

Not 'Just Danish': How Young Multiracial Danes Challenge White Hegemony

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Abstract : Nordic Exceptionalism is a racial paradigm that inhibits a critical examination of structural discrimination and the daily experiences of minority-racialised Danes. As a result, the category ethnic-Danish is a White hegemonic construct that limits access for multiracial ethnic Danes irrespective of their multigenerational Danish heritage. An anti-immigrant public discourse and frequent racialisation as 'other' in social interactions are part of a boundary-making process that sustains White hegemony and excludes multiracial ethnic Danes from a collective national identity. With an analysis of interview data with 40 multiracial ethnic Danes, this research finds that the understanding of race as a category and the salience of race for multiracial ethnic Danes has changed over time concurrently with demographic changes and a heightened awareness of racialisation processes. The older generation is more likely to conform to White hegemony by trivialising racialised experiences. In contrast, younger multiracial ethnic Danes have the knowledge and cultural capital to challenge Whiteness actively. They do this by claiming their multiracial identity as a crucial part of their Danish identity and acknowledging race as a social fact that impacts their lives. Many young multiracial participants also dispute that the public immigration debate is race-neutral and is active in organisations supporting immigrants and refugees. These findings suggest that young multiracial Danes are uniquely positioned to push public discourse toward a better understanding of how Whiteness is integral to national identity and advocate for a broader Danish identity type that challenges White hegemony and Nordic exceptionalism.

Keywords : multiracial Danes, nordic exceptionalism, racial identity, white hegemony

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