

Part 9: Misconceptions About Democracy

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<u>The Mainstream View (Wrong)</u>	<u>The Truth</u>
We <u>elect</u> the <u>politicians</u> that we <u>like</u> .	We <u>fire</u> the <u>parties</u> that we <u>dislike</u> .
In the United States, we have two major parties: Democrat and Republican. We also have third parties (such as libertarian).	In <u>every</u> sane democracy, there are only two parties: <u>Ruling</u> , and <u>Opposition</u> .
Parties are bad. George Washington said he would rather go to hell than join a party. Parties are an unfortunate side-effect, of the way we count votes (first past the post). A necessary evil, that we tolerate.	A party is the <u>natural unit</u> of government Only a <u>party</u> can <u>credibly replace the government</u> – parties are <u>uniquely</u> equipped with the: size, reputation, standing, experience, and skills required to actually run the country.
Parties are <u>static</u> . For example, the Democratic party “is” both the pro-LGBT party and the race-conscious party.	Parties are <u>dynamic</u> . Their <u>platforms</u> change each 4-year cycle. For example, Obama-2008 ran on “marriage between one-man-one-woman”. In stark contrast to modern D-party. (And, by 2016, Trump was saying “Caitlyn Jenner can use any bathroom in Trump Tower”.) Republicans were originally the “party of Lincoln” – and Southern Democrats were overtly racist, and KKK-allies. Today it is the reverse (if anything). Trump-2016 smashed up the traditional Republican party, and formed something new – something unlike the Bush/Romney party.
Parties represent <u>destinations</u> . For example, “Republican” stands for: states rights, low taxes, patriotism, family values, “republic” etc. “Democrat” stands for: unions, pro-choice, regulation, “democracy”, etc.	Parties represent <u>directions</u> – like steering a car to the left or the right. The name “Republican” is arbitrary. Re-naming it [to “red” or “hot” or “Colgate”] or anything else, would make no difference. The historical name, is mainly relevant to historians only. Parties do not stand for anything static – nor should they.
Voters use <u>philosophical introspection</u> to decide which party to <u>join</u> . More or less permanently.	On an ongoing basis, both parties are making <u>mistakes</u> – (untenable statements or actions) – and these errors drive voters <u>out</u> of their party (into the rival party). Temporarily.

<p><u>Picking the right leader</u> is important – if we have a bad leader, they will ruin the country.</p>	<p>The government's performance <u>at any given single moment</u>, is less important than <u>a process</u> of ongoing accountability and improvement.</p>
<p>"You can't trust any politicians! They're all liars!"</p> <p>and/or the reverse: "Now that he's in charge, we have to rally behind him (and trust him extra)."</p> <p>And/or this cop-out: "Well, the world is a complex place – he was going to close Guantanamo / build the wall, but he couldn't because of <u>(excuse)</u>."</p>	<p>We <u>can</u> trust a party, because they have a brand that outlives any individual member. Parties have something at stake (something very big)!</p> <p>We <u>can</u> and <u>should</u> punish a party, for not keeping its promises. This includes punishing politicians who had nothing to do with the original mistake(s).</p> <p>The more <u>spiteful</u> and <u>unforgiving</u> we are, the better we will be treated, in the long run. High expectations = Accountability = Justice = Performance = Prosperity.</p>
<p>To improve Democracy, we should put more choices on the ballot!</p> <p>More elections = more measurement of the "will of the people".</p>	<p>To improve Democracy, we should <u>remove</u> choices until we are down to just <u>one</u>: thumbs up, or thumbs down.</p> <p>Many "secondary" elections [such a primaries] are akin to a 2nd pair of eyeglasses – mostly <u>interfering</u> with the 1st pair. A 2nd election ruins democracy – it does not enhance it.</p>
<p>Voters are so ignorant! Alas!</p> <p>75% of people, cannot name <u>any</u> of their senators or representatives. And -- only 1 in 3, can name their state governor... it is regrettable that voters are so ignorant!!</p>	<p>The individual Senators and Representatives (and their names) are irrelevant, compared to <u>parties</u> – so it is quite logical for busy voters to ignore such minutiae. Instead, voters must know how the two parties differ (on the issues that affect them). This is exactly what Voters <u>do</u> know.</p> <p>Toothpaste consumers do not understand the chemical engineering that goes into toothpaste manufacture – nor should they. The price of the toothpaste, and relevant differentiation from the competing toothpaste – these can be printed on the box.</p> <p>In politics, a minority of specialist researchers can/will/should research the issues, and reveal their findings [indirectly through betting markets, or to campaign strategists directly].</p>
<p>It is unfortunate that people are so tribal. Most just see the "R" or "D", and then automatically agree or disagree! Can't they think for themselves?! What partisan hacks!</p>	<p>The <u>brand</u> (ie, Republican / Democrat), is the optimal vehicle for accountability. A given politician might be a dupe, or a fall guy – it is too difficult to hold them accountable.</p>
<p>Primaries (and Referendums – P/Rs) are good! They give the voter <u>more control</u> over parties and the issues.</p>	<p>P/Rs are dangerous and counterproductive, creating conflicts of interest for no benefit.</p> <p>Either the ruling party <u>agrees</u> with the result, or it <u>doesn't</u>. In the first case, P/Rs are superfluous; in the latter case, we are asking the ruling party to do something they don't want to do.</p>

	<p>It would be morally wrong to put the KKK in charge of protecting black people's rights. In the same way, it is unwise to ask a party to implement referendums that they do not agree with.</p> <p>When "intent" is separated from "implementation", it inevitably leads [1] to slow implementation, and [2] illegitimacy of the whole govt (ie, Brexit 2016 and California Prop 8 2008). "The only thing worse than having a referendum, is having one and not implementing the result." – D Deutsch. Both of those referenda were <u>very</u> close, suggesting near-indifference of the public on the decision.</p> <p>P/Rs are almost always plagued by low voter turnout – [Trump-2016 nominate via 5% of the popular vote, and overconfident Brexit-Remain-ers staying home]. And ...why should turnout be high? One decision is a triviality – on a given day, the ruling party makes 10,000 decisions. Voters cannot be in the business of micromanaging every single government decision – that's what the government is for.</p> <p>"Unbundling" is always counterproductive –(referenda "unbundle" policies; and primaries "unbundle" candidates). Each govt policy must be traded off against the others they are doing. Similarly, for candidates – a primary victory must be traded off against an Election Day defeat.</p>
<p>The party that comes in 2nd place is just some loser party, no different than the party that comes in 3rd.</p>	<p>The 2nd place party is sacred – it should be given a special title: The Opposition Party. It is our best source of <u>criticisms of the Ruling Party</u>. Fear of criticism is what motivates the government to behave well. The health of the 2nd place party is <u>how short a leash</u> the 1st party is on. So, while the 1st place party has a [temporary] monopoly on running the country, the 2nd place party has a [temporary] monopoly on <u>replacing the Ruling party</u>. We [citizens] have special rights, in dealing with this monopoly – to whom we are vulnerable.</p>
<p>The parties have the right to govern their own affairs. They should be free, to make their own decisions. (After all, who would rightfully interfere with them? Certainly not the rival party.) If they screw up (and lose an election) – that's on them!</p> <p>Fear of losing, will keep the party in line!</p> <p>When a candidate loses an election, their party undergoes an internal</p>	<p>These parties <u>are</u> the government. Party corruption is government corruption. We need to whip them into shape!</p> <p>Losing an election [to a flawed candidate] doesn't just harm the losers -- we <u>are all deprived</u> of our one viable choice; we are all deprived of healthy competition.</p> <p>We need our parties to compete "against each other on the right things in the right ways for the right reasons". If they do anything else, then that is corruption.</p> <p>Laziness of one party gives the other a "long leash". Thus the</p>

reform, in order to improve for next time – this is as good as we can hope to expect.	<p>parties can mutually corrupt each other. Party corruption is government corruption – we should take it personally.</p> <p>If a party is sick, it must face both internal criticism and external discipline. After all – without external discipline, there is insufficient reason to be self-critical. Unless the party can be “destroyed from without”, it will not proactively critique itself from within.</p> <p>When a party loses an election, their self-reflection and internal reform is weak – “Nanci Pelosi won an 8th term as Speaker of the House in Nov 2016, despite having led Democrats to four successive electoral defeats”. This is <u>collusion</u> and <u>corruption</u>, by the back door.</p>
A 3 rd party can’t break in – and this is regrettable. We should make life easier for 3 rd parties! More choice!	We should formally ban all 3 rd parties – ie, make them illegal.
A two-party system is weak – because we only have two options! What do we do, if both choices are bad?	<p>The two-party system is strong, because it <u>unifies</u> all <u>opposition to the government</u> onto one team – maximizing the threat it poses to the Ruling Party.</p> <p>If neither of the two parties wants your vote – it is because your demands are unreasonable.</p>
Since there are only two parties, we are vulnerable to <u>collusion</u> – that’s why we need more choice!	The proper way to deal with <u>collusion</u> of the two parties, is to ensure that at least one party <u>suffers</u> and is <u>destroyed</u> each cycle. Thus, they are natural rivals (and if they somehow did collude, it could only last one cycle). Threat of destruction <u>motivates</u> each party to present a distinct, compelling, realistic vision – every election, every time.
It is my God-given right to vote for whoever I want – I can write in any name I wish!	It is your God-given right to <u>argue</u> and <u>convince others</u> to join you in either [1] <u>supporting</u> the current government or [2] overthrowing it [and installing the opposition].
The leader of the party, and the presidential candidate should be the same person.	<p>The best “candidate-picker” is not necessarily also the best candidate. This would be like making HR the CEO, or making the casting director the lead actor, or making a baseball talent scout an MLB player.</p> <p>The candidate-picker is often corrupt, and “picks” themselves – even if they know, that they aren’t the optimal candidate (ie, the candidate who is most likely to win).</p>
<u>Hiring the right person</u> , is the important part, because “president” is an important job, and we want to put the right person in there!	<u>Firing people</u> , is the important part, because our willingness to fire our leaders (and replace them with new people), is what keeps them in line – <u>firing means accountability</u> .
Parties should be accountable (to the voter), via <u>processes</u> such as	Parties should be accountable <u>to the outcome</u> -- of winning the general election.

primaries (and other pre-election-day votes).	Pre-election-day votes (primaries) are counterproductive, since the voter is not a specialist on how to win elections. Instead, they should have the same status as polls or surveys.
The important choice, is the single choice made on election day – this steers the country.	99.9999% of the governing choices will be made at other times. First, before the election, when the candidate and platform are chosen. Second, after the election, when the government is actually running the country.
The “instant” of election day, only affects what happens <u>after</u> election day. How could it be otherwise?	The election day event, should “strike backwards” through time, it should punish the people who led us to this point. Fear (of this accountability/justice) should <u>preemptively</u> affect parties and their platform-making.
Paradoxes (such as <u>Condorcet Paradox</u> , or the Nobel-Prize Winning <u>Arrow’s Impossibility Theorem</u>) prove mathematically that the “problem of public choice” has no solution. We must lower our expectations, and resign ourselves to everlasting, inescapable frustration.	These paradoxes do not apply when there are only 2 choices. (Specifically, the <u>independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA) axiom</u> can be violated.) This has been intuitively obvious to the layperson for centuries. Each party “argmax”es their <u>platform</u> , because this helps them the win the general election, and take power.
It is bad for Kamala Harris (for example) to have been chosen as candidate “undemocratically”.	“Voting” is what happens on election day. An individual Party’s pre-campaign is something else entirely. There is no reason for them to resemble each other. That would be like a chef ordering food in the restaurant in which he works. It was bad to allow Biden to choose the candidate [first – himself, and second Kamala], with no oversight. It was bad, because Biden could not be punished for choosing poorly.
How could anyone vote for Biden-2020?? He was much too old, even back then! [etc]	The president (qua human) is irrelevant – it is the <u>party</u> who was elected.
If you can win in the primaries, then you’d probably make a great candidate.	Winning a few primary elections, merely demonstrates some modicum of election-winning talent – it <u>may</u> foretell greatness as a candidate; or it may not.
The European “Proportional Representation” (PR) style of democracy, gives the voter more choice, and more power -- by allowing for more parties. PR is <u>good</u> , because the relevant issue is: how many seats does my favorite party have in Congress? (ie, representation)	PR makes it very difficult to fire bad politicians, and bad parties – greatly increasing their laziness and corruption. PR makes it difficult to tell (on election day) which post-election “coalition” will form, and what it will do. PR is <u>bad</u> , because the relevant issue is: how much suffering and despair will today’s politicians feel, if they go on to lose on election day?
The campaign is important – the highlight of the four-year cycle.	The pre-election campaign is a mopping-up operation – the real “campaign” is running all the time. Parties constantly

<p>The “eternal campaign” is a bad thing – these poor politicians, always “dialing for dollars”, when they should be governing.</p>	<p>“advertise” to protect their brand – CNN, Fox, Joe Rogan, etc. All throughout the four year cycle.</p> <p>The fear of ad spending is misplaced. Ads only work if they are effective – thanks to the internet, it may be possible to “advertise” cheaply (so-called “earned media”). It is better to have popular ideas and good communication, and good responsiveness to feedback.</p> <p>“Dialing for dollars” may be just a grift – collecting money from gullible people (tale as old as time); and scamming gullible Congresspeople into laboring for it. It may also be a side-effect of the fact that only parties have power (not Congresspeople).</p>
<p>Presidents should be good <u>compromisers</u>, and good at working with other people.</p> <p>It is crazy (and undemocratic) for Trump to replace the whole Republican party with his family, friends, and loyalists.</p>	<p><u>Before the election</u>, a President must appeal to many people, but <u>after getting the job</u>, they should resemble a CEO.</p> <p>It is rational for the CEO to choose his entire staff. If you don’t trust someone, you shouldn’t hire them. Presidential candidates should, in fact, <u>also</u> choose everyone running for Congress in their party -- and they should all be subordinate to him.</p>

Quoted passages, are either from Beginning of Infinity (Deutsch) or Responsible Parties (Shapiro).

This table highlights the differences between **competitive feedback** in **free markets** (on the left), and **winner-take-all elections** (on the right).

<u>In CVS (in the free market)...</u>	<u>In Politics (in elections)...</u>
It is the <u>fear of not being chosen</u> that keeps sellers in line. Thus, each new choice <u>increases</u> that fear, spurring continuous self-improvement.	It is the <u>fear of not being chosen</u> that keeps the Ruling Party in line. However, because of split-the-vote “spoiler” logic (and the inevitability of the whole group wholly choosing one option), each new choice <u>decreases</u> that fear, putting corrupt Ruling parties at ease, furthering their self-corruption.
More choices = always better for <u>the consumer</u> .	More choices = good for <u>tyranny</u> , because it frustrates and divides the opposition.
You are free to ignore all the new choices, if you wish. (You can keep buying Crest, even if new toothpastes are invented.)	A new choice may be more popular with opposition voters, so you are <u>not</u> free to ignore it!
Other people’s choices, do <u>not affect</u> your outcome. (You can buy Crest if other people buy Colgate.)	Other people’s choices, <u>entirely determine</u> your two viable options. You can only affect the outcome at all, if you pre-restrict to these options.
In an ideal society, we make it as easy as possible to <u>introduce a new choice</u> – a new product/brand/option.	In an ideal society, we make it as easy as possible to <u>replace the current government</u> .
More entrepreneurs = more economic growth.	Stronger motivation to earn as many votes as possible = more political progress.