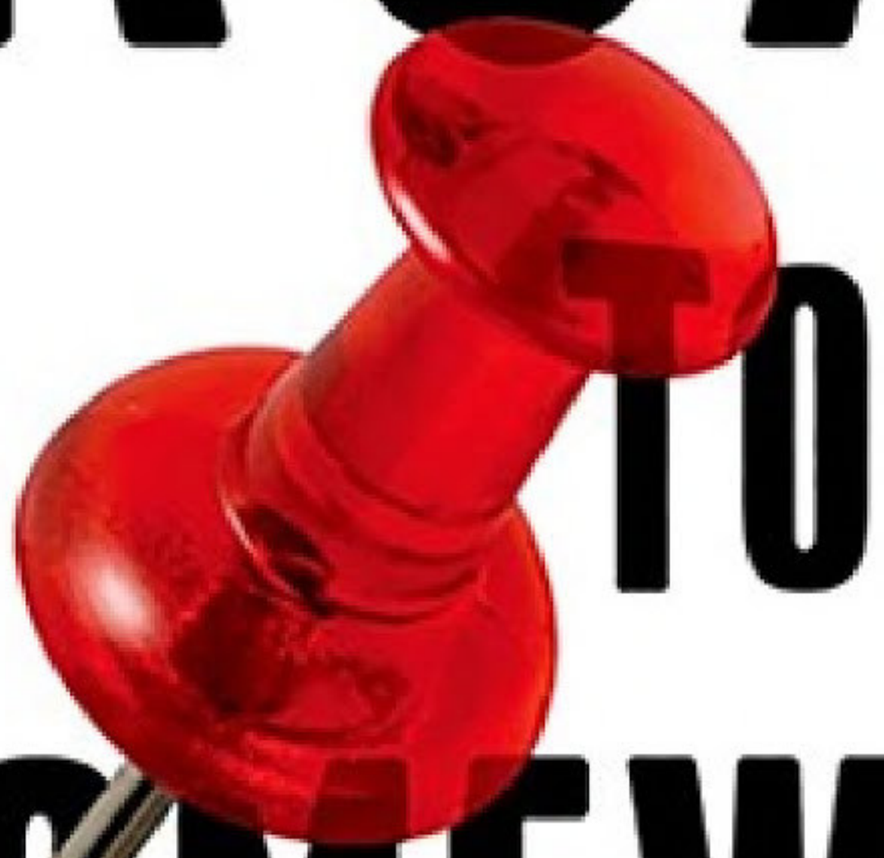
'Challenging and illuminating.' — Will Hutton

THE ROAD TO SOMEWHERE



THE POPULIST REVOLT AND THE FUTURE OF POLITICS

DAVID GOODHART

First published in English in the United Kingdom in 2017 by C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.,
41 Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3PL

Distributed in the United States, Canada and Latin America by Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 0016, United States of America.

A Cataloguing-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 9781849047999
eISBN: 9781849049139

www.hurstpublishers.com

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is in part a response to recent events. It also grew out of my earlier writing on immigration and multiculturalism (in *The British Dream*) and is an attempt to provide a broader critique of contemporary liberalism from the radical centre. I had planned something more abstract and timeless with Postliberal in the title. Then those events intervened and I have instead written something swifter and more specific. It draws on several things I have written in the three years since *British Dream*, above all the *Demos Quarterly* essay 'A Postliberal Future?' This book is certainly informed by Postliberal (and Blue Labour) thinking but I have not used the word Postliberal in the title, or in the book at all, as it is too opaque and open to misinterpretation.

There are many people I would like to thank for various kinds of assistance or insight in the writing of this book and the more general evolution of my thinking (see also the Select Bibliography at the end). Special thanks to: Andrew Adonis, Katharine Birbalsingh, Belinda Brown, Geoff Dench, Eric Kaufmann, Michael Lind, Paul Morland, Toby Mundy, Bob Rowthorn, Allen Simpson plus Michael Dwyer, Jon de Peyer, Alison Alexanian and the team at Hurst. I would also like to thank: Michelle Bannister, Jamie Bartlett, Hannah Beard, Phillip Blond, Sam Bright, Alex Brummer, Andrew Cahn, Samantha Callan, Daisy Christodoulou, Jon Cruddas, René Cuperus, William Davies, Swati Dhingra, Stephen Driver, Bobby Duffy, Daniel Finkelstein, Janan Ganesh, Maurice Glasman, Dean Godson, Maud Goodhart, Matthew Goodwin, Charles Grant, Andrew Green, Francis Green, Kathy Gyngell, Jonathan Haidt, Ernst Hillebrand, Sunder Katwala, Inara Khan, Shiria Khatun, Ivan Krastev, David Landsman, Tim Leunig, Warwick Lightfoot, Alexander Linklater, John Lloyd, Rebecca Lowe Coulson, Pam Meadows, Anand Menon, David Metcalf, Jasper McMahon, Richard Norrie, Liav Orgad, Geoff Owen, Marie Peacock, Trevor Phillips, John Philpott, Rachel Reeves, Christopher Roberts, Shamit Saggar, Paul Scheffer, Tom Schuller, Jonathan Simons, Jon Simmons, David Soskice, Nick Timothy, David Willetts, Max Wind-Cowie, Alison Wolf, Philip Wood, Michela Wrong.

1

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Brexit and the election of Donald Trump—the two biggest protest votes in modern democratic history—marked not so much the arrival of the populist era in western politics but its coming of age.

Looking back from the future, the first few years of the twenty-first century, culminating in those two votes, will come to be seen as the moment when the politics of culture and identity rose to challenge the politics of left and right. Socio-cultural politics took its place at the top table alongside traditional socio-economic politics—meaning as much as money.

This book, conceived at the beginning of 2016, was originally intended to, among other things, warn against the coming backlash against the political status quo—and in particular against the 'double liberalism', both economic and social, that has dominated politics, particularly in Britain and America, for more than a generation.

The backlash came earlier than I expected, but it did not come out of the blue. In fact it was widely predicted and has been several decades in the making. Britain has been catching up with more established trends in continental Europe and the US. The spirit of the new political era can be found in solid support for populist parties across Europe (many of which have been part of governing coalitions), in persistent opposition to large scale immigration, in Trump's election in the US, in Brexit, in the success of the Scottish National Party, and in the demise of the British Labour Party and much of the European centre-left. This book will focus on Britain but will consider related trends in Europe and the US.

Both Brexit and Trump's election were unexpected victories given a decisive tilt by unhappy white working class voters—motivated, it seems, more by cultural loss, related to immigration and ethnic change, than by economic calculation. But they are also very different phenomena. Trump's 'strongman' appeal marked a more radical departure in both tone and content from what has gone before in western politics and will, of course, have more far-reaching consequences than Brexit. If Trump keeps his isolationist election promises the world may slide towards a trade war and global economic depression, not to mention a free hand for Russia in her near abroad; if he jettisons them his core supporters may not take it well.

Liberal democracy is unlikely to be toppled, even in the US. The habits of compromise and civic order are too ingrained, and America will remain a land of plenty for the vast majority. And in Britain large parts of politics will remain either technocratic or marked by left-right priorities—how best to combine state and market in infrastructure spending, for example, or how to rein in inequality. But since the turn of the century western politics has had to make room for a new set of voices pre-occupied with national borders and pace of change, appealing to people who feel displaced by a more open, ethnically fluid, graduate-favouring economy and society, designed by and for the new elites.

Many liberal-minded people in Britain and elsewhere have been uncomfortable about granting space to these political forces and regard hostility to the openness required by European integration and a more global economy as simply irrational, if not xenophobic.

Some of those core Remainers reported waking up the day after the Brexit vote feeling, at least briefly, that they were living in a foreign country. If that was, indeed, the case they were merely experiencing, in political reverse, what a majority of people apparently feel every day.

For several years now more than half of British people have agreed with this statement (and similar ones): ‘Britain has changed in recent times beyond recognition, it sometimes feels like a foreign country and this makes me feel uncomfortable.’ Older people, the least well educated and the least affluent are most likely to assent, but there is quite widespread support from other groups too.[1]

Even allowing for the querulous spirit that opinion polls often seem to inspire, this is an astonishing thing for the majority of the population to agree to in a country as stable, peaceful, rich and successful as today’s Britain. It is a similar story in the US where 81 per cent of Trump supporters said life was better fifty years ago.[2] What is going on?

Much of the British commentariat see an ‘open v closed’ divide as the new political fault-line. Tony Blair dedicated a speech to the distinction in 2007 just before he left office: ‘Modern politics has less to do with traditional positions of right versus left, more to do today, with what I would call the modern choice, which is open versus closed.’[3]

He was partly right, but he failed to grasp why so many people find his version of open so unappealing. To understand that we have to consider the great value divide in British society, echoed to varying extents in other developed societies. The old distinctions of class and economic interest have not disappeared but are increasingly over-laid by a larger and looser one—between the people who see the world from Anywhere and the people who see it from Somewhere.

Anywheres dominate our culture and society. They tend to do well at school—Vernon Bogdanor calls them the ‘exam-passing classes’—

then usually move from home to a residential university in their late teens and on to a career in the professions that might take them to London or even abroad for a year or two. Such people have portable 'achieved' identities, based on educational and career success which makes them generally comfortable and confident with new places and people.

Somewheres are more rooted and usually have 'ascribed' identities —Scottish farmer, working class Geordie, Cornish housewife—based on group belonging and particular places, which is why they often find rapid change more unsettling. One core group of Somewheres have been called the 'left behind'—mainly older white working class men with little education.[4] They have lost economically with the decline of well-paid jobs for people without qualifications and culturally, too, with the disappearance of a distinct working-class culture and the marginalisation of their views in the public conversation. However, Somewhere ambivalence about recent social trends spreads far beyond this group and is shared by many in all social classes, especially the least mobile. Despite recent increases in geographical mobility, about 60 per cent of British people still live within 20 miles of where they lived when they were fourteen.[5]

Of course, few of us belong completely to either group—we all have a mix of achieved and ascribed identities—and there is a large minority of Inbetweeners. Even the most cosmopolitan and mobile members of the Anywhere group retain some connection with their roots and even the most small town Somewhere might go on holiday abroad with EasyJet or talk on Skype to a relative in Australia.

Moreover, a large section of Britain's traditional elite remains very rooted in south east England and London, in a few old public schools and universities. Indeed they are more southern-based than in the past as the dominant families of the great northern and midland towns have gravitated south. But even if this part of the elite has not moved very far physically they are much less likely than in earlier generations to remain connected to Somewheres through land ownership, the church, the armed forces or as an employer. They are, however, connected to the new elites. As has happened before in British history, the old elite has absorbed the new one—the rising 'cognitive' elite of meritocrats, from lower social class and sometimes immigrant backgrounds. In doing so it has often exchanged traditional conservatism for a more liberal Anywhere ideology—consider George Osborne in whom the economic liberalism of the right and social liberalism of the left is said to combine.

In any case Anywheres and Somewheres do not overlap precisely with more conventional social categories. Rather, they are looser alignments of sentiment and worldview. Both groups include a huge variety of people and social types—Somewheres range from northern working class pensioners to Home Counties market town *Daily Mail* readers; Anywheres from polished business executives to radical academics.

Although I have invented the labels, I have not invented the two value clusters that are clearly visible in a host of opinion and value surveys—with Anywheres making up 20 to 25 per cent of the population, compared to around half for Somewheres (and the rest Inbetweeners).

This book and the Anywhere/Somewhere categorisation is both a frame for understanding what is going on in contemporary politics and a plea for a less headstrong Anywhere liberalism. The Anywheres have counted for too much in the past generation—their sense of political entitlement startlingly revealed after the Brexit and Trump votes—and populism, in its many shapes and sizes, has arisen as a counter-balance to their dominance throughout the developed world. It can be a destructive counter-balance, but if we are to be tough on populism we must be tough on the causes of populism too—and one of those causes has been Anywhere over-reach.

Extrapolating from opinion surveys, and adding my own judgments and observations, I have assembled a loose Anywhere ideology that I call 'progressive individualism'. This is a worldview for more or less successful individuals who also care about society. It places a high value on autonomy, mobility and novelty and a much lower value on group identity, tradition and national social contracts (faith, flag and family). Most Anywheres are comfortable with immigration, European integration and the spread of human rights legislation, all of which tend to dilute the claims of national citizenship. They are not in the main anti-national, indeed they can be quite patriotic, but they also see themselves as citizens of the world. Work, and in fact life itself, is about individual self-realisation. Anywheres are comfortable with the achievement society; meritocracy and most forms of equality (though not necessarily economic) are second nature to them. Where the interests of Anywheres are at stake—in everything from reform of higher education to gay marriage—things happen. Where they are not, the wheels grind more slowly, if at all.

By contrast, the Somewheres are more socially conservative and communitarian by instinct. They are not on the whole highly religious, unlike their equivalents in the US, and only a small number on the far-right fringes are hard authoritarians or consistent xenophobes. They are moderately nationalistic and if English quite likely to identify as such. They feel uncomfortable about many aspects of cultural and economic change—such as mass immigration, an achievement society in which they struggle to achieve, the reduced status of non-graduate employment and more fluid gender roles. They do not choose 'closed' over 'open' but want a form of openness that does not disadvantage them. They are also, in the main, modern people for whom women's equality and minority rights, distrust of power, free expression, consumerism and individual choice, are part of the air they breathe. They want some of the same things that Anywheres want, but they want them more slowly and in moderation. Their worldview—as with

Anywheres I have assembled it from opinion surveys and my own observations—is best described by a phrase that many would regard as a contradiction in terms: ‘decent populism’.

The relative powerlessness of British Somewheres in recent times is shown by, among other things: the miserable state of vocational education and apprenticeship provision in a graduate-dominated society, the double infrastructure failure in housing (in the south east) and transport links (in the north), and the bias against domesticity in family policy.

Both Anywhere and Somewhere worldviews are valid and legitimate and their divergence from each other is neither new nor surprising. What has changed is the balance of power, and numbers, between them. Until thirty or forty years ago the Somewhere worldview remained completely dominant. It was British common sense. Then in the space of two generations another Anywhere common sense has risen to challenge and partly replace it.

This is thanks, above all, to two things—the legacy of baby boomer ‘1960s’ liberalism and the expansion of higher education, which has played a key role in disseminating that legacy. We are now entering a third phase—Brexit might be said to mark its beginning—in which neither worldview is so clearly dominant.

The helter-skelter expansion of higher education in the past twenty-five years—and the elevation of educational success into the gold standard of social esteem—has been one of the most important, and least understood, developments in British society. It has been a liberation for many and for others a symptom of their declining status.

The Anywhere world of geographical, and often social, mobility, of higher education and professional careers was once the preserve of a small elite; it has now become general, though not universal. For Somewheres, meanwhile, post-industrialism has largely abolished manual labour, reduced the status of lower income males and weakened the national social contract—neither the affluent nor employers feel the same obligation towards ‘their’ working class that they once did.

In a democracy the Somewheres cannot, however, be ignored. And in recent years in Britain and Europe, and in the US through Donald Trump, they have begun to speak through new and established parties and outside party structures altogether. In Britain they helped to win the Brexit referendum and then the vote itself, and by constantly telling pollsters how worried they are about immigration they have kept that issue at the centre of British politics.

The Anywhere ideology is invariably a cheerleader for restless change. Consider this from Tony Blair, again, at the 2005 Labour conference: ‘I hear people say we have to stop and debate globalisation. You might as well debate whether autumn should follow summer… The character of this changing world is indifferent to tradition. Unforgiving of frailty. No respecter of past reputations. It has no custom and practice. It is replete with opportunities, but they

only go to those swift to adapt, slow to complain, open, willing and able to change.' This from the leader of the party which historically represented the people who benefitted least from capitalist modernisation.

When change seems to benefit everyone—such as broad-based economic growth or improved healthcare—the conflict between the two worldviews recedes. But when change does not seem to benefit everyone—as with the arrival of the two 'masses', a mass immigration society and a mass higher education system for almost half of school leavers—the restrained populism of Somewheres can find a voice.

One of the implicit promises of modern democratic citizenship is some degree of control over one's life. This translates most easily into a right to stop things happening, the right, at its most basic, to some stability and continuity in the place and the way one lives. Given the nature of the modern world even this is not a promise that democratic politicians can easily deliver, especially when committed to an economic liberalism that has exported factories and imported workers. Consider the extraordinary ethnic and physical changes in London and Birmingham in the past thirty years.

Somewheres are often said to be myopic, unable to see that accepting change brings longer-term advantage. Yet it is also the case that the people from Anywhere with more fluid identities and an educational passport to thrive are well equipped to benefit from change, while the people from Somewhere are often not, even in the long run.

Anywheres tend to see Somewhere conservatism as irrational or as a backlash against the advance of liberal social values. It can be that, but it is also to be expected that people who feel buffeted by external events with little political agency, social confidence or control over their destinies will cling all the harder to those spaces where they can exercise some control—in the familiar routines of their daily lives and beliefs. Somewhere conservatism may have shed many of the historical trappings of mid-twentieth century classic working-class conservatism—the protestant faith, jingoism, white supremacy—but the instinct to stick with the familiar and to those small zones of control and esteem means Somewheres are often hostile both to market change and to top-down state paternalism.

Most Somewheres are not bigots and xenophobes. Indeed much of what I call the 'great liberalisation' of the past forty years in attitudes to race, gender and sexuality (see the next chapter) has been absorbed and accepted by the majority of Somewheres. But compared with Anywheres the acceptance has been more selective and tentative and has not extended to enthusiasm for mass immigration or European integration. Somewheres are seldom anti-immigrant but invariably anti-mass immigration. They still believe that there is such a thing as Society.

The 1960s were not just about challenging traditional ideas and hierarchies—they also marked a further dismantling of the stable,

ordered society in which roles were clearly ordained. Individuals became freer to win or lose (see chapter seven). That was disorientating to many. Most Somewheres did not share the optimism of baby boomer Anywhere liberalism and instead found that the emerging post-industrial, post-nationalist, post-modern Britain was in many non-material ways a less hospitable place for them.

Eric Kaufmann, a leading authority on nationalism and ethnicity, has shown that the Brexit and Trump backlashes were not only about education and mobility but also about a core values divide, relating to order and authority, that cuts across age, income, education and even political parties in western democracies.[6] There is a cluster of questions that pollsters ask about the importance of children being obedient, support for capital punishment and so on—known as the authoritarian-libertarian axis—and a position closer to the authoritarian end of the axis turns out to be the key predictor of whether someone voted Brexit or not. (Only 11.5 per cent on the axis are actually classified as authoritarian though 52 per cent are described as illiberal.)[7]

Strong authoritarianism is the instinct of only a small minority but the broader desire of Somewheres for a more stable, ordered world, is now being heard in the parliaments and chancelleries of the developed world. And Generation Z, everyone born after 2001, seems to confirm this new tilt towards caution and conservatism.[8]

Kaufmann emphasises the ethnic aspect of this shift: 'As large scale immigration challenges the demographic sway of white majorities, the gap between whites who embrace change and those who resist it is emerging as the key political cleavage across the west. Compared to this cultural chasm, material differences between haves and have nots… are much less important.'[9]

This chimes with the view that at least part of Trump's success came through appealing to a hitherto latent white identity politics. In any case, populist politics is certainly here to stay and, though many of the parties themselves are unstable and often dominated by furious personality clashes, the demand for their product shows no sign of fading. Their appeal is primarily motivated by cultural anxiety and hard to measure psychological loss. Economic loss is a factor too—a significant majority of the 56 per cent of British people who describe themselves as 'have nots' voted Brexit—but if it was primarily about economic loss the populists of the left would surely be stronger.

There is another important aspect to this argument. Anywheres often claim that the trends they support are historically inevitable—whether it is mass immigration, the current form of globalisation or the decline of settled communities. But in reality, rich societies are much less mobile than Anywheres assume and the same is true for humanity as a whole: a little over 3 per cent of the world's 7.3 billion people live outside their country of birth and this percentage has only increased slightly in recent decades. Only twenty-five years ago, net

immigration to Britain was zero. It is true that inflows into rich countries have risen quite sharply since then but that has been partly the result of policy choices. Large-scale immigration is not a force of nature.

Also economic globalisation, at least in a technical sense, is less developed than is often assumed. If globalisation is defined as the emergence of a single global economy, with transnational corporations with worldwide production networks and few barriers to the free flow of goods, labour and capital, then it has barely started.

The globalisation story tends to focus on its impact on trade, finance, transport and communications technologies and immigrant diasporas, all of which are either inherently international or easy to internationalise. Even here the impact is much less than usually assumed and all these activitives are governed by national laws or international agreements drawn up between national governments. According to the trans-nationality index of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, even the 100 most global corporations still have nearly half of their sales, assets and employment in their home country (where they may still benefit from formal and informal protections).[10]

Moreover, the vast majority of workers in advanced countries work in the service sector serving the domestic market, not in the global economy. And while states have to take account of global market forces, they continue to have a large amount of potential discretion over fiscal, tax and welfare policy. Recent globalisation has in part represented a welcome rebalancing of power and wealth away from rich western states like Britain towards developing countries like China and India. But there is no reason why it should actively disadvantage the poorer people in rich countries.

The global openness of the past twenty-five years has been on balance a blessing for most British people, but the blessing becomes more mixed the further down the income and education spectrum you move. The particular forms that globalisation takes are not, however, set in stone—it is a matter of politics and can be adjusted. If the Anywhere technocrats who dominate the World Trade Organisation, the EU, the international human rights courts, and so on, are forced to concede that their version of globalisation is, in part, a choice, not an irresistible force like the seasons, as Tony Blair claimed, then by extension they must persuade us that it is a desirable destination. And that is very much harder. A better globalisation is possible and a world order based on many Somewhere nation states cooperating together is far preferable to one big supranational Anywhere.

This book will show that the people from Anywhere in Britain—including the metropolitan elites of left and right, reflecting the interests of the upper professional class—have dominated the political agenda whichever party has been in power for the past twenty-five years and have too often failed to distinguish their own sectional interests from the general interest.

It is true that the Anywheres have some social trends on their side, what *Economist* journalist Jeremy Cliffe has described as the 'Londonisation' of Britain: increased mobility and immigration, the spread of higher education, the social liberalism of younger generations, the detaching effect of social media and the decline of many traditional allegiances.[11] But many of these liberalising trends are reversible, particularly if automation starts to do to Anywhere jobs what it has partly already done to Somewhere ones, and in any case it is impossible to imagine a world without at least a large minority of people with core Somewhere values—half the population will always be in the bottom half of the income and the ability spectrums.

I use the word 'liberalism' many times in the course of the book so I should say something about it. We are all liberals now—from Nick Clegg to Nigel Farage—in the limited sense that we all believe in the rule of law, individual rights and checks and balances on power.

Then there are the more specific liberalisms that the word is more generally associated with today: the rights and equality revolution starting in the 1960s that we call social liberalism and the market revolution of the 1980s that we call economic liberalism. Social liberals are not necessarily economic liberals and vice versa but the two have partly merged in the past twenty-five years following the conversion of the centre-left to more market friendly economics. This 'double liberalism', I mentioned earlier, has dominated British society since the early 1990s and strongly overlaps with Anywhere progressive individualism.

One might also call it the liberal baby boomer worldview. Think of someone like Richard Branson, the hippy capitalist: individualistic, committed to autonomy and 'doing your own thing', a bit wary of the national, wide but shallow attachments. Such liberals usually care about social justice too but, as the American social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has pointed out, they often don't 'get' other political impulses—loyalty, authority and the sacred.

Compared with traditional societies, modern societies have a low level of moral and political consensus and, to many liberals, therein lies our freedom. John Stuart Mill's famous 'harm principle'—'the only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others'—speaks to the individualistic, even libertarian, live and let live ethos of part of modern Britain. (Though harm is an ambiguous concept and is now being extended by student radicals to encompass the idea of offence.)

We should recall, though, that Mill was rebelling against the conformism and authoritarianism of Victorian society. And in our much more liberal and diverse society it is common norms that now need protecting as much as liberty.

The harm caused by a slowly disconnecting society is hard to pinpoint, even if it is real enough. But liberalism does not care much for common norms or rather finds them too arbitrary. Who is David

Goodhart to tell you what your norms are? Why not someone else? On what basis do we agree our shared norms? There is no recourse to authority, because liberal modernity has largely undermined religious and moral authority in the name of freedom and individual choice. So we are just left with the liberal agreement to disagree.

But modern liberalism, far from being such a content-less technique for reconciling different points of view, ends up imposing the worldview of the mobile, graduate, upper professional elite—the Anywheres—on the rest of society. Some of that worldview, such as sex equality, has been broadly absorbed into mainstream common sense, but some of it has not: the erosion of national citizen favouritism, for example. That is the point where Anywheres and Somewheres fall out.

This book is mainly about Britain, though many of the issues I discuss are also relevant to other rich democracies. Most of this book is also about white British people, who still constitute around 80 per cent of the British population. But ethnic minority Britons are also an important and growing part of the story. Minorities can be an emblem of the rapid change that makes some of the long settled population anxious. But they also take their various places on the Anywhere/Somewhere spectrum. Superficially, minorities are often Anywhere inclined in that they are usually less attached to British traditions that may have excluded or humiliated them in the past and are more inclined to support an openness that allowed their families into the country in the first place. Yet they also have a special interest in social stability, tend to be more religious and often have more socially conservative views about the family and gender relations than the white British, which inclines them in a Somewhere direction. (Some of the most ethnically divided parts of Britain, such as the northern 'mill towns', are home to parallel Somewhere groups.)

It is time that Anywheres stopped looking down on Somewheres, white or non-white, and learnt to accept the legitimacy of their 'change is loss' worldview and even accommodate some of their sentiments and intuitions. As Michael Ignatieff, the former leader of the Canadian Liberal party, put it in a review of former British Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's account of the 2010 coalition government: 'Clegg has a bad case of high-minded liberal self-regard and it leaves him perpetually baffled that the people he calls populists stole support from under his nose. Presenting yourself as the voice of reason isn't smart politics. It's elitist condescension. Brexiters had their reasons and their reasons won the argument.'[12]

And in the words of Britain's one UKIP Member of Parliament, Douglas Carswell: 'The crowd is no longer a mob.'[13] Anywheres cannot continue ruling without consent of the crowd, just as Somewheres cannot exercise political power by shouting insults from the sidelines—feeling condescended to is not a good enough reason to vote for an inexperienced demagogue as president.

Brexit and the election of Donald Trump need not mean that the

forward march of liberalism is permanently halted. But a liberalism of the future that can appeal to a critical mass of Somewheres needs a less thin and unhistorical understanding of people and societies and a slower, more evolutionary approach to change that tries harder to win the consent of those who benefit least.

Orthodox liberalism's stress on choice and autonomy makes it uncomfortable with forms of identity and experience which are not chosen. It likes the idea of community in theory but does not see that a meaningful one excludes as well as includes. To this kind of liberalism people are rational, self-interested individualists existing apart from strong group attachments or loyalties. Much of modern economics and law are based on this model of human behaviour, which is why both disciplines often fail to properly account for national borders and preferences. And if you accept these liberal premises then any defence of tradition or community is likely to appear irrational or, in the case of immigration, racist.

Without a more rooted, emotionally intelligent liberalism that can find the common ground between Anywheres and Somewheres, the possibility of even more unpleasant backlashes cannot be completely ruled out, even in Britain. Brexit may be an early tremor rather like the unexpected populist surge in the Netherlands in the early 2000s. This book is partly about describing the underlying decency of many Somewhere ideas and intuitions and defending them from the disdain of some members of the Anywhere classes. But there are also crude and xenophobic versions of Somewhere politics where populism slides towards the far right or the threatening bombast of a Donald Trump.

* * *

A Journey from Anywhere

For most of my adult life I have been firmly in the Anywhere camp, and by background and life-style remain so. In the mid-1990s I was the founder editor of *Prospect*, the monthly current affairs magazine, that was loosely affiliated to the liberal centre-left and endorsed New Labour's arrival in 1997. But while editing *Prospect* I also began to detach myself, intellectually, from orthodox liberalism—in particular after writing a rather speculative essay for the magazine headlined 'Too Diverse?'[14] It raised questions about the conflict between rapidly increasing ethnic diversity and the feelings of trust and solidarity required to sustain a generous welfare state. The essay was reprinted in the *Guardian* and caused an almighty row, at least on the centre-left. I was accused of 'nice racism' and 'liberal Powellism'.

That brief notoriety triggered a lasting interest in immigration, race, multiculturalism, national identity and so on (which in 2013 resulted in a book, *The British Dream*).[15] And the more I studied these things and tried to defend my initial, rather accidental, scepticism the more I became convinced that the left had got on the wrong side of the

argument on mass immigration (too enthusiastic), and integration of minorities and national identity (too indifferent).

On matters of culture and community the sometimes socially conservative intuitions of mainstream public opinion came to seem to me at least as rational and decent as the individualistic egalitarianism of the middle class, university educated left which now dominates the Labour party. Liberalism, as the late Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall once said, is stupid about culture. It can be stupid about parts of human nature too. It understands the yearning for freedom and autonomy much less so for recognition and belonging. As I heard Labour politicians, some of them friends, talking about the fiscal benefits of mass immigration as the party's old working class base drifted away I understood what Hall meant.

Dogmatism and group-think are not the preserve of poorly educated Somewheres. Indeed, progressive Anywheres tend to be more socially tolerant than Somewheres but less politically tolerant.[16]

So I am a kind of Anywhere apostate but I like to think that I can see the point of both worldviews. My social networks are still largely comprised of Anywheres but when the conversation turns to politics I often find myself looking on as an outsider.

That does mean that I sometimes hear Anywhere views in their most unvarnished form—my email inbox was full of angry contempt for the ignorant masses from left-wing professors in the days after the Brexit vote. And here are two examples of conversations I have been part of in the last few years that illustrate one of the book's central theses and lend some support to Theresa May's reprimand to the world citizens 'from nowhere'.

The first conversation took place at an Oxford college dinner in Spring 2011. When I said to my neighbour—Gus O'Donnell, then in his last few months as Cabinet Secretary, the most senior civil servant in the land—that I was writing a book about immigration, he replied, 'When I was at the Treasury I argued for the most open door possible to immigration … I think it's my job to maximise global welfare not national welfare.'

I was surprised to hear this from the head of such a national institution and asked the man sitting next to the civil servant, Mark Thompson—then Director-General of the BBC—whether he believed global welfare should be put before national welfare, if the two should conflict. He defended O'Donnell and said he too believed global welfare was paramount.

This exchange underlined, rather starkly, what this book is about. Both men's universalist views are perfectly legitimate and may reflect their moderately devout Catholic upbringings. They are views that are quite normal in some circles and may now encompass up to 10 per cent of public opinion. O'Donnell, when I met him again a few months later, confirmed that my recollection of the conversation was accurate and he has subsequently expressed his views in milder form in newspaper articles. Moreover, he thinks that his views about

immigration are, notwithstanding some short-term losers, in the interests of the average British person.

But is it healthy for democracy when such powerful people hold views that are evidently at odds with the core political intuitions of the majority of the public? If these were just private views that had no bearing on the job that both men did it would not matter. But O'Donnell was the permanent secretary of the Treasury when important decisions were being made about immigration—not least the decision to open the British labour market in 2004 to the new former communist EU states seven years before required by EU law and seven years before any other large EU state did so. By all accounts he was a powerful advocate for openness.

The second conversation happened a few years before in 2007. I was at a sixtieth birthday party for a well-known Labour MP. Many of the leading intellectual figures of the British centre-left were also there and at one point in the evening the conversation turned to the infamous Gordon Brown slogan 'British jobs for British workers,' from a speech he had given a few days before at the Labour conference.

The people around me entered a bidding war to express their outrage at Brown's slogan which was finally triumphantly closed by Chris Huhne—who went on to become a Liberal Democrat cabinet minister in the Coalition government. He declared, to general approval, that it was 'racism, pure and simple.'

I remember nodding along but then thinking afterwards how weird the conversation would have sounded to most other people in this country. Gordon Brown's phrase may have been clumsy and cynical but he didn't actually say British jobs for white British workers. (In a YouGov poll soon after the speech, 63 per cent of people agreed that employers should have special incentives to hire British born workers and, rather shockingly, 22 per cent said there should be incentives to hire the white British born.)

In most other places in the world today, and indeed probably in Britain itself until about twenty-five years ago, such a statement about a job preference for national citizens would have seemed so banal as to be hardly worth uttering. But in 2007 the idea of a borderless Europe and the language of universal rights had ruled it beyond the pale, at least for this elite centre-left group.

By chance as I was writing this in October 2016 a similar row blew up over a suggestion, indirectly from Amber Rudd the home secretary, that companies should inform the Home Office of the proportion of their non-British employees when applying to sponsor a foreign worker for a work permit. The intention was to signal to employers that they might be over-dependent on foreign workers and not doing enough to train British ones. There was an indignant outcry from business and liberal Britain—in some cases absurdly citing the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany—and the measure was quickly dropped. Another YouGov poll again found widespread support for the proposal—with 59 per cent supporting (including a narrow

majority of Labour supporters) and 26 per cent opposing—proportions that almost map on to my estimate of the Anywhere and Somewhere populations of Britain.

But both Gordon Brown and Amber Rudd were addressing a real issue. As part of the greater freedom and efficiency of British business since the 1980s has come a weakening of the idea of the national corporate citizen, the implicit obligation to train and employ British citizens. As larger businesses have become more global and footloose, employers have come to expect complete freedom to import skilled workers and in some cases unskilled workers—in Britain's biggest manufacturing sector, food and drink, more than one third of production workers now come from eastern Europe, from almost nothing ten years ago. It did not even occur to the Labour party to complain about this.

Business self-interest and the progressive worldview—with its stress on openness, rights and equality—have both become uncoupled from common sense notions of economic justice, still seen through a national lens. It is this uncoupling that has been eating away at European social democracy.

More broadly, it illustrates how the gap between the secular liberal baby boomer Anywhere worldview that dominates our political party, governmental and social institutions and the intuitions of the ordinary citizen has become the great divide in British life.

* * *

In the next eight chapters I will first, in chapter two, introduce in more detail that great divide—as revealed in countless surveys—between Anywheres and Somewheres and then, in chapter three, set this British story in a wider European and American context. In the subsequent five chapters I will take different areas of life and show how Anywhere and Somewhere perspectives and interests differ. Chapter four considers globalisation, European integration and the nation state; chapter five looks at immigration, integration and the London story; chapter six looks at the knowledge economy and the declining status of non-graduate employment; chapter seven looks at the achievement society and its discontents; chapter eight looks at the remaking of family life. These are all huge fields about which libraries full of books have been written. I cannot claim to be an expert in any of them but by looking at them through the Anywhere/Somewhere prism I hope to shed some fresh light.

The final chapter will look at the likely future trends in the Anywhere/Somewhere tussle and make the case for a new political settlement that can provide Somewheres with more of a stake in our Anywhere-designed open societies.

2

ANYWHERES AND SOMEWHERES

In the immediate aftermath of the Brexit vote there was a long wail of dismay at how Britain had broken into two nations. Those who voted Leave were said to be Britain's losers: the left behind, the white working class of the Midlands and the North, but supplemented by older people from everywhere and Tory southerners. Their experiences and worldviews diverged radically from the core Remain voters, who were winners: optimistic, young, educated and middle class, living in the big metropolitan centres and university towns.

As the dust settled, this polarisation story came to be challenged by a more nuanced view of the multiple tribes of Britain and their internal divisions—a complex patchwork of social, economic and cultural differences, as the think tank British Future put it.[1] It was noted that only 37 per cent of Labour voters had voted Leave, that while most people in public housing voted Leave so too did those who had paid off their mortgages, and that there were large dissenting minorities of around 40 per cent in the main strongholds of both sides —London and Scotland for Remain, and the North East and the West Midlands for Leave.

Yet fundamental truths are often to be found in first reactions, and the Brexit vote did reveal a central divide in British society. This rift is not just about social class, though the Brexit vote was probably the most directly class-correlated political choice of my lifetime, with support for Remain highest at 57 per cent in the top social classes (A,Bs) dropping to 36 per cent in the lowest (C2,D,Es), with 49 per cent in the middle (C1s).[2]

The divide is about education and mobility and, in fact, the combination of the two. More decisive in predicting a Remain vote than affluence and membership of the highest managerial and professional class was whether or not someone was a graduate: more than two thirds of graduates voted Remain.[3]

There are many things that still unite us as a country. Most people accept the continuing reality and importance of the nation state even if the more liberal-minded think of it primarily as a community of interest—revolving around taxes, public services and rules for getting along together—rather than as a community of identity. And many of the so-called left-behinders accept much of the 'great liberalisation'

that I mentioned in chapter one—in attitudes towards race, sexuality and gender—even if they are by no means liberals. Indeed, the broad outlines of our politics, encompassing a relatively free-market economy with a big state and a big society—with a culturally permissive and egalitarian ethos—are accepted by the vast majority.

But I also believe that the Brexit vote happened because over the past generation we have allowed ourselves to drift too far off into separate and barely comprehending cultural blocs—the two tribes that I have labeled Anywheres and Somewheres.

The divisions can be seen in what we get angry about. When Nigel Farage complained about feeling uncomfortable in a train carriage with no English speakers in it, the outrage in Anywhere media reverberated for several days, but anecdotal evidence suggested that 60 or 70 per cent of the country thought what he said was just common sense. Or when Jeremy Corbyn did not sing the national anthem on one of his first outings as Labour leader, it was the Somewheres' turn to be infuriated. Anywheres were more likely to think it was an amusing media confection.

A free society has many conflicting values and strands of opinion, but if the value gulf becomes too deep—especially between the dominant class and the rest—we become vulnerable to shocks and backlashes like Brexit.

I am often taken aback at the lack of awareness on the part of Anywheres at just how peculiar their views are to middle-ground Somewhere opinion. Let me describe a scene that has become all too familiar to me over the past few years.

At the end of 2015 I was at a conference about the refugee crisis. It was a grand gathering in a country house with many experts providing alarming glimpses of Europe's southern and eastern borders—then looking increasingly like Europe's version of the Mexico–US border.

At several points during the two-day discussion the academics, NGOers and government officials talked about migration flows as if they were generals moving troops around the battlefield. There is, for example, a big youth bulge in the Western Balkans and in many of the forty African cities with more than a million residents. At the same time, several Western European countries have rapidly ageing populations. So, hey presto, argued several delegates, we should make it easier for the former to move to the latter and we would have a 'win-win situation' if only European politicians would show political leadership: code for ignoring public opinion.

This idea appeared to have the support of many people in the room. Yet it blithely ignores the fact there is such a thing as society. Societies are not just an aggregation of individuals who happen to live in physical proximity and into which millions of people from elsewhere can be easily transplanted.

Successful societies are actually existing things based on habits of cooperation, familiarity and trust and on bonds of language, history and culture. In modern times successful societies have also been

relatively open to movement of ideas and people. But if our European societies—a magnet to millions of refugees—are to continue flourishing they need to retain some sense of mutual regard between anonymous citizens, which means keeping inflows to levels that allow people to be absorbed into that hard-to-define thing we call a 'national culture' or 'way of life'.

Most people in Britain, and in the rest of Europe, when faced with images of desperate people in the summer of 2015 felt compassion—many acted on it as individuals by donating to charities, and most of us wanted our governments to do something to alleviate the suffering. But there are also clear limits—both financial and emotional—to this compassion. Most of us would like to be generous without encouraging further flows and without risking damage to our own country's social and cultural infrastructure. High levels of normal immigration in recent years means Britain is already struggling to properly integrate some incomers, especially those from traditional, often Muslim, societies.[4]

This ought to be common sense, especially to the sort of idealistic people at my conference who were mainly on the political left. Yet when it comes to immigration the left abandons its normally social and communitarian instincts and becomes libertarian in its individualism. Why not another 100,000 desperate people? After all what is there to integrate into? We are all just individual human beings, are we not? The universalism of the left—based on its historic commitment to race equality—meets the 'there is no such thing as society' individualism of the liberal right.

Yet not only do we know that there is such a thing as society we also know that good societies are characterised by high levels of trust and what academics call social capital—the existence of networks and insitutions that make it easier to cooperate for the common good. As the American political scientist Robert Putnam has, reluctantly, conceded, the effect of high levels of immigration and ethnic diversity is to reduce trust and familiarity, at least in the short-term, especially when the people arriving come from places that are culturally distant; absorbing 100,000 Australians is very different to 100,000 Afghans.

Rapidly increasing diversity can also reduce the readiness to share. This is based on the notion that people are readier to share with others they have a fair amount in common with. This does not have to be based on shared ethnicity or religion but it has to be based on something—shared interests and experience most obviously.

We do not all have to be the same, or have the same values, to successfully share a public space. After all, national social contracts and welfare states evolved in European societies that were sharply divided by class and region, but a sense of national solidarity, of sharing a common fate, transcended those differences.

Ethnic differences too can be, and are, absorbed into the national 'we' but it is not always a swift or easy process and liberal societies are reluctant to force the pace. The evidence suggests that ethnically

heterogeneous societies show lower levels of support for redistribution and thus in the longer run have weaker welfare states.[5] This is now emerging in Europe having long been evident in the US. (Trump's furious opposition to Obamacare, perceived as obliging the mainly white suburbs and small towns to subsidise the mainly non-white inner cities through their insurance premiums, is said to be another reason for his victory.)[6]

And what if the Anywhere vs Somewhere divide is itself contributing to the feeling that we are no longer a single society? That as social class divisions become more blurred, we are replacing them with this new divide based on education and mobility, and large social groupings which do not comprehend the intuitions of the other side on some of the most important issues of our times.

The binary distinction between Anywhere and Somewhere worldviews will feel too forced to many people, especially if they feel themselves to contain a mix of Anywhere and Somewhere values. Everyone is, of course, an individual political being with their own idiosyncratic mix of views and values. But we are also creatures of our circumstances and experiences, members of families, social groups, educational and ability categories, all of which leave their traces upon us in ways we are often unaware of and incline us towards wider value groups.

The value clusters I am describing are not static and older distinctions based on economics and left/right beliefs cut across them in unpredictable ways—it is possible to be a statist or a free-market Anywhere or Somewhere. Both value clusters lie on a spectrum—Anywheres and Somewheres come in many shapes and sizes—and, yes, there is quite a large Inbetween group (on my estimate about a quarter of the population).

Notwithstanding all those caveats, my two tribes capture the reality of Britain's central worldview divide and help illuminate important aspects of modern politics, including the unexpected Brexit vote. I sketched out the outlines of the Anywhere/Somewhere divide in chapter one, here is some more detail.

The most typical Anywhere is a liberally-inclined graduate. Anywheres vote for all the main parties but particularly the 'progressive' ones: Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens (and the civic nationalist SNP in Scotland). They generally belong to the mobile minority who went to a residential university and then into a professional job, usually without returning to the place they were brought up. They are mainly in the upper quartile of the income and social class spectrum and include a disproportionate number of people who feel a special responsibility for society as a whole. They predominate among decision makers and opinion formers. There is a left-of-centre wing—in caring professions like health and education, and the media and creative industries—and a right-of-centre wing in finance, business and traditional professions like law and accountancy. Anywheres are highly concentrated in London and the other main

metropolitan centres, as well as university towns.

This in a nutshell is their worldview: they broadly welcome change and are not nostalgic for a lost Britain; they fully embrace egalitarian and meritocratic attitudes on race, sexuality and gender (and sometimes class) and think that we need to push on further; they do not in the main embrace a borderless world but they are individualists and internationalists who are not strongly attached to larger group identities, including national ones; they value autonomy and self-realisation before stability, community and tradition.

The average Somewhere is on a middling income, having left school before doing A-levels. In voting preference, they lean towards the Conservatives and UKIP (many are ex-Labour). They are most likely to be in the bottom three quartiles of the income and social class spectrum and have not, in the main, experienced higher education. People from Somewhere are numerically a much larger and more widely distributed group than Anywheres but their political voice is weaker. They tend to be older and come from the more rooted middle and lower sections of society, from small towns and suburbia—where nearly 40 per cent of the population lives—and the former industrial and maritime areas.

Their worldview can be characterised thus: they do not generally welcome change and older Somewheres are nostalgic for a lost Britain; they place a high value on security and familiarity and have strong group attachments, local and national; Somewheres (especially younger ones) accept the equality revolution but still value traditional family forms and are suspicious of 'anything goes' attitudes; they are not Hard Authoritarians (outside a small core) but regret the passing of a more structured and tradition bound world.

A worldview is a fuzzy and fluctuating thing, but I estimate (and will show in more detail later) that around 20 to 25 per cent of the British population loosely share the Anywhere worldview as I have outlined it, with perhaps 5 per cent belonging to the more extreme sub-group that I call Global Villagers. Somewheres claim about half the population, with a sub-group that I call Hard Authoritarians of real bigots representing between 5 and 7 per cent of the population. The Inbetweeners account for the rest. Similar patterns exist in many other developed countries, as I will indicate in the next chapter, but my Anywhere/Somewhere distinction is based on British experience.

Attitudes to immigration have probably become the single biggest litmus test of Anywhere/Somewhere difference and over time have come to stand for more general attitudes towards social change and whether people feel comfortable with and feel they benefit from it, or not.

That more than 75 per cent of the population in 2013 wanted to reduce immigration a little or a lot suggests that even some Anywheres and a lot of Inbetweeners may, on this issue, have moved into the 'reduce immigration' camp.[7]

But in broad outline the numbers map neatly onto my estimated