

[Making the lesser of all evils even lesser](#) [1]

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We often hear that people are increasingly frustrated and apathetic about politics. However, many socialists believe in the 'democratisation' of institutions, particularly the economy, and even the Conservative party believes that democratising police forces will empower local people.

The problem is that with such widespread apathy, extremist or special interest groups are likely to take control of institutions and then reinforce their position there. For example, student union elections attract tiny turnouts resulting in active far-left groups being more likely to take control. It is no surprise that student politics is so left-wing: once socialists can call on activists to vote time and again, it is very difficult to take them on without trying impossibly to get the apathetic interested. Similarly, even the largest trade union Unite only attracted 16% turnout for its leadership elections.

But if democracy is the least worst form of government, what is the alternative? The answer is less government. In the cases of trade and student unions, the outcomes are fairly irrelevant in that people can always leave them if they are dissatisfied. It is easy to be apathetic: unless people are actively involved, it is much easier to influence outcomes by simply choosing to go elsewhere, by trying to campaign for specific changes, or by creating new institutions ourselves. The level of turnout to elections is therefore fairly irrelevant as people are not at all apathetic about society, being fully engaged in making individual decisions or organising those around them for campaigns and initiatives.

Government, however, is different. Campaigns to influence government decisions are necessarily about how to best spend other people's money. It is also notoriously hard to campaign for change, with the ability to create alternative services crowded out by the fact we already pay for public provision through taxation. We end up becoming disillusioned rather than apathetic, noticing that decisions can be taken at our expense without the ability to refuse or look for alternatives.

Therefore the solution is to return provision of services to the public, not by enforcing democratic structures, but by pulling back government's role and allowing us to experiment and innovate in any way we choose. This policy may be unpopular, but once it is done, it is the people who will be back in control.

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