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Belonging in Brexit Britain: Central and Eastern European 1.5 generation young people's experiences

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the experiences of young people born in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) who are part of the 1.5 migrant generation living in "Brexit Britain." We focus on two key themes: (a) young people's feelings of belonging to Britain, their countries of birth and Europe, and the ways in which these have been impacted by the EU Referendum result; (b) young people's future plans, in an inter-generational context, with particular regard to their feelings of belonging and the ruptures of migration and Brexit. Britain's decision to leave the EU caused uncertainty for CEE 1.5 generation young people at a time when many of them were consciously reflecting on their beings, becomings, and belongings. The majority of young people asserted a sense of belonging to Britain whilst simultaneously feeling a sense of "in-between-ness." Many young people wanted to remain living in Britain, at least in the short term, and felt a sense of belonging to Britain. Our focus on the potential intergenerational impact of Brexit suggests that CEE young people and parents may view possibilities for the future differently; we examine some of the key reasons for these differences from the young people's perspectives.

KEYWORDS

1.5 generation, Brexit, Central and Eastern Europe, migration, young people

1 | INTRODUCTION

"Brexit means Brexit," the Prime Minister, Theresa May, famously declared in the aftermath of the EU Referendum in June 2016. At the time of writing, in June 2018, Britain has triggered Article 50, and negotiations on Britain's exit from the EU are ongoing. However, the public is still unclear over the details of what kind of relationship Britain will have with the EU once it leaves in March 2019, if the agreed period of negotiations is not extended by agreement with the EU member states. What has become clear, in the time since the 2016 Referendum, is that Brexit is very likely to have significant implications not just for Britain's place in Europe, but also for its demographic makeup and promoted national identity.

A significant aspect in the build-up to the Brexit Referendum was the debate on immigration. Questioning the exclusively economic explanation for the majority pro-Brexit vote, Virdee and McGeever (2017) examine the discursive dimensions of the Leave campaign and show how this was built on a narrative which aimed to reinstate the sovereign will of the British people, exemplified through slogans such as "Let's take back control." Indeed, the Leave campaign led by both the UKIP party and sections of the Conservative party focused on a politics of reasserting Britishness as an identity which must be preserved and reasserted in the face of the threat of increasing immigration. Virdee and McGeever (2017) call this a politics of nationalist resentment, which comes in a long history of racialised identities constructed in relation to migrants and feelings of national belonging, and debates on who has a right to belong. Stocker

(2017) traces the re-emergence of anti-immigration discourse and popular racism against Commonwealth migration to Enoch Powell's 1968 "rivers of blood" speech and Margaret Thatcher's 1978 "swamping" statement. The government's rhetoric on race, culture, and national identity and the politics of racial and migrant resentment have been perpetuated in the posteconomic collapse of 2008 by New Labour's administration (led by Gordon Brown) with the well-publicised slogan of "British jobs for British workers," the rise of the UKIP who led a sustained anti-immigration campaign, and the more recent anti-EU slogans from Conservative's Theresa May in 2016: "If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere."

Britain has experienced significant in-migration following the accession of 10 Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to the EU successively in 2004 and 2007. Of the 3,650,000 EU nationals esti-mated as currently living in the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2017a), about half (1,876,000) are from the EU8 and EU2 countries. Around a quarter of all EU migrants in Britain are Polish (1,000,000), followed by Irish (398,000), Romanian (340,000), German (299,000), Italian (267,000), and Lithuanian nationals (190,000). Of the 228,000 EU nationals residing in Scotland, the majority (128,000) are from the EU accession states, especially Poland (ONS, 2017a). The unpredicted wave of postaccession mobility is geographically diverse and whilst a large proportion of migrants reside in large urban areas, rural, and semiurban areas have also experienced demographic changes (De Lima, 2012; Shubin, 2012). However, despite research showing the economic benefits of migration (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014), structural disadvantage and discrimination among CEE migrants is widely evidenced (McGhee, Heath, & Trevena, 2013; Moskal, 2016).

The anti-immigration rhetoric and the message of re-gaining power and control from the EU over national affairs were clearly determining aspects of the Brexit vote, whilst public attitudes to immi-gration and the EU were shown to turn increasingly negative as the referendum campaign progressed (Clarke, Goodwin, & Whiteley, 2017). The sharp increase in the number of hate crime and online "xeno-racism" incidents recorded by the police in the month after the referendum was another clear sign of racist hate, with many White migrants, especially Polish, reported as victims (Burnett, 2016).

Recent population statistics (ONS, 2017b) show that UK net migration has seen a significant decrease since the Brexit Referendum, with lower numbers of EU nationals arriving in the United Kingdom (about 19% fewer), and a significant increase (29%) in the number of EU nationals leaving the United Kingdom when compared with the previous year (2016). Whilst the referendum vote was clearly linked to the increasing rate of net migration Britain has experienced since EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the (non-British and non-Irish) EU citizens residing in the United Kingdom were cast as "the others" in the referendum debate, with a clear denial of their voice or scope for active citizenship through voting rights. Unlike local, and in some cases national, elections, where EU nationals with settled status could vote, the Brexit Referendum was constructed as a "British-only mat-ter," an issue of British national identity. As most EU nationals residing in Britain do not have British citizenship (ONS, 2017a), either by choice or because of the costly and complicated process of securing it, they found themselves powerless spectators in the vote which decided their future—as EU nationals living in a soon-to-be non-EU country.

This paper examines the experiences of CEE-born young people who arrived in the United Kingdom as children, mainly as a result of their parents' (defined as first generation) decision to take advantage of free movement within the EU, and have lived here for 3 years or more. Whilst it is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the number of CEE-born young people currently living in the United Kingdom (defined as the 1.5 generation), ONS (2017a) figures estimate that about 815,000 non-British EU citizens (not exclusively from CEE countries) are under the age of 16, with about 300,000 of them being born in the United Kingdom (second generation). This suggests that about 500,000 young people aged under 16 have migrated to the United Kingdom as children from other EU states. In addition, other young people aged 16–18 who are possibly part of the 1.5 generation are recorded as adult migrants in the ONS statistics.

A person's age at the time of a key life transition—such as migra-tion, and now Brexit—is crucial to understanding the ways in which they become involved in new regimes and societies (Fulbrook, 2011). The 1.5 generation CEE migrants who are the focus of this paper represent a unique group, as a result of experiencing part of their formative socialisation in their country of origin and another part in their country of destination. For the young people in our study, who were born in CEE countries, but many of whom have lived most of their formative years in the United Kingdom, what it means to belong in Britain is being deconstructed during the crucial time of their transitions from childhood to youth and adulthood, due to Brexit.

In this paper, conceptual understandings of belonging relating to migrant children are deepened as the uncertainty caused by the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU has occurred at a time when many CEE-born young people are consciously reflecting on who they are (their beings), who they can be (their becomings), and where and who they do/will feel attached to (their belongings). For CEE-born young people who have spent much of their childhood in the United Kingdom, have experienced a large proportion (if not all) of their edu-cation in the British education system and cannot necessarily remem-ber living in their origin countries (even though they might often visit them), the multiple impacts of Brexit are highly significant. Population geographers have emphasised the importance of life course transitions and overlapping (family) life courses (Tyrrell & Kraftl, 2015), and in this paper, we show how Brexit may cause a significant and unexpected rupture (Coe, Reynolds, Boehm, Meredith Hess, & Rae-Espinoza, 2011; King, 2018) in CEE migrant young people's life courses—their beings, becomings, and belongings—which will have lasting impacts. The ways in which Brexit will impact upon their decision-making in a whole host of areas—education, employment, migration, family life— have yet to be played out. By focusing on CEE young people's opinions and experiences in the period between the referendum result and the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, this paper provides some illumina-tion on the question many people living in and beyond the United Kingdom are considering—"What next?" We examine young people's feelings of belonging to Britain, their countries of birth, and Europe and the ways in which these have been impacted by the EU Referen-dum result. We then take an intergenerational perspective to explore the future plans of the young people, with particular regard to their feelings of belonging and the ruptures of migration and Brexit.

2 | MULTIPLE BELONGINGS AND RUPTURES: EXPERIENCES OF CEE 1.5 GENERATION MIGRANTS

The life stage of childhood, with its blurred boundaries, is often considered as highly significant for psychosocial development—composing of a dialectic of "being" and "becoming" (Tisdall & Punch, 2012; Worth, 2009). Recently, greater consideration of young people's social relationships in different contexts has led to some researchers moving beyond the commonly accepted duality of young people as "being" and "becoming" (James & Prout, 1997) to an extended typology that includes "belonging" (Sumsion & Wong, 2011; Tisdall & Punch, 2012). Drawing on theoretical work on identity and belonging, child migration researchers have emphasised the need to recognise young people's experiences of migration in the "here and now" and how it is intertwined with their feelings of identity and belonging (Ní Laoire, Carpena-Mendez, Tyrrell, & White, 2010; Tyrrell, White, Ní Laoire, & Carpena-Mendez, 2012; White, Ní Laoire, Tyrrell, & Carpena-Mendez, 2011). Migration during childhood, particularly in Europe, often has been viewed as a rupture in young people's lives—a rupture in the perceived norm of residential fixity, disturbing young people's social networks, and interfering with their educational pathways. CEE young people's experiences of migration as rupture (Coe et al., 2011), overlaid by Brexit uncertainty, are interrogated further in this paper, with a focus on their feelings of belonging and plans for the future within an intergenerational context.

The 1.5 generation occupy a unique place of "in-between-ness" that first and second generation migrants do not have (Vildaitė, 2016). Where the literature broadly suggests that first generation migrants identify more with their country of origin and second generation migrants identify more with their country of destination, 1.5 generation migrants tend towards more complex identities that may include multiple conceptions of home and belonging (Gardner, 2012; Kim & Duff, 2012; Ní Laoire et al., 2010; Zubida, Lavi, Harper, Nakash, & Shoshani, 2013). This sense of in-between-ness often felt by 1.5 generation migrants may take several forms: (a) in-between origin and destination; (b) in-between youth and adulthood; and (c) in-between majority and minority cultures in the host society (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008: 68). In-between-ness leads to multiple feelings of belonging and unbelonging and can have a significant impact on the settlement process itself and on the outcomes of settlement, at a critical stage in the psychosocial development of young people.

Prior to Brexit, the continuum of belonging–unbelonging sometimes had been overlooked in research with adult migrants within the EU (see Ryan, 2018), perhaps due to the assumption of unproblematic belonging being inherent in free movement. Studies of child migrants in Europe, however, have focused explicitly on these issues because of the immediacy associated with "integrating" young people into schools and communities. They have explored young migrants' feelings of belonging, social construction of identities, and their reflexivity in social positionings (see Forbes & Sime, 2016; Moskal & Tyrrell, 2016; Ní Laoire et al., 2010; Ross, 2015; Sime & Fox, 2015; Tyrrell et al., 2012).

Recent research that has focused on EU migrants' experiences since Brexit has highlighted the disruption to the belonging–unbelonging continuum for young adults. For example, Lulle, Moroşanu, and King (2018), in a recent study of EU-born youth aged 18–35 living in London, showed the affective impact of Brexit and how they experienced "othering" in the referendum. With the prospect of losing their privileges as EU nationals, many said Brexit has made them consider their settlement plans more seriously, by thinking about securing citizenship or moving on to other countries. Drawing on Bauman's (2000) concept of "liquid migration," Lulle et al. show that for many young adults the characteristics of liquid migration, such as temporariness, unpredictability, and openness to new experiences and places, have been undermined by Brexit as political rupture. Brexit was also seen by many EU migrants as a destabiliser to their sense of belonging in the United Kingdom. Whilst for the first generation migrants in their study the possibilities for work and unrestricted mobility were the main concerns, there were also emotional consequences, expressed as anger, consternation, and rejection experienced postreferendum.

Many of the young people in our study had migrated to Britain to join parents who had migrated first, that is, they experienced reunification with family members in the United Kingdom, and as such can be called 1.5 generation migrants. Some of their parents may have begun their moves to the United Kingdom engaged in Bauman's (2000) "liquid migration", but family attachments, the desire to live with their children and provide them a better life in Britain (rather than sending remittances home for them) led to the reestablishment of daily family connectivity in the United Kingdom. Once stable employment and housing had been secured in the United Kingdom, sometimes a process which took several years, young people joined their parents and the family was re-unified. In some families, only some of the children moved to the United Kingdom, leaving siblings in their birth country for reasons such as age or stage of education. In other families, the intention had been that the migration period would be short, but as circumstances changed, they had decided to stay. Parents' concern for children's education and well-being—fear that they would not settle back into the school system in the home country or that their education and employment prospects were better in the United Kingdom—and children's own expressed desire to remain in the United Kingdom often influenced these familial decisions. These processes of family migration from CEE countries to Britain can be succinctly summed up in the wider definition of "lifestyle migration" that King (2018) has espoused in research with CEE young adult migrants in Europe. He suggests that lifestyle migration is about more than having leisure and relaxation (see O'Reilly & Benson, 2009)—for young adult CEE migrants, it is about getting better and higher paid work (King, 2018). For CEE family migrants, it is about a better quality of family life that Britain offered them. The result of these migration decisions and processes has been that in spite of migration flow predictions, CEE parents and children are one of the largest migrant groups living in communities across Britain.

3 | METHODOLOGY

This paper draws on findings from the "Here to Stay? Identity, citizenship and belonging among settled Eastern European migrant children and young people in the UK"[1] project. The project used multiple methods to explore the lives of young people (aged 12–18) who arrived in the United Kingdom as migrant children from CEE countries

and have lived in the United Kingdom for at least 3 years. The data discussed in the paper are from an online survey of over 1,100 CEE-born young people who had lived in the United Kingdom for 3 years or more, interviews with adult stakeholders and 20 focus groups with young CEE-born migrants aged 12–18 in England and Scotland.[2]

The online survey took place between October 2016 and April 2017, a few months after the June 2016 EU Referendum. In total, 1,120 young people participated in the survey, with 806 full completions.[3] Advertised through schools and social media, the survey attracted mainly young people aged 16–18 (68%), whereas 32% of respondents were aged 12–15. There were more female respondents (60%) than male (38%), and the vast majority of respondents (97%) identified as White (n = 1,062). Over half of the respondents were Polish (56%), followed by Romanian (10%) and Lithuanian (9%) nationals. The other 25% of the respondents were originally born in other EU and non-EU countries to Eastern European parents. Most respondents lived in England (71%) and some in Scotland (19%), whereas 10% did not give their current location. Over a third said they had lived in the United Kingdom for 10 or more years. Data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics.

In-depth semistructured interviews were carried out with stakeholders from a range of organisations working with CEE-born migrant young people across the United Kingdom. These included senior representatives and frontline staff such as English as an additional language managers and teachers (7), education managers (5), social work, health and psychological services (4), police (2), and voluntary sector and diaspora organisations (9). All interviews were transcribed and coded using a thematic analysis approach.

In addition to the interviews with stakeholders and the survey, 20 focus groups were carried out with young people who met the inclusion criteria (born to CEE parents and had lived in the United Kingdom for 3 years or more). These focus groups took place in schools, community and diaspora groups across the United Kingdom and explored in detail some of the emergent issues from the survey, focusing on feelings of identity and belonging, access and use of local services, and the implications of Brexit. In total, 122 young people (55 female and 57 male participants), all aged 12–18, were involved in the focus groups which took place between May and November 2017 across the United Kingdom in urban (11), semiurban (3), and rural (6) areas. The focus groups used a toolkit for creative engagement called Ketso (www.ketso.com) to allow all of the young people to fully participate in the group discussions. The Ketso toolkit was used by participants to express ideas on issues posed to them by writing or drawing on "leaves", which are then displayed by group agreement in creative ways to represent the range of ideas on the topics posed to the group. During the activity, new issues emerged and all individuals had an equal chance to contribute, as the activity allowed participants to contribute through written or spoken words and visuals. The issues we used to structure the focus groups included relationships, places, belonging, citizenship, and identities.

All focus groups and interviews took place in English and were recorded and transcribed in full, in order to allow in-depth thematic analysis. To develop the analytical framework, three interview transcripts were coded independently by the research team, who then agreed on a framework for analysis to be applied to the remaining interview data. The same process was used in the analysis of the focus group data. Separate coding frames were developed for the interview and focus group data sets to reflect their different foci and contexts. The remainder of the paper discusses the findings in relation to two key themes which emerged from the analysis: (a) how 1.5 generation CEE migrants living in Britain feel about Brexit in relation to their experiences of childhood migration and their feeling of belongings to Britain, their birth country, and Europe; and (b) what their plans and their parents' plans are in the context of Brexit.

4 | "IT'S COMPLICATED": BREXIT UNCERTAINTY AND RUPTURED BELONGINGS

In this section, we explore how 1.5 generation CEE young people living in Britain felt about Brexit during the period immediately after the EU Referendum result. We pay particular attention to their feelings of belonging to Britain, their countries of birth, and the EU in the context of their previous migrations. Brexit has been described as "rupture" (King, 2018), and for the majority of the young people in our study, the rupture that Brexit represents in their lives has been layered on top of the experience of migration to the United Kingdom as a rupture in their childhood.

Many of the young people in the study perceived Brexit to be significant challenge, compounding the challenges they had faced since moving to Britain during childhood—moving home, learning English, going to school, making friends, and living in new communities. As Ní Laoire et al. (2010) highlighted in their study of CEE migrant young people living in Ireland, migration means doing childhood differently—in different places, with different people and with different resources. For some young people, the rupture caused by migration when they moved to Britain several years ago had resulted in them experiencing multiple difficulties, particularly with socialisation.

> I think moving country at the age of eight-and-a-half messed something up in my head a bit, because when I was a kid, I was very social and active, but since coming to UK I have become a lot more introverted. Secondly, I feel like I don't belong anywhere now, as I will never be British or understand the ways of British and I don't feel fully Latvian and certainly cannot relate to people there [...]. (Survey Respondent, female, 14, from Latvia)

> I moved when I was nine and found it extremely hard to integrate and I had to learn English from almost scratch, losing social skills throughout that period and became more introverted. When a child is around the age of ten and moves to another country, it is hard for them to fully be able to identify with either country and hence if one wants to take their child somewhere else, it best be at an early age. (Survey Respondent, male, 17, from Poland)

For young people who had experienced intense or protracted difficulties associated with their migration to Britain, Brexit uncertainty represented another rupture in their lives that created disturbance

to their feelings of belonging. However, simply returning to their country of birth was considered by the majority of young people to be problematic, because their experiences of migration and living in Britain had ruptured their sense of belonging to their home country. The uncertainty over their migration status that Brexit introduced had reawakened or reinforced their sense of unbelonging to Britain.

> I don't feel as much as a part of England after Brexit as I'm uncertain of the future. However, I don't feel as a part of Lithuania and I couldn't go back there. (Survey Respondent, female, 14, from Lithuania)

> I feel Polish but I don't want to go back to Poland. I want to stay here. (Focus Group Participant, female, 16, from Poland)

Many young people occupied an in-between space that has been identified in other research with 1.5 generation young people (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008; Gardner, 2012; Ní Laoire et al., 2010), a space that they had been prompted to both reflect upon and experience more since the EU Referendum result.

> If I leave the UK I'm f*****, man. I can't speak Polish that well nor write it. I'm planning to stay for life. In terms of short term plans, I intend to go to university. I don't like to identify as Polish, but I don't feel English either. It's complicated LOL, I feel human I suppose;-) (Survey Respondent, male, 18, from Poland)

> I would like people to understand that neither countries feel like a home to someone like me. [...] My family doesn't really see me as a Pole and the people here don't see me as a British person. (Survey Respondent, female, 14, from Poland)

The vast majority of the participants in the study (92%) had retained citizenship of their country of birth, even though many of them had been in the United Kingdom for more than 5 years. Research has shown, however, that some young people do not choose to express one particular national identity or assert a sense of belonging to an individual nation; instead, young people may live out multibelonging, with feelings of attachment being felt and expressed in different ways at different times and scale (Ní Laoire et al., 2010). This was the experience for some of the young people in our study during the period of Brexit uncertainty. Many of them had been shocked by the result of the EU Referendum, and in our survey, 81% of young people did not feel hopeful about their futures because of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU. The EU Referendum result and the uncertainty caused by the Brexit political discourse had prompted many of our survey respondents to consider (or reconsider) their sense of belonging to the United Kingdom. For example, the majority of respondents said that they felt a sense of belonging to the United Kingdom: 29.4% said they "definitely" felt that they belonged in the United Kingdom, 33.2% said that they felt they belonged "most of the time," and 20.1% said they felt that they belonged "a little." For them, Brexit had not meant that they had stopped feeling this sense of belonging, but it had prompted them to explore their social positioning—how they are viewed by those

external to themselves—and in some cases, to question their right to belong in Britain as non-British EU citizens. The future lives they had planned were now perceived as being less influenced by their own decision-making than they had thought prior to the referendum and, therefore, as more precarious.

> I feel like I belong in the UK, however I am fearful of what will happen now. I'm scared for my future and how the Referendum will affect me. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Poland)

> Because of Brexit, my future is uncertain. [...] Something might change for people who are not originally from the country, so maybe the employment and stuff. (Focus Group Participant, male, 16, from Bulgaria)

Furthermore, 56.4% of survey respondents felt uncertain about Brexit, 54.1% felt worried and 27% felt scared.[4] The questioning of their right to have moved to the United Kingdom, the lack of certainty over their right to continue living here and what "settled status" will mean in reality, has left many CEE young people fearful for their futures, even if they felt a sense of belonging to the United Kingdom.

> Because of the Referendum I am scared to be living here for the first time in my life. I have been living here for over 10 years. It is my home. The thought of leaving it behind, terrifies me. [...] This is our home and it breaks my heart that in a couple of years it may not be home anymore. (Survey Respondent, female, 15, from Poland)

> I feel like Brexit has created a lot of uncertainty around my university application, universities are asking more questions and there is no definite answer whether it's possible for my fees to go up whilst I'm at university. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Poland)

Other young people in the survey and focus groups expressed a very strong sense of belonging to the United Kingdom and described Britain as their home, even if they were not British citizens. They did not feel a sense of in-between-ness that is common for 1.5 generation migrants. Our survey analysis showed that feelings of belonging to the United Kingdom were stronger the longer young people had lived in the United Kingdom.[5]

> Well, firstly I suppose I have to say I don't really think of myself as an immigrant. I lived here for most of my life and until the Brexit Referendum results came in, I didn't really reflect, acknowledge or even consider how being born in Poland could possibly impact my life, mainly because I never thought it would. [...] For the most part, I treat my Polish identity as more of a quirky quality than a defining factor of my personhood (which is again unnerving, when I reflect on what a big impact it could potentially have on my life in a post Brexit Britain). (Survey Respondent, female, 18, from Poland)

> I love this country, I love every inch of the beautiful, green British land and countryside. I am very grateful that I was allowed to move to this country and settle here among

very tolerant, friendly, multicultural society and, most of all, British citizens. My family was given an opportunity for a new life, new home and future along with my education, health care services and government support. I feel like I have debt to British nation that I want to repay by my future job aspiration in service in the British army or police. [...] I do also hope for changes that will make lives better in the UK after Brexit for everyone. (Survey Respondent, male, 17, from Poland)

Only 3.9% of survey respondents said that they "definitely" did not feel that they belonged in Britain, and Brexit was reinforcing these feelings of unbelonging.

I have never felt English or British and since Brexit I feel more Polish than ever. [...] I have no intentions of staying in the UK for university, as I simply don't belong here. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Poland)

A source of continuity for many young people since they had experienced the rupture of intra-EU migration during childhood and were now experiencing Brexit uncertainty whilst living in Britain was to express a strong feeling of belonging to Europe; 92.4% of survey respondents said that they felt European. Despite Brexit, a sense of connection and belonging to Europe, the belonging which had enabled their free movement to Britain in the first place, was felt keenly. However, some young people were now grappling with how their sense of belonging to Europe was impacted by Britain's decision to leave the EU.

I feel like a European more than anything. The Brexit Referendum has me severely worried for the future of this country, its people and foreigners living here. (Survey Respondent, male, 16, from Czech Republic)

I don't consider myself as belonging in Hungary or the UK entirely, although I feel that I mainly belong in the UK. I consider myself an EU national and would love to maintain that right. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Hungary)

I feel very connected to Europe and European culture. There has been some concern regarding whether I want to stay in this country in the future due to the political changes happening in the UK. I am considering moving to the EU after finishing university, despite the fact I enjoy living in this country. (Survey Respondent, male, 18, from Latvia)

In summary, in our study a small number of CEE 1.5 generation young people felt a very strong sense of belonging to Britain and called Britain "home." A small number of young people felt the opposite—their country of birth was their "home," and they did not feel any sense of belonging to Britain. The vast majority of young people did express some feeling of belonging to Britain but also felt a sense of "in-between-ness." These findings support other research with 1.5 generation migrants and the idea that migration during childhood is an experience of rupture. However, our research also shows that, for some CEE young people, Brexit has ruptured their developing sense

of belonging to Britain because their right to belong (as EU citizens) has been called into question at a time when they were planning their futures. As they were overcoming the rupture of childhood migration itself, Brexit has introduced another rupture in their lives, one that was unexpected, but is highly significant for their future plans. These multiple ruptures go some way towards explaining why so many CEE 1.5 generation young people expressed worry about what Brexit might entail for them (and for others), and uncertainty when planning for their futures.

5 | "WHAT NEXT?": YOUNG PEOPLE'S BREXIT PLANS IN INTERGENERATIONAL CONTEXT

The vast majority of young people in our study expressed a desire to remain living in Britain, at least in the short term, despite Brexit. About 75.2% of survey respondents said they were "likely" or "very likely" to continue living in the United Kingdom. Given that the majority of CEE-born young people in our study expressed some degree of feeling that they belonged to the United Kingdom, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of them would like to continue to live in the United Kingdom.

I very much feel like a part of the UK, which is why Brexit makes me sad. They're cutting away from the EU, so people who move here after Brexit will feel like they don't belong or are intruding, and no one should feel that way. (Survey Respondent, female, 16, from Poland)

Although the EU referendum has made the futures of many European migrants uncertain, I love this country and will do anything in my power to stay here as it is my home. (Survey Respondent, female, 15, from Poland)

However, the expressed desire of many of the CEE young people to stay living in Britain needs to be considered within the context of both their everyday lives and the life course. For some young people, the familiarity of their everyday routines and networks provided security in the midst of Brexit uncertainty and rupture; it was the stability of their everyday lives that they were seeking to preserve by wanting to remain in Britain. This is similar to the findings of research with young migrants in other contexts, where "the everyday" is crucial to their experiences of, and plans for, migration (see Coe et al., 2011). Many of the young people were ambitious for their futures and were considering the next stage in their life course when deciding whether or not they wanted to remain in Britain. Often, they wanted to finish their education in Britain (70.2% of survey respondents) and make the most of the educational opportunities that they thought living in Britain offered them, but Brexit had introduced uncertainty into their plans.

I have big aspirations for my future in terms of education and I dream to attend Oxbridge, but I fear for my future in England due to Brexit ... tuition fees ... visas ... citizenship ... student loans .... (Survey Respondent, female, 15, from Romania)

[...] Because of Brexit, I do not know whether university fees will be higher for me or not - I don't know whether

I would get a student loan, even if I got into a university here. I do hope to study in the UK though. However, after my studies, if living in the UK turns out to be harder after leaving the EU, I would return to the EU or the EEA (preferably France or Norway). (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Poland)

In their study of Polish adult migrants, McGhee, Moreh, and Vlachantoni (2017) argue that basic socio-economic and demographic factors are inadequate to explain future migration and civic integration plans. Instead, they assert that interest in and awareness of one's rights and anxieties about the ability to maintain one's rights in the future are stronger determinants. Whether young people are allowed to remain living in the United Kingdom depends on the arrangements that the British government put in place for non-British EU citizens when Britain is no longer part of the EU and the majority of young people were very aware of this.[6]

I hope me and my family will stay here, that Brexit won't make us leave England, as I prefer living here than in Poland. England is my new home now and I feel like I'm part English. (Survey Respondent, female, 16, from Poland)

I'm not sure whether I will be sent back with my family, back to my Home country? (Survey Respondent, female, 14, from Poland)

The status and rights of non-British EU citizens living in the United Kingdom have retained a high profile since the Brexit negotiations between Britain and the EU began. British citizenship is costly and the detailed arrangements of "settled status" for non-British EU nationals are unclear (see Roulet, 2018). Although the majority of the young people had retained the citizenship of their birth country and had not become British citizens, more of them were making citizenship applications and some families were prioritising children's applications:

I am worried about the legal safety of people like me. My parents are currently sorting out legal documents (permanent residency, British citizenship etc.) to ensure that we are completely safe from any changes to laws that may happen after leaving the EU. It is an uncertain time, and despite promises that EU citizens living here already will be safe and will not be deported etc., it leaves us in a vulnerable and uncomfortable position. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Hungary)

It's unfair that we need to apply for British citizenship and spend a lot of money, when a lot of people can't afford it, but have become part of the British community. (Survey Respondent, male, 16, from Poland)

During the period of Brexit uncertainty, CEE young people and their families were experiencing personal insecurity about their future lives, and this was having an immediate and deeply felt impact. The young people in our study often discussed the intergenerational differences that were occurring within their families with regard to their plans for the future in the context of the EU Referendum result. Strategies for overcoming the uncertainty that the Brexit rupture has caused—specifically rights to remain living, being educated and working in the United Kingdom—were not always perceived similarly by parents and children (from the young people's perspectives).

My parents want to move out [of the UK], but I started school here and don't want any complications regarding the school system. Unlike many English kids my age, I want a well-paid career. (Survey Respondent, female, 14, from Poland)

Drawing on recent migration studies that have highlighted the importance of intergenerational relations and overlapping life courses (Sime & Pietka-Nykaza, 2015; Tyrrell et al., 2012), it is important to consider the wider ramifications of Brexit uncertainty for CEE young people in the context of their family lives. As many of these young people are transitioning from childhood to youth and adulthood, they are also experiencing transitions associated with migration changed by Brexit. Some young people felt that their parents had always considered returning to their country of origin as an option, but that Brexit had made it more of a possibility than before. This discussion from a focus group gives an interesting account of the intergenerational decisions that were being discussed in some CEE families in Brexit Britain, within the wider context of their migration experiences:

Participant 1: Yeah, my mum and dad were discussing about moving back, the same with him as well [meaning Participant 3].

Participant 2: And me. But I want to stay here for now and go to America.

Participant 1: Because since they dragged us out here at such a young age, we are used to living here and we do not want to move back because we'd have to learn the language over again, since we are starting to forget it. And then we would have to go back to school for another year.[...]

Interviewer 1: Is there anywhere that's problematic for you that you would not go?

Participant 1: Back to our original country.

Participant 3: Yeah. I mean, I'd go on holiday, obviously, but not to stay there.

Participant 2: Yeah, it's just not right, I guess. [...] They have [parents] been talking about going back ever since we got here. They do not feel very comfortable here, so they just want to move back.[...]

Participant 1: My parents have wanted to go back since Brexit started, like the rumour around it. They started wanting to go back more and more. They were thinking about going back as soon as I finish Year 11, but then they changed it until I finish college. [...]They think it'd be better for us, but we think different, because we know what it's like and we are used to living here. Our parents are quite old and they are (laughs) used to that lifestyle and the way to live down there, and we are used to living here.

(Participant 1: male, 16, from Poland; Participant 2: male, 15, from Poland; Participant 3: male, 15, from Slovakia)

The period of Brexit uncertainty has called CEE young people's right to belong in the United Kingdom into question and caused uncertainty over their futures in the United Kingdom, at the time that many of them were becoming young adults and reflexively negotiating their feelings of belonging. If they were of an age when they and their parents felt that they could make independent decisions, then they might experience the rupture of family fragmentation (again)—with family members deciding differently about whether to leave or remain—and potentially the rupture of another migration, this time out of Britain. The possibility of intergenerational divergence was recognised by some of the stakeholder interviewees. They felt that Brexit had caused further uncertainty for these young people at a critical point in the life course.

> Some families where maybe the longer-term plan has never been to always remain in Scotland, there's always been an intention, not a firm plan, but an intention to return at some point. And then young people are getting to the stage where they're making their own plans for their future, and do they then make their plans for remaining in Scotland where they've formed friendships, they've got a network, or do they think about returning? And if so, what does that look like? (Stakeholder Interviewee – EAL teacher, Scotland)

> I suppose what really comes to mind is around families where there's a sense of, particularly in the current climate, where there's an increasing sense of uncertainty, you know, about whether the families are always going to remain the UK, leave UK, you know. It's a very troubling, difficult thing as a teenager, having to make decisions at that age at the same time as thinking about studies and, you know, potential career paths, but also uncertain as to whether your family's going to remain in UK, move back to Poland, then you're going to lose your friends that you've made, in fact you're going to have to make another big shift in your life. (Stakeholder Interviewee – Diversity Officer, County Council, England)

Although the majority of young people wanted to remain living in Britain, at least until they had completed their education, the impact of Brexit on key transitions in the life course, such as from education to employment, was considered by some young people. Difficulties associated with being an EU citizen living in Brexit Britain were also being thought through by young people.

> I plan to finish university in England, but go work abroad, as I don't believe I belong in England especially after Brexit, and when I think about it, I don't want to spend the rest of my life here, because I feel like it would be too hard for me to travel back to my country and I will never be accepted here. (Survey Respondent, female, 16, from Lithuania)

For some young people, the rupture that they had experienced in their initial migration to Britain as a child had encouraged them to consider future migrations as a possibility, finding comfort in the idea that they had migrated once, they could migrate again.

> I plan to move to America and become a lawyer there. I feel like I want to travel the world and moving from Poland to England made me realize it's not that bad of a change. I want to meet new people and just enjoy my life. (Survey Respondent, female, 15, from Poland)

Young people discussed that their parents were focused either on staying in Brexit Britain, depending on the terms of their right to remain, or return to their countries of origin. However, young people themselves were open to the possibilities of moving to another EU country or further afield, if Brexit Britain did not offer them the right opportunities:

> I hope to study theoretical physics, and carry out research in the UK or France depending on opportunity. I hope my residency in the U.K. will be confirmed and student loans etc. will be applicable to me. (Survey Respondent, female, 17, from Slovakia)

These young people's plans to out-migrate and seek opportunities elsewhere fit with the Bauman's (2000) concept of "liquid migration" and King's (2018) wider definition of "lifestyle migration." The wider context of the decisions that they are making about their futures are hugely relevant: They have experienced migration during childhood—a rupture to their feelings of belonging during the formative belonging life stage; they are now experiencing Brexit—another rupture that is disrupting their feelings of, and rights to, belonging during childhood or at the cusp of youth. As Britain is the place where these young people spent the majority of their childhood, their "being" and "becoming" life stage, it is not surprising that many of them feel a strong sense of belonging to Britain. The ways in which the multiple ruptures they have experienced will impact upon their lives, and indeed, the society and economy of Britain, depends on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations and decisions made by the British government. Many of the young people felt powerless during this period of Brexit uncertainty. The majority hoped that they would be allowed to remain in the United Kingdom, whilst at the same time, many of them felt that they should plan for a future beyond Brexit Britain.

6 | CONCLUSION

In this paper, we examined the opinions and experiences of 1.5 generation CEE-born young people living in Brexit Britain gleaned from a national online survey, focus groups and adult stakeholder interviews across England and Scotland. We focused on two key themes that emerged from the data: (a) young people's feelings of belonging to Britain, their countries of birth and Europe, and the ways in which these have been impacted by the EU Referendum result; (b) young people's future plans, in an intergenerational context, with particular regard to their feelings of belonging and the ruptures of migration and Brexit.

The uncertainty for CEE-born 1.5 generation young people, and their families, caused by Britain's decision to "Leave" the EU occurred

at a time when many of them were consciously reflecting on who they are (their beings), who they can be (their becomings) and where and who they do/will feel attached to (their belongings). For CEE-born young people who have experienced the rupture of child migration, have spent much of their childhood in Britain, have experienced a large proportion (if not all) of their education in the British education system, and cannot necessarily remember living in their countries of birth (even though they might often visit them), Brexit is a source of anxiety and fear. Although a small number of young people in our study felt a very strong sense of belonging to Britain and called Britain "home" (and only a very small number felt the opposite), the majority of the young people asserted a sense of belonging to Britain, whilst simultaneously feeling a sense of in-between-ness that has been observed in other studies of migrant children—they did not feel that they entirely "fitted in" to society in Britain (where they lived) or their birth country (often that of their citizenship). For some young people, Brexit uncertainty had ruptured their developing sense of belonging to Britain because their right to belong (as EU citizens) had been called into question at a time when they were planning their futures in the United Kingdom. As they were overcoming the rupture of childhood migration itself, Brexit has introduced another rupture in their lives, one that was unexpected and highly significant for their future plans. For some other young people, the rupture of migrating from CEE countries to Britain during childhood had made them more open to the possibility of migrating again—out of Brexit Britain in search of better opportunities, just as their parents had done when moving to pre-Brexit Britain.

Our study gives some indication of the "what next?" question for 1.5 generation CEE-born migrants living in Britain in the context of Brexit. Many of the young people in our study want to remain living Britain, at least in the short term, and feel a sense of belonging to Britain, where they assert and experience coexisting belongings. With Brexit, a top tier of the citizenship-identity hierarchy (i.e. EU citizenship) is unravelling for British young people, whilst at the same time, it is becoming reasserted for CEE-born young people living in Britain —they are "othered" because they are EU migrants. EU citizenship enabled these young people's free movement but the external forces of Brexit are now disrupting perceptions of their right to belong in Britain and causing unprecedented uncertainty over their futures. Our focus on the intergenerational impact of Brexit in CEE migrant families living in Britain, from young people's perspectives, suggests that children and parents may view possibilities for the future differently. In the short term, young people seem keen to maintain stability in their everyday lives by completing their education in Britain, whereas some of their parents are keen to out-migrate. In some families, young people are keen to seek a perceived better future by out-migrating, whereas parents wish to remain in Britain. In line with King's (2018) broadening of the concept of "lifestyle migration," the "what next?" for CEE 1.5 generation young people and their families may depend on the socio-economic conditions of post-Brexit Britain. It remains to be seen whether Britain will retain the young CEE 1.5 generation migrants who have been educated here, often developed a sense of belonging to Britain, and had planned prosperous futures there, or whether they will engage in liquid migration—leaving an age-ing parent population who feel uncertain about post-Brexit Britain.

There is an urgent need for more research on the intergenerational impact of Brexit on EU citizen families currently living in Britain.

ENDNOTES

[1] ESRC Grant ES/M011038/1

[2] Case studies with 20 families—young people and parents—are ongoing, so the data are not included in this paper.

[3] This was a convenience sample, and the data could not be weighted due to the absence of existing reliable data on EU nationals in the United Kingdom.

[4] Respondents could choose more than one option.

[5] The relationship between participants' feelings of belonging in the United Kingdom and years they had lived in the country was investigated using Spearman's rank order correlation (ρ). There was a small, positive correlation between the two variables $ρ = 0.179$, $n = 879$, $p < 0.001$, with stronger feelings of belonging to the United Kingdom associated with longer length of stay.

[6] The survey took place before "settled status" for EU nationals was announced.

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