



A New Life, or Shadows of the Past? Everyday Emotional Experiences of Forcibly Displaced Kurdish Immigrants

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Emotional experiences have been heavily discussed in migration studies in recent years. The role played by emotions is significant in comprehending the experiences and social interactions of immigrants in their daily lives. Drawing on studies of Kurdish immigrants forcibly displaced as a result of political conflict and state violence, the study engages with the following research questions: What emotions do Kurdish immigrants experience in their everyday routine? What experiences produce these emotions? How do the lived experiences of Kurdish immigrants affect their emotional experiences? The available studies are discussed in the context of 'emotion-producing situations or events', 'emotional culture' and 'lived experiences'. The research questions are explored through a systematic review method intertwined with a narrative synthesis and a thematic analysis process of available literature. This study illustrates how emotional experiences caused by pre-migratory push factors are reflected in immigrants' post-immigration social interactions. It demonstrates the difference between emotional experiences created by resolved and persisting issues in immigrants' daily lives by drawing attention to emotion-producing situations. It further notes how reinforced general cultural beliefs and normative expectations reflect on immigrants.

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Forcibly displaced persons, whether externally or internally displaced, are likely to experience negative emotions after immigration owing to their traumatic and violent experiences before and during immigration. Perceived threats by, and actual violence against, forcibly displaced persons increase negative emotions and produce a negative emotional orientation in their daily lives. Their orientation towards their home(land) may also become negative (Camarena & Hägerdal 2020) owing to not being able to feel at home there. As they are compelled to enter new and sometimes very complex cultures, they have to tackle the psychological acculturation process alongside this resettlement (Sheikh & Anderson 2018).

The UN defines displaced persons as persons who have been forced or compelled to flee or abandon their homes or places of habitual residence within or across borders, particularly in situations of violence, human rights violations and abuses, armed conflict, persecution or natural or human-made disasters, which are defined as pre-migratory push factors (IOM 2019). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR; 2023) categorises displaced persons into different groups, with the overwhelming majority of them being asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). Emotions and feelings of displaced persons as a result of wars, internal conflicts and political violence, especially in the pre- and post-immigration periods, have been the subject of much research in different disciplines in health and social sciences in recent years (see Kevers, Rober & de Haene 2017; Mahmud 2021; Riaño-Alcalá 2008; Sulaiman-Hill & Sandra 2012). Among the most frequently addressed topics on refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are transnational connections and attachments and the ways in which a sense of belonging and home(land) are shaped within transnational spaces (Toivanen & Kivisto 2014), the nexus between pre-immigration traumatic experiences and their social and psychological well-being (Castaneda et al. 2015; Elfadl et al. 2021), psychological distress (Li & Anderson 2016), perceived discrimination (Salama et al. 2019) and mental health issues (Fatahi & Krupic 2017; Wrobel & Paterson 2014) in the country of the settlement. Coping strategies in everyday life and acculturation processes (Oppedal & Idsoe 2015; Phillimore 2011; Taloyan et al. 2011a) associated with limitations, opportunities offered, acquisitions obtained or a shared sense of inclusion produced in a host country have also found wide coverage in literature. A one-dimensional approach (either negative or positive) has also been favoured in understanding the relationship between experiences and emotions in the day-to-day lives of immigrants (Cheka, Knipscheer & Kleber 2010; Holgate et al. 2012). However, emotional experiences have not been considered from a more holistic perspective in this literature, and emotions remain deciphered through the link between the emotional experiences of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants and their day-to-day lives.

This study focuses on the emotional experiences of Kurdish immigrants who have been displaced several times in different periods. Studies have found that many Kurdish immigrants have memories of forced evacuation from their villages, oppression, torture, imprisonment, exile and the threat of enforced disappearance, extrajudicial and arbitrary killings. They have also faced discrimination in both their homeland and in the country of settlement, with further negative memories being associated with the very process of immigration itself (Cheka, Knipscheer & Kleber 2010; Göral 2016; IFWF 2007; Kurban, Celik & Yükseser 2006). In the process of displacement, they may have faced social isolation/exclusion, alienation and impoverishment (IFWF 2007).

Moreover, many Kurdish immigrants have encountered new forms of isolation, social exclusion and poverty in the countries where they sought refuge (Ammann 2005; Wahlbeck 2005). Existing studies demonstrate that they have experienced similar, or a range of different, emotions and feelings in the pre- and post-immigration processes owing to reasons such as legal status, stereotyped attitudes and loss of hierarchy.

Studies on Kurdish immigrants often focus on the reasons for forced migration, the psychological and social consequences of immigration, nationalism, identity transformation, the relationship to the Kurdish diaspora, integration, the process of return and obstacles to it and how the categories of gender and class affect these issues (see Ammann 2005; Baser 2013; Cheka, Knipscheer & Kleber 2010; Kurban et al. 2007). What is missing from these studies that document the most important period of Kurdish (e)migration in the 1990s (Diner & Toktaş 2010) is the question of how emotional experiences shape the daily routines of Kurdish immigrants. The period was particularly important for the (re)construction of their identities (Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Baser 2015).

Drawing on previous studies of Kurdish immigrants forcibly displaced across borders, this review describes and interprets a wide spectrum of their post-immigration emotional experiences by synthesising available research. It addresses the questions of what emotions Kurdish immigrants experience in their daily routines and how their historical memories affect and shape these experiences. The review further intends to explore their emotional experiences, to offer an extensive understanding of how emotions develop within and to contribute to immigrants' group dynamics and social interaction. As it covers a systematic review of the available literature from different disciplines in health and social sciences, the current review does not focus on a specific theory on emotions *and/or* emotional experiences. The discussion surrounding the identified studies in this review revolves around the concepts of emotion-producing situations or events, emotional culture and lived experience. These concepts have enabled alternative theoretical discussions to understand and explain the available data. A systematic review method intertwined with the narrative synthesis was applied, and a thematic analysis process was followed to explore and evaluate the scope of the literature by establishing relationships between the included studies. I hope that this review will contribute to providing opportunities for developing strategies and policies for immigrants and to explaining the interaction between local communities and immigrant groups.

EVERYDAY EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

The long-standing interest in emotional experience is reflected in theories of different disciplines (Reisenzein & Döring 2009). These different theories of emotional experiences can also be regarded as a beacon of rich theory-building efforts. Indeed, many theorists have acknowledged the theories of emotion as theories of emotional experience (Goldie 2002; Helm 2009; Reisenzein & Döring 2009) and have understood that emotional experience constitutes a basic aspect of emotion (Frijda 2009; Reisenzein & Döring 2009). According to Trampe, Quoidbach and Taquet (2015), emotions can be a result of various stimuli and situations, and they have an impact on individuals' thoughts and behaviours. In Nogueira's (2014) view, emotional experience is a result of the interrelation between events or situations that cause a particular emotion and personal experience. Depending on these events or situations, individuals can experience either positive or negative emotions more dominantly,

but can also experience ambivalent emotions (Trampe, Quoidbach & Taquet 2015). Individuals also have different social backgrounds, lived experiences or personality characteristics; therefore, their emotional experiences towards the same situations may differ because personal motives (e.g. goals, interests, attitudes or expectancies) related to the event play an important role (Scherer & Tannenbaum 1986).

Culture is an essential component in the definition of emotions. The emotional culture of a society is visible in vocabularies, beliefs and norms. Emotion vocabularies incorporate the categories of meanings used to identify emotional experiences and are learned along with relevant general cultural beliefs and normative expectations (Gordon 1990; Peterson 2006). People living together, interacting or collaborating in the same cultural contexts share similar emotion patterns over time, as the frequencies and intensities of their emotions merge (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim 2011).

According to Stets and Turner (2008), culture can be identified as a system of symbols, and its basic elements, such as emotion stocks of knowledge known as emotional experiences that strengthen over time and become usable in interaction, regulate the behaviours and interactions of individuals. Durkheim ([1912] 1995) puts emphasis on the production of symbols in social interaction and their utilisation by individuals. However, there is a clear bond between expectancies for negative and positive interactions and one's history because expectations are built on an individual's history (Summers-Effler 2006). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2003) indicate that an individual cannot experience the present by erasing what has happened previously, because the present experience contains ineradicable traces of the past and can be understood by uncovering the vestigial features of the past. Denzin (1990) stresses that emotions should be studied as lived experiences of interacting individuals. According to Collins' theory, 'the greater the [feeling in taking action] attached to symbols highly charged by previous interactions, the more likely those symbols are to "reverberate" in consciousness, and become the subject of, or inspire, future thought' (Boyns & Luery 2015: 152). Nevertheless, Summers-Effler (2006) enunciates that new symbols are linked to previous interactions.

Theories of diaspora can contribute to the discussion of emotional experiences regarding issues such as cross-border activities, lived experiences, the formation of immigrant cultural identity, homeland, the second and third cultural space and collective memory (Bhandari 2021). The notion of homeland, for example, is linked to feelings of belonging and, often as a result of prolonged absence, is redefined by the material and symbolic conditions of living in the host country (Almenara-Niebla 2020). Diaspora studies also underline that immigrants' collective emotional memories of a conflictual and violent past may have consequences in shaping present-day intergroup relations (Martinovic et al. 2017; Müller-Suleymanova 2024). There are numerous discussions surrounding the formation of diasporic experiences and the function of diasporic activities. This can be because past emotional experiences are directly influential in generating diasporic experiences, but diasporic activities are also a source of generating new emotional experiences.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic review method intertwined with a narrative approach was applied in this study to enable a synthesis of existing published studies (Daemi, Chugh & Kanagarajoo 2020) on the emotional experiences of forcibly displaced Kurdish

immigrants and to explore and evaluate the scope of the literature on this subject by establishing relationships between the included studies (Popay et al. 2006). The narrative approach developed by Green, Johnson and Adams (2006) and Popay et al. (2006) to synthesise qualitative and quantitative research was followed as a guideline for research questions, data sources, search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria and data analysis. A hybrid protocol was used to shed light on the research questions and to contribute to the discussions about the emotional experiences of Kurdish immigrants that arise in the context of their post-immigration experiences.

The research questions were explored through a systematic review of available literature from the health and social sciences, including English-language articles on the emotional experiences of Kurdish immigrants forcibly displaced across state borders as a result of political conflict and state violence, published in peer-reviewed journals between 2001 and 2020. Only articles conducted with qualitative research methods were included to find out how Kurdish immigrants explain their feelings, emotions and emotional experiences. When the title and abstract of an article indicated that a study might be eligible for inclusion, the full text was perused to determine its suitability for the inclusion criteria. Reference lists of selected articles and relevant review articles for applicable studies were also used to conduct comprehensive research in the study. Books, book chapters, theses, dissertation projects, commentaries, letters to the editor, abstracts and conference proceedings were excluded. For each selected article, data were extracted from the research objectives, study design, methods, sample group, geographic location and results. In some articles, the concepts of refugees and immigrants appeared together, and articles exploring both categories were used in this study. For the purpose of this research, immigrants were defined as asylum seekers, refugees, irregular immigrants and undocumented immigrants; however, the specified criteria could not be met by any article covering irregular and undocumented immigrant sample groups. To put it differently, articles on irregular and undocumented immigrants were not included in the study owing to criteria such as the method, type of publication, presence of only a Kurdish sample group, etc. Because the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample groups were not recorded in all the studies, analysis of the data according to sex, gender and age categories was not possible.

Databases including PubMed, PsycInfo, JSTOR and Google Scholar were systematically searched in August 2020 using the following Boolean search string: '(Kurdish immigrant* OR refugee* OR asylum seeker*) AND (feeling* OR emotion* OR emotional experience* OR sense OR mental health)'. Articles in English containing studies on the feelings and emotions of Kurdish immigrants were initially selected from the aforementioned online databases (N = 5910). Duplicates of the selected articles were determined and discarded before examining the titles and abstracts according to the current eligibility criteria (N = 1578). The full texts of articles, the titles and abstracts of which were identified (N = 126), were accessed from the online libraries of the Chemnitz University of Technology, Witten/Herdecke University and the University of Oxford, if they were not open access articles. The publications whose full text could not be obtained (N = 28) were not included in the study. As a result of the evaluation of the full texts, all articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study (e.g. ineligible sample group or methods, or those not from a peer-reviewed journal article; N = 87). A final total of 14 articles, 3 of which were found by searching by hand (Fatahi and Økland 2015; Holgate et al. 2012; Kayaalp 2020), thus met the inclusion criteria and were included in the study. Given the cultural distinctions, societal developments

and immigration policies of the countries, a systematic review of research keywords in the official language of the host countries where Kurds reside would probably result in access to more articles and enable different findings. For instance, studies that were written in German were among the most frequently encountered articles. To avoid possible prejudices and determine the suitability of each article in line with the research questions, all 101 downloaded articles were tested through the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist form (2018). The CASP Systematic Review Checklist, consisting of 10 questions, improved consistency in deciding about articles by providing a framework that is consistent with the specified criteria.

The narrative synthesis began with the development of a preliminary synthesis, followed by exploring links within and between studies (Popay et al. 2006). Initially, the data extraction and analysis stages were carried out using tabulation, which converts data into a common rubric, and thematic analysis, a common technique for translating or interpreting data in primary research (Snilstveit, Oliver & Vojtkova 2012). Tabulation included a data table containing a detailed description extracted from each study, such as country of immigrant, participant, method and outcome (Table 1). The thematic analysis process consisted of three stages: coding of text, creation of categories and themes and interpretation of data. Coding of the text was conducted both manually and using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA (VERBI Software 2017). The main purpose was to compare the codes for each study, to minimise discrepancies and to strengthen the internal trustworthiness. Codes emerged inductively from examining primary data using a line-by-line approach. The initial codes were brought together into concepts labelled as categories. Categories were linked to subcategories to sort and organise large amounts of data, and themes were then identified at the descriptive level (Popay et al. 2006).

Codes, categories, subcategories and themes for each study obtained manually and through the software program were compared with each other to put them into final form. Subsequently, on the basis of the research questions, the themes highlighted in the included studies were defined by comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences between their findings to develop a better understanding of factors affecting the emotional experiences of Kurdish immigrants (Popay et al. 2006; Table 1).

LOOKING BACK: ANGER, FEAR AND BELONGING

There is a large Kurdish diaspora around the world, especially in Europe, mostly as a result of political oppression by the nation states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria (Taloyan et al. 2011a). Several studies demonstrate that forcibly displaced Kurdish immigrants have experienced predominantly negative emotions and remain susceptible (owing) to feelings associated with the pre-immigration lives (Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Fatahi 2014; Fatahi & Krupic 2017; Griffiths 2001; Kevers, Rober & de Haene 2017; Taloyan et al. 2011b). For instance, Griffiths (2001) found that past memories of distrust, fear and anger conditioned Kurdish immigrants' experiences with authorities in the UK. Fatahi et al. (2010) observed that similar emotions were experienced with Swedish officials. Fear, mistrust or anger may correspond to immigrants' needs to know how their traumatic stories are perceived by outsiders (Griffiths 2001). Confirming and validating that their traumatic stories are perceived accurately by their interlocutors will build mutual trust. Griffiths (2001) underlines that this can greatly influence public service counselling relationships.

Table 1 An estimated list of studies on everyday emotional experiences of forcibly displaced Kurdish immigrants.

REFEREN- CES	COUNTRY OF IMMIG- RANTS	METHOD	OUTCOMES	THEMES									
				EXCLUSI- ONARY DISCO- URSE	STEREO- TYPE ATTIT- UDE	HOME (LAND)	LIVED EXPER- IENCES	LEGAL STA- TUS	IDENTI- TY-RELA- TED PRODU- CTION	DIAS- PORIC SPACES	GETTING/ LOSS OF A HIERA- RCHY	SYMBOLS, RITUALS AND INTERACTIVE SITUATIONS	
Alinia and Eliassi (2014)	Sweden	Interview	Frustration, discrimination, feeling excluded, belittlement, sense of xenophobia, feeling safe, mistrust, feeling disturbed, irritation, harassment, sense of belonging, attachment, sense of confidence, feeling respected	x	x					x		x	
Baser (2015)	Germany	Face- to-face interview	Anger, helplessness, frustration							x			x
Fatahi et al. (2010)	Sweden	Semi- structured interview	Mistrust, fear, feeling of insecurity	x		x	x					x	
Fatahi (2014)	Sweden	Semi- structured interview	Alienation, discrimination, disempowerment, sense of not belonging, lack of sense of self- confidence, sense of freedom		x		x					x	
Fatahi and Økland (2015)	Scandinavia	Focus group interview	Prejudice, discrimination, feeling disrespected, feeling of security	x						x			
Fatahi and Krupic (2017)	Sweden	Focus group interview	Anxiety, irritation, fear, hopelessness				x						
Griffiths (2001)	Greece and the UK	Semi- structured interview	Desperation, self-undervaluing, sadness, fear, anger, disillusionment, feeling obsessed, hope, feeling safe, acceptance, mistrust			x	x	x		x		x	x
Holgate et al. (2012)	The UK	Face- to-face interview	Discrimination, sense of limitedness, prejudice, desperation, mistrust		x				x			x	

(Contd.)

Bhabha (1993) argues that remembering is not an act of retrospection. Lived experiences not only impose restrictions on interactions through material and cultural conditions but also shape interactions in terms of words or dimensions of behaviour (Summers-Effler 2006). They are barriers or enablers to favourable interaction. Symbols, figures or rituals from previous interactions also resonate and can be the subject of future thoughts (Boyns & Luery 2015) because current experiences comprise ineradicable traces of the past (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2003). For example, Fatahi (2014) indicates that, when refugees face discrimination in Sweden, they unconsciously attach this to their previous experiences of discrimination in their country of origin.

Traces of pre-migratory negative experiences are often encountered in interactive situations, figures, rituals and symbols. The frequency of the reiteration of actions and events also causes negative emotions to maintain their potential roles in interactions. Baser (2015) suggests that the prohibition of political protests in Germany and the use of police violence by the local authorities against demonstrations mirror the actions of Turkey's law enforcement officers, creating anger and frustration among Kurdish immigrants. She further notes that after any intervention that results in the death of a citizen, Kurdish or not, Kurdish immigrants have experienced helplessness, frustration and uncertainty. Additionally, factors linked to interactional experiences may play a role in the shift between negative emotions. As Clark (1990) demonstrates, emotions remembered or re-evoked from other times and settings may be mixed with or even fuelled by current emotions, and thus transform into different emotions. Griffiths (2001) highlights the experience of fear in connection with seeing a policeman or hearing a helicopter and draws attention to emotional transformation change, for example, fear into anger. Anger clearly appears as a common emotion in studies of forcibly displaced Kurdish immigrants. Anger can form a strategy to cope with fear created by events that threaten their identities.

Home(land), saturated with symbolic and concrete meanings and encompassing territorial and non-territorial elements of belonging (Toivanen & Kivisto 2014), results in positive, negative and ambivalent emotional experiences in Kurdish immigrants' daily routines. As Kevers, Rober and de Haene (2017) indicate, since the homeland is lost and inaccessible, memories harbour grief and longing. Some immigrants also experience strong guilt associated with family or friends left behind or lost (Taloyan et al. 2011a). High-intensity events or instability in the homeland also keep alive emotional experiences such as yearning, distress, guilt and grief, especially for those who have never visited the home country since emigration (Taloyan et al. 2011a; 2011b). The inability to return to the homeland may enable stronger negative emotions.

Gordon (1990) states that socially constructed emotions such as guilt and shame motivate individuals to strive for collective goals and serve a function in the social control of individuals' behaviours. As guilt is a social and other-oriented emotion (Julle-Danière et al. 2020), immigrants' strong bond with the homeland and individuals there may cause the construction of a new life in the host country to be subjected to collective thoughts and evaluations. Attachment to the community or ethnic group may become a preference or even a priority (Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Toivanen & Kivisto 2014). Experiencing traces of pre-migratory push factors could strengthen the bond with the ethnic group and cause feelings of longing and alienation towards the homeland.

(RE)CREATION OF EMOTIONS: NEW PLACES, NEW EXPERIENCES

Human emotions are emergent features of the structure of social situations or events, conceptualised as social facts. Emotions are manifested, shaped, experienced and expressed in different ways (Boyns 2006), depending on factors including different social backgrounds, lived experiences and personality characteristics (Scherer & Tannenbaum 1986). Challenges in obtaining legal status are potential emotion-producing situations, impacting the emotional experiences of immigrants once they arrive at their places of resettlement and afterwards (see Holgate et al. 2012; Kayaalp 2020). Kayaalp's (2020) research on Kurds in Canada notes that, owing to legal challenges in obtaining residency or citizenship status, they experience emotions such as feelings of discrimination, exclusion, insecurity and unwelcomeness. A positive change in legal status reinforces the sense of belonging of Kurdish immigrants in Finland, opening options for physical mobility, a sense of security and an improved standard of living (Toivanen & Kivisto 2014). Those who are included develop a positive sense of belonging, while interactions creating feelings of exclusion can lead to further isolation and alienation over time. Boyns and Luery (2015) state that the degree to which individual expectations are satisfied is significant – disappointments generate negative emotions.

Immigration status is closely linked to employment opportunities, as lack of settled residency status can result in formal employment being unavailable. Studies show that, when legal status is intertwined with work-related situations, immigrants can be exposed to greater exploitation (e.g. long working hours, limited holidays), must deal with barriers posed by authorities and employers and as a result can experience a sense of xenophobia from the host society, disillusionment, anxiety and depression (Griffiths 2001; Holgate et al. 2012; Kayaalp 2020). Here, the power-status relationship that affects emotional arousal in social interaction can be applied (Kemper 2006). Gaining power and status results in positive emotions such as satisfaction and confidence; by contrast, losing power and status leads to negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and distrust.

Events and situations alter people's impressions (Smith-Lovin 1990). Recently, countries and societies' political discourses on immigrants have become harsher, reflected in exclusionary practices and stereotyped attitudes (Alinia & Eliassi 2014). Studies on forcibly displaced Kurdish immigrants generally show that experiences such as being criminalised as a potential terrorist (creating feelings of being disrespected, frustration, anger and mistrust), unequal treatment (indignation and stigmatisation), labour-market segregation (feelings of discrimination, distress, insecurity and being disrespected), cultural and linguistic misunderstandings (feeling the victim of prejudice and discrimination), legal ambiguity (a sense of xenophobia and discrimination) and hostility from dominant groups (feelings of shame, exclusion and harassment) can lead to similar or varying emotions (see Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Fatahi & Økland 2015; Holgate et al. 2012; Kayaalp 2020; Kevers, Rober & de Haene 2017; Taloyan et al. 2011a; 2011b).

Thoits (1990) suggests that emotion as a subjective experience may not always allow for observation of expressive gestures, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, because individuals usually control such gestures in public. However, modifying, masking, exaggerating or rejecting the inhibited or free display of expressive gestures can have emotional consequences for the other person (Kemper 1990). Physical distance, certain forms of eye contact and gestures in daily social interactions also create feelings of insecurity, mistrust and disturbance (Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Fatahi et al. 2010). Despite immigrants' desire to belong to the host countries, the emphasis

placed on their being 'immigrants' strengthens their sense of being unwelcome and pushes them towards greater identification with their homeland (Alinia & Eliassi 2014). When emotion produced by the precipitating situation finds its counterpart in past experiences, the emotion becomes apparent; however, emotion may not be easily interpreted when the emotion-producing situation or event is unlike previous experiences (Schachter 1959), and the individual may experience an avoidant emotional response. Holgate et al. (2012) show that immigrants sometimes interpret situations less severely by avoiding the real definition of the emotion-producing situation, for example, believing they have experienced a stand-alone instance of prejudice rather than widespread xenophobia.

The emotional experiences of forcibly displaced Kurdish immigrants are also affected by language barriers, loss of social capital, cultural diversity and alienation accompanying immigration (Fatahi 2014). The loss of hierarchy awakens feelings of desperation and self-deprecation, increasing the sense of alienation and being discriminated against (Griffiths 2001; Holgate et al. 2012). Alternately, the disappearance of the language barrier can herald feelings of greater acceptance, becoming conscious of duties and rights in their new home and the construction of new identities (Griffiths 2001). Improving one's social position through social and economic participation is a source of positive emotional experiences such as attachment, belonging, self-esteem, freedom and pride (Alinia & Eliassi 2014; Fatahi 2014; Taloyan et al. 2011a; 2011b).

DIASPORIC 'HOMES' AND A SHARED SENSE OF INCLUSION

Individuals' routine activities and choices in social interactions are influenced by their past emotional experiences (Boyns & Luery 2015). Length of residence and immigration status, particularly associated with limitations, opportunities offered and acquisitions obtained, or a shared sense of inclusion (Millán-Franco et al. 2019), are two influential factors in transforming emotional experiences emerging from forced migration. Alinia and Eliassi (2014) point out that the older generation of Kurdish immigrants in Sweden can actively attend democratic and cultural activities there. They exercise political freedom and gain awareness of their personal and political rights as citizens and members of minority groups.

Belonging not only means the ability to adapt; it implies emotional attachment to various collectives and feeling 'at home' and 'secure' (Yuval-Davis 2006). Kurdish diasporic communities, in locations where a strong Kurdish identity is built, are diasporic 'homes', while the home(land) remains an ambiguous and ambivalent conception. These communities are also described as 'homecomings' that foster a positive Kurdish identity through emotional experiences of confidence and respect (Alinia & Eliassi 2014). According to Fatahi and Økland (2015), diasporic homes and communication with others are a basic need for feelings of safety and social well-being among Kurdish immigrants in Scandinavia. Karagöz (2017) shows that Kurdish community centres in France have a similar function of eliminating feelings of alienation and restoring feelings of lost roots and identities. Griffiths (2001) also demonstrates that community centres alleviate feelings of insecurity and threat. The strong transactional need of group inclusion (Turner 2006) can be emphasised, as can two emotions experienced by community centre members: senses of belonging and safety. Both emotions motivate individuals to maintain a sense of group inclusion.

Feelings of belonging and solidarity are closely related to interaction, underpinned by a sense of safety. An individual's belief that Kurds are exiled and unable to return

to their homeland can motivate participation in local and diasporic community networks. If the encounter with local communities fosters positive emotions on both sides, a common sense of inclusion can be generated (Summers-Effler 2006). New positive interactions could change immigrants' negative expectations for the better. Otherwise, interaction remains limited to group members. Interactions within diasporic community networks, such as community meetings and demonstrations, can nurture and strengthen collectives (Clarke & Waring 2018; Summers-Effler 2006).

Community centres may carry out social functions that hold communities together (Summers-Effler 2006). Many centres serve as consultancy services because immigrants prefer to consult their staff rather than professional advisers from outside the community owing to distrust and misunderstanding (Holgate et al. 2012). As Kevers, Rober and de Haene (2017) note, community events ensure the re-establishing of social connection and trust while reinforcing a sense of collective belonging, solidarity, and resistance to oppression. They are the motivating factors providing opportunities for a shared sense of inclusion.

Among immigrant communities, opportunities to preserve their traditions and cultures, learn the Kurdish language(s) in the formal education system and publish books and other forms of media in Kurdish also create a favourable change in their emotional experience. These possibilities define host countries as safe havens with a freer atmosphere than their home societies (Taloyan et al. 2011a; Toivanen & Kivisto 2014). Taloyan et al. (2011a) state that Kurds writing in their mother tongue and sharing experiences of oppression and trauma produce positive feelings of satisfaction.

Studies in Sweden show that involvement in community centre activities makes immigrants identify with the homeland and fosters their sense of belonging to the host country (Alinia & Eliassi 2014). Ongoing political conflict in the homeland and social and cultural opportunities offered by the host countries are important in changing immigrants' plans to return to their homeland (Taloyan et al. 2011a). Openly presenting themselves as Kurds to the authorities and society in Sweden and speaking Kurdish without threat or fear of punishment are further connected with immigrants' positive emotional experiences, such as a sense of freedom and confidence, satisfaction and empowerment (Taloyan et al. 2011b).

CONCLUSION

This review evaluates Kurdish immigrants' post-immigration emotional experiences. Previous research (Fatahi & Krupic 2017; Kevers, Rober & de Haene 2017; Toivanen & Kivisto 2014) has explored their emotional experiences; however, comprehensive research is needed on the consequences of forced displacement for their emotional well-being. Owing to the lack of sufficient information in available studies, this study does not consider whether Kurdish immigrants' emotional experiences differ across sex, gender, length of migration, socio-economic status and legal status (asylum seekers, refugees, irregular and undocumented immigrants, guest workers) and between generations (younger and older generations). Exploring these intersecting categories is necessary for more comprehensive outcomes and for formulating impactful policies. Another limitation is no doubt that this study focuses only on qualitative studies and Kurdish immigrants. Future research with a mixed methods approach on different immigrant groups would enable a better understanding of immigrants' emotional experiences.

This study demonstrates how Kurdish immigrants' negative emotional experiences caused by pre-migratory push factors are reflected in their social interactions in the destination country. To reduce possible repercussions of the lived experiences and build a sense of inclusion, authorities should initially identify the mental health and emotional/behavioural difficulties associated with forced displacement. Studies developing effective strategies for coping with these challenges considerably gain importance in this case.

Symbols, figures and rituals from Kurdish immigrants' pre-immigration interactions reverberate in negative emotional experiences in the resettlement country owing to differences in cultural and societal definitions. Emotional experiences generated by specific symbols convert into distinct negative emotions. The transformation of fear into anger is particularly worthy of note. Understanding and identifying pre-migratory push factors will help counteract resulting negative emotional experiences.

This study highlights that Kurdish immigrants often experience negative emotions caused by events or situations. However, this study's findings lack evidence to alleviate these negative emotions by relevant institutions in the host country. Rather than healing the traces of immigrants' traumatic past, authorities emphasise policies promoting socio-cultural integration. This research shows that these policies fall short of Kurdish immigrants' expectations owing to reasons such as legal status, social and occupational regression, loss of hierarchy and language barrier. Language-related difficulties particularly impact Kurdish immigrants throughout the immigration process. A coordinated inclusion and visibility of local authorities (e.g. municipality) and (immigrant) community-based organisations will alleviate these difficulties (Ölcer 2023). Additional research should concentrate on finding strategies for the difficulties faced by immigrants.

The current study indicates that resolving uncertainty surrounding the legal status of Kurdish immigrants more quickly accelerates their socio-economic and cultural inclusion, facilitating a sense of belonging. Negative cultural beliefs and unsafe atmospheres reinforce closer ties with their homeland and further trigger their traumatic memories by generating fear (Alinia & Eliassi 2014). This highlights the importance of sharing by filtering out states' discursive, political, structural and institutional attitudes and anti-immigrant language in the media and the importance of further migration studies on media literacy.

This review reveals that negative interactions with local communities and ambivalent emotions towards the homeland motivate further involvement in Kurdish diasporic community networks and community organisations. Reinforcing intra-group social relations through socio-cultural activities is the main strength of Kurdish community organisations. No evidence, however, has been found to support their role in building/maintaining social cohesion or social interaction between displaced and host communities. Further research is needed to better understand the role of Kurdish diasporic community networks in strengthening the social inclusion of immigrants in host countries.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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