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**CROSSING THE RACE LINE :
“NO POLISH, NO BLACKS, NO DOGS” IN BREXIT BRITAIN?
OR, THE GREAT BRITISH BREXIT SWINDLE**

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ABSTRACT:

In June 2016, a clear majority of English voters chose to unilaterally take the United Kingdom out of the European Union (EU). According to many of the post-Brexit vote analyses, the single strongest motivating factor driving this vote was “immigration” in Britain, an issue which had long been the central mobilising force of the United Kingdom Independence Party. The article focuses on how – following the bitter demise of multiculturalism – these Brexit related developments may now signal the end of Britain’s post-colonial settlement on migration and race, the other parts of a progressive philosophy which had long been marked out as a proud British distinction from its neighbours. In successfully racialising, lumping together and re-labelling as “immigrants” three anomalous non-“immigrant” groups – asylum seekers, EU nationals, and British Muslims – UKIP leader Nigel Farage made explicit an insidious re-casting of ideas of “immigration” and “integration,” emergent since the year 2000, which exhumed the ideas of Enoch Powell, and threatened the status of even the most settled British minority ethnic populations – as has been seen in the Windrush scandal. Central to this has been the rejection of the post-national principle of non-discrimination by nationality, which had seen its fullest European expression in Britain during the 1990s and 2000s. The referendum on Brexit enabled an extraordinary democratic vote on the notion of “national” population and membership, in which “the People” might openly roll back the various diasporic, multi-national, cosmopolitan, or human rights-based conceptions of global society which had taken root during those decades. The article unpacks the toxic cocktail that lays behind the forces propelling Boris Johnson to power. It also raises the question of whether Britain will provide a negative exemplar to the rest of Europe on issues concerning the future of multi-ethnic societies.

KEYWORDS:

1. Brexit
2. Immigration
3. Mobilities
4. Diversity
5. Racism
6. Nationalism

INTRODUCTION: RACE, DIVERSITY AND BREXIT

One curious feature of the British Europhobia that triumphed in the European Union (EU) referendum of 2016 — and by extension, the 2019 general election — has been its implacable belief that the nation has a superior track record to the rest of Europe on racial and ethnic diversity and anti-race discrimination. Britain has always believed that it is a more multi-ethnic and multi-racial society than its neighbours, and is proud of the fact (Favell, 1998a). This is of course a legacy of empire, and the latter claim is no longer strictly true, if it ever was. West European nation-states as a whole have all gone through a dramatic “transition to diversity” that has generalised questions that were once more directly encountered in post-colonial movements to Britain, France, and the Netherlands, the most obvious former empires (Alba & Foner, 2015). Many now have higher percentages of migrant-origin population; many have far better refugee-reception records; all have become multi-racial.

Still, the Britain of the 1990s and 2000s — or, at least, London, as memorably characterised by anthropologist Steve Vertovec (2007) — could indeed claim to be the home of “super-diversity.” In the 2000s, Britain led the way in enabling freedom of movement of CEE nationals after accession in 2004. To the strongly anchored values of its anti-racist institutions, it added the labour market’s rigorous recognition of post-national rights of non-discrimination towards EU citizens. A wide range of substantial East European migrant networks was added to its already open and (what was assumed to be) tolerant global diversity. The wanton destruction of this reputation by Brexit, as I will narrate, poses vital questions for Europe as a whole. Will European neighbours respond to ongoing migrations and mobilities in the continent with a similar reactionary roll back of the fragile multicultural, post-national, cosmopolitan or human-rights based conceptions of society that have taken root in recent decades? Or will Britain, which was a pioneer in these respects, become a salutary example of how dangerous the abandonment of these values may be?

There is little to suggest that post-Brexit, Britain will become any less diverse — unless perhaps the Union itself fails to hold. Its porous, off-shore, highly globalised, service-driven economy generates a huge demand for migration and cross-border mobilities and transactions of all kinds; any plausible British government is very unlikely to adopt the kind of nationalist social democracy proscribed by Wolfgang Streeck in Germany to get a grip on the inherent population flux of late capitalist neo-liberalism (Streeck, 2017; on this debate, see Parker, 2017). One of the ironies of the virulent anti-“immigration” politics that, as I will argue, drove the Leave vote to victory, is that its triumph will very likely land Britain with far higher levels of unregulated “neo-liberal” immigration than was ever likely under the hated obligations of EU freedom of movement. Not least, this is because it is now forcing over three million indefinite and highly mobile resident EU nationals to now become the permanent “immigrants” they had been falsely pictured to be (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018).

The ever-entrepreneurial politicians piloting the proud Island-Nation out into the mid-Atlantic have pinned their vision of future British diversity on essentially colonial fantasies: of a newly minted “global Britain” replacing European trade, and the island becoming the metropolitan centre of a revived Commonwealth of favoured trading nations (Dorling & Tomlinson, 2019). This will somehow be tied to a points-based immigration for high-end global talent (only) — as if Britain were, in fact, in size, capacity and physical location, Canada, Australia, or even Singapore, and as if it needed Nobel Prize scientists more than it needed plumbers, agricultural workers, builders, box packers, cleaners, sex workers, bell boys and taxi drivers. This delusion is in fact exactly what their counterparts believed was possible for Britain in the 1950s as it resisted joining the EU (Milward, 2002). Yet the same politicians told open lies about “taking back control” on “immigration” to carry the Leave campaign over the 50% line in the referendum, in the process, as I will further argue, shredding the society’s post-war settlement on migration, multiculturalism, and race. This victory came after nearly ten years of Theresa May’s “hostile environment,” the then Home Secretary’s branding of UK immigration policy as a carceral nightmare for irregular migrants (Jones et al, 2017);

the Windrush scandal, which threatened the deportation of hundreds of elderly West Indian British unable to prove their citizenship despite an entire lifetime's residency in the country (Bhambra, 2016; Yuval-Davis et al, 2019); spikes in reported hate crime against East Europeans and South Asians that tracked support for leaving the EU (Devine, 2018; Barbulescu et al, 2019); and the sidelining from all Brexit debate of the wishes of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018) — key elements in the narrative that I will lay out.

In this toxic environment of its own making, the post-referendum government has fallen over itself in its reassertion of “Great” Britain as a still welcoming haven for desirable immigration and “foreign friends.” Yet this hypocrisy cannot hide that Brexit has also opened a Pandora's box of old-style racism and xenophobia. Up and down the country, openly racist arguments about indigenous “Englishness” and its indubitable whiteness can be heard in public (and even academia) again: the dark side of colonial beliefs that had been absent in mainstream British politics since the silencing of the virulently anti-immigration Conservative politician Enoch Powell in the 1970s (see Favell, 1998b; Hansen, 2000). And seen: as the proud white and red St George cross is visible fluttering on churches, cars, and garden flag poles everywhere. The triumphant return of Powellism to the centre of British politics is perhaps the most striking dimension of a contradictory and explosive cocktail of autarchic yet globalist political delusion that, eventually, propelled Boris Johnson to power: the Great British Brexit Swindle, as it can be called (see also Coles, 2016).

This historical reversal is quite a shock, given the violent birth pains of multicultural race relations in Britain, in the face of the apocalypticism articulated in Enoch Powell's infamous “Rivers of Bloods” speech in 1968, that most had thought irreversible (see Ballinger, 2018). Are the nostalgic core of elderly Leave voters, and their fantasies of a lost Xanadu of 50s post-war community (Lawrence, 2019), also nostalgic for white race riots, gollywog jokes, and “for rental” signs in houses everywhere with the byline “No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs” (now amended to “No Polish...”) (Verma, 2018)? Britain's reputation internationally on race and diversity rested on the pragmatic, cross-party

consensus on multicultural race-relations and immigration that ended all that, against the threat of Powellism, and was fashioned up to fifty years ago (Favell, 1998b; Hansen, 2000). This progressive, inclusive narrative had evolved in the 1990s and 2000s, embracing ideas of diaspora, transnationalism and hybridity, to position Britain at the forefront, not only of the global economy, but also the vanguard of a new kind of cosmopolitanism. Its confidence, as with the Colgate smile of then premier Tony Blair, has proven fragile. Yet this defeat cannot be attributed only to the Conservative Party. The hostile rollback can be dated from 2000 and early New Labour years — the long demise of multiculturalism and post-nationalism in Great Britain that reached its destination with the triumph of United Kingdom Independence Party leader Nigel Farage's ideas in the 2016 referendum. As I will narrate, it was a political betrayal but also an intellectual one: with academics — some of them notionally on the left — leading the way in the trashing of multiculturalism, and the return of an archaic "immigration" discourse, that has not only cast out Europe and Europeans, but also cast doubt on the true membership of all non-white and migrant-origin minorities in Britain.

HOW NIGEL FARAGE WON THE REFERENDUM OF JUNE 2016

It is already forgotten in the bluster of bad Churchillian pastiche that has come to dominate the ruling British Conservative Party, but when Britain woke up at 5am to the news of the referendum result on 24th June 2016, there was only one figure openly celebrating the victory in front of the media. A now buried *Daily Mail* front page proclaimed "We're Out!" with the UKIP voice of Leave Nigel Farage in an ecstatic Mussolini-like pose, hollering his delight (Daily Mail, 2016). Prime minister David Cameron was contemplating his resignation speech; Theresa May, his successor, was biding her time; and Boris Johnson was still running sheepishly away from the cameras. The respectable face of the Leave vote was nowhere to be seen.

It was a remarkable turnaround for Farage, who the night before had conceded that Leave had failed, and one week before had been openly discredited and verbally distanced from the Leave

campaign after he unveiled his notorious “Breaking Point” image on the side of a promotions van in front of the Houses of Parliament in central London (for a photo and discussion of the incident, see Kaufmann, 2018: 194-95). This tasteless stunt took place as it turned out on the same day that a young woman Labour MP, the pro-refugee-campaigning Jo Cox, was assassinated by a white race supremacist in a West Yorkshire high street, in the North of England (Aspen 2019). The poster clearly crossed a line that the mainstream apparently felt was a step too far: associating EU membership and the migration it allegedly fostered, with a patently racialised, fearmongering image of mass asylum seeking. The death of Jo Cox, which inspired a moratorium on campaigning for a whole day, also seemed the logical consequence of the drift of Leave arguments over the months towards increasingly dog whistle type politics on, especially, “immigration.” Yet, here he was, Farage, a week later, vindicated by “the People”, in a referendum which public opinion analysts were quick to show had indeed been substantially turned in the final analysis by the issue of “immigration” as a problem of EU membership, on the very terms and conceptualisation that UKIP had been openly campaigning for since the late 2000s (Ashcroft, 2016; Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley, 2017; Curtice, 2017; Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017).

It is not frivolous then to argue that it was the apparently beyond-the-pale “Breaking Point” poster that may have captured the median vote in the referendum — and hit a sweet spot in the British (or, to be more accurate, English) electorate, who might otherwise have stayed solidly aligned with their political party, economic arguments, or concerns about Britain’s respected place in Europe and the world.

The vivid colour photo on the side of the van, as discussed by Kaufmann above, is of a curving exodus of hundreds of apparently Middle Eastern men — all young adults or middle aged, dark skinned, apparently lower class or poor — walking across a countryside border somewhere in central Europe (Guardian, 2016). They are tightly packed on a road, and accompanied by (apparently white) armed guards. The poster headline says “The EU has failed us all,” and the byline reads, “We

must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders,” and “Leave the European Union,” with a big tick. There is a grinning Farage, pointing at the poster. In one photo he is caught haranguing a Remain protester trying to disrupt the photo op (Kaufmann, *ibid*).

One aspect of the photo might be deemed unfortunate. Had UKIP really done its background research on the image, which a Getty images photographer had clearly composed to allude to Nazi wartime propaganda of “parasite refugees” in central Europe? (Guardian, 2016). Its message was powerful enough in any case: the Mediterranean migration crisis has been similarly dominated by media images turning humans into insect-like swarms, or in the case of migrant boats, packed on board like slaves aboard slave ships (Anderson, 2015). But here was an abusive image specifically of “EU immigration.” The key point was that Farage was confirming an over ten year campaign by UKIP to establish a negative image of “EU immigration” — which might be more easily racialised in other ways, and associated with a burly Polish worker, an East European woman making a coffee on a train buffet; or, for that matter, a high tech or finance industry worker in London, or young, student types making coffee at the sandwich shop Pret a Manger.

Yet Farage had tapped into something that was in fact well established, indeed reified, in aggregate quantitative terms by academic scholarship. Analysts had already been confirming that so-called “EU immigration” was the rising tide of the Leave vote (Curtice, 2017). The trends confirmed something that had found academic justification already a year before in a prescient article by Nuffield scholar Geoff Evans, together with Jonathan Mellon (Evans & Mellon, 2015), which showed that as the line of net EU migration had crossed and overtaken Commonwealth origin migration monthly, its progress was being tracked by the line of anti-EU referendum voting intentions heading inexorably towards victory. This part of the analysis was sound. At the same time, Evans claimed that “the people were perceptive” (2016a): unusually sensitive to the visible “facts” of migration around them. The problem here was that there was no attempt to say who or what these “immigrants” were. Every distinction that might be made within EU free movers and between EU free movement

and other forms of migration was collapsed in the aggregate. On this basis, overall migration had been running annually at over three times the published government target of 100,000; no government in twenty years had got near the target (Cohen, 2017). The new figures announced by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) in May 2016, and given prominent press coverage, with so-called EU immigrants rising sharply and matching non-European migration, pushed this point centre stage, and gave Leave what may have been its most decisive shove towards the winning line. Evans' point was that these votes were coming from Labour Party voters (Evans and Tilley, 2017). They wouldn't vote for UKIP in a general election, but they could be persuaded to align with their views in a one-off poll, if the saliency of immigration rose enough: as it was, in tandem with the anti-EU line. And the line that Evans was drawing, as he surmised after the event in evidence given at a seminar for the Parliament BBC channel (Evans, 2016b), could be drawn directly back and lain at the feet of ex-prime minister, Tony Blair, who had taken an insistent position on accepting the possibility of mass Central and Eastern European migration in the early 2000s — and, it was said, not listening to Labour voters. (Evans and Tilley, 2017). Again, this point was exactly what Farage and UKIP had been arguing since the late 2000s (Ford & Goodwin, 2014).

Not to be outdone, in the wake of ONS figures in May, anti-migration demographer, David Coleman — also a distinguished Oxford man — published a more forthright version of the argument in a right-wing publication showing inexorably rising migration from outside and inside the EU leading towards his pet fear — the “end of Great Britain,” which he had predicted will occur in 2070 when the non-white population (as measured by the current British survey instruments) would exceed the (presumably) true white British (Coleman, 2016). A distinguished, ostensibly left-wing economist, Paul Collier — also an Oxford man, as were all of the leading protagonists (along with Theresa May) in the Conservative Party scrimmage for political power these years (Kuper, 2019) — had been making similarly visible, bestselling arguments about the negative consequences of immigration (Collier, 2013). These were heavily reliant on Robert Putnam's (2007) highly contestable work on the impossibility of sustaining welfare in highly diverse societies. Collier stressed the

threshold of impossibility of what he claimed as the unusually indigenous British national population ever absorbing so many migrants of different and distant culture. Collier's calculations about the indigenous origins of the British nation are bizarre, but Coleman's projections are not wrong — not if you read the statistics on “immigrant” (i.e., non-White British) children in early years' education a certain way, assume (ahistorically) stable categories of colour-based race classification, and that “race” is a proxy for immigrant origin (see also Kaufmann, 2018). Anti-racist organisations such as the Runnymede Foundation project the same growth in British minority populations (Lievesley, 2010). Coleman's cataclysmic conclusions about the consequences of this for the nation were Powellism riding high again.

But who or what was this “EU immigration” given a human face in the Farage poster? Could it be the same “EU immigration” to which public opinion analysts were referring — with little attempt to dig into who people might mean or what they had in mind? “EU immigration” was in any case everyone's explanation for the result. The night before the result, former Labour leader Ed Miliband — under whose leadership the party had embraced a supposedly working class friendly, and anti-“immigrant,” “Blue Labour” ethos of “Work, Family, Community” (Shabi, 2019) — had said: “As far as Labour voters are concerned, there are two issues. There is obviously immigration, but beneath that there is a whole set of issues about people's lives and the fact that they don't feel politics is listening to them” (quoted in Asthana, Quinn, & Mason, 2016). “Immigration” was the dominant word used in justifications by Leave voters in a post-vote word cloud analysis of the British Election Study posted on Twitter by Matthew Goodwin, another Blue Labour sympathiser pushing Farage-ist argumentation (reprinted in Evans & Menon, 2017). It was even confirmed by more sober analysis such as the state-of-the-art work by John Curtice, or the widely cited polls by Mori and Lord Ashcroft.

Farage's poster had effectively visualised the potential associations for everyone. It offered, as so much in the Brexit campaign, a chance for “the People” to finally and openly say what they had

been (in fact) thinking now for decades, but — it was argued — unable to. Farage had long been saying this. Multiculturalism had imposed “political correctness,” and the nation had been hollowed out by EU laws which allowed racially, culturally and socially distant “foreigners” to get jobs on equal terms, because of free movement laws on non-discrimination by nationality (Hodges, 2015). Another rapidly packaged mass market Brexit tome, Eric Kaufmann's *Whiteshift* (2018), sought to justify the continued life of Powell's ideas in these very terms (see Trilling, 2019, who reads this as an archetypal “I’m not racist, but...” argument). It was not hard for the arguments to go mainstream when there had been literally dozens of tabloid front covers that had since around 2004 routinely reported “EU immigrants” as rapists, thieves, benefits scroungers, floods and invasions, among other less dramatic tropes (Shabi, 2019). It could all be pinned on “EU immigration.”

Yet the bigger delusion at work here, was that Farage was referring to three kinds of unwanted “immigrants” *who were not even* forms of “immigration” in Britain. The most blatantly not so were the asylum seekers in the photos. Literally, in the sense that these men were never going to be immigrants in Britain; they were stuck on a border in central Europe. EU membership was taking care of the rest; any who struggled further against increasingly barbed border crossings would be subject to seeking asylum in the first country of arrival and constant threats of *refoulement*. Those that made their way further West were either going to end in a Germany that had offered refuge to a million of them, or perhaps in a worst-case scenario, stuck in a camp in Calais almost in sight of the white cliffs of Dover (see Crawley et al., 2018). Britain’s reception of 35,000 refugees in 2014/15 hardly put it in the front line of the Syrian or Mediterranean crisis in any case (Lambert, 2016). And this of course leaves aside a legally semantic but vital point. These asylum-seekers were *not* immigrants in law but, rather, potential refugees entitled to protection under an international law founded to deal with statelessness and political violence. “EU immigration” to Britain being composed of these flows was a pure phantasm; associating EU membership with British exposure to refugee obligations, even more so — although UKIP clearly had benefitted from years of negative

media and academic focus on disastrous EU security policies in the Mediterranean (Crawley and Skleparis, 2018).

The second association was metaphorical. These men might be Syrians, but they *could* be EU migrants moving to Britain as “free movers.” “The EU has failed us all.” Could these instead be the supposedly countless Roma from CEE countries in Britain? There are certainly some, but far less than other parts of Western Europe. Aren’t EU movers overwhelming poor, dark skinned, looking for cheap jobs or easy benefits? Emphatically not. All credible economic research has shown EU migrants in Britain to be younger, better qualified, often from higher income countries, less likely to be unemployed, and net contributors to the British economy (Gordon, Travers, & Whitehead, 2007; Dustmann & Fratini, 2014; Portes, 2016; Rienzo, 2016). If not that, then were they not the future of EU membership when Turkey joins, as it would soon? Again: not true. Turkey is not joining the EU any time soon, and Turks in any case have fairly routine access to Western Europe. They don’t need EU membership to be the largest migrant group in Europe. In London’s “superdiverse” environment, large numbers of Turks in London may often “pass” as white, as do Brazilians or Russians (Wessendorf, 2014). Once again, a racialisation was at work. And again, in legal terms, if these were in fact EU citizens, and they were being automatically labelled “immigrants,” they were nothing of the sort. Again, that’s the law. They were EU citizens who could choose to reside as non-national residents in another part of the EU, with the full range of EU citizenship rights and benefits afforded — just as the British live in Spain or France. When were these British ever considered “immigrants” in these countries? When had their EU citizenship rights ever been challenged by the fact they might be “unwanted” by the “people” of the country in question (with Brexit, they were about to find out...; Kochenov, 2016)? Wouldn’t that be “racist,” in its own way? This point however was lost entirely in the academic Farage-ism rife among the public opinion analysts — who count and classify EU free movement in Britain, but nowhere else, as “immigration.”

The third association was subliminal. Look at these faces. Could they not be the same people we see driving our taxis in major cities? Or — the thinking goes — sitting around in cafes in grim Northern towns plotting child sex exploitations rings? The trope of the “grooming scandal,” in which groups of Pakistani British men have been convicted for sexually abusing young white girls, has dominated press discussion of British Muslims in recent years (*Just Yorkshire v. The Times*, 2018). The warped logic being presented here can be read as follows, however illogical it is: 'These men swarming Westwards are surely Muslims; our nation faces continued flows of Muslims from South Asia; Muslims are immigrants and the kind of immigrants we don't want more of; they look like these migrants in Europe — and *therefore* we need to *take back control* of this from the EU.' British Muslims, in other words, the most visible consequence of post-colonial settlement in the British Isles, and which has continued to be a significant flow to the country, were also being marshalled to the anti-EU case. UKIP, like the Conservative Party, has always taken care to find the odd Asian or Black face to prop up its multi-racial credentials (Holehouse, 2014). But the geo-politics of recent years, the threat of Middle Eastern wars, occasional terrorist attacks in Britain, and the alleged ongoing radicalisation of Muslim youth, has made it much easier to think of Muslims as potentially not good British citizens. And here was Farage associating the ongoing lack of control of British Muslims with the EU.

Worse than this, Farage was successfully calling British citizens who happen to be Muslims “immigrants,” something which has been *de facto* unacceptable terminology to talk about BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) or BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) nationals in Britain since the 1970s (on these peculiar British euphemisms for talking about race, ethnicity and diversity in Britain, see Bunglawala, 2019). Such has been the success of this particular Farage-ism, that it is not only the public opinion analysts with their crude aggregates about “immigration” that have repeated and disseminated an abusive language — not surprising given the general lack of attention among public opinion scholars to issues of distinguishing race, ethnicity, migration and cross-border mobilities —

but a substantial part of the progressive, anti-racist left *has also* felt compelled to embrace the stigma, to turn it around positively.

An influential, nation-building organisation, British Future, led by an activist of mixed Indian and Irish heritage, Sunder Katwala, campaigns influentially for Britain to take a positive view of “immigration.” Public funding sources have poured money into his organisation to begin a “national conversation” on how British people feel about, and can be convinced of the benefits of “immigration” (Rutter, & Carter, 2018). A leading Somali British politician, the young and charismatic former Sheffield mayor turned MEP, Magid Magid, wears a signature “Immigrants Make Britain Great” T-shirt (Guardian, 2019). Linked public poster campaigns have been made with individuals of various backgrounds proclaiming “I am an immigrant” and extolling their contributions to British society (see online poster campaign: 'iamanimmigrant.net'). The analogy for everyone presumable is “America” — that well-known bastion of multi-racial toleration — and the curious colonial trope of Britain reinventing itself, after all that has happened, as “just like the USA” — a border tight island, able to reconstitute itself as an “integration nation” of immigrants (see Favell, 2016, a critique of Alba & Foner, 2015; see also Schinkel, 2017).

We can welcome the world — as long as they buy British. This all sounds good, until its myopic sense of history and minority political struggle in Britain is revealed. The logic leads straight to the Windrush tragedy, as I will explain below. It was also why it was perhaps no surprise, as leading critical Black studies scholar Kehinde Andrews pointed out in his post-Brexit analysis, that Black British — not known to have been hugely comfortable with the EU, which has a racist reputation — in fact voted largely to remain (Andrews, 2017). As Andrews said, his father had explained to him he was hearing things about East Europeans, and other recent migrants, that sounded uncomfortably familiar to him, reminiscent of the days when Enoch Powell was still riding high. He was remembering all those signs in windows: “No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs.” What that meant was “No Blacks = No Foreigners = No Immigrants.” Britain had come along way since the

1960s hadn't it? Surely it had. Yet on the days before and after the referendum, Polish workers and Romanian cab drivers up and down the country could be found listening to their London-based diaspora radio stations, narrating one incident after another of hate crime against CEE residents being reported to the police. And even more alarmingly, along with this spike around the day of the referendum itself — a spike which was going through the roof the day Jo Cox was killed — it was also apparent in the wider statistics that the large majority of those reporting hate crime incidents, which had run at much higher levels throughout the referendum, were in fact South Asian British (Devine, 2018; Barbulescu et al., 2019).

HOW BME/BAME BRITISH BECAME "IMMIGRANTS" AGAIN : THE TRIUMPH OF HOBBSIAN

POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY

And so the line that was crossed on the day of Jo Cox's murder became the line that was crossed a week later — as the many leading Brexit analysts cited above (i.e. Evans, 2016a; Curtice, 2017; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Kaufmann, 2018) lined up to confirm it was "EU immigration" that had caused Brexit. It was also often then said, a little more quietly, perhaps: and well, maybe it is *not* so unreasonable after all that the man on the Clapham Omnibus should feel that enough was enough, that maybe "immigration" was a serious concern for ordinary people. One of the most prominent Blue Labour advocates, David Goodhart, described this outcome — predicted by his books, he claimed — as vindication of his understanding that contrasted the effete, ungrounded, cosmopolitan views of big city elites, the "anywheres," with the solid, common sense of the "somewhere," people up and down the country who were now rightly asserting their feelings about too much immigration and not enough Britishness being imposed through integration (Goodhart, 2013; 2017). His formulation was immediately adopted by the new prime minister Theresa May.

A strange thing then happened among the public opinion analysts. Rather than reconsider the ways in which an artificial fear of immigration, often falsely classified as such, had been stoked

by crude terminology and aggregate modes of analysis that shadowed the Farage-ist line, they now set about to argue, through the same statistical apparatuses, that after Brexit, the saliency of “immigration” as a concern (still the same unexplored aggregate), had in fact started to drop (Ford, 2017). The implication was that the EU boil had been lanced. Whoever or whatever those “EU immigrants” had been — Poles taking our jobs, Roma taking our benefits, Syrians swarming West, or depraved British Muslims abusing our teenage daughters — whatever dark fantasy of “immigration” has worked to make the issue so salient to Leave voters — now that we were leaving the EU, the argument was now, suddenly, that “immigration” was going to be ok (Phillips et al., 2018).

This was the Great British Brexit Swindle. It was a logic that was spelt out by Boris Johnson's advisor, Dominic Cummings, during the 2019 election, with the fabrications of "taking back control" on "immigration" and marginalising resident EU nationals still at its heart (see Cummings, 2019). The Leave campaign had convinced enough people that “immigration” was such an existential threat when the EU was involved, that it could lift the solid 35% anti-EU opinion and add another 17% ready to go along with UKIP on this occasion, to deliver the approx 37.5% of the electorate that would enable a plebiscitory outcome to be claimed as “the voice of the People,” in perpetuity (the logic put forward by Evans, 2016b). This was regardless, of course, of any legal veracity in the discussion about free movement, migration, and migrants in Britain — or indeed any other perversion of democracy that had been affected to pull Leave to victory. Now, it could say: Oh, it was only because we couldn't “control” all those “EU immigrations.”

From this moment on, of course, the government — and notably Boris Johnson — sought to utterly reverse its course, using the positive results about “immigration” that seem to suggest the real issues may lie elsewhere. Johnson's pro-immigration rhetoric is particularly striking. Of course, now, as an Island-Nation again, Britain would be able to now choose its own path on “immigration”: with the right policies it could be positioned to benefit from immigration, by points and high skill, that would in practice be selectively colour and culture coded (UK Government, 2020; Guardian,

2020). No matter that it had not delivered in twenty years on promises of targets, or that, excepting a short period before the referendum, non-EU immigration, of a much less regulated nature, had always run much higher than EU migration. No matter too, that the untenable position on EU residents in Britain in any case meant that Johnson had folded on most redlines in his deal, and EU citizens would be able to stay, and indeed still come, until an as-yet-undetermined Brexit transition date, and settle *en masse* now as “immigrants.” The most scholarly of the public opinion analysts supporting the argument about the decline in saliency of “immigration,” also had a less sanguine insight. It turned out that those Leave voters most inclined to be anti-immigration, were also those with strong anti-race equality views, and the most angry about multiculturalism (Sobolewska & Ford, 2019). A future “culture war” was still brewing on race and diversity. And that when asked who they preferred as “immigrants,” white Europeans were clearly preferable to non-white non-Europeans (Hix, Kaufmann, & Leeper, 2017). Race, in fact, was a key factor — and not about to disappear with Britain exiting the EU (for the full range of discussion on this issue, see Bhambra, 2017; Virdee & McGeever, 2018; Benson, 2019).

Good news for equality fans, though. EU migrants, once Brexit was complete, would now be subject to the *same* draconian rules as non-EU migrants: the same high salary requirements, discrimination against spouses, impeccably documented residency records, no criminal record, no welfare dependency, etc. (Favell & Barbulescu, 2018). This, surely, would be a big draw for the highly skilled who would be banging on the door of Britain’s shiny new points-based immigration quotas? Those not negligible numbers of BME/BAME British, who had voted for Leave in the mistaken belief perhaps that the country might become less racist after kicking out the Europeans, giving them a break on family migration or Commonwealth connections, would perhaps be disappointed (Ehsan, 2017). Equality would instead mean simply that all “foreigners” would get treated equally badly, although with the suspicion that if they were rich, or came from certain old Commonwealth countries, they might be rather more “wanted”. Down the line, it is highly likely Britain will strike its

own bilateral free movement deals for nationals from certain countries that remain “white” in this sense.

The insistence of the new Island-Nation as henceforth a nation of (clearly, visibly) indigenous British *plus* “ethnic” minorities of (visible, audible) “immigrant origin” *with no other* long term resident non-nationals present, and with this past and ongoing “immigration” to be celebrated, underscores the fears then projected into strange statistical constructions of Britain becoming majority “non-White British” at some point in the future. Since *all* “foreign-origin” persons are in this view of populations, by definition, “immigrants” — and as long as this “foreignness” can be visibly or audibly traced (and counted — through British race and country of birth statistics, back through generations) — they would, in this construction, remain “immigrants,” marked out as such as distinct from “indigenous” British. This leads to the remarkable statistics: that “immigrants” already make up over 30% of the primary school population, and would continue climbing (Department of Education, 2017, as reported by Alba & Foner, 2015, interpreting race/minority statistics as “immigration” statistics).

This is precisely the point at which the entire history of British race relations and the inherently multi-racial composition of the post-colonial nation disappears in an oddly transposed, Americanised, country of immigration, construction. Those with memories enough of the early race and ethnicity scholarship would recall all the early sociology on “immigrants” in the 1950s and 1960s. There were the quaint books on the “coloured quarter,” as outdated as American sociologists of the same era referring to African Americans as “negroes” (Banton, 1955). “Foreigners” were (obviously) “non-white,” and their visible presence provoked hostility and resentment. This is where the sea change in British attitudes was so apparent, as progressive views had to distance themselves from such nativism. Post-Enoch Powell and the “Rivers of Blood,” the children of those first movers from the Empire — who had in fact never been “foreigners,” could also never be called “immigrants.” They were Black British, Asian British (and later Chinese British, African British). The

parents of the post-war generations who came in such numbers from the Caribbean or South Asia in the 1950s and 1960s, were — like the “immigrants” in Farage’s poster — also *never immigrants* (Bhambra, 2016). They were born and bred British subjects of the Empire, *automatically* British citizens. It is nothing short of astonishing that this has been effaced in the contemporary debates on the costs and benefits of “immigration.” We have forgotten: the British Empire was “British.” British subjects were “British.” This is the insidious Powellite logic of how precisely older Black British were left high and dry by the Windrush scandal. So now it is good to be labelled an “immigrant” again? Is this meant to be a consolation to the Windrush scandal victims, at least 80 of which were deported while hundreds of others were harassed for years by public authorities?

For sure, the successive modifications of Nationality Law from the 1960s on, were substantially about addressing this population anomaly in a world of independent nation-states — the shrinking of the Empire into its nation-state island core (Dummett & Nicol, 1990). Empire “British” had to become “foreigners” by this operation. This is where the anomaly of shrinking empire citizenship is directly analogous to what has happened to EU citizens when the line of British membership crossed them on the day of referendum — they became “immigrant foreigners” again (see Sigona writing about his own experience in the intro to Gonzales & Sigona, 2017; Kostakopoulou, 2018). West Indians and South Asians had already experienced with the advent of Nationality Law in the 1960s this double movement of citizenship — their families outside Britain became foreigners again, henceforth immigrants who would face all the difficulties of immigration control and eventually the “hostile environment” — but for those already in, or able to move freely, there was the promise of recognition of Black identity as Black British, as part of a national commitment to integration, and then multiculturalism, and the move to a multi-racial society. For a blood bath in the street — the Powellite alternative — was not a viable option for the country (Favell, 1998b).

Or wasn't it? The return of Powellite "immigration" discourse, in the era of UKIP, Farage and Leave, to classify and distinguish "foreigners," indexed by colour or nationality, that by definition means they can never *really* be indigenous "true" or original British (code for "white English"), is thus one of the most egregious and disturbing of the Brexit era. An open, globally porous, multi-racial, multi-national state, used to the sound and feel of multiple diasporas, and built on a hard-won historical understanding of its diverse and territorially ambiguous composition, suddenly found itself reinventing the nation as a bordered entity with a fixed population, in which the only legitimate foreigners present would be those identified as wanted "immigrants," on the narrow path from foreigner to immigrant to citizen (Cohen, 2017).

It is needless to say, in everyday sociological terms, a hugely unrealistic picture of how the British economy, society or culture as a globalised territory works (Recchi et al., 2019). It may seem trivial or irrelevant, but an estimated 35 million tourists and visitors come to Britain every year. One might say — so what, *they* are *not* immigrants. No, but they *are* foreigners present in the society, they have crossed borders, some stay for substantial time. They are present in the economy, in the culture, in the everyday; interacting with British and others in the streets and pubs. They clearly do not fit the idea that all legitimate foreigners must be "wanted immigrants." They, like all other forms of international mobilities, are kept invisible and out of the "immigration" equation by a border regime which designates their category, and the specific rights which allow them freedom as foreigners on the territory (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013). It is all clear until a tourist overstays, as some do, and becomes part of an irregular "migration." Other mobile populations are business travellers, or service personnel under GATS regulations, working long stretches of time. Still others are long term or permanent residents. These are also *not* immigrants, although they might seem like them. Suddenly the numbers of such people more or less regularly present in the territory is high: in fact, there are as many as 8 million foreign residents, not counting those temporarily present (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). Conceptually, though, this is invisible in the Island-Nation construction. EU membership added a further level of complexity to this — more than 3.5 million of the foreign

population — through free movement of persons on the labour market, extended to families and dependents. Under the fourth freedom, they too were *not* immigrants in the country (Favell, 2014).

The point here is that the rhetoric of being a bordered nation able to definitively decide who is allowed to be present on the territory and who is not, is wildly inaccurate. Non-nationals are always present in significant numbers. The EU non-nationals have become subject to a political decision to decide they were not in fact legitimate as non-national residents, but had to be subject as foreigners to immigration laws. This is indeed a question of sovereignty, as Nigel Farage would be right to claim. Resident and non-resident non-nationals are subject to British law, but their status is also governed by international rules. Refugees are another case — able to claim rights against the state (Bosniak 2006). Family reunification is another example. Very large numbers of persons can claim the right to be present or remain as a non-national. It is an illusion of a particular democratic sort that the nation has final jurisdiction over these questions. A decision could be made in the EU referendum to cut out one such population. It was not able to speak on the question, and a restricted “nation” of voters, the “People,” was allowed to say who could be present in the territory in this case. But the “People” cannot decide how the economy works, how culture works, or even in the end, despite the sovereigntist delusion, of how demography within a particular territory works.

This obviously Hobbesian notion of sovereignty has been a strong feature of the Brexit vote — in part, why echoes of the English Civil War, and the historical contest over sovereignty, have been so present in the Referendum and Brexit struggles in parliament. The determining features of the referendum illustrated the operation of a particular kind of political demography at work — an attempt by a highly globalised, transnationally embedded nation-state to assert sovereign control over aspects of mobilities and free movement that are an integral part of the economy in which it has invested itself, and which are matters embedded in wider governance structures — the balance of international human rights, economic obligations, the looseness of population control. As I have suggested and will argue below, there is little chance that this mode of economy or its porousness

will change, although it may become *more* porous and free moving if Britain signs up to some of its global free trade aspirations. The dynamics of intra-EU migration will change, of course, since the supply of workers will change (as it has, see Grierson, 2019). The referendum was an attempt to, at once, gain sovereign control over the European population present in Britain, and shore up the barriers to the “unwanted” immigrants evoked in Farage’s poster. The operation here was to cast a new definition over who was a wanted or good migrant and who was not: a pure operation of political demography, invoking “the People” to decide democratically who is the true British population, who is a (i.e., European) foreigner, and which foreigners may be selected and visibly accepted as “immigrants” (see Anderson, 2013). The fantasy is of a cleanly policed Hobbesian island, with a perfect binary biopolitics of wanted and unwanted immigrants — and citizens (Tyler, 2010). “Good” immigrants are those “new” British celebrated in the sporting images of multi-racial athletic victories, or the poster campaigns extolling their contributions to the nation — *potentially* as good as the “true” British who have democratically had their say. And once EU citizens become good “immigrants,” they too could happily stay on these same terms (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018).

Of course, as some have found to their cost, the line can move in the other direction. Every other “migrant” present on the territory is an “unwanted” “foreigner” and subject to the “hostile environment.” Every other case, is a “bad” immigrant in relation to the “good.” A lot of non-nationals on UK soil might feel comfortable with this regime — their rights are secured by other international rights agreements, if not human rights. They may be OK if they do not *seem* to be migrants (usually colour coded) — like if they are “tourists.” But you never know. Tourists can be mistaken for “unwanted immigrants” on the street. A foreign visitor (a student? a temporary intern? a nurse?) can be treated the same way as an irregular foreign migrant worker. To paraphrase Theresa May, Brexit means Brexit, and a hostile environment is a hostile environment (see Jones et al, 2017).

And so, the spotlight turns again on those elderly Black British, the pioneer Windrush generation and their children, who came to the British Isles or were born here at a time when they were still part of the Empire. Hostile environments based on watertight bureaucratic implementation are a rather alien system for a UK system essentially based on equal treatment, informal records, and no national ID system. And thus when retired West Indian British went along to get some help with benefits or some essential medical treatment, looking and sounding Black and not so unlike certain recent “immigrants” — in the new biopolitical environment, where they couldn’t produce any documentation, they never had a passport or anything to prove their long term right to residency, suddenly hundreds were suddenly at prey of the hostile environment, in a Kafka-esque twist of irony (see Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, & Cassidy , 2019). They had lived here all their lives in Britain and they were being threatened with being deported to a country they had never set foot in. Not only was Britain now calling people like them “immigrants” when before they were Black or West Indian British; now they could feel the line cross them in a way that made them the wrong kind of “immigrant” again, “bad” or “unwanted” — merely because they were missing a piece of paper. The sovereign state, believing in its own absolute sovereignty, spoke. Go home. No Dogs. No Polish. No Blacks.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE FUTURE OF MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN?

The success with which the Farage-ism latent even in much ostensibly progressive thinking has rendered non-white British minorities “immigrants” again poses the longer term question of whatever happened to a land rather better known for its prominent commitment to anti-racist legislation and conceptions of multi-ethnic society. Secure in its multicultural race relations in the 1980s and 1990s, the British used to snort with derision at the persistent French obsession of discussing their long term, post-colonial ethnic and racial minorities in terms of *immigration* and

immigrés — in other words, the dominant idiom of *Le Pénisme* — from the high-minded vantage point of super-diversity and a globally savvy “cool Britannia.”

Understanding what has happened requires a longer historical view. The roll back in fact dates from 2000 and the very public destruction of ideas associated with a special Runnymede Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, which published what became known as the Parekh Report in the autumn of that year (Parekh et al., 2000). Although it was not top of the agenda, the early years of New Labour (from 1997) saw an open willingness to revise and update the post-colonial, multicultural narrative of post-war Britain that now was having to respond to the pressures and transformation associated with the dramatic new migrations of the 1990s. In these, the post-colonial BME/BAME British, and the “Black” (and sometimes distinctive Asian or Muslim) politics associated with these groups, was only one part of the challenge of super-diversity, which also posed new questions in terms of intersectionality, multiple or mixed identities and the global dimensions of metropolitan migrations coming to Britain from all corners of the planet (Vertovec, 2007). Among these, European populations were not yet foremost in this reflection, as so much of the intra-EU migration of the 1990s was young and professional and therefore (largely) “invisible,” and still mostly West European (Favell, 2008b). But the transformation of the British economy into a services and flows driven, global switchpoint, was creating a very new profile of lower end migrants, with a wider transformation of the large British cities mixed in with ongoing family migrations from outside the EU. This was particularly the case with London, a paradigmatic “space of flows” in Manuel Castells’ terms (1996), a key global city, and arguably the quintessential one.

The Commission put together under the leadership of multicultural philosopher Bhikhu Parekh, a former Chair of CRE, included numerous stalwarts of the British race relations industry. Among them, though, were two other prominent academics and theorists — who we might surmise provided a good deal of the intellectual substance of the report: Tariq Modood, a vocal critic of how race relations had failed to represent Muslims, and a strong believer in the potential of a

multicultural liberal nationalism in Britain; and Stuart Hall, now in his later period of thinking after the cultural turn in Marxism and the “new times” of the 1980s, a radical cosmopolitan and decolonial thinker on identity, diaspora and hybridity — and its expression in anti-racist politics (Parekh et al, 2000).

Others on the Commission certainly were less radical. But what emerged showed the strong imprint of considered theoretical reflection. The future of multi-ethnic Britain, they argued, was a multi-racial future, reconciling the anti-racism of Black politics with emergent Muslim concerns on cultural racism, that had been at the forefront of discussion since the 1989 Rushdie scandal (the Muslim mobilisation against the author of a scandalous novel, *The Satanic Verses*; see Favell, 1998b). The report embraced super-diversity (the term had not yet been invented, even if its conditions were visible) as multi-ethnicity, and identified the residual resistance in Britain to the transformations in its midst with issues connected to the historical narrative of British nationalism. The imperial vision of the nation needed to change in order to see Britain as an emergent global space of diasporas and hybridity — one with a different historical narrative, that might recognise the evils of a colonial past, and embrace aspects of the society found *outside* its borders among its own populations. In this sense it was a post-national vision, embracing non-discrimination by nationality, culture, race or ethnicity, accepting the longer term consequence of leaving behind illusory notions of an indigenous white country that had now to open itself to the full effect of global migration, mobilities and diversity. The report imagined the nation as a “Community of communities” — hence hedging the question of nationhood as “multiculturalism-in-one-nation” (Favell, 1998b; see also Uberoi, 2015). Was it one — or multiple? The report made several recommendations concerning the official recognition of multiculturalism, and the institutionalisation of a more general and intersectionally flexible Equality Act that would mainstream racial discrimination fully alongside all other forms of anti-discrimination legislation — and offer better protection on culture and religion (this was eventually passed in 2010). The report was upbeat about the country’s ability to transcend

persistent racial disadvantage — its transformative agenda on diversity and culture could, it said, still be radically anti-racist.

It was on the view of nationhood that the report attracted the most attrition. The report noted the impact of devolution and globalisation in the UK and its posing problems to Britain as a unifying singular unit. It saw the migrant and minority diversity as a resource in the building of a more multiple community of communities beyond the old idea of the Union — in its way, a response to old “Black” politics challenge that there *‘Ain’t no Black in the Union Jack* (Gilroy, 1987). This undoubtedly was its positive national message — it suggested Britain had a capaciousness and experience that could contain these transformations. In advance of its launch the *Daily Telegraph* first reported a well-known right-wing politician, Ann Widdecombe (who has latterly become a prominent face of the Brexit Party), then the shadow Home Secretary, making positive noises. She noted, apparently approvingly, that “We have come light years in this country since the 1970s and I am very pleased to hear someone else recognising this. People’s attitudes have changed a lot, and although I am not saying that everything is perfect, race relations are extremely good” (Bentham, 2000).

A couple of days later, though, with the launch expected by then Home Secretary Jack Straw, the *Telegraph* had made a pivot, perhaps sensing a different sea change in play. Since the late 1980s, with the Rushdie Affair, and the scandal about a conservative headmaster Ray Honeyford criticising Muslim demands in education schools (1985), there had been growing sympathy for the critique of multiculturalism (Favell, 1998b). Parekh and Modood were two of the most vocal advocates of British multiculturalism. But there were also many on the “race and class” far left who hated the cultural turn, joining a wave of conservative nationalist critique of the compromises over conservative Muslim demands during the 90s (Joppke & Morawska, 2003).

The *Daily Telegraph* now set about isolating the report’s most sweeping statements, those still critical of Britain’s performance (Johnston, 2000). The report contained negative views on

Britain's treatment of asylum seekers, about the harsh effects of immigration control on British minority families, and noted still virulent pockets of everyday racism around the country. The history of Britain, the report said, was not recognising minorities in the story — the imperial history of the Irish, Africa and Asian colonies, was left out. For this reason, Britain and British still had racist connotations of imperial domination in its self-conception, they argued; and it was adamant too that England and Englishness had exclusive racial connotations. Britishness had to become hyphenated, hybrid, decentered.

The *Daily Telegraph* now framed this as treason (Johnston, 2000). Accusing the report of branding Britain "racist," it launched a broad attack on the multicultural aims of the government. Other Newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* joined in the attacks. Members of the Commission were attacked, with Parekh and Hall singled out for abuse; Runnymede received death threats (for the detailed account, see McLaughlin & Neal, 2004; Neal & McLaughlin, 2017). Within days, the Labour government distanced itself from the report, setting itself on a new neo-nationalist course that over the next few years would see it re-embracing an ideology of national integration instead of multiculturalism, new conditions on naturalisation and citizenship, ever tighter immigration controls and targets, and eventually a muscular liberalism and heavy anti-radicalisation policing (such as "Prevent") in the face of Muslim extremism. (Jones et al, 2017). This continued into the anti-"immigration" Blue Labour policies of Ed Miliband (see Shabi, 2019). The "hostile environment" in fact pre-dated Theresa May, if not in name (Jones et al., 2017). The focus on good race relations and multicultural inclusion drifted away particularly into a concern with the social isolation of Muslim communities (the Cattle Report, 2001, after the Asian riots of that year) and potential Muslim terrorism (after the 2005 London attacks).

Ironically, the Parekh Report had still reconceived British diasporic diversity almost exclusively against a post-colonial, Commonwealth background. In particular, Modood's nationalist version continued to be serviceable through the New Labour years and into the Cameron "one

nation” era. Aspects of this are still voiced by the likes of Boris Johnson — they are comfortable with this kind of (post) colonial vision (Sullivan 2019). The *Daily Telegraph* could have read the report that way. But the one it latched on to could be personalised in the radical (and politically “Black”) input of Stuart Hall, and it was much more unsettling — as had been the continued writing in this vein by his most well known follower, Paul Gilroy (1993; 2004). That race was a “sliding signifier” from phenotype to culture, that the diasporic experience of slavery had post-national as well as decolonial implications, that hybridity led beyond the nation-state, and that the most profound source of racism in the modern world is nationalism and nation-building (Hall, 2017; see also Valluvan, 2019). In other words that white racism lay at the heart of the Great British Union, in fact (as, in fact, Powell, had also effectively argued).

The *Daily Telegraph* in a sense had read it right (with reference here again to Johnston, 2000). It could indeed be said that there was a sub-stratum of treason at work in this argument. It was an attack on the fiction of Britain as an Island-Nation. Curiously, at this point in time, again, reading the statistics in a certain way, the newspaper could claim with a sober face: why should we listen to these radical multicultural claims, when *only* 4 million of British were of ethnic minority origin (well under 10%)? The effects of new migrations and the free movement of the 2000s had not yet shifted the demographic ground under their feet (on this see Vertovec, 2007).

To satisfy economic demand on migration, Labour also changed path. The question of economic demand was turned towards the EU; towards, in effect, migrants who were “white,” “Christian,” as well as generally young, well educated, hyper-mobile and flexible, and very unlikely to stay long term. Britain broke from the cautious EU pack in 2004 by opening its doors to free movement accession, after notoriously underestimating its likely appeal to East European workers (Dustmann et al., 2003; see Regout, 2016). A large number of these movers were in fact after-the-fact regularisation — London had already become a transnational East European economy (Garapich, 2008). As the figures rose to over a million Polish, large numbers of Romanians, Baltics

and other CEE nations, and totals — adding in all the West Europeans — as high as 3.7 million residents by the time of the referendum (Vargas-Silva & Fernández-Reino, 2019). This of course only added to Vertovec's super-diverse mix; it also added a new kind of practical European-scaled transnationalism that was a good illustration in its own way of Hall's radical diasporic hybridity (Favell, 2008b). This mix, of old and new minority and migrant populations in the global city, is the one celebrated in Hackney and Lambeth (Wessendorf, 2014) — and which delivered the city a Muslim mayor in 2016, and massive pro-Remain majority in the referendum (despite all the resident continental Europeans not having a vote). It was also the one celebrated as the true identity of Great Britain in the famous Olympics opening ceremony of 2012 — the last time perhaps the world has, universally, looked at "Great" Britain affectionately, before it became embroiled in the angstful auto-destruction and imperial roll back of the referendum. The point about the Britain found by new EU residents in the 2000s was that its culture of anti-discrimination, and the institutions that buttressed it, was one built on the long and hard won commitment to multiculturalism, multi-racial equality and its post-national, transnational and cosmopolitan shift beyond the nation, first signalled by (aspects of) the Parekh Report. Rigorous implementation of the EU's core value of non-discrimination by nationality, slotted right in alongside non-discrimination by race, religion, gender, age and disability, in the practices of private and public organisations, in service provision and public culture, and largely speaking in everyday life. Not only did this make Britain the most highly Europeanised society on one key measure: open and unqualified equal access to the labour market (Favell, 2014). It also put Britain at the core of European values, having also deeply influenced the EU in its thinking on anti-discrimination (Gerhards, 2007; Givens & Evans Case, 2014). It was this that has been ripped apart by Farage-ism and the referendum it won. The intent of Farage's manifesto against anti-discrimination had always clear, even to the *Daily Telegraph* (Hodges, 2015).

CONCLUSION: IRONIES OF THE POST-BREXIT IMMIGRATION ISLAND

For all their recklessness over “immigration”, and their apparent willingness to rip up the post-war settlement on race and multiculturalism, the politicians that now pilot the Island-Nation are very cautiously downplaying any further reactionary drift on these issues. They are men (and a few women) who know they have opened a Pandora’s box — and they are happy to sit on the lid a little longer if it can get them through another election. Johnson’s blustering appeasement to London’s super-diverse, immigrant economy has plotted its path towards the fiction of a high end only “good” immigration; anti-state global free marketeers (ironically) conjuring up a whole new state apparatus to direct the selection and allocation of migrants to economic demand. They gloat over the working class South Asian bus driver father from Rochdale origins of the libertarian millionaire banker Sajid Javid, the Pakistani British politician brought in to clean up the Windrush Scandal, now promoted as Chancellor to front the business deals of global trade that will follow Brexit. He and his colleagues seem to see no contradiction in the vision of an Island-Nation that has “taken back control” on “immigration,” but seeks to throw open its borders and regulation to every new business deal open on the planet.

Noises have been made about new trade and mobility relations with the New Commonwealth, but there is no political appetite for this, and no support amongst Leave voters. Reciprocal access for Pakistanis and Indians in the UK is a sad delusion that motivated some British South Asians to vote Leave. Any migration that happens from poorer parts of the world will happen even more dramatically now than it has in recent years through informal and illegal channels. The increasingly flexible and stratified economy of “global Britain” is very likely to offer many more such opportunities; again, diametrically the opposite of what Leave voters thought they were voting for. The shiny new immigration policy promised by Johnson, will be even more explicitly based on a biopolitics of selective “good” immigrants, the colour of money, and very also likely stratified racially, to reflect British imperial preferences in the world (see again Guardian, 2020). As has also become apparent, Britain can barely extract itself from EU free movement, leading to the enormous irony of the 300,000+ a year net migration being boosted by a one off 3 million new immigrant

settlement, as EU nationals are forced to naturalise — or go home (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018). The selection dynamics of course are obvious. Those at the top end, who could, have indeed gone back to the continent. This again was not part of the Leave voters preference set when they thought of “taking back control.” It constitutes a massive new “immigration,” among a lot of European nationals (most of whom who can retain their nationality), who have little incentive to feel or become truly British, except in a resentful instrumental way: not a great model of citizenship, for sure. Maybe their children will feel differently — despite the very difficult circumstances they have been born into, and the routine xenophobia that has been reported by bullies in school playgrounds (Zontini & Però, 2019). Their settlement is not a bad thing for Britain; far from it. It is a massive human capital boost. But again, it is diametrically the opposite of what Leave voters were convinced they wanted.

The swindle continues. Both May and Johnson were convinced by the kinds of arguments advanced by Goodhart, Goodwin and Kaufmann, that the locus of British political culture and the outcome of British elections, lay with low educated, xenophobic, angry “working class” white men, who apparently populate the North of England in large numbers. The Labour Party, a little more romantically, has also been pulled in by this logic (see Chakraborty, 2019, discussing Evans & Tilley, 2017). The post-industrial North and some agricultural regions are going to get some financial attention — a bung of a few million quid, and a lot of talk and political stunts (UK Government, 2019) — when it was already the biggest beneficiary of EU subsidies, and has the biggest to lose as a region from losing EU markets (“New SPERI research,” 2016). Meanwhile, Northern Ireland, which depends in its own way, on the careful institutional preservation of multicultural pluralism, has as always been forgotten.

Scotland, however, has taken a different line on migration and diversity. Doubtless it would face some of the same challenges in winning over a majority white population, but a multi-ethnic, multi-racial line is a good one when its main ethnic division is a religious one. Reconceiving Scotland

with the positive legacy of multiculturalism-in-one-nation — at ease in Europe and in the world — would work, and with its population profile facing sharp demands for migration, it could potentially thrive with free movement. Certainly it can count on a lot more English escaping north.

Multiculturalism-in-one-nation, however, is not an option for the rump England that may be left if the Union splits. All the Black English footballers and Muslim cricketers in the world, are not going to paper over the fact the St. George English nationalism mobilised racism and xenophobia to get itself across the referendum line, and that the Unionist mission of Great Britain is now in the hands of an exclusively English nationalist Conservative party and its voting constituency, that has taken Farage-ism to his heart, while still refusing to clasp Nigel to its bosom. Farage's entire career was motivated by resentment for his exclusion from the Conservative Party. Post-empire myths will not hold together the massively superdiverse, diaspora nation of angry indigenous white "nationals" and angry and mistreated minorities and new citizens — not least with a gung ho global business model, based on services industry that will only create more unmanageable migration, flows and mobilities, profiting from casualisation, flexibilisation, and informalisation, and held together by a cynical biopolitical governmentality, that is all about facilitating differentiated flows through stratification and categorical discrimination (Morris, 2015). It is light years from a country proud to have institutionalised the most comprehensive set of race equality and anti-discrimination provisions in Europe for nationals and non-nationals alike. The model, of course, is the US, and "smoke and mirror" immigration politics (Massey, Malone, & Durand, 2002) — that boosts all the business opportunities of migrant exploitation, via racialised hierarchies of access and exclusion, and a deportation regime designed to keep low end migrants available yet permanently vulnerable (de Genova, 2010). The one thing this model never delivers is less migration: although it creates great anti-immigration theatre, when it talks tough and builds walls. Meanwhile, of course, the exclusive focus on evaluating migration from the receiving side only, and attempts to restrict transnationalism and back-and-forth transactions that sustain return investments and remittances, only drives global inequality further up, and development in sending countries down.

Meanwhile, back home, some of the politicians' noises being made about doing good by the British working class may have a social democratic air, but this is hardly a sincere goal. To reimagine the British economy as one that might protect British workers, or give them improved labour conditions, would require a transformation in a totally different direction, towards the kind of left nationalist programme that has been defined in Germany by Streeck (2017). It would need a manufacturing economy, and German style industrial system; it would need effective unions, who could secure higher pay and better conditions for British workers; there would need to be new state imposed red tape, intervening into companies, controlling their hiring processes, imposing quotas imposing national preferences over economic demand; they would need to throw out a lot of anti-discrimination law. A series of things antinomical to the path of the British economy in the last five decades would, in short, need to happen, to create a protected British workforce with higher pay and better conditions and benefits. It is very improbable any Conservative government could be sincere about these goals; it is highly unlikely a Labour government would be able to deliver any of them. The demand for migration, in a flexible, highly open economy, is likely to remain high, unless one government or another crashes the economy — which some have seen as the ultimate goal of the *no deal* hardcore, who seem to want a reset *tabula rasa* for the new global Britain to emerge.

The experience of migration and diversity in Britain in the 1990s and 2000s showed that what is economically and culturally sustainable in a positive vision of national transformation is different from what is politically sustainable. Those that wanted to transform the nation in another direction — to re-install an imperial, colonial Britain freed from reconciling its place in the world with Europe — have taken the opportunity offered by the normative power of sovereigntist thinking. It was carried by its easiest and most powerful expression, a 50% + one vote, that can be claimed forever as the “voice of the People.” This is of course not the only model of democracy that might be conceived for a global political economy, and certainly not the only model of political demography. It appears far from viable given the contradictions it contains within its Island-Nation mentality, and is likely to be explosive given the unavoidable demographic direction of population change and

diversity. It is held together by algorithms of social media obfuscation, an open destruction of values of truth and sincerity in the public sphere, and a wild, tabloid media-led, riding of populist resentment against professional politicians, lawyers, bureaucrats and intellectuals in favour of authoritarian popular sovereignty (see, again, Cummings, 2019).

The Great British Brexit Swindle has used these ideas and values but delivered power to an even narrower, global-business fixated elite, with no intention of restricting the flows and mobilities that have unleashed these forces. The proud Island-Nation sailing off into the mid-Atlantic will indeed be a powder keg — once the Powellism that delivered this result finds it has nowhere to go, and no Europe left to blame. As Britain sails away to its fate, a more hopeful future for European multi-ethnic, multi-racial society will have to be looked for elsewhere — to France or Germany, to the Netherlands or Sweden; societies with their own deep and divisive diversity dilemmas, but also societies — perhaps, we may hope — with a greater awareness and memory of just where all of the dark stuff of imperial nationalism can lead.

Appendix

The present article is a version of a paper originally presented at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and then subsequently at University of Queensland, Brisbane, Loughborough University, UCLA, European University Institute, Florence, and University of Paris-Sorbonne III. I thank audiences at these events for their responses. It also draws upon the work of the ESRC 'Governance after Brexit' project [Northern Exposure: Race, Nation and Disaffection in "Ordinary" Towns and Cities after Brexit](#), for which I would like to thank fellow team members, outside partners, and colleagues at the University of Leeds.

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