



Racialized Encounters Winter Symposium 2021

***Nordic Summer University (NSU), Study Circle 5:
“Racialization, Whiteness and Politics of Othering in Contemporary Europe”***

March 17-19 2021, Roskilde, Denmark / virtual meeting on Zoom

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Day 1, 2-6pm Danish time: Hierarchies of Whiteness

Katerina Strani & Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak

“WHAT RACE ARE POLISH PEOPLE? I THOUGHT THEY WERE THE SAME AS BRITISH FOLK”: RACIALIZING TROPES OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN ‘OTHER’ IN THE UK

Although white supremacy is a motif which often appears in anti-migrant discourse (Faulkner & Bliuc, 2016), the fact that Eastern European migrants are white has not exempted them from racialisation or from “xeno-racism” (Sivanandan, 2001). Starting from the concepts of differentiated whiteness and hierarchies of whiteness as a category of power rather than colour, this paper looks at racializing tropes of the Eastern European ‘other’ in the UK through an analysis of: articles from UK print and online media; Twitter posts and below-the-line (BTL) comments in online news articles; interviews with Eastern European in the UK. We identify strategies of racialisation, homogenisation, stereotyping, objectification and wrongly ascribed ethnicity which result in tropes used with the aim of categorising, denigrating, oppressing and ultimately rejecting the racialised Eastern European Other. Additionally, contrary to definitions of hate speech as a targeted discourse, our study also shows that in online discussions triggered by a specific event involving host and migrant communities, hate speech may not be exclusively related to the ethnic groups involved in the event, but directed at a homogenised Other in a reductionist way. Our results show that hate speech patterns such as ‘us and them’ distinctions, racialisation, ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ migrants, victimising the perpetrator’s (dominant) group, victim-blaming, focus on socio-economic context, exist irrespective of the groups involved in the event or context of the online discussion.

Brandur Mortensen Nolsøe

CROSSING DIASPORIC BOUNDARIES: EXPLORING THE ENACTMENT OF FAROESE WHITENESS IN DENMARK

Since the 1960s a steady stream of young Faroe Islanders have migrated to Denmark for educational purposes. Over time this influx has formed a well-established diasporic environment in Copenhagen in which native Faroe Islanders live during their study years before returning to the Faroe Islands to pursue a career. In many cases friends from the same social circles experience this chapter in their lives together, and end up living in the same

dormitory. Oscillating across the symbolic boundaries of this tight-knit diasporic environment in everyday life, community-members are constantly faced with a juxtaposition between Faroese-ness and non-Faroese-ness. A white minority in Denmark, Faroese Islanders are equipped with a significant capacity to pass as Danish, in part due to cultural Nordic affiliations and relatively strong command of the Danish language. Reflecting their freedom to choose between the Danish EU passport and the Faroese passport, community-members over- and undercommunicate their Faroese-ness as a way of negotiating their racialized positions in different contexts. On one hand, so as to emphasize the racialized position as members of the Faroese minority. On the other hand, in order to enact European whiteness in order to "fit in". In this paper, I draw on autoethnographic vignettes from fieldwork in the Faroese community in Copenhagen to explore how unmarked racialization affects negotiation of Faroese identity in different contexts in everyday life. Reflecting on my own experiences in the same community - as a visiting student based in other countries, and later as a member of the community - I analyse how established interaction rules underpin the reproduction of Faroese self-image in relation to differentiated whiteness. The paper contributes to the expansion of the research field of racialization and migration in the Nordic region, specifically in the context of Faroese migration to Denmark.

Stephanie Barille

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE OF ICELAND: (IN)VISIBILITY AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MIGRANT OTHER

This paper explores the discursive and visual representations of the migrant Other in Iceland within the past decade and interrogates its visibility within Icelandic society. Despite recent efforts to include migrants in Icelandic national narratives and portrayals, the focus in societal debates on migration and multiculturalism remains oriented towards including migrant Others in nation-states projects and ideals. Against the backdrop of Icelandic exceptionalism and nation-branding, representations of 'Others' in Iceland are informed by a certain idea of Icelandicness and help to perpetuate a certain exoticisation of the North. The paper investigates how both the Icelandic myths of homogeneity and exceptionalism render certain migrant groups (in)visible through racialisation and hierarchisation processes in Icelandic society, and how it impacts politics of differentiation.

Heidi Erbsen

IDENTITY BEYOND BORDERS: CATCHING UP WITH THE LAG IN RECOGNITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL, CASE STUDY ON RUSSIAN SPEAKERS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Globalization has greatly changed the way individuals and groups (including minority and majority groups alike) identify themselves. In a historical standpoint, states "theoretically" passed down information to citizens via public social processes or with the help of news media; in a globalized and networked world however, individuals have increasing space through social media platforms to pass information about their preferences to governing officials. The process of globalization which allows individuals to communicate and express themselves beyond borders has shifted the lens of identity in two ways: It has shifted away from being state centered, towards being ideologically based, and has reconfigured the top-down relationship between individuals and states. When it comes to research and policy-making however, this shift has taken more time. This presentation therefore first analyzes how ideas of identity have evolved more generally with globalization. Then it considers the research and media coverage of one minority group, Russian speaking minority populations in Estonia and Latvia, to show how trends in identity studies of these groups have evolved with globalization processes. Finally, the paper aims to identify key areas for future research to consider in the studies of

minority groups who are perceived to have cultural ties (be they linguistic, ethnic, religious, etc.) with an external institution. Even though this study uses the example of Russian speaking minority groups living in Estonia and Latvia, the findings and suggestions here are relevant considerations for any individual or group which has been politicized by state or international relations. Despite the fact that individuals have an increasing number of platforms to express themselves, state to state and global relations are still prominent factors in identity formation and, in polarizing conflict situations can create a sense of othering for minority groups.

Day 2, 2-6pm Danish time: Racialized spaces

Doron Eldar

DECOLONIZING EUROPE THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE OF COMMEMORATION – CLAIMING BLACK SPACE IN THE CITY AND NATION

This paper investigates how efforts to materialize Black narratives of colonialism and trans-Atlantic slavery in Brussels, Copenhagen, and Lisbon function to claim space across two main scales, the nation's and the city's. At the nation's scale, these monuments claim discursive space of belonging, as they position Black people as equal producers of the European (national) space by commemorating Black narratives of national history in the public sphere. The monuments represent Afro-descendants as people who have a legitimate claim to Europe. At the city's scale, the projects can be seen as efforts to claim physical space and create a "Black sense of place" against the backdrop of residential segregation, policing, and being seen as "out of place." I have two main aims for the project. The first is to elucidate how the struggle over postcolonial Europe's landscape of commemoration reflects wider negotiations over European identity and politics of belonging. The second is to amplify the work of artists and activists doing counter-memory work and provide a useful synthesis of strategies to overcome the challenges associated with their projects. My interest in the topic arises from my biography as a Jewish granddaughter to European refugees born in Israel, who has been educated in a boarding school in Eswatini and in Universities in Europe and the US. In particular, I am interested in the hybridity of culture and place, white ignorance, and ways to tackle it.

Julie Chamberlain

HEIMAT WILHELMSBURG: THE CONTESTATION OF RACIALIZATION THROUGH URBAN SPACE

One of the key ways that racialized positions emerge, shift, and are contested and negotiated relationally is in and through space. I would like to contribute a paper that explores how this is happening in the historically stigmatized neighbourhood of Wilhelmsburg, in Hamburg, Germany. Over the past few years, I conducted research with racialized long-time residents of the neighborhood, exploring their perspectives on recent urban planning and development that had depended upon images of the neighborhood as a racialized space. For 150 years the neighbourhood had been planned and devalued as an un-German and un-European space within the city. Yet racialized long-time residents experience and value the neighbourhood as a warm, welcoming, diverse, and beautiful place both against and within the history of devaluation. Many characterize it as Heimat, invoking that spatial concept of identity and belonging that has lately been revived and hotly contested on the national stage in Germany. My paper explores how some Wilhelmsburg residents analyze and resist racialization through the assertion of the neighbourhood as Heimat in the context of exclusions that they otherwise

experience as so-called “people with migration backgrounds” in Germany. Residents negotiate and contest the specificities of local racialization processes by valuing and identifying with a neighbourhood that is supposedly a “problem.” Heimat is not without tensions between people who are differentially racialized, however (a term that was coined by Laura Pulido). The picture in Wilhelmsburg encompasses resistance to racialization and solidarity across shared experiences, as well as othering of some recent arrivals to the neighbourhood, particularly of “Bulgarians,” which I often heard as a catch-all term for people who have migrated from Eastern Europe in the past 10+ years, and who are experiencing housing insecurity and exploitation. My paper explores the full complexity of this picture, centring interviews and photographs from Wilhelmsburg, and drawing on the work of Black German and German POC scholars and activists in particular to frame an example of how racialization is spatially contested and reproduced.

Derek Perdue

MUDDLED THOUGHTS: HOW SECOND-GENERATION “RETURNEES” EXERCISE WHITENESS

In this paper I suggest that contemporary whiteness in (sub)urban Portugal is entangled in migration and trauma, expressed in young men and women’s attitude towards their parents, especially their father, from the so-called “returnee” (retornados) generation of the 1970s. Decolonization wars in Angola, for example, and political regime change at home resulted in a mass migration of approximately 500,000 “white Portuguese” to Portugal from April 1974 to November 1976 and placed significant stress on existing infrastructures of housing and labor. It is in this milieu that a “promise” was made by the Portuguese state that these white people, who were relatively unskilled and many of whom had never stepped foot inside Portugal, would return with favorable options. They would have privilege, be integrated to their right and just homeland and be able to articulate such status into real life opportunities in post-colonial Portugal. As one might imagine, life for the “returnees” has not been so simple. Multifaceted discourses of stigma dogged the returnees and many felt and were treated as “second-class white Portuguese.” Moreover, in subsequent years, tens of thousands of Black “Luso-Africans” joined them to dwell in social housing projects that were constructed in the urban periphery. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in six such neighborhoods located around the Lisbon metro area, I explore “whiteness” as friction and join a cadre of artists/scholars who attempt to “write race” through fiction. The mobilization of affect through narrative is instructive in understanding the tensions involved in being white in one of the Blackest cities of Europe. My choice in textual style complements the efforts of young, white artists connected to hip-hop, reggae and graffiti in their struggle to reconcile their conflicted ideas and sentiments about family, racism and what it is to be Portuguese.

Amani Hassani

RACIALISATION IN ‘POSTRACIAL’ CONTEXTS: POLITICS OF RESPECTABILITY, MIDDLECLASS POSITIONING AND DISCREET RESISTANCE AMONG YOUNG MUSLIMS IN DENMARK

I am interested in the topic of racialisation as it connects to theories of spatialisation. The relationship between racialisation and spatialisation effects the intersections between race, class and gender and how these are constructed in spatial terms. I explore these topics in my comparative ethnographic work on Muslims in Denmark and Quebec. Both these nations perceive themselves as ‘postracial’, thereby creating a veneer of colourblindness in policy and discourse that trickles down to everyday interactions between racialised Muslim and white citizens. In this regard, I explore how political discourse target Muslim women and men

differently and offer different potentials for agency. I discuss how young Muslims use city spaces to challenge their categorisation along racial and gendered narratives, especially the conflation of these into the archetype of the “submissive Muslim woman” beneath the “aggressive Muslim man”. My ethnography indicates that these youth – while insisting on their right to religious expression –traverse a unique, gendered, and racialised terrain to achieve upward social mobility through middle class respectability. The young women were often represented as oppressed by patriarchal structures and thus often felt a need to counter-represent themselves as independent and empowered, while the Muslim men responded to their racialisation associated with violence, with unthreatening demeanours palatable to the white gaze to achieve social capital in professional and public spaces. For these young women and men, the idea of achieving middle class respectability by making differences palatable to a white gaze, is an important gendered tactic to navigating racialised spaces and ultimately achieving upward social mobility.

Nial Cunningham

BEYOND EXCEPTION: THE IRISH BORDER IN TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

“That’s the only kind of travel permit I have got, you good for nothing civil servant bastard’.
He read it, looked at it and handed it back to me.
“Are you Irish?” “No’ I said, ‘as a matter of fact I’m a Yemenite Arab”’.
(Behan, 1965[1991]):23)

So recalls the young Irish republican Brendan Behan on his return to Ireland in 1941 after release from an English borstal for attempting to bomb Liverpool docks. Fast forward to 1998 and your current author reflects on the continuities at Dublin Port while awaiting clearance to enter the country. Two members of an Garda Síochána board our coach. “Are you Irish?” my white fellow-travellers and I are asked (no ID required), while another ingenious word formulation is used for those who are not (white, that is), resulting in their swift removal and our rapid departure onto the quays and into the heart of the still sleeping city. More than two decades on, the privileges of whiteness and the partiality of ‘open’ borders still persist in everyday mobilities for people of different classes and ethnicities across the internal supranational boundaries of the EU and its newest satellite in the UK, such as that running across the island of Ireland. The persistence in the ‘singling out’ of people of colour at the border suggests that little has changed in the racial enforcement of soft border regimes between the UK, Ireland and indeed elsewhere across ‘open’ Europe (MRCI, 2011; Buttery, 2019a, 2019b). In order for ‘openness’ to be performed, ‘EU [including British] migration policy, specifically when it targets people who are not EU citizens, works through the protocriminalisation of potential migrants from places that are marked as problematic’ (Gilmartin, 2015). The state tends to read ‘problematic’ places in phenotypical terms and this underpins the universalising whiteness of contemporary European cosmopolitanism that frames the openness of borders such as that on the island of Ireland: ‘From the perspective of bodies with human faces, the benefits of de-bordering the Irish border cannot be overstated’ (McCall, 2018: 294). Brexit, and its potential implications for peace, mobility and citizenship is calling that openness into question and has thrust the Irish border to the very heart of contemporary geopolitics.

Tina Burova

DANDINI DANDINI LULAJZE

“Dandini dandini Lulajze” is a title for a monthly event, hosted by a sociocultural centre Zinnschmelze. It aims to foster cross-generational, intercultural meetings in the Barmbek area

- Hamburg, Germany. The project was created to help the future generation see how diverse the German/Hamburg society has become and to embrace this diversity in the most positive way. Good-night rituals are a pretty universal concept and can thus serve as a shared point of reference for many people. Nowadays, we can find almost everything on YouTube - melodies, lyrics and stories - but as Youtube stores them safely for our use, we start memorizing less and less. Our grandparents' generation didn't grow up in the digital age, but they have a lot of knowledge to pass on. What if instead of always looking things up we took the time to ask them? We would like to get to know grandparents from Barmbek with various ethnic backgrounds to ask them to share the lullabies of their childhood with the rest of the community – especially families with children. Because moving to another country can be challenging on various levels - a new language, new traditions and ways of doing things have to be learned. Newcomers find themselves constantly juggling between the need and/or expectation to feel integrated and a desire to feel connected to where they come from. This is especially challenging for the elderly and children. It is harder to learn a new language for older people and this limits them from accessing events where socializing happens. Immigrant kids, on the other hand, might find it hard to feel confident in their cultural identities. Even though kids are much quicker with languages and faster adapt to new situations, they are still reminded of their differences in appearance, accent, religion. Once per month on a late afternoon, we gather at the Zinnschmelze. The atmosphere is relaxed – pillows and blankets on the floor. A small set up to create an intimate and calm atmosphere to listen, learn and see how differences create a beautiful and colorful bunch.

Day 3, 2-6pm Danish time: Intersectionality

Kasia Narkowicz

FEMONATIONALISM IN POLAND AND PROXIMITIES TO EUROPEANNESS: HOW THE OTHERING OF RACIALISED MUSLIM BODIES IS JUSTIFIED THROUGH FEMINIST RHETORIC IN THE PERIPHERIES OF EUROPE

My paper will examine the Central European identity and its complex links to Europeaness through the study of femonationalistic exclusions in public policy and discourse and popular culture. It will particularly study how Muslim bodies that are made out of place and Othered in Poland through hegemonic deployment of feminist sentiments. The mobilisation of gender rights rhetoric in the exclusion of racialised bodies will be contrasted to the ongoing Polish anti-gender mobilisations targeting Polish women. This paper will discuss examples from public policy, media discourse and popular culture that exemplify how whiteness is enacted in Poland and what this might mean for a country which has historically been situated in the peripheries of Europeaness. One example that I will discuss is of the Polish author Laila Shukri who writes bestselling books from her home in the Emirates for a Polish audience. Shukri's novels reproduce orientalist narratives about Muslim women in Arab countries, but they also do the work of giving white privilege and feminist credentials to Polish women. Her self-representation as a wife of a wealthy sheikh, oppressed yet at the same time economically privileged, allows her to be critical of women's oppression, contrasting it to Polish realities, but without overstepping the boundaries of acceptable femininity. Her Arab-sounding pseudonym strengthens her position as balancing between her role as 'native informant' and still 'our own' woman. Shukri becomes a European who is narrating what oppression against women looks like for Polish people back home. This femonationalism satisfies several contradictory goals that will be explored in this paper. It provides cultural validity to a broader right-wing nationalistic project in which Muslims are excluded from the Polish public sphere, while simultaneously bracketing the country's own questionable commitment to gender equality.

Additionally, it allows the Polish audience to make a claim to a Europeanness that is not always granted to us.

Anaïs Duong-Pedica

TEACHING WHITE FEMINISM, ENCOUNTERING WHITELY RESISTANCE: CHALLENGES TO GENDERING RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM

This paper is an exploration of my experience building, developing and teaching the course “White Women & White Feminism” in Finland. The inspiration for this course came from my own experiences of being antagonized by (elite and highly educated) white women in British academia as well as an engagement with the academic literature produced by Black, Third World, Indigenous, and other women of colour who have had similar and often more traumatizing experiences. This is a course that came out of anger (Lorde 1984) and that required that I occupy and commit to the position of the feminist killjoy (Ahmed 2017). Through intimate experiences with white feminine racism and readings, I developed an interest in the mechanisms of power that white women deploy to resist being challenged on issues of racism, and ultimately, to recreate a racial supremacy that benefits them. I am interested in the everyday investments in white supremacy white women and white feminists make. The course aims to place individuals in systems of oppression and is an attempt to challenge taken for granted assumptions about the innocence and fragility of white women (hooks 1981; Carby 1982; Fellows & Razack 1998; Moreton-Robinson 2000; Srivastava 2005; Hamad 2019; Salem 2020), as solely victims of oppression. Eventually, it sheds light on the collective complicity that must be reckoned with by white women and white feminists and the need to make anti-racism and decolonial thought an inherent part of one’s way of thinking about and being in the world. In the context of education, “white talk” (Bailey 2014) among students, distancing strategies, faculty members’ defensiveness, teaching exhaustion due to the nature of the topic and having to make space for students’ “white fragility” (DiAngelo 2011, 2019) can all come into play when teaching about race and gender. This conversation will focus on disentangling the ways in which whiteness (Frye 1992) affects gender and race relations in a power setting such as a university classroom and on naming and analysing “dominant ways of [being,] knowing, interpreting and feeling” (Wekker 2016: 3) in the classroom.

Emina Buzinki

CRITICAL & UNTOLD STORIES: ACCOUNTS OF RACIALIZATION AND SURVEILLANCE OF REFUGEE YOUTH

In this study, I delve into the question of what might it mean to be of a non-dominant race and ethnicity for refugee youth in Croatia in the times of social distancing intersecting at the Covid-19 pandemic and the enhanced securitization politics that normalizes racialization and criminalization of refugees and migrants. It is the centrality of the border regimes and their translation into public spaces such as schools that occupies this writing -- the entanglement of the European migration regime and the extremization of the protection of external borders of the EU, and the domestic nationalism forge the questions of the methodologies and tools of racialization, particularly those that permeate educational policies, curriculum and instructions. Moreover, I explore how the experiences of refugee youth in distant schooling have been shaping their complex identities (racial, transnational, national, religious, gender) and how those identities have been negotiated in socially distant schooling and everyday life.

Bolaji Balogun

RACIAL CONTRACT – WHITENESS CONTRACT

This paper revisits Charles Mill's 'racial contract' theory in a sharply different context to its usual applications in the West. In doing so, the theory is opened to a new global application, able to re-centre questions of colonialism and domination in a more 'peripheral', understudied location in Central and Eastern Europe. To make this effective, I reflect on the region's polity that is often considered race-neutral in terms of its social configuration. I consider the ways in which the 'racial contract' serves as a key historical study of race through three major manifestations – Colonial association, Eugenics, and Economics – that are often neglected in racial discourses in Central and Eastern Europe. To this end, I reroute The Racial Contract (Mills, 1997) beyond the normative liberal Western hegemony, showing that Mills' concept has not been marginal to the histories of race and racism in the West.