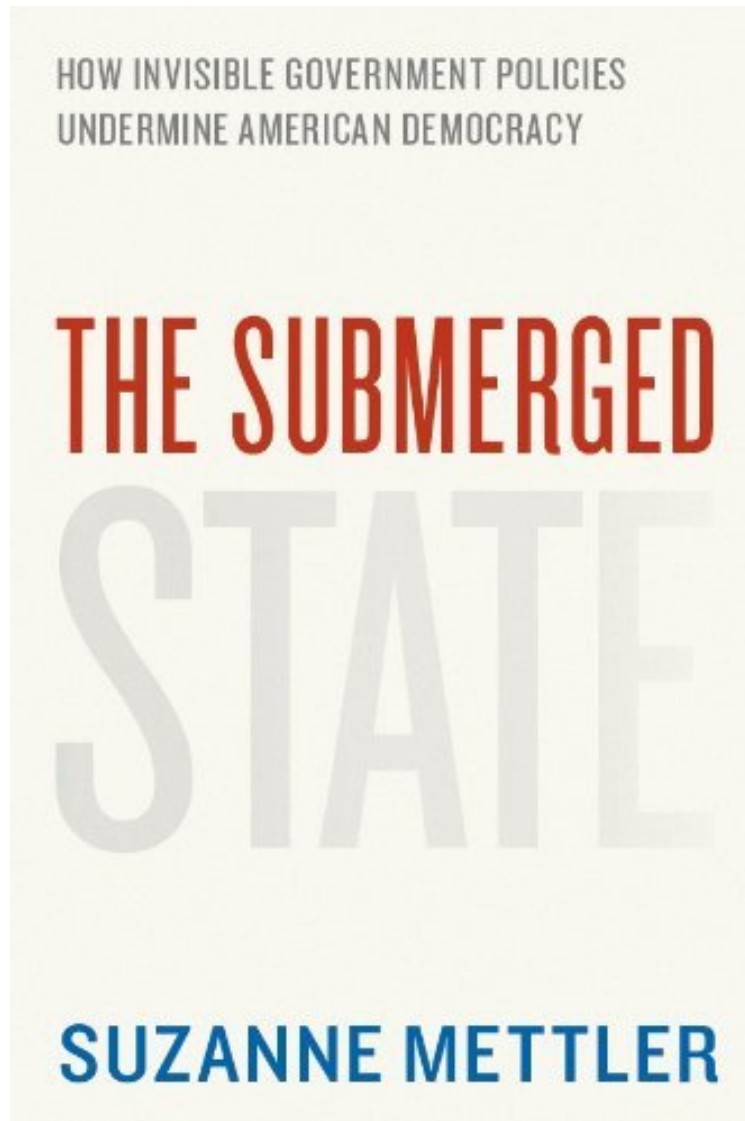


[Library ebook] The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy (Chicago Studies in American Politics)

The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy (Chicago Studies in American Politics)

Suzanne Mettler

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



 [Download](#)

 [Read Online](#)

#547702 in eBooks 2011-08-31 2011-08-31 File Name: B005PY34VI | File size: 76.Mb

Suzanne Mettler : The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy (Chicago Studies in American Politics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy (Chicago Studies in American Politics):

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A powerful look at the hidden side of government
By Michael Burnam-fink
It doesn't take a pundit to know that American politics are screwed up beyond measure. Congress is stuck in gridlock, the economy is stalled, elections are decided by culture war attack ads, and politics itself is derided as a pursuit for lying hustlers. Everybody has a scapegoat, but Mettler actually has some evidence backing her theory. The key issue is not the government we see, but the government we don't, the vast tangle of tax breaks, public-private partnerships, and incentives that Mettler deems 'the submerged state'. The size of the submerged state is astounding, 8% of the GDP, or half the size of the visible state (Medicare, social security, Medicaid, the military, servicing the debt, and the relatively minuscule discretionary funding that covers everything else the government does, from transportation to education to NASA and foreign aid). Mettler deploys economic and social statistics to show that for all its expense, the submerged state is a failure on nearly every level. Whatever your politics, there is something to dislike about the submerged state. It represents a transfer of wealth from the poor to the wealthy, when most Americans abstractly support reducing inequality. It is a distortionary government influence on the workings of the free market, without even the relative clarity of direct purchases or regulations. It often fails to accomplish stated policy goals of improving access to education, healthcare, or housing. It leads to civic disengagement, as those who benefit fail to see how the government has helped them, or how they can meaningfully impact politics through voting. And above all, it is corrupt, as it replaces broad public participation with the lobbying of narrowly constituted wealthy interests groups. This book is not perfect. Mettler is a liberal political scientist, and she has the biases of her profession: that conservatives are responsible for much of what's gone wrong with America over the past 30 years (disclosure: I agree), and that citizens would vote 'better' (i.e. for liberals) if they were just better informed. She is also not quite up to the task of sinking the submerged state. But these are minor quibbles. In the social sciences, I evaluate theories on their explanatory power, and Mettler has provided a powerful lens for seeing many divergent policies as part of a unitary whole. In a just and reasonable world, the 2012 Presidential campaign would be about Mettler's book. Unfortunately, we're still living on Earth, and so it's going to be about Obama's socialism and Romney's dog.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Book's great, Kindle edition lacks a MAJOR feature.
By teacher1234
It's a great book! Kindle does need to get itself together with the page numbers, though. This is a book for class, and I'll have to do extra detective work if I want to cite Mettler's text at all.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Megan Lacy Hornyak
A must read

“Keep your government hands off my Medicare!” Such comments spotlight a central question animating Suzanne Mettler's provocative and timely book: why are many Americans unaware of government social benefits and so hostile to them in principle, even though they receive them? The Obama administration has been roundly criticized for its inability to convey how much it has accomplished for ordinary citizens. Mettler argues that this difficulty is not merely a failure of communication; rather it is endemic to the formidable presence of the “submerged state.” In recent decades, federal policymakers have increasingly shunned the outright disbursing of benefits to individuals and families and favored instead less visible and more indirect incentives and subsidies, from tax breaks to payments for services to private companies. These submerged policies, Mettler shows, obscure the role of government and exaggerate that of the market. As a result, citizens are unaware not only of the benefits they receive, but of the massive advantages given to powerful interests, such as insurance companies and the financial industry. Neither do they realize that the policies of the submerged state shower their largest benefits on the most affluent Americans, exacerbating inequality. Mettler analyzes three Obama reforms—student aid, tax relief, and health care—to reveal the submerged state and its consequences, demonstrating how structurally difficult it is to enact policy reforms and even to obtain public recognition for achieving them. She concludes with recommendations for reform to help make hidden policies more visible and governance more comprehensible to all Americans. The sad truth is that many American citizens do not know how major social programs work—or even whether they benefit from them. Suzanne Mettler's important new book will bring government policies back to the surface and encourage citizens to reclaim their voice in the political process.