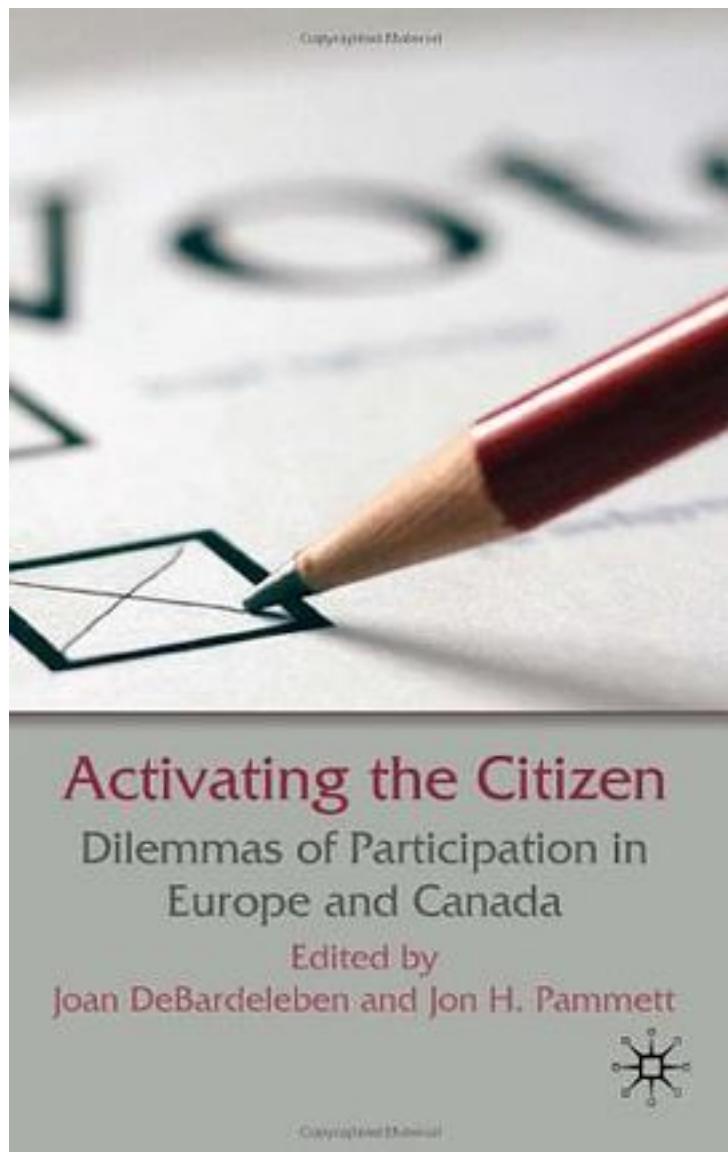


Activating the Citizen



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A real or potential 'democratic deficit' is haunting established democracies. Declining levels of citizen participation affect the ballot box, political party membership, and other forms of civic activism. So disturbing are these trends that governments themselves have undertaken assertive mobilization campaigns and institutional reforms to try to address them. Activating the Citizen not only examines the reasons underlying citizen withdrawal, but also explores and assesses innovative approaches on both sides of the Atlantic to try to counter these phenomena. Bringing together research by Canadian and European scholars, this volume considers proactive approaches such as changing political party leadership selection practices, new forms of civic education to engage youth, direct citizen participation through Citizens' Assemblies and referendums, and the construction of issues so as to elicit responses in the name of 'good citizenship'. All of these political measures are designed to 'activate the citizen'.

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