

'Mixed heritage and interracial relationships'

Understanding Interracial Relationships and Children
of Mixed Parentage

Parker and Song, (2001:1)

- The topic of mixed race can bring out the worst in people. From the vicious harassment of couples in mixed relationships to the hatred expressed on supremacist websites, few subjects have the same capacity as racial mixture to reveal deep-seated fears and resentments,

Movement of People

- Europe is a magnet because of the opportunities and possibilities that it offers.
- Move from South to the North is a relatively recent trend
- From the early part of the 14th Century onwards there was a move from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere
- Exploration, adventure, looking for raw materials, minerals, cheap labour,
- Making contact and developing trade

Globalisation

- ‘the set of forces that makes populations more interdependent....a defining feature of the integration of the world economy is movement of all kinds across organisational boundaries. As a special instance of this, the accelerated movement of people across political borders (migration).....’, (Jordan and Duvell 2003:1).

Explanation

- **Racial denial,**
- **The quest for cultural inclusion and social mobility,**
- **The quest for economic mobility,**
- **Sexual and colour curiosity,**
- **Revenge for racial and social oppression,**
- **Geographical propinquity and shortage of same race partners,**
- **Shared interests.**

Civil inattention analysis - Goffman

- Under normal circumstances *civil inattention* means that, although people notice each other, this is done in a way that enables 'face saving'. In other words, the gaze and scrutiny is done at a distance leaving adequate social space for the individual to occupy.
- 'In daily social life, we normally give a good deal of attention to protecting or 'saving' each other's 'face'. (Giddens 1989:93)

Definition

- Classification problem (colour, country, region, continent)
- Mixed race category (British context)
- European dimension – different approaches
- ‘One drop rule’
- Racial hierarchy
- Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Politics and Identity
- Nationality and Nationhood

Fault-Line

- **Assimilation/Integration;**
- **Separatism;**
- **Multiculturalism;**
- **Return Movement**

Making sense of the World

- **A Binary World View**

The driving force for this argument is the belief that we live in a binary world that is characterised by certain demarcations and differential ranking of races and cultures. This demarcation is not just to be considered as an arbitrary line, drawn up randomly, rather it represents and forms the essence and essential differences between the two racial groups.

Managing the Experience

- Distancing,
- Selective revelation of the relationship,
- Mutual support,
- Minimising of social contact,
- Avoidance,
- Reconfiguring the social milieu.

Children of Mixed Parentage

- Societal attitude towards the children and their families
- The children's experiences
- Making sense of self and views of others
- Identity formation
- Cultural connection
- Beyond colour

Illan Katz, (1996:24)

who posed the intriguing question;

- ‘Why do people from different racial groups form liaisons which produce children of mixed parentage, given the antagonism between races’ ... ‘What are the interpersonal dynamics in such liaisons?’

Belonging

- Between camps (Gilroy)
- Country of abode – physical presence
- Psychological/emotional feeling of belonging
- Sense of place and connectedness to society
- Reactions and attitude of ‘others’
- Validation of self

Methodological Difficulty

- Locating subjects – (snowballing)
- Definitions – (heritage, identity, cross-cultural)
- Self-identification
- False-self – (refugees, asylum seekers)
- Authenticity issue (assimilation by default)
- Coding and making sense of the findings
- Universality versus Particularity
- Generalisation of findings