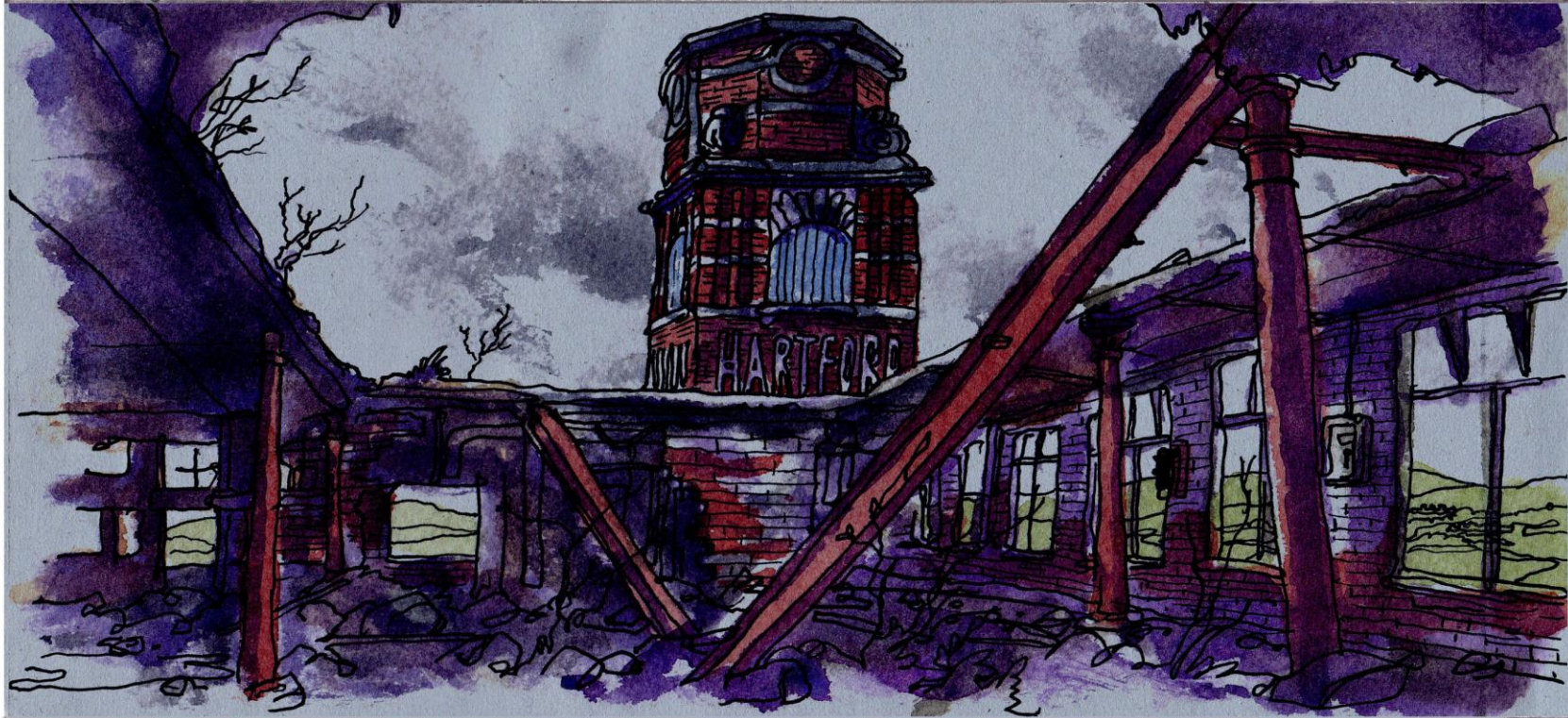


THIS LEFT BEHIND IDEA, BEING AN IMMIGRANT, YOU WERE ALWAYS LEFT BEHIND - AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PILE. YOU KNEW YOU WOULD HAVE TO WORK THAT MUCH HARDER TO JUST SURVIVE. SO THE IDEA OF BEING LEFT BEHIND WASN'T NEW TO US.



SOMEONE DECIDES YOU'RE EITHER BLACK OR WORKING CLASS. LOTS OF US ARE BOTH! THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS ALWAYS FRUSTRATED THE CRAP OUT OF ME, THERE IS TALK OF THE WORKING CLASS BEING LEFT BEHIND. THE WHITE WORKING CLASS WERE LEFT BEHIND, BUT THE WORKING CLASS IN GENERAL HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND.

In recent times, the term 'the left behind' has been used by academics, politicians and journalists to explain both Brexit, as well as the electoral gains made by political parties such as UKIP. Invariably, this term has become a shorthand way of referring to older white working class men with few skills and qualifications, located primarily in post-industrial spaces. Central to the 'left behind' argument is the idea that people who are white and working class have been disadvantaged by globalisation, deindustrialisation and, more recently, austerity. However, our interviewees questioned this narrative. They pointed to the ways in which it excludes the experiences of black and minority ethnic communities, and the losses they have also endured - of jobs, living standards, and services. They also challenged the idea that the 'working class' can be understood simply as white, identifying instead a multiracial and multi-ethnic working-class who have all been adversely impacted by processes of deindustrialization, welfare reform, austerity, rising inequality and increasingly impoverished public services. Reframing this notion of the 'left behind' calls for a broader consideration of who has been impacted by social, economic and political change, and the role that processes of economic and urban decline, structural and institutional racism, and class exclusion play in shaping contemporary lives.

This work is funded by the British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust and The University of Manchester. It has also been approved by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee. To find out more about this work visit www.ethnicity.ac.uk