OPEN OWNS THE FUTURE
Foreword

Reaching out to the world and being an inclusive society has been deeply important to our success as a nation. Immigration and openness have been good for our economy and culture. In the current Brexit debate, we need to see freedom of movement as something that has enriched and can continue to enrich our country – not just a price we have to decide whether to pay in return for access to the single market.

Yet what used to be accepted wisdom has become the truth that dare not speak its name. Defensive emotion has replaced positivity and reason and as a result we risk shooting ourselves in the foot as a nation. But the facts haven’t changed; the evidence remains clear.

That’s why Global Future exists. We are an independent think tank working to develop the insight, analysis and ideas to help make the case for immigration, freedom of movement and building an open, diverse and vibrant Britain that looks out to the world. We also want to help build a vision of openness that engages and is of benefit to everyone.

In this report, we launch Global Future with new, compelling evidence that not only is Open versus Closed becoming the pivotal divide in British politics – but that despite recent setbacks, Open owns the future.

What we are seeing is a generational divide. Open values are not restricted to the youngest generation: they are dominant among those born in the 1970s onwards. Evidence suggests that people’s fundamental values remain stable, even though their attitude to more immediate material matters may shift – so as this Open generation ages, those advocating a closed politics are running out of road.

This report marks a new phase for Global Future – as an active participant in the debate about our country’s direction. Over the coming months we will publish new, independent analysis across society, business and the arts: work designed to help make sure that Britain’s unique character as a country of tolerance and diversity is not undermined by short-term thinking that threatens to turn us into a narrower and lesser nation.

Our view is an optimistic one – Britain can and will succeed as a confident, outward looking nation. We aim to play our small part in helping to make that happen.

Gurnek Bains, CEO of Global Future
In Brief

Politics is changing. The growing Open/Closed divide splits the generations and increasingly trumps the old Left/Right divide in defining voting behaviour. The political axis is rotating. This analysis not only helps to explain the 2017 General Election result but points strategists towards a battle for the growing Open ground where elections will be won.

Part One: Open versus Closed – Analysing the Data

Open versus Closed There is a growing divide in British politics. Open voters are positive about multiculturalism and diversity, comfortable with immigration, and in favour of Britain taking an internationalist, outward-looking approach to the world. Their views contrast with those of Closed voters, who are more likely to be sceptical of these things.

Younger voters are more likely to be Open On a range of issues our polling identified a stark divide between those aged 18-44 and those aged over 45 in attitudes to touchstone issues such as multiculturalism, anti-discrimination measures and nationalism.

This divide is generational, and Open is growing. As those who have grown up comfortable with a diverse, multicultural Britain get older, we can expect to see Open voters becoming the majority in older and older age groups.

The political axis is rotating Crucially, in the UK and across the world this divide increasingly predicts voting behaviour. Over the last 20 years the political axis has been rotating: from one which is based on economic interests to one increasingly based on values.

Part Two: Political strategists from both major parties respond to the analysis

Conservative peer Lord Andrew Cooper writes that the 2017 general election results showed a significant acceleration in this rotation of the political axis. He argues that a continuation of this pattern will see further seats change hands, and concludes that while the gulf in values will continue, the age when Open voters are outnumbered by Closed voters – currently around 45 – will rise as the ‘Open Generation’ gets older and the ‘Closed Generation’ dies out, with profound strategic consequences for the Conservative Party.

Labour’s Lord Spencer Livermore argues that the Global Future analysis provides the best frame for understanding the 2017 General Election. He concludes that the only viable strategy now available to Labour is one in which it is the unambiguous party of Open.
PART ONE: OPEN VS. CLOSED – ANALYSING THE DATA

There is a growing divide in British politics: Open versus Closed. It is a divide which straddles Left and Right, Labour and Conservative, but which helps to explain both the 2016 EU Referendum and the 2017 General Election.

Open voters are positive about multiculturalism and diversity, comfortable with immigration, and in favour of Britain taking an internationalist, outward-looking approach to the world. They contrast with Closed voters, who are more likely to be sceptical about these issues.

Crucially, the number of Open voters is set to grow. Younger voters are more likely to be Open whereas older voters are more likely to be Closed – our polling identified a stark divide between those aged 18-44 and those aged over 45, and we can expect the age groups in which Open has a majority to increase as the Open generation ages.

While over-45s think multiculturalism has weakened Britain, under-45s think, by more than two to one, that it has strengthened Britain. While almost two thirds of over-45s think immigration has changed Britain for the worse, almost two thirds of under-45s think it has changed Britain for the better. Six out of ten under-45s are comfortable with internationalism or globalism, while six out of ten over-45s, around the same proportion, choose to identify with nationalism instead. Under-45s see the European Union, overseas aid and social liberalism as forces for good; over-45s do not.

The under-45s are hugely positive, by wide margins, about feminism, about gay rights, about equality for different races, religions and cultures, and about human rights laws; while the over-45s are still more likely to be positive than negative about these social changes, the numbers show that they are much more equivocal.

The Open versus Closed division is different from David Goodhart’s distinction between what he calls Anywheres and Somewheres. For Goodhart, Anywheres have ‘progressive individualist politics, which prioritise openness, autonomy and cognitive ability, have dominated policy for more than a generation and promoted, among other things, the two “masses” – mass immigration and mass higher education’. Meanwhile, Somewheres are ‘people who value stability, familiarity and more parochial group and national attachments and have experienced the declining status of so many non-graduate jobs’. Key to Goodhart’s analysis is that Anywheres make up around a quarter of the population, while Somewheres make up around half.¹ Our analysis shows that while there may be some conceptual overlap between Open and Anywhere, and between Closed and Somewhere, Open attitudes are far more widespread than the quarter or so of the population Goodhart identifies as Anywheres.

¹ https://inews.co.uk/opinion/year-wasnt-political-parties-somewheres-anywheres/
As the generations of young people who have grown up comfortable with a diverse, multicultural Britain get older, we can expect to see Open voters becoming the majority in older and older age groups in future. The British Social Attitudes survey has found evidence that different attitudes towards a range of social issues across the population are more likely to be due to a ‘generational effect’ (generations retaining similar views over time, with older more socially conservative generations being replaced by younger, more socially liberal ones) than a ‘lifecycle effect’ or ‘ageing effect’ (people becoming more conservative in their views as they get older), so that on certain issues, ‘in general there is a clear generational divide, with younger cohorts tending to be more liberal than older ones. And this is true across time; in general each generation retains similar views over time’. 1 BSA research has found that ‘attitudes to sex before marriage, same-sex relationships, abortion and pornography have all become more liberal2 over recent decades, as well as recording a decline in support for traditional gender roles.3

Open values are not unique to the political right or left: they are compatible with the world-views of many in both the Conservative and Labour Parties, and at different times politicians of both right and left have sought to embrace or reject them. But in 2017, Theresa May chose to position herself much more strongly on the Closed side of the divide than David Cameron had in 2010 and 2015, whereas Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party was more obviously associated with Open values.

Of course people will still vote for a wide range of reasons: leadership, policy, the state of the nation, what they think will be best for the country, for themselves and for their families. But any party which positions itself, in its policies and in its rhetoric, against a set of values which is shared by an ever-growing proportion of the British electorate is making its task harder.

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1 http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39147/bsa34_moral_issues_final.pdf
2 http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39147/bsa34_moral_issues_final.pdf
Polling: What do the voters think?

Polling carried out by Populus on behalf of Global Future found that for a series of pairs of statements designed to illustrate Open/Closed values, a majority of those aged 18-44 put themselves on the Open side while a majority of those aged over 45 put themselves on the Closed side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For each of the following pairs of statements, which is closest to what you believe in?</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45+</th>
<th>Difference: 18-44 vs. 45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internationalism</strong></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nationalism</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
<td>-22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK should be outward-looking and engaged on global challenges</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK should be inward-looking and focused overwhelmingly on our own national challenges</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>+/-0%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism has strengthened Britain</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism has weakened Britain</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration has changed Britain for the better</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration has changed Britain for the worse</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>+28%</td>
<td>-26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK accepting asylum seekers</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK not accepting asylum seekers</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
<td>-28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants help keep our public services going</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are a drain on our public services</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>+22%</td>
<td>-12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In another set of questions, we asked people how positive or negative they felt about a number of things chosen to illustrate the same Open/Closed divide. Again, those aged 18-44 were much more likely to feel positive than those aged over-45.

For several of these questions, both the older and younger age groups feel positive – although the younger age groups are more positive. However, in every case the difference remains stark. Even where both age groups are net positive, over-45s are much more equivocal (e.g. on gay marriage & human rights).

In other cases, while our poll found positive sentiments overall, this was because a large positive sentiment from 18-44s outweighed a small negative sentiment from over-45s. This was true for multiculturalism, for free movement within the EU and for the increasing diversity of the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET POSITIVE (% feeling very/quite positive minus % feeling very/quite negative)</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45+</th>
<th>Difference: 18-44 vs. 45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right of ‘free movement’, for people from EU countries to live &amp; work in any other EU country</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right of gay people to get married and become parents</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures to promote greater equality for women</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures to promote greater equality for people from ethnic minority groups</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The increasing diversity of the UK</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights laws</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We asked similar questions about whether people thought that a number of things chosen to illustrate the same Open/Closed divide were a force for good or a force for ill, and found a similar divide between respondents aged 18-44 and those aged 45 or over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ‘FORCE FOR GOOD’ (% Saying ‘force for good’ minus % saying ‘force for ill’)</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45+</th>
<th>Difference: 18-44 vs. 45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>-23%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social liberalism</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Union</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>-26%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas aid</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For another set of Open value statements we polled, 18-44s were again more likely to agree than those aged 45 and over, although the difference was not always great.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET AGREE (% agreeing minus % disagreeing)</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45+</th>
<th>Difference: 18-44 vs. 45+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The right of people to move freely and to live and work in any EU country has been a great positive achievement of the European Union</td>
<td>+23%</td>
<td>+47%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are all citizens of the world, as well as being citizens of our own country</td>
<td>+66%</td>
<td>+67%</td>
<td>+66%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a responsibility to care about people in countries around the world, not just in our own country</td>
<td>+45%</td>
<td>+58%</td>
<td>+32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater equality for people of different races, religions, cultures and ethnicities has made us a better country</td>
<td>+42%</td>
<td>+60%</td>
<td>+27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants make a significant positive contribution to the UK</td>
<td>+29%</td>
<td>+41%</td>
<td>+19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citizens of nowhere?

In her Conservative Party Conference speech in 2016, Theresa May famously said ‘If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere’. Was this in tune with the British public? We asked them.

In fact, our poll found that 81% of people agreed with the statement ‘We are all citizens of the world, as well as being citizens of our own country’, and just 15% of people disagreed. Unlike some of the other statements we polled, there was not a significant divide between the older and younger age groups: 81% of both 18-44s and over-45s agreed with the statement.

Some might argue that Open values are the preserve of a London-centric metropolitan elite. But the evidence suggests that they have a majority in every region of the country, and that the gap between 18-44s and over-45s is significant everywhere.

In polling carried out on General Election day, 8 June 2017, on behalf of Lord Ashcroft, 5 58% agreed with the statement ‘On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a good thing for the country’, compared to 42% who agreed with the statement ‘On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a bad thing for the country’ – a gap of 16%. While those in London were most likely to agree that immigration had been a good thing for the country – 71% against 29% – there was a majority for the pro-immigration statement in every single region of the UK.

Similarly, Lord Ashcroft’s polling found that a majority of people in every region of the UK believed that multiculturalism, social liberalism, feminism, the green movement and globalisation were a force for good.

The same polling shows that the difference in view on Open/Closed values between 18-44s and over-45s is evident in every region of the country. Under-45s in London are mostly a bit more Open even than those in the rest of the country – but the under-45s in every region are net positive on all of the Open values statements – and the gap in view between under-45s and over-45s is more or less as big in regions outside London as it is in London, and in some cases bigger.

The British Election Study found that there was no ‘youthquake’ in the 2017 General Election – where ‘youthquake’ is defined as a significant increase in turnout among 18-24 year olds. That group did not turn out in greater numbers than it had in 2015.  

But there was a significant swing to Labour in that group – as there was among 18-44s in general – along with a swing to the Conservatives among older voters. According to Ipsos MORI, ‘All the swing to Labour was among under 44s (and highest of all among 25-34s), while there was a swing to the Conservatives among over 55s. This is the biggest age gap we’ve seen in elections going back to the 1970s’.  

And turnout does seem to have gone up among those aged 25-44. As the British Election Study says, ‘Where all sides agree is that there was a dramatic change in the relationship between age and vote choice’. So even without a narrowly-defined ‘youthquake’, the evidence suggests that a significant increase in the number of under-45s voting Labour contributed to the loss of Theresa May’s majority.

**Demographics: where are the votes going?**

This Global Future polling is supplemented by a demographic model built by Populus, based on census data rather than on polling. This model plots Security (covering factors such as income, occupation, housing tenure, health and benefit claimancy) and Diversity (covering factors such as ethnicity, immigration, density, age and urban/rural). Interlocking the two dimensions creates a vector map of four quadrants: high security/high diversity, high security/low diversity, low security/high diversity, and low security/low diversity.

This demographic model supplements the polling above. Not only is age a key variable in the model, but on a range of different attitudes and values questions, authoritarian and socially/culturally conservative and nationalist attitudes correlate very strongly with the demographics of the low security/low diversity (bottom right) quadrant, while socially and culturally liberal and globalist attitudes correlate very strongly with the demographics of the high security/high diversity (top left) quadrant. Clearly, the model does not claim that everyone within a given area has the same demographic characteristics or opinions.

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8. https://www.ncpolitics.uk/2018/02/no-there-really-really-really-really-really-wasnt-a-youthquake.html/  
We can illustrate how the model works by looking at the position of the average Republican and Democrat voter in US Presidential elections since 1980. It clearly shows the average Republican voter rotating from the high security/low diversity (top right) quadrant towards the low security/low diversity (bottom right) quadrant, with the average Democrat voter rotating simultaneously from the low security/high diversity (bottom left) quadrant to the high security/high diversity (top left) quadrant.

**ROTATION OF THE US POLITICAL AXIS**

Movements in the average voter rotary position since 1980
Similar shifts, with traditional parties of the left increasingly appealing to more affluent, more diverse voters while traditional parties of the right increase their support from less affluent, less diverse voters, are apparent in other recent elections around the world.

In the UK, we can use the same demographic model to show what has been happening in recent elections. When we plot the seats Labour lost in England and Wales between 1997 and 2015 using this model, we can see that while it lost seats in all four quadrants, the greatest proportion are in the low security/low diversity (bottom right) quadrant. (Scotland is omitted from this because of the different party dynamics within its politics.)
Looking at 2017, the seats the Conservatives lost – predominantly to Labour – sit mostly in the high-security/high diversity (top left) quadrant, and the seats Labour lost to the Conservatives sit mostly in the low security/low diversity (bottom left) quadrant – indicating a similar rotation of the model, with Labour picking up voters in more affluent, more diverse areas and losing votes in less affluent, less diverse areas.

UK GENERAL ELECTION 2017: SEAT LOSSES BY PARTY

If this rotation continues in future elections – and there is every reason to think that it will, as the Open voters who dominate the 18-44 age group get older, making Open attitudes increasingly common in higher and higher age groups – then constituencies in the high security/high-diversity (top left) quadrant will be harder and harder for Closed parties to hold.

On their current trajectories – although different approaches are available to parties of both right and left – that means Labour looks set to be increasingly competitive in more affluent constituencies, while the Conservatives look to make gains in the low security/low diversity (bottom right) quadrant. In 2017, this worked far better for Labour than it did for the Conservatives. In the future, with
PART TWO: POLITICAL STRATEGISTS FROM BOTH MAJOR PARTIES RESPOND TO THE ANALYSIS

In this section, two experienced political strategists from either side of the party divide analyse the future of British politics, based on this new research. Andrew Cooper is a former director of strategy to David Cameron, and Spencer Livermore was a strategic advisor to Labour on four general election campaigns. They both conclude that the future is likely to belong to whoever is most in tune with voters who have the Open attitudes and values identified in this report.

I have spent almost my entire working life in politics one way or another and, for most of that time, I believed it could be explained by simple economic characteristics you could almost spot just by standing outside someone’s house.

If they had certain things like a higher income, a senior professional job, a marriage, good health, their own home – especially if it was without a mortgage and detached – they were more likely to vote Conservative. If they did not have any or many of those things, they were more likely to vote Labour.

And this used to explain the age difference in politics too. Older people tended to be Tories because lots of those things tended to come with age. Younger people, who are less likely to have those things, tended to be Labour if they were anything at all.

But a few years ago, these old political certainties slowly began to turn. The axis has now rotated so far that it is time we acknowledged what is staring us all in the face: the way people vote now is increasingly about cultural characteristics, not just economic ones.

In short, it is no longer just a matter of Left versus Right: Open versus Closed is becoming more and more significant.

These days, a far better way of predicting how someone will vote is to discover whether they live in an ethnically and religiously diverse area, the density of the local population around them, how they define their national identity, or what their feelings are toward minority communities.

It means that lots of people who once were good bets to be Conservative now turn out to be Labour. And people that pollsters might have predicted would be Labour are now Tories.

The referendum on EU membership was, for most voters, not just about the specific transactional arguments such as whether they and their families would be better off with Brexit. Instead, it was a
stark binary choice between two fundamentally different reactions to the realities of globalisation: nationalism or internationalism?

A year later that same question was reflected in a significant churn within the base of support for both Conservatives and Labour. Millions of people found their attitudes more strongly defined by their feelings towards Brexit than by the offer from either Labour or the Tories.

The political axis is rotating not just because of the referendum vote for Brexit, but because that vote connects directly to a spectrum of deep values that add up, for many people, to their whole worldview. This explains why the gulf between Remainers and Leavers has tended to widen, not narrow since the referendum.

Nor is this dramatic turn in politics merely a British phenomenon. Over the last few years, similar cultural questions have cut across traditional dividing lines in elections and referendums across the developed world from the United States to France, Italy, Germany and Austria.

There has already been discussion about how Labour won among voters under the age of 47 in last year’s election, while the Conservatives won among people older than that. But this was not a story of the Labour vote share falling gently with age. Instead, it went off a cliff: the Conservative lead over Labour was simply huge among older voters – nearly 20% among 55-64s and nearly 40% among over-65s; the Labour lead among younger voters was similarly enormous – around 30% on average among all those under the age of 45.

There has been much discussion of how badly the Tories did in 2017 among students. But again, this obscures the scale of the real story: the swing away from the Conservatives was even worse among 25-34s and nearly as bad among 35-44s.

To be clear, I am not saying everyone who voted Remain or Leave also believes all or any of a set of related value propositions about globalism; it is that there is a very high probability that they do. Lots of people reading this will have voted one way or the other in the EU referendum who don’t take an Open or Closed view on the range of other issues. But if that is you, congratulations: you are what polling firms call an ‘outlier’.

New polling for Global Future reveals that beneath this extraordinary and unprecedented generation-al divide lie profoundly different feelings about what the UK’s stance should be towards the rest of the world and about openness towards other people in general.

Under-45s overwhelmingly think that immigration and multiculturalism have changed Britain for the better, over-45s are equally adamant they have made Britain worse. Younger people regard overseas aid and the European Union as forces for good in the world, while older voters on balance see them as forces for ill. The younger group tend strongly to the view that increased diversity has had a positive effect on the UK, while the older group see its effect as negative. The same difference in view applies to
the right of free movement for EU citizens: by a margin of nearly three to one, under-45s regard this positively – while most over-45s see it as a negative. Three in five people in the younger group describe themselves as ‘globalist’ or ‘internationalist’, rather than ‘nationalist’; the same ratio that takes the opposite view in the older group.

Across an array of value questions – gay marriage, feminism, measures to promote equality, human rights laws and social liberalism in general – there is a fundamental difference in world view between under-45s and over-45s; whereas the older age-group is often equivocal about social change, under-45s are overwhelmingly positive towards it.

Indeed, the rotation of the political axis from the economic divide of Left and Right towards a new Open/Closed values divide can clearly be seen in the pattern of general election results over the last twenty years. The seats that Labour lost between its 1997 landslide and its 2010 defeat are heavily concentrated in the parts of Britain defined by being non-diverse and relatively poor – the Brexit heartland also characterised by a concentration of Closed values. And the voters that Labour lost over the same period were disproportionately likely to define their own national identity as ‘English’ – or “Welsh” – rather than British.

**KEY DRIVERS OF LABOUR LOSS OF VOTES: NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Those who have stopped voting Labour since 1997 in England and Wales are disproportionately likely to identify themselves as English/Welsh rather than British.
But the 2017 general election results showed a significant acceleration in this rotation of the political axis with the polarising reaction to the Brexit referendum being the most obvious cause. The average voter switching to the Conservatives was typically poor, left school at 16, working in a non-professional job and living in an area with virtually no ethnic diversity – all of which correlates very strongly with holding Closed attitudes. The average voter switching to Labour was relatively better off, middle class, well-educated and living in an area of high ethnic diversity – a demographic architecture correlating very strong with holding Open world-views.

In 2017 the Tory vote increased by about 6% across the country. But it barely rose at all – or even fell – in many of its traditional heartlands such as Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Sussex and Cheshire. At the same time, across England and Wales the Conservative vote increased most in traditionally working class Labour heartlands like South Yorkshire, Humberside, Cleveland, Durham, Tyne & Wear. Big though they were, these increases in Tory support weren’t big enough to win them.

If this rotation of the axis continues, and in the current political climate there is no reason to believe it will stop, the Conservatives should expect to capture more seats in traditional Labour territory at the next election. But Labour too, has an opportunity to push on in Open areas such as London, where the Tories lost six seats in 2017 and could lose another 10 at the next election.

Some of those MPs at risk in the Conservative Party will, of course, comfort themselves by thinking this gulf in attitudes is about the ageing process. Almost every teenager who ever expressed an interest in politics will have been told a version of the ancient – and patronising – line about younger people voting with their hearts and older ones with their heads.

But this gulf in values is nothing to do with the age of your body but a function of the fundamentally different worlds in which these two groups – Open and Closed – have grown up. People who are under the age of 45 now have been born since the early 1970s, have reached voting age in the mid-1990s or later and have spent their entire adult lives in the post-Soviet rapidly globalising internet era – the world of free movement of people, the age of Amazon, Google, Apple, a time of growing transparency and ever more openness. People who have only ever known these things are much more likely to accept them and see them as positives. People who remember the world before this economic, political and cultural upheaval are much more likely to feel insecure about the breadth and pace of change.

There is no good reason to believe the generation that has come of age in the last 25 years is going to change its world view as it grows older. Those whose life experience has led them to feel positive towards immigration, multiculturalism and internationalism are not going to suddenly reverse these positions when they get into their 50s and 60s. Their Open world-view is baked in; it is not a function of life-stage.
This means that while the gulf in values will continue, the age when Open voters outnumber Closed voters – currently at around 45 – will rise as the ‘Open Generation’ gets older and the ‘Closed Generation’ dies out.

Andrew Cooper is a Conservative Party strategist and founder of the London-based research and strategy company Populus, where he works with a wide range of major UK and international business clients as well as political campaigns, including the No campaign in Scotland’s 2014 referendum on independence and the Remain campaign in the UK’s 2016 referendum on EU membership. From 2011-2013 he was Prime Minister David Cameron’s Director of Strategy in 10 Downing Street.
It seems like long ago now, but there once was a time when the Labour Party had every reason to be fearful of Theresa May.

The new Prime Minister had walked into Downing Street with a plan to transform politics by colonising vast tracts of Labour territory. Standing on the steps of No 10, Mrs May said she stood for social justice and building One Nation. She even ended her speech with a very new Labour claim: “We will make Britain a country that works not for a privileged few, but for every one of us.”

Her plan failed because she became the hostage of those in the Conservative Party who want to close Britain off to the rest of the world. When Mrs May called the 2017 General Election it was specifically to overcome the opponents of a hard Brexit – to crush the saboteurs – and achieve the narrow, extreme rupture with the European Union she had once campaigned against. And we all know what happened next.

Instead of achieving the overwhelming victory she sought, she lost both her majority and her political authority. Contrary to all expectations, including possibly his own, Jeremy Corbyn picked up 30 seats and took Labour back to where it was in 2010.

But some of the most fashionable theories for Labour’s improved performance do not survive detailed scrutiny. Figures released recently by the British Election Study show that the so-called “Youthquake” - a disproportionate increase in turnout amongst the young – never really happened.

The idea that “Jezmania” exists among the general public is undermined by evidence showing Labour’s leader continues to lag behind an ever-more unpopular Theresa May as Britain’s preferred Prime Minister.

And claims that the public was wildly enthused by the chance to vote for a radical left-wing manifesto are also unlikely when, give or take a dash of nationalisation, it was pretty much a cut-and-paste of the policy offer Ed Miliband had made with significantly less success two years earlier. Far from being a revolutionary upheaval of the commanding heights of the economy, Labour in 2017 was even pledging to retain most of the Tories’ benefit cuts.

Instead, the Global Future analysis published here today by Andrew Cooper is by far the most compelling and rigorous explanation that I have seen. He shows where old alliances are breaking down and new electoral coalitions are beginning to be formed. He outlines how the real division in British politics now is not between Left and Right so much as being open to the world or closed.
And he explains why there was such a significant swing to Labour, and away from the Conservatives, among voters under the age of 45.

In the age of identity, people were not motivated to vote simply by retail offers such as free tuition fees but by a much deeper recognition of shared values on issues ranging from multiculturalism, immigration and our country’s future place in the world.

For many people, Mrs May’s forced conversion to hard Brexit placed her firmly on the wrong side of this divide between Open and Closed. The Conservatives became the party of restricting immigration, building borders and killing foxes. “If you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere,” said the Prime Minister. “If you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re not a Tory”, heard millions of voters.

While the Conservatives doubled-down on chasing voters on the Closed side of the divide, Labour made extraordinary gains in seats like Canterbury, Kensington and Battersea – where Open voters made the crucial difference.

Such voters chose to back Labour at the last election because they had little choice: in most seats, supporting another party such as the Liberal Democrats or the Greens would have most likely helped deliver a hard Brexit majority.

But a huge question mark hangs over whether these voters will make the same calculation again.

Although Labour MPs, Labour members and Labour voters are overwhelming on the Open side of the divide, the party’s official position still supports Brexit and appears to place limiting immigration ahead of Britain’s economic prosperity.

The time is fast approaching when Labour will have to stop facing both ways and pick a side between Open or Closed. Either choice will see votes lost as well as gained because there is always a trade-off.

But I believe choosing to place ourselves on the Open side of the divide is in accordance with our historic internationalist values. It is also in the interests of our voters, whose jobs and security rely on being part of an outward-looking country. And it is the right choice strategically.

This is not just a question for the next election: the divide between Open and Closed will define politics for decades to come. As Global Future’s analysis shows, the long term demographic trend of our country’s politics is moving steadily towards one where Closed voters will be far outnumbered by those with Open values.

For those in my party who fear we will lose seats in some traditional heartland areas where people have Closed values, I can only point out that in all but a handful of these constituencies, the Labour vote itself already strongly leans towards Open.
But most importantly of all, the Labour Party will not succeed or, indeed, deserve to succeed – if it carries on pretending to be something it is not. The Conservative Party is heading towards becoming an authentically Closed party because that is where the values of their ageing voters and membership predominantly lie. But, even if we wanted to, there is no plausible path for Labour to shift against openness, diversity, and free movement, or in favour of a narrow, closed nationalism.

Nor do I believe that sitting on the fence between Open and Closed will for much longer be a viable strategy for our party. Despite this week’s welcome shift towards a Customs Union the party is still a long way behind it’s voters and members, and in this era of internal party democracy, the membership’s tolerance cannot be taken for granted by a leadership that is triangulating on an issue so fundamental to our country’s future and our party’s principles.

The axis of British politics is rotating and, as it does so, it presents Labour with a huge opportunity. The route back to government is through the progressive, inclusive politics of our members and voters.

The Open side of this great debate will own the future. And if Labour gets the strategy right, our party can too.

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