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CHAPTER 12

Migration, ageing and social inclusion

Shereen Hussein

Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the experience of migrants growing older in a ‘new’, host community focusing on the roles of migration trajectories, social networks and culture in shaping the experience of social inclusion among older migrants. I draw on data obtained from life history interviews with 66 older Turkish migrants, aged 65 years or more collected in 2012-2013 and 30 interviews with community workers and care workers supporting Turkish older people (see Hussein and Öglak 2014; Hussein forthcoming). While Turkish migrants are not as large a proportion of the UK migrant population as they are in other European countries such as Germany, they are a sizeable part of some migrant communities, especially in London.

The analysis is based on Nancy Fraser’s trilogy of interrelated factors of social justice: resources, recognition and representation (Fraser 2007). Fraser’s original analysis focused on the re/distribution of economic resources. In my analysis I will focus on social networks as a key resource in migrants’ life course. The concept of social networks is used here as a key element of ‘resources’ within Fraser’s trilogy of social justice. It reflects the availability and quality of resources and information in order to achieve certain goals (Fawcett 1989). The configurations of social networks and their linkages with a selected group, wider community in the host country or country of birth become of paramount importance in understanding their structure and impact on the levels of social inclusion of people as they grow older in the host country (Savage, Bagnal and Longhurst 2005; Boccagni 2012).

For recognition, I will discuss the cultural visibility and social status of this particular group of migrants and how these interact with wider recognition of ‘migrants’ and ‘older people’ as integrated groups within the wider society. In relation to representation, Fraser (2007) focused on social and political participation and access to justice; here, I will include participation within and outside the ‘community’ and draw attention to the vexed impact of ‘strong social networks’ and solidarity in creating support as well as potential of social inclusion. Here, I consider social inclusion of older people as a key component of the social justice discourse (Artiles et al. 2010).

Ageing and migration in context

Ageing might appear as a well-known concept, it simply means ‘growing older’, yet defining what constitute ageing and how it manifests itself is far from simple. Ageing has diverse definitions and meanings; not only across different cultures but also between various groups within the same society, including between men and women (Vincent 2003). The meaning of ageing is very much dependent on the context of discussion and debate where it can be a symbol of wisdom and experience or an image of dependency and burden. The simple statement of ‘growing older’ thus brings both connotations of experiences and disadvantages. Notwithstanding the various definitions of ageing, most societies are organised in a patterned fashion corresponding to various ‘stages’ in our lives from children, to working adults to older people.

The interaction of culture and ageing can be viewed from different perspectives, likely to be centred on the definition of ‘old age’ and affected by the cultural norms of a community. Further, the identity of older people from different cultures is shaped by a long and intertwined processes and structures. Generally speaking, studies on ageing and migration tend to link older migrants with notions of “double” and “triple” jeopardy, and cumulative

advantage/disadvantage (Philipson 2015). However, double and triple jeopardy theories have been criticized because of their failure to capture the heterogeneity and inequalities within ethnic groups. Torres (2006) in her study of Iranian immigrants in Sweden argues that these models have resulted in problematization and labelling ethnic minority older adults as a homogenised social category of ‘older migrants’; resulting in a narrow focus of attention given by governments, social policy and academics. Within Fraser’s framework, older migrants’ experience of social (in)justice is shaped by resources, or lack of them, (mis)recognition and how they participate and interact within and outside their closed community. Some of the variability in these core three elements could be explained in part by migrants’ histories during their working-age including the types and structures of their engagements in the host countries as well as the extent of their culture and social networks and the processes of accumulating human and social capital (Mutchler and Burr 2011). At the same time, ethnic and racial backgrounds are important on how ‘others’ view them and consequently how such perceptions of the others can open or close opportunities within their own communities and the wider host society (Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Torres 2013).

The multiple experiences of migration and gender are situated within a complex array of assumptions, practice and environments that are viewed within specific perspectives among different groups within the same place. Such dynamics present further challenges to the meaning of ageing? How does ageing manifest itself within families, communities and states? And what are the implications of the differences observed on individuals and societies? Are all important questions to understand the experience of different groups of older people and attempt to reduce inequalities at old age that are associated with race, gender and cultural backgrounds.

Data

The interviews with older Turkish migrants took place in Turkish culture centres (n=19); day centres or residential care homes (n=23); participants own homes (n=17) and in public places such as coffee shops (n=7). All interviews were conducted by a Turkish-speaking researcher, recorded with permission, transcribed and then professionally translated to English. Participants had an almost equal gender split, 34 women and 32 men and had a mean age of 72.3 years. The majority of participants originally arrived to the UK to seek paid work (n=28) or accompanying other family members (n=13), but a large group of 24 arrived to the UK as refugees. The majority lived with their spouses either on their own or with their adult children. Data collection was through life histories and individual biographies' approach (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). This was achieved through face-to-face interviews guided by an interview guide focusing on each individual 'story', using prompts when needed to trigger further conversations. We have intentionally avoided constructing a formal process of interviewing, composing the discussion as 'a chat about your life' as a tool of empowering participants and reducing the public/private divide within the research process (Zubair and Victor 2015).

Migration and resources while growing older

Older migrants are by no means homogenous and many did not necessarily follow difficult migratory paths and trajectories. Some migrant groups including transnational professionals, return or retirement migrants might experience ageing differently in their new countries of destinations (Warnes and Williams 2006). Yet, the majority of First-generation Turkish migrants to the UK were directly or indirectly recruited into low-paying jobs, in most cases to work within Turkish speaking communities, working as tailors or in shops. This work formed an important part of their social networks' structure and the development of their 'new' social identity as migrants. They joined the UK at a time when immigration policies targeted low-skilled migrant workers. This was triggered, as in the majority of Europe, by the Second World

War and consequent severe labour shortage. However, unlike other European countries the UK did not develop large-scale ‘guestworker’ programmes to recruit migrants. Instead, most immigration occurred to the UK were spontaneous and in large initiated by migrants themselves and were supported by strong social networks spanning between host and home countries. Evren’s case (below) represents a typical story of many of the participants in our study.

My husband had a business in Istanbul. But he went bankrupt and we were stuck in a difficult situation. I had heard from my friend that the tailors earn good money in London. But I was illiterate; I had never gone to primary school however I learnt it [making dresses] by myself. Moreover I do not know English. My friend suggested to come here and to work here. And I took my little daughter and came to London. Next day I began to work in a garment workshop. I did not have to speak English because everyone there spoke Turkish. My friend had arranged a room for us. I worked hard and in tough conditions but without any formalities and I worked largely as pieceworker.

(Evren, 72 old Turkish woman)

This process of migration highlights the crucial role of social networks both at home and in the UK at all stages of the migratory process and post migratory experience. This expanded from the early stages of identifying an opportunity in relation to the migratory destination, then in facilitating the migratory action through continued practical support in finding work and accommodation. The strong social network of the Turkish community in the UK redistributed various resources including practical and emotional support to the then new migrants in many ways. They facilitated the initial act of migration by providing accommodation and connections to a large group of earlier migrants, access to paid work and knowledge albeit limited and specific to the day-to-day needs of migrants. Ageing for many was not an issue that they reflected upon or considered at their younger ages, it was rather a process that took place in

relative silence, only surfacing with the onset of health conditions or the cessation of work. In most cases, there was little awareness of what they could do once their informal employment ceased to exist.

There is paucity of research investigating the social life of older migrants and its relationship with the wider community and environment. The vast majority of participants in this study were regular visitors to their local culture centres, indicating great potential for such centres to play key roles in promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation at old age. Here, the 'community' and the environment of the Turkish culture centre acted as facilitator for social activities and as a great resource. However, the type of activities was not gender neutral and the nature of 'engagement' was still very confined to almost the same group of Turkish older migrants prohibiting the development of new social networks. During the interviews some older women felt particularly excluded because of limited language proficiency as well as their gender when the community centre failed to provide specific activities for women.

Men go the Turkish Cafe or Turkish Community Centre but we [women] are not included in any Centre.

(Ayşe, 62 years Cypriot woman)

Accessing the wider community, whether for care needs or social and wellbeing support, was more restricted. The analysis shows that language and communication issues were evident barriers acting on at least three levels. Such challenges were presented pre, during and post communications in relation to health and social care needs. Language barriers were also evident during receiving support, where many felt limited ability to communicate their needs and preferences and ended up accepting their own assumptions as facts. Then among those who experienced receiving support from outside the Turkish community some felt they were being mistreated, misunderstood, or in some cases humiliated. It was difficult to establish if these

incidents of mistreatment were genuine or were simply perceived due to lack of their ability to effectively communicate their own feelings and needs.

Migration and recognition at old age

Older migrants' biographical stories involved the acceptance of losses, as of the work role and importance within the Turkish community and in many cases a mismatch between hopes and reality. Many of our participants came from depressed rural areas and had relatively little education and few formal or technical job skills.

For many migrants there was a preference to receive support from their close family members or at least from Turkish workers. Many were in receipt of social care benefits such as personal budgets, which forms a corner stone of the personalisation agenda of the English social care system (Boxall, Dowson and Beresford, 2009), and used such benefits to facilitate receiving care from their close social network. Older Turkish migrants perceived these arrangements as the most desirable options to addressing their care needs, which would minimize potential conflicts related to cultural and language preferences. By maintaining care exchange within the same network they have effectively extending their reliance, although more formally, on their close social network particularly their family. However, it was clear that other options of care provision were not usually explored or weighted up against the opportunity of continuing this emotional exchange within their closest social network. Indeed, the narratives from this study included examples where this type of reliance did not seem to be the best option, and in some cases appeared to pose some further risks of neglect or abuse. More generally, retaining the interaction within the same social network into old age posed certain challenges in relation to feelings of isolation and social exclusion at old age

The interviews with Turkish community support workers indicated some misassumptions about Turkish older people, particularly in relation to the availability, willingness and quality of their social capital and their role in older people's wellbeing.

They [the Government] think that our elderly people stay with us but we use some social care services at home such as home help, meals on wheels, from Council or Government.

(Turkish Care Co-ordinator)

There was also an expressed lack of recognition among the participants of how older people were treated among the wider public. For example, many participants related to 'bad stories' they have heard concerning older people who receive formal long-term care including incidents of mistreatment and neglect. They used such stories to justify their lack of acceptance of help and support from outside their closed community. The latter highlights the power of closed social networks in exchanging information and their limitations in reflecting the wider experience of other older people who have more positive experiences. Thus a combined effect of communication difficulties and lack of awareness of suitable activities and support, through a selective pool of experiences, made many older Turkish migrants prefer to stay within the comfort zone of the Turkish community, both formally and informally, regardless of whether this was best meeting their needs or not.

However, some older Turkish migrants also questioned the assumptions of filial obligations, where the wider community assumes they will be looked after and treated with respect by their offspring and family members (Valk and Schans 2008). Furthermore, older women strongly felt that duties towards their husbands' care and their children and grandchildren come first, and in many situations they expressed a strong feeling of marginalisation.

They [my family] don't give me any respect and as a person, I feel very alone in my home. Never go out, always at home and in front of TV.

(Frieda 83 years Turkish woman)

In Frieda's case there seemed to be signs of emotional abuse and neglect and her experience highlights the complexity of family relations that could be observed in all cultures and cautioned from simplistic assumptions related to family care and concepts of filial obligations (Cylwik 2002; Nauck 2005).

Generally, Alevi community tends to keep to itself, particularly through membership of associations, which (though not exclusively) are likely to have a strong political engagement. Therefore, the "England Alevi Cultural Centre & Cemevi (IAKMC)" was established in 1993, with the aims of preserving their cultural and religious identities and providing social support. The IAKMC also aimed to have a 'social mission' to address economical, and social problems, offering consultancy service with culturally oriented activities (Wahlbeck 2002). IAKMC has membership of over three thousand, forming one of the biggest non-governmental organisations with Turkish origin in England. It was no surprise that for most Alevi/Kurdish older people in the sample. The IAKMC was very important and many participated regularly within this community.

Migration and representation at old age

The representation of migrants in the British public space is both problematic but sometimes over simplified. The discourse of public image of migrants in Britain has continued to take a central stage in various domestic debates from economic participation/pressure to national

threats and terrorism (Duffy and Frere-Smith 2014). The representation of migrants is, in general, focused disproportionately on ‘illegal’ immigration and asylum seekers/refugees with very little coverage of the significant contribution of migrants in the labour market and the UK higher education system (Blinder and Allen 2016). The negative coverage of illegal migrants and asylum seekers is usually generalised to include all ‘migrants’ fuelling anti-immigration and racial sentiments (Threadgold 2009, Balch and Balabanova 2016). Despite some recognition of the growing populations of ‘migrant’ older people in the UK and Europe, the representation of older migrants, let alone older migrant women, is almost absent in the media and policy debates (Cela and Fokkema 2017). The limited body of research focusing on older migrants in Europe portrays a negative health and social experiences of higher rates of isolation and unmet needs. Part of such (mis)representation is the tendency to consider labour migration as a ‘temporary’ phenomenon, such perception is not only present among policy makers but among migrant groups themselves.

Another reason for the absence of older migrants from the public debate is their current age profile, with fewer numbers currently considered ‘older’ than the general population. While this might be the current state, there is general agreement that there will be more migrant older people in the UK, simply because people from all communities are living longer. It is projected that by 2051 the ethnic groups with the highest proportions of people aged 50 and over will^[1] be ‘other White’, Chinese, ‘other Asian’, white British, Indian, ‘other’ and white Irish (Lievesley, 2010).

Research highlights a wish among various groups of older migrants in Europe to return to their home countries at one point, however, such ‘wish’ remains as such due to practical and family commitments (Warnes and Williams 2006; Percival 2013). During the interviews with Turkish older migrants, they were prompted to talk about their preferred place to grow older. The

majority appreciated being in the UK with only five participants said they were actively considering returning back to Turkey to spend their later years of life. Their reasons for wishing to return 'home' were explained in relation to cultural issues, to be better understood by the wider community and the availability of larger social network in Turkey and general nostalgia to better weather and a familiar place from their childhood and youth memories.

The vast majority of participants (n=61) were certain that they will continue living in the UK, some highlighting the better care services offered to older people in the UK when compared to Turkey while the majority explained that most of their social networks including immediate families were already in the UK and thus they felt a sense of belonging to the UK; '*here is my real homeland*'. The social construct of their identities seemed to be fluid with time and circumstances. While they tended to identify their belonging to the UK as older people in need of care and support they were in fact referring to their strong socially constructed networks rather than the wider British society. Further, many of the participants were more influenced by their own perception of ageing as young adults when migrated from Turkey than becoming an older 'British' citizen, thus reflecting a perception of ageing that related to a different place (Turkey) but that might have also related to a different generation (how their own grandparents have aged for example).

Social participation of this particular group of older Turkish migrants seemed to revolve around family obligations, such as grand-parenting and looking after spouses for women, and heavy involvement in the cultural centres and their activities among men. The culture centres offered access to Turkish movies, TV and music as well as food and old games. They offered a safe place where older men can speak in Turkish with other people who share similar histories.

Lütfi who was a 66 man who arrived to the UK 30 years prior to our interview has made a clear effort to access wider activities. He originally came looking for work but had never ‘formally’ worked but managed to provide paid ‘help’ to friends. He brought his wife and had 4 children who all lived near by his home in London. Lütfi was one of the most active participants despite his poor command of the English language; he had a gym membership through his local council and swam regularly, at least twice a week. When we asked him where he would prefer to spend the next 10 years of his life, he quickly said ‘*in the UK*’, when prompted why, he said ‘*this is my homeland now, here is my wife and children and I am happy here*’. The gender influence in Lütfi’s case should not be ignored as none of the women we interviewed referred to participating in activities involving the wider British society not the least sporting activities such as swimming. Lütfi’s grown up children were also important in shaping his outlook to life, they have actively encouraged him to join the local gym and lived geographically close to him providing support when needed. They have thus acted as a bridge to a wider set of networks.

Discussion

It is important to note the limitation of this sample of older Turkish migrants and their representation to the wider older Turkish community in the UK. The interviews were based in North London, where many of the older Turkish migrant communities initially settled. The group who remained geographically immobile since arrival may not fully represent other Turkish migrants who had moved to other parts of the UK due to employment, family or other reasons. I have also used the culture centres to initiate participants’ recruitment process; the sample thus may over represent those who make use of the culture centres more regularly. This sample lived in some of the most deprived urban areas in the UK and previous research (Scharf et al. 2005) has shown that older people in deprived urban areas have longer length of residency and tend to age in place more than others. Older people within these settings tend to suffer from multiple exclusions due to a set of disadvantages including limited social relations, low

working-life income and long residency in low-status neighbourhood (Scharf et al. 2002; Scharf et al. 2005).

The experiences of older Turkish migrants presented in this analysis highlight the importance of the intersectionality of migrants' background in their experience of ageing and over all levels of social inclusion (Dannefer and Settersten 2010). Following Fraser's concept as a framework of understanding the experience of older migrants, we find their core resources to be their social networks which shaped most of processes associated with accumulation of human and social capital, work and employment trajectories and cultural ties (Mutchler and Burr 2011) emphasising the importance of considering migrants' identity, in part, as a social construct of what group identity means at old age. Here the level of involvement of various actors, such as family and friends, in the migration process is likely to impact on individual migrants' post migration wider choices and decisions. These decisions may include maintaining and formulating old and new networks and interacting with various layers of the 'new' society as well as the continuity and strength of transnational ties and connections with the country of birth (Castles 2010). Within such context, the composition of social networks consists of a multiplicity of social actors and groups.

The migration journeys of all participants in our study were highly influenced and initiated by self and closest networks including family and friends in Turkey and the UK. Where such networks formed a key resource for a considerable part of their lives. Their biographies indicate a process of a social network building that involved interchanging support and reliance on a specific social group that unintentionally comes with a long process of isolation from the wider communities of the host society (the UK) through informal working, limited opportunities to acquire transferable skills including language and dependency on information exchanged within a closed network. Thus, while the resources they had were essential to complete their

migratory goals 'successfully', to the contrary to Fraser's theory, this particular type of resource did not provide a basic component in their experience of social justice in the host country. In this context, thus, resources in the form of strong elective social networks did not enhance the social inclusion of older migrants but perhaps facilitated a sense of ambivalence of own belonging as older people within the wider British society (Grillo 2007). What was clear from the analysis is that older migrants lacked the type of 'resources' necessary for facilitating a path to social inclusion and social justice within the wider British society.

Recognition is a key component in people and group's levels of social inclusion and j(in)justice. Honneth (2006) argues that experiences of misrecognition are the fuel of contemporary social and political struggles, and mutual recognition is the most relevant criterion of justice. Not only how a group recognises itself is important, but how various groups are recognised and understood by the wider community is even more important. The path to older age for most participating migrant older people was formed through the identification with an 'elective belonging', referring to the way in which 'place biographies' have become less important than their personal biographies and identities (Phillipson 2007; Buffel 2017). The discrepancies between the preferred and actual place of ageing resulted in a high degree of feelings of social exclusion at later age and a sense of marginalisation from the wider community, which had been observed among other groups of migrants in previous studies (Buffel 2017). These feelings formulated how they recognise themselves and how they feel they are recognised by the wider society. For older migrants with certain political background such as Alevi or Kurdish, established a further political identity through creating a diaspora as a notion of self-portrayal and political mobilisation (Wahlbeck 2002). Here, cultural centres played an important role in identity recognition and support mechanisms. A body of literature points to the interplay between the notion of diaspora and feelings of marginalisation, disadvantages and the continued struggle for recognition (Brubaker 2005), yet could be regarded as a 'dangerous

enemy within' or an 'agent of change' (Kleist, 2008). The empirical data reflect a greater sense of belonging to a certain identity among the group who arrived as refugees with Alevi/Kurdish background, where there appeared to be a greater resistance among this group to interact with the wider community.

The findings indicate a general feeling of lack of recognition among older Turkish migrants, these were manifested in some cases of a constant perception of being mistreated and misunderstood. The perceived assumptions by the wider British public of the availability and willingness to provide for 'their' older people are equally questioned and added to lack of recognition of the needs of older migrants. Fraser emphasises the need for both redistribution of resources and recognition as key requirement for social justice (Fraser 1996). The way to incorporate both, she argues, is through a comprehensive framework where differences are recognised, through a norm of participatory parity, and fair redistribution of resources.

To capture the level of social participation, rather than political participation, I considered how older migrants actively participated within and outside of their 'communities'. As a pivotal point, the analysis shows that the majority of migrants did not anticipate growing older in their destination country with significant implications on their planning and valuing participation as 'older people' within the British society. The representation and social participation of older migrants were shaped by the continued connections with the social networks formed during the migratory journey as well as their political identity as the case with Alevi/Kurdish older migrants (Öglak and Hussein 2016). Only a handful of migrants interviewed made a clear effort to create and maintain connections with the wider British community. Almost all of this group were men and the processes were, in the majority facilitated, by their grown-up offspring, who were well educated and were able to facilitate some form of participation. Thus, working with

second-generation migrants and addressing gender difference could prove fruitful in facilitating meaningful social, and potentially civic, participation and representation of older migrants.

The findings of this study have wider implications as they resonate to a large extent with the experience of other older BME communities in the UK (Victor, Martin and Zubair 2012). For Turkish older migrants, social networks were key resource that provided them with significant safety nets at crucial times in their lives. However, the same ‘resource’ created unintentional isolating bubbles from the wider society for prolonged periods of time, which had negative implications on the way they felt they are recognised and on how they actively sought representation. Turkish culture centres play a crucial part in providing safe places for communication and social activities, which could be utilised to extend own social networks. These centres can also act as a starting point for information sharing and support including awareness-raising of individual own rights and enhance their broader representations.

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