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Democratic reforms and legitimacy in established Western democracies

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Stellingen

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Democratic Reforms and Legitimacy in Established Western Democracies

Kavita Ziemann

1. The odds of a reform occurring decrease when the quality of government or economic performance increase. At the same time the odds of reform increase when the effective number of parties increases. [*this thesis*]
2. Despite a decline in hierarchical culture most of the reforms implemented are of integrative and indirect nature. Such reforms include delegation to regulatory institutions, central banks, regional authorities, courts and international organizations (mainly the European Union). [*this thesis*]
3. There is a convergence towards indirect and integrative institutional design in many Western democracies. [*this thesis*]
4. Reforms that aim to influence the decision making process, such as decentralization, introduction of freedom of information laws, and increasing the powers of courts are most likely to have positive effects on legitimacy. [*this thesis*]
5. Contrary to what New-Institutionalist theory leads us to expect, institutional changes are not rare. [*B.G. Peters, Institutional Theory in Political Science: the "New Institutionalism"*, London: Pinter, 1999, pp. 147–8]
6. Institutions do not matter as much as New-Institutionalist theory would expect them to. [*S. Bowler en T. Donovan, The Limits of Electoral Reform*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013]
7. Elites do not use direct democratic instruments in institutional reform processes as they were intended to out of fear of losing control. [*L. LeDuc, The Politics of Direct Democracy*. Petersborough: Broadview Press, 2003]
8. Constitutional anomie has a negative effect on legitimacy. [*M. Flinders, Democratic Drift: Majoritarian Modification and Democratic Anomie in the United Kingdom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010]
9. The legitimacy model presented in Chapter 2 can also guide policy makers at the Ministry of Foreign affairs — currently formulating their rule of law programming for fragile and conflict-affected states.
10. Working in non-Western democracies, such as in Mali and Yemen, has shown me how informal institutions can address citizen needs neglected by formal institutions.