



## **Information, Participation, and Choice: An Economic Theory of Democracy in Perspective**

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Anthony Downs's *An Economic Theory of Democracy* is one of the handful of books that reshaped political science in the post-World War II period. *Information, Participation, and Choice* traces the influence of Downs's ideas on subsequent research on voters, candidates, and parties in the United States and elsewhere. Since their publication in 1957, Downs's seminal ideas -- tweedledum and tweedledee politics and the "rationality" of political ignorance and nonparticipation on the part of voters--have shaped an ongoing debate about how politics actually work. The debate pits a public-choice model inspired by microeconomic precepts against a traditional textbook model that presumes a responsible, informed, and civic-minded citizenry and a set of elected officials motivated by concern for the public interest and policy convictions.

The essays comprising *Information, Participation, and Choice*, by leading political scientists and economists, provide both a summary of Downs's key theoretical insights and an empirical examination of how well models inspired by Downs accurately describe U.S. political competition for Congress and the presidency.

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