

Living with difference critical thinkings example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Abstract

This paper is critical review of journal living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter from Gil Valentine. The first section of this paper will summarize the general issue of the paper and the findings which have resulted from the research. The following section of this paper will analyze and evaluate important parts of the topic of progress in human geography like the work discussed in the article, references used, terms and the intended audience. The paper will evaluate the capacity to live with difference in the 21st Century.

Introduction

The topic of capacity to live with difference is now come to the fore with questions like, how can we forge civic culture with difference - it is something which is coming to preoccupy many geographers through their diverse and deep writings regarding cosmopolitanism, urban citizenship, activism and hospitality. In 1950s, Gordon Allport a social psychologist developed 'contact hypothesis'. His thesis was influential across social sciences and was the best way for reducing prejudice and promoting social integration to different groups.

Summary

This paper has sought to reflect human geography progress pertaining to question of how people live in difference. By doing so, the author has traced encounter geographies by making connections with older tradition of work in psychology on the topic of prejudice. In one hand is the positive focus placed on social transformations that characterize writing about new urban

citizenship and cosmopolitanism serves as welcome antidote for previous emphasis on use of cities as sites of conflict and social exclusion. On the other hand, the author remains wary regarding swiftness to celebrate daily encounters and power of these encounters to achieve social transformation and cultural destabilization. The evidence of research reveals that proximity is not equal to meaningful contact. Normative codes of behaviour are taken for granted in public space meaning that people commonly behave in kind or courteous manner towards each other, it is not same as having respect of difference. There is an uncomfortable gap between people actual values and their professed liberal values, as people who hold prejudiced view cannot exchange civilities publically with people from minority despite their politics. Everyday convivial encounter marks a culture of tolerance that leaves issues of intersecting and multiple identities—especially, identifications by which these encounters get approached and differential capacities of voices to participate. This article focuses on white majority attitude towards range of minority, thus forming an extension of past studies that have been concentrated on relations between ethnic minority and white majority groups. This study did not explore prejudice and poor relations between and within minority ethnic groups, yet these neglected tensions are worthy of getting attention due to their competing rights claims and values which are started to emerge in contemporary debates over equality. Examples of such debates are communities which are faith-based, LGBT communities, etc. To summarize, this paper reiterates calls for resocialization and rematerialization of human geography: returns to focus on sociospacial

insecurities and inequalities they breed and tries to understand the intersecting and complex ways by which it operates.

Analysis of Paper

Geography may seem to be a natural discipline for concerns encounter, the implicit role of shared space provides opportunities for encounters between strangers. The relevance of contact in mediation difference has older tradition in psychology discipline. The empirical model used in this study comes from Citizenship 21 funded qualitative research project as part of 2-stage investigation into prejudice. The study addresses the negative social attitude towards minority groups, not just migrant communities and minority ethnic. MORI IPSOS in the first stage conducted an all-country questionnaire about Citizenship 21 prejudice. This survey asked people according to them they had less positive attitude towards which groups. This survey was completed by 1693 adults who were asked questions about 167 sampling points which were constituency based. The data collected was weighted for reflecting profile of national population. The poll results were published in Profiles of Prejudice report by Citizenship 21. This paper draws upon the subsequent quality study which was funded by Citizenship 21 for understanding patterns which were identified in the national survey. This involved 30 in-depth interview and 9 focus group discussions with group of white majority.

Research design included both individual and group methods as previous research showed that some people feel at ease expressing their attitudes with others in social context, whereas others only talk only in private, one-on-one situation. The focus groups looked at general issues and shared

values, whereas design of individual interviews was for examining certain processes which shaped social attitude development and individual biographies. Just like the survey this qualitative research was focused on white majority sample and their attitudes towards the minority and marginalised social groups which include disabled, LGBT, travellers, gypsy, children, asylum seekers and other minority communities. Thus, research extended much of the writing regarding encounter geographies as it focused on complex range of differences rather than adoption of bipolar approach for consideration of relations between white majority and minority ethics.

The qualitative research was conducted in three regions in UK: Southwest, West Midlands and London and the details of the locations were withheld for protecting the anonymity of participants. Quotations presented by this paper were in verbatim. Even after instigating contact between social groups, example in the space of school, rather than generation of intercultural exchange it can become socially decisive. The social studies of youth and childhood literature include evidences of repetition of sexual, race, gender and class practices in youth which confirms the animosities and challenges. Some informants argued that contemporary public space encounters get regulated by 'political correctness' codes to such extent which makes them feel obliged for curbing public expression of their negative feelings and personal prejudices. Actual attitudes are allowed for leaking out in spaces which are privatized, like in between close friends and at home. Other informants who identify themselves as liberal and having conscious desire for being non-prejudiced described themselves being fearful of having contact with minority as Sennett terms it as 'anxiety of privilege'. They

mention that they are aware and uneasy about their cultural and economic position, yet were unaware of display of respect across inequality boundaries. In both the situations, where individuals holding liberal values behave in disrespectful ways toward minority by avoiding encounters and where individuals hold prejudiced values and still they behave in polite manner with the minority group — clear gap exists in public spaces between practices and values of individuals. If meaningful contact has to be produced between minority and majority groups, this gap has to be addressed to bring about social change.

Leaving the emergence to otherness from openness to chance, some scholars argue that the design and commercial hospitality industry can play crucial role in fostering interaction and integration between diverse groups. The diverse accounts on basis of which we can begin building 'politics of connectivity' through specific spaces needs to be treated with caution due to two reasons, Firstly, Intergroup contact—might be beneficial in reduction of majority prejudice can turn out to be stressful in case of minority. As they can be unsure of the reception they will get as they might not be open to representation burden and might dread encounters due to their experiences of discrimination and marginalization taints their willingness of engaging in relation with the majority. Secondly, in case common ethics of mutual respect and care emerges out of particular kind of organized, purposeful encounters then connectivity cannot be scaled-up and sustained in time and space.

Encounters which turn out positive with minority groups necessarily do not change opinion of people about groups for the better permanently or with

same speed as negative encounters. Simply put, negative encounters with minority individuals get treated as representation of the whole ethnic group, whereas positive encounters with minority individuals tend to be perceived as representation of the individual. Failure to produce respect for generalized contact for difference explains why there is no contradiction between past stories of exchange between white majority's everyday civilities with asylum seeking neighbours while washing his car and his support to anti-immigration and rightwing political party. Certainty of respondent's justification about their prejudices makes them harder to challenge, especially in groups where they feel they have little controlling ability and they get treated unfairly. Thus, more emphasis needs to be placed on immediate experiences of contact and people's history of material circumstances and social experiences which contribute to feelings of participants of major and minor groups about urban encounters.

Encounters between people from same or different groups takes place in presence of power, material conditions and has its place in history. The big danger is with contemporary disclosures about urban citizenship and cosmopolitanism with celebration of everyday encounter's potential for producing social transformations might allow the inequality issue to slip out of debate. Some of the informants who participated in this research had non-prejudiced and cosmopolitan attitudes, they considered their lives were full of possibilities and were highly optimistic about their future. Author of this paper has argued over the need of scaling back from the latest preoccupation with 'contact hypothesis' contemporary manifestation for acknowledging the relations between individual processes and prejudices

which turn communities defensive and antagonized in scarce resources competition and conflicting rights debate. Resources have been used not only for housing, work, benefits and others, but also for provision of legal and financial support for ways of living and cultural practices. The different rights have been used in this paper in reference to right of political equality, life free of discrimination, social equality and also individual rights like freedom of speech. This approach also needs researchers to start reflecting on tools used in research which might provide effective ways for exploration and understanding the transmission of practices and values. Examples of this are methodological technique employment which are not used in researching encounter geographies like intergenerational studies, life histories and biographical interviews.

Conclusion

This lecture of progress in Human Geography reflects the geographical contributions to policy and academic debates regarding how civic culture is forged out of difference. This is done by tracing disparate set of geographical writings about cosmopolitanism hospitality, new urban citizenship and micro-publics of daily life which are used to understand need of shared space for providing opportunities for encounter between ‘strangers’. The study is based on the older work tradition regarding ‘contact hypotheses’ from field of psychology. Then, original empirical material is applied, to critically reflect notion of ‘meaningful contact’ for exploring the paradoxical gap emerging in encounter geographies between practices and values. Conclusion is based on geographers needs to give more attention to sociospatial insecurities and

inequalities they breed, and unpacking interesting and complex ways by which power operates.