

Trade's Progressive Opposition

Abstract

Populist, protectionist, and progressive anti-trade views are renascent among voters and politicians, but which of these ideologies have successfully inspired the mobilization of interest group coalitions? To answer this question, we collect original data on thousands of groups' participation in highly organized anti-trade coalitions in the US. The composition of these groups and associated textual evidence suggest that their motivations are mainly progressive, focused on the environment, human rights, economic justice, and reducing corporate power. We also focus on progressives' labor union allies, showing that their anti-trade activities are motivated by both sincere progressive anti-globalization and classic protectionism. Collectively, this anti-trade alliance accounts for a majority of trade lobbying and PAC contributions among non-producer groups. We conclude that progressive anti-globalism allied to labor is the most organized and enduring non-firm interest group opposition to globalization in the United States. This organized left-wing opposition to trade has no match on the right, raising questions about the durability of populist nationalist opposition to trade.

Anti-trade ideologies are resurgent in American politics. On the right, populist economic nationalism stormed to power in the Republican party and the presidency in 2016; on the left, progressive anti-globalization has been highlighted in presidential campaigns and mass movements. The impact of these ideological currents have been investigated among both voters and politicians.¹ But American trade politics is a classic site for the influence of special interest groups.² Pro-trade firms and industry associations, in particular, have developed collective organizational strategies around coalition-building and matched them with lobbying and campaign cash. They have used these techniques to drive trade policy outcomes.

In this paper, we examine the intersection of revived opposition to globalization and contemporary patterns in special interest mobilization. Have anti-trade ideologies successfully embodied themselves as interest groups and mastered the tools employed by producer groups, including ad hoc coalitions and public campaigns as well as lobbying and campaign contributions? And what motivations have driven these groups to participate in trade politics: nationalist demands for sovereignty, protectionist demands for insulation, or progressive demands for a reformed globalization?

To answer these questions, we assemble the largest ever dataset of anti-trade activity by non-producer interest groups in the US. We find significant coalitional activity around specific trade agreements as well as longer-term engagement across all trade issues through the Citizens' Trade Campaign and other permanent national, state, and local groups. These coalitions have nearly 6000 unique members with especially heavy representation of labor unions; environmental groups; progressive groups; liberal religious organizations; and identity groups. Members of these anti-trade coalitions account for a very large share of trade lobbying and campaign contributions among non-producer groups.

While the composition of these coalitions provides clear evidence of organized interest group opposition to trade from the left, we uncover no equivalent organization on the right. Only a sliver of members of anti-trade groups represent right-wing ideologies, and no effective coalitions have been formed with a populist nationalist orientation. We follow up on this point by differentiating competing forms of left-wing opposition to trade: protectionist opposition emanating from workers or unions in uncompetitive industries or vulnerable occupations; and, progressive opposition from left-wing issue groups emphasizing economic justice, human rights, corporate power, development, and the environment (Ehrlich, 2010, 2018). Examining membership and textual data, we find that anti-trade coalitions are far more focused on progressive concerns than protectionist ones. We therefore refer to these groups collectively as 'trade's progressive opposition'.

Our emphasis on progressive motivations behind coalitions leads us to collect further data on

¹ Broz, Frieden and Weymouth (2019); Frieden (2018); Goldstein and Gulotty (2019); Owen and Walter (2017); Ballard-Rosa et al. (2017).

² Milner (1988); Krueger (1974).

labor unions, whose participation in ‘progressive’ coalitions raises questions about their aims. In their separate activities, we find that labor unions express protectionist concerns around jobs and offshoring, and oppose liberalization when their workers are most exposed to foreign competition. However, they also articulate a range of progressive critiques of globalization around human rights, the environment, inequality, and foreign development. They reveal their sincere support for these issues through their alliances with progressive groups and their opposition to trade agreements with uncompetitive countries with weak labor rights and environmental standards. Labor unions are therefore an important part of trade’s progressive opposition, though their motivations are both progressive and protectionist.

To see the importance of trade’s progressive opposition, consider the following puzzle: The US elections of 2016 have been interpreted as a triumph of populist anti-globalization. The threatened end of NAFTA was one of the most consequential facets of the subsequent trade war. However, rather than withdrawal and fundamental reorientation of North American trade, the resulting USMCA largely preserved the forms and commitments of the original NAFTA. It departs primarily in strengthening rules-of-origin in autos, improving labor market protections for Mexican workers, and moderately enhancing environmental enforcement, while efforts to strengthen IP protections for biologics were blocked. How did passage of an orthodox trade agreement – shot through with concessions to Democrats – end up as the Trump administration’s top legislative priority for 2019?

We see in this outcome traces of the organized groups we describe. Left-wing opponents of trade have shown significant organizational capacity. Their progressive critiques ensure that environmental, human rights, and social justice concerns are a part of the trade landscape. Progressive groups have found important labor union allies and use their organizational resources to amplify their messages. While these unions are importantly motivated by protectionist aims, they also share progressive concerns about the shape of contemporary globalization. These groups are all important constituencies in the Democratic party, and the case of the USMCA – which needed passage through a Democratic controlled House – illustrates their influence.

In contrast, there is hardly any significant organized interest group opposition to trade among traditional Republican constituencies or right-wing nationalist groups. Instead, we see periodic flareups of anti-trade sentiment that are fundamentally originating in presidential campaigns or the presidency – early in the Reagan years, the Buchanan and Perot campaigns, and the Trump presidency. While these moments of right-wing opposition to trade have been highly impactful, they lack the interest groups, collective organization, and solid base of Congressional support needed to make them a consistent feature of Republican Party politics. As the Trump administration turned to pushing the USMCA – a typical free trade agreement – economic nationalism lacked the organization to hold the administration to account.

So while right-wing populist opposition to globalization has garnered recent attention, we conclude that the activities of left-wing – particularly progressive – anti-trade groups represent the most

organized and enduring opposition to trade in the US. In contrast with the Republican Party, an awkward fit for anti-trade populists given its connections with big business, the progressive wing of the Democratic party is a welcoming venue for anti-trade activism. Scholars of trade should not lose sight of left-wing opposition to trade. The remarkable efflorescence of populist anti-globalization may not last, while progressive opposition has shown it has the capacity and motivation to endure.

Anti-trade Ideologies and Interest Group Organization

The 2016 US presidential election and subsequent trade war dramatically raised the profile of anti-trade ideologies. *Populist nationalism* prescribes hostility to cooperation with foreigners within constraining international institutions, and is founded on chauvinism and xenophobia. *Industrial protectionism* emphasizes insulating American producers and workers from foreign competition. Donald Trump’s critique of global trade order incorporates elements from both these ideologies. A third anti-trade view has also increased in visibility: *Progressive anti-globalization*. The campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren demanded a redesigned globalization to reduce the power of large corporations and raise environmental and human rights standards.

These resurgent anti-trade ideologies have been examined among voters and the public. For example, a lively debate has ensued over the role of material and non-material interests in voting for populist right-wing parties.³ Mass preferences over trade are also shaped by progressive concerns about globalization (Ehrlich, 2010, 2018; Bastiaens and Postnikov, 2019). Politicians’ and parties’ role in activating anti-trade sentiment have also been investigated (Eichengreen, 2018; Otjes et al., 2018). Global capitalism’s extremes provide fertile ground for political entrepreneurs advocating anti-globalism from both the right and left (Frieden, 2018; Rodrik, 2018).

In comparison with the focus on voters and politicians, interest groups have received much less coverage in investigations of the recent anti-trade wave. This may be perfectly reasonable given the populist nature of right-wing nationalism and left-wing anti-globalization. On the other hand, trade politics is the paradigmatic site for interest group politics (Schattschneider, 1935; Krueger, 1974; Grossman and Helpman, 1994). Interest groups play an important role in holding politicians to account between elections, and in shaping multidimensional policy outputs in complex areas like global economic regulation. Interest groups may dominate policy formation even beyond these scope conditions (Gilens and Page, 2014). Either way, interest group organization is important to accumulate political resources and solve collective problems around monitoring, rewarding, and punishing politicians. Recent scholarship has reinvigorated the study of producers’ political activity on trade issues – especially pro-trade firms – and argues that they decisively shape trade policy

³ Broz, Frieden and Weymouth (2019); Ballard-Rosa et al. (2017); Owen and Walter (2017); Mutz (2018); Nguyen (2017); Goldstein and Gulotty (2019); Margalit (2019).

outcomes. It is therefore critical to examine *what role non-producer interest groups have played in advancing anti-trade ideologies*.

We limit our investigation of this broad question in two ways, leaving open many avenues for further scholarship. First, we concentrate on a public and collective form of interest group mobilization: the creation of temporary and permanent coalitions. Collective organization is a key objective for interest groups across many issues, including trade (Heaney and Lorenz, 2013; Brulle, 2019). Coalitions unite groups with disparate agendas but shared interests. Coalition formation influences politicians by signaling preference intensity and organizational ability (Kollman, 1998). Coalitions also conduct public campaigns targeting voters, politicians and other groups; coordinate the strategies and sharing of information; and build organizational knowhow, political capital, and infrastructure. While the existence and membership of these coalitions is interesting in its own right, identifying members of coalitions also provides a useful research opportunity to pinpoint the actors with a sufficiently strong stake in an issue to take a public and collective stand. Members of these groups can be matched to private, individual forms of political engagement to understand their profile in other political activities. Lobbying and campaign contributions are highlighted in the trade literature, so we discuss coalition members' engagement in these activities.⁴

Second, we have chosen to focus on non-producer groups' engagement in collective mobilization, contributions, and lobbying because producers have already received sustained investigation. Pro-trade forces have been shown to dominate in these areas. Ad hoc coalitions of pro-trade firms and associations were created to support liberalization on every major US trade issue of the past three decades.⁵ Publicly pro-trade firms dominate lobbying on trade and corporate campaign contributions, too.⁶ In contrast, anti-trade firms and associations have mostly failed to create large public coalitions, and they account for vanishingly small shares of lobbying.⁷ We use these extant findings on producer groups as benchmarks for our original findings on non-producer groups opposed to trade.

Our ultimate goal is to explore the overlap between the rise of anti-trade ideologies and the renewed focus on the organized special interest politics of trade. In particular, we examine whether non-producer interest groups in the US have actively opposed trade in recent years, extending the

⁴ Gawande and Bandyopadhyay (2000); Gawande, Krishna and Olarreaga (2012); Kim (2017). Our focus on these particular forms of political activity leaves aside many others: testimony to Congress or agencies; notice and comment, trade advisory committees (TACs), and other solicited feedback; voter mobilization; and passively earned representation in the Congress of Executive branch.

⁵ Baccini, Osgood and Weymouth (2019); Osgood (2020).

⁶ Kim (2017); Blanga-Gubbay, Conconi and Parenti (2020).

⁷ Blanga-Gubbay, Conconi and Parenti (2020); Osgood (2020). Anti-trade producers have pursued alternative routes to political influence, targeting defensive measures of trade protection in the form of trade remedies (Bown, 2009), rules of origin (Laaker, 2019), and regulatory protection (Gulotty, 2020). We also document anti-trade producers allied with non-producer groups below.

reach of anti-trade ideologies beyond mass publics by creating durable interest group organizations? And have these groups successfully organized and employed the political tools – coalition-building, public campaigns, lobbying, campaign contributions – used so effectively by pro-trade producer groups? We also explore the origins and motivations behind the creation of anti-trade coalitions, considering three possible accounts: populist right-wing nationalism; labor-centered protectionism; and progressive anti-globalization.

Populist nationalist opposition to trade and the right

One site to look for interest groups’ anti-trade activity is from the populist nationalist right. Populist economic nationalism elevates the nation – its people, economy, and institutions – above all others. It has intellectual roots in mercantilist, autarkic, and isolationist ideologies, though in the American context it is most clearly founded on the commercial protectionism that thrived from the founding of the Republic to the second World War. It is also defined in opposition to the dominant internationalist discourses of political and economic elites (Frieden, 2018).

Contemporary populist nationalist opposition to globalization is a characteristic mix of economic and identity-based concerns. Mercantilist tropes about the value of exports over imports, and the importance of national production and trade surpluses, are recurrent. Commercial exchange and trade negotiations are something that the nation either ‘wins’ or ‘losses’, and mutual benefit is not an important value. Economic nationalists emphasize self-reliance to protect the nation and view importing and offshoring as unpatriotic. Popular nationalism is also founded on cultural chauvinism and hostility to foreigners, whether allies or adversaries. Economic nationalists seek to preserve US sovereignty and limit international cooperation.

Nationalist opposition to trade and globalization has mostly arisen from the American right. Most recently, nationalist opponents of globalization achieved signal victories with Donald Trump’s election and the subsequent initiation of a multi-front trade war. Trump mobilized anti-globalization voters by expanding the playbook developed in the populist campaigns of Ronald Reagan, Ross Perot, and Patrick Buchanan. It is important to note, however, that the periodic moments of economic nationalism from the Republican Party are the exception to the rule. The party has generally been quite supportive of trade over the past 40 years owing to its close connections to big business, finance, and internationalists supportive of an American-led world order.

While Trump’s role in activating voters and redefining the Republican party’s coalition is relatively clear, the role of explicitly populist nationalist interest groups opposed to trade and globalization is not. Coverage of such groups has been limited in both academic scholarship and the press.⁸

⁸ Instead, the main interest groups mentioned as allies to Trump’s anti-globalization agenda are anti-trade firms and certain labor unions. And while these actors may share populist nationalist leanings, those views are not their *raison d’être* and are more plausibly linked to the protectionist motives described below.

This apparent lack of activity by nationalist interest groups may be a perfectly logical result of the ‘popular’ nature of populism, or the dormancy of economic nationalist narratives in US trade politics after the NAFTA and WTO debates. On the other hand, it may be that mobilization among populist interest groups simply requires more systematic investigation. For this reason, we keep an open mind and use our investigation of non-producer groups’ opposition to trade to investigate the extent of nationalist opposition to trade among American interest groups.

What would we expect to find if popular nationalist motives are a driving force among politically active interest groups? To answer this, we develop a set of four observable implications concerning *membership*, *issues of interest*, *texts*, and the *participation of unions* among anti-trade coalitions. First, if anti-trade coalitions are importantly driven by nationalism, we would expect members to come from self-identified right-wing groups or groups with explicitly nationalist or xenophobic agendas. Second, nationalist opponents of trade should be particularly opposed to unilateral or unequal forms of liberalization where market access in the United States is not matched to any improved market access in a partner market. Nationalist opponents of trade cooperation might also oppose trade agreements generally as unneeded infringements on sovereignty and national self-reliance. Third, the textual content of their opposition to trade should focus on concerns about national self-reliance and patriotism; American identity or superiority; the importance of sovereign independence; and the limited value of international cooperation. Finally, participation among unions will not be driven by trade *per se* but by the extent of right-wing or nationalist political ideology among union leaders or membership. We summarize these predictions in Figure 1.

Labor-based protectionism and the left

Protectionism among workers or unions is a second potential driver of non-producer interest group mobilization. This ‘labor-based protectionism’ is founded on workers’ or labor unions’ demands for relief from the negative effects of foreign competition. Foreign competition may be fair but unwanted. More often, these demands are couched in terms of unfair foreign wages, mistreatment of workers, or illegal subsidies and business practices. In the US, offshoring of jobs by US firms has been shown to particularly shape attitudes about globalization (Owen, 2017; Margalit, 2011).

Not all workers or unions will necessarily oppose trade, however, and competing models of trade preferences differ in describing the links between labor and protectionism. The clearest mapping is provided in Rogowski (1989), which argues that trade politics has historically pitted labor against landowners (and at times, capital-owners). Assuming factors of production are mobile across industries, labor should oppose trade in relatively labor-scarce countries like the US. Contemporary applications of this Stolper-Samuelson approach have investigated disputes between skilled workers, which the US has in relative abundance, and unskilled workers (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001). The links between labor and protectionism are less clear in the specific factors model (Frieden, 1991;

Table 1: Implications of competing theories of anti-trade interest group mobilization

Theory of non-producer interest group opposition to trade:			
Empirical implication	Populist nationalism	Protectionism	Progressivism
<i>Membership:</i> types of groups that compose anti-trade coalitions	Economic nationalist groups allied to right-wing, chauvinist, anti-immigrant, or culturally conservative groups.	Labor unions and locals (possibly allied to anti-trade producer groups).	Left-wing anti-globalization groups allied to progressive, environmental, human rights, left-religious, identity groups.
<i>Issues of interest:</i> variation in coalition mobilization across issues.	Opposition is uniform across trade agreements, or strongest for big multilateral agreements or unilateral liberalization.	Strong opposition to broadest or most economically impactful multilateral agreements, like TPP and NAFTA. No support for unilateral liberalization.	Support for unilateral or pro-development programs. Fiercest opposition to countries raising progressive concerns (e.g. on environment or labor rights).
<i>Texts:</i> topical content of letters/policy statements	Self-reliance/economic independence; patriotic or xenophobic themes; sovereign independence; opposition to international cooperation.	Jobs, job loss and wages; offshoring and outsourcing; deindustrialization and economic harms; consequent non-economic harms.	Human/labor rights; environmental concerns; corporate or elite power; inequality and economic justice.
<i>Participation of unions:</i> variation across unions and agreements in joining anti-trade coalitions.	Union participation is not driven by partner features, but by extent of right-wing nationalist views among members.	Unions participate more when facing import-competition and threats from offshoring especially if work is routinized or blue collar.	Unions more active when partner countries have poor labor rights or environmental records, especially unions with concerns on these issues.

Hiscox, 2002). If workers are stuck in their industries, labor as a class will be divided. Workers in comparative advantage industries will support trade; workers in comparative disadvantage industries will oppose trade.

Recent work suggests that labor's preferences over trade may be even more highly articulated. First, exposure to offshoring varies substantially across professions and types of jobs, and has no one-to-one relationship with skill level (Owen and Johnston, 2017). Second, firm-level drivers of workers' preferences are operative (Dancygier and Walter, 2015). Workers employed in larger export-competitive firms may be less threatened by trade, for example, although those same large firms are more likely to offshore production or outsource stages of the production process abroad. Finally, a large literature has investigated programs or institutions to compensate trade's losers.⁹ The availability and efficacy of such programs, and micro-level variation in ability to move across industries and space, are frontier questions on the attitudes of workers towards globalization.

Most of the work described above focuses on the distributive consequences of trade liberalization as a driver of policy preferences. Labor unions play a secondary role in the sense that their specific activities, organization, and particular attitudes (which may differ from workers') are not the focus of investigation. Other scholarship places unions themselves at the center of analysis. Ahlquist and Levi (2013) and Kim and Margalit (2017) focus on the role that labor unions play in shaping the positions and voting of their memberships on trade-related issues.¹⁰ The power of labor unions in FDI regulation is discussed in Owen (2015, 2013), which finds that industries with higher levels of unionization are more likely to have higher restrictions on inward FDI.¹¹ Labor unions have also received attention in the study of labor rights provisions of free trade agreements (Kim, 2012; Lechner, 2016; Raess, Dür and Sari, 2018).

Workers and unions have typically turned to parties of the left to represent their views on trade and other issues. For example, the US Democratic Party has long-running links to the labor movement, and unions are core constituencies and sources of organizational strength for the party. As a consequence, labor-centered protectionism represents one important strand of anti-trade ideology on the political left (Dutt and Mitra, 2005). This generality requires two immediate qualifications. First, centrist or internationalist Democrats have forcefully supported trade liberalization and global economic integration. Second, some Republican politicians have successfully used anti-trade appeals to secure union votes. Reagan Democrats and the Trump presidential campaign are prominent examples. For this reason, one cannot describe all union opposition to trade as being 'left-wing' although the links between unions and the Democratic party

⁹ Walter (2017); Rommel and Walter (2018); Owen and Johnston (2017); Hays, Ehrlich and Peinhardt (2005).

¹⁰Labor's opposition to trade received significant attention in the debate over NAFTA (Steagall and Jennings, 1996; Engel and Jackson, 1998).

¹¹See also Pond (2018).

are certainly stronger, more enduring, and more far-reaching than with the Republican party.

Collectively, scholarship on workers and unions describe a ‘protectionist’ theory of non-producer opposition to trade with close but not exclusive ties to the left. If interest group opposition to trade primarily fits this ‘protectionist’ model, then several patterns in the mobilization of interest group coalitions are expected to arise. First, opposition to trade should be primarily concentrated among workers and their labor unions. Second, protectionist opponents of trade should be particularly opposed to liberalization with large and competitive economies. They should also oppose unilateral or unequal forms of liberalization where market access in the United States is not matched to any improved market access in a partner market. Unilateral liberalization with developing countries with large endowments of (unskilled) labor should be particularly threatening. Third, the substantive content of opposition to trade should feature concerns about import competition, offshoring, job loss, and wages. Finally, opposition to trade should be concentrated among unions representing particular types of workers (e.g. performing routine jobs in offshorable industries) or workers in import-competing industries.

Progressive opposition to trade

Progressive opposition to trade arises from a commitment to reform the global economy in line with values associated with the progressive left. These are commitments to economic justice and reduced economic inequality domestically and globally; to human rights, in particular labor rights and the protection of disempowered minority groups; to reduce the political and economic power of large corporations and other owners of capital; and, to the protection of the environment. While one approach has been to view these commitments as a stalking horse for protectionism, contemporary scholarship emphasizes the sincere belief of left-wing voters and groups in these goals (Ehrlich, 2018). In this way, preferences over trade are truly multidimensional (Ehrlich, 2010).

One important facet of a progressive critique of trade is that globalization has been designed to further the interests of elite corporations. In this view, trade liberalization (and associated changes in the regulation of foreign investment and short-term capital movements) have empowered large corporations at the expense of SMEs and family farms, and so contributed to a growing concentration of economic and political power. Globalization has also allowed MNCs to avoid proper taxation and so induced a race to the bottom among states in tax policy, and regulatory arbitrage more generally. Trade may also reinforce global inequality, particularly where trade rules are written to deny access of developing markets to the developed world (as in agriculture) or to strengthen the property rights and legal-institutional advantages of large corporations.

At the same time, some progressives see the benefits of ‘fair trade’. This includes efforts to grant special access to the developed world markets through the Generalized System of Preferences or a re-designed WTO approach focused on development. Fair trade also takes a micro-level approach,

focused on cultivating smaller or family-owned businesses in the developing world or on the proper remuneration of developing world workers and entrepreneurs. Thus anti-trade progressivism may be less opposed to global commerce, per se, than the particular legal institutions and social practices which have shaped who takes the gains from trade in the current global order.

Progressives have also focused on the use of trade policy to further global human rights. Protections of foreign workers' rights is a particular focus: labor unions and human rights groups have played key roles in demanding protections for labor in trade agreements.¹² Efforts to tie preferential trade agreements to human rights are also encouraged by progressive groups (Hafner-Burton, 2005). Progressive voters and organizations also make protection of the environment a core feature of their calls for a revised globalization. The environmental movement has sought environmental commitments in trade agreements as one means to improve the impact of globalization on the environment (Bastiaens and Postnikov, 2017; Morin, Dür and Lechner, 2018). Mass support for the linkage of trade and environmental concerns has been demonstrated across several countries (Bernauer and Nguyen, 2015; Spilker, Bernauer and Umaña, 2018).

Progressive opposition to trade is a feature of the American left, particularly the progressive wing of the Democratic party and a variety of much smaller alternatives like the Green Party. Their anti-trade views are well-represented in the recent presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, but also in the earlier campaigns of Ralph Nader and Howard Dean. Anti-capitalist/anti-globalization mass movements received significant attention in the US and global debates on the creation of the WTO.¹³ Though not a centerpiece of these movements, progressive critiques of globalization are featured in Occupy Wall Street, MoveOn, and Black Lives Matter.¹⁴

The views of the voters, movements, organizations and politicians described above comprise a 'progressive' theory of left-wing opposition to trade. If trade opposition among interest groups primarily fits this model, then several patterns in anti-trade coalitions are expected to arise. First, progressive organizations should play a predominant role in anti-trade activism. Second, progressive opponents of trade are likely to be more concerned about a partner country's performance in human rights or the environment than about their economic size or competitiveness. They also might favor lopsided or unilateral forms of liberalization with developing countries if these programs are designed to pursue a development agenda. Third, the substantive content of opposition to trade should feature discussion of economic inequality, human and labor rights, the environment,

¹²Hafner-Burton (2011); Locke (2013); Postnikov and Bastiaens (2014); Malesky and Mosley (2018).

¹³Weir (2007); Seoane and Taddei (2002).

¹⁴There is a large literature on left-wing groups and trade politics in the European Union. (Dür and Mateo, 2014; Dür, Bernhagen and Marshall, 2015, E.g.). Dür and De Bièvre (2007) finds that NGOs have gained access to policy-makers but failed to secure commensurate policy victories. Scholars have investigated important facets of left-wing opposition to trade and globalization, e.g. on the environment (Bernauer and Nguyen, 2015), international economic institutions (Broz, 2011), and labor standards (Locke, 2013).

and other concerns with social/economic justice. Finally, opposition to trade among labor unions or workers should not necessarily be concentrated among trade unions facing the most intense import competition. For example, unions representing export-competing industries or non-tradable industries might be active, and they might activate over trade issues with countries that are not trade competitive but provide political opportunities on key progressive agenda items.

Trade Opposition among American Interest Groups

Our empirical investigation begins with collection of a new dataset on membership of non-producer interest groups in coalitions opposed to trade. We set out to collect information on any public anti-trade coalition from 2000-present with significant membership of non-producer groups, including issue organizations, political groups, charities, religious groups, labor unions, and other membership organizations. In so doing, we uncovered a rich vein of anti-trade coalition activity among these groups which has not been previously described.

At least one coalition of groups formed to oppose the following trade agreements: the Singapore and Chile FTAs; the Peru-US agreement; the (proposed) Free Trade Agreement of the Americas; AUSFTA; CAFTA-DR; the Oman FTA; the Colombia, Panama, and South Korea FTAs; the Trans-Pacific Partnership; the USMCA; and the proposed Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).¹⁵ We found no organized opposition to the trade agreements with Jordan, Morocco, and Bahrain. Looking beyond trade agreements, we also found no organized opposition to major trade initiatives including Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) for China, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and the Generalized System of Preferences program.¹⁶ However, we did find organized campaigns against Trade Promotion Authority in 2002, 2007, and 2015.

In addition to campaigns around specific issues, we found four permanent national anti-trade organizations that are constituted as coalitions: the Citizens' Trade Campaign (CTC), Coalition for a Prosperous America, Alliance for Responsible Trade and the Blue Green Alliance. The CTC is particularly important in anti-globalization advocacy and mobilization. It organized several of the largest *ad hoc* coalitions opposed to trade agreements that appear in our data. We also include an item in our data for groups that appeared in the CTC's state organizations committee, which is separate from its ordinary membership. Finally, we also uncovered 16 regional, state, or municipal anti-trade or fair trade coalitions which we incorporated as separate items in our data.

The campaign against the Trans-Pacific Partnership illustrates our data. The largest organization opposed to the agreement was a coalition formed by the Citizens' Trade Campaign. This

¹⁵We also include a 2018 coalition which issued a letter identifying priorities for a renegotiated NAFTA and heavily criticized the extant NAFTA as a separate item.

¹⁶Several of the US's largest labor unions and environmental groups (along with human rights and religious groups) separately opposed PNTR for China but not as part of a coalition.

coalition included over 1500 unions, NGOs, charities, religious organizations, and political groups. The coalition sent letters to members of Congress on the likely impacts of TPP on US jobs; the environment; food safety; access to medicines; human and political rights; and the power of investors. In addition to this main coalition, we found several other much smaller coalitions (e.g. of environmental groups, agriculture and food groups, and public health groups). Overall, 2519 separate groups joined coalitions opposing the agreement.

Our resulting data set is structured as a cross section of groups, where each row represents an individual group, for example, Iron Workers Local 397 or the Sierra Club. We then have 38 columns which record if the group joined a coalition opposing one of the issues noted above or any of the permanent groups. We add three additional pieces of information. First, we assign one or several of 21 group type labels to our groups depending on the main focus of their interests and political activities. These labels – ‘environmental’ for groups focused on the environment; ‘union’ for labor unions – allow us to summarize the types of groups that have joined these coalitions. The complete set of labels is reported in Table 3. Second, we match groups wherever possible to lobbying data cleaned and made available by the Center for Responsive Politics.¹⁷ Third, we match groups to data on political action committee (PAC) contributions also from the CRP.

Interest groups that have publicly opposed trade

To illustrate this data, Table 2 lists the 40 most active groups. We rank this ‘top 40’ by how many of the 17 trade agreements or fast track/TPA votes on which they joined coalitions, along with whether they ever joined the CTC. The most active group is Friends of the Earth, an environmental organization joined by the Sierra Club in the top 10. Other highly active groups include labor unions (Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO, Teamsters, and United Steelworkers); religious groups (the United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society); human rights NGOs (Global Exchange); and general progressive groups (Public Citizen).

Table 3 summarizes our data in its entirety. 5906 unique groups joined coalitions opposing US trade agreements and globalization, or in support of fair trade policies from 2000 to the present. Because some oppose multiple issues or join multiple organizations, our data represent 9650 separate instances of anti-trade activity. These numbers show the great scope of groups that have opposed trade in the US. We also see significant breadth across issues, for example, 2519 groups opposed the TPP and 1038 joined the coalition calling for NAFTA reform. 831, 371, 384, 369, and 421 opposed the Colombia, Korea, CAFTA-DR, Panama, and Oman agreements respectively. Less than 100 joined each of the remaining coalitions opposed to trade agreements. The three TPA coalitions from 2002, 2007, and 2015 had 9, 725, and 2229 members respectively. These numbers reflect a general ramping up of organized activity over the time period we examine.

¹⁷Both of these datasets are available for bulk download at www.opensecrets.org/bulk-data/.

Table 2: **Most-active opponents of trade in non-producer coalitions**

Group	Num.	Type(s)
Friends of the Earth	16	environment
AFL-CIO	15	union
Communications Workers of America (CWA)		union
International Brotherhood of Teamsters		union
Sierra Club		environment
United Methodist Church General Board		religious
United Steelworkers		union
Global Exchange	14	humanrights
National Family Farm Coalition		farming
Public Citizen		progressive;antiglob
Western Organization of Resource Councils	13	progressive;environment
Inst. for Agriculture and Trade Policy	10	farming;foodsyst
Int. Assoc. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers		union
National Farmers Union		farming
Progressive Democrats of America		progressive
Texas Fair Trade Coalition		fairtrade
UNITE HERE		union
Alliance for Democracy	9	progressive
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)		progressive
Citizens Trade Campaign		antiglob
Defenders of Wildlife		environment
Family Farm Defenders (WI)		farming
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers		union
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers		union
Jobs With Justice		laborrights;religious
United Students Against Sweatshops		laborrights
Witness for Peace		forpolicy
American Federation of Teachers Texas	8	union
California Farmers Union		farming
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Lat. Am.		religious
Comms. Workers of America Local 37083 WashTech		union
Dakota Resource Council		progressive
Maine Fair Trade Campaign		fairtrade
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns		forpolicy;religious
Ohio Farmers Union		farming
Rainforest Action Network		environment
Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees		union
United Steelworkers Local 1188		union
Washington Fair Trade Coalition		fairtrade
Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition		fairtrade

Notes: Groups are ranked according to number of trade issues (trade agreements and TPA authorizations) for which they joined anti-trade coalitions plus one if they ever joined the Citizens Trade Campaign. The highest possible total is 18; 16 is the highest actually observed.

Table 3: Group types across anti-trade coalitions

	Number of groups:		
	In coalitions	Lobbying	Contributing
Labor organizations: 37.6% of total / 42.6% of memberships			
Union locals and branches	2086	14	16
National labor unions	132	34	56
Identity groups: 19.5% of total/ 19.6% of memberships			
Progressive	546	10	39
Religious	304	2	2
Ethnocultural	229	6	3
Women's rights	72	3	4
Environment: 16.8% of total / 16.5% of memberships			
Environmental	715	20	18
Farming	168	1	3
Food systems	108	2	0
Rights groups: 6.2% of total / 7.2 % of memberships			
Labor rights	190	2	0
Human rights	174	5	2
Domestic development: 5.7% of total / 5.0% of memberships			
Community development	212	4	1
Public health	85	5	0
Consumer	39	1	3
Foreign policy: 3.6% of total / 4.5% of memberships			
Foreign policy	125	4	1
Anti-globalization	47	2	2
Foreign development	41	12	0
Company	348	-	-
Trade associations	42	-	-
Other	70	10	2
Total	5906	150	152

Notes: Percentage figures are percentage of groups of some type that ever joined any-anti-trade coalition (on left); and, percentage of some type that joined coalitions weighted by the number of issues/permanent coalitions on which active (on right). The 5906 groups were active 9650 times overall. Group counts may be fractional because some groups have multiple types which are allocated across types; counts are rounded to nearest integer.

The most interesting feature of Table 3 is the variation in numbers across the different group types. Unions are the most common group that has opposed trade representing 37.6% of all groups in our data. Much of this size is driven by local chapters of a small set of large, politically active national unions. 877 chapters of the United Steelworkers joined coalitions, for example.

Second most active are groups representing political, religious, ethnic and gender identity-based interests. These are 19.5% of the data. For example, the subcategory of broadly progressive-oriented political groups includes chapters of Occupy Wall Street; Americans for Democratic Action; Democratic Socialists of America; and the Green Party. Interestingly, we see a lot of activity from left or progressive-oriented religious groups, for example, Methodist, Presbyterian and Unitarian congregations or national organizations. Groups representing specific ethnicities or immigrant communities are also highly active, particularly on trade agreements with relevant home countries.

Table 4: **Lobbying and contributions among anti-trade groups**

	<u>Among non-producer groups</u>			<u>Among all groups</u>		
	All	Unions	Nonunion	All	Unions	Nonunion
Lobbying on trade by anti-trade groups:						
%-age lobby expenditures	60.4	51.7	8.7	2.1	1.8	0.3
PAC contributions by anti-trade groups:						
%-age campaign contributions	46.4	41.9	4.6	14.1	12.3	1.9
... to Democrats	66.7	62.5	4.2	23.5	21.7	1.8
... to Republicans	20.1	15.1	5.1	5.6	3.7	1.9

Notes: Lobbying and PAC contributions data are from Center for Responsive Politics. Non-producer lobbying groups exclude firms, trade associations, and other business associations (as coded by authors), but include all issue groups and unions. Non-producer PACs include issues groups (CRP code J) and unions (CRP code L). PAC data excludes candidate and party committees.

Third largest are groups from the environmental movement. (We include groups interested in farming and food systems under this umbrella, too.) Environmental NGOs, which are the second most active subcategory, play a fundamental role in populating and driving the interests of these coalitions as we show below. Rounding out the groups participating, we see significant action in human and labor rights (6.2% of total); domestic development and public health (5.7% of total); and groups with interests in foreign policy and foreign development (3.6% of total).

Looking over these groups, and considering the important role of the Citizens Trade Campaign and other left-wing national organizations, the dominance of left-oriented groups is evident. It is also worth highlighting what we did not find: organized right-wing, populist, or nationalist opposition to globalization. None of the coalitions that we uncovered in our investigation were primarily organized or composed of groups representing the American right.¹⁸ We did locate a few organizations within our data with a nationalist slant, e.g., the American Jobs Alliance or the Made in America Movement. However, these groups were only a small subset of the anti-globalization groups in our data, were often explicitly non-partisan despite their right-wing orientation, and lack the resources and recognition of our most active left-wing groups. Therefore, it seems that populist or right-wing anti-globalization, for the time being, remains an essentially popular phenomenon with limited interest group mobilization.

In addition to looking at participation in public coalitions, we also examine lobbying and campaign contributions. On lobbying, for which we can determine a specific interest in trade, we present all left-wing or progressive groups that lobbied on trade from 1998-2016 in Table 3. These are only 150 separate groups. Only 67 of these 150 groups actually joined any anti-trade coalition. While these total numbers of unique groups are relatively modest, Table 4 shows their total lobby expenditures constitute an important share of lobby expenditures among issue groups and unions.

¹⁸The Coalition for a Prosperous America comes closest, and has been loudly supportive of the China trade war. CPA is the only majority-producer coalition in our data.

Groups that joined our anti-trade coalitions account for more than 60% of all lobbying on trade by non-producer groups; these expenditures are particularly dominated by unions (which are 51.7% of such expenditures). However, these groups account for only about 2.1% of all trade lobbying expenditures among all groups: our anti-trade groups' expenditures pale in comparison to producer groups' lobby spending.

We also examine the PAC contributions of the groups that have publicly opposed trade. We find that 152 of our groups joining anti-trade coalitions have directly given contributions. While the absolute numbers are again small, the shares of (non-candidate, non-party) PAC contributions are actually quite impressive. 46.4% of all non-producer group PAC contributions come from groups that have joined these anti-trade coalitions. (These are mostly, but not exclusively, unions.) 14.4% of contributions, whether from producers or not, come from our anti-trade groups. These patterns are particularly reinforced looking at contributions to Democratic party candidates.

Comparing the organization and political activities of these progressive trade opponents with trade's corporate supporters and opponents helps to contextualize what we have described. From NAFTA to the TPP, trade's supporters among firms and trade associations organized at least one ad hoc coalition for every major trade agreement or TPA fight but the Jordan FTA. Producer opponents of trade organized coalitions for only two FTAs. Trade's progressive opposition lie in the middle, organizing coalitions for 14 US FTAs and two reasonably sized coalitions on Fast Track/TPA. Trade's public supporters among producers play an absolutely outsized role in lobbying on trade, while trade's opponents among producers account for only a tiny share of lobbying expenditures. Trade's left-wing opponents lie in the middle in terms of both lobby spending and campaign contributions, though the lobby expenditures are modest in absolute terms.

Textual evidence on the interests of anti-trade coalitions

Our codings of the group 'types' provide an initial indication of the progressive motivations of the majority of groups that have joined anti-trade coalitions in the United States, though labor unions very active, too. To examine the interests of coalitions more rigorously, we consider the textual content of the letters or statements which they generally release. We found 41 such letters across the ad hoc coalitions contained in our data. In order to examine the content of these letters, we coded each paragraph of the letters with at least one of 76 possible topical tags. These tags include mentions of substantive issues (e.g. import competition, jobs, the environment, human rights, tax havens) but also non-substantive material like group introductions or general statements of positions which we do not include in our analysis of topical content. To facilitate presentation, we have bunched the 69 substantive tags we examine into nine thematic categories.

The results from this investigation are presented in Table 5 which lists the 40 most discussed topics (97% of the substantive discussion in the letters). The most discussed issue is the environ-

Table 5: **Topical content of anti-trade coalition letters**

	% pars	Rank		% pars	Rank
Environment, farming and food: 20.8% of paragraphs					
Environment	16.6	1	SPS/food safety	1.6	16
Farmers	2.1	12	Food systems	0.5	37
Trade agreement creation and enforcement: 16.1% of paragraphs					
Process (Fast Track/input)	13.1	2	Benchmark	1.4	18
Enforcement	1.6	17			
Corporate power: 14.3% of paragraphs					
Dispute/ISDS	6.3	3	Corporate power	3.6	8
IP rules	4.5	5			
Economic justice: 12.0% of paragraphs					
Foreign development	3.8	7	Small businesses	0.8	30
Immigration	2.5	11	Community dev.	0.7	32
Poverty	2.1	14	Economic growth	0.5	35
Inequality	1.3	20	Downstream industries	0.4	40
Human rights: 9.2% of paragraphs					
Labor rights	5.1	4	Racial justice	0.9	28
Human rights	1.7	15	Women's rights	0.4	39
Indigenous peoples	1.2	21			
Sovereignty concerns: 8.6% of paragraphs					
Regulatory sovereignty	3.2	9	Tax havens	0.8	29
Finance/banking	1.4	19	Capital controls	0.5	36
Govt procurement	1.2	22	Harmonization	0.4	38
Privatization	1.1	24			
Competition and protectionism: 7.4% of paragraphs					
Jobs	2.7	10	Import competition	1.1	26
Foreign investment	1.2	23	Offshoring	0.8	31
Wages/pay	1.1	25	Currency manipulation	0.5	34
Public health: 5.9% of paragraphs					
Pharma/Medicines	3.8	6	Public health	2.1	13
Other topics: 1.6% of paragraphs					
Consumers	1.0	27	Security implications	0.6	33

Notes: Paragraphs are assigned one or more of 76 topical tags; only 69 substantive topics are included in the denominator. Paragraphs with multiple topic tags are allocated proportionally to the topics. ‘% of pars’ indicates the percentage of all paragraphs focused on a given topic; rank indicates the ranking of that topic among all topics. Only the top 40 most-discussed topics are provided above, which represent about 97% of all substantive discussion.

ment, along with related concerns about small farms (both at home and abroad), SPS measures, and food systems. Procedural concerns around Fast Track/Trade Promotion Authority and the process of collecting input from stakeholders were also widespread. The next set of most common issues include wide-ranging progressive critiques around corporate power, economic justice, human and labor rights, and national sovereignty (in regulatory affairs particularly). Strikingly, only in 7th place do we see direct discussion of foreign competition and protectionism, which is most heavily focused on concern about American workers’ jobs and wages, especially the threat of offshoring. That being said, we acknowledge that discussion of environmental or labor standards may reflect

protectionist motives. Public health topics and a set of residual concerns about other topics round out the list. We find the overwhelming focus of these letters on progressive concerns to be striking but not surprising given the membership of the groups described above.

Surveying our evidence on groups opposed to trade in the US, we advance the following conclusions. Collective mobilization of non-producer groups to oppose trade is widespread and significant over the past two decades. This opposition has primarily come from unions and other groups with a leftward bias in their interests or that are traditional Democratic or progressive constituencies. These groups have shown considerable organizational skill in opposing international trade, forming over 40 ad hoc coalitions and 20 permanent alliances. A small but active subset of these groups also engage in lobbying and campaign contributions, though the total scale of these activities, particularly lobbying, are noticeably smaller when compared with trade's proponents in corporate America. Unions are far more active in these individual activities than non-unions.

The general orientation of the groups and the textual evidence show they are primarily concerned with what we have termed progressive opposition to globalization rather than opposition rooted in protectionist fears of import competition. Right-wing nationalist concerns are almost totally absent among the members of anti-trade coalitions, and no coalition has formed with a specific nationalist orientation. It is striking the extent to which these groups have not mobilized on unilateral US liberalizations (GSP, AGOA), and were extremely mobilized on liberalization with countries that are no major trade threat but which provoked concerns on labor rights (Colombia, Oman) and the environment (CAFTA-DR). We therefore refer in short to the set of organized anti-trade coalitions among non-producer groups as 'trade's progressive opposition', though we highlight that this summary glosses over important protectionist inclinations which we now examine.

Labor Unions' Opposition to Trade

Our findings on the importance of progressive motives in special interest groups' anti-trade activity raise important questions about the labor unions that join these coalitions. Are these unions truly motivated by the progressive themes highlighted in their public communications? Or are they driven by protectionist motives, and alliances with progressive groups are tactical, arising from shared ends – curtailed trade, weakened corporate power – rather than shared values? We ultimately conclude that labor unions' anti-trade activities reflect a mix of protectionist motives and sincerely held progressive beliefs about globalization's effects. Unions are therefore both allied to, and an integral part of, trade's progressive opposition.

Politically active unions’ participation in anti-trade coalitions

To understand the motives behind union participation in anti-trade activity, we examine variation in labor union participation in anti-trade coalitions across the different trade agreements in our data. For example, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union joined coalitions opposing the free trade agreement with Colombia but not the TPP. Is variation in opposition across these agreements driven by the intensity of foreign competition or by concerns about offshorability? Or is opposition driven by the level of respect for labor rights or environmental standards in partner countries in line with progressive anti-globalism?

We use the coalitions data introduced above to construct a panel of all unions – whether national or local – which ever joined one of our anti-trade coalitions. For each union, we record whether it joined a coalition on each of the trade agreements in our data.¹⁹ Our outcome is therefore dichotomous and the unit-of-analysis is the union-agreement. We call this variable *Joined opposing coalition_{ua}* where u represents a politically active union and a a particular trade agreement. The data has 28769 observations (2213 unions \times 13 trade agreements), and *Joined opposing coalition_{ua}* = 1 in just under 8% of observations. Because the presence of local unions might be seen as an undue inflation of our sample size, we reexamine all models using national unions only, where the sample size is at most 1651 (and the outcome is a 1 in 11% of observations).

Our first explanatory variable is an indicator for whether a union’s industries are net-importing or net-exporting in relation to the trade agreement’s partner(s). To construct this measure, called *Net-importing_{ua}* we use data on bilateral imports and exports of all of the union’s 4-digit industries with all of the partners in a trade agreement.²⁰ A union is net-importing if the sum of all of its industries imports’ from all agreement partners exceed exports. The use of fine-grained trade data restricts this analysis to the goods-producing industries only, represented as ‘G’ in the ‘Sample’ row of the tables. Following Owen and Johnston (2017), we also construct union-level measures of *Offshorability_u* and *Routinization_u*. The original measures of these concepts from Acemoglu and Autor (2011) are occupation-level; we map them to the finest level of NAICS industry possible

¹⁹The NAFTA renegotiations, which reflect opposition to the original NAFTA, and the USMCA coalition, which opposed the renegotiated agreement, are recorded separately, as in our data above. We exclude from the analysis opposition to a trade agreement with the EU, which has not reached a sufficient level of seriousness as a policy to merit significant activity (though roughly 70 of our groups preemptively formed a coalition opposing TTIP/TAFTA in 2013).

²⁰Trade data are from <https://relatedparty.ftd.census.gov/> and are summed over all years between 2005 and 2014. Codings of union industries were done by the authors. Labor federations or coalitions, like the AFL-CIO and its many regional committees, cover a broad array of industries and are not given individual industry codes. We call these ‘peak’ unions. Some unions currently cover a broad array of industries but also have clear current or historical industrial relationships, for example, the United Steelworkers, Teamsters, and United Auto Workers. For these unions, we employ codings of their main industries so that we can match them to industry-level data. We examine separate models where we treat these unions as ‘peak’ unions and find that our main results are similar.

(usually 6-, 4- or 3-digit) using industry occupation matrices supplied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We then average these industry measures across all industries covered by a union’s membership. Note that these measures do not vary across trade partners and are not available for ‘peak’ unions representing a broad array of industries. We therefore test the impact of these union features on unions serving clearly delimited goods and services industries (‘G+S’ in the tables).

We also include in our models measures of the trade partners’ labor rights practices and environmental standards. Our measure of country labor rights practices (*Partner labor rights_a*) comes from Mosley (2010). We use the composite labor rights measure (‘LaborRightsPos’), which is greater as labor rights improve. Our measure of environmental performance comes from Esty and Porter (2005), from which we use the ‘env_rank’ variable, which is reversed so higher values indicate better environmental regulation.²¹ Both variables are normalized to lie on a unit interval with the minimum country score at 0 and the maximum at 1. Because these variables are agreement partner features, we can analyze goods, services, and ‘peak’ unions covering broad arrays of industries (‘G+S+P’). We estimate models with these two country-level features separately due to our small sample of agreements, and address increasing the identifying variation in the next section. We use linear probability models in all specifications.

The results from our models are presented in Table 6. We find that protectionism is plausibly an important driver of unions’ participation in anti-trade coalitions. Unions are more likely to activate on agreements where they are net-importing relative to trade partners. A given goods industry union in our data is around 8% more likely to oppose an agreement when it is net-importing relative to the agreement partner(s). The results on offshorability and routinization are somewhat inconsistent across specifications, but the most common pattern in the results is that offshorability and routinization jointly drive opposition to trade from unions, as argued in Owen and Johnston (2017). Overall, we conclude that unions are more likely to join anti-trade coalitions where competition from foreign workers and producers is stronger.

At the same time, we also see that progressive motives are operative. Participation in coalitions occurs at noticeably lower rates when the agreement partner’s labor rights are strong or when environmental standards are high. The effects of these variables are noticeable, too. For example, moving *Partner labor rights* from its highest to its lowest value in the data (1 to 0) increases the predicted chance of participating in an anti-trade coalition by 16%. These effects are even larger among national unions. While it is possible that these associations might arise from fears about lower regulatory standards, these relationships hold conditional on net-importingness of the union relative to that trade partner. They are also identical in unreported models using continuous trade measures. We also examined models interacting partner labor or environmental standards with net-importingness of the industry. We found no evidence net-importing industries are especially

²¹This measure is not available for Oman.

Table 6: **Protectionist and Progressive Motives among Politically Active Unions**

	Joined opposing coalition _{ua}					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Panel of national and local unions that joined opposing coalitions:</u>						
Net-importing	0.08*** (0.00)	0.08*** (0.00)				
Offshorability	0.78*** (0.20)	0.56* (0.21)	-0.24*** (0.06)	-0.25*** (0.06)		
Routinization	0.47*** (0.13)	0.29+ (0.13)	-0.07+ (0.03)	-0.07+ (0.03)		
Offshor. · Rout.	-1.31*** (0.31)	-0.92** (0.32)	0.36*** (0.09)	0.39*** (0.09)		
Partner labor rights	-0.16*** (0.01)		-0.16*** (0.01)		-0.16*** (0.01)	
Partner env. standards		-0.11*** (0.01)		-0.10*** (0.01)		-0.10*** (0.01)
Intercept	-0.16+ (0.08)	-0.08 (0.08)	0.19*** (0.02)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.14*** (0.00)	0.12*** (0.00)
N	15223	14052	25051	23124	28769	26556
Sample	G	G	G+S	G+S	G+S+P	G+S+P
<u>Panel of national unions that joined opposing coalitions:</u>						
Net-importing	0.11* (0.04)	0.16*** (0.04)				
Offshorability	0.16 (0.59)	-0.26 (0.61)	-0.42* (0.15)	-0.46** (0.16)		
Routinization	0.25 (0.47)	0.05 (0.48)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.08 (0.08)		
Offshor. · Rout.	0.11 (1.02)	0.77 (1.05)	1.13*** (0.27)	1.16*** (0.28)		
Partner labor rights	-0.35*** (0.07)		-0.24*** (0.03)		-0.25*** (0.03)	
Partner env. standards		-0.19* (0.07)		-0.16*** (0.03)		-0.17*** (0.03)
Intercept	0.04 (0.24)	0.08 (0.25)	0.21*** (0.04)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.21*** (0.01)	0.18*** (0.01)
N	377	348	1261	1164	1651	1524
Sample	G	G+S	G+S+P	G+S+P	G+S	G+S

Notes: Outcome variable is *Joined opposing coalition_{ua}* measuring whether union *u* joined coalition opposing trade agreement *a*. All models are linear probability models using OLS. G = unions representing (at least some) goods industries; S = unions representing service industries only; P = ‘peak’ unions representing a broad array of industries. National and local unions joining coalitions are any union HQ, branch, local, or committee that joined at least one of the opposing coalitions in our data. Locals are union branches or locals that have a parent union at the national level.

vocal about opposing agreements when labor rights are poor, for example.

Extension to all national unions

In this section we address important extensions of the above analysis. First, we include unions who have never joined an anti-trade coalition. Their non-participation may reveal important patterns about union attitudes on trade. Second, we collect data on additional union-level features that might drive political engagement but which are only available for national unions in the US. Third,

we incorporate inter-union variation in self-expressed progressive motives in order to expand our identifying variation for testing a progressive theory of union anti-trade activity.

Accomplishing these goals required construction of an alternative panel of national unions. To do so, we employed data provided by the Office of Labor-Management and Standards at their Online Public Disclosure Room portal.²² We queried the database for all union national headquarters active after 2011, and then restricted that sample to national unions with either 100 recorded members or \$10000 in receipts. This left 138 unions as the foundation for our panel which we then matched to data on coalition memberships across trade agreements. Note that we have unions incorporated into our sample who have never politically engaged on trade issues. The OLMS-OPDR data also provide us with important union features which might predict political activity: total union receipts, number of members, and whether the union has a PAC.

We then used the websites of these unions to understand their specific interests in trade issues. Only 38 of the 138 national unions had any mention of trade issues on their websites. 19 of these mentioned labor rights issues as a specific concern around globalization. 15 of these mentioned environmental concerns in the context of their positions on trade.²³ We use these web mentions to construct two variables: *Website labor rights_u* is a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if the union mentioned labor rights concerns around globalization. *Website environment_u* is defined analogously. We then ask the following question: are the labor unions that express an interest in labor rights issues more likely to oppose trade agreements with partners that have worse labor rights records? If so, then we argue that these statements are likely sincere expressions of concern about these issues, particularly conditional on import competition and susceptibility to automation and offshoring.

The results from this analysis are contained in Table 7. As in our previous results, we find that net-importingness remains a positive correlate of participation in anti-trade coalitions. Offshorability and routinization also jointly predict opposition to trade. We again find that worse partner labor rights or environmental standards are linked to a greater chance of opposition. However, we also find that the effects of weakened standards are particularly strong for unions that have expressed concerns about labor rights or environmental standards on their websites. In other words, particular American unions are self-describing labor rights and the environment as motivating concerns, and those unions are especially likely to oppose trade agreements with partners with poor records on those dimensions. These patterns hold when controlling for important features of union's exposure to trade competition. The simplest interpretation of these findings is that some labor unions have genuine progressive concerns around labor rights and the environment which drive, at least in part, their anti-trade activism.

²²<https://olms.dol-esa.gov/olpdr/>.

²³By way of comparison, 30 of 38 mentioned concerns about jobs or wages and 14 mentioned offshoring specifically.

Table 7: **Protectionist and Progressive Motives among Panel of National Unions**

	Joined opposing coalition _{ua}					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Panel of national unions:</u>						
Net-importing	0.08* (0.03)	0.10** (0.03)				
Offshorability	-0.48 (0.48)	-0.46 (0.52)	-0.23* (0.10)	-0.27* (0.11)		
Routinization	-0.02 (0.32)	0.12 (0.33)	-0.27*** (0.06)	-0.23*** (0.06)		
Offshor. · Rout.	1.00 (0.87)	0.92 (0.93)	0.76*** (0.18)	0.85*** (0.19)		
Website Labor Rights	0.42*** (0.07)		0.28*** (0.03)		0.32*** (0.03)	
Partner labor rights	-0.05 (0.06)		-0.08** (0.02)		-0.07** (0.02)	
Web LR · Partner LR	-0.60*** (0.12)		-0.25*** (0.06)		-0.25*** (0.06)	
Web Environment		0.32*** (0.09)		0.21*** (0.04)		0.24*** (0.03)
Partner env. standards		-0.06 (0.06)		-0.05 (0.03)		-0.05+ (0.02)
Web Env · Partner env.		-0.37+ (0.17)		-0.18* (0.07)		-0.16* (0.07)
In Receipts	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
In Members	0.03* (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Has PAC	-0.12+ (0.06)	-0.13 (0.07)	0.05* (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Intercept	-0.45** (0.16)	-0.54** (0.16)	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.12* (0.04)	-0.11** (0.03)	-0.13*** (0.03)
N	377	348	1430	1320	1794	1656
Industries	G	G	G+S	G+S	G+S+P	G+S+P

Notes: Outcome variable is *Joined opposing coalition_{ua}* measures whether union *u* joined coalition opposing trade agreement *a*. All models are linear probability models using OLS. G = unions representing (at least some) goods industries; S = unions representing service industries only; P = ‘peak’ unions representing a broad array of industries. National unions are national union HQs based in the US with at least 100 members or \$10000 in receipts, and operating after 2011.

Textual evidence on Unions

To further investigate the motives of America’s national unions in participating in trade politics, we do a detailed investigation of textual evidence of their trade positions. We scoured the 138 national unions’ webpages focused on pages labeled ‘issues’, ‘public policy’, ‘campaigns’, ‘activism’, and so on for general positions about international trade and globalization issues. If we were unable to find positions on trade generally, we searched for statements on one of three recent issues: the TPP, the USMCA, and the China trade war. As noted above, we found statements from 38 unions. We then topically coded the documents in exactly the same manner that we did the coalition letters examined in Table 5.

In Table 8, we find that concerns about foreign competition are preeminent in labor unions’ discussions of trade issues, particularly a heavy focus on jobs, offshoring, and concerns about pay.

Table 8: **Topical content of union trade statements**

	% pars	Rank		% pars	Rank
Environment, farming and food: 4.4% of paragraphs					
Environment	3.2	10	Farmers	0.3	40
SPS/food safety	0.9	23			
Trade agreement creation and enforcement: 9.5% of paragraphs					
Process (Fast Track/input)	7.9	3	Benchmark	0.3	39
Enforcement	1.3	18			
Corporate power: 13.2% of paragraphs					
Corporate power	6.7	6	Dispute/ISDS	1.1	21
IP rules	5.4	7			
Economic justice: 14.1% of paragraphs					
Inequality	4.6	8	Foreign development	0.8	26
Infrastructure	2.8	11	Trade adj. assistance	0.8	27
Community dev.	2.2	13	Immigration	0.7	31
Poverty	1.4	16	Economic growth	0.7	33
Human rights: 16.0% of paragraphs					
Labor rights	10.6	2	Human rights	1.8	14
Mobilization	3.6	9			
Sovereignty concerns: 3.5% of paragraphs					
Regulatory sovereignty	1.6	15	Finance/banking	0.4	36
Privatization	1.2	19	Government procurement	0.3	38
Competition and protectionism: 29.8% of paragraphs					
Jobs	12.1	1	For. barriers remain	0.7	32
Offshoring	7.1	4	Import competition	0.6	34
Wages/pay	6.9	5	Dom. barriers remain	0.4	35
Trade deficits	0.9	24	FDI	0.4	37
Currency manipulation	0.7	30			
Public health: 1.9% of paragraphs					
Pharma/Medicines	1.0	22	Public health	0.9	25
Other topics: 2.0% of paragraphs					
Consumers	1.0	27	Security implications	0.6	33

Notes: Paragraphs are assigned one or more of 76 topical tags; only 69 substantive topics are included in the denominator. Paragraphs with multiple topic tags are allocated proportionally to the topics. ‘% of pars’ indicates the percentage of all paragraphs focused on a given topic; rank indicates the ranking of that topic among all topics. Only the top 40 most-discussed topics are provided above, which represent about 98.6% of all substantive discussion.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, labor rights and concerns about corporate power are also major topics. We see significant secondary discussions of issues around economic justice, sovereignty, the environment, human rights, and public health that are consistent with progressive critiques of globalization.

Surveying our evidence on labor unions’ political activity around trade, we advance the following conclusions. Labor unions’ decisions about which issues to engage on plausibly reflect a mix of both protectionist and progressive motives. On one hand, unions are more active in opposing agreements when their industry is at a comparative disadvantage, and unions whose members are more vulnerable to offshoring are more active, too. Unions’ web statements on trade and globalization highlight

most prominently their concerns about jobs, offshoring, and foreign competition. However, unions are also active in opposing agreements with countries with poor labor and environmental standards even conditional on the competitiveness of those partners. Unions have been very active in opposing trade issues where foreign competition is not a plausible concern but progressive concerns about human and labor rights are, and they describe these concerns in some detail on their websites. They have also not formed coalitions to oppose unilateral pro-development forms of liberalization. Perhaps most importantly, they have closely allied themselves with progressive groups in order to oppose trade and they have allowed a progressive message to take center stage in those coalitions' communications. Overall, unions are driven by both protectionist and progressive concerns in their anti-trade activity.

Conclusion

Organized interest group opposition to trade in the US is centered on left-wing groups. They have formed *ad hoc* coalitions and permanent groups of considerable size across a wide array of trade issues. The largest national organizations among these groups, especially unions, account for significant shares of lobbying and campaign expenditures among non-producer groups. In contrast, right-wing or populist anti-trade groups have not effectively formed their own coalitions; are a tiny share of other coalitions; and are essentially inactive in lobbying and contributions.

This left-wing interest group opposition to trade is more 'progressive' than 'protectionist', though both tendencies are certainly present. Non-union progressive groups form the majority of anti-trade coalitions, and their concerns absolutely dominate the texts produced by these coalitions as part of their public campaigns. Allied labor unions express a mixture of both protectionist and progressive concerns on their websites, and the patterns in union participation in anti-trade coalitions also evince a mixture of both concerns. Finally, it is striking the extent to which both groups have not opposed unilateral liberalizations focused on foreign development but have strongly opposed liberalizations with countries with poor records on human rights, labor rights, and the environment. Organized interest group opposition to trade in the US is best summarized as 'trade's progressive opposition', though there is nuance beyond that headline.

What have been the effects of this opposition? We leave systematic investigation of this question for future work, but we highlight at this point three impacts. First, trade's progressive opponents and allied unions have cultivated representation in the Congress and the Democratic Party. The House of Representatives, in particular, has a significant share of members that vote in a progressive fashion on trade issues, many of whom are members of the Congressional progressive caucus. Although these members are a minority, they raise progressive concerns around trade agreements. Democrats outside of the the Congress – from presidential candidates down to local elections –

have also been influenced by progressive anti-globalization.

Second, trade's progressive opponents have shaped the trade agenda of the Congress and the Democratic Party platform. Progressives successfully fought to make the labor standards and the environment a principle trade negotiating objective in the Trade Act of 2002. These demands were reinforced in the "May 10th agenda". The TRADE Act and "Better Deal" economic blueprint are more recent efforts by Democrats to reshape trade policymaking, though they lead to no passed legislation. The 2016 Democratic Party platform summarized Democrats' trade positions with a characteristic mix of progressive and protectionist concerns:

While we believe that openness to the world economy is an important source of American leadership and dynamism, we will oppose trade agreements that do not support good American jobs, raise wages, and improve our national security. We believe any new trade agreements must include strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards in their core text with streamlined and effective enforcement mechanisms. Trade agreements should crack down on the unfair and illegal subsidies other countries grant their businesses at the expense of ours. It should promote innovation of and access to lifesaving medicines. And it should protect a free and open internet. We should never enter into a trade agreement that prevents our government, or other governments, from putting in place rules that protect the environment, food safety, or the health of American citizens or others around the world.

Finally, progressive concerns have had a tangible impact on the content of US trade agreements. The May 10th agreement led to fully enforceable labor and environmental provisions in US trade agreements of the Obama era. Modernizing these provisions was a particular focus of the TPP negotiations and the negotiation of the USMCA. Progressives have successfully fought against certain extensions of IP or dispute settlement rights for corporations. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that anti-trade progressives have had fewer outright victories than America's pro-globalization firms and industries. Their record of organizational success and ongoing, but modest, political impact suggests that they will continue to work as the most vital ideological component among America's anti-trade interest group coalitions.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following additional materials are available in the online appendices:

Appendix A: Data.