

Lisa Martin. *Democratic Commitments: Legislatures and International Cooperation.*

Chapter 2. “Theoretical Framework: Legislatures, Executives, and Commitment.”

Summary: Building on the literature of legislative activities, Martin presents a theoretical framework which models international cooperation as commitment problems at both international (country-country) and domestic (legislature-executive) levels. She concludes that institutionalized legislative participation in international cooperation (first-track etc.) will help states increase the credibility of their commitment at the international level, since despite their delegation of authority, legislatures hold influence over executives.

Hypotheses

Delegation Hypothesis: legislatures will move to institutionalize their participation in international cooperative endeavors when there is greater conflict of interest between the executive and the legislature.

-When the preferences of legislature and executive are very different (divided government, etc.), the legislature uses institutions as the solution to the asymmetric information problem and participates in foreign policy to a greater extent.

Influence Hypothesis: executives are unable to manipulate the structures of legislative participation to evade legislative influence on international cooperation: delegation does not mean loss of influence for the legislature.

-This legislative influence on executive includes the power of the purse, the manipulation of implementation, the creation of independent agencies, etc.

Credibility Hypothesis: institutionalized legislative participation in international cooperation leads to greater credibility of international commitments.

-This is because institutionalized legislative participation reduces the slack between the negotiator’s authority and implementation of the deal. Because the negotiator takes into account legislative preferences, there is less risk of a negotiated agreement failing to gain ratification.

Cooperation Hypothesis: institutionalized legislative participation leads to greater levels of international cooperation.

-International cooperation is modeled as a prisoners’ dilemma. Hence, credible commitment is essential.

Chapter 7 “Implementing the EU’s Internal Market: The Influence of National Parliaments.”

Summary: Martin tests the Credibility Hypothesis for the case of implementation of EU legislation. She finds a positive correlation between formally institutionalized parliamentary participation in negotiations and high implementation rate of EU legislation. Also, Denmark’s excellent record of implementation, despite its initial reluctance to join the EU, can be explained by its parliament’s active participation in negotiations.

Argument: Three factors increase parliamentary involvement and the credibility of a state’s commitments.

Early parliamentary involvement helps executives anticipate the level and nature of domestic opposition to the agreement. Government accountability for parliament encourages ministers to invest the necessary time and energy to master the details of European legislation, and this in turn increases bargaining power of ministers and assures rapid implementation. Finally, transparency of the implementation process – who will be involved or have veto power - makes it less likely that negotiators will be able to fool themselves into thinking that they can circumvent opposition later.

Data: Martin operationalizes credibility as the implementation rate of EU legislation published by the European Commission. She argues that if governments’ commitments are credible, we should see a high implementation rate. She finds a positive correlation between implementation rate and parliamentary oversight.

Denmark: Denmark has the best implementation record despite its reputation as a “reluctant European.” This paradox can be explained by the highly activist participation of the Danish parliament in EU negotiations. For example, the parliament at an early stage set up a Market Relations Committee charged with oversight of EU activities. The MRC is in constant session assuring extensive consultation with the executive.