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CHAPTER 10

Antiracist Feminism and the Politics of Solidarity in Neoliberal Times

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Introduction

Within both feminist research and critical race studies, the changing conditions of political action under neoliberalism have been the focus of intensive discussions, framed especially around the concepts of postraciality and postfeminism. Expanding on the more general argument of how neoliberalisation[1] has resulted in reduced space for political action (e.g. Mouffe 2005), researchers have identified specific challenges to feminist and antiracist activities. The neoliberal political rationality emphasises race, gender, and class-based inequalities as individual failures, resulting in the depoliticising of social and economic powers (Brown 2015; Goldberg 2009; Mohanty 2013). Thus, frequent denials of racism and its structural nature characterise politics and the public sphere more broadly, and racial

[1] I understand "neoliberalisation" in a similar manner as Dikec (2007), as a concept that connects perspectives on policies, rationalities, and everyday lives, all of which have been the focus of scholars studying the effects of a neoliberalism understood as political-economic practices and thinking.

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logic is often disguised in the language of cultural differences (Goldberg 2015; Lentin and Titley 2011).

In this context of increasing inequalities and the denial of their structural roots, we are, however, witnessing the rise of antiracist and feminist activism that repoliticises questions of race and gender, and to some extent class, in new ways. Antiracist feminism has rapidly expanded in the last decade throughout the Nordic region, with new groups, media sites, and public events organised especially in the large cities. This chapter examines antiracist feminist and queer of colour activism, in which the main or sole actors belong to groups racialised as non-white or "others" in Nordic societies. It investigates how the activists articulate the need for such activism; their views on cooperation and solidarity with other social justice movements; and the development of their political agendas in the context of neoliberal capitalism. The analysis is based on extensive interviews, fieldwork, and text material collected in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland from 2015 to 2019.

Antiracist feminism and queer of colour activism is located at a junction that is influenced by and connected to (some parts of) the feminist movement, but also to groups organising Black, Brown, and other minoritised people. Inspired by queer of colour scholar Fatima El-Tayeb (2011), I use the concept "postethnic activism" to refer to activism in which political mobilisation is based on a shared understanding of being racialised and treated as non-belonging by the surrounding society, despite often being born and/or raised in the Nordic societies. Such activism is postethnic in the sense that it creates communities and understandings of shared interests across ethnic and sometimes religious divides, while being sensitive to and critically interrogating racialised power relations. In the studied countries, this means, for example, groups developed around the Black experience or people with African heritage; activism in racialised and marginalised urban areas; social media groups for PoC (persons of colour); and Muslim organisations confronting Islamophobia. While sharing many of the analyses on racial inequalities with the other groups, antiracist feminism and queer of colour activism have some specific characteristics, notably their insistence on the gendered and sexualised nature of racism.

Postethnic activism has developed as resistance to the normative whiteness embedded in the national identities of the Nordic countries. It exposes the taken for granted and exclusionary notions of hegemonic national imaginaries, which result in divisions between white and non-white populations. At the same time, postethnic activism creates knowledges and

articulates political claims based on the (variety of) experiences of racialised and marginalised communities (cf. Gilroy 1987).

Scholars have critically investigated the widespread perceptions of the Nordic countries as outsiders to the colonial project, instead showing that these countries participated in, and benefited from, European colonialism in many ways, both overseas and in the Arctic (e.g. Kuokkanen 2007; Keskinen et al. 2009; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012; Naum and Nordin 2013). Despite sometimes being interpreted otherwise (Tlostanova et al. 2019), race and racism are not viewed as some kind of residue from bygone historical periods, but as deeply embedded in the cultural, economic, and institutional structures of the Nordic societies. Enshrining racial hierarchies has enabled economic exploitation to proliferate throughout previous centuries, and this dynamic continues in the present day. The colonisation of Sámi lands and the exploitation of natural resources in the Arctic operated in parallel to the creation of racial taxonomies that inferiorised indigenous people (Lehtola 2015). Today's Nordic societies are not only characterised by exclusionary politics towards migrants and racialised minorities, but also by the production of an exploitable labour force through processes of racialised differentiation and hierarchisation that enable capitalist profit making (Mulinari and Neergaard 2017, 92). Studies have also highlighted the role of the racial state in the Nordic countries, on the one hand in relation to its repressive and assimilatory actions towards indigenous people and racialised minorities, and on the other, its role in knowledge production and the creation of racialised differences (Keskinen 2019; Schclarek-Mulinari and Keskinen 2020). Feminist researchers in particular have critically examined Nordic myths of exceptionality in terms of gender equality, egalitarianism, and sexual nationalisms (e.g. de los Reyes et al. 2002; Sawyer and Habel 2014; Dahl 2018).

In this chapter, I argue that antiracist feminism has the potential to reconfigure political agendas and tackle the central questions of our time, due to its border position connecting antiracist, feminist, and (to some extent) class-based politics. There are, however, a number of obstacles in the way of arriving at a coalitional politics, especially with other feminist movements and the predominantly white Left. Moreover, antiracist feminism and queer of colour activism have developed insightful analyses of the gendered and sexualised elements of racism, but are not as strong in addressing class-based power relations. At the end of the chapter, I point towards a few political openings and moments of political solidarity that

reach out from beyond the existing coalitions, and pave new ways for enacting social justice politics in neoliberal times.

Mobilising Across Differences and the Politics of Solidarity in Racial Capitalism

To understand political mobilisation and emerging solidarities in neoliberal capitalism, it is important to view it as a specific phase of racial capitalism that is shaped by the histories of racism and capitalism. Cedric Robinson's (1983) seminal work showed that racism is central in the development of capitalism, and profoundly challenged the Eurocentric knowledge base of traditional Marxism. According to Robinson, racism and capitalism did not so much "break from the old order but rather evolved from it to produce a modern world system of 'racial capitalism' dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide" (Kelley 2000, xiii). Racial capitalism as a concept refers to "an understanding of the role of racism in enabling key moments of capitalist development" (Bhattacharyya 2018, ix), which also shapes the conditions for political mobilisation and social movements. Robinson argued for the crucial role of Black Radical Tradition in the struggles against racial capitalism. Following him, several scholars have emphasised the transformative potential of movements organising Black activists, artists, and intellectuals to protest against neoliberal restructuring, police violence, and other hardships faced by Black communities, but also to produce all-encompassing agendas that seek to abolish several kinds of oppression so as to enable socially-just futures for broader society (Taylor 2016; Johnson and Lubin 2017, 13).

In an effort to work with the concept of racial capitalism, Gargi Bhattacharyya (2018) combines feminist and postcolonial research to bring in perspectives of unpaid labour and populations pushed to the edges of capitalist production. Her analysis identifies racialised processes that divide populations into workers, almost-workers, and non-workers, with differential economic resources and life prospects. Bhattacharyya extends the discussion of racial capitalism to the techniques and ordering of bodies not only through race and class, but also gender and sexuality, to "understand how people become divided from each other in the name of economic survival or in the name of economic well-being" (ibid., x). Neoliberal capitalism creates divisions both in the labour market and

through the erosion of the welfare state, resulting in increasing social and economic inequalities of which racialised minorities and migrants bear the brunt. State withdrawal from service provision, and the under-financing of schools and other welfare institutions shifts the welfare responsibilities to individuals and families.

While theoretical discussions about the neoliberal turn in racial capitalism and its impact on social justice movements point towards new challenges, the questions of how to collectively mobilise in the context of divisive rule and the heterogeneity of oppressed groups have long occupied feminist, critical race, and (neo-)Marxist theorists. Some of the groundbreaking theoretical insights on mobilisations across differences and the politics of solidarity have been created by feminists of colour and transnational feminists. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) defines solidarity as "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities". She emphasises that solidarity is a practice that rests on the choice to struggle and work together for social change, while acknowledging the different social locations and identities of those involved. Solidarity is an achievement, and a process of developing a "we" through action and shared struggles (Dean 1996). Therefore, it is also a temporary and fragile collectivity that cannot be taken for granted: its development requires openness to criticism, rethinking, and relearning through shared activities. Feminist and queer of colour activists and researchers have developed analyses of coalitional politics that take differences as their starting point, instead of presuming sameness or shared goals as the basis for feminist politics (e.g. Moraga and Anzaldua 2015; Bacchetta and Maese-Cohen 2010; Cole and Luna 2010; Emejulu and Sobande 2019). These analyses understand coalitional politics to be based on the fact that groups participating in coalitions recognise themselves as subjects, and are also treated by others as such.

Researching Antiracist Feminism in Three National Contexts

This chapter is based on several kinds of data sets collected in three Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland): interviews; participatory observations and recordings from public events; media sources (social media, news media, magazines); and other textual data (campaign

material, booklets, etc.). The research[2] used the concept of postethnic activism, while acknowledging that this covers a larger body of activism than the field of antiracist feminism discussed in this chapter. I conducted translocal studies in five large cities: Copenhagen, Malmö, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Turku. While these cities are sites of active mobilising around questions of antiracism, feminism, and queer of colour perspectives, they do not represent the entirety of such activism in the respective countries.

For this chapter, I have focused on the interviews of those activists who self-identified as feminists and/or participated in activities that explicitly used the terms antiracist/intersectional feminism or queer of colour activism. The selected data includes 27 interviews, of which ten are from Sweden, 11 from Finland and six from Denmark. Since two of the Swedish interviews are pair interviews, the number of interviewed persons is 29. It was not always easy to draw the line between interviews that should be included and those not meeting the criteria, since people could identify with intersectional feminism but participate in activities that were not explicitly feminist, albeit framed, for example, around Black politics or PoC activism. Most of the interviewed activists were young adults in their twenties and thirties, but some were teenagers and a few were in their forties.

The activists whose interviews I draw upon in this research were engaged in different kinds of feminist and queer activist groups; civil society organisations; social media platforms; and arts and other kinds of cultural work which focuses on antiracism and feminism. The digital sphere has become increasingly important for activism, providing possibilities for mobilising, organising, and spreading knowledge in an easily accessible manner. It has also enabled the establishment of digital platforms and media sites run by antiracist feminist groups, which have become important voices in public spheres that operate among and beyond the explicit realm of antiracist feminism. These include, for example, *Ruskeat Tytöt Media* [Brown Girls Media] in Finland; *Rummet* [The Room, active 2014] and *Kontext* [Context] in Sweden; and *Marronage* in Denmark. While different in scope and distribution (*Marronage*, for example, publishes a print journal, while the others rely solely on web-based

[2] The project *Postethnic Activism in the Neoliberal Era. Translocal Studies on Political Subjectivities, Alliance-Building and Social Imaginaries* was funded by the Academy of Finland (decision 275032). The writing of this chapter has also been enabled by another Academy of Finland-funded project (decision 316445).

content), these activities bear witness to the new forms and inspiration of antiracist feminism in the Nordic region.

Methodologically, I have sought to follow Yasmin Gunaratnam's (2003) thoughts of moving from accounts of difference and commonality to the politics of connection, which emphasises the active work to achieve connectivity. Such research practices attempt to acknowledge disconnections and move "closer to others through inhabiting, accounting for and putting to work the distances between us" (ibid., 102). While my white body and structural location in racial hierarchies have been part of the research process since the beginning, affecting the data collection in many ways, the points of connectivity and disconnectivity did not always follow predetermined categorisations of race, ethnicity, class, or gender.

Theoretically and epistemologically, I situate myself in the same traditions of post/decolonial feminism and race critical thinking that most of the interviewees were inspired by and drew upon. With some research participants, I also shared critical perspectives on neoliberal capitalism and class politics. These points of connectivity opened up many in-depth conversations about antiracist and feminist politics; at the same time, both the research participants and myself were usually fully aware of the connecting and dividing aspects of our social locations. I did not seek access to events or social media sites that were designed for those racialised as non-white, out of respect for the activists' boundary setting. The national contexts also prompted different aspects of connectivity and allowed for varying kinds of work with the distances between the research participants and myself. Especially in Sweden, the fieldwork evoked my own migration and activist histories, resulting in a strong alliance with the activists. Closer to home and mixed with my everyday life in Finland, the work for connectivity has covered everything from engagement in collaborative antiracist activities to experiences of the dividing effects of racialisation.

Whiteness and the Difficult Politics of Solidarity

Although intersectionality has become one of the most eagerly used terms by feminist researchers and activists, it has not resulted in as broad an acknowledgment of the issues of race and social class as the Black feminists who developed the concept (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2000) argued for. Despite intersectionality and multiple power relations being widely acknowledged as central questions for feminist theory and feminist politics, the activists interviewed in this study pointed out the gap between

utterances/aims and actual politics. This suggests that many outspoken commitments to intersectionality and recognition of differences in feminist and queer politics are non-performative (Ahmed 2012), since the entanglement of normative whiteness and differential power relations is left untouched. Many of the activists refer to white spaces—which exist in both feminist and queer activism—where normativities and ways of sharing thoughts are exclusionary towards those racialised as "others". White spaces create what Andreassen and Myong (2017, 102) discuss as racial isolation and a need to constantly relate to racism and hegemonic orders, which pre-conditions agency and subjectivity.

> But if, for example, you are queer, and you experience heteronormativity, and you experience that your queer identity doesn't have room in the society, then it can be very frustrating to be in a room that's heteronormative (…) But when you are also queer and in a white queer room that's also difficult, because you're the only one … or might be the only one … that experiences racialisation. So a lot of the times you are forced to choose either or. Do I want to be uncomfortable being the only non-white or do I want to be uncomfortable being the only queer person? I think that's very true and I think it's very difficult for people to understand, especially people who are in this queer and feminist scene, to understand that a feminist and queer environment is not welcoming for everybody and it's not open for everybody. And even if it theoretically is so, in practice it's not. (Irene, Denmark)

It was not only the implicit racial hierarchies and white normativities that made many activists withdraw from participation in—and collaboration with—other feminist groups. The critical edge was also directed towards "white feminist smugness"—a view of feminists as good agents who are already conscious of power relations, so thus take a stand for antiracism. This kind of positive self-image can make it hard to admit and reflect on the ways one participates in racialising practices, and benefits from unequal power structures. Feminism can thus become a form of self-disciplining and self-actualisation (Kanai 2020), performed through "knowing the discourse" of antiracism and intersectionality, but lacking concrete participation in the messy work of everyday intersectional struggles, where one is exposed to critique and uncomfortability.

> And it's also that people have a self-image of being so good and that means you are an antiracist and a feminist. But I would say: one is not a feminist or

> antiracist or whatever without doing something. It is after all about doing, not something one is [laughs]. And it's an act, you need to … And yes, that's what is missing, in my view. One has this good image: we believe in the equality of all people, we believe in this and that. And it's all about theorising, not practicing it. (Marta, Sweden)

While feminist environments have their specificities, it is evident that the activists refer to "white smugness" more generally, as a characteristic that is shared by many Left and antiracist actors too. 'White smugness' is typical for political actors who perceive themselves as progressive and conscious of questions of antiracism, yet are not open to seriously investigating their own role in upholding racial privileges, or who (more or less openly) resist efforts to change exclusionary practices within their movements.

This "white smugness" and the wilful ignorance (Mills 1997) of racism as part of societal structures and everyday encounters creates difficulties when attempting to address power relations and raise questions about racialising practices. The feminist activists racialised as non-white can end up tiptoeing around questions of racism and everyday exclusions, when they witness a "good" feminist's self-image being at risk of being shattered, or when they anticipate conflict arising.

> With white people overall, whether they are feminists or not, one has to be more careful of what to say (…) it's like balancing between what one dares to say and what not. And especially if they are feminists … like if we are cynical, they often think that to begin with, they *understand* and know everything, and if some issue arises that they disagree with, or which they have never thought of, then the *arguing against* can sometimes be even harder than with somebody who doesn't identify as a feminist. Because if they start with thinking that they are good antiracist people … like everybody has certain privileges and unlearning them is … kind of a lifelong journey. But if you encounter somebody who thinks that they have already *done* the work and they are like a *trademark* good person, then it's extremely difficult to criticise what this person does without the person blowing up. (Anna, Finland)

It is worth paying attention to Anna's formulation "if we are cynical". In my interpretation, she is aware that she is taking the description to its extreme in order to clarify an important element related to the difficulties of political solidarity. Racism becomes a matter that those racialised as non-white need to deal with, and opening up discussions about racism

involves the risk of affective outbursts. Anna is not claiming (except in cynical moments) that there is no hope for feminist solidarities, but these situations occur often enough to make her wary and mistrust the benefits of discussing racism with feminists who do not experience it themselves. Taking differential privileges—especially those related to whiteness—seriously in the everyday practices of feminist and other social justice movements is a difficult act, because it requires renegotiating and redistributing power.

The restructuring of power relations that the activists speak about would not only mean fostering practices that provide space for those racialised as non-white, and for the questions they want to raise, but also an in-depth discussion about the focus of feminist politics. If mainstream (white-dominated) women's organisations are criticised for being occupied with heteronormative, labour market-oriented, and reformatory politics (e.g. de los Reyes et al. 2002), the politics of leftist and anarchist feminist groups are not necessarily less embedded in white ignorance.

> We are not very close to them in my view. We have cooperated quite a lot, like participated in feminist events, but it still feels like … I don't know how to put it … it's about power, I think, kind of being afraid of losing one's positions or giving space for questions we think are central instead of some others. But it doesn't feel like so many other feminist organisations have an antiracist or postcolonial or that kind of awareness. In such collaborations, one has to struggle very much to include these questions (…) the grassroots socialist or anarchist feminist groups are very focussed on class, and not so aware of other issues, and so, they are rather white organisations in the end. (Rita, Sweden)

The strong critique by the interviewed activist towards the Left is not about a dismissal of the centrality of class politics or anti-capitalist orientations. Instead, I interpret it as a reflection on the exclusionary definition of the working class and the subject of left politics that has traditionally been the white male industrial worker, and, in the updated postindustrial form, the white female public sector or care worker. Both configurations are outdated in societies that have witnessed the racialisation of the working class and the class structure more broadly (Neergaard 2017; Virdee 2017) and a serious questioning of heteronormativity. The challenge that some of the interviewed antiracist feminist activists and other postethnic activists

articulate is how to radically reconfigure left politics in a way that incorporates feminist and antiracist agendas, to re-imagine its political subject(s).

Autonomous Political Spaces and Communities of Belonging

Establishing antiracist feminist platforms and groups for those racialised as "others" is thus a political act—it creates space for radical new agendas, but is also about building communities of belonging to provide and receive support. I discuss them here as "autonomous spaces" to draw attention to the fact that the essence of such self-organising is to use the power of agenda-setting to define central feminist questions, together with others whose social locations make them wary of racialised, gendered, and sexualised power relations. As one of the activists organising a social media platform for those racialised as "others" describes, the construction of a new kind of "us" was a central aim of the activities:

> Our goal was to provide a platform for persons who are racialised [as others]. Because we realised that what we were doing in one way or the other, all the time, was directed at or aimed to teach a white audience. And there was something odd in that kind of organising. I mean, it's totally okay to do so, but if we get together to do something, it can't be on that premise. It would be really weird that we girls talked about racism, and all the time would have to relate to a white audience. And then we thought, why not do something else. So the only rule we had for writing on our website was that we would redefine the "us", so that we, all the time, would have in mind a person who is also racialised [as other]. (Paula, Sweden)

Antiracist feminist activism is a combination of the politics of social justice, the politics of survival, and the politics of revolutionary love. With the politics of social justice, I refer to the political goals that connect the groups to other social justice movements, notably those that organise Black, Brown, and other minoritised groups. But antiracist feminism also brings a distinctive perspective, and pushes questions of racism into hegemonic feminist, queer, and left agendas. The politics of survival is a concept developed in Black feminism to articulate the collective creation (and necessity) of support and healing by those targeted by racism (Collins 2000; Emejulu and Bassel 2016). The politics of survival is essential in a hostile and violent environment, in which one's humanity is frequently

questioned. With the politics of revolutionary love, I'm thinking of both the ways of living together that disrupt norms and conventions in order to collectively create visions of other futures (Sandoval 2001), and the radical global visions embedded in "feminist praxis that links interpersonal feeling and affection to the project of revolutionary internationalism" (Havlin 2015, 79).

In the feminist orientation articulated by those racialised as "others", it is not possible to separate feminism from antiracism. Questions of gender and sexuality are viewed as profoundly intertwined with racism and antiracism. In order to find the will to participate in activism, many activists thought that one needed to find a group that treats feminist, queer, and antiracist matters as the entangled processes and structures they were experienced as.

Autonomous organising is important, since it provides collective space to define the central antiracist feminist questions, in which the group members possess a general understanding of one another's experiences of oppression. The following quotation shows how the politics of social justice intertwines with the politics of survival and love. The autonomous spaces provide personal safety and belonging for the participating activists, but also enable them to define their relevant political questions and seek transformative solutions.

> I think it is important, because it gives us a possibility to formulate our views without the risk of somebody questioning without really understanding what it's about. Instead we are, and there is a feeling of safety in it, in a room where we don't share the same experiences but usually have at least some kind of understanding of the experiences of the others, and don't question them. One can experience things as one does. I also think it is a strength to be able to politically formulate analyses from your specific position. We can be more radical, we can formulate views more clearly. So I think it is both about a political benefit and a personal feeling of safety. That one can feel comfortable, and feel that here we are the majority. Nobody else is formulating the relevant questions, we are. (Rita, Sweden)

Autonomous antiracist feminist and queer spaces are themselves a result of—and an ongoing process or experiment of—coalitional politics. Not only are different groups and persons racialised in different ways in regard to racial, religious, or geopolitical categorisations, but class hierarchies, educational capital, and cis-normativities also produce different

experiences and differing access to power. Many of the studied antiracist feminist groups left the decision of who is racialised as "other", and who is not, to the participants themselves. There were ongoing discussions over how power relations related to colourism (Burton et al. 2010), and the different positionings of Black and Brown bodies were part of the dynamics taking place in the activist groups.

The politics of survival, love, and social justice all build ties that strengthen solidarities with groups mobilising Black, Brown, and other minoritised people, compared to those social justice movements dominated by people racialised as white. It seems to be especially difficult to find shared ground with white-dominated organisations in terms of the politics of survival and love, while it is somewhat easier when it comes to the politics of social justice that enables the building of (at least temporary) solidarities on the basis of shared aims and campaigns.

Separatism and Coalition Building

Autonomous spaces should not be equalised with separatism, which involves questions of political tactics and strategy when working with intersectional politics. Especially in the public sphere, separatist organising as non-white or racialised "others" has led to instances of racial panic in which the white-dominated mainstream media frames the issue as "white people not being allowed to participate" (Oscarson 2019) in separatist groups aimed for the racialised "others". The activists themselves see separatism as a useful strategy to develop politics and find support. Separatism is understood and practised in several ways, not only in relation to racial—but also gendered and sexualised—categorisations. As many activists point out, it is not a means in itself but a useful tool to take control, when combined with networking and cooperation with other groups.

> But also to work strategically to develop networks outside, in order not to get stuck in separatist spaces, since the intention is to make broader change—not only for us. (Hibo, Sweden)

Separatist organising can be used as a tactic to place race and racism on the political agenda in the context of widespread colour-blindness and denials of racism. Entering white-dominated spaces as an outspokenly Black or Brown activist is a way to bring questions of race and racism to the forefront, disturb the hegemony of whiteness, and demand that other

political actors acknowledge the lived realities of those racialised as non-white. Separatist organising can also serve strategic ends, since it enables a focus on certain questions and creation of coalitions across differences to tackle specific issues. As described by the following activist, intersectional politics is about going in and out of specific positions. The citation describes a process in which separatism and coalition building are connected in ways that seek to open up a politics of solidarity with other social justice movements.

> I think separatist organising is extremely valuable. Because it trains you to go in and out of different political identities and positions. It is extremely relevant that you also, in that way, challenge people by going into the room like just: aha, but I'm Black [laughs]. It may sound silly but … it's like using it as a political identity from which to pursue certain questions together with many other people. (…) separatism should be seen as a tool that one uses to somehow affect the power(ful). And that is why it is so important with alliances and coalitions and so forth. For example, we can say that the discussion about having 2000 police officers in Husby [a racialised area in Stockholm], we can have an agreement with *Allt åt alla*, a socialist group, that it's wrong and maybe also *Black Coffee* [a separatist Black group], maybe also some parts of the queer movement can think that it's wrong and then we can do something together. At the same time we know that we have different interests in other areas but here and now we can do something together. (Mona, Sweden)

Some antiracist feminist groups have sought to develop their organisations into broad coalitions of differently located antiracist feminists. These are open to all those who accept the political goals and principles of the organisation, not only to those racialised as "others". This means that the difficulties of cross-racial coalitions, as discussed previously in this chapter, become part of the everyday conversations and interactions of the organisation. The aim of such organising is to enable solidarity and mobilisation for struggles that are not necessarily one's own, but can provide ground for a politics of shared struggle. Challenging racism and creating a more inclusive feminism is an elementary part of such politics.

> Zeinab: But I think we somehow felt that the experiences of being racialised [as others] were important and that they should be discussed among us. It's why I 100 percent support such separatist groups. But regarding our organisation, we have felt that these experiences need to be taken up in spaces

where people who reproduce racism are present. (Amina: The structures.) And for the structures, to hear about these. Because that's where the difference takes place, and that's where change is created. And when one talks about these things.

Amina: That's where one makes alliances. (Zeinab: Yes.) I mean it's there that one can support each other as women or non-binary persons. That's what we are lacking, in the movement, you know many people say: But I can't call her a sister or sibling because they are not pursuing my struggle. I mean we wanted to take that away and like create a common … that one can pursue each other's struggle like. (Zeinab and Amina, Sweden)

Racialised Labour, Precarity, and Gendered Racism

Some of the interviewed activists were engaged in left politics in addition to antiracist feminism, and some addressed class inequalities or neoliberal logics when organising antiracist feminist activities. Yet on a general note, antiracist feminism seems to engage more with questions of gendered and sexualised racism, and less with the intertwining of race and class, or with critiques of racial capitalism. It is, however, possible to distinguish actions and campaigns that reflect on neoliberal processes and racialised class structures, albeit while not always articulating these in the language of racialised labour or (anti-)capitalism. I now discuss three examples of how antiracist feminist activists have drawn attention to the gendered and sexualised aspects of racialised labour, precarity, and class relations. I present them as political initiatives that can open up new perspectives for social justice politics, and inspire coalitions that can operate across differences of race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

The first example is related to how racialised exclusion and exploitation of Muslim women's labour is addressed from an antiracist feminist perspective. The "Right to Our Bodies" (*Rätten Till Våra Kroppar*) demonstration on 1 May 2017 was initiated by a group of postcolonial and Muslim feminists in Gothenburg, but it spread to other cities in Sweden and internationally. The demonstrators demanded the right to work for Muslim women while wearing the hijab. The action was a result of the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union, according to which private companies had the right to ban employees from wearing visible

religious symbols, such as the hijab. While the ruling did not allow for a complete ban of religious attire, its formulations enable employers to decide arbitrarily what kind of religious signs are suitable for workplaces (Abdessadok 2017). The Muslim activists who initiated the demonstration were dissatisfied with the lack of attention in the Swedish public sphere to the ruling, and its conditioning of Muslim women's right to work. The activists organised protest marches and social media campaigns (#Muslimwomenban), and connected with supportive artists and social movements in other countries. The slogans of the demonstrators—"my hijab is not your business", "employment is our right" and "Muslim women do not need saving"—exemplify how the activists connected antiracist feminism with questions of racialised labour and its interwoven elements of exploitation and exclusion. The choice to organise the demonstrations on the traditional Labour or Workers' Day of 1 May built a temporal continuity to earlier working-class struggles, while simultaneously pointing towards the need to place the racialisation and gendering of labour at the centre of left politics. This hints towards the need to rethink the subject of left politics.

The second example is the establishment of *The Union—Cultural Workers' Union for Black and People of Colour* in spring 2019. This is a trade union for those racialised as non-white who work in the Danish cultural sector. The Union seeks to "work for the rights and needs of BPOC artists, cultural workers and employees in cultural institutions, and to celebrate BPOC art & diversity" (The Union 2019). Interestingly, The Union connects the perspective of artists and cultural workers to those employed in cultural institutions in working-class positions, such as cleaners, kitchen workers, and security personnel. The Union aims to work coalitionally across class divisions, in order to gain better rights for all workers racialised as non-white in cultural institutions. The combination of celebrating BPOC culture and demanding rights in the labour market shows that the antiracist feminist and queer activists want to change both ideologies and structures, instead of reducing their demands to one or the other.

The third example is a group of initiatives that seek to tackle the issues of navigating white institutional spaces and the economic pressures of cultural work, highlighting the racialised and gendered experiences of precarity and flexibility. Many of the interviewed activists commented on the draining effects of precarious labour market positions, and the neoliberal demands of flexibility and individualised responsibilities, especially if they

were working in the cultural sector or combining studies with work. Likewise, the Black feminist journalist and activist Fanna Ndow Norrby conducted a series of TV programmes titled *We Can't Do It* for the Swedish broadcasting company SVT that pinpointed the exhaustion and burnout especially faced by young women in the labour market. The programmes did not explicitly discuss precarity or provide structural explanations for the exhaustion. Yet, they presented a feminist perspective on the increasing demands of effeciency and flexibility in today's working life through the stories of young women and non-binary people with different racial locations. The title "we can't do it" played on the well-known feminist slogan "we can do it" and its accompanying image, making use of feminist genealogies and raising the need for solidarities across racial divisions.

Another initiative related to precarity and efficiency demands is a project run by the Swedish antiracist feminist organisation *Interfem* in 2019, which focussed on how the effects of racism and sexism contributed to stress and work-related burnout. Building on research, the experiences of participants, and discussions about actions that can be helpful in tackling stress-creating situations, the meetings sought to increase the health of women and trans persons racialised as "others". The project's focus can be interpreted as a reflection on the racialised and gendered aspects of neoliberal capitalism, which leads to precarious working lives, and the shift of responsibilities to the individual. The project activities witness of an aim to combat racialised and gendered precariousness through solutions that combine individual well-being with collective analysis and support. Furthermore, Finnish antiracist feminist activists have elevated questions of racism and mental health within the political agenda. One such activist is the vice chair of the *Antiracist Forum*, therapist Michaela Moua, who has drawn attention to and called for action to prevent the detrimental effects of racism on an individual level and as a social justice issue (Kettumäki 2019). Emphasising that racism is both a structural phenomenon and part of everyday interactions, Moua has made explicit the connections between the individual and the collective in racialised affectivities.

Conclusions: Politics of Solidarity and Futures in the Making

In this chapter, I have shown that other processes that have very different effects parallel the depoliticising and individualising tendencies of neoliberal capitalism, resulting in a repoliticising of questions of race, gender, and class. The role of antiracist feminism mobilising those racialised as "others" in the Nordic region is essential for such repoliticisation processes. However, several obstacles exist in the face of a politics of solidarity that would build coalitions across racial divisions. Among these is the hegemony of whiteness that is still characteristic of many feminist, queer, and left movements. Antiracist feminism is also preoccupied with a broad scale of coalition building, and does not always favour cross-racial activities. Antiracist feminism develops several kinds of politics—those of social justice, survival, and revolutionary love—all of which provide somewhat different reference points to coalition building. It should also be acknowledged that antiracist feminism itself is about coalition building: it mobilises differently racialised activists; activists with varying class and educational backgrounds; queer and trans activists; and many others.

An important question in terms of the politics of solidarity is how mainstream feminism deals with the hegemony of whiteness within its movements, and responds to the new political subjects of antiracist feminism. To some extent, the antiracist feminist agendas have already influenced broader feminist and left politics. However, future feminist politics needs to tackle the differences in power and resources, as well as critically interrogate investments in "white feminist smugness", in order to develop feminist solidarities that are built into everyday struggles and the messy work of intersectional politics. Political influence does not necessarily require concrete cooperation, but can also be based on acknowledgment and respect for the political subjects and perspectives that the field of "postethnic activism" covers.

Antiracist feminism can provide prospects for broader social justice movements and coalitions. Many of the activists who participated in the study allied themselves more strongly with other organisations mobilising Black, Brown, and other minoritised groups. Although neoliberalisation and racial capitalism have so far not been at the forefront of antiracist feminist politics, in this chapter I have argued that the activists reflect on several processes and tendencies in current societies that can be analysed from the perspective of racialised labour, precarity, and neoliberalisation. Such

initiatives can inspire future politics that would articulate the intertwining of gendered, racialised, and class-related aspects of neoliberal capitalism, and develop alternative visions.

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