

EAF 22 - Ronald Reagan Choice as Analytical Framework

Do you share my reverence for Mr. Reagan? His great, perhaps greatest, speech was *A Time for Choosing* (1964). He said, “. . . up to man’s age-old dream, the maximum of individual freedom, consistent with order, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism.” Visualize this choice as vertical line—up to freedom or down to totalitarianism.

That choice founds an analytical framework that I believe incorporates your thinking and guides evaluation of any public policy, politician’s position, or pundit pronouncement. At the risk of appearing immodest, I label this thought-guiding tool the **Enis Analytical Framework (EAF)**. See if these examples incorporate your thinking and guide analysis:

The world is divided into two kinds of people: those who desire to tell other people what to think and say and do (totalitarians), and those who resist such orders (freedom-seekers). To avoid any prerogative connotations—left-wingers, radicals, out-of-the-mainstream, conservatives, tea-partiers, etc.—let’s label the former **TOTALISTS** and the latter **FREEDOMITES**. **TOTALISTS** are Platocrats—followers of the philosophy that sees the world as it ought to be (Plato’s *Republic*)—idealism structured by ideology. **FREEDOMITES** follow Aristotle (*Politics*) who says see the world as it is—common experience structured by science and evidence.

Totalitarianism has many labels: aristocracy, feudalism, socialism, fascism, communism, communitarianism, liberalism (20th century version), progressivism. **TOTALISTS** believe that their desires rule slaves, peasants workers, proletariat, untermenshen, useful idiots, rank-and-file union members, American consumers. The elite few not only know what is best, but fervently believe that that knowledge grants them the power to force the rest of us to obey. Thus they seek ever more rules, laws, regulations, tax increases to enforce and expand their powers. We know what is best for you—even if you do not comprehend or acquiesce. You are not only ignorant, but are evil, to oppose us **FREEDOMITES**.

The **EAF** not only categorizes schools of philosophy, but also economics: micro (price) theory studies how individuals (who resist being told what to do) respond to incentives—in most basic form: supply/demand changes to price adjustments. Macroeconomics studies how public policy (monetary and fiscal) promulgated by politicians and bureaucrats affects economic behavior. Price theory has developed from Adam Smith to Alfred Marshall to Ludwig von Mises to Milton Friedman to Gary Becker and Steven Levitt. Macro theory—public policy descends from Thomas Malthus to Chancellor Bismarck to Lord Keynes to Thomas Piketty and Paul Krugman. Note how the emphasis of analysis shifts from micro to macro: individual behavior to government control.

We can use the **EAF** to analyze public policy today: Obama’s war on business (EPA, FDA, renewable energy, Obamacare), IRS political targeting, Bengasi tragedy, ignored red line in Syria, illegal immigrant amnesty, faux impeachment scare, and on and on. How do those of us who favor individual freedom—initiative and entrepreneurship, the Constitution, small and efficient government, religious freedom, etc. analyze and act to prevent TOTALISTS from transforming it?

The **EAF** can begin to structure that thought and action. It is not an answer, but a blueprint, a balance sheet, for guiding analysis. Just as an architect’s blueprint or an accountant’s balance sheet structures their work, so can the **EAF** structure analysis of public policy. It does not relieve the analyst of hard thought about each policy or politician, but does provide structure and guidance for that analysis.

I do hope that this brief sketch of my ideas piques your interest. More detail is available on my website DrBenEnis.com. If you do find these ideas useful, I would be most pleased to discuss them with you. Please contact me.

