

This country needs left wing politics

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Politics.co.uk was one of a [number of organisations](#) to note comments made by former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, last week, as they reported him saying during an interview with LBC:

On his reservations about a Farage-Conservative alliance, the former chancellor added: "I would have quite a lot of reservations... I'm verging on no. But I certainly would not vote for Reform."

"My politics is on the centre right, but the centre bit is as important as the right."

I think this needs unpacking, because Osborne may have been being deliberately profound, which is something I may have never credited him with before.

Osborne is doing what has rarely been done of late, which is to differentiate the right, the centre, and by implication, the left. By implication, he also makes a range of other things clear.

The first is that there is a spectrum of opinion in politics.

The second is that the extremes of the left and right are different from the moderate forms of both, and there need not even be an overlap in support for these varying forms of left and right within those wings of political thinking.

The third is that there is a centre.

The fourth is that the terms 'centre right' and 'centre left' describe members of the centre, and not members of the right and left, as such.

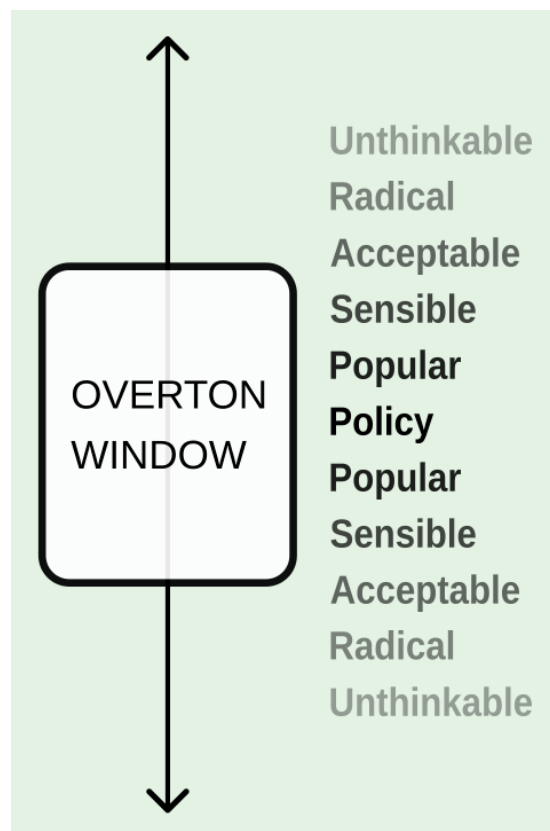
The fifth is that if there is a centre, it is most definitely different from being on the right or left.

And sixth, if there is a right and left, then it is not the same as being on the far-right or far-left.

In other words, presuming that left and right are meaningful terms (and the two-party system, and the idea that the choice is only between capitalism and socialism, which is in itself a sad indication of society to have developed new thinking to reflect the political realities of life as we now live it) there is a spectrum from:

- * Far right, and then to
- * The right
- * Centre right
- * Centre
- * Centre left
- * The left
- * Far left

The distinction is important. First, the term 'centre' recognises the [existence of the Overton Window](#), which it has been suggested might also look like this:



At the same time, by implication, Osborne implies here is a coalition that seeks to exclude opinion, of which coalition he is clearly a part, and which simply masquerades in left and right-wing forms.

What he also makes clear is that he thinks the terms 'right' and 'left' are not that useful as they do not indicate transferability i.e. it cannot be assumed a person on the 'centre right' will support a person on the 'far right', because the term 'centre' matters more to them, meaning, in other words, that they would rather maintain the status quo than risk change.

But I also think, and this might be important, that this clears space for there to be a left and right as political spaces that are quite distinct from the centre left or centre right, as well as the far left and far right.

In other words, there is a space for policy difference, which has essentially ceased to exist in the centre, whatever further description has been given to it, but where it is possible to promote ideas that are politically plausible alternatives to the status quo, but which are not extreme, as are the far-left and far-right.

As far as I can tell, there is nothing akin to this right-wing view in this country now. It has ceased to exist, having been overwhelmed by the far-right in all its noxious Tory, Reform, [and even Labour](#), varieties.

There is, however, a left-of-centre opinion, which has recently existed and which needs expression, and which is decidedly different to the supposedly centre-left politics of Labour, which exist well to the right in Overton Window terms.

There may well be a demand for a genuine right-wing in the UK, but I cannot see anyone supplying that view for a long time now. The simplistic, callous, catchphrase politics of the far-right has captured the whole right-of-centre space where it might exist now. You are either neoliberal centre, or a neo-fascist now, and there is little in between, and there is no intellectual firepower of any sort to create anything else.

There is, however, space for, demand for, and more than sufficient intellectual firepower available to create political space on the left, which simultaneously rejects the absurdities of the far left.

The absence of any form of actual right-wing (as opposed to far-right, or centre ground neoliberal) thinking is not an excuse for the left not to exist, but I suspect language is making it possible to deny that possibility. We need to challenge that, and recreate that politics of the left which both rejects neoliberalism and the absurdities of those of the materialist socialists for whom control rather than cooperation is the obsession. The country urgently needs for this to happen.