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### Citation for published version:

Meer, N 2022, 'Who still needs the nation? Empire, identity and the British welfare state', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 50-59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12910>

### Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1111/1468-4446.12910](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12910)

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

### Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

### Published In:

British Journal of Sociology

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Who Still Needs the Nation?

Empire, Identity and British Welfare State

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## Who Still Needs the Nation? Empire, Identity and British Welfare State<sup>i</sup>

*The eyes of the world are turning to Great Britain. We now have the moral leadership of the world, and before many years are over we shall have people coming here as to a modern Mecca, learning from us in the twentieth century as they learned from us in the seventeenth...*

Aneurin Bevan, 5 July 1948

Addressing a Labour party rally in Manchester, on the very day Britain's National Health System (NHS) came into being, the congratulatory words of the Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevan, are remarkably consistent with contemporary sentiment. They might easily have accompanied the applause for NHS staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, or featured in the NHS segment during the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics. What is especially striking, however, is not only their resonance with contemporary rhetoric, but the cognitive dissonance they required in their own time. Precisely as Bevan claimed for Britain a 'moral leadership of the world', Britain still claimed for itself jurisdiction over a large swathe of the planet's population. Only formally pivoting from Empire to nation-state with the introduction of the 1948 British Nationality Act, often incredibly violently relinquishing imperial territories in the subsequent decades, this too may be traced to Bevan's seventeenth century. Henceforth, colonial 'British subjects' became Citizens of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth (CUKC) who helped rebuild, after the Second World War, the societies that the very bodies of their forebears had first made wealthy (Meer, 2022).

As a narrow aperture through which we view the story of the NHS, the opening epithet nests with Prime Minister Clement Atlee's (1948) announcement of the broader social welfare program his post-war Labour government established. Pitched to the public as an endogenous creation, 'we may be proud', he insisted, 'that Britain which has given the lead in so many things in the world is still in the forefront of social advance in the building up of the great structure of our social services'.<sup>ii</sup> The architect of key features on this new social welfare system, meanwhile, William Beveridge, had long believed that new social advances should be anchored in a prevailing national story of 'pride and gratitude to our ancestors', and in which we would 'look back as a nation or as individuals two hundred years and more to the generations illuminated by Marlborough or Cromwell or Drake', and others from 'the best of our breed' (quoted in Cohen, 1985: 89). The point being that Britain's social welfare system, like all social systems, has been forged in an 'idea of community...connected with sets of political values' (Béland and Lecours, 2005: 679) that are underwritten by identity claims. Grasping the historical features of these contingencies is integral to understanding what has, can and *could* constitute their membership.

It is on these matters that Gurinder Bhambra's (2021) contribution intervenes. Providing a typically wide-ranging and generative discussion, hers is an argument of both historical content as well as methodological approach, and does not need to be repeated or summarised here. What is advanced instead is an argument that speaks to her call for 'better social science, located in a more adequate understanding of the shared histories that have configured our present, in order to find more expansive and generous solutions to the problems that face us' (Bhambra, 2021: 15). This is an urgent and necessary task that Bhabra has helped take up in a significant variety of places over the years, and alongside which her present intervention should be read.

In one respect however, it is odd that such global North genealogies and their implications have not come from one mainstay of historically minded social science, and that concerned with nations and nationalism in particular. That this has not occurred somewhat makes Bhambra's case. Yet in her piece too, and even while a linchpin of her argument is that 'the British state was an imperial state with a national project at its heart' (ibid. 2), Bhambra (2021) states that she is 'less interested in the identity of the state, or the identities of its inhabitants, than in the practices and structures that constitute it' (ibid. 2). This is puzzling, for it is surely only in the very interactions between the identities of states and compositions of imagined communities, that we can see the configurations of the shared, siloed or overlooked histories of 'us' that can underwrite notions of reciprocity today (Meer, 2016). This is after all integral for a goal where, as she argues, 'the 'us' must be inclusive of those currently presented as 'other' and outside the web of reciprocity in which obligations are recognised – both historically and contemporaneously' (Bhambra, 2021: 15).

To the extent that this is an omission, it surely reflects space rather than intention. Yet it does allow us to concentrate on a possible ambivalence in Bhambra's (2021) argument, namely: where does a recognition of the 'composite nature of the British state' lead us if we truly wish to move past 'a simple presentation of a *national* history' (ibid. emphasis original). This is a normative question, but it is one not only concerned with either the British state or how England stands in for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For it is difficult to conceive of a re-imagining of 'us' by focusing solely on the state, especially where the intended objective is to trouble the prevailing national project. If national projects, like racial projects, must be laboured at to be sustained, then in the case of Britishness we find a rich vein of contestation by those left out of its formal narration.

It is on this point that the subsequent discussion will focus, but there is perhaps a related issue which might also be foregrounded. This is the role of wider populations in both repudiating and supporting imperial wealth extraction, specifically where this concerns class solidarities and more fundamentally the very constitution of working class. As Bhabra (2021: 12) argues, it is undoubtable that '[r]adical arguments about class were countered by conservative claims about the nation' (ibid. 12), where 'each was belied by the colonies and empire – and their 'classes''. Yet there are other rich histories of social and political struggles that demand our attention in ways that matter for the present discussion. These includes how the 'racialized outsider', to use Virdee's (2014: 164) term, 'played an instrumental role in trying to align struggles against racism with those against class exploitation' (ibid). While a different point to the thrust of Bhabra's argument, it shares in common a desire to read history against the grain, and offers 'grounds on which we can defend the vitality and richness of what might be called "webbed accounts" in contrast with the static and arid state of historiography's master narratives' (Gilroy, 1990: 118).

At a time when popular historians and other ideologues are colluding in the elevation of myths and noble lies that preclude these stories, evidence of 'the multi-ethnic character of the working class... from the moment of its inception' (Virdee 2014: 7–8) invite a discussion about working class solidarities and the institutions of the working class, in relation to their support, disavowal and ambivalence to the imperial state. It is also connected to the earlier normative question too, for '[e]ach time the boundary of the nation was extended to encompass ever more members of the working class, it was accompanied and legitimized through the further racialization of nationalism that prevented another more recently arrived group from being included' (Virdee 2014: 5).

What these considerations reiterate is a preliminary but unstated question that warrants explicit attention, namely: why re-make national projects at all?

### **Who still needs the nation?**

This is a necessary question precisely because in thinking specifically about social welfare provision in any given society in the Global North, there is presently no getting away from the centrality of national. This is not to overlook a long and established set of critiques and normative preferences which offer cosmopolitan framings (broadly conceived), or more bottom up ways that social welfare provision may be achieved. Each and more are especially relevant to understanding Anti-Racist social collectivism (see Bhattacharyya, 2015), and the cultivation of what we might call a ‘shared fate’ that ‘comes by virtue of being entangled with others in such a way that one’s future is tied to theirs’ (Williams, 2003: 208). Nonetheless, the meta membership that underwrite social welfare systems are not satisfactorily understood *purely* through cosmopolitan or local framings alone. One way of insisting on this point is to follow Burton’s (1997: 234) question: ‘who can afford to be sanguine about (or oblivious to) needing the nation?’. It is no accident those groups who mobilise to re-imagine national projects are also those for whom exclusion from it routinely comes with ‘material dispossession and political disenfranchisement’ (ibid). Consistent with Bhabra’s (2021) argument, moreover, interior and exterior racial injustices cannot be deemed ‘aberrant offshoots’ (Stoler, 1995: 9) from the *creation* and *curation* of nation-states. To do so is to deny a ‘reciprocity of determination’ (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991: 2) between race-making and nation-making. This is partly why some have previously argued that the contemporary appeal to nationhood

cannot break free from this relationship, seeing an equivalence with race, for ‘ideas of ‘race’ and ‘nation’ are both categories of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion’:

Herein lies a process of reification because the criteria of inclusion / exclusion are made to appear as the determinants of groups’ differentiation rather the act of signification, the reproduction of the act of signification, and the ordering of the material world in ways consistent with the act of signification (Miles, 1987: 27).

Amongst the issues that this view ignores however, are the challenges, revisions and contestations of racial minorities, which variously seek to recognise racial histories in order to re-make founding narratives, not least through the force of re-imagined identities. To read nationhood as a flattening process of racialization without taking seriously how racial minorities confound certain notions of hierarchy within it, can only ever offer only a partial view. It is precisely the form and content of nationhood, whether or not one holds cosmopolitan, transnational or antinational identities, that the pursuit of racial justice cannot vacate. This further demands we engage with a set of literatures on the idea of nations, national identities as well as the attempts to re-make membership through these categories, not least in Britain, and particularly by racialized minorities themselves. The rationale motivating these arguments is not only present centred. It is moved by a desire to improve the prevailing historical understanding in which race is minimised as part of a ‘narrative contract’ (Kaviraj, 1993) between the nation-states and their narrators. Whether or not this requires ‘unmasking the complicity of history-writing in patrolling the borders of national identity as well’ (Burton, 1995: 240), we can minimally agree on the need to ‘think about the effects of racism both in its relationship to nationalism and in relation to the nationalist historiography’ (Gilroy, 1990:



114). This is supportive of Bhambra's (2021) thesis but it also needs to be laboured. Yet it is notable how few canonical scholars in the field of nations and nationalism had much to say on the role of Empire, and with the exception of Anderson (1991 [1983]), virtually nothing to say of racism in the formation of nation-states. In comparable ways, it is not unfair to argue these authors viewed European imperialism as incidental to European nation-state formation, in so far as 'the core or essence of nationalism' had allegedly long since been 'laid out' (Gellner, 2008: 42).

This is not to say that such authors thought nationalism inevitable, much more that race was inconsequential to nation-state formation. Given the entanglement of European modernity (for Gellner and other 'modernists' the seed-bed of nations and nationalism<sup>iii</sup>) in Empire, this seems odd to say the least, and reminiscent of J.R. Seeley's remark that the British Empire was acquired in 'a fit of absence of mind'. Such disinterest is perhaps one reason why nationalism studies and race scholarship have largely proceeded in parallel, even while the latter has taken a deep and substantive interest in historical and archival narrations of the nation-state. As Hartman (2007: 6), for example, draws out in her account of the afterlife of slavery, something that should not in her terms be seen as 'an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory'. On the contrary, across nation-states in the Global North it is acutely manifest that 'black lives are still imperilled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago'. She continues: 'This is the afterlife of slavery – skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. I, too, am the afterlife of slavery'. True enough, Hobsbawm's (1968) discussion dwells on the relationship between industrial capitalism, nationalism and imperialism, but even then does not much advance on Williams (1944: 210) study, *Slavery and Capitalism*, which charted not only how the 'commercial capitalism of the

eighteenth century developed the wealth of Europe by means of slavery and monopoly', but how this 'helped to create the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century' (ibid) that is so central to Hobsbawm's later accounts of nationalism. The latter author, moreover, having virtually nothing to say of the manifestation or legacy of these histories in British culture and society. This said, there are important resources carried in Anderson in this respect, including the ways 'racism dreams of eternal contaminations' (Anderson, 1991 [1983]: 149), which he implies can be imagined-out just as much as they are imagined-in. To think this plausible is to direct attention to the fleetingly discussed histories which bring to the centre such accounts. If we consider what Berman (1982) characterised as 'classical modernity', the period after the French revolution (1789–1900) and the long nineteenth century, it quickly becomes apparent that colonialization and imperial systems of wealth and labour extraction from the Global South were a keystone of European nation-state formation. Bhabra's (2021) thesis then begins to address precisely this gap, and might be taken beyond the British Empire. That between them the Spanish, Portuguese, German, French and Belgium empires could annex and appropriate the human beings, materials resources and knowledge systems of the entire African continent, large swathes of South and East Asia, Australasia and Latin and Central America, and this *not* underpin nation-state formation is a view sustained only by omission. The ways in which European empires went about this varies, of course, something reflected in how the subsequent colonial rule took different forms. The mutilating indentured labour of the Congolese by the Belgians, the creation of a compliant British imperial Raj, as well as the mass exterminations that accompanied settler societies and colonies of North America and Australasia, offer diverging examples of coloniality and imperial governance. The important point is that European imperialism is both *preceded* and *proceeded* by the period of 'classical modernity' and European nation-state formation, and to read this period as external to the very constitution of

European nation-states is to actively foreclose any possibility that a ‘long imperial hegemony, and the intimacy of the relationship between capitalist development at home and colonial conquest overseas, laid the trace of an active racism...’ (Hall, 1980: 338).

So there are two ways in which Bhabra’s intervention can be built upon. The first is in our prevailing accounts of nation-state formation, whether proposed by modernists, ethno-symbolists or primordialists, which have largely overlooked the role of imperialism and colonialism in European nation-state formation, not least ‘the exterminatory dimension of nation-building’ (Moses, 2002: 34). The second is that this tendency has obscured the ways in which, to quote Wolfe (2016: 11), ‘reciprocally, colonialism subsequently came to furnish a racialized mythology that could be displaced back onto stigmatised minorities within Europe itself’. Each of these are important not only as historical accounts in and of themselves, but for understanding racial injustice today, and specifically how ‘past wrongs in present circumstances includes future-oriented considerations about improving the situation that resulted from them’ (McCarthy, 2004: 769).

## **Memory Holes**

Perhaps in the final analysis the argument being mobilised here insists that we grasp how scholarship that has been ‘elaborated within the confines of Western modernity’ retains its ethnocentric anchorage (Venn, 2003: 3). The objective of this complaint is not to devalue this scholarship; it is instead to seek an understanding of its relationship to colonialism, and the ways in which these ‘are already deeply implicated within each other’ (ibid). This is why the designation ‘post’ can be misleading, for the challenge that postcolonial and decolonial enquiry variously presents is not only anchored in what ‘turbulent

histories' happened *after* decolonization, but also on the form and content of colonialism and its subsequent (indeed contemporary) implications. It is important to be clear what is being argued here. The social dynamics of race and racism in our present moment cannot merely be 'read off' these historical currents, for the process of racialization is also contingent even while there are necessarily shared racial mechanisms across space and time (Meer, 2013, and 2018). So even while the *mechanics of racialization* share common properties, they necessarily operate differently in curating and sustaining diverse racial projects. What is being claimed is more minimal. Specifically, that imperialism was constitutive of European nation-state formation in ways that have implications for how national identities are presently imagined. In this respect there is a continuing dialogue between the colonial and the post- and de-colonial that is 'imagined out' in the prevailing narration of national projects. Perhaps this is best viewed as something akin to Orwell's (1949) memory hole, that useful mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened. For while it is of course true that nationalism studies is not of one kind, it is also true that the field reflects a profoundly unsatisfactory engagement with race, empire and its implications (cf Leddy-Owen, 2019). It would be unkind to characterise an interdisciplinary field, one with so much invested in historical analysis, as an intellectual example of Wekker's (2016) description of 'white innocence'. The charge instead is that it has seen too little in racial histories of nation-state formation, and this is self-evidently a problem, not least because Empire has been constitutive of nation-state formation, something that in Britain came 'home' long before Windrush docked in Tilbury. The missed opportunities to recognise and engage this are the source of a continuing frustration in race scholarship<sup>iv</sup>.

Conversely, if scholars of nations and nationalism have been insufficiently interested in race, it is also true that for a long time some scholars of race were insufficiently uninterested in national identity. Part of the reason for this may be the long shadow cast by how, after the war, and inspired by the Chicago sociologists, a very British take on 'race-relations' flourished but to whom re-making national membership was not a concern. Still is it notable the amongst the critical response to these framing, re-making national projects was not key, and instead the charges these authors faced included that they did not offer sustained analyses of questions of power, and were consequently 'atheoretical' and 'ahistorical', 'concerned with 'attitudes', 'prejudice' and 'discrimination' and were 'remarkably uninformative' (Zubaida, 1972: 141). Rex's (1973) work most certainly eschewed a narrow focus by pointing to the importance of social and economic marginalisation, yet he appeared unable to integrate these sociological concerns into 'wider conceptual debates about the theory of racism or into the analysis of processes of racialization in contemporary Britain' (Solomos, 1993: 22). It is especially interesting that Bob Miles (quoted in Ashe and McGeever, 2011: 2017) would later claim that his work did not entail as much a rejection of what preceded him as may have previously been claimed. In relation to Banton, he reflects on how he "hijacked" his [Banton's] concept of racialization because to me it spoke to a process. And what he was good at researching and writing about was historical processes by which the idea of "race" took meanings in different contexts' (Miles, quoted in Ashe and McGeever, 2011: 2017). Beyond this, the interest in nationhood was focused principally on the tension between 'the need of the capitalist world economy for the mobility of human beings, and on the other, the drawing of territorial boundaries and the construction of citizenship as a legal category which sets boundaries for human mobility' (Miles, 1988: 438).

All of this remains relevant because one development in thinking about national identity in race scholarship would in time come in response to these approaches, which were said to limit the scope of theory and silence racial subjects (Gilroy, 1987: 23). As Hall (1996: 191) would later conclude, ‘these fundamentally binary terms in which British race relations have been mapped have essentially collapsed’, an assessment informed by (as well as informing) the ‘new ethnicities’ problematic. This sought to engage the shifting complexities of ethnic identities, specifically their processes of formation and change, and was given an authoritative voice in the work of Hall (1991, 1996[1988]). A different iteration of the same concern can be found in Modood’s (1992) *Not Easy Being British: Culture, Colour and Citizenship*, and which marked an important intervention with the author probably the first social scientist to get beyond the binary rhetoric of being for or against *The Satanic Verses* by placing British Muslim mobilisations within a register of minority claim-making (rather than blasphemy or religious offence). This intervention challenged anti-racists to recognise Muslim minorities, rather than dismiss them as being anti-Enlightenment zealots, and included Modood’s (1992) insistence on the need for concepts of racism and belonging that could critique socio-cultural environments which devalue people because of physical differences but also because of membership of a cultural minority. Critically, he argued, the two often overlap and create a double disadvantage (including on the grounds of religious identity). To grasp this, he maintained, requires an account ‘that is able to connect a group’s internal structure, values and understanding of itself...with how that group is categorised and treated as a subordinate race within wider society’ (ibid, 1992: 48).

### **Re-making ‘Britishness’?**

In many respects, these new ethnicities approaches marked a timely intellectual development that captured the ways in which ‘identities had broken free of their anchorage in singular histories of race and nation’ (Cohen, 2000: 5), and corresponded with what the commentator Alibhai-Brown (2001: 47) characterised as an optimistic period, one in which Britain was prepared to take stock and ‘assess whether existing cultural and political edifices are keeping up with the people and the evolving habitat’. In this vein, at the turn of the millennium, and after eighteen long years of Conservative rule, a Labour government was still in its first term with a large Parliamentary majority and political capital to spend. This was an overdue opening to rethink the national story beyond a kind of insider-outsider relationship, something more akin to an upward spiral out of an entrenched setting. This would draw upon social and political struggle, and well as labour of post-colonial multiculturalist thinkers, who took seriously the challenge of remaking national identities and poured their efforts on a state-of-the-nation-type report. Published by the Runnymede Trust in 2000, the *Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000), to give its full title, is a salutary lesson, precisely because its attempt to reconcile a changing national identity with an honest and necessary account of its origins, in ways that was ‘inclusive of those currently presented as ‘other’ and outside the web of reciprocity in which obligations are recognised – both historically and contemporaneously’ (Bhambra, 2021: 15). This is why the Commission recommended that central government take steps in formally declaring Britain a multicultural society – it was hoped that such an approach would begin to steer a new course in imagining national identity (cf Uberoi, 2015; Levey, 2019). A question we might nonetheless ask today is: was it naive, too celebratory? It certainly reflected a cumulative political movement that had followed the migrations of the parents and grandparents of many of Britain’s post-immigrant ethnic minorities, who had exercised their Commonwealth citizenship and journeyed to its metropole. If the shameful Windrush deportations tell us

nothing else, it is that any meaningful sense of national belonging for many black and ethnic-minority Britons will remain unachieved unless the country is able to recognise its imperial moorings. The observation of course had long been made, at least since Hall (1978: 26) had previously argued that a ‘decisive mental repression-which has overtaken the British people about race and Empire since the 1950s.’

If this is so, it is of the peculiar kind similar to Bevan’s cognitive dissonance, for there is seemingly sufficient resonance of Empire in the nation’s life to encourage Her Majesty’s Treasury to send a ‘Friday Fact tweet’ that ‘Millions of you helped end the slave trade through your taxes’ (Olusoga, 2018). In this instance, the British Government could take pride in abolition but not responsibility for slavery’s expansion, nor the colossal wealth and horror this entailed. As Hartman (2007: 31) has argued in her account of ‘incidental death’, ultimately this reflects an inability of racialized subjects being just a by-product of commerce. Why might things be different when 43% of people polled by YouGov can take pride in Britain’s history of colonialism and deem it ‘something to be proud of’ in the present (Dahlgreen, 2016). One view maintains that such instances emerge from a form of postcolonial melancholia, something which ‘blinds us to the connections between race thinking and the white supremacism that legitimized colonial endeavour, so much so that we fail to notice that racism is a problem until the next tragic death or inflammatory eruption shakes us temporarily out of our complacency’ (Gilroy, 2006: 5). This is not of course unique to Britain, and in his account of *Why the French Don’t like Headscarves*, John Bowen (2006) picks up this thread in relation to France’s refusal to recognise its colonial and post-colonial implications. Arguing that even though the Muslim headscarves and mosques are not objectively more visible than other religious difference, they are subjectively shocking because they force French people to think about how being French is



no longer – if it ever was – the preserve of white Christians. In our case, this key historical point was overlooked in the clamour at the time to decry the Parekh report as an assault on national identity, specifically focusing on the report's central observation that the idea of Britishness carried 'largely unspoken racial connotations'. The *Daily Telegraph's* Philip Johnston (2000) accused the commissioners of wanting to 'rewrite our history', all the while failing to see it was an attempt to share and take ownership for history. As McCarthy (2004) has argued, the distribution of this task sits at the very foundation of what must be erected upon it, since '[e]ach generation of citizens, whether native- or foreign-born, inherits the burdens of membership – the national debts, as it were – together with the benefits of membership... This is not a matter of collective guilt but of collective responsibility; and reparation is not a matter of collective punishment but of collective liability' (ibid: 757-758).

What is described has been neither a linear nor stable development, and has frequently been resisted. Two decades since the Parekh report, a period that has included civil disturbances, illegal wars abroad, and terrorism at home, as well as the distinctively multicultural London 2012 Olympics, the core idea that Britishness has been remade by black and ethnic minority Britons is hard to erase even if it resisted. This appears not only in the self-definitions of minorities but also in the discursive formation of the Britishness writ large – while neither are complete or settled, they are profoundly important multicultural success that must not be ignored (Uberoi and Modood, 2013, 2010). Indeed, it might even be argued that the precarious status of Britishness is, somewhat ironically, better observed in debates about devolution and constitutional settlements, and in which it remains an open question as to where multicultural difference fits in these contexts (Meer, 2015).

This is then to register the persistence of claims making on the national identity of Britishness, through an agent-centred contestation which illustrates that to ‘accept one’s past – one’s history – is not the same thing as drowning in it; it is learning how to use it’ (Baldwin, 1998: 333). None of this should not be taken to imply that racial criteria for membership of the nation have dissolved, nor that minorities are not viewed as an indication of national decline. For in many respects it is an asymmetrical recognition: one abundantly apparent to ethnic and racial minorities, and oftentimes white majorities too. Gilroy’s (1982: 278) prediction that ‘it will take far more than the will to create a “pluralist national identity” to prise the jaws of the bulldog of British nationalism free’, describe an on-going task.

This is not only about continuity, however, for consistent with the argument made so far, present racial projects are not a replication of what Lawrence (1982: 47) had to say of the Britishness of the 1970s, specifically that ‘the “alien” cultures of the blacks...was as either the cause or else the most visible symptom of the destruction of the “British way of life”’. Instead, the issue in contemporary re-statements of Britishness shares common mechanics with what has proceeded, particularly in pointing to Muslim difference as a threat to the nation, and made apparent in the UK Government’s promotion of *Fundamental British Values* (DfE 2015). Clearly, issues here around ‘values’ and national identity are complex, not only in their relation to each other, but also in terms of how they are used as a basis for national identification. One might ask why ‘national security’ and ‘social welfare’ are being elided like this. It is a good question and the answer rests not in ‘security’ (political or social) but in the construction of the national project, and communities that constitute its population. It is more active than ‘coming to the game after it is already begun, after the rules and standards have been set, and having to prove oneself accordingly’ (Young, 1990: 165). Instead, the national project reflected in

‘Fundamental British Values’ currently wields the full security apparatus of the state against a body of its citizenry ‘currently presented as ‘other’ and outside the web of reciprocity in which obligations are recognised’ (Bhambra, 2021: 15). It illustrates once more, who still needs the nation.

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*Notes*

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<sup>i</sup> I am very grateful to Jan Dobbernack, Gezim Krasniqi and Varun Uberoi for comments on an earlier version of this draft. The discussion draws upon arguments more fully elaborated in Meer (2023).

<sup>ii</sup> Atlee, C. (1948) 'New Social Services and the Citizen', 4 July 1948, <https://speakola.com/political/clement-atlee-new-social-services-nhs-1948> Viewed 17 July, 2021

<sup>iii</sup> Without wishing to rehearse textbook definitions that are abundant elsewhere, different readings of the provenance of nations and nationalism are typically narrated as comprising either 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent' (Gellner, 1983: 35), or that the nation is made up of 'self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or "homelands", create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws' (Smith, 2009: 29). Inevitably, these 'poles' are not always as distant to one another as is sometimes claimed.

<sup>iv</sup> In a longer piece I would elaborate that nationalism scholars in the Global South have obviously taken much more interest in how race and empire were integral to European nationalism.