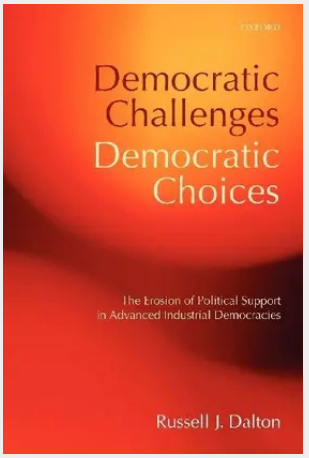
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Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices

The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies



Most democratic citizens today are distrustful of politicians, political parties, and political institutions. Where once democracies expected an allegiant public, citizens now question the very pillars of representative democracy. Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices documents the erosion of political support in virtually all advanced industrial democracies. Assembling an unprecedented array of cross-national public opinion data, this study traces the current challenges to democracy primary to changing citizen values and rising expectations. These critical citizens are concentrated among the young, the better educated, and the politically sophisticated. At the same time, the evidence debunks claims that such trends are a function of scandals, poor performance, and other government failures. Changing public are born from the successful social modernization of these nations. A creedal passion for democracy is sweeping across the Western democracies, and people now expect more of their governments. This study concludes by examining the consequences of these changing images of government. The author finds that these expectations are making governing more difficult, but also fueling demands for political reform. The choices that democracies make in response to these challenges may lead to a further expansion of the democratic process and a new relationship between citizens and their government

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