

**DEMOCRACY  
FOR  
REALISTS**

*Why Elections Do Not Produce  
Responsive Government*

**CHRISTOPHER H. ACHEN  
LARRY M. BARTELS**

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS  
PRINCETON AND OXFORD

# Contents

*List of Illustrations ix*

*Preface xiii*

## CHAPTER ONE

Democratic Ideals and Realities I

## CHAPTER TWO

The Elusive Mandate: Elections and the Mirage of Popular Control 21

## CHAPTER THREE

Tumbling Down into a Democratical Republic:  
"Pure Democracy" and the Pitfalls of Popular Control 52

## CHAPTER FOUR

A Rational God of Vengeance and of Reward?  
The Logic of Retrospective Accountability 90

## CHAPTER FIVE

Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to  
Droughts, Floods, and Shark Attacks 116

## CHAPTER SIX

Musical Chairs: Economic Voting and the Specious Present 146

## CHAPTER SEVEN

A Chicken in Every Pot: Ideology and Retrospection  
in the Great Depression 177

## CHAPTER EIGHT

The Very Basis of Reasons: Groups, Social Identities,  
and Political Psychology 213

*Contents*

**CHAPTER NINE**

Partisan Hearts and Spleens: Social Identities and Political Change 232

**CHAPTER TEN**

It Feels Like We're Thinking: The Rationalizing Voter 267

**CHAPTER ELEVEN**

Groups and Power: Toward a Realist Theory of Democracy 297

**APPENDIX**

Retrospective Voting as Selection and Sanctioning 329

*References* 335

*Index* 371