

Comfort, celebration and loss: contrasting narratives of diversification in a newly diverse area and their implications for intergroup relations.

WOODS, R., KASPRZYK, G., TEODOROWSKI, P. and BUTLER-WARKE, A.

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Comfort, celebration and loss

Contrasting narratives of diversification in a newly diverse area and their implications for intergroup relations

Dr Ruth Woods (Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen), Dr Malgorzata (Gosia) Kasprzyk (Grampian Regional Equality Council), Dr Piotr Teodorowski (University of Stirling), Dr Alice Butler-Warke (University of St Andrews)

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Corresponding author: Ruth Woods (r.woods3@rgu.ac.uk)

Background: Diversity in the UK

- Traditional acculturation theory: Only migrants acculturate and experience acculturative stress (Berry, 2005; but see Kunst et al., 2021)
 - ‘**virtually all the adaptive changes take place in the acculturating individual**, with few changes occurring among members of the larger society’ (Berry, 2005, p.707)
- PhD research: Non-migrants’ experiences in west London
 - Need to understand acculturation experiences of migrant **and** non-migrant residents **in diversifying areas**



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Method

- Deprived urban area in Scotland with increasing ethnic diversity
 - Largest groups: Scottish, Polish
- 25 semi-structured interviews with migrant and non-migrant residents
- Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006; 2019)
 - Plus rigour checks: Reflexive logs and discussions; critical friends; deviant case analysis, translation (Gawlewicz, 2014; Meyrick, 2006; Smith & McGannon, 2018)

Findings

- Diversification brings changes to local area
 - People, shops, language
- Changes framed within 3 distinct **narratives of diversification**:



Familiarity and comfort (migrants)

‘When if I ever wanted to cook something Polish, a Polish dinner, I had access to spices, Polish ingredients, **something that reminded us of home.**’ (migrant)

Celebration of diversity (some migrants, some non-migrants)

‘I love the fact that we have so many nationalities here. (...) We have a Polish lady across the road, we have people from Lithuania, we have people down the road from Latvia, it’s great, I love it.’ (non-migrant)

Alienation and loss (some non-migrants)

‘I remember, younger, what we called go down the town, and you could buy anything. **But now it’s just... and this is not going to be racist, but it’s just Polish shops. There’s about five of them down the town as it is, and you think “where’s all our shops gone?”** Where’s all the shops gone that you could buy things?’ (non-migrant)

Discussion

- Ethnic diversification experienced through distinct narratives of change
 - Linked to wider narratives of self and place over time
- Migration into disadvantaged areas (Wiest et al., 2021)
 - Facing multiple challenges: deprivation, stigmatisation
 - Diversification changes mapped onto wider narratives of decline and marginalisation
 - Shops selling Polish food did not displace previous shops
- Acculturation experiences of non-migrants living in diverse areas have been neglected
 - Is A&L a form of acculturative stress?: ‘a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation’ (Berry, 2005, p. 708)
 - What contributes to celebratory vs loss narratives?

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