

# White Middle Class Identities and Urban Schooling

Diane Reay, Gill Crozier and David James

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'A thoughtful and very interesting analysis by a talented group of researchers.' - Professor Annette Lareau, University of Pennsylvania, USA

'White Middle Class Identities and Urban Schooling is a very important book. Looking at class practices and habitus as linked to family and schooling, the authors unpack the ways in which choice of secondary school is increasingly linked to the forging of social structure. In so doing, they bring the ability of the middle class to erect boundaries both symbolically and geographically into a new era of social class construction, while instantiating increasingly widespread choice of secondary school for one's children as a key and pivotal site for class formation and contestation. This is a 'must read' for anyone interested in contemporary class formation.' – Professor Lois Weis, Graduate School of Education, University at Buffalo, USA

Decades of neo-liberal reforms have established a market in secondary schooling, where 'choice' and 'diversity' are expected to drive up standards and maximize individual responsibility. This is known to favour middle class people. But what of those middle classes deliberately choosing ordinary and even 'low performing' secondary schools for their children? What are their motives, and how do they experience the choice? What is it like for the young people themselves? Where do they end up? And what does all this show us about contemporary white middle class identity and its formation?

This groundbreaking study offers some answers to these questions. Based on detailed fieldwork with parents and children, it examines 'against-the-grain' school choices, looking in particular at family history, locality, the nature of 'choice' itself and associated anxieties, relationships to other ethnic groups and to whiteness, and the implications for democracy. The book highlights an inescapable acquisitiveness but also more hopeful dimensions of contemporary white middle class identity.

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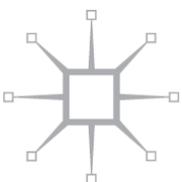
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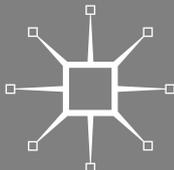
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