

Third Party Blues: The Truth and Consequences of Two-Party Dominance (Controversies in Electoral Democracy and Representation)

Scot Schraufnagel



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More than many areas of American politics research, studies of minor party competition and success are often overly driven by normative concerns that do not hold up to empirical scrutiny. This concise book presents a concerted effort to analyze the barriers in election law, such as ballot access restrictions and single member districts with a plurality rule, that prevent third parties from gaining a durable hold in American politics.

Rather than trudge through yet another history of third parties in America or polemical arguments for minor party inclusion, Schraufnagel provides empirical grounding for the claims of third party backers. This thoughtful analysis demonstrates that the inclusion of third parties improves electoral participation rates and that third party involvement in the legislative process is linked to landmark legislative productivity. In the end, the work provides thoughtful suggestions on the types of reforms that would lead to greater third party success in American elections.

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