

Pork legs are shaking up British politics

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

In the U.K., the meat product known as gammon has recently become shorthand for a certain type of middle-aged white man. He's a Conservative voter, he likely supports Brexit, and his habitual rantings about immigration and the scourge of political correctness have caused him to turn so red as to resemble a pan-fried slab of ham. Hence, a gammon. It has become the British left's insult of choice, one that is kicking up an impassioned debate about racism—against certain white men.

"Gammon" refers not to an individual, but to a group of people—one that, in this case, is defined by age and political persuasion. The insult is like the mirror image of "snowflake," a slight used by the political right to denote a hypersensitive generation of young people on the left who struggle to deal with dissenting viewpoints and therefore require "safe spaces" lest they get "triggered."

But some U.K. political commentators argue that "gammon" takes it too far. The Northern Irish lawmaker Emma Little-Pengelly, has suggested the term is ageist and racist for its emphasis on age and skin color.

The gammon debate has nearly reached the upper echelons of British government. When a spokesman for U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May was asked where the premier stood on the issue, he said they had not discussed it. At least one political correspondent seemed to take the silence as a kind of tacit approval, writing, "PM's spokesman would not say she thinks the term gammon is racist."

Summary: