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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Tables and Figures -- Preface -- 1. Rational Public Opinion -- 2. The Myth of Capricious Change -- 3. Opinions about Social Issues -- 4. Economic Welfare -- 5. Foreign Policy: World War II and the Cold War -- 6. Vietnam, Detente, and the New Cold War -- 7. Parallel Publics -- 8. The Causes of Collective Opinion Change -- 9. Education and Manipulation of Public Opinion -- 10. Democracy, Information, and the Rational Public -- Appendix to Figures -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	This monumental study is a comprehensive critical survey of the policy preferences of the American public, and will be the definitive work on American public opinion for some time to come. Drawing on an enormous body of public opinion data, Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro provide the richest available portrait of the political views of Americans, from the 1930's to 1990. They not only cover all types of domestic and foreign policy issues, but also consider how opinions vary by age, gender, race, region, and the like. The authors unequivocally demonstrate that, notwithstanding fluctuations in the opinions of individuals, collective public opinion is remarkably coherent: it reflects

a stable system of values shared by the majority of Americans and it responds sensitively to new events, arguments, and information reported in the mass media. While documenting some alarming case of manipulation, Page and Shapiro solidly establish the soundness and value of collective political opinion. The Rational Public provides a wealth of information about what we as a nation have wanted from government, how we have changed our minds over the years, and why. For anyone interested in the short- and long-term trends in Americans' policy preferences, or eager to learn what Americans have thought about issues ranging from racial equality to the MX missile, welfare to abortion, this book offers by far the most sophisticated and detailed treatment available.

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