

The Plural Politics Test

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Background

Folks love taking quizzes. We're addicted to psychometric self-understanding. I know this because I am an ENTP 1w9 Ravenclaw. The problem, though, is most political quizzes fail in decisive ways. With this quiz, I'm trying to redress some of those shortcomings. I want it to be valid and character-building. I want to provide respondents with a metric that is (1) true to real, political-psychological fact (2) conducive to an ethic of growth, cognitive flexibility, and civic expansion.

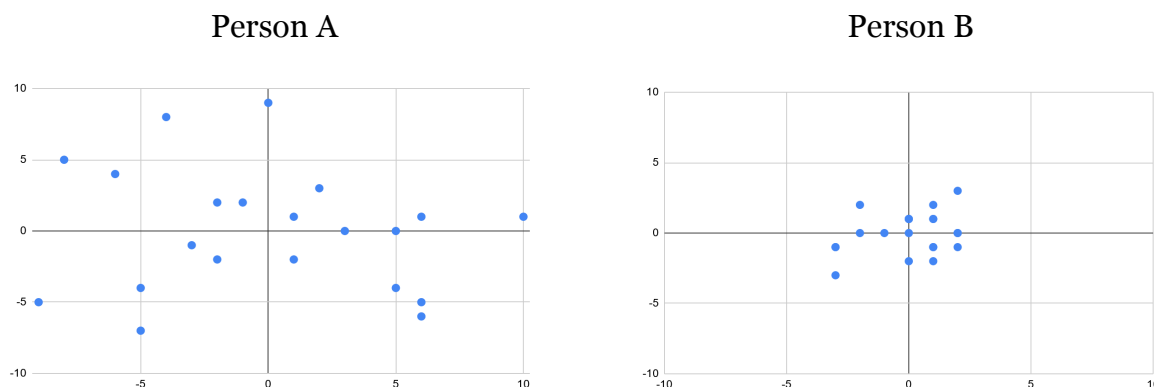
One very popular quiz is the Political Compass. It collapses lots of data down to a midpoint. With my Plural Politics Test, I'm totally rejecting that kind of reductionism. I believe the Compass's collapsing is neither sufficient for developing an [antifragile](#) political identity nor predictive of actual political behavior out in the world. In other words, it's neither ethically nor empirically useful.

Where the Political Compass and similar quizzes discard measures of *spread*, the Plural Politics Test elevates data spread as the most salient factor for assessing one's political orientation. In other words, this test primarily indicates one's level of political *reach* or *expansiveness*.

This test also rejects the reliance of the Political Compass and similar quizzes on highly abstract political beliefs as self-identified by Likert scale. (That’s the thing where you hit “agree,” “disagree,” or “neutral” and sometimes also indicate the strength of your position). Instead, I shift to a model of applied appreciations. I don’t use any Likert scales. In a bit, I’ll explain exactly why.

Also, the “construct validity” of my test items is demonstrated by acceptable “Cronbach’s alpha scores.” This means I’ve tried to show, empirically, that the statements in this test reflect reality rather than being pulled out of thin air by the testmaker as if they’re self-evidently valid ways of conceptualizing the world.

Okay, so let’s get into it. Imagine that the political positions and policy preferences of two people are mapped out according to two axes: economic and social. (It doesn’t matter what the specific metrics are.) This generates the following two datasets.



If Person A and Person B took the Political Compass, they’d receive exactly the same result. That’s because their datasets average to the same point: (0,0). Each person would be labeled a “centrist” or “moderate.” The Compass would tell both people something like “you have balanced views and you dislike extremism” and call it a day.

Yet these are *clearly* individuals of rather different sorts. Person A’s viewpoints are heterogenous. That means it would be impossible to predict their position on any given topic. Person B’s viewpoints are homogenous. On any given topic, we can confidently

predict that Person B will hold a middle-of-the-road position. Person B is a “true” moderate, so to speak. Person A isn’t.

Political Compass results don’t indicate the degree to which someone’s answers “hang together.” In other words, they don’t indicate correlation coefficients. Furthermore, the creators of the Compass keep the test’s scoring system secret. So we have no idea about the frequency with which Political Compass datasets resemble Person A’s or Person B’s.

What we can *assume*, though, is that the Political Compass makers consider Person B—the predictable, homogeneous one—to be the more “normal” of the two. The *very idea* of conceptualizing someone’s results as a *midpoint* implies datasets hanging together in a reasonably predictable way (i.e. having decently high correlation coefficients). So Person A, the eclectic one, would be considered a sort of curious outlier by the defining logic of the Compass.

I suspect the Political Compass creators purposely keep their methodology under wraps because their basic supposition isn’t true and they know it. I think their supposition of who’s “normal” and who’s an “outlier” doesn’t bear out statistically. The defining logic of their test is wrong.

So what I’m doing is totally different.

The Plural Politics Test seeks to account for data spread as a significant variable unto itself, not mere statistical noise. I’ve tried to do this without sacrificing the construct validity of individual items (and ergo the analytical coherence of the axes used to identify types of political positions).

In this test, the spread of a respondent’s dataset is reported out. The underlying contention here is that heterogeneity or eclecticism shouldn’t be considered an aberrant feature of political identity. Eclecticism is quite common, actually. As the American poet Walt Whitman had it: “I am large, I contain multitudes.” Moreover, in a normative sense, eclecticism is good (imo).

Appreciating a wide range of political positions allows for open-minded analysis, context-specific application, and creative pluralism in the civic sphere. In other words, an eclectic political identity allows for a sort of “meta-ideological” functioning, a way of thinking where you can use all the tools provided by different ideologies while avoiding getting captured by them and becoming a tool yourself. We should encourage this.

Crucial to that end is cultivating a basic pictorial conceptualization of politics and political behavior where expansiveness and eclecticism are both variable and relevant. We want to make this way of thinking a meme, something you can look at and grasp the defining logic of right away.

In its time, the Political Compass served a useful purpose in meme-ing a model of ideology that is multi-axis. Before that, people were thinking in terms of a single-axis model of left and right, which was hopelessly reductionist.

I’m trying to go one step further and give credence to a multidimensional model of *self*, too. That means bidding adieu to the midpoint-based rendering of the Political Compass.

The Plural Politics Test

Alright, so let’s get specific. The Plural Politics Test differs from the Political Compass in a number of domains. One is its reporting of data spread. This test uses the full swath of data generated by the respondent to produce a circular bar plot that illustrates the respondent’s breadth of ideological appreciations. This switch from a Cartesian plane to a circular bar graph is basically the essence of the logic shift.

In addition, respondents are provided with their level of “viewpoint diversity,” which is something like their eclecticism value. In a bit, I’ll describe exactly how each of these values are calculated.

The second domain where this test differs from the Political Compass test is its method of data collection. The Political Compass employs a 4-point Likert scale to assess levels of agreement or disagreement with sixty-two political propositions. This test's collection method differs in two key ways.

(1) This test is uninterested in dichotomous “agreement” or “disagreement.” On the contrary, it measures context-variant *appreciation* of viewpoints. Respondents are provided with thirty statements for which they may choose one, zero, or multiple viewpoint(s) that they find valid to think about. I'm interested in what participants “can get on board with.” A basic willingness to consider viewpoints is the foundation of antifragile pluralism. We want to move away from thinking about individual selves and start thinking about “dividual” selves. “Dividual” is a hifalutin word meaning a self that can be divided into parts. In other words, we want to think in terms of the impulses, instincts, and allergies that live within the *container* that is a person.

(2) The Political Compass uses a 4-point Likert scale with no middle option for “neutral” or “unknown.” Even-numbered Likert scales like that are known as “forced Likert scales” because their setup forces positive or negative opinion-taking. This is a conscious decision on the part of the Compass creators. Someone wrote them and suggested adding a middle option, i.e. switching to a 5-point Likert scale. In their FAQ, the Compass creators gave the following counter:

“This makes it too easy for people to duck difficult issues. By forcing people to take a positive or negative stance, the propositions make people really evaluate their feelings. Often people find they wanted to select 'don't know' mainly because they'd never really thought about the idea.”

I disagree with this rationale. I believe it's eminently *responsible*, actually, and *commendable* to admit one's ignorance on certain matters. You can't be an expert on everything. It is civically *preferable* for people to forgo reifying opinions about matters about which they're underinformed or uninterested. Forcing people to artificially muster up affective judgments on matters that lie outside their scope is a huge problem of the

contemporary media environment. Artificially dichotomous affective framing is a driver of closed-mindedness, intolerance, and polarization.

So the Plural Politics Test provides a “Neutral/Unknown” option. These are recorded as zeros. If multiple of these responses are recorded for a particular subject, then introductory educational material is linked at the end of the test with the respondent’s results. I want to cultivate curiosity and development, not force opinion.

A third domain where this test differs from the Political Compass is the coherence of the items. Frankly, some items in the Political Compass test are just bad. Here’s one: “Astrology accurately explains many things. Agree or disagree?”

Now, granted, answering “agree” to this item does empirically correlate with left-centrism (for some reason). But the item certainly has no face validity, which we should care about if the results are supposed to be edifying to the person reading them. Furthermore, the Compass creators code it for *authoritarianism*, not left-centrism, on the supposition that believing in certain mystical determinants of fate correlates with having authoritarian social predilections. This is just speculation and bad science.

Similarly, the way the Political Compass categorizes its propositions seems arbitrary. The test consists of six categories. (1) Your country and the world (2) Economy (3) Personal social values (4) Wider society (5) Religion (6) Sex. These consist, respectively, of 7, 14, 18, 12, 5, and 6 propositions. Why these categories are used isn’t explained. Why the seemingly random number of items per category also goes unaddressed.

The Plural Politics Test makes categories of subject areas that are listed as the most salient by actual people. An equal number of items comprise each category.

Note: I considered introducing new metrics but decided against it (for now). The two axes used to form the four parts of the circular bar graph are basically the same ones that many are familiar with. The Political Compass’s axes, derived from David Nolan’s “[Nolan Chart](#),” are left-right “economic” and libertarian-authoritarian “social.” I derive

my axes from the Nolan Chart too. To be frank, these axes are anything but exhaustive. Other tests measure other continua, some of which are okay and some even good. Jonathan Haidt's [moral foundations theory](#) examines pre-ideological moral-political *dispositions*, too, which are important to consider. However, I chose to stick with the Nolan Chart's axes because they're familiar. Too much change at once could have turned off some test takers. Also, since the point of this test is to indicate *assertiveness* and *eclecticism*, which are sort of "meta-metrics," I think the particular axes used are less important than they might otherwise be. (This is all so much self-rationalizing bullshit, mind you. I'll change the axes in the future when I'm motivated enough to do it.)

What I did do, though, was change the *terms* used for the social axis. Where the Nolan Chart refers to "libertarian" and "authoritarian," I refer to "liberty-loving" and "authority-respecting." The verb form implies a sense of flux, fluidity, and non-exclusivity as opposed to the Political Compass's static and reductionist "-ism" form. This rendering also mitigates confusion over the use of the word "libertarian," which in economics refers strictly to a free-market orientation. David Nolan and the Compass creators are libertarians. Nolan helped found the Libertarian Party of the United States. I think we can safely entertain the notion that these folks purposely sought to, uh, *broaden* (muddle) people's thinking on liberty-focused ideologies.

Okay, so now the next part of this whitepaper is going to read like a scientific report. I performed a study to determine whether or not my test items are empirically valid and whether my basic conceptualization of assertiveness and eclecticism is on the right track. If you're not interested in that, skip to the next part where I lay out the way the test calculates your results—all of this being because I'm a profoundly gracious soul and unafraid of peer review.

Empirical Stuff

Items

A total of thirty items comprise this test: 5 items each in 6 categories. These categories are: (1) Economics (2) Race and ethnicity (3) Healthcare (4) Education (5) National security (6) International relations. With some collapsing of subject areas that overlap, these categories are some of the most important to Americans according to [a 2019 Pew survey](#). I will be on the lookout in coming years for how these might change according to what people care about.

Note: as an American, my bias is U.S. politics. These categories are uniquely salient to Americans. I expect a fair degree of relevance in other contexts but one can never make simple translations between cultures and national situations. To be sure, this is a limitation of the test.

Questions and question items were presented in a different, random order to participants to prevent potential order effects, unlike the Political Compass.

Determining Construct Validity

Participants. One hundred adults (ages 18+) were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online data collection service. The responses of 34 participants were discarded from data analysis due to their incorrectly answering an attention check item, suggesting unreliable data. These exclusions resulted in a sample size of $N = 66$. Each participant was compensated \$0.20 through MTurk for their participation.

Procedure. The survey was programmed into Google Forms, an online survey development service, and listed on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) under the title “Political Stances Questionnaire.” Before taking the survey, participants were provided with an explanation about what they’d be asked to do as well as how they’d be compensated for their time and participation. Participants were informed that their

involvement in the research would be entirely voluntary and that they'd be able to withdraw at any time after starting. All categories, items, and individual selection choices were presented in random order to control for order effects. To maintain the anonymity of participants, no identifying information was collected. Participants' responses were identifiable to me only by randomly generated MTurk worker codes assigned to each participant.

Design. 30 items were coded to the four "quadrants." These groups of 30 were summed into four additive indices. Cronbach's alpha (α) scores were calculated for each of the indices to determine how well the items hang together. Bivariate correlations between indices were calculated to determine the analytical distinctiveness of the groups.

Results

The liberty-loving scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .78$). The authority-respecting scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .80$). The left-economics scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .78$). The right-economics scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .76$). All of these values indicate that the indices are testing for constructs that reliably hang together. This is good.

Also, I'm quite pleased that the alpha scores are in the range of .70 to .80 and not higher. If I'd gotten scores up above .90 or so, I would've worried that the indices were wound too tightly, not allowing for the context variance I presupposed at the outset.

Table 1. Inter-index bivariate correlations (Pearson's r)

	Item 1	2	3	4
Item 1: Right-economics	--			
Item 2: Left-economics	.44**	--		
Item 3: Liberty-loving	.51**	.65**	--	
Item 4: Authority-respecting	.64**	.53**	.57**	--

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Okay, so, this part is pretty important: Table 1 indicates there's something interesting going on. It's of interest to me in particular because it suggests that I'm right. Each of the inter-index correlations is positive, significant, and robust. That's not at all what you'd predict with a diametric-oppositional conceptualization of the variables. That is to say: the logic of the Political Compass, where the metrics are laid out on a Cartesian plane and a midpoint plopped down somewhere on it, fails to account for the data.

What you would expect with the Compass's conceptualization is to observe strong *negative* correlations between left-economics (item 1) and right-economics (item 2) and between liberty-loving (item 3) and authority-respecting (item 4). You'd expect no particular correlations between the set of economic variables (items 1 and 2) and the set of social variables (items 3 and 4). But none of that proves to be the case.

On the contrary, the positive correlations observed suggest that my conceptualization better accounts for the data. People with strong leanings in *one* direction also tend to lean strongly in the "opposite" direction (along both axes). In other words, operationally, these are not "continua" at all. The subjects don't tend to *lean* or *not lean*

horizontally and/or vertically. They tend to *expand* or *not expand* in all four directions at once.

Q.E.D. Tyvm.

How Results Are Calculated

The Plural Politics test provides two main results based on a user's circular bar graph and one additional overarching label, which is a result of combining the two main results together. The main results are the user's political assertiveness score and their viewpoint diversity score. Let's start with the assertiveness score, which is the simpler of the two.

Assertiveness

For most users, assertiveness is coded quite simply by how far the user's bars extend when summed together. In other words, it's just a tally of *how many boxes* the user selected, regardless of which ideology they code for. So since there's 30 questions and they each have 4 checkboxes coded for an ideology, the highest possible assertiveness score is 120 (30 times 4 is 120). Someone scoring 120 would be maximally politically assertive, finding every single statement in the test plausible.

I've divided 120 into quartiles. Those scoring in the first quartile (scores 0 to 30) get the result "very moderate" because they don't have very many political appreciations at all. Those in the second (31-60) are just "moderate." Those in the third (61-90) are "strong" because they have relatively many political appreciations. And, naturally, those in the fourth (91-120) are "very strong."

For some users it will be a little different. Say you score the maximum 30 points in one variable, for example right-economics, and in the other three you score 2, 1, and 4. Your results would sum to 37, which, according to the summative index alone, would make you “moderate.” This wouldn’t do. Although your overall politics don’t add up to a very politically “expansive” disposition (i.e. you’re rather limited), nevertheless you are so *strongly* exclusive in appreciating right-economics over everything else that it would be weird to call you “moderate.” So this is a case where one variable (viewpoint diversity, as discussed next) has to sort of spill over into the other (assertiveness). In other words, you’re a different kind of assertive: assertively *exclusivist*. Note that few people are actually like this empirically, but it’s a fringe group that’s got to be accounted for.

So I’ve added onto the simple summative scoring index. In addition to when you score 61 or above *overall*, you’re also given a “strong” assertiveness result if any *one* of your four ideologies has a score between 22 and 25. You get “very strong” if any of them is 26 or higher. Why these numbers specifically? No reason except they felt right.

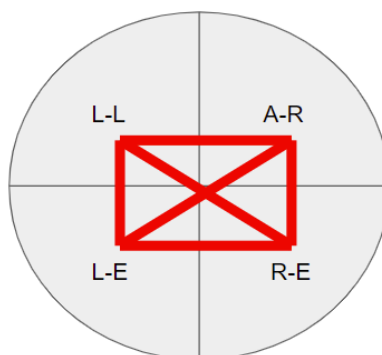
Viewpoint Diversity

Someone who scores very high in two ideologies and very low in the other two might get a “strong” assertiveness result even though they’re decidedly lacking in certain kinds of political appreciation. Imagine someone with very high left-economic and authoritarian appreciation, for instance, who rejects right-economics and liberty-loving. We want another measure to weed out this type from the true “eclectics” who take every side into consideration. Viewpoint diversity gets at this.

To find it, we want to measure how close together someone’s bars are *to one another* within their circular bar graph. Someone whose bars are all close to one another (regardless of whether they’re strongly or moderately assertive) can be called *eclectic*. In other words, they appreciate all sides relatively equally. Their circle might look like a big, wide sunflower or it might look like a small one, but the point is that it’s

symmetrical: the “petals” are equally sized.

Here’s how I calculate that. We start by finding the average difference between each of the four ideology scores. Since there’s 4 ideologies, that means there are 6 differences to take into account. Like so:



...where each red line is a difference. So we just subtract each value from each other value and then convert all these differences to *absolute* differences by removing the negative signs. You end up with 6 numbers. These 6 numbers are averaged into one value. This is the magic value. Mathematically, it works out that the magic value must fall between 0 and 15. So again, we can divide this up into quartiles to get four diversity viewpoint categories.

Those scoring in the first quartile (scores 0 to 3.75) get the result “very exclusive” because their “petals” are very unequal. Their views are rather siloed and they reject certain lines of thinking. Those in the second (3.76-7.5) are just “exclusive.” Those in the third (7.51-11.25) are “eclectic” because they have relatively equal “petals” meaning they’ve got pretty equally distributed political appreciations. And, naturally, those in the fourth (11.26-15) are “very eclectic.”

Political Label

So then we can smash those two main results together and make a 2 by 2 matrix with 4 labels for 4 different political types. To do that, I disregard the very / non-very thing and break it down to just two broad dichotomies: (1) strong vs. moderate (2) eclectic vs. exclusive. So the matrix looks like this:

Strong and Eclectic	Moderate and Eclectic
Strong and Exclusive	Moderate and Exclusive

Then we've got to give these guys names because what's a typology without fun names?

Moderate x Eclectic = *Moderate Centrist*. With noncommittal but well-balanced views, this is your average "normie," a conventional centrist and lower-case "c" conservative (i.e. a conservative in Edmund Burke's sense). Their result comes with this description:

"You're a person who's wary of big moves and big statements. You believe everyone has some good points and some bad points, and it's hard to tell which is which, so we should take our time and be careful. You might sometimes go out and advocate for something impactful, but only in special cases."

Strong x Eclectic = *Expansive Pluralist*. With strong, committed views that are all over the place, this is someone who picks and chooses what they like with little regard for labels or partisan association. Their result comes with this description:

"You're someone who gets excited about all points of view. You dislike boxing yourself in with labels. In politics, you're unconcerned with being consistent or

coherent. You're not afraid to take strong stances and make big moves in whatever direction, regardless of which side endorses it, if it seems right to you."

Moderate x Exclusive = *Soft Ideologue*. This person is noncommittally but definitively associated with certain lines of thinking and against other lines. They're someone who likely gets sort of worked up about the same things as their hard-ideologue counterparts but forgets about it, doesn't bring it up at family gatherings, and doesn't tweet about it. Their result comes with this description:

"You're pretty sure about the directions we need to take, being suspicious of certain ideologies and confident that your way of thinking is on the right track. However, you're not fully committed - you're not likely to go out and crusade for your point of view except in certain circumstances."

Strong x Exclusive = *Hard Ideologue*. This is your typical activist-minded ideologue who's very confident about their strongly held views and very sure the other side is wrong. Their result comes with this description:

"You're very sure about the directions we need to take, believing fully in your point of view and rejecting other ideologies that you see as wrongheaded. You're committed to your cause. You are likely an active participant in the political sphere and you advocate for your beliefs with confidence."

So yeah, that's it. Reach out with any thoughts or anything. My Twitter is [@nate_coffman](#). You can also email me at ncoffman96@gmail.com. You can join the Plural Politics Discord group [here](#) and consider supporting the project on Patreon [here](#). I love you.

Version 2: Main Updates (August, 2023)

Ah shit, here we go again. In October of 2022 the test was launched thanks to [Sarah Hubschman](#), the top-notch programmer who translated everything you've read here into cold hard code. It got lots of feedback, especially on [our Discord server](#). Two big substantial critiques kept coming up: (1) the prompts with their four statements were too cognitively demanding, making the test a bit of a chore to take (2) the four ideologies from the Nolan Chart were too limited.

Version 1 was indeed guilty on both counts. Version 2 fixes these issues. It overhauls the way prompts are presented to make it easier on the brain and it adds two new ideologies to the original four. It also updates a bunch of other stuff, which I'll list in an appendix at the end of this document.

New Presentation of Test Items

Version 1 presented users with a prompt and four points of view to click if they found any of them valid to think about. The four POVs corresponded to the four metrics on the Nolan Chart. I liked this because it eliminated any whiff of false dichotomy. I didn't want to use a system like "Statement: Agree or Disagree" (a simpler layout) because I thought it would give polarity vibes. But I knew the difference was only aesthetic. At the end of the day, users would just be checking a box or not checking a box, so it was always going to be all-or-none in terms of scoring.

So, given the feedback that version 1's layout was overwhelming to look at, I'm willing to sacrifice on aesthetics. It really *was* a chore to take version 1.

So now I'm doing "Statement: Lean Yes or Lean No." Each statement corresponds to an ideology and it's the job of the user to say whether or not they sympathize with it. There

are 72 statements in total. 72 pages is more to click through than the previous 30, but it's significantly less information to parse overall since each page now presents just a single idea as opposed to four.

The 72 new statements are broken up into six groups of 12. That's 12 statements each for six ideologies (since I've added two new ones to the original four). Instead of 30 pieces of data to add together to make an ideology score, there's now 12. This reduction does sacrifice a degree of precision but I honestly don't think we were getting a lot out of version 1's precision anyway. 12 items per metric is perfectly acceptable in social science so it's good enough here.

Two New Ideologies

I've added two new ideologies to the original four. These are "Traditional" and "Progressive." Where liberty and authority concern social hierarchy in the present, the concern of traditionalism and progressivism is one's stance toward the past and future. Lots of quizzes conflate traditionalism with authoritarianism and progressivism with libertarianism. But a cursory glance at the world busts open those conflations. Stalinists were progressive (forward-looking) authoritarians. Reaganites were traditionalist (backward-looking) liberty-lovers. For the record, I lay much of the blame for the rampancy of these conflations on the Political Compass, which conflates hierarchy and historicity pretty systematically.

So the concerns of liberty/authority and progression/tradition are analytically discrete. But... are they *empirically* distinct? (Queue next section.)

Version 2: Empiricism

I ran a new study using exactly the same design and procedure as for version 1, only with new test items. This time, I ended up with an N of 82 participants after removing 18 who failed an attention check item.

Results

The updated liberty-loving scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .70$). The updated authority-respecting scale appears barely internally consistent with a barely acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .60 ($\alpha = .68$). The updated left-economics scale appears *just* barely internally consistent with a barely acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .60 ($\alpha = .63$). The updated right-economics scale appears *just* barely internally consistent with a barely acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .60 ($\alpha = .61$). The new progressive scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .73$). The new traditional scale appears internally consistent with an acceptable Cronbach's alpha score above .70 ($\alpha = .72$). All values indicate that the indices are testing for constructs that hang together more or less reliably.

Across the board we're seeing lower internal consistency. That's because (1) the metrics are shorter (2) people are happier to agree with statements when there aren't any alternative statements on screen, so there's less variance. But they're all still technically acceptable. I'd actually expected at least a couple of them to come out unacceptable, which would have impelled me to retool and retest. As a person trained in social science I'm rather bothered by this reduction in internal consistency but it's just part of the sacrifice necessary to make this thing more fun. There's a reason everyone takes quizzes on BuzzFeed for free but few people volunteer to participate in academic studies for pay. Rigorous consistency makes for boring tests.

Table 2. Version 2 inter-index bivariate correlations (Pearson's r)

	Item 1	2	3	4	5	6
Item 1: Right-economics	--					
Item 2: Left-economics	.50**	--				
Item 3: Liberty-loving	.62**	.46**	--			
Item 4: Authority-respecting	.70**	.58**	.48**	--		
Item 5: Progressive	.68**	.51**	.71**	.65**	--	
Item 6: Traditional	.77**	.61**	.48**	.76**	.57**	--

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Again, all inter-index correlations are positive, significant, and robust, which reveals again what it revealed last time. Somewhat noteworthy is the fact that the two strongest correlations are traditionalism with right-economics (.77) and traditionalism with authority-respecting (.76). These three variables have been historically associated with the political right. It's interesting that the two traditionalism correlations are stronger than the correlation between right-economics and authority-respecting itself (.70). It's as if traditionalism is the bridge between the two. Two theories for this. One: law-and-order types are moving away from the libertarian (right) economics that they used to extol as figures like Donald Trump support rightwing social beliefs but are economically eclectic. (Trump supports deregulation and lower taxes, right-wing stances, but also Social Security and barriers to free trade, left-wing stances.) Two: maybe it's that traditionalism has *always* been the glue that most strongly binds different factions of conservative coalitions (as in Frank Meyer's [fusionism](#)). Note that these are just offhanded suggestions. Really the correlations are all pretty close and probably within the margin of error.

Appendix: Miscellaneous Updates (August, 2023)

1. I changed “Soft Ideologue” to “Advocate” and “Hard Ideologue” to just “Ideologue.” I felt bad calling so many people ideologues. Surprisingly, nobody ever really pushed back on this, which might be worth theorizing about. But “Advocate” is just a more poised way of speaking, even though I still personally regard these people as soft ideologues.
2. The results page now links to suggested reading material based on the user’s scores. I’d planned to do this in version 1 but the idea fell to the wayside as we worked through how to program the thing itself. Now the readings are specifically catered to users on their results page in addition to being listed on the “Expand” page. Users get reading recs when they skip 4 or more prompts in either an ideology or a question category.
3. I changed how viewpoint diversity is calculated because adding two new ideologies would make for 15 difference scores instead of 6 using the old method, which would mean unwieldy code and weird results (and this problem would increase exponentially with any future additions). So now I’m just calculating the standard deviation, which is the average distance of all points in a dataset from the mean of the dataset as a whole. With this method, diversity scores fall between 0 and 6. Between 0 to 1.5 is “very eclectic,” between 1.5 and 3 is “eclectic,” between 3 and 4.5 is “exclusive,” and between 4.5 and 6 is “very exclusive.”
4. I changed the windows for assertiveness by quite a lot. Version 2’s presentation leads to more agreement across the board due to how people respond differently to a single statement versus four statements on screen. Basically, version 2’s presentation makes people significantly more agreement-happy. By a back-of-the-envelope count, version 1 had a yes/no ratio of about 1:4 whereas

version 2 has a ratio closer to 2:1. Wow! So I widened the windows for moderate and very moderate to 0-33% and 34-66% respectively and shrunk the ones for strong and very strong to 67-82% and 83-100% respectively. (It's no longer just quartiles.) If I hadn't, way too many people would get Ideologue and Expansive Pluralist and way too few would get Moderate Centrist and Advocate. In sum, I nudged the markers to get a relatively equal mix of all four labels among users. Folks want to see what their personalities are like relative to other people, not arbitrary statistical quartiles.

5. I added a pop-up with instructions that users have to click away to start the test. This is cleaner than including the instructions on every question page. (Duh. Lots of minor updates seem obvious after the fact.) Here's the instructions:

“Choose ‘Lean Yes’ if you sympathize with a statement. Choose ‘Lean No’ if you disagree with a statement, you don’t vibe with it, or you think its basic premise is wrongheaded. Choose ‘Skip’ if you don’t know or don’t have an opinion.”

I like providing three different options for clicking ‘lean no.’ Oftentimes one simply disagrees. But there's also the case of sensing the moral landscape hinted at by a statement and being displeased by that *landscape* while not necessarily disagreeing with the words per se. In other words, there can be “vibes-based” responses (which, by the way, we should all collectively stop giving into. It's actually good to think critically.) And thirdly there's the “wrongheaded premise” one, e.g. like what philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote: that in responding ‘no,’ he meant really to wave away the whole question. As in “Hush... none of that now.” I hope users keep in mind that all of these reasons for selecting ‘lean no’ are acceptable even though nobody ever reads instructions, myself included.

6. I made accounts for Plural Politics on [Medium](#), [Twitter](#), and [Reddit](#). Will I be active on these? Who's to say.