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Returning Home After Retirement? The Role of Gender in the Decision Making Process of Where and How To Retire / Anita Böcker

Abstract

This paper examines how gender plays a role in the decision-making processes of older migrants on where to live after retirement. It is based on in-depth interviews with 20 Spanish-born and 76 Turkish-born migrants who spent their working lives in the Netherlands and decided to return to their country of origin after retirement. Existing studies on return migration showed that women are often more reluctant than men to settle back in their country of origin, yet these studies also acknowledge that more in-depth research should be conducted on the role of gender in migrants' decision-making on return migration. In this paper, we examine, firstly, why our female respondents may be more reluctant to return and how this influences the decision-making processes of couples or families. We argue that specifically Turkish women fear a loss of new-won freedoms and that both Turkish and Spanish women prefer to maintain dual residency in order to provide and receive informal family care when needed. Secondly, we examine how the respondents' citizenship status influences their decision making. Migrants with Dutch or Spanish (EU) citizenship can move freely between the Netherlands and their country of origin. By contrast, migrants with (only) Turkish citizenship lose their residence rights in the Netherlands when they stay outside the country for a year. For naturalised Turkish migrants, their citizenship of the 'host' state is a source of freedom and security, ensuring them access to family members there and guaranteeing them the right to return back as and when the need arises. For Spanish migrants, their EU citizenship fulfils the same functions. This makes the decision to return 'permanently' much less dramatic for these groups compared to migrants who are third-country nationals. Our data also show that migrants' perspectives on citizenship are influenced by gender differences. We found that particularly women value their citizenship of the host state or, for that matter, their EU citizenship, above all in terms of the access it ensures them to their children and grandchildren.

Keywords: return migration, citizenship, gender, Turkey, Spain

1. Introduction

This paper examines how gender plays a role in the decision-making processes of older migrants on where to live after retirement. It is based on interviews with Spanish-born and Turkish-born migrants who spent their working lives in the Netherlands. Existing studies on return migration showed that women are often more reluctant than men to settle back in their country of origin. In this paper, we examine, firstly, why our female respondents were often more reluctant to return and how this influences the decision-making processes of couples or families. In answering these questions, we pay special attention to caring roles and expectations, which are highly gendered. Secondly, we examine how the respondents' citizenship status influences their decision making. Migrants with Dutch or Spanish (EU) citizenship can move freely between the Netherlands and their country of origin. By contrast, migrants with (only) Turkish citizenship lose their residence rights in the Netherlands when they stay outside the country for a year. What difference did this make for the migrants concerned, and how did it interact with gender differences?

Gender and (return retirement) migration

Although one can observe an increase of studies on retirement migrants in general, the experiences of post-retirement returnees are still largely under-researched, (exceptions are for example Ackers and Dwyer 2002; Krumme 2004; Bolzman, Fibbi et al. 2006; Balkir and Böcker 2012; de Coulon and Wolff 2010; De Haas and Fokkema 2010; Hunter 2011). Earlier studies on return migration to the Mediterranean region focussed mainly on the return of working-age migrants and do not incorporate the experiences of post-retirement returnees in their analysis.

Recent studies on Turkish and Spanish return retirement migrants who have worked in a Northern-European country show that older migrants often prefer to maintain a flexible migratory pattern (instead of returning permanently to their country of origin), because of a 'duality of resources and references' in both the country of retirement and the country where they spent their working life (compare Krumme 2004; Bolzman, Fibbi et al. 2006). Low cost flights between Northern-Europe and the Mediterranean and cheap communication possibilities have made it possible to: 'exploit, maintain and continue to develop residential opportunities, social networks and welfare entitlements in more than one country' (Warnes and Williams 2006 p. 1265). Although we assume that gender plays an important role in the decision making process of where and how to retire, gender is often left aside in studies on retirement migration or only hinted at shortly.

King and his colleagues (2004) argue in a state of the art report on 'Gender, Age and Generations' that the dynamics of return are highly gendered. They argue that, although men and women may yearn for 'home', women are often more reluctant to return to the country of origin, because generally women do not want to give up their 'new-won freedoms' and do not want to return to conservative social conditions (p. 39). According to King and his colleagues, more in-depth research on the role of gender in migrants' decision-making on return migration is needed as well as on how a (non-)return decision is taken within the family. Mahler and Pessar (2006) also argue that more attention should be paid to the importance of gender in the negotiation of where and how to retire. According to Mahler and Pessar (2006 p. 2f) people do 'gender work'; referring to the fluid practices and discourses through which people negotiate relationships and conflicting interests. This raises the question how a possible return move is negotiated within the household setting – between the husband and wife and within the broader family – and how gender plays out in this process.

Citizenship from a bottom-up perspective

In the citizenship literature, there is an ongoing debate on the changing form and nature of citizenship. According to some scholars, national citizenship is giving way to new, postnational or transnational forms of citizenship. For example, Soysal (1994) has argued that European nation states have been extending rights which used to be reserved for citizens to noncitizen migrants, and

that migrants' claims for rights within host states are increasingly framed within discourses of universal human rights. Other scholars emphasise the resilience of national citizenship or the limitations of the international human rights system.

A bottom-up perspective is largely absent in this literature. There are few empirical studies and even fewer studies examining what meaning citizenship actually has in people's lives (cf. Jones and Gaventa 2002; Lister et al. 2003; Miller-Idriss 2006). An interesting exception is a study by Leitner and Ehrkamp (2006). Based on ethnographic research in Germany and the US, it analyses the values and meanings migrants assign to citizenship. Particularly relevant for our topic is their finding that the intersection of gender and national identity may lead to conflicting decisions about naturalisation: whereas Turkish and Mexican women did not see a contradiction between their Turkish or Mexican identities and acquiring the citizenship of the host state, their male compatriots were more reluctant to apply for naturalisation because they felt it would betray their national identity. Their study also shows that national citizenship continues to be meaningful in migrants' struggles for cross-border mobility, legal protection and access to social and political rights. Similar to Leitner and Ehrkamp, we will examine what values and meanings (older) migrants attach to citizenship of the host country, paying special attention to (the intersection of) gender and nationality differences.

Methodology

This paper is based on semi-structured interviews with Spanish and Turkish return migrants. The interviews were conducted in the framework of different research projects. Böcker interviewed Turkish return migrants in 2009-2010 as part of a comparative project on retirement migration. Gehring interviewed both Turkish and Spanish return migrants in 2012-2013 within the scope of her ongoing PhD research on retirement migration. In total, we conducted 76 interviews: 20 with Spanish migrants and 56 with Turkish migrants. Most of the interviews were with couples (11 Spanish and 30 Turkish couples), some were with male migrants (4 Spanish and 21 Turkish men), and some were with female migrants (5 Spanish and 5 Turkish women).

We made use of purposive non-random sampling methods to recruit respondents. The main criteria for selecting respondents were that they were retired in the sense that they had chosen or been required to give up paid work, that they had spent (a large part of) their working lives in the Netherlands, and that they had returned to Spain or Turkey upon their retirement. We attempted to include migrants with different family status, different health status and different migration patterns in both samples. Most respondents settled back permanently in Spain or Turkey, but we also interviewed migrants who divided their time between the Netherlands and their country of birth. Finally, as we were interested in the effects of different citizenship statuses, we attempted to include equal numbers of Turkish and dual (Dutch/Turkish) nationals in the sample of Turkish returnees.

Gender and the decision making process

This section examines the role of gender in the decision-making processes of our respondents on where to live after retirement. The decision making process does not end at the moment of final settlement in the country of origin, but continuously plays a role when, for example, all children are married, one of the partners dies, or health deteriorates. At these moments settlement and the mobility pattern may be reconsidered. We pay attention to dynamics between different players who are involved in the decision making process and to why women may be more reluctant to return permanently to the country of origin. Although each decision making process involves specific players, personal motivations, and differing dynamics between partners; we provide some insights hinting at broader similarities and differences in this section.

Negotiation, discussions, and quarrels

The migratory decision-making process of where and how to retire concerns a process of negotiation, discussion and sometimes also conflict between the people involved. One of the main subjects of the negotiations and possible disagreements concerns the mobility pattern. Generally speaking, women more often prefer a fluid migratory pattern with back-and-forth moves and men prefer to return permanently to their country of birth. Mostly compromises are found and migratory patterns are negotiated within the couple which may lead to a (1) permanent return move with the wife retaining the possibility to move regularly to the Netherlands, a (2) fluid migratory pattern or (3) sometimes to different mobility patterns within the couple – one of the partners already returns and the other partner moves back-and-forth. The following interview notes show how a Turkish couple negotiates their mobility pattern:

Especially his wife has a lot of friends in the Netherlands and she likes the freedom she has here to go outside. In Turkey she stays more at home and their family visits them. In the Netherlands she goes outside and does whatever she wants. That is why she doesn't want to return to Turkey for the whole year. His wife had a bypass operation a few years ago and he doesn't want to upset her in any way. So he keeps on traveling. Actually he doesn't like to travel. [Turkish couple, living part of the year in Turkey]

A few respondents also hinted at quarrels they had had with their spouse. In those cases the husband mostly wants to return permanently, whereas the wife is more reluctant or wants to remain in the Netherlands.

While talking about the decision to return the wife becomes emotional. She explains that she did not want to return permanently to Spain, because she didn't want to be far away from her children and grandchildren. She had many discussions and quarrels about this with her husband, but she did not feel free to negotiate the return with him. In the end she felt forced by her husband to

return permanently to Spain. Their daughter, who is visiting the couple at the time of the interview, explains that her father still lays down the law in their marriage. After returning to Spain, the wife went on holidays to the Netherlands and there she saw that her children were doing fine without here. After this visit she was more at ease in Spain. [Spanish woman, permanent returnee]

This interview fragment shows that the return migratory move does not only affect the lives of the migrant(s) involved, but also influences relations with family members – mainly children and parents (when alive). The decision to return is therefore often negotiated with close family members who may live in the Netherlands or in the country of birth.

The wife explains that their son gave them his permission for their return to Spain. She tells that her son told: ‘mum and dad, you both have worked very long and you made sure that we [both sons] could have a good job. I’m a grown-up now and I studied at Utrecht University. I can take care of myself now’. She states that both their sons have a good life in the Netherlands and that she felt that she could return now. The husband adds that it hurts to leave children behind in the Netherlands, but that it’s also difficult not to fully enjoy the last years of their life. [Spanish couple, permanent returnees]

Permanent returnees, both male and female, emphasize that the decision to settle back in their country of birth has not been an easy one, since it often means a bigger distance to their family and friends in the Netherlands and leaving a country which has become familiar during the years they lived there. The decision for permanent Turkish returnees is specifically difficult, because a return move may have implications for their residence rights in the Netherlands – they may be forced to give up their Dutch citizenship or they may lose their Dutch permanent residence status when living more than a year abroad. In the section on citizenship we elaborate more on this topic, also in relation to its gender implications.

Reluctance to return

As stated earlier, women may be more reluctant to return permanently to the country of origin than men. A broad range of reasons can be found for this reluctance, yet in this section is only space for three main reasons. First of all, similar to what is found in other studies, particularly Turkish women feel that they have gained more freedom in the Netherlands and feel therefore more ‘at home’ in the Netherlands than their husbands. Furthermore, upon return the social life of both Turkish and Spanish women may be tied to the house and the social life of men is more outside, which may lead to an easier re-adaptation of men than of women.

She explains that she didn’t want to return to Turkey, but because her husband had a very hard time in the Netherlands, she decided that it would be better to return together. The first year after their return she was very depressed. She argues that she felt freer in the Netherlands. ‘I had my own car, my own money, but here I have to ask my husband for everything.’ She explains that it was much easier for her husband to build up a new network in Turkey, because he could go to a tea

house, but women cannot do that in her opinion. She spent many hours inside the house during that first year. [Turkish woman, permanent returnee]

Whereas a return move may cause a loss of new won freedoms and status for women, for men the opposite may be true. Mainly Turkish male respondents who returned with a remigration benefit (see section on citizenship) state that they wanted to return to Turkey because of a loss of freedom and status in the Netherlands. These men depended on a Dutch social or invalidity benefit prior to their return to Turkey which caused for some a feeling of humiliation and uselessness. Moreover, they often felt maltreated and discriminated in the Netherlands and preferred to return to Turkey because of that. Although women were in general more reluctant to return, we also found that some women explicitly state that they prefer to return to Turkey or Spain, because of language difficulties and isolation in the Netherlands.

A second reason expressed by both Turkish and Spanish women is the relation with the family. Although both men and women find it difficult to leave (grand)children behind in the Netherlands, for women this seems to be more often a reason not to return permanently to Spain or Turkey. The following interview notes show how a couple negotiates these different needs:

He would prefer returning for good. He is under great psychological pressure here all the time. [...]His wife does not want to return yet. She wants to wait until their youngest son is married and settled. [...] She does not want to stop him, however. And he accepts that she wants to stay in the Netherlands for another six years or so. He tells her: Stay here for another six-seven years, find a girl for our youngest son. He can come back to the Netherlands and stay here for three months each year, as a tourist. She can come to Turkey and stay for about six weeks each year. So they will not be separated all the time. [Turkish couple, husband is about to return and the wife moves back-and-forth]

However, when children live in both countries or only in the country of birth, the decision for a permanent return move is easier for both men and women.

The couple explains that they returned to Turkey, because they never managed to bring their disabled daughter to the Netherlands. The wife therefore always moved back-and-forth between the Netherlands and Turkey and the husband spent the summers in Turkey. After 25 years in the Netherlands, the couple decided to live permanently in Turkey so that they could take care of their disabled daughter. The husband states that the return was easier for his wife because she never stayed on a permanent basis in the Netherlands and all her family members are living in Turkey. [Turkish couple, permanent returnees]

A third reason which influences the migratory pattern is related to care obligations and expectations. Although the social networks of both men and women often include family relations in the 'home' as well as in the 'host' country, caring expectations and roles in informal care

arrangements within the family are highly gendered. Baldassar (2007 p. 293) shows in her work on families who care across borders that caring is not restricted to people who live in close proximity to one another, yet the way care can be exchanged is influenced and transformed by migration, geographical distance, borders and the passage of time. We found that families find creative ways through for example telephone contact, Skype and e-mail to maintain intense caring relationships, however specifically nursing and child care are types of care which can only be provided in close proximity or in a crisis event. The responsibility of often women to provide care for (grand)children can lead to a fluid migratory pattern in which the wife prefers to move back-and-forth between the Netherlands and the country of origin.

She explains that her husband wants to return to Spain, but that she cannot go with him. She takes care of their granddaughter during two days a week. She cares for her during the six months that they are in the Netherlands. She enjoys doing it and their daughter does not have the financial means to pay for the kindergarten. She argues that she can think about a permanent move to Spain when their grandchildren are old enough. [Spanish woman, spends six months per year in Spain]

Furthermore, post-retirement returnees move at a stage in their lifecycle associated with an increased need to receive care themselves. This also influences the migratory pattern of post-retirement returnees. For some couples receiving care from their children is an incentive to stay in the Netherlands, yet for others it is a reason to return once again to the Netherlands. It is striking to see that women who returned permanently to Spain or Turkey consider more often a final return move to the Netherlands when they are in need of care or when their husband dies. Particularly among the Turkish respondents, husband and wife sometimes give different answers to the question whether they would prefer to move back to the Netherlands in certain situations:

The wife said that, if her husband would die, she would want to go to her children in Holland. God knows, but I want to go to my children, if they [Dutch immigration authorities] let me, or the children should come here to stay with me. Her husband said he would stay in Turkey under all circumstances. [Turkish couple, permanent returnees]

Partly as a result of these gender differences, the decision-making process is stressful and sometimes conflict-laden. Men may often decide easier to return to the country of origin while women prefer to maintain dual residences, yet only partly because they do not want to lose their 'new-won freedoms' as King et al. (2004) argue. Our study shows specifically that women prefer to move back-and-forth in order to enable access to a broader range of informal care resources and to maintain a transnational way of family life. For most Turkish respondents the decision to return permanently was particularly difficult because of their citizenship status. We will further elaborate on this topic in the next section.

Significance of dual or EU citizenship

In the past few decades, most Turkish-born migrants in the Netherlands have acquired Dutch citizenship. A large majority were not required to renounce their Turkish citizenship, thus becoming dual nationals. Spanish-born migrants, and migrants from EU member states more generally, have shown a much lower propensity to naturalise, even though they are generally allowed to retain their former citizenship. Migrants with Dutch or EU citizenship can move freely between the Netherlands and their country of origin. By contrast, migrants with (only) Turkish citizenship lose their residence rights in the Netherlands if they remain outside the country for a year. How does this influence the decision making of the migrants concerned, and how does it interact with gender differences?

More than half of our Turkish respondents acquired Dutch citizenship while they were living in the Netherlands. Among our Spanish respondents, a much smaller proportion was naturalized. In both groups, migrants who have not naturalised say they have not done so because they do not see (important) advantages. They believe that their Spanish (EU) citizenship or their permanent resident status gives them largely the same rights as Dutch citizens – and that a Dutch passport would not protect them against discrimination. Some also refer to the requirements and the costs. In hindsight, a few Turkish returnees regret that they have not applied for naturalisation. They now realise that a Dutch passport would have offered advantages over a permanent resident status. In particular, it would enable them to spend longer periods of time in Turkey without risking their residence rights in the Netherlands.

For Turkish respondents who are dual citizens, their Dutch citizenship is above all a source of freedom and security, enabling them to come and go as they want and guaranteeing them the right to return back to the Netherlands if things would not work out in Turkey.

His Dutch passport is fairly important for him. You can come and go whenever you want. You can also stay away for a longer period of time. And when you arrive at Schiphol, there are two queues. The queue for EU citizens is shorter than the other one, for non-EU citizens. [Turkish man, living part of the year in Turkey]

His Dutch passport is important for him, of course. They cannot throw you out. He can go back to the Netherlands if he loses his disability benefit. Otherwise, he would be on the street in Turkey. [Turkish man, spending a trial period in Turkey before settling back there permanently]

The latter respondent finds it reassuring that he would be entitled to social assistance in the Netherlands. Another respondent calls her Dutch passport ‘a kind of insurance’ against more and less foreseeable risks. She and several other returnees say they would not have returned to Turkey without it. Particularly for female respondents, however, this has not only to do with retaining access to the Dutch welfare state, but also, or primarily, with maintaining family relations. Their

Dutch passport gives them the easiest and most certain access to the country of residence of their children and grandchildren.

Without her Dutch passport, she would not have returned. Her daughter and grandchild live in the Netherlands. She wants to be able to board a plane to visit them without first having to apply for a visa. She also feels rich having two countries. And whenever the situation in one country deteriorates, she can flee to the other country. [Turkish woman, permanent returnee]

The Spanish respondents also find it important, for similar reasons, to retain access to the Netherlands. However, they do not need Dutch citizenship to enjoy the same feelings of freedom and security. Their Spanish (EU) citizenship provides them with these rights. They can visit the Netherlands with their Spanish passport (or just their Spanish ID card):

She did not want to go back to Spain. It was her husband who decided that they would return. She found it hard that she could not see her grandchildren growing up and to be separated from her daughter. Six years after her return, she feels happy here. Twice a year she visits her children and grandchildren in the Netherlands, while her husband stays here. [...] She can travel without restrictions, take her passport and go. [Spanish woman, permanent returnee]

Respondents with only Turkish citizenship, on the other hand, are well aware that they are not be allowed to settle back in the Netherlands after a longer stay in their country of birth. This makes the decision to return permanently such a difficult one for this group. For the respondents with Dutch or Spanish citizenship, ‘permanent’ does not have the same, dramatic, connotation, even if they are aware that a return to the Netherlands may not be possible because of financial or other practical constraints.

Losing Dutch citizenship

Return migrants with dual citizenship may lose their Dutch citizenship if they do not have their Dutch passport renewed within ten years after their return (and subsequently every ten years). Moreover, dual citizens may be required to give up their Dutch citizenship upon their return to their country of birth. The Dutch Remigration Act offers older migrants from former recruitment countries who face problems in the Dutch labour market the option of returning to their country of origin. They receive a monthly benefit to help cover their costs of living and/or a lump sum for their moving expenses. However, they have to return for good, and naturalised migrants are required to renounce their Dutch citizenship.

Both among our Spanish and Turkish respondents, there are returnees who were required to give up their Dutch citizenship in return for a remigration allowance. The Spanish respondents do not seem to be bothered by this requirement. As one of them remarks dryly: ‘I still have my Spanish passport.’ The Turkish respondents, on the other hand, find this requirement difficult to agree to. Some feel aggrieved by it. They point out that they have lived in the Netherlands for many years,

that they brought up their children there, that the Netherlands has become their second mother- or fatherland, and particularly male respondents also refer to their economic contribution.

He had to renounce his Dutch citizenship. He does not think that is fair. After having worked so many years in the Netherlands, you should not be required to give back your Dutch passport. [Turkish man, permanent returnee]

What some of them do not mention explicitly – probably because it is so obvious for them – is that together with their Dutch citizenship they also give up the possibility of returning back to the Netherlands. This is different for the Spanish respondents, as is illustrated in an interview with a returnee who is about to lose her Dutch citizenship because of the ten-years rule.

She shows us her expired Dutch passport. She has not had it renewed after her return to Spain, because, as she explains, she does not need it. She keeps it in a nice box, along with pictures and other souvenirs from the Netherlands. [Spanish woman, permanent returnee]

The naturalised Turkish respondents clearly attach a different value or meaning to their Dutch passport. This value or meaning can also be grasped from what parents say about their children's citizenship.

He had to denounce his Dutch citizenship. He found it a bit difficult, because he lived there thirty years. They also asked for the passports of his children, but did not insist. So the children still have their Dutch passports. He will have them renewed every five years. Perhaps they want to return to the Netherlands when they are grown up. [male returnee, permanent returnee]

His daughter, who was only eleven years old, also could not keep her Dutch citizenship. He and his wife feel bad about this. They are afraid that their daughter may blame them when she is grown up. They did not ask for her consent, she was too young. He is not interested in Dutch citizenship for himself, but he would like his daughter to get back hers. [male returnee, permanent returnee]

De Haas and Fokkema (2010) found that sons of Moroccan return migrants tend to resent their fathers' decision to return since it blocks their own chances of gaining admission to Europe. The examples above show that Turkish returnees attach great value to their children retaining Dutch citizenship.

As already explained, women are often more reluctant than their husbands to return permanently to their country of origin. As a compromise solution, some couples settle for a fluid migration pattern. Another compromise is that the husband files the application for a remigration benefit and gives up his Dutch citizenship, so that the wife can retain hers. In some cases, this compromise is explicitly negotiated between wife and husband; in other cases, it is a sort of tacit compromise between the husband's wish and the wife's reluctance to settle back in Turkey. We

found much fewer examples of women who gave up their Dutch citizenship so that the family could return with a remigration benefit. In one case, this was because both spouses wanted to return, the wife even more than the husband, while the husband was more reluctant to give up his Dutch citizenship because of his political refugee past.

We found quite a few examples of couples where the husband renounced his Dutch citizenship while the wife retained hers. Thus, gender differences may not only lead to conflicting decisions about naturalisation – as Leitner and Ehrkamp (2006) found with regard to Turkish migrants in Germany – but also to conflicting decisions about denaturalisation. As a consequence of such conflicting or compromised decisions, husband and wife (and children) may have different citizenship statuses. Our interviews with Turkish returnee women who have retained their Dutch citizenship make clear that these women attach great value to their Dutch passport, as a kind of insurance policy and because it offers them the easiest and most secure access to their children in the Netherlands. At the same time, they are aware that their husband can no longer claim these citizenship rights. Do they experience this as empowering, or rather as disempowering? It is difficult to say on the basis of the following interview quotes. However, both women present their Dutch citizenship as a resource which they would use for the benefit of their husband or family, too.

He found it hard to give up his Dutch passport, but he did it because he wanted to return. His wife and their daughter kept their Dutch passports. She says: ‘It is very important for me and I find it still more important for our daughter. You never know what will happen; one day we may want to return to the Netherlands.’ She adds that her husband will have to stay here, but that she may be able to have him come over to the Netherlands after some time. [returnee couple, living permanently in Turkey]

She has dual citizenship, her husband has not got Dutch citizenship anymore. He had to give it up so that they could make use of the Remigration Act. Did he find this difficult? As a matter of fact, he did, she says. Because it is a kind of insurance, if things go wrong, you can return to the Netherlands. However, she told him, if necessary I can go first, and we can apply for family reunification. [female returnee, living permanently in Turkey]

We also found examples where the difference in citizenship status among the spouses is clearly experienced as awkward and limiting. Several couples were forced to cancel or change their plans to visit relatives in the Netherlands, because the husband’s visa application was refused. In one case, the wife decided not to go either; in another case, she went alone. In both cases, the wife as well as the husband felt humiliated by the Dutch state.

Conclusions

Our paper confirms that the process of deciding where and how to reside after retirement is gendered. Women may be more reluctant to return permanently to the country of birth. King et al. (2004) mention two reasons for this reluctance: (1) women do not want to lose their ‘new-won

freedoms' and (2) they do not want to return to conservative social conditions. Our Turkish respondents particularly refer to those two reasons. Our data shows that a third motive should be added: the role of women within the family and the exchange of care. Both Spanish and Turkish women prefer to maintain dual residency in order to live a transnational family life and to provide and receive informal family care when needed.

Our data show that decision-making processes are also influenced by migrants' citizenship status. For naturalised Turkish migrants, their citizenship of the 'host' state is a source of freedom and security, ensuring them access to family members there and guaranteeing them the right to return back as and when the need arises. For Spanish migrants, their EU citizenship fulfils the same functions. This makes the decision to return 'permanently' much less dramatic for these groups compared to migrants who are third-country nationals. The options of the latter group are constrained by the host state's immigration rules.

Our data also show that migrants' perspectives on citizenship are influenced by gender differences. We found that particularly women value their citizenship of the host state or, for that matter, their EU citizenship, above all in terms of the access it ensures them to their children and grandchildren. Turkish women are therefore also more reluctant to give up their citizenship of the host state than Turkish men.

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