

## **4th Annual ENQUIRE Postgraduate Conference, 2011**

### **Identity Research: Past, Present and Future**

Negotiating, employing and maintaining individual and collective identities have been significant themes within social science research for many years. The enduring nature of these strands has allowed them to take on ever more diverse forms in increasingly complex settings – from the macro-social levels of inter-group conflicts to the intimate and everyday identity work in relation to gender, sexuality, race and disability. Identity continues to resonate with researchers as a central concept in addressing the pressing sociological issues of our time.

Approaches to the conceptualization and investigation of identity continue to evolve. Debates over the 'real' or the socially constructed nature of aspects of self and the value of inter-disciplinary approaches raise important questions about the future of identity research. How has the proliferation of approaches such as critical realism created opportunities for advances in identity research? Does a psychosocial orientation entail a working together of the intensely personal, individual aspects of identity – formerly solely the domain of psychology – with the broader, social-collective context of sociology?

The fundamental debates raised within identity research apply across the discipline and call into question the identity of sociologists themselves. How are sociologists adapting to an increasingly competitive research context characterized by a growing focus on impact and inter-disciplinary work? The conference will end with a keynote speech and discussion addressing these issues and their implications for the future of sociology.

We are excited to confirm our plenary speakers:

Professor John Holmwood (University of Nottingham)

Professor Richard Jenkins (University of Sheffield)

Dr Stephanie Lawler (Newcastle University)

Professor Nira Yuval-Davis (University of East London)