



ESRC Identities and Social Action

Programme Director: Prof Margaret Wetherell

The Open University
Milton Keynes
www.identities.org.uk



Identities and Social Action

- £4 million ESRC investment
- 25 research projects in universities around the UK
- Inter-disciplinary focus



Programme Themes

- Emerging identity trends
- Community cohesion and social conflict
- Political and civic involvement
- Social Exclusion



Dr Simon Clarke and Dr Steve Garner (University of the West of England) – Mobility and Unsettlement: New Identity Construction in Contemporary Britain

Prof. Ben Rampton, Dr Roxy Harris, Dr Alexandra Georgakopoulou, Dr Constant Leung (Kings College, University of London) – Interaction, Ethnicity and Popular Culture in Urban Classrooms

Prof. Avtar Brah (Birkbeck College, University of London) – South Asian and White Women's Spaces of Sociality and Celebration



- Whiteness
- Intersectionality and hybridity
- Sites and contexts – spaces and places



- Whiteness as invisibility or malevolent absence
- Whiteness as content, a 'filled' social identity
- Whiteness as a set of norms
- Whiteness as resources
- Whiteness as contingent hierarchy



Intersectionality:

- People live at the intersections of multiple social identities
- Creative and fluid consequences as new hybridised identities emerge
- Bottom-up approach to studying the “steady traffic of identifications that constitute everyday interaction”



- Understanding the different 'durees' which form identities
- The momentary, the quotidian and the historical



Any particular moment shaped by:

- ◆ Historical and communicative processes in society at large
- ◆ The ethos in particular schools and class rooms
- ◆ The cultural resources and dispositions that individual students bring with them (their wealth, linguistic abilities, educational expectations and positioning within sub-cultures of consumption)
- ◆ The positioning of individuals at school and within the peer group
- ◆ Discourse strategies within specific communicative events



Sites and Contexts

- Identities are spatially constituted
- The 'informal' spaces of sociality
- The negotiation of intimacy and otherness, solidarities, antagonisms, ambivalences and social divisions
- Forming boundaries



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