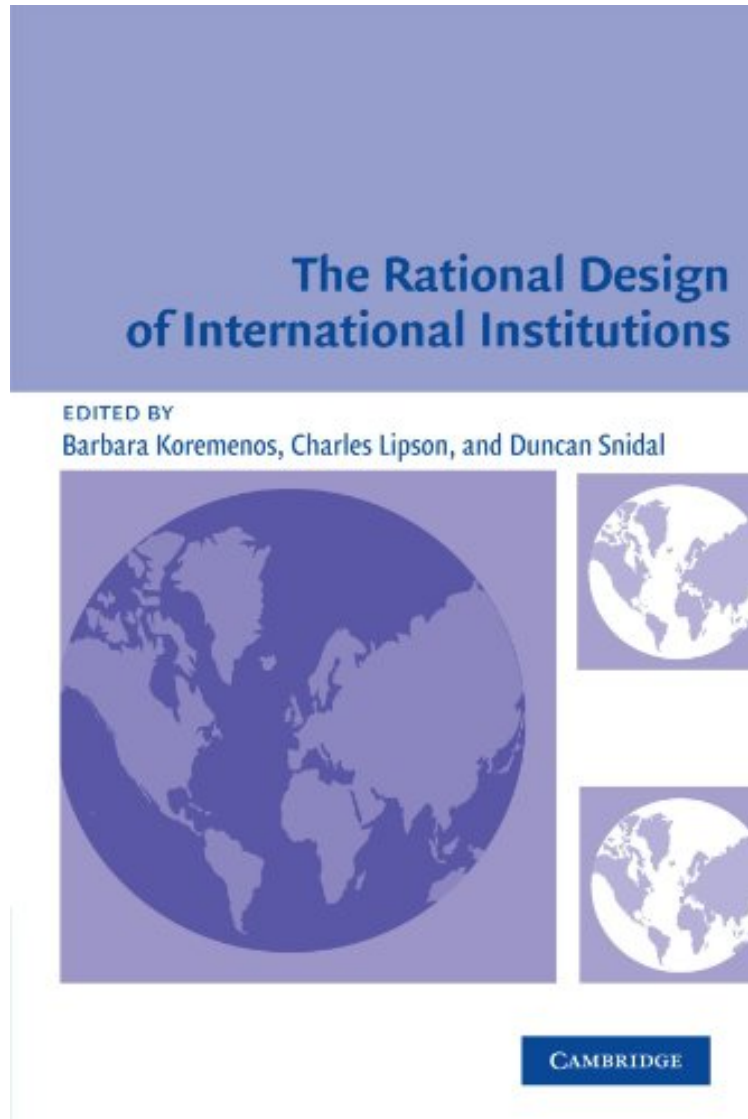


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The Rational Design of International Institutions (International Organization)

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bounded rationalityBy Daniel SchufThe Rational Design Project is a very interesting research programme: the authors try to find and empirically test certain causes of different regime

types. They succeed somewhat moderately in this, after analysing several case-studies, which comprise the bulk of the book. The book is an excellent read for graduate or post-graduate students of international relations, who are trying to specialize in regime-formation and are feeling affinity with the neoliberal institutionalist approach. A close read draws out an appreciation of the methodological issues involved. Students from the cognitivist and the realist strand of thought might find a lot to shoot at. In this sense, it is an essential read: it makes a good case, and a good argument. even though you can disagree with the conclusions, then still their way of analysing regimes is definitely worthwhile.

International institutions vary widely in terms of key institutional features such as membership, scope, and flexibility. Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal argue that this is so because international actors are goal-seeking agents who make specific institutional design choices to solve the particular cooperation problems they face in different issue-areas. Using a Rational Design approach, they explore five important features of institutions-- membership, scope, centralization, control, and flexibility--and explain their variation in terms of four independent variables that characterize different cooperation problems: distribution, number of actors, enforcement, and uncertainty. The contributors to the volume then evaluate a set of conjectures in specific issue areas. (This book is Volume 55, part 4 of *International Organization*.)