

The Voice Of The People Public Opinion And Democracy

Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa PANDIT DEENDAYAL

UPADHYAYA Report of the Annual Lake Mohonk Conference on International

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this book is a groundbreaking exploration of public opinion in sub saharan africa based on the afrobarometer a survey research project it reveals what ordinary africans think about democracy and market reforms subjects on which almost nothing is otherwise known the authors find that support for democracy in africa is wide but shallow and that africans feel trapped between state and market while africans are learning about reform on the basis of knowledge reasoning and experience few countries are likely to attain full fledged democracies and markets anytime soon

pandit deendayal upadhyaya was an acolyte of indian culture he occupies a place of pride

among the builders of modern india he worked for awakening a slumbering society and was always in the forefront of every mass movement

in this pathbreaking work the author integrates questions of justice and stability through a model of deliberative democracy in the plural polity deliberative democracy and the plural polity provides a realistic but critical reform agenda that can animate struggles for justice in an enormously diverse world

this reader contains selections representing opposing points of view on a variety of issues organized around a central theme the text ties each debate on a specific topic in american politics to a larger issue the meaning and improvement of american democracy

philosopher and political scientist james fishkin evaluates modern democratic practices explains how the voice of the people has struggled to make itself heard in the past and combines a review of ideas and experiments including his own idea for a national issues convention that was adapted by pbs in january 1996 to legitimately rediscover the people s voice

since so few people appear knowledgeable about public affairs one might question whether collective policy preferences revealed in opinion surveys accurately convey the distribution of voices and interests in a society this study the first comprehensive treatment of the relationship between knowledge representation and political equality in opinion surveys suggests some surprising answers knowledge does matter and the way it is distributed in society can cause collective preferences to reflect disproportionately the opinions of some groups more than others sometimes collective preferences seem to represent something like the will of the people but frequently they do not sometimes they rigidly enforce political equality in the expression of political viewpoints but often they do not the primary culprit is not any inherent shortcoming in the methods of survey research rather it is the limited degree of knowledge held by ordinary citizens about public affairs accounting for these factors can help survey researchers journalists politicians and concerned citizens better appreciate the pitfalls and possibilities for using opinion polls to represent the people s voice

despite the enthusiasm surrounding the colour revolutions and the arab spring the world s share of democracies has stagnated over the past 15 years the steady rise of china russia and iran has also led to warnings of a resurgence of authoritarian great powers especially in light of the financial crisis centred in the usa and western europe on the positive side however democracy remains remarkably popular as an ideal in the global barometer s most recent survey two out of three respondents say democracy is their most favoured political system including a majority in 49 of the 55 countries yet there is evidence much expanded upon in this edited collection that commitments to liberal democracy in practice are not as strong nominally pro democratic citizens frequently favour limitations on electoral

accountability and individual rights in the service of improved governance or economic growth further there are rising concerns that many citizens especially across the developing world are turning away from democracy out of frustration with democratic performance in contrast to many transitional regimes the more established democracies appear to be losing support among their highly educated citizens the contributions in this edited collection compare how democracy is understood and experienced in transitioning regimes and established democracies this book was published as a special issue of the journal of elections public opinion and parties

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