

Stuff to Add to Guide? (Collab)

# INTRODUCTION

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Enlightened Centrism is hard to define, so for the sake of clarity, this document shall consolidate all necessary information there is to know about this concept.

***Political polarization sucks... Welcome to Enlightened Centrism.***

Firstly, Enlightened Centrism is not a political ideology, it is a ***way of life***, an attitude, a style of holistic thinking. Enlightened Centrism attempts to transcend political labels, as it is not a relative position between the left and the right, but a pragmatic synthesis of the entire political landscape, in relation to the ***current environment***.

***Enlightened Centrism transcends political labels.***

Enlightened Centrism applies Johnathan Haidt's *MORAL FOUNDATIONS THEORY* and the BIG FIVE personality theory. Enlightened Centrism recognises the value of so-called 'right-wing' beliefs, as well as so-called 'left-wing' beliefs. Enlightened Centrism is a pragmatic, holistic, adaptive, context-dependent approach.

***Enlightened Centrism is an attitude, a style of holistic thinking.***

John F. Kennedy once described himself as an 'idealist without illusions.' Genuine solutions require realism and pragmatism, not just idealism and emotion. Likewise, sometimes the most pragmatic solutions must be radical. This is a core tenet of Enlightened Centrism.

***Enlightened Centrism can be radical, if necessary.***

# 1. FOUNDATIONS

## Moral Foundations Theory & The Righteous Mind

Moral Foundations Theory (MFT), a psychological theory developed by Jonathan Haidt, explains the origins and variations of human moral reasoning. The theory suggests that there are five core moral foundations that influence our ethical judgments:

- Care, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority & Purity

Haidt argues that our moral judgments stem from intuitive processes, with reasoning often serving as a post-hoc rationalization for our gut feelings. He uses the metaphor of an elephant (intuition) and a rider (reason): the elephant is largely in control, while the rider attempts to justify these reactions post-hoc. We feel 'righteous' in our beliefs because they align with our instincts, not always because they are rationally correct.

Different cultures and political ideologies prioritize different moral foundations. For example, surveys show that liberals score higher on care and fairness, while conservatives score higher on loyalty, authority, and sanctity.

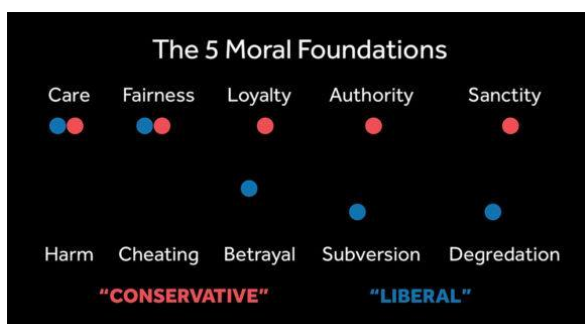
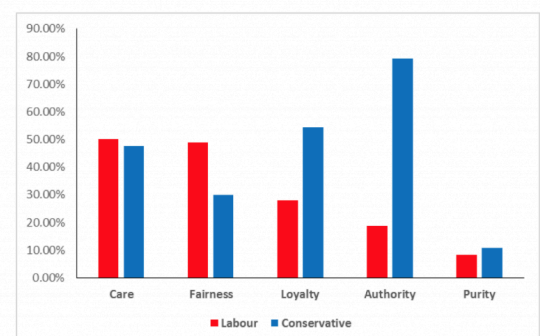


Figure 2: Mentions of the 5 moral foundations in Labour and Conservative tweets



Religion and politics are seen as powerful domains where moral foundations are **activated** and **reinforced**. These domains help to bind groups together, but they also create divisions between different groups with conflicting moral priorities.

By understanding and empathizing with the moral foundations of others, people can engage in more constructive dialogue and reduce political and cultural conflicts.

## Personality Theory – The Big Five and Political Leanings

The Big Five personality traits, also known as the Five Factor Model (FFM), are a widely accepted framework in psychology for understanding human personality. These traits are Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.



Each trait represents a spectrum, and individuals can fall anywhere along the continuum for each trait. When applied to political thinking, these traits can provide insight into why people might align with certain political ideologies or parties. For example:

### **Liberals/Progressives:**

- Higher in Openness to Experience: Embrace change, diversity, and innovation.
- Higher in Agreeableness: Value social welfare, empathy, and cooperation.

### **Conservatives:**

- Higher in Conscientiousness: Value order, tradition, and personal responsibility.

- Lower in Openness: Prefer stability, predictability, and traditional values.

Again, recognition that there is **value** in **personality variance**, and the **subsequent political variance**. Liberal personalities are more likely creative and innovative and able to push culture forward. Conservative personalities are more orderly and stable and able to protect and preserve traditions.

## **The Value of the Left and the Right**

Whatever way you want to look at it... there will always be 'conservatives' and 'liberals' in society. Those that wish to preserve and protect, and those that wish to innovate, update, and create. Both groups hold a necessary function. A cultural dialectic.

### ***Adopting a Spirit of Play***

Hierarchies, systems, and institutions make up society. For these systems to function properly they must maintain their integrity. In an ideal world, these systems would be:

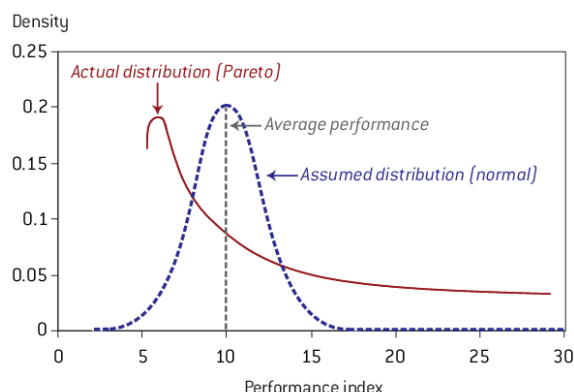
- Competent (Meritocratic)
- Voluntary (Invitational)
- Diverse (Competitive)
- Reciprocal (Collaborative and in a Spirit of Play)

Examples in sport or stand-up comedy – highly meritocratic industries. You can't fake competence.

## **Contending with the Pareto Principle**

The Pareto principle or "80-20 rule" was named in honour of economist, and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto. The principle originally applied to describing the distribution of wealth in a society, fitting the trend that a large portion of wealth is held by a small fraction of the population. Empirical observation has shown that this 80-20 distribution fits a wide range of cases, including natural phenomena and human activities. Similar to the old adage: "to

those who have everything more will be given; from those who have nothing more will be taken” we see in society, wealth and talent often accumulate at the top, and not along a normal distribution.



For example:

- 20% of criminals commit 80% of crimes
- 20% of drivers cause 80% of all traffic accidents
- 80% of pollution originates from 20% of all factories
- 20% of a company's products represent 80% of sales
- 20% of employees are responsible for 80% of the results
- 20% of students have grades 80% or higher

Not necessarily bad:

Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic have won 84% of Grand Slams since 2004. This follows that 20% of the participants win 80% of the prize money, and that **approximately 1%** of professionals earning **almost 50%** of the prize money. In sport you can't control for a concentration of the wealth and talent at the top. But overall, people don't mind... as long as it's fair and meritocratic.

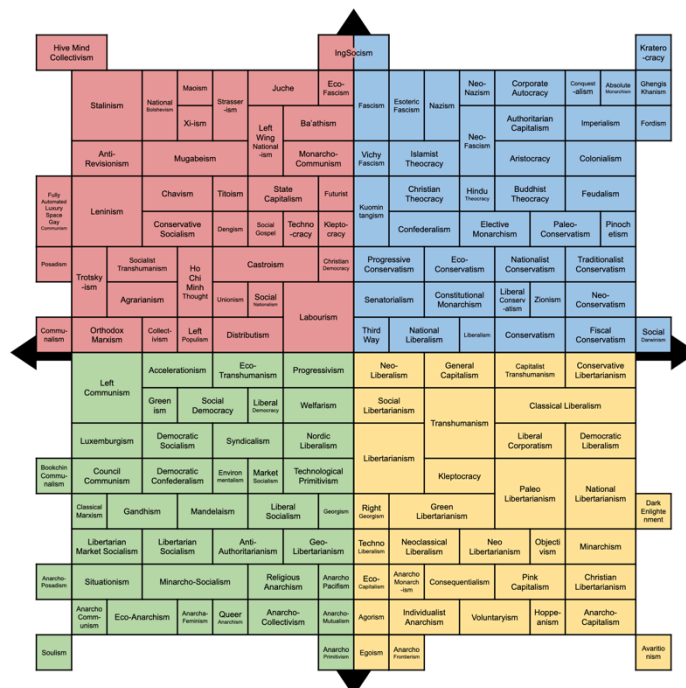
## Conclusions

Pareto is difficult phenomenon to contend with. Having a lot of resources funnelled to a small minority at the top while the majority stacks at 0 is a very menacing danger to a

society. People tried to solve this problem with shuffling resources from the minority to the majority, but it always ends up back to the top.

The solution is two-fold: One, have a diverse market of skills and talent... so people can find the most appropriate industry for their ability and personality, and work their way to the top. Two regulate and prevent corruption – that is when society becomes resentful. As systems become corrupt, they are no longer predicated on competence and reciprocity, but rather power, monopoly, hegemony, submission.

***We need the Right to maintain functional hierarchies, and the Left to call out and update corrupt ones.***





3. We have reverence and respect for normality and tradition.
4. Memes, and a spirit of play, is our greatest weapon.
5. We shall not go quietly into that good night.

### 3. OPERATING PLAN

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## Make Enlightened Centrism Great Again

The truth is: to be an Enlightened Centrist is both very easy and very difficult.

On the one hand, you're a diplomat, you can transverse the political landscape as a non-partisan operative, giving people the benefit of doubt and attempting to synthesise multiple ideas and frameworks.

On the other hand, you're politically homeless... your awareness of personality and moral foundations theory can cause you to question the distinction between emotion and rationality, even within yourself. We must hold our own biases to account and recognise our own blind spots. This calls for humility, self-awareness, and mindfulness – traits that must be continually practiced and developed.

To be an Enlightened Centrist you must, first and foremost, challenge your own beliefs and intuitions. Be honest about where you stand instinctively and move forward thoughtfully. Changing your mind, more often than not, requires you to grapple with your own identity. Admitting that you were wrong feels personal. But remember, you are not your ideas. As Robert Green writes "Accept the fact that nothing is certain, and no law is fixed. The best way to protect yourself is to be as fluid and formless as water; never bet on stability or lasting order. Everything changes."