



Democracy More or Less: America's Political Reform Quandary (Cambridge Studies in Election Law and Democracy)

Bruce E. Cain

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Why do American political reform efforts so often fail to solve the problems they intend to fix? In this book, Bruce E. Cain argues that the reasons are an unrealistic civic ideal of a fully informed and engaged citizenry and a neglect of basic pluralist principles about political intermediaries. This book traces the tension between populist and pluralist approaches as it plays out in many seemingly distinct reform topics, such as voting administration, campaign finance, excessive partisanship, redistricting, and transparency and voter participation. It explains why political primaries have promoted partisan polarization, why voting rates are declining even as election opportunities increase, and why direct democracy is not really a grassroots tool. Cain offers a reform agenda that attempts to reconcile pluralist ideals with the realities of collective-action problems and resource disparities.

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