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‘Seeing Whiteness’ in Norwegian education challenging a discourse of silence

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ABSTRACT

Employing a systematic literature review, this study explores research into whiteness studies in Norwegian education. Whiteness is broached as a sociogenic rather than a phylogenic phenomenon homologous with constructed social categories such as class. The review shows a preponderance of a tiny number of academics studying whiteness, reticence and discomfort in grappling with white privilege and a hierarchy of whiteness where the indigenous Sami and East Europeans are relegated to a lower tier of whiteness – what we refer to as ‘shades of whiteness’. Teacher education courses need to furnish student teachers with analytical tools developed by scholars in the field of whiteness studies. We also drawn attention to the attendant challenge of exploring ways of identifying and redressing the deleterious effects of an internalized discourse of white supremacy on the part of non-white students. This would go some way in grappling with the imbricated and matrix-like nature of whiteness.

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Introduction

Education and the Norwegian school model

This study concerns itself with the question: what does a systematic literature review of research into Whiteness in Norwegian education say about the current status of the field and what are the implications for teacher educators? Jupp and Lensmire (2016) argue that while race-evasion was the main focus of first-wave critical Whiteness studies (CWS from hence), second-wave CWS should pay attention to the nuances and complexities that inform White teacher identities, such as social structure, local contexts and other discourses of hierarchy. Commensurate with the above, we ask how Whiteness is geographically instantiated on a historical periphery that whitens itself and becomes systemic in the case of Norway. Furthermore, we query how this historically distilled Whiteness informs education.

In Norway, like many other countries, discussions around diversity and inclusivity in education have gained prominence in recent years. While Norway is

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often considered a relatively homogeneous country, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of addressing issues related to race, ethnicity, and whiteness within teacher education and the education system as a whole (Pihl 2016; Thomas, Changezi, and Enstad 2016). The demographics of teachers in Norway have been evolving over the years, albeit slowly. Historically, the teaching profession in Norway has been predominantly composed of ethnically Norwegian teachers. However, efforts have been made to increase diversity among teachers to better reflect the multicultural nature of Norwegian society. The Ministry of Education and Research has encouraged greater recruitment of teachers with diverse backgrounds to enhance cultural competence within the education system. The lack of diversity among teachers in Norway has been identified as a challenge for creating inclusive learning environments and addressing the needs of diverse student populations. Research suggests that having a more diverse teaching workforce can contribute to better educational outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds.

Recognizing this, teacher education programs in Norway have been making efforts to address issues related to whiteness, diversity, and cultural competence. Many teacher education programs, such as the courses the first two authors teach at the University of Southeastern Norway, now include courses or modules that focus on intercultural education, multiculturalism, and anti-racist pedagogy. These courses aim to provide prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach in diverse classrooms effectively. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on the importance of inclusive teaching practices and culturally responsive teaching in Norway (Hauge 2014; Solbue and Bakken 2016; Thomas and Law 2017). This involves acknowledging and challenging the influence of whiteness in education, promoting equity, and ensuring that teaching approaches are responsive to the needs and experiences of all students.

Along with other Nordic countries, the Norwegian educational ethos is informed by the ideal of a state-driven approach that provides equal opportunities for all irrespective of sex, geographic location, social or ethnic background encapsulated in the Norwegian term *enhetsskolen* (common or one school for all) (Elstad 2020; Rasmussen 2001). The above was reinforced by a progressive pedagogy inspired, among others, by the German *Bildung* tradition that aims at personal transformation through an amalgamation of personal and cultural maturation in education. The earlier complacency about the excellence of Norwegian education was shattered in 2001 when the OECD's PISA test revealed mediocre scores for Norway leading to several reforms in teacher education. This had the effect of undermining the ideal of the 'common or one school for all' which was supplanted by a neoliberal regime of testing, accountability and standardisation (Sahlberg 2011; Sjøberg 2017; Thomas 2021). With a conservative government at the helm (2013–2021), private schools also burgeoned substantially with a corollary of, among others, increased segregation of schools along ethnic lines, especially in the Capital Oslo, and other major cities in Norway, leading Elstad (2020, 56) to conclude, 'It is difficult to escape the conclusion that inequalities are reproduced, and that the realisation of the noble ideas of the common/one school [*enhetsskolen*] is under pressure in Norway as well'.

PISA, whiteness, and cultural bias on standardised testing

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assess the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students across participating countries. PISA aims to evaluate how well students are prepared to meet real-life challenges and to provide insights into education systems worldwide (Schleicher 2018). PISA assesses three core domains: reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and scientific literacy. These domains are measured through a combination of multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and tasks that require students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. In addition to the core domains, PISA also includes assessments of students' collaborative problem-solving skills and their ability to understand and interpret information in digital environments.

PISA attempts to create a common framework that can be applied across different cultural contexts to assess students' abilities in key domains. However, critics have argued that standardised tests like PISA may contain inherent cultural bias that can disadvantage certain groups. Cultural bias refers to the potential for the test questions, format, or content to be more familiar or relevant to certain cultural or socio-economic groups, potentially leading to unfair results (Sjøberg 2017; Thomas 2021). Some argue that standardised tests, including PISA, may reflect the cultural perspectives and knowledge more aligned with the dominant culture (i.e. White) in the testing context, potentially disadvantaging students from diverse backgrounds. The issue of cultural bias is complex and multifaceted. It involves factors such as the choice of test items, language used, and the extent to which the test content reflects the diverse experiences and knowledge of students from different cultural backgrounds.

Much ink has flowed in grappling with the educational themes sketched above. However, we argue that the seismic change in the demographic in recent decades, coupled with ethnically segregated urban landscapes, warrants studies that consider the role of Whiteness and race. There is a dearth in Whiteness studies in education in Norway and the next segment considers why educational research appears reticent in broaching the topic through the lens of Whiteness and race.

The paradox of structural racism and egalitarian aspirations

Midtbøen (2022, 34) grapples with the prima facie contradiction inherent in an egalitarian Norway and claims of structural racism. He argues that, unlike the USA, structural racism in Norway is mitigated by 'relatively low economic inequality, an extensive social safety net and a well-developed and free education system provide strong institutional conditions for upward social mobility among descendants of immigrants Norway'. Elgvin (2021) outlines three types of structural racism and asserts the second typifies Norway:

The second way is based on an intentional explanation: If a sufficient number of people in important social institutions display racist or discriminatory tendencies and are bound together by an informal discourse, an institution can function structurally racist - even where the law is the same for all. (Elgvin 2021, 99)

Race and White supremacy in Norway

We understand Lensmire's (2008) challenge to scholars of CWS as one that goes beyond antagonising and alienating White students as 'nothing but the embodiment of White privilege' (Lensmire 2008, 316), and the need to make an inventory of the cornucopia of discourses and trajectories – much in the tradition of Foucault's (1977) archaeology of knowledge – that informs an imbricated habitus of Whiteness that is mutable. White supremacy is premised on the notion that there is a biological hierarchy of races with the White race superior to the other races and hence legitimising domination. While the term may be imported from the USA, as some detractors often claim, we contend that the belief and practice of White supremacy has a long pedigree in Norway that goes back to a time prior to the foundation of the USA, and hence the indigeneity of a parochial Norwegian White supremacy.

Race was considered a taboo term jettisoned in favour of euphemisms such as 'ethnic' and 'cultural' differences until recently in education research in Norway (Andersson 2022; Beach and Lunneblad 2011, 32). Race was indelibly linked to 'bigots' who believed in innate and irreconcilable differences between races as a rationale underpinning White supremacy. This refusal to countenance racism persisted even though national minorities, such as the Sami, Jews, and Tartars, among others, experienced state-sponsored discrimination which was premised upon classical notions of racism. For instance, in regard to racism against the Sami in the 1800s, Berg-Nordlie (2022, 427) writes, 'Methods such as body snatching [i.e. stealing Sami corpses from graves] and skull measurement with varying degrees of consent were used to gather "evidence" that the Sami were an inferior people'. Hence, while the Sami are White, they were denied access to the particular Whiteness that prevailed in mainstream Norwegian society due to their perceived biological, cultural and ethnic 'otherness'. There are some parallels with the earlier denigration and later rehabilitation of Irish Whiteness in the USA as delineated in Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White* (Ignatiev 1995).

Norwegian historians Brochmann and Kjeldstadli (2008) state that Norwegian notions of racial hierarchy during the nation-building stage (1814–1940) were distilled during the Enlightenment. 'Towards other peoples, Norwegians shared the same notions of supremacy as most nineteenth century westerners' (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 94). Minorities fared poorly due to a White racial frame built on the superiority of the 'Germanic', 'Nordic' or 'Norwegian race'. The Sami were considered 'biologically degenerate' and 'doomed under the forward march of civilisation while the Kvens were classified as Mongols with the corollary traits of 'brutality' and 'sentimentality'. The Romani people were to be 'dissolved' as a group (Ibid). One thousand children were abducted in a manner reminiscent of the 'breeding out Aboriginal blood' program in Australia. 'Romani women were overrepresented compared to the population at large: 109 out of 4,731 voluntary and compulsory sterilisations from 1934 to 1977 targeted Romani women' (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 149). The denouement of the above was that 'Norwegians came to share a colonialist mind without having colonies – apart from the Sami areas' (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 98)

The valorisation of an imagined pristine or proto-Norwegian Whiteness was clearly shared by the Nazis who considered Norway 'a genetically desirable country' and 'highly Aryan' - one where the offence of *Rassenschande*, or race defilement could not transpire

(Nilsen 2019, 181). German soldiers were under orders to treat the Norwegian population kindly, and in 1941, SS head, Heinrich Himmler established the first ever section of the race-based organisation, *Lebensborn*, outside of Nazi Germany in Norway which resulted in roughly 30,000 and 50,000 love relationships between Norwegian women and German men (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 161). It appears the Nazis *Blut und Boden* notion of a pure Aryan national body found its apotheosis in Norway. How did Norwegian Whiteness compare to the others in northwestern Europe? ‘England and Germany ranked high in the Norwegian mental hierarchy. Norwegians saw themselves as lagging slightly behind these great powers of civilisation. Someday, soon, Norway was to take its place along with these forerunners’ (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 8). There were two competing versions of nationality around the time Norway’s Constitution was written in 1814. One version built on the French concept of political union in which independent, permanent residents and income-earning citizens (mainly men) were subjects. The other version, pertinent to theorising Whiteness in Norway, was one held by several early historians such as Rudolf Keyser and Peter Andreas Munch.

Keyser developed the so-called immigration theory, according to which, Norway was populated from the north by Germanic tribes entering the land that was not inhabited (the presence of the Sami was more or less ignored). Being homogenous, Norwegians were a kind of original or primordial people. (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008, 95)

Clearly, the historical contours of Norwegian Whiteness briefly sketched above evinces several commonalities with what Jupp, Badenhorst, and Shim (2022, 6) refer to as ‘a transnational understanding of racialised intersectionality’. Whiteness in Norway was premised upon a Germanic-Nordic inculcation of White supremacist notions parasitic upon claims to an innate biological superiority – an ethnic-racial heritage which resonates with aspects of WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) in the USA. Between 1836 to 1915 about 750,000 Norwegians emigrated to North America. ‘The number who emigrated in this period was almost equal to the total who lived in Norway in 1801’ (Joranger 2022). Joranger (2022) further posits that the significance of White privilege in Scandinavian emigration has been under communicated and goes on to state that immigrants from the Scandinavian countries were largely identified as White and were at the top of a hierarchy based on ethnicity and race.

Theoretical framework

White supremacy vs. White privilege

White privilege posits the valorisation of White skin colour as an unearned social asset with a corollary of freedoms in a host of everyday experiences. Its possessors assume the universality of their experience as normal (McIntosh 1988). Commensurate with the members of the Midwest Critical Whiteness Collective (Lensmire et al. 2013) we concur with the critique of the scholars of the reductionism inherent in McIntosh’s (1988) seminal definition of White privilege encapsulated in the metaphor of the ‘invisible knapsack’. Lensmire et al. (2013) recommend displacing White privilege from the centre of antiracist work in teacher education and focus on White supremacy. In particular, the argument about nuancing McIntosh’s (1988) White privilege to account for the disparate

experiences of the White poor is apposite in a Norwegian context. Over the years, less affluent, working-class Norwegians bemoaned what they perceived as statutory bias in favour of refugees and other immigrants who were 'swamping' their neighbourhoods backed by generous welfare payments. Lensmire et al. (2013) contention that a White privilege pedagogy demands confession which is a dead end resonates with our experiences as pedagogues in Norway. We have become accustomed to the inevitable protest from students who contest any notion of White privilege when the subject is broached. Upon revisiting the conceptual frameworks within Whiteness, we have also noticed that White privilege rarely differs from White supremacy in its deployment in our key word search. Hence, several of our earlier references to White privilege have been jettisoned in favour of White supremacy commensurate with the recommendation of Lensmire et al. (2013). More recently, Myrdahl (2014) claims that Norway squandered an opportunity in the aftermath of the Norwegian terrorist and White supremacist Anders Breivik's attacks in 2011 killing 77 people. She contends that Breivik's supremacist views have become mainstream and platitudes such as 'tolerance' and 'inclusion' were discursively deployed in the aftermath of the attacks rather than a sincere attempt at querying and dislodging supremacist views premised on a White pigmentocratic understanding of 'Norwegianness'. She concludes,

Breivik wanted his actions to lead to a revolution and a new Norway defined by explicit White supremacist policies . . . the dominant Norwegian response to the experience of White supremacist terrorism failed to interrogate some of the core assumptions that the majority culture shares with the terrorist. Thus, despite the initial disruption of constructions of national belonging, the Whiteness of the nation quickly regained its status as the invisible norm. (Myrdahl 2014)

White supremacy and white privilege are distinct concepts that relate to power, race, and privilege, but they differ in their focus and implications. White supremacy refers to an ideology or belief system that asserts the inherent superiority of the white race over other racial and ethnic groups. It is rooted in the idea that white people should dominate society, hold positions of power, and have control over resources and institutions (Bonilla-Silva 2012). White supremacy can manifest in explicit forms, such as hate crimes, racial discrimination, and the promotion of racial hierarchies. It can also exist in more subtle forms, such as systemic racism and the perpetuation of racial inequalities through social structures and institutions.

On the other hand, white privilege refers to the unearned advantages and benefits that white individuals receive solely based on their racial identity in societies where whiteness is considered the norm or the dominant culture (Leonardo 2002). It is the systemic advantages that white people experience in various aspects of life, including education, employment, housing, criminal justice, and overall social interactions. These advantages are often invisible or taken for granted by those who possess them and are deeply ingrained in social systems and structures (McIntosh 1988). White privilege does not require individuals to actively promote or believe in white supremacy. Instead, it is a result of the historical and ongoing systemic advantages afforded to white people in societies shaped by white dominance. It means that white individuals often have greater access to resources, opportunities, and societal benefits compared to people of other races, without having to face the same obstacles or systemic biases.

In the context of education, white supremacy informs white privilege by perpetuating systemic advantages for white individuals and creating disadvantages for marginalised racial and ethnic groups. The education system, like many other institutions, has historically been influenced by white supremacist ideologies, resulting in unequal access, opportunities, and outcomes for students of different races (Bonilla-Silva and Peoples 2022). White supremacy in education can be seen in various ways, such as the underrepresentation of non-white teachers and administrators, the Eurocentric curriculum that centres white history and perspectives, discriminatory disciplinary practices disproportionately affecting students of colour, and the perpetuation of racial stereotypes and biases in school environments. These structures and practices reinforce white privilege by granting white students and educators advantages, such as access to resources, quality education, positive perceptions, and greater opportunities for success.

White privilege in education often manifests as higher graduation rates, better academic performance, more favourable treatment from educators, increased representation in leadership positions, and the overall reinforcement of white cultural norms as the standard for success and achievement (Leonardo and Zembylas 2013). This perpetuates a cycle where white students are more likely to excel and continue to benefit from educational and societal opportunities, while students of colour face barriers and systemic disadvantages. Recognizing the connection between white supremacy and white privilege in education is crucial for addressing systemic inequalities. Efforts to dismantle white supremacy in education require challenging and dismantling discriminatory policies and practices, promoting diversity and inclusion, decolonising the curriculum, fostering culturally responsive teaching, and actively working towards equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for all students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background.

Critical Whiteness studies

Critical Whiteness studies posits that Whites are complicit in producing and reproducing White supremacy while engaging in race evasion techniques that insulate Whites from critically scrutinising their roles in maintaining the status quo (Leonardo 2002). Whiteness is understood as a socially constructed category – a location of structural advantage, of race privilege (Frankenberg 1993, 1). It is the abolition of this Whiteness that Leonardo calls for.

Again, and to reiterate, there is a difference between White people, White culture, and Whiteness. Students would do well to recognise the point that as they work against Whiteness, they are undoing the self they know and coming to terms with a reconstructed identity. Like the abolitionists of the nineteenth century, White subjects of the twenty-first century commit one of the ultimate acts of humanity: race treason (Leonardo 2002, 46).

Of interest is the perpetuation of Whiteness as a system of political, social, legal and cultural advantage and its maintenance by the conscious and unconscious negation of its existence through the deployment of myriad strategies, such as focusing on progress, victim blaming, and focusing on culture rather than race, colour blindness and visible discomfort when confronted with White supremacy. The aim of CWS is to put the

spotlight on these race evasion techniques with a view towards disrupting these systems of power. White norms construct racial differences favourable to Whites and detrimental to non-Whites, while simultaneously appearing to be ‘common’ and ‘neutral’. David Gillborn (2005) is concerned about White actors’ lack of awareness of their roles.

One of the most powerful and dangerous aspects of Whiteness is that many (possibly the majority) of White people have no awareness of Whiteness as a construction, let alone their own role in sustaining and playing out the inequities at the heart of Whiteness (Gillborn 2005, 490).

In this study, we understand Whiteness as a White racial consciousness (Landsman 2006, 15) with a corollary of privileges among which is the imposition of a distorted self-understanding upon non-Whites and Black people in particular – what Du Bois (1903, 3) has called a ‘double-consciousness’. Whiteness became the arbitrary adjudicator of human value based on one’s colouration – an ideology of epidermalization sealing the inferiority of non-Whites. Of pertinence to this study is Wallis’s (2016, 74) prescient warning to Europe, the context for this study.

Today, still, the people of different ethnicities in Europe have little common understanding of being ‘White’, but that is beginning to change as immigrants from North Africa, Asia, and other places are entering European countries. Preserving native and White ethnic identity is part of the message and appeal of the New Right groups in many European countries.

Collins and Alexander (2017) posit the terms ‘White out’ and the ‘White architecture of the mind’ in unpacking Whiteness. ‘White out’, in a manner akin to snow blizzards that reduce visibility to zero, is when the experiences of others (i.e. non-Whites or ‘inferior Whites’) are intentionally blotted out ‘in lieu of a competing definition of reality’. We will later argue that ‘White out’ is implicated in the dearth of studies and reticence in regard to the impact of Whiteness in education in Norway. The ‘White architecture of the mind’ is overarching and is defined as ‘individual actions, choices, behaviours, and attitudes that are guided by a socially constructed system that predisposes these attitudes and grants privileges and accessibilities to core members of a dominant group’ (Collins and Alexander 2017, 6).

Reflexivity

As Black professors (authors 1 and 2) working in White academia, a self-reflexive declaration is salutary. The self-declared radical Black-British Professor, Andrews and Andrews (2018, 216), asserts: ‘Universities are a central part of the system that oppresses Black communities. The very idea of race, the hierarchy of White supremacy, was produced and maintained by universities’. While sympathetic to aspects of Andrew’s radical approach – and similar sentiments expressed by Eddo-Lodge’s (2018) book *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race* – we demur in regard to their pessimistic and deterministic conclusions. ‘Therefore, overcoming Whiteness is impossible because it is a product of the structural condition, a psychosis caused to ensure that the system remains intact’ (Andrews and Andrews 2018, 195). With a combined length of stay of more than 80 years in Norway, we have had our share of experiences with Whiteness. Among others, being mistaken for janitors, given assignments that less

qualified colleagues reject, new students waiting outside in the corridor for the ‘real’ lecturers despite our presence in front of the chalkboard, and conversations often beginning in English because lack of familiarity with Norwegian is the default position based solely on skin colour. As Black scholars in Norway, we are particularly concerned about a discourse of denial, negation and what we consider to be psychological intimidation with respect to antiracist education in Norway. Despite the above, we continue to lock horns because we believe we have a role to play in antiracist education in teacher education in Norway.

Methodology

Systematic literature review and inclusion criteria

This being a tertiary study of primary studies, scholars concur that the degree of confidence invested in findings from a systematic review – their provenance – are contingent upon the thoroughness of the research and domain knowledge of the researchers. We have found the widely employed assessment scheme known as DARE (Database of Attributes of Reviews of Effects) to be germane in establishing the provenance of our findings. The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (2002, 2) Centre for Reviews and Dissemination has the following DARE criteria:

- (1) Are inclusion/exclusion criteria reported relating to the primary studies which address the review question?
- (2) Is there evidence of a substantial effort to search for all relevant research?
- (3) Is the validity of included studies adequately assessed?
- (4) Is sufficient detail of the individual studies presented?
- (5) Are the primary studies summarised appropriately?

Only studies nestled in the field of education and schools in Norway were included given the specificity of our research question. Furthermore, only peer-reviewed, scholarly articles were selected. The rationale was to gauge, not only the level of researchers’ familiarity and engagement with Whiteness, but the field’s status as evidenced by the volume of publications and dissemination.

Following other systematic literature review studies on Whiteness (Schooley, Lee, and Spanierman 2019), the selection process followed principles of interrater reliability. The authors independently examined all articles using the inclusion criteria outlined above. The main disagreement revolved around a few articles which, although seemingly focusing on Whiteness, argued against the phenomenon (even undermining it) and suggesting alternative terminology, such as ‘majority privilege’ rather than ‘White privilege’. This was resolved on the basis that only studies that operationalised the concept of Whiteness, as underpinned by the corpus of established literature, could be included.

Data search

A word search using the following words and collocations were entered into the library search engine ORIA: *White privilege, Whiteness, White critical studies, schools, education,*

Norwegian and Norway. The search returned seventy-six hits in total of which only four articles in English fulfilled the criteria; there were no books and the nine book chapters were incommensurate with the inclusion criteria. ORIA is a constituent of the Ministry of Education and Research's digitalisation strategy for the sector of higher education in Norway.

Oria is a common portal to the collected material found at most Norwegian subject and research libraries. Supplemented with a wealth of electronic material from open sources, Oria provides unified access to material such as books, electronic books, journals, electronic journals, documents, articles, music and movies (UNIT 2020).

Among the hundreds of multidisciplinary databases included in the ORIA search, twenty-six were from databases belonging specifically to the category 'Education and pedagogical subjects'. Among others, these included *Academic Search Premier*, *ERIC* (the world's largest education database containing over 1.5 million records), *SpringerLink* and *Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities with Science & Technology*, to name a few. After some discussion with colleagues, we decided that a similar search had to be conducted in Norwegian. This was based on the general observation that while most university-based Norwegian academics are conversant with the convoluted nature of academic English, there are colleagues who are more comfortable publishing in Norwegian – not only due to lack of English proficiency, but concerns with ensuring the availability of high-quality research in the field in Norwegian. Key words, such as, *hvit/e privilegiet, hvithet, skoler, utdanning, Norge, norsk* (*White privilege, Whiteness, schools, education, Norway, Norwegian*) were entered into ORIA. Of the paltry twelve hits, only one article in Norwegian (Dowling 2017) fulfilled the inclusion criteria. We can only surmise from the paucity of published material our search identified that Whiteness studies in education in Norway have yet to gain serious traction. On a more positive note, while not included in our review, there was a preponderance of undergraduate and postgraduate theses broaching the subject of Whiteness in education – perhaps indicative of an upcoming cadre of academics more uninhibited in grappling with and utilising Whiteness as an analytical tool.

Data analysis

The peer-reviewed articles were analysed using a content analysis approach. Holsti (1969, 14) defines content analysis as 'any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages'. Others emphasised the 'manifest content of communication' (Berelson 1952) and 'replicability' (Bryman 2004) as crucial components of content analysis. Hansen and Machin (2019, 93) outline eight steps in conducting content analysis, which served as a useful template germane to our analysis: (1) a well-defined research problem (2) review of relevant literature (3) selection of sample (4) definition of analytical categories (5) construction of a coding schedule and protocol (6) piloting the coding schedule and checking reliability (7) data preparation and analysis (8) reporting the findings and conclusions. Hansen and Machin (2019) underscore the salience of an explicit 'theoretical framework' in a content analysis approach. Commensurate with the above, we first read the articles independently and coded on a sentential level informed by the research question's focus on the current status of the field of Whiteness studies and the implications for teacher educators. All authors

assigned codes inductively to the articles selected with an inter-coder reliability percentage of ca. 70%. Hansen and Machin (2019, 109) state, ‘It is perfectly feasible – and indeed often desirable – to take a partially inductive approach and to simply add new values to a variable’. Four themes were deemed pertinent to the construction of a content analysis protocol: (a) the authors and journals of the peer-reviewed articles and their racial/ethnic backgrounds (b) the aims outlined in the articles (c) findings and (d) implications for education. These emergent themes were codified in a content analysis protocol with further instructions about new rounds of coding. The subsequent cycles of coding were constantly subjected to inter-coder reliability (Bryman 2004).

In summary, only six peer-reviewed articles fulfilled the criteria: five in English and one in Norwegian. Where studies included other countries (e.g. England in Dowling and Flintoff 2018), the focus was on the findings from Norway in keeping with the inclusion criteria. All translations from Norwegian to English, where relevant, are ours. The findings from these articles are presented in the next section. To facilitate the analysis, articles that were analogous in terms of methods, findings and implications for the teaching profession were grouped together and compared. In a second round of analysis, a synthesis of all articles is presented.

Findings

Firstly, both academics (Fylkesnes and Eriksen) were PhD students at the time of their research. This is a salient point commensurate with the earlier observation that research into Whiteness in education in Norway appears to be in its infancy and embraced by up-and-coming White Norwegian academics rather than established ones. Despite conducting a systematic literature review on Whiteness in Norwegian education without a specific time frame, such as the last ten years, our findings were disheartening as we discovered only a few articles on the topic. Some of the glaring questions the review throws up are: why are junior academics and neophyte graduates (mostly on a Bachelor and Master level) in the main employing Whiteness as an analytical tool?

Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen (2018) argue that teacher educators’ statements about cultural diversity reveals a dichotomised understanding where diversity is valorised and simultaneously coupled with non-White others who are deficient in relation to the White norm – ‘a double meaning making pattern’.

These terms are interesting because, even though some invoke positivity (e.g. resource, dialogue), they generally allude to more negative ideas of, for example, Costly school resource usage (e.g., behavioral challenges), cognitive challenges (e.g., special education) and assumptions of how cultural diversity refers to ideas of non-Norwegianness. (e.g., the multicultural, multilingualism, bilingualism, minority, integration, inclusion, another nationality and from a different country). (Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen 2018, 22)

They further draw attention to how the teacher educators in their study extend this deficiency framework to parents from minority backgrounds whose competences are devalued.

Such representations of the minority parents may be understood to promote subtle ideas of them as a group that is not only uneducated and knowledgeable, but moreover also possibly less able to comprehend certain things related to their children’s cognitive abilities. Thus, such descriptions might invoke how this parental group represents particular challenges for

the teacher (e.g. they might be users of extra teacher resources) (Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen 2018, 27).

Eriksen's (2022) study among pupils in Norwegian schools provides important insights into how Whiteness (primarily skin colour) as a necessary precondition for Norwegians is imbibed and inculcated.

The most striking presence in the initial conversations between students was the persistent but somewhat impossible presence of race. Many of the students instantly applied classification schemes related to skin colour or physical appearance, but somewhat implicitly. For example, when the students were asked to write their ideas down on the thinking sheet, they seemed reluctant:

Researcher: Do you have any suggestions?

Brian: Skin colour. Or, you know, in Norway you are not exactly brown, you know . . .

Anna: Light skin colour.

David: You can tell from the looks. The skin colour is light (Eriksen 2022, 7).

Furthermore, Eriksen's (2022) finding concerning the Sami underscores the fluid nature of Whiteness as a boundary marker that may at times not be coterminous with skin colour. Sami researcher Astri Dankertsen (2019) argues that, for the Sami, who might pass and be perceived as White by themselves and others, Whiteness is an ambiguous but still very real presence. Although theories of distinct Scandinavian races are abandoned, they still exist in everyday categorisations of Sami individuals as non-White Others, and influence identity processes among the Sami today (Eriksen 2022, 9).

Significantly, Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen (2018, 2019) and Eriksen's (2022) findings reveal how White stakeholders operate from within an essentialised and racialised understanding of Norwegianness that is incompatible with modern notions of multicultural citizenship and diversity. One implication of this, in Eriksen's (2022, 16) view, is the need to go beyond the discomfort of White individuals as this runs the risk of neglecting the pain experienced by students of colour. Not least, she reminds us that anti-racist education is contingent upon the broader work of decolonisation. Of note in their study is the failure to perceive the incompatibility of holding, on the one hand, a positive view of people of colour and minoritised cultures, while simultaneously calcifying their otherness. 'For example, teachers may address whom they assume to be Norwegian pupils though a language affirming their cognitive superiority (e.g. using terms such as *knowledge, understanding, dialogue, and democracy*) in contrast to how they might address whom they assume to be multicultural pupils (using a language that affirms their cognitive inferiority) (Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen 2018, 415). There is a clarion call for teachers to be equipped to deconstruct a parochial strain of Norwegian Whiteness rooted in what Fylkesnes (2019) calls the 'pedagogy of amnesia' and 'the doxic ideal of imagined sameness'. These terms will be further unpacked in the discussion section.

Commensurate with the articles in Table 1, the articles in Table 2 distil similar challenges with respect to Whiteness in education. Teacher educators experience dissonance in speaking about their own Whiteness because this Whiteness was predominantly accustomed to naming, defining and labelling a 'reality' amenable to their

Table 1. Overview of peer-reviewed journals.

Journal article details	Aims	Findings	Implications for education
Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen (2018) <i>Title:</i> The Double Meaning Making of the Term <i>Cultural Diversity</i> in Teacher Educator Discourses. <i>Journal:</i> <i>Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education</i> <i>Method:</i> Semi-structured interviews with 12 teacher educators from two Norwegian teacher education institutions.	To consider the meaning making of the term cultural diversity in teacher education discourses.	The double meaning making pattern of the term cultural diversity is featured by being both something explicitly positive, important and desirable for teacher education, yet also more subtly assumed to be something more negative and challenging: it is represented as 'less developed' and as the knowledgeable Other (p. 27).	Specifically, teacher education institutions could, for example, provide teacher educators with critical theoretical and analytical tools for deconstruction that enable them to question and disrupt the way in which whiteness is normalised through discourses produced (also by themselves) within institutions (p. 29).
Fylkesnes (2019) <i>Title:</i> 'Patterns of racialised discourses in Norwegian teacher education policy: Whiteness as a pedagogy of amnesia in the national curriculum'. <i>Journal:</i> <i>Journal of Education Policy</i> <i>Method:</i> Critical discourse analysis of how whiteness works through the use and meaning making of the term 'cultural diversity' in six Norwegian teacher education policy documents.	To examine how whiteness works through the use and meaning making of the term 'cultural diversity' in six Norwegian teacher education policy documents	Whiteness was found to be related to the usage and meaning making of the term <i>cultural diversity</i> , manifested in three discursive patterns of representation that highlighted: (1) three hierarchically arranged pupil group categories (2) descriptions that placed these pupil group categories as either superior Norwegian or as inferior non-Norwegian, and (3) the role of student teacher as political actors of assimilation (p. 404).	Teachers must be able to link the pedagogy of amnesia and the doxic ideal of imagined sameness and understand how such ideologies currently forge a polished national self-image that hides a 'dirty' and violent past. Teachers need to learn to not only 'diagnose' but also 'treat' and 'cure'. Teachers need competency in deconstructing whiteness.(p. 417) Teachers need competency in deconstructing whiteness.
Eriksen (2022) <i>Title:</i> 'Discomforting presence in the classroom – the affective technologies of race, racism and whiteness'. <i>Journal:</i> <i>Whiteness and Education</i> <i>Methods:</i> Small-scale ethnographic fieldwork in Norwegian primary schools. Observations of social studies classes in nine Norwegian primary school classrooms at six different schools in mainly urban parts of South-Eastern Norway.	To examine the potential of an affective lens as an analytical tool in approaching citizenship education in Norway, and discuss how this can be turned into insights for developing anti-racist pedagogical strategies.	Responses predominantly monocultural/genealogical in outlook: highlight essential Norwegian culture, nationality of parents, place of birth and physical characteristics; fewer responses related to a liberal multiculturalist outlook, and affective dimensions such as 'feeling Norwegian' (p. 7).	The need to go beyond the discomfort of white individuals as this runs the risk of neglecting the pain experienced by students of colour. Reminder that anti-racist education is contingent upon the broader work of decolonisation. Reminder that anti-racist education is contingent upon the broader work of decolonisation.



Table 2. Overview of peer-reviewed journals.

Journal article details	Aims	Findings	Implications for education
<p>Dowling (2017) <i>Title:</i> 'Rase og etnisitet? Det kan ikke jeg si noe særlig om – her er det "Blenda-hvitt"! ["Race or ethnicity? I cannot say much about that – here it is dazzling white!"] <i>Journal:</i> <i>Norsk pedagogisk tidsskrift</i> <i>Method:</i> teacher educators wrote reflexive narrative biographies.</p>	<p>To consider teacher educators' [in Norway] discourses about whiteness, 'race' and (anti) racism in their work in physical education.</p>	<p>Teacher educators struggle to find words to talk about their racialised (white identities). Teacher memories are steeped in an exotic and at times threatening image of the 'other' – mostly populated by a homogenous, ethnic white local society. Teacher educators' white identities are invisible but are conscious of their students' non-white identities.</p>	<p>'Race' is mainly addressed in some theme-based lessons where the meaning of other social categories (class, gender) for teaching or sports participation is covered (p. 11). Challenges on a structural level in teacher education constrain the problematisation of Eurocentricism and whiteness. Several cases of cultural racism which were difficult to analyse due to strong emotions and the lack of conceptual competence in regard to race (p. 12). Challenges on a structural level in teacher education constrain the problematisation of Eurocentricism and whiteness. Several cases of cultural racism which were difficult to analyse due to strong emotions and the lack of conceptual competence in regard to race (p. 12).</p>
<p>Dowling and Flintoff (2018) <i>Title:</i> 'A whitewashed curriculum? The construction of race in contemporary PR curriculum policy'. <i>Journal:</i> Sport, Education and Society <i>Method:</i> A purposeful sample of contemporary PE policy texts in England and Norway, including national core curricula, PE subject curricula, examinable PE syllabi and school sport policy.</p>	<p>To consider the construction of race and racism in selection of formal documents. It addresses one aspect of a larger critical exploration of white physical educators' (teaching educators and PE teachers) perspectives on race and racism with the long-term aim of supporting them in critical engagement with race (p. 1).</p>	<p>Whiteness is rendered invisible and constructed as a sort of neutral category that does not require naming. White experience and knowledge are universalised and taken to count for the experiences of everyone. Sami culture is confined to Sami schools, not Norwegian. While skiing was historically central to Sami culture, the sport has been coopted as Norway's national sport sidelining its Sami roots and the fact that many non-ethnic Norwegians do not ski (p. 9).</p>	<p>PE textbooks uphold notions of cultural racism rather than challenge them. The legacies of colonialism and Eurocentricism are overlooked. 'Fair play' is a discursive construction that obscures power relations. Students who do not conform to the normative values of a 'whitewashed' PE are 'lacking', 'deficient' and on the 'outside' (p.10). The legacies of colonialism and Eurocentricism are overlooked. 'Fair play' is a discursive construction that obscures power relations. Students who do not conform to the normative values of a 'whitewashed' PE are 'lacking', 'deficient' and on the 'outside' (p.10).</p>

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

Journal article details	Aims	Findings	Implications for education
<p>Anne Flintoff and Fiona Dowling (2019) <i>Title:</i> 'I just treat them all the same really: teachers whiteness and (anti)racism' in physical education. <i>Journal:</i> Sport, Education and Society <i>Method:</i> collective biography; 10 white teacher educators (5 from Norway and 5 from England) and 8 PE teachers.</p>	<p>To explore physical educators' perspectives on race and racism as a first step towards disrupting whiteness and supporting the development of antiracist practice.</p>	<p>Traces of essentialist beliefs about race, such as the idea that Black athletes are superior athletes or that white Norwegians have a 'ski' gene. Colour blind pedagogy that draws on liberal notions of meritocracy and equal treatment but with little appreciation of the impact of structural racism on educational experiences results in students being repositioned as 'bodies out of place'. Immigrants from Poland and other Eastern European countries are still 'othered'.</p>	<p>The need to challenge the invisibility and 'taken-for-granted' nature of whiteness and its operation. Need to prepare to take the first steps towards 'unlearning' - to acknowledging 'how white racial privilege may affect our professional identity and beliefs in ways that present obstacles to transformative learning'. Need to prepare to take the first steps towards 'unlearning' - to acknowledging 'how white racial privilege may affect our professional identity and beliefs in ways that present obstacles to transformative learning'.</p>

worldview. It is in the interstices of this dissonance that teacher educators experience ‘strong emotions’ – a classic case of White fragility (DiAngelo 2018). There are echoes of Eriksen’s (2022) concern for sensitising teachers to the broader work of decolonisation given the unsavoury views about the Sami, Black people, East Europeans and power discourses in general, in addition to competence in White literacies.

In Table 2, Dowling (2017, 258) reproduces one teacher educator’s memory of the rare encounter, or anticipation of an encounter, with ‘dark’ people in the big city. The citation is told through the objectifying White gaze which divests non-Whites (‘dark opponents’) of their subjectivity and reduces the encounter to a belligerent meeting of colours.

The team had to travel to the big city to play a match. We were constantly terrified of the dark opponents we could meet there. We were unaccustomed to ‘such types’ in our middle-class enclave. They could hurt us, hit us. They were more brutal, we thought. The excitement on the bus was palpable . . . we egged each other on!

Another teacher educator in Dowling’s (2017) study writes about an unpleasant experience in which, what she referred to as an ‘African girl’, refused to participate in a mandatory skiing activity. It is significant, from the viewpoint of critical Whiteness studies, that the teacher racially incarcerates the student in attributing her refusal to ski to an alleged ‘passive’ African culture.

The student began to cry. She just walks right past me and out of the auditorium. My feelings were very complex. How should I react? The student was overweight and came from another culture with little practice of being active. Both that she was overweight, Black and from another culture, made me unsure of how I should react (Dowling 2017, 261).

Dowling and Flintoff’s (2018) study of the physical education (PE) curriculum in Norway (Table 2) unpacks a discourse that privileges White PE practices and students as universal and normative while relegating the Sami culture and other minorities to the periphery of policy texts.

From our critical Whiteness perspective, we identify two main themes in the racial discourse of Whiteness in PE policy. Firstly, Whiteness is rendered invisible and constructed as a sort of neutral category that does not require naming. White experience and knowledge are universalised and taken to count for the experiences of everyone. Secondly, Whiteness is constructed as normative against which ethnic minorities are measured (Dowling and Flintoff 2018, 7).

Dowling and Flintoff’s (2018) study employing English and Norwegian teacher educators’ biographies reveals a discourse of meritocracy and equal treatment that silences the machinations of Whiteness. ‘Analyzing the “truths” in these narratives, shows how race is constructed in relation to others, leaving Whiteness unmarked. It is the Black and Pakistani students who are named’ (Dowling and Flintoff 2018, 129).

Where I work, we try to be a showcase for multiculturalism because as you know, we do have a considerable number of ethnic minority students . . . But they could use jargon about foreigners in the class that was borderline. Like, one time I overheard, ‘Heh, you Paki, pick up my rubbish’. Joking, but . . . And it’s like a question of when do you react? How many comments are too many? It’s difficult to put your finger on

something, but it's there, racism is there but you don't know how to deal with it (Dowling and Flintoff 2018, 129).

Discussion

Going beyond an essentialised and racialised discourse in education

The preponderance of a tiny number of academics in Whiteness studies, as the findings elicit, has been highlighted as a major challenge if the field is to gain traction in education in Norway. As the review shows, the six articles focusing on Whiteness in education in Norway are authored by six academics (if all authors are counted just once). Our review is limited in that we can only register the absence of male authors of Whiteness research in Norwegian education without pursuing this further.

Furthermore, and pertinent to this study's implications for teacher education, Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen (2018, 2019) and Eriksen's (2022) contention that White stakeholders operate from within an essentialised and racialised understanding of Norwegianness is apposite. We argue this will necessitate courses in teacher education specifically designed to sensitise student teachers to the machinations of this essentialised and racialised discourse. Given that one in five in Norway has an immigrant background, there is a need to review and amend extant educational literature to reflect this demographic shift to be more including and upend the current anomalous perception of Norwegians and blond-haired and blue-eyed in the main. Currently, such courses are non-existent in the main and, where taught, deferred to the discretion of lecturers. Researchers have long critiqued the under theorisation of race in Scandinavia in favour of words such as 'immigrants' and 'ethnicity', as the majority of articles demonstrate, due to race's conflation with classical biological racism, and dismissed as the preserve of a few on the fringe, such as neo-Nazis. According to Beach and Lunneblad (2011, 32) such terms function as proxies that circumlocute and euphemise the machinations of racism, which is ubiquitous in Scandinavia. Sweden, for instance, sterilised 60,000 racially mixed families, single mothers, and so-called travellers (Romany) between 1935 and 1974, and they add that 'things were similar but not as severe in Norway, Finland and Denmark' (Beach and Lunneblad 2011, 32). To be shocked is to embody the privilege of White 'innocence', according to Mulinari and Neergaard (2012, 14). In her work, Hooks (2013, 177) reminds us:

Throughout my work I emphasize that it is more useful for everyone (especially Black people/people of color) to think in terms of White supremacy rather than racism, because we usually associate racism with overt discriminatory acts of aggression by Whites against Black people, whereas White supremacy addresses the ideological and philosophical foundations of racism.

The salience of Whiteness in antiracist education

We argue for the salience of employing Whiteness explicitly as an analytical tool in antiracist education in Norway. Unfortunately, the current repertoire of terms long employed in antiracist education have been hijacked to mean different things to different

audiences. Fylkesnes, Mausestagen, and Nilsen (2018) have shown how words such as ‘the multicultural, multilingualism, bilingualism, minority, integration, inclusion, another nationality and from a different country’ have become euphemisms for Black and Brown non-westerners. Further studies of an explorative nature must be conducted in order to ascertain the reasons why so few White researchers in Norwegian education employ the term Whiteness, but based on our review, the lacuna in the literature resonates with DiAngelo’s (2016) concepts of ‘White solidarity’ and ‘White fragility’. DiAngelo (2016, 181) considers White solidarity ‘the unspoken agreement between Whites to maintain silence, not challenge each other, keep each other comfortable, and generally maintain the racist status quo and protect White privilege’. White fragility is defined in the following manner:

These include emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation. These responses work to re-estate White equilibrium as they repel the challenge, return our racial comfort, and maintain our dominance within the racial hierarchy. I conceptualize this process as *White fragility*. (DiAngelo 2018, 2)

Although anecdotal, two examples from Norwegian mediascape and academia highlight this determination to silence any discussion of Whiteness. A Norwegian professor of sociology for instance, who wrote in the national newspaper *Aftenposten* about her negative experiences being married to a Black-American in Norway to add her voice to the debate on racism and White supremacy in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd (Furuseth 2020), received only two positive comments of a total of twenty-five. Deleterious comments, such as, ‘she mentions the word “White privilege” nine times and wants to tell us how terrible the White person is’ predominated. While some studies in our review appeared to broach Whiteness studies, they clearly disavowed the underpinnings of the corpus of literature on White studies and were therefore not included in our study. For instance, Brossard and Harnes (2020, 287), write ‘The issue of colour, although important in Norwegian daily life and discriminatory practices is less salient in Norwegian discourses’, and hence their preference for the term ‘majority privilege’. We argue that this is an example of what Whiteness scholars have labelled ‘White Out’ (Collins and Alexander 2017, 2) where the aim is to blot out and obfuscate attempts at exposing Whiteness with a view towards concealing the intrigues of White supremacy. In general, we are of the opinion that the above attempt at ‘White Out’ is not an isolated phenomenon among some who otherwise champion diversity. One professor, a head of diversity studies, published an entire article denouncing, among others, structural racism in Norway and the concept’s founding father, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva:

It is naïve to embrace concepts developed by research activists with big egos and enormous ambitions, that their concepts and perspectives shall both establish completely new descriptions of reality and forge peace and justice. Eduardo and Johan Galtung, the fathers of the concepts structural racism and structural violence, two enormously influential researchers, without a doubt come under this category. (Brekke 2021)

We contend that such statements, echoing Bonilla-Silva’s (2020, 8) point that the notion of systemic racism appears ‘alien to Whites’, go some way to explain the challenges facing Whiteness studies in Norway, as also witnessed by the yawning lacuna in the literature, as our review show. In their book *Decolonizing the University*, Bhabra, Gebrial, and

Nişancıoğlu (2018, 232) highlight the term ‘undone science’ defined as ‘areas of research identified by social movements and other civil society organisations as having potentially broad social benefit that are left unfunded, incomplete, or generally ignored’. Whiteness studies are clearly perceived as iconoclastic in regard to White supremacy and, hence, can be subsumed under ‘undone science’.

Dowling’s (2017) study, employing White Norwegian teacher educators’ narrative biographies, revealed that their childhood memories were populated by homogenous, White spaces where non-Whites were perceived in exotic tropes. The above is commensurate with findings from the field of implicit racial bias. One of the world’s leading experts on implicit racial bias, Jennifer L. Eberhardt (2020), maintains that unconscious bias is ingrained even in well-meaning people and affects our visual perception, attention, memory and behaviour. According to her, racial categorisation is the brain’s way of bringing coherence to a chaotic world by relying on patterns that seem predictable. She goes on to state:

For example, in one study I conducted with Brent Hughes, Nicholas Camp and other colleagues at Stanford, we found that White participants exhibited less brain activity in brain areas that specialize in processing faces when shown Black faces than when shown White faces. I was struck by the dampened response to Black faces because it suggests the brain registered those faces in categorical terms. (Eberhardt 2020, 25)

What lessons can be drawn from the field of implicit racial bias following Eberhardt’s (2020) studies? These scientific findings undergird recommendations from scholars in Whiteness and anti-racism studies. As a first step, these findings must find their way into the teacher education curriculum. While teacher education courses feature words such as multicultural, diversity, intercultural etc., these hardly move beyond platitudes. Teacher education courses would benefit from workshops and seminars that employ a hands-on approach. Concretely, it is important to employ precise nomenclature related to Whiteness and its myriad permutations and explore ways of dismantling what Hooks (2013, 3) calls ‘the invisible and visible glue’ of White supremacist thinking which is ‘imprinted on the consciousness of every White child at birth and reinforced by the culture’. Not least, this training would not be complete unless we ask what damage the discourse of Whiteness inflicted upon non-Whites? According to Hooks (2013), White supremacy is not just about skin colour, it is about the plethora of ways all races internalise and perpetuate White supremacy.

The ‘Other’ Whites: the Sami and East Europeans

Eriksen’s (2020) study, in addition, shows that primary-level schoolchildren in Norway have a nuanced racial repertoire that not only operated on a traditional Black-White binary, but what we call ‘shades of White’. The students opined that Whiteness was one characteristic of being Norwegian. However, this pigmentocratic demarcation excluded ‘White’ Sami who were deemed ‘pale’ and not ‘White’ – hence not Norwegian. Teacher educators’ reflexive biographies in Flintoff’s (2017, 5, 8) research also identified this pigmentocratic stratification within Whiteness. She states, ‘in other texts we generated, the Sami, East Europeans (for example, they are “criminals”), or Polish labour

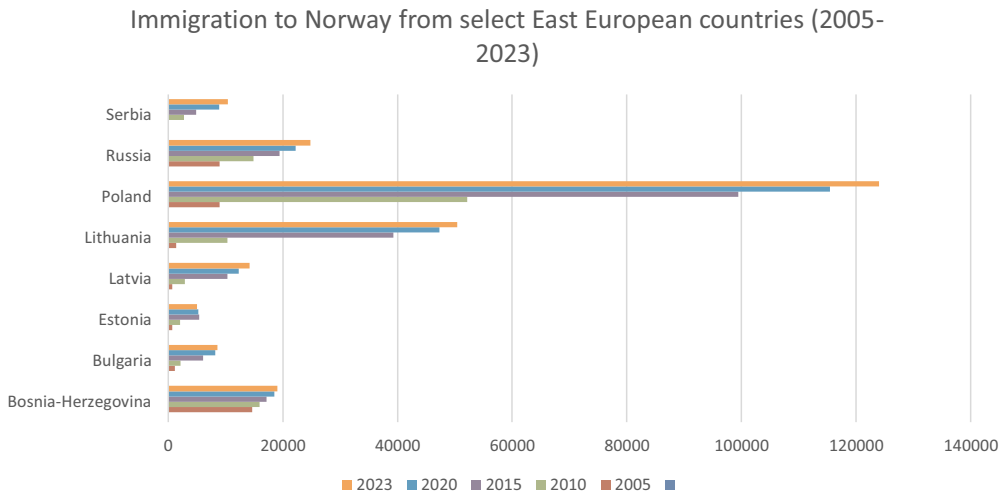


Figure 1. East Europeans in Norway.

immigrants (for example, they “steal” jobs from Norwegians), were marked out as inferior in a hierarchy of Whiteness’.

The above underscores the need for further Whiteness studies in Norway that consider the machinations of this ‘hierarchies of White’ continuum and its impact upon the schooling experience of students from East European countries. Since joining the European Union, this demographic has experienced an exponential rise and become the largest in Norway, with nearly one of four immigrants now coming from the former East bloc countries (see Figure 1). In fact, our review shows that while almost all studies touched upon this discrimination against other Whites, there was no sustained engagement. Understandably, the researchers had to maintain fidelity to their research objectives, but we are confident future research will grapple with this burgeoning issue, as the following citation from one study on immigrant employment hierarchies in Norway exhibits. A Norwegian hotel manager states:

The Eastern Europeans work really hard, but they don’t have the service attitude. They work for 14 hours straight, they don’t have to smile or think, they are like horses, you know. In many ways that’s good, but it can be a bit much. They are too hard. The social part is also important, right? I have noticed that the Eastern Europeans, they just don’t have that. That’s why they will never do really well here in Norway. The Swedes have done really great. I don’t think the Eastern Europeans will ever get to that level. (Friberg and Midtbøen 2018, 1472)

The dearth in Whiteness studies in Norway is bewildering given the seismic demographic changes in the last few decades. Wiggen (2012) emphasises the particular burden that Norway carries in light of the atrocious terrorist attacks committed by Anders Behring Breivik in 2011. Jim Wallis (2016), in his book, *America’s Original Sin*, writes about the urgency of dismantling racism buoyed by the changing demographic of the USA. But we are becoming, for the first time, a country with no single racial majority – having been from our beginnings a White-majority nation – we stand at another door which many White Americans are still fearful of passing through. (Wallis 2016, 10). In a similar vein,

the seismic changing demographic in a small country such as Norway, we argue, warrants more familiarity and research into the field of Whiteness studies. We argue that the general prevarication with respect to the use of the term Whiteness in Norway is a *dénouement* of White fragility and what Collins and Alexander (2017, 6) call the ‘White architecture of the mind’. The media and the predictable few people who dominate the comments section, politicians, academics who while advocating diversity clamorously work to expunge any mention of Whiteness, and a host of other abettors, consciously or unconsciously collude to disparage and discredit Whiteness as a viable analytical tool.

Dowling and Flintoff (2018, 9) raise the issue of Sami culture being confined to Sami schools, not Norwegian. While skiing was historically central to Sami culture, the sport has been coopted as Norway’s national sport sidelining its Sami roots and the fact that many non-ethnic Norwegians do not ski. Their comparative study of physical education documents in Norway and England shows how ‘Whiteness is rendered invisible and constructed as a sort of neutral category that does not require naming. White experience and knowledge are universalised and taken to count for the experiences of everyone’. The above resonates with DiAngelo’s (2018, 25) understanding of Whiteness as resting ‘upon a foundational premise: the definition of Whites as the norm or standard for human, and the people of colour as a deviation from that norm. Whiteness is not acknowledged by White people, and the White reference point is assumed to be universal and is imposed on everyone’.

Implications for teacher education

The implications for teacher training is twofold: first, to name and then expose the machinations of Whiteness followed by the equally important task of expunging any self-loathing internalised by victims of Whiteness. The internalised feelings of inferiority were previously distilled in Hooks (2013, 6) earlier statement: ‘All over the United States, parents who assume they have taught their families to be actively anti-racist are shocked when they discover that their children harbour intense anti-Black feelings’. One of the authors of this study, as a high school teacher in Norway some years ago, experienced the following in regard to what everyone, until then, assumed was an ethnic Norwegian student. Having taught a course about the importance of valorising difference in an increasingly globalised world, this student raised her hand and shared that she had a ‘confession’ to make – something which she had never done before (she was seventeen years old). ‘I am Sami’, she said. ‘I have always hidden this fact in Norway’. The entire class was stunned and silent for an extended period because no one thought this was possible in a country at ease with its image as a champion of human rights, tolerance and peace. The girl’s mother rang the main author to thank him for, as she put, fostering the conditions necessary for her daughter to be proud enough to articulate her heritage. Dowling and Flintoff (2018, 9) give expression to the negation and deprecation of Sami culture and, significantly, add:

Our analyses reveal how Whiteness is constructed along a hierarchy. Though inevitably interconnected to markers like social class and gender, awarding different status to different

individuals and groups, Whiteness is also stratified. The privilege of Whiteness is not evenly distributed among White people.

As the literature review demonstrated, the field of Whiteness research in education is dominated by young academics. The degree to which their older colleagues will be open and accommodating remains to be seen. The field of pedagogy in teacher education shies away from using terms like racism and Whiteness – euphemisms such as ethnicity and multiculturalism are preferred. It is argued that a younger cadre of academics, who are willing to challenge the current discourse of silence, will go some way in ameliorating the current stasis.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review of Whiteness in Norwegian education explored the status of the field and the implications for teacher educators. Whiteness is broached as a sociogenic rather than a phylogenetic phenomenon homologous with constructed social categories such as class. The study builds on theoretical insights derived from the field of Whiteness studies where White is not merely a neutral biological descriptor but becomes the standard or norm for human, rendering non-Whites an aberration from the norm of Whiteness. While the tentacle-like reach of White privilege is suffused into every aspect of society, the White beneficiary is ‘meant’ to remain oblivious to these perquisites. The concept of Whiteness is not static, however, but shifts contingent on the exigencies of ‘who is and who is not included in the exclusive club’ (Andrews and Andrews 2018, 196).

We have shown how despite entering several lexical variants associated with Whiteness studies in Norwegian education, in English and Norwegian, our search turned up only six peer-reviewed journal articles: five in English and one in Norwegian. Furthermore, five of these publications featured the same main authors (Fylkesnes and Dowling). We have suggested that stakeholders in politics, media and academia – who either deny the existence of Whiteness or prefer euphemisms such as ‘diversity studies’ and ‘majority privilege’ – are partially responsible for the paucity in Whiteness studies. We are also cognisant that perhaps Whiteness is in its infancy in Norway due to the relative novelty of immigration.

The review of the articles evinces several commonalities. ‘Norwegianness’ is discursively positioned as the quintessential ‘Whiteness’ despite platitudes paying homage to terms such as ‘multicultural citizenship and diversity’, among others (Fylkesnes, Mausethagen, and Nilsen 2018; Fylkesnes 2019; Eriksen 2020). There is a call for teacher education to understand the untenable position of simultaneously claiming to empathise with the pain of non-White students while calcifying their otherness. Teacher education courses would need to furnish student teachers with the linguistic and analytical tools developed by scholars in the field of Whiteness studies. The authors have introduced Whiteness studies in their respective courses in teacher education with overall positive feedback. Our study has also drawn attention to the concomitant challenge of exploring ways of identifying and redressing the deleterious effects of an internalised discourse of White supremacy on the part of non-White students. This would go some way in grappling with the imbricated and matrix-like nature of Whiteness as Hooks (2013) and Foucault (1977) remind us with respect to White supremacy and the discourse of power respectively.

Finally, we have highlighted the urgency for further Whiteness studies in Norway to consider the machinations of what has been called a ‘hierarchy of White’ continuum and its impact upon the schooling experience of students from ‘otherized’ White backgrounds such as the Sami and burgeoning East European demographic.

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