

Rachel Finn

Department of Sociology



My research investigates the ways in which second-generation, South Asian-American, young women negotiate identity given the various discourses that structure the American ethno-racial schema. I am interested in the way that South Asian women are constructed within American discourses on culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. My research examines how South Asian-American women identify with particular discursive frameworks, specifically how and where they describe their identity as South Asian, American, middle class or female. I am particularly interested in what versions of these categories of identification they have access to and how they use them. For example, which aspects of the discursive category American do they identify with and which aspects do they reject?

I also investigate the ways in which discursive frameworks both converge and diverge. For example, I am interested in how cultural identity is racialised and how class identity mediates cultural belonging. On the other hand, I am also interested in how gender identity challenges cultural expectations: all of which create multiple identifications. In doing so, I argue that identity is multi-axial and that South Asian-American women's identities are enmeshed within multiple discursive threads, such as multiculturalism, heterosexism and racism. Furthermore, these different axes of identity work together sometimes to reaffirm particular discursive expectations and sometimes to disrupt other discursive categorisations. I thread these assertions through theoretical paradigms such as postcolonial theory, feminist theory, migration theory and cultural studies.

Rachel.I.Finn@postgrad.man.ac.uk