

'Everyone wants good government, but how do we know when we have it? The path-breaking Quality of Government Institute cuts through the tiresome ideological debate with theoretically grounded empirical analyses of the components, measures, and outcomes of good government. The book's contributors demonstrate the relevance of political science, and they do so with arguments and evidence that should improve policy and, ultimately, peoples' lives.'

— Margaret Levi, University of Washington, USA

'All too often today research in political science is irrelevant and uninspiring, shying away from the "big" questions that actually matter in people's lives. Good Government shows that this does not have to be the case. Tackling some of the "biggest" questions of the contemporary era – What is good government? Where does it come from? How can it be measured and how does it matter? – this book will prove invaluable to academics and policy makers alike.'

— Sheri Berman, Barnard College, USA

'What is "Good Government?" Few doubt that it is better to have a "good government" than a "bad" one, but few of us have thought carefully about what makes for good government vs. bad. Sören Holmberg and Bo Rothstein's excellent volume helps fill in this gap. Though the book is more than this, the focus on corruption is particularly fascinating. We know that corruption is "bad" but where does it come from? Why are some legislatures more corrupt than others? Why does the media sometimes collude? Why are women less easily corrupted than men? These are just a few of the many fascinating questions this volume explores. By bridging democratic theory, public policy and institutional analysis, it is one of the first to give us some practical insight into the obviously important question: what makes some governments "better" than others?'

— Sven Steinmo, European University Institute, Italy

In all societies, the quality of government institutions is of the utmost importance for the well-being of its citizens. Problems like high infant mortality, lack of access to safe water, unhappiness and poverty are not primarily caused by a lack of technical equipment, effective medicines or other types of knowledge generated by the natural or engineering sciences. Instead, the critical problem is that the majority of the world's population live in societies that have dysfunctional government institutions. Central issues discussed in the book include: how can good government be conceptualized and measured, what are the effects of 'bad government' and how can the quality of government be improved?

Good Government will prove invaluable for students in political science, public policy and public administration. Researchers in political science and the social sciences, as well as policy analysts working in government, international and independent policy organizations will also find plenty to interest them in this resourceful compendium.

Sören Holmberg and **Bo Rothstein** are at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Cover image: Detail from *Corrupt Legislation*, mural by Elihu Vedder, dated 1896. Mural is located in the lobby to Main Reading Room, Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, DC. The main figure is seated atop a pedestal saying 'Corrupt legislation'.

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The Relevance of Political Science

