KVINDER & KØN FORSKNING

NR. 2 2023

Racialization and Racism in Denmark

KVINDER & KØN FORSKNING **ÅRGANG. 35, NR. 2 2023**

KVINDER, KØN & FORSKNING er et akademisk, fagfællebedømt tidsskrift og udgør et samlingssted for udvekslingen af kønsforskningens forskningsresultater og -diskussioner. Kvinder, køn og forskning er et dansk tidsskrift med nordisk forankring og internationalt sigte.

- Præsenterer original forskning, som tager udgangspunkt i feministiske epistemologier og som vægter kønsforskningens intersektionelle perspektiver.
- Fremmer teoretiske og metodologiske diskussioner inden for kønsforskningen
- Giver plads til publicering af endelige forskningsresultater såvel som metodiske og teoretiske undersøgelser og eksperimenter.
- Inviterer både etablerede og yngre forskere til at bidrage til feltet. Alle artikler underlægges dobbelt-blind fagfællebedømmelse af mindst to fagfæller.

KVINDER, KØN & FORSKNING modtager gerne:

- Forskningsartikler og -essays.
- Debatindlæg, kommentarer og andre tekster, der relaterer til feministisk teori.
- Boganmeldelser og notitser om nye ph.d.-afhandlinger inden for feltet.
- Tidsskriftet ønsker at kvalificere og styrke en dansk og nordisk terminologi og samtale om nordisk såvel som international kønsforskning. Kvinder, køn og forskning modtager derfor bidrag på dansk, norsk og svensk såvel som engelsk.
- Se retningslinjer for bidrag på https://tidsskrift.dk/KKF/about/submissions

KONTAKT
Center for Køn, Seksualitet og Forskellighed
Institut for Nordiske Studier og Sprogvidenskab
Københavns Universitet
Emil Holms Kanal 2
DK-2300 København S
e-mail: koen@hum.ku.dk
http://koensforskning.ku.dk
https://tidsskrift.dk/KKF/index

OPEN ACCESS POLICY
Alle artikler udgivet i Kvinder, Køn & Forskning er frit tilgængeligt online på https://tidsskrift.dk/KKF/index i den accepterede version og opsat i tidsskriftets layout strakt efter udgivelsen. Kvinder, Køn & Forskning opkræver ingen gebyrer for udgivelse af artikler eller andre dele af redaktionsprocessen.

ISSN-online: 2245-6937

COVER ILLUSTRATION
Maya Acharya

LAYOUT
Kasper Monty, www.monty.dk

DANMARKS FRIE FORSKNINGSFOND
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FUND DENMARK
Udgivelsen af Kvinder, Køn og Forskning er støttet af Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond og Hulda Pedersens Legat.

ADVISORY BOARD

INDHOLD

Redaktionsledelsens forord

I redaktionen på *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* er vi stolte af at kunne præsentere et særnummer om racialisering og racisme i Danmark. Racialisering og racisme udgør centrale sociale, politiske og kulturelle akser af forskel, der strukturerer ulighed, diskrimination og marginalisering, og som differentierer menneskers adgang til ressourcer og privilegier, såvel som deres relative udsathed for eksklusion og vold. Som både forskningen og de antiracistiske bevægelser gør klart, er racisme fortsat strukturerende for ulighed og diskrimination på synlige såvel som mere subtile måder. Det redaktionelle kollektiv på *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* har gennem de seneste fire år (dvs. både før og efter den nuværende redaktionsledelse trådte til) prioriteret at arbejde med en redaktionel profil og prioritering, hvor minorisering – herunder racialisering og racisme – ikke blot udgør et add-on til kønsforskningen. Derimod ønsker redaktionen at en række intersektionelle minoriserede perspektiver og særligt racialisering og racisme skal udgøre et udgangspunkt for den feministiske samtale og dermed som et af kønsforskningens centrale teoretiske og empiriske felter. Denne ambition har dels afspejlet sig i redaktionens sammensætning, hvor repræsentation udgør en væsentlig prioritering, dels har det afspejlet sig i centreringen af forskning, som er skrevet i relation til en minoriseret erfaringshorisont. Nærværende temanummer er et udtryk for den ambition, og vi er særligt stolte af kunne præsentere en temaredaktion bestående af forskere, som er centrale for arbejdet med racisme, racialisering og antiracistiske og intersektionelle kritikker i en dansk kontekst.

Spørgsmålet om racialisering har en lang og ikke altid uproblematisk historie i kønsforskningen, hvor temaet i nogle tilfælde har ført til banebrydende analyser, mens det i andre har figureret som et signifikant fravær eller som præget af gode intentioner, der har brolagt veje i problematiske retninger. Ønsket om at tænke kønsforskningen ud over et hvidt etnocentrisk udgangspunkt stammer især fra sort og de-/postkolonial feminisme, men fandt også vej til *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* fra tidsskriftets begyndelse. Således hed tidsskriftets allerførste artikel nogensinde om emnet: "Er feminismen kulturimperialistisk?" (Connie Carøe, 1992/1), og den efterlyste blandt andet et øget fokus på race som analytisk kategori, dog uden helt at præcisere hvordan. Siden har andre artikler og temanumre på forskellige måder taget udgangspunkt i erfaringer, analysegreb og teoretiske interventioner fra teorier om (de)kolonialisme, racialisering og (anti)racisme. Dette er blandt andet sket i temanumre som *Kolonialisme og postkolonialisme* (1996/4), *Orientalisme* (2000/3), *Migration og medborgerskab* (2002/2), *Intersektionalitet* (2006/2-3), *Religion* (2005/1-2), *Transnational Experiences. Europe. The Middle East* (2007/2-3), *Hvidhed* (2008/4), *Intersectionalities at work: Concepts and Cases* (2010/2-3) og *Førsteheder* (2016/4). Der er dog et mindretal af disse, som for alvor har centreret begreber som racisme, race og racialisering som analytisk udgangspunkt for forskningen. Som temaredaktionens indledning også påpeger, har racebegrebet ofte fungeret som et analytisk forsvindingspunkt og derfor også levet i skyggen af en vis underteoretiserethed i den danske kontekst. Dette søger nærværende temanummer at rette op på og inviterer dermed til et nyt og bedre fokus på race og racialisering som differentierende dynamik. Forskning i racialiseringens og racismens virkemåder er i rivende udvikling verden over. Vi håber med dette temanummer at kunne bidrage til feltet med et fokus på den nordiske og danske kontekst.

Michael Nebeling Petersen, Mons Bissenbakker og Camilla Bruun Eriksen

Preface from the editorial managers

The editorial team of *Women, Gender & Research* is proud to present this special issue on racialization and racism in Denmark. Racialization and racism constitute central social, political, and cultural differentiating axes that underlie structures of inequality, discrimination, and marginalization, which differentiate citizens' access to resources and privileges as well as their relative exposure to exclusion and violence. As both research and anti-racist movements firmly state, racism continues to structuralize inequality and discrimination in explicit as well as subtle ways. In the last four years the editorial collective of *Women, Gender & Research* has (before and under the present editorial management) established an editorial profile and priority, in which minoritization – including racialization and racism – not only constitute an add on to Gender Studies. Rather it has been the aim for the editorial board that intersectional minoritized perspectives - and racialization and racism in particular - constitute the starting point for the feminist conversation and thereby also the central theoretical and empirical domains of Gender Studies. This ambition is reflected in the composition of the editorial board, in which representation is a high priority, as well as in the centering of research written in relation to a minoritized horizon of experience. This special issue is an expression of this ambition, and we are proud to present a special issue editorial team of researchers, who are central for the studies of racism, racialization and antiracist and intersectional critiques in the Danish context.

The question of racialization has a long and not always unproblematic history within gender studies. In some cases, the topic has resulted in groundbreaking analyses, while in others it features as a telling absence or as a problematic path paved by good intentions. The desire to formulate gender studies beyond a white, ethnocentric perspective originates from Black and de-/post-colonial feminisms in particular, but was also present within *Women, Gender & Research* since its beginning. In fact, the journal's very first article ever published was titled: "Is feminism cultural imperialism?" ["Er feminismen kulturimperialistisk?"] (Connie Carøe, 1992/1). The article calls for an increased focus on race as an analytical category although it does not quite specify in what manner this is to take place. Since then, other articles and special issues have used the experiences, analytical tools, and theoretical interventions from (de) colonialism, racialization, and (anti)racism as a point of departure. These have been featured in special issues such as *Colonialism and postcolonialism* [*Kolonialisme og postkolonialisme*] (1996/4), *Orientalism* [*Orientalisme*] (2000/3), *Migration and citizenship* [*Migration og medborgerskab*] (2002/2), *Intersectionality* [*Intersektionalitet*] (2006/2-3), *Religion* (2005/1-2), *Transnational Experiences. Europe. The Middle East* (2007/2-3), *Whiteness* [*Hvidhed*] (2008/4), *Intersectionalities at work: Concepts and Cases* (2010/2-3) and *Firstness* [*Førsteheder*] (2016/4). The number of articles and issues that center concepts such as racism, race, and racialization as their analytical position is, however, in the minority. As the introduction to this special issue points out, the concept of race has often functioned as an analytical vanishing point, which has thusly lived in the shadow of under-theorization in a Danish context. That is what this special issue attempts to rectify. Thus, our hope is that it can function as an invitation to a new and broader focus on race and racialization as differentiating dynamics and contribute to the field with a focus on Nordic and Danish contexts.

Michael Nebeling Petersen, Mons Bissenbakker and Camilla Bruun Eriksen

Racialization and Racism in Denmark

By Bontu Lucie Guschke, Iram Khawaja and Lene Myong

Bontu Lucie Guschke, Postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Sociology, Freie University Berlin, bontu.guschke@fu-berlin.de, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8810-5207

Iram Khawaja, Associate Professor, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, irkh@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5231-8729

Lene Myong, Professor, Centre for Gender Studies, University of Stavanger, lene.myong@uis.no, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3700-1157

Our ambition with this special issue on "Racialization and Racism in Denmark" is to support and expand critical and generative engagements with how racialization and racism continue to influence, structure, and operate in a Danish context, including the territories and areas that are connected to Denmark through (post)colonial ties. We initiated work on the special issue in the spring of 2021, and while it responds to calls for more critical scholarship on colonialism, decolonialization, racialization, and (anti)racism across many fields, including those of gender and feminist studies in the Nordic countries, it also reflects how such research is gathering pace.

Gender studies constitutes an ambiguous force in relation to research on racialization and racism in Denmark. It is not a coincidence that "Racialization and Racism in Denmark" finds a home in *Women, Gender & Research*. This is illustrative of how gender studies functions as one (but not the only) entry point to critical interrogations of racialization and racism in Denmark. At the same time, gender studies' historical investment in gender as its primary object, its reliance on white and Western epistemologies, and its attachments to institutional spaces dominated by white scholars, also hold true in a Danish context. These conditions continue to shape the field of gender studies and its approaches to race, and lead to complex and shifting internal relations between gender studies and research on racism and racialization.

As we discuss in this introduction, research on racialization and racism in Denmark has followed different but sometimes converging routes (see also Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018; Hervik 2019a; Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022). Therefore, we refrain from making any claims about when the field of gender studies in Denmark 'first' started to engage with the themes of race, racialization, and racism, nor do we offer an exhaustive mapping of the existing literature, which includes the connections between gender and migration studies. We acknowledge that racist power structures have been scrutinized, engaged with, and countered for much longer and in more domains than those covered by us.

In this introduction, we focus our reflections on the relationship between gender studies in Denmark and research on racialization and racism over the past 30 years. Our aim is to consider both how gender studies has approached race and where we might be heading in terms of the emergence of what may or may not be considered a more established field of racism and racialization studies. As part of this endeavor, we recognize, acknowledge, and build upon the important critical

research on racism and racialization that has been conducted in a variety of fields in the past. Nonetheless, we assert that we need more research and more spaces for such research in a Danish, and more broadly speaking, a Nordic context.

Gender studies and the turn to ethnicity

Ethnicity, migration, and postcoloniality became focal points for Nordic gender studies during the 1990s and early 2000s (Mulinari et al. 2009). In the context of *Women, Gender & Research*, Signe Arnfred's article "Pengene eller livet? Feministiske forskningsnoter med afsæt i Afrika" ["Money or life? Feminist research notes from Africa", our translation] (1996) constitutes an early example of a discussion that grapples with white supremacy, ethnicity/race, and how feminist scholars approach such issues. However, these insights were not picked up by feminist researchers to reflect more carefully upon the impact of racism and white supremacy on contemporary Danish society and the field of gender studies itself. Instead, there was a more pronounced interest in postcolonial theory in analyses of (post)colonial relations and cultural production (e.g. Petersen 1996; Kledal 1997).

Inspiration from postcolonial theory also shaped ethnographic and qualitative research methods, which gained significant impact within Danish gender studies during the 1990s. Empirical studies examining contemporary processes of othering and minoritization (e.g. Staunæs 1998), hybridity (e.g. Mørck 1998), and identity formation among Muslims (e.g. Christiansen & Rasmussen 1996) sought to dislodge gender as a primary or isolated anchor point for feminist research, while emphasizing the relevance of other categories, most notably ethnicity. The turn to ethnicity converged with a more general orientation towards poststructuralism within gender studies, as feminist poststructuralist theory became a central inspiration for the theorization and analysis of issues such as ethnic-racialized forms of exclusion (Staunæs 2003, 2004). It is a topic for further studies to unpack in more detail how and to what effect the analytical category of ethnicity has shaped and/or foreclosed research on racism in Denmark, not only in relation to gender studies but across the human and social sciences. In gender studies, the concept of ethnicity proved useful to 'diversify' analyses of power, but the employment of ethnicity as a euphemism for race has also worked to support race-evasive vocabulary and perspectives.

Intersectionality without race

When feminist scholars started to use the concept of intersectionality in Nordic gender studies during the early 2000s, one of the motivations was to strengthen critical engagements with race (de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari 2002). In many instances, however, intersectionality was taken up in ways that projected engagements with race as a possibility, but never as a core commitment or a priority for intersectional analyses. Many Nordic adaptations have sifted standpoint feminism out of intersectionality, and the concept has become more aligned with poststructuralist conceptualizations of subjectivity and performativity (for discussions of this point, see Carbin & Edenheim 2013; Hvenegård-Lassen & Staunæs 2020).

Critics have argued that Nordic (and European) adaptations have enacted a whitening and depoliticization of intersectionality: rather than foregrounding race, such adaptations have contributed to its erasure and the excavation of Black feminist thought (see e.g. Carbin & Edenheim 2013; Lewis 2013; Tomlinson 2013; Bilge 2014; Dahl 2021). Another point of critique concerns how the anchoring of intersectionality within a poststructuralist paradigm has enabled "assimilation into white liberal epistemologies" (Groglopo & Suárez-Krabbe 2023, 5). Gender studies scholars who have made contributions to intersectionality research in a Danish context have responded and engaged with a number of these assessments (for recent examples see Christensen & Jensen 2019; Fiig 2019; Faber, Christensen & Mørck 2019; Hvenegård-Lassen, Staunæs & Lund 2020; Lykke 2023). Some of these engagements have included

arguments for a re-orientation of intersectionality towards race (Hvenegård-Lassen & Staunæs 2020) and reckonings with white ignorance and accountability (Lykke 2020).

While the concept of intersectionality may thus have opened the door to considerations of race and critiques of 'colorblindness' in gender studies in Denmark, it is notable that, even though intersectionality has been applied to a range of research topics, the concept has not been used as a welcome starting point for generating more studies of structural and institutional racism in Denmark, or for studies with a dedicated focus on the oppression of Black or brown women and people. Early adaptations, as well as the 'mainstreaming' of the concept, have relied in many instances on a displacement of race, which has been articulated through the projection of race as an optional category. This has worked to suspend race as an urgent analytical commitment for gender studies, thus preserving "the epistemic habit of whiteness" (Dahl 2021, 117-118). Moreover, it bears mention that Black scholars and scholars of color working in Danish academia have to a large extent been absent from discussions and conceptual work on intersectionality. In this sense, adaptations of the anti-racist framework of intersectionality have worked to reinforce white exclusivity and epistemic reproduction within an academic system that grants only limited and differentiated access to non-white bodies.

Race-critical research

If we look beyond the field of gender studies to consider the broader landscape of research on racialization and racism in Denmark during the 1990s and early 2000s, we see that a number of studies have examined racism in media discourse and media representations of religious, ethnic, and racial minorities (e.g. Hussein, Yilmaz & O'Connor 1997; Hervik 1999, 2002; Yilmaz 2000). Other studies have addressed migration discourse, legislation, integration politics, and racial discrimination (e.g. Schierup 1993; Røgilds 1995; Jagd 1997; Horst 1998; Justesen 2003; Singla 2004). Conceptualizations of a 'new' form of racism in Denmark, operating through the fixation of cultural differences that result in the subordination and racialization of minorities, were analyzed in many of these studies. While the concept of racism was explicitly mentioned and applied analytically, manifestations of racism were rarely investigated in relation to sexualized or gendered forms of oppression, or in the global context of colonialism. Kim-Su Rasmussen's (2004) theorization of Danish racism constitutes a unique but overlooked contribution from this period. Building on the work of Frantz Fanon, Rasmussen warned against (liberal) conceptualizations of racism as prejudice or discrimination, instead emphasizing that colonial racism operates through the essentialization of national identities, a forgetting of colonial history, and as a traumatizing social and psychic structure.

Within gender studies, more race-critical research emerged during the 2000s and early 2010s; for example, in analyses of historical manifestations of racism in Denmark (Andreassen 2003; Andreassen & Henningsen 2011; Blaagaard & Andreassen 2012) and in empirical studies of racialization in Danish media representations (Andreassen 2007), the ethnic/racial othering of young men (Jensen 2007), and the principle of racial assimilation in transnational adoption (Myong 2009). In gender studies, as well as in adjacent research fields, a growing interest in critical perspectives on Nordic exceptionalism (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012), and in particular whiteness (Frello 2007; Andreassen, Henningsen & Myong 2008), also left an imprint; for example, in studies of racialized and gendered forms of minoritization/majoritization in educational and pedagogical settings (Staunæs 2004; Kofoed 2005). It is also notable that the use of ethnicity as a privileged lens to understand Muslims and Muslimness was replaced by concepts such as religiosity and belonging (Khawaja 2010). This shift also produced critical examinations of how feminist ideals of gender equality were being mobilized by politicians to control and marginalize Muslim women (e.g. Andreassen & Siim 2010). It is also possible to observe a preliminary focus on racial capitalism during this period, for example in

research focusing on au-pair migration (Stenum 2011).

Although studies such as the above outlined new research areas and new research questions, feminist engagements with racialization and racism during the 2000s nevertheless appear to have been limited both in scope and in the choices of theoretical frameworks and in relation to research themes. Critical perspectives on Denmark's colonization of Kalaallit Nunaat (see also Andersen, Hvenegård-Lassen & Knobblock 2015; Graugaard & Høgsfeldt this issue) – and territories in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia – were not given much space or consideration within gender studies. This lack of engagement with racism's colonial past and present has continued to characterize not only gender studies but the broader field of research on racism in Denmark.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on racialization and racism

Similarly to these concerns, critics have argued that research on racialization and racism in Denmark has employed a narrow theoretical and methodological repertoire, which contributes to rendering invisible the wealth of theories and methods that have been conceived outside the European and North American university (Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018). Knowledge production from the Global South was, and remains, largely absent from the Euromodern university (Lapiņa et al. this issue). In the research on racialization and racism that has taken shape over the past 10 years, however, we do see indications of a broader range of theoretical approaches to racism being applied, as well as a more general shift away from analyses focusing on the racialization of identity and subjectivity towards analyses that are attuned to structural and institutional racism, the specificity of racism, and racism's colonial and capitalist underpinnings.

Broadly speaking, we see two (connected) strands in this literature. One focuses on conceptualizing how racialization and racism are taking form in a Danish context. A growing cluster of studies use qualitative methods to approach racialization and racism at a micro level in order to conceptualize how whiteness, race, and/or colorblindness/racelessness shape cultural organizations (e.g. Thorsen 2020), reproduction and kinship (e.g. Kim-Larsen 2018; Andreassen 2019), media discourse and public debate (e.g. Smedegaard Nielsen 2014, 2021; Yilmaz 2016; Danbolt & Myong 2019; Hervik 2019b), and educational settings (e.g. Lagermann 2013; Khawaja 2015; Jaffe-Walter 2016; Padovan-Özdemir 2016; Skadegård 2018; Hvenegård-Lassen & Staunæs 2019; Vertelyté 2019; Li 2021; Vertelyté & Staunæs 2021; Berisha this issue; Li & Yang this issue). This has generated concepts such as "minority taxation" (Thorsen 2019), "racialized forecasting" (Yang 2021), "unspeakability" (Guschke 2023), a focus on the benevolence of racialized discrimination (Skadegård 2017), and how "good intentions are not enough" (Lagermann & Khawaja 2022), but also specific accounts of anti-Black racism (e.g. Diallo 2019; Hunter 2023) and anti-Muslim racism (e.g. Hassani 2023; Kristensen this issue). This is adding to more specific and expanded interpretations of how racism and structural discrimination coagulate at an institutional level and affect people's everyday lives.

We also see a growing number of studies interested in using and developing creative methodologies such as memory work, autoethnography, and affective and embodied archives as methods to decolonize knowledge production within and beyond the classroom (e.g. Lapiņa 2018; Diallo & Friborg 2021; Khawaja 2022; Khawaja, Staunæs & Vertelyté 2023; Acharya & Muasya this issue; Loving Coalitions Collective this issue). Cutting across many studies is the use of and inspiration from affect theory (e.g. Andreassen & Vitus 2015; Myong & Bissenbakker 2016; Lindberg 2022; Bissenbakker 2023) and new materialist theorizations (e.g. Hvenegaard-Lassen & Staunæs 2019; Khawaja, Staunæs & Vertelyté 2023).

The second strand of literature is broadly characterized by interrogations directed toward the regulation and implementation of state racism and the connections between colonialism, capitalism, and the welfare state. This encompasses

studies that foreground coloniality and anti-Blackness as constitutive of modernity and contemporary Danish society (e.g. Elg 2020, 2021; Cramer, Elg & Jørgensen 2021; Hunter 2021, 2023) and research that takes Denmark's colonial past as the starting point for theorizations of contemporary racism (e.g. Danbolt 2017; Hvenegård-Lassen & Staunæs 2020), including new and critical inquiries into the links between eugenics and racism (Sørensen this issue). As part of this stream of research, a growing number of studies interrogate racism as a state-sanctioned tool; for instance, by examining how state racism is implemented and enforced through detention and deportation regimes (e.g. Arce & Suárez-Krabbe 2018; Suárez-Krabbe & Lindberg 2019), in welfare state practices (Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022; Brodersen & Øland this issue), or through the regulation of labor (Spanger 2022). Several studies also approach racism through concepts of biopolitics and necropolitics (e.g. Nebeling & Bissenbakker 2021; Myong & Bissenbakker 2023; Brøndum this issue), or as an imperialist technology (Dahler 2020).

In the above overview, we have not differentiated between contributions from gender studies and contributions from other research disciplines. This is indicative of the theoretical and methodological shifts that have taken place over the past 10 years, which have led to research on racialization and racism in Denmark assembling in new patterns, less clearly defined by disciplinary borders. While it is our impression that research on racialization and racism has thereby become more interdisciplinary, we acknowledge that blurred disciplinary borders and overlapping approaches have always been a defining factor of research on racism and racialization in Denmark. These developments raise the question of whether research on racialization and racism is emerging to become its 'own' field, despite the continuing lack of institutional anchoring (see also the discussion of this point in Roundtable this issue).

Looking back over the past 30 years, it is evident that broader epistemological waves in the social sciences and humanities have formed the contested relations between the field of gender studies and critical research on racism and racialization. We noted above how the poststructuralist discursive turn during the 1990s and 2000s oriented Danish gender studies toward interrogating intersectionality, ethnicity, and—to a lesser extent—race, whilst the affective turn from 2000 onwards has informed conceptualizations of racialization as affective processes connected to emotions such as shame, discomfort, or anger, and with the power of mobilizing/obstructing societal change. We might also talk about the more recent new materialist turn in the social sciences, where performative, agentic human and non-human forces are shedding light on how race is always already at play in different contexts and processes of becoming.

Another significant development is the growing scholarly interest in the notion of racial capitalism which, influenced by Marxist thought, allows the reconceptualizing and rethinking of the historical continuities in the deep entanglement of capitalist and racist extraction. The perspective of historical engagement is also seen in decolonial theorizations of the Global North and the Global South, which have greatly influenced ways of interrogating processes of racialization as formed through continuous structures of colonial oppression and othering. Importantly, these shifts and changing approaches to racism and racialization do not form a well-aligned, progressive, and neat pattern. There are, and continue to be, many important and fruitful internal differences and disagreements in terms of conceptualizations, methodologies, theoretical inspirations, and levels of macro-micro analytical focus among scholars researching racialization and racism.

Anti-racist knowledge production beyond academia

This special issue has been produced at a time when research on racism, migration, gender, and sexuality is under close political scrutiny and heavy attack, with the aim of delegitimizing and silencing these research fields (cf. Folketinget 2021; Dansk kønsforsknings indre og ydre rammer 2022). These attacks need to be seen within

a larger global political context, where the political mobilizations against social justice movements serve, among other things, to mainstream nationalist and anti-immigration politics. Over many years, and in many contexts, including Denmark, resistance to race-critical thinking has been a key driver of such attacks (see also Danbolt & Myong 2019; Schmidt 2021; Lapiņa et al. in this issue). There is no doubt that this makes the conditions for conducting research within the abovementioned fields difficult because it rekindles a structural and historical reluctance to critically examine racism and white supremacy and a fear of doing so. This fear has been mobilized in particular via the categorization of research on racism and racialization as activism, and hence political and 'pseudoscientific.' In the case of minoritized and racialized researchers, there is an added dimension of belittling the research(ers) as too personally motivated and hence not neutral and failing to live up to the objective standards of 'true science.'

This special issue does not intend to prove the scientific credentials and validity of research on racism and racialization by distancing itself from activism and thereby reproducing a racialized binary between white research and Black, Indigenous, and people of color activism. On the contrary, we wish to highlight how knowledge production on racism and racialization always occurs in many different ways and contexts. The anti-racist mobilization amongst Black, Indigenous, and people of color in Denmark is generating crucial insights and interventions, both in dialogue with, and in opposition to, research. This is evident, for example, in the cross-field of arts, research, and media. Small, independent publishers, translators, online publications, and media portals, such as Friktion, (un)told pages, Respons, and Marronage, have carved out alternative spaces for racialized people and anti-racist perspectives. Moreover, there has been a proliferation of literature, both translated and original, from Black, Indigenous, and people of color authors focusing on the affective, lived, and embodied processes of racism and racialization. Within the field of the arts, which has a long history of anti-racist struggle and solidarity, an "agitating aesthetics" (Danbolt 2020) emerged during the 2010s, with a growing number of artistic initiatives and interventions confronting colonialism and structural racism. An example of the contemporary interaction between art and research can be seen on the cover of this special issue, which was illustrated by Maya Acharya. On her choice of images and design, she writes: "I explore the theme of racialisation through a collection of fragments, materials, objects and visions that—to me—evoke embodiment, connection, desire, shattering, memory, and protection."

Our aim for this special issue was, amongst other things, to create a space for a broad variety of analytical perspectives, knowledges, and interventions that critically engage with racial oppression. In our call for papers, we quoted scholar and poet Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan (2019, 81-82), who pointedly writes:

> *Equal access to unjust systems is not liberation*
> *More people of colour on pedagogically unchanged reading lists*
> *is not salvation, and no number of black and brown faces in*
> *universities can fundamentally undo the racism.*
> *[…]*
> *Just because they give you a seat at the table*
> *doesn't mean they're prepared to change the room.*

Inspired by Manzoor-Khan, we wanted to assemble a collection of texts that move beyond calls for non-white inclusion and representation. We therefore encouraged submissions that enable us to understand, and radically change, the different rooms, structures, and processes that maintain and uphold racialized and colonial structures of subjugation and oppression. While we believe that many of the articles we are able to publish as part of this special issue engage with exactly these challenges, we also acknowledge that our—the editors'—own positioning as (junior and senior) scholars within academic institutions and our related orientation toward certain forms of

research and certain areas of knowledge production has undoubtedly shaped the submissions we received, as well as our editorial process. As an editorial team consisting of a non-Danish, queer scholar of color, a religious minoritized scholar of color, and a transnational adoptee of color, situated in different geographical locations (Germany, Norway, Denmark) we always tried to complement as well as challenge each other's perspectives and hold each other accountable to our ambitions. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that there are more themes and perspectives that could certainly have been part of this issue; therefore, we hope that our work will be taken up, critically examined, and fruitfully challenged within the different communities aiming to understand and fight racialization and racism in Denmark.

Overview of the contributions to this special issue

The issue opens with a roundtable discussion that took place as part of the Danish Gender Studies Conference on 19 August 2022 at the University of Copenhagen. The roundtable was planned by the three editors of this special issue. While Iram Khawaja and Lene Myong chaired the discussion, Bontu Lucie Guschke joined as a participant, together with researchers Elizabeth Löwe Hunter, Jin Hui Li, Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Mira C. Skadegård, and Ferruh Yilmaz. The roundtable participants discussed questions about the field of racialization and racism studies, the questions, topics, and bodies that have been excluded from this field, the relation between racialization and racism research and gender studies, and possible ways forward in regard to strengthening the field, the research, and its positioning during these times of political mobilization against researchers and academics engaged in studying racialization and racism. It thus opens up a variety of themes and questions that are further engaged within the eight articles, two essays, and three book reviews in this issue.

The first article is Maya Acharya and Gabriella Isadora Muasya's "Sensible Ruptures: Towards Embodied and Relational Ways of Knowing," in which the authors explore queer and racialized experiences in Danish academia through affective, embodied, and sensory ways of knowing. They conceptualize these as 'sensible ruptures' which are unfolded through the creation of an online, audio-visual archive that allows "thinking not only against, but beyond, disembodied colonial logics." In their text, they work with queer epistolary forms in creating and sharing knowledge in a relational, affective, and situated way. Their article challenges and reconfigures in multiple ways how knowledge about racialization and racism is generated and made accessible.

In her article "'In Women's Hands': Feminism, Eugenics, and Race in Interwar Denmark," Victoria E. Pihl Sørensen investigates how knowledge about eugenics was both shaped and utilized by bourgeois Danish women in their endeavor to promote 'racial hygiene.' Critically analyzing two stories, one of nationally acclaimed women's rights advocate Thit Jensen and one of the Copenhagen Housewife Association's eugenics radio Listener Group, Sørensen focuses in particular on the entanglements of race and class in the eugenic targeting of the poor and working class, identifying eugenics as a "decidedly racist project."

Tringa Berisha investigates the complex relations between racialization and space in her article "Racialized Spatial Attachments: Researcher Positionality and Access in a Danish Suburban High School," introducing the notion of 'spatial attachments' to grasp and analyze how bodies are positioned according to their assumed spatial and racialized attachments. The article is based on methodological reflections on how it is possible to gain access to and navigate through contested racialized spaces as a racialized and minoritized researcher.

Jin Hui Li and Ahrong Yang also write about space and racialization in educational contexts in Denmark, but include a temporal perspective on the experiences of racially minoritized girls/women in a Danish primary school context in their article "Forhandlinger af tilhørsforhold på tværs af tid. Racialt minoriserede kvinders erfaringer med at høre til i den danske folkeskole" ["Negotiations of belonging across time. Racially minoritized

women's experiences of belonging in the Danish public school"]. Drawing on spatial educational research, they investigate the experiences of racially minoritized girls/women between 1970 and the 1990s, as well as female students attending school today, and identify that belonging in the Danish primary school and in Danish society more generally is a constant struggle for racially minoritized female students. Working with time narratives, they are able to demonstrate that, neither in the 1970s nor today, is belonging neutral or taken for granted for racially minoritized students.

Tine Brøndum also works with narratives in her article "'The Curse of the Refugee': Narratives of Slow Violence, Marginalization and Non-Belonging in the Danish Welfare State," which draws on narrative interviews with people who have fled to Denmark, recently or in the past. Investigating central sites of refugee management: asylum camps, municipal integration initiatives, schooling, and employment, the article analyzes the racialization, control, and structural violence experienced during the process of being cast as a 'refugee.'

In the article "'We Are Never Allowed to Just Be Ourselves!': Navigating Hegemonic Danishness in the Online Muslim Counterpublic," Morten Stinus Kristensen uses the notion of hegemonic Danishness as a dominant racial project in Denmark, which divides people into groups that belong and those that do not, depending on their imagined proximity to a socio-cultural and racialized understanding of what it means to be Danish. The article presents an analysis of how young Muslims navigate and counter this dominant racial project through public social media practices, revealing an emergent Danish Muslim counterpublic.

Marianne Brodersen and Trine Øland's article, "Gendered Racism: The Emancipation of 'Muslim' and 'Immigrant' Women in Danish Welfare Politics and Professionalism," delves into how emancipatory welfare initiatives are based on racial capitalist and Orientalist logics that produce controlling images of the Muslim girl as inhibited and the immigrant housewife as unfree. The authors specifically focus on the intersecting oppressions and gendered racism of Danish welfare politics and professionalism.

The final article in this special issue is a contribution by the Loving Coalitions Collective, entitled "The Magic of Feminist Bridging: A Mosaic of Anti-Racist Speech Bubbles about Othering in Swedish Academia." Turning their focus to Denmark's neighbor, Sweden, the collective—consisting of seven interdisciplinary gender studies scholars of diverse ethnic and racial origins—creates a feminist coalition with the aim of "questioning and shaking the colonial/racist foundations of Swedish academic knowledge production and the overall Swedish society." Working with poems, letters, and personal testimonies that grapple with experiences and memories of Othering, racialization, and disidentification with Swedish academia and society, they offer not only a critical understanding of racism in the context of Swedish exceptionalism, colonial amnesia, and silence on Swedish whiteness, but also a creative methodological process that embraces lived and embodied knowledges.

The articles are followed by two essays. Naja Dyrendom Graugaard and Amalie Høgfeldt Ambrosius' text "The Silent Genocide: Why the Danish Intrauterine Device (IUD) Enforcement in Kalaallit Nunaat Calls For an Intersectional Decolonial Analysis" turns its focus towards the colonial, racial, and gendered continuities of Denmark's role as a colonial power in Kalallit Nunaat. Engaging with the silenced history of Danish authorities initiating and performing coercive insertions of intrauterine devices (IUDs) in Kalaallit women and adolescents, the authors pinpoint the intimate relations between colonialism, racism, and patriarchy in Danish colonial practices and urge the forthcoming investigation to consider these entanglements in order to challenge the continuity of this act of gendered violence.

The second essay, "How Is the Anti/Not/Un-Racist University a Radical Idea? Experiences from the Solidarity Initiative at Roskilde University," is written by a group of scholars who were involved in a university campaign for solidarity with anti-racist struggles at Roskilde University and around the world. The authors, Linda Lapiņa, Rashmi Singla, Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Karmen Tornius, and Laura Horn, describe the events surrounding

the solidarity campaign, which was initiated in 2020, including the continuing struggles to gain institutional support for the initiative. Working with the metaphor of doors, they reveal through their experiences how and for whom these institutions function, which doors are "opened, shut or slammed into someone's face," but also how "to continue to crack walls and push doors open."

Finally, the issue includes three book reviews. kaseeta ssemigga reviews Suvi Keskinen's *Mobilizing the Racialised 'Others': Postethnic Activism, Neoliberalisation and Racial Politics*. A review of Marta Padovan-Özdemir and Trine Øland's *Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees: Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity* is written by Iram Khawaja, and Lene Myong contributes a review of the Danish translation of Jackie Wang's *Fængselskapitalisme* [*Carceral Capitalism*].

References

Andersen, A., Hvenegård-Lassen, K. and Knobblock, I. 2015. Feminism in Postcolonial Nordic Spaces. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 23(4), 239-245.

Andreassen, R. 2003. The 'exotic' as mass entertainment: Denmark 1878-1909. *Race & Class*. 45(2), 21-38.

Andreassen, R. 2007. *Der er et yndigt land – Medier, minoriteter og danskhed*. Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter.

Andreassen, R. 2019. *Mediated Kinship: Gender, Race and Sexuality in Donor Families*. London: Routledge.

Andreassen, R. and Siim, B. 2010. Debatter og reguleringer af muslimske tørklæder. Religiøse symboler og populisme. *Politik*. 13(4), 15-24.

Andreassen, R. and Henningsen, A.F. 2011. *Menneskeudstilling: Fremvisninger af eksotiske mennesker i Zoologisk Have og Tivoli*. Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter.

Andreassen. R. and Vitus, K. eds. 2015. *Affectivity and Race: Studies from Nordic Contexts*. London: Routledge.

Andreassen, R., Henningsen, A.F. and Myong, L. eds. 2008. Hvidhed [special issue]. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 4(8).

Arce. J. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2018. Racism, Global Apartheid and Disobedient Mobilities: The Politics of Detention and Deportation in Europe and Denmark. *KULT: Racism in Denmark*. 15, 107-127.

Arnfred, S. 1996. Pengene eller livet? Feministiske forskningsnoter med afsæt i Afrika. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 4, 5-21.

Bilge, S. 2014. Whitening Intersectionality: Evanescence of Race in Intersectionality Scholarship. In: Hund, W. D. and Lentin, A. eds. *Racism and Sociology*. Zürich: Lit, 175-206.

Bissenbakker, M. 2023 (in press). Introduktion. In: Bissenbakker, M. ed. *Tilknytningens grænser: Den affektive regulering af migration i Danmark*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 9-39.

Blaagaard, B. and Andreassen, R. 2012. Disappearing Act: The Forgotten History of Colonialism, Eugenics and Gendered Othering in Denmark. In: Hipfl, B. and Loftsdóttir, K. eds. *Teaching Race with a Gendered Edge*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 81-96

Carbin, M. and Edenheim, S. 2013. The Intersectional Turn in Feminist Theory: A Dream of a Common Language? *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 20(3), 233-248.

Christensen, A.D. and Jensen, S.Q. 2019. Intersektionalitet – begrebsrejse, kritik og nytænkning. *Dansk Sociologi*. 2(30), 15-33.

Christiansen, C.C. and Rasmussen, L.K. 1996. Kvindelige islamister og post-kolonialisme. Muslim først, så kvinde? *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 4, 45-65.

Cramer, N., Elg, E., Jørgensen, A.V. eds. 2021. Sorthed. Special issue of *Periskop: Forum for kunsthistorisk debat*. No. 25.

Dahl, U. 2021. Nordic Academic Feminism and Whiteness as Epistemic Habit. In: Keskinen, S., Stoltz, P. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Feminisms in the Nordic Region: Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Decolonial Critique*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 113-132.

Dahler, N. 2020. Biometrics as Imperialism: Age Assessments of Young Asylum Seekers in Denmark. *Race & Class*. 62(1), 24-45.

Danbolt, M. 2017. Retro Racism: Colonial Ignorance and Racialized Affective Consumption in Danish Public Culture. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research.* 7(2), 105-113.

Danbolt. M. 2020. Ind i friktionen. *Kunstkritikk* [online]. [Accessed 1 September 2023]. Available from: https://kunstkritikk.no/ind-i-friktionen/

Danbolt, M. and Myong, L. 2019. Racial Turns and Returns: Recalibrations of Racial Exceptionalism in Danish Public Debates on Racism. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism and Antiracism in the Nordic Countries*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 39-61.

Dansk kønsforsknings indre og ydre rammer [The internal and external frameworks of Danish Gender Studies]. 2022. The Danish Gender Studies Conference, 18-19 August 2022. Centre for Gender, Sexuality and Difference. University of Copenhagen.

de los Reyes, P., Molina, I. and Mulinari, D. eds. 2002. *Maktens olika förklädnader. Kön, klass och etnicitet i det postkoloniale Sverige*. Stockholm: Atlas.

Diallo, O.-K.M. 2019. At the Margins of Institutional Whiteness: Black Women in Danish Academia. In: Emejulu, A. and Sobande, F. eds. *To Exist is to Resist: Black Feminism in Europe*. London: Pluto Press, 219-228.

Diallo, O.-K.M. and Friborg, N.M. 2021. Subverting the White Cis Gaze: Towards a Pedagogy of Discomfort, Accountability and Care in the Anthropology Classroom. *Teaching Anthropology*. 10(4), 17-35.

Elg, E. 2020. Øjne som tårnlygter. *Amulet Magasin*. 1, 141-185.

Elg, E. 2021. Karen Blixens Plads. Bermærkninger om flyvning, ikke-flyvning og plads. *Periskop – Forum for kunsthistorisk debat*. *Sorthed*. 25, 138-147.

Faber, S.T., Christensen, A.D. and Mørck, Y. 2019. Intersektionalitet 30 år – en introduktion. *Dansk sociologi*. 30(2), 5-13.

Fiig, C. 2019. Skarpere med end uden? Kønsforskning og politologi. *Politica.* 51(1), 5-18.

Folketinget [The Danish Parliament]. 2021. V137 om overdreven aktivisme i visse forskningsmiljøer [Excessive activism in certain research environments]. [Accessed 1 September 2023]. Available from: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/vedtagelse/v137/index.htm

Frello, B. 2007. Om distributionen af hvidhed – race, raceoverskridelse og racisme i John Fords *Forfølgeren. Kontur*. 15, 19-29.

Groglopo, A. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2023. Coloniality and Decolonisation in the Nordic region: An Introduction. In: Groglopo, A. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. eds. *Coloniality and Decolonization in the Nordic Region*. New York: Routledge, 1-21.

Guschke, B. 2023. *The Persistence of Sexism and Racism at Universities: Exploring the Imperceptibility and Unspeakability of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination in Academia.* Copenhagen Business School [PhD]. PhD Series No. 06.2023.

Hansen, N.K.L. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2018. Introduction: Taking Racism Seriously. *KULT: Racism in Denmark*. 15, 1-10.

Hassani, A. 2023. Racialisation in a "Raceless" Nation: Muslims Navigating Islamophobia in Denmark's Everyday Life. In: Groglopo, A. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. eds. *Coloniality and Decolonization in the Nordic Region*. New York: Routledge, 37-50.

Hervik, P. 1999. *Den generende forskellighed. Danske svar på den stigende multikulturalisme*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel.
Hervik, P. 2002. *Mediernes muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religion i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling.
Hervik, P. 2019a. Racialization in the Nordic Countries: An Introduction. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism and Antiracism in the Nordic Countries*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 3-37.
Hervik, P. 2019b. Denmark's Blond Vision and the Fractal Logics of a Nation in Danger. *Identities*. 26(5), 529-545.
Horst, C. 1998. Den institutionelle racediskrimination trives godt. *Social Kritik* (Special Issue: Diskrimination & Racisme). 55, 4-7.
Hunter, E.L. 2021. Diasporiske perspektiver på racialiseringens kolonialitet i Danmark. *Periskop – Forum for kunsthistorisk debat*. *Sorthed.* 25, 89-111.
Hunter, E.L. 2023. Black Racial Isolation: Understanding African Diaspora Subjectivity in Post-Racial Denmark. Doctoral Dissertation. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley.
Hussein, M., Yilmaz, F. and O'Connor, T. 1997. *Medierne, minoriteterne og majoriteten. En undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier og den folkelige diskurs i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling.
Hvenegård-Lassen, K. and Staunæs, D. 2019. Elefanten i (bede)rummet. Raciale forsvindingsnumre, stemningspolitik og idiomatisk diffraktion. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 1-2, 44-57.
Hvenegård-Lassen, K. and Staunæs, D. 2020. Race Matters in Intersectional Feminisms: Towards a Danish Grammar Book. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research.* 28(3), 224-236.
Hvenegård-Lassen, K., Staunæs, D. and Lund, R. 2020. Intersectionality, Yes, but How? Approaches and Conceptualizations in Nordic Feminist Research and Activism. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research.* 28(3), 173-182.
Jaffe-Walter, R. 2016. *Coercive Concern: Nationalism, Liberalism, and the Schooling of Muslim Youth*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Jagd, C.B. 1997. Når fordomme bliver til racediskrimination. Dokumentations- og Rådgivningscenteret om Racediskrimination.
Jensen, S.Q. 2007. *Fremmed, farlig og fræk: Unge mænd og etnisk/racial andenhed – mellem modstand og stilisering*. PhD Dissertation. Institut for Historie, Internationale Studier og Samfundsforhold, Aalborg Universitet.
Justesen, P. 2003. Racisme og diskrimination. Danmark og menneskerettighederne. Akademisk.
Khawaja, I. 2010. *To Belong Everywhere and Nowhere: fortællinger om muslimskhed, fællesgørelse og belonging*. PhD dissertation. Roskilde University.
Khawaja, I. 2015. "Det muslimske sofa-hjørne". Muslimskhed, racialisering og integration. *Pædagogisk Psykologisk Tidsskrift*. 52(2), 29-38.
Khawaja, I. 2022. Memory Work as Engaged Critical Pedagogy: Creating Collaborative Spaces for Reflections on Racialisation, Privilege and Whiteness. *Nordic Journal of Social Research*. 13(1), 94-107.
Khawaja, I., Staunæs, D. and Vertelyté, M. 2023. How Racial Matter Comes to Matter: Animacy, Memory Work, and Childhood Dolls. *Body & Society*. 29(3), 29-54.
Kim-Larsen, M.A.E. 2018. Hvid mælk - om racialisering af mælk og laktoseintolerans i forbindelse med transnational adoption. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 25(4), 38-48.
Kledal, A.R. 1997. Seksualitet og imperialisme. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 4, 51-62.
Kofoed, J. 2005. Holddeling. Når der gøres maskulinitet og hvidhed. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 3, 42-52.
Lagermann, L.C. 2013. Racialized Subjects in a Colourblind School. *The International Journal on School Disaffection*. 10(1), 73-91.
Lagermann, L. and Khawaja, I. 2022. *Gode intentioner er ikke nok. Opgør med fem myter om racisme, diversitet og etniske minoriteter i pædagogisk praksis*. Copenhagen: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.

Lapiņa, L. 2018. Recruited into Danishness? Affective Autoethnography of Passing as Danish. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 25(1), 56-70.
Lewis, G. 2013. Unsafe Travel: Experiencing Intersectionality and Feminist Displacements. *Signs*. 38(4), 869-892.
Li, J.H. 2021. The Lived Class and Racialization: Histories of 'Foreign Workers' Children's School Experiences in Denmark. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 190-199.
Lindberg, A. 2022. Feeling Difference: Race, Migration, and the Affective Infrastructure of a Danish Detention Camp. *Incarceration: An International Journal of Imprisonment, Detention and Coercive Confinement*. 3(1), 1-18.
Lóftsdottir, K. and Jensen, L. eds. 2012. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
Lykke, N. 2020. Transversal Dialogues on Intersectionality, Socialist Feminism and Epistemologies of Ignorance. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 28(3), 197-210.
Lykke, N. 2023. "Post-War" Reflections on Intersectionality: Arrivals, Methodologies and Structural Entanglements. In: Davis, K. and Lutz, H. eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Intersectionality Studies*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 180-196.
Manzoor-Khan, S. 2019. *Postcolonial banter.* Verve Poetry Press.
Mulinari, D., Keskinen, S., Irni, S. and Tuori, S. 2009. Introduction: Postcolonialism and the Nordic Models of Welfare and Gender. In: Keskinen, S., Tuori, S., Irni, S. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. London: Routledge, 1-16.
Myong, L. 2009. *Adopteret. Fortællinger om transnational og racialiseret tilblivelse*. PhD dissertation. Danish School of Education. Copenhagen: Aarhus University.
Myong, L. and Bissenbakker, M. 2016. Love Without Borders? White Transraciality in Danish Migration Activism. *Cultural Studies*. 30(1), 129-146.
Myong, L. and Bissenbakker, M. 2023 (in press). At vende Danmark ryggen. Danske kvinder og børn i interneringslejre i det nordøstlige Syrien. In: Bissenbakker, M. ed. *Tilknytningens grænser: Den affektive regulering af migration i Danmark*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 146-176.
Mørck. Y. 1998. *Bindestregsdanskere. Fortællinger om køn, generationer og etnicitet.* Forlaget Sociologi.
Nebeling, M. and Bissenbakker, M. 2021. The White Tent of Grief. Racialized Conditions of Public Mourning in Denmark. *Social & Cultural Geography*. 22(2), 170-188.
Padovan-Özdemir, M. 2016. Racialised Entanglements of Teacher Professionalisation and Problematised Immigrant Schoolchildren: Crafting a Danish Welfare Nation-State, 1970-2013. *Pedagogica Historica*. 52(5), 485-506.
Padovan-Özdemir, M. and Øland, T. 2022. *Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees: Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity*. Oxon, New York: Routledge.
Petersen, K.H. 1996. En køn historie. Postkoloniale kvinders kamp for kontrol over meningen med deres eget liv. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 4, 66-79.
Rasmussen, K-S. 2004. Hvad er dansk racisme? Minority Report. [online]. [Accessed 31 July 2023]. Available from: http://www.minority-report.dk/dansk/deltagere/kim_su_rasmussen.html.
Røgilds, F. 1995. Stemmer i et grænseland. En bro mellem unge indvandrere og danskere? København: Politisk Revy.
Schierup, C.U. 1993. *På kulturens slagmark. Mindretal og størretal taler om Danmark.* Esbjerg: Sydjysk Universitetsforlag.
Schmidt, G. 2021. Boundary Work: Investigating the Expert Role of Danish Migration Researchers. *Identities*. 28(5), 543-560.
Singla, R. 2004. Youth relationships and ethnicity: A social psychological perspective. *Young.* 12(1), 50-70.

Skadegård, M.C. 2017. With Friends Like These, Who Needs Enemies? Structural Discrimination and Good Intentions in Everyday Interactions. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*. *7*(4), 214-223.

Skadegård, M.C. 2018. *The Space Between: A Study of Structural Discrimination in Danish Contexts*. PhD dissertation. Aalborg: Aalborg University.

Smedegaard Nielsen, A. 2014. *"De vil os stadig til livs". Betydningskonstruktioner i tv-nyhedsformidling om terrortruslen mod Danmark*. PhD dissertation. University of Copenhagen.

Smedegaard Nielsen, A. 2021. Saving Racialized Children through Good Schooling: Media Discourses on Racialized Children's Schooling as a Site for Upholding Danish Whiteness. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 200-208.

Spanger, M. 2022. Constructing Victims and Criminals through the Racial Figure of "The Gypsy". In: Kempadoo, K. and Shih, E. eds. *White Supremacy, Racism, and the Coloniality of Anti-Trafficking*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 154-169.

Staunæs, D. 1998. Think Twice! Grænser og kategorier i opbrud. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 4, 53-71.

Staunæs, D. 2003. Where Have All the Subjects Gone? Bringing Together the Concepts of Intersectionality and Subjectification. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research.* 11(2), 101-110.

Staunæs, D. 2004. *Køn, etnicitet og skoleliv*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

Stenum, H. 2011. *Migration Management at the Margins: Transnationalized and Localized Government of Marginalized Migrants in Denmark: Au Pairs and Destitute EU Citizens*. Aalborg Universitet. SPIRIT PhD Series No. 26.

Suárez-Krabbe, J. and Lindberg, A. 2019. Enforcing Apartheid? The Politics of "Intolerability" in the Danish Migration and Integration Regimes. *Migration and Society.* 2(1), 90-97.

Thorsen, T.S.S. 2019. Minoritetsbeskatning – et værktøj til at forstå opretholdelse af strukturelle uligheder i dansk akademia. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 28(1-2), 31-43.

Thorsen, T.S.S. 2020. *Racialized Representation in Danish Film: Navigating Erasure and Presence*. PhD dissertation. Aalborg University.

Tomlinson, B. 2013. To Tell the Truth and Not Get Trapped: Desire, Distance, and Intersectionality at the Scene of Argument. *Signs.* 38(4), 993-1017.

Vertelyté. M. 2019. *Not So Ordinary Friendship: An Ethnography of Student Friendships in a Racially Diverse Danish Classroom*. PhD dissertation. Aalborg: Aalborg University.

Vertelyté, M. and Staunæs, D. 2021. From Tolerance Work to Pedagogies of Unease: Affective Investments in Danish Antiracist Education. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 126-135.

Yang, A. 2021. *Child-Friendly Racism? An Ethnographical Study on Children's Racialized Becoming in a Race-Blind Context*. PhD dissertation. Aalborg: Aalborg University.

Yilmaz, F. 2000. De har sejret ad helvede til. In: Tinor-Centi, E. ed. *Fra racisme til det stuerene – myndighedernes respons og ansvar*. Dokumentations- og rådgivningscenteret om racediskrimination.

Yilmaz, F. 2016. *How the Workers Became Muslim: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Research and education on racism in Denmark: The state of the field – and where to from here?

By Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Bontu Lucie Guschke, Elizabeth Löwe Hunter, Iram Khawaja, Jin Hui Li, Lene Myong, Mira C. Skadegård and Ferruh Yilmaz

Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, PhD, Independent scholar, odakange@gmail.com

Bontu Lucie Guschke, Postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Sociology, Freie University Berlin, bontu.guschke@fu-berlin.de, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8810-5207

Elizabeth Löwe Hunter, PhD, Independent scholar, elizabethlowehunter@berkeley.edu

Iram Khawaja, Associate Professor, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, irkh@edu.au.dk., https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5231-8729

Jin Hui Li, Associate Professor, Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, jhl@ikl.aau.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3546-7324

Lene Myong, Professor, Centre for Gender Studies, University of Stavanger, lene.myong@uis.no, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3700-1157

Mira C. Skadegård, Associate Professor, Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, mcsk@ikl.aau.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7663-9279

Ferruh Yilmaz, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Tulane University

Creating spaces for discussion between scholars studying racialization and racism

This piece is based on a roundtable discussion that took place as part of the Danish Gender Studies Conference on 19 August 2022 at the University of Copenhagen. The roundtable was planned by the three special issue editors to publish it as part of this special issue. **Iram Khawaja**, associate professor at the Danish School of Education (DPU) at Aarhus University, and **Lene Myong**, professor at the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Stavanger, chaired the discussion, while Bontu Lucie Guschke joined as a discussant.

Research on racism and racialization in Denmark lives between and across many research fields - education studies, gender studies, media studies, migration and refugee studies, global studies, and cultural studies to mention just a few. As scholarship and teaching on racialization and racism in Denmark seem to be growing and expanding, we wanted to provide a space to bring together scholars who work within different theoretical and disciplinary fields and from different racialized positions to initiate dialogue and discussion not only about their research projects but about the state of the field - if we can even call it a field - of racialization and racism research in Denmark. The ambition of the roundtable was both to stimulate critical dialogue on how research on racialization and racism has emerged and evolved in a Danish context and to discuss in which direction anti-racist research and education might turn in the future. In preparing the roundtable and inviting the discussants, we as editors were aware of the challenges and risks in addressing questions about racialization, structural racism, and the logic of white supremacy in Denmark - ranging

from potential exclusions within academia to attacks against scholars, as also elaborated on in the roundtable discussion. Yet, we agreed that we find it important to insist on creating spaces for continuing our dialogues and organizing meeting points, such as this roundtable, to strengthen the research community on race and racism. We are deeply grateful to the scholars who accepted our invitation to join the roundtable and who shared their perspectives, insights, and experiences so generously.

Six scholars who research racialization and racism in Denmark joined the roundtable: **Bontu Lucie Guschke** who at the time was a PhD Fellow at Copenhagen Business School, investigating racist and sexist harassment and discrimination at Danish universities from an intersectional perspective**. Elizabeth Löwe Hunter** who at the time was a PhD Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, where she was working on a research project that focuses on the African diaspora in Denmark. **Jin Hui Li** who is an associate professor at Aalborg University, working within the field of racialization with a focus on the relationship between transnational students in higher education, the development of the nation, and the welfare state in relation to identity. **Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo** who at the time was a PhD Candidate at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Her dissertation is an exploration of 'black study', black feminism, and community building among African-Norwegian youth. **Mira C. Skadegård** who at the time was an assistant professor at Aalborg University, researching structural discrimination, racism, and racialization in education and workplaces. **Ferruh Yilmaz** who is an associate professor at Tulane University in the US. For many years, he has been studying how political processes influence the view of Muslim immigrants in Denmark.

The discussion has been audio-recorded and transcribed by Signe Bech Nystrup Andersen, student assistant at Aarhus University. The version below has been slightly adapted by us as editors, in agreement with the discussants, to fit the format of a forum article. This means that some passages have been cut out, and some sections have been rearranged, however, without altering the content and context of what was said. The roundtable was arranged around several questions about the field of racialization and racism studies, the questions, topics, and bodies that have been excluded from this field, the relation between racialization and racism research and gender studies, and which ways forward it is possible to go in regard to strengthening the field, the research, and positioning of it in times of political mobilization against researchers and academics engaged in studying racialization and racism.

Towards establishing a field of racialization and racism studies

Lene: What do we understand as the field of racialization and racism studies in Denmark? To what extent does this field even exist?

Elizabeth: I appreciate that you added that second question. People often say: "Oh, you're in the U.S., but you're studying Denmark. Why? That's a paradox". And for me, that's completely necessary and logical that I had to leave to do exactly this. Also, being in my final year, a lot of people ask me: "Okay, are you going to search for jobs in Denmark?", and I am thinking: 'If I wanted to, where? If I wanted a postdoc, who would be my advisor? Where would I be? And also, wouldn't I be completely alone?' And then there's that whole extra burden of being tokenized. So, would I want to? This completely toxic shutdown of people who dare to challenge the status quo is just so extremely violent. It is impossible to work under those conditions, I mean, you people who are in Denmark, you do it, but also you are penalized for it. So, the whole thing about 'Is there even a field?': No. Because there is no institutional backup.

Mira: I was just thinking, no, we don't have any Danish field, and we don't have enough departments or any departments – or, we have one department, otherwise we wouldn't be here. But mostly everyone, like you were saying, is alone everywhere. But if we look at the research over time, race has figured as a thing in different ways implicitly or

explicitly in the ways we could approach or address race. Because in the seventies and eighties, there have been some researchers that used the word - I think like three, but they were there. So, there is a history to this in a Danish context. But we also need to remember, we are a little thing in a much broader context. The field does exist. It exists in a lot of different ways and across a lot of disciplines and in a lot of different countries, and that's what we need to remember and draw on. You need to do a little bit of detective work because it will be under 'integration' or 'immigration' or any of these other ways in which we can hide it. I'm just saying, there is something. It may not be a formalized field in a Danish context, but we have to remember, there is a history we have to respect, which we are situated within.

Oda-Kange: Yes, the research is here, and we are doing research, but is it really a field? I'm not sure. But something you said, Elizabeth, made me think about what has happened just recently within the last two years, something that I'm very wary of. The result of the Black Lives Matter uprising that also happened in this part of the world, at least for me, made it so that from one moment to the next suddenly my phone was ringing all the time with all these opportunities. This momentum, this idea that 'now is the time' - now you can talk about all of these things that you have been trying to talk about for years and years and years. And it was so much that it became too much, and I had to check out completely. And then once I came back, it kind of died down. So, I have this feeling that this "field" is very, very fragile, and it is also kind of held up by trends or what is interesting right now but is there a long-term commitment to trying to change and trying to actually dig deep into the roots of racism here and not just echo some buzzwords or trends that come from the current political debate?

Ferruh: I'm not sure that there is a field. If there isn't a field, it's not unique to Denmark. For example, one of my mentors is one of the biggest names in America about race, George Lipsitz, and he has never worked in the field. So, racism research has always been in communication departments, gender studies, anthropology, sociology, so, there has never been a real field about racism studies, I think. And this is not unique.

Hui: I think about it historically. It seems like we also suffer from memory loss. In the 1980s in the Danish context, there was huge articulation in the media about racial violence. It was in the daily papers, such as Ekstra Bladet or BT. "Raceuro" (race riots) was mentioned directly. I didn't live in Denmark during the 1980s, but I have tried to understand this lived experience of racism. Why is it not said aloud? Like why is it not articulated in the language of teachers and professionals, and from the student's perspective? As I was looking through the newspapers' collections, this was such an everyday life experience for the migrant students. So, I am still struggling with what happened in the 1990s? Why did the notions of race and racism disappear? I went to the school in the 1990s, it was not a thing we talked about. So, I am very interested in the historical movement of how the term "race" got erased for some time and how it came back.

Bontu: I would like to add a question: Would we want this as a field, and if so, in what way? Because I think there is also a danger of institutionalizing this in an academic system that has been inherently exclusive to certain forms of knowledge and knowledge created by marginalized people. If it is institutionalized in that system, who has to have a say in how that is being done, and whose research will become part of that and seen as a part of that? So, I would love for that to be a field, but I would also be afraid of *how* it is then institutionalized in the academic system, as we have it standing right now.

Racism research and gender studies

Iram: Being at the Danish Gender Studies Conference, we are curious about the relationship between racialization and racism studies and the field of gender studies in Denmark. How has this relationship changed over time?

Hui: I think it's connected to how we were schooled ourselves. When I was studying pedagogics at the University of Copenhagen, I was not really taught critical race theory, but I was taught a lot of gender studies. For me, it's how the bricks of our way of thinking build upon gender studies. It doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be like that forever, but it is very closely related in the Danish context. But now, I think, it can maybe be detached slowly. I think that also reflects if this field of ours will be developing and getting stronger by itself over time and have its own way of thinking.

Oda-Kange: I think gender studies, both in Denmark and in Norway and probably also a bit in Sweden, seems to be this sort of entryway if you want to do research on racism. It's easier to do it within gender studies than in other fields, in my experience. At least there you might be let in. And I think it comes from the adoption of intersectionality as a term, and then having to ask: 'Okay, where does this term come from? And can we talk about this without talking about race?' And somehow an opportunity opens. But I feel like in many other fields, you have to be careful with your words, especially in research proposals and things like that, and then maybe the truth of what you are really trying to study comes out later.

Bontu: I agree, it is used as an entry point for many of us because it is one of the only ways that work. At the same time, I am also always surprised and annoyed that there is still so much - not from you, but in the field of gender studies - this narrative that 'first you study gender, and then you can add another layer to it, then you can add an intersectional perspective, and then you can look at racism.' And that is often how you are allowed to do it, but it is not really the history of how that research developed. So, it's not like scholars went out and did gender research and then at some point realized: 'Oh, there is also racism, so let's look at that.' So, I am also always wondering, can we tell that story or that history in a different way of acknowledging, especially when the term intersectionality is used so much, how that very analytical perspective comes from Black feminism and analyses of race and racism in connection with gender and in connection with class and other categories? To very actively tell that story differently to hopefully create more space and starting points for research on racism that don't have to go through gender and gender studies if that's not what's in focus of the research you are trying to do.

Lene: We might also ask, what has been in- and excluded through that relationship between gender studies and research on racialization and racism?

Mira: If we are asking what has been excluded, it has been people of color studying it. Just the fact that there has been such a huge exclusion of anyone that's not white in the field and a lot of white scholars studying non-white persons as objects or problems. That is, really, one of our biggest challenges we need to overcome. Which we are overcoming now, but I think it is one of the things that has created a lot of frustration. And then of course the term race has also been excluded from this field for a long time.

Elizabeth: I'm glad that you sort of opened that, Mira. Because whiteness needs to be studied more. This conference, the way I understand it, it's white gender studies. That is the default. So, what is missing is studying that invisibilized default, which is present everywhere. It is not just our panel that is on race, everything is racialized, So, we need to make that part of all the analysis we do. It's not just like Black and brown folk, who have intersectional identities, we all do. And then what about the idea of positionality? Who is allowed within the university? Who gets to teach what? Who gets to research what and research who? Who gets those jobs? Who gets to be experts? Who gets to translate who and so on? These things aren't random.

The im/possibilities of conducting research on racialization and racism in Denmark

Lene: Thinking about these questions of 'who is let in and who is not let in', how did you enter this field of research?

Ferruh: I am not a scholar of race or immigration. What I was looking at was actually the political process that has changed in how we see immigrants in Denmark. I lived in Denmark for 20 years. When I came to Denmark, I came as a Turkish person. But when I left Denmark, I was first and foremost a Muslim. I had become Muslim. So that's the process I wanted to study. I wanted to analyze how that process had happened. I call this process culturalization. In Denmark, we used to understand the social differences in terms of class, but it became cultural differences, which then erased the class consciousness in a way. I get confused when people use the term racialization. I don't know how that fits, how that explains, what is going on in Denmark. My feeling is that it is a term that is imported from somewhere, that explains what is going on in other contexts. I am not sure how it explains it here.

Mira: Well, my research is on discrimination, which is discrimination on all discrimination grounds. I didn't actually intend to look at racism. I came to the field from a practical side, I worked as a consultant, advising organizations and corporations in regard to "ligestilling", which is equal opportunities, and then I realized there wasn't enough Danish research on racism in Denmark. Every time I referred to British, Swedish, whatever, other research, they were like: 'That's because we don't have a problem in Denmark.' So, if there is no research, then it's not necessary, and I was like: 'All right, I'll do the damn PhD.' So that's why I got into the field.

Oda-Kange: I left Denmark, actually to do my research, because I didn't feel like I could do it here. So that's where it started for me. I left Denmark for Norway, which is in many ways two sides of the same coin or two sides of the same colonial history. But I think I needed that distance from the general denial and gaslighting that happens in Denmark every time that you try to mention coloniality or racism or anti-blackness for that matter.

Elizabeth: Like Oda-Kange, I also left to ask the kind of questions that I want to ask. Which is basically: How are you a minority, racialized person, when race doesn't exist, and also, how do you research something that supposedly doesn't exist? I see that a lot of the scarce research that we have in a Danish context is often some sort of discourse analysis of news media and the like, and that's already produced from somewhere. I'm really interested in hearing what real people have to say, because we can speak. And so, I am looking at some very few autobiographies and then I did a bunch of interviews to hear what people have to say. I hadn't seen that before. So as Mira said, I am also basically producing the research that I really wanted to read myself.

Iram: What implications does the current political context have for conducting research on race and racialization?

Mira: It's contentious - but interesting. I try not to get really upset. I try to see it as an interesting question, like: 'Why is that?' Because otherwise, I will do what everyone else did and leave - which is understandable, but one also has to claim this field a little bit and talk about why these challenges are there. Many have been talking about how difficult it is to work with this, and how contested it is, and how we are under attack, but that shouldn't come as a surprise, at least for most of those people who are used to being part of oppressed groups, because historically we have always been… People really get upset about this field. So, we know that this is a contentious field. And I think it's really important to claim a space in it despite that!

Elizabeth: Related to what Mira ended on - speaking of people being upset – is this dismissal of what we do. It's scientific research and analysis,

it's not opinions. But it gets treated like everybody can have an opinion about this, and everybody can say: 'Well, you have your individual perspective' and 'especially, you have your ethnic perspective' and 'your victimized perspective.' Whereas you have to be pretty audacious to just challenge, I don't know, a nuclear scholar in the same way and just offer your opinion like that.

Oda-Kange: I think that discussing how we do research in the university is already problematic, because the university itself in my eyes and in my experience, is an extremely violent place. It is not a safe place at all. You cannot be sure when teaching or sitting with colleagues having lunch, how your work will be interpreted, used, dismissed, copied, and not cited, and so on. I also want to mention all the research that has been done outside of the university, such as Farhiya Khalid with Respons and their work on the "ghettoplan" and how racism is very much connected with class and space and home in this context (see podcast "Mere end Mursten"). But at the same time, it is difficult, because once the university co-opts the knowledge that has been created outside of the university, it's only the knowledge, but not the people, that's taken in, and then it's still being narrated by an observer that stands on the outside, usually a white one. And then another thing is, as someone who has been let in, I feel like I always have to be careful not to be too honest or too activist, because there is always this fear of, 'well, now you have gone too far, and we will never let you back in.' And it becomes extremely lonely. And that means that the research that is being funded, that is actually being done, then often can only go so far. There's always a limit. It has to be "spiseligt" (digestable) for those who are funding it. It cannot be too much. It cannot be too activistic. It cannot be too dangerous.

Future visions for anti-racist change and solidarity in research and education

Iram: Many of you touched upon that feeling of being lonely, raising questions that can make people upset. Looking forward, what strategies for organizing solidarity can we develop? What forms of anti-racist change are we seeking in research and education? What are our visions for change?

Mira: We could try to remember to stand together, to support each other, and to trust in the work that we are actually doing. When you get attacked, remember we're doing research. This is not an opinion party. I think that a lot of people working in this field are extra stringent because they know they're under scrutiny in a different way than if they were studying nuclear stuff or frogs. Of course, you are all under scrutiny, but I think we are extra worried because we know there's another scrutiny. So, maybe just trust the process and not worry so much that you're not doing essentialist or positivist or quantitative research, because that is not the only research out there that is valid. And sometimes we forget that because we feel alone and feel worried and feel attacked individually. So, remembering: We are doing research. People will disagree, let them.

Hui: I would say that as a young scholar, it is very good to reach out for more experienced scholars who probably have been in these places and have received these attacks. And I think people working in this field are very aware of these tensions and will show solidarity and will be helpful.

Bontu: One question that I think a lot about, is, what does solidarity then actually mean or look like? Because it's so often also named as, 'oh yes, I stand in solidarity with the people under attack or with this field of research' and what does that really mean? I keep thinking about this open question. I don't think you can really be in solidarity as a state of being, but it's really a practice.

It's something you have to do, and you have to do it continuously. And it's this continued struggle with the people that you want to be in solidarity with, or stand with, about: 'Okay, what is it that you are actually being attacked for? Or, what kind of support do you need for that? Or, what kind of backing do we need for that?' And I don't think it means that we have to agree on everything. I don't think it means that we have to agree on exactly how this research should be done, or what questions to focus on first, but we need to have a collective aim or a collective struggle to say 'this is legitimate research'.

Ferruh: I am very pessimistic. There is a very sharp assault on critical thinking as such, not only on racism, as we experience within gender studies. So, I am pessimistic that we don't have power to do anything about it because they are coming after us. I don't know what to say. So, I don't know what to do. It's very stressful for a lot of us. Both here, in gender studies and some other studies too, for example, people who study the far right are also under attack.

Bontu: I try to remind myself quite often that, well, yes, I am marginalized in many ways and so on, but I do also hold a position in a quite renowned institution in the Global North. What do I do with that? How do I use that institutional affiliation? How do I use the resources that come with that? Thinking about very small practices: Who do I read and cite? Who do I supervise? How do I teach? What do I put in the curriculum of the courses that I teach? If I act as a reviewer, what kind of review do I give to these papers? All these small practices where we are all part of reproducing the academic system. Each and every time, I try to question myself: Am I just doing this because I somehow learned that this is how I am supposed to do it, or does that actually support that kind of academic system that I think we need to ask these questions and to do this kind of research? So, of course, quite often I can feel like, okay, I am the small PhD student in this huge academic system, and how will that change anything? But I do believe that all of us have our small leverage points, where we can think about, who we invite, who we give a platform, etc. So, to not completely drown in the pessimism, I try to remind myself, where do I have influence and how can I use that?

Hui: I see myself as a descriptive researcher. I describe things. I describe these lived experiences of racialization. And then, as I study education, there are teachers and pedagogues who, I'm pretty sure, don't go into the field with the intention of discriminating. So, showing them how schooling and how their institutions are functioning, and which kind of effect it creates, and they create - without saying it's them as an individual, but the school as an institution - I think that is important. To make visible to the professional practitioners what is happening, or how these groups of students experience their teaching, I think that's important for this field.
Mira: We wouldn't study this if we weren't interested in equality and social justice, which are ground pillars of democracy. So, I think that's important to just say out loud: that the reason we study this and the hope we have is to contribute to strengthening equality and belonging and making it easier to be citizens in any society, and in particular the Danish society. So, I'm just pointing out, it's not entirely non-normative. It's pretty damn normative. We're trying to actually maintain our society as opposed to breaking it down. I think this work is super important in terms of supporting and not letting the democratic structure fail, basically.

Elizabeth: As important as I think the research is that we do, regular people don't care about academia. And politicians don't either, and they do not read our stuff, before they go public and say things about it. We aren't as important as we think. And so, something about change is actually about trying to be human as something very radical. Because it actually is very radical to stay human within academia. They certainly try to make us into some like masculinist robots or something, and so to actually practice the things that we care about, those of us that are grounded in something feminist, wherever it's from. I think that can change something for real. Like, when peers or people who are a little bit more junior to me call me crying, to be there in

a very human way. Figuring out when we can let go of that professional, academic guard. Because, of course, we needed to protect ourselves, when we are who we are, but also letting it down sometimes to show some realness. That is the thing that has kept me alive through all of these many PhD years and continues to be.

Iram: Thank you so much to each of you for your valuable time, contribution, thoughts, reflections, for being here despite anger, despite disappointment. It means a lot. We hope that this space can also do something because it does something to gather people with different fields of work, different point of views, and different disciplinary takes on this field. Maybe we are forming some kind of field. As fluffy as it might be.

Our aim of the roundtable was to make space for the field of research and education on racism and racialization within and in relation to gender studies and show how it is characterized by different positionalities, experiences, perspectives, and ambitions. In the discussion, it became evident that on the one hand, we cannot say there really is a demarcated field for studies on racism and racialization. Is it (the lack of) institutional backing that determines the (non-)existence of a field of racism studies? Or is it the legacy of research on racialization and racism that has been conducted in whichever field it was possible since at least the 1970s, that we should pay attention to as informally delineating a research field? If it is a field of research, how come its constitution seems fragile and influenced by broader public debates, for instance around Black Lives Matter, more than by a long-term commitment to investigate the roots of racism in Denmark? If it is not a field yet, we need to ask what risks and challenges it would comprise to institutionalize racism research within an academic system that has been inherently exclusive to knowledge created from marginalized perspectives. Looking at the relationship between gender studies and research on racism and racialization, there have been continuous struggles of 'who is let in', who gets to study whom, and what forms of knowledge are accepted as legitimate parts of the academy. On the other hand, it also became evident in the roundtable discussion that the field, in all its diversity, is characterized by some common goals, challenges, and mechanisms. For example, the goal of being committed to analyzing and making the workings of racism and racialization evident and bringing about anti-racist change through involvement in academia, alternative knowledge production and dissemination and just staying human in restrictive and dehumanizing institutionalized structures.

The latter half of the discussion specifically turned towards the challenges of conducting research on racialization and racism, especially as a racially marginalized scholar. As the discussants highlighted, in the current political context, research insights are often treated as mere opinions, and researchers are attacked in public media discourse, political debates, as well as within universities. Academia is not a safe space for racialized scholars, and as a consequence, some scholars have had to leave Denmark to conduct their research elsewhere – in other countries, or outside the academic system – while others decide to claim their space within Danish universities despite continuous headwinds. Thus, as we ask in the headline, where to from here? If we were to try to distill a collective, collage-like answer to this question from the discussion, it might be this one: We need to recognize it as a radical act to stay human within an academy that tries to dehumanize us, to practice - and not only talk about - solidarity, which makes it possible to work towards a shared aim of strengthening social justice, equity, and belonging in this society, through our research, our teaching, and in our institutions. We hope that this roundtable can be seen as a small step in reclaiming our space and working towards a practice of solidarity.

Sensible Ruptures: Towards Embodied and Relational Ways of Knowing

By Maya Acharya and Gabriella Isadora Muasya

Maya Acharya, PhD fellow, Danish School of Education, University of Aarhus, msa@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3378-7749

Gabriella Isadora Muasya, PhD fellow, Danish School of Education, University of Aarhus, ginm@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6044-3158

Abstract

This paper explores queer and racialized experiences in Danish academia through what we call 'sensible ruptures': affective, embodied and sensory ways of knowing. Taking seriously these modes of knowledge, the article outlines the creation of an online, audio-visual archive. Weaving together text, audio and images to unfold our concept of sensible ruptures, we demonstrate how the audio-visual can meaningfully contribute to capturing the affective and material fabric of racialized and queer experiences with/in Danish higher education. Sensible ruptures underscore the importance of understanding the complex processes of racialization in an institutional and national context saturated by ambiguity and exceptionalism. We contend that thinking not only against, but beyond, disembodied colonial logics offers a different mode of knowledge creation, reconfiguring the self as permeable: constituted through and with our histories and surroundings. We centre friendship as a vital part of this process, harnessing queer epistolary to perform our pursuit of, and argument for, knowledge as always and inevitably relational.

KEYWORDS: racialization, queer studies, affect, embodiment, archives, epistolary

Introduction

We, Gabriella & Maya, an Afro-Danish woman and a queer, Nepalese-Ukrainian person of color, respectively, found each other in the process of navigating higher education in Denmark and learning what it means to become academic researchers. In writing this article, our aim is to explore queer and racially minoritized[1] experiences in Danish higher education through what we conceptualize as 'sensible ruptures': affective, embodied and sensory ways of knowing. Giving weight to these modes of knowing, we created an audio-visual archive with the intention of carving out a different way of co-creating knowledge.

Entering Danish academia simultaneously, we shared a focus on how racialized students create spaces of resistance and belonging within and beyond the university. Confiding in each other and conversing together, our own encounter with the university has also been a reckoning with the ways in which the academy is rooted in violent histories and colonial ideals of objectivity, extraction and productivity that sever theory from embodied and lived experience (de Sousa 2017; Bhambra 2018; The River and Fire Collective 2021). In this environment, knowledge sutured to white, cis, middle-class, able-bodied straightness becomes situated as rational, normative, neutral and thereby able to transcend the confines of the body (Bacchetta et al. 2018; Diallo 2019; Harris and Nicolazzo 2020).

During our first year as PhD fellows we quickly encountered, through everyday interactions, the ways in which our projects were met with: anxieties around the 'controversy' of these students' resistance and themes of de/anti-colonialism as a threat towards the academy; around our stakes and positionality; and around collaborative/creative methodological approaches. We shared experiences of coming up against ideas, customs and behaviors that enforce how the preferred or professional researcher must maintain a relational and depoliticized distance in order to produce a disembodied subjectivity that is so often idealized within academia, and to which innumerable interventions have been made[2]. In 2020, in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as exacerbated long-standing systemic racist harm towards marginalized groups and a growing national political rhetoric of hostility towards scholars engaged with topics of gender, race and sexuality, the tensions around the (im)possibility of bracketing our subjectivity surfaced in our conversations.

By accounting for our bodies through these conversations, as bodies 'out of place' (Puwar 2004) in the academy, we identified different ways of relating and responding to the institution. We saw ruptures starting to emerge, both in the binary categories we had been taught (of researcher/researched, personal/political, rational/irrational), in the normative ideals of who and what constitutes legitimate knowledge, as well as in our own affective landscapes. On the basis of sharing our positionings and experiences, we developed the term sensible ruptures as a way of resisting disembodied sensibilities in Danish academia and experimenting with ways of co-constituting knowledge. The term - which derives from affective and sensuous ways of knowing and being (Ivinson & Renold, 2021; Puwar, 2021) – became a springboard for our desire to create an archive, one where we could map our embodied experiences in an attempt to make sense of research as a process rooted in the bodily and its relation to the world.

In early 2022, we began to meet regularly to outline the beginnings of this online audio-visual archive[3]. Drawing on our experiences as queer and racialized individuals, the archive explores our notion of sensible ruptures, emerging as a collection of video clips, audio recordings and illustrations organized as a form of collage and tethered to different bodily and material locations. Combining these mediums, we created affective atmospheres informed by our senses and embodied experiences. Each audio-visual clip is connected to a wider whole with footage of water serving as both an entry and exit point. In between, there is no linear narrative or trajectory, but five connecting points titled STIMOROL, LINOLEUM UNIVERSAL SOAP, GUT, BREATH and ADRIFT. The latter functions as an anchor; each

clip eventually leads to this conjoining video of our bodies in water.

In our desire to subvert normative ideals of knowledge creation and emphasize a collaborative process, we make use of letter writing inspired by the concept of 'queer epistologies of repair' (DasGupta et al. 2021). Honoring how letters have historically been a site of learning, knowledge sharing and enacting queer bonds for those in opposition to the conditions of white, cis heteropatriarchy, the authors generously extend their correspondence as a method of solidarity and sustenance: letter writing[4] as "speaking out loud, co-reflecting, caring, and supporting each other" (DasGupta et al. 2021, 491). Evoking the support and hope that queer epistolary offers, our conversation[5] is both a current between our experiences of adriftness in academia as well as a desire to move beyond imposed modes of knowing, productivity and individualism. The following exchange unfolds the concept of sensible ruptures in relation to the experiences encompassed in the archive as well as critically analyzing the process, meaning and implications of its making; together we share considerations on gaze, access, language and closeness/distance. The letters are interspersed with wider methodological and theoretical reflections, positioning our project in relation to an overall contribution regarding topics of racialization, affect, materialism and embodiment.

This paper asks: how can queer and racialized experiences be explored through affective, embodied and sensory ways of knowing? We argue that experimenting with an audio-visual, practice-based approach offers ways of thinking against and beyond colonial logics within Danish academia. We underscore the importance of capturing complex processes of racialization and marginalization, which are not easily fixed and are intrinsically linked to affect, within this landscape. Additionally, in understanding friendship as a crucial part of knowledge constitution through our project, our letter writing and archive propose new forms of relationality that affectively break with disembodiment and alienation in Danish academia.

Drifting between through letters

Dear Gabriella,

It's been a little over two weeks since I last saw you. I hope you've arrived well in Cape Town, so exciting to think of you there, carving out new beginnings!!! I'm slowly finding grounding again after returning from my research stay in Vancouver. Glad we had some time to overlap in Copenhagen in between all the transience, to be in the water together, in the residue of summer. Also so glad we ended up choosing that shot of us jumping into the sea to frame our archive. It makes so much sense to me in terms of how we've talked about the project and how it's unfolded. Water as embracive, returning to submerge, cleanse, simply be. Water as both grief and solace; a place to be both adrift and held, where there's space for pleasure and support, as well as devastation and loss. Water as reflection, a way to grasp ourselves, and as refraction, a way to distort and bend this perception into new directions and forms. (Okay, I know I'm a sucker for the water metaphor. Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley (2008) reminds me that although reaching into the metaphoric possibilities of the sea may allow for a type of linguistic queering, we must also not lose sight of the specific material formations, both past and present, of violence, memory and resistance, the sea holds).

And that line from the poem you chose, layered on top of the clip ADRIFT. From Adrienne Maree Brown: that "water seeks scale, that even your tears seek the recognition of community" (2017, 109). I found that so beautiful in considering how, for me, this archive came out of a desire for connectivity; that sharing and collecting our experiences like this is not just a way to make sense of them, but a creative project to imagine something new and uncharted, a way of being together beyond the oppressive temporalities and orderings of academia. There is potential in that. Which is to say this friendship, in very real ways, expands my sense of what is possible – that my understanding, (un) learning and knowing is forged within and through intimate processes of relation. It cannot exist separately from these breaks and bonds, which is why

I understand our archive, the notion of sensible ruptures, and this correspondence, as a creative intervention enacting possibility against a colonial present. Or, as I read recently, taking the liberatory potential of friendship seriously means a "renewal of our imagination about who we are and who we wish to become" (Banerjea et al. 2018, 2). Which is all really to say, thank you.

I think a vestige of (continued) coloniality is the dismissal and diminishing of these forms of intimacy for the same reason that we are taught to swallow the fantasy of an emotionally contained, independent subject, separate and distinct from the rest of the living world. I had this conversation around dinner the other day where we were talking about whether or not we believed in reincarnation, and my friend said something that stuck with me. They said that our bodies are in a constant process of shedding, death and rebirth. In this way we're porous and permeable, always and inevitably entangled with each other. I'm sure there's a bunch of hotshot new materialist scholars who would agree.

So much of our work, our experiences, and this project itself has orbited around what it means to know. Against the contours of the institution, we have felt bound by hierarchies of legitimacy that determine what knowledge is viable and worthy.

Repeatedly, DK academia has asked me to justify (too) closeness; to extrapolate my body from my work, as if they are not one and the same. This has been framed in terms of academically hazardous proximities to the students I'm engaged in research with, to methods of carrying out this research, to the themes of racialization and social justice, to investments in identity, affect and politics. This perturbation is often tied to an implication of bias or lack of rigor, and a consistent imperative to explain and justify, which itself can be seen as a mechanism of structural oppression. It's been noted that there is often backlash towards work that engages experience as theory as naive, static, or essentialist (Calafell & Moreman 2009, 128) as well as a skewed expectation toward marginalized scholars, whereby "especially BIPOC, but also trans, gender non-conforming, queer and disabled researchers are expected to reflect on their position to avoid being accused of bias and navel-gazing" (The River and Fire Collective 2021). I'm holding on to closeness, to our archive.

Still from video ADRIFT, 2022

I notice I keep referring to the project as an archive. I still feel kind of cringe about using that term but also not sure if 'audio-visual un-fucking project' is right either lol. So much has been written about the archive, a word laden with notions of authority, binding what and who can be known, how things come to matter. What I'm really interested in is what creatively crafting this kind of space can do. Julietta Singh tells us that "no archive will restore you, no text but those we cannot read" (2018, 23). She writes about the body-archive, attending to her own history and its bodily traces, material and felt. I'm drawn to this idea of tracing the untraceable, the corporeal, accounting for that which cannot be read or comprehended in a literal sense. I wonder if that is what we are doing in the gathering and manifesting of these ruptures, in our project?

Somewhere in transit,
Maya

Hi Maya,

Your letter gives me a sense of home - thank you! I hope your journey back has been gentle and that you're finding your place and rhythm.

Thank you for naming closeness. I wanted to note that we've talked about how writing these letters to each other is a way to deliberately choose closeness as a minoritarian method (Gagnon 2021). Materially (attending to our surroundings), relationally (centering friendship), methodologically (favoring proximity through embodiment and epistolary), and ethically (as an avowal of the vulnerable and connected, as well as a critique of distanced subjectivity).

Your reflections on the value of friendship and the desire for relationality in academia deeply resonated with me. For me, our friendship has been a space of intellectual intimacy, rest and joy and created moments where I regained a sense of self. There is a poignant bell hooks quote I wanted to share, which I think hits at the heart of our desires to create different forms of relational knowledge: "to heal the splitting of mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language. We seek to make a place for intimacy. Unable to find such a place in standard English, we create the ruptured, broken, unruly speech of the vernacular" (hooks 1994, 175). From our own individual and shared experiences, we also chose to make sense of and theorize the broken – we stayed with the ruptures, interrogated them, cried and laughed about them together. I see our archive as having emerged out of our friendship where we held each other in our needs to explore and make meaning of our experiences, but also, as you write, a making space for possibilities of knowing otherwise. Our weaving together of similar yet different affective experiences – joys, pains and curiosities – and supporting each other through different ways of knowing, seeing and listening has been one of the most exciting and challenging learning spaces.

In particular, the archive became important because it gave us a practice-based and visual medium for us to explore what it means to exist, think, argue and work in Danish academia: a context which is dominated by color blindness (Lagermann 2013), colonial amnesia (Marronage 2021) and racialized exceptionalism (Danbolt & Myong 2019). Where experiences and knowledge of structural oppression are so often rendered invisible and the subtle mechanisms of racism veiled in ambiguity. And a wider societal context where marginalized groups are still developing and experimenting with language in order to make sense of their experiences and break with forms of alienation (DCN & Marronage 2020; Löwe Hunter 2021). These types of harm inflict self-doubt/self-blame, second-guessing whether instances of discrimination and harm occurred or not, and if they are individual, institutional or structural (Khawaja 2023). I really think this is why our audio-visual approach has been so important for us, because it not only allowed us to denormalize harmful words/phrases/questions in academic contexts, but also to take seriously felt and material experiences beyond words – sitting with the affective and sensory dimensions of these instances working with a 'show don't tell' approach. We played and experimented with images and sounds and voice-over narration, stitching together fiction, poetry or diary excerpts. And although

words, both spoken and written, are a part of the archive, they function more to create an affective atmosphere than to 'explain'.

I was wondering, how have you experienced the creative possibilities and limitations of text/ language in exploring our experiences through the archive?

Settling in,
Gabriella

Dear Gabriella,

I think language is – like closeness – fraught. Filled with potential for harm, as you describe. Closeness feels like a signal, a move towards collaboration and feeling which extends not only through the archive but also our writing. Basically, the writing itself is embodied, coalescing with and performing our argument. Which reminds me of Ocean Vuong's (2020) observation of the epistolary form – that it demands the reader enters a conversation that is inherently excluding and that this disorientation is important: we are not speaking to an external 'you' but, first and foremost, to each other.

Reflecting on closeness and the encounter between the bodily and the material, I'm wondering if you noticed how, in the archive, each rupture (with the exception of ADRIFT) is titled with either a bodily location or a material (BREATH, LINOLEUM UNIVERSAL SOAP, GUT, STIMOROL)?? I know this wasn't a premeditated choice; however, it carries meaning in terms of our epistemological framing – how we insist on knowledge as material and bodily, and in doing so reveal something about the assumed proximity/distance of these materials to the knowing (human) subject.

There's also a connection to language here, often neglected in the literature, about how material and language are co-constituted, and therefore how the discursive contours of what we can and cannot articulate, matter. Which is a long way of getting back to what you named about how the audio-visual gives us room to engage with sensory and affective knowledge beyond language as narration. This is meaningful in reflecting not only on the conceptual usages of sensible ruptures, but also the dominance of colonial languages; what it means to be at home in a language that is not your own, and the limits of what kind of home that can be (Ramayya 2019, 19). Articulation is sticky. I think this relates to how we have given a name to something in an attempt to make it tangible, and that us speaking the concept of sensible ruptures into existence is testimony to the ways in which language constrains the experience of racialization in this landscape you describe; how these experiences become illegible through the negation of the affective and bodily. Which is why it was necessary for us to turn to other mediums to attend to those silences, to what is effaced by this linguistic worldview. As Natalie Diaz notes, "if language is a technology, speech is only one way of it. It is not the body but an estimation of the body" (2020, n.p.). I see our reach for sensible ruptures as striving towards a different type of technology, towards sensory and affective vernaculars that are built with and through an unfolding bodily lexicon.

hugs (not words),
Maya

Affect, Racialization and Danish institutions

This paper is premised on an understanding of the university as a space in which colonial histories are deeply entrenched in a way that is not relegated to the past but rather ongoing and, importantly, felt; universities are spaces in which certain bodies are 'at home' while other, minoritized bodies, are made 'out of place' (Puwar 2004; Ahmed 2012). Following these scholars, we emphasize the affective dimensions of racialization within academic institutions. Increased attention has been paid to affective approaches in examining racialization in Denmark (see for instance Myong & Bissenbakker 2014; Andreassen & Vitus 2016; Vertelyté & Staunæs 2021; Goankar 2022, among others). However, there is a limited and lacking body of literature around processes of racialization within Danish universities, particularly by

those with lived experience of racism. Important interventions have been made by scholars such as Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo (2019) and Bontu Lucie Guschke (2023), while Copenhagen-based collectives such as Marronage & DCN (2020)[6] have also done vital work in outlining how processes of racialization unfurl within and against Danish institutions. Contributions from Mira C. Skadegård (2017) and Iram Khawaja (2022) expand on universities and pedagogy as spaces of institutional whiteness, while Tess Skadegård Thorsen (2019) and Khawaja (2023) meaningfully address the affective tolls of being minoritized in Danish higher education through the concepts of minority taxation and minority stress, respectively.

We bring affect and embodiment to the forefront of discussions of racialization precisely to underscore the importance of understanding these processes in socio-political contexts where they are obscured. This paper builds on the aforementioned studies through our collaborative, practice-based approach, yet diverges in its attention to affect and embodiment as sites of resistance and epistemic possibility. Through this pursuit of creating knowledge otherwise, we also insist on the entanglement of affect and material, inscribing ourselves into perspectives that bring materiality to the fore, complicating relationships between subjects and objects, human and non-human (Chen 2012; Weheliye 2014).

Specifically, we align our project with the argument that committing to a more capacious understanding of what is animated (imbued with life), or "what and who counts as human, and what or who does not" (Chen 2012, 30), allows us to queer our subject positions. Additionally, we understand knowing itself as materially implicated, that human subjecthood is underpinned by racial hierarchies of anti-Blackness and the colonial construction of humanness as White (Wynter & McKittrick 2015; Jackson 2020; Wilderson 2020). We therefore recognize that different racialized subject positions have different relationships with different types of matter according to ideological, economic, historical and political processes. In doing so, we orient towards materiality as an entry point for exploring sensible ruptures, thus conceptually expanding the archive itself to include the more-than-human.

Hi Maya,

Thanks for your letter! I hope you're well :)

I have been thinking it is also important to reflect on the limitations of the audio-visual in terms of which senses can actually be mediated; photo and video is obviously for hearing and seeing and not for example smelling, tasting and touching. I remember how we grappled with this, since our different experiences were based on so much more than hearing and seeing.

For example, in my video clip titled LINOLEUM UNIVERSAL SOAP, I try to mediate the affective experience of a particular kind of Danish institutional scent. A creeping scent born of the combination of linoleum floors and universal, odorless soap – which reminds me of something that is trying not to smell, but is made conspicuous by its insistence on being absent. In making the archive, I sat with this feeling of a smell-pretending-to-be-a-non-smell, connecting it with institutional homogeneity, or an 'odorless' ('colorblind' and 'innocent') society – distant from and clean of colonial wrongdoings (Wekker 2016). Audio-visually, I mediated this experience – sensory despite itself – through the style of the video, using handheld point of view shots of feet running up and down grey linoleum stairs that loop indefinitely. I layered these moving images with repetitive mechanical sounds of a printer, giving a distinct character and 'soundscape' to the academic institution itself. Against this backdrop, a voice-over narrates embodied memories of Danish institutions and how we learn about places differently through our bodies. Reflecting on how smell can unveil structural issues, and how for some it might go unnoticed, and for others it might reek. The process of making this video made me think of how ruptures are stored in the body, stretching across time and space. Here I consider Christina Sharpe's assertion that what is relegated to the past is a question of how we are unevenly located in the present (2016), contending that "the past that

Still from video LINOLEUM UNIVERSAL SOAP, 2023

is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present" (9). A rupture then is not something that just occurs in the moment but it lingers, like a longing, a warning or curiosity and communicates something about how the body is always-already connected with its social, cultural, historical, political and material surroundings, stirring together time and space. Our archive has become a way of weaving together a sort of 'affective material fabric' by making use of our different embodied experiences. Perhaps in this way, our archive is a rupture in of itself? How was it for you exploring your ruptures through images and sound?

with gratitude,
Gabriella

Between Theory and Practice: On Cracks and Fissures

We are indebted to and stand on foundations laid by the manifold de/anti-colonial and Black feminist theorists who have historically challenged and fought against heteropatriarchal, white supremacist and colonial forms of oppression (Lorde 1984; Collins 1989; Harrisson 1991). Our project is situated within older and on-going debates circulating objectivity and subjectivity and informed by long-standing issues around closeness/distance, neutrality and disembodiment in research (Dillard 2000). As the letters allude, we are inspired by the liberatory potential of theorizing from lived experience through practice (hooks 1994). Breaking with detached ways of producing knowledge, we align ourselves with hooks' merging of theory and practice as a reciprocal process. Our concept of sensible

ruptures and archive go hand in hand; we not only theorize our memories, encounters and everyday experiences, but in order to do so, we center the process of creating the archive itself as an experiment in examining possibilities of knowing.

Ruptures emerge as the result of contradicting forces; they can move slowly, lingering for years in a state of potentiality or accelerate and tear a building apart when contradictions can no longer be absorbed (Forensic Architecture 2022). In challenging colonial systems of thought, the idea of breaking with, cracking open and fissuring have been applied as conceptual lenses and metaphors to analyze the relationship between knowledge, power and border thinking (Fanon 1967; Mignolo & Walsh 2018), and as ways of creating decolonial possibilities. Decolonial cracks and fissures are locations of thinking and doing practice-based decolonial work within modern/colonial/heteropatriarchal systems. In the book *On Decoloniality Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018) Walsh develops the notion of cracks by categorizing herself as a militant/activist intellectual, whereby cracks can lead to radical forms of pedagogy that challenge these systems within academia. Although we, too, challenge disembodied colonial sensibilities centered around distance, our conceptualization of ruptures is less geared towards an intellectual activism within the institution. Rather, our practice-based approach to sensible ruptures allows us to think through the generative potential of creatively co-constituting knowledge against as well as beyond the disembodied colonial logics of academia.

Hi Gabriella,

I love the way that you describe the archive as an affective fabric, weaving together collectively and distinctly! Your understanding of the way the format reflects this, underscores the possibilities of the audio-visual in allowing us to layer different moments and histories in such a way that they touch, interlace and commune with each other.

Thanks for asking about my clips. In the archive, there is the segment called BREATH, consisting of a collage I made by gathering different words jotted down during various institutional, online meetings throughout the first year of the pandemic. Often, during these meetings, I found myself writing or doodling – something I do to focus my attention. I noticed that these scribbles became a way for me to express feelings and frustrations that I wasn't able to say out loud. To me, they illustrate minute outbursts: swear words, sarcastic comments, painful realizations in moments when I felt clenched, unable to speak up. Material inscriptions that are paradoxical in both their silence and articulation. Then there's also the video titled STIMOROL, a clip of me arranging small, white, rectangular pieces of gum into a symmetrical grid, as I talk about illness, mental health and a profound sense of loss. In the audio, I grapple with what it might mean to account for a faltering body charged with the institutional "imperative of productive redemption" (Lee 2022, 259) that continues to attach to the narrative of the model minority. The clip is interspersed with photos of hospital visits, a tray of beige food, an x-ray, disposable pyjamas – material remnants of what it means to be an improper body, a feeling/failing body, within institutional systems. The gum alludes both to the orderings of whiteness in academia – its disciplining of bodies illegitimized through raced, classed and gendered markings – as well as to an experience during a doctor's appointment, to acquire documentation for sick leave, in which I impulsively grabbed several packets of liquorice-flavored Stimorol. Aesthetically, the repetitive motion of systematized assembly is juxtaposed to the affective landscape extended through rumination.

The reason I've chosen to draw out these examples is not only because they emphasize materiality as linked to our-selves, but because they encapsulate the unruly, almost convulsive, nature that is emblematic of these (seemingly nonsensical) ruptures. In some ways sensible ruptures can be understood as reactive, and although they of course emerge from the specificity of racialized and gendered antagonisms in Danish academia, I understand them less as opposition or response, but rather spontaneous fissures demonstrating a jolt (towards reclamation, of taking or talking back

in these examples); a return to the body, a move towards a sense of self, or a potentiality of self beyond the colonial claim to disembodied, individualized, ableist subjecthood.

I think this temporal distortion is crucial to our definition of sensible ruptures, echoing what Sharpe says about the undoing of time and space. I also think of tempo in the rupture INTUITION, created as a homage to embodied knowledges, or what might otherwise be understood as 'gut feelings' that reside in those bodies subjugated by history. Taking seriously these visceral ways our bodies remember and convey, the video plays with tempo by making use of extreme slow motion at the same time as the frame zooms out. At first you see just a close up of a belly button before the video reveals a hand cradling a stomach, which gradually becomes a body filling the screen, pairing slowness with expansion. Artist Arooj Aftab's voice reverberates beyond the moving image, creating an atmosphere that is out-of-sync with the temporal impetus of academic productivity. Slowness becomes the condition for knowing.

There is of course ample and generous literature on alternate temporalities, where queer/disabled/raced space-time is collapsed and reassembled against normative futures (Halberstam 2005; Hartman 2006; Muñoz 2009). Following these theorists, I think this temporal reconfiguration we've been considering extends to the archive as a whole. Maybe that's what you're getting at when you say it is a rupture in of itself? Rejecting notions of linearity/coherence in that queerly inconsistent way, the ruptures loop and connect continuously, speaking from differently bodied subject positions but blurring, in the sway of voices and images, towards a collective desire for a way of knowing and being against the exclusions and alienations of academia.

Reflecting on this affective pursuit of alterity as I rewatch STIMOROL now, I notice how the themes of mourning and loss are interwoven with longing. I hone in on the lines: "Losing my bearings/ my temper/ my nerve/ my mind" as well as "I want to be touched and feel home. I want to hold someone and feel close to myself". I read this yearning for closeness both as a desire for an embodied self – that healing of the split that bell hooks speaks about – as well as a longing for a relational future yet-to-come :')))

There is a conceptual potency in our choice of the word rupture that I want to excavate. The choice of the word 'sensible' has layered meanings: a way to subvert notions of neutrality that saturate how certain types of disembodied knowledges are presented as distanced, detached, dichotomous and thereby rational, as well as alluding to the ways in which these seemingly 'irrational' ways that resistance surfaces make sense as bodily expressions of existing and navigating in academic institutions steeped in oppression. Sensible also in terms of engaging the sensory: how institutions make themselves felt in bodily ways and how this feeling in turn produces other forms of knowing – knowing always and inevitably entangled with the body – that calls into question which bodies are assumed as knowing bodies and which bodies, through their opposition, cause friction, ruptures. How these ruptures are also testament to the way in which embodied knowledge resists the imperative to fragment the self, how affective experiences shift and disturb the very fabric of academia.

The rupture then alludes to a fracturing of a structure (i.e. the mechanisms of coloniality that govern DK academia), and in that, the potential of its destruction. But why rupture, and not crack, break, rift, crevice? For me, the reasoning lies in the motion, going back to the notion of spontaneity, multidirectional jolts in time-space, unruly and differently ruled ways of knowing. Something echoing Jafari S. Allen's description of "generative flashes in which pasts are present" (2021, 3). I am stuck on the term generative. A rupture is sudden, unpredictable, disruptive, disobedient; it is also, importantly, not static. Etymologically adjacent to eruption, a rupture does not simply break apart, it emanates – something comes of a rupture, it carries a force, an energy, a willfulness for something to emerge. I don't offer the term generative in terms of production or output, but in the sense that despite (or perhaps precisely because of) their commitment to abounding disorderliness, their incapacity to be forecast or foreclosed, sensible ruptures cut open a space of possibility. Which, in encompassing the affective dimensions of institutional violence, allow

the refraction of racialized and queer embodiment as inexorable responses and interventions to those same structures. Structures that are devastating, as well as demand devastating.

I wonder if these thoughts on sensible ruptures resonate with you, or connect to your understanding of the archive itself as a rupture?

One more thing before I head: in outlining these examples, I arrive, once again, at the paradox between the desire to theorize from our lived experiences, and the vulnerability that comes with that. This links to conversations we've had around how to do the archive. Realizing that the project was not a display of pain or explanation, so often the default mode of narration afforded/imposed upon marginalized people, we asked how we could create an archive where theorizing and articulation is not simply a mode of education, documentation or extraction for a white gaze, but instead a striving for knowledge as liberation?

constantly out of time,
Maya

Hey Maya,

Yes! and conceptualizing ruptures as an embodied experience that rejects temporal linearity in a queerly inconsistent way makes me think of the different formats and platforms we considered to explore ruptures in a non-linear way. Do you remember we especially discussed the relationship between the concept and format? We experimented with the extent to which the audio-visual archive should fit into a traditional storytelling arc, i.e. with an introduction, a middle (with a conflict or climax) and end with a resolution. We tried this, and it didn't work, because the linear storytelling format flattened the complexity of a rupture and also risked erasing our individual experiences by homogenizing and essentializing them. Instead, we leaned into the interactive multi-story format with no clear beginning or end, where we could mediate the different affective atmospheres of a rupture by playing with sounds, images, time and rhythm to create a different way of making sense of our embodied experiences.

This format also lends itself to telling many stories within one story – it offers different perspectives on the same topic by giving us the choice of

Still from video STIMOROL, 2022

linking and looping the videos. Especially the use of the loop function became a visual entry point for us to think through the ways in which these ruptures are exactly that: relational, connected and reoccurring, blurring notions of beginnings and endings, with some of my experiences tying into yours and vice versa. The technical process itself, the making of the archive, became a way to think through the relationship between affect, materiality and bodily knowledge. The filming, editing, naming of the videos, dragging and dropping of clips, deleting and experimenting with sounds and images became catalysts for us to co-create knowledge. I appreciate how our practice-based approach is very much an interconnected yet open-ended way of co-creating knowledge about racialized and queer experiences, which celebrates incompleteness in knowledge production (Nyamnjoh 2020) blurring the boundaries of knowledge making inside and outside of Danish academia.

This is why I see our archive as a form of rupture in of itself, because it is not separate from the notion itself – we needed the format to think through and conceptualize sensible ruptures. It then becomes more than a term to identify racialized and queer experiences; it becomes a practice-based approach striving towards a distinct epistemological space.

But, we are now approaching a new phase: after the making of the archive and writing of this article, what do we want to do with this audio-visual project? Who could this archive be for, how can it evolve beyond our experiences? We have discussed how the archive is not for consumption and explanation of racialized and queer peoples' pains/struggles or necessarily seek to advance institutional systems but rather create a space for other racialized and queer peoples to make sense, care for and explore their embodied knowledges – nurturing the ruptures we carry.

Happy first day of spring,
Gabriella

Dear Gabriella,

Okay, I think this is The Question. If the stuff of the sensible rupture, what comes of it, does not seek output or consumption, but possibility, if we are not seeking to rupture as proof, documentation or evidence, and if the rupture isn't static, then what is generated in these sudden and momentary instances, how might we work with their debris? In short, as you ask, what is to become of our archive?

When I think of the debris and 'nurturing the ruptures we carry' (love that btw!), I'm reminded of Kara Keeling's concept of 'futures past', where she gives life to those "struggles and things that people tried to make happen but were defeated in" (2020, n.p.), how those efforts for futures are not a mirror to the present but nonetheless not lost, they still have a power and charge. Carrying along this idea that shattered struggles and intents may still reverberate in the now, it's important to be clear that sensible ruptures don't seek a reductive destruction or to simply dismantle the systems that they emerge from (and thereby illuminate), but instead enact a desire for a more capacious way of creating knowledge. They are not invested in breaking as an end but as a means. By attending to the affective minutiae of existence as racialized and queer people, the ruptures embrace the irreconcilable, the unlanguagable, the felt, the flesh, as the grooves along which we might unearth, and perhaps nurture, a different kind of epistemology.

Thinking about who the archive is of and for, I'm intrigued by how your question of access relates to refusal. Tina Campt outlines the transformative potential of refusal as it relates to haptic images, specifically in work by Black artists, by shifting the optics of gaze to radical forms of seeing. This vantage point is one that demands affective labor "of discomfort, feeling, position and repositioning" (Campt 2021, 17). In her offering, as well as those of many others on the ethics of visibility (Alexander 1994; Odumosu 2019; Sealy 2019), we are reminded of the colonial stakes of witnessing as an affective process, one that demands and moves.

In talking about how our archive might conjure further rupture, I've been thinking about our decision to open it to others who find themselves at

the juncture of racialization and queerness in Danish academia, inviting them to contribute their own ruptures. By exerting agency over access, how we make it visible, and to whom, the archive becomes a practice in breaking with structures of spectatorship and consumption. This also goes back to our conversation on intimacy and how academic comportment enforces ideals of individualization and ownership when it comes to knowledge. Our co-creation insists on relational knowledge as well as building an ethics of opacity, where those who seek to access the archive must also become engaged in maintaining it as a site of embodied possibility. The archive becomes a space not only for subverting gaze but for freeing new perceptions as we look towards each other. It's cool to think about how we might create a genealogy of ruptures and gazes; one that is invested in mutuality rather than universality.

The way sensible ruptures introduced itself as a concept was very much on brand, as in, it felt explosive. It came from an urgency between the two of us, an inexorable need to make meaning of our experiences, our tears seeking scale. The potential of the concept though, I think, lies in its collective expansion; how we intend the archive as a project that is perpetually unfolding and relational. In this sense, our desire for feeling, for one another, for connectivity, is both a premise and a promise.

see you in the water <3
Maya

Towards a Relational Horizon

In asking how queer and racialized experiences can be explored through affective, embodied and sensory ways of knowing, these letters conceptualize the notion of sensible ruptures, troubling who and what is considered 'sensible' in the academy, and reflecting on what it means to take embodied knowledge seriously through the audio-visual.

We argue that sensible ruptures offer a lens to analyze not only how institutions make themselves felt, materially and affectively, but as a way of expanding what it means to be a knowing subject in Danish academia. Connecting the concept of sensible ruptures with the archive, we show how the body and its relation to material surroundings are intertwined. We examine the relationship between the material – linoleum floors, soap, gum packages, and paper collages – and the affective/felt as mutually contingent to sensible ruptures; one does not make sense without the other. Characterizing these ruptures as spontaneous, disorderly, intuitive, everyday and breaking with linear notions of time and space, we contend that they offer generative potential, breaking open modes of interrogating and creating knowledge.

There is an insistence, spanning not just the concept of sensible ruptures, but the making of the archive itself, as well as the letters comprising this paper, on alternate ways of knowing. An insistence on knowing as inevitably imbrued with the body, reconfiguring the self as always permeable, constituted through and with our histories and surroundings. While revealing and resisting the logics of disembodiment that permeate academic systems, we emphasize the generative qualities of this intervention, not as an undertaking in documentation of racialized pain/harm/oppressions or institutional validation, but as an exercise in possibility. Tuning into the sensory, we ask, what might be discovered if we tend to these ruptures, transfused in the minutiae of everyday experience? What understandings might we uncover through digressive and disorderly paths that jolt from the body?

Our letters traverse these routes through intimate dialogue, intentionally embodying both our practice and our proposition. The correspondence itself performs our desire for, and argument towards, relational knowledge. Describing the making of the archive as both a return to and an undoing of the self, we have sought to reject the imperatives of singularity, instead elevating the ways friendship and feeling sustain us within and through conditions of alienation. Merging conversation with analysis, theory, citations that cover poetry, journal excerpts, friends and scholars, our use of queer epistolary also refuses the categorization and hierarchization of these forms of knowledge, enshrining them as mutually constituted. We offer

analyses of different sensible ruptures in the archive, as well as the sonic and visual choices we made in arranging these ruptures, to demonstrate how an audio-visual exploration of these instances can meaningfully contribute to capturing the embodied, sensory and affective aspects of racialized and queer experiences. Crucially, by allowing a different type of vernacular, the archive addresses the necessity and potential of substantiating these experiences. Pointing to the specificity, and oftentimes vulnerability, of researching and articulating experiences of marginalization in Denmark, we contextualize our project through the urgency of those absences – of language, reckoning with colonial histories and acknowledgment of structural racism – that saturate Danish academia.

Reflecting on tensions of gaze and access, we open the archive to other racialized and queer people in Danish higher education in the hopes of collectively developing sensible ruptures. In this sense, the archive is an ongoing, open-ended project. It's important to highlight that we weave together our experiences to valorize interdependence, but not to collapse or conflate: we mean for the space to be a practice in collective knowledge creation, recognizing our distinct positions and experiences, not a move towards the universal and homogenizing. We have gathered these ruptures as an experiment towards a relational horizon, hoping that our work can contribute to enlivening ground for new terms, methods, concepts, connections and creations to continue to shift and arise. We establish ruptures as necessary, not simply for enduring those systems implicated in the colonial project, but for pushing at its limits, towards emanation and possibility.

References

Agostinho, D., Dirckinck-Holmfeld, K. and Grova Søilen, K.L. 2019. Archives that matter. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Informationsvidenskab og Kulturformidling*. 8(2), 1-18.

Ahmed, S. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Alexander, E. 1994. Can you be Black and Look at This?: Reading the Rodney King Video(s). *Public Culture*. 7(1), 77-94.

Allen, J.S. 2021. *There's a Disco Ball Between Us: A Theory of Black Gay Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Andreassen, R., and Vitus, K. 2016. *Affectivity and race: Studies from Nordic contexts*. London: Routledge.

Bacchetta, P., El-Tayeb, F., Haritaworn, J., Hernandez, J., Smythe, S.A., Thompson, V.E., and Willoughby-Herard, T. 2018. Queer of color space-making in and beyond the academic industrial complex. *Critical Ethnic Studies*. 4(1), 44-63.

Banerjea, N., Dasgupta, R., and Grant J.M. eds. 2018. *Friendship as social justice activism: Critical solidarities in a global perspective*. London: Seagull Books.

Bhambra, G.K., Gebrial, D., and Nişancıoğlu, K. 2018. *Decolonising the University*. Pluto Press.

Brown, A.M. 2017. *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. Chico, CA: AK Press.

Calafell, B.M. and Moreman, S.T. 2009. Envisioning an academic readership: Latina/O performativities per the form of publication. *Text and Performance Quarterly*. 29(2), 123-130.

Campt, T. 2021. *A Black gaze: Artists changing how we see*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chen, M.Y. 2012. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and queer affect*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Collins, P. H. 1989. The social construction of Black feminist thought. *Signs*. 14(4), 745-773.

Cvetkovich, A. 2003. *An archive of feelings: trauma, sexuality, and lesbian public cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Danbolt, M. and Myong, L. 2019. Racial Turns and Returns: Recalibrations of Racial Exceptionalism in Danish Public Debates on Racism. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries. Approaches to Social Inequality and Difference.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 39-61.

DasGupta, D., Rosenberg, R., Catungal, J. P., and Gieseking, J.J. 2021. Pedagogies of Queer and Trans Repair: Letters from Queer Geographic Classrooms. A*CME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*. 20(5), 491-508.

de Sousa Santos, B. 2018. *Decolonising the university: The challenge of deep cognitive justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Diaspora of Critical Nomads and Marronage. 2020. *Vi Vil Mere End At Overleve – Opgør Med En Antisort Verden*. Copenhagen: Eks-Skolens Trykkeri.

Diaz, N. 2020. *Postcolonial Love Poem Natalie Diaz.* [Online]. [Retrieved 31. March 2023]. Available at: https://rb.gy/7g2w8

Dillard, C.B. 2000. The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. 13(6), 661-681.

Fanon, F. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Forensic Architecture. 2022. *Witnesses Exhibit*. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

Gagnon, O.M. 2021. Tender archives and the closeness of Cheryl Sim's The Thomas Wang Project. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*. 31(1), 1-25.

Goankar, A. 2022. *Feeling Sick of Home? A Cultural Study of Postmigrant Homesickness in Contemporary Denmark*. PhD dissertation. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.

Guschke, B. 2023. *The Persistence of Sexism and Racism at Universities: Exploring the Imperceptibility and Unspeakability of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination in Academia*. Frederiksberg: Copenhagen Business School [Phd]. PhD Series No. 06.

Halberstam, J. 2005. *In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. New York: NYU press.

Harris, J.C. and Nicolazzo, Z. 2020. Navigating the academic borderlands as multiracial and trans* faculty members. *Critical Studies in Education*. 61(2), 229-244.

Harrison, F.V. 1991. *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

Hartman, S. 2006. *Lose Your Mother A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

hooks, b. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, London: Routledge.

Hunter, E.L. 2021. Diasporiske perspektiver på racialiseringens kolonialitet i Danmark: Diasporiske perspektiver på racialiseringens kolonialitet i Danmark. *Periskop–Forum for kunsthistorisk debat*. 25, 88-111.

Ivinson, G., and Renold, E. 2021. What More Do Bodies Know? Moving with the Gendered Affects of Place. *Body & Society.* 27(1), 85-112.

Jackson, Z.I. 2020. *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*. New York: NYU Press.

Keeling, K. 2020. *Looking after the future on queer and decolonial temporalities.* [Online]. [Retrieved 31 March 2023]. Available at: https://rb.gy/jdssm

Khawaja, I. 2023. Minoritetsstress: Begrebet, dets anvendelighed og potentiale. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 34(2), 91-107.

Khawaja, I. 2022. Memory Work as Engaged Critical Pedagogy: Creating Collaborative Spaces for Reflections on Racialisation, Privilege and Whiteness. *Nordic Journal of Social Research*. 13(1), 94-107.

Lagermann, L.C. 2013. Racialized subjects in a colour blind school. *International Journal on School Disaffection*.10(1), 73-89.
Lee, J.K-J. 2023. Model Minority Life, Interrupted. In: Chen, M., Kafer A., Kim, E. and Minich, J. eds. *Crip Genealogies*. London: Duke University Press, 257-275.
Lorde, A. 1984. *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Trumansburg: Crossing Press.
Marronage. 2021. This Silence is like an Invisible Wall that Needs to be Shattered and Broken. An Interview with Jupiter Child. *Periskop – Forum for Kunsthistorisk Debat*. 25, 78–87.
Midtvåge Diallo, O-K. 2019. At the margins of institutional whiteness: black women in Danish academia. In: Emejulu, A. and Sobande, F. eds. *To exist is to resist: Black feminism in Europe*. London: Pluto Press. 219-227.
Midtvåge Diallo, O-K., Kelekay, J., Abdullahi M., and Sawyer, L. 2023. Writing Letters as Counter-Archiving: An Afro-Nordic Feminist Care Practice. *Merridians*. 22(1): 180-203.
Mignolo, W.D., and Walsh, C. E. 2018. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Muñoz, J.E. 2009. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press.
Myong, L. and Bissenbakker, M. 2014. Forstyrret kærlighed: Affektiv assimilation som nyt ideal for transnational adoption. *Social Kritik: Tidsskrift for Social Analyse and Debat*. 26(137), 56-67.
Navarro, T., Williams, B., and Ahmad, A. 2013. Sitting at the kitchen table: Fieldnotes from women of color in anthropology: Introduction: Gender, race, and anthropological practice. *Cultural Anthropology*. 28(3): 443-463.
Nyamnjoh, F. 2020. *Decolonising the Academy: A Case for the Convivial Scholarship*. Namibia: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.
Odumosu, T. 2019. What Lies Unspoken: A Remedy for Colonial Silence(s) in Denmark. *Third Text*. 33(4-5), 615-629.
Puwar, N. 2004. *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of place*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
Puwar, N. 2021. Carrying as Method: Listening to Bodies as Archives. *Body & Society.* 27(1), 3-26.
Ramayya, N. 2019. *States of the body produced by love*. London: Ignota.
Sealy, M. 2019. *Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
Sharpe, C. 2016. *In the wake: On blackness and being*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Simpson, A. 2007. On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship. *Junctures.* 9, 67-80.
Singh, J. 2018. *No archive will restore you*. Santa Barbara, CA: Punctum.
Skadegård, M.C. 2017. With Friends Like These, Who Needs Enemies?: Structural Discrimination and Good Intentions in Danish Everyday Contexts. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*. 7(4), 214–223.
The River and Fire Collective, 2021. The Fires Within Us and The Rivers We Form. *Teaching Anthropology*. 10(4), 92-109.
Thorsen, T.S.S. 2019. Minoritetsbeskatning - et værktøj til at forstå opretholdelse af strukturelle uligheder i dansk akademia. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 28(1-2), 31-43.
Thorsen, T.S.S. and Skadegård, M.C. 2019. Monstrous (M)others: From Paranoid to Reparative Readings of Othering Through Ascriptions of Monstrosity. *Nordlit*. *42*, 207-230.
Tinsley, O.M. 2008. Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage. *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.14(2-3), 191-215.
Vertelyté, M., and Staunæs, D. 2021. From tolerance work to pedagogies of unease: affective investments in Danish antiracist education. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 126-135.
Vuong, O. and Orange, T. 2020. *City Arts Lectures.* [Online]. [Retrieved 31 March 2023). Available from: https://rb.gy/ziogg

Weheliye, A.G. 2014. *Habeas viscus: racializing assemblages, biopolitics, and black feminist theories of the human*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Wekker, G. 2016. *White Innocence*: *Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Wilderson III, F. B. 2020. *Afropessimism*. New York: Liveright Publishing.
Wilson, S. 2008. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Winnipeg: Fernwood.
Wynter, S., and McKittrick, K. 2015. Unparalleled catastrophe for our species? Or, to give humanness a different future: Conversations. In: McKittrick, K. ed. *Sylvia Wynter*: *On Being Human as Practice.* Durham: Duke University Press, 9-89.

Notes

1 Recognising that these categorisations are contextual, contested, shifting and imperfect, we use racialized to describe the process of being racialized as non-white.

2 For insight from Black feminist and Indigenous scholars, see Dillard (2010); Navarro et al. (2013), Simpson (2007), Wilson (2008).

3 Scholars have expanded conceptualisations of the archive beyond the textual, attending to its affective dimensions (Cvetkovich 2003) and addressing archives not only as "sites of power, knowledge and violence but also reimagination, redress and healing" (Agostinho et al. 2019, 5). This project is inspired by scholars such as Sharpe (2016), Singh (2018) and Hartman (2006), who open up the possibilities of the archive as a space of creative potential.

4 In the DK context, Skadegård and Thorsen (2019) use epistolary to foreground their intimacy in researching monstrosity, gender and race. Also see Midtvåge Diallo et al.'s (2023) recent work on Afro-Nordic feminism, using letter writing as counter-archiving.

5 The letters presented here reflect our conversations throughout our PhDs and have been edited for the purposes of this article.

6 Marronage is a collective of decolonial feminists who work with resistance narratives through editorial work, events and protest. DCN is an organisation working to strengthen community among Afro-Danish groups in Denmark.

“In Women’s Hands”: Feminism, Eugenics, and Race in Interwar Denmark

By Victoria E. Pihl Sørensen

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Performing and Media Arts, Cornell University, vep23@cornell.edu, https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7032-4577

Abstract

Eugenics had popular appeal and expressions in early 20th-century Denmark. This article tells two stories of what eugenics looked like ‘in the hands’ of bourgeois Danish women as they promoted ‘racial hygiene’ through cultural production. The first story highlights the eugenic feminism of nationally acclaimed women’s rights advocate Thit Jensen through a reading of her play The Stork (1929). The second tells of the Copenhagen Housewife Association’s engagement with new media technology and race science through their eugenics radio Listener Group (1934). Read through a lens that pays especially close attention to race and class, I argue that this work identifies them as significant proponents of eugenic ideology and as contributors to the targeting of the poor and working class in the name of ‘racial hygiene’ – a decidedly racist project.

KEYWORDS: Race, class, eugenics, popular culture, feminism, media history

"We stand apparently at the dawn of a new and grand human leap forward, which will unfold with the exact science [of eugenics] as a guide and motherhood as a means," proclaimed Jensine Thorgils in the national magazine of the prominent bourgeois women's rights organization the Danish Women's Society (Dansk Kvindesamfund) on September 30, 1916. Thorgils was a midwife who professed great faith in Francis Galton's assertion that the laws of inheritance which governed plants also applied to humans. Therefore, she thought it "only fitting that a movement [had] arisen in order to begin a rational effort towards transforming the contemporary human being into a new and higher species." Along this path, she believed that "human destiny would, at one of the most crucial points, rest in women's hands" (Thorgils 1916, 221).[1]

This article examines eugenics ideology in the hands of bourgeois women in interwar Denmark.[2] I tell two stories about the cultural work of white bourgeois women's organizers to spread eugenic ideas to the Danish masses. The first story emphasizes the eugenic feminism of nationally acclaimed author and women's rights advocate Thit Jensen through a reading of her play about 'racial hygiene', *The Stork* (*Storken*) (1929). The second examines a lecture series on eugenics aired by the Danish National Radio Station (Den Danske Statsradiofoni) and analyzes the Copenhagen Housewife Association's (Københavns Husmoderforening) cutting-edge engagement with new media technology and race science through their corresponding radio Listener Group in 1934. Read through a lens that pays especially close attention to race and class, I argue that this work identifies them as significant proponents of eugenic ideology and as contributors to the targeting of the poor and working class in the name of 'racial hygiene' – a decidedly racist project.[3]

While Thit Jensen stands as a central figure in Danish women's rights history, the Housewife Association occupies the sidelines.[4] Jensen was eccentric and outspoken and her relationship with the leading women's rights organization, the Danish Women's Society, was not always friendly. Nevertheless, the society repeatedly invited Jensen to speak at their events and she continues to be popularly viewed as a central figure in the history of the women's movement. In contrast, the Copenhagen Housewife Association, which facilitated mutual help between housewives and education in home economics, cooking, handcrafts, and child-rearing, might conventionally be discounted from the history of the women's movement proper. Yet the Housewife Association was committed to the advancement of bourgeois women, and the women involved were often also engaged in the formal bourgeois women's movement. This was the case for Thit Jensen, playwright of *The Stork*, and for Caja Rude, leader of the Housewife Association's Listener Group. The association's founding underscores its bourgeois feminist agenda: in 1916 Thit Jensen had rallied the housewives in a direct rebuff to the rising tide of women servants organizing for better working conditions in Denmark (Andersen 1990, 187). Born as a union-busting formation intent on placing the housewives' needs above those of their servants, the association was decidedly anti-working class. It advocated for the empowerment of housewives in their homes and beyond – to the exclusion of their servants – and got involved in numerous political debates of the day. Crucially, one of the association's causes was the so-called "sanitation of society" (Rude 1934a, 6; Atlung 1942, 66).

Thit Jensen and the Housewife Association were not alone in viewing what they considered to be women's interests in line with race science. Merle Weßel has brilliantly demonstrated that "eugenic feminism" was present across the Nordic countries (Ziegler 2008; Weßel 2018). Weßel's research highlights the work of Danish feminists Dr Dida Dederding (1889-1955) and Jo Jacobsen (1884-1963), both of whom organized around sexual education and 'racial hygiene' in the early 20th century (Weßel 2018). This article extends the history of eugenic feminism to include the cultural work of Thit Jensen and the Copenhagen Housewife Association. It demonstrates bourgeois white women's significant investment in race science and underlines the symbiotic relationship between bourgeois feminism and eugenics in the early 20th century. Men in the eugenics movement believed that women were especially

well suited to propagandize to other women, so they relied on them for the realization of their project (Kevles 1985, 64-65; Rembis 2006, 91). Conversely, eugenics gave "scientific credence" to the women's rights movement by providing an appropriate avenue for bourgeois women to take the stage in the public square and preach about birth control (Roberts 1998, 72-76). Yet eugenics and white bourgeois feminism went hand in hand not only because of this strategic alliance. The movements also joined in ideological allegiance to the advancement of 'white civilization'. Modern science and media were crucial tools for eugenicists and white bourgeois feminists alike.

Re-viewing Eugenics in Denmark

Eugenics developed first as a scientific and then a popular ideology that was concerned with optimizing human reproduction according to very specific aesthetic and social ideals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Building on Darwinian evolutionary theory and asserting that biology is destiny, eugenics was presented as a program for human 'betterment', wherein 'human' meant the white middle and upper classes. While a national eugenic discourse did not strive towards the Nazis' fascistically imagined 'übermensch', eugenics remained a racist, classist, anti-gay, gender essentialist, and ableist project. It was an accepted science with "international currency" that manifested in diverse iterations throughout the world, but common to them all was a concern for managing populations who were deemed obstructive to social progress and likely to be an economic burden (Kevles 1985, 58-69: Stepan 1991, 5-9; Paul 1998, 96-99). According to eugenicists, the population had to be managed through either 'negative eugenics' (i.e. removal, sterilization, imprisonment, and death) or 'positive eugenics' (i.e. encouragement of increased reproduction of the so-called 'fit').

Writing about eugenics in Denmark is a struggle against what Bolette Blaagaard and Rikke Andreassen (2012, 84) have identified as the persistent "non-memory" of Denmark's violent past. The prevailing tale of how the Danish welfare state was conceived in the interwar period by social democratic reformism that effected social and economic leaps for all is evidence of this. It is a story that spurs national pride, but a handful of scholars, notably Lene Koch, Gunnar Broberg, Nils Roll-Hansen, Bent Sigurd Hansen, and Birgit Kirkebæk, have shown that the modernization of the Danish state was intimately tied up with the science of eugenics.[5]

The most striking eugenic policies of the period were those concerning sterilization that were implemented between 1929 and 1935 under Social Democratic Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning. The 1929 Sterilization Law legalized "voluntary" castration and sterilization of people who were institutionalized, because they were understood as dangerous to society and as posing a threat to "racial hygiene" (Koch 2000, 131). In 1934, the net for those who could be considered 'defective' was widened and forced sterilization of those viewed as such was legalized, even though, as Koch (1996, 75) writes, volition had been entirely illusory in the years prior. The sterilization policies enabled around 13,000 surgeries up to the late 1960s (Koch 1996; 2000). Depending on the year, 24-60 percent of them were rationalized as necessary "eugenic" procedures (Koch 2000, 131).

People who were identified as a threat to the Danish genus – disproportionately poor and working class – were also at risk of internment. As Kirkebæk (2005, 204) reveals, the women's internment center on the island of Sprogø was a de facto poor-law administration "clearance-order project" designed to empty women's shelters and reformatories of "morally mentally deficient women." It also functioned as a general disciplining tool, demonstrating clearly what would happen to someone who was identified as one of "the worst ones" in Danish society (ibid., 197). Consequently, the benefits of the Danish welfare state came at the cost of especially poor and working-class people, who were violently criminalized and targeted for incarceration, internment, and involuntary medical treatment, sterilization, and castration (Koch 1996; 2000; Kirkebæk 2004; 2005; 2013; Broberg et al. 2005).

This crucial literature establishes the prevalence of eugenic thinking and its practices as fact in the medico-institutional and politico-legal spheres of modernizing Denmark. This work has been necessary, but is not sufficient. Although, as Bent Sigurd Hansen writes, some eugenic scientists and politicians wished primarily to discuss it among themselves, and Danish eugenics sterilization policy proceeded by way of what some would call "stealth" (Hansen 2005, 65), eugenics reached beyond parliament and medical institutions. Eugenic ideology did not manifest into a formal movement in Denmark, but it had popular expressions. Yet the "stealth" of eugenics has proven durable as its expressions in popular culture have flown largely under the radar in eugenics historiography thus far. My research indicates that we cannot fully understand eugenics in Denmark without paying close attention to its expressions in popular culture.

Existing literature demonstrates that Danish eugenics differed from the explicitly white supremacist Nazi eugenics.[6] It is in part this comparison with neighboring Third Reich Germany that leads Koch and Hansen to argue respectively, but in close relation, that Danish eugenics was neither "anti-Semitic" nor "racist" and that its Danish proponents "seemed fundamentally uninterested in race" (Koch 1996, 234; Broberg et al. 2005, 50). I am wary of using Nazism as the measure for racism: much racism pales in comparison to that espoused by Nazism, but using one extreme instance of racism as a defining measure for another elides the systemic relationship between racist articulations and racist violence. As Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022, 186) argues, racism functions in "distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies." Instead of looking for an equal, or in her words "average" or "original" racism, she urges us to "consider how fatal couplings of power and difference in one place develop and change," and then examine how these are globally interlinked (ibid., 187-188). The "fatal couplings" expressed in Danish eugenics were historically and culturally specific, but they joined in the international belief that 'white civilization' was under threat.

Danish eugenicists did not fervently spew the fascist myth that 'Aryans' were the ideal men, but they were not 'uninterested' in race, nor were they free from harboring racist views. While their eugenics often targeted the poor and working class rather than people of color, their desire to control the working class was informed by the contemporaneous international discourse on race in science. As Rikke Andreassen (2015, 74) explains, "race and class became increasingly intertwined" in European race science at the end of the 19th century. When the first International Eugenics Congress was held in London in 1912, the working class was singled out as the number one threat to the future of the white race because of their believed special propensity for harboring and transmitting "traits such as low intelligence, low morality, and aesthetic ugliness" (ibid., 79). In Denmark, this belief translated into a eugenic campaign led by the Danish Race Science Committee (Den Antropologiske Komite) to identify, study, and contain "less desirable individuals" among the poor and working classes for the sake of the "quality of the Danish race" (ibid., 77.) The goal of these efforts was to perfect the white Danish race. Consequently, even when expressed through class, Danish eugenics was a racial project. The significance of race in Danish eugenics becomes even more apparent when turning from politics and science to eugenic discourse in the popular cultural sphere – here, in the cultural productions of white bourgeois feminists.

The two sections below examine what Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell (2006) have called "popular eugenics" in the work of prominent bourgeois women's organizers and highlight their racial and class narratives. Together they draw attention to their significant efforts to spread eugenics – an ideology that shaped the understanding of 'welfare' and 'nation' – in Denmark in the interwar period (ibid.; Jensen 1929).

Early 20th-century Danish eugenics may appear 'stealthy' if we focus primarily on the sophistry of politicians and aspirations of scientists to exclusively direct its course, but when we turn to its contemporaneous cultural expressions, we find a fully pronounced vision of modern society based

on racist, classist, and ableist ideas. I make use of a variety of historical sources to support this account. Primary materials are sourced from KVINFO's Print Press Project (KVINFO's Tidsskriftsprojekt), the *Biographical Encyclopedia of Danish Women* (Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon), and the Royal Danish Library's collections including the database Mediestream and the Thit Jensen Archives. Newspapers frequently published identical or similar reports on the popular events of interest here. They have been selected according to a principle of relevance and representation. When appropriate, for example when stressing a popular opinion, several have been cited at once. Primary materials, such as *The Stork*'s playscript, provide an opportunity for close analysis of popular eugenic feminist messaging. In turn, the popular print pieces shed light on how this message was received.

Thit Jensen and *The Stork* (1929)

In the quintessential Danish lexicon of the women's movement, *The Women's Movement's Who-What-When*, Thit Jensen (b. Maria Kirstine Dorothea Jensen, 1876-1957) is described as "undoubtedly … the most influential female author, beloved and hated" by all in early 20th-century Denmark (Ørum 1975, 160). In Gry Jexen's recent tour de force, *Woman, Know Your History* (2021), she is portrayed alongside 49 other significant women. In the *Biographical Encyclopedia of Danish Women*, Jensen is commemorated as a key actor in the women's movement who paved the way for the changing public opinion on women's place in society (Zibrandtsen 2003).[7] These representations are illustrative of Jensen's special standing in the national memory of Danish modernity, of Danish literature, and of the Danish women's movement. This is why her involvement with eugenics and one of its manifestations – her popular play *The Stork* – serves as an important example of how women's rights and eugenics ideology were intimately intertwined as they were reaching for an intersecting common goal of a particular vision of white modernization in Denmark.

Figure 1: Portrait of Thit Jensen ca. 1909. Source: The Royal Danish Library.

Jensen wrote numerous novels and gave many lectures in her lifetime, but she is perhaps most known for propagandizing the concept she called 'voluntary motherhood', which she borrowed from the writings of the US eugenicist and white bourgeois feminist Margaret Sanger (Jensen 1924b). Jensen proclaimed herself as a pro-abortionist and the popular representations of her demonstrate that she is often remembered as such. But for Jensen abortion was not solely about choice, if even primarily so. She was concerned for the future of what she called 'civilization', and she fought hard against what she viewed as the moral decay of society. Abortion was one of the means through which she imagined 'civilization' could prevail and evolve.[8] She believed that only wanted children would be healthy children, and she wholeheartedly wanted what she understood as unhealthy children to remain unborn: children of the poor, of the sick, of the 'morally corrupt' would only become a burden on society, and

in the worst-case scenarios they too would procreate, leading to further 'degeneration' of the nation and by extension the world. In her view, if you were born of bad 'stock', you were destined to become it (Jensen 1929).

Jensen met Margaret Sanger in the United States and they served together on the International Birth Control Committee of 1925.[9] The committee promoted birth control as a eugenic technology that would enable women to commit themselves fully to "the great task of creating a better race" by encouraging the procreation of "fit off-spring" and the prevention of their perceived opposites (*The New York Herald* 1925, 6). Jensen translated Sanger's *Women and the New Race* (1920) into Danish and toured Denmark presenting a lecture of its contents to overflowing lecture halls (Jexen 2021). Consequently, Jensen was a steadfast proponent of eugenic abortion and perhaps one of the most prolific in Denmark at the time.

This is not the representation of Thit Jensen that you encounter in contemporary popular culture. Neither the women's movement lexicon nor the entry in the *Biographical Encyclopedia of Danish Women* mentions the words 'eugenics' or 'racial hygiene' (Ørum 1975; Zibrandtsen 2003). Jexen's book (2021) does, but not until the penultimate page, and Jensen's relationship with Sanger is left unexamined for eugenic ideology and solidarity rooted in white bourgeois feminism. Jensen's museum in Farsø, Jutland, presents 'racial hygiene' as an opportunist tool that Jensen used to make the case for women's rights and abortion, because it was a cutting-edge science at the time.[10] A critical reading of *The Stork* will demonstrate that this is in fact a representation of Jensen's view in reverse. Rather than eugenics being a tool with which to advocate for abortion, abortion was a tool with which to execute eugenics and achieve what Jensen imagined as an optimized Danish population that could withstand 'civilizational' competition.

The Stork premiered at The People's Theater (Folketeatret) on Friday, January 4, 1929, to a sold out theater. At curtain call, Thit Jensen and the actors received flowers and "minutes-long" applause (*Helsingør Avis* 1929, 2; *Vestsjællands Social-Demokrat Slagelse* 1929, 3; *Lolland-Falster Social-Demokrat Nakskov* 1929, 4). The play was an instant success.[11] In an interview with a national newspaper a couple of days prior, Jensen had been asked about the play's thematic and had proudly proclaimed:

> *It is about racial hygiene! Life's biggest problem! I think that we can easily improve the human race – school should make sure that this is imprinted onto the children, that they think thoroughly before they pick a partner for life.*
>
> *… this is an attack on an existing law [the law against abortion] that hinders any effort to improve the nation. (Til Forsendelse Med de Kongelige Brevposter Privilegerede Berlingske Politiske Og Avertissementstidende 1929, 9)*

This was a controversial agenda that was met with both celebration and critique.[12] Some critique was rooted in blatant misogyny like that launched by the then-infamous anti-feminist public intellectual Dr Wieth-Knudsen, and some, such as the critique offered by Minister of Social Affairs Karl Kristian Steincke, demonstrated good faith engagement with the science of 'racial hygiene'. Steincke expressed his opinion that Jensen had misrepresented (or perhaps misunderstood) the principles of inheritance (*Social-Demokraten* 1929, 6). Neither critique questioned the ethics of eugenics as such.

The play was performed at the People's Theater in Copenhagen until mid-March. It was picked up by other theater troupes, toured in the following year in both Denmark and Sweden to "storming excitement," and received a warm reception in Norway in 1935 (*Nordjyllands Social-Demokrat* 1930, 2; *Bornholms Tidende* 1930, 2; *Social-Demokraten* 1935, 10). Thus, it became a success that stands as one of the most significant but overlooked propagandizing efforts in the spread of eugenic ideology across Scandinavia.

The Stork centers on the consequences of the misdeeds of the scoundrel Henning Holk. Henning is the unruly adopted son of the town's

well-respected attorney. Henning is a misogynist, he sexually assaults women, he lies, he cheats, he drinks, he is disrespectful of authorities, he is unemployed, and he is anti-social. 'Every man for themselves' appears to be Henning's motto as he makes his otherwise respectable family's life miserable by seducing young women and fathering children out of wedlock relentlessly. His indiscretions land him in multiple alimony cases, which his father works tirelessly to resolve. As a result, Henning's adoptive father is drained of his money and of his life-force.

The opening scene of *The Stork* invites the audience into the Holk family's dining room. Here, Henning's adoptive mother glances at her watch nervously. She is waiting for Henning, who has not yet gotten out of bed even though it is already lunch time. She calls out to him and in response he enters the room, proclaiming that he just awoke from "a lovely dream."

> *"Oh," his mother answers. And Henning proceeds:*
>
> *Yes, I dreamt that I was married to Josephine Baker and had gotten 9 little [N-word] children… And you were the sweetest [N-word] grandma… and you had become black in this occasion.*

The scene continues:

> *Mrs. Holk (laughing): Oh, Henning, you're terrible!*
>
> *Henning: Are you not happy that I cannot even dream without you being in it?*
>
> *Mrs. Holk: Yes, but now, I'm mostly happy to have become white again. (Jensen 1929, 1)*

This opening dialogue establishes Henning as an unreliable joker who knows exactly which buttons to press, i.e. threatening to turn the racial order upside down, imagining his white mother as Black. Henning dreams of 'miscegenation', or more likely he enjoys making other people think that he does. Evidently this racist jest is more entertaining than offensive to Henning's mother, as she laughs and plays along. The scene serves as a comedic entry into a serious matter. It is a cheap joke that provides white Danish audiences the opportunity to unite in laughter about something considered so uncontroversial as racial purity, white supremacy, and anti-Blackness, so that Jensen then can present them with something that may be viewed as less so: a story about sexual immorality and what radical measures society must take to prevent its spread.

Dylan Rodríguez (2021) describes white supremacy as "a *violence of aspiration*" that reproduces systemic anti-Black and colonial violence in support of what he calls "White Being" (emphasis in original). "White Being" refers to the project in which "white Man" is posited as the one who holds "the master code," i.e. the human ideal under which everyone and everything else is ordered and subordinated (Wynter, in Rodríguez 2021, 7-8). In addition to militarized and colonial violence, "White Being" uses continued "rearticulations" and "narrative structures" of white supremacy that can be disguised as reform and progress to sustain itself (ibid.). *The Stork*'s opening scene deploys one of these anti-Black "narrative structures" – the racist common sense of the necessary separation of white and Black people – as a premise for its eugenic argument (ibid., 3). If white people can agree that 'contaminating' whiteness with Blackness is at once ridiculous and detrimental to Danish society, Jensen seems to suggest, they ought to agree that this other kind of 'contamination' of the Danish genus by way of 'dangerous' traits is equally perilous. When you follow this scene's denouncement of 'miscegenation' to its logical conclusion, the argument about 'white civilizational' advancement through eugenics emerges clearly and anti-Black racism becomes a pillar on which it rests.

The rest of the play goes like this: one of the unfortunate victims of Henning Holk is the young woman Bodil, Holk Senior's former secretary. Bodil is making her way to a new life with her true love, a reputable and educated man whose family is known for breeding good stock heritage

dogs. One day Henning deviously tells Bodil that he may not have "been so careful" during their sexual encounters. Now, Bodil is pregnant and desperate for an abortion. She seeks help from the local doctor, Dr Eigil Thomsen, who also happens to be Mr Holk Senior's best friend and incidentally the father of the teenage girl towards whom Henning has most recently directed his sexual attention. In a fortunate turn of events for Bodil, Dr Thomsen is a reasonable and wise man. He sees Henning for what eugenic ideology claims that he is: "a weed" in the garden of society (Jensen 1929, 125). When Bodil reveals to Dr Thomsen that Henning would be the father if the baby were to be born, the doctor comes to her aid and performs the procedure.

The play culminates in a dramatic courtroom third act, wherein Dr Thomsen sits charged with executing 'fetal removal' after an anonymous tip gave him up to the police. The prosecutor has still not identified the woman who received the alleged abortion. Dr Thomsen's mouth is sealed shut in silent martyrdom, except when it comes to explaining his motivations. He proudly delivers a five-and-a-half-page monologue on eugenics as the play comes to a close. Dr Thomsen begins by presenting the courtroom with a genealogical map of Henning's birth family that traces poverty, crime, and immorality in every single generational link leading up to the contemporary culprit, Henning.[13] Deploying monikers that are systematically used to scapegoat the poor, Dr Thomsen forcefully concludes that Henning's lineage consists of only "thieves, vagrants, lechers, thugs and imbeciles" and that this genetic line therefore must be terminated (Jensen 1929, 123).

Finally, he spells out his reasons for providing the abortion so that there can be no doubt:

> *The anonymous woman came to me, she told me the source of her unhappiness, that it was Hjul-Volle the Younger [read: Henning] she could not have known, for he appeared to be the son of good parents.*
>
> *I saw before me this lineage of weeds.*
>
> *And that's when I stood… like the Gardener in front of a good herb bed, ready to be fertilized with good and useful seeds… and in the middle of this bed, a growing weed seedling that wanted to spread and suffocate all good seed.*
>
> *What does a Gardener do.*
>
> *He takes the seedling with a firm hand and uproots it.*
>
> *Does anybody judge him for that.*
>
> *What does a Gardener do, when he sees a weed appear in his garden? He beheads it before it goes to seed.*
>
> *We want weeds, wherever they grow, to be cut before they go to seed.*
>
> *We want, when parents send their sons and daughters, well-raised, of good heritage out into life, that they will find a partner, well-raised, of good heritage… and together they will raise the people's tribe up to heretofore unknown purity, greatness.*
>
> *You've asked for my motive.*
>
> *My motive was the welfare of society. (Jensen 1929, 125-126)*

Like the rest of the play, Dr Thomsen's monologue is full of eugenic imagery: the good seeds vs. bad seeds dichotomy that joins this gardener analogy, which at once posits eugenics as ruthless (beheading, uprooting), but also necessary and honorable, is embedded in eugenic logic. The monologue in its entirety is also a meta-element. It abruptly challenges the conventions of the dramatic genre and reads as a speech outside the play itself. One contemporaneous reviewer remarks – although regretfully – that they felt as if they had been transported from the courtroom scene to something more akin to a lecture hall (*Horsens Folkeblad* 1929, 1). The forceful syntax with which

Dr Thomsen delivers his speech is evocative of Jensen's own rhetorical style. It is clear that this eugenic message is shared between Thit Jensen and Dr Thomsen in this moment when the veil between character and playwright dissipates. If a little crude, it is a powerful theatrical device that clearly conveys the play's central message: Denmark has a problem with moral decay. This decay threatens future generations and the solution is to be found in the practice of eugenic abortion, which, according to the play and Jensen, will purify the nation.

The Stork presents abortion as a tool with which to achieve the well-kept garden, free of "weeds," that Jensen imagines that Danish society should be. It advocates specifically for *eugenic* abortion, not abortion *in general*. Black people and poor people are vilified and construed as "bad seeds," while white petty bourgeois women, like Bodil, are placed on a pedestal (although a misogynist one) as "good herb beds," in need of protection so that they may be fertilized with "good seeds" for "the welfare of society" (Jensen 1929, 125-126).

As the play's opening signals, Jensen's conception of society had a particular racial order that depended upon a collective white agreement on the subordinate position of Black people to uphold its logic. In order to understand the racial logic that undergirded Jensen's eugenics, it is helpful to look at her popular lecture on "Humanity and Laziness." She toured with this lecture between 1912 and 1920 to packed rooms in Denmark (*Sorø Amts Dagblad* 1919, 3). Here, Jensen shares an anecdote about how her father had a carriage horse that would not mount a hill until one of her brothers whipped it. She forewarns:

> *This is what will happen to society – it will come to a standstill because of pure laziness – the one does not want to [do anything], so the other does not want to [do anything] – and then maybe one day we'll have a new coachman – perhaps a Yellow one – with a whip – and at that point we might regret not modernizing humanity, when the time was right. (Jensen 1912, 25)*

Echoing the so-called 'yellow peril' narrative that was spreading across Europe, Jensen declared that if white people did not pull themselves together, they were at risk of becoming enslaved by other races, specifically people in Asia.[14] She believed that 'white civilization' was in competition with and under threat from people racialized as non-white across the globe, and that purging laziness and 'degeneration' through eugenics would lead to a 'white civilization' that could withstand this pressure. This was a core belief of eugenicists internationally that only intensified with World War I as young, healthy, white men who were viewed as the future of society were killed by the millions. In Denmark this translated to white bourgeois anxiety about the degrading effects of industrialization on the poor and working class and the negative impacts of this on society as a whole. When race in 'race-betterment' was used as a stand-in for 'the human race', it did not necessarily refer to all people throughout the world. As Thit Jensen's exclusion of Asian people from "humanity" demonstrates, human was always already understood as white within this discourse (Jensen 1912, 25).

When one takes seriously the opening that is made to function as a joke and reads the rest of *The Stork* in light of Jensen's other writings, racism and classism emerge as two crucial drivers of eugenics as it spread in the popular sphere in Denmark in the interwar period. *The Stork* stands as a powerful reminder of the intersecting race and class interests of the bourgeois white women's movement with eugenics ideology, and underlines the distinct role that cultural production played in furthering their common goals.

The Housewife Association's "Heritage and Race" Listener Group (1934)

On January 15, 1934 at around 7.15pm, members of the Copenhagen Housewife Association gathered in their office on Gammelmønt 1 in anticipation of a new lecture series on eugenics on Danish

National Radio. This was the first meeting of the association's newly formed Listener Group that had as its purpose to listen to the radio series and discuss "the question of heritage and race" that was considered of "utmost importance" (Rude 1934a, 6).

At 7.30 that evening, they would hear Dr Øjvind Winge lecture on the founding laws of genetics over the airwaves. Winge, who today is known as 'the Father of Yeast Genetics', was part of what Lene Koch has called the "establishment" of eugenics in Denmark (Koch 1996, 115; Szybalski 2001). He was the first to speak in the new lecture series "Heritage and Race" which aired on national radio every other week in the winter and spring of 1934. Next in line were shellfish biologist Ragnar Spärck, pathologist Oluf Thomsen, psychiatrist August Wimmer, ethnographer Aage Gudmund Hatt, and Social Democratic Minister of Social Affairs Karl Kristian Steincke among others.

The series was a popular crash course in 'racial hygiene'. It made the case for why this approach to population management was a necessary next step in the progression of the Danish nation. It was also a means through which Danish scientists distinguished their version of eugenics from the explicit white nationalism that was gaining traction in neighboring Germany. While each speaker focused on highlighting eugenics from their particular disciplinary field – biology, genetics, politics – they all took a stand against what the Nazis were calling 'pure race', debunking it as mythology rather than an actual scientific fact. Pure genetic lineage was impossible in the human race, they argued. Only plants which self-fertilized offered the kind of genetic purity that the Nazis foolishly pursued. The other point on which all of the lecturers agreed is presented by Dr Oluf Thomsen in the foreword to the book that contains the lecture manuscripts of the series:

> *Also for conditions of inheritance, we are dealing with a kind of infection, for the dangerous and devastating traits infect the genealogy in a fateful way and threaten its demise or at the very least its increasing deterioration.*
>
> *It is certainly a joyous sign of the times that all writers in these collected articles, wherein these questions are examined, agree that effective preventative measures are sorely needed. (Thomsen 1934, 8)*

The lecturers suggested four eugenic measures that were to protect the future generations: (1) popular education on "the nature of heritage and its significance for each person, as well as for society" through "enlightening literature, lectures, films etc."; (2) the institutionalization of the science of genetically inherited diseases in humans at the university level; (3) the organization of Marriage Consultation Offices that could advise people about the "heritage that awaits their offspring, and which will be determining the happiness or unhappiness of the generation…"; and finally (4) "Easier access to direct hindrance of the fertilization of dangerous traits through the generation," for which, Thomsen writes, the Sterilization Law of the past winter was "a step in the right direction" (Thomsen 1934, 8-9).

The backdrop against which these measures are suggested is painted vividly by Dr Gudmund Hatt in his lecture on "The Human Races" (Hatt 1934, 37-61). Having spent much time explaining that race is a human construction and not a biological fact, Hatt nevertheless concludes that white European world domination is under threat. Referencing historian Charles H. Pearson on the limits of the geographical domination of the white race, Hatt writes:

> *The events to come, quickly offered [Pearson] support. Not only did certain exotic peoples begin to make themselves relevant militarily and politically. More important is the capacity to conduct peaceful competition with the white race that the Japanese, Chinese, Indian, yes, even the Negroes, are demonstrating.*
>
> *Yet, it is neither Indians nor the Negroes that are threatening European world domination. The Asians are. Nothing is more dangerous for the white man's influence in the tropics*

> *and elsewhere than Asian immigration. East Asian people appear to be the most vital on Earth. This is especially true for the Chinese, who seem to be able to thrive and work in all climates and therefore are far superior in their ability to adapt than Europeans are. (Hatt 1934, 60-61)*

Like Thit Jensen, Hatt believed in the myth of 'yellow peril' and viewed Asia as a threat to 'European civilization' and imperial power. While the 'eugenic establishment' of Denmark did not endorse the race purification project in Germany, or the championing of the 'Nordic race', they were still working within an ideological framework that sought to reproduce "White Being" through sustained European imperialism (Rodríguez 2021). If China was threatening white Europe in part because the Chinese were considered superior workers, the answer had to be, they suggested, to optimize the white race in response.

Figure 2: Portrait of Caja Rude, 1933.
Source: The Royal Danish Library.

The first step towards salvaging the Danish nation was, as Oluf Thomsen laid it out, popular education through media. Thomsen and the other radio lecturers took the lead and the Copenhagen Housewife Association picked up the baton with the formation of their corresponding Listener Group.

Presenting "heritage and race" as one of "the most burning questions of the day," Caja Rude had invited members to join the Listener Group in an article published in the Housewife Association's magazine on January 5 (Rude 1934a, 6). This was a new experiment that combined modern media – radio, picture slides, and the magazine – in an intentional popular educational effort as the association took on the responsibility of dealing with what they saw as an equally modern problematic: the "sanitation of society" (ibid., 6). The excitement about modern communications technology and the pressing desire to engage emerging modern science is palpable in the writing. This was an experiment, Rude wrote, which "according to [them] had not previously taken place in this exact special form," and which the magazine would later refer to as a transnational endeavor that was taking place in England and Sweden simultaneously (ibid., 6; *Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad* 1934, 19).

The invitation to join the Listener Group begins with an apparent paradox between endorsement and critique of Nazi eugenics. The first sentence references the immensely successful Nazi propagandist play *Hereditary Stream (Erbstrom)* that was being performed in Berlin (Teicher 2020, 125). A photograph from the performance and a celebratory review from a "respected German magazine" accompany it (Rude 1934a, 6). In immediate succession, Rude addresses the violent persecution of Jews that was ongoing in neighboring Germany:

> *We are all familiar with the extraordinary weight that the Nazis place upon the question of race. The terrible persecutions of Jews are a result of an overextended theory*

> *of race, which goes much too far. But from an unbiased point of view, we cannot forget that there's something serious behind the immense energy and fanaticism with which the problems of race are discussed and revised in the Third Reich. (Ibid., 6. Italics mine)*

This paragraph makes it very clear that, for Rude, anti-Semitism is not, unlike the 'sanitation' of Danish society, the urgent issue at hand. In fact, she stresses to the reader that the Nazis may be onto something regarding "the problems of race" (ibid., 6). In a cowardly move, she swiftly proclaims: "We will not here discuss the Jewish problem, which in Germany has an entirely different background and a much more serious character than in our own little country" (ibid., 6). Here, Rude takes a page out of the book of the Danish eugenic 'establishment' in an attempt to separate the science from the Nazi applications of it. She places herself in what she calls an unbiased position, but it reads as studied neutrality that unequivocally adds up to anti-Semitic complicity. Crammed between a celebration of a Nazi play and a dismissal of the urgency of countering the mounting violence against Jews, Rude's address of Nazi 'fanaticism' appears disingenuously strategic. The apparent paradox between endorsement and critique of Nazi eugenics is revealed to be none at all. Proceeding to make the case for the importance of discussing eugenics in tandem with the radio series (in spite of its Nazi association but also *because* of it), Rude encouraged members to take part and to gain useful experience in this new discussion format through trial and error.

The Listener Group's first meeting would prove to be mostly in error. Winge was interrupted and almost "drowned out" by noise from interfering technology in the building that the Housewife Association shared with other organizations (Rude 1934b, 14). Yet the Listener Group remained committed to the lecture series. They immediately sought help from the National Radio's "Noise Office," and "took great leaps" to resolve the technical problems for future meetings by ordering a brand new antenna (ibid., 14). Over the next five months, the Listener Group would meet every other week to study and discuss race and eugenics.

The group would keep everyone abreast of their progress in the members' magazine. At the second meeting, 35 women had shown up to do "the work" (Rude 1934b, 14). Rude remarked in excitement on the group's enthusiastic studiousness, highlighting how members were even engaging directly with primary texts borrowed through the library and "written by the expert – the scientist!" (ibid., 14). For Rude, this topic necessitated foundational knowledge that laymen did not necessarily hold, and it therefore required direct engagement with the accompanying literature. Yet, "…it is difficult," Rude wrote, "to speak definitively about any one point at this time; it'll come, when the series has been listened to to its full extent" (ibid., 14). However, a definitive opinion on eugenics did not appear in the Housewife Association's magazine.

Instead, as the radio series was coming to an end, the Listener Group continued their work. Despite a minor drop in attendance, they added yet another educational element to their program: group excursions to various institutions across Denmark. In the last two months of their work together, the group toured Gamle Bakkehus – a "Treatment Institution for Idiotic, Feebleminded, and Epileptic Children" – the Home for Physically Handicapped, and the Welander Homes that were treatment centers for children born with syphilis. The housewives were especially impressed with the "friendly and cozy" atmosphere at Gamle Bakkehus (*Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad* 1934, 6). As they witnessed children doing technical labor, specifically weaving and sewing, the warden highlighted the importance of the Sterilization Law (*Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad* 1934, 8). Sterilization, internment, and a pedagogy focused on industriousness were considered effective tools in turning the "feebleminded" children into productive laborers.

It is in the write-up of this visit to Gamle Bakkehus that we come closest to what may be called the Housewife Association's endorsement of negative eugenics, i.e. the prevention of the

birth of people deemed 'unfit'. Concluding that the group was in agreement "that these had been enlightening hours, which deepened the interest for the most impacted members of society," the magazine presented a couple of paragraphs by August Wimmer on "Modern Racial Hygiene" in anticipation of his lecture on April 23 (*Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad* 1934, 8). Most striking is the section where Wimmer presents pregnancy, not as life-giving, but as death-bringing, specifically "assassination … by degeneration":

> *The thought behind race-improving endeavors is clear and must be applauded by anyone with a humane mindset: To prohibit the birth of individuals, who because of such an inherited encumbrance are liable to become ill in their souls or to become abnormal etc., and to live a more or less pathetic or unhappy life, to little joy and gain for themselves, to the unrest and disruption of society. We all must lament this 'assassination of the child by degeneration in the mother's womb'. (Ibid., 8)*

Wimmer, and by extension the Listener Group, saw eugenic abortion as the compassionate solution to the problems of society. Through their sustained engagement with eugenic educational material, the Copenhagen Housewife Association make up one important branch of the propagandizing apparatus of racial hygiene in early 20th-century Denmark. They were not mass-disseminating eugenics from a stage or over the airwaves, nor were they simply consuming eugenic media. Rather, they reproduced it through their own educational multimedia format in a way that they viewed as attractive to bourgeois women. Eugenic science reached Danish homes through the airwaves. It was amplified through a loudspeaker, through articles placed alongside advertisements for dry cleaning services and advice on how to set a festive dinner table, and through committed and rigorous study conducted by and for bourgeois women. The Listener Group serves as a prime example of how bourgeois white women embraced the task put upon them by eugenicist scientists to further the advancement of 'white civilization' and of the intimate multimedia work they took on in doing so.

Conclusion

The Stork (1929) and the Copenhagen Housewife Association's Listener Group (1934) demonstrate the significant cultural work that white bourgeois women took on in order to do what they understood as their part in ensuring the reproduction of the Danish nation in the interwar period. Thit Jensen and the Housewife Association promoted the necessity of 'racial hygiene' as Denmark's foundational welfare reforms were developed and implemented in the 1920s and 1930s. They represent two different modes of early feminist engagement with eugenics in Danish popular culture: a sensational popular performance and an intimate radio study group. Together, they illustrate how the project of expanding Danish women's rights and position in society facilitated an increased interest in, engagement with, and propagandizing for eugenic science via modern communications technology, cultural production, and education among the bourgeoisie.

The Stork is one of the more egregious expressions of "popular eugenics" in Denmark (Currell and Cogdell 2006). It is blatantly ableist, classist, and racist. It represents a loud eugenics that did not profess loyalty to the eugenic "establishment" and the actual scientific technicalities of inheritance (Koch 1996, 115). In contrast, the Housewife Association's engagement with eugenics on the radio and in their magazine appears rigorously in line with the eugenic experts. Studiousness abounds, including in the noted '(non) neutrality' on Nazi anti-Semitism. Both instances of eugenic feminist cultural production accept the premise of national and 'civilizational' decline as the rationalization for implementing 'racial hygiene'. I have argued that within this discourse, 'civilization' should always be understood as white. *The Stork* and the Listener Group represent two "rearticulations" that served to uphold 'white civilization'.

The Stork and the Listener Group are exemplary of the slippery relations between apparently contradictory political projects – feminism, progress, and welfare contra eugenics, racism, ableism, and classism – in the development of what is often called one of the most progressive and democratic structures in the world, the Danish welfare state. Eugenics was engaged by 'progressives' internationally. Yet this analysis is not a sweeping indictment of the women's movement as evenly eugenicist, racist, and classist. These two cases display *specifically* white bourgeois women's allegiance to racial hierarchy and class society as they promoted so-called progressive and compassionate reforms. In this way, they parallel the intermingling of feminism and eugenic ideology as seen, for example, in the contemporaneous United States and the United Kingdom.[15] An undeniable image of what eugenics looked like "in women's hands" in early 20th-century Denmark emerges: bourgeois white feminists grasped onto eugenics, shaped it, and disseminated it popularly to the detriment of those who were deemed unworthy of humanity along the lines of sexuality, class, disability, and race.

As the two stories tell of the popular spread of eugenics, they call attention to the dangers of placing the responsibility of an ugly past on a select few. They highlight the presence of white supremacist ideas in the hands of feminists and social democratic progressivists and re-emphasize the importance of popular cultural, critical race, and class analysis for historical research. Finally, they demonstrate the necessity of tracing the strings – humbly and with care – that are intertwined with white supremacist ideology in the history of what has been called welfare in modern Denmark.

References

Allen, A.T. 2000. Feminism and Eugenics in Germany and Britain, 1900-1940: A Comparative Perspective. *German Studies Review*. 23(3), 477–505.

Andersen, J. 1990. *Den Sidste Valkyrie: En biografi om Thit Jensen*. København: Gyldendal.

Andreassen, R. 2015. *Human Exhibitions: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays.* Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Atlung, M. 1942. *Københavns Husmoderforening: 1917-1942*. København: Københavns Husmoderforening. The Royal Danish Library.

Blaagaard, B. and Andreassen, R. 2012. Disappearing Act: The Forgotten History of Colonialism, Eugenics and Gendered Othering in Denmark. In: Hipfl, B. and Loftsdóttir, K. eds. *Teaching Race with a Gendered Edge: Teaching with Gender, European Women's Studies in International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms*. New York: ATGENDER. Central European University Press, 81-97.

Bornholms Tidende (1866-). 1930. Svenskerne er glade for "Storken". September 26, p. 2. Mediestream.

Broberg, G. and Roll-Hansen, N. eds. 2005. *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

Currell, S. and Cogdell, C. eds. 2006. *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Davis, A. 1983. *Women, Race & Class.* New York: Vintage Books.

Den Til Forsendelse Med de Kongelige Brevposter Privilegerede Berlingske Politiske Og Avertissementstidende (1833-1935). 1929. Thit Jensen om "Storken": Stykket er et angreb på paragraf 193 i Straffeloven af 1866. January 3, p. 9. Mediestream.

Estabrook, A.H. and Davenport, C.B. 1912. *The Nam Family: A Study in Cacogenics*. Cold Spring Harbor, NY: New Era Printing Company.

Goddard, H.H. 1912. *The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
Hansen, B.S. 2005. Something Rotten in the State of Denmark: Eugenics and the Ascent of the Welfare State. In: Broberg, G and Roll-Hansen, N. *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
Hatt, G. 1934. De Menneskelige Racer. In: Winge, Ø. *Arv og Race*. Kbh: Martins Forlagstrykkeri. The Royal Danish Library.
Helsingør Avis (1838-1936). 1929. "Storken" på Folketeatret. January 5. Mediestream.
Horsens Folkeblad (1866-). 1929. Fru Thits Skuespil "Storken". January 5. Mediestream.
Jensen, T. 1909. Moral. The Royal Danish Library.
Jensen, T. 1912. *Humanitet og Dovenskab*. The Royal Danish Library.
Jensen, T. 1924a. *Feminismens Program*. The Royal Danish Library.
Jensen, T. 1924b. *Frivilligt Moderskab*. [Online]. [Accessed October 13, 2022]. Available from: https://dansketaler.dk/tale/mit-foredrag-frivilligt-moderskab-eller-kultiveret-foraeldrefoelelse/.
Jensen, T. 1928. Børnebegrænsning: Hvorfor og Hvordan? *Ugeskriftet Ole*, 27. The Royal Danish Library.
Jensen, T. 1929. *Storken, Moderne Skuespil i 3 Akter*. Folketeatret. The Royal Danish Library.
Jexen, G. 2021. *Kvinde, Kend din Historie: Spejl dig i Fortiden*. 1st edition. København: Gyldendal.
Kevles, D.J. 1985. *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*. New York: Knopf.
Kirkebæk, B. 2004. *Letfærdig og Løsagtig - Kvindeanstalten Sprogø 1923-1961*. 1. Holte: SocPol.
Kirkebæk, B. 2005. Sexuality as Disability: The Women on Sprogø and Danish Society. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*. 7(3–4), 194–205
Kirkebæk, B. 2013. *Defekt og Deporteret: Ø-anstalten Livø 1911-1961*. 2. Holte: SocPol.
Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad. 1934. 5(20). 20 April. The Royal Danish Library.
Koch, L. 1996. *Racehygiejne i Danmark 1920-56*. København: Gyldendal.
Koch, L. 2000. *Tvangssterilisation i Danmark 1929-67*. København: Gyldendal.
Lolland-Falster Social-Demokrat Nakskov (1901-1950). 1929. Børnereguleringsproblemet fremme i Rampelyset. January 8, p. 4. Mediestream.
The New York Herald. 1925. Birth Control Friends Quote Elder Roosevelt. April 1, p. 6.
Nordjyllands Social-Demokrat (1905-1945). 1930. Svenskerne kan lide "Storken": Thit Jensens skuespil opføres under stormende begejstring i Stockholm. September 26, p. 2. Mediestream.
Paul, D.B. 1998. *The Politics of Heredity: Essays on Eugenics, Biomedicine, and the Nature-Nurture Debate*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Proctor, R. 1988. *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Rembis, M.A. 2006. 'Explaining Sexual Life to Your Daughter': Gender and Eugenic Education in the United States during the 1930s. In: Currell, S. and Cogdell, C. eds. *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 91-120.
Roberts, D.E. 1998. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.
Rodríguez, D. 2021. *White Reconstruction: Domestic Warfare and the Logics of Genocide*. 1st edition. New York: Fordham University Press.
Rude, C. 1934a. Arv og Race. *Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad*. January 5. The Royal Danish Library.
Rude, C. 1934b. Vor Lyttergruppe. *Københavns Husmoderforenings Blad*. February 5, p. 14. The Royal Danish Library.
Social-Demokraten. 1929. Omkring Storken. January 5, p. 6. Mediestream.
Social-Demokraten. 1935. Thit Jensens "Storken" vækker stor interesse i Oslo. December 17, p. 10. Mediestream.

Sorø Amts Dagblad - Slagelse (1916-1957). 1919. Nye syndikalistoptøjer i Aarhus. February 14, p. 3. Mediestream.

Steincke, K.K. 1920. *Fremtidens Forsørgelsesvæsen: Oversigt over og Kritik af den samlede forsørgelseslovgivning samt Betænkning og Motiverede Forslag til en Systematisk nyordning*. København: Indenrigsministeriets Foranstaltning.

Stepan, N. 1991. *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Szybalski, W. 2001. My Road to Øjvind Winge, the Father of Yeast Genetics. *Genetics*. 158(1), 1–6.

Teicher, A. 2020. *Social Mendelism: Genetics and the Politics of Race in Germany, 1900-1948*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Thomsen, O. 1934. Menneskets Arvelighedsforhold. In: Winge, Ø. *Arv og Race*. Kbh: Martins Forlagstrykkeri. The Royal Danish Library.

Thorgils, J. 1916. Moderskabet og Forslag til dets Værn og Pleje. *Kvinden og Samfundet*. September 15, pp. 221–222. KVINFO's Print Press Project. [Online]. [Accessed September 20, 2022]. Available from: https://www.kvinfo.dk/side/444/.

Vestsjællands Social-Demokrat Slagelse (1899-1949). 1929 "Storken" på Folketeatret. January 5, p. 3. Mediestream.

Weßel, M. 2018. *An Unholy Union? Eugenic Feminism in the Nordic Countries, ca. 1890–1940*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Wilson Gilmore. R. 2022. Race and Globalization. In: Bhandar, B. and Toscano, A. eds. *Abolition Geography: Essays Towards Liberation*. Brooklyn: Verso. 107-132.

Zibrandtsen, M. 2003. *Dansk Kvindebiografisk Leksikon - Thit Jensen*. [Online]. [Accessed May 23, 2023]. Available from: https://kvindebiografiskleksikon.lex.dk/Thit_Jensen.

Ziegler, M. 2008. Eugenic Feminism: Mental Hygiene, the Women's Movement, and the Campaign for Eugenic Legal Reform, 1900-1935. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*. 31(1), 211–236.

Ørum, B. 1975. *Kvindebevægelsens Hvem-Hvad-Hvor*. Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag.

Notes

1 All translations from Danish to English are mine.

2 I use the term 'interwar' to stress the significance of World War I for the proliferation of eugenic ideology internationally.

3 Eugenics and 'racial hygiene' are used synonymously.

4 The Housewife Association and Jensen were no longer affiliated in 1934.

5 Social Democrat Karl Kristian Steincke (and later Minister of Justice and Minister of Social Affairs) proposed a modernization of Danish society in his two-volume book *Social Relief of the Future* (1920) (*Fremtidens Forsørgelsesvæsen*) wherein he argued for the utility of eugenics. Steincke's advocacy for eugenics influenced the Danish social reforms greatly.

6 In comparison with their German and US counterparts, Danish scientists were less concerned with fostering a superior group of people than with preventing "degeneracy" and disease generally (Proctor 1988; Koch 1996, 134).

7 KVINFO, the Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender, hosted the online encyclopedia from 2001 to 2022. The *Biographical Encyclopedia of Danish Women* is now hosted by the Danish National

Encyclopedia on Lex.dk. This narrative of Thit Jensen is thereby further embedded into national memory.

[8] See Jensen's lectures, "Humanity and Laziness" [Humanitet og Dovenskab] (1912), "Feminist Program" [Feminismens Program] (1924a), "Voluntary Motherhood" [Frivilligt Moderskab] (1924b) and "Morality" [Moral] (1909).

[9] For analyses of Sanger's eugenic and white supremacist ideology, see, for example, Davis (1983) and Roberts (1998).

[10] Observations from the author's visit to the Jensen museum in Farsø in summer 2022. More examples of popular representations of Jensen (accessed October 10, 2022) are available from: https://nordicwomensliterature.net/writers/jensen-maria-kirstine-dorothea-thit/; https://forfatterweb.dk/oversigt/jensen-thit; and https://www.dr.dk/skole/dansk/mellemtrin/thit-jensen-1876-1957.

[11] See: "Fru Thit Jensens Skuespil 'Storken,' der fik stormende success," *Demokraten (Aarhus 1884-1975*), January 7, 1929, p. 3. "'Storken' par Folketeateret," *Vestsjællands Social-Demokrat*, January 5, 1929, p. 3. A Sunday performance was added to accommodate the many requests from people who would have to travel to see the play. "Folketeatret," *Frederiksborg Amts Avis*, January 25, 1929, p. 4.

[12] See: "Storken's Premiere," *Vejle Amts Folkeblad*, January 5, 1929, p. 8, in which a writer from Vejle suggests that the opinions of the play are particular to people in the Danish capital. See also Wieth-Knudsen's review: "Stork eller Slange?" in *Nationaltidende*, reprinted in *Aalborg Amtstidende*, January 30, 1929, pp. 1 and 3.

[13] This parallels the work of US eugenicists Henry H. Goddard, Arthur Estabrook and Charles Davenport who constructed the genealogies of the Kallikak family and the Nam family respectively (pseudonyms). They argued that poor intelligence, criminality, and "non-social traits" were passed down through generations (Estabrook and Davenport 1912; Goddard 1912).

[14] The 'yellow peril' was a scaremongering narrative that identified people from East Asia as a threat to European civilization. It was believed that they would supplant white Europeans at the top of the racial hierarchy through their technological and cultural development (Andreassen 2015, 64).

[15] On the USA, see Davis (1983) and Roberts (1998). On the UK, see Allen (2000).

Racialized Spatial Attachments – Researcher Positionality and Access in a Danish Suburban High School

By Tringa Berisha

PhD Fellow, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University,
tringa@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6660-5656

Abstract

Danish high school's rising ethnic/racial diversity and tendencies of segregation call for explorations of students' educational experiences of racialized differentiation. This article unfolds methodological reflections on this endeavor, by focusing on researcher access. Not only is space a medium through which racial relations materialize – space is also interconnected with access. If researchers depend on relations for access to sites of inquiry, which depends on how researchers are read by actors in the field, it is critical to scrutinize the spatial dimensions to such readings and what knowledge is (allowed to be) produced. Unfolding two ethnographic vignettes, the researcher's positionality of passing is analyzed to explicate the relationship between racialized bodies and racialized spaces. I propose the notion of spatial attachments as an analytical lens for explaining such body–space conflations to illuminate the interconnectivity between educational spaces and the broader external world, and to expand the language to address racialization in the colorblind context of Danish high schools.

KEYWORDS: education, racialization, researcher positionality, passing, racial spaces, spatial attachments

Introduction

> *In recounting incidents at school, which have felt racist, two racialized[1] female students foreground an incident, where a white, male classmate suddenly shouted "Fuck Vestegnen!" at them and ran off. Vestegnen is a region west of Copenhagen, labeled as a socially deprived area with high ethnic/racial diversity. Neither of his recipients is from Vestegnen or poor, but they are both visibly racialized. They wondered: was his comment euphemistically racist? (Fieldnotes)*

Spaces hold more than physical attributes; they carry symbolic meanings (Barajas & Ronnkvist 2007). In a school environment, such as Bakke High School (BHS), students' bodies not only gain meaning from where they dwell at school, but also the spaces beyond with which they are associated. Michelle Samura (2016) emphasized that body–space relations offer a rich avenue for examining racialization in education. Therefore, it is worthwhile exploring the insights gained from applying Samura's suggestion of sensitivity to body–space relations when analyzing researcher access to sites of inquiry. I explore this path, by asking: What does it mean for ethnographic fieldwork in racialized high school spaces to work from a seemingly ambiguous, racialized researcher position of passing? I address what implications the positions available to me have for my fieldwork, and hence the knowledge produced, and explore the implications of passing and non-passing as a white, ethnic Danish Christian, whilst being a second-generation immigrant of Kosovar-Albanian origin with a Muslim background. This inquiry is pertinent because the infusion of meaning into spaces not only shapes the environments traversed by students, teachers, and researchers but also underscores the relation between the researcher's body and the school's landscape. A relation which shapes the research endeavor, inasmuch I must be accepted into a space to conduct research. In this regard, the article focuses on researcher access, as something intricately intertwined with students' spatial negotiations. Thus, this article responds to the demand for methodological approaches in antiracist research by scrutinizing racialized possibilities of access in research.

Following feminist intersectional scholarship, which maintains that researchers are intrinsically embodied and biased (Mama 1995; Peake 2015; Faria & Mollett 2016; Doshi 2017) producing situated knowledges (Haraway 1988), I focus on the spatiality of knowledge production. I do so by interrogating the relations between racialized bodies, space, and access by developing the notion of spatial attachments based on the empirical data generated during fieldwork observations as part of a larger research project.[2] First, I outline existing literature on researcher-researched relations in fieldwork. Second, I provide the theoretical framework that connects racialization and space by utilizing the concepts of racial spaces (Neely & Samura 2011) and passing (Lapiņa 2018). Through this combination, I propose the notion of spatial attachments as an analytical lens to elucidate ways in which bodies and spaces are read as extensions of one another in ways that reproduce or disrupt existing racialized formations. To this end, I draw on theoretical perspectives from poststructuralism, critical race theory, and feminist intersectional theory situated within a transdisciplinary field of human geography, anthropology, and education. This is followed by methodological reflections regarding access, positionality, and collaboration and then by an analysis of two ethnographic vignettes. The analysis reveals how space becomes a medium through which racial relations manifest and provides researchers with a language to address the racialization of everyday interactions in the color-blind context of Danish high schools (Samura 2016; Lagermann 2019).

Researcher–Researched Relations

Previous research on researcher–researched relationships in the exploration of racialization processes within education has yielded valuable

insights. As articulated by Ann Phoenix (1994), 'race positions' of both the researcher and the researched, along with their respective positions of power, permeate the research encounter in dynamic and multidimensional ways. Kum-Kum Bhavnani's investigation into white youths reveals a reversal of the usual power balance between racialized researchers and interlocutors perceived as white (Bhavnani 1990, cited in Wright 1998). A reversal, which hinges on the presumed power dynamic between white researchers and non-white interlocutors. Cecile Wright (1998) echoed this through her own analysis. She illustrated her position as an African-Caribbean woman based in the UK, finding herself "caught in the crossfire" (ibid., 67) of relations between predominantly white teachers and African-Caribbean students within British schools. Her interlocutors' perceptions of her shifted across different school spaces, and served as entry points for Wright to investigate the impact of "'race' positions" (ibid., 77) within distinct contexts of the research setting. In engaging with these contributions, I refrain from comparing my own positionality with theirs. Passing as a white ethnic Dane presents its own set of dynamics. Iram Khawaja and Line L. Mørck (2009) accentuate the intricate and multi-layered nature of researcher positioning when studying various racialized groups. They advocate for transparency in acknowledging the theoretical, personal, and political implications inherent in the researcher's role throughout the research process. This includes an examination of how their visible Otherness or perceived whiteness can influence access and methodological possibilities (ibid.). They identified theoretical and personal standpoints, research methods, as well as ethnic and racial body signs as crucial elements intersecting with the field of study, shaping researcher positioning, the research process, and its subjects (ibid.). Following Khawaja and Mørck's perspective, I work toward increased transparency through reflection on the researcher–researched relationship, recognizing its pivotal role as a precursor to knowledge produced.

Racialized Spaces

Research across various disciplines, including anthropology, geography, and law, has explored the relationship between race and space (e.g., Agnew & Duncan 1989; Blomley 1989, 1994; Feld & Basso 1996; Kobayashi & Peake 2000; Delaney 2002; McKittrick 2006). These contributions have challenged the positivist view of space as mere containers for human interaction. They maintained that space is socially constructed, just as the social is spatially produced (Harvey 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994; Gieryn 2002) and that power relations are tightly woven into physical spaces. María Lugones wrote:

> Your life is spatially mapped by power. Your spot lies at the intersection of all the spatial venues where you may, must, or cannot live or move. Those intersections also spatialize your relations and your condition with respect to the asymmetries of power that constitute those relations (2003, 21).

George Lipsitz (2007) wrote of the 'spatialization of race' and the 'racialization of space' to emphasize the inherent spatial dimension within the lived experience of race and the racialized dimension within the lived experience of space. Caroline Knowles (2003) underscored the spatial dimensions of race-making, too. Her argument, based on the fluidity and mutability of spatial and racial meanings over time, posited that space operates as an active archive, encapsulating history and encompassing social relationships and processes that constitute racial structures (ibid.). She argued that the construction of race as a category be understood as spatial practices. Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura (2011) introduced a theoretical framework to investigate the (re)production of race relations through space, which is also applied in this article. They advise we approach racial spaces by foregrounding their overlapping characteristics to unveil how both race and space are "contested, fluid and historical, interactional and relational, and defined by inequality and difference" (2011, 1941-1945). This framework

enables analyses of processes wherein racialized distinctions shape space and spatial configurations perpetuate racialized differences.

Few studies have explicitly explored the race–space relationship in high school contexts. In the US, Laurie Olsen (1997) found that students with immigrant backgrounds undergo what she calls 'Americanization'. To achieve social and academic integration, students feel compelled to conform to the inflexible four-category racial system in the US, which is perceived by students as encompassing 'Black, white, brown, and yellow' categories, because friendships form along racial lines. In the UK, Sara E. Truman (2017) elucidated how students' racialized and gendered bodies are subjectively experienced as 'out of place' within the school. Similarly, Mary E. Thomas (2011) explored students' spatial practices. Their practices were governed by logics of '(in) correct placements' on the social map of the school, and were influenced by, inter alia, how the students were racialized and gendered. Thomas argued that the body is a product of its relations to others, often shaped by discomforting encounters. She emphasized that students' narratives of feeling either in or out of place underscore the significance of intersubjective spatial negotiations in the process of coming to terms with social relations, norms, and differences within the school context (see also Gottdiener & Malone 1985; Eckert 1989; Barajas & Ronnkvist 2007; Samura 2016).

Recently, new materialist/posthuman perspectives have emerged in Nordic educational studies as an extension of the spatial turn. These perspectives analyze how educational spaces shape subjectivities and learning experiences by considering the role of affects and materialities (Hultman 2011; Lenz Taguchi 2015; Juelskjær & Rasmussen 2019). Carla Chinga-Ramirez (2015) investigated the experiences of racialized students in a Norwegian high school, analyzing the impact of school structures, organizations, and discourses. Tina Mathisen (2020) examined Othering processes using affect theory to understand how the 'foreigner' category is produced through racialization, involving spatial separation, skin color, and language. Moreover, Dorthe Staunæs and Manté Vertelyté (2023) delved into racialization, by examining diversity work as micro-interventions aimed at cultivating affective atmospheres. While I am inspired by the significance of materiality, affect, the body, and space in the formation of racialized differentiations in education from new materialist/posthuman perspectives, this article positions itself within poststructuralism. It focuses on racially coded spaces at BHS, emphasizing the interplay between the discursive constructions of spaces and bodies, and how this impacts the relational dynamics of social life at school. Poststructuralist thought in human geography enables spatial imaginaries that recognize multiple meanings emerging from competing relational systems (Massey 1993). Emphasis is on ways in which subjects are embedded within spatialized materialities. This theoretical stance's key features can be summarized as follows: (1) Spaces are open and interconnected, shaped by various practices and processes, some of which emerge from within, while others emerge from without. (2) Spaces are seen as multiplicities, co-constructed through differing spatial practices and forms of belonging. (3) Contestations over how spaces should be read may occur, leading to the emergence of domination and resistance strategies that link to spatial identities and practices. (4) People and spaces are 'entangled in heterogeneous processes of 'spatial becoming' (Murdoch 2012, 21–22). Drawing support from these four points, I propose the notion of spatial attachments. The notion elucidates the interconnectivity between school spaces and the broader external world. Our structural positioning in society is spatialized and is constituted via the material reality through which our experiences, opportunities, and networks form. We carry these experiences enmeshed with spaces, into the school, in which sharedness/differences is activated in relational encounters. Emerging friendships across homogeneities at BHS foster differing spatial practices throughout the student body. These practices are oriented toward specific locations within the school's physical space. In essence, attachments to locations beyond the

school may serve as a means of making oneself comprehensible to others within the school, resulting in the acquisition of a sense of belonging. Thus, one becomes through space, and space offers possibilities of becoming. Lastly, this notion of spatial attachments remains indefinite, open, and fluid. It is always contextualized and rooted in the embodied, material, and temporally specific space. Rather than aiming to represent a singular truth, it provides a framework for my engagement within the field, acknowledging my limitations and situatedness (Haraway 1991; Thrift 1999, 1996, both in Murdoch 2012).

Passing and Spatial Attachments

My position as a young, female, second-generation immigrant of Kosovar-Albanian origin and Muslim background allowed me to pass as a white, ethnic Dane in the field. Furthermore, students mistook me for a student, a teacher, or someone from SSP[3] depending on my placement in space and proximity to others. Given that my understanding of BHS is contingent on my points of access, it is pertinent to contemplate my access in relation to my ambiguous position, which held both possibilities and limitations. There is an often-overlooked spatial dimension to knowledge production, which relies on access. At BHS, my access was influenced by my interlocutors' racialized readings of my body. Put differently, the process of entering BHS from my position, as someone who passes, revealed the significance of race in the social–physical landscape among students. Racial passing is a concept and phenomenon primarily connected to Afro-American's experiences of being read as white (Smith 1994; Ahmed 1999; Kroeger 2003). Building upon the insights provided by Linda Lapiņa, who argued that bodily surfaces are produced via notions of difference that 'stick to' bodily markers (Ahmed 2004), and in conjunction with the social spaces they pass through/dwell in, as a continuous process of becoming, passing is here comprehended as a multifaceted process that is "inherently discursive, embodied-material, and affective" (Lapiņa 2018, 58). Furthermore, it represents a subject position that demands labor in the form of negotiating (in)visibilities during relational encounters (Piper 1996). Reflecting on the ever-shifting subject positions available to me as someone who passes into spaces sought access to, to pass can be considered as a pass to somewhere (Khawaja 2015). Passing as a pass into sites of inquiry points to the reading interlocutors stabilize of the researcher before and during the granting of access (Khawaja & Mørck 2009) and, consequently, the types of knowledge that can materialize. Danishness is an emerging un(re)marked majority positioning, within reach for certain bodies (Lapiņa 2018). My body did not pose a hindrance in accessing white spaces, as Danishness is phenotypically proximate to whiteness (ibid.). While (South)Eastern Europeanness may be perceived as 'lagging behind' and never 'quite-as-white', this position does enable passing as (West)European (Lapiņa 2018; Lapiņa & Vertelyté 2020). This is because Muslimness is primarily associated with brown and black bodies and is far less connected to Danishness (El-Tayeb 2011). My passage became challenged when seeking access to a cohort of racialized students as my body did not overtly convey my somewhat racialized position:

> Ahmed: Are you new?
> Tringa: I'm a PhD student.
> Derya: She's 26!
> *My age provoked a collective shock reaction from the cohort. They asked what city I'm from, what Folkeskole I attended, and neighborhoods I've lived in. The spaces I mentioned are associated with the working class and high ethnic/racial diversity.*
> Derya [pauses]: May I ask... what ethnicity are you?
> Tringa: I'm Albanian.
> Ahmed: Are you then Muslim, too?
> Tringa: Yes.
> Derya: I could tell you're something other than Danish. I guessed perhaps Bosnian.
> *She immediately invited me for a walk to the supermarket nearby and repeatedly to the couch where the racialized second-year*

students hang out onwards. Later, she added, I look half-Danish.
(Fieldnotes)

The excerpt highlights the students' recognition and reading of my spatial attachments, revealing a racialized reading of my body based on my relation to different spaces (being ethnic Albanian in relation to the neighborhood) and subject positions (Muslimness). The connotations sticking to the spaces mentioned makes it relevant to clarify "What ethnicity are you?" and "Are you then Muslim, too?" as if the spaces are reserved for specific racialized bodies and subject positions and therefore necessitates an explication of how I fit into them. We may be intelligible to others by our spatial attachments. Attachments that have inscribed in them spatialized race–relations that organize social life (Bonilla-Silva 2010): from school landscapes to city structures and to relationships between countries of the Global North and Global South (Massey 1993). The intelligibility of people and their subject positions may entail mapping out the locations of their lives, each of which carries its sets of discursive connotations. Thus, the record of our locations may become activated in various ways, depending on where we are, with whom, and for what purpose. However, as demonstrated in the opening quote of this article, some bodies' spatial attachments are assumed upon a glance at their appearance, showing the intertwined nature of spaces and bodies. At the same time other bodies' spatial attachments require clarification. David, an ethnic Danish student, is a case in point. Two racialized students account for their white, male classmates' distrust toward David's aesthetics and his friendship choices: "They talk so much shit about him … *that wannabe perker*![4] — because he hangs out with us" (fieldnotes). David's lifelong proximity to and friendships with racialized Others enabled through his upbringing in a multicultural area marks him as strange among some of the white students. He carries his location of upbringing with his body into BHS visible through mannerisms, language, and clothes and becomes an intelligible, proximate subject to some racialized students. With this consciousness of the connotations sticking to various spaces, I maneuver through the field, recognizing that aligning my body with spaces imbued with different sets of meanings influences readings of my body (see also Howarth 2002). This circles back to Lapiņa's (2018) conceptualization of passing as a discursive, embodied-material, and affective process. Therefore, I conceptually and analytically interlink the concept of passing with spatial attachments to capture and nuance how race functions implicitly, how bodies are understood in relation to spaces, and how this affects access and the ways it is possible to navigate the tacit normalized instances and imbrications of (presumed) whiteness within this field.

Methodology: From Fieldnotes to Ethnographic Vignettes

After several high schools rejected my proposal for collaboration, I opted for BHS due to its geographic location [5] and a prior collaboration with the school, which I anticipated would streamline my access. The research process encompassed two concurrent phases spanning from April 2022 to January 2023. During the initial phase, I conducted participant observations in selected classes, establishing contact with students who, in turn, facilitated my entry into a group of racialized second-year students (ages 17–19) who frequently gathered on a couch located at the rear of the cafeteria. These early observations by the couch informed my theoretical and methodological decisions, centering on the examination of embodied and spatial processes of racialized differentiation and belonging, as expressed through students' movements, interactions, and narratives. My regular presence in this space led to a snowball effect in recruiting participants for interviews. After three months of observations, I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with students, employing a mobile interview technique known as spatial tours (Elwood & Martin 2000; Hassani 2018). These interviews aimed to understand the students' dynamic utilization of, attachments to, and navigation within BHS. I continued to observe

in-between the interviews. Lastly, the empirical data pertaining to teachers and the school administration derive from observations and informal conversations with them. While not the primary focus of this study, these interactions provided valuable insights into the broader context of the field and were considered too significant to be disregarded.

During fieldwork, I noticed homogenous friend groups formed along racialized differences, evident in how they occupied physical spaces. This urged a body–space focus. Various incidents scattered across time appeared as fragments containing important information about the school's landscape and understanding them required connecting the pieces together. For this article, I employed focused coding (Emerson et al. 1995) of the material, inspired by Neely and Samura's (2011) approach. I explored the interconnection between race and space as manifested in the collected data. I conducted a line-by-line analysis, first examining the fieldnotes, identifying instances related to race and then to space. Subsequently, I honed in on the material relevant to my access, where race and space intersected. To uncover meaningful connections within these selected excerpts, I documented my insights in theoretical memos that specifically centered on body-space conflations. Upon revisiting the material, I expanded my analysis beyond merely examining how certain spaces within BHS ascribed significance to the individuals occupying them but also to the complex interrelationship between how bodies were perceived in relation to spaces both within and beyond the school environment and explored the manifestation of these interconnected processes at BHS.

I wrote selected fieldnotes into two ethnographic vignettes: one describing my access to the school and the other detailing my access to the student community by the couch. Vignettes enable narrative descriptions of specific scenes, inviting readers to witness moments of insight and the analytical conclusions reached (Schöneich 2021). I wrote extensive fieldnotes after each day of observation and combined the fragments into comprehensible texts or "stories worth telling" (ibid. 122). This is a stylistic choice, which "presents analytical assumptions as the truth" (ibid. 118). I unsubscribe to the idea of objective knowledge and recognize the inseparability of theory, empirical data, and the researcher. The vignettes must therefore be understood as inseparable from me and my theoretical stance (Emerson et al. 1995). Nevertheless, assembling the fragments into vignettes convey my navigation and access in the field, indicating how my body took an orientation over time at BHS.

Bakke High School's Educational Space

The politicized space of BHS is influenced by the growth of racialized diversity in Danish high schools (DST 2019). This demographic shift has given rise to the formation of 'white' and 'brown' [6] schools (Bloch & Jessen 2017) in which students cluster into ethnically, racially, and religiously homogeneous friend groups (Mørck 2007; Khawaja 2015; Rambøll 2019). Student dispersal politics seek to curb this tendency (Regeringen 2018; Ministry of Children and Education 2022). In a context characterized by Nordic exceptionalism (Gullestad 2002; Browning 2007; Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2016), conversations surrounding racialization, racism, and difference often encounter reluctance or resistance (Hervik & Jørgensen 2002; Berg 2004; Rasmussen 2004; Danbolt & Myong 2018). Paradoxically, political discourse draws on notions of parallel societies (between Danish whiteness and racialized Muslim Otherness) and groupings, to advocate political intervention in racialized homogenized spaces.

Due to BHS' location, the student composition is relatively diverse in terms of socioeconomic class, spanning from upper middle- to working-class backgrounds. Although the school borders a working-class neighborhood with high diversity, there has been minimal racialized diversity at BHS. Only recently has racialized students' presence become more noticeable, landing at 9,12 percent in 2022. The inclination of racialized students to appear as a separate entity through

homogenous friendship groups in the social landscape of high schools worries principals and politicians (Bloch & Jessen 2017), alluding to the framework of comprehension structured upon political discourses on parallel societies. The concern with ethnic/racial homogenous 'groupings' should be understood in relation to political expectations to the school as an integrating institution, as well as the bodies it is to contain and how. The selection of BHS as a research site is underpinned by a notable pattern; some students seek refuge there as an alternative to their local 'ghetto' high school, while others contemplate leaving BHS in pursuit of what they perceive as a more favorable environment for racialized students in different schools – an example of bodily orientation through spaces informed by race. Within the confines of BHS, racialized students are dispersed across classes, lines of study, and grades, but congregate by a couch behind a stage in the cafeteria, forming two distinct but merging cohorts. One unifying factor between these two groups is their racialized status, albeit along different parameters—either as Muslim or as Black. In previous years, the gathering spot for racialized students was near black leather couches in the lounge area, which were among the first sights encountered upon entering through the main entrance. However, these couches have since been replaced with tables intended for schoolwork (see also Khawaja 2015; Staunæs & Vertelyté 2023). As one employee describes it, the racialized students "hide back there now." The remainder of the cafeteria features long rectangular tables primarily occupied by white students.

Positionality, Maintaining Access, and Collaboration

Negotiating access to 'the couch' was an ongoing process that required continuous engagement. My multiple social positionings in terms of race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, and gender were not sufficient on their own to gain/maintain access. It involved answering questions about the research project, my personal life, the nature of my presence at BHS, sharing opinions, advice, personal experiences, and jokes. My positionality was tested throughout the fieldwork, and the development of my rapport with the students was a dynamic and evolving process. It started with the students asking probing questions to detect inconsistencies in my responses, and it progressed to forming genuine friendships, connecting on SoMe, meeting one another's family members, inviting me into their homes, and addressing me as *abla* (older sister in Turkish). This echoes the point put forward by Grimaldi et al. (2015, 141) that "a full problematization of researcher positionality requires going beyond a categorical understanding, in so far as it is relational, unstable, not fixed, and contextually situated." My positionality underwent a process of mutual negotiation, where my access to their world was contingent on the trust I earned through my engagement and openness. Once comfortable, a student asked,

> Murat: Tringa, were there many perkere [4] when you were a student?
> Tringa: No, I was one of few. And there was no couch. You have each other, and that's a big difference between my high school years and yours. (Fieldnotes)

Discussions about shared and differing experiences as well as my chosen theories and methodologies emerged, and many students displayed a high level of transparency. I reminded them of the research's scope, emphasizing aspects that should remain off the record, and offering the option for partial or full withdrawal of any information they had provided. In exchange for access to their life stories and experiences, I extended the same offer to them. Recognizing the inherent power imbalance in this dynamic, where I write about their experiences, it became imperative to uphold the principles of knowledge production that prioritize the protection of the represented and marginalized subjects' right to control the knowledge generated about them (Baker et al. 2004, in Swartz 2011). Redistributing power over knowledge produced meant involving the students in my writing process. I invited those who expressed interest to participate in a discussion group dedicated to the

forthcoming analyses for collaborative engagement in the research.

Vignette I: Accessing the School

BHS is familiar to me due to a previous collaboration that amounted to a critical ethnographic report. The result received no response from the school. I contacted the Head of Education (HoE), my acquaintance of a decade, to propose continuation of our cooperation. Our acquaintanceship might have impacted his immediate acceptance. When he, the vice principal (VP) and I met the following week, my old report was printed and annotated:

> *The 80 pages laid in two piles in front of them. The HoE encouragingly said, "it's interesting with the whiteness perspective" and "good that you're critical" twice, with a careful smile, and quick nods. The VP was silent. Being asked to describe the current project, I suspected access relied on an ability to describe how it differs from the old report. This time, I intend to explore students' negotiations of norms, under the project title "racialized differentiation." The VP explained they have declined other PhD candidates, "who have probably been rejected by many schools and figured they'd find one far away that doesn't know them. We dismissed them to support your career instead." I am granted access, as long as I am aware that the political nature of such projects can damage the school.*

As I entered BHS, I felt indebted. The school's willingness to welcome me reflects its progressive approach to research and its concern for all students' well-being, perhaps also influenced by social justice movements, especially as a historically white school with increasing ethnic/racial diversity. Nonetheless, this access was granted with a measure of caution. It is an access that does not hinge solely on my passing – after all, we know each other well. Access may instead rely on the spaces that I carry into the meeting room. These spaces encompass not only the university I represent but also a shared attachment to the school, despite our vastly different entries into it. Our mutual connection to the school and local community becomes a path to negotiate my researcher loyalty. This stands in contrast to the 'unknown' rejected PhD candidates from 'far away', who have no affective investments in upholding the school's positive reputation. The inherent political nature of research pertaining to "racialized differentiation," conducted by a racialized researcher has prompted a cautious approach. This dynamic highlights what Puwar (2021) conceptualized as archives (paper, bodies, landscapes, buildings, feelings, etc.) carried with the body into the field of inquiry. The notion of carrying not only stresses how we are always embodied as knowledge creators, impacting the research we undertake, but perhaps, I suggest, also shapes our bodies in how they are perceived within a space. In addition to the project's then-provisional title, the VP may interpret my body as carrying life experiences of being racialized as a Muslim minority into the realm of knowledge production on Danish educational institutions, and thus anticipates a critical perspective related to my interest in the role of race in education, a subject that is typically positioned as external to Danish public discourse and schools. Carrying these life experiences and spaces into the domain of critical race scholarship shapes my entry into BHS and influences the reception of the forthcoming research.

(Educational) Spaces are never neutral but always imbued with contestations over how to define and use them. The negotiation of access to BHS' space as a research site demonstrates our social positions as "defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18, in Neely & Samura 2011, 1938). The VP controls my access, and I control the school's representation in my work on racialization. My representation of the school depends on the type of access granted. My request to conduct critical analyses may function as a contestation of the meaning of BHS, as the request construes it as a relevant site to conduct such research. The

research's political potential to create change demonstrates how spaces are not fixed but are constituted in fluid processes, through performative, embodied experience (Thrift 1996, Rose 1999, both in Neely & Samura 2011). My arrival is timed with BHS' historically high ethnic/racial diversity and nationwide implementation of student dispersal politics (Regeringen 2018). BHS is positioned amidst these politics that aim to recenter Western whiteness as the somatic norm (Puwar 2004) of Danish high schools. My critical gaze on this recentering provokes a warning, which underlines the institutionalized whiteness (Ahmed 2012) of the space I am about to enter or, in other words, the whiteness "already in place," and the whiteness-as-something-soon-to-be-disturbed (ibid.):

> *The administration selected classes to grant access to — all quite homogenously white, contrasting the ethnic/racial diversity observable in the common areas. Then, a teacher invited me into her (more diverse) class, known as "troubled" among teachers. In this class, I met students from the group of racialized second-year students who frequent the backstage couch. I exited classroom observations to spend time with them upon invitation. Time passed. I posted on LinkedIn my newfound direction for my project: racial spaces. HoE "liked" my post, but the "troubled class" was thereafter made inaccessible for my observations. Furthermore, absence would now be registered for interviewees, contrary to previous utterances. This meant that students with high absence rates were hindered from doing interviews with me.*

Perhaps HoE connects my shifting research focus on space with an increasing focus on the school's role.[7] It is not just about students' negotiation of norms anymore. He, my gatekeeper, is in a vulnerable position as he may be considered partly responsible if this study is too critical toward BHS. He navigates a complex terrain comprising institutional hierarchies, education policies, news outlets, running a school responsibly, securing its survival via continuous funding, current and future students, their parents, etc. This exemplifies how multiple power relations between differently positioned actors with varying interests in the field co-construct the empirical material allowed to be produced. I experience HoE's decisions as blockages to my knowledge production, necessitating renegotiation of my access through complete transparency about my theories, methods, interview guide, and observations. Later, when BHS hired two senior ethnographers from another university to conduct research, students' absence was not registered for their participation. My unequal conditions to conduct research do not rest on having been hired but on generous, contingent access. Importantly, the other researchers did not carry racialization in their project title, names nor bodies. Contributions to whiteness studies argue that privilege—invisibly to white subjects (McIntosh 1989)—circulates through whiteness via easier access to resources, opportunities, and social/economic advantages (Frankenberg 1993; Lipsitz 1998). Gatekeepers co-constitute our researcher positionalities by their readings of us, reflected in the access granted. The unequal allocation of opportunities among us researchers highlights the 'what' we carry into the highly politicized high school space, namely, our bodies' differing spatial attachments, that enable or constrain our access to opportunities within the field.

Vignette II: Racialized Placement in Space

The second vignette explicates my researcher positionality in contact with students as an entry point to the operating logics at school. In the introductory days of fieldwork, it became apparent that students use BHS' spaces differently. As analyzed by Liselotte Ingholt (2007), student communities, shared habits (academic, social, and leisure), and participation are interlinked and unfold spatially. The institutionally structured pace of daily school life imbues communities with temporariness and students with a bodily orientation, as they (re)construct communities in every break via routinized

wanderings through space. The reconstruction of communities via habitual bodily orientations was also informed by racialized homogeneity. It is the first most notable characteristic of the social life at BHS due to its visual display of the separation of skin tones, clothes, hair, and eye colors. The slow immersion into BHS presents a series of moments that point to the intertwinement of racialization and space:

> *I observe a racialized boy, Emre, playing at the foosball table with two racialized male friends. They're dressed in black sporty streetwear, and Emre has black Nike Vapormax sneakers on. They play amicably and competitively, using lingo associated with male, racialized, working-class youth. It's just us in the space. They glance and smile at me several times. I smile back, not hiding that I'm paying attention. Minutes later, students flow into the gym hall for a presentation. To not get in the way of anyone, I place myself on some stairs, behind the many chairs reserved for students. Soon, teachers scatter onto the stairs next to me. Emre walks by and sees me. His facial expression turns serious. He says something to his friend, who also gazes at me with seriousness. In the following days, whenever Emre spots me in the cantina, his smile turns to almost anger. His reading of me has transformed. Days pass. In the meantime, I start "hanging out" with racialized second-year students. Once they find out I'm an ethnic Albanian Muslim, and have a similar housing history as some of them, they repeatedly correct my placement in space: "Tringa, what are you doing here? We're sitting over there!" They insist I join them by the couches. They greet me with personal handshakes, and I dress as the casual version of myself: in baggy men's t-shirts, loose jeans, and sneakers: not New Balance, Asics, nor Adidas (as these are brands primarily worn by white students) but Yeezy's. In the meantime, I ignore Emre. He often sees me with his friends. One day he greets Murat, with whom I'm conversing on the couch. They exchange mundane words, and Emre dwells for a few silent moments. I say: "Murat, every time your friend sees me, he stares at me, as if I owe him money." All three of us laugh loudly.*

My observation of the foosball game did not elicit a negative response from the students. Instead, their curious smiles hinted at a potential gendered and sexualized reading of me, contingent upon perceiving me as a fellow student. Factors such as their age, language usage, bodily surfaces, and clothing choices, informed my understanding of Emre. Emre's reaction to my sudden appearance among the teachers transformed the nature of our initial encounter into an instance of authoritative surveillance. My passing as an ethnic white Dane added a connotation to the felt surveillance upon my proximity to the teachers, on 'the teacher's stairs.' Research indicates that visibly racialized men in Denmark feel regularly monitored via gazes (Khawaja 2011), are labeled as troublemakers in schools (Gilliam 2009), and are subjected to "ethnic profiling" by the police (Søndergaard 2022). Consequently, I gave Emre the space to approach me at his own pace, with the intention of not exacerbating the perception of our encounter as one characterized by surveillance. My established proximity to Emre's friends complicated his perception of me as an authority figure. The couch was a place rarely sought after by teachers; only the Muslim, racialized janitor visited it. My welcomed trespassing of their informal territory rubbed off onto my body, signaling Emre's friends' assessment and acceptance of my positionality – a figure that was not overly unfamiliar. When I initiated direct contact with Emre, my reading of him guided me to employ an appropriate relational repertoire: a hint of confrontational humor. I mark my non-authority (Ringer 2013) and racialized status by translating an Albanian youth slang expression into Danish, as a method to make myself recognizable, as humor is densely culturally coded and affective (Vertelyté 2022). Simultaneously, I addressed Emre's misconceptions about me in front of his friend, Murat, a move that someone in a defensive position might avoid. This clarification

served to assure Emre that our interaction did not adhere to the typical teacher-student relation. Emre's laughter helped dissipate the unspoken, accumulated tension between us, opening up the possibility of forging a different kind of relational space.

The second vignette engendered considering racialization at BHS as linked to students' utilization of spaces. My ambiguous positionality in the process of seeping into the school's social landscape excavated (in)correct placements related to racialized readings of bodies (Thomas 2011). As a passer, my body was made intelligible via the intersection of the social categories I embody, with an emphasis on my spatial attachments. The relevance spatial attachments gain to the social life at school blurs the boundary that separates the internal and external realms of the school: it points to how spaces beyond the school are inherently racialized (Bonilla-Silva 2010) and how these spaces co-construct BHS' social fabric. Crucially, some bodies' spatial attachments are presumed, as exemplified by the "Fuck Vestegnen" incident, where preexisting connotations "stick to" the body (Ahmed 2004) via space. In other cases, bodies gain intelligibility through their relations to spaces, such as my placement on the teachers' staircase or the backstage couch. In both scenarios, we observe the emergence of racially coded spatial becomings emerging from the intricate interplay between spaces within and outside of BHS.

Concluding Remarks: Access as Interlinked with Race and Space

This article delves into the complexities of access to a Danish high school and the interplay between spatial dynamics and racialization. I have reflected upon my researcher positionality of passing as a white, ethnic Danish Christian and used it as a point of entry to argue that space and racialization must be considered as interlinked in the co-constitution of a social/physical relational educational space. Through two ethnographic vignettes, I propose the notion of spatial attachments to conceptualize ways in which bodies can be understood from their spatial becomings and belongings that reference locations with racially coded connotations. In Vignette I, the process of accessing the school unfolds as a negotiation of, inter alia, power of representation and researcher loyalty. The latter is in the field perceived as bound up on a presumed shared affective investment in the school's positive reputation due to my past contact with the school. Put differently, my spatial attachments are activated in becoming a recognizable subject, an ally, in my politically sensitive research endeavor. Navigating the dynamic opening and limiting of access experienced during fieldwork is also affective and intuitive pointing toward the often affective and tacit ways in which processes of racialization unfolds in education (Zembylas 2015; 2021). As shown in Vignette I, engaging with race, racialization, and racism in this context is a speculative act, pointing to the simultaneous absence and hyperpresence of race mirrored in euphemistic speech (Guschke 2023). Grappling with space is a place to begin. Exploring the relationship between race, space, and affect might be the next step to untangle this absence/presence further.

Vignette II deepens our understanding of how spatial dynamics intertwine with racialization within school. Student communities and their participation are intricately linked to spatial configurations, with racialized homogeneity as a prominent characteristic of social life at BHS. In seeking access to students, my positioning within these spaces, as both a student-like observer and a racialized researcher, highlighted the reciprocal influence between body and space: racialization undergirds how space matters to bodies' intelligibility. The racialization of bodies is an important element to understand the co-constitution of the different spaces within the school. Interestingly, Vignette II also hints toward how one's relations to spaces outside of school may gain importance to one's physical placement within school and how we carry different archives of meanings, relations, categories, and spaces with us. My reflections upon access from a position of passing and spatial attachments have paved the way to consider the interplay between spatial configurations and racialization within a school. This provides a

foundation for further investigations into increasingly diverse educational institutions. Taking positionality seriously creates greater transparency for the (situated) knowledge produced and advocates for a more nuanced approach to education research that considers the multifaceted nature of educational spaces and the experiences of students within them.

Acknowledgments
I am grateful to the students, the peer reviewers, the KKF editorial board, my supervisors, and colleagues for their support in the materialization of this article.

Funding Disclosure Statement
The PhD project is affiliated with the research project 'Educational experiences of racialized differentiation in Danish high schools' funded by Independent Research Fund Denmark.

References

Agnew, J.A. and Duncan, J.S. 1989. *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Ahmed, S. 1999. 'She'll wake up one of these days and find she's turned into a nigger':passing through Hybridity. *Theory, Culture & Society.* 16(2), 87-106.

Ahmed, S. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, S. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Barajas, H.L. and Ronnkvist, A. 2007. Racialized space: framing latino and latina experience in public schools. *Teachers College Record.* 109(6), 1517-1538.

Berg, A.J. 2004. "Taus forlegenhet?" Rasialisering, hvithet, og minnearbeid. *Kvinneforskning.* 2, 68-83.

Bloch, C. and Jessen, B. 2017. Rektorer i opråb til politikere: sæt en stopper for »hvide og brune« gymnasier. *Berlingke*. 24 April. [Online]. [Accessed 28 March 2022]. Available from: https://www.berlingske.dk/samfund/rektorer-i-opraab-til-politikere-saet-en-stopper-for-hvide-og-brune-gymnasier

Blomley, N. 1989. Text and context: rethinking the law-space nexus. *Progress in Human Geography*. 13(4), 512-534.

Blomley, N. 1994. *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. 2010. *Racism without Racists, Color-Blind Racism & Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield.

Browning, C.S. 2007. Branding Nordicity: models, identity and the decline of exceptionalism. *Cooperation and Conflict*. 42(1), 27-51.

Chinga-Ramirez, C. 2015. *Skolen ser ikke hele meg! En narrativ og postkolonial studie av sosial ulikhet i den videregående skolen gjennom minoritetselevers erfaringer med å være*. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Danbolt, M. and Myong, L. 2018. Racial Turns and Returns: Recalibrations of Racial Exceptionalism in Danish Public Debates on Racism. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-racism in the Nordic Countries*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Delaney, D. 2002. The space that race makes. *Professional Geographer*. 54(1), 6-14.

Doshi, S. 2017. Embodied urban political ecology: five propositions. *Area*. 49(1), 125-128.

DST. 2019. *Indvandrere og efterkommere i flertal på 14 gymnasier*. [Online]. [Accessed 28 March 2022]. Available from: https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/nyheder-analyser-publ/bagtal/2019/2019-10-23-indvandrere-og-efterkommere-i-flertal-paa-14-gymnasier

Eckert, P. 1989. *Jocks & Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School*. New York: Teachers College Press.
El-Tayeb, F. 2011. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. London: University of Minnesota Press.
Elwood, S. A. and Martin, D. G. 2000. "Placing" interviews: location and scales of power in qualitative research. *Professional Geographer*. 52(4), 649-657.
Faria, C. and Mollett, S. 2016. Critical feminist reflexivity and the politics of whiteness in the 'field'. *Gender, Place and Culture*. 23(1), 79-93.
Feld, S. and Basso, K.H. 1996. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
Frankenberg, R. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: the Social Construction of Whiteness*. London: Routledge.
Gieryn, T.F. 2002. What buildings do. *Theory and Society*. 31(1), 35-74.
Gilliam, L. 2009. *De umulige børn og det ordentlige menneske: Identitet, ballade og muslimske fællesskaber blandt etniske minoritetsbørn*. Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
Gottdiener, M. and Malone, D. 1985. Group differentiation in A metropolitan high school: the influence of race, class, gender and culture. *Qualitative Sociology.* 8(1), 29-41.
Grimaldi, E., Serpieri R. & Spanò, E. 2015. Positionality, Symbolic Violence and Reflexivity: Researching the Educational Strategies of Marginalised Groups. In: Bhopal, K. and Deuchar, R. eds. *Researching Marginalized Groups*. New York: Routledge.
Gullestad, M. 2002. Invisible fences: egalitarianism, nationalism and racism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 8(1), 45-63.
Guschke, B. 2023. *The Persistence of Sexism and Racism at Universities: Exploring the Imperceptibility and Unspeakability of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination in Academia*. Frederiksberg: Copenhagen Business School.
Haraway, D. 1988. Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3), 575–599.
Harvey, D. 1973. *Social Justice and the City.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia.
Hassani, A. 2018. *Muslim, Young and Urban - A Comparative Ethnography of Representation and Mobility among Young Adults Who Identify as Muslim in Copenhagen, Denmark and Montreal, Canada*. Montreal: Concordia University.
Hervik, P. and Jørgensen, R.E. 2002. Danske benægtelser af racisme. *Sociologi i dag.* 32(4), 83-102.
Howarth, C. 2002. 'So, you're from Brixton?' The struggle for recognition and esteem in a stigmatized community. *Ethnicities*. 2(2), 237-260.
Hultman, K. 2011. *Children, Rulers, and Other Actors: Posthumanist Perspectives on Subjectivity and Materiality in Pre-school and School*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.
Ingholt, L. 2007. *Fællesskaber, vaner og deltagelse: et studie af unge på to gymnasier*. København: Københavns Universitet.
Juelskjær, M. and Rasmussen, L.R. 2019. Klasserummets arkitektur. In: Johansen, M.B. eds. *10 døre til klasserummet*. København: Akademisk Forlag.
Khawaja, I. 2011. Blikkene: muslimskhedens synlighed, kropsliggørelse og forhandling. In: Pedersen, M. H. & Rytter, M. eds. *Islam og muslimer i Danmark: religion, identitet og sikkerhed efter 11. september 2001*. København: Museum Tusculanum.
Khawaja, I. 2015. "Det muslimske sofa-hjørne": muslimskhed, racialisering og integration. *Pædagogisk Psykologisk Tidsskrift*. 52(2), 29-38.
Khawaja, I. and Mørck, L.L. 2009. Researcher Positioning: Muslim "Otherness" and Beyond. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 6(1-2), 28-45.
Knowles, C. 2003. *Race and Social Analysis*. London: Sage.

Kobayashi, A. and Peake, L. 2000. Racism out of place: thoughts on whiteness and antiracist geography in the new millennium. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 90(2), 392-403.
Kroeger, B. 2003. *Passing. When People Can't Be Who They Are*. New York: Public Affairs.
Lagermann, L. 2019. *Farvede forventninger*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
Lapiņa, L. 2018. Recruited into Danishness? Affective autoethnography of passing as Danish. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 25(1), 56-70.
Lapiņa, L. and Vertelytė, M. 2020. "Eastern European", yes, but how? Autoethnographic accounts of differentiated whiteness. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 28(3), 237-250.
Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Lenz Taguchi, H. 2015. Betydelsen av materialitet i barns lärande och subjektsskapande: neomaterialism – en ny transdisciplinär forskningsfåra. In: Engdahl, I. and Ärlemalm-Hagsér, E. eds. *Att bli förskollärare: Mångfacetterad komplexitet*. Stockholm: Liber.
Lipsitz, G. 1998. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Lipsitz, G. 2007. The racialization of space and the spatialization of race: theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape. *Landscape Journal*. 26(1), 10-23.
Loftsdóttir, K. and Jensen, L. 2016. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. London: Routledge.
Lugones, M. 2003. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
Mama, A. 1995. *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender, and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge.
Massey, D. 1993. Politics and space/time. In: Keith, M. and Pile, S. eds. *Place and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
Massey, D. 1994. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Mathisen, T. 2020. "We hang out because we are foreigners": the (re)production of the categories "foreigner" and "Norwegian" in school. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*. 1(2), 124-141.
McIntosh, P. 1989. White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom*.
McKittrick, K. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Ministry of Children and Education. 2022. *Forstå reglerne for den nye elevfordelingsmodel*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 January 2023]. Available from: https://www.uvm.dk/gymnasiale-uddannelser/adgang-og-optagelse/elevfordeling/saadan-er-den-nye-fordelingsmodel/elevfordeling-paa-gymnasierne.
Murdoch, J. 2012. *Post-Structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space*. London: Sage.
Mørck, Y. 2007. Multicultural upper secondary school life in Denmark: identifications, solidarity and citizenship. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 3(2), 69-77.
Neely, B. and Samura, M. 2011. Social geographies of race: connecting race and space. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 34(11), 1933-1952.
Olsen, L. 1997. *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools*. New York: The New Press.
Peake, L. 2015. On feminism and feminist allies in knowledge production in urban geography. *Urban Geography*. 37(6), 830-838.
Phoenix, A. 1994. Practising feminist research: the intersection of gender and 'race' in the research process. In: Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. eds. *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis.
Piper, A. 1996. Passing for White, Passing for Black. In: Ginsberg, E. ed. *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Puwar, N. 2004. *Space Invaders: Race, Gender, and Bodies out of Place*. New York: Berg.
Puwar, N. 2021. Carrying as method: listening to bodies as archives. *Body and Society*. 27(1), 3-26.

Rambøll. 2019. *Kvalitativ Undersøgelse af karakteren af og* årsager *til negativ social kontrol* på *ungdomsuddannelserne*. [Online]. [Accessed 28 March 2023]. Available from: https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2019-12/Negativ%20social%20kontrol%20p%C3%A5%20ungdomsuddannelserne_2019.pdf.

Rasmussen, K.S. 2004. *Hvad er dansk racisme?* [Online]. [Accessed 2 May 2023]. Available from: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.minority-report.dk%2Fdansk%2Fdeltagere%2Fhvad_er_dansk_racisme.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK.

Regeringen. 2018. *Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund: Ingen ghettoer i 2030*. [Online]. [Accessed 19 September 2021]. Available from: https://www.regeringen.dk/media/4937/publikation_%C3%A9t-danmark-udenparallelsamfund.pdf.

Ringer, A. 2013. Researcher-participant positioning and the discursive work of categories: experiences from fieldwork in the mental health services. *Qualitative Studies*. 4(1), 1-20.

Samura, M. 2016. Architecture of diversity: using the lens and language of space to examine racialized experiences of students of color on college campuses. In: Pasque, P.A., Ortega, N., Burkhardt, J. C. and Ting, M.P. eds. *Transforming Understandings of Diversity in Higher Education: Demography, Democracy, and Discourse*. Sterling: Stylus.

Schöneich, S. 2021. 'On a Hot Day in the Field…' the art of writing ethnographic vignettes. *Ethnoscripts*. 23(1), 116-124.

Smith, V. 1994. Reading the intersection of race and gender in narratives of passing. *Diacritics.* 24(2-3), 43-57.

Staunæs, D. and Vertelyté, M. 2023. Diversitetsarbejde som mikrointerventioner i stemninger, forhåbningsfyldte ting og sans for racialisering. In: Khawaja, I. and Lagermann, L. eds. *(Farve-) blinde vinkler – om racialisering, ulighed og andetgørelse i uddannelsessystemet*. København: Samfundslitteratur.

Swartz, S. 2011. 'Going deep' and 'giving back': strategies for exceeding ethical expectations when researching amongst vulnerable youth. *Qualitative Research*. 11(1), 47-68.

Søndergaard, J.K. 2022. Etnisk Profilering: Oplevelser og konsekvenser af minoritetsetniske mænds møder med politiet. *Institut for Menneskerettigheder*.

Thomas, M.E. 2011. *Multicultural Girlhood: Racism, Sexuality, and the Conflicted Spaces of American Education*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Truman, S.E. 2017. *Speculative Methodologies & Emergent Literacies: Walking & Writing as Research-Creation*. Ontario: Massey College.

Vertelyté, M. 2022. 'Have we lost our sense of humour?!' Affective senses of racial joking in Danish schools. Seminar. *Antiracist Education: Reforming Public Education through Perspectives from Below*. 26. October. Aalborg University, Copenhagen.

Wright, C. 1998. 'Caught in the crossfire': reflections of a black female ethnographer. In: Conolly, P. and Troyna, B. eds. *Researching Racism in Education*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Zembylas, M. 2015. Rethinking race and racism as technologies of affect: theorizing the implications for anti-racist politics and practice in education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 18(2), 145-162.

Zembylas, M. 2021. Sylvia Wynter, racialized affects, and minor feelings: unsettling the coloniality of the affects in curriculum and pedagogy. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 54(3), 336-350.

Notes

[1] Acknowledging that such words are contextual, challenged, and changing over time, I apply the term "racialized" to denote the process that racialize people as non-white. Here, minoritization

is understood as interwoven with the process of racialization. I also apply terms used by the interlocutors themselves when relevant.

2 Project description: https://projekter.au.dk/educational-experiences-of-racialized-differenciation

3 Cooperation between schools, social authorities, and police.

4 'P-rker' is a derogatory slur targeted at racialized Danes. It emerged in tandem with the arrival of Muslim guest workers in the 1960s and is an abbreviation of Persian (*per*ser) and Turkish (tyr*ker*).

5 Between luxurious villas and a so-called 'ghetto'-turned-'area of prevention.'

6 Synonymously referred to as *ghetto schools* by politicians and the media if they contain more than 30 percent racialized students.

7 Concern about the portrayal of the anonymized school produced by such theoretical and methodological incisions points toward the neoliberal structuring of high schools as they are granted funding per graduated student. A teacher phrased it: "The school's battles for the students, the student's battle for the schools."

Forhandlinger af tilhørsforhold på tværs af tid. Racialt minoriserede kvinders erfaringer med at høre til i den danske folkeskole

Af Jin Hui Li og Ahrong Yang

Jin Hui Li, lektor, Institut for Kultur og Læring, Aalborg Universitet, jhl@ikl.aau.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3546-7324

Ahrong Yang, adjunkt, Institut for Kultur og Læring, Aalborg Universitet, ahya@ikl.aau.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6845-4621

Abstract

Inspired by spatial education research and queer and critical race theories, this article investigates how experiences of being a racially minoritized girl/woman in a Danish primary school context have shaped over time and influenced their belonging at school and in society. The analytical insights in this article derive from empirical material that spans a longer period of time and are based on, respectively, empirical material in which racially minoritized women share their experiences of attending Danish primary school in the period 1970 to the 1990s and empirical material in which female students share their experiences of attending Danish primary school today. While the students' experiences are negotiated on different racialized terms, the temporal perspective helps to identify patterns of how racial exclusion cuts across time and how access to being seen as (fully) Danish is a struggle for racially minoritized female students. Overall, the analysis finds that belonging in the Danish primary school and in Danish society is a constant struggle for racially minoritized female students. Demanding continuous negotiation, explanations, and imagined alternatives, belonging is neither neutral nor taken for granted by the racially minoritized female students neither in the 1970s nor today.

KEYWORDS: Race, female students, belonging, Danish schooling, time narratives

Indledning

Folkeskolen er et formativt rum, hvor idealer om medborgerskab og tilhørsforhold bliver til (Buchardt, Markkola & Valtonen 2013), og hvor processer, der angår race og racialisering, spiller en central rolle i skolingspraksis (Juva & Holm 2017; Vertelytė 2019; Li & Buchardt 2022). I denne artikel sætter vi fokus på racialt minoriserede pigers/kvinders racialiserede og kønnede erfaringer med at høre til i den danske folkeskole. Dette med afsæt i, hvad vi her kalder *tidsnarrativer*. Med tidsnarrativer refererer vi til, hvordan tid bliver forhandlet og opererer centralt i informanternes fortællinger om tilhørsforhold. Vi er inspireret af feministisk, queer og kritisk race-teori, der anskuer tid som værende ikke-lineær (se for eksempel Haraway 1988; hooks 1994; Ahmed 2006). Særligt er vi optaget af Sara Ahmeds begreb om 'orientering'. Hun forstår tid som kropslig orientering i tid, sted og rum. Med afsæt i Ahmeds teoretisering, anskuer vi de racialt minoriserede pigers og kvinders tidsnarrativer som kropslige (re)orienteringer i tid, sted og rum (Ahmed 2006, 554). Når vi analyserer pigerne og kvindernes forestillinger om tid, læser vi dem som måder, hvorpå de orienterer og reorienterer deres mulighedsrum for kønnede og racialiserede tilhørsforhold. De analytiske eksempler i artiklen strækker sig over en længere tidsperiode og tager afsæt i forskellige empiriske materialer, som vi vender tilbage til.

I en dansk kontekst har racialt minoriserede pigers/kvinders oplevelser og erfaringer i skolen ikke i samme grad været genstand for analyser som racialt minoriserede drenges (Gilliam 2018; Soei 2018). I denne artikel undersøger vi derfor de racialt minoriserede pigers/kvinders narrativer om at høre til, når henholdsvis tidligere elever erindrer og kigger tilbage på deres oplevelser, og når nuværende elever forudsiger deres oplevelser og kigger frem i tiden. Dette er beskrivelser og erfaringer, der strækker sig over forskellige tidslinjer, men som alle centrerer sig om racialisering og tilhørsforhold til den danske skole og det danske samfund. Med racialisering henviser vi til de sociale og materielle differentieringsprocesser, hvorigennem mennesker tilskrives raciale betydninger. Race kan forstås som effekten af historiske racialiseringsprocesser, der opererer gennem hierarkisering og dominans (Murji & Solomos 2005; Myong 2009). I den forbindelse forstår vi skolen som et produktivt sted, hvor kønnede og raciale forestillinger, samt sammenfletninger af tid og rum, produceres gennem socialisering og uddannelse af elever som fremtidige borgere (Singh, Rizvi & Shrestha 2007). Desuden tager vi udgangspunkt i, at sådanne *spatial-temporale* forestillinger danner grundlag for og er med til at strukturere elevers identiteter og tilhørsforhold (Juelskjær 2009; Cheng 2014). Vores undersøgelsesspørgsmål er således følgende: *Hvordan anvender racialt minoriserede kvindelige (tidligere og nuværende) elever tidsnarrativer til at forhandle deres tilhørsforhold til den danske folkeskole?*

Kategorien 'racialt minoriserede' dækker både over børn og børnebørn af migranter. Det er elever, som i medier, policydokumenter og pædagogiske praksisser er blevet betegnet med en række overlappende kategorier. I 1970'erne og 1980'erne: 'Udenlandske børn', 'fremmedarbejderbørn' og 'fremmedsprogede børn', 'indvandrerbørn' og 'to-kulturelle'. I 1990'erne startede brugen af 'tosprogede elever' og kategorierne 'børn med anden etnisk baggrund (end dansk)', 'efterkommere' og 'andengenerationsindvandrerbørn' (Kofoed 1994), og senest vandt betegnelsen 'tredjegenerationsindvandrerbørn' frem gennem 2000'erne. Tosprogede elever bliver også anvendt overlappende med kategorien 'muslimske børn/elever' (Buchardt 2016; Gilliam 2018; Li & Enemark 2023).

Race, køn og tilhørsforhold i skolen i en nordisk kontekst

Nyere studier viser, at undervisning og sociale interaktioner i den danske folkeskole, såvel som i de andre nordiske lande, praktiseres gennem kulturelle og pædagogiske idéer om 'den normale elev': Idéer, der er baseret på hvide, vestlige middelklassestandarder, samtidig med at de tales ind i farveblinde og/eller kulturelt neutrale diskurser (Rosvall 2015; Røthing 2015; Padovan-Özdemir & Ydesen 2016; Pihl, Holm, Riitaoja, Kjaran & Carlson

2018; Fylkesnes 2019). I disse studier bliver det problematiseret, at hvidhed opererer som en national norm. For eksempel: at skolen er med til at producere norskhed og danskhed som knyttet til hvidhed, hvilket blandt andet kommer til udtryk gennem farve-/raceblinde praksisser. Således bidrager skolen til at skabe forestillinger om et 'os', bestående af de hvide elever, og et 'dem', bestående af de racialt minoriserede elever (Røthing 2015; Riese & Harlap 2021; Eriksen 2022).

Flere nordiske studier har vist, hvordan raciale differentieringer mellem 'os' og 'dem' kan fungere ekskluderende for racialt minoriserede elever gennem skolens (re)produktion af hvid normativitet. For eksempel analyserer Osa Lundberg (2021), hvordan brune elever i det urbane Sverige oplever, at inklusion og adgang til det svenske samfund tilbageholdes eller begrænses af præmissen om hvid normativitet. Sanna Mustonen (2021) viser i en finsk kontekst, hvordan brune unge med flygtningebaggrund erfarer, at idéen, om at sprogfærdigheder er nøglen til deltagelse, inklusion og integration, hviler på en falsk antagelse. Dette fordi racialiserede migranters sprogkundskaber ikke beskytter dem mod racialisering og eksklusion. Endvidere analyserer Carla Chinga-Ramirez (2017), hvordan sociale og kulturelle diskurser om norsk lighed som ensartethed udspiller sig i skolen på en sådan måde, at racialt minoriserede elever ofte bliver marginaliserede som ikke-norske. Samtidig er der også studier, der viser, hvordan racialt minoriserede elever søger at modvirke den racisme og andetgørelse, de oplever. I en dansk kontekst undersøger Ahrong Yang (2021b), hvordan brune elever forudsiger fremtidige møder med racisme og deler deres bekymringer om, hvordan disse potentielle møder kan håndteres. Med begrebet "racialized forecastings" (Yang 2021b, 169), som kan oversættes til "racialiserede forudsigelser" peger Yang på de kampe, som racialt minoriserede elever tager op, når de forsøger at skabe mening med deres racialiserede oplevelser. Racialiserede oplevelser, der hviler på farveblindhed, og som eleverne på en og samme tid også selv opretholder og samtidig forsøger at gøre modstand mod. Disse undersøgelser er en del af en voksende forskningsinteresse i at forstå racialt minoriserede elevers socialisering og tilhørsforhold i skolen, undersøgt gennem intersektioner af racialisering, køn og social klasse (Staunæs 2004; Lagermann 2013; Chinga-Ramirez 2017; Khawaja 2017; Fylkesnes 2018; Hummelstedt, Holm, Sahlström & Zilliacus 2021; Li 2021a).

Selvom der er gennemført en række nordiske undersøgelser, som bygger på racialt minoriserede elevers egne stemmer om racialisering og tilhørsforhold i skolen i et samtidigt perspektiv (Khawaja 2001; Moldenhawer 2005; Buchardt 2014; Chinga-Ramirez 2017; Vertelytė 2019; Varjo, Kalalahti & Jahnukainen 2020; Yang 2021a; 2021b) såvel som i et historisk perspektiv (Li 2021a; Li & Buchardt 2022), synes der at være begrænset vidensproduktion om levede erfaringer med racialisering og dansk skolegang fra et elevperspektiv, og som undersøges på tværs af tid. Denne artikel bidrager med viden om, hvordan racialt minoriserede elever henholdsvis oplevede og oplever tilhørsforhold med særligt fokus på racialisering.

Teoretisk ramme

Vi forstår pædagogiske kontekster som sociale rum og steder, der (re)producerer sociale og pædagogiske praksisser og interaktioner – med fokus på rummets sociokulturelle og sociomaterielle facetter (Baroutsis, Comber & Woods 2017). Vi trækker på den stigende interesse i pædagogisk forskning for at undersøge rumlige relationer. Teoretisering af centrale geografiske begreber såsom rum, sted, tid og mobilitet kan betragtes som måder til at udforske rumlige relationer i læreres, elevers og deres familiers liv (Larsen & Beech 2014). I forhold til den spatiale uddannelsesforskning er vi inspireret af studier, der inden for transnational uddannelsesmobilitet arbejder med, hvordan studerendes identiteter konstrueres gennem stedsdistinktioner og -sammenligninger (Raghuram 2013; Cheng 2014). Denne forskning viser endvidere, hvordan studerendes opfattelser, forestillinger og oplevelser af uddannelsesrum bidrager til produktionen af deres følelser af at høre til (Singh et al. 2007), og hvordan dette former bestemte race-, klasse- og

kønsbestemte stedsidentiteter (Holloway, O'Hara & Pimlott-Wilson 2012; Cheng 2014; Li 2021b).

I denne artikel er vi særligt interesserede i at tilføje et tidsaspekt for at analysere elevernes oplevelser af identitet og tilhørsforhold: Hvordan konstrueres de tidligere og nuværende elevers raciale identiteter gennem tidsnarrativer? Analysen af disse tidsnarrativer fortæller noget om, hvordan den danske skoles mulighedsrum for kønnet og racialiseret tilhørsforhold bliver erfaret på tværs af tid. Som nævnt er artiklen baseret på to forskellige empiriske materialer: Det ene er to individuelle interview med racialt minoriserede kvinder, hvori de deler deres erindringer om at gå i den danske folkeskole i perioden 1970 til 1990'erne. Det andet empiriske materiale er fokusgruppeinterview med racialt minoriserede piger, som fortæller om deres oplevelser af at høre til i den danske folkeskole i dag. I fokusgruppeinterviewene bringer de nuværende elever tidslighed op i form af forestillinger om fremtiden, når de forhandler deres racialiserede tilhørsforhold, mens de tidligere elever via deres erindringer deler deres forestillinger om potentielle alternativer til oplevelser af racialiseret tilhørsforhold. Vores ambition er med andre ord at tage udgangspunkt i det at være racialiseret som en ikke-hvid kvinde/pige i en dansk skolekontekst for derigennem at belyse, hvordan kønnede og racialiserede identiteter (re)orienteres gennem forestillinger om alternative udformninger af og fremtider for tilhørsforhold.

Tilhørsforhold forstår vi som følelsesmæssige og rumlige tilknytninger til forskellige kontekster, subjektiviteter og fællesskaber – som at føle sig 'hjemme' (Yuval-Davis 2011). At føle sig hjemme er en dynamisk og vedvarende proces, som indebærer en følelse af håb for fremtiden (ibid.). At opleve at høre til bliver oftest neutraliseret som værende en del af en hverdagspraksis og bliver således først artikuleret og politiseret, når oplevelsen af at høre til bliver truet. Tilhørsforholdspolitikker omfatter specifikke politiske projekter, der sigter mod at konstruere tilhørsforhold til bestemte kollektiver, som i sig selv bliver konstrueret i disse projekter på specifikke måder og inden for specifikke grænser.

Skolen kan ses som et politisk projekt, der former elevers tilhørsforhold til et bestemt kollektiv. For at forstå nogle af de friktioner, der er involveret i konstruktioner af tilhørsforhold fremmet af forskellige politiske tilhørsprojekter, er vi nødt til at se på, hvad der kræves af det enkelte subjekt, for at vedkommende har mulighed for at blive betragtet som tilhørende kollektivet: retten til at høre til. Fælles oprindelse (eller rettere: myten om ægte oprindelse) kan i nogle tilfælde blive afkrævet, mens det i andre tilhørsprojekter kan være en fælles kultur, religion og/eller sprog, der er afgørende (ibid.).

I denne artikel analyserer vi, hvad der i elevernes tidsnarrativer bliver fremhævet som krav på at høre til i den danske skole. Vi undersøger også spørgsmålet om, hvilke rum der er til forhandling i forhold til at ændre kravene i de måder, hvorpå informanterne orienterer sig mod deres raciale identiteter. I vores analyse anlægger vi et intersektionelt perspektiv på, hvordan racialiserende krav om tilhørsforhold er forbundet til køn og alder (Collins & Bilge 2016). Det vil sige, at analysen fokuserer på, hvorledes køn, alder og racialisering griber ind i/sammenvæves med hinanden. Vi har arbejdet med følgende analysespørgsmål: Hvordan anvender racialt minoriserede piger/kvinder tidsnarrativer til at forhandle tilhørsforhold? Og hvilke krav bliver tydelige i tidsnarrativerne om at høre til i den danske skole?

Metode

Materialet med tidligere migrantelever er fra et større *oral history*-studie, som handlede om deres skoleerindringer. I perioden 2019-2020 blev der foretaget interview med 28 personer, der som børn ankom til det danske uddannelsessystem fra 1970'erne til 1990'erne. De analytiske eksempler i denne artikel er med informanter, der gik i skole fra slutningen af 1970'erne til 1980'erne. *Oral history* kan beskrives som interview, der fanger fortiden (historien) såvel som fortiden, som den er i nutiden (hukommelsen) (Bak 2016). Mundtlig historie er både en kildetype og en metode til at indsamle og fortolke mundtlige kilder. Indsamlingen/

skabelsen sker gennem interaktion mellem forskeren og informanten under interviewet. Historiedelen kan således både referere til historiske begivenheder, men også til den enkeltes historie. Rekruttering af informanterne foregik via opslag ophængt på Nørrebro omkring Blågårds Plads og via sociale medier samt gennem informanterne selv. Dynamikken i interviewene var præget af, at intervieweren (Hui) også inddrog egne oplevelser som migrantelev op gennem 1990'erne. En slags 'samhørighed' blev etableret under disse interview, da forskeren anerkendte informanternes erfaringer ved at indikere en genkendelse af deres fortællinger via kropssprog og verbale tilkendegivelser. Interviewene, der varede 1-2,5 timer, foregik i informantens hjem, på et offentligt bibliotek eller på en café. I nogle tilfælde blev informantens medbragte billeder fra skoletiden anvendt i interviewet. Informanterne havde gået i skole i forskellige geografiske områder i Danmark, som strækker sig fra urbane til landlige områder. Med informanternes samtykke er de som personer samt steder og institutioner nævnt ved deres rigtige navne i denne artikel. Fremskrivningen af informanternes historier med deres rigtige navne skyldes dels et ønske om at fremhæve stemmer fra mennesker, hvis 'almindelige' erfaringer normalt ikke bliver hørt (Perks & Thomson 2016), og dels at disse steder og institutioner kan indgå i historisk dokumentation af, hvordan skoling af migranter foregik i praksis.

De empiriske eksempler med de nuværende elever er fra et større feltarbejde om børns levede erfaringer med race og racialisering, som blev gennemført 2018-2019 (af Ahrong). Eksemplerne i denne artikel er fra et fokusgruppeinterview med elever, der på daværende tidspunkt gik i 6. klasse på en folkeskole i Nordjylland i Danmark. Med afsæt i kritisk race-metodologi var ønsket med fokusgruppeinterviewene at sætte race og racialiserede erfaringer i forgrunden, og som Daniel Solórzano og Tara Yosso påpeger: "[to] view these experiences as sources of strength" (2002, 24). Udover at adressere race og racialisering direkte med eleverne blev fokusgruppeinterviewene også organiseret på baggrund af elevernes racialiserede kroppe. I fokusgruppeinterviewet, som er genstand for analyse i denne artikel, deltog både racialt minoriserede og majoriserede elever. Ambitionen var at skabe rum, hvor særligt de racialt minoriserede elever fik mulighed for at opleve, at deres erfaringer med race og racialisering var centrale og definerende for deres oplevelser (hooks 1994). Således var intentionen at muliggøre og støtte elevernes modfortællinger. Sådanne modfortællinger, der udfordrer majoriserede fortællinger om racisme og racialiseret privilegier, bliver ofte stillegjorte (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Som racialt minoriseret (koreansk adopteret) forsker kunne Ahrong relatere til elevernes modfortællinger samt dele egne modfortællinger. At adressere spørgsmål om race kan i sig selv virke kontroversielt, særligt i kombination med børn og i en dansk kontekst, hvor diskurser om farveblindhed er dominerende (se for eksempel Myong 2009; Andreassen & Myong 2017; Skadegård 2018). Idéen om, at race er et skadeligt emne for børn at involvere sig i, bliver af forskere anset som en raceblind diskurs, som understøtter diskurser om normativ hvidhed (Yang 2021a). At skabe et rum for at dele oplevelser og levede erfaringer med race og racisme er således også en måde at udfordre dominerende vestlige perspektiver på både børn (Young & Barret 2001; Qvortrup 2009; Sánchez-Eppler 2018) og race (Wekker 2016; Rastas 2019; Yang 2021a) og tilbyde alternative indsigter til at forstå både barndom og race som konstruerede, performative og meningsfulde sociale kategorier (Ahrong 2021a). Fokusgruppeinterviewet blev afholdt i et aflukket lokale på skolen og varede i cirka en time. I analysen er eleverne blevet anonymiseret med henblik på at skabe et interviewrum, hvor deres oplevelser og tanker blev givet plads, uden at de skulle frygte fordømmelse og/eller disciplinering fra lærere eller forældre.

Selvom vi som forskere således oplevede samhørighed med vores informanter, forventede vi ikke, at vores forskerpositioner dermed blev ophævet. Eller at vi var, hvad Patti Lather (2000, 17) refererer til som: "the one(s) who know". Som forskere anser vi os selv som medkonstruerende af de levede erfaringer, informanterne delte med os. Samtidig forstår vi, at disse blot er fragmenter af erfaringer, identiteter og udkæmpede kampe.

Udover at vi med denne artikel er interesserede i at sætte minoriserede pigers/kvinders skoleoplevelser i forgrunden, er det tid, som bliver afgørende for vores analytiske læsninger af elevernes forhandlinger af tilhørsforhold. Det empiriske materiale fra 2010'erne er med til at informere vores analytiske læsninger af det empiriske materiale fra 1970-1990'erne og omvendt. Vi har således læst efter forhandlinger, hvori tid, rum, køn og race fremstår som centrale for pigernes/kvindernes oplevelser af tilhørsforhold. Når det empiriske materiale læses op imod og ved siden af hinanden, kan vi se, at pigerne/kvinderne forhandler deres oplevelser af tilhørsforhold, der på én og samme tid viser forskellige racialiserede præmisser, og samtidig eksponerer hvordan udgrænsninger af racialiserede tilhørsforhold er uforandrede.

Tidligere elever: Fysisk adskillelse i og uden for skolen

I interviewene med de elever, som gik i dansk folkeskole i slutningen af 1970'erne og i starten af 1980'erne, er der gentagne kønnede fortællinger om, hvordan de oplevede både eksplicitte og mere subtile former for racisme. Hvor anden forskning viser, hvordan mandlige tidligere elever fortæller om skoleerfaringer, der ofte var præget af racisme i form af fysisk vold i skolegården (Li 2021a), fortæller de kvindelige tidligere elever om mere subtile former for racisme. Hvor de mandlige elevers fortællinger centrerer sig om, hvordan de ofte tog til genmæle og forsvarede sig, og hvordan de af lærerne blev læst som balladem agere og skolemodstandere, centrerer de kvindelige elevers fortællinger sig om, hvordan de oplevede racial eksklusion gennem fysisk adskillelse fra de hvide elever. Oplevelser og erfaringer med et racialiserende adskilt skolerum og dets betydning for oplevelsen af at høre til i skole- og fritidskontekster ses for eksempel hos Ganimet. Tre år gammel kom Ganimet til Danmark fra Nordmakedonien i 1970. Hun beretter om, hvordan "danske børn" og de racialt minoriserede børn ikke legede sammen, og hun reflekterer i interviewet over, hvorfor der ikke blev gjort en større indsats for mere interaktion mellem børnene:

> *Ganimet: "Men altså bagefter tænker jeg da, det er bemærkelsesværdigt, at vi ikke øhm… Ikke var mere sammen med de danske børn, egentlig, privat. Altså, en sjælden gang var vi med til fødselsdage, ikke altid. Der var måske heller ikke den samme struktur omkring det med at invitere på samme måde".*
>
> *Hui: "Mm… Men det er ikke noget, du tænkte over som barn?"*
>
> *Ganimet: "Nej. Det, det gjorde jeg faktisk ikke. Det var først bagefter, jeg har tænkt over, at der både fra den ene og fra den anden side måske kunne være gjort noget ligesom for… Ryste os sammen, at vi fik mere sammen, ikke? (…) Men det, det lå ligesom ikke i kortene…"*

Ganimet deler her en erindring om, hvordan "de danske børn" og de racialt minoriserede børn var adskilt, når de ikke var i skole. At Ganimet problematiserer den praksis eller "struktur omkring det med at invitere", er en refleksion, hun har som voksen, og ikke noget hun umiddelbart erindrer som værende et problem, da hun var barn. Selv i interviewsituationen, hvor Ganimet rejser spørgsmål omkring adskillelsen mellem "de danske børn" og de racialt minoriserede børn og efterspørger, at der kunne have været gjort en indsats for, at børnene gik "mere sammen", så forklarer hun det med, at strukturen ikke var "den samme" (som den er i dag). Ganimet taler således om sin oplevelse af, at der "bagefter" (hun var elev) er sket ændringer omkring, hvordan man for eksempel inviterer til arrangementer, der foregår uden for skolen: At hvad der dengang ikke "lå i kortene", har forandret sig. I hvert fald i en sådan grad, at Ganimet her får anledning til at sætte spørgsmålstegn ved adskillelsen. Historisk set er adskillelse og segregering netop en racialiserende praksis, som er med til at opretholde udgrænsningen fra blandt andet danskheden og det danske børnefællesskab. I forlængelse af ovenstående citat fortæller Ganimet,

hvordan adskillelsespraksisser mellem børnene også medførte og/eller manifesterede sig gennem brug af skældsord rettet mod de racialt minoriserede børn.

Ganimet fortæller, hvordan de racialt majoriserede børn forsøgte at ramme de racialt minoriserede børn på en måde, som hun erindrer som "hård" og som noget, "der gjorde ondt", for eksempel, når et skældsord som "fremmedarbejder" blev brugt. Ordet blev brugt til at "udstille" de racialt minoriserede børn som ikke hørende til på samme vilkår som "de danske børn": At de ikke var gode nok til at indgå i ("det danske") fællesskab og i den danske skole. Samtidig fortæller Ganimet, at hun trods de racistiske oplevelser ikke følte sig som et offer i skolen. Dette begrunder hun med, at hun havde mange legekammerater og en tryg "base" blandt de andre racialt minoriserede børn:

> *Ganimet: "Nej, jamen jeg tror ikke, vi følte os ikke engang som ofre, fordi vi havde øh, så stærk en base i hinanden, fordi vi ikke kun var en, altså vi havde, vi var jo tre i den klasse, og vi var fire i den anden, og der var vi fire piger, vi ville egentlig også gerne være sådan, vi forstod hinanden, og vi trivedes med det, og vi var, vi var med i klassen, men vi lavede bare ikke ting efter skole. Så det var, altså det var... det var egentlig ikke et savn, det var, det var bare, hvad det var, fordi vi havde jo vores base, når vi gik derfra, så havde vi ikke kun de fire med, så havde vi jo... en kolonne af folk, vi kunne lege med (griner), ikke, og så fordi vi havde sådan nogle karréer, hedder det, og så havde vi ligesom øh, så havde vi som sådan hver vores legeplads, ikke, og så besøgte vi jo hinandens karréer, og så var der tilknyttet en øhm, bemandet legeplads".*

I Ganimets narrativ bliver det tydeligt, at hendes tilhørsforhold i skolen og i den lokale kontekst også var præget af, hvordan skolens børn boede, og hvilke legepladser de legede på. Sammen med mange andre børn med migrantbaggrund boede Ganimet i boligblokkene i Vognmandsmarken. De gik ikke i fritidshjem efter skole men legede på den bemandede legeplads i Kildevældsparken. De fandt tryghed i hinanden i skolen og på legepladserne og var derfor ikke afhængige af de hvide klassekammeraters 'velvilje' til at inkludere dem i legene i og uden for skolen. Ganimets narrativ klinger også af en 'sådan var det bare, og det var der ikke noget at gøre ved'-tilgang. Det vil sige en slags accept af, at racial adskillelse var tingenes tilstand, en selvfølgelighed, som ingen prøvede at ændre på, ej heller at udfordre. Dette på trods af at der var et særligt tiltag på skolen, der adresserede de sociale dimensioner af migrantelevers skolegang. Vognmandsmarken Skole arrangerede for eksempel studieture til det daværende Jugoslavien. Disse blev beskrevet som gode redskaber til at fremme social interaktion og mellemfolkelig forståelse mellem de danske og de jugoslaviske børn (Hjemmet og skolen, 1973). Selvom sådanne sociale tiltag, der havde til formål at etablere venskaber på tværs af 'kulturforskelle', blev vægtet højt i skolen i 1970'erne, oplevede Ganimet racial adskillelse som værende 'normalt'.

Den rumlige og materielle side af skolens organisering og indretning bliver også i Yildiz' skolerindringer fremhævet som værende af betydning for hendes inklusion i en ny klasse på Vestre Skole i Ikast i 1986. Yildiz kom til Danmark fra Tyrkiet i 1977, da hun var fem år. Hun gik i skole i Viborg fra 1979-1986 og flyttede siden til Ikast, hvor hun fra 1986-1989 gik på Vestre Skole. Yildiz husker at blive placeret på en anden skole (Vestre Skole) end distriktsskolen (Nordre Skole). Hun husker, at begrundelsen var, at der allerede var mange børn med migrantbaggrund på Nordre Skole. Samtidig fortæller hun, at hun følte, at hendes familie blev forkert kategoriseret af kommunen, da de alle allerede kunne dansk og var 'velintegrerede'. De var med andre ord ikke nyankomne migranter, da de ankom til Ikast. Yildiz husker at blive placeret i Vestre Skole, som havde få elever som hende (det vil sige med migrantbaggrund). Yildiz fremhæver, at de største forskelle mellem skolen i Viborg og i Ikast var indendørsfaciliteterne.

> *Yildiz: "På Vestre, der var ikke nogen indendørsfaciliteter, der var man ude hele året rundt. Og så var der en gårdvagt… Det var*

slet ikke hyggeligt på samme måde. Slet, slet ikke. Og øh, så var der jo dem, der spillede basket, og dem, der spillede fodbold, og de gik jo så over på banerne og spillede øhm... og jeg, jeg var faktisk ikke så meget sammen med dem fra min egen klasse, jeg var sammen med en tyrkisk pige, der gik en klasse under mig. Fordi at når man kommer ind i 6. klasse, hvor alle har sine... kammerater, så er det svært at komme ind… Det, ja. Der var grupperinger og klikerne. Og så kan jeg huske… Øhm, det, der var værst ved timerne, det var, hvis der skulle laves gruppearbejde, hvem skal jeg være sammen med".

Da hun var den eneste elev i sin klasse med migrantbaggrund, var hendes klassekammerater i begyndelsen meget nysgerrige på hendes tyrkiske baggrund. En interesse der, ifølge Yildiz, forsvandt efter et par måneder. Yildiz erindrer, at lærerne ikke var opmærksomme på, at hun havde sociale problemer med sine nye klassekammerater, hvilket særligt gjorde sig gældende i frikvarterne og i gruppearbejde. For Yildiz bliver det meningsfuldt at antage, at dette skyldtes, at klassen allerede var inddelt i faste grupperinger. Yildiz forklarer eksklusionen med, at indretningen ikke inviterede til fælles leg for en ny elev i 6. klasse, når der allerede var dannet faste grupper. På trods af dette følte hun sig heldig, da hun i det mindste havde fundet en legekammerat fra klassetrinnet under hende, som hun havde mødt til modersmålsundervisning. Yildiz husker de to ugentlige sessioner med modersmålsundervisning i tyrkisk som hendes redning for at finde sig til rette i Ikast og i skolen. Her følte hun sig hjemme blandt elever, der lignende hende.

Selvom Ganimet fortæller om en skoletid, hvor oplevelsen af tilhørsforhold var præget af fysisk adskillelse fra de majoriserede elever, fortæller hun samtidig, at hun ikke oplevede sin skolegang som ekskluderende. Uden for skolen fandt hun sammen med andre racialt minoriserede elever. Det er først i hendes erindring om, hvad der ikke "lå i kortene", at hun samtidig fortæller, at racialiseret opdeling var med til at skabe følelser af eksklusion og andetgørelse. Samtidig fortæller Yildiz, som ikke havde andre racialt minoriserede elever i sin klasse, om en skolegang præget af ensomhed og eksklusion. I begge tilfælde ses det, hvordan den spatiale organisering af skolerummet og inddelinger af elevers kroppe bidrager til affektive gruppedannelser, hvor følelser af at høre til sammenstiller nogle kroppe med bestemte andre (Ahmed 2014). Inspireret af Sara Ahmed (2014), forstår vi her følelser (af at høre til) som placeret i det sociale, det diskursive, det rumlige og det affektive snarere end i det individuelle. Det vil sige, at følelser er i cirkulation og bliver formet af det specifikke (skole) rums organisering. De affektive gruppedannelser sker dermed gennem cirkulation af følelser, der formes af spatial organisering. At racialt minoriserede elever føler sig andetgjorte og ekskluderede hænger således sammen med, hvordan elevernes fysiske kroppe er organiseret i skolerummet gennem raciale opdelinger. Racialt minoriserede elevkroppe sammenstilles via segregering fra hvide elever. I fortællingerne tydeliggøres det racialt segregerede rum ved at bestemte kroppe associeres med specifikke skolerum (for eksempel at hvide elever 'naturligt' kan indtage skolegården i frikvarterne eller at de 'naturligt' bliver inviteret hjem til fødselsdage), og gennem markering af skolerum som territorier, der tilhører bestemte kroppe, og hvor andre kroppe, som ikke associeres med disse rum, får fornemmelser af fremmedgørelse og/eller ensomhed (som for eksempel Yildiz' krop på Vestre skole) (Puwar 2004; se også Berisha dette nummer). På tværs af Ganimet og Yildiz og andre informanters fortællinger finder vi en lyst til at gå tilbage i tiden for at ændre det racialt segregerede rum. Dette tilvejebringer forestillinger om alternative oplevelser, hvis skolerummet ikke havde været racialt adskilt. Disse processer, hvori tid og rum indgår i den kontinuerlige reorientering af raciale tilhørsforhold, kan ifølge Doreen Massey (2005, 107) forstås som "always becoming", det vil sige, hvordan tid såvel som rum er en kontinuerlig og ufærdig proces, der er i konstant tilblivelse. Denne temporale og spatiale reorientering af de tidligere elevers mulighedsrum for racialt tilhørsforhold gør sig gældende både for Ganimet, som husker og erfarede sin skolegang som tryg, og for Yildiz, som husker sin skolegang som ensom og forbundet med eksklusion. Det handler for begge om at

forestille sig et (andet) materielt og socialt rum i skolen, hvor der havde været rum til, at de racialt minoriserede kvindelige elever i højere grad kunne interagere med de majoriserede elever. Ganimet og Yildiz giver på den måde udtryk for et ønske om at reorientere rummet: At gøre det mere racialt retfærdigt fordelt. Og dermed også åbne for, hvordan det potentielt ville have påvirket deres oplevelse af tilhørsforhold til skolen.

I lighed med Hanne Haavinds (2007) norske studie om børns transformationsprocesser fra kategorierne 'barn' til 'ung' viser vores analyse, at de racialt minoriserede kvindelige elever gennemgår en marginaliseringsproces, når deres tilhørsforhold læses som ikke-dansk og dermed som ikke hørende til det nationale fællesskab. Til gengæld bruger de som voksne fortiden til at (gen)forhandle forestillinger om en skolegang, der fordrede et mere racialt retfærdigt rum. Et reorganiseret rum med andre inddelingsmuligheder, der muliggør affektive gruppedannelser, hvor følelser af at høre til ikke bliver til på baggrund af kategoriseringer som hvid eller ikke-hvid (Ahmed 2014). En sådan inddeling fordrer, at de racialiserede elever ikke indtager det spatiale skolerum som de forstyrrende og fremmede kroppe i en hvid skole (Puwar 2004). Disse resultater peger på, hvordan de voksne racialt minoriserede kvinder forsøger at udfordre skolen som et rum og en tid, hvor de måtte kæmpe hårdt for at 'opnå' at blive anset som passende og egnede elever (Davies & Saltmarsh 2007). Deres kritiske blik og erindringer om deres skolegang kan ses som modfortællinger. De nutidige elever skaber ligeledes modfortællinger, men de kredser i højere grad omkring adgang til danskhed. Ligesom de kvindelige tidligere elever bruger de også tidsnarrativer til at forhandle tilhørsforhold. Men hvor Ganimet og Yildiz erindrer og taler om fortiden, er de nutidige elevers forhandlinger centreret om forestillinger og/om fremtiden.

Nuværende elever: Med- og modfortællinger til 'helt dansk'

I fokusgruppeinterviewet med de nuværende elever ser vi modfortællinger til det eksisterende racialiserede rum. Eleverne forhandler i højere grad end de tidligere elever spørgsmål omkring danskhed med deres lærere og kammerater. Særligt pigerne orienterer sig mod, at danskhed ikke nødvendigvis er bundet op på hvidhed eller ikke-muslimskhed. I fokusgruppeinterviewet er eleverne uenige om, hvad det vil sige at være dansker: Om det er hudfarve, fødested eller religion, der er definerende for adgangen til det at være dansk. Dog er de enige om, at danskhed er forbundet med følelsen af at være dansk. Særligt bruger pigerne eksempler omkring fremtid og forestillinger om deres fremtidige børn til at reorientere danskhed. For eksempel når Murat, en sort elev, fortæller, at han ikke føler sig dansk, men somalisk. Gennem forestillingen om, at de i fremtiden vil få børn, udfordrer eleverne Amalie og Elizabeth, hvorvidt Murat fortsat kan insistere på, at han og hans fremtidige børn ikke er fra Danmark og danske, men udelukkende er fra Somalia og somaliske. Amalie er hvid, og Elizabeth er racialt minoriseret og har generelt svært ved, at hendes ikke-hvide krop skal definere hendes tilhørsforhold.

> *Elizabeth: "Altså Murat, han fik engang et spørgsmål med, at når han får børn, er de så også fra Somalia? Men altså, det er de jo, hvis du synes, og hvis de selv synes det og sådan noget…"*
>
> *Amalie: "Hvad så, hvis du bliver kærester med en dansk, sådan helt dansk pige?"*
>
> *Murat: "Hvad?"*
>
> *Amalie: "Hvis du bliver kærester med en helt dansk pige, og så at du får børn med hende, vil du så stadig sige, dine børn er somaliere?"*
>
> *Murat: "Ja".*
>
> *Elizabeth: "Men hvad så med din danske kæreste, hvad vil hun sige til det?"*
>
> *Murat: "Det ved jeg ikke".*

Elizabeth: "Ja, hvis hun sagde: "Vores børn er danske og somaliske?""

Murat: "Så skal man så sige, de er danskere, men de er jo muslimer".

I denne udveksling bliver det tydeligt, at Elizabeth og Amalie ikke forstår, hvorfor Murat ikke identificerer sig som både somalisk og dansk. På den måde, pigerne afkræver Murat et svar, kan det tolkes som, at de bliver provokeret af, at han nægter at tage danskheden på sig. I udvekslingen mellem børnene kan der være flere læsninger af racialisering i spil, og som kommer til udtryk i pigernes krav til Murat. Når pigerne bliver provokeret af Murats afvisning af danskheden, kan det tolkes som et udtryk for, at de gentager en diskurs, hvor danskhed er et naturliggjort ideal, hvilket Murat her udfordrer. Samtidig gentages en dansk hvidhedsdiskurs, hvor danskheden kobles til den "helt danske piges" (hvide) krop.

Pigerne bruger narrativer om fremtiden og forestillingen om familie som et rum til at udfordre Murats forståelse, men også i forhandlingen med ham om muligheden for at være sort/brun *og* dansk. At eleverne bruger fremtiden til at forhandle racialiserede oplevelser, kan læses som racialiserede forudsigelser (Yang 2021b). Noget som, ifølge Yang, særligt gør sig gældende for racialt minoriserede (børn), fordi de 'forbereder' sig på fremtiden og de kampe, som potentielt skal udkæmpes. Dette er kampe, som de har erfaring med, vil opstå, og som indebærer, at deres ikke-hvide kroppe bliver udfordret og afkrævet forklaringer.

Samtalen mellem eleverne er interessant, fordi den giver indblik i, hvordan vi også kan forstå forhandlinger af danskhed gennem intersektioner af køn, race og religiøsitet. Udover at eleverne taler ind i en heteronormativ diskurs i forhold til familiedannelse, er det også interessant, at det er pigerne, der bruger tidsnarrativer om børn som argument for tilhørsforhold. Traditionelt har børn, relationsarbejde og affektion været forbundet med feminine konnotationer og kvaliteter (Burman 2007). Ligeledes kan den selvfølgelighed, som Murat møder spørgsmålene med, være udtryk for en patriarkalsk diskurs, hvor børn traditionelt set i højere grad er defineret af faderen (ibid.), for eksempel gennem videreførelse af efternavn. Samtidig laver Murat en kontrast mellem danskhed og at være muslim, når han afslutningsvis i citatet indvilger i, at hans kommende børn godt kan være danske og konstaterer, at de samtidig "jo" er muslimer.

Elizabeth og Amalie forsøger at redefinere kravene til dansk tilhørsforhold gennem modfortællinger, der både eksponerer og udfordrer dominerende diskurser om danskhed som værende lig med hvidhed og ikke-muslimskhed (Khawaja 2010) samt diskurser om køn og forældreskab. Pigernes modfortællinger kan også læses som forsøg på at foretage en *fællesgørende bevægelse* (ibid., 269), som udfordrer raciale og kønnede normer centreret om grænser for nationale og helt nære (familiære) tilhørsforhold. I forhold til danskhed er særligt Elizabeth optaget af at udfordre de nuværende raciale præmisser.

Hun fortæller blandt andet, at hun finder det problematisk, at ikke-hvid hudfarve per definition er lig med ikke-dansk. Elizabeth fremhæver sammenvævninger mellem ikke-hvid hudfarve, religion og nationalitet.

Elizabeth: "Ja. Og jeg har engang prøvet, hvor jeg var nede i boden, og jeg så fik et eller andet af Sofies mad, hvor der var bacon i, og så var folk bare sådan: "Spiser du bacon?"-agtigt, og så var jeg sådan: "Ja, det gør jeg". Og det synes jeg var sådan lidt mærkeligt. Og så også noget andet, det er, at vi har en gang om året, tror jeg vist, det var, ellers var det kun i de mindre klasser, hvor vi fik sådan et flag, hvor der var en firkant, og så var der på den ene og den anden side, ja. Og så skulle man så tegne det sådan… Land, man kom fra. Hvis man var helt fra Danmark, så skulle man tegne på begge sider, og hvis man var fra et andet land også, så skulle man også tegne på den anden side. Og det synes jeg, sådan… Fordi altså, jeg har jo et eller andet fra et eller andet land, men jeg vil aldrig nogensinde tænke, at jeg var fra et andet land, så derfor synes jeg, det var lidt

forkert, at jeg sådan, når jeg så tegnede andet end et dansk flag".

Ahrong: "Hvad gjorde du så?"

Elizabeth: "Jeg tegnede et dansk flag på begge sider, hvor folk de sådan gik hen og spurgte og sådan noget, og det var bare sådan… Men jeg har jo ikke lyst til at snakke om det andet sted. Der tegnede jeg i hvert fald et dansk flag også på den anden side. Men jeg kan faktisk huske, der var nogen, der blev sure på mig over det, fordi jeg ikke havde tegnet det andet flag".

Ahrong: "Andre elever, eller nogle…?"

Elizabeth: "Jeg tror faktisk måske, det var Anette, der var vores lærer der, og så også nogle andre elever, der var sådan: "Hvorfor er det, du har gjort, det?" og det kan jeg bare huske, jeg syntes, det var vildt nederen".

I dette uddrag af interviewet bliver det tydeligt, hvordan skolerum materielt og diskursivt reguleres på måder, så Elizabeth oplever en stærk kobling mellem brun hudfarve og muslimskhed og ikke "helt dansk". Både når hendes klassekammerater afkræver hende en forklaring på, hvorfor hun spiser bacon, og når hendes lærer rammesætter en øvelse, der materialiserer helt bestemte racialiserede forventninger til danskhed. Forventninger der indbefatter, at Elizabeth ikke 'alene' eller kun kan forstås og identificere sig som dansk. Dette bidrager til, at brune elever som Elizabeth føler sig utilpasse og andetgjorte i og fra deres ellers familiære spatiale kontekst. Elizabeths spatiale tilhørsforhold reguleres således gennem materialitet (flagtegning og bacon). Her sammenkobles race med spatialitet og tilhørsforhold: Danmark og hvidhed knyttes sammen, mens brunhed kobles til et forestillet andet land. Elizabeths erfaringer fra øvelsen viser, at hun bliver kategoriseret som værende 'ikke helt dansk' på trods af, at hun føler sig som netop dansk. Her ses det, hvordan øvelsen bidrager til både affektive gruppedannelser og racialiserede spatiale inddelinger, hvor følelser af at høre til sammenstiller nogle kroppe med bestemte andre, der tildeles bestemte rum (Ahmed 2014). Dette korresponderer med anden forskning om nyankomne migrantelever i 1970'erne, som også peger på en racialiseret affekt, der materialiserer elevernes følelse af tilhørsforhold (Li & Buchardt 2022). At Elizabeths klassekammerater og lærer bliver sure, kan ses som udtryk for, at de ikke bryder sig om, at hun overskrider og forstyrrer den racialiserede norm om spatialt tilhørsforhold gennem en stærk sammenkobling af danskhed og hvidhed. Men for Elizabeth opleves det som et overgreb mod hendes mulighed for at identificere sig selv som 'kun' dansk, fordi hendes brune krop bliver gjort til genstand for særlige racialiserede forventninger.

I begge eksempler bliver det tydeligt, at skolen er med til at rammesætte elevernes identitet gennem spatiale forestillinger og praksisser, som forudsætter et bestemt oprindelsesland og/eller religion, både i undervisningsrummet og i frikvartererne. Skolen kan her læses som et rum, hvor produktion af viden og materialisering af national identitet i høj grad er struktureret af og medstrukturerende af koloniale vidensarkiver (Wekker 2016). Vidensarkiver, der fordrer en racialiseret fortælling om den danske nation som baseret på hvid homogenitet (Myong 2009), og som er med til at sløre hvidhed, race og religiøsitet som affektive teknologier (Eriksen 2022, 72).

Elizabeths erfaringer fortæller os, at hun er nødt til at kæmpe for at få lov til at føle sig 'helt dansk' – en vedvarende proces, som indebærer en følelse af håb for fremtiden (Yuval-Davis 2011). For Elizabeth, som har en hvid mor og en brun far, bliver det vanskeligt at passe ind i den racialiserende norm, som foreskriver, at danskhed og hvidhed hænger uløseligt sammen. Således oplever hun, at hendes tilhørsforhold racialiseres og bliver defineret via hendes hudfarve. En kamp, hvor hun dagligt må kæmpe for at føle sig hjemme i skolen. Elizabeths modstand og kampe kan læses som udtryk for, at hendes følelse af tilhørsforhold i høj grad er politiseret, fordi hendes tilhørsforhold konstant er under pres og bliver truet (Yuval-Davis 2011; Khawaja 2023), og dermed som noget, hun aldrig kan tage en pause fra. Det samme kan

siges også at gælde Murat, men hvor han frem for at kæmpe for muligheden for at være dansk skal kæmpe for muligheden for at identificere sig som somalisk og ikke-dansk. Denne "always becoming"-proces (Massey 2005, 107), hvori tid og rum indgår i den kontinuerlige reorientering af det raciale tilhørsforhold, handler for de nuværende elever om at have et mulighedsrum, hvori de selv kan definere deres tilhørsforhold uagtet hudfarve. Det gør sig gældende for både Elizabeth og Murat, der orienterer sig imod at få lov til at definere sig som henholdsvis dansk og somalisk. Dette rejser relevante spørgsmål til, på hvilke måder elevernes kampe for (selv at definere deres) tilhørsforhold er koblet til de videns- og magtrelationer, som produceres i den danske folkeskole? Og i hvilket omfang disse videns- og magtrelationer fortsat bidrager til at understøtte privilegerede majoritetsperspektiver? Som Mari Kristine Jore (2022) påpeger, hviler sådanne identiteter på forestillinger om sociale og raciale hierarkier og hvid vestlig overlegenhed. Vores analyser tyder på, at disse diskurser og praksisser er så forankret i den danske folkeskole, at nutidige elever fortsat og konstant må forhandle deres tilhørsforhold.

Konklusion

Vi har i denne artikel undersøgt, hvordan racialt minoriserede piger og kvinder anvender tidsnarrativer til at forhandle deres erfaringer af tilhørsforhold i den danske folkeskole og i samfundet. I analyserne tydeliggøres nogle af de krav og grænser for tilhørsforhold til det nationale fællesskab og danskhed, som folkeskolen er medproducent af. Vi har læst efter forhandlinger, hvori tid, rum, køn og race fremstod centrale for informanternes oplevelser af tilhørsforhold.

Vores analyser viser differentierede erfaringer med at være racialiseret pige/kvinde i den danske folkeskole på tværs af de to empiriske materialer, men samtidig også hvordan udgrænsninger af racialiserede og kønnede tilhørsforhold – under forskellige og kontekstbestemte præmisser – alligevel består. De tidligere elever er særligt optaget af, at adgangen til danske børnefællesskaber var en racialiseret umulighed for dem. Noget som kom til udtryk gennem fysisk adskillelse og segregering fra og af de racialt majoriserede elever. Og noget som de, gennem deres erindringer, husker som selvfølgeligheder dengang, men som noget de i dag forholder sig kritisk til. De tidligere elever forestiller sig, hvordan de ville have oplevet at høre til, hvis skolerummet ikke havde været præget af fysisk adskillelse. Dette kan forstås som temporale og spatiale reorienteringer af deres adgang til og muligheder for racialiseret tilhørsforhold. Dette gør sig både gældende i en fortælling, hvor informanten mindes skoletiden som tryg og ikke-ekskluderende, og i en fortælling, hvor skoletiden erindres som ensom og forbundet med eksklusion. I de nutidige elevers fortællinger ser vi, hvordan skolen bidrager til at materialisere viden om nationalitet præget af racialiserede fortællinger om den danske nation som baseret på hvid homogenitet. De brune og sorte elevers spatiale tilhørsforhold reguleres gennem materialiserende praksisser (for eksempel gennem flagtegningen og kost), hvor race, spatialitet og tilhørsforhold sammenkobles. I denne proces bliver Danmark og hvidhed knyttet sammen, mens brunhed og sorthed kobles til et forestillet andet land. I elevernes fremtidige forestillinger forhandles danskhed som både med- og modfortællinger, der enten følger eller udfordrer den normative hvide danskhed. Blandt andet i forhold til fremtidig familiedannelse og forestillinger om at få børn. For disse elever ser vi den kontinuerlige reorientering af racialt tilhørsforhold gennem kampe om at skabe et mulighedsrum, hvor de selv kan definere deres tilhørsforhold uagtet hudfarve og religiøsitet. Disse elever forhandler erfaringer med tilhørsforhold gennem tidsnarrativer om fremtiden, hvor sammenvævninger mellem race, køn, religiøsitet og nationalitet tydeliggøres.

Det er interessant at se disse resultater i lyset af, hvordan antiracistiske pædagogikker og strømninger har udviklet og formet sig over tid i den danske folkeskole. Mantė Vertelytė og Dorthe Staunæs (2021) analyserer for eksempel, hvordan racialiserede fjendtligheder og diskurser om tolerance var fremherskende i 1980'erne og 1990'erne. En diskurs, der dannede grundlag for en pædagogik om "tolerancearbejde" med henblik på at

"skabe gode atmosfærer" (Vertelytė & Staunæs 2021, 21). Desuden peger Vertelytė og Staunæs på, hvordan det fra 2000'erne og frem er ubehaget ved at tale om race, der dominerer pædagogisk praksis og vanskeliggør antiracistiske uddannelsespraksisser. I vores empiriske materiale er det særligt interessant at se, at de nutidige elever både forhandler danskhed og forholder sig meget aktivt til spørgsmål om race og racisme på trods af diskursen om ubehag forbundet med antiracistisk pædagogik blandt fagprofessionelle (Stage & Øland 2021). En sådan tendens gør sig ikke kun gældende i det danske skoleliv. Studier i en norsk kontekst viser ligeledes, at nutidige mellemtrinselever i højere grad italesætter racisme og giver udtryk for et behov for at distancere sig selv fra (strukturel) racisme (Eriksen 2022, 59). Vores analyse viser, at modstand er mulig. I fokusgruppeinterviewet er de kvindelige elever kollektive om den modstand. Som Johanna Ennser-Kananen (2021) peger på i sine studier af racialt minoriserede unge i Finland, muliggøres modstand mod racisme, hvis den viden, der understøtter modstanden, kan udvikles kollektivt mellem racialt minoriserede i lokalsamfundet. På trods af en øget bevågenhed omkring strukturel racisme, peger vores analyse på, at adgangen til at blive genkendt som (helt) dansk er en kamp for de racialt minoriserede kvindelige elever. Det var det i 1970'erne, og det er det i dag. Vores analyse viser, at for brune og sorte elever er det at høre til i den danske skole hverken neutralt eller trygt, men derimod en stadig forhandling hvor den enkelte elev konstant bliver afkrævet forklaringer.

Funding disclosure statement
Ahrong Yangs forskning til denne artikel er finansieret af Ph.d.-rådet for Uddannelsesforskning.

Jin Hui Lis forskning til denne artikel er finansieret af Aalborg Universitet under projektet "Global flows of migrations and their impact on North European welfare states" (FLOW).

Litteratur

Ahmed, S. 2006. Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology. *GLQ*. 12(4), 543-574.
Ahmed, S. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Andreassen, R. og Myong, L. 2017. Race, Gender, and Researcher Positionality Analysed through Memory Work. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*. 7(2), 97-104.
Bak, S.L. ed. 2016. *Oral History i Danmark*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.
Baroutsis, A., Comber, B. og Woods, A. 2017. Social Geography, Space, and Place in Education. In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Interactive Factory.
Buchardt, M. 2014. *Pedagogized Muslimness: Religion and Culture as Identity Politics in the Classroom*. Münster: Waxmann Verlag GmbH.
Buchardt, M. 2016. *Kulturforklaring: uddannelseshistorier om muslimskhed*. København: Tiderne Skifter.
Buchardt, M., Markkola, P. og Valtonen, H. 2013. Education and the making of the Nordic welfare states: Introduction. In: Buchardt, M., Markkola, P. og Valtonen, H. eds. *Education, state and citizenship*. Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 7-30.
Burman, E. 2007. *Deconstructing developmental psychology*. London: Routledge.
Cheng, Y. 2014. Time protagonists: student migrants, practices of time and cultural construction of the Singapore-educated person. *Social & Cultural Geography*. 15(4), 385-405.
Chinga-Ramirez, C. 2017. Becoming a "Foreigner": The Principle of Equality, Intersected Identities, and Social Exclusion in the Norwegian School. *European Education*. 49(2-3), 151-165.
Collins, P.H. og Bilge, S. 2016. *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity.

Davies, B. og Saltmarsh, S. 2007. Gender economies: literacy and the gendered production of neo-liberal subjectivities. *Gender and Education*. 19(1), 1-20.

Ennser-Kananen, J. 2021. 'My skin is hard' - adult learners' resistance to racialization and racism. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 179-189.

Eriksen, K.G. 2022. Discomforting presence in the classroom – the affective technologies of race, racism and whiteness. *Whiteness and Education*. 7(1), 58-77.

Fylkesnes, S. 2018. Whiteness in teacher education research discourses: A review of the use and meaning making of the term cultural diversity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 71, 24-33.

Fylkesnes, S. 2019. Patterns of racialised discourses in Norwegian teacher education policy: Whiteness as a pedagogy of amnesia in the national curriculum. *Journal of Education Policy*. 34(3), 394-422.

Gilliam, L. 2018. *Minoritetsdanske drenge i skolen: modvilje og forskelsbehandling*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Haraway, D. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*. 14(3), 575-599.

Hjemmet og Skolen 1973. Københavns Kommunale Skolevæsen. Særnummer om Fremmedsprogede elever, nr. 63.

Holloway, S.L., O'Hara, S.L. og Pimlott-Wilson, H. 2012. Educational Mobility and the Gendered Geography of Cultural Capital: The Case of International Student Flows between Central Asia and the UK. *Environment and Planning A*. 44(9), 2278-2294. hooks, b. 1994. *Teaching To Transgress*. New York: Routledge.

Hummelstedt, I., Holm, G., Sahlström, F. og Zilliacus, H. 2021. 'Refugees here and Finns there' – categorisations of race, nationality, and gender in a Finnish classroom. *Intercultural Education*. 32(2), 145-159.

Haavind, H. 2007. Accountability in persons. What is in the telling to others about yourself. In: Staunæs, D. og Kofoed, J. eds. *Magtballader*. København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag, 159-178.

Jore, M.K. 2022. *Konstruksjoner av norskhet og vestlighet i samfunnsfaget i ungdomsskolen: En postkolonial studie av muligheter for identifikasjon i samfunnsfagundervisning*. Høgskulen på Vestlandet.

Juelskjær, M. 2009. *"En ny start": bevægelser i/gennem tid, rum, krop og sociale kategorier via begivenheden skoleskift.* Ph.d.-afhandling. København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Aarhus Universitet.

Juva, I. og Holm, G. 2017. Not All Students Are Equally Equal: Normality as Finnishness. In: Kantasalmi, K. og Holm, G. eds. *The State, Schooling and Identity: Diversifying Education in Europe*. Singapore: Springer Singapore, 213-232.

Khawaja, I. 2001. Minoritetsbarnet i den danske folkeskole – en kvalitativ undersøgelse af positionerings- og andetgørelsestendenser i en dansk folkeskole. *Psyke & Logos*. 22(1), 29.

Khawaja, I. 2010. *To belong everywhere and nowhere - fortællinger om muslimskhed, fællesgørelse og belonging*. Ph.d.-afhandling. Roskilde: Ph.d.-programmet i Hverdagslivets Socialpsykologi, Roskilde Universitet.

Khawaja, I. 2017. Hverdagens religiøsitet i og udenfor skolen: Om kirker, nisser og bedetæpper. *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning*. 8(2), 101-122.

Khawaja, I. 2023. Minoritetsstress: Begrebet, dets anvendelighed og potentiale. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 34(2), 91–107.

Kofoed, J. (1994). Midt i normalen: om minoriteter og den nationale idé. *Tidskrift for Københavnerstudier i Tosprogethed*, *24*, 159–165.

Lagermann, L.C. 2013. Racialized subjects in a colour blind school. *International Journal on School Disaffection*. 10(1), 73-89.

Larsen, M.A. og Beech, J. 2014. Spatial Theorizing in Comparative and International Education Research. *Comparative Education Review*. 58(2), 191-214.
Lather, P. 2000. Against empathy voice and authenticity. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 9(4), 16-25.
Li, J.H. 2021a. Migranters erindringer om skolens håndtering af racisme i og uden for skolen i 1980'erne: Fra 'Grønjakkernes bytte' til skoledrillerier. *Uddannelseshistorie, Selskabet for Skole- og Uddannelseshistorie*. 57-76.
Li, J.H. 2021b. The lived class and racialization – histories of "foreign workers' children's" school experiences in Denmark. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 190-199.
Li, J.H. og Buchardt, M. 2022. "Feeling strange" – oral histories of newly arrived migrant children's experiences of schooling in Denmark from the 1970s. *Paedagogica Historica*. 1-19.
Li, J.H. og Enemark, N.R. 2023. Educating to belong: Policy and practice of mother-tongue instruction for migrant students in the Danish welfare state. *European Educational Research Journal*. 22(1), 114-132.
Lundberg, O. 2021. The property functions of whiteness and Swedishness – a case study of race reputation and status in urban education. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 148-158.
Massey, D. 2005. *For space*. London: Sage Publications.
Moldenhawer, B. 2005. Transnational migrant communities and education strategies among Pakistani youngsters in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 31(1), 51-78.
Murji, K. og Solomos, J. 2005. *Racialization: Studies in theory and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Mustonen, S. 2021. 'I'll always have black hair' – challenging raciolinguistic ideologies in Finnish schools. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 159-168.
Myong, L. 2009. *Adopteret: fortællinger om transnational og racialiseret tilblivelse*. Ph.d-afhandling. København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Aarhus Universitet.
Padovan-Özdemir, M. og Ydesen, C. 2016. Professional encounters with the post-WWII immigrant: a privileged prism for studying the shaping of European welfare nation-states. *Paedagogica Historica*. 52(5), 423-437.
Perks, R. og Thomson, A. 2016. Interpreting memories. In: Perks, R. og Thomson, A. eds. *The oral history reader*. London: Routledge, 297-310.
Pihl, J., Holm, G., Riitaoja, A.-L., Kjaran, J.I. og Carlson, M. 2018. Nordic discourses on marginalisation through education. *Education Inquiry*. 9(1), 22-39.
Puwar, N. 2004. *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Oxford: Berg.
Qvortrup, J. 1999. Barndom og samfund. In: Denick, L. og Schultz Jørgensen, P. eds. *Børn og familie i det postmoderne samfund*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 45-75.
Raghuram, P. 2013. Theorising the Spaces of Student Migration. *Population, Space and Place*. 19(2), 138-154.
Rastas, A. 2019. The Emergence of Race as a Social Category in Northern Europe. In: Essed, P., Farquharson, K., Pillay, K. og White, E.J. eds. *Relating Worlds of Racism*. Cham Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 357-381.
Riese, H. og Harlap, Y. 2021. Utdanning, rasialisering og tilhørighetens grenser. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Pedagogikk & Kritikk*. 7, 132-146.
Rosvall, P.-Å. 2015. 'Lad' research, the reproduction of stereotypes? Ethnographic dilemmas when researching boys from working-class backgrounds. *Ethnography and Education*. 10(2), 215-229.
Røthing, Å. 2015. Rasisme som tema i norsk skole - Analyser av læreplaner og lærebøker og perspektiver på undervisning. *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*. 99(2), 72-83.
Sánchez-Eppler, K. 2018. Geographies of Play: Scales of Imagination in the Study of Child-made Things. In: Spyrou, S. et al. eds. *Reimagining Childhood Studies*. Bloomsbury Academic, 41-57.

Singh, M., Rizvi, F. og Shrestha, M. 2007. Student mobility and the spatial production of cosmopolitan identities. In: Gulson, K.N. og Colin, S. eds. *Spatial Theories of Education: Policy and Geography Matters*. New York: Routledge, 195-214.

Skadegård, M.C. 2018. *The Space Between: A Study of Structural Discrimination in Danish Contexts*. Ph.d-afhandling. Aalborg University, Det Humanistiske Fakultet. Ph.D.-Serien.

Soei, A. 2018. *Omar – og de andre: vrede unge mænd og modborgerskab*. København: Gad.

Solórzano, D. og Yosso, T. 2002. Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8, 23-44.

Stage, J.L. og Øland, T. 2021. Raciale vragrester i velfærdsprofessionelt arbejde. *Tidsskrift for Professionsstudier*. 17(32), 6-19.

Staunæs, D. 2004. *Køn, etnicitet og skoleliv*. Frederiksberg: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur.

Varjo, J., Kalalahti, M. og Jahnukainen, M. 2020. The reasoning behind the envisioned educational trajectories of young people from Finnish and immigrant origins. *Education Inquiry*. 11(4), 360-378.

Vertelytė, M. 2019. *Not so ordinary friendship: An ethnography of student friendships in a racially diverse Danish classroom*. Ph.d.-afhandling, Det Samfundsvidenskabelige Fakultet, Aalborg Universitet.

Vertelytė, M. og Staunæs, D. 2021. From Tolerance Work to Pedagogies of Unease: Affective Investments in Danish Antiracist Education. *Nordic Journal of Educational Policy*. 7(3), 126-135.

Wekker, G. 2016. *White innocence: paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Yang, A. 2021a. *Child-Friendly Racism? An ethnographical study on children's racialized becoming in a race-blind context*. Ph.d-afhandling. Aalborg Universitetsforlag.

Yang, A. 2021b. Racialized forecasting. Understanding race through children's (to-be) lived experiences in a Danish school context. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. 7(3), 169-178.

Young, L. og Barrett, H. 2001. Adapting visual methods: Action research with Kampala street children. *Area*. 33(2), 141-152.

Yuval-Davis, N. 2011. *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*. London: Sage Publications.

"The curse of the refugee". Narratives of slow violence, marginalization and non-belonging in the Danish welfare state

By Tine Brøndum

Postdoc, Department of Educational Anthropology, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, tineb@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0953-8889

Abstract

Drawing on narrative interviews with people who have recently or in the past fled to Denmark, this article examines experiences of being cast as refugees within the Danish asylum and integration bureaucracy. The analysis is situated within a social context formed simultaneously by Nordic exceptionalism and racial colour-blindness, and by increasing restrictions within Danish asylum and integration policy. Within this context, the article analyses narrative accounts of structural violence and racialization within three central sites of refugee management: namely the reception and asylum camps, encounters with municipal integration workers, and in contexts of schooling and employment. The analysis conveys intersubjective perspectives on how being labelled as a 'refugee' involves being racialized, managed and controlled and it argues that such forms of legally-sanctioned control measures can be understood as a slow violence that harms the lives of those seeking protection in Denmark. Finally, the article discusses how people labelled as 'refugees' respond to and oppose experiences of racism and control, and how such responses are often silenced in ways that further legitimize racism.

KEYWORDS: refugee narratives, racialization, Nordic exceptionalism, necropolitics, slow violence

Introduction

> *I think it's inhumane. We have lived here for nine years, we have tried to learn the language, we know the Danish people, we got to know Denmark; all this culture and everything. And still, you worry; will you get this… permanent… passport? You won't. […] Sometimes I think this is a wonderful country, but it's not anymore for refugees. I pity those who are refugees.*

In the above quote Daria, who fled to Denmark from Afghanistan in 2013, reflects on the prospects and challenges of living in Denmark as a refugee. While Daria – in line with so many others – has worked hard to comply with the requirements of 'integration', the gradual restrictions introduced in the Danish Integration Act make the prospect of permanent residence permit uncertain. As I will show in this article, this uncertainty adds to widespread and similar experiences of being kept at the borders of Danish society and of being subject to continued marginalization and racialization that are inherent in various asylum and integration interventions.

The legal and social conditions for people seeking refuge in Denmark and Northern Europe have been critically addressed in relation to restricted border control and asylum policy measures (Griffiths 2014; Mayblin 2020; Gammeltoft-Hansen 2021; Kohl 2021). This includes studies of rejected asylum seekers in Danish deportation centres (Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018). Likewise, scholars have studied how changing social welfare conditions and needs of local communities influence the reception and lives of people granted asylum (Eastmond 2007; 2011; Whyte et al. 2019; Weiss 2020; Shapiro & Jørgensen 2021). These studies document an increased austerity within Nordic asylum and integration policies and shed light on underlying racializing assumptions and logics as well as conveying some of the consequences they produce.

I build on this literature including its focus on the role of "the state and the law in producing categories of undesired racialized populations" (Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018, 45). The article analyses how people who have arrived in Denmark as refugees experience processes of othering and racialization related to asylum and integration. I conceptualize such encounters as instances of structural (Galtung 1969) or bureaucratic violence (Abdelhady et al. 2020) in which people categorized as refugees are racialized and subjected to controlling measures and subordination (see also Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022).

My analytical approach is informed by the theoretical concepts of necropolitics (Mbembe 2003) and slow violence (Nixon 2011). Both are situated in decolonial thinking that critically addresses "the darker side of Modernity" (Mignolo 2011, 2), pinpointing how a dichotomous, colonial, worldview that contains Western hierarchical ideas of human difference and human worth installs differences between people through racial and patriarchal formulations of knowledge, gender, and subjectivity.

Through analysis of narrative interviews with people who have fled to and settled in Denmark within the last 30 years, the article explores the interpersonal experience of being incorporated as a 'refugee' within the Danish welfare state. This is addressed through the following research questions:

> How do the research participants, who are categorized as 'refugees', experience and respond to the racializing policies and integrational logics that govern their rights and ways of living as 'refugees' in Denmark?
>
> What long-term consequences do everyday racialization and structural violence have for the research participants in terms of feelings of worth and belonging in Danish society?

The article begins by placing the study within a broader research context of Nordic exceptionalism and racialization. Next, I present the theoretical concepts that inform the analysis and briefly convey central tendencies and shifts in the last

30 years of Danish asylum and integration policies. Moving on, I present the empirical material and overall research design that the analysis rests upon and discuss ethical considerations related to questions of voice, power and representation in sensitive empirical research. Finally, the analysis is structured around three central sites in which experiences of bureaucratic control and racializing encounters appear: namely in reception and asylum camps, in encounters with municipal integration workers, and in institutional contexts of schooling and employment. Throughout the analysis empirical accounts are used to illustrate how being labelled as a 'refugee' entails categorization that legitimizes and produces racism and long-term marginalization.

From a narrative, intersubjective perspective the article contributes to research that critically addresses the worldviews, experiences and life conditions of marginalized groups in society (Jackson 2002). The analysis shows how racialization and structural violence are experienced by people seeking asylum and safety in Denmark, and it shows how such experiences accumulate and transform over time and have long-term consequences related to notions of dignity, human worth and belonging.

Research context: Nordic exceptionalism and racialization in a colour-blind society

In recent years a range of studies within the Danish and Nordic context have focused on race and racism as global structural principles, relating to the still-present influence of European colonialism (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012; Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018; Hervik 2018; Danbolt & Myong 2019; Øland 2019). These studies acknowledge the Nordic countries' multiple entanglements and complicity with European colonialism and thus view structural racism as well as coloniality as constitutive parts of European modernity and Western civilization. This complicity still influences Nordic societies' policymaking and knowledge production as well as peoples' everyday lives (Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018; Keskinen 2022).

This body of research therefore calls for a critical engagement with the narrative of Nordic exceptionalism that, in brief, expresses the idea that the Nordic countries were not – or were only peripherally – active in European colonialism. Moreover, the term encompasses a form of Nordic self-perception formed by ideas of a Nordic national identity as being peace-loving, rational and good, global citizens (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012, 4). For instance, Mathias Danbolt and Lene Myong (2019, 43) speak of "racial exceptionalism", denoting Nordic self-perception as one of being "without a history of racial difference and tensions". Such perceptions render critical discussions of Nordic colonial involvement and complicity controversial. They furthermore work to silence the voices of those who experience and point out historical and current experiences of racialization and inequality, for instance through accusations of being over-sensitive (Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018). Nordic exceptionalism presents Nordic history and identity as progressive, liberal, and modern. However, as Nanna Kristine Leets Hansen and Julia Suárez-Krabbe (2018, 2) point out, "such silencing mechanisms support notions of white supremacy and privilege, they close down possibilities for social and political change, and they lead to social and political death".

Likewise, Fatima El-Tayeb (2011, xx) emphasizes the need to include the influence of historical memory to understand how ongoing reconstructions of European history and identity still take form as "silent racializations and ethnicizations" marked by colour-blindness, understood as the reluctance or even refusal to acknowledge racial thinking and its effects in society. El-Tayeb calls for visibilizing the consequences of a racism that "continues to place people of colour outside the limits of the new, inclusive, 'postnational' community" (ibid). She argues that such processes of othering in Europe appear to be strongest regarding Muslim 'others', who are subjected to a double-bind of being racialized and discriminated against in societies that do not acknowledge race. These processes relate to the ways in which

values such as democracy, humanism, gender equality and sexual freedom have been constructed as European (or Nordic) values within European discourse, in opposition to so-called 'Muslim values' (ibid., 82).

From a similar perspective, Nordic educational scholars have critically addressed how refugees and immigrants are 'integrated' into the Nordic societies through socializing institutions such as day-care, schooling, and through employment measures. These studies illustrate how pedagogical as well as policy interventions aimed at integrating and educating children and adults with refugee status often build on stereotypical, hierarchical and racializing categorizations that simultaneously assume and produce ethnic/racial difference and symbolic boundaries (Jaffe-Walter 2016; Rytter 2019; Øland 2019; Bregnbæk 2021; Li & Buchardt 2022; Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022). Such pedagogical interventions thus build on and continue racially-informed conceptualizations of 'others', both as objects of concern (Jaffe-Walter 2016) and as subjects in need of management and improvement (Øland 2019) in order to 'integrate'. Thus, as Mikkel Rytter (2019) points out, the concept of integration is neither neutral nor innocent but builds on dominant and exclusive social imaginaries about the nation and the welfare state. Rytter (ibid.) shows how the term integration has, since the 1990s, responded to shifting political demands according to which immigrants and refugees have been expected to assimilate with (most often undefined) Danish norms and standards.

Theoretical approach

My analytical work is informed by the concepts of necropolitics, slow violence and everyday racism, and builds on a decolonial approach that enables critical analysis of Western societies' willingness to accept that some people living within the borders of Europe – such as refugees and migrants – are legally and socially marginalized and impoverished (Mayblin et al. 2020).

As a function of coloniality, Achilles Mbembe (2003, 21) has defined the concept of necropolitics to theoretically capture brutal forms of oppression that permanently wound individuals in ways in which they are "kept alive, but in a state of injury". Mbembe (ibid., 27) describes sovereignty as "the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not". Building on Mbembe's work, necropolitics has been used to analyse the conditions asylum-seekers meet in asylum camps and deportation centres (Davies et al. 2017; Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018) as well as the consequences for people seeking asylum, when living in state-sanctioned impoverishment (Mayblin 2020; Mayblin et al. 2020).

As Thom Davies et al. (2017) point out, within the context of the welfare state, state powers are exercised both through the provision of security and care, but also through their withdrawal or withholding. In such cases, the outcome of necropolitics and structural violence is normalized within state institutions and jurisdictions and often remains invisible, dispersed and slow, as a kind of violence with no perpetrators (Davies et al. 2017; Mayblin 2020).

Such invisibility is central to the concept of slow violence (Nixon 2011), which can be seen as a form of necropolitics. I employ this concept due to an interest in the delayed and dispersed forms of violence that take place over time and out of sight but that must be understood as an outcome of specific political decisions. In this way, slow violence is the result of state-supported structural violence that makes people suffer in situations that could, politically, have been avoided had there been a political will to end the suffering (Mayblin 2020, 6). Thus, slow violence can be understood as the mode of operation and outcome of necropolitics, and it puts the receiving subjects of the policy decisions into focus. As Rob Nixon (2011, 2) points out, slow violence conceptualizes "an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all". Thus, slow violence contains a temporal aspect and supports analysis of the long-term effects of not only war, but also of state-supported policy decisions, interventions and inaction.

Building on the above, I draw on an understanding of racism and racialization as global, historical and complex processes of domination that work through multiple but contextually specific structures of power. From this it follows that racialization must be studied from a perspective of intersectionality and in specific contexts, sensitive to aspects of class and gender (Ahmed 2012) as well as to racialized divides in broader welfare and policy logics of who is considered deserving and who is considered undeserving of security and welfare (Mayblin 2020, 34). Philomena Essed (2008, 448) uses the term "everyday racism" to address the significance of smaller, day-to-day instances of racism, pointing out three central and interdependent processes:

> (1) The marginalization of those identified as racially or ethnically different; (2) the problematization of other cultures and identities; and (3) symbolic or physical repression of (potential) resistance through humiliation or violence.

Everyday racism and discrimination are often difficult to point out, as such opposition is often met with counter accusations, or the risk of being ridiculed by those in power. Ignoring the very existence of racism by silencing these voices works to legitimize racial discrimination with the argument that 'race does not matter' (Hansen & Suárez-Krabbe 2018, 6). From this follows, that everydayness, invisibility and silencing are shared characteristics of the above concepts. While this might enable a decoupling of the concrete policies from their causes and from race issues more specifically, such policies are no less harmful and damaging for those experiencing them.

Methodological approach

The article builds on empirical material consisting of 15 narrative interviews with people who have fled to Denmark within the last 30 years.[1] The interviews were generated as part of the research project RESTORE that explores narratives of refugeedom (Gatrell 2016) both through the perspective of the displaced and through the narratives of local municipal employees working with refugee reception and integration. The interviews were conducted by the author during the period of autumn, winter and spring 2021/22. The interviews were mainly conducted in Danish, following the wish of the individuals,[2] and lasted between 1.5–2 hours.

My main research interest in the interviews centers around the intersubjective experiences and memories of the participants (Jackson 2002) related to their arrival in Denmark including their experiences of Danish reception, integration and welfare initiatives. After introducing each participant to my research interests, my questions were few and open-ended focusing on their experiences and meaning-making. My questions did not specifically focus on racism, but this topic became evident during the interviews.

In qualitative empirical research, questions of power, positionality and ethics are important to address, particularly in relations of unequal power balances between participant and interviewer in aspects concerning, for example, citizenship status and language. In this case, my presence and position as a white, ethnic majority woman cannot avoid influencing the dynamics of the interviews. While I tried to meet and minimize this imbalance and pursue an equal and open-minded space for conversation, I am aware of the impossibility of fully doing so, acknowledging my own part in producing certain power relations and spaces for subjectification (Christensen 2016). I have therefore consciously restrained myself from engaging in what Patti Lather (2000, 19) calls the "fantasies of mutuality, shared experience, and touristic invitations to intimacy".

When introducing the interview to the participants, I stressed my interest in hearing their experiences and interpretations of events important to them. This is not to suggest that the voices of the interviewees always hold the 'right' or 'true' story nor that I as a researcher will know, let alone represent such 'truths'. Rather, I seek to explore the contextualized and socially embedded meaning-making of the participant, while at the same

time acknowledging the multiple and often contradictory voices within each story. This acknowledges the always unstable and co-constructed quality of a story told, as well as the limits of telling, understanding, and knowing (Lather 2000; Jackson 2002; Butler 2005).

As part of my analytical work, I read the interview transcriptions repeatedly. From this I generated condensed descriptions of the interviews, enabling a better understanding of specific themes, plots, disruptions, and silences in each narrative. The ambition of my analysis is not, however, to depict a correct story of 'the racialized refugee', or to claim direct correlations between specific policy measures and the experiences of the participants. Rather it aims to depict how intersubjective experiences of structural violence and of being categorized and racialized appear in the narratives. By including narrative accounts of the participants' arrival in Denmark, including those who arrived in the 1990s, I include a long-term perspective on the affective consequences of the abovementioned experiences. Consequently, several of the participants in the study no longer fit the juridical category of 'refugee' – and indeed do not consider themselves as such. It is therefore important to stress that my choice to include their stories in the study does not reflect a wish to insist on a lasting 'refugee identity', but rather to put focus on the long-term consequences of being labelled a refugee, acknowledging the processes by which the refugee label has become politicized, partly by governments and negative public discourses on 'the other' (Zetter 2007). Consequently, I do not understand the refugee label as a neutral legal category, but as a racial category "to the extent that they are ascribed to people marked as non-white and non-belonging to 'Europe'" (Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018, 45) often used for governance purposes. In this way, critical analysis of the intersubjective consequences of being cast as a refugee supports a broader body of work that addresses how the refugee label works to legitimize and normalize institutional and state-sanctioned racism, that deprives those allocated to the category of the 'refugee' of basic human rights and political agency (see for instance Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018; Øland 2019; Mayblin 2020; Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022).

Brief policy context

The legal conditions governing Danish asylum and integration policy have changed fundamentally during the last 30 years. When the first Aliens Act was adopted in 1983 it was one of the most liberal of its kind. Currently, however, Denmark is considered to have one of the most restrictive aliens and integration legislations in Europe (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2021). Due to the arrival of more than 20,000 refugees from Bosnia in around 1992, a special act was adopted that for the first time introduced the notion of 'temporary protection'. While asylum previously had been granted on a permanent basis, this led to long-term temporary housing in barracks and refugee camps without the right to work and study, and with limited access to welfare benefits (Vedsted-Hansen 2022). Many of these restrictions were lifted in 1995, and most of the Bosnians seeking asylum were granted permanent asylum.

Following general tendencies have been marked by increased political and symbolic restrictions. These include the dispersal policy ('spredningsloven') in 1999 that served to disperse the responsibility of refugee reception between Danish municipalities, at times at the cost of undermining family relations, and the reduced introduction benefits ('starthjælp') in 2002. Refugees in Denmark today are enrolled in state-defined municipal integration programmes lasting one to five years, entailing mandatory language classes and short-term activation courses and internships (Kohl 2021; Shapiro & Jørgensen 2021).

As pointed out by scholars (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2021; Rytter et al. 2023) the above and other restrictions serve both as concrete measures towards the people granted asylum, but also as a symbolic negative nation-branding communicated to discourage possible future asylum seekers. This logic is evident, not least in the political responses to the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, when new restrictions stressed self-reliance

and further reduced integration benefits well below those of other receivers of welfare benefits. Also in 2015, a new category of temporary protection was introduced as a central pillar of the Danish Aliens Act. In the legislative amendments to the Aliens Act that marked the "paradigm shift" in 2019, these restrictions were repeated and widened through an increased focus on repatriation whenever possible, thus intensifying the precarious and uncertain status and living conditions of refugees in Denmark (Shapiro & Jørgensen 2021; Vedsted-Hansen 2022; Rytter et al. 2023).

Moreover, as a consequence of the so-called "paradigm shift" of 2019, people who have had their residence permit refused or withdrawn and who do not voluntarily leave the country are forced to move to one of the deportation centres, which since 2015 have served to contain those people who have been rejected legal protection in Denmark (Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018). In this way, not unlike the camps accommodating the Bosnian refugees in the 1990s, deportation centres have come to constitute potential permanent repositories for people with no place to go, just as they form legal grey zones that criminalize and deprive people of their sense of agency (Turner 2015). At the time of writing, 1250 Syrian refugees have had their asylum cases reopened, while 140 have permanently lost their residence permit. Irrespective of the numbers, it has been documented that these legal changes have had a great impact in terms of worries and fear about an uncertain future and, ultimately, deportation (Filskov et al. 2022).

"I became another human being" – Structural violence in the camps

The life stories and trajectories of the participants differ in various ways. This is both related to the different times of arrival, the shifting asylum and integration legislation the participants have been subjected to, as well as to their overall different social and personal conditions. As a general theme, however, the empirical material shows how memories and experiences of displacement linger long after the participants have left the respective integration programmes, and for some, even after they have obtained Danish citizenship.

For those who arrived from Bosnia and were granted temporary protection in 1992, the years of purposeless waiting for asylum in refugee camps are narrated as very difficult and harmful, and as "living in stagnation". For instance, Mehmet recalls the experience of waiting in the camps as a bare existence: "Well, you didn't do anything. You just sat there, there were no activities, no schooling, no work. There was a TV, a common room, but no one showed any particular interest. We just existed". Likewise, Jovan reports on the traumatizing experience of everybody just "sitting in tv-rooms, watching the war and worrying […] I think many people just broke and were traumatized sitting there". Jovan recalls living a "life on standby", not being able to work or attend schooling. Like several of the others, Jovan was subjected to living in a refugee centre for four years.

The collected narratives of long-term waiting in camps communicate experiences of social death, produced by a structural violence within the broader asylum bureaucracy. Restrictive measures such as isolation, waiting, and being denied schooling and work while observing others enjoying more rights produce the feeling of being disposable (Mayblin 2020). The feeling of being at the mercy of Danish bureaucracy does not end, however, when gaining either temporary or permanent refugee status or citizenship.

Insecurity and anxiety about the future were, at the time of the interviews, unsurprisingly much more present for those participants who had arrived since the 2010s and who still hold temporary residence permits that must be resubmitted every second year. Their stories illustrate how the gradual austerity within Danish asylum and integration bureaucracy is experienced, and how anxiety accumulates over time.

This is vividly illustrated in the narrative of Hemin, who fled from Syria and arrived as an unaccompanied minor in 2015 when he was 13 years old. Hemin's story of arriving in the Danish asylum system is one of not receiving help to navigate his new social reality, and of not being able to make himself heard or understood. He repeatedly recalls

how basic provisions were withdrawn without any valid explanations. He describes the employees at the children' camps as racist and indifferent to his most basic needs for safety, and how they on several occasions beat him when he misbehaved. For instance, he recounts a conflict in one of the children's centres in which his weekly allowances were halved, while the staff neglected to prove sufficient food:

> *I remember, after the first five days, I didn't have any money at all. So, I told them [the staff], "I don't have any money… what can I eat? I don't have any food: you must find some food for me". They replied, "you spend your money fast […] that's not our fault".*

This experience is the first of many in Hemin's narrative, describing employees at the centres as controlling, unsympathetic and "very racist". I read these descriptions in the narratives as accounts of how centre officials are experienced as controlling and exercising power over the children at the centre in ways in which inaction, such as the *withholding* of help and care, plays an active part (see also Davies et al. 2017). This is also experienced through insufficient or complete absence of information given to the young residents about centre rules and their most basic rights as refugees in Denmark:

> *I knew they were lying. There are no rules. It was their rules, they made up some rules. […] They were stronger because they speak the language, they know the rules, they can do everything. We cannot do anything. We don't speak the language. We don't know the rules. Then he [the centre employee] tells me: "Okay, we are stealing from you. What are you going to do about it?"*

Hemin is left with no understanding or knowledge of his rights in Denmark. While Hemin's experience does not necessarily mirror the specific official asylum policies in 2015, his narrative conveys the experience of being humiliated and marginalized as a central part of life in the camps, and it is thus a testimony of some of the personal and affective consequences of the hardening of the Danish asylum regime. Hemin recalls being continuously problematized and controlled. He was moved more than once, and isolated in remote centres, disregarding his fear of dark woods and of being alone:

> *I felt this anxiety. If I stay at one place, I have difficulties breathing. I felt the room shrinking. I felt this at the centre, but they didn't try to help me. I tried to explain to them […] that it is ok, I won't go out. I don't have a problem. I'll just stay inside. Because they tell me that I can't go out. [I said] "I'll just stay inside, but I just want to have internet access so I can talk with my parents". Then they tell me: "These are our rules. We cannot do anything".*

In a Danish context, the work of Katrine Syppli Kohl (2021) and Suárez-Krabbe et al. (2018) among others supports the picture of a Danish asylum system stripped of care and which is upheld through deliberate political measures such as dispersal of asylum seekers to isolated and remote areas as well as denial of their political agency. Hemin's narrative shows the desperate experience of being dominated and disregarded in a hierarchical system of power. I understand these experiences to be the outcome of a slow violence of necropolitics, in which asylum seekers are "kept alive but in a state of injury" (Mbembe 2003, 21). Such injury appears in Hemin's story, for instance when he falls ill, becomes apathetic and stops eating, while he persistently asks for medical help. Looking back, he reflects on his own development: "I remember, I was like a normal human being before… In the children's centre, there were lots of problems, but I was normal. But when I [was] moved to [the new centre], I became another human being. I became all different".

In the following section I direct my focus to the experiences of racialization and structural violence in encounters related to the municipal integration programmes.

"You should work in Denmark" – imperatives of integration and work

Experiences of being othered and controlled in meetings with municipal integration workers is a central theme in the majority of the interviews with those who have arrived since the 2010s. In this regard, the material illustrates a heightened experience that the imperative to 'integrate' involves being pushed towards immediate employment, often in unpaid internships or predefined, unskilled jobs in sectors in need of manpower. This is evident in the story of Esin who arrived from Afghanistan in 2011 with two small children through family reunification with her husband. Esin recalls a meeting with an integration worker to whom she expressed her wish to continue the education she began in Afghanistan:

> *[The integration worker] told me: "No. First you should learn Danish then you can start your education". I said: "It's okay, I'll do both". She told me: "No, when you can't speak Danish, you are nothing for us. […] You're like a useless person for us if you can't speak Danish. It is not necessary for us [that you educate]" [...] If you want to live in Denmark, you should forget about that, you should learn Danish, you should work in Denmark.*

Esin's encounters with the integration programme led to enduring feelings of being controlled, put down and treated as being less worthy than others. She expresses lingering feelings of shame and humiliation for having had "big dreams for the future" when she ended up in several low-status internships as a cleaning assistant. Her experience of being quickly pushed into low-skilled internships, wherever there is a need, is reflected in existing studies (see e.g., Eastmond 2011; Shapiro & Jørgensen 2021).

Similarly, Mayar from Syria recalls her experience from 2016 onwards; that the aim of the municipal workers was to just: "get [us] into the job market. That's just how it is, just passing people on". Due to experiences of violence and fear in Syria, Mayar suffers from a trauma-related disease that causes her chronic pain in her body. Nevertheless, like Esin, she was placed in unpaid internships that were "filled with stress and frustration because it didn't make sense to be there." Likewise, Mayar recounts the job opportunities she was offered: "to work either in a kitchen, an old people's home, a factory, or cleaning. Despite my illness and that I can't work [in] such places".

While the political imperative of integration through employment is presented as self-reliance, the everyday experiences and struggles of the participants more often point towards meaninglessness and control that negatively affect their sense of worth, agency and belonging.

Waahid who fled Afghanistan reports similar experiences of being pushed towards low-skilled, 'fast jobs' upon his arrival in 2010. At the time, he was 26-years-old and brought with him a half-finished university education, work experience and high ambitions. He recalls how the integration workers presented his job opportunities:

> *They were saying instantly: "Good jobs are […] bus driver; become a taxi driver. If you learn how to make pizza, you'll have a good job." They were always saying that, and I was like "why should I?" […] why would the municipality tell me to permanently stay like that?*

Trying to make sense of the integration workers' advice to aim only for low-skilled immediate employment, Waahid reflects:

> *Back then, I was thinking, they think of us as lower-class people, so they want [us] to stay [lower] than other Danes. That's what I thought. An issue of class and race or something. But now I understand that the Danish integration system is designed like that. It is designed for getting people into these fast jobs that do not demand a lot of skills.*

Reasoning like this, Waahid moves from a perception of a personal racist motive to a (seemingly neutral and faceless) structural explanation. This points to a structural racism and bureaucratic

violence, enabled by assumptions of human worth, knowledge and subjectivity, but at the same time masked and performed without any visible perpetrators.

Applying a perspective that considers the lasting effects of coloniality as constitutive of modern Europe's management of 'others', however, reveals how 'refugees' are considered and handled along implicit racial divisions as 'matter out of place' within the symbolic and spatial organization of modern societies and the nation (see also Turner 2015; Mayblin 2017). Within this logic, the very category of 'refugee' connotes a subject that can legitimately be managed and controlled as commodified labour in order to become beneficial for society (see also Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022). Indeed, as El-Tayeb points out, "hierarchized labour structures [do] not merely use but produce 'ethnic' difference" (2011, xiii), and it is within such processes and hierarchical divisions of labour, that racialized (or ethnicized) citizens are permanently defined and produced as 'migrants' or 'outsiders', thus constructing a lasting internal boundary between the valuable superior and the worthless inferior subject (ibid.). Within this line of argument, Waahid's evaluative account of the integration workers' advice seems poignant: "They were not suggesting, this is the way you move one step ahead and you get a good education. They were saying, 'this is going to be permanent'".

"I just had to put up with it" – silenced racialization in educational contexts

A final site in which racialization appears in the material, is that of public educational institutions and workplaces. This emerges in the form of school memories from the 1990s and onwards, in accounts of more recent experiences at language schools and other educational institutions, and finally through incidents in which the participants' children experience racism in school contexts.

In the narrative of Sahra, who arrived from Somaliland in 1992, and who has since lived in Denmark, racism appears in all the three above-mentioned contexts. Sahra recalls being racialized as a pupil in the 1990s by a teacher who openly "didn't like foreigners". She struggled with racial prejudice and othering later during her education and afterwards at her workplace. Likewise, her children have experienced racist discrimination in school. For instance, Sahra describes an incident in which her son suddenly "performed badly in everything" and Sahra was called to a meeting on the matter: "This teacher, she was just smearing my son, and the other teachers present did not say anything." Sahra tried to solve the problem through extensive efforts of helping her son with his schoolwork. Still, the teacher's smearing behaviour continued. Sahra gives an account of the response when she addressed the school administrator:

> *He closed the door and said: "Now, sit down, Sahra. […] Now listen, that teacher is teaching 25 Danish pupils, and then someone who looks like him [her son] has come into her class. She can't take it, that's why. But Sahra, you must take it easy. It is not only you, she is like that towards [all] immigrants".*

While the school administrator acknowledges the racist behaviour of the teacher, he does not offer any solution:

> *He is sorry, well yes, but what could he do? I just had to put up with it. That day, I thought, that woman, she is about to ruin my child. That was when I started writing complaints and coming to the office. I often came there. […] I fought for a while, but in the end, I said: "We will do it, we'll change [school]".*

Sahra moved her children to another school. Looking back, she recalls the teacher's comments about her son: "She said, 'He will not be able to make it. He is unintelligent'. Today, my son has a bachelor's degree. He is studying for his master [degree] at the university."

Sahra's story is one of working hard to adapt to a new society while fighting for herself and her

children. As she long ago obtained Danish citizenship, Sahra is no longer a refugee in legal terms. Still, her narrative illustrates how racialization sticks to her body and how, even after obtaining citizenship, she is continuously kept at the margin of society. From this I conclude that while the refugee category in itself must be seen as actively producing difference and marginalization, this marginalization does not end with the acquisition of citizenship. Rather, the marginalizing effects of the category seem to linger as a lasting and active form of labelling in ways in which the label quietly transforms to one such as 'the immigrant', 'the foreigner' or 'the other'. Either way, Sahra is subjected to politicized and racial categories.

Finally, Sahra's story illustrates how racism takes different forms depending on its intersections with gender, race and social positioning. Sahra reports on several incidents of discrimination in her workplace such as being treated in a patronizing way and yelled at as if she "was a child." When she tried to oppose and confront her leader, she was met with the comment, "he is just making fun, if he cannot interfere like that, you don't understand Danish humour." While Sahra is thus silenced, she reflects on her gendered reactions when experiencing racism:

> *It has broken me so many times. I have felt on my body that this is too much. […] But I think that women more easily… I don't think a man would be able to stand the things I have dealt with. I think that would be too much. […] Men would not put up with the things I have put up with, they would take the battle, they would fight. I can't fight, that's too big, I'd rather come again in another way.*

Sahra views her response to racism as gendered and as encompassing both humiliation and dignity. When asked about this 'other way' of fighting, she explains: "I can go home and break and cry, but when I come back, I must fight the right way. And only with the right people." In this way, her fights seem well considered and purposeful and as a fight "for dignity" and a space of her own, aiming for long-term goals that at times require acceptance of disrespect. She states: "[I have to] use my head. I am Sahra. I can do what I want to, and I am happy for who I am. But I want to be here."

Sahra's narrative shows how she continuously balances humiliation and dignity in order to achieve her greater goals. As several others, she repeatedly experiences not being heard and ends up keeping quiet. As Sara Ahmed (2012, 157) has described, keeping quiet and "going along" when encountering racism can be a way of protecting oneself; as a form of passing and a "labor of minimizing the signs of difference". In this way the above forms of racism must be seen as exercises of power and control over those who are othered, whereby complaining or speaking up about racism results in individualized blame and comments such as "you don't understand Danish humour" and "you must take it easy". Consequently, such forms of silencing send the message that those targeted do not (and will not) qualify as 'Danish' but will have to accept and endure racism.

Other incidents of structural violence in educational contexts visibilize stereotypical conceptions of 'the refugee family' as an entity subjected to distrust and control (see also Mathiessen 2023). This is the case when Esin describes incidents in which teachers, municipal workers and volunteers interrogate her and her family about private matters and the information is passed on to the municipality:

> *Sometimes they are controlling us. Sometimes, they are even controlling us through our children in school. […] Sometimes, volunteers […] from the municipality [come] […] and they want information, sometimes private information, asking the kids: "How is your father?" "How is it going with your mother?" Like that. "How is the relation with your father and mother?" And then they send it to the municipality.*

In one instance, the teacher of Esin's 7-year-old daughter repeatedly questioned Esin and her husband if they were divorced. It turned out that the teacher had asked Esin's daughter as well. Not knowing the meaning of the word 'divorce', the

child had answered 'yes'. Esin explains: "She said 'yes'. Yeah, she didn't know what it meant. And at that time, I was in the municipality [integration programme] and they told me: 'If you're divorced from your husband, you [do] not belong in Denmark'. On other occasions, the teacher asked Esin's daughter if she was beaten or punished by her parents:

> *[The teacher asked if we were] hitting our kids or if we were punishing our kids. […] Why are they asking about this? […] And they sent all the information to the municipality. It was very shocking.*

Interrogating children on possible domestic violence or whether their parents are divorced, can at first glance be seen as well-intentioned concern for the wellbeing of the child. In Esin's narrative, however, such questions appear as strong markers of power and control as they relate directly to Esin's basis of residence in Denmark. In this context, such interrogations work to amplify Esin's already precarious position in Danish society.[3]

The examples above illustrate what Reva Jaffe-Walter (2016) has framed as 'coercive concern', namely how policy-driven interventions of control are often veiled as acts of caring and helping but are based on racialized and Islamophobic prejudices. As Jaffe-Walter points out, such prejudices build on a negative image of Muslim family values and gender norms as a threat to the Danish nation-state and liberal values. Consequently, such representations legitimize controlling interventions, such as scrutinizing the acts and values of Muslim men and families, while Muslim girls and women are seen as in need of help and liberation (ibid.; see also Brodersen & Øland this issue).

Esin does not, however, experience being helped, let alone liberated by the municipal interventions. On the contrary, she consistently reports feeling controlled and othered. In this way, Esin's story illuminates how subordinating power relations silently racialize and deny subjectivity and agency to those people who are categorized as refugees, while at the same time representing them as people in need of help and intervention.

Discussion: "the curse of the refugee"

In this article I have analysed ways in which people categorized as refugees experience and respond to structural and everyday racism and slow violence. In this final part, I revisit these experiences with the purpose of illuminating the long-term consequences of slow violence for people living in protracted environments of hostility and uncertainty.

While those of the participants in this study who arrived in Denmark in the 1990s have by now all acquired Danish citizenship and are no longer legally refugees, feelings of uncertainty and non-belonging linger and are easily activated, for instance in relation to incidents of racist public discourse or political changes. In such cases, Mehmet speaks of "the curse of the refugee" as a fundamental fear that his basic rights and safe life in Denmark can be withdrawn. He explains how this feeling has stayed with him and made him take certain precautions in his everyday life: "I have some money ready; I have my hard disk and my passport. […] It's super irrational… […] that's the curse."

This fear speaks to the precarious condition of never feeling fully safe, feeling denigrated, and not entitled to have the sense of being someone who truly belongs in Denmark. Such emotions are present in almost all the narratives, but they dominate, unsurprisingly, amongst those who still hold a temporary residence permit and who are thus living under the restricted possibilities of ever obtaining permanent legal residence in Denmark. For instance, Waahid describes his reaction when he realized the consequences that the 2015 legislative amendments introducing temporary protection and increased focus on repatriation would have for his prospects of permanent residence in Denmark:

> *I was like: No, this is not going to be your country. You cannot think that. You just need to think about how to survive. And that's good enough, you just have to protect your children from being deported to another*

> *country or sent to Rwanda or somewhere. Those were the things we were thinking about. Day and night.*

Similarly, Mayar expresses how strong sentiments of safety and gratitude upon her arrival in 2015 have since been blurred by contradictory emotions of distress, fear and not feeling entitled to be a part of Danish society:

> *I lose my motivation to go on. Because I have tried to do everything I can. I have a problem with my health and with the physical pressure. I have pain in my body all the time. And now I feel I am without a clear future. […] The psychological pressure causes my health to worsen with time. […] [The pain] is developing due to the pressure I am living with, unfortunately.*

Mayar's memories of fear and of having lost her future during the war in Syria intersect with the uncertainty of the present. While Mayar expresses this as a loss of believing in a future, Daria reflects on the future as being continuously marked as 'refugee', and she directly relates this permanent refugeedom to the structural and everyday racism she continues to experience:

> *I am a refugee, that is also what I am. […] I don't know in other countries, but I think [you] never [stop being a refugee] in Denmark […] because of the continuous racism. This is what you experience […] from the state, with all these law restrictions. And also, from some people, not all; the way they look at us, you can feel it, that they don't like... They don't like refugees.*

In the above quote, Daria relates the continued categorization as a refugee that she experiences to ongoing experiences of racism and thus the ascription of the permanent, predefined and marginal identity this produces. As Essed (2008, 448) points out, everyday experiences of racism accumulate over time: "Expressions of racism in one particular situation are related to all other racist practices". In this way, the continued experience, legitimated through the refugee label and related public discourses on immigrant Muslims, produces a slow violence that supports a self-fulfilling prophecy of racial division. This is clearly illustrated in the words of Hemin:

> *You can never be Danish, because so many racist things happened to me. Even if they speak to you, if they smile to you, if they walk with you, they see you with Danish eyes. They don't see you as a Dane. And they are right. It is their country.*

Conclusion

Since the 1990s Danish refugee and asylum policies have shifted from constituting one of the most liberal legislations in the world, to being one of Europe's most restrictive. Most significantly this has played out as a response to the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, which marked a turning point in Danish – as well as Scandinavian – asylum and immigration policy both in terms of specific juridical as well as symbolic and administrative policy changes.

Within this context, the above analysis has focused on narrative accounts of experiences of racialization and structural violence in three central sites, namely in asylum camps, in encounters related to municipal integration programmes as well as in educational contexts. The analysis illuminates how the refugee category works in ambiguous ways to racialize and marginalize those labelled as 'refugees'. As the analysis has shown, living in uncertainty of what the future holds and having your political agency to influence your own future and life conditions restricted, has long-term affective and embodied consequences, such as being on guard, focusing on mere survival or, as is well documented elsewhere, psychological as well as somatic illness (see e.g. Mayblin 2020; Filskov et al. 2022). As the narratives above have illustrated, the consequences of living under such insecure conditions seem to accumulate over

time and harm people's everyday interactions and societal engagement.

As shown in the analysis of Hemin's narrative of life in Danish asylum camps for children, the withdrawal of rights and withholding of help can be seen as a 'violent inaction' that, in his case, had severe consequences for his wellbeing as well as his continued experience of non-belonging in Denmark. This supports Davies et al.'s (2017) suggestion that political *inaction* be seen as a means of control that advances slow violence. In order to understand such inaction and deliberate restrictions of people's life prospects, I have employed the concept of necropolitics and its underlying logic of hierarchical divisions of human worth. Doing so, as applied to Esin's, Mayar's and Waahid's narrated experiences, reveals a racializing integration and employment bureaucracy. The refugee label works as a legally-sanctioned racializing category that legitimizes and increases the ongoing exclusion and marginalization of 'refugees' through hierarchical ideas of deservingness and undeservingness.

The concepts of necropolitics and slow violence have been used to examine the lives of people seeking refuge in the UK (Mayblin 2020) and France (Davies et al. 2017), as well as to rejected asylum seekers in Denmark (Suárez-Krabbe et al. 2018), and to the assessment of queer asylum seekers (Lunau 2019). What sets my study apart from these is that it makes the point that the slow violence of being cast as a refugee is present even for people who have formally and juridically obtained protection and ceased to be refugees in a legal sense. In this way the article brings together nuanced and differing narratives of displacement across a long-term perspective of three decades, covering different groups of 'refugees'. Disregarding their many differences, the narratives convey the "gradual wounding" (Mbembe 2003) as a common experience of refugeedom that encompasses the lasting and affective consequences of having once been cast as 'a refugee.' These lasting consequences have been illustrated through the narrative of Sahra where her marginalized position as a refugee was taken over by equally racializing but permanent categorizations that make clear that even for those who do acquire permanent protection in Denmark, legal protection does not automatically lead to either recognition or feelings of belonging and safety. In conclusion, the article conceptualizes 'the curse of the refugee' as an experience of insecurity and harm that lingers and in different ways continues to affect the lives of the displaced. It is a gradual and slow violence, enabled by policies that communicate precariousness and insecurity, that fuels self-fulfilling prophecies and feelings of not belonging and not believing in a future in Denmark.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank, first and foremost, the interview participants. Thank you to the anonymous peer reviewers, the editors of the special issue, Ditte Margrethe Hermann Hauge for transcribing interviews, RESTORE's reference group, the research group The History and Sociology of Welfare Work, University of Copenhagen, as well as Bolette Moldenhawer.

Funding disclosure statement

The empirical material used in this article was generated as part of the research project, Refugees' stories and stories about refugees: Crafting new narratives of the Danish welfare state (RESTORE) at the University of Copenhagen. RESTORE is supported by the Independent Research Fund Denmark, case number: 0132-00093B. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

Abdelhady, D., Gren, N. and Joormann, M. 2020. Introduction. In: Abdelhady, D., Gren, N. and Joormann, M. eds. *Refugees and the Violence of Welfare Bureaucracies in Northern Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1–28.

Ahmed, S. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Bregnbæk, S. 2021. Questioning care: ambiguous relational ethics between a refugee child, her parents and the Danish welfare state. *International Journal of Inclusive Education.* 25(2), 196–209.

Butler, J. 2005. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Christensen, G. 2016. Power, ethics and the production of subjectivity in the group interview. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches.* 9(1), 73–86.

Danbolt, M. and Myong, L. 2019. Racial turns and returns: recalibrations of racial exceptionalism in Danish public debates on racism. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 39–61.

Davies, T., Isakjee, A., and Dhesi, S. 2017. Violent inaction: the necropolitical experience of refugees in Europe. *Antipode.* 49(5), 1263–1284.

Eastmond, M. 2007. Stories as lived experience: narratives in forced migration research. *Journal of Refugee Studies.* 20(2), 248–264.

Eastmond, M. 2011. Egalitarian ambitions, constructions of difference: the paradoxes of refugee integration in Sweden. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* 37(2), 277–295.

Essed, P. 2008. Everyday racism. In: Moore, J. H. ed. *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*. Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 447–449.

El-Tayeb, F. 2011. *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe.* Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Filskov, N., Hansen, T.O., Larsen, S., Petersen, M.J. and Tan, N.F. 2022. Man kan aldrig føle sig sikker. En analyse af de retssikkerhedsmæssige udfordringer, når flygtninge mister deres opholdstilladelse. Copenhagen, Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Galtung, J. 1969. Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research.* (3), 167–191

Gatrell, P. 2016. Refugees—What's Wrong with History? *Journal of Refugee Studies.* 30(2), 170-189.

Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. 2021. The do-gooders' dilemma: Scandinavian asylum and migration policies in the aftermath of 2015. In: de Bengy Puyvallée, A. and Bjørkdahl, K. eds. *Do-Gooders at the End of Aid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 38–59.

Griffiths, M. 2014. Out of time: the temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* 40(12), 1991–2009.

Hansen, N.K.L., and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2018. Introduction: *Taking Racism Seriously*. KULT. Postkolonial Temaserie. 15, 1–10.

Hervik, P. 2018. ed. *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jackson, M. 2002. *The Politics of Storytelling – Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Jaffe-Walter, R. 2016. *Coercive Concern: Nationalism, Liberalism, and the Schooling of Muslim Youth.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Keskinen, S. 2022. Afterword: Re-Narrating Finnish Histories and Searching for the Politics of Hope. In: Hoegaerts, J., Liimatainen, T., Hekanaho, L. and Peterson, E., eds. *Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 345–52.

Kohl, K.S. 2021. Making a familial care worker: the gendered exclusion of asylum-seeking women in Denmark. *Gender, Place & Culture.* 28(10), 1365–1386.
Li, J.H. and Buchardt, M. 2022. "Feeling strange" – oral histories of newly arrived migrant children's experiences of schooling in Denmark from the 1970s. *Paedagogica Historica*, 1–19.
Lather, P. 2000. Against empathy, voice and authenticity. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 4, 16-25.
Loftsdóttir, K. and Jensen, L. 2012. Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region. In: *Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 1-11.
Lunau, M. 2019. The trouble with 'truth'. On the politics of life and death in the assessment of queer asylum seekers. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 28(3-4), 12–23.
Matthiesen, N. 2023. Etniske minoriteter, forældresamarbejde og tillidens performativitet i risikosamfundet. In: Khawaja, I. and Lagermann, L. eds. *(Farve)blinde vinkler: om racialisering, ulighed og andetgørelse i pædagogisk praksis*. Frederiksberg: Nyt fra Samfundsvidenskaberne, 76–95.
Mayblin, L. 2017. *Asylum after Empire. Colonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking.* London, New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.
Mayblin, L. 2020. Impoverishment and Asylum – Social Policy as Slow Violence. London: Routledge.
Mayblin, L., Wake, M. and Kazemi, M. 2020. Necropolitics and the slow violence of the everyday: asylum seeker welfare in the postcolonial present. *Sociology.* 54(1), 107–123.
Mbembe, A. 2003. Necropolitics. *Public Culture.* 15(1), 11–40.
Mignolo, W. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options.* Durham: Duke University Press.
Nixon R. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. London: Harvard University Press.
Padovan-Özdemir, M. and Øland, T. 2022. *Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees. Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
Rytter, M. 2019. Writing against integration: Danish imaginaries of culture, race and belonging. *Ethnos.* 84(4), 678–97.
Rytter, M., Mortensen, S., Bregnbæk, S. and Whyte, Z. 2023. Introduktion. Paradigmeskiftet og dets konsekvenser. In: Rytter, M., Mortensen, S-L.J., Bregnbæk, S. and Whyte, Z. eds. *Paradigmeskiftets konsekvenser. Flygtninge, stat og civilsamfund.* Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 9-38.
Shapiro, D. & Jørgensen, R.E. 2021. 'Are we going to stay refugees?' Hyper-precarious processes in and beyond the Danish integration programme. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research.* 11(2), 172–187.
Suárez-Krabbe, J., Lindberg, A. and Arce, J. 2018. "Stop Killing us Slowly": a research report on the motivation enhancement measures and criminalization of rejected asylum seekers in Denmark. Available from: https://refugees.dk/media/1757/stop-killing-us_uk.pdf.
Turner, S. 2015. What is a refugee camp? Explorations of the limits and effects of the camp. *Journal of Refugee Studies.* 29(2), 139-148.
Vedsted-Hansen, J. 2022. *Refugees as Future Returnees? Anatomy of the 'Paradigm Shift' Towards Temporary Protection in Denmark*. CMI Report, no. 6.
Weiss, N. 2020. The trauma of waiting: understanding the violence of the benevolent welfare state in Norway. In: Abdelhady, D., Gren, N. and Joormann, M. eds. *Refugees and the Violence of Welfare Bureaucracies in Northern Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Whyte, Z., Larsen, B.R. and Olwig, K.F. 2019. New neighbours in a time of change: local pragmatics and the perception of asylum centres in rural Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* 45(11), 1953–1969.
Zetter, R. 2007. More labels, fewer refugees: remaking the refugee label in an era of globalization. *Journal of Refugee Studies.* 20(2), 172–92.
Øland, T. 2019. *Welfare Work With Immigrants and Refugees in a Social Democratic Welfare State*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Notes

1 My main selection criteria for participation was the prior experience of having been categorized as a refugee. As none of the participants were any longer part of any municipal integration arrangement, my contact to them was diverse and initiated, for instance, through social media as well as various professional networks.

2 Some exceptions were made however, as two participants were helped with translations by a classmate and a family member, in order to speak in more detail, while two others preferred to speak in English.

3 This precarity relates to Esin's legal basis of residence in Denmark, as she is granted residence permit in Denmark due to her family reunification with her husband. Therefore, had Esin in fact been divorced, she would consequently lose her basis of residence in Denmark.

“We are never allowed to just be ourselves!”: Navigating Hegemonic Danishness in the Online Muslim Counterpublic

By Morten Stinus Kristensen

PhD, mortenstinus@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3713-3287

Abstract

For several decades, mainstream media have positioned Muslims as cultural, political, and social outsiders to Denmark. Danish Muslims confront and navigate this exclusionary racial project of hegemonic Danishness in a host of ways, including through online communication and social media practices. This article is a qualitative study of Danish Muslims who produce discursive interventions on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram in direct and indirect relation to mainstream media discourses on Muslimness. Their social media practices are conceptualized as part of an emerging, online Danish Muslim counterpublic where features that afford interactivity shape the counterpublic to be communal in distinct ways. This digital counterpublic provides direct challenges to hegemonic Danishness’ one-dimensional representation of Muslimness. Particularly when it comes to questions of gender and claims to ordinariness through quotidian posts on life as a Danish person who just happens to be Muslim, these social media practices are racial projects that undercut hegemonic Danishness’ racialization of Muslimness as non-Danish, monolithic, and culturally deficient.

KEYWORDS: Media Studies, racialization, Gender Studies, social media, digital counterpublics, Danish Muslims

Introduction

Through constant and ubiquitous racial projects, racial formation plays out across Danish culture, politics, and everyday life, shaping and reproducing hierarchies of people. In this article, I situate *hegemonic Danishness* as a dominant racial project that divides people living in Denmark into groups that belong or not depending on their imagined proximity to a socio-cultural and racialized understanding of what it means to be Danish. Analyzing a case study of how Danish Muslims experience and relate to hegemonic Danishness through public social media practices, the article provides insights into an emerging Danish Muslim counterpublic that uses social media platforms to challenge a central presupposition of hegemonic Danishness: that Muslimness is culturally incompatible with Danishness and that Muslims therefore do not belong in Denmark. Negative perceptions of mainstream media representations of Muslimness vis-à-vis Danishness lead the participants of this study to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), and Instagram, where they seek to represent what it means to be Muslim and Danish more fully. Through content that directly sheds light on the problems with mainstream media representations of Muslimness as well as typical slice-of-life social media content that showcases the ordinariness of being Muslim in Denmark, the counterpublic troubles the narrow, homogenizing, and negative representation of Muslimness at the core of hegemonic Danishness.

Muslim individuals in Denmark live in a political, social, and cultural context where Muslimness and those who embody it are figured as fundamentally out of place in the country they call home. Manifested through media discourses, this racial project centers cultural and religious differences as what make groups of people intrinsically different, even oppositional (Balibar 1991). Ferruh Yılmaz (2016) demonstrates how for several decades, Danish media has distributed and legitimized right-wing interventions that have constructed Muslimness within an oppositional nation-in-danger discourse through a host of intersecting and co-constitutive registers and dynamics. Danishness is continually juxtaposed with an imagined Muslimness considered to be incompatible with life in Denmark due to Muslim people's alleged distance from the nation's majoritized population and culture. This has produced and maintained a widespread conceptualization, or 'common sense' understanding, of Danishness as a meaningful category that must be policed and protected from intruders (Hall 2016; Hervik 2019).

This project emerges from the intersections of Media Studies and Gender Studies, and the Danish Muslim participants were primarily asked to reflect on media consumption and production including how they perceive mainstream media's framing of Muslimness. Their insights illuminate a recognition among Danish Muslims of a racializing and exclusionary dynamic that produces Muslim identity as un-Danish. I explore how they use social media platforms to produce discursive interventions that navigate, challenge, and circumvent hegemonic Danishness and contribute to creating a counterpublic where Danish Muslims and Muslimness can be represented in ways precluded by hegemonic Danishness which is dominant across mainstream media.

This article contributes to a growing research agenda on how Muslims respond to living in Danish society where hegemonic discourse, political hostility, and other patterns of marginalization exclude them from belonging. I argue that this project's informants do not attempt to dismantle Danishness, but rather engage in racial projects themselves to broaden Danishness so as to include Muslims and Muslimness. I approach this through the lens of racial formation theory, which posits that racialization is a constantly ongoing process and a "synthesis […] of the interaction of racial projects on a society-level" (Omi & Winant 2015, 127). Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2015) identify racial projects as anything from wearing dreadlocks or participating in a Black Lives Matter protest to white supremacy itself. In this article, I consider some of the "vast web of racial projects" that occur in Denmark specifically (ibid.). Conceptualizing social media practices as racial events illustrates that racial formation is dynamic and subject to change and challenge. In

other words, I excavate a dominant racial project, hegemonic Danishness, through analysis of racial projects that directly and indirectly navigate, respond to, and challenge it and the racial meanings it (re)produces. These racial projects play out in a counterpublic that is mainly digital so I also consider how social media platform infrastructures engender distinct modes of communication that in turn shape the counterpublics as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1990, 67).

Hegemonic Danishness as exclusionary racial project

As Denmark becomes a multicultural society, hegemonic Danishness emerges to construct Muslims as a unified group that does not fully belong to Danish society. It is a wide-ranging racial project—one of the "building blocks in the racial formation process […] taking place all the time, whenever race is being invoked or signified, wherever social structures are being organized along racial lines" (Omi & Winant 2015, 13). In the manner of many dominant racial projects, hegemonic Danishness obscures complex and perplexing realities of genuine social, economic, and political transformations wrought by the inequalities of global capitalism and attendant dynamic migration patterns (Golash-Boza, Duenas & Xiong 2019). As a technology of power, hegemonic Danishness responds to this historical juncture by providing a framework that is simple in its identification of the problem as well as its solution. Rather than facing complex responsibilities accompanying the realization that modern migration patterns result from centuries of Western exploitation, hegemonic Danishness offers a more one-dimensional answer where immigrants generally, and Muslims in particular, are figured as *intrinsically different than Danes*. Hegemonic Danishness proposes that whatever issues Denmark faces, none are more significant or destructive than this foreign presence that can be, if not eradicated, then at least scapegoated.

Hegemonic Danishness is tied to the immigration of people from majority Muslim countries beginning in the 1970s and responds to a sense of loss of an imagined Danish nation and culture prior to this modern moment of transformation (Hervik 2011). In a process co-constitutive with historical and current racializations of Muslims across the Western world, hegemonic Danishness positions Muslims as simply out of place in Denmark and therefore undeserving of, even a strain on, the generous welfare state perceived to define Denmark's egalitarian spirit (Rana 2007; Hervik 2011; Mouritsen & Olsen 2013; Yılmaz 2016; Razack 2022). This racial project is dynamic and historically situated and responds to material conditions and the distribution of power. In other words, while hegemonic Danishness is largely discursive, it emerges as a response to material changes and has material effects.

As a racial project, hegemonic Danishness aims to restore previous power hierarchies through claims that increasing Muslim presence in Denmark threatens traditionally dominant social and cultural norms. But it has other functions and contours and might also be identified as immanent in many other dominant formations concerning a host of norms constructed as distinctly Danish from sexuality to political culture. In this article, I discuss only its Danishness-Muslimness binary where practices from eating pork to shaking hands are mediated as distinctly Danish and represented politically and in mainstream media as a Danish cultural and social order that must be protected (Yılmaz 2016; Lindhardt 2021). The racial logics of hegemonic Danishness have distinct material effects including discrimination of individuals categorized as Muslims in arenas such as the labor, housing markets, and public administration (Herby & Haagen Nielsen 2015; Dahl & Krog 2018; Andersen & Guul 2019). The democratic drawbacks include diminishing the sense of political belonging among Danish citizens with Muslim backgrounds (Simonsen 2018), and hegemonic Danishness' notion of a nation-in-danger has played a central role in advancing a right-wing

turn in Danish politics (Mouritsen & Olsen 2013; Rytter 2018).

Like most systems of oppression, hegemonic Danishness relies on normative constructions of gender and sexuality and for instance situates Muslim women and queer Muslims as victims in need of saving. This can refer to individuals needing rescue from other Muslims, or a more abstract perception of the group lacking agency due to the supposedly inherent misogyny of Islam and Muslim culture. This article emphasizes how Danish Muslim women navigate hegemonic Danishness, which reduces them to their relation to an imagined Islam depicted as inherently hostile to their agency and selfhood (Ahmad & Waltorp 2019). When hegemonic Danishness construes Muslim women as culturally inferior and in need of saving, it also subjects them to the structural racism embedded in the Western tradition of producing distinct groups as a danger to society in need of discipline (Foucault 2003). As such, hegemonic Danishness erases the individuality of Muslim women as it figures them as lacking the agency imagined to be embodied by white, Danish women. Intersections of gender and race common in racial formations manifest here by positioning Islam and Muslims as intrinsically misogynist; an image of Islam that is then held up against the alleged equality of Danish culture and society and, underlining the contradictions of race, works to make all Muslims, particularly women, subject to discipline and discrimination (Andreassen 2005; Christensen & Siim 2010; Rognlien & Kier-Byfield 2020; also see article by Brodersen & Øland, this issue).

Navigating hegemonic Danishness

I employ the term hegemonic Danishness (Stormhøj 2021, 98) to describe my study's findings. None of the informants directly addressed this concept, but the concept's premise, that Danish Muslims are aware of and navigate majoritarian dynamics that situate them as not fully belonging in Denmark, has been demonstrated by previous research across disciplines and confirmed in my interviews with participants. In a qualitative study of young Muslims, sociologist Amani Hassani (2022) found her interlocutors resisting the racialization of Muslims as an underclass by claiming a middle-class position. Hassani (2022, 68) also points to how the research participants "could challenge, rephrase and reframe the presumptions of their political subordination, but they were not necessarily able to dismantle, disempower or circumvent these structures of power." Educational psychologist Iram Khawaja (2017, 103, my translation) similarly found that in schools Muslimness functioned as a "sociocultural category" with a host of effects on individuals' daily life and social positioning. In political science, Kristina Bakkær Simonsen (2018, 135) has shown that second-generation immigrants from the Middle East, most of whom are Muslim, experienced "unequal access to belonging" in Denmark. Like the patterns of discrimination cited above, this awareness of being made Other is a result of hegemonic Danishness' racial project of sorting people according to a racialized Danishness-Muslimness scale.

One of the ways Danish Muslims navigate hegemonic Danishness is through online communication. Karoline Marie Donskov Dige (2022) has analyzed how Danish Muslims may use Facebook to come together and address the distinct challenges they experience as Muslims in Denmark. Focusing specifically on religion, Dige (2022) addresses how questions of identity and belonging are reflected in Danish Muslims' online lives. Karen Waltorp (2015, 64) has shown how young Muslim women use social media to navigate the many intersecting fields of their lives and evocatively concludes that this generation of Danish Muslims is "turning the smartphone into a portal to other possible lives, ways of relating, and experimental acts." Research in other European countries such as Norway, Germany, and Italy similarly shows Muslims, and Muslim women in particular, using social media and the internet to traverse and contest the exclusion they experience (Eckert & Chadha 2013; Engebretsen 2015, Evolvi 2017). This article contributes to that body of research by exploring how Danish Muslims utilize online spaces for discursive interventions

that address, navigate, and challenge how they are racialized via hegemonic Danishness.

While Danish Muslims can and do challenge their marginalization through dominant institutions like mainstream media, those very channels of communication play a major role in racialization. Mahvish Ahmad and Karen Waltorp (2019) speak to the gendered nature of this double-bind and how it especially situates Muslim women through a host of expectations they must fulfill before being accepted. As some informants of my study argue, Muslim women must relate to certain stereotypes if they want to be widely understood in the dominant public sphere (El-Tayeb 2011). Iram Khawaja, Tina W. Christensen, and Line Lerche Mørck (2023) analyze how such racializing double-binds stemming from the narrow conceptions of who deserves to be considered a full citizen and human, and attendant effects such as feelings of injustice, have distinct psychological implications. Simonsen (2018) has found that some young Muslims forgo public debates on issues that concern them because they do not feel entitled to participate in a public they experience as exclusionary. The informants in this study, on the other hand, recognize that social media affords discursive resources less restrained by hegemonic Danishness and make their complex multilayered identities legitimate and legible to audiences in a way that mainstream media generally appear unable to do.

Counterpublics in digital space

Jürgen Habermas' (1989) public sphere theory sheds light on the ways in which individuals and groups change society by making their voices heard. This article is informed by Nancy Fraser's (1990) critique of Habermas, arguing that publics and counterpublics should be considered in the *plural* and as continually constituted through complex struggles over meaning beginning from and in relation to the dominant public. If hegemonic Danishness is the dominant public discourse, then, counterpublics must exist in relation to it. I suggest that Danish Muslims engage social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter in ways that conform to Fraser's understanding of a counterpublic as an entity that, among other things, provides alternative knowledges. Sarah Jackson and Brooke Foucault Welles (2015, 933) have shown how online counterpublics on social media platforms like #BlackLivesMatter may serve marginalized citizens as "unique sites and methods that members of these groups use to produce nondominant forms of knowledge" not available in mainstream media. The next section delves into the informants' perceptions of mainstream media's role in producing notions of Danishness and Muslimness and how those perceptions are central to their motivation to turn to social media to create the kind of alternative knowledges offered in any counterpublic (Fraser 1990).

The specific modes of communication present on social media platforms shape racialized digital counterpublics in ways tied to the various platform features and architectures, including how they enable communal labor and solidarity (Brock 2012; Florini 2014). The efficacy of online counterpublics like #BlackLivesMatter, for instance, is tied to features such as retweeting being used to highlight distinct events and issues as well as movement leaders (Jackson, Bailey & Foucault Welles 2020; Lowenstein-Barkai 2022). The meanings and effects produced on these platforms cannot be separated from their underlying infrastructures (van Dijck 2013). Characteristics like persistent multidirectional communication between audience and producer set social media platforms apart from the more unidirectional modes of communication dominant in mainstream media. Such characteristics proved to be crucial to the informants' social media practices as they helped produce a distinct sense of community, even intimacy, in the Danish Muslim counterpublic (Andreassen et al. 2018). In this article, I point to how features such as commenting and direct messaging afford an interactive, multidirectional communication mode that shapes the informants' experiences and content (Bucher & Helmond 2018).

Tensions exist between the liberatory potential of online practices and what Christian Fuchs (2014, 92) calls the "colonized internet" where

"actual practices of data commodification, corporate media control, as well as corporate and state surveillance limit the liberal freedoms of thought, opinion, expression, assembly and association." Like all users of major social media platforms, the individual Danish Muslims in this study invariably participate in a "platform imperialism" that is connected to broader structures of capitalism and oppression reflected in exclusionary dynamics such as hegemonic Danishness (Dal Yong Yin quoted in Fuchs 2014, 93). Despite such paradoxes and contradictions, I suggest that social media does contain potential to host and solidify a Danish Muslim counterpublic where questions of belonging and racialization can be critically interrogated.

Methodology

This article is based on qualitative interviews with ten individuals who use social media to produce public content directly and/or indirectly related to their identity as Muslims living in Denmark (Kristensen 2022). Qualitative interviewing is a "process of knowing through conversations" that "is intersubjective and social, involving interviewer and interviewee as co-constructors of knowledge" (Brinkmann & Kvale 2014, 18). The open-ended interviews, conducted in Danish, started from an interview guide provided to the informants prior to the interview. Taken together, the total of 16 hour-long interviews, two with each participant, produced hundreds of pages of transcripts. Through several cycles of holistic, initial, and pattern coding and sub-coding using the software nVivo, I categorized the interview transcripts and discovered dozens of discrete and overlapping patterns and themes relevant to the study (Saldaña 2013).

Research instruments shape the research in direct and indirect ways and in this case, the research instrument is me: a white, majority-Danish, non-religious cisgendered man trained as an academic in the US. That positionality and background invariably shape my scholarly interests and practices, including the preparation, performance, and analysis of these interviews. I may, for instance, have asked different questions informed by my own experiences as a minoritized person had I had those experiences. Conversely, it is possible that the informants would have responded differently in conversation with someone with lived experiences that aligned more with their own.

The informants were recruited based on preliminary desk research into Danish Muslims who used their social media platforms to produce public-facing content—i.e. the participants all used social media to purposefully address the public. A protocol adhering to ethical research principles was developed in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign's Office for Protection of Research Subjects. This protocol included a consent form outlining the research participants' rights and obligations, which all informants signed prior to the first interview. As the research project revolves around public social media practices and content and the informants are generally easily identifiable from the interview material, most informants agreed to forgo anonymization.

While all informants provided interesting insights that speak to the themes of this article, in order to provide a stringent analysis in a limited amount of space, I quote only four informants whose narratives and experiences complement each other well while also showing the variation of different positionalities and ways of using social media among the study participants. The following informants are quoted in this article: Özcan, age 32, who uses Facebook and Instagram to post about a variety of things from political analyses over humorous observations on fatherhood to marketing his published works of poetry; Ayan, age 38, former editor-in-chief of a volunteer-run publication, *Ethniqa*, an online magazine by and for women of color living in Denmark, who now uses her blog, Twitter, and Instagram to document her life, often centered on motherhood, and frequently addresses racism and other issues related to her intersectional identity; Saeid, age 33 who was recruited due to his involvement with the online magazine *Respons*, which produces citizen journalism from a minority point of view, although the interviews mostly ended up revolving around Saeid's use of Facebook,

where he participates in debates on immigration and related issues; and Ellie, age 39, a well-known comedian and actor who produces several shows on YouTube, and uses Instagram and Facebook to promote those, participate in the political debate as well as share posts about her daily life.

The diversity of content types and personal backgrounds among the informants illustrates the heterogeneity of Danish Muslims as a group. It also illustrates that the participants should not be seen as *representatives* of the counterpublic conceptualized in this article, but *examples* of its heterogeneous nature since there are certain similarities across this group of informants that are not uniform across the group of Danish Muslims. For instance, all the participants are generally well-educated and have careers in the private sector. This might speak to the general profile of people who engage in public debates in Denmark, but it nonetheless affects the analysis at hand and its findings.

Mainstream media and hegemonic Danishness

Counterpublic media practices tend to relate to mainstream media, and this was certainly the case for the informants in this study whose reflections and experiences inform this section. Across the board, they identified mainstream media's representation of Muslims as frequently inaccurate, and to various extents, they described their social media practices as responding to or supplementing the dominant discourse as it relates to Muslimness, Islam, immigration and other similar subjects. None described their social media practices as generally being in outright opposition to mainstream media, which they also consider as a potential site of discursive interventions. Indeed, several informants have or hope to contribute to mainstream media, and some explicitly positioned their social media activities as an avenue into mainstream media participation. This paradoxical relationship to mainstream media can be understood as reflecting a hope to become included in Danishness *as* Muslims—even if that racialized category's hegemonic nature has been constructed on the basis of *excluding* Muslims (Hassani 2022). This is not to say that the informants never openly criticize Danish media discourses in their social media content. They certainly do. But such explicitly counterpublic practices do not stand alone. Another key element of this counterpublic is how the participants' presentation of their own personhood on social media through slice-of-life posts shapes the counterpublic's racial project. That content demonstrates that the fact they are Muslim does not mean that their lives are not 'ordinary' in the Danish context. This stance confronts the homogenizing, individuality-erasing racialization of Muslims as outsiders prevalent in hegemonic Danishness, and while its counterpublic character might be less direct than the overt challenging of dominant narratives, both types of content, the slice-of-life and the challenging of mainstream media discourse, are equally important to what makes this counterpublic distinct.

Hegemony distributes the power that decides "the point at which the conversation begins" (Hall 2016, 171). So, when hegemonic Danishness conditions a 'common sense' image of Muslimness, Muslims that do not conform to the dominant image of Muslimness are less able to challenge that image (ibid., 138). Such representation of complex individuality appears to be in excess of the "ontological distinctions," assumptions of what Muslims are and do, from which most Danish mainstream media operate when they cover Muslim lives in Denmark (Yılmaz 2016, 50). The informants' perception of a distinct limit to how mainstream media allow them to express and represent themselves were often brought up during the interviews as the opposite of social media's advantages of autonomous and holistic self-expression.

Saied attaches a structural critique of media representation and its potential effects on Muslims and/or immigrants to his explanation of turning to social media to offer alternative knowledge on Danish Muslims: "The issue is that so many people get their information from the media and probably do not meet Ali and Fatima in their daily lives," he argues. "Then that becomes their image

of reality. That's the core of the whole problem." This perception of the public's media-dependent, warped image of Muslims and immigrants motivates him to provide a different take on those subjects. For instance, as seen in fig. 1, during the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, he challenged negative media coverage and politicians blaming alleged cultural differences for the disproportionately high number of positive cases in areas with many immigrant inhabitants. In a tangible example of how digital counterpublics provide alternative knowledges, Saeid provided a fact-check, arguing that the disproportionality may stem from higher population density. Titling his Facebook-post "A few 'forbidden' numbers about the COVID-19 situation in Vollsmose," (my translation) Saied addressed a perceived inaccuracy in mainstream media's coverage that reproduces negative framing of immigrants. Referencing housing dynamics to explain the high number of cases in Vollsmose, a neighborhood where many racial and ethnic minoritized Danes live, Saied's post went directly against the culturalized explanations on offer in the dominant public sphere.

Trained as a journalist, Ayan's recounting of why she founded *Ethniqa Magazine* in 2011 also identifies mainstream media as the issue, in this case, the lack of members of minority groups within newsrooms and that disparity's effects on the coverage: "We can't just have people write *about* us. We must grasp the pen and write our own stories," she explains.[8] The informants generally agree that the binary framework of us-and-them at the heart of hegemonic Danishness in large part can be traced back to media discourses. To Ellie, anti-Muslim racism is "mostly a media-thing; it's not something I encounter out in the streets with people yelling 'go back to your own country' and such."[9] Özcan, on the other hand, describes the dissonant public, informed by media narratives, as "very divided: either you are with Muslims or you are against Muslims." And so, the informants to varying degrees identify Danish media representation of Muslims as inaccurate and damaging to the way they are perceived as a group, and they situate that representation centrally to explain why they engage in what I conceptualize as counterpublic social media practices.

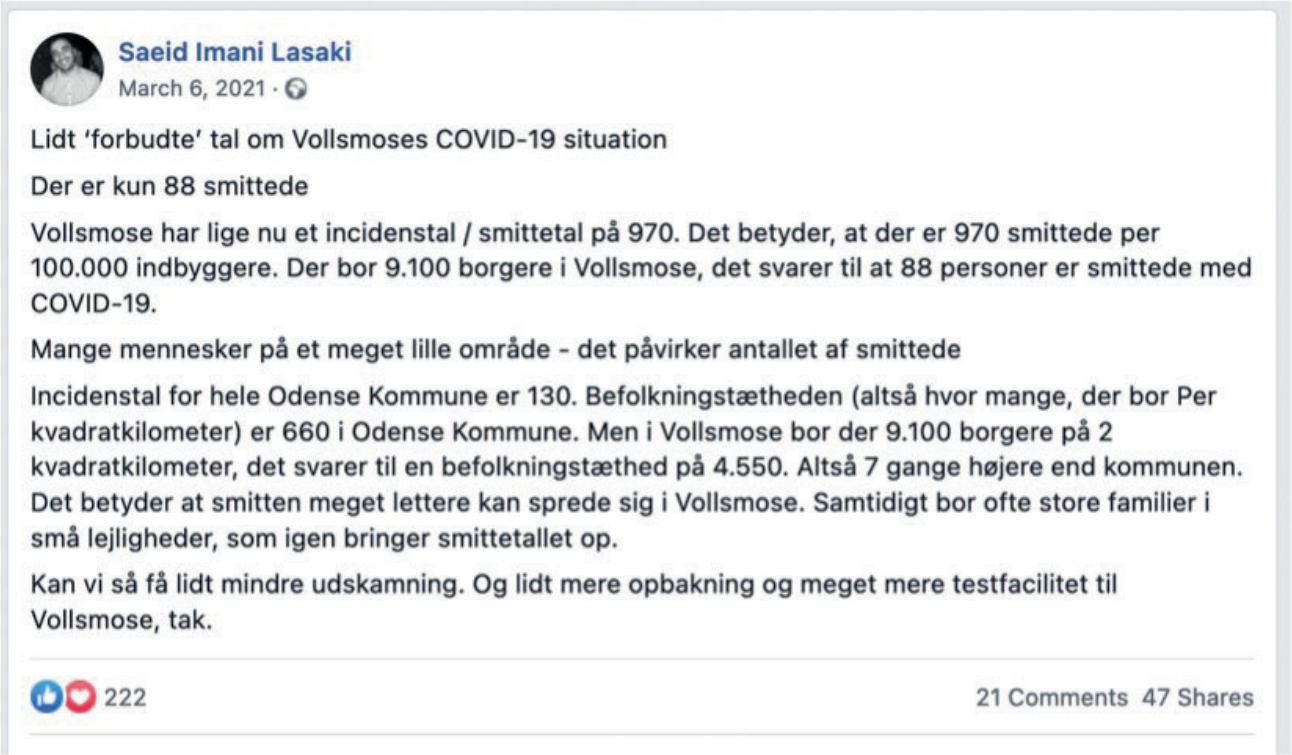

Figure 1

Hegemonic Danishness hinges on a generalized, monolithic Muslimness as its negative referent and the informants are conscious of this as immanent in how the media covers Muslims, Islam, and related issues. A major motivation for their social media practices is being able to counter this homogenizing representation by expressing *individual* identities; to demonstrate that their personhoods are not at all encapsulated by the one-dimensional, often negative stereotypes they believe circulate in the dominant public about Muslims. Several informants observed that such illegibility confounds individual Muslims' ability to challenge this image of Muslimness through mainstream media. In their experience, if an individual Muslim's identity is counter-stereotypical, they are less likely to be invited to contribute to mainstream media. Ayan succinctly expresses how media framing erases individuality, particularly in gendered ways: "We are never allowed to just be ourselves!" Muslim women, instead, "always get locked into this specific role," she says.

An interview Ellie gave to *Berlingske*, a national newspaper, illustrates how individual stories may be in excess of the public discourse imposed by hegemonic Danishness and how such excess may contribute to the racial project's function of separating Muslimness from Danishness. In the interview, Ellie was asked whether she would mock the Quran or Allah. This question has been a perennial theme in Denmark since the cartoon crisis in 2005 culminated in an anti-Muslim political climate in which the Danish 'we' was moored to humor and respect for democracy while the implicitly Muslim 'them' was seen as the opposite; incapable of grasping and performing Danish humor and culture (Hervik & Boe 2008). Ellie's response, that she would not mock the Quran, became the headline of the interview as well as the subject of an opinion piece in the same paper by well-known columnist Adam Holm. Holm (2019) claimed that Ellie's refusal to mock the Quran was because of a "self-applied Islam-muzzle." Ellie recounts, in paraphrase, Holm's argument as well as her response:

'Muzzled by Islam. And she refuses to mock the Quran or Allah. She is against us.' Then suddenly, I'm given this completely different role in the debate. Suddenly, I'm made into this extremist rather than a person who responded to a challenge [by the interviewer] and said 'Well, I just [personally] don't need to [mock Islam]'.

Ellie expresses how such treatment in the press, both by Holm and the framing of the initial interview, headlined "Comedian Ellie Jokar: 'I would never mock the Quran or Allah'" (Balslev 2019), may cause her to be less willing to be interviewed by mainstream media: "Because then I'm thinking, no matter what I say, it will be twisted into something I don't actually believe." Cultural values embedded in hegemonic Danishness here appear mobilized in opposition to Ellie who in turn feels that she is represented as an exemplar of homogenous Muslimness rather than an autonomous individual with agency. The experience highlights how media framing works to the detriment of Muslims in co-constitutive ways. Framing through hegemonic Danishness entails that Danish Muslims who choose to contribute to mainstream media, even when interviewed as individuals, risk erasure of that individuality. And then this erasure may end up solidifying the very stereotype that situated them at risk of being stereotyped in the first place.

An ordinary counterpublic

Ayan also brought up erasure of individuality as a key issue and argues that to her, most mainstream media representation of Danish Muslim womanhood appears stereotypical. Highlighting the malleability of racializing discourse, Ayan points out that the gendered stereotyping is widespread and elastic (see also Andreassen 2005; Hervik 2011). She says that "earlier, it was the oppressed woman," but "now it is the woman who gave her culture and parents the finger" she sees represented in Danish media. The Muslim woman depicted as liberated from her parents' oppressive culture may appear to be the opposite of the oppressed Muslim woman. Both figures, however, reify hegemonic Danishness' narrative of Islam as fundamentally oppressive to women, in contrast to the supposed openness and gender equality at the core of Danish values.[10] While acknowledging that

some Muslim women are oppressed, Ayan wishes that Danish media would dispatch the narrow representation in favor of showcasing the diversity of experience of Muslim women. In the absence of such representation, she turns to Instagram and Twitter to present a multilayered individuality where she is a wife, a mother, a daughter, a Muslim, a Somali-Dane, a television casting agent and all kinds of other intersecting identities at once. The distinctly individual-centering nature of social media shines through in this counterpublic.

In her Instagram posts, Ayan narrates an aspect of this identity, describing how she simultaneously faces pressures from hegemonic Danishness as well as challenges from within her community—echoing previous research on how Danish Muslims navigate expectations from the dominant culture alongside other expectations like those from their families and local communities (Waltorp 2015; Galal & Liebmann 2020; Hassani 2022). Fig. 2 shows how Ayan took part in a hashtag campaign, #DelDinSkam (*share your shame*), meant for minoritized women to discuss the shame they might feel about not living up to the expectations of their parents, their community, or Danish society-at-large (Eriksen 2021). In this post, Ayan discusses the shame she felt at being unmarried, how she found peace with her unmarried status, and how things started looking up once she "let go of her shame."

Ayan's contribution to the hashtag highlights how individual social media practices overlap with broader online counterpublics in that the hashtag campaign was initiated by two women, Nilgün Erdem and Souha Al-Mersal, who hoped that it would help minoritized women, who may encounter what they call a distinct "culture of shame" in their communities, realize that "they are not alone in having this feeling" as they explained in an interview (Eriksen 2021). As founders of the campaign,

Figure 2

they describe the community created through this hashtag as a "safe space where you are not reduced to a media headline" (ibid.) This echoes the informants' statements on why they seek out social media to provide fuller representation of their racialized gender identity, which mainstream media rarely allow.

Features of social media, like the above hashtag, afford community between audience and content producer and are central to digital, networked modes of communication (Plantin, Lagoze, Edwards & Sandvig 2018). Other features, such as commenting or liking, also make interactivity central to this mode of communication and add a communal aspect to the counterpublic. Özcan, for instance, identifies comments on his posts as important markers of support and community: "So when people write 'Wow, that is so well put' and compliment what I have said because they feel the same way […] then I know I hit upon something through social media that the newspaper would not have been able to accomplish." Ayan points to how she often receives private messages on Instagram in reaction to specific posts that struck a nerve with her audience. She relates how the positivity of messages from her audience are no less meaningful when presented in private. Indeed, due to the controversial nature of some issues Ayan addresses, for example dating across religious affiliations, it seems unlikely that she would receive such affirmation without these private channels. Public affirmation matters to her as well. In the comments of her #DelDinSkam post, Ayan later expressed how happy she was at the positive response her post had generated, illustrating the importance of communication between her and the audience. Further illustrating the intensely personal nature of these media practices and their intersections with gendered issues, Ayan discusses a decision to share the traumatic and very personal event of having a miscarriage. She points out that "I have to, like…I have to know that I am not alone. I have to know that there are other women who have been in this situation so we can help each other." These posts are part of a multidirectional communication that Ayan knows provides real relief to members of her audience. That sense of community is key to Ayan's decision to share very personal and delicate issues—and, on a more general level, speaks to why we must consider even intensely personal and individual social media content as participating in broader structural discourses.

Such examples are not the kind of counterpublic discourse that is explicitly political or even always overtly speaking back to dominant narratives. Some of the content does engage in direct challenges of dominant discourse and I have discussed some of it above, but much of the informants' social media content is what most social media users produce: quotidian insights into what the individual happens to be doing or thinking at that moment. A random day's sequence of stories on Ellie's Instagram illustrates how such content can be understood as a counterpublic racial project.[11] In ten stories, as seen in fig. 3, Ellie documents travels with her production crew; advertises a new episode of her YouTube interview show, *Den Lyserøde Taxi* (*The Pink Taxicab*), where she talks with two young Muslims about issues like wearing the headscarf or living in a so-called ghetto; and shares a video of a performance by African-American gymnast Nia Dennis.

Seen in isolation, this can hardly be described as creating a counterpublic. Juxtaposed to her perception af how mainstream media have framed her as an exemplar of monolithic, un-Danish Muslimness, however, these posts documenting Ellie's ordinary individuality demonstrate how social media discourse may stand in contrast to mainstream media representations. In these digital spaces, Ellie expresses some of the many layers of her individuality. Such content, like Ayan's statement that she started her blog, in part, to "show that women like me are also just totally ordinary Danish women," put forth claims to ordinariness that confront hegemonic Danishness' demands for a uniform Muslim identity. In this context, we can understand these social media practices as counterpublic racial projects that resist hegemonic Danishness' reproduction of a homogenized Muslimness, which has little to do with Danish Muslims' actual lived experiences.

Figure 3

Concluding discussion

In this article, I argue that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), and Instagram host a Danish Muslim counterpublic. I conceptualize a sample of Danish Muslims' social media practices and content as racial projects grappling with the dominant project of hegemonic Danishness, which racializes Muslims as interlopers in Denmark. The focus has been on informants' reflections on their social media practices in relation to the representation of Muslimness they experience in mainstream media, a central catalyst for hegemonic Danishness. The findings suggest that despite their inherent attachment to capitalism and other modes of oppression, social media platforms do function as sites for circulating alternative knowledges and discourses that directly and indirectly challenge the dominant public's representation of Muslimness and, in turn, hegemonic Danishness' racial project of producing Muslims as un-Danish. This is most apparent when informants directly counter and supplement what they consider inaccurate or stereotypical narratives of Muslims and Muslimness presented in Danish mainstream media. But they also engage in counterpublic racial projects by simply sharing snapshots of daily life, narrating a Danish Muslim individuality that troubles hegemonic Danishness' one-dimensional construction of Muslimness.

So, when Saeid uses Facebook to critique a media narrative about immigrants' and Muslims' cultures making them inherently susceptible to the novel coronavirus, he engages in a racial project that seeks to amend, but not eradicate, the racialized category of the Danish Muslim. Such content provides the kind of explicit discursive intervention one would expect from a counterpublic, challenging hegemonic Danishness' 'common sense' notion of Muslims as culturally foreign. Similarly, informants like Ayan also engage in racial projects when they put forth representations of their own complex negotiations of expectations from the Muslim community and Danish society-at-large. Highlighting racial formation's intersections with gender, Ayan's rejection of the stereotypical representation of a woman oppressed by Islam does not dismantle '(Danish) Muslim woman' as a

meaningful category. Instead, Ayan undercuts the simplistic and stereotypical character of that category by narrating an identity in which Muslim is just one of many identity markers. The interactive nature of this digital counterpublic helps create community by for instance connecting Ayan to the audience through direct messaging, where they recognize and encourage her resistance to the racial project that constructs the 'Muslim woman' as a monolith. In her content, Ayan presents herself as a wife, mother, and woman whose Muslimness is important to, but not wholly definitive of, her identity.

When these informants post excerpts from their daily lives, as we saw with Ellie's use of Instagram for example, they subtly claim ordinariness not as Danish Muslims but as people living in Denmark who happen to be Muslim. Ellie herself experienced the consequences of hegemonic Danishness when she felt as if her choices about how she satirizes religion were obfuscated in mainstream media and instead presented as the result of coercion tied to her identity as a Muslim. On intrinsically individualistic social media platforms like Instagram, however, Ellie has more control over how she is represented. On social media, the informants experience autonomy and representational independence not available to them through mainstream media outlets. They use these sites to engage in counterpublic practices and "formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1990, 67). In the context of hegemonic Danishness, simply embodying a Danish identity where Muslimness is present without fully defining it troubles a dominant public discourse in which Danish and Muslim are mutually exclusive.

I conceptualize these social media practices as racial projects that adjust and expand racial formation in Denmark to include the huge diversity of lived experiences among *Muslims who live in Denmark*. The informants accept Danishness as a meaningful category that they can be included within *as* Muslims—or rather as Danes who happen to also be Muslim. This conforms to extant research on how Danish Muslims navigate their positionality outside Danishness by seeking inclusion within it rather than seeking its destruction (Hassani 2022). But the counterpublic identified in this article posits a more optimistic stance than has been expressed by other young Muslims in Denmark, whose feelings of non-belonging according to previous research might cause them to forgo participation in political discourse (Simonsen 2018).

The interactivity of this counterpublic, afforded by commenting and messaging, complicates meaning-making and community-building and situates this article's findings as preliminary. This online counterpublic is innately dynamic and continuously evolving, and this article can only offer a snapshot of a moment in time. As they build a shared sense of community through resistant discourse, we might conceptualize these informants as part of an *emergent* counterpublic. Their activities exist in and contribute to an interactive space that may either grow into a more coherent community or splinter into a host of Danish Muslim counterpublics.

My findings corroborate extant research by demonstrating Danish Muslims' awareness of an exclusionary dynamic attached to their identity as Muslims in Denmark, in this case particularly as it relates to mainstream media representation. The study's focus on social media practices contributes an additional perspective to a promising research agenda on how members of this group experience and engage this dynamic, and the success of campaigns like #DelDinSkam suggests that the online counterpublic I have identified may be populated by many more individuals than the study's informants. Rejecting the negative representation of Muslimness inherent to hegemonic Danishness while refusing neither Muslimness nor Danishness, the informants in this study reveal the contradictions of racialization and its erasure of individual personhood. In response to a dominant public where hegemonic Danishness situates Muslims as fundamentally Othered vis-à-vis life in Denmark, I have argued that even expressions of ordinariness so characteristic of social media content can be understood as a counterpublic move when performed by Danish Muslims. In these online spaces, Danish Muslims might find novel and

distinctly communal ways to navigate and trouble hegemonic Danishness as they utilize social media's potential for mediated self-expression to more fully represent their complex identities as people living in Denmark who happen to also be Muslim.

Literature

Ahmad, M. and Waltorp, K. 2019. Kontroversen om Exitcirklen: racialiseringen af muslimske kvinder i den danske mediedebat. *Jordens Folk*. 54(1), 65–77.

Andersen, S.C. and Guul, T.S. 2019. Reducing Minority Discrimination at the Front Line—Combined Survey and Field Experimental Evidence. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 29(3), 429-444.

Andreassen, R. 2005. *The Mass Media's Construction of Gender, Race, Sexuality and Nationality: An Analysis of the Danish News Media's Communication about Visible Minorities from 1971-2004*. Canada: University of Toronto.

Andreassen, R., Petersen, M.N., Harrison, K., Raun, T. eds. 2018. *Mediated Intimacies: Connectivities, Relationalities and Proximities*. UK: Routledge.

Balslev, N. 2019. Komikeren Ellie Jokar: "Jeg ville aldrig gøre grin med Koranen eller Allah". *Berlingske.dk*. [Online] 11 June. [Accessed: 21 February 2022]. Available from: https://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/komikeren-ellie-jokar-jeg-ville-aldrig-goere-grin-med-koranen-eller-allah

Balibar, E. 1991. Is There a "Neo-Racism"? In: Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. eds. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, 17–28.

Brinkmann, S. and Kvale, S. 2014. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Brock, A. 2012. From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 56(4), 529–549.

Bucher, T. and Helmond, A. 2018. The Affordances of Social Media Platforms. In: Burgess, J., Marwick, A., and Poell, T. eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media*. London: SAGE, 233–253.

Christensen, A.-D. and Siim, B. 2010. Citizenship and Politics of Belonging: Inclusionary and Exclusionary Framings of Gender and Ethnicity. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 19(3), 8-18.

Dahl, M. and Krog, N. 2018. Experimental Evidence of Discrimination in the Labour Market: Intersections between Ethnicity, Gender, and Socio-Economic Status. *European Sociological Review*, 34(4), 402–417.

Dige, K.M.D. 2022. Muslimerne bag skærmen: Danske muslimers onlinefællesskaber. Økonomi & Politik. 95(1), 42-57.

van Dijck, J. 2013. *The culture of connectivity: a critical history of social media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eckert, S. and Chadha, K. 2013. Muslim bloggers in Germany: an emerging counterpublic. *Media, Culture & Society*. 35(8), 926–942.

El-Tayeb, F. 2011. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Engebretsen, M. 2015. Transkulturelle erfaringer i sosiale medier: En studie av diskursive strategier hos norske innvandrere på nett. *Norsk medietidsskrift*. 22(04), 1–22.

Eriksen, S.H. 2021. Hashtagget #deldinskam skal hjælpe særligt nydanske kvinder til at slippe skammen. *Information*, 19 February, 6-7.

Evolvi, G. 2017. Hybrid Muslim identities in digital space: The Italian blog Yalla. *Social Compass*. 64(2), 220–232.

Florini, S. 2014. Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin': Communication and Cultural Performance on "Black Twitter". *Television & New Media*. 15(3), 223–237.

Foucault, M. 2003. *'Society must be defended': lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador.

Fraser, N. 1990. Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*. (25/26), 56-80.

Fuchs, C. 2014. Social Media and the Public Sphere. *TripleC*. 12(1), 57–101.

Galal, L.P. and Liebmann, L.L. 2020. *Magt og (m)ulighed Forhandlinger af konformitet, autoritet og mobilitet blandt etniske minoritetsborgere i Danmark*. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitet.

Golash-Boza, T., Duenas, M.D. and Xiong, C. 2019. White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Global Capitalism in Migration Studies. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 63(13), 1741–1759.

Habermas, J. 1989. *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hall, S. 2016. *Cultural Studies 1983: a theoretical history.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Hassani, A. 2022. Navigating Racialised Spaces. *Nordic Journal of Social Research*. 13(1), 67–79.

Herby, J. and Haagen Nielsen, U. 2015. *Omfanget af forskelsbehandling af nydanskere: Et felteksperiment på lejeboligmarkedet*. Holte: Ankestyrelsen.

Hervik, P. 2011. *The Annoying Difference: The Emergence of Danish Neonationalism, Neoracism, and Populism in the Post-1989 World*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Hervik, P. 2019. Denmark's blond vision and the fractal logics of a nation in danger. *Identities*. 26(5), 529-545.

Hervik, P. and Boe, C. 2008. Integration through Ridicule? In: Eide, E., Kunelius, R., and Phillips, A. eds. *Transnational Media Events: The Mohammed Cartoons & the Imagined Clash of Civilizations*. Göteborg: Nordicom, 215-236.

Holm, A. 2019. Ellie Jokars selvpåførte islam-mundkurv er ikke vejen frem. *Berlingske.dk*. [Online] 16 June. [Accessed: 11 June 2021]. Available from: https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentatorer/ellie-jokars-selvpaafoerte-islam-mundkurv-er-ikke-vejen-frem

Jackson, S.J., Bailey, M. and Foucault Welles, B. 2020. *#HashtagActivism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Jackson, S.J. and Foucault Welles, B. 2015. Hijacking #myNYPD: Social Media Dissent and Networked Counterpublics: Hijacking #myNYPD. *Journal of Communication*. 65(6), 932–952.

Jørndrup, H. 2022. *Dem vi (stadig) taler om*. Roskilde: Center for nyhedsforskning.

Stormhøj, C. 2021. 'Danishness', Repressive Immigration Policies and Exclusionary Framings of Gender Equality. In: Keskinen, S., Stoltz, P. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Feminisms in the Nordic Region: Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Decolonial Critique*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Khawaja, I. 2017. Hverdagens religiøsitet i og udenfor skolen: Om kirker, nisser og bedetæpper. *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning*. 8(2), 101–122.

Khawaja, I., Christensen, T. W. and Lerche Mørck, L. 2023. Dehumanization and a psychology of deglobalization: Double binds and movements beyond radicalization and racialized mis-interpellation. *Theory & Psychology*. 33(2), 249–265.

Kristensen, M.S. 2022. *Discourse, platforms, and racialization: Danish Muslims navigating hegemonic Danishness on social media*. Doctoral thesis. Champaign: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Lindhardt, M. 2022. In Denmark we eat pork and shake hands! Islam and the anti-Islamic emblems of cultural difference in Danish neo-nationalism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 25(4), 1139-1155.

Lowenstein-Barkai, H. 2022. "Write it down! I am an Arab": The role of reader comments in the formation of networked counterpublics. [Online] *New Media & Society*.

Mouritsen, P. and Olsen, T.V. 2013. Denmark between liberalism and nationalism. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*. 36(4), 691–710.
Omi, M. and Winant, H. 2015. *Racial formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
Plantin, J.-C., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., Sandvig, C. 2018. Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New Media & Society*. 20(1), 293–310.
Rana, J. 2007. The Story of Islamophobia. *Souls*. 9(2), 148–161.
Razack, S.H. 2022. *Nothing Has to Make Sense: Upholding White Supremacy through Anti-Muslim Racism*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.
Rognlien, L. and Kier-Byfield, S. 2020. Everyday Activism and Resistance by Minority Women in Denmark. *Conjunctions*. 7(1), 1–16.
Rytter, M. 2018. Writing Against Integration: Danish Imaginaries of Culture, Race and Belonging. *Ethnos*. 84(4), 678–697.
Saldaña, J. 2013. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
Shoemaker, P.J., Vos, T.P. and Reese, S.D. 2009. Journalists as Gatekeepers. In: Wahl-Jorgensen, K and Hanitzsch, T. eds. *Handbook of Journalism Studies.* New York: Routledge, 73–87.
Simonsen, K.B. 2018. What It Means to (Not) Belong: A Case Study of How Boundary Perceptions Affect Second-Generation Immigrants' Attachments to the Nation. *Sociological Forum*. 33(1), 118–138.
Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen. 2020. *Medievirksomheders beskæftigelse*. [Online]. [Accessed: 4 June 2023]. Available from: https://kum.dk/fileadmin/_mediernesudvikling/2020/Medievirksomheders_beskaeftigelse.pdf
Sonne Nørgaard, A., Korshøj, J. and Pilegaard Petersen, R. 2020. *Faglærte og ufaglærte er markant underrepræsenteret i debatspalterne*. [Online]. [Accessed: 2 June 2023]. Available from: https://cevea.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Analyse-Faglrte-og-ufaglrte-er-markant-underreprsenteret-i-debatspalterne.pdf
Waltorp, K. 2015. Keeping cool, staying virtuous: Social media and the composite habitus of young Muslim women in Copenhagen. *MedieKultur.* 31(58), 49–67.
Yılmaz, F. 2016. *How the Workers Became Muslims: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Notes

1 I use "generally" here to acknowledge that especially in recent years, some mainstream media outlets appear to be engaging a fuller and more complex representation of Muslimness.
2 Including one two-interview sequence with two informants producing content together as part of a group. Informant quotes drawn from the transcripts are translated by me.
3 It should be mentioned that while including the rest of the informants would provide additional perspectives, none would have significantly altered this article's conclusions as the major findings presented here were found, with minor variations, across all interviews.
4 The descriptions of the informants' social media activities position them at the time of the interviews in late 2019 and early 2020. Informant ages listed here are also at the time of the interview.
5 As this is not a study of religion, and Muslim is conceptualized as a racialized category rather than a religious identity, informants were not asked to address their religiosity. I did make it clear to them during the recruitment process that the project revolves around people who identify as Muslim and their experiences of what it means to be categorized as "Danish Muslim" in contemporary Denmark.
6 A 2020 report of nine national newspapers showed that while academics only make up about 13

percent of the Danish population, members of this group author more than two-thirds of all published opinion pieces in those outlets (Sonne Nørgaard, Korshøj & Pilegaard Petersen 2020).

7 While not all immigrants or their descendants in Denmark are Muslim, many are, and it is this dynamic Saeid is speaking to here when he uses Muslim and immigrant interchangeably and uses the names Ali and Fatima commonly held by Muslims to denote average immigrants.

8 In this article I mostly address discourse, but hegemonic Danishness is co-constitutive with material realms such as labor relations so, it bears mentioning that while ethnic minorities in 2021 made up 14 percent of the population, they only appeared as 3.5 percent of news sources in surveyed media outlets (Jørndrup 2022) and only 5.6 percent of employees in the media industry in 2019, even though this population is 12.3 percent of the overall workforce in Denmark (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen 2020).

9 Ellie does also suggest that a reason she does not encounter such direct racism is that those who would target her if they realized she was Muslim might consider her to be ethnically ambiguous.

10 These issues with journalistic coverage are not due to Danish journalists being bad at their job, but the structures and norms of journalism as a profession. Referencing Herbert Gans' work, Shoemaker et. al. (2009, 77) point out that "the construction of news" is to be found in "the process by which all parts, routines, and arrangements of the [news] organization are engaged for the creation of news." In other words, it is not individual failings of journalists (although those probably occur as well), but journalistic professional norms such as how one selects sources or frames certain issues that generally explain these problems.

11 Instagram Stories are posts set to self-delete after a given amount of time, usually 24 hours.

Gendered racism: The emancipation of 'Muslim' and 'immigrant' women in Danish welfare politics and professionalism

By Marianne Brodersen and Trine Øland

Marianne Brodersen, Associate Professor, Center for Education, University College Absalon, mar@pha.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2288-9192

Trine Øland, Associate Professor, Section for Education, Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen, troeland@hum.ku.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1286-9032

Abstract

This article examines the intersecting oppressions of Danish welfare politics and its emerging interest in emancipating 'immigrant' women and girls. It draws on Patricia Hill Collins' notion of controlling images and, based on a documentary text corpus, it identifies how the images of the unfree immigrant housewife and the inhibited immigrant girl are formed through oxymoronic liberal arguments of care and control. The article demonstrates how this plays out in an assemblage of policy documents and suggests why welfare professionalism is called upon to 'rescue' 'immigrant' women and girls, situating welfare politics and professionalism within the racial welfare state and its racial capitalist and Orientalist logics. The analyses demonstrate how gendered and racialized signifiers help to structure welfare politics and professionalism, and how a space of emancipation is intertwined with a global economic division of labor. The article suggests that racialized welfare politics and professionalism are permeated by the desire to emancipate women, which remains a powerful impulse within Danish welfare state capitalism, liberalism and social-democratic reasoning.

KEYWORDS: gendered racism, emancipation of women, Danish welfare politics and policy, welfare professionalism, racial capitalism

Introduction

In recent years, a research field has emerged that dismantles the myths of exceptionalism and white innocence, as well as exhibiting racial and colonial trajectories and structures of the Nordic welfare states (Keskinen 2019; Toivanen, Skaptadottir & Keskinen 2019). This research trend has depicted the development of the Danish state as having been boosted by trade, the exploitation of enslaved people, engagement in colonial modernization projects, development aid, and participation in Western military alliances and interventions stretching from the Arctic to the tropics (Jensen 2012, 2015). Such observations are underpinned by conceptualizations of the racial state or the racial welfare state, which – despite declarations of egalitarianism and color blind universalism – organizes itself along racial gradients when it shapes space and place, conceptions and representations, inclusions and exclusions, deserving and undeserving subjects etc. (Neubeck & Cazenave 2001, 13–14; Schclarek Mulinari & Keskinen 2022, 4–5).

David Theo Goldberg (2009, 28-29) explains how three factors, curiosity, exploitability and threat, have been associated with race throughout the histories. Curiosity and exploitability demanded engagement and some sort of interaction between the dominant and dominated, whereas threat, pointing to race as marking insecurity and downfall, created distance. As we will show in this article, these factors also map how race is advanced within Danish welfare state politics[1], where 'the threat of race' has been associated with saving 'immigrant' women or the veiled 'Muslim' woman. For example, the defense of "Muslim" women and their rights was offered as the legitimation of the US-led military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 (Abu-Lughod 2015, 4; Farris 2017, 2), in which Denmark participated. Throughout this article, we try to understand how and why current humanitarian and emancipatory welfare state strategies rely upon generalized images of 'Muslim' or 'immigrant' women.[2]

As research has shown, Denmark has not been an outsider to the colonial project (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012), although this has been claimed. Suvi Keskinen (2022, 17-22) even highlights this claim as a defining point when identifying "racial Nordicization" as being intertwined with two other distorted realities: the claim of being an egalitarian welfare state and the claim of gender equality being a defining and superior feature of the Nordic welfare state. The question of gender equality in the Danish model has also been scrutinized by Rikke Andreassen (2012, 2013) and Christel Stormhøj (2021), who have shown how gender equality works as an exclusionary ideal and norm in media debates and immigration policies. Andreassen has depicted how gender equality is used as a tool to criticize and attack "Muslim minorities". Her research has excavated a dominant stereotype, namely the "oppressed immigrant woman" (Andreassen 2012, 2). This stereotype, which has been dominant since the 1970s, generated stories of 'immigrant' women being victims of violence, forced marriages and honor killings. From the 1990s, the stereotype became linked to questions about the headscarf, which was interpreted as preventing 'Muslim' women from entering the workforce (Andreassen 2013, 218). This discourse mirrored alarmist debates in several other countries about girls and/or women wearing headscarves – to the extent of proposing legislation to ban headscarves.

With this article, we furthermore build on research concerning "a postcolonial welfare analytics" of complex super- and subordination processes in Danish welfare work with refugees (Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022, 30–50) that are characterized by color blind universalism, liberalism and individualism (ibid., 41-44, 88-89). We also build on critiques of anti-Muslim racism within benevolent integrationist welfare states, for instance as it is described in Reva Jaffe-Walter's (2016, 1, 4) analyses of Muslim immigrant stereotypes, including the "figure of the oppressed immigrant girl" and the oppositions between "barbaric Muslims" and "enlightened Western liberals" in Danish public community schools. Finally, we draw on postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said (2003) and Lila Abu-Lughod (1991, 2015), who point to how the West shapes the Orient, including the image of the 'Muslim' woman in relations of generalizing

knowledge, thus forming and representing the Other as an object of conquest, improvement and mastery. These scholars will assist us in historicizing the images that we carve out analytically, as we will show how the mobilization of orientalist tropes constitutes racialization in Danish welfare politics and professionalism.

This article's research question is: How and why do current Danish welfare state politics urge 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women to become emancipated? We focus on how controlling images work in complex ways through oxymoronic liberal arguments (cf. Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022, 41), and how and why welfare professions are called upon and tasked to enforce the emancipation of 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women. Thus, the article will contribute with knowledge about the relation between controlling images, welfare professionalism and the racial welfare state, which is also a capitalist undertaking trading on its ideological liberalist foundation. As our analyses exhibit, such images are not only available as political representations or dominating images in the media, but function as complex racializing technologies of concern within welfare and integration practices. This is not unlike what Amalia Sa'ar (2005) has conceptualized as "the liberal bargain", promising women a better future with freedom, rights and protection, but assuming linear universal progression while denying its racial tracking.

Assemblage of document material

The article is based on a selection of documents exemplary of how Danish welfare politics and policies in the 2020s call upon welfare professionals to emancipate 'immigrant' women. Our assemblage of documents contains terms of reference and recommendations from *The commission for the forgotten women's struggle for liberation*[3] *[Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp]* (2022b, 2022a), which sparked and reinvigorated our interest in gendered racism in welfare work (Brodersen & Øland 2023). We have thus arrived at the material from a position as researchers in welfare work where we have observed an increasing focus on 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women as a target group.

The commission was initiated by the former Social Democratic government in January 2022 to combat what was termed a "parallel normality" in which the "freedom of girls or women is non-existent and where their individual rights are of no importance if they collide with the honor of the family" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022b, 1).[4] The focus of the commission was set on combatting "honor-related social control", claiming "values that should apply for all people living in Denmark" (ibid., 2), and to "develop recommendations concerning how girls and women from immigrant communities can be supported in having the opportunity to decide in matters of their own lives" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 1). The commission consists of a chairperson and nine members who are either politicians or welfare professionals within social work who engage with ethnic minorities in different ways.

Furthermore, our corpus contains documents describing current policies such as interventions predating the commission and characterized by being intertwined with the commission's work. The policy *Mandatory offer to learn [Obligatorisk læringstilbud],* the title being an oxymoron in itself, was prepared in 2018 by the former liberal-conservative government (Børne- og Socialministeriet 2018), and it aims to ensure "opportunities to learn Danish, democratic norms and values, and Danish traditions for all children in Denmark" (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet 2019, 1). However, the policy exclusively targets one-year-olds, who are not attending day-care, and their parents living in so-called marginalized housing areas. As such, location works to spare the white middle class from this intervention, despite the policy's sentiment applying to 'all children'. This makes it a racializing intervention. In addition to "language stimulation" (ibid., 7), the intervention involves mandatory teaching of parents about Scandinavian child rearing. Finally, our corpus includes the curriculum text for the educational module *Educational work in relation to negative social control [Pædagogisk arbejde i relation til negativ social kontrol]* provided

by University College Copenhagen (n.d.), and governmental reports and interventions concerning the employment of 'immigrants', especially 'immigrant' women (Regeringen 2021; SIRI 2021). As can be seen, there is no unifying characteristic of the documents at face value, but they are an appropriate assemblage of documents for this article's specific research purpose, because each document exemplifies particular assumptions and scripts in welfare politics and policies that are interconnected, and therefore suited to our analysis of controlling images.

Controlling images as an analytical lens

To understand the urging of 'immigrant' women to become emancipated through Danish welfare professionalism, we turn to Patricia Hill Collins' (2000, 2019) influential work within the tradition of Black feminist thought, in particular, her concept of controlling images, which she originally designed to capture a set of stereotypes that fuel the continuous subordination of Black women through language and culture in the US. Even though Collins (2019, 79) makes the point that controlling images resemble stereotypes, she prefers the term "controlling images" because it signals a focus on "the work they [the images] do in structuring unequal power relations". Further, Collins notes how the work of images is actively constructed by individuals, whereas stereotypes signal passive consumers of information (ibid.). Following these insights, we do not use stereotypes as a theoretical concept in our analysis.

Collins (2000) identifies four interrelated controlling images that are deeply intertwined with US economic history of slavery, the legal system, and the labor market. These images – the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother and the jezebel – circulate within the education system, mass media and government agencies, and they are all "designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (ibid., 69).[5]

Controlling images are relational and provide interconnected social scripts for understanding social hierarchies of a society (Collins 2019, 80), and they display tropes of a racialized femininity and provide ideological justification for the oppression of Black women. The images work as operators and sites for broader political domination (and resistance) within the social class structure (ibid.,78-80). By weaving specific social portraits produced discursively into a common and widespread image, controlling images as an analytical lens draws on an intersectional perspective. As such, controlling images can reveal "the specific contours of Black women's objectification as well as the ways in which oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and class intersect" (Collins 2000, 72).

In this article, we find the concept of controlling images fruitful to investigate the gendered and racialized strategies aimed at 'Muslim' and 'immigrant' women operated by the Danish welfare state. We acknowledge that the Danish context differs from the US context, and we will not reproduce the images that Collins has identified. However, we do not think of systems of domination and exploitation as being confined within a nation-state logic, but as historical and social arrangements that are always entangled with other regions (Lowe 2015) and with global relations of postcoloniality as well as global racial capitalism (Go 2021, 40). This means that the forms of domination and differentiation may have similar ways of working, which explains our application of the concept. Still, our images need to be situated and explained outside the US, in this case within the Danish context of European Orientalist and racialized logics.

Consequently, we apply the concept of controlling images as a heuristic to tease out specific and historically grounded controlling images from the Danish context. We construct these specific images by pointing to what we see as the infrastructure of Collins' controlling images, i.e., the elements working from within the controlling images. Collins (2000, 70-72) identifies how binary thinking and the casting of the Other, who equals an oppositionist that must be combatted and surveilled, is central to how controlling images work.

This has guided our analytical strategy when reading and analyzing the documents. The main point is that the Other appears as a threat and an object to be fought. Collins elaborates on the thinking embedded in controlling images by disaggregating the elements, i.e., the interdependent concepts constructing the controlling images:

> *The foundations of intersecting oppressions become grounded in interdependent concepts of binary thinking, oppositional difference, objectification, and social hierarchy. With domination based on difference forming an essential underpinning for this entire system of thought, these concepts invariably imply relationships of superiority and inferiority, hierarchical bonds that mesh with political economies of race, gender, and class oppression. (ibid., 71)*

In our analysis, we seek to identify the interdependent concepts (binaries, oppositional difference, objectification, and social hierarchy) that function as vehicles for the intersecting oppressions that construct 'Muslim' and 'immigrant' girls and women and which, in effect, may deny them the status as fully human subjects – as welfare strategies rely on binaries and oppositional difference to 'rescue' them. Through this analytical strategy, we have assembled two main controlling images: the image of the unfree immigrant housewife, and the image of the inhibited immigrant girl.[6] Both of these images work through oxymoronic liberal arguments and the welfare professionals are tasked with emancipation based on these images. The way in which this appears is unfolded below – with reference to the documents and with research literature to contextualize, historicize and make sense of the controlling images identified in a current Danish context.

The image of the unfree immigrant housewife

One image appears significant throughout the documents, namely the image of the unfree immigrant housewife signifying a woman who is, allegedly, oppressed and tied to her family and husband. Overall, this image problematizes the 'immigrant' woman and depicts her as someone who works as a housewife rather than having a paid job: "women with minority backgrounds are kept at home instead of participating in the job market; they are pushed back into religious marriages in spite of being divorced in accordance with Danish law, and they are over-represented in women's shelters" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022b, 1). As such, this controlling image builds on an implicit oppositional difference to an image of an emancipated woman who meets ideals of independence and freedom through work and participation in the labor market. However, the problematization of the 'immigrant' housewife not only singles out her (absent) will to contribute to society's economy and production, but further accentuates the problematic nature and dynamic of the 'immigrant' home and family, which her supposed status as an oppressed unfree immigrant housewife maintains. The oppositional difference and the Othering that takes place in this image provides reasons for the current welfare policy's efforts to emancipate the imagined immigrant housewife and to justify welfare professionalism's attempts to push her out of the home.

The image of the unfree immigrant housewife becomes effective through the articulation of another oppositional difference, namely an alleged resistance to 'Danish' culture. The foreword to the recommendations from the commission states, "A great many minority-ethnic Danes have made good efforts to integrate themselves in Denmark (…). Unfortunately, there are also many with a minority-ethnic background who are mentally in another place; who live according to another culture and in a parallel normality" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 3). Further, the commission states:

> *Finally, there is one group of women that has adopted the culture of honor to such a great extent that they do not realize its problems, and maybe even play an active role in the continuation of them and in the execution of*

> *honor related social control. For these girls and women, Danish democratic values and rights of freedom need to be made clear to them so that these values will get under their skin (ibid., 4).*

The controlling image of the unfree immigrant housewife portrays the 'immigrant' housewife as living in a "parallel normality" and as accepting a "culture of honor", thus constituting a threat to Danish values and society. This threat is not only tied to her absence from the labor market, but also to her reproduction and execution of "honor-related social control" that gets coded as 'Muslim culture' through the mentioning of women with a background in MENAPT: Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey (ibid.).[7] The contrasting of 'Danish culture' with 'Muslim culture' works as an argument for emancipating the 'immigrant' housewife. This makes sense because of an implicit and opposing idea of Danish society as being marked by modern, enlightened, and rational thinking versus a 'Muslim' 'parallel society' characterized by underdevelopment and patriarchal and oppressive practices. According to Abu-Lughod (2013, 31), this image of 'Muslim culture' as underdeveloped draws on a widespread "cultural framing" where reasons and explanations are sought for in Islam, but not in the colonial and imperial histories of Europe. This framing also becomes apparent in the discourse on so-called honor crimes, depicting 'Muslim' societies as places where honor is closely connected to morality (ibid, 119-120). Sara Farris (2017, 7) notes that the assumed backwardness builds on a dominant notion that gender relations in the Western part of the world are more advanced and must therefore be taught to 'Muslim' women. The controlling image of the unfree immigrant housewife can be seen as conveying such knowledge about 'Muslim' culture in a densified form. In this way the image enables and serves as a reason for surveillance and intervention. 'Muslim' women (and 'Muslim' people in general) are positioned as the Other and interventions are justified by reference to this Other's nature as a primitive, undeveloped and inferior nature. In his writing on Orientalism, Said (2003, 32) points to how knowledge on the Orient works as a means to elevate oneself and to create and dominate the Other "[a]nd authority here means for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it' – the Oriental country – since we know it and it exists *as* we know it". As such, this controlling image draws on a European Orientalist logic of binaries and oppositional difference.

Welfare professionalism and surveillance of the unfree immigrant housewife

The image of the unfree immigrant housewife works to construe 'immigrant' women as putatively oppressed and underdeveloped, thereby turning them into an object of welfare state interventions that address 'immigrant' women and their families' everyday lives. In the commission's recommendations, the municipal authorities are called upon to take on greater responsibility and proactively respond to so-called honor-related social control, which are elements in the construction of the controlling image of the unfree immigrant housewife:

> *The staff from the local authorities, whom the citizens meet in their everyday lives, has a major task and an important responsibility as a communicator of the rights and duties that apply to everyone in Danish society. For this reason, the commission believes it is critical that the front-line workers, who encounter honor-related social control during their daily work, should be better qualified to intervene. Further, these employees must be met with strong support from the community in their effort to stand firm in their professional competence when encountering complicated conflicts rooted in cultural differences. (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 6)*

Again, cultural differences are construed as an oppositional and threatening difference that must be combatted. A central focus of the intervention

is parenting in 'immigrant' families, by which the commission recommends that health visitors[8] become the new spearhead for surveillance and correction of parenting practices: "The commission recommends that the unique access of the health visitors to children and new parents should be utilized more actively in order to detect and report on honor-related social control – i.e. via regular use of screening tools when encountering the parents [in the school]" (ibid., 7).

As health visitors have access to the homes of 'immigrant' families, and because they possess knowledge on the child's so-called normal development and good parenting, they are positioned as a pivotal profession. In the description of their tasks and importance, the image of the cultural inferior and oppressed 'unfree immigrant women' – confined to the home – functions as a strong argument for the emancipating practices of welfare professionalism:

> *It is the conviction of the commission that there is potential in the health visitors' contact with minority ethnic mothers, in particular, who live an isolated life behind the walls of their home, without contact to their surrounding community. These can be women who do not yet master the Danish language, who are not yet entering the job market, and who do not have a network. However, it can also be women who are subject to limitations imposed by their spouse, family and network, which means that they rarely engage in the world outside of a very limited sphere. (ibid., 7)*

In a wider sense, the emphasis placed on (the knowledge and access of) the health visitors expresses a tendency by which welfare workers, due to their positions close to citizens, are urged to exercise more explicit and firm control as part of their work. This demand is also expressed by the commission as it stresses the central role of social educators and teachers in interventions against 'honor-related social control' and the common project of emancipating 'immigrant' women and girls, prolonging the scope of intervention from child rearing and day-care institutions to schools and education as such. Thinking with Said (2003, 27), we argue that the Danish welfare professionals are called upon to perform a range of practices in relation to 'honor-related social control'. This entails describing and making statements about social control, etc., based on knowledge about 'cultural difference'. We argue that this mimics Orientalism as described by Said (2003, 15): "Orientalism as a kind of willed human work [...] in all its historical complexity, detail, and worth without at the same time losing sight of the alliance between cultural work, political tendencies, the state, and the specific realities of domination". In other words, we point to *how* welfare professionals' willed human work not only connects to politics in the current situation, but also is invoked to perform according to the dominant political will.

The emancipation of the 'immigrant' housewife through paid labor

Welfare professionalism is tasked with addressing the socially *reproductive* aspects of the 'immigrant' housewife – i.e. to counter an alleged fear of her passing on a non-Danish, 'Muslim culture' to next generations. However, welfare policy and its calls for professionalism also addresses *productive* aspects of the 'immigrant' housewife, as efforts are directed at emancipating 'immigrant' women from the home and making 'them' available to the labor market.

This object is clearly put forward in the initiatives taken by the government agency SIRI (n.d.). While these initiatives are levelled at the recruitment of "women with non-Western backgrounds" (ibid.), they aim to increase the employment of 'immigrants' in the Danish labor market in general. Following an evaluation of municipal advancements to improve the employment rates of 'immigrants', the Minister for Integration stated a need for fierce and more effective efforts to increase the employment of "non-Western immigrants" (VIVE 2020; Regeringen 2021). The *Recruitment guide* [*Rekrutteringsguide*] published by SIRI begins with

a description illustrating the idea of a non-Danish/Western woman:

> *A larger number of women are living in relative isolation from Danish society, have limited knowledge of Danish norms, and experience social marginalization. […] Some of these women are not aware of where to get help and advice. For these women, their understanding of the municipality often comes from their network. This might result in the women being reserved in their initial contact with the municipality, and that they wish as a starting point to have a minimum of contact with the municipality. (SIRI 2021, 6-7)*

According to this rationale, to make the 'immigrant' housewife employable it is necessary to establish contact and 'motivate' her. The SIRI guide proposes different methods, from using municipal registers to identify the women, to outreach work, and using already employed 'immigrant' women in local networks as "ambassadors" (ibid., 13-19). The aim is to push non-Western 'immigrant' women into the labor market, and, as such, to convert the unpaid work they are assumed to perform in the household and for the family into work that is in demand in the Danish labor market. Thus, a report evaluating measures taken to match immigrant labor with the needs of different businesses reveals that a larger proportion of 'immigrant' women are increasingly being employed in the "health and care businesses" of the public sector (VIVE 2020, 39-40). In this way, the employability of the 'immigrant' housewife is linked to state initiatives to supply the welfare system with so-called 'warm hands' in a situation framed as a care crisis.

Through the transformation of the 'immigrant' housewife from being dependent on husband, family and culture into an independent woman selling her work on a market, she is made productive and useful to Danish society. As pointed out by Henriette Buus (2001), the plea for this transformation of gendered labor reflects how the life-form of the housewife is no longer considered independent and valuable. The entrance of the 'immigrant' housewife on the market for paid labor can in one sense be paralleled to the general trend of women's employment in Denmark. However, the controlling image of the unfree immigrant housewife shows how the push to transform the labor of the 'immigrant' woman' is intimately connected to the mobilization of historically grounded Orientalist visions of the Other and the continuous downgrading and subordination of 'immigrant' and/or 'Muslim' women (Said 2003; Abu-Lughod 2015). The term 'non-Western', currently used in policy documents, sums up the racializing content, which works as an implicit reason for pushing the 'immigrant' woman out of her home and into the job market. The employed 'immigrant' woman is promised dignity and human worth, which comes with her new status as being independent from her husband and the patriarchal culture. However, this new 'freedom' does not come without a cost, as it often implies entrance into low-paid positions in care and domestic work. Farris (2017, 15) spells out the contradiction: migrant women are urged to "emancipate themselves by entering the productive public sphere", but in reality, they are often "confined to care and domestic work in the private sphere". In her writings on racial capitalism, Gargi Bhattacharyya (2018) also points out how the work of migrant women has typically been limited to housekeeping and care work in unpaid or low-paid positions. This history is intertwined with the development of capitalist states, where cheap labor has enabled the accumulation of values (ibid., 125-149).

The controlling image of the unfree immigrant housewife can be said to exemplify racial capitalism due to the way this image works to degrade the value of 'non-Western' 'immigrant' women, and, at the same time, extract and benefit from their (un)paid labor. Following Bhattacharyya, we see how Danish capitalism, aided by Danish welfare politics and professionalism, builds on racialized differentiation, designating different status to 'workers' and 'non-workers' (ibid., iv). This differentiation is present in the valuations of 'immigrant' women being available and productive on a labor market, and these valuations overlap with a differentiation between the status of citizens versus non-citizens. The workings of this differentiation

can be further understood in relation to the (Danish, social democratic) ideal of the productive, working human being who is driven by a faith in innovation and who strives to create and optimize their own achievements (Nissen et al. 2015, 141). This ideal is present in the early stages of the construction of the social democratic welfare state, exposed by the concern for the unproductive human and the political initiatives to prevent idleness (ibid., 142). The productive human being still functions as a model for welfare politics and its focus on productive versus unproductive citizens.

It is worth stressing how the current attempts to encourage 'immigrant' women to abandon their status as housewives are framed as an act of emancipation and not as coercion. To understand how this works, it is vital to acknowledge that liberalism, as the ideological basis for capitalism, operates within the social democratic welfare state even though it is often presented as its opposite. According to Lisa Lowe (2015, 7), "the genealogy of modern liberalism is [thus] also a genealogy of modern race; racial differences and distinctions designate the boundaries of the human and endure as remainders attesting to the violence of liberal universality". Liberal ideas, such as rights, emancipation, freedom, free labor, and free trade were first introduced during the colonial period, that is, at a time when they appeared in sharp contrast to the governing practices. Lowe states, however, that liberalism made it possible to renew and strengthen exploitative relations, as these became part of a register of free will and choice. The mindset of colonial rule did not disappear; rather, it was reinvented in a new form of governance (ibid., 16). This makes it relevant to point out how current social inequalities are "the legacy of processes through which 'the human' is 'freed' by liberal forms, while other subjects, practices, and geographies are placed at a distance from 'the human'" (ibid. 3). The logics that civilize and provide freedom for some are thus the exact same dividing logics that constitute others as uncivilized and unfree through controlling images which legitimize interventions and designate positions at the lower echelons of society. As stated earlier, Denmark is not an outsider in relation to colonialism: colonial relations are rewritten and veiled under an oxymoronic liberalism, which promises freedom through labor in low-status occupations.

The image of the inhibited immigrant girl

Across the documents, an image of an inhibited immigrant girl who calls for emancipation can be carved out. Overall, this image problematizes girlhood in 'immigrant' families and communities. It also stigmatizes socialization by 'immigrant' parents, because this kind of upbringing supposedly does not lead to the becoming of a Nordic or Scandinavian girl aligned with the Danish and Scandinavian educational tradition. The image legitimizes restriction and surveillance, which are supposed to replace primary socialization in migrant families with the state's socialization in daycare and school. This oxymoronic sense-making – to emancipate based on stigmatization and surveillance – will be unpacked below.

Binaries and oppositional differences play a pivotal role in the construction of this image. In the commission's recommendations it is stated: "In Denmark, children normally increase their right to self-determination and opportunity to make their own choices as they get older. This move towards freedom and independence is, however, not seen in families where the culture of honor is prevalent. Here, the opposite pattern is more likely" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 9). In this example, human difference is clearly related to stages of liberal deeds and is moreover shaped by binary thinking, which makes the difference an oppositional difference. Furthermore, the report construes "ethnic minority parents" as people who raise their children based on "what they know", insinuating that they lack proper knowledge and that "what they know" is based on "patterns that do not fit Danish society" (ibid.).

The binary difference and the social hierarchization of difference are also stressed in the *Mandatory offer to learn* manual (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet 2019), which is written directly to the professionals. In the manual the ability to

help oneself and be resourceful is presented as something 'immigrant' parents are ignorant about and which the (Danish) professionals should attend to:

> *Being self-reliant is central to the tradition of Scandinavian day-care. Though, in the Mandatory offer to learn you should pay attention to parents who do not know why you do things as you do, and therefore may misunderstand your actions and feel that you do not take care of their children. (ibid., 20)*

This alleged opposition to Danish society is also confronted through forced distribution of ethnic minority children in day-care to ensure that day-care "mirrors the population" as depicted in this quote: "The commission (…) wants to avoid closed communities where oppression of girls' and women's liberty is normal. It is essential to ensure that patriarchal attitudes cannot exist in a protected vacuum without being challenged and confronted by Danish values pertaining to equality and human rights for all" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 10). Therefore, day-care with a high percentage of ethnic minority children should be avoided (ibid.). The idea seems to be that day-care should not mirror the local community but rather the commission's idea of how the population ought to be composed – to ensure that 'immigrant' girls will become emancipated like Nordic girls, i.e., transformed into the image of state socialization.

In other words, difference is understood as an oppositional difference that needs to be managed by the means of well-intentioned interventions. Guidance, restrictions and prohibitions – in the name of democracy – aim to help the girls. This corresponds with Trine Øland (2019, 189), who discusses how welfare work reduces the Other to a negotiable Other "to be either excluded or to be fixed, conquered and overcome and thus disappeared into the national fabric". Øland further states (ibid.) that even though immigrants and refugees are ascribed rights, "welfare work by and large doesn't recognise the Other as a respectable Other in its own right, as a singularity existent in the present and living an alternative to the grand narratives of exclusive progress and modernity". In accordance with this, Abu-Lughod (2015, 43) suggests that we "might have to accept the possibility of difference: Can we only free Afghan women to be 'like us' or might we have to recognize that even after 'liberation' from the Taliban, they might want different things than we would want for them?" The point is that to disentangle knowledge about difference from an Orientalist tradition, theorizing difference must take its departure from another place.

The antithesis of the Nordic girl

One vital part of this oppositional difference relates to the headscarf. The "Muslim girl" is defined by the commission as wearing a headscarf and is made an object, an Other, who is denied her own identity and agency, and is instead defined in a very narrow sense (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 12). The 'immigrant' girl is ascribed 'Muslim norms' by the commission, which states, "it is absolutely wrong when Muslim girls at a very early age are subjected to sexualized norms of decency and dressed in a headscarf" (ibid.). Such wording only makes sense because the 'Muslim' girl is understood as the exact opposite to the celebrated 'free Nordic' girl, who makes her own choices and has her own identity. In other words, the controlling image of the inhibited immigrant girl is the negation of "the Nordic girl" who is "smart, free, strong, and safe to be free" (Oinas 2017, 179). The antithesis of this image appears when 'Danish values' and 'Nordic childhood' are voiced in Danish welfare politics. The risk of naming welfare state practices as Nordic or Danish is that 'Nordicness' and 'Danishness' then resembles notions of a racialized group identity, and this labelling has exclusionary effects.

In this way, the 'Muslim' girl is racialized as an effect of being considered inferior, oppressed, inhibited – and a minor, who should not be listened to: "The commission does not think that minor girls should have the responsibility to either choose or decline such a significant religious symbol as a

headscarf" and "[a] girl in primary school is simply not old enough to decide to wear a headscarf. For this reason, it is the commission's firm belief that it should not be allowed for girls to wear a headscarf in primary school" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022a, 12).

Parallel to the image of the unfree immigrant housewife, where emancipation is accomplished by entering the market for paid labor, the image of the inhibited immigrant girl refers to emancipation through the abandonment of the headscarf, which works as a symbol of the so-called sexualized norms of decency. Freedom and choice are celebrated as ultimate liberal values in the Danish welfare state, and 'immigrants' must align themselves with these values. This paradoxically means that 'immigrant' girls are demanded to live according to choice, but cannot choose to wear a headscarf. As Abu-Lughod (2015, 19) reminds us, the simplistic idea about freedom and choice has its flaws, and choice does not necessarily pave the way for a worthy life, just as "secularism has not brought women's freedom or equality to the West". Thus, to think that 'Muslim' women lack choice is to ignore, "the extent to which all choice is conditioned by as well as imbricated with power, and the extent to which choice itself is an impoverished amount of freedom" (ibid., citing Wendy Brown).

The significance of this simplistic differentiation, bordering citizens and non-citizens, can be identified when relating to our earlier point about racial capitalism playing a role as a structuring logic of the image of the unfree immigrant housewife. The racial differentiation already set in place concerning girls prepares them for roles in capitalist production. As Bhattacharyya (2018, 125–49) has suggested, bordering is about giving different rights and freedoms to different groups of people. Lowe (2015, 150) also points to this dynamic when she identifies differentiation as being an essential part of the logic of capitalism: "[C]apitalism expands not through rendering all labor, resources, and markets across the world identical, but by precisely seizing upon colonial divisions, identifying particular regions for production and others for neglect, certain populations for exploitation and still others for disposal". Following this argument, we interpret the racial differentiation and hierarchization that plays out while welfare workers intend to save 'immigrant' girls as a way of designating them future roles in capitalism.

Thus, within this controlling image 'immigrant' girls are objectified, surveilled and told how to perform and act, and not ascribed agency. In this way, 'immigrant' girls are prepared for a passive and docile role in the machinery of society and not thought of as agentic participants, citizens or partners who are cut out for dialogue on an equal footing. Racial differences and distinctions, produced by the dehumanizing oppositional difference and objectification working from within the controlling image, thus allocate boundaries of the human within this modern welfare state framework. Simone Browne (2015, 7) refers to Silvia Wynter's sociogenetic principle and writes it is "the organizational framework of our present human condition that names what is and what is not bounded within the category of the human, and that fixes and frames blackness as an object of surveillance". Browne points to surveillance as vital to modernity and that the seeing eye is white. This is also the case in our assemblage of documents. Browne (2015) uses the term "intersecting surveillances", which is built on Collins' intersectional paradigms, to explain how oppressions work in tandem and produce injustice through practices and policies of surveillance. This also applies in our case: 'immigrant' girls and their parents are surveilled from many angles, which reinforces domination based on differentiation, objectification and social hierarchy.

These attempts to ensure 'integration' can be interpreted as what Jaffe-Walter (2016, 2) terms practices of coercive assimilation towards 'Muslim' girls in Danish schools: practices cloaked in benevolent discourses of care and concern. The wording "coercive concern" captures how these efforts, as well as the ones we study in this article, become effective through the intertwinement of freedom and control (ibid., 6).

It is striking that the differentiation and hierarchization of the category of the human contradicts how "the Scandinavian educational tradition"

is conceived of and praised in Danish welfare policy directed at welfare professionals, for instance, in the *Mandatory offer to learn* manual under the heading "Cultural and democratic formation": "The Scandinavian pedagogical tradition is built upon an understanding of democracy where all children have the opportunity to express themselves and have their needs and interests met regardless of background and differences" (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet 2019, 17). However, in the publication differences in needs and interests are soon narrowed down to religious festivals and traditions, which should be based on Danish norms; only superficial differences in the form of different festival traditions are imaginable and legitimate. As noted previously, differences are not accepted, but instead deemed in need of erasure and replacement to 'rescue' the 'immigrant' girl and women.

The welfare worker as an authority

As part of the objectification of the inhibited immigrant girl – and the interventions, restrictions and prohibitions proposed – the welfare worker as a public authority and knowledge as a neutral foundation for governance seem to be important prerequisites to make the controlling image work. "Mandatory offer to learn" is an oxymoron: the offer is obligatory, an order for those targeted by the policy. In the wording of the policy, the day-care manager and the social educators form a regulatory authority with a legal capacity: "The day-care manager and the pedagogical personnel have the role of an authority in the mandatory offer to learn because they have to keep a record of the children's attendance compared to the required number of hours, and of the parents' attendance in the courses, and they should notify the authorities if deviations occur" (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet 2019, 3). It is explained as a practicality: it should be decided who will do the registration, and it is said to be important to make clear announcements about registering to "build a collaboration with the parents that is based on respect and trust" (ibid.).

However, the policy mentions a number of serious sanctions for the targeted 'immigrant' parents, who are warned: "If the parents do not admit their child in the mandatory offer to learn, or take care of the intervention themselves, the municipal authorities must decide to withdraw the child benefit" (ibid., 2). The day-care professionals also risk being brought to justice and penalized if they do not perform their role: "The manager of the day-care institution is responsible for the registration and controlling of these children's attendance and for reporting to the municipal authorities, in cases where a child's attendance over a period of time is too low or too high" (Børne- og Socialministeriet 2018, 3).

The day-care employee is thus positioned as superior and as an authority. In this way, the controlling image trades on welfare professionals being employed by the welfare state, which takes advantage of the professionals as an authority in practice and for direct political reasons. Their professionalism is cast as per definition in compliance with the prevailing welfare policies. Hence, this is not considered to constitute a professionalism of its own, with distance and relative autonomy. Rather, the state seeks to control the professionals to control the 'immigrant' parents – that is, to combat putative social control in 'immigrant' families. This is seen when knowledge about social control is suggested as a curriculum in social educator and teacher training courses, as stated by the commission: "It is in the nick of time to ensure that the professional staff in day-care institutions and schools receive training in order to understand, identify and deal with honor-related social control" (Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp 2022, 8). To fulfil this aim, the professionals are suggested to attend a new educational module in further education titled "Pedagogical work in relation to negative social control", directed at teachers and social educators in schools, after school programs and day-care institutions. The commission states that "more knowledge will lead to less reluctance and more action in facing these issues" (ibid.). Thus, the commission considers knowledge to be unambiguous and applicable in ways which can immediately be turned into

actions that support the prevailing welfare policy. Through the further training of social workers, social educators and teachers, the commission expects that welfare workers will be able (and willing) to identify subjects who are showing signs of an oppositionist Other.

Conclusion

In this article, we have analyzed how current Danish welfare state politics and policies urge 'Muslim' and 'immigrant' women and girls to become emancipated through the incitement and engagement of welfare professionals. Furthermore, we have pointed to how these efforts are embedded in a political-economic logic, where racial capitalism is cloaked under liberal and social-democratic ideas.

Through our analytical construction of the controlling images, the unfree immigrant housewife and the inhibited immigrant girl respectively, we have scrutinized how these images are built on a common structure of racialization. Drawing on oppositional differences, the controlling images are performative of social and cultural recognizable images which convey a gendered and racialized content. The controlling images connect to sexist and racist logics that take shape as processes of Othering in welfare politics and professionalism. We understand this as a form of gendered racism, where sexism and racism overlap or even reinforce each other (Neubeck & Cazenave 2002).

The article has highlighted how welfare professionals are called upon to enforce 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women to seek emancipation from 'patriarchal culture', and how this enforcement is sustained by policies, which work through oxymoronic liberal arguments where coercion and care compose an irresistible invitation to freedom. As such, the article has emphasized how visions of the nation state incorporate women's bodies in processes where welfare professionals, as agents, are regarded as vital players in promoting liberal-economic thinking, as a promise of modernity and freedom.

Our analysis has exposed a paradox in the dynamic of gendered racism in the present Danish context, namely the paradox of racialized Danish welfare politics and professionalism framed in a space of the emancipation of 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women. This paradox can also be observed behind the racialized dual standard in the political discourse on families, where freedom of choice in relation to (white, heteronormative) families is generally valued as positive, while similar practices are problematized in families with immigrant backgrounds (Stormhøj 2021, 99-102). This double standard is accepted because white women are considered as making rational, independent choices, whereas 'immigrant' women are regarded as merely adapting to suppressive, cultural traditions.

However, the welfare state policy analyzed in this article, including its dominant controlling images of 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women and girls, is grounded within capitalism in ideologies serving "the reproduction of the material conditions of production" (Farris 2017, 12). Thus, with this article, we have contributed to existing research literature on prevailing dominant stereotypes and images of the oppressed 'immigrant' woman and girl. We have done so by pointing to the observation that the stereotyping and controlling images are not only a discursive matter of media or political debates, but also a complex matter of welfare professions as lubricating agents invoked to serve the racist and capitalist welfare state and its ideological foundation in liberalism.

To further understand the enforced emancipation of 'immigrant' women, we have pointed to the historical intertwinement of social democratism, liberalism and global colonial relations. The logic embedded in the enforcement of freedom on 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women can be viewed as an expression of how, even in a present context, "ideas of progress and development justifies colonialism and coloniality" (Suárez-Krabbe 2015, 3). By applying controlling images as an analytical lens, we have exposed social domination as being based on a system of thought which works through historically racialized, differential thinking about progressivism and developmentalism as

seeking to 'rescue' 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' women and girls. Since controlling images are actively constructed by individuals, however historically embedded individuals are, these images can be undone by exposing the contradictions and paradoxes they bring about, displacing the hierarchical constructions on which they are based.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. 1991. Writing against Culture. In: Fox, R.D. ed. *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present.* Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 137–162.

Abu-Lughod, L. 2015. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* First Harvard University Press paperback edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press.

Andreassen, R. 2012. Gender as a Tool in Danish Debates about Muslims. In: Nielsen, J. ed. *Islam in Denmark.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 113- 26.

Andreassen, R. 2013. Take off That Veil and Give Me Access to Your Body: An Analysis of Danish Debates About Muslim Women's Head and Body Covering. In: Schrover, M. and Deirdre, M.M. eds. *Gender, Migration and Categorisation*. IMISCOE Research. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 215–29.

Bhattacharyya, G. 2018. *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. Cultural Studies and Marxism. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Brodersen, M., and Øland, T. 2023. Kvindens paradoksale frigørelse i velfærdsarbejdets brændpunkt. In: Øland, T. ed. *Velfærdsarbejdets paradokser.* Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 127-140.

Browne, S. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Buus, H. 2001. Velfærdsstatens Kvindeliv - Etablering, Udvikling, Afvikling? *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning.* 10(2), 69–78.

Børne- og Socialministeriet. 2018. Aftale Mellem Regeringen (Venstre, Liberal Alliance Og Konservative), Socialdemokratiet Og Dansk Folkeparti Om Delaftale På Børne- Og Socialministeriets Område Om Obligatorisk Læringstilbud Til 1-Årige i Udsatte Boligområder Og Skærpet Straf for Pligtforsømmelse for Ledere i Offentlig Tjeneste Eller Hverv. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.regeringen.dk/media/5282/aftaletekst-om-obligatorisk-laeringstilbud-og-skaerpet-straf.pdf

Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet. 2019. Obligatorisk Læringstilbud. Indhold udarbejdet af Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut for Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.uvm.dk/-/media/filer/uvm/aktuelt/pdf-19/190806-haandbogen-til-obligatorisk-laeringstilbud.pdf

Collins, P.H. 2000. Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images. *Black Feminist Thought*. New York and London: Routledge, 85-112.

Collins, P.H. 2019. 11: Controlling Images. In: Weiss, G., Salamon, G. and Murphy, A.V. eds. *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 77–82.

Farris, S.R. 2017. *In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Go, J. 2021. Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism. *Sociological Theory.* 39(1), 38–47.

Goldberg, D.T. 2009. *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Jaffe-Walter, R. 2016. *Coercive Concern: Nationalism, Liberalism, and the Schooling of Muslim Youth*. Anthropology of Policy. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Jensen, L. 2015. Postcolonial Denmark: Beyond the Rot of Colonialism? *Postcolonial Studies.* 18(4), 440–52.

Keskinen, S. 2019. Intra-Nordic Differences, Colonial/Racial Histories and National Narratives: Rewriting Finnish History. *Scandinavian Studies.* 91(1–2), 163–81.

Keskinen, S. 2022. *Mobilising the Racialised 'Others': Postethnic Activism, Neoliberalisation and Racial Politics*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp. 2022a. Delanbefalinger fra Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.denglemtekvindekamp.dk/media/8995/delanbefalinger-kommissionen-for-den-glemte-kvindekamp-publikation.pdf

Kommissionen for den glemte kvindekamp. 2022b. Kommissorium. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: http://denglemtekvindekamp.dk/om-kommissionen/kommissorium/.

Loftsdóttir, K., and Jensen, L. eds. 2012. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. Studies in Migration and Diaspora. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor and Francis.

Lowe, L. 2015. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Neubeck, K.J., and Cazenave, N.A. 2001. *Welfare Racism: Playing the Race Card against America's Poor*. New York: Routledge.

Nissen, M.A., Fallov, M. A., Ringø, P., Kjaerulff, J. and Birk, R.H. 2015. Det produktive menneske: om neoliberalisme, politiske ideer og socialt arbejde som forandringsagent. *Social Kritik.* 27(141): 14–27.

Oinas, E. 2017. The Girl and the Feminist State? Subjectification Projects in the Nordic Welfare State. In: Formark, B., Mulari, H. and Voipio, M. eds. *Nordic Girlhoods. New Perspectives and Outlooks.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Padovan-Özdemir, M. and Øland, T. 2022. *Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees: Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity*. Routledge Research in Race and Ethnicity. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Regeringen. 2021. Ny rapport om indvandreres beskæftigelse understreger behov for ny indsats. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://bm.dk/nyheder-presse/pressemeddelelser/2021/04/regeringen-ny-rapport-om-indvandreres-beskaeftigelse-understreger-behov-for-ny-indsats/.

Sa'ar, A. 2005. Postcolonial Feminism, the Politics of Identification, and the Liberal Bargain. *Gender & Society.* 19(5), 680–700.

Said, E.W. 2003. *Orientalism*. Facsimile edition. Penguin Modern Classics. London: Penguin.

Schclarek Mulinari, L., and Keskinen, S. 2022. Racial Profiling in the Racial Welfare State: Examining the Order of Policing in the Nordic Region. *Theoretical Criminology.* 26(3), 377–95.

Scott, J.W. 2012. Emancipation and Equality: A Critical Genealogy. Universiteit Utrecht: Treaty of Utrecht Chair.

SIRI. 2021. Rekrutteringsguide: En guide til at opsøge og rekruttere selvforsørgende kvinder med ikke-vestlig baggrund i beskæftigelsesrettede forløb. Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, Styrelsen for International Rekruttering og Integration. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.integrationsviden.dk/beskaeftigelse/flygtninge-indvandrerkvinder-i-beskaeftigelse/guide-til-rekruttering-af-ikke-vestlige-aegtefaelleforsorgede-kvinder

SIRI. n.d. Projektet - Flere Indvandrerkvinder i Beskæftigelse (KIB). Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet; Styrelsen for International Rekruttering og Integration. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.integrationsviden.dk/kib.

Stormhøj, C. 2021. 'Danishness', Repressive Immigration Policies and Exclusionary Framings of Gender Equality. In: Keskinen, S., Stoltz, P. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Feminisms in the Nordic Region: Neoliberalism, Nationalism and Decolonial Critique*, Gender and Politics. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 89–109.

Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2015. *Race, Rights, and Rebels: Alternatives to Human Rights and Development from the Global South*. Global Critical Caribbean Thought. London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd.

Toivanen, M., Skaptadottir, U.D. and Keskinen, S. 2019. *Undoing Homogeneity in the Nordic Region: Migration, Difference, and the Politics of Solidarity*. 1st ed. Studies in Migration and Diaspora. London, New York: Routledge.

University College Copenhagen. n.d. Pædagogisk arbejde i relation til negativ social kontrol. Københavns Professionshøjskole. [Accessed 20 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.kp.dk/videreuddannelser/paedagogisk-arbejde-i-relation-til-negativ-social-kontrol/.

VIVE. 2020. En brancheorienteret tilgang til at få flygtninge og indvandrere i job. VIVE. [Accessed 29 April 2023]. Available from: https://www.vive.dk/da/udgivelser/en-brancheorienteret-tilgang-til-at-faa-flygtninge-og-indvandrere-i-job-14884/.

Øland, T. 2019. *Welfare Work with Immigrants and Refugees in a Social Democratic Welfare State*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Notes

1 In this article, the term politics refers to a broad political context where policy is produced and circulated, whereas the term policy covers specific politics realized as content in the form of laws, mandates for commissions, etc.

2 Danish welfare politics and professionalism addressing 'Muslim' women have coalesced with and permeated representations targeting non-Western 'immigrant' women (as it have in other countries, cf. Farris 2017), which is one of the reasons why we write 'Muslim' and 'immigrant' women in quotation marks, i.e. use inverted commas to communicate that these are historical labels that are effects of complex problematization. When we use phrases like *the image of the unfree immigrant housewife*, we do not use inverted commas because the wording in itself signals that we are pointing to an image, a construction or a representation.

3 This is our translation as the commission does not have an English translation itself. As Joan W. Scott (2012) explains, emancipation has been associated with the lifting of restraints, but also with liberation from intellectual chains in the sense of a changed consciousness.

4 All quotes from the Danish documents are translated by the authors.

5 The image of *the Mammy* as the faithful and obedient servant is intimately linked to the history of Black women as caregivers for white children. *The Matriarch*, a more recent image, problematizes Black women who are single mothers and the head of their household. Such female-headedness is regarded as an important cause of Black poverty, and due to these working women's time away from home they are also blamed for neglecting their children and contributing to their failure at school (Collins 2000, 75). A third image is *the Welfare mother* - a Black single mother, who receives social welfare benefits. This image shares important features with those of the Mammy and the Matriarch. Like the Matriarch, the Welfare mother is considered an insufficient mother, as she assumedly neglects her children or passes on poor values to them. However, where the unavailability of the Matriarch is defined as problematic, in the case of the Welfare mother, her accessibility is deemed the problem. The fourth image is that of a sexually aggressive Black woman, *the Jezebel*, an image tied to slavery and to more recent efforts to control Black women's sexuality (ibid., 79-81).

6 We name the images 'immigrant' girl and housewife, even though 'Muslim' girl and women are also used and given significance in the documents, which is also important when analyzing and historicizing the tropes appearing. Moreover, ethnic minority girls and women are used in the documents. We think of the girls and women as racialized groups, which are shaped as such while targeted by the racialized images and interventions.

[7] MENAPT is a statistical category launched by the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, cf. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-denmark_en#statistics [accessed 29 April 2023] and used by Denmark Statistics from 2021, cf. https://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile.aspx?id=34714&sid=indv2021 [accessed 29 April 2023]. This is a new way that the welfare state statistics reproduce 'racial difference' by reference to culture and region through generations. Earlier it did so by referring to Western and non-Western and developed and less developed groups.

[8] Health visits are conducted by health visitors who regularly visit families with newborn babies until they are approximately one year old. It is an integrated part of the universal welfare provision in Denmark to ensure that every child in the first year of their life is healthy and thriving. 95–99 percent of the population receive welfare visits from a health visitor. Health visitors are nurses with further education.

The magic of feminist bridging: A mosaic of anti-racist speech bubbles about Othering in Swedish Academia

By Loving Coalitions Collective

Victoria Kawesa, PhD Candidate, Linköping University, SE, victoria.kawesa@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2381-038X

Ina Knobblock, Lecturer, Mid Sweden University, SE, ina.knobblock@miun.se, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5727-5660

Maria Vlachou, Postdoctoral Fellow, Linköping University, SE, vlachou.maria23@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2973-6225

Redi Koobak, Senior Lecturer, University of Strathclyde, UK, redi.koobak@strath.ac.uk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7932-2867

Tara Mehrabi, Senior Lecturer, University of Karlstad, SE, tara.mehrabi@kau.se, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1061-3292

Madina Tlostanova, Professor, Linköping University, SE, madina.tlostanova@liu.se, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0727-2098

Nina Lykke, Professor Emerita, Linköping University, SE, and Aarhus University, DK, ninly@fastmail.fm, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7946-7185

Abstract

Are feminist coalitions magical enough to survive and endure while questioning and shaking the colonial/racist foundations of Swedish academic knowledge production and the overall Swedish society? Can feminist bridging and collective writing remain a magical process even when grappling with difficult experiences and memories of Othering and racialization? This is a creatively and collectively written article on feminist coalition building, and its importance in thinking, articulating and deconstructing race, racialization and racist structures. More than two years ago, seven interdisciplinary gender studies scholars of mixed ethnic and racial origins, came together to explore our differently situated experiences of disidentifying with Swedish academia and society in a collective we call Loving Coalitions (capital initials). Against the background of Swedish exceptionalism, historical amnesia of Sweden's colonial past and present, and the deafening silence on Swedish whiteness and racism, we are sharing our poems, letters, texts and testimonies of racist interactions in Swedish academia and society. While doing so, we discuss how moving away from conventional ways of doing research and experimenting with creative methodological alternatives allow us to acknowledge and embrace our different life backgrounds and academic trajectories as a mode of knowledge production. We hope and believe that our experiences, reflections and ways to resist racism and Othering in Sweden and Swedish academia through alternative coalition building, based on mutual care and love, can be relevant in a Danish context as well.

KEYWORDS: feminist coalitions, Swedish exceptionalism, racism, Swedish academia, alternative methodologies, everyday experiences, Critical Race Studies

Introduction

We are seven interdisciplinary gender studies scholars of mixed ethnic and racial origins who came together to explore our differently situated experiences of disidentifying with Swedish academia and society in a collective we call Loving Coalitions. After years of working in different gender studies centers/programs in Sweden, we have come to ask ourselves, individually and collectively, on which grounds do we participate in shaping gender studies within Swedish academia? When, where and how have our voices been heard or neglected as irrelevant, not timely, foreign, and not academic enough? Can we belong to this academic timespace called gender studies in Sweden, particularly in the current context of the neoliberalization of universities and the alt-right backlash against gender studies, antiracist and migration research? Can the subaltern speak when she is refused the privilege of being heard or worse, being made unintelligible in the face of epistemic ignorance if not violence? Our aim is not only to speak but to change academic practices, structures, epistemic norms and modes of knowledge production in gender studies.

Drawing on creative ways of producing knowledge, Loving Coalitions has become a space for sharing our memories which are loudly or subtly relevant to feminism(s) as a movement, as a theory, as an institutionalized field of studies and as embodied in daily life. Among those memories, there are many vivid memories of interactions in Swedish academia and society. We have, over time, built trust in this space, while moving away from conventional ways of doing research and experimenting with creative methodological alternatives that have allowed us to compare notes between our different backgrounds and academic trajectories, and collectively understand them in new ways.

In alignment with our creative and collective working modes, the structure of this article does not follow a normative academic paper. We have instead decided to let the reader take a peek into our messy on-going process of collaboration as a collective in which we embrace all the worlds we embody, i.e., the academic, domestic, creative, geopolitical, natural, affective, corporeal, spiritual, social and political ones by letting them all become parts of our writing and conversations in an emergent, fluid, improvisational and unsynchronized way. Without following a linear narrative, we share reflections on racism, whiteness, Swedish exceptionalism, coloniality of time, migration politics, feminist coalition building, etc.

In accordance with our creative working modes, the article is a mix of collective reflections and individual pieces of text, written as part of the memory sharing in our group. With the exception of longer contemplations on the theme of time, the individual pieces are marked through italicization and first name in parenthesis.

We situate our article within ongoing feminist critiques of Swedish exceptionalism, color-blindness, whiteness and the absence of a discourse on race. We argue that writing from the everyday experience of being the racialized Other can urge us to think, articulate and deconstruct race, racialization and racist structures, which is necessary to decolonize Swedish gender studies and its epistemic culture. Next, we introduce our methods and methodologies as a potential mode of knowledge production about race, racialization and intersectional power structures that delink from the white epistemic academic norms. Moreover, we argue that such modes of knowledge production could be mobilized as a way out of the neoliberal temporalities of academia that is the capitalist colonial temporality of optimizing production and quantification of knowledge. Instead, we offer slow research, community building and care. In other words, with our ongoing project we wish to disrupt the common, fast, competitive and patriarchal research patterns. Instead, we allow for space and time to build mutual trust, slowly and organically, while creating a community in which we can connect and heal while writing together about feminisms. We are also slowly weaving together our discussions, letters, poems, memories, testimonies and stories into a collective book that celebrates the journey of a beautiful coalition of seven different yet interconnected feminist/gender scholars. Our book is going to be called: *Memories*

that Bridge: Weaving Feminist (Her)Stories in Loving Coalition.

We responded to the call for contributions to the special issue about Racialization and Racism in Denmark, even though our focus is Sweden. We took our point of departure in the call for papers that pinpointed the "interconnectedness between Denmark and the wider Nordic regions regarding historic and contemporary issues of racism and racialization". We do not explicitly discuss similarities and differences between Denmark and Sweden. However, we hope and believe that our experiences, reflections and ways to resist racism and Othering in Sweden and Swedish academia through alternative coalition building, based on mutual care and love, can be relevant in a Danish context, too.

Swedish Whiteness

We are connected through Swedish academia, where we work or have worked as professors, postdocs, associate professors, or doctoral students. Some of us live in Sweden, some have left and live elsewhere, others are commuting. One of the experiences that we all share is the sense of being Othered in Swedish academia or/and society. In our collective, some of us are white and Nordic, but in a Swedish context become foreigners, in particular, by not totally being trusted as someone who legitimately can embody the values of the exceptionally 'worldleading' Swedish version of 'Nordicness', i.e. the particularly Swedish version of white innocence (Wekker 2016). Others are considered white but are also ethnically outside of the hegemonic Swedishness as they belong to the colonized Other of Sweden, the Sámi (Knobblock & Kuokkanen 2015). Others in the collective carry a whiteness that is not considered part of the assumed 'progressive' whiteness of 'Norden' (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2016; Lundström & Teitelbaum 2017; Lundström & Hübinette 2020). Some of us are racialized as foreigners, and thus become seen and read as non-Swedish (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009; Koobak & Thapar-Björkert 2012; Koobak 2013; Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Koobak 2016; Thapar-Björkert & Tlostanova 2018). Others experience a peculiar invisibilizing/hyper-visibilizing distortion that erases colonial and Indigenous aspects of their identity to put forward the homogenizing geopolitical difference (discrimination by passport) as the main racializing factor (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Knobblock 2019; Koobak, Tlostanova & Thapar-Björkert 2021). Even for those of us who have lived in Sweden most of our lives, becoming a Swede is almost impossible when embodying a Black female body (Kawesa 2004; 2006; forthcoming; Sawyer 2006; Habel 2012; Adeniji 2014). Some of us are migrants from the Middle East, carrying with them the dual stigma of a threat/victimized Other, never the knowing subject (Tesfahuney 2001; Mulinari & Neergaard 2005). One way or another, we are all living the life of the Other in a country in which whiteness has a dark history and race is a hush word that shall not be whispered! In other words, 'Othering' takes on different shapes and variations, depending on our different positionalities and localities, yet it is connected to a hegemonic notion of whiteness and the denial of structural racism, which we address in this section.

There are three aspects of whiteness within the Swedish context that are important to unpack. First, there is the hegemonic whiteness which is overwhelmingly opaque, while simultaneously excluding many people who might be considered white in other societies. Western whiteness is constructed along racial hierarchies that historically positioned Swedish whiteness at the top of what is known as the Germanic race, and thus constructing Swedes as the whitest of all white nations (Hübinette et al. 2012). Living in a country where whiteness is equivalent to Swedishness (Mattsson & Pettersson 2007; Hübinette & Lundström 2014) creates a hierarchy of whiteness and hegemonic notion of whiteness against which all other bodies are measured as 'not white enough'.

Second, hegemonic whiteness in the Swedish context should be also examined through its relationship with colonialism (Hübinette et al. 2012; Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2016; Keskinen et al. 2018; Alm et al. 2021). In fact, Sweden is described as

a society that has difficulties in consolidating its past and present forms of colonialism. The historical archive of Swedish colonialism paints it as innocent of colonial whiteness, and normalizes the idea that Sweden hardly engaged in colonialism, and if it did, it was to a very small extent which does not count. This sense of white innocence (Wekker 2016) has become normalized, while we know that Sweden participated in the Transatlantic slave trade and abolished slavery in 1847 (Lönn 2007) and at the same time, the colonialization of Sámi is still ongoing. When examining colonial complicity (Vuorela 2009), it is important to explore how gendered and racialized power structures are constructed in the Nordic countries and to awaken the amnesia that denies Sweden's colonialism. In this context, it is also important to point to the feminist scholarship that engages with racism and colonialism in the Nordic countries as a way of troubling Nordic exceptionalism and bringing Indigenous knowledges from a Sámi perspective to the forefront in relation to the colonial history and present of the Swedish state (Knobblock 2022).

Third, we should address the elephant in the room: race. Similar to other European contexts (Goldberg 2006; El-Tayeb 2011), the critical discourse of race is evidently absent in Sweden. One of the difficulties of being Othered in Sweden is the lack of a common discourse that addresses the implications of Swedish whiteness and racism. It becomes difficult to create a joint framework because the Nordic version of European whiteness, and its particular Swedish materialization denies race as a social category and subscribes to a color-blind ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2013) as the political norm. In Sweden, the word race was erased from all public documents and substituted with ethnicity (Hambraeus 2014) which makes it harder to pinpoint the racialization process in Sweden as involving white Swedes and their white privileges. Racial issues are translated as ethnic, religious, or cultural problems, while leaving the scrutiny of Swedish whiteness unmarked and invisible. This color-blind ideology that is specifically Swedish, is a "certain kind of progressive antiracism" (Hübinette 2017) which can be differentiated from other Western states where color-blindness is linked to neoliberalism (Goldberg 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2013). At best, race and racism are addressed as an issue of the past, one that Sweden has put behind; a problem of another geopolitical context; or a problem of a few 'bad apples,' and not an overwhelmingly common presence or a structural problem, even after the Swedish Parliamentary elections on September 11, 2022 when the Swedish Democrats became the second largest party[1] (Sands 2022). Therefore, it is important to discuss whiteness and explore its power dimensions from a critical race perspective that foregrounds how institutions function to conceal power relations based on white privilege (see e.g. Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2016; Alm et al. 2021).

In our Loving Coalition, we have made space for the articulation of race and whiteness, and how it has affected our daily lives and working environments. This has been important, as it can be difficult to fully express the daily frustration, pain and suffering that are caused by whiteness and racism in our lives. Having entered Sweden through different routes, Loving Coalitions has become a space for our articulation and theorizing of decolonial, critical race and whiteness understandings of our positionalities in a color-blind Swedish society where the white hegemony is overwhelmingly yet unmarked (Habel 2008; Hübinette et al. 2012; McEachrane 2014). Swedish whiteness remains an invisible power structure through which antiracism and gender equality are being articulated (Hübinette & Lundström 2014). Although the epistemic habit of whiteness in relation to Nordic academic feminism (Dahl 2021) has been examined along with the crisis of whiteness (Keskinen 2018), Swedish scholars continue to mostly engage with issues pertaining to Swedish Whiteness. At the same time, Critical Race Studies related to Swedish racism (Motsieloa 2003; Mulinari & Neergaard 2005; Schmauch 2006; Kalonaityte, Kawesa & Tedros 2007; 2008) leaves a lot of room for research on Swedish whiteness in gender studies and antiracist scholarship.

Politics of belonging and exclusion are tied up in the way we work and live in Sweden and

elsewhere, making an understanding of intersectional oppressions important for our collective (see e.g., Crenshaw 1991; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Kontturi, Tiainen, Mehrabi & Leppanen 2023). As we are also impacted by the blindness to racism in Swedish gender studies, our work in Loving Coalition involves challenging Nordic and Swedish hegemonic feminism (Dahl, Liljeström & Manns 2016; Lykke 2020). We are, moreover, concerned about the Swedish shift to neoliberalism since the early 1990s (Boréus 1997) and its ethno-nationalist right-wing shift, which has an increasingly oppressive effect on migration policies and has led to an increased criminalization of those perceived as Others (Schierup, Ålund & Neergaard 2018).

Writing in Loving Coalitions - Methodologies

The groupwork started from the methodology of Collective Memory Work (CMW) (Haug 1987; Stephenson, Kippax & Crawford 1996; Onyx & Small 2001), aiming at finding common ground where our situated experiences of becoming Non-Swedish in Swedish academia seemed to intersect. But it soon became clear that this approach was not letting us move beyond the critique of the neoliberal/colonial university, and we still ended up producing coherent, rational, although substantially embodied narratives of our experiences.

Thus, we began to integrate a broader palette of creative writing methodologies (Lykke 2014) in the memory work. Basically, Loving Coalitions has focused on three main writing methodologies: writing on common themes, automatic writing, and letter-writing. Theme-writing defines the memory-work methodology which was the starting-point for our group work. We chose to enrich this methodology through automatic writing and letter-writing inspired by creative writing methods which some of us were familiar with (previously used in teaching and/or research).

Automatic writing (Lykke 2014) implies that before the writing session, the group agrees on a topic, to which we are all committed (i.e., "becoming non-Swedish in Swedish Academia"). We also decide upon a time frame (i.e., 10 minutes), and, on a signal from the timekeeper, all of us begin to write with the instruction to start from the shared topic and write everything that comes to mind without lifting the pen from the paper or the fingers from the keyboard. Afterwards, we take turns in reading our texts out loud to each other. The group responds to the texts, looking for resonances and differences between the memories, and for key themes to take further into new group writing exercises.

The genealogy of automatic writing is artistic and spiritual. The methodology was developed by writers and visual artists of the Surrealist movement (Rosemont 1998), and in different spiritual practices (Conley 2016). Inspired by psychoanalysis, the Surrealists wanted the artistic process to disrupt boundaries between a rationally acting 'I' and its unconscious bodily agencies, and to engage in spontaneous, collective writing (or drawing) processes in resonance with the unconscious mind. But in addition to disrupting borders between the conscious and the unconscious, they were also keen on radically undoing the boundaries between the 'I' and the world 'out there', between subject and object, between 'real' and 'not-real', as ontologically separable entities. Surrealism intonates a radical break with the reality principle that resonates with contemporary critiques of positivism and its hierarchizing representationalism and objectification of subaltern subjects, as well as with artistic research and decolonizing moves to revitalize Indigenous philosophies that take dreamworlds and spiritmattering seriously (Black 2018; Schaeffer 2018). Thus, automatic writing was summoned by the Surrealists to transgress the rational and sovereign authorial subject of modern writing and art-making. We chose to integrate this methodology into our memory-work to enable ourselves to articulate not only rational analyses of our memories, but also to grapple with the strong affects that the memory-work called forward.

The second methodology to be integrated in our memory-work, the writing of personal letters to each other, was added to our repertoire

to make the automatically written texts enter into conversation with each other beyond the round of responses. Letter-writing has become a way of moving from spontaneously articulated individual experiences of intersectional oppression and resistance, to collectively unfolding analytical levels, enabling us to put individual perspectives in committed conversations, while still doing it from an embodied and affectively situated perspective - i.e., in the format of an engaged letter, written by an 'I', lovingly committed to a 'you' (Knobblock & Stubberud 2021). The letter-writing has also opened for more direct engagements with internal hierarchies and our structurally different relations to vulnerable topics such as race, migrant status, privilege, whiteness, queerness, etc.

We use these writing modes playfully alongside each other, and share the general approach that methodologies should not be understood as once and for all congealed entities 'to be applied', but as emergent, plastic, malleable, always in an ongoing process of dynamic unfolding. To enrich and deepen our conversations and trusting coalition building, we practice feminist bridging - trying carefully to avoid glossing over intersectional differences and structural power differentials along the lines of racialization, migration status, geo- and corpopolitical situatedness, sexual identity, positioning in the academic job hierarchy, labour market relations, language, and existential differences such as health status, age, various kinds of personal experience of trauma and loss, or joyful circumstances, which cross-cut our group.

I cannot find a starting point. My thoughts are floating in all sorts of directions as I attempt to stay on top of things, in control. My head is pounding from exhaustion, the neck strained from not having slept well, the patch behind my ears aching from the glasses which are a bit tight after the last readjustment at the optometrist, I am longing for a break. Yet I have shown up for our writing group meeting, knowing that I can share my thoughts, feel a bit more grounded, marvel at the creativity of my colleagues, feel their energy. Sometimes love is about showing up. Persistently. When you have a million things to do. When your body is not at its most comfortable. When you feel empty of ideas. But you show up because you remember. You remember how this commitment has been a lifeline for you in moments when academia takes over your body, your mind, your mental health. When it sucks you dry and you have nothing else to give. You remember that the coalitions you have built, the loving coalitions, keep you sane. You remember the best moments when you have felt the most free in expressing yourself in just a matter of minutes, surprising yourself at what you can still draw from the depth of your mind when you thought you have nothing left to give. You show up because you remember. And you remember because you keep showing up. The magic of a 10-minute writing exercise, in silence, alone, but together. You forget the aches and the pain and the anxieties or when you can't you write about that and you arrive at a different sense of reality, one that gives you back your grounding, gives you back to yourself as you are, with others. [Automatic Writing Text with the theme of loving coalitions. Author: Redi]

Building Bridges – Building Trust

Loving Coalitions – the name of a group. Where did it come from – this name? Maria invented it, I think. But it is in the plural. There are many coalitions. Criss-crossing our group. Criss-crossing other groups, which affiliated members of this group participate in. They are all entangled in each other. [Part of Automatic Writing text with the theme of loving coalitions. Author: Nina]

How do we know how to trust a bridge; that it will hold? The fact that some of us have known each other for a long time has played an important role, since we had already developed loving coalitions in many different forms. Some were more like 'newcomers' to these entanglements and had to be introduced by one of the people involved. Let's be honest, we all had our 'test criteria' in order to start trusting each other. For instance, in the very first meeting, one of us asked a crucial question: who is going to save and store everything we

exchange and share in the group? The immediate answer was "we will all have access to save and store everything we share as a group". All our texts and video recordings of our conversations are stored, accessed and editable by each one of us. There is no individual ownership. That was one important step towards building trust. Trust was right there, confirming that we are not going to reproduce the normative academic standards of competition, maximization of individual citations, and high jacking of knowledges. We were building an alliance.

It is also important to mention that the constellation of the group changed along the road. In the first months, three members of the group decided not to continue participating and after a while two more members joined us. Since then, we have consistently been working together as a group of seven. It's been two and half years that we have been meeting on zoom every month and in between we exchange letters, texts and numerous emails.

Thanks to our different training, interests, and writing idiosyncrasies, we had the chance to try working with our memories differently. CMW is a great feminist methodological option, and one of us had 'successfully' deployed it in the past and continues to use and re-invent it. But it was not enough for Loving Coalitions. Once we delved into automatic writing and letters – and continued to fiction and poetry as well – our memories started breathing and moving like living beings, drawing us into passionate loving coalition building. Allowing ourselves to 'draw out of the margins' of academic writing helped us reach the more corporeal, affective, and hence messier, contradictory, controversial, difficult to access corners of our situated experiences. We were still working on collectivizing our memories but in a more creative way.

As academics specializing in antiracism, critical whiteness studies, African feminisms, queer death studies, Indigenous feminisms, Sámi studies, decolonial feminisms, postsocialist feminisms, critical migration studies, anti-genderism, we were all familiar with how to talk about our geopolitical differences, yet related situatedness. However, our creative writings, directly, and nearly magically, spoke to our vulnerable and at the same time more resilient human sides, the ones that we all carried with us in the group. Acknowledging our common, yet different forms of vulnerability, and common, yet different strategies of resistance, have sparked even more trust in each other; a stronger sense of a collective understanding. Our texts have also pointed to how much we need each other, how much we crave for loving coalitions and how important they are as forms of resistance, and as Madina loves saying, as possibilities of *re-existence* (thinking with Adolfo Albán 2009). Our creative writings also revealed how much work, time and commitment para-institutional coalitions like ours entail.

Creative writing and becoming an intellectual academic and Antiracist Feminist is something that I long for, becoming that person that I know I am capable of being and breathing from that space that I have created for myself, where my ideas, are not attacked but taken in, breathed in and energized by others…I long for spaces like that where power dynamics and hierarchies are not about destruction, but empowerment, where one's desire to be and overcome struggles that are meant to destroy you can be met, and taken seriously, a loving coalition that leaves room and space to grow and become…I have found that space….it is a challenging space, because it's not just about being comforted, taken in, accepted and loved, but also giving back, being there, being accountable and honoring others' time and work. I have often been bad at doing that, felt sorry for myself, and got lost in the feeling of not being good enough, and therefore not able to give, because what is there to give, when what you have is not good enough? Holding on, and holding back gifts to others, that might mean love to them, not giving which has also meant not being able to receive. But through the years, my relationship with Nina has really helped me survive. It's my first loving coalition with a person, but I was told she could never love me…a white professor, what does she know about my suffering as a black woman? What does she know of race and white privilege when she has all that privilege? She taught me everything I need to know about loving coalitions. [Automatic

Writing text with the theme of loving coalitions. Author: Victoria]

Resisting Chrono-powers

The question of time (and temporality) has been central in our endeavor to build trust and a stable feminist alliance while we are challenging the standardized academic knowledge production modalities. So, against the frenetic chrono-politics of the neoliberal/colonial academia, we decided to intentionally slow down. Isabelle Stengers (2018) has reminded us in her *manifesto for slow science*, that fast science could be compared with fast food: quickly prepared, not particularly good, and it clogs up the system. Although Stengers directs her plea for slow science to those academics who work in technoscience, that kind of fast, competitive, benchmarked research has been steadily normalized in all academic disciplines. Despite our subjectivities being forcefully accustomed to these research modalities, we all committed to a slow collective research process without any guarantees of quantifiable outcomes or promises for publications in journals with high impact factor. Putting aside our fears, that for some of us exponentially increase with every second that brings us closer to the end of our temporary contracts, and for others increase because we are expected to bring money to their institutions instead of 'fooling around', we have allowed space and offered our time to this feminist collective. We have offered our patience for organically building trust, finding our methodological ways to engage with the burning issues we want to delve into and letting things emerge instead of forcing or pre-determining them. Parallel to our 'official' and more easily quantifiable work-related responsibilities as seen in the eyes of the institution, and next to the myriads of other kinds of emotional and physical labor involved in the social reproduction of everyday life, we have dedicated time, energy and creativity to build something together, with each other and for each other.

Simply slowing down might be considered the loudest form of resistance to what Sarah Sharma calls "power-chronography", imposed by neoliberal capitalism: in its logic "capital caters to the clock that meters the life and lifestyle of some of its workers and consumers, the others are left to recalibrate themselves to serve the dominant temporality" (2014, 139). In other words, power-chronography raises crucial questions such as; whose time counts as worthy or valuable and whose bodies need to adapt to the 'right'/expected temporalities and rhythms or who needs to wait while looking at others moving smoothly through time? These time related divisions obviously cut along racial, geopolitical, and gender lines, clearly manifesting the alignment of the academic power-chronography with the coloniality of time. In his fascinating work, Riyad A. Shahjahan thoroughly explains how the modern conceptualizations of time as linear, progressive, and quantifiable in standardized units, "underpin our theories of student development, faculty development, etc." (2015, 490). Moreover, engaging with decolonial thinkers, Shahjahan reminds us of the unquestionable modern and neoliberal value of being efficient and productive, so deeply internalized by academics and students, originate in modernity, and its darker colonial side. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes, "Representations of native life as being devoid of work habits, and of native people being lazy, indolent, with low attention spans, is part of colonial discourse that continues to this day" (cited in Shahjahan 2015, 492).

In a recently co-authored article by two of us (Vlachou & Tlostanova 2022), we discuss exactly the fear and anxieties of racialized academics with being absent from work for too long, risking to be labeled as lazy and slow. In particular, the academics we talked with shared their stories about working in Scandinavian institutions during the Covid pandemic, and the institutional pressure to be physically present while their colleagues (mostly white Scandinavians and North Europeans), were working from home. On top of that, they had to deal with the additional migration-related delays and complications without the support of their institutions. To exemplify, below we present an extract from an interview, quoted in the article:

> *M: I didn't find it fair because when I finally arrived at my department, I was totally alone the first days. Everybody was working from home. Many of my colleagues were working from home for months and they were planning to continue to do so for as long as the pandemic lasts. But I had to prove that I care more about my new position than I care about my health or the health of my sister, that I had to leave before she was fully recovered. And then I started wondering – you know, I am one of the very few non-EU in my department from the global south – if they hired me just for filling the quota and not because I really deserve it, or they really liked my proposed project. Since I moved here, I feel like I always need to prove myself more than the others, so I need to work harder than anyone else. I need to expose my body to the virus by coming to the university while the others can safely work from home (ibid., 12).*

All of us in our collective have, in different yet interrelated ways, experienced in our flesh the pressure to overperform in an academic environment that keeps count with its colonial/racialized clock, as vividly depicted in the stories of the people we talked with. Nevertheless, our writings and conversations on time expanded beyond academia and included memories from all areas of our lives and life in general. In the following section we present some of our creative texts on the theme of time.

Contemplations on the theme of time

Ieddne/Ädno [mother/river]

Tiny creature,
tiny precious creature
growing in my warm waters
you enter time, linear

or layered?

Born and named
In *gidádálvve*, spring-winter,
second of eight seasons,
wheel of life and continuity,
you carry

the name
of your *máttaráddjá,*
great-grandfather

and the rivers run,
and the rivers run,
slowly, generatively
differently than

since time immemorial

my child, you learn
to swim in colder waters
embraced by

the silent river,
the stilled river

the power grid,
that keeps on giving

light

the world, electric
beams

as it crumbles

[Poem produced through the reworking of the author's automatic writing text on time. Author: Ina]

Sweden! – Time is running out!

Jimmie Åkesson, the Party leader of the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), a far-right racist Nationalist Party, tweeted on 10 June 2021 that: "Unlike Magdalena Andersson [then the Prime Minister of Sweden] and her Social Democrats, we will neither leave nor abandon our roots." He posted an image of a poster that the

Sweden Democrats used during their glory days of creating the organization BSS (*Preserve Sweden Swedish*).

BSS was a racist far-right organization with Nazi roots formed in 1979. The organization's goal was to advocate for limited immigration and deportation of immigrants living in Sweden. BSS held its first annual meeting in Stockholm on 20 March 1983 (Larsson & Ekman 2001, 75). In 1988, the BSS members together with *Sverigepartiet* (Sweden Party) formed the Sweden Democrats, which continued to use the slogan "Preserve Sweden Swedish" (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*) until the late 1990s (Widfeldt 2015, 181).

When I saw this tweet yesterday, memories of the summer of 1984, when I was nine years old and came to Sweden as a refugee, came back lingering to me. We had finally arrived in Sweden, the land that would keep us safe, my mother told us on our way to Stockholm Arlanda. The flight was long, and I was not sure that we would really be safe. I felt lost when I looked around the plane, and saw only white pale faces, men in suits laughing, singing, and talking loudly in a language that sounded strange and alien. I pulled my mom's arm, trying to get her attention. "Mom", I said, "Mom, I don't think I will be able to learn that language." My mom just smiled, as if it did not matter, we were heading to safety. She had finally managed to take us away from Uganda, after my father was killed during the Idi Amin war.

Mom was right, I found new friends in our new home Husby, a suburb in Stockholm. There was a certain newfound sense of safety knowing that soldiers would not come to our home to threaten to kill us, or rob us, and I did not have to hide under a bed at night because of gunshots. I could finally breathe, and just enjoy playing and being a kid. Walking around in the sun, I would listen to my favorite playlist on my Walkman. This year was pivotal in pop music history. Michael Jackson made history with his album Thriller, and Madonna busted on the music scene with "Like a Virgin". I played every day that summer with my new best friends, who came from Chile and Uganda. Some of them were graffiti painters, usually painting their art under the tunnels of bridges around the neighborhood transforming dull, grey concrete walls into bright, loving, happy colors.

I learned from my new friends about the meaning of the ugly scribbles that were sprayed in the tunnels and sometimes on the outside of our houses. In large black letter's someone had sprayed BSS on our building, and the same letters were sprayed over the beautiful graffiti art that my friends had worked so hard on. But who would do this, I asked? One of the graffiti painters from Chile explained what BSS meant, telling me that some Swedes did not want foreigners in Sweden. They wanted us to go back to our countries, so that Sweden remained only for white Swedes. They even wanted to kill us, he said. I was astonished and scared, wondering if my mom knew this about Sweden. My new friends who had lived in Sweden longer, convinced me that Sweden is our country too, and that there was a way to take it back. My friends had a strategy, which was to change the symbol BSS into BSB (*Bevara Sverige Blandat),* which meant "Preserve Sweden Mixed".

We spent the summer of 1984, listening to pop music, break dancing, creating graffiti Art, but also taking political action by using our spray cans transforming every "S" in BSS into a "B" as in "BSB".

When I look back at the summer of 1984, now 37 years later, and what has happened to Sweden, I am stunned that the Swedish Democrats, who got into Parliament 2010, now have almost 18 percent of the Swedish votes, thus becoming the third largest parliamentary Party in Sweden.

I am writing this text 14 June 2021, a year before the Parliamentary elections in Sweden September 2022. This might be the last summer that we might still have a chance to keep the BSS movement away from entering the Swedish Government. I hope that the BSB movement will win the Parliament Elections, so that I can tell that 9-year-old refugee girl from 1984 that we can still believe that we are safe in Sweden, but time is running out. [Story based on childhood memories produced through the reworking of the author's automatic writing text on time. Author: Victoria]

Waiting

It took me months when we said we should write about temporality. As I started blabbing on the paper, urging the urge for writing, focusing on 'time' and thinking-writing rather than feeling-writing, I spouted my thoughts on the paper focusing on academia rather than temporality itself.

It took me months and a stomach wrenching sensation of 'something is wrong'. It took me weeks of not wanting to write more into my writing for the next memory-work meeting before I realized I did not connect to what I wrote. At least not when I think of temporality. I was not connected to the temporality about which I was trying to write. I did not even dream about it, not once! And I dream about everything! As I was feeling desperate to write, because I wanted to, and I knew that I do have something to say, I decided to wait for the dream. Eventually, and as I was waiting for the inspiration to come to me in a dream, I realized, *waiting* itself is what I want to write about. The all-consuming, bodily demanding, hopeful, fearful, promising but also ominous, waiting tells the story of all immigrants in exile, and I am one.

I could not stop thinking about waiting! I have been living it for the past 10 years with all my might. When did waiting become a chore? When did waiting become something more than merely the joyful anticipation before the new year's celebration in my grandmother's house? When did waiting become the state of my life as time passes me by? When did waiting become stressful moments, minutes, days, weeks and months between visa application, grants applications, deadlines, and academic steps? Not that it is not joyful anymore, for I immensely enjoy my work! But, waiting became my life. Waiting consumed me and vomited me into something intense, hooked on medication and therapy sessions, numb, unable to connect to my body, always on a 100 percent speed. And yet, wanting more, wanting to go faster. There is so much more I want to do. As if there is not now, I became a child of tomorrow, stuck in my past memories of the now I once imagined, and its future which I wanted to change in that imaginary now. I embodied waiting, I became waiting in the process.

Waiting is an academic space-time for me in which I become an immigrant. My research, my work is my drug. It gives me joy, but it also numbs me from enduring all I had to endure, and that I still have too, and the enduring that is yet to come. Drowning myself in the academic temporality and riding the waves diffracts the reality of being in exile and being in pain, in waiting. It ignites me to articulate waiting into something, a space of agency. How can I channel and diffract my life, my waiting with that of others? How do people become racialized as their lives and their bodies are put on hold in waiting? How do they deal? I digest my own experience, feelings and every state of being in a hamster wheel as I search through stories of waiting in my informants' tales. I wait with them and taste their ways of waiting. As they tell me stories about missing their families, waiting to be heard, waiting to fit in, waiting to get access. Waiting is a fearful joy, a chore, a wish, a way of connecting. It is also to see what is missing. To ask, why are we left frozen in waiting? What does this waiting do to us? What does this waiting produce?

I wonder what attending to waiting generates. What am I doing as I wait? I am angry. I have been angry for a while. That is why I was hooked on medication in my first visit to the doctor. Though grateful for the medication as it kicked some life back to me, I wonder how I end up here? My anger, my burn out, my depression was translated by the doctor, the social worker and many others as the result of my childhood trauma. I guess my anger was not justified! Placed in the past, my anger, my state of mental health was reduced to the problems of the 'Other culture'. While all may be true, at least partially, I could not help but to shrink, feeling the burn of the stigma. Was my burnout and depression merely an outcome of my experiences of the far past? I could not wonder if my fellow academics who are not from 'those countries' are also asked the same questions when treated for a work-related burn out. They are not! I know. I am angry at myself because I would be angry equally, had the doctor not taken the 'culture matter' into consideration. What is wrong with me?

I guess what angers me is how the social worker put more weight on the far past in Iran than the past years in Sweden, easily making the burn-out an 'immigrant issue'. What about the trauma of being an immigrant in a country that does not want you? A country, that while posing as a safe haven for refugees, makes sure that you, the refugee, the immigrant, knows your place. Be grateful, do not take space, and learn the Swedish way of life better than that of a Swede. Or to be isolated and it is 'your' fault for failing to integrate. What about the trauma of constantly rethinking every word, every phrase that comes out of your mouth not because of the accent, which is also daunting, but because of the fear to cross a line, suggest an academic insult, in a context which has no traces of the familiar? What about the promises of patiently waiting; waiting for your turn in structures of power and the institutional must that you have no point of reference for, yet living it intimately in the flesh? What about the trauma of being called out by a student for not being able to speak Swedish in an evaluation form published on the university webpage? Waiting for things to get better, waiting to learn more about academic life in Sweden, waiting to become a citizen, waiting to get a job, any job! Waiting to finally feel at home, yet, strangely home remains to be somewhere else but not here. Waiting! [Story based on memories produced through the reworking of the author's automatic writing text on time. Author: Tara]

Unfinished Questions and a Magical Exit

We have not solved it all

Why are each of us in the group? How and when have we become a collective? How, despite our differences, can we still carve out a space for shared values and goals? What are we holding back, what are we ready to suppress just so we can keep the group together? It's more important for us to keep and focus on what we share instead of challenging our vulnerability.

A collective text analyzing intersections and differences in our approaches and sensibilities, could be helpful in trying to become more aware of our identification as a collective and also a hothouse for formulating and trying out ideas including the antiracist feminist decolonial discussions that could be later shared with other groups, as well as with the public. Our Loving Coalitions are still an experiment - not all of the things we have tried out have been successful. There are no ready-made recipes, no definite answers. Turning to the world, we are also asking how valid this anti-racist work is for other people? To what extent can we afford being slow with such an urgent and topical agenda? Although a safe and healing space, how can the collective also be a way to actively fight against many forms of attacks, not just shielding ourselves?

All of these are unfinished questions, and we will keep struggling with them, but we have learnt that it is better to work on them in Loving Feminist Coalitions than in individual isolation.

To magically exit the article, we will summon a short glossary, collected among the many keywords which filled our letters on the theme of feminisms:

Ability to perceive intersections of our experiences, values and dreams
Cannot exist in singular
Constant state of learning
Dancing-Whirling-Spinning
Decoloniality
Everyday way of living in struggle with others
Grandmothers and mothers
Hard to cram into instrumental pigeonholes
Interconnected with Indigenous worldviews
Intergenerational
Leap of faith
Love
Matristic
More-than-Human
Never-ending struggle,
Obuntu Bulamu
Queerfemme
Relationality
Response-ability

Stubborn kitchen table
Theory in the Flesh
Vibrant, not violent
Witchery
Wonderland

References - people we think with

Adeniji, A. 2014. Searching for words: Becoming mixed race, black and Swedish. In: McEachrane, M. ed. *Afro-Nordic landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe*. New York: Routledge, 169-181.

Albán, A. 2009. Artistas Indígenas y Afrocolombianos: Entre las Memorias y las Cosmovisiones. Estéticas de la Re-Existencia. In: Palermo, Z. ed. *Arte y Estética en la Encrucijada Descolonial*. Buenos Aires: Del Siglo, 83–112.

Alm, E., Berg, L., Lundahl Hero, M., Johansson, A., Laskar, P., Martinsson, L., Mulinari, D., and Wasshede, C. eds. 2021. *Pluralistic struggles in gender, sexuality and coloniality: Challenging Swedish exceptionalism*. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Black, C.F. 2018. *A mosaic of indigenous legal thought: Legendary tales and other writings*. New York: Routledge.

Bonilla-Silva, E. 2013. *Racism without Racists*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Conley, K. 2016. *The Surrealist Collection: Ghosts in the Laboratory*. In: Hopkins, D. ed. *A Companion to Dada and Surrealism*. Chichester, Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Crenshaw, K.W. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*. 43(6), 1241–1299.

Dahl, U. 2021. *Nordic Academic Feminism and Whiteness as Epistemic Habit*. In: Keskinen, S., Stoltz, P. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Feminisms in the Nordic Region: Gender and Politics*. Cham: Springer, 113-132.

Dahl, U., Liljeström, M. and Manns, U. 2016. *The Geopolitics of Nordic and Russian Gender Research, 1975-2005*. Stockholm: Södertörn Academic Studies.

de los Reyes, P. and Mulinari, D. 2005. *Intersektionalitet. Kritiska reflektioner* över *(o)jämlikhetens landskap*. Stockholm: Liber.

El-Tayeb, F. 2011. *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Goldberg, D.T. Racial Europeanization. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 29(2), 331-64.

Habel, Y. 2008. Whiteness Swedish Style. *Slut* 2, 41-51.

Habel, Y. 2012. *Challenging Swedish Exceptionalism? Teaching While Black*. In: Freeman, K. and Johnson, E., *Education in the Black Diaspora: Perspectives, Challenges, and Prospects*. New York: Routledge.

Hambraeus, U. 2014. Rasbegreppet ska bort ur lagen. *SVT Nyheter*, July 30.

Haug, F. 1987. *Female sexualization: A collective work of memory*. Vol. 25: London: Verso.

Hübinette, T. 2017. *Ras och vithet. Svenska rasrelationer igår och idag*, Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Hübinette, T., Beshir, S., and Kawesa, V. 2014. *Afrofobi. En kunskapsöversikt* över *afrosvenskars situation i dagens Sverige.* Botkyrka, Sweden: Mångkulturellt centrum.

Hübinette, T., Hörnfeldt, H., Farahani, F., and Rosales, R.L. 2012. *Om ras och vithet i det samtida Sverige*. Vol. 4: Mångkulturellt centrum Tumba.

Hübinette, T. and Lundström, C. 2014. Three phases of hegemonic whiteness: understanding racial temporalities in Sweden. *Social Identities*. 20(6), 423-437.

Hübinette, T. and Tigervall, C. 2009. To be non-white in a colour-blind society: Conversations with adoptees and adoptive parents in Sweden on everyday racism. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 30(4), 335-353.

Kalonaityté, V., Kawesa, V., and Tedros, A. 2007. *Att färgas av Sverige: Upplevelser av diskriminering och rasism bland ungdomar med afrikansk bakgrund i Sverige*. Stockholm: Ombudsmannen mot etnisk diskriminering.

Kalonaityte, V., Kawesa, V., and Tedros, A. 2008. Svarta (s) strategier: att hantera rasism och diskriminering som svart svensk. *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift*. 15(3-4).

Kawesa, V. 2004. Om svart femininitet och identitet: Anti-rasismens Grand Slam. *Mana* 3.

Kawesa, V. 2006. Ain't I, my hair? Black femininity and identity. *Slut* 1.

Kawesa, V. Forthcoming. *Black Masks/White Sins: Becoming A Black Obuntu Bulami Antiracist Feminist.* PhD dissertation. Linköping: Linköping University.

Keskinen, S. 2018. The 'crisis' of white hegemony, neonationalist femininities and antiracist feminism. *Women's Studies International Forum*. 68, 157-163.

Knobblock, I. 2022. Writing-Weaving Sámi Feminisms: Stories and Conversations. PhD dissertation. Lund: Lund University.

Knobblock, I. and Kuokkanen, R. 2015. Decolonizing feminism in the North: A conversation with Rauna Kuokkanen. *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 23(4), 275-281.

Knobblock, I. and Stubberud, E. 2021. Bortom gränserna. Ett brevsamtal om språk, tillhörighet och dekolonisering. *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap*. 42(4), 5–29.

Kontturi, K.-K., Tiainen, M., Mehrabi, T., Leppanen, T. eds. 2023. *Making Middles Matter: Feminist Methodologies in-between Intersectionality and New Materialisms*. Edited Volume. Routledge.

Koobak, R. 2013. *Whirling stories: postsocialist feminist imaginaries and the visual arts.* Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press.

Koobak, R. and Thapar-Björkert, S. 2012. Becoming non-Swedish: locating the paradoxes of in/visible identities. *Feminist Review*. 102(1), 125-134.

Koobak, R., Tlostanova, M., and Thapar-Björkert, S., eds. 2021. *Postcolonial and postsocialist dialogues: intersections, opacities, challenges in feminist theorizing and practice*. London: Routledge.

Larsson, S., and Ekman, M. 2001. *Sverigedemokraterna: den nationella rörelsen.* Stockholm: Ordfront.

Loftsdóttir, K. and Jensen, L. 2016. *Whiteness and postcolonialism in the Nordic region: Exceptionalism, migrant others and national identities*. New York: Routledge.

Lönn, J. 2007. Transatlantisk slavhandel – katastrof för Afrika – lönsamt för Sverige. *Södra Afrika*. 13(3), 16-17.

Lugones, M. 2010. Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*. 25(4), 742-759.

Lundstrom, C. and Teitelbaum, B.R. 2017. Nordic Whiteness: An Introduction. *Scandinavian Studies.* 89(2). 151-158.

Lundström, C. and Hubinette, T. 2020. *Vit melankoli: En analys av en nation i kris*. Gothenburg: Makadam forlag.

Lykke, N. ed. 2014. *Writing Academic Texts Differently. Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Lykke, N. 2020. Transversal dialogues on intersectionality, socialist feminism and epistemologies of ignorance. *NORA. Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 28(3), 197-210.

Mattson, K. 2004. Vit Racism. In: Mattson, K. and Lindberg, I. eds. *Rasismer i Europa - kontinuitet och förändring*. Stockholm: Agora.

Mattsson, K., and Pettersson, K. 2007. Crowning Miss Sweden: National constructions of White femininity. *NORA. Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*. 15(4), 233-245.

McEachrane, M. ed. 2014. *Afro-Nordic landscapes: Equality and race in northern Europe*. New York: Routledge.

Motsieloa, V. 2003. *Det måste vara någonting annat'; En studie om barns upplevelser av rasism i vardagen*. Stockholm: Rädda barnen.

Mulinari, D. and Neergaard, A. 2005. 'Black skull'consciousness: the new Swedish working class. *Race & Class*. 46(3), 55-72.
Onyx, J. and Small, J. 2001. Memory-Work: The Method. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 7(6), 773–786.
Rosemont, P. 1998. *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. Austin TX: University of Texas Press.
Sands, L. 2022. Sweden election: How an ex neo-Nazi movement became kingmakers. *BBC News*, September 15.
Sawyer, L. 2002. Routings: Race, African Diasporas, and Swedish Belonging. *Transforming Anthropology*. 11(1), 13-35.
Schaeffer, F.A. 2018. Spirit matters: Gloria Anzaldúa's cosmic becoming across human/nonhuman borderlands. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 43(4), 1005-1029.
Schierup, C.U., Ålund, A. and Neergaard, A. 2018. "Race" and the upsurge of antagonistic popular movements in Sweden. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 41(10), 1837-54.
Schmauch, U. 2006. *Den osynliga vardagsrasismens realitet*. PhD dissertation. Umeå Universitet.
Shahjahan, R.A. 2015. "Being 'lazy'and slowing down: Toward decolonizing time, our body, and pedagogy." *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 47(5), 488-501.
Sharma, S. 2014. *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.
Smith, L.T. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples.* London: ZED Books.
Stengers, I. 2018. *Another science is possible: A manifesto for slow science.* New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
Stephenson, N., Kippax, S. and Crawford, J. 1996. You and I and she: Memory-work, moral conflict and the construction of self. In: Wilkinson, S. ed., *Feminist social psychologies*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 182-200
Tesfahuney, M. 2001. Globaliserad apartheid. *Sverige Och De Andra,* 187-215.
Thapar-Björkert, S. and Tlostanova, M. 2018. Identifying to dis-identify: occidentalist feminism, the Delhi gang rape case and its internal others. *Gender, Place & Culture*. 25(7), 1025-1040.
Tlostanova, M., Thapar-Björkert, S., and Knobblock, I. 2019. Do we need decolonial feminism in Sweden? *NORA. Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 27(4), 290-295.
Tlostanova, M., Thapar-Björkert, S. and Koobak, R. 2016. Border thinking and disidentification: Postcolonial and postsocialist feminist dialogues. *Feminist Theory*. 17(2), 211-228.
Vlachou, M. and Tlostanova, M. 2022. The geopolitics of international higher education prior and during Covid-19: a decolonial feminist analysis. *Globalisation, Societies and Education,* 1-18.
Vuorela, U. ed. 2009. *Colonial Complicity:' The Postcolonial in a Nordic Context*. In: Keskinen, S., Tuori, S., Irni, S. and Mulinari, D. eds. *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. Surrey: Ashgate.
Wekker, G. 2016. *White innocence: Paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Widfeldt, A. 2015. *Extreme Right Parties in Scandinavia*. New York: Routledge.

Notes

[1] In the general Swedish elections of 2022, the far-right Sweden Democrats party became the second-largest party with above 20 percent of the popular vote.

The silenced genocide: Why the Danish intrauterine device (IUD) enforcement in Kalaallit Nunaat calls for an intersectional decolonial analysis

By Naja Dyrendom Graugaard and Amalie Høgfeldt Ambrosius

Naja Dyrendom Graugaard, Postdoc, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, najadg@cc.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4255-8822

Amalie Høgfeldt Ambrosius, Independent, amalie@hoegfeldt.eu

In 2022, it was publicly revealed that Danish authorities have initiated and performed coercive insertions of intrauterine devices (IUDs) in Kalaallit women and adolescents, beginning in the 1960s. This has brought forth public and political calls to action, and an official Danish-Greenlandic commission has been established to investigate this hitherto silenced history (Naalakkersuisut 2023).

As feminist scholars of postcolonial and decolonial studies (one of us Danish/Kalaaleq, one of us non-Kalaaleq), we urge the forthcoming investigations to consider the colonial, racial, and gendered mechanisms of the IUD enforcement practice, and the narratives around it. We hold that apt analysis of Danish IUD coercion and campaigning, its past workings and present consequences, requires specific attention towards how different modes of power and oppression intersect in Danish colonial strategies in Kalaallit Nunaat. While the gendered and racial dynamics of Danish colonization is seldomly analyzed (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012; Petterson 2012; 2014; Andersen, Hvenegård-Lassen & Knobblock 2015; Ambrosius 2020; 2022), we argue that the history (and presence[1]) of reproductive control of Kalaallit indeed points to the intimate relations between colonialism, racism, and patriarchy in Danish colonial practices.

The self-imagery of Denmark's role as a colonial power in Kalaallit Nunaat has tended to present itself as benevolent, with good intentions and as 'different' – even 'exceptionally good' – in comparison to other colonial powers (Graugaard 2009; Loftsdottír & Jensen 2012; Boassen et al. 2022). Historians have also sought to explain Danish colonial atrocities as 'typical to their time' and argue that it is not appropriate to direct critiques towards the Danish colonialists for acting according to past colonial and imperialist ideals.[2] In this commentary, we caution forthcoming analyses of the so-called 'IUD campaign' to be attentive to the blindfolds and colonial amnesia that exceptionalist and explanatory approaches to Danish colonial history tend to produce.

Instead, we suggest that Danish IUD enforcement on Kalaallit women and adolescents should not merely be understood or explained as a side-product of Danish-Kalaallit colonial relations, but as a coercive and strategic measure to control the Kalaallit population – at least, since the beginning of the family planning programme in the 1960s (according to what is currently known). Consequently, we argue that Danish IUD enforcement on Kalaallit is also to be understood as a genocidal practice, "intended to prevent births" in

the Kalaallit population and resulting in the loss of half a generation of Kalaallit people.[3] This hitherto silenced genocide reflects that Kalaallit women, their bodies, and the erasure of their reproductive rights were in fact at the center of Danish (neo-) colonization of Kalaallit Nunaat.[4]

The silenced genocide suggests that Danish colonialism in Kalaallit Nunaat indeed was, and continues to be, an act of gendered violence. To challenge its continuity, we believe it is crucial to scrutinize and uncover the gendered, racial, and colonial mechanisms of the 'IUD campaign'.

The so-called 'IUD campaign'

Between 1966 and 1970 Danish health authorities inserted approximately 4500 intrauterine devices (IUDs) in Kalaallit women and girls, as was revealed by the DR podcast series 'Spiralkampagnen' last year (Klint & Petersen 2022). The 4500 women and girls (down to eleven years of age, according to recent testimonials), who were either persuaded or coerced to an IUD insertion, represented about half of all Kalaallit women of childbearing age at the time in Kalaallit Nunaat.

The insertions of IUDs in Kalaallit women were part of a family planning campaign – now popularly known as 'the spiral campaign' or 'the IUD campaign'. While the historical data is still far from exhausted, it has been uncovered that the Danish state initiated the campaign to halt the population growth in Kalaallit Nunaat that had followed an intensive modernization programme launched by the Danish government in the 1950s. The growing Kalaallit population was considered to pose a threat to the Danish state because population increase in Greenland was considered expensive for Denmark to finance (Klint & Petersen 2022).

Moreover, the modernization programme sparked a construction boom, which attracted large numbers of Danish male workers to Kalaallit Nunaat. This resulted in a rise of pregnancies among young Kalaallit women who ended up as single parents, as the Danish fathers would often stay and work for shorter periods of time before leaving for Denmark again. The young Kalaallit mothers were perceived by the Danish state to pose another challenge to the Danish vision of the modernization process. Becoming mothers prevented these women to engage in further education or vocational training and from partaking in the new labour market, which were central tenets in the Danish vision of 'modernizing Greenland' (Dahl 1986; Arnfred 1994).

As the evidence from the journalistic investigations shows so far, the Danish state initiated the family planning campaign due to the potential socio-economic consequences and costs to Denmark in the case of increased population growth in Kalaallit Nunaat.

In consequence – and as was seemingly intended – the Kalaallit population growth numbers dropped drastically in the 1970s. The 'IUD campaign' continued until 1974, but the number of IUDs in the 1970s has not been registered and the total number of IUDs inserted in the 1970s is therefore unknown (Klint & Petersen 2022). In fact, the testimonies of Kalaallit girls and women indicate that coercive IUD insertion by Danish doctors has continued up to this day, and that the years of the 'spiral campaign' is just a fraction of a practice that extends far beyond the 1960s and 1970s.

Many of the women, who recently stepped forward and publicly shared their stories and encounters with the 'spiral campaign', have reported that they were not informed properly at the time about the insertion of IUDs, and they were not presented with any option to reject it. Many were adolescents in their puberty, not even sexually active, and were sent straight from school by their teacher to the doctor's room for an IUD implementation without the involvement of or consent from their parents. Some of the women have also reported that they were not informed of the insertion of an IUD during their doctor's gynecological examination and therefore experienced years of unexplained infertility and accompanied physical complications. Many of the women have never told their story until the silence on the issue was broken (initiated by Kalaaleq woman Naja Lyberth who was the first to share her story publically,

Møller & Jeremiassen 2023), and many describe it as an experience of sexual assault that has caused serious physical and mental consequences and trauma in their lives.

Until last year this history has been repressed. It has not been publicly known before now and it is a topic that has never been researched. This means that the entire scope of the 'IUD campaign', the extent of its consequences, and the string of events from the political orders of the Danish state to the Danish doctors' room in Kalaallit Nunaat is still to be uncovered.

'Getting the story right': Why research into Danish IUD coercion on Kalaallit women calls for a decolonial, intersectional approach

While the gendered and racial dynamics of Danish colonization is seldomly analyzed, the 'IUD campaign' exemplifies that the Danish colonial state similarly to 'big colonial powers' made use of intersecting forms of oppression to control the Kalaallit people. Yet, Danish discourse has often centered on emphasizing how Danish colonialism was 'different', 'well-intended', and more 'benevolent' than other colonial powers. As emphasized by Kristin Loftsdóttir & Lars Jensen (2012), Denmark has, along with other Scandinavian countries, made use of 'small nation discourses' to construct itself as 'innocent' in comparison to larger colonial nations. Consequently, Danish colonial studies is characterized by a lack of examinations and analyses of the many ways in which Denmark employed various colonial strategies and practices to subordinate Kalaallit – and how these were constructed by and with patriarchal, sexist, and racist ideologies.

However, the prevalence, scale, and systematism of the 'IUD campaign' presents evidence that the Danes – like the Brits and the French in their respective colonies – have imposed coercive birth prevention methods to diminish and reduce the Indigenous population. Controlling a population's fertility has been intrinsic to uphold colonial domination in many colonies, and Indigenous people in settler colonies have been – and continue to be – targets of coerced birth control and forced sterilization (e.g. Ataullahjan & Bernard 2022; Basile & Bouchard 2022). Such practices have been characterized as genocide by scholars (Stote 2015; Carranza 2020) and international organizations such as the United Nations[5]. The many silenced stories of Danish IUD coercion in Kalaallit Nunaat that have surfaced over the past year demonstrate that reproductive abuse and violence *also* characterize Danish colonialism, and we thus argue for considering the scale and magnitude of the IUD enforcement as a genocidal practice. The systematic control of Kalaallit women's reproductivity, as well as the omission of seeking and ensuring their consent, demonstrates that Denmark, indeed, exercised a colonial politics infused with ideologies of Danish paternalistic and racial superiority. It shows that Danish colonial rule has been entwined with racial violence in similar ways to that of other colonial powers, and this heavily counters the existing narrative that generally lacks both recognition and analysis of Danish racism and supremacy in Kalaallit Nunaat. Whilst there has been an increasing public and academic attention in recent years towards the psychological and covert racial violence associated with Danish colonization of Kalaallit Nunaat (e.g. Petterson 2012; 2014; Graugaard 2020b), not many scholars have engaged with overt physical racial violence perpetuated as part of Danish colonialism. However, the IUD campaign and its ramifications epitomize the importance of broadening the existing scope of analysis to investigate Danish racial violence in Kalaallit Nunaat further.

The IUD coercion on Kalaallit women shows the pervasiveness of Danish colonialism in Kalaallit Nunaat and how coloniality continued to shape public institutions and their practices long after the formal status as 'colony' was (formally) absolved. As more stories and experiences are voiced and shared, there are indications that Kalaallit women have been targets of Danish IUD coercion – as well as unconsented non-reversible contraceptive

interventions – until a decade ago, if not more recent. These atrocities – past and present – expose the violent character of the Danish engagement in Kalaallit Nunaat, and how Danish policy makers and practitioners have considered Kalaallit women's bodies, their sexual and reproductive rights at the dispense of the Danish state.

In recent years, the Danish public and media have brought attention to the ways in which medicalization of 'different' bodies have had gendered manifestations in Denmark. The case of Sprogø is an example of how the Danish state used medicalizing discourses to control Danish women and their reproductivity.[6] The 'IUD campaign' in Kalaallit Nunaat illuminates another dimension of this history, as it reveals the deeply colonial and racialized mechanisms of Denmark's systematic subordination of Kalaallit women, girls, and bodies. Considering how the Danish state upheld and perpetuated its colonial ideology through colonizing Kalaallit women's bodies from (at least) the 1960s and onwards, we urge forthcoming investigations of the 'IUD campaign' to analyze the intimate relations between colonialism, racism, and patriarchy in the history and presence of Danish reproductive control of Kalaallit.

Meanwhile, we caution against investigations into Danish IUD coercion in Kalaallit Nunaat 'for the sake of research' or for proving specific theoretical standpoints. Taking up this agonizing history as a topic for research requires acute awareness of the colonial legacies of Arctic research and the ways in which research has had, and continues to have, damaging effects on Inuit communities in the Arctic, including Kalaallit Nunaat (Graugaard 2020a). Such awareness, we believe, involves a refusal of 'damage-centered' research (Tuck & Yang 2014) that sensationalizes, instrumentalizes, and trades stories of Kalaallit people's pain and trauma to be consumed by non-Kalaallit scholars and readers, and expropriated for academic production and discussion.

We hold that breaking the silences on Denmark's reproductive genocide in Kalaallit Nunaat should be done in consolidation with its victims, their lived experiences, epistemologies, and situated knowledges – and it should be vested in unsettling explanatory, exceptionalist narratives and "getting the story right, telling the story well" (Smith 2014) through Indigenous- and Kalaallit-led inquiry and dissemination. As feminist scholars of postcolonial and decolonial studies, we consider the process of uncovering the historical lineages of IUD coercion on Kalaallit women and adolescents as much a study of the present as it is of the past. As the story become unearthed, it also points to its continuity in contemporary Danish state and social service practices, such as abortion persuasion towards expectant Kalaallit mothers, discriminatory 'parent legibility' conducts towards Kalaallit parents, and rocketing numbers of forced removals of Kalaallit children from their families. Thus, the insights gained from investigating Danish IUD coercion should not be relegated to the safety locker of 'history'. They should implicate present Kalaallit-Danish relations and their colonial continuities, and hold accountability to their contemporary consequences.

References

Andersen, A., Hvenegård-Lassen, K. and Knobblock, I. 2015. Feminism in Postcolonial Nordic Spaces. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 23(4), 239-245.

Ambrosius, A.H. 2022. Feminist frustrations and covert colonialism in the Danish Commonwealth. Encountering feminist tools for Greenlandic decolonisation. *KULT Postkolonial Temaserie.* 17, 1-24.

Ambrosius, A.H. 2020. *Killjoys Kalaallit: An exploration of artistic resistance to hegemony in Greenland*. Dissertation, University of Cambridge.

Arnfred, S. 1994. Investigating gender in the Greenland process of modernization. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 2(1), 12-27.

Ataullahjan, S. and Bernard, W.T. 2022. The scars that we carry: forced and coerced sterilization of persons in Canada, Part II. *Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights.* Ottawa, Canada: Senate, Canada.

Basile, S. and Bouchard, P. 2022. *Free and informed consent and imposed sterilizations among First Nations and Inuit women in Quebec.* (Research report). First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission: Bibliotheque et Archives nationales du Quebec.

Boassen, P., Cossette-Laneville, E., Graugaard, N.D., Jensen, L., Lingner, B. and Møller, R.D. 2022. Introduction. Greenland - 301 Years Later: Kalaallit Nunaat ukiut 301-nngornerat. *KULT Postkolonial Temaserie.* 17, 1-6.

Carranza Ko, Ñ.P. 2020. Making the Case for Genocide, the Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Peoples of Peru. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal.* 14(2), 90-103.

Dahl, J. 1986. *Arktisk Selvstyre*. Viborg: Akademisk Forlag.

Graugaard, N.D. 2009. National Identity in Greenland in the Age of Self-Government. *Centre for the Critical Study of Global Power and Politics*, *Working Paper CSGP*. 09/5, 1-70.

Graugaard, N.D. 2020a. Arctic Auto-ethnography – unsettling colonial research relations. In Ren, C. Merrild, A. & Ren, C. eds., *Collaborative Research Methods in the Arctic Research: Experiences from Greenland*. New York: Routledge, 33-50.

Graugaard, N.D. 2020b. Opgøret med Kæmpe Eskimoen. *Tidsskriftet Grønland*. 3, 90-99.

Graugaard, N.D. 2020c. *Tracing Seal – Unsettling Narrative of Kalaallit Seal Relations* [PhD thesis]. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press. The summary chapter can be accessed here: https://vbn.aau.dk/en/publications/tracing-seal-unsettling-narratives-of-kalaallit-seal-relations

Hermann, A.K. 2021. *Imperiets Børn*. København: Lindhardt & Ringhof Forlag

Klint, C and Petersen, A. 2022. *Spiralkampagnen* (podcast). Danish Broadcasting Cooperation. Available from: https://www.dr.dk/lyd/p1/spiralkampagnen (accessed 16.06.2023).

Loftsdóttir, K and Jensen, L. eds. 2012. *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Møller, A-S.G. and Jeremiassen, A. 2023. Naja var den første til at tale højt om spiralerne: Vi har ventet utålmodigt. *KNR: Greenlandic Broadcasting Company.*

Naalakkersuisut. 2023. Danmark og Grønland sætter uvildig udredning af spiralsagen i gang [Press release]. *Departement for Sundhed, Nalaakkersuisut.*

Petersen, R. 1995. Colonialism as seen from a former colonized area. *Arctic Anthropology*. 32(2), 118-126.

Petterson, C. 2012. Colonialism, Racism and Exceptionalism. In Loftsdottir, K. and Jensen, L. eds., *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities.* New York: Routledge, 29-41.

Petterson, C. 2014. *The Missionary, the Catechist and the Hunter – Foucault, Protestantism and Colonialism.* Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Smith, L.T. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed). New Zealand: Otago University Press.

Stote, K. 2015. *An Act of Genocide, Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Fernwood Publishing.

Tuck, E. and Yang, W.K. 2014. Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 20(6), 811-818.

Notes

1 As more cases come to light on this history, there are indications that Danish reproductive control of Kalaallit women has been practiced until very recently, and perhaps still is today in different forms, e.g. abortion persuasion.

2 To exemplify this approach to Danish colonial history, a Danish researcher and university lecturer responded to one of the author's social media posts that critiqued the missionary Hans Egede's colonial practices and treatment of Kalaallit people, with: "I think it is a bad idea to impose contemporary ideals on people from the 18th century. You should not criticize Egede for living in the Enlightenment period and for acting like a typical 'Enlightenment-man'" (our own translation). Such explanatory approach to Danish colonial history is particularly crystalized in the work of another Danish scholar, Thorkild Kjærgaard, who persistently claims that Greenland was not a colony at all due to the specific historical circumstances of the Norwegian-Danish monarchy in 1721. Some of these scholarly tendencies in contemporary scholarship on Greenland is discussed as 'academic anxiety' and 'Qallunaat fragility', see *Tracing Seal – Unsettling Narratives of Kalaallit-Seal Relations* (Graugaard 2020c).

3 From the definition of genocide by the United Nations: https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml (accessed 15.06.2023)

4 The wording '(neo-)colonization' here indicates the ambiguity of the official timeline of Danish colonization in Kalaallit Nunaat. As has been demonstrated, Danish colonization continued, and even intensified, after the official status as 'colony' was formally abolished and Kalaallit Nunaat was annexed as a Danish county in 1953 (Petersen 1995). The ways in which Denmark intentionally avoided decolonising its Greenlandic colony and instead ensured continued Danish control has also been discussed, and most recently elaborated in the book *Imperiets Børn* by Anne Kirstine Hermann (2021).

5 https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml (accessed 16.06.2023)

6 For description of medicalising discourses and Danish women in the context of Sprogø please consult: Kirkebæk, B., 2005. Letfærdig og løsagtig – kvindeanstalten Sprogø 1923–1961 (Dissolute and loose – the institution for women at Sprogoe 1923–1961). *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 7(3-4), 229-231.

How is the anti/not/un-racist university a radical idea? Experiences from the Solidarity Initiative at Roskilde University

By Linda Lapiņa, Rashmi Singla, Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Karmen Tornius and Laura Horn

Linda Lapiņa, Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3562-6949

Rashmi Singla, Associate Professor, Department of People and Technology, Roskilde University, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7981-1169

Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9372-1621

Karmen Tornius, Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies, and former PhD researcher, Department of Social Science and Business, Roskilde University, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3136-1629

Laura Horn, Associate Professor, Department of Social Science and Business, Roskilde University, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5671-131X, lhorn@ruc.dk (corresponding author)

Abstract

In this essay, we share our experiences with a university campaign for solidarity with anti-racism struggles at Roskilde University (RUC, Denmark) and around the world. We situate the initiative in the broader context of Danish universities as racialized institutions. We recount previous initiatives of anti-racist and diversity-focused campaigns on campus and then unfold the events around the solidarity campaign of 2020 and the time thereafter. We end with an assessment of where we stand now, insisting on the need to continue to crack walls and push doors open.

Introduction

'As the staff and students of an international, progressive, and critical university, we call upon Roskilde University as an institution to strengthen its commitment to social justice and human rights', our letter, signed by over 100 staff and students, stated. Written in the summer of 2020, the call was drafted in the context of broader social struggles and demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement in Denmark. What happened next? Did the call contribute to changes and cracks in the academic traditions that reproduce racialized practices?

In this essay, we reflect on and share our experiences with this campaign for solidarity with anti-racism struggles around the world. First, we situate the initiative in the broader context of Danish universities as racialized institutions. We recount previous initiatives of anti-racist and diversity-focused campaigns on campus and then unfold the events around the solidarity campaign of 2020 and the time thereafter. We end with an assessment of where we stand now, insisting on the need to continue to crack walls and push doors. Throughout the essay, we engage with the metaphor of doors. As Sara Ahmed (2021) writes in Complaint! doors show *how* institutions function and for *whom* they function - how some people are allowed to enter, while others become trespassers. Doors can be opened, shut, or slammed into someone's face. Sometimes doors only become apparent when they close. At other times, new doors can be built. Simultaneously, doors highlight the importance of walls as part of the structure of an (anti-)racist university.

The Danish University as a racialized Institution

As a socially constructed category linked to historically constituted power relations, race works as a central global organizing principle of social relations. Race is pivotal to all Euromodern institutions, and relations of class, labour, ethnicity, gender, family, sexuality, spirituality, language, and knowledge are hierarchically organized through race (Quijano 2000). The Euromodern university has an ongoing history of producing knowledge to maximize, legitimize and reproduce "the state-sanctioned and/or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies" (Gilmore 2002, 261). Intimately connected to capitalism, racism is fundamentally anti-social and rests upon reducing collective life (Melamed 2015, 78), structuring specific groups of people in such a way that they cannot even be subjects, but rather become 'the other' – sometimes they become not-even-others (Fanon 1967; Gordon 2014; 2021). In knowledge production, this is apparent in the ways that the thinking of scholars from the Global South is largely non-existent in the Euromodern university. Because their knowledges are not regarded as valid or important to engage with, they rarely appear as professors or on the curricula of the university. Consequently, there is no relationship to them, and these knowledges and thinkers are actively produced as nonexistent - they are 'not-even-other traditions'. Thus, they are not thought of seriously as knowledge, and the people behind the ideas are not regarded as people who think and know (Suárez-Krabbe 2022).

Danish universities are public institutions embedded in the nation-state project and dependent on state funding, which means that they depend on governmental goodwill. Like in Brazil, the US, Hungary, Poland, and the UK (among many other countries), Danish politicians, journalists, and academics have engaged in attacks on gender studies, migration studies, critical race studies and related fields accusing scholars of being too 'activist', 'political' or 'pseudo-scientists'. These attacks resulted in a parliamentary resolution against "excessive activism in certain research milieus" approved in June 2021 by the Danish parliament.[1] Such attacks need to be understood in light of an increasing number of people in Denmark, including people in universities, who acknowledge the interconnected problems of climate change,

capitalist extractivism, imperialism, racism, and patriarchy require radical change – and are actively working towards tackling these complex challenges (Finck-Carrales and Suárez-Krabbe 2022; Groglopo and Suárez-Krabbe 2023). In recent years, students and staff in several universities have been urging and working towards decolonizing the curriculum, research methods, and knowledges.

Racism is implemented through the law (Suárez-Krabbe and Lindberg 2019), and it is a central organizing principle in welfare work in Denmark (Padovan-Özdemir and Øland 2022). Racism also works through the appropriation of terms, such as diversity, gender equality, and equity, intending to neutralize struggles, allowing states or institutions to appear non-racist; as well as through mechanisms such as foot-dragging in change processes. For instance, in June 2022 the same Danish government that enacts, implements and denies state racism, agreed to fund the creation of an 'action plan against racism and discrimination'. However, at the time of writing in June 2023, no further actions have been taken. The government, while paying lip service to its commitment, would not specify a concrete timeline for working on the action plan.[2]

Of Walls and Doors at a critical University

Ahmed (2012) refers to the "walls of white men" as a core feature of many university departments in the English-speaking world: walls adorned with portraits of professors, heads of departments, and other accomplished figures. These are material manifestations of universities as places built to accommodate and grant smooth advancement to some (white cis-male) bodies, at the expense of others. While there are no actual "walls of white men" at RUC, almost every meeting room and office provide walls that shelter and enclose predominantly white bodies and minds. An encounter between these bodies materializes into a wall of white faces on a computer screen in online meetings. In RUC, like other Danish universities, these walls of whiteness constrain most diversity and inclusion initiatives that instead predominantly aim for an equal representation of women, based on a binary gender regime. In contrast, at night and in the early morning hours, the university corridors are populated by migrant workers, including brown and black people, that perform cleaning and maintenance tasks. Unlike universities in settler colonial contexts, RUC is not built upon stolen land, but in a racialized labour market and migration regime which continues to be maintained by the labour of migrants and people who do not pass as white.

This raises the question of what can seep through walls of meeting rooms and offices, walls that shelter whiteness - as in the case of the meetings held as part of the anti-racist struggles at RUC - and highlights how silences and absences are part and parcel of the architecture of the academic-industrial complex.

While thinking of walls, doors and perhaps windows is useful for understanding the structures of the university, they are also colonial technologies in and of themselves - a part of the master's house, built by master's tools (Lorde 1979/1984). Decolonial thinkers like Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Bayo Akomolafe, Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, as well as postcolonial thinkers like Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Ashis Nandy, have explored cracks as spaces of possibility that disrupt the predominance of colonial logics in knowledge production, enabling us to know, move and create otherwise. They have shown how decolonial ruptures are always already present in colonial structures (la paperson 2017). The question is, are we (you, the reader, and we, the authors, as well as we, the community) willing to commit to, as Robbie Shilliam (2015) calls for, taking over control of the means of knowledge production so they become means of knowledge cultivation? This essay is part of situating ourselves for moving with(in) such potential cracks.

Allowing ourselves to think beyond cracks we could ask what might happen if the anti-racist

university was imagined as an ecosystem, a meadow, or a garden with many gardeners, embodying the idea of pluriversity (Boidin et al. 2012). What would happen if instead of concrete walls, doors, and cracks, we would enact spaces of knowledge and learning as permeable membranes and vulnerable, living and dying bodies- or perhaps assemblages, networks of nodes that are multi-scalar, at once locally specific and transnational, that hold multiple di-/convergent relational worlds? We revisit the im/possibilities of cracks and pluriversal ecosystems in relation to the Solidarity initiative in the final part of this essay.

Cracks in the critical University?

In many ways, Roskilde University might be among those spaces where one would expect the dimensions sketched out above to be mitigated by historical awareness, collective understanding, and critical commitments. Established in 1972, Roskilde Universitets Center (RUC) was set up as an educational experiment with an explicitly critical pedagogical approach in the form of problem-oriented, project-based group work (Bitsch Olsen & Pedersen 2018). A university for critical engagement with social reality. After 50 years, RUC has preserved a commitment to interdisciplinarity in teaching and research and a reformulation of the original pedagogical approach (Andersen & Heilesen 2015). As Warren argues (2019, 5), at RUC "education does not just involve learning about the world but changing one's action in the world". RUC positions itself as a university 'in reality', offering policymakers and businesses the brilliant minds of innovative, forward-thinking, and solution-oriented graduates. Perhaps RUC can be thought of as a critical case for reflecting on the possibilities of anti-racist struggles in a university context - if walls persist, if doors cannot be built here, what does this mean for less sheltered, less 'critical' institutions?

The past decade has seen several struggles by students and staff to create cracks in the walls of whiteness at RUC. For instance, in February 2013, a group of ethnic minority students established a new association, stating that:

> *The purpose of the association is to represent and promote the interests of the multicultural students socially, academically, and culturally at Roskilde Universitetscenter and University College, Sjælland. Unfortunately,* ***we have experienced that many students with an ethnic background other than Danish have problems adapting to the culture of the Danish students*** *(Multicultural Students 2013, our highlights).*

While the association was well attended, it did not last long. Continuity in student-led initiatives is a recurrent issue at universities, given limited organizational capacities and experience. Investing time and energy into social struggles in institutions (e.g. at the course, programme, or university level) requires resources that not all students can muster, in particular under additional pressures such as ethnic and racialized conditions. This points to the crucial role of permanent staff members to keep doors open, contribute to continuity and make others aware of possible cracks so that new people coming to campus might find them.

The Call for Solidarity with Anti-Racist Struggles

While our initiative stands on the shoulders of previous decolonial, anti-racism, and anti-discrimination efforts at RUC, it was aligned with the global response to the Black Lives Matters movement in the summer of 2020. There was an unprecedented political opening for conversations about race-based discrimination as lived experiences which allowed the earlier discussions held at RUC to move from the fringes towards the mainstream. Additionally, the global wave of demonstrations, protests, debates, workshops, social media campaigns, keynotes, and letters of support after the killing of George Floyd in the United States indicated that racism is not a space- or place-specific

problem. While the movement put pressure on structural racism in the US, the Danish protests of reportedly nearly 15.000 people also addressed manifestations of racism at 'home'. Doors were opening across organizations, and invitations for dialogue were extended.

In this context, a small group of femme and queer PhD students at RUC turned towards their more seasoned colleagues with the question: what can we do at Roskilde University to address legacies and continuities of racialization in academia? Two authors of this essay were part of this initial discussion and decided to co-author a petition asking the University to acknowledge racial discrimination as an issue prevalent in Denmark, and therefore, in Danish Universities. The petition called on the University administration to set up a working group to tackle such discrimination - both structurally and interpersonally. At this point, all authors of this essay are involved. Our aim was to be concrete, we agreed; we needed to wedge this issue in through the door of existing diversity and equality discourses. Late in June 2020, we approached colleagues from an interdisciplinary range of perspectives for comments and inputs via google docs. We received many suggestions in the drafting process as well as wishes of goodwill and support. It felt like a new door was under construction.

In this early stage of the Covid-19 crisis, engagement with the RUC student body was challenging. We contacted the Student Council who endorsed the draft and shared the initiative with students online. Eventually, our 'Call for Solidarity with Anti-racism Struggles Around the World' was sent out for signatures.[3] The email referred to the widespread protests in Denmark and globally, as well as the conversations sparked by #blackintheivory online. The statement situated race-based discrimination as a globally and locally embedded problem that had been raised by RUC students and academic staff in the past albeit without much impact. The initiative called for strengthening the commitment to social justice and human rights at RUC by considering concrete action points. At the heart of the initiative was a request for a meeting which could lay the ground for an institutional approach to addressing racism at RUC.

Attempts were made to engage with various university-wide communication channels, such as RUC paper or the newsletter, but to no avail. Summer set in and the Black Lives Matter dynamic quieted down. Regardless, 114 people, spanning the entire hierarchy of the institution, from students to full professors from different departments signed the call. Encouraged by this we set up follow-up meetings in August where people proposed ways of moving forward with the initiative. Bridges and doors were forming on our collective horizon. We agreed to submit the Call to RUC's leadership and administration. In an email to the Rectorate and the Deans in August 2020, we asked for a meeting to discuss the way forward. We had pushed the door wide open. Would they walk through? Instead, we became aware of a letter of disagreement from some of our colleagues. The letter warned against 'control mentality' and 'cancel culture/deplatforming' and used examples from Evergreen State University (US) to provide examples of such radicalization.[4] The letter argued that racism at RUC is rare, that there are appropriate measures already in place, and that the Call for Solidarity was promoting undemocratic university politics. This letter had been emailed to the Academic Council, the central platform for deliberation at RUC. We asked ourselves if we had run against a RUC version of the wall of white men. Moreover, the 'corridor talk' within and outside RUC revealed similar concerns and doubts about racism as a problem in Denmark. Among the drafters of Call for Solidarity were researchers who have shown and analyzed how race and racialization operate in Denmark.[5] In the context surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement's upsurge, it was difficult to see how our moderate petition could be perceived as a radical act. If years of research are dismissed as 'pseudoscience' then what kind of evidence is expected? We were eventually informed that the Academic Council at RUC had agreed that the issues we had raised were important, but didn't

warrant setting up a specific working group. Instead, the points were to be added on to the mandate of the 'Diversity and Equality Committee'.

Institutional Frames and Doors: The Diversity and Equality Committee, and meeting with the Rectorate

A new 'Gender Equality and Diversity Committee' had been set up in 2020 partially as a response to the #metoo movement that had emerged in Danish academia; and to EU regulations mandating the existence of such a committee as a precondition for receiving EU research funding.[6] 'RUC must ensure real equality and diversity in terms of interaction and collaboration and in terms of attracting and retaining staff and students', the committee's report set the overall framework for the work on gender equality and diversity.[7] The doors to be built through this framing, however, essentially reduced 'diversity' to gender, highlighting institutional measures to reduce gender pay gaps, deal with gender harassment, and boost the number of female professors. In a congratulatory article in the university paper, the focus of the new committee as outlined by the chair, pro-rector of the university, was entirely focused on gender equality; 'diversity' other than gender apparently did not feature in the equality concerns at the university.[8] This felt like a door slammed shut, turning a blind eye to the complex intersections of categories such as race and gender.

There had been concerns raised about the composition of the Gender Equality and Diversity committee with regard to the expertise and positioning, but also previous management decisions, and even personal conduct of appointed members. A group of people also responded to the Rectorate, outlining concerns about the makeup and the operation of the Committee for dealing with RUC students' and staff's racialized experiences. The door remained shut - our questions were never answered. This experience left us with new walls: in addition to 'walls of white men', we saw how a 'wall of white women' was erected to divert from meaningful discussions about race and racism at RUC. We realized that regardless of widespread condemnation of racism, few are willing to engage in a conversation about the real-life consequences of racial thinking. Whereas COVID-19 had made physical walls feel thicker than ever, it was the invisible discursive walls of silence that rendered this initiative radical - showing how structural and systemic discriminations are upheld by the reproduction of 'absence'.

While we weren't exactly holding our collective breath for the gender and diversity committee, in April 2021, the open questions of the Call came up again at an event organized by the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Power (CKMM) that highlighted the racial dynamics, institutional and personal, experienced by faculty members of colour (Skadegård-Thorsen 2020; Singla & Busch-Jensen 2007). Two staff members sent a report of this concrete event to the RUC vice-chancellor and chair of the Equality and Diversity committee, also to remind them of the initiative (Singla & Just 2021).

In autumn 2021 the drafters of the Call for Solidarity finally received an invitation to a meeting with the rectorate. When this meeting took place, on 2 February 2022, three of the co-authors of this essay participated, representing different departments and racial/ethnic positions. They met with the rector and vice-chancellor of the university, after having sent a written agenda in advance, with contours of a door sketched out, and an invitation to walk through it. Among the suggestions discussed were workplace welfare, attention to racial aspects in hiring practices, cases of harassment, and a working group to facilitate an ongoing engagement/review of RUC's activities. Existing initiatives, such as the onboarding for international employees, were mentioned, along with programs and courses at RUC that centered racial dimensions. The meeting was positive in the sense that we were able to address racism as such, including the discomforts such conversations often spark in the people involved. It was an honest conversation from both sides, and the rectorate's response was

broadly sympathetic but cautious. They seemed willing to address racism in that setting, and we insisted that such an effort required expertise in the field precisely due to racism being 'invisible' to the eyes of many white people.

The Gender and Diversity Plan has been launched, and a policy for 'Inclusion and Diversity' has been published in the summer of 2022. RUC's 50th anniversary was celebrated in September 2022 with the participation of a 'visibly ethnic minority member' as one of the performers as well as a receiver of the outstanding alumni prize. At the time of writing this essay, after invitation and persuasion from board members of the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Power (CKMM), RUC's vice-chancellor, as chair of the Gender Equality and Diversity committee, has finally agreed to participate in a discussion seminar on "the policies and tools in the area of diversity" in April 2023. Do we see a crack, a window opening, or just a symbolic token of much-acclaimed diversity?

Stay with the Cracks - that's how the Light gets in

As Hall (2020) argues, the university as an institution and a social terrain is unable to escape the capitalist realism in which it is entangled, with its practices, structures, standards, and visions. The university as an institution has never been a pure progressive beacon of hope, far from it. Bacevic (2018) reminds us that 'neoliberal attacks' on 'the university' are not necessarily external events. Racialized, gendered injustices are ingrained in the university hierarchies and the power relations of knowledge production (Bhambra et al. 2018) - this also holds for RUC. What we have seen over the last years, is that there is a deeply troubling normalization of this system. Yes, there might be student initiatives, and calls for a renewal of Higher Education; however, at the same time, we also see widespread resignation, disinterest, or even hostility in the face of structural constraints and competitive pressures (Wright et al. 2020). Danish students' 'human capital' is developed through training in soft and marketable skills from primary school onwards. Interdisciplinarity and project work, which is the cornerstones of the RUC model, have become commodities; just like internationalization. At the same time, student support has been tightened through repeated reforms, and the number of international students from the EU is increasingly capped in a move of thinly veiled welfare parochialism. Danish governments, some of them nominally social democratic, have successively moved towards a right-wing (anti-)migration position, paired with anti-elite discourses that often focus on academics.

Some of us (the authors of this essay) do not believe in university reform, but in abolition; others engage in different committee work albeit knowing that committees more often than not are set to avoid commitment (Ahmed, 2021). However, if we with Ruth Wilson Gilmore understand freedom as a place (2022, 93), our initiative can evolve into an actual place-making practice. Commenting on Audre Lorde's 'master's tools', she writes:

> *First, Lorde's focus on tools requires us to concentrate on fundamental orderings in political economy. If the master loses control of the means of production, he is no longer the master. Thus, relations of production are transformed in the process. Second, her focus on the master's house guides our attention to institutions and luxury. The house must be dismantled so that we can recycle the materials into institutions of our own design, usable by all to provide new, liberating work (2022, 79).*

The demands in the Call for Solidarity (training, curricular diversity and inclusion of texts written by ethnic and racial minorities, safe spaces, dialogues, collaboration, and a committee), while seen as 'radical' by some, are indeed limited and limiting because they do not aim at taking over the control of the means of production. Our experiences and positionality also illustrate that racism creates ambivalent spaces of simultaneous racialization (racializing and being racialized) and

resistance (Schmitt et al. 2017, 242). Still, following Gilmore we argue for the need for collective, shared ways of putting cracks into this system, opening doors for things to be different. Our initiative, and this essay, is one way of showing that need. With Angela Davis, we insist that "it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist" (cited e.g. in Kendi 2019). Anti-racist struggles are necessarily collective, and insisting on institutional responsibility underwrites the community spirit that is often invoked at RUC. Drawing on bell hooks (2005, 40), "a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and common good that binds us". Community and commitment are pivotal conditions for radical changes, through which the cracks can become meadows or gardens. However, in this process, we are also aware of the risks of building new walls, as well as of the importance of how we engage (with) each other. It was not the Call for Solidarity as a text that built community, but the process of working on it, of sitting in the same rooms, of seeing each other, of working together across differences. It provided ways to feel that we shared the struggle, rather than simply continuing working behind closed doors (Ahmed 2021). The doors we built might have consisted of moderate, institutional frames; nonetheless, they were not picked up in the manner we hoped. The broader context of uncertainty and dark clouds gathering over the Danish Higher Education sector might make it less likely that people will engage with the doors we built, even if we continue to hold them open. Still, we hope that this essay might inspire students and colleagues to reach out to us. After all, pointing out the walls is the first step towards identifying cracks, leaks, and ruptures in order for further progressive work to continue to create community and commitment to anti-racist struggles.

References

Ahmed, S. 2012. On Being Included. Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S. 2021. Complaint! Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bacevic, J. 2018. University under attack? Politics, contestation and agency beyond the neoliberal university. In: R. Barnett and M. Peters. eds. The Idea of the University: Contemporary Perspectives. New York: Peter Lang, 21-36.

Bhambra, G., Gebrial, D. and Nisancioglu, K. eds. 2018. Decolonising the University. London: Pluto Press.

Bitsch Olsen, P. and Pedersen, K. 2018. Problemorienteret projektarbejde. En værktøjsbog. Samfundslitteratur, 5th edition.

Boidin, C., Cohen, J., and Grosfoguel, R. 2012. Introduction: From University to Pluriversity: A Decolonial Approach to the Present Crisis of Western Universities. Human Architecture. 10(1), 1.

Carney, S. 2022. Global Humanities Bachelor Program Overview. Unpublished working paper. Roskilde University

Fanon, F. 1967. Black Skins White Masks. Translated by Charles Lam Markman. London: Grove Press.

Fink-Carrales, J.C.F., and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2022. Introduction. Horizons of possibility and scientific research: Whose problems, whose solutions? In: Finck-Carrales, J.C.F. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. eds. Transdisciplinary Thinking from the Global South: Whose problems, whose solutions? Routledge, 1-14.

Gilmore, R.W. 2002. Race and Globalization. In: Johnston, R.J. et al. eds. 2002. *Geographies of Global Change: Remapping the World.* New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 261-274.

Gilmore, R.W. 2022. *Abolition Geography. Essays Towards Liberation.* London: Verso.

Gordon, L. 2014. Black Existence in Philosophy of Culture. Diogenes. 59(3-4), 96–105.

Gordon, L. 2021. Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization. New York: Routledge.
Groglopo, A., and Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2023. Coloniality and Decolonization in the Nordic Region - an introduction. In: Groglopo, A., and Suárez-Krabbe, J. eds. Coloniality and Decolonization in the Nordic Region. Routledge, 1-21.
Hall, R. 2020. The Hopeless University: Intellectual Work at the end of The End of History. London/ Ephemera: MayFly Books.
la paperson. 2017. A Third University Is Possible. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Kendi, I. 2019. How to be an Antiracist. New York: One World.
Lorde, A. 1984. The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. Comments at the "The personal and the political panel," Second Sex Conference, New York, September 29, 1979. In: *Sister Outsider.* Sister Visions Press, 110–113.
Martin, S. and Dandekar, D. eds. 2022. Global South Scholars in the Western Academy: Harnessing Unique Experiences, Knowledges, and Positionality in the Third Space. London: Routledge.
Melamed, J. 2015. Racial Capitalism. Critical Ethnic Studies. 1(1), 76–85.
Multicultural Students at RUC and UCSJ. 2013 Email communication 18. February 2013, file on record with Rashmi Singla.
New York Times. 2017. A Campus Argument Goes Viral. Now the College Is Under Siege. 6 September 2017.
Padovan-Özdemir, M. and Øland, T. 2022. Racism in Danish welfare work with refugees: troubled by difference, docility and dignity. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
Quijano, A. 2000. Coloniality of Power, Ethnocentrism, and Latin America. Nepantla, Views from the South. 1(3), 533–580.
Schmitt, C., Semu, L. and Witte, M. 2017. Racism and transnationality. Transnational Social Review. (3), 239-243.
Shilliam, R. 2015. The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Siig Andersen, A. and Heilesen, S.B. eds. 2015. The Roskilde Model: Problem-Oriented Learning and Project Work. Heidelberg, New York: Springer.
Singla, R. and Busch-Jensen, P. 2007. Racisme - et psykologisk perspektiv, [Racism - a psychological perspective] In: Psykologisk Set. 24(68), 28-37.
Singla, R. and Just, S.N., 2021. A Well attended 'Gender & Diversity Academy' webinar: Structural discrimination & Minority Tax: The Danish Academic Context Internet: IMT Nyhedsbrev, April 2021, file on record with Rashmi Singla.
Singla, R. 2015. Intermarriage and Mixed Parenting: Promoting Mental Health & Wellbeing. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Skadegård Thorsen, T.S. 2019. Minoritetsbeskatning - et værktøj til at forstå opretholdelse af strukturelle uligheder i dansk academia [Minority taxation - a tool to understand maintenance of structural inequality in Danish Academia]. Kvinder, Køn & Forskning. 28(1-2), 31–43.
Suárez-Krabbe, J. 2022. Over our dead bodies: The death project, egoism and the existential dimensions of decolonization. In: Carrales, J.C.F. and Suárez-Krabbe, J. eds. Transdisciplinary Thinking from the Global South: Whose Problems, Whose Solutions? Routledge, 130-147.
Suárez-Krabbe, J., and Lindberg, A. 2019. Enforcing Apartheid? The Politics of "Intolerability" in the Danish Migration and Integration Regimes. Migration and Society. Advances in Research. 2(1), 90-97.
Warren, S. 2019. Re-Thinking the "Problem" in Inquiry-Based Pedagogies through Exemplarity and World-Oriented. *Education Sciences.* 9(4).
Wright, S. et al. 2020. *Enacting the University: Danish University Reform in an Ethnographic Perspective.* Dordrecht: Springer.

Notes

1 For the parliamentary proceedings of Resolution V137, see https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/forespoergsel/f49/index.htm For an English overview, see e.g. *Times Higher Education* (2021) Danish academics fear for freedom after MPs condemn 'activism', 11 June 2021, available from https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/danish-academics-fear-freedom-after-mps-condemn-activism

2 For the announcement of the action plan on 9 June 2022, see https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/pressemeddelelse/justitsministeriet-inviterer-organisationer-mv-til-at-komme-med-input-til-ny-handlingsplan-mod-racisme/. On 3 March 2023, the current justice minister responded to a question in the parliament about the status of the action plan: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20222/spoergsmaal/S328/index.htm

3 See the original text of the Call at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sSeBEyrvO0IE_QgGOyUk6pYjhh32YGipELt3yzD41V4/edit?usp=sharing

4 Evergreen State is in a partnership agreement with RUC; in 2017 it had been 'on the front line of the national discontent over race, speech and political disagreement' (*New York Times* 2017). The text of the letter of disagreement, addressed to the academic council, is on record with the authors.

5 See for instance these personal experiences by international researchers in Denmark https://thedisorderofthings.com/2020/09/29/race-racism-and-academia-a-view-from-denmark/

6 There was an existing but generally non-functioning equality body before this development.

7 RUC Gender Equality Plan 2022, available from https://ruc.dk/sites/default/files/2022-08/GenderEqualityPlan_folder_UK_A4.pdf

8 See RUCpaper (2020) RUC kickstarter ligestillingsudvalg 28 May 2020 https://rucpaper.dk/2020/05/28/ruc-kickstarter-ligestillingsudvalget/

Surviving Nordic Supremacy

Suvi Keskinen:

Mobilising the Racialised 'Others' – Postethnic Activism, Neoliberalisation and Racial Politics

Routledge. 2022. 164 pages. 312 dkk.

By kaseeta ssemigga

Master student in Social Sciences and Psychology, Roskilde University, kaseeta@hotmail.com

Mobilizing the Racialised 'Others' illustrates the efforts of activists racialized as non-white to combat the violent nature of Nordic (white) superiority. These efforts range widely from addressing media (mis)representations, housing conditions, border/migration policies, crime bills, etc., which all negatively target non-white people residing in the Nordic region.

Much of the work in the field of race and racialization has amongst other things focused on media discourse (Danbolt & Myong 2019), and on the intersection between psychology and philosophy (McEachrane 2014). Suvi Keskinen is a white professor of Ethnic Relations at the University of Helsinki, Finland. With this contribution, she joins Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Annika Lindberg & José Arce (2018), in taking a more grounded approach that follows the intimate lives of activists racialized as non-white, as they attempt to untangle negative media discourses and oppressive policies targeting them. Through a wide spanning qualitative study that includes interviews and extensive field work, this book investigates the conditions, forms, and visions that shape activism and solidarity, brought about by activists in Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

Keskinen coins two terms in her book that help identify the types of racism and activism present in this geographical region. The first one being 'racial nordicisation', which sets the context for the second term, known as 'postethnic activism' (p. 24). Racial nordicisation is a variation of 'European racialisation' and refers to three ways in which 'Nordic superiority' is constructed, in relation to both non-white Others and the rest of Europe. These include: 1) Rejecting current "forms of racism and racial thinking" (p. 24) and at the same time relegating ongoing racial oppression and colonial activities (both domestically and overseas) to the past. 2) Positing the welfare state as egalitarian and innocent of exclusion, thus concealing historical, ongoing exclusions and harm toward minorities like sterilization, assimilatory practices, dehumanizing attitudes towards migrants, indigenous people and people with disabilities, etc. (p. 20). Lastly, 3) weaponizing gender equality in

"constructing national identities and hierarchies in relation to migrants and racialised minorities" (p. 24).

'Postethnic activism' is then the multi-faceted effort that aims to challenge the various aspects that shape racial nordicisation. In the book, Keskinen describes various forms of postethnic activisms and their intended focuses. What characterizes these activists is their common interest, which builds upon understandings of their societal positionings in the countries in which they are situated. The activists "identify the reasons for their organizing in the impact of racism on social structures and individual lives" (p. 36). Drawing on Frantz Fanon, Keskinen connects "the violence of global raciality, the outcome of centuries-long histories of colonialism and racism (...) with individual experiences of unsafety and marginalization by those racialised as 'Others'". So postethnic activists are posed with the task of "organizing to create futures beyond such hierarchies" (p. 36). Of course, this work involves continuous analyses of social structures and practices to be able to understand the broader contexts of both collective and individual experiences.

Keskinen's account of racialization in the Nordic region sufficiently grounds the social context of the racialized 'Others'. In doing so, she also argues that there is good reason to believe in the radical potential of postethnic activism. Founded upon politics of social justice, politics of survival, and politics of love, postethnic activism will not miss to address commonalities and center intersections of social violence at its core moving forward. Hence, we might call it an upgrade in terms of conducting activism in the Nordic region. With this perspective as the standard for approaching social activism, we can surely wave goodbye to single-issue policy activism.

The book elucidates the labor prior to 2020's Black Lives Matter demonstrations and a dialogue with old and new academic work in this field. More specifically, chapter four implicitly opens possibilities for further conversations regarding antiBlackness within activist spaces. Known for its gratuitous nature, antiBlackness refers to the "human race's necessity for violence against Black people" (Marronage & DCN 2020, 47; see also Hunter 2023, chapter 3).

The absence of a grounded acknowledgement of antiBlackness and how antiBlackness shapes social positions indicates the limitations of both the book's analytical framework as well as postethnic activism's understanding of the racial hierarchy. Keskinen does not fully describe these hierarchies in the book, even though she continuously states the existence of said racial hierarchies and acknowledgement of differences. Furthermore, chapter five sets the scene for a white vs. non-white binary racial categorization. Despite the acknowledgement of present hierarchies amongst non-whites, these hierarchies are not fully described in their nature, which I assume is a shortcoming of her desire to focus on the common. Absence of deeper engagements with antiBlackness will only bring about solutions that promote comfortable serfdom for non-Blacks and increasing passivity towards oppressive structures, regardless of difference.

However, Keskinen successfully connects the oppressive patterns operating across the Nordic countries. I agree with the author that the book is widely accessible for, particularly "scholars and students in sociology, ethnic and racial studies, cultural studies, feminist studies and urban studies" (np), but it is also of great utility to newcomers in these fields.

References

Danbolt, M. & Myong, L. 2019. Racial Turns and Returns: Recalibrations of Racial Exceptionalism in Danish Public debates on Racism. In: Hervik, P. ed. *Racialization, Racism and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries. Approaches to Social Inequality and Difference*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 39-61.

Hunter, E.L. 2023. "Black Racial Isolation: Understanding African Diaspora Subjectivity in Post-Racial Denmark." Doctoral Dissertation., Berkeley, USA: University of California, Berkeley.

Keskinen. S. 2022. 'Mobilising the racialised 'Others': Postethnic Activism, Neoliberalisation and Racial Politics'. London and New York: Routledge; London and New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Marronage & Diaspora Critical Nomads. 2020. "VI VIL MERE END AT OVERLEVE - OPGØR MED EN ANTISORT VERDEN". Eks-Skolens Trykkeri.

McEachrane, M. ed. 2014. 'Afro-Nordic Landscapes - Equality and Race in Northern Europe. New York and London: Routledge; New York and London: Taylor & Francis.

Suárez-Krabbe, J. Lindberg, A. & Arce, J. 2018. '"Stop Killing Us Slowly"': A research report on the motivation enhancement measures and criminalization of rejected asylum seekers in Denmark'. The Freedom of Movement Research Collective.

Racism and Racialization in Danish Welfare Work

Marta Padovan-Özdemir and Trine Øland:

Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees – Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity

Routledge. 2022. 182 pages. 104 GBP

By Iram Khawaja

Associate Professor, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, irkh@edu.au.dk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5231-8729

Denmark's national self-image of being a benevolent welfare state taking care of its citizens in terms of benefits, social security, health care and education is being challenged and analyzed in the book, *Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees - Troubled by Difference, Docility and Dignity*, by Marta Padovan-Özdemir and Trine Øland. The authors focus their attention on the welfare work regarding the reception and inclusion of newly arrived refugees. This seems specifically relevant when analyzing race, racism and racialization in Denmark, as the refugee "constitutes a contested figure at the mercy of state humanism, universalism and integrationism" (p. 51).

Padovan-Özdemir and Øland are combining two fields of research. On the one hand the research on welfare and integration, and on the other hand research focusing on racism and racialization. Consequently, their understanding of racialization lies at the intersections of race and welfare work, which points towards one of the major findings in their book, namely of how Danish welfare work with refugees is fundamentally complicit in reproducing racial structures of super- and subordination. It is the authors' goal to unravel this complicity and destabilize the silencing of and ignorance on race and racialization in welfare work, by developing a "historical-sociological language for speaking about race, racism and racialisation in a Danish welfare work" (p. 3).

Innovative methodologies

Padovan-Özdemir and Øland take on a critical sociological historical analysis of the reception of refugees in Denmark, but they are not applying a traditional historical lens to this work. Their aim is to break with traditional linear understandings of history as chronologically and progressively developing. Drawing on postcolonial theoretical perspectives from, amongst others, Ann Stoler (2016) and Avery Gordon (2008), on how the past and present are enfolded in each other and how

the past is haunting the present, the book engages in creative methodologies by working with stock stories and hauntology. Combining a critical race theoretical focus on majoritarian discourses and narratives with a critical postcolonial focus on race, power and privilege, the stock stories function as analytical anchors in the book.

A stock story is defined as, "descriptions of events as told by members of dominant/majority groups, accompanied by values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by dominants to insure their dominant so it becomes position" (Love 2004, 228-229 cited in Padovan-Özdemir & Øland 2022, 70). The stock stories analyzed in the book are based on readings of an extensive historical archive comprised of four welfare professional periodicals based on the four largest groups of organized welfare professions engaged in the reception of newly arrived refugees in Denmark: social workers, educators, teachers and nurses. The archival time-period stretches over almost 40 years (1978-2016) and covers empirical material regarding different groups of refugees arriving in Denmark, such as people from Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Syria.

The empirical material is formed and presented as historical stock story montages – a crisscrossing of different archival material from different time periods, refugees and welfare work. This is presented as a dynamic and innovative methodology, which serves to highlight the dominant theme of the stock story which transverses time, body and space. As a reader it can, however, sometimes be difficult to get a sense of which groups of refugees and which historic time-periods and professions the analysis draws upon. On the one hand, the aim of critically working with history in a non-conforming and non-chronological way enables a dynamic grasp of historically sedimented discourses and narratives on newly arrived refugees, but on the other hand, it can also be argued that different groups of refugees, different times, contexts and welfare professions influence how processes of racialization take form and are manifested. One cannot help wondering whether the same kind of racialization and stock story would play out in the same manner regardless of whether it is a Tamil refugee arriving in the 1980s or a Syrian refugee arriving in 2015? The diverse but specific conditions at play - historically, socially and the categories the refugees are read through - are thus sometimes relegated to the background of the analysis. What stands in the foreground, though, are the larger analytical strokes on how welfare work with refugees comes into being through the different dominant racializing stock stories.

Racializing stock stories and ghosts

The analysis of the three stock stories of color-blindness, potentializing and compassion are multilayered and nuanced and each stock story is related to the other but with independent affects and ghosts haunting the welfare work and its racializing effects.

The stock story of color-blindness is analyzed as a central part of welfare work's investments in evading issues of race and difference via discourses of egalitarianism, exceptionalism and universalism. Difference – especially when it is cast as cultural differences, are seen as threats and challenges that need to be managed, controlled and in some cases tolerated, positioning the welfare worker as the benevolent neutral and rational helper.

In the stock story of potentializing, the refugee is cast as a non-agentic object of integration and it is the welfare worker's task to bring as much as possible out of the refugee in terms of work and education. This is a form of "potentializing racialization (..) in terms of who is privileged with subjective agency and will, and who is not" (p. 119).

Potentializing is very much upheld through liberalist market forces and discourses of integration whereas the stock story of compassion is fueled by humanitarian and democratic values and ideals of justice and human rights. This casts the welfare worker on a morally higher ground working for the greater good. At the same time the refugee is formed as in need of help and change.

The analysis of the stock stories appears to follow a highly systematic and ordered format

(there are three stock stories, each story has three variations) and you can be left with the sense of it being almost too ordered. Where are the cracks, the resistances and the disorderly stories that challenge the hegemonic discourses and their rigidity in the empirical material? By the end of the book, another layer, however, is added to the analysis, which in some ways serves to deconstruct this order as the ghosts haunting and troubling the stock stories are analyzed. Each stock story has its own ghosts. Color-blindness is haunted by difference, potentializing by docility and compassion by dignity.

The ghosts refer to features of relational welfare work that welfare workers thought they had buried or worked on in order to make them disappear; they are social figures that come and go; they never quite settle and they never attain an approved position in welfare work with refugees.

The ghosts compel the social workers to work on silencing, shutting down and controlling race and difference - what Padovan-Özdemir and Øland term, "burying the ghosts alive" (p. 159). This points to the very subtle codes guiding the racializing processes of Danish welfare work with refugees, and this is without doubt one of the strengths of the book; it delves into the subtle, often silenced layers of racialized complicity in the ways of working with, helping, educating and integrating newly arrived refugees. It is possible, though, to discuss whether the methodology of hauntology is serving its full purpose in the book. The concept of ghosts and hauntings is developed to capture the often ephemeral, present but not present sensations, affects and figures surrounding race - that which seems there but not there (Gordon 2008; Hvenegaard-Lassen & Staunæs 2021). This level of analysis could have been unfolded more in regard to other ways in which race is present but actively silenced in the welfare work with refugees.

New majoritarian stories?

The book draws on material from different welfare professional periodicals. Hence, we hear and learn about the refugees through the welfare workers' perspectives. One could ask, if this approach reproduces existing majoritarian stories by applying the lens of the superordinate and not the Othered and subaltern? The aim is clearly the opposite, to make visible the dominant stock stories and deconstruct these. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the power dynamic of this approach and the immanent risk of further objectifying the refugee as a monolithic figure seen through a majoritarian optics of the welfare worker. Padovan-Özdemir and Øland also point to this inherent problem of knowledge production and power:

> *Thus, it is clear that the story is told by the ones who operate the tools of reality production, in this case welfare workers, and it is clear that the story told claims a factual and neutral viewpoint because it is the viewpoint of welfare workers. (p. 117)*

How is it possible to trouble these tools of reality production, to dismantle and trouble the dominant optics? One way would be to include the subaltern perspectives - the ones who are being managed, controlled, and molded into the Danish welfare system - the refugees. This, however, does not come without its own troubles. Giving voice to subaltern groups and individuals might as well be tied to the benevolent and misunderstood ideal of liberation (Spivak 1988; Lather 2000), and to the practice of exhibiting the pain, suffering and subordination of the othered through a superordinated position of the researcher (Weheliye 2014). It is this very same practice of the humanitarian, benevolent social worker, that is being critically analyzed in the book. So, it seems there is no easy way to solve the question of knowledge production in relation to racialized and Othered minorities, but it needs to be reflected on more actively, also in relation to the question of researcher positionality and power.

A brave book

Racism in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees is an insightful, analytically rich and brave book. The

book is an important contribution to the existing somewhat sparse research on race, racism and racialization in welfare work, and one can argue that even though the focus is on welfare work and newly arrived refugees, the logics, stories and ghosts are recognizable in other spheres and contexts in society, making the book relevant beyond the field of welfare work.

References

Gordon, A.F. 2008. *Ghostly matters: haunting and the sociological imagination*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Hvenegård-Lassen, K. and Staunæs, D. 2021. Shooting the elephant in the (prayer)room: Politics of moods, racial hauntologies and idiomatic diffractions. In: Bozalek, V., Zembylas, M., Motata, S. and Holscher, D. eds. *Higher Education Hauntologies: Living with Ghosts for a Justice-to-come*. London: Routledge, 50-62.

Lather, P. 2000. Against empathy, voice and authenticity. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. 4, 16-25.

Stoler, A.L. 2016. *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Weheliye, A.G. 2014. *Habeas Viscus Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Spivak, G. 1988. Can the Subaltern Speak? *Die Philosophin*. 14(27), 42-58.

Den nye raciale kapitalisme og fængselssamfundet

Jackie Wang:

Fængselskapitalisme

Oversat fra engelsk af Jonas Eika og Nanna Dahler med forord af Mikas Lang. OVO Press, 2021 (opr. 2018). 321 s., 239 kr.

Af Lene Myong

Professor, Senter for kjønnsstudier, Universitetet i Stavanger, lene.myong@uis.no, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3700-1157

Jackie Wangs *Fængselskapitalisme* består af en række essays, som teoretiserer og diskuterer racismens og kapitalismens intime forbundethed i USA, og som den aktuelt manifesterer sig i det raciale fængselssamfund. Udover at være forsker, kunstner og fængselsabolitionist, har Wang en bror, der som mindreårig blev idømt en livstidsstraf uden mulighed for prøveløsladelse. I *Fængselskapitalisme* væver hun teoretiske analyser sammen med digte, drømme og levet liv. Resultatet er et værk, som både er akademisk og litterært i sin analyse og omarbejdning af de strukturer og processer, der opretholder fængselssamfundet.

Fængselskapitalisme tager afsæt i Cedric J. Robinsons (2000, opr. 1983) teoretisering af racial kapitalisme, der, meget forsimplet sagt, anskueliggør racial undertrykkelse og differentiering som et centralt element i – og ikke som en effekt af – akkumulation af kapital. Wang analyserer det, som hun kalder den nye raciale kapitalisme, men fremfor for at fokusere på, hvordan racisme virker gennem lønforskelle og arbejdsmigration, identificerer hun henholdsvis røverisk långivning og parasitisk regeringsførelse, som to centrale modaliteter. Ifølge Wang bliver vi allerede fra en ung alder indlemmet i en form for finansielt statsborgerskab, som ansporer os til at acceptere gældsætning som en uundgåelig del af vores liv. I USA er racialisering helt afgørende for, hvilke kreditformer den enkelte låntager har adgang til. Røverisk långivning betegner de lånetyper, som er indrettet på en sådan måde, at låntageren med stor sandsynlighed risikerer at misligholde lånet. Kredit fungerer med andre ord som en form for berøvelsesmetode, og den rammer især sorte amerikanere.

Med parasitisk regeringsførelse sigter Wang til, hvordan den US amerikanske stat i stigende grad dækker sine udgifter gennem lån frem for beskatning, og at indtægter bliver brugt til at finansiere en stadig voksende gæld. Denne regeringsførelse blev for alvor intensiveret i USA med finanskrisen i 2008, men den gradvise omdannelse fra skattestat til gældsstat har pågået siden

1970'erne. Det er Wangs pointe, at den parasitiske regeringsførelse blandt andet virker gennem udvinding og plyndring. Et oplagt eksempel er politimagtens målrettede og aggressive udstedelse af bøder og inddrivelse af gebyrer, hvormed der genereres flere indtægter til kommunekasserne. I USA er denne form for plyndring især rettet mod sorte borgere, men andre fattiggjorte og racialiserede grupper bliver også udpeget.

Det at gøre folk til borgere-skyldnere eller indlemme dem i kreditordninger kan, forklarer Wang, forstås som ekskluderende processer, der virker gennem inklusion. Staten og kreditsystemet får en interesse i at holde folk i live netop for kontinuerligt at kunne frarøve dem penge. Politisk økonomi er dermed vigtig i forhold til at forstå de økonomiske interesser i at vedligeholde et sådant system, men staten benytter sig samtidig af masseindespærring og umotiveret vold for at opretholde en racial orden, hvis resultat er død og udpining af sorte liv. Ifølge Wang har antisort racisme en central rolle både i masseindespærringens politik og i omdannelsen af velfærdsstaten til en straffende stat. Sorte amerikanere er både blevet strukturelt fastholdt i fattigdom og konstrueret som nogen, der har gjort sig "fortjent til straf" (s. 72), eksempelvis på grund af selvsamme fattiggørelse.

I *Fængselskapitalisme* træder afropessimismen frem som en vigtig inspiration. Det indebærer en forståelse af antisort racisme, som konstituerende for tilblivelsen af 'mennesket' som moderne, humanistisk kategori. En afropessimistisk optik modsætter sig således forsøg på at sidestille antisort racisme med andre former for racisme. Samtidig forstår Wang sort slavegørelse som selve mulighedsbetingelsen for den globale kapitalisme, og hun argumenterer for, at sort racialisering både følger en kassérbarhedslogik og en udbyttelighedslogik. Antisort vold udgør ikke en afvigelse eller undtagelse fra liberale værdier som lighed, multikulturalisme og frihed, men nærmere den grundsten USA hviler på. Afropessimismens teoretisering af umotiveret vold som et definerende træk ved antisort racisme muliggør også en dybere forståelse af dens psykologiske aspekter. Politivold kan sjældent forstås alene eller primært som udtryk for økonomiske motiver eller individuel sadisme (selv om det også er på spil), fordi, som Wang skriver: "[H]vidhed som kategori opretholdes blandt andet af ritualiseret vold mod sorte mennesker, og af hvides konsumering af spektakulære billeder af antisort vold" (s. 80).

Bogens kapitler spænder vidt i sine analyser af det raciale fængselssamfunds biopolitiske teknikker: indtægtsgenerering og udplyndring gennem bøder og gebyrer, myten om ungdomskriminelle som 'superpredators' (en myte der har banet vej for indførelse af livstidsdomme til mindreårige), samt omfavnelsen af overvågningsteknologier og algoritmiske og prædiktive politimetoder, hvor geografi optræder som stedfortræder for race. Dertil kommer et kapitel om/imod uskyldighedens politik og dens mobilisering af 'det uskyldige offer'. En sådan politik er med til at udstikke en grænse mellem hvilke liv, der er værdige til beskyttelse, og hvilke liv der kan undværes. Disse analyser fletter Wang sammen med sin families historie og den ødelæggelse, de bliver påført af fængselssystemet.

Fængselskapitalisme er eminent oversat til dansk af Jonas Eika og Nanna Dahler, men det bedste er, at oversættelsen indrammes af et forord af Mikas Lang og et efterord af oversætterne. Forordet bidrager til at situere *Fængselskapitalisme* teoretisk og politisk, og som Lang forklarer, er Wangs arbejde et forsøg på at tænke fra både et marxistisk og et afropessimistisk perspektiv men uden en ambition om at få perspektiverne til at gå op i en højere enhed – styrken er nærmere, at hun tør lade dem stå uafgjort (s. 16). Lang afslutter med at gengive Frank Wildersons kritik: afropessimismen vil, som jazz og hiphop, uvægerligt blive brugt til at animere andres (ikke-sortes) projekter. Jeg opfatter det som en vigtig kritik. Forordet bør ikke alene læses som en situering af Wangs arbejde: ligesom Langs øvrige arbejde udgør det et betydningsfuldt, afropessimistisk bidrag til det voksende felt af kunst, aktivisme og forskning, hvorfra antisort racisme i Danmark bliver teoretiseret og bekæmpet fra en sort position.

Eika og Dahlers efterord er formuleret som et udkast til en analyse af dansk, racial fængselskapitalisme. Analysen medtænker forskellene mellem Danmark og USA, og Eika og Dahler foreslår,

at det især er gennem sine velfærdsfunktioner, at den danske stat "antager røveriske, gældsættende og straffende former" (s. 287). Obligatoriske integrationsforløb med ulønnede praktikforløb og fattigdomsskabende sociale ydelser er bare to eksempler. Sideløbende hermed pågår kriminaliseringens og deportationens vold, som medfører, at flygtninge og migranter er i stigende fare for at få frataget opholdstilladelser, nægtet familiesammenføring og/eller blive tilbageholdt i udsendelseslejre. Meget mere bør skrives og tænkes om efterordets pointer, som i kombination med Langs forord udfolder og forstærker værkets aktualitet i en dansk politisk kontekst. Ros til OVO Press for at prioritere en udgivelse, der både forkaster en reformistisk tilgang til fængselskapitalisme og den liberale anti-racisme, der dominerer en dansk offentlighed.

Som Wang skriver i bogens afsluttende kapitel, er det vanskeligt, næsten umuligt, at tænke og arbejde sig hen imod en verden uden fængslet. Fængselsabolitionisme kræver ikke kun en gentænkning af statens rolle, men også en total forandring af alle sociale forhold (s. 238). Netop på grund af fængslets naturalisering er det nemt at afvise krav om politiets og fængselssystemets afskaffelse som urealistiske og useriøse. Frem for at svare at abolitionismen udgør den eneste fornuftige position, påbegynder Wang en samtale om død, drømme, kamp og frihed med en række revolutionære, levende og døde. "Kan vi bruge", spørger hun, "genfortryllelsen af verden som et redskab til at knuse fængslets realisme?" (s. 239).

Jackie Wang skal få de sidste ord:

> *I nogen tid har jeg tænkt over hvordan jeg kan overbringe dig budskabet om afskaffelsen af fængsler og politi. Men jeg ved at det ikke er min opgave som digter at få dig over på min side med overbevisende argumenter, men at bibringe dig en vibration som kan vække dit begær efter en anden verden (s. 256).*

Litteratur

Robinson, C.J. 2000, opr. 1983. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.* NC: University of North Carolina Press.