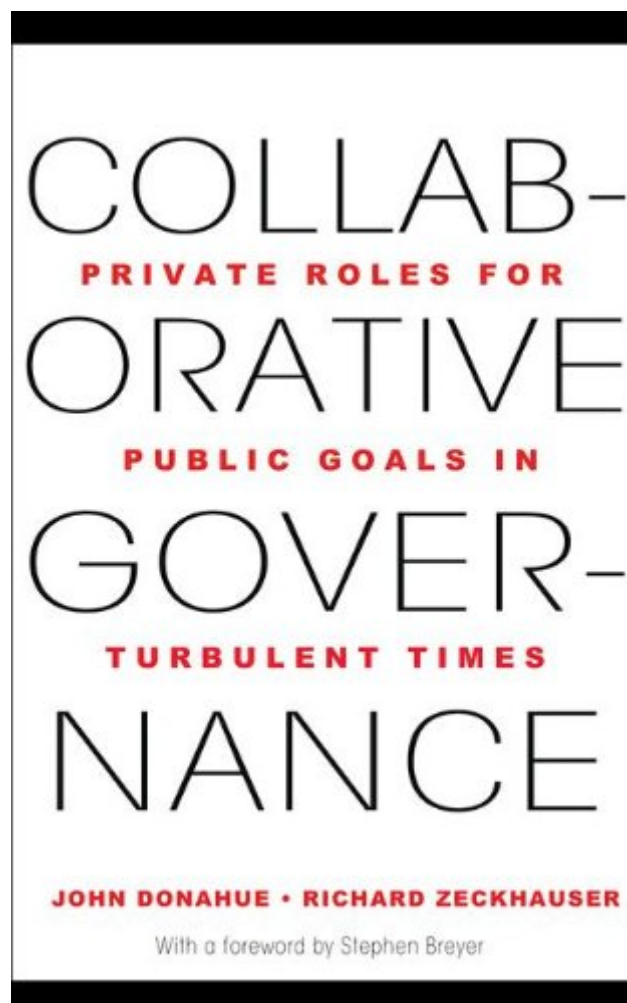




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Collaborative Governance: Private Roles For Public Goals In Turbulent Times



Synopsis

All too often government lacks the skill, the will, and the wallet to meet its missions. Schools fall short of the mark while roads and bridges fall into disrepair. Health care costs too much and delivers too little. Budgets bleed red ink as the cost of services citizens want outstrips the taxes they are willing to pay. Collaborative Governance is the first book to offer solutions by demonstrating how government at every level can engage the private sector to overcome seemingly insurmountable problems and achieve public goals more effectively. John Donahue and Richard Zeckhauser show how the public sector can harness private expertise to bolster productivity, capture information, and augment resources. The authors explain how private engagement in public missions--rightly structured and skillfully managed--is not so much an alternative to government as the way smart government ought to operate. The key is to carefully and strategically grant discretion to private entities, whether for-profit or nonprofit, in ways that simultaneously motivate and empower them to create public value. Drawing on a host of real-world examples--including charter schools, job training, and the resurrection of New York's Central Park--they show how, when, and why collaboration works, and also under what circumstances it doesn't. Collaborative Governance reveals how the collaborative approach can be used to tap the resourcefulness and entrepreneurship of the private sector, and improvise fresh, flexible solutions to today's most pressing public challenges.

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Customer Reviews

Love it, the Authors know there stuff. Gave me alot of information that is not easily available. Good read!

The book was in new condition and exactly what I asked for. Thank you!

This is an excellent reference for those seeking a comprehensive assessment of the strategic and public policy elements of Collaborative Governance. Invaluable dissertation reference!!Love it.

I had to buy this book for a class, but it was so good. It provided examples/ case studies that helped me make huge changes in the work I do.

Nice book easy to read and understand and real world example

Business v environment; business v health care legislation; business v social policy; business v government. The choice is all too often presented as a clash of ideas and ideologies. Sometimes it is. More often than not, it is not -- when collaboration rather than conflict is the most productive way forward. This book shows eloquently and with ample examples how that's best accomplished and why it often is the only way forward. Now the only question is how this approach to governance can be used to tackle one of the biggest problems facing us today: global warming.

This is a truly extraordinary book. We live in a time when governments around the world are struggling to fulfill their missions and when there appears to be a growing mismatch between the needs of citizens (in terms of health, security, education, and other areas to name a few) and the ability of government to cater to these needs. Directly addressing this challenge, Jack Donahue and Richard Zeckhauser provide a conceptual framework for thinking about a new mode of interaction between the public and the private sectors. They begin by discussing, in plain speak, but

nonetheless rigorously, the advantages and challenges inherent in sharing discretion - the quintessential element of collaboration - between the public sector to the private sector. The government can try to use the private sector's productivity, information advantages and resources to aid in the fulfillment of its mission, but it needs to be mindful that shared discretion can create its own problems. After laying out this conceptual framework, four fifths of the book provide a tightly focused analysis of many different cases and features of collaborative governance in practice. It is difficult to imagine a reader who would not find a number of cases directly of interest to him or her. The authors achieve the remarkable result of providing both general insights and concrete advice. They stop short of providing an actual "how to do it" list, but the evaluation of existing projects and the "Tasks and Tools" section comes close to this for the careful reader. To say that the book is brilliantly written would be a gross understatement. Every sentence is beautifully set into the perfect spot. What is really remarkable here is that the eloquence complements, rather than veils, the message. (What is also remarkable is what must be an all-time record of the number of alliterations in a single book!) A good book raises new questions, besides answering them. Also on this count, the book excels. The book is intellectually stimulating so that the reader yearns for more. For example, one fact is that the book is heavily US focused. That offers the great advantage that the authors could make use of their decade-long experience in the subject in this particular country. Readers in Europe and Asia, however, may have difficulties relating to some stories, simply because some of the problems described would just not occur outside of the United States. This perhaps should encourage other scholars to consider in how far the conceptual framework Donahue and Zeckhauser provide is applicable elsewhere (it seems it would be), and which applications exist in other countries that can be mapped into the framework, and whether cultural elements play a role in allowing collaborative governance to unfold effectively. The "Tale of Six Cities" that the authors provide could be complemented by a "Tale of Six Countries." Policymakers around the world should not be deterred by the US focus of the book but carefully consider which of the insights are appropriate for them. The other question that, in my view, receives too little attention in the book is, what are the incentives of the government to engage in collaborative governance? This question is both of academic and practical interest. Of course, ideally, the government would be maximizing citizen welfare. It seems, though, that this is not necessarily the objective of most real-world governments. Instead, they are also choosing policies to get reelected, and altruism alone is rarely the dominant action motive among modern-day politicians. Fortunately, there is some evidence that, for example, citizen satisfaction with the way democracy works is higher when environmental quality is higher, but it is not clear whether this feeds back into electoral success. Ultimately, it seems that

collaborative governance will be allowed to realize its full potential when those in power actually actively use it because they believe it is in their own best interest to do so. From this perspective, the book may benefit, perhaps in a future edition, from making a stronger case for why politicians should care. In short, in my personal opinion (which, in the interest of full disclosure, is intensely shaped by having had the pleasure of having Richard Zeckhauser as my Ph.D. advisor), what we have here will probably (and hopefully!) be regarded as one of the seminal books on public policy for years and decades to come. I conclude this review by citing directly out of the book. On p. 45, the authors argue that "creating public value by capitalizing on private capacity requires careful balancing acts and precise implementation." There are many pitfalls in this endeavor. But, in a beautiful and optimistic conclusion, the authors argue that "the feat of finding the elusive balance point can be a marvel to behold and a satisfaction to accomplish." I believe this idea applies just as well to a research project as fundamental as this one. To me, this book has struck a perfect balance. It is a marvel to behold. And I hope the authors feel satisfaction through what they have accomplished.

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