

Brexit is nothing like the rise of Donald Trump – whatever he might think



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No coherent thinking, no meaningful movement: There is no real Trump ideology
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All over the Western world, electorates are angry at their self-satisfied, arrogant political classes; they want their views reflected, including, of course, on immigration, and feel that they have been ignored for too long.

Manual workers and the lower middle classes are especially fed up, and feel under pressure financially as a result of the legacy of the Great Recession, automation and globalisation.

First the [Leave campaign in Britain](#) and now [Donald Trump in America](#) have sought to harness these populist rebellions. But I have news for Mr Trump: he may become the next US president but he never will be Mr Brexit. It's not even close.

In all of the ways that really matter, the Brexiteer agenda is dramatically at odds with what passes for Trump's world-view.

The Donald wants to walk away from America's free trade deals; Brexiteers are desperate to sign as many as possible as quickly as possible.

Leavers here would love to join Nafta; Trump wants to quit it. Almost all Brexiteers want to use Nato to help protect the West and project UK and US power; Trump sees it as a drain on resources.

The utter incompatibility of visions ought to be obvious. Brexit is the politics of hope, of positive change, of radical reform; Trump is the politics of despair, of powerlessness, of retreat.

Brexit was primarily about regaining Britain's self-government; it is a bold, powerful statement that liberal, independent, free-trading democracies are the best way for countries and their people to prosper in a modern, complex world.

It is a denunciation of post-war technocracies, a rejection of top-down rule, and a commitment to a massive increase in democratic control.

In complete contrast, America self-evidently never relinquished its independence: [this is just another election](#), albeit between two hopeless candidates.

Brexit's massive repatriation of power to our own institutions will strengthen and rejuvenate the UK's ailing democracy, which had become atrophied and pathetic; the election of either Trump or Clinton, by contrast, could make America almost ungovernable.

It is clear why Trump wants to bask in the Brexiteers' reflected glory: they triumphed spectacularly on an anti-establishment, David-versus-Goliath message, and in the face of the received wisdom.

To get out his vote, Trump needs to convince his supporters he has a real chance – and pointing to the referendum triumph and the explosive shock it caused to the elites they so despise is a great way of achieving this.

It is in the interest, too, of the liberal-Left intelligentsia in Britain to conflate Brexit – a pro-free trade, pro-democracy, pro-internationalist movement – with Trumpism – an anti-trade, almost autarchic agenda.

If nothing else, they hope that the market chaos a Trump victory would cause might derail or delay Brexit indefinitely, or make it much harder for Theresa May to sign global trade deals.

Such folk are also keen to focus on the demographic similarities between the two groups of voters: those with more advanced academic qualifications are more likely to back Hillary Clinton or to vote Remain.

The intent here is obvious: to portray Brexit as a plot by dumb, uneducated suburban voters who were led astray by a group of charismatic demagogues (such as Michael Gove or Boris Johnson), thus discrediting the movement to leave the EU.

It is undeniably true that many Northern and coastal communities decided to vote Leave partly as a protest against social change, and that many Midwestern states will do the same with Trump.

But while his base is overwhelmingly white and male, and his campaign has further fanned the flames of America's horrendous racial divisions, the Leave vote was dramatically more diverse.

A majority of women (and men) voted to Leave: in fact, according to Lord Ashcroft's on-the-day poll, there was complete gender equality at 52 per cent for Brexit.

Trump has few votes in America's great cities. The Leave side's record here too was far better. Even in London, Leave grabbed 40 per cent of the vote, hugely more than Trump will get in New York or Los Angeles.

As to minority votes, take London's Newham, where under 17 per cent of the population are white British and 32 per cent are Muslim. Leave still grabbed 47.2 per cent of the vote. Harrow, a very different London borough with a white British share of 31 per cent and the UK's largest concentration of Hindus and Jains, voted 45 per cent for Leave, also well above the London average.

Plenty of Leave campaigners hailed from ethnic minorities, not least the excellent Priti Patel; and the majority of the Tories' 17 ethnic minority MPs backed Leave. A majority of ethnic minority voters still backed Remain.

ut the proportions are incomparable to the racially-divided US election, where an astonishing 91 per cent of the African-American vote is likely to go to Clinton, who also has a massive 50-point lead among Hispanics.

There was, tragically, a despicable spike in instances of abuse and even attacks on migrants in the immediate aftermath of the vote, apparently directed primarily at Eastern European workers.

This was a disgusting development and the Government should have condemned it even more forcefully than it did, but it was a very different phenomenon to the extreme racial divisions that we are currently seeing in the US.

Most importantly of all, modern British Euroscepticism is a well-established doctrine. It dates back to Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech of 1988.

Dozens of books have been written on the subject since then; it is a proper movement with its own historians, philosophers and economists, its activists and its supporters.

By contrast there is no real Trump ideology, no coherent thinking, no meaningful movement. He is a poujadiste, an operator in the mould of Ross Perot, the independent anti-free trade candidate who grabbed 18.9 per cent of the vote in 1992.

Trump is a pure opportunist who will say anything to get elected, and then do whatever he is able to get away with. So Mr Trump. Come up with better answers to the challenges facing America – and stop appropriating our victory.