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Public lecture: From Macpherson to the 'war on terror': analysing the impact of state policies on 'race' for education in England

Arranged by the research project "Professional interventions as a state-crafting grammar addressing 'the immigrant' & Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Thursday 13 March, 2014, 13:00 – 15:00

Venue: University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Humanities, South Campus, KUA1, Karen Blixens Vej 4, 22.0.11, 2300 Copenhagen S

New Labour's election in 1997 seemed at first to herald a break from the previous conservative government's policies on both 'race' and education. Not only did New Labour promise to put equality of opportunity back on the agenda but with the publication of the enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson 1999) it also seemed intent on combating institutional racism. Almost two decades later and the unrelenting focus on 'success', 'standards' and 'achievement' set in the broader context of policies of marketisation, privatisation and managerialism marks a continuity with the neo-liberal policies of earlier conservative governments but has also had the effect of exacerbating division and disadvantage rather than equalising educational opportunities.

In recent English education policy, 'race' has been an 'absent presence' (Apple 1999). However, through national preoccupations with 'segregation' following the inner city disturbances in northern towns in 2001, and global preoccupations with 'security', expressed through the 'war on terror', 'race' has continued to play a significant part, albeit coded through community (Worley 2004), in the manufacture of consent for state policies in education, immigration, welfare reform and foreign policy. The 'war on terror' has had profound implications for Muslims and migrants in particular but has also had far reaching educational implications that need to be explored.

The paper draws on critical policy analysis to situate recent English national education policies in the broader context of the reform of economic and social policies and priorities aimed at securing neo-liberal hegemony. It explores the critical role of 'race' in the contested and contradictory nature of the New Labour project (1997-2010) and the more recently the coalition government's policies on education.

Everyone is welcome, registration is not needed. For further information, please contact: associate professor, Bolette Moldenhawer, bolettem@hum.ku.dk