

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02539-4 - Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale

Edited by John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge

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DELIBERATIVE SYSTEMS

'Deliberative democracy' is often dismissed as a set of small-scale, academic experiments. This volume seeks to demonstrate how the deliberative ideal can work as a theory of democracy on a larger scale. It provides a new way of thinking about democratic engagement across the spectrum of political action, from towns and villages to nation states, and from local networks to transnational, even global systems. Written by a team of the world's leading deliberative theorists, *Deliberative Systems* explains the principles of this new approach, which seeks ways of ensuring that a division of deliberative labour in a system nonetheless meets both deliberative and democratic norms. Rather than simply elaborating the theory, the contributors examine the problems of implementation in a real world of competing norms, competing institutions, and competing powerful interests. This pioneering book will inspire an exciting new phase of deliberative research, both theoretical and empirical.

JOHN PARKINSON is Associate Professor of Public Policy in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick.

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Preface

This volume began at a conference called *Democracy and the Deliberative Society*, held at the King's Manor, University of York, in June 2009. Supported by grants from the British Academy, and the University of York's Research Priming and Distinguished Visitors Funds, the plan was to bring together a mix of political theorists, philosophers, public policy scholars, empirical political scientists, and practitioners to explore an emerging 'macro' emphasis in deliberative democracy: the idea that deliberative democracy is as much a theory about how democratic societies work at the large scale as a set of blueprints for the design of relatively small-scale institutions.

In the event, it was one of those conferences that academics dream of. The atmosphere was one of intellectual generosity, fun, and goodwill, and that was due not only to the commitment of the invited participants but to an active, spirited audience as well. The sun shone, the debates were lively, friendships were made, and the conversation flowed.

We therefore want to begin by thanking everyone who made the York conference such a success, especially Matthew Festenstein who was one of the instigators along with John Parkinson, and Alex Bavister-Gould who conducted a literature review that gave the project a strong foundation. Behind the scenes Tom Flynn contributed both intellectually and organizationally. That everything eventually went so smoothly was largely due to the cheerful unflappability of Judith Pink.

The paper givers were superb, and while this particular volume has focused on a selection of the most theoretical papers, we want to acknowledge the important contributions made by other colleagues both during the conference and afterwards. Those others, who could not participate in this volume for a variety of reasons, include John Dryzek, Sophie

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PREFACE

Duchesne, Florence Haegel, Maarten Hajer, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, Christian List, Aletta Norval, Graham Smith, and Wytse Versteeg.

Following the conference, ideas for a book germinated for a while, until finally a proposal went to Cambridge University Press. Bob Goodin, Series Editor, was extremely generous with time and criticism, and the eventual shape of the volume and the substance of the chapters owes much to his care and attention. We also thank the anonymous referees whose comments proved invaluable in the sometimes extensive redrafting process. Some chapters are completely new, but all are much revised and much stronger as a result. John Haslam has been a supportive and enthusiastic Commissioning Editor throughout.

In between first submission and final acceptance of the proposal, a second weekend conference was held at Harvard University in December 2010 to deepen the opening theoretical statement. We thank the Ash Center for Democratic Innovation at the Kennedy School of Government for hosting and sponsoring the workshop, Bruce Jackman for administrative support, and Hollie Russon Gilman and Adriane Gelpi for assistance during the meetings. Most of the contributors to that conference have become co-authors of the introduction, and we thank them all for their enthusiastic participation. We are also grateful to David Estlund for his phone-in contributions to the first session.

Finally, we would like to thank very much those others who have helped with long discussions or quick observations over the last two years, including Selen Armityan, André Bächtiger, John Dryzek, Andrew Knops, Gerry Mackie, Simon Niemeyer, Espen Olsen, and Stefan Rummens.

So, a cast of thousands (well, dozens), in several forums over two years: a deliberative system in action.

John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge

I would also like to thank Jane Mansbridge for all that she has done on this project. She gave generously of her time to graduate students in York, did interviews, organized the Harvard conference, and steered the collaborative writing of the introduction, all through some very busy times. It would not have come together as it has without you, Jenny. Thank you.

John Parkinson