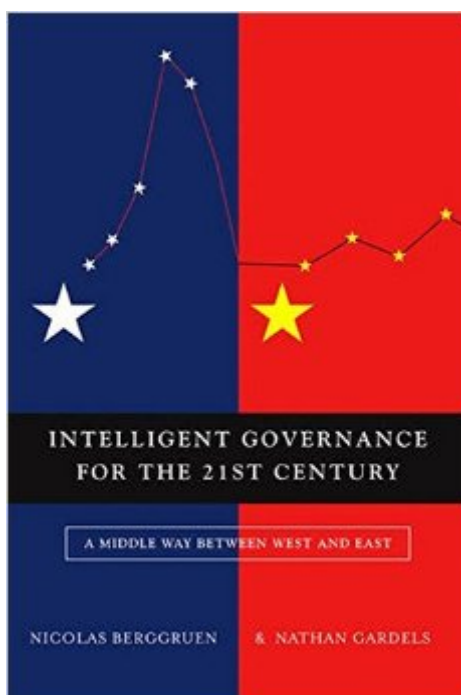


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Intelligent Governance For The 21st Century: A Middle Way Between West And East



Synopsis

For decades, liberal democracy has been extolled as the best system of governance to have emerged out of the long experience of history. Today, such a confident assertion is far from self-evident. Democracy, in crisis across the West, must prove itself. In the West today, the authors argue, we no longer live in "industrial democracies," but "consumer democracies" in which the governing ethos has ended up drowning households and governments in debt and resulted in paralyzing partisanship. In contrast, the long-term focus of the decisive and unified leadership of China is boldly moving its nation into the future. But China also faces challenges arising from its meteoric rise. Its burgeoning middle class will increasingly demand more participation, accountability of government, curbing corruption and the rule of law. As the 21st Century unfolds, both of these core systems of the global order must contend with the same reality: a genuinely multi-polar world where no single power dominates and in which societies themselves are becoming increasingly diverse. The authors argue that a new system of "intelligent governance" is required to meet these new challenges. To cope, the authors argue that both East and West can benefit by adapting each other's best practices. Examining this in relation to widely varying political and cultural contexts, the authors quip that while China must lighten up, the US must tighten up. This highly timely volume is both a conceptual and practical guide of impressive scope to the challenges of good governance as the world continues to undergo profound transformation in the coming decades.

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Customer Reviews

Here's what is really great about this book:01) The authors are connected, admired, and conversant with the great minds of Silicon Valley (Eric Schmidt offers a very strong blurb) and even more importantly, this book both represents the best from those minds, and has clearly had as positive effect in getting this particular meme ("intelligent governance") considered.02) The authors force attention to a fundamental flawed premise in the West, that any form of democracy (even if corrupted beyond recognition) is preferable to any form of dictatorship (the authors refer to China as a mandarinstate). As someone who grew up in Singapore and has the deepest admiration for Minister-Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and the professionalism of the Government of Singapore (it employed my step-mother from New Zealand for many years, ultimately as head of the Department of English), I am among the first to suggest that the West falls short, but I would point to Singapore and the Nordics and BENELUX as my preferred alternative, not just hybrid, but rooted in ethical evidence-based decision-making. I would also note that the West has actively supported 40 of 42 dictators for the last fifty years -- integrity is NOT a strong suit for our so-called Western democracies.03) The book is strongest -- no doubt as the publisher and the authors intended -- in relation to the impact of social networks as feedback loops helpful to governments, whether democratic or mandarinstate, that are capable of LISTENING. Chapter 4, "The New Challenges of Governance," is certainly suitable as a stand-alone assigned reading.

You do not need to be a serious student of American politics to realize that our current system of government is no longer working. A recent poll showed that only 9% of American voters had a favorable impression of Congress. As Edward Deming, the famous quality control expert, was fond of saying, "Don't blame the individual for problems with the system. Fix the system." As Americans, we need to accept that our political system is broken. Electing new leaders will not fix the system. Only by doing a radical overhaul of the system, can we expect to develop a workable system of governance. If we fail to change our system, our democracy will probably fail. There are two major purposes of this book. The first is to explore the problems with our current system of governance. The book does an excellent job of recapping the history of democracy in the Western world in general and America in particular. It also traces the history of governance in the East and China in particular. As part of the historical background, the authors point out the inherent flaws in our system of governance. "Where will California and America as a whole be two decades from now if we don't find a way for democratic societies to break out of the paralysis that is leading us from an era of promise to a trajectory of demise?" While we have all been taught that one-person, one-vote was the

democratic way, the politicians have failed to share the problems with this policy. First all votes are not equal. That is all voters are not equally informed about the issues and possible solutions. Different voters have different agendas - they are often seeking radically different goals with their vote.

How's this for provocative? Red China's dictatorship is more accountable to its citizens than Wall Street is to Americans. The governance system of the People's Republic of China may be the best equipped of any system to handle the challenges of the 21st century. Western-style liberal democracies have both too much and too little democracy. Authors, Berggruen and Gardels, have written an actually very sober analysis of global governance focusing on the contrast between China's mandarin state and Western liberal democracies, especially that of the United States. They analyze contemporary global politics as being in a new stage of development which they refer to as Globalization 2.0. That sees the United States' economic and political domination of the rest of the world coming to an end and the world developing into a multipolar one with no single dominating political and economic power and diffusion of economies and industries where geographies and public jurisdictions are becoming irrelevant. Increasing global integration, diversities, and economic diffusions require new political and technical capabilities. The authors want to see improvement in world governance, primarily in the Western democracies, which are entering into a declining state of poor performance, political paralysis, declining legitimacy, and an increasing influence of participatory media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) which is making "mob rule" of a sort an increasingly crippling factor for good governance.

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