

# Review of: "[Commentary] An Alternative Polity"

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Author(s) suggest that government is hostile to citizens and that ministers appointed from the outside business world might be preferable to career bureaucrats. In addition, the suggestion is that the status quo is not working and something else is needed. These are suggestions that are likely to arouse interest. Author(s) seems to make assumptions that raise questions that need to be investigated further. For example, the following questions should be considered:

1. Are members of a party better qualified to represent the will of voters than party leaders? Will knowing the names of leaders help in voting decisions, or do people have a general sense of the ideology of the party and vote for those who seem supportive of them?
2. Is majority rule invalid if less than 50%? In the U.S., winners can get less than 50%. In Europe, coalitions form a majority. Does a more complex system with more choices of how much one likes or dislikes a candidate produce a better assessment than a binary choice? Especially in realigning periods, the will of the people is clearly expressed in binary choices.
3. Is it inevitable that politicians will break promises, but voters can ultimately decide who they want and can abandon parties? Is the influence of business inevitable in Western capitalist nations?
4. Is the U.S. system better when one votes for a single person? Is personality-based voting better than voting for party and platform?
5. If individual members vote in manners that differ from the party, is there a risk that bills will not be passed? If constituents favor an individual person's position, can't they vote their conscience without fear of losing their seat?
6. Is rule by highly educated ministers on a fixed term based on assumed competence preferable to a less elitist, more democratically responsive structure?
7. Do civil servants provide expertise? Can this expertise be lost if job security is denied? Should political leaders make decisions based on information? Are politicians not accountable to the people? Should a distinction be made between honest advice that may be wrong and purposely misleading leaders?

This opinion piece introduces interesting ideas for reform. How complexity in voting systems and new thinking about tenure of ministers can foster democracy should be laid out more clearly. The proposed tweaks at the margins do not seem to support the view that democracy is not working. More, however, might be said about the ability of those at the



very top to make policy with little transparency.