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Teaching and applying Hirschman - Thoughts from a practitioner turned academic

For students of the Social Science and project managers alike (in development or elsewhere), Albert Hirschman's ideas and writings can not only be inspiring, but actually practically useful. Hirschman teaches us time and again how the often called for but seldom concretized idea of thinking outside of the box can actually work. This refers to his approach to find contradicting explanations for existing lines of thought and mainstream concepts but also how he had theorized on his own way of doing research or his propensity for transgressing disciplinary boundaries. Not only between political science and economics, but especially the humanities and above all, literature. Yet, in my experience, the most practical resources for students and practitioners are those writings of Hirschman that are mostly overlooked nowadays - specifically his writings on development. In my presentation I will highlight how Hirschman's ideas have guided me through the intricacies of practical development project management, and how I have come to integrate Hirschman text into basically all of the classes I teach, be they in comparative politics, history of ideas, development economics, project management and policy analysis.