



## Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government

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Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government analyses a series of interrelated questions. The first two are diagnostic: how far are there legitimate grounds for concern about public support for democracy world-wide? Are trends towards growing cynicism evident in the United States evident in many established and newer democracies? The second concern is analytical: what are the main political, economic, and cultural factors driving the dynamics of support for democratic government? The final questions are prescriptive: what are the consequences of this analysis and what are the implications for strengthening democratic governance?

This book has brought together a distinguished group of international scholars who develop a global analysis of these issues that looks at trends in established and newer democracies as we approach the end of the twentieth century. It also presents the first results of the 1995-7 World Values Study as well as drawing on an extensive range of comparative empirical evidence.

Challenging the conventional wisdom, this original and stimulating book concludes that accounts of a democratic 'crisis' are greatly exaggerated. By the mid-1990s most citizens world-wide shared widespread aspirations to the ideals and principles of democratic government. At the same time there remains a marked gap between evaluations of the ideal and the practice of democracy. The public in many newer democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and in Latin America proved deeply critical of the performance of their governing regimes. And in many established democracies the 1980s saw a decline in public confidence in the core institutions of representative democracy including parliaments, the legal system, and political parties. The book considers the causes and consequences of the development of critical citizens. It will prove invaluable for those interested in comparative politics, public opinion, and the dynamics of the democratization process.

## ADVANCE PRAISE

'The great democratic paradox of the 1990s is that it has simultaneously been the decade of democratization and the decade of growing distrust of democratic institutions. This volume admirably dissects the complex and multi-dimensional background of these conflicting trends, and presents a judicious evaluation of the grounds of optimism and pessimism—in which, fortunately, the former prevails.' AREND LIJPHART, University of California San Diego

'Critical Citizens is the most comprehensive collection of comparative work on confidence in government and sources of public support for democracy. I strongly recommend it.' SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET, George Mason University

'Pippa Norris and her colleagues examine claims and counter-claims about the erosion of public confidence in democracy, describe the depth and dynamics of trust in government, and lay out a broad and differentiated approach to the phenomenon. They sort out the rather high degree of support for democracy from widespread uneasiness with the workings of institutions and with the behaviour of politicians. Their book is must reading for survey researchers and comparative students of democracy alike.' SIDNEY TARROW, Cornell University

'This is the most impressive comparative study of how citizens in contemporary democracies relate to their

governments. In an age of expanding democratic institutions around the globe, the authors of Critical Citizens capture the reader's interest and provide a masterful update on one of the critical issues of our time.' CHRISTOPHER J. ANDERSON, Binghamton University (SUNY)

`It is the Civic Culture study 40 years later . . . Critical Citizens is a landmark comparative study of trends in attitudes toward nation, government regime, political institutions, and leaders, in some forty regionally well-distributed countries, bringing together the research of a cross-national team of social scientists, led by Pippa Norris of the Harvard Kennedy School....

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