimated coefficients. \*\*\*Indicates statistical significance at 99% level, \*\*indicates significance at 95% level; \*indicates significance at 90% level. DPJ, Democratic Party of Japan; FDI, foreign direct investment. LDP, Liberal Democratic Party; Temp, temporary contract workers; TPP, Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

the respondents answered that they were not interested in information on the TPP, and they were treated as missing. Model 4 examines respondents' propensity to choose the "Don't know" response to the TPP question using the same set of explanatory variables.

Five points stand out. First, highly educated and high-income<sup>16</sup> earning respondents and those who work for firms that export, import, or produce goods abroad are more likely to support the TPP. The substantive effects range from 5% point higher support for high-income earners (compared with middle-income earners), and 8–12% point higher support for respondents with college or higher degrees and employees of firms that export, import from, or invest abroad. The results are consistent with the skilled-based argument of Stolper–Samuelson trade theorem (Stolper & Samuelson, 1941), as well as Melitz' model of heterogeneous trade, which suggests that employees in firms that engage in foreign market are beneficiaries of further trade liberalization. Finally, respondents' self-assessment of their job security, such as their assessment of how likely they are to lose their jobs in the next 3 years (possible job loss), or how difficult it is for the respondents to find a comparable job if they quit their current job (skill specificity), reduce their support for the TPP, but only by 1–2% points.

Yet, the power of economic models in explaining citizens' attitudes stops here. Respondents' sectors of employment, that is, whether they are employed in manufacturing, agriculture, construction, and medical service – the three sectors that are considered to benefit (manufacturing) or lose (agriculture, construction, and medical service) from the TPP – do not differ systematically from the respondents in other sectors of employment. Low-income respondents and respondents with temporary work contracts do not systematically differ from middle-income respondents and regular contract employees (*seiki shain*) either. Attitudes toward the TPP among respondents in agricultural sector ("Farmers") are not more protectionist or free trading than the service sector workers (reference group) either.<sup>17</sup>

Instead of these economic attributes, the social and political attributes of respondents are powerfully associated with their support for the TPP: gender and partisan support. First, women are on average 10% point less likely to support the TPP than men, controlling for other economic and political attributes. Second, supporters of DPJ (the party which was in power at the time of the survey), are 21% more likely to support Japan's participation in the TPP than nonpartisan respondents, controlling for key demographic factors that could affect their partisan support (income, age, education, and gender).

Fourth, partisan support is also associated with who were more likely to choose "Don't know" as the response to the question about Japan's participation in the TPP (model 4). Both LDP and DPJ supporters were around 10 and 20 percentage points less likely to choose "Don't know" answers, respectively, when compared with nonpartisans, which lends support to how two-party competition can mobilize policy campaigns, informing uncertain citizens regarding the distributional effects of the TPP. Moreover, women are 10 percentage points more likely to choose the "Don't know" response.

Finally, the results of model 3 indicate that respondents' attitudes toward the TPP were highly correlated with which the sources of information they trust. Those who trust

the Internet as a source of TPP information were surprisingly more protectionist (7% points less likely to support TPP), while those who trust newspapers as sources of information are 9% points more likely to support it. These “protectionist” Internet believers are surprising, given the global nature of the Internet technology, yet, this finding is consistent with an emerging observation among sociologists about “Netto Uyoku (Internet Right-wingers)” (Tsuji, 2008).<sup>18</sup> Indeed, in a separate analysis, we found that partisan support is associated with respondents’ trust in different media sources. Specifically, DPJ supporters are 8% points less likely to trust the Internet as a source of TPP information than LDP supporters and nonpartisans.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, the bulk of citizens’ attitudes toward the TPP seems to be framed by partisan competition. Economic self-interests, measured according to the Stolper–Samuelson and Ricardo–Viner models, do not turn out to have strong effects on citizens’ attitudes. The next section explores how this partisan competition shapes citizens’ formation of their trade attitudes.

#### 4.5 Testing the process of protectionist mobilization: Google Trend data

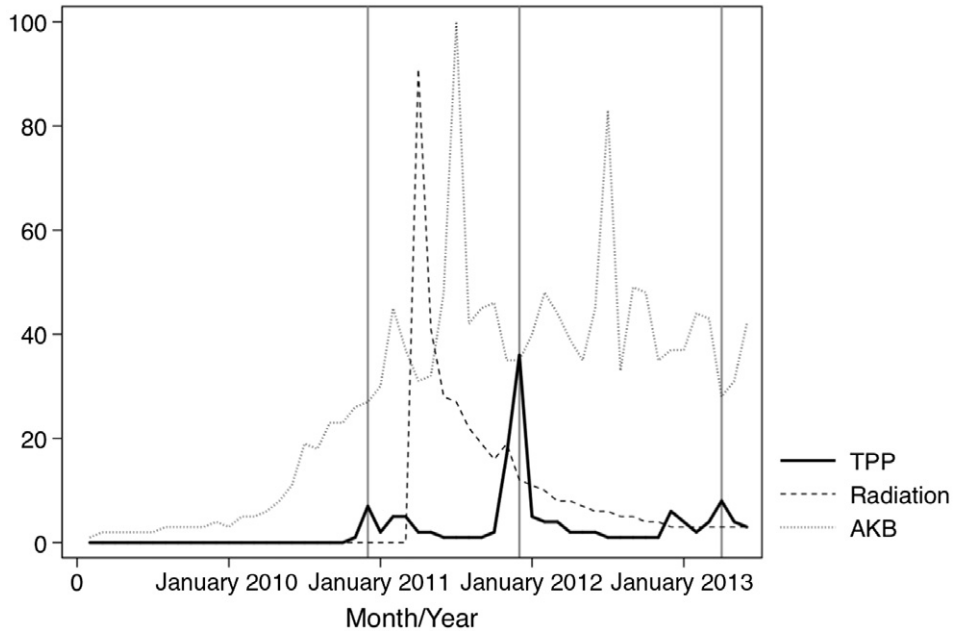
We test what drove the protectionist mobilization on the Internet, a new media that appears to have fostered protectionism in Japan. To do so, we used Google Trend search engine query data.<sup>20</sup> The Japanese language Google’s search engine gives search volume information for specific words for a specified time period between 2004 to the present. The Japanese language Google Trend search engine also gives prefectural and city-level breakdown of search volumes, and it also allows comparison among different key words to gauge the salience of multiple issues.

This Internet search engine query data allows us to trace the rise and fall of Japanese citizens’ interests in the TPP, as well as where the rise of interests in the TPP occurs during the process of mass mobilization by the elites. Although not perfect proxies, we could infer from where interests in the TPP rose (e.g. prefectures with manufacturing exports vs. a large number of farmers), whether supporters or opponents of the TPP were mobilized.

There are three limitations in using the query data from this Japanese-language Google search engine. First, the search volume data are estimates provided by Google rather than actual search volume data. Second, only yearly data on search volumes are available for each prefecture during the time period between 2010 and 2011, which does not allow us to test for monthly or weekly rises and falls of the search volume. Third, the query data are normalized and scaled, with scores ranging from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the peak search volume. What this means is that when we compare prefectures’ search volume for the term “TPP” at time  $t$ , 100 indicates the prefecture with the highest search volume at time  $t$ . When we compare the changes in search volume over time, 100 indicates the peak volume during a given week during the query period  $t$ .

Figure 2 compares the changes in search volume for three terms: “TPP” (black line), “houshanou” (radiation; dotted black line), and “AKB” (a popular Japanese girls’ teen group; the fine dashed black line). The last two terms were chosen to gauge the salience of “TPP” compared to one of the highest public health concerns in Japan since March 11,





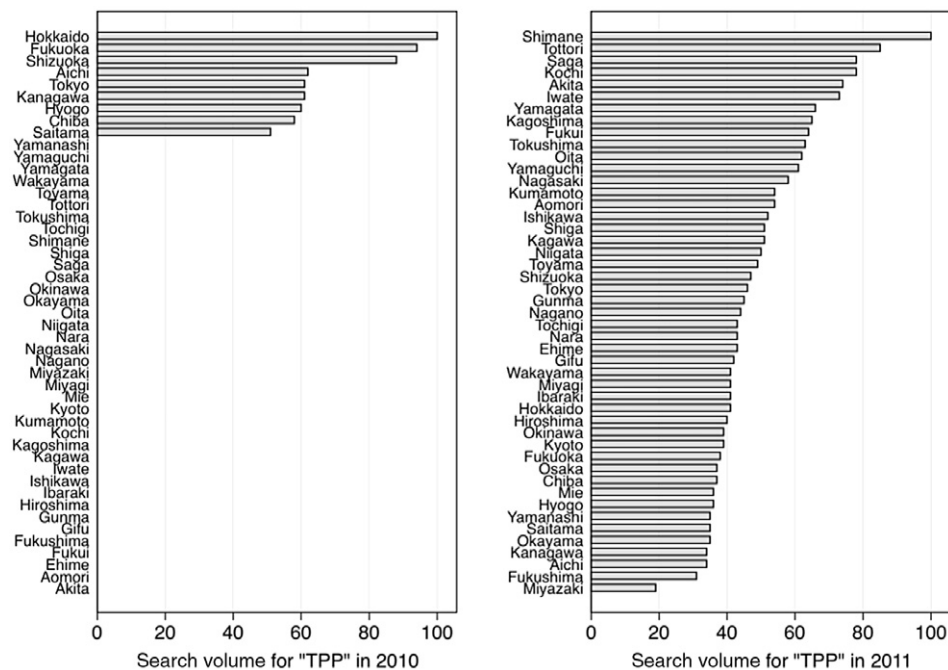
**Figure 2** Salience of the TPP issue – Google Trend data.

Source: Authors' search using Google Trend between 2004 to present.

Note: The solid line indicates the search volume for the word “TPP,” the fine dashed line indicates the search volume for the word “AKB” (a popular Japanese girls’ teen group), and the rough dash line indicates the volume for the word “houshanou (radiation).” The three vertical lines indicate the spikes in the search volume using the key word “TPP.”

2011 (“radiation”), and one of the most popular subculture phenomena in Japan (“AKB”). Figure 2 shows that there was a bump in search volume for “TPP” around when then-Prime Minister Kan expressed his interest in participating in the TPP negotiations during the APEC meeting in Yokohama (November 14, 2010), and another big bump in November 2011 when Prime Minister Noda made an announcement that the government would start prenegotiations with participating countries to enter the TPP (November 11, 2011).<sup>21</sup> The final bump was in March 2013, when Prime Minister Abe announced the government’s intention to participate in the TPP negotiation. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that international trade is a low salience issue in politics, “TPP” drew high attention from the Japanese citizens. During the peak time (November 2011), “TPP” received half as much of the attention as “houshanou (radiation)” drew during March 2011, when the meltdown of Fukushima nuclear power plant posed a major threat to public health in Japan.

Which prefectures experienced the rise in public attention toward the “TPP”? Figure 3 compares the query data by prefecture in 2010 and 2011. During 2010, only 8 out of 47 prefectures showed sufficient search volume, with Hokkaido prefecture being at the top. This makes sense because agricultural cooperatives began their

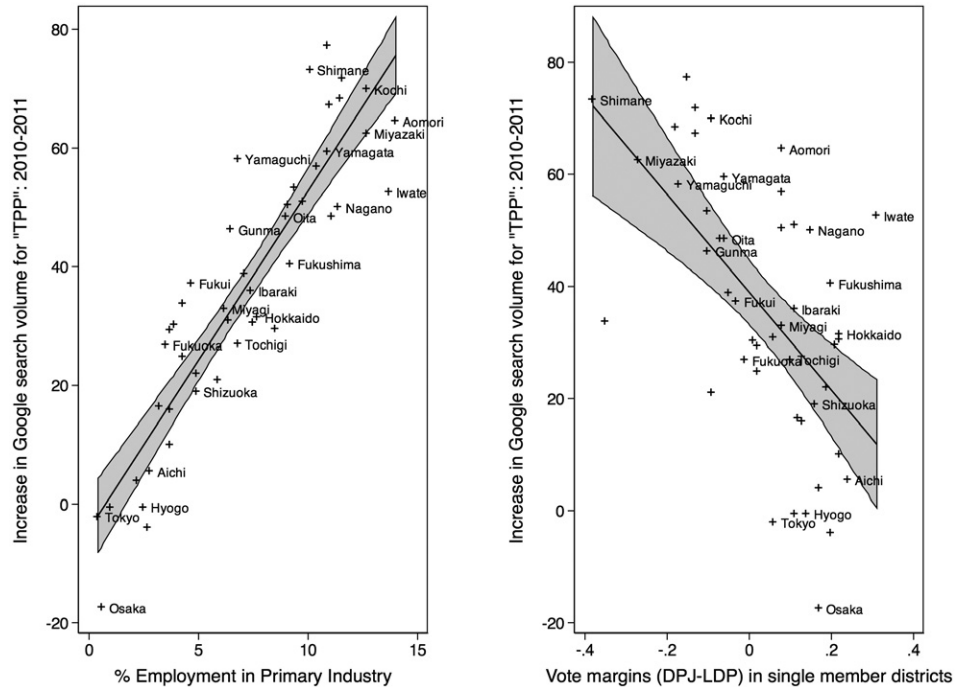


**Figure 3** Comparing 2010 and 2011 by prefecture.  
 Source: Google Trend query data collected by the authors.

anti-TPP campaign around October of 2010, and Hokkaido prefecture was the first to start a prefectural-level, anti-TPP campaign (Kuno & Naoi, 2013). This finding is also consistent with the discussion in Section 3, where we found that Hokkaido is a major production area for a number of sensitive agricultural products. Excluding Hokkaido, however, the 2010 query data suggests that the majority of search volume came from urban (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Fukuoka, Chiba, and Hyogo) and manufacturing prefectures (Aichi and Shizuoka). While the search volume for the term “TPP” does not tell us about the direction of citizens’ attitudes (e.g. support or oppose), the geographic distribution of the search volume indicates that highly educated individuals, manufacturing employees, and those who work for companies that either export, import from, or invest abroad were seeking information on the TPP on the Internet in 2010 compared to rural residents.

Yet, this pattern was reversed for 2011, when protectionist mobilization peaked as indicated by the increase in protectionist citizens in Table 4. Rural prefectures, such as Shimane, Tottori, Saga, and Kochi, had the highest volumes of search, despite the fact that these prefectures have the small populations.

In order to identify the causes of the changes in volume of searches in prefectures from 2010 to 2011, we try to explain the increase in searches from 2010 to 2011 using two variables: the percentage of labor in the primary industry (agriculture, forestry, and



**Figure 4** Estimating the increase in search volume for “TPP.”

Source: Google Trend query data collected by the authors.

Note: The  $y$ -axis measures the increase (positive values) or decrease (negative values) in search volume for the word “TPP” from 2010 to 2011 in each prefecture. The  $x$ -axis in the left panel indicates the percentage of employment in primary industry per total labor force for each prefecture, and the  $x$ -axis in the right panel indicates the vote margins (% DPJ votes minus % LDP votes) in single-member districts (aggregated by prefecture) in the 2009 Lower House election. The closer a point is to the point 0, the more competitive the two-party competition was, and positive values indicate DPJ dominance, and the negative values indicate LDP dominance. Prefectural labels are selectively shown due to space constraints.

fishery) and the vote margin between DPJ and LDP in single-member districts during the 2009 election (the higher the vote margin, the more dominant DPJ was over LDP).

The left panel of Figure 4 shows the relationship between the percentage of employment in primary industry and the estimated increase in the search volume for the term “TPP” from 2010 to 2011. The results present indirect evidence that the biggest losers (agriculture) can expend their resources to mobilize a broader protectionist coalition. The right panel of Figure 4 shows the same relationship with another variable, the vote margin between the DPJ and the LDP in single-member districts in a given prefecture. The results suggest that rural and the LDP-dominant prefectures experienced the largest increases in search volumes, while urban and competitive districts experienced the smallest increases. The results lend support to our argument about the partisan nature of mass protectionist mobilization and policy campaigns.

#### 4.6 Implications for domestic impediments to economic reform

Our findings challenge the conventional wisdom about the domestic impediments to economic reform in two ways. First, while the literature has focused on the power of special interest groups in blocking reform and the low institutional threshold for these vested interests to capture legislators (Olson, 1965; Tsebelis, 2002; Nielson, 2003), that literature is insufficient to account for why the bulk of nonfarmers oppose the TPP. Second, the thriving influence of agricultural interests, in light of Japan's debates about the TPP, is especially puzzling from an institutional perspective given that Japan's electoral reform in 1994, which gives more power to party leaders over backbenchers and to consumers over producers (Cox, 1987; Rogowski & Kayser, 2002). These changes should have empowered free-trading consumers and facilitated the reform, but they did not. We show that even with the higher institutional threshold, special interests can work through the public to influence trade policy by persuading an uncertain public to oppose a trade agreement. Furthermore, partisan cues about the TPP (e.g. the DPJ supported the TPP, and the LDP opposed it until the LDP returned to power in 2012) often confused, rather than informed the public about the true distributional implications of the TPP.

The power of the elites to mold the public's mind was also evident from the surprising lack of a backlash against Prime Minister Abe's announcement to join the TPP negotiations in March 2013, despite the LDP's pledge to oppose the TPP during the 2012 Lower House election. As Figure 1 suggests, the *Yomiuri Shimbun's* survey suggests that support for the TPP increased by 11% point once the LDP returned to power, and Prime Minister Abe made his announcement about Japan's participation in the TPP negotiations. Although it is still a moving target, one possible explanation for the lack of backlash is that the LDP has an agreement with agricultural cooperatives to exclude politically sensitive products from the negotiation table, and if this fails, the LDP would compensate them generously.

### 5. Concluding Remarks

This paper analyzes how the elites shaped public opinion over trade policies by using the TPP as a case study. Our review of Japan's FTAs reveals that to date, FTAs so far have not changed the nature of import protection in Japan, despite the protrade interests' hope that FTAs could serve as an engine of economic growth. Indeed, the government successfully excluded agricultural products from trade liberalization in past FTAs due to strong opposition from the antitrade farmers and the loser-sympathetic public.

This paper investigates how public opinion on the TPP has been formed using an original public opinion poll. One of the most striking findings is the ability of the agriculture and other protectionist interests in expending their political resources to mobilize a broader protectionist coalition. This reveals an informational mechanism of mobilization, leveraging the existence of uncertain losers. The uncertainty among the public aids uncompetitive agriculture at the expense of the competitive manufacturing sector and silent consumers. The mechanism works like this. Uncompetitive agriculture

and its allies are politically and financially resourceful due to the government's protection (in the forms of subsidies and price support) and the organized political support it can provide to legislators. With these resources, the uncompetitive sectors engage in anti-TPP/FTA campaign activities, especially using new media (e.g. the Internet). These policy campaigns can generate mass opposition against the TPP/FTA.

Then, what are conditions under which a broader, protrade coalition can be mobilized? There are three possibilities, but they all come with some political risks (losing an office) for legislators. First, the potential beneficiaries of FTAs, especially competitive export-oriented businesses, also need to expend some resources to engage in pro-FTA campaigns. Emphasizing consumer benefits might also be effective in mobilizing mass support, as demonstrated in some experimental work by Naoi and Kume (2013). Second, because intraparty divides often delay Japan's progress toward trade liberalization, an institutional reform to strengthen the prime minister's power in negotiating trade agreements might be a good idea. Indeed, the recent decision-making regarding the TPP seems to suggest that backbenchers are willing to "delegate" the final decision-making to the Cabinet,<sup>22</sup> and that legislators are well aware of the importance of centralized decision-making.

Finally, because anti-USA sentiment is prevalent among Internet right-wingers" who seem to oppose TPP, it might help to emphasize the fact that some powerful industry groups in the USA (such as the automobile industry) are opposing Japan's participation in the TPP. Reporting more detailed information about the domestic politics of the TPP in the USA might clarify to Japanese voters that the USA is not entirely a winner in this negotiation, especially if Japan joins.

## Notes

- 1 At the time of the conference where this paper was presented, the number of the participants was 11. It is currently 12, after Japan joined in the negotiation in July 2013. This change is not reflected in the paper.
- 2 See Urata (2011), Solis and Urata (2007), and Kawai and Urata (2012) on Japan's FTA policies.
- 3 On Japan's agriculture policy, see, for example, Honma (2010).
- 4 WTO, World Tariff Profiles 2012.
- 5 Melitz's (2003) model of heterogenous trade would also predict that exporting firms (not the manufacturing sector as a whole) would benefit from further trade liberalization. Moreover, a reduction in tariffs in export markets can lower the threshold for less productive firms to enter the market, increasing the number of exporting firms. See Plouffe (2012) and Kuno and Naoi (2013).
- 6 METI's estimates are based on the potential losses from Japan's not joining the TPP, because it incorporates Japanese manufacturing companies' competition with South Korea. We used the term "aggregate benefits" here, because if Melitz's model of heterogenous trade is correct, even among manufacturing firms, the beneficiaries of trade liberalization would still be a small fraction of Japanese firms. Indeed, using Japanese firm-level survey, Kuno and Naoi (2013) has shown that only 20% of manufacturing firms surveyed in Japan export, import, or produce goods abroad. We will discuss this point later.

- 7 See Shusho, TPP koushou sanko hyomei he: kanzeino seiiki, nichibei kakunin [Prime Minister is going to declare participation in TPP negotiations: Japan and the United States confirmed “sacred space” re: tariffs], *Asahi Shimbun*, 23 February 2013.
- 8 See TPP Reigai/Seiiki, jujitsu deha nai. [TPP’s Exemption/Sacred Space, Not a fact]. *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 February 2013.
- 9 Mitsuhashi T. (2011). Deceiving Effects of the Dichotomy of Manufacturing vs. Agriculture: Have you heard about the remaining 22 issues on the negotiating table? *Nikkei Business*, 7 March 2011, and TPP, EPA/Possibility of lowering the minimum price for procurement/ Possible effects on construction industries. *Kensetsu Tsushin Shimbun*, 15 November 2010.
- 10 Especially in parliamentary systems where elected ministers can influence bureaucracies, even “scientific estimates” of the potential effects of signing trade agreements, released by bureaucracies, can also be highly politicized as discussed earlier.
- 11 [http://www.macromill.com/monitor\\_info/index.html](http://www.macromill.com/monitor_info/index.html). Registered monitors participate voluntarily in various surveys in exchange for points which can be used for shopping coupons.
- 12 We do not claim that our sample is nationally representative, however, because we suspect that there is selection bias in two respects. First, all of the respondents have to have Internet access either at home or work, and second, they also have to be registered with Macromill as monitors.
- 13 Opinion editorials on the TPP from the two newspapers with the highest subscription rates in Japan, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (right-leaning) and the *Asahi Shimbun* (left-leaning), for instance, both argued that the government should participate in the TPP negotiations (Prime Minister Should Steer the Wheel to TPP Participation), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 8 February 2013; TPP: Needs Proactive Involvement, *Asahi Shimbun*, 15 February 2013.
- 14 Regional and prefectural newspapers as well as industry-level newspapers (e.g. the *Nihon Nougyou Shimbun* [Japan Agricultural News]). There is much more variations in the regional newspapers’ positions on the TPP. The *Hokkaido Shimbun*, which has a higher subscription rate than national newspapers in Hokkaido prefecture, has published several opinion editorials opposing Japan’s participation in the TPP (Kuno and Naoi, 2013).
- 15 The list of sources of information are (i) newspapers; (ii) television and radio stations; (iii) the Internet; (iv) books and magazines; (v) industry associations; (vi) agricultural cooperatives; (vii) consumer cooperatives; (viii) local governments; (ix) labor unions and politicians; (x) colleagues at the workplace; (xi) economists; and (xii) Mino Monta (a popular television personality for a daytime TV program, that is, the male Japanese version of Oprah Winfrey). The top three sources were TV and radio (81%), newspapers (69%), and the Internet (58%).
- 16 High-income respondents were defined here as respondents with an annual individual income higher than 6 million yen and constituted 15.9% of the respondents with income. Low-income respondents were defined as respondents with an annual individual income lower than 2 million yen and constituted 32.9% of respondents with income.
- 17 The lack of statistical significance of “farmers” could be due to the small number of farmers in the sample (20). Among these 20 farmers, 8 chose “Don’t know,” 7 opposed Japan’s participation in the TPP, and 5 supported it.
- 18 Tsuji (2008) reports that these right-wingers who actively promote conservative political views on the Internet (e.g. posting on boards, blogging, and tweeting) are more likely to be men, but age, income, and education have no systematic effects.
- 19 The results of this analysis are available from the authors upon request.

- 20 Pelc (2013) uses this search engine to study the politics of trade in the USA, and also describes the limitations of these data. The link to the Google Trend site is here: <http://www.google.co.jp/trends/>. A Japanese language explanation for how this search engine works is available at: <http://www.itmedia.co.jp/news/articles/1209/28/news030.html>.
- 21 The minutes of this press conference is available at the Cabinet Office's home page: <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/noda/statement/2011/1111kaiken.html>.
- 22 This was the case for DPJ's then-Prime Minister Noda's announcement to start the prenegotiation, as well as LDP Prime Minister Abe's announcement regarding TPP participation.

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