

Addressing social care needs and well being of older migrants and ethnic minorities in the UK

Dr Shereen Hussein
Principal Research Fellow
King's College London

Faculty of the psychology of older people
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shereen.hussein@kcl.ac.uk

Why focus on older migrants?

- What happens during your younger ages impact on how you feel, act and aspire at your older age.
- How different or similar is the experience of ageing between migrants and home-born populations?
- What correct and incorrect assumptions do we make about different groups of BME older people?

A case study: Older Turkish migrants in London

- Why Turkish migrants and why London?



Turkish people are not all the same

- Mainland Turkish; Cypriots; Alevi; Kurds
- Different histories, similar journeys
- Some are not easily distinguished – invisible minority

Migration journey

- How did it all start? .. Many years ago ..
- *'I had heard from my friend [in Turkey] that the tailors earn good money in London. But I did not know English. My friend suggested I come here [London] and to work here. And I took my little daughter and came to London (in the 60s). I did not have to speak English because everyone spoke Turkish, I did not need to learn English. My friend had arranged a room for us. I worked hard and in tough conditions.'* (Woman, 72, Turkish)

Belonging

- A journey of interactions and belonging ..
- Social networks → migration → social network → labour participation → social network → accommodation → life → ageing
- *'We lived here for a long time but we had worked entirely with Turkish people as tailors. We do not know much about the English community'*

(Woman, 75 years old, Cypriot)

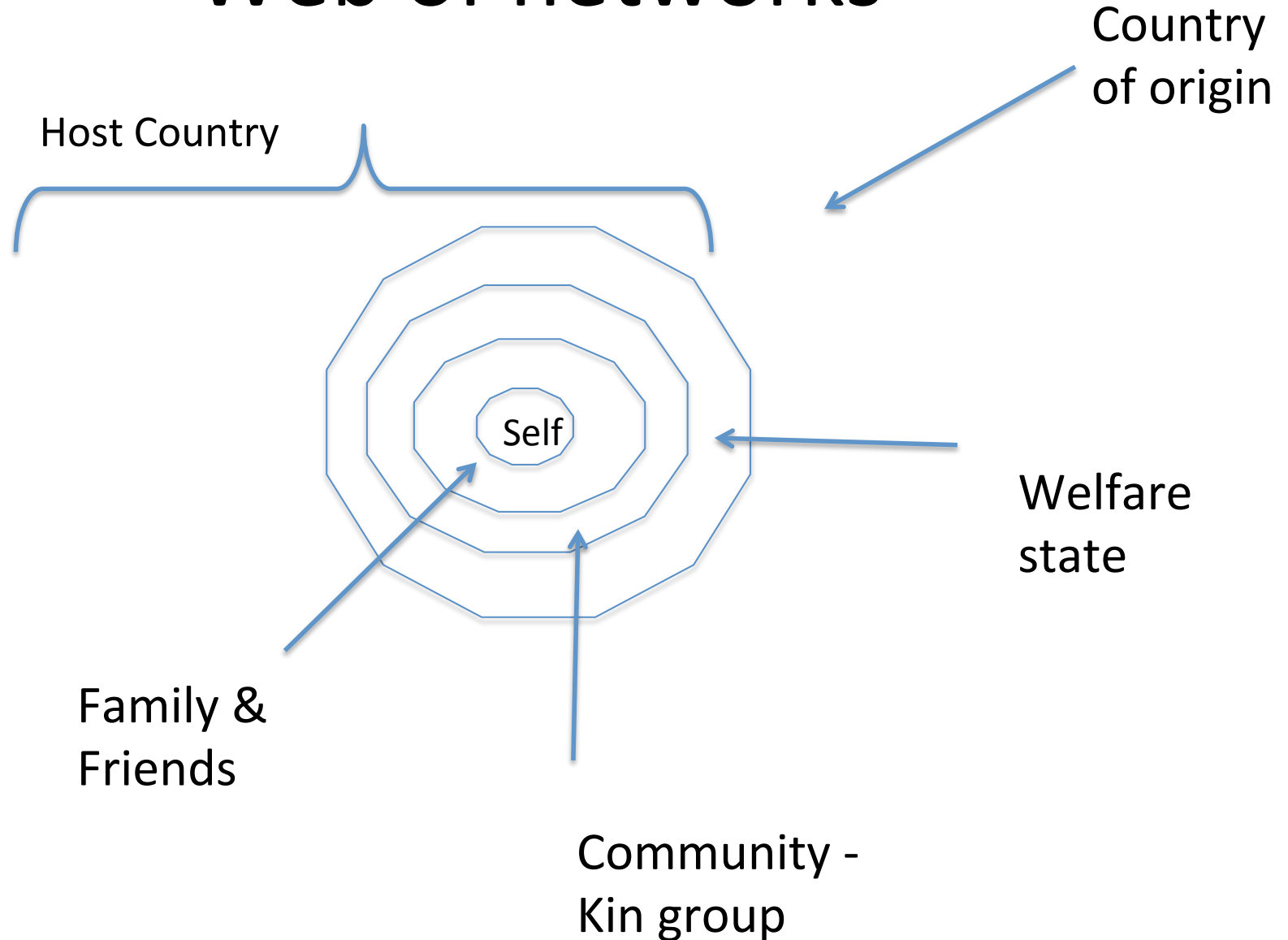
The story

- This is only for those we talked to .. Can't generalise
- Closed network – ethnic economies
- Informal work and family.. all tangled up
- Over a long period of time
- Relative and absolute exclusion

“I have been living in England for 35 years; I am illiterate, I did not go to elementary school because there was not a school in our village. I had worked as ‘chef’ in a Turkish restaurant for 21 years. I did not know English except ‘yes’ and ‘no’. I had never need for speaking English.”

(66, Male, Alevi)

Web of networks



Ageing

- Changing gear – before and after ‘retirement’
 - Being busy in the shop/restaurants .. Then ... little activities rotating around grand parenting, TV and community group
 - Sometimes taken by surprise
- Ageing and onset of disease .. Sudden and big change .. Do I need to talk to the rest of the world ?!!
- ‘Silent’ ageing – little realisation of available support outside of close network

Who should I trust? Who should I rely on?

- Expectations from the 'family system' and immediate community
- Obligations and duties; unspoken rules – in many cases gender biased:

Mrs. Kaplan (71, Cyprus), been in the UK for 50 years. She had worked in Textile as a tailor at home, informal working and no employment protection. She does not have a good command of the English language. She's been looking after her husband (80) who has a mild dementia, and blind for 7 years. She has her own health problems (rheumatoid; can't use her fingers. They have 6 children and only one daughter lives near by she helps with cleaning, cooking and shopping.

Gaps between ideals and realities

- Availability of key family members to offer support
 - Geographical proximity and willingness
- Or the assumed duties are not fulfilled

‘They [my son and daughter-in-law] don’t give me any respect and as a person, I feel very alone in my home. never go out, always at home and front of TV’.

(83, female, Turkish)

Culture centres

- Key role:
 - socialization
 - keeping the Turkish language alive
 - exchanging information (if correctly known)
- But there are limitations to what they can achieve
 - Outdated information
 - Lack of funding
 - No real provision of activities aimed at integration

Capitalizing on social capital

- Intergenerational solidarity and strong family and community ties are assets
 - Empower informal carers and community advocates
 - Enable the community to better care
 - Increase awareness of available services and of own rights to them
 - Off-spring usually well educated and fluent in the English language- bridge to their older parents
- Gender issues: *‘Men go the Turkish Cafe or Turkish Community Centre but we [women] are not included in any Centre’*

(62, female, Cypriot)

Messages to practice

- Awareness of cumulative impact of isolation and associated barriers
 - Language and communications
 - Assumptions from both sides
 - Perceived barriers that certain services are not suitable for my own needs
 - Family support should not be assumed and is not always there
 - Gender issues
 - Multiple burdens of care (partner and grand-children) and own health needs .. Less of a priority

Thank you for listening

- Further readings:
- Oglak, S. and Hussein, S. (In press) Active Ageing, Social and Cultural Integration of Older Turkish Alevi Refugees in London. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*
- Hussein, S. and Öglak, S. (2014) Ageing, identity and place: the experience of Turkish migrants in the United Kingdom, *Turkish Migration in Europe International Conference*, London 30th May- 1st June 2014.
- <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/res/rowm/projects/turkeyuk.aspx>
- @DrShereeHussein