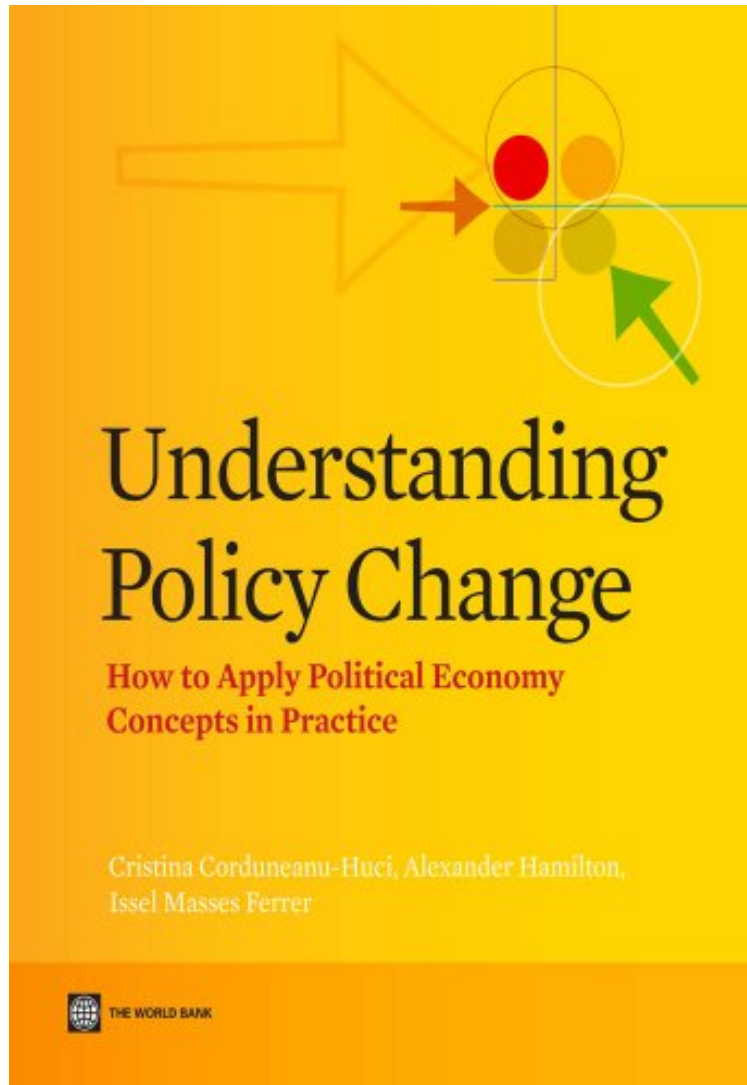


Understanding Policy Change: How to Apply Political Economy Concepts in Practice

Cristina Corduneanu-Huci, Alexander Hamilton, Issel Masses Ferrer
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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Real Understanding of Policy Change for the Better in Intl DevelopmentBy Patrick RobertsThis book explains how groups of people can cooperate to bring about policy change, particularly in development. The book's strength is its clear explanation of the categories of political economy. In particular, the book identifies the incentives of politicians and bureaucrats that sometimes get in the way of stated

reform goals. But this is not just a dry text listing abstract concepts. The authors draw on their rich experience at the World Bank to provide examples of reform efforts from around the world, with particular attention given to non-Western contexts. The book shines light on why the interests of the few and well-connected sometimes prevail over the interests of the many. It turns out that political institutions can be designed to either favor the few or well connected, or better represent the majority, and the authors provide clues about how to recognize the former and achieve the latter. The book's examples of participatory budgeting, procurement reform, and infrastructure projects are particularly strong. Overall, I recommend this book for practitioners undertaking reform, seasoned scholars in the field looking for new examples, and policy and international development students looking for a good grounding in the field. I will reference this book in my classes.

How does the social and political context in which decision-makers find themselves in affect their ability to realize their reform goals? How does this context facilitate or inhibit specific reform agendas and projects? How can we operationalize and evaluate these risks and opportunities in order to decide what reforms and projects are feasible given the circumstances? This book provides the reader with the full panoply of political economy tools and concepts necessary to understand, analyze, and integrate how political and social factors may influence the success or failure of their policy goals. Starting with the empirical puzzle of why corruption, rent seeking, and a lack of good governance emerge and persist in a host of countries and sectors the book reviews how collective action problems and the role of institutions, as well as a host of ancillary political economy concepts can affect the feasibility of different projects. However, the book is not just a one stop shop of political economy concepts, but also provides practical advice on how to organize and use this information via the introduction of stakeholder mapping tools and the development of an actionable political economy toolkit. In other words researchers, graduate students, and policy practitioners interested in understanding, the what, the why and the how of policy reform will find this book an essential tool.