Hyphenated Voices
The Organization of Racialized Subjects in Contemporary Danish Public Debate

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Abstract

Applying a conceptual framework of hyphenation, understood as the organization of racialized subjects, this paper investigates rhetorical strategies for working existing hyphens as practiced within an Action Aid Denmark initiative to train young people to become public opinion leaders in anti-discrimination matters. We identify three such rhetorical strategies: 1) Silencing: Racialized subjects are organized by majority voices that speak of/for 'the Other'; the training explicitly seeks to change the organization of public debate by working this hyphen. 2) Positioning: The main strategy for working the hyphen, as taught in the course, is to speak from a minority position, but in a manner that is recognizable to the majority. Thus, non-white participants are trained to speak with white voice; they become exceptions to the rule, tokens or role models when telling their stories in a scripted manner. And 3) Representing: In telling their own stories, the aspiring opinion leaders come to speak for racialized subjects as a group. Thus, the course (unwittingly) reproduces the current racialized organization of public space in the form of 'benign discrimination'. On the basis of this analysis, the article advances postcolonial organization studies by demonstrating that hyphenation cannot be overcome, but must be engaged in a continuous process of re-working the hyphen. Thus, the task of researchers and practitioners alike is to show the constraints of current hyphenations and find strategies for organizing subjects in more equal and open relations.

Keywords: Anti-discrimination training; hyphenation; postcolonial organization studies; public debate; racialization

Introduction

The days of overt colonial conquest may be over, but discourses of the inferior East and the superior West continue to organize racialized subjects within Western public spheres and to populate public imaginations with visions of such subjects (Andrijasevic et al., 2019; Banerjee,

2011; Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Dar, 2014; D'Souza and Pal, 2018; Gammelgaard et al, 2019; Liu and Baker, 2016; Nkomo, 2011; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008).[1] This pervasive postcolonial condition marks some subjects as Other in relation to the colonial power (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1952; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). In the context of Western public spheres, immigrants and descendants of immigrants from non-Western countries have taken over the mark of the Other as they continue to be organized by a colonial hierarchy. Hence, these public spheres, and their participating subject positions, are constituted by what Ahmed (2007) terms a 'phenomenology of whiteness'. Here, 'whiteness becomes a social and bodily orientation given that some bodies will be more at home in a world that is orientated around whiteness' (Ahmed, 2007: 160).

Organization studies are no less oriented towards whiteness, as has become increasingly recognised within the field itself (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Jack et al., 2011; Mir and Mir, 2012). Thus, organization scholars should critically examine the racialization of organizations and the processes of organizing racialized subjects that the orientation towards whiteness entails – at the levels of organizational practice as well as of our own conduct. To fulfil this dual call for reflection, we examine the organization of racialized subjects in contemporary Danish public debate, seeking to explain this organization as strategies of hyphenation, which necessarily involve us as researchers with the subjects of our research.

Inspired by Fine (1994), we *define hyphenation as the positioning of racialized subjects within colonial discourses of the Other in which the racialized self is both separated from and merged with broader Self-Other dialectics* (see also, Radhakrishnan, 1994; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). We develop the concept of hyphenation within the phenomenology of whiteness so as to focus attention on the interrelations of bodily and discursive hyphens, focusing on how hyphenation organizes bodies in public discourse and determine which subject positions get to speak, what they get to speak about and for whom they get to speak (Liu, 2017; Raman, 2020). As Dar (2018: 432) vividly shows, black and brown bodies 'are asked to perform and

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[1] Here, we purposefully reproduce the dichotomy Western/Eastern as it is often used in public debate and, not least, in Management and Organisation Theory. This dichotomy does not necessarily refer to 'Western' as a geographical term since Australia, for example, is classified as a 'Western' country whereas several countries in South America are not. Rather, the dichotomy between West and East is a social construction, which relies more on a white/non-white distinction than a geographical one. As such, this is a first illustration of the problematic hyphenation process, which will be the focus of this article.

use voice daringly or silence instrumentally to leverage degrees of assimilation into white structures'.

Conceptualizing hyphenation as strategies for positioning subjects in relation to the phenomenology of whiteness, we establish a framework for the analysis of this organization of subjects. Thus, we understand the organization of hyphenated subjects as a relational process in which the individual subject position only emerges relative to the positions of other subjects within the context of the organization (whether constituted as a public sphere or delimited by formal organizational boundaries) (see for example Reynolds, 2017; Weik, 2011). Assuming this relational ontology, implies the researcher directly in the research; we are also (and always) positioned in relation to that which we study (Ashcraft, 2018, 2020; Holck and Muhr, 2020; Strumińska-Kutra, 2016; Swan, 2017). Just as researched subjects are organized by their hyphenations, researchers can only come to understand this organization in and through their own relationship to it – as mediated by the researched-researcher hyphen. Thus, we study hyphenation as the mediation between particular bodies and the general – and generally pervasive – phenomenology of whiteness, asking *how racialized subjects are organized in ways that enable them to do and say some things and not others.*

We answer this question by applying the conceptual framework of hyphenation to a case study of an initiative aimed at training young people to become opinion leaders in anti-discrimination matters. Organized by the NGO Action Aid Denmark, the purpose of the initiative was to enable the participants to become actively involved in Danish mass-mediated public debate. That is, the participants were trained to identify, exploit and, perhaps, change the existing public organization of racialized subjects. When engaging with the initiative, we were immediately struck by the pervasiveness of the assumption that non-white subjects had to overcome particular, and particularly difficult, obstacles before they could speak up. Facilitators and participants alike premised their interventions on this perceived state of affairs, meaning that those who self-identified as non-white (which, it should be noted, was the majority of the 20 participants) were also assumed to be racialized in the Danish context.

In our analysis of the initiative, we will explicate and explain this assumption of racialization with reference to the concept of hyphenation. Thus, we explore how non-white participants were organized as Other in relation to the unmarked majority position of the public debate, and we detail the ways in which the training sought to shift the current organization so as to

improve the conditions of possibility for racialized subjects within the Danish public sphere. Pursuing this goal, participants were, as we will argue, taught rhetorical strategies for working the hyphen. In substantiating this argument, we focus on the frictions of the training; asking how the identification of existing hyphens and the introduction of strategies for working the hyphen may both challenge and support the existing organization of racialized subjects. Accordingly, the analytical ambition of this article is to identify the *rhetorical strategies of hyphenation* that were practiced in the course and to discuss the (new) conditions of possibility for racialized subjects' positioning and participation in contemporary Danish public debate that these strategies enable.

Employing the terminology of rhetorical strategies, it should be emphasized, does not imply an exclusive focus on the participants' instrumental use of the discursive means available to them. To the contrary, we understand particular rhetorical choices to be always-already constrained (and enabled) by the context of articulation (Ceccarelli, 2001; Jasinski, 1997; Just and Berg, 2016). Further, the available options can be simultaneously exploited instrumentally and explored constitutively (Leff and Utley, 2004), meaning speakers may both (re-)shape themselves and their contexts in and through their rhetorical efforts. Thus, our understanding of rhetorical strategy holds close affinity with Butler's concept of performativity (Butler, 1997), but rather than emphasizing performative potentiality it highlights particular performances (Rand, 2008).

In our engagement with the ways in which participants in the opinion leader training were taught to negotiate societal constraints, three strategies of hyphenation emerged as particularly salient: *Silencing*, *positioning* and *representing*. Although analysed separately, we do *not* suggest that the three identified strategies operate independently. To the contrary, they should be seen as interrelated organizational forms that, in combination, establish the conditions of possibility for racialized subjects who (wish to) engage with contemporary Danish public debate. Thus, we only distinguish between them analytically to be able to discuss their interrelations, thereby returning to our theoretical aim of explaining how hyphenation positions racialized subjects, delimiting what such subjects can say and do. On the basis of the analysis, we will also discuss how the identified organizational constraints on racialized subjects may be re-worked to offer more individual opportunities and fewer

societal boundaries. Here, we will return to our own position as researchers, discussing how we may (or may not) contribute to the realization of such an emancipatory project.

The phenomenology of the hyphen

We ground our investigation in Sara Ahmed's phenomenology of whiteness, according to which 'whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they "take up" space' (Ahmed, 2007: 150). Whiteness, then, is not just a description of certain bodies; rather, it is an organization of racially marked bodies in relation to each other that comes with historically produced values. Throughout colonial history, and in current neo-colonial articulations, the value ascribed to white bodies has been superior to that ascribed to non-white bodies (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1952, 1959, 1961; Said, 1978). Whiteness is, as Ahmed (2007: 150) puts it, 'an effect of racialization, which in turn shapes what it is that bodies "can do"' (Ahmed, 2007: 150) – and, as is the centre of our analytical attention, *what subjects with racialized bodies can say* (Spivak, 1988).

Whiteness is not only constructed as superior, but also as the norm, the normal, whereby non-white bodies become noticeable as deviant from this norm. In 'Western' contexts white bodies do not have to 'face their whiteness; they are not orientated "towards" it' (Ahmed, 2007: 156); it is the non-white disturbance, not the continued dominance of white voices, that is marked. The white body and the white voice blend in, they are accepted as 'just' a body and a voice with no other distinguishing features than their inherent right to be in and speak of the world.

Whiteness, in sum, 'functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape' (Ahmed, 2007: 158) while denying other bodies the right to take up space 'naturally'. White bodies are 'more at home in a world that is orientated around whiteness' (Ahmed, 2007: 160), wherefore non-white bodies are marked off from and identified in relation to whiteness. Such bodies are, as Michelle Fine (1994) argues, hyphenated, meaning their relation to white bodies is a fundamental condition of their possibility; not only in predominantly white spaces, but in spaces that are organized around whiteness, more generally.

The hyphenation of non-white bodies

Fine (1994: 79) 'examine[s] the hyphen at which Self-Other join in the politics of everyday life, that is, the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our invention of Others'. As individuals and collectives are organized around such hyphens of self-other relationships, subjects get positioned in relation to each other. Thus, identities are produced in processes of hyphenation; no matter whether a specific identity is perceived as hyphenated (e.g. Muslim-Danish) or not (Danish), social relations are organized around such hyphens, and individual subjects come to be in and as the positions that arise from how they are related to the norm. If a person fits the norm (in this case of being white and Danish), they enjoy the privilege of not being visibly hyphenated, of not being noticed and of not being singled out as part of a minority (the hyphenation white-Dane does not exist), but that person, or subject position, still arises from the process of hyphenation – as the unmarked position in the relation or norm against which the Other is set out.

In proposing hyphenation as the conceptual centre of analytical attention, Fine studies 'not just the decontextualized voices of Others, but the very structures, ideologies, contexts, and practices that constitute Othering' (Fine, 1994: 70). Since such structures, ideologies, contexts and practices are constructed through history, historical events may also normalize, exacerbate and/or change them. Fine and Sirin (2007:18) show the particular impact of one such historical event:

> On September 11, 2001, across lines of class, community, religiosity, documented and undocumented status, gender, and politics, Muslim-American youth and their families were abruptly evicted from the moral community of psychological citizenship in the USA and they were homogenized 'Muslim-Americans'.

Similarly, psychological citizenship in Denmark and the related debate around what constitutes 'Danishness' is orientated towards markers like religion and skin colour, not citizenship in the legal sense (Keskinen and Andreassen, 2017; Myong and Bissenbakker, 2016; Skadegaard, 2017). That is, *markers of hyphenation*.

While hyphenation is never limited to one relation, some hyphens are, for historical as well as contemporary sociocultural and political reasons, more salient. As argued above, the racial hyphenation of non-white continues to organize subjects who belong to this category, just as

wo-man is a longstanding and predominant hyphenation and non-heterosexual has, until quite recently, been so repressed as to not even appear in the form of hyphenation (see e.g. Andreassen, 2012; Fernando et al., 2019). Religion is another case in point, and in the post-9/11 world hyphenation around being (or being cast as) Muslim means that some minority subjects are marked off from the majority in particularly troublesome ways and have to negotiate borders of such hyphenation on a daily basis (Holck and Muhr, 2019). Once hyphenated, the hyphen is difficult to remove, difficult to ignore. Muslim-Americans, Muslim-Danes (or those who are seen as such because of the assumption of a correlation between race and religion) became noticeable as never before.

Fine and Sirin succinctly explain that such hyphenation can be deeply problematic, but may also present hope:

> Some portray the hyphen as a traumatic check point, and others as a space for cautious collaboration, public education, or (…) assertive confrontation. For a few it is a space of shame, for many a site of anxiety and for others an opportunity to invent new versions of self (Fine and Sirin, 2007: 21).

No matter how the position is enacted, perceived and negotiated, hyphenated bodies exist '…at the membrane between contentious political and cultural contexts and their own meaning making' (Katsiafikas et al., 2011: 121). As such, 'hyphenated selves travel from global politics to everyday lives, and from intimacies of interior life back out to social relations and politics' (Katsiafikas et al., 2011: 136). That is, strategies of hyphenation come to organize the in- and exclusion of subjects into public spaces that are, themselves, organized along similar lines, e.g. white/non-white and Western/non-Western, always marking the hyphenated subject off, barring this subject from going unnoticed, from being included with ease.

Strategies of hyphenation

Hyphenation is a process of positioning subjects in and through their relations to each other. As such, hyphenation is strategic in the Foucauldian sense of creating the conditions of possibility for certain subjects to act and speak in particular ways within a societal context (Foucault, 1980: 142). Strategies of hyphenation, then, are relations of power-knowledge; ways of knowing the subject's place in the world and of acting in and from that place.

However, strategies of hyphenation are also rhetorical resources that offer individual subjects the possibility to work and re-work the available hyphens so as to carve out (new) speaking positions and opportunities for action for oneself and others (Crenshaw, 1997; Phillips, 2006).

Fine (1994) highlights that 'working the hyphen' is not just an option for hyphenated subjects, but can also become a research strategy if and when researchers allow their own subjectivities to come into play as more than 'neutral transmitters of voices and stories'. Thus, Fine encourages researchers to acknowledge and utilize their positions as active co-constructors of hyphens and as potential reformers of current hyphenation practices:

> When we opt, as has been the tradition, simply to write about those who have been Othered, we deny the hyphen […] When we opt, instead, to engage in social struggles with those who have been exploited and subjugated, we work the hyphen, revealing far more about ourselves, and far more about the structures of Othering (Fine, 1994: 72).

As a research practice as well as an activist endeavour, the terminology of working the hyphen places emphasis on exposure and engagement, not erasure. The racializing effects of hyphenation are always-already in place, and if we attempt to erase them (e.g. by pretending they do not exist or by ignoring our own implication in them as researchers), we merely suppress the hyphen and efface the possibility of changing it:

> We may self-consciously or not decide *how* to work the hyphen of Self and Other, how to gloss the boundaries between, and within, slippery constructions of Others. But when we look, get involved, demur, analyse, interpret, probe, speak, remain silent, walk away, organize for outrage, or sanitize our stories, and when we construct our texts in and on their words, we decide how to nuance our relations with/for/despite those who have been deemed Others (Fine, 1994: 74, italics in original).

The ultimate ambition of our work with hyphens, then, is to re-work them. We do so, first by analytically identifying currently dominant forms of hyphenation and existing attempts to work them and, second, discussing the potentials and limitations as well as possible re-workings of the strategies we found. Before doing so, we turn to a more detailed presentation of our case and methodology.

Methods for the study of hyphenation

In pointing out that strategies of hyphenation are found in the practice of the field of research as well as in the relationship between the researcher and the field, Fine (1994) offers hyphenation as both a conceptual framework and a methodology. Thus, in working with the empirical case organization of Action Aid Denmark, specifically its training of young people to become opinion leaders on anti-discrimination matters, it is important to establish our relation to the field and to further detail how we studied the strategies of hyphenation that we encountered in the field. In doing so, we first present the research context, more generally, then detail our encounters with the hyphens of the specific case and how we coded the empirical data for rhetorical strategies of hyphenation. We conclude this section with a reflection on our own positionality in relation to the case.

Research context

The non-governmental organization of Action Aid Denmark (part of the international Action Aid alliance) has nearly 70 years of experience with development work. The organization is present in 45 countries with the declared aim to alleviate poverty. To this end, Action Aid Denmark concentrates on building local capacity to empower people living in poverty to improve their situation despite oppressive societal, institutional, and organizational structures. While most activities focus on developing countries, the organization is also active in Denmark. Here, it works with a human rights approach to societal inequalities, and the training programme in anti-discrimination advocacy is but one example of the organization's efforts to counter structural racism in the Danish context. The initiative emphasizes issues of such structural racism and explicitly seeks to redress and improve the current conditions of possibility for racialized subjects' participation in Danish public debate (Action Aid Denmark, 2016).

The underlying assumption of the training, namely that structural racism is prevalent in the mass-mediated Danish public sphere, is well-documented in research, which consistently shows that 'we' (white/Danes) speak, and 'they' (non-white/non-Danes) are talked about (Jørndrup, 2017; Jacobsen et al., 2012; Kontrabande, 2012). Immigrants and their

descendants are statistically underrepresented as news sources: Even though they made up 12,3% of the population in 2016, they only accounted for 4% of sources in the media stories of that year (Jørndrup, 2017: 6). Furthermore, minority ethnic subjects mostly appear within certain news areas (crime and foreign matters) and almost every other story about immigrants and integration is about crime (Kontrabande, 2012).

In particular, Muslims are largely negatively framed and restricted to certain topics such as extremism, terror and sharia law (with an emphasis on oppression of women):

> Constructed through an antagonistic and hierarchical relationship between 'Danes' and 'Muslims' [as if the two were mutually exclusive], Muslim culture and Islam tended to be represented as a threat to Danish society and so-called Danish values. The reporting was rather one-sided and exclusive of minority voices, and when Muslims were given voice, the same few publicly visible and vocal actors appeared. At the same time, the lives and opinions of the less visible majority of Muslims more or less vanished in the media coverage. In this way, the newspapers constructed a distorted and negative picture of Muslims and their religion, and thereby contributed to a general climate of intolerance and discrimination against Muslim minorities (Jacobsen et al., 2012: 53).

This is the currently dominant form of hyphenation in Danish public debate; the hierarchical ordering of 'us' and 'them' in which 'the One' speaks about or for 'the Other'.

The Action Aid Denmark initiative explicitly seeks to redress this situation, and while the initiative does not use the language of hyphenation, the participants were, as we shall see, taught strategies for working the hyphen. Thus, the initiative offers fertile ground for our dual ambition of identifying current strategies of hyphenation and supporting efforts to (re-)work them.

Encountering the hyphen

The opinion leader initiative consisted of 11 days of training in various topics related to public opinion formation, aiming to enable the participants to gain a voice in Danish media. The actual days of training were spread across four months (September through December), and in Autumn 2016 one of the authors of this article had opportunity to observe the initiative.

The data on which we base our analysis consists, firstly, of the observation notes from eight out of the 11 days of the course.

Following the conclusion of the opinion leader training programme, we added a second source of data as the same author invited all participants to take part in interviews to reflect upon their experiences. Initially, five participants as well as the main organizer and facilitator from Action Aid Denmark (who self-identifies as white and male) accepted. A seventh interview was added as one further participant came forward after the first version of this article was shared with the participants for their commentary. Of the total of six participants who were interviewed, three self-identify as minority ethnic (non-white/non-Danish), three as majority ethnic (white/Danish). Two are men, four are women. All interviews were transcribed to allow for coding of the hyphenation strategies in the written material (see below).

Further, we had access to the output of the training, as published on the blog provided by Action Aid Denmark and in other media (e.g. newspapers). Since we emphasize participants' reflections on the strategies of hyphenation as well as their efforts to (re-)work them, this written material only functions as background to our analysis. As a matter of indicating the impact of the course, however, let us note that apart from the many blog posts, which were integrated in the course as 'training ground', 13 articles in other media were published during the programme. Some participants continued publishing opinion pieces after the training ended and are, today, recognized opinion leaders, but most have left the scene, as it were. With the intention to best serve everyone's interests, all quotes are anonymized and we use pseudonyms throughout.

As mentioned, the assumption that non-white participants were always-already hyphenated emerged as a recurring concern of both the facilitators and the participants during our very first encounters with the course. Thus, Fine's (1994) concept of hyphenation and her idea of working the hyphen as the focus of engaged research formed the foundation of our work from an early stage. Hyphenation as a colonizing discourse of the Other and as a relational identification of 'Self', the hyphen that separates and merges our invention of others and selves, was therefore also present from the very beginning of the coding process; it guided how we approached and made sense of the empirical data.

Coding the hyphen

To ensure that our research thoroughly engaged with the empirical case, we structured the coding process along the lines suggested by Howarth (2010). First, we problematized the context as described above; meaning, we diagnosed hyphenation as a central empirical concern. Second, we worked retroductively, oscillating between Fine's theoretical concept and the empirical instances of hyphenation, so as to establish more specific explanations of the hyphenation strategies we encountered. Whereas Howarth's third and fourth steps are the identification of three general logics (political, social, and fantasmatic) and the explanation of how these logics are co-articulated, we focused more specifically on rhetorical strategies of hyphenation, understood as the work of the hyphen on individuals *and* individuals' efforts to (re-)work it.

Turning to a more inductive strategy of identifying patterns within the material, we were inspired by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) who suggest a process of moving from 'first order concepts' through 'second order themes' to 'aggregate dimensions'. In our case, we first noted all the places in which participants could be said to speak about hyphenation. As already established, this was a central topic of the course (albeit not labelled as such) and, hence, the relevant material was both rich and varied, but, we soon found, also highly patterned. Hence, second order themes like discrimination, racialization, ambiguity, activism and fatigue soon emerged. In continuing our work with these themes, we focused particularly on rhetorical hyphenation strategies. As mentioned, we define rhetorical hyphenation strategies as individuals' instrumental *and* constitutive use of the options available to them in a given context. While this definition of strategy emphasizes the power that strategies exert over subjects, it also allows room for the creative use of existing strategies so as to enable subjects to act and speak in new ways and, thereby, change their position. Thus, one *both* speaks from a subject position *and* creates such a position through speaking. This is what we mean by 'working the hyphen'.

We found this definition of the rhetorical work of and with hyphenation to be particularly pertinent to our case as the opinion leader initiative explicitly aimed to provide the participants with the rhetorical means necessary to successfully work currently dominant strategies of hyphenation. Further, we found that participants not only sought to use the dominant strategies to their own advantage, but actively negotiated the strategies they were

taught. We term such negotiation 're-working the hyphen' as it reflects upon and/or resists existing hyphenations so as to change the social context rather than the individual's position within it.

In the analysis, we identify three prevalent strategies, explain how they work rhetorically and ascertain the possibilities and limitations they pose in terms of re-organizing racialized subjects in Danish public debate:

1) Silencing: *Minority positions are articulated by majority voices that speak of and for the Other and either defend or demonize people of colour*. This is the dominant colonial discourse in and through which the hyphen establishes a hierarchical relationship between majority and minority. In this form of hyphenation, the hyphen operates as a line that is rarely blurred., let alone crossed. In the course, this dichotomous and discriminatory strategy is identified so as to enable the participants to work it.

2) Positioning: *Minority ethnic subjects are invited (and taught!) to emulate majority discourse; that is, to speak with 'white voice'*. In learning to tell their personal stories, course participants are positioned as exceptions to the rule, tokens or role models, thereby enacting particular relations of in- and exclusion. The hyphen, in this case, links majority and minority positions within one subject, as e.g. immigrant-Danish or Muslim-Danish. This strategy of hyphenation was the main form of working the hyphen as taught within the course. It enables the racialized subject to gain a speaking position within the public debate, but it is a position that operates on the given conditions of possibility. Therefore, it was questioned and/or resisted by several participants although others recognized its instrumental use.

3) Representing: *In telling their own stories, the speaking racialized subjects come to represent other subjects with similar identity markers and, hence, risk reproducing both the discursive practices of silencing and positioning*. Here, the hyphen establishes majority-within-the-minority relations, privileging those non-white minority individuals who can speak in ways that are hearable to the white majority over and against those non-white subjects who are unable or unwilling to do so. This strategy of hyphenation arises as an (unintended) side-effect of the strategy of positioning, and many participants saw it as limiting the potential of the course to re-organize processes of racialization. Being able to represent others may improve the position of individual course participants, but it also restricts what those individuals can do and say, and it does not change much (if anything) in terms of the

organization of racialized subjects in the Danish public sphere. Again, some participants accepted this condition as inherent to their current possibilities of speaking, arguing that anything is better than silence, but most, including those who accepted to work the strategy of representation, saw it as being in serious need of re-working.

Having identified the three rhetorical strategies of hyphenation, we turned to Howarth's fifth step of criticizing current strategies, which in our case, and in accordance with Fine's concept of hyphenation, included a reflection on not only the ways in which participants in the course were taught to work the hyphen – and how they, in turn, re-worked these new strategies of hyphenation – but also on our own role as researchers. Accordingly, we conclude this methodological section with a specification of how we approach this final, critical *and* reflexive, step that we shall also return to in the discussion.

Speaking of hyphenation/for hyphenated subjects?

While organizing the informants' experiences as we observed and heard them, our own labour of working the hyphen could not be contained within the emerging coding scheme. When presenting our work in various developmental stages at conferences and seminars, we had the unsettling experience of being positioned in relation to the article in and through our own bodies. That is, as white researchers we are used to passing unnoticed – or, rather, are not accustomed to experiencing the effects of hyphenation in terms of race whereas we routinely deal with other bodily markers, such as gender and sexuality. Confronted with our own whiteness, we felt a limitation as to what we could/should say about the racialized experiences of the participants in the course. The limits did not necessarily emanate from others (at least not directly), but rather from the relationalities we felt and sought to construct with our data. How might we, as white subjects, talk about the ways in which non-white subjects are given and take voice without reproducing existing hyphenations? Faced with this disturbing question, we have sought to re-work our own hyphens; inquiring into the ways in which we are positioned in relation to our informants (see also Holck and Muhr, 2020; Swan, 2017).

As we revisited the data with this purpose in mind, it turned out that the issue had also been a concern of some of the participants in the course; the white participants had had similar

14

experiences of being positioned outside of their usual sphere of de-racialized subjectivity and of doubting whether they, in fact, had the right to speak up on the topic of racialization. No matter how well-intentioned their utterances, they became aware of the inherent problems of speaking for non-white others. Further, this issue, as we will see in the third analytical round, also occurred to non-white participants when they had success in speaking out; who might their utterances claim to represent and who might not be properly represented by such representation?

Once the question of (non-)representability had appeared, we encountered it throughout (our dealings with) the data; it could not be confined to an additional code, but saturated the material *and* our relations with it. Therefore, besides the three strategies of hyphenation maintained in the analysis, we also included the issue of how participants both work and re-work them throughout. Further, we focus the discussion on the issues of how the strategies interrelate and how we interrelate with them. Acknowledging that no one ever escapes hyphenation, our final concern, which we revert back to in the concluding discussion, is with the issue of how everyone might benefit from re-working their hyphens.

The hyphenated organization of racialized subjects in Danish public debate

The starting point of the analysis, as well as of Action Aid Denmark's opinion leader initiative, is the pervasive structural discrimination and racism of Danish public debate. This means that some voices, because of the colour of the speaking bodies, are treated differently from other voices, those pertaining to white bodies. The colour of material bodies (and the assumed religious belief, culture and way of life that goes with it), then, comes to precede and define racialized subjects of and in public debate; *who you are perceived to be, shapes what you (can) say*. Thus, non-white people in Denmark are currently interpellated by a colonial discourse of the Other and come to be (re-)presented stereotypically. These subjects are racialized before – maybe even at the cost of – being seen as participants in public debate; for instance, silenced as angry-black-African-woman rather than enabled to speak as Danish-citizen-exercising-her-democratic-right-to-freedom-of-speech. The opinion leader course explicitly began from the identification of this current condition of possibility and sought to enable the participants to

engage with and, potentially, change it. Thus, the first identified hyphenation strategy is the currently dominant one, which the course aimed to alter.

Silencing – Majority-minority hyphenation

> The majority should not be talking *about* us. They should be talking *with* us.
>
> (Observation, 03.09.16)

The basic premise of the opinion leader course was that non-white subjects are currently objects of public debate; they are talked about, but rarely heard. Thus, the course and its participants joined forces in identifying the strategy of majority-minority hyphenation, the positioning of the white majority subject as the unmarked centre in relation to which the non-white minority subject is positioned as subordinate, as the currently dominant – and deeply problematic – rhetorical strategy of Danish public debate. Further, Action Aid Denmark and the course participants shared the common ambition of changing this situation. In our interview with the main facilitator from Action Aid Denmark, he said:

> We see a societal challenge, and it has been documented by the UN and in European surveys that we have problems with racism in Denmark. And it is part of the strategy of Action Aid Denmark to try to change that. It is part of the organization to work against vilification […] We wanted two things with the opinion leader training. First, to shape the debate with the articles and stuff that came from telling those stories [of the participants] and presenting a counternarrative. Second, and in the longer run, the goal is actually to build these young people's capacity to do something afterwards as well. (Martin)

The course, then, aimed to empower the participants by training them in public debate. If non-white subjects (and their allies) became better able to use various rhetorical strategies, it was argued, they might be able to gain a voice and, hence, work existing hyphens while re-working their effects. That is, rather than being silenced by their hyphens, these subjects could work with available strategies of public debate to gain a recognizable position (as will be detailed in the next round of analysis).

However, while entering the debate on its current terms may grant non-white voices access to the public domain, some participants felt that agreeing to these terms was in itself a form of

silencing, of not expressing one's non-white minority position, but rather conforming to the majority. That is, they did not see the potential and, ultimately, rejected the premise of the course – not in terms of the discrimination of current hyphenation strategies, but as regards the potential to re-work them from within. As one minority ethnic female participant, who was particularly critical of the training, said:

> I have chosen to put being an opinion leader aside. I've done so because I think the format was unpleasant. I think I was one of the only ones who never sent anything to any newspapers because it felt like violating my personal boundaries. That thing about having to do it on others' terms. (Amy)

Thus, the first hyphenation strategy is the one against which the course and its participants define themselves. The currently dominant 'violent hierarchy' (Derrida, 1981: 41) of Danish public debate as used by subjects in the dominant (white) majority position so as to maintain their privilege by relegating (non-white) minority subjects to the inferior position of being talked about. Some participants felt that speaking up on the terms of the majority would amount to reproducing the majority-minority hyphenation, wherefore they rejected the idea of working the hyphen from within. Others chose to engage with the dominant form of hyphenation, seeking to work the hyphen to their own advantage. How they did so will be the main topic of our analysis of the second hyphenation strategy: positioning.

Positioning – Speaking as hyphenated subjects

> Your personal narrative is essential – it's what makes your target audience want you and want to share you [on social media]. It's what makes them feel you.
>
> (Observation, 04.09.16)

Sharing one's personal story was the specific means of working the hyphen so as to gain a voice, as taught in the course. This was a source of discomfort for the white participants who, generally speaking, struggled with the storytelling format as they came to realize they had no relevant stories to tell:

> Storytelling was a big hurdle to me. When have I ever experienced racism or ethnic discrimination personally? And then you're in the same room with people who

have the craziest stories [of being discriminated against based on race]. I felt an urge to be part of the debate; I wanted to get 'out there', but I couldn't really connect it to my own bodily experiences. (Helena)

The non-white participants, to the contrary, were expected to have relevant and important stories, which – when articulated – would educate majority ethnic members of the public of the trials and tribulations of minorities. Their stories were 'authentic' and could provide 'insights', granting white people access to the experiences of non-white bodies. As the main facilitator of the course said of his own experience:

Well, having heard these stories created a drive in me. Like, the emotional experience of meeting the people who actually experience this, that has been a strong driver afterwards as well. (Martin)

Installing a similar drive in others, through the public sharing of the participants' stories, was a main ambition of the course.

Sometimes this ambition was, indeed, realized, but never without tension. For instance, a non-white female participant explained how she received response from an anti-immigration politician who said that because of her story he now had a better impression of Muslims:

After we had talked to each other for two hours, he [the politician] said to me that no matter how ridiculous I might find it, he now had a better impression of Muslims because of me. And that was, I think, a weird statement. I could, after all, understand and also appreciate the fact that he had the capacity to change his mind, but I can't help thinking that I shouldn't have had to be the one to help him. (Suheda)

While not unproblematic (as the quote indicates and as we will discuss in the third and final round of analysis), such willingness to share one's story on behalf of a group clearly enables non-white subjects to gain a voice within the current conditions of possibility of debate, as was the intention of the course.

However, other participants objected vehemently to the format, like this non-white male participant:

I hate storytelling. It's a very mainstream way to write. It's as if you have to have experienced something, before you're allowed to talk about it [...] But I don't want to be a monkey in a cage. As a minority, you use your personal story to reach the majority, but why doesn't the majority have to use its story to reach me? (Ahmet)

Here, Ahmet points to the issue that storytelling not only puts non-white subjects in the spotlight, but also places them in a certain and restricted position. Learning to use their supposedly 'authentic selves' in storytelling, the participants only got to tell certain stories. There is, as Ahmet indirectly acknowledges, some credibility and legitimacy in disclosure, but it is problematic, as he emphasizes, that this particular narrative form only applies to minorities. And as Suheda, who is more positive of the format, noted in the preceding quote, it is a problem that the format accepts the responsibility of minorities to educate the majority.

The participants' concern, ultimately, is about becoming what Kanter (1977) labels a token; even when voicing ordinary experiences, they risk being classified as the exception to the rule or being cast as a role model. The preferred method for working the hyphen, as taught in the course, enabled non-white participants to speak up, but only to do so from a very specific position. This amounts to the hyphenation strategy of the 'other-within', the recognizable other or hyphenated identity of, for example, Muslim-Danish. This subject position is different enough to be exotic, but similar enough to be understandable. It is hyphenated in the sense of being both 'us' and 'them', which limits individuals' potential for expressing their unique identity and constrains these individuals' representative powers. As the participants in the course were taught to speak from this particular position, recounting the experience of being a hyphenated subject, they gained a voice, but worked within current forms of hyphenation instead of working against – or re-working – the constraints imposed by the hyphen. Again, some participants accepted the strategy of positioning as a precondition for being able to speak at all, but more participants were critical of the limitations this created, especially in terms of representation, the third strategy to which we now turn.

Representing – Majority-within-the-minority hyphenation

Do I, as white, even have the right to take part in this debate?

(Observation, 03.09.16)

The consensus among the course participants was that non-white bodies are more 'fit' for talking about integration because they happen to be the objects of inquiry of this debate. However, turning the current debate *about* people of colour into a debate *by* people of colour has two (unintended) effects. First, it silences white majority subjects as they no longer feel able to represent non-white experiences:

> I think I have become even more aware of how important it is that it isn't a debate…that is, pass the voice on, perhaps, if you can do that. I don't know if you can. I thought a lot about it […] that it is more important that someone with a minority ethnic background speaks about integration instead of someone…white. (Helena)

Second, and more importantly, it turns non-white individuals into representatives of the group of racialized subjects as a whole:

> I'm locked into these stereotypical expectations. People expect me to talk about social control, not feminism and rights for people who are transgender. I've written several opinion pieces where I don't mention anything about Islam or religion in general and still some call me Islamist! People read me as Muslim because I have brown skin and an 'exotic'-sounding name. But where does that come from? I once got a personal response from the spokesperson from The Danish People's Party [a far-right party with a critical stance on immigration] in which he said he couldn't assess whether I am Danish or not, because he doesn't know me. But who made him the judge in the first place? (Ahmet)

The problem raised here is both that white majority subjects retain the right of in- and exclusion, of deciding who is Danish, and that non-white minority subjects can only represent the racialized position:

> When a white person makes a statement it's on behalf of that one individual. However, whenever I speak, apparently I speak on behalf of others. And that is true in some cases in the sense that I talk about experiences that I have as a Muslim and that other Muslims are also likely to have had, simply because they are Muslim and live in Denmark. That is not the same as saying that I can speak for all Danish Muslims and it's difficult to keep those two positions separate. (Suheda)

Having to speak for others (or being positioned as doing so), Suheda says, is a control mechanism that restrains minority ethnic subjects; because they are never just voicing their own opinions and positions, but also always representing a general racialized Other, non-white opinion leaders are restricted in what they can say and tasked with a particular responsibility when speaking.

While Suheda (and the other non-white course participants) would prefer to be able to speak up as individuals, the course prepares them to take on the responsibility as representative of one or several minority positions:

> The Action Aid Denmark course has refined and softened my voice. I'm now very conscious about the fact that when I'm entering the political sphere, then I'm not just me; I'm also black, Muslim and a woman. That delimits what I can say and how I can say it. When debating I sometimes hold myself back and make sure not to interrupt. I need to appear respectable in the eyes of others. (Suheda)

Suheda is far from uncritical of her representative role, but she is among the participants who have taken it on.

In discussing how she dealt with the responsibility of representing, Amy shares her less positive view:

> The feeling that you have to fight. That you constantly have to have an opinion every time you see something problematic or discriminatory or racist; then you have to be the first person to speak out against it. It's the feeling that because I was *so* privileged that I got one of only a few spots on the course and can talk on behalf of others who don't have a voice of their own, then I have to do so all the time. That's tough and it's a heavy burden to carry. (Amy)

As discussed in the previous section, the participants were trained to tell their own stories, but they were also trained to represent the stories of others. Thereby, their stories became more generic, their voices more bland. Many participants were unsatisfied with this effect of the strategy of majority-within-the-minority hyphenation and actively sought to re-work it, but as they were not provided with any rhetorical resources for doing so, the only readily available option was to (re-)turn to the position of silence. While choosing to remain or to become silent might not be exactly the same as being silenced position, it has similar effects in

terms of the subject's ability to intervene in public debate. Thus, the options available seemed to be to speak up from the current position of the racialized subject or to remain silent and, hence, be positioned as a racialized subject by others. In either case, there is not much impetus towards re-working the hyphen.

In sum, the hyphenation strategy of representation meant that course participants were limited in their work with the hyphen. In a sense they ended up neither representing themselves nor those they were said to speak up for, but, instead, a certain imaginary of the non-white subject. This imagined position may be much more benevolent than the one articulated by anti-immigration voices in the public debate, but it is nevertheless problematic as it invites the hyphenation of a majority-within-the-minority. As individual non-white subjects come to represent the racialized subject position as a whole, this hyphenation strategy reproduces the existing organization of racialized subjects. Becoming subject to a colonial 'helping'-discourse, the participants, ultimately, risk reproducing existing positions through 'benevolent discrimination' (Romani et al., 2019; see also Muhr and Salem, 2013; Holck and Muhr, 2017). That is, in working the hyphen as taught in the course, the participants do not really re-work it, but only become able to articulate the formerly silenced position. They become able to articulate the problems of the organization of racialized subjects in the Danish public sphere but are unable to alter this organization.

Concluding discussion: Reworking the hyphens

In a seminal special issue of *Organization*, marking a shift towards postcolonial organization studies, Jack et al. (2011: 275) encouraged organization scholars to 'contribute to the development of a more critical and heterodox examination of organizations and organizing'. Focusing on Self-Other dialectics (see e.g. Radhakrishnan, 1994; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008), we have sought to take up this invitation by examining how hyphenation organizes racialized subjects, enabling them to do and say some things – and not others.

We applied the framework of hyphenation, understood as the organization of racialized subjects, to a case study of an initiative aimed at training young people to become opinion leaders in anti-discrimination matters. Here, our unit of analysis was not the organization as such, but the process of (re-)organizing the participants in and through the training. More

specifically, we asked how the identification of existing hyphens (for example Danish-Muslim) and the introduction of rhetorical strategies for working the hyphen may both challenge and support the current organization of racialized subjects. The analysis traced a movement through different rhetorical strategies of hyphenation, understood as the simultaneously constitutive terms and instrumental use of communication, taught in the opinion leader course:

First, the *silencing* of non-white subjects, which is commonly perceived to be the dominant hyphenation strategy of public debate, its current condition of possibility, is explicated and criticized as part of the training. Accordingly, the central aim of the course is to enable non-white subjects (and their white allies) to work existing hyphens. Specifically, the non-white participants in the course are encouraged – and trained – to become part of the conversation that is currently about them.

At the next turn, the hyphenation strategy of *positioning* provides non-white participants with a 'hearable' form in which they speak as and from the position of their hyphens, e.g. Afro-Danish or Muslim-Danish. Here, personal stories become means of making minority experiences available and recognizable to the majority, of rendering the Other less strange, but also of locking this subject into a very specific and restricted speaking position. In our data, one non-white male participant, Ahmet, is especially critical of this strategy. He rejects what he calls the mainstream expectation in public debate that one, as a minority subject, must have experienced personally what one is talking about. He specifically mentions social control as an example hereof and explains how the expectations of 'the personal story' delimits his voice to already established discourses of the Other that he can speak into – and speak from. The offered strategy, therefore, presents a dilemma: While speaking from a particular position is perceived to be better than being silenced altogether, the position comes with its own problems and limitations.

One of these limitations links directly to the third hyphenation strategy of *representing*. While the white participants in the course learned to question their ability to speak on behalf of others, the non-white participants experienced that their positions all too easily were taken to represent racialized subjects as such. Thus, these participants were incentivized to articulate a position that might neither represent their own experience nor those of others, but nevertheless conformed to expectations of 'what it is like' to be a racialized subject in

Denmark. Thus, a second dilemma appears: The participants risk reproducing existing norms and expectations, existing hyphenations, even as they seek to work with and against them.

On the basis of these findings, we can now raise two final issues for discussion: *What, more precisely, does hyphenation do to the organization of racialized subjects, and how does the concept further our understanding of this organization?* In turning to these issues, let us first note how the strategies for working the hyphen, as offered in the course, ultimately confirm the existing hyphenation of racialized subjects and, hence, their organization in the marked position of the hyphenated relationship: non-white. Whereas Raman (2020) shows how marginalized people can gain a voice and acquire the power to speak up, our case indicates that empowerment is not a necessary outcome of attempts to work the hyphen. That is, speaking up is in itself organized within relations of hyphenation and can indeed perpetuate racialization, as e.g. shown by Liu (2019) in her study of self-orientalism.

Thus, before being able to 'offer a response to the Spivakian challenge … "can the subaltern speak?"', as Raman (2020: 283) suggests is the promise of postcolonial organization studies, we must investigate what happens to the subaltern voice as it speaks. When non-white bodies are confined to speaking with white voice, as is one (unintended) effect of the training we followed, not much has been gained (see also Dar, 2018). This is not to say that the hyphen can never be re-worked, that speaking up cannot be empowering, but merely to caution that the work is not complete with the act of speaking up. While Raman (2020) concludes that marginalised voices are no longer in the shadow, we suggest that, to continue his metaphor, the light that shines on them continues to be white. Or, in the conceptual terms of our framework, even as hyphenated voices are heard, the speaking subjects continue to be racialized and organized along the lines of their racialization.

Thus, as Andrijasevic et al. (2019: 313) put it, 'the machinations of power are never far away, as people's differences come to be used as an axis of actual and potential oppression, coercion and exploitation'. Conceptually, we establish hyphenation as one of these machinations of power, which must be worked with caution and re-worked with audacity. This leads to the issue of how to move from working within current hyphenation strategies towards more radically re-working the hyphen. As hyphenation is both an empirical process and a research practice, this move has a practical as well as a methodological dimension. It is the last task of this article to attend to the re-working of hyphens in its two forms.

Hyphenation as organizational practice

While each of the three strategies of hyphenation that emerge from our data are problematic in their own ways, the identification of existing hyphens and the potential to work them is, we should acknowledge, an improvement from the current situation. As the participants agreed on the final day of training, non-white participation in public debate means forcing the public to acknowledge and relate to the existence of hyphenated voices, one way or the other (Observation, 06.12.16).

Further, when the three strategies are taken together, they point to the recurrent problem of representation, of how being able to speak – and, hence, to represent – always involves a certain position of privilege and, thereby, risks misrepresentation of the less privileged. Becoming aware of this very dilemma, however, is a first step towards re-working the hyphenation it supports. For instance, one white female participant turned her lack of a story into the story:

> I find it difficult to share something about myself, and I remember we talked a lot about that during the course. Given that the course is about racism and discrimination you don't as a white person have that many stories to tell. So, we had to use that non-story as our point of departure. (Claudia)

Thus, white people may move the debate forward by highlighting and criticizing their own privilege, thereby questioning positions and challenging relations rather than repeating and stabilizing them.

Similarly, Suheda, in a final reflection upon her experience as a non-white participant in the course, called for a more dialogical space. She criticized the current format of public debate for not being concerned with its own consequences. A real advance, she argued, would be for new spaces to open up, enabling different people to engage each other in dialogue. While not specifying how such a space might be developed in practice, the willingness to continuously problematize current practices and engage with different positions constitutes an important step in the right direction, towards re-working the hyphen as an ongoing process. That is, instead of advocating a specific change that may lead to the stabilization of new hyphens, one

can advocate and practice reflexivity as a means of continuously questioning and shifting hyphenated organizations.

Thinking racialization through hyphenation clarifies that and why we will never be 'done'; the organization of one subject in relation to others is a basic condition of possibility of the existence of subjects as such. Thus, the issue is not to end hyphenation, but to always seek more equal and open terms of relating subjects to each other – in theory, practice and, importantly, as a research practice.

Methodologies beyond the hyphen

The participants' concerns regarding how best to intervene in public debate reflect our methodological queries as to how we should engage with the participants and their efforts to work (and re-work) the hyphen: How do we negotiate our own hyphenations when speaking for/of others? Can we talk with and not about subjects who are differently positioned from us? And how may we negotiate these positionalities? The questions that so troubled the course participants in their practical interventions, then, are equally problematic from a methodological point of view.

As Fine (1994: 74) notes, referencing Haraway and Spivak, the starting point must be to break with the problematic assumption that research can be done from 'no-where':

> Qualitative researchers then, and most now, produce texts through Donna Haraway's (1988) 'god trick', presuming to paint the Other from 'no-where'. Researchers/writers self-consciously carry no voice, body, race, class, or gender and no interests into their texts. Narrators seek to shelter themselves in the text, as if they were transparent (Spivak, 1988). They recognize no hyphen.

Fine contrasts such 'hard and fast' research with scholarship that understands its own positioning and works both *from* and *with* it; working the hyphen is a practice whereby researchers 'self-consciously interrupt Othering' and 'force a radical rethinking of the ethical and political relations of qualitative researchers to the objects/subjects' of their work (Fine, 1994: 75).

As Ahmed says, the point of critique is not to replace one habit – or hyphen – with another, but to keep open the possibility of change, of constantly re-working the hyphen:

> A phenomenology of whiteness helps us to notice institutional habits; it brings what is behind, what does not get seen as the background to social action, to the surface in a certain way. It does not teach us how to change those habits and that is partly the point (Ahmed 2007: 165).

Thus, it may be that people of colour are currently (re-)presented by and through white voices, but fortunately that is not the only hyphenation at work. Other voices are also speaking up, and new critiques are made (see also Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013; Manning, 2018; McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Strumińska-Kutra, 2016). Our task as researchers is to support this process of re-working existing hyphenations, including but not limited to those in which we are personally involved (Fine,1994).

Thus, recognizing the necessity of speaking from *somewhere* does imply that everyone can only speak from and for their own position. Instead, we (as researchers) just as our course participants (as opinion leaders) should continuously question and challenge how we are positioned – and position ourselves – in relation to the subjects that we speak *for* and *about*. Further, we have to consider who we speak *to* and *with*. Finally, and most importantly, we must not only broaden the conception of our audiences, but also learn how to listen (Swan, 2017) – and listen intently – to ensure that contributions to public debate that are not uttered in 'white voice' are no longer only heard as 'white noise'. Re-working the hyphen is not about ending hyphenation; it is about re-organising (public) space so as to enable a richly multifaceted chorus of differently hyphenated voices speaking from – and being heard as – different positions.

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