**The Transpacific Partnership and the Broken Promise of Civil Society Inclusion in Trade Policymaking**

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The Transpacific Partnership (TPP) has been described as a “next generation” trade agreement owing to the very broad scope of the negotiations and the many policy spheres upon which they encroach. Indeed, not only do “behind-the-border issues” venture into new areas ranging from digital trade to supply chains and state-owned enterprises, but the TPP’s economic weight and geographic scale also mean that it is likely to create precedents for the global harmonization of trade rules. The fact that domestic laws concerning food safety or environmental standards – to name just two prominent examples – that were once the product of democratic processes are currently being renegotiated as part of international trade negotiations raises questions on the democratic governance of cross-regional free trade agreements. This is why many civil society groups (consumer associations, environmental organizations, labor unions etc.) have raised their voices to demand greater inclusiveness and transparency in trade negotiations, thereby echoing earlier debates surrounding previous forms of regionalism (CUSFTA, NAFTA). In response to criticism and political mobilization, governments have attempted to develop a number of policy tools to open the trade policy process to civil society actors. The impact of these measures on the ends and means of trade policy have, however, rarely come under academic scrutiny.

This article aims to assess governmental initiatives to include new trade policy stakeholders in “next-generation” FTA negotiations with the aim of developing a systematic approach to evaluate the inclusiveness and accountability of trade policy making. To do so, it proceeds in three parts. The first part reviews the literature on free trade agreements to shed light on the paucity of studies concerned with the democratic governance of cross-regionalism. The second part attempts to remedy this problem through a theoretical discussion of civil society inclusion and participatory democracy in the trade policy sphere. The third part uses this methodological toolbox to analyze the experience of the United States within the context of TPP negotiations.