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## The Trans-Pacific Partnership

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# The Trans-Pacific Partnership

Lillie Haggard

## Introduction

Countries use free trade as both an economic and political tool to unite and strengthen allies. Many countries have opted to engage in regional free trade agreements (FTAs) in order to ease into global free trade and develop specific political alliances. In 2016, what was to be the world's largest free-trade deal (covering 40 percent of the global economy) was signed by President Barack Obama and put up for ratification. This was the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which consisted of twelve nations: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam.

The TPP was controversial, however, especially due to rising populism and new protectionism in the United States. In order to understand why the TPP was signed by President Obama, failed to be ratified, and was then rejected by President Trump, this paper will first outline the timeline, content, and potential benefits of the TPP. Then societal groups affected by the TPP will be analyzed, followed by a discussion of governmental structures and actors involved in accepting and rejecting the TPP.

Societal groups and industries who benefited from the TPP in the U.S. put pressure on the U.S. government and the public to support the TPP signage, while those who were disadvantaged by the deal put on a similar pressure to oppose it. President Obama's main aim for the foreign policy behind the TPP was geopolitical strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. Because the structure of the U.S. government gives so much power to the executive branch concerning foreign policy, President Obama pushed the TPP forward until he signed it, notwithstanding the growing populism in society. In the end, however, despite the potential economic and strategic benefits, societal pressure in the voting and election system influenced both Congress and President Trump to prevent U.S. involvement in the TPP.

## The History of the TPP

### *Timeline of the TPP*

While President Obama drove the formation of the TPP, he did not originally formulate the Asian-focused deal. The TPP began as an Asian-focused FTA called the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, also known as the P4 (Canadian Government 2019). The agreement was signed in 2005 by Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore. In 2008, more countries began talks to join the P4, including the U.S. at the end of President George Bush's term (Chatzky and McBride 2019). In 2009 President Obama continued international talks on joining the P4, and in 2010 the U.S. officially joined the negotiations, renaming the deal the Trans-Pacific Partnership (Canadian Government 2019). In February 2016, President Obama signed the deal for the U.S. along with eleven other countries. Because this was the year of a U.S. presidential campaign, Congress did not ratify the deal, as it had become a target for both Democrat and Republican candidates, which will be discussed later. In January 2017, on President Trump's first full day in office, he formally withdrew from the TPP (Chatzky and McBride 2019).

### *Contents of the TPP*

The TPP negotiations took many years, because so many countries were involved, and each country wanted its special interests to be accounted for. For example, countries like Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand wanted agricultural goods to be covered in the TPP, as their economies were agriculturally dependent (Lee 2018). The U.S., on the other hand, wanted the TPP to cover intellectual property rights as well as services. The U.S. wanted these special interests to be included so that services like accounting and software products could be unrestrained by trade barriers, while simultaneously being protected from copyright infringement (Lee 2018).

According to the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S.'s goal was for the TPP rules to have comprehensive market access, a regional approach to commitments, a way to address new trade challenges, inclusive trade, and the creation of a platform for regional integration (USTR 2015). The thirty chapters of the TPP outlined rules that covered many topics and areas of interest to attain these goals. The chapters discuss eliminating nontariff barriers (NTBs) and tariff barriers on U.S. goods and increasing the service sector's access to foreign markets. Also included were heavier intellectual property and copyright protections, foreign direct investment (FDI) protections with balancing rules that protect a state's rights to regulate in the public interest, and environmental and labor standards. Next, the chapters outlined additional pressure to provide transparency and reporting on monetary policy. This was to be accomplished by requiring regulatory communication among TPP countries to avoid currency manipulation and increase governing transparency with due process. Finally, "the most expansive disciplines on state-owned enterprises ever in a US FTA or the WTO, albeit with exceptions, to advance fair competition with private firms based on commercial considerations" (Fergusson et al. 2015) were included.

The thirty chapters of the TPP created a rule book to achieve the benefits that the TPP countries wanted in this massive deal.

The elimination of tariffs meant significant changes for companies within the TPP. It was estimated that tariffs and NTBS would be reduced by 98 percent on a variety of goods. These goods included automotive and other manufactured products, textiles and apparel, and agricultural commodities, such as meat, dairy, produce, and grains (Chatzky and McBride 2019). This elimination would have a direct effect on U.S. industries; there would be direct competition from the other TPP countries' companies as the TPP opened a huge part of the trade world to a level playing field. In other words, comparative advantage would no longer be distorted from NTB and tariff costs. This meant that whoever produced a product at the cheapest cost and/or the best quality would win that given market's customers.

The regulations around technology in the TPP were new and economically valuable for many U.S. companies. It was the first regional trade deal that included comprehensive rules on digital commerce. This would have ensured the free flow of information across countries and required consumer privacy protections. There were also extensive requirements on intellectual property. These included patent enforcement, copyright terms, and protection for technology and trade secrets, which encompassed medications as well (Chatzky and McBride 2019). As the U.S. continued to specialize and had a comparative advantage in technology, these new rules in international trade were necessary, because the U.S. would lose money and create competitors if no system was in place to prevent intellectual property from being stolen. Including these rules incentivized U.S. companies to expand their products internationally while being protected.

The deal was historical in its environmental and labor standards. It surpassed the standards set in previous trade deals by committing the signing countries to prohibit forced and child labor, improve workplace conditions, strengthen environmental protections, and allow labor unions (Chatzky and McBride 2019). These regulations were important to include, as environmentalist and other human rights groups often oppose free trade deals due to these issues. NAFTA, for example, was criticized, because it increased international transportation, which increased pollution and other resource problems (Karpilow et al. 2015). The labor standards were also supported by the U.S. as a way to help balance the loss of manufacturing jobs, because if the cost of labor increased in some Asian countries, then the difference in wages would not be as extreme between the U.S. and other countries. This potentially meant that not as many jobs in this area would be lost.

### *Projected Benefit from the TPP*

Overall, the TPP was designed to decrease or eliminate tariffs, liberalize the services trade, open markets to FDI, provide guidelines on digital or e-commerce, protect intellectual property rights, and stipulate standards for labor and the environment. These rules and guidelines in the TPP text were designed to increase economic

benefits around the globe. The TPP was to be the largest free-trade deal the world had ever seen, covering 40 percent of the global economy (Chatzky and McBride 2019). From an economic standpoint, lowering trade barriers benefits the economies of all involved. International competition causes companies to produce quality goods as cheaply as possible, so the consumers benefit by having more options to buy from at lower costs. Companies that produce the best product in their industry can expand their markets and consumers and increase profits. While there is some shrinking in a given country's inefficient markets, the overall net gain is positive.

This trend of potential net gain from free trade was seen in predictions of the TPP's outcomes. Some of the predictions are debatable, because trying to foresee the future of the largest FTA ever proposed is not easy. According to an article written in 2016 by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, the TPP would have increased U.S. wages and increased U.S. exports by 9.1 percent. By 2030, it was projected to increase U.S. real incomes by \$131 billion a year, or 0.5 percent above the baseline GDP (Petri et al. 2016). The Peterson Institute estimated higher increases than study predictions put out by the United States Trade Commission (USITC 2016), who predicted a 0.15 percent increase in GDP or \$42.7 billion increase. However, the USITC model only accounts for tariffs and not NTBs, while the Peterson report tries to predict the effects of both the NTBs and the tariff changes of the deal. Because tariffs only consisted of about 12 percent of the economic benefits in the TPP (Fergusson and Williams 2016), the Peterson's analysis is potentially more accurate. A study by Tufts University actually reports that there could have been net losses from the deal (Capaldo et al. 2016), but this study ran contrary to international trade theory, causing some economists to argue that the methodology was "ill-suited to examine a trade agreement" (Fergusson and Williams 2016).

The studies were also in general consensus that the trade deal could potentially decrease employment and output in the natural resources, manufacturing, and energy sectors. The growth would be shifted to services and agricultural production (Fergusson et al. 2015). This economic aspect was a heavy influence in domestic politics as different industries might have profited and hurt from the deal. Aside from economic incentives, there were also political and strategic incentives to form economic alliances with Asia. These domestic and political state-interested influences shaped U.S. interest and the signing of the deal but also induced controversy that would lead to President Trump's decision to back out of the deal.

### **Domestic Politics—Societal Groups**

To see what was going on in the U.S. with regard to the signing of the TPP, understanding societal groups is necessary. Tension between groups who would be affected differently by the TPP influenced the U.S.'s withdrawal. The industrial sectors, such as agriculture, technology, and manufacturing, were focused primarily on the economic benefits and drawbacks. Industries that encouraged the signing of the TPP were those predicted to receive economic benefit from the FTA. There were also environmental

groups in society who were invested in whether or not the U.S. joined the TPP. Finally, populism was on the rise in society, which also contributed to lack of domestic support for the TPP.

### *Agriculture*

Most of the agriculture industry supported the TPP, from soybeans to beef and pork. Markets such as Malaysia, Japan, and Vietnam did not have an FTA in agriculture before the TPP, so it would mean opening large markets for them (Fergusson and Williams 2016). Other areas in agriculture faced some complications. Dairy producers were unsure about the TPP; they too would receive access to new markets, but it would also mean more competition from countries like Canada and Australia, who could produce dairy cheaply as well. The area within agriculture that opposed the TPP entirely was the U.S. sugar industry. The sugar industry was represented by the American Sugar Alliance (Fergusson and Williams 2016). This opposition is understandable given the U.S.'s high tariffs on sugar. Once tariffs were removed, the U.S. sugar industry would have had to lower their prices and profits in order to keep up with foreign sugar prices. However, the Sweetener Users Association, which represents candy makers and other sugar-consuming industries, was in great support of the TPP. The TPP would allow cheaper sugar to be brought into the U.S., so candy makers could, in turn, produce candies cheaper and gain more profit (Fergusson and Williams 2016). Agriculture companies who benefited from access to new markets (which was the majority) supported the TPP; those who benefited from the tariffs were opposed to the TPP because they produced food products at a higher cost compared to foreign competitors.

Analyzing the attitude and actions taken by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) accurately describes how the agriculture industry pushed for the TPP to be signed. The AFBF conducted its own research on the effect the TPP would have specifically on agriculture, hoping to create awareness of the agricultural benefits and get the farming community involved in supporting the TPP. The AFBF was explicit about the predicted gain in revenues from this research: "The Trans-Pacific Partnership will tear down trade barriers and help level the playing field for US agricultural exports to 11 nations across the Pacific Rim. Ratifying TPP will boost annual net farm income in the United States by \$4.4 billion," (AFBF 2016). The research and public support sought to convince individuals in the agricultural industry to support the TPP.

### *Technology*

Similar to the agriculture industry, the technology sector also wanted the TPP. U.S. tech companies produced data and software better than other countries in the deal, giving them a clear competitive advantage in the global market for these products. The TPP also protected intellectual property rights and would include e-commerce in a way that prevented countries from prohibiting cross-border flows of data over the Internet. What this means is that high-tech companies could sell their product without having to move servers or data in-country (Fergusson and Williams

2016). U.S. companies could reach more markets with their specialized technology and data systems without losing profit from intellectual property theft.

The technology sector also tried to influence the government through lobbying. A primary example of this is the BSA's actions and support for the TPP. BSA is a large lobbying group for tech companies that aims to bolster copyright law. Companies they represent include IBM, Microsoft, Adobe, Apple and others (Fang 2015). The BSA publicly endorsed the USTR in the TPP, lobbied to Congress representatives about the benefits that the TPP would have on the technology sector, and conducted press releases to further educate the public on the matter. According to the CEO of BSA, "TPP is a leap forward in trade agreements, establishing rules that truly reflect 21st century trade. It ensures opportunities and growth for all sectors that rely on data innovation by establishing the first-ever strong and enforceable general application trade rules on cross-border data flows in a multilateral agreement" (BSA 2016).

The agriculture and technology industries formed the U.S. Coalition for TPP. In 2011, this coalition wrote a letter directly to President Obama, encouraging progress on the TPP and outlining specific details that should be emphasized in the deal as negotiation rounds were occurring. The letter was signed by seventy-three U.S. businesses including Oracle, Kraft Foods, and Microsoft (Business Roundtable 2011). By 2016, more leadership had joined the coalition, including the Emergency Committee for American Trade, the AFBF, the Business Roundtable, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the US Chamber of Commerce (Needham 2016). The coalition focused on encouraging both Congress members and citizens alike to move forward the trade deal. In the coalition's words they were, "intensifying [their] broad education and advocacy efforts on the Hill and around the country as the administration and Congressional leaders work to address the next steps that are required to secure passage of the TPP" (Needham 2016).

#### *Manufacturing*

However, not all industries supported the TPP. While the service and tech industries in the U.S. had the comparative advantage in many of their goods and stood to profit from the elimination of tariffs, those in manufacturing did not. Countries such as Vietnam, Peru, and Malaysia all had cheaper unskilled labor compared to the United States. Accordingly, ratification of the TPP would likely have resulted in a loss of U.S. jobs and wages in the unskilled labor manufacturing industry. While there would be net benefits from the TPP and new jobs would be created elsewhere, these unskilled workers may not have the labor mobility (due to lack of education for the new job, inability to move away from family, etc.) to relocate to new jobs (Autor 2016). Thus, many manufacturing workers saw the TPP as a direct threat and were against the deal.

In the U.S., low-skilled workers often depend on labor unions to lobby the government for their needs. The AFL-CIO's actions, which now represents thirteen million workers nationwide (Open Secrets 2019), reflected how manufacturing workers in the U.S. felt about the TPP and what was done to prevent it. The president of the AFL-CIO held an interview with PBS to spread public awareness and influence the TPP, stating

that "this agreement is not worthy of the American people and the American worker" (PBS NewsHour 2015); the president further discussed specific points of the TPP that needed revision. The union also spent a total of \$5,755,000 in lobbying in the year 2011 alone. Second only to Obama in contributions, the AFL-CIO gave Elizabeth Warren \$19,750 (directly from the organization and individuals), as she was an outspoken opponent of the TPP and an advocate for workers' rights (Open Secrets 2019). The AFL-CIO's public statements and lobbying costs show their dedication to be heard and affected the policy decisions during TPP negotiations.

#### *Environmental*

Another significant interest group that opposed the TPP were environmentalists. While there were standards for environmental protection in the TPP, there was also a provision that allowed companies to sue countries who prohibited trade. The language of the agreement could have been interpreted in a way that allowed companies to sue against environmental or health standards (Ho 2016). An increase in international trade also meant an increase of the transportation of goods by boat, plane, and trucks, which would increase fossil fuel outputs. One of the main organizations opposing the TPP was the Sierra Club (Ho 2016). The Sierra Club works strategically with individuals and organizations to create social and public awareness on issues. For example, the Sierra Club collected more than half a million petitions criticizing the TPP in relation to climate disruption, clean air, and clean water. The Sierra Club collaborated with other organizations, such as Friends of the Earth, Green America, Greenpeace, and others, to collect and deliver all petitions to the Capitol (Carr 2016).

#### *Populism*

In 2016, American society experienced a rise in populism, demonstrated by the election of the populist presidential candidate Donald Trump. Populism is the belief that the elite in a country are corrupt and take advantage of the general populace. Populists accuse elite and/or outside forces and powers for the hardships of the lower class (Balfour 2017). During this time, people accredited loss of jobs to globalization and also feared international dealings, such as immigration, were a threat to the nation's cultural identity (Balfour 2017). The rise of populism in the U.S. brought free-trade deals under public scrutiny, because they were seen as taking advantage of the American people (Lima 2016). This caused a lack of public support for the TPP, which in turn caused a lack of congressional support as well.

#### **Domestic Politics—State Structures**

The amount of lobbying that different industries and interest groups conducted with both Congress and the president shows that the U.S. government is designed to listen its people. The system of frequent election holds legislators accountable to U.S. citizens. These influences and checks and balances within the government affected the outcome of the TPP.

*Executive Bureaucracy*

The president's power as head of state and chief diplomat has grown exponentially as the world continues to globalize. The president can lead negotiations and conduct trade-deal talks, which set the framework and goals for U.S. foreign policy. During this period of globalization specifically, the Obama administration aimed to strengthen relations in Asia since the region was a growing power. President Obama emphasized the environmental benefits but was primarily concerned about the strategic capability of the deal by way of political and economic alliances in Asia.

President Obama argued for the labor and environmental benefits of the TPP. In his final address to the UN as president of the U.S., he discussed the TPP's effect of increasing global standards: "We've worked to reach trade agreements that raise labor standards and raise environmental standards, as we've done with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, so that the benefits are more broadly shared" (White House 2016). Obama frequently made these types of comments about the strong environmental and labor standard laws in the TPP to dispute the environmentalist complaints about the deal. Throughout his presidency, Obama emphasized that the world was continuing to globalize and increase in trade, whether the U.S. was involved or not. However, if the U.S. was involved, they could put pressure on countries to adhere to environmental and labor standards that would otherwise not be kept.

While the new environmental and labor laws in the trade deal were important to the president, Obama also keenly focused on the geopolitical strategy of the TPP. For these reasons, looking at who was in the TPP was just as important as noticing who was left out—China. China had become an opposing force to U.S. foreign policy in Asia. By uniting and strengthening other Asian countries' ties to the U.S., the U.S. would ultimately strengthen forces against China. If there was a strong U.S. alliance in Asia, the U.S. would have more pressure on China to adhere to international law, such as protecting intellectual property. Also, in 2012 China began forming its own massive FTA, called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or RCEP (New Zealand Government 2019). This trade agreement includes fifteen countries, such as India, Australia, Thailand, Japan, Singapore, and China, but excludes the United States. This deal would strengthen China's influence throughout the region—another reason why the U.S. needed to tighten their alliances and increase its presence in Asia. The TPP was just as much of a tool to increase environmental and labor standards as it was to economically and politically combat China's RCEP, if not more so. In May 2016, President Obama wrote an op-ed for the Washington Post about the RCEP: "As we speak, China is negotiating a trade deal that would carve up some of the fastest-growing markets in the world at our expense, putting American jobs, businesses and goods at risk," (Obama 2016). Here the president emphasized just how important beating China on this deal is. Interest groups who were afraid of losing jobs or harming the environment would lose on both if the U.S. did not sign the TPP, which would allow China to pull ahead in leading trade in the Asia-Pacific region.

Obama had more to say in his op-ed about the opportunities of global leadership the U.S. would have by signing the TPP: "Building walls to isolate ourselves from the global economy would only isolate us from the incredible opportunities it provides. Instead, America should write the rules. America should call the shots. Other countries should play by the rules that America and our partners set, and not the other way around. . . . The world has changed. The rules are changing with it. The United States, not countries like China, should write them," (Obama 2016). The president was explicitly saying that the TPP is both an economic and geopolitical opportunity for the United States. He viewed the TPP as a way to secure U.S. global leadership and to direct what the future would look like for the world.

Increasing the economic benefits of the Asian countries in the TPP also showed another side of U.S. strategy and leadership opportunities. As the TPP would increase these Asian countries' GDPs, it would make these countries even more effective allies in the region. Their economies would also become more dependent on the U.S., as the U.S. bought more of their products. This economic leverage would be politically beneficial for the U.S. when pressuring TPP countries to adhere to U.S. foreign policy. By specifically strengthening U.S. allies economically, it would also strengthen U.S. allies from aggressive Eurasian countries that challenged the U.S., such as Russia, North Korea, and China. Illustrating this point, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described the allied country of Japan as "the cornerstone of peace and stability in the region" (Clinton 2011). This is a direct reference to the geopolitical strategy of the Obama administration during the time of the TPP. By strengthening the U.S. ally of Japan, the U.S. was strengthening the cornerstone of peace and stability against countries that were opposing these principles, at least in the eyes of U.S. leadership.

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) writes foreign policy for the president and lobbied extensively on behalf of the deal. The USTR Michael Froman emphasized President Obama's goal of getting the TPP signed by outlining both the strategic and economic benefits: "[The] TPP is as important strategically as it is economically. Economically, TPP would bind together a group that represents 40 percent of global GDP and about a third of world trade. Strategically, TPP is the avenue through which the United States, working with nearly a dozen other countries (and another half dozen waiting in the wings), is playing a leading role in writing the [trade] rules of the road for a critical region in flux" (Fergusson and Williams 2016).

The Department of State (DOS) is another vital component in helping carry out the foreign policy of the president and United States. In 2015, Secretary of State John Kerry emphasized the president's goal of getting the TPP signed by again outlining the strategic and security benefits, stating that

TPP also matters for reasons far beyond trade. The Asia-Pacific includes three of the globe's foremost populous countries and its three largest economies. Going forward, that region is going to have a big say in shaping international rules of the road on the Internet, financial regulation, maritime security, the environment, and many other

areas of direct concern to the United States. Remember that, in our era, economic and security issues overlap; we can't lead on one and lag on the other. (Fergusson and Williams 2016)

#### *Congress*

While Obama had signed the TPP in 2016, a major state-structured obstacle was still in the way of full implementation of the TPP—Congress and (unavoidably) political parties. The deal needed to be passed by both the House and the Senate. The responses of industries and interest groups reflected and shaped much of the political leaders' feelings about the TPP. With the service and agriculture industries pushing for the TPP and other groups, such as environmentalists or the manufacturing sector, vehemently opposing the TPP, voting on the treaty became a political field of landmines.

Democratic senators received support from environmentalists but also from several service industries. Republican senators sought political support from manufacturing workers but also from farmers. Voting yea or nay had potential political backlash for both parties. With the rising populism in the U.S., free trade deals were becoming unpopular; a vote could potentially threaten a representative's reelection. Ultimately, these factors caused congressional leaders on both sides to refrain from putting the TPP up for a vote to be ratified. For these reasons, in January 2016, Senator Chuck Summer (who was the chamber's top Democrat at the time) told AFL–CIO leaders that the TPP would not be ratified. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan confirmed this by declaring the GOP did not have the votes to pass the TPP in the House (Raju and Jones 2016).

The upcoming presidential election in November 2016 caused even more domestic and structural political challenges for congressional representatives and the TPP. After Obama signed the TPP, Republican presidential nominee Donald J. Trump called the TPP “a rape of our country” (Lima 2016). This pressured the Republican senators to not support the TPP, because if they did, they would be opposing their own party's nominee. Going against one's party nomination would isolate voters and cause disunity before a presidential election. Further, should Trump be elected, it would be politically unwise to argue against the president, especially one of the same party. Voicing these thoughts, Senator Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader at the time, said the Senate would not act on the TPP during the lame-duck session of Congress. McConnell continued: “If the next president wants to negotiate a trade agreement, he has the opportunity to do that and to send it up. . . . It's certainly not going to be brought up this year and it'd be up to discussions with the new president as to, you know—I think the President-elect made it pretty clear he was not in favor of the current agreement” (Raju and Jones 2016). Republicans held the majorities in both the Senate and the House in 2016; with the Republican candidate so anti-TPP, Republicans did not have incentive to hold a vote to ratify the TPP. And because they controlled the majority of votes, they did not have to.

The upcoming presidential election also posed challenges for Democrats in Congress. Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, had switched positions

on the TPP, claiming during the campaign that she would get rid of it. Switching sides on the TPP caused voters to doubt Clinton's sincerity on the issue. And so, similar to Republicans, supporting the TPP would cause disunity with the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. While Obama still supported the TPP until the end of his presidency, ultimately it ended his presidency. If elected, Hillary Clinton would shape U.S. foreign policy for the next four to eight years, not Obama. And so, because the new Democratic nominee no longer supported the TPP, neither would the Democrats in Congress.

Thus, when the TPP went to Congress to be ratified in February of 2016, nothing happened. Neither the House nor the Senate pushed for the treaty to be put on the floor for a vote. The presidential race with two complicated candidates, pressure from voters and interest groups in society, as well as state-structured political party pressures made the treaty too politically controversial and risky to hold a ratification vote. And so, the TPP stalled until the election of the new president, which turned the stall to an abrupt stop.

#### **Domestic Politics—President Trump's Withdrawal from the TPP**

After analyzing the industrial and interest groups who were for and against the TPP and after examining how the U.S. government functions, President Trump's decision to withdraw from the TPP can be explained. During Trump's campaign, he sought the support of citizens who were ideologically populist; he promised to withdraw from international trade deals, portraying the U.S. as a victim in these trade deals and claiming the deals were “not fair” to the American people (Smith 2017). As discussed above, the manufacturing industry was particularly opposed to TPP trade deals. This sector and its workers became a base for Trump; in order to win another election in four years, he would have to follow through on his campaign promises to maintain this support for both reelection and support for his desired legislation. When signing the executive order against the TPP, Trump said, “It's a great thing for the American worker” (Smith 2017). By “worker,” Trump was referring specifically to manufacturing workers.

Once Trump took the executive office, he became the chief diplomat and negotiator of foreign policy for the United States. And so, despite years of negotiations by two past presidents, he had the power to dismiss the TPP with a simple signature. Once Trump withdrew, there was no deal to confirm in Congress, and the TPP died in the United States. However, the TPP still exists in the other eleven countries who signed what is now called the CPTPP; the door is not closed for the U.S. should there be a change in presidential policy toward the free trade agreement (Chatzky and McBride 2019).

#### **Conclusion**

The Trans-Pacific Partnership sought to create the largest free-trade deal that focused on Asia. The U.S. would contribute a large part of the trade with the other eleven countries in the deal. While signed by President Obama, the TPP was ultimately

not ratified by Congress; eventually, the U.S. withdrew from the TPP with President Trump's executive order. In order to understand why the deal was signed and why it was taken away, one must consider both domestic societal groups, state structures, and politics. Industries such as agriculture and technology stood to profit from the TPP; thus, they formed coalitions and supported lobbyist groups like the BSA. These coalitions and groups pressured the public and the U.S. government to sign the TPP. On a state-structured level, President Obama supported the deal and controlled the foreign policy power of the U.S. government, including the Department of State and the USTR. There was geopolitical significance in the TPP for the U.S. by both strengthening ties with Asian allied countries and by excluding opposing Asian countries, such as China.

However, the same structures became obstacles to the ratification of the TPP as well. Manufacturing industries and environmentalist interest groups opposed the TPP and levied strong pressure against it. Growing populism in society made free-trade deals unpopular among many voters. When the presidency changed hands, President Trump was in full control of the deal that had yet to be ratified by Congress. He then issued an executive order on his first day in office, rescinding the U.S.'s signature on the TPP. Congress had delayed the vote of ratification due to the complex pressures coming from domestic political struggle. Not wanting to upset their voting base or political parties, congressional representatives put off the vote until Trump came into office, ultimately closing the door on the TPP. The TPP demonstrated how domestic aspects of the U.S. influence foreign policy decisions. It also sheds light on how the government is structured and how power is distributed to advance or hinder foreign policy deals and treaties. Perhaps in an American future where there are less manufacturing jobs, more environmentally cleaner ways of transportation, and political leaders who see economic ties to Asian allies as a critical geopolitical strategy, the TPP could return. For now, U.S. reentry into the TPP will not happen anytime soon.

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