Enoch Powell: Britain's First Neoliberal Politician

Robbie Shilliam

Introduction[1]

Britain's first neoliberal politician was not Margaret Thatcher, nor even Keith Joseph, but the country's most accomplished racist – Enoch Powell. That is Arun Kundnani's (2018) provocation. Recent scholarship on Powell, including my own, has sought to draw out his long-term influence on politics, society and economy beyond the visceral racism that he so expertly conjured (for example Schofield 2015; Shilliam 2018; Hirsch 2018). In this contribution I aim to show that a focus on Powell allows us to consider political and intellectual departure points that might provide a more adequate account of the contemporary relationship between racist populism and the neoliberal project. I pursue this aim by suggesting that a political crisis is not always an epistemological crisis. By the latter, I mean a crisis of interpretation wherein received logics become paradoxes. A recent body of literature has begun to pay attention to the paradoxes contained within the neoliberal project (see Kiely 2018). My contribution is specifically addressed to the seeming paradox of neoliberal elites becoming populists.

Consider how critical scholars overwhelmingly apprehend neoliberal subjectivity as a calculus of self-governance defined by individualized risk/responsibility and competitiveness. Presently, however, much of Britain's governing class promote an ethics of individual risk/responsibility at the same time as paradoxically supporting the "people" in their struggle against "elites". The same class also subscribe to the notion that needs are best met through individual competitiveness while paradoxically calling for redistributive justice on behalf of the "white working class" (see Bhambra 2017). Since the Covid-19 pandemic, these paradoxes have moved almost entirely into the domain of national health-care and eugenic aspirations for herd immunity.

Paradoxes can sometimes be "completed", that is, resolved upon investigation - their logics reconciled. In this contribution I suggest that such a resolution might be achieved by apprehending racist populism as, formatively, a neoliberal project. In doing so, I am keen to make a heuristic distinction between neoliberal politicians, neoliberal economists, and neoliberal ideologues. In practice I realize that these distinctions cannot be categorical. Nonetheless, I use this distinction to tease out a blind spot addressed by the editors in their introduction: the shock, felt by many political economists, of the return

of populism to the Anglo-Atlantic world. I would argue that this shock has something to do with what the editors call the "misreading of foundational moments". Critical theories of neoliberal subjectivity have closely tracked economic expressions of neoliberalism emanating principally from think-tanks and ideas institutions. While this is obviously not empirically mistaken, such a focus can elide the expression of the neoliberal project in and through mainstream politics.

One might protest that Thatcher (and Reagan) feature prominently in received narratives. That, though, is part of the blind spot I am identifying: interventions made principally in the political field prior to the late 1970s/early 80s are eclipsed and, in this respect, the foundational moments of the neoliberal project are misread. In what follows I shall argue that the political force required to instantiate and defend the neoliberal project – especially in times of crisis - requires us to engage with chronologies, issues and actors which we might not foreground so instinctively if we dwelt primarily with economists and ideologues. Above all, the neoliberal subject that gains traction in the terrain of mainstream politics is far more intimately crafted by race, nation and legacies of empire than we would otherwise expect (see Slobodian 2018).

In the first section I rehearse the Foucauldian-influenced rendition of neoliberal subjectivity – one that is common-place amongst critical scholars of political economy. I then note the work of those who have sought to embed race within the political rationality of neoliberalism, which prompts me to turn to Stuart Hall's ground-breaking analysis of the organic crisis of the 1970s. Following Hall's cues, I return, in the next section, to Powell's political interventions in the 1960s. I explicate the ways in which Powell's racist populism logically (and not just rhetorically) articulated the neoliberal project in parliamentary and electoral politics. Powell politically advanced the subject position we nowadays associate with neoliberalism, but as a racialized and popularized one. Overall, I seek to demonstrate that using Powellism as a departure point certainly renders the current crisis a political one, but not necessarily an epistemological one.

Neoliberal subjectivity

For some time, political economists identified the formative moment of neoliberalism in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Aside from some references to the already-existing Chile "experiment" (for example Winn 2004), scholars predominantly explained neoliberalism's capture of electoral politics in terms of a response to a crisis of profitability and competitiveness in core capitalist states (famously Harvey 2005; for a critique see Kundnani 2018). Thatcher and Reagan came to personify the political dismantling of

corporatist compromises between state, labor and business, and the replacement of Keynesianism with marketization.

In recent years, the narrative of neoliberalism has increasingly pivoted towards ideas institutions, think-tanks, and academia. The Colloque Walter Lippmann in 1938 and then the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society led by Friedrich Hayek in 1947 are now presented as formative moments in the intellectual and economic development of neoliberalism; in Britain, this history pivots around the formation of the Hayekian-influenced Institute of Economic Affairs in 1955 (see for example Mirowski and Plehwe 2009; Stedman Jones 2012; Turner 2007; Burgin 2012; Jackson 2016).

It is important to note, though, that even with a wider and deeper historicization, the assumption still remains that the late 1970s constitutes the most meaningful conjuncture wherein the neoliberal project entered mainstream politics. In this respect, both older and newer narrations present the neoliberal project primarily and predominantly as an attempt to "naturalize" market logic and "make the world in [the market's] image" (Jessop 2002, 469; Clarke 2005, 58). Critical scholarship on "neoliberal subjectivity" has refracted the same foci on exposing market logics in its reconstitution of the "social", principally through a turn to Foucault.

For much of the 1990s, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony proved useful to critical scholars for explaining how top down policies could become socially embedded (for example, Overbeek 1993; Rupert 1995). But, as Stephen Gill (1995, 401) argued in an influential article, the Gramscian approach could also be aided by Michel Foucault's understanding of power as diffuse and capillary rather than as singular and concentrated. The turn towards Foucault was propelled further by the recovery of a series of his heretofore unpublished lectures on governmentality and biopolitics at the Collège de France in the late 1970s and early 80s. As Thomas Lemke (2002, 191) reported, the idea of governmentality glossed both "representation" – a discursive field rationalizing the exercise of power by specifying objects, arguments and justifications – as well as "intervention" – the notion that rationalization was not neutrally technical but rather committed to the pursuit of a political project. In fine, to study governmentality was to study the "conduct of conduct".

It is hard to overstate the influence of Foucault in explicating neoliberal subjectivity as a form of governmentality wherein appropriate conduct takes on the personage of homo-economicus – "the ideal, entrepreneurial, self-made individual" (Brown 2003; McCarthy and Prudham 2004, 276). Critical scholars have also taken Foucault's assertion that, while the governing conduct of classical liberalism

principally referenced exchange, neoliberal conduct principally references competition (Read 2009, 27). Hence, governmentality approaches framed neoliberal subjectivity as an individualized form of responsibility, or as Jonathan Joseph (2013, 42) puts it, subjects "who are free to take responsibility for their own life choices, but who are expected to follow competitive rules of conduct" (see also Spence 2016).

For those working in political economy, financialization, privatization and deregulation remain the exemplary policy areas through which neoliberal subjectivity is socially embedded. Still, the Foucauldian approach has always assayed governmentality broadly, reaching into cultural, familial and personal domains (see Rose 1996). Feminists such as Johanna Oksala (2013, 34) and Isabella Bakker (2007, 551) have addressed the ways in which market logic has restructured kinship and intimate relationships so that the reproduction of populations can no longer be dependent upon welfare programs that collectivize risk. Policy areas that address these "biopolitical" issues - life and the reproduction of populations – have tended to congeal around immigration, border control and citizenship rights. These are areas less represented in scholarship on neoliberal subjectivity. Indeed, they begin to complicate received narratives that plot the neoliberal project onto the mainstream political field via calculations expressly to do with economic competitiveness and profitability.

Where the literature has most saliently addressed these areas is through a concern for populations considered ungovernable, and here, race emerges as a key element in the formation of neoliberal subjectivity. Aihwa Ong (2007, 3–4) has argued that neoliberal governmentality produces states of exception for those racialized populations who cannot or refuse to subject themselves to the political rationality of competition and individual responsibility. In distinction to biopolitics, Achille Mbembe (2003) has proposed the concept of necropolitics - a form of governing not implicated in killing but rather in exposing discrete populations to the probability of death. With similar concerns, David Goldberg has introduced the term "racial neoliberalism". "Forces of unruliness", he points out, are racialized with the consequence that some populations are encouraged to protect themselves from others whom the state locks up (prison) or locks out (immigration) (Goldberg 2009, 333–34; see also Tilley and Shilliam 2018).

Taking Goldberg's prompt, Nisha Kapoor (2013, 1035) examines how the neoliberal state articulates race in terms of law and order, especially in times of crisis. Speaking specifically to the context following the 2007/8 financial crisis, Ian Bruff (2014, 115–16) claims that the neoliberal state has taken an avowedly authoritarian turn by mobilizing institutional power so as to enable and defend

4

austerity measures. In delineating the phrase "authoritarian neoliberalism", Bruff references 1970s debates over law, order, authoritarianism and capitalist crisis involving Nicolas Poulantzas, Bob Jessop, and Stuart Hall. Hall utilized Gramsci and Althusser (with a smattering of Foucault) to pre-empt many of the concerns for neoliberal subjectivity that have arisen in the last 25 years. It is notable just how relatively little Hall is cited in the political economy literature that deals specifically with neoliberal subjectivity (see Carrington 2019). Regardless, I want to follow Bruff's prompt by turning to Hall's engagement with the "organic crisis" of the corporatist state.

In *The Great Moving Right Show,* Hall (1979, 14) memorably took issue with the left-wing presentation of the right-wing National Front as a "class enemy in familiar Fascist disguise". At stake, for Hall, was an assessment of the depth of the 1970s crisis and the degree to which it was fundamentally rearranging the terrain of class struggle. To plumb this depth, Hall (1980a, 68) found Nicos Poulantzas's treatise on "authoritarian statism" provocative. Poulantzas wished to draw attention to an authoritarian turn by the capitalist state towards addressing crisis but which retained formal representative institutions in the process. Hall (1979, 15), however, preferred the term "authoritarian *populism*" in so far as he believed it crucial to dwell on "active popular consent" to authoritarian rule.

Hall's preference was informed by *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978)*,* a landmark book in which he and his co-writers had exposed the moral panic in the early 1970s over black "muggings" – a non-legal, colloquial term for violent and opportunist robbery. Hall examined how the sedimentation of fear over "black crime" came to legitimize the political turn towards law and order. (As an aside, when providing his first public address upon recovering from Covid-19, British prime minister Boris Johnson described the virus as an "unexpected and invisible mugger".)

Hall was concerned to demonstrate that in post-war post-imperial Britain, the travails of Black labor, marked by colonial immigration, were fundamental to understanding class struggle. In part, his argument addressed the prospects for resistance to the organic crisis of the corporatist state. As a "sub-proletariat" of the working class, Black labor lived class through the "modality" of race. It followed, then, that this lived experience was crucial to the building of a broad praxis that could confront the attempts by capital to "divide" the working class per se. In lieu of such a praxis, Hall (1978, 394–95) warned, the crisis of capital would continue to be resolved by the replacement of class struggle with a right-wing populism driven by Thatcher.

For Hall, "Thatcherism" was a new element of a "radical right programme"; it was, nonetheless, "incipient in earlier manifestations" - most especially, in Powellism (Hall 1979, 19; 1980b, 26). I want to now dwell in this incipience so as to provide the following provocation: if Thatcherism is a political project presently associated with neoliberalism, then we might have to read Powellism as a political project not associated simply with racism, but with racist populism *as a formatively neoliberal project*. My aim, then, is to demonstrate that Powell politically advanced the subject associated with neoliberalism as a racialized and popularized one.

Powell, Neoliberalism and Racism

To pursue this line of inquiry, it is first necessary to document the fact that Powell was indeed a believer in and promoter of neoliberal policies, or "free enterprise" as he described it (see Jackson 2016). After all, Keith Joseph is often considered the key politician through which Thatcher came to channel Milton Friedman's theory of monetarism. Powell, though, was Joseph's senior and knew Friedman through the Mont Pelerin Society (see in general Nelson 2009, 71–74; see also Greenleaf 1983, 326). Powell was a seminal influence on the economic thought of a number of Thatcher's first ministers, such as Geoffrey Howe and John Biffen.

In the late 1950s Powell advocated for anti-inflationary monetary policy (Stedman Jones 2012, 190–97). During this time he sought to amplify his influence through the Conservative Party's Policy Studies Group, a body tasked to find alternative directions to the "Butskellism" that aligned both political parties to corporatist and "mixed-model" governance (see Green 1999). In 1960, Powell published one of the Institute of Economic Affair's (IEA) most influential early works entitled *Saving in a Free Society.*

The formative importance to Powell of policy positions sourced from Hayek and Friedman helps to explain his involvement in an early set of exchanges curated by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) which, by the 1980s, would become the US equivalent to the IEA. Back in 1968 the Institute invited civil-rights supporting Senator Paul Douglas and Powell to debate the question, "how big should government be?"

Powell's rhetorical strategy in the debate was to take issue with the "incredulity" by which British politicians of all parties approached the "price mechanism", even though it clearly functioned "under their noses" and "in their daily lives" (Powell and Douglas 1968, 47). Powell was especially disparaging of the way in which government sought to control and future-plan the economy. Pre-

empting the new public management discourse of later years, Powell argued that government decision-making was hampered by a "paucity of information" and "debility of motive" (Powell and Douglas 1968, 59). In contrast, the market was able to continuously receive impressions from "any and every source"; and its neutral allocative mechanisms far surpassed the "centralized and conscious judgment" of governing politicians (Powell and Douglas 1968, 60).

Furthermore, and demonstrating what we would nowadays call a "governmental" concern for marketization, Powell refused to consider his promotion of the "free enterprise system" as a call for laissez-faire. To the contrary, free enterprise was itself "a form of government, a method of regulating the economic relations between citizens" (Powell and Douglas 1968, 67). As Powell (1965, 25–26) put it elsewhere, and in an argument remarkably redolent of neoliberal governmentality, the "free economy of capitalism" was "a way of life" that government had to ensure.

In the introduction I made a heuristic distinction between neoliberal politicians, economists and ideologues. The importance of this distinction becomes even more relevant at this point in my argument because, unlike many of the British intellectuals and economists who made their case through the IEA, AEI and other ideological apparatuses, Powell wished to make the case for monetary and anti-inflation policies directly and personally in the arena of electoral politics. As a politician, he articulated the "free enterprise system" as a populist project.

Equating the market with freedom and economic planning with communism, Powell (1969a, 2) presented a stark choice to the 1965 electorate: "a free society [or] a society in bondage". In doing so, Powell (1969a, 106) described those pulling the levers of economy from behind the offices of government as "conspirators" who cast employee and employer as enemies of each other. Such divide and rule tactics were necessary, Powell (1969a, 109) claimed, to obfuscate the fact that economic-planning caused both wage and price inflation. The free enterprise system, however, promised the ordinary man just as much influence as the man in Whitehall (Powell 1969a, 13). Powell's political strategy was therefore to dis-identify the Conservative party with the corporatist state along populist lines. "The Tory principle", he explained, was "to trust the people" (Powell 1969a, 4; see also 1965, 32). Free enterprise was for the benefit of the people; economic planning was for the benefit of the elites.

One might protest that the fit between populism and neoliberalism was simply a rhetorical one. I disagree strongly. As I will now show, that fit was articulated through logic – a race logic.

Initially a supporter of empire and opponent of Indian independence, by the late 1950s Powell had radically rethought his imperial commitments. In 1961 he delivered a famous speech to the Royal Society of St George declaring the end of empire. In fact, Powell went on to propose something far more provocative. English nationhood, he argued, had never in any way been modified or changed by Empire: the "nationhood of the mother country remained unaltered through it all, almost unconscious of the fantastic [imperial] structure built around her" (Powell 1965, 144). "National consciousness", mooted Powell, was "transmitted from generation to generation by a process analogous to that of inheritance" (Schofield 2015, 182). Those generations who lived through Empire were only now, in its end days, coming "home" again, to "discover affinities with earlier generations of English" who had lived before the imperial era (Powell 1965, 144).

In Powell's estimation, national heredity was demonstrated by cultural character and constituted by political culture. In terms of character, the original English man could not suffer "the safety, ease and irresponsibility of servitude"; he was called instead to pursue "freedom… [and] the responsibilities and the opportunities, which are inseparable from it" (Powell 1970). Yet this freedom did not comprise anarchical energies; bound to a "deferential" responsibility, English freedom manifested as an orderly independence (see Powell 1969a, 186). For Powell, the cultural heritage of English nationhood – orderly independence - was safeguarded via parliamentary sovereignty. Ever since Henry 8th declared his imperium, "no law has been made for England outside England … and the whole subsequent history of Britain and the political character of the British people have taken their color and trace their quality from that moment and that assertion" (Ritchie 1978, 34).

In Powell's conception, then, English nationhood was a distinct heredity that manifested key elements of what would nowadays be called neoliberal subjectivity: an embrace of individual freedom, an acceptance of the self-responsibility that came with said freedoms, and a desire for all freedoms to be rendered orderly (via individual character) and governable (through parliament). In this respect, Powell's disavowal of the effect of empire was the necessary premise by which he could present the English "people" as inheriting a natural disposition towards the free enterprise system.

Of course, disavowing empire was only possible if Powell congenitally racialized English nationhood as exclusively white (Anglo-Saxon) stock. This racialization is evident in the way in which Powell arranged the diverse populations of the British Empire by reference to varying political proximities to whiteness. For instance, Powell considered Commonwealth citizenship to be a "legal fiction" created by the 1948 Nationality Act. He also bemoaned the ascription of "our nearest European

neighbors" as aliens at the same time as "myriad inhabitants of independent countries in Asia, Africa and the New World were British, indistinguishable from native-born inhabitants of these islands" (Powell 1966). One might protest that Powell wished for the end of the entire Commonwealth - including its white dominions. While this is true, Powell never presented the Commonwealth's Anglo-Saxon constituents as a national threat in the same way that he did "coloured immigration".

Such distrust is evident as far back as the 1940s when Powell reasoned that Indians were ill-suited for orderly self-government due to their proclivity to vote along communal lines rather than as independent citizens (Brooke 2007, 671–72). Forward to 1966 and Powell (1969a, 221) was presenting communalism to his West Midlands constituency as a "curse of India" that had moved to England with the settlement of Sikhs. No surprise, then, that in Powell's (1969a, 237) estimation, the non-white Commonwealth settler could never "become an Englishman" in the cultural sense: English heredity was defined by orderly independence which demanded a self-responsibility to which communalism was antithetical. And culture, for Powell, *was* race. For instance, when speaking of those population groups who did not, in his estimation, wish to integrate, Powell (2007) famously proclaimed that "their color marks them out". England remained for him categorically "a white nation": a child born of Indian parents in Birmingham, even if acclimatized to English culture, could never become English but would always remain Indian (Powell 1970).

These are the logics that enabled Powell, in his infamous "rivers of blood" speech, to identify non-white Commonwealth arrivants as the key threat to English nationhood at empire's end (see Hirsch 2018). In this respect, his populism could only make sense as a claim on racialized heredity. For instance, Powell (2007) was especially concerned with miscegenation via the arrival of "unmarried persons". Moreover, he described the effect of non-white settlement in neighborhoods in terms of "wives unable to get hospital beds in childbirth, [and] children unable to get school places" (Powell 2007; see also 1969a, 220). Powell's defense of an altruistic domain for social services was not made on ethical grounds – via the principle of universal provision – but on racial grounds - on behalf of preserving the purity of English heredity.

I am arguing, then, that Powell conceived of what we now call "neoliberal subjectivity" in terms of a defense of English heredity - a heritage founded on the principle of orderly independence. This being the case, it is through the association of empire with the degradation of orderly independence that Powellism inducts the neoliberal project into parliamentary and electoral politics.

Powellism as neoliberalism

In making this argument I want to take a prompt from a defining speech given by Powell in 1963 and entitled "The Duties of the Tory Government and Nation". On this occasion, Powell (1963) claimed that "imperial delusion" encouraged the English people to "consume what we have not produced". In his estimation, a contrived dependency upon the riches garnered from empire threatened the orderly independence of the English whereby "on our own ingenuity, effort and husbandry alone depends what this nation ... can achieve and enjoy" (Powell 1963). For Powell, these delusions were created and maintained by destructive national myths.

As will be remembered, Powell was adamant that empire had never been constitutive of English nationhood. In fact, the English were positive that they were *not* building empire; at least, that is, until the fateful moment when Disraeli crowned Queen Victoria Empress of India (Powell 1965, 140). Ever since, Powell lamented, the dominant national myth had been a fictitious one: "we had an empire, but it has gone, leaving us a second-rate … power". A corollary to this national myth was the presumption that Britain had once been the "workshop of the world" but was no more. Powell pointed out that this apprehension of global decline was in no way novel but evident, even, in the self-professed heyday of British industrialism – the 1850s – when anxieties abounded that American productivity was supplanting British craftsmanship.

From these conjoined myths – the loss of empire and of predominance in world trade – arose "the monstrous progeny of a closed Imperial trading area", with "its wraith still [haunting] the corridors of British politics under the name of Commonwealth preference" (Powell 1965, 142). Above all, Powell argued that it was the chimera of a lost global supremacy that compelled both Tory and Labour governments in post-war post-imperial Britain to subscribe to economic planning, a policy that was modelled on - and specifically measured by - a competition for growth amongst nations. "Strong" national growth was defined in terms of halting the decline of the relative size of Britain in the industrial and commercial world (Powell 1965, 142; see also 1969a, 78). In sum, Powell argued that the justifications by which the British government pursued planned growth were all captive to degrading national myths about imperial decline.

Alternatively, Powell pointed out, "happiness and success" were "likeliest to come to the nations which know themselves as they really are, without delusions either of height or depth" (Powell 1965, 142). In other words, Britain could simply chose to live within its means. For was not the market

"irresistible"? Its mechanism still determined wages, profits and prices even as the government fixed the monetary supply so as to speed up productivity, increase growth, and thereby inflation (Powell 1965, 110). It stood to reason, then, that government should provide a monetary system that would not enable dependency and irresponsibility in the pursuit of mythical "growth" but would instead "tell us the truth about the consequences of our choices and decisions, about the true cost of importing, the true profit of export, the true return upon investment: give us this, and we can do the rest ourselves" (Powell 1969a, 78–70). Effectively, Powell was proposing that monetarism would restore England's cultural heritage of orderly independence.

Precisely as Powell advocated for national redemption, he perceived race relations legislation in Britain to be a wedge by which empire's pathologies - even at empire's end – could exercise a corrupting influence on English nationhood from the inside. The Race Relations Act of 1968 was the second such act in Britain that made it illegal to refuse employment or public services to an individual on account of their race. In Powell's opinion, the Act legally supported the minoritization of the racialized majority with the consequence of making the white English "strangers in their own country" (Powell 2007). Moreover, race relations legislation denied the English man the right to "discriminate in the management of his own affairs between one fellow citizen and another" (Schofield 2015, 213). I would also suggest that Powell assayed race relations as introducing the communalism principle into British politics – a principle which he had early on argued made a colonized peoples ill-fitted for self-governance.

By this logic, Powell cast state-management of the economy as a form of foreign despotism and Anglo-Saxon degeneration. In doing so, he framed the pursuit of social justice as an issue of racial demography, i.e. the restoration of white English heredity (orderly independence), rather than of structural socio-economic inequality (for an update see Tilley 2020). When it came to parliamentary and electoral politics, Powell enunciated this framing through a racist populism.

I noted above how Powell had contrasted the "ordinary man" to the venal Whitehall economic planner. Lo and behold, this was the same rhetorical man whom Powell presented as the subject of his Rivers of Blood speech. Famously, Powell proposed that to even question whether this white English man really did have legitimate grievances qua a racialized majority was proof of one's elitist mendacity. It was, after all, "common sense" to "ordinary people" that the nation faced, first and foremost, a racialized demographic challenge (Powell 1963). Nevertheless, the "enemy" of the people – a racially/nationally traitorous elite - had "mastered the art of establishing a moral ascendancy over his

victims and destroying their good conscience" (Powell 1970). Academics and activists who dared to suggest, in the global context of the late 1960s, that "rioting and arson [by minorities] is due to dissatisfaction over housing and employment" (Powell 1970) were participating in a "great betrayal" (Powell 2007).

It is also through his racist populism that Powell took exception to Britain's attempt to join the EEC. Entry, he warned, would induce a new political dependency, a replacement of the old imperial handicap. Furthermore, in seeking to engender a "candid conversation" about "our own country" when his fellow politicians were too timid to do so, Powell, as did a number of British-based members of the Mont Pelerin Society (Slobodian 2018, 172–78), associated his argument with developments in Rhodesia, where Ian Smith had unilaterally declared independence from Britain to avoid decolonization and majority Black rule. In point of fact, Powell (1969a, 164) was skeptical that Britain could or should militarily defend any commonwealth entity. Nonetheless, in criticizing aspirations for EEC membership, Powell (1969b) began with his own "Unilateral Declaration of Independence": "we do not need", he protested, "to be tied up with anybody". In these ways, Powell's Euroscepticism was intrinsic to a neoliberal project set upon redeeming English nationhood from imperial and racial contaminants.

It must be acknowledged that Powell's influence on parliamentary politics after 1974 was mediated and no longer direct; and Thatcher was far more of a status quo pragmatist than Powell ever was (Vinen 2009). But even so, Powellism clearly laid the ideational and electoral groundwork for Thatcherism (Shilliam 2018, 101–8). Or, to riff off Stuart Hall: through Powell, race was the modality by which neoliberal subjectivity was politically induced.

Conclusion

Currently, marketization is being pursued through autarkic sentiments, populism is being supported by governing classes even as they hold firm to the individualistic ethos of competition, and "class struggle" has been retrieved in racialized form by the same governing classes that have materially eviscerated redistributive capacities through austerity measures. These paradoxes are being exacerbated - not replaced - by the Covid-19 pandemic. Such paradoxes present as logically contradictory: absurd conditions. But, as I mentioned in the introduction, paradoxes can be "completed" upon investigation. I have presented evidence to suggest that this completion is possible if Enoch Powell is apprehended not as Britain's most racist politician, but at the same time as the country's first neoliberal politician. In short, Powell's racist populism logically articulated the neoliberal project.

So, let me return to the blind spot that I have sought to identify in this contribution. In their introduction, the editors note the surprise with which many political economists have encountered the recent explosion of populist politics (in the Anglo-Atlantic world, at least). I suggested that this surprise might owe in part to a "misreading of foundational moments", specifically, of the neoliberal project. For this purpose, I made a heuristic distinction between economic, ideological and political expressions of neoliberalism. The utility of this distinction was to bring to light a lacuna evident in critically-minded narrations of the neoliberal project – a lacuna that falls between: a) a 1940s departure point, with economists and intellectuals in ideas institutions and thinktanks; and b) a 1970s departure point, with politicians addressing a crisis of profitability and competitiveness. It is not that these narratives are false. It is simply that they do not adequately track the political articulation of the neoliberal project in the decades of imperial decline.

Alternatively, I have narrated post-war neoliberalism in Britain as a response to the end of empire and an attempt to redeem the Anglo-Saxon race from its imperial-corporatist-socialist degeneration. This narration would infer that, as an explicitly political project, neoliberalism has always been a constitutively racist-populist one. In turn, this would raise the prospect that, even if the presentation of neoliberal subjectivity as homo-economicus retains fidelity to the arguments and agitations of economists, ideologues and think-tanks, it misses the actual politics of that subjectivity.

Those who have drawn attention to the racist mobilizations that undergird neoliberal subjectivity might be less surprised at neoliberal politicians suddenly "turning" populist. Yet there is still work for us to do in explaining how and why entrepreneurial individualism and racist populism are not logically contradictory but rather logically complementary. Perhaps neoliberal subjectivity is more Victorian than Foucauldians imagine (see Wynter 2015). Eugenics distinguished itself from Herbert Spencer's "laissez-faire" social-darwinism as an interventionist, self-making science that sought to inscribe into the genetic fabric of the Anglo-Saxon masses the qualities of orderly independence inherited by its elites. All in the name of competition, of course: competition between races. Was there ever more of a "neoliberal" project than eugenics?

One might counter that not all neoliberals are racist populists, and I would agree. Friedman, for all his faults or naiveties, broke with Powell on racism (see Kamola 2019). It is also true that Powell's project does not map perfectly onto the charts of neoliberal economists and ideologues: Powell was, for instance, opposed to economic growth by any means. But the point is that economists and ideologues have never had sole ownership over the neoliberal project. If we apprehend neoliberalism not in terms

of a sequential chronology, but more usefully as a "history of the present", then this history is as much Powell's as it is Hayek's or Friedman's. And who have the current political elite returned to so quickly and faithfully in order to make capital out of crisis? Neither Hayek nor Friedman but Powell, with his ready-to-use playbook of racist populism. Indeed, consider how little "economic growth" has featured in the arguments by neoliberal politicians for Brexit and how fundamental has been their invocation of a redeemed Anglo-Saxon spirit of enterprise. If only the NHS was not staffed by so many foreigners, and if only Anglo-Saxons could take a China virus "on the chin".

Not all neoliberals are racist populists, but todays racist populists are all neoliberals - by intention or by effect. Most are also the spoilt sons of Thatcher who are less concerned by grand philosophical designs for remaking the human subject and far more interested in scams and short-term financial leveraging. Their use of Powell's play-book draws on none of his philosophical depth: it is, likewise, a political scam and an electoral leveraging. Zombie Powellism: the Anglo-Saxon race eats its own.

We are no doubt in the midst of a political crisis – in fact, a layered crisis upon crisis. But depending on one's point of departure, it is not necessarily an epistemological crisis. No one needs to be surprised. Perhaps a departure point marked by the end of empire and located in constituencies such as Powell's south west Wolverhampton might explain to us as much about our contemporary organic crisis as one marked by the end of Keynesianism and located near the shores of Lake Geneva.

Bibliography

Bakker, Isabella. 2007. "Social Reproduction and the Constitution of a Gendered Political Economy." *New Political Economy* 12 (4): 541–56.

Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2017. "Brexit, Trump, and 'Methodological Whiteness': On the Misrecognition of Race and Class." *The British Journal of Sociology* 68 (1): 214–32.

Brooke, Peter. 2007. "India, Post-Imperialism and the Origins of Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' Speech." *The Historical Journal* 50 (3): 669–87.

Brown, Wendy. 2003. "Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy." *Theory & Event* 7 (1).

Bruff, Ian. 2014. "The Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism." *Rethinking Marxism* 26 (1): 113–29.

Burgin, Angus. 2012. *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Carrington, Ben. 2019. "Remembering Stuart Hall: Learning to Think Differently." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 96 (1): 248–54.

Clarke, Simon. 2005. "The Neoliberal Theory of Society." In *Neoliberalism a Critical Reader*, edited by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, 50–59. London: Pluto Press.

Gill, Stephen. 1995. "Globalisation, Market Civilisation, and Disciplinary Neoliberalism." *Millenniun: Journal of International Studies* 24 (3): 399–423.

Goldberg, David Theo. 2009. *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Green, E. H. H. 1999. "Thatcherism: An Historical Perspective." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9: 17–42.

Greenleaf, W. H. 1983. *The British Political Tradition Vol. 2*. London: Methuen.

Hall, Stuart. 1979. "The Great Moving Right Show." *Marxism Today*, no. January: 14–20.

———. 1980a. "Nicos Poulantzas: State, Power, Socialism." *New Left Review*, no. 119: 60–69.

———. 1980b. "Thatcherism - A New Stage?" *Marxism Today*, no. February: 26–28.

Hall, Stuart, C. Critcher, T. Jefferson, J. Clarke, and B. Roberts. 1978. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, The State, and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hirsch, Shirin. 2018. *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell: Race, Locality and Resistance*.

Jackson, Ben. 2016. "Currents of Neo-Liberalism: British Political Ideologies and the New Right, c.1955–1979." *English Historical Review* 131 (551): 823–50.

Jessop, Bob. 2002. "Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State–Theoretical Perspective." *Antipode* 34 (3): 452–72.

Joseph, Jonathan. 2013. "Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism: A Governmentality Approach." *Resilience* 1 (1): 38–52.

Kamola, Isaac. 2019. "Milton Friedman in South Africa: Libertarian Economics and the Apartheid Imaginary." In *Annual Conference of the International Studies Association*. Toronto.

Kapoor, Nisha. 2013. "The Advancement of Racial Neoliberalism in Britain." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (6): 1028–46.

Kiely, Ray. 2018. *The Neoliberal Paradox*. London: Edward Elgar.

Kundnani, Arun. 2018. "Disembowel Enoch Powell." *Arun Kundnani on Race, Culture, and Empire* (blog). 2018. https://www.kundnani.org/disembowel-enoch-powell/.

Lemke, Thomas. 2002. "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique." *Rethinking Marxism* 14 (3): 49–64.

Mbembe, J. 2003. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15 (1): 11–40.

McCarthy, James, and Scott Prudham. 2004. "Neoliberal Nature and the Nature of Neoliberalism." *Geoforum* 35 (3): 275–83.

Mirowski, Philip, and Dieter Plehwe, eds. 2009. *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nelson, Edward. 2009. "Milton Friedman and U.K. Economic Policy: 1938-1979." Research Division: Federal Reserve Bank of St.Louis. https://s3.amazonaws.com/real.stlouisfed.org/wp/2009/2009-017.pdf.

Oksala, Johanna. 2013. "Feminsm and Neoliberal Governmentality." *Foucault Studies*, no. 16: 32–53.

Ong, Aihwa. 2007. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

Overbeek, Henk, ed. 1993. *Restructuring Hegemony in the Global Political Economy: The Rise of Transnational Neo-Liberalism in the 1980s*. London: Routledge.

Powell, Enoch. 1963. "The Duties of the Tory Government and Nation." POLL 4/1/1 Speeches. enochpowell.info.

———. 1965. *A Nation Not Afraid*. London: B.T. Batsford.

———. 1966. "Extract from Speech at the Memorial Hall, Harrow." POLL 4/1/2 File 4. enochpowell.info.

———. 1969a. *Freedom and Reality*. Edited by John C. Wood. London: B.T. Batsford.

———. 1969b. "Speech to Conservative Women's Rally, Clacton." POLL 4/1/5 Speeches. enochpowell.info.

———. 1970. "Speech at Turves Green Girls School." POLL 4/1/6 Speeches. enochpowell.info.

———. 2007. "Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' Speech." *The Telegraph*, November 6, 2007, sec. Comment. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html.

Powell, Enoch, and Paul Douglas. 1968. *How Big Should Government Be?* Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Read, Jason. 2009. "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity." *Foucault Studies* 0 (0): 25–36.

Ritchie, Richard. 1978. *Enoch Powell: A Nation or No Nation? Six Years in British Politics*. Kingswood: Elliot Right Way.

Rose, Nikolas. 1996. "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies." In *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, and Rationalities of Government*, edited by Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose, 37–64. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rupert, Mark. 1995. *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schofield, Camilla. 2015. *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press.

Shilliam, Robbie. 2018. *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit*. London: Agenda Publishing.

Slobodian, Quinn. 2018. *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Spence, Lester K. 2016. *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics*. New York: Punctum Books.

Stedman Jones, Daniel. 2012. *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Tilley, Lisa. 2020. "Saying the Quiet Part Out Loud: Eugenics and the 'Aging Population' in Conservative Pandemic Governance." *Discover Society* (blog). April 6, 2020. https://discoversociety.org/2020/04/06/saying-the-quiet-part-out-loud-eugenics-and-the-aging-population-in-conservative-pandemic-governance/.

Tilley, Lisa, and Robbie Shilliam. 2018. "Raced Markets: An Introduction." *New Political Economy* 23 (5): 534–43.

Turner, Rachel S. 2007. "The 'Rebirth of Liberalism': The Origins of Neo-Liberal Ideology." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12 (1): 67–83.

Vinen, Richard. 2009. *The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*. London: Simon & Schuster Ltd.

Winn, Peter, ed. 2004. *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973-2002*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2015. "The Ceremony Found: Towards the Autopoetic Turn/Overturn, Its Autonomy of Human Agency and Extraterritoriality of (Self-)Cognition." In *Black Knowledges / Essays in Critical Epistemology*, edited by Sabine Broeck, 184–252. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.