
Political Contestation about International Economic Agreements: Lessons for the Canada-UK Trade Relationship after Brexit

*Final Report for the SSHRC/ESRC
Knowledge Synthesis Grant Initiative “Understanding the
Future of Canada-UK Trade Relationships”*

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List of acronyms

ACTA	Anti-Counterfeiting Agreement
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (between EU and Canada)
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
CUSFTA	Canada-US Free Trade Agreement
EEA	European Economic Area
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement (between EU and Japan)
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ICS	Investment Court System
IR	International Relations
ISDS	Investor-State Dispute Settlement
ITC	International Trade Centre
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NHS	National Health Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (between EU and US)
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USMCA	United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive summary

The United Kingdom (UK) is currently negotiating the precise legal arrangements of **Brexit** – its withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Brexit will affect the economic relationship between the UK and Canada; if it goes forward as planned by the UK government, it will mean that a **new bilateral trade agreement** between both countries will need to be devised.

International trade agreements are highly complex treaties, but in spite of their technocratic nature, they sometimes **become politicized**. In other words, they may generate contentious political debates that engage not just diplomats or experts, but a broader range of societal actors. However, not every trade agreement becomes equally contentious. It is important to understand under which conditions politicization of trade agreements occurs, and how it can be channelled into the trade policy process.

Existing research shows that the politicization of trade agreements is particularly likely if they are perceived as a **threat to state sovereignty**. This threat can originate from the scope of the agreement, measured by the range of issues included or the economic weight of the negotiating partners, but it can also reflect concerns that the agreement undermines a polity's collective identity. Identity concerns often relate to regulatory standards on sensitive issues such as health care, the environment, food safety, consumer protection, and the labour market.

In certain cases, politicization is a result of **diffusion from a different trade agreement**. For instance, the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) became controversial in Europe primarily because it was perceived as being similar to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiated between the EU and the United States (US).

Once politicization processes have been set in motion, their trajectories in different countries depend on a range of conditioning factors. Which aspects of an agreement will become contentious and in which arenas these debates will occur depends on the **institutions** involved in the trade policy process, **patterns of public opinion** towards international trade, and **the resources and strategies of political actors**, particularly opponents of the trade deal.

Although the **strong economic and cultural ties between Canada and the UK** may suggest that a future economic agreement between the two countries will not generate much opposition, it would be wrong to assume that the negotiations for a new bilateral agreement will be entirely without controversy. **Economic triggers** of politicization could be provisions in the agreement that touch upon the fishing and dairy industries, financial services, and, to some degree, the movement of labour. **Identity-related triggers** of politicization could be provisions on health care systems, environmental standards, and geographical indicators.

Subnational identities could become relevant in political discussions of a Canada-UK trade agreement. In Canada, opposition against an agreement could originate from Quebec, especially if the agreement is seen as privileging Canada's British traditions over its connections to *la Francophonie*. In the UK, concerns previously raised in the Scottish Parliament about its right to decide on regulatory standards and public procurement as well as about the protection of Scottish food and fisheries products could re-emerge.

Political controversy about the Canada-UK agreement could also be the result of **diffusion** from a planned bilateral agreement between the UK and the US. Such an agreement will likely be more controversial than the Canada-UK deal. Issues that might be politicized in its context, such as food and environmental standards, health care systems, or investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), may also affect negotiations with Canada.

While policy makers are typically hard pressed to quell politicization, they can **shape the institutional settings** in which it occurs. The switch from narrow trade deals on tariffs to new-generation trade deals involving public services as well as environmental and health protection has brought **non-traditional players** to the table. These new players include parliaments, business associations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and citizen groups. These actors must be systematically informed and meaningfully included in policy processes.

Measures to increase transparency and to create channels of civil society participation have become part of the standard repertoire in modern trade negotiations. Three main strategies can be distinguished: (1) **transparency** measures using press releases and publications; (2) **limited inclusion** through instruments such as close-ended or targeted consultations, aimed at supporting existing policy decisions and effective governance; and (3) **open inclusion** through instruments such as open-ended consultations that allow interest groups to challenge the status quo.

Proponents and opponents of international economic agreements use specific **communication strategies** to make their case to the public. Not every argument is equally influential on public opinion. **The most powerful arguments tend to be emotional** ones, tapping into fear of economic costs or loss of national sovereignty in policy-making, especially in key fields such as immigration or environment. Technical arguments that focus solely on the institutional details of a future Canada-UK trade deal will likely shape public opinion much less than vivid, concrete, and emotional arguments that touch upon the day-to-day concerns of the public.

The **power of these arguments does not depend on their empirical validity** but on their public appeal. There are also **diffusion effects**, given the transnational character of anti-trade NGOs, which implies that these actors borrow strategies from previous successful campaigns. Because Canadian and British NGOs are well-integrated into such networks, arguments and posters used in the TTIP and CETA cases might reappear in the debate on the Canada-UK trade agreement.

In the agenda setting process, **opponents of a trade deal often have an advantage** if they have the necessary resources and engage the debate. This is because they do not need to be coherent and can attack the agreement from multiple angles. This is especially the case when the trade deal is multidimensional and covers a broad range of issues, providing more ammunition for the opposing side. Nevertheless, when faced with public opposition, the negotiating parties can use **public consultation to renew the agenda** and increase support for a trade deal. Such consultation must be meaningful; it must ensure unbiased access for a broad range of different interests and demonstrate how feedback is reflected in policy outcomes.

1. Background

Following the Brexit referendum of June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) formally notified the European Union (EU) of its intention to withdraw from the EU by March 29, 2019. The precise legal arrangements of the withdrawal are still contentious both within the UK and in the ongoing negotiations with the EU (Armstrong 2017; Evans and Menon 2017; Oliver 2018). The British government, led by Prime Minister Theresa May, has stated its ambition that Brexit should eventually entail leaving both the EU's Single Market and Customs Union (Department for International Trade 2018b; HM Government 2018), though it has been willing to accept a post-Brexit transition period – currently anticipated to last until December 2020 – and a “backstop” that would establish a Single Customs Territory with the EU for the trade in goods for an indefinite time period. One implication of leaving the Customs Union would be that, after the end of the transition period and within the limitations established by the “backstop”, the UK would cease to be subject to the EU's bilateral and multilateral trade agreements – including the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada. For the Canada-UK relationship, this means that a new bilateral economic agreement would need to be devised.

International economic agreements – especially new-generation agreements like CETA that address behind-the-border issues such as regulatory standards or access to government procurement, in addition to customs duties – are highly complex treaties. They are drawn up by professional negotiators with special technical expertise, interacting with each other in a bureaucratic process that usually takes place behind closed doors. Yet in spite of their technocratic nature, a number of these agreements have in recent years become the subject of contentious political debates in the participating states that have reached far beyond expert circles. This development is described in the scholarly literature as the *politicization of international economic policy* (De Ville and Siles-Brügge 2016a; Gheyle and De Ville 2017; Young 2017b; 2017c; Duina 2018). CETA is a case in point: While the agreement was hailed by Canadian and EU negotiators as a “progressive trade agreement” that sets new standards for both entities' international policies, the agreement met with sustained opposition in some parts of the public, especially in Europe, and almost failed when the Belgian region of Wallonia threatened to exercise its veto over Belgium's approval of the deal (Hübner et al. 2017; White 2017).

The example of CETA illustrates that the politicization of international economic policy is potentially highly consequential. However, not all trade and investment agreements concluded in recent years have become equally contentious. In the EU, for instance, CETA and the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States (US) generated a great deal of controversy, while agreements concluded in the same time frame with Singapore, South Korea, and Japan remained largely non-politicized (Young 2017a; 2017b). Even the politicization of CETA and TTIP was not uniform; both agreements were more contentious in some EU member states – especially Germany, Austria, and Belgium – than in others. As Canada and the UK prepare to negotiate their post-Brexit economic relationship, it is important to comprehend the reasons for these differences. Policy makers require an understanding of the conditions under which international economic agreements become politicized. They also need to consider how public controversies can be anticipated in designing the trade policy process, so that political contestation is channelled into impactful policy debates.

2. Objectives

In an attempt to draw lessons for the upcoming negotiations of a new Canada-UK agreement, this knowledge synthesis report assesses the state of research knowledge about the politicization of international economic agreements. The report addresses four main questions:

1. Which *explanatory factors* have been identified in the relevant literature to account for the differentiated politicization of international economic agreements? Why do some agreements become politically contentious, while others hardly register in public debates? Why can one and the same agreement become more politicized in one political/regional context than in others?
2. Which *specific aspects of a Canada-UK economic agreement* could become flashpoints for politicization? When applied to the Canada-UK context, does the literature on the politicization of international economic agreements allow us to predict the controversies that we are likely to see in the development of a new bilateral agreement?
3. How can policy makers shape the *institutional context* in which political contestation about international economic agreements occurs? Which best practices have been identified in the literature for increasing the transparency of the negotiation process, incorporating diverse stakeholders and viewpoints into the negotiations, and informing the broader public about negotiation results, so that politicization is constructively fed into the policy process?
4. Which *communication strategies* have been proven to “work” for proponents and opponents of international economic agreements in those instances in which an agreement has become contentious? Which arguments and framing strategies have been identified in the literature? Based on these findings, what lessons can proponents and opponents of a Canada-UK economic agreement draw to help them make an effective case to the public?

The proposed synthesis of research knowledge on these questions will identify research strengths and gaps in scholarship about the politicization of international economic agreements. It will also aid policy makers in making crucial decisions on the governance of Canada-UK trade negotiations, with the objective of facilitating an inclusive and evidence-based public debate.

3. Sources and methods

There are various well-documented cases of political conflict about international trade and investment agreements that reach back more than thirty years. Examples include the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1980s and early 1990s (Ayres 1998), the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the Millennium Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the late 1990s (Kobrin 1998; Bayne 2000), and the Anti-Counterfeiting Agreement (ACTA) in the 2000s (Matthews and Žikovská 2013; Dür and Mateo 2014). However, broad scholarly debates about the politicization of such agreements did not emerge until the past decade. These debates crystallized around the aforementioned cases of CETA and – even more so – TTIP. CETA negotiations started in 2009 and were concluded in 2013; the agreement was amended in 2016 and provisionally entered into force in 2017 (Hübner et al. 2017; White 2017). TTIP negotiations began in 2013, but were halted in late 2016 (De Ville and Siles-Brügge 2016a; Young 2017b). Both agreements became contentious from around 2013/14. However, as previously mentioned, politicization was uneven: CETA and TTIP were much more contentious in Europe than in Canada and the US. Within Europe, politicization was more intense in some EU member states than in others. And while

debates about CETA and TTIP were raging, other trade negotiations pursued by the EU – for instance with Japan – largely escaped public scrutiny.

The cases of CETA and TTIP thus raise interesting comparative questions, which have motivated researchers to explore politicization patterns and their underlying reasons. While research about the politicization of international economic agreements used to be a niche topic addressed in a relatively small number of studies, a more systematic literature on the issue is now emerging, and rapidly growing (for a first overview, see Laursen and Roederer-Rynning 2017; Young 2017b). However, this emerging literature still suffers from a number of shortcomings: First, it is strongly dominated by a few cases, especially TTIP, which are examined primarily from a European angle. Comparisons to other economic agreements, or to non-European settings, are sometimes drawn, but in most cases not systematically developed. Second, the contestation about international economic agreements is discussed largely in isolation from the broader scholarship about the politicization of international governance that has developed in International Relations (IR) and EU Studies (Zürn 2014; Statham and Trenz 2013; de Wilde et al. 2016; Hutter et al. 2016). By the same token, interconnections to other relevant non-trade related research fields – such as stakeholder involvement in policy-making (Chalmers 2014; Bunea and Thomson 2015; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015) or referendum campaigns about international treaties (Hobolt 2009; Atikcan 2015b; 2018) – also remain unexplored. Finally, it should be noted that there is no previous research that applies insights on the politicization of international economic agreements to a future Canada-UK trade and investment deal.

In the light of these shortcomings, this knowledge synthesis report relies on a diverse range of research materials that reaches beyond purely trade-related scholarship. To be sure, it is a primary purpose of this report to review the scholarly literature published in the last decade – especially after 2013/14 – on the politicization of international economic agreements. While rapidly growing, this literature is still relatively limited; our review seeks to present a comprehensive assessment of the most important contributions published before October 2018. However, in an attempt to address the aforementioned limitations and idiosyncrasies of this emerging field of inquiry, we make sure to situate this literature in more general scholarly debates about the politicization of international governance. This broader and more established literature provides an analytical framework that allows us to define the contributions of the narrower trade-related literature in a more explicit fashion. Finally, we consult research and primary data on Canada-UK relations – especially trade and investment flows – to make the politicization literature applicable to the specific challenges that policy makers and stakeholders from both countries face in debating a new bilateral agreement.

4. Results

The results of our knowledge synthesis will be presented in four steps. In the first section, we examine how the differentiated politicization of international economic agreements has been explained in the literature. We show that existing explanations distinguish between triggering factors that set in motion politicization processes, and conditioning factors that shape how politicization unfolds in specific political settings (such as different states that are contracting parties to an agreement). The remainder of our presentation is structured in line with this distinction. In the second section, we analyze issues that could potentially trigger politicization in a Canada-UK agreement. The third and the fourth section deal with conditioning factors: We examine options for policy makers to shape institutional settings for trade-related political

contestation and then turn to communication strategies that proponents and opponents of economic agreements can pursue to make their case to the public.

4.1 Explanatory framework: What accounts for the politicization of international economic agreements?

At its most basic, politicization can be defined as a *process whereby a particular item or issue becomes salient and controversial in processes of collective decision-making* (Schmitter 1969; Hooghe and Marks 2012). Applied to international governance, politicization occurs when a bilateral or multilateral agreement or organization is turned into a subject of contentious political debate that engages not just diplomats or other experts, but a broader range of societal actors. While the concept of politicization has gained prominence in the literature on trade and investment agreements only recently, it has been debated much more widely and systematically in IR (Zürn et al. 2013; Zürn 2014) and particularly in EU Studies (de Wilde and Zürn 2012; Statham and Trenz 2013; Hurrelmann et al. 2015; de Wilde et al. 2016; Hutter et al. 2016). This broader literature has also identified a number of explanatory factors that play a role in initiating and shaping politicization. We will rely on these to structure our review of explanations highlighted in the recent literature on the politicization of international economic agreements.

4.1.1 Explanations of politicization in the IR and EU Studies literature

What accounts for the politicization of international and regional governance? The research in IR and EU Studies operates with an explanatory framework consisting of three groups of variables (Table 1):

- The *trigger* (or independent variable) that sets in motion politicization is widely considered to be a (perceived) threat to state sovereignty. According to this argument, the content of international agreements matters: Agreements that bring about a high degree of “authority transfer” by shifting important state powers to the regional or global level are particularly likely to be politicized, compared to agreements whose scope is more narrowly circumscribed (de Wilde and Zürn 2012; Zürn et al. 2013; Zürn 2014). Additionally, threats to state sovereignty can also originate from agreements that are perceived as undermining core pillars of national identity (Grande and Hutter 2016).
- Once politicization processes have been set in motion, their trajectories in different regional contexts depend on a range of *conditioning factors* (or intervening variables). In the existing literature, these are understood as being largely unrelated to the content of the agreement. The main factors mentioned are political opportunity structures, such as a country’s institutional configurations or traditional political identities (de Wilde and Zürn 2012; Baglioni and Hurrelmann 2016; de Wilde et al. 2016), as well as the political strategies pursued by important societal actors, such as political parties and civil society associations (Adam and Maier 2011; Green Pedersen 2012; Hutter et al. 2016).
- The specific combination of triggers and conditioning factors shapes the *manifestations* of politicization (that is, the dependent variable) in a particular political setting. In addition to developing quantitative indices that measure the overall “extent” of politicization (Hutter and Grande 2014; Hutter et al. 2016), researchers have in recent years emphasized the differentiated character of politicization (Hurrelmann et al. 2015; de Wilde et al. 2016). It is advisable, for instance, to explicitly distinguish various objects of politicization (that is, aspects of an international agreement that become salient and controversial) and different arenas in

which politicization may occur (such as debates in the news media, manifestos by political parties, or demonstrations in which citizens take to the street).

Table 1 – The politicization of international agreements: Explanatory framework

	Triggers (independent variables)	Conditioning factors (intervening variables)	Manifestations (dependent variables)
Definition	Factors that make an international agreement (or organization) be seen as politically relevant	Factors that shape how an international agreement (or organization) is discussed in specific settings (e.g., different member states)	Extent and type of politicization
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer of sovereignty to the international level ▪ Perceived threat to collective identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political opportunity structures, such as institutions (e.g., rules on elections and referendums) and political identities (e.g., country's openness to internationalization) ▪ Strategies of political actors, including political parties, civil society groups, media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree of salience and controversiality ▪ Aspects of agreement that are politicized ▪ Arenas where debates occur, and actors active in them

Source: Compiled by the authors.

This general explanatory framework can structure our review of the more specific literature on international economic agreements. As was previously mentioned, this literature has emerged relatively recently. In contrast to the broader politicization literature (especially Hutter and Grande 2014; Hutter et al. 2016), no large-scale empirical studies have been conducted that systematically observe manifestations of politicization over time and in different regional contexts. Rather, most studies on the politicization of trade and investment agreements are based on smaller-scale research. They rely in part on quantitative data collection (Roederer-Rynning and Kallestrup 2017; Caiano and Graziano 2018) and qualitative case studies (Bauer 2016; Jančić 2017), but many contributions also operationalize their dependent variable more loosely and refer mostly to anecdotal evidence. Various manifestations of trade-related politicization have been examined – including public statements by civil society actors (Bauer 2016), protest events and other forms of political mobilization (Caiano and Graziano 2018), parliamentary debates and activities (Jančić 2017; Roederer-Rynning and Kallestrup 2017), as well as media reporting and social media posts (von Nordheim et al. 2018) – but their interconnections have not been systematically analyzed. It should also be noted that most studies focus on a small number of EU member states, usually those where politicization has been the most intense (De Bièvre 2018). Nevertheless, research on the politicization of international economic agreements has developed a number of relevant propositions that seek to explain politicization patterns. While these do not necessarily refer to the above concepts and categories, they highlight factors that can easily be integrated into the general explanatory model.

4.1.2 Triggers

The analysis of triggers of politicization in the literature on international economic agreements focuses in particular on the one agreement that has seen the most intense politicization: TTIP. In line with the general explanatory framework, studies of TTIP emphasize two main factors to account for the high level of controversy about this agreement: (1) its broad scope, both in terms of the size of the participating markets and in terms of the range of substantive issues addressed,

and (2) the fact that TTIP was perceived as a threat to the collective identity of Europe and its member states.

- From the European perspective, the *broad scope* of TTIP meant that the transfer of sovereignty implied in any potential concessions to the US would be particularly consequential. As Hamilton and Pelkmans (2015) as well as Young (2016; 2017b) point out, the EU and US are near peers in terms of economic strength and market size, while all of the EU's previous economic agreements were with smaller partners. In addition, De Ville and Siles-Brügge (2016b; 2017) as well as Dominguez (2017) emphasize the significance of the subject matter addressed in TTIP. They focus particularly on the chapter on regulatory cooperation – which formulates the ambition to cooperate based on “good regulatory practices” – as well as on the proposed investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) procedures. These provisions were seen as important because they have the potential to undermine the ability of the EU and its member states to regulate in the public interest, particularly in the field of consumer protection. In short, TTIP raised concerns about sovereignty because its substantive scope reached beyond traditional trade agreements and addressed sensitive behind-the-border issues (Roederer-Rynning and Kallestrup 2017).
- Additionally, research on TTIP has also emphasized the agreement's *identity dimension*. As a number of authors have pointed out, TTIP was perceived by parts of the EU population as a threat to European values (Young 2016; Buonnano 2017; Eliasson and Garcia-Duran 2017; Duina 2018). These concerns were often linked to claims that the agreement would undermine European regulatory standards, which in turn were portrayed as central to European identity (Young 2016; Eliasson and Garcia-Duran 2017). This case could be made most strongly with reference to TTIP's (alleged) effects on market access for food products, such as genetically modified organisms or chlorinated chicken (Duina 2018). Buonnano (2017, 805) argues that such value-based claims raised against TTIP reflect attempts by the European Commission to strengthen European identities by creating the myth of a “green, social, and humanitarian Europe”, while “othering” the US as a country of rampant and harmful neoliberalism. While the origins of Europeans' identity concerns are debatable, there is widespread consensus in the literature that a diffuse mistrust of the US, and the perception that TTIP would give the Americans power over closely held European values, was a strong trigger for the politicization of the agreement.

Based on these case studies, we can hypothesize that TTIP was less politicized in the US because the EU's regulatory standards could not be presented in the same way as a threat to American values. The explanatory model also provides a convincing account for why the EU's trade agreements with smaller partners like Korea (Park 2017) and Japan (Suzuki 2017) did not generate the same level of politicization. These agreements addressed fewer sensitive regulatory issues and were concluded with states about whom there was much less mistrust in the European population.¹ The explanatory model can also be applied in the North American context, where studies on the CUSFTA and NAFTA debates have likewise emphasized concerns about a regulatory “race to the bottom” and a sellout of national values (Bow 2015; Robinson 2015).

The one case for which the model does not seem to work particularly well is the politicization of CETA. From the European perspective, Canada is neither a particularly significant market, nor a trade partner that raises value- and identity-based fears. Most accounts therefore explain the

¹ The agreement with Japan still awaits ratification; therefore, future controversies about the deal cannot be entirely ruled out.

politicization of CETA as a spill-over from TTIP: Even though some authors see CETA as less far-reaching in its regulatory ambitions (De Ville and Siles-Brügge 2017; for the opposing view, see De Bièvre 2018), the agreement introduced a number of provisions that would also be included in TTIP, in particular an ISDS system. In addition, there were concerns that American multinationals with a presence in Canada could employ CETA's ISDS provisions to undermine European regulations (Hübner et al. 2017; White 2017; Young 2017a). In other words, CETA was politicized in Europe primarily because it was perceived as being similar to TTIP, and thus linked to the EU-US trade relationship. In research on comparative politics, such a horizontal “spread” of political phenomena from one context (state, policy, or international agreement) to another is described as a process of diffusion. In the light of these considerations, we can therefore add *diffusion effects between different trade agreements* to the list of potentially relevant triggers for trade policy politicization.

4.1.3 *Conditioning factors*

As discussed above, conditioning factors (or intervening variables) are factors that explain why politicization of an international economic agreement, once triggered, does not express itself in the same manifestations in all relevant contexts. In line with our general explanatory model, the recent literature on the politicization of trade and investment agreements suggests that two groups of conditioning factors are relevant in this respect: (1) political opportunity structures that make some regional contexts more susceptible to politicization, and (2) resources and strategies of political actors – particularly opponents of trade agreements – that influence their success in alerting the broader public to allegedly problematic aspects of the agreement.

- *Political opportunity structures* are contextual factors that shape the environment in which political actors – such as proponents and opponents of trade agreements – argue for their preferred policy solutions. The recent literature on trade and investment agreements has emphasized two types of opportunity structures: institutional settings and patterns of public opinion. The influence of institutions is evident, for instance, in the involvement of various kinds of parliaments in the trade policy process. In the EU, trade agreements are discussed not only in the European Parliament (Roederer-Rynning 2017), but some national and regional parliaments have also taken an interest in the issue (Laursen and Roederer-Rynning 2017). In case studies on TTIP, Jančić (2017) as well as Caiano and Graziano (2018) have shown that the way in which national parliaments (and the parties represented in them) engage with trade issues determines mobilization patterns by opponents of the agreement. The potential role of regional institutions has been evident in Belgium, where the country's highly decentralized federal system afforded the region of Wallonia a veto over CETA (Bollen et al. 2015; Hübner et al. 2017; White 2017). In addition to political institutions, politicization patterns around international economic agreements have also been shown to reflect public opinion. This includes citizens' views on matters of international trade as well as perceptions of the negotiating partner (Dür and Mateo 2014; De Bièvre 2018). In the EU context, the population in Scandinavian states tends to be the most positively inclined towards trade (or economic globalization more broadly), while the population in Mediterranean states is the most sceptical; the UK falls in between these two extremes (European Commission 2012, Annex, T83). Politicization of international economic agreements can be expected to be particularly intense where sceptical opinions on trade prevail. In the specific context of TTIP, some authors have also linked politicization to anti-American sentiments, with citizens who view the US negatively being more inclined to oppose TTIP (Jedlinger and Schoen 2018; Steiner 2018). It

should be noted, however, that it cannot always be clearly established whether negative public opinion on a specific agreement (or treaty partner) predates political mobilization or is an effect of it.

- *Resources and strategies of political actors* have been analyzed primarily with a view to opponents of international economic agreements. Agreements such as CETA and TTIP have enjoyed broad support not only from political elites but also from business actors; however, there was little active business mobilization in favour of the agreements (Young 2016; 2017b). One reason is that procedures for stakeholder consultation in the EU provide business actors with an “inside access” track to make their perspectives heard, thus shaping the EU’s negotiation position. By contrast, politicization was primarily brought about by civil society associations, which represent more diffuse constituencies (Strange 2015; Young 2017b). Their success in mobilizing larger parts of the citizenry differed between EU member states, depending in part on the associations’ financial resources (De Bièvre 2018) and political connections with powerful allies such as established leftist and green parties or trade unions (Caiano and Graziano 2018). Furthermore, the literature on CETA and TTIP has emphasized the importance of political communication strategies. It shows that politicization has been brought about most successfully by discursive frames that make reference to aspects of the agreements that trigger emotional reactions, such as fear or anger. This explains why health and food safety issues, such as genetically modified organisms (legal in North America but mostly illegal in the EU) or the process of “chlorinating” chicken to reduce the spread of pathogens (legal in North America but illegal in the EU) gained a lot of traction (Buonanno 2017; Duina 2018). Other frames that proved effective were concerns about unchecked corporate influence and a lack of transparency in the negotiation process (Bauer 2016; Gheyle and De Ville 2017; Siles-Brügge 2017).

We can conclude that, with respect to conditioning factors of politicization, the variables highlighted in recent scholarship on economic agreements match those that have been identified in the general politicization literature. Both bodies of literature emphasize that trajectories of politicization are shaped in part by political opportunity structures (such as institutions and public opinion patterns), but that they can also be influenced by the agency of political actors who decide to deploy resources and present arguments in a strategic manner. While the existing trade-related literature has focused primarily on opponents of international agreements, there is clearly also a case for examining political strategies pursued by their proponents.

4.1.4 Conclusion

The politicization of international economic agreements is a relatively new research field. There have been a number of previous instances of political contestation about such agreements, but scholarly discussions about the issue were triggered primarily by the controversies that developed in the EU around CETA and TTIP. The literature remains strongly dominated by these two cases (especially TTIP), examined primarily from a European angle. It therefore does not allow for sweeping generalizations. Indeed, it may well be asked whether the politicization of international economic agreement is a phenomenon that primarily occurs in agreements that include, or can at least be linked to, the US.

Table 2 – The politicization of economic agreements: Factors identified in the literature

Triggers (independent variables)	Conditioning factors (intervening variables)	Manifestations (dependent variables)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope of the agreement (partner’s market size, range of substantive issues addressed) ▪ Identity dimension of the agreement (perceived threat to core values) ▪ Diffusion effects between various agreements that are seen as similar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political opportunity structures, especially institutional settings (e.g., parliamentary ratification processes) and patterns of public opinion (e.g., perceptions of trade, views of negotiating partner) ▪ Resources and strategies of an agreement’s opponents, including finances, alliances with political parties, framing strategies employed in discussing an agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protest events ▪ Statements from civil society groups ▪ Parliamentary debates (and other parliamentary activities) ▪ Media reporting, social media debates

Source: Compiled by the authors.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that there is a widespread consensus in research contributions on CETA and TTIP regarding the factors that trigger and condition politicization processes (Table 2). The factors that have been identified are well aligned with the broader, and more established politicization literature that has developed over the past decade in the fields of IR and EU Studies. In spite of the deficiencies that can be identified in the existing research literature on the politicization of international economic agreements, it is therefore plausible to approach questions about potential political contestation surrounding a post-Brexit Canada-UK agreement with reference to these categories.

4.2 Triggers: What could be flashpoints for politicization in a Canada-UK economic agreement?

The explanatory framework developed in the preceding section allows us to define the specific challenges of negotiating a post-Brexit economic agreement between Canada and the UK. While the idea of such an agreement does not currently face much opposition in both states, it would be wrong to assume that the negotiations will be entirely without controversy. In the literature on trade policy-making in both Europe and Canada (Poletti and De Bièvre 2014; Kukucha 2016), including in the context of the CETA (Hübner et al. 2017) there is consensus that such agreements create winners and losers, and that governments’ negotiation strategies, in the face of heavy lobbying, are driven by an interest to minimize the losses of the affected sectors. Thus, this section tries to identify which aspects of the Canada-UK economic relationship could trigger politicization. Our analysis relies on current research on trade-related political mobilization, as well as primary data on the Canada-UK economic relationship.

4.2.1 Background: Canada-UK economic relations

Canada and the UK both present themselves as trading nations. The UK is Canada’s most significant economic partner in Europe: its third largest export destination, sixth largest source of imports, second most important trading partner in services, and fourth largest source and second largest destination of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The deep historical ties, the use of the English language, and the integration of the British economy into the EU Single Market have made the UK an attractive base from where Canadians conduct their business with Europe.

Since 1999, Canada accounts for around 2% of the UK total trade. In the past 10 years, the UK has experienced a trade surplus with Canada in most years. The trade surplus is driven by trade in services, with UK exports to Canada being explained by goods (59%) and services (41%), while imports from Canada are mainly in goods (75%) (Department for International Trade 2018a). The top 10 goods imported from and exported to Canada by the UK represent 89% and 78% respectively of total goods traded (Table 3). Table 4 shows that the most traded services are travel and other business services, followed by financial services for the UK and transport services for Canada. Before CETA was provisionally implemented, Canada's most protected sector was "live animals and animal products" (including dairy products) with an average trade weighted tariff of 51%, while the UK's most protected sectors were "live animals and animal products" and "beverage, spirits and tobacco" with average trade weighted tariffs of 8% and 6%, respectively (Department for International Trade 2018a). The data on the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index calculated by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) show that air transport and accounting are among the most highly protected services in both the UK and Canada, with Canada imposing higher restrictions in other sectors, such as courier, broadcasting, and distribution (Department of International Trade 2018a).

Table 3 – Top 10 UK goods traded with Canada, 2014-2016

Product categories	3 year average value (£ millions)	Proportion of total UK exports to Canada	% change from 2011-2013 average to 2014-2016 average
<i>Top 10 UK goods exported to Canada on average from 2014 to 2016</i>			
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	£804	19%	-18%
Vehicles other than railway	£564	13%	58%
Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	£505	12%	2%
Pharmaceutical products	£302	7%	-10%
Mineral fuels, mineral oils	£292	7%	-48%
Electrical machinery and equipment	£221	5%	8%
Precious or semi-precious stones and metal	£175	4%	-75%
Optical, photographic, cinematographic	£156	4%	-8%
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	£154	4%	16%
Ores, slag and ash	£101	2%	25%
<i>Top 10 UK goods imported from Canada on average from 2014 to 2016</i>			
Precious or semi-precious stones and metal	£6,002	59%	-22%
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	£682	7%	14%
Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	£561	6%	47%
Nickel and articles thereof	£377	4%	-30%
Mineral fuels, mineral oils	£325	3%	-41%
Electrical machinery and equipment	£320	3%	-6%
Wood and articles of wood; wood charcoal	£206	2%	17%
Optical, photographic, cinematographic	£200	2%	5%
Inorganic chemicals	£194	2%	-70%
Ores, slag and ash	£109	1%	16%

Source: Department for International Trade 2018a

Table 4 – UK trade in services with Canada in 2016

Service type	Exports to Canada (£ millions)	Proportion of total export services to Canada	Imports from Canada (£ millions)	Proportion of total import services from Canada
Travel	£832	24%	£628	36%
Other business services	£632	18%	£498	29%
Financial	£563	16%	£86	5%
Transportation	£499	15%	£252	14%
Telecommunications, computer and information services	£323	9%	£145	8%
Insurance and pension	£160	5%		
Intellectual property	£143	4%	£30	2%
Construction	£126	4%	£1	0%
Personal, cultural and recreational	£100	3%	£33	2%
Government	£32	1%	£62	4%
Total	£3,441	100%	£1,745	100%

Source: Department for International Trade 2018a

The academic literature on the economic relationship between Canada and the UK post-Brexit is still quite limited; it mainly focuses on the impact of CETA, as well as the UK's negotiation strategies and priorities (D'Erman 2016; Neuwahl 2017). Media coverage is a key source of information, specifically for more recent developments. The Guardian, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Reuters and other news outlets have had significant coverage of trade developments, including CETA and the NAFTA renegotiations.

It is important to note that while there has been significant press coverage of CETA in the UK, especially in Scotland, there was no debate in the British House of Commons or House of Lords prior to the signature of CETA (Stone 2016). The British government was concerned that a significant debate in the Parliament would signal that the UK would not want a post-Brexit deal with Canada, or that negotiations would be difficult. Consequently, the debate in the UK Houses of Parliament began after CETA was signed (Stone 2016). This could mean that there are concerns and interests that were not comprehensively considered by the UK government when making its decisions. These could surface during new negotiations with Canada.

To evaluate the potentially contentious areas of trade negotiations between Canada and the UK, triggers will be divided into economic scope, impacts on identity and values, and the influence of diffusion from other trade agreements. Through the identification of the triggers of politicization, it will be possible to observe the areas of most concern moving forward.

4.2.2 Economic triggers

The scope of a trade agreement between Canada and the UK could influence the politicization of the agreement, especially if the agreement touches upon specific areas where the respective governments have been responsible for governing in the public interest. These areas could include the fishing industry, the dairy industry, and FDI. There has also been some concern over the movement of labour.

In light of the strong economic relations between the two countries, several impact assessments concerning CETA in both the UK and Canada highlight that CETA is a substantial building block for a future trade relationship between the UK and Canada post-Brexit. The UK's impact assessments discuss the economic growth that CETA will encourage and argue that the UK economy will suffer without access to the benefits of CETA (Department for International Trade 2018a). In Canada, an assessment by the Parliamentary Budget Officer has also been cautiously positive (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer 2017). In addition, several Canadian provinces have commissioned impact assessments regarding CETA. While provinces will experience different impacts from CETA, Ontario and Quebec will likely incur the largest ones, as they have the most important trading relationships with the EU member states (Standing Committee on International Trade 2012). The scope of a CETA-like agreement between Canada and the UK is likely to impact areas of Canada and the UK differently, and this could give rise to a variety of politicization triggers, based on those region-specific concerns.

An impact assessment from Manitoba highlights the impacts of CETA-like agreements on the manufacturing sector, northern development and public procurement as reducing the available policy options for economic development and constraining the province's abilities to add value (Jacobs and Fernandez 2014; Stanford 2014, 34). Newfoundland and Labrador have highlighted their concerns over the fishing industry and CETA (Sabau and Boksh 2017). Therefore, different trade sectors could be triggers in different contexts.

Access to fishing market might prove to be a contentious area in Canada-UK negotiations from the UK perspective as well. This might be particularly significant since fisheries have been explicitly exempted from the "backstop" proposal for a post-Brexit Single Customs Territory with the EU. Canada exports significant amounts of fish and fish products to the UK (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada 2014), with the UK being the tenth largest destination for Canadian fish exports (Seafish 2018). Therefore, securing market access in this area will be important for Canada. However, the British fish market may be an area that the UK will move to protect post-Brexit. The fishing industry within the UK has severely declined under the EU fishing quota system outlined by the Common Fisheries Policy, and the fishing sector saw significant support for Brexit (Roberts 2018a; 2018b). Impact assessments in this sector discuss the difficulties faced by the British fishing fleets due to the EU Common Fisheries Policy (Roberts 2018a; 2018b). Consequently, it is possible that Britain will move to protect its waters and limit access to fish markets in order to rebuild its own domestic capabilities and win further support from a key Brexit base (Government of the United Kingdom 2018, 73; Roberts 2018a; 2018b).

In terms of goods, the most protected sector in Canada is "live animals; animal products". To the extent that agriculture will be covered by a Canada-UK agreement, access to certain sectors in Canada may therefore prove particularly contentious. Trade between Canada and the UK in animal and animal products is quite significant. In 2017, animal products represented approximately 0.55% of the Canadian exports to the UK and 0.54% of the Canadian imports from the UK (Government of Canada 2018). There was significant resistance to the additional access negotiated as part of CETA, specifically to the dairy market (Export Action Global 2018, 14). The supply management system within Canada includes very specific production and trade controls that limit the access to the market except for a specified, minimal quota (Export Action Global 2018, 41). CETA allowed for an increased access to this market (approximately 3% of the market share) for EU producers, especially for cheese products (European Commission 2017, 19-20). As part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Canada has allowed its

partners to access 3.25% of its dairy market. Additionally, the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) negotiations have also highlighted the desire of the US to have more access to this market (McGregor 2018). With Canada agreeing to open up the dairy market (3.56% market share) under the tentative USMCA deal, there is likely to be significant resistance to any further market access (Ramlakhan 2018). Therefore, negotiating further access for UK producers would likely face significant resistance from Canadian dairy farmers. If the UK's access would be additional to the access granted to the EU, CPTPP partners and the US, securing enough support becomes increasingly unlikely. Farmers are a group that all major political parties in Canada have worked hard to gain support from (McGregor 2015).

Some concerns have been raised about the UK dairy markets as well. The UK dairy market is 77% self-sufficient and, thus, it has been reliant on trade within the EU Single Market for certain products, such as butter and cheese, with Ireland being its most important trading partner (McNamara 2017, 7). Therefore, if the UK is not able to secure favourable trade conditions in this area, it may seek additional market access in Canada. The UK has already secured a deal with China regarding dairy products, showing the importance of this sector for the UK and the realization of the large negative impacts it can suffer in case of a non-preferential deal with the EU (BBC 2018). While Canada does have a heavily protected dairy industry, Canada does import a significant portion of the dairy products it consumes (Government of Canada 2018). Therefore, the UK would want to secure new markets for its exports if it cannot guarantee access to the EU's market at a low cost.

There will be significant pressures on both sides for an agreement regarding financial services. If the potential agreement does not provide significant guarantees in this area, there are likely to be strong reactions on either side. Canadian businesses will try to protect current levels of FDI in the UK. In 2017, the UK was the fourth highest source of FDI to Canada, accounting for 5.76% of inflows (out of a total of 35.1% from Europe). The UK was also the second most important destination for Canadian FDI with 9.1% of outflows (out of a total of 25.7% to Europe) (Global Affairs Canada 2018). The competitive location and conditions in the UK have encouraged high levels of FDI, but these factors may not be enough to secure current levels of FDI in the future with the UK exiting the EU Single Market, specifically in financial services (Dhingra et al. 2017). The UK's passporting rights for banks and financial services companies will end when the UK officially leaves the EU (Nye 2017). Under the EU regime, the UK was an access point to the EU Single Market for Canadian investors in banking and financial services (Nye 2017). Investing in the UK allowed for market access to all the other EU or European Economic Area (EEA) countries with very limited additional authorization (Nye 2017). However, leaving the EU means that the UK will most probably lose these passporting rights and become a "third country" with a much more limited access to the Single Market (Strupczewski and Baczynska 2018). Therefore, Canadian investors will be concerned about potential losses that could come with investing in the UK rather than another EU country. It is possible that Canadian companies will look to the Continent instead, unless the UK secures significant access to the financial markets of the EU, especially considering that Canadian investment in and from the rest of the EU has increased relatively more in recent years than Canadian investment in and from the UK (C.D. Howe Institute 2016). Canada will want assurances that its investment in the financial and banking sectors will not be significantly impacted by Brexit, which might not be an issue on which the UK will be able to decide. Canadian negotiators might use this loss of access to the EU Single Market by the Canadian investors as a bargaining chip in negotiations in other sectors with the UK. Financial services are one of the most important markets for the UK's economy, which means that it will

want to negotiate a favourable deal in this area (James 2018). This may prove an area difficult for the UK to negotiate.

Some labour groups have also expressed concern with elements of the CPTPP agreement that allow for the easing in the movement of labour. They argue that this will take jobs from qualified Canadians who could miss out on meaningful employment (Canadian Labour Congress 2018). If the UK seeks to pursue this area of negotiation, there could be increased pressure from civil society organizations. Provinces have questioned the authority of the federal government to impose decisions on the provinces during trade negotiations (Standing Committee on International Trade 2012, 7). For example, during the CETA negotiations, labour mobility proved to be a challenge as the regulation of professional and trade occupations is under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories (Standing Committee on International Trade 2012, 14). The UK also has interests in controlling the freedom of movement, as this was one of the key points of Brexit.

4.2.3 Identity and value triggers

Concerns about identity and values can trigger politicization when a population views a potential trade deal as a threat to a state's sovereignty, or as compromising a state's core values. In the case of the Canada-UK agreement, the strong historical connections between the two countries might make the emergence of such concerns appear unlikely. In spite of Canada's increasingly diverse society, large parts of the population remain strongly attached to British political and cultural traditions (Resnick 2005). (Attachments to France remain strong, of course, in the French Canadian population.) Citing political and cultural connections to the UK, some Canadian politicians – most prominently opposition leader Andrew Scheer – have come out as enthusiastic supporters of a Canada-UK trade deal. Scheer explicitly endorsed Brexit before the June 2016 referendum (Scheer 2016). Since the referendum, he has made a Canada-UK trade agreement one of his foreign policy priorities, even travelling to the UK with the explicit purpose of symbolically promoting the idea (Hurrelmann 2018).

Yet even though there is a strong foundation of common values, it cannot be ruled out that specific provisions of a Canada-UK trade agreement would raise identity-related concerns. In CETA and TTIP, these areas tended to be health and environmental standards, food standards, labour standards, privatization, and the potential implications of the investment dispute settlement mechanism for democracy. For instance, several groups expressed concerns regarding the provision of public services, such as health care. This is tied to the value that states should provide health care to its citizens. CETA moves to limit the ability of companies to produce generic pharmaceuticals, which will increase the costs of drugs for Canadians (Lexchin and Gagnon 2014). As CETA also allows for government contracts to be opened up to increased competition, several civil society groups, in Canada as well as the UK, expressed concerns about increased privatization of health services, arguing that this could eventually increase costs of health care in the long run (Patients4NHS 2018; Sinclair et al. 2014). Additionally, concerns have also been raised regarding the environmental impacts of CETA as it was argued that CETA fails to guarantee adequate sustainability measures (Centre for International Environmental Law 2017). Food production standards and sustainability were also a heavily debated topic among European civil society groups, including those in the UK (Corporate Observatory Europe 2016). These groups viewed the policies and processes in Canada as a threat to the key values of Europe and the UK. It is possible that these issues could continue to be contentious in negotiations between Canada and the UK.

Another value-based concern was CETA provisions on dispute settlement, which were presented as giving corporations power over the governments (Webb 2018, 8). The UK has expressed opposition to the idea of any kind of supranational control over dispute settlement (Neuwahl 2017, 280). Civil society groups have argued that investment dispute settlement undermines democracy and the powers of the elected government by placing increasing amounts of power in the hands of foreign companies (Corporate Europe Observatory 2016). The replacement of the ISDS with an investment court system (ICS) was received positively in Canada and many of the EU member states. However, the EU member states must ratify CETA agreement due to the inclusion of the ICS and issues related to indirect investment. As the UK did not ratify the agreement yet, it remains to be seen whether the ICS will be a contentious issue raised in debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

During the CETA negotiations, the UK government did not include any products for rules of origin protections, which was one of the most contentious issues during CETA negotiations on the EU side (Williams 2017a). Canada has recognized a number of EU geographical indicators for food products, however, the list does not include any UK goods. This decision has proven controversial within the UK, especially in Scotland (Williams 2017a; Williams 2017b). There are a number of Scottish products that enjoy EU protection, but they are not protected under CETA. These products include Scottish salmon, Scotch beef and lamb, Stornoway black pudding, Orkney cheddar, Ayrshire Dunlop, Cornish party, Cumberland sausages, and Jersey royal potatoes (Williams 2017b). Scotland argued that these goods were tied to its identity, and that without the protections provided by the rules of origin, it is possible that its identity could be undermined.

This example illustrates the potential of mobilizing subnational identities against a potential Canada-UK agreement. While provinces in Canada and devolved administrations in the UK do not have the legal power to derail trade agreements, both countries' systems of multilevel governance provide opportunities for the political expression of subnational identities, which may strongly influence the decision-making at the central political level. In Canada, opposition against an agreement with the UK could originate from the Francophone province of Quebec, especially if the agreement is seen as privileging Canada's British traditions over its connections to *la Francophonie*. Given Canada's character as a bilingual country, one significant advantage of conducting transatlantic economic relations through the EU has been that potentially divisive inner-Canadian debates about the relative importance of the "Anglosphere" and the "Francosphere" for Canadian foreign policy identity could be kept in abeyance. If not managed carefully by Canadian politicians, the fallout of Brexit has the potential to undermine this domestic consensus (Hurrelmann 2018; Bell and Vucetic forthcoming).

In the UK, there has been much discussion about the impact of Brexit on Scotland (McHarg and Mitchell 2017). In the context of Canada-UK trade negotiations, it is important to recall that Scotland was quite divided over CETA. Two Scottish MEPs voted against CETA, and various Scottish MPs and MSPs expressed serious concerns, which related to ISDS, labour standards, the future right of the Scottish parliament to decide on regulatory standards, public procurement, the insufficient protection of Scottish food and fisheries products, and the unproven economic advantages of CETA (Robertshaw 2017; Scottish Greens 2016). Scotland has also continued to show support for a softer Brexit, in which the UK would have fewer trade options outside of EU arrangements (BBC 2018). Given the political vulnerability of the UK's current minority government (Government of Canada 2018; Boffey et al. 2018), it cannot be ruled out that the

Scottish National Party emerges as a power broker in the British parliament after the next election (BBC 2017).

4.2.4 Potential diffusion effects

A final factor that could trigger a politicization of a future Canada-UK trade agreement is diffusion effects from other agreements that either Canada or the UK conclude in the same time frame. While it is difficult to anticipate such diffusion effects, the example of TTIP, which triggered an unexpected politicization of CETA when the Canada-EU negotiations were all but concluded, points to the importance of considering the broader trade policy environment in which a Canada-UK agreement is negotiated.

After the conclusion of negotiations on the CPTPP and the USMCA, Canada is not currently engaged in highly controversial trade negotiations that appear likely to spill over to a Canada-UK trade deal. Public controversies about CPTTP and USMCA could, of course, still emerge in the ratification process. In the UK, by contrast, diffusion appears a more realistic prospect. The focus of public debate here is on the future trade relationship with the EU, as well as on a potential US-UK trade deal. Given the example of TTIP, especially the latter agreement should be considered a potential source of diffusion.

Both British advocates of Brexit and US President Donald Trump have expressed strong support for a US-UK trade agreement, which is sometimes presented as one of the primary benefits of Brexit (Partington 2017; Crilly 2018). However, US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has made it clear that, from the US government's perspective, such a trade deal would require that the UK remove "unnecessary regulatory divergences" with the US, not least in the area of food safety (Partington 2017). Against the background of TTIP, such comments suggest that a US-UK trade deal could be strongly politicized in the UK, since it would raise many of the same sovereignty and value/identity concerns that made TTIP so controversial. Should a Canada-UK economic agreement be pulled into the resulting discussions, the story of CETA could play itself out all over again.

4.2.5 Conclusion

The EU is the UK's most important trading partner (Office for National Statistics 2018) and, thus, an agreement with Canada will be impacted by any deal that the UK strikes with the EU. The UK's second most important trading partner is the US (Office for National Statistics 2018). This means that a trade deal with the US might be a priority for the UK rather than a deal with Canada. Because of the availability of CETA as a template, it is possible that a Canada-UK trade deal is concluded quickly and without much public controversy. However, as the discussion in this section has shown, various economic and value-based factors specific to the UK and Canada could trigger politicization during the negotiations of a new bilateral agreement. Academic and primary sources have shown that diffusion effects can be important triggers of politicization as well. In particular, any issue that might be politicized in negotiations with the US, such as food and environmental standards, might affect the negotiations with Canada.

4.3 Conditioning factors (I): How can policy makers shape institutional settings for political contestation about international economic agreements?

In a democracy, politicization is a development that should not be feared. The objective for policy makers should not be to suppress contestation about a Canada-UK trade agreement, if and when it develops, but to channel it into impactful policy debates. This section therefore focuses on how political contestation can be actively assuaged by decision makers by increasing transparency of trade negotiations and by including non-state stakeholders (e.g., interest groups and citizens) in negotiation processes, mainly via consultation strategies. This section thus addresses the previously mentioned political opportunity structures that condition trade related contestation. There are many ways in which such opportunity structures can be deliberately shaped to increase transparency and inclusiveness. This section provides an overview of such strategies, comments on their use in different contexts, and assesses their effectiveness.

4.3.1 Stakeholder involvement in international trade negotiations

The international economic order that emerged at the end of World War II, and which centred largely on the Bretton Woods institutions, was not designed to give a place for non-state stakeholders to voice their concerns and preferences in international negotiations. As explained in Ghelye and De Ville (2017, 17), the early years of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) can be understood as a form of “executive multilateralism” where government representatives coordinated their policies without being subjected to much parliamentary control or public scrutiny (see also Zürn 2004). These behind-closed-doors negotiations remained opaque because of the nature of international trade agreements, which focused on “at the border” issues related primarily to tariffs on trade in goods. However, as trade agreements increasingly shifted to “behind the border” issues, putting things like “domestic regulations that reflect societal preferences in areas such as public services or social, environmental or health protection” onto the trade agenda, decision-makers found themselves increasingly hard pressed to continue to exclude domestic actors from their negotiations (Ghelye and De Ville 2017, 17). To speak with Ghelye and De Ville (2017, 17): “awareness of this increased intrusion into sensitive domestic policy issues gradually led to the involvement of new actors in the international trade scene”, including parliaments but also business associations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and citizen groups. The inclusion of these “non-traditional players” in trade agreements pressured decision-makers to bring greater transparency to negotiation processes (including the making public of documents) as well as to establish both informal and formal channels of participation for a broad range of non-state stakeholders.

These historical changes in how decision makers have brought non-state stakeholders firmly into the fold of negotiation processes have mirrored a growing academic literature on so-called “government responsiveness”: the notion that government policies reflect the concerns of the public at large (Burstein 2003; Page and Shapiro 1983; Soroka and Wlezien 2004; 2005; Weakliem 2003). This literature is much broader than just international trade negotiations. In fact, the central questions in the literature relate to domestic policy-making, with the question of international trade developing only as a niche area within this larger research agenda.

In very broad terms, research on the question of government responsiveness turns on a series of fundamental questions: how much impact does public opinion have on public policy and what factors moderate the extent and nature of this impact? One prominent strand in this literature is related to the salience or importance of the policy issue for the public. A general scholarly

consensus has emerged around an expected positive correlation between highly salient issues and increases in government responsiveness, at least in western democratic regimes. Another prominent strand takes a slightly more sceptical view, stressing that responsiveness is tempered both by the inherently limited cognitive capabilities of individuals and the limited organizational capabilities of decision makers (Burnstein 2003, 30). Responsiveness, in other words, suffers from the problem of “satisficing” rational actors.

A third strand of the responsiveness literature, and the one that is most relevant for this present report, is the role of intermediaries that link public opinion to governmental decision-makers. In particular, interest groups – including business associations, citizen groups, cause groups, and consumer groups – play an important role in these processes. While scholars have long acknowledged the important role played by interest groups in mediating public opinion and public policy, this line of enquiry has garnered far less attention in research on government responsiveness. Indeed, recent scholarly work has been quick to point out that a critical shortcoming of the responsiveness literature is the omission of interest groups. Lamenting the paucity of research on the specific question of the linkages between public opinion and interest group agendas, Bevan and Rasmussen (2017, 2) explain that responsiveness studies either rarely take interest groups into account, or they limit themselves by focusing on specific interest group types or specific policy issues (Agnone 2007; Burnstein and Freudenburg 1978; Gilens and Page 2014; Lax and Phillips 2012; McAdam and Su 2002; Olzak and Soule 2009). For Kimball et al. (2012, 7-8), excluding interest groups from responsiveness studies is a “critical omission, for organized interests tend to play a starring role in theories of unequal representation”.

4.3.2 *Mechanisms of non-state stakeholder involvement*

The mechanisms of non-state stakeholder involvement are many and varied, and range from rather passive processes that work to increase the transparency of negotiation processes, to far more active processes that work to include non-state stakeholder in policy-making processes in meaningful ways. Unfortunately, there is no established typology of these mechanisms. However, drawing on the recent work of Organ (2017) as well as empirical research carried out for this report, we can conceptualize non-state stakeholder involvement at three distinct levels. This is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 – Mechanisms of inclusion

	Transparency	Limited inclusion	Open inclusion
Concept	Institutional transparency and awareness raising, but little or no participation	Includes transparency as well as participation through instruments of deliberative and direct democracy, but just as means to support existing policy decisions and effective governance	Includes transparency as well as participation through instruments of deliberative and direct democracy that allow interest groups to challenge the status quo
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press releases ▪ Speeches ▪ Publications ▪ Information on website ▪ Use of social media ▪ Making documents publicly available ▪ Official statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close-ended and/or targeted consultation with limited / closed-ended options for replies ▪ Targeted stakeholder involvement ▪ Targeted public hearings / events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open ended consultations ▪ Open stakeholder consultations actively ensuring participation of a diverse range of interests ▪ Open public hearings actively ensuring participation of a diverse range of interests

Source: Compiled by the authors.

These mechanisms have been used to differing extents in recent international trade agreements (Table 6). TTIP provides a good starting point for comparison. Shortly after TTIP negotiations were initiated in 2013, it was clear that the process faced considerable societal opposition and pressures from non-state stakeholders, including a broad array of interest groups (see also De Ville and Siles-Brügge 2016a; Jedinger and Schoen 2018; Gheyle 2016; Organ 2017; Sparding 2014; Steiner 2018; Van Loon 2018; von Nordheim et al. 2018; Young 2016). As a highly contentious trade agreement, TTIP is a critical case for understanding how different mechanisms of transparency and inclusion were deployed by decision-makers. First, TTIP was the object of considerable opposition from civil society organizations, coming in the form of protests as well as a range of mobilization-related activities linked to the use of “web pages and newsletters” (Buonnanno 2017, 796). As Gheyle and De Ville (2017, 16) report, “more than 80 organizations in the EU and the US wrote a letter to the then Presidents Barack Obama, José Manuel Barroso and Herman Van Rompuy expressing their ‘opposition to the use of behind-closed-door trade negotiations’”. On the side of the EU, the initial response was to increase transparency in the negotiation processes. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker asked incoming Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström to “enhance transparency towards citizens and the European Parliament during all steps of the negotiations” of TTIP (Ibid, 17). This resulted in the Commission launching various “transparency initiatives” committing to publishing information on meetings of its Commissioners and senior officials and providing greater access to documents relating to TTIP (Coremans 2017; European Commission 2014). The 2015 Trade for All initiative seeks “[t]o make trade negotiations more transparent”; the strategy “commits to publishing key negotiating texts from all negotiations, as happens in the [TTIP]” (European Commission 2015, 5). Additionally, Trade for All entails a broad promise to promote “informed debate in Member States and a deeper dialogue with civil society at large” (Ibid, 18). This focus on transparency and (vague) promise for inclusion drew heavy criticism from trade unions and NGOs (Gheyle and De Ville 2017, 17).

During the TTIP negotiation process, more robust forms of inclusion have been observed in both the EU and the US. Facing considerable societal pressure, American negotiators worked to increase transparency of negotiations by issuing press releases and “consulting closely with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders” (Office of the United States Trade Representative 2013). Additionally, non-state stakeholders were involved through various outreach activities as well as open consultation processes. While the Commission speaks on behalf of the EU in international trade negotiations, the UK nevertheless took some steps to enhance transparency and inclusion in the TTIP process. In terms of transparency, information dissemination was a priority for the UK government, employing press releases, news articles, speeches, publications of official statistics, and the liberal use of social media (including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube) (GOV.UK 2015). In terms of stakeholder inclusion, the Department for International Trade provided general contact and several specific contact opportunities on their website as well as online consultations. Importantly, they also processed a freedom of information request.

Table 6 – Transparency and inclusivity strategies used in different trade agreements²

Party	Transparency	Limited inclusion	Open inclusion
EU (TTIP; EU-Japan EPA; EU-South Korea FTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information provided to the press ▪ Information factsheets on website ▪ Brochures ▪ Social media (twitter) ▪ Publishing of report of each negotiating round and initial negotiating proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent study (sustainability impact assessment) ▪ Specific meetings with interested parties ▪ Impact assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public consultations ▪ Formal inclusion of civil society organizations via Civil Society Dialogue
United States (TTIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press releases ▪ Outreach through public sessions at negotiations ▪ Linking EU website instead of providing information themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request a speaker/ interview (outreach activity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultations
United Kingdom (TTIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Website information ▪ Press releases ▪ News stories ▪ Speeches ▪ Publications, such as guides ▪ Official statistics ▪ Dept. for International Trade on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General contact and several specific contacts on website for export and import enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freedom of Information Request ▪ Online consultations (until 26 October 2018)
Canada (CETA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press releases ▪ Information on website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing suggestions in a letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public consultations
Japan (EU-Japan EPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press releases ▪ Information on website 		
South Korea (EU-South Korea FTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on websites ▪ Disclosure of documents ▪ Commissioning of feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public hearing 	

Source: Compiled by the authors.

² Relevant documents (all accessed November 30, 2018):

- For the EU: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153846.pdf; http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153864.pdf; <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/events/index.cfm?id=1314>; http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153866.pdf; http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153871.pdf; <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/positionpapers.cfm>; http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153878.pdf
- For the US: <https://www.trade.gov/mas/ian/tradeagreements/index.asp>; [https://tcc.export.gov/Trade Agreements/Free Trade Agreements/index.asp](https://tcc.export.gov/Trade%20Agreements/Free%20Trade%20Agreements/index.asp)
- For the UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade>; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-for-international-trade&publication_type=transparency-data; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-white-paper-preparing-for-our-future-uk-trade-policy-government-response/trade-white-paper-preparing-for-our-future-uk-trade-policy-government-response#introduction>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/creating-a-transparent-and-inclusive-future-trade-policy>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/creating-a-transparent-and-inclusive-future-trade-policy>
- For Canada: <http://international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/consultations/index.aspx?lang=eng>; <https://international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/ceta-aecg/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- For Japan: <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/speeches/index.html>; https://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/ie/page25e_000233.html
- For Korea: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/negotiations-and-agreements/>

These same mechanisms can be found to varying degrees in other recent high-profile international trade negotiations. CETA, for instance, involved both parties issuing press releases and providing online information in order to increase transparency in the negotiations (Hübner et al 2017; Neuwahl 2017). They also engaged in providing opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in a relatively informal “sharing of ideas” via suggestion letters and, for both the EU and Canada, more formal public consultations. The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) has also seen the implementation of transparency and inclusion mechanisms, but in a much more lopsided manner (Suzuki 2017). For its part, the EU worked diligently to increase transparency in the usual manner of providing information through press releases, publishing fact sheets on the DG Trade website, and using social media. The Commission also conducted an independent impact assessment study, held specific meetings with interested parties, as well as open online public consultations. Japan, however, did little to enhance inclusion in the negotiation process. While minor efforts were made to increase transparency in the form of press releases and information on the relevant websites, no effort was made to include stakeholders in public hearings or consultations.

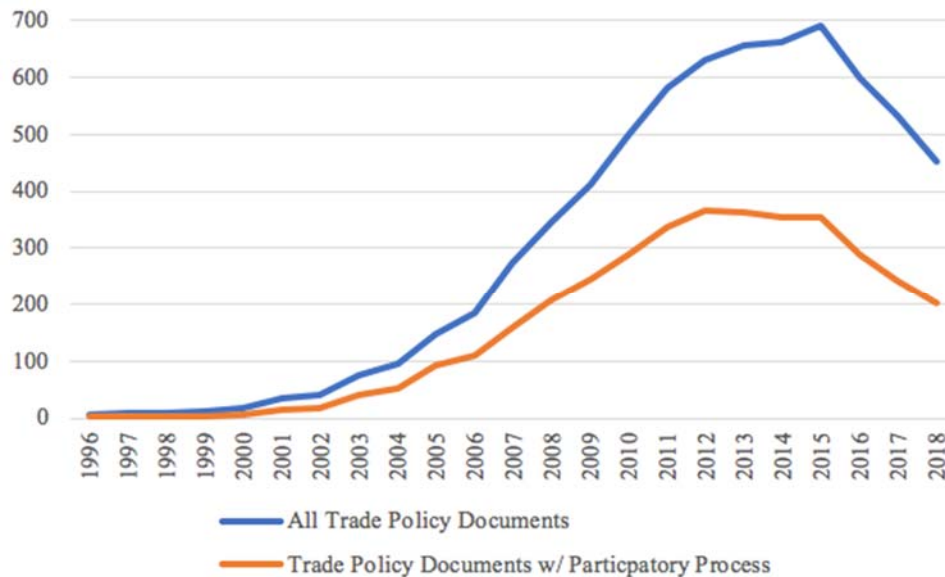
Finally, the EU-South Korean Free Trade Agreement is, in relative terms, more inclusive when it comes to societal interests and non-state stakeholders (Park 2017). While the EU implemented the same battery of mechanisms as in the EU-Japan deal (and in this case using the formalized Civil Society Dialogue Mechanism), its counterpart in this instance, South Korea, did work to enhance transparency and inclusion. This came specifically in the form of online information provision, the government commissioning of “feasibility study”, and a public hearing. As Park (2017, 835) explains, this is new for South Korean trade negotiations and is the result of changes made in the 2012 Commercial Treaty Act. The Korean “National Assembly now possesses much stronger monitoring and control power for the entire lifetime of trade negotiation and implementation. Also, the business sectors and [civil society organizations] have been provided with diverse venues and channels to more strongly engage in policy-making” (Park 2017, 835-836). The Commercial Treaty Act has specific provisions for public hearings, information disclosure, report submissions, and making a feasibility study known before the start of negotiations, for example.

4.3.3 Global trends

The above discussion gives some insight into the types of strategies used by decision makers to involve non-state stakeholders in trade negotiation processes. However, these cases can hardly be generalized to the rest of the globe. Indeed, they represent trade among OECD countries. Recent data generated by the International Trade Centre (ITC), a multilateral agency with a joint mandate with the WTO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, can give some insight into broader trends of the inclusion of non-state stakeholders in international trade negotiations across other parts of the globe (International Trade Centre 2017). ITC data reflects a repository of strategic trade policy documents dealing with trade and development issues with particular coverage in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In addition to disaggregating these documents in terms of different trade sectors, countries, regions, and years, it also indicates whether policy documents are the product of a “participatory process” – “through the use of consultations and/or workshops with the public and stakeholders” (Ibid, 23). Using these data, we can get a sense of non-state stakeholder involvement in international trade processes from non-OECD countries.

Figure 1 plots ITC data comparing the total number of strategic trade policy documents issued per year (1996-2018) and the number of strategic documents that used a participatory process. We can see that the total number of documents is roughly double that of documents that use the participatory process. For example, in 2015, there are 690 total documents and 355 that involved non-state stakeholders. Put differently, non-state stakeholders are included in strategic trade processes about half of the time. These figures suggest that participatory processes are used beyond the OECD; however, there does not seem to be a clear increase in the share of documents using participatory processes over time.

Figure 1 – Number of trade policy documents in ITC database: 1996-2018



Data source: International Trade Centre, <https://www.tradestrategymap.org> (accessed November 30, 2018)

4.3.3 Conclusion

The increasingly important and central role of so-called “non-traditional players” in international trade agreements has pressured decision makers to bring greater transparency to negotiation processes and to establish both informal and formal channels of participation. These strategies, conceptualized here in terms of transparency, limited inclusion, and open inclusion, have become part of the standard repertoire for actors involved in modern trade negotiations. Indeed, recent global trends beyond OECD countries suggest that participatory processes are prevalent (but not dominant) in other parts of the world and constitute a significant share of economic and trade agreements. However, the extent to which these strategies help channel political contestation into decision-making, or translate into a de-escalation of politicization, is difficult to establish.

4.4 **Conditioning factors (II): How can proponents and opponents of international economic agreements make their case to the public?**

The final research question to be addressed in this report concerns the communication strategies used by proponents and opponents of trade agreements. Like opportunity structures, these were identified in our analytical framework as a conditioning factor that can determine which shape politicization takes in a particular political context. This section is primarily interested in identifying the political arguments that dominate political debates when an international economic agreement has become contentious, and particularly those that “work” for proponents and opponents of such agreements in making their case to the public. Debates on new-generation trade agreements are no longer limited to the economic domain, often involving “behind-the-border” issues and broader themes such as national sovereignty, immigration, and social and environmental policy. In debates on international economic matters, the most powerful arguments tend to be emotional ones, tapping into fear of economic costs or loss of national sovereignty in policy-making, especially in key fields such as immigration or environment. Importantly, the power of these arguments depends primarily on their public appeal and not on their empirical validity. Moreover, the No side (opposing the trade deal) often has an advantage in agenda setting, when it has resources and participates in the debate. This advantage is due to the fact that they do not need to be coherent and could attack the agreement from multiple angles. This is especially the case when the trade deal is multidimensional and covers a broad range of issues, providing more ammunition for the opposing side. However, the studies also demonstrate that negotiating parties could use repeat referendums or public consultation to renew the agenda and increase support for the trade deals at hand. Below we first discuss the body of research that studies political framing strategies in general, and then focus on such strategies in the case of international economic agreements. We also underline diffusion effects, pointing to the transnational character of the anti-trade NGOs, which often learn and borrow strategies and arguments from each other.

4.4.1 *How does framing work?*

The power of political arguments in shaping public opinion has been widely studied in the political psychology and social movement literatures. Politicians present political issues in particular ways and mobilize voters by encouraging them to think along particular lines. This is called a framing effect (Benford and Snow 2000; Chong and Druckman 2007a; 2007b; Goffman 1974). It typically occurs when, in describing an issue or event, a speaker’s emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when forming their opinions (Druckman 2001, 1042; Entman 2004). The way an issue is framed can therefore produce dramatic differences in public opinion. For example, in an American study, when answering whether they would favour or oppose allowing a hate group to hold a political rally, 85% of respondents answer in favour if the question highlighted the importance of free speech, whereas only 45% were in favour when the question emphasized public safety and the risk of violence (Sniderman and Theriault 2004).

Importantly, not every argument (frame) is equally influential on public opinion. What are the ingredients of a strong frame? Why do some arguments resonate and some do not? Research shows that individuals should be able to comprehend the content of the frame, in other words be familiar with its theme, and find it applicable to the situation at hand (Benford and Snow 2000; Chong and Druckman 2007b; Snow et al. 1986). Moreover, vivid information is also more easily recalled than dull or pallid stimuli (Brader and Marcus 2013; Jerit and Barabas 2006; Ridout and Searles 2011).

Therefore, emotional and vivid arguments, especially those evoking fear, anxiety and anger, are expected to be more enduring than those that do not elicit an affective response, all else being equal. People also pay more attention to and are better able to recall negative information (Pfau and Kenski 1990; Soroka 2014). Overall, familiar frames that are presented in an emotional and negative manner are stronger, and are thereby expected to be successful in affecting individuals' opinions by increasing the salience of the particular dimension they emphasize. Importantly, the strength of a frame is not based on its intellectual or moral content. It is only strong in its appeal to audiences (Chong and Druckman 2007b, 111). What we call "post-truth" politics is so prevalent today because whether or not a frame is strong does not depend on accuracy, validity or relation to scientific evidence (Chong and Druckman 2007a, 652). Strong frames often rest on symbols, and may use heuristics rather than direct information on the substance of a policy.

While the strength of frames is what the literature presents as the most important component in understanding framing success, speaker credibility and resources also matter. If the campaigners have better credibility and resources, this amplifies the power of these frames by giving the speakers more standing and opportunities to advance them.

4.4.2 Is the public more susceptible to framing effects on certain issues?

The existing research has not focused on this question directly. The study of referendums, however, provides an important starting point. In referendums, the question can range from one with which the public is highly familiar to one that is complex and technical. When a referendum question concerns an issue in a longstanding debate such as independence, and the positions of the political parties on the issue are well known, public opinion is highly stable with pre-existing beliefs anchoring the outcome (LeDuc 2002). The opposite is also true. When ideological alignments are unclear and parties line up in a non-traditional way, we observe a gradual opinion formation period and public opinion can shift significantly over the course of the campaigns. This is particularly the case in referendums on complex international treaties or large packages of constitutional provisions, as voters do not have well-formed opinions. Campaign materials give voters cues, serving as short-cuts to help them make sense of conflicting information.

This is why referendums on international economic agreements are expected to provide considerable shifts in public opinion, as the public is often unfamiliar with their technical contents. This implies that even in cases where there is no referendum, campaigns on international trade have a notable potential to affect individuals' opinions on the topic. Hicks et al. (2014, 115) stress the complexity of trade agreements for the public and the importance of the framing used by the political elite. Arguing that "such elite, or top-down, preference formation processes have been little studied in the political economy of trade", the authors conclude that even when controlling for the most well-known economic variables, their results strongly suggest that well-organized parties can use their rhetorical and political resources to shape individuals' policy preferences. Siles-Brügge (2018, 2) similarly points to the technical nature of trade agreements and argues that this often leads to contradictory "expert" knowledge. He distinguishes between the two types of frames that political actors tend to use. For instance, in the post-Brexit trade policy debate, the first was used by the Treasury and the advocates of a soft Brexit, who made an effort at "technocratic repression", "reducing trade policy to matters of economic gains" in order to avoid an emotionally charged debate (Widmaier 2010). The second, on the other hand, was embraced by the hard Brexit advocates who used emotive frames emphasizing "kith and kin", a closer association with the Anglosphere, at no significant cost to the UK's trading relationship with the EU. Siles-Brügge

(2018) argues that the real power of the second set of arguments lies in their emotional appeal. This is why criticizing these frames on the basis of their expert knowledge overlooks the real mechanism behind their success. Echoing the findings of framing theory in a similar fashion, Hopkin and Rosamond (2017) point to the loosening of the relationship between political rhetoric and “truth” in key debates in contemporary macroeconomic policy around public debt and budget deficits. Such frames, they argue, are indifferent to the truth and proceed without effective concern for the veracity of the claim in question, which explains their hold on the popular imagination. In the next section we summarize key research that focuses on framing effects on international economic agreements, first in cases with referendums and second in cases without referendums.

4.4.3 Framing international economic agreements in referendum debates

A rigorous study of framing effects would require a careful research design with multiple steps, assessing the rationale behind the choice of frames, the media attention these frames receive, and the extent to which they move public opinion. Although framing effects in EU referendums have received considerable scholarly attention, such effects remain relatively understudied in other fields. Regarding referendums on international economic agreements, the bulk of existing research focuses on referendums relating to questions of European integration. Although the EU is not a mere economic cooperation, its agreements and treaties carry an important economic dimension.

Comparative studies of EU referendums on treaty ratification (e.g., the Lisbon Treaty) very much parallel the findings of the framing literature and demonstrate that the information provided to voters during the campaigns matters. In these referendums, when the negative consequences of a No vote are stressed, more people favour the proposal; and when the negative consequences of a Yes vote are stressed, more people oppose the proposal. These studies find that arguments on two specific themes – economy and sovereignty – are often the most powerful. This is because they are highly familiar to the voting public and lend themselves to an emotional campaign style. Anti-EU campaigns typically argue that a proposed EU agreement will cause a loss of political autonomy in key fields such as social policy, immigration, military neutrality, and moral issues such as abortion, even when those themes are not present in the treaty at hand. On the other side, the pro-EU campaigners succeed the most when they can tap into the economic costs of an anti-EU vote.

More specifically, the No side in an EU treaty ratification campaign has more ability to control the agenda and to advance such emotional arguments on the threat to political autonomy (Atikcan 2018). Given that the No side does not necessarily need a coherent case and can attack a proposal from multiple angles (LeDuc 2002), multidimensional referendum proposals such as long EU treaties provide more of an advantage to the No side by offering more material to campaign on and more risks to highlight on the loss of autonomy. In contrast, when the proposal is limited to a single topic such as the Fiscal Compact (a short EU treaty on economic and monetary governance), this advantage is reduced. Alternatively, in referendums where the public was asked to vote twice on the same subject such as the Danish and Irish votes on the Maastricht, Nice and Lisbon Treaties, the EU became involved after the first of each referendum, offering guarantees and taking certain arguments off the table, thereby limiting the No side’s hand in the second referendums. Such circumstances reduce the ability of the anti-EU campaigners to set the agenda, which is otherwise usually in their control. When that happens, the pro-treaty side uses similar arguments and highlights the drastic economic consequences of an anti-EU vote.

Moving onto the most recent referendums on international economic cooperation in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Switzerland, the body of research on these recent cases is more limited and does not provide a systematic analysis of framing effects. Nevertheless, they offer important evidence confirming the findings above. Table 7 lists the “winning themes”, i.e. themes identified in the literature as having a significant impact on the outcome in these various categories of referendums, including repeat referendums.

Table 7 – “Winning themes” identified by the literature on international economic referendums

Referendum	Themes having a significant impact on the outcome
Referendums on EU treaties (Maastricht Treaty, Nice Treaty, European Constitution, Lisbon Treaty, Fiscal Treaty)	Economic benefits/costs relating to membership Loss of sovereignty in key fields such as social policy, immigration, military neutrality, and moral issues such as abortion (e.g. Atikcan 2015b; 2015c; 2018; Elkink and Sinnott 2015; Garry 2013, 2014; Hobolt 2006, 2009)
2016 Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement	Loss of Dutch sovereignty Potential eventual EU membership of Ukraine Potential war with Russia (e.g. Hoogenboom 2017; van der Akker 2018; van der Brug et al. 2018)
2015 Danish referendum on its opt-outs	Loss of Danish sovereignty Recent refugee crisis (e.g. Sørensen 2015)
2014 Swiss referendum on immigration from the EU	Threat of immigration (e.g. Ackermann and Freitag 2015; Erne 2014; Freitag et al. 2015; Manatschal 2015; Milic 2015; Sciarini, Lanz and Nai 2015)

Source: Compiled by the authors.

These findings confirm that in debates on international economic agreements, strong arguments often refer to economic benefits/costs and the loss of national autonomy, loss of control on immigration, loss of social standards, and threats to democracy. These argumentation strategies are especially important if the international agreement at hand is a broad and multidimensional one because it offers considerable room for the anti-agreement side to stress its potential risks. This is more and more the case in trade policy-making as new-generation trade agreements no longer deal simply with tariffs and non-tariff barriers but set regulatory norms and practices across a broad range of social activities (Hübner et al. 2017).

4.4.4 Framing international trade deals in the transatlantic context

Recent studies show that campaigns on international trade agreements, even when there are no referendums, have the potential to educate citizens on the content of these agreements and cause a shift in public opinion, especially when they involve emotional arguments (e.g. Hicks et al. 2014; Siles-Brügge 2018). In this section, we look at the framing of two international trade deals in the transnational context, TTIP and CETA, both of which have attracted considerable public attention despite not having a referendum on them.

To start with TTIP, the pro-TTIP arguments emphasized economic benefits involving several million jobs dependent on exports, cheaper products, and increase in disposable income for the average household. However, TTIP has been subject to fierce criticism, presenting it as a threat to democracy and sovereignty due to the ISDS mechanism, as a threat to food safety, data protection, environment, and as a threat to public services such as the UK’s National Health Service (NHS)

(von Nordheim et al. 2018). In a leaked paper on its communication strategy for TTIP, the Commission explicitly mentioned its anxiety over the public debate on the TTIP and “the need to repress (or, in its own words, ‘pro-actively’ ‘define’) potential value-based, emotional concerns, such as ‘data privacy’ or ‘lowering EU regulatory standards’” (Siles-Brügge 2017, 470). In the face of such criticism, the pro-TTIP arguments shifted from “jobs and growth”, via “transparency”, to “strengthening the EU’s voice”. Van Ham (2016, 2-3) argues that the EU started the process with a “dispassionate strategy” aimed to focus the TTIP debate on facts and not fear, but then had to change toward a defensive approach of proving the EU’s transparency and responsiveness, and finally more explicitly as the strategic reply to the “rise of China” and a vital step in strengthening the EU’s voice around the globe.

Academic work on TTIP does not provide a systematic and rigorous analysis of framing effects. But this emerging literature parallels the main findings of the literature on framing and referendums. First, the anti-TTIP campaign holds the advantage in setting the political agenda, and in using the internet and the social media to mobilize local networks, and the pro-TTIP stakeholders are more silent (Ciofu and Stefanuta 2016; Eliasson and García-Duran 2018). Second, these studies confirm that emotional frames win over other frames. They suggest that opposition NGOs used emotional messages and tapped into public fears and concerns by discussing globalization’s impact on national sovereignty and identity, anti-Americanism, and scepticism of the EU in general, with vivid phrases such “Trojan horse” in referring to US multinationals’ taking over rulemaking in the world economy, “chlorine chickens” and “hormone advanced bee” (Bauer 2016; de Bièvre 2018; De Ville and Siles-Brügge 2016b; Eliasson and García-Duran 2018; van Ham 2016). For instance, Eliasson and García-Duran (2018, 109) argue that in the UK, the strategic use of the potentiality of privatising the NHS as a consequence of regulatory convergence and forced competition caused significant public concern. Ciofu and Stefanuta (2016), in turn, argue that pro-TTIP arguments need to be better communicated and should be “easy-to-grasp, engaging and exciting”. Third, these studies point to the post-truth nature of some anti-TTIP arguments, such as “TTIP allows the US to veto and eventually block EU law-making”, because they fail to pass the validity check and suggest that the pro-TTIP camp has been unable to debunk these myths (Bauer 2016, 194; Ciofu and Stefanuta 2016; Eliasson and García-Duran 2018). Eliasson and García-Duran (2018) underline the effective use of selective data, simplifications, exaggerations, and distortions, especially in social media disseminations. On the other hand, De Ville and Siles-Brügge (2016a; 2016b) argue that pro-TTIP arguments emphasizing growth and jobs and containing the geopolitical and geo-economic rise of China and other emerging economies, are also very unlikely to materialize.

Moving onto the framing of its Canadian cousin, pro-CETA arguments very similarly focused on economic growth, job creation, lower prices for consumers, and lower costs for businesses. Anti-CETA groups first used the theme of genetically modified food. Hübner et al. (2017) argue that when they recognized that this form of campaign did not resonate strongly with the public at large, anti-CETA groups changed their strategy and focused on two issues that were presented as undermining the political sovereignty of the participating states: the ISDS and the negative list approach. Anti-CETA civil society groups argued that the ISDS provision would weaken the European standards in food and climate policy, and in the mining, oil and gas sectors. On the second point, the change to the negative list was presented as a large victory for corporate lobby, as it would expand the scope of trade agreements and endanger public services. De Bièvre (2018, 74-76) notes that these were presented as a “Trojan horse”, and that the ISDS would serve as a “back door” for US multinationals to sue the EU through their Canadian affiliates.

Academic research on CETA does not provide a detailed analysis of framing effects either. Nonetheless, once again, their findings fall in line with those of framing and referendum literatures. In a study focusing on both TTIP and CETA, Siles-Brügge (2017) argues that civil society opposition groups against these two trade agreements succeeded in framing a very technical matter, particularly the ISDS mechanism, in a highly emotional manner. Much like the anti-EU campaigners in EU referendums, these opposition groups argued that the ISDS mechanism would threaten democracy, and evoked anger among the public. The choice to focus on the ISDS was strategic because “opposition to ISDS could more easily be emotively communicated than other, more technical issues” (Siles-Brügge 2017, 473). In another similarity to anti-EU campaigners, they did not need to be coherent. Their frame was broad and ambiguous enough to appeal to a greater number of constituencies that have heterogeneous preferences (Cox and Béland 2013).

Yet, Siles-Brügge (2017) also suggests that this overall ambiguousness and the concreteness of the target (ISDS) became a weakness later. After launching a consultation process, the European Commission reformed a specific element of the agreement and adopted the new ICS system instead of the contentious ISDS. This move allowed the Commission to repair the trade agreement’s overall legitimacy. Although this was not deemed sufficient by most of the opposition groups, it pacified pivotal actors and allowed the Commission to move forward. To argue that the reformed ICS was only a “Zombie ISDS” that was “back from the dead”, the opposition groups had to use highly technical and complex arguments, which “ran the risk of being less effective with [...] public opinion than the initial emotive framing” (Siles-Brügge 2017, 477). This assessment parallels the discussed pattern in double EU referendums, where “guarantees” offered by the EU in a second referendum renew the agenda and limit the advantage of anti-EU campaigners.

An important final point concerns diffusion effects, in other words, the transnational networking among campaigners and the impact of such networks on the framing processes. Research on EU referendums show that when referendums are held in a sequence, campaigners borrow “winning” campaign strategies, arguments and posters from one another, providing evidence of such networking and learning across cases (Atikcan 2015a; Jahn and Storsved 1995). Research on TTIP and CETA suggest the existence of a similar process, pointing to connections between the anti-trade movements in various European countries and the key role of the broader Seattle-to-Brussels network in facilitating such interactions (Bauer 2016; Caiani and Graziano 2018; Siles-Brügge 2017). A selection of posters in Figure 2 provides evidence of such effects.

Figure 2 – Similar campaign posters and arguments used in TTIP and CETA campaigns³



4.4.5 Conclusion

There is a large body of academic work on framing effects. However, the role framing plays in the negotiation of new-generation trade deals remains understudied. In debates on such deals, as Table 8 summarizes, using familiar themes in an emotional and negative manner and borrowing strategies from previous successful campaigns would increase an actor's chances of influencing public opinion. What is more, these campaign arguments do not need to be empirically "correct" in order to be influential. Although the anti-trade deal side enjoys a superior agenda setting power, the pro-trade deal side often uses mechanisms such as public consultations to renew the agenda and offer potential solutions to contentious issues.

³ The posters are available at: <https://newint.org/blog/2015/09/11/ttip-local-council-power>; <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/eu-parliament-approves-controversial-canada-trade-deal-1.2977149>; <https://sputniknews.com/world/201604251038594500-us-ttip-eu-negotiations/>; <https://deutsch.rt.com/inland/57625-umstrittenes-freihandelsabkommen-ceta-tritt-in/>; <http://brandalism.ch/brandalism-in-brussels-to-protest-ttip-ceta-free-trade-deals/>; <http://www.revoltedesign.org/#/ceta/> (all accessed November 30, 2018).

Table 8 – Framing strategies and the facilitating factors for the pro- and anti-trade sides

Ingredients of a strong argument	Facilitating factors for the anti-trade deal side	Facilitating factors for the pro-trade deal side
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using familiar themes ▪ Using emotional appeal (especially fear and anger) ▪ Using negative information ▪ Using non-technical and vivid arguments ▪ Access to previously used and successful campaign materials (through networking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broad scope trade deals ▪ Agenda setting power of the No side ▪ Availability of the “sovereignty” argument ▪ Access to the anti-globalization network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of the “economy” argument ▪ Use of repeat referendums or public consultations to renew the agenda

Source: Compiled by the authors.

5. Implications

The analysis in this report has a number of implications for research as well as for Canadian and British trade policy-making. Research implications derive from the aforementioned deficiencies in the scholarly literature on the politicization of international economic agreements, which was found to be dominated by the European/EU perspective, narrowly focused on a limited number of cases (especially TTIP), and insufficiently linked to relevant debates in the broader literature. The following *desiderata for future research* can be formulated to address these deficiencies:

- Research on the politicization of international economic agreements should use comparative research designs, applied to a range of cases that reaches beyond Europe, to systematically test explanatory hypotheses about the factors that drive politicization. The explanatory framework developed for this knowledge synthesis report, which distinguishes triggers (independent variables) and conditioning factors (intervening variables), as well as different manifestations of politicization (dependent variable), can provide a promising starting point.
- The negotiations for a future Canada-UK economic agreement represent one relevant case that can be studied with this approach. This knowledge synthesis report has identified a number of potential triggers and conditioning factors that could influence politicization in the process of negotiating this new bilateral agreement; their influence should be empirically monitored once negotiations get under way. Other examples of agreements that deserve to be studied from a politicization perspective include the planned trade agreement between the UK and the US, but also the CPTPP and USMCA agreements that Canada is part of.
- Research on the politicization of international economic agreements should be systematically embedded in the broader literature about the politicization of global governance, strategies for increasing government responsiveness, and framing strategies applied in debates about international agreements. This knowledge synthesis report has demonstrated that these three bodies of literature can provide useful insights for an analysis of trade policy politicization. The potential of cross-fertilization between these approaches deserves to be more systematically explored.

Our analysis also allows us to formulate a number of recommendations that can aid trade policy practitioners – policy makers in government as well as activists in civil society – anticipate, navigate and influence contentious political debates that develop around a Canada-UK trade agreement. The following *policy implications and recommendations* derive from our analysis:

- The future Canada-UK trade agreement will likely be a multidimensional agreement and will therefore be praised and criticized from various angles. The most influential arguments will

likely touch upon the issues of economic benefits/costs, potential loss of national sovereignty, and implications for national identity. Technical arguments that focus solely on the institutional details of the trade deal will not shape public opinion as much as the vivid, concrete and emotional ones that touch upon the day-to-day concerns of the public.

- CETA provides a suitable template for a proposed Canada-UK trade agreement. Sectors such as agriculture and fisheries would impose some difficulty if an extension of CETA is envisaged; if the goal is the swift conclusion of a new bilateral agreement without major public controversies, these issues should not be included, or only minimum concessions should be expected. An important area of interest for Canada will be the UK financial services sector. The exit of UK from the EU's Single Market will impose restrictions on the Canadian investors in this field, thus the UK government might want to keep this sector as open as possible to still be attractive for foreign investment.
- Public contestation about previous trade agreements, as well as the Brexit referendum, raised public awareness for taking control of national borders, money and law. Such identity-related issues are immensely familiar to the public and constitute potential mobilizing ground. Because Canadian and British NGOs are well-integrated into the anti-globalization network, arguments raised in the TTIP and CETA cases, as well as the posters used, will likely reappear in the debate on the future Canada-UK trade agreement. Subnational identities, for instance of Quebec or Scotland, could be additional focal points for politicization. Some of the arguments in the ensuing debate will likely involve exaggerated or unrealistic elements. As such arguments are extremely difficult to debunk in a heated debate, it is better to think about them in advance and campaign accordingly.
- It is advisable to clearly separate negotiations for a Canada-UK economic agreement from negotiations for a future agreement between the UK and the US. The latter agreement is likely to be considerably more controversial, especially in the UK. Policy makers interested in evidence-based public debates about a Canada-UK agreement must attempt to limit diffusion effects from negotiations on economic agreements involving the US.
- As the debate unfolds, in the face of potential opposition to the deal, the negotiating parties can use public consultation. Such a platform would allow the involvement of the public and stakeholders in the process and the discussion of the particular issues that have become contentious. Even though the emerging solutions might not be deemed perfect, the process itself is valued and the proposed solutions often neutralize the opposition to some degree. In this context, the future Canada-UK trade agreement would be well-served by adopting best practices in transparency and inclusion exercised by the EU. The inclusion of non-state stakeholders must be meaningful in order to mitigate politicization. Policy makers need to demonstrate how feedback is reflected in policy outcomes. Inclusion of non-state stakeholders cannot work simply from the premise of pluralism. Instead, policy makers must ensure unbiased access for a broad range of different interests.

6. Conclusion

While the precise legal parameters of Brexit are still unclear, it appears likely that the UK's withdrawal from the EU will necessitate the negotiation of a new bilateral economic agreement with Canada. In anticipation of these negotiations, it is important for policy makers to understand the conditions under which international economic agreements become politically contentious among citizens, and how such contestation can be addressed in trade policy negotiations.

As this knowledge synthesis report has shown, previous instances of trade policy politicization have occurred when an agreement was seen as a threat to state sovereignty, either because of its broad substantive scope or because of provisions that are seen as undermining a polity's core values and identities. There have also been diffusion effects, with controversies about one agreement leading to politicization of others. The precise trajectories of politicization in different countries depend on a range of conditioning factors, including political opportunity structures and the resources and strategies of political actors.

While the idea of a Canada-UK economic agreement does not currently appear to be particularly contentious, our analysis demonstrates that politicization of a new bilateral agreement cannot be ruled out. It may be triggered by provisions on sensitive economic sectors, such as fisheries or financial markets, as well as by national and subnational identity concerns. Diffusion from a future UK-US economic agreement is also a possibility.

Trade policies of the Canadian and British governments should not attempt to suppress politicization; rather they should seek dialogue with an agreement's critics and channel public contestation into an inclusive and evidence-based public debate. Our knowledge synthesis report has identified promising strategies for increasing transparency of the trade policy process and for bringing about limited or open inclusion of civil society. It has also provided insights into framing strategies and campaign dynamics in contested debates about international agreements that can help both opponents and proponents of a Canada-UK trade deal make their case to the public.

7. Knowledge mobilization activities

This knowledge synthesis report will be presented, and discussed with stakeholders, at three public forums, taking place on December 12, 2018 in London/UK, on February 4, 2019 in Ottawa/Canada, and in March 2019 (date TBD) in Warwick/UK. Insights from the report will be transposed into two policy briefs, aimed respectively at a Canadian and a British audience. These policy briefs, as well as the report itself, will be made available online and will be distributed through targeted mail/email, social media, as well as personal contacts. The report will form the basis for future publications and research projects of the four authors; it will also inform their activities in Brexit-related public outreach and policy advocacy.

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