

MIXEDNESS AND MIXING: EXPLORING ISSUES FOR RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND POLICY

A One-Day Invitation-Only Seminar for Academics, Practitioners and Policymakers

Date: Friday, 28 September 2007
Venue: 8th floor, Keyworth Centre, London South Bank University

For a map showing how to reach the venue, go to: <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about/maps.shtml>

Aim

- to bring together academics and representatives of relevant statutory and voluntary sector bodies to identify and discuss key issues related to mixed race/ethnicity research, practice and policy in the British context.

Rationale

Although they are often invisible in debates on race and ethnicity, the 2001 census reveals that the 'Mixed' population is the third largest and fastest growing ethnic category in the UK, half of whom are aged under 16, with predictions that 'Mixed' will become the single largest minority ethnic group by the end of 2020. 'Mixed' as a categorization, however, is also subject to challenge, with racial and ethnic identification posed as fluid, contextual and contested rather than fixed.

'Mixed' young people are often thought of as trapped between 'two worlds' or 'stripped' of an identity, with disproportionate numbers in fostering and adoptive care, or at risk of educational underachievement, often attributed to this 'identity confusion'.

'Mixed' is a descriptor attached predominantly to individuals rather than partnerships or households, but 'mixing' is also on the increase. Over half of 'mixed' dependent children have married or cohabiting parents. But these relationships are commonly regarded as inherently subject to a 'culture clash' that leads to emotionally difficult relationships. Indeed, the fact that just under half of 'mixed' families are headed by a lone mother is pointed to as evidence that 'mixed' relationships are often transient.

In contrast to these negative portrayals of adjustment difficulties within an individual, couple relationship or family, a growing strand of 'mixed race studies' identifies problems emanating from wider society, in terms of stereotypical assumptions and racism.

The majority of research on 'mixed' families has been conducted in the USA. Although it addresses important issues, the need for empirical knowledge about both 'mixedness' and 'mixing' in the UK context is increasingly noted by policymakers and practitioners, many of whom are setting up specialist services in the absence of wider knowledge. Academics have also identified the need for data gathering shaped by conceptual and analytic rigour. This one-day, invitation-only, seminar is a contribution towards developing the emergent field adequately.

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Programme

- 10.30 – 11.00 Registration and coffee
- 11.00 – 11.10 Welcome and housekeeping: Ros Edwards, London South Bank University
- 11.10 – 11.30 Podcast: Rt. Hon Hazel Blears MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Café talk: introductions and issues
- 11.30 – 12.30 Panel session:
Researching mixedness and mixing – concepts and substance
Chair: Fatima Husain, Centre for Economic and Social Exclusion
Contributors: Suki Ali, London School of Economics
Chamion Caballero, London South Bank University
Raya Muttarak, University of Oxford
Miri Song, University of Kent
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 13.45 E-Conference report back
Hamish MacPherson, Commission for Racial Equality
- 13.45 – 14.45 Panel session: Perspectives on grassroots provision
Chair: Rob Berkeley, Deputy Director, Runnymede Trust
Contributors: Sharron Hall, Intermix
Val Hoskins, People in Harmony
Mado Khan, Multiple Heritage Service, Sheffield
Bradley Lincoln, Multiple Heritage Project, Manchester
- 14.45 – 15.00 Refreshments
- 15.00 – 16.00 Panel session: Policy, practice and future directions
Chair: Keith Ajegbo, Consultant
Contributors: Patrice Lawrence, National Children's Bureau
Maxine Shervington, MA Consultancy, Learning &
Development Agency
Mike Vance, The Learning Trust
- 16.00 – 16.15 Concluding remarks
Introduction: Harry Goulbourne, London South Bank University
Speaker: Jennifer Ashby, Head of Race Equality Unit, Race Cohesion
and Faiths Directorate, DCLG