This book examines whether mechanisms of accountability characteristic of democratic systems are sufficient to induce the representatives to act in the best interest of the represented. The first part of the volume focuses on the role of elections, distinguishing different ways in which they may cause representation. The second part is devoted to the role of checks and balances, between the government and the parliament as well as between the government and the bureaucracy. The contributors to this volume, all leading scholars in the fields of American and comparative politics and political theory, address a variety of questions. Do elections induce governments to act in the interest of citizens? Are politicians in democracies accountable to voters in future elections? If so, does accountability induce politicians to represent citizens? Does accountability limit or enhance the scope of action of governments? Are governments that violate campaign mandates representative? Overall, the essays combine theoretical discussions, game-theoretic models, case studies, and statistical analyses, within a shared analytical approach and a standardized terminology. The empirical material is drawn from the well-established democracies as well as from new democracies.

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Cambridge Studies in the Theory of Democracy

General Editor
ADAM PRZEWORSKI New York University

“It is not current politics but democracy as a form of government that I seek to describe,” James Bryce wrote in 1921. The goal of this series is to reinvigorate theoretical reflection about democracy by exposing it to the full range of historical experiences under which democracies have flourished or floundered. Our ambition is to understand what makes democracies work and endure. How do they promote normatively desirable and politically desired objectives, and how do they peacefully handle crises that occur when such objectives are not being fulfilled? We intend to ignore artificial divisions among different approaches, by drawing simultaneously on classical political theory, modern analytical methods, and comparative empirical research. We hope that our conclusions not only will offer some guidance for countries that are still in the process of developing democratic institutions, but also will provide a means of understanding the deficiencies of the well-established democratic systems.

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