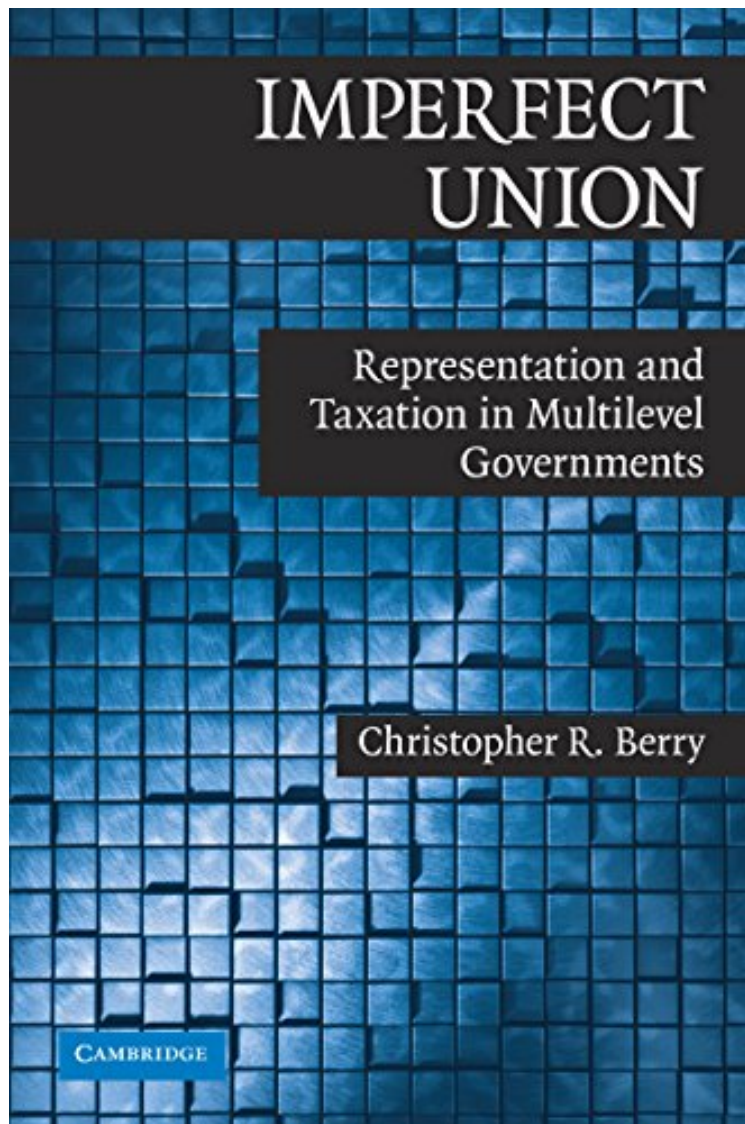


(Mobile ebook) Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments (Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions)

Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments (Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions)

Christopher R. Berry

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Christopher R. Berry : Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments (Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments (Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions):

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helpful. The source of John Oliver's special districts episodeBy So CalThis book is the basis of John's Oliver's segment on special districts [...] and the author is cited extensively.⁵ of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Must ReadBy "Just Wondering"Very well researched and written. Mr. Berry's points are well thought out. A MUST READ for all students of political science and economics, or those just wondering about their local governments finances.

Imperfect Union offers the first political theory of special purpose jurisdictions, which constitute the most common form of local government in the United States today. Collectively, special purpose governments have more civilian employees than the federal government and spend more than all city governments combined. The proliferation of special purpose jurisdictions has fundamentally altered the nature of representation and taxation in local government. Citizens today are commonly represented by dozens - in some cases hundreds - of local officials in multiple layers of government. As a result, political participation in local elections is low and special interest groups associated with each function exert disproportionate influence. With multiple special-interest governments tapping the same tax base, the local tax base takes on the character of a common-pool resource, leading to familiar problems of overexploitation. Strong political parties can often mitigate the common-pool problem by informally coordinating the policies of multiple overlapping governments.

"In Imperfect Union, Christopher R. Berry forcefully and adeptly argues that the Tiebout model of efficiently competing local government no longer comports with the structure of local political institutions. He demonstrates how the vertical overlap of local governments creates a common pool resource problem wherein governments vie for pieces of the tax base. Berry's work raises important questions about whether voters can navigate and control the complex jumble of special-purpose governments that affect almost every aspect of their lives. This book should make political scientists and economists reconsider the assumptions that have served as the basis for much of the research on local government finance for nearly half a century and should be required reading in any course on local government, fiscal policy, and modern democracy." - Mathew D. McCubbins, University of California, San Diego

"The United States has literally thousands of single-purpose governments, often layered on top of one another and sharing a common tax base. And many scholars believe that the proliferation of these entities is good for democracy. But Chris Berry, in the first detailed study of this layering phenomenon, shows that quite the opposite is true - that citizens don't participate, that interest groups prevail, that spending is too high, that outcomes are unrepresentative. This is a seminal work, rooted in theory and filled with interesting data, that advances our understanding of government and democracy." - Terry Moe, Stanford University

"As an economic downturn knocks local budgets out of kilter, the age-old questions asked by Christopher Berry are especially timely. Are local governments doing their job efficiently? If not, why not? What can be done to make the system work better? Combining powerful theory with sophisticated analyses of piles of information, Berry forgoes the descriptive and anecdotal to answer such questions definitively. Berry's disciplined, path-breaking work reaches theoretical heights comparable to the ones achieved by his great University of Chicago predecessors, Robert Parks, Louis Wirth, Edward Banfield, and James Q. Wilson." - Paul Peterson, Harvard University

"Well written, persuasively argued, and nicely packaged, Chris Berry's Imperfect Union invigorates the study of local institutions. By embedding the political structure of cities, counties, and special districts in a familiar political economy framework, Berry demonstrates how local institutions are special instances of institutions more generally. And doing so allows him to clarify the fiscal interrelationships among multiple layers of government in a theoretically compelling manner. This is a terrific accomplishment." - Kenneth A. Shepsle, Harvard University

"With this important and timely book, Berry fills a large hole in the literature on the political economy of local government in the United States, which for too long has ignored the rapid expansion of specialized, overlapping jurisdictions with concurrent tax powers. The book assembles an impressive array of data to document the causes and consequences of this trend, and more importantly, it makes a strong case that should attract attention beyond academia: special districts are bad for taxpayers and bad for democracy." - Jonathan Rodden, Stanford University

"Imperfect Union draws our attention to an understudied but deeply important aspect of American federalism. Berry demonstrates that, absent strong parties or other mechanisms of control, the overlapping nature of special-purpose governments can lead to severe overspending and inefficiency. Berry's first-rate scholarship makes this accessible work essential reading for scholars of federalism, urban governance, public finance, and party politics." - Craig Volden, The Ohio State University

About the Author Christopher R. Berry is an assistant professor in the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. Previously, he was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University, Massachusetts in the Department of Government. Professor Berry received his BA from Vassar College, New York, Master of Regional Planning (MRP) from Cornell University, New York, PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, and post-doctoral training at Harvard University. He was also a Charles E. Merriam Fellow at the University of Chicago. Professor Berry is active in community development and was formerly a director in the MetroEdge division of ShoreBank, America's oldest and largest community development financial institution. He has published in journals such as the American Journal of Political Science, the Journal of Politics, the Journal of Law and

