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Runnymede Perspectives

Minority Report

Race and Class in post-Brexit Britain

Edited by Omar Khan and Faiza Shaheen

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CONTENTS

Foreword

In the aftermath of the 2016 referendum on leaving or living within the European Union, debates on race and class have descended from inadequate to toxic. In response, Runnymede and CLASS are co-publishing this volume to kickstart a conversation that can lead us to a more informed policy position on race and class in Britain.

The inadequacies of the current debate are multiple, and from the causes to the economic, social and political consequences we find ourselves with more questions than answers. To start with, we must better analyse and understand how race and class interact – notably by interrogating the persistence and extent of intergenerational inequalities on the grounds of race and class, and examining how those inequalities are then unjustly supported by racist and classist attitudes and behaviours.

The contributors to this volume also suggest how a more informed analysis can lead to the building of shared interests among the multi-racial working class, who are too often divided by race and pitted against each other. Arguments raised in the various chapters sketch out how policymakers might respond to class-based and race-based inequalities, while including the voices of the Black and minority ethnic working class.

Over the next year Runnymede and CLASS will seek to work with others on improving the public debate and policy analysis around race and class in Britain. We will not shy away from calling out racism, but nor will we accept that racist attitudes among the white working class are the key cause of racial inequalities in Britain today. We will also want to work with those seeking to reduce the inequalities of opportunity, status and outcome among all working-class people in Britain in 2017.

This volume is only the first step in what will be a challenging but fruitful programme of activities. We are, as are our contributors, under no illusions about the scale of the challenge. But we look forward to working with others similarly committed to clearer analysis of, and better policy responses to, racial and class inequalities. While this conversation may not be easy, it is necessary for achieving a better Britain.

Runnymede and CLASS

Introduction: Analysing and Responding to Racial and Class Inequalities

Omar Khan and Faiza Shaheen

After years when class was ignored, Brexit in the UK and Donald Trump's election in the US have placed it firmly back on the agenda. Notably, the re-emergence of class analysis has taken a distinctive form, namely by focusing principally on the *white* working class, and more on their cultural or social exclusion than on how structural inequalities deny the working class (white or otherwise) access to opportunities, resources and power (see also Runnymede's 2009 volume *Who Cares About the White Working Class?*).

The very broad headline argument of this report is that race must be better understood and addressed in the context of class. More specifically, it proposes three ways of sharpening our discussion of both race and class. First is analysis: how we understand and frame these issues, from employment or education data to voting behaviour. Second is mobilization: how we understand existing interests and ideas on race and class, and how *shared* interests and attitudes could be further developed. Third and last is policy: how should government and others respond to inequalities based on class and race.

Many of the chapters in this volume were first produced as presentations for a conference on Race and Class held on 26 May 2015 at the LSE. All of these pieces have been amended for inclusion in this report, with the addition of the last chapter from Omar Khan. A podcast of the evening's public discussion is also available. Runnymede and CLASS have jointly decided to publish this report to improve thinking and action on race and class in Britain following the referendum decision to leave the European Union.

Analysing race and class

The pieces in this volume show why so much of the current analysis on race and class is both confused and wrong. The focus on (and only on) the *white* working class obviously relegates race as a category of analysis. Or, worse, race is invoked only as a category in *opposition* to class – that racism is over, that ethnic minorities are part of a 'cosmopolitan elite', that policymakers and political parties respond or pander to ethnic minorities – sometimes, it's claimed, at the *expense* of the white working class.

It's hard to square this assessment with the reality. Racial inequalities persist in almost every arena of British society, from birth to death. Discrimination is persistent in the labour market and ethnic minorities lack equal political participation whatever their perceived advantages. The renewed discussion on class isn't unique in ignoring (or being ignorant of) these facts, but how might we instead analyse race and class?

Various contributors to this volume tackle this question, and two obvious starting points stand out. First is that we need to begin with an understanding of the basic data on class and race, and in particular Black and minority ethnic people's experience of education, the labour market and social mobility in Britain today. The first two chapters, by Yaojun Li and Lucinda Platt respectively, outline this evidence.

Second, the 'white working class' analysis tends to sidestep or even erase the existence of the 'black working class'. Satnam Virdee outlines and seeks to correct the historic erasure of the black working class in England, and also notes the continued consequences of that historic amnesia. Various chapters highlight the ongoing exclusion of the black working class; they also consider how we might instead analyse race and class.

It's somewhat easier to criticize the current framing of race and class than to provide a snappy or easy alternative way of analysing them. The term 'intersectionality' has been adopted in academic and some journalistic discussions of race, class and other inequalities, but not only is the term somewhat confusing, it doesn't necessarily specify clearly enough how race and class interact.

As Gargi Bhattacharyya's wide-ranging and insightful chapter indicates, the current discussion on race and class may be simplistic, but social scientists as well as activists also struggle with a range of questions and appropriate responses. For example, how does race impact the experiences of different members of the working class? What is the role of immigration (and of foreign qualifications) on the construction of class positions and identities, and of their transmission across generations? How does

immigration both define the composition of the working class and operate as a potential dividing line within the working class? What is the role of 'culture' in explaining class, and how does it connect to race (and racism)? And does race influence the attitudes – and voting behaviour – of different parts of the 'working class'?

From analysis to mobilization

The question of attitudes inevitably leads to the question of how the working class mobilizes or constitutes a class 'for itself' in terms of pursuing its own interests. Post-Brexit and post-Trump it might appear that race and class operate as *competing* interests, though exit poll data suggests a more mixed picture at least in terms of class. But whatever the shortcomings of opposing class and race in terms of analysis, it is hopelessly divisive as a way of focusing on shared interests and on productive mobilizations among people who share the experience of being on the wrong end of inequalities and discrimination.

The decline in class-based political mobilization has been notable for some decades now, and not really connected to the increased ethnic diversity of the working and middle classes. Social-democratic parties have seen their links to working-class people weaken, while working-class populations have been in relative decline, with the middle class becoming a majority in the UK around 2000. Mike Savage's work has challenged the standard 'middle vs working' class definition for some time and his chapter here extends his analysis, first presented in the Great British Class Survey, to the issue of race.

Data from Brexit and Trump suggest one interpretation of the declining political salience of class: rather than class, race and education are the main cleavages in British (and American and European) current political life. University-educated populations and minorities vote for more 'liberal' political positions, but ones that don't seem to resonate with or offer policies for 'left-behind' white working-class voters. Yet at the same time data suggests it wasn't simply economic policies that motivated white working-class voters to support Brexit or Trump.

Indeed many commentators now suggest that the response to white working-class concerns misidentifies both what they care about, and how to fix it. Whatever concerns a voter expresses to Labour or another party, they respond in economic terms (if you've got a hammer, everything looks like a nail). Instead, it is argued, when you listen to white working-class or wider or narrower 'left-behind' voters, they instead focus on *cultural* change. From a race perspective this conclusion seems difficult to address, if the demand or interest is to turn back the clock to a time when Black and minority ethnic people had less opportunity or were fewer in number.

There's no doubt that exclusionary and nostalgic motivations did indeed drive much of the Brexit and Trump vote. But the term 'culture' (as with the slogan 'take back control') suffers from its wide meaning, leading to ambiguities. Is it the smug 'culture' of the elite, with its sneering dismissal of ordinary concerns that motivated the 'left behind' working-class voters, or is it the *multi*-'cultural' presence of non-white British (or white American) people?

This just shows how mobilization or building shared interests isn't disconnected from analysis. If we think that a group's interest is the revival of a cultural past, that obviously implies different forms of solidarity (and exclusion) than if the interest is ensuring the equal voice and dignity of every citizen. The latter, especially if supplemented by a focus on economic inequalities, might unite working classes of different backgrounds, while the former is not only exclusionary but has no obvious policy solutions (other than mass deportation).

Policy responses to race *and* class

This leads to the third and final way to link race and class: through policy. Both race and class are associated with inequalities that are transmitted generationally, inequalities typically framed in terms of economic opportunity or social mobility. There is clearly scope for expanding policies to respond to these inequalities, both as a way to provide opportunities for all, and as a way for building shared interests and a more just, cohesive society.

Another way policy could better respond to inequalities based on class and race is to build on the ideas in Faiza Shaheen's and Omar Khan's pieces, that is the way in which racism is both perpetrated and experienced as a denial of human dignity. For the racist some groups of people simply aren't fully human, and so aren't owed equal moral obligations; nor can they be part of 'our' community.

Humiliation and dignity are powerful human emotions, and ones not limited to ethnic minorities. There is an opportunity for policy to respond much more directly to these emotions and outcomes, to ensure the equal voice and participation that defines democratic societies. Such participation extends not only to the

explicitly political sphere – i.e. political representation – but to all of those institutions and practices that affirm or reflect the nation: broadcast and newspaper journalists, FTSE-100 directors, football managers, arts bodies, charities and universities.

In addition to well-known (though rarely implemented) social mobility policies, another way to address unequal access and voice is by applying positive action much more comprehensively, and to adopt policy action on grounds of both race and class. Whether these policies succeed will depend on a three-fold challenge: recognizing the specific harm and indignity of racism, and the fundamental way it rejects the notion of equal moral worth; recognizing that working-class indignities, though less morally fundamental, require a response to strengthen if not salvage democratic institutions; and, finally, being clear-sighted that some of the specifically *white* working-class loss of status is relative, and that *some* demands for respect are demands to reinstate past social inequalities that we have rightly rejected as unjust.

Conclusion

If we cannot reinstate past social inequalities to boost the status of 'left-behind' working-class white men, that doesn't mean that their concerns are without merit. Challenging some but not all forms of social inequality opened up opportunities for some women and ethnic minorities, and the group least able to protect its existing privileges has been the white working class. Middle- and upper-class white men have a wider range of social advantages and so have been more insulated from any downward social mobility caused by the relative opening up of opportunities for women and minorities.

In thinking about racism in modern Britain, particularly post-Brexit, we often focus on hate crime and individual attitudes. But it's not the white working class who make people with African and Asian-sounding surnames send in twice as many CVs; it's not the white working class who award white British graduates nearly three times as many firsts as Black British graduates; it's not the white working class who have eliminated targets for child poverty, which is highest among British Bangladeshi and Pakistani households; and it's not the white working class who design budgets that make the poorest Black and Asian women some £2,000 worse off, and the wealthiest white men slightly better off.

In a sense the poverty of the discussion of the *white* working class has simply followed in the footsteps of the poverty of the discussion on race. Instead of focusing on structural inequalities and the barriers to equal participation, white working-class culture is pathologized, while their attitudes and behaviours are the main focus of analysis – and in a way that blames them for their condition. For those working to challenge racial inequalities, this culturalized (or racialized) analysis is familiar, and so too the tendency to suggest personal choice and culture is to blame for persistent and widespread inequalities. (And so perhaps it's no surprise that the current 'integration tsar', who now pathologizes ethnic minorities, was previously in charge of the 'troubled families' and 'anti-social behaviour' policies that blamed working-class people – not inequality – for their disadvantages, and did nothing to improve the circumstances of the working class as a whole.)

This volume points to a better way of analysing race and class, highlighting the experiences of Black and minority ethnic working-class people in particular. It also points to how that analysis can help build a better, more productive mobilization or construction of shared interests among the wider working class. This will mean re-focusing working-class identity in a way that cannot simply be nostalgic about the past, or indeed about the extent of racism in Britain. In addition to ensuring greater socio-economic equality, we need policies that recognize the need for dignity and voice, how a good stable job contributes to people's sense of personal worth, and the way in which Britain's wider culture creates barriers against that equal participation, in the workplace as well as in the 'Westminster bubble'.

Our conclusion isn't that there are no challenges or conflicts around the issues of race and class; indeed, this volume points out how difficult it is to analyse much less develop policy that honestly and fairly captures both. But there are better and worse ways of meeting this challenge, so that BME and working-class people achieve more equal opportunities and access to voice and power than they do at present. Given both groups are disadvantaged and for generations have lacked the influence of their numbers, it's past time to build on the analysis in this volume towards shared demands and policies that finally reduce those disadvantages.

1. Persisting Disadvantages: Barriers to Ethnic Social Mobility in the UK

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Our objective in this chapter is to briefly summarize the processes of ethnic social mobility in contemporary UK society. We compare the origin–education–destination (OED) trajectories of the first and second generations of ethnic minorities with those of whites. Using data from the UK Longitudinal Household Panel Survey, we find that the first generation were highly positively selected, but experienced many disadvantages in the labour market. Starting from a lower position, the second generation outperformed whites in educational attainment, but the occupational position they attained fell far short of what their human capital would have entitled them to. Overall, class effects are weaker for the ethnic minorities than for whites, which is particularly true when examining the indirect and the total effects for the second generation.

One of the most important changes in contemporary UK society is the increasing proportion of ethnic minorities in the population, from less than 3% in the 1950s to 15% in 2011. A great deal of research has been conducted by academic and policy-making communities on the labour market positions of ethnic minorities, particularly in terms of unemployment, earnings and intergenerational social mobility (Berthoud and Blekesaune, 1996; Heath and Li, 2008; Li, 2010; Li and Heath, 2008, 2010, 2016). Yet the processes of social mobility as experienced by the whites and the first- and second- generation ethnic minorities remain under-researched.

Processes of social mobility concern the direct and the indirect effects of family-origin classes on class destinations. Indirect effects are those mediated by educational attainment. In studying processes of social mobility, we need to compare first- and second- generation ethnic minorities with whites in terms of the direct, indirect and total (sum of direct and indirect) effects experienced. As the immigrant generation tend to come from developing countries, we might expect them to have lower origin statuses than do whites, which is called 'negative-selection' by some researchers (Borjas, 1987). Yet it might also be the case that they are not randomly selected from the population of their origin societies, but come from relatively well-to-do families and possess high levels of aspiration for themselves and their children, hence positively selected. But if the first generation suffer setbacks in the labour market, as much research has shown, this would mean that their children, the second generation, start from a lower position than their white peers, affecting their educational and occupational attainment. While there has been much research on separate links in the origin–education (OE), education–destination (ED) and origin–destination (OD) relations (Heath and Birnbaum, 2014; Li and Heath, 2016; Li, 2017), little systematic research addresses simultaneously the OED relations of the ethno-generational groups in contemporary British society.

Datasets used

In order to address the questions of ethno-generational processes of social mobility, as outlined above, we used the UK Household Longitudinal Survey, which has a large sample size and contains rich information on ethno-generational groups, parental social positions, and respondents' educational and occupational attainment. The dataset helps us test whether processes of social reproduction operate in a similar manner for the majority and the ethnic minorities. We used the first three waves of the survey including information 'rolled-over' from the British Household Panel Survey in Wave 2.[1]

For origin and destination, we adopted the status approach, with status obtained from parents' and respondents' occupational details and translated into standard International Socio-Economic Index (ISEI) scores. Education is coded as an eight-way variable, ranging from no formal education to Masters and PhD, which are, together with parental and respondent's status, used in a structural equation modelling (SEM) framework. With regard to ethno-generational status, we defined the first generation as those born outside the UK and arriving at age 13 or older, and the second generations as those born in the UK or arriving by age 12. Given the complex interplay between ethnicity and gender, we conducted the analyses for men and women separately. We also confined our study to the working-age population, namely, ages 16 to 65 for men, and 16 to 63 for women.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (%, means and standard deviations)

	Parental status		*R*'s status		Degree+ (%)	*N*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
White:	71.1	22.6	60.7	16.5	22.8	36,503
1st generation	72.6***	22.6	59.9*	16.2	39.4***	4,337
2nd generation	68.7***	23.5	61.8***	15.4	28.4***	3,474
All:	70.8	22.7	60.6	16.2	24.2	

Notes:
1. Significance tests are conducted with each generation compared with whites: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ (the same for Figure 1 below).
2. Weighted analysis (the same for all analyses in this chapter).
Source: The Understanding Society (USoc) waves 1–3 (the same for all analyses in this chapter).

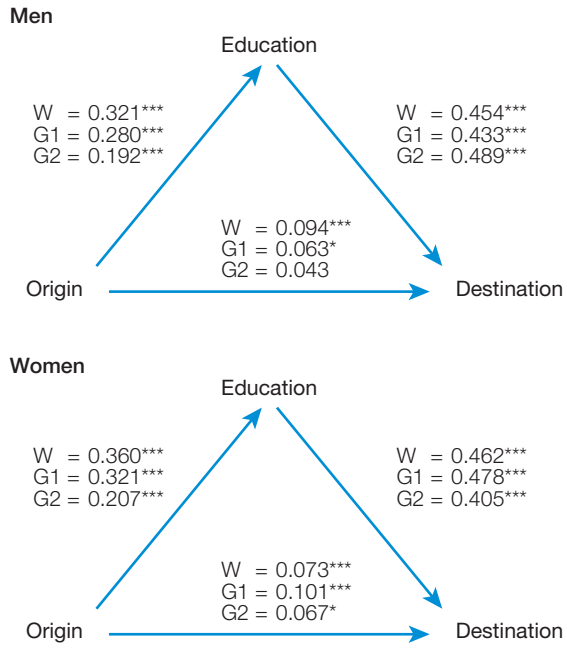
Data interpretation

The data in Table 1 show an overall support for the notions of positive selection by the migrant generation in terms both of parental class and their own education. The parental status of the first generation is significantly higher than that of whites, and they are almost twice as likely to have had a degree-level education. There is also clear evidence of first-generation setback and second-generation advancement. The parental status of the second generation is significantly lower than that of whites, but they have still managed to outperform whites in terms of education. Proceeding from this observation, we now examine how family origin affects people's education, which in turn affects their destination in the OED framework.

Figure 1 shows, for men and women separately, the standardized path coefficients for whites (W), and first- and second-generation ethnic minorities (G1 and G2) in the OE, ED and OD links. The major differences are found in the OE link, where for both gender groups we see much stronger links for whites than for ethnic minorities in both generations. Ethnic disadvantages in the ED link are found for second-generation women, and those in the OD link are shown for second-generation men and women alike. Combining the information in the three links, we see, in the lower part of the figure, clear ethnic differences in the processes of mobility. Here, we find that first-generation men have significantly lower coefficients in the total effects than whites, and second-generation men have significantly lower coefficients in both indirect and total effects. For women, the second (albeit not the first) generation have significantly lower coefficients in both indirect and total effects than whites.

While Figure 1 has shown the overall ethno-generational differences with whites, we move further to see the differences of each of the main ethnic groups. For simplicity, we present results only in the total effects where the effects of ethnic groups are presented as a percentage of whites. In Figure 2, we

Figure 1. Path coefficients for whites, and first- and second-generation ethnic minorities

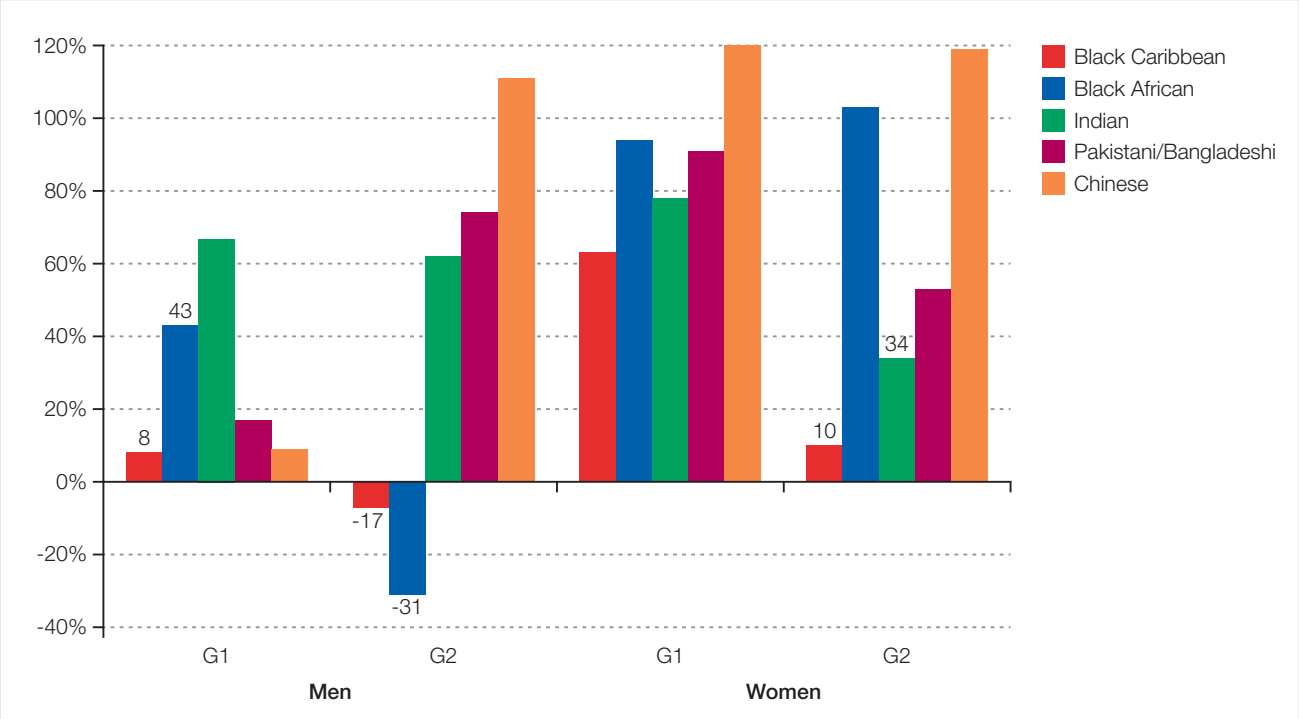


Summary statistics of comparisons

	Direct	Indirect	Total
Men:			
White – 1st generation	0.031	0.024	0.055*
White – 2nd generation	0.051	0.052*	0.103**
Women:			
White – 1st generation	–0.029	0.013	–0.016
White – 2nd generation	0.005	0.083***	0.087*

can see that apart from second-generation Chinese men, first- and second-generation Chinese women, and second-generation black African women, all other ethnic minority groups in both generations clearly lagged behind whites, with men in both black groups having significantly lower effects than those for whites. With regard to women, second-generation black Caribbean and Indian women have only 10% and 34% of an effect in terms of intergenerational mobility compared with their white peers.

Figure 2. Total effects of ethno-generational groups' OED as a percentage of whites' effects



Note: White men's and women's total effects set at 100. Only significantly different effects (at the 0.05 level or above) for the minority ethnic groups are shown as labelled data.

Findings summary

In brief, our main findings are that:

1. Most immigrants to the UK are positively selected but most of them experienced notable *déclassement* in the British labour market, leaving their children in a disadvantaged starting position.
2. Their suppressed class position, however, did not fail to instil in their children a sense of determination and aspiration to strive for a better life. Thus we find that the second generation, in spite of a significantly lower starting-point, still managed to fight against the odds and outperform whites in education.
3. There is also evidence of racial discrimination affecting first and second generations alike. In spite of their better education, both generations of ethnic minorities failed to attain occupational positions commensurate with their human capital, which was especially noteworthy in the case of the second generation who are educated in Britain.
4. Further analysis shows that this disadvantage was acute for men in both black groups, the second generation in particular.

Ethnic minorities have thus experienced marked barriers to achievement. While the barriers for the first generation may be partly accounted for by personal factors such as lack of language skills, structural reasons would be a better explanation for what affects the second generation.

Notes

1. The data, including technical reports, are available at http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/key-data.aspx#/tab-uk-surveys.

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2. Class, Ethnicity and Social Mobility

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Since 2005, when I published *Migration and Social Mobility*, a study of social mobility across the UK's ethnic minority groups, there has been a steady increase in research into the role of social background in shaping ethnic minorities' occupational outcomes, and how it can refine our understanding of 'the ethnic penalty'. The ethnic penalty, coined by Anthony Heath and Doreen McMahon (1997), was conceived as the higher risks of unemployment or the lower chances of a professional/managerial outcome for an equally qualified member of a minority ethnic group, when compared with the white majority. But, as I pointed out in 2005, if social class background matters – as we know it does – for occupational outcomes, then it should also matter for ethnic minority occupational outcomes. Given average lower social-class origins for many minorities when compared to the majority, we would therefore expect their occupational outcomes to be somewhat worse – even without discrimination; and that the penalty or gap would be reduced by taking account of social class origins.

My analysis – and that of subsequent studies – has provided support for these claims (Platt, 2005a, b, c; Platt, 2007, 2015; Zuccotti & Platt, 2016). But the story, and that of subsequent analyses (e.g. that of Yaojun Li in this volume; and of Carolina Zuccotti: Zuccotti, 2015; Zuccotti et al., 2015), has nevertheless proved a little more complicated. These complications are twofold: first, there are differences in the extent to which background 'matters' across ethnic groups; second, there are differences in whether privileged origins bring the same returns for minorities as they do for the majority.

These issues draw attention to the ways in which minorities' social origins are shaped by the migration trajectories, pre-migration characteristics and settlement patterns of their (migrant) parents. They also help to focus our attention on mechanisms – the mechanisms by which labour market inequalities are sustained through class background in general, and the mechanisms of ethnic disadvantage and exclusion from the labour market. I discuss in turn what each can tell us.[1]

Observation 1

First, differences in the relevance of class background to ethnic minorities' outcomes across groups may suggest that for some groups their migrant parents' class may be closer to their 'true' class than for others. There is already some evidence that more advantaged / skilled / highly educated migrants in their country of origin face downward mobility on migration. This could be due to the circumstances of migration (e.g. forced migration), unfamiliarity with the context of the destination country (including challenges in 'translating' qualifications into those recognized in the UK), and through direct labour-market discrimination and other forms of exclusion (e.g. through not having the right to work). In other cases, however, migrants with lower levels of education or skills may be moving to jobs that are a closer match.

When thinking of advantaged or disadvantaged origins and their impact on the life-chances of the next generation in general, it is not the specific job that we think matters, but what the occupation implies about parental resources, attitudes, networks and ambition. These can all be used to foster the success of the next generation. For those who face downward mobility it is likely that they will still have the attitudes and ambition, and even some of their networks, of their original class position. In that case, disadvantaged origins are likely to be less closely linked to disadvantaged outcomes. Looking in more detail at differences across ethnic groups in the importance of class background can therefore help to tell us which groups are downwardly mobile; and also be informative about what it is about class background that matters for children's outcomes.

In addition, to the extent that all minority groups have higher chances of upward mobility from working-class backgrounds, even given the differences between them, this may be informative about selection. That is, migrants tend to have more positive characteristics both in terms of job-relevant factors such as health and education, as well as in terms of more indeterminate characteristics such as 'drive' and willingness to take risks. If parents either pass these on to their children, or use them to help their children succeed, then the children of

migrants should do better than children from non-migrant backgrounds with similar social origins. Thus, such findings help us to understand differences in 'selection' between minorities and the majority.

Observation 2

Let us next turn to the fact that advantaged origins do not necessarily bring the same advantage to minority ethnic groups. Again, this may tell us what it is about advantaged origins that matters for success. If privilege is maintained not just by occupational position but by belonging to the 'right group', then advantaged origins may not help minorities to the same degree because they may have different networks and be excluded from opportunities. This can help us to understand the extent to which discrimination and exclusion limits the opportunities for minorities, and for some minorities in particular.

Analysing social mobility across minority groups can therefore be informative about the processes involved in the migrant parents' experience of migration, and of occupation on arrival. Such analysis can also help to shed greater insight into the processes by which social origins influence the outcomes of the next generation more generally.

Observation 3

One final consideration is to reflect on the perspective of minorities themselves in terms of how they evaluate their own class position and the levels of social mobility achieved by their children. This relates to challenges posed to the way we think about ethnic minorities in Western countries, challenges that have been posed by the critiques of 'methodological nationalism'. Developing from these critiques, researchers have taken seriously the imperative to consider the reference points of migrants themselves for both their own outcomes and those of their children. 'Success' may mean doing better than you would have done in your country of origin, or it may mean your children doing better than you, or their doing better than they would have done in the country of origin. While minorities and in particular the second generation may compare themselves to a certain extent with majority populations, it is unlikely that other minority groups provide a meaningful point of reference, even if that is the implication of many studies. And within-country studies of differences between majority and minority cannot give us meaningful answers to whether migrants have achieved 'success' by reference to their countries of origin.

Outcomes

As a result, a growing number of studies capitalize on cross-national data or develop specially designed studies to address just these questions. For example, cross-national data on educational outcomes can facilitate comparison between children's outcomes in the country of destination compared to similar children in the country of origin. Such analysis has tended to suggest that even those children who do not appear to be achieving so well in education are making *relative* gains from their parents' migration (Luthra, 2010). This was also the conclusion of a systematic study of Turks in Turkey and Europe, which was able to show that even those migrants moving to relatively low-skilled jobs were gaining some occupational advantage; and their children were upwardly mobile not only relative to their migrant parents, but also compared to their likely position had their parents not migrated (Guveli et al., 2016; see also Zuccotti et al., 2015).

Overall, then, a serious and systematic attention to social mobility across ethnic groups has the potential to both raise questions about and offer answers to issues not only relating to migration processes, but also to the factors implicated in social mobility more generally, and to the meaning of 'success'.

Note

This chapter draws on a larger project, developing the points outlined here, which is being undertaken by the author with Carolina Zuccotti.

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3. Some Thoughts on the Theory, History and Politics of Race and Class, or, Why Class Analysis Must Take Race Seriously

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It is perhaps fitting that we begin this dialogue on race and class at the LSE. As many of you know, the London School of Economics was established in 1895 by four leading members of the Fabian Society – Beatrice Webb, Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw and Graham Wallas – with the explicit aim of bettering British society by focusing research on issues of social inequality. You also probably know that these individuals provided much of the intellectual stimulus for the newly founded Labour Party. What is perhaps less well-known is that they were the chief proponents of a perspective that attempted to make a hitherto uninterested, unskilled working class more conscious of 'its' Empire and the role it needed to play in its defence. And they did so by re-interpreting the original demands of the new unionism – of economic and social justice for the working class – as not an end in itself, but rather as a means of maintaining Britain's imperialist ambitions abroad.

This kind of reasoning can be traced right up to the post-war consensus, where we find state attempts to integrate the working class into the nation through the twin principles of 'citizenship' and 'social welfare' was at the same time deeply entwined with discourses of race. William Beveridge – LSE Director between 1919 and 1937, a Liberal, but someone who was profoundly influenced by the Webbs – wrote in *Children's Allowances and the Race* (1942):

> *Pride of race is a reality for the British as for other peoples … [In] Britain today as we look back with pride and gratitude to our ancestors, look back as a nation or as individuals two hundred years and more to the generations illuminated by Marlborough or Cromwell or Drake, are we not bound also to look forward, to plan society now so that there may be no lack of men or women of the quality of those early days, of the best of our breed, two hundred and three hundred years hence?*

Given how class was racialized in the field of politics, that is, to think about the working class was to think about it with regard to questions of race, Empire and national belonging, it seems all the more curious how infrequently race and racism have featured in academic accounts of class in Britain. Such erasure combined with occlusion is no longer acceptable if we are to take racism seriously in class analysis. So, what kind of theoretical resources might help us conceptualize notions of race and class in articulation?

Theorizing race and class

My theoretical starting point is Stuart Hall because he helps to transform our theoretical understanding of race and class through a critical engagement with the structuralist-Marxism of Althusser and the Marxist-humanism of Gramsci; a 'Marxism without guarantees' that is both attentive to history and the significance of contingency in the field of politics. One of the most important insights emerges from his re-thinking of the concept of ideology. For Hall, ideology cannot be reduced to a form of false consciousness, a thinly constructed mask of false ideas or beliefs, but should instead be understood as a sort of unquestioning imaginary that represents the real world, and that provides individuals in society with what he terms:

> *… those systems of meaning, concepts, categories and representations which make sense of the world, and through which individuals come to 'live' … in an imaginary way, their relation to the real, material conditions of their existence.* (Hall, 1980: 334)

So, we can no longer think of the idea of race as something superficial, an unwelcome accretion on an otherwise healthy British polity. Rather, it is an idea that has a long history, one that suggests it forms an intrinsic component of the fabric of British society, including working-class culture. How could it be otherwise in a nation-state that was the imperial hegemon of the world-system and whose Empire – which encompassed a quarter of the world's land surface and a fifth of its global population – was legitimized through such discourses, both abroad and at home?

Hall also draws our attention to how parts of the British working class can often interpret their class-based subjugation through the lens of 'race', and sometimes seek to mobilize on this basis to maintain their economic and political security such that race

becomes 'the modality in which class is "lived", the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and "fought through".' What marks out Hall's analysis as so innovative is the way he further develops his conception of ideology to analytically capture questions of identity formation and resistance to domination. For me, this is where first Gramsci and then post-structuralism allow Hall to break free from the Althusserian understanding that only dominant ideologies can be reproduced, and which therefore precludes the possibility of individuals resisting the process of interpellation. For Hall, there is a struggle over meaning, including over ascribed racist interpellations such that, under certain conditions, these racist identifications can also be appropriated by the racialized, and infused with a new ideology of resistance to counter racism and discrimination:

> *The racist interpellations can become themselves the sites and stake in the ideological struggle, occupied and redefined to become elementary forms of an oppositional formation ... The ideologies of racism remain contradictory structures, which can function both as vehicles for the imposition of dominant ideologies, and as the elementary forms for the cultures of resistance.* (Hall, 1980: 342)

A historical sociology of race and class in Britain

Informed by these kinds of theoretical considerations, my book *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider* represents an attempt to stretch the concept of class so that it can both accommodate the ethnic diversity of the English working class, and allow me to assess the significance of racism and anti-racism within it, over two centuries. Or, to put it another way, I have tried to recover the social experiences of the racialized minority worker from the condescension of sociologists and historians of class and work who, by systematically ignoring their presence, have effectively 'whitewashed' that history.

So, what are the analytic returns? We can no longer underestimate the deep, structuring power of racism within the English working class and its key institutions. Let me illustrate this with an example from the late nineteenth century, where socialist-inspired collective action in pursuit of economic and social justice for those parts of the working class excluded from the mid-Victorian reforms justified their claims with reference to a racializing socialist nationalism that could not accommodate migrant workers like the newly arrived Jews escaping pogroms in the Tsarist empire. Ben Tillett – the dockers' leader – was a typical case in point. His support for Jewish workers attempting to organize themselves remained lukewarm at best. It was shaped by a pragmatic, instrumental collectivism which recognized the need to curtail expressions of overt antisemitism only because it risked fatally undermining the broader class solidarity forged in opposition to the employers. When referring to the Jewish workers, he declared: 'yes, you are our brothers and we will stand by you. But we wish you had not come' (cited in Virdee, 2014: 50).

My argument is this. The idea of the nation operated as a power container, limiting the political imagination of even those who considered themselves to be representatives of the most exploited and oppressed. While the conceptions of national belonging that underpinned the vision of socialist activists like Tillett were undoubtedly broader than those forged by the elites of the time, and in that sense sought to democratize society, they nevertheless attempted to do so by identifying new racialized others. In this case it was the Jews, who could not be imagined as English by virtue of their alleged race and religion.

Indeed, this expanded understanding of national belonging gained growing legitimacy among the unorganized working class precisely because it was able to portray elite conceptions of national belonging as unjust due to the exclusion of those like themselves who were also English and Christian, and therefore deserving of fair and equal treatment. As a result, each time the boundary of the nation was extended to more members of the working class, this was accompanied and legitimized by a racialized nationalism that excluded more recent arrivals. This dual process of democratization and racist exclusion was to be repeated throughout the twentieth century, with different migrant groups and their English-born children in the firing line each time.

If one part of my book (Virdee, 2014) highlights the powerful structuring force of racism in English society over two centuries, the other focuses on those few but nevertheless important moments of multi-ethnic class solidarity when parts of the working class collectively suppressed expressions of racism. Critical to this process of class formation which went through race, not around it, was a social actor that I have termed the racialized outsider – who in different historical periods happened to be Irish Catholic, Jewish, Asian, African and Caribbean. Reading English labour history against the grain, with these racialized outsiders written back into the narrative, transforms our understanding of the broad contours of that history. We find, for instance, that it

was minority men and women – against whom the dominant conception of English/British nationalism was constructed – who helped to universalize the militant, yet often particularistic, fights of the working class precisely because they were more able to see through the fog of blood, soil and belonging that forms such a constitutive component of racializing nationalisms. These racialized outsiders were the linchpin – the key mediating agent – that helped to align struggles against racism with those against class exploitation.

Our understanding of those defining moments when the working class in England emerged as a class-for-itself, including the 'heroic age of the proletariat', Chartism, the new unionism, and the anti-systemic strike wave of the 1970s and early 1980s, look strikingly different from the conventional accounts when we write race back into that story. By reading that history through the lens of race, through the eyes of racialized minorities who were present in every one of those moments, we find that race and class were mutually constitutive in the making of the English working class.

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4. The Role of Cultural Capital for Understanding Race, Ethnicity and Class

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The Brexit result in the UK, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and the rise of authoritarian nationalism across many parts of the globe mark fundamental shifts in the global political landscape. As we search to understand these developments in order to contest them, we need to resist any tendency to boil down our explanation into unidimensional causes: whether these be class, race, immigration, misogyny, the urban–rural divide, age, or whatever else. It is all of these factors of course, but it is their crystallization and cross-fertilization which make them so powerful and visceral today.

I think that the multidimensional analysis of inequality associated with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu offers a powerful way forward. Bourdieu's thinking is hugely influential, but there is a danger of pigeonholing it as mainly about class, or indeed mainly about 'lifestyles' and consumption rather than more fundamental economic and political divides. In fact, his concept of cultural capital, I argue, is vital for addressing the current situation.

This is largely because the divide between 'experts' and the 'people' is becoming an increasing political divide, with right-wing populism targeting the liberal, university-educated middle classes, who in turn look with scorn, even incredulity, on the new populism. For Bourdieu, this is hardly surprising, as educational differences are associated with fundamental inequalities of cultural capital, which privileges those with the 'right' cultural attributes, and discriminates against those who lack them. Entrenched inequalities in educational outcomes are often held up to show how those pupils, who feel 'at home' in a school where their families encourage reading, theatre and museum-going, get better qualifications, which in turn gives them advantages in employment.

Considerable research has shown that extensive cultural change associated with globalization, migration, and the proliferation of media platforms, especially digital ones, has only proliferated powerful cultural divisions (see especially *Culture, Class, Distinction,* Bennett, Savage et al., 2008) the British study which I worked on in the mid-2000s, and which I focus on here). Our study showed an especially powerful distinction between the generally well-educated middle and upper classes who typically participate extensively in a wide range of organized cultural activities. By contrast, working-class people appear to be more home, family and neighbourhood centred, and are less likely to engage with the formal cultural sector.

Hitherto, research on cultural capital has only partly addressed how race, ethnicity, and nationalism might be associated with cultural capital. This is so even though the cultural dimension of racism is well attested. I therefore want to highlight the possibilities within recent analyses of cultural capital for extending our understanding of racial inequality.

We can begin with the recognition that possessing cultural capital involves being familiar with the 'national' cultural canon, the cultural repertoires associated with 'national belonging'. This idea was powerfully articulated by the Australian anthropologist Ghassan Hage, who demonstrated how the implicit values of whiteness placed immigrant and minority communities at a disadvantage in the Australian context. We found plenty of evidence for this process in the UK when we conducted interviews with ethnic minorities for *Culture, Class, Distinction*. Many of the older generation of ethnic minorities felt ill-at-ease in mainstream British culture, given its imperial, white and Christian aspects. Although younger minorities felt less marginalized, there was still a keen sense of being an 'outsider' and not fully 'fitting in'.

This sense of cultural capital as articulating 'whiteness' is, however, undergoing change. Bourdieu's own defining study of cultural capital in France, conducted during the 1970s, focused nearly entirely on white French composers, writers, artists and musicians, and the kind of cultural capital he detected was strongly Eurocentric, with no reference points from other parts of the globe. In *Culture, Class, Distinction* we took care to ask about knowledge of, and interests towards, cultural works from different ethnicities and geographical locations (for instance Bollywood cinema, Miles Davis, Maya Angelou, Frieda Kahlo). Our analysis showed that, indeed, a taste for these had become evident amongst a few well-educated respondents, but they have in no way entered the cultural 'mainstream'.

When Bourdieu wrote *Distinction*, he rather assumed that French reference points, combined with a few

others from the European high-culture tradition, comprised cultural capital. However, especially for younger people, there is now a strong sense of detachment from elements of what is seen as the tired, even staid, 'British' canon. It is now hip to lay claim to more cosmopolitan tastes, for instance to be open to 'world music', to 'international films', and such like. And indeed, research by sociologists across Europe has detected a major fault-line between the more educated middle classes, who express an interest in cosmopolitan culture, and poorer populations, who are more attached to national or local genres. It is not hard to see how this fracture overlaps strongly with political cleavages between right-wing nationalist movements and more cosmopolitan currents. The Brexit vote demonstrated very clearly how graduate professionals saw themselves as 'Europeans' whereas national identities mattered much more to the working classes. Hence, because cultural capital is becoming less nationally focused, the possibility opens up for the popular classes to insist that they are the bearers of the 'national' mission.

However, the 'cosmopolitan' tastes of the educated middle classes are not as 'global' as they might assume. When we asked about the programmes, books and music which appealed to 'cosmopolitans', it predominantly consisted of Anglophone, especially American, genres. In fact, amongst the younger well-educated populations, old-fashioned European high culture attracts little excitement or engagement, even though there is a great deal of familiarity with it. By contrast, programmes such as The Wire, Friends, or Cheers would be mentioned enthusiastically, and more recently the popularity of Scandinavian 'noir' also testifies to the appeal of a kind of 'cosmopolitan whiteness' for the white British middle classes. When asked in detail, people who identify themselves as cosmopolitan still find it hard to name specific artists, musicians, or film-makers from Africa, South America or Asia. In short, the appeal of cosmopolitanism is a long way from creating a genuinely level cultural playing-field across the globe, and continues to marginalize cultural production from outside dominant, white, capitalist nations.

Analyses of cultural capital have fed into new ways of thinking about social class, notably through the Great British Class Survey. Here, a major argument I developed in *Social Class in the 21st Century* (Savage, 2015) is that the fracture between middle and working class is being eclipsed in significance by that between a relatively small wealthy elite which has economically pulled away from the majority of the population. This elite tends to comprise senior business managers (notably chief executive officers), as well as senior professionals (corporate lawyers and the like). Whilst some ethnic minorities (especially second- and third-generation members) have successfully moved into professional and managerial jobs, they have only rarely entered the top echelons of this elite, which remains largely white (though not necessarily white British).

The shifting ethnic distributions of those entering higher education is also telling. It is now sometimes commented on in the UK that ethnic minority youngsters are more likely to go to university than are the whites, as if this were a sign that ethnic barriers are declining. However, this argument needs to be treated with a pinch of salt. It is the white working class – those on the receiving end of decades of stigmatization – who fare particularly badly, whereas the white middle- and upper-class children do very well. And, whilst many ethnic minorities (notably black Africans, Chinese and Indians) are entering higher education in proportionally higher numbers, this is less the case for the elite universities whose graduates go on to enjoy the best prospects. Data also shows that it is migrants from predominantly white nations whose members are especially likely to be graduates: in 2011 it was migrants from Canada, followed by the US, 'other EU states', Nigeria, Antarctica & Oceania, and then France. Leaving aside Nigeria, many of these will be the kind of white 'cosmopolitan' populations we have referred to above.

We are therefore in a situation where class intersects powerfully with nationalist and racist sentiments. A liberal white middle class with cultural capital associates itself with a kind of cosmopolitanism which scorns nationalism, and so leaves room for working-class and relatively disadvantaged groups to use nationalist repertoires to claim belonging. The whiteness associated with cultural capital is changing, away from a white British–Eurocentric model towards a more 'Anglophone' form, which embraces a form of cosmopolitan anti-nationalism but which is relatively impervious to black and ethnic minority culture. Ethnic minorities and immigrants are therefore marginalized not only with respect to nationalist populism, but also among those liberal middle classes who ostensibly proclaim cosmopolitan leanings, thereby leading to their experiencing a sense of 'double exclusion'. This situation poses huge challenges for progressive political movements.

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5. The Mysterious Intersections of Race and Class

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What is the question? The point to ask is why do we care? What is it that we hope to gain from revisiting this old trope of interminable meetings in poky rooms above the bar and poorly copied tracts from revolutionary groupings, who are waiting, with increasing impatience, for the rest of us to catch up and ignite the struggle? Who talks of these things anymore?

The whitening of the working class

There is one kind of articulation of this question that arises from the allegation, either implicit or explicit, that a focus on racial disadvantage has distracted us from the more pressing matter of class exclusion. We know too well that we revisit these old debates as a result of a period when the name of the white working class has been taken in vain again and again. For a period, at least since the end of the Blair government, the spoken-for white working class has appeared in political discourse largely as a legitimizing referent for unpalatable authoritarianism.

A dislike of foreigners? No more than the legitimate disquiet of a white working class experiencing the impact of changing communities. A desire to punish the recipients of welfare? No more than a response to the call to be tough on scroungers and those who refuse the terms of (white) working-class respectability. A commodification of all public services? No more than a recognition of the desire for self-sufficiency embedded deep in the culture of the (white) working class. As should be all too clear, this is the working class as reimagined through Thatcherism. Aspirant, atomized and defensively monocultural. And it is a framing that casts minoritized groups outside class identity altogether.

The fact that no such mythically homogeneous white working class has ever existed is neither here nor there. The project to persuade of the unifying power of the non-differentiated entity of whiteness has long roots in our popular consciousness. The point for us is not to seek, so belatedly, to dismantle the fictional claims of shared whiteness. Instead let us ask what is achieved by seeking to remove class identity from the racialized? And how might an anti-racism for a time of austerity reunite race and class in a manner that speaks to hearts and hungers?

Declassing the racialized

Discussions of class in the UK increasingly reference only the white working class. In addition, this appears to be a class identity formed primarily through culture. In this, it is the (allegedly) rooted cultures of white working-class life that are foregrounded. The transient made-on-the-hoof solidarities of more mobile workers are not registered here.

What would be gained from reinserting racialized groups into our understanding of the working class? An attention to the black working class – and the black working class of now, not some lost idyll of times gone by – allows us to see again how work shapes where you live and who you see, what you do and who you love. While the lost locatedness of the 'white' working class belongs to a particular moment of massified workplaces, the fragmentation of work also remakes working-class identities.

Class identity and the roof over our head

Perhaps now we might divide the working class into those with some security of tenure, but no necessary access to fragmenting and shifting labour markets, and those in insecure housing but moving in and out of work in the precarious economy. A shrinking lucky minority has secure housing and access to work, but as time goes on, this group grows smaller and smaller. One major outcome of all of this is that class solidarity is not, in the main, built on geographical proximity. Despite the honourable and very exciting example of community housing campaigns organized around threats to particular estates, the working class of all ethnicities is increasingly dispersed. Solidarity, therefore, must be articulated through other experiences of shared space. Perhaps the workplace if a vehicle of mobilization can be found. Perhaps other shared spaces of leisure or association. Perhaps most often in the shared repertoire of music and style that remains one of the only 'spaces' to express and practise working-class mutuality for the young.

The cultures of lived working-classedness become, by force, the strategies that emerge to retain affective bonds and a sense of self in lives where work and home are transitory. The claiming of non-work

identities, including those of family and of faith, as primary and status-giving is one such strategy. The sewing together of virtual and located networks another. As must by now be apparent, both of these experiences of dislocation and the strategies to remake self and community in response have long histories in minoritized communities. This is the story of the black working class. The fact that similar processes of dislocation and precarity have entered white communities should allow us to recognize shared class cultures that are not based in nostalgia in any way. However, we must also understand that these are solidarities that may not be articulated as class, and that dislocation raises other challenges.

Why should we care about the transforming experiences of race and class?

In this brief suggestion, I have tried to indicate the contours of class as it is formed in our time. For some, older histories of classed cultures will be interspersed with the experience of precarity and disentitlement. For others, such experiences may not be narrated as a continuation of classed identity but may be regarded as part of some other history of dispossession. Either way, this is an account of class that privileges work or a relation to work and, through this, access to social goods. In a time when work and the quality of lives shaped by such work lie at the core of the challenge to live with dignity, there is something to be gained by considering race and class as an analytic description and not a battle for attention.

So here is a swift review of some of the reasons why we should care about the intersection of race and class:

1. The impact of racism on experiences of work – including unemployment, training, progression, redundancy. Racism still fragments workplaces and serves as a vehicle for poor employment practices. What happens at work to the minoritized soon happens to everyone. Seeing clearly how racism is utilized as a management technique lets us understand the direction of travel in employment practices more generally.
2. Rhetorics of race and nation in the framing of class identities. This danger has become all too apparent in recent months, with the promise of national pride paraded as a recompense for decades of systematic dispossession for the white working class both in the UK and in the US. Such campaigns represent a wilful whitening of class identities for racist ends – and need to be identified and challenged as such. Such a challenge must include some understanding of how it is that feeling poor or feeling angry or feeling unheard can be funnelled into feeling white.
3. The promise of class differentiation and comparative privilege in the construction of official racism such as immigration control. In our time of everyday bordering in every corner of life, the suggestion that wealth or some other form of capital can lift some out of the category of the racialized reveals the close association between techniques of race and of class. Bordering must be understood as one of the central racializing techniques of our time. The promise that class performances can offer an escape from bordering reveals the arbitrary character of such racialized categorization.
4. The framing of racist violence as a working-class problem – without linkages to state violences here and abroad or through immigration control. One outcome of the whitened account of the working class is that the tensions and contradictions of our racist society can be projected onto this whitened and homogenized mass of disaffection. Violence? Of course, no more than a staple of working-class life. What else could be expected? This framing distracts us from attending the violences of state racism and the continuities between violent state racisms and other modes of state violence and coercion. Ironically, it is in these continuities that a commonality of classed experience may be recognized among the young.
5. The depiction of anti-racism as a middle-class project. This has been the barely hidden undercurrent in much of the supposed discussion of the ‘white’ working class, particularly as framed in the populist nationalisms of mainstream politics. Pretending concern for the white working class has been used, quite wilfully, as a means of silencing talk of racism. We cannot counter this onslaught of delegitimization without developing an anti-racism that is far more explicit about the politics of class.
6. The depiction of working-class organization as a racist project. This has been the other side of accounts of the ‘white’ working class, and one that has entered all sides of political debate. If the working class experience their pains as outcomes of whiteness, then all of their claims must be racial claims, so the implication goes. Working-class organizing, even when it relies on older structures and does not yet include diverse communities, remains an important resource for social justice in our time. Anti-

> racists need to reconnect with old and new forms of class organizing if we are to make any dent in the structures and practices of injustice that enable racism.

We have lived through a time when those least interested in social justice have hijacked the language of class, often in order to sideline discussions of racism. If we are to rebuild an anti-racism fit for our time, we must re-occupy the terrain of class politics and do so as anti-racists. It is a dull lesson, but it is as true now as it was in the poky upstairs room above the bar in years past.

6. How Not to Think about Class

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Class and race are often compartmentalized – we find ourselves talking about race and racism or the white working class. In reality the two conversations are overlapping and the issues highly intertwined. By continuing with this false dichotomy we not only divide and misunderstand communities, we undermine the solidarity that should exist across all those struggling on low incomes.

When we think of the average working-class person, we might picture a sooty white man emerging from a coal-mine as the Hovis theme tune plays in the background. But the working-class people of 2017 are more likely to work in call centres than coal-mines; they're more likely to be women than men, and they're more likely to be BAME than a middle-class person is. Our cultural image of a working-class person is outdated, and maybe that's because the collective power of working-class people has deteriorated. Without a strong industrial movement, working-class people struggle to define themselves.

To that end, working-class people are particularly prone to being defined by others, not least politicians. The 'white van' incident with the Labour MP Emily Thornberry is a particularly indicative example of this.

In 2014, Thornberry tweeted a picture of a house draped in England flags with a white van parked outside it. She was visiting Rochester during a by-election where UKIP stood a chance of winning a seat from the incumbent Conservatives. Although Thornberry's tweet contained no text except for 'image from Rochester', it was widely interpreted by MPs and commentators as a suggestion that people who drive white vans (in other words, working-class men) are inherently racist. Nick Clegg commented: 'I just thought it was a jaw-droppingly condescending way of treating someone who was just proudly hanging some flags outside their home.'[1]

Clegg's comments are interesting. They imply that the man whose house Thornberry had photographed was just an Englishman 'hanging some flags'. He was not trying to make any statement beyond apolitical national pride. Clegg, on the other hand, along with Thornberry's other critics, understood that the St George's cross is not 'just a flag', but a cultural symbol – and one of its connotations is jingoism and racism. In other words, Thornberry's critics implicitly viewed themselves as thoughtful, introspective people who understand that material objects can carry symbolic weight; the working-class man didn't understand what he was doing.

Later, the 'white van man' in question was interviewed by the media. He said: 'I will continue to fly the flags – I don't care who it pisses off. I know there is a lot of ethnic minorities that don't like it.'[2] In other words, he was well aware of the cultural symbolism of the England flag – that it could be seen as an act of hostility towards ethnic minorities – and he did it anyway.

What can we learn from this incident? For one thing, it demonstrates that working-class people are not idiots who are incapable of assessing the weight of their actions. The 'white van man' knew that hanging the England flag outside his house could provoke racial tension; he just didn't care.

The story also reveals how debates around the subject of racism are largely led by middle-class people who feel it is their role to arbitrate the behaviour of the working class. The fact is the white van man in Rochester had probably debated racism before with his peers and colleagues. He did not need Nick Clegg to define his actions for him, especially as – it transpires – Clegg was wrong about his motivations.

Indeed, perhaps we should question to what extent middle-class people are effective referees of race politics. While studying at Oxford University, I experienced a number of racist comments from peers who were part of the same social class as a significant number of MPs. 'Why do all Muslims have a chip on their shoulder?' queried one. 'I thought black people were lazy, but you've changed my mind,' noted another. I'm not black, by the way, but being Asian was apparently sufficient for one fellow student to anoint me the official representative of the black community. And then of course there's the black MP Dawn Butler's experience of being told 'this lift really isn't for cleaners' by an unnamed member of the commons. If middle-class people are allowed to

appoint themselves the authority on what constitutes racism, they become exempt from scrutiny – and the consequences can be damning, as Dawn Butler's story reveals.

We need to move towards a better-quality conversation around race and class. The nature of the present debate lets down all the actors involved. It lets down working-class people who are depicted as stupid; and it lets down BAME people who are encouraged to think there are no working-class racists, only people who can't understand the weight of their actions. Instead of this simplicity, we need to build a new, unifying image of the working class – one that appreciates all the inherent complexities, and the diversity of working-class people. Equality is not about ticking boxes, but a profound understanding of people's lives, their circumstances and their ambitions. Reducing inequality means being honest about the obstacles people face.

In a sense, it is useful for the establishment to divide the working class by focusing upon marginalized white people. But the truth is that all working-class people are being let down by a broken economy and a dysfunctional capitalist system. When white working-class people receive attention as a group, it is too often presented as a race issue rather than a problem of economics. This elides the fact that white working-class people have a lot more in common with BME people in their own class than with white professionals. All working-class people are beset by low wages, scarce housing and a lack of state support. This is the case regardless of race, and the figures suggest the situation is actually worse for BAME working-class people than for their white counterparts. Changing public opinion on the situation of working-class people is going to be a cumbersome and time-consuming task, a bit like steering an ocean liner in the opposite direction. But it can be done, and must be done, because public discourse on race and class as it currently stands is risible, and that harms us all.

Notes

1. http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/nov/24/emily-thornberry-tweet-clegg-ukip-farage
2. http://metro.co.uk/2014/11/21/owner-of-rochester-house-covered-in-flags-hits-back-after-mp-is-sacked-for-snob-tweet-4956554/#ixzz42zfGeJ74

7. Race and Class: From Analysis to What Next

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This chapter makes three main arguments. First, that race and class do not completely overlap, but they are connected because of the way that advantaged groups exercise economic power. Racism as a rejection of equal moral worth is one particular way in which economic inequalities were first justified and are now perpetuated, but only among ethnic minorities. Second, that race and class diverge in various and arguably increasing ways. Third, that the only way to respond to racism and class inequalities is by addressing wider social inequalities. This will require targeted *and* universal policies, to tackle socio-economic inequalities as well as inequalities of voice or status.

A common interpretation or perhaps criticism of class-based analysis or movements is that all other social phenomena, particularly inequalities, are viewed through the prism of class. In Marxist terms, issues such as race inequality are merely 'epiphenomenal' with the real battle being over the control of economic capital. While this sort of orthodox Marxism may be out of fashion, the idea that racial inequalities can be wholly explained by class, and that combating social class inequalities (or ensuring 'social mobility') will eliminate racial inequalities is still widely shared.

It's not only Marxists who interpret racial inequality in class terms. Whether it's the Daily Mail or civil servants, the idea that class or perhaps poverty fully explains racial inequality in Britain is now very well-worn. Perhaps the most common evidence invoked to deny that racism persists is that middle-class Chinese and Indian pupils outperform white British pupils. And yet those pupils, who outperform white British pupils in school, are much less likely to get a first or 2:1 at university, more likely to be unemployed after graduation, and are less likely to be well paid at work.

1. Racism as the denial of economic resources and opportunities

This evidence highlights how economic resources and opportunities are denied to people on grounds of race. Especially post-Brexit, hate crime or racist violence is the most common understanding of racism. It is of course important to develop policy responses to racist violence, and to hear politicians publicly condemn it. But racial inequalities aren't just about the greater likelihood of being insulted or punched. Relatively few people are willing to act out their preferences in terms of violence, but many more would prefer not to have a black colleague, or perhaps would prefer to buy a product or service from someone like themselves.

Across the globe public goods and services are too often distributed in a way that denies some groups (ethnic minorities, women, low-income populations) access or at least equal access to those goods. Denying economic resources and opportunities is typically how advantaged groups act out their dominance and prejudice against disadvantaged groups. In fact, it is plausibly argued that the origin of the categorization of human beings into 'races' was a way of justifying the enslavement and transportation of African people. We tend to think that our ancestors were morally less advanced than us, but that doesn't mean they didn't seek to justify (however immorally or implausibly) their actions and behaviour. Enslaving people at the very time liberty and reason underpinned the Enlightenment (and the 'Glorious Revolution') required justification.

The justifications provided by philosophers of the highest rank – Locke and Hume (Khan, 2007) in Britain, but most notoriously Kant (Mikkelsen, 2013), the most influential thinker of all, whose Anthropology has been identified as the first 'categorization' of the 'races'. Racist morality spread was soon affirmed across society. Biblical passages were invoked to demonstrate that it was morally permissible to enslave African people, while Magna Carta was deemed to justify enslavement of Africans (Pettigrew, 2015) as an aspect of the Englishman's liberty (an argument Enoch Powell would update in the 1960s [Khan, 2015] by insisting on the freedom to discriminate and so rejecting race relations legislation).

If modern liberal-democratic philosophy is based on the Kantian idea of equal moral worth, then racism is the denial of that worth to some group in society. If some people aren't fully or equally human, they aren't owed any rights or other moral obligations, and they can be enslaved or, in Kant's words, treated 'merely as a means'.

This denial of equal moral worth to people of non-white 'races' was so deeply embedded in Western thinking that its likely roots as an ideological justification of enslavement specifically, and economic

domination generally, were rarely identified. Racist thinking even transmuted into a *cause* rather than a *consequence* or effect of socio-economic inequality, and its transmission across generations.[1]

2. Race and class: overlapping or pulling apart

During the 19th and much of the 20th century a type of class-based analysis of race developed. Very crudely, this interpreted the poverty of underdevelopment that afflicted African and Asian peoples as having been caused by colonialism. Colonialism in Africa and Asia involved white Europeans occupying the capitalist class, while those who had been colonized were all part of the global proletariat. Even in the decades following decolonization, and with longstanding racial inequalities in the United States, race and class overlapped to such an extent that many didn't see the need for further analysis. One important exception is the longstanding journal *Race and Class*, published by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), whose analysis initially (from the 1970s) addressed 'Black and Third World Liberation', and which continues to offer global, multidisciplinary insights into race and class (www.irr.org.uk/about/raceandclass).

Two notable changes since the 1970s are the growth both of a significant capitalist class outside Europe, and the development of a Black and minority ethnic middle class, more prominently in the United States, but to some extent in the UK too. Many have observed the higher university participation rates among Black and minority ethnic people, and their greater tendency to live in London, and in other major cities that are deemed to have a greater say or even standing in contemporary Britain.

Previous Runnymede research and the chapters by Platt and Li earlier in this volume highlight how this greater educational success hasn't translated into social mobility or economic opportunities, most notably in the labour market. So while there *are* middle-class BME people in Britain, they are less able to translate their social background into success in the labour market, and more vulnerable to seeing their children experience downward social mobility (in part because white British households with equivalent income typically have larger assets, notably via inheritance). And even where BME people are more likely to live in London, they are also more likely to live in the most deprived parts of those cities, and to experience greater disadvantage (Jivraj and Khan, 2013) than white British people living in similar neighbourhoods.

More fundamentally, BME people in Britain experience racial discrimination *regardless* of their class. When employers require people with Asian or African surnames to send in twice as many CVs for an interview, when police disproportionately stop young black men, or when racists target people in the street, your social class background doesn't matter.

Of course working-class or poor BME people are even more vulnerable to these outcomes, and have fewer resources or advantages with which to challenge and overcome racial discrimination. But this shared vulnerability to racist treatment explains both why BME middle-class people may be more likely to live in areas with large ethnic minority populations, and why they feel greater solidarity with working-class BME people. For example, in the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study, even middle-class ethnic minority respondents chose 'unemployment' as their most important vote choice issue. This is probably because they not only know they are more vulnerable to unemployment, but they have friends or family who are or have been recently unemployed.

3. Race and class: policies to reduce inequality, racism and classism

There are two key debates on responding to class and racial inequalities. The first is whether or not we need to respond only to poverty or whether we must also reduce inequality. It's hard to see that responding only to poverty will reduce racial or indeed class inequalities. We've already cited some of the evidence on race, including how GCSE attainment doesn't lead to success at university or in the workplace. It would of course be good to see government reduce the disproportionately high rates of ethnic minority poverty, but there's little reason to believe that this will effectively reduce or eliminate racial inequalities in education, the workplace, criminal justice, health and housing.

On the one hand, government's tendency to ignore or be unfamiliar with ethnicity data on poverty means that their policies run the risk of increasing racial inequalities. For example, current thinking on child poverty, notably to focus more on divorce rates and alcohol abuse and less on income, will shift policy away from the two groups with the highest child poverty rates – Bangladeshi and Pakistani – because these groups also have the lowest divorce and alcohol abuse rates. On the other hand, a focus on poverty alone does nothing to target racial discrimination specifically. This requires more effective

implementation of equality and anti-discrimination law and policy, particularly in the labour market. But it will also require a much bolder, clear positive vision for Britain, including an explicit defence of ethnic diversity or multiculturalism, and a celebration of the contributions of Black and minority ethnic Britons.

The other key debate on ethnic if not class inequality is the extent to which policies should be universal or targeted. This debate is considerably more controversial in the case of race or ethnicity. Race-specific measures do not whet the appetite of the public or of policymakers, and these have almost never been implemented in Britain. But they would clearly be one way to combat racial inequality, particularly where those inequalities cut across class.

While there are significant targeted policies around *poverty*, policies targeting *class* specifically aren't that common. In the policy debate on poverty, policymakers in Britain seem to have agreed on a more targeted approach, via free school meals for example, or the many benefits (e.g. job-seeker's allowance, income support, tax credits) that are have now been bundled into universal credit. This consensus appears to be based on the relative cost-effectiveness of targeted policies. A second important argument is that policies should target those with the greatest or real need, and many universal policies benefit people who don't actually need (or deserve) the service or benefit in question.

At the same time evidence suggests universal policies, such as the National Health Service, are more popular as well as more effective in attending to poverty and indeed inequalities. First of all, such services or benefits (formerly including child benefit) disproportionately still benefit the worse off as they are more likely to use the universal service or take up the benefit. Second, it is less costly to administer universal policies. Third, universal policies are often more effective and less likely to lead to stigma: as the saying goes 'services for the poor tend to be poor services'. Fourth and last, if better-off groups use a service their involvement will ensure that their 'sharp elbows' improve it (ideally to everyone's benefit), at the same time building in their support for the service, and so giving it democratic legitimacy and political support.

3.1 Building policies to respond to race and class inequalities

What, then, does this mean in terms of building policies to respond to race and class inequalities?

(a) First, that we should seek to develop universal policies, but ensure these do in fact disproportionately benefit worse-off groups, notably including ethnic minorities and working-class people.

(b) Second, however, is that these universal policies may need reforming in their delivery, especially if they are seen as services for better-off citizens, where 'gatekeepers' or the culture of that service create or sustain barriers to access. So if the data show a particular group are less likely to take up a service, providers must engage the relevant group, and determine how delivery can actually reach everyone. This may require a change in how the service is delivered, or in the culture of the organization.

When it comes to race and class inequalities, the best outcome is where universal services are equally taken up by all, but because a service is good for working-class people doesn't mean that it will be good for minorities (or vice versa). The general point is that while universal services or benefits can be a very effective way of responding to race and class inequalities, we cannot assume this is the case. Furthermore, solutions for improving those services or benefits may offer general lessons for ensuring equal access, but tailored approaches must be considered and developed for different groups and in different areas.

(c) This leads to the third point, namely that we shouldn't shy away from defending targeted policies. If a group has a specific need policies should be implemented that actually respond to the need, rather than some proxy or universal application. More generally, justice requires that we give priority to the needs of the worse-off first.

Here too the lessons on race and class are both complementary and divergent. Where a targeted policy to increase the voice or participation is known to work, and where both ethnic minorities and working-class people lack such voice or representation, the policy can and should be applied to *both* groups. An example here is positive action, an example that also points to the need to implement the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act (2010).

There are then many targeted policies that could be similarly deployed in response to race and class inequalities. However, there are some such policies that might not be so extended. Three examples are: race equality training for employees in the criminal justice system to challenge stereotypes about black men; English-language provision for migrants; and an industrial or economic development policy that ensures better (or any) jobs for working-class communities. On this latter point, a key reason why

communities feel 'left behind' or otherwise excluded is because in many working-class communities there is no longer the sort of work that helped define that community and provided individuals with meaning and self-worth. The idea that a nostalgic form of 'white Britishness' could fill this hole while offering neither employment, resources, nor access to decision-making institutions is profoundly desperate – and dangerous. Instead we must build responses that actually react to the need for dignity and meaning, needs that must be accompanied not only by a vague sense that the community matters, but by real opportunities for employment and representation.

(d) It may be particularly important or useful if people support a targeted policy for a group other than themselves. So to build shared interests or a common sense of belonging, we should support policies that benefit other groups and *not* our group, and expect similar support in return. This will both ensure that we support policies on grounds of justice rather than out of self-interest, and make us understand other people's experiences better.

A final point here, however, is that when supporting policies to benefit others it is not enough to build shared interests or something stronger – say, solidarity. Understanding other people's experiences will require a much bolder and explicit admission of the past and ongoing racism that affect how British (working-class or otherwise) identity expresses itself.

Conclusion

There is an increasingly wide gap between academic and commonsense discussions of race and class. But even in the academic literature, it's more and more of a challenge to understand and analyse race and class together, with an increasing variety of outcomes and experiences in Britain and throughout the developing world.

And yet all the evidence still shows that race and class matter: for economic outcomes, political participation, and social stability. In this chapter I've shown how we might better understand the transmission of inequalities of race and class across generations, but also how we might better respond to it. Doing so will require good policy design, as well as building shared interests and practices, especially among groups who currently don't interact. This won't mean dropping existing demands that Britain recognize the nature of race (or class) inequalities, nor eliding genuine conflicts. And those inequalities certainly shouldn't mean ignoring the voices and experiences of the black working class.

Runnymede and CLASS have begun thinking how we might build a shared agenda, one that actually responds to race and class inequalities, and build a platform for joint action and mobilization. Thinking through these issues highlights the extent to which government must more directly address inequalities of income and resources, as well as inequalities of voice, representation and power. If not all of the policy responses will be equally beneficial for ethnic minorities and working-class people, they (and indeed all of us) should still support those policies insofar as we support equality and democracy.

Note

1. Class-based inequalities were also sometimes accompanied by moral claims that the 'lower classes' were different sorts of human beings, though such claims were substantially weaker than those based on race, and became rarer during the 20th century. The claim that working-class or perhaps low-income people are *stigmatized* in public discourse and policy provision suggests one way that moral arguments about class are still relevant.

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Runnymede Perspectives seek to challenge conventional thinking about race in public and policy debates. Perspectives bring the latest research to a wider audience and consider how that research can contribute to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

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