

PUBLICATION REVIEWS

“This book not only provides an authoritative statement of what we know about how to align political incentives with the interests of society, but it does so with an eye to making change happen even in the face of political opposition. The World Bank will never be the same again. ”

James Robinson

University Professor, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago

“This brilliant report offers a clear-headed and insightful analysis of the problem of politics which impedes governments from playing an appropriate role in the delivery of social services such as health and education. It does so by bringing together the vanguard of economics research on the functioning of political markets, and showing how this research both explains perverse behaviors and describes a path to improve outcomes using the current forces of citizen participation in politics, through the medium of elections in India. Non-political technocrats interested in improving the delivery of social services would do well to heed the lessons in this report so that any steps that they take do not lead them down political blind alleys or precipitous cliffs. Among other things the books suggests that they will strengthen their comparative advantage by improving the quality of political contestation if, through their work, they also ensured the generation and dissemination of credible and non-partisan information about public goods.”

Nachiket Mor

India Country Director, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Board Member, Reserve Bank of India

“The World Bank has long drawn a line in the sand: no politics. But what if politics is key to economic development? The body of careful research documenting the pernicious effects of corruption, repression, coercion, exclusion, and fear on economic development has now become enormous. This bold new report is a first step to erase the Bank's line in the sand and understand not only the roles of citizen engagement, transparency, civil rights, free speech, and inclusive politics, but also how the Bank can harness them. Bravo! ”

Daron Acemoglu

Elizabeth and James Killian Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Co-author of Why Nations Fail

“This valuable report deals with some of the central challenges faced in making government work better. It pulls together a range of evidence and provides an authoritative overview of what we have learned.”

Timothy Besley
Professor of Economics and Political Science &
W. Arthur Lewis Professor of Development Economics
London School of Economics

“This pathbreaking report places politics at the heart of the development dialogue—exactly where it belongs. An accumulating body of research shows how the processes through which leaders are selected and sanctioned have fundamental consequences for economic outcomes. In a world of increasing transparency and growing citizen political participation, policy actors face a choice between harnessing these forces to accelerate development or ignoring them at the expense of the world’s poor. This report provides constructive ideas for harnessing these forces in ways that are suited to diverse institutional contexts so that reform leaders can overcome political constraints to their countries’ development goals.”

Asli Demirgüç-Kunt
Director of Research
The World Bank

“The wealth of nations depends ultimately on the quality of their governments, and economic development in poor countries is regularly limited by political constraints. This book offers the best current summary of research on how these critical constraints can be relaxed, by policies and reforms that improve the transparency and accountability of government. It should be read by students and policy-makers and anyone who is concerned for improving global economic development.”

Roger Myerson
Glen A. Lloyd Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago
2007 Nobel Laureate in Economics