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Solutions When *the* Solution is the Problem: Arraying the Disarray in Development

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Abstract

An analytic framework for tracing three waves of efforts to provide key public services in developing countries is provided. Persistent (though not universal) failure has been the product of (a) the imperatives of large bureaucracies to discount decisions that are *inherently* both discretionary and transaction-intensive (and thus less able to be codified and controlled), and (b) good and bad reasons for believing that, because modern bureaucracies underpin rich country prosperity *now*, simply adopting their institutional form elsewhere is the surest way of facilitating development. Contemporary debates regarding the merits of incorporating more "participatory" approaches into public service delivery are best understood in this context.

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