Introduction: New Territories in Critical Whiteness Studies

This conference is an opportunity for postgraduate students engaged in the field of critical whiteness studies to present research and develop the new postgraduate arm of the White Spaces Research Network. Research in this field continues to turn the core logic of traditional race and ethnicity studies on its head by concerning itself with the accumulation of power in multicultural societies. It is interested in how this accumulation of power has come to be associated with certain social, cultural and material practices valued in western liberal democracies. Findings from whiteness studies scholars have profoundly changed conceptualisations of racialisation and gendering, that is the process by which we are produced as raced and gendered beings. For example these debates trouble the distinctions between 'race', racism and anti-racisms paving the way for more fluid understandings of the productiveness of power, its uneven and distributed nature.

Attesting to the interdisciplinary and international nature of whiteness studies today, delegates from the US, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK will attend the New Territories conference, representing disciplines as diverse as music, politics, history, and sociology. Delegates' contributions confirm that postgraduate students today are pushing the field into new territories. Key themes and questions that the conference will explore include:

- What are the connections between nation-building and racialisation, national identity and race identity? How do nationalist efforts circumscribe identities that include certain racial (and sexual and class) constituencies and exclude others?
- In what ways have colonial legacies and the contemporary 'post-colonial' condition framed this racialised nation-building? What social and political tensions have colonial pasts produced for white subjects and (former?) imperial nations?
- What codes of whiteness are reproduced in past and contemporary social politics and cultural productions?
- How do these codes configure relations with the past and future as well as the present?

- What new constituencies and claims can be brought into being through concepts of whiteness, white making, white spaces, white gendering and gendered whiteness?
- What methods have white individuals and communities developed, in both contemporary and historic eras, in order to subvert white privilege (including their own) and white supremacy?
- What are the methodological, theoretical, and practical implications of these questions?

This conference grows out of efforts by the White Spaces Research Network to establish a postgraduate arm that fosters research leaders of the future in critical whiteness studies. This postgraduate body provides an arena in which members may network with other postgraduate researchers and established academics in the field, develop research collaborations, present their work, and share relevant resources and information. The aim is not to marginalise the work of postgraduate researchers in whiteness studies, but to create a community grounded in an understanding of the specific pressures, constraints, and opportunities facing postgraduates.

Throughout the conference, delegates will work to further the White Spaces Postgraduate Network by developing goals for the network, hearing presentations on potential resources (such as the White Spaces website), establishing research connections, and mapping out future network events. Because the conference aims to facilitate ongoing collaborations amongst participants and to provide a space to contemplate the particular pressures and opportunities facing postgraduate scholars in whiteness studies, its design aims to maximise dialogue around research connections and the future development of this work. Thus, it uses a variety of formats for conference contributions including a larger key note session, paper panels, facilitated dialogue and debate sessions focused around particular conference themes and questions, and resource-specific sessions. We have attempted to group submitted abstracts into panels around common themes. The hope is that these groupings will open-up rather than close down debate across multiple conference themes and issues. We are sure there will inevitably be as many productive differences as there are points of connection in paper sessions.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, August 18th

13.00-15.30 Registration/check-in, Beech Grove House

16.00-16.10 Welcome

16.10-18.00 Dr Cath Ellis
School of Music, Humanities and Media, University of Huddersfield

'Teaching and Unlearning: Critical 'Race' Pedagogy and Online Learning Environments'

18.00-19.00 Drinks and Snacks Reception*

19.00 Meet-up for Dinner

19.30 Dinner at Hansa's Gujarati Restaurant

Thursday, August 19th

8.00-9.00 Breakfast, Ellerslie Hall

For delegates in Leeds Uni accommodation

9.00-10.30 Panel 1 (Re)racialising English Spaces

Chair: Say Burgin

Rob Waters, University of Edinburgh

City after dark: 'Spades', ponces and prostitutes in the making of 'respectable Englishness', 1955-1968

Helen Moore, University of Surrey

Shades of whiteness? The intersection of 'race' and class in the English countryside

Caroline Lucas, University of Leeds
The imagined folk of England

10.30-10.50 Coffee Break

10.50-12.20 Panel 2 Challenges to National Identities
Chair: Dieuwerje Dyi Huijg

Maddy Abbas, University of Leeds
'White terror' in the 'War on Terror'

Noemi Michel, University of Geneva
Struggle over the French past, struggle over whiteness?

Charlie Leddy-Owen, University of Surrey
The role of Englishness in the stabilisation and destabilisation of whiteness

12.20-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Panel 3 Whiteness in Anti-Racist (In)Action
Chair: Nalini Mohabir

Ruth Martin, University of Cambridge
Civil liberties and racial justice: The National Lawyers Guild's move to the South, 1960-1968

Say Burgin, University of Leeds
Critical whiteness studies as an activist legacy

Dieuwerje Dyi Huijg, University of Manchester
Female whiteness: A theoretical exploration of inaction as agency

15.00-15.20 Coffee Break

15.20-16.20 Tamsine O'Riordan
Zed Publishers

'Getting Published: You and Your PhD'

16.20-17.15 Dialogue and Debate Sessions

19.00 Meet-up for Dinner
19.30 Dinner at Jino's Thai Cafe

Friday, August 20th

8.00-9.00 Breakfast, Ellerslie Hall
For delegates in Leeds Uni accommodation

9.00-10.30 Panel 4 Whiteness and Privilege: Methodological Inquiries
Chair: Maddy Abbas

Manuela Honegger, University of Lausanne
Analysing whiteness through interview data: A methodological challenge

Jane Reas, University of Leeds
'YOU ARE the expert here': Negotiating my own white privilege as a researcher exploring the privilege of whiteness

Jennifer Dulek, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana
Making the grade: Examining the racial awareness of preservice teachers at Illinois

10.30-10.50 Coffee

10.50-12.20 Panel 5 Complicated Capital
Chair: Jimmy Pickering

Karin Kolber, Ludwig-Maximilians Universitat Munchen

White mothers of black children in Germany: Standing on the color Line?

Barbara Samaluk, Queen Mary University of London
Whiteness as symbolic capital

Leon Moosavi, Lancaster University

White privilege and Muslim converts: Confirming or contradicting white privilege?

12.20-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.00 Say Burgin and Shona Hunter
University of Leeds

White Spaces Research Network

14.00-14.30 Kirsty Mattinson and Louise Heery
Worldwide Universities Network

WUN White Spaces: Options and opportunities for developing the PGR Network

14.30-14.40 Comfort Break

14.40-16.00 White Spaces Postgraduate Network: Collaborations and Directions
(with coffee)

ABSTRACTS

IN RUNNING ORDER

Rob Waters
University of Edinburgh

City after dark: ‘Spades’, ponces, and prostitutes in the making of ‘respectable Englishness’, 1955-1968

This paper explores the themes of the ‘re-racialisation’ of post-war Britain and the racialisation of space through an analysis of the representation of London’s ‘other’ spaces, against which English identity was articulated in the 1950s. The paper contests Wendy Webster’s suggestion that London social exploration literature of the Victorian era was re-written along racialised lines in the post-war period, reforming the two nations of rich and poor into one ‘white’ nation, constructed against a black immigrant ‘other’. Looking at literatures on London’s West Indian and African populations, and on the city’s prostitutes and pimps, it argues that sociological and fictional literature on the city in the 1950s articulates a common ‘respectable English’ identity defined against the ‘twilight zones’ of Soho and the W11 area, and the East End, which housed a variety of ‘others’ which variously took centre stage in menacing ‘respectable Englishness’. The structures of the Victorian antecedents of this literature were not replaced by the new literature, but incorporated its redefinitions. The paper therefore proposes a revision of the ‘re-racialisation’ thesis to suggest a more piece-meal racialisation of Englishness in this period, which took as its corner-stone not ‘race’ but moral space. It is suggested, finally, that the 1950s therefore marked a period of transition in which English identity was redefined increasingly along explicitly racialised lines, but in which ‘race’ had not yet come to occupy the central symbolic space which it held with the ascendency of Powellism in the late-1960s.

Helen Moore
University of Surrey

Shades of Whiteness? The intersection of race and class in the English countryside.

It is widely acknowledged by critical whiteness scholars that whiteness can be lived and structurally positioned in multiple ways across space and time due to its intersection with gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, local political discourses and historical context. Taking this as my starting point, this paper will explore Murguia & Forman's (2003) theory that different degrees or 'shades' of whiteness exist as variants of hegemonic whiteness: That a 'spectrum' of whiteness can be identified with the 'most white' at one extreme and the 'least white' at the other.

Murguia & Forman developed this theory in their study of Mexican Americans in the USA. However, I am interested in applying their 'shades of whiteness' theory to my own ethnographic research which is concerned with whiteness, class and 'community' in the English countryside. Specifically, I seek to address the ways in which 'rural English whiteness' is constructed by residents of an English village in relation to Eastern European migrants who have moved to the area to undertake low-paid agricultural labour. Findings from my pilot study suggest that the Eastern European migrant workers are viewed by the English village residents as 'not quite white', or not 'white enough' to integrate into rural village life.

The key questions I wish to raise in this paper are:

1. In a predominantly white landscape such as the English countryside, to what extent can local discourses separating white 'locals' from white 'others' be racialised?
2. Or is the idea of 'shades of whiteness' in this context a misnomer? Is the construction of self/other, insider/outsider actually founded upon class- and nationality-based distinctions rather than processes of racialisation?

I shall draw upon existing empirical research as well as findings from a pilot study, to address these questions.

Caroline Lucas
University of Leeds

The Imagined Folk of England

Folk music has a long history of being employed to symbolise the musical identity of nations. Furthermore, revivals of interest in folk music have often been heavily influenced by the prevalent ideologies of the relevant nation.

This paper will examine contemporary constructions of Englishness, which utilise folk music to assert, or question, specific collective identifications. The formation of 'white Englishness' is closely caught up in this, with ideas of heritage and the mythology of the purity of tradition contributing to the use of English folk music to assert idealisations of indigeneity.

This paper will discuss essentialist imaginings of national heritage, as asserted by the British National Party's endorsement of specific English folk musicians. This will be explored alongside a consideration of the reaction this provoked and the establishment of the 'Folk against Fascism' movement. These ideas will be contextualised with an analysis of the collaborative musical project 'The Imagined Village'. A consideration of this cooperative will question the representation of contemporary collective identities through the fusion of musical traditions. This case study will enable a discussion of the project as an example of a living tradition, incorporating the musics of other cultures active within England, alongside issues of authenticity and musical pluralism.

Maddy Abbas

University of Leeds

‘White terror’ in the ‘War on Terror’

> One fantasy of whiteness is that the threatening Other is always a terrorist. This projection enables many white people to imagine there is no representation of whiteness as terror, as terrorizing (hooks, 1992:174)

Following hooks (1992), I am arguing that ‘Western’ and ‘Muslim’ relations have operated through a civilizing/terrorizing binary. Within this framework, acts of terror have been projected onto the bodies of Muslims whose presence is perceived as a threat to the ‘civilised world’ and which must therefore, be contained through any means possible. Hence whilst terrorism is popularly attributed to Muslims within the discursive formation of the ‘War on Terror,’ white terror involved in the performance of war and its attendant institutions is largely unacknowledged, but which arguably represents a repressed, dark side of the war’s ‘civilizing’ mission. This paper therefore follows hooks (1992) that white terror is active in the schema of the ‘War on Terror.’ In order to find a voice to articulate these issues, I will draw on Agamben’s use of the figure of *homo sacer*, which for Agamben, embodies a life that can be killed without ceremony or constituting an act of homicide. *Homo sacer* is outside the political community and the rights of humans, and thus experiences a ‘bare life.’ I want to expand on this figure by drawing on the register of vampirism to understand processes of dehumanisation experienced during the ‘War on Terror.’ If as Žižek (2002:91) argues, *homo sacer* is ‘the being who remains alive only as an indulgence, who should be dead already – and to whom, therefore, anything can be done,’ there is a need to acknowledge the extent of the horror perpetrated against our fellow humans in ‘our name,’ a terror which de-stabilises the notion of what it is to be human altogether. Enter the vampire…

Noémi Michel

University of Geneva

Struggle over the French colonial past, struggle over whiteness?

In February 2005, the French National Assembly adopted a legislative Article aiming to promote the “positive role of the French colonisation” in history books of French schools. This adoption subsequently gave rise to a very strong public controversy, which ended one year later with the cancellation of the law article on the initiative of the President Chirac. By drawing upon conceptual and analytical resources of critical whiteness studies, this paper seeks to grasp which collective subjectivities and which racialised power relations are at stake in this debate. For this purpose, it conducts a discourse analysis of the competing claims over the legitimate public narrative of the

French colonial past. The analysis shows how this debate is structured by a struggle between a nostalgic narrative of a “humanitarian enterprise”, mainly supported by right wing groups and former white settlers, and a deconstructionist narrative of an “institutionalised des-humanizing racist enterprise”, mainly supported by descendants of the colonised. Furthermore, it is suggested that this controversy can also be read as an implicit struggle between a re-assertion and a deconstruction of whiteness understood as a racialised power relation which informs contemporary subjectivities and practices in postcolonial France.

Charlie Leddy-Owen

University of Surrey

The role of Englishness in the stabilisation and destabilisation of whiteness

In recent years there has been a notable upsurge in interest surrounding Englishness. A substantial rise in the number of white people self-describing as English ahead of British has been accompanied by massive academic and popular interest in the topic. The question of what Englishness means today is asked on an almost daily basis in newspapers and across the mainstream media, and in a flurry of academic and popular books. An important dimension of this debate is the relationship between race and Englishness. Historically Englishness has been seen as an ethnic or even racial identity for which whiteness is a defining feature, and much recent research finds that most whites and non-whites alike in contemporary England still construct Englishness in this way to some extent - a majority of white respondents see Englishness as normatively white and a majority of non-white respondents self-identify with the more inclusive category of British. Furthermore, evidence suggests that many white English-identifiers link their perceptions of a white Englishness to culturally and politically conceived notions of a loss of identity, leading to patterns of resentment and embattlement which raise important questions about the present and future of Englishness within a multicultural Britain. In this context, the aim of my research is to analyse to what extent notions of a racialised Englishness are currently being stabilised or destabilised, and whether a post-racial, progressive Englishness might be possible.

Ruth Martin

University of Cambridge

Civil liberties and racial justice: The National Lawyers Guild's move to the South, 1960-1968

"No member of a great social movement, be he lawyer or lawman, can remain untouched by the forces that impel it. The bar has a special obligation to create and preserve the equality on which our entire system of jurisprudence is expressly founded" - William Kunstler, NLG

During the 1950s, the New York-based National Lawyers Guild focused primarily on northern issues in its support for civil liberties and social justice - for instance the legal defence of communists. However, its focus altered drastically in response to rise of the southern civil rights movement. The group created the Committee for Legal Assistance in the South (CLAS), which had broad aims of developing education and defence networks through the provision of volunteer lawyers for civil rights defendants. Moreover, the organization became the primary legal representative for SNCC, and ultimately passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a separate Black Nation within the US in 1968.[2] However, the Guild's president, Victor Rabinowitz, recalled in 1979 that "we don't have any in the Guild -- any blacks-- to any considerable extent it damaged or provided additional damage to the image of the Guild in certain areas of the legal community, and it also resulted in a terrible loss of morale among our own older people".

The two major research questions which I seek to address in this paper include the extent to which northern white activists in CLAS addressed the charges and realities of racism, battling white supremacy within the southern court system and more subtle, insidious inequalities within the movement and their own organization. For instance, they continued to depict inequality as a Southern problem - to what extent did this undermine the effectiveness of northern attempts to defend civil rights and create racial justice? Secondly, I aim to delineate the motivations - guilt, idealism? - for this radical alteration of their methods during the nascent years of their fight for Southern justice.

Say Burgin

University of Leeds

Critical Whiteness Studies as an Activist Legacy

Academics have attempted to recognise white individuals, communities and even institutions in the United States as 'raced' for at least the last century. France Winddance Twine and Charles Gallagher (2008) have sketched what they see as three 'waves' of whiteness studies, beginning with du Bois' work from the turn of the 20th century. Their pivotal article finally provided a historical framework for those of us engaged in critical whiteness studies. In understanding the ways in which the current work of this discipline acts as a legacy, rather than 'new academic fashion' (Twine and Gallagher, 2008: 4), the field gains a sense of longevity and legitimacy; whiteness scholars may situate their work amidst longer and broader attempts to dismantle white racial hegemony in the US and elsewhere.

This paper underscores the necessity for today's whiteness scholars to continue to excavate the ways in which whiteness has served as an object of critical inquiry in the past, particularly in arenas outside of or marginal to academia. With specific reference to two white, racial justice activists in the US during the 1960s and 70s – Joseph Barndt and Bob Terry – this paper will argue that collective antiracism struggles, often occurring within wider social movements, have served as especially important sites for interrogating, contesting and re-defining whiteness. Social movement activity, particularly urgings by activists of colour, compelled these activists to analyse whiteness in a variety of ways: as a racial identity that could go unremarked-upon by those for whom it fit, as a multi-level system of power relations aimed at maintaining white supremacy, and as a carrier of dominant cultural norms and values. Understanding these efforts as part of the legacy of critical whiteness studies, I argue, reveals that white activists interrogating whiteness in the US (influenced by activists of colour) anticipated many ideas that 'third wave' scholars later developed.

Dieuwertje Dyi Huijg
University of Manchester

Female Whiteness: A theoretical exploration of inaction as agency

Agency refers to the control that the subject, more or less constrained by structure, can exercise over one's self and one's social environment. It is associated with intentional and purposeful behaviour, reflexivity and consciousness, hence with a subject's (potentiality of) action. This supports agency in its activist expression where the subject resists, constructs, and organises conform her ideological persuasion with the objective of social change. Contradictorily, femininity and the female location on the axis of gender are more often associated with opposite expressions. And when taking the intersectional perspective one step further, to understand agency in whiteness it is necessary to get a grip on how agency works at the dominant, normative and privileged site. White, female activists' location appears a conflictive position in their struggle against social injustice; on the gender axis, at the disadvantaged and oppressed site, they construct their female agency in opposition to this socially unjust (sexist) system and its advantaged inhabitants; their activism is an activism *contra*. As white people, though, they inhabit the unjust (racist) system contra which they struggle, that privileges them and hegemonic whiteness 'directs' their racial agency in passivity and omission. This brings about tension in agency and requires the problematisation of action *and* inaction. Simultaneously, these expressions (activity, passivity and omission) facilitate the analysis of the different sites of intersectionality (dominant and subordinated, etc). Illustrated by examples of (young) white, female activism (São Paulo, Brazil), this paper intends to explore *inaction* where agency and intersectionality work simultaneously and maybe contradictorily on the crossroad of gendered and racialised activism.

Manuela Honegger

University of Lausanne

Analysing Whiteness Through Interview Data: A Methodological Challenge

Since a decade, critical whiteness studies in social science have developed rich empirical evidence about whiteness. Methodologically, some studies focus on whiteness as categorisation processes through historical analysis (Roediger 2005) while others understand it as discourse using narrative analysis based on text (Nayak 2007). Yet, analysis of interview data, such as suggested by Ruth Frankenberg (1993), are rare. In general onecan observe that methodological discussions in the field tends to be occasional. Therefore this paper raises the question: *How whiteness can be analysed empirically through interview data*? This question raises some methodological challenges in dealing with interview data concerning: the influence of interactions in the production of whiteness; the analytical steps of analysing whiteness; the analysis of its implicit articulations and its validity. This paper contributes thus to the methodological discussion on empirical whiteness studies. The developed tools for analysis allow comparisons of whiteness studies across different national contexts. To illustrate the applicability of the tool, the case of Switzerland is examined.

The following sections are developed. Firstly, whiteness as a dimension of the *institutionalised interpretative repertoire* of Swiss citizenship is conceptually defined. Secondly, methodological tools inspired by thematic qualitative analysis and discursive analysis in psychology are developed. Finally some parts of my interviews, carried in my PhD project on “institutional racism in social welfare institutions in Switzerland” with social workers, illustrate the developed methodological tools.

Jane Reas

University of Leeds

‘YOU ARE the expert here’: Negotiating my own white privilege as a researcher exploring the privilege of whiteness

As part of my study of the volutourist experience in Siem Reap, Cambodia, I have identified a number of privileged spaces which I would like to explore further in a consideration of factors that allow young, white, middle-class, westerners to take part in gap year holidays, development projects or charitable placements involving some form of voluntary work. Of these spaces the privilege of whiteness is one of the themes I am particularly keen explore. I am however - as a researcher of the privileges of whiteness - confronted with my own white privilege.

On a recent trip to visit NGOs in Siem Reap, for example, I was struck by the total ease of access, enthusiastic welcome and unconditional acceptance I received from managers, founders and directors of charitable projects, as well as a rather unearned respect from Khmer staff. In short, my own white privilege appeared to be smoothing the progress of my research. It seemed that simply by virtue of my whiteness, I was considered to be not only the expert but, as Sarah White also contended in her research of development workers in Bangladesh, undoubtedly in “a position of marked racial privilege” (White 2002).

In this paper I will discuss how I intend to negotiate my own privilege of whiteness whilst seeking to explore the privilege of whiteness in others.

Jennifer Dulek

University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana

Making the grade: Examining the racial awareness of preservice teachers at Illinois

In shaping a global society that will work to expose the institutionalized effects of white power and privilege, a fundamental consideration must be the way in which children are educated. In the United States, approximately 87% of teachers are white (Frankenberg, 2006) while the number of racial minority students is over 42% and growing (NCES, 2007). My investigation contributes to emergent scholarship on white teachers' multicultural competence. Without adequate racial awareness, white teachers are more likely to have low expectations for racial minority students, stricter discipline, and disproportionately high referral to special education classes (Gay, 2002; Irvine, 1990). To examine the experience of white pre-service teachers at the University of Illinois, I conducted a qualitative study with two white, female students in the Elementary Education Program. Each semi-structured interview lasted approximately 50 minutes and examined the participants' perceived preparedness to be effective in racially diverse classrooms. Using a phenomenological approach, results indicated the presence of racial color-blind ideology (Neville, 2009) and suggested that social justice topics lacked nuance and depth in education courses. Participants also discussed challenges and considerations in choosing where to begin their teaching careers, displaying (a) hesitancy and fear in working with racial minority students and (b) desire to work in predominantly white locations, to which they were most accustomed. Although we cannot generalize findings based on two participants, their responses help us to think about how we might better educate pre-service teachers, focusing on both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.

Karin Kolber

Ludwig-Maximillians Universitat Munchen

White mothers of black children in Germany: Standing on the color line?

The paper focuses on the self-conception of *white* German mothers of Black children and on their strategies of coping with everyday life. How do they rate racism in Germany and how do they and their children cope with being the targets of racist actions? How does their place in society change? How does growing up in Germany, a dominantly *white* society, affect these women's thought patterns and behavior? In order to clarify the specific social roles of *white* women in Germany, a historical background beginning with Colonial times through the Weimarer Republic, Second World War, and post war era will be examined. This analysis reveals that a *white* German woman having a relationship with a Black man has been, and most likely still is, challenging German society's effort to maintain it's *Whiteness*.

First results of the biographical interviews conducted with *white* mothers of Black children in Germany show that peer-group pressure does influence many areas of life of *white* mothers and their Black children. A wide variety of daily reality coping strategies were demonstrated, most frequent being blanking out and ignoring racism and discrimination.

The field of research regarding *Whiteness* in Germany, has been ignoring the question of *white* mothers to Black children, an experience worth noting, closely connected to the questions of motherhood and belonging.

Barbara Samaluk

Queen Mary University of London

Whiteness as a symbolic capital

Whiteness is ultimately about unequal power relations and discriminatory structures and should therefore be studied as such. This can be achieved by adapting Bourdieu's theoretical concepts that have effectively moved the interrogation of power relations from the domain of production to the domain of consumption and thus transcended material and symbolic binary. Bourdieu's trinity of field, habitus and capital can offer a useful ground for an interdisciplinary analysis of contemporary mobility on micro and macro level. I will argue that by looking at intersectional commodification of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the UK (labour) market that find themselves in-between locations vis-à-vis being white and being black. By adapting Bourdieu's theoretical concepts I will try to show that migrants from CEE are appropriated through intersectional racialization and as such commodified as an 'Eastern European' brand that carries specific capitals that are more or less desirable or valuable on the UK labour and other markets. That kind of analyses can unmask the working of 'symbolic economy' that is hidden behind 'meritocratic' capitalist system and as such materialised in modern racisms that appropriate different intersections which can function as disguised material properties. Therefore I will argue that whiteness in connection with other intersections should be seen as a form of cultural, symbolic capital that is employed by dominant or minority groups in order to maintain, reproduce or transform unequal power relations and thus determine differential inclusion and exclusion in the UK labour and other markets.

Leon Moosavi

University of Lancaster

White Privilege and Muslim Converts: Confirming or Contradicting White Privilege?

In this paper I discuss the experiences of 'white' Muslim converts in relation to white privilege. I am interested in exploring how the 'whiteness' of the Muslim converts shaped their experiences after converting to Islam. I do this by assessing the extent to which 'white' people converting to Islam were privileged due to their whiteness. This also involves comparing the experiences of 'black' Muslim converts. I try to complicate the picture by also thinking about the limits of white privilege in the 'white' Muslim converts journeys. For instance, I also question whether their 'whiteness' and white privilege was revoked in some way for converting to Islam. Finally, I think about the way in which 'whiteness' may not always be so privileged to the extent where we may even start to think about white disprivilege, a perhaps controversial suggestion because it would be supported by the Far Right. This paper is based on 37 in-depth interviews that I have conducted between 2008-2009 with Muslim converts in Greater Manchester as part of my PhD research on Muslim converts in Britain.