



# RACE, PLACE AND THE SEASIDE

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

DANIEL BURDSEY



## Endorsements

“Burdsey masterfully excavates the seaside as a sociological site. His engrossing study of racialisation reveals fluidity and complexity in the ways people identify with, are included in, and excluded from English seaside space.”—Steve Garner, *Birmingham City University, UK*.

“Burdsey’s book offers us grounded sociology in the best sense. It engages with such cultural beliefs and contests the racialisations embedded within them; he offers up instead a social justice critique through his model of ‘coastal liquidity’. Burdsey demonstrates how the seaside can be a place for new voices, and new values. An intelligent and ethical book of interest to all cultural geographers, and those interested in thinking through the pervasive and everyday incarnation of ‘race’.”—Sally Munt, *University of Sussex, UK*.

“Burdsey takes us through a compelling, conceptually and empirically rich sociology, of why the seaside—a local, global, imagined, material, contested, inviting, dangerous, pleasurable, violent and lovely edgeland—is a place where race gets practiced and projected and where belonging and attachment are enacted. Burdsey deftly reminds us of two things: first, the importance of the spatial in the politics of race; and second, why the seaside is significant in social and personal life.”—Sarah Neal, *University of Surrey, UK*.

“Questions of race and racism have often been limited to discussions of Britain’s big cities. However, as Gurinder Chadha pointed out in her film *Bhaji on the Beach* the seaside—at the edge of the political territory—is a rich and evocative place to understand how racism can co-exist with convivial multiculturalism. Like a latter day Orwell, Daniel Burdsey’s sensitive and insightful book offers us a vivid set of sociological postcards from the coast that aids us in understanding the changing cartographies of racism today.”—Les Back, *Goldsmiths, University of London, UK*.

“This is an engaging and insightful exploration of a very ‘British’ place—the seaside. Burdsey’s critical gaze vividly captures the ebb and flow of the seaside as a space of encounter and transition, encompassing processes and experiences of belonging and exclusion, negotiation and fixity, amusement, violence and death. It is ‘our Island story’ told from its edges.”—Claire Alexander, *University of Manchester, UK*.

“Drawing on nearly a decade of rich sociological enquiry, *Race, Place and the Seaside* is a groundbreaking study that highlights the significance of race and ethnicity at the seaside. Daniel Burdsey weaves together multiple perspectives and scales, from lived experience to geopolitics, to present an important alternative reading of the English seaside linked to racialised notions of belonging, exclusion, and identity.”—Alice Mah, *University of Warwick, UK*.

“This is a superbly crafted book exploring racism and ethnicity in coastal areas. Far from being stable and homogenous, English seaside locations are revealed as transnational and thoroughly racialised sites of belonging. Through the idea of ‘coastal liquidity’ Daniel Burdsey finely illustrates how multiculturalism, whiteness and racism ebb and flow, holding out the potential to configure these places anew. The effect is that *Race, Place and the Seaside* will make us approach these leisure spaces differently. It allows us to critically reflect on the prevailing practices of beach culture and begin to see seaside towns as much more than the dilapidated faded English resorts they are often purported to be.”—Anoop Nayak, *Newcastle University, UK*.

## Race, Place and the Seaside



Daniel Burdsey

# Race, Place and the Seaside

Postcards from the Edge

palgrave  
macmillan

Daniel Burdsey  
School of Sport and Service Management  
University of Brighton, UK

ISBN 978-1-137-45011-1      ISBN 978-1-137-45012-8 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-45012-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016940982

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Cover illustration: © John Devin / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature  
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

*For Holly and Alex*

My days at the seaside are always more fun when I am with them.





# Foreword

The seaside is a mysterious place. Even the seemingly bland, everyday, ordinary British seaside, most of us know of and some of us love, holds many secrets hidden from view.

This is despite the proliferation, over the past quarter of a century, of seaside research by varied academic tribes, journalistic reportage, popular general seaside histories, or specific case studies, and increasing attention from government and associated bodies in terms of research, policy formation, and funding.

Sometimes, the problem is with a grand concept or theory that, when first launched, the seaside research community applauds, but that subsequently obscures rather than reveals. On other occasions, influential studies ultimately straightjacket because they are caught in a moment of time or offer a partial, limited analysis of some theme or topic.

As an academic, I've been thinking and writing about the seaside and exploring places betwixt land and sea—on the edge—for four decades. While I've had immense enjoyment and satisfaction from the activity, I have also concluded that while we know a fair amount, and have some fascinating insights about what was or now is, our knowledge and understanding is incomplete and inadequate. Such, perhaps, is our lot when trying to make sense of the real, complicated, changing, varied world on the edge. It is also, however, that we do not have conceptual tools that are good enough to improve our understanding of the seaside.