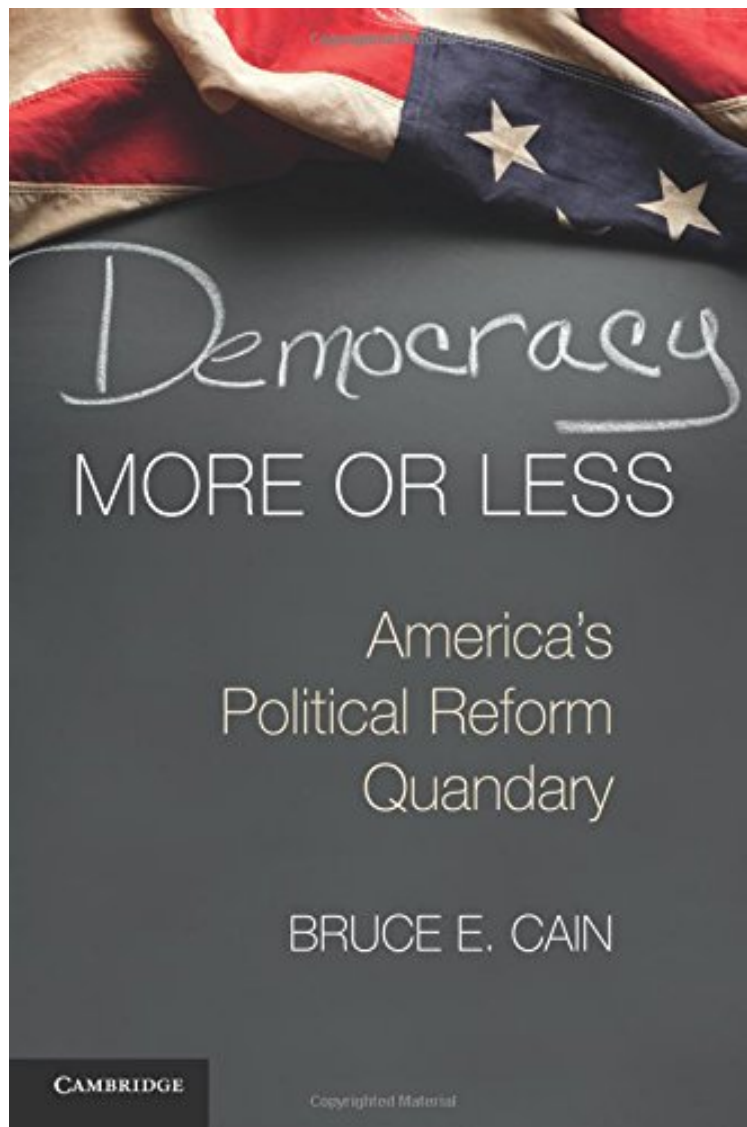


(Free pdf) Democracy More or Less: America's Political Reform Quandary (Cambridge Studies in Election Law and Democracy)

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Bruce E. Cain

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Bruce E. Cain : Democracy More or Less: America's Political Reform Quandary (Cambridge Studies in Election Law and Democracy) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democracy More or Less: America's Political Reform Quandary (Cambridge Studies in Election Law and Democracy):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. American Politics Are --- Complicated!By J. CordiProfessor Cain explained the density of this book -- "its really a textbook for my (Stanford) students". It is dense with information.He explained that if you read the introduction to each chapter you get the essence of the book -- as much philosophy as fact.I am finding it's not a quick read -- a couple of hours here and there -- I'll get through it eventually.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An interesting, important, and unique perspective on issues ...By Joshua TaubererAn interesting, important, and unique perspective on issues of democratic governance. I wasn't necessarily convinced, but one doesn't have to agree with the conclusions to find the book instructive.4 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Academic Smoke -- Disdain for the Public Denial Over Two-Party TyrannyBy Robert David STEELE VivasI spent some time reviewing the author's history (he's been writing about electoral matters since the 1970's) and what offers through its superb Inside the Book feature, as I am unemployed and between the book price and what charges for delivery today this would have been a \$40 commitment. My call: not worth it for the electoral reform activist, but useful as the nay-sayer summary for graduate level courses in politics.The book suffers three strikes:01 The author does not cite Theresa Amato's seminal work published in 2009, Grand Illusion: The Myth of Voter Choice in a Two-Party Tyranny. Since I had to run for President in 2012 to learn that we have eight accredited parties, six of which are blocked from ballot access by the two-party tyranny, this is my first clue that the author is running on old reading and not at all in touch with the latest critical commentary. He also does not cite John Barry's seminal book published in 1989 The Ambition and the Power: The Fall of Jim Wright: A True Story of Washington -- this is the book about Newt Gingrich turning the Members into foot-soldiers for the party, such that each party now sells Member votes as a bloc.02 The author does not cite Matt Taibbi's 2011 book Griftopia: A Story of Bankers, Politicians, and the Most Audacious Power Grab in American History -- in combination with the absence of other books focused on the criminal nature of the two-party tyranny and an examination of all that offers online, I have to conclude that the author is in denial about the criminal nature of our government today, and an apologist for the system entire.03 The author's disdain for the public is palpable and reprehensible. While I share with the author a sadness over the depth of the apathy of the 40% of the public that has fallen prey to the ignorant extremists of the two-party tyranny, I would point the author to another book he has not read, Paul Ray and Sherri Ruth Anderson's The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World; he might do well to also read Howard Zinn again (e.g. A Power Governments Cannot Suppress and Vaclav Havel's The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe. He's 40% right and completely clueless on the other 60%.This book strikes me as a superb example of tired academic writing divorced from the public interest and all too willing to overlook the criminal insanity of our government today. This book posits a "blended" solution intended to allow "the system" to carry on for just a bit longer. Our government today is unconstitutional, in violation of most international conventions and treaties, preying on its own public and enabling predatory capitalism against all of us while carrying out elective wars based on lies -- and in the face of all this, the author appears, in one word, complacent. Not good enough.Best wishes to all,Robert David STEELE VivasOpen Power: Electoral Reform Act of 2015 - Open Source Activist Tool-Kit

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.

"Everyone talks about the dysfunction of American politics, but very few people have practical or thought-through ideas on what to do about it. Bruce Cain has studied this topic extensively as a scholar and has first-hand experience in the cauldron of California's ongoing experiments in structural reform. In this book he explains the conceptual weakness in today's most popular reform proposals and offers a convincing alternative. I hope this book informs media, academic and public discussions of a way out of our political morass." James Fallows, National Correspondent, The Atlantic"Bruce Cain has written a remarkable, deeply insightful book about the American experience with political reform. His survey is wide-ranging, distinguishing throughout a populist vision of tight citizen control of government from a pluralist call to protect the role of interest groups, parties and other intermediaries in building coalitions and encouraging workable compromise. Campaign finance, redistricting, election administration, transparency and conflict-of-interest regulation are among the topics that receive careful attention, and Cain offers both keen criticism of policy failure and a fresh path forward. Scholars and policy-makers will be turning to this book for years to come." Bob Bauer, New York University School of Law and Co-Chair of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration"Democracy More or Less is a crowning achievement from one of the leading thinkers on election law and politics. Bruce Cain's must-read account of the failures of political reform efforts in the US should be

carefully studied by everyone who believes in easy solutions to the problem of money in politics, redistricting, polarization and representation. Cain's proposed solutions merit our attention and serious consideration." Rick Hasen, School of Law, University of California, Irvine "In this wide-ranging study Cain argues that reforms often fail because they reflect a misguided attempt to increase popular democracy. In his view the latter is like homeopathic medicine, taken in small amounts it may be helpful, but in larger amounts it is harmful." Morris Fiorina, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution "This is a book all sides of the political reform debate should read. Its fresh thinking and insightful analysis will probably fully please no side, but it will help all sides better understand the scope of the issues and what others are thinking." Benjamin L. Ginsberg, Attorney, Jones Day "Finally, a book on American democracy that challenges romantic, populist 'reform' naiveté and insists that serious and productive reform must instead take into account the way political power is actually constructed, mobilized and channeled - particularly through organizations, including political parties, that inevitably and desirably exist between the isolated citizen and effective political participation. Deceptively short and accessible, this book raises profound and necessary challenges to more conventional ways of thinking about the nature and fate of democracy in America." Rick Pildes, New York University School of Law

About the Author Bruce E. Cain is the Charles Louis Ducommun Professor of Humanities and Sciences in the Political Science Department at Stanford University, California, where he is also the director of the Bill Lane Center for the American West. In addition to publishing numerous scholarly works, he has also served as a consultant for state and local governments on constitutional and charter reform, campaign finance regulation, redistricting, and voting rights. He received the Zale Award for Outstanding Achievement in Policy Research and Public Service and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.