

Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action

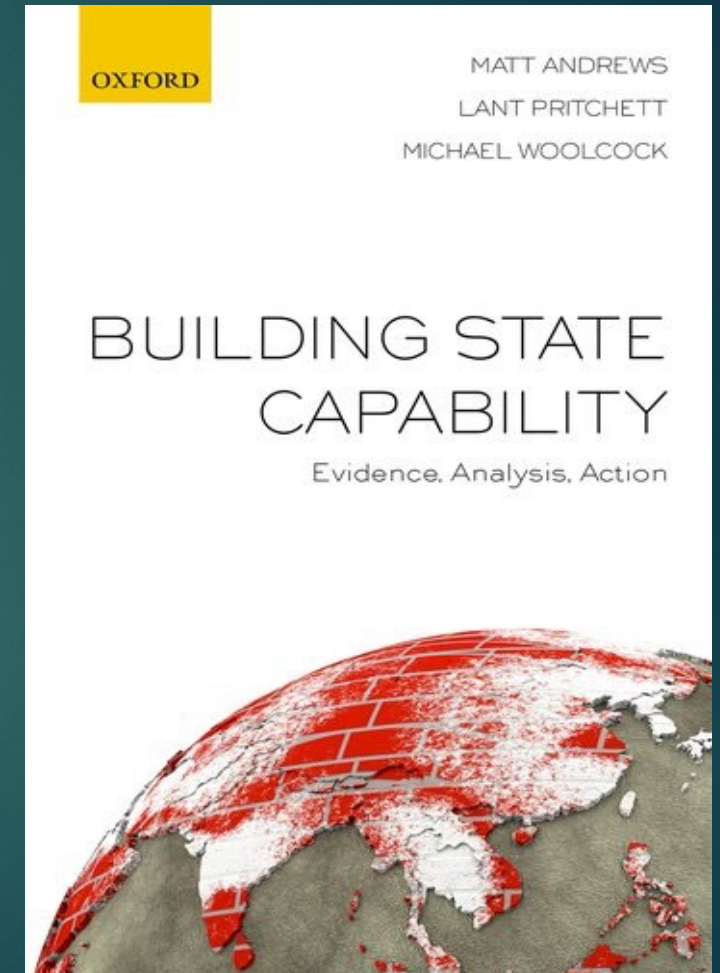
MICHAEL WOOLCOCK

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH GROUP, WORLD BANK

KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

UNU – WIDER, HELSINKI

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Free download available at: <http://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/building-state-capability-evidence-analysis-action>

Earlier generations made similar claims. How might this time be different?

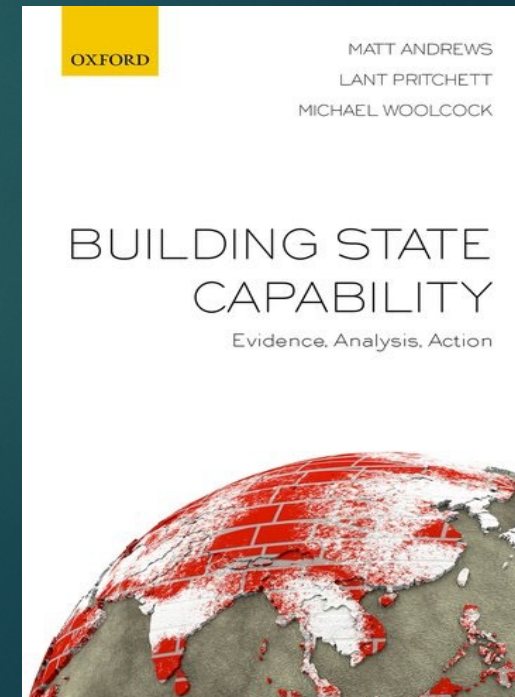
- ▶ PDIA as a “perpetual second word” on implementation capability
 - Cf. first word: deep originality
 - Cf. final word: QED
- ▶ [The options presented to us] “often fits so ill with our own style or is so far removed from it that **we can use it at best as a decoration** and not as material to build with. ... there has been so little to choose from.”

Ki Hajar Dewantara, 1935 (Education reformer, Indonesia)

- ▶ Lindblom (1950s), Hirschman (1960s), Rondinelli (1980s), Scott (1990s)...
- ▶ “The term ‘implementation’ understates the complexity of the task of carrying out projects that are affected by a high degree of initial ignorance and uncertainty. Here ‘project implementation’ may often mean in fact a *long voyage of discovery* in the most varied domains, from technology to politics.” Albert Hirschman (1967: 35)
- ▶ Strong diagnosis, weak proscription, no accompanying ‘social movement’

Earlier generations made similar claims. How might this time be different?

- ▶ So, *Building State Capability* seeks to:
 - ▶ Expand, improve, refine empirics and diagnostics (Part I)
 - ▶ Outline a concrete, actionable alternative (Part II)
 - ▶ Contribute to building a global social movement
 - ▶ Book available online for free, to anyone (~5000 downloads, 150+ countries)
 - ▶ Companion training programs available online for free, to anyone
 - ▶ In teams of 5-6, with a government official
 - ▶ Work with wide array of global partners 'Doing Development Differently'



Action!

'Doing development differently' (DDD)

1. **Building State Capability program, Harvard Kennedy School**

- ▶ Direct engagements with governments
- ▶ Online and executive training programs
- ▶ Working papers, blogs, etc

2. **Applied Research: Document, explain sub-national variation**

- ▶ Wide variance in outcomes a ubiquitous feature of complex problems
- ▶ Integrate broad surveys with detailed case studies of how vexing implementation problems were solved

3. **Operational Practice: Doing Development Differently 'movement'**

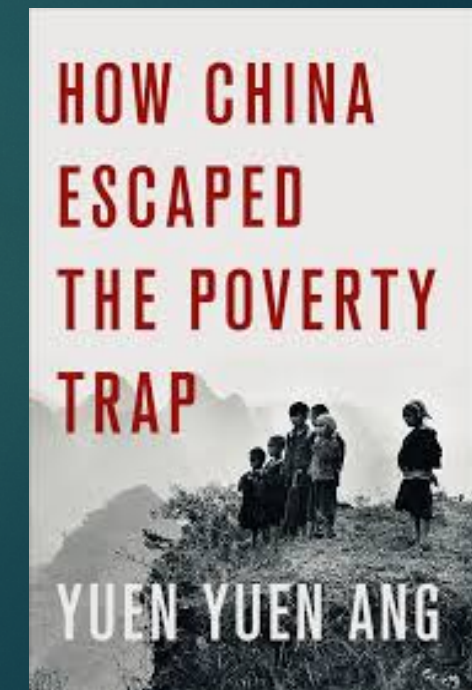
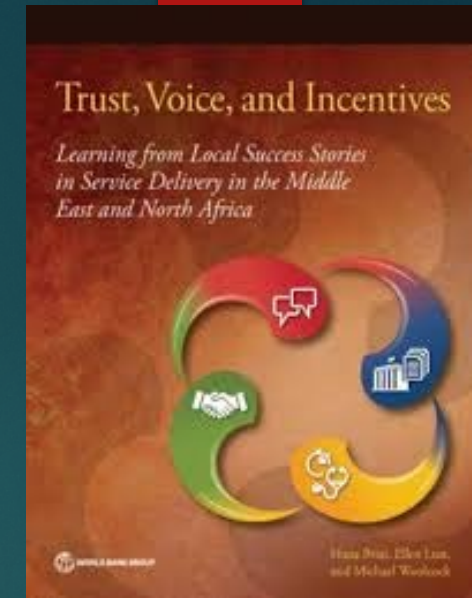
- ▶ A widening array of alternative 'adaptive' approaches to navigating complexity
- ▶ Incorporation into donor, IFI activities

Applied research

- ▶ Key role for evidence in improving implementation quality entails
 - (a) **mapping variation** in the outcomes a team proposes to navigate
 - (b) **explaining where, how, why and for whom** such variation occurs
 - (c) **sharing insights from local teams** that have managed to navigate this tough terrain better than others

All done as part of a more focused strategy that

- ▶ begins and ends with helping local professionals, political leaders and citizens respond to **problems that they themselves have jointly nominated and prioritized**
 - ▶ i.e., understanding not just the “effects of causes” but the “causes of effects”
 - ▶ Need ‘ecologies of evidence’ to do all this well
- ▶ **Diagnostic Country Case Studies**
 - ▶ Yuan Yuan Ang (2016) *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Cornell UP)



Wide variation *within* countries

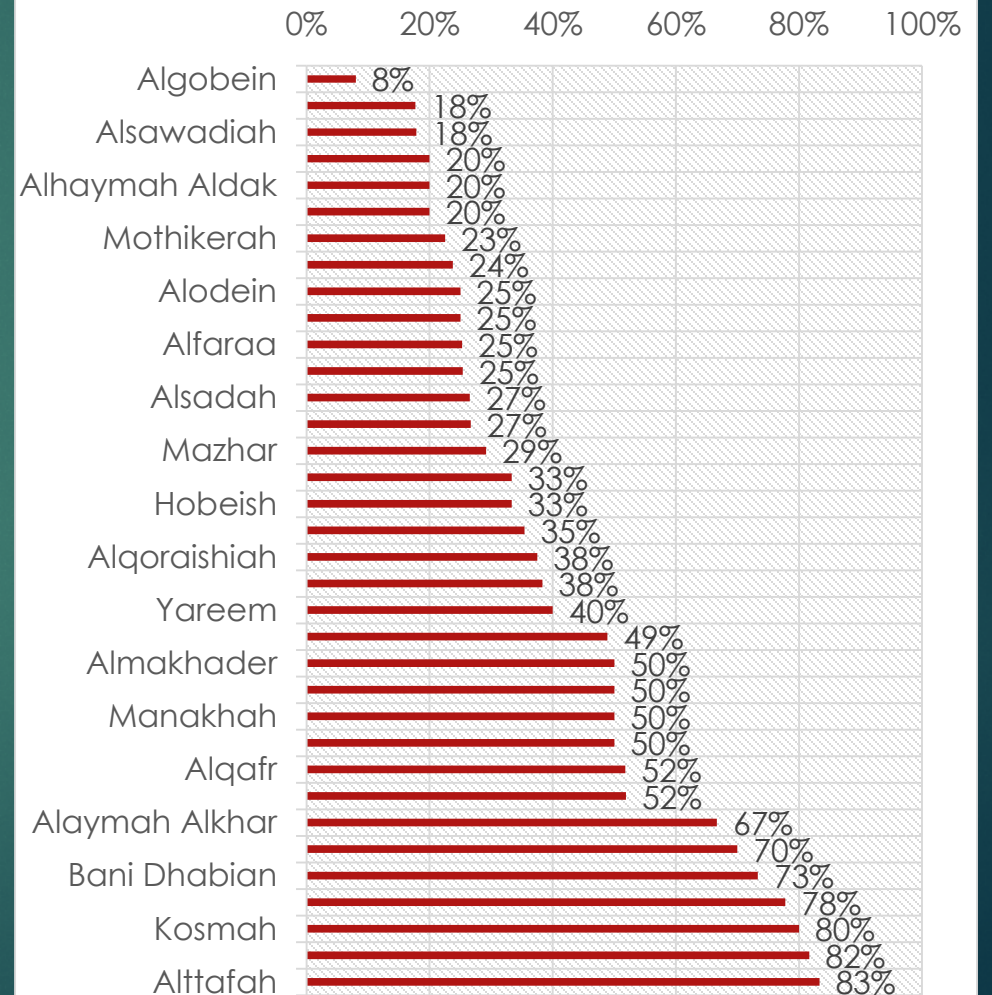
e.g., Health clinic performance. Why?

FIGURE 7.12 Absenteeism among doctors, by region:
Morocco, 2011



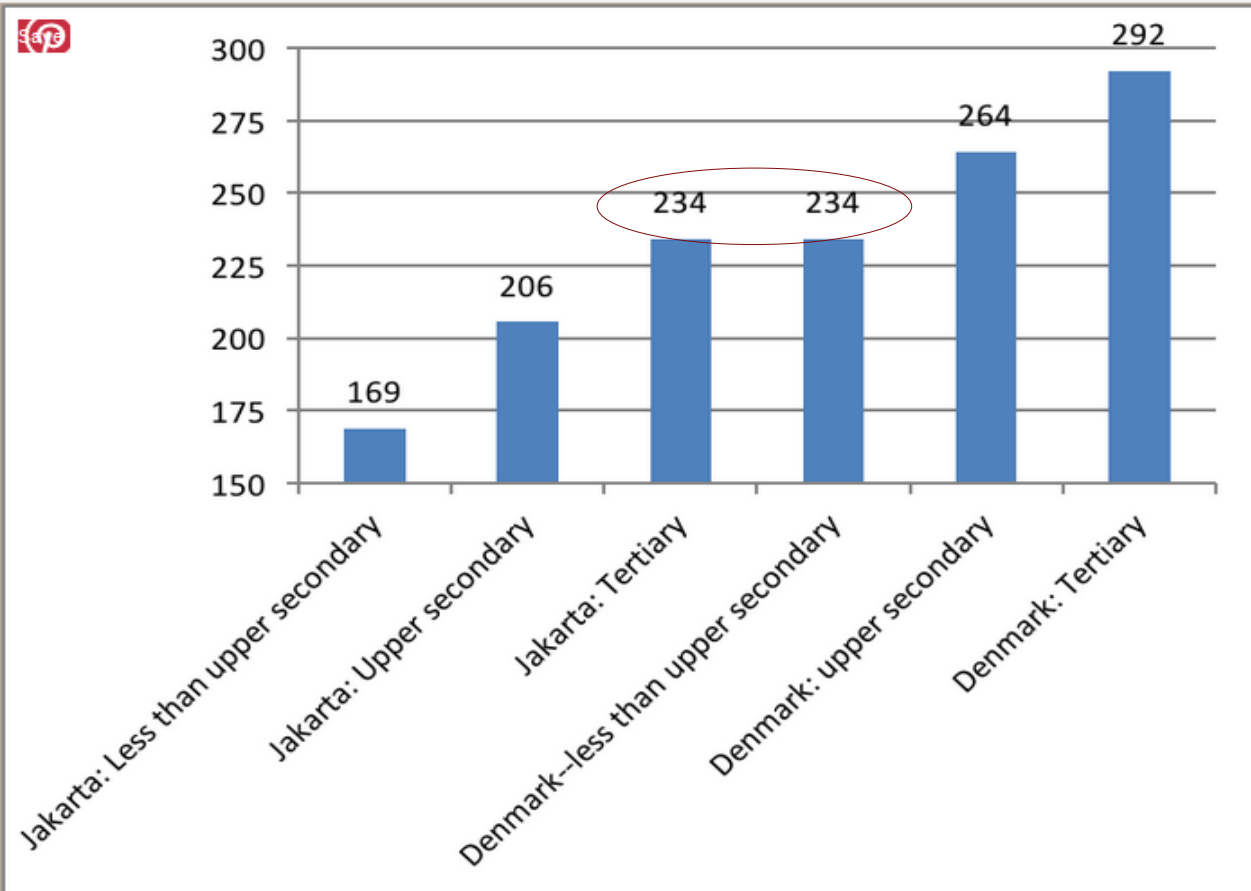
Sources: PETS (health), Morocco, 2011; QSDS (health), Morocco, 2011.

Absenteeism by District, Yemen

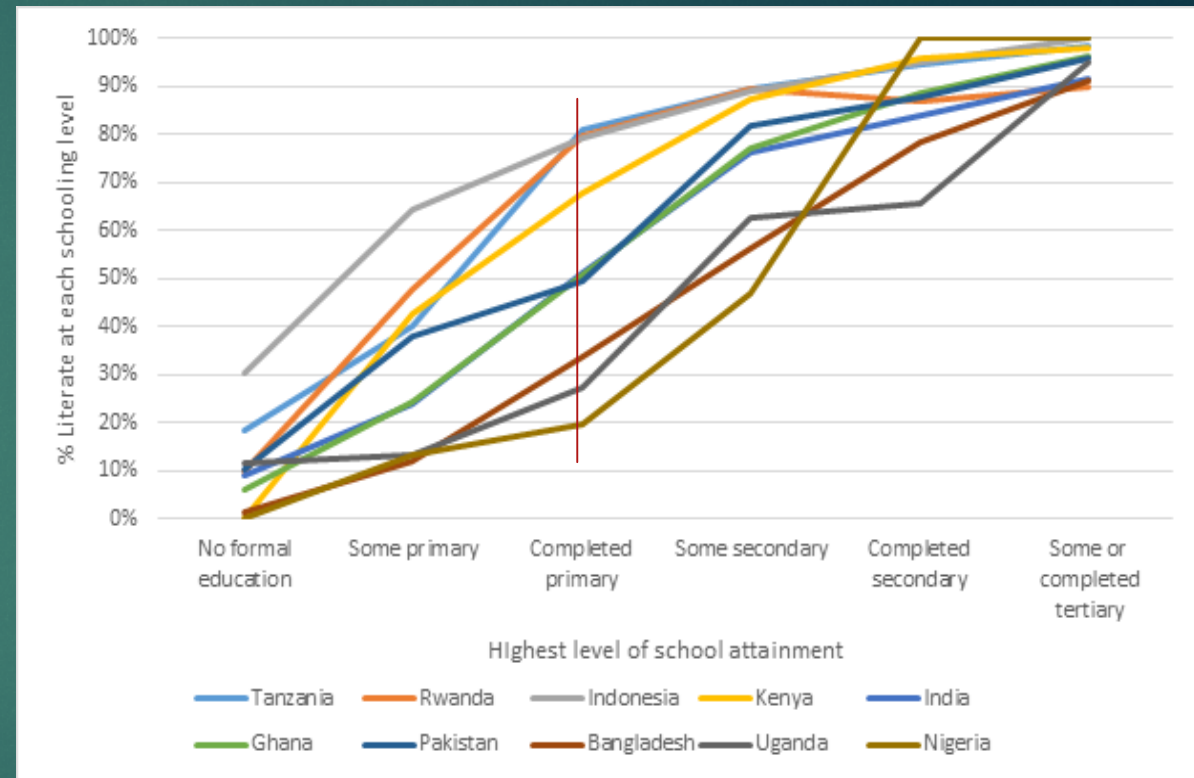


And in education outcomes (even for the well-off...)

Figure 1: Jakartans with tertiary education have the same literacy proficiency on the OECD PIAAC assessment as Danes who have less than upper secondary schooling.



Source: OECD, Skills Matter: Further Results, Table A3.2



Source: Kaffenberger and Pritchett 2017

RISE program: <https://www.riseprogramme.org/>

Operational practice: DDD 'movement'

▶ Doing Development Differently (DDD)

- A proto social movement of senior administrators and front-line practitioners
 - Boston (2014), Manila (2015), London (2016), Jakarta (2017), Nairobi (2018), Berlin (2019)
- Building out the 'demand side practice' for substantive change
 - Not just the 'supply side critique' (from academia)
- Frontier issues: crafting political and administrative tools
 - From 'architecture' to 'engineering'

▶ Global Delivery Initiative (GDI)

- <http://www.worldbank.org/reference/GDI/>
- ~40 member organizations: governments, NGOs, think tanks, academia
- Case studies on implementation dynamics, problem solving, in projects
- See also Princeton's Innovations for Successful Societies
 - <https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/>

'PDIA' within, beyond the World Bank

1. Major reports, donor programs

- ▶ World Development Reports
 - ▶ Conflict & Security (2012)
 - ▶ Behavioral Economics (2015)
 - ▶ Governance & Law (2017)
 - ▶ Education (2018)
- ▶ *Trust, Voice and Incentives: Learning from Local Success Stories in MENA* (2015)
- ▶ *The Innovation Paradox* (2017)
- ▶ DFID (UK), DFAT (Australia), SIDA, NZAid et al

2. In World Bank country programs

- ▶ Indonesia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Cambodia...

3. Adaptive Fellows Program

4. Other organizations

- ▶ IRC, Mercy Corps, R4D, Feedback Labs, RTI, Abt, USAID, global health...

Conclusion: A self-critique

(or, enacting “a propensity for self-subversion”)

▶ **Water pistol in a gun fight?**

- ▶ What if prevailing politics too nasty, overwhelming?

▶ **Adequate administrative ‘plumbing’?**

- ▶ Procurement, accounting, etc

▶ **Securing robust, durable authorizing environment?**

- ▶ When political winds shift, staff turnover is high...

▶ **Discerning ‘good failure’ from design failure, implementation failure**

- ▶ When to hold, fold, walk away, run?

▶ **PDIA-ing PDIA**

- ▶ Itself is hard to fully implement...