THE BERGGRUEN INSTITUTE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2010 WITH A MISSION TO DEVELOP FOUNDBATIONAL IDEAS, AND THROUGH THEM, SHAPE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

OUR MISSION

In the age of technology and globalization, critical analysis of our systems and the beliefs on which they are founded is required.

As an international “think and action” network, we seek to bring together the best minds and most authoritative voices from across cultural and political boundaries to address the core challenges of our era – from global governance to what it means to be human in an age of technology.
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The Berggruen Institute was founded five years ago to foster new thinking about the most consequential social and political issues of our day. As an action and think tank, our mission is also to promote the innovative design of governing institutions and media to meet those challenges.

In many ways, our most audacious projects have been our most successful. Through the 21st Century Council, we have built a critical bridge between China and the rest of the world in our “Understanding China” series of meetings with President Xi Jinping and the top leadership of that major rising power. The many “town hall” meetings from Madrid to Berlin hosted by our Council for the Future of Europe have provided a rare forum where top leaders can meet to map a common destiny. The Think Long Committee for California sponsored legislation that reformed the citizen ballot initiative for the first time in 80 years. In the two short years since it was launched in Davos, The WorldPost, our partnership with the Huffington Post, has become a place “where the whole world meets” by bringing together contributors from all over the planet onto a daily platform for the global cross-pollination of ideas. Our recently announced $1 million Philosophy Prize, which will be awarded for the first time this year, promises to place socially and politically transformative ideas on center stage of the public discourse. Our fellows hosted by universities from Stanford to Tsinghua promote East-West understanding through intellectual exchanges.

Thanks to the commitment and active engagement of our members and the labors of our dedicated staff, we have accomplished a great deal in a short time. This report marks only the beginning of the achievements we are confident the Berggruen Institute will continue to attain in the coming years.

NICOLAS BERGGRUEN
Chairman, Berggruen Institute
Nicolas Berggruen Institute and its 21st Century Council founded
SEPTEMBER 2010

Think Long Committee meets with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
OCTOBER 2010

Blueprint for California published; Think Long Committee
NOVEMBER 2011

Meeting with President Sarkozy in Paris, 21st Century Council
OCTOBER 2011

Berlin Town Hall, Council for the Future of Europe
SEPTEMBER 2011

Intelligent Governance for the 21st Century: A Middle Way Between West and East written by Nicolas Berggruen and Nathan Gardels is published
NOVEMBER 2012

Think Long Committee meets with Governor Jerry Brown
MARCH 2011

Think Long Committee meeting with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
OCTOBER 2011

Council for the Future of Europe founded; inaugural event in Brussels
SEPTEMBER 2011

European Commission Investment Offensive to boost jobs and growth – draws from Council for the Future of Europe’s jobs plan
NOVEMBER 2014

Berggruen Institute and Huffington Post launch The WorldPost
JANUARY 2014

First “Understanding China” meeting with President Xi Jinping and the 21st Century Council in Beijing
NOVEMBER 2013

“Project Europe” Town Hall in Madrid, Council for the Future of Europe
FEBRUARY 2014

Purchase of Monteverdi land for future Berggruen Institute campus
FEBRUARY 2015

Philosophy and Culture Center launched – center seeks to develop new ideas and encourage fresh thinking across cultures and disciplines
SEPTEMBER 2015

WorldPost Future of Work Conference in London explores how technology is revolutionizing work
MARCH 2015

Governor Jerry Brown signs initiative reform SB1253 – the first major change to California’s initiative process in four decades – in victory for Think Long Committee
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A Blueprint to Renew California: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED BY THE THINK LONG COMMITTEE FOR CALIFORNIA

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS
The aim of the Council, in the words of our Chinese member, Zheng Bijian, is to “build on a convergence of interests in order to create a community of interests.”

A key forum for achieving this aim is the G-20, which includes leaders of both the advanced and emerging economies constituting 2/3 of the global population and 3/4 of the global GDP. To that end, the 21st Century Council meets when appropriate with the chair of the annual G-20 summit to help shape the agenda.

The 2008 financial crisis revealed how tightly tethered the advanced and emerging economies had become. At the G-20 Summit in London in 2009, then-British prime minister Gordon Brown rallied the major countries of that inclusive group in a collective agreement to avoid a global depression. At that moment, it appeared that the G-20 had become an effective coordinating body for globalization.

As the immediate effects of the crisis subsided, so did the influence of the G-20 as the world became even more fragmented. Europe turned inward to cope with its own debt crisis. Russia invaded Crimea and conflict arose between the U.S.-led alliance system in East Asia and China’s newly assertive posture in the South China Sea.

In short, the prospect of global cooperation had deteriorated into the potential for a new bloc system that would once again divide the world, with Russia and China on one side, and the U.S. and its allies on the other.

The 21st Century Council brings together prominent statesmen and women, global thinkers and tech-titans to address the challenges arising as power shifts from Western-dominated globalization to a multipolar world.

Since China and the U.S. are the pivotal powers that will shape that convergent future, we also hold regular meetings with President Xi Jinping and China’s other top leaders.

In November 2013 on the eve of the 13th Plenum of the Central Committee, we held our first “Understanding China” conference in Beijing with President Xi Jinping.
China to shut the door that has already been opened."

In the second gathering of the Understanding China series we discussed the most controversial issues with a wide array of officials, including the “rule of law” with the Vice-President of the Supreme People’s Court and “freedom and order” in cyberspace with Lu Wei, the Internet czar.

In his comments, President Xi Jinping emphasized that, for China to meet its goals, it would have to avoid the “Thucydides trap” of a rising power falling into conflict with the established powers and “cement” the role of the G-20, which China will chair in 2016, in fostering cooperation on global growth.

At the request of President Xi’s top economic adviser, Liu He, a working group of the 21st Century Council submitted recommendations for the 2016 G-20 agenda.

It is impossible for China to shut the door that has already been opened.

At that time, President Xi told the group: “The Chinese Dream can only be realized by engaging in today’s interdependent world... the more developed China becomes, the more open it will be. It is impossible for China to shut the door that has already been opened.”

There is a core challenge for the Communist Party as it tries to shift from the Second Industrial Revolution to the third: innovation entails steady disruption while the Party seeks above all to maintain stability. It is not easy to see how you can both clamp down and “purify” the Internet by limiting the flow of information, as Xi has called for, while at the same time extolling “Internet Plus” innovation. Can “Internet Plus” and “Internet minus” go together? Where the Chinese authorities decide to draw the line between “freedom” and “order,” as we discussed with Internet czar Lu Wei in Beijing, will determine the scope of innovation-based prosperity.

The most pronounced aspect of the structural difficulty is America’s rejection of China’s political system and its impact. With different cultural traditions and political histories, countries tend to view and judge others from their own perspective. In the eyes of many Americans, China values collective interests and lacks democracy and human rights, while in the eyes of many in China, the Americans, who believe in individual rights, have a natural tendency to engineer political evolution in other countries, and therefore we need to be on guard. These oversimplified perceptions have put the two countries at two ends of the world, running parallel and never seeming to converge.
THE CONTEXT

In 2010, the euro zone was in crisis. High levels of public debt among several euro zone members, particularly Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, were shaking the bonds of the union. The threat of default among those hardest hit raised the specter of bank failure and the potential for a second crisis in 3 years for the still fragile global financial system. Europe’s financial crisis precipitated its political crisis. Slow growth and high levels of unemployment – which was as high as 50% among young people in Spain – have led the public to distrust Europe’s financial institutions. European elections across member states have generally seen establishment candidates losing ground to anti-establishment nationalist and populist parties. Between member states, suspicion and resentment has reached toxic levels as northern states condemn southern states for fiscal mismanagement and lax discipline and southern states blame northern states, led by Germany, for imposing crippling austerity measures. More recently, the migrant crisis has proven the latest challenge, as European states determine how to respond to the unprecedented number of immigrants from the Middle East seeking asylum across their borders. In short, Europe’s crisis is not merely an economic or political crisis – it is a crisis of identity.

OUR WORK

In September 2011, as the Greece sovereign debt crisis spread financial panic across Europe, the Berggruen Institute established the Council on the Future of Europe. The Council is comprised of 29 prominent European statesmen, former heads of government, top economists and historians.

The key theme that emerged in the very first meeting in Brussels – “Europe is the solution not the problem” – remains the cornerstone of the Council’s activities. Early on, the Council recognized that while the euro zone crisis could only ultimately be solved by moving toward a fiscal and political union, European institutions lacked the legitimacy to get there. Only fully engaging European citizens by democratizing how the European Commission is chosen would enable the necessary – if limited – transfer of sovereignty required to govern Europe effectively.

The Council also recognized that as necessary as structural reform and improving competitiveness may be to long-term prosperity, austerity measures alone without a short-term program for growth and inclusive employment could not rescue troubled European economies from their debt trap. Austerity alone, Council members feared, would undercut and not bolster the allegiance of citizens to a shared vision of a common European future.

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To carry this message to European public opinion, the Council organized a series of high-profile “town hall” meetings in Berlin, Paris and Madrid and engaged students of Sciences Po in Paris and the London School of Economics to participate and spell out their own vision of Europe’s future.

The Council was also instrumental in proposing an investment, training and jobs program for Europe that was ultimately embraced as European policy in January 2015 when European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker proposed a 315 billion euro plan that would leverage initial capital from the European Investment Bank with EU funds. This idea was first conceived in 2013 by the Berggruen Institute, which has a strong presence in Europe, as well as the Italian labor minister.

Moving forward, the Council intends to launch a forward-looking narrative that can once again enlargeintroverted national identities and give new impetus, especially for the younger generation, to the idea of integration beneficial for all.

For a fresh start Europe needs to build integration with a positive vision from the ground up instead of only through the back door of a common currency rooted in the negative constraint of rigid debt and a deficit constraints. A similar historical role to that fulfilled by the Coal and Steel Community could be played today through a “European Digital Community” that harnesses the new power of the information age by forging a convergence of connectivity, renewable energy and smart transportation into the so-called “Internet of Things.”

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NATHAN GARDELS:
How to Repair Europe by Leveraging German Overreach

For a fresh start Europe needs to build integration with a positive vision from the ground up instead of only through the back door of a common currency rooted in the negative constraint of rigid debt and a deficit constraints. The earliest success in moving toward a common Europe was the Coal and Steel Community in the late 1940s and 1950s. That project harnessed Europe’s industrial might on behalf of the community instead of individual nations that had deployed their manufacturing prowess to wage war. A similar historical role could be played today through a “European Digital Community” that harnesses the new power of the information age by forging a convergence of connectivity, renewable energy and smart transportation into the so-called “Internet of Things.”

MARIO MONTI:
Democracy’s Conundrum: Reforms Take Time to Mature — But Voters Want Results Now

All great reforms must first mature. To be successful, they must be fully understood by society. This process requires time and a lot of explanations. However, the need to obtain the consent of the people must not deter the leaders from their mission, even if it makes them unpopular.
THINK LONG COMMITTEE FOR CALIFORNIA
The members of the Council, a non-partisan, high-powered group of citizens that met monthly for one year, ranged from the former chief justice of California’s Supreme Court to former governors and U.S. secretaries of state – with broad experience in public affairs, labor and business. It was financed with an initial $20 million to fight the requisite political campaigns to reform state governance practices.

In its initial phase, the Committee joined with others to implement citizen instead of legislative drawing of electoral districts, “top-two” winner non-partisan primaries and a simple majority vote to pass budgets – all with the aim of ending the protracted partisan gridlock that saddled California with multi-billion dollar deficits for several years. These measures, along with a temporary tax increase and budget cuts, have been key in turning around the state’s fortunes under Governor Jerry Brown.

At the end of its deliberations, the Committee released its final report, “A Blueprint to Renew California,” which, among other proposals, recommended devolution of power to local governments and school districts, reform of the direct democracy initiative process to ensure greater deliberation of measures proposed by the public, establishment of a “rainy day” reserve fund for economic downturns, a long-term oriented oversight body to balance the short-term, special-interest character of the elected legislature and modernization of California’s tax system to reflect the reality of the 21st century service economy and its inherent volatility.
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The Committee joined Governor Brown in supporting a ballot initiative, Proposition 2, in the November 2014 election that would require the establishment of a “Rainy Day Fund.” The measure, which aimed to create a cushion to stem budget volatility, also passed by a wide margin of the public vote. Prop. 2 captures one-time spikes in revenue to use for paying down the state’s wall of debt while creating a cushion to avoid budget cuts in an economic downturn. In conjunction with Senator and former Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg, a member of the Think Long Committee, the Committee helped draft Senate Bill 1445, a measure that would modernize the tax system with Mexico, with states in China and wherever we can find partners, because we know we have to do it all. From the bottom up, the top down and the collective effort of the world community to deal with the existential threat of climate change.

JERRY BROWN:
Acting on Climate Change From the Bottom Up

In California, we have emphasized in recent years building standards and appliance standards and a renewable energy goal. But now instead of just asking how many solar installations we have or how many wind installations or geothermal, we are putting the emphasis on our climate footprint. And as of today, California generates about 450 million tons and we’re going to reduce, by 2020, at least 25 million tons. And then in the next six months, we’re going to set a goal for 2030 that will be more ambitious, that will require more technology and will also require heightened political will.

I believe that from the bottom up, we can make real impact and we need to join together, not just other cities in America—we’re signing MOUs with Quebec and British Columbia, with Mexico, with states in China and wherever we can find partners, because we know we have to do it all. From the bottom up, the top down and the collective effort of the world community to deal with the existential threat of climate change.

NATHAN GARDELS:
A New State of Mind in California

For aspirational constituencies striving to reach the middle class the most important thing is an opportunity web and trampoline to boost their chances in life. Even though California has one of the most progressive tax structures in the nation, inequality is rising and dashing aspirational hopes. Something more is needed as USC Professor Edward Kleinbard has articulated and former assembly speaker, now senator, Bob Hertzberg, has sponsored in legislation, namely, a new philosophy of governance that focuses on the overall progressive outcome that can be achieved through modernizing the tax code and investing in infrastructure and public higher education—the key means of upward mobility. Such investments are inherently progressive in the distribution of their benefits and in the creation of new well-paying jobs.
The Berggruen Fellowship Program launched in the fall of 2015 with a cohort of 6 fellows at Stanford University’s Center for the Advanced Study of Behavioral Sciences (CASBS). The fellows, all of whom hold tenured faculty positions at other universities, hail from distinguished academic institutions both in the U.S. and abroad. Each one will research a topic related to one of the core themes of the program, including:

• The Future of Political Governance
• Sustainable Innovation
• Humans and Technology
• Harmony and Freedom
• Equality and Hierarchy

The Philosophy and Culture Center was launched in September 2015 with a mission to help bridge cultural divides, particularly between the East and the West and to foster the development of new ideas. In a fast-changing and increasingly multipolar world, there is an urgent need to understand cultures and develop new thinking and relate these insights to the pressing issues of our day.

The Center fulfills its mission through three main programs:
1. The Berggruen Fellowship Program
2. The Berggruen Philosophy Prize
3. The Berggruen Ideas Competition

It is said that what is least material most endures. Power changes hands, buildings crumble and people die. But ideas, paradigms, worldviews and narratives live on. They are perennial. Ideas shape the world by cultivating the soul, organizing the intellect and animating the will. In short, ideas matter.

At the same time, in our modern society ideas often have a hard time reaching across cultures and disciplines. In a rapidly globalizing yet increasingly fractured world, we aim to close the gap that has been widened by narrow views. It is with this summons in mind of closing the communication gap among cultures and disciplines that the new Berggruen Philosophy and Culture Center was initiated.
Peter Sloterdijk: Controversial Philosopher Says Man And Machine Will Fuse Into One Being

It is unforeseeable whether the hyper-cloud of the 21st century will end the regional immersion in institutionalized untruths that was typical of the 20th century. Nor do we know today whether the clear sky, or the cloud that covers it, is the information.

Anyone who uses the word “cloud” in the singular risks falling prey to mystification. At present, once more, there are several cloud systems, and what we once called the Cold War now returns as the war of clouds. One of the nasty surprises of the incipient 21st century is that the demons of propaganda have returned in a digitally updated form.

To counter the new empires of lie and perspectival distortion, a renewal of the idea of enlightenment is indispensable.

The fellowship is offered for up to two years and gives scholars the opportunity to study at distinguished academic institutions across the world. As of the fall of 2016, the program will have fellows at Stanford University, Harvard University, Oxford University, New York University, Tsinghua University and Peking University. The Center is also funding a study to identify what being human means in the age of artificial intelligence, at the Brain and Creativity Center of the University of Southern California, under the guidance of world-renowned neuroscientist Antonio Damasio.

The Berggruen Philosophy Prize will be awarded to a living thinker, scholar or leader whose ideas have influenced our beliefs and way of life. The recipient of the $1 million prize will be nominated by a broad group of academics and journalists invited to do so and selected by a nine-person jury.

The call for nominations for the first prize, which will be awarded in early December 2016, will begin in early February and close in late May of that year.

The Berggruen Ideas Competition is under development as of the printing of this publication, however, its intent is to identify ideas that will shape and shake our way of life in the 21st century and invest in their further development. The competition will cast a wide net to source new, foundational thinking for the modern era, and encourage applicants to develop plans to further develop, disseminate and implement these ideas. The first competition is tentatively scheduled to be held during the spring of 2017.

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“Unprecedented advances in the sciences and technology offer a new enlightenment and open the way for a flourishing humanity. And yet, the fragmentation of the social fabric worldwide, promise the very opposite. Philosophical reflection may well help us navigate the developing storm.” ANTONIO DAMASIO, Distinguished Professor of Neuroscience and Director, Brain and Creativity Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
To achieve its aim, The WorldPost strives for a global viewpoint looking around, not a national standpoint looking out. Though we are an up-to-the-minute news site with correspondents in Beijing and Istanbul, what distinguishes us above all are the first person global voices of our global contributors, which range from the likes of Chinese President Xi Jinping or tech-entrepreneur Elon Musk and cellist Yo-Yo Ma to Iranian students in Tehran or a young Spaniard looking for work. On any given day, you will find datelines from our bloggers from Tunis, Jakarta, Berlin, Paris, Athens, Cairo, Tokyo, Shanghai, Mexico City or New Delhi.

In the 2015 Global Thought Leaders survey we conducted with the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Zurich, The WorldPost/HuffPost rated as a top platform for the global circulation of ideas, along with The New York Times and The Guardian.

It is often said that the Internet is a global thinking circuit. It is global, and it is a circuit. But it is not thinking. The WorldPost mission is to foster such a connected consciousness for our wired planet.

NATHAN GARDELS
Editor-in-Chief, The WorldPost

THE CONTEXT

The WorldPost was born out of a contradiction and a paradox. The contradiction is that, while the world is growing more interdependent, the media is fragmenting. It is de-globalizing, re-nationalizing, re-localizing and even tribalizing. The paradox, therefore, is that the information age is becoming the age of non-communication across boundaries – political, cultural and ideological.

THE WORLDPOST

The aim of The WorldPost is to help bridge this growing chasm by becoming a platform where the whole world meets, a common zone where the cross-pollination of ideas and perspectives from all corners of planet can take place. The WorldPost – a partnership with the world’s largest on-line publication, The Huffington Post – launched in Davos, Switzerland in January 2014.

THE WORLDPOST EXCERPTS

The following excerpts from The WorldPost blogs over the past two years demonstrate the quality and breadth of its contributors and its mission as a platform WHERE THE WHOLE WORLD MEETS.

OUR WORK


JOHANNESBURG - “Because of Mandela that was the best of times for us, to come out of the apartheid. But now we’ve had many disappointments and the most troubling one is the corruption: the politicians getting greedy and looking after their own comfort, security and luxury, in many cases with public money. It’s as simple as that. You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. This must obviously include your neighbor generation. It has to include absolutely everyone who will live on the Earth after us.

AMIRAH YAHYAOUI: Five Years After the Revolution, Tunisia is Sliding Back to the Past

TUNIS - When dictatorships fall, the political vacuum that ensues is quickly filled by political activists from the anti-dictatorship opposition. Unfortunately, what these figures have in legitimacy they lack in competency and experience. They are unable to take on the task of reforming the state. As a result, a counter-revolutionary discourse emerges almost organically: “it was better before.”

What we desperately need now from Enrique Peña Nieto is a new deal that can be summed up in two words: honesty and justice.

NADINE GORDIMER: The Post-Mandela Disillusion

Johannesburg - “The argument that strong countries are bound to seek hegemony does not apply to China,” Xi posited. “This is not in the DNA of the country given its long historical and cultural background.” He even offered this surprising historical reference to Sparta and Athens: “We all need to work together to avoid the Thucydides trap – destructive tensions between an emerging power and established powers, or between established powers themselves.”

ARTYOM LUKIN: Why Russia and China Won’t Curb North Korea Anymore than the U.S. Will Curb Saudi Arabia

VLADIVOSTOK - Just like Beijing, Moscow is exasperated about Pyongyang’s nuclear tests, but at the same time it does not want to see the North being annexed by the pro-American South. Moreover, Russia and North Korea currently share intense anti-Americanism, which makes them allies of sorts. And the DPRK was one of the few governments that openly supported Moscow on the Ukraine issue.

SHASHI THAROOR: Why India’s Intolerance Problem Is Hurting Its Global Reputation

NEW DELHI - The Indian adventure is that of human beings of different ethnicities and religions, languages and beliefs, working together under the same roof, dreaming the same dreams. The behavior of the Hindutva extremists, however, has opened the door to critics to suggest that it is safer in India to be a cow than a Muslim.

RAY KURZWEIL: In The 2030s, Nanobots In Our Brains Will Make Us ‘Godlike’

Kurzweil believes that being connected to computers will make us more human, more unique and even godlike. “Evolution creates structures and patterns that over time are more complicated, more knowledgeable, more creative, more capable of expressing higher sentiments, like being loving,” he said. “It’s moving in the direction of qualities that God is described as having without limit.”

“So as we evolve, we become closer to God. Evolution is a spiritual process. There is beauty and love and creativity and intelligence in the world – it all comes from the neocortex. So we’re going to expand the brain’s neocortex and become more godlike.”

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Nations Like Persons Have Many Identities

ISTANBUL - One of the most important things we have learned in modern times—and even before that as reflected in post-Renaissance literature from Shakespeare to Dostoyevsky—is that we are not made up of one quality, one color or one idea. The individual is simultaneously made of multiple traits. Our rationality and desires are often in contradiction and play out in complex, not always transparent ways. My understanding of my characters is in this sense Dostoyevskian.

Many of the characters in my novels over the years are upper class, secular Turks. They may have a European outlook and want to join the European Union, but at the same time also believe in the power of the army to make a military coup and will follow an authoritarian leader. Even as they aspire to European values, they also still want to be wrapped in the comforts of traditional ethics, morality and religion. So you can’t label something “modern” or “traditional.”

Even as they aspire to European values, they also still want to be wrapped in the comforts of traditional ethics, morality and religion. So you can’t label something “modern” or “traditional.” They bleed into each other.

What makes human beings interesting is that they continue to hold contradictory ideas together at the same time, and that is what constitutes the individual character. Nations are complex, not always transparent ways. Our rationality and desires are often in contradiction and play out in complex, not always transparent ways. My understanding of my characters is in this sense Dostoyevskian.

What is most important is that, as with individuals, you can’t look out onto the international scene and say this country is “good” and that country is “bad.” The good and the bad go together.

How To Be Alone In Our Techno-Consumer Culture

JONATHAN FRANZEN:

What I saw coming already in the 1990s with the first wave of techno-utopianism—when the Internet was supposed to bring world peace and the free exchange of ideas—was that, inevitably, it was going to become commercialized. That is exactly what has happened. The Internet and social media have been co-opted into selling.

One of the consequences is that the world of consumerism, of selling and selling yourself, has worked its way ever more deeply into the minute by minute fabric of daily life.

Everything becomes data. You can’t go to a bar with friends without that becoming “data” about you, the bar, and what you’re drinking, which then finds its way into someone’s marketing scheme.

That’s the dominant paradigm now. What’s amazing about this paradigm is that it’s managed to persuade the people who buy into it that they’re somehow rebelling against the dominant paradigm.

Innovations That Will Change Your Life

ELON MUSK:

“From an evolutionary standpoint, human consciousness has not been around very long. A little light just went on after four and a half billion years. How often does that happen? Maybe it is quite rare. In fact, it would appear to be quite rare. Or, others out there with a consciousness are very good at hiding. If it is such a rare thing, then we should do whatever we can to ensure its long-term survival.”

KISHORE MAHBUBANI:

Why Singapore is the World’s Most Successful Society

SINGAPORE - So why did Singapore succeed so comprehensively?

The simple answer is exceptional leadership. Many in the world have heard of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the founding prime minister who passed away in March this year. Fewer have heard of Dr. Goh Keng Swee, the architect of Singapore’s economic miracle, and Mr. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore’s philosopher par excellence. Together, they made a great team.

This exceptional team also implemented three exceptional policies: Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty. Meritocracy means a country picks its best citizens, not the relatives of the ruling class, to run a country. Pragmatism means that a country does not try to reinvent the wheel. As Dr. Goh Keng Swee would say to me, “Kishore, no matter what problem Singapore encounters, somebody, somewhere, has solved it. Let us copy the solution and adapt it to Singapore.” Copying best practices is something any country can do. However, implementing “Honesty” is the hardest thing to do. Corruption is the single biggest reason why most Third World countries have failed. The greatest strength of Singapore’s founding fathers was that they were ruthlessly honest. It also helped that they were exceptionally shrewd and cunning.

How To Be Alone In Our Techno-Consumer Culture

CRAIG VENTER:

A New Phase Of Evolution

Biological evolution has taken 3.5 or 4 billion years to get us where we are. The adaption of our species to the social environment—social evolution—has been much faster. Now that we can read and write the genetic code, put it in digital form and translate it back into synthesized life, it will be possible to speed up biological evolution to the pace of social evolution.

On a theoretical basis, that gives us control over biological design. We can write DNA software, boot it up to a converter and create unlimited variations on biological life.

Behind the Cello

YO-YO MA:

“To be able to put oneself in another’s shoes without prejudice is an essential skill. Empathy comes when you understand something deeply through arts and literature and can thus make unexpected connections. These parallels help you closer to things that would otherwise seem far away. Empathy is the ultimate quality that acknowledges our identity as members of one human family.

Visionaries like Elon Musk have spoken of the Internet and the planetary reach of the media as a “global thinking circuit.” We need to be sure that this connecting circuit is about communication and not just information by fostering both empathetic and critical thinking.”
NATHAN GARDELS:
The World’s Most Influential Voices of 2015

In 2015, The WorldPost and the Zürich-based Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute (GDI) joined together to publish the Global Thought Leaders Index, a “collective intelligence” analysis that maps the global conversation on the Internet and ranks its most influential voices. For the first time, the annual index measured not only the globally-dominant English language infosphere, but also the other main language infospheres of Spanish and Chinese, as well as German.

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In Spanish, Fidel Castro and Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa top the list, with Mexican poet Octavio Paz at #3, Chinese writer Mo Yan at #4, Edward Snowden at #5 and cellist Yo-Yo Ma at #6. Other top influencers of note include former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis at #7, Swiss writer Beatrice Dalle at #8, and journalist Gabor Concio at #9. The English-language influence rankings for the Chinese-language “outside” the mainland in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the diaspora indicate an influence pattern similar to the top “global layer” in the other language spheres.

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In English, Pope Francis, former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis and American author J.K. Rowling top the list, followed by Chinese writer Mo Yan and Edward Snowden at #2. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma and Cuban political dissident Yoani Sánchez are also in the top ten.The map and the territory

The map of the global conversation is as interesting as the intellectual territory it covers. YouTube is by far the global giant when it comes to platforms that spread ideas. Thoughts are far more widely cast through Twitter than through the more closed, narrowly cast “friend” connections of Facebook. The WorldPost/Huffington Post, including the 15 international HuffPost editions, also emerges as a top platform for the global circulation of ideas, along with The New York Times and The Guardian. The WorldPost, a 2-year-old partnership with the Berggruen Institute, serves as the HuffPost’s global portal. The Spanish daily newspaper, El País, ranks as the major platform in the Spanish-speaking world.

Observations

In the German and Spanish language areas, a layer of common global voices dominates at the top of the list, overlapping with the English-language global rankings, while voices not generally known beyond language borders concentrate in the bottom half of the rankings. This reflects the more or less free flow of ideas across the Internet. The Chinese analysis indicates a situation in which there is “one language, two infospheres.” Rankings for the Chinese language “outside” the mainland in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the diaspora indicate an influence pattern similar to the top “global layer” in the other language spheres.

But “inside” China, using the Baidu Index of the more than 740 million web pages to which the search engine has access, the rankings are markedly different, with few non-Chinese voices. The Internet as a ‘Global Thinking Circuit’

The aim of The WorldPost is to establish a global platform for the cross-pollination of ideas beyond borders, a place where the whole world meets. Partnering with the highly regarded Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Zürich to chart the currents and map the virtual territory of the infosphere is a key step in making the Internet a truly “global thinking circuit” instead of just a worldwide series of dots that don’t connect. The message can catch up with the medium if we put our minds to it.
For decades, liberal democracy has been extolled as the best system of governance to have emerged out of the long experience of history. Today, such a confident assertion is far from self-evident. Democracy, in crisis across the West, must prove itself. This timely volume is both a conceptual and a practical guide of impressive scope to the challenges of good governance as the world continues to undergo profound transformation in the coming decades.

SELECTED AS ONE OF THE FINANCIAL TIMES BEST BOOKS OF 2012
“A fascinating book (and) a powerful sign of the times”
– Financial Times

Praise for Intelligent Governance
A brilliantly insightful and provocative book on the central issue of our time: effective governance. Democracies and autocratic systems are both at risk of failure on a broad front. Berggruen and Gardels courageously invite us and the next generation to tackle this problem head on, with humility and open minds.

MICHAEL SPENCE, Nobel laureate, Chairman of the World Bank Commission on Growth and Development, and author of ‘The Next Convergence’
Do we have something to learn from China’s political experience? The authors breach the taboo and say yes, imagining a political system that combines accountability and meritocracy and sketching an emergent globalization that could reenergize multilateralism. Truly a thought-provoking book.

PASCAL LAMY, former Director General of the World Trade Organization
Drawing on precepts and practices from both West and East, Berggruen and Gardels provide a thoughtful and attention-grabbing view on what constitutes “intelligent governance”. Required reading for anyone reflecting on how best to deal with the multiplying challenges faced by all our societies.

ZHANG WEIWEI, author of ‘The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State’

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