



Challenging governance theory: From networks to hegemony

By Jonathan S. Davies

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Theories heralding the rise of network governance have dominated for a generation. Yet, empirical research suggests that claims for the transformative potential of networks are exaggerated. This topical and timely book takes a critical look at contemporary governance theory, elaborating a Gramscian alternative. It argues that, although the ideology of networks has been a vital element in the neoliberal hegemonic project, there are major structural impediments to accomplishing it. While networking remains important, the hierarchical and coercive state is vital for the maintenance of social order and integral to the institutions of contemporary governance. Reconsidering it from Marxist and Gramscian perspectives, the book argues that the hegemonic ideology of networks is utopian and rejects the claim that there has been a transformation from 'government' to 'governance'. This important book has international appeal and will be essential reading for scholars and students of governance, public policy, human geography, public management, social policy and sociology.

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Editorial Review

Review

A robust challenge to the casual acceptance of network governance as the 'way we live now', this book offers a stimulating and provocative critique of governance that is theoretically rich and analytically satisfying. Essential. Helen Sullivan, University of Birmingham

Jonathan Davies adds a novel critical voice to debates about governance. Drawing on Gramsci, he argues that network governance is less a panacea than a perpetuation of modernism. Dreams of spreading connections, reflexivity, and communication constantly get transformed into a reality of hierarchy, hegemony, and domination. Mark Bevir, University of California, Berkeley

The conventional wisdom about 'governance' is subject to an incisive critique, reinforcing Davies reputation for pushing forward new thinking about the relationship between state and civil society. Chris Skelcher, University of Birmingham

About the Author

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