Weaving Translocal Lives, Bridging Ageing Experiences
Weaving Translocal Lives, Bridging Ageing Experiences: Turkish-born Women in Sweden
Abstract


This thesis explores Turkish-born women’s experiences of ageing in a translocal setting by looking into the narratives of women who lived in Sweden for 40 years on average. It is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 Turkish-born women who are between the ages 60 and 78. The overall aim of the thesis is to contribute to new knowledge about the diversified later life experiences of ageing migrant women from an intersectional life course perspective. The following research questions have guided the analysis: How do Turkish-born women construct their sense of belonging after almost 40 years in Sweden? How did the migration to Sweden influence the women’s understandings of gender norms? How do they make sense of ageing and care in a migration context? And how can we explore the complex power dynamics that have been produced over the life course of ageing migrant women? The study incorporates a cross-fertilisation of intersectional and life course perspectives to emphasise the simultaneous influence of agency and structural forces to reveal the racialised and gendered experiences of migrant women. The analysis shows that sense of belonging is constructed at a translocal scale that extends national borders and has a temporal nature. The women construct their sense of belonging through family and kin ties and become rooted in certain localities through negotiations and re-negotiations over the years. Care and work come to the fore as important sites of such negotiations as the women age in Sweden. Both care and work arrangements carry gendered patterns as they do and undo gender by performing household work, paid work and care for family and kin. The analysis shows that the women often have one foot in traditional gender norms while having another foot in gender equal norms. Moreover, the ‘doing’ of gender extends to old age. The women do age through negotiating intergenerational and gendered care with other actors in their lives. The study suggests an intersectional life course perspective to expand our gerontological imagination.

Keywords: translocal ageing, intersectional life course, doing age, doing gender, Turkish-born women, Sweden, care

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PART II
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ARTICLE IV
An Intersectional Life Course Approach to Expand Our Gerontological Imagination on Ageing Migrant Women
Preface

What called me to this topic? When I contemplate on this question, it leads me to a specific memory. In 2017, I was living in Istanbul and doing an internship at a local NGO called 65+ Elder Rights Association. One day we received an e-mail, in English, from a Turkish-named person who lives in a large city in Sweden. In the e-mail, this person was asking if we, as the NGO, can recommend nursing homes in Istanbul that are specialised in Alzheimer’s care. The reason was, as he explained, that he had a mother in Sweden who was around 90 years old and was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. He explained that his mother’s memory was already deteriorated to the point that she cannot remember what has been said two minutes ago. Moreover, he stated that she forgot all the Swedish she learned and was struggling to live in a nursing home in Sweden. As a last resort, her son decided that it might be a good option to ‘send her’ to a nursing home in Istanbul, where he thought that might be a better fit to her needs. This case puzzled me because I never thought about this ‘transnational’ aspect of ageing before. We sent him a list of nursing homes in Istanbul and wished good luck, but I continued to think about ‘what happens to the people who are ageing in another country?’. I was already familiar with the ‘labour migration to Europe’ phenomenon that took place around the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey, so I got curious about the aftermath of this migration in relation to later life. I already knew that many labour migrants moved to Europe as ‘guest workers’ to work in factories and were supposed to return Turkey around the age of retirement since their goal was often to save money. I also knew that the majority of the recruited workers were men and women were either left behind or brought to Europe under family reunification laws. As I briefly looked into the literature, I realised that for many migrating people, returning turned into a myth - referred as the ‘myth of return’ in literature - which made me even more curious about ageing in another country. So, I decided to do research on this topic and applied to a PhD position in Sweden.
Acknowledgements

As expected, writing a thesis had been a difficult and long journey, that is full of wonders and surprises. Although it is a cliché to call it a journey, it is the best word to describe it, because it is an experience of *bildung* in its truest sense. It is a journey to the magic mountain that is full of bumps, heavy rain and many unexpected encounters with the self and others.

As I was struggling with this self-cultivating experience, I got tremendous support from people that cared for me, which reminded me once again the importance of community. I received so much support and care throughout this whole process, I cannot express my feelings of gratitude enough. But here comes an attempt to do so.

First of all, I am deeply grateful for the all the women who shared their stories with me during the interviews. This thesis literally would not exist without you. My heart gets so full when I think about how generously you shared your life stories with me.

Secondly, I feel very lucky to have Helen Peterson and Jenny Alsarve as my thesis supervisors. They guided me into this academic world and encouraged me at every step of the way to move forward. Thank you for all your moral support, patience, and academic wisdom! I learned so much from you. I also feel thankful to Christine Roman, who had been my first supervisor for a year before she retired. Thank you for being such a welcoming and supportive person when I was a real rookie.

Throughout these five years, I had many chances to present my work-in-progress at the higher seminars of sociology as well as at the seminars of Work, Family and Intimate Relations (WFIR) and Centre for Feminist Social Studies (CFS), which turned out to be very fruitful. I learned so many tips and tricks about academic work from these seminars, thus, I would like to thank everyone who reserved time to read and comment on my work while giving me the chance to think about ‘bigger societal issues’. Special thanks to Magnus Boström, Rolf Lidskog, Lisa Salmonsson and Oksana Shmulyar Gréen for taking the time to read my manuscripts and give feedback. Also special thanks to Everett Thiele and Sue Glover Frykman for proof reading the thesis.

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PART I

1. Introduction

This thesis is about the ageing experiences of Turkish-born women in Sweden. More specifically, it explores Turkish-born women’s experiences in a translocal setting by looking into the narratives of women who lived in Sweden for 40 years on average. It is a qualitative study based on the narratives and situated experiences of the women who are between the ages of 60 to 78. It focuses on the influence of age, gender and migrancy over the life course of Turkish-born women in a translocal context.

The following section (1.1) defines the research problem by highlighting the current shortcomings in the field. Later, in 1.2, the aim and research questions are presented. The structure of the thesis is clarified in 1.3. Finally, in 1.4, some of the core notions and terminology used in the thesis are explained.

1.1. Defining the Research Problem

The research problem can be explained in five points. First, Sweden has a growing population of older migrants. According to Statistics Sweden, the number of people aged 65 and above with a foreign background has doubled in the last 20 years (from 153,864 in 2002 to 307,699 in 2021). It is reasonable to assume that the face of ageing and later life, in Sweden as elsewhere, will change dramatically in the coming decades. We therefore need to address the diversity of experiences in later life. This requires using a critical lens that is sensitive to ageist, sexist and racist stereotypes of later life.

Secondly, our ‘gerontological imagination’ (Estes, Binney & Culbertson, 1992; Ferraro, 2007, 2018; Torres, 2015) regarding diverse later life experiences is limited and needs more attention from different disciplines. The idea of gerontological imagination refers to C. W. Mills’ concept of ‘sociological imagination’ and implies that ageing and later life should be analysed using a more holistic framework to understand heterogeneity and diversity in ageing experiences. Ageing experiences should be contextualised.

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1 Author’s calculation. Statistics Sweden, data set: Number of persons by foreign/Swedish background, age, sex and year. (Last access date: 02/11/2022).
in relation to social and historical contexts and power dynamics. As Torres (2015) points out, research on ageing migrants in recent decades has been dominated by studies focusing on ‘elderly immigrants’ who are problematised and reduced to identity orientations and culture-specific characteristics. She argues that these studies often view non-white migrant groups through a ‘white lens’, essentialising and othering them based on their ethnicity. In this type of research, ethnicity is seen as something fixed in advance and determined a priori through others’ assignment. This approach suggests that people’s ethnic backgrounds shape who they are and condition them to exhibit certain patterns and behaviours. This approach has been widely criticised for being simplistic, primordialist, over-generalising, and for disregarding the socially constructed aspects of ethnicity (Torres, 2015, 2019; Näre, Walsh & Baldassar, 2017; King et al., 2017). Following Torres’ (2015) call to ‘expand our gerontological imagination’, this thesis discusses how age, migrancy and gender are not fixed in advance, and are therefore temporal and socially constructed.

Thirdly, an increasing body of work by feminist gerontologists shows that women’s experiences in later life qualitatively differ from those of men due to the influence of patriarchal power structures throughout the life course (Ray & Fine, 1999; Hooyman et al., 2002; Calasanti, 2008; Frexias et al., 2012; Hess, 2018). Women’s later lives are strongly shaped by the repercussions of their complex and often non-linear involvement in paid work, unpaid work and pension schemes, as well as the power relations in their families and in their personal lives. There is a considerable body of work focusing on Turkish-born women in Europe (e.g. Inowlocki and Lutz, 2000; Erel, 2002; Akpinar, 2003; Zielke-Nadkarni, 2003; Mirdal, 2006; Liversage, 2009; Abadan-Unat, 2011, Yurdakul & Korteweg, 2013; Mirdal and Küçükyıldız, 2015; Palmberger, 2017; Ozasir Kacar & Essers, 2019; Wanka et al., 2019; Krobisch et al., 2021; see Chapter 3). However, fewer studies have explored the ageing and later life experiences of Turkish-born women (see Naldemirci, 2015; Liversage & Mirdal, 2017). From a sociological point of view, it is meaningful to explore the standpoint of ageing Turkish-born women, the complex configurations of power dynamics, and the tensions between structural barriers and agency over the course of their lives.

Fourthly, a perspective that takes time and temporality into account can potentially inform us about the situated and temporal stories of ageing migrants. Time and temporality play a key role in revealing the fluid and ongoing aspects of migrant experiences. Moreover, a focus on temporality
goes hand in hand with the life-course perspective, as it enables us to look at the contingencies and discontinuities of such experiences. With the emergence of a ‘transnational turn’ (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 1999) and translocality (Appadurai, 1996; Conradson & McKay, 2007) in migration studies, the spatial aspect of migration has been challenged by emphasising the multi-sitedness of migration experiences. However, especially with the translocal framework, the idea of multi-sitedness has been extended to include the temporality and situatedness of such experiences (see, for example, Cwerner, 2001; Griffiths et al., 2013; Robertson, 2015).

Lastly, more sociological studies that focus on ‘age’ are needed. Disproportionate attention is given in sociological analysis to other social positions than age, which is surprising given the rapid growth of the world’s ageing population. Sociology has great potential to contribute to the field of gerontology by examining the influence of power dynamics and social positions on ageing. For this reason, the call to incorporate intersectionality into the study of ageing migrants is highly relevant (see Anthias, 2012; Torres, 2015; 2019; Ferrer et al., 2017). Moreover, it can be illuminating to look at ageing from the perspective of power dynamics and emphasise the tension between agency and structure by incorporating ‘doing’ perspectives (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Previtali & Spedale, 2021) as a way to explore the performative and socially constructed aspects of ageing; however, few studies in the field adopt such a perspective.

1.2. Aim and Research Questions

The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute new knowledge about the ageing experiences of Turkish-born women in Sweden. The study considers the translocal ageing experiences to be co-constructed by material and affective dimensions, and it therefore explores how these dimensions are interconnected in the women’s narratives. The material dimension concerns the translation of their ‘migrant’ status into everyday life. This includes residency status, citizenship, the gendered division of labour in the household, living arrangements, employment status, and care arrangements within families. The affective dimension concerns the emotions, thoughts and feelings associated with their lived experiences. It is thus concerned with how a sense of belonging, subjectivity, understandings of motherhood, and views of femininity change over the life course, and how they relate to material spaces in a translocal context. By exploring how these dimensions come into play over the life course, the thesis aims to contribute both
empirically and theoretically to our understanding of later life and to expand our gerontological imagination.

Four main research questions have been formulated to achieve the overall aim. The first three research questions are designed to address specific aspects of the women’s narratives, namely migration, gender, and old age (in that order). The fourth research question is designed as an overarching query to explore the influence of power dynamics on the life experiences of Turkish-born women over the course of their lives.

RQ1: How do Turkish-born women construct their sense of belonging after almost 40 years in Sweden?
RQ2: How did the migration to Sweden influence Turkish-born women’s understandings of gender norms?
RQ3: How do Turkish-born women in Sweden make sense of ageing and care in a migration context?
RQ4: How can we explore the complex power dynamics that have been produced over the life course of ageing migrant women?

1.3. Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured as a compilation thesis. It consists of four peer-reviewed research articles and a cover (kappa, in Swedish). Each research question is addressed alongside several sub-questions in an article. Article 1 focuses on the narratives around migration and belonging. Article 2 explores the narratives around gender norms. Article 3 focuses on ageing and later life. Despite having these specific areas of focus, all three of these articles discuss the intersection of age, gender and migrancy to varying degrees. Article 4 presents the intersectional life course theory as a way of expanding our gerontological imagination. This is done by drawing on the empirical material of the thesis. Summaries of the articles are presented in Chapter 6.

The cover (kappa) serves several purposes: (a) to provide contextual background concerning migration from Turkey to Sweden (Chapter 2); (b) to give a broader overview of previous literature than was possible in the articles due to journal word limits (Chapter 3); (c) to expand on the theoretical and methodological issues by elaborating on the theoretical concepts and theories (Chapter 4) and clarifying methodological challenges (Chapter 5); (d) to give a brief summary of each article (Chapter 6); and (e) to provide a general discussion synthesising the empirical material from the interview study (Chapter 7).
1.4. Clarification of Key Concepts

In this section, some terminology, and key concepts such as migrancy, old(er) age, and translocality are clarified. Other key concepts will be defined and discussed later in the thesis, but I would like to clarify some of them already here to avoid misunderstandings.

First, it is important to note that this thesis focuses on migrancy rather than ethnicity or race. The main reason for this choice is to find the commonalities in migration experiences within a fragmented diaspora. The diaspora from Turkey in Sweden is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Thus, framing their experience as ‘migrancy’ is more meaningful than focusing on a single ethnic or religious group. However, framing it as migrancy runs the risk of homogenising racialized experiences of ageing in Sweden. Ageing as a Kurdish woman is not the same thing as ageing as a British woman in Sweden, even if both are ageing as ‘migrants’. Some aspects of migration may link these two migrant groups. They may share feelings of missing family, friends and the home they left behind, or experience difficulties due to language barriers. These can potentially be common migrancy experiences. However, they also differ on multiple levels because migrants with non-European backgrounds, especially if they are practising Muslims, are subject to racialised discrimination, which is linked to an ethnic/religious identity rather than migrancy as such. Thus, while all their experiences can be framed within the context of migrancy to acknowledge ethnic and religious diversity, it is important to recognise that different meanings and experiences are attached to their migrancy than to that of white/European migrants.

Moreover, when talking about migrancy, there is a danger of categorising the women who participated in this study as ‘migrants’, a position that some of the women disidentified with. For this reason, they are not referred to as migrants for the most part, and their experiences are instead understood and interpreted as situated within a so-called translocal context.

Secondly, ‘transnational ageing’ is more commonly used in the literature than ‘translocal ageing’, in order to highlight the transnational ties and dynamics of later life for migrants. However, the notion of transnationalism has some shortcomings because of its emphasis on ‘in-betweenness’ or constant contact and mobility across national borders, as I discuss in the theory chapter (Chapter 4). While in some cases I find the

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2 Hence the use of Turkish-born instead of Turkish.
term ‘transnational’ to be useful, I often find that the concept of translocality better captures their experiences because of its emphasis on situated, non-linear and multi-scalar mobilities of people, resources, and ideas (Appadurai, 1996; Conradson & McKay, 2007; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Finally, ‘older’ is used in the thesis instead of ‘old’ or ‘elder’ to emphasise the relational aspect of age. A prominent scholar in the field, Calasanti (2008), discusses the danger of using ‘older’ rather than ‘old’, arguing that it implies some internalised ageist norms because it categorises being ‘old’ as an undesired position that is negative in itself. However, the interviewed women in this study did not consider themselves ‘old’. There are multiple reasons for this dis-identification. ‘Old’ is not an objective position. Different meanings are attached to it, and thus it is contextual, relational, and personal (which is further problematised in Article 3). ‘Older’ can potentially generate a similar negative meaning, however it encompasses a larger population that is not necessarily limited to a specific age cohort. Thus, it can be understood as a relational position rather than a label.

The following chapter gives an overview of the background of the thesis. In this chapter, details about the diaspora from Turkey as well as the history and characteristics of migration from Turkey to Sweden are presented.
2. Contextualising Migration from Turkey to Sweden

In this chapter, I set the scene for contextualising migration from Turkey to Sweden by giving an overview of its main characteristics.

Today, Turkish-born migrants are not among the largest migrant populations in Sweden, since they rank as the 10th largest group of foreign-born residents (Statistics Sweden, 2022). Because Statistics Sweden does not record ethnicity, there are no exact figures on the distribution of different ethnicities. However, there is information on the number of Swedish residents who were born in Turkey. According to Statistics Sweden (2022), the number of residents born in Turkey is 55,954, while the number of those who are aged 60 and above is 11,354. If children and grandchildren of the first generation who migrated are added, the estimated number of Swedes with origins in Turkey is about 100,000 (Baser & Levin, 2017).

There are two main migration flows from Turkey to Sweden: (a) labour migration based on bilateral labour agreements between two countries, which mainly took place in the late 1960s and 1970s, and (b) the forced migration of ethnic and religious minorities (Kurds, Arabs and Assyrians) and politically active people, which mainly took place after the 1980 military coup in Turkey.

The first official labour agreement between Sweden and Turkey was signed in 1967 (Erder, 2006). However, as Baser and Levin (2017) note, some Turkish cultural organisations mark 1965 as the first year of migration. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, migration from Turkey to European countries took the form of labour migration; manual workers were recruited from rural areas in Turkey to work in factories and industries in countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden (Akgündüz, 1993). In Sweden, most of the workers from Turkey were recruited to work in manufacturing in industries such as steel and textiles, as well as in the service sector (Erder, 2006). Unlike many European countries, Sweden did not recruit workers on a temporary basis. Therefore there was no widespread ‘guest worker’ discourse as there was in Germany. This can partially be explained by Sweden’s relatively liberal migration policies, which were a result of the political climate in Sweden during the 1960s and 1970s. During these years, Sweden followed a multiculturalist approach that encouraged migration and introduced several integration
policies for arriving migrant groups. Erder (2006) also notes that Sweden’s small and ageing population was a determining factor in the country’s migration policies. During this period, Swedish language courses for newly arrived migrants were organised and paid for by the municipalities, the labour organisations actively supported migrant workers, and regulations were established to secure the same working conditions for migrant workers as for workers from Sweden (Larrucea, 2015).

As a result, many labour migrants from Turkey settled and aged in Sweden, although most of them planned to return to Turkey after retirement. This is a common phenomenon among migrant communities around the world and is referred to as ‘the myth of return’ (Zetter, 1999; Abdelhady, 2010; Cakmak 2021). Dahya (1973) argues that the myth of return is an emotional bond that diasporas maintain with their homeland as they renegotiate their identities in the country of settlement. Unfortunately, there is no recent data on the rate of return migration from Sweden to Turkey. However, both Erder (2006) and Larrucea (2015) argue that the intention and desire to return to Turkey was more prevalent among ethnic Turks than other ethnic groups because they had the option to return. The Kurds and Assyrians were displaced from Turkey, and thus their ties with the country were severed for decades. Erder (2006) notes that this has had a more tangible impact on their integration in Sweden, making them more willing than the ethnic Turks to invest in a life in Sweden.

There are several diasporas of Turkish origin in Sweden consisting of different ethnicities, such as Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and Assyrians. A common characteristic of labour migrants is their point of origin in Turkey. Most of the labour migrants who came to Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s came from Kulu; a rural town in Konya, which is situated in central Anatolia.

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3 This coincides with the time when the Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna) was in power and Olof Palme was prime minister. Palme was a popular politician among the Turkish diasporas. There is still a park in Kulu, Turkey, named after Olof Palme in his memory. (See Kulu-Svensksamhället i Turkiet, 2019 [https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7124045](https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7124045))

4 Statistics Sweden has data on emigration rates based on country of birth; 11,811 Turkish-born residents in Sweden emigrated between 2000 and 2022, but there is no information on the destination (author’s calculation, Utvandring efter födelseland, kön, år. 2000–2022, Statistics Sweden). Although it is plausible that some returned to Turkey, it is not possible to draw conclusions about return migration from this data.
Akgündüz (1993) argues that this was not the result of a deliberate agenda. In the case of Sweden, he states that:

> Interpreters for Swedish employers who had ties in Kulu, a district of Konya province, initiated recruitment from that vicinity. When Swedish firms demanded more labour, initial migrants nominated relatives and friends from the same area. (Akgündüz, 1993, p. 176)

This micro-level homogeneity in terms of point of origin changed over the following decades, as many ethnic and religious minorities were displaced. For instance, the Assyrian diaspora mostly comes from Mardin, a city in south-eastern Turkey. This shows that social networks have been a real driver of migration.

A study about the parents of so-called second-generation Turkish migrants shows that only a small percentage of Turkish-born migrants in Sweden have an urban background (Larrucea, 2015). Studies on the integration of communities of Turkish origin in Sweden also emphasise the importance of point of origin: people who migrate from urban areas in Turkey seem to be more receptive to Swedish values, while the majority of migrants from rural areas maintain the cultural and traditional norms that they had in Turkey (Yazgan, 1993).

In the years following the 1980 military coup, many ethnic/religious minorities (mainly Kurds and Assyrians) and politically active people (mainly left-wing) were forced to migrate due to increasing violence and oppression. Many citizens were sentenced to prison in unfair trials, lost their jobs or were found guilty by association because of their involvement with political parties. As a result, even ethnic Turks who were politically active at the time were forced to flee under threat of imprisonment or violence. Moreover, the military coup accelerated the oppression and violence against ethnic and religious minorities and triggered an asylum-based migration flow from Turkey to mainly Western/Northern Europe, including Sweden. Today these groups make up the majority of the diasporas from Turkey. As Levin and Başer (2017) note, the Kurdish and Assyrian diasporas are highly visible and involved in contemporary Swedish life. The Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, as a stateless ethnic group, plays a very important role in Kurdish activism; they even have their own name, İsveç Ekolü (The Swedish School),
which refers to their efforts to keep their language\(^5\) and culture alive (Levin & Başer, 2017). The Assyrian community in Sweden also has symbolic significance, as it is estimated that there are currently more Assyrians living in Sweden than in Turkey, due to forced migration (Levin & Başer, 2017).

A study on the so-called second generation of migrants in eight countries, including Sweden, called TIES (The Integration of the European Second Generation) (Crull & Heering, 2015) provides some insight into the composition of different ethnic groups and their reasons for migrating. The authors of the study asked second-generation migrants from Turkey about their fathers’ reasons for migrating. According to the study, the majority of the Turks migrated either for work (40.7%) or family reunification (45.1%). Kurds have more heterogeneous reasons, but most of them also migrated for work (37.3%), while 28.7% came for family unification. Asylum seekers/refugees accounted for 22.4% of the Kurds, compared to 56.6% of Assyrians. When it comes to family reunification, 11.5% of Assyrians migrated for this reason, while 15.6% migrated for work (Levin & Baser, 2017, p. 4).

Both labour migration and forced migration generated continuous migration flows, also known as chain migration, often for the purpose of family reunification and marriage. Many migrants who arrived alone brought their partners and children to the country during their first years in Sweden. Most of the women who came to Sweden in early to mid-adulthood migrated as a result of the family reunification laws, as most of the recruited workers were men (Erder, 2006).

Little attention has been given in previous research to migrants’ non-traditional family formations. In most cases, cohabitation and non-marital childbearing are not represented in studies. One reason for this may be that many studies rely on national records, which often do not address these patterns. Similarly, when discussing family reunification, it is important to keep in mind that in this context ‘family’ is legally defined as a nuclear family. As Torres (2019) points out, family reunification laws are determined and defined within national boundaries, and therefore migrants themselves cannot decide on who constitutes their families.

As can be seen, there is already a great deal of diversity among the Turkish-born residents in Sweden. The tensions between different

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\(^5\) The Kurdish language, Kurmançî, is not recognised as an official language in Turkey.
communities have continued after their migration. Ethnic and religious differences and historical conflicts between these groups have a spill-over effect, creating a fragmented diaspora. Thus, different groups identify with different communities and form their own social ties (e.g., the Kurdish diaspora strictly differentiates itself from the ethnic Turkish diaspora) (Levin & Baser, 2017).

In the following chapter, an overview is given of general characteristics of studies focusing on ageing, gender, and migration, with a particular emphasis on how Turkish-born migrants are studied in a European context.
3. Literature Review

The literature presented below is based on a scoping review conducted on an ongoing basis between 2019 and 2023. As noted by Peters et al. (2015), scoping reviews are commonly used for ‘reconnaissance’, and are therefore very useful for synthesizing research evidence and mapping existing literature. Their main goal is to provide an overview of the literature without focusing on a specific research question. Hence, they adopt a broader approach with the aim of mapping the field. Further details of the literature review protocol can be found as an appendix to the thesis (see Appendix 1).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section (3.1) is more context-specific; it presents the literature on older Turkish-born migrants as well as Turkish-born women. The second section (3.2) is designed as an overview of the studies focusing on migration and old age. Studies from different disciplines such as social gerontology, anthropology, and migration studies are presented. The last section (3.3) aims to map studies at the intersection of migration and gender, with a specific focus on migrant women.

3.1. Migration from Turkey to Europe

Older Turkish-born Migrants in Europe

The labour migration from Turkey to several Western and Northern European countries has been the subject of much research in recent decades and continues to be a focus of European migration studies (see, e.g., Johansson, 1997; Zielke-Nadkarni, 2003; Akpinar, 2003; Ehrkamp, 2005; Erder, 2006, Abadan-Unat, 1977, 2011; Naldemirci, 2013; Fassman & Icduygu, 2013; Bilecen et al., 2015; Liversage & Jakobsen, 2016; Bilecen, 2017; Baser & Levin, 2017; ten Kate et al., 2021; Ünver, 2023). In general, these studies have addressed issues such as integration, religion, family relationships, caregiving, and residential and living patterns of the Turkish-born diaspora in Europe.

Studies focusing on the first generation of Turkish-born migrants in Sweden have often focused on the ‘difference’ between them and the majority of Swedes (Liljeström, 2003; Gustafsson et al., 2022). When it comes to Turkish-born women, the topic of interest became even narrower,
as the majority of studies focused on topics such as oppression, violence, or health-related problems (Sachs, 1983; Kocturk, 1992; Krobisch et al., 2021; see chapters 3.2 and 3.3), with a few exceptions (Aygören & Wilińska, 2013; Naldemirci, 2015; Carlson, 2015).

Although there has been increasing interest in the ageing and later life experiences of Turkish migrants over the past decade (Baykara-Krumme, 2013; Liversage & Jakobsen, 2016; Buffel, 2017; Klok et al., 2022; Yazdanpanahi & Woolrych, 2023), most studies on first-generation Turkish-born migrants have not had old age as a specific area of focus, with a few exceptions (Naldemirci, 2013, 2015; Palmberger, 2017, Palaz, 2020). This is not specific to studies on Turkish-born migrants, as Torres (2013) notes, the majority of the literature on migration and transnationalism is oblivious to old age. The studies focusing on older Turkish-born migrants in Europe have often focused on health and care issues, loneliness, housing issues, poverty, marginalisation, and discrimination (e.g. Fokkema & Naderi, 2013; Liversage & Jakobsen, 2016; Akdede & Giovanis, 2020; Conkova & Lindenberg, 2020; Gustafsson et al., 2022).

A common pattern in research on older Turkish-born migrants is that the findings have shown strong (affective and/or material) attachment to Turkey even after decades of residence in Europe. For instance, Baykara-Krumme’s (2013) qualitative study on the mobility patterns of Turkish migrants has provided some insights into the transnational mobility patterns of Turks aged 65 and over. Her findings have shown a strong attachment to the country of origin among older Turkish migrants, which is in line with other studies on Turkish migrants. Ersanilli and Koopmans’ (2011), Caglar’s (2013), Fokkema et al.’s (2015), Palmberger’s (2017) and Cakmak’s (2022) studies on Turkish migrants have shown that connections and feelings of attachment to Turkey have remained strong among first-generation migrants despite decades of living in Europe.

There has been increasing scholarly interest in the concepts of belonging and identity construction in migration studies in the past decades (i.e., Hedetoft & Hjort, 2002; Gilmartin, 2008; Delanty et al., 2008). A similar trend can be observed in studies on migration from Turkey. An example of this trend can be observed in a comparative quantitative study conducted by Klok et al. (2017) that specifically explored Turkish and Moroccan older migrants in the Netherlands. The main aim of the study was to investigate the influence of transnational belonging on overall wellbeing, with a
particular focus on the protective factors against loneliness. The findings showed that a higher level of transnational belonging was associated with increased feelings of loneliness (Klok et al., 2017). They concluded that a transnational lifestyle contributes to homesickness and loneliness instead of alleviating it, as it causes ‘a sense of “uprootedness” i.e., a diminished sense of belonging’ (Klok et al., 2017, p. 348).

Another study on belonging and identity is Palmberger’s (2017) qualitative study on social ties and embeddedness among older Turkish labour migrants in Austria, which focused on the impact of cultural, religious, and political associations. Her results showed that these associations play a key role in feelings of embeddedness in the country of settlement, and that older community members play a central role in community building. When asked about preferences for later life scenarios, her informants gave ambivalent responses. Palmberger (2017) found that many of them hoped their children would take care of them, but also stated that they knew ‘times have changed’. Most of them were sceptical about nursing homes because of the lack of culturally sensitive routines, such as access to halal food and opportunities for religious practice, and language barriers.

A similar ambivalence in imagining care in later life was found in Naldemirci’s (2013) study of older Turkish migrants in Sweden. Most of the informants expressed ambivalent opinions about later life care. On the one hand, they idealised the public care system in Sweden and presented themselves as well-integrated and modern migrants. On the other hand, they described this ideal as too detached, too individualistic, and uncaring. One of the most interesting findings of Naldemirci’s study was how encounters with the health care system helped older Turkish migrants develop a sense of belonging in Sweden. The routine check-ups, doctors’ visits, and hospitalisations, which are essentially rooted in the medicalisation of old age, helped them to create and maintain a sense of belonging in Sweden. Although the author has discussed how the impossibility of realising the myth of return seems to stem from medical necessity, he has argued that older Turkish migrants saw their right to medical care as a ‘well-earned indication of belonging’ in terms of citizenship (Naldemirci, 2013, p. 89). Naldemirci (2013) concluded that their sense of belonging was negotiated after their bodies began to function less effectively.
Although there is not enough literature on older Turkish-born migrants to make any general claims, the existing literature has shown that older migrants have maintained social and affective ties with Turkey while slowly forming new ties through their networks in the diaspora.

Turkish-born Women in Europe

Most studies on Turkish-born women in Europe focus on the experiences of women in Germany, as Germany is home to the largest Turkish-born population in Europe due to the labour migrants who have settled there (e.g. Inowlocki & Lutz, 2000; Abadan-Unat, 2011, Yurdakul & Korteweg, 2013; Bilecen, 2019; Erel, 2020; Krobisch et al., 2021). However, there is also significant work from Denmark (Liversage, 2009; Mirdal, 2006; Mirdal & Küçükyıldız, 2015; Liversage & Mirdal, 2017), the UK (Cakir, 2009; Cakir & Yerin-Gunerı, 2011), Austria (Palmberger, 2019; Wanka et al., 2019), the Netherlands (Ozasir-Kacar & Essers, 2019) and Belgium (Timmerman, 1995; 2013). These countries are similar to the case of Sweden in the sense that their Turkish diasporas consist mainly of labour migrants and their descendants. The Turkish diasporas in these countries are mainly considered to be ethno-religious minorities or vulnerable communities, as their members often live in economically deprived neighbourhoods and work in precarious industries. These studies often focus on gender norms and the specific gender-based disadvantages and vulnerabilities experienced by Turkish-born women in different European contexts. They also examine the changes and continuities in traditional gender norms post- and pre-migration. Inowlocki and Lutz (2000) note that:

From the 1970s onwards, a clear tendency towards the orientalisation of migrant women can be identified: the debate on ‘foreign women’ (Ausländerinnen) became a debate on Turkish women. The Turkish peasant woman, oppressed by her tradition and (Islamic) culture and transformed through migration into a humble follower of her husband’s orders, a helpless and isolated housewife, became the icon of migrant women, the female migrant par excellence. (Inowlocki & Lutz, 2000, p. 307)

There is a considerable, if not extensive, body of work from Sweden on Turkish-born women as well (i.e., Sachs, 1983, 1986; Koçtürk, 1992; Akpınar 1999, 2003; Liljestrom, 2003; Aygören & Wilińska, 2013;
Some early studies focused on the health care encounters and fertility patterns of Turkish-born women (i.e., Sachs, 1983; Sachs, 1986; Bäärnhielm & Ekblad, 2000) as well as on traditional gender norms and honour-based violence (Koçtürk, 1992; Akpınar, 1999, 2003). The more recent studies have tended to focus on more diverse aspects of the Turkish women’s lives, such as education and language (Carlson, 2007, 2015), transnational care (Naldemirci, 2015) and entrepreneurship (Aygören & Wilińska, 2013; Yeröz, 2019).

As with the research on older Turkish-born migrants, a common pattern in the early studies on Turkish-born women is that they were often ‘problem-focused’. Given the vulnerability of the Turkish communities in many European countries, this is perhaps not a surprising result. While fully acknowledging the need for studies focusing on the disadvantages experienced by Turkish-born women, I find that there is still a need for more comprehensive or diverse studies that highlight other areas. Very little is known about the everyday experiences of Turkish-born women, especially in later life.

Many of the studies mentioned were carried out by migration scholars. However, the gerontologists have also been shifting their focus to issues of migration, as many countries are experiencing an increasingly diverse older migrant population. The following section provides an overview of various discussions around ethnicity, migrancy, and old age.

### 3.2. The Intersection of Migration and Old Age

Studies on the intersection of migration and old age have come to the fore as a result of the global trends in population ageing and international migration. In the European context, many labour migrants have chosen to remain in their country of settlement. As noted by Torres (2019), migration scholars discovered old age through the case of older migrants. In the last two decades, migration scholars and social gerontologists have started to pay more attention to this intersection after recognising the importance of transnational ties in a highly globalised world.

Early studies on older migrants focused mainly on the identity orientations and culture-specific characteristics of ethnic groups labelled as ‘others’. Accordingly, these studies mainly tackled issues related to the disadvantages faced by older migrants in terms of care regimes, pensions, access to health care, well-being, integration, isolation and loneliness (e.g., ...
Choi, 1996; Angel, 2003; Warnes et al., 2004; Lee, 2007) and these issues are still frequently addressed in the literature (e.g. Wingens et al., 2011; Sadarangani & Jun, 2015; Klok et al., 2017; Liversage, 2017; Olofsson et al., 2021; Fokkema & Ciobanu, 2021; Cela & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2021).

In a scoping review, Torres (2019) pointed out that the literature on the intersection of ethnicity and old age 'gives the impression that ethnic and racial “belonging” is a given' (Torres, 2019, p. 64). This approach homogenises migrant groups under essentialist/primordialist and culturalist assumptions about ethnicity. Essentialist/primordialist understandings of ethnicity are rooted in earlier studies of racial biology and anthropology where ethnicity is seen as fixed, stable, fundamental, and conditioned by the circumstances of birth (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006; Torres, 2020). In this sense, they are similar to the culturalist understanding of ethnicity, which is an essentialist approach to culture (Ghorashi, 2010). The culturalist discourse on migrants has mainly focused on ‘cultural differences’ between migrants and the host population, which are often assumed to be large and problematic. In this type of research, ethnic minorities have been constructed as culturally static and homogeneous ‘others’ who often are in need of some form of ‘social intervention’ (Torres, 2019). In other words, attempts to make the culturally or ethnically diverse experiences of older migrants more visible ended up creating stigmatised representations of older migrants in both research and policy.

This approach can be described as ‘ethnicity as a vulnerability’, which was originally a response to the criticism that research viewed migrants through a white cultural lens (Wray, 2003). Researchers in this field aimed to broaden and diversify later life experiences by accounting for the influence of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They highlighted the fact that gerontological research (often relying on national registry data) homogenised older people in terms of their ethnicity. There was a lack of representation of ethnic minority groups in both research and policy, which exacerbated existing structural inequalities between them. Thus, several scholars criticised the mainstream gerontological approaches for failing to recognise the ethnically and culturally diverse experiences of ageing (see Torres, 1999; Wray, 2003; Zubeir & Norris, 2015; Timonen, 2016; Palmberger, 2017). For instance, in her article on ethnicity and agency, Wray (2003) called for an expansion of our understanding of power,
fulfilment, independence, and the meanings attached to agency in later life. She argued that these norms may vary in relation to the specificities of time, space, and culture.

However, an excessive emphasis on migrants’ ethnicity led to discourses of ‘special needs’, ‘cultural difference’ and the homogenisation of migrant groups (cf. Zubair & Norris, 2015; Torres, 2020). In the Swedish context, essentialist/primordialist discourses led to the construction of the image of ‘elderly immigrants’ as a social problem (Torres, 2006). Over the years, both essentialist/primordialist and culturalist approaches have been criticised by scholars (e.g., Ghorashi, 2010; Torres, 2020; Cebeci, 2021; Romens, 2022) for reducing migrants to a set of cultural characteristics and for using victimising discourses.

In addition, the overemphasis on migrants’ need for social intervention has resulted in studies focusing mainly on healthcare and the quality of life of migrant groups, who have been framed as ‘vulnerable’ (i.e., Bolzman et al., 2004; Grundy, 2006; Koochek et al., 2007; Krobish et al., 2021). Consequently, this has contributed to the ‘burden’ discourse. This discourse stems primarily from an economic productivity perspective, where older migrants are depicted in terms of their labour market participation and share of expenditures for healthcare and pension schemes (Timonen, 2016).

This burden discourse emerged almost simultaneously with the discussions in the migration literature about the integration of ethnic minorities. Zubair and Norris (2015) have noted that gerontologists picked up their interest in older migrants from migration scholars who were focusing on integration issues of migrants in Western countries. Once the importance of including different ethnic groups in research on old age was acknowledged (Warnes & Williams, 2006; White, 2006), there was an influx of gerontological research focusing on older migrants in Europe (e.g. Bolzman et al., 2004; Warnes et al., 2004; Phillipson & Ahmed, 2006; Ruspini, 2009; Ciobanu & Hunter, 2017, Klok et al., 2022).

In the early 2000s, gerontologists began to shift their focus to more diversified understandings of later life, drawing on life course theory. This

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6 The critical debate about older adults as ‘burdens’ is most prevalent in a gerontological sub-field called ‘the political economy of ageing’ or ‘critical gerontology’, which was developed in the 1970s and 1980s (see Walker, 1980; Townsend, 1981; Estes, 2000; Walker & Foster, 2014).
school of thought was informed by studies that focused on accumulated experiences across the life course, and that therefore had an individual focus as well as a structural one. Life course theory has been popular in ageing studies compared to other theories because of its acknowledgement of agential capacity and its encompassing framework. One of the principles of such theory is the principle of agency, about which it has been argued that ‘individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances’ (Elder et al., 2003, p. 11). This emphasis on agency and biography was important, as it directed the discussion towards heterogeneity in relation to migration experiences and personal backgrounds, based on different social positions such as gender, ethnicity, or class.

This emphasis helped researchers to avoid the criticism of homogeneity and opened up a space for the influence of different life trajectories, as it was receptive to experiences beyond the ‘white cultural lens’. For instance, the timing of major life events such as marriage, having children, entering the workforce and retirement differs across cultures and countries. This understanding made the social gerontologists and migration scholars more aware of the intertwined experiences of migrants based on migrancy and age, which eventually led to the development of the field of ethno-gerontology (e.g., Gelfand, 2003; Crewe, 2005; Torres, 2006, 2015, 2019).

The late 2000s and 2010s have seen an interest in intersectional research connecting different social positions and geographies, with a greater focus on the temporality and fluidity of identities as well as different meanings attached to agency and autonomy (Baars & Dohmen, 2013; Greiner & Phillipson, 2013; Ciobanu et al., 2017). Recognising contextualised and situated experiences of ageing by considering individual life trajectories and available resources is becoming a more prominent feature of contemporary studies. This stream of research can be summarised as ‘ethnicity as a resource’, which refers to how migrants utilise ethnic or non-ethnic resources to overcome challenges and negotiate their conditions. This research thus diverges from studies that view ethnicity as vulnerability, which have been contested for their essentialist and culturalist undertones. Drawing on social constructionist and intersectional perspectives, Torres (2015; 2020) has called for researchers to ‘expand our gerontological
imagination’ by moving away from the essentialist/primordialist studies of ethnicity and old age.

Today there is an increasing recognition that we need to negotiate new identities and new ways of living/ageing. The growing field of transnational ageing research is a result of this. As Näre et al. (2017) have stressed, only in 2016, three edited volumes were published on ‘transnational ageing’. The increasing interest in transnational ties has resulted in research described as ‘bottom-up transnationalism’ (Baldassar, 2007), which has sparked discussions on transnational families and old age care. Recognising the roles of stay-behind relatives, communities and the state has made it possible to discuss the intersection of ageing and migration without reviving the discourse of problematising older migrants. For example, Baldassar (2007) has pointed out that gerontologists have long assumed that caregiving requires proximity. For this reason, health care and caregiving relationships of older migrants were mainly discussed in relation to the health care system in the country of settlement, with specific emphasis on needs and financial costs. However, studies on transnational ageing have shown that transnational ties consist of many different types of care, including practical, financial, personal (hands-on), emotional and moral support, which can be sustained across borders (Baldassar, 2007; Naldemirci, 2013, 2015).

In the following section, a scoping review of studies on migrant women is presented, drawing on the literature of gender and migration studies.

### 3.3. The Intersection of Migration and Gender

Migration is a major turning point in the life course that can lead to changes in two opposing directions. On the one hand, it can mark the continuation of lifelong disadvantage and vulnerabilities, but on the other hand, it can be an empowering experience that leads to better living conditions and emancipation. For migrant women in particular, the experience of migration can mean access to education, better living and working conditions, equal rights, and equal pay. In other words, it has the potential to be an empowering or emancipatory experience, but it can also deepen a pre-existing situation of precariousness. For example, Morokvasic and Catarino (2010) have observed that ‘crossing borders for work purposes can be empowering and open up new opportunities for challenging the

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7 This point is discussed in more detail in Article 2: Knowing and Finding Your Place: Turkish-born women in Sweden doing and undoing gender.
established gender norms, but it can also lead to new dependencies [...]’ (Morokvasic & Catarino, 2010, p. 256). This complexity shows that the intersection of gender and migration is a multi-dimensional issue that touches on many areas of social life, although this aspect did not receive much attention until the early 2000s (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

Early research on migration simply added biological sex (the female component) as a variable to measurements. In these studies, women appeared as a variable. This brought women into the picture to some extent but did not contribute to an understanding of the social and structural aspects of gender in relation to migration. Indeed, Pessar and Mahler (2003) have argued that this was simply an attempt to redress the male bias in migration research. Moreover, most research on gender and migration lacked any recognition of women’s active participation in the decision-making processes that shape their experiences. Until the 1980s – which is when migration researchers began to adopt a more feminist agenda (Pessar & Mahler, 2003) – women were mostly studied as ‘companions’ of migrant men. Morokvasic and Catarino (2010) have argued that women were stereotyped in most research from the 1970s and 1980s, and were portrayed as ‘problem-burdened, helpless and isolated’. This positioning of women as passive was challenged in the 1990s and early 2000s (Wray, 2003, 2004). For instance, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) used a gender-theoretical perspective in a study and urged migration scholars to take gender relations and structural realities into account.

The 2000s saw an increase in migration research focusing specifically on gender issues. Gender became a *sine qua non* in almost all areas of research. Issues of care work, sexuality, sex trafficking, labour and identity began to be more prominent. However, as noted by Morokvasic and Catarino (2010), there were still many research gaps and problematic ideas in migration research. They argued that ‘in spite of the diversity of origins, profiles and patterns of migration, paradoxically there is a persistence in stereotyping women as “passive victims”’ (Morokvasic & Catarino, 2010, p. 246). They therefore called for more studies focusing on women as agents.

Although there has been criticism of this ‘problem-focused’ research on migrant women (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007; Morokvasic, 2013; Pio & Essers, 2013), it is important to acknowledge that many migrant women struggle with structural barriers, and conducting research on these aspects
is valid and important. For instance, several studies on women migrating from Turkey to Europe show patterns of disadvantage, discrimination, and oppression (e.g., Inowlocki & Lutz, 2000; Erel, 2002; Akpınar, 2003; Liversage, 2009; Dedeoğlu, 2014).

Since the 2000s, a growing number of studies have focused on the structural disadvantages of migration histories, along with gendered patterns. For instance, a study on migration strategies of Moroccan migrants showed that women are not equally involved in the decision-making processes of migration (de Haas & Fokkema, 2010). Another example of this trend is Liversage’s (2009) study on the experiences of Turkish-born migrant women in Denmark, which examined the gendered nature of migration and its impact on lived experiences. She pointed out that women are expected to behave as ‘the guardians of tradition’ in the country of settlement, ‘with the domestic responsibilities of reproducing homeland family values’ (Liversage, 2009, p. 230). In addition to these expectations, she argued that migrant women generally suffer from systematic disadvantages. For example, she observed that women are at a persistent disadvantage when it comes to learning the language of the country of settlement due to accumulated disadvantages throughout the life course (such as low educational attainment and less engagement in paid work) in addition to structural barriers (such as patriarchal oppression and the burden of unpaid labour).

Today, it is possible to come across both kinds of studies in migration research, women as variables and women as agents. Nevertheless, scholars are increasingly calling for migrants’ diverse experiences in terms of gender and sexuality to be brought to the fore. Several studies from the past decade focus on issues such as empowerment, transformation and resistance of migrant women while incorporating feminist theories and concepts into the study of migrant women (e.g. Ghorashi, 2010; Ehrkamp, 2013; Thomas & Limm, 2017). Although old age is not factored in these studies, some scholars draw attention to older migrant women’s experiences (Bozalek & Hooyman, 2012; Liversage & Mirdal, 2017; KC et al., 2023). Critical feminist gerontology, which is discussed more in detail in the theory chapter, is pioneering this field by incorporating feminist theories and methodologies into the study of ageing.

As can be seen in the existing literature, several studies have focused on Turkish-born migrants in Europe from various perspectives. The literature
review has highlighted problematic aspects as well as developments in different fields in order to provide a general overview. This thesis aims to nuance these debates and contribute to expanding our gerontological imagination by providing empirical material.

Focusing solely on ‘problematic’ aspects of migrant women is simplistic and obscures the complex nature of their experiences. To address this shortcoming, more studies are needed on migrant women’s agential and transformative potentials. Previous research has demonstrated that there is a need for studies that include both agency-oriented and ‘structural barrier’ perspectives, especially when studying non-white migrant populations in Europe. It is therefore important to talk about negotiation, resistance, adaptation and alteration of norms and structural conditions, in addition to the intersectional perspective.
4. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I elaborate on my own gerontological imagination by drawing upon several theories from various disciplines. This chapter aims to introduce the theoretical frameworks employed in the articles and provide more extensive insights into the key concepts. To begin, I establish my position in the field by defining and elucidating critical feminist gerontology, as it is the foundation for my theoretical framework. Subsequently, I explore intersectionality and the life course. The chapter concludes with an exploration of translocal ageing, proposing a more comprehensive comprehension of transnational connections in later life to analyse the diverse experiences of ageing.

4.1. Critical Feminist Gerontology

The main theoretical inspiration of the thesis relies on critical feminist gerontology since it is a field that is encompassing different theoretical frameworks and concepts which are useful in the analysis of the thesis. Critical feminist gerontology combines critical gerontology and life course perspectives with feminist theories and thus provides an insightful realm to think about diverse experiences of ageing. Critical feminist gerontology is a relatively new field that carries characteristics from both the critical gerontological school (i.e., Walker, 1981; Phillipson, 1991; Estes, 2000; Katz, 2020) and feminist studies (Sontag, 2018; Friedan, 2010; hooks, 2000). Scholars within this domain aspire to delve into how power dynamics and intersecting social positions intricately shape women’s experiences of ageing throughout their lives (Gibson, 1996; Holstein, 1999; Hooyman et al., 2002; Arber et al., 2003; Calasanti et al., 2006; Calasanti, 2008; Frexias et al., 2012; Garner, 2014; Hess, 2018). They recognise that “gender is inextricably linked with other social inequalities” (Calasanti, 2004, p. 306). Hence, they conceive power relationships as interwoven and simultaneously influenced by diverse hierarchical positions.

Power has been viewed as a structural force and/or as a feature of interpersonal dynamics (thus sometimes framed as power relations) in sociological and feminist studies (e.g., Butler, 1997; hooks, 2000; Cho et al., 2013; Brubaker, 2021). This thesis comprehends power as a constellation of generative and relational dynamics shaped and perpetuated through interactions woven into institutional frameworks. Those wielding power within society mould prevailing institutions in alignment with their
interests and values, enabling them to influence others differentially, thus generating social inequalities (Castells, 2016). These interactions reproduce distinct social positions, some endowed with privilege while others subjugated. Social positions emerge and persist, bearing varying connotations in terms of power.

Nonetheless, as articulated by hooks (1989), there are no clear cuts between these positions. Distinct demarcations between these positions blur. The line dividing privileged from oppressed positions remains fluid, for as hooks (1989, p. 20) contends, “we dominate and are dominated”. This nuanced and pervasive apprehension of power widens the aperture to comprehend the mutable essence of power dynamics. Moreover, it directs attention to the possibilities of resistance. Scholars of intersectionality underscore the coexistence of oppression and resistance, dissecting how social positions interplay with power dynamics (hooks, 1989; Anthias, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2016).

Critical feminist gerontologists contend that women’s ageing experiences exhibit distinct qualitative characteristics compared to men’s due to their positioning along power axes, potentially rendering them vulnerable to disadvantaged situations (Gibson, 1996; Holstein, 1999; Hooyman et al., 2002; Frexias et al., 2012). It is this focus on the relational character of power and the emphasis on the mechanisms that produces inequalities that makes a study feminist rather than a study ‘on women’.

Notably, critical feminist gerontologists assert that caregiving and labour practices significantly influence women’s experiences in later life, as their engagement in paid work (and thus participation in pension programs and healthcare initiatives) proves intricate in numerous countries. Many women navigate a non-linear trajectory of paid employment throughout their life. Similarly, they posit that ageing women encounter age-based discrimination distinct from men, as they concurrently face patriarchal oppression concerning their bodies, lives, and resources (Hooyman et al., 2002). For example, some scholars highlight the ‘devaluation’ of older women, as many Western societies associate a woman’s value with socially defined standards of attractiveness (Nielsen, 1990; Garner, 2014).

Moreover, critical feminist scholars point out how gendered experiences are deeply rooted in everyday practices and draw attention to the dynamic and constituted aspect of power relations that are “institutionalized in social arenas with important consequences for life chances” (Calasanti & Zajicek, 1993). This emphasis on intersecting social positions goes hand in hand
with the critical gerontologists’ research on structural barriers in later life inequalities.

The critical gerontological school, also called the political economy of ageing, positions the problematic ramifications of historical inequities, capitalism, globalization, and social class as its central concerns in ageing (Walker, 1981; Estes et al., 1982). This theoretical framework closely examines how societal structures influence human lives. Notably, Townsend (1981) and Walker (1980) emphasise the impact of structure on the development of dependency in old age, delving into the socio-political implications of intergenerational dependency.

Pioneering the field of critical gerontology, Estes and colleagues (1992) introduced the concept of gerontological imagination as a means to cultivate a comprehensive theoretical and empirical approach addressing the sway of structures – both historical and social contexts, alongside contemporary neoliberal and capitalist institutions – over an individual’s life course. This exploration of gerontological research spanning from 1945 to 1992 by Estes and colleagues reveals a lack of a coherent golden thread due to the research’s fragmentary, positivistic, and solution-oriented nature. This critique aligns with claims that gerontology is rich in data but poor in theory (Bengston & Birren, 1998). Estes and colleagues (1992) argue that the prevalence of the ‘burden’ discourse and the biomedical approach to ageing restricts researchers’ gerontological imagination, rendering them insensitive to socio-historical contexts.

Presently, scholars employ gerontological imagination as a framework for contemplating ageing and old age, aspiring toward an integrative paradigm in gerontological research. For instance, Ferraro defines gerontological imagination as ‘a way of thinking about the process of ageing that integrates and enables one to understand contributions from varied disciplines’ (Ferraro, 2018, p.11). Torres (2015, 2019) applies the gerontological imagination to the context of ethnicity, probing the landscape of gerontological research on older migrants.

Feminist researchers diverge from critical gerontologists through their emphasis on agency. Indeed, they critique the critical gerontological perspective for its perceived excessive determinism (Afshar et al., 2008). In this sense, critical feminists shine a spotlight on women’s empowerment, transformative capabilities, strengths, competencies, negotiations, and distinctions, alongside acknowledging their oppression and vulnerabilities (Gibson, 1996; Ray & Fine, 1999; McMullin, 2000; Frexias et al., 2012).
Incorporating agency into the theoretical framework facilitates the exploration of women’s everyday actions and negotiations, rendering the practical enactment of social positions more discernible. Although the ‘doing’ perspective is not the main theoretical framework of this thesis, it is highly relevant and useful to explore the performative aspects of ethnicity, gender, or old age. I draw upon doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and doing age (Nikander, 2009; Previtali & Spedale, 2021) in the articles along with other theories because this framework is helpful to shed light on the situational and relational aspect of such social positions. The doing gender perspective is elaborated more in Article 2 and is applied to the analysis of the empirical material, while doing age is elaborated and applied in Article 3.

4.2. Intersectionality

The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw in 1989 and is rooted in black feminist theory. However, Brah and Phoenix (2004) argue that well before that date, it had been employed in feminist work to explore how women are simultaneously positioned based on factors such as race, class, sexuality (lesbian), or colonial experiences. Over the past few decades, it has become a central topic within feminist and gender studies, extending its influence to various other social scientific disciplines, including sociology. Moreover, it has transcended the confines of academia and now plays a significant role in policy formation. Hoffart (2021) highlights how intersectionality has informed discussions on human rights and public policy through initiatives led by the United Nations and various European Union organisations globally. It has also found adoption among activist groups and has become a term frequently encountered as a slogan during events like the Women’s March, Pride gatherings, and climate action protests. Thus, perhaps unsurprising that a term as widely used as ‘intersectionality’ has taken on multiple definitions.

Crenshaw (1989) employs the metaphor of a traffic intersection to elucidate the concept of intersectionality. She expounds, “discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, it may flow in another... if an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars travelling from any number of directions, and sometimes, from all of them” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149). According to this analogy, individuals positioned at the centre of such an intersection can be concurrently exposed to traffic approaching from multiple directions. Pinpointing the specific vehicle or direction responsible for the collision might be challenging in
certain instances. Furthermore, there are scenarios where two or more cars from disparate directions can contribute to the accident. Building on this metaphor, Crenshaw contends that approaching gender and race inequalities as distinct and unrelated aspects on a singular axe conceals the intricate power dynamics operating along numerous axes.

Crenshaw and other feminist scholars who contributed to intersectionality make the point that inequalities are not independent of each other (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006) and that different inequalities are in fact dissimilar (Verloo, 2006). This means that in order to understand how different social positions such as gender, race/ethnicity, class or age intersect on multiple levels on the power axes, we need to acknowledge that social positions are relational. In other words, the meanings attached to social positions are not constructed in isolation, but rather they are continuously constructed in relation to one another. This relational aspect results in a complex interaction of social inequalities and oppression. Other definitions of intersectionality such as viewing it as “the interaction between systems of oppression” (Weldon, 2008, p. 193) or as “a dynamic intertwining of categories [...] in which they mutually construct each other in constantly changing configurations under continuous renegotiation” (Lykke, 2006, p. 158), similarly underscore the intricate and intertwined construction of social inequalities.

Despite the fact that it has been cherished by many for a few decades now, intersectionality has also received significant critique from scholars. Many of these critiques stemmed from claims of misunderstanding the original meaning or definition of intersectionality. Many scholars in the field argued that intersectionality is ‘misused’ (Bowleg, 2008; Bilge, 2013; Tomlinson, 2019) or is ‘misapplied’ (May, 2015). They also claimed through its adaptation in other fields, it has been ‘depoliticised’ (Bilge, 2013), ‘commodified’ (Alexander-Floyd, 2012) and ‘diluted’ (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). Moreover, many scholars criticized its usage around identity politics by claiming that it is used in an additive manner which creates politically fragmented understandings and have essentialising tendencies (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). According to this critique, social positions are “interdependent and mutually constitutive rather than independent and one-dimensional” (Bowleg, 2008, p. 312). Audre Lorde’s (1984) meditation on the social positions as the ‘meaningful whole’ also

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8 See the special issue on intersectionality of European Journal of Women’s Studies 3/2006.
emphasises this interrelated and multidimensional aspect. She articulates: ‘constantly being encouraged to pluck out some aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing and denying the other parts of the self’ (Lorde, 1984, p. 120 in Bowleg, 2008, p. 312). Lorde’s interpretation vividly portrays the intricacy of intersectional positions, highlighting how being a Black lesbian woman constituted a ‘meaningful whole’ rather than a mere aggregation of individual social positions.

To recap, there are several pitfalls that one might encounter when incorporating an intersectional approach into research, which can be quite daunting. The discussions regarding the paradigmatic nature of intersectionality are indeed perplexing. Ongoing debates revolve around the classification of intersectionality within various paradigms. There are arguments as to whether intersectionality is a theory (Davis, 2008), a methodology (MacKinnon, 2013), a problem-solving tool (Collins and Bilge, 2016), or an analytical perspective (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013). As my research aligns with critical feminist gerontology, employing an intersectional lens is an apparent choice. However, determining how to apply it effectively or interpret it within the context of my research poses a challenge.

Incorporating intersectionality into the theoretical framework is primarily driven by the profound theoretical implications it offers. It shapes my conceptualization of ageing migrant women. It also governs my analytical approach. As noted by Cho and colleagues (2013), “what makes an analysis intersectional -whatever terms it deploys, whatever its iteration, whatever its field or discipline- is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power” (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013, p. 795). Consequently, I interpret intersectionality as both a way of thinking and a tool to dissect the power dynamics rooted in diverse social positions.

In their discussion, Amelina and Lutz (2021) define several fundamental assumptions inherent in applying an intersectional lens to study transnational contexts. First, transnational social actors occupy a multi-local framework of reference – positioned between national borders and, at times, a third locality (Anthias, 2012). Second, they are hierarchically situated across many dimensions of inequality, encompassing gender, age, class, ethnicity, and sexuality (Lutz & Amelina, 2021). Notably, Anthias’ work (2012, 2020) emerges as distinctive within transnationalism research.

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9Transnationalism and translocality will be further discussed in Chapter 4.4.
as she consciously incorporates intersectionality through the proposition of a translocational framework. This framework integrates intersectionality to illuminate these localities’ contextual and interconnected facets. It directs attention toward the paradoxical and ambivalent interplay of social positions concerning gender, ethnicity, and class within a translocational setting.

Within this thesis, intersectionality is operationalised with life course theory to facilitate the contemplation and analysis of how age, gender, and migrancy intertwine to establish an intricate web of power dynamics. The combination of intersectionality and life course theory can traverse a loosely outlined chronology, integrating temporality into the analysis. There are specific times where certain social positions become more prominent and determinant in one’s life. Through the lens of a life course perspective, an exploration of the contingencies linked to turning points concerning these social positions becomes viable. This aspect is expounded upon in greater detail in the subsequent section.

4.3. Life Course

The life course perspective has gained widespread use among gerontologists due to its comprehensive understanding of life, facilitated by advancements in collecting longitudinal and biographical data. As Phillipson and Dannefer (2010) point out, it was the sociologists who first originated the perspective. There is no unified definition of life course, but from a gerontological standpoint, life course suggests that ageing cannot be understood without taking both the individual and societal levels into consideration. So, the individual’s chronological age does not have a determinant role per se, but it is shaped and re-shaped over the course of life along with the external factors and agential choices. Elder and colleagues (2003) suggests that “life course provides a framework for studying phenomena at the nexus of social pathways, developmental trajectories, and social change” (Elder et al., 2003, p. 10).

Social pathways consist of structures that are shaped by certain institutions, such as education, work and family, trajectories mark the specific roles and experiences attached to the pathways, for example retirement or becoming a parent. Elder and colleagues discuss that there are some turning points over the life course which are “substantial changes in the direction of one’s life, whether subjective or objective” (Elder et al., 2003, p. 8). Turning points can also be defined as “a lasting shift in direction of life trajectory” (Rutter, 1996, p. 603).
The life course perspective has sensitised gerontological research to the diverse range of experiences, patterns, and the influence of societal transformations on human ageing (Phillipson and Dannefer, 2010). This point holds particular significance as it aligns with an intersectional framework. Gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and socio-economic class play pivotal roles in shaping an individual’s life trajectory, rendering them relevant to discussions regarding turning points. For example, migration can be classified as a significant transition, constituting a turning point with implications for family ties, living arrangements, caregiving dynamics, and socio-economic standing. When key life markers like educational attainment, marital status, or parental roles intersect, they intertwine to form a complex tapestry of experiences. These intersections, in turn, give rise to cumulative advantages and disadvantages (Dannefer, 2003), which invariably impact day-to-day life encounters.

The life course perspective is useful in addressing the motives and consequences of migration as well as its intersection with other social positions. Wingens and colleagues (2011) emphasise that “a sociological life course approach to migration focuses on the dynamic interplay of societal structuring and institutional framing of migrants’ life courses and the patterns of migrants’ biographical mastering of transitions and coordinating of life spheres” (Wingens et al., 2011, p. 2-3). This emphasis on agency and biography is particularly noteworthy, as it opens avenues to scrutinise the diversity inherent in migratory experiences and individual backgrounds stemming from social positions.

It is worth acknowledging that the life course perspective has faced scholars’ critique over the years. This criticism includes its reliance on a chronologically standardised ‘normative’ life course, often referred to as the institutionalised life course (Kohli, 2007). It has been faulted for being anchored in socially plausible and normative interpretations and definitions of life (Dannefer, 2012) and lacking a sense of interconnectedness (May & Nordqvist, 2019). May and Nordqvist (2019) argue that much of the existing literature on the life course emphasises transitions and assumes a quantitative nature. A case in point is the analysis by Neugarten et al. (1965) of ‘social clocks’ that establish norms for behaviours deemed suitable at certain ages.

Similarly, Phillipson and Dannefer (2010) highlight the concept of the ‘three boxes of life’, which delineates childhood, adulthood, and old age. This institutional framework within the life course perspective stems from the notion that the life course is socially and politically constructed. It posits
that old age is “reinforced in institutions, created by social policy, or legitimatized by social and behavioural sciences” (Dannefer and Philipson, 2010, p. 6). These three boxes correspond to different life stages, coinciding with specific age-graded periods. The first box pertains to early life and is moulded by education, the second refers to working life, and the final box encompasses retirement years. However, May and Nordqvist (2019) contend that this approach lacks a relational and interconnected understanding of personal life. They argue that contemporary societies depend on temporal scripts and collective timetables dictating how we should navigate growing up and ageing. This ‘three boxes’ concept appears rigid, disregarding the life course’s relational and temporal facets. Examining the life course from a phase-oriented perspective blurs the boundaries between agency and structure while neglecting the disruptions inherent in such linear scripts. In the context of migration, for instance, these scripts often encounter disruptions, resulting in more varied patterns in later life (Wingens et al., 2011). Additionally, it indirectly links the final phase with a stigmatised end (the last stage before death) and implies a decline. Grenier (2012) engages with the notion of ‘transitions’ within the life course to underscore the fluid and less rigid nature of ageing experiences while critiquing contemporary models like successful, active, or healthy ageing.

Despite the critiques mentioned above, life course theory still has potential to provide a fruitful approach. The emphasis on the impact of cumulative advantage and disadvantages (O’Rand, 1996; Dannefer, 2003) over the life course fits well with intersectional approaches. Additionally, the comprehensive nature of the life course proves advantageous for exploring transnational experiences. Transnationalism is not confined to a singular point in life but encompasses an entire journey stretched across time. Wingens and Reiter (2011) affirm that this emphasis on time and temporality within the life course sets it apart from other social theories that centre on agency and structure. Temporal considerations are a fundamental facet of the life course and can be conceptualised across historical (macro-level), institutional (meso-level), and biographical (micro-level) dimensions (Wingens & Reiter, 2011).

This thesis aims to synthesise insights from intersectionality and life course theories to illuminate power dynamics over the course of life. An intersectional life course perspective holds promise in revealing how differentiation processes influence individuals throughout their lives, offering insights into turning points and the temporal aspects of events. This
framework enables researchers to delve into the interconnected lives of individuals while probing the interplay between personal agency and structural barriers. The objective of Article 4 is to showcase the application of an intersectional life course perspective to the empirical material presented in this thesis.

4.4. Transnationalism, Translocality & Translocal Ageing

Transnationalism & Translocality

Transnationalism signifies a broad range of connections and implications from cross-country economic activities of international enterprises and NGOs to individual, small-scale mobilities between countries. Therefore, it implies an establishment of networks across different geographies. In this context, transnationalism refers to established and sustained contacts between different localities. Glick-Schiller and colleagues (1992) describe transnationalism as “the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement” (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992, p. 1).

Migration scholars frequently employ the concept of transnationalism to illustrate migrants’ intricate relationships and connections to distinct spaces characterised by diasporic communities. For example, Gupta and Ferguson (1992) discuss the notion of ‘transnational public spheres’, wherein the solidarity and identity formation of communities no longer hinge solely on spatial appropriation or face-to-face interactions, which were once central aspects of our comprehension of community.

A general characteristic of research in transnationalism is the critique to the sedentary understanding of national borders and the simplistic, one-way approach to migration (from country of origin to country of settlement), which is referred to as the ‘transnational turn’ in migration studies (Faist, 2004). Studies on transnationalism pay attention to the relational and hierarchical dynamics of power that is produced and reproduced within a transnational context (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Amelina & Faist, 2012; Barglowski et al., 2015).

This line of thought analyses migrants’ identity construction in relation to being ‘here and there’ at the same time. As Vertovec (1999) states “transnationalism is often associated with a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions, and everyday practices” (Vertovec, 1999, p. 451). Thus,
transnationalism signifies a space for establishing and maintaining social
ties, meanings and relations that transcend geographical settings.

In some cases, translocality (or translocalism) is used as a synonym for
transnationalism or is used as an umbrella term to describe diverse patterns
of mobilities (domestic as well as international) and spatial connectedness
on multiple scales (e.g., Ma, 2002; Grillo & Riccio, 2004; Greiner &
Sakdapolrak, 2013). Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013, p. 375) define
translocality as ‘the emergence of multidirectional and overlapping
networks that facilitate the circulation of people, resources, practices and
ideas’. It is sometimes referred to as a ‘grounded’ version of
transnationalism (Brickell & Datta, 2011) due to its focus on the influence
of specific localities over people’s lives as well as the situatedness of
(im)mobile actors.

Appadurai (1995) introduced the concept of translocality to capture the
intricate and fluid nature of connections, providing a framework for
discussing the diverse ‘selves’ and communities. This term finds greater
usage among human geographers and anthropologists, particularly in
research originating from the global south and east (e.g., Appadurai, 1996;
Escobar, 2001; Oakes & Schein, 2006; Conradson & McKay, 2007;
Greiner, 2010; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Featherstone, 2011; White, 2011).

Translocality challenges the underlying presumption within
transnationalism that considers nation states as inherent boundaries. It
strives to surmount the concept of ‘container spaces’ and the dichotomy
between ‘here’ and ‘there’ (Greiner, 2010; Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012).
Consequently, it sheds light on diverse scales encompassing homes,
neighbourhoods, cities, and regions while emphasising these scales’ socially
constructed and adaptable nature (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Translocality facilitates a relational and context-specific investigation by
encompassing the influence of various scales. This approach acknowledges
the involvement of other actors, including immobile actors (such as stay-
behind family members, kin, or the so-called second generation), in
exploring migration experiences.

Due to this emphasis on social construction and fluidity of multiple
scales, translocality has an actor-oriented and affective dimension that takes
emotions, attachments, thoughts, and feelings of actors into account.
Hence, it is concerned with the symbolic flow of styles, ideas, images, and
symbols across different spaces, which is referred as the ‘translocal
imagination’ (Brickell & Datta, 2011). This aspect facilities a discussion
that is beyond the material flow of people, resources and goods. By
addressing the flows of ideas, feelings and knowledge, translocality provides fertile ground to think about the complex formation of subjectivities that are not only bound to national borders.

Lastly, translocality provides a time and temporality lens, which is central in the construction of migrants’ identities and sense of belonging. Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2012) draws on Giddens’ (1984) concept of ‘time-space distanciation’ to argue that “the production of translocales implies a strong temporal dynamic, as they are constructed and dismantled along what Giddens (1984) terms ‘time-space trajectories’ (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 378). This temporal aspect highlights the contingency and situatedness of migration-related experiences. There is emerging interest in temporality in migration research (Meeus, 2012; Griffiths et al. 2013; Robertson, 2018), yet it has not been explored in a translocal setting to a greater extent.

Translocal Ageing

Ciobanu and colleagues (2020) have noted that until recently, research on ageing migrants centred around four main focal points: vulnerability, policy, transnationalism, and care. Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002) observed that the hesitancy to establish a transnational research agenda among gerontologists stemmed from ‘methodological nationalism’, which primarily examined the phenomenon of ‘ageing in place’ (referring to the process of growing older in the country of settlement). They highlighted how social scientists inadvertently reinforced the significance of national borders by conflating society with the confines of nation states. This perspective effectively normalised the concept of national boundaries. Horn and Schweppe (2017) and Torres (2019) echoed this notion, asserting that ageing studies’ theoretical and methodological approaches overlooked older individuals’ experiences that transcends national borders.

Although research on ageing and migration carry characteristics from both transnationalism and translocality, in the literature it is often framed as ‘transnational’ ageing (i.e., Näre et al., 2017; Böcker & Hunter, 2017; Horn & Schweppe, 2017; Ciobanu et al., 2017; Nedelcu et al., 2023). However, the term ‘translocal ageing’ has also been used in recent years (e.g., Iossifova, 2020; Sampaio & Amrith, 2023). This difference in terminology stems from the fact that ‘transnationalism’ is a more widely recognised and established concept in migration studies than ‘translocality’. Transnational ageing is “the process of organizing, shaping and coping with
life in old age in contexts which are no longer limited to the frame of a single nation state” (Horn et al., 2013, p. 7). As this description implies, transnational ageing encompasses various aspects of migrants’ everyday lives, considering cross-border mobilities and connections. In this sense, it explores the experiences of ‘ageing in between’, cutting across many themes relevant to ageing research, such as everyday practices, biographies, family relations, social services, well-being, and social policy. Consequently, its implications are broader than measurable transnational activities, such as the frequency of cross-border mobility or regular contact with left-behind family members.

Research demonstrates that quantifiable transnational activities do not accurately capture the essence of the transnational ageing experience (Baldassar, 2008; Walsh & Näre, 2016; Horn, 2022) because many cross-border activities, such as regular visits to the country of origin or the exchange of remittances, are heavily influenced by external factors. Factors such as migration laws in the respective countries, migrants’ economic conditions, health status, and family relationships play pivotal roles in determining such connections. However, these facets of transnational ageing still provide insights into how specific mobility patterns contribute to later life experiences.

There is a growing recognition that ageing within a migration context is not solely linked to the mobile individuals themselves but is moulded by their social networks (Baldassar et al., 2006; Baldassar, 2007). Consequently, translocal ageing goes beyond simplistic notions of ageing confined to either ‘here’ or ‘there’. This relational aspect stands as a key defining feature of translocal ageing. For instance, family, kin, and friends are just as crucial as migration laws and pension schemes of nation states in shaping later-life experiences within a translocal framework. Translocal ageing is more complex and nuanced than dual orientations, as it is contextually situated in both time and place (Sampaio & Amrith, 2023). In other words, it does not exclusively entail the experience of ‘ageing in between’ as a constant negotiation between two locations. Yet, it also does not equate to ‘ageing in place’, implying a steady and unchanging life trajectory within the host country.

In conclusion, while the transnational ageing framework proves valuable and pertinent for this thesis, it does carry the potential of excessively highlighting binary distinctions rooted in nation states or ethnicities. Consequently, incorporating theories related to translocal ageing can
effectively remedy these limitations and redirect focus toward the interconnected and contextual dynamics at play.

As evident from the theories and concepts introduced in this chapter, a consensus on definitions or interpretations is notably absent. Therefore, I have expounded upon how these notions are comprehended and applied within the scope of this thesis. The realm of critical feminist gerontology exhibits considerable adaptability in assimilating theoretical frameworks and concepts from adjacent disciplines. Consequently, concepts like intersectionality and ‘doing gender’ perspectives from feminist studies, life course from social gerontology, as well as translocality and translocal ageing from migration studies, have been deliberately selected as appropriate theories and concepts for delving into the research inquiries of this thesis.
5. Research Design

This chapter addresses the methodological orientation of the research in line with the research questions and aim of the thesis. First, it briefly touches upon qualitative research, motivates the reasons for following a qualitative method and elaborates on how life course research and narrative interviews are utilised. Then the empirical material along with information about the profile of the interviewed women, recruitment process and the interview guideline are presented. In the third section, the specific analysis techniques that are used to identify the key concepts and themes that are embedded in the material are presented. This is followed by a discussion on my position as a researcher during the recruitment and interview process and reflections on the possible influences of researcher's positionality. The chapter ends with a presentation of the ethical considerations and the possible limitations.

5.1. Qualitative Research

A methodological inquiry starts with “How to gain meaningful insights? “How to generate informative data?” “How to explore people’s experiences?” and “Which methods will best describe the context?”. These inquiries are pivotal in crafting a well-suited research design tailored to the research material.

Within this thesis, a primary objective revolves around giving voice to Turkish-born women to articulate their personal and situational experiences across their life course. Consequently, a qualitative research design emerged as the most suitable choice, offering the capacity to delve deeply into the knowledge and insights about the study participants’ experiences (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). To execute such an inquiry, a semi-structured, in-depth interview format with open-ended questions was selected as the optimal interview method. These interviews drew inspiration from the methodologies of life course research and narrative interviews.

Life Course Interviews

Within the context of this thesis, life course interviews serve as a central tool for capturing significant life events and their enduring repercussions in individuals' lives. Consequently, the life course perspective is a theoretical orientation and a methodological instrument. As a methodological tool, life course research empowers researchers to adopt a holistic approach,
facilitating the comprehension of the broader panorama. Owing to this versatility, it applies to quantitative and qualitative research endeavours.

Quantitative investigations centred on the life course predominantly rely on register data and surveys built upon event histories, life domains, and life histories as foundational units of analysis (Karweit & Kertzer, 1998; Schoenduwe et al., 2015). Recognizing the peril of oversimplifying survey data is important, given that quantitative life course research risks homogenizing life trajectories among diverse participants. Although not as extensive as quantitative, there is increasing interest in qualitative life course studies (Laub & Sampson, 1993; Locke & Lloyd-Sherlock, 2011; Verd & Andreu, 2011; Skinner et al., 2014).

In life course research, the emphasis on agency is combined with the social aspects of time and place. Elder and colleagues (2003) emphasise that the life trajectories are shaped by the interplay between biographical and historical time. This is also closely linked to the timing of events, which is the time the social changes hit the individual.

Another facet integral to the life course paradigm is interdependence. Elder introduces the notion of path interdependence to highlight interconnected life trajectories that weave through one’s life journey. As Hagestad and Call (2007) emphasised, linked lives draw attention to the symbiotic relationship shared with those in our immediate surroundings. This dimension takes on heightened significance in gerontological research due to its invaluable insights into the social networks interwoven into daily life. These networks encompass intergenerational and familial connections, serving as central elements in comprehending the experiences of older adults.

This thesis examines relationships through the lens of Elder’s (2003) linked lives framework. This perspective positions older women’s relationships with their spouses, children, and other close family members or friends as foundational components of their life course. Notably, concerns regarding caregiving and reciprocity have been contextualised within the realms of interdependence and intergenerational care during the formulation of the interview guide.

The fundamental tenets of life course research – socio-historical context, timing of events, linked lives, interdependence, and agency – were thoughtfully integrated into the interview guide’s design (Elder et al., 2003). This integration aimed to yield empirical data elucidating transitions, turning points, the significance of interconnected lives, and the evolution of
roles, rights, and obligations as individuals progress through different life stages.

Elder and Giele (2009) noted that life course interviews are structured around critical life events or turning points, encompassing events like migration, marriage, retirement, the birth of the first child, and initial employment. In light of this, the interview guide encompassed inquiries spanning various themes: everyday life, work, family dynamics with family relations, migration experiences, caregiving roles, household responsibilities, and health status. Additionally, an array of open-ended questions was incorporated to delve into personalised life events specific to each interviewee. The progression of the interview guide’s themes loosely followed a chronological sequence, commencing with biographical inquiries. This approach facilitated a structured yet flexible narrative flow, allowing interviewees to share their life stories coherently. Conversations initiated with discussions about education, migration experiences, employment, and the birth of their first children, culminating in reflections on retirement and later-life occurrences. This approach enabled me to trace the trajectories of these women’s lives, capturing their narratives from their 20s to 30s to their present age.

Certain questions were strategically crafted with the concept of linked lives in mind, aiming to prompt the interviewees to discuss the various individuals influencing their life course. The interview guide encompassed queries such as “Can you tell me about an ordinary week in your life?”, “How is your relationship with your close family?”, “How are financial decisions made in your family?”. These inquiries were devised to foster discussions about the interactions with other significant individuals. Alongside the life course interview framework, a narrative approach was woven into the interview process, channelling the interviewees’ experiences into a storytelling format (Riemann, 2003).

Narrative Interviews

An intrinsic trait of narrative interviews lies in their collaborative nature, facilitating the emergence of empirical material through dynamic interaction, dialogue, and exchange between the interviewer and the interviewee (Creswell, 2014). The narratives presented by the interviewees are akin to life stories interwoven with socio-historical contexts. In this regard, they not only convey the individual experiences and perspectives of the interviewees but also encapsulate the broader socio-historical backdrop.
against which their life courses unfold (Muylaert et al., 2014). These narratives are best understood as ‘situated’ and ‘narrated’ accounts rather than rigid ‘facts’ or universally ‘true stories’. A narrative does not merely chronicle a series of life events but rather represents the narrator’s endeavour to connect these events temporally and thematically (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 632). Thus, the narrative interview format allows interviewees to contemplate, introspect, and retell their life stories.

In narrative interviews, the interviewee’s memory is considered to be selective: When reflecting on the past, some of our experiences become more prominent while some are forgotten (Muylaert et al., 2014). As astutely observed by Bell (2002), ‘narrative highlights the temporal nature of experience, acknowledging that one’s comprehension of individuals and events evolves’ (Bell, 2002, p. 209). This consideration holds particular significance in capturing the personalised nuances of life events, a relevance amplified in gerontological research, where interviewees heavily depend on their memories when recounting their experiences.

The essence underpinning narrative interviews is to “reconstruct social events from the perspective of the interviewee as much as possible” (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2011, p. 5). Consequently, the interview process is characterised by broader inquiries centred around the ‘how?’ rather than a barrage of narrowly framed, closed-ended questions with predefined objectives (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). This approach empowers the interviewee to narrate their experiences, bringing to light facets that hold personal significance or weight that the interviewer could have overlooked or dismissed.

In the interview guide, each theme started with a ‘how’ question (i.e. How was your experience with work?, How would you describe living in Sweden as a Turkish-born women?) or with a question to encourage them to tell a story (i.e. Can you tell me about your migration experience?, Can you tell me about the living arrangement in your house?).

By combining both perspectives, I aimed to elicit more personalised turning points from the interviewed women. While the life course interview provided a loose timeline and specific themes to follow, the narrative aspect enabled interviewees to diverge from or focus on specific life events that were significant to them. Some examples of this were the death of their parents, divorce, buying a house in Turkey or the funerals/deaths of their spouses.

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10 The full interview guide can be found as appendix (see Appendix 3).
5.2. Empirical Material

In this section, the details about the recruitment and interview process are presented. It also includes an overview of the interviewees and their backgrounds in terms of migrancy/citizenship, age, education, occupation and living conditions.

5.2.1. Recruitment Process

The interview process was scheduled to commence during 2020. The inclusion criteria when recruiting participants for the study were determined as Turkish-born women, living in Sweden, between the ages 60 to 80. The original plan for recruiting participants, designed during the fall of 2019, included as a main strategy to recruit interviewees through Turkish culture organisations and religious organisations. This strategy also included on-site visits to these organisations to inform about my study during face-to-face meetings. The plan, however, had to be revised as the data collection period of the thesis was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic (officially declared from March 2020 by WHO). Majority of the organisations that I planned to contact were shut down during most of 2020 and 2021.

First, I distributed the call for participation within several Turkish-culture organisations in large metropolitan areas in Sweden. I was able to establish contact with only two organisations during 2020 as the rest of them were closed. In 2021, I was able to connect with more organisations (two culture associations and one religious organisation) and recruited more participants through them. I sent out e-mails and tried to contact people who are active in such organisations and tried to reach out to potential participants through them. I was able to recruit some interviewees through these organisations and continue the recruitment via the snowball method. Some people who were active in such organisations were well-known people in their communities, acting as gate keepers. They informed me about other organisations or potential participants who might be interested in joining the study.

Second, I joined several Facebook groups for diaspora communities from Turkey in Sweden and shared the calls there. This was a double-faced challenge due to the ‘digital divide’ (McDonough, 2016). Although there is no way to know exactly the age distribution of users of such online platforms, it is plausible to assume that more younger people are active in them. Due to the limitations of usage of ICTs among an older population, it was difficult to make contact with the identified target group through
these online platforms. I was able to recruit some people from these platforms through their children since some users contacted me and referred me to their parents or grandparents.

As a result of the difficulties with the recruitment of interviewees, the recruitment process was prolonged. The recruitment of interviewees ended by August 2021 after 20 interviews had been conducted as it was possible to see the emerging pattern and themes from the material.

5.2.2. Performing the Interviews

As previously indicated, the thesis draws upon 20 in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted with Turkish-born women who predominantly migrated to Sweden during the 1970s and 1980s. Carried out by me in Turkish, all interviews took place between 2020 and 2021. These interviews, lasting approximately two hours each, form the foundation of the study.

The initial recruitment strategy centred on conducting face-to-face interviews; however, this approach was revised in early 2020. This adjustment became imperative due to the vulnerability of the target demographic to COVID-19, with individuals aged 70 and above being considered high-risk in Sweden (while the threshold was 65 and above in other European countries and Turkey). Consequently, the data collection method was expanded to include phone and video interviews to accommodate these circumstances.

Out of the 20 interviews, seven were conducted in person, five were carried out using video-chat applications, and eight were conducted over the phone. The choice of interview format rested with the interviewees themselves. For those conducted in person, some took place in public settings like parks and cafes, whereas others occurred within the confines of participants’ homes – often on balconies or backyards.

While phone interviews generally encountered no technical difficulties, arranging video interviews frequently posed challenges. Some interviewees received assistance from friends or family to initiate the video calls at the scheduled times. Notably, phone and video interviews tended to be slightly lengthier than face-to-face ones, primarily due to a lengthier initial phase of ice breaking. Although phone interviews offer certain advantages, such as obviating the need for travel – thus saving both time and costs – they are accompanied by certain drawbacks, such as difficulties in fostering rapport and the absence of non-verbal cues (Irvine, 2010). During phone and video interviews, interviewees tended to pose more inquiries about my personal
and professional life than in face-to-face sessions, extending the time before delving into the main interview questions.

In the subsequent section, I provide an overview of the interviewed women. A detailed table containing the profile of the interviewees is included as an appendix to the thesis (see Appendix 2).

5.2.3. Profile of the Interviewees

Age

The age range of the interviewees had been pre-set as 60 to 80 before recruitment. The lower age limit was established in consideration of the retirement age, which is around 62 in Sweden. However, I aimed to include individuals who retire early, as it is common for women to do so earlier than men due to health concerns, gender norms, or precarious work conditions (Garner, 2014). The upper age limit was set at 80 due to the nature of the interview questions, many of which rely on memory and active recall. It is important to clarify that my intention is not to suggest that age-related cognitive impairment begins at 80. Rather, I imposed an age limit to ensure the material’s consistency and mitigate potential issues that might arise during the interviews.

At the time of the interviews, ten of the 20 interviewees fell within the age range of 60 to 65, seven were between the ages of 66 and 70, and three were in their 70s. It proved to be considerably challenging to connect with women over 70. This difficulty could be attributed to the recruitment method’s limitations, excluding an older demographic with lower engagement with social media and ICTs. Additionally, this trend could be linked to declining health status, given that rates of chronic diseases and disabilities are more prevalent within the 70+ age group, which makes them harder to access.

Migrancy and Citizenship

The backgrounds of the interviewees reflect the characteristics of two main migration flows from Turkey to Sweden: they have different ethnic and religious backgrounds (Turks, Kurds, Arabs and Assyrians) and have migrated mostly from rural Turkey during their early to mid-adulthood years.
Four of the interviewees were displaced migrants: two were asylum seekers based on ethnic/religious oppression while the other two were political migrants. The rest of the interviewees migrated to Sweden through family reunification programs in their 20s and 30s, residing in Sweden for an average of 40 years. At the time of the interviews, all interviewees held Swedish citizenship. Notably, the two asylum seekers exclusively possessed Swedish citizenship, while the others retained dual citizenship from both Turkey and Sweden. Those with dual citizenship pursued the reacquisition of their Turkish citizenship several years after migrating to Sweden, as the option for dual citizenship was not available until 2001.

**Educational background**

Three interviewees held university degrees, while two had no formal education before migration. The remaining women either had middle school or high school diplomas. Eleven of the 20 women continued education upon moving to Sweden. In many instances, this progression was facilitated through Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) courses (Svenska för Invandrare) provided by local municipalities to newly arrived migrants. These language courses were offered free of charge and spanned from elementary to high school levels. While participating in these language courses, the interviewed women were introduced to additional educational prospects. For instance, some were introduced to short-term vocational programs for roles such as cooks, bakers, caregivers, and preschool teachers. Six applied to higher education institutes (university colleges or universities) for further studies. Consequently, by the time of the interviews, eight interviewees had attained higher education diplomas. Among the six interviewees who pursued studies after migrating, one already held a higher education diploma from Turkey.

**Occupational background**

The interviewees’ educational backgrounds reflect a notable trend of upward social mobility for some women. Before migration, most women resided in rural Turkey, where engagement in paid employment was uncommon for women during the 1970s. However, with migration, all except one (who assumed the role of a stay-at-home mother) transitioned to paid employment. Initially, many took up precarious positions as cleaners, babysitters, or factory workers upon their arrival. Often, their
partners, who were employed as factory workers, introduced them to these roles. These early jobs spanned various sectors, including textiles, food, and steel. Yet, many women shifted to more stable and higher-paying positions after completing their education. With enhanced language skills and attained diplomas, they transitioned into office-based roles such as secretaries, teachers, and nurses.

By the time of the interviews all but three were retired. Even though the retirement age in Sweden is generally 62, there were several women in their 60 who retired early due to health issues. The women who had worked in factories were affected by the heavy work conditions and had injuries throughout their working lives that led to their early retirement.

**Health Status**

All the data about interviewees’ health was self-reported. Most of the interviewees had one or more chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases. However, they were able to maintain their everyday lives without major interruptions. One of the interviewees had a life-threatening disease by the time of the interviews. All of them were able-bodied and generally considered themselves as healthy. This is possibly due to a selection bias in the recruitment as the majority of the interviewees were in their 60s.

**Marital Status, children & living conditions**

Among the interviewees, ten women were married or cohabiting with their partners at the time of the interviews. Those who were cohabiting without formal legal marriage were in relationships with native Swedish partners. Conversely, the remaining individuals who were legally married had partners originating from Turkey. Notably, those with Turkish-born partners were the ones who had migrated under family reunification laws, following their husbands to Sweden.

The remaining half of the interviewees were single, comprising four widowed and six divorced. All interviewees except for one were parents. Among them, seven were residing with their adult children. These children were either single or had recently gone through divorce or separation, leading them to move back in with their parents.

Among the women who had children, all but one had grandchildren. None of them lived together with their grandchildren except the cases where
their divorced/separated children would bring their own children on the alternating weeks.

All except one woman lived in the peripheries of large metropolitan cities or mid-sized cities across Sweden. Most interviewees were in the central regions of Sweden, with a few located in the southern part and one woman residing in the northernmost part of the country. For many, their current residence marked the initial city they settled in after migration. Over the years, most of them did not engage in significant relocations across Sweden.

5.3. Analysis

The analysis process did not adhere to a singular type of analysis but instead combined features from narrative and thematic analysis. Broadly, both the narrative and thematic analysis processes employed an inductive approach. This implies that the analysis encompassed comprehensive examinations of the unprocessed interview transcriptions, aiming to extract concepts, themes (Thomas, 2006), and narrative elements. The narrative analysis was integrated with the thematic analysis procedure, wherein distinct themes, sub-themes, and concepts were derived from the interview data. While the narrative approach allowed for a situated and contextualised analysis, the thematic analysis facilitated a deeper comprehension of the nuances and patterns within the stories.

In general, the analysis process was executed systematically through the following procedures: 1) sorting and organising the materials, 2) filtering out irrelevant elements, and 3) constructing arguments by formulating logical points based on the gathered material (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). The approach to data analysis primarily adhered to Creswell’s (2016) methodology, which involved initial data preparation (transcribing all interviews), followed by data reduction through coding and subsequent condensation of the codes. Once the codes were identified, pertinent sections were translated from Turkish to English. These codes encompassed meaningful textual segments that were subsequently merged into distinct themes.

Thematic Analysis

Also regarded as interpretive thematic analysis (Liamputtong, 2009), thematic analysis provides a variety of tools to analyse qualitative data. The researcher looks for themes and transitions between the themes to capture the important events. As Braun and Clarke (2006) point out, it is a method...
for identifying and analysing patterns (themes) within a data set. The initial facet of thematic analysis involves cultivating a profound familiarity with the transcribed text. Researchers meticulously read and re-read the transcriptions to uncover patterns, striving to comprehend the data with precision. The goal is to discern elements that seem intriguing and pertinent in the context of the research questions. This revolves around identifying shared attributes among the interview transcriptions. By looking into the common motifs in the transcribed text, the researcher can detect and make sense of the patterns.

Following this procedure, first the interview transcripts were read and marked with different colours to represent different codes. A good code is ‘one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon’ (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 1). The codes consisted of an experience, event, or a turning point such as “financial struggles after migration”, “feelings about divorce”, “ideals for a ‘good’ later life”. After that, the codes were compiled into themes. In this phase, I tried to make sense of what is being said by the interviewees as a group and tried to find the ‘negotiated patterns of meaning’ (Liamputtong, 2009). Through this process, I gathered a thematic map of the material that consists of three interconnected themes.

Initially, three prominent themes surfaced as significant, which I chose to shape the foundational content of the first three articles in the thesis: 1) narratives encompassing migration and the concept of belonging, 2) narratives delving into gendered practices of care and responsibilities within families, and 3) narratives exploring later life and the ageing process. Certain themes were ‘prefigured’ (Creswell & Poth, 2016), as they aligned with the themes outlined in the interview guide, such as migration or ageing. Following this preliminary categorization, I revisited the transcriptions to find additional sub-themes (such as intergenerational care, motherhood, femininity, and old age care) and concepts (such as translocal subjectivity, negotiation, belonging, and rootedness) nested within these distinct narratives. Furthermore, I sought divergences among the transcripts to ascertain disparities and contrasting experiences. For instance, in Article 1, which centres on translocal subjectivities and sense of belonging, I meticulously examined accounts about migration, striving to identify the subjects’ sentiments and thoughts associated with that journey. The analysis revealed experiences of both belonging and non-belonging. The principles of narrative analysis influenced this method of closely scrutinizing ideas and emotions.
Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is a useful tool to analyse important life events and life trajectories since it relies on the story (narrative) of the participant which often refers to a specific time in the life course. Consequently, this analytical approach shares numerous commonalities with life course research. What sets it apart from life course research and other methodologies, such as thematic analysis, is its unwavering focus on delving into experiences from the vantage point of the narrator’s imagery and interpretations. Narratives serve as vehicles for elucidating, comprehending, and recounting facets of the world that hold significance for the narrator. During analysis, the interviewees’ narratives are reshaped within a framework that lends coherence to the readers’ understanding (Silverman, 2011).

Narrative analysis aims to identify and understand the situated meanings of lived experiences. ‘By focusing on narrative, we are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means; the mechanisms by which they are consumed; how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted and what, if any, effects they have’ (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 2). Narrative analysis, thus, relies on emotions, imagery, experiences, explanations, metaphors and even the linguistic contexts (Gibbs & Matlock, 2008).

Time and temporality hold paramount importance within narrative analysis. This approach permits the researcher to trail the trajectory of a story rather than adhere to a rigid chronological sequence, enabling the capture of the meanings, thoughts, and emotions woven into the narrative. Instead of adhering to a fixed timeline, the researcher follows the natural timeline of the narrative itself. These stories inherently possess a beginning, middle, and end, interweaving ideas from the past, present, and future (Silverman, 2011).

This thesis employs the narrative approach due to the interviewees’ reliance on retrospective recollections and revisiting their experiences. This entails recounting their stories by drawing from memory and articulating their recollections to the researcher. As mentioned, narrative interviews are collaborative endeavours grounded in interaction and dialogue. Hence, I acknowledge my role in shaping the interviewees’ responses. The formulation of interview questions and my presentation of the research influenced their answers, as this dynamic created a specific context that inevitably coloured their responses.
Time, place, plot, and scene are key elements of narrative analysis. This emphasis on the time, place and context is closely related to life course stages which has been traditionally discussed as childhood, marriage, retirement etc. (see Elder, 2003). While these timeframes are helpful to understand the structural component of life course, mini-stories, and sub-plots as narratives (Liamputtong, 2009) are helpful to identify the agency-driven aspect of life trajectories.

After a close read of narrated stories in the material, I identified some analytical points based on the life course principles, that is the transitions, trajectories and turning points (Wingens & Reiter, 2011). I searched for common patterns among the narratives and developed more narrative-specific concepts to be able to analyse and explain those experiences. To continue from the same example above, belonging and negotiation came to fore as useful concepts to analyse their stories around migration. This procedural approach was consistently adopted across all articles, and its intricacies are expounded upon in the individual methods section of each respective article.

Looking at the discontinuities and interruptions between the themes enabled me to see the motivations and causes of transitions. Thus, narrative analysis seamlessly complements thematic analysis within my research framework. By tracing the trajectories of the women, I aimed to discern the relational and situational dimensions inherent in their experiences across diverse institutional and familial contexts.

Moreover, during the analysis process, I tried to stay alert to the emotive languages and signs (gestures, mimics etc.) that the women used when expressing their emotions and thoughts. I diligently documented these non-verbal cues in the transcriptions, such as when interviewees laughed, paused, or cried. These annotations served as contextual markers that illuminated the narratives, enabling me to read between the lines and glean deeper insights from the women’s stories.

5.4. Reflexivity and Positionality
Issues concerning reflexivity and the researcher’s positionality are important in qualitative research. Steier defines reflexivity as a process of ‘bending back on itself’ (Steier, 1991, p.2). In this context, the researcher must maintain an ongoing awareness and contemplation of their societal stance within the interview setting and throughout the analysis phase. Various facets of my role as the researcher establish me as an insider or outsider within the study’s framework. These roles situate me in distinct power
dynamics during interviews and shape my perspective while engaging with the material during analysis. Dickson-Swift and colleagues (2007) point out several concerns that might emerge within qualitative research: upholding boundaries, cultivating rapport, establishing, and navigating friendships, acknowledging reflexivity, and managing emotional responses.

In qualitative research, researchers do not assume the role of impartial, distant observers; their involvement and impact throughout all stages are recognised. As emphasised by Creswell and Poth (2016), researchers must strive for an accurate portrayal of the subject matter while recognizing that they represent the material. This constitutes a central element in upholding research quality. In an article exploring the multifaceted influences on qualitative interviews, Broom and colleagues (2009) posit that while in-depth interviews hold an empowering potential, they also face scepticism. They argue that societal factors such as gender, age, class, and ethnicity influence the interview process, consequently shaping varying power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee.

Similarly, Karnieli-Miller and colleagues (2009) delve into the ethical and methodological dilemmas inherent in employing a qualitative research design, particularly concerning consent, confidentiality, reciprocity, and privacy. They acknowledge that each decision the researcher makes presents its ethical challenges. Navigating this terrain sensibly involves maintaining a continuous reflexive stance in the field and diligently addressing (and resolving) potential issues whenever feasible (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

Reflexivity is key in qualitative research because the power dynamics affect the material. As the researcher, I share some characteristics with the interviewees, such as place of birth, mother tongue, country of settlement and gender, which potentially makes me an insider. However, I also differentiate from them in terms of age, in some cases socio-economic class and, in many cases, ethnic/religious background, which potentially makes me an outsider. As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2017) point out, reflexivity requires a constant attention to the different kinds of linguistic, social, political, and emotional expressions as the empirical material is constructed and interpreted by the researcher.

The study adopts a narrative approach which means that the interviews and analysis built on the stories of the interviewees, who relied on their memories. Stories are inherently multilayered and selected forms of narratives (Bell, 2002). Thus, it consists of inconsistencies or contradictions. Moreover, I as the researcher analyse and interpret the narratives of the interviewees, which adds another layer to their stories. Throughout the
study I tried to stay sensitive to these possible outsider and insider positions. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that my interpretations of the interviewees’ accounts unavoidably bear the imprint of the conceptions and knowledge I developed before and during my PhD project. As the interviewer and author of this thesis, I wielded the authority to interpret, select, and present the women’s narratives. While these interpretations could be considered more empirically and theoretically ‘qualified’ within a research context (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2012), I must recognise that my interpretations do not necessarily mirror universally applicable truths concerning Turkish-born women in Sweden.

The power balance within an interview context does not operate as a neutral sphere but rather reflects the biographical and characteristic nature of both sides. It is a sphere of mutual influence. As Dickson-Swift and colleagues (2007) outlined, self-disclosure, openness and reciprocal sharing are important aspects of an interview process. Knowing that the interviewee is not an answering machine, I conscientiously respected their boundaries, remained attuned to sensitive subjects, and endeavoured to strike a harmonious equilibrium between their perspective and mine. I refrained from employing potentially offensive terminology, such as labelling them as ‘old’ or ‘migrant’.

I also tried to accommodate possible language difficulties. The interviews were planned to be in Turkish. Only two interviewees spoke English. All the women spoke Swedish at different levels, but Swedish was excluded as an interview language due to the fact that I was not fluent in Swedish. In some cases, the women had difficulties with finding the Turkish words to express themselves, in those cases, they used the Swedish words/expressions, and I used a translation software to translate them into Turkish.

Farahani (2010) talks about the complex meanings that are attached to the insider and outsider positions in a diasporic setting where the researcher is also part of the diaspora. Although it is impossible to say that I was aware of all the possible power dynamics, I did my best to stay vigilant and sensitive to them. Within the scope of this research, my insider position heightened my awareness of certain cultural norms and codes, thereby aiding the contextualisation of women’s narratives. To elaborate, my fluency in Turkish as a native speaker and my upbringing in Turkey facilitated my initial access to the community, thus contributing to a smoother communication process, notwithstanding the challenges posed by COVID-19. The shared gender identity between me as the interviewer and
the interviewees also fostered a zone of familiarity and comfort. Furthermore, I am a ‘migrant’ who relocated to Sweden as a young adult in my mid-20s. This granted me a sense of familiarity concerning potential migration-related experiences. The challenges of obtaining a residence permit or citizenship, grappling with the sensation of ‘gurbet’\(^\text{11}\), navigating language barriers, and adapting to Sweden’s cold and dim winters were all firsthand experiences for me as a recent migrant at the time of the interviews. During the interviews, I occasionally shared personal information about myself in response to the interviewees’ inquiries, thus cultivating a more conversational and natural interview environment. This approach facilitated rapport-building and muddled the power dynamics between me as the interviewer and them as the interviewees.

However, I also differentiated from them in several aspects, which puts me in the outsider box: I migrated to Sweden as a PhD student, having secured employment before my move, and I come from a middle-class urban background. These circumstances granted me certain privileges that mitigated my migration journey in comparison to the experiences of most interviewees. Furthermore, I exclusively spoke Turkish as my mother tongue, setting me apart from the bilingual women, conversing in Kurdish, Arabic, or Suryoyo as secondary mother tongues. These outsider positions exposed certain blind spots where my previous knowledge and familiarity proved limited. This divergence also underscored the ethnic tensions present, particularly since many Kurds and Assyrians had been displaced and harboured bitter sentiments towards the Turkish state, which unabashedly champions Turkish identity and language nationalism.

Moreover, I was at a different life stage in my life at the time of the interviews. It is important to make the chronological age aspect clearer since by the time of the interviews I was in my late 20s while most interviewees were in their 60s. I framed the research as ‘ageing experiences’ instead of ‘old age experiences’ when reaching out to the interviewees. As Lundgren (2013) points out, age positions are also produced within social interaction. This can be seen in some interview excerpts when some of the interviewees address me as ‘my daughter (kızım)’ or ‘my child (çocuğum)’ which is an informal way of addressing younger generations in the Turkish language.

\(^{11}\) The concept of ‘gurbet’ is introduced in Article 1. Briefly, it refers to a real and imaginary place that is ‘not home’, a place that is far from the homeland. It is used by Middle Eastern and Balkan diaspora to depict feelings of longing and alienation.
5.5. Ethical Considerations

I have generally adhered to the guidelines the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) outlined in 2017 for maintaining high research standards. These guidelines offer valuable insights into potential challenges and pitfalls related to quality, positionality, trust, and reflexivity – all previously addressed in the preceding sections. However, qualitative research presents distinct ethical considerations beyond these points.

Orb and colleagues (2001) have delineated three fundamental ethical principles applicable to qualitative research that researchers must take into careful consideration: autonomy, beneficence, and justice. Autonomy pertains to securing informed consent, establishing a foundation for voluntary participation, and granting participants the ability to renegotiate terms. Beneficence entails promoting the welfare of others and preventing harm, encompassing practices like pseudo-anonymisation, and safeguarding the identity of participants. The principle of justice delves into concerns of equitable treatment and fairness. Operationalising justice within the realm of research involves averting exploitation and abuse, all while acknowledging the vulnerabilities of participants.

In the subsequent section, I provide an overview of the ethical considerations that were present in my thoughts before, during, and after the study.

5.5.1. Before the Study

First, I formulated the interview guideline following the principles of American Psychological Association’s bias-free language guide (2020) in order to avoid any negative connotations related to issues of discrimination and to assure that the language is inclusive. I formulated the questions carefully to make sure that they were understandable, clear and in everyday language.

Prior to commencing data collection, ethical approval was secured from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Etikprövningsmyndigheten) under the reference number 2020-00518. Given the involvement of participants from an ethnic/religious minority group within Sweden, this application process mandated a comprehensive portrayal of the research project. The

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12 American Psychological Association (APA) has a style and grammar guideline that is focusing on bias-free and inclusive language and terminology (https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition).
application encompassed meticulous risk assessments, encompassing privacy, potential harm to individuals or groups, informed consent protocols, and handling sensitive information.

To establish a foundation for autonomy, I prepared an informed consent form. Initially, I distributed a written call for participation in the study through offline and online channels, furnishing details about the study’s content. I repeated this information prior to performing the interviews as well. Striking a balance between offering sufficient information without overwhelming participants was a conscientious effort aligned with the approach outlined by Orb et al. (2001). Depending on the interview format, I gathered either written or verbal consent. Additionally, I ensured that all interviewees were well-informed about their prerogative to abstain from answering specific questions or terminate the interview. This approach aimed to foster an environment conducive to negotiating trust and consent throughout the interview.

5.5.2. During the Study

One pilot interview was performed to test the interview questions. After this, small adjustments were made to clarify some questions, but the questions did not change substantially.

I asked the interviewees about their choice of interview format (in person or other) and their choice of place to perform the interviews. This was done to ensure a safe, friendly, and open environment for them to feel comfortable during the interviews. The face-to-face interviews often took place in their own homes (usually in the balcony or garden to keep distance) or public places like parks. An important part of justice in a research context is to recognise vulnerabilities and to manage emotions. I made sure that the interviewees had privacy and were in a calm and silent environment. I occasionally checked how they felt with the interview setting and asked if I could accommodate any of their needs. We often had the interview over a Swedish fika with some coffee and cakes if it was in person.

Throughout the interviews, some narratives touched upon sensitive topics like death or financial difficulties, evoking emotional responses. This was an anticipated outcome, and I was well-prepared to offer assistance. In case if any participant would need support, I was ready to provide referrals to registered healthcare professionals such as counsellors or psychologists or to suggest involving a family member or friend. I also proposed taking breaks or resuming the interview on a different occasion based on their preferences. Notably, during one phone interview, a participant wished to
temporarily pause the conversation due to an incoming call, and I readily accommodated this request.

All interviews were digitally recorded. Following the beneficence principle, the researcher has the responsibility to protect the identity of participants through pseudonymising. This information was included in the informed consent form, but I asked again in the beginning of the interviews if they felt comfortable with being recorded. At the end of the interviews, I asked all of them if they want to add or remove any part of their answers. I also asked if they would like to receive a copy of the interview transcription.

5.5.3. After the study

Silverman (2011) recommends a series of practices, including pre-testing the interview guidelines, capturing all interactions, meticulous transcription of interviews, and presenting extended information on participants within the research report to ensure reliability. Steps related to pre-testing and recording have already been discussed. All interviews were transcribed verbatim in Turkish, and pertinent sections from these transcriptions were translated into English. Given the potential time constraints of translating all transcripts verbatim, Turkish expressions were parenthetically provided to account for nuances that might be lost in translation. As a protective measure, I employed pseudonyms for all names and excluded certain personal details of interviewees in all published works. However, brief background information was disclosed prior to introducing direct quotations in the text. Appendix 2 provides a more comprehensive overview of their backgrounds. This approach was adopted to offer a general picture of the interviewees and provide contextual information for the employed quotations.

Right after finishing the interview, I provided the contact information of myself and my supervisors to all participants and informed them about contacting me if they had any questions regarding the study. All participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw, change or add information to their interview material. This measure was enacted to implement verification, ensuring that interviewees comprehended and felt at ease with their shared content – aligning with the principles of fairness and justice. Subsequently, three participants expressed an interest in reviewing the transcriptions; however, none wanted to alter the original material.

The interview data has been securely stored and archived on the university’s servers, following data management regulations, for 10 years.
The university ensures the security of the server. Any information intended for public sharing has been subjected to pseudonymisation for privacy purposes.

Finally, it is imperative to reflect on selecting interviewees for each article, given that not all 20 interviews were directly cited in every article. While composing the articles, I focused on identifying the most pertinent quotes and narratives that effectively conveyed the narrative relevant to each section of the analysis. Consequently, not all 20 interviewees were featured in each article. Nonetheless, the entirety of the interviewees is represented across a minimum of one article.
6. Summary of Articles

This chapter provides an overview of four articles, which collectively form the foundation of this thesis. These articles’ primary objectives, key concepts, findings, and arguments are presented.

6.1. Article 1: Making Sense of Belonging: Translocal Subjectivity and Rootedness of Turkish-born Women

(Submitted in December 2021, accepted in September 2022, published in June 2023 in Nordic Journal of Migration Studies DOI: 10.33134/njmr.535)

This article focuses on the migrancy-related experiences of the interviewed women to contribute to the field of translocal ageing. The objective is to comprehend how a sense of belonging and rootedness was shaped throughout their lives. Employing the translocality perspective (Appadurai, 1996; Conradson & McKay, 2007; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013), the article delves into the dynamic and temporal aspects of the interviewed women’s sense of belonging over their approximately 40-years in Sweden. Belonging was used as a sensitizing concept to guide the analysis of the narratives. The analysis shows two main dimensions of sense of belonging: material and affective.

The findings reveal a profound interconnection between the material and affective dimensions of belonging. However, distinct aspects emerged within each dimension. Notably, family and kinship ties (particularly in the context of motherhood), shared values aligning with the broader Swedish society (such as gender equality), the gradual weakening of social bonds with family left behind, as well as the complex emotions tied to non-belonging – be it to Sweden, Turkey, as well as feeling at gurbet come to the fore as the affective dimensions of belonging. Having children and grandchildren in Sweden were a significant determinant in their feelings of belonging to Sweden. Generational ties thus rooted them in Sweden.

On the other side, the material dimensions consisted more of ‘concrete’ spaces and relations: specific localities such as their current neighbourhoods or houses in Sweden provided them a sense of familiarity which consequently informed their sense of belonging. Familiarity with neighbours, daily interactions with local shopkeepers, and accumulating cherished memories within particular places all fostered a connection to
Sweden. In certain instances, women with financial resources purchased summer houses in Turkey to manifest a lasting sense of rootedness for and materialise belonging for forthcoming generations. This endeavour aimed to establish a palpable and enduring material space where their children and grandchildren could maintain ties with Turkey.

Based on these findings, the article concludes that the sense of belonging is not a static state but is fluid and constantly evolving. Turkey and Sweden's material and socio-political circumstances significantly impacted the interviewed women’s sense of belonging. Yet, the results underscored that the influence of family and kinship ties was particularly noteworthy, especially within intergenerational connections.

This article adds nuance to the discourse surrounding the framing of ‘transnational belonging’ in migration studies. Rather than categorising migrants into a binary of ‘here’ or ‘there’, or perpetually positioning them as ‘in between’, the article delves into the complexities. Tracing the women’s narratives spanning roughly 40 years reveals that translocal subjectivity does not necessarily stem from simultaneous identification with two places but rather involves a shifting dynamic of identification across various levels throughout one’s life journey. The women intermittently and persistently identify with the migrant experience, even though, in many instances, they deliberately distance themselves from this categorization. Consequently, the women navigate and reshape their sense of belonging while contending with structural obstacles influenced by their social positions.

6.2. Article 2: Knowing and Finding Your Place: Turkish-born Women in Sweden Doing and Undoing Gender

(Co-authored with Jenny Alsarve and Helen Peterson. Submitted in August 2022 to European Journal of Women’s Studies, Re-submitted in June 2023)

In this article, the aim is to understand the gendered patterns of ageing as a Turkish-born woman in Sweden. The inquiry delves into how Turkish-born women navigate work, caregiving, and household responsibilities within their families and what repercussions such negotiations carry regarding gender norms. Employing the “doing gender” perspective articulated by West and Zimmerman in 1987, the study delves into the daily enactments and interpretations of engaging with and dismantling gender roles. Central to the article is the concept of negotiation, as it proves instrumental in
grasping how the interviewed women perceive, embrace, comply with, or contest gender norms.

The findings reveal that the decision-making processes regarding migration, caregiving, paid employment, and household chores constitute the primary domains in which these negotiations unfold. In many cases, the main actors of these negotiations are their spouses, however, in some cases their children were involved as well. The findings show that the interviewees often straddle the line between traditional gender norms and gender equal norms. Despite having readjusted the allocation of caregiving and work responsibilities over time, the women persist as the primary caregivers for their families, shouldering the orchestration of these obligations. Conceptions surrounding motherhood and femininity predominantly remain tethered to traditional gender norms, which find expression in their interactions with both spouses and children. The influence of the Turkish diaspora significantly shapes their self-perception as women within society. While some cherish the experience of residing in closely-knit communities linked to ethnically segregated neighbourhoods, others recount contrasting tales. Several women emphasised the coercive impact of the Turkish diaspora in Sweden by recounting instances of conditional freedom and familial discord.

The article seeks to enrich the discussion concerning migrant women from non-European origins. It underscores the importance of agency in adhering, contesting, and re-negotiating traditional gender norms to a certain degree. Yet, it also highlights the formidable and enduring influence of internalised gender norms, which find expression within the women’s narratives. The analysis shows that some women talk about ‘knowing their place’ as a designated inferior position in the society, while others challenge this by trying to ‘find their place’.

6.3. Article 3: Doing Old(er) Age in a Translocal Context: Turkish-born Women’s Experiences of Ageing, Care and Post-mortem Care Practices

(Submitted in November 2022, accepted and published in August 2023 in Journal of Women and Aging, DOI: 10.1080/08952841.2023.2250236)

In this article, the aim is to understand how Turkish-born women do old age in a translocal setting. The focus lies in comprehending their
perceptions, enactments, and negotiations of old age and the life and caregiving dynamics that typically accompany this life stage, including old age care and intergenerational support. The article theoretically relies on critical feminist gerontology (Hooyman et al., 2002; Frexias et al., 2012) and theories on doing old age (Previtali and Spedale, 2021).

Firstly, the analysis shows that the interviewed women distinguish themselves from the category of old age by referring to the ‘imagined others’ which were closely connected to the perceived ways of ageing in Turkey and Sweden. The women disidentify with the ‘Turkish way of ageing’ which is often characterised as dependant and unhealthy, but socially engaged. Conversely, the Swedish way of ageing is seen as an active, healthy, and independent life but also socially disconnected and lonely. Grounded in these perceptions, the women position themselves within these narratives, consciously aligning or diverging from these ‘imagined others’.

Secondly, old age care and intergenerational care was significant sites for the doing of old age. The analysis shows that the women contemplate their envisioned later lives by evaluating the available formal and informal caregiving alternatives. They persist as the ‘orchestrator of care’ within the family, spanning their entire life trajectory. Additionally, the study reveals that their caregiving responsibilities extend to post-mortem care as they encounter death and loss within their families. In other words, they remain responsible for arranging funerals in a translocal context alongside the emotional labour of such momentous life events.

In the discussion, it is argued that (old) age is not a stable status but rather a situationally accomplished social position. In this case, the translocal context is a significant determinant of such accomplishment. The women’s narratives show several ambivalences and dilemmas regarding later life arrangements. Through the negotiations that took place in the sites of gendered and intergenerational care, the women negotiate their terms by either challenging or adhering to their conditions which shows the performative aspect of old age. This dynamic demonstrates the inherently performative nature of old age. Within the narratives, an internal struggle becomes evident, thus highlighting the temporal dimension intrinsic to the process of ‘doing’ old age.
6.4. Article 4: An Intersectional Life Course Approach to Expand Our Gerontological Imagination on Ageing Migrant Women

(Submitted to *Journal of Aging Studies* in September 2023)

The purpose of this article is to show a concrete example of how to merge two perspectives, namely life course and intersectionality in order to address diversified experiences in later life. On a theoretical level, the article relies on critical feminist gerontology and discusses the usefulness of merging intersectionality and life course theories due to their complementary potential. While intersectionality enables researchers to recognise and tackle the interwoven power dynamics, including the impact of social positions like gender, age, and ethnicity, the life course perspective facilitates an agency-driven approach. This approach adds nuance to individuals’ later-life experiences, simultaneously considering the cumulative effects of structural influences. The article showcases the practical application of this theoretical orientation. This is achieved by adopting the intersectional life course framework Ferrer et al. (2017) developed.

According to this framework, four concrete analytical steps can be followed to address the intersectional aspect over the life course of individuals: 1) the key events, timing and structural forces that influence individuals’ lives should be identified, 2) linked lives should be evaluated from both a local and global (thus translocal/transnational) perspective, 3) categories of difference should be identified and how they shape identities should be explored, 4) the influence of systems of differentiation and domination should be examined with a focus on resistance and agency.

This article applies this four-step framework to the empirical material that is collected with Turkish-born women in Sweden to show 1) how the different social positions (age, gender and migrancy) intersect over their life course after approximately 40 years in Sweden, and 2) how to use a concrete tool to address diversity of later life experiences and thus expand our gerontological imagination (Torres, 2015, 2019). The analysis reveals the following insights:

1. **Impact of Migration as a Key Life Event:** Migration as a key life event was profoundly shaped by the historical and social context influenced by the economic and political dynamics of Turkey and Sweden between the 1960s and 1990s. During this period,
Turkey faced high unemployment rates among its young labour force in rural areas. Concurrently, like many post-WW2 industrialised nations, Sweden required labour for diverse sectors such as mining, steel, and manufacturing. This confluence led to bilateral labour agreements that initiated the initial migration wave. Subsequently, in the 1980s, due to the political upheaval following a military coup in Turkey, the migration patterns shifted towards asylum-seeking and forced migration.

2. **Transformation of Lives Through Translocality:** These migration waves caused a significant transformation in the lives of the interviewed women. Initially informed by local contexts, their lives transitioned into ones characterised by translocal ties. Many moved to Sweden, either following their spouses or accompanying their parents. Consequently, their connections extended beyond the local, with relationships stretching between several localities. These connections encompassed their ties with family left behind and their new bonds established in Sweden, often through their children and grandchildren. This intricate interplay informed their evolving sense of belonging over the passing years.

3. **Fluctuating Identification with Categories of Difference:** The women’s identification with categories of difference, such as their migrant status, age, ethnicity (such as Kurdish), and religious identity (such as Muslim), demonstrated a fluid nature, subject to the socio-political climate prevailing in Sweden. Over their lifetimes, these identities ebbed and flowed, closely mirroring the changing social atmosphere. Many of these women encountered gendered and racialised experiences of discrimination across different stages of their lives.

4. **Negotiation, Resistance, and Adaptation:** The study showcased the diverse strategies the women employ in negotiating and resisting oppressive systems. Simultaneously, it highlighted these systems’ adaptation, adherence, and reproduction methods. This intricate interplay underscores the significant agency wielded by these individuals in shaping their own experiences.
7. Discussion

The aim of the thesis has been to contribute to knowledge on the ageing experiences of Turkish-born women in Sweden in a translocal context. By looking into the narratives of this specific group, the thesis had an aim to nuance our understanding of later life and expand our ‘gerontological imagination’ on later life (Ferraro, 2007; Torres, 2015). Expanding our gerontological imagination means a way of thinking that goes beyond the simplistic, one size fits all type of perspectives on later life, but rather one that takes diverse and heterogeneous experiences into account. This necessitates an exploration of the ongoing interplay between structure and agency, which unveils how life experiences are temporally situated along power axes.

Each article includes a concluding discussion section wherein subject-specific conclusions are discussed. This chapter aims to synthesise the findings from all four articles and unify the discussions into a more cohesive summary. The main research questions of each article are answered while the empirical and theoretical contributions of the thesis are discussed.

On an empirical level, the thesis provides insights into gendered and racialised experiences of ageing. By presenting empirical data from a marginalised population in Sweden, the thesis establishes a framework for exploring how these experiences influence and shape the women's lives.

The first research question of the thesis centred on how Turkish-born women make sense of belonging in a translocal context. The analysis revealed that sense of belonging evolved through ongoing negotiations with other individuals, underlining the significance of interconnected experiences and linked lives. These negotiations had both affective and material dimensions. Previous studies concerning belonging in the context of migration have suggested a form of transnational belonging (e.g., Dahinden, 2012; Naujoks, 2015; Klok et al., 2017) that predominantly revolved around affiliation with specific nationalities, countries, or ethnic groups. These studies emphasised an intermediate and dual orientation toward belonging for migrant groups, thus treating belonging as an unchanging and steady condition.

Nonetheless, the findings of this thesis demonstrated that the sense of belonging fluctuated over time, with the women experiencing varying degrees of connectedness and detachment during different life stages. A non-linear process characterised this dynamic. While certain women established deep roots in Sweden through family and kin relationships, others grappled
with feelings of being at ‘gurbet’ or expressed intermittent sensations of still being partially connected to their migrant identity, especially when they were reminded by others. This temporal dimension of belonging was evident on a translocal scale, transcending national boundaries and ethnic labels. Particular localities and communities significantly influenced the formulation of this sense of belonging. As elaborated further in Article 1, the findings suggest that belonging should be perceived as a temporal process rather than a fixed status (Antonsich, 2010; May 2017).

The second research question addressed in the thesis was: How did the migration to Sweden influence Turkish-born women’s understanding of gender norms? The findings revealed that the women often navigated a space where traditional gender norms diffused with ideals of gender equality. This indicated an ongoing negotiation process. The women were impacted by normative expectations concerning motherhood and femininity, which manifested in various aspects of their lives, such as work, household responsibilities, and caregiving. While their negotiation primarily involved family and kin, the local communities they inhabited also shaped their understandings as they do and undo gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Prior studies on migrant women depicted migration either as an empowering experience (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Astilean, 2016; Xhaho et al., 2021) or as a perpetuation of patriarchal oppression (Hofmann, 2014; Ince-Beqo, 2014). Both lines of research concentrated on the influence of structural forces, exploring the effects of education, paid employment, language acquisition, etc. Consequently, they faced criticism for portraying migrant women as passive recipients. This study aligns with a third line of research focused on migrant women, which recognises women’s agency and capacity for transformation alongside the acknowledgement of structural barriers (Inowlocki & Lutz, 2000; Hoang, 2011; Bell & Domecka, 2018). Negotiation as a demonstration of agential capacity emerged as a central theme in comprehending gender norms within a translocal context. This was particularly evident as the women navigated through various transitions and turning points throughout their lives. The women often had one foot in traditional gender norms, while having the other in gender equal norms. This demonstrates that the gendered experiences of migrant women cannot solely be viewed as either ‘empowering’ or ‘oppressive’. Because this duality carries simplistic and orientalist undertones about Turkish-born women, which overlooks the nuances of such experiences.
The third research question addressed in the thesis was: How do Turkish-born women in Sweden make sense of ageing and care in a migration context? The analysis demonstrated that ageing was a shared experience closely intertwined with others in an individual’s life, which signals the importance of linked lives. These others sometimes encompassed family members and neighbours, while on occasion, they were more of ‘imagined others’. The women engaged in a negotiation process, considering both Turkish and Swedish ways of ageing as they assessed their choices. Gendered and intergenerational care served as significant arenas for these negotiations. The findings indicated that the women experienced tensions and ambivalence regarding norms and expectations. While challenging certain aspects of old age care, especially intergenerational dynamics, they also adhered to some normative anticipations. The results revealed that the Turkish-born women’s aspirations for their later years involved ageing independently, akin to a Swede, while concurrently maintaining social and intergenerational connections, akin to a Turk, Kurd, Arab, or Assyrian.

In this regard, the thesis proposes a more nuanced perspective on ageing migrants, countering the oversimplified and essentialist portrayals of “elderly immigrants” in Sweden (cf. Torres, 2019). This portrayal only assumes ‘difference’, as older migrants are considered culturally distant and too different from the native population. However, this study also shows similarities in terms of aspirations, ideals and conditions between the Turkish-born women and the Swedes. Thus, it suggests a more nuanced and negotiated understanding of later life.

The fourth and last research question was meant to explore the racialised and gendered experiences of ageing as a migrant woman. Thus, the question of ‘How can we explore the complex power dynamics that have been produced over the life course of ageing migrant women?’ was investigated. An intersectional life course perspective (Ferrer et al., 2017) was selected to delve into this query. Ferrer and colleagues’ (2017) four-step model unveiled the significance of interconnected life paths and the temporal alignment of events within the socio-historical context. This model also furnished a framework for dissecting the production of categories of difference and the performative aspect of social positions, notably through negotiation and resistance.

Although the call to integrate intersectionality into gerontological research has been voiced for some time (e.g., Vespa, 2009; Ziegler, 2012; Richardson & Brown, 2016; Brotman et al., 2020; Holman & Walker, 2021), the model proposed by Ferrer and colleagues offers a coherent and
systematic approach. When applied to the empirical data within the thesis, the findings illuminated how gender and migrancy intertwined, engendering novel hierarchies of difference that fostered privilege and oppression for Turkish-born women. Additionally, it contextualised the familiar phenomenon of labour migration from low-income and non-European nations to European countries, shedding light on the socio-historical backdrop of these women’s translocal experiences.

Moreover, the findings divulged tensions within the group, as some women actively distanced themselves from the prevailing narrative of a ‘migrant woman’ due to its portrayal as unwelcomed, undeserving, and passive, which signalled internalised racism and sexism.

Overall, the intersectional life course perspective provides an analytical foundation for scrutinizing heterogeneous experiences that are often overlooked in mainstream ageing paradigms. It possesses the potential to challenge the one-dimensional and linear narrative of later life, prevalent in many Eurocentric ageing models such as successful, active, or healthy ageing (e.g., Rowe & Kahn, 1997; Kalache, 1999; World Health Organization, 2020). This is pivotal for broadening our gerontological imagination on later life. Because the assimilation of such frameworks facilitates an understanding of diverse interpretations attached to ideals and varied encounters with privilege and oppression. Thus, it empowers researchers to critically engage with mainstream ageing paradigms.

One golden thread in the findings is the importance of specific localities and communities in the women’s lives (such as sharing the same place of departure, being part of a specific ethnic/religious diaspora, or living in an ethnically segregated neighbourhood). The diasporic communities had a significant influence on how the women negotiated different identifications with being a migrant or being old. Thus, the thesis proposes to incorporate a translocal framework (Conradson & McKay, 2007; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Anthias, 2020), rather than a transnational one to draw attention to the multi-scale (that is national, institutional, and local) constellations of migration experiences that transcend state borders.

A further golden thread in the empirical material is the ‘doing’ aspect discussed in Articles 2 and 3. The empirical material showed that social positions are not inherent and fixed to the subject, but they are rather done through performances over time, which is in line with previous research (Nikander, 2009; Ferrer et al., 2017; Previtali & Spedale, 2021; Syed, 2023).
On a theoretical level, the thesis contributes to the field of critical feminist gerontology by addressing the impact of power dynamics of different social positions and the influence of agential capacity over the experiences of ageing migrant women. As Weil (2023) highlighted, the intersectional life course perspective offers a holistic framework for unveiling the influence exerted by social positions such as age, gender, ethnicity, or class as individuals navigate life. Thus, this thesis builds upon the relatively recent body of literature on the intersectional life course (Vespa, 2009; Ziegler, 2012; Richardson & Brown, 2016; Ferrer et al., 2017; Brotman et al., 2020; Holman & Walker, 2021) and seeks to add nuance to the discourse surrounding ageing migrant women. In doing so, the thesis illuminates the emergence of new hierarchies among power positions and how these dynamics reproduce privilege and oppression over an individual’s life. Given the increasing diversity of Europe’s migrant population, it becomes imperative to sensitize our gerontological imagination on later life to embrace the vast spectrum and multiplicity of experiences. This entails approaching migrant women’s experiences not merely in terms of ‘difference’ or ‘sameness’ but also capturing the fluid and temporal dimensions inherent in notions of difference(s) and sameness.

Furthermore, the thesis proposes to include a time and temporality perspective to the study of ageing migrants. Previous literature in both life course studies (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Elder, 2003; Wingens and Reiter, 2011) and migration studies (Griffiths et al. 2013; Robertson, 2015; Harris et al., 2020) has already recognized the temporal aspect of such experience by pointing out the non-linear aspects related to migration and ageing. Incorporating a time and temporality perspective into the inquiry has the potential to reveal the fragmented and discontinuous phases of both migration and ageing. The empirical material has shown that the questions that are highly relevant to migrant lives such as what is distant or proximate, who is family or not, or where is home, where is gurbet changes over the course of the women’s lives. Thus, this spatio-temporal aspect is shown to be central in understanding the everyday experiences of ageing migrants.

7.1. Suggestions for Future Research
The limitations of the study have been discussed in the methodology chapter to a certain extent. I would like to highlight additional limitations and suggest future research.
A potential limitation of the study could stem from its utilisation of a narrative approach. As often observed in narrative inquiries, the study is constructed upon an interpretation of the accounts provided by a limited number of chosen participants who recollect their experiences from memory when responding to queries. This methodology was chosen due to its appropriateness in elucidating the perspectives of a particular group and affording them a platform for expression. Nonetheless, I curated specific narratives and subjected them to an analytical process. It is conceivable that my interpretations might inadvertently overlook certain facets of the participants’ narratives.

While not extensively explored in this thesis, the empirical material uncovered distinct variations among Turkish-born women concerning their socio-economic class and educational background. These factors significantly influence their lives, affecting their available resources and, consequently, their capacity to exert agency (for instance, specific class standings can facilitate upward social mobility, while certain ethnic or religious standings can lead to discrimination). As a result, relying solely on national borders or ethnic classifications provides an incomplete depiction of the intricate interplay between these social positions. An area that warrants further investigation pertains to an in-depth examination of intra-group dynamics among migrant women concerning the variables of class and education.

Furthermore, despite being a tricky concept, an inquiry on identity could provide a fruitful discussion on ageing migrant women. Without assuming that ‘migrant’ and ‘old’ as the fundamental identifications of ageing migrant women, we could look for what else they identify as and when they identify with such positions. This kind of research can reveal insights about what aspects of life and categorisations are meaningful and when they become meaningful to ageing migrant women.

Finally, the study unveiled the importance of various other individuals in the women’s lives who jointly influenced the paths they traversed. Partners, children, extended family members, those who remained in their home countries (particularly parents), and neighbours played pivotal roles in shaping these women’s experiences. Consequently, a study that expands its scope to encompass these women’s social relationships and networks to a larger extent has the potential to illuminate the intertwined and translocal dimensions of the ageing experience.
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Appendix 1

Literature Review Procedure

The body of research presented in chapter 3 is based on a scoping review. In scoping reviews, the general aim is to identify and map the available evidence (Munn et al., 2018). The first framework for scoping reviews was published in 2005 but it has been revised and developed further since (Levac, Colquhoun & O’Brien, 2010). In this sense, it is a rather new way of performing reviews. There are several qualities of scoping reviews that distinguish them from traditional systematic reviews. A systematic review is intended to identify and retrieve evidence that is relevant to a particular research question (Munn et al., 2018) while scoping reviews often have a broader approach and aim to provide an overview of the field by mapping the key concepts and trends. Since the aim and research questions of the thesis are cross cutting several fields such social gerontology, sociology, migration studies and gender studies, I aimed to provide an overview of the common patterns in all the fields mentioned above.

Moreover, systematic reviews follow a structured and pre-defined process that is based on a protocol and a priori delimiting factors. Since the idea is to provide meaningful and reliable evidence, systematic reviews often have a quality criterion. According to the Cochrane Handbook, systematic reviews use systemic methods to select studies with an intention to minimise bias and provide more reliable findings. However, the intention in scoping reviews is to provide an overview, thus, there is minimal (or none) pre-determined quality criteria for the inclusion of studies. The idea behind a scoping review is to provide a map of the field to pinpoint the trends in the body of research, regardless of the quality (Peters et al., 2018). Thus, in this thesis, the literature review chapter intends to present the types of available research and to identify the research gaps.

The first scoping review for the thesis was done in 2019 and it has been repeated in 2021 and 2023. All the articles and books that are reviewed were indexed in the following databases: Sociological Abstracts, Sociology Collection, Scopus, ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts), Social Science Premium Collection. Google Scholar was also included in searches after 2020 and was used continuously throughout the thesis work. The following inclusion criteria was used in searches:
• Peer-reviewed
• Exploring the experiences of older Turkish women in Sweden
• Published in scholarly journals
• Available in English, Turkish or Swedish

The keywords used in the initial search were: turk*, Turkish women, Sweden, migrant, transnation* and old* with truncations. Different combinations of such keywords were used for searches as well as word-combinations such as ‘turkish women in sweden’.

The exclusion criteria were: medical and/or disease-related studies as well as studies on youth, children, domestic migration, second-generation and highly skilled migrants, disability, migration from other countries to Turkey, and studies on political participation. I also excluded Turkish migrant groups that are living outside Europe (e.g., North America or Asia). The sorting of the exclusion criteria was done manually. Duplicated results were eliminated. The results of searches with different combinations are presented in the table below.

Table: Name of database, keywords and number of results for the searches
(all limited to peer-review)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Database</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Number of results</th>
<th>Number of results after exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>old* AND turk* AND migrant</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>old* AND turk* AND sweden</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Abstracts</td>
<td>turk* AND migrant* AND old*</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSIA</td>
<td>turk* AND women AND Sweden</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSIA</td>
<td>turk* AND women AND migrant*</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science Premium Collection</td>
<td>old* AND turk* AND sweden</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science Premium Collection</td>
<td>‘turkish women’ AND ‘sweden’</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science Premium Collection</td>
<td>Migrant* AND turk* and Sweden</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After performing the searches, I read the abstracts of the studies and sorted them out based on the exclusion criteria. I read and manually coded the literature as studies focusing on:

1. Migration from Turkey to Europe
2. The intersection of migration and old age,
3. The intersection of migration and gender,

which is how it is structured in chapter 3. The intention with the searches with keywords such as ‘turk*, women, sweden and old*’ was to sort out the existing literature on Turkish-born women in Europe and more specifically in Sweden. The studies focusing on Sweden were prioritised but studies that are based on data from Germany, the UK, Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands were also included. They were relevant since these countries host a large number of Turkish-born migrants and the Turkish diaspora in these countries share more or less similar characteristics to the Swedish context.

I did several searches with different combinations of keywords such as transnation*, turk*, old* as well as translocal*, women, sweden in the same databases. This generated a new set of literature where I could sort them as studies on the intersection of ethnicity/race and old age and the intersection of gender and migration. After this initial search, I used the reference list of selected articles as a guide to find more relevant studies. This was a more unstructured and iterative process which continued during the whole thesis work.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies were included in the literature review. By dividing the literature review in three sections, I aimed to map out the existing body of work in two different levels: The first section was aimed at presenting the context that is specific to Turkish-born women and older Turkish migrants in Sweden and Europe, while the last two sections were meant to present the body of work on older migrants and migrant women in general to identify the general trends. The idea behind this structure was to shed light on what characterizes the research and to identify the research gaps.
## Appendix 2

**Profile of Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age by the time of the interview</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Last finished school</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Date of Migration</th>
<th>Type of Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fazilet</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Married (second marriage)</td>
<td>TR, Highschool, SE, University College</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aydan</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Sambo (married earlier)</td>
<td>TR, University</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Political Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirin</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR, Highschool, SE, University College</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesim</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR, Highschool</td>
<td>Worker (factory)</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aysel</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR, middleschool, SE- University College</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sude</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR, Highschool, SE, University</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Political Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinar</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Single (partner died)</td>
<td>TR, Elementary school, SE-University College</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigdem</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Single (partner died)</td>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>Worker (cleaner)</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibel</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR, Elementary school</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serpil</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR, university</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Life Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiraz</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>Worker (cleaner)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neziha</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Single (partner died)</td>
<td>TR, middle school</td>
<td>Worker (factory)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadriye</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR middle school, SE, vocational highschool</td>
<td>Worker (factory)</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neriman</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Single (partner died)</td>
<td>TR- middle school</td>
<td>No employment</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyla</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR-no formal education. SE, Vocational elementary school</td>
<td>Worker (cleaner)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Asylum Seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zehra</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR, elementary school</td>
<td>Worker (factory)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fadime</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Married (second marriage)</td>
<td>TR,highschool. SE, Vocational elementary school</td>
<td>Worker (restaurant)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piraye</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR, middle school. SE, vocational highschool.</td>
<td>After-school teacher</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muazzez</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>TR-elementary school</td>
<td>No employment</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Family Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halide</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Single (divorced)</td>
<td>TR,university SE, university</td>
<td>It specialist</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Asylum Seeking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Interview Guide

Biographical Questions
- Age/birth of place/marital status/educational level.
- Where do you live currently? (city) For how long?
- Do you have any children and/or grandchildren?
- Can you tell me about your living arrangements? (ie. co-habiting with someone, living alone etc.)
- When did you come to Sweden? For what reason (family reunification, labor migrant, minority etc).
- What is your citizenship status? (migrant, citizen, double citizen, asylum seeker)
- What is your living situation in terms of place (country)? (ie. spending summers in Turkey, the rest in Sweden or vice versa)
- What languages do you speak? (If other than Turkish, how and when did you learn it?)

Everyday Life
- Can you tell me about an ordinary week in your life? What kind of things you usually do?

Work
- How was your experience with your work?
- Can you tell me about your work experiences? Possible follow-ups: Have you ever worked in Sweden? Have you worked before moving to here? What kind of job? For how long? Do you have an old age pension or occupational pension?
- Did your family (mostly spouse) support your decision to work/not work?
- How are the financial decisions made in your family? Possible follow ups: Do you manage your own money? Do you make financial decisions by yourself?
- Are you involved in any voluntary work?
- Are you satisfied with your work situation?
Family relations & Generations
- How is your relation to your close family (spouse, children)?
- Do you have any family or relatives living in Sweden? If so, can you tell me about your relation to them? Possible follow ups: the proximity of your family members to your house, the frequency of family visits). Possible follow ups: Do you think you can ask for their help if you need something? Who would you call/ask for help in case you cannot solve something by yourself/if you need help?
- Do you get along with your children and/or grandchildren?
- How would you consider relations within your family in terms of reciprocity?

Migrant vs. citizen
- Can you tell me about your migration experience?
- How do you feel about being a Turkish-born citizen in Sweden?
- Has something changed about your feelings over the years? Possible follow ups: Where would you consider as ‘home’? Why or why not? Would you rather live somewhere else?
- How did you decide to stay in Sweden?
- What are your thoughts about Sweden?
- If the informant has a citizenship: how did you make the decision to become a Swedish citizen? Is it because of practical reasons (proximity to family, access to welfare services) or political (avoiding Turkey for political reasons, cultural difference etc).
- Did you ever encounter discriminatory attitudes due to your ethnicity? If so, what happened and how did you handle it?
- What are the most significant changes in your life after moving to Sweden?
- What has been the best thing about living in Sweden and what has been the most difficult?

Gender
- How would you describe living in Sweden as a Turkish-born woman? Possible follow ups: Do you feel comfortable? Maybe make a comparison with Turkey.
- How would you describe your family? (ie. egalitarian, traditional, a close family etc).
- How are decisions made in your family?
- Do you see a difference between being a younger woman and older woman?
Care

- Can you tell me about your care arrangements? (ie. do you provide or receive care, help etc.)
- How are the house chores done/handled in your home?
- How do you handle a situation when you need help with something? Is there someone who you can ask for help?
- If you need to receive care in the future, what would be the ideal care in your opinion?

Health care and social services

- How would you describe your physical condition health-wise? (healthy, disabled, living with chronic disease etc).
- How often do you visit healthcare centres?

Possible follow ups: How do you go to these centres? (with someone, by car etc).

- How is your communication with the staff at the health care centres?

(If she is not fluent in Swedish: how do you communicate? Translator, family members or by herself?)

- How would you consider the health care system in Sweden? How would you evaluate it compared to Turkey?
- Do you receive any non-familial support? (home visits, check-ups, cleaning services, financial support etc). If so, who is providing it? (state, komun, private company)
- If living with family: Would you consider living at an old age care institution? Why/why not?

Possible follow up: How is it to live with your family? Are you satisfied with your living arrangements or would you like to have in another way?

- If living at an old age care institution: Could you tell me about how it is to live in here (in this institution)?
- If you were to think of the ideal solution when it comes to living arrangements for older persons, how would this solution look like?
**Approach to old age**

- How do you think of old age? Possible follow ups: Do you consider yourself as ‘old’? For what reasons?
- How is it like to age in Sweden?
- Do you think that some things in your life changed significantly after a certain age or did they stay the same?
- How would you describe your life after 60?
- Can you tell me about your family member’s attitude towards you? Possible follow ups: Do you think your family members respect you more now (since traditionally older people are respected in the family in turkey)?
- How did you think of old age/later life before? Has your understanding changed?

**Final/Wrap up Questions:**

- Would you like to add anything to our discussion? (Maybe something I missed and that is significant to you)
- Would you like to discuss more about a specific topic?
- Can I contact you again if I want to clarify some points or for example skipped a question during the interview?
- Would you like me to send you the transcription of your interview?


14. Larsson, Susanna (2012). We bang our heads, therefore I am. Subculture as laboratory of identity – the case of heavy metal.


