

**The politics of “rushing to pen”.
Treaty commitment and diplomatic ties that bind?**

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Abstract

The existing literature on international treaty-making generally differentiates between states' commitment and states' compliance. What has received less attention is that commitment usually is signaled in two steps. Before countries ratify international treaties, they engage in negotiations that culminate in the act of signature. While there exists a considerable literature explaining the determinants of ratification, we know surprisingly little about the politics of signing.

This paper starts from the observation that differences between the act of signature and the act of ratification have not received sufficient attention. We argue that a state's decision to sign a treaty differs from the decision to ratify a treaty. In particular, our empirical test suggests that the size of states' representation to international organizations yields explanatory power for treaty signature, but not for ratification. Rooted in the principal-agent literature, we develop an argument on why and how participation in negotiations affects the incentives of negotiators to “rush to pen”. Empirically, we rely on a new data-set comprising 53 multilateral treaties concluded between 1990 and 2005.