Abstract

, this paper addresses the question of how and why some migrants, but not others, are able to shed a label of difference to become full . This is achieved through investigation of the perceptions of difference which are held by members of t
white

(Anderson 2012).[1]

belong within the collective community.

theorised in relation to race. Race is one form of identification by which boundaries are constructed - Yuval-Davis 1992) and is particularly salient in the context of postcolonial Britain where colonial frameworks, which depict minorities as perceptions of difference (Rogaly and Taylor 2010). A link between Gilroy 2002[1987]; Rogaly and Taylor 2010 Muslims ndnani 2007; Lentin 2008). -migrants can be included within discourses of migration and integration as a result of their ethnicity. The inclusion of *British* ethnic and faith minorities in these discourses, irrespective of citizenship or birthplace, blurs the boundaries of who is and is not a migrant. The potential for any non-white person to be positioned ght to accusations that w (Parekh 2000).

Given that the conditions for inclusion and exclusion to a collective are determined by the established majority,[2]

in how boundaries are constructed around a collective. Following this, I situate the paper within discourses of (racialised) Britishness and in relation to existing research on w

therefore of Britishness, imposing and reinforcing the cultural st that se 2010: 92-94). It is the informal, naturalised, yet changeable, threshold of authenticity they maintain which protects

inclusive discourses actually reconstitute non-w a double process of de-racialization and re-racializ 2005: 562). Similar processes are also evident in post-London 2012 discourses of Britishness which highlight the migration histories of medal-winners to exemplify an integrated and diverse Britain.

According to Lentin, belonging to the nati (2008: 122).

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Britishness of ethnic minorities e.g. British Asian or Black British. For Raj, this creates a state of in which ethnic mi forever non-British and never (2003: 201). The freedom to assert an unqualified British identity remains the privilege of

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White British attitudes to immigration

In his recent work, Skey (2010) explains that those people whose belonging appears unmarked and unquestioned have been largely ignored by academics, whose interest has fallen on more marginal groups. This interest has often originated in concern with racism or social injustice, yet also reflects the invisibility and banality of dominant groups (Byrne 2007; Skey 2010; Twine 1996). Some subsets of white British society have been studied; for example, at the end of the last decade the white working-class received a swell of interest (e.g. BBC White Season 2008; Runnymede W gradually gaining academic attention, but in Britain this has focused primarily on working-class communities, who have become increasingly visible through discourses of the and beleaguered natives (Rogaly and Taylor 2009, 2010). The visibility of the white working-class in public discourses demonstrates that the invisibility of whiteness described by Garner (2007) is a predominantly middle-class phenomenon. The middle-classes remain largely beyond academic gaze in a pri (Tyler 2012) and are often treated as a homogenous mass, referred to, for example, as - (e.g. Rogaly and Taylor 2010: 1335).

Evidence from large-scale opinion polls reveals the British public to be more negative about immigration than several other Western countries, particularly in relation to illegal migration and concerns over welfare (Ford 2012). However, surveys also show that opposition to immigration is d 2007: 727) and concern about the unity of the[ir] 2005: 42). McLaren and Johnson d4(s fET6l)-11(a)4(

(2010) who suggest emphasising white British emigration as a means of de-racialising immigration.

In contrast to suggestions that the racialised nature of immigration discourses means that ethnic minorities are conflated with immigrants (e.g. Gilroy 2002[1987]; Paul 1997; Raj 2003; Rogaly and Taylor 2010), Blinder (2011) finds that few people imagine the British-born children of immigrants as -box nature of survey data gives respondents the opportunity to choose life. The fact that respondents did not agree that the British- asked directly, does not necessarily mean that the same respondents do not assume migration status and Preston (2007) find that attitudes towards immigrants *are* affected by ethno-racial differences. Their analysis of the British Social Attitudes Survey demonstrates that public opposition is stronger towards immigrants who are more ethnically distant, regardless of skill or education. Similarly Ford (2011) finds that white immigrants are routinely preferred to non-whites; however, he suggests that the picture is more complex as the British public also discriminates within racial groups according to perceptions of cultural and political similarity. Meanwhile McLaren and Johnson find race to be *less* important than shared customs and values, with 72% o to be truly British you have to be white rather than Black or (2007: 721). Again, given the survey style of questioning which produced this finding, responses may reflect considered opinions rather than naturally occurring thoughts which would reveal underlying assumptions of difference.

As shown, research into public attitudes towards immigration has predominantly consisted of quantitative analysis of opinion polls and national surveys (e.g. Dustmann and Preston 2007; Ford 2011 and 2012; Iversflaten 2005; McLaren and Johnson 2007) and there is surprisingly little qualitative research into the opinions of white British individuals. local elites largely perceived as a one- (2012: 72) in which to act, behave and, at times, also think and feel according to the dominant (2012: 68). In uncovering the multifaceted nature o singular, Antonsich demonstrates how qualitative analysis improves understanding of perspective (2012: 72)

addition to eight individual interviews I conducted one four-person group interview to give insight into the social acceptability of different opinions (Fielding and Thomas 2008).

Interviews consisted of 45-60 minute conversations about migrant integration which were recorded and transcribed verbatim. By looking at who is included in discourses of migrant integration,

way fro (2008), I treated interviews as

following a participatory approach and in line with feminist theories whi genuine interplay between research 2008). Since open dialogue is the most natural way of talking to people already known personally, conversations were non-standardised, unstructured and informal, although prompts and participatory activities were used to aid the flow of conversation where necessary. I also included my own thoughts and reflections when appropriate.

Since I am similar in age, background and experience to my participants (and known to them personally), I self-identified as part of the researched group. However, in the very act of conducting research Edwardshhm59(Ed5.7ETBT1 0 0 2.11 2of)onally)

more idealised self-perception than fact. I in Brighton exclude immigrants and minorities, there seems little hope of more inclusive attitudes elsewhere.

Analysis

The second half of the paper analyses the data collected in conversation with the twelve middle-class white Brits who participated in the research, and is divided into five sections. The first discusses the complexities and contradictions evident in how participants talk about migrants. The second explores whether visible difference is a factor underpinning white middle-class perceptions of difference and,

cultural similarity is debated. Finally the fifth section looks at the effect of social distance on perception of difference.

'Liberal' articulation of difference

Existing research on attitudes to immigration has demonstrated that young, educated people are generally more positive about immigration and integration than other segments of British society (Ford 2011, 2012). The participants of this study, who are aged between 22 and 30, have at least bachelor-level education and live in a self- therefore they fit neatly within an assumed liberal demographic. As I embarked on this project I was repeatedly asked how I hoped to extract honest opinions about such a controversial topic. Surely participants would want to present themselves as models of liberalism? However, analysing th
articulate their opinions has provided an array of interesting material. Qualitative interviewing has helped to uncover less-liberal understandings, often based on normative frameworks which underlie stated liberal opinions. Meanwhile contradictions and uncertainties demonstrate the difficulty people have talking about migrants.

Participants were highly aware of the social acceptability of some views and unacceptability of others, however, many still explained feeling unconfident in articulating their opinions because of uld be conceived of as racist:

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what do you say? Do you say British person? I dunno. Sarah[3]

always worried about m

have to explain. Like you always feel like you hav

In addition to a strong awareness of political correctness, which left some participants preferring
support for liberal ideals. This was especially evident in efforts to empathise with migrants:

t not a very sociable

environment that they were in before Michael

the significance of religion to integration, several participants used Islam (unprompted) as a symbol of difference.

w Tim

The framework by which these participants understand integration is based on a binary distinction between -w w

In the last two quotes whiteness is also constructed as antithetical to multi-culture, revealing -white people. Mann observed similar assumptions among his interviewees who routinely distinguished

a universal agreement

Even among young, educated middle-class people, who are supposedly the most liberal group within society (Ford, 2011), culturally different (i.e. non-European/non-Western) migrants are rarely r Migrants from Australia, America or English-speaking Western-Europeans meanwhile, who *are* , can do so relatively quickly and easily. An Australian accent or Thanksgiving celebration simply does not bear the same significance as an Indian accent or the Hijab. Thus, while

, acculturate. Given

, discourses which place the burden of integration on m

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