

NONGOVERNMENT ENTITIES INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL TRADE ARE ALSO
UNBALANCED—IN FAVOR OF THE MORE POWERFUL INTERESTS

When it comes to nongovernment entities of the sort whose participation in domestic economic governance helps maintain dynamic competition with a minimum of direct government intervention, those that span the international economy sufficiently to exercise some trade-governing influence tend to represent the larger and more powerful economic interests. Smaller producers, who might be able to enter a domestic market and get effective public support against suppression of their competition by more powerful or locally entrenched firms, may find it too difficult or costly to do so in international markets. Consumer and civic groups do not readily discover and express internationally their common interests with their foreign counterparts in the maintenance of market dynamism. Community organizations, unions, and most of the many types of nongovernment entities that can participate in domestic market governance do not easily make their influence felt on an international market scale. The reverse is true, however, for larger firms of great market power. The number of industries with large firms operating over more than one national market is increasing rapidly. Large trading organizations are embracing more and more products. In the management phase, industrial organizations are expanding to embrace and direct the interdependent world production mechanism. Their contribution toward the effectiveness of that mechanism is very great and they sometimes are channels for dynamism and efficiency interchanges which governments might fear to permit. By the same sign, however, their power is increasing. The reticence of the executive branches of government about the concerted public use of trade-governing power gives the large private power complexes an additional advantage, for they can use their power and knowledge to influence the intergovernmental trade discussions which are kept secret from the general public. Hence, the structure of nongovernment entities available for participation in the governance of trade is unbalanced when it comes to representing the full range of public interests involved.

PUBLIC OPINION IS READY FOR INFORMATION AND WANTS CHANNELS FOR
EXPRESSION

But if the structure of government and nongovernment entities for the governance of international trade among the industrial countries may be called incomplete and badly balanced for the representation of the public interest, what can be said of the organs of public information and direct expression of opinion, and all the channels for holding governing powers to public accountability and a sense of social responsibility? Only rarely does the public get the information and timely analysis needed to discuss thoroughly the pros and cons of a specific trade situation requiring governance. When it does, however, a very important thing is revealed. In spite of the bargaining postures of governments and of nongovernment powers, and in spite of that major part of the press and communications media which reports these postures and supports one of them or another, the public remains relatively unimpressed. As could be observed in all of the countries