

Might or care? The political choice that will define ou...

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Politics is being recast as dominance: strength, winning, threats, hierarchy. Donald Trump may be the loudest advocate of this worldview, but he is not alone.

In this video, I explain what I call the politics of might — rule by threat, the rejection of restraint, and the treatment of institutions, law and truth as optional. It shapes taxation, welfare, international relations and democracy itself. It legitimises inequality and makes insecurity a tool of control.

I contrast that with the politics of care — not as sentiment, but as the practical recognition of vulnerability and interdependence. Care builds productivity, stability, trust and long-term resilience. It requires accountable democratic government acting to reduce fear, not amplify it.

Ultimately, this is the choice: fear or care, dominance or cooperation, exclusion or inclusion.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ1_o8uJlVU?si=PZPVBWkpcK9EQxfF

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=hw4pm-1a17c43-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Might or care? That is the choice that will define our future.

We're being told now by politicians that everything is about strength, dominance, and winning. Donald Trump is, of course, making these ideas explicit, but he is far from alone, but this is not about strength. What he is describing is what I might call "the politics of might," and it is the direct opposite of the "politics of care."

So what do I mean by the politics of might? The politics of might says power justifies itself. It assumes those who can dominate are entitled to rule. It rejects restraint, cooperation, and mutual obligation, and it treats institutions, law and truth as optional extras within society, which are of little consequence, and this matters now.

We are not just talking about rhetoric here. This approach, the politics of might, reshapes how government behaves. It affects taxation and welfare, international relations and democracy itself. It encourages rule by threat rather than by consent, and it legitimises inequality as a natural outcome of what it calls strength.

This can be contrasted directly with the "politics of care." Care is not weakness. The politics of care starts from the recognition of human vulnerability, and we all suffer from that in some way or other. It recognises interdependence and not self-sufficiency, and it accepts that markets do not meet all needs. As a result, it insists that the state has responsibility for collective well-being.

There's a contrast, therefore, to be made between care and might: they are two opposing worldviews.

Might says hierarchy is inevitable.

Care says dignity is universal.

Might rewards accumulation and dominance.

Care prioritises sufficiency, security, and shared provision.

What are the economic consequences of the politics of might? Tax cuts for the powerful would, of course, be justified as an indication of strength. Public services would be framed as a sign of weakness or dependency and would therefore be subject to scrutiny and cuts. Inequality would be tolerated or encouraged, and economic insecurity would become a tool of control, and that point is particularly important. People would be coerced because, of course, that is exactly what might is all about. This is what those who think they have strength believe they should do to enforce their will upon others.

What are the social consequences of the politics of might? Trust would collapse. Fear would become normalised. Groups would be pitted one against another, and we are already seeing that. We are seeing leading members of the Tory party arguing that the greatest threat to the UK is Islam. Well, that's just nonsense; it's absolutely untrue, and

yet they're claiming it, and that is deliberate. It is a consequence of "othering" people, and the result is to replace solidarity with suspicion, and that is deeply dangerous.

There are also democratic consequences of the politics of might. Independent institutions are attacked as a consequence of this philosophy, and we can see that in the USA right now. Jerome Powell, who is in charge of the US Federal Reserve, is being attacked at a personal level because Trump doesn't like him. There's nothing more or less to that, and of course, he's not the first to suffer this sort of victimisation by his administration. Courts, regulators and the media are delegitimised, and we see that every day in the States, but we're also seeing that in the UK as well. And accountability is portrayed as obstruction, as if it is not our right to ask questions of those who are in power. As a consequence, democracy becomes performative rather than real.

Care, on the other hand, is economically rational. Let's just stand back for a moment and really consider this key point. Care is not sentimental. If people are cared for, they are more productive because they feel more secure. They're more willing to go to work. They do not live in fear. They can therefore take the risk of actually undertaking activity, and healthy populations cost much less in the long term than do those who live in fear. We know that; the evidence is unambiguous. And what is more, education, which is a clear indication of care, is an investment and not a drain because it improves our long-term productivity, but also the chance of people to simply live good and happy lives. Stability supports sustainable economic activity in that case, and that is what the politics of care delivers.

With care, the role of the state changes as well. It is quite literally a carer, and not an enforcer, and the state exists to reduce fear and not to amplify it. This is, of course, in direct contrast to everything that we are seeing Trump doing and which others want to copy from his playbook and use across Europe. The role of the state in the politics of care is to provide security where markets cannot, and that includes healthcare, housing, income, security, and basic infrastructure to ensure that we can thrive. This is not about ideology. It is about practical governance, but it's also about delivering what people really need.

The false promise of strength is that it concentrates power, but erodes legitimacy. It delivers short-term gains, and I think that is obvious. Right now, it looks as if Trump is winning, but the cost in the long term of that happening is enormous. It creates brittle systems that collapse under stress, and that will be the inevitable outcome of what is going on in the US at present. Ultimately, all of this depends on coercion, and people don't like being coerced.

We do therefore face a choice, a very real choice. Do we organise society around fear, or care? Around dominance, or cooperation? Around exclusion, or inclusion? And this is not abstract; it is a genuine political choice. We have those options available to us, and we have to decide the one which delivers sustainability and community and well-being for everyone if we are all to survive on an equal footing and just survive at all, to be

blunt.

My conclusion: the politics of might is economically destructive. It undermines democracy and social cohesion. It destroys the willingness to work. If growth is your criteria for success, and it's not mine, it is still a bad choice. In contrast, the politics of care is not optional; it is necessary, and it requires active, accountable, democratic government; the very thing which every government around the world now seems to be walking away from, including here in the UK.

What follows from this? What can we do? Well, we must reject the narratives that glorify dominance. We must defend the role of the state. We must argue openly for care as an organising principle, and we must show it in our actions, and we must rebuild political economy around human need. That is what we need to do. That is why I talk about the politics of care, because I believe in it.

I believe that this is what we must evidence if we are to eventually rid ourselves of the threat that we can now see all around us, which comes from this politics of might, which we might as well call fascism by any other name, and which is threatening to bring us all down.

We don't need that.

We need to care.

We need to look out for each other.

We need to literally build the systems that will protect us all from the threat that is being put in our way.

This is the choice we have to make, and if ever there was a call for action, it is just this: Please, care. Care for each other. Care for each other, whoever the other person is, because one day you might need them to care for you, and that's really important.

What do you think? This is an important issue, one that matters heavily to me. Does it to you?

There's a poll down below. Let us know.

Poll

[poll id="290"]

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