Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

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Race ends where?

A race expert from Northumbria University, Newcastle will discuss the constantly changing face of race and racism in a special journal edition launched this month.

Dr Nasar Meer, a Reader in Social Science and co-Director of the Centre for Civil Society and Citizenship at Northumbria University, will argue that racial identities and categorisations have become more complicated over the last three decades.

The findings are included in a co-edited special issue of the Journal of Sociology which will be launched on Monday 18 November in London at a

joint event involving the Centre for Civil Society and Citizenship (Northumbria University), the British Sociological Association and the journal publishers, SAGE.

The special edition, entitled *Race Ends Where? Dialogues in Race, Racism and Contemporary Society*, and co-edited with Professor Anoop Nayak of Newcastle University, provides an overview of the history of sociological research into race and outlines the direction of current research. This unique issue will include articles from the leading UK experts of race theory and sociology.

Dr Meer argues that the election – and re-election – of the first African-American president of the United States, the passage of anti-discrimination laws, and the multicultural nature of the London 2012 Olympic Games has led to a widely held belief that society has moved beyond racial division.

However, he suggests that our understanding of race in the UK needs to factor in how sexuality, gender, education, religious affiliations and other group identities can affect each individuals experience of racial identity, discrimination and acceptance.

Dr Meer said: "We are not living in a post-race era, just a more complicated one. Things have changed and become more complex. We now understand the intersectionality affecting people's experiences, such as the context of gender and sexuality and how they work alongside race to influence different material outcomes.

"We have moved through a period of political 'blackness' with non-whites seen as sharing a political identity through which they could engage in – sometimes violent – struggle. However, since the 1990s this has splintered as ethnic minorities demonstrated that they were not equally disadvantaged and did not identify themselves by their skin colour primarily, but instead by religion, culture, nationality, sexuality and other diverse categories."

The launch event, sponsored by Northumbria University, will feature key authors, among them will be Dr Meer, Northumbria University, and Professor Anoop Nayak, Newcastle University; Professor Claire Alexander, Manchester University; Professor Les Back, Goldsmith College; Paul Baggueley, Leeds University; Professor Gurminder Bhambra, Warwick University; Dr Bridget Byrne, Manchester University; Professor Nira Yuval-Davis, East London

University; Dr Karin Murji, Open University; and Sarah Neal, Open University.

Dr Meer added: “This special issue argues that people experience disadvantage in different ways. Not all Muslims are victims of Islamophobia, for example, if you’re a Muslim woman you are more likely to experience Islamaphobia, particularly when wearing the hijab, a symbol linked to the religion.

“Intersectionality challenges the assumption that everybody within a certain race and ethnicity will have a shared citizenship and a shared way of belonging. It also looks at the changes within people’s definitions of race – such as the inclusion of ethnic religious groups, Jews and Muslims, under the umbrella of a racial category.

“The idea we live in a post racial age is becoming widespread, however my colleagues and I would argue that race has not disappeared, it has just become more complicated.”

The launch of *Race Ends Where? Dialogues in Race, Racism and Contemporary Sociology* will be held on Monday 18 November from 12noon in the SAGE Boardroom, 55 City Road, London, EC1Y 1SP. For details of the event, visitwww.britsoc.co.uk.

For more information, contact Nasar.Meer@northumbria.ac.uk or Anoop.Nayak@newcastle.ac.uk.

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