

Migration, ageing and social inclusion: A case study of Turkish older migrants in the UK

Professor Shereen Hussein, King's College London



DrShereehussein



Background: Social exclusion

Older people

Six domains of later-life exclusion*

1. Neighbourhood and community;
2. Services, amenities and mobility;
3. Social relations;
4. Material and financial resources;
5. Socio-cultural aspects;
6. Civic participation.

+ Migrants

- Pre-migration (drivers & motivations)
- Migration process (ordeal)
- Post migration stressors
- Attachment & displacement



Commutative disadvantages?

Twitter: @DrShereeHussein

05/07/18

2

* Walsh, K., Scharf, T. & Keating, N. (2017) Social exclusion of older persons: a scoping review and conceptual framework. *European Journal of Ageing*, 14(1): 81-98

Migrant older people are getting some research recognition ... but

- The majority of migration research focuses on working-age migrants
- The majority of ageing research does not specifically addresses older migrants
 - With few exceptions; sometimes mixing ethnicity with migration
- Very few statistics are available on migrant older people in Europe, let alone with a focus on social exclusion domains
- In 2015, 11% of foreign born, compared to 18% of the total UK population, were aged 65+

Migration & Ageing

- Notions of “double” and “triple” jeopardy theories
 - Largely been criticized because of their failure to capture the heterogeneity and inequalities within ethnic groups
 - problematization and labelling of older migrants as a homogenised social category Human and social capital accumulation (positive returns)
 - Relates to migration and life course trajectories
- Otherness – ethnic & racial markers
 - How groups are perceived and how they perceive ‘other’ groups

A Case Study: Turkish Migrants in London

- At least 500,000 Turkish born in the UK- the majority live in the capital, London
- There was no specific UK immigration route ((e.g. guestworker in Germany) but a general appetite for 'low skilled' immigrants
 - Most migration decisions were spontaneous and actively initiated at the individual level
 - Some differences however, esp. Cypriot Turks and Kurds
- 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
- Majority of main land Turks arrived in the 70s, except Turks and Alevi in the 90s (mainly as refugees)

The Research

- Life history interviews with 66 older Turkish migrants, aged 65 years or more
 - Collected in 2012-2013; intentionally avoiding using a formal process of interviewing, composing the discussion as 'a chat about your life'
- 30 interviews with community workers and care workers supporting Turkish older people
- All interviews were conducted in Turkish language, professionally translated, transcribed and analysed thematically
- 34 women and 32 men and had a mean age of 72.3 years
- Majority arrived to seek paid work (n=28) or accompanying family (n=13), with a large group of 24 arrived as refugees.

Twitter: @DrShereeHussein

Oglak, S. and Hussein, S. 2016. Active Ageing, Social and Cultural Integration of Older Turkish Alevi Refugees in London. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 36(1): 74-87.

05/07/18

6

Analytical Framework

- Analysis framework based on Fraser's(2007) trilogy of social justice: resources, recognition and representation
- Social inclusion is considered as a core component of social justice
- Fraser's original analysis focused on the re/distribution of economic resources, I focus on social networks as a key resource in migrants' life course.
- For recognition, I discuss the cultural visibility and social status of this particular group of migrants
- Fraser (2007) focused on social and political participation and access to justice; here, I include participation within and outside the 'community'

Social networks as a resource: the migratory decision and beyond

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.. 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.

(Evren, 72 old Turkish woman)

Migration and Recognition at Old Age

- Recognition as a 'migrant' and as an 'older person'
 - A 'selective' pool of experiences - Many relating to 'bad stories' in the media re mistreatment of older people ... little acceptance of 'outside' support
 - A 'selective' pool of experiences
- Maintained care exchange within the same social networks
 - Recognised others' needs and being recognised by others but within their closest networks; High risk of isolation and social exclusion at old age
- Political recognition for some groups (Alevi and Kurds)

Recognition within the close social network

They [son and daughter in law who are paid through personal budgets] don't give me any respect as a person, I feel very alone in my home. They never take me out, I am always at home in front of TV.

(Frieda 83 years Turkish woman)

Migration and Representation at Old Age

- Migrants' public representation is both problematic and over simplified
- Little attention to 'older' migrants, almost never in a positive way
- A portray of negative health and social experiences and higher rates of isolation and unmet needs
- Fluid comparison between the representation of older people across border (Turkey and the UK) but also across time
 - In many cases based on 'constructed' rather than 'real' experience

Some made a clear effort: A note on gender

- Lütfi (66 years old man) was one of the most active participants despite his poor command of the English language
- Arrived alone 30 years ago, worked informally, then brought his wife and children
- Had a gym membership through his local council and swam regularly
- Clearly happy to grow older in the UK – the role of grown up children
'this is my 'homeland' now, here is my wife and children and I am happy here'

Ageing as a stage of the migrants' life course

- Ageing was a process that came about in relative 'silence'
 - Not considered or planned for at younger age; sudden onset of disease; withdrawal of 'work'; a 'shock' for some
- For many, especially men, the local culture/community centre was a place to fill in this void
 - Not gender neutral
- Transnational belonging
 - Facilitated through satellite TV, cross-country communications etc.

Social networks and social inclusion

- Social networks for older migrants is a significant resource
 - Shaped and strengthened over the migrants' life trajectories
 - Supported the migratory act itself
 - Redistributed resources within a newly formulated 'identity' of self within a new community in the host country
- Created some adverse effects – relative and absolute isolation from wider society
- This particular resource did not provide a basic component in their experience of social inclusion in the host country

Recognition

- Elective identity and belonging
 - Either socially or politically
 - How they are recognise others and perceive others to recognise them
- Divergence between actual and preferred place of ageing
 - Levels of isolation and social inclusion/exclusion
- Advantages and disadvantages of community/cultural centres
- Notions of diaspora

Participation

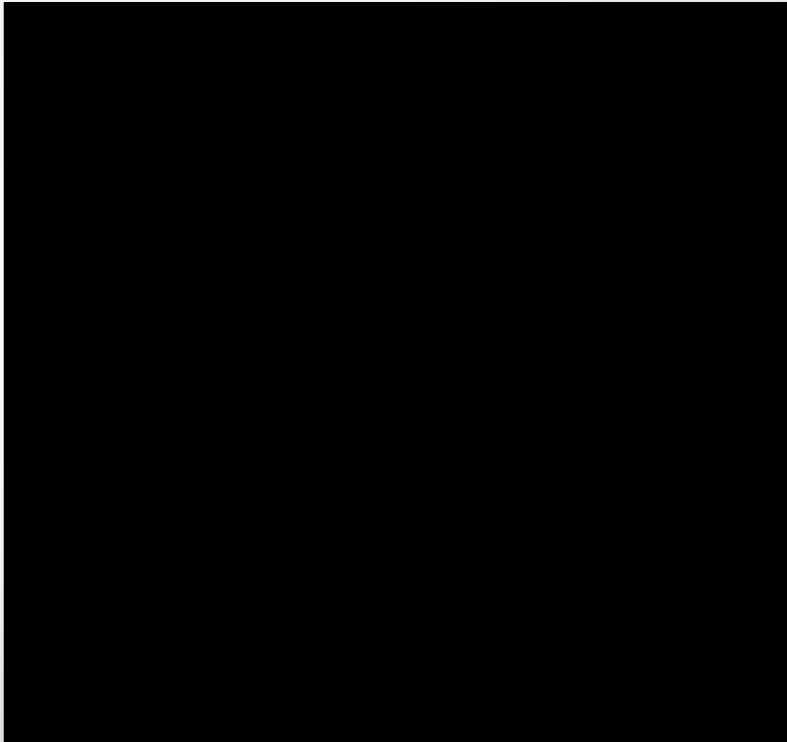
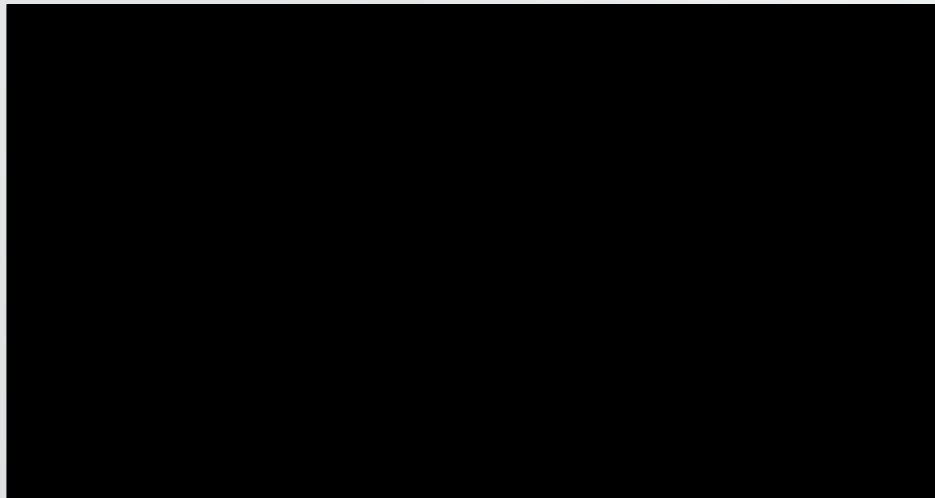
- Representation and social participation shaped by the continued connections within certain social networks
- Some made an effort of wider participation
 - Gender and political alliance
 - The role of off-spring (bridging across)

Discussion points

- Limitation of the study (lack of generalisability)
- Intersectionality of migrants' background and life course trajectories
- The importance of social networks across all stages of life
Limited opportunities to acquire broader sets of transferable skills
 - Unintentional isolation bubbles
- Wider implications

Funding and Acknowledgment

- This is research from a sub-study of the Longitudinal Care Work Study, which is conducted by a team of researchers at the Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London and led by the author. I am particularly grateful to Sema Oglak.
- The study is funded by the English Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of the Social Care Workforce Research Unit core funding (2008-18)
- The views expressed here are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent that DHSC.



Shereen.hussein@kcl.ac.uk

s.a.hussein@kent.ac.uk

07952740146



DrShereeHussein

Twitter: @DrShereeHussein