

Bringing Capitalism and Class into the Frame: In Defense of Political Blackness

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Abstract

Political blackness as the umbrella concept that unites the political struggles of minority ethnic communities in the UK against racism, discrimination, and violence under a black identity gained ascendancy between the 1960s and early 1980s. Following its critique as being alien to Asians, who did not share African ancestry associated with blackness and for sidestepping ethnic particularism and cultural identity with ethnic minority groups, the analytical power of the concept waned in academic and policy circles. This paper presents a critical review of the evolving discourse surrounding the concept of *Political Blackness*. It argues that critics of the concept have contributed to and reinforced divisions among minority ethnic communities, often overlooking the unifying and strategic purpose that political blackness once served. In doing so, they have failed to recognise its role as a bulwark against the class-based foundations of racialisation, thereby weakening collective resistance to structural inequality and racism. By bringing the conceptions of capitalism and class into the discourse, political blackness is defended as a viable concept to challenge the widening racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes between the White population and ethnic minorities, and collectively confront the new right movement, whose remits on cultural war and anti-wokeism tend to whitewash racism and its effects on ethnic minority communities. The paper concludes that the class root of political blackness, which emphasises class unity and solidarity across the minority ethnic communities under one political umbrella, is relevant now to challenge the politics of division and identity politics that the British ruling class and the state personnel deploy through state institutions, media, policies, and laws to divide and prevent minority ethnic communities from uniting as a collective to challenge the capitalist establishment along the class line.

Keywords

Class, Capitalism, Minority Ethnic Communities, Racialization, Political Blackness

1. Introduction

This paper presents a critical review of how the concept of Political Blackness has evolved and been contested over time, while situating its relevance in addressing the challenges faced by ethnic minority communities in the contemporary UK context. The concept of Political Blackness emerged in the 1960s and 1970s when the notion of “black” was deployed by anti-racist activists and sociologists to describe all minority ethnic communities that were disadvantaged by racism and discrimination for the purpose of forging solidarity against racism and the racist policy of the British State that transcends ethnicities (Alexander, 1996; Modood, 1999; Hall, 2000; Aspinall, 2020). This context of blackness is somewhat political because it refers “not only to those whose roots are in Africa—to black Africans, African Caribbeans but also to people of Asian and other ethnic minorities” (Cole, 1993: 672) and unites them as being oppressed on racial grounds rather than phenotypical differences (Modood, 1994; 1999; Dasgupta, 2018). The analyses of Political Blackness have revealed its unique contributions as the rallying point of solidarity for minority ethnic communities to challenge racial injustice, racism, and discrimination and to speak with one voice as a unified community (Ashe et al., 2016; Ambikaipaker, 2018), shape the construction and reconstruction of ethnic identities and collectivities, and illuminate contemporary shifts in understanding the racialised landscape of ethnicity and antiracist activism.

However, the concept came under intense scrutiny in the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, when scholars began to question the basis of blackness as the recipe for common equality within minority ethnic communities (Cole, 1993; Modood, 1988, 1992, 1994; Shukra, 1996). The critics questioned the analytical utility of the concept in generalising and understanding the differences, as well as the lived experiences and identities, of minority ethnic communities. The consequences of this critique have weakened not only the academic remit of the concept but have also affected its currency within the British political and policy arena. However, contemporary developments in multi-racial Britain have compelled us to revisit the concept and take stock of its remits, lest we fall into immutable reference where we throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Following the critique of political blackness that underpins the British sociological conception of “black and ethnic minority”, Cole (1993) advocated for the adoption of the “Asian, black and other minority ethnic” formulation (Cole 1993). Cole’s suggestion was supported by Modood (1994) and Alexander (1996), who echoed similar positions. Hence, the acronym BME (Black and other Minority ethnic) became more prominent and salient in the British policy circle, but the inclusion of “Asian” made the formulation of BAME (black, Asian and other Minority ethnic) acceptable and adopted by different organisations, including the Institute of Race Relations and the Civil Service (Aspinall, 2020). The adoption of BAME has not only weakened the social solidarity associated with political blackness, but has also led to increased division and fragmentation of ethnic minorities along cultural, ethnic, and identity frames. The stripping of the ideological con-

tent of political blackness led to the insubstantial expressions of BAME. Beyond the affirmation of cultural diversity and ethnic differences, the BAME categorisation is just an empty shell that has no ideological tradition of class and ethnic collectivism.

Since the BAME categorisation became the official jargon, the gulf and problems within the minority ethnic communities have widened, and the weaponisation of cultural and identity differences has made the collective response to these problems more acute in comparison to when political blackness was the rallying formula. The intention behind the categorisation of BAME, which is the affirmation of identity and cultural differences in minority ethnic communities, has not achieved its desirable outcomes of racial progress and the narrowing of disparities between the White population and minority ethnic groups, as the findings and report of the UK Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities revealed ([Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021](#)). The report demonstrated that BAME communities fare worse when compared with the British White population in the areas of education and training; employment, fairness at work and enterprise; crime and policing; and health. One of the responses of the UK Commission to the widening of racial and ethnic disparities is the call for the abandonment of BAME categorisation:

Use of the term BAME, which is frequently used to group all ethnic minorities together, is no longer helpful. It is demeaning to be categorised in relation to what we are not, rather than what we are: British Indian, British Caribbean, and so on. The BAME acronym also disguises huge differences in outcomes between ethnic groups. This reductionist idea forces us to think that the principal cause of all disparities must be majority versus minority discrimination.¹

If political blackness is seen as problematic from some academic discourses, its alternative (BAME) has now been considered unworkable and too broad to understand the daily and social experience of ethnic minority groups. The acceptance of BAME in the official parlance stems from the ethnicity discourse that underpins the critique of political blackness. The rejection of BAME categorisation on the grounds that it is too broad to monitor the progress of each ethnic group is problematic for two reasons. First, the BAME categorisation ended up dividing the minority ethnic communities along the cultural frame of ethnicity and stripping them of class unity and social solidarity that underpinned the conception of political blackness within the ethnic communities. With the advent of BAME, each minority ethnic group looked after itself and tended to struggle against oppression based on racism and discrimination on its own rather than as a collective. The implication of this is that each minority ethnic group becomes weaker on its own and incapable of fighting against racism, discrimination, and oppression orchestrated by the British capitalist ruling class through racialisation.

¹See UK report on Racial and Ethnic Disparities (2021), p. 32.

The BAME categorisation would lead to the abandonment of each minority ethnic group on the societal margins to solve their problems individually and fend for themselves. If the proposed categorisation of British Caribbean and others is accepted as the [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities \(2021\)](#) suggested, the huge differences in outcomes between minority ethnic groups and the British White population cannot be fought by British Caribbeans or others alone, without forging solidarity with other minority ethnic groups who are experiencing similar problems. Second, the rejection of BAME by the Commission is a divisive attempt to further erode and undermine the unity and solidarity that minority ethnic minority groups have achieved in the last sixty years, and further fragment and divide them based on ethnicity and cultural identity. In fact, if the BAME categorisation has not helped in narrowing the ethnic and racial disparities of minority ethnic communities in comparison with the British White population, there is no evidence to suggest that each minority ethnic group will achieve its progress without the BAME categorisation. Therefore, the quest of ethnic minority groups to close the racial disparities gap with the British White population remains more unrealistic under the BAME categorisation than political blackness. It is my contention that the critics of political blackness understood the concept in a non-socialist frame and thus affected the ideological context in which it emerged.

This is the basis on which this article seeks to revisit the conception of political blackness and highlight why it is important in contemporary multi-racial Britain. Using a socialist frame, this paper seeks to rescue the concept from non-socialist critique and bring the notion of capitalism and class to further understand the sanctity of the concept and its future relevance. In doing this, the review of political blackness will be thoroughly espoused in section two, the defence of political blackness is undertaken in section three, and the paper concludes in section four.

2. The Review of Political Blackness

The important change in British politics in the last two decades has been the increasing number of ethnic minorities who have occupied key state and political positions. The positions of British Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Health Secretary, Ministers, Chancellor, Mayors, Council leaders, MPs, and others have been occupied by ethnic minorities. Yet, the significant problem of racism, marginalisation, and huge differences in outcomes between the British White population and minority ethnic communities remains wide, as reported by the UK [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities \(2021\)](#). It is within this context of change and ferment in the UK parlance that the present paper is located. Whilst political blackness continues to serve as an important point of reference in ethnic and racial studies, the concept needs rethinking, not simply at an analytical level, but more substantively within the context of its class underpinning, and continued relevance, as far as the contemporary expressions of structural changes in British capitalism, together with the shifting expressions of racism and marginalisation faced by the minority ethnic groups, are concerned.

The concept of political blackness was inspired by the Black Power Movement (BPP) of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States that spearheaded anti-colonial politics and campaigns against racism, especially against the new Commonwealth migrants in Britain (Sivanandan, 1981; Hall, 1988; 1991; Ambikaipaker, 2018). Blackness became a political lexicon in the post-war epoch when Africans, Asians, and Black Caribbeans migrated into Britain (Narayan, 2019). The BPP in Britain was organised to unite Africans, Asians, and Caribbean migrants to confront racial discrimination and violence, and formed community-based responses to these problems (Sudbury, 2001; Bourne, 2016; Narayan, 2019). The idea of political blackness or black political identity ensued following the visits of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael—one of the founders of the BPP in the US—to London in 1965 and 1967, respectively (Angelo, 2009; 2018; Owusu, 2016; Waters, 2018).

The visits of these leaders of Black movements in the US led to the formation of organisations such as the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RASS) in 1965, the United Coloured People's Association (UCPA) in 1967, the British Black Panther Movement (BPM) in 1968, the Black Unity and Freedom Party (BUFP) in 1970, the Black Liberation Front (BLF) in 1971, and other groups and associations (Bourne, 2016; Narayan, 2019). The activists from these organisations, together with those from the London-based Pakistani Workers' Union (PWU), Pakistani Progressive Party (PPP), Indian Workers' Association in Birmingham, and Asian Youth Movement (Narayan, 2019), created a common political identity around blackness, as envisioned by the BPP, to unite the newly arrived Commonwealth migrants (irrespective of their ethnic, cultural, religious, and national identities) to agitate for racial injustice.

John Narayan further argued that “the BPP’s political blackness was thus a response to the state’s racialisation of new Commonwealth communities as ‘coloured people’” (Narayan, 2019: 949). These “coloured Commonwealth citizens” were considered a homogenous group at the time and were regarded as a threat to the racial homogeneity of the White British population (Banton, 2005). The public discontent with these migrants from diverse Commonwealth countries led to protests, riots, violence, and racism against these minority ethnic groups (Hansen, 2000). The state and official response to the public discontent led to the enactment of the Immigration Acts of 1962, 1968, and 1971 to contain their aspirations and path towards obtaining British citizenship.

Despite the diversities within the ethnic minority groups in terms of culture, language, religion, and nationality, they shared a common trajectory of colonial oppression, common racism, and experienced hatred, discrimination, marginalisation, and political exclusion (Alexander, 2018). The concept became the rallying point for minority ethnic communities in the UK to speak with one voice, challenge discrimination, injustice, and racism, and serve as social solidarity against a common racism (Sivanandan, 1987). The response to this common racism and discrimination was the adoption of blackness or a black unifier to unite these minority ethnic communities and challenge the rampant episodes of racism, vio-

lence, and discrimination. The concept of political blackness was hegemonic, not because these minority ethnic groups were unaware of their diversities, but because they united under a common frame to respond to the problems that confronted them at the time. Since blackness as a common unifier was political and not cultural, the ethnic minorities were comfortable with it.

One of the earliest supporters of political blackness is Ambalavaner Sivanandan, whose contribution was shaped by his experience of racism since 1958. Sivanandan witnessed the anti-black race riot of 1958 in Notting Hill following his migration to Britain from his native Sri Lanka in the same year, and concluded that “I knew then I was black, and I could no longer stand on the sidelines: race was a problem that affected me directly. I had to find a way of making some sort of contribution to the improvement of society” (Sivanandan, 1987: ix). Political blackness to Sivanandan is the engagement of minority ethnic groups in common political struggles against common racism and the forging of a common front and solidarity that transcends ethnicities. This was exemplified following the horrendous racist attacks on Afro-Caribbean and Asian youth in English inner cities in the 1980s by the National Front and British National Movement (Dasgupta, 2018), where youths of the affected ethnic minorities forged solidarity and defended themselves and their communities while the police were indifferent to the growing impunity of racist attacks and violence against them (Sivanandan, 2008; Dasgupta, 2018).

Sivanandan’s works on political blackness were important to the anti-racism movement and black struggles, but were devoid of the class analysis that underpinned racialisation and racism (Sivanandan, 1976; 1981; 1987; 2000; 2008). Another scholar who shared the position of Sivanandan is Stuart Hall. Hall (1988) argued that blackness was the common denominator by which ethnic minorities were politically mobilised against the common problem of racism they faced. The implication of political blackness for Hall is the creation of a new black identity as “a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural difference between the different communities, [which] became ‘hegemonic’ over other ethnic/racial identities—though the latter did not, of course, disappear.” (Hall, 1988: 27). In subsequent work, Hall (1991) added further weight to the relevance of political blackness:

Caribbean, East Africa, the Asian subcontinent, Pakistan, Bangladesh, from different parts of India, [who] all identified themselves politically as black. What they said was, “We may be different [in terms of] actual colour of skins, but vis-à-vis the social system, vis-à-vis the political system of racism, there is more that unites us than what divides us”. (Hall, 1991: 55)

Despite the awareness of cultural diversity within the ethnic communities, the consequence of Hall’s position is the understanding that cultural differences within the minority ethnic communities must not stand in the way of these groups forging a new political identity of resistance against racism and discrimination.

Other recent work that tends to strengthen the remit of political blackness is Mohan Ambikaipaker's anthropological study on Political Blackness in Multiracial Britain. Drawing on the ethnographic study of participants from a community-based anti-racism organisation—the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) in London, which supports victims of racism, hate crimes, racial harassment, racial injustices, and antiblack police violence. Ambikaipaker (2018) explored the questions around the meaning of political blackness for positive social change in society, the nexus between institutionalised racism, official anti-racist state policies, and the racial violence experienced by non-white communities in Britain. Ambikaipaker observed that everyday political whiteness was a response to the failure of the British state to provide effective strategies for ending all forms of racial injustices, violence, and institutional racism that ethnic and religious minorities continuously faced in everyday life. The findings in Ambikaipaker's study highlight the continuous reproduction of colonial forms of racism in contemporary Britain and the connivance of state institutions, especially the police and judicial system, to whitewash racism and control non-white communities. Finally, Ambikaipaker's work has demonstrated how political blackness serves as a counterweight to the racialised landscape of political whiteness against Muslims and ethnic minority women and constitutes an effective strategy towards attaining racial justice.

The positions of the defenders of political blackness have demonstrated why the concept is important in the mobilization of oppressed ethnic groups under a single umbrella and in unifying the collective voice of the ethnic minority groups that have been marginalized and have shared common experiences of racial discrimination and racism based on their ancestry, heritage, or phenotypical characteristics. These positions have been supported by Mercer (2000), who regarded the concept as “a form of symbolic unity that emanated from signifiers of racial difference” (Mercer, 2000: 210). Nevertheless, the ideological underpinning of class that underpinned political blackness was obscured in the arguments of the supporters of the concept. It is not sufficient for Asians to consider themselves as politically black if the ideological connection to the political context of blackness is missing and unknown.

However, the concept of political blackness was critiqued for being “a coercive ideological fantasy” (Sudbury, 2001: 34) that unites minority ethnic communities based on victimhood and mode of oppression and failed to account for pluralism, pride, and cultural expressivity of each ethnic minority group in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Hazareesingh, 1986; Modood, 1988; 1990; Ali, 1991; Cole, 1993; Brah, 1996). One of the prominent critics of political blackness is Tariq Modood, whose corpus of works (Modood, 1988; 1990; 1992; 1994; 1999) rejected the notion of blackness because it is an essentialist construct that harms the Asian identity. Modood's argument was premised on the assumption that blackness or black identity was exclusively rooted in African ancestry and heritage. Therefore, Asians taking on black identity were coerced into adopting a false identity (Modood,

1994; 1996). For Modood, political blackness situated Asians as “secondary or ambiguous black” or attempted to erase Asian presence. Modood’s argument found empirical support in the works of Ang-Lygate (1997), Sudbury (2001), and Phillips (2007). Ang-Lygate (1997) observed that the notion of black has little resonance with Chinese and Filipina women who resided outside black populated areas.

Ang-Lygate’s findings were further confirmed in Sudbury’s (2001) study of Chinese women’s organisations in Manchester, which found that the Chinese women were uneasy with the term black and preferred to be classified and recognised based on their origins. Further study by Phillips (2007) also found support for Modood’s position among members of the National Association of Asian Probation staff, who considered blackness as a stumbling block or as preventing discussion on the under-representation of Asians in the probation service. Another study whose findings share the position of Modood is Maylor (2009), who observed the experiences of staff in further education colleges in England and found that the political context of blackness remains problematic, as many South Asian staff found it difficult to identify with the inclusive term as black. Maylor concluded that the concept was insufficient to capture a broad range of experiences of those who are incorporated into the category (political blackness).

However, Modood’s position has been challenged by several scholars, most especially Sarup (1991), who argued that focusing on differences between ethnic minorities rather than acting collectively is potentially harmful, as such differences foster competition and further division between the ethnic minorities. Shukra (1996) also challenged Modood’s position on three grounds. First, Modood’s position did not account for the positive effects of black power that some Asian activists observed in Asian community organisations in the 1970s. Second, black political identity has helped foster a new mode of Asian militancy, where Asian workers and the youth movement thrived. The third is that political blackness contributed to the breaking down of prejudices between Asians and African-Caribbeans through the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) from 1978.

Claire Alexander, another scholar, has challenged Modood’s position and argued that deconstructing political blackness connotes creating division between ethnic minority communities. Alexander (2002) noted that the deconstruction of political blackness, vis-à-vis a theoretical declaration of independence on the ground of cultural difference, has meant “the discussion of racism and inequality has largely disappeared from the agenda of research or debate” (Alexander, 2002: 566), while attention is focused on cultural difference, as the new marker and explanation for socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination within minority ethnic communities. This critique was further reaffirmed by Alexander (2018), who argued that “abandonment of ‘black’ as an inclusive category” has led to the increasing focus on commodified culturalism that privileged oppression as the new marker of identity.

Unlike Modood, who dismissed political blackness within the context of ethnic pluralism, cultural identity, and multiculturalism, [Andrews \(2016\)](#) argued that the concept “is not meant as a statement of sameness per se between ethnic minority populations” ([Andrews, 2016: 2065](#)). Andrews critiqued the notion of political blackness on three grounds: on-strategic essentialism, non-whiteism, and methodological nationalism, and argued racism is global and rooted in imperialism, and the alternative to political blackness is to internationalise the fight against imperialism, using the Bandung 1955 conference that established the Non-Aligned Movement (during the Cold War) as a useful case. This argument obscures the class and capitalist context of imperialism. Imperialism, as [Lenin \(2015\)](#) argued, is the highest or latter stage of capitalism. The fight against imperialism is, by extension, the fight against capitalism, and the fight against capitalism cannot be fought based on the ethnicity paradigm of nation-states, as Andrews suggested. To challenge imperialism is to challenge global capitalism in its tracks. The capitalist question is the class question, where the unity of the working class (irrespective of ethnicities) across the world is needed to challenge imperialism and its defenders in different nation-states. Andrews’s suggestion corroborated and reinforced Modood’s critique of political blackness, such that Modood had argued that connection based on victimhood is problematic, while Andrews’s internationalisation of the victimhood of racism across different nation-states is the antidote to political blackness.

However, the critics of political blackness have been faulted for being divisive and reductionist: reducing the general problem facing minority ethnic communities to differences within such communities and weakening their solidarity by emphasising and focusing on what divides them and thus undermining the fabric of unity that connects them ([Phoenix, 1998](#)). The criticisms of political blackness ended up dividing and fragmenting the minority ethnic communities and making unity difficult, especially when confronting the structural and systemic problem of racism. The collective will of the minority ethnic communities to band together and forge a formidable structure against racism and marginalisation has been undermined by the appeal to divisive cultural identity rather than class solidarity. This lends credence to [Sivanandan’s \(2000\)](#) critique that the shift away from radical political blackness towards “ethnic enclaves and feuding nationalisms” paved the way for more attention on identity than racism. Focusing attention away from racism and towards identity plays into the hands of those who always whitewash the effects of racism on the minority ethnic communities. It is my contention in this paper that the critics of political blackness glossed over the capitalist root of racism and the role that the capitalist ruling class played in dividing the people along ethnic and racial lines to prevent them from challenging capitalism along the class line ([Ogunrotifa, 2022b](#)). The capitalist ruling class fears the unity of the people, especially ethnic communities on the class line, because such unity will find its echo within the larger British working class and raise class consciousness rather than ethnic consciousness. The critics of political blackness are indirectly

advocating for the supremacy of ethnic consciousness and undermining class consciousness. They are either playing the game of the capitalist ruling class unconsciously or have played into the hands of the capitalist ruling class and the state, and enabled them to achieve their aims of division within the minority ethnic groups based on race and ethnic consciousness.

Critics of political blackness only reinforce the colonial method of divide and rule (Ramanathan, 2014; Ali et al., 2015; Rahman et al., 2017; Ray, 2018), by creating artificial divisions among the minority ethnic groups on a cultural (identity) frame. What is problematic is not that the concept is inherently flawed and ontologically banal. Rather, the problem stems from the caricatured way in which the concept was deconstructed following its critique, to privilege cultural identity and ethnic particularism in the contemporary context. The loss of the analytical hegemony of political blackness stems from the deviation from the ideological (class) foundation of its emergence over the years.

The symbolic character of political blackness remains important in this epoch, where racial disparities in outcomes, especially education and training, employment, fairness at work and enterprise, crime and policing, and health, are widening between the British white population and ethnic minority groups, as revealed in the report of the *Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021)*. The culturally divided and fragmented minority ethnic communities that remain at the receiving end of marginalisation, systematic structures of deprivation, discrimination, and victimisation cannot challenge the structurally induced racial disparities on their individual ethnic colouration. Rather, they need the collective framework of political blackness to challenge the contemporary expression of racism, racialism, and marginalisation by the unity of the minority ethnic communities. Therefore, political blackness must be rescued from the rhetoric and perfidy of ethnicity or ethnic pluralism that have undermined its validity in challenging the contemporary problems of racism and marginalisation facing minority ethnic groups in the UK. This would be undertaken by bringing capitalism and class back into the discussion on political blackness, as this would provide the defence of the concept and demonstrate its continuous relevance in the contemporary context.

3. Capitalism, Class, and the Defence of Political Blackness

Having chipped away at the ideological character of political blackness and deconstructed its explanatory paradigm in academic, official, and policy discourses over the years by the critics, it is important to restate that the critique of political blackness is usually one-sided—focused on the “politics of difference” and identity, and sidesteps the class unity and solidarity on which political blackness was founded. The fulcrum of political blackness revolves around both the class and cultural frames, but its critics have intensely focused on the latter and neglected the former. The contemporary developments in global capitalism have demonstrated why political blackness is fundamentally important in tackling the challenges facing people at the societal margins, especially those from minority ethnic

groups. Tackling these challenges involves rescuing political blackness from the grip of ethnic divisiveness and placing more emphasis on its class character. Therefore, making a case for the defence of political blackness requires bringing capitalism and class into the discourse, as this would help in reshaping and re-evaluating the remits of the concept and its continuous relevance in responding to contemporary issues. With the imprimatur of capitalism and class as modes of thinking, the defence of political blackness as a useful theoretical framework is significant for three reasons.

First, the foundation of political blackness is underpinned by class, and not ethnicity. As previously stated, the emergence of political blackness stems from the common racism faced by the “coloured migrants” from New Commonwealth countries in Britain in the post-war epoch. With the small arrival of white migrants—Irish and workers from Eastern European countries, the scale of labour needed and positions to be filled was huge. Hence, the need for the emigration of the “coloured migrants”, mostly from New Commonwealth countries in Asia and the Caribbean. These “coloured migrants” are workers and were part of the working class (as workers). The emigration of these coloured migrants occurred due to the structural changes in British capitalism, where Britain was faced with a major shortage of labour and the expanding post-war economy meant that mass immigration from Britain’s colonies and former colonies (New Commonwealth countries) was required to enhance economic growth (Phizacklea & Miles, 1980; Carter et al., 1987; Hansen, 2000; Miles & Brown, 2003; Miles, 1982; 2014).

Available evidence revealed that the post-war recovery of the British economy was undertaken by immigrants who were primarily nurses, manual labourers, and other workers in unskilled occupations (Miles, 1982; Banton, 1983). The structural changes in British capitalism in the post-war period created a demand for labour that was increasingly met by migrants from the New Commonwealth. As Miles (1982) argues, these migrants were recruited to fill roles that had been vacated by British workers who had moved into other, often more desirable, sectors of wage-labour employment. This process saw migrant labour being concentrated in sectors of the British economy—such as textiles and metal manufacturing—that were becoming less competitive in the global market and were already experiencing decline. In these industries, production could only be sustained through the payment of low wages, a condition that attracted both migrant and indigenous workers during times of high unemployment. Therefore, the “coloured migrants” entered into proletarian or working-class positions and were recruited as a class fraction of the working class to manual labour positions with low wages and poor working conditions.

The influx of “coloured migrants” and their contributions to British capitalism caused a split within the British ruling class—a class that influences the fundamental objectives of state policies (Ogunrotifa, 2022b). This division within the ruling class found its expression in the fundamental objective of state policies on immigration in the post-war years. A section of the ruling class wanted to utilise

the availability of cheap labour to preserve and protect the competitiveness of British businesses and the economy in the global market. This section of the ruling class opposes the racialisation of migrant workers because they want them in the field picking fruits and engaging in semi-skilled, unskilled, and menial labour. The other section of the ruling class wanted cheap migrant labour but did not want “coloured migrants” or non-white labour to preserve the whiteness character of British society (Rattansi, 2005).

The consequence of the anti-immigration rhetoric of the British ruling class and its allies, including Enoch Powell, was the weaponisation of racist tropes and hysteria against coloured migrants among the British white population (often through the media), which thus led to a spate of common racism, discrimination, riots, and violence against minority ethnic groups since the 1950s. The racist ideology that underpinned the anti-immigration stance of this section of the ruling class reinforced the existing racist images and beliefs rooted in British national culture that symbolise the “colonial subjects”. The anti-immigration campaign against the “coloured migrants” gained overwhelming support among the British white population and thus translated into racial discrimination in housing and policing (Virdee, 2014) and state policy on immigration.

The British state under the Conservative government of 1951-1965 was the agent of racialisation, enacting racist policies against new Commonwealth immigrants as a way of legitimising exclusionary practices in the UK (Carter et al., 1987; Solomos, 1989; 1993; Paul, 1997; Cole, 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2016; 2020). Miles’ (1982) argument that the state (British state) is the agent of racialisation and racialises minority ethnic groups for political purposes was further corroborated by Carter et al. (1987: 335), who observed how anti-immigration rhetoric was fundamental in shaping the racialisation policy of the British state in the 1950s and the 1960s:

“The problem of colonial migration has not yet aroused public anxiety... [But] if immigration from the colonies, and, for that matter, from India and Pakistan, were allowed to continue unchecked, there is a real danger that over the years there would be a significant change in the racial character of the English people.”

The observation of Carter and his colleagues highlights the concern of the British state and its institutions—which are the custodians of the general interest of the capitalist ruling class (Miliband, 1969; Hay, 1999)—about the need for state policy on the racialisation of immigrants. Therefore, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed by a Conservative government (a pro-business party and a section of the British ruling class) to racialise Black and Asian immigrants as the problem, using law, policy, and regulation to protect the British racial character of Whiteness (Rattansi, 2005). The passing of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act ended “the automatic right of people of the British Commonwealth and colonies to settle in the United Kingdom who were overwhelmingly Blacks

and Asians” (McKay, 2008). The Act’s critics had argued that “the legislation was racist in intent because some of those responsible wished to maintain the racial homogeneity of the existing population” (Banton, 2005: 63).

If the economic necessity of cheap labour is the overall interest of the capitalist ruling class and the British state that is under their custody, why did the racialisation of “coloured migrants”—which was counter-productive to the capitalist interest—become state policy? The purpose of racialisation is not because the British ruling class was against the use of cheap labour of coloured migrants to run the economy and protect the competitiveness of British businesses with their competitors in Europe and North America, but often utilises it to deflect and distract the public’s attention from economic decline and to prevent questioning of the failing capitalist system. In comparison to other Western European countries, Geiger (2017) observed that the British post-war recovery experienced a slower rate of economic growth, as British capitalism experienced an organic crisis before the passing of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. Racialisation is the process through which racism is expressed, as both the British state and the capitalist ruling class used racism as a weapon for furthering division and disunity among the people, especially the working class.

Geiger’s findings further revealed that British capitalism was weaker than in the pre-war era despite the recovery. Due to the fragile nature of the economic recovery, British capitalism could not afford substantial social spending in the post-war era. The failure of the British capitalist state and its capitalist ruling class to provide more housing and other social welfare provisions fuelled public discontent because the arrival of coloured migrants put intense pressure on the existing local social services (Hansen, 2000). British capitalism could not provide full employment or address the housing shortage and inadequate local social services funding to cater to the increasing population following the influx of immigrants to Britain.

The economic effects of the crisis of British capitalism translated into political consequences for the ruling class and the British state under Conservative rulership, whose reaction to the problems was expressed through racialisation that objectified Blacks and Asian Immigrants as undesirable, problematic, and a cause of the crisis. With the racist Immigration Act, the impression that the British state and the ruling class gave was that such legislation was necessary to stop job competition between the White population and Immigrants. Racialisation was activated using state apparatus to legitimate exclusionary practices to protect their class rule and the scrutiny of the capitalist system at a time when socialism was at its ascendancy during the Cold War.

Without the weaponisation of racism by a section of the British ruling class vis-à-vis an anti-immigration stance, the public hostility, violence, and racism of the White British population against the new Commonwealth migrants would not have occurred. This is because such public hostility against the “coloured migrants” ensued due to housing shortages, unemployment, and lack of funding for local social services for the White British population. Therefore, racism against

minority ethnic communities had a class root and deepened the notion of state racism (Sivanandan, 1976; Banton, 1977; 2005; Miles, 1982; Carter et al., 1987; Solomos, 1989).

State racism is expressed as part of institutional and structural racism, which are embedded in the strategy, structure, systems, and culture of state institutions. Racism is an ideological outcome that permeates state structures and state institutions, and not a personal preference. As an ideological superstructure, racism is not independent of its own existence, but rather is shaped by the capitalist economic base. Since the capitalist economic base creates racism and shapes the racist ideological superstructure, state structures and state institutions are part of the superstructure that is shaped and determined by the capitalist economic base. Therefore, all capitalist states are inherently racist.

The concept of state in Marxist parlance is the idea that the state is an organ of class rule, for the oppression of one class by another (dominant ruling class over lower classes in society) (Lenin, 1992; Carnoy, 2014; Therborn, 2016). The state is the only institution that has a monopoly on violence and is legally allowed to use violence to control the population, especially the lower class. However, the activation of state instruments of control and violence is to protect the capitalist class interests, enforce its capitalist order, and bring other classes into compliance with the extant laws and status quo. Therefore, the idea of “state racism” is simply a machination of the state personnel in aligning the policy objectives of the state institutions with the interests and ideology of the capitalist ruling class.

As Miliband (1969) noted, power resides not in the state apparatus itself but in the personnel (including politicians) of the state. Even though states have relative autonomy (independence) from the ruling class (Miliband, 1973), the state personnel tend to act in the long-term interest of the capitalist ruling class, which they disguise as a form of national interest (Block, 1987). What seems to be state racism is rather the use of racism by the state personnel to project the ideology and interests of the capitalist ruling class in the fundamental objectives of state policies. Therefore, the saliency of racism in the modus operandi of state structures and institutions is structurally underpinned to achieve a particular ideological objective, which is in the interest of the capitalist ruling class.

Political blackness was a response to the racialisation of “coloured migrants” or minority ethnic groups by the British ruling class and state personnel, in which the structural development in British capitalism was the key factor that shaped who was to be racialised. Apart from racialisation through the enactment of Immigration Acts, the class basis of racism is also expressed on the industrial front—in workplaces and unions (Virdee, 2014: 98-119), where the ideological outcomes of the capitalist economic base shape the dynamics and organisation of the British Trade Unions. In this regard, the racialised workers (coloured labour migrants) were not allowed to join the mainstream labour unions and were often discriminated against by the employers or capital in terms of promotion, career progression, training, and advancement (Virdee, 2000; 2014). The denial of the oppor-

tunity to join mainstream labour unions means that ethnic minority workers were unable to utilise the structure of the labour union to protest these injustices, marginalisation, and racism.

This discrimination and racism on the industrial front were “accompanied with violence against migrant communities with flashpoints such as white-on-black rioting in Nottingham and Notting Hill in the 1950s, leading to ‘nigger hunting’ and ‘Paki bashing’ in the 1960s.” (Narayan, 2019: 950). The Indian Workers’ Association (IWA), which was formed in the 1930s to agitate for the independence of India, became a vanguard for workers’ struggle against racism and discrimination within the workplace, “within trade unions, of campaigns against racism and on civil liberties issues” (Josephines 1991: 1), and the IWA supported many other groups in the anti-racism struggle. Wild (2016) observed that the Birmingham Branch of the IWA collaborated with the British Black Power (BBP) groups, attended BBP demonstrations, and openly adopted a politically black identity in the late 1960s. Waters’ (2018) study further corroborated Wild’s findings and noted that the IWA was part of the Black People’s Alliance (BPA), which comprised over 50 militant Afro and Asian-led groups that campaigned and demonstrated under a unified organisation. Narayan further noted that the BPA included BBP groups and other organisations such as “the Pakistani Workers’ Association, the Pakistan Democratic Front, the West Indian Association, the Caribbean Socialist Union, the Group for Nigerian Revolution, the Afro-Asian Liberation Front and the Black Regional Action Movement.” (Narayan, 2019: 950). Political blackness thus ensued when these racialised workers, through their own association, collaborated and formed solidarity with other anti-racist and black groups and organisations to protest the grotesque racism and discrimination under the black political identity (Alexander, 2013; Ramamurthy, 2013; Virdee, 2014). Class is thus the nexus that brought ethnic minorities together under political blackness and facilitated the unity of the ethnic minorities (“coloured migrants”) on a class basis and class solidarity and ensured that they spoke with one voice and defended against everyday racism and racism in the workplace, police brutality, and political violence in the street.

Political blackness was never based on ethnicity but on class: class unity and class solidarity of ethnic minority groups that are racialised workers. Therefore, having rescued the concept from the divisive farce of ethnic particularity and cultural identity in which it is portrayed, political blackness is a potent tool that can act as a bulwark against the contemporary expression of racialisation against minority ethnic groups in the UK. If the socialist mission is to make the unfamiliar familiar, then the defense of political blackness is hinged on its potential to challenge the racialisation utilised by the British ruling class and state personnel against minority ethnic communities in this contemporary epoch, as we will see in the rest of this article.

Secondly, political blackness is required to challenge the widening racial and ethnic disparities in the UK. Ethnic minority groups have made a lot of progress

compared with their conditions in the 1970s and 1980s ([Race Disparity Unit, 2017](#)). There are now more successful businessmen, members of the middle class, and educational attainments of minority ethnic communities than in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, a few ethnic minority individuals have become CEOs, heads of government agencies, MPs, Ministers, Councillors, Mayors, and Prime Ministers. These achievements of ethnic minorities in these endeavours seem to suggest two important facts. The first is that there is a racial progression of ethnic minorities in the UK over the last 40 years, and the second is that racism has changed its nomenclature in contrast to what ethnic minorities faced from the 1950s to the 1990s.

The foundation for the achievement and inclusion of ethnic minority individuals and the progress recorded by the middle class of BAME extraction were the consequences of the struggle fought under the banner of political blackness. In fact, the foundation for such racial progress was laid under political blackness. The racial progress, as demonstrated by the achievements of a few individuals in the leadership of the private sector and public offices, does not override the widening racial and ethnic disparities between the white population and minority ethnic groups. The [Race Disparity Unit \(2017\)](#) revealed that widening outcomes exist between white and minority ethnic populations in terms of poverty and living standards, education, health, employment, housing, policing, public sector workforce, and the criminal justice system. This implies that minority ethnic communities fare worse as a collective in British society. The report further observed that Indian and Chinese students have surpassed the education attainments in GCSE, and they are likely to have first-class degrees. But are they given the job? How many Indian and Chinese graduates are senior managers in public and private enterprises? The plight of minority ethnic groups is further compounded in the report, where they fare worse when compared with the British White population in the areas of education and training; employment, fairness at work and enterprise; crime and policing; and health ([Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021](#)).

In addition to the widening racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes, minority ethnic communities are still faced with the problem of racism in the context of stop and search, incarceration, sentencing, and imprisonment. The 2004/05 British Crime Survey shows that people from mixed ethnic groups face significantly higher risks of being victims of crime than white people. The survey also revealed that ethnic minority groups were significantly more likely than white people to be worried about burglary, car crime, and violent crime. The [Lammy Review \(2017\)](#) reported that ethnic minority groups are three times as likely to be stopped and searched as those who are White, while blacks were six times more likely to be searched in comparison with the white population. In the context of arrest, mixed ethnic men and women were “more than twice as likely” to be arrested than White men and women, black men were more than three times more likely to be arrested than White men, while black women and Black boys were also “significantly more likely to be arrested” than White women and boys ([Lammy Review, 2017](#)).

According to data published by the UK government, there were a total of 277,378 stop and search incidents in England and Wales during 2017/18, the most recent year for which figures are available. This marks a decrease from 299,228 incidents recorded in the previous year (2016/17) (Borooah, 2021). Isaac (2020) reports that Black defendants face 40% higher odds of receiving custodial sentences compared to their White counterparts, while Asian or Other ethnic defendants face 50% higher odds. These findings provide strong evidence of ethnic disparities in sentencing practices within the Crown Court.

Further analysis by Isaac (2020), drawing on government data that controlled for key legal factors such as prior convictions and the entry of a guilty plea, revealed similar patterns: Black defendants had 55% higher odds, Asian defendants 53%, and Chinese or Other ethnic groups 81% higher odds of receiving a custodial sentence compared to White defendants, while young offenders from minority ethnic groups are more likely to receive a community sentence and less likely to be discharged or given a referral order (Criminal Justice System Race Unit, 2006). Within the context of imprisonment, Black and Asian, especially Muslim, individuals are significantly overrepresented in the prison population, with this disproportionality rising significantly for Muslims since 2002 (Young Review, 2014; Veiga et al., 2023; Lymperopoulou, 2024; Guilfoyle & Pina-Sánchez, 2025). The Young Review further revealed that prisoners have “experienced differential treatment as a result of their race, ethnicity or faith”; Black prisoners felt that they were stereotyped as drug dealers and Muslim prisoners as terrorists (Young Review, 2014: 56). The concerns about the criminal justice system, especially in England and Wales, are that “young Black men of African Caribbean descent” are frequently “based on the supposition that they belong to a gang, and that young Muslim men are, or soon will be, engaged in terrorist activity” (Young Review, 2014: 57). Racial disparities in the criminal justice system have led to Black individuals facing increasingly severe criminal sanctions and being disproportionately subjected to harsher penalties (Rahman et al., 2017; Ball et al., 2023; Veiga et al., 2023; Guilfoyle & Pina-Sánchez, 2025). The disproportionate confinement of Black people has been largely driven by the increased use of incarceration for less serious offences, rather than by rising crime rates. As a result, entire communities experience long-term consequences that further entrench inequality and mistrust in the legal system. These patterns have contributed to widespread perceptions of unfairness among ethnic minority communities, which in turn have undermined trust and cooperation with law enforcement and hindered the effectiveness of criminal trials. Systemic racism within the justice system undermines its fairness and creates significant obstacles to achieving true justice. These ethnic disparities not only distort legal outcomes but also produce widespread social and economic harm, particularly for Black individuals and other ethnic minority communities.

These problems persist at a time when there are more ministers and public office holders from minority ethnic groups. This suggests that racial disparities in outcomes will persist for two reasons. First, the problems faced by minority ethnic

groups stem from racialisation, and racialisation is the ideological process through which racism is perpetuated and sustained by the ruling class and state personnel in society. It is expressed in racialising advantages, benefits, and privileges to the White population against Black and other minority ethnic groups (Ogunrotifa, 2022a). Racialisation is not a one-off process; instead, it is a process through which racialised groups are constantly and consistently re-racialised through different methods and tactics vis-à-vis state institutions, media, and other socio-cultural institutions that are under the custody of the capitalist ruling class. As overt references to inferiority, superiority, distinct races, and racial hierarchy are rare in the contemporary era, racism is still practised through racialisation, especially in terms of laws, policies, allocative mechanisms, budgeting, and institutional practices (Ogunrotifa, 2022a; 2022b).

Racialisation, thus, ensues when enacted policies, laws, and regulations have been overtly and covertly racist because it is used to legitimate exclusionary practices and racialisation against sections of the population. With racialisation, the British ruling class takes advantage of cultural and ethnic divisions to prevent the unity of the working class across ethnic communities from uniting to challenge the capitalist system that is responsible for their plight as a class and along the class line.

For instance, the analysis of the austerity budget implemented by the Conservative government from 2010 has revealed that the cumulative effect of tax and benefit changes since 2010 has made BAME women emerge as the worst hit and the poorest Black and Asian women some £2,000 worse off, while the wealthiest people were slightly better off (Women's Budget Group, 2016; Khan & Shaheen, 2017). The budget presented by the then U.K. Chancellor (George Osborne) did not refer to race or ethnic minorities, but they were at the receiving end of such austerity policies.

Furthermore, the occurrence of racialisation can be seen in terms of the vast gap or considerable differences between the Whites and the minority ethnic groups, in a whole range of areas such as housing, employment, occupation, education, health, and social deprivation (Li & Heath, 2008; Li, 2017), and in the entrenchment of low-wage and low-skill jobs for minority ethnic groups as the racialised fraction of the working class. While there is no single Office for National Statistics (ONS) report from 2024 that comprehensively covers all aspects of ethnic and racial disparities, recent data from 2023 indicate that outcomes for ethnic groups vary significantly across key areas such as health, employment, education, and housing.

According to a 2023 report by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), racial disparities continue to affect multiple aspects of life in England and Wales, including housing, employment, education, health, and social deprivation. Many ethnic minority groups experience persistent structural disadvantages, such as higher rates of poverty, substandard housing, and lower levels of employment. For example, Black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi communities are significantly more likely to reside in deprived areas and suffer from housing deprivation (ONS, 2023).

In the labour market, Black individuals face higher unemployment rates, while various minority groups are disproportionately represented in low-paid and insecure employment. Conversely, groups such as the Indian and Chinese communities tend to have greater representation in professional and skilled occupations (ibid). Despite some progress in education, educational inequalities and negative health outcomes continue to affect ethnic minority populations. These persistent disparities have contributed to a widespread perception of discrimination and a lack of trust in both the healthcare system and the criminal justice system among many minority communities.

Furthermore, the 2023 report by the Office for National Statistics revealed that ethnic minority groups are more likely to be employed in low-paying and insecure jobs, contributing to significantly higher poverty rates, which are twice as high as those of White groups. Black African households are 75% more likely to experience housing deprivation than White British households, while Bangladeshi households are 63% more likely. These disparities are often linked to factors such as overcrowding, living in London, and a higher likelihood of renting rather than owning property. With racialisation, preserving these widening racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes between the White population and other minority ethnic groups by the ruling class and state personnel is a means to preserve their power, privileges, prestige, and control among the majority White population in society and to prevent the unity of the minority ethnic communities along class lines to challenge the capitalist system for the oppression, racism, and marginalisation they are experiencing (Ogunrotifa, 2022b).

Second, the assumption that ethnic minority individuals in state and official positions, such as the Prime Minister, Chancellor, Ministers, Mayors, or MPs, are never going to make a fundamental change in closing the racial disparities gap. The expectations of people from minority ethnic backgrounds may be that if individuals from their ethnic stock attain state positions of authority, like Ministers or the Prime Minister, this may warrant having policies favourable to ethnic minorities. This is not usually the case. This is because the fundamental objective of state policies, laws, and regulations is designed in the interest and ideology of the capitalist ruling class. Most of the ethnic minority individuals who occupy important state or public positions, such as Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel, David Lammy, Sadiq Khan, Kemi Badenoch, Suella Braverman, and others, share similar class interests with the British ruling class. Therefore, most of the policies designed, executed, and implemented by their respective offices share the interests of the British ruling class. Otherwise, they would not be allowed to occupy such positions, and if they occupy such positions, they may be forced to resign. Therefore, it is not the state or public positions that these ethnic minority individuals occupy that are important, but the class interest that they represent. To be better rephrased, it is not about the individuals that occupy public or state positions, but the class interest and ideology of the ruling class, which they share. The class interest of the ethnic minority individuals in important state offices will not change

the fortune and the problems that minority ethnic communities face in everyday life, especially in closing the racial disparities gap, because of the class interest and ideology of the capitalist ruling class, which they represent and share.

The British Guardian Newspaper on 22nd of October 2022, reported that Rishi Sunak (a former British Indian Prime Minister) and his wife have a combined wealth of over £700 million. The wealth of the British Prime Minister reflects his class position as part of the British ruling class. Why should minority ethnic communities discard political blackness when there is a British-Indian Prime Minister whose class interest is fundamentally opposed to the class interest of the communities, who are predominantly working class? Why should political blackness be discarded because a British-Indian becomes a Prime Minister, a British-Iraqi becomes Chancellor, or a Black British becomes a Home Office Secretary? The critics of political blackness glossed over this class reality, and the findings of Sewell's [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities \(2021\)](#) that racial progress should be recorded by a narrow frame of a particular ethnic group (such as British Caribbeans, British-Pakistanis) are dubious and disingenuous at best.

As the fate and hope of ethnic minorities in narrowing the racial disparities in outcomes are uncertain despite having ethnic minority individuals occupy important public and state offices, political blackness is required and must be preserved for two reasons. First, political blackness is essential and needed to challenge the new right movement that whitewashes the effects of racism through anti-wokeism and the cultural war, which prevents credible policy measures from being implemented to address the racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes. Political blackness is needed to counter the campaign of the cultural warriors by exposing them as agents of the British ruling class who enable racism through the deconstruction of efforts to eradicate racism in society. For instance, the Daily Independent Newspaper on the 14th of June 2021 reported that Priti Patel, a British-Indian Home Secretary, regarded anti-racism protests associated with the Black Lives Matter movement as “gesture politics.”

Patel told GB News on 14th of June 2021 that “I just don't support people participating in that type of gesture politics.” Furthermore, the Daily Independent Newspaper on 21st October 2020 reported that Kemi Badenoch, a Black British woman and Equalities Minister, told the British parliament that “we do not want to see teachers teaching their white pupils about white privilege and inherited racial guilt.” Also, Suella Braverman, a British-Indian UK Attorney General, was reported by the London Evening Standard Newspaper for questioning the court judgment that acquitted four protesters who toppled Edward Colston's statue in Bristol during the Black Lives Matter protest.

The London Evening Standard newspaper on 25th January 2022 reported that Suella Braverman considered appealing and referring the case to the Court of Appeal. Ms Braverman said the verdict was causing “confusion” and she was “carefully considering” whether to use powers which allow her to seek a review so senior judges have the chance to “clarify the law for future cases.” The implication of

the assumption of these ethnic minority individuals in state and public office is that British capitalism has reinvented itself in the last three decades, as there are now black, Asian, and other ethnic minority faces of British capitalism. The era of “no black, no Indian, no Irish, no dogs is allowed” is past. The reinvention of British capitalism with an ethnic face has not changed the fortunes of minority ethnic groups in terms of their class position, even though social inclusion, integration, and diversity have now been embraced in contemporary British society. This reinvention is rather superficial, as the class and capitalist roots of racism are intact. The ethnic face of British capitalism does not lead to racial progress or to narrowing the widening gap of racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes. These ethnic minority individuals are now the ethnic faces of British capitalism, who are also the vanguard of anti-woke culture that downplays the effects of racism on the victims, and rather blames the victims (who are from the minority ethnic groups) for overstating the effects of racism. These ethnic minority individuals are now part of the resurgent new right movement that prioritises cultural war and anti-wokeism following the assumption of Donald Trump as the United States President.

These ethnic minority individuals are now the ruling class cultural warriors who demonstrate their contempt for anti-racism and “wokeism,” and condemn any attempt to discuss how racism and poverty impact the lives of minority ethnic groups as a distraction and “excuse for failure.” These cultural warriors are the fighters for the rich and the ruling class to maintain division in society, such that their essentialist thinking on anti-wokeism tends to stereotype minority ethnic communities as being responsible for their condition. Political blackness is needed as solidarity against these cultural warriors who do not speak for the ethnic minorities but for the rich. In this sense, political blackness is useful in collectively issuing a political and social disclaimer on these individuals and is needed as a counterweight to attempts by the cultural warriors to demonise the anti-racism campaign.

Second, political blackness is required to challenge the widening racial and ethnic disparities between the white population and ethnic minority groups. The reports on [Race Disparity Unit \(2017\)](#) revealed that Indian, Chinese, and Black Africans fare better in educational attainment than Black Caribbeans, British-Pakistanis, and British Bangladeshis. Can Black Caribbeans or British-Pakistanis successfully challenge the British state in resolving these disadvantages without the imprimatur of other ethnic minority groups? It is highly unlikely that any of the minority ethnic groups will succeed in challenging the British state on their own. Since racialisation—which has its class root—is shaping the racial disparities outcomes, political blackness, founded on class unity and solidarity of the ethnic groups, is needed to challenge the British state and the British ruling class in addressing the racial disparities outcomes as a collective.

4. Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the remit of political blackness and argued for its contin-

ued relevance in the contemporary epoch. Following the review of the critiques of political blackness in light of the recent report of the [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities \(2021\)](#), this paper argues that the criticisms of political blackness on the grounds of ethnic, cultural, and identity frames are out of touch in dealing with the contemporary expression of racialisation that minority ethnic communities experience in the UK. The current expression of racism is invisible and activated through racialisation, utilised by the British ruling class to shape the fundamental objectives of state policies, laws, and regulations that legitimise exclusionary practices against minority ethnic groups in areas of education, health, housing, employment, occupation, and social deprivation. Having rescued the concept from the divisive farce of ethnic particularity and cultural identity, it is contended that the foundation of political blackness is built on class—class unity and class solidarity of “coloured migrants” or minority ethnic groups to challenge the class context of racism that is expressed through state racialisation. The onset of racism against minority ethnic groups in Britain is the racialisation of “coloured migrants” since the 1950s, and this is widely connected to the structural changes and development in British capitalism, which determines who is to be racialised in the post-war epoch. By bringing capitalism and class into the discourse, the common tapestry of political blackness that binds minority ethnic communities together under class unity and solidarity must be defended and utilised to confront the contemporary episode of racialisation, orchestrated by the British ruling class and state personnel. This would help to challenge the widening racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes through laws, policies, and regulations, and checkmate the campaign of cultural warriors, whose cultural war and anti-wokeism tend to demonise and undermine anti-racism campaigns and whitewash the effects of racism on the victims (minority ethnic groups). Defending political blackness on a class basis is a radical pathway towards forging working-class unity that can overthrow capitalism and end racism.

Despite the lack of primary data on ethnic and racial outcomes in the UK, the continued relevance of political blackness in the contemporary context highlights the need for ethnic minority communities to unite across class lines and challenge the ongoing reproduction of disparities. These disparities have undermined their communities in areas such as education, health, housing, employment, poverty reduction, occupation, and social deprivation when compared to the indigenous White population. In conclusion, political blackness, contrary to [Alexander \(2018\)](#), was never confined to a specific historical moment or era. Its class context remains urgent and relevant today, as there is a critical need for class unity and solidarity across ethnic minority groups under a single political umbrella. This unity is essential to counter the politics of division and identity politics that the British ruling class employs—through state institutions, media, policies, and laws—to fragment and prevent ethnic minority communities from collectively challenging the established power structures along class lines.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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