British politics after Brexit: Reflections on the last three years and the next fifty

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When Walter Bagehot wrote the second edition of his classic account of the British Constitution in 1873 he observed that it was likely to be out of date very quickly. The British constitution under Lord Palmerston, which he had described in the first edition, was very different from that of Benjamin Disraeli only a decade later. In the absence of a written code or comprehensive legal rules, the British constitution is whatever happens. As Bagehot put it, the Constitution "has continued in outward sameness but in hidden inner change." He regarded this as an advantage. It enabled the constitution to adapt to external shocks. But it means that, as so often in Britain, the label does not always match the contents of the bottle. It also enables the British to achieve major constitutional changes by accident, without necessarily intending it. Does this matter? It is far from clear that we would have a better constitution if we changed it on purpose. We would certainly have a much more rigid one. I very much doubt whether a more formal constitution would have weathered the crisis of the past three years as well as the one we have.

During that period the Constitution has undergone significant changes, most of which can be traced to the decision to leave the European Union. They include major changes in the role of political parties, in the relations of the government with Parliament, and in constitutional the role of the courts. All of them have been controversial. But the controversy has been distorted by the European debate. People have welcomed or deplored the changes, depending on how they affect the likelihood of our leaving the EU, and where they stand on that issue. This is, to my mind, rather absurd. Ultimately constitutional change must be considered on its merits, irrespective of our views about any particular political issue. What I want to talk about this evening is why the decision to leave the EU provoked the biggest constitutional crisis of our

recent history. And I want to consider what continuing effect that crisis will have on public life now that it is over, at any rate at a domestic political level.

The Brexit crisis was the combined result of three remarkable developments. The first was the attempt to resolve a highly controversial question by introducing an element of direct democracy into a Parliamentary system. The second was the advent of a minority government. And the third was the collapse of a shared political culture. These three things were of course related. But the starting point for all of them was the referendum.

A referendum is a device for circumventing the Parliamentary process. The justification for doing that in 2016 was that there was a mismatch between Parliamentary sentiment and public opinion. Public opinion was divided on the European Union, but all parties represented in Parliament believed that we should remain in it. So if you wanted to leave, there was no party that you could vote for except for UKIP which had no MPs and little prospect of getting any. In due course, this problem would have probably have resolved itself. Sooner or later, the transformation of the Conservative Party into an anti-EU party would I think have occurred anyway, as a result of the growth of anti-European sentiment among its electoral base. But David Cameron's decision to try to lance the boil in 2016 accelerated the process, with highly disruptive consequences. The great Victorian constitutional lawyer A.V. Dicey, whose works are still authoritative, was a great believer in referenda. He thought that they were a superior alternative to party politics, which he regarded as a source of unnecessary strife and division. He argued that referenda were a useful way of restraining the wild projects of politicians. A referendum, he said, was "an emphatic assertion of the principle that nation stands above party." It would be hard to imagine a clearer refutation of Dicey's argument than the referendum of 2016. The problem is that the argument does not work if it is the nation rather than the parties which is divided.

There were two things wrong with the referendum of 2016. The first is common to all referenda on issues about which there are strong feelings. They create a sense of entitlement in the majority which inhibits compromise and invites absolute outcomes. This is the mentality summed up in the oft-repeated statement that "the British people"

had voted to leave the EU. It implied what many people said out loud, that the 48% who voted to stay were not for this purpose to be regarded as part of the British people and did not count. Far from uniting the nation as Dicey envisaged, the referendum of 2016 sundered the four nations of the United Kingdom. It divided us by class, by region, by economic status and by generation. It split families and alienated friends. It poisoned our politics. It was the most significant single cause of the demise of the shared political culture which had hitherto enabled our constitution to work. That has in turn encouraged a much more authoritarian style of government.

The second objection is specific to the referendum of 2016. In countries such as France, Switzerland and Italy whose constitutions provide for referenda, it is necessary to formulate a precise legislative proposal whose approval by the electorate will be decisive. This was the kind of referendum that Dicey supported. It was the kind of referendum that Britain itself chose for the Scottish devolution referendum of 1979 and the alternative vote referendum of 2011. The problem with the question asked in 2016 is that there were too many answers to it other than Yes or No. You might be in favour of leaving the EU in any circumstances whatever. Some people were. Or you might be in favour of leaving it only on the footing urged by the Leave campaign, namely that a satisfactory agreement could easily be reached about future relations with the EU. If that was your view, there were any number of different kinds of agreement with the EU that you might regard as satisfactory. Unfortunately the nature of our future relations with the EU after leaving was not on the ballot paper. It hardly could have been since it depended on the result of a future negotiation. Yet that was the whole subject of dispute for the next three and a half years. The referendum could only ever have been decisive if the answer was Remain, as Mr. Cameron assumed it would be. If the answer was Leave, all the difficult questions would be left unanswered for Parliament to deal with. As a result, the referendum was not the end of the argument, but only the beginning. Against that background, it is very odd to say that Parliament had no business to be arguing about Brexit.

Yet that is what the government did say. The House of Commons was repeatedly accused of obstructing the attempt to implement the result of the referendum. This

accusation reached the outer limits of hyperbole in September 2019 when the Attorney-General (of all people) told the House of Commons that it had "no moral right to sit". In its manifesto for the subsequent election, the Conservative Party declared that MPs had "devoted themselves to thwarting the democratic decision of the British people in the 2016 referendum." This sort of thing has been repeated so often that we are in danger of believing it. It is manifestly untrue. The facts are that the House of Commons voted by a very large majority to serve the Article 50 notice. It accepted the principle of leaving the EU. But on the terms of our departure it was as divided as the population that it served, as was only proper. The real burden of the government's complaint against Parliament was that a majority of MPs was unwilling to allow them to leave the EU until they had made satisfactory alternative arrangements. This undoubtedly weakened the government's negotiating hand in Brussels, but it was neither unreasonable nor undemocratic.

Having sponsored a referendum which left Parliament to sort out all the uncertainties and ambiguities of the result, the government then lost the majority which might have enabled that to be achieved. There had been minority governments before 2017. But they were few and short-lived. In each case, the situation was managed by avoiding controversial legislation. But that was hardly possible for Mrs. May, because Brexit, one of the most controversial policies ever espoused by a British government, was top of the agenda. The result of all this was to test to the edge of destruction some of the basic principles on which our constitution works.

Britain is a Parliamentary democracy in more fundamental sense than is commonly realised. The whole structure of our institutions depends on Parliament being the ultimate decision-maker. This is because of the way in which our democracy evolved out of a monarchical constitution. Walter Bagehot described Britain as a "disguised republic". The Crown has extraordinarily wide prerogative powers, whose actual exercise by the monarch would be quite inconsistent with a democratic constitution. In theory, the monarch appoints and dismisses ministers. In theory, the monarch summons, dissolves and prorogues Parliament. In theory the monarch consents to Parliamentary legislation, without which it is not valid. In theory the monarch

conducts the international relations of the United Kingdom. These relics of absolute monarchy have been limited by convention since the eighteenth century. By convention the prerogative powers of the Crown are actually exercised by her ministers, who are answerable for their exercise to Parliament. By convention the monarch must appoint ministers who command the confidence of the House of Commons and may not retain the services of ministers who have lost it. By convention the monarch does not veto Parliamentary legislation. We are only a democracy because of these conventions. Their combined effect is that the legitimacy of governmental action depends on Parliamentary sentiment. In overtly presidential constitutions like those of United States or France there are constitutional documents from which the executive can derive legitimacy for its acts independent of Parliament. There is nothing equivalent in Britain.

This is, admittedly, not how most people think about the matter. In general elections, most people do not regard themselves as voting for an MP. They regard themselves as voting for a government. Parliament is just part of the mechanics for giving effect to their choice. But there are obvious reasons why it is important to stick to the constitutional view and not the popular one. One reason is that the popular view does not work even in its own terms. Very few British governments have come to power with an absolute majority of the votes cast. They have all been minority governments in electoral terms. The first past the post system in Parliamentary elections commonly means that they have an absolute majority only in Parliamentary terms. There is, however, a more fundamental reason. The diversity of opinions among MPs, even within a single political party, is an important part of the process by which governments achieve the broadest possible basis of consent for their acts. The popular view of the electoral process would confer despotic power on ministers, constrained only by their fear of retribution at the polls at the next election.

Conventions are rules of practice which are not necessarily legally binding, but which it would be politically costly to ignore. The dependence of our constitution on conventions is often presented as a British peculiarity. In fact, all constitutions depend to some extent on conventions. Law is never enough. Even in a highly formal and law-based constitution like that of the United States, the importance of conventions becomes

obvious when you see what happens when they are cast aside. The world is full of countries whose democratic constitutions have been subverted entirely legally by governments set on exploiting legal forms to undermine democratic substance: Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Hungary, Turkey, Russia. The list gets longer every year. But although conventions matter everywhere, they are particularly important in an informal and political constitution such as the British one. In our system, they are the main barrier against the ministerial despotism which would otherwise be implicit in our quasi-monarchical constitution. The problem about constitutional conventions is that they depend on a shared political culture. A shared political culture means the mutual acceptance that the constitution must be made to work in the interests not just of one side but of the system as a whole. It means a common sentiment about what are the limits of political propriety. It means that not everything that legally can be done, should be done. All of this requires a culture which accepts pluralism and diversity of opinion; in which opponents are not enemies but fellow citizens who disagree and with whom it is necessary to engage.

Faced with a Parliament which rejected the government's blueprint for relations with the EU after Brexit, both Mrs May and Mr. Johnson claimed an alternative source of constitutional legitimacy, displacing Parliament, based on the result of the referendum. I have already explained why the referendum, although it was undoubtedly a powerful political argument, was not and never could be a source of constitutional legitimacy. The constitution showed itself to be remarkably resilient in the face of this threat to the fundamental assumptions on which it operates. Its famous flexibility enabled it to fight back on two main fronts. One was the procedures of the House of Commons. They were significantly changed by Speaker Bercow with the support of a majority of the House, including an important group within the governing party. The other was the courts. They gave legal effect to the traditional understanding of the role of Parliament, which the government believed to be non-binding and which it resolved to disregard.

The procedures of the House of Commons are one of the most arcane parts of our constitution. But they are of critical importance. They determine in important

respects the relationship between the government and the legislature. The British Parliament is unusual among democratic legislatures. It is not just a lawmaker and an external check on government. It is itself an instrument of government. Its main function is to support the government, or change it for another which it can support. This is reflected in the fact that in the Westminster model, unlike other legislative models, ministers actually sit in Parliament. Together with their Parliamentary Private Secretaries, they currently comprise about a fifth of the House of Commons. It is reflected in the fact that the ministry is selected for its numbers in the House. And it is reflected in the House's rules. Standing Order 14 of the House of Commons provides that with limited exceptions "government business shall have precedence at every sitting". Since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, the Parliamentary agenda has been decided by the government. The Leader of the House, a government minister, puts forward business motions. The opposition cannot normally put forward its own business motions or amend the government's. These procedures do not sit well with minority government. Their whole basis and their sole justification is the assumption that the government commands a sufficient majority in the House of Commons to get its business through. The governments in the last Parliament were is an unusual position. The House of Commons professed to have confidence in Her Majesty's government but not in its only significant policy. In the face of this difficulty, Mrs May's government engaged in what can only be described as a crude piece of blackmail. It tried to force MPs to support its own proposals by using its control over the Parliamentary agenda to stifle consideration of anyone else's. The calculation was that in the face of the Article 50 deadline and the risks of a no-deal exit, MPs would be forced to submit.

This strategy was circumvented by Speaker Bercow. Bercow is a controversial figure. But this country owes him a very great debt. He adapted the procedures of the House of Commons to accommodate the problems provoked by a minority government. The Speaker is the servant of the House of Commons. It is not his job to make things easier for a government whose policies do not have the support of the House. In December 2018 Bercow departed from normal practice by allowing MPs to amend government business motions and put forward their own program. In September 2019, during the brief period between the return of Parliament from its recess and its

prorogation a week later, the government deliberately declined to move any business motions so as to frustrate any attempt to amend them in this way. Bercow allowed private members to take control of the order paper under Standing Order 24, which provides for emergency debates. The Speaker allowed it to be used to make time for the so-called Benn Act to be tabled and passed. Both of these innovations left the government speechless with rage. But both were absolutely necessary to cope with the problems of having a minority government in a representative democracy.

Baulked by the Speaker's inventive approach to procedure, the government resorted to proroguing Parliament. That provoked what was perhaps the most controversial of all the constitutional developments arising from the Brexit crisis, namely the intervention of the courts. Prorogation was a more significant step in September 2019 than it would normally have been. Normally a major change in our law requires positive action from Parliament. But under Article 50 of the EU Treaty, Britain would automatically leave the EU on 31 October 2019 with or without a satisfactory agreement if Parliament did nothing. The prorogation of Parliament was conceived as a way of ensuring that Parliament could do nothing for long enough to achieve this seismic change in spite of strong Parliamentary opposition. As it happened, this result was prevented by the so-called Benn Act, which was passed in a great hurry after the government announced its plan to prorogue. But if the government had been right on the question of principle, it could have prorogued Parliament before the Benn Act was passed and indeed extended the prorogation beyond 31 October.

The government's decision to prorogue Parliament was not exactly a breach of convention. The power of prorogation was an ancient power dating back to the medieval origins of Parliament. It had historically been exercise for a wide variety of reasons, including political ones. In England, John Major prorogued Parliament in 1997 in order to forestall a debate on the cash-for-questions scandal. More recently, in 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, prorogued Parliament in order to pre-empt a motion of no confidence, after his coalition partners deserted him and joined the opposition, thereby depriving him of his majority. But if prorogation was not a breach of convention, it was clearly a gross breach of the shared political culture which placed

Parliament at the centre of the political system. It was a direct assertion of executive power to force through a policy which Parliament opposed, without its authority.

There was no doubt that in principle an exercise of the royal prerogative can be judicially reviewed. That was decided in a famous case before the Law Lords in 1984. However, for it to be quashed, there must be some legal criterion by which it can be found wanting. Political outrage is not enough. So the decision to prorogue faced the Supreme Court with a question as fundamental as any which a British court has ever had to consider. The sole basis on which we are entitled to call ourselves a Parliamentary democracy is that governments are answerable to Parliament. The question was whether this was a principle of law, and therefore binding, or a mere matter political sentiment which the government was at liberty to ignore. The Court held that held that it was a principle of law. Mr. Rees-Mogg is said to have described this as a "constitutional coup". This strikes me as rather extravagant. The Prime Minister is a public officer. The power to prorogue Parliament is a public power. The common law has always been reluctant to recognise that a public officer can exercise a public power without being accountable to any one but himself: not to the monarch, because in practice he is himself exercising the monarch's powers; not to the electorate because it has no institutional means of holding the government to account otherwise than through Parliament; not to Parliament because it will have been prorogued. The effect would have been to transform a public power into a personal privilege.

I have been a vocal critic of the tendency of the courts to arrogate to themselves decisions which are properly matters for political debate and Parliamentary accountability. But this was different. The Supreme Court intervened not to claim decision-making powers for judges but to safeguard the decision-making powers of Parliament. It reminded us that under our constitution the government's sole source of legitimacy is the support of the House of Commons. This was something that the government had been inclined to overlook. In former times, the question would have not have got anywhere near the courts. It would have been resolved in accordance with a shared understanding of the political community about the limits of political propriety. But what happens if that understanding breaks down? Do the courts simply stand by

and say “Oh dear!”? Some, perhaps most, conventional assumptions about politics do not lend themselves to judicial enforcement. But others are so fundamental to the democratic character of our constitution that their destruction would leave an intolerable void. This was such a case.

By September 2019, the impossibility of sidelining Parliament and the absence of a majority in Parliament for any alternative solution to the European conundrum had combined to bring the business of the moment to a standstill. The traditional safety valve in this situation is a dissolution and a general election. Walter Bagehot described this as an appeal from one Parliament to the next. Brexit was the major issue at the resultant election. The scale of the Conservative victory conferred democratic legitimacy on the government’s Brexit policy, something that the referendum had never done. The referendum campaign had been fought in a fog of ignorance and a cacophony of tendentious and unverifiable claims and counterclaims about what the consequences of leaving might be. It had also failed to address the question of our future relations with the EU. None of this was true of the general election that we have just had. We are not obliged to agree with the decision to leave the European Union. But we do I think have to accept that it is what most of our fellow-citizens want, whatever the consequences.

So what of the future? With an overall majority of 80, the government will not need to play fast and loose with constitutional principle in order to get its way. It would be agreeable to think that as a result the breakdown of our political culture in the past three years was just a passing phase. Unfortunately, there are signs that this may be too optimistic.

The first of them concerns the organization of political parties. Political parties have a critical function in a Parliamentary democracy. Politics is a market place. Parties mediate between the public and the state, in their search for a slate of policies which can attract the widest range of support and maximise their electoral prospects. They modify their offering in response to changes of public sentiment. But the political market has taken a serious knock over the past few years. The problem arises mainly from the tiny membership rolls of the constituency associations which constitute the basic units of political parties. This has happened over a long period – more than fifty

years. It has happened partly as a result of changes of patterns of sociability, and partly as a result of the more fickle and less tribal allegiance of most voters. But the ironic result of people becoming less tribal is that political parties have become more so. Because of the dwindling membership rolls of constituency associations, it is too easy for small but well organised groups to take over political parties, as Momentum has taken over much of the Labour Party and UKIP and the Brexit Party much of the Conservative Party. Constituency associations have immense power. They select Parliamentary candidates. They make the ultimate choice of the party's leader in the House of Commons. Entryists are almost by definition activists and zealots. They narrow the party's policy offering. This limits the choices available to the electorate to relatively extreme positions. The problem is particularly acute when it happens to both major parties at the same time.

In a famous lecture in 1976, Lord Hailsham described the British constitution as an 'elective dictatorship'. This, he said, was because of the immense power possessed by a government with an overall majority in the House of Commons. Lord Hailsham was I think wrong in 1976. He looked only at the mechanics of party discipline in the House of Commons, and not at the process by which party policy is made. Traditionally, political parties have been "big tents" or broad churches. They have not been cramped bunkers or narrow sects. The operation of the political market means that party policy is usually a compromise: not just a compromise between different groups within the party, but a compromise with the policy platforms of other parties whose clothes it is electorally desirable to steal. This is how the political market works. It is fundamental to the ability of a democracy to accommodate dissent and enable us to live together in a single political community. This is why the narrowing of the intellectual base of both major parties is such a significant development. By limiting the electorate's choices to relatively extreme positions, the polarization of politics disables the political market and obstructs the process by which we accommodate dissent. It means that Lord Hailsham's warning about elective dictators, which was not justified in his day, may shortly be justified in ours.

The polarisation of politics has proved destructive of the way that politics works to accommodate a wide range of opinion. It is also symptomatic of something more sinister, which I hope it is not too melodramatic to call a developing totalitarian tendency. There has been a growing intolerance of dissent and a tendency to deny the legitimacy of opposition. Let us look at the signs.

First, there was the consistent habit of shooting the messenger without engaging with the message. The governor of the Bank of England, the British Permanent Representative to the EU, the civil service authors of various projections of the economic impact of Brexit, the assumptions underlying Operation Yellowhammer (the contingency plan for a no deal Brexit), have all expressed views based on the careful analysis of evidence. None of them have been met with a reasoned or evidence-based refutation. Instead, they were summarily rejected for no other reason than that they did not suit the public position of those who wished to leave the EU come what may. The authors, it was said, must be remainers. Therefore one need not engage with their views. In the case of the Governor of the Bank of England, it was seriously suggested by Mr Rees-Mogg that he had no business to be expressing a view at all.

Secondly, there was the expulsion of 21 MPs from the conservative party for failing to support the government in its willingness to risk a no-deal exit in its negotiations with the EU. They were prevented from fighting the election as the conservatives that they undoubtedly were. All of those who tried to fight their seats as independents were defeated by more compliant government candidates. This was not an ordinary measure of party discipline. It was a political purge. Of course, political parties have always had this power. But they have recoiled from using it in order to keep their electoral appeal as broad as possible. The present government fought the last election on the basis that they did not need a broad appeal because the polarization of politics would enable them to win without one. As it turned out, they were right about that. This has been mainly an issue in the Conservative party, but the Labour Party has not been far behind. Last July, it was reported that 70 Labour MPs who were thought to be hostile to Momentum were facing the threat of deselection. They were saved from this ordeal by the early onset of the general election. This kind of approach from

dominant groups in both major parties suggests that the extraordinarily narrow political base of the constituency associations is already leading to a more authoritarian political style.

Thirdly, there was the present government's successful but disreputable argument that Parliament and the courts were frustrating the will of the people. This was an attempts to capitalise on anti-political feelings which have been mounting in most western democracies for many years. But whatever we may think of our politicians, we cannot have liberty without democracy, or democracy without politics, or politics without politicians. To denounce politics as anti-democratic is not just a contradiction in terms. It is bound to lead to a more authoritarian style of government which we will not like.

Fourthly, there is the attack on the judiciary. The Prime Minister has said that his proposals will distinguish between judicial review designed to protect ordinary citizens from oppressive governmental acts, and judicial review which is really politics by other means. As I sought to explain in my Reith Lectures, there is a real problem about judicial review. It has tended to intrude into areas that properly belong to Parliament and to ministers answerable to Parliament. But I am not sure that when the Prime Minister talks about politics by other means, he means the same thing as I do. I suspect that he means cases with important political implications. This part of the government's program has quite obviously been provoked by resentment of the Supreme Court's decisions in the two Gina Miller cases. Yet those decisions did not involve the judicial usurpation of the role of Parliament. On the contrary, both of them defended Parliament against an executive that wanted to sideline it.

When the government loses a judicial review, it is invariably because it is found to have acted illegally, or to have done something that it had no power to do. I do not suppose that the Prime Minister intends to introduce legislation saying that if ministers act illegally or without legal power the courts must not intervene if they did it for political reasons. The problem lies not in the existence of these powers, which are essential in any civilized society. It lies in the enthusiasm of some judges to find that the government has acted illegally or without power, when the real basis of their

intervention is simply that they disapprove of the policies in question. I think that a change of judicial attitudes is long overdue. But you cannot achieve that by Act of Parliament. You cannot have a statute which says that judges must be more respectful in future of the proper province of politics. The only way to stop courts from holding that ministers have acted illegally or without legal power, is to give ministers unlimited powers.

It is no doubt difficulties like these which explain the Attorney-General's call for a political element in the appointment or confirmation of judges. To appreciate the oddity of this suggestion, you have to imagine what questions might be asked of candidates. There would be no point in asking them whether they were judicial activists. They would simply answer that they would be as active as the law and the facts of the case required them to be, no more and no less. You could ask them whether they were Tories. Or leavers. That would produce the kind of discreditable consequences that we have seen in the United States, where judges are identified with the political positions of their appointers. Indeed, that would seem to be the object of the exercise. Would the present government be happy to face a bench of judges selected on overtly political grounds by the Labour ministers who were in power from 1997 to 2010, or confirmed by the predominantly Labour Parliaments of that period? This is one of the most ill-thought out ideas ever to emerge from a resentful government frustrated by its inability to do whatever it likes. It would gravely undermine public confidence in the judicial function. And it would deter any lawyer of stature from applying for appointment. Better to continue in independent practice, they will say, and conserve their self-respect than participate in such a charade of independence.

Finally, there are the minor pointers, straws in the wind that re sometimes as revealing as major policy statements. The government has threatened the financial model of the BBC. It is doing this at a time when it is accusing the broadcaster of a bias towards the liberal instincts which the conservative party is busily trying to cut out of its heritage. Ministers have conducted an organised boycotting of the *Today* program. There was the refusal to countenance a peerage for John Bercow, contrary to long-standing tradition, on the ground that he stopped a minority government behaving as if

it had a majority. This is an act of vindictive mean-mindedness unworthy of Her Majesty's Government. All these are symptoms of a frame of mind uncomfortable with dissent, which feels that it is the duty of every national institution to stand behind the government.

The Prime Minister has declared his intention of reuniting Britain after the long Brexit crisis. I think that he is being unrealistic. People hardly ever unite around a policy, least of all a one as controversial as Brexit. The only thing that ever has or ever will unite us is a common loyalty to a way of conducting our affairs that we can respect even if we disagree about the outcome. This means a process of decision-making which accommodates dissent, debate and a diversity of values. It means a process which recognizes the legitimacy of opposition. It means a government which does not believe that the ends justify any means that are calculated to achieve them. These are not just optional extras or rules of courtesy. They are fundamental to the survival of the democratic state. Aristotle's objection to democracy was that it was inherently unstable. It transmuted naturally into tyranny. It is not law or constitutions which has prevented this from happening in the century and a half during which democracy has been the prevailing system in Europe and North America. It is a shared political culture. That takes years to come into being, but it can be destroyed in no time at all.