Racialised norms in apprenticeship systems in England and Germany

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Abstract

In this paper, we consider the issue of the under-representation of young people from minority ethnic/migrant backgrounds in apprenticeships in England and Germany. Whilst there are many studies on apprenticeships in England and Germany, few focus on under-representation or discrimination, even fewer on ethnic under-representation, and there are no comparative studies of the topic. We review the existing literature and drawing on Critical Race Theory (e.g. Gilborn 2008) we argue that most studies on apprenticeships and ethnicity tend to confirm rather than challenge stereotypes of these minority groups, and to view young people as autonomous agents able to make (relatively) free choices. We argue that connections should be made between ethnic under-representation and studies of the racial segmentation of the labour market. Drawing on these studies of the labour market, we suggest, innovatively but perhaps somewhat controversially, that it is likely that racialised norms (Puwar 2004) shape expectations of the worker and migrant worker, and of who fits where in the labour markets and vocational training systems. Further, we argue that this challenges popular notions of what constitutes career 'choices' on the part of young people.

Keywords Apprenticeships; under-representation; race; labour market segregation; stereotypes.

Introduction

Figures from both England and Germany show that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds (England) and migrant backgrounds (Germany) are under-represented in the respective apprenticeship systems (Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006; Perez-del-Aguila et al 2006; Riessig and Gaupp 2006). Unemployment and under-achievement in education among these groups is an economic, social and political issue in both countries (BBC 2013; Frankfurter Rundschau 2012) possibly more so in the current financial crisis with reduced opportunities in youth labour markets across Europe. In this paper we consider the existing literature from both countries on this topic, and argue that most studies are descriptive in character, rather than analytic or critical. Drawing on insights from Critical Race Theory (e.g. Gilborn 2008) we argue they tend confirm rather than challenge stereotypes of these minority groups and to view young people as autonomous agents able to make (relatively) free choices. We suggest that there is a need for further research which analyses this under-representation in connection with theories of the racial segregation of labour markets, and

argue, possibly controversially, that racialised norms (Puwar 2004) shape perceptions of the worker and migrant worker and contribute to the context for this under-representation.

In order to focus on structural issues, we have selected a comparative approach (see Heinz and Nagel 1997). It could be argued that our approach broadly combines a *parallel demonstration of theory* and *contrasting perspective of contexts* (Skocpol and Somers 1980) as we seek to explore the raced structures in two very different national contexts, that is, we suggest that despite significant differences in national apprenticeships systems, labour markets and racial histories, similar raced structures can be observed shaping both national contexts.

Apprenticeships in England and Germany

England and Germany both have long traditions of apprenticeships, however, their systems are quite different. In England, despite efforts of several governments throughout the twentieth century, apprenticeships had fallen into decline until recently (Brockmann et al 2010). In April 2009 the Labour government launched the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to increase the number of apprenticeships. The NAS provides an all-round service, for employers, learners, providers of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and a web-based vacancy matching system (Apprenticeships 2012a). In England, the government funds 100% training costs for apprentices aged 16-18 and 50% for those aged over 19, and the apprentice's wages are paid by their employer (Apprenticeships 2012a). The NAS has reported some success, with the number of people starting apprenticeships increasing from 65,000 in 1996/97 to 279,700 in 2009/10 (Apprenticeships 2012a). Indeed, some sectors are now oversubscribed, including legal training, accountancy, telephone engineering and IT, the demand for apprenticeships increasing as £9,000 p.a. fees have been introduced at English universities (Mead 2012; All About School Leavers 2013; Garner 2013). Apprenticeship completion rates stood at 74% in 2009/10 (Apprenticeships 2012a). In this article we focus on the apprenticeship framework described here, however, the VET system in England also includes vocational courses at Further Education colleges which have no employer input (Brockmann et al 2010), and vocational courses which require a university degree and involve a high level of work-based learning such as nursing.

There are still major problems with apprenticeships in England. Firstly, although there has been a recent rise in employers providing apprenticeships, numbers are still low compared to other European countries (Brockmann et al 2008). Secondly, the UK labour market, whilst considered flexible, is also polarised, providing highly-skilled jobs for educated graduates at one end, and a glut of low-skilled jobs for the poorly-qualified at the other (Fuller and Unwin 2003, 23). Thirdly, and related to the previous point, apprenticeships in England, like all vocational education, tend to be very low status, especially compared to more academic routes (Brockmann et al 2008), despite there actually being very high quality apprenticeships available and even on the increase (Apprenticeships 2013). Fourthly there is little involvement and therefore commitment of employers (Brockmann et al 2010).

Apprenticeships in Germany are accessed within the dual system, which includes both training within a company or business, and academic education in vocational education colleges. An apprenticeship is financed by both employers and the state (BBF 2012) and there have traditionally been high levels of commitment from both. Apprenticeships offer an alternative pathway to an academic career, and in comparison to England, they retain a relatively high status and remain a viable alternative to a more academic route to employment (Brockmann et al 2010). Indeed, it is estimated that about half of every cohort will enter the dual system at some time (ibid.) Completion rates stand at about 85% (BIBB 2012, 35), so higher than in England.

It is, however, worth mentioning that since the 1960's, the German 'expansion of education' (e. g. Vester 2004) has resulted in many more students doing A-Levels without going on to university. This has resulted in an 'elevator effect' (Beck 1986) leading on the one hand to a better qualified cohort, but on the other, disadvantaging those with the lowest qualifications (Skrobanek 2007). This has had a particular effect on apprenticeships, previously the preserve of those without A-Levels, where there has been an increase in competition for places. In the early 21st century there was a drop in the supply of apprenticeships, making the market even more competitive. However, since the introduction of the 2004 'training pact', a contract between the government and employers, in which employers make a commitment to create 60,000 new apprenticeships per year (BMBF 2013), this situation has improved.

There are several comparative studies which contrast the English and German systems of VET, focussing for example, on the skills (English) versus knowledge (German) emphasis (Brockmann et al 2008), and on agency and identity in transitions into the labour market (e.g. Evans and Heinz 1994). Work on discrimination and disadvantage tends to focus on gender, rather than ethnicity – both vocational systems are highly gender-segregated (e.g. Miller 2005; Jacob et al 2013). Whilst there are separate studies of the impact of ethnicity, which we discuss below, there are no comparative studies.

Minority ethnic groups in England and Germany

It is important at this stage to clarify which groups we are discussing when we speak about under-representation. Any term used to describe an individual's racial heritage is unsatisfactory and contributes to the essentialisation of social groups. However, we employ the terms currently used in educational discourses in our respective national contexts. Whilst explicitly rejecting racial essentialisation, and emphasising that the social groups we name are plural and heterogeneous, we use the terms in order to identify, draw attention to and critically theorise racial inequalities in the vocational systems.

Equally we emphasise that we are not discussing the same social groups in each country, however, we are discussing social groups which can in some ways be considered to occupy equivalent status. In Britain, the term, 'minority ethnic', whilst frequently undefined explicitly, tends to refer to so-called 'visible minorities' and include people from Asian, African, African-Caribbean and Chinese backgrounds, as well as of mixed heritage. Although it sometimes refers to groups who are sometimes classified as white due to their light skin colour, such as East European, Jewish or Irish, many educational studies neglect to refer to these groups. The majority ethnic group is referred to as 'white'. Research on schooling in England has traditionally focussed on class as the definer of educational success, although more recently there has been a smaller, but still significant number of studies exploring the impact of race, and a widening recognition that racial discrimination continues to exist in the education system (e.g. Gillborn 2008; Tomlinson 2008). This comes in the context of attention to issues of race in wider society, including an official admission by the government that 'institutional racism' exists (MacPherson 1999).

Differentiation between groups of migrants in academic study is relatively new in Germany, beginning at the turn of the 21st century (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2012). Research on education and minorities tends to focus on the two main groups of young people from migrant backgrounds, the families of guest workers, who are most often of Turkish origin, and Aussiedler, ethnic Germans from the states of the former Soviet Union with German citizenship (Leung 2005). Aussiedler are seen as immigrants and indigenous at the same time, since they are descendants of Germans settlers in Russia during the reign of Catherine the Great. The children of guest workers often do not have German citizenship, although often have been born in Germany and been through the German school system. Aussiedler do have citizenship, but are less likely to have been born in Germany (Reissig and Gaupp 2006). The majority group is referred to as 'German'. There are of course other ethnic and cultural groups, but these are seldom addressed in research. The term guest worker tends to be employed (both in academic work and by the media) for individuals of Turkish origin, whilst actually guest workers came from Greece, Spain and Italy as well; however mostly these groups are not referred to using this term and the focus is on those of Turkish descent.

In England therefore, the debate has been couched in racial terms. In Germany, the debate, where it occurs, is couched in terms of national belonging and citizenship, and those who might be referred to as 'minority ethnic' in England tend to be referred to as 'Auslaender' (foreigners) in Germany. Research on race, whilst still a minority issue, is nevertheless more widespread and mainstream in England than in Germany. In fact, in Germany, even the mention of race is a taboo in most circles (Chin et al, 2009). There are complex reasons for this. Firstly, due to the impact of the racial politics of the Nazis there is a reluctance to see the racial aspects of current discourses and policies around immigration (Hund 2006; Chin et al 2009). In addition, politicians and the media have, until recently, denied that Germany is a country of immigration (Pries 2005; Ha 2012; Melter and Mecheril 2011). Whilst there is increasing (official) acceptance that Germany is, indeed, a country of immigration, issues of immigration still tend to be considered outside of their wider context. German research has tended to focus on gender as a definer of educational success. Recently, there has been a flurry of attention around the educational under-achievement of young people from migrant backgrounds (Allemann-Ghionda and Pfeiffer 2008), however, they tend to focus on perceived 'cultural deficiencies' of the minority groups rather than discrimination (Diefenbach 2007). Only in the last decade have some researchers begun to introduce critical

theories of racism (e.g. Hund 2006; Melter and Mecheril 2011) and post-colonialism (Castro Varela and Dhawan 2005) into the German debate, arguing that there is ongoing race discrimination in the German education system which cannot be explained only by reference to national belonging and citizenship. However, such studies are still marginal and are rarely linked to empirical data, especially in the field of vocational education.

Under-representation: the figures

Despite major differences in the respective labour markets and apprenticeship traditions, statistics from both England and Germany suggest that the percentage of minority ethnic young people/young people from migrant backgrounds in apprenticeships is low. In England, although there has been an increase in minority ethnic young people starting apprenticeships in recent years, this group remains not only under-represented in terms of numbers of apprenticeship starts, they are also more likely not to complete if they do start. Also significant is the fact that they are less likely to progress to a related job if they do complete (NAS 2009). Only 6% of apprenticeship starts overall come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Keeping in mind that in total 9% of the population of England is from ethnic minority communities, and that in the main apprenticeship recruitment group (16 to 24 year olds), the proportion is 13.5% (Apprenticeships 2012b), this proportion is still quite low. There is differentiation across sectors, with minority ethnic young people particularly under-represented in traditional craft-based sectors but also in hospitality and customer service, although there are sectors in which they are better represented such as IT (NAS 2009). This can be broken down into certain different ethnic groups: learners from Asian backgrounds are particularly under-represented in construction, hairdressing and electrotechnical apprenticeships and Chinese and mixed ethnic background apprentices are underrepresented in vehicle maintenance and repair, construction, and engineering (Marangazov et al 2009, ix). Moreover, black and Pakistani apprentices are less likely to complete while apprentices of Indian origin appear just as likely as white apprentices to complete (Hogarth et al 2009, 32; Perez-del-Aguila et al 2006, 35). There is some evidence to suggest that group most under-represented is black males aged 16-24, who are also suffering extremely high levels of unemployment, currently rates stand at over 50% (Apprenticeships 2012b; BBC 2013).

German research shows that young people from migrant backgrounds are under-represented in vocational training, and end up in jobs which are lower paid and have fewer chances of promotion (Reissig and Gaupp 2006, 28). Whereas 67.5 % of male Germans from 18 to 21 and 45.9% of female Germans had an apprenticeship in 2006, only 28.8% of males from migrant backgrounds and 23.8% of females of the same cohort did (Siegert 2009). Moreover young people from migrant backgrounds are concentrated in very few professions, mainly hairdressing (females) and retail (Stein and Stummbaum 2010, 233). Figures show that Aussiedler are more likely to have a job, apprenticeship, or be at college, than young people of Turkish origin, who are more likely to be unemployed (Reissig and Gaupp 2006, 36). However, importantly, even Aussiedler struggle to get an apprenticeship (Reissig and Gaupp 2006, 37).

A recent study (reported by Gaupp, Lex and Reissig 2011) found that when questioned on their aspirations, 52% of German young people who completed school wanted to do some kind of vocational training, 38% of those from migrant backgrounds, 50% of Aussiedler born abroad and 20% Turks born abroad. Six months after leaving school, more boys than girls had an apprenticeship (29-22%) and more Germans than young people from migrant backgrounds (35-20%). Those born in Turkey had particular difficulty (7%). Whilst the report does not comment on whether this is an issue of aspiration or awareness, it does show that young people from migrant backgrounds are less likely to get into vocational training if that is their intention.

Why, then, in both England and Germany, with very different systems of vocational education, are minority ethnic young people so under-represented? We move on to explore more closely the existing studies on the topic.

Why are there so few minority ethnic young people in apprenticeships? A review of the literature

The literature we reviewed includes both academic research and reports by third sector organisations. As there is so little literature on this topic specifically, we have included work from as far back as 1990 in the study. The review therefore spans over twenty years. Significantly we found only three studies overall which had interviewed young people

themselves, all conducted in England (Cross, Wrench and Barnett 1990; Britton et al 2002; Perez-del-Aguila et al 2006), and although there were several English studies which considered the perspectives of practitioners, only one German study did so (Horn and Horsch 2010).

It is not currently possible to identify whether the under-representation in either national context results from a low level of applications, or whether applications from these groups are less likely to be successful (Black Training and Enterprise Group [BTEG] 2008:7), or indeed a mixture of both. The main reasons given in the existing literature for minority ethnic young people or young people from an migrant background being under-represented in apprenticeships in both England and Germany are as follows: they choose more academic routes (Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006; Horn and Horsch 2010); their parents prefer them to get a university degree (Britton et al 2002; Marangazov et al 2009,3; Ecotec 2009; Gaupp, Lex and Reissig 2011); they underachieve in compulsory education (Klieme et al. 2010; Horn and Horsch 2010; Marangazov et al 2009; Bos et al. 2007; Clark and Drinkwater 2007, 45; Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006); they have language difficulties (Horn and Horsch 2010; Ecotec 2009, 8); they lack the necessary networks to get placements (Marangazov et al 2009, 10; Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006); and discrimination (Marangazov et al 2009; Ecotec 2009; Britton et al 2002; Horn and Horsch 2010; Skrobanek 2009). In England in addition, the perception of apprenticeships as low status is said to limit the number of minority ethnic young people applying for placements (Ecotec 2009; Marangazov et al 2009, 8); equally it is reported that they do not receive sufficient or appropriate Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)- an issue for all young people in England, but which disproportionately affects minority ethnic young people who might depend more on formal guidance than others (Ecotec 2009; Maragzov et al 2009, 3; Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006; Cross, Wrench and Barnett 1990); and that perceptions of a typical apprentice including images and language used in marketing materials, particularly in certain fields such as construction, prevent them from even considering apprenticeships as an option (SHM 2008 cited in Maragzov 2009, 8; Ecotec 2009). In Germany, the frequently unexplained phrase 'cultural reasons' is given as an additional reason (Reissig and Gaupp 2006; Horn and Horsch 2010); also young people from migrant backgrounds are said to have low levels of what is referred to as 'employability' (Kalter 2006, 2008; Seukwa 2006; Skrobanek 2009; Horn and Horsch 2010; Stein and Stummbaum 2010).

Towards a critical race analysis of the literature

However, the literature is sometimes contradictory and is not conclusive, nor is it explicitly theorised and thus merits some unpacking. Much of the wider literature on apprenticeships acknowledges that systems which are often assumed to be equitable such as education and training systems, are actually shaped by class and gender (e.g. Heinz and Nagel, 1997; Jacob et al 2013). It is therefore plausible that education and training systems are also shaped by race hierarchies. In order to render frequently covert structures of race visible, we draw on useful insights from Critical Race Theory (CRT). Although CRT originated in the USA as a response to the critical legal studies movement, which critiqued the alleged objectivism of the legal system (Ladson-Billings 1998), it has been adapted as a research tool to challenge assumed neutrality and meritocracy in education in the US (e.g. Ladson-Billings 1998; Yosso 2005) and the UK (e.g. Gillborn 2008; Chadderton 2013) by revealing deeply engrained racial structures, and has also made inroads into education research in Germany (e.g. Wischmann 2014). It should be noted that CRT cannot be unproblematically employed in a European context which is so different historically and racially from the US. However, for the purposes of this study, insights from CRT provide a useful framework which foregrounds race and racism as a central aspect of analysis 'as a structure and discourse which shapes the interaction' (Duncan 2002, 87), and allows us to critique the implicitly objective standpoint of most of the work in this body of literature on apprenticeships.

Critical race theorists argue that racialised norms shape social structures, attitudes, policies and discourses. This challenges the widespread belief that education and training systems are inherently fair and equitable, and racism consists simply of individual and aberrant acts (Ladson-Billings 1998; Gillborn 2008). In spaces which have been traditionally the preserve of white people, such as government and academia, racialised norms prevail, and members of other groups might experience both overt, but also, unwitting discrimination because 'certain types of bodies [...] are tacitly designated as being the "natural" occupants of specific positions' (Puwar 2004, 8) creating notions of who fits, and who does not fit.

Whilst discrimination is mentioned explicitly in several English studies of minority ethnic young people and apprenticeships (e.g. Marangazov et al 2009; Ecotec 2009; Britton et al 2002), and two German studies (Horn and Horsch 2010; Skrobanek 2009), many of the

authors neither explicitly clarify what is meant by this term, nor provide examples, and where examples are provided, discrimination is understood as an individual attitude, which serves to mask its structural nature (Yosso 2005). In addition, actual examples of discrimination in the workplace frequently do not seem to be recognised as such by the authors, and are therefore in effect, silenced. For example, employers' reluctance to hire young people from immigrant backgrounds in Germany is explained away with common sense reasons such as it being economically rational (e.g. Kalter 2006), linked to minority youth's low levels of formal qualifications; or as a simple legal issue (Horn and Horsch 2010), a fear of employing 'foreigners' in case of problems with their refugee or legal status. These reasons given by employers go unproblematised by the authors, although other literature suggests at least some of these arguments do not stand up to scrutiny. For example, Skrobanek (2009) argues that for most applicants, legal status is of no relevance, as they mostly have German citizenship or at least legal rights to work.

Discrimination, when mentioned in this body of literature, also tends to be presented as a separate issue to the other factors mentioned which might impact on minority young people's lives, rather than as potentially impacting on all factors in the form of racial structures which shape the attitudes and experiences of all members of society. Many of these studies do not take into account the effects of race discrimination on the life chances, expectations and achievements of young people from immigrant backgrounds. In failing to take into account the way in which racial minorities are positioned in a society structured by race, much of this literature implicitly presents the aspirations and decisions of young people from minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds as (relatively) free choices made by autonomous agents, rather than contextualising these in a society in which they are frequently disadvantaged. It is therefore vital when considering the under-representation of any marginalised group, to explicitly problematise notions of autonomous choice in decision-making (e.g. Yosso 2005). Beck, Fuller and Unwin (2006) report that particularly those from an Asian or Chinese background aspire to stay in full-time education, although black young people were reported as being keener than other groups on getting a full-time job and doing a vocational qualification. However, the notion that these young people are aspiring freely or making choices should be problematised, as it masks the racial structures which will have contributed to these aspirations.

Equally, the notion that minority ethnic young people underachieve in compulsory schooling which affects their chances on the labour market, needs more unpacking. There is, for example, in the German literature on apprenticeships, little consideration of the role of the highly segregational nature of the German education system, which means relatively few young people from migrant backgrounds go to a top tier school and do A-Levels. Gomolla and Radtke (2007) in a rare study of ethnic and cultural discrimination in primary to secondary school transitions, suggest that primary school teachers under-estimate the achievements of students from migrant backgrounds, and are less likely to give them a grammar school recommendation than indigenous students who had the same or even lower test results. Students from migrant backgrounds are thus much more likely to end up in the lower tiers of German schooling than indigenous young people, with far-reaching consequences for their life chances as a whole. One might argue that students from migrant backgrounds go to university rather than doing an apprenticeship, however, in the German context they are equally underrepresented at German universities, although this varies across subjects (Karakaşoğlu 2009). In contrast, figures from England show that ethnic minority groups are more likely to stay on in full-time education after compulsory schooling than white young people,

> nearly 60 percent of ethnic minority young women are in higher education as are nearly 50 percent of ethnic minority men compared with only 31 percent of white women and under 30 percent of white men (Beck, Fuller and Unwin 2006)

However, this is a complex issue and cannot be considered a straightforward choice – as Connor et al (2004) argue, this over-representation is at least in part related to the perception among minority ethnic groups that they need to compensate for underachievement in compulsory education and discrimination in the labour market.

Critical race theorists have argued that minority ethnic underachievement in education should be considered in the context of ongoing and endemic racism (e.g. Gillborn 2008). Although some studies of apprenticeships do recognise that minority ethnic young people often experience racism at school, including pointing out that students from immigrant backgrounds in Germany are frequently placed in so-called 'problem-classes' at school (Horn and Horsch 2010), or their work is rated below their counterparts' (Klieme et al. 2010; Bos et

al. 2007), they fail to explore how this might affect future life chances. Only one study, from England, considers how this affects their attainment levels and can leave them traumatised (Britton et al 2002), which will affect their employment prospects in different ways. Critical race theorists identify what they refer to as 'microaggressions' of racism (e.g. Lynn and Parker 2006, 260), which tends to consist of small things that build up, and often involves slightly differential treatment, such as low teacher expectations at school, or being spoken to in a patronising way. These are examples of treatment, which could be considered insignificant, or perhaps due to other factors, but which have a cumulative effect on the lives of minority ethnic individuals. Student responses to such microaggressions, including underachievement, should be understood in this context.

English research has equally identified racial discrimination in careers advice and guidance, suggesting that a lack of careers guidance is not only an issue of a lack of information. In two studies in which minority ethnic young people themselves are interviewed about their experiences, they report that careers staff are unsupportive, in some cases pushing the young people towards Further Education when they wanted a job (Cross, Wrench and Barnett 1990; Britton et al 2002). Indeed, once the racial context is taken into account, it is almost impossible to speak of aspirations and choices without problematising these notions. As Chisholm (1997) argues, aspirations are strongly linked to expectations, '[t]he range of the occupationally possible arises not only as a consequence of what people see around them, but also as a result of what is culturally thinkable' (p.168). Chisholm applies this notion to gender, but it could equally be applied to race. '[W]hat is culturally thinkable' does not only apply to the (perceived) culture young people from a minority ethnic or migrant background are assumed to be influenced by through their families, but also the current English or German cultural setting and how these young people are positioned within it.

Secondly, and linked to this point, much of the body of literature on apprenticeships seems to be underpinned by assumptions of 'cultural deficiency' (e.g. Yosso 2005; Diefenbach 2007), by which is meant that in a raced society racial minorities tend to be assumed to lack social and cultural capital, in that their knowledges, skills, abilities, values, aspirations, resistances, contacts and behaviours are de-valued (Yosso 2005, 69). Such theories of cultural deficit approaches belong to a long history of the theorisation of deficit thinking, also applied, for example, to social class, (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) where knowledges, values and

behaviours common among the upper and middle classes are valued as capital, and the lower classes are perceived to be lacking in capital. As Diefenbach (2007) argues, where there is an assumption of cultural deficiency, disadvantage is assumed to be the fault of the ethnic group, the family or the individual (blamed on ethnic or 'cultural' reasons), and social systems remain unquestioned as they are assumed to be equitable. It could be argued that the claims made by employers regarding alleged language deficits among young people from migrant backgrounds might partially be informed by assumptions of cultural deficit. Some German studies show that the language skills of most minority students do not differ from others' (Skrobanek 2009; Petersen 2012), and are therefore not instrumental in differential training outcomes. Cross, Wrench and Barnett (1990) argue that in their study of English careers advisors, Asian people were *perceived* as having below average communication skills. Whilst the authors concede that this is possibly due to accents being regarded as incomprehensible to an employer, they also argue it seemed to be simply a misconception.

Assumptions of cultural deficit thinking can also be identified in the assumptions of some of the authors of the literature as well as the practitioners they question, demonstrated by the way in which such data is frequently reported without further theorisation or contextualisation. For example, the German studies which argue that young people from migrant backgrounds have low levels of 'employability', such as being poor at teamwork and preferring to stick together in same-language groups (Kalter 2008; Horn and Horsch 2010), state that such behavior is regarded as detrimental to the team as a whole. However, without theorization of the wider racial context, these studies fail to recognise the potential importance of (perceived) mono-ethnic friendships for protection against racism (Mecheril et al 2010), and equally fail to acknowledge that members of the majority culture would not be critiqued for neglecting to have friends from outside their ethnic group (Yosso 2005; Diefenbach 2007). Indeed, the literature mostly does not explicitly recognise the role of resistance to potential or actual racism among young people from migrant backgrounds. For example, the suggestion that migrant groups are themselves to blame for a (perceived?) lack of networks appears in more than one German study. These suggest, for example, that young people of Turkish heritage tend to 'isolate themselves' from the majority community which damages their chances in the labour market (Pries 2005; Kalter 2006). However, it could be argued that such statements both imply that disadvantage is the group's own fault (Diefenbach 2007), and devalue the cultural capital of the minority group. Alternative

interpretations include a recognition that young people from migrant backgrounds in particular use informal networks to find work (Horn and Horsch 2010), and that young people of Turkish descent often build strong, supportive communities, especially valuable for transitions into the labour market, partly because many Turkish migrants have their own businesses (Kalter 2006). The literature also mostly does not recognise the role of resistance in steering English young people away from apprenticeships, which are often regarded as low status. A single report Ecotec (2009) explicitly recognises a legacy of discrimination and resistance in shaping young people's decisions not to apply for an apprenticeship, stating that groups

> such as women, disabled people and people from BME groups […] may be aware that they/their children require as strong a CV as possible in order to succeed and if Apprenticeships are seen as inferior they will not be identified as an enabler of career progression.

Not only does deficit thinking involve the de-valuing of actual 'knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts' (p.69), but also racial and cultural stereotyping, which often takes the form of over-generalisations about ethnic groups based on notions of culture as static (Yosso 2005; Lynn and Parker 2006). Such stereotyping is common in this body of literature, similarly appearing to influence the perceptions of practitioners who work with young people, and the authors of the literature who do not problematise these stereotypical views. For example, one English paper (BTEG 2008, 10) challenges the claim made by other literature that minority ethnic young people aspire only to jobs which require a university degree, arguing that there is some evidence to suggest that this is a stereotype and a common perception of vocational trainers and careers advisors, and that actually minority ethnic young people have similarly diverse aspirations to white young people. Equally the study by Cross, Wrench and Barnett (1990), although now dated, suggests that careers practitioners may stereotype Asian parents. The authors report that Asian parents are regarded by careers officers as 'over-aspirational' and responsible for pushing children towards jobs for which they are ill-suited. Moreover they report stereotypical views of the young people among practitioners, with

> Asian boys seen as unsociable and less mature, girls as responding well to authority but being too deferent; Afro-Caribbean [sic] boys seen as less sociable with adults but more with peers, less mature and less favourably disposed to authority, as were the girls. Afro-Caribbean boys were seen as likely to perform badly at school, lose confidence, and underachieve post-school. Far from countering this

tendency, the service seems to accept and even encourage it, and not reflect the boys' ambitions (Cross, Wrench and Barnett 1990).

The authors argue that this resulted in particularly African Caribbeans being steered towards low level placements regardless of their exam results or aspirations.

Moreover it could be argued that the German literature citing the rather vague 'cultural reasons' for the under-representation of young people from migrant backgrounds appears to be informed by common stereotypes, assumptions of cultural deficit and static notions of culture and implicitly blames the disadvantage on the disadvantaged (Yosso 2005; Diefenbach 2007). Horn and Horsch (2010) quote an employer, 'They [sic] want to earn money quickly and without having to get any qualifications' (p.38). Employers are also reported as claiming that Muslim women are discouraged from working at all (Horn and Horsch 2010). These serve to reify racially stereotypical views based on longstanding deficit thinking, but are not critiqued as such by the authors, and therefore appear to be objective. Reissig and Gaupp (2006) show that young people of Turkish origin are more likely to be self-employed or go into the family business than enter the dual system (p.36). However, the authors argue this is a (Turkish) cultural issue rather than considering that it may be, for example, one of resistance to potential racism (Yosso 2005), or a result of institutional racism (Gomolla and Radtke 2007), thereby reifying cultural stereotypes, devaluing potential resistance and masking possible structural discrimination.

Critical Race Theorists argue that race hierarchies are so deeply engrained in society that race privilege and oppression at a structural level tends to be invisible to those privileged by it (the majority groups), although more obvious to those it disadvantages. As we have argued, race is frequently implicit and race discrimination covert. There will, therefore always be those who object to racial critique. However, a CRT approach allows us to challenge work presented as objective, and tell a more complex and nuanced story. We do not argue that the race context affects every individual the same, nor that the racial structures function in the same way in both national contexts. However, we do argue that neglecting to foreground the racial context as an important factor in the under-representation of minority ethnic young people or young people from migrant backgrounds, leads to the education and training system

itself remaining unproblematised, represented mostly as neutral and meritocratic, masking race structures.

The racial regulation of the labour market

We suggest that when considering the under-representation of young people from minority ethnic or migrant backgrounds and apprenticeships, connections should be made with studies of the racial segmentation of the labour market historically (e.g. Doeriger and Piore 1971; Jain and Young 1978; Penn 1998; Blackaby et al 2005; Weizsaecker 2005; Ha 2012). There seems to have been little application of such labour market theories to studies of vocational education and training when considering race.

Dual labour market theory (Doeriger and Piore 1971), for example, argues that the labour market is segmented into primary and secondary sectors. In the primary sector the jobs are higher quality, better paid, extensive training is required, and most workers in the sector are male and members of the majority ethnic group. In the secondary sector, jobs are lower paid, conditions are worse, little or no training is required and most workers are female or minority ethnic or both. Women and minority groups do not compete on the same terms if they attempt to enter the primary sector. This is of course a relatively dated theory from 1971, at a time when the labour market was simpler. Indeed, neither the UK nor German could be referred as a 'dual' labour market as labour markets have become much more complex. Equally, particularly in England, minority ethnic people are reasonably well represented in some, what could be referred to as primary sectors, such as medicine or academia. However, there are still significant levels of racial segregation in the labour market. Even when ethnic minorities do work in these higher sectors, they are under-represented in the highest positions, and over-represented in part-time, more precarious posts, and the 'ethnic pay-gap' is well-documented (see e.g. Bhopal and Jackson 2013). Moreover the level of unemployment for minority ethnic groups stands at 13% in comparison with 8% for the rest of the population (Department for Work and Pensions 2011). Apprenticeships, whilst of course not always a route to higher sector work, should still provide relevant training and a secure route into the labour market, despite their low status in England. The under-representation of minority groups in apprenticeships can be considered symptomatic of wider patterns of exclusion and racial hierarchies throughout the contemporary labour market.

Equally the work of Penn (1998) on the raced nature of the labour market demonstrates the enduring nature of racial structures and should be taken into account. Penn shows how in Britain skilled workers have been traditionally white and male (p. 259) and minority ethnic people and women were historically regarded as 'unsuitable for skilled work' (ibid 260). This pattern continued post 1945, with workers from Caribbean arriving in the 1950's, and from India and Pakistan in the 1960s and 70s (Jain and Young, 1978). In general, the immigrants did secondary sector jobs. This segmentation reinforced, and was reinforced by stereotypes of non-whites as 'idle, shiftless and unreliable' (Penn 1998, 260). This in turn reproduced perceived boundaries between white and other ethnic groups, and between what was regarded as 'white and 'black' work.

In Germany the work of Weizsaecker (2005) and Ha (2012) challenges a strong political discourse which maintains that labour migration began post-World War II with the arrival of the guest workers (Ha 2012, 59; Mecheril et al. 2010) and denies links between colonialism, Nazism and the present day (Ha 2012, 60). In fact, as far back as the 1880s and 90s in Prussia there were anti-Polish restrictions in order to prevent the 'polonisation' of Prussia. Poles were classified as an underclass by discourses which maintained cultural superiority of Germans and such policies and discourses were very influenced by colonial politics of the time (Ha 2012). Colonial structures equally influenced the treatment of guest workers, who helped build the new German democracy after 1945, and who were regarded as cheap labour and denied citizenship rights (Ha 2012, 65). Importantly, like similar studies of the US labour market (e.g. Roediger 1991), Ha (2012) emphasises that racism does not have to have a visible colour line. East Europeans, although pale-skinned like Germans, are also classified as sub-races and treated accordingly.

This work highlights the extent to which labour markets in the UK, Germany, and the US have been racially regulated historically, and continue to be today, despite becoming ever more complex. In Germany and the UK, employers are given little incentive to change the status quo due to lack of action taken by the government, contrary to the affirmative action programmes which have had some impact in the US (Penn 1998; Ha 2012). Even Germany's new system of privileges for highly qualified immigrants does not change this hierarchy, which, as Ha (2012) argues, is still just a way of securing Germany's position in the global

economy following imperial logic. In both England and Germany, as in the US, a form of native privilege in the labour market has been created (Penn 1998; Roediger 1991; Ha 2012).

The image of the apprentice – racialised norms and 'space invaders'

Drawing on these more critical analyses, we suggest, perhaps somewhat controversially, that it is likely that racialised normative images (Puwar 2004) of the worker prevail in both countries, shaping to some extent both the labour markets and vocational training systems, and indeed, much of the literature in field. These norms may also dominate expectations of apprentices. Indeed, as mentioned above, some of the English literature on apprenticeships does mention that perceptions of a typical apprentice prevent minority ethnic young people from even considering apprenticeships as an option (SHM 2008 cited in Maragzov 2009, 8; Ecotec 2009), but neglects to connect this to wider raced structures in the labour market. As Puwar (2004) has argued in relation to other mainly white spaces, individuals with bodies, accents or dress who have not traditionally occupied certain positions are often viewed as 'space invaders'.

Penn (1998) argues that 'ethnic and gender exclusion is central to apprenticeship structures historically in […] Britain' (p. 259). Historically, sons were apprenticed with their fathers or uncles. These traditions created expectations of a typical apprentice as white and male, expectations which may prevail, despite the fact that until recently, most immigrant workers came from former colonies and automatically held British passports. In Germany the migrant worker is still largely understood as a guest worker, people who are 'tolerated' *because* of the work they do (Castro Varela and Mecheril 2010, 30), expected to return 'home' in times of economic downturn, and would be the first to be made redundant. Unlike in Britain, the guest workers did not have a right to German citizenship. Thus immigrant workers in Germany were reduced to their labour capacity (Ha 2012), and a norm of the immigrant as unskilled worker prevails.

 Apprenticeship systems cannot be considered neutral spaces, and as we have argued, historically labour markets in England and Germany have been raced spaces, and to a certain extent they may continue to be so today. As critical race theorists would argue, race structures are often hidden, and it is not necessarily easy or even possible to produce

'evidence' of such structures (Chadderton 2013). Despite increasing evidence of structural racism in English and German education systems (e.g. Gillborn 2008; Melter and Mecheril 2011), very rarely is it explored in vocational training systems. However, despite the different vocational training systems and immigration histories in England and Germany, employing insights from CRT and taking into consideration the raced historical context, both may be shaped by racialised norms of migrant workers. These racialised norms (Puwar 2004) may potentially impact on perceptions and expectations of employers, vocational trainers, parents and young people themselves, and contribute to the under-representation of young people from immigrant families in apprenticeships and vocational education, just as they do in the education system as a whole. These norms will have to be negotiated by young people, employers and vocational trainers alike. Such considerations challenge popular and simplistic notions of what constitutes career 'choices' and 'aspirations' on the part of young people and their families, and suggests that the interplay between structure and agency is more complex than is acknowledged in most literature on this subject.

As the proportion of individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds in both countries rises, already at over 13% in the UK and approaching 20% in Germany, their under-representation in apprenticeships represents not only a social problem but also an economic one. However, in a paradoxical situation in which youth unemployment in Europe is unprecedentedly high, yet German employers have this year begun to report difficulties in filling apprenticeship places, and English employers have long complained of a skills gap, addressing the issue of racialised norms in the system becomes ever more important if the number of young people from migrant backgrounds successfully completing apprenticeships is to increase. More empirical work is needed around racialised norms in vocational training systems, to establish how these norms might operate differently for different ethnic groups and in different sectors, how they differ in different national contexts, how they are affected by the ongoing financial crisis, and what strategies are employed by those who resist.

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