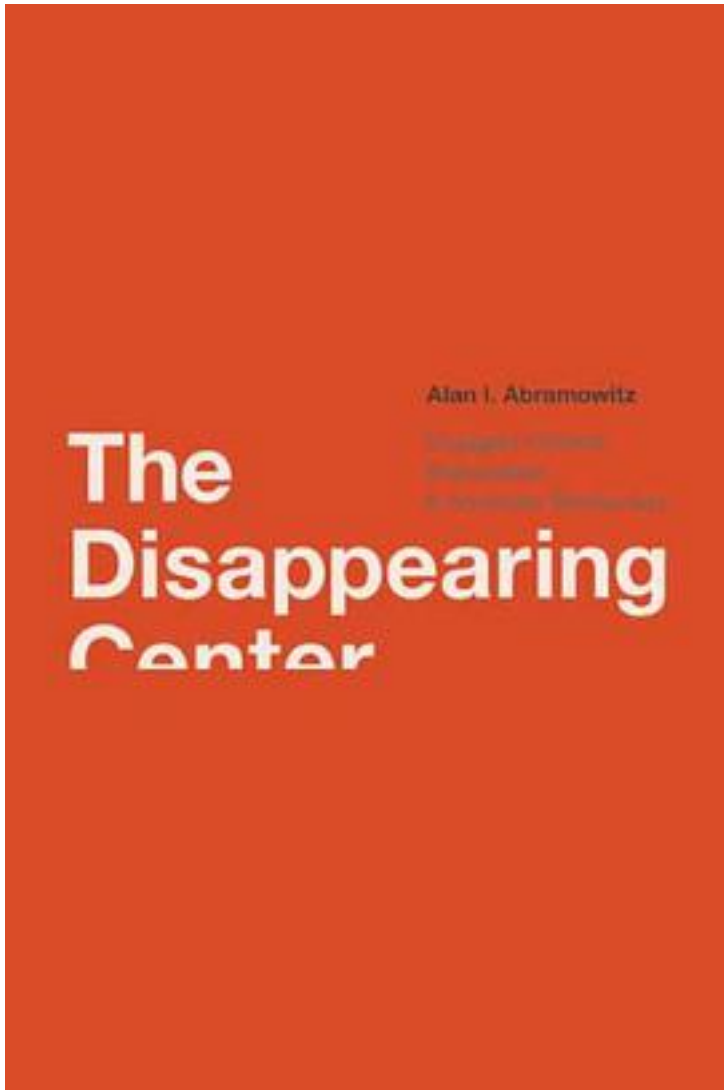


The Disappearing Center



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出版者:Yale University Press

出版时间:2010-5-4

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780300141627

While many Americans worry over the rise of partisan politics, Emory University political science professor Abramowitz (Voice of the People) finds reason to celebrate: the increasing ideological divide, he argues, has engaged more people while making the stakes in elections more clear, resulting in dramatically higher voter turnout (the 2008 election had the highest turnout "in more than four decades") and a populace that's more politically involved-whether campaigning directly, speaking with friends, contributing money or simply putting up yard signs. Statistics show that the "proportion of pure independents in the electorate has been declining since 1970"; party loyalty today is based not on social group identification (as in FDR's "New Deal Coalition") but ideological beliefs, creating more disciplined Republican and Democratic voting blocs. Abramowitz admits that this can become paralyzing in U.S. democracy (as opposed to parliamentary democracies) when the executive and legislative branches are controlled by different parties, making bipartisan cooperation not just unlikely, but politically damaging, and giving those few moderates who remain outsized importance. Abramowitz bolsters his thought-provoking conclusions with 67 tables and charts.

作者介绍:

Alan I. Abramowitz is the Alben W. Barkley Professor of Political Science at Emory University.

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