

# **From Micro to Macro?**

Department of Political Science and Government  
Aarhus University

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1 Context

2 Exercise

3 Readings

# **“Classical” Democratic Theory**

- Dahl
- Berelson

# Bernard Berelson

- Lived 1912–1979
- President of AAPOR 1951–1952
- Democracy requires:
  - Civic character
  - Interest and participation
- Competent voting requires:
  - Information and knowledge
  - Principle (i.e., stable views)

# Scott Althaus

- Everything Berelson said was made up
- i.e., there is no “classical democratic theory”

# Skepticism of Public Competence

- Citizens as political outsiders
- Ignorance
- Opinion instability
- Lack of political engagement
- Lack of political trust and tolerance
- Elitism and majority tyranny

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# Public Opinion in Aggregate

- Page and Shapiro
  - “Miracle of aggregation”
  - Change is meaningful
- MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson
  - Macropartisanship
  - Policy Mood

# Writing and Discussion Exercise

- Read a statement on the slides
- Count off 1 and 2
  - 1 Defend
  - 2 Challenge
- Write for 5 minutes

## Short Writing Exercise

*Many citizens do not vote. Many citizens do not pay attention to politics and thus know very little. Many citizens do not have opinions. Many citizens make up opinions when asked, meaning their views are unstable over-time. If many citizens fail to have coherent opinions (or opinions at all), then there is no such thing as an aggregate “public opinion.” It is a phantom. It does not exist.*

# Writing and Discussion Exercise

- Form into “Defend” and “Challenge” groups
- Discuss:
  - Your strongest arguments
  - Your greatest weaknesses
- Come together for a debate

# This week's readings

- Gilens
- Page and Shapiro
- Druckman and Leeper



