

Are We All Idiots

By Simon Pelletier

Politics is interesting because of the challenge of organizing people and society. Some folks think that the government will provide a solution and they advocate giving them money to fix the problem. Others believe individuals and businesses are more capable of solving problems, with the government's role being to facilitate their efforts in ways that benefit the greater whole.

Politics is boring because government has become sclerotic. There are strong economic players invested in the continued system of people and policies in the institutions. This makes real change very hard. For example, unions often protect government employees so effectively that a newly elected government faces significant challenges when trying to redesign or reorganize a department. Another example is suburban infrastructure. No government can pivot to urbanism without having to address all of the infrastructure challenges present in the suburbs that are baked into the system.

Politics also has a status element that attracts people. The allure of influence and recognition can drive someone to engage with it. But politics is also plagued by tribalism and ideological rigidity. Parties often coalesce around specific views on social and economic issues. If you don't adhere to the beliefs of the whole group, you can struggle within the party. This tribalism means you have to be loyal to the party's ideas, or you'll be cast out for being too independently minded.

Business might compel some more than politics because there is an unlimited potential for immediate and significant change if you can solve a problem that people have right now. Software exemplifies this as there are few roadblocks to implementing a solution compared to the physical world where planning and safety departments hold a compliance monopoly.

A significant hurdle with business is the intermittent nature of the income generated from a project. Early on you aren't guaranteed success and if you have bills to pay, as most do, it makes it hard to take the risk (time away from a regular job) necessary to find customers. An obvious solution to this would be to make the business experiment part of a hobby. Something that can be worked on in the evening and weekends.

And so I must decide if we prefer business or politics.

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