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PATHOLOGICAL INTEGRATION, OR, HOW EAST EUROPEANS USE RACISM TO BECOME BRITISH

Abstract

East Europeans are integrating into life in the UK. This entails learning to get along with their new neighbours, but it also involves *not* getting along with certain neighbours. Integration isn't confined to benevolent forms of everyday cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, and conviviality; it can also include more pathological forms, like racism. Whilst integration is generally seen as desirable, the learning that it entails necessarily includes less desirable practices and norms. The aim of this article is to show how East Europeans in the UK have been acquiring specifically British competencies of racism. This doesn't mean all East Europeans are racist or they always use racism; it does mean, however, that racism is a part of the integration equation. We focus on the racist and racialising practices of Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians in Bristol in the UK. These East Europeans are using racism to insert themselves more favourably into Britain's racialised status hierarchies. This is a kind of integration.

Keywords

integration, racism, racialised hierarchies, immigration, East Europeans

Introduction

For more than a decade, East Europeans have been quietly integrating in the UK. They haven't had much help: integration hasn't featured as a policy priority for EU citizens whose free movement implied a transient presence and for whom their Europeanness (and whiteness) made integration seem less urgent. They have been victims of racism and xenophobia in ways that have slowed their integration. In this article, however, we argue that they have also learned to use racism in ways that have facilitated their integration. Racism is something we learn, and some people in Britain have learned to be racist toward East Europeans, just as previous generations learned to be racist to other immigrants. But this kind of learning works both ways: immigrants can also acquire the local tools and tactics of racism as part of their process of integration. East Europeans in the UK are learning British racism, and this, we argue, represents a kind of integration, albeit a pathological one. Acquiring and using local variants of racism is one way East Europeans can manoeuvre and manipulate Britain's shifting and contingent status hierarchies in their favour. Racism in this view is not something separate from (or antithetical to) integration, but something that is also a part of integration.

Integration is generally viewed as a good thing, something to be encouraged and facilitated, and something that, when achieved, represents a desirable societal outcome. And, conceived in these ways, it is a good thing. But more fundamentally integration involves a gradual familiarisation with and adaptation to a panoply of norms, values, and practices found in the receiving country – not just to the A list found on the Life in the UK test. Official versions of diversity taught in citizenship education, enshrined in anti-discrimination laws, and peddled by politicians ultimately co-exist alongside more pathological variants traded in neighbourhood interactions, disseminated by tabloids, and favoured by the far right. Racism is one such practice immigrants can acquire in this larger package of integration.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the racist practices of East Europeans in the UK represent a kind of pathological integration. We do not argue that East Europeans are racist, but

that racism can be a part of integration. We thus focus on the racist and racialising practices of the EU citizens of Poland, Hungary, and Romania living in Bristol in the UK. East Europeans are not all and not always racist; to the contrary, most of the time they are getting on (and learning to get on) just fine with their neighbours, colleagues, and friends. But our interest here is how alongside these more convivial practices of vernacular cosmopolitanism, East Europeans are acquiring and mastering a more racist repertoire of social interactional and discursive strategies that respond to specifically British configurations of hierarchical difference. This paper is about how East Europeans use racism to situate themselves favourably in Britain's racialised status hierarchies. This, we argue, is a kind of integration.

Two integration biases

The scholarship on integration features two biases. The first is that integration is a top-down phenomenon, with the state and its agents playing the lead role in incorporating newcomers into the fold of the 'nation'. Integration in this view is a collection of 'things that a *state* can do' (Favell, 2003: 15 [emphasis in original]). States subscribe to different philosophies of integration (Favell, 2001, Brubaker, 1992) which are translated into concrete policy frameworks to incorporate newcomers via access to citizenship (Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer, 2001), full political participation (Hochschild et al., 2013), unfettered access to the labour market (Heath et al., 2008), and the desired balance between preserving cultural distinctiveness and adherence to a common set of national values, often civically understood (Joppke, 2007).

The second bias is the normative assumption that integration is a good thing (see Favell, 2003: 15 on this point). Integration isn't only something states do, it's something states *should* do. This is because integration is a key component of the larger project to define and defend the values of the nation (Anderson, 2013, Favell, 2003). Formal membership is bestowed by the state via naturalisation, but full inclusion must be achieved, ratified, and renewed through the continual enactment of the community's national values (Anderson, 2013: 93, 134). Bridget Anderson (2013:

3) tells us that the 'good citizen' is hardworking, law-abiding, and embodies the liberal values of individual autonomy and freedom. But the good citizen is not just liberal and tolerant; she is also white. The nationally defined community of value is also a racialised community of value, preserving not only the morality of the nation, but its chromatic boundaries as well (Anderson, 2013: 36-37, Gilroy, 2013 [1987]: 42-51, Gilroy, 2004: 95-100, 110-14, Hall, 1992: 297-98). Integration assumes the role of the gatekeeper of the nation: whiteness is twinned with liberal values to patrol its boundaries and decide who is deserving (and who isn't). Whilst the architects of integration like to proclaim their commitment to the mingling and melding of difference, integration is in fact a divisive process, constructing and hardening difference (Anthias, 2013b: 323, Valluvan, 2017: 5). Integration is not the organic or anodyne amalgamation of difference; it is the hard-fought struggle to protect the national boundaries of the community of value (Anderson, 2013: 9). It's integration's tight link with nationalism that lends it its normative bias.

These positive associations also derive from integration's intellectual lineage as a reaction against, and corrective to, the perceived homogenising tendencies of assimilation (Brubaker, 2001: 533, Joppke and Morawska, 2003: 4-7). Once the preferred approach to immigrant incorporation, assimilation was eventually discredited for placing the burden of incorporation on immigrants. Assimilation was a one-way street, where immigrants were expected to shed their particularistic ethnic identities in favour of the more encompassing (civic) national identity of the dominant majority. Against this, integration posited that immigrant incorporation was a two-way street, with immigrants and receiving states sharing responsibility, and their respective cultures, in a benevolent admixture of mutual adaptation.

Correcting assimilation's negative bias, however, has left integration with a positive one. If we bracket our road-sign metaphors, both integration and assimilation are fundamentally about 'becoming similar' (Brubaker, 2001): 'the process of change toward greater cultural similarity brought about by contact between two or more groups' (Yinger, 1981: 251). Value judgments enter the integration equation only when we discuss normative questions about what *kind* of change we

desire, what philosophy of integration we live by, and what our conception of the 'good citizen' is. But sociologically, this kind of change is value neutral; it can accommodate both benevolent and malevolent forms, desirable and undesirable outcomes (Favell, 2001: 28-30).

Our interest here is not whether immigrants *should* become similar, or whether 'assimilation' or 'integration' better captures this process of 'becoming similar'. Our interest is *how* people become similar: the strategies, tactics, and techniques they learn, invent, borrow, and adapt (on both sides of the immigrant/native divide) to seek entry into the community of value. Whilst policy frameworks provide a blueprint for and official endorsement of the state's preferred vision of integration, the actual forms of integration experienced and practised by ordinary immigrants cannot be singularly deduced from them. Integration does not always follow the good intentions or preferred pathways laid out by its philosopher architects; ordinary people are also agents of their own integration. People don't simply become similar, they make themselves similar, and they do this through aspirational claims to the nationally defined community of value.

There is no dearth of scholarship on the quotidian strategies and practices deployed by ordinary immigrants to negotiate diversity. Studies of ordinary, everyday, and vernacular cosmopolitanism (Werbner, 2006, Lamont and Aksartova, 2002, Datta, 2009) mingle with commonplace diversity (Wessendorf, 2014), everyday (Wise and Velayutham, 2009) and mundane multiculturalism (Watson and Saha, 2013), and intercultural (Phillips et al., 2014) and multiculture approaches (Neal et al., 2013) to provide a textured overview of how ordinary people experience and negotiate these evolving landscapes of diversity. In these accounts, natives and migrants are sometimes depicted as 'rub[bing] along together' (Watson, 2006: 2), gradually adjusting to co-existence through convivial practices based on the common interests and experiences of sharing the same social space. In some accounts this conviviality is purposeful; in others, an urban civility or 'ethics of indifference' (Tonkiss, 2006: 22-24) emerges on its own accord, where diversity becomes an unremarkable feature of the ordinary landscape of things, passing without notice.

This flattening of difference surely reflects a kind of integration, but one that also carries its own assumptions about the desirability, if not inevitability, of integration (see Neal et al., 2013: 315-17 on this point). Racism doesn't feature prominently in these accounts (but see Husband et al., 2014, Bloch and Dreher, 2009), although it is sometimes acknowledged (Wessendorf, 2014, Wise and Velayutham, 2009). Where it does appear, it's often depicted as separate from, or antithetical to, integration, as something that needs to be overcome. It represents a developmental stage of integration that can be attenuated through policies and practices that cultivate productive encounters between migrant and native. Racism of course often is an impediment to integration; it makes migrants (and others) visible, marking them as outsiders (Back et al., 2012: 141). But whilst the scholarship on integration has been concerned with how racism excludes, every process of exclusion is simultaneously a process of inclusion, of establishing and maintaining the boundary between racialised 'self' and 'other'. The racist excludes others (Anthias, 2016: 179-81), but in so doing includes herself (Fox et al., 2015). Like integration, racism can also be a two-way street, where victims are also perpetrators, and perpetrators also victims.

Struggles over integration are thus struggles over inclusion in the community of value. This struggle conceals multiple and contested gradations, or hierarchies, of in-out binaries, each subject to manoeuvring and manipulation (Back et al., 2012, Song, 2004, Anthias, 2013a, Garner, 2006). Claims to inclusion can be made by invoking the liberal values of the nation – the same values that ostensibly promote toleration of (or, in its more robust, multicultural variant, respect for) diversity. But they can also be made by invoking the phenotype of the nation (thus effectively rejecting that diversity, and the liberal values protecting it). One way to get on the right (and white) side of the community of value is thus to adopt the insider racialising and racist practices that both produce and police the community of value's somatic boundaries. It's along the rungs of these racialised ladders that struggles for integration occur. Racism is one (albeit pathological) modality through which people can insinuate themselves favourably into these contingent hierarchies of post-immigration diversity.

We thus focus on integration as a bottom-up process of becoming similar. Integration is not an endgame, achieved through lifetime membership in the community of value, but an ongoing labour of negotiating contingent hierarchies of diversity to one's material and symbolic advantage (see also White, 2011: 9, 140). Our interest is in how East Europeans in the UK use racism to negotiate and manipulate these contingent, and racialised, status hierarchies. In pursuing this, we hope to move integration beyond its normative and top-down biases and recalibrate it in terms that can accommodate fuller and more varied dimensions and valences.¹ We thus explore how East Europeans in the UK learn (and learn to use) British practices of racism as part of their process of integration.

Methods

This article draws on qualitative data collected with Hungarians and Romanians in Bristol between 2009 and 2011 and with Poles in Bristol in 2016. The Hungarian and Romanian data came from fifty interviews and ten focus groups (with a combined total of fifty participants), split between Hungarians and Romanians. Fox and colleagues sampled from existing contacts (with multiple entry points), chance encounters (Hungarian or Romanian spoken in public places), and online fora for Hungarians and Romanians. For the focus groups, a participant-organiser was selected and tasked with recruiting around five co-national friends and acquaintances. The Polish data come from Mogilnicka's research on ordinary Poles' encounters with post-immigration diversity in Bristol. Mogilnicka used snowball sampling to select ten Poles to follow through their daily routines (on ten occasions each). She observed their interactions, talked informally with them, and recorded her observations in fieldnotes. She also interviewed them at the beginning and end of her fieldwork. She spoke with many other Poles connected to her key informants, some of whom feature in the discussion here.

Both authors constructed samples that roughly reflected the features of the overall population of East Europeans in the UK. The average length of stay for our participants was 2.5

years (with Romanians here the shortest time, and Poles the longest). Our sample was well educated but working in occupations below their skill levels (similar to the overall population; see Dobson, 2009). Whilst sixty per cent of our participants had a university degree, only five per cent worked in 'higher occupations' (according to NS-SEC classification criteria), thirteen per cent in 'intermediate occupations', and the remainder in 'lower occupations' (with high concentrations of 'cleaners and domestics', 'care workers', and 'waiters'). (Occupational data were missing for twelve per cent of the sample). There were not remarkable differences between the three national cohorts.

Fox and Mogilnicka were both interested in the context-specific work 'race' did in the ordinary lives of East Europeans. Their research participants were not prompted to speak about 'race'; rather, the researchers observed when and how 'race' emerged in routine talk and interaction. Fox and his collaborators asked questions about finding work, finding a place to live, and negotiating bureaucracy – contexts where difference was encountered. Interviews were designed to see how, if at all, racialised categories were used to narrate these experiences. Focus groups were intended to reveal more interactional uses of these categories. Brief questionnaires designed to collect demographic information were completed by all participants. Mogilnicka employed a more ethnographic approach to observe how and when Poles experienced (and talked about) diversity. She was interested in observing their interactions and how her participants described them.

All data were collected and analysed in the languages of the participants; translations are those of the authors. All names and some biographical details were changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. Besides taking the usual ethical precautions (informed consent and anonymisation of the data), we also took care not to elicit racist views, but rather to query those that were volunteered (and to pursue other talk about diversity, including positive representations). It's possible our participants felt more comfortable expressing racist views to researchers who

shared the same nationality and language (in contrast, see, eg, Ayona Datta's 2009 research on 'everyday cosmopolitanisms' with Poles in London).

Our frequent references to 'East Europeans' in the text are used as a shorthand for 'Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians'. This is not to ignore important differences between (and within) these cohorts, nor should it suggest our findings are representative of *all* East Europeans. Our aim is not to make claims about *how* racist East Europeans are in the UK, but to show how some Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians *use* racism in certain contexts in ways that affect their integration.

Learning British racism

Before East Europeans could effectively use British racism, they had to learn it, and the racialised hierarchies it protected. East Europeans were no strangers to racism in their countries of origin. Sizeable Roma populations in both Hungary and Romania have long been targets of racist scorn and contempt (see, eg, Woodcock, 2007, Feischmidt et al., 2014), a racism that has been enjoying renewed political legitimacy in Hungary as of late (Vidra and Fox, 2014). Poland has found that it doesn't require large populations of Roma or Jews for racism or anti-Semitism to persist (on Anti-Semitism in Poland, see Bilewicz and Krzeminski, 2010). More recently, the transit of refugees through Hungary and Romania (but not Poland) has rekindled racial, national, and religious insecurities (on the Hungarian case, see Fekete, 2016). These varied sources of diversity are arranged and rearranged in complex and multiple hierarchies of (racialised) difference which vary across and within each of these countries (see, eg, Law, 2016). Our concern here is not to comprehensively map these variations but to observe that racism, with its complex lineages, was firmly established in the region before their citizens set foot in the UK.

These homegrown racisms, transmitted by and transformed through transnational social remittances, provide East Europeans with a useful catalogue of racist practices to inform their racialising and sometimes racist practices in the UK (Gawlewicz, 2015b, Nowicka, 2017, Grabowska and Garapich, 2016, White, 2011). But whilst racism is not hermetically sealed by national

boundaries, nor is it free-floating in a transnational ether, completely untethered from the national histories and contexts that lend meaning to it. Racism is a set of practices, ways of doing and being, that are necessarily embedded and layered in local, national, transnational, and global contexts. The versions of racism East Europeans bring to the UK from their countries of origin get imaginatively reworked, recombined, and sometimes replaced with new local practices in use in Britain (Fox, 2013). But the ingredients transnationals work with must be fit for purpose in the settings in which they're deployed. Racism does not describe what people are, but what people do, and what they do is context specific. Contexts in the UK are shaped by local hierarchies of racialised difference. This doesn't mean East Europeans can't make use of their homegrown racisms in the UK; they can (and do [see Grill, 2017, Fox, 2013]). It does mean, however, that homegrown racisms have limited purchase in negotiating the racialised hierarchies of difference encountered in the UK. East Europeans are thus learning to adapt transnational versions of racism for local use whilst acquiring a new skill set of more British forms of racism. The 'British' in British racism thus describes not where the racism is from, but where it is used. British racism, like all racisms, is a work in progress. Mastery occurs not through imbibing a fixed or finite set of racist practices, but by learning to use – and modify – an evolving and variegated set of practices.

We thus show how East Europeans learn to use local racist practices to insert themselves favourably in Britain's racialised hierarchies. To demonstrate this, our analysis proceeds in two parts. First, we show the clumsiness of East Europeans' early encounters with diversity in Britain. This is the shock of the new, where ill-fitting and generic racist tropes are crudely and incongruously meted out against unfamiliar targets. Second, we explore how, over time, East Europeans become more adroit users of British forms of racism. This is a more bespoke British racism, one that corresponds not only to specifically British hierarchies of difference but also is in synch with the rhythms and practices of East Europeans' everyday lives in the UK.

1. The shock of the new

‘When I first came here I was surprised to see so many Black people’, reflected Adam, a young Polish man who worked as a hotel receptionist. ‘I knew there were some’, he went on, ‘but I didn’t realise how many.’ Living in a diverse area, however, he eventually got ‘used to it.’ Daniel also remembered his early encounters with racialised difference: ‘I had seen only one *Murzyn*² in Poland’ (in his small town in the country’s southwest), he explained. ‘I hadn’t seen any before I turned 18, and then there was a football player on our team, he was the first – [hesitating] Black man I ever saw.’ Daniel’s shift in labels, correcting the pejorative *Murzyn* with the more neutral ‘Black’, encapsulates his nine-year trajectory of adjustment to local British norms and values.

For others, Blacks were not just conspicuous, they were threatening. Middle-aged Emma, from a provincial Hungarian town, also admitted to little contact with Black people in Hungary. Then she was introduced to a Black waiter at the restaurant where she began work as a dishwasher:

I’m not a racist, nothing like that, [but] my whole life I’ve never liked Negroes.... I don’t like their smell, I don’t want to touch them, ever.... And then the very first time I went [to work], five minutes later one of the waiters shows up, a Negro boy,... and he comes over to me and sticks his hand out... and introduces himself. I stood there, I was so shocked, he was holding my hand, you know? ...I can’t describe what was in my head,... I don’t want to touch them, and then you know, all the sudden, the shock – fuck! – he’s touched you.

Repulsion and fear featured in other accounts as well. Adrienn, a young Hungarian special needs teacher, told the other members of her focus group that ‘Muslims always scare me, especially at night – no face, no nothing.’ To this, Kolos, who had just arrived in the UK, added ‘You can’t see them in the dark, only their eyes.’

Stories like these convey not only East Europeans’ lack of familiarity with local versions of racialised difference, but the unease that unfamiliarity provoked in them (see also Gawlewicz, 2015a: 26). A white British majority also featured as different to East Europeans, but this difference wasn’t essentialised or racialised. Nor was it threatening: separate hot- and cold-water taps

confounded East Europeans, but didn't frighten them. Minority difference in contrast was essentialised and racialised as repulsive and threatening.

This was a crude, impulsive, and even clumsy racism, ill-fitted to the complexities of post-colonial difference in the UK. It traded in abstracted, one-size-fits-all categories, showing little appreciation for the diverse experiences of minorities in the UK. 'In the beginning', Alíz, a recent Hungarian arrival, recounted, 'it was really scary. I had no idea what these people were like, and if you start with what you know from films, what... they say about Negroes,... it's not a very positive message.' Octavian, a Romanian IT worker, admitted he was afraid to go to one Bristol neighbourhood where there were 'loads of Jamaicans': 'you feel like you're in the Bronx.' Octavian may have never been to the Bronx, but it supplied him with a ready shorthand for racialised urban diversity. It was similar for Orsolya, also from Romania, who likened one Bristol neighbourhood to what 'you see in films: there are Blacks on the street, I wouldn't go there.' Hollywood's penchant for ramped up, racialised violence provided a familiar template against which new and personal experiences of diversity could be read as dangerous and sinister (Fox, 2013: 1878, see also Nowicka, 2017: 10-11).

For others, Roma in East Europe supplied the main reference point for making sense of racialised difference in the UK. Vilmos, a factory worker from Hungary, compared a 'terrible', 'dirty', 'African', and 'Pakistani' neighbourhood in Bristol to 'a Gypsy settlement back home'. For Octavian, the IT worker, it was the skin colour of Pakistanis that reminded him of 'Gypsies back home'. Romanians were especially preoccupied with the Roma, possibly because they were often conflated with Romanians (Moroşanu and Fox, 2013: 443-48, Fox et al., 2012: 688). Old racisms like these helped East Europeans' make sense of their early encounters with diversity in the UK (Fox, 2013: 1878). This beginner racism gave expression to the anxieties and frustrations East Europeans experienced in their adjustment to their new lives, but little more. East Europeans still had a lot to learn about British racism, which is what we turn to now.

2. *A bespoke British racism*

‘One of my best friends told me’, relayed Monika, a young Polish woman, ‘that she learned to be racist in England.’

Racism has a learning curve. With time (and effort), East Europeans gained proficiency in its local British forms. A one-size-fits-all racism expressing a fear of the unknown evolved into more bespoke practices of racism deployed in context-specific ways. Previously generic groups of Blacks and Asians were disaggregated into Somalis, Pakistanis, and Africans, each appearing as distinctive variants of the racialised other. This racism not only drew on (and manipulated) extant hierarchies of racialised difference (Back et al., 2012), it also helped favourably resolve East Europeans’ own ambiguous position in those hierarchies. This process, we argue, reflected a kind of integration, where East Europeans learned the local norms of racism to distinguish themselves from Britain’s more visible minorities. This racism hadn’t shed all its East European inflections (transnational ties continually refreshed them; see Gawlewicz, 2015b, Grill, 2017), but it did adjust to the local contexts where it was used.

The workplace was one such context. Viktor, a Hungarian, had been in the UK for two years, long enough for him to speak about his experiences with an air of authority. He worked in a factory where the shifts were divided into Poles, Hungarians, and ‘Africans’ (the latter replacing earlier catch-all terms like ‘Blacks’ and ‘Negroes’). Viktor attributed this workplace segregation to the Africans: ‘It’s really hard to work with them’, he lamented. ‘They really don’t work.... On average, they did about half of what we did, and they didn’t even finish that.’ Bence, a Hungarian security guard at a supermarket, expressed similar views. ‘The ones that come from Africa’, he began ‘– I’m not a racist, but most of them are worthless, lazy, good-for-nothing.’ Bence leveraged the supposedly superior work ethic of Hungarians against other immigrants: ‘Hungarians don’t like being here either’, he admitted, ‘but they do their work.... But lots of immigrants from other places,

who really are useless, good-for-nothing, lazy, they just don't care.' Bence concluded 'the English have figured this out too: they like them even less,... no one can work with them.'

These examples exhibit features we didn't see earlier. For one, the racialised others they describe are not the disembodied stranger we saw before, but their co-workers. This was personal, and it produced personal effects, attenuating the status degradations East Europeans experienced in the UK (Fox et al., 2015, see also McDowell et al., 2009: 12-14). Viktor and Bence explicitly ranked their 'African' colleagues below them and, in so doing, positioned themselves nearer a white British majority. Whiteness, made visible through racism, helped reverse their perceived loss of status (Fox et al., 2015: 742-44).

We can see this in the way Vince, a Hungarian waiter, complained about the rude and condescending 'Pakistanis' he served. 'I'm not a racist', he began, 'but somehow I really hate serving them.' Vince hadn't trained as a waiter; he had a degree in engineering. Working as a waiter entailed a reduction in status. When his guests were Pakistani, Vince experienced this status reduction in racialised ways. Racism helped alleviate these degradations by restoring the higher status his whiteness bestowed on him. Andrew, a Polish shopkeeper, similarly took umbrage at a Chinese customer who held out her hand for a pen to sign a credit card receipt without raising her head. This incensed Andrew, who surmised that Chinese customers have no manners and don't understand British culture. Petty annoyances like these were no longer so petty when they expressed racialised status degradations. Vince and Andrew weren't alone, either: more than half of our sample experienced downward mobility since coming to the UK (see also White, 2011). Racism expressed the frustrations of that downward mobility, but also sought to reverse it.

Other encounters were less trivial. One evening Joanna and her friends were rudely interrupted during their night out by the arrival of her (Polish) husband. Joanna, who had until then moved in predominantly Polish circles in Bristol, was apparently branching out: her husband had just learned she planned to leave him for a British South Asian man. Shocked, upset, and drunk, he lashed out: 'I won't let some *Ciapaty*³, some filth, raise my children!' His friends, he went on, were

laughing at him because his wife was with a '*Ciapaty*'. Another Polish woman involved with a different South Asian man met with similar condemnation (*in absentia*) from her friends. 'She left her husband and four children and moved out to live with this... *Ciapaty!*', exclaimed Kasia to her friends, all gathered at a party. 'She left her family! And for whom? For some dick, an Arab for sure!, She ended with, 'I'm not a racist, but...' as the others nodded their agreement. Experiences like these, trivial or otherwise, upset East Europeans' unspoken assumptions about where they belonged in Britain's racialised hierarchies. Racism was an effective tool for correcting these degradations.

British acquaintances were sometimes enlisted to lend authority to these repositionings. Levente, a Hungarian security guard, related a story about how 'the Blacks' at the post office where his colleague's father worked 'didn't like to work.' He attributed this view to his colleague's father: 'That's not a general statement, it's specific to these people. And so my colleague's dad, says to them, why don't they work more, or harder, and then right away he's accused of being racist.' Ewa, a Polish woman working in a local supermarket, also looked to 'the English' for support. 'At our supermarket, we have these Muslim women, you know, the fully covered ones.... They're very slow,... they don't know how to use money, they're often illiterate, right?' Ewa didn't hide her annoyance, but she was also annoyed that the 'English' customers tolerated them. 'I've seen loads of times how English people lose their patience with them: ...they're queueing and the Muslim women are taking their time, packing their bags very slowly. But [the English], you know, clench their teeth and try to smile... but you can tell they're pissed off.' Ewa expressed solidarity with her English customers' irritation, but their clenched-teeth response sparked her own irritation with them.

Levente and Ewa expressed an empathy for and solidarity with a (white) British majority. The racist and racialising practices they conveyed positioned them momentarily, if not more durably, in a more desirable position in the UK's contingent status hierarchies. Their experiences were not only grounded in their quotidian encounters with diversity, they also helped define and redefine

those encounters in ways that favoured them over the minorities they disparaged. This was a purposeful and context-specific racism: it displayed an appreciation of local understandings of racialised difference and a capacity to deploy those understandings to allay the degradations they experienced. It was this sort of racial realignment, we argue, that figured as a kind of integration. This entailed not only appropriation of the unspoken norms (and phenotype) of the community of value, but also the promise of socio-economic mobility (over the backs of the minorities they denigrated). This is not the flagship integration touted by politicians or proffered by policymakers. But that's our point: the integration of everyday life is more ambiguous than its stylised versions traded in elite discourse and enshrined in public policy.

East Europeans also integrated by appropriating and mastering discourses about immigration already in circulation in the UK. Anna, who married a North African Muslim man in Poland before both moved to the UK, complained that Somalis didn't take part in British cultural and religious traditions. When her daughter invited her schoolmates to her birthday party, 'the Muslim kids said they would be sick that day.' Anna shrugged her shoulders: 'They don't integrate.' It was the same for 'Christmas [and] Easter parties, hardly any of them show up.' She concluded decisively that 'When you're in this country you need to respect its principles. This is a Christian country!' This perceived failure (or unwillingness) of immigrants to integrate was a common refrain in British public discourse (see, eg, Anthias, 2016: 174, 182, Garner, 2006: 448-49). Monika, the Polish woman introduced above, espoused a supercharged version of this discourse, outperforming the British at their own game. Her story began sympathetically enough: 'My friend works in a school with disabled children,... and unfortunately these children are from mixed families – relatives get married, cousins, even brothers with sisters.' But her pity quickly gave way to indignation:

This is what I don't like about this country, that there's tolerance beyond any limits, right? ...When you come to this country, you need to respect its laws, including its religion. If you're not from the same faith, no one forces you to stay, right? But don't

try to change it, it's not your country. I came here and I respect every piece of the land here, every person who lives here.

Liberal notions like tolerance are hard to pin down; Monika swapped them for an unassailable version of culture and religion that barred the entry of other immigrants to the community of value.

Others invoked local variants of welfare chauvinism. The image of the benefit scrounger filching the public purse goes back at least as far as Elizabethan England (where vagrants and vagabonds were pilloried for seeking out parishes 'simply to claim poor relief'; see Anderson, 2013: 22-27). New Commonwealth immigrants were the 1960s incarnation of the benefit scrounger (see Solomos, 1989) before refugees (Welch and Schuster, 2005) and now East Europeans (Balch and Balabanova, 2016) vied for the role. In one Hungarian focus group, Vanda turned the tables back on Commonwealth immigrants: 'they come here for all sorts of benefits, they don't work, they just take the money.' For Alíz, an unemployed Hungarian teacher in another group, it was Somalis: 'there are some people who abuse the system, who live off of it, like the Somalis', to which Rita added 'Somalis and Africans... live off the state, they don't really work.' Gyula summed up their frustration by suggesting that 'they've got a lot more opportunities for... benefits than the English', thus expressing his sympathy for (and alignment with) the British.

The existential threat posed by terrorism afforded East Europeans even greater rhetorical leverage. Viktor, the Hungarian factory worker, related an episode on a bus in London. 'About four or five chador people – men, women – ...got on the bus,' he began. 'I think to myself, "bloody hell, terrorists! We're going to blow up!"' Viktor was parroting familiar associations between immigrant diversity and terrorism found not only in the tabloid media (Goodman et al., 2017) but also in political debate (Huysmans and Buonfino, 2008). For Anna, the Polish shopkeeper, it was Syrian refugees who couldn't be trusted. 'I can't watch them on TV anymore,... these young men pushing down fences to get here. They should kick them out and that's that!' She went on: 'I can't stand them. I understand women and children, but most of them are young men – immigrants, not refugees!' Anna added her Muslim husband's endorsement to keep him on the right side of an

otherwise ambiguous boundary (a familiar strategy in mixed relationships; see Song, 2010: 1202-04). 'Even my husband claims there are too many of them, and most of them aren't refugees.' Anna skilfully inverted the victim/perpetrator binary, recasting refugees as at best economic migrants, at worst terrorists (a strategy that gained popularity following the Paris terror attacks in November 2015; see Goodman et al., 2017: 110-11, see also Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008). It was the same for Marcin, also from Poland: '[T]hey say [refugees] are mostly women with children, but when you watch the news you only see young men.' Marcin attributed these views to his British colleagues: 'What I'm saying is nothing compared to [what they say]. When they watch the news... and see those dark migrants...' He trailed off, shaking his head.

For others, though, learning British forms and norms of racism meant learning to moderate that racism (see also Gawlewicz, 2015a: 34-35, Nowicka, 2017: 10). When Ewa (above) observed how the English 'clench[ed] their teeth and tr[ie]d to smile' at the Muslim customers taking their time in the supermarket queue, she demonstrated an awareness (but not endorsement) of the norm that racism should be held in check. The English patrons in her story were performing tolerance and forbearance, hallmarks of the community of value. Emma's (Hungarian) colleague, Anikó, similarly reproached Emma for not concealing her repulsion for her Black colleague: 'At least don't show it so much!', she urged. Anikó wasn't telling Emma not to be racist, she was telling her to hide it better, consistent with British workplace norms. Emma heeded Anikó's advice and eventually, as she describes it, 'got on really well' with the Black waiter. 'He talked to me loads. I couldn't understand anything, but he was so nice, he didn't give up, and if he had to, he'd ask me the same question 625 times.' Ironically, perhaps, given her starting point, it was Emma who ultimately embodied, and didn't simply pay lip service to, norms of tolerance.

These bespoke versions of British racism exhibited two features not found in East Europeans' earlier racism. First, they were specific to British contexts. Both the targets of their racism and the tropes they deployed were grounded in British contexts. This was not the one-size-fits-all beginner racism used by recent arrivals to the UK, but one appropriate for specific situations

and targeting specific groups. East Europeans talked about immigration, benefit scrounging, terrorism, refugees, and even political correctness in ways that would have been recognisable to most native British people. That's because these were familiar motifs already in wide circulation (see, eg, Blinder and Allen, 2016). They harkened back to the immigrants of yesteryear, who stole native jobs and trampled on cherished national customs (see Solomos, 1989). And they endured because they were still useful for defining the national community of value. The only twist here is that it's now East Europeans also on the receiving end of this abuse (except for the terrorist, still reserved for Muslims) (see Balch and Balabanova, 2016). So whilst there's variation in the use of these motifs over time and between (and within) our three national cohorts, there is also continuity and convergence of similar repertoires of racialising and racist practices. By mastering these practices, East Europeans were 'becoming similar' (Brubaker, 2001) to the other British users of the same practices.

Second, these bespoke versions of racism were purposeful. They not only expressed the frustration East Europeans experienced in the UK, they also helped temper the status degradations underlying that frustration. This doesn't mean East Europeans were racist in a strategic way, or that they were self-aware of hierarchies of difference. But their racialising and racist actions could produce strategic effects, symbolically repositioning them in Britain's contingent status hierarchies (see Anthias, 2016, Moroşanu and Fox, 2013). This may not have resulted in any direct material advantage, but it at least assuaged the psychic stress of material disadvantage and the loss of status that accompanied it. East Europeans were becoming similar not to an undifferentiated British population, but to a white British majority. This was a good place to be. Racism helped East Europeans negotiate their place in Britain's contingent hierarchies of racialised difference; it helped integrate them.

Conclusion

Most of the time racism is a barrier to integration. Deployed by a dominant majority against disadvantaged minorities, it marks and stigmatises difference, acting as a fulcrum against full inclusion in the community of value. But what is a problem for some can be a solution for others. East Europeans fought racism with racism; they learned to use racism as a modality of integration. In this kind of integration, racism is passed down the racialised ladder to the next rung where it is applied as the same sort of fulcrum of exclusion against its next victims. Racism was one tool East Europeans' drew upon to improve the perception, if not the reality, of their integration in the UK.

This doesn't mean all East Europeans are racist, or that East Europeans have become *more* racist since coming to the UK. Racism, vernacular cosmopolitanism, conviviality, everyday multiculturalism, and the like are not dispositions that singularly define certain individuals; they are repertoires of action that the same individual can invoke in different contexts to do different things (Mogilnicka, 2016). East Europeans in the UK have learned to *do* British forms of racism (just like they've learned to *do* British forms of conviviality, civic inattention, cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism). Racism is one part of East Europeans' overall toolkit for negotiating racialised difference in the UK.

The markers of difference that define the boundaries of the community of value are always in flux. New Commonwealth migrations to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s revived and redefined earlier colonial versions of 'race' for ordering difference (Gilroy, 2013 [1987]). More recently, the tinted boundaries that kept postcolonial interlopers at bay have been cobbled together with a concoction of cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic markers of deservingness (Back et al., 2012). In this light, it is perhaps ironic that it's nominally white East Europeans in the UK who are responsible for reminding us just how much colour (still) matters (see also Garner, 2006: 446-47). That's because colour matters to them: they wear their whiteness as a badge of deservingness, to place them on the right, and white, side of the racialised boundaries of the community of value.

Paul Gilroy's earlier observations about the future of immigration to Britain were prescient in this regard (2004: 110-11 [emphasis added]):

Later groups of immigrants may not, of course, be connected with the history of empire and colony in any way whatsoever. However, they experience the misfortune of being caught up in a pattern of hostility and conflict that belongs emphatically to its lingering aftermath. *Once they recognize the salience of racial categories to their perilous predicament, it should not be surprising if these people try to follow the well-trodden path pioneered by the most vulnerable and marginal members of the host community. They too will seek salvation by trying to embrace and inflate the ebbing privileges of whiteness. That racialised identification is presumably the best way to prove they are not really immigrants at all but somehow already belong to the home-space in ways that black and brown people against whom they have to compete in the labor market will never be recognized as doing.'*

The echoes of racialised difference from the era of New Commonwealth immigration reverberate in the racialising and sometimes racist practices of East European immigrants to the UK. East Europeans, with minimal experience of Britain's racialised past, have emerged as the new guardians of Britain's re-racialised future.

Racism does not tend to feature prominently in accounts of post-immigration integration. We have everyday cosmopolitanism and commonplace diversity, everyday multiculturalism and mundane multiculturalism, intercultural approaches and multicultural approaches, and conviviality and indifference to difference. And that's a good thing: it's evidence that on the whole, people *are* finding ways to get along. But racism is also a part of integration (see Valluvan, 2017). It's one, albeit pathological modality by which newcomers attempt to insert themselves favourably into post-immigration racialised hierarchies of difference. This is what East Europeans have learned to do in the UK, and it represents a kind of integration. We shouldn't overlook integration's pathological forms. The integration equation needs to be recalibrated to take account of these more unsavoury forms if we're want to more fully appreciate how it works, and doesn't work.

Endnotes

¹ By stretching an already rubbery concept even more, perhaps we're asking integration to do too much work here (Valluvan 2017, Favell 2001b). But in fact, by paring it down to Brubaker's (2001) 'becoming similar' formula, we're asking it to do *less* conceptual work, so that it can capture greater empirical variation (including more pathological forms).

² '*Murzyn*' translates roughly as 'Negro', carrying a similar pejorative meaning (see also Gawlewicz 2015a: 31-33).

³ '*Ciapaty*' is a Polish neologism, probably derived from 'chapatti', the Indian flat bread, and used pejoratively to describe people of South Asian descent (see also Gawlewicz 2015a: 31-33; Nowicka 2017: 7-8).

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