OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

# The changing shape of politics

## Rethinking Left and Right in a new Britain

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# Chapter 2: Beyond left and right: The end of an old order?

As I explained in Chapter 1, one of the aims of this book is to challenge the idea that placing voters and parties on a single left-right spectrum can fully explain political competition in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. I suggest that in many contexts, a cultural dimension of political competition is just as important in explaining party choice. This applies both to Britain and to many other European countries. But to make this point we must address two fundamental questions. First, what do we understand by "left" and "right" and how have these notions evolved over time? Second, what do we understand by the "cultural dimension" of political competition and what kind of issues does it aggregate? In this chapter I will attempt to address these questions by considering the role of society and how conflicting interests within it have driven (changes in) political preferences. In doing so I will draw on the body of literature that addresses not only the issue of what political preferences are and how they are defined and classified, but also how these preferences are rooted in social structure.

The terms "left" and "right" first appeared in late eighteenth century France to describe the position deputies sat in the National Assembly in the immediate aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution. The mainly aristocratic deputies who supported the Catholic Church and the king sat to the right of the president, while supporters of the revolution sat to his left. By the twentieth century, however, "left" and "right" were understood as *economic* ideologies, with the right representing a preference for private enterprise and free market ideology, and the left favouring state intervention in the economy and a redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. The extreme left position was represented by the communist parties of Europe, which advocated full public (state) ownership of the means of production and distribution of wealth.

## Cleavage Theory

The shift in the meaning attributed to "left" and "right" through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the development of new forms of conflict within society. According to *cleavage theory*, as European societies modernised, a series of conflicts within them became salient and came to define party political competition. For Lipset and Rokkan (1967), two major processes shaped the diverse political landscape in Europe in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The first was the *national revolution*,

which occurred as the state gradually began to play a more significant role in the lives of ordinary citizens through the increasing power of the state bureaucracy and, more generally, the "widening … scope of governmental activities" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 13). Through the expansion of state-created or state-sanctioned projects such as the establishment of universal education, the railways, post office and police, by the latter part of the nineteenth century most citizens had had some kind of contact with the state and its agents (Hobsbawm 1990: 80-81). This marked a clear break from the earlier period in which the state was remote and relied on indirect rule via intermediaries such as nobles and priests (Hechter 2000: 57). For Lipset and Rokkan, the growing influence of a standardising state led to "increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct *subject populations* in the provinces and the peripheries" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 14). What is more, states increasingly sought control over education, wresting the power to educate the younger generation away from the family and, most importantly, away from the Church. In countries with a significant number of Catholics whose religious allegiance was to Rome, not the state capital, this issue became particularly divisive and led to a schism between secular and religious interests (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 15). In short, the national revolution generated two forms of *cleavage*, one between the centre and the periphery and one between the (Catholic) Church and the state (and more generally between religious and secular sections of society).

The second major process was the *industrial revolution* that gradually took hold of Europe through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This first of all led to a conflict between landed (agrarian) interests and the interests of industrial entrepreneurs (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 14). Later on this conflict was superseded by a conflict that pitted wage earners against owners and employers and led to the emergence of the trade union movement and of socialist, communist and social democratic parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 21). This latter conflict can be seen as a cleavage between capital and labour and is the one on which the left-right divide, in its economic sense, rests.

For Lipset and Rokkan (1967), these four societal cleavages—between centre and periphery, between church and state, between land and industry and between owner and worker—interacted in different ways in different European countries. In countries such as the United Kingdom where the dominant religion was also the state religion, the church-state cleavage did not really apply. In Roman Catholic countries, on the other

hand, it proved particularly divisive. Moreover, the relevance of each cleavage and the different interests each one aggregated determined the grassroots interests that the emerging mass political parties came to represent (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 27-29). By the twentieth century the owner-worker cleavage separated supporters of economically left-wing socialist, communist and social democratic parties from those of economically right-wing conservative and liberal parties in virtually all Western European countries (with the exception of Ireland). However, some European party systems retained the hallmarks of the earlier three cleavages, especially in terms of the existence of Christian democratic and other church-based political parties.[1]

## The Evolution of Political Parties in the UK

The development of political parties in the United Kingdom illustrates the way Lipset and Rokkan's cleavages shaped party competition. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the two main parties of the time on the one hand reflected the land/industry cleavage; the Conservative (Tory) Party had become the party of the rural gentry while the Liberals (Whigs) had become the party of urban entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the party divide also reflected the centre-periphery cleavage with the Conservatives representing the centre and the liberals representing the periphery. Geographically this meant that the Conservatives dominated in London and the South-East of England, while the Liberal, Independent Liberal and Irish Parliamentary parties (the latter two being Liberal allies) held sway in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as in some industrial heartlands such as Birmingham. This corresponds to Lipset and Rokkan's suggestion that in Britain the centre's state-building project during the “national revolution” was supported by the established Church and the landowning class and resisted by peripheral interests in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, by some urban industrial entrepreneurs and by the non-conformist churches (dominant especially in Wales) (Lipset and Rokkan 1965: 37).

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1 In the Netherlands there were three separate parties representing distinct religious denominations: the Catholic People's Party, representing Roman Catholics, as well as the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union representing the Dutch Protestants. These parties merged in 1977 to form the Christian Democratic Appeal.

If we fast forward to the years immediately following World War I, we see that this pattern had started to change as the owner-worker cleavage had begun to take precedence over earlier cleavages. The centre-periphery divide was still in evidence with the Conservatives strongest in London and the south-east and the Liberals still holding on in parts of Wales and Scotland (Ireland's newly found independence representing perhaps a consequence of a less resolvable centre-periphery cleavage). However, the industrial areas in parts of London, the North Midlands, South Wales and Southern Scotland had now been taken over by an insurgent Labour Party, who had begun to take swathes of the (newly enfranchised) working class vote.

If we now take another leap in time, this time to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, we see Conservative dominance of the more affluent rural areas and Labour prevailing in the industrial urban areas. By the time of the 1950 elections, which Labour won with a majority of just five, the Liberals were reduced to a rump of just nine seats.

The dominant cleavage both in Britain and on the near continent during the immediate post-war period was therefore between labour and capital, and this manifested itself in an ideological struggle between left and right in their economic sense. In Britain, labour was represented by the Labour Party and capital by the Conservatives. The situation was complicated somewhat in parts of continental Europe by a secular religious divide, although in Catholic countries this divide tended to reinforce the left-right cleavage. As Seymour Martin Lipset put it, “in countries such as France, Italy, Spain and Austria, being Catholic has meant being allied with rightist or conservative groups in politics; while being anti-clerical (or a member of a minority religion) has most often meant alliance with the left” (Lipset 1959: 92).

## Post-bourgeois values

During the late 1960s a new group of issues became salient both in Britain and elsewhere in Western Europe as the new counter-culture began to take hold. These issues included freedom of speech, racial equality, women's rights, gay rights, environmentalism and the legalisation of soft drugs. Ronald Inglehart (1971, 1977) referred to these issues as “post-bourgeois” or “post-material” and contrasted them with the purely “acquisitive” or “materialist” issues that had dominated politics in the immediate post-War period. By the end of the 1960s the new issues were beginning to shape the values of more affluent members of the younger

generation, while classic (economic) left-right or “materialist” issues continued to frame political discourse amongst middle-aged and older voters. In terms of voting behaviour, Inglehart suggests that the emergence of post-bourgeois values and their association with middle class youth could lead to the emergence of new parties or even “reverse the traditional alignment of the working class with the Left, and the middle class with the Right” (Inglehart 1971: 1009). To support this, he finds that in the six cases he studied (Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy) those holding “post-bourgeois” values were more likely to support left-leaning parties and New Left parties such as D66 in the Netherlands (Inglehart 1971: 1013).

Despite the changing values that defined politics, Inglehart believed that the new “post-bourgeois” values could be incorporated into the existing left-right dimension, arguing that “the new Left-Right continuum resembles the old in that it pits forces of change against those of the status quo—but the values motivating change relate to life styles rather than acquisition” (Inglehart 1971: 1016). Thus Inglehart has a rather vague notion of “left” and “right”. In a joint paper written with John Huber the two authors argue that the left-right dimension is “an amorphous vessel whose meaning varies in systematic ways with the underlying political and economic conditions in a given society” (Huber and Inglehart 1995: 90). Thus, despite their changing contents in terms of values, Inglehart still believed that “left” and “right” remained useful categories for explaining political competition in Europe.

Writing in 1971, Inglehart held that in Britain those who adhered to “post-bourgeois” values (such as protecting free speech and giving people more say in political decision-making) were more likely to vote Labour or Liberal and less likely to vote Conservative (Inglehart 1971: 1009). However, his data showed that “post-bourgeois” values had less influence on voting behaviour in Britain than in the other Western European countries he studied. In Britain these new values became relevant to party competition only very gradually. As an illustration, let us take the example of gay rights. During the 1960s initiatives to liberalise laws criminalising homosexual acts were promoted by backbench MPs, most notably the Conservative MP Humphrey Berkeley and the Labour MP Leo Abse. It was a non-partisan campaign. When Leo Abse's bill to decriminalise homosexual acts between adults over the age of twenty-one was passed in 1967, it was introduced as a private members bill. The (Labour) government front bench remained neutral for fear of a

backlash by voters and, most tellingly, only 117 MPs bothered to vote either for or against the bill at its Third Reading.[2] In the late 1960s gay rights was therefore not a salient political issue.

Indeed gay rights only became a salient issue for party competition in the 1980s. Through the 1960s and 1970s the mainstream Left in the shape of the Labour Party did not associate itself with the gay rights movement, despite the establishment of a fringe group called Labour Campaign for Gay Rights in 1978.[3] No mention is made of this issue in official Labour Party policy statements until a pledge in *Labour's Programme, 1982* for equal rights for gay people and for a reduction in the gay age of consent to 18 (Buckle 2015: 99). However, this pledge was watered down somewhat in the party's 1983 election manifesto, which only includes the following short statement:

> We are concerned that homosexuals are unfairly treated. We will take steps to ensure that they are not unfairly discriminated against—especially in employment and in the definition of privacy contained in the 1967 Act—along the lines set out in Labour's Programme, 1982.[4]

The Labour-led Greater London Council (GLC) and some other Labour-controlled councils had begun funding LGBT groups in the early 1980s. However, even at that time, homosexuality was even more frowned upon by Labour supporters than by Conservative supporters; according to a 1983 British Social Attitudes poll, 67% of Labour supporters thought that homosexuality was always or mostly wrong, compared with 61% of Conservative supporters and 48% of Liberal/SDP supporters.[5] The widespread disapproval of homosexuality was fanned by the recent rapid spread of HIV/AIDS and the frequent targeting of homosexuals in the tabloid press (see below).

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2 UK Parliament website, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/collections1/sexual-offences-act-1967/sexual-offences-act-1967>, accessed 28 March 2018.

3 See the LGBT Labour website, <http://www.lgbtlabour.org.uk/history>, accessed 28 March 2018.

4 Labour's 1983 Manifesto, available at <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab83.htm>, accessed 28 March 2018.

5 British Social Attitudes, “Homosexuality”, available at <http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-30/personal-relationships/homosexuality.aspx>, accessed 29 March 2018.

Perhaps a critical turning point came in 1984 with the launch of a campaign group called “Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners” aimed at uniting the LGBT community with mining communities in their fight against Thatcher, a struggle that featured in the 2014 film *Pride*. The success of this group in raising funds for striking miners raised the profile of gay rights issues within the Labour Party and a motion supporting equal rights for gay men and lesbians was passed at the 1985 Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth thanks to the block vote of the National Union for Mineworkers (NUM) and despite a refusal of the National Executive Committee to support the motion.[6]

However, more than the growing sympathies of at least a part of the Labour movement towards gay rights, perhaps it was the growing hostility of much of the Conservative Party to this issue and, in particular, the vilification of the gay community and their putative links with “the loony left” that made gay rights a party political issue. Right-wing newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* frequently portrayed the Labour Party and its leader Neil Kinnock as being in hock to extreme left-wing and minority interests.[7] The issue of homosexuality became a part of the 1987 election campaign when a Conservative poster warned that Labour wanted the book “Young, Gay and Proud” to be read in schools.[8] In 1988, the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher introduced Section 28 (Clause 28) of the Local Government Act 1988, which amended the Local Government Act 1986 to include a clause that local authorities “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality”. This was in response to a perception that left-wing Labour councils were attempting to pervert “normal family life”.

Similarly, issues of race and gender discrimination were also not specifically party political issues until the 1980s. The issue of race relations did not play a significant role in the 1974 elections and the 1976 Race

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6 Colin Clews, “1985. Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. Part Two.” *GAY in the 80s: From Fighting for Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives*. Available at <http://www.gayinthe80s.com/2012/09/1985-lesbians-and-gays-support-the-miners-part-two>, accessed 29 March 2018.

7 See, for example the 1987 Sunday Express cartoon by Cummings. Available at Pink Singers: London's LGBT Community Choir, “Section 28”. Available at <http://www.pinksingers.co.uk/singing-the-changes/section-28>, accessed 29 March 2018.

8 Sanders, Sue; Spraggs, Gill (1989). "Section 28 and Education". Available at <http://www.schools-out.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Section-28-and-Education-Sue-Sanders-Gillian-Spragg-1989.pdf>, accessed 29 March 2018.

Relations Act was supported by a majority of Conservative MPs with just forty-three Tories voting against the Act on its Third Reading (Anwar et al. 2000: 9). Similarly the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, while initiated by Labour, enjoyed cross-party support. Once again, it was only in the 1980s that issues of gender and race became a salient issue that separated Labour and the Conservatives. The Labour Party manifesto in 1979 barely mentioned race relations, restricting itself to a rather bland pledge to strengthen and widen the scope of the Race Relations Act and a brief statement that "immigration and citizenship law needs revision". In the 1983 manifesto, however, the party pledged to "repeal the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 British Nationality Act and replace them with a citizenship law that does not discriminate against either women or black and Asian Britons". The manifesto devoted two sections and over 500 words to "Equal Rights" and "Nationality and Immigration", promising measures to prevent discrimination and a more liberal immigration policy to benefit relatives of immigrants already resident in the UK.[9] In the right-wing media, meanwhile, anti-racism became associated with the "loony left" (see the link provided in footnote 17 as an example), illustrating how discourse over race and anti-racism had become politically salient. Similarly the Greenham Common Peace Camp established in 1981 by women against the deployment of cruise missiles at an army base led to a discourse that associated feminism with the Left (and specifically the Labour Party) and traditional family values with the Conservatives.[10]

In summary, therefore, "cultural issues" did not become salient for political competition in Britain until the 1980s and when they did they seemed to fit quite smoothly onto the existing left-right spectrum with the left (and the Labour Party) coming to be associated with anti-racism, feminism and gay rights and the right (and the Conservative Party) taking a more reactionary stance on all issues.

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9 Tony Collins, "Labour 1983: the Most Inspiring Suicide Note in History", *Socialist Unity* (23 March, 2013), available at <http://socialistunity.com/labour-1983-the-most-inspiring-suicide-note-in-history>, accessed 4 April 2018.

10 Indeed Margaret Thatcher herself famously espouses "Victorian values" in the 1983 election campaign (Samuel 1992).

## Beyond left and right: The need for a cultural dimension

The association of the "economic left" with the "cultural left" (i.e. anti-discrimination and freedom of lifestyle choices) and the corresponding association of the "economic" and "cultural" right is not a necessary one. Two relatively recent developments illustrate the way that the economic and cultural definitions of "left" and "right" are not necessarily associated, at least not in the same way. The first was the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the development of multi-party systems in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Research on party positions across Europe suggests that while in Western Europe economically left wing parties tend to be more socially progressive in terms of lifestyle issues, tolerance of difference and law and order, and right-wing parties tend to be more "authoritarian" on these issues, in many post-communist Europe countries a reverse correlation applies with economically right-wing parties adopting a more progressive stance on cultural issues and economically left-wing parties holding a more conservative position (Marks *et al.* 2006).

The second development that suggests that the economic and cultural dimensions may not always correlate is the emergence of strongly culturally right-wing movements in many parts of Europe, discussed in Chapter 1. Perhaps the earliest of these to emerge was the French National Front (Front National, FN), led by Jean-Marie Le Pen and later his daughter Marine Le Pen. While unapologetically anti-immigrant and authoritarian, the FN adopts some rather left-wing policies on the economy, such as more generous welfare payments (albeit only for "native French") (Stockemer and Amengay 2015: 374). Other such parties have gained strength in northern Europe especially (see Chapter 1), but their positions on economic policies are either rather ambiguous or even left of centre. What distinguishes them from mainstream parties is their dislike of immigration and cultural heterogeneity, i.e. their position on a cultural dimension of political competition.

These developments suggest that forcing both economic and cultural issues into a single over-arching left-right dimension is an oversimplification and that instead the field of political competition in much of Europe can better be understood as *two-dimensional*. Some scholars (Hooghe *et al.* 2002; Marks *et al.* 2006) therefore propose a two-dimensional policy space that is defined not only by an economic left-right dimension but also by a cultural dimension that they call TAN/GAL, an acronym of traditional-authoritarian-

nationalist versus green-alternative-libertarian. Others have proposed alternative two-dimensional schema with different labels for the cultural dimension, such as libertarian-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1994, 1995) and many more (see below).

The recent emergence of culturally "right-wing" or TAN parties and movements, of which the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is a further example, highlights what may be a new (fifth) cleavage that is increasingly dividing societies in Europe and beyond. This is a cleavage between "winners" and "losers" of globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2006), also termed the "transnational cleavage" (Hooghe and Marks 2018). Globalisation, seen in terms of economic and cultural integration both with neighbouring countries (e.g. through transnational organisations such as the EU) and with the rest of the world, has benefitted some citizens but has disadvantaged others. Those who lack the education, skills and wherewithal to cope in a globalised economy have lost out, while those who have the opportunity to take advantage of a more globalised business environment or to work, study and travel abroad have benefitted. The former tend to reject the idea of an open economy and open borders and oppose immigration and EU integration, while the latter embrace these innovations. Most of all, it seems to be cultural resistance to globalisation, more than a leftist rejection of global capitalism, that has come to define party competition at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. This has manifested itself both in the increasing prominence of new culturally right-wing parties and in the repositioning of existing parties to fit the new cleavage (Kriesi et al. 2008). This does not rule out the possibility of a leftist rejection of global capitalism—there have already been signs of this development in southern European countries such as Spain and Greece, and perhaps even in Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party—however, in most European countries in the first two decades of the twenty-first century it has been the culturally rightist movements that have gained pre-eminence.

Authors who emphasise the cleavage between "winners" and "losers" of globalisation have a slightly different conception of the principal issues that define the cultural dimension compared with those scholars who draw from Inglehart's notion of "post-bourgeois" values, although (unlike Inglehart himself) they also propose a two-dimensional ideological space. While those who highlight cleavage politics give priority to issues such as immigration and EU integration (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008), the latter group associate "post-bourgeois" values with TAN/GAL, emphasising more issues of law and order, environmentalism, gay rights

and abortion (Hooghe *et al.* 2002; Marks *et al.* 2006). Most recently adherents of this second group have attempted to marry the two concepts by suggesting that as a result of the "transnational cleavage" immigration and EU integration have become more prominent elements of TAN/GAL (Hooghe and Marks 2018). However, a touch of ambiguity still prevails as to precisely which issues define the cultural dimension and this ambiguity is perhaps reflected in the many labels that have been associated with this dimension. These include libertarian-universalistic vs traditionalist-communitarian (Bornschier 2010), universalism vs particularism (Beramendi et al. 2015; Häusermann and Kriesi 2015) and cosmopolitan vs communitarian (Teney et al. 2014; Wheatley 2015).

Scholars of British politics also point to recent changes in the structure of society and a consequent increase in the salience of cultural issues in politics. Ford and Goodwin (2014) explore the rise of UKIP, arguing that the surge in support for UKIP from 2010 to 2013 was the result of a transformation of society that had been underway since the 1980s. For Ford and Goodwin, the decline of heavy industry and the corresponding shift to a post-industrial economy left older and less well-educated blue collar workers with few opportunities to progress. As a result, this group of voters, whom they label the "left behind", have become increasingly isolated, pessimistic and convinced that their way of life is under threat. Mass immigration has increased their sense of insecurity as they face ever greater competition from immigrants over semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. To add insult to injury, the three establishment political parties have been fighting to win over the now more numerous and dominant middle class, leaving "left behind" voters relegated to mere "spectators in electoral battles for the educated middle-class vote" (Ford and Goodwin 2014: 117). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this group demonstrates a significantly higher probability than middle-class, well-educated voters to be Eurosceptic, to oppose immigration and to hold onto a traditional view of Britishness. It was this group, Ford and Goodwin argue, that made up the bedrock of support for Nigel Farage's UKIP (Ford and Goodwin 2014). They also overwhelmingly voted to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum (Goodwin and Heath 2016). Although these authors do not explicitly discuss the impact of globalisation, the implication of their argument is that this group of voters has been "left behind" by a rapidly changing and ever more globalised world.

A similar argument is made by Goodhart (2017), who divides British voters into two main groups: “Anywheres”, well-educated, cosmopolitan citizens who have “achieved” identities and feel “generally comfortable and confident with new places and people”, and “Somewheres”, who “are more rooted and usually have 'ascribed' identities” (Goodhart 2017: 3). For Goodhart, those older white working class men whom Ford and Goodwin describe as “left behind” make up the core group of Somewheres (*ibid.*). While both Anywheres and Somewheres form quite heterogeneous groups with Somewheres ranging “from northern working class pensioners to Home Counties *Daily Mail* readers; Anywheres from polished business executives to radical academics” (Goodhart 2017: 4) both groups are associated with their own distinct set of values. Anywheres represent what Goodhart refers to as a “progressive individualism” that “places a high value on mobility and novelty and a much lower value on group identity, tradition and national social contracts”, while Somewheres are “more conservative and communitarian by instinct” and “feel uncomfortable about many aspects of cultural and economic change” (Goodhart 2017: 5). Goodhart goes on to argue that an Anywhere elite has been in control of the political agenda for the last twenty-five years (Goodhart 2017: 10) but in recent years has more and more faced resistance from Somewheres; a resistance that ultimately led to the 2016 vote to leave the EU. The crux of Goodhart's argument is very similar to those described above; it proposes a growing gap between those who thrive in a new global world and those who feel threatened and undermined by it—a gap that is ever more reflected in an ideological divide over *cultural* rather than economic values.

In Britain the divide between Anywheres and Somewheres (or between “winners” and “losers” of globalisation) has a geographical dimension. Jennings and Stoker (2016) contrast “cosmopolitan areas” from “provincial backwaters”. In the former, they argue “we find an England that is global in outlook; relatively positive about the EU; pro-immigration; comfortable with more rights and respect for women, ethnic communities and gays and lesbians; and generally future-oriented”, while the latter tends to be “inward-looking, relatively negative about the EU and immigration, worried by the emergence of new rights for ‘minorities’ and prone to embracing nostalgia” (Jennings and Stoker 2016: 372). They show that differences in attitudes between “cosmopolitan areas” and “provincial backwaters” has widened in recent years, particularly over issues relating to immigration, ethnic minorities and Europe (Jennings and Stoker 2016:

375). The implication is that it is not only people, but entire regions that are being “left behind” by globalisation as global economic change is driving uneven development (Jennings and Stoker 2016: 373). Highly skilled jobs are concentrated in Britain's more dynamic cities and towns, as both investment and skilled labour drain from more peripheral regions. This geographical divide is not the same as the “north-south divide” that was seen to define “haves” and “have nots” in the 1980s and 1990s; “provincial backwaters” may be found at just a short distance from “cosmopolitan areas” such as inner London.

Jennings and Stoker's distinction between “cosmopolitan areas” and “provincial backwaters” is also reflected in the way regions voted in the EU referendum. Boston in Lincolnshire recorded the highest vote to leave the EU, at 75.6% for leave, while Lambeth in inner London recorded the strongest remain vote (outside Gibraltar) with 78.6% voting to remain in the EU. Particularly sharp differences were recorded between metropolitan areas and neighbouring “backwater” areas. Thus, Havering, at the edge of London voted 69.7% to leave, a sharp contrast to metropolitan Lambeth. Similarly, while Manchester voted 60.4% to remain, Wigan, at the edge of Greater Manchester, voted 63.9% to leave. Finally, while Leeds just voted to remain (by 50.3%), next door Wakefield voted 66.4% to leave.

All these shifts suggest a value-based divide that is predicated on education, age and geographical location (for more on the influence of age and education on the Brexit vote, see Chapter 1). Despite the fact that it has an economic dimension insofar as it sets economically prosperous regions against economically underprivileged “backwaters”, the nature of the divide relates primarily to cultural values that are intimately related with the notion of identity, especially with respect to *outsiders* and t*he outside*. A number of scholars believe that this value divide is not only intensifying but will continue to do so and may come to replace (economic) right versus left as the principle ideological divide in much of Europe. Häusermann and Kriesi (2015) argue that even some issues that are normally considered traditional left-right issues, such as spending and taxation, are increasingly becoming *cultural* or *identity* issues. This is because state spending is not only about how much to spend, but also about whether benefits should be universal or targeted at particular in-groups (often excluding labour market outsiders such as foreigners and young people). The European debt crisis has meant that flexibility about how much to spend is more limited, giving extra salience to issues about whether benefits should be shared by “outsiders” or restricted to “insiders” only. According to Häusermann

and Kriesi, “social insurance for labor market insiders competes with needs-based benefits for outsiders and low-income workers” (Häusermann and Kriesi 2015: 226).

## Summary

Let us summarise the argument so far. “Left” and “right” are fluid concepts and their meanings have shifted significantly over time as the structure of society has changed. In the sense it was used in the twentieth century, “left” and “right” referred above all to economic ideologies and to the diverging interests of labour and capitals. However, by the end of the century a set of cultural issues that could not so easily be assimilated into a unidimensional left-right dimension had become salient both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century a divide (or cleavage) between “winners” and “losers” of globalisation appeared to underpin these differences in cultural values. The divide would seem to correlate strongly with age, education and geographic location, at least in the case of Britain. Instead of describing the political position of a party or voter along a unidimensional left-right scale, it would therefore perhaps make more sense to define political ideology in terms of two dimensions: one economic left-right dimension that aggregates issues relating to distribution of wealth and the role of the state in the economy and one cultural dimension that aggregates issues relating to identity and tradition. As the specific issues that belong to each dimension may be context-dependent, we still have some work to do identifying what they are. Our next task is therefore first to verify the assumption that political opinion in Britain can indeed be defined by two overarching ideological dimensions, then to define more precisely the issues that these dimensions encompass (if they exist), before determining from where on the resulting two-dimensional ideological map the main parties draw their votes, exploring whether or not the ideological profiles of party voters are changing and finally addressing the question of whether politics—as defined by the positions of voters—is becoming more polarised along either dimension. To do this we will need to draw on real life data on the opinions of British voters. It is to this task that we devote our energies in the following two chapters.