

Chapter 4. Examining the Predictability of the Selectorate Theory: Which Aspect of Democracy explains Better, the Size of the Winning Coalition or Civil Liberties?

Abstract

Arguing that civil liberties better explain public policy outcomes than does the winning coalition (W), chapter 4 evaluates the predictability of Morrow et al.'s (2008) selectorate theory. Morrow et al.'s (2008) selectorate models compare two different features of political institutions: the size of W versus constraints on the chief executive. Their analysis reports that for 25 (81%) out of 31 different policy outcomes, W explains more of the variance in these outcomes than do executive constraints. However, after having conceptualized civil liberties as a fundamental and uniquely democratic feature, chapter 4 presents evidence that the inclusion of a variable accounting for the presence or lack of civil liberties contributes to a loss of the robustness, if not the significance, of W in more than 62% of the selectorate models. In other words, this chapter finds that countries with high levels of civil liberties are better at providing public goods than are countries with large winning coalitions.