Weakliem

Public Opinion

Is political polarization on the rise? Do various “populist” movements have anything in common? Is the opposition between left and right becoming obsolete and, if so, what might replace it? Many of the most pressing questions about contemporary politics involve public opinion. This incisive sociological introduction considers the formation of opinions as not just a matter of individual responses to external conditions, but as a social process in which people influence and are in turn influenced by others. David L. Weakliem illustrates how changes in economic and social conditions affect public opinion and how the distribution of opinions is shaped by the structure of interaction among people. He applies this approach to discuss topics such as political polarization, long-term trends in public opinion, and the prospects for democracy. Combining theory with up-to-date information on public opinion, the book will be of interest to researchers and students alike in sociology, political science, and communication studies.

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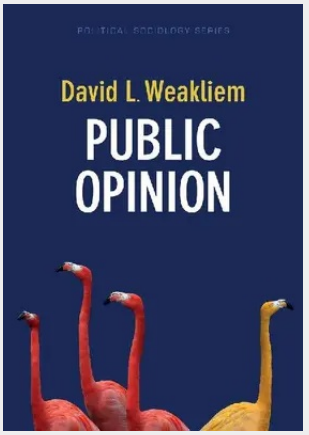

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