

What if politics is not a left / right spectrum? What t...

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I have, for rather more decades than I now wish to consider, viewed politics on the left / right spectrum that we are all told exists. That is all too easy when there continual references to that simple, linear perspective of what is suggested to be a political continuum.

But I do not think that spectrum is useful. It leads to linear thinking.

At the moment it is pushing the main parties to left and right when, if there is such a spectrum it is also said that it hides a normal distribution of political opinion, as if there is a golden mean.

That then implies that there is a middle ground that needs filling. The result is that we are offered Change UK, populated by people manifestly for the status quo, who no one seems much inspired by.

And at the same time some people seem surprised that there is significant support for the SNP, LibDems and Greens and go on to suggest that they must campaign with each other because they all think Brexit is wrong. The assumption would seem to be that they, along with Change UK, are simply 'in the middle' and that's enough to define a political position.

But of course it isn't. These parties have distinct, and separate offerings. They happen to agree on Remain. That's good. But it's only the belief that politics must exist in a spectrum that requires, in the opinion of some, that they campaign together when that might well be inappropriate.

What is wrong is not the politics of these parties. It is the model of politics that we have, which tries to place them on a single line between two other parties that the UK political system is rigged to favour.

But what if there was no line? Or at least what if there were positions above or below the line? What if some positions were closer to you? And others further away? What if we had 3D political imaging? Better still, 3D imaging capable of morphing with

time? Make it 4D.

What then? Because this is what we actually have. Even in Northern Ireland, where voting patterns are deeply embedded, [there are signs of change](#), but that's not necessarily to the middle. That change is to 'different'. And in the rest of the UK votes for the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Greens definitely fit that pattern. It would be good if one day I might again believe that of the LibDems too. Those parties are either not on the spectrum that is supposed to exist, or wish (and need) to get off it.

And that is good news, because we need politics nuanced by and to the reality of people's lives.

And we also need politics and politicians capable of seeing overlaps, commonalities and differences, and being honest about them, which the existing spectrum is not.

I can hope for change. But this is a change we can all make. We can refuse to see politics as a linear spectrum. We can reject two party hegemony as a result, even if we continue to support a party that has benefited from it. We can opt for non-tribal, negotiated, nuanced, representative democracy instead.

That is our choice.