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DEVELOPING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACIALISATION AND MIGRATION

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The number of studies approaching research on migration from the perspectives of racialisation and postcolonialism has increased considerably in the Nordic countries since the Millennium. These studies have produced important empirical knowledge and theoretically informed analyses of the histories and current processes in the Nordic societies, as well as of different diasporic communities living in the region. However, the theoretical approaches have often been borrowed from Anglo-American literature, while theoretical discussions and elaborations within the Nordic region have been scarcer. This Special Issue *Developing Theoretical Perspectives on Racialisation and Migration* engages in and develops theories on migration, racialisation and postcolonialism from the Nordic context, bearing in mind that 'Norden' is not an isolated region but part of global processes through multiple transnational connections and postcolonial power relations. Moreover, we seek to highlight how concepts and theoretical approaches on migration and racialisation need to be adjusted to and elaborated in a context characterised by welfare state ideologies and institutions, notions of allegedly homogeneous nations and claims of exemplary achievements in gender and socio-economic equality, as well as neoliberal policies.

This Special Issue provides insights into how existing theories on racialisation and migration can be developed, revised and revisited – especially in relation to questions on how race and ethnicity intersect with the categories of gender, sexuality, class and age. The articles examine and discuss how the concepts race, racialisation and whiteness can be used for analysing the histories and current trends in the Nordic countries and what are the different ways of understanding and defining these concepts. Moreover, the contributions explore how postcolonial and decolonial theories can shed light on a geographical context that is often considered to be an outsider to colonial processes, since the countries' role in colonising non-European territories was relatively small – at least in comparison to colonial powers like Great-Britain, France and the Netherlands. Research has, however, shown the 'colonial complicity' (Keskinen et al. 2009) of the Nordic countries that has built upon participation in colonial economic and cultural endeavours as well as the embracement of ideologies that place Europe as the cradle of civilisation, thus superior to (what is discussed as) the non-western world. The emphasis on the Nordic countries' outsider position, has also meant that colonial histories and structures of racism have been, and still are, largely ignored or presented as insignificant in the Nordic public discourse. Along the discussions of migration and racialisation, the articles explore nation-state formations and constructions of national identity in the Nordic region, both as a consequence of migration and as a reaction to migration.

The perspectives of racialisation and postcolonialism/decoloniality are extremely timely today. A number of studies have shown how the Nordic countries were a part of the colonial world order (e.g., McEachrane & Faye 2001; Keskinen et al. 2009; Loftsdottir & Jensen 2012; Rud 2016), participating in slave trade (Larsen 2008; Weiss 2016), development of racial biology (Hübinette & Lundström 2014) and exhibition of the racialised others (Andreassen 2015), as well as benefiting from colonial trade relations and (re)producing colonial representations (Sawyer & Habel 2014). Thus, racialisation and the processes of creating inequalities on the basis of racial categorisations are in no way new phenomena in the Nordic countries. However, such processes have taken new forms and penetrated all arenas of the society following the increased migration from non-western countries since the 1960s. In recent years, the Nordic societies have witnessed the rise of neo-nationalism, right-wing populism and racist movements that today bear considerable effect on governmental policies, political parties, and mainstream and social media (e.g., Hervik 2011; Horsti & Nikunen 2013). Public debates on migration and integration of minorities frequently portray Muslims and non-western minorities in a manner that reproduces colonialist and Orientalist discourses – ranging from the threatening to the exotified (e.g., Bredström 2003; Lundström 2007; Nielsen 2014). Simultaneously, the racialised

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minorities are organising themselves in multifaceted ways, making use of social media and elaborating ways to produce 'safe spaces' to discuss matters that centre non-white perspectives. The critical voices of racialised minorities are also increasingly gaining foothold in the wider public sphere, a tendency most visible in Sweden, but also visible to an extent in the other Nordic countries. In order to understand and examine these recent changes, as well as to combat and erode power relations based on hegemonic understandings of race and whiteness, theorisation of racialisation and postcolonialism/decoloniality is a necessity.

The research field of critical studies on racialisation, postcolonialism and migration was first developed in Sweden, where studies were already published in the 1990s (e.g., Molina 1997; Tesfahuney 1998) and the research field has expanded in the 21st century (e.g., de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari 2002; Mulinari & Neergaard 2005; de los Reyes & Kamali 2005; de los Reyes 2006; Sawyer 2008; Hûbinette & Lundström 2011; Hübinette et al. 2012; Lundström 2014). In the other Nordic countries, certain researchers have engaged with similar themes and perspectives (e.g., Andreassen 2005, 2007; Myong 2009; Rastas 2005; Tuori 2007; Keskinen 2012, 2013; Loftsdottír 2011; Svendsen 2014), yet the establishment of a specific research field is still in process. In addition to this, several initiatives have developed the analysis of racialisation and postcolonialism on the Nordic level, examining both the racial and colonial histories of the Nordic region, as well as their continued presence and effects on cultural, structural, political and embodied processes (Keskinen et al. 2009; Loftsdottir & Jensen 2012; McEachrane 2014; Garner 2014; Leinonen & Toivanen 2014; Andreassen & Vitus 2015).

Race, racialisation and whiteness

Three central concepts are discussed in this Special Issue: race, racialisation and whiteness, but the contributors have made different choices on which concepts to use and what implications follow from this. In our view, all three concepts are needed and point to somewhat distinct, yet interwoven meanings. We understand 'race' to be a socially and culturally constructed category that nonetheless has real effects on people's lives and societal processes. The concept 'racialisation' was introduced by Frantz Fanon (1963) but gained wider influence following the theoretical elaboration of Robert Miles (1989, 1993). The main benefit from using the concept racialisation comes from its emphasis on processes and the varied ways ideas of race are turned into practices on different levels of the society. While some scholars, such as Miles (1993) have argued for a substitution of the concept race with that of racialisation, we believe that both are needed to effectively analyse both the histories of and the current social processes in the Nordic societies. Irene Molina (2005) defines racialisation as processes that differentiate people, stabilise these differences and legitimate power differences based on them. This definition makes it clear that racialisation is not only about ideas, representations and discourses, but involves material processes and their likewise material effects. Similarly, Ylva Habel (2012) points to how the term racialisation emphasises racial and/or ethnic subordination caused by societal, political and historical processes, which has constituted racial identities, privileges, and discriminations. Racialisation can occur based on alleged biological differences, skin colour or cultural differences, often combining elements of these. Racialisation has become a popular concept, especially in different kinds of Marxist inspired research, feminist studies and cultural studies – even to the extent that it has been criticised of having lost its analytical value (Murji & Solomos 2005, 2-3).

In order to clarify the meanings and different ways of using the concept 'racialisation', we suggest that three approaches can be identified based on where the analytical focus is placed: on the 1) racialisation of bodies and subjectivities, 2) cultural and discursive construction, or 3) intertwining of cultural signification and social structures. While all three approaches understand racialisation to be connected to historical and societal processes, the focus of each is distinct. For example, Andreassen & Ahmed (2014) analyse encounters in schools, neighbourhoods and other everyday environments to identify how bodies and subjectivities are racialised. They argue for the use of the concept racialisation, as that allows for creating connections between historical processes of racism and colonialism and contemporary experiences. As an example of the second approach, Keskinen (2014) examines the racialisation processes in media and political debates following a shopping mall shooting, in order to point out the shifting and fixing of categorisations, as well as the implications of postcolonial histories and border zone positions. The third approach can be viewed in Irene Molina's (1997) analysis of the racialisation of the Million-programme residential areas in Sweden, involving processes of stigmatisation and structural inequalities.

Many researchers, including the editors and contributors of this Special Issue, have used racialisation as a concept that covers both the discursive/representational and material processes. This kind of broad understanding has been criticised by some scholars for being too ambiguous and leading to 'conceptual inflation' (Murji & Solomos 2005, 11-12). Other researchers have opted to use racialisation to refer solely to signifying processes. Among those are Omi and Winant (2015, 111) who define racialisation as 'the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group'. They conceptualise the broader process of 'race-making' as racial formation, which for them means 'the sociohistorical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed and destroyed' (ibid., 109). Their theorisation thus seeks to catch the dynamics of the social, political, and institutional aspects of creating racial identities and structural (in)equalities. Recently, the concept of racial formation has raised interest among Nordic scholars, visible also in this Special Issue, where Diana Mulinari and Anders Neergaard refer to it when engaging in discussion with Marxist, critical race and black feminist studies. Furthermore, Mulinari and Neergaard prefer to use the concept 'racial regime' to capture the specific forms of racism in the Swedish context. In our view, racial regime may well be a fruitful concept for analysing racism, but it does not capture the agency of the racialised others and groups that seek to disrupt/dismantle racist ideologies and structures so well. We argue that such starting points are more firmly included in the idea of racial formation, as defined by Omi and Winant (ibid.).

The third concept, whiteness, is not always used in studies on race and racialisation. On the other hand, there is a specific field that can be called 'whiteness studies' and, in a more narrow meaning, 'critical whiteness studies' (e.g., Dyer 1997; Hill 1997; Ware & Back 2002; Frankenberg 2003; Byrne 2006). Since many scholars (in the Nordic countries) have sought to develop concepts and theories to make better sense of and centre non-white perspectives, the interest has been on processes of racialisation that create differences and hierarchies, as well as racism directed at those defined as the 'others'. Due to the fact that concepts like racialisation/racialised are increasingly becoming part of non-academic environments and discussions, notably as part of the self-identification processes of

those targeted by racism (cf. Habel 2012), they are sometimes used to cover only the 'racialized others'. We do not question the use of the term racialized in the self-identification processes of racialised minorities nor scholars who make this starting point explicit. However, if not reflected on, the problem with limiting the term 'racialised' only to non-white people is that such conceptualisation makes whiteness (remain) invisible and the locus of hegemonic power. We think that whiteness should be included in theorisations of race and racialisation; that is, racialisation is a relational process, where whiteness often acts as the unspoken norm against which 'others' are measured and defined, creating hierarchies not only among groups of people but also ways of life, embodied characteristics, residential areas and so on. In order to examine the full scope of racialisation and racism (the structured system of inequalities), whiteness needs to be included in this broader frame, not left unaddressed and undisturbed to yield hegemonic power. There is certainly a risk of once again re-centring whiteness when turning the analytical focus and theoretical grip on whiteness and people who embody its power and privilege. Therefore, there are even more reasons to explore whiteness as a part of broader processes of racialisation and structures that create racial inequalities.

Emerging perspectives and the contributions in the Special Issue

Current processes of racialisation and/or racial formation cannot be understood without theories that address colonialism and global racial orders. Moreover, the processes of racialisation have been (and continue to be) tied to intra-European histories and Nordic national histories. In the current Nordic societies, racialisation builds on and rearticulates historical legacies, but also develops new forms. In order to examine the varying and changing modes of racialisation and racism, researchers are drawing on several theoretical perspectives and adapting them to the analysis of the Nordic context.

For a couple of decades, postcolonial theories have been influential in the academia in most Nordic countries, especially in the humanities and the social sciences affected by the 'cultural turn'. More lately, decolonial theories have become the interest of especially those acquainted with Latin American perspectives and Marxist studies (Suarez-Krabbe 2015; Groglopo 2012; KULT 2009). While the postcolonial theories have been criticised for an over-emphasis on identities and representations, as well as focusing too much on the historical experiences of the South Asia and the Middle-East, decolonial theories have emphasised that colonialism already started with the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in the 15th and 16th century and how colonialism was deeply intertwined with the emergence of global capitalism. The concept 'coloniality of power' (or the colonial matrix of power) places the emergence of race in the context of global, Eurocentric, capitalist power (Quijano 2000; Lugones 2007, 189-191). Race here is understood as the historical, social classification of the human population in biological terms. According to Quijano (ibid.), coloniality not only constitutes racial but also geopolitical identities. Moreover, the rise of global capitalism is indebted to Eurocentric knowledge production and ideas of modernity. In this Special Issue, postcolonial theories influence the articles by Kristin Loftsdottír and Mathias Danbolt, who examine the role of the Nordic countries in the postcolonial world order, with racialised processes in the labour market and the commodity market.

With the expansion of the research field of racialisation and migration in the Nordic region, the analyses and theories have also become more nuanced in relation to the ways different groups are being racialised. In this issue, Kristin Loftsdottír explores the differences and hierarchies among whiteness and the processes of intra-European racialisation detecting the variations of how Poles, Latvians and Lithuanians are perceived in public debates and everyday interaction in Iceland. Her article points towards the interconnections of cultural and bodily markers in the othering processes of groups originating in Europe. On the other hand, recent studies have sought to address the different forms that racialisation processes take when targeting individuals and groups originating in African, Middle-Eastern, Asian or Latin-American countries (e.g., Myong 2009; Alinia 2011; Sawyer & Habel 2014). Racialisation processes not only differentiate between different diasporic groups, but also place them in hierarchical order, where certain groups and individuals may be perceived as 'not quite white' yet close to, while others are portrayed as the ultimate other of white Western-ness and the white national identity. This points to the fluidity (and fragility) of racial categories, and how race intersects with categories like social class and religion, as well as underscores how racialisation is a continuous, context specific and social process.

The intersections of race with gender, sexuality and class have been at the centre of many scholars' work that builds on postcolonial and black feminist perspectives, as well as queer of colour theories. Two landmarks of this research tradition in the Nordic context have been the anthology *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader* (de los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari 2002) and the theoretically oriented *Intersektionalitet* (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005). In the footsteps of these publications, several others have emerged (e.g., Farahani 2007; Keskinen et al 2009; Carbin 2010). Intersectional feminism has criticised, for example, hegemonic (white) feminism, heterosexist feminism and the exclusionary constructions of gender equality, where gender equality has been adopted for nation-building purposes and serves to create racialised distinctions between the those perceived as majorities and minorities. In this Special Issue, the intersectional perspectives are developed further by Rikke Andreassen and Lene Myong, who explore how gender and race intersect within academia and how positions of authority depend on such intersections, creating expectations of authenticity and illustrating the difficulties of raising discussions about race and racialised power relations. Moreover, Mulinari and Neergaard apply perspectives of intersectionality in their (new) conceptualisations of racism, defined as exploitative and exclusionary racisms. They show how racial regimes are created through gendered and sexualised processes, using examples from Sweden. In her article, Catrin Lundström elaborates on the intersecting role of gender and class for theories on migration and whiteness. Her article argues that migrating subjects are located in contextual intersectional social processes that are structured by global power relations and exchanges of capital. As a result of these, the white western migrants embody favourable positions.

Scholarship on race and racial subjectifications has, over the previous decade, made use of cultural politics and architecture of emotions (Ahmed 2004, 2010; Clough & Halley 2007). In the Nordic context, the anthology *Affectivity and Race: Studies from Nordic Contexts* (2015) has examined how emotions and affect produce bodily, cultural and national boundaries in relation to race and migration. Here Nordic scholars apply affectivity as an analytical lens in order to understand and nuance Nordic racial constructions and formations, both historically and in contemporary times, and show how experiences such as disgust, fear, discomfort and pleasure play into racial hierarchies, relations and norms. Importantly, the anthology emphasises and illustrates how bodily materiality is of

equal importance to verbalisations and categorisations for processes of inclusions and exclusions. For this Special Issue, Kristin Loftdottír examines affective responses by migrants in order to discuss how whiteness and especially different shades of whiteness are constructed in Iceland. Similarly, Andreassen and Myong dwell with how experiences and feelings of discomfort can inform about racial and gendered subject formations. By analysing their own emotional responses to situations where racial hierarchies are at play, and using their own discomfort as an entrance to understanding racial formations, they show how privileges of whiteness and hierarchies of race and gender are at play in contemporary academia. Mathias Danbolt looks at what he calls 'racialised affective consumption' in his article for this Special Issue. Here he seeks to conceptualise the affective and historical dynamics of the debates on racism. He also employs an affective analytical lens, when he addresses the implications of (the rhetoric of) pleasure and enjoyment in racist mobilisations.

As evidenced in the research cited in this introduction, Nordic scholars have engaged with, and continue to do so in this Special Issue, developing the Anglo-American theories to suit the Nordic context. In this Special Issue, Danbolt elaborates on the British post-colonial tradition of 'commodity racism' as it takes shape in the Danish context, describing it as 'retro racism'. In a similar vein, Andreassen and Myong build on black feminism in their analysis of different racial positionalities and processes of subjectification. As the field of study involving race, racialisation and migration develops in the Nordic context, researchers can increasingly engage, even critically, with studies and theorisation by other scholars working in the Nordic context – not only referencing to US/UK scholarship as the source of knowledge and authority.

The articles in this Special Issue are often tied to the analyses of specific national contexts and thus, also highlight the differences within the Nordic region. Often treated as a homogeneous entity – the Nordic region or 'Norden' – the countries bear many similarities, but have also taken different routes historically and politically and continue to do so today. There are interior power relations within the region, for example, following the histories of Norway, Finland and Iceland having struggled for their independence from the regionally dominant Sweden and Denmark. Moreover, the common narrative of Scandinavia that only includes Norway, Sweden and Denmark marginalises Finnish and Icelandic perspectives, not to talk about the perspectives of the Sami.[1] In the racial categorisations developed under the paradigm of biological racism, dominating in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, racial divisions also cut through the Nordic populations: the 'superior' Nordic race was constructed against its 'inferior' others – groups like the Sami, the Tatars, the Finns and the Roma (who all lived in 'Norden') were placed on the lower levels of the racial hierarchy (Andreassen 2015; Isaksson & Jokisalo 1999).

Even in this Special Issue, the continued colonisation and internal colonisation within the Nordic region and its nation-states remains unaddressed. Since the perspective of this issue is on migration and its connections to racialisation and postcolonialism, the Sami and other indigenous perspectives and theories have not been articulated in the contributions. Yet, we wish to point out that a nuanced understanding of colonialism and racism in the Nordic region also requires a discussion of the internal and continued colonisation in the Northern part of the Nordic region and the Arctic (e.g., Valkonen 2009; Gärdebo, Öhman & Maruyama 2014). This applies to the understandings of the histories and the current state of the Nordic region as well.

To summarise, this Special Issue of the *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* provides a collection of articles that engage theoretically with race, racialisation and whiteness from Nordic perspectives. While being informed by international theories of race, whiteness and postcolonialism, the articles in this Special Issue contribute to new theoretical developments in these fields. As such, the Special Issue is an important contribution to the Nordic region, finding and expressing its own voice(s) within this field. While it is precisely the Nordic context which allows the contributors to throw new light and perspectives on this field, we believe that these new theoretical contributions will be of interest and nuance the fields of studies on racialisation and migration not only in the Nordic countries but also outside the Nordic region.

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Rikke Andreassen (PhD, University of Toronto, Canada; Professor (mso), Roskilde University, Denmark) is a researcher and teacher working within the fields of media, gender, sexuality and race. She is the coordinator and co-founder for the research network 'Re-developing international theories of media and migration in a Nordic context' (TheoryNord). She has published three volumes, latest *Human Exhibitions. Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays* (Ashgate, 2015), and a large number of articles in various journals incl. *Social Identities*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Race and Class* and *NORA. Nordic Journal of feminist and gender research*.

Notes

1. The perspectives and voices from Greenland and the Faroe Islands are also marginalised; furthermore, the nations continue to be positioned and represented partly as Danish colonies.

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