

## Why does Labour prefer long years of opposition to almo...

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I had a discussion with Neal Lawson of Compass, and others, this week on the subject of proportional representation.

Many of the usual arguments were rehearsed, and I will not repeat them here.

I did, however, express my bafflement at Labour's position on this issue . It is Neal's view that the Labour leadership is sticking to first-past-the-post because they believe that, once in a while, they get the chance to form a government, and they are not willing to abandon that.

My position is that if only they abandoned that position then Labour would, most likely, be the leading party within an almost perpetual left of centre coalition that might form the government of the UK for a very long time to come, given the obvious political preferences of most people in this country. They could, in other words, be in power almost continuously, even if they would have to tolerate the presence of some ministers within their administration who came from smaller parties.

Rationally, you would expect anyone within the Labour leadership to opt for almost continuous power if that choice was available to them when the alternative is decades or more of opposition, during which periods there is virtually nothing that Labour can do to influence the way in which the UK is governed.

Why it is that Labour cannot see this, and why it is that Labour is not willing to compromise to achieve this outcome on behalf of its membership, who are in favour of it, and the wider interests of people in the UK as a whole, who also want this, is beyond my comprehension .

In fairness to Neal, he too cannot really understand why Labour holds its position. All that we know is that because of some old tribal belief they think that it is impossible for them to compromise with anyone in pursuit of power, even if doing so would be of benefit to the party, its leadership, and the country at large.

And if that insular and utterly self-centred illogicality does not worry you, it should.