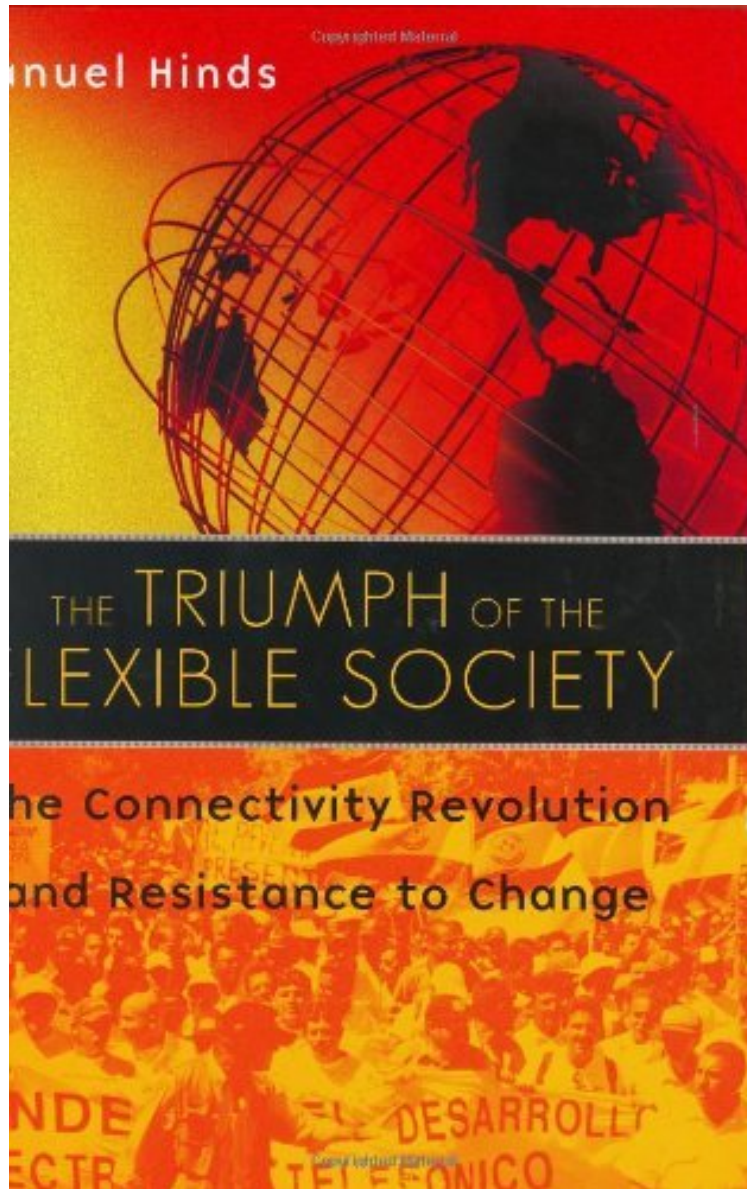


The Triumph of the Flexible Society: The Connectivity Revolution and Resistance to Change

Manuel Hinds

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Manuel Hinds : The Triumph of the Flexible Society: The Connectivity Revolution and Resistance to Change before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Triumph of the Flexible Society: The Connectivity Revolution and Resistance to Change:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A remarkable book which combines depth and breadthBy Yevgeny

N. Kuznetsov A remarkable feature of this book is unusual combination of depth and breadth. Long-term social, political and economic dynamics consistently remains in the limelight of analysis: suffice it to recall names of Tocqueville, Toynbee, Drucker, and Bell. Yet even against such illustrious benchmarks, the book is fresh, original, and - as a pleasant surprise - engaging to read. The depth of the book is in exploration of why some institutions are more amenable and adaptable to change than others. The main hypothesis is simple yet plausible: The less hierarchical and more horizontal are society's institutions, the more adaptable and productive is the society. Take, the problem of alcoholism, for instance. Sweden is consistently more efficient in dealing with it than most other countries because it is largely non-state activity (although the government does provide a conducive framework for it), organized through a variety of horizontal and voluntary associations. Going from mundane to more dramatic, take a phenomenon of revolution. From the perspective of the book, any revolution is a sign of inflexibility. The deepness of the book is analysis (although such analysis is in its infancy) of organizational structures which institutionalize horizontal and network architecture of society. Network is easily the most frequently used terms of the literature but all too often networks are discussed as inherently informal, as emerging in addition to formal principal-agent institutions. The breadth of the book makes it an engaging read. The author juxtaposes, for instance, Stalinist Soviet Union and fascist Germany without falling into simplification. Again, a skeptic would say that after H. Arendt such juxtapositions are not new, but the author does add fresh features. The author is not your typical academic. He has been an official in the World Bank and Minister of Finance of his native El Salvador. He is a 'thinking doer': his interest in analytics and theory is eminently practical. This 'thinking doer' perspective in Latin America proved eclectic and, for that reason, eminently insightful. Suffice is to recall Albert Hirschman's refreshingly original contributions or more recently Carlota Perez' (who is from Venezuela) 2004 book on how long-term co-evolution of financial and technological structures opens up opportunities for leapfrogging.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Magnificent: Essential reading to understand what is happening now, and how societies deal with change. By Global Traveller I enjoyed thoroughly this book and, more importantly, I learned a lot. The Triumph of the Flexible Society is essential reading for: national or international policy decision makers, for policy thinkers and designers, and for anyone who wants to understand what is happening in the world today. This really includes everyone. The book does many things to help us cope better with the world of today. Manuel Hinds provides a strong and clear conceptual framework to understand why, extremely rapid change in societies leads them to become defensive -- protecting rents and privilege -- and autocratic. In cases of extremely large and fast change, like the industrial revolution, many countries were unable to cope and ended up in bloody totalitarian regimes. The stresses of change caused by the industrial revolution led France to go from the enthusiasm of the 1789 revolution to the bloody vertical autocracy of Napoleon. The same thing happened in Russia; it went from the energy of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, to the long Stalin tyranny, one of the most autocratic and bloody periods in Russian history. In Germany, the same forces of change started to open the society in the Weimar governments of the 1930s, only to end up in the horror of the Nazi regime a few years later. Manuel Hinds lucidly explains what is happening today by analyzing what the connectivity revolution is doing and why its embarking all of us into a new period of "mega" change. Then he elucidates us as to the large risks that history can repeat itself -- again. We may be now in a paradise of openness, competitive markets, individual rights and democracy, but the stresses of defensiveness and reaction are brewing all over the world. In its rapid and increasingly ubiquitous unfolding -- affecting everyone, in their work, culture and identity -- the connectivity revolution is leading many individuals and countries to unleash the same autocratic reflexes that we suffered in the past processes of massive change.

If there is one book you read this year, I suggest you read The Triumph of the Flexible Society. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Millard Long's review of The Triumph of the Flexible Society By Jancis Long Manuel Hinds' book "The Triumph of the Flexible Society" may not only change the way you think about the world, it may change what you "do" about the world. Hinds has written a profound analysis of the way in which different societies deal with the forces of change. Hinds focuses on two major changes in technology-the industrial revolution and the revolution in connectivity. The connectivity revolution, now only in its early stages, includes, but is much broader than, globalization. Revolutions of this magnitude create opportunities, but at the same time they destroy imbedded capital and existing labor skills. Losers in this revolution may seek to maintain their positions in society by impeding change and many will want to restore the order of the past by seeking refuge in one or another form of fundamentalism. Countries that have strong, flexible and horizontal institutions will reap the benefits but countries with vertical, authoritarian structures are more rigid and more likely to attempt to protect the established order. The open, liberal society will be threatened by forces from without, but, more importantly, from forces within. Hinds use his framework to analyze the destructive regimes of the 20th century, Nazism and Communism, and the plight of the developing countries. He also seeks to provide us with the understanding we shall need to cope with the coming revolution in connectivity. This is a "must read" for anyone attempting to understand and deal with the forces behind past and present social, political and economic developments. - Millard Long

Hinds takes offers a fresh perspective on the social, political, and economic disturbances now affecting our world. This book looks at those disturbances not as separate problems, but rather as the coherent symptoms of a deep technological

revolution that is changing the shape of society on the scale of the Industrial Revolution: the Connectivity Revolution, the basis of the New Economy. Analyzing the resistance to change that erupted violently in response to that last major economic upheaval, Hinds shows how Communism, Nazism, and fundamentalism owe their triumphs not to the prevalence of poverty or oppression but to the rigidity of societies threatened by profound social changes prompted by rapid technological progress. Demonstrating that their rigidity was caused by the same kind of state intervention in the economy that is now being proposed to stop globalization, he argues persuasively that only a horizontal, flexible society can smoothly manage change in such a way that the pain of transformation and therefore, the risk of giving birth to new varieties of destructive regimes is minimized.

"Comprehensive graduate collections."-Choice?Comprehensive graduate collections.??Choice?Comprehensive graduate collections.?-Choice"Provides the reader with a remarkable analysis of the challenges that the new 'information-related' technologies present in today's world. Manuel Hinds, an eminent Latin American policymaker in his own right, describes the difficulties of our current global environment, enriched by a fascinating historical perspective. Mr. Hinds's strong belief in the values of democracy and of the market economy is inspiring. Yet, it presents a major challenge to policy and opinion makers alike: how to use the technological revolution to improve society at large, without incurring the tragic mistakes of the past."-Claudio M. Loser *The Inter-American Dialogue* About the Author MANUEL HINDS is a consultant to private and public institutions, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Bank of Development, and the International Monetary Fund.