Rational Foundations of Democratic Politics

Democracy is widely accepted today as the most suitable form of government. But what is democracy, and does it always produce good government? Democracy is often associated with the existence of competitive elections. But theory and experience suggest that these are not sufficient for democracy to function reasonably well. In this book, a number of experts from North America and Europe use a rational choice approach to understand the foundations of democracy – what makes democracy successful, and why. They consider diverse problems of democratic governance such as the importance of morals or virtue in political life, negative advertising, the role of social capital and civil society in sustaining democracy, the constitutional and cultural prerequisites of democracy, and the interaction of democracy and markets.

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# Contents

List of Contributors                       page vii

1 Introduction                           1
   *Albert Breton, Gianluigi Galeotti, Pierre Salmon, and Ronald Wintrobe*

## PART ONE  SOME PROBLEMS WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND TRENDS IN THEIR EVOLUTION

2 Demobilized and Demoralized: Negative Ads and Loosening Bonds  15
   *Michael C. Munger*

3 Turning “Citizens” into “Consumers”: Economic Growth and the Level of Public Discourse  30
   *Stergios Skaperdas*

4 Economic and Cultural Prerequisites for Democracy  44
   *Roger D. Congleton*

5 Civil Society and the Contemporary Social Order  68
   *Frédérique Chaumont-Chancelier*

## PART TWO  MORALS IN POLITICS

6 When Does Altruism Overcome the Intransitivity of Income Redistribution?  93
   *Donald Wittman*

7 Democratic Resilience and the Necessity of Virtue  101
   *Alan Hamlin*

## PART THREE  SOCIAL CAPITAL

8 The Optimal Level of Solidarity  125
   *Ronald Wintrobe*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Bonds of Democratic Politics – An Economic Perspective</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stefan Voigt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART FOUR</strong> THE ROLE OF CONSTITUTIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Voting Rules: A Constitutional Quandary</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gianluigi Galeotti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Citizens’ Sovereignty, Constitutional Commitments, and Renegotiation:</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Original versus Continuing Agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viktor J. Vanberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Constitutional Rules and Competitive Politics: Their Effects</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on Secessionism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Albert Breton and Pierre Salmon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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