

charge that was well documented in 1994 and led to pressure within the country and from the United States for new elections. In August 1994 Balaguer pledged to hold new elections within two years (instead of four years) and not to be a candidate.

The constitution of the Dominican Republic was prepared under Balaguer in 1966. It is one of the few remaining in the world that permits unlimited presidential reelection while granting extensive powers to the president, powers that have often been extended de facto. The president, senators, deputies, mayors, and members of municipal councils are elected for four-year terms. In 1992 the Chamber of Deputies had 120 members elected by proportional representation, with a single list drawn up by each party. The Senate had thirty members, one for each province. The Dominican Republic lacks civil-service legislation, and as a result government patronage and jobs play a major role in elections. Both the judiciary and the Central Electoral Board, which oversees elections, have been politicized, a situation that has fueled allegations of irregularities in every election since 1966. In addition, there has been the reality of fraud and attempted fraud in several elections.

With debt crisis, the collapse of world sugar markets, and the challenges of economic globalization, the Dominican Republic has been involved in a painful economic transition. It is seeking to diversify its economy principally by expansion of export assembly manufacturing in free trade zones, tourism, new agricultural exports, and mining. These activities highlight the country's continuing vulnerability to international economic forces. They have further weakened an already fragmented labor movement, challenging the social bases of democracy in the country.

The major political challenge for the Dominican Republic will be to construct reliable electoral institutions to minimize fraud, to enact constitutional and electoral measures that limit presidential powers while encouraging constructive executive-legislative relations, and to reaccommodate the party system as Bosch (who retired from party leadership after the 1994 elections) and Balaguer pass from the scene. From 1978 to 1990 the party system tended toward fragmentation as the PLD gained in strength and the PRD lost voters and divided. In 1994, however, the PLD lost voter sympathy in the split between Balaguer and Peña Gómez. Over the rest of the decade, shifting alliances will determine whether party fragmentation will reemerge. At the same time the nation must re-

form the state to make it more effective and must also address the basic needs of its population.

See also *Caribbean, Spanish; Central America; Dictatorship; Military rule and transition to democracy*.

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Downs, Anthony

American economist best known to students of democratic theory for his seminal work *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Downs (1930–) wrote the book as his doctoral dissertation in economics at Stanford University. After completing the dissertation, he shifted his research interests to public administration and public policy. He has made many significant contributions to those fields, having written or coauthored fourteen more books and hundreds of articles on topics such as housing policy, transportation economics, urban development, and the politics of bureaucracy. In later years Downs returned to democratic theory.

Downs realized that politicians (and parties) want primarily to be elected and thus need to construct policy platforms that correspond to voters' preferences. In *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), he introduced a simple model of political party competition. This model helped to make sense of several features of American political campaigns that previous sociological and social-psychological approaches had missed almost entirely because they saw voters' choices as rooted in party loyalty and group identity. In Downs's model of party behavior, there are strong incentives for parties to offer the same policies—that is, for tweedledum-tweedledee politics.

An Economic Theory of Democracy also helped to inspire a reevaluation of the civics textbook model of democracy, which was common through the 1950s. The ideas he developed about rational ignorance and the rationality of not voting have become indispensable components of any discussion of citizenship, even among those who find these ideas abhorrent to a "strong" concept of participatory democracy.

Downs's work makes other contributions that are not familiar to many students of the subject. These include the notion of ideology as a shorthand way of summarizing policy views, party labels as voting cues, and the feasibility of putting together a winning coalition based on single-issue voting blocs.

Although Downs was inspired by ideas about competition drawn from earlier economists, including Joseph Schumpeter, Arthur Smithies, and Harold Hotelling, his application of economic ideas to the analysis of political competition is a distinctive creative synthesis. Many elements of *An Economic Theory of Democracy*—for example, his ideas on the implications of information costs and uncertainty—are original. The book is one of the founding works in public choice theory. Of all the work in the field, it has had the greatest influence in political science: Downs popularized the notion of modeling political actors in rational choice terms.

The Downsian model of two-party competition is based on the axiom of self-interest—that is, on victory-oriented political parties and candidates. In addition to the fundamental assumption that the context is democratic politics, Downs makes nine other main assumptions. First, there are only two political parties. Second, elections take place within a single constituency. Third, there is a single election to choose a single candidate, and that election is decided by a plurality vote. Fourth, policies



Anthony Downs

can be located along a single (left-right) dimension. Fifth, candidates' policy positions are well defined. Sixth, each voter estimates the candidates' policy positions for the next election and votes for the candidate or party that can be expected to enact policies that are closest to the voter's own position. Seventh, parties and candidates care only about winning; so they formulate policies to win elections, not for other reasons. Eighth, each candidate is part of a unified party team. And ninth, eligible voters go to the polls if the expected benefits of their vote's contribution to the election of their preferred candidate exceed the "costs" of voting.

This simple model gives rise to a prediction that candidates' policies will converge to the preference of the median voter. Also, in this simplified model, elections can be

expected to be decided by relatively narrow margins (because candidates are nearly identical in their only relevant attribute—policy preference). In actuality, on many of the most important issues that divide the nation, parties and candidates in the United States simply do not look alike, and many seats are won by lopsided margins.

Yet it is a mistake to characterize Downs entirely by his prediction of convergence to the median voter in two-party competition. Downs offers a sophisticated discussion of factors that affect competitiveness and the relative divergence of party platforms. He considers multiple issue dimensions, intense single-issue minority publics, and the role of performance evaluations. He also looks at multi-party competition.

As a classic work, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* suffers from being forever cited but rarely read. Even the notion of Downsian modeling that is presented in the literature is often a caricature of Downs's rich insights into politics. As a consequence of the all too frequent trivializing or esotericizing of its message, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* is not recognized as the major contribution to political theory that it is. Many of those who acknowledge Downs as a democratic theorist do so only to reject what he has to say as fundamentally erroneous.

An Economic Theory of Democracy has led a generation of public choice scholars on a long quest to rethink Downs's ideas and the assumptions of his modeling in order to match them better to empirical realities. There is no single rational choice model of party competition or of voting turnout; there are only rational choice models. Downs himself regards the book as an exercise in the power of deductive modeling from a few simple axioms. It was never intended to be the last word. Moreover, even when the work is wrong, it is wrong in fundamentally useful ways. It raises deceptively simple but absolutely central questions about political behavior that had not previously been recognized as such—for example, "When will parties diverge?" and "Why do people bother to vote when their vote is almost certain not to matter?"

See also *Participation, Political; Rational choice theory; Schumpeter, Joseph*.

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Duverger, Maurice

French political scientist, sociologist, and constitutional lawyer known for his studies of electoral systems. Born in Angoulême, Duverger (1917–) was professor of political sociology at the University of Paris from 1955 to 1985.

In his book *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, first published in English in 1954, he set forth what has come to be known as "Duverger's law": the electoral system of plurality winners in single-member districts (in which the candidate who wins the most votes gains the seat) favors a two-party system. Duverger also noted, in what some scholars have dubbed "Duverger's hypothesis," that proportional representation and the two-ballot, majority runoff system tend to be associated with more than two parties. Together, the law and hypothesis may be called "Duverger's rule," a statement of the relationship between the number of seats per electoral district and the number of "effective" (major) parties.

Duverger discussed two effects that favored the relationship noted by the law linking plurality electoral systems with two-party systems. The first is the mechanical effect: the underrepresentation of minor national parties, which are unable to win pluralities in more than a small number of districts. The second is the psychological effect: the tendency of voters to avoid "wasting" their votes on parties that cannot win a seat. Voters who might have preferred a smaller party have the incentive to vote instead for one of the two largest parties, as these have a realistic chance of winning in single-seat districts. This process of voting for less favored, but electable, candidates has come to be known as *strategic voting* in the political science literature.

Duverger indicated that when the electoral system is a proportional representation system, neither the mechanical nor the psychological effect works against the ability of smaller parties to win seats. Electoral systems based on proportional representation use multimember districts.