

The Place of Race in Teacher Identity: An Implementation of Archer's Morphogenetic Model

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Abstract

In recent decades, educationalists and social psychologists have shown particular interest in teacher's identity and connection with race as an important identity marker as highlighted by the anti-racist movement (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 2000). The identity markers of a teacher provide the foundations of their personal and social identity and how they influence the social contexts the teachers experience. This research focuses on using Archer's Morphogenetic model as a conceptual framework to highlight agency in situational influences on teacher's identity and how their reflexivity allows them to navigate the social influence discourses of race, impact their identity. Identifying race as the main criterion, twenty-one teachers (majority were racial minorities) across England were interviewed for this research. Together their life histories and reflections given over forty hours of interviewing shape the empirical foundations of this study. The analysis of this research revealed the significant role of familial heritage, friendships, and teacher role models in contributing to both white and racial minority teacher's race identity. It also showed that the perception of the influence of their race identity ranged throughout their teaching careers and influenced by the school climate and student school demographics. The analysis also revealed that the attitudes towards race in society and the political discourses led to feelings of self-doubt, invisibility, and marginalization amongst racial minority teachers early in their life impacting their professional identities in their teaching role.

Keywords: race study, identity, teacher training, family heritage, agency