The welsh Welsh – Y Cymry cymreig: A study of cultural exclusion among rural-dwelling older people using a critical human ecological framework

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Abstract

Research on cultural exclusion has not kept apace with transformations to rural populations, economy, family structures and community relationships. Cultural exclusion refers to the extent to which people are able or willing to conform to cultural norms and values. We theorise cultural exclusion using the critical human ecological framework and social comparison theory, taking into account period effects, area effects and cohort and/or lifecourse effects. Qualitative case studies in three rural areas of South Wales (United Kingdom) synthesise data from life-history interviews, life-history calendars, documentary sources and focus groups (*n* = 56). Our findings suggest that cultural exclusion is an issue for rural-dwelling older people, which they describe by temporal self-comparison and group comparisons. The critical human ecological framework provides new insight into the drivers (industrial decline, policy and population change, a shift from collectivism to individualism), and outcomes (sense of belonging, community cohesion) of cultural exclusion experienced by rural-dwelling older people.

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Introduction

This article focusses on the experience of cultural exclusion of older people living in rural areas of South Wales. Social exclusion is a complex concept that has four common features: it is multidimensional, relational, dynamic and influenced by human agency (Walsh et al. 2017). Walsh et al. (2017) note that:

> varying in form and degree across the older adult life course, its complexity, impact and prevalence is amplified by old-age vulnerabilities, accumulated disadvantage for some groups, and constrained opportunities to ameliorate exclusion. (p. 93)

Social exclusion is a significant issue for rural-dwelling older people (Scharf & Bartlam 2006; Walsh et al. 2012a). Research has indicated that older people in rural areas experience exclusion across a number of life domains, including social resources (Gray 2009), neighbourhood amenities and services (Dwyer & Hardill 2011), material resources (Doheny & Milbourne 2014), civic participation (Curry et al. 2014) and culture. Cultural exclusion is arguably the most under-explored domain of social exclusion (Lysgard 2006). In order to address this gap in knowledge, this article focusses on the following questions:

- How does cultural exclusion manifest itself among older people originating from, and currently living in rural areas of South Wales?
- What are the drivers that contribute to cultural exclusion for this group of older people?
- What are the outcomes of cultural exclusion?
- What theoretical and practical contributions to knowledge can be made by using a critical human ecological approach to understanding cultural exclusion?

The remainder of this introductory section will provide an overview of key definitions, concepts, literature and research relating to cultural exclusion which has informed the study on which this article is based.

Culture

Culture is a contested concept which has been defined and interpreted differently, often depending on political or ideological stance or academic disciplinary focus. There is consensus about certain properties, that is, it is learnt and not inherited, it is derived from the social environment (and can be perceived differently by individuals) and is subject to change over time (Zelinsky 1973). Culture consists of a set of norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that are shared by a group, community or society. It can be transmitted through language, rituals, religion, institutions, art, music and literature and passed from one generation to another (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952). Culture has both universal (etic) and distinctive (emic) elements (Avruch 1998) and is "an image of the world, of oneself and one's community" (Zelinsky 1973: 70). Thus, cultures are manifested differently at national, regional, community or group levels (Hume & Pryce 1986).

Cultural Difference

Variations in culture are typically found between more and less highly developed societies (Inglehart & Baker 2000) and urban and rural sectors of society (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Tönnies 1957). Cultural differences are assumed to be related to demographic transition and disparities between traditional and modern norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions.

Generally, traditional societies are described as bound together by territorial tribalism, economic interdependence and family solidarity and are often termed collectivist cultures. A collectivist culture gives primacy to the needs of a kinship group, family or community over the individual. In collectivist cultures, community cohesion is important and religiosity is high. Community cohesion is maintained through social control: standards are enforced because sanctions are applied to those that deviate (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Triandis 1995). On the other hand, modern, industrialised societies are characterised by diffused ties, geographic separation and independence of nuclear units across generations and are often described as individualistic cultures (Goode 1970). An individualistic culture is one in which the needs of the individual (self-expression, subjective well-being and quality of life) assume primacy, rather than the

common good (Inglehart & Baker 2000). In modern societies, survival is taken for granted and religion is less important than in traditional societies. This has an influence on how society functions (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Triandis 1995).

While the shift from traditional collectivist to modern individualist society is a gross oversimplification of cultural shifts, data from the World Values Survey for 65 countries suggest that cultural change follows a roughly predictable direction (Inglehart & Baker 2000). However, changes are not linear: different societies follow different trajectories and cultures are complex, dynamic and diverse. Authors have argued that modernisation theory fails to take into account power differentials, the persistence of some traditional values despite economic and political change (DiMaggio 1994) and how situation-specific factors shape cultural development (Inglehart & Baker 2000).

Cultural Exclusion

At the local, regional or national level, individual differences can be observed in the degree to which people adopt cultures (Avruch 1998). For example, the adoption of local culture may be related to personal factors such as age or generation (Higgs & Gilleard 2010; Keating et al. 2015). The adoption of a particular culture may be down to personal choice or cultural exclusion, the latter referring to a situation when an individual is unable to put into practice the norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that he or she relates to. Thus, cultural exclusion is defined as the extent to which people are able or willing to conform to prevailing cultural trends (Winter 2017).

Various authors have developed different conceptualisations of social exclusion. A recent review of the literature (Walsh et al. 2017) identified six conceptual frameworks of relevance to older populations (Table 1): four were specifically focussed on the social exclusion of older people (Barnes et al. 2006; Guberman & Lavoie 2004; Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2008; Kneale 2012; Walsh et al. 2017); and two related to the exclusion of rural-dwelling older people (Scharf & Bartlam 2008; Walsh et al. 2012a). Similarities and differences were observed in the domains of exclusion included in each of the models. For example, although four frameworks

Table 1. Conceptual frameworks and the domains of social exclusion

Social Exclusion Domain:	Frameworks for:					
	Older People				Older People and Rural Areas	
	Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman (2008)	Barnes et al. (2006); Kneale (2012)	Guberman and Lavoie (2004)	Walsh et al. (2017)	Scharf and Bartlam (2008)	Walsh et al (2012a)
Material resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Services and amenities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civic participation		✓	✓	✓		
Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Neighbourhood		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Adapted from Walsh et al. 2017.

included culture as a domain, the two frameworks used in rural contexts did not refer to this domain. A growing body of evidence emphasises the impact of community and structural transformations in rural areas upon social exclusion (Keating et al. 2013; Walsh et al. 2012a). In all six frameworks, exclusion from amenities and services is conceptualised as a domain distinct from culture, and in five frameworks neighbourhood exclusion is also conceived as a separate domain. This article will extend work on rural social exclusion by focussing on the domain of cultural exclusion and its relationship with other domains of exclusion.

In order to understand cultural exclusion, one needs to be able to identify "a culture" as an entity. It has been argued that the conceptualisation of culture as a universe of shared meaning within "a tribe", "a nation" or "a people" rarely resonates with 21st century society

(Gupta & Ferguson 2001). This has led many authors to focus on regional or local connectedness, thereby denying the anthropological idea of culture.

More recently, there has been an increasing interest in the study of place attachment, place identity, geographies of belonging and sense of place which is informed by multiple research traditions with different epistemologies. The phenomenological approach to belonging suggests that it is an innate desire to connect oneself to things and place (Mee & Wright 2009). On the other hand, the symbolic interactionist perspective considers belonging to be a product of the construction of self-identity in relation to the social world (e.g. Scannell & Gifford 2010). Other conceptualisations of place attachment (e.g. place memory [Lewicka 2008]; autobiographical insideness [Rowles 1983]) take into account autobiographical memories (e.g. childhood, or the location of significant life events) or sociobiographical memories (family lineage, ethnic or cultural identity and territorial identity). Place attachment and identity is also concerned with aesthetic attachment, social attachment (more closely aligned with the domain of exclusion from social relations) and amenity/environmental attachment (more closely aligned to services/ neighbourhood domains of exclusion) (Burholt et al. 2014). Although cultural identity and cultural exclusion are relevant to place attachment and place identity, they are not synonymous concepts. Indeed, implicit in cross-cultural studies is the conceptualisation of the world as a "mosaic" of cultures comprising a complex array of beliefs, attitudes, norms and values that can be studied as entities and contrasted with each other, rather than a manifestation of regional or national place connectivity (Gupta & Ferguson 2001).

Studies exploring cultural exclusion often focus on cross-cultural comparisons, for example, by comparing indigenous populations and transnational migrants or ethnic minority groups (Burholt et al. 2016; Torres 2006, 2012). In this respect, cultural exclusion is assumed to be associated with acculturative demands (Berry 2006) and intersects with gender, social status and other structural factors.

Another body of evidence on cultural differences contrasts rural and urban societies. For many years, the concept of "rural idyll" has dominated literary and academic studies (Curry et al. 2014). Culturally, rural areas were described as pleasant, prosperous, safe environments that

were beneficial to health and well-being. People living in rural areas were depicted as holding certain values relating to hard work, nationalism, cohesion and resistance to welfare support (Cloke & Little 1997). The romanticising of rural communities has been referred to as "cultural invisibility" (Commins 2004: 62) and has been criticised for failing to recognise disadvantage, exclusion and differences between rural areas and rural inhabitants (Milne et al. 2007).

Presently, rurality is viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon (Halfacree 1993) and a symbolic lens for moral and cultural values which can vary between groups of people (intersecting with gender, social status) as well as across time and location (Boyle & Halfacree 1998). However, traditional and hegemonic cultural discourses have marginalised a host of "other" groups in rural society. In particular, they have ignored the heterogeneity of older people and rural areas (Milne et al. 2007). The myths and misconceptions concerning rural culture have contributed to the veiling of old-age cultural exclusion in rural areas.

Cultural Change

While comparisons between societies, ethnicities or regions provide evidence of cultural variation, there is very little contemporary social science research that considers how "national cultures" change over time in particular places and how these dynamics may contribute to exclusion. Personal decision-making and structural changes such as policy initiatives influence the pace of diffusion and changes in norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions. For example, improved communication links, mass media and similarity in social structural positions accelerate the rates of cultural diffusion (Rudel & Hooper 2005). Under these circumstances, disparities between rural and urban populations should decline (Critchfield 1994). However, indigenous cultural values often leave their imprint on subsequent generations, long after the material conditions responsible for those values have altered.

Industrial regional developments and/or policy initiatives that directly influence the mobility and composition of populations impact on cultural norms. For example, political apparatus can be used to select aspects of modernisation or industrialisation to "import" to countries, or regions within countries, to accelerate desired change and decrease differences

between or within countries (Rudel & Hooper 2005). In areas of rapid change, older people may hold norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that endure from an earlier period as research suggests that individual basic "values" are fixed by adulthood (Inglehart & Baker 2000). Consequently, one way of examining cultural exclusion is to examine difference in cultural values between generations (e.g. Sun & Wang 2010). Another possibility is to examine cultural change and/or exclusion across the lifecourse of an older generation. The latter approach is taken in this article, and provides us with the opportunity to examine the influence that societal structures and the life course have upon the experience, drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion among rural-dwelling older people.

Background: Culture of Wales

In this article, we focus on three rural areas in South Wales to examine the process of cultural exclusion for older people. Wales is a region in the United Kingdom with a population of 3.11 million people. Wales has devolved powers across a wide range of areas (including health, education and social care), and was granted powers for limited primary legislation in 2006.

The nation has a complex culture with distinctive regional components. The dominant characteristics of Wales' culture include nonconformity (religious denominations such as Calvinist Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and Wesleyans), the chapel (emphasising the difference between the Church of England and Anglicanism), literary tradition such as the *Eisteddfod* (a Welsh festival of literature, poetry and music) and language (Cloke & Milbourne 1992). The Welsh language is one of the most important elements of cultural heritage and historically has been noted as "the indispensable medium for expressing Welsh cultural values" (Jones 1952: 16–17). Wales is a bilingual nation with both English and Welsh afforded equal status by the Welsh Government. However, Wales has experienced a gradual decline in the proportion of Welsh speakers from around half of the population at the beginning of the 20th century to approximately one-fifth (19%) in 2011. There are currently 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales (Welsh Government 2012).

Early research on culture in Wales was grounded in social anthropology (Rees 1950). Community studies portrayed rural culture as vibrant

and stable with inhabitants bound together by strong shared values, social reciprocity and a common world view (Day 2002). These studies tended to present a positive view of communal existence described as "the completeness of traditional rural society" (Rees 1950: 170) and failed to examine internal contradictions or tensions.

On the whole, when conflict was acknowledged in rural community studies, the focus was upon the Welsh/English cultural divide. For example, Bowen (1959) classified a cultural geography of Wales comprising *Inner Wales* and *Outer Wales*. Inner Wales fostered Welsh cultural traits with inhabitants popularly known as the *Cymru Gymraeg* (Welsh-speaking Wales). Outer Wales, with external (English) influences, was less homogeneous in terms of language and culture and was referred to as *Cymru ddi-Gymraeg* (non-Welsh-speaking Wales). Other authors have described Welsh culture in terms of cliques, referred to as *buchedd* ("way of life"). These cliques served a social control function by enforcing standards of behaviour within the community, especially relating to religious participation, economic behaviours and consumption of alcoholic beverages, with one group regarded as more pious and "respectable" than the other (Day & Fitton 1975; Jenkins 1960). In addition to rifts between Welsh indigenous and English non-indigenous people, studies by Frankenberg (1957) and Emmett (1964) emphasised divisions and rivalries based on gender and age.

Community studies undertaken in Wales in the last century have been criticised for failing to account for the diversity of rural life (Day 2002). Contemporary Wales has been influenced by modern social and economic trends and rural areas have undergone significant changes in recent decades which are likely to have implications for culture and cultural exclusion. These transformations include demographic changes associated with increased population mobility, such as outward migration of younger people, counter-urbanisation and other inward migration flows. The cultural construction of rurality and/or Welsh culture has been influenced by incomers, such as the middleclass reinvention of rural (Murdoch & Day 1998) or the "neo-triablism" of counter-urbanisers (Halfacree 1998). Similar reimaginings of "culture" have been observed within Irish island communities, where older people played a pivotal role in creating and sustaining islander identities, but perceptions of identity differed between migrants and non-migrants (Burholt et al. 2013).

Islanders with a "historical islander identity" held a circumspect view of community change, based on their perception of the transformation of the island community in the wake of modernisation. We may expect to find similarities in behaviour and perceptions of long-term rural inhabitants in Wales.

In addition to the impact that population turnover has had on culture in Wales, structural issues such as declining local economies, agricultural reform and neo-liberal transformations have also contributed to change (Day 1987). The demise of local rural industries and traditional farming has resulted in deprivation, high levels of unemployment, lack of affordable housing, poor public transport and closure of local amenities and services in many areas. Living in rural areas takes place in an increasingly dynamic cultural context (Walsh et al. 2012b). Over time there has been a steady erosion of Welsh culture and a decline in Welsh speaking: *buchedd* has been replaced by new socio-economic values (Day 2002).

The representation of "close-knit" Welsh-speaking rural communities may not reflect the current reality of rural living. The pre-industrial *gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 1957) is most likely no longer a valid representation of family life in South Wales. However, misconceptions about rural culture endure as older people tend to under-report exclusion. There has been a tendency for older people to buy into the "rural idyll" believing that living in aesthetically pleasant surroundings outweighs any exclusion from participation in society (Hennessy et al. 2014; Walsh et al. 2012b). Other contributory factors for under-reporting may be due to cultural identity: pride, stoicism or fear that such a revelation may result in shame and stigmatisation (Wenger 2001). In order to address the gap in knowledge about cultural exclusion, we examine the contribution that societal structures and the life course have upon the experience of cultural exclusion for older people who have originated from, and are currently living in rural areas of South Wales.

Theoretical Framework

We adopt a critical human ecological theoretical framework to examine the process of cultural exclusion for older people originating from, and presently living in, rural areas of South Wales (Keating & Phillips 2008).

We draw on four "systems" or levels within the ecological model to contextualise our findings. These are (1) the macrosystem, which incorporates structural issues including ideology, political landscape, norms, values and national policies; (2) the exosystem, which refers to structure and organisations that affect the immediate environment – that is, natural and physical elements of the environment, alongside services, amenities and employment opportunities in the local area; (3) the microsystem, which focusses upon individual characteristics or resources such as psychological traits, health, material resources and social resources; and (4) the chronosystem, which relates to the passage of time. In this article, we consider macro-time (period effects), exo-time (place effects) and micro-time (cohort and/or lifecourse effects) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2006) in relation to the drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion. Micro-time, exo-time and macro-time have been used to study child development, but to our knowledge these concepts have not been applied to older people and cultural exclusion.

Within the ecological model, culture (norms, values and ideologies) is subsumed within the macrosystem. However, cultural exclusion can only be understood in relation to time and context. In this respect, we consider social comparison as a *process* relevant to the temporal and contextual experience of cultural exclusion (Festinger 1954). This theoretical approach will provide better understanding of the interaction between factors within the "four" systems that can illuminate how and why older people experience cultural exclusion in the rural areas of South Wales (Bronfenbrenner 2005).

Data and Method

A qualitative case-study methodology was selected to provide a means of understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those involved.

Sample Selection

Three rural case study areas were selected in South Wales. The selection was based on two criteria, that is, they (1) were classified as "rural wards" under the Welsh Government Rural Development Programme and (2) had experienced significant community change (e.g. regeneration, economic decline or population change).

Area A was located within Caerphilly Local Authority comprising two village settlements and a rural hinterland. Area B was the largest rural ward in Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority comprising eight villages. Area C was located within Swansea Local Authority approximately 16 km to the north of the city.

Two samples of participants were drawn: one for life history interviews and one for focus groups. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to recruit participants aged ≥60 years living. Ten older people in each of the three case study areas (N = 30) were recruited for life-history interviews. A majority were female (n = 19) and aged between 75 and 89 years (n = 17). Most were married or living with a partner (n = 16), and around one-third (n = 11) were widowed. A majority of participants (n = 21) spoke English as their first language; however, in Area C, most (n = 8) identified Welsh as their first language. A majority (n = 20) had always lived in the study areas; ten participants had originated from the area, but had moved away for some years, and then returned.

Older people who had not participated in the life-history interviews were recruited for focus groups in each of the case study areas (N = 26).

Data Collection

Stage 1: Life-history interviews. Interviews focussed upon hardship and prosperity. They were conducted face-to-face in participants' homes in English or Welsh, audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked to share photographs documenting their life histories and changes in their communities.

Stage 2: Documentary analysis and focus groups. Documents about the communities were obtained from local historical groups and libraries. Relevant data about historical community change were extracted and organised into a community timeline. Focus group participants discussed the history of the area using the timeline as a prompt.

Stage 3: Repeat life-history interviews with life-history calendars. Each participant who had undertaken a life-history interview was re-interviewed. Participants were presented with a draft version of a personal life history calendar (LHC), which contained their lived experience in

chronological order extracted from the initial interviews. The LHC also contained the history of the area and national changes. Additional questions were asked to elucidate important area of participants' life histories.

Analysis

An Interpretive Phenomenological Analytical approach was used to analyse the data. The analysis was idiographic with a detailed analysis of one case (life-history interview or focus group transcript) undertaken before moving onto the next one. Firstly, detailed notes of relevant information that related to cultural exclusion were recorded chronologically. Secondly, superordinate (e.g. values) and sub-themes (e.g. specify types of values such as collectivism) were identified and nested using NVivo software (Version 10). The superordinate themes were organised into the respective systems of the human ecological model. The themes were coded by one researcher (PhD candidate), and interpretations were discussed with the supervisory team. Relationships *between* systems and, over time, *within* systems (e.g. micro-time) were noted.

Findings

The findings are organised under two main headings: (1) the manifestation of cultural exclusion and (2) the drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion for older people originating from, and currently living in, rural areas of South Wales.

The Manifestation of Cultural Exclusion

Cultural exclusion was described as an issue for a majority of participants and was discussed in terms of comparisons with earlier times in their lives (temporal self-comparison) or in comparison with other groups. The micro-time descriptions served to demonstrate impacts from other systems during specific episodes of proximal processes of exclusion.

Temporal self-comparison. Cultural exclusion was framed as a contemporary personal comparison with historical experiences, that is, temporal

self-comparison. Participants expressed concern about the erosion of the cultural norms and values that had been prevalent within the communities in which they reside during earlier periods of their lives. Interviews contained descriptions of historical cultural experience, which was contrasted with the contemporary experience and outcomes for older people.

During participants' childhood, a traditional community culture was described. The need for material possessions was not described as essential by the participants. Instead, they alluded to placing greater value on strong family relations and close community bonds. A number of participants commented that despite hardship and poverty, most of the community were living in very similar circumstances and participants referred to this period as a happy time during which they were satisfied. For example,

> When you live in them conditions you don't know no different. It's like a bird in a cage – he doesn't know there's an outside world does he? Lovely childhood when you look back. We didn't have any money mind, but we enjoyed ourselves.
>
> (Area B, Male, 89 years)

Participants recollected shared values of mutual support and reciprocity during their childhood. They described a culture in which people supported one another, were respectful, courteous, polite and non-judgemental. As a result, participants explained that during that period they felt safe and secure and had a sense of pride in the collectivism of the close-knit communities. Participants contrasted this with the contemporary community in which they felt families were dispersed and relationships with neighbours had undergone much change. Many participants explained that they were neither familiar with nor had contact with people living in the area. Participants commented upon contemporary cultural norms which they felt demonstrated a decline in social bonds and an increase in a materialistic culture where people prioritised maximising personal incomes and possessions as opposed to focussing on the common good. For many participants this resulted in what they described as their perception of a decline in community cohesion. For example:

> You know I don't know half of them who live up here. I was looking the other day and from the top to the bottom of the road I only know five men. And I used to know everybody… and they don't talk or look out for you anymore. People look out for themselves much more.
>
> (Area B, Male, 87 years)

Participants described other historical and traditional normative beliefs, values, customs and traditions. Examples provided by participants included: families and households were larger, men went out to work while women remained at home and people remained living and working within the local community. On reaching adulthood, there was an expectation to meet and marry someone local, enter employment locally – often in the family profession – and to live within close proximity to the family. Consequently, when first married, often participants lived with relatives in overcrowded housing or lodged with families or neighbours.

> We moved into a house four doors up from my mother […]. We moved so close because it was the done thing.
>
> (Area B, Female, 65 years)

Participants contrasted this with the contemporary communities in which they felt it was more likely that both women and men were in paid employment. Emphasis was placed by participants upon the limited local work and housing opportunities that currently exist in their communities which they explained is resulting in family members moving away from the local area to live and work.

Another integral feature of the historical Welsh culture identified by participants centred on financial savings, thriftiness and indebtedness. Participants stressed the importance of saving money to purchase a home, household goods or holidays and not to accrue debt. Resourcefulness included growing food and making household items such as toys, clothes and furniture. As one participant commented:

> And of course we had allotments […]. We were self-sustaining. We always had a good table. I can never remember being hungry.
>
> (Area A, Male, 86 years)

In contrast, participants noted that resourcefulness was not a feature of contemporary culture. Participants explained that local people would drive to supermarkets to purchase food and household items. Furthermore, older participants expressed concern that there was generally a lack of regard for "living within one's means" and that obtaining credit and being in debt was a normal for many people.

In the past, participants described how communities were bound together by similarities between the inhabitants in the use of Welsh language, going to chapel and employment (farming and mining). Participants explained that every local household was either involved in or had close relationships with someone involved in these activities. As one participant commented:

> It was a fairly tight community and everybody practically knew everybody else. We knew what was going on with most people and Welsh was largely spoken.
>
> (Area B, Female, 74 years)

In contemporary rural South Wales, participants noted how many of these cultural features had declined or disappeared, notably the demise of indigenous employment and a decline in the Welsh language. Participants were concerned that the absence of shared norms and customs was resulting in a lack of common ground for the community. In Area C, participants expressed disappointment that it was no longer the norm to speak Welsh in public spaces – even for Welsh speakers. A number of participants commented that they felt that these changes fostered a sense of conflict and division (see group comparisons below).

One participant explained how previously religion played a pivotal role in the communities and influenced the local culture:

> I think the chapels played a far greater role […] there was more of a community spirit. I can remember [grandmother] used to go to [chapel] and Mam used to go to chapel. My Dad used to go to [chapel name] and [Grandfather] used to go to [church name].
>
> (Area A, Female, 78 Years)

Participants described how chapel was an important source of education on Welsh heritage and Welsh language. One participant explained how the chapel had fostered not only religious faith but also a range of values such as caring, sharing and assisting others, which contributed to the sense of community, which however was not apparent in the contemporary community cultural values.

Group comparison. Participants discussed the manifestation of cultural exclusion by comparing the current situation for older people (or

themselves) with other groups. Comparisons were primarily made to younger cohorts and in-migrants to the rural areas.

Many participants expressed concern about a generational divide in beliefs, values, customs and traditions. Participants made a distinction between the norms and values of the older generation which remained collective and community-focussed, compared with the younger generation who participants felt were more individualistic and did not have a connection or commitment to the community. In particular, concern was expressed by participants about the lack of involvement of younger people in community activities, such as attending chapel or regeneration activities. Several participants made reference to the lack of respect from the younger generation, as well as a disregard for spending time building relationships. Furthermore, they noted that younger generations led more private lives and accepted debt as a normal part of life. These behaviours were, according to participants, contrary to prior Welsh cultural norms. As one participant commented:

> When we were engaged was we sat down and made a rug […]. You wouldn't see couples doing that now would you? They'd be playing games on the telly. But we made homes. Now they go out and buy things and it's a throw-away society.
>
> (Area A, Male, 80 years)

Participants were also critical of those who had migrated to the study areas, who they felt did not contribute to the community. Concern was expressed by a number of participants that many had bought homes as holiday lets or second homes but did not appear to integrate into the community. More specifically, participants' comments alluded to the fact that they believed that in-migrants did not want to embrace aspects of the Welsh culture such as the chapel and *Eisteddfod*. As a result, participants expressed concern that key Welsh traditions and the Welsh language were threatened.

> I don't mind people moving in but they must be part of the community, please. OK, they don't speak Welsh but they don't learn it. But it's our way that is changing, you see, not theirs. It's detrimental for the language and detrimental for the chapels.
>
> (Area C, Female, 79 years)

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The Drivers and Outcomes of Cultural Exclusion

The drivers – macro-time (period effects), exo-time (place effects) and micro-time (cohort and/or lifecourse effects) – and outcomes of cultural exclusion were complex and interrelated. These are discussed within three time periods: pre-Second World War (1900–1939); post-Second World War Keynesian period (1945–1979); and the neo-liberal monetarist economic period (mid-1970s–current time).

Macro-time: Period effects. Period effects are historical events that affect an entire population at a specific time. The period before the Second World War (1900–1939) was regarded by participants as fostering cultural inclusion rather than exclusion. They described how mining and farming were dominant forms of employment, but were low-waged. Consequently, this period was characterised by material disadvantage. Participants explained how there was minimal state intervention and few educational opportunities.

Despite structural constraints, participants explained that cultural norms and values were inclusive. They described how people lived and worked together in mining or farming industries and how retail services were locally based. Low levels of population turnover meant that participants knew neighbours and long-standing friendships and relationships were developed. Welsh language and religion were described by participants as dominant features of the culture. Local people socialised together which fostered mutual support and reciprocity within a collectivist culture. One female participant commented:

> You were in it together and no household was different to the other. It didn't matter about your status, your income or anything like… because people lived in the valley and they stayed in the valleys. They didn't move out.
>
> (Area A, Female, 95 years)

The period immediately following the Second World War, the Keynesian period (1945–1979), was characterised by full employment and increased state intervention, in particular the establishment of the welfare state. A national house-building programme was mentioned by some participants as providing local affordable housing and services, and activities

were plentiful. A collectivist culture continued to dominate this period according to many participants. One commented:

> You had the library below the workman's hall and then you had the YMCA where they had dancing. We used to play records there and it was packed. When you think of what we did in this small community it was amazing. We haven't got that now.
>
> (Area A, Female, 71 Years)

While a collectivist culture was fostered, participants explained how certain structural-economic drivers began to contribute to a decline in some traditional norms. Although Welsh was spoken at home, through much of this period education was imparted through the medium of English. As one man explained:

> No they wouldn't leave you speak Welsh in school would they? It does make me sad that my generation never spoke Welsh. My father was Welsh speaking and we're in the gap aren't we?
>
> (Area C, Male, 69 Years)

Participants described how this had a detrimental impact on language, as a generation lost the ability to converse fluently in Welsh. It was not until the 1967 Welsh Language Act that teaching through the medium of Welsh was promoted.

By the 1970s, the prosperity of the Keynesian economic period began to decline culminating in an international oil crisis in 1973, a global recession and increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. Many participants commented that during this period there was a gradual shift from collectivist to individualistic cultural norms and values. By the 1970s, car ownership was widespread, resulting in a greater degree of mobility. The advent of supermarkets meant less reliance on the immediate community. As a participant explained:

> I think the introduction of the car is the downside because people go out of the valley to shop now to supermarkets and all that.
>
> (Area A, Female, 79 years)

Participants described how over time, new technologies and other developments began to transform aspects of the local culture. They

commented upon a decline in religiosity and associated values being reflected in the dwindling numbers attending the local chapels. Television and car ownership were regarded by participants as contributing to a decline in collective activities and social connectivity: more people travelled outside of the area or stayed at home watching television. As one participant explained:

> I think the coming of the television altered a lot of things [...], activities like cinema and dancing declined.
>
> (Area A, Female, 78 Years)

Core features of the neo-liberal monetarist economic period (mid-1970s–present time) as described by participants included public sector cutbacks, promotion of the free market and privatisation of services. Simultaneously, there were increases in unemployment, under-employment, zero-hour contracts, low wages and the out-migration of people of working age. Globalisation and technological developments continued apace with multinational companies locating services in urban areas rather than in rural ones. Individualistic cultural norms and values dominated this period.

In terms of employment in the study areas, participants explained that the manufacturing base was severely depleted and farming suffered further decline and diversification. The latter was attributed to the introduction of milk quotas during the 1980s which limited the productivity of farms. The service industry became the dominant form of employment. Participants explained that historically people had lived and worked within the same community and this harnessed a sense of belonging and connection between groups of people and generations. However, significant agricultural and industrial decline meant a reduction in local or familial employment opportunities for the younger generation:

> Farming has changed completely and has been decimated. If you look at the land here now [...] nobody is growing barley or wheat or potatoes or anything like that [...]. The milk industry has gone with nobody producing milk anymore. Whereas before every farm would employ at least one person, none of them employ anyone now [...]. You can go out in the spring and not hear the sound of a tractor anywhere, whereas before you could hear the noise of tractors going all the time.
>
> (Area C, Male, 67 Years)

Increasing population change during this period was perceived by participants to be a key driver of changing cultural norms and values of the areas (see above). All three case study areas continued to experience a decline in Welsh language. Whereas in the previous period the primary driver for decline was attributed to the education policy (which required all schools to teach through the medium of English), in this period the in-migration of non-Welsh-speaking residents further contributed to the decline. As one participant commented:

> Some of them try to contribute to the community but they want to turn everything into English. That's how I see it […].

<div align="right">(Rural Area C, Male, 70 Years)</div>

Exo-time: Place effects. While structural-economic drivers (period effects) influenced cultural exclusion, there were variations in the timing and scale of the impact. Participants explained that these can be largely attributed to place effects which focus upon the physical and environmental developments within the rural areas.

During the pre-Second World War period, participants explained that rapid industrialisation in Areas A and B meant that mining replaced farming as the dominant form of employment. This brought large-scale industry to the area and resulted in population growth. Terraced housing was built which transformed much of the rural landscape. Services and amenities were built around these developments. In contrast to Areas A and B, Area C was more affluent. Farming remained largely unmechanised during this period. Industrialisation was on a far smaller scale and large-scale meat and arable farms remained viable. Many of the mines that were developed in Area C were drift mines, which had less impact on the physical landscape than large underground mines elsewhere. These smaller mines employed fewer people and did not result in high levels of in-migration or house-building programmes. This meant that cultural norms and values were maintained to a greater extent in Area C with a greater proportion of the population speaking Welsh. As one participant commented:

> The community was definitely rural and all these cottages were here. There was a thriving farming community where all the farmers knew each other […]. We knew what was going on with most people and everyone spoke Welsh.

<div align="right">(Area C, Male, 93 years)</div>

During the post-war Keynesian economic period, while changes broadly mirrored the period effects, some area-based drivers resulted in minor variations between case study sites. In particular, during the 1950s, there were large-scale social housing developments in areas A and B, according to participants' recollections, resulting in increased levels of in-migration. In Area C, although farming was beginning to decline, participants explained that there were only small-scale social housing developments which had limited impact on the rural landscape and population movement. Thus, cultural norms and values were maintained in Area C to a greater extent than in the other areas.

During the neo-liberal monetarist economic period, all three areas experienced significant decline (see period effects). Some specific area-based drivers resulted in differences in the scale and intensity of cultural exclusion between the case study areas. The demise of indigenous industry in all areas resulted in out-migration of young people in search of employment. In Area C, this was compounded by the lack of affordable and accessible housing in the area due to gentrification, and a more limited house-building programme than in either of the other two case study areas. Subsequently, cultural exclusion was more pronounced in Area C which, until this period, had retained more of its cultural heritage.

> The old community is dying and the community is changing and we are having in-migration in the village… I told them that they must ensure that local people, Welsh local people, have housing.
>
> (Area C, Female, 82 years)

Micro-time: Cohort and/or lifecourse effects. Cohort effects relate to the older population's exposure to cultural exclusion across the lifecourse (Ryder 1985). The cohort can be conceived as a structural category, whereby the unique circumstances and conditions through which cohorts emerge provide a record of social and structural change. The conditions (period effects, area effects) and lifecourse material and social conditions may uniquely shape the experience of cultural exclusion within an age cohort. In this respect, the cohort effects are the outcomes that cultural exclusion has upon participants but also comprise the actions that the cohort undertakes to ameliorate outcomes.

Many participants felt that cultural exclusion had a detrimental effect on their sense of belonging and perceptions of community cohesion. Taking a lifecourse perspective, it was apparent that a sense of belonging was related to length of residence in the area, especially sociobiographic and autobiographic histories (Rowles 1983). A historical sense of belonging was closely interwoven with the culture of the area (Burholt et al. 2013) and was ruptured by cultural changes. Participants associated a decline in community cohesion to population turnover. They commented on the way in which population change had a detrimental effect on social attachment and "social insideness" (Rowles 1983), hindering connections with family and neighbours and contributing to the demise of the close-knit community. A participant commented:

> I came to know everyone in the village and I could tell which house they were in. Everyone, I knew everyone right? But now I don't know those that live on this road here. That's the difference. People have moved in you see. Strangers and they don't [help].
> (Area C, Female, 81 years).

Cohort effects also comprised actions undertaken to ameliorate cultural exclusion. For instance, a few participants explained how they worked with other older, long-term residents to try and maintain a sense of community cohesion within their cohort. As one participant stated:

> There is a sense of community. Not so much in the new estates but in these old streets here we are very community orientated. We are here for everybody, we will help anybody. We won't go into people's houses but we are here and if somebody wants anything and we are all very chatty and talkative to one another, you know.
> (Area C, Female, 82 Years)

Some participants described how they attempted to sustain and foster community cohesion as well as rekindle a sense of belonging through historical groups that attempted to develop an appreciation and understanding of the area's rich heritage. For example, participants in Area C explained how a Heritage Museum was established and in Area B, the Chair of the local Historical Society edited books about local history. Participants articulated their passion and commitment to learn about, record and share information about the cultural history of the areas.

Discussion

Underpinned by a critical human ecological framework, this article has explored the manifestation of cultural exclusion among older people originating from, and currently living in, rural areas in South Wales. The framework has facilitated a description of the interactions between the drivers, experiences and outcomes of cultural exclusion, taking into account period, area, cohort and lifecourse effects. In this discussion, we return to the three research questions that guided our analysis.

Firstly, the findings suggest cultural exclusion to be an issue among older people in rural areas. Drawing on social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), participants' experiences of cultural exclusion were based on temporal self-comparison and group comparisons. The findings demonstrate the importance of relativity when considering cultural exclusion, that is, it can only be understood in relation to the time and context within which older people live.

Life-history interviews (referring to micro-time and the impact of proximal processes of exclusion) indicated that a collectivist culture based on mutual support and reciprocity was dominant during the childhood of older participants. Welsh language and religious participation were prevalent. These characteristics (cultural heritage) shaped the contemporary cultural identity of older people. However, as the collectivist culture was replaced by an individualist culture over time, participants felt excluded: their cultural identity was in conflict with prevailing norms, values and behaviours. In particular, differences in cultural identity were emphasised when compared to younger generations and in-migrants.

Our second research question was concerned with the drivers of cultural exclusion. In the macrosystem, the findings suggest that period effects that contributed to a shift from a collectivist to an individualistic culture included the demise of indigenous industry, policy developments (in particular educational policy) and population change. Other research has also identified that structural change has a pivotal role in explaining exclusion experienced by older rural residents (Scharf & Bartlam 2006; Williams & Doyle 2016). While period effects impacted upon cultural exclusion in all three case study areas, variations were evident in the extent of their impact, both in terms of timing and scale, which were explained by place effects (exosystem).

Collectivist cultural norms and values were retained for a longer period of time in rural Area C, which did not experience large-scale industrialisation, housing and population growth at the same time as Areas B and C. However, the eventual decline of farming and mining, out-migration of younger people and gentrification in Area C had a more profound impact on participants, as the change was more rapid than in the other areas. Thus, the speed of macro- and exo-time effects had an impact on cultural exclusion.

With regard to the third research question, the primary outcomes of cultural exclusion for participants' were a decline in a sense of belonging, safety, security, life satisfaction and community cohesion. The sense of belonging was associated with cohort and/or life course effects (microtime), such as length of residence in an area, sociobiographic and autobiographic histories, but was simultaneously affected by other systems within the ecological model. The shift from collectivist to individualistic cultural norms had an impact on cultural exclusion and belonging as participants aged (Bengtson et al. 2012; Triandis 1995). The findings resonate with other research, indicating how population change can have a detrimental effect upon "social insideness" (Rowles 1983). Participants' historical sense of belonging was associated with the culture of the areas and resonates with other research (Burholt et al. 2013). In particular, it reveals how cultural heritage contributes to cultural identity, which when contrasted with contemporary cultural norms may decrease perceptions of belonging.

Older people were not necessarily passive "recipients" of cultural exclusion, as some were able to accept, reject or modify culture. By presenting symbols of cultural heritage, older people were attempting to reconstruct culture. Similar reimaginings of "culture" have been observed within Irish island communities (Burholt et al. 2013). Some authors have argued that culture is simply negotiated through interpersonal communication and can be easily changed by renegotiation (Bruner 1982). However, this approach does not take into account power and status which are associated with the ability to recast dominant discourses. There is very limited research on the role of agency in the process of cultural exclusion. Further research to determine the characteristics of older people that attempt to renegotiate culture (compared to those that do not) would be of benefit (Dewilde 2003).

The critical human ecological–theoretical framework has facilitated an exploration of the contribution that societal structures (micro-, meso- and macro-systems and time) have upon older people's experience of cultural exclusion in the rural areas of South Wales. The framework has provided the structure to understand the dynamic, relative, multilevel social construction of cultural exclusion. Macro-time in the South Wales communities could be described as a trajectory from collectivist values to individualist ones. Exo-time moved from population stability, local services and employment opportunities to population churn, remote services and few employment opportunities. Micro-time progressed from cultural identities in harmony with cultural norms, to cultural identities in conflict with cultural norms when compared to in-migrants and younger cohorts. Participants rejected new cultural norms and yearned for those from an earlier time. Feeling culturally excluded impacted on outcomes, decreasing the sense of belonging and perceptions of community cohesion, safety, security and life satisfaction in later life.

Limitations

This study was confined to rural South Wales' communities and it is not possible to generalise findings to other locations. The study of cultural exclusion, notably the shift from a collectivist to an individualistic culture and the decline in indigenous language and/or religious participation, could benefit from comparative research with other bilingual regions in Europe, for example, Catalonia or Basque region of Spain, Brittany (France) and Gaelic-speaking regions in Ireland or Scotland. Using a similar methodology and conceptual framework would establish whether there are similarities or differences in the process within different cultural and sociopolitical contexts.

The South Wales communities were classified as disadvantaged. Therefore, the study is unable to examine the ways in which cultural exclusion manifests itself across different types of communities. For example, the experience of cultural exclusion of a disadvantaged person/household within a predominantly affluent area requires further investigation. With a few exceptions (Keating et al. 2013; Walsh et al.

2012b), rural research has failed to recognise the diversity between and within different types of rural areas as well as the heterogeneity of older people who reside within these communities.

This study has relied on older people's recollections of Welsh culture. Despite historic descriptions of hardship, the assessments of community life in rural South Wales were positive, suggesting a cognitive bias towards judging the past disproportionately more positively than experienced. Psychologists have found that individuals have a tendency to rewrite the past in a favourable light (Mitchell et al. 1997). Therefore, cultural identity in later life may be wedded to a "rosy retrospective." However, in this study, the "rosy view" of cultural heritage was held collectively by older participants. Consequently, regardless of the degree of subjectivity, the dissonance between cultural expectations and contemporary experiences had a negative impact on outcomes.

Despite limitations, this article has highlighted the importance of taking the chronosystem into account in order within the ecological framework to be able to understand and explain cultural exclusion among older people. It has shown how prevailing cultural trends become embedded in cultural identities. As culture changes, disconnection with contemporary values may manifest over the lifecourse. This suggests that strategies that seek to address cultural exclusion must take into account the cultural identities of future as well as current generations of older people in rural areas.

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