

Institution-building from the inside

Politics, the logic of behaviour and the process of reform



Global Partners
Governance

Parliaments, parties and political behaviour



Why engage with parliaments?

International assistance and parliamentary strengthening – an overview.

It seems that almost every system of government needs a parliament. Given that fewer than half the world's countries have a parliament, it is not the norm. However, the importance of parliaments has increased in terms of their significance and effectiveness. No longer based solely on the formal powers granted to them by law, they now appear to be essential to the quality of the state's legitimacy and its ability to represent the public interest.

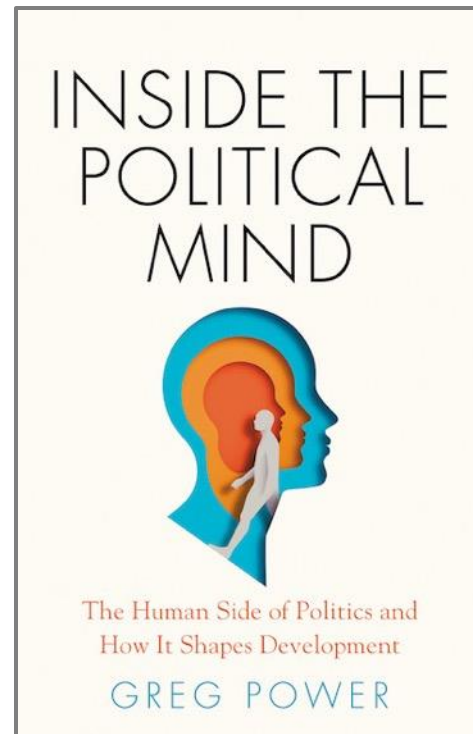
Parliaments play a critically important role in emerging democracies. The nation's performance in these early years will shape their institutions, determining the norms and values which underpin the democratic culture. Their work today is very significant policy area connected with political and economic development. Parliaments can perform a crucial role in poverty reduction strategies, promotion of gender equality and conflict management through debate and deliberation.

In short, parliaments are central to the state's strategic objectives as an emerging state agency. They need to provide advice in achieving these objectives, but for the most part, they are not. This book provides a practical guide to the role of parliaments in development programming, drawing on the experience of the world's parliaments, this series is a key part of the international support to governments.

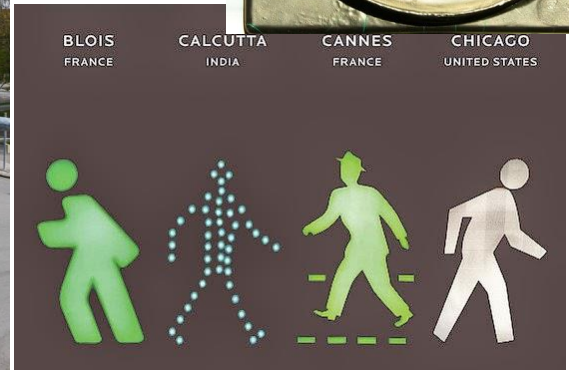
The purpose of this series of books is to explain parliaments and parliamentary

POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

A DIPD READER



Why driving in a different city explains political behaviour



Why driving in a different city explains political behaviour



The difference between *what the rules say* and *what the rules mean*

- Road furniture looks familiar. The 'highway code' reflects the same basic principles.
- Driving though depends less on the formal rules than on understanding the informal assumptions, local norms, know-how and tacit understandings between drivers.
- Those norms have developed as a result of millions of repeated interactions between drivers.
- A logic emerges, and the chaos starts to make sense. You get good at driving in that place through shortcuts, workarounds, bending of the formal rules.
- None of it improves the traffic. And often makes it worse. But faced with a difficult journey, drivers opt for the quickest route to their destination that day.

“What else can I do?”

- Where the state is weak, politicians are expected by citizens to fill the gaps
- In order to fill those gaps MPs have to go around the formal system, rather than through it
- Voters come to prize those traits in their politicians
- Candidates vie with each other to show that they have the wherewithal to perform this role
- None of which addresses the underlying problems or their causes
- The *catch-22* is that it is expensive, inefficient and largely ineffective, ... it is logical, but not rational

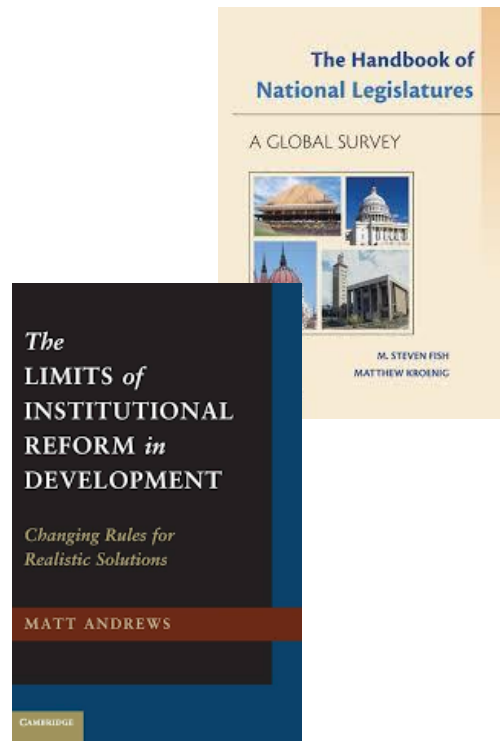


A more behavioural approach to political reform: Four principles



1. Individuals over institutions: All change is behavioural change.

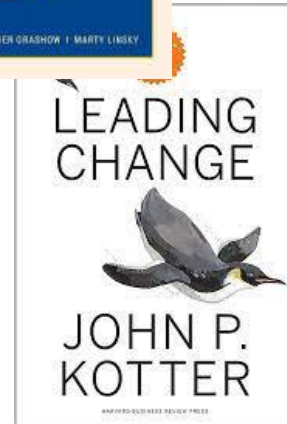
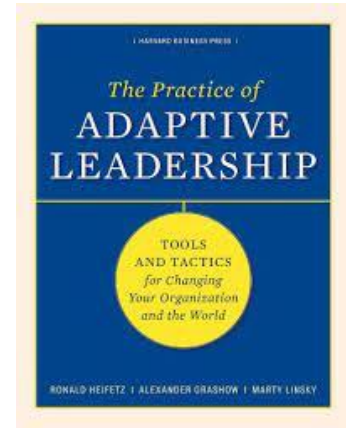
- Traditional tendency to value structures more than behaviour.
- Institutions offer tangible evidence of change. But frequently they forget to take the people in the new buildings with them.
- What is 'good on paper' is often not so good in practice



1. Individuals over institutions: All change is behavioural change.

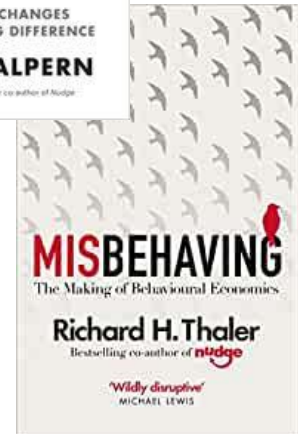
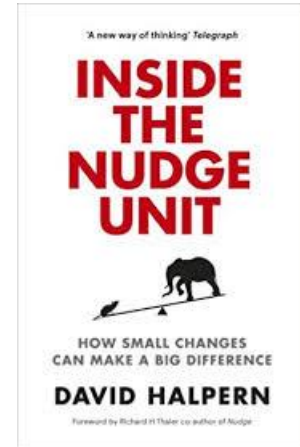
“change sticks when it becomes ‘the way we do things around here’”

John Kotter



2. Loss aversion, personal interest and political principle

- When change is in the air, everybody's first thought is:
 - How is this going to affect me?
- 'Loss aversion' is central to understanding resistance to change
 - The pain of losing is greater than the benefit of winning
 - The potential gains have to be twice the value of the possible loss
 - The feeling of loss is magnified when personal authority is involved



2. Loss aversion, personal interest and political principle

- Altering behaviour is hard because people don't like change:

"Plans for reform almost always produce many winners and some losers while achieving an overall improvement. If the affected parties have any political influence, however, potential losers will be more active and determined than potential winners."

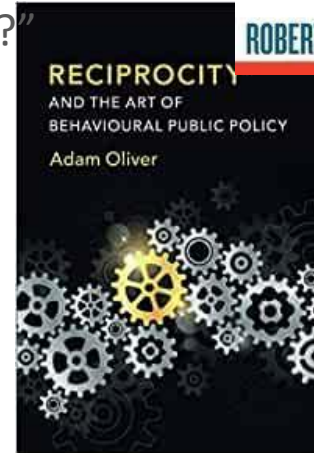
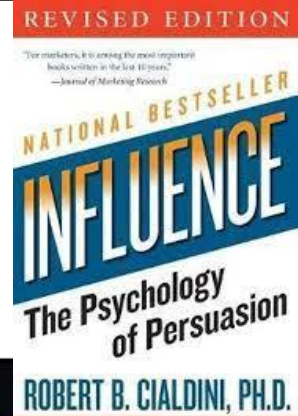
Daniel Kahneman

- Combine personal interest with principle
 - Appeals principle never enough on their own
 - Explain change in personal terms, and provide a principle to back it up



3. “What’s in it for me?” Reform as reciprocal exchange

- Cialdini and the norm of reciprocity
 - Informal indebtedness, concession then retreat, trading upwards
- All politicians are simultaneously reformers and opportunists
 - Reform of the Kenyan Parliament “Why are you denying yourselves?”
 - Lyndon Johnson and the US 1964 Civil Rights Act
- The key principle of reform?
 - “Make sure everybody gets something”

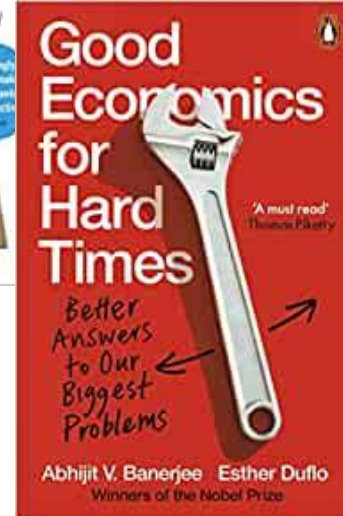
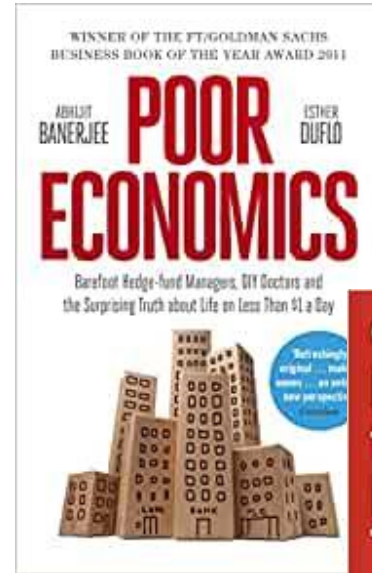


4. Think big, act small

Change is often based on the assumption:
“we shouldn’t do anything, unless we can do everything.”

“But it is possible to make very significant progress against the biggest problems in the world through the accumulation of a set of small steps, each well thought out, carefully tested, and judiciously implemented.”

Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Dufflo

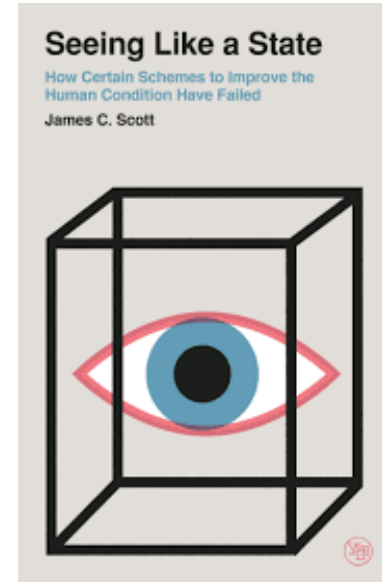


4. Think big, act small

- Three problems in international interventions:
 - over-ambition
 - premature load-bearing
 - political resistance

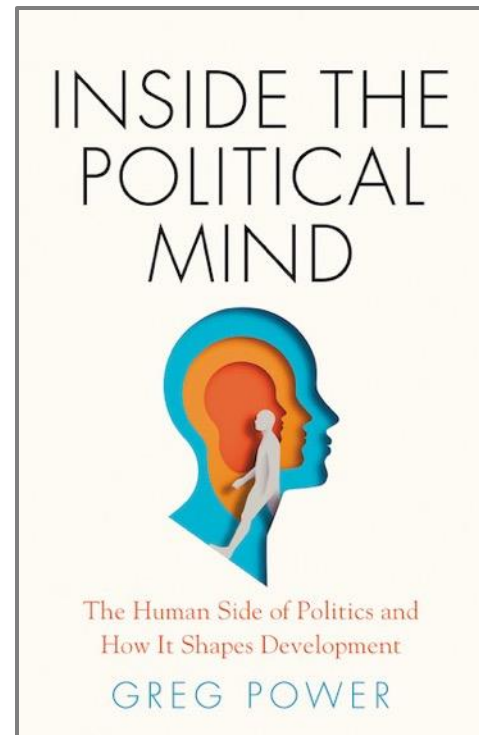
“It feels like we’re the ones being implemented ...”

- Institution-building from inside
 - *Mētis* as ‘myopic groping’
 - Pockets of good practice and the ‘ripple effect’
 - Modest *and* significant. The virtue of slow change



“Good enough for a human institution”

- People over process
- Align principle with personal interest
- Reform as reciprocal exchange
- Get the small things right first



Political behaviour is always logical, but rarely rational

“Never denigrate a behaviour until you’ve worked out what purpose it really serves.”

