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Yang, Ahrong

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Racialized forecasting. Understanding race through children's (to-be) lived experiences in a Danish school context

Ahrong Yang [a,b]

[a]Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark; [b]Department of Social Education, University College Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

ABSTRACT

Is it possible to address racism without mentioning race? Based on two cases from an ethnographical field study conducted in a Danish elementary school, this article investigates how students of colour (aged 10–13) predict future encounters with racism and share their concerns with how to deal with these potential encounters. Inspired by Sara Ahmed's notion of emotions and concept of *past histories of contact* and *pushes*, this article examines how to understand emotions of race when two students share their concerns about for instance, being able to defend themselves and verbalize fear of not belonging. What I am suggesting is that emotions of race are not only shaped by the students' past experiences but that race also works through emotions of concern about the future as *racialized forecasting*. These racialized forecastings surface as experiences connected to the children's black and brown bodies, where their emotions of race intersect with ideas of gender and age. The analysis will show how the children struggle to address their race experiences as they push and are being pushed by race-blind discourses, making it very difficult for the students to make sense of their feelings.

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Introduction

This article contains my initial reflections on the development of the concept *racialized forecasting*. Inspired by Sara Ahmed's (2004a, 2004b, 2013, 2017) model of emotions, I argue that not only do past experiences with racism shape racially minoritized children's becoming. Race is also experienced as expected futures. These expected futures work through emotions of concern about encounters that brown and black children imagine themselves having to deal with. Also, the article provides an insight into how race as a social category can be understood in a Danish context, when the students in question struggle to address (the fear of) the to-be-lived experiences on the account of race-blindness. Thus, the racially minoritized students wiggle and *push* (Ahmed, 2017) as they try to make sense of their racialized forecastings without the possibility to address or connect their emotions as links to race experiences. What these experiences have in common are their linkages to emotions about race when their black and brown bodies become central to the forecasted experiences. I am inspired by Bonilla-Silva's (2010, 2015) notion of race as a social category, and how races are reproduced through racial structures that give some people advantages and other people disadvantages, socially, politically, economically, and ideologically. Thus, races are real and meaningful categories. The phenotypical characterizations 'brown' and 'black' are used to underline the fact that racial domination historically has been producing and still is producing races in different (hierarchical) forms, in which racially minoritized groups have been and still are in a systemic way oppressed and devoid of certain privileges. As the multiple ethnic groups from the African continent historically became 'Black', I use this phenotypical characterization about the children with African background (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Hooks, 2015). I characterize the children who are noticeably racially minoritized either by wearing hijab and/or are identified as or identify themselves as non-white Danes as 'brown'. Likewise, the children who are noticeably racially white, I characterize as 'white'.

The article is part of a larger ethnographical study conducted between 2019 and 2020 in a Danish elementary school located on the outskirts of a larger city. The scope of the study is how children aged 10–13 make sense of race through different intersectional processes of categorization, and how they do so in a predominantly race-blind context. The empirical material for the analysis in this article is based on two focus group interview encounters with two racially minoritized children, Arham (12) and Elizabeth (12).[1] When Arham and Elizabeth share

CONTACT Ahrong Yang pagn@hum.aau.dk Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Copenhagen. Denmark; Department of Social Education, University College Copenhagen, Copenhagen

their racialized forecasted experiences, discourses of race-blindness play a significant part in how they deal with their experiences. The rejection and denial of racism as a still-existing structural issue in Denmark are closely linked to discourses of colour-blindness/race-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Rastas, 2019). The tabooing of racism in a Danish and Scandinavian context is expressed through denial. Not in terms of *if* racism or race as a category exists, but rather that they neither exist nor are an issue *here*. The Nordic racial exceptionalism has upheld and reproduced national and regional narratives of equality and tolerance (Andreassen & Myong, 2017; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Essed, 1991; Essed et al., 2019; Gullestad, 2002; Horst, 2017; Hübinette, 2014; Rastas, 2019). Further, because the definition of racism has been limited to questions of intentions, it has become extremely difficult to call out racism and talk about race as lived experience (Danbolt & Myong, 2019; Skadegård (in review)). Moreover, the pedagogical challenges when faced with issues involving racism and the demand for being better prepared to tackle such issues can be considered to be symptomatic of the challenges with racism we face in Denmark (Horst, 2017). For instance, when I asked a group of white teachers at a predominantly white school about the student composition in terms of the students' race, one teacher responded: 'Truly a funny question, because I really do not notice it', and the other teachers agreed. The resistance towards 'noticing' or the effort to not 'see' is linked to the discourses about Denmark being egalitarian and positioned as a country that is deeply invested in ideals of equality (Gilliam, 2018; Gilliam et al., 2017). Following this, the pedagogical, educational institutional context produces and reopens histories and narratives of inclusion, celebrating diversity, and notions of childhood/adulthood among other things which allow race-blindness to take certain forms. 'Noticing' the students' race is considered to conflict with the pedagogical (and general) assumption that 'seeing the whole person' means not seeing the students' race (Gillborn, 2001; Youdell, 2006), because 'what really matters is what is inside'. Though this binary perception of *inside/outside* might support the fact that biological races do not exist (that the inside and outside are separated), the lived experiences with racism and the emotions of race, I argue, get subsumed in the efforts of not 'noticing' race (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b, 2013). I follow Bonilla-Silva's (2010, 2015) definition of *colour-blindness* and *colour-blind racism*. I use the term race-blindness instead, as the main argument in this article is the importance of verbalizing race and race experiences in a Danish context. I am trying to identify more of the underlying challenges of colour-blindness, e.g. the potential risk of avoiding talking about race in a context where talking about racialization, 'colors', and race has been and still is tabooed.

This article is structured as follows: First, I will situate my research by positioning it within the existing literature on race and racialization in a Danish educational context. Second, I will propose the conceptualization of racialized forecasting, followed by some methodological reflections. Finally, the empirical findings will be illustrated and presented by means of the proposed framework.

Researching race as a category in a Danish school context

Is it possible to address racism without mentioning race? Though studies of race are still considered under-represented in Denmark (Skadegård, 2018), there has been an increase in studies related to investigations of racism as a point of departure and race as a category central to research (see for example, Andreassen & Ahmed-Andresen, 2014; Andreassen & Myong, 2017; Danbolt, 2017; Hervik, 2019; Myong, 2009; Øland et al., 2019; Skadegård, 2017; Thorsen, 2020; Vertelyte, 2019) As suggested earlier, the effort to not talk about race and racism is connected to history, as well as regional and national narratives:

> "After scholars all over the world questioned and rejected so-called scientific racism (e.g., UNESCO 1969, the notion of race became taboo in many European countries. Because of the historical burden and negative connotations of the word 'race' in Europe not only researchers but also authorities have discussed 'ethnic groups' or 'immigrants', rather than 'races' or 'racialized minorities'. In many societies, avoiding the word 'race', along with normative whiteness and innocent national self-images, has led to denials of racism". (Rastas, 2019, p. 357)

In a Danish (educational) context, the social category 'ethnicity' has often been used interchangeably with race, both popularly and in research. In Danish studies working with race in an educational context, race is oftentimes linked to different categories of the students' otherness, though the race category might not have been initially central to the research but proves relevant along the way. Like Rastas (2019) argues, ethnicity is commonly used to describe or identify the othered students, with categories such as 'ethnic other' (than Danish), or 'Danish students with ethnic minority background'. Or race and ethnicity are used as supplementing categories, where race becomes an 'add-on' category (*ethnicity/race*), to not reproduce the idea of biological races (Lagermann, 2014). However, using race and ethnicity synonymously risks the categories erasing one

another. That is not to say that ethnicity is not relevant when investigating, for instance, experiences with racism. Yet, 'ethnicity' is not a neutral term and mostly serves 'linguistically as a marker of otherness' (Andreassen & Ahmed-Andresen, 2014, p. 28), or surfaces as racialization. Instead, the two terms should be separated (Myong, 2009). However, equating race and ethnicity yet again reproduces a race-blind discourse that pushes race to the background. Another perspective on why there is not more Danish educational research addressing race more directly is the Nordic/Danish exceptionalism and tabooing of race/racism. As already addressed in the introduction, the Nordic racial exceptionalism works to uphold national and regional narratives of equality and tolerance, which also manifest in the compulsory public schooling (folkeskolen), one of the most, if not *the* most, important welfare-state institutions in Denmark (Buchardt et al., 2013; Horst, 2017). The public schooling is a space where ideals of citizenship and belonging are shaped (Buchardt et al., 2013), and where processes of race and racialization play a central part of the practice of schooling (Vertelyte, 2019; Li & Buchardt, (in review); Gilliam et al., 2017), reproducing ideas of Nordic exceptionalism that silence, for instance, racism and race inequality.

In recent years, the concept of racialization has been used to understand the processes through which racial meaning is linked to something that is considered without racial meaning and as processes reflecting the structures of privilege and power in society (see for example, Khawaja,; Hervik, 2019; Danbolt & Myong, 2019; Hübinette, 2014; Skadegård, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2007; Murji & Solomos, 2005; Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019). Examples of race surfacing can be seen in how processes of racialization are embedded in the curriculum in Danish elementary school, through religion (Buchardt, 2008) or the subject Danish (Bissenbakker, 2008), where categories of ethnicity, culture, and gender come to operate synonymously or intersect with race. Scholarly literature on Danish schools has shown how the intersecting processes of race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender produce different categories such as 'problematic students' (Staunæs, 2009), how racialized minoritized male students are often stigmatized as 'troublemakers' (Gilliam, 2009), and how intersecting processes of race and racial experiences produce students' understanding of friendships and vice versa (Vertelyte, 2019).

My analysis will also show the intersecting nature of how race comes to exist, through how race, gender, and age interconnect in the children's forecasting and emotion work when forecasting experiences with racism. However, I argue for a need to verbalize race. As contended by other European scholars within the field of race and racism, the understanding of the meaning of race, and ultimately of racism, is inadequate (Gillborn, 2015; Rastas, 2019). Furthermore, learning about racism in school without naming race, consequently, facilitates enactment and reproduction of racist dynamics in education intended to prevent racism (Svendsen, 2014). As long as people still face racism and are being racialized, and in order to change the racist status quo, race must not be silenced but has to be verbalized (Gillborn, 2015; Rastas, 2019; Svendsen, 2014). Hence, I am not suggesting a hierarchy of oppression. Rather, I am letting race become the starting point for investigations of how race is being shaped through emotions when the students forecast future encounters with racism.

Conceptualizing racialized forecasting

The notion of racialized forecasting is inspired by Ahmed's (2004a, 2004b, 2013) concepts of past histories of contact. For Ahmed (2004a, 2004b, 2013, 2017), emotions[2] are social and rela-tional rather than psychological. This challenges the understanding of emotions being something within bodies moving outside or something outside moving in. Instead, emotion is shaped socially in the contact with objects and others, and 'works to create the very distinction between the inside and the outside' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 10). Hence, what Ahmed argues is that emotions are not simply something we have, but that emotions shape the very surface of the body. The very distinction of having an inside and an outside is shaped by contacts with others, and how that impression of others feels against our surface depends on how we recognize this or that feeling from past histories of contact. This also suggests that emotions are not individual but social and that all actions are actually reactions, 'in the sense that what we do is shaped by contact with others' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 4). In this reconsidering of emotion as placed in the social, the discursive, and the affective rather than the individual, emotions work to align collective and individual bodies through their social, discursive, spatial, and affective attachments (Ahmed, 2001). As Ahmed famously wrote: 'It is not simply that any body is hated' (Ahmed, 2001). In each encounter with objects and other subjects, particular histories are re-opened, such that some bodies are already considered or read as more hateful than other bodies. The immediate perceptions of sensations felt in these collusions cause us to not only read the feelings, but 'how the feelings feel in the first place may be tied to past history of readings, in the sense that the process of recognition (of this feeling, or that feeling) is bound up with what we already know' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 25), which causes reactions.

Another important aspect of recognition and *already-knowingness*, I argue, is how racialized becoming also exists in the future. What I propose is that identities of race are not only shaped by past encounters with racism, but experiences of racially minoritized becoming are also shaped by future histories of expected contact.

As mentioned, some of the racialized minority students in the focus group interview shared concerns about experiences they forecasted would or could happen. Encounters where their racialized minority bodies played a significant role in their feelings of belonging, and where emotions of race are shaped by struggles to address race. These struggles materialize as pushes against, within, or by race-blindness:

> "When you push, you are often pushing for something; a possibility can be what we are pushing for … The necessity of pushing is a consequence of what has become hard or hardened over time". (Ahmed, 2017, p. 109)

Hence, I argue that not only do past histories of contact reopen and shape emotions of race but race also works through emotions of concern about forecasted experiences that racialized children imagine themselves having to deal with. The everyday understanding of forecasting is making predictions, e.g. about the weather. And so, to make a forecast is to say what you think will happen in the future, or a statement of what is judged likely to happen in the future, based on information you have now. Thus, forecasting does not only transgress through time (to forecast the future, based on information you have or past histories of contact), but also through boundaries of inside/outside or private/social. To forecast is not an action that takes place solely 'within'. Instead, it is directed (statement) as a reaction to something or someone informed by an already-knowingness (judgement), and as a desire to challenge the status quo through pushes.

The experiences shared by black and brown students, however, also (re-/pre-) open imaginative and future histories of contact. Much like past histories of contact, these future experiences of contact impress upon the surfaces of bodies, shape emotions, and interweave across time and manifest as forecasted experiences shared by the students through racialized forecasting. Past histories of contact inform how we recognize and judge encounters with objects and others. Racialized forecasting is informed by how we predict and calculate future encounters of our bodies being impressed upon, based on what we already know and how we push for new possibilities.

Methodology

In the focus group interviews, I was interested in the children's thoughts and experiences with race and racism. In the research, engaging in conversations with the children about race and racism is directly connected to the fact that races are still a social reality (Osanami Törngren, 2018). Not in terms of biological race hierarchies but because the consequences of such ideas still exist today, and those consequences are real, making races socially real and meaningful categories (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Moreover, being racially minoritized myself (I am a Korean-born adoptee), I have embodied race experiences and could relate to the children's struggles to address and even make sense of their emotions of race. Throughout the study, though I was positioned as an adult and teacher, my body was immediately read as racialized othered. Also, it was easier for me to 'connect' with the brown and black students than with the white students. The brown and black students would often turn to me and initiate conversation. In the focus group interviews, it was the racially minoritized students who would revise the questions and ask me back about race experiences, for example, by asking about my feelings, thoughts, and experiences with racism. I was part of the affective space in the focus group interviews when I for instance, acknowledged the students of colour's racialized experiences, or when I shared my own racialized experiences. Thus, I gained the role as a like-minded adult for the racially minoritized children. The white students would also ask me questions related to my East Asian body and about my adoption background and even wanted to comfort me for being 'an adopted child' (adoptivbarn). Thus, being in an educational space that dictates strong hierarchical discourses between adulthood and childhood, race most often was the first thing the students noticed in my first encounters with them. Though my brown body was the conversation starter, in these situations race was not mentioned by the white children. This demonstrates how race becomes a social and lived category, and how race-blindness is enacted and performed from a young age.

Cases of racialized forecasting

The analysis is based on two cases from two different focus group interviews conducted with students in a Danish elementary school with an approximate 70/30 composition of white students/students of colour. The same composition was reflected in the class that

participated in my research. All the teachers in the class were white. Prior to the focus group interviews, I had been conducting observations in the class for a week and had come to know the students a bit through class observations and tagging along during their breaks. Hence, we were not totally unfamiliar with each other when I one week into the observations announced that I would like to talk to the students in groups and when I later asked the students if they wanted to participate. Besides asking the students about their school life, I also wanted to address race and racism with them. I have chosen two very different cases that illustrate racialized forecasting with analytical attention to how race comes to exist through different emotions of defensiveness and fear, and how the children struggle to address their emotions about race when they push against race-blindness.

The following two cases will illustrate the analytical framework of racialized forecasting by demonstrating new aspects of racialized experiences in order to understand how the becoming of race identities for children is connected to struggles with race-blindness.

'I would defend myself'

One example of racialized forecasting is from a dialogue with a group of students about their experiences with racism. This group consisted of four racially minoritized students: Idil, a 12-year-old black female student; Eas, a 13-year-old brown male student; Yasmiin, a 12-year-old black female student; and Arham, a 12-year-old black male student.

In this analysis, I want to show how race comes to exist through emotions of self-protection when the student Arham imagines having to defend himself from an overtly racist encounter.

During the period of my observations, the class was working on a theme about how to navigate and socially behave on social media. Thus, it was clear that talking about skin colour and encounters with racism was not something completely new to the students. This was also corroborated when I at one point during the interview asked them if skin colour was something they talked about in school, with peers, or at home. Though this was not how I had intended the question, Arham, a 12-year-old black male student, responded:

Arham: 'I have nothing against my skin color. I'm perfectly happy about it and I do not care if people call me black or *n-word*.'[3]
Ahrong: 'Do you have any experiences being called *n-word*?'
Arham: 'Yes. I know how to defend myself'.
Ahrong: 'Would you like to share an example of an encounter where you've experienced racism?' Arham: 'For example, if a man comes up to me and calls me the *n-word*, I'd say "what did you just say?", and if it's a man I don't know then of course I'd defend myself. If he calls me *n-word* without reason, I'll tell him to shut up and watch his mouth … Or something like that.'
Ahrong: 'Is it something you've experienced?'
Arham: 'No' (laughs).

As we know, the word 'skin color' is not neutral. Skin colour is, for Arham, connected to feelings of pride and being happy. At the same time, skin colour is also something that can cause conflict, e.g. having to defend yourself from name-calling. Putting Arham's response into context, he is reacting to the impressions left on the surface of his body. When I ask if skin colour is something they talk about, I also suggest that there is *something* to talk about. However, for Arham it means not every skin colour but the skin colour of *his* body. Arham's perception of 'skin color' reinforces a race-blind discourse where 'skin color' only refers to people with non-white bodies (the list is long but see for example, Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). When Arham shares his feelings of pride and feelings of being happy about his skin colour, they are also expressed through emotions of defensiveness: 'I have nothing against my skin color' (suggesting that his skin colour might be something to feel ashamed of) and 'I'm perfectly happy about it' (suggesting that his skin colour might be less desirable).

The way the emotions of pride and defensiveness inform one another can also be said to surface as Arham knowing to defend himself from the feelings of pain or threat that he recognizes when being asked questions about skin colour. The fact that Arham knows how to defend himself from racism should not be surprising considering the long history of systemic racism against black people and people of colour and anticipatory vigilance relating to people of colour, especially black people (Himmelstein et al., 2015). What I found interesting, though, was how race was negotiated when Arham talks about being in a racist encounter he had not experienced, yet still quite vividly can imagine himself being part of. The experience Arham shares is an indisputably overt racist encounter, where a man seemingly unprovoked approaches Arham and attacks him with racist slurs. It demonstrates how Arham experiences race and that he has a certain know-how; knowing that the black body is subjugated to overtly racist attacks and how to respond, being prepared (Fanon, 1952; Hooks, 2015). The emotions of race also surface as him *pushing* against a direction of past histories

reinforcing race-blindness (Ahmed, 2017, p. 109). Though the encounter described by Arham is acted out overtly against Arham's black body, leaving no question in regard to intention (Sue, 2010), he is not able to call the man out for the racist nature of the encounter. Doing so would be contrary to the idea that racism is something in the past or at least something that only exists far away from Denmark. Thus, while Arham pushes against past histories where his non-white body would be something to *not* be 'happy about' (to be discussed shortly), the very same forces of race-blindness push against Arham, as he is not able to address his racialized forecasting as connected to his racially minoritized body, though it is obviously central to his experiences. The embodied experiences of having an already hateful body with *sticky* associations attached to a body 'like that', where past histories re-open (Ahmed, 2001), inform Arham's to-be-lived experiences.

What we also learn is that Arham's feelings of being attacked or threatened by others are limited to people he does not know ('if it's a man I don't know then of course I'd defend myself'). That racism cannot exist within the intimate sphere is linked to assumptions of racism only being intentional (see for example, Vertelyte, 2019; Skadegård (in review)). Interestingly, when asked for an example of an encounter with racism, Arham forecasts defending himself from 'a man', where the feelings of defensiveness reinforce a heteronormative idea of masculinity and aggressiveness, a 'man-against-man encounter' (Butler, 1997; hooks, 2015). However, it is also an encounter where the man approaching Arham seems to be behaving somewhat childishly and stupidly, insofar as Arham would have to tell him to behave himself and 'watch his mouth'. Hence, Arham does not respond to the unknown man's aggressive behaviour with being aggressive himself, but instead he wants to react with what can be interpreted as the 'appropriate' emotions (Ahmed, 2013). The desire for wanting to experience the suitable emotions at different times and places, here 'being under control', can be linked to past histories about the male, black body (Fanon, 1952; hooks, 2015). For instance, we already know from other studies that being racially minoritized has psychological consequences. In Arham's case e.g. ideas of the violent, irrational, black man (Fanon, 1952), dehumanization of black children through *adultification* (Epstein et al., 2017; Goff et al., 2014), and narratives of the young, brown/black male being a troublemaker (Gilliam, 2009, 2018; Khwaja, 2011).

However, due to the avoidance of noticing race and the intersection between race and gender in this case, Arham's experiences of expressing suitable emotions and suitable reactions are a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' situation (Sue, 2010). The small pushes expressed by Arham can be said to be against a somewhat invisible enemy (race-blindness), and with nowhere for Arham to really push against what has become hard or hardened over time (Ahmed, 2017). At the same time, acting against it would only reinforce what he is pushing against, which causes him to be caught up in a double bind (Skadegård & Jensen, 2018; Sue, 2010). While Arham pushes against race-blind discourses by being happy about his body and wanting to defend himself (and the black body), by defending himself from the racist encounter he risks acting out the racialized stereotypes of what is expected of him, which remains unsaid as it would entail talking about race and racism. While Arham pushes against race-blindness by for instance, striving for a future where being non-white is not considered less fortunate and something children should be protected from, the very same discourse pushes against Arham, leaving him limited space to place his experiences with racism.

When forecasting an experience with racism, Arham connects 'racism' as attacks where the intentions are clear and overtly racist. Attacks that he 'of course' would defend himself against. Nonetheless, they are emotions of defensiveness regulated and suppressed by race-blind discourses (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Race-blindness in the shape of this invisible enemy is therefore difficult to combat and push against. It also manifests through more implicit forms of race-blind racism where the emotions of race also 'surface' as more subtle, which the next example will illustrate.

Half white = half-sister

In this case, I meet Elizabeth who is a 12-year-old brown female student. Her mother is white, and Elizabeth's biological father is non-white. Like the previous case with Arham, Elizabeth also participated in a focus group interview. That group consisted of a mix of racialized students. However, this group includes both racially minoritized students and racially white students. Besides Elizabeth, there are four other students in this group: Isa, a 12-year-old black female student; Amalie, a 11-year-old white female student; Murat, a 13-year-old black male student; and Kristoffer, a 12-year-old white male student.

In this analysis, I want to shed light on how race comes to exist through emotions of fear of not belonging: In this case, within the intimate relationship of family, when Elizabeth experiences a hard time addressing race as she forecasts how she would have to explain her skin colour to her younger white siblings. Moreover, the analysis will show how Elizabeth struggles with discourses of race-blindness

when she shares emotions of being bodily othered and at the same time pushes to reinforce race-blindness.

To provide some context: Elizabeth's mother is white, and her biological father is a person of colour. It is unknown how the relationship between Elizabeth and her biological father is, as she is very clear about not wanting to talk about him. Her mother has remarried a white man, with whom Elizabeth has grown up and considers to be her father. She has two younger white siblings. Shortly before the focus group interview was conducted, Elizabeth's parents divorced. During the period of my observations, I learned that the divorce was a huge concern for Elizabeth, and that she regularly sought comfort in their head teacher. Throughout the interview, Elizabeth shared her concerns about not belonging in school, in her class, and in her family due to her brown body. Hence, for Elizabeth race is connected to feelings of fear which are amplified by her parents' divorce. In this following extract from the focus group interview, Elizabeth shares these feelings concerning her younger brother. The urgency of Elizabeth wanting to share her concerns is evident when she at one point during the interview interrupts a conversation, raising her hand and saying:

Elizabeth: 'It's because there is actually something else, I've been thinking about a lot.'
Ahrong: 'Mm … ?'
Elizabeth: 'And that is that my little brother, he's only two years old now, and … he doesn't notice that I'm … more dark-skinned than him, but then I've come to think, that like … when he gets older, I'll have to explain to him why … If he asks about it … And I've always thought about, what if he says that I'm his half-sister? And I told my mother, and I got really upset about it, because suddenly it just dawned on me that he's little and wouldn't be able to understand that it could upset me, and then my mother said that she doesn't think that he would ever say that. And if he asks about it, then of course I just have to tell him like it is. After all, there is no reason to lie about it. When he was born, I was also really scared of it, but at that time I thought I could just say that I didn't know why, because then he had no reason for saying that we're only half.'
Ahrong: 'I can totally understand that'.
Elizabeth: 'But that was what my mom said?!'

To Elizabeth, looking alike becomes central to whether she is part of the family or not. Though they are both biologically and socially connected, she fears that her racialized othered body excludes her from being accepted as her younger brother's 'real' sister, instead of 'only half'. The concerns shared by Elizabeth of being 'only half' are connected to her being 'more dark-skinned' than her brother, rather than them being biological half-siblings. While divorce is always challenging and creates feelings of uncertainty for the children and siblings involved (Winther, et a 2014), in this case skin colour is an extra dimension to ideas of biology and belonging.

Being 'only half' intersects with skin colour and shapes emotions of race in a very interesting way in Elizabeth's case. If we consider the missing 'half part' of her being accepted as her brother's full sister, it will require her also to be 'fully white'. Hence, the half part that 'naturally' enforces her entitlement to being a sister and being a part of the family is also the white part of her: Ultimately Elizabeth's right to exist as a full sister. Further, the other 'part of her', which is the part that does not connect her biologically to her siblings, the non-white part, the lacking part, is being hidden away and pushed to the background. However, only to be brought out in daylight when Elizabeth is confronted with it and must 'explain to him why' she is brown, lacking, and 'only half' his sister. Only half white. In Elizabeth's case, issues of seeing race are connected to age, and skin colour is something you will grow up to 'notice'. Like with Arham, the conflicting nature of race-blindness is what shapes the struggles with emotions of race shared by both Arham and Elizabeth.

In her forecasting and preparing herself for when her ten-year-younger brother someday will demand answers, Elizabeth struggles with race-blindness pushing in different directions: On one hand, she is pushing race-blindness forward when she, through emotions of fear, fights to understand and does not want to accept that skin colour should be defining for her belonging (to her brother and her family). On the other hand, she also pushes against race-blindness when she shares her concerns about being 'more dark-skinned', that her racialized bodily experiences are legitimate: A knowingness she has embodied as part of having a brown body and being racialized, and which informs her forecasting. Elizabeth's wiggles around race-blindness and her eagerness to share her experiences can be linked to Danish literature on mixed-race experiences. For instance, how mixed-race or racially minoritized Danes experience having to negotiate their Danish identities in everyday interactions (Skadegård & Jensen, 2018). Moreover, like in Arham's case, race-blindness taking the shape of this somewhat invisible enemy also pushes against Elizabeth as she struggles to make sense of her feelings.

Where racism takes shape as more explicit in Arham's case, it is more implicit for Elizabeth and thus easier to dismiss as Elizabeth overthinking

things (or worrying too much). Not worrying, again, draws upon the idea that race should not matter. While embodying race-blindness, Elizabeth pushes to get some assurance that she, despite her not looking like her siblings and parents, still belongs, when she in the interview talks about sharing her fears with her mother. Elizabeth is, however, met with denial – most likely not due to negative intention, but rather as an act of love, wanting to appease and be race-blind. However, in the focus group interview, Elizabeth makes a powerful push against this act of love when she, with frustration in her voice, says: 'But that was what my mother told me', as a reaction to me empathizing with her. I read this as not only Elizabeth once again seeking an adult's reassurance of her belonging in her family, but also as her searching for reassurance that her brown body informs and shapes her experiences and emotions and vice versa: That what she feels impressing upon her bodily surface is true. She seeks validation that it is not just something within her that she should not worry about, but rather ignore. From this perspective, it is easy to understand Elizabeth's eagerness to share her feelings of concern regarding her brown body. With both being given the space to talk about her worries, struggles, and emotions regarding her brown body, and with me being positioned as a female brown adult, she experiences a perhaps rare chance to address her emotions and experiences with race, which for Elizabeth is also connected to struggling and insisting on the right to her existence.

Final remarks

Inspired by Sara Ahmed's notion of past histories of contact (Ahmed, 2004a, Ahmed, 2004b, 2013) and pushes (2017), I argue that emotions of race are not only shaped by the students' past experiences and what they already know. Race also works through emotions of concern about the future. In this article, I am suggesting the concept *racialized forecasting*: Where past histories of contact inform how we recognize and judge encounters with objects and others, I suggest that racialized forecasting is informed by how we predict and calculate future encounters of our bodies being impressed upon, based on what we already know and how we push for new possibilities.

Analysing extracts from focus group interviews conducted with students of colour shows that emotions of race surface as struggles that intersect with gender and age when the students push against discourses of race-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, 2015). In their struggles with emotions about race, the children both reinforce race-blind discourses while at the same time in different ways pushing against them. As such, the struggles with race experiences and their pushes against race-blindness become a matter of their very right to exist and belonging in school, their families, and society. However, the overwhelmingly strong resistance against and the effort to not see and verbalize race, in which they have been socialized through, for instance, public schooling, make race-blindness a somewhat invisible enemy for the students that reproduces Nordic/Danish exceptionalism. It leaves them few places or recourses to address their experiences and pushes against the children's racialized forecastings. Hence, in the two cases presented here, the children wiggle and struggle with making sense of their emotions of having to prepare to defend themselves from racist encounters, or emotions of being anxious about being excluded from their most intimate relationships. All due to their non-white bodies.

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Notes

1. The names of the students have been pseudonymized.
2. In Ahmed's theorization of emotionality, emotions are identified to 'involve bodily processes of affecting and being affected' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 208). Following this, I do not distinguish between the two terms 'affect' and 'emotion'.
3. Although Arham said out the actual Danish word, I am refraining from writing it out altogether, and the mention of the word is instead written in italics, '*n-word*'.

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Notes on contributon

Ahrong is a doctoral student with a master's degree in Learning and Innovative Change. In her doctoral thesis Ahrong researches race and racialized processes among students age 10-13 in a Danish elementary school context. Through a qualitative study with pedagogical visual methods, she investigates race, how students make sense of race, and race as performed via categories of gender, sexuality, language, religion, and class. Ahrong is also affiliated with Department of Social Education at University College Copenhagen.

ORCID

Ahrong Yang http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6845-4621

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