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Published online: 22 Sep 2021.

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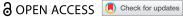
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ABSTRACT

This article uses Danish media discourses on racialized children's schooling as a lens through which to analyse how issues of kinship and family play into nation-building processes through representations of 'the child'. The article addresses the question of the distribution of racialized children, mostly termed 'bilingual pupils', at Danish schools, which is a recurrent theme in the public debate. The media representation of this issue is mostly framed around an ideal of spreading the 'bilingual pupils' among different schools to ensure proper mixing with white Danish pupils, which is framed as securing both the educational development of the children and the prosperity of the Danish nation. Through the ideal of mixing, the nation is constituted as able to include the racialized child as an act of saving it from its heritage of racialized and classed disadvantage. A comparison with other kinds of media reporting on racialized children in Danish schooling reveals the constellation of a racialized hierarchy that works to uphold Danish whiteness and non-racism through the ideal of proper mixing. Migrant subjects who have mixed through kinship with Danish whiteness and have actively abandoned their racialized familial background seem more easily constituted as belonging in Denmark.

Introduction

This article uses Danish media discourses on racialized children's schooling as a lens through which to analyse how issues of kinship and family play into processes of nation-building and racialization. While a significant number of studies have analysed different aspects of minoritisation, racialization and national belonging in Danish media (Andreassen, 2007; Smedegaard Nielsen, 2014; Hervik, 2002; Stage, 2011; Yilmaz, 2016), none have considered how the representation of children more specifically plays into these questions. Education constitutes one of the most significant fields for children's public presence, and may be addressed as a meeting point between the child's parents/family and the public, via the child's caretaking and upbringing. Therefore, the study of media discourses of racialized children's schooling can reveal insights into how public processes of racialization may intersect with historically profound imaginaries of race as being reproduced through kinship, as reflecting a conflation of familial and racial reproduction (Ahmed, 2006, p. 120 f). Through such an imaginary, the child may come to figure as a bearer of its race.

By focusing on imaginaries of nation, race and belonging, I will investigate the role of the child figure through the following research question: How can media discourses on racialized children's schooling contribute to an understanding of the racialized structuring of Danish society? I will answer this question by addressing more detailed analytical questions, namely: How can we understand the figure of the child in racializing processes, and in what ways does it serve to negotiate the meeting between state/society and family/kin, and the specific ways in which race becomes significant in this relation? In what ways does the study of media representations of racialized children's schooling add to the understanding of Danish whiteness, and its role for the racialized structuring of Danish society?

Theory and framework for analysis

Media and education both constitute important fields in public nation-building processes (e.g. Buchardt, 2018; Stage, 2011). In the last decades of the 20th century, media and educational-pedagogical discourses underwent rather similar processes of culturalisation in their approach to migrant subjects (Buchardt, 2018, pp. 60–62). This entailed an intensified use of culture as an explanatory category for issues related to nation-building

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and migration (Buchardt, 2018; Yilmaz, 2016). Nevertheless, there is a lack of research into the intersection between mediatized and pedagogised discourses and practices of nation-building. This study aims at filling some of this gap by studying how the presence of pedagogised discourses in media contributes to mediatized nation-building and racializing processes. Although I have not been able to locate Danish studies of media representations of children's education, a few international studies indicate that the media represent educational inequalities and disparities within a frame of racialized explanations and the upholding of white hegemony (McCallum et al., 2020; Villenas & Angeles, 2013). A study of children in Portuguese newspapers (Ponte, 2007) demonstrates that education constitutes a main field of media coverage of children, which 'deals with the idea of children as the country's future' (ibid, 751). Indeed, the child as pointing towards the future is a prevalent figure that structures much of the thinking about children, and 'highlights the links between individual children, notions of social progress and national welfare that circulate within national and international policy debates' (Burman, 2008, p. 1). Edelman (2004, pp. 2–3) suggests that the futurism attached to the figure of the child makes 'fighting for our children' what structures politics itself, because of its one-sidedness and the impossibility of opposing it. Additionally, the well-being of children is of institutionalized national concern, and thus, of great public interest.

The child is an interesting analytical figure because it is positioned between past and future. On the one hand, 'a child is not yet that which it alone has the capacity to become' (Castañeda, 2002, p. 1). On the other hand, the figure of the child may be approached as the bearer of a heritage bestowed on it through kinship (Gordon, 2008, pp. 335–36). In this sense, the child easily comes to constitute the site of a battle over how best to regulate the tension between the heritage of the past and the becoming of the future. For my reading of media representations of racialized children in Danish schools, I will use 'the child' as category of analysis. In doing so, I aim to unfold how the social world is figured through focusing my gaze at the representation of children, and how they are orientated in the world (Ahmed, 2006). In this reading, I move between two analytical levels, using analyses of the representations of individual children to show how the specificities of the child as figure play into the racialized structuring of Danish society.

As pointed out by Castañeda (2002, p. 3 f), one of the most significant embodiments of the figure of the child is the idea of human development from child to adult. In this sense, an analytical reading through the lens of 'the child' will provide particular insights into how human development, and its inherent elements of transformation, becoming and potentiality, are interlocked with imaginaries about society, its ideals and its futures. To substantiate my reading, I will use Sara Ahmed's (2006) notion of orientations as 'what shape the contours of space' (Ahmed, 2006, p. 3). I will study how the children represented are affectively and spatially orientated towards or away from other bodies and things, for example, their family/kin, schooling, other social or public settings, the nation, and the future and its ideals.

Racialization in media and education in denmark

Since the late 20th century, a Nordic research field of media and migration has developed, focusing on media representations of migrants, migration and related issues (Eide & Nikunen, 2011; Horsti, 2008). In Danish media in particular, a negative representation of Muslims as a deviant minority group is prevalent (Horsti, 2008). Several studies of Danish media have identified a common concern with a 'problem minority', constructed in media discourses where it is termed 'immigrants' or 'Muslims', and including stereotyping, racialization and ascribing specific problematic behaviour to the minority (Andreassen, 2007; Smedegaard Nielsen, 2014; Hervik, 2002; Hussain et al., 1997; Yilmaz, 2016). While the media focus is very much on Islam and Muslims, these discourses must be seen as part of broader racializing processes that may affect subjects regardless of whether or not they are actually practising Muslims. Through slippages and the interchangeability of terms and visuals (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2014, p. 109 f), the media effectively works to racialize subjects who, based on their bodily or cultural markings, may be recognized as belonging to the categories 'immigrant' or 'Muslim'. Whiteness also plays an important part in the racialization in Danish media, which speak from and to a position of whiteness as the norm (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2014). In a Danish context whiteness is also highly nationalized, in the sense that 'Danish' (sometimes extended with 'Nordic' or 'Western') is often used as proxy for white in popular discourse, perhaps reflecting the historic construction of a Nordic whiteness as the norm and ideal (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2014, p. 191 f; Andreassen, 2019, p. 98 f).

With regard to children in education, similar kinds of slippage between categories, corresponding to those in the media, seem to take place in political-pedagogical practices (Buchardt, 2014, p. 33),[1] which suggests that similar processes of racialization occur here, too. Consequently, Danish schools, like the media, may be considered a site for racialized production (Vertelyte, 2019). As part of the regulation of 'the bilingual pupil', Buchardt (2018) argues that

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'culture as a pedagogical explanation to pupils and parents with a migration history in the field of welfare-state schooling can be understood as a pedagogized form of nation-ness within schooling' (ibid, 68).

Whereas the racialization through a discourse of culture is prominent in both fields – media and pedagogy – the analysis must be conducted with sensitivity to the fact that the term 'bilingual' seems to be specific to the discourses concerning racialized children in education. Jensen et al. (2012) argues that the use of 'bilingual' turns the marked difference between the pupils into a technical problem that can be fixed with a pedagogical didactic approach. This therefore makes the pupils undergo a transformation aimed at neutralizing or erasing the 'bilingual pupil' as a social category. In this sense, the categorization as bilingual may reflect the idea of children as malleable (Castañeda, 2002, pp. 2–3), as opposed to adults being fixated with categorizations that offer little prospect of change, e.g. 'Muslims' or 'immigrants'. Not least for this reason, discourses on bilingual pupils are indeed relevant for closer study. On the one hand, they relate very intimately, by means of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, to the fixations of racialized public discourse. On the other hand, they point in a different direction due to the malleable vocabulary and imaginary attached to the figure of the child.

Methods and presentation of empirical material

I have selected newspaper articles for analysis via the Danish media database *Infomedia*. A search for the words 'tosproget' ('bilingual') and 'skole' ('school') in national newspapers in the most recent four-year period (2017–2020) returned more than 500 articles. I have chosen to focus on national newspapers as they provide a broad picture of the general media agenda and public discourses across the political spectrum covered by their various editorial lines, most of which stem from historic links to particular political parties. National newspapers also encompass a variety of modes of representation, from broadsheet to tabloid.[2] Following a reading of the articles' headlines and lead paragraphs, I have identified the problematization of 'too many' bilingual pupils in Danish schools as a recurring, and thus general, organizing frame throughout the reporting, as it is only challenged to a very limited extent. As per Stephen Reese (2007), I understand 'frames as structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process' (Reese, 2007, p. 150). In this sense, the problematization of the amount of bilingual pupils is the organizing principle that structures how different elements of representation are put together in most of the reporting.

This framing demonstrates that the issue of racialized children in Danish schools shares considerable intertextuality with media and pedagogical racializing discourses, which constitute subjects with a migrant background as problems, and therefore as objects of specific regulation. I have identified five different clusters of media content that point towards specific ways in which bilingual pupils are problematized. I identified the themes through a closer reading of how different framing elements are at work in the articles by pointing out the problem represented in more detail, how it is evaluated and/or suggestions on how to solve it (Entman, 1993). The term framing elements refers to all the different elements of representation in the reporting, for example, the journalists' own wording, quotations, citations and images. The clusters are: 1) the distribution of bilingual pupils between the schools; 2) the linking of the distribution of bilingual children to recurrent problematizations of so-called 'ghettos'; 3) case stories of concrete experiences from different schools; 4) the question of numbers, with a focus on different tipping points for when the number of bilingual children is seen as causing problems; and 5) the question of parents' free choice of school, mostly concerning the problem of white Danish families fleeing from public schools[3] with a high number of bilingual children.

However, the material also includes articles with a framing that challenges the general problematization of 'too many' bilingual pupils. The most prominent example is the school Søndervangskolen and its principal, who involves herself in the debate by challenging the underlying premise that pupils can be categorized on the basis of 'bilinguality' (Vestergaard, 2017, 2019). This part of the reporting reveals interdiscursivity with other kinds of media stories about racialized children in Danish schools, namely cases concerning migrant children threatened with deportation. I have previously studied these cases, partly in collaboration with Lene Myong (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2020; Smedegaard Nielsen & Myong, 2019), and found that the children's familial ties to white Danes played a significant role for the public concern for their case. I will include insights from these studies in order to add perspectives that can provide a more complete picture of how Danish media's representation of racialized children in Danish schools plays into to the racialization of society.

In order to conduct a closer qualitative analysis, I have selected articles that represent each of the five clusters, as well as the challenging framing, in an attempt to strive for variety in the material analysed.

Reading the reporting through the figure of the child

In my reading of the empirical material, I have identified three main figurations, which will structure the

presentation of the analysis. The figurations are formed by the way the reporting orientates the bilingual pupil and how this orientation informs the racialized structuring of society, and I have synthesized them into the following sections: 1) *The potentiality of racialized children*; 2) *The proper mix of whiteness*; and 3) *Children are children and 'model minorities'*. Apart from the articles sampled, the third section also includes analytical insights from the above mentioned other kinds of media stories about migrant children threatened with deportation.

The potentiality of racialized children

The reporting generally attributes the problem of too many bilingual pupils to what and where they come from. The reporting mainly constitutes this 'background', as it might be termed, in terms of the children's race and class by ascribing different elements of these two categorizations to the pupils and their families. In one article, for example, bilingual pupils and other pupils are interchangeably differentiated by references to the following dichotomies: 'White and brown schools', "ethnic minority children" versus "ethnically Danish families", "immigrant children" versus "ethnically Danish middle-class children", "bilingual children" versus "children of more well-educated parents", "Danish role models" versus "pupils of foreign ancestry", "bilingual children" versus "Danish children", and "children from families from non-Western countries" versus "resourceful parents" (Dørge, 2020). In another article, nuance is added to the intersection between race and class by a teacher from a school in a so-called 'ghetto[4]', who points to the parents' educational background and social status as presenting a bigger challenge than the pupils' ethnicity (Graversen, 2019b). In other articles, the children are referred to as Muslim, either in writing (Graversen, 2019a) or through visual representations of Muslim clothing, such as the hijab (Karker, 2017). The effect of such slippages between terms is a racialized differentiation between children read as, respectively, 'brown' and 'white', based on their bodily appearance, and construed through the intersection of a variety of categorical axes of racialized, ethnic/national/regional/cultural and class-based signification. The slippages also illustrate how whiteness appears as a nationalized category, in the sense that 'Danish' or 'ethnically Danish' and 'white' are used interchangeably. However, through the reference to 'families from non-Western countries', whiteness also seems to align itself with the term Western within a broader Western/non-Western dichotomist thinking.

Although, the intersectional racialization in the reporting reflects more general discourses about racialized minorities that other studies of Danish media reporting have identified (Andreassen, 2007; Yilmaz, 2016), the focus on bilingual pupils adds another facet, as the transformability through education, attached to the child, evokes imaginaries about future ideals and potentialities. Thus, the reporting centralizes how the children's potentiality can be secured for future realization. This is very much presented as the need to move them away from their position as racialized minority into the majority of the white norm, and in this way, to become *like* white children.

One way the reporting frames this movement of the bilingual pupils is through the profiling of a politics of 'spreading' the bilingual pupils between different schools (Dohm, 2017; Grønkjær, 2017; Hvid, 2018a; Karker, 2017). In one interview, a professor of pedagogics argues that bilingual children should be moved away from their local schools, even if doing so deprives their parents of their free choice of school: 'One should do it for the sake of the children', as he puts it (Karker, 2017). This marks a division between the interests of the children and the interests of their parents, who are labelled as not doing what is best for their children. In this sense, the universal 'one', as used by the professor, becomes a moral good that consists of taking over and doing what is best for children whose parents have seemingly failed. Another example of spreading is the reporting on the 'bussing' of bilingual children with poor Danish language skills to schools outside their districts. The aim of the bussing was to mix these pupils with more white Danish pupils in order to improve their Danish language skills (Hvid, 2018a) and, as one journalist put it, 'give them better possibilities to develop' (Hvid, 2020a). This wording indicates that something in their local settings with other bilingual children would disturb the pupils' development. However, in 2020 it was reported that the mixing by bussing did not have the intended effects (Hvid, 2020a, 2020b), and as such it was criticized as a failed attempt to solve integration and social politics 'in the classrooms' (Nystrup, 2020). This framing of the issue as being a more general problem of integration is also reflected in the reporting's focus on 'ghettos'. Through problematizations of the proportion of non-Western immigrants and their descendants (Graversen, 2019b), the residents' level of education and income (Graversen, 2019a), and 'a great negative social heritage' (Winther, 2018, p. 7), the reporting roots the problematization of racialized children's schooling in their way of living with their families in 'ghettos' – or 'parallel societies' (ibid), as these neighbourhoods are also described.

The effect of the displacement of the issue of distribution of pupils, from a matter of educational policy to a more general societal problem, is that the racialized child is constituted as a bearer of the

burden of the 'problem background' of their family/ kin. Through a Danish education, the aim is to move the bilingual pupil towards Danish belonging, and therefore the child is figured as the potentiality or hope of repairing the problems ascribed to what and where it comes from. However, the movement of the bilingual child is also figured as troublesome. For example, the 'ghettos' are described as prisons, which could become 'too convenient' (Winther, 2018). In another article, the Tingbjerg 'ghetto' is figuratively described as being in 'Copenhagen's north western corner, with only one paved way out to the surrounding society' (Graversen, 2019a). It may also involve resistance from the bilingual pupils themselves if the process of moving them to Danish belonging is not initiated at a sufficiently early stage in their lives. One teacher from a so-called 'ghetto-school' says, 'There is something to work with when a pupil says: I refuse to talk integrated' (Graversen, 2019b). In this example, the article frames resistance towards linguistic integration as a challenge that should be overcome through pedagogical effort in school.

Thus, on the one hand, the racialized child is figured through its potential for a promising future that can be realized through good schooling. On the other hand, this future promise is balanced in terms of the risk of it not being fulfilled, suggesting that the child's malleability and potentiality is constantly being framed as normative and implying the possibility of failure, as termed by Castañeda (2002, pp. 2–4). As demonstrated above, the normativity attached to the 'bilingual pupil' is to transgress its race and become *like* white children. This reporting aligns the integration and future prosperity of Danish society with individual and educational development in ways that position the racialized child's racial transgression as the key to move towards these future ideals. The alignment between educational development and racial transgression may also point towards a reading of the reporting as framing the distribution of bilingual pupils as a project aimed at saving the children from their working-class background, a background that involves the risk of missing out on their potential to become good, well-educated citizens if they do not learn to orient properly towards the future.

The proper mix of whiteness

'The composition of pupils at Tingbjerg School in Copenhagen can be said to be as diverse as the colours of the striped socks Marco Damgaard has chosen to accompany his white shirt, dark blue jacket and chinos Monday morning: There are pupils with ethnic roots in around 40 different countries at the school. The 34-year-old principal likes diversity – and colourful

socks – but still Marco Damgaard feels that something is missing: More ethnically Danish pupils' (Graversen, 2019a).

The above citation comes from an article that profiles the principal of the district school in Tingbjerg, an area of Copenhagen designated as a 'ghetto'. With its references to diversity of colours, the excerpt clearly illustrates the racialization of the question of pupil composition. Indeed, the principal, Marco Damgaard, who is depicted in photos as a white man, is represented as embracing this 'colourful' racial diversity, although he still feels that he misses having more 'Danish' pupils – in this context, those positioned as the opposite of colourful ethnicity, i.e. white. His longing for more white pupils stands out as an unquestioned and legitimate longing, as it is expressed in a straightforward manner, and no further arguments are deemed necessary.

The unquestioned good of white Danish pupils, and the longing for 'more' of them in contrast to the 'too many' racialized, bilingual pupils is a constellation that runs through most of the reporting. Another way in which this constellation is constituted is through the representation of 'numbers', in terms of particular tipping points for when the proportion of bilingual pupils in a school poses a problem. The tipping points suggested in the reporting fluctuate between a maximum of 40% bilingual pupils in some articles (Grønkjær, 2017; Jessen & Nielsen, 2017; Karker, 2017), and 30% or 20% in others (e.g. Bloch, 2020; Dohm, 2017). While the specific percentages may differ, it is a recurring premise in the reporting that if the number of bilingual pupils exceeds the tipping point, it will have negative effects on the academic level (Grønkjær, 2017) or the learning and social environment (Bloch, 2020).

However, the reporting does not suggest an ideal of only white pupils. One article quotes a school principal who states that she finds an 80/20 composition optimal, that the students benefit from encountering diversity, and that mixed ethnicity can be a resource when it is kept at this level (Bloch, 2020). As can also be seen in the earlier quote about the principal's colourful socks, the reporting seems orientated towards an ideal of the Danish nation as characterized by love for diversity, thereby entailing an 'imperative to mix with others' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 134).While the reporting represents the Danish educational system and the politicians as actively trying to solve the problem of mixing through initiatives aimed at distributing bilingual pupils, it positions the children and their families as being less willing to mix. They are described as "clumping together" in a small number of schools (Hvid, 2018b), and thus as resistant to mixing with white Danes, and through this not-mixing, are deemed to be acting against the interests of the children. In Ahmed's (2004, pp. 133–

34), the reporting seems to be premised on the argument that if migrant families had just shown their love for the nation through mixing with white Danes and speaking the language, they could have been rewarded with 'the "promise" of being loved in return' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 134), or even to not have their love 'understood as a (potentially racist) rejection of the culturally inclusive (Danish) nation' if they only show love for subjects with the same ethnic racialized minority background (Myong & Bissenbakker, 2016, p. 140). However, the bilingual pupil embodies a hope that posits the coherent, mixed society as a future ideal for the nation, one that will be realized in the development and raising of children who mix properly with white Danes. As one local politician put it in an interview about the 'bussing' of pupils in the city of Aarhus: 'the long-term goal is that Aarhus becomes more mixed so that *"bussing"* will become unnecessary' (Hvid, 2020b).

At some points, the reporting also makes white children's parents responsible, by problematizing their opting out of local schools with 'high' numbers of bilingual pupils (Grønkjær, 2017). In this way, white Danes seem to be ascribed a responsibility to let their whiteness expand in public space (Ahmed, 2006, p. 109 f) to secure the white majority required for the ideal mix. Accordingly, this part of the reporting puts forward the argument that the solution also involves a mobilization of white Danish parents to choose particular schools, as much as it is about spreading bilingual children (Grønkjær, 2017). However, while the spreading of bilingual children is framed as something that should be done 'from above', if necessary by force, e.g. by bussing, and perhaps even against the will of their parents, the white parents' responsibility to mix is represented as something they should be gently encouraged to assume. Indeed, even the argument for spreading bilingual pupils is based on the premise of white parents' ability to choose public schools, as it is predicted that what is termed "resourceful parents/families" or "ethnic Danish parents" will opt out of public schools with a high number of bilingual pupils (Dørge, 2020; Hvid, 2020b; Nystrup, 2020). In addition, while the parents of bilingual children are portrayed as acting against the best interest of their child when they do not mix, white Danish parents are portrayed as acting in the best interest of their child and their learning prospects when they do not mix, i.e. by opting out of schools with a high number of bilingual pupils.

Children are children and 'model minorities'

'Can a school with exclusively bilingual pupils be a success?' (Vestergaard, 2019, p. 6). This is the title of an article profiling Søndervangskolen, a school whose policy regarding the distribution of bilingual pupils stands in stark contrast to the general picture. Quantitatively speaking, the reporting on this school constitutes only a small part of the total sample. However, I have included it in the analysis because it is the only part of the reporting that counters the general framing of the articles problematizing a high number of bilingual pupils. This reporting on Søndervangskolen bears similarities to other types of media reporting on racialized children in Danish schools, namely migrant children threatened with deportation from the country.

According to the above-quoted article, 96% of Søndervangskolen's pupils are bilingual, and the pupils 'no longer get bad grades' (Vestergaard, 2019, p. 6). The school's success is attributed to the principal, Rani Hørlyck. She argues that her pupils are Danish because they were born in Denmark, have Danish as their mother tongue, and attend a Danish public school (ibid, 7). In this sense, Hørlyck actively resists the racializing practice of categorizing some pupils as 'bilingual' as opposed to 'Danish'. In another article, Hørlyck and other participants dispute the very category of the 'bilingual pupil'. They frame it as outdated, as most of those designated as bilingual are third-generation, of immigrant grandparents, and thus the categorization is deemed an unnecessary labelling of the pupils that excludes them from the Danish community (Vestergaard, 2017). Instead, the article from 2019 actively assigns the children to the category of 'Danish', for example, by referring to one pupil's Danish language as having a heavy local dialect (Vestergaard, 2019, p. 6), by describing the pupils' lunch break as a scene that 'binds Denmark together' (ibid), and by reporting that the school, being a Danish public school, celebrates Christmas (ibid, 8).

Nevertheless, this ascribing Danishness to the pupils still seems to be premised on distancing them from something that could be interpreted as non-Danish. Hørlyck is quoted as saying that the pupils may 'say something to you in Arabic in the hallway to impress, but they only speak Arabic for leisure purposes' (Vestergaard, 2019, p. 7). Here, the logic of bilinguality is used in a very literal way, to distance the children from this 'other' language, Arabic, which might otherwise orientate them away from Danishness. In this sense, although Hørlyck aims to break down the racializing category of 'bilingual', the referred citation is still premised on a problematization of bilinguality, in its literal sense – that is, of having two primary languages, as something that could mark pupils as non- or less-Danish. This active de-racialization of the children may aim to constitute them as 'just' children, but it is nonetheless premised on their inclusion in the

category of 'Danish'. In this way, it seems to reproduce an imaginary of child innocence as simultaneously white and non-racial (Bernstein 2011, 4 f), thus reflecting the historic conceptualization of childhood as innocence as a white invention (ibid; Garlen, 2019). In effect, as Julie C. Garlen puts it (Garlen, 2019, p. 65, italics in original): 'When we simply expand the age-old refrain "let children be children" to "let *all* children be children", what we are actually saying is, "let *all* children be *like White* children"'.

Similar orientations towards white Danishness as constitutive for child innocence are evident in other kinds of media representation of racialized children as belonging in Denmark, e.g. the cases of the Thai national Im (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2020) and the Chinese national Yiming (Smedegaard Nielsen & Myong, 2019). Both children were threatened with deportation from Denmark, where they lived with their mothers, both of whom had married white Danish men. The media reporting on their cases stressed their Danish language skills and their good performance in Danish schools, as well as Im's local dialect (Smedegaard Nielsen, 2020, p. 6) and Yiming's intellectual capacity (Smedegaard Nielsen & Myong, 2019, p. 505). However, while such efforts to unearth evidence of the children's Danish belonging with regard to the representation of bilingual children in Danish schools represent an exception from the general picture, it constitutes the general framing of the cases of Im and Yiming, as they are based on a sense that their deportation is unfair precisely because of their perceived belonging to Denmark. In contrast to bilingual pupils, and regardless of their status of mostly being Danish citizens, Im and Yiming seem to be readily embraced as belonging in Denmark. Thus, the comparison of these different kinds of representation of racialized children may point to efforts aimed at sorting 'deserving' and 'good' migrants/racialized subjects from 'undeserving' and 'bad' migrants/racialized subjects (ibid, 506–7). Consequently, what the comparison may also reflect is a Danish society that is racially structured not only on a dichotomy of white Danish versus racialized migrant/foreigner, but more precisely in terms of a racialized hierarchy consisting of different racialized positions. A recent quote from the Danish Minister of Immigration and Integration Mattias Tesfaye, supports this observation, when he argues that what causes problems is immigration from Middle Eastern countries: 'If we only had immigration from China, the Philippines, Thailand and Brazil, one could give me a firing notice, because in that case we wouldn't have any integration challenges in Denmark' (Lynggaard, 2020).

The hierarchisation of migrants, as illustrated here, may be informed by imaginaries about, e.g. the stereotype of the East Asian as an academically successful 'model minority' (Eng & Han, 2002, p. 347), as well as

by Islamophobia, and the discursive construction of Muslims as a 'problem minority' (Andreassen, 2007; Buchardt, 2014; Yilmaz, 2016). However, my comparison of studies of different kinds of racialized children in Danish settings also shows that mechanisms other than those specifically concerned with the racialized body of the subject itself may be significant, particularly with regard to how the racialized subject is orientated towards whiteness. In the cases of Im and Yiming, the children and their mothers have actively abandoned their racialized background, not least in terms of the children's biological fathers, who are both described as not being part of their lives (Smedegaard Nielsen & Myong, 2019, p. 503–4; Smedegaard Nielsen, 2020, p. 7). Instead, they have mixed properly with Danish whiteness, via their Danish husbands/stepfathers. Indeed, Im and Yiming orientate themselves towards their white Danish stepfathers as their 'real' father (ibid). As opposed to the discourses of the bilingual pupils, Im and Yiming, and their mothers, do not need society's 'help' to learn to mix, e.g. through forced distribution between schools, as they mix as properly as possible through love, marriage and kinship. Their good performance in school serves as evidence of their successful mixing, and also orientates them towards the future as well-educated, good citizens. Accordingly, it may be suggested that the way in which public and media debates address the question of racialized subjects' belonging in Denmark, has less to do with formal citizenship and a life lived in Denmark, than it has to do with how they are orientated towards whiteness, in terms of kinship relations, and away from their racialized background. In this sense, the reporting comes to uphold an ideal of Danishness as being premised on a certain amount of hereditary whiteness. Thus, a racialized child's belonging to Denmark becomes dependent on the child's ability to form part of a white Danish kin, or alternatively, its potentiality to do so through mixing in school, serving as a promise of future kinship bonding with white Danes.

Concluding remarks: Racialized children's schooling as an ideal site for upholding danish whiteness

On the basis of the study, I suggest that media reporting on racialized children's schooling may be viewed as an ideal site for upholding Danish whiteness in its hegemonic position. I base this insight on the following findings: First, the media reporting on bilingual pupils establishes a pervasive racialization and marginalization of bilingual pupils and their families and kin. It also naturalizes a white majoritisation, while constituting whiteness as a category of advantages of different kinds, mostly related to class/education, childcare and a sense of moral goodness. Second, the mutability of the child figure makes it

possible to put forward an ideal of moving the bilingual pupil away from their racialized 'background' and towards a Danish belonging, and in this sense transgress their race. This constitutes Danish whiteness as inclusive and non-racist, through a performed inclusion of the racialized children, presented as a wish to save them from the disadvantages of their background through good schooling. However, and third, due to the normativity of the child's potentiality, the constitution of inclusive, non-racist Danish whiteness still allows for the racialized exclusion of those who fail to move away from their background and belonging. As shown through the comparison to cases of other kinds of migrant children, the constitution of a racialized hierarchy legitimizes the exclusion of some racialized subjects as 'undeserving'. Simultaneously, the inclusion of other 'deserving' racialized subjects upholds whiteness through the ideal of proper mixing, such that racialized subjects who are orientated towards whiteness with the proximity of kinship are more readily figured as belonging to Denmark. Thus, the reporting suggests a sense of proper mixing as the incorporation of racialized subjects into chains of white kinship. This allows the reporting to uphold Danishness as white, while still being able to include some racialized subjects, as they through familial mixing can work to prove the moral good of a non-racist Danish whiteness.

Funding

Notes

1. The racialized categorization of pupils has shifted between terms such as 'immigrant pupils', 'foreign-language pupils', and most recently 'bilingual pupils' (Buchardt, 2014, p. 33).
2. The selected newspapers include *Berlingske Tidende, Politiken, Jyllands-Posten, Weekendavisen, Information, Kristeligt Dagblad, BT* and *Ekstra Bladet*.
3. 'Public school' is my translation of the Danish 'folkeskole', which refers to compulsory tuition free schooling in Denmark from primary school to lower secondary school.
4. 'Ghetto' is a commonly used term used in Danish politics and public debate to designate and problematize residential areas with high numbers of residents with a migrant background.

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