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Parties and Interests Groups in the CPTPP Ratification Process in Chile: A Case of Politicisation?

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Abstract

The article examines the strategies employed by Chilean political parties and interest groups in their efforts to politicise the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). To achieve this goal, political entrepreneurs and anti-trade lobbies have opposed the CPTPP using a distinct strategy to shape the debate. They expanded the scope of topics, mobilising political action from various groups, such as environmentalists, unions, indigenous activists and advocates for gender equality, amongst others. Furthermore, this strategy involves shifting the discourse away from the traditional dichotomy of free trade versus protectionism and redirecting the debate toward ideological and cultural dimensions, such as legitimacy and sovereignty. Ultimately, this approach helps explain the debate gridlock and the prolonged duration of the legislative process leading to ratification of the CPTPP.

Introduction

In March 2018, the Chilean president, Michelle Bachelet, signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). She said, “Today we are proud to conclude this process, sending a strong message to the international community that the opening of markets, economic integration and international cooperation are the best tools for creating economic opportunities and prosperity” (La Tercera, 2018). These words, together with the 33 Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) already ratified by Chile, are illustrative of the consensus that existed at the time about the benefits of openness to trade

and the limited controversiality of the issue. Nothing could have predicted that the ratification of the CPTPP would take almost five years in the National Congress,¹ or more precisely

¹ In other countries, the difference between the date of signing and ratification reinforces the idea that the delay in Chile in the case of the CPTPP was exceptional: United States (209), Australia (204), Mexico (407), Japan (160), Malaysia (706), Peru (922) and Vietnam, (782), all in number of days.

1,811 days from the date of its signing to congressional ratification, far greater than that experienced by any of the PTAs signed by the country.

Why was the ratification of this treaty held up for so long? The question is puzzling because Chile had reached a strong general consensus of the non-negative impacts of PTAs and did not entertain opinions favouring protectionism or restrictions on the openness model (Ffrench-Davis, 2022).

This article proposes and tests empirically an explanation of the prolonged process of ratification of the CPTPP. The explanation is based on the idea that trade policy was politicised by “political entrepreneurs” and interest groups (IGs) that mobilised against ratification. These actors were opposed to free trade and found in PTAs a window of opportunity to meld different interests. In 2016 the CPTPP generated demonstrations against the signing of a trade agreement without precedent in Chile. However, they alone cannot account for the stagnant ratification process, a point further evident when considering similar mobilizations in European Union (EU) countries against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

The literature on the politicisation of trade policy has focused mainly on the EU (i.e., Andrienne-Moylan, De Wilde 2011; De Wilde and Raube 2023; De Bièvre et al. 2020). Here it is extended to the Latin American context that has been little explored. Three hypotheses are formulated. The first is that the side mobilised against the CPTPP is composed of a greater range of IGs while the coalition that promotes the agreement is more monothematic and consists mainly of business groups (**Hypothesis of Diverse Coalitions**). Second, with respect

to discursive strategies, it is expected that political entrepreneurs (new left parties challenging the status quo) and the IGs opposed to the treaty to include a greater number of topics in their interventions (**Hypothesis of the Scope of Topics**). Third, that these same political entrepreneurs as well as those activists and lobbies against the treaty would try to channel the debate towards its allegedly negative aspects, such as its implications for sovereignty, transparency and democratic legitimacy (**Hypothesis of Discursive Polarisation**).

This article not only accounts for the direct lobbying activities of IGs but also analyses 4,462 quasi sentences used by legislators in their interventions and 1,453 by IGs during every year of the CPTPP’s journey through parliament. The results show that: i) the IGs opposed to the treaty referred to a far wider range of topics than those defending it; ii) pro-CPTPP right-wing legislators were more monothematic in their interventions; iii) the speeches of legislators and activists against the treaty focused more on issues of legitimacy and sovereignty, while those who were in favour stuck to defending its economic benefits and underscoring procedural issues.

Politicisation: political entrepreneurs and interest groups

The research of trade politicisation has focused mainly on the EU and only recently (Andrione-Moylan, De Wilde and Raube, 2023; De Bièvre and Poletti, 2020; Diuna, 2019). Historically, negotiations over EU trade agreements were characterised by low levels of politicisation (Young, 2019; 2017). This dynamic changed significantly with the debate on TTIP and the CETA. In both agreements, there was acute politicisation and there were protests as well (Diuna, 2019; BBC, 2017). The concept of politicisation refers to an “increase in polarisation of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are advanced towards policy formulation (...)” (De Wilde, 2011: 566). Greater politicisation typically translates into a lower likelihood (or a greater cost) of PTAs being ratified. Politicisation has two dimensions that we explore in this article, each of which brings with it observable differences in the behaviour of political entrepreneurs and anti-trade lobbies. First, an expansion of the audiences and actors who are attentive to and mobilise around the

43 debate. Second, polarisation, which is related to the adoption of more extreme positions on
44 integration and trade (De Wilde, et.al, 2016).
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47 How can politicisation occur if there is no majority against trade in public opinion, or more
48 so, if it supports trade liberalisation? The answer can be found in the role played by political
49 agency (Young, 2019; Schimelfenning, 2020). Trade policy politicisation requires agents
50 with the will and capacity to confront the status quo, as has been noticed more generally with
51 international cooperation (De Vries, Hobolt et al., 2021: 316). These agents are commonly
52 non-mainstream political parties. By seeking to mobilise around issues or dimensions which
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are not predominant (e.g. trade policy) they aspire to attract new voters and activists (De Vries and Hobolt, 2012).

This dynamic does not develop in a vacuum and requires a “political opportunity structure” (De Vries et al., 2021). An example is the electoral system of proportional representation—more permissive than majority systems—which enable political entrepreneurs to induce “public contestation over international cooperation”. In Chile's case, the “opportunity” was an institutional change, the 2015 Electoral Reform that increased the size of electoral districts and, as a result, reduced the thresholds for gaining parliamentary representation (Alemán, 2023). The reform thus provided incentives for the entry of new parties. Of particular importance was the entry of a new political bloc, the “Frente Amplio”, into the 2018-2022 legislature. The member parties of this conglomerate subscribed to a position openly critical of the country’s trade policies, something relatively new in the party system. In fact, the 2017 electoral platform of the Frente Amplio’s presidential candidate² announced that “we will sign no more free trade agreements until the criteria for subscription have been updated, including by democratising the processes.” The strategic mobilisation of these political entrepreneurs against the CPTPP in Chile resembled those of Podemos in Spain and other Eurosceptic parties hostile to free trade agreements like the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) and CETA (Ivaldi et al., 2017).

Together with challenger parties, another kind of agent that can induce trade policy politicisation are the opposing lobbies or activist groups. The literature examines how interest groups (IGs) sustain opposition to trade through grassroots mobilizations and campaigns (Dür and Mateo, 2014; Gheyle and De Ville, 2019; De Bièvre and Poletti, 2020), as well as

their impact on the viability of bilateral Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) (Grossman and Helpman 2002).

It is anticipated that lobbies, in collaboration with political entrepreneurs, will exert a considerable influence on polarisation and expand the scope of their interventions to encompass a wider range of issues. This article begins with the underlying notion that if

² Beatriz Sánchez won 20.27% of the votes in the first round.

politicisation is evident in any context, it is most prominently manifested in the mobilisation of activists opposing trade and in the discursive strategies employed by challenger parties or political entrepreneurs. With this premise in mind, the article undertakes an analysis of the two primary dimensions of politicisation.

a) *Expansion of the scope of topics*. This dimension of trade politicisation is linked to the notion of *conflict expansion* formulated by Schattschneider (1960; 1957). Socialisation of the conflict, notes Schattschneider (1957), is a strategy more frequently used by those actors whose preferences are distanced from the status quo and who see themselves as harmed by a particular (political) result. The purpose of this socialisation is to “expand the community” that mobilises around a particular regulation or policy. For example, the result of the “conflict expansion” over trade policy in the EU was precisely the joining of forces by actors that had previously had no relation with each other (Daviter, 2009).

As for IGs opposed to trade, the literature shows that in the United States, for example, the groups opposed to NAFTA sought to frame the issue in such a way that it brought together disparate and even antagonistic perspectives with a discourse that merged environmental, labour issues and indigenous rights. The strategy was to expand the audience to which the activist coalition sought to appeal with its anti-trade stance (Kay and Evans, 2018). This observation is consistent with a trend the lobbying literature has identified: groups that defend causes that answer to the demands of different minorities establish a coalition-building dynamic that is different to other lobbying agents that defend monothematic causes (Dwidar, 2022a; Muñoz-Puig, 2023). All of this makes *lobbying together* an attractive strategy for

marginalised groups (Dwidar, 2022a). Under favourable conditions, interest groups will unite to collectively advocate for their interests, enhancing their likelihood of achieving success (Hula, 1999). This strategic approach aligns with (mentioned earlier) broadening the scope of the conflict. In particular, lobbies with limited resources are likely to display stronger incentives to establish coalitions (Beyers and De Bruycker, 2018). Anti-trade lobbies not only represent interests in a disadvantaged position with fewer resources, especially when compared to the business lobby, but also encompass groups that would suffer harm if the agreement were to be signed. Therefore, such groups would have greater incentives to

mobilise by forming more diverse lobbying coalitions (“lobbying together”). A first (descriptive) hypothesis follows:

Hypothesis of the Diverse Coalitions to Trade: *Anti-CPTPP interest groups formed a more diverse coalition compared to the groups that lobbied directly and indirectly in support of ratification (H1)*

An expansion of the conflict is also observable in the specific discursive strategies of the parties or political entrepreneurs opposed to the trade policy. This aligns perfectly with the literature, which underscores the strategic utilisation by opposing groups or politicians of a “polysemic injustice frame” concerning trade policy. This frame is sufficiently ambiguous to obtain support from and mobilise diverse groups and audiences (Siles-Brügge, 2017, 466). Such polysemic discourses are transformed into the hub or pivot that keeps a variety of actors together due to their discursive framing of the notion of injustice as the basic element (Siles-Brügge, 2017, 466). The use of this polysemic injustice frame fits with Frente Amplio’s accusatory stance on the economic model, trade included— the political entrepreneurs in this case do not define themselves as being an exclusively left-wing coalition (Titelman, 2019) and seek to represent different excluded causes. In the model, this greater propensity of activists opposed to trade to form coalitions should be observable in interventions that include more topics, particularly associated with the causes of disadvantaged groups who see themselves as harmed by the CPTPP. The hypothesis is:

Hypothesis of Expansion of Discursive Scope: *Political entrepreneurs against the CPTPP are likely to include more topics in their interventions than legislators in favour of ratification (H2).*

44 *b) Discursive polarisation.* The adoption of “polarising” postures is a path chosen by
45 political entrepreneurs to manipulate the prominence of an issue (De Vries and Hobolt, 2012).

47 The comparative literature shows that legislators opposed to PTAs adopt a more
48 confrontational tone in order to polarise the ratification debate, as occurred in the EU in the
49 cases of the TTIP and CETA. In these discourses, the technical component is given a low
50 profile while the conflictive aspects are emphasised (Migliorati and Vignoli 2022).

51 Opponents of trade policy, whether from Eurosceptic perspectives or the left, tend to
52 highlight broader ideological arguments against free trade. They also raise concerns about
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PTAs as potential instruments that might further entrench an anti-democratic model, potentially eroding state sovereignty, notably through mechanisms such as dispute resolution courts. In the EU, there is a greater impetus for politicisation on the non-mainstream party benches, as they face fewer constraints compared to established parties. This strategy can help them appeal to disaffected voters, as Schimelfenning (2020: 351) suggests. Conversely, De Ville and Gheyle (2023) show that parliamentarians and delegations from the social democrat or centrist blocs in the EU Parliament displayed a higher inclination to support a reformed version of the TTIP with, as predicted, less polarising interventions.

Following Hurrelmann & Wendler (2023), it is possible to classify debates on treaty ratifications in a continuum ranging from the most procedural issues at one end, through economic/sectoral ones, with questions of ideology and principle at the other end. Polarising strategies would be detectable from the greater intensity and prominence of normative affirmations about legitimacy or democracy (Migliorati and Vignoli, 2022). Accordingly, the more technical the debates in the EU, the less linguistic politicisation is to be expected (Pansardi and Tortola, 2022).

Regarding the role of anti-trade interest groups, the literature demonstrates that lobbying efforts from NGOs, citizen groups, unions, and environmental organisations do indeed impact trade policy through their critical stances (Dür and De Bièvre, 2007; Eliasson and Garcia-Duran, 2018). During the NAFTA and FTA debates in Canada, coalitions of anti-trade activists often included sectors marginalised by democratic institutions and established parties (Ayres, 1998). These groups were more inclined to adopt polarising discourses and question the democratic legitimacy of trade agreements. The Seattle protests brought together

various groups, united by their shared criticism of the WTO for what they perceived as
disempowering citizens and elected governments. This returns us to the earlier discussed
issue of legitimacy, which we can anticipate to be a recurring theme in the discourse of
interest groups and anti-trade activists, aligning with the analogous discursive strategies
employed by political entrepreneurs.

We should then expect both political entrepreneurs and anti-trade lobbies in Chile to polarise
the debate towards normative and ideological aspects. The hypothesis is:

Hypothesis of Discursive Polarisation: *Anti-CPTPP parties and lobbies are more likely to make interventions that include mentions of sovereignty and legitimacy compared to those who defend the treaty (H3).*

The case of the CPTPP in Chile

Chilean development has been characterised by an economic model of active trade liberalisation (Ffrench-Davis, 2022). The trade reform was initiated in the 1970s and continued to gain momentum in the subsequent decades through a combination of unilateral, preferential, and multilateral strategies. During the dictatorship period, Chile not only unilaterally reduced tariffs but also actively engaged in negotiations, initially on a multilateral scale, and pursued Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with its primary trading partners. Chile has consistently pursued a proactive trade policy, establishing Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with diverse economies and enhancing its trade tools. These include Strategic Association Agreements, encompassing economic, political, and cooperative aspects, as well as functional agreements addressing double taxation. Chile is a signatory to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), formerly known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) after the U.S. withdrawal. The CPTPP is renowned as a 21st-century trade pact, featuring intricate commitments that extend beyond traditional liberalisation, covering areas such as Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and state-owned enterprises. Following the U.S. withdrawal in February 2017, a collaborative effort among the remaining 11 countries led to the signing of the CPTPP, with partner countries including Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and Brunei Darussalam.

The negotiation of the TPP came under strong criticism for the lack of transparency, since it was understood that there was a strategy of not disseminating the documents. In response,

the Direcon (now Subrei) felt obliged to combat the mistrust, deploying major public relations efforts to demonstrate technically the benefits for the country. Critics were also related to mechanisms such as investor state dispute settlement, present in previous treaties. The CPTPP vote in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate revealed a division that was not present before, which signals a case of trade politicisation.

Chilean party and legislator positions on the CPTPP have similarities with European counterparts. Social democratic and centrist parties in Chile align with their European counterparts. For example, the German SDP had divisions on TTIP, while the Greens and AfD opposed it. In Spain, the ruling People's Party and Ciudadanos supported the treaty, while Podemos, a new left party, opposed it (Dür & Schlipphak, 2021). Unlike the centre-left parties that governed Chile since 1990, the new left parties in Chile, or political entrepreneurs, had not signed or voted on the trade liberalisation treaties in the National Congress, and thus, they faced different constraints.

Data and methods

The research design includes two sources. First, Chilean press websites, specifically *La Segunda*, *La Tercera*, *Diario Financiero*, *El Mercurio* and *SoyChile* (available in EMOL). Information searched was filtered for the period between 11 March, 2018 and 31 December, 2022 and keywords³ were used to search for the news items available. In parallel, all the hearings whose subject or descriptor was related to the treaty studied here were reviewed via the Lobby Law (www.infolobby.cl). Likewise, the minutes of committee sessions in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate between 2018 and 2022 were studied to register all the groups participating. Second, thousands of quasi sentences were recovered from the CPTPP legislative discussions contained in the History of Decree No. 318 recorded by the Library of Congress (BCN). The parliamentary procedures in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate were considered.

To test the hypotheses, all the interventions of legislators and IGs during the ratification

44 debate in the National Congress were analysed. Each intervention in committee and chamber
45 (in the case of legislators), was segmented into quasi-sentences (N=4,462, for the quasi-
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47 sentences of deputies and senators). Quasi sentences of IGs were also obtained (N=1,453),
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49 each coded using two criteria: first, the categories from the Comparative Agenda Project
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51 (CAP), which contains 23 themes. Second (to specifically analyse Hypothesis 3), the
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53 Hurrelmann & Wendler (2023) model, which analyses interventions on the ratification of
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56 ³Such as CPTPP, TPP, TPP-11, TPP11, Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, Transpacific Trade Agreement.
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CETA in EU member states, was replicated. The codes in question are: i) procedural aspects of ratification; ii) economic effects, impact on businesses, jobs and the economy; iii) ideological positions on social and labour standards, environment; iv) concerns about the legitimacy of dispute resolution mechanisms, and general implications for democratic norms and principles.

The dependent variables are as follows: *Scope of Topics* captures the count of topics covered in legislative interventions. This response variable is conditional on the political blocs that participated in the debates and their position for or against in the ratification vote. The other dependent variable, *Sovereignty*, is the count of mentions in the quasi-sentences of legislators and IGs to national sovereignty, legitimacy and democracy (code iv, above). The opposite extreme is captured by the *Economic/Procedure* variable, which is the count of quasi sentences referring to procedural issues and economic impact.

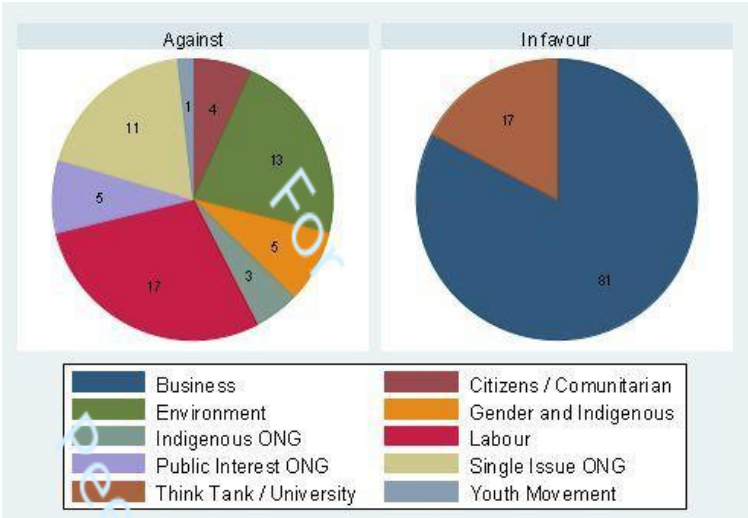
As for independent variables, *Frente Amplio/Other Left* identifies the legislators of these parliamentary benches. *Centre-Left* equals one when the legislator belongs to a party in the coalition that governed Chile between 1990 and 2010 (Socialist Party, Party for Democracy, Radical Social Democratic Party and Christian Democratic Party); zero otherwise. *Right Parties* identifies right-wing parties (Independent Democratic Union, National Renewal, Evopoli, and Republicans). *Against* controls for the vote in the Chamber of the legislator who made each intervention, taking the value of one for votes against; zero otherwise (in favour or abstentions). *Chamber of Deputies* equals one for this chamber and zero for the Senate.

Results and analysis

The key findings are as follows. Regarding the descriptive hypothesis (H1), Figure 1 illustrates a higher level of diversity in the interests advocated by lobbies opposing the CPTPP. These include various NGOs focused on environmental protection, unions representing different sectors, youth movements, single-issue lobbies, indigenous women's groups, and agricultural workers, among others. In stark contrast, a majority of those engaged in both external and internal lobbying efforts in support of the treaty were business groups, with think tanks playing a lesser role. At a descriptive level, this lends support to our

hypothesis that underscores the greater diversity within the coalition opposing ratification. This implies that lobby dynamics in the treaty debate were influenced by an expansion of the conflict.

Figure 1. Distribution of lobbies by their position on CPTPP



The primary findings stem from a series of models assessing the other two inferential hypotheses (H2 and H3). The Tables (Tables 1 through 4) present models employing either Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) or Negative Binomial Regression (NBREG).⁴ The choice of a count model was appropriate, as the dependent variable in one instance relates to the number of policy agenda topics, while in the other, it corresponds to the Hurrelmann and Wendler coding. This model selection aligns with the observed evidence of overdispersion. Table 1 shows the results of different regressions for the *Scope of Topics* as a function of the different political blocs, and the voting of the legislators who participated in the debates.

Contrary to what we expected, if the Frente Amplio/Other Left is taken as the default, the *Centre Left* coefficient is positive and statistically significant in different specifications. It was expected to see greater diversity of topics and audiences in the case of the “Concertación” parties. Meanwhile, more in line with the hypothesis are the negative

⁴ Our dependent variables are non-negative integers.

coefficients for the *Right Parties* variable in Models 1, 2 and 3. The interpretation is that right-wing party legislators in favour of ratifying the CPTPP were more monothematic when debating the treaty in the National Congress. The effect of the variable *Against*, meanwhile (a negative and statistically significant coefficient), is inconsistent with the polysemic frame of injustice idea advanced above: legislators who voted against the Treaty delivered less diverse interventions in terms of the topics and audiences included.

Table 1. Scope of Topics (Legislators)

Frente Amplio/Other Left (Default)	(1) Number of Topics	(2) Number of Topics	(3) Number of Topics	(4) Number of Topics
Center-left	1.777*** (0.115)	0.542*** (0.134)	0.0337** (0.0166)	0.0337 (0.0854)
Right-wing parties	-0.283** (0.116)	-2.236*** (0.161)	-0.174*** (0.0200)	-0.174 (0.114)
Independents	2.139*** (0.177)	1.245*** (0.179)	0.0972*** (0.0210)	0.0972 (0.0701)
Against Chamber		-2.063*** (0.123)	-0.125*** (0.0150)	-0.125 (0.0919)
Constant			-0.271*** (0.0113)	-0.271*** (0.0745)
	8.140*** (0.0891)	10.15*** (0.147)	2.372*** (0.0180)	2.372*** (0.116)
Observations	4,462	4,462	4,462	4,462
R-squared	0.109	0.162		

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$ ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Given these results that only partially support the hypothesis, an alternative operationalisation is to concentrate the analysis on a smaller set of topics from the CAP Codebook that are homologous to the IGs that mobilised against the CPTPP. In Table 2, the dependent variable *Scope of Topics* is operationalized as the count of mentions of environmental, indigenous, gender, and work topics. The results regarding the centre-left are maintained, confirming what was observed in Table 1.

Table 2. Topics: Gender, environment; indigenous and labour (legislators)

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Frente Ampio+IzqNoCo (Default)	(OLS) Selected Topics	(NBREG) Selected Topics	(NBREG) Selected Topics
3.Centre-left	0.0450** * (0.0142)	0.272** (0.107)	0.268* (0.154)
4.Right	-0.0180 (0.0142)	-0.148 (0.113)	-0.154 (0.237)
5.Independents	0.0431** (0.0217)	0.262* (0.154)	0.259* (0.144)
Chamber		-0.0560 (0.0827)	-0.0545 (0.122)
Against			-0.00698 (0.196)
Constant	0.134*** (0.0109)	-1.974*** (0.0974)	-1.968*** (0.231)
Observations	4,462	4,462	4,462
R-squared	0.006		

Standard errors in parentheses. * p < .10 ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Turning to the second hypothesis, Table 3 examines the polarisation of the discourse, as aspects of sovereignty and legitimacy are invoked in the legislators' quasi-sentences. Table 4 reports the same exercise for the IGs participating in the CPTPP debates. As far as the discourse of the parliamentary party benches is concerned, those who voted against the agreement can be seen to be more likely to allude to topics of national sovereignty and legitimacy in their interventions. Recall *Sovereignty* is the count of mentions of national sovereignty and the treaty's democratic legitimacy. Model 2 shows that the *Against* coefficient is positively correlated with the dependent variable and is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Model 3 confirms this result when controlling for *Chamber of Deputies*. The results go in the direction suggested by H3 in Models 4, 5 and 6. In these models, the effect of the predictors is analysed when the response variable is *Economic/Procedure*. The sign of the coefficient is inverted with respect to the previous models: it is negative and is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The interpretation reveals that legislators who oppose the CPTPP place a greater emphasis on issues like sovereignty and legitimacy in their discursive strategies, aiming to intensify polarisation within the discussion process. Conversely, legislators

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supporting the treaty tend to centre their discourse on its economic and sectoral effects, as well as the ratification procedures. This approach is underpinned by concerns about the potential threat to the ongoing economic liberalisation through trade policy. These findings align with our hypothesis regarding discursive polarisation among legislators.

Table 3. Discourse Polarisation (Legislators)

	Model 1 (OLS)	Model 2 (NBREG)	Model 3 (NBREG)	Model 4 (OLS)	Model 5 (NBREG)	Model 6 (NBREG)
VARIABLES	sovereignty	sovereignty	Sovereignty	Econ/Proced	Econ/Proced	Econ/Proced
Against	0.0711*** (0.0108)	0.501*** (0.0834)	0.416*** (0.0851)	-0.0299*** (0.0099)	-0.273*** (0.0967)	-0.304*** (0.0985)
Chamber			0.421*** (0.0857)			0.151 (0.0943)
Constant	0.109*** (0.00698)	-2.213*** (0.0613)	-2.388*** (0.0732)	0.125*** (0.00641)	-2.079*** (0.0574)	-2.137*** (0.0687)
Observations	4,165	4,165	4,165	4,165	4,165	4,165
R-squared	0.010			0.002		

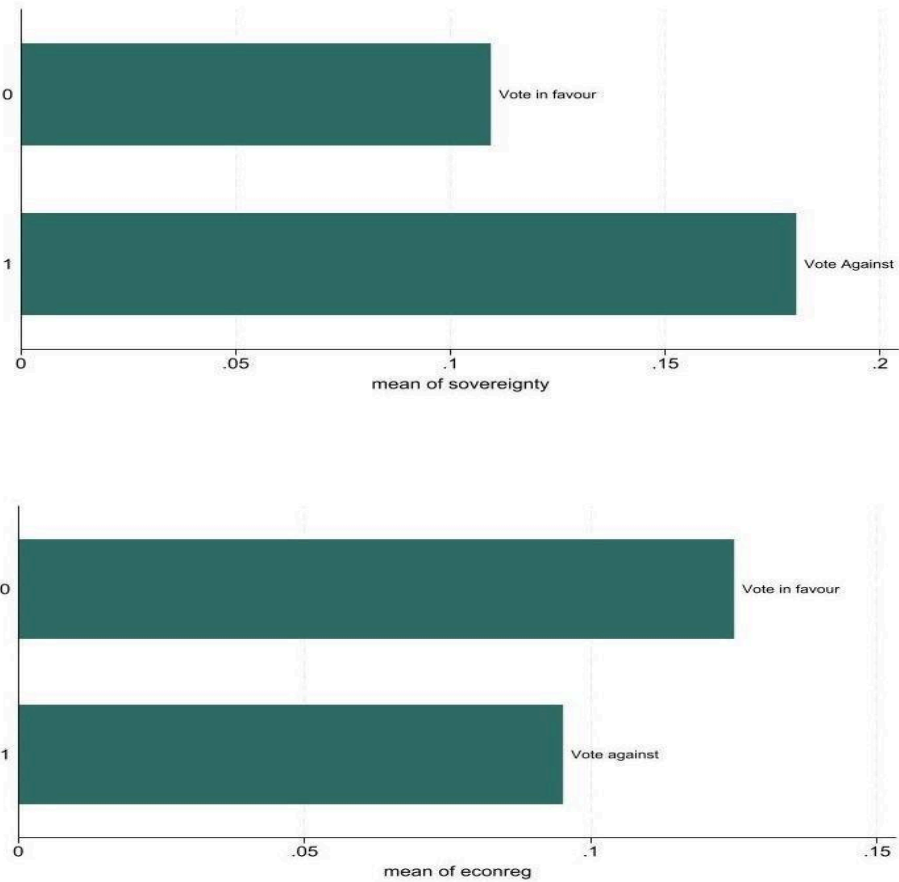
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Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$ ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

To gain a deeper understanding of these recent findings, let's turn our attention to Figure 2. This figure illustrates the mean differences for both *Sovereignty* and *Economic/Procedure*.

The outcomes affirm the concept that supporters of the treaty in the National Congress primarily focused their arguments on the presumed economic advantages and procedural aspects. In contrast, the factions opposing ratification placed considerably less emphasis on economic and procedural aspects, instead opting to intensify the debate and steer it towards normative and positional issues captured by *Sovereignty*. Consequently, while the results of H2 display mixed outcomes, in the context of H3, the findings align with our theoretical expectations regarding legislators' contributions.

Figure 2. Mean comparison Sovereignty versus Economic/Procedure by Votes



We analyse the interventions of IGs participants to test whether the dynamics of discursive polarisation is also observable. In Table 4, the coefficient in Model 1 for the relationship between *Sovereignty* and the variable of interest *Against* is positive and significant, as expected. This does not occur in Models 2 and 3. When specifying *Economic/Procedure* as the dependent variable, it can be seen that the IGs opposed to the CPTPP refer less to these matters. In the case of Models 5 and 6, this implies that when we move from zero to one in *Against*, the expected log count of *Economic/Procedure* decreases. This provides evidence to support H3. An additional aspect to be noted is the bicameral dynamic of the National Congress. In Model 6, the Chamber of Deputies was characterised by a debate less focused on procedural or economic aspects compared to the Senate. This suggests that the technical aspects or economic consequences of the treaties are discussed with greater emphasis in the

Senate.

Tabla 4. Discourse Polarisation (groups)

	(OLS)	(NBREG)	(NBREG)	(OLS)	(NBREG)	(NBREG)
<u>VARIABLES</u>	<u>Sovereignty</u>	<u>sovereignty</u>	<u>Sovereignty</u>	<u>Econ/Proced</u>	<u>Econ/Proced</u>	<u>Econ/Proced</u>

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Against	0.0549** (0.0275)	0.152 (0.0962)	0.171* (0.0973)	-0.103*** (0.0151)	-1.154*** (0.189)	-1.237*** (0.190)
Chamber			0.0764 (0.0869)			-0.758*** (0.194)
Constant	0.336*** (0.0229)	-1.092*** (0.0819)	-1.152*** (0.0987)	0.151*** (0.0126)	-1.891*** (0.122)	-1.500*** (0.146)
Observations	1,453	1,453	1,449	1,453	1,453	1,449
R-squared	0.003			0.031		

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Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$ ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

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The results obtained show several dynamics. First, the “community” of groups mobilised against the treaty was more heterogeneous than those who supported ratification. This is not a surprising outcome in trade policy, since those actors that are threatened by the agreement are generally more concentrated and tend to form coalitions to defend their interest. On the other side, those that obtain benefits are generally more dispersed and have less incentives to form coalitions. In fact, those in favour were mainly business associations with similar interests, while those against were groups that fight for minority rights or a variety of cause interests, such as “Mapuche” women, citizen groups, social movements, groups opposed to the use of pesticides, environmentalists, gender activists, rural youth, trade unionists, among others. This supports H1. Second, legislators favourable to the CPTPP include fewer topics in their interventions. However, we cannot corroborate H2. In the case of H3, the results

show that the legislators who oppose the CPTPP focused their interventions more on normative and ideological aspects such as sovereignty and democratic legitimacy compared to those who voted in favour.

Discussion

The ratification process for the CPTPP in Chile lasted nearly five years, which considerably exceeded the delays experienced with all previously signed PTAs. The impasse in these deliberations may seem unexpected, considering the apparent consensus on the country's trade policy. However, this underlying dynamic is not unfamiliar in the literature. Recent research on the politicisation of trade policy in the EU has shed light on a similar phenomenon, where the expansion of the conflict to new audiences and the discursive

polarisation by legislators and interest groups against the treaty appear to account for the prolonged stagnation.

Politicisation of the CPTPP saw a notable increase in the diversity of groups mobilised against the treaty, primarily representing disadvantaged minorities affected by its ratification. This diversity sharply contrasted with the pro-treaty lobbies, which mainly consisted of business associations. Those advocating for the CPTPP focus on a narrower range of topics when highlighting the purported benefits of ratification. Interestingly, there is no evidence indicating a greater diversity in the discourse among challenger political entrepreneurs or left-wing parties. However, when it comes to discursive polarisation, it becomes evident that this strategy is employed by political entrepreneurs and anti-trade lobbies to steer the discussion away from the conventional dichotomy of free trade versus protectionism, redirecting it toward ideological dimensions such as legitimacy and sovereignty. Ultimately, this approach helps elucidate the deadlock in the debate and the protracted legislative process leading to the ratification of the CPTPP.

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