

When taught about first past the post (FPTP) in politics class, we were given the following as an advantage: FPTP inherently keeps the extremes out of power. An advantage! As a radical myself, I obviously oppose this being an advantage; however, I can see why moderates would be otherwise inclined. Hence, it seems imperative that I display, with my supreme intellect and IQ of over 9000, how this is neither an advantage nor even any good at achieving that goal, of combating extremism. Here is a short piece doing so.

Firstly, and most obviously, why should one even want to prevent the political extremes from gaining representation? Democracy is, first and foremost, a process which is meant to be *representative*. Hence, in not accurately representing the *demos*, the electorate, it is failing to perform this desired function. This goal of keeping the extremes out is merely a way for the status quo to maintain power and to prevent the advancing of society. If not looking to represent as the ultimate aim, why not just revert to some oligarchy, some dictatorship? (Well, I say revert - FPTP is just a façade, so it's hardly reversion!)

Furthermore, this "advantage" and the phrasing thereof is entirely misleading - it fails to define what the extremes are (more specifically, the term's connotation). I'd present two attributes of what ought be, functionally, referred to as the political extremes; that which is both not of the mainstream (in fact, very much the minority) and radically different from the mainstream. What of either of these indicates they oughtn't be represented? The former - importantly - means that the position is a minority position and therefore even if represented they won't be given power; at most, an extreme party would have a few seats - after which they're no longer extreme! Furthermore, even political minorities should be represented - while perhaps not as numerous as the mainstream, they still exist and, if popular enough to gain a seat through a more representative electoral system, they should have a voice. The latter also doesn't mean they shouldn't be represented - there is no objective overton window; just because something is radical compared to the mainstream doesn't mean it is inherently bad or unrepresentable. In fact, the current mainstream - the mainstream of neoliberal capitalism, etc., etc. - would be inherently unrepresentable in the context of a fascist mainstream with this logic, something no doubt those who consider the keeping of political extremes from power an advantage would oppose. Do ideas become inherently unrepresentable for no reason other than not being mainstream, regardless of difference? This logic is just an appeal to popularity and authority. This logic is merely a tool of the bourgeoisie and those inspired by its insipid cultural hegemony to uphold the status quo, to uphold class rule.

Perhaps, however, my lecturer and those who also follow this line (who seem numerous) require *violence* for something to be extremist. Perhaps then we see a different connotation: that which uses violence to assert its political power. This connotation falls short in supporting their point - engaging in electoral politics isn't a violent act. In fact, it seems to be quite the opposite. I also find it ironic how the

violence of those out of the mainstream is disgusting and makes the actors thereof unrepresentable while the violence of this essential disenfranchisement and all other acts of violence of the mainstream goes unopposed. Don't be illusioned - this is disenfranchisement and this is violent. When one sees the radical - the so-called "extreme", whatever its highly ambiguous connotation is - it's no surprise that it is filled by those the mainstream has fucked over. Who are these people? We're the queer people, the people of colour, the poor, the neurodivergent, the physiodivergent; we're the social minorities. Don't be illusioned - this is further disenfranchisement of social minorities who have been disillusioned by the status quo. It therefore clearly isn't democratic and is therefore obviously not an advantage (provided the reader believes in the core principles of democracy).

Even if the specific parties running happen to be violent, violence is still illegal. If any of this is provable, surely they'd be arrested? If unprovable, it's slander. If a party engages in political violence to manipulate the election (or even non-violently manipulates it), there's no way a non-mainstream party could get away with such things if caught (sadly the mainstream parties can). To think this has anything to do with violence is to fall prey to the illusively ambiguous connotation of the sign "political extremes". This is all about that which is mainstream and that which is not.

It isn't even effective; if the goal is to prevent extremism (which seems inherently tied to violence in the framework of the proponents of this "advantage"), it is only counter-productive. While the quote is often overused in radical circles, here it seems quite applicable: "a riot is the language of the unheard" (Martin Luther King). What do you think the radical non-mainstream turns to when unrepresented, when disenfranchised? Violence. In disenfranchising us, it only shows us how violence is the only way to achieve our emancipation; the emancipation of the proletariat and all social minorities. If one truly wants to prevent political violence (while it'd likely be best to start with the violence of the status quo!), disenfranchising the radicals - who are often otherwise non-violent - isn't the way to go. Radical discontent cannot just be swept under the rug.

It therefore seems clear that keeping the "political extremes" (i.e. that which isn't mainstream) from having representation should be strived for neither on ideological grounds nor on pragmatic ones, as the primary function of democracy is to represent and - in disenfranchising the political extremes - violence is only promoted.