DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS

Can we design institutions that increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process? At a time when there is growing disillusionment with the institutions of advanced industrial democracies, there is also increasing interest in new ways of involving citizens in the political decisions that affect their lives. This book draws together evidence from a variety of democratic innovations from around the world, including participatory budgeting in Brazil, Citizens’ Assemblies on Electoral Reform in Canada, direct legislation in California and Switzerland and emerging experiments in e-democracy. The book offers a rare systematic analysis of this diverse range of democratic innovations, drawing lessons for the future development of both democratic theory and practice.

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Social scientists have rediscovered institutions. They have been increasingly concerned with the myriad ways in which social and political institutions shape the patterns of individual interactions which produce social phenomena. They are equally concerned with the ways in which those institutions emerge from such interactions.

This series is devoted to the exploration of the more normative aspects of these issues. What makes one set of institutions better than another? How, if at all, might we move from the less desirable set of institutions to a more desirable set? Alongside the questions of what institutions we would design, if we were designing them afresh, are pragmatic questions of how we can best get from here to there: from our present institutions to new revitalised ones.

Theories of institutional design is insistently multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, both in the institutions on which it focuses, and in the methodologies used to study them. There are interesting sociological questions to be asked about legal institutions, interesting legal questions to be asked about economic institutions, and interesting social, economic, and legal questions to be asked about political institutions. By juxtaposing these approaches in print, this series aims to enrich normative discourse surrounding important issues of designing and redesigning, shaping and reshaping the social, political, and economic institutions of contemporary society.

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DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS

Designing institutions for citizen participation

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University of Southampton
To my parents
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