Do Institutions Matter? Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism

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GOV 20

November 2 2017
Some questions

- What is an institution?
- What are some theories of institutions?
- How can institutions have effects?
- What is Linz argument against presidentialism?
- What are some responses?
The menu
Daron Acemoglu is an INSTITUTION
What is an institution?

- North: “Institutions are the rules of the game in a society... the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions”.
- Huntington: “Stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior”
- Riker: “congealed tastes”
## Institutional Strength and Weakness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>strong formal institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>stable (but weakly enforced) formal institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>unstable (but enforced) formal institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>weak formal institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informal institutions

“We define informal institutions as socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels.”
Formal and informal institutions

Figure 1
A typology of informal institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Effective formal institutions</th>
<th>Ineffective formal institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Substitutive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>Competing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Linz Critique

- Winner take all
- Fixed term
- Dual legitimacy
- “Style”: head of state = head of government
Populism?

“This identification of leader with people fosters a certain populism that may be a source of strength. It may also bring on a refusal to acknowledge the limits of the mandate that even a majority can claim as a democratic justification for the enactment of its agenda. The doleful potential for displays of cold indifference, disrespect, or even downright hostility, is not to be scanted.” (p.61)
The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes

edited by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan
Premiers can be stronger
Recap

- Definitions of institutions
- Institutional effects
- Institutional strength and weakness
- Informal institutions
- Trade-offs in institutional design
- Presidentialism v. parliamentarism