Corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis on LGBTQ+ segregation and internal migration in Finland

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Abstract

Although an inclusive city is generally the normative framework for urban development, opportunities for inclusion are not the same for everyone. This presentation focuses on urban places and meaning-making of these places for Finns whose gender and sexual identity are considered non-normative. Furthermore, the discourses of inclusion and exclusion and how these have influenced people's willingness to stay in certain places or move away are discussed (see e.g., Gerhards 2010; Poston et al. 2017). These experiences are linked to LGBTQ+ segregation, LGBTQ+ ghettos (see e.g., Aldrich 2004), and the stigmatisation of certain places; identity issues and fear of discrimination can lead to self-segregation and the choice of environments that offer social protection, which in turn can lead to the segregation of those areas (Ghaziani 2014).

The presentation takes a critical approach to the experiences and meaning-making associated with urban places, and the notions of inclusion, equality, and rights that they evoke. The research is based on two datasets; the first from a survey conducted via the Webropol application (521 responses), and the second from the Suomi24 Corpus (City Digital Group, 2021), which is a collection of posts from the 'Finland24' discussion forum. The Webropol survey asked participants about their experiences of the places where they have lived as a child and an adolescent, reasons for settling in their current location, possible reasons for internal migration, and experiences that have affected the quality of life. The Suomi24 Corpus was chosen to represent "general" opinion, as the forum ranks among one of the most popular for discussions among the general public in Finland.

The data were analysed using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis, i.e. a combination of quantitative corpus analysis (collocation analysis and grouping of collocations into semantic categories) and qualitative critical discourse analysis (close reading of concordance lines) methods. The data shows there is a clear trend for internal migration towards large urban areas and growth centres; one of the motivating factors for this being the sense of inclusion in a community that supports identity. The creation of such places is also carried out by members of minorities themselves through self-segregation and strategies to avoid stigmatised places. In turn, the Suomi24 data shows that the internal migration of LGBTQ+ is seen as problematic in the "general" discussion (mostly among non-LGBTQ+ people), as certain urban areas, such as Helsinki, are seen to be adversely overcrowded with people from minority groups.

Keywords: CACDA, inclusion, internal migration, LGBTQ+ segregation, urban areas

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