

The Role of In-Group Attachment at the Early Stage of Migration Process among Berber Migrants

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Abstract: Berber migrants have been separated from their families and in-group members when they migrated to the UK. Following this separation, Berbers have faced work integration difficulties at their early stages of migration. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on transnational identity development, which remains an under-researched aspect of how intra-ethnic attachment may affect the professional identity development and the social integration among Berbers. To provide a rich understanding of Berbers' migration process, the data was collected by using qualitative methods including; initial interviews. This method was conducted with 7 Berber migrants who live in the UK, Tamazight, Musician, JSK, Tutor, and Painter are based in London, Twin mum in Wales and Louiza in Portsmouth. Studying this specific ethnic group might provide an insight into whether attachment among Berbers contributes to their work integration and professional identity development. There are two principal aspects to this research: first, the role of their ethnic attachment during their migration, and second, an exploration of their professional identity development. The latter entailed identifying the role of group attachment in the development of their professional identity.

Keywords: ethnic, professional identity, Berbers

Introduction

Berbers (or Amazigh, which means ‘free men’) are the indigenous people of the North African ‘Maghreb’, meaning the part of North Africa which includes, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco (Hannoum, 2008). The term ‘ethnic’ in this thesis is not based on ideas of race. Instead, the ethnic group refers to a self-defined cultural collective as used by the Office of National Statistics (2011): “There is no consensus on what constitutes an ethnic group and membership is something that is self-defined and subjectively meaningful to the person concerned”.

Attachment theory has been the focus of many researchers who have expanded the knowledge of infant-parent attachment, where the focus was on infant development in general and the continuity of patterns of child-parent attachments over time (Ainsworth, 1989; Sroufe and Water 1977). To comprehensively understand the attachment theory among Berbers, my research aims to explore the challenges encountered by Berbers in their integration into the UK society and to determine whether Berber’s professional identity development across international boundaries is influenced by some important factors such as their in-group membership. This implies a search for the impact of Berbers’ attachment on their professional identity development, despite differences attributable to their work experience. In addition, I would like to make substantial progress toward understanding whether Berbers’ professional identity provides a basic development process relevant to their social validation across international boundaries.

Like other identities, occupational identity may change over time and space depending on the objectives of the profession, and the cultural and political context in which the profession is located. The term ‘professional identity’ can be used interchangeably with such terms as occupational identity and work identity. Occupational identity refers to “vocational, work, professional or career identity” (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011: 693). For this research, the term ‘professional identity’ refers to the process of integrating individual’s personal knowledge and experience with organisational demands, a process that is linked to self-efficacy (Woods et al., 2016). In other words, the individuals who are employed in the public or private sector aim to deliver their knowledge and experiences to their organisations.

Research Problem

Studies on professional identity have been explored by an in-depth analysis of how counsellors, teachers, nurses and accountant develop their professional identity through their community of practice and training (Suddaby et al., 2007; Gibson et al., 2010; Trede et al, 2012, Dollarhide et al., 2013; Hoeve, 2014). However, there is very little research that deals on how attachment theory contributes to the development of the professional identity of migrants. Furthermore, there is no available literature outlining how this could be developed for the Berber migrants’ living in the UK. This gap in knowledge is particularly problematic in the workplace and social integration for Berber migrants, who may need support and training resources that are different from those they had in their home countries. Therefore, my interest in this research lies in the way that Berber groupness may lead to an empowerment strategy across international boundaries

that may help immigrants to forge their occupational identity, which in turn may enable them to have a sense of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2006) points out that belonging is a sense of feeling 'at home'. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the ethnic group relatedness, yet which may be a central factor driving professional identity development and having a sense of belonging to a new country. This implies that the ethnic collectivity may have an influential role in Berber immigrants' positioning in UK society. In addition to considering the process of migrants' professional career development which they are going through, it is important to consider the countries of origin as well as the host country (Georgiades et al. 2007). The analyses will highlight whether the Berber ethnic group community plays a role in developing their professional identity and sense of belonging.

Literature Review

The role of self in social relationship

The original theory that was formulated by Mead (1934) proposed that individuals develop their self through their social relationships. Similarly, Gecas (1982) argued that social relationships help individuals to acquire important features of their self (cited in Blustein and Noumair, 1996). Following this perspective, Gergen (1991: 170) stated that "relationships make possible the concept of the individual self...we appear to stand alone, but we are manifestations of relatedness". Blustein and Noumair (1996) also report that studies and theories in sociology and social psychology have revealed that relational influences have a potential influence on self. Regarding this, the social attachment might impact not only self-formation process; it may also impact on the professional identity development. This may be the case with Berber migrants who may tend to maintain their ethnic groupness at their early stage of migration to develop a new occupational identity. Blustein (1992: 175) has described career exploration as individuals' knowledge of self and environment, which are used to enhance their career development.

Family attachment and career exploration

Empirical studies (Schulthesis & Blustien, 1994; Kracke, 1997) and theoretical formulations (Josselson, 1988; Marcia, 1988) have examined the impact of family attachment on career exploration process and identity development. Similarly, Ketterson and Blustein (1997) have examined the role of parent-adolescent attachment relationships in the career exploration process through a correlative analysis. Their results indicate that attachment to their parent correlates positively with environmental exploration. This is because the role of family relationships characterised by support and autonomy improves the knowledge of both self and the external environment that individuals are involved in to progress their career development (Kracke, 1997). Early in attachment studies, researchers found that parents' attachment provides security

and support that helps the child to develop his identity and to explore the environment. A similar theory has been used to illuminate the responses to challenges that Dutch and Belgian immigrants encountered in California during the stages of pre-migration, transit, settlement and adjustment/adaptation, where the author argues that understanding social support and immigrants 'needs will benefit from the application of attachment theory (Van Ecke, 2007).

Regarding the role of attachment relationship, this may be the case with Berbers migrants who seek support from their group members to explore their new identity and their new environment in terms of workplace integration through developing their vocational identity to progress in their career and to contribute to the society of settlement. In the career exploration realm, attachment theory is one of the most successful theories that have been applied (Ketterson & Blustein, 1997), its significant notion is the fact that the relationship with the 'attachment figures', such as parents or others provides an emotional support as well as a feeling of security (Ainsworth, 1989). This feeling of security and emotional support has contributed to the mastery and exploration of the world (Sroufe & Waters, 1977). Although the career exploration and development have been examined from caregiver attachment relationships, exploring ethnic group attachment and professional identity development that may contribute to the career exploration process within migrants is one of the unsolved questions within sociological and psychological fields. As many researchers point out, during the professional career, work identity development needs to be explored (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2010; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003).

The role of self in career development

Blustein and Noumair (1996) argue that self and identity have an impact on individuals' career development and practice. Within the field of psychology in general and in social constructionist sociology, and social psychology in particular, there have been several perspectives which explain the notion of self. In Kohut's (2009) psychoanalytic perspective, the self develops through an individual's intrapsychic organisation that gives the individuals the ability to attain a sense of self-esteem. This view of self contrasts with the perspectives of other theorists, De Craemer (1983) and more recently Markus and Kitayama (2012) who have observed that the self is more related to the social context in which the individuals construct their self in relation to their own experiences and social roles (Cushman, 1990; Gergen, 2001).

Such a view emphasises the point that within the international boundaries, Berber migrants may give importance to their self-image, in terms of how they are perceived by others. Thus, they may construct their vocational identity in relation to their ethnic group relationship, which acts as a support prior to engaging in the work and social environment to better meet the organisations and host community conditions. Regarding this, in Lofquist and Dawis's person-environment fit theory (*PE fit*) the self-image refers to "individual's perception of his or her personality, that is, of his or her psychological needs and values and of abilities for satisfying those needs and values in interactions with the main general environments (e.g., work, social, educational, family) that

life presents” (1991: 62). The context in which Berber migrants are found can have an impact on their self-image and identity. In other words, Berbers in the UK may be perceived differently by firstly, their host community, secondly the European migrants to the UK, such as those from the EU and thirdly the non-European migrants. This perception may be knitted with their different identity and cultural backgrounds. Thus, the conclusion that can be attained at this point is that Berbers’ identity within the UK territory may be formed through their relationship to their ethnic group.

Research Paradigm

This exploratory research will explore the migration experiences of Berber migrants living in the UK with a particular focus on their intra-ethnic attachment and professional identity development. According to Babbie (2011: 65) “exploratory studies are often done when a researcher is examining a new interest, or when the subject of the study is uncharted”. The aim is to explore their responses to the challenges that they have experienced during their migration process and to explore whether their groupness may act as a reinforcing strategy to develop their social and professional identity development, which in turn may influence their sense of belonging.

Design and Method Description

In my research, the data collection procedure is of three stages. The discussion provided in this paper is obtained from the initial interviews that have been conducted via Skype and lasted for 60 to 85 minutes. The initial interview is of two steps: the first step, demographic information such as gender, age, the length of stay, type of work, work experience, marital status, the number of children and religion have been gathered. This primary data source allowed me to create participants’ profiles to facilitate characterization see the table 1 below that summarises participants’ characteristics. The second step of the initial interview was a briefing session that allowed me to introduce the diary method and to explain how and for how long they should complete their diary.

Currently, the participants are engaged in completing their personal diaries. Their diaries as it was explained during the briefing session have two parts; in the first part, they are asked to write about their migration experience as it is lived and in the second part the participants are asked to recount only the significant events that have occurred during their migration process.

Finally, in the third stage, the data that will be obtained from the diaries will be followed up by open-ended semi-structured interviews that will help to explore both issues raised in solicited diaries and those that have not been tackled during the diary method.

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Migrant status	Educational Level	Work Experience In the UK	Current Occupation	Length of stay	Marital Status	Number Of Children	Religion
Tamazight	F	20	Mixed Kabyle-Lebanese	2.0 generation	Undergraduate level	2 years	Students Part-time waitress	2 years	Single	0	Atheist
Painter	M	61	Kabyle	1.0 generation	-A level in Algeria -Diploma in hotel and tourism in Algeria -Training as instructor, and decoration and painting in the UK	32 years	Driving instructor	35 years	Married	2	A non-practicing Muslim
Musician	M	46	Kabyle	1.0 generation	-Degree in teaching music	20 years	Cleaning Supervisor	20 years	Single	0	Muslim
Twin mum	F	50	Kabyle	1.0 generation	-B. A degree in economics and management in Algeria	13 years	Child practitioner	14 years	Married	2	Non-religion

					-Level 5 leadership management in the UK						
Tutor	M	54	Kabyle	1.0 generation	M.A degree in engineering in Algeria	26 years	Teacher of physics and Math	26 years	Married	0	Muslim
JSK	M	33	Kabyle	1.0 generation	-B.S degree in Algeria -professional training as team leader in the UK	6 years	Sales administrator	6 years	Married	0	Muslim
Louiza	F	42	Kabyle	1.0 generation	-B. A degree in English in Algeria	5 years	Costumer service adviser	8 years	Married	2	Muslim

Figure 1: Characteristics of Berbers Based on Demographic Details

1.0 generation: Those who were born Algeria and arriving in the United Kingdom as an adult.

1.5 generation: Those born in Algeria and migrated at a young age.

2.0 generation: Those who were born abroad such as the United Kingdom or other.

Justification of Using the Method

The literature on the study of migration and professional identity development among migrants is more based on collecting narrow data (for instance using surveys, open and semi-structured interviews). Since I want to get a comprehensive understanding of the aspects that impact their integration process and professional identity development, I believe that deep and rich data could be reached by using triangulated methods. Initial interviews have enabled me to gain a greater understanding of how each participant differs from another in terms of his/her migration experience. In addition, through their narratives, respondents' stories about their lives and experiences that they have provided during the initial interview acted as means to know my participants better and to provide a whole picture of my participants.

The solicited diaries will enable me to capture their feelings and reactions towards a specific event, because each participant' account of his/her experience may be either different or same. The final interviews will enable me to observe and feel their emotional responses.

Limitations of the methods

Like any other research instrument, initial interviews, solicited diaries and semi-structured interviews have some limitations. The main limitation that this study encountered so far is the difficulty of recruiting the participants and the inability to practice observation at workplaces of my participants due to the ethical issues towards the non-Berber employees as well as the employer. The only challenge that I have encountered in the initial interview is the technical problem of my personal computer. During the mock interview that I had with one of my participants, my personal computer was not well responding to the signal. This mock interview enabled me to fix my computer before the real interviews and I had two computers in hand during the real interview in case the problem will re-emerge. In addition, while completing their diaries, I am keeping a regular contact with my participants to check their progress. However, I found that their progress is slow and the majority has not started their diary in the time asked. This is mainly due to the time consuming and my participants are not diaries keepers. As it is argued that diaries require great efforts and time from the respondents (Meth: 2004; Alaszewski: 2006). To address this issue, I have allowed them extra time to give them more time to recall the important information and enabling them to make changes and add information. Another issue that I might encounter in the critical incident diary is being biased, as Leitch (2015) argues the reflective self-report in Critical Incident Technique may lead to bias. To address this limitation, participants who agreed to take part in the study have been provided with a full explanation about what, how and when to record in their diaries during the last phase of the initial interview stated earlier. In addition, they have been encouraged to recount the important incidents by providing them with an incident protocol that might help them to recall the retrospective events. Similarly, open-ended semi-structured interviews may lead to the participants to divert from the original topic (Kaar, 2007). To avoid such limitation in my study, the final interviews will be

guided by specific open-ended questions covering specific themes to achieve the aims and the objectives of the research and enabling the interviewee not to deviate from the researcher's concern.

Sampling approach

To explore deeply the process of migration and integration among this specific ethnic group, the study uses a purposive sampling that best suit to answer my research aims and objectives, because it enables me to collect information from Berbers based on their first-hand experience about their migration (Babbie, 2011). The goal of purposive sampling that refers to a non-probability sampling, is to select individuals who are appropriate to the research study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Silverman, 2014; Bryman, 2016). Due to the small number of Berbers in the UK, it has been difficult to reach a large size sample. Therefore, to obtain a relevant and a purposive sample, I have recruited participants through snowball sampling. I have posted on Facebook on the Amazigh Cultural Organisation's page that I was looking for Berber workers who live in the UK. Then some participants who fit the criteria characteristics responded to my request. In addition, I politely asked those from my personal contact to ask their friends or acquaintances from the same background. Such sampling is used to recruit groups who are not easily accessible (Babbie: 2011; Shinebourne: 2011). This type of sampling refers to gaining access to a larger group of people who are relevant to the research topic by first approaching a small group (Bryman: 2008; Babbie: 2011; Nolas: 2011; Silverman, 2014; Bryman: 2016).

Sampling Criteria
-Participants must be adult workers (from 18 to 65 years).
- 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 generation migrants.
-Resident in the UK 2+ years.
-From the same ethnic background.

Figure 2: Research Sample Criteria

Primarily Results and Discussion

As a Berber immigrant and PhD researcher in the United Kingdom, I share my experience with other immigrants, regardless their ethnicity, however, I feel more comfortable when I am surrounded by my in-group members. I think sharing the same ethnic background with my participants give me the privilege to understand and to interpret their data accurately.

Louiza is a Kabyle woman aged 42 years. She is born in Bejaia a Kabyle region in Algeria. Louiza has studied in Algeria and has BA degree in English. She lives in the UK since 2009. She is married to an Italian-English husband and has two children. She worked as a volunteer in school as a teacher assistant (TA) from 2009 to 2010. She had her own business as a French teacher from 2013 to 2015. Then she works as a customer service adviser from 2015 up to now.

During the interview, Louiza revealed that she has no Berber or Algerian friends in Portsmouth the place where she currently lives. When I asked her whether she is in contact with Berbers she goes on to say that:

The original text (in French):

“Il y en n’as pas beaucoup je pense mais hhh c’est vrai que ça fait plaisir d’avoir quelques comme ça –moi personnellemen tj’ai pas hhhjeneconnais du tout ni Algérien ni Kabyle dayé...mais hhh ça me manque comme même le contact des kabyles ...oui...oui...parce que c’est un composant de notre identité...ce n’est pas hhh il y a quelque chose qui manque il y a hhh...haja avecquielqu’untu vas parler des chosesquivacomprendredirectementhhhblajene sais pas tumentionnesquelque chose ça y est on est on comprend et tout ...tu peuxavoirce genre de conversation avec des Anglais ou hhh ouais ça me manque c’estvrai ...c’est commeunefamillecommeune grande famille”

The translated version:

“There are not a lot I think but it a pleasure to have someone like that...me personally I don’t have hhh I don’t know at all neither Algerian or Kabyle here ... but I miss the contact with Kabyles....yes...yes...because it is a component of our identity...it is not hhh there is something missing there is hhh something with whom you can talk about things that he can understand directly...without I don’t know... you mention something it is done we understand everything....you cannot have such discussion with an English or hhh yeah I miss it is true...it is like a family like a big family”.

This extract from the initial interview shows that Berberness is important for Louiza during her migration. Although she has two children and a husband she misses the cultural contact with her in-group members. We can say that for Louiza her in-group attachment knows separation due to spatial circumstances. Her attachment to her in-group members is defined in terms of mutual understanding and communication. Here we can argue that ethnic attachment is important for migrants who seek comfort and closeness with their in-group members. According to the attachment theory, the desire for closeness to in-group members across the borders is part of our identity and biology that focuses on the behavioural system as Ainsworth claimed:

“the attachment behavioural system that is biologically rooted and thus species-characteristic” (Ainsworth, 1989:709). In addition, despite the technology development that provides synchronous communication between people such as Skype, phones etc. Louiza is marked by in-group separation, the lack of feeling of being understood by the out-group people. For Louiza in-group attachment is like a family for her.

Similarly, Musician had emotional consequences of being away from his family because he came in his teens but he stands on some people from his in-group member who helped him to find his way.

Musician is a Kabyle man aged 46 years. He was born in Sidi-Aich a Kabyle region in Algeria. He did his studies in Algeria. After doing one year of English and later two years of sociology, he did one year of psychology. Then he studies three years in a school of music where he got a degree in teaching music. He is single and has no children. He has lived in the UK since 1997. He is working as cleaner supervisor.

While introducing himself during the initial interview, Musician provided his short anecdotal as he referred to as a movie.

He said that:

“I lived her almost twenty years now (caught) well is been so not that hard hard hard but a bit hhh I was young when I arrived here, everything was new for me hhh finding some people that I know which I have been stand on and...I...just help helped me to find out my way hhh and God thanks we all everything is gone perfect Alhamdulillah -----I lived with friends for six months without paying nothing ... so just to make a bit of money then after that I have to be independent. I have to go that how that how it is”.

This extract illustrates how Musician found it hard the first days of his migration due to his young age. He found support from his in-group members who are Algerians and some of them are Berbers as he said. According to the intra-ethnic attachment, Musician revealed about the ideology of help and support that is found among the in-group members across the borders who provide support to the new comers in terms of housing.

“well it is not easy for the first time----all the people came to this country they have to work so hhh we have to fill ourselves ...it was a bit embarrassing...I have not got the right to work...to work...you have to provide paper----is all those obstacles that we have to go through until we find something that allowed us to work...the only thing is either you work cash and hand like no papers and no bank account and nothing sort of these things or you can just make fake paper to work with ...that we have done...I work for the first time in a restaurant...then...it was okay it was new...new job for me new hhh like an opportunity to know this kind of job... I didn't like it because is not ... I don't don't like kitchen but I have to----then carry on with that job until ...hm 2000 hm and one ...then I stopped for almost one year...everything goes smooth but still the problem of that papers...always in my mind because ...to not to be...to be very far from your family from what you left behind is very hard, to be honest and...things changed in back home”

This verbatim, however, demonstrates Musician difficulty in integrating the workplace at the early stage of this immigration may be due to his illegal status. In addition, the obligation for Musician to work in a domain that he does not like that is the kitchen. Consequently, this has modified his occupational world and his view of self in comparison to his work as a teacher in Algeria. Therefore, it may be necessary for some individuals to develop new careers because their skills and qualifications are not transferable (Blustein and Noumair, 1996). In addition, his illegal status reinforced the family separation since he could not travel and he shows the fears of going back home due to the changes that Algeria knew at that time.

Conclusion

It is obvious that from the samples discussed above, Berber migrants have faced some challenges when integrating the workplace and developing their professional identity across international boundaries. Therefore, during their migration process, shared backgrounds and cultures supply a common understanding that leads to a sense of comfort and security that could result from their link to others from the same ethnic group as an empowerment strategy that deals with emphasising cooperation, revealing feelings, and negotiating the migration process. It may also provide the ability to shift from the security provided by the ethnic group attachment, with self-confidence in engaging to other groups in domains such as workplace integration, where Berbers can develop their professional identity by constructing a social framework based on the concept of domain of practice. For example, Berbers may construct their identity through the interaction with their ethnic community and at the same time with those who share a similar domain of practice. As Hoeve et al. (2014) suggest, for nurse educators need to interact and share their work experiences with individuals from the same domain of practice (nurse community) to learn and construct their identity. In this sense, identity is created in relation to others, rather than inherited; this would suggest that the social process relates to social constructionist theory (Gergen and Gergen, 2008) (cited in Woods et al., 2016).

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Author Biography

Miss Imene Hamani obtained her Master's degree in Didactics of English from the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities at the University of Abdurrahman Mira-Bejaia in 2014. She is currently a Ph. D. researcher under the supervision of Dr Dave Burnapp and Prof Andrew Pilkington at the University of Northampton. Her research is centred on the study of migration and acculturation process among Berber ethnic group who live in the United Kingdom. Other topics of interests in Miss Imene Hamani include race and gender; mixed race; Islamophobia; well-being in migrants; and power and inequalities. Her experience as an associate lecturer in sociology at the department of sociology and criminology at the University of Northampton has increased her interest in how society shapes people's identities and interactions in their everyday lives across the borders. The earlier version of this paper was presented at MIRDEC-4th, international academic conference on social science, multidisciplinary and globalization studies, in July the 4th, Madrid, Spain. We are grateful to the MIRDEC Coordinator Dr Kamal Cebeci for his great help and support.