

Institution-building from the inside

Politics, the logic of behaviour and the process of reform



Global Partners
Governance

Politics, politicians and behavioural change

Global Partners Governance

Guide to Parliaments, Paper 1.

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 democratically elected legislature, having a parliament is not the norm.

Parliaments that respond to citizens' needs, are transparent, and are seen to be legitimate are more likely to be effective. The evidence shows that the best way to build a parliament is to focus on the quality of the work it does and the extent to which it is seen to be legitimate.

Parliaments play a critically important role in emerging democracies. The world's parliaments in these early years will be the norm and values which determine the trajectory of the country. They work closely with other institutions to ensure that every significant policy area connected with political and economic development is covered. Parliaments can perform a crucial role in setting national strategies, particularly in gender equality and conflict management through debate and deliberation.

In good parliaments, representatives will be the same through elections as representatives of civil society. They need to be powerful actors in advancing their objectives, not just the state apparatus. Parliaments can perform a crucial role in setting national strategies, particularly in gender equality and conflict management through debate and deliberation.

The content of this series of videos is to explain parliaments and parliamentarians.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS
A DIPD READER

DIPD

Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States

The difficult development of parliamentary politics in the Gulf: Parliaments and the process of managed reform in Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman

Greg Power

LSE

1. Why do parliaments exist?

Parliaments exist to represent the people, to make laws, and to oversee the executive. They are a key part of the democratic process and are essential for the development of a country's institutions.

Department for International Development

UKaid

GUIDE TO WORKING WITH PARLIAMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNDP

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GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY REPORT

The changing nature of parliamentary representation



INSIDE THE POLITICAL MIND

The Human Side of Politics and How It Shapes Development

GREG POWER

“Look, we all already know that politics matters ...”

1. Politics looks very different when viewed from the inside.
2. Political institutions only get stronger when politicians want to make them stronger.
3. In many places, there is little reason why they should want to make them stronger.
4. Unpick that logic, and work outwards from there.



[World Development Report
2017 Launch](#)

“What else can I do?”

Formal institutions v informal political cultures

- 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* of constituency service is that it is expensive, inefficient and largely ineffective, ... but it is logical ...



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

What's it like behind the wheel in a different city?

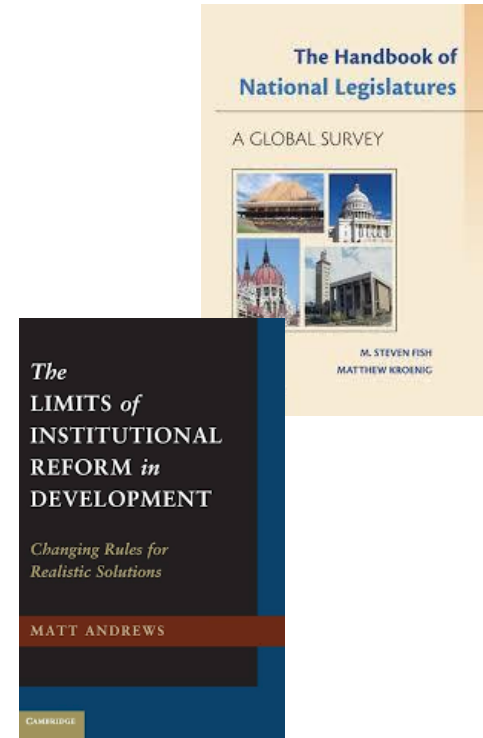
- Road furniture looks familiar. The 'highway code' reflects the same basic principles.
- Driving though depends less on the formal rules than on the informal assumptions, local norms, know-how and tacit understandings between drivers.
- After a while you get good at driving in that place through shortcuts, workarounds, bending of the formal rules. You build up the context-specific know-how, or *mētis*.
- This all embeds itself and reinforces the prevailing logic.
- But none of it improves the traffic. And often makes it worse.
- But “what else can I do?” Faced with a difficult journey, drivers opt for the quickest route to their destination that day.

A more behavioural approach to political reform: Four principles



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

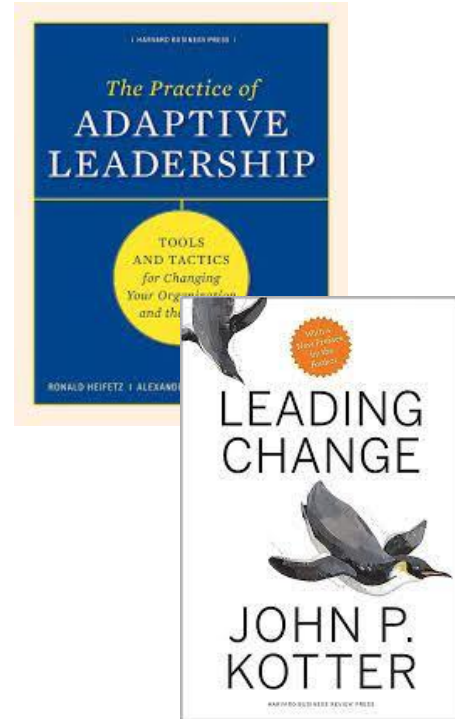
- Traditional tendency to value structures more than behaviour.
- Institutions offer tangible evidence of change.
- But frequently they forget to take the people in the new buildings with them.
- Ottaway: the international community is good at creating organisations rather than institutions.
- It leads to some odd outcomes, which are good on paper, but ...



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

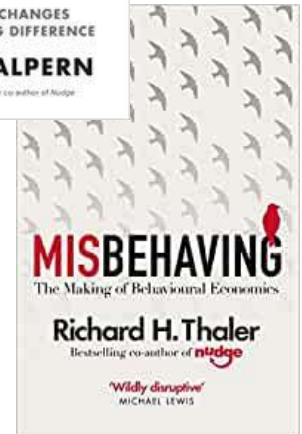
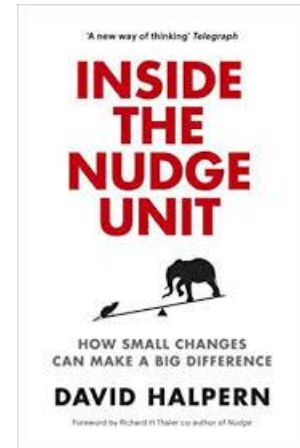
“change sticks when it becomes ‘the way we do things around here’”

John Kotter



2. Personal interest and political principle: The effect of Loss aversion

- First questions, when change is in the air:
 - How is this going to affect me?
 - Why would I make my life more difficult?
- ‘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. Personal interest and political principle: The effect of Loss aversion

- Change is hard:

“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

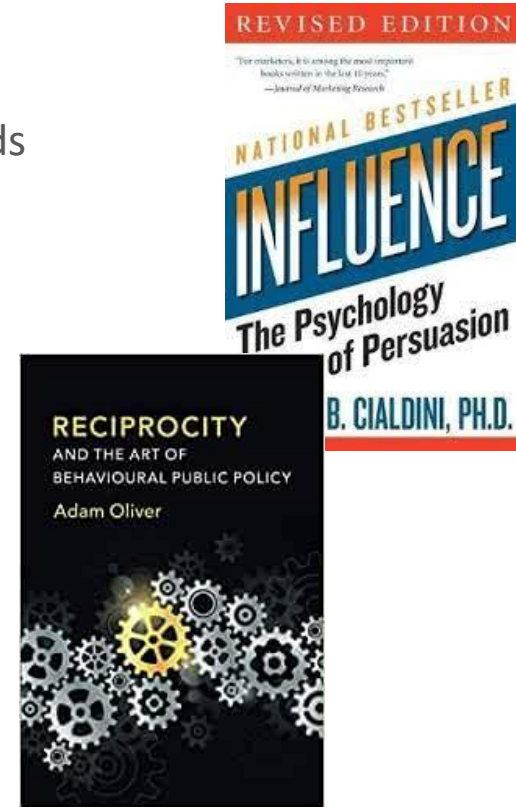
- Combine personal interest with principle

- Appeals to constitutional principle unlikely to answer the first two questions
- Explain change in personal terms
- Provide a political 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
- Reform of the Kenyan Parliament
 - “Why are you denying yourselves?”
 - *Reformers vs opportunists*
 - Appeals to both sides of the political brain
- The key principle of reform:
 - “Make sure everybody gets something”

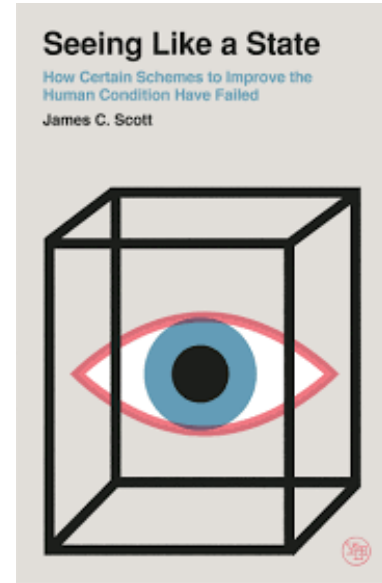


4. Think big, act small

- 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

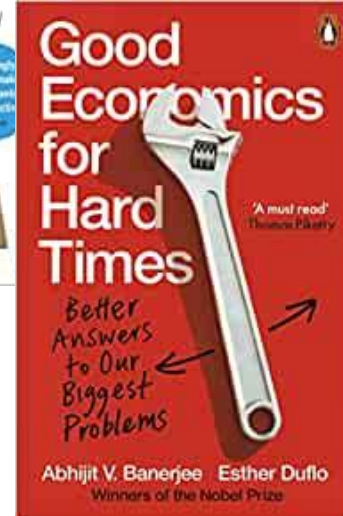
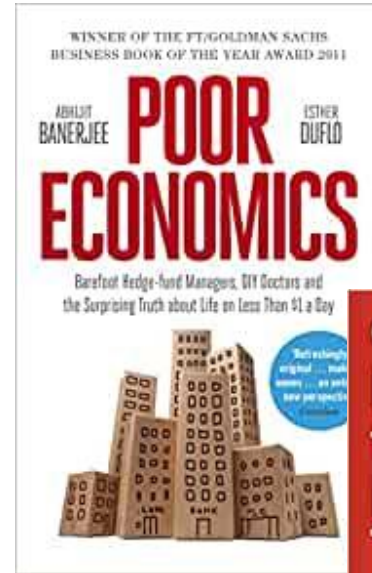


4. Think big, act small

Change is often based on the assumption:

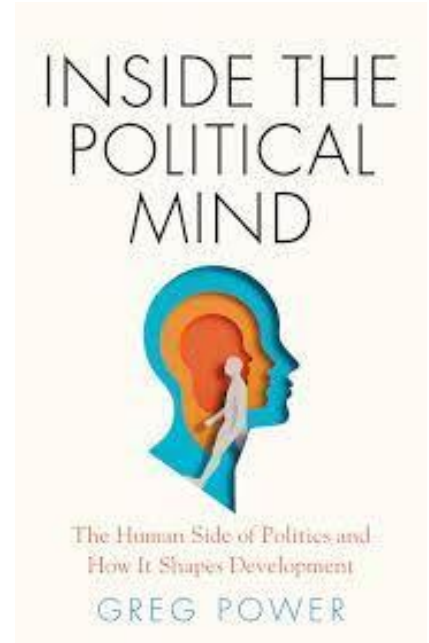
“we shouldn’t do anything, unless we can do everything.”

“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.”



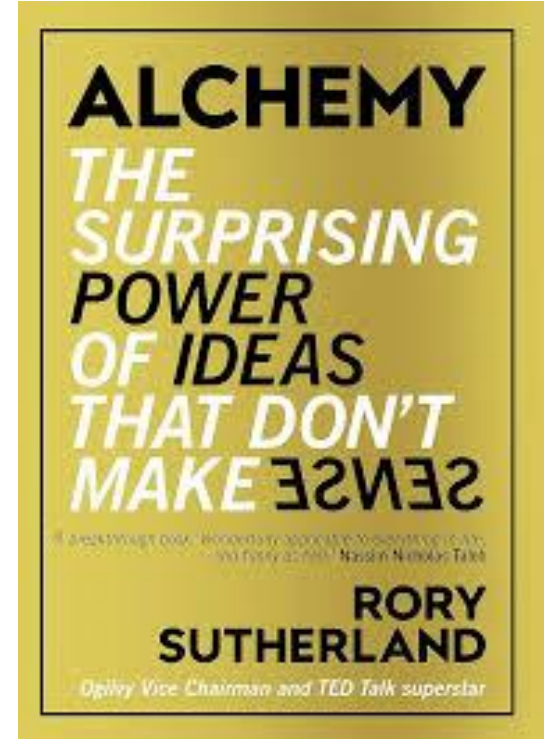
“Good enough for a human institution”

- 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.”



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