

Whiteness, citizenship of class and educational privilege of Eastern European pupils in British schools.

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Abstract

The paper deconstructs ways in which the white ‘race’ of Eastern European pupils and the class determination of their parents in the country of arrival combine, to either afford or deny them racialized privileges in British education. Critically reviewing published research on Eastern European pupils in British schools, the article concludes that past understandings of ‘white middle-class privilege’, developed mostly in research about white middle-class nationals, cannot be applied in the same way to white-middle class migrants. The paper shows that the class and race of white middle-class migrants become re-articulated in school contexts in ways which suggest that, despite being white and middle-class in their home countries, Eastern Europeans cannot be fully white and middle-class in the migration setting. Based on these insights, we offer an analytical frame for theorising this observed conundrum, making a contribution to sociology of education, race and migration.

Keywords: racialization; Eastern Europeans; education; white middle class privilege; migration

Introduction

Scholarship on ‘white privilege’ and its relationality to ‘race’ and ‘class’ in British education has been mostly developed in relation to white middle-class nationals and more established minority ethnic students (e.g. Archer 2010; Reay et al, 2011). A notable exception here is work by Bhopal (2018) on Gypsy and Traveller groups in the

UK who represent a group of ‘undeserving whites’ whose apparently unruly lifestyle is used to deny them the same privileges as those afforded to other white middle class students. Internationally, scholars have also written about the ways in which the whiteness of students can change, as their whiteness becomes a racial perspective and a world-view (Leonardo 2002) which, for instance, positions people as ‘white trash’ if they are poor, as ‘other’ if they are Eastern European (Kitching 2011) or as ‘racially inferior’ if they are Irish (Fox et al. 2012). The consequences of such positioning are, as noted by Sullivan (2014, 5), that there are intra-white hierarchies, considered from the perspective of ‘class’ which is used to establish ‘white-middle class moral goodness’ and ‘the moral badness of poor and lower-class white people’. The insights from the analysis that we present in this paper additionally show how these intra-white and class hierarchies are re-used to highlight the badness of white (Eastern European) migrants.

The above work is closely aligned with a strand of whiteness studies which argues that whiteness increases in scope, not in scales, as it accommodates other white subjects but maintains domination of some (Leonardo 2002). Nowhere is this more evident than in migration studies, for instance, on the inclusion of the Irish or the Eastern European migrants into the same system of social benefits as white nationals in the UK, while simultaneously excluding their non-white counterparts. Increasing the scope of whiteness is driven by offering advantages (in this instance economic – e.g. McGhee 2009) to the UK nationals, whilst simultaneously fulfilling their long-term goals of domination, evident for instance, in the ability of the British to exclude Eastern Europeans when they see fit, reflected in the changing imperative of the British immigration policy.

The understanding of whiteness therefore that guides the analysis in this paper draws from race and migration studies which posits that whiteness is the contingent outcome of immigration policy, practices, and processes that operate according to factors based on race (e.g. Ignatiev 1995; Kushner 2005; McDowell 2009). These studies challenge the ongoing myth of meritocracy and ‘post racial/ class’ society, as does a lot of educational work which points to the supremacy of the white British middle class students and the curriculum over identities, intellectual ability and perspectives of minority students (e.g. Crozier 2015). Such situation has been said to represent a new form of racism, whereby minorities are constructed as ‘inferior’ not only on the basis of their skin colour but also because of their ethnic and cultural characteristics, and how they combine with factors related to their class and gender (Barker 1981).

It is now widely accepted that it is not possible to understand lack of privilege in education, or any practice (intentional or not) of social stratification of students, without considering the mutual effects of race, gender and class (e.g. Author 2014, Rollock et al, 2015; Reay 2001; Archer 2007). However, little is known about the ways in which such social stratification develops in relation to ‘white’ *migrant pupils*. This paper responds to this gap by critically reviewing existing research evidence on Eastern European pupils in British schools. We used critical discourse analysis following Fairclough (2013) as the focus on the language used to talk about Eastern European pupils gave us insights into their ‘problematizations’ of Eastern European pupils – i.e. the thinking that shapes their condition (here that of privilege in education) and how and when it becomes a problem (Foucault’s analysis of ‘Problematization’, cited in Koopman, 2018) – i.e. when they become less white. Our focus on problematisation was novel, as the

literature that we have reviewed rather focused on the problems with which Eastern European were associated – for example, educational achievement, language difficulties or cultural adaptation to the British education system. Looking at problems alone however was not sufficient for us to establish when Eastern European pupils became more or less white and how they came to be more white over other minority pupils. We show below that the problems associated with Eastern European pupils are the same as those usually associated with other minority pupils but they are problematised differently (i.e. thought about differently), and it is these differences in problematisations that provided us with an understanding of how and why educational privileges are bestowed on Eastern European pupils in ways that other minority pupils cannot access.

For this paper, a critical review of existing literature on Eastern European pupils in British education has been conducted. We performed a primary search of electronic databases EBSCO, JSTOR, ERIC, Oxford Journals, ProQuest, Sage Premier and Wiley Online Library. Combinations of search terms were used, such as: ‘Eastern Europeans and Education and UK/ Britain’, and/ or ‘Eastern Europeans and Racism/ Racialization’ and/or ‘Eastern Europeans and Class’. The primary search generated 217 journal articles. Screening of abstracts and titles was then performed independently by each author and then we compared our thoughts on which papers were relevant for the analysis of problematisations of Eastern Europeans (not only in education but also more broadly in the British society). 35 papers were then selected for the final analysis. In the sections below, we provide a review of those papers that suggested a theoretical juxtaposition between current understandings of white middle-class privilege in education with its different forms which might be developing in relation to middle class white *migrants*. So, for example, we excluded publications from our review which

discussed language difficulties of Eastern European pupils but provided no insights into how these difficulties were ‘thought about’ by the schools and whether through this thinking, Eastern European pupils came to occupy positions of privilege and to what extent this was related to their race and class. Our paper reviews and builds on the findings of this literature which has so far focused primarily on Eastern European pupils’ experiences of racism, albeit through a lens which recognises the intersections of race and class in these experiences of exclusion in the some studies (eg Tescherenko and Archer 2014). Building on insights of this previous work, we aim to develop a framework that illustrates more explicitly the role of class formation in processes of racialisation which has hitherto been under-emphasised in the educational literature on Eastern European pupils in UK schools.

The first section of the paper reviews key theorisations about race, class and racialization, as well as providing definitions of ‘white privilege’ and ‘whiteness’ that are used in the paper. This section helped us to identify potential ways in which conceptualisations of white middle-class privilege may change in relation to white migrants. The following sections constitute the analytical part of the paper, revealing the main conundrum in published research on Eastern Europeans in British education – namely, that despite being white and middle-class in their home countries, Eastern Europeans, to use Allen’s (2009) phrase, cannot be fully white and middle-class in the migration setting. The conclusion begins to theorise this conundrum, suggesting an frame for analysing a relative lack of privilege for white middle class migrants in education and developing notions of ‘class of migrants’ and ‘citizenship of class’.

The ‘problem’ of white Eastern Europeans in England

There are around 1.6 million Eastern European migrants in the UK (ONS 2018). The

2004 and 2007 waves of migration, after A8 and A2¹ EU accessions, have undoubtedly contributed to this numerical presence. Eastern European migration to Britain had of course started a lot earlier, for instance, in the 1950s and 1960s, when many Eastern European workers arrived in England as part of the European Voluntary Worker (EVW) Scheme introduced after WW2. The EVW, despite the active recruitment of black workers, contributed to about 90,000 arrivals, many of whom were from Eastern Europe (Isaac 1954). EVWs were political refugees from places such as Germany who were made to sign contracts decreeing that they would only engage in work chosen for them by the Ministry of Labour and would not change work without prior permission of the Ministry. They were directed to agriculture, textiles, heavy industry and mining, and compelled to join trades unions. It was made clear that they would be the first to be made redundant if necessary and that they would not be promoted over British workers. They did, however, enjoy the same wages as British workers (Author).

The Eastern Europeans who are the focus of this paper, however, are part of a different wave of migration. Unlike the EVWs, or the migrants from the British colonies, they are commonly associated with personal economic benefits and capitalist, rather than colonial, approaches to labour processes. Their ‘high numbers’ in the UK, since A8 and A2 accessions, have been used as a racialized frame to construct them as ‘problems’ for the British people (Fox et al, 2012), with right-wing tabloids drawing particular attention to the *scale* of migration, legitimizing in this way public concerns

¹ A8 countries - the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (joined the EU in 2004)

A2 countries - Bulgaria and Romania, joined the EU in 2007

about the balance between economic benefits vs. social disruption (for review of tabloid representations of Eastern Europeans, see Blinder and Allen, 2016).

British immigration policy can also be seen to draw on ‘high numbers’ of Eastern Europeans to justify their racialised exclusion. Fox et al (2012) have argued that these numbers are drawn upon because their white ‘race’ cannot be used to exclude them, as they were represented in the New Labour Government’s Policies of 2005 and 2006 (issued shortly after the A8 and A2 accessions) as causing, unlike their non-EU counterparts, little disruption to ‘community cohesion’. Community cohesion therefore became an important criterion for officially approving of these migrants under Labour; under the Coalition and the Conservative governments from 2010, it was used to disprove of them. Still not being able to use race as a factor, Eastern Europeans were instead represented in the Coalition and Conservative years as disrupting community cohesion because of the strain on social services they caused, despite evidence showing that they were 40% less likely to claim benefits as compared to British nationals (Dustmann and Frattini 2014). Their shared skin colour with the British majority is overshadowed in this case by concerns about high levels of immigration and the potential impact on community cohesion. This was reflected in a commitment in the Conservative manifesto to ‘reduce the number of people coming to our country with tough new welfare conditions’ (Conservative Manifesto 2015, 29). The Conservative government pledged that ‘instead of something-for-nothing, we will build a system based on the principle of something-for-something. We will then put these changes to the British people in a straight in-out referendum on our membership of the European Union by the end of 2017’ (The Conservative Manifesto 2017, 30). This referendum took place on 23 June 2016 and 52% of the British people voted to leave the EU.

In education, the ‘high numbers’ frame has also been used to ‘other’ Eastern European pupils. Tabloids reporting on the growing numbers of Eastern European pupils have heightened concerns about their impact on the education of British majority students, describing the latter as being held back in their progress by ‘floods’ of Eastern Europeans who are absorbing already limited school resources (quoting English language difficulties as the main reason - e.g. Sabey 2017). Interestingly, the tabloids do not mention ‘race’, nor do they discuss ‘problems’ with community cohesion, both of which, on the contrary, have been commonly used to ‘other’ more established minority ethnic students (e.g. Author 2012, Vincent 2018). In this paper, we however show that ‘race’ and ‘community cohesion’ are important reference points in racialization of Eastern European pupils, based on our review of research examples which signal that these two concepts have been used in teacher narratives about their pupils, to signify white Eastern European pupils over other minoritized pupils. We also discuss how the white ‘race’ of Eastern Europeans and the absence of narratives about them as affecting ‘community cohesion’ are not sufficient to afford them the same privileges in education as white nationals enjoy. We draw attention to the impact the perceived lower class of Eastern European migrants has on these privileges; a link we develop in more detail in the subsequent sections of this paper. By focusing on the ‘class of migrants’, we contribute to the sociology of migration and race studies in education, addressing specifically a gap on ‘class formation amongst migrants in the migration setting’ (Phizacklea 1984, 209).

Our understanding of racialization, whiteness and white privilege has been shaped by the critical literature of race and racism which identifies European expansion and colonisation as central to the project of ongoing racial formation (Miles 1993; Murji and Solomos 2005, Omi and Winant 2015). However, to address the current location of

Eastern Europeans within these racialisation processes we also draw on the work of Annie Phizacklea (1984). We turned to this work because historical and congoing colonial relations which are the basis for the racialization of Britain's minoritized populations are not the main contributory factor in the migration and racialization of Eastern Europeans to the UK. This requires instead an analytical frame which proposes to consider discrimination (and signification) of migrants to be products of 'a market position with a plurality of classes existing in each of the primary markets of employment, housing and education' (Phizacklea 1984, 202). We felt this was important, given the context of A8 and A2 migration, driven by the EU free movement policy and internationalisation of the labour supply under broader trends of marketisation and capitalist economies. Plurality of classes, as it is constructed in different migration settings, was also important in developing our argument about the 'citizenship of class' which we present later in the paper. This does not however mean that we reject the role of 'race'. Rather, as A8 and A2 migration is driven by capitalist approaches to migration, we felt it was more appropriate to develop an analytical frame that recognises first that Eastern European pupils share the white skin colour with the British majority students and secondly, have no colonial relationship to Britain. Thus, we rather sought to explain the observed discrimination and signification of Eastern European pupils through a lens which positions 'race' and 'class' relations as determined by a common economic characterisation of migrants in the country of arrival (Phizacklea 1984) - here, this characterisation centres around the 'low-skilled builder' stereotype often used in the UK to refer to Eastern Europeans.

In our analysis of published research, we therefore asked:

- a) What does the current literature suggest about problematisations of Eastern European pupils?

b) What role, if any, does the economic characterisation, in combination with white race and class of Eastern Europeans play in these problematisations?

c) How do the race and the class determination of Eastern Europeans as ‘low-skilled builders’ combine to either afford or deny them privileges in education?

Race, Class, White Educational Privilege and Migrants

Classifying people as ‘other’ through lenses of race and its attributes (such as ethnicity, class and gender) has been described as the racialization of structural inequalities and the politicisation of ‘race’ (e.g. Williams 1986, Wallace 2018). In such situations, ‘race’ is therefore used to ‘make up people’, to position them in prevailing social hierarchies and to provide clues for interacting with them (Omi and Winant 2015). Most analyses also agree that when ‘race’ is used to provide such clues and establish hierarchies, it is less of a biological category and more of a social construction (recently Francis-Tan and Tannuri-Pianto 2015 or in relation to Eastern Europeans, see Kitching, 2011). We draw on these understandings to enable explanation of explain how race is used in education contexts to, on the one hand, afford certain privileges to white Eastern European pupils but also, and especially by interacting with their class attributes, to take these privileges away.

We discuss below how race and class appear in teacher narratives about Eastern Europeans in ways that reflect ‘racial projects’ (Omi and Winant 2015). The racial project that we reveal in this paper is predominantly organised by the economic model of migration and capitalist approaches to movement of labour. It positions Eastern Europeans as a market phenomenon that is signified or discriminated against, based on the common ‘builder’ stereotype of Eastern Europeans in the country of arrival. This stereotype suggests low opportunities for accumulation of social capital, which

overrides the social signification that could be afforded to Eastern Europeans through their white 'race' (when evoked in biological terms). Thus, the educational privilege of Eastern Europeans, as we explain below, is organised via a symbolic and social meaning ascribed to perceived racial differences and similarities, which, in combination with the 'class of migrants' (a concept which we develop below) are invoked in discursive and institutional practices to interpret, order, and structure social relations with Eastern Europeans. Such ordering and structuring is otherwise known as 'racialization' (Miles 1993; Murji and Solomos 2005). The now well-established literature on this phenomenon has recognised that racialisation needs to be understood 'not exclusively in terms of categorising according to appearance and culture, but also as a more abstract process of attributing innate characteristics to all members of a given group (Garner 2013, 504). In the case of Eastern Europeans in England, we argue that it is the group's social status as recently arrived migrants and their linguistic otherness rather than shared physical characteristics, that serves as the basis for racialisation. Policy discourses surrounding migration position Eastern Europeans as potential competitors for dwindling resources in the UK and in this context define them as 'not quite white' enough (Allen 2009). However, as we later argue, Eastern Europeans can simultaneously be afforded privileges within educational and other social settings based on physical characteristics which they share with the majority white population in Britain.

Theorised as such, racialization is inextricably connected with the understanding of 'white privilege' which suggests that whiteness and white identities operate as an invisible and unnamed form of structural advantage or a standpoint from which white people view themselves, others, and society (Bilge 2013). While critiques of whiteness and understanding of white privilege date back to the work of Du Bois (1899; 1932) the

term 'white privilege' was popularised in the 1980s by McIntosh. We agree however with Leonardo's (2004) critique of discussions that could be seen to imply that whites are passively handed an 'invisible knapsack' (McIntosh 1990) as this can serve to mask the active racial oppression engaged in by white people.

Within the educational literature, white privilege has been recognised to operate as a marker of belonging (Bhopal, 2018). This aspect of white privilege is revealed in many teacher narratives about their Eastern European pupils, who mostly talk about them in the sense of belonging to the class and school community in the same ways as the white British majority pupils do. Representations of Eastern European pupils that we reveal below seem to suggest that the teachers use their shared white identity (in biological terms) with those Eastern European pupils who are physically white to *empathise* with them. They talk about, for instance, Polish or Czech pupils as those who 'blend in' but equally express disappointment that other Eastern Europeans, such as pupils from Romania and Bulgaria (referred to by teachers as Roma), who may not be white, negatively affected their education. Work by Bhopal (2018) in relation to Roma and Travellers communities in the UK has already shown that even those from white ethnic backgrounds do not have access to the same advantages associated with acceptable forms of whiteness (such as paying taxes, etc) which equates to being seen as belonging. This seems to also emerge here in relation to Romanian and Bulgarian pupils. It is unclear whether the teacher narratives about these pupils that we cite below are about white or non-white Romanian and Bulgarian migrants but what transpires is that these migrants are clearly not positioned as being equally white to their Polish or Czech counterparts, suggesting that a particular type of whiteness is valued, in which not all Eastern Europeans occupy a homogenous position. Their differing positions seem to depend on norms and values in which certain skin colour, culture, dress and

language are valued more than others. Thus, the meaning of whiteness that we use in the paper is that of ‘a dominant identity in which formations and boundaries of whiteness have specific cultural and economic forms of domination which reinforce the position of privilege (Bhopal, 2018, 18). In this sense, whiteness is also associated with historical privilege which continue to benefit (national) whites regardless of their class and other intersectional identities (Bhopal, 2018). Bhopal (2018) however acknowledges that privilege connected with whiteness may work differently for white-working class and middle-class groups, an argument that has been pioneered in education by David Gillborn (2012) in relation to UK working and middle-class nationals. We additionally argue that privileges associated with whiteness work differently for white nationals and white *migrants*. We show below that the intersectionality with the migrant status of Eastern Europeans overrides the privilege of belonging to the same category of whites as the nationals, because of how the meaning of their class changes in the migration setting due to the historically weaker economic position of the Eastern European countries (this meaning is contrary to their class determination in the country of origin). We thus argue that class has citizenship, and Eastern Europeans’ privilege is not simply transferable across borders. This suggests that the meaning of white privilege should not only be developed in terms of its intersectionality with the class of nationals but also that of migrants (as it becomes re-enacted differently for migrants *in* the migration setting).

Interestingly, the privileging position of Eastern Europeans in education does not seem to be affected by their proficiency in the English language, in the same way as it does for other minority ethnic pupils. This is despite evidence showing that language barriers for Eastern European pupils are greater than for other migrant groups, and that because of these barriers Eastern Europeans tend to mix socially with people from their

own backgrounds (e.g. Sumption and Somerville 2010). It was interesting to note that the teachers who are cited in the sections that follow had not identified lack of English language skills as a barrier to community cohesion. We interpret this as a manifestation of the privilege connected with their whiteness, following Gamson et al (1992) who argue that racialization through English language is the most likely and ‘viable’ representation when the Eastern Europeans share the somatic criteria with the British majority. We analyse relevant quotes to support this argument in the section ‘Diversity that does not need to be managed’ but here, for comparison, and to contextualise this argument, we recall the report from the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (CIAC) that linked poor English proficiency of the non-white migrants arriving in Britain in the 60s to criminality, terrorism and lack of social (e.g. CIAC 1964) and international research which shows that these links are still present for Black and Minority Ethnic students (e.g. Bondy 2016).

As the paper develops, we also identify ways in which educational privileges of Eastern Europeans are challenged, and we interpret them through Phizacklea’s (1984) argument about class determination of migrants being mostly shaped in a migration setting. We suggest specific points about the process of class formation of migrants when colour differences cannot be considered. We understand class formation mainly in terms of social capital accumulation, following relevant research to date about Polish migrants in the UK (Ryan et al, 2008; Tkacz and McGhee 2016; Moskal and Sime 2016). This understanding captures processes of integration into the class structure of the host nation on the basis of Eastern Europeans’ ability to develop the ‘right’ social capital and therefore access to the same privileges and benefits as the nationals enjoy (i.e. dense networks that re-enforce their ties with the hosts and enable them to master the rules of the field – as explained by Putnam, 2007 and Ryan 2008 for instance,

developing work of Bourdieu, 1986). This includes not only the ‘technical’ or ‘everyday’ privileges, such as the ability to claim welfare benefits, legally reside in the UK, access to education and housing, but also (and most importantly for this paper) forms of social privileges, manifested in respect, belonging, equal status in the community and institutions such as schools, and the levels of public perception that Eastern Europeans can also be ‘like the nationals’. This coheres with the understandings of white privilege and whiteness we have outlined in the previous sections.

Morris (2003), for instance, has argued that, as much as ‘race’ and cultural capital of migrants matters in establishing their social privileges, their wider acceptance also depends on migration policies, and their associated migrant rights and status (legal and social) in the country of arrival. We earlier briefly reviewed some key policy representations of Eastern Europeans to illustrate how the social status these policies shape for Eastern Europeans, based on their race and ethnic, as well as economic and citizenship characteristics, determine the extent to which they are considered as ‘white’ in the host nation. From that, we can give further consideration to the ways in which these characteristics can establish their class determination and educational privilege in the host society schooling system.

To frame the analysis in this paper, we also draw Putnam’s (2007) work on ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ capitals of migrants, which has been useful in explaining why despite being white and middle class, Eastern Europeans are not considered as such in the migration setting. Bonding and bridging capitals develop on the basis of associability and levels of ‘sameness’ (and the resources that facilitate it – such as shared ethnicity and class) with ‘people who are like me in some important way’ (bonding capital) and ‘people who are unlike me in some important ways’ (bridging

capital) (Putnam 2007, 143). This distinction has been useful in framing our analysis of how Eastern Europeans' ties with the host society are established which, as we show towards the end of the paper, despite their middle class and the white skin colour, do not afford them the same level of privileges in education as is bestowed on the white nationals. This may be, as noted by Ryan et al (2008) in relation to Polish migrants in London, due to the fact that shared ethnicity is not the only factor that affects the ability of Eastern Europeans to develop bonds with the nationals and to 'spark' willingness of nationals to develop bonds with them. That is why it is important to explore all the different dimensions in which people may be 'unlike me in important ways'. Ryan et al (2008, 676) argue that 'there has been a tendency to focus on bridging exclusively in relation to ethnicity but other aspects, such as class and gender, may be equally important in certain contexts'. And whilst we do not consider gender in our analysis, as there is not enough information in the research identified in our search about its role in bestowing privilege in education for Eastern Europeans (although there is wider research on gender and Eastern European migration – e.g. Lopez-Rodriguez, 2010), we focus to a large extent on class. Through the focus on class, we aim to develop an analysis of the formation process of the 'class of migrants' (and its key tenets) using lenses that consider the role of the interaction between the class-based stereotype of an Eastern European builder developed in England and the whiteness of Eastern Europeans in bridging.

We show below that the class-based 'builder' stereotype, despite being integrated into the mainstream working-class structure of the British society, is a sub-category (underclass) of Eastern Europeans' whiteness, because of their historically and economically weaker citizenship. Eastern Europeans therefore cannot possibly be treated in the same way as nationals because, as we explain below, their class

determination in the host country has specific citizenship that prevents them from being 'full-white'. We further argue that, by extension, current understandings of white middle-class privilege in education cannot therefore be applied in the same way to nationals and migrants, pointing to the need to juxtapose these understandings with their newer versions that can take account of the changing education setting in Britain, where there are more 'white' students who are not nationals.

Combining our theorisations about white privilege and whiteness outlined in the previous section, we understand educational white privilege specifically as characterisations that position white middle-class students as the 'desired' type of students. These students are afforded a certain type of privilege, which carries with them, for instance, additional support and access to better facilities and educational courses (e.g. Archer et al. 2007). White middle-class privilege can also be manifested in perceptions that minority and working-class students do not quite 'fit in' and that they are from inadequate families. Such perceptions threaten their educational ambitions, opportunities to occupy positions of power, self-esteem, sense of belonging and ability (Reay 2006, Crozier 2018). Thus, the meaning of educational privilege that we use here centres around the intersection of opportunity, belonging, empathy and oppression in relation to education practice and experience of schooling, evolving, as expressed by Putnam (2007), around bridging and bonding capitals which evoke specific responses to pupils who have characteristics 'like me' but also those who are 'unlike me'. Because of the effects of these two types of capital, the Eastern European participants in studies that we review below have experienced many educational privileges. They have however also experienced downward social mobility, manifested in their high middle-class status at home being downgraded by the British nationals to a stereotypical working-class builder. The observed downward social mobility of Eastern Europeans makes them an

interesting group to explore, supporting Vincent et al's (2013, 929) point that 'race cannot be simply 'added on' to class analyses, especially when the class of migrants is concerned. 'Race/racism changes how class works, how it is experienced, and the subjectivities available to individuals' (Vincent et al, 2013, 929). These interrelationships are most visible in the case of white middle-class Eastern Europeans whose class position, as we reveal in the sections that follow, is ill-defined, precarious and fluid, due to their citizenship status. We therefore argue below that their class has citizenship which 'dilutes' the opportunities for educational privilege that their 'whiteness' could bestow on them. Eastern Europeans become racialized through stereotypes of 'builders' from Eastern Europe; an observation which represents a unique form of racialisation pointing to citizenship. However, as we explain below, the shared skin colour of Eastern European pupils continues to play an important role, alongside citizenship (in the sense of nationality), in their racialization. Their whiteness has positioned them as minorities that do not have to be 'managed' under strategies relating to diversity. Such positioning has contributed to bestow educational privileges on them, such as belonging and empathy, and lessened the degree of their 'othering'. We unfold relevant details below.

Diversity that does not need to be managed

Our analysis of published research suggests that the conditions under which racialization of Eastern European pupils evolves is mainly related to English language abilities. Such racialization is reflected in several teacher narratives about their Eastern European pupils who, through avoidance of references to them as learners affecting school integration, positively associate them with a group of 'whites' that simply do not speak English as the first language. For example, the only 'problems' with Eastern European pupils the teachers in Flynn's (2013) study saw were that their limited English

proficiency could hamper their success against the norms expected in the national curriculum. One teacher was particularly anxious that the poor English ability of Eastern European pupils meant that ‘there is still *a danger* [our emphasis] that some children can just be put in bottom groups because they’re second language children’ (teacher participant, cited in Flynn 2013). This was interesting as it draws attention to important differences surrounding racialization of Eastern Europeans vs. other minority ethnic students. In relation to the latter, it has been widely argued that frames for racialization, especially those that place minority students in lower ability sets, are often implicitly based on colour and ethnic differences, where children are placed in lower sets just because they are Black or Asian (e.g. Gillborn and Youdell 1999; Rollock et al 2015). In relation to white Eastern Europeans, putting them in lower sets *just because* they are second language learners does not seem to be right, affording them in this way some privileging positions associated with being white.

Our analysis has also suggested that Eastern European pupils are not stigmatised by the need to manage ‘difference’ and ‘diversity’; a stigma often surrounding other minority ethnic groups (e.g. Tinker 2009; Shah 2009; Author 2012). Thus, characterisations of Eastern European students which do not associate them with school ‘problems’ related to diversity, also seem to afford them privileging associations with those aspects of being a migrant that are positive. Here these aspects include, for instance, not being disruptive and aggressive, working hard and ‘fitting in’ well.

Radek did really well. He fitted in quietly and got down to work, making lots of friends. He came in a small group; no one paid much attention to him being from the Czech Republic.

(teacher cited in Reynolds 2008,17)

They fit right in, really, you wouldn't be able to pick them out, apart from the fact obviously they are Polish, and you wouldn't necessarily be able to identify it, if you saw them on the playground for example

(teacher, cited in Flynn 2013, 345)

It was also interesting to note how 'colour', and its racialized negative characteristics such as pupil misbehaviour and criminality, returned to teacher narratives about the pupils, when it was possible to use them. This was evident in comparisons between white and non-white Eastern European pupils, as well as with other minority ethnic pupils. For example, whilst not explicitly mentioning colour, when talking about Romanian students (referred to by teachers as Roma), many teachers expressed views which associated them with negative aspects of being a minority, and, as illustrated in the quote below, even 'blamed' them for slower progress of those (white) Eastern European students who had 'fitted in' well before the arrival of the Romanian pupils.

When the big group of migrants arrived this year, Radek [the pupil from the Czech Republic referred to in the previous quote] went backwards massively. He's getting in fights, he hangs out with Roma most of the time and even his English has deteriorated. He's really suffered behaviourally and academically from the arrival of all the Roma pupils.

(teacher cited in Reynolds 2008, 17)

In relation to more established minority ethnic pupils, the following comparison of Eastern Europeans was noted:

The Polish children seem keener to work than the Bengali children, I think. Well, I'm not saying all the Bengali children, but we do have special needs Bengali children and we also have the problem with the Bengali children going off on extended holidays.

(teacher participant, cited in Flynn 2013, 344)

In summary, it seems that race functions as a master category which determines positive or negative associations with being a minority. Where race cannot be used, the focus in racialization shifts towards students' citizenship status, or those aspects of their whiteness that make students less white (like their English language proficiency). This then feeds teacher valorised language about Eastern European pupils who are not talked about in the same way as 'fully white' British students, and even the fully-white (biologically) students are not perceived as such. Teacher constructions of Eastern European pupils suggest the prominence of racialization but one that evokes different connotations than race and ethnic-centered classifications of other minority ethnic students, such as 'Black or Black-British' or 'Asian or Asian-British', in which race is more pronounced. The description around citizenship helps the elision of race, but it does not change the fact that the white race of Eastern European pupils is used to determine the 'preferred' type of a minority student. It might not function as the key category in establishing conditions for their exclusion, but it helps to construct Eastern Europeans as pupils who do not have to be discussed in terms of management of diversity. Arguably, 'diversity management' is not necessary to frame Eastern European pupils because, through their whiteness, they conform to a racialized understanding of the type of minority student that does not affect community cohesion. Their presence is

instead managed through the conceived need for greater English language support, represented by teachers as a learning need, not, as shown, in relation to other minority students, as a factor affecting school integration.

The next section deconstructs in more detail ways in which citizenship of some Eastern European countries, and its associated (negative) migrant characteristics, are used in school contexts to establish conditions for exclusion of Eastern European students. These details, in combination with our analysis of race in this section, enabled us to begin to theorise the notion of the ‘class of migrants’. We discuss the term’s key nuances and tenets below.

The Class of Migrants and Citizenship of Class

The insights from published research presented below support Phizacklea’s (1984) position outlined at the start of this paper - that the class of migrants may indeed be established by their economic classification in the receiving country. Our analysis however provides more details of the nuances and complexities of this classification, shaping an understanding of the sociology of the process of migrant class formation. Our critique suggests that while it may be true that class determination of migrants can to an extent be explained through lenses emphasising ‘their common social and economic situation’ (Phizacklea 1984, 203, citing Castles and Kosack) in the country of arrival, we argue that it should not be used as the main ‘entry point’. This would, for instance, require an assumption that low-skilled Eastern European migrants are able to develop bonding and bridging capitals (that we introduced at the start of this paper) in the same way, because they share the same economic status in the migration setting. Research on Polish migrants in London by Ryan et al (2008) has already highlighted that such assumptions should not be made, showing that instead of being a factor driving a particular class identity of Poles, their common socio-economic status has

instead been a source of competition and suspicion for them and different social belonging. Based on the insights from our review of published research, we argue that there should indeed be an adequate space to speak to the socio-economic status of Eastern Europeans in theorisations about their class formation in the host nation setting. But, drawing on our analysis of whiteness in the previous section, we also argue that an adequate space should also be given to speak to race too. The primacy of each, alongside its various intricacies, should therefore be addressed when necessary, based on several intricacies associated with the ‘class of migrants’ that we have observed.

The first intricacy is related to their citizenship. Under this intricacy, we posit that it is not only important to consider that Eastern European pupils are children of migrants but also, and perhaps primarily because, they are children of migrants *from specific countries in Eastern Europe*. This arises from the ‘historical context of the uneven development of capitalism’ (Phizacklea, 1984, 204), and seems to be particularly affecting A8 and A2 migration. Combined with the government representations of Eastern Europeans summarised earlier in this paper, to first increase EU migration to Britain but then to specifically target Eastern Europeans as a ‘threat’, it seems that the historically inferior economic position of Eastern European countries may play an equal (if not sometimes more prominent than race) role in shaping relationships between the British hosts and the Eastern European migrants. We therefore argue that the class of migrants has specific citizenship and starts to develop in the country of origin. We show below that when the home class status is low, it gets transferred to the migration setting (negatively affecting Eastern European students’ access to such educational privileges as career guidance) and when it is high (middle-class) it becomes re-articulated in ways that reflect downward social mobility. Thus,

rather than being related to the overall common category of being a low-skilled migrant in the host country, the class of migrants and its associated educational privilege, seems to evolve around Eastern European nationalities, characterised to an extent through lenses of race or ethnicity but also, through a specific level of economic development at home. Research evidence that we have reviewed has shown that being from economically-weak Eastern Europe associates Eastern European migrants with those aspects of migration that are negative, i.e. ‘heavy drinkers and smokers’, ‘jobless’, ‘aggressive’ and ‘benefit shoppers’ (Tereshchenko and Archer 2014). Opportunities to be guided by schools about progressing to university have also been affected by this association, as schools have been found to assume that the children of Eastern European migrants doing low skilled jobs in the country of arrival (albeit often highly qualified and doing high-skilled jobs at home) would not aspire to study in higher education. These assumptions, as Tereshchenko and Archer (2014) show, were also often made despite the Eastern European students themselves expressing a desire to go to university:

(...) the seemingly positive stereotype of Eastern European migrants as being ‘hard workers’ associate them with working class jobs such as being a builder. Some students suggest that teachers may be influenced by this stereotype in their expectations of their career pathways.

(Tereshchenko and Archer 2014, 5).

Associations of their citizenship with Eastern Europe have also limited Eastern Europeans in their access to privileging social networks as the research evidence that we

have reviewed suggests that they have struggled for social acceptance in the British society (Moskal and Sime 2016). We have found evidence which suggests that there were specific implications of these associations in the context of schooling:

One implication of the widespread anti-immigration discourses (including by the mainstream political parties portraying immigration as a problem) is that most young people from Eastern Europe are seen as new ‘Other’ in English schools, both by the white majority and more established minority ethnic groups. This undermines Eastern European students’ ability to ‘belong’ and also links to parents’ implicit views about the lesser status of their home language and the desire to escape the ‘immigrant’ label through acquiring an English accent, English education, a degree, a professional education for their children.

(Tereshchenko and Archer 2014, vii)

As noted in the previous section, acquiring an English accent as a means to social mobility is possible in the case of Eastern European migrants because of their ‘whiteness’. But their citizenship, which, on the other hand, evokes associations with non-aspirational working class in the host country, poses limits to educational privileges that are bestowed on them. The research evidence that we have reviewed suggests that because of their citizenship, it is also assumed that Eastern Europeans cannot achieve the same education outcomes as the ‘fully’ white nationals can. For example:

Kasia (Polish student): I remember when we had a GCSE results day. Kinga and I went together and we received envelopes and we passed every single

GCSE, and the teacher who gave us the envelope and who was next to us was so surprised, because we're Polish.

Kinga (Polish student): She's like 'oh, you've actually passed your GCSEs'.

(Polish students cited in Tereshchenko and Archer 2014, 28).

Our analysis therefore suggests that despite their whiteness affording them the privilege of 'fitting in', and the initial racialized privilege of the 'desired' minority student that does not affect community cohesion, school responses to Eastern Europeans cannot be fully explained by their shared skin colour with the British majority students. The whiteness of Eastern Europeans becomes 'coloured' by the characteristics of their class whose effects are pronounced in the migration setting but which begins to develop in the country of education. The evidence we have reviewed also suggests that the relative economic position of Eastern Europeans' country of origin to the country of arrival overrides the middle-class determination of Eastern Europeans developed in their own countries. This was demonstrated by Tkacz and McGhee (2016) who have shown that when Eastern Europeans arrive in Britain, they are perceived as unskilled 'builders', irrespective of their professional and educational status at home. This is despite displaying the same characteristics as the British middle-class parents and positively identifying themselves with members of the majority community, through recognising the rules of the field and blending into the group habitus of the school (Ryan et al, 2008).

Such observations point to the second intricacy of the class of migrants – i.e. that Eastern Europeans have agency (in the sense of using their middle-class predispositions established in the home country to access educational privilege in the country of arrival – see Tkacz and McGhee 2016). Based on the evidence reviewed, we

argue that, where possible, and despite some differences related to language and cultural capitals (e.g. Moskal, 2016), Eastern Europeans draw on their shared whiteness with the British majority, by, for instance, remembering ‘not to speak Polish here’ [in an education setting] (Polish student participant, cited in Thomas 2012, 507), which enables them to ‘benefit from whiteness if they speak English without an accent so that they are not perceived as foreign’ (Tereshchenko et al, 2019). Their white race therefore is used strategically to help the elision of their immigrant status where necessary, which, as noted by more established minority ethnic students in Thomas’s’ (2012) study, enables Eastern Europeans to gain educational privileges that other ethnic minorities will never be able to access:

(...) Lidia, born in Poland, felt that by speaking English she could access money and power in order to be more successful. (...) Noah [a British minority ethnic student] seemed to accept that there was no escape from him from minority ethnic status and the ‘othering’ label.

(Thomas 2012, 508)

Concluding remarks

In an answer to our research questions about the ways in which the white race of Eastern European pupils and the class determination of their parents in the country of arrival combine, to either afford or deny them privileges in education, we conclude that there is a theoretical need to speak to the primacy of each. We also conclude that past understandings of ‘white middle-class privilege’, developed mostly in research about white middle-class nationals, cannot be applied in the same way to white-middle class migrants, whose class and race become re-articulated in school contexts in ways which suggest that, despite being white and middle-class in the home countries, Eastern

Europeans cannot be fully white and middle-class in the migration settings.

The insights from published research we have built on in this paper begin to shape a framework for analysing the above conundrum. We propose that this frame should be based on the premise that forms of privilege in education for Eastern Europeans depend on their ethnic-specific sources of possibilities in the country of education. We have shown above that those Eastern Europeans who are middle-class have more agency to use these possibilities to escape the lesser status of the ‘citizenship of their class’ in the country of education. Ultimately, however, it is only possible for them to escape this status (at least in the sense of ‘fitting in’, building bridging capitals and being racialized as the ‘desired type of students’) mostly because they are white. Those Eastern Europeans who are less white, either phenotypically or behaviourally (because they display behaviours that do not conform with established notions of whiteness) are not privileged in the same ways and are instead stigmatised by the narratives of affecting community cohesion that have followed more established minority ethnic students for many years. Thus, our frame’s entry point is that the primacy of race or class in seeking an understanding of Eastern Europeans’ educational privileges should not be sought, but rather evoked when necessary.

How can this frame be used to understand what kind of a racial project is applied to Eastern Europeans? The somatic meaning of Eastern Europeans’ ‘race’ that affords them the privilege of belonging to the same category of ‘whites’ as the British majority (as they just ‘fit in’) is contraindicated by its social sub-aspects, such as their common ‘low-skilled economic migrant’ status. This status functions as the main racialized frame because ‘race’ cannot be used. Eastern Europeans therefore become integrated in the mainstream class system through class-based racialization which is negatively associated with economically weak ‘citizenship’ of countries in Eastern Europe. This

citizenship gives their white race a colour. In the context of schooling, this colour is further darkened by low English abilities of Eastern European pupils. These abilities are used by teachers to distinguish between Eastern Europeans and the white nationals and to re-articulate the middle-class position of the former in ways that reflect downward social mobility. The whiteness of Eastern European pupils is however bestowed on them through representations of poor English skills as a learning need, rather than an ethnic characteristic which requires management to prevent disruption to school integration. Eastern Europeans' 'race' therefore, through being interchangeably evoked as a biological and class-based category, gives rise to a racial project under which whiteness and 'citizenship of class' produce complimentary effects that either afford Eastern European privileges in education or take them away.

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