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UNDERSTANDING RACIAL HATRED: A NEW PSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH

Wednesday, November 7, 2007
3:00pm
Sociology Department, Suite 520.14T

Psychologists have turned to personality, cognitive processes, social identity and discourse to explain racism, sociologists to structure, culture or identity. Some have attempted to use a socially informed psychoanalysis. The end-result is inconclusive and confusing. Problems stem from mixing up prejudice and hatred, using hatred at different levels of analysis (individual, group and institutional), confusing the origins of racism with its reproduction and offering reductive accounts (too psychological or too social). After briefly surveying the field, this paper uses elements from the socially informed psychoanalytic approaches to construct a new ‘psychosocial’ framework for understanding the reproduction of individual level racial hatred. It then tests the framework using case-studies from a recently completed interview-based study of racially-motivated offending in one deprived area of the UK.

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