



Indeterminacy and Society

Russell Hardin

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In simple action theory, when people choose between courses of action, they know what the outcome will be. When an individual is making a choice "against nature," such as switching on a light, that assumption may hold true. But in strategic interaction outcomes, indeterminacy is pervasive and often intractable. Whether one is choosing for oneself or making a choice about a policy matter, it is usually possible only to make a guess about the outcome, one based on anticipating what other actors will do. In this book Russell Hardin asserts, in his characteristically clear and uncompromising prose, "Indeterminacy in contexts of strategic interaction . . . Is an issue that is constantly swept under the rug because it is often disruptive to pristine social theory. But the theory is fake: the indeterminacy is real."

In the course of the book, Hardin thus outlines the various ways in which theorists from Hobbes to Rawls have gone wrong in denying or ignoring indeterminacy, and suggests how social theories would be enhanced--and how certain problems could be resolved effectively or successfully--if they assumed from the beginning that indeterminacy was the normal state of affairs, not the exception. Representing a bold challenge to widely held theoretical assumptions and habits of thought, *Indeterminacy and Society* will be debated across a range of fields including politics, law, philosophy, economics, and business management.

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