BACK TO THE FUTURE OR FORWARDS TO THE PAST?

Nostalgia and National Populism

in the US and the UK

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CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

An appeal to nostalgia has been a salient feature of national populism in both the United States and the United Kingdom in recent years. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the way in which Donald Trump in his 2015 Presidential campaign and the Brexiteers in the 2016 European referendum campaign employed nostalgia to gain support. This will be done through a discourse analysis of the evocation of three forms of nostalgia: the nostalgic heartland (the longing for an exclusionary sense of home), nostalgic deprivation (feelings of loss and deprivation in various areas), and nostalgic restoration (an attempt to restore an idealised past version of the country). After a discussion of secondary literature, the quantitative results of the discourse analysis will be evaluated with a qualitative approach. This novel bottom-up study into nostalgia and populism will lead to valuable insights into the relation between nostalgia and national populist movements.

Key words: nostalgia, populism, campaign(s), heartland, deprivation, restoration, discourse.

INTRODUCTION

2016 was the year of the populist revolt; a revolt which had been years in the making. The election of Donald Trump and the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union were the result of "very deep and long-term currents that have been swirling beneath our democracies for many decades."[1] Still, Trump's election and Britain's exit from the EU left many shocked and surprised, and since then, there has been an enormous amount of academic research committed to explaining the rise in support for national populism. Whereas most research has focused on this bottom-up approach, much less research has been conducted top-down, into the national populist campaigns. Trump's presidential campaign and the campaign for Brexit might have been different in terms of content and topic, but there is one element that binds them together. Trump's 'Make America Great Again' slogan and the Brexiteers' recurring line of 'Take Back Control' are both reactionary; they indicate a return to a past where America was 'still' great and the British 'still' had control. It is not surprising these slogans resonated strongly with many voters. When living in times that are swiftly changing, it can be hard to keep up. And especially for those who feel they cannot keep up, or even feel they are purposely being left behind, feelings of alienation and anxiety prevail. Comfort can then be found in those 'good olden days' when times were simpler. Trump and the Brexiteers "successfully flirted with the feelings of disenchantment, anger, anxiety and fear experienced in the Western world, particularly by those who have been hit the hardest by the economic downturn."[2] By promising a return to the past, they were evoking within voters a feeling prevalent and typical for the current times: nostalgia.

There has only been limited academic interest into the connection between populism and nostalgia. This is striking, because at first glance, nostalgia seems to be one of the main features of populist campaigns, especially in the UK and the US.[3] The studies that have been done into nostalgic references often focus only on one form of nostalgia, or do not differentiate

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1. Roger Eatwell and Matthew J. Goodwin, *National populism: the revolt against liberal democracy* (UK: Pelican, 2018): ix.

2. Alessandro Gandini, *Zeitgeist Nostalgia: On populism, work and the 'good life'* (UK: Zero Books, 2020).

3. Sophie Gaston and Sacha Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France, and Germany* (UK: Demos, 2018): 49. Gaston and Hilhorst regard the Brexit vote as a moment in political history that is "a conclusive testimony to the political potency of nostalgia."

between different types. That is why this study aims to do a deep dive into populist nostalgic references in order to answer the following research question: How is nostalgia being used in national populist campaigns? This will be done through a discourse analysis, by evaluation of rhetorical references to the nostalgic heartland (longing for an often-exclusionary sense of home), nostalgic deprivation (feelings of loss in various societal areas) and nostalgic restoration (an attempt to restore an idealised past version of the state in question) in primary sources from 2015-2017 from the Vote Leave campaign in the United Kingdom and the Trump campaign in the United States.[4] To answer the main research question, this research is divided into three sub questions:

1. Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of the nostalgic heartland and in what way?
2. Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic deprivation and in what way?
3. Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic restoration and in what way?

It is expected that both Donald Trump in his first election campaign and the Brexiteers in their Vote Leave campaign effectively drew upon a sense of nostalgia within voters, proving that nostalgia is one of the main driving features of national populism. It is furthermore expected that conceptions of the nostalgic heartland were equally prevalent in both campaigns, but that references to nostalgic deprivation occurred more often in the US than in the UK, and references to nostalgic restoration occurred to a greater extent in the UK than in the US, due to its differing national contexts.

Historiography

There has been plenty of academic research into national populism, its origins, its consequences and its main 'raison d'être'. Some of the most encompassing academic work on populism has been done by Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin. In their book *National Populism* they outline the 'four D's as the origins of national populism: distrust in liberal politicians and institutions, destruction of the national group's historic identity and established way of life due to immigration and ethnic change, deprivation as a result of rising inequality and a loss of faith in a better future, and lastly, de-alignment; the weakening of bonds between traditional

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4. These three nostalgic conceptions will be further explained in the methodology and the three chapters.

mainstream parties and the people.[5] They define national populists as politicians who "prioritize the culture and interests of the nation, and promise to give voice to a people who feel that they have been neglected, even held in contempt, by distant and often corrupt elites."[6] More specifically, they want to restore the "dominance of the national group", which includes a return to customs and traditions of the past. National populists, they argue, want to live in a country with fewer immigrants and slower, or no, ethnic change, with a state that has more power while transnational bodies have less.[7] Whereas national populism is not one movement, it does have a very transnational nature in terms of its similarities. As Hugh Gusterson lines out, among diverse national populist movements there is a similar hostility toward ethnic change; a claim that they speak 'for the people'; a belief that traditional government institutions are corrupt; an attack on transnational organisations such as the EU, NATO and the UN, and most importantly for this research, "a call for a return to (an invented) tradition."[8]

Another work central to research on national populism is *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (2017) by David Goodhart. He claims there is a 'great divide' in British society, which is also largely applicable to the US. Namely one between the 'Anywheres' and the 'Somewheres'. The Anywheres have, at least up until 2016, dominated Western society. They enjoy higher education, move around both nationally and internationally and have so called 'achieved identities'; identities based on educational and career success "which makes them comfortable and confident with new places and people."[9] Somewheres, to the contrary, are more or less rooted in one place and have 'ascribed identities' based on a particular place and belonging. They therefore find rapid change more unsettling. The so-called 'left-behind' are part of this group, but the "Somewhere ambivalence about recent social trends spreads far beyond this group and is shared in all social classes."[10] Goodhart's main argument is that dominance of the Anywheres in the political structure over the last decades is the primary reason for the rise of national populism, as he sees populism as

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5. Eatwell and Goodwin, *National populism: the revolt against liberal democracy*, xxi-xxiii.

6. Eatwell and Goodwin, ix.

7. Eatwell and Goodwin, 276.

8. Hugh Gusterson, "From Brexit to Trump: Anthropology and the rise of nationalist populism," *American Ethnologist,* 44 (2017): 210.

9. David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics* (London: Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2017): 7.

10. Goodhart, 8.

a counterbalance to the Anywheres' neoliberalism. This research will look at those Somewheres, or more specifically, how Donald Trump and the Brexiteers have appealed to those Somewheres, and how they have played into their antipathy towards rapid change with their campaigns.[11]

While it is important to understand the currents driving support for national populism – which is what most research about populism has focused on thus far – there should also be academic research on the interplay between national populist politicians and their voters; on how national populist politicians gain support. At the end of their book, Eatwell and Goodwin confess that their research focuses mostly on the bottom-up developments; on the way people perceive the world around them and how that shapes their support for national populism. They argue the 'supply side' must too be considered; namely, how national populists appeal to the public.[12] This is what this research is going to do; by taking perspective from the 'supply side', it aims to discover how the national populist campaigns of Trump and the Brexiteers have appealed to the Somewheres' antipathy towards rapid change. It questions whether conceptions of nostalgia were prevalent in the campaign rhetoric, in order to establish whether and in what way nostalgia feeds the national populist campaigns. And it is vital to do so, because as Michael Kenny has argued, nostalgia is a little-examined and underestimated feature of political discourse.

The role nostalgia plays in political strategies has elicited remarkably little interest from academics, unlike other features of populism.[13] This means that in order to gain an exhaustive understanding of national populism – both where it comes from and what its drivers are – more research needs to be done into its nostalgic references. Also, because most research conducted into nostalgia and populism has so far either focused on European countries or has focused merely on one aspect of nostalgia. For example, Sven Schreurs' "Those Were the Days: Welfare Nostalgia and the Populist Radical Right in the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden" and Steenvoorden and Harteveld's "The appeal of nostalgia: the influence of societal pessimism on support for populist radical right parties" both focus on the radical right in Europe. Gaston and Hilhorst's analysis of nostalgia as a cultural and political force in Britain, France, and Germany constitutes a very encompassing work into populist nostalgic references, but its focus also

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11. Goodhart, 8.

12. Eatwell and Goodwin, 271.

13. Michael Kenny, "Back to the populist future? Understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 22, no. 3 (2017): 258.

remains in Europe.[14] Perhaps because of its more limited history, the US is often overlooked when it comes to nostalgia. But Trump's main campaign slogan and his strong appeal to 'rust belt' voters do suggest nostalgia might have come into play. Therefore Behler et al. analysed nostalgia in United States, however their study again only looked at one form of nostalgia which they defined as 'national nostalgia'.[15] Here lies the added value of this thesis: no prior studies have investigated the influence of three different forms of nostalgia on the populist movements in both the UK and the US.

The reason why this study focuses on the US and the UK specifically is because the national populist campaigns of 2015 and 2016 had very salient outcomes in those countries; in the US, Trump was elected for a four-year term presidency, and because the Brexiteers won the referendum, the UK left the European Union. Furthermore, Gest, Reny and Mayer also focused on the US and the UK in their study on nostalgic deprivation and their reasons for doing so are also very useful for this current study. First, the US and the UK are two of only three Western countries that use a first-past-the-post electoral system that institutionalizes a historic two-party structure.[16] Second, white working-class communities share a similar sense of social and economic decline in both countries and lastly, poverty and inequality have been on the rise because of a shift from a manufacturing to service-driven economy, both in the US and the UK.[17] This gives reason to assume that nostalgia has been used at least to some extent in both countries. The are many questions that remain however, such as whether one form of nostalgia was more prevalent or dominant than the other two: for example, did the Brexiteers lean on nostalgic restoration more heavily than on nostalgic deprivation? How did this differ between the US and the UK, and in what way were those different forms of nostalgia evoked, exactly? And the ultimate question: what does this reveal about the populist campaigns in question?

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14. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France, and Germany.*

15. Anna Maria C. Behler et al., "Making America Great Again? National Nostalgia's Effect on Outgroup Perceptions," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 41 (2021).

16. Justin Gest, Tyler Reny and Jeremy Mayer, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain," *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (2018): 1700.

17. Gest, Reny and Mayer, 1701.

Analytical concepts and theoretical framework

Nostalgia stems from two Greek words; *nostos* meaning 'return home,' and *algia* meaning 'longing'. Svetlana Boym defines it as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed."[18] Importantly, nostalgia is a yearning for a different time, or even a rebellion against the modern idea of time, and it is not always retrospective, Boym claims: "the fantasies of the past, determined by the needs of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future."[19] This is very much the case for the nostalgia connected to current-day politics. As Alessandro Gandini argues, nostalgia is at its core a populist sentiment; "it appeals to the heart, rather than the mind."[20] Gandini, in his book on nostalgia, draws on work from Bauman, who argues we live in times of 'Retrotopia'. The current political and societal aspiration, he states, is characterized by a return to an ideal past rather than towards the construction of a better future.[21] This can lead to an exclusionary, racist and xenophobic sense of home, because, to return to Boym and the Greek nostos (home) and algia (longing); algia is what we share, but nostos divides us.[22] Namely, what is home? Nostalgia does not differentiate between the real and the imagined, and people often "tend to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one."[23] This is one important consequence of nostalgia, which is very visible in national populist campaigns, but there are more forms of nostalgia with various effects.

Michael Kenny sees nostalgia as the wish for a rebirth of the way life, and the state, as it used to be. He argues that the idea of a once-great imperial nation, waking up once again, strongly resonated in the campaign for Brexit. He states that the Brexiteers purposely aroused fantasies of the rebirth of an 'unencumbered' nation to gain support among the 'Somewhere' electorate.[24] Trump, he claims, did something similar in his 2016 campaign with his plan to make America great again. Even though Kenny offers a sharp analysis of nostalgia in British politics, he only covers one aspect, or form, of nostalgia. It is the kind of nostalgia where the

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18. Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and Its Discontents," *The Hedgehog Review* 9, no. 2 (2007): 7.

19. Boym, 8.

20. Gandini, *Zeitgeist Nostalgia: On populism, work and the 'good life'*.

21. Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia (*UK: Polity Press, 2017).

22. Boym, "Nostalgia and Its Discontents," 9.

23. Boym, 10.

24. Kenny, "Back to the populist future? Understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse," 258.

people or politicians yearn for a restoration of their country's values, traditions, or 'great' history; a nostalgia very much linked to – a perhaps distorted vision of – history. Gest, Reny and Mayer focus on a different aspect of nostalgia, namely that of a comparison between an idealised past state and the way things are now. They argue that support for the radical right is "the product of a latent psychological phenomenon we call nostalgic deprivation – the discrepancy between individuals' understandings of their current status and their perceptions about their past."[25] In other words, they look at a form of nostalgia that is triggered by economic decline and feelings of loss in various aspects of society and daily life.

Taggart has also connected populism to nostalgia, or more specifically, to what he calls the 'heartland'. The heartland is a land of the imagination, and its use or evocation occurs only at times of difficulty – which, in turn, is also when people tend to entertain feelings of nostalgia. The heartland is not a utopia however, because it implies an imaginative backward glance by populists in order to reconstruct what has been lost by the present.[26] For populists, the heartland embodies all the positive aspects of everyday life, and it is not constructed solely with reference to the past, but also by setting literal boundaries and by the exclusion of 'others': "the heartland lies at the core of the community and excludes the marginal or the extreme."[27] Taggart adds that the conception of the heartland reveals both the commonalities and differences between different manifestations of populism.[28] This research will focus on three main aspects of nostalgia, based on the definitions by Kenny, Gest et al., and Taggart, and establish how they were utilised in the national populist campaigns in the US and the UK.

For the theoretical framework, this study will use the ideational approach introduced by Mudde and Kaltwasser. While populism consists of a specific set of ideas, they explain that populism is different from other political ideologies such as fascism or liberalism because of its very limited programmatic scope. They define populism as a 'thin-centred ideology'; because of its limited belief system, populist politicians politicize grievances that are relevant to their own contexts.[29] Although all populists share the same "moral and Manichean

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25. Gest, Reny and Mayer, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain," 1695.

26. Paul Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 2000): 95.

27. Taggart, 96.

28. Taggart, 98.

29. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Studying Populism in Comparative

distinction between 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite','" this explains why there are so many different types of populist parties.[30] The ideational approach explores these differing sets of ideas in order to learn more about the origins and raison d'être of populist parties, but also to establish how they gain support. Because it neatly separates the ideas influencing the populist ideology from the basic tenets of the ideology itself, the ideational approach will allow this study to incorporate nostalgia as one such idea. Namely, there is enough reason to assume that feelings of nostalgia have had a significant effect on the populist movements in both the US and the UK (the many studies discussed in the historiography all point to the utilisation of nostalgic references in both countries). Since this research is interested in examining the differing usage of three forms of nostalgia in said countries, the ideational approach is quite literally ideal for this study. In explaining the application of the ideational approach, Mudde and Kaltwasser also refer to several studies on nostalgia, including Gest, Reny and Mayer's study into nostalgic deprivation and Taggart's definition of the populist heartland. This further exemplifies that this approach is very useful for this current study, as it will allow the incorporation of nostalgia into the supply-side analysis of populist rhetoric.

Methodology

While this research will be conducted from an ideational approach, it will use a discourse analysis to explore how and in what way conceptions of nostalgia were applied in Trump's 2016 presidential election campaign and the Brexit referendum campaign. Because both these campaigns took place merely five years ago, primary sources have been collected predominantly from websites such as (the archives of) *Politico*, *The Guardian*, *the Independent* and *Twitter*. For the Trump campaign, the sources date from 2015 to 2016, but for the Vote Leave campaign a slightly broader time period is used because where the vote itself took place in June 2016, the UK did not officially decide to leave the EU until article 50 was triggered on the 29th of March 2017. The primary sources were chosen to represent a coherent and balanced picture of both campaigns[31] and include transcripts and videos of rally speeches from Donald

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Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda," *Comparative Political Studies,* 51 no. 13 (2018): 1699-1670.

      30. Mudde and Kaltwasser, 1670.

      31. Donald Trump predominantly campaigned through rallies, debates, and Twitter; thus, his sources constitute predominantly of those categories. Vote Leave campaigners too held speeches and participated in debates, but they also published many opinion pieces and interviews in newspapers. That is why the nature of their sources is more varied than those of Donald Trump.

Trump, transcripts of debates between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, tweets from Trump, Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson and interviews with them, campaign- and victory speeches by Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson and other Vote Leave campaigners, and opinion pieces from the politicians of the Vote Leave campaign published in newspapers.[32] Around 50 sources were analysed but ultimately 37 sources - excluding tweets – turned out to be useful for this study. The reason why these specific sources were chosen is because of their persuasive nature: election speeches and social media content published around the election is meant to persuade, convince, and mobilise the electorate. Nostalgia is therefore expected to be more easily detectable in such sources than in, for example, parliamentary debates or other non-broadcasted and non-published events and texts.

In this research, a total of three discourse analyses will be conducted. This will be done by scanning all the primary sources from the campaigns for nostalgic references which will then be tagged with a particular form of nostalgia. Note that while the discourse analysis will be conducted with the programme *NVivo*, all cases of nostalgia will be selected manually to consider their context and underlying meanings. *NVivo* allows for the quantitative part of the analysis because it can provide an insight into which nostalgic category was most used in which campaign and by whom, and which subcategory of each broader nostalgic category was used how many times. Whereas this will create a sound comparative analysis of the Vote Leave campaign and the Trump campaign, the results will remain quantitative until they are coherently analysed. This will be the most important part of the research since the answer to the research question also asks for a qualitative approximation of the results. The nostalgic references for the analysis are grouped into the following categories and subcategories:

1. The Nostalgic Heartland
The conception of the nostalgic heartland is predominantly based on Taggart's heartland and constitutes a very exclusionary definition of 'the people'. It is also more broadly evoked by reference to nationalist sentiment and a good dose of 'common sense' and correlates with the ideas of 'Little England' and 'Middle America.' [33] In order to establish how the nostalgic heartland was evoked in both campaigns, this research will look for passages referring to concepts which correspond with the heartland. The subcategories, or nodes, outlined in *NVivo*

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32. See the appendix for more information on the specific sources that were chosen for the discourse analysis.

33. The category of nostalgic heartland will be further explained in Chapter 1.

are the following: anti-immigration; common sense, exclusion of 'others; exclusionary forms of national identity; nationalism; isolationism; law and order; the left behind; Middle America; Middle England; ordinary people, normal people; the Second Amendment; the Anglo-Saxon/ Anglophone people; the people, our people; and the silent majority. Most of these subcategories are based on Paul Taggart's definition of the heartland,[34] but some are based on other secondary literature, which will be discussed in the first chapter prior to the discourse analysis.

2. *Nostalgic Deprivation*

The conception of nostalgic deprivation is primarily based on Gest, Reny and Mayer's definition of nostalgic deprivation, following their bottom-up study into the relation between support for the radical right and feelings of nostalgic deprivation.[35] They define nostalgic deprivation as the "discrepancy between individuals' understanding of their current states and their perceptions about their past."[36] It consists of references to social, political, and economic loss and it represents those aspects of life which were there in the past but are lost in the present, mostly due to globalisation, neoliberalism, and a shift from a manufacturing- to a service-driven economy. By means of a second discourse analysis, this research aims to find out whether feelings of nostalgic deprivation were explicitly evoked by Trump and the Brexiteers during the campaigns. Because nostalgic deprivation relates to a general sense of loss and deprivation in various areas, the following subcategories for tagging, based on Gest, Reny and Mayer's study, have been entered into *NVivo*: economic deprivation (related to the prosperity and economic health of the country, not individuals), national deprivation (related to general deprivation of the state and country) and industrial deprivation (loss of factories and traditional industry), and loss of: state sovereignty, control, political influence, national identity, exceptionalism, status, working class culture,[37] ethnic homogeneity, possibility and opportunity, jobs and income, and a loss of exceptionalism and national identity (Englishness for the UK, the American Dream for the US). Most of these subcategories are based on Gest,

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34. Taggart, *Populism,* 91-98. Taggart has listed these characteristics in the chapter "Populism, the People and the Heartland."

35. As discussed in the introduction and further delved into in Chapter 3: Nostalgic Deprivation.

36. Gest, Reny and Mayer, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain," 1695.

37. Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The New Tribes Shaping British Politics*, 7.

Reny and Mayer. Others are selected by means of other secondary literature which will be further discussed in chapter two.

3. Nostalgic Restoration

This conception of nostalgia is more loosely based on Michael Kenny's definition of nostalgia,[38] combined with the main spearheads of national populism outlined by Eatwell and Goodwin.[39] Both Kenny and Eatwell and Goodwin argue that nostalgia in current-day national populism can be characterised by a preference for the way things were, and more specifically, by the wish for a rebirth of the nation as it used to be, which this research will call 'nostalgic restoration'.[40] To find out in what way both campaigns used nostalgic restoration to gain support among voters, references will again be grouped into various subcategories which all relate to the wish for the restoration of: national values and traditions; imperialism and empire; Global Britain; state sovereignty, and the Special Relationship, [41] but also references to other areas of nostalgic restoration such as: historical triumphs; exceptionalism; the literary canon; Take Back Control;[42] the First- and Second World War; the Battle of Britain; the monarchy and royalty; former presidents and prime ministers (most notably Winston Churchill); the American Revolution, and the Second Amendment.[43] Most of these characteristics of nostalgic restoration were named by Michael Kenny, and some relate to other secondary literature, which will be further addressed in the third chapter. Note that while some of these subcategories might seem the same as some categories outlined in nostalgic deprivation, the way in which they are used differs. With nostalgic deprivation the politician in question grieves the loss of, for

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38. See the introduction for preliminary discussion and chapter 3: Nostalgic Restoration fur further elaboration.

39. See page 6-7.

40. The concept of nostalgic restoration and the motivation for choosing the specific subcategories are discussed at length in chapter 3.

41. Buruma, *The Churchill Complex: The Rise and Fall of the Special Relationship*, 6. The Special Relationship is important for the analysis of the Brexit campaign, because as Ian Buruma has argued, "Britain's tortured relationship with the European continent, resulting at this time of writing in acrimonious wrangling over Brexit, is partly the result of Britain's nostalgia for the Special Relationship."

42. This was one of the main campaign slogans of the Vote Leave Campaign. Only the references where 'take back control' related to a policy objective have been tagged for the discourse analysis (taking back control over national affairs, etc.) The occasional, emptier, chant of 'take back control' has not been included since they lacked a deeper contextual meaning.

43. Make America Great Again will not be included as a node. Whereas it does hint at the restoration of a 'Great' America, it was merely a battle cry and not a policy objective (and thus did not reveal any valuable information on the way in which nostalgic restoration was evoked).

example, state sovereignty, while with nostalgic restoration the politician would call for the return (or restoration) of sovereignty. Nostalgic restoration implies a proactive approach towards the past, in terms of vowing to preserve or restore it.

Structure of the thesis

The structure of this research will be in line with the sub questions and the methodology. The first chapter will be devoted to the first sub question which reads: 'do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of the nostalgic heartland and in what way?' After discussion of secondary literature on this topic, this sub question will be answered by means of a discourse analysis of primary sources of the campaigns of Vote Leave in the UK and Trump in the US. The chapter will end with a discussion of the results of the analysis and an answer to the question. The same will be done for chapters two and three, but with the two remaining sub questions which read: do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic deprivation and in what way, and do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic restoration and in what way? The thesis will logically end with a conclusion, which will consist of an overview of the results of the discourse analyses, an answer to the main research question, and suggestions for further research on national populism and nostalgia.

Chapter 1

THE NOSTALGIC HEARTLAND

What you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed.[44]

The first chapter of this thesis will devote itself to the nostalgic heartland. The theory for the nostalgic heartland is based on that in Paul Taggart's book *Populism*. Even though this publication dates back more than twenty years, Taggart's analysis of populist rhetoric is still relevant and applicable today. He argues populists use the rhetoric of 'the people' because they are the occupants of the heartland, which is the main concept populists appeal to. The heartland is a territory of the imagination where a "virtuous and unified population resides."[45] The evocation of this idealised version of society occurs mostly in times of hardship and difficulty and is to its core a nostalgic sentiment, because it embodies only the positive aspects of everyday life. The heartland is different from other ideal societies or utopias because "it sees populists casting their imaginative glances backwards," to reconstruct which has been lost by the present.[46]

Interesting about this conception of nostalgia is that it also reveals more about the populists who use it. The heartland holds a very limited and singular conception of 'the people' which explains why populist rhetoric is often geared towards having 'the people' be a homogeneous (white) group. Notably, Taggart argues that the heartland is not only created by reference to the past but also by setting frontiers.[47] This results in frequent 'othering' of those people who do not fit the narrow description of, for example, the English people or the 'normal' Americans. The heartland lies at the very centre of the community and therefore prefers to exclude everything that - and anyone who - seems too different. This act of exclusion reinforces the sense of unity within the heartland because it "strengthens the border around this territory of the imagination."[48] Taggart exemplifies that in the UK, explicit evocation of the nostalgic

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44. Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (London: Random House, 2011): 3.

45. Paul Taggart, *Populism,* 95.

46. Taggart, 95.

47. Taggart, 96.

48. See note 47 above.

heartland would be reference to 'Middle England' and in the US to 'Middle America'.[49] There are probably more ways populists in the US and the UK have appealed to the public through conception of the heartland however, which is why this chapter will devote itself to investigating in what way Trump and the Brexiteers have used the nostalgic heartland in their campaigns. After a discussion of secondary literature on the nostalgic heartland, a discourse analysis will be conducted on primary sources from the populist campaigns. Discussion of the results from this analysis will then lead to the answer of the first sub question, which reads: Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of the nostalgic heartland and in what way?

1.1 THE BRITISH HEARTLAND: RIVERS OF BLOODY NOSTALGIA

The vote on Brexit in June 2016 was a very unusual one. Not only because of its widely unexpected outcome and far-reaching consequences, but also because of its content. The exact question on the ballot was "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" The two options given to the British people were either to maintain the status quo – remaining in the EU – or to return to the way things were before 1973, before the UK joined the European Community. This made the Brexit referendum markedly different to other national referendums, for they usually contain a vote on a new project or political undertaking; on a step forward.[50] The Brexit referendum offered the people a chance to go back quite literally to the past. As it turned out, just more than half of the British voters found this a very appealing prospect.

Whereas the referendum certainly had a nostalgic nature, the way in which it was used is yet undefined. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the way nostalgia was used, this chapter will focus on the evocation of the nostalgic heartland. If British politicians did indeed evoke the nostalgic heartland in their referendum campaign, it would not be the first time. Similar sentiments were also clear in the writings and speeches of Conservative politician Enoch Powell. In 1968 he delivered a controversial speech now known as the 'Rivers of Blood' speech, where he was very critical of mass immigration. Not only that, but he also explicitly called for the return of the 'real' England, with 'pre-empire ethno-purity'.[51] Even though he

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49. Taggart, 97.

50. Elliot Green, "How Brexiteers appealed to voters' nostalgia," London School of Economics BPP, August 30, 2016, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/how-brexiteers-appealed-to-voters-nostalgia/

51. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and*

was soon after fired by Conservative leader Ted Heath, opinion polls conducted at the time suggest eight out of ten Britons supported Powell's ideas.[52] Powell's speech is a clear example of the nostalgic heartland. Setting boundaries, the exclusion of immigrants, an appeal to a white, pre-empire England and speaking of "ordinary, decent, sensible people" tick all the right boxes for the evocation of the heartland.[53]

Existing secondary literature on the driving forces of the Vote Leave campaign suggests that some of Powell's ideas still influence Britain's contemporary social-political landscape. According to studies conducted after the Brexit referendum, an exit from the European Union appealed more strongly to those who identified with Englishness rather than Britishness, for 79 per cent of voters who identified as exclusively 'English not British' voted Leave.[54] The evocation of, and identification with, Englishness is part of the nostalgic heartland because this sense of national identity is perceived as more exclusionary than Britishness. As Gaston and Hilhorst point out, references to the English working classes (who identify with Englishness) are often proceeded by noting their White ethnicity and reactionary nature.[55] That Englishness was a strong determinant for a Leave vote is also exemplified by the fact that people living in England voted predominantly to leave the EU (with the exception of the more urban areas in the south), while Scotland, where people identify with Britishness and not Englishness, voted almost unanimously to remain.[56]

Not only identification with Englishness was a determinant for a Leave vote. Anti-immigration attitudes also shaped anti-EU sentiment. Surveys conducted days before the referendum suggest immigration was even the most salient factor driving turnout and voting behaviour across Leave constituencies.[57] Whereas the Leave vote was, after the referendum had taken place, exhibited as a vote to take back control from the neoliberal governing elites,

Political Force in Britain, France and Germany, 44.

52. Gaston and Hilhorst, 44.

53. Enoch Powell, "Rivers of Blood speech" (speech, Conservative Association meeting in Birmingham, Birmingham, April 20, 1968). https://anth1001.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/enoch-powell_speech.pdf

54. Gaston and Hilhorst, 49.

55. Gaston and Hilhorst, 46.

56. "EU Referendum Results," BBC, accessed September 26, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results

57. Gaston and Hilhorst, 69.

multiple studies show that immigration most strongly mobilised Leave voters, and not anti-elite sentiments. Gaston and Hilhorst argue that Leave campaigners preferred to present the Leave vote as a working-class revolt against neoliberalism, since many preferred not to acknowledge the exclusionary and xenophobic driving forces behind the campaign.[58]

This discourse analysis will seek to establish how conceptions of Englishness, immigration, and working-class identity were evoked during the referendum campaign. Not only that, but did other aspects – those which have not yet been discussed at length in other academic studies – also come into play? Such as the evocation of 'the people', common sense and nationalism. With help of the upcoming discourse analysis this study will be able to establish to what extent Powell's ideas still influence contemporary British politics.

1.1.1 Discourse analysis: The Nostalgic Heartland – UK

The discourse analysis reveals that the nostalgic heartland was referenced 65 times in all UK sources. One thing that immediately stands out, is that the most referenced node is anti-immigration (referenced 24 times, which makes it 36,6% of the total references to the nostalgic heartland). Anti-immigration is followed by 'the people and our people,' 'ordinary people and normal people', and 'nationalism' which were all referenced ten times, each making up 15,2% of total references. 'Exclusion of others' was tagged four times (6,1%), 'isolationism' three times (4,5%), 'Middle England' twice, (3%) and 'common sense', 'exclusionary forms of national identity' and Anglo-Saxon people' all one time (1,5%). Figure 1 displays the complete results of the discourse analysis for UK sources and the subcategories of the nostalgic heartland. The nodes Middle America, law and order, the left behind, and the silent majority have been left out of this table since they were not referenced in the primary sources.

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58. Gaston and Hilhorst, 69.

Figure 1	Debate	Interview	Opinion	Speech	Tweets
Anti-immigration	1	3	12	6	2
Common sense	0	1	0	0	0
Exclusion of others	0	1	3	0	0
Exclusionary forms of national identity	0	0	1	0	0
Nationalism	0	2	4	3	1
Isolationism	0	1	1	1	0
Ordinary people, normal people	0	2	3	3	2
Middle England	0	0	1	1	0
Anglo-Saxon People	0	0	1	0	0
The people, our people	0	1	6	2	1

1.1.2 Discussion

Whereas the numbers presented in figure 1 might only be relative, they do give an insight into the utilisation of the nostalgic heartland in the Vote Leave Campaign. It is evident that Brexiteers drew upon the heartland predominantly by reference to immigration. This mostly involved talking about a need to control the rising immigration numbers or by explicitly positioning themselves – and a vote for Brexit – as anti-immigration. Such statements often involved a warning about large numbers of immigrants coming to the UK in the case of Remain, as this quote from MP Iain Duncan Smith illustrates:

> The official assumption is that immigration will add at least three million to our population by 2030. That's 200,000 people, or the equivalent to building a new town the size of Swindon or Aberdeen every single year. In other words, just a year after the Conservatives were returned to office, the Treasury admits it has given up on one of the key promises that the British people elected us to deliver – to cut net immigration to 'the tens of thousands.'[59]

The prospect of Turkey joining the EU, which would create a free-travel zone between Islamic regions in the Middle East and Britain, was often used as an argument to vote Leave: "The EU is already opening visa-free travel to Turkey. That would create a borderless travel zone from

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59. Iain Duncan Smith, "Duncan Smith says desperation to stay in Brussels means government are rowing back on pledge to cut migration," *Daily Mail*, April 23, 2016. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3554760/IAIN-DUNCAN-SMITH-says-desperation-stay-Brussels-means-government-rowing-pledge-cut-migration.html

the frontiers of Syria and Iraq to the English Channel."[60] Such statements fit neatly into the description of the heartland, for they set apart the 'English people' from the 'other' immigrants. Whereas the idea of an influx of immigrants from non-Western areas might already be enough to evoke feelings of the nostalgic heartland for many voters, anti-immigration messages in the campaign were often invigorated by the argument that living standards for the British people would decline in the case of 'open-door migration': "Open-door migration has suppressed wages in the unskilled labour market, meant that living standards have fallen and that life has become a lot tougher for so many in our country."[61] Arguments like these - which portray immigrants as competing with the English people - worked. They prove that immigration played a significant role in the salience of nostalgic rhetoric. As Gaston and Hilhorst have pointed out, immigration was seen through a framework of social competition; the country's resources were seen as finite and zero-sum. By invoking the nostalgic heartland through anti-immigration rhetoric, Vote Leave campaigners underpinned voters' acute level of anxiety that their own access to those resources, but also their power and control over national affairs, would be compromised.[62]

Notably, the number of sources using anti-immigration sentiment rose starkly towards the end of the campaign: Brexiteers must have realised the anti-immigration argument was working to draw in voters. This is not only evident from the date of the sources referring to immigration (most date back to just before the referendum campaign), but also from the sources on the website Vote Leave Take Control. They have listed some key speeches and opinion pieces from the Vote Leave campaign from February 2016 to June 2016, and where from February to April only 3 out of 29 sources explicitly mention immigration, from May to June 14 out of 24 sources either mention immigration or wholly revolve around it.[63]

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60. Michael Gove, Boris Johnson, and Gisela Stuart, "Statement by Michael Gove, Boris Johnson and Gisela Stuart on NHS funding," *Vote Leave Take Control*, June 3, 2016.
http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/statement_by_michael_gove_boris_johnson_and_gisela_stuart_on_nhs_funding.html

61. Nigel Farage, "Why we must vote to LEAVE in the EU referendum," *Express,* June 21, 2016.
https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/681776/nigel-farage-eu-referendum-brexit-vote-leave-independence-ukip

62. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France and Germany,* 18.

63. "Key speeches, interviews, and op-eds," *Vote Leave Take Control*, accessed 6 October 2021.
http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/key_speeches_interviews_and_op_eds.html

Reference to 'the people and our people' also occurred steadily throughout the campaign. The evocation of 'the people' is one of Taggart's main characteristics of the heartland. 'The people' might seem an unspecified group, but while rules for inclusion are not always clear, those for exclusion are.[64] For the Vote Leave campaign, this meant that the people, or the British people, were regarded as being threatened by a rising number of immigrants: "To make the Living Wage work for the British people, we need to be able to control the number of people coming in.[65] A second trend discernible with the help of this discourse analysis, was that of the people versus the elite; the 'us versus them' argument: "It is we who are speaking up for the people, and it is they who are defending an obscurantist and universalist system of government that is now well past its sell by date and which is ever more remote from ordinary voters."[66] This quote clearly illustrates how the EU was portrayed as a vague, authoritarian organisation taking away control from the people: "The EU is built to keep power and control with the elites rather than the people."[67]

The conception of 'the people' closely corresponds with the subcategory of 'ordinary and normal people'. Many quotes such as the one by Boris Johnson above are applicable to both categories because they refer to both the people and 'ordinary voters.' Utilisation of the ordinary, normal people is very similar to the 'us versus them' argument mentioned above. In most cases it portrays the ordinary people (often the white, working-class communities) as the uncorrupted portion of society, right in the middle of the heartland. This then creates a stark contrast with the corrupt governing elites in London and Brussels. It was often Nigel Farage who created this contrast in his speeches and articles:

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64. Taggart, *Populism,* 97.

65. Iain Duncan Smith, "Duncan Smith says desperation to stay in Brussels means government are rowing back on pledge to cut migration," *Daily Mail*, April 23, 2016. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3554760/IAIN-DUNCAN-SMITH-says-desperation-stay-Brussels-means-government-rowing-pledge-cut-migration.html

66. Boris Johnson, "Boris Johnson's speech on the EU referendum," (Speech, May 9, 2016.) *Conservative Home.* https://www.conservativehome.com/parliament/2016/05/boris-johnsons-speech-on-the-eu-referendum-full-text.html

67. Michael Gove, "Statement from Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Justice, on EU Referendum," *Vote Leave Take Control,* February 20, 2016. http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/statement_from_michael_gove_mp_secretary_of_state_for_justice_on_the_eu_referendum.html

Because what the little people did, what the ordinary people did – what the people who'd been oppressed over the last few years who'd seen their living standards go down did – was they rejected the multinationals, they rejected the merchant banks, they rejected big politics and they said actually, we want our country back, we want our fishing waters back, we want our borders back.[68]

Another subtheme of the heartland which came up repeatedly was a nationalist sentiment. The discourse analysis reveals that nationalism expressed itself in various ways during the campaign. The first was again by a comparison, or a contrast, between the UK and the European elite:

If you walk around London today, you will notice that the 12 star flag of the EU is flying all over the place. That is because this is Schuman day. It is the birthday of the founder of this project, and the elites have decreed that it should be properly marked. Do we feel loyalty to that flag? Do our hearts pitter-patter as we watch it flutter over public buildings? On the contrary.[69]

Boris Johnson evokes nationalism by claiming British hearts do not 'pitter-patter' for that 'elitist flag' like they do for the Union Jack. By positioning the UK opposite the EU, Johnson evokes what Behler et al. label as national nostalgia: a form of collective nostalgia which increases prejudice towards out-group actors.[70] The second form in which nationalism manifested itself was in sheer pride for Britain: "Britain is a great country - the world's fifth largest economy with the world's best armed forces, best health service and best broadcaster. We are first in the world for soft power thanks to our language, culture and creativity."[71] Whereas nationalist sentiment certainly corresponds with the evocation of the nostalgic heartland, specific references to Englishness would be even more fitting. This specific and exclusionary form of national identity proved difficult to distinguish with the discourse analysis. Nevertheless, it was the English who most identified with the Brexiteers' nationalist

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68. Nigel Farage, "Nigel Farage delivers first post-Brexit Speech in European Parliament - in full." (Speech, June 30, 2016). *Independent.* https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-brexit-speech-european-parliament-full-transcript-text-a7107036.html

69. Johnson, "Boris Johnson's speech on the EU referendum."

70. Anna Maria C. Behler et al., "Making America Great Again? National Nostalgia's Effect on Outgroup Perceptions," 1.

71. Michael Gove, "Michael Gove's essay for Today programme – Why it is safer to take back control," *Vote Leave Take Control,* April 19, 2016. http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/michael_gove_s_oped_for_bbc_radio_4_today_programme.html

evocations for they voted Leave in much larger numbers than the Scots, Welsh, or Northern-Irish.[72]

Englishness might have proven difficult to discern, but exclusion of 'others' and other social groups was much more clear. Vote Leave campaigners explicitly excluded marginalized, non-white groups to prove a point about rising immigration numbers and deteriorating living conditions for the British people, such as Boris Johnson did here: "Yes, by the narrowest margin you … have helped to keep us locked in the back of the minicab, with a driver who barely speaks English, going in a direction we don't want to go."[73]

Lastly, isolationist references served mostly to argue there should be a renewed focus on Britain itself, instead of money and goods flowing out to other countries in the world. One could argue that the whole Brexit vote was an act of isolationism. However, this would not correspond with the many references to the restoration of Global Britain (one of Boris Johnson's main objectives). Whereas the evocation of Global Britain will be discussed at greater length in chapter three on nostalgic restoration, one conclusion can already be drawn: Vote Leave campaigners were isolationist in arguing for renewed control and a stronger focus on national affairs but were isolationist towards to the EU only. They opted for less cooperation with the EU but for more with the rest of the world, especially with the United States.[74]

1.2 THE AMERICAN HEARTLAND: REAL AMERICANS FIRST

Whereas more research has been done into British – or rather English – nostalgia, the Trump campaign also had a very reactionary and backward nature which should not be overlooked. Trump's 'Make America Great Again' functioned not only as a slogan but became a "battle cry for his followers who yearned for a past that never existed."[75] MAGA was not a policy objective, but a way to evoke a feeling of nostalgia within voters. And according to the results of the 2016 Presidential elections, it worked. While MAGA itself might not have been a clear

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72. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past,* 49.

73. Boris Johnson, "You must vote to Leave the EU or wake up with the worst hangover in history," The Telegraph, June 5, 2016. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/05/you-must-vote-to-leave-the-eu-or-wake-up-with-the-worst-hangover/

74. The preference for an invigoration of the Special Relationship with the United States will be further discussed in chapter 3.

75. Cheryl Thompson, "Trump has made America nostalgic again for a past that never existed," *The Conversation*, November 4, 2020. https://theconversation.com/trump-has-made-america-nostalgic-again-for-a-past-that-never-existed-149449

policy objective, Trump did campaign with specific plans which matched the definition of the nostalgic heartland: the wall on the Mexican border and the Muslim ban point to anti-immigration sentiment, and threats towards Iran and North Korea and the trade war with China point to American exceptionalism on the one hand and to nationalism and insularity on the other.[76]

Because of these exclusionary policy objectives, Trump supporters are often claimed to predominantly consist of white working-class voters who feel threatened by changing racial demographics and long for a return to the past. Whereas this statement is a bit oversimplified, there is some to truth to it. As exit polls from the 2016 Presidential election suggested, White voters were the only racial group to support Trump over Clinton, by a large margin of 20 per cent.[77] What is more, research has found that support for Trump most strongly correlated with negative attitudes toward the increased amount of non-White American citizens and anti-globalization attitudes.[78] Behler et al. used this information as a starting point for their research on national nostalgia and attitudes toward racial outgroups in the United States. They claim that national nostalgia – which they distinguish from personal nostalgia – was associated with increased prejudice towards other racial groups as well as support for the populist message of Donald Trump.[79] This form of national nostalgia is similar to the conception of the nostalgic heartland, for it creates a feeling of unity, belonging, and safety for those who fit within this narrow definition of American citizenship.

Bart Bonikowksi similarly argues that Trump appealed to ethnically, racially, and culturally exclusionary understandings of American identity widespread in US society, for example by representing Mexican immigrants as criminals and, for years prior to the election, fanning the flames of Islamophobic and racist conspiracy theories concerning President Obama's place of birth.[80] This form of nationhood resonated with his supporters' illiberal, anti-

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76. Ron Pruessen, "Trump's appeals to America's past and nostalgia in the face of new problems are closing off new ways to tackle them," *LSE US*, accessed September 26, 2021. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2020/03/12/trumps-appeals-to-americas-past-and-nostalgia-in-the-face-of-new-problems-are-closing-off-new-ways-to-tackle-them/

77. Behler et al., "Making America Great Again? National Nostalgia's Effect on Outgroup Perceptions," 4.

78. See footnote 77 above.

79. Behler et al., 2.

80. Bart Bonikowski, "Trump's Populism: The Mobilization of Nationalist Cleavages and the Future of U.S. Democracy," in *When Democracy Trumps Populism: Lessons from Europe & Latin America*, ed. Kurt Weyland and Raúl Madrid (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 113.

elitist, and exclusionary sentiments.[81] In other words, Trump's conception of nationalism was mostly characterised by exclusion of those who do not fit his narrow definition of American. Because, to give shape to 'the people', Trump drew on this contested conception of nationalism by "distinguishing legitimate members of the nation from those whose claims to nationhood are questionable."[82] In doing so, Bonikowksi claims radical right actors, including Trump, tap into viscerally experienced collective identities and activate powerful in-group and out-group dynamics.[83] The goal for this discourse analysis is to establish whether Trump did indeed employ this evocation of nostalgia and if so, in what way. Was it mostly shaped by anti-immigration sentiment and exclusion of others, or did he draw on other characteristics of the heartland?

1.2.1 Discourse analysis: The Nostalgic Heartland – US

To answer these questions, the same discourse analysis was conducted for the sources from the US as for those from the UK. The nostalgic heartland was referenced 107 times in all US sources. Again, anti-immigration was the most referenced node (referred to thirty times, making up 28,4% of total references to the nostalgic heartland). The node 'exclusion of others' was tagged fourteen times (13,8% of total), 'the people, our people' twelve times (11,2%), followed by 'exclusionary forms of national identity' which was referred to eleven times (10,3%). Trump referred to nationalism nine times (8,4%), and to isolationism, the ordinary people, and the silent majority all eight times (each 7,5% of total references). 'Law and order' was tagged six times (5,6%) and the left behind only one time (0,9%). Figure 2 shows the complete results of the discourse analysis for US sources and the subcategories of the nostalgic heartland. The nodes Middle America, Middle England, common sense, and the Anglo-Saxon people have been left out of this table since they were not referenced in the primary sources.

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81. Bonikowski, 113.

82. Bonikowski, 111.

83. See note 82 above.

Figure 2	Debate	Interview	Speech	Tweets
Anti-immigration	9	0	8	13
Exclusion of others	7	0	4	3
Exclusionary forms of national identity	2	1	6	2
Nationalism	1	0	6	2
Isolationism	2	0	6	0
Law and order	2	0	3	1
Left behind	0	0	1	0
Ordinary people, normal people	0	1	5	2
The people, our people	0	0	11	1
The silent majority	0	0	2	6

1.2.2 Discussion

Just as for the Vote Leave campaign, the nostalgic heartland for Trump was most shaped by reference to anti-immigration sentiment and (the need for) borders. When taking a quick glance at his campaign, this might not be so surprising: Trump's plan to build a high wall on the Mexican border was one of his most disreputable plans during the campaign. And yet, while he did repeatedly stress the need for such a wall, the discourse analysis provides for a richer analysis of Trump's evocation of the nostalgic heartland and anti-immigration sentiment. For example, the discourse analysis reveals that Trump's main themes during the 2016 election campaign included terrorism, the danger of the Islam, and immigration from 'dangerous' and non-Western regions: "And this is what's caused the Great Migration where she's taking in tens of thousands of Syrian refugees, who probably in many cases -- not probably, who are definitely in many cases, ISIS-aligned. And we now have them in our country."[84] Within Trump's aversion to immigration there are broadly two strands to be recognised: first, a focus on the threat of terrorism and Islamophobia, which calls for a need to close the borders for immigrants from the Middle East, and secondly, a focus on crime and gang violence, of which the culprit were immigrants from Mexico and Latin America.

Trump's emphasis on the dangers of immigration also reveals how he employed a very exclusionary form of national identity during the campaign. He defined the American nation and the American people by the establishment of borders and boundaries: A nation WITHOUT

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84. Donald Trump in "Third Presidential Debate," (Debate, Las Vegas, US, October 20, 2016) Politico. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/full-transcript-third-2016-presidential-debate-230063

BORDERS is not a nation at all. We must have a wall. The rule of law matters.[85] This ties in with Taggart's main characteristics of the heartland: he argues that the heartland is not only created by reference to the past, but also by setting frontiers, which reinforces the sense of unity within the heartland by strengthening the border around this territory of the imagination.[86]

Another central theme when analysing Trump's employment of the term 'the people' or the 'American people', is that of the people versus the elite. For Trump, this elite was made up of the entire political establishment, but was mainly embodied by Hillary Clinton: "This election will decide whether we are ruled by the people, or by the politicians."[87] Whereas Trump more often referred to the American people or 'the people' in general than to 'ordinary, normal people', this is simply because he already defined the American people as the normal people: uncorrupted, hard-working citizens, as opposed to the Washington elite. This is another characteristic of the heartland, for the people living in the heartland find themselves exactly at the centre of society, not in the outer (elitist) echelons.[88]

This evocation of 'the people' fits with Bonikowski's description of Trump's nationalism, who argued that Trump appealed to ethnically, racially, and culturally exclusionary understandings of American identity.[89] But, this was not the only way in which Trump evoked nationalism. As the discourse analysis reveals, he often combined nationalism with isolationism. The slogan 'America First' did exactly that: by arguing for the 'greatness' of America, it called for a renewed focus on the country itself. Trump employed nationalism to argue for an emphasis on the heartland, whereby he often created a contrast between Americanism (a form of nationalism) and globalism. In his view, the two could not go hand in hand:

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85. Donald Trump, Twitter post, July 28, 2015, 5:20 p.m. https://www.thetrumparchive.com

86. Taggart, *Populism*, 96.

87. Donald Trump, "Full transcript: Donald Trump NYC speech on stakes of the election," (Speech, June 22, 2016) Politico. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/transcript-trump-speech-on-the-stakes-of-the-election-224654

88. Whereas many authors have argued Trump's anti-elitist rhetoric clashed with his own elite status (as e.g. Rahm Emanuel pointed out in "It's Time to Hold American Elites Accountable for Their Abuses," *The Atlantic*, May 21, 2019. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/05/middle-class-americans-are-sick-elite-privilege/589849/), this discourse analysis finds that Trump's definition of elite points to purely the political, neoliberal, Washington elite, not the rich (financial) elite, which includes himself.

89. Bonikowski, "Trump's Populism: The Mobilization of Nationalist Cleavages and the Future of U.S. Democracy," 111.

> We got here because we switched from a policy of Americanism – focusing on what's good for America's middle class – to a policy of globalism, focusing on how to make money for large corporations who can move their wealth and workers to foreign countries all to the detriment of the American worker and the American economy.[90]

Trump's isolationist argument furthermore focused on two main aspects: the economy (trade deals, tariffs, tax cuts), of which the quote above is an example, and on international security. He was critical of NATO and found that countries had to fend for themselves instead of relying on the US to do that for them: "Because our country cannot afford to defend Saudi Arabia, Japan, Germany, South Korea, and many other places."[91]

On Twitter, Trump often used the term silent majority. While the term itself is different from 'the American people' or 'ordinary people', for Trump the silent majority means the same. Namely, the normal American people who have stayed silent for a long time but are speaking up now by voting for Trump: "The polls have been consistently great. The silent majority is speaking. Politicians are failing. #MakeAmericaGreatAgain!"[92] The silent majority is exactly that group of people who reside in the heartland, far removed from the political elites.

Trump's call for law and order is exemplary of his broader focus on crime prevention. In his opinion, crime numbers had risen steeply during the Obama years, and he saw it as one of his main missions to bring security and safety back for the American people.[93] Whereas Hillary Clinton regarded police violence as a threat to the safety of civilians, Trump saw violence against police as one of the biggest problems in the US: "An attack on law enforcement is an attack on all Americans. I have a message to every last person threatening the peace on our streets and the safety of our police: when I take the oath of office next year, I will restore law and order our country."[94] When analysing Trump's references to law and order, the same two scapegoats reappear as in his rhetoric on immigration: the safety of American citizens was, according to Trump, mostly endangered by Hispanics and Islamic immigrants.

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90. See note 89 above.

91. Donald Trump in "Third Presidential Debate."

92. Donald Trump, Twitter post, July 30, 2015, 4:27 p.m. https://www.thetrumparchive.com

93. "Trump inauguration: President vows to end 'American carnage'." *BBC,* January 21, 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38688507. As also pointed out in reporting after Trump's inauguration speech.

94. Donald Trump, "2016 RNC draft speech transcript," (Speech, Cleveland, Ohio, July 21, 2016.) Politico. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/full-transcript-donald-trump-nomination-acceptance-speech-at-rnc-225974

1.3 CONCLUSION

Which conclusions can be drawn now that a discourse analysis has been conducted on references to the nostalgic heartland in the US and the UK? Did the national populist campaigns in those countries indeed refer to conceptions of the nostalgic heartland and in what way? The first half of the question, pertaining to whether they did or did not refer to the nostalgic heartland is clear: they certainly did. In most sources that were scanned, references to heartland were present. To answer the second half of the question, more thorough analysis was needed.

To recap, for the Vote Leave campaign, the nostalgic heartland was mostly characterised by a strong evocation of anti-immigration sentiment. Utilisation of the term 'the people' went hand in hand with the exclusion of 'other', non-white social groups, for they were often seen as the culprit for the decline in living conditions for the British people. Furthermore, evocation of 'the people' but also of 'ordinary and normal people' was invigorated by a strong us versus them rhetoric, with them being both the European Union and corrupt governing elites in London (the latter was present to a greater extent in the UKIP campaign than in the official Vote Leave campaign). Nationalism was evoked, but a more thorough analysis would be necessary to distinguish references to nationalism between Britishness and Englishness. Lastly, Vote Leave campaigners were isolationist in arguing for a stronger focus on national affairs (which pertains to the nostalgic heartland) but were isolationist towards to the EU only, not towards to the US, for example.

In the Trump campaign, the nostalgic heartland was also most characterised by reference to anti-immigration, whereas the total number of references was spread out more evenly over the subcategories than was the case for the Vote Leave campaign. In the US, anti-immigration sentiment focused mostly on the threat of terrorism and rising crime levels. The whole campaign was characterised by a strong sense of exclusion, even more so than in the UK. Trump repeatedly talked of the 'American people', however his definition of American was a very narrow one, considering his strong anti-immigration sentiment and tendency to scapegoat non-white or Islamic people. Like the Vote Leave campaign, Trump used rhetoric of the people versus the elite. In this case, the elite was the Washington elite, embodied by Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. For Trump, nationalism and isolationism went hand in hand: by invoking nationalism he urged for isolationism. To conclude, scapegoating very much permeated the Trump campaign. The neoliberalist and globalised elite on the one hand and immigrants on the other were seen the culprit for the declining living conditions of 'real' Americans.

Both campaigns did indeed use the nostalgic heartland to gain support, and they did so in remarkably similar ways. The same subthemes of the nostalgic heartland occurred in both the US and the UK, in similar proportions. But: perhaps defying expectations, the utilisation of the heartland in the US went along more traditional lines than in the UK. Whereas the Brexiteers were predominantly against immigration from Eastern-Europe and the Middle East, they did want freer movement of people between countries of the Commonwealth and a points-based system of immigration. Trump did not make such a distinction: immigrants were either terrorists or would come to steal jobs away from Americans. Plus, the Brexiteers' evocation of nationalism and isolationism was contrasted by their emphasis on Global Britain. No such thing was the case for the Trump campaign: he persistently drew on a nostalgic vision of the American heartland to argue for America First, without exceptions. The next two chapters will establish whether these trends extend themselves to nostalgic deprivation and nostalgic restoration as well.

Chapter 2

NOSTALGIC DEPRIVATION

It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times.[95]

This chapter focuses on yet another aspect of nostalgia: that which relates to a sense of loss and deprivation. The slogans 'Take Back Control' and 'Make America Great Again' not only imply a return to a past state, but they also indicate that something lost must be retrieved. Taking these quotes as a starting point, Gest, Reny, and Mayer conducted a study into nostalgic deprivation among support for the Radical Right in the UK and the US. They define nostalgic deprivation as the "discrepancy between individuals' understanding of their current states and their perceptions about their past," whereby they divide this deprivation into economic, political, and social deprivation.[96] They conclude that (negative) change in these areas may trigger the emergence of radical right parties but it is the discrepancy between voters' self-reported social, political, and economic status and their perception of the past that influences support for the radical right.[97] This means nostalgic deprivation is a matter of perception and may not always be objectively real,[98] which in turn is an aspect of nostalgia, for it implies a backward glance to an often imagined past.

Political deprivation stems from a pervasive sense of powerlessness among supporters for the radical right, which is why populist parties have profited from frustrations with EU integration, political (corruption) scandals and politicians who are seen to be out of touch with needs of the average people.[99] Whereas in the UK political deprivation is expressed by reference to a loss of control and sovereignty, in the US the focus lies more on a loss of political influence. But perhaps more important than those political grievances is a sense of social and cultural deprivation. In the US, this is strongly shaped by race and racism. The antipathy towards social change stems from a drop in social status, since it is seen as an attempt to

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95. Ali Smith, *Autumn* (Penguin Books: UK, 2017): 3.

96. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain," 1695.

97. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 1712.

98. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 1700.

99. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 1697.

"subvert dominant racial groups' status in society."[100] Recently, in the US this was triggered by the election of Barack Obama and the emergence of movements such as Black Lives Matter. Whereas this aspect of societal and racial nostalgic deprivation is expected to be most salient in the US, a similar focus can be seen in the UK, where the Vote Leave campaign rejected multiculturalism and European integration, which strongly resonated with the white, Christian population. Anxieties about social status also translate to social deprivation: because of social change, the "settled expectations of whiteness" are challenged.[101] Whereas the white, working-class population always had some sort of safety net, this 'natural order' has been disturbed by transformations of the global economy and demography, both in the US and the UK.

Gest, Reny and Mayer's study into nostalgic deprivation is taken as a starting point for this chapter's discourse analysis, which aims to find out in what way Trump and the Brexiteers have used nostalgic deprivation in their campaigns. After a discussion of secondary literature on nostalgic deprivation in the US and the UK, a discourse analysis will be conducted on primary sources from the populist campaigns. This will then lead to an answer to the second sub question, which reads: Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic deprivation and in what way?

2.1 BRITISH NOSTALGIC DEPRIVATION: IT'S ALL THE EU'S FAULT

UKIP, during the Brexit campaign, held its annual conference in Doncaster. Doncaster is a working-class town in South Yorkshire, a former coal mining village located right in the centre of the heartland. Deprivation, unemployment, and inequality have been on the rise there since most of the coalmines were shut down during Thatcher's years as prime minister. Cathrine Thorleifsson has conducted a study into UKIP's appeal to coal nationalism after the Brexit referendum and she found that several social actors "nostalgically evoked the industrial past to cope with existential insecurity."[102] She argues it was not merely neoliberal restructuring, the legacies of industrialism, or global migration that caused the rise of English nationalism, but it was all of these. This conclusion is important for this discourse analysis on nostalgic deprivation, because it suggests a broad range of factors should be considered. Not all existing studies have done so; a significant amount of research has been conducted on deprivation in

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100. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 1697.

101. Gest, Reny, and Mayer, 1698.

102. Cathrine Thorleifsson, "From coal to Ukip: the struggle over identity in post-industrial Doncaster," *History and Anthropology*, 27, no. 5 (2016).

relation to the Brexit vote, but the conclusions differ as to which aspect of deprivation shaped support for Brexit the most.

For example, Gaston and Hilhorst argue Brexit was mostly an anti-establishment vote, for many inhabitants of those de-industrialised towns felt they had lost a stake in Britain's political and economic centres of power. Rising poverty and deteriorating living conditions have resulted in rising anxiety on the one hand and seething anger with political authorities on the other.[103] This is what existing literature on British deprivation has thus far focused on the most: many academics agree it was mostly pessimism about the future and frustrations with deteriorating living conditions that shaped support for Brexit, for Leave voters were significantly more likely to believe children growing up in the UK today would be worse off than their parents.[104] This reveals that a mix of disenchantment with political, social and economic conditions and pessimism about the future which fuelled anti-European sentiment.[105]

Matthew Goodwin and Oliver Heath also argue for the salience of economic and social inequality in the Brexit vote. They have shown how a lack of opportunity across the UK led to Brexit and concluded that the poorest households, and people who were unemployed, in low-skilled jobs and without qualifications were much more likely to support Leave. Overall, they claim those left behind by rapid economic change were the most likely to support Brexit.[106] Maria Abreu and Özge Öner suggest the most important contextual determinants of the Leave vote were political disengagement and cultural grievances, but in the end, they also name economic deprivation as an important factor. They namely observed that Leave targeted their campaign on politically isolated areas in economic decline, with low skill levels, high levels of deprivation and ageing populations.[107]

Whereas existing literature suggests the evocation of nostalgic deprivation might indeed have been an important factor in the Vote Leave campaign, it predominantly focuses on social-economic deprivation and less on other aspects of deprivation, such as political

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103. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past,* 49.

104. Lord Ashcroft quoted in Gaston and Hilhorst, 49.

105. Gaston and Hilhorst, 49.

106. Matthew Goodwin and Oliver Heath, "Brexit vote explained: poverty, low skills and lack of opportunities," *JRF*, August 31, 2016. https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/brexit-vote-explained-poverty-low-skills-and-lack-opportunities

107. Maria Abreu and Özge Öner, "Disentangling the Brexit Vote: The Role of Economic, Social and Cultural Contexts in Explaining the UK's EU Referendum Vote," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52, no. 7 (2020).

deprivation. This discourse analysis will test whether areas of economic and social deprivation were indeed the most important determinants for the Vote Leave campaign, or if other nostalgic areas also came into play. Since existing research has not managed to coherently outline all aspects of deprivation that shaped support for Brexit – and which of those aspects shaped support the most – this comprehensible analysis of nostalgic deprivation in the Vote Leave campaign will be a valuable contribution to existing research on the topic.

2.1.1 Discourse analysis: Nostalgic Deprivation – UK

The discourse analysis was conducted in the same way as in the first chapter. The nodes chosen for this analysis are based on previous research by Gest, Reny and Mayer and others, and adapted to the British national context.[108] There were 61 references in total to nostalgic deprivation in the primary sources from the UK. See Figure 3 for a complete overview. The subcategories industrial deprivation, loss of national identity, loss of exceptionalism, loss of status and loss of ethnic homogeneity were left out since they were not referred to in the primary sources. The most-referenced node was loss of control (referenced thirteen times, making up 21,3% of total references), followed by loss of state sovereignty and loss of political influence (both referenced twelve times, each 19,7% of total). Loss of jobs and income was referred to eight times (13,1%) and national deprivation seven times (11,5%). Economic deprivation and loss of possibility and opportunity both came up four times (6,6%) and loss of working-class culture came up once (1,6%). The total number of references to nostalgic deprivation in the UK sources is similar to the number of references to the nostalgic heartland, which was 64.

Figure 3	Debate	Interview	Opinion	Speech	Tweets
Economic deprivation	0	2	0	2	0
National deprivation	0	0	3	4	0
Loss of state sovereignty	0	1	5	6	0
Loss of control	0	6	5	2	0
Loss of political influence	0	2	6	4	0
Loss of jobs and income	2	2	4	0	0
Loss of working-class culture	0	0	1	0	0
Loss of possibility and opportunity	0	1	3	0	0

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108. The nodes are not specifically grouped in political, economic, and social deprivation categories distinguished by Gest, Reny, and Mayer because this author believes this would too strongly encourage a silo mentality, while indeed fluidity and flexibility are needed to gain the most coherent picture of the evocation of nostalgic deprivation.

2.1.2 Discussion

Since the main Vote Leave slogan urged voters to take back control, it might come as no surprise that utilisation of nostalgic deprivation in the UK was most shaped by reference to a loss of control. The discourse analysis reveals that the loss of control argument focused on two main areas, namely loss of control over national economy and immigration policy. Many Brexiteers claimed large swaths of money were flowing from the UK to the EU every day, whereby the UK had (supposedly) no say over how this money was spent.[109] This, because the EU was seen as a corrupt institution and because the UK was too often outvoted in the European parliament: "I think it should concern everybody that since the Lisbon Treaty - we have been outvoted more and more often and there are fundamental ways now in which we cannot control our lives. I've mentioned the money, I've mentioned immigration policy."[110]

This argument also tied in with reference to loss of (state) sovereignty. Vote Leave campaigners tried to explain to the British people the primacy of the European Court of Justice and how this meant the British government had no say over many national affairs: "And the British people ought to know it too: your government is not, ultimately, in control in hundreds of areas that matter."[111] This was a convenient way to argue that not the national government but the EU was to blame for the economic deterioration of Britain. Other arguments concerning the loss of sovereignty revolved around the erosion of British democracy: "We cannot change the pace. We cannot interrupt the steady erosion of democracy."[112] Boris Johnson often drew on functionalist theory to explain that European integration was a process which could not be stopped and would ultimately result in the UK losing all say over national affairs. Nigel Farage generally kept it simpler by combining loss of sovereignty with us-versus-them rhetoric: "Our

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109. Many readers will remember Boris Johnson's campaign bus with the text: "We send the EU 350 million pounds a week, let's fund our NHS instead."

110. Boris Johnson, "5th June 2016: Boris Johnson interview on The Andrew Marr Show," *Johnson Dossier*, June 5, 2016. https://johnsondossier.com/#h.3ohklq9

111. Michael Gove, "Statement from Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Justice, on EU Referendum," *Vote Leave Take Control,* February 20, 2016. http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/statement_from_michael_gove_mp_secretary_of_state_for_justice_on_the_eu_referendum.html

112. Boris Johnson, "Boris Johnson's speech on the EU referendum" (Speech, May 9, 2016). https://www.conservativehome.com/parliament/2016/05/boris-johnsons-speech-on-the-eu-referendum-full-text.html

democracy is precious and our right to self-determination is one which has been given away by the political class to the EU and bureaucrats such as Jean-Claude Juncker."[113]

In turn, reference to a loss of political influence corresponded closely with the argument of loss of sovereignty. They differ however in the sense that loss of political influence focused on the influence of the 'normal' people on politics in general, and loss of control and sovereignty revolved around the powerlessness of the national government in relation to the EU. However, Brexiteers made sure to argue that political alienation of the people was not the fault of the British government, but, again, the EU was to blame: "We are seeing an alienation of the people from the power they should hold, and I am sure this is contributing to the sense of disengagement, the apathy, the view that politicians are "all the same" and can change nothing, and to the rise of extremist parties."[114] By framing discourse in this way the Vote Leave campaign ensured the EU (and British politicians supporting the EU) were seen as the establishment, not them. An anti-establishment vote would thus become an anti-European vote.[115]

Brexiteers also drew on nostalgic deprivation by reference to a loss of jobs and income. The EU was once again to blame for the decline in wages for British workers, and not the British government: "We must leave the EU so that not only can wages increase for British workers but so that living standards rather than declining can start going up. The wellbeing of those living and working in our country matters to me more than GDP figures."[116]

National deprivation (e.g. decline in quality of housing, schools, healthcare) was, according to the campaigners, mostly caused by mass immigration as a result of free movement of people in the Eurozone. Immigration supposedly had put a strain on public services: "With pressure on jobs, wages, and housing – not to mention ever-increasing waiting times at hospitals that are full to capacity, and families struggling to find places for their children at our oversubscribed schools."[117] Whereas Brexiteers did not often refer to Britain's declining

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113. Nigel Farage, "Why we must vote to LEAVE in the EU referendum," *Express,* June 21, 2016. https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/681776/nigel-farage-eu-referendum-brexit-vote-leave-independence-ukip

114. Boris Johnson, "There is only one way to get the change we want: Vote to leave the EU." *The Telegraph,* March 16, 2016. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2016/03/16/boris-johnson-exclusive-there-is-only-one-way-to-get-the-change/

115. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past*, 49.

116. Farage, "Why we must vote to LEAVE in the EU referendum."

117. Iain Duncan Smith, "Duncan Smith says desperation to stay in Brussels means

economic performance (they rather preferred to stress how great the UK was doing economically), the EU was, again, to blame for any decline economic problems:

> "British exports of goods were actually 22 per cent lower, at the end of the second 20 year period, than if they had continued to grow at the rate of the 20 years pre-1992. And before you say that this might be just a result of Britain's sluggish performance in the export of manufactured goods, the same failure was seen in the case of the 12 EEC countries themselves."[118]

Important to note is that there was no reference to industrial deprivation in the primary sources, while Cathrine Thorleifsson argued the industrial past was nostalgically evoked to cope with existential insecurity. [119] This discourse analysis found no proof of this, but rather revealed that the Brexiteers appealed to those people living in the heartland by pointing the finger to the EU. They effectively convinced many of those feeling they had lost a stake in Britain's political centres of power that the EU was to blame for their loss of political influence and decline in living conditions.[120] Brexiteers far more often referred to political deprivation (related to loss of control, influence, and sovereignty) than to areas of economic deprivation,[121] which is striking since existing academic literature predominantly focused on the salience of economic deprivation for the Brexit vote. This discourse analysis shows how the Vote Leave campaign, with relatively little direct reference to rising poverty or deteriorating living conditions, managed to draw in voters who needed an outlet for their frustrations. They handily shaped discourse to make the EU look like the culprit of all that had gone wrong over last couple of decades. There was only one solution to repair the damage done: take back control and return to 1973.[122]

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government are rowing back on pledge to cut migration," *Daily Mail*, April 23, 2016. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3554760/IAIN-DUNCAN-SMITH-says-desperation-stay-Brussels-means-government-rowing-pledge-cut-migration.html

118. Johnson, "Boris Johnson's speech on the EU referendum."

119. Cathrine Thorleifsson, "From coal to Ukip: the struggle over identity in post-industrial Doncaster."

120. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past,* 49.

121. This would prove Abreu and Öner (2020) right who argued political disengagement was the main determinant of a Leave vote.

122. The year the EU became a member of the European Economic Community.

2.2 AMERICAN NOSTALGIC DEPRIVATION: IT'S ALL RELATIVE

During the 2016 presidential race, Hillary Clinton divided Trump supporters into two baskets. The first basket supposedly held the deplorables: "The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic – you name it."[123] The second basket included people who felt the government had let them down and were desperate for change. This statement caused a big dent in Clinton's popularity – it came across as an elitist overgeneralisation – and research has since proven her wrong (at least on the people in the second basket). Thomas Pettigrew namely challenges the idea that Trump voters were economically deprived. Despite Trump's focus on "jobs, jobs, jobs," his voters were mostly not unemployed or working-class people: their median annual income was nearly 82.000 dollars.[124] He claims it was not actual deprivation that drove support for Trump, but rather 'relative deprivation', which Pettigrew explains is the result of disappointing comparisons (which do not necessarily have to be true): "Trump adherents feel deprived relative to what they expected to possess at this point in their lives and relative to what they erroneously perceive other 'less deserving' groups have acquired."[125] For example, rising tuitions have made it more difficult for many children to advance beyond their parents' status, and rising housing costs may no longer allow the type of ideal retirements people had envisioned.[126] This way, Pettigrew argues many Americans were left feeling deprived *relative* to their expectations and hopes for the future, and Trump played into these sentiments.

Steenvoorden and Harteveld claim relative deprivation resulted in high levels of societal pessimism among voters, which attracted them to the nostalgic nature of the populist right. Trump posed a clear vision of how society could change to better suit them: by returning to how it used to be before the social changes occurred that put them in a (perceived) disadvantage.[127] The sense of othering that comes into play is important here, since white privilege ties in with this relative deprivation. Being white has in US history always meant you were at least one step ahead of 'other' citizens; it rendered relative advantage people of

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123. Hillary Clinton quoted in Katie Reilly, "Read Hillary Clinton's 'Basket of Deplorables' Remarks About Donald Trump Supporters," *Time,* September 10, 2016. https://time.com/4486502/hillary-clinton-basket-of-deplorables-transcript/

124. Which is higher than the median annual income of democratic voters.

125. Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Social Psychological Perspectives on Trump Supporters," *Journal of Social and Political* Psychology 5, no. 1 (2017): 111.

126. Pettigrew, 111.

127. Steenvoorden and Harteveld, "The appeal of nostalgia: the influence of societal pessimism on support for populist radical right parties," 29.

colour.[128] Fast social change has, to a certain degree, ended the social dominance of whites, and Donald Trump has played into these anxieties among the predominantly white, working-class population.[129]

Hainmueller and Hopkins have therefore claimed that anti-immigration attitudes among Trump voters were not driven by a sense of economic loss, but rather by concerns for the deprivation of their version of the nation and national identity.[130] Existing literature thus focuses predominantly on national deprivation and the (relative) loss of opportunity, national identity, and the American dream, which embodies social and economic mobility. This discourse analysis aims to establish if Trump did indeed predominantly employ these aspects of nostalgic deprivation. How did he shape discourse to make voters feel (relatively) deprived and to make them long for an imaginary past?

2.2.1 Discourse analysis: Nostalgic Deprivation – US

Again, the primary sources from the Trump campaign were tagged with their corresponding subcategory of nostalgic deprivation in *Nvivo*.[131] The same nodes were used as for the discourse analysis of nostalgic deprivation in the UK, but they had different outcomes. Figure 4 contains an overview of the results. There were no references to the loss of: state sovereignty, control, status, and ethnic homogeneity, so those have been left out.

In total, nostalgic deprivation was tagged 84 times in the primacy sources. The discourse analysis reveals Donald Trump referred most to a loss of jobs and income (nineteen times in total, making up 22,6% of total references). However, his references were rather evenly spread out across several categories because national deprivation was a close runner-up with seventeen references (20,2%). Industrial deprivation was tagged fourteen times (16,7%) and economic deprivation thirteen times (15,5%). The other categories came up significantly less: loss of national identity, working-class culture, and possibility and opportunity were all tagged six times (7,1% each), loss of exceptionalism was referred to twice (2,4%) and loss of political influence only once (1,2%).

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128. Gest, Reny and Mayer, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain," 1698.

129. Pettigrew, "Social Psychological Perspectives on Trump Supporters," 112.

130. J. Hainmueller and D. Hopkins, "Public attitudes toward immigration," *Annual Review of Political Science,* 17 (2014).

131. See methodology for more explanation on these subcategories.

Figure 4	Debate	Interview	Speech	Tweets
Economic deprivation	9	0	4	0
National deprivation	10	0	7	0
Industrial deprivation	9	1	4	0
Loss of exceptionalism	1	0	1	0
Loss of political influence	0	0	1	0
Loss of jobs and income	9	0	8	2
Loss of national identity	0	0	5	1
Loss of working-class culture	3	2	0	1
Loss of possibility and opportunity	2	0	3	1

2.2.2 Discussion

Donald Trump evoked nostalgic deprivation predominantly by reference to a loss of jobs and income. In doing so, he focused on the loss of manufacturing jobs, and he liked to reiterate hard numbers of the jobs that had disappeared over the years: "By far the biggest losses occurred in motor vehicles and parts, which lost nearly 740,000 manufacturing jobs."[132] There were broadly two guilty parties at play for Trump. First, the neoliberal governing class (specifically Bill and Hillary Clinton) which had negotiated the NAFTA trade agreement,[133] and second, more cost-effective countries to where the jobs had 'fled', especially Mexico: "Our jobs have fled to Mexico and other places. We're bringing our jobs back. I'm going to renegotiate NAFTA."[134] With this strong focus on the manufacturing industry in decline he aimed to play into the anxieties of the working class. As Pettigrew argues, the vast majority of Trump voters was not actually unemployed; in most cases they had only switched from manufacturing to service jobs.[135] This means Trump meant to play into their nostalgia, by vowing to bring back not only jobs and income, but a social safety net and a safe haven.

By reference to national deprivation Trump mainly focused on the deprived state of national infrastructure and public buildings: "Our country has tremendous problems. We're a debtor nation. We're a serious debtor nation. And we have a country that needs new roads, new

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132. Donald Trump, "Donald Trump Speaks in Michigan" (Speech, Michigan, US, August 19, 2016) *Politico.* https://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-michigan-speech-transcript-227221

133. NAFTA stands for North American Free Trade Agreement, which created a free trade zone between the US, Canada, and Mexico.

134. Trump in "Third Presidential Debate."

135. Pettigrew, "Social Psychological Perspectives on Trump Supporters," 112.

tunnels, new bridges, new airports, new schools, new hospitals."[136] This constant assertion that the country was doing badly and was in decline might seem to conflict with his evocation of nationalism, but rather it served to argue how badly the Democrats (and Barack Obama in particular) had left a degenerate country. To restore America to its former glory, people had to vote Trump.

One way to solve this national deprivation was to bring back automobile factories and energy companies: "I will bring our energy companies back and they will be able to compete and they'll make money and pay off our national debt and budget deficits which are tremendous."[137] This focus on energy companies, and coal in particular, appealed strongly to those used to work in the coal mines, and is an overt form of Thorleifsson's coal nationalism.[138] Notably, Trump never made a case for greener industry or CO2 reduction. Rather, his call to invest in non-green industries appeased those in denial of climate change. Reference to economic deprivation of the country also served as an argument to bring back more traditional factories: "We don't make our product anymore. It's very sad, but I am going to create a… the kind of a country that we were from the standpoint of industry. We used to be there. We've given it up. We've become very, very sloppy."[139] It worked fifty years ago, so why should it not work now?

Loss of opportunity and possibility was, perhaps surprisingly, predominantly tied in with reference to the degenerating conditions for African Americans living in the inner cities. Trump only ever referred to African Americans as living in horrible conditions without prospects and opportunity: "You go into the inner cities, it's 45% poverty. African Americans now 45% poverty in the inner cities. The education is a disaster. Jobs are essentially non-existent."[140] Instead of celebrating African American culture, Trump exaggerated their deprivation to show Obama had not lived up to his promise. When talking about the loss of national identity he mainly meant the culture and traditions of the white working- and middle

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136. Donald Trump in "First Presidential Debate" (Debate, Hempstead, NY, US, September 27, 2016). *Politico.* https://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/full-transcript-first-2016-presidential-debate-228761

137. Donald Trump in "Second Presidential Debate," (Debate, St. Louis, Missouri, US, October 10, 2016) *Politico.* https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519

138. Thorleifsson, "From coal to Ukip: the struggle over identity in post-industrial Doncaster."

139. Trump in "Third Presidential Debate."

140. Donald Trump in "Second Presidential Debate."

classes.[141] These are also, according to Trump, the people who have lost most of their political influence: "These are the forgotten men and women of our country. People who work hard but no longer have a voice. I AM YOUR VOICE."[142]

Trump mostly evoked nostalgic deprivation by referring to declining economic conditions, both for the country and the people. This would mean Pettigrew is right in arguing Trump used relative deprivation to point out how economic mobility, opportunity and safety had decreased over the last fifty or so years.[143] Steenvoorden and Harteveld are also right in arguing that high levels of societal pessimism pervaded the Trump campaign.[144] Trump played into these high levels of pessimism by first reiterating how bad the country was doing but then explaining how he would solve it all. Not by innovation, but by reversing the effects of globalisation and neoliberalism.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Now that both discourse analyses have been conducted, the second sub question can be answered, which reads: Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic deprivation and in what way? Nostalgic deprivation certainly pervaded both campaigns, although to a greater extent in the US than in the UK. They also appealed to different aspects of nostalgic deprivation: where the Vote Leave campaign predominantly focused on areas of political deprivation, Trump made most use of economic and national deprivation.

The Vote Leave campaign blamed the European Union for all aspects of deprivation, whereby 'loss of control' was the most salient argument. All problems supposedly stemmed from the fact that the British government had lost their say over national economy and immigration policy since joining the EU. The UK had "the fifth largest economy in the world,"[145] but in order to live up to that potential Britain had to be freed from being under the yoke of the EU. Therefore, loss of sovereignty was a major argument: the EU was portrayed

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141. As was also evident with his evocation of the nostalgic heartland.

142. Donald Trump, "2016 RNC draft speech transcript."

143. Pettigrew, "Social Psychological Perspectives on Trump Supporters."

144. Steenvoorden and Harteveld, "The appeal of nostalgia: the influence of societal pessimism on support for populist radical right parties."

145. Andrea Leadsom, "The choice the UK now faces is to accept a largely unreformed EU, or choose the route of freedom and democracy," (Speech, May 17, 2016). http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/andrea_leadsom_the_choice_the_uk_now_faces_is_to_accept_a_largely_u nreformed_eu_or_choose_the_route_of_freedom_and_democracy.html

as being an autocratic ruler to blame for the erosion of British democracy. Through evocation of nostalgic deprivation, the Vote Leave campaign managed to convince the 'normal people' it was the EU's fault they had lost their political influence. Whereas Matthew Goodwin and Oliver Heath argue for the salience of economic and social inequality in the Brexit vote, this discourse analysis shows the Brexiteers referred more often to areas of political deprivation than to economic decline.

For the Trump campaign, it was the other way around. Most emphasis was on areas of economic and national deprivation, whereby the neoliberal governing classes were blamed for the general decline of America. Whereas Trump did focus on the deprivation of the nation – as Hainmueller and Hopkins argue [146] – he was mostly concerned with a loss of (manufacturing) jobs and the disappearance of more traditional, fossil-fuel industry such as automobile factories and energy plants. By arguing for the return of traditional jobs and industry he gave a voice to those people who felt most negatively affected by the effects of globalisation and who felt most (relatively) deprived of social safety and mobility. For those anxious about societal change and reeling from the perceived loss of their way of life, Trump offered comfort by promising reactionary solutions to their (and the country's) problems.

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146. Hainmueller and Hopkins, "Public attitudes toward immigration."

Chapter 3

NOSTALGIC RESTORATION

History can inspire but also bedevil.[147]

One of the main spearheads of national populism is that it seeks to preserve or restore the dominance of the national group, and especially its customs and traditions.[148] This characterisation of national populism closely resembles how Michael Kenny defines nostalgia: as a preference for the way things were, or more specifically, by the wish for a rebirth of the nation as it used to be.[149] Kenny's form of nostalgia embodies a strong historical-cultural focus, which this research has labelled 'nostalgic restoration'. Nostalgic restoration is generally characterised by a great love for or even celebration of the history of a country.

Within populist discourse there is often a strong emphasis on not only culture and traditions (of the dominant group), but also on sovereignty and exceptionalism. As such, Michael Freeden has claimed that nostalgic restoration, or at least what this research has labelled nostalgic restoration, is a core feature of right-wing populism since it attempts to (re)establish sovereignty. Sovereignty, he argues, is depicted within populist movements as a unique property of the national-cultural tradition, which must be preserved in the face of continuous challenges.[150] Politicians invoking nostalgic restoration see national history and traditions, including sovereignty, as valuable assets that shape the national culture. They serve as a source of pride and strength, both of which are severely needed in times of uncertainty and deprivation.

There are more aspects to this form of nostalgia than merely the call to reclaim sovereignty.[151] Nostalgic restoration is the attempt to restore or preserve the national historical-

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147. Ian Buruma, *The Churchill Complex: The Rise and Fall of the Special Relationship* (London: Atlantic Books, 2020), 7.

148. Roger Eatwell and Matthew J. Goodwin, *National populism: the revolt against liberal democracy*, 276.

149. Michael Kenny, "Back to the populist future? Understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse," 257.

150. Michael Freeden, 'After the Brexit referendum: revisiting populism as an ideology', Journal of Political Ideologies 22, no. 1 (2017): 1–11.

151. Note that the subcategory of sovereignty here differs from sovereignty as part of nostalgic deprivation. There it relates to the **loss** of sovereignty, here to **reclaiming** or **restoring** sovereignty.

and cultural tradition, including the controversial aspects. Naturally this does not mean Donald Trump wishes to restore slavery or Boris Johnson wants a return of the Second World War, but by means of reference to those historical time periods they want to make their supporters feel comfortable above all else.[152] In fast-changing times, especially those people living in the imaginary heartland and identifying with a sense of nostalgic deprivation want to feel socially secure. As Rodriguez has pointed out, this sense of societal security feeds on identity: it incorporates emotions and perceptions.[153] A threat to the ideas, history, and self-image of the dominant forces is regarded as a threat to social security,[154] which is exactly why Kenny argues national populists evoke nostalgic restoration to protect those values of the past.

This chapter aims to establish whether this kind of rhetoric was indeed prevalent in the Trump- and the Vote Leave campaigns. After some further discussion of existing secondary literature on nostalgic restoration in the UK and the US, a discourse analysis will again be conducted, with the same primary sources as in first two chapters. This will ultimately allow for an answer to the third sub question, which reads: Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic restoration and in what way?

3.1 BRITISH NOSTALGIC RESTORATION: A TICKET TO THE PAST, PLEASE

Brexit itself can already be seen as an attempt of nostalgic restoration. Instead of moving forwards by adapting to new situations, the British people deliberately chose to return to the way things used to be before the UK joined the EU. Discourse around the referendum was also cloaked in a sense of the past. Figures such as Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and Jacob Rees-Mogg often hinted things were better in the past, but they never referred to a clear point in the 'great' history of Britain. Sometimes they pointed to Britain's imperial past when Britain was a 'great, independent maritime trading nation.' Sometimes it was the Second World War, when Britain fought alongside the US to defeat villainous Germany, and sometimes it was the 1950s, when there was still a sense of unity in British society.[155] This illustrates that the Vote Leave

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152. Nick Cohen, "Our politics of nostalgia is a sure sign of present-day decay," *The Guardian*, June 26, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/26/our-politics-of-nostalgia-is-a-sure-sign-of-present-day-decay

153. Abelardo Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality," *Journal of Strategic Security* 13, no. 2 (2020): 20.

154. Rodriguez, 20.

155. Cohen, "Our politics of nostalgia is a sure sign of present-day decay."

campaign willingly employed the reactionary nature of the vote and used it to their advantage.[156]

The question is where this strong appeal to the past comes from. It can be argued that nostalgic restoration arises from a sense of insecurity. Namely, countries that are confident about their present status have no need for nostalgia. A self-assured Britain would have no need to appeal to the horrible histories of slavery, colonialism, and the Second World War to gain a sense of social security: "It would take it as read that the present is superior to the past and that we have progressed enough to admit our mistakes."[157] A strong evocation of nostalgic restoration would thus reveal that a large portion of British society does not feel comfortable or even at home in the present.

Gaston and Hilhorst see Britain's imperial history as an important factor for the Vote Leave campaign's evocation of nostalgia. They argue that countries with imperial histories are more prone to contested narratives of the past, which manifests in "a potent form of nostalgia for a time of global status and cultural influence."[158] Polling shows this positive attitude towards the imperial past: a poll conducted in 2014 suggested that 59 percent of the British people regarded their colonial history as a source of pride, and 49 percent believed countries (previously) colonised by Britain were better off as a result.[159]

Boris Johnson's ploy for 'Global Britain' is therefore an important aspect of nostalgic restoration. Whereas plans for Global Britain were generally presented as being future-oriented rather than as a call for restoration, the emphasis on promoting relationships with Commonwealth nations and the predisposition towards the Anglosphere suggest the opposite.[160] Namely, the Anglosphere was born from British exceptionalism, since it includes Britain's former colonies: New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States. It dates back to the Victorian era and reeks of imperialism. The UK still has a strong preference for the Anglosphere when it comes to multilateral relations and has therefore never been able to

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156. Gandini, *Zeitgeist Nostalgia: On populism, work and the 'good life'.*

157. Cohen, "Our politics of nostalgia is a sure sign of present-day decay."

158. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past*. 43.

159. See note 158 above.

160. Gaston and Hilhorst, 52. This because the Commonwealth and the Anglosphere are both products of the imperial era. As Gaston and Hilhorst highlight, the Commonwealth is often referred to by the Civil Service as Empire 2.0.

"reconcile its imperial origins with the exercise of soft power during the formation of the European Union."[161]

Weighing perhaps even stronger for the British than the Anglosphere is the Special Relationship with the US. Established after the Second World War, it is one of the most high-profile alliances in the world. It used to be a relationship of mutual dependency: the US needed British approval to legitimate its decisions globally, and the British, having lost their hegemonic status, could use a powerful ally like the US. Whereas the relationship has always seemed to be more valuable to the British than to the Americans,[162] nostalgia for the Special Relationship received a boost when Donald Trump was elected (who openly favoured Boris Johnson over Theresa May even before he became Prime Minister). Together, Johnson and Trump "share ideas, values, and vision of the world that the UK's exit from the EU has revitalised."[163]

It was not only evocation of imperialism that pervaded the Brexit campaign: Gaston and Hilhorst argue that the most prominent nostalgic evocations related to the Second World War.[164] Winning the war against the Nazi's remains a source of national pride in the UK until today, and 'Blitz spirit' has played a pivotal role in shaping patriotic narratives of English national identity since the 1940s. In the Brexit campaign, the war also served as an important reference to Britain's victorious past.[165]

Next in this chapter, the discourse analysis will establish in what way Leave campaigners have appealed to not only the Second World War, but also to imperialism, Global Britain, the Anglosphere, the Special Relationship, and other aspects of British national identity and history such as the literary canon, the monarchy, and former Prime Ministers.

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161. Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality," 24.

162. As was exemplified by the Suez crisis in 1956, when Eisenhower openly rejected Britain's invasion of Egypt to recapture the Suez Canal, and more recently by Obama claiming Merkel's Germany was their most important European ally.

163 Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality," 41.

164. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past*, 63.

165. Thomas T. Williams, "Mobilizing the Past: Germany and the Second World War in Debates on Brexit," *Brexit in Perspective: Debating British Identity and Politics* 19, no 51 (2021).

3.1.1 Discourse analysis: Nostalgic Restoration – UK

The nodes for this category of the discourse analysis rather differ between the US and the UK. The table below (figure 5) presents the nodes applicable to the UK and the number of times they were tagged in the primary sources from the Vote Leave campaign.[166] The total number of references to the subcategories of nostalgic restoration number up to 106. The most referenced node was 'Global Britain', which was tagged seventeen times, making up 16% of total references. This was then followed by 'taking back control', tagged sixteen times (15,1%).[167] 'state sovereignty' was referenced thirteen times (12,3%),[168] 'Second World War' nine times (8,5%) and 'general war references' eight times (7,6%). Reference to 'imperialism and empire' occurred seven times (6,6%), and reference to ''great' British history' and 'the Special Relationship' occurred both six times (each 5,7% of total references). The 'literary canon' was referenced five times (4,7%), 'restoration of national values and traditions' four times, and 'general historical references' four times as well (each 3,77%). 'Exceptionalism' tagged three times, as was 'Winston Churchill' (both 2,83%), 'First World War' two times (1,9%), and 'monarchy and royalty' and 'former prime ministers' only once (0,9% each).[169] Whereas nostalgic restoration has been tagged more than a hundred times, the individual subcategories are spread out quite evenly, without big discrepancies between them. The number of references to this nostalgic category is much higher than the number of references to the nostalgic heartland and nostalgic deprivation, which were tagged 64 and 61 times respectively.

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166. For further explanation on why these nodes were chosen for nostalgic restoration, see the methodology.

167. Note here that this reference is different to 'loss of control' which was used as a node for nostalgic deprivation in chapter 2. Loss of control pertained to a sense of (relative) loss of control over national affairs, whereas 'taking back control' is about the restoration of how things used to be: when Britain still did have control.

168. Same thing goes for 'state sovereignty'. In chapter 2 this pertained to a loss of state sovereignty, in this chapter it is about reference to the restoration of state sovereignty.

169. Of course, Winston Churchill has also been Prime Minister, but references to him differ notably from references to other PM's: this because Churchill is a well-known popular historical figure associated with the Second World War.

Figure 5	Debate	Opinion	Interview	Speech	Tweets
Exceptionalism	0	1	0	2	0
Global Britain	0	6	0	11	0
Imperialism & empire	0	2	0	5	0
'Great' British history	0	2	0	4	0
General historical references	0	0	1	1	2
Literary canon	0	0	2	3	0
Restoration of national values & traditions	0	0	1	2	1
State sovereignty	0	5	0	7	1
Taking back control	1	5	2	8	0
General war references	0	0	0	6	2
First World War	0	1	0	1	0
Second World War	1	3	3	2	0
Monarchy & royalty	0	0	0	1	0
Former prime ministers	0	1	0	0	0
Winston Churchill	0	1	2	0	1
The Special Relationship	0	0	0	3	3

3.1.2 Discussion

Boris Johnson's Global Britain must have resonated strongly with voters, for it was the most referenced subcategory within nostalgic restoration. References tagged under Global Britain did not necessarily have to contain the phrase Global Britain itself, but also involved indirect references to Britain's strong global position. They always included a strong sense of pride: "But I have been repeatedly impressed by the way people around the world are looking for a lead from Britain, engagement from Britain. And so whether we like it or not we are not some bit part or spear carrier on the world stage. We are a protagonist – a global Britain running a truly global foreign policy."[170] The concept of Global Britain inherently refers to the imperialist past, so Gaston and Hilhorst were right in arguing that many British people have a positive connotation with their country's imperialist history.[171] Vote Leave campaigners eagerly employed this fact, which resulted in a rather lob-sided view of Britain's position in the world. Johnson always brushed over the fact that the UK had lost most of its empire and its hegemonic

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170. Boris Johnson, "Beyond Brexit: a Global Britain" (Speech, Chatham House, December 2, 2016.) https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/beyond-brexit-a-global-britain

171. Gaston and Hilhorst, *At Home in One's Past,* 52.

position in a mere century, but instead stressed how Britain was "powerful, liberal, humane, an extraordinary force for good in the world."[172]

Logically, the plea to take back control was repeated often during the campaign. It occurred along similar lines as reference to a loss of control, as discussed in the second chapter on nostalgic deprivation. On the one hand, taking back control involved a focus on limiting immigration and restoring control over borders,[173] and on the other, it emphasised Britain's historical tradition of parliamentary democracy. This had, for centuries, distinguished Britain from other countries in the world, until the EU infringed upon their 'sacred' constitutional system: "Britain could do better. We're a uniquely inventive nation. Our greatest invention is representative democracy - the principle that the people who run our country should be chosen by us and can be kicked out by us. It's time to take back control."[174]

The thread of history running through the argument to take back control continues with references to state sovereignty. Sovereignty did not only come up in terms of loss (as was the case in the chapter two), but also had a more pro-active approximation in terms of recapturing independence. Hereby there was again a strong outward focus. If the UK took back control from the EU, and managed to re-establish itself as a sovereign nation, it could once again "embark upon an exciting future as an independent nation,"[175] and serve as an example to the rest of the world. Nigel Farage even hoped Brexit would mean the end of the EU and would involve a return of European nation states: "I hope this victory brings down this failed project and leads us to a Europe of sovereign nation states, trading together, being friends together, cooperating together and let's get rid of the flag, the anthem, Brussels, and all that's gone wrong."[176]

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172. Boris Johnson, "Boris Johnson's Brexit Victory Speech: Full Transcript," (Speech, London, UK, June 24, 2016) https://www.newsweek.com/boris-johnsons-brexit-victory-speech-full-transcript-474086

173. As was also distinguished in the second chapter. The only difference is that 'take back control' referenced in this chapter involves a more proactive plea to take back control, instead of focusing on the loss of control over national affairs.

174. Michael Gove, "Michael Gove's essay for Today programme – Why it is safer to take back control," *Vote Leave Take Control,* April 19, 2016. http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/michael_gove_s_oped_for_bbc_radio_4_today_programme.html

175. Nigel Farage, "Why we must vote to LEAVE in the EU referendum," *Express,* June 21, 2016.

176. Nigel Farage, "EU referendum: Nigel Farage's 4am victory speech – the text in full" (Speech, June 24, 2016). *The Independent.* https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-referendum-nigel-farage-4am-victory-speech-text-full-a7099156.html

The era of European nation states ended after the Second World War (WWII), which was coincidentally, as the discourse analysis reveals, a much-referenced period during the Brexit campaign. Whereas evocations of WWII might have not been the most prominent, which was what Rodriguez argued,[177] Vote Leave campaigners did not shy away from using war rhetoric, with often explicit reference to WWII. This involved comparisons between the referendum and the Battle of Britain and the call to 'mobilise forces', but also more controversial statements such as Boris Johnson's comparison of the European integration project to Nazi Germany:

> "The truth is that the history of the last couple of thousand years has been broadly repeated attempts by various people or institutions – in a Freudian way – to rediscover the lost childhood of Europe, this golden age of peace and prosperity under the Romans, by trying to unify it. Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically."[178]

This illustrates how Brexiteers sometimes crossed ideological lines when employing Britain's past and historical triumphs as an argument to vote Leave, resulting in stronger resistance from the Remain camp but also in stronger support from the Leave camp.[179]

The Vote Leave camp tended to only highlight the positive aspects of British history, and the same happened with reference to imperialism and empire. While many would argue the negative implications of British imperialism grossly outweigh the positive, the Vote Leave camp drew on the latter to evoke a nostalgic feeling for Britain's past. By pointing out all the good Britain had done in the world, Brexiteers aimed to convince the people that an exit from the EU was vital for Britain to regain its influential global position 'to do good' in the world. Take for example Boris Johnson, who said the following about a conversation he had with Afghan President Ghani:

> "I have to admit that he embarrassed me, not because he railed at the British for the Durand line or for our colonial misdemeanours, no – he thanked me, profusely and

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177. Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality," 24.

178. Boris Johnson interviewed by Tim Ross, "Boris Johnson interview: We can be the 'heroes of Europe' by voting to Leave," *The Telegraph,* May 14, 2016. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/14/boris-johnson-interview-we-can-be-the-heroes-of-europe-by-voting/

179. Delia Dumitrescu and Eitan Tzelgov, "Why Brexit is so polarizing and what we can do about it," *ECPR,* 2018, https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/41833.
In turn contributing to higher levels of polarisation. Johnson's comparison of the EU to Nazi Germany shows how "Liberals and Conservatives had systematically different moral profiles" during the Brexit campaign.

repeatedly for the sacrifice of the 456 British troops who have given their lives and whose names I saw on that wall. He was absolutely categorical that this time – this century - our legacy was positive and lasting."[180]

Not only Johnson used British history to his advantage, so did Jacob Rees-Mogg when comparing Brexit with (subjectively) victorious moments in British history: "I mean this is Magna Carta, it's the Burgesses coming at Parliament, it's the great Reform Bill, it's the Bill of Rights, it's so many. It's Waterloo, it's Agincourt, it's Crecy. We win all these things."[181] But by so extensively drawing on contested moments in history, Brexiteers brought to the surface a sense of insecurity about the present and future. Cohen was right in arguing that instead of invoking a feeling of innovation and possibility, Brexiteers harked back to the past to provide voters with a sense of comfort.[182]

This feeling of comfort was also sought by reference to the Special Relationship, which Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage did to the greatest extent (who in turn, were also both favoured by Donald Trump). This reveals that the British have always been inclined to prefer the US over Europe.[183] In seeking to restore the alliance with the US, Brexiteers reveal how Britain, at heart, is an 'exceptional' island nation: it differs from European countries in its DNA. It wants to be more like the US and less like other European countries. That is why Boris Johnson often referred to Winston Churchill: he was a supporter of European integration but never wanted to be a part of "a European superstate", since "he saw the UK as being supportive of the marriage but not a participant in the marriage – that is the crucial thing."[184] Whether Churchill would have liked it or not, he became a figurehead for the new independency movement that wished the UK to be friends with Europe, but not a part of it.

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180. Johnson, "Beyond Brexit: a Global Britain."

181. Jacob Rees-Mogg, "Jacob Rees-Mogg on the benefits of Brexit," Video, Facebook Post, *Channel 4 News,* posted October 3, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1438612812883324

182. Nick Cohen, "Our politics of nostalgia is a sure sign of present-day decay," *The Guardian,* June 26, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/26/our-politics-of-nostalgia-is-a-sure-sign-of-present-day-decay

183. As Rodriguez argues in "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality."

184. Boris Johnson interviewed by Tim Ross, "Boris Johnson interview: We can be the 'heroes of Europe' by voting to Leave."

3.2 AMERICAN NOSTALGIC RESTORATION: DREAMS OF AN EXCEPTIONAL PAST

Vast amounts of secondary literature exist on aspects of nostalgic restoration in the United Kingdom. Much less has been written about this form of nostalgia in the Trump campaign. Perhaps because the US simply doesn't have such an extensive history: it only became a sovereign nation in 1776. Or, the limited academic literature on Trump's appeals to American history could be due to Trump's own limited knowledge of the past: during his first months in office, he suggested Andrew Jackson was "really angry" about the Civil War (which did not begin until two decades after his death) and he referred to human trafficking as problem that was "probably worse than any time in the history of this world," seemingly forgetting centuries of slavery.[185] Nevertheless, Trumps' appeals to American history, culture, and traditions should be examined at greater length, if only to paint a more comprehensive picture of his utilisation of nostalgia in general.

Namely, there is substantive reason to assume Trump did employ nostalgic restoration in his 2016 campaign: his campaign slogan already suggests as much. By vowing to make America great 'again', he must have been drawing on some 'great' aspects of the American historical tradition. For example, while America First might indicate a discard of the age-old ideology of American exceptionalism, some have argued the contrary. Ron Pruessen claims Trump's confidence in "divinely ordained exceptionalism" has fuelled initiatives to restore losses, which is exactly what nostalgic restoration is about.[186]

American exceptionalism, which is the idea that the US is inherently different – and superior to – other nations, is strongly tied in with nostalgia. The idea draws upon events in American history to argue that the US has a unique character which sets it apart from other nations. By reference to past events, it holds that the US "thwarts the laws of history by rising to power but never decline."[187] People who believe this to be true use, for example, the

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185. Juanna Summers, "Trump's muddled view of American History," CNN, August 24, 2017. https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/19/politics/trump-history-facts-historians/index.html

186. Ron Pruessen, "Trump's appeals to America's past and nostalgia in the face of new problems are closing off new ways to tackle them," *Blogs LSE US,* accessed November 2, 2021. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2020/03/12/trumps-appeals-to-americas-past-and-nostalgia-in-the-face-of-new-problems-are-closing-off-new-ways-to-tackle-them/

187. Hilde Restad, "Donald Trump's calls to 'Make America great again' show that American Exceptionalism is still a powerful idea," *Blogs LSE*, 2016, accessed November 2, 2021. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2016/03/04/donald-trumps-calls-to-make-america-great-again-show-that-american-exceptionalism-is-still-a-powerful-idea/

American revolution, the conquering of the American continent, and the two World Wars (where the Americans defeated the Germans, not once but twice) to argue that the US is an unstoppable international force.[188] This concept of nationality is strongly intertwined with subjective views of history, which makes it important to take into account when studying Trump's nostalgic references.

American exceptionalism ties in with the wish to restore American empire and hegemony. As Porter argues, with the rise of President Trump, a group of people wish to see American primacy reinstated whereby they prefer to look back to a "nobler past," instead of facing the future head-on.[189] Whereas the US might not be, or have been, an 'official' empire like Britain was, the Americans also relied on a preponderance of power to achieve hegemony in a liberal word order.[190] Despite breaking with the British crown in the 18th century, the US developed its own expansionist impulse and continued took over the lead of the Anglosphere from the British after the World War II.[191] Porter claims Trump utilised a set of evasive and soothing images of the past, including references to American exceptionalism, to reimagine a lost world,[192] just as Boris Johnson did with his plea for a Global Britain.

This discourse analysis will aim to establish how these suggestions about Trump's evocation of not only empire, but also American history and culture in general, compare with his call for America First and isolationism. How did he incorporate arguments about the Second Amendment and the American Revolution in his campaign? To what extent did he draw on nostalgic restoration to gain support among the electorate, and by reference to which aspects of American values, culture, history, and traditions did he do so?

3.2.1 Discourse analysis: Nostalgic Restoration – US

Figure 6 displays the results of the discourse analysis. Some nodes are the same as the ones used for the discourse analysis on the Vote Leave campaign, but some differ. Nodes specific to the UK have been left out (such as the monarchy), and instead the US-applicable nodes were

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188. Hilde Restad, "Donald Trump's calls to 'Make America great again' show that American Exceptionalism is still a powerful idea."

189. Patrick Porter, *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion and the Rise of Trump* (UK, Polity Press: 2020), 11.

190. Porter, 15.

191. Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality," 24.

192. Porter, *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion and the Rise of Trump*, 11.

used, such as the American Dream, the Second Amendment (protecting the right to keep and bear arms), and the American Revolution.[193] As in previous chapters, only the subcategories that were tagged at least once have been displayed in figure 6. This means general war references, imperialism and empire, the Civil War and the Special Relationship are not included in the results table.

In all primary sources from the US, there were 49 references to nostalgic restoration.[194] The node 'American Presidents' was tagged the most, namely eleven times, making up 22,5% of total references to nostalgic restoration. This was followed by reference to 'restoration of national values and traditions' and the Second Amendment, which were both tagged nine times, which is 18,4% of total. 'American Dream' was referenced seven times (14,3%), 'exceptionalism' five times (10,2%), and Winston Churchill three times (6,12%). The American Revolution was tagged twice (4,1%), and 'general historical references', 'historical triumphs' and the Second World War were all tagged once (all 2% of total).

Figure 6	Debate	Interview	Speech	Tweets
Exceptionalism	0	0	5	0
American Dream	0	0	4	3
General historical references	0	0	1	0
Historical triumphs	0	0	1	0
Restoration of national values & traditions	1	0	8	0
Second Amendment	4	0	1	4
Second World War	1	0	0	0
Winston Churchill	0	1	0	2
American Presidents	2	1	2	6
The American revolution	0	0	2	0

3.2.2 Discussion

Striking is the big discrepancy between the number of references to the nostalgic heartland and nostalgic deprivation on the one hand – which were tagged 107 and 84 times respectively – and nostalgic restoration on the other, which was tagged merely 49 times. To some extent, this was to be expected. It shows how Trump's primary emphasis during the campaign was on the

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193. For more information on the reasoning behind these subcategories, see the methodology.

194. Note that this does not include every time Trump vowed to 'Make America Great Again'. Whereas his slogan seems to point to nostalgic restoration, it was an overall empty slant. Only adherences to more specific (policy) plans have been included in the analysis.

deprivation of the heartland and less on nostalgic evocation of America's history and traditions. Despite the limited number of references to nostalgic restoration, it is still worthwhile to dissect the way in which he applied this form of nostalgia, since this will disclose valuable information on Trump's beliefs about not only American history, but also its culture, traditions, and values.

When invoking a sense of nostalgic restoration, Trump most often referred to historical American Presidents, and two in particular: Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. He liked to emphasise that Lincoln, who was President during the Civil War and who abolished slavery in the US, was a Republican.[195] This to show that he himself, and the Republican Party, was not racist, and to justify various of his policies: "Our first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, warned us by saying: 'The abandonment of the protective policy by the American government will produce want and ruin among our people.'"[196] Even more so than referring to Lincoln, Trump liked to openly display his admiration for Ronald Reagan. Not only the MAGA slogan was copied directly from Reagan's 1980s campaign, but he often tweeted quotes from Reagan which closely resembled his own beliefs. Aside from Reagan and Lincoln, Trump too admired Winston Churchill. He also tweeted his quotes and said he returned his bust in the Oval Office.[197]

The discourse analysis also shows that Trump vowed to restore national values and traditions. These references revealed a striking contradiction: by claiming that "American values and culture" would "be cherished and celebrated once again," Trump simultaneously argued that "to achieve this New American Future, we must break free from the bitter failures of the past – and reject the same insiders telling us the same old lies."[198] This implies both a return to the past and a break from it. While Trump tried to frame his plans (such as America First) as innovative plans of the future, they actually hark back further than Trump's own definition of the past. When alluding to the past, Trump principally meant the last decade (the

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195. This while the Republican Party has changed severely since the 1860s. The salient Republican policies of the 1860s actually compare better with current Democratic policies than Trump's plans for the US, and Democratic beliefs and policies around the Civil War period resemble contemporary Republican standpoints.

196. Donald Trump, "Full transcript: Donald Trump NYC speech on stakes of the election." (Speech, New York City, NY, US, June 22, 2016) *Politico*. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/transcript-trump-speech-on-the-stakes-of-the-election-224654

197. Donald Trump interview by Liam Stack et al., "Donald Trump's New York Times Interview: Full Transcript," (Interview, November 23, 2016) *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/23/us/politics/trump-new-york-times-interview-transcript.html

198. Trump, "Donald Trump Speaks in Michigan."

Obama years). But, by vowing to restore 'American culture and traditions' he spoke for the heartland's culture and traditions of an even more distant past; before neoliberalism and globalism became the focal points for the American political class. This is further exemplified by his support of the Second Amendment, which Trump claimed was "under siege" by Democrats like Hillary Clinton.[199] By endorsing the Second Amendment, Trump openly sided with the portion of society attaching value to this controversial aspect of American culture.

The American Dream is one of the central tenets of American culture and is strongly tied in with a sense of possibility and opportunity. Trump regarded the American Dream as something which had been lost and had to be restored: "We must reclaim our country's destiny and dream big and bold and daring. We have to do that. We're going to dream of things for our country and beautiful things and successful things once again."[200] Speaking of America's destiny not only relates to the American Dream but also to American exceptionalism. Whereas Trump indicated he preferred not to use the term exceptionalism,[201] he did (inexplicitly) employ the concept, since Trump and his supporters liked to look back to a nobler past in attempt to restore it.[202] His confidence in the US being 'bold and daring' fuelled arguments that America's destiny should be restored.[203]

Within the sources analysed for this discourse analysis, Trump only once referred directly to historical achievements of Americans (which was something Vote Leave campaigners did repeatedly): "Americans are the people that tamed the West, that dug out the Panama Canal, that sent satellites across the solar system, that built the great dams, and so much more."[204] By claiming that "history is watching us now," Trump claimed his presidency personified the movement that "would show the world that America is still free and

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199. Trump in "Second Presidential Debate."

200. Donald Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump's Victory Speech," (Speech, New York City, NY, US, November 9, 2016) *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/10/us/politics/trump-speech-transcript.html

201. Nicole Guadiano, "Trump wants to teach 'American exceptionalism,' an idea he once disavowed," Politico, August 24, 2020. https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/24/trump-teach-american-exceptionalism-401060

202. Porter, *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion and the Rise of Trump*, 15.

203. Pruessen, "Trump's appeals to America's past and nostalgia in the face of new problems are closing off new ways to tackle them."

204. Trump, "Full transcript: Donald Trump NYC speech on stakes of the election."

independent and strong."[205] This reveals Trump certainly evoked nostalgic restoration, albeit to a lesser extent than by evocation of the nostalgic heartland and nostalgic deprivation.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Now that the results for both discourse analyses on nostalgic restoration have been drawn up, the third and last sub question can be answered, which reads: Do the national populist campaigns refer to conceptions of nostalgic restoration and in what way? Both campaigns did refer to conceptions of nostalgic restoration, but in rather different ways. While nostalgic restoration was the most referenced nostalgic category for the UK, it was the least referenced one for the US. This reveals where the Vote Leave campaign and the Trump campaign diverged.

In Britain, nostalgic restoration ran like a thread through the Brexit campaign. The discourse analysis revealed that Vote Leave campaigners drew on a sense of nostalgic restoration and British history to evoke a feeling of comfort within voters. This is exemplified by the fact that they merely highlighted the positive aspects and triumphs of British history, conveniently leaving out the damage that Britain has caused abroad for centuries. Not only Britain's imperial history was seen through rose-coloured glasses; references to World War II and the Blitz were also used in an attempt to revive British hegemony in the minds of the British people. Whereas Rodriguez argued for the relevance of the Anglosphere in the Brexit campaign, the Brexiteers mainly stressed the importance of the Special Relationship for British foreign relations.[206] The Anglosphere might not have been that significant in the rhetoric of nostalgic restoration during the campaign, but anno 2021 the historic trilateral AUKUS security pact between the US, the UK and Australia does point to a renewed focus on the Anglosphere.

Aside from the occasional reference to Churchill, Trump did not in any way refer to either the Anglosphere or the Special Relationship during his campaign. This on the one hand shows that Americans simply do not care as much for the Special Relationship or the Anglosphere as the British do, but it also reveals that Trump did not appeal as much to nostalgic restoration as he did to the nostalgic heartland and nostalgic deprivation. When he did refer to the past, he predominantly did so to show what had been lost. 'Real' American values had been replaced by neoliberalism and globalisation, but Trump vowed to restore those aspects of the American Dream which were threatened by Democrats, including the Second Amendment.

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205. Trump, "2016 RNC draft speech transcript."

206. Rodriguez, "Imperial Nostalgia and Bitter Reality."

While Trump claimed he rejected the idea of American exceptionalism, he did want to restore and protect the US' hegemonic position – only by an isolationist focus instead of a global one. Whereas he often vowed to break with the past and build towards a better future, Trump's vision of the future was remarkably like the past.

CONCLUSION

These are turbulent times. The world is changing at an enormous rate, and challenges posed by climate change, technological advancements, and a changing global order ask for a great deal of flexibility. But many find it difficult to adapt to these developments, and understandably so, since many of these changes also involve personal losses. Evolving with globalisation is a lot to ask if it has only weakened one's position in society. Heightened anxiety among those who are struggling to come to terms with shifts in the global and societal structures leads to a search for comfort and belonging. Nostalgia is a perfect tool with which to delve back into the past; into an imaginary time when all was better.

A discourse analysis of primary sources from the Vote Leave- and Trump campaign has resulted in a comprehensive overview of the way in which various forms of nostalgia were used. The first analysis was conducted into the nostalgic heartland, which broadly means the longing for an exclusionary sense of home. In both the US and the UK, the nostalgic heartland was most shaped by reference to immigration, and more specifically through evocation of anti-immigration sentiment. In the UK, utilisation of the term 'the people' went hand in hand with the exclusion of 'other' social groups, for they were often seen as the culprit for the decline in living conditions of the British people. Furthermore, evocation of 'the people' was invigorated by a strong us versus them rhetoric, with 'them' being both the European Union and corrupt governing elites in London.

The nostalgic heartland was the most referenced category of nostalgia for the Trump campaign. The entire campaign was characterised by a strong sense of exclusion, even more so than in the UK. Scapegoating very much permeated the Trump campaign. Both immigrants and the neoliberalist elite were seen as the culprit for the declining living conditions of 'real' Americans. Nationalism and isolationism went hand in hand: through evocation of nationalism Trump urged for isolationism. This illustrated how utilisation of the nostalgic heartland in the US went along more traditional lines than in the UK. Whereas the Brexiteers were against immigration from Eastern-Europe and the Middle East, they advocated for freer movement of people between countries of the Commonwealth. Trump did no such thing. For him, immigration and terrorism were inherently linked. Furthermore, the Brexiteers' evocation of nationalism and isolationism was contrasted by their emphasis on Global Britain. Trump drew persistently on a nostalgic vision of the American isolationism and nationalism to argue for America First.

The second discourse analysis was conducted on nostalgic deprivation, which is characterised by feelings of (relative) loss in various areas. The Vote Leave campaign predominantly referred to aspects of political deprivation. Through employment of nostalgic deprivation, they effectively convinced those feeling they had lost a stake in Britain's political centres of power that the EU was to blame for their loss of political influence. References to a loss of control, influence, and sovereignty were more salient than references to areas of economic deprivation. Instead of damaging the country's reputation by emphasising areas of economic decline, the Vote Leave campaign handily shaped discourse to make the EU look like the culprit of all that had gone wrong over last couple of decades.

For the Trump campaign, the emphasis was not necessarily on political deprivation, but more on economic and national deprivation. He shaped discourse by reference to declining economic conditions, both for the country and the people. He liked to point out how economic mobility, opportunity, and safety had decreased for the American people as result of the loss of (manufacturing) jobs and the disappearance of traditional industry, whereby he aimed to appeal to the 'losers' of globalisation living in the imaginary heartland. Through a strong sense of societal pessimism, Trump stressed how he would heal a nation in decline: by offering reactionary solutions to current problems.

The last discourse analysis focused on nostalgic restoration, which can be broadly defined as an attempt to restore an idealised past version of the country. This aspect of nostalgia is where the Vote Leave- and Trump campaigns diverged the most. While nostalgic restoration was the most referenced nostalgic category for the UK, it was the least referenced one for the US. The Vote Leave campaign was pervaded with a strong sense of nostalgic restoration. Most emphasis was on the plea to take back control and restore Britain's global position to what it used to be before joining the EU. Vote Leave campaigners most notably referred merely to the positive aspects and consequences of Britain's historical tradition, including its empire and role in the Second World War. This illustrated how nostalgic restoration was predominantly used to provide voters with a sense of comfort and belonging.

Whereas the British liked to place emphasis on the Special Relationship, and how important it would once again become once the UK left the EU, Trump barely referred to the UK or the Special Relationship in his campaign. This exemplifies how the Americans do not attach as much value to historical traditions as the British do. When Trump did evoke nostalgic restoration, he mostly did so to show how 'real' American values had been lost and were replaced by ideologies of the elite, such as neoliberalism and globalism. Instead, he vowed to restore and protect aspects of American culture and history that more strongly appealed to the

heartland, such as the Second Amendment. While Trump claimed he wanted to build a better future, this future looked remarkably like the past.

This research has offered a comprehensive analysis of the way in which nostalgia was used in the national populist campaigns in the US and the UK. By doing so, it has filled a gap in existing academic literature, in which a broader overview of nostalgia in national populist politics was lacking. In general, only little academic attention has gone to studying nostalgia. Whereas the few studies that did focus on nostalgia all constituted valuable contributions to the field, they only focused on one form or category. That is why this research has delved into the various forms of nostalgia that were used in the Vote Leave campaign in the UK and the (first) Trump campaign in the US, to establish how populist politicians have used nostalgia to gain support. After having conducted a deep-dive into three forms of nostalgia – the nostalgic heartland, nostalgic deprivation, and nostalgic restoration – it can be concluded that populist politicians in the US and the UK have used this longing for the past to their advantage through nostalgic references in their campaigns. By employing various forms of nostalgia, they aimed to appeal to those living in the heartland, reeling from deprivation, hoping for a restoration of the past.

What has not been established is whether nostalgia was also employed in their non-populist counterparts: the Remain campaign in the UK and Hillary Clinton's campaign in the 2016 Presidential election. While the utilisation of nostalgia fits particularly well with populist ideologies and appeals to the Somewheres more than to the Anywheres, it might still be well possible that Remainers and Clinton also appealed to certain aspects of nostalgia. Not only Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage used war rhetoric in their campaign, but Remainers did so as well, albeit to a lesser extent. Hillary Clinton used old photographs of her and Bill Clinton in her campaign, allegedly to evoke a feeling of trust and nostalgia within voters. This might encourage further research to gain a more thorough comparison of populist and non-populist movements. The current study also raises the question as to how populist movements outside the US and the UK employ, or have employed, nostalgia. Because of its wide scope, the framework offered by this research is well equipped to also be applied to other countries and cultures.

Hopefully this study encourages the academic field to provide even more attention to those areas where not only nostalgia overlaps with populism, but also where history, culture and traditions overlap with politics at large. The current findings namely show how political campaigns and decision making are strongly tied in with perceptions of the national past and culture. Not only that, studying nostalgia in national populist rhetoric has shed more light on

the divisions in British and American society. Incorporating nostalgia into studies of populism further enriches existing knowledge on not only the appeal of populist parties but also on societal trends such as polarisation, nationalism, and globalisation.

In the US and the UK, utilisation of nostalgic rhetoric has contributed to great wins for the populist movements, resulting in a year of populist revolt. By appealing to voters' nostalgia, Trump and the Brexiteers aimed to ease existing anxieties caused by swift social change and declining opportunities. Nostalgia evokes a feeling of home, belonging, and comfort, so its appeal seems to make sense. But there looms a danger in it as well. As was seen in this research, nostalgia, and the evocation of an imaginary sense of home, go hand in hand with xenophobia and even racism. With Boris Johnson as current Prime Minister of the UK and Trump's rumoured bid for re-election, it is clear that populism and nostalgia were not left behind in 2016; they are still very much part of the present. More steps should therefore be taken to bridge the gap between those thriving in current society and those drowning in a sea of change. The appeal of nostalgia should never be greater than the appeal of the present, for one cannot return to the past while moving into the future.

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APPENDIX

Primary sources

When it came to choosing primary sources for the Vote Leave campaign, it became clear that the group of people campaigning to leave the European Union was wide-ranging and diverse. It included the UK Independence Party (UKIP), of which Nigel Farage was the leading figure, but also various politicians from both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. Therefore, the most prominent members of the Vote Leave campaign were all included when selecting primary sources. Statements, writings, and transcripts of speech of the following people were part of the discourse analysis: Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, Gisela Stuart, Jacob Rees-Mogg, Dominic Cummings, Priti Patel, Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Gove, James Cleverly, Nigel Lawson, and Liam Fox. In total, around 50 sources were analysed, but 29 primary sources from the Vote Leave campaign included nostalgic references, excluding tweets from Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage that contained references to nostalgia from January 1st, 2016, to January 1st, 2017. The other sources were classified under debates, interviews, opinion pieces (published in newspapers and online), and speeches.

The primary source material from the Trump campaign gathered for the analysis dates from the moment he announced his run for presidency in June 2015 up until the day of the election, November 3rd, 2016. Nine sources have been analysed, plus Trump's twitter archive from the 2015 to 2016, on which a query has been run for all tweets relating to the (sub)categories of nostalgia. Nine sources might seem little, especially compared to the number of sources analysed from the Vote Leave campaign, but this is simply because Trump did not publish opinion articles like the Brexiteers did. His campaign consisted solely of campaign rallies, debates, some interviews and most importantly Twitter. To find references to nostalgia in his tweets, the website *Trump Twitter Archive* was used, since Trump's own Twitter account was suspended after the Capitol Riots in January 2021. All tweets were scanned by searching on tags of the subcategories, such as 'American people' or 'immigration'. The other sources, such as transcripts of speeches, rallies, and debates, were scanned and tagged manually just as the sources from the UK.