



# WHY TRUMP WON

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I was elected to the Parliament of Canada seven times—three times as Prime Minister. I did not expect Donald Trump to be elected President of the United States. But unlike most observers, I did think it was at least possible. Why?

Because I sensed, as Mr. Trump surely did, that the political landscape had shifted.

The underlying issue is this: Over the last few decades, thanks to globalization, a billion people—mostly in the emerging markets of Asia—have lifted themselves out of poverty. This, of course, is a good thing. Yet, in many Western countries, the incomes of working people have stagnated or even declined over the same period.

In short, many Americans voted for Donald Trump because the global economy has not been working for them. We can pretend that this is a false perception. We can keep trying to convince people that they misunderstand their own lives. Or we can try to understand what they are saying and offer some solutions.

I prefer the latter approach.

Let me begin with this:

In our contemporary world, there are, as British journalist David Goodhart describes it, those who can live “Anywhere,” and those who live “Somewhere.”

Imagine you work for an international bank, computer company, or consulting firm. You can wake up in New York, London, or Singapore and feel at home. Your work is not threatened by import competition or technological dislocation. You vocally support all international trade agreements and high levels of immigration. You are one of those who can live Anywhere. There are a lot of those people. But there are a lot more completely unlike them.

Let’s say you’re a factory worker, a small-businessperson, or in retail sales. Your work has been disrupted by outsourcing, cheap imports and technological change. Your children attend the local schools and your aging parents live nearby. Your social life is connected to a local church, sports team, or community group.

If things go badly at your company, or if policy choices by politicians turn out to be wrong, you can’t just shift your life to somewhere else. Like it or not, you depend on the economic policies of your national or state government. When it doesn’t come through for you, you’re not happy. And when it ignores you entirely, you get angry.

It's easy for Anywheres to dismiss these concerns. But the Anywheres' faith in global solutions and multi-national political bodies is founded more on fantasy than fact.

The fact is, the critical functions of laws and regulations and monetary and fiscal stability, among other things, are provided by nations, not global institutions.

The nation, with all its flaws, is a concrete reality. The “global community” is little more than a concept. Yet it is the Anywheres, with their faith in globalization—not the Somewheres—who have dominated the politics of almost every advanced country.

That is, until now.

This sea-change is not limited to the United States. The same dynamics—“Anywhere” elites versus “Somewhere” populists—is playing out all across the Western world.

These populists, as I've tried to show, are not the ignorant and misguided “deplorables” depicted in mainstream media. They are our family, friends, and neighbors. The populists represent, by definition, the interests of ordinary people. And, in a democratic system, the people are supposed to be our customers.

So, how then can we best serve them? I propose an approach I call “populist conservatism.” Grounding ourselves in tried and true conservative values, we must speak to the issues that concern the Somewheres and their families—those of ordinary people, not elites. Those issues include market economics, trade, globalization, and immigration.

In addressing these issues, conservatives should remain pro-free market, pro-trade, pro-globalization and pro-immigration. Going in a completely opposite direction in any of these areas is a mistake.

But being pro-market does not mean that all regulations should be dismantled or that governments should never intervene to protect workers. Being pro-trade does not imply that every trade agreement is a good one. Being pro-globalization should not entail abdicating loyalty or responsibility to our country and our local communities. And being pro-immigration should never mean sanctioning illegal immigration, erasing our borders, or ignoring the interests of our citizens.

I call this “populist conservatism,” but it's really just conservatism.

Conservatism is about seeing the world as it is. It's also inherently populist because it is about serving real people rather than theories.

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