

## The Political Compass, or why the US democracy isn't.

Written by Mitra Ardron

Monday, 30 August 2004 00:04

---



[Click for full-size](#)

As we approach US and Australian elections, its useful to look at the differences. As countries all over the world have shown, a multi-party system allows a much larger proportion of the population to feel that they have somebody in the government who represents them, and it usually requires a prospective leader to draw together a coalition among a number of different parties in order to form a government. They at least have to consider other points of views to avoid their voter base abandoning them to a third-party. Both the major parties in the US are afraid of such a system, because such a system would show, by the votes that would move to third parties, that they represented very few of the electorate, rather than the companies that have bought their election. As a result neither party, when in power, does anything to change a system which guarantees that a vote for a minor party won't even be counted for the purposes of determining the "least-worst" candidate. The work of Paul Ray's "[Political Compass](#)" ( [cached](#) ) is a useful reminder at this time of the election, that when you analyze the US public's views on different issues and that most people are essentially forced to choose between two parties, neither of which represent their views on most issues. In Australia, whether I agree with the result or not, we at least have a system where most people feel they have someone to vote for, and most people not only vote (its compulsory here) but consider the issues before doing so.