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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Dear British politics—where is the race and racism?

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Abstract

This article explores the neglect of race and racism in the discipline of British politics. I outline why this has happened, the consequences of such neglect and how it might be remedied. The article proceeds in four stages: First, it makes the case that British politics *has* neglected race and racism. I do this by showing that race does not feature within the core concerns of the discipline, and that despite the fact that race may be noted in the relationship between demography and representation, its status as a social construct is not addressed. Second, the article explores the question of disciplinary reflexivity. Drawing on Emirbayer and Desmond's (2012) racial reflexivity framework, I delineate the disciplinary and scholastic unconscious of British politics, showing that the reliance on the Westminster Model obscures questions of race. Next, the article discusses the Sewell Report (2021), explicating its post-racism narrative, and draws parallels between the findings of the report and the study of British politics. The final section of the article outlines a framework for a British politics of race. The framework draws on critical race theory, and Britain's imperial history of colonialism and empire-building and thus puts the study of race at the centre of the discipline.

Keywords Race · Racism · British politics · Critical race theory · Disciplinary reflexivity

Introduction

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990b), James C. Scott makes a distinction between *public transcripts* and *hidden transcripts*. Scott defines the former as 'the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate', adding that when 'not positively misleading', the public transcript 'is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations' (1990b, p. 2). The hidden transcript, the other side of the public transcript, exists 'offstage' and may give rise to covert resistance (1990b,

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p. 2). My interest in invoking Scott is to draw attention to the fact that British Politics[1] has a public and hidden transcript relating to race and racism. The public transcript reflects the ways in which the discipline approaches questions regarding race, which might be understood as invocations of race take place when they refer to demographic or identity-based characteristics of the individual that affect voting or modes of engagement relating to political representation. Parallel to this, there exists a hidden transcript where there are issues pertaining to race and racism that the discipline is acutely aware of, but for various reasons are supressed. Race and racism are then *hidden* to the extent that the discipline of British Politics is largely silent about these issues. The overall effect of this position is that the discipline has been unwilling or indeed unable to respond to Grenfell, to the Windrush scandal, to the Black Lives Matter Movement, or the Sewell Report.[2] This stands in contrast to other disciplines, including sociology (Szetela 2020; Ellefsen and Sandberg 2022; Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury 2019), history (Hirsh 2020), as well as sub-fields such as political theory (Havercroft and Owen 2016) and international relations (Danewid 2020; Abu-Bakare 2020). British politics is conspicuous in its absence.[3]

While there is a normative commitment to equality and anti-racism in the discipline, persistent racial inequality speaks to these silences and requires that we do more and indeed recognise the areas where we need to do better. Disciplines such as sociology have had to grapple with their own complicated relationships with race and racism, including the question of to what extent the birth of the discipline of sociology, linked as it is with modernity, was involved in promoting racialised imperial projects, but also exclusionary projects with regards its canon. Such questions are being considered under the decolonisation agenda (Bhambra and Holmwood 2020; Meghji 2022). In British Politics, however, we are somewhat behind in this process of reckoning with our past but, also, we lack the tools and the concepts to engage in debates about race and racism. Admittedly these are hard conversations, which may involve some discomfort, but disciplinary reflexivity does not come without its challenges.

My approach in this article is as follows: I begin by explicating the thesis that British Politics *has* neglected questions of race. I do this by tracing and making explicit British Politics' present mode of operation. Specifically, I am concerned

[1] To avoid confusion in the article, I distinguish between the discipline of British Politics by capitalising 'British Politics', while British politics in the general is referred to as 'British politics'.

[2] The Grenfell tragedy (June 14th 2017) was a high-rise fire, which broke out in the 24-storey Grenfell Tower block of flats in North Kensington, West London. 72 people died, including two who later died in hospital, with more than 70 others being injured and 223 people escaping. The Windrush Scandal began to surface in 2017 after it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the 'Windrush' generation, had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. The Black Lives Matter movement is an international social movement, formed in the United States in 2013, dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence, especially in the form of police brutality. The Sewell Report (2021), is a report commissioned by then Prime Minister, Boris Johnston, examining 'race and ethnic disparities' in the United Kingdom.

[3] I am grateful to Phillips, Earle, Parmar and Smith (2009) for the inspiration for the title of the present article and I duly acknowledge their piece: Dear British Criminology, where has all the race and racism gone? *Theoretical Criminology*, 2019, pp. 1–20.

with establishing the modes through which the discipline engages with concepts of race, and how this delimits the scope of inquiry, while also leading to little meaningful interrogation of the social construction of the concept of race. From here, the article explores the question of disciplinary reflexivity and I draw on Emirbayer and Desmond's (2012) racial reflexivity framework to delve into the disciplinary and scholastic unconscious of the discipline to consider how this shapes how it approaches its subject matter, but also how this serves to obfuscate questions of race. Next, to illustrate these problems, the article discusses the Sewell Report (2021), explicating its post-racism narrative, and the uneasy parallels between the findings of the report and the neglect of race in the discipline of British Politics. In the fourth and final section of the paper, I outline a framework for how British Politics might re-engage with debates about race and racism, suggesting key indices for consideration and where it can offer a unique contribution.

The state of the discipline

Bagehot's reputation as a founding father of British Politics is well-known, less well-known are his concerns over Anglo-Saxon purity and how it is threatened by mobility stemming from empire, colonialism and industrial urbanisation. These concerns combine to produce a racialised logic in Bagehot's work, which is underpinned by hereditary science (Shilliam 2021). Hereditary science, inspired by Darwin, Spencer and Galton promulgated the view that biological characteristics are inherited, evolutionary and constitute a battle between the races for survival (Shilliam 2021). For example, in 'The English Constitution' (1865–1867), Bagehot argued that racial impurity bought about by enfranchisement of the masses would impact negatively on the 'dignified' and 'efficient' elements of government and lead to the degeneration of politics. Later, in 'Physics and Politics' (1873), Bagehot claims that evolution had created different brain capacities among the races which enabled and outlawed different political behaviours. Such distinctions lead Bagehot to argue that the 'modern savage' mind was 'twisted into a thousand curious habits; his reason… darkened by a thousand strange prejudices…' (Bagehot 1873, p. 120 in Shilliam 2021, p. 6). In contrast, the 'accomplished' white man's inheritance credited him with 'nervous organisation', that replaced instinct with reason (Shilliam 2021, pp. 61–62).

Racialised thinking also informed the early behaviouralist approaches to political science in America under the influence of Watson (1913/1924) where cultural deficit arguments replaced biologically reductionist ones (Shilliam 2021). Following this nineteenth century period of explicit disciplinary racism, we see that for much of twentieth century British Politics devoted less attention to race than kindred disciplines such as sociology (Bhambra and Holmwood 2020). While this situation has improved somewhat in recent years, research on race continues to make negligible inroads into the discipline. In this section, I draw out the main contours of how British Politics has engaged with race, identifying trends in the public transcript of the discipline, before offering some explanations for why the discipline has taken this course.

While races do not exist in any scientifically meaningful sense, many people act as if race is a fixed objective category—and these beliefs are reflected in social and political discourse (Miles 1982). A racism based on biological reductionism may now be eclipsed by a concern with culture and ethnicity as fixed categories, but we might also add that common-sense conceptions of race rely on a panoply of classificatory variables such as skin colour, country of origin, religion, nationality and language (Solomos 1989). Racism emerges when those ideologies and social processes discriminate against others based on their putatively different racial membership.

Scanning the twentieth century, the political dimension of race relations in British society has, until relatively recently, received little serious attention from British Politics scholars; a point that has been noted by sociologists interested in the impact of race on politics as can be seen in the work of Hall et al. (1978), Solomos (1986, 1989), Layton-Henry (1984, 1992), Miles (1990) and Smith (2009).

Into this vacuum, we might note the signal contribiution of Stuart Hall, the founding figure of British Cultural Studies, who eschews a discipline-specific gaze to provide an account of the intersections between cultural, social, economic and political relations as played out in relation to race and, later, new ethnicities in Britain in the 1970s and beyond. In *Policing the Crisis* (1978) Hall et al. focus on the moral panic around 'mugging' and race, shifting the focus away from ideas of assimilation, integration and 'the immigrant problem' towards a recognition of the role of discourse, representation and its implications for the emerging 'law and order society' that was to trigger large scale black resistance in the 1980s under Thatcherism. Influenced by Gramsci and Althusser, Hall and his co-authors were concerned with the role of the state and the media in framing ideologies of national and racial crisis. The object of study here, then, is not 'race', 'black communities' or even 'mugging' but the way in which these serve as emblematic of discourses of broader social, cultural, political and economic crisis in 1970s Britain.

Smith's (2009), *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality (1968–1990)* is also noteworthy for highlighting racism and homophobia in British politics and noting the demonisation of black, lesbian and gay people in New Right discourse under Thatcherism in the 1980s. Smith highlights the centrality of race and (homo) sexuality to the Thatcherite project through immigration debates of the late 1960s, highlighting the infamous speeches of Enoch Powell and the debates about the promotion of homosexuality articulated around the Section 28 legislation of 1987–1988.

Notwithstanding the valuable work of Hall et al. (1978) and Smith (2009), the argument remains that while sociological studies of race abound, there has not yet emerged a major body of research on the various aspects of the interrelationship between race and politics in the period since 1945 in British Politics. This neglect is striking given the post-second world war history of race and racism in Britain as can be gleaned through a historical overview of immigration policy in British politics. For instance, we might note the political response to black immigration in the immediate post-war period; the pressure for legislative controls and restrictions; national and local policy development in relation to issues such as racial discrimination and disadvantage. There are also the shifts in racial ideologies that took place during the period from the 1940–1980s, as well as the race riots of 1981 (Akram 2012b, 2014). Race is also clearly implicated in development commitments and foreign policy

under successive governments. Also noteworthy are the role of anti-racist and black political mobilisation in the United Kingdom. All of which brings us back to scholars such as Solomos (1989), Hall et al. (1978) and Smith (2009), whose research has focused on the racialisation of contemporary British politics, exploring how the British state has manoeuvred on issues of race, and looking at the growth of race as an important political symbol. As Solomos (1989) states, British Politics' neglect of such issues is hard to understand given the relatively high profile occupied by racial questions on the political agenda during the post-war period. While much of the extant research on these issues comes from sociology and cognate disciplines, there has been some research on race and ethnicity in the discipline of British Politics, and it is interesting to note its specific concerns and contours.

Politics as usual?

Political science and the sub-field of British Politics' distinctiveness on matters of race might stem from the fact that the discipline focuses on governing institutions, the elites who inhabit them, and the voters who formally participate in the selection of such elites. Disciplines like sociology in contrast have long been more 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' in their interests. Given this disciplinary context, and insofar as British Politics has been concerned to explore the relationship between politics and race, we see that it is a concern with race in terms of how it affects voting behaviour or contact and engagement with political institutions which characterises much of the literature on race in British Politics. There is a longstanding body of work addressing the relationship between race, ethnicity, voting behaviour and elections (Anwar 2001; Heath et al. 2011; Geddes 2001; Hill et al. 2017). A further dominant trend in the literature on race and politics is the not insignificant branch of literature on race and the Labour party (Purdam 2001; Sobolewska 2013; Krook and Nugent 2016). Further to this, there is the research on British political parties that mobilise on issues of race, such as the British National Party (BNP), Britain First and the English Defence League (Clark et al. 2008; Rhodes 2009; Allchorn 2020). Additionally, Allen's (2018) work on the uniform, but largely white and male British political class is noteworthy for critiquing the lack of diversity of elites.

By the late 1980s, we see a shift from race to ethnicity as an independent variable, and this is particularly evident in comparative work, where it was apparent that ethnicity was replacing race as a description of group membership. This is particularly true with regards research on ethnic conflict and consociationalism. Ethnicity, however much like race, as Taylor (1996) reminds us, is problematic and we can question the usefulness of this concept. The concept of ethnicity either assumes shared origins, or instrumentalism, but often a combination of the two, but it nonetheless remains unclear how and why such factors might affect politics. This leads Taylor (1996) to suggest that much like race, the effects of ethnicity have not been sufficiently substantiated in the literature.

An extended albeit selective illustration of this thesis can be seen in Table 1 below which provides a systematic mapping of articles published on race in two of the journals of the discipline: The British Journal of Politics and International Relations

Table 1 Systematic Mapping of references to 'Race' in *British Politics* and *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*

	British Politics 2006–2022	BJPIR (1999–2022)
Substantive*	11	17
Cursory	91	172
Demographic descriptor	0	01
Miscellaneous**	0	15
Total no. of articles mentioning race	102	205
Total no. of articles published to date	535	924

Search Terms used: Race, ethnicity, racism, ethnic, BAME, intersectional

*Searches on 'race' or 'ethnicity' found similar number of entries, hence the single mode of analysis here

**Miscellaneous includes: books reviews, rejoinders/responses to published articles, editorials, and repetition of articles

(BJPIR) [1999–2022] and the present journal, British Politics (2006–2022). These two journals have been selected because in the case of British Politics it is a specialist journal 'solely devoted to British politics', while BJPIR is a more general journal that is 'especially interested in developments in British politics' (Beech 2012, p. 11).[4]

To date, BJPIR (1999–2022) has published 205 out of possible 924 articles, which mention race, ethnicity and related terms.* ** A closer analysis of the data suggests that of these 205 articles identified with the search term race or ethnicity only 17 out of the 205 deal with race or ethnicity in a substantive manner, meaning that they explore the topics as the main, or one of the main focuses of the article. A further 172 of the 205 articles bought up in the search mention race or ethnicity, but do so in a cursory manner. This means that race or ethnicity is mentioned at least once in the article but is not explored in any depth, so it may be mentioned without any examination, or appear in the references or the biography of the author(s) or refer to race as in a competition. Of the total number of articles published in the journal over its history—924 articles—17 of these, or 1.84% deal with race in a substantive manner.

Of the two journals, British Politics (2006–2022) is the younger and has published 102 articles which mention either race, ethnicity or similar terms. Of these 102 articles, 11 deal with race or ethnicity in a substantive manner. 11 articles is 2.06% of the total 535 articles published over the journal's 28 year span.

As such, in BJPIR and British Politics we see that of the total number of articles published, race and related topics feature at around 1–2%, so minimally (see

[4] Beech's (2012) analysis of the journals of the discipline of British Politics is corroborated by the respective journal's description on their websites: *British Politics* 'promotes a holistic understanding of the topic of politics in Britain', while *BJPIR* 'is the world's premier outlet for research on British politics'.

Table 1). Notably, for both journals the number of articles on race improves in recent years indicating an upward trend and that the situation is improving albeit slowly.

In terms of broader patterns identifiable from this data, four key findings are worth highlighting. First, although a broader analysis of research in British Politics shows that research on race in politics is largely concerned with exploring the impact of race as a demographic factor and as an independent variable on voting or engagement with political institutions, it was interesting to note that this was not the case in BJPIR (Hill et al. 2017 is the exception). Notably, and perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of British Politics' articles on race explore British political parties that have mobilised on issues of race, so the British National Party (BNP) (Clark et al. 2008; Rhodes 2009) and The English Defence League and Britain First (Allchorn 2020). Second, the past decade or so has witnessed a growth in research on new migration, refugees and asylum seekers, and many of the articles that did address race in BJPIR focused on these topics (see Betts 2006; Morris 2012; Karyotis et al. 2022). This pattern is also evident in British Politics, but to a lesser extent (Squire 2008). Research on contemporary trends in racialisation is welcome, but it should not obscure the fact that there is negligible research on what we might call old or post-WW2 migration, or the activities of the racialising state. It is, however, worth pointing out that British Politics has published a number of articles relating to citizenship and community cohesion (MacGregor and Bailey 2012; Donoghue 2013; Thomas 2014), and Britain's Muslim communities (Allen 2022). Third, research on race and politics lags that on politics and gender, which fare better than race in the two journals (see Moon et al. 2019; Milner 2019). Fourth, a search for research on intersectionality bought up negligible results.

Diagnosing the problem

It is important to recognise the precise articulation of race and ethnicity in the extant literature in British Politics. There has been an understanding that race matters most in social and cultural contexts, hence it being the preserve of those disciplines concerned with society and culture such as sociology, but where it did have an effect in British Politics was in relation to the person, as a demographic or identity-based attribute or symbol of group membership, hence we see the acknowledgment that race has, some of the time, *affected politics* as an exogenously generated independent variable. Accordingly, race is something that affects persons as a social, psychological or identity-based feature, or might be studied in relation to prejudice, but is has no direct relationship to politics. On this view, race is something that largely arises and exists outside of politics and is therefore largely to be studied as such (Smith 2004). This stance is problematic for several reasons.

The reasoning behind this articulation is the overarching scientific method of political science, which privileges the identification of causal laws which explain the effects of race or ethnicity as independent variables on phenomena such as voting or joining political parties (Taylor 1996). In establishing race as one of many independent variables that may affect political behaviour, this leads to a situation where: "(R)ace is a thing in the world, which could be picked up, listed, and coded to analyse

political behaviour" (1996, p. 887)—and or correlated to other such *facts*. Such an approach does not recognise the changing, contested and socially constructed nature of race, or indeed ethnicity and culture, and forecloses that discussion rather than centring it as has been the core insight of decades of research on race (Miles 1982). The overall effect is race and ethnicity continue to be seen as natural and essential phenomena, rather than something that is generated and reproduced through everyday usage or is instrumentally created by political institutions and the state thus making it a 'political product' (Taylor 1996).

Ultimately, British Politics, then, has either ignored or minimised race, thereby relegating it to a hidden transcript (Scott 1990a). In doing so, the politics of race and how politics and the state instrumentally creates and reproduces race through state-making initiatives—systems for creating inequality and unequal power—are denied (Miles 1982). Disciplinary silence on matters of race is a depoliticising manoeuvre, which takes the politics out of race, rather than centring it, and when the discipline of British Politics does encounter race, it essentialises it rather than affirms its social construction. Political (and lay) activity in Britain actively creates race, yet the discipline of British Politics does not study or reflect this. For instance, the state is implicated in creating racial categories as used in the census; the state actively creates and legislates for race relations (see British Race Relations Acts 1965, 1968 and 2000) as well as produces racialised immigration policy (see Commonwealth Immigration Acts 1962, 1968; and Immigration Act 1971). As such, the state articulates race through fostering positive race relations on the one hand, while actively creating a hostile and racialised environment on the other.

In sum, and as Taylor points out, the question is not just how British Politics has failed to incorporate race and racism into its disciplinary remit and public transcript, but also why it has failed to establish a coherent position that offers a valid answer as to the 'thinghood' of race and ethnicity (1996, p. 892), meaning to recognise its effects without essentialising it as a stable category. The end result for the study of British Politics 'is a neglect which may not have been malignant, but which is hard to call benign' (Smith 2004, p. 42).

Disciplinary reflexivity: what is it that we do when we do British politics?

Writing in the early 1960s, Kuhn struck a chord in the natural sciences and beyond for making the academy think about knowledge production, advance, and the tendency to 'normal science', or the promulgation of paradigms. Paradigms persist because a research community 'acknowledges [the paradigm] for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice' (1962, p. 10). In practice, paradigms persist through disciplinary journals, through repositories of knowledge such as textbooks, through the courses taught at universities, and they desist up until the point that a 'scientific revolution' takes place, which challenges the paradigm, moving us to a competing paradigm. With Kuhn in mind, British Politics has been extraordinarily resilient in maintaining its dominant paradigm, or public transcript, over the years despite much critique. My concern here is not to add to the substantial literature

addressing the utility or not of the Westminster Model as the dominant paradigm in British Politics, but to critique the presuppositions which underly the model, while also highlighting what the dominance of the model occludes with regards to debates on race and racism.

To do so I turn to Bourdieu, who contributes to these debates by conceptualising reflexivity, which he defines as: an interrogation of three types of limitations—of social position, of field,[5] and of the scholastic point of view—that are constitutive of knowledge itself (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 40). Starting with Bourdieu, but extending his ideas about reflexivity to critique the position of race in disciplinary knowledge, Emirbayer and Desmond (2012) are interested in the nature of, and limits on, disciplinary reflexivity. Doing so enables one to address the unsettling question of why certain disciplines have neglected or marginalised discussions of race, and the implications of this for disciplinary reflexivity. Drawing on Emirbayer's and Desmond's three-tier taxonomy of the concept of racial reflexivity (social, scholastic and the disciplinary unconscious), I use this framework to explore British Politics' approach to race. While there is some overlap, my concern here is with the second and third tiers, although I outline all three tiers below.

The social unconscious

Reflecting the insight that the critical gaze must be turned back on the researcher and not just the research object, an individualistic approach to reflexivity is the dominant trend in the literature on reflexivity. Accordingly, the first tier of Emirbayer and Desmond's three-tier model—the social unconscious—emphasises the need to recognise the social location and unconscious of those engaged in knowledge production. This requires situating the researcher in relation to a racial hierarchy which privileges whiteness in knowledge production. The dominance of whiteness necessarily distorts and marginalises those who are engaged in researching race as it positions the study of race as a minority concern, whilst failing to situate whiteness as a racialised identity, so whiteness is taken-for-granted and normalised. For example, Emirbayer and Desmond point to regression analysis where whiteness often functions as a standard against which all other categories are (implicitly) compared, "the consummate 'reference category' in the parlance of regression analysis" (2012, p. 579). Whiteness is also normalised in the common, implicit and uncritical use of concepts such as 'mainstream culture' and 'middle-class values' … 'supposedly commonplace categories, widely recognised, unquestionably stable, and internally consistent—… against which all other (non-white, non-middle-class) groups can be measured' (2012, p, 579). The point here is that there are different vantage points from which research in British Politics is conducted, which will inform what is

[5] Bourdieu defines the 'field' as a space where there is competition for resources and power. The field concept is designed to encourage the recognition that competition and resources differ in different spaces or 'fields', so the education field is distinct in terms of its struggles from the world of sport or the art world. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 97).

deemed worthy of study. The neglect of race in the discipline affirms the dominance of whiteness in the discipline; a point which is little commented on or questioned.

The disciplinary unconscious

Individual-level reflexivity must be situated in relation to a discipline-level reflexivity, where we recognise the intellectual currents or the 'position-takings' prevailing in the discipline, often in mutual antagonism. To this end, the second tier of Emirbayer and Desmond's (2012) framework, the disciplinary unconscious, asks us to map out this disciplinary 'common sense' or 'doxa'. This requires documenting the discipline's 'traditions and national particularities', its 'obligatory problematics' and 'habits of thought' (Bourdieu 2004 [2001], p. 94 in Emirbayer and Desmond 2012, pp. 582–583). Together, these create the collective history of a discipline and inform the questions that it pursues. What, then, is the disciplinary unconscious of the study of British Politics?

Turner (2006), when defining the noun discipline, identifies five different meanings with the most relevant for our present purposes suggesting that it is 'an organising perspective on phenomena that is sustained by academic training or the disciplining of the mind' (2006, p. 183). Unlike the sub-field of international relations, which has at points needed to question and convince that it is in fact a distinct discipline (Kaplan 1961), British Politics has an 'organising perspective' (Gamble 1990), that has remained relatively imperious to change, maintaining a core set of assumptions and focuses over the course of its evolution. These foci include the study of British political institutions, the processes of central government and the formal procedures within the public realm. One reason for this continuity in subject matter over the history of the discipline is that unlike cognate disciplines such as sociology and economics, British Politics bypassed debates that other disciplines faced in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s where they questioned the status of the knowledge claims being made as well as the philosophies behind their thinking. Thus, this organising perspective, despite some internal shocks, has remained intact since the discipline's emergence in the latter third of the nineteenth century (Dearlove 1982). This history can be traced in classic works by leading founding fathers, Bagehot (1867), Dicey (1885) and Jennings (1933).

Tivey (1988), uses the language of an 'image' to describe the mainstream literature in the discipline, suggesting that British Politics has an image of its subject matter, which comprises a core set of assumptions about the system and how it works. For Marsh (1999), there is a mainstream or family of ideas about British government shared by practitioners and academics alike, while for Gamble (1990), the organising perspective precedes theory and provides a map of how things relate, a set of research questions (1990, p. 405). Whether thought of as an image or set of underlying assumptions, British Politics revolves around the Westminster Model, which, as Dearlove (1982, p. 438) states is: '[the] core that provides the continuity which gives coherence to the diversity within the established discourse'.

Although familiar to many, it is worth outlining the central tenets of the Westminster Model, whose core features include strong cabinet and institutions (Greenleaf

1983); government based on majority rule; the importance attached to constitutional convention; a two-party system based on single member constituencies, and the assumption that minorities find expression in one of the major parties amongst other related principles (Verney 1991).

There have been many critiques of the Westminster Model (Marsh et al. 2003; Rhodes 1997) with some calling it muddled and subject to conceptual stretching beyond meaning (Russell and Serban 2021; Flinders et al. 2022), while others suggest that it should be recognised as a narrative (Bevir and Rhodes 2003), but it continues to operate at a implicit if not explicit level in the field. Criticisms of the model reflect broader criticisms of the nature and evolution of the discipline since the nineteenth century. For Marsh et al. (2003, p. 306), the Westminster Model offers a 'shorthand, normative, organising perspective' to portray a particular image of the British political system, rather than a theoretically, well-developed and explicit model of how British politics works. Similarly, for Kerr and Kettell the Westminster Model is fundamentally restrictive, emphasising a Whiggish-focus on historical evolution, leading to the production of 'highly static, overly empiricist, and largely descriptive accounts of formal institutional processes and political behaviour…' (2006, p. 6).

A central limitation of the Westminster Model is that it purports to portray a particular image of the British political system that is 'fundamentally and essentially democratic' (Dearlove 1982) rather than a theoretically well-developed model of how British politics works—or one that acknowledges conflict and inequality that is racial or otherwise. For Dearlove, this established discourse has gone beyond description and explanation 'to embrace applause for our democratic politics as a stable, flexible, consensual, adaptive, peaceful and successful example of representative and responsible government that is the best in the world' (1982, p. 439). As is clear, a focus on the Westminster Model equates with a focus on the core areas of government, parliament and related actors and institutions, while neglecting whole areas of political life, particularly where they intersect with questions of race or socio-political inequality and conflict. As discussed earlier in the article, when race does feature in British Politics, it is in relation to voting and elections, or in observations about the persistent 'whiteness' of the political class, but even then, it features in limited ways.

The scholarly unconscious

Scholarly activity, according to Bourdieu, is mistakenly characterised by a preoccupation with 'skholè'—the privileged freedom to enjoy 'free time, freed from the urgencies of the world, that allows a free and liberated relation to those urgencies…' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 1.). Adopting this notion of skholè, Emirbayer and Desmond define the scholastic unconscious as: "a characteristic attitude of pure, disinterested thought, of detached intellectuality, unconstrained by social and economic necessity and drawn to a playful 'as-if' mode of engagement with the world and its problems" (2012, p. 585).

Applied to British Politics, a notion of the scholarly unconscious allows us to think critically about the scholastic presuppositions that inform British Politics' reliance on the Westminster Model, and the type of scholarly gaze that this encourages and, moreover, how this necessarily mitigates against seeing racial inequality. Specifically, I am concerned with detailing the evasions implicit in adopting a moral universalising gaze in British Politics, but also an attitude of pure disconnected thought unconstrained by socio-economic necessity.

The core insights raised in the literature describe British Politics as a discipline with an overarching paradigm and a binding epistemology, which combine to produce an overly empiricist, descriptive, and largely a-theoretical approach to British Politics. The overall effect of this is to produce an approach which aligns the political as being wholly contiguous with formal procedures within the public realm. Consequently, it pays negligible attention to the non-elite individuals who comprise the British polity and neglects the perspectives of subordinate groups. Writing in the 1980s, Dearlove points out that 'we have ignored real class inequality in favour of a focus upon the abstract equality of citizens' (1982, p. 450), and while the discipline may have made some improvement in relation to class and gender in recent years the same cannot be said of race. Today, a class-based analysis of voters provides the dominant frame in British Politics, and while the neglect of race is at times noted, as is the whiteness of the British political class (Allen 2018), there is little enthusiasm to rectify this neglect. Actors or agents matter in the literature, but these actors tend to be elite actors (prime ministers, parliamentarians, civil servants) or, more characteristically, there is a tendency to adopt a moral universalising stance to citizens without paying attention to questions of race, gender, sexuality or disability. Such a perspective assumes a neutral starting point for citizens, and equal access to, and engagement with, political resources when this is clearly not the case. A focus on a neutral actor or citizen is partial when it is divorced from the structural contexts in which actors operate, yet the Westminster Model struggles to take such context into consideration, if at all (Marsh et al. 2003).

There have of course been attempts to revise and update the Westminster Model. Rhodes' differentiated polity model (Rhodes 1997), reliant on the notion of governance rather than government and on networks as 'exchange relationships', offers an alternative to the centralised and unitary power of the Westminster Model. Responding to changes such as globalisation, Rhodes highlights fragmentation over centralization of power and a segmented over a core executive in British politics, meaning that power is diffuse and fragmented. On this view, interest groups, the voluntary and the private sector function as the multitude of interdependent organisations that make up a system of government because the British government need their cooperation given that it rarely delivers services itself.

There is also Marsh et al.'s (2003) asymmetric power model, which recognises the strengths of Rhodes' approach with regards moving us from a centralised to a dispersed understanding of power, but critiques Rhodes' commitment to pluralism, instead highlighting the structural inequality that pervades British politics. For Marsh et al., Rhodes' model does not pay sufficient attention to the asymmetries of power and resources, meaning it does not recognise that structural inequality is

reflected in crucial political resources such as money, education and key political positions. Marsh et al. criticise the neglect of the broader structural context in which politics takes place, highlighting the tendency in British Politics to privilege agents while downplaying structure.

Marsh et al.'s (2003) argument that structural inequality has been neglected in debates in British Politics while privileging the agency of elites is important, but we need to go further than they do in thinking about structural inequality and specifically the effects of race and racism. A key issue with both Rhodes (1997) and Marsh et al.'s (2003) critiques of the Westminster Model is that they remain wedded to core institutions and processes of Westminster rather than taking a broader understanding of the relationship between the state, its institutions and the public. Further, acknowledging structural inequality as Marsh et al. do without specifying the precise mechanisms through which it exerts its effects is a limited solution as is engaging in discussion of structural inequality without considering the agency of individuals. Ultimately, Marsh et al.'s critique highlights the limitations of the Westminster Model as does Rhodes, but both only take us so far. British Politics has tended to neglect whole areas of British politics, preferring to defer these discussions to other disciplines, but the role of the state and it's power to intervene in public life is fundamental to such debates.

At root, the issue for Bourdieu as well as Emirbayer and Desmond is the detail that is lost in remaining wedded to a theoretical stance or models such as the Westminster Model, and how this obscures the lifeworlds of individuals. Emirbayer and Desmond criticise the attitude of pure disconnected thought and an intellectualism unconstrained by socio-economic necessity characteristic of disciplines such as British Politics. This perspective entails a distancing valorised as objectivity while insulating academic thought from practical urgencies and concerns. While some argue that the Westminster Model is devoid of serious engagement with theory, the model occupies a pivotal place in the discipline and, in privileging abstract knowledge as well as the objectifying gaze, it misses the quotidian or practical dimension of political and racialised life. Practice can always be informed by theory, but in neglecting practice, we miss a crucial dimension of people's everyday reality (Bourdieu 1977).

In sum, Emirbayer and Desmond's model is helpful for making explicit that which is implicit in British Politics—for turning the critical gaze back on ourselves. In describing the implicit as the 'unconscious' as they do, their three-tier typology helps us to discern that which may be hidden or less visible thereby bringing British Politics' hidden transcript into the light. The unconscious occupies a pivotal place in this schema and might be seen as the other side of reflexivity. Where reflexivity demands inward looking attentiveness and reflection, the unconscious is often thought to bubble away under the surface; a repository of thoughts which make occasional appearances, but often outside of the conscious awareness of the agent. In other work I have challenged this reading of the unconscious, arguing that it is a much-neglected aspect of agency, which features in an everyday way in agents' lives as a store of past experiences both positive and negative (Akram 2012a, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019). Reclaiming the unconscious as I suggest is necessary opens it up as an arena for thinking about everyday encounters for agents, but there are also insights here for thinking about disciplinary reflexivity.

Emirbayer and Desmond's framework as explored here makes visible the contours and concerns, but also the gaps in both the public and hidden transcript of race in British Politics. Applying the racial reflexivity framework to British Politics makes visible the discipline's social, disciplinary and scholastic unconscious, but it worth recalling that the unconscious is not necessarily something which is solely or necessarily hidden. Rather, as Burkitt elucidates:

> What we are unconscious of is in front of us, yet it is that which we do not see or articulate, just as we do not see the space between the trees… and it would take an unusual occurrence for the internal space between things to be at the forefront of our minds. (Burkitt 2010, p. 327)

As such, while scholars of British Politics may undoubtably have an understanding of the disciplinary context in which they operate, they may not always see it in its entirety, or in terms of its exclusions. Bringing this unconscious disciplinary context to the fore as this article does can lead to insight, but also (mis)communication, thus affirming the porous boundary between conscious and unconscious thought and, crucially, our not always conscious role in reproducing the discipline.

The Sewell Report

The argument of this article might be seen as solely academic, but I wish strongly to counteract this reading by turning to the practical implications of continuing in the present mode where British Politics remains silent on questions of race and racism. If the discipline remains in its current form, then there will not only be little scrutiny of race and racism in British politics, but the alternative thesis can also prevail: that, as concluded by the Government-commissioned Sewell Report (2021), claims regarding racism in the United Kingdom come to be viewed as exaggerated and insubstantial.

In March 2021, The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its report examining 'race and ethnic disparities' in the United Kingdom. Chaired by Tony Sewell, the report, popularly referred to as the Sewell Report, was commissioned by Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. It would be reasonable to surmise that this report was Johnson's attempt to acknowledge and address a mounting crisis as exemplified by a series of recent and ongoing incidents involving race and racism including the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017, the Windrush scandal of 2017 and the Black Lives Matter movement. Indeed, the opening pages of the report acknowledge that 'the spirit of BLM was the original trigger for our report' (2021, p. 7). The report was met with widespread condemnation, with the Runneymede Trust calling the claim that institutional racism no longer exists 'insulting as it is farcical',[6] while

[6] https://www.runnymedetrust.org/news/statement-regarding-the-cred-report-2021—accessed 30th June, 2022.

Bhopal,[7] the author of 'White privilege: the myth of the post-racial society' (2018), called it a 'whitewash'. There are evidently many problems with the Sewell Report, here I restrict myself to some key issues.

The Sewell Report investigated racial and ethnic disparities in education, employment, crime and policing, and health. It accepts that disparities in access and outcomes exist, but the range of explanations offered for these disparities bear scrutiny. My criticisms pertain to three points: the need to support claims of racism with objective data; the pitting of racism against class-based inequality; and the reliance on cultural explanations to explain racial inequality.

First, the report states that claims of racism in society have been exaggerated while 'stretching the meaning of racism without objective data to support it' (2021, p. 45). It outlines the different forms that racism takes, listing institutional, systematic and structural racism, but the report minimises the existence of these forms of racism, instead suggesting that distinctions between '*explained* racial disparities' and '*unexplained* racial disparities' are what matter most, while emphasising the need to move discussions of race onto more objective foundations which are evidenced through data (my emphasis). Such a position not only fails to recognise the complexity involved in documenting racism and its effects but is then followed by the contradictory statement that where there are racial disparities, these will be explained by reference to 'geography, class or sex', meaning factors other than racism are responsible (2021, p. 36).

This brings me to my second key concern with the report: it downplays racism, but highlights geographic inequality across the United Kingdom, highlighting white working-class disadvantage particularly in the North East of England (2021, pp. 37–43). As such, the report reinforces inter-ethnic disparity rather than recognising as Hall et al. (1978) state that: 'race is the modality through which class is lived (Hall et al. 1978, p. 394), but also ignoring the critical insights of intersectionality which reminds us that identity comprises multiple intersecting factors (Crenshaw 1989). Pitting the white working class against ethnic minority groups, while also suggesting that some ethnic groups have been better at integrating than others, the report is impressed by the 'immigrant optimism' of some of the 'new African Communities' (2021, p. 7). However, it is the recycling of cultural tropes that affirms the paucity of this report as can be seen in its use of cultural explanations to explain disparities in outcomes for certain black groups. For example, the report uses select data on family breakdown, absent fathers, working mothers and lone parent families as reasons for Black-Caribbean male underachievement thereby stigmatising single-parent families as well as whole communities. Overall, the report is striking in its tone of optimism, as well as its insistence that it is the 'mistrust' and 'perceptions of bias' rather than the reality of bias that haunts the present and has led to a reluctance to acknowledge that the United Kingdom has become open and fairer in the past fifty years.

[7] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/31/sewell-report-racism-government-racial-disparity-uk—accessed 30th June, 2022.

The Sewell Report is a symbolic event for signifying the erasure of decades of research and thinking about the problem of race and racism. In commissioning and legitimising this report, the state continues to ignore the reality, complexity and challenges associated with tackling race and racism. My immediate concern here, however, is not the responsibility of the state in addressing these matters—a point that I return to later—but in the discipline of British Politics and how it is also subject to evasions, silences and relative neglect of debates on race and racism. Thus while the Sewell Report is undoubtedly chronically flawed, it reflects a wider problem where issues of race and racism are hidden in plain sight, they are seen but misrepresented or neglected. Yet, on closer inspection there are some striking similarities between the finding of the Sewell Report and the discipline of British Politics, which serve to remind us of how race becomes sidelined to more dominant narratives in British politics and in the discipline of British Politics.

Sewell's concerns with white, class-based and geographic inequality in the North East of England echo long-standing concerns in British Politics, which stubbornly refuse to evolve. As an illustration, Sewell's concerns about class are notably reminiscent of recent scholarly debate about the fall of 'red walls' or Labour heartlands in the North East of England, the Midlands, and Yorkshire and Humber to the Conservative Party following the 2019 General Election (Cutts et al. 2020). Sewell's focus on the white working class in the North East of England, and British Politics' concerns with electoral geography and re-and de-alignment in British politics speak to a longstanding and timeless preoccupation with class and geography in the discipline, which obfuscate race from the analysis rather than seeing class and race as inextricably linked for white and minority groups. Where Sewell misrepresents the debate on race, the discipline of British Politics circumnavigates this debate altogether by excluding the topic from its disciplinary remit. Such a position is, I suggest, wholly untenable for the discipline of British Politics and has implications for the mirror it holds up to British politics more broadly. For if the discipline cannot see its own evasions around issues of race, this impacts on its ability to comment on issues of race in the polity.

A British politics of race?

If we accept that the scholarly study of race has been neglected in the discipline of British Politics and that this requires remedy, then, what does a British Politics which centres race look like? To answer this question we might begin by noting that a distinctly American politics of race emerged after the post-civil rights movement in response to the rhetoric and limitations of the perceived gains of the civil rights movement (1950s–1960s). This corresponded with an increase in Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and black political scientists establishing their own publishing outlets and professional organizations, such as the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (Smith 2004). Gains and set-backs arise from this development in the form of 'separate but dubiously equal professional existences', leading to the segregation of scholarly activity from the wider discipline of American political science (Smith 2004, p. 43). Disciplinary segregation is

counterproductive and to be avoided, but the issue remains, however, that a British Politics of race must reflect on Britain's own legacies of racism and politics, and it must begin with the acknowledgement of the minimisation of race in the discipline, but where does it go from here? In this section, I outline a framework to identify the core concerns of an agenda for a more serious engagement with race in the discipline. The framework pivots on three key points: critical race theory; the importance of history; and how reform of the sub-discipline must be linked to reform of political science departments. I address each in turn.

Critical race theory

If race were to be taken more seriously and if we are to avoid the relegation of race to the side-lines of the discipline, critical race theory (CRT) offers a way forward**.** CRT has received much negative backlash of late,[8] but this is perhaps expected given its ambit and the scale of the task that it envisages. CRT has its roots first in American legal studies and then educational studies, but its impact is growing. While some have argued that there is a lack of clarity about the theoretical and conceptual focus of CRT, others have maintained that this lack of prescriptiveness or universalism is in fact a strength. Describing CRT as more of a verb than a noun, Crenshaw (1989) argues that CRT offers an inherently activist, practical and flexible framework, which can be adapted in fields of inquiry beyond legal studies.

At root, CRT asks us to centre race and racism in our analysis and to recognise its pivotal role in reproducing racial domination, inequality and outcomes (Delgado and Stefancic 2000; Crenshaw 1989). In defining CRT, Delgado and Stefancic (2000) argue that the following key principles are core: That racism is routine and ordinary rather than exceptional, and it is the effect not of individual prejudice, but structural power relations. Racism is purposive, meaning that it rationalises and reproduces racial inequality. Racism has no objective essence but is a social construction which is the product of social thought and relations leading to differential outcomes. Intersectionality is central to CRT, and there is no single unitary identity, but an overlap of identities. And, finally, CRT tells us that experiences of racism are unique and different and that groups must be allowed to recount their own experience of racism, rather than be subsumed within a singular and universalising black experience.

Accepting the need for refinement of CRT principles, Meghji (2022), argues that CRT's core presuppositions are enriched when complemented with Bonilla-Silva's notion of the 'racialised social system'. For Bonilla-Silva (1997), racism begins with racialisation, but with the proviso that all actors are racialised, not just black ones. But some racialised actors receive greater economic renumeration than others, they have a better labour market participation, enjoy primary positions in the political system, have license to draw social segregation as well as enjoy higher social esteem

[8] Notably, the UK's Minister for Education, Kemi Badenoch, claimed that the government 'stood unequivocally against CRT'. Meanwhile, in the USA, Donald Trump, when president, described CRT as being 'like a cancer', and issued a presidential order which banned the teaching of CRT in employee training schemes run by the federal agency or any company with a government contract (Meghji 2022).

and a psychological wage, which is a DuBoisian term meaning such actors receive non-material benefits for being white (Bonilla-Silva 1997, pp. 469–470). This structural conception of material and symbolic racism is underpinned by a recognition that race is socially constructed, that it places people into a racial hierarchy and leads to the unequal distribution of resources across racial hierarchy.

A further key insight developed by a racialised social system approach to CRT is that racism and racialisation are endemic across society and that racial inequality is reproduced via processes at the micro, meso and macro levels. As such, the approach taken to tackling racial inequality cannot be partial, meaning focus on discrete areas be they in education or the law, but needs to look at how racism shapes all spheres of life in interconnected ways, so a poor education leads to limited housing and labour market prospects. Academic disciplines may of course need to take a discrete disciplinary gaze, nevertheless the key lesson for British Politics is that there are distinct but interconnected vantage points in the racial regime with regards politics, these include the role of the state; of elite actors; of political parties; of institutions, but not forgetting that we also need to pay attention to institutions beyond the state, because racism is not specific to the state. I do not have the space to engage in detailed examination of, for example, institutional racism here (Akram 2022), but each of these components is potentially worthy of detailed scrutiny for its role in reproducing race and racism.

In linking the micro, meso and macro of race, a racialised systems approach to CRT allows us to brings individuals' experiences of racism to the fore while linking these experiences to structures, the state and ideologies. This shows how race is normalised, legitimised and reproduced.

Seminal studies in sociology, such as Rex and Moore's *Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook* (1967); and similarly, but focusing on Handsworth—*Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (Rex and Tomlinson 1979)—offer rich qualitative examples of the lived experiences of race in ethnically diverse cities such as Birmingham. More recently, research by Khan (2022) on Muslim women in Manchester points to the effects of everyday racism on hijabi women (see also Afshar 2008) or we can point to research on the effects of Islamaphobia amidst anti-terrorism discourses (Awan and Zempi 2017). The lived experiences of race may have multiple referents, but we might ask where are the studies of the everyday *political* lives of Britain's ethnic minorities in cities such as Birmingham, or indeed Manchester, Cardiff and Glasgow? Documenting political parties that mobilise around issues of race is of course part of the picture, but to explore the effects of race on everyday life, scholars of British Politics need to recognise that race is experienced in varied ways and that we need to reflect on the types of methodologies that will help to capture this varied picture. As per the insights of CRT, the discipline would be richer as well as more reflective of the polity if it included more bottom-up accounts of the political lives and lived experience of race and racism of the United Kingdom's multi-generational ethnic minorities.

Yet, the focus on the everyday reality of racism should not equate with an individualised approach to the problem of race. Instead, we need to recognise that racism is structural, it is systematic and not something that can be tackled at an

individual level. We need a penetrating analysis not on 'diversification' or 'inclusion'—the more palatable form that anti-racist strategies can take—but on how racism is reproduced while recognising that it is routine and ordinary rather than exceptional.

The importance of history

In the spirit of CRT, British Politics' approach to race would be attuned to the relationship between national and global critiques of racism and intrinsic to this is an understanding of Britain's imperial past. British racism at a domestic level would be considered in relation to critiques of colonialism, empire and racial capitalism and, crucially, recognise Britain's unique role in orchestrating this racialised order (Williams 1944/2021). Race is undoubtedly central to British history but has been little commented on in relation to matters such as, for instance, the origins and development of British capitalism. Historians such as Eric Williams have considered this question and, Williams, the author of Capitalism and Slavery (1944/2021) argues that while race is undoubtedly a factor in slavery, economic motives prefigure racism as the primary motivation in Britain's approach to slavery: 'it had not to do with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor' (1944/2021, p. 17). Meticulously detailing Britain's pivotal role in slavery, Williams shows that the slave trade was foundational in providing 'the capital which financed the Industrial Revolution in England…', but that by the early nineteenth century 'commercial capitalism' gave way to a 'mature industrial capitalism', which was less reliant on monopolies and slavery (1944/2021, p. xi). Slavery, Williams argues, ended when it was no longer profitable for the British rather than for moral reasons associated with the British abolitionist movement (1944/2021, pp. 169–186).

For Bhambra (2022), adopting a historical perspective allows us to view the British state as an 'imperial state' with a 'national project at its heart' funded through imperial revenue from colonial populations. An asymmetry lies at the heart of the British imperial state, because while the imperial state is constituted through 'relations of extraction', the national project—and specifically the British welfare state—comes into being through 'relations of re-distribution' or welfare. Injustice is at the heart of the British imperial state reliant as it is on the legitimacy of the white working class rather than any ethical commitiment to colonial populations. This injustice reverberates today in practices that privilege national citizens over others, and which negate the multi-racial character of Britian's working class.

Gilroy (2001) similarly reminds us of the need to take a historical approach to racialised domestic politics, but shows that doing so requires asking some uncomfortable questions. For Gilroy, 'the residues of imperial and colonial culture live on wherever 'race' is invoked' (Gilroy 2001, p. 162), and so reference to race necessarily invokes questions of Britain's empire. The fact that debates about race in Britain tend to be conducted in isolation from historically-informed debates about Britain's colonial past is in fact a signal of a wider malaise, with Gilroy diagnosing Britain as suffering from a 'postcolonial melancholia' which is, at root, the failure to address

and acknowledge Britain's post-imperial decline that is tied up with 'the content and character of the shrinking culture that makes England distinctive' (2001, p. 162). This post-colonial melancholia, or a failure to seriously acknowledge Britain's imperial history, both economic and political successes and prestige, but also post-colonial shame and guilt, feeds discussion of nationalism on the one hand, while reinforcing a racial hierarchy premised on white supremacy.

The politics of memory, or the question of what is remembered or forgotten of a nation's past is not a neutral question but refers to: 'a subjective experience of a social group that essentially sustains a relationship of power' (Confino 1997, p. 1393). Countries have thought long and hard about how to navigate and address the harms of their ancestors and history, but also the value of collective remembering,[9] and British Politics, with reference to its own imperial past, could take a lead in helping to navigate this complex terrain.

From the department to the discipline

While 'practical urgencies and concerns' may be absent in the Westminster Model they loom large for British Politics and offer some explanation for why there is a paucity of race scholarship in the discipline. UK Higher Education and academic career progression incentivise a culture of capturing large grants and generating impact. These grants privilege quantitative approaches characteristic of American political science and venerate American journals. While this research does not exclude research on race, it tends to favour 'mainstream' political science topics rather than marginal topics like race, thus affirming what is seen and understood as knowledge in political science. Additional pressures exist in the form of the Research Excellent Framework (REF) by which academic research is evaluated and funding distributed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. In privileging work that is of international standing this in turn disincentivises research focusing exclusively on the British domestic sphere (Beech 2012).

Political science departments in the United Kingdom also contain their own mechanisms for side-lining research on, but also the researchers of, race. Departments need to do more to both recruit staff who research race, but also support those who do this work to progress within the discipline. As Emejulu (2019) argues, people of colour in political science tend to research neglected topics such as race and that: '(w)orking in these sub-disciplines means that it is unlikely that they will be able to attract support, in terms of viable peer groups and mentors, funding for research projects and invitations to powerful, career-defining network' (Emejulu, p. 203, see also Begum and Saini 2019). Such concerns are even more pressing when we consider the very vocal demands from students to 'decolonise the curriculum', meaning to transform the ways in which the academy engages in knowledge production. Calls to decolonise the political theory canon, for instance, question the logic of exclusion and dismissal established in a canon composed of 'dead white

[9] On navigating colonial legacies, see Eyerman (2004). The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory. *Acta Sociologica*; 47(2):159–169.

European males' dedicated to Enlightenment ideals, but for whom universal principles such as freedom only applied to propertied white men (Emejulu 2019).

Overall, a British Politics of race must be premised a wider definition of the political rather than a narrowly Westminster-focused one; it would centre the study of the (dis)empowered and (in)equality. Pivotal to this task would be the recognition that we must document the lived reality of race and racism, rather than deny or minimise such perspective in favour of objective theories, models and data collection. The task ahead is not insignificant, and there are signs that some of this work is already underway as can be seen in the emerging decolonisation critiques of political science (Begum and Saini 2019; Shilliam 2021), but there is clearly more to be done. CRT is still emergent and while it may not be a silver bullet, its key insight of centring race as a focal point for critique rather than evading, sidestepping or silencing such analysis, seems a vital starting point for British Politics to renew itself and to become more relevant.

In conclusion

This article has been concerned with critiquing British Politics' relationship with race. I have outlined the key concerns of the discipline in terms of its mode of operation, the Westminster Model, while outlining the implications of this approach for race scholarship. I have argued that the discipline has not only failed to acknowledge or engage in meaningful scholarship on the social construction of race and its material and symbolic effects, but that when it has engaged with race it has done so in a narrow manner, focusing on representation rather than re-distribution, or the effects of racism on the polity. Following Emirbayer and Desmond, engaging in a more serious and sustained way with disciplinary racial reflexivity in British Politics means grappling with Britain's colonial past; with critical race theory; as well as with internal reform of how race scholarship is supported at department and discipline level as outlined in the framework above. Taking this agenda forward, future research could explore how race might be incorporated into analysis at the level of institutions, the state and public policy.

Returning to Scott (1990a), power is never total, but where it exists, one finds resistance. Where there is a public transcript, there will be hidden transcripts. In the case of British Politics, dominant perspectives must necessarily coincide with marginal perspectives. Hidden transcripts are also effective in another respect: they exist as provocations when bought into the light. The question then becomes one of whether the provocation is taken and accepted, or again pushed to the sidelines. In extending a provocation, this article makes the case that reflexive disciplinary introspection on the issue of race is long overdue. Writing in the 1960s and reflecting on the epistemological and philosophical ruptures that erupted across many disciplinary fields, Dearlove stated that British Politics was somewhat insulated from these ruptures and shifts, but the time for re-positioning itself is now, as is the time to offer a uniquely British Politics perspective on race and racism.

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