Race, immigration and multiculturalism in Conservative ideology from Powell to Johnson.

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Abstract

Enoch Powell's legacy continues to haunt British politics, and especially the Conservative Party, which while seeking to distance itself from the more extreme language and warnings of his so-called "Rivers of Blood" speech has nevertheless embraced Powell's belief that mass migration has mostly had a negative impact on British society and that multiculturalism has generally been a failure. Drawing extensively on the Powell archives, parliamentary debates and election manifestos from the 1960s onwards, we argue that Powell's vision of Britain as a white, Christian and "Greater English" homogeneous community is consistent both with Conservative immigration policy in the decades following their return to government in 1970 and with how more recent leading Conservative politicians have tended to define the "we" of the sovereign nation as against an increasingly hostile casting of the "other" represented by new and existing migrant communities as well as the competing sovereignties of the European Union and its member states during and after the EU referendum campaign.

Keywords: Enoch Powell; Conservative Party; immigration, race, multiculturalism

Introduction

On 23rd July 2019, Boris Johnson was elected leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party by a two to one majority, polling 92,153 votes compared to his rival, Jeremy Hunt's tally of 46,656. Among Prime Minister Johnson's first key appointments was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, who was born in Rochdale to a Muslim Pakistani immigrant bus driver father and a mother who did not speak English. As Home Secretary, Johnson appointed Priti Patel, the daughter of Gujarati Indian parents who had left Uganda to start a new life in Britain in the 1960s before Idi Amin's purges of non-African residents prompted a major exodus in the early 1970s. Johnson also appointed as Conservative Party Chairman and Cabinet member, James Cleverly who was born in Lewisham to a British father and an African mother from Sierra Leone.

The ethnic and religious diversity that these senior Cabinet appointments represented would appear to give the lie to any claim that Britain's longest running and most successful governing party had an on-going problem with race. Yet just a few months before, in his role as Home Secretary, Sajid Javid was forced to announce a compensation scheme for hundreds of victims of the so-called "hostile environment" that had led to the resignation of his predecessor Amber Rudd and which had been enthusiastically promoted by the then Prime Minister Theresa May during her long tenure at the Home Office.[1]

[1]https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/april/government-updates-mps-on-windrush-compensation-scheme/

In the lead up to readings of the Bill that would become the Immigration Act 2014, Theresa May announced her intention to create a “hostile environment” for certain categories of migrants in the United Kingdom (Travis, 2013). But while May specifically identified “illegal” immigrants as the targets of punitive restrictive measures, the effect of this policy approach was to unsettle any migrants who were legally present and to disincentivise the entry of those attempting to work or to join family in the UK. This aggressive approach was manifested in 2013 during Operation Valken, a Home Office initiative that featured the deployment of advertising vans carrying the message "Go home or face arrest" around areas of London with high proportions of ethnic minority residents (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018: 234).

The targeting of these areas not only signalled that Britain’s inner city communities required extraordinary intervention by law enforcement officials precisely because of their ethnic make-up (Atkinson, Parker & Morales 2017); it reinforced what we argue is a longstanding Conservative trope of demarcating the boundaries of national belonging along racial lines. Diane Abbott’s criticism of the "rhetoric" of the Immigration Act 2014 illuminates the inseparability of public policy from racialised constructions of illegality, and it also highlights the unbroken thread of Conservative immigration policy that we contend links “the hostile environment” to its origins in the idea of a British nation under siege from alien outsiders that had been successfully championed by Enoch Powell in the 1960s and subsequently

> I remind the House that immigration as an issue has been freighted with emotion since the days of Enoch Powell, and since those days immigration has been a synonym for black, Asian and foreign-looking people – for "the other". […]
>
> The danger with the Bill is not just that it will create the hostile environment for illegal immigrants that the Home Secretary was boasting of, but that it will tend to create a hostile environment for all of us of immigrant descent and our children (Hansard, 22 October 2013, Vol. 569, cc220-221).

The Powell Factor

Enoch Powell began his infamous speech to his Birmingham Conservative Constituency Association on 20 April 1968 with the words:

> The supreme function of statesmanship is to provide against preventable evils. In seeking to do so, it encounters obstacles which are deeply rooted in human nature[2]

[2] Enoch Powell, "Speech at Birmingham, 20 April 1968," in Freedom and Reality, ed. John Wood (London, 1969), 213–19. All subsequent Powell quotations are from this speech unless otherwise noted.

We argue that "the evils" Powell wished to prevent amounted to the emergence of a multiracial or multicultural Britain, a reality which many of the United Kingdom's towns and cities have since become. However, this diversity has not been accompanied by a greater willingness to accept a non-essentialised definition of Britishness and Englishness among Conservative leaders, MPs and party members or with Conservative-aligned political and media outlets and commentators. In more recent years the privileging of an *ur*-British, or perhaps more accurately "Greater English" identity has been defined through and against the UK's membership of the European Union and the apparent capture of Britain's sovereign right to control its own borders, laws, courts, seas and territory. After the narrow victory of the Leave campaign in the June 2016 referendum on continued British membership of the European Union, Theresa May's government and indeed the Labour Opposition under Jeremy Corbyn made ending "freedom of movement" a key tenet of their approach to the withdrawal agreement with the European Union. The right to belong and, more importantly, the exclusion of those without the right to belong has increasingly defined the British polity since the 1960s in no small measure due to the legacy of Enoch Powell.

Far from being a maverick outsider who quickly became associated with an abandoned "unacceptable face of Conservatism", Enoch Powell's "taboo breaking" warnings on the perils of non-white immigration and membership of the then Common Market opened the door to a populist politics that made previously covert racist immigration controls

entirely legitimate and a necessary pre-condition for "good community relations".[3] Successive Conservative leaders not only accepted the premises of Powell's cultural xenophobia, they refined and extended the categories of "othering" by recourse to an idealised notion of the good, integrated, settled and numerically contained immigrant community which needed to be contrasted with the opportunist, impecunious and criminal "aliens" against whom the United Kingdom's borders must be defended.

In this paper we identify three strands to this Conservative defence and assertion of an authentic racialised British identity—

1. The primacy of the Union and Protestant supremacy as the sovereign core of the historic British Empire
2. The presumption that the default British subject is of White British heritage
3. The belief that if migrants cannot assimilate with and be accepted by the "native population" then measures must be taken to control, prevent and if necessary remove their presence in order to preserve genuine British identity and the British way of life

Enoch Powell on Immigration and Race Relations in the 1960s

[3] Gallup and National Opinion Polls calculated the percentage in agreement with Powell at re- spectively 74 per cent and 67 per cent of the country. Amy Whipple, *Journal of British Studies* 48 (July 2009): 717–735.

Against the background of the 1968 Race Relations Act and a shift in public policy that had finally moved to make "the colour bar" unlawful, the Conservative Party which had successfully reaped the electoral rewards of a populist backlash against the perceived "open door" policy of the Wilson Labour government to immigration from the New Commonwealth in the 1968 local government elections, sought new ways to "play the race card" without leaving itself open to accusations of Powellism or fellow travelling with a resurgent and increasingly popular far right. To achieve this, successive Conservative leaders from Edward Heath onwards raised the standard of "good community relations" in order to justify the racial/geographical sorting of would be migrants, repatriation, and punitive immigration controls—including a major extension of unlimited administrative detention for those over whom the Home Secretary enjoyed unprecedented powers of immigration control.

However, this shift towards a punitive deterrent approach to unwanted and uninvited migration into the UK was not exclusive to the Conservative Party. The Wilson government expanded restrictions introduced under Macmillan in 1962 with its 1968 amendment to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. While exclusivity became a central plank of New Labour's immigration policy under Tony Blair and it remained so under Gordon Brown whose "British jobs for British workers" speech to the Labour Party Conference in 2007 confirmed an emerging political elite consensus on national identity in which citizenship must remain the exclusive and jealously guarded prerogative of the sovereign state.[4] However, we argue that while Powellism continued and continues to

[4]http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7010664.stmhttp://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7010664.stm

shape the ideology of modern Conservatism, there is no equivalent racialised narrative of exclusion and belonging that ideologically defines the other major parliamentary parties in British politics.

The arrival of the Windrush generation in the late 1940s and 1950s, the subsequent entry of New Commonwealth citizens in the 1960s and 1970s and the apparent divergence between "native" and immigrant ways of life—from household formation to leisure patterns to religious worship and tolerance— became frequent subjects of criticism by Conservative politicians and Conservative leaning newspapers (although far from exclusively) throughout the post-war period. However, a closer examination of official and unofficial declarations of Conservative leaders and prominent politicians from the Heath government's apparent "distancing" from the Conservative Party's "Powellite" wing in the late 1960s to the leadership of Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s and 1980s to the era of Major, Howard, Hague and Duncan Smith in the 1990s and 2000s, to the premierships of David Cameron and Theresa May in the 2010s reveals a far more ambivalent attitude to immigration and immigrant communities in the United Kingdom than might be assumed from an aberrationist reading of the Powell effect on modern Conservative political thought and policy-making.

Indeed, Smith (1994) argues that:

> A right wing populist movement did emerge (in the 1960s) which spoke effectively to the concerns of many of the alienated and disenchanted. It offered a tremendously popular alternative to the consensus approach and, in this sense, laid some of the

> groundwork which was critical to the legitimation of Thatcherism's right-wing populist project. The key point is that this movement, Enoch Powell's anti-black immigration movement, was constructed around race and nationalism, rather than economic issues (Smith, 1994: 6).

In what follows we seek to extend Smith's argument about the defining character of Powell's attack on multiculturalism and immigration for Conservative ideology beyond the Thatcher years to include all her successors as Conservative leaders, who in their different ways have sought to both appease and expand the right wing populist constituency which forms a sizeable share of the Conservative membership and potential voter base while maintaining, at least publicly, an opposition to racism in its crudest manifestations. While we do not have the space to analyse Powellism's effect on fringe far right groups such as the National Front, the BNP and the EDL along with the more recent rise of anti-European Union parties including the Referendum Party, UKIP and the Brexit Party, we argue that Enoch Powell foreshadowed much of the ideological rhetoric on the political right in Britain which served to condition and bolster the Conservatives' broadly anti-immigrant stance in the ensuing decades.

Enoch Powell's bitter reflection that "all political careers end in failure" proved to be a fitting epitaph for an intelligent young academic turned politician whose ambitions to lead the Conservative Party and eventually his country were to end in backbench obscurity as a member of an increasingly beleaguered Ulster Unionist Party. Powell was a man whose name for many had become a byword for prejudice and bigotry, while for

others it remained the true voice of an embattled, authentic English nation that saw itself in danger of becoming "a stranger in its own country".

Powell's contribution to future discourse on race within British politics was the normalisation of rhetoric that, as Bourne (1998: 59) notes, had previously "belonged to the fascist fringe".

> Powell institutionalised the whole numbers game—how many were coming now, how many would come, how many would they breed and how many would have been bred by the year 2000. And, merging into the numbers game, was the spectre of a changed British complexion—a coffee-coloured nation was at hand (ibid: 59).

Powell, who is perhaps best remembered for his vociferous pronouncements of the dangers of Commonwealth immigration, was nevertheless relatively silent about the issue during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Shepherd (1997: 133) explains that while Powell acknowledged the potential for societal schisms along racial lines as early as 1955, his paternalistic attitude toward Britain's imperialist legacy -- which he later abandoned -- resulted in his tacit support of assistance initiatives for immigrants advanced by the then Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd.

In the absence of a Powell-driven agenda prior to the mid-1960s, Cyril Osborne and Norman Pannell were the main anti-immigrant torchbearers for the Conservatives, though Frank Tomney, Labour MP for Hammersmith North, was also a notable figure. During a House of Commons debate in 1958, Tomney announced that "wishing" would not solve the "problems" related to immigration and that, "for the first time in Great

Britain", a "colour problem existed" (Hansard, 05 December 1958 vol 596 cc1589-90). For Osborne, Tomney and Pannell, immigration control was a matter of colour, with New Commonwealth migrants the identified targets for restricted access to the United Kingdom due to their "inherent" incompatibilities with the "native" British population. During a sitting of the House of Commons in February 1961, Pannell stressed the innate backwardness of New Commonwealth migrants:

> It is very difficult not to deal with this [immigration] problem without mentioning the high incidence of coloured immigration to this country … It must be admitted that many Commonwealth immigrants come from countries with backgrounds and codes of conduct which are totally different from those in this country. There is a standard of civilisation which is lower and there are acquired habits and inclinations which conflict with the accepted pattern of this country, which has evolved over the centuries. Certain difficulties are bound to arise in such cases (Hansard, 17 February 1961 vol 634 c1963).

Even amidst the clamour of the sharp rise in immigration in 1961 (the number breached 100,000), it was not until the Kenyan Asian "crisis" of 1963 and Peter Griffiths' surprise victory in Smethwick after running an explicitly anti-immigrant campaign that Powell earnestly began his determined cause against Commonwealth immigration. After Kenya's independence in 1963, the British government offered Kenyan citizens, who had previously been recognised as British passport holders, a two-year window within which to choose between a British passport and a Kenyan one. However, during the same period, the Kenyan government sought to evict its Asian population from the country, which resulted in 100,000 Kenyan Asians opting to come to the United Kingdom under valid UK passports.

Powell believed the UK government never expected Kenya to eject its Asian population and therefore would not have allowed so many to have unlimited access to Britain (Schoen, 1977: 30-31). It was on these grounds that Powell launched his critique of the government's approach to immigration, even as others like Reginald Maudling attempted to convince him that the government had been fully aware of the possibility of the mass migration of Kenyan Asians following the country's independence.[5] Disillusioned at the irreversible march of decolonisation, from 1964 onwards, Powell spoke openly about his disapproval of the number of Commonwealth immigrants entering and residing within what the Windrush generation had been encouraged to think of as "the mother country" of the British Empire.

Powell was frustrated that the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act had done little to substantially quell the amount of immigrants coming to Britain. Incensed by the Wilson government's proposed Race Relations Act, Powell decided to address what he considered to be the concerns of every "decent" British citizen. At a Conservative Association meeting on 20 April 1968, Powell evoked an image of the New Commonwealth migrant that was both vile and menacing. For Powell, immigrants were disruptors of the peace and guilty of atrocities against unassuming British citizens. Upending the rhetoric of the Race Relations Bill, Powell declared that those truly suffering from discrimination were native Britons, rather than the minority groups the Bill was intended to protect. For Powell, the only measure capable of preventing a disaster of "American proportions" was a net immigration level of zero—even if it

[5] Maudling to Powell, quoted in *The Times*, 28 May 1971 in Shepherd, 1997: 337.

meant offering migrants a stipend to return to their countries of origin (Powell, 1992b: 164).

Powell's surprise speech in Wolverhampton instigated an intense reaction within Parliament. Quentin Hogg warned that the "roomful of gunpowder"--as Powell so vividly described it--was more in danger of exploding due to Powell "flicking the ash" of a cigarette "all over the place". Hogg was resentful that Powell had gone straight to the press and television stations instead of first approaching him about the content of his speech:

> It was not as if my right hon. Friend did not know what the effect of his remarks would be. He did, because he said in terms that he could imagine the outcry he would cause. He did not come to me. He did not give me a sight of what he was going to say. (Hansard, 23 April 1968 vol 763 c74)

Through the power of spectacle, Powell deftly refocused the debate on the Race Relations Act away from discrimination against minorities to the "problem" of immigration. For Powell, the real sufferers of discrimination were not "coloured" migrants, but the native white population whose homeland was being overrun by the menace of the outsider (Powell, 1992b: 165). The Heath Government's official response to Powell's speech was to evict him from the Shadow Cabinet and to publicly castigate him for his incendiary rhetoric. However, while Powell was further relegated to the fringes of the respectable political realm, his proposals became the focus of strategic interest to the Conservative Party. This fact was not lost on Prime Minister Harold

Wilson, who, in May 1969 accused Heath of being duplicitous in his response to Powell's approach to immigration issues:

> I think that the posture of the right hon. Gentleman [Heath] is always to dissociate himself in tone from his right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Powell) but never to dissociate himself from the policy. (Hansard, 15 May 1969 vol 783 c1639)

This was clear enough from Edward Heath's speech to the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool five months after Powell's Birmingham speech:

> On immigration you have endorsed the proposals which I put forward at York for the strict control of entry, together with policies to promote racial harmony. [...] [T]his policy will severely curtail the number of immigrants coming into this country. But, at the same time, we shall pursue policies to help racial harmony. Again we will help those who wish to return to their own country. But let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that this is going to remove the problem - it will not, but we will help in this way. But if there are any who believe that immigrants to this country, most of whom have already become British citizens, could be forcibly deported because they are coloured people, in an attempt to solve this problem, then that I must repudiate, absolutely and completely (Heath, 1968).

In alluding to Powell, Heath was being somewhat disingenuous since the member for Wolverhampton South-West had never actually called for *compulsory* repatriation, although many of his supporters favoured such a policy. Wilson's attacks on Heath's

unconvincing attempt to distance official Conservative policy on immigration from that of Powell were an attempt to create a smoke screen behind which the Labour government was quickly pulling up the immigration drawbridge in reaction to the potential influx of Kenyan and Ugandan Asians. The resulting 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act subjected all Commonwealth migrants to immigration control unless they had a parent or grandparent who was born, adopted or naturalised in the UK (Hepple, 1968). The 1969 Immigration Appeals Act further distinguished the legal status of migrants from British citizens (Hepple, 1969).

The immigration acts of the 1960s successively redefined what it meant to be a British citizen, and the 1971 Immigration Act made divisions even more distinct by introducing the categories of "patrials" and "non-patrials" and included a provision for the repatriation of migrants. While Enoch Powell was certainly not the first to speak to the ills of Commonwealth Immigration, as Studlar suggests, he managed to "channel … hostility [toward migrants] into votes for the Conservative Party in 1970" (Studlar, 1978). Iain Macleod was convinced that Powell was having an impact, and stated that it was likely that "Powellism" would "shape much of [the Conservative Party's] programme" by the time the General Election occurred (Schoen, 1977: 15). Perhaps Ronald Bell's only mistake in implying that Powell's speech would lead to the implementation of more expansive immigration legislation was merely a misjudgement in timing; it did not take 10 years to institute Powell's proposed policies—it took less than three.

The 1971 Immigration Act and the Ugandan Asian "crisis"

The 1970 Conservative Party manifesto clearly defined the Party's designs to bring about more restrictive immigration controls. It identified the "cause" of racial tension to be the presence of foreigners within Britain and it promised to "ensure" that there would be "no further large scale permanent immigration". The manifesto indicated that a Conservative government, if elected, would "give assistance to Commonwealth immigrants who wish to return to their countries of origin".[6] When Edward Heath and the Conservatives emerged victorious, the Party set about developing a more comprehensive immigration policy that would retain elements from the bills passed throughout the 1960s and would also cautiously implement some of the changes Powell proposed near the end of the decade.

Powell consistently argued that a complete cessation of Commonwealth immigration was not enough to solve the "problem" of migrants in Britain, as too many had already arrived and threatened to outnumber the British population as they continued to procreate. This example from Powell's famous Wolverhampton speech expresses his thoughts on immigrants already living in the United Kingdom and demonstrates his advocacy of repatriation, a policy once suggested by John Bean, a founding member of the British National Party (Foot, 1965: 208), "I turn to re-emigration. If all immigration ended tomorrow, the rate of growth of the immigrant and immigrant-descended population would be substantially reduced, but the prospective size of this element in

[6] Conservative Party Manifesto 1970.

the population would still leave the basic character of the national danger unaffected" (Powell, 2007).

Powell may not have succeeded in putting "re-emigration" at the top of the immigration agenda, despite some cross party support, but he had certainly won the debate on the need to end "uncontrolled migration", which because of the predominantly Black and Asian character of immigration in the 1960s had an undeniable racial bias, as Lord Shepherd a vocal opposition critic of the Immigration Bill lamented,

> I do not conceal from the House my bitter hostility to this Bill. It is not entirely because of what is in the Bill that I feel that way. I think it is perhaps the concept and motivation of the Bill—this is the last time that I shall say this—and because of the dark shadow of the right honourable gentleman in another place who undoubtedly influenced the views of the Party opposite … I believe that many provisions of the Bill will not in any way assist in the assimilation of the coloured community (Hansard, 24 June 1971 vol 320 cc1014-1015).

Lord Shepherd's fears proved to be amply well founded. The 1971 Immigration Act created new categories of exclusion and introduced comprehensive restrictive measures against "persons subject to immigration control". Migrants were no longer considered "settled" in the United Kingdom unless they were unbound by time restrictions, and Commonwealth and Irish citizens could no longer automatically register as British citizens after five years of residency (Evans, 1972: 509-510). The Act further restricted access of "non-patrials" to employment and required immigrants from some countries to register with the police. The Secretary of State gained immense latitude and

immigration officers were given extensive discretionary powers in determining grounds for deportation. The Act also allowed the Secretary of State to deport a migrant's family regardless of their length of residence in the United Kingdom (Evans, 1972: 517-18). Additionally, migrants could be detained if subject to a deportation order. However, detention was not limited to those facing imminent deportation. Immigration officers could refuse entry and the Secretary of State could detain migrants "pending examination or pending removal from the United Kingdom". The 1971 immigration legislation introduced an entirely new quality to the expression of state power. A person's status as a non-UK national was potentially enough to lead to his or her imprisonment for an indefinite period. The boundary between "insider" and "outsider" had never before been so clearly demarcated.

Despite the substantial restrictions introduced in the 1971 Act, Enoch Powell remained unconvinced of its effectiveness and sought to introduce further controls. He believed the Act's inclusion of a repatriation scheme was half-hearted and lacked emphasis amidst the other policy proposals (Powell, 1978: 66). Powell continued to obsess over the influx of New Commonwealth migrants into the UK, which is evidenced in his painstaking analyses of immigration statistics and the many letters he sent to statisticians and other politicians warning of the imminent threat migrants posed to the British economy and its people's way of life. Powell collected documents featuring the net balances of foreign nationals moving into and out of the UK under the 1971 Immigration Act. Against one such document, Powell placed tick marks next to the figures for Canada, Australia and New Zealand, signalling his apparent acceptance of migration from majority white countries, while he conspicuously omitted the numbers

of migrants from these Commonwealth nations from his tally of migrants entering and exiting Britain (POLL, 8/2/2, Immigration Act 1971 statistics, Net Balances Jan-Mar 1973). In his famous speech in Birmingham, Powell stated that because of “marked” differences of “colour”, the integration of ethnic migrants would be "difficult" (Powell, 1992b: 167). This lack of faith in "coloured" migrants’ ability to assimilate into British communities was indicative of Powell’s belief that non-white immigrants were inherently volatile and disruptive. Despite the severity of the 1971 Act’s provisions, they were hardly enough to end new migration completely and anti-immigrant sentiments were soon reignited in 1972, when Britain once again faced a humanitarian crisis involving African Asians – this time from Uganda.

When Ugandan President Idi Amin declared that all Asians within the country had 90 days within which to vacate their homes and businesses and leave the country, tensions intensified in the United Kingdom, as it was feared that the vast majority of Ugandan Asians would seek residency in the UK using their British passports. An obsession with numbers dominated discourses relating to immigration into Britain, and led some within government to demand that the Ugandan Asians be refused entry. The UK Government even considered finding a remote island on which to settle the immigrants, but eventually acknowledged their right to enter (BBC News, 2003). Inevitably Enoch Powell was among the voices of discontent. For Powell, the Ugandan Asians seeking refuge in the United Kingdom were not Britain’s responsibility and he questioned the severity of the conditions from which they had fled. The immigration of Ugandan refugees, Powell declared, was "an imposition … foisted upon the long-suffering British on grounds of legal and moral obligations which were bogus" (To the Monday Club

Universities Group, November 18, 1972 in Powell, 1978: 72). Bale (2012: 161) notes that the Conservative Party's base interpreted the decision to accept Ugandan refugees as a betrayal of the manifesto commitment to halt one-off intakes of sizeable migrant populations. The Ugandan crisis presented an opportunity for Powell to continue to be the spokesman for the disaffected anti-immigrant right and its wider publics.

During the Conservative Party conference in October 1972, Powell continued advancing his anti-immigration agenda and discussed the social stresses immigration would pose to British society; he once again advocated repatriation schemes (Humphrey and Ward, 1974 in Schoen, 1977: 92-93). Edward Heath publicly disagreed with Powell, and believed it was the UK Government's duty to allow the Ugandan Asians entry. The Home Secretary, Robert Carr, flatly accused Powell of racialist views while praising all that the 1971 Act had done to curb immigration with its introduction of a repatriation scheme and the 24-hour surveillance of migrants. Powell's efforts to introduce a new immigration bill were unsuccessful, but his popularity barely diminished. Enoch Powell continued to be viewed as an "asset" to the Conservative Party amongst respondents in a series of Gallup polls undertaken between 1972 and 1973 (*The Times*, 11 October 1972 in Schoen, 1977: 93; Schoen, 1977: 92-97). Gallup polls conducted in the first few days of September 1972, weeks before the first Ugandan Asians arrived, found that a majority of people (54%) disapproved of the Heath Government's decision to admit them, while 28% expressed their approval (Kohler, 1973: 194). The arrival of Ugandan Asians heightened the resolve of those wishing to exclude foreigners from the country while Powell's supporters in the press stoked fears that tensions between "natives" and foreigners would culminate in an all-out conflict on the streets of Britain.

After Powell

It is telling that the Conservatives' ultimate abandonment of Enoch Powell did not immediately follow his expulsion from the Shadow Cabinet or even in the wake of the Heath government's public disavowal of Powellism while it was simultaneously drafting the 1971 Immigration Act. Instead, the break came on the issue of Europe and Powell's consternation that the Party backed an expanded monetary union. His concern, as Shepherd (1997: 437) notes, was that such a union would foreshadow "the establishment of a unitary European state within the lifetime of one parliament". His decision to support Harold Wilson's opposition preceding the 1974 election and his encouragement that a sizeable number of voters abandon Heath's government proved to be a betrayal too far. Powell's departure from the party was not exclusively related to his racialised anti-immigrant rhetoric, because those sentiments became party policy; it was attributable to the fact that he refused to toe the line on the European question (Schofield, 2013: 301).

With the arrival of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative Party leader, the connection between good race relations and restricting immigration that had been made in the 1970 Conservative manifesto was even more firmly emphasised. The 1979 manifesto emphasised the distinction between assimilated immigrants who were "legally settled here" and who ought to enjoy equality "before the law whatever their race, colour or creed" with equal opportunities while insisting that, "firm immigration control for the future is essential if we are to achieve good community relations. It will end persistent

fears about levels of immigration and will remove from those settled, and in many cases born here, the label of ‘immigrant’.”

In order to achieve this second objective the Conservatives proposed to introduce a new British Nationality Act "to define entitlement to British citizenship and to the right of abode in this country". Disingenuously the manifesto insisted that the Nationality Act "will not adversely affect the right of anyone now permanently settled here", while denying those who had permanently settled here the opportunity to be united with their parents, grandparents and children over 18 in all but "a small number of urgent compassionate cases". The Act would also remove the Labour government’s 1974 concession to husbands and male fiancés. Responding to the calls for the protection of jobs for indigenous British workers, the Conservative Party also promised to severely restrict the issue of work permits.

However, it was in the area of surveillance and population control that the 1981 British Nationality Act represented a great leap forward into a Powell inspired biopolitics. Not only was there to be a Register of Commonwealth wives and children entitled to entry for settlement under the 1971 Immigration Act, there was also to be a quota system, "covering everyone outside the European Community, to control all entry for settlement". The first time that the Conservatives embarked on what was to prove a perilous obsession with immigration targets. Although the 1971 Immigration Act already provided the Home Secretary with sweeping powers of arrest and detention, the Conservative manifesto pledged to "take firm action against illegal immigrants and overstayers and help those immigrants who genuinely wish to leave this country--but

there can be no question of *compulsory* repatriation" (emphasis added, Conservative Party Election Manifesto 1979, s4 cited in Partos, 2019: 86).

It was the series of violent disturbances in Britain's deprived inner city communities that were to prove the first major test for the Thatcher government's ability to reconcile its strident law and order agenda with the complaints emanating from many sections of Britain's Black and Asian communities that despite the anti-racist legislation of the previous Labour government, discrimination in housing, education, employment and especially policing was rampant (Parker and Atkinson 2018).

As disorder erupted on the streets of Brixton many were quick to label the riots as racially charged and an emphasis was placed on the minority ethnic character of the rioters (Benyon, 1984). When Lord Scarman offered his report on the riots at the request of the Home Secretary, he identified an "important racial dimension" to the riots, which accompanied deprivation and feelings of frustration (Scarman, 1986, pp.xiv, 1.4). Scarman's emphasis on race was evident in his assessment of those he deemed most prominent in the unrest: "[A] few hundred people – most, but not all of them, black – attacked the police on the streets" (Scarman, 1981, 1.2). Yet of those participating in the unrest throughout Britain in July 1981, 67 percent were white British. These statistics undermined media reports that the primary disruptors were black migrants when the riots were in fact "multi-racial and broadly affected the racial composition of the areas in which they occurred" (*Home Office Statistical Bulletin,* 1982 in Benyon, 1985: 410).

A discussion of immigration legislation followed in the aftermath of the Brixton riots. The Conservative MP for Basildon, Harvey Proctor, who was a leading figure in the Powellite Monday Club, feared the expansion of street violence and identified immigration as a primary source of unrest. For Proctor, a multi-ethnic Britain was all but impossible and those supporting multiculturalism were "engaged in a sustained attack" on the British "way of life". Harvey Proctor took up the theme in parliament where his advocacy of repatriation and indictment of immigration was unrelenting:

> Immigration has unsettled our institutions and traditions that have been nurtured over the centuries and abruptly changed the complexion and texture of our national life. Immigration makes us assume grave burdens and incur grave risks that would otherwise not arise … I believe that it would be fairer to black and white alike in our country if we were firmer [on immigration] (Hansard, 28 June 1982, v26, c662).

The Labour Shadow Home Secretary, Roy Hattersley, took a very different view and was explicit in connecting the roots of the urban unrest to discrimination and deprivation and a toxic anti-black migrant rhetoric that went from the Prime Minister right down to backbench MPs like Proctor and his colleagues

> I must be honest and say that I have some pessimism about the sort of answer that I am likely to receive from a young man of 16, about to leave school, certain to become and to remain unemployed, and denied any unemployment benefit until the second week in September. If that young man is black, how do the Government think that his answer is affected by the Prime Minister talking on television of other blacks "swamping" this country and the knowledge that a dozen or two dozen of her Back Benchers want to

> send that young man home, when he knows no other home than Brixton, Toxteth or Southall? (Hansard, 16 July 1981 v8 c1409)

The 1981 British Nationality Act meant that being born in the UK was no longer sufficient to acquire citizenship, which thereafter depended on the nationality or immigration status of the child's parents; on the child being born and residing in the UK for 10 years or on an exercise of the Secretary of State's discretion on the child's behalf. What Hattersley may not have anticipated was that the legislation being piloted through parliament would have the precise consequence of making it possible, decades later, to remove young men (and women) of New Commonwealth origin who had known no other home than Britain.

From Government to Opposition

The 1983 and 1987 Conservative election programmes followed a similar "firm and fair" pattern—officially opposing racial discrimination in everyday life while practising it in terms of marriage and family reunion restrictions in the interest of "good community relations". The 1987 manifesto boasted that "Immigration for settlement is now at its lowest level since control of Commonwealth immigration first began in 1962," with further tightenings promised to reduce opportunities for legal settlement from the Indian sub-continent and West Africa. For the first time in 1987, the figure of the fake or bogus refugee was identified and a solution promised to those seeking to use the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol without a genuine claim for

protection. In terms of citizenship and immigration the 1987 manifesto did not go as far as Norman Tebbit's notorious "cricket test" of Englishness but neither did it accept that "British culture" was a composite rather than an essential primordial social institution:

> Immigrant communities have already shown that it is possible to play an active and influential role in the mainstream of British life without losing one's distinctive cultural traditions. We also want to see all ethnic minorities participating fully in British culture. They will suffer permanent disadvantage if they remain in linguistic and cultural ghettos.

By the time of John Major's election to the leadership of the Conservative Party—"refugees" had been given equal billing with immigration in the manifesto for the 1992 election revealing an increasing anxiety and antipathy towards

> immigrants from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world [who] seek to abuse our openness to genuine refugees. The number of people seeking refugee status has risen from 5,000 a year to 45,000 over the past four years.

The remedies proposed were to form the backbone of a series of asylum and immigration acts aimed at creating faster and more effective systems of determining who are genuine refugees and who are not, an appeal system that would allow for the quick return of those with unfounded claims and biometrics (fingerprinting) to prevent multiple applications and benefit claims. This was the first in a series of manifesto commitments from both the Conservative and Labour parties that firmly established in

the public's mind the association of fraud and criminality with those seeking refuge or asylum.

Five years later, all mention of refugees had been replaced in the Conservative manifesto with the phrase "asylum seekers" who *if genuine* were to be promised sympathetic treatment but those with unfounded claims were warned that they would no longer be allowed to avoid normal immigration controls. William Hague's Conservative Party—in an effort to emphasise the point—promised a safe haven not a soft touch "on asylum" leaving to the imagination of the reader what would become of the UK's international obligation to protect refugees. Britain, voters were told, "has gained a reputation as a soft touch for bogus asylum seekers".

The Conservatives promised a significant ratcheting up of a system that they accused the Labour government of allowing to descend into chaos.

> In four years, Labour has seen the cost of the asylum system double and put a great strain on many communities. Our policy will be that all new asylum applicants are housed in secure reception centres until their cases are determined. This will speed up the process of establishing which claims are well-founded. Asylum applications from safe countries will not normally be accepted.
>
> We will ensure that those whose claims are rejected are quickly deported by a new Removals Agency.

Significantly, every one of the Conservative Party's pledges on asylum was accepted and implemented by the Blair and Brown Labour governments. The chaos in many parts of the system—as Labour Home Secretary John Reid candidly confessed in his "not fit for purpose" remark—nevertheless remained.

Clear Blue Water?

When the Conservatives returned to power as the dominant partner in a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats in 2010, David Cameron's pledge to reduce net migration from "hundreds of thousands" to "tens of thousands" marked a return to the "immigration by numbers" strategy familiar to the immigration debates of the 1960s. In February, Prime Minister Cameron used a speech in Munich to announce that "the doctrine of state multiculturalism" had failed. But while Cameron was cautious to separate devout Muslims from those who wished to destroy Western values—"Someone can be a devout Muslim and not be an extremist. We need to be clear: Islamist extremism and Islam are not the same thing", he insisted that the roots of fundamentalism lay in New Labour's flawed assumption that community integration could be made compatible with multiculturalism rather than through assimilation and the insistence on a common British way of life. Like his predecessor, John Major, who described his country as one of "long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers and, as George Orwell said, 'Old maids bicycling to holy communion through the morning mist'", the image ideal of Cameron's vision was unashamedly that of monoethnic Chipping Norton rather than cosmopolitan Notting Hill.

This stress on assimilation as a duty that even second and third generation immigrant communities owed to Britain was reinforced by David Cameron's insistence on the need for "a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism". He re-invoked the longstanding Conservative commitment to make the acquisition of English compulsory for those wishing to acquire British citizenship, and promised a "common curriculum" which his Education Minister, Michael Gove had vowed to promote through, for example, a new school history curriculum that celebrates Britain's achievements in the world. Gove argued, "[t]here is no better way of building a modern, inclusive, patriotism than by teaching all British citizens to take pride in this country's historic achievements. Which is why the next Conservative Government will ensure the curriculum teaches the proper narrative of British History—so that every Briton can take pride in this nation" (Gove, 2009).

The renewed emphasis on traditional British values and pride in British history betokened a Powell-like antipathy towards European sovereignty claims on Britain's laws and policymaking. Throughout the 2010s, Theresa May as Home Secretary and subsequently as Prime Minister made a habit of denouncing what she considered to be the undue interference of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice as well as the domestic courts operating under the 1998 Human Rights Act in contesting the use of ministerial powers and the legality of proposed or even existing legislation. This signalled more than dissatisfaction with legislative and judicial barriers to the deportation of foreign criminals; it reflected the government's frustration that it was unable to significantly reduce net immigration to the tens of thousands. As Partos

(2019: 152) notes, one of the major factors inhibiting the Conservative Party's ability to achieve this goal was "the existence of (EU and international) legislation which protected the rights of migrants", particularly EU migrants entitled to freedom of movement. The desire to circumvent these restrictions was evidenced in Home Secretary Theresa May's advocacy of a "British Bill of Rights". May stated in 2012 that if EU courts were unwilling to accept judicial advice from UK Parliament, the government would "have to look at other measures and that could include primary legislation" (Cordon, 2012). Concurrently, May advanced a policy approach aimed at destabilising existing immigrants' right to remain status while preventing the entry of others.

The broadened scope of potential migrant criminality during the 2010s reinforced the popularised view that difference is unassimilable. However, it also illuminated the willingness of consecutive Conservative governments to apply racialised logics of social control to immigration policy and advance the "criminalisation of diversity" (Burnett, 2008). Simultaneously the deep splits within the Conservative Party over Europe led to the departure of Theresa May as Prime Minister in July 2019, apparently vindicating Enoch Powell's warning in 1973 that

> The supreme right of the Commons to tax, legislate and call the executive to account has already been ceded. In the next Parliament will be completed the absorption of Britain into the new European State as one province along with others[7]

and reinforcing the determination of Conservative Leave MPs to refuse to pass a European Union Withdrawal Agreement which would continue to bind the United Kingdom to the EU's laws and institutions.

Conclusion

Boris Johnson's carefully cultivated dual identity as simultaneously a Churchillian statesman (as a former Mayor of London and Foreign Secretary) and a maverick and outspoken magazine editor and newspaper columnist, encapsulates what we might identify as the Conservative Party's bi-polar disorder with regard to race and multiculturalism. Johnson the newspaper columnist's description of burqa-wearing Muslim women as comparable to "bank robbers" and "letter boxes" was seen as a dog whistle to the many Conservative members who appeared to share what the former Conservative Chairwoman Baroness Warsi described as Johnson's "tough on Muslims" political positioning which was "helping to create an environment in which hate crime

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7 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/09/eu-enoch-powell-common-market-conservative-party

is more likely".[8] While the more statesmanlike Johnson appealed to tolerant voters with a promise of re-invoking Nick Clegg's proposal of an amnesty for non-criminal irregular migrants.[9]

Significantly, Lady Warsi also accused former Prime Minister David Cameron of perpetuating a distorted and offensive caricature of Muslim women as "traditionally submissive", a sentiment which built on his 2011 Munich Security Conference speech in which Cameron stated

> Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.

"Our values"—which are portrayed as explicitly Western, liberal, tolerant (and implicitly white and Christian) are contrasted here very clearly with an alien presence that is seen as not only religiously and racially distinct, but non-Western, illiberal, intolerant (and implicitly non-white and Muslim). It is hardly surprising, given the pronouncements of successive Conservative Prime Ministers and senior politicians that

[8]https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/08/boris-johnson-muslim-women-conservative-party

[9]Boris Johnson's Amnesty What Would It Mean? https://www.freemovement.org.uk/boris-johnson-immigration-amnesty/

a 2019 YouGov poll for the anti-racist campaign group, Hope Not Hate, found that fully half of all Conservative Party members would not want a Muslim Prime Minister, "while more than two-thirds of Tory members believe the myth that parts of the UK are under Sharia law, and 45% think some areas are not safe for non-Muslims".[10]

The parallel with Enoch Powell's vision of a degenerating Britain threatened by "alien wedges" could not be more apparent

> The nation has been, and is still being, eroded and hollowed out from within by the implantation of large unassimilated and unassimilable populations—what Lord Radcliffe once in a memorable phrase called "alien wedges"—in the heartland of the state...The disruption of the homogeneous "we", which forms the essential basis of parliamentary democracy and therefore of our liberties, is now approaching the point at which the political mechanics of a "divided community"...take charge and begin to operate autonomously.[11]

The challenge for the form of modern, inclusive Conservatism that Sayeeda Warsi continues to appeal for remains stranded in this seemingly intractable vision of an

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[10]https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/24/tory-members-would-not-want-muslim-prime-minister-islamophobia-survey

[11] J. Enoch Powell, Speech to the Hampshire Monday Club in Southampton (9 April 1976), from A Nation or No Nation? Six Years in British Politics (Elliot Right Way Books, 1977), pp. 165-166.

idealised community that is incapable of separating the idea of the United Kingdom from Enoch Powell's racialised and essentialised notion of Britishness.

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