



REFORMS: LEVELS, DYNAMICS, AND AGENCY

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SECTION I: DEFINITIONS, IDEAS, AND LEVELS

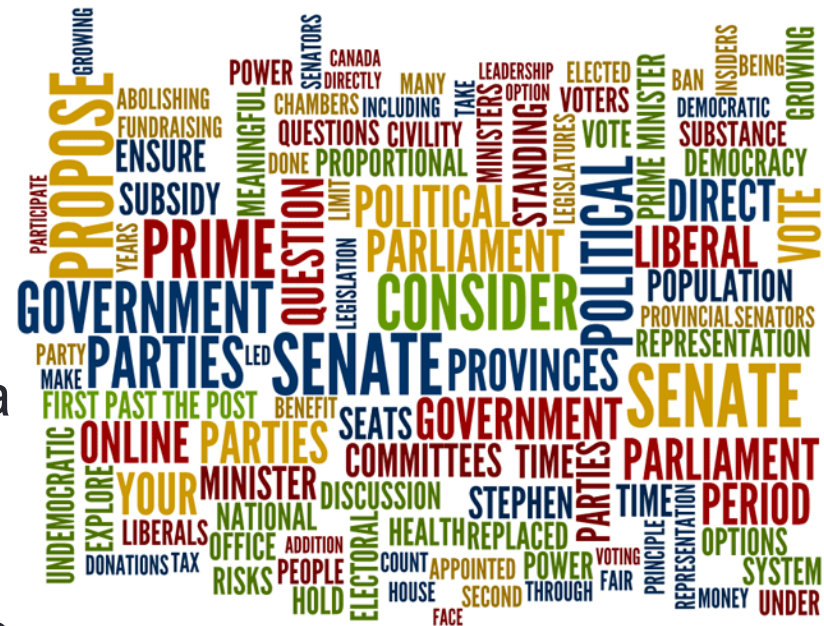
No Earthly Political System is Paradise...



That is the Bottom Line

What is Reform?

- Reformer:
 - a person who advocates or brings about (especially political or social) reform
- Reform:
 - synonyms- improve, ameliorate, refashion, renovate
 - “make changes in something (typically, social, political or economic institutions or practices) in order to improve ..



- Oxford Dictionaries

Revolution vs. Reform

- Edmund Burke
(January 12, 1729- July 9, 1797)
- Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)
- *“A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risque the loss of that part of the constitution which it wished the most religiously to preserve.”*

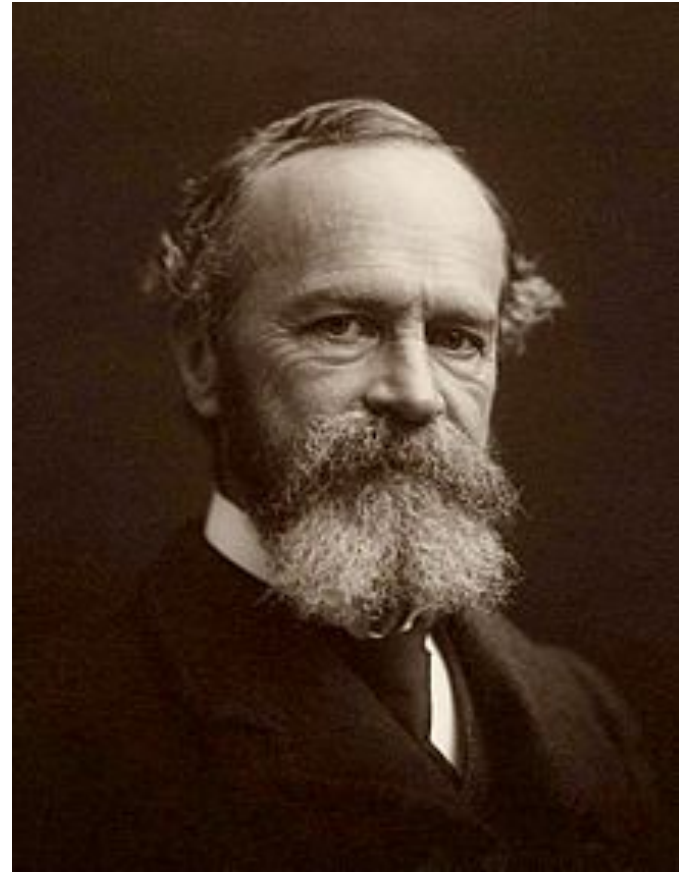


Meliorism

- “The doctrine that the world may be made significantly better by human effort.”

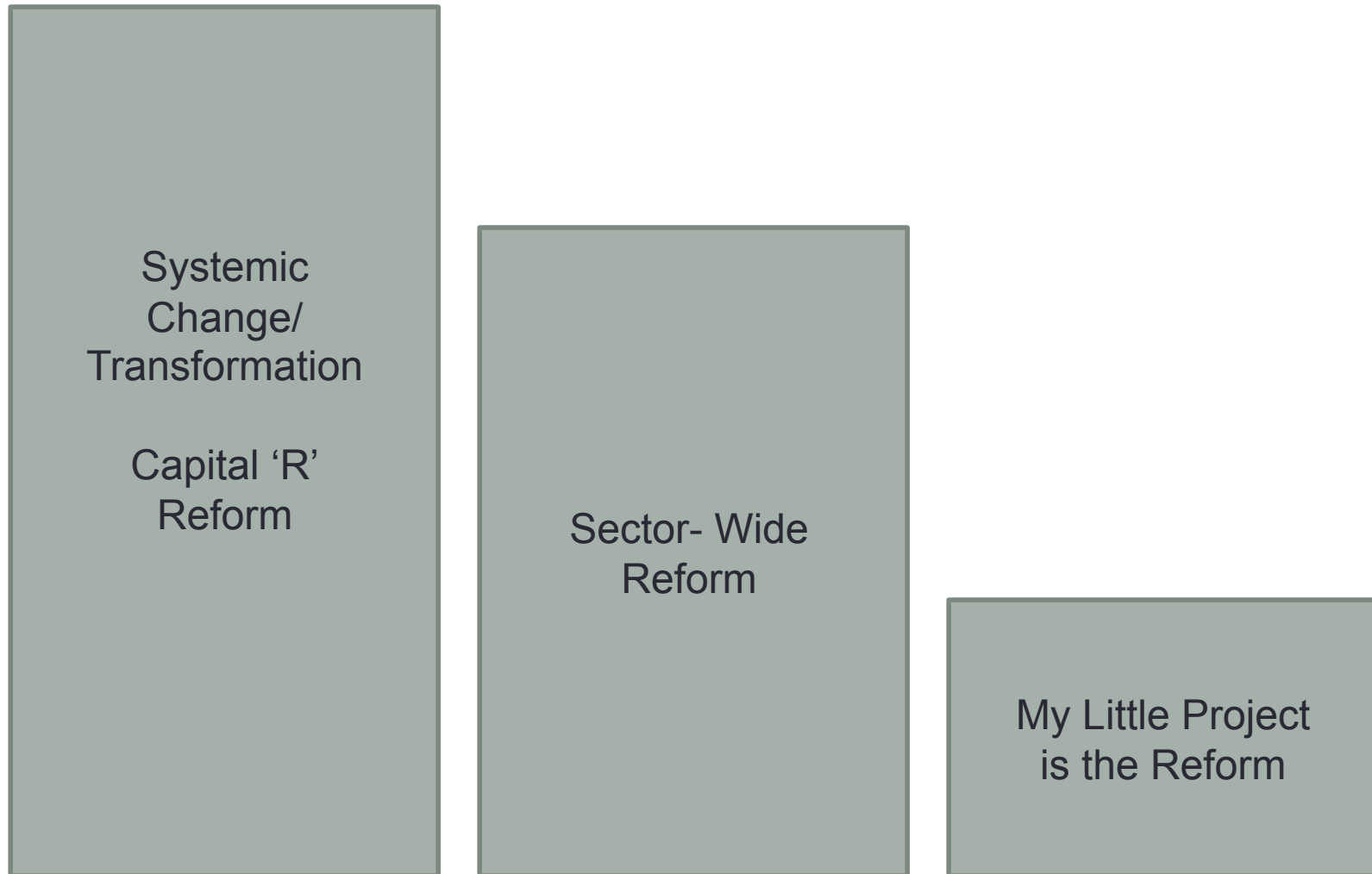
-Shorter Oxford Dictionary

Liberals and Conservatives
can agree



William James, philosopher of pragmatism

Three Levels of Effort



Systemic Reform

The rise of the modern state:

The Long 19th century in Britain



Accession to the EU: Bulgaria

To join our club, you must...

abide by the accession criteria as follows:

- **political criteria:** stability of the institutions safeguarding democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- **economic criteria:** existence of a viable market economy, the ability to respond to the pressure of competition and market forces within the EU;
- **acceptance of the *community acquis*:** the ability to assume the obligations of a Member State stemming from the law and policies of the EU)



Sector-wide Reforms


Before the Masai got his cool phone



My Little Project is the Reform



Declare victory,
move on.



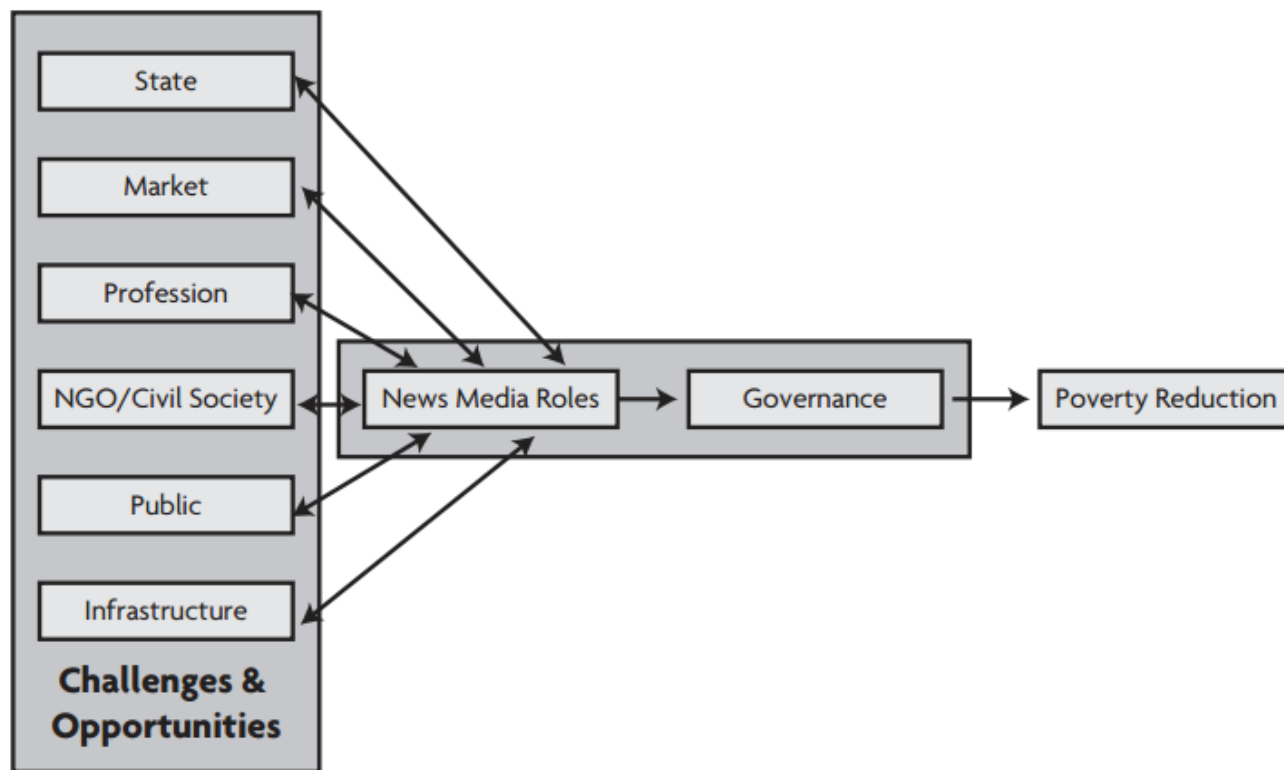
“If reforms are largely technical in nature, have a solid rationale behind them, are supported by well-positioned champions within the relevant ministries, and if they avoid alienating powerful constituencies, then under most circumstances they can probably stay ‘under the radar screen’ and survive the shifting political, economic and administrative sands.”

Source:

*Public Financial Management Reform in the Middle East and North Africa,
A World Bank Study* by Robert P. Beschel Jr. and Mark Ahern

Example: How do you Improve News Media?

Figure 16.1. Challenges and Opportunities Facing the News Media



... how the 3 levels of reform interact

Source: *Public Sentinel, News Media & Governance Reform*, Pippa Norris, Editor

Group Work:

Establishing an Effective Internal Audit Function





SECTION II: POLITICS AT NTP OR NOT



Politics is Decisive:
Policy entrepreneurs
and ideas abound

Focusing Events

1. Happen suddenly
2. Infrequently
3. Big in scale
4. Leaders and the public discover them at the same time



Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster,
March 11, 2011

Impact of Focusing Events on Politics

- Pressure: “Do Something!”
- Stakes for leaders: High
- Level of Players: High, both local and global
- Major reforms suddenly possible

Source:
Public Choices and Policy Change, The Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries
by Merilee S. Grindle and John W. Thomas



“You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.”

-Rahm Emanuel,
Mayor of Chicago

“We have a kamikaze government.”

- Arseniy Yatsenyuk,
- Interim Prime Minister of Ukraine



When Politics is at NTP

(Normal interplay of domestic political forces)

- Pressure on leaders: Moderate
- Stakes for leaders: Moderate
- Level of players: Moderate
- Reforms likely to be incremental

Source:

Public Choices and Policy Change, The Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries
by Merilee S. Grindle and John W. Thomas



SECTION III: STRUCTURE VS. AGENCY

The Serenity Prayer

“[God] grant me the serenity to accept the
things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.”

-Reinhold Niebuhr

Why is Wisdom Needed?



Which things can I change?
Structure vs. Agency: Clear?

Why Reforms Succeed

- Fiscal or other crisis pushes people to (re)action
- Realism about what's feasible
- Leadership ownership
- Popular pressure
- EU accession process
- Sequence of governments maintain reforms- reforms are a long-term process

Sources:

“Making Public Sector Reforms Work, Political and Economic Contexts, Incentives, and Strategies,”
Policy Research Working Paper 6174 by Simone Bunse and Verena Fritz. (August 2012).

And

“Good Countries or Good Projects? Macro and Micro Correlates of World Bank Project Performance,”
Policy Research Working Paper 5646 by Cevdet Denizer, Daniel Kaufmann, and Aart Kraay. (May 2011).

Why Reforms Fail

- Resistance to reform is underestimated
 - Trade unions, vested interests, bureaucracy, etc.
- Commitment to governance is overestimated
 - Expectations, lack of incentives for leaders
- Lack of citizen demand
 - Lack of citizen efficacy, asymmetry of information

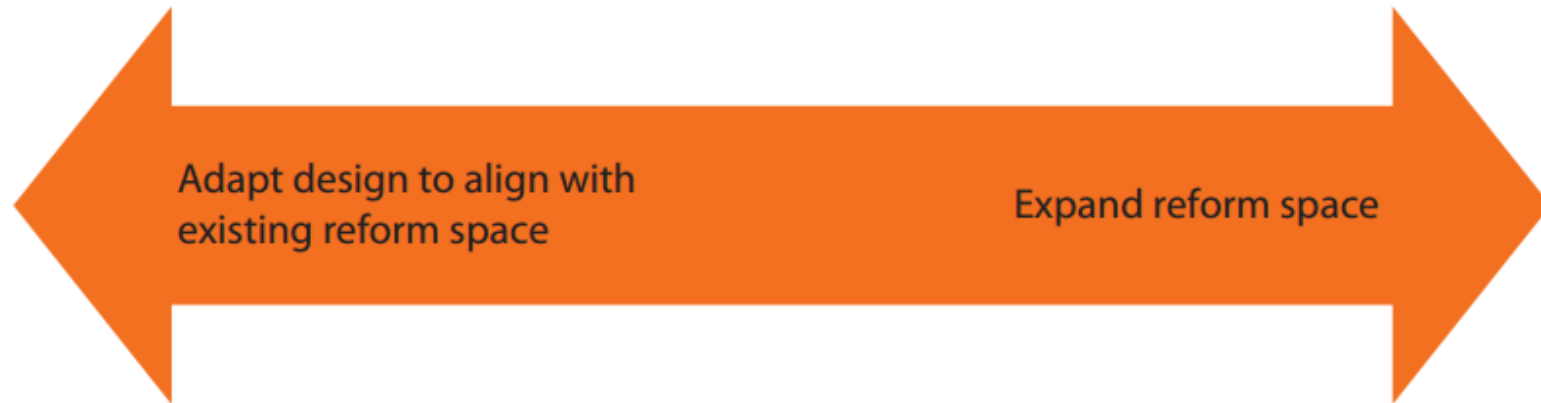
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The Spectrum of Reform Space



- Do the political analysis
- Do what you can, move on

- Proven Methods:
 - Information strategies
 - Empower stakeholders
 - Build coalitions
 - Launch social movements, etc.

Source:

Problem-Driven Political Economy in Action: Overview and Synthesis of the Case Studies, The World Bank's Experience
by Verena Fritz, Brian Levy, and Rachel Ort, Editors

In Closing:

- Politics is Decisive
- Agency Matters: Be Meliorists
- Leadership Counts: You can lead, too (more later)
- Change is the work of coalitions... and movements
- History Moves through human effort
- Hardihood Needed: Tough-minded optimists