

Presidentialism, parliamentarism, and democracy

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Abstrak

Are newly established presidential democracies doomed to fail? In support of their positive answer to this question, advocates of parliamentarism point out that these regimes tend to last longer than presidential ones. This book takes a contrary view. It argues that most of the reasons offered for the poor survival record of presidential democracies - that they are prone to deadlocks, offer no incentives for coalition formation, make political parties weak, and fragment decision making - have neither sound theoretical foundations nor any empirical support. In fact, what has made presidential democracies more fragile is that they typically emerged in countries where the military was already strong, which placed democracy of any kind at risk. Therefore, the prospects of new democracies that have established a directly elected president as their head of government may be better than usually considered.

Instead of attempting to change the form of government, institutional reformers should thus concentrate on designing a better presidential democrac