

Legislatures have a deep and subtle influence on international bargaining and cooperation. Although legislative active participation in foreign affairs in democracies is often thought to impair democracy, theoretical and empirical evidence has shown that institutionalized legislative participation in bargaining increases mutual trust and enhances credible commitments amongst democracies. This institutionalized legislative “is the key determinate of the credibility of commitments”.

The legislative/executive relationship is of an exchange nature rather than of dominance. Legislatures can indirectly control executive’s decisions on international affairs by accelerating or delaying the ratification of such decisions. Legislative can also delegate decisionmaking power to the executive, yet to reserve its prerogative to reclaim it or to refuse to implement international agreements. The key point to start with is that legislative does care about foreign policy as much as the executive does.

Two main approaches attempt to explain the legislative power delegation: (1) distributional approach that finds motivation to delegate power by legislatures to subcommittees in providing “credible commitments to complex cross-issues bargain”; and (2) informational approach that views the necessity of delegation of power in the need to acquire expert information.

Legislative’s influence on international cooperation sometimes functions indirectly, *e.g.*, when the executive is aware that its decision on an international issue would have bearings on, or requires, an act of domestic policymaking, it considers the legislative’s preferences. Legislative’s delegation, in turn, is conducted with consideration about the consistency of preferences between the legislature and the institution which has been entrusted with the issue in question. When legislative and executive preferences are in

line, the necessity of the executive interference in foreign policymaking is expected to be at the lowest rate. When legislative participation is not institutionalized or when the executive prefers to circumvent legislative opposition, they will reach agreements with states that turn out to be difficult to be put into effect at home. Legislative institutionalized participation, therefore, helps the executive avoid such negotiating errors which in turn enhance the credibility of commitments.