

# Why The CSP?

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## A DISQUISITION ON THE RIGHTWARD SHIFT OF THE OVERTON WINDOW

### Overview Of A Faulty Paradigm:

As I write this essay (in January 2012), only about half of the electorate says that it “approves” of President Obama. The reason that this figure is as low as it is, the evidence shows, is that the administration has alienated many *Progressives*. During the first 30+ months of his term, Obama disenchanted them—in large part due to his routine capitulation to a fanatically recalcitrant G.O.P. In other words, a large portion of those who “disapprove” of the president do so because he has moved ***too far to the right***.

Obviously, faced with a choice between the incumbent and someone who is even further to the right, such people will vote to keep Obama in office. These voters recognize that the lack of the Democrats’ ability to effect more progress than they have is partially attributable to the pathological intransigence of a G.O.P.—a unified caucus that is hell-bent on sabotaging any measure that would make the pseudo-opposition party “look good” to the electorate. After all, G.O.P. success is—in part—predicated on DP failure.

The lesson here is simple: Disapproval of the administration doesn’t ipso facto translate to “will not vote for Obama”. Some people disapprove of the president from his right flank; others disapprove from his left. In terms of electoral calculus, the ramifications of each version of disapproval are the opposites of one another. Alas, general measurements of “disapproval” don’t reflect this crucial distinction. Such misleading taxonomies are byproducts of a myopic way of looking at the political landscape, as this essay will show.

It stands to reason that when faced with only a Republican alternative, all “disapproving” Progressives will opt for the (insufficiently Progressive) Democratic candidate—***by default***. For lack of a better alternative, this is the best option for those on the so-called “left”. It is only for those who disapprove of Obama because they want an even-further-to-the-right Executive that “disapproval” will probably translate to Republican support. (And even many of THOSE people may shift if—in the intervening months—they become better informed.)

We should note that Obama’s approval numbers have been rising since a particular point in the recent past: the point at which he stopped basing his entire strategy on placating the far-right (i.e. the Rahm Emanuel strategy, which put political gamesmanship over rectitude). In other words, Obama’s support increased when he started actually standing up to corporatists (i.e. Republicans), put principle over political maneuvering, and began talking regularly about income inequality.

So long as he was capitulating to a fanatically recalcitrant G.O.P., Obama only ended up shooting himself—and the entire country—in the foot. Now that he has ceased the kow-tow approach, the Progressives he was losing are slowly starting to come back. (Perhaps he’s finally

learned his lesson.) This fact alone reveals a tremendous amount about the orientation of the DP vis a vis Progressives.

All these (eminently relevant) factors are rarely mentioned in the mainstream media when “approval / disapproval” polls are discussed. The two categories are treated as if they indicate unified camps—as if all who disapprove of Obama disapprove of him for the same reasons. I (and many Progressives I know) “disapprove” of the current administration for reasons that would make it all the MORE certain that we would vote for Obama over a Republican alternative.

Obviously, the resolution to the DP’s marginally right-wing m.o. is not to move even further to the right. After all, like every administration before his, the Obama administration is dysfunctional INsofar AS it is to the right of what can be dubbed “the true center”.

An overly-simplistic “approve / disapprove” taxonomy of the electorate does not reveal these key points. But such categories DO make sense when we view the political landscape strictly through the lens of partisan warfare—and view all things in terms of Democrats vs. Republicans—a narrative to which Americans have become so accustomed as to cease to even question its existence. The reasons for Obama’s approval numbers *from Progressives* at any given point reveal something dysfunctional about the way most people view politics.

### **A Case Of Deceptive Symmetries:**

The conventional left-right political spectrum is defective for two reasons. First, it is one-dimensional, and thus over-simplifies things that are multi-dimensional in nature. Second, it reflects only RELATIVE left-right positions, not positions in terms of an ABSOLUTE reference point (on the political spectrum).

Let’s focus for now on the second flaw.

The Overton Window (OW) is the range of political discourse at any given time—a range that may be situated anywhere along the ABSOLUTE political spectrum (APS). Most discourse transpires within the purview of that (limited) window, regardless of where that window is located on the APS. This myopic treatment of politics not only limits the scope of the public debate; it is very misleading regarding where any given position REALLY IS on the APS (i.e. where a position is located with respect to an absolute reference point).

What, exactly, is the APS? For the definition of (absolute) “right-wing”, see my “Understanding The Right Wing”. I touch on the definition of the “left” (in the absolute sense) below. Together, these explanations demarcate the “poles” of such a spectrum. Rarely is the existence of an APS even acknowledged, let alone discussed openly. Why not? Because it doesn’t comport with the standard political narrative—which would have us all believe that the entire “story” is what the Democrats and the Republicans happening to be doing to one-up each other. Casting the “players” as marginally-right-wing pitted against ultra-right-wing isn’t conducive to a dramatic plot-line.

Here’s the catch: When the OW shifts along the APS, the conventional left-right distinction doesn’t reflect that change. And, to make matters worse, when things become more polarized WITHIN that window, there is an illusion that both “sides” are becoming more radical: a perception that the right is moving further to the right while the left moves further to the left. Such RELATIVE polarization has, indeed, been happening since Reagan. But NEITHER party

has been moving leftward in absolute terms.

The explanation for this is simple. If the OW is itself moving rightward, then the “left side” of the debate can still be moving to the right in absolute terms even as it shifts to the left end of the window. In other words, the center of the window can diminish—with most people migrating to either end of the window—even as BOTH sides move rightward along the APS. If we’re only viewing things in terms of the OW, this absolute movement goes completely un-noticed. All we see is the local polarization.

The consequence of this process is as follows: That which is defined as “bi-partisan” or “centrist” or “moderate” ITSELF moves to the right (in absolute terms). It does this even as it remains “in the middle” with respect to the RELATIVE left-right divide (i.e. the two ends of the OW).

The Obama administration acknowledges none of this...which is precisely why it opted to aim for “bi-partisanship” at every juncture in the first 30+ months—cooperating with a chronically obstructionist G.O.P. (The G.O.P., we should keep in mind, is a unified caucus determined to keep the economy as sluggish as possible going into the 2012 elections, for obvious reasons). This was the “Rahm Emanuel” approach, to which Obama naively acquiesced. The Obama administration did this only to learn—time after time after time—that every “compromise” was all for naught.

This was ALL completely predictable if one was paying attention.

Indeed, “bi-partisan” sounds wonderful, magnificent, splendid, and marvelous...at first blush. Since January 2009, though, it has generally only been a euphemism for “pointless capitulation to the far-right”. The skewed perception of the political landscape obfuscates this crucial fact, as all things are seen in terms of positioning within the OW. Here, one “side” is pitted against the other “side”, with winners and losers, as though it were a sporting event. Consequently, “political participation” is simply a matter of picking a team.

The MSM illustrates how this works. We currently have two partisan groups of “news” networks: FoxNews, CNN, and CNBC for the Republican Party (the de facto home of corporatism) and MSNBC alone for the Democratic Party (the default home of Progressives)...with the three “major” networks floating indiscriminantly in between these two vantage points. (The BBC, NPR, and PBS remain closer to the absolute center of the APS. There are ZERO left-wing outlets to speak of in the United States.)

So we have two media “camps” defined by partisan loyalty: The former attacks anything having to do with the Democrats (as not being sufficiently far to the right) while the latter attacks anything having to do with the Republicans (as being too far to the right). But this PARTISAN symmetry does not translate to ABSOLUTE (political) symmetry. Why not? Because the OW within which this sparring transpires is itself positioned entirely to the right of the center of the APS (i.e. the true center).

Thus, the former media outlets represent the RADICAL right, thereby attacking anything to their left...while MSNBC essentially defends positions somewhat closer to the ABSOLUTE center (yet still slightly to the right of that center) FROM the radical right's onslaught.

Understanding this, we see that the two media camps are two entirely different kinds of operations. Essentially, the *sine qua non*

of programming on MSNBC is exposing the lunacy of the far-right (though, generally, not explicitly championing Progressive ideals). Meanwhile, the *sine qua non* of radical-right-wing outlets is explicitly championing proto-fascist positions. This, of course, involves relentlessly castigating anything that is to the left of the far-right-wing. Indeed, being reactionary, the primary focus is to incessantly berate those who don't adhere to the anointed catechism (often via ridiculous caricature).

The result of all this is preposterous political theater, choreographed to be provocative and captivating without ever being edifying. With respect to the OW, this media feud may reflect a PARTISAN symmetry. However, with respect to any complete view of the political landscape (the APS), the feud is far from symmetrical. Let's take an iconic pundit from each media "camp" to illustrate this important point: Rachel Maddow and Sean Hannity.

### An Illustration:

The left-right dichotomy on which our public discourse is based is very, very misleading. What Rachel Maddow does is ONLY analogous to what Sean Hannity does insofar as each is an apologist for one of the two major parties. Beyond that, what Maddow does is NOT analogous to what Sean Hannity does. Let's be clear why the two are apples vs. oranges:

Maddow will (legitimately) criticize the far-right from a position that is slightly right of absolute center (which ends up being at the **left end** of the right-shifted OW).

By contrast, Hannity (as well as Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin, Bill Kristol, Frank Luntz, David Horowitz, Larry Kudlow, Adam Bellow, Dick Morris, et. al.) will (illegitimately) champion the radical right while castigating anything that is anything less than radically right-wing.

***The far-right not only corresponds to the right end of the OW, it defines how far-right the OW is itself positioned on the APS.***

So we have two partisan media camps—operating to the right of the true political center. One criticizes radical right-wing propaganda (in an effort to defend a party that is closer to the absolute center). The other defends radical right-wing propaganda (which involves attacking anyone who criticizes radical right-wing propaganda). These are two very different kinds of operations. The former involves the promulgation of propaganda; the latter involves CRITICISM OF propaganda.

Both do what they do in order to promote the respective political party—so NEITHER is capable of candidly critiquing its own partisan loyalty...as that may reveal the position—nay, the existence—of the Overton Window, thereby undermining the partisan narrative on which they both operate.

Therefore, it is a false equivalence to portray this partisan feud as somehow just a matter of one "side" vs. the other "side"...with some kind of ideal "medium" between them. MSNBC is not the left's analogue of FoxNews. To reiterate: The former plays an anti-propaganda role while the latter is nothing more than a right-wing propaganda factory. (The U.S. has almost nil leftist propaganda. Progressives are already accused of being socialists, so what in heaven's name would REAL socialists do?)

BOTH media camps engage in partisan bickering and adolescent polemic: this is true. But that doesn't mean they both have positions analogously situated on an ABSOLUTE left-right divide. Listening to the two media camps, one would never know that an APS even existed...which is precisely the point. Corporate-run media wants it that way. So long as audiences perceive things entirely in terms of orientation within the OW, the OW can literally be anywhere.

Alas, most of the electorate is too myopic to recognize the big picture, and consequently only casts every issue in terms of the ends of the OW: one camp vs. the other camp. Why? Because most of us are simply inclined to pick a party, then think of all things in terms of THAT CHOICE. Our entire view of politics boils down to the following:

- The left side of the OW (since the 70's, always the Democrats)
- The right side of the OW (since the 70's, always the Republicans)
- And the "moderates" in between (ever-fewer as polarization within the window continues)

From this perspective, "centrist" simply means: Splitting the difference between wherever the Democrats and the Republicans happen to be, regardless of where that actually is on the APS.

"Centrist" becomes a useful concept in terms of partisan warfare, but is ultimately meaningless with regard to political theory. In effect, being "bi-partisan" ends up really meaning "the moderately-right capitulating to the far-right"...a noble-seeming gesture done (by Democrats) while offering the illusion of two "sides" that are cooperating (by meeting each other "half-way").

Here's the rub: When things invariably go awry because of policy that is (inevitably) too far to the right, the far-right can simply blame the moderate-right for being INSUFFICIENTLY far to the right.

It's the same routine every time: The problems CAUSED BY right-wing policy can be summarily blamed on the "left" side of the OW (the de facto opposition party)...thereby giving the far-right the rationale to move things EVEN FURTHER to the right. In reality, Democratic policy is often flawed because it's too far to the right...but you'd never know this listening to a debate exclusively couched in terms of the OW.

Consequently, the policy currently located on the so-called "left" (i.e. the left end of the OW) is flawed because it's STILL TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT: a fact that rarely enters political discourse. (Actually, this fact **doesn't even make sense** given a discussion that is exclusively based on positioning within the OW.)

No matter where the OW may happen to be on the APS, this myopia will allow the same routine to happen every time—precluding any discussion of insights from the true center of the APS.

### Point in case:

The economic stimulus of 2009 was too small (due to obstruction from—and capitulation to—a pathologically intransigent G.O.P.) So, predictably, the stimulus didn't work nearly as well as it could (should) have. Instead of learning the obvious lesson (that the stimulus should have been much larger), the far-right was simply able to say: "See! The stimulus didn't really work. Which is why having any stimulus at all was a bad idea. Ergo we shouldn't have had a stimulus. Q.E.D."

As patently absurd as the claim was, it SOUNDED plausible to tens of millions, who think of everything in terms of positioning within the OW. (For more on this, see my "Political Stockholm Syndrome".) Such egregious mis-impression provides the far-right with the cover it needs to continue to push supply-side economic policy with impunity (i.e. to promote the very policies that caused all the problems in the first place, under the pretense of offering "solutions").

And so it goes: the arsonist gets to blame the (handicapped) fire department for the house continuing to burn. The (sabotaged) water-hoses aren't extinguishing flames fast enough, so the arsonist can offer more gasoline instead...and sound to some people like a plausible alternative.

The polarization WITHIN the OW is misinterpreted as some sort of symmetrical divergence around a (chimerical) "center". Of course, there are, indeed, fewer politicians located at the center of the window, as those on the left side of the window are migrating "further to the left" OF THAT WINDOW. But this is happening as the entire window shifts to the right. As even a child can figure out, slightly further to the left of a purview that has itself moved further to the right does not amount to "moving to the left" in absolute terms.

For the last 35 years, moving leftward within the OW often amounts to moving to the right. Mischaracterizing this relative movement is precisely what has enabled the OW to continue to move rightward...without anyone pointing it out.

### **But how do we really know that the OW has shifted rightward?**

To answer this, one need simply refer to what "right-wing" MEANS (again, see my "Understanding The Right Wing"). Once the definition is clear, we can measure the elements of "right-ness"...and thereby ascertain the degree to which each major party has become more and more extreme in precisely those respects. This is not difficult to do.

The extreme right of the APS is, of course, fascism. So, to gradually move to the right is ipso facto to incorporate more and more elements of fascism: highly-concentrated power, top-down control, anti-intellectualism, cult-like activity, tribalism (especially hyper-nationalism), etc...and, thus, away from humanism, secularism, cosmopolitanism, social justice, intellectualism, distributed power, bottom-up control, etc.

So what indicates that the Overton window has moved to the right? Other than general indicators (corporatism, super-patriotism, fundamentalist religionism, augmented militarism, larger structural inequalities, exacerbated socio-economic stratification, and growing wealth concentrations), there is a handy barometer: the changing taxonomy of political platforms. I'll note a few flagrant examples:

Though NEITHER partisan camp would want to admit it, in many ways, Obama is further to the right than Reagan was. Clinton was CERTAINLY much further to the right than Eisenhower in terms of economic policy. (Now Eisenhower would be deemed a "socialist" by right-wing commentators.) In fact, Reagan's actual policies would be too far to the LEFT for most Republicans now—though they continue to fetishize him. And given what Eisenhower actually did, he would be deemed too far left for even Democrats today.

Keynes used to be considered mainstream by reasonable Republicans. Since the 70's, his name is taboo in right-wing circles, and now even Democrats are hesitant to mention him. Even as recently as the 60's, someone like Barry Goldwater was too far right for most Republicans. But today, he'd fit comfortably in the G.O.P. mainstream. Teddy Roosevelt's domestic policy would be too far left for even today's Democrats.

Lastly, during Truman and Eisenhower, what are now Revisionist Zionists were considered fascists by mainstream Zionists. But now... "Zionist" MEANS Revisionist Zionist (and is thus considered mainstream).

Corporatism is, by definition, right-wing. (For more on this, see my essays on corporatism.) Since FDR, corporatism has played a larger and larger role in the political process. Both the Democratic and Republican parties are—to some degree—corporatist. Therefore, both are, by definition, right-wing. The last time there was a non-corporatist (i.e. genuinely Progressive) party was the "Republican" party under Teddy Roosevelt. (Being further to the right, the G.O.P. is more corporatist than the DP. Conversely, being more corporatist, the G.O.P. is further to the right.)

It is quite clear that, during the post-war era, the OW has moved to the right a significant amount...which is precisely why we need a new political party: a party at the true center of the APS. Understanding this, the Civil Society Party (CSP) would not be "the new left"; it would simply be "the new center". It would be a party at the REAL center.

## **So Then What Would "Too Far Left" Be?**

Since we're so unfamiliar with gauging things in terms of the APS, we've developed a severely skewed conception of what "too far left" means. We know what "too far right" entails...but what, exactly, would "being left of the true center" entail? In other words, if the CSP is at the true center (i.e. the center of the APS), then what is to the left of the CSP?

A genuinely "leftist" ideology is characterized by two things:

1. A call for too much socialism (insufficient accommodation of free markets / private enterprise).

## 2. Relativism (cultural, moral, and epistemic)

The varying degrees of 1 and 2 define the left end of the APS. (Ironically, it is because of 2 that “real” leftists would be reticent to acknowledge the APS in the first place.) There may be other (ancillary) elements to real left-ism (absolutist pacifism, for example), but these are the two most salient elements here in the U.S.

1 involves an ethical system (and cultural assessments) based exclusively on subjective / relative standards. (We saw this sort of thing in post-modernism.) Generally, this entails false moral equivalencies and strident calls for political correct-ness. In this way of viewing things, EVERYTHING is merely a social / psychological construct: there are no universal moral principles and there is no objective Reality (or discernable features thereof).

We find this mindset with, say, radical behaviorism—characterized, in part, by an irrational aversion to evolutionary psychology or the positing of a (universally innate) “human nature”. Various ultra-lefty circles found in some colleges have exhibited these traits—misguided attempts to eschew the absolutism endemic to right-wing ideology.

2 involves socialist-leaning views of many stripes—including left-wing libertarians (i.e. anarcho-syndicalists) who see capitalism as inherently bad, and so allow for little or no role for it in an ideal economic system. The extreme of this view is, then, ABSOLUTE socialism—which is, of course, analogous to the absolute capitalism (i.e. anarcho-capitalism) seen on the far-right. (Alas, fundamentalism in either direction is dysfunctional.)

As far as the CSP would be concerned, 1 and 2 are “too far left”. Thus, the CSP would be TO THE RIGHT of such things, and would criticize them just as it criticizes right-wing positions. After all, the true center is at the center of the complete spectrum of political ideology (the APS). Deviation from the true center involves, by its very nature, political ideology of some brand or another. One may therefore see the true center as ideology-less. (Indeed, Progressivism isn’t an ideology; it is quite literally **lack of** ideology.)

Being at the true center, Progressives embrace capitalism within a delimited domain...in concert with properly socialized infrastructure. The recognition here is that too much socialization is just as bad as too much privatization.

Meanwhile, Progressives recognize that certain truths are absolute / objective, while certain truths are relative / subjective, and that it is extremely important to tell the difference. (The former establishes where the former ends and the latter begins, as objective truths define their own boundary conditions. Indeed, if it were the other way around, everything would be subjective.)

But here’s the kicker: In order to discredit the so-called “left” (i.e. Progressivism or anything remotely close to it), the far-right caricatures anything to its left AS IF it were characterized by 1 and 2. In this way, the true center can be dismissed as “too far to the left”.

Of course, the DP—being as it is to the right of the true center—is nowhere near 1 and 2. But the skewed left-right dichotomy enables the far-right’s extremely distorted portrayal of the non-far-right to seem plausible (at least to those enamored with the far-right). So it goes: Denizens of the far-right are easily persuaded to see ANYTHING less far-right than they are as some manifestation of 1 and/or 2... as if the vast range on the APS between the G.O.P. and the REAL left did not exist. This affords the far-right opportunity to assault Progressives with straw-



man arguments (e.g. anything less than Neoliberal ideology is a slippery slope to Soviet-style Communism).

The current (myopic) way of viewing politics enables this to happen, thereby precluding any opportunity for a genuinely Progressive party to form.

### **A Brief Note On The Monikers “Conservative” and “Liberal”:**

What of the qualifiers “conservative” and “liberal”? As far as the APS is concerned, not only are these two terms pointless, they are quite literally meaningless.

There are right and wrong answers to certain questions; and that has nothing to do with artificial constructs like “conservative” or “liberal”. (There is nothing “liberal” or “conservative” about human rights.) Such terms are inherently misleading, as they are nothing more than colloquialisms with heavy baggage—and **amorphous** colloquialisms at that.

The meaning of the two (emotionally-charged) buzz-terms has changed so much over time, one requires a complicated flow-chart just to keep track. Moreover, the two terms are almost entirely context-dependent—and even then, they only offer a general gist. At any given time and place, what is “liberal” or “conservative” to one person might not be to another. Being inherently relative, such terms only serve to distract from the use of objective standards to assess political policy.

Of course, Americans often use these terms **pejoratively**, roughly corresponding to “stuff the far-right endorses” vs. “stuff the (so-called) ‘left’ endorses”. But this is all quite specious and utterly spurious. Two examples should suffice:

- “Economically, I’m a conservative; but socially I’m liberal” typically translates to “My views on social issues are sound, but I have no idea what I’m talking about when it comes to economic policy.”
- What else does “bleeding-heart liberal” mean than “someone who cares about all humans and advocates taking measures to help those in need”? This has nothing whatsoever to do with the definition of “liberal” in any dictionary I’ve ever seen.

I have never called myself a “liberal” for the exact same reason I have never called myself a “conservative”: both labels are inane. At the end of the day, the two buzz-terms are employed in a pedestrian manner to indicate loose associations with political views—and only amount to **stigmas** and **stereotypes**. Therefore, these pseudo-categories play no role in bona fide political theory.

Meanwhile, **formally defined** terms like “Neoconservatism”, “Neoliberalism”, “reactionary”, “traditionalism”, “tribalism”, “fascism”, and “corporatism” (for the radical right); “socialism”, “moral / cultural relativism”, and “pacifism” (for the true left); as well as “humanism”, “secularism”, “social justice”, and “cosmopolitanism” (for the true center) are eminently relevant terms with important (and objective) meanings—and so correspond with certain points on the APS. One cannot have a serious debate WITHOUT using these key terms.

In order to have meaningful discussion,p;p; it is crucial that all parties employ only well-defined terms, always call a spade a spade, and use objective standards by which to assess every issue. Relativism (specifically, political correct-ness) has no part in serious political

discourse—as it only serves to sabotage candid critical analysis. The U.S. would be far better off if nobody ever used the monikers “conservative” and “liberal” ever again in a political context.

### **A New Way Of Looking At Things:**

The solution to the problem of misleading dichotomies is quite straight-forward: Stop thinking of all things in terms of Republicans vs. Democrats...as if that distinction corresponded (in absolute terms) to “the right” and “the left”...as if that taxonomy defined all of political reality...as if any discussion outside of those categories were illegitimate...as if there were no other alternatives.

By couching everything in terms of Democrats (the left end of the OW) and Republicans (the right end of the OW), the illusion is created that this partisan feud is an exhaustive account of all viable options.

Moreover, an apparent left-shift (within the OW) is often misrepresented as an ABSOLUTE shift left. Even as it involves migrating closer to the window’s left end, it may really be a move rightward (with respect to the true center of the APS). This precludes the ability to talk honestly about REAL leftward shifts, or the ability to even refer to anything to the left of the OW.

Regardless of one’s views, one can’t help but conclude that the current debate is woefully constrained by the OW. Such myopic discussion casts all issues in terms of two “sides” (i.e. each end of the window)...thereby utterly neglecting any insight that doesn’t comport with one of the two partisan “camps” within that limited range.

The NEW debate (the one involving the CSP) looks at the big picture. This means a choice between two kinds of positions: those to the right of the true center (positions within the current OW) *vis a vis* those at the true center (where genuine Progressivism defines itself).

This way, positions within the current OW (encompassing BOTH the Democrats and the Republicans) are understood to be varying degrees of right-wing. The position at the true center of the APS, by contrast, is the position of the CSP. In this way, Progressivism can be seen for what it really is: neither too far to the right nor too far to the left.

### **Potential Criticism:**

“But you’re just orienting the political spectrum around your personal views. You’re establishing your own position, then ‘fixing’ the APS so that it ends up at the center.”

If I were actually doing this, then what I’ve called the “APS” would not be a *genuinely absolute* political spectrum; it would simply be “just another” political spectrum (namely, one relative to a certain political ideology). The reader must judge, then, whether the case I’ve made for what right-wing really means and what left-wing really means is a good case.

The far-right-wing would make the above criticism simply because it doesn't want to recognize how far-to-the-right (i.e. close to fascism) it really is. Moreover, recognizing the APS would expose its straw-man depictions of Progressivism, thus undermining most of its time-honored rhetorical strategy.

Meanwhile, some on the moderate right (e.g. establishment loyalists of the Democratic Party) will tend to indulge in relativism, and claim that there can be no APS. After all, many in the DP don't want to be any less right-wing than they already are, and so, naturally, don't like to think of themselves AS right-wing.

The fact of the matter is that there IS an APS, because there can't not be...lest there be no way to ascertain which ideas are (objectively) better than others. (I will not countenance relativism here.)

Once one understands what makes "too far to the right" too far to the right, and "too far to the left" too far to the left (in objective terms), then one sees that the true center is what it is...and thus WHY what we currently dub "Progressivism" is the political approach with the most credence.

The positing of the APS, then, isn't some strategically "rigged" portrayal of political views; it is a reflection of how things actually work—a description of (objective) Reality. It is a description that elucidates not only WHAT the best ideas are, but WHY they are the best ideas. The beauty is that partisan politics (loyalty to one of the two major parties) plays absolutely no role in the explanation.

A reasonable person will tend to take positions at the point on the APS that best comports with axiomatic principles (those indicative of humanism, cosmopolitanism, intellectual integrity, calls for social justice, etc.) That position, it turns out, is what is commonly called Progressivism, and exists—almost by definition—at the true center. It should come as little surprise, then, that the most intelligent, the most educated (in the profound sense of the term), the most cultured, and the most genuinely moral people in our society tend—overwhelmingly—to espouse views that are much closer to the center of the APS.

The point here is to establish a political party that represents the ideas germane to that (ideal) place on the APS. I'm suggesting that such a party be called the Civil Society Party...and proposing that we ACTUALLY HAVE such a party.