

**Changing Maps: Governing in a World of Rapid Change**  
 by S. A. Rosell, et al.  
 Report of the Project on Governing in an Information Society  
 Carleton University Press  
 253 pp. \$21.95 pb

**On Government Today**

We, in Canada, have pushed the parliamentary form of government in a direction that has exaggerated conflict in a very unproductive way. The result frustrates many of the people who work within the system, both politicians and public servants.... Another institutionalized problem for our political system is the extent to which debate occurs in secret, either in caucus or in Cabinet. It's hidden from the people, and that limits the extent to which people can see and understand how the various interests represented in Parliament are being articulated, and how conflicts are being resolved. In the information society that sort of covert process may no longer be sufficient. p. 83

Special interests need to be countered, and their money kept from corrupting our elected officials. The political energy required to reform the political system, so that it better protects the public interest, can only come from aggrieved citizens banding together to clean up politics. p. 204

Government officials come to see themselves as elites who "do things for" the people. And "the people," placed in the role of those for whom things are done, grow passive and unrealistically demanding. The relationship inevitably deteriorates, with people constantly nagging at government about their rights, while government officials, tiring of the unreasonableness of incessant public demands, respond by becoming more secretive, cunning and manipulative. A vicious circle is set in motion that erodes our democratic institutions. p. 245

Leaders who guide people to work their own way through thorny issues, rather than adopting a "we know best" posture, and who create the conditions for dialogue, rather than imposing their own views and values on the citizenry, are not abdicating their responsibility for making the hard decisions. On the contrary, they are ensuring that their decisions, once made, will reflect the true convictions of the citizenry, as well as their own best judgment. p. 252

**On Belief Systems**

We need to recognize that we live in communities and that, to obtain the benefits of living in that community, there are some norms of behaviour that we need to adopt. p. 38

Myth lies at the basis of human society... This is mankind's substitute for instinct. It is the unique and characteristic way of acting together. A people without a full quiver of relevant agreed upon statements, accepted in advance through education or less formalized acculturation, soon finds itself in deep trouble, for, in the absence of believable myths, coherent public action becomes very difficult to improvise and sustain. p. 124

... He proposed, for example, that we do not need a common religious or philosophical view, but we do need to be committed to the view that developing and socializing our children is a fundamental requirement, and to the view that a society in which people actively participate in self-rule is better than one in which people do not take part. p. 45

**On "Public Judgement"**

Raw opinion is opinion on an issue that is formed before the public has had the opportunity to deliberate it, and to grasp its full implications. Inconveniently, people do hold strong opinions on subjects about which they know nothing, and to which they have devoted little or no thought. Typically, such opinions are highly volatile, changing from day to day, and full of internal contradictions. The surest sign of raw opinion is when people are unaware of the consequences of their own views. p. 247

On some issues, however, the public's views have evolved from raw opinion into more thoughtful judgment. Typically, this evolution requires a complex process of deliberation that unfolds through a number of stages. One knows that public judgment has been reached on an issue when, on probing, peoples' opinions are found to be firm rather than volatile, self-consistent rather than contradictory and, most importantly, self-conscious, thoughtful and responsible about consequences. p. 248

Some roundtable members questioned the degree to which the public really is interested in being involved in such an effort. People have busy lives, they noted, and simply don't have the time, or often the interest, to be so fully engaged. Yankelovich agreed that the process of coming to public judgement is not needed, or appropriate, for some issues. At the same time, he cautioned, when it comes to the most important issues, public interest is real, and public involvement is essential to a legitimate and effective outcome. p. 27

The desire to be involved, to be part of the decision-making process that affects our own destiny, is so powerful, it's one of the most powerful human feelings. And, most often, the detachment, mistrust, aloofness, cynicism, and so on that we are seeing on the part of the public is an angry reaction to not being involved, to not being consulted with genuine sincerity. p. 98

The style of leadership, most consonant with the evolving new framework, is one in which leaders:

- respond to citizens as equals;
- give citizens the opportunity to deliberate alternative choices on important issues, rather than trying to sell them a single prepackaged choice;
- possess the communication skills (and patience) needed to help citizens make the journey from raw opinion to public judgment;
- empower average people to take moral responsibility for the consequences of their opinions; p. 251

The legitimacy of decisions in future will rest, not on absolutes, but on the degree to which they arise from an agreed process. That agreement itself will be temporary, contingent and subject to periodic revision. p. 37

In our mixed economies, there is plenty of precedent for government to seek to compensate for market failure. Also, opinion polls show that while the public (at least in the United States) distrusts government's social agenda (on the rational grounds that government hasn't learned how to cope with social problems very well), it does support a proactive government in the economic arena. There is virtual consensus that market solutions should have priority but, that when these fail, government must step in. For the public, the issue is not ideological but pragmatic. The public mandate is: Do whatever it takes to make the economy work to provide good jobs for all who seek them, and who have the skills and motivation to do them well. p. 244

**On Economics**

PLEASE HELP!  
 1) give me and/or the book honest criticism at 250.592.  
 2) discuss with family + friends  
 3) write your M.P. or M.L.A.  
 4) call the media.  
 The Globe and Mail, Saturday, February 8, 1997 p. D13

I'm not haranguing you about this because I stand to gain anything monetarily if this book gains a wider audience; I'm haranguing you about this because I'm scared of the future, and as I see it, this book is by far the most effective tool to ensure Canadian survival into the next century.  
 D. Evan Redford, Editor-in-Chief

There is simply no reason for this book to be buried in obscurity. Not only is it quite possibly the most important work of non-fiction to come out of Canada in the late 20th century, but it's very well written and mercifully jargon-free for the lay audience (it even has some cute little illustrations). Please don't get the wrong idea. I'm not haranguing you about this because I stand to gain anything monetarily if this book gains a wider audience; I'm haranguing you about this because I'm scared of the future, and as I see it, this book is by far the most effective tool to ensure Canadian survival into the next century.

**An important book**  
 I've recently finished reading the review of *Noting Rampetistiskin* (Dec. 14), and the lament contained in the last paragraph — that the book "fails to provide the combination that will be necessary if our society is to retain its compassionate values and remain competitive during a time of upheaval" — saddens me.  
 I'm saddened because there is another book out there which does fulfil the task admirably, but which has been inexcusably neglected (according to the Canadian Periodical Index, it has only once been reviewed, and then only by an obscure literary magazine). The book is *Changing Maps: Governing in a World of Rapid Change*. It's edited by Stephen Rosell, and published by Carleton University Press. I'm constantly reminded of the book's pedigree by the appearance of many of its renowned co-authors (16 in all) in the media.  
 Just recently, for instance, Judith Maxwell (executive director of the Queen's/University of Ottawa Economic Projects) was featured on CBC's *Sunday Morning*. Just a couple of weeks ago, Richard Lipsey (former economic adviser to the C.D. Howe Institute) was featured in a nationally syndicated column by Giles Cherson. A few years ago, Charles Taylor delivered the Massey Lecture for CBC's *Ideas* series. The list goes on and on.  
 There is simply no reason for this book to be buried in obscurity. Not only is it quite possibly the most important work of non-fiction to come out of Canada in the late 20th century, but it's very well written and mercifully jargon-free for the lay audience (it even has some cute little illustrations). Please don't get the wrong idea. I'm not haranguing you about this because I stand to gain anything monetarily if this book gains a wider audience; I'm haranguing you about this because I'm scared of the future, and as I see it, this book is by far the most effective tool to ensure Canadian survival into the next century.

On Rights & Responsibilities  
 We need to remind one another that no rights are absolute. Even freedom of speech, we all know, is denied to people who want to shout fire in a crowded theater when there is no fire. p. 203  
 It is a mistaken notion that just because we desire to be free from governmental controls, we should also be free from responsibilities to the community. p. 261  
 mon good, or indifferent to the community. p. 261

English of course, too high a degree of social uniformity (groupthink) can constitute a learning disability, depriving society of the different perspectives and unconventional viewpoints on which learning so much depends. p. 140

### On the Media

Journalists continue to seek to frame issues in terms of the narrative, dramatic model, so that if it doesn't have a personality base, a conflict, and a clear conclusion, it does not count as a news story worthy of mention. Most stories are selected on the basis of how they fit the narrative model, not on the basis of their intrinsic importance for national discussion. p. 99

It seems to me, more and more, that this is a technological revolution made in heaven for Canada, and yet we are allowing private players to control this game and there appears to be no sense of public urgency about it. If we're concerned about reversing tendencies toward social fragmentation, and about knitting together a country that is spread over an immense territory, it seems to me that this technology offers us an immense opportunity. We need to ask ourselves what role government can play to ensure that the technology is developed in ways that serve public purposes as well as private interests. p. 129

One of the most popular developments in this new world of information and communication, is people communicating with each other. In the midst of all of the passive technology we pump out, what people respond to most positively is the interactive aspects. When we offer people even very crude interactive capabilities, the response is phenomenal. Ted Turner is right, he said that it is not video on demand that people want, it's people on demand that they want. p. 131

I think the press and other institutions do a superb job of raising consciousness and of creating awareness. But what they do is get the public agitated and aroused, and then move on to another issue just when people are ready to engage an issue. p. 94

### On Class Warfare

Consider, for example, the emerging threat to our societies of class warfare. This threat is implicit in one of the Governance project's scenarios. It is as applicable to the United States as it is to Canada, and is, I believe, the most likely outlook for the future of both nations, unless the two societies actively intervene to change the flow of history. p. 240

This scenario need not be imagined for a remote future. It already is happening. In the emerging global economy, the class warfare scenario is a far more likely outcome than it would have been in the more autonomous, less interdependent economies of the past. p. 240

There can be no more urgent task for leadership and governance than to slow, stop and reverse these trends. p. 241

Building social cohesion and a learning society requires that we find ways to provide a reasonable distribution of the proceeds of that society to its members. Otherwise, people will not participate fully, and we shall end up drifting toward the world of increasing social polarization described in the HMS Bounty scenario (or worse). At the same time, we are reaching the limits of the tax/transfer system to address issues of redistribution. As a result, a variety of alternative approaches have been suggested to deal with the question of distribution. These include different ways to redistribute work,<sup>83</sup> different ways to encourage wider participation in capital ownership,<sup>84</sup> and more. How best can we address these distributional issues in the information society?

More broadly, this process of renewing the social contract will require that we provide at least a partial answer to a question that underlay many of our discussions; namely, to what extent must we be driven by the imperatives of the globalized marketplace, and to what extent can we make choices about the sort of society we wish to construct and sustain: p. 120

On the one hand we have a supply of skilled people who are un- or under-employed, and on the other hand we have a range of serious social problems that need to be addressed. It should be possible to devise innovative ways to bring together that supply and that demand: p. 84

### On Dialogue

Playing down conflicts can blind us to important perspectives and be self-defeating. We talk with like-minded people too much, and tend to underplay the extent to which knowledge is contested. Instead, we need to bring the conflict in our perspectives to the fore, and use that as a basis for learning.

We need to stop pretending that the other side does not exist, is wrong, or does not matter. We need to stop viewing debates and conflict from a technical perspective, to stop regarding them as error, the error of others who disagree with us... To develop effective learning organizations, and learning societies, we need to focus on conflict, not tiptoe around it. We need to set up mechanisms for dialogue and negotiation that use conflict as an essential stage in the building of that consensus. p. 87

.. What became clear to us, out of the scenarios, is that sustaining social cohesion is going to be a dominant concern in a world of rapid change. Otherwise that world will fragment and fall apart. Not only will Canada become the Titanic, the world will become the Titanic.

Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community. p. 77

In this view, we need to place greater value on rebuilding our social infrastructure, to emphasize the importance of investing in our families and our neighbourhoods, rather than simply investing in producing more goods and services. Rebuilding our social infrastructure should be a primary, not a derivative, goal. p. 46

Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence.... For example, a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust.... In a farming community... where one farmer got his hay baled by another and where farm tools are extensively borrowed and lent, the social capital allows each farmer to get his work done with less physical capital in the form of tools and equipment.74 p. 113

Even more striking, Putnam and his colleagues also found that social capital was the only reliable predictor of economic success:

... if we draw a map of Italy in 1993 according to wealth, we will find that communities with many choral societies are also more advanced economically. I originally thought that these fortunate communities had more choral societies because they were wealthy. After all, I thought, poor peasants don't have time or energy to spend singing. But if we look closely at the historical record, it becomes clear that I had it exactly backwards. Communities don't have choral societies because they are wealthy; they are wealthy because they have choral societies - or more precisely, the traditions of engagement, trust and reciprocity that choral societies symbolize. p. 114

Schultze argued that the major economic and social institutions of society cannot be made to work effectively simply through the laws, regulations, social policies and monetary incentives that govern them. Rather, to work, they require that the citizens of a society hold, and transmit from generation to generation, an appropriate set of supportive values and attitudes. Schultze cited a wide range of examples to illustrate his thesis:

The free enterprise system. A web of implicit contracts, informal understandings, and ideas of fairness underpins the modern free enterprise system, a set of relationships which cannot practically be governed by explicit legal contracts.

Tax collection. Revenue collection from an income tax system cannot be enforced by audits and penalties alone. Were taxpayers' decisions about whether or not to cheat to be based solely on a calculation of the likelihood of being caught, the system would not work, except perhaps with a huge enforcement mechanism that would violate other important social standards.

Income support systems. The existence of individual values that give a significant weight to the virtues of self-support and to the long-term future is probably necessary to underpin a technically well-designed welfare or unemployment insurance system.

The criminal justice system. Where impulsiveness and aggression are the norm, and when individuals place very low values on future benefits and costs, then no system of criminal penalties and law enforcement that is consistent with a civilized society can successfully deter a large volume of criminal activity. p. 122

Max Weber, one of the early sociological critics of modernity, attacked what he called the process of rationalization: the tendency of "instrumental reason" to dominate all forms of modern life, ultimately creating, he believed, an "iron cage" civilization stuffed with "heartless experts" and "spineless pleasure seekers." p. 236