

# Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy: Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics

This book examines the relationship between presidentialism, parliamentarism, and democracy. It argues that the choice between these two systems of government is not simply a matter of institutional design, but also reflects the broader political culture and history of a country.



## Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

by Thomas Hylland Eriksen

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Presidentialism is a system of government in which the president is both the head of state and the head of government. Parliamentarism is a system of government in which the head of government is the prime minister, who is selected by the parliament. Democracy is a system of government in which the people have the power to choose their leaders.

The relationship between these three concepts is complex and has been the subject of much debate. Some scholars argue that presidentialism is more conducive to democracy than parliamentarism, while others argue that the opposite is true. Some scholars argue that the choice between presidentialism and parliamentarism is primarily a matter of institutional design, while others argue that it is also a reflection of the broader political culture and history of a country.

This book contributes to the debate by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between presidentialism, parliamentarism, and democracy. It draws on a wide range of case studies to show how the choice between these two systems of government has been shaped by a variety of factors, including the political culture, the history, and the economic development of a country.

### **The Case for Presidentialism**

There are a number of arguments in favor of presidentialism. First, presidentialism is said to be more efficient than parliamentarism. In a presidential system, the president is directly elected by the people and is not accountable to the parliament. This means that the president can make decisions more quickly and decisively than a prime minister, who must constantly negotiate with the parliament.

Second, presidentialism is said to be more accountable than parliamentarism. In a presidential system, the president is directly elected by the people and is therefore directly accountable to them. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister is elected by the parliament and is therefore accountable to the parliament, not to the people.

Third, presidentialism is said to be more stable than parliamentarism. In a presidential system, the president is elected for a fixed term of office and cannot be removed by the parliament. This means that the president is less likely to be subject to political instability than a prime minister, who can be removed by a vote of no confidence at any time.

## **The Case for Parliamentarism**

There are also a number of arguments in favor of parliamentarism. First, parliamentarism is said to be more representative than presidentialism. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister is elected by the parliament, which is itself elected by the people. This means that the prime minister is more likely to be representative of the people than a president, who is elected directly by the people.

Second, parliamentarism is said to be more responsive than presidentialism. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister is accountable to the parliament, which can remove the prime minister by a vote of no confidence at any time. This means that the prime minister is more likely to be responsive to the needs of the people than a president, who is not accountable to the parliament.

Third, parliamentarism is said to be more flexible than presidentialism. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister can be removed by a vote of no confidence at any time. This means that the system can be more easily adapted to changing circumstances than a presidential system, which requires a constitutional amendment to change the president.

The choice between presidentialism and parliamentarism is a complex one. There are a number of factors to consider, including the political culture, the

history, and the economic development of a country. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the best system of government for a particular country will depend on its specific circumstances.



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