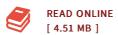# Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice

By Bent Flyvbjerg

University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 304 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.0in. x 0.8in.Its like the story of Little Town, an influential actor says in Rationality and Power when choosing a metaphor to describe how he manipulated rationality to gain power, The bell ringer . . . has to set the church clock. So he calls the telephone exchange and asks what time it is, and the telephone operator looks out the window towards the church clock and says, Its five oclock. Good, says the bell ringer, then my clock is correct. In the Enlightenment tradition, rationality is considered well-defined, independent of context; we know what rationality is, and its meaning is constant across time and space. Bent Flyvbjerg shows that rationality is context-dependent and that the crucial context is determined bydecision-makers power. Power blurs the dividing line between rationality and rationalization. The result is a rationality that is often as imaginary as the time in Little Town, yet with very real social and environmental consequences. Flyvbjerg takes us behind the scenes to uncover the real politicsand realrationalityof policy-making, administration, and planning in an internationallyacclaimed project for environmental improvement, auto traffic reduction, land use, and urban renewal. The action...

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