

## Is grievance politics running out of road?

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The politics of grievance has dominated debate in both Britain and the United States. Nigel Farage, Rupert Lowe and Donald Trump have all built political narratives around anger, blame and the promise that someone else is responsible for people's hardship.

But is that politics now running out of road?

In this video, I argue that grievance can win attention, mobilise anger and even win elections. But it cannot govern. It cannot build houses, restore public services, fund healthcare, educate children, tackle climate change or create security. Eventually every politician has to answer one question: what are you actually going to do?

The problem for Farage and Trump is that their answers remain deeply neoliberal: lower taxes, smaller government, more markets, and more blame. That does not solve the grievances they exploit. It recycles the same failed model in a more extreme form.

The alternative is a politics of care, coupled with an economics of hope. That means understanding people's anger, and then using the capacity of government to address its causes. I think this is the moment to move beyond grievance and build something better.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=451ZPexe-ic?si=eB4wwfJ0pBC8A7w4>

This is the audio version:

[https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=8jq8c-1b0702d-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo\\_link=episode\\_page&btn-skin=c73a3a](https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=8jq8c-1b0702d-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a)

The Debate Ammunition for this video is available [here](#).

This is the transcript:

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You know what the politics of grievance is. It's the politics of Nigel Farage. It's the politics of Rupert Lowe. It's about making people angrier by telling them to blame other people, the wrong people, for their misfortunes.

Now, let's be realistic. There are lots of people in the UK who are suffering misfortune not of their own creation, and they are rightly angry about that.

They're angry with the neoliberal system. But to tell them to blame others, those who are less fortunate than themselves, or who are migrants, or somebody else, for the fact that they're suffering misfortune is wrong.

And my suggestion in this video is that the politics of grievance, this deliberate exploitation of people's justified anger and the direction of it against others in society, may be running out of road.

Weekend events suggest that something important is changing.

Nigel Farage is facing growing questions about his future. The media has turned on him. Even members of his own Reform party are turning upon him.

And elsewhere, Donald Trump is also being challenged. He's tried to put in place rules that would change the electoral system in the US to suit the Republicans. He's saying he's doing it to defeat a communist threat, describing the Democratic Party in the USA as communists, and he's saying he's doing it to keep the Republicans in power for at least a hundred years, a claim once made by Nazi politicians in Germany.

These stories might look different, but they suggest there's a shared weakness between Farage and Trump, and both of them raise questions about the future of grievance politics. The narratives from these different countries, the UK and the USA, do reveal the same underlying problem. Farage has built a movement around his own personality. Trump still holds power, but sounds increasingly insecure. He feels that his own narrative of power and personality is failing, and he's trying to shore up his position as a consequence. Confident movements do not usually change election rules, but that's what Trump is trying to do.

We know both Trump and Farage are facing pressures, and we know they have no solutions to those problems. Both are exposing the limits of grievance as politics.

Grievance is effective, we know, at winning elections. Farage has won elections for the

first time, although not of late in the last two by-elections, when it was thought that Reform might have a chance; they did badly.

But grievance did work for Trump, twice. It mobilises anger against real or imagined enemies. It keeps people focused on what they oppose, but governing demands something else. Governing demands actual answers and not just complaints. You cannot manage by grievance alone, and eventually, every movement has to deliver results.

Trump is finding that, and he's falling short and falling short badly, as this weekend's events to mark the 4th of July celebrations proved, the crowds were small. People would not turn up.

This is where grievance politics struggles. When it comes to actually delivering, it's proving unable to do so, and that's why we are at a potential change point in the history of grievance politics. It's running out of road.

The outsider narrative is becoming less convincing. Trump and Farage presented themselves as anti-establishment politicians. In both cases, the claim was absurd.

Farage has been a successful politician within the UK since 1999. He is the ultimate insider as a former City trader, and as a person of obvious wealth.

Trump is much the same. He was born with a large fortune. He's partly, and over time, turned it into a small fortune, except for the money he's made again since being president.

But both are political insiders in reality, and this is being rumbled. People have realised these people are not what they claim to be. And as a result, both are now identifying new enemies.

Farage is moving towards the right and becoming more like Rupert Lowe in his attacks on migrants.

Trump is accusing the Democrats of being communists.

But neither in the process has resolved the grievances they've exploited to get into office, and their supporters are beginning to notice. That's my core suggestion.

Naming problems is not enough to convince people that you have solutions to the issues that you face. Identifying failure is only the beginning of a process of change, and it's a fact that neoliberal institutions have failed many people, but criticism alone does not build success.

Every politician must eventually answer one question. What exactly are you going to do? That is the test that grievance politics, both sides of the Atlantic, faces. And their

policy solutions, from both Trump and Farage, remain intensely neoliberal in tone.

They argue that lower taxes must be made available to people.

They argue for smaller government as if that still provides an answer to any known question.

They argue that markets are what will deliver security for people when people are already realising that is not the case.

And national identity is replacing the role of effective government in their narratives.

The old failed existing model is simply being recycled by them, in a more extreme form.

People are realising that they are not politicians delivering change. They are politicians delivering a more extreme form of what is, and the outcomes look worse rather than better. That's why grievance politics isn't working. And the reality is that people realise they still need government that works.

Healthcare can't be delivered through grievance. Nor can housing. It requires public capacity and long-term planning. Education and social care need functioning institutions. Climate change demands collective action, and most people realise that climate change is real. Just walk outside at present in the UK, and the evidence is there for you to see. And what people are realising is that none of these issues are addressed by simply finding new enemies.

The fact is that anger is not a sustainable political programme. Permanent anger is politically exhausting, and people are being exhausted by it. As too are the politicians who are promoting it. Farage looks and sounds tired because he is tired, tired of everything he's saying, none of which is leading to the change that he claims to want. Trump is sounding tired because he's recycling the same old arguments, and they are losing their emotional force.

And parties built on one personality always become fragile. Succession becomes a major problem. There is no heir apparent to Farage in Reform UK, just as there was no heir apparent to Farage in any of his previous political parties, all of which failed.

And in the States, look at the cast of characters who are looking to try to succeed Trump, who is now 80, after all, and you'll see a bunch of nobodies. JD Vance, Rubio, and others, none of them standing out from the crowd, lacking the charisma required to be leaders and the ability to persuade people of the virtues of their arguments. The weaknesses of grievance politics based around a cult of personality are now becoming visible.

But, and let's be honest about this, the next phase of politics is uncertain. I can say with some confidence that grievance politics is, at the moment, having a difficult time, and

I'm pleased to report that fact. But we don't know where things will go next.

If we look at Trump, the answer is greater authoritarianism. He is trying to destroy American democracy. And if we look at what Farage, to some extent, and Rupert Lowe, in particular, with what his Restore UK party, are claiming in the UK, they want to go in the same direction. Their claim is that if we move rightwards and exclude people from the right to vote, we will get the politics we want.

But that is not what people in this country have ever wanted. And anyway, history rarely provides neat endings of this sort. Those are only pathways to the eventual failure of this system of government. And this system of thinking, this system of political modelling, is now under strain. Whether in the UK or the USA, the cracks are very definitely showing.

What that means is that we have an opportunity, and that's important. I do not like the politics of grievance. That's obvious. I believe that there is an opposite. It's a politics of care. It's what I've talked about often on this channel. It's what I talk about on the Funding the Future blog, and if you want to find out more, just go there and read the materials I write. It's a valuable source of additional information that supports this channel.

But the issue is, the politics of care starts by understanding grievances, and then it explains what governments can actually achieve when addressing them. That is fundamentally different from the politics of grievance itself. It's one thing to keep talking about grievances. It's quite a different one to understand grievances and to then address them.

A politics of care, coupled with an economics of hope, recognises the state's financial capacity to act to solve the problems we have. It focuses on helping people flourish. The aim is to provide a constructive alternative to grievance politics by providing people with the opportunities they desire for themselves, their families, their children, their grandchildren, their communities, and everyone they know.

This is what I'm talking about on this channel, and it's the failure to address these issues, which has created the failure, as I now see it, of the politics of grievance. And it's that same failure that opens the opportunity for change. We have the chance now to talk about a politics of care in a way we didn't before, precisely because the bubble around both Farage and Trump is bursting, and in the case of Farage, it looks as though it's bursting very quickly. We need an alternative. This is the moment for that alternative. This is what the politics of care was created for.

Andy Burnham is following the same old model, just in a lighter form than Farage, in the model that is used by the Tories, the Lib Dems, and Labour alike.

That will fail.

Farage has failed.

We need something better.

The politics of care is the opportunity for change that we should be grabbing right now, and which I hope parties like the Greens, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, and maybe Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland will be grabbing and taking and running forward with because this is the basis of a future with hope built into it.

That's what I think. Let us know what you think. Take part in our poll below. Please share this video, and if you like what we're doing, if you'd like to give us a donation, that would be great. There's a link down below.

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## **Poll**

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