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SLSP2690 Racism, Ethnicity, Migration and Decolonial Studies

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Introduction

On June 23rd, 2016, Britain voted to withdraw from the European Union with a narrow majority of 52% (Antonucci et al., 2017). Dominant rhetoric attributes the Leave vote to the left-behind Britons disseminating the idea of Brexit as an expression of the predominantly white angry working class (Antonucci et al., 2017). Disguising Brexit as the economic anxieties of the white economically marginalised is methodological whiteness, disregarding the role of race (Bhambra, 2017a). The lack of recognition of those left-behind voting Remain, crucially ethnic minorities, highlights the necessity to understand Brexit in racial and cultural terms. This essay proceeds to identify the majority of Leave voters as middle-class southerners provoking cross-class analysis considering individual values, looking beyond simply the left-behinds (Antonucci et al., 2017). The overarching drivers behind Brexit stem from society's transition to progressive cultural views which has fostered multicultural resentment and anti-immigration sentiment amongst those in declining economic positions and nostalgic towards Britain's imperial past (Antonucci et al., 2017; Namusoke, 2016). Caution should be taken when approaching the adopted mantra that the left-behinds caused Brexit as evidence reveals the vote was a "cross-class allegiance to whiteness," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1810) fuelled by misplaced nostalgia and desire for the resurgence of white privilege (Namusoke, 2016). Exploration of why the left-behind view has so much purchase reveals the long-term political reproduction of the colourisation of the globalisation losers as white which must not be so readily accepted.

The left-behinds gave us Brexit: the economically marginalised

Since the 1950's, globalisation induced technological and transportation advances have facilitated the integration of countries' economies, markets and industries via the enhancement of global flows of capital and people (Bhambra, 2017a). Subsequently, de-industrialisation produced unemployment in manufacturing sectors following the automation and outsourcing of jobs (Bhambra, 2017a). Popular discourse blaming the left-behinds alludes to these de-industrialised white, working-class regions in Northern-England coining them globalisation losers suffering most from a host of economic have-nots (Bhambra, 2017a). Economic inequalities have deepened as incomes and living standards for low- and middle-class citizens have plateaued or declined whilst the wealthiest 1% have become richer (Bhambra, 2017a; Perkins,

2018). Thus, despite substantial economic growth, those feeling left-behind from Britain's advancements in a globalised society feel "united by a general sense of insecurity, pessimism and marginalisation," (Antonucci, 2017. p.213) believing that their "experienced loss from economic development and globalization, in relative terms, has been unfair," (Richards et al., 2019. p.75). Their frustrations have cumulated into anti-elitist sentiment critiquing political elites and globalisation winners for their lack of attentiveness to the grievances of the working class (Calhoun, 2016). The racialisation of the left-behinds as white enable assumptions that they hold homogenously racist beliefs supporting the view they caused Brexit, as they are deemed most likely to be enticed by the xenophobic rhetoric of the Leave campaign (Rhodes et al., 2019). As globalisation has enabled greater inward flows of low-wage, ethnic minority immigrants, populists blamed "'Them' for stripping prosperity, job opportunities, and public services from 'Us'," (Inglehart & Norris, 2016. p.2) paving the way for the nationalistic success of the Leave campaign (Bhambra, 2017a).

Dorling (2016) argues more recent austerity policies following the 2008 financial crisis has heightened political resentment. Cutting wages, public spending and state welfare provision has deepened socio-economic inequalities, enhancing globalisation losers' economic marginalisation (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Imperialism cultivated the rise of nationalistic attitudes causing state welfare which "came wrapped in the Union Jack," (Bonnett, 1998. p.329) to be interpreted as exclusively available to the imagined national community of white Britons (Bonnett, 1998). Right-wing politics utilised the "welfare spongers' card," (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018. p.9) to frame immigrants, including ethnic minorities, as a threat to this white entitlement deflecting from the government's deterioration of the welfare system (Dorling, 2016; Bonnett, 1998). The Leave campaign's attack on immigration and multiculturalism promoting insular Britain has been understood to have mobilised the working class to vote Leave, as exiting the EU and regaining sovereignty over immigration laws was framed as a solution to their socio-economic deprivation (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018). This understanding reinforces the stereotype of left-behind Leave voters as uneducated, benefit-dependent white Britons residing in inner-city areas where it is assumed that the ethnically diverse environment encouraged the displacement of their political resentment, stemming from the loss of manufacturing jobs and reduced state welfare, onto ethnic minorities and migrants (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Shifting the blame for

their socio-economic deprivation is argued to have strengthened their support for the Leave campaign's isolationist tone opposing multiculturalism and immigration (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). However, the majority of Leave voters live in the rural South facing sparse immigration, whereas cosmopolitan urban regions such as London, home to over 1 million Europeans, predominantly favoured Remain (Bhambra, 2017a; Calhoun, 2016). Therefore, the view of the left-behinds as the white, working class voting against globalisation induced economic inequalities, condemning political elites for failing to cap immigration, is insufficient (Bhambra, 2017a). The heterogeneous social composition of the left-behinds must be acknowledged, looking beyond economic anxieties and recognising the role of race in their differing political choices (Bhambra, 2017a).

The left-behind Remainers: the acknowledgement of their heterogeneity

The mantra adopted of the left-behinds inaccurately categorises them as a socially homogenous group failing to acknowledge those who voted Remain (Demir, 2017). 73% of 18-24-year olds voted Remain despite being the section of the left-behinds most at competition with European labour migrants, citizens and immigrants for future employment and housing (Ashcroft, 2016; Kirton & Greene, 2016). Young people typically favour progressive social change, greater tolerating multiculturalism and prioritising concerns about immigration over economic redistribution (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The majority voting Remain suggests politics has become increasingly value-based, therefore reducing explanations of Brexit to the economic motivations of the white working-class is unrepresentative of the left-behinds (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). An overwhelming majority of 73% black citizens, 67% Asians and 67% mixed residents voted Remain, in comparison to 53% of white Britons favouring Leave, warranting more race and ethnicity-based explanations behind Brexit (Demir, 2017). Ethnic minorities are likely to suffer an ethnic penalty incurring worse labour conditions stemming from austerity policies than their white counterparts, alongside poorer healthcare access and education opportunities (Bhambra, 2017a). Despite experiencing worse socio-economic inequalities, ethnic minorities favoured Remain due to the disincentivising racialised nationalistic tone of the Leave campaign resenting multiculturalism and immigration, further demonstrating Brexit as a cultural vote (Demir, 2017). Sections of the left-behind voting Remain discredits the argument that they gave us Brexit, therefore must be approached cautiously. Marr (2017) argues

the influence of social and cultural views in combination with experienced realities hold greater relevance than income or geographical location.

Who did vote Leave?

Certain economic have-nots are transnational and spread across all of Britain, and not only experienced by the globalisation losers of the north (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). This indicates motivations to vote Leave extend beyond simply the frustrations of deindustrialised northern towns, with research highlighting more widespread societal backing amongst those more educated and in higher-skilled employment too (Marr, 2017; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The totality of only 24% of the lowest two tax classes voting Leave accentuates the need for cross-class analysis to identify the Leave majority (Dorling, 2016). Whilst 24% exemplifies Brexit having "some popularity with the disaffected and the disenfranchised … it was not limited to that group, and the people who swung the vote were affluent, older southerners," (Williams, 2016). The typical populist supporter is the "petty bourgeoisie," (Inglehart & Norris, 2016. p.27) and hold traditional values, contradicting the view of Brexit being caused by solely the left-behind unskilled, manual workers. Lack of analysis disputing the binaries of globalisation winners versus losers, the wealthy and the poor, neglects the category of the middle class (Antonucci et al., 2017). 59% of Leave voters were middle class and 55% homeowners suggesting Brexit is "best explained as the social malaise of intermediate classes, which have experienced a declining financial position in the last years – the so called 'squeezed middle'," (Antonucci et al., 2017. p.212; Ashcroft, 2019). This group represent the majority of Leave voters encompassing a more ordinary group of Britons, weakening the view the narrow group of left behinds gave us Brexit (Antonucci et al, 2017). The squeezed-middle face angst regarding difficulties sustaining their middle-class lifestyles following economic decline causing "confusion between objective and imaginary risks," (Antonucci et al., 2017. p.214) making them susceptible to believing populist rhetoric magnifying the threat of immigration. Therefore, the middle class's political frustrations commonly displaced onto immigrants should be recognised as more significant in causing Brexit than a proportion of the racialised left behinds. Inglehart & Norris (2016) identifies economic insecurity as a reinforcer of resentment towards increasingly progressive values, highlighting the interconnectedness of the psycho-social effects of globalisation and economic position (Antonucci et al., 2017). It was not economic inequality alone that

fuelled Brexit, but economic precarity combined with fears that immigration is eroding nationalist culture and weary of "educated elites with progressive cultural views," (Inglehart & Norris, 2016. p.30) eliciting mistrust of national and global governments. Analysis indicating Brexit was predominantly driven by the middle class reduces the validity of the simplistic view that the economically left behinds caused Brexit. Greater truth lies within cross-class unease about the loss of white privilege (Virdee & McGeever, 2018).

A vision of sovereignty

Those who feel left-behind in an increasingly globalised society and nostalgic for a previous era comprising of traditional values were found likely to vote Leave, weakening the largely accepted understanding which attributes Brexit solely to the economically marginalised section of the left-behinds (Richards et al., 2019). Therefore, the view that the left-behinds caused Brexit must be approached with caution and understood in terms beyond economic anxieties focussing particularly on the role of white sovereignty. Gilroy (2004) cited in Ashe (2016) states postcolonial melancholia prevents "Britain from being able to mourn its imperial history," by clinging "desperately to the memory of its 'finest hour' – victory in World War Two," (Ashe, 2016). As Britain's position as a global hegemon has declined, increasing anxiety about its future role has fostered a sense of longing for Britain's Empire and its prestige, suggesting the vote was "for some version of the past," (Calhoun, 2016. p.50; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). 60% of over 65's voted Leave supporting the role of postcolonial melancholia as a force behind Brexit, because this generation possess memories of Britain's peak imperial status (Ashcroft, 2016; Namusoke, 2016). Seeking to construct an Empire 2.0, UKIP and Conservative Eurosceptics wished to reignite ties with the Commonwealth, whom they claim Britain has neglected since joining the EU (Namusoke, 2016). One portrayal of the Commonwealth appealed to white Britons, reminiscing on the ease of life before post-materialist values and racial diversity, by accentuating Britain's relationship with the white nations (Namusoke, 2016; Richards et al., 2019). This far-right vision "seeks to place whiteness as a key criterion denoting commonality," (Namusoke, 2016. p.472) ensuring the continuity of white privilege. The Commonwealth Acts of 1962 and 1968 exemplify this racial hierarchy, granting specialised access for white nations, comparable to UKIP's portrayal of Britain's future relations with the racially homogenous (Bhambra, 2017a; Bhambra, 2017b;

Namusoke, 2016). Joining the EEC in 1973 further demonstrates Britain's longstanding desire for racial homogeneity by promoting free movement for over 250 million, predominantly white, Christian Europeans with "less ethnic frictions," (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018. p.6; Bhambra, 2017b). Joining the EU aimed to fill unskilled labour shortages with those culturally similar whilst maintaining links with its former Empire in an effort to retain imperial status, highlighting the significant influence of nostalgia towards the Empire in political decisions (Calhoun, 2016). The view that the left-behinds gave us Brexit should therefore acknowledge the role of history within the referendum without detracting from the ethnic dimension whereby Leave voters were motivated by their desires for regaining exclusively white sovereignty (Richards et al., 2019).

Ethnic minorities received an alternative portrayal of Britain's future which promoted more porous borders for those from the Commonwealth, offering greater social and economic opportunities as a chance to reconnect with their heritage (Namusoke, 2016). However, ethnic minorities favouring Remain suggests they saw beyond this "cynical ploy," (Namusoke, 2016. p.467) which desired the resurgence of white privilege and the preservation of racialised English nationalism reinforcing the need to recognise Brexit as driven by cultural resentment towards multiculturalism and immigration (Rhodes et al., 2019). UKIP's claim that EU free movement "turn[s] away qualified workers from the Commonwealth so as to free up unlimited space for migrants from the EU," (Namusoke, 2016. p.466) sought to foster Euroscepticism but this ignores statistics that revealed non-EU immigrants residing in Britain constituted 54.6% of total immigration in 2014 (Namusoke, 2016). The consistent augmentation of EU immigration in British politics disregards the fact Britain is not a major receiver of immigrants (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018). UKIP's deceptive poster depicting a mass crowd of Eastern European men crossing a border titled 'Breaking Point' aided the Brexit campaign in becoming an anti-immigration movement ceasing to be "driven by arguments about costs and benefits," (Calhoun, 2016. p.53; Favell & Barbulescu, 2018). EU migrants were initially seen as beneficial in revitalising Britain's economy when less than 10% of the population were concerned about race and immigration in the 1980's (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). However, the media and political elites have problematised them post the 2008 financial crisis as immigration has become a core concern, transitioning the threat of immigration to include those

"not-quite-white," (Rzepnikowska, 2019. p.64). Gilroy (1987) cited in Rzepnikowska (2019) identified a new meaning of race which excluded Europeans based upon culture and ethnicity creating the contemporary 'Other' and forging an internal hierarchy of whiteness. Anti-immigrant sentiment within hard right-wing parties has subsequently shifted to this form of xenoracism whereby the category of the migrant has become racialised (Rzepnikowska, 2019). National belonging in Britain is now based upon racialised Englishness following the universality of whiteness explaining the Leave campaign's anti-immigrant sentiment inclusion of white EU nationals who are seen as "incompatible with being British," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1807; Rzepnikowska, 2019). A 42% rise in hate crime in the two weeks following Brexit towards migrants and ethnic minority Britons, regardless of whether they were long-term residents, exemplifies a generalised anti-foreigner sentiment (Namusoke, 2016; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Populist supporters hold anti-immigrant beliefs supported by 80% of Leave voters seeing immigration as a social ill (Ashcroft, 2019; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). This lack of anti-European specificity in post-referendum hate crime and anti-immigrant attitudes highlights Leave voters' desire to leave the EU as more culturally motivated by race than the economic rationalisation (Namusoke, 2016). In June 2016, employment of UK-born nationals was at an all-time high, contesting the claim that immigrants have stolen British jobs further undermining the argument that Brexit was driven by economic motivations (Bhambra, 2017a). Therefore, the economic disguise of the narrow group of left-behinds must be approached with caution.

Cross-class anti-immigrant sentiment, stemming from fears over the loss of white privilege and the erosion of racial homogeneity, must be recognised as an outcome of Britain's history of white colonial dominance which was reignited in the far-right's vision of Empire 2.0 (Antonucci et al., 2017; Namusoke, 2016). EU free movement was "both an economically and demographically sustainable population system," (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018. p.9) framing immigration as a domestic political problem whereby the Government failed to nurture the progressive cultural values needed to accompany Britain's socio-demographic transformation. Foreigners evoke uncomfortable guilt for Britons as they are a reminder of Britain's colonial brutality which they fail to confront, motivating those guilt-ridden remembering this period to seek their exclusion (Ashe, 2016). Selective immigration rewarding whiteness excludes racialised 'Others' despite

their significant role in facilitating Britain's imperial success and society today, denying Britain's deep-rooted racist legacy (Ashe, 2016; Bhambra, 2017a). The dishonest image of 'kith and kin' accentuating white relations fails to recognise that encouraging Commonwealth immigration would greater increase non-white flows from India and Pakistan, who constitute British society more than the white nations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Namusoke, 2016). The EU referendum was constructed upon this "selective amnesia," (Booth, 2020) acknowledging the positive elements of British history simultaneously erasing the atrocities, failing to acknowledge the devastation imposed upon non-whites that remains today. Whilst the Commonwealth nations are recognised to have shared values, laws and English-speaking citizens deeming them a suitable alternative trading partner to the EU, Britain fails to attribute these commonalities as an outcome of Britain's colonial rule (Ashe, 2016). British relations with the Commonwealth "would rely on old and new forms of economic, political and cultural domination to control former colonies," (Ashe, 2016) highlighting how arguments regarding trade disguises the cultural role of nostalgia founding the desire of reconnecting with the racially homogenous and reasserting white dominance (Namusoke, 2016). 30% of Britons surveyed in a YouGov poll in 2020 believed former colonies were better off as part of the British Empire (Booth, 2020). This distorted perception of British history that fuels the nostalgia behind Brexit reflects the inaccurate education surrounding colonial Britain (Booth, 2020). However, there are two kinds of nostalgia. The egalitarian type typical of elderly Remainers, more concerned with economic equality for the younger generation, separates the traditional nostalgia desiring an ethnically homogenous Britain that motivated Leave voters reflecting the conservative discourse of the Leave campaign (Richards et al., 2019). The view the left-behinds caused Brexit must therefore be understood with regards to individual attitudes combining to forge an element of collectiveness, revealing Leave voters were often driven by traditional nostalgia specifically left behind from globalisation, consisting of an ethnic dimension seeking restoration of white sovereignty and cultural homogeneity (Demir, 2017; Richards et al., 2019).

Why has the view the left-behinds gave us Brexit got so much purchase?

"Around 270 locations can be identified where the local outcome was in the opposite direction to the broader official counting area," (Rosenbaum, 2016) reflecting how conclusions can be distorted without closer analysis. Maps typically demonstrate

northern England towns as those which voted Leave giving purchase to the argument the left-behinds cased Brexit but often neglect population density (Green, 2017). Statistics reveal the Home Counties in southern England had more Leave votes, highlighting how maps can skew Brexit conclusions (Perkins, 2018). Rochdale voted 60% Leave despite Central Rochdale, comprised of mostly ethnic minorities, being the second highest ward to vote Remain (Rosenbaum, 2016). The lack of statistical visualisation on maps neglects the complex racial and regional patterns of the vote, instead supporting the historical reproduction across the political spectrum that globalisation losers are the white working class (Green, 2017; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Framing the left-behinds as the root of Brexit confirms the "tendency in the UK of ascribing racism to poor white British people, while elite-driven racism is often unacknowledged," (Rzepnikowska, 2019. p.70). Following the 1970's neoliberal policies and Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government's defeat of the working-class in the 1980's, the loss of workers' unions saw a decline in working class solidarity forging racial and regional divisions (Bhambra, 2017; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Labour prime minister Gordon Brown's 2004 EU accession opened the migrant labour market to East Europeans causing an unprecedented increase of immigrants believed to lower wages for those of the same skillset as the immigrants due to increased competition (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2014).   Despite Britain upholding a national minimum wage and Lemos and Portes (2008) concluding that the 2004 EU accession had no statistically significant impact on native employment nor wages, the belief that immigration lowered native Britons income aided the resurgence of working-class solidarity amongst those fighting for the "familiar," (Rzepnikowska, 2019. p.71, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2014). This social movement of that faction became "politics of resentful nationalism," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1811) encouraging the realignment of left-wing politics with the racist attitudes of the far-Right. New Labour was not exempt from the strict austerity policies within British politics which followed the 2008 financial crisis, in turn worsening conditions for the working class fostering greater resentment (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). For example, ex-Labour leader Gordon Brown (2011) cited in Virdee & McGeever (2018) promoted protectionist policies safeguarding "British workers for British jobs," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1813) demonstrating a nationalistic tone in response to the collective resentment within the working class. This encouragement of anti-immigrant sentiment aided the Government's deflection

of their economic failures onto immigrants, and consequently ethnic minorities via the attack on multiculturalism, further decreasing multi-ethnic working-class solidarity and enhancing the historical white racialisation of the left-behinds that remains prevalent in Brexit discourse (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Labour leader Ed Miliband's engagement with Blue Labour's "family, faith, and flag," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1813) sentiment built upon this anti-immigrant sentiment and deemed "a terrible betrayal of Labour's best and noblest traditions," (Rooksby, 2011) including anti-racist values. The patriotic steering of Blue Labour towards far-right extremism whereby white Britons are depicted against immigrants and ethnic minorities highlights how the left-wing political agenda has reproduced the argument of the racialised image of left-behinds (Rooksby, 2011). Demonstrating that the white working class have been hit hard by deindustrialisation, migration and austerity measures suits the left-wing political agenda but must be analysed in racial and cultural terms to reveal the more socially complex explanation of Brexit (Bhambra, 2017a).

Far-right politics hosts deeper xenophobic and racist attitudes. The surge of UKIP support in the 2015 general election, with over 90% being cast in England, demonstrates racialised English nationalism as central to activating the long-term racist consciousness expressed in Brexit (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Authoritarian UKIP leader Nigel Farage sparked populist support, aided by the right-wing press facilitating the rise of racialised politics by reinforcing the construction of ethnic minorities, refugees and immigrants as an economic and security threat (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Conservative prime minister David Cameron pinpointed Polish migrants as benefit scroungers, demonstrating the Conservative party's progression to farther right-wing alignment, consequently gaining UKIP voters strengthening the significance of Englishness as a key driver of Brexit beyond the economically left behind (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Both left and right-wing political agendas have fostered anti-immigrant sentiment and depicted the white working class as globalisation losers creating a "racialised frame of white working-class victimhood," (Virdee & McGeever, 2018. p.1814). Subsequently, individuals fitting this category sought to politically understand their image, becoming aware of their victimisation of globalisation and juxtaposition with the 'Other', encouraging them to vote Leave (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). The reproduced argument of the left-behinds as white, globalisation losers throughout British politics

makes the view they caused Brexit more readily accepted but acknowledging the cultural and racial dimension beyond this narrow vision reveals Brexit to be primarily driven by cross-class cultural resentment (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

Problematising the white working class deflects from the role of race in voting Leave (Bhambra, 2017a). Methodological nationalism incurs methodological whiteness, whereby the racialisation of the British working class as white "is to conflate socio-economic position with racialized identity while claiming to only speak about class and to repudiate identity politics," (Bhambra, 2017a. p.217). Class is commonly depicted as a "euphemism for a racialized identity politics," (Bhambra, 2017a. p.227) causing confusion over whether the view of the left-behinds refers to the working class or whiteness. The methodological whiteness of academics overlooking statistics that demonstrate ethnic minorities disproportionately favoured Remain reinforces the Brexit narrative's centrality on whiteness (Bhambra, 2017a). Analysis must disaggregate socio-economic inequalities that derive from race and class instead of similarly attributing the inequalities white Britons face to the differing racial injustices ethnic minorities experience (Antonucci & Varriale, 2019). Whiteness is understood as the customary experience failing to acknowledge the deep-rooted racism in Britain's economic system founded upon a history of colonial racism (Bhambra, 2017a). The decline of the white working class into socio-economic positions that ethnic minorities already occupy sparked an outcry, comparable to the lack of concern for ethnic minorities who have faced disproportionately more long-term discrimination (Bhambra, 2017a). Public concern arose only when the left-behinds were colourised as white, which omitted ethnic minorities from the debate, suggesting whiteness surpasses class position (Rhodes et al., 2019; Bhambra, 2017a). This lack of acceptance of economic anxieties as a multi-ethnic problem confirms Ta-Nehisis Coates' belief in the applicability of the "notion that white dude's issues are 'economic' and everybody is just trying to declare their feelings," (Crampton, 2016; Freeman, 2016). Brexit evidently has a racial basis, voted for by predominantly white Britons in an effort to save those forgotten whites in a nation perceived to be white (Bhambra, 2017a). The colourisation of these 'forgotten whites' infers 'Others', including ethnic minorities, have gained a disproportionate advantage legitimising the expression of the white majority's racial self-interests disregarding ethnic minorities' concerns as identity politics (Bhambra, 2017a). Up until the Race Relations Act of 1965, legal discrimination in terms race and

ethnicity was permitted privileging whiteness (Bhambra, 2017a). Post-WWII multiculturalism efforts saw the loss of this racial privilege and instead the questioning of white dominance paving the rise of xenophobic nationalism expressed in Brexit wishing to "take our country back," (Bhambra, 2017a. p.214). Brexit, therefore, is more an attack on multiculturalism which aims to dethrone "the idea of national homogeneity and attempting to equalize power relations," (Demir, 2017). It is seen to be a revolt by the white majority, not just the white working class, over the loss of white privilege because "when you're accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression," (Mahdawi, 2018; Crampton, 2016). Majority expression reinforces a "society of hierarchy and domination produced by opportunity hoarding along lines of difference," (Bhambra, 2017a. p.219) seeking the resurgence of white privilege, legitimised by the Leave campaign. Accepting that cultural resentment within the middle class predominantly drove Brexit would entail confronting Britain's racist realities and endure more discomfort than justifying it in terms of the racialised left-behinds' economic anxieties (Bhambra, 2017a; DiAngelo, 2015). Analysis looking beyond methodological whiteness to understand Brexit in racial and cultural terms would see that the "social profile is more complex than popular stereotypes suggest," (Inglehart & Norris, 2016. p.12) requiring the view the left-behinds gave us Brexit to be approached with caution.

Conclusion

It is clear that Brexit was a cross-class cultural backlash opposing progressive cultural values tolerating immigration and multiculturalism, broadening the common argument that blames the economic anxieties of the losers of globalisation (Bhambra, 2017a). The 'whitening' of these economically marginalised left-behinds is methodological whiteness detracting from the fact ethnic minorities, disproportionately more left-behind, voted Remain requiring this perspective to be approached with caution (Bhambra, 2017a). The middle class, perceiving a decline in their socio-economic position, swung Brexit as their cultural resentment over the loss of white privilege following multiculturalism policies was legitimised by the Leave campaign's racist and xenophobic tone (Antonucci et al., 2017). Traditional nostalgia for Britain's Empire at a time of white superiority and international status sparked much of the over 65's to vote Leave, contrasting with the favouring of Remain by young people who hold progressive cultural values (Namusoke, 2016). Therefore, the role of race rooted in Britain's colonial history must be recognised as central to the motivations behind

Brexit, interpreted as a white revolt seeking the resurgence of white privilege and national cultural homogeneity (Bhambra, 2017a; Favell & Barbulescu, 2018). Whilst the tolerant multicultural attitudes of young people sow optimism in combatting racial discrimination, the success of the Leave campaign provokes concern as to how racialised English nationalism is gaining ground in British politics (Virdee & McGeever, 2018).

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