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**Transnational Aging among Older Turkish and Moroccan Migrants in the Netherlands:
Determinants of Transnational Behavior and Transnational Belonging**

Jolien Klok¹, Theo G. van Tilburg¹, Bianca Suanet¹, Tineke Fokkema^{2,3,4}

¹ Dept. of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1081, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands

² Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI-KNAW), Lange Houtstraat 19, 2511 CV Den Haag, The Netherlands

³ University of Groningen, Broerstraat 1-11, 9712 CP Groningen, The Netherlands

⁴ Erasmus University Rotterdam, Burgemeester Oudlaan 50, 3062 PA Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Correspondence author: Jolien Klok, Dept. of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1081, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Jolien.Klok@VU.nl

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Abstract

This study investigates how resources and constraints (location of family, gender, income, cultural distance to society of settlement and health) impact the experience of two interrelated dimensions of transnational aging: transnational behavior and transnational belonging. We specify transnational behavior by visiting the country of origin and transnational belonging by emotional attachment to the country of origin and considering return migration. Data come from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam with interviews held between 2013 and 2014 with 264 Turkish migrants and 205 Moroccan migrants, aged 55-66. Regression analyses reveal that transnational belonging and behavior are explained by different factors. Family-in-laws' location and gender only play a role in explaining transnational belonging, cultural distance and self-rated health affect both dimensions, and subjective income only impacts transnational behavior. Results from the stratified analysis show that for Turkish migrants families' location, cultural distance and health are important in considering return migration, whereas for Moroccan migrants, only cultural distance plays a role. We conclude that the distinction between transnational belonging and behavior is useful in understanding transnational aging and that our resources and constraints approach extends our view on older migrants.

Keywords: transnational aging, transnational behavior, transnational belonging, older migrants

Introduction

People migrate since time immemorial. Against a background of increased access to mobility and technological progress, migration has taken a whole new dynamic during the last decades (Castles & Miller, 2009). The experience of aging is also impacted by this development. Especially for older adults who went through the life-changing event of international migration, these features of the modern era bring new opportunities and lifestyles (Fokkema, Cela, & Witter, 2016). Increasing numbers of older migrants travel back and forth between their countries of origin and settlement, either physically (Baykara-Krumme, 2013), virtually (Baldassar, Nedelcu, Merla, & Wilding, 2016) or imaginary (Buffel, 2015). As migrants' lives are no longer bound to one country, 'aging in place' as policy, but also as gerontological ideal, needs problematization (Johansson et al., 2013). Aging in place refers to staying in the same or a familiar place (e.g. neighborhood, community) over a sustained period of time. It is considered an epitome of aging because of older people's need for and tendency to value continuity in perspectives and environments (Estes, Biggs, & Phillipson, 2003). Without bluntly devaluing the importance of continuity in later life, aging in place might offer a too limited perspective for those who spend their lives across borders, because of its emphasis on a singular place (Zhou, 2013). Researching aging from a transnational viewpoint allows for a perspective wherein multiple places can simultaneously be of importance to a person. We call this transnational aging. Our interpretation of transnational here is explicit, as we transcend cultural or ethnic identity within the borders of the country of settlement. We seek to do justice to the *trans* in transnational by letting it mean "border-crossing".

In the current paper we apply this transnational perspective to the aging experience of first-generation, older migrants residing in the Netherlands, who migrated decades ago. We aim to answer the research question: how can differences in transnational aging be explained? Two interrelated dimensions 'transnational behavior' and 'transnational belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) are studied. Transnational behavior is actual, physical border crossing behavior (Bolognani, 2007). Transnational belonging is an emotional attachment to and imagined orientation on the country of origin (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). We focus on several factors that could impact these dimensions, using a resources and constraints approach.

Previous research on older migrants who have been living in countries of settlement for dozens of years focused on the question of where to stay after retirement (De Coulon & Wolff, 2010). Options are staying in countries of settlement, returning permanently to countries of origin (return migration), or adopting a lifestyle travelling between countries of settlement and origin (pendulum migration). The vast majority employs a lifestyle of pendulum migration (Bolzman, Fibbi, & Vial, 2006). They ‘go home’ to their countries of origin because of affective social bonds, expectations and obligations, ties to a place, and environmental reasons (i.e. a warmer climate) (Bolzman et al., 2006; Fokkema et al., 2016). Intrinsic to being a pendulum migrant is to always ‘go back’ to the country of settlement. This is paradoxically often for the same reasons: proximity to loved ones like (grand) children in the country of settlement, but also for social security, residence permits and good quality health care (Bolzman et al., 2006; De Haas & Fokkema, 2010; Ganga, 2006). Factors that impact the factual decision to stay, return, or travel back and forth have been researched more than once. Yet, how older migrants lead their transnational lives on an emotional level has hardly been the center of attention.

The current paper will add to this firstly by studying transnational aging from a broader perspective, while still considering the life-changing question of return migration. It studies factors that impact emotional attachment to the country of origin, as well as transnational behavior. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of studies on transnational aging are qualitative, providing social science with many insights and meaningful interpretations of a complex social reality. The current research contributes to this work by employing quantitative data to study determinants of transnational aging more systematically. We take the case of migrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent in the Netherlands.

Turkish and Moroccan migrants in the Dutch context

In response to a demand for low skilled workers, Turkish and Moroccan labor migrants came to the Netherlands during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Initially, plans were to stay in the Netherlands temporarily to save money and then to return to countries of origin. However, as economic conditions in these countries did not improve, family reunifications started in the 1970’s and continued into the 1980’s (Schellingerhout, 2004). The idea of temporary stays was largely abandoned in the 1980’s and many Turkish and Moroccan migrants are still residing in the Netherlands. They now form, together with migrants from former Dutch colonies Suriname and

the Dutch Antilles, the main ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. The first generation of 55 years old and over, counts respectively 46.000 Turkish and 44.000 Moroccan migrants in a population of 5.3 million older adults (Statistics Netherlands, 2016). Overall, these groups share migration histories, poor socio-economic conditions and religion (Islam) (Crul & Doornik, 2003). However, they do differ in their position in Dutch society. For instance, the Turkish community is characterized by high ethnic solidarity, whereas social cohesion among the Moroccan community is lower (Crul & Doornik, 2003; Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001).

Regarding migrants' legal transnational possibilities, since 2012 Dutch politics allows for older migrants to stay a maximum of 13 consecutive weeks abroad without losing access to social security and benefits (Fokkema et al., 2016). Many of them make use of this arrangement to spend time in the country of origin (Schellingerhout). Most Turkish and Moroccan migrants have Dutch and/or dual citizenship (Bevelander & Veenman, 2006), making travelling across country borders relatively easy. Living costs in Turkey and Morocco are lower than in the Netherlands and transportation is relatively cheap. Furthermore, return migration is encouraged in the Dutch Remigration Scheme, in which it is established that return migrants have the right to a monthly allowance when they decide to permanently resettle in the country of origin. However, this would revoke their Dutch nationality.

We look at migrants aged 55-66, which demographically may seem a rather young cohort, hardly appropriate to be called 'old'. However, research shows that migrants often age prematurely (Bolzman, 2013), because of decades of tough physical labor in, at times, precarious legal and social circumstances (Soom Ammann & Van Holten, 2013). This is also the case for the population under study (Schellingerhout, 2004): though young in calendar years, they are 'older', speaking in social and physical terms.

Transnational Belonging and Transnational Behavior

Scholars in transnational aging (Zontini, 2015) as well as in the wider field of transnationalism (Somerville, 2008) have distinguished between a behavioral and an imagined component in transnationalism, when using the concepts of transnational 'ways of being' and transnational 'ways of belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Ways of being refer to actual border crossing connections and practices. Transnational ways of belonging convey identification with and attachment to (people in) the country of origin through nostalgia, memory or imagination.

Imagination is not fictitious here, but a lived consciousness of connectivity with the country of origin and its people, despite their physical absence (Anderson, 2006).

Inspired by the distinction between transnational behavior and transnational belonging, we start by focusing on visiting the country of origin, an indicator of transnational behavior. Duval (2004) defines return visits as intermittent but temporary sojourns undertaken by migrants to countries of origin, where significant social ties exist. Additionally, it is a practice that allows migrants to maintain multiple identities in several international places (Duval, 2004). Being one of the most tangible embodiments of living life across borders, return visits are at the heart of transnational behavior. Especially among older migrants, who have large amounts of free time, return visits to countries of origin are gaining popularity (Fokkema et al., 2016).

We further study two indicators of transnational belonging: emotional attachment to the country of origin and consideration of return migration. First, attachment to the country of origin, either in its physical or social sense, centers around notions of ‘home’ and ‘feeling safe’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Where does one feel at home, and ‘comfortable’? Migrants, without actual border-crossing behavior, can find themselves being situated between different points of reference: between country of settlement and country of origin, between real and imagined. These sometimes take mutually exclusive forms: a matter of ultimate loyalty to either the place of origin or the place of settlement (Wolf, 2002). The constant confrontation between a simultaneous home ‘here’ and home ‘there’ (Zontini, 2015) on an emotional and imagined level is a marker of transnational belonging. This could be particularly prominent for older migrants under study here, as they spent a substantial part of their youths in the country of origin and it was found that people tend to reminisce about the past more in older age (Cohen & Taylor, 1998).

A second indicator of transnational belonging is pondering on a permanent return to the country of origin. This is relevant for older migrants, as with retirement age also the question of where – in what country – to grow old becomes prominent (Hunter, 2011). Most of them eventually employ a lifestyle of travelling back and forth (Fokkema et al., 2016), with which the question of return often becomes the ‘myth of return’ (Anwar, 1979). Nonetheless, with regard to the question of return Ganga (2006, p. 1395) states: “It would be a mistake to consider return as an episode; rather it needs to be seen as a process, an evolution, which is intrinsic to the migrant experience, even for those who never go back.” This refers to continued deliberation on where

one should be, a constant longing for the country of origin and its way of life, while at the same time living in the country of settlement. Considering return adheres more to a state of mind, than to the planning of an actual return migration. As such, it refers to transnational orientation on a more symbolic level (rather than a behavioral level) and is therefore regarded as an indicator of transnational belonging.

Determinants of Transnational Behavior and Transnational Belonging

This paper explores how differences in transnational aging can be understood, by looking at transnational behavior and transnational belonging. We follow Bolzman et al. (2006) when they argue that migrants employ a specific way of combining their personal resources and cultural identity to guide the decision-making process of return migration. Bolzman et al.'s focus is the *actual* move (or stay) while we, in contrast, concentrate on transnational aging from a broader viewpoint, not necessarily including actual, life changing actions. Nonetheless, we reason that the same categories of resources and of constraints impact transnational aging. These categories are social (our focus is on location of family), economic (income), cultural (the cultural distance to the country of settlement) and degree of autonomy (in this study health limitations). Different factors may have varying impacts on the two dimensions of transnational aging through different mechanisms. Some resources or constraints may be crucial for engaging in transnational behavior, whereas others may be more determinative for transnational belonging, while still others may evoke both.

Social

Visiting the country of origin is a social activity, often implying cultural and/or social ties that were formed before emigration and are maintained by these visits (Duval, 2004). These social ties are often familial connections (Zontini, 2015). An obvious determinant of return visits is hence whether family lives in the country of origin. We argue that having extended family such as siblings, family-in-law and other family in the country of origin may not only contribute to more transnational behavior, but also to stronger transnational belonging (Burholt, Dobbs, & Victor, 2016). Visiting family in person and sharing sustained periods of time with them may arouse a heightened awareness of the country of origin when in the country of settlement, and a feeling of 'home' attached to it. We therefore hypothesize (Hypothesis 1): when family members

live in the country of origin, transnational behavior is more likely and transnational belonging is stronger.

Offspring of the generation under study is largely located in the country of settlement (Schellingerhout, 2004). When older migrants consider to stay in the country of settlement or to return, the location of children is generally decisive (Bolzman et al., 2006). This is even more so for women than for men, as women are often more reluctant to leave children and grandchildren (De Coulon & Wolff, 2010). Men may therefore evaluate the possibility of aging in the country of origin as more viable. We therefore expect transnational belonging to be less apparent for women than for men.

We call on another argument for gender differences in transnational belonging. Migration to the more ‘developed’ countries is usually accompanied by a greater institutional focus on gender equality, often leading to status gain and more independence for women. As a by-product of this development, men experience status loss (Goldring, 2001). Women consequently tend to prefer to stay in the country of settlement to cling to their newly achieved liberty, whereas men are more likely to desire a permanent return to foster and/or restore their socially solid position in the country of origin (De Haas & Fokkema, 2010). Based on the location of children and how this influences men and women differently, and on divergent gender norms in the country of origin and settlement, Hypothesis 2 reads: women have a weaker transnational belonging than men.

Economic

Differences in economic resources have frequently been found to impact levels of engagement in transnational behavior (i.e. Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002). Although travelling to Turkey or Morocco is not too expensive, sufficient income is still required to maintain regular return visits. But what presents itself as an even bigger expenditure, is the gifts that are handed out during those stays, either to live up to the expectations of those left behind, or to demonstrate that the emigration was an economic success (Bolognani, 2007; Hunter, 2011). We thus formulate Hypothesis 3: the higher the income, the more likely transnational behavior is.

Cultural

Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) identify ‘reactive transnationalism’, i.e., negative perceptions of the society of settlement and feeling socially excluded. As a result, homesickness and nostalgia may occur, for a country where one does feel ‘at home’. Consequently, it gives rise to transnational belonging, either because of an imagined, emotional involvement in the country of origin, or because the question of return is once again being contemplated. Simultaneously, visiting the country of origin can be a comforting escape, resulting in increased transnational behavior. Accordingly, we expect in Hypothesis 4: the more cultural distance is perceived, the more likely transnational behavior is and the stronger transnational belonging is.

Health limitations

Poor health could limit the extent to which migrants are physically able to travel back, thereby curbing transnational behavior (Bolzman, 2013). Moreover, Turkish and Moroccan older migrants tend to prefer informal care, provided by children and in-laws to formal care (Fokkema et al., 2016). As children are primarily located in the country of settlement (Schellingerhout, 2004), poor health could also diminish the extent to which one considers return migration. Hypothesis 5 is: the poorer health, the less likely transnational behavior is and the weaker transnational belonging is.

Methods

Sample

To analyze the hypotheses, we used data from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam. LASA is a multidisciplinary, ongoing cohort study, focusing on four domains of functioning of older adults: physical, emotional, social and cognitive (Huisman et al., 2011). In 2013 and 2014 a migrant cohort was sampled, exclusively containing older adults of Turkish and Moroccan origin residing in the Netherlands. Face to face interviews were conducted by trained interviewees who offered a Dutch and translated interview (in Turkish, Moroccan Arabic/Darija and Tarafit). Next to the general survey, migrant specific topics were covered, such as acculturation, transnationalism and identity. The cooperation rate was 45%. The sample consists of 479 respondents.

We excluded five respondents who were not born in either Turkey or Morocco, because we are interested in first-generation migrants from these countries. We also excluded four respondents who were institutionalized and one respondent with a premature termination of the interview, leaving a total sample of $N = 469$ of which 264 with a Turkish background and 205 with a Moroccan background. On average, respondents spent 36.6 years in the Netherlands and their age ranged from 55 to 66, with a mean age of 60.9.

Measurements

Transnational behavior was measured by a dichotomous variable which assessed whether people had visited Turkey/Morocco at least once in the last five years for a sustained period of at least two months (coded as 1) or not (0). Of the respondents 30% reported they had not been in the country of origin in the last five years, 51% reported they had been there once for a period of at least two months, the rest of them more than once for this period of time. Transnational belonging was indicated by two variables: emotional attachment and considering return migration. Emotional attachment was gauged by three statements, “I belong here less than in Turkey/Morocco”, “Although I live here, it does not feel as my country” and “Turkey/Morocco is always in my mind and in my memories” (selection of Lowlands Acculturation Scale, Mooren et al., 2001). Respondents were asked whether they did not (0) or did (1) agree with these statements. Scores were summed to obtain a scale ranging from 0 to 3; for Turkish migrants reliability rho is .71, and Loevinger’s homogeneity .58; for Moroccan migrants rho is .68, and homogeneity is .60. Considering return migration was assessed by one question: “Are you considering going back to Turkey/Morocco permanently?” Response categories were “no” (1), “I do not know” (2) and “yes” (3). The three dependent variables we used to operationalize transnational aging revealed low correlation. Considering return migration and feelings of loss correlated (Spearman) .20 ($p < .001$). Visiting the country of origin indeed seems to be a different dimension: it did not correlate significantly with the other two variables.

Four variables were used for social resources. We measured family members’ residence by three variables, indicating whether one’s siblings, family-in-law, and extended family are predominantly living in Turkey/Morocco (1) or not (0). Children in the Netherlands was measured in the opposite way: having most of the children (and or children in law) in the Netherlands (1) versus having no children (and/or children in law) or not having most of them in

the Netherlands (0). Gender was coded male (0) or female (1). Income is a variable containing eleven categories of income levels per month per respondent and partner (if applicable). Response categories ranged from up to 907 euro per month (1) to 2723 euro per month and higher (11). For income satisfaction we asked: “Are you satisfied with the standard of living you attain on your income?” Response categories ranged from “dissatisfied” (1) to “satisfied” (5). To measure cultural resources we indicated whether one perceives cultural distance (Kleijn & Verboom, 2004) to Dutch society. Three items were presented: “I sometimes get visits from Dutch acquaintances”, “I would like to speak to Dutch acquaintances about what worries me” and “It is all right for a Dutch acquaintance to babysit my children”. Response categories ranged from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (4). Scores were summed to obtain a scale ranging from 3 to 12; for Turkish migrants reliability alpha is .64, for Moroccan migrants reliability alpha is .77. The last resource is good health, gauged by two variables. Physical functioning reflected the ability to perform seven activities of daily living (Katz et al., 1963): walking up and down a staircase of fifteen steps without resting, dress and undress oneself, sitting down and standing up from a chair, cutting toenails, walking outside for five minutes without stopping, using public transportation, and taking a shower or a bath. Response options ranged from “no, cannot” (0) to “yes, without help” (4). Scores were summed to obtain a scale ranging from 0 to 28; for Turkish migrants reliability alpha is .86, for Moroccan migrants reliability alpha is .75. Self-rated health was assessed by one question: “How is your health in general?” Response options ranged from “poor” (0) to “excellent” (4).

Control variables were age and partner status, i.e., having a partner (1) versus not (0). Further, we accounted for differences in level of education (5 to 18 years), having a paid job and length of residence in the Netherlands in years.

Procedure

First, we established whether or not Turkish and Moroccan migrants differ significantly in their scores on the dependent and independent variables using *t*-tests for continuous variables and χ^2 -tests for categorical variables. To test if and how explanatory variables impact transnational aging differently for Turkish and Moroccan migrants, we analyzed them separately. However, computing *z*-scores for the differences in effect sizes (Brame et al., 1998), we found that the effect sizes only differed significantly for very few explanatory variables. Hence, we decided to

only show the results of the regression analyses for the pooled sample in the subsequent tables. We controlled for differences between migrants from Turkish (0) and Moroccan (1) descent.

Given the measurement scales of the dependent variables, we used binary logistic regression for visiting the country of origin, ordinal logistic regression for emotional attachment, and multinomial logistic regression for considering return migration. Regarding the latter, response option “do not know” is somewhat ambiguous, taking into account that the question asks whether one considers. We observed no differences for the contrasts between “yes” and “do not know” and the reference category “no”. Consequently, we combined “yes” and “do not know” in one category and performed binary logistic regression. We mention the explanatory variables that significantly differ in their impact on the dependent variables between Turkish and Moroccan migrants. We tested whether the negative effect of having children in the Netherlands on transnational belonging is stronger for women than for men (moderator effect; Hypothesis 2) but as there were very few women in the sample with no children in the Netherlands, we could not incorporate it in the final model. Multicollinearity testing did not reveal any problems.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptives of the variables for the full sample, as well as for Turkish and Moroccan migrants separately. The last column shows whether or not the two groups differ significantly. Turkish and Moroccan migrants differ in their return-visiting behavior as well as in their emotional attachment to the country of origin. More Turkish migrants (79%) report that they visited Turkey in the last five years for an uninterrupted period of at least two months than their Moroccan counterparts (62%) visited Morocco. Turkish migrants, on average, have a stronger emotional attachment to Turkey than Moroccan migrants have to Morocco. Turkish and Moroccan migrants do not differ in considering return migration.

– Table 1 about here –

Most respondents report that their family predominantly live in the country of origin and almost all respondents state that most of their children live in the Netherlands. Turkish migrants report significantly more often than Moroccan migrants that the majority of their family-in-law lives in the country of origin. The results further indicate that the two groups differ significantly in income satisfaction, perceived cultural distance and ability to perform activities of daily living. Moroccan migrants are more satisfied with the standard of living they can attain on their income,

perceive a greater distance to Dutch society, and perform better in activities of daily living than Turkish migrants. No differences on control variables are found.

Table 2 depicts the results of regression analysis of the three variables for transnational aging. Regarding Hypothesis 1, when family members live in the country of origin, transnational behavior is more likely and transnational belonging is stronger, we find partial support. Contrasting our expectation, transnational behavior is not impacted by the presence of family members in the country of origin. For transnational belonging we do find an effect of family members in Turkey or Morocco in the expected direction: when one has family-in-law in Turkey or Morocco, emotional attachment to the country of origin increases with .41. In the pooled sample, we only find it for emotional attachment and not for considering return migration. Moreover, we find this effect just for family-in-law, not for siblings, other kin, nor for children. In the stratified sample, we find that Turkish migrants have a decreased likelihood of considering return migration when family-in-law reside in the country of origin ($B = .87, p < .01$). There is no association among Moroccan migrants ($B = .18, p > .05; z = -2.3, p < .05$).

– Table 2 about here –

Hypothesis 2 reads that women have a weaker transnational belonging than men. We find support for this presumption. Women's likelihood of considering a permanent return is significantly lower than men's ($B = -.82$). An effect for emotional attachment is not detected. Turkish migrants having children in the Netherlands are much less likely to consider returning to Turkey than childless Turkish migrants or those with children in Turkey ($B = -1.27, p < .01$), while there is no difference among Moroccan migrants ($B = .26, p > .05; z = 2.4, p < .05$).

For Hypothesis 3, the higher the income, the more transnational behavior, the results show no support. Even more so, we detect a countered effect: an increase in satisfaction with the standard of living one can attain reduces the likelihood of having spent a period of at least two months in the country of origin in the last five years ($B = -.22$).

Hypothesis 4 is supported. The more one perceives cultural distance to Dutch society, the more likely one is to have spent at least once in the last five years a period of two months or longer in the country of origin. Next to that, the greater the perceived cultural distance, the stronger is the emotional attachment to the country of origin. The effects are .10 and .16 respectively for every increase on perceived cultural distance. Furthermore, Moroccan migrants who perceive greater cultural distance, are more likely to consider returning to Morocco

permanently ($B = .13, p < .05$), while we see, in contrast to the hypothesis, a reversed effect among Turkish migrants ($B = -.17, p < .05; z = 3.1, p < .01$).

Concerning Hypothesis 5, which discussed the impact of health on both transnational behavior as well as transnational belonging, we find mixed support. With respect to transnational behavior, health evaluation has the expected effect: better self-rated health increases the likelihood of having spent time in the country of origin in the last five years ($B = .36$). However, it impacts transnational belonging in the opposite direction: an increase in self-rated health causes a decrease in emotional attachment to the country of origin ($B = -.22$). A similar effect is observed among Turkish migrants for the effect of physical functioning on considering return migration ($B = -.10, p < .01$; among Moroccan migrants $B = .04, p > .05; z = 2.7, p < .01$).

We further observe that almost none of the control variables significantly impact any of the indicators of transnational aging, except for age of Moroccan migrants on emotional attachment ($B = .13, p < .01$; among Turkish migrants $B = -.03, p > .05; z = 2.5, p < .01$). This effect of age points in the same direction as the effect of health. We also detect that being born in Morocco versus in Turkey explains a rather large share of the variance in visiting behavior ($B = -1.02$) and emotional attachment ($B = -.55$), additional to the effect of the other explanatory variables. Finally, we observe that the variables we use for explaining the variance in visiting the country of origin, emotional attachment to the country of origin and considering return migration, explain 19%, 12% and 8% respectively.

Discussion

We investigated how several resources and constraints influence transnational aging among older Turkish and Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands. Specifically, we looked at how location of family, gender, level of income, differences in cultural distance to society of settlement and in health affected two interrelated dimensions of transnational aging: transnational behavior and transnational belonging. We specified transnational behavior by visiting the country of origin and transnational belonging by emotional attachment to the country of origin and considering return migration.

We did not find an effect for having family members in the country of origin on transnational behavior (Hypothesis 1). Perhaps visiting the country of origin has above all an emotional meaning; with ties being attached more to place than to people (Vingerhoets, 2005).

For transnational belonging we found, as expected, that when family members live in the country of origin, even though it only applies to family-in-law, emotional attachment increases.

However, for Turkish migrants having family-in-law in the country of origin is a reason *not* to consider return migration. Perhaps affective ties with partners' family could also pose a burden when returning there for good, because of potentially imposed care duties. Datta, Poortinga and Marcoen (2003) found for instance, that Non-Western migrants have more instrumental than affective relationships with in-laws in comparison to Western European natives. Yet, this explanation does not provide us with any insight on why this would differ between migrants from Turkey and Morocco. We suggest further comparative research that explicitly focuses on different types of family and how this impacts transnational aging.

We found support for Hypothesis 2, which is consistent with earlier found gender differences in desiring return migration (Böcker & Gehring, 2015). Having children in the country of settlement is reason for Turkish migrants to not consider a permanent return, but not for Moroccan migrants. This could relate to differences between Turkish and Moroccan migrants in opinions on the place of the family. Phalet and Schonpflug (2001) observed that Turkish parents in the Netherlands transmit ideals on the importance of family relatedness more intensely to their children than Moroccan parents.

The results signify that when satisfaction with income is higher, return visits are less likely. This contradicts our idea (Hypothesis 3) that costs of travelling and visiting are more affordable for those with high income. It might be that, the more one has to spend (assuming satisfaction with income is related to objective spendable income), the more relatives and friends in the country of origin expect the visitor to buy them presents. Consequently, people who are satisfied with their income may become hesitant to visit their country of origin. Fokkema et al. (2016) also discuss migrants' possible reluctance to visit the country of origin because of high responsibilities and social obligations.

We found convincing evidence for Hypothesis 4 that cultural distance towards society of settlement increases the likelihood of return visits and enhances transnational belonging. We must be careful not to interpret this association as an argument for understanding transnational aging and integration into society of settlement as opposite ends of a continuum. Research has shown repeatedly that this is not the case (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). Cultural distance in this study measures whether migrants allow citizens of the society of settlement in their personal spheres.

This is far from a comprehensive measure of integration into society of settlement, as integration is more complex, entailing many different dimensions, like participation, identification and culture adoption (Snauwaert, Soenens, Vanbeselaere, & Boen, 2003). The finding that Turkish migrants are less likely to consider eventual return migration when cultural distance is greater (in contrast to Moroccan migrants, who showed a pattern supportive of the hypothesis) also illustrates that cultural distance and transnational belonging are not contradicting concepts.

Supporting Hypothesis 5 we found a reduced likelihood of transnational behavior when one's health was poor. However, better health diminished transnational belonging. This may be explained explicitly by the *aging* component, in transnational aging. As people become older and health deteriorates, not only do they reminisce about lost times and places, but they also contemplate more on where to die (Becker, 2002; Cohen & Taylor, 1998).

Overall, the resources and constraints approach we used to explain differences in transnational aging among Turkish and Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands is well chosen. Most of the determinants were indeed contributing to some of the differences in transnational aging, although not always for all three dependent variables in the hypothesized direction. Bearing in mind the associations we found for the two dimensions, we conclude that the distinction between belonging and behavior is useful in understanding transnational aging. Additionally, there are indeed different factors influencing the two dimensions; while family-in-laws' location and gender only play a role in explaining transnational belonging, cultural distance and self-rated health affect both dimensions. Subjective income on the other hand, only impacts transnational behavior. These findings suggest that for Turkish and Moroccan older migrants in the Netherlands largely the same factors are impacting their transnational experience. Therefore, studying them in a pooled sample appears to be a fruitful procedure. However, for some of the associations we find differences between the two groups, which were mainly detected for considering return migration. To understand these differences, future research could focus on the national circumstances in the country of origin. For instance, Al-Ali, Black and Koser (2001) stress the importance of taking into account historical contexts and the interplay of social, political and institutional factors in countries of origin (Bosnia and Eritrea), when explaining uneven patterns of transnational activities. With regard to the population under study here, internal affairs seem to be causing political instability in Turkey. Various developments might be of importance to interpret differences between Turkish and Moroccan migrants in their

transnational involvements. We observed differences in the average frequency of visiting the country of origin and the average level of emotional attachment. We also detected differences in factors that influence considering return migration (as shown in the stratified regression analyses). However, we lack sufficient insights for a further discussion of differences between Turkish and Moroccan migrants and did not formulate hypotheses on these differences.

In this paper, the *aging* part of transnational aging might not have had the same level of theoretical focus as ‘transnational’. Yet, our focus was not on studying how aging impacts transnational orientation, but how transnational engagements come about in old age and how these can be understood. Throughout the paper we make clear why certain transnational involvements are potentially salient when being older, of which considering return migration (Hunter, 2011) is the most obvious, but we also discuss how visiting the country of origin and emotional attachment to it, are of importance in older age (Cohen & Taylor, 1998; Fokkema et al., 2016). Furthermore, we study specific features of old age that could impact transnational aging, like poor health.

A few other nuances and limitations should be mentioned. First, formulation of the question about family location was hardly determinative: respondents reporting that their family members were not *predominantly* living in Turkey or Morocco could still have family members there. This could therefore still be a reason to travel to Turkey or Morocco, thereby diminishing the explanatory power of family location.

Second, the Netherlands is ‘home’ to many first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan migrants (Crul & Doornik, 2003). We did not investigate if being well embedded in the Turkish or Moroccan community in the Netherlands might compensate or supplement transnational aging (Snel, Engbersen, & Leerkes, 2006).

Third, although transnational behavior and transnational belonging do not necessarily go hand in hand, they do often come together (Boccagni, 2012; De Bree, Davids, & De Haas, 2010). In addition, transnational behavior and belonging may present themselves at different times in a person’s life. Moreover, the two can be compensatory: elevated transnational belonging may compensate incapability of visiting the country of origin. We did not unravel these processes but focused on what factors influence specific dimensions of transnational aging. Follow-up research is necessary to study whether and how transnational behavior and belonging cohere among older migrants.

Fourth, this research has focused on older migrants, who migrated relatively early in life and grew old in a foreign country. We studied their transnational aging, which means the findings reported here do not necessarily hold true for the “sunbirds” from Europe, North America and Asia, for the older care givers and care receivers who cross international borders to do so, or for those who migrated from Europe to Canada after World War II in search for economic betterment, or for still others who may also lead highly transnational lives in old age (Ciobanu, Fokkema & Nedelcu, 2016). In addition, when reflecting on the findings of this study, we should not take for granted the national context in which the described processes take place (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2011), and discern the possibility that our findings deviate from research among, for example, older Turkish migrants in Germany and older Moroccan migrants in France.

Despite these limitations, we add to existing research on transnational aging, firstly, by decomposing transnational aging into a behavioral and an emotional, imaginative component and arguing that different factors may have different impacts on the two dimensions. We thereby go beyond the ‘mere’ question of return after retirement, on which some previous studies have focused (Böcker & Gehring, 2015; Bolzman et al., 2006; De Coulon & Wolff, 2010). Secondly, by using quantitative data, we were able to more systematically study determinants of transnational aging, a not much undertaken effort. Third, scholars often lump Turkish and Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands together as ‘ethnic minorities’, because of similar migration histories, deprived health and socio-economic conditions (Denktaş, 2011). We explored and observed some differences in transnational aging between Turkish and Moroccan older migrants and described them.

Conclusion

In this research, we studied what inspires transnational behavior and transnational belonging among aging migrants. We observed that family-in-laws’ location and gender play a role in explaining transnational belonging, subjective income impacts transnational behavior, and cultural distance and self-rated health affect both dimensions. We thus find both practical as well as more personally subjective factors to impact the two dimensions of transnational aging, suggesting that older migrants’ lives are, on multiple domains, imbued with transnational experiences. For social work knowledge, this implies that we should take into account that other reference category – the country of origin – when being in relation with older migrants, or when

possibly judging their aging lives as “non-participating”. There just might be a chance we only see a part of their lives in the country of settlement. Also, social work organizations should acknowledge these highly transnational lives and aim to remove potential barriers that older migrants face in receiving social services when engaging in pendulum migration. The need for these practical adaptations is a function of diverse societies and flows from the main finding of this study: transnational aging is a salient reality with life conditions both ‘here’ and ‘there’ continuously shaping older lives in the society of settlement.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics for pooled and stratified samples

	All		Turkish migrants		Moroccan migrants		t/χ^2
	N = 469		N = 205		N = 264		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
<i>Dependent variables</i>							
Visiting Turkey/Morocco	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	16.0 ***
Emotional attachment (1-3)	1.8	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.7	1.0	2.6 **
Considering return migration	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
<i>Independent variables</i>							
Siblings in Turkey/Morocco	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	2.0
Family-in-law in Turkey/Morocco	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	4.1 *
Extended family in Turkey/Morocco	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.1
Children in the Netherlands	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.3	0.0
Gender (female)	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.5
Income (1-11)	5.0	2.9	5.0	2.8	5.0	2.9	0.0
Income satisfaction (1-5)	2.5	1.5	2.2	1.3	2.8	1.5	-3.9 ***
Cultural distance (3-12)	7.6	2.5	7.2	2.0	8.1	3.0	-3.4 **
Physical functioning (0-28)	23.3	5.5	22.2	6.1	24.8	4.4	-5.3 ***
Self-rated health (0-4)	2.5	1.1	2.5	1.0	2.6	1.1	-0.9
<i>Control variables</i>							
Age (55-66)	60.9	3.0	60.8	3.1	61.1	2.9	-1.2
Having a partner	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.5
Level of education (5-18)	7.3	3.3	7.2	3.0	7.4	3.5	-0.6
Having a paid job	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	3.8
Length of residence in the Netherlands (7-46)	36.6	7.3	37.0	7.0	36.1	7.6	1.4
Moroccan (vs. Turkish)	0.4	0.5					

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2: Logistic regression of transnational behavior and transnational belonging (N = 469)

	Transnational behavior		Transnational belonging			
	Visiting Turkey/Morocco		Emotional attachment		Considering return	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	-4.65	2.59			2.04	2.24
Cut point 1 (Emotional attachment = 0)			0.98	1.99		
Cut point 2 (Emotional attachment = 1)			2.96	1.99		
Cut point 3 (Emotional attachment = 2)			3.96 *	2.00		
Siblings in Turkey/Morocco	-0.49	0.25	-0.15	0.19	0.03	0.21
Family-in-law in Turkey/Morocco	0.08	0.25	0.41 *	0.19	-0.36	0.22
Extended family in Turkey/Morocco	0.02	0.31	0.12	0.23	0.27	0.26
Children in the Netherlands	0.34	0.33	-0.37	0.27	-0.42	0.30
Gender (female)	-0.42	0.25	0.11	0.20	-0.82 ***	0.22
Income (1-11)	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04
Income satisfaction (1-5)	-0.22 **	0.08	-0.07	0.06	-0.08	0.07
Cultural distance (3-12)	0.10 *	0.05	0.16 ***	0.04	0.02	0.04
Physical functioning (0-28)	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.04	0.02
Self-rated health (0-4)	0.36 **	0.13	-0.22 *	0.10	-0.08	0.11
Age (55-66)	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.04
Having a partner	0.18	0.32	0.42	0.26	-0.03	0.29
Level of education (5-18)	-0.05	0.04	0.00	0.03	-0.02	0.03
Having a paid job	0.19	0.32	-0.02	0.24	-0.29	0.27
Length of residence in the Netherlands (7-46)	0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01
Moroccan (vs. Turkish)	-1.02 ***	0.24	-0.55 **	0.19	0.23	0.21
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)		0.19		0.12		0.08

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$