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Collective Resource Mobilisation for Economic Survival within the Kurdish and Turkish Communities in London

Olgu Karan[±]

Abstract

This paper proposes a new conceptual framework in understanding the dynamics within the Kurdish and Turkish (KT) owned firms in London by utilising Charles Tilly's work concerning collective resource mobilisation. Drawing on 60 in-depth interviews with restaurant, off-licence, kebab-shop, coffee-shop, supermarket, wholesaler owners and various community organisations, the paper sheds light upon the questions of why and how the KT communities in London moved into, and are over represented and why Turkish Cypriots are absent in small business ownership. The research illustrates that members of the KT communities aligned in their interests to become small business owners after the demise of textile industry in the midst of 1990s in London. The interest alignment in small business ownership required activation of various forms of capital and transposition of social, cultural and economic capital into one another.

Keywords: *Charles Tilly; collective resource mobilization; de-industrialisation; Kurdish; Turkish; shopkeepers; North London.*

Introduction

This paper aims to elaborate on the reasons for and the ways in which Kurdish and Turkish (KT) communities in London set up small firms by utilising Charles Tilly's (1973;1977;1978) work concerning collective resource mobilisation. The paper sheds light upon the questions of why and how the KT communities in London moved into, and are overrepresented in, and why Turkish Cypriots are absent from, small business ownership.

There is very little, if any, research that has addressed the question of why and how individuals in the UK have become self-employed (Dawson et al., 2009:2). Particularly, scholarly studies have paid little attention to the growth of KT ethnic economy, comprising one of the highest proportions of self-employment (Dedeoglu, 2014: 52-53). The empirical data generated during the fieldwork with Turkish speaking communities and various community organisations is used to inform to the development of a theory influenced by Charles Tilly, and utilised to understand the dynamics within entrepreneurship

[±] Dr Olgu Karan is a social researcher based in Ankara and holds a PhD from Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom. E-mail: olgu-karan@gmail.com.



within the KT communities. The paper argues that large sections of KT communities were aligned in their interest for setting-up small businesses. The alignment was a process that entailed increasing communication and an intensification of networking within the community via community organisations, interpersonal networks, and newspapers in KT language.

The various theories utilised in previous studies on ethnic entrepreneurship can be divided into the three groupings: cultural, structural, and mixed approaches of embeddedness such as interaction theory and mixed embeddedness. Proponents of cultural explanations have pointed out the impact of culture on entrepreneurship (e.g., Altinay, 2008; Altinay & Altinay, 2006; Basu & Altinay, 2002; Basu, 1998; McEvoy & Hafeez, 2007; Srinivasan, 1995; Werbner, 1984, 1990). They focus on the impact of supposed values of a specific ethnic community on the success and failure of entrepreneurship. They argue that cultural differences lead to divergence in entrepreneurial performance. The culturalist view of ethnic businesses fails to recognise the role of agency fully. By ignoring the role of agency, culturalist approaches cannot account sufficiently for the fact that individuals are capable of mixing and articulating various cultural heritages and ethnic identities (Vermeersch, 2011). Structuralists, on the other hand, stresses that, individuals from ethnic groups act within the context of the changing political, cultural, social and economic structures. Unlike culturalist theories, it stresses that individuals and groups act within a historical changing political economic context, not in a vacuum where changes in political economy are ignored (Volery, 2007: 32).

In contrast to culturalist, and structuralist theories, proponents of interaction theory advocate that determinants of business ownership cannot be assessed solely according to the personal characteristics of owners or in line with the structuralist account that ignores agency (Waldinger et al., 1990). The theoretical contribution of interaction theory enabled researchers to combine minority attributes with the wider structural attributes of society. As Waldinger et al., (1990:112) state “framework is based on ethnic groups’ access to opportunities, group characteristics, and emergent strategies which are embedded in changing historical conditions. The opportunity structures entail market conditions (particularly access to ethnic/non-ethnic consumer markets), and access to ownership (in the form of business vacancies, competition for vacancies)”. According to Waldinger et al., (1990:3), ethnic entrepreneurship is based on “a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national background or migration experiences.” However, the quotation ignores the fact that interaction among people does not necessarily originate from a shared national background or migration experience. Rather, shared experiences in the occupational structure and shared interests within different ethnic groups whose migration experiences correspond to different time periods could result in new alliances and identity constructions that facilitate networks utilised for entrepreneurship. Their assertion ignores the dynamics in ethnic attachment formation or dissolution. There is no pre-

existing necessity for common national backgrounds to contact each other and interact.

Finally, criticism of the interactionist model has been raised by more recent contributions by continental European researchers (Kloosterman, Van der Leun & Rath, 1999; Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, 2003; Rath, 2002; Pang and Rath, 2006). Their main criticism of the interactionist model discussed above was that it mainly focuses on the supply side of entrepreneurship, while ignoring the context where entrepreneurialism has been regulated and differentiated (Pang and Rath, 2006:205). Some scholars (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun & Rath 1999; Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, 2003; Rath, 2002) proposed a more nuanced mixed embeddedness approach to immigrant entrepreneurship that recognises the regulatory structures and market dynamics. The advantage of this multi-level mixed embeddedness approach lies in its focus on interplay between ethnic social networks and political, economic structures. As Rath (2007:5-6) states, “it acknowledges the significance of immigrants’ concrete embeddedness in social networks, and conceives that their relations and transactions are embedded in wider economic and politico institutional structures.” Even though the mixed embeddedness model stresses the importance of immigrant’s agency, it fails to explore the agency dimension empirically (Tatli et. al., 2014; Trupp, 2014). Economic actions of ethnic entrepreneurs are viewed as responses to larger structures beyond their influence without taking into account the entrepreneur’s own sense of these structures, meanings, and definitions that people bring to their situation in the confrontation and negotiation between themselves and structures (Tatli et al., 2014:59). In a similar vein, Anthias and Cederberg (2006:4) argue that the push-pull model, based on neo-liberal economic theory and Marxist approaches fall short in explaining “...the ways in which knowledge and communication channels and opportunities for work are mediated by social actors in specific social locations” In other words, the existing literature assumes that the interest in setting-up a shop, and the motivation for setting-up small businesses is pre-given, and pre-existing, rather than processes that are consciously formed by the efforts of ethnic community members’ agency.

Moreover, while interaction (Waldinger et al., 1990) and mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman et al., 1999, 2001) theories attempt to bring agency and structure together, these theories pay insufficient attention to the macro structural factors, such as globalisation, affecting opportunities for migrant employability (Collins, 2000:13). Thus, the interaction and mixed embeddedness approaches are unable to grasp the processes of socioeconomic restructuring, which has its origins in global economic shifts.

Charles Tilly’s Collective Resource Mobilisation and Ethnic Economy

To this end, I propose, Charles Tilly’s collective resource mobilisation theory provides a dynamic and shifting approach in understanding the stages in

ethnic small firm ownership. The theoretical approach influenced by Tilly's model has three interrelated components, namely, *interests*, *mobilisation of networks* and finally, *opportunity structure*. More specifically, interests entail the "gains and losses resulting from a group's" (Tilly, 1977:1-10) action. Interests take into account the would-be entrepreneur's own sense of context, meanings, and definitions that they bring to their situation in the confrontation and negotiation between themselves and structures. Mobilisation of networks denotes the process of activation of networks for ethnic businesses. The issue here is not a passive ethnic network, but rather an active network focusing on a purposeful act. Finally, "opportunity describes the relationship between population's interests and the current state of the world around it" (Tilly, 1978:3-5). Opportunity involves the external factors which enable or constrain KT business start-ups and maintenance. In its simplest possible form, according to Tilly (1978), the capacity to act collectively is likely to work as follows: Shared interests promote networks, the intensity of networks facilitates increased mobilisation, and collective action is a function of all three components.

Methods and Data Collection

The field study draws upon 60 interviews, consisting of restaurants, off-licences¹, kebab-shops, coffee-shops, supermarkets, wholesalers and various community organisations in London between 2010 and 2011 (see Karan, 2015). The selection criteria used for the inclusion of business owners to be interviewed could be summarized as follows. First, business owners from three ethnic groups, Turkish Cypriot, Turkish and Kurdish were chosen to be interviewed. Secondly, specific sectors were identified to represent three broad Kurdish, Turkish, and Turkish Cypriot business owners, namely catering and retail sectors. The reason for choosing these sectors was that most people from the target groups find employment in these sectors (Dedeoglu, 2014:118). Finally, the shopkeepers interviewed were drawn from London boroughs of Hackney and Haringey. Following the London Borough of Enfield, largest groups of the KT community members have concentrated in the boroughs of Hackney and Haringey as the KT population grew over the years from 26,000 in 1991 to over 180,000 in 2011 (Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013:6; Karan, 2015).

The number of interviews conducted with Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot business owners were respectively twenty, sixteen and ten. The number of interviews conducted with key informants was fourteen. 4 out of 60 interviewees were women and only one of these owned a shop. The paper draws on qualitative research methods that enable the participants' business start-up and maintenance experiences to be analysed in the context of the existing literature. This allowed for the generation of a new theoretical approach to emerge based on their explanations. In addition, the role of the promotion of social solidarity by various community organisations, including social, faith

¹ Off-licences are usually small corner shops and markets which are licenced to sell alcohol.

based, and cultural organisations in generating resources to set up and maintain businesses has been analysed since from the early years of settlement by the KT communities. The interview structure was guided by the principle of understanding the dynamics in small firm ownership by utilising Tilly's resource mobilisation theory. The real names of the interviewees have been changed in order to maintain their anonymity. Pseudonyms were used in order to maintain interviewees' anonymity. In the following three sections, empirical findings are discussed in reference to Tilly's model.

Table 1. Resident population born in Turkey by areas and boroughs of London, 2011 UK Census.

	Born in Turkey	% of Turkish born in total	% of Turkish born among foreign born	% of Turkish born among non-EU foreign born	% of foreign born in total
London	59,596	0.73	1.99	2.98	36.68
Inner London	31,717	0.98	2.32	3.61	42.21
Outer London	27,879	0.56	1.71	2.48	33.07
Top 3 London Boroughs					
Enfield	13,968	4.47	12.74	25.17	35.08
Haringey	10,096	3.96	8.88	17.92	44.60
Hackney	8,982	3.65	9.33	15.42	39.08

Source: Sirkeci et al., (2016)

Interests in the KT Communities

The Thatcherite era, during the 1980s in the UK resulted in de-industrialisation and de-regulation moving manufacturing jobs out of the UK while an increase in both high and low end service sector employment became dominant in the old industrial cities of the UK (Turner, 1995; Wills et al., 2009). The whole KT communities once almost entirely employed in the textile industry (Dedeoglu, 2014) searched for new means of survival. According to the findings of this study, the dramatic and rapid decline of employment in the textile industry had caused uncertainty and insecurity within the KT communities. The idea of setting up small shops was also approached nervously. With no English skills and having no relationship with the broader society in their previous employment (Dedeoglu, 2014: 59), they started to ask whether small business ownership was an alternative way of employment in which they could be successful. It is often expressed in the interviews that the possibility of finding a job was discussed in friendship networks and at KT community organisations. Social networks were a means for discussing the possible alternatives, getting recommendations and sharing information for survival. Such micro-mobilisation of networks is necessary for collective

resource mobilisation. It entails framing the possible further action for economic survival. The interest in setting-up a shop and the possible benefits of it were rationally and jointly calculated with the social networks.

Cinar's case, below, is a clear example of a process the author of this paper calls *interest alignment*² towards business ownership. Initially, like other unemployed co-ethnics he had to look for opportunities in order to survive. Because of the low transferability of cultural capital in terms of English language competence and qualifications, the opportunity for finding employment in the mainstream labour market was limited. While he was unemployed the possibility of finding a job was discussed in kinship and friendship networks. Because of the risks associated with self-employment, feelings of anxiety were common among would-be entrepreneurs. The lack of cultural capital to communicate with customers was also a contributing factor for anxiety. He regularly attended a KT community organisation, meeting with friends, discussing the possible alternatives, getting recommendations, sharing information for survival. Micro-mobilisation in co-ethnic networks involves the process of *interest alignment* towards business ownership. It indicates simply the various interactive and communicative processes that shape interest alignment and is a process referring to largely verbal efforts to restore or assure meaningful interaction within any ethnic community to accomplish common ends. Setting up a shop as a viable means of survival is socially constructed and elaborated by the micro-mobilisation of networks. As Cinar, an off-licence owner mentions:

I started to search for opportunities after the collapse of the textile industry. You have to do that in order to survive. You have to earn your living. You evaluate in your mind the things they tell you and recommend. You choose the option that is suitable, the one to suit your conditions. Yet, your relative also plays a role in the direction you take. We were socialising at an association, passing time with friends there. My friends from the association recommended this shop to me. They informed me that the shop was for sale (Cinar, off-licence owner).

In a very short time period of time, Kurds and Turks have managed to establish their businesses. *Turkish Catering News* (2002), a Turkish magazine has estimated the increase in the number of catering businesses to be from 200 at most in 1975 to 15,000 in 2001 (cited in Atay, 2010:129). The whole KT communities once almost entirely employed in the textile industry searched for a new means of survival and decided to invest in small business ownership. The decision process was dependent on consultations within the KT communities which resulted in an interest alignment for setting up businesses amongst many

2 Interest alignment in business ownership refers to the linkage of ethnic group and entrepreneurial orientations such that ethnic group interests, values and beliefs and entrepreneurial orientations, goals and ideology are congruent and complementary. Interest alignment in the KT communities involves the shift from low segment of proletariat to petty bourgeoisie.

KT community members. This involved the framing process, in which acting collectively becomes possible as it mediates between networks mobilised for common ends and the opportunity structure.³

On the other hand, there were several factors which eased Turkish Cypriots' adaptation problems. First, Turkish Cypriots have a longer presence in the UK. It also corresponded to the existence of a welfare state, which provided better support networks. Furthermore, they were migrants from a former British colony (Robins and Aksoy, 2001:690). Finally, Turkish Cypriots attained mainstream employment in multicultural workplaces where the basic means of communication was the English language. All these factors have reflected on the prospects of second and third generations. Thus, it is possible to state that Turkish Cypriots were not thrown into the same situation after the demise of the textile industry. The ethnic groups' interpretation of prospects for a livelihood in small business ownership is dependent on how they locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large. The Turkish Cypriot community did not experience the interest alignment process in small business ownership as in the case of KT communities. The Turkish Cypriot community did not have a tendency of creating a common script in response to the features of the social reality that confronted the mainland Turkish community. Interest alignment through which networks and bonds of solidarity were utilised for business start-ups and maintenance with Turkish Cypriots after the demise of the textile industry was not possible. Turkish Cypriots mostly hold professional jobs. They have tended to become teachers, civil servants, pharmacists, doctors, dentists, accountants, lawyers, insurers (Atay, 2010:132). Turkish Cypriots were able find employment in the mainstream economy. Turkish Cypriots have not participated, and are not participating, in solidarity bonds and the mobilisation of resources for survival in small business ownership.

In sum, Charles Tilly's collective resource mobilisation theory, in the context of ethnic small businesses, is as illuminating about the absence of collectivism as it is on the presence thereof. The theory would argue that, in the first instance, a sense of common interests or interest alignment is required for the mobilisation of networks to generate resources in setting up and maintaining ethnic businesses.

3 According to the literature on ethnic minority entrepreneurship (see Light, 1972; Kloosterman & Rath, 2003; Waldinger et al., 1990), the collective ethnic minority tendency towards, and interest in setting up businesses is assumed to be relatively unproblematic and to have existed prior to mobilisation rather than having been socially constructed by social actors and created by the mobilisation process. Economic actions of ethnic entrepreneurs are viewed as responses to larger structures beyond their influence without taking into account the entrepreneur's own sense of these structures. However, in order to act collectively for setting up businesses, as a minimum, people have to both aggregate around certain interests in their lives and feel optimistic about the fact that acting collectively could actually redress their situation. The absence of this cognitive process which brings and binds people together around certain interests would make the mobilisation process very difficult and probably impossible.

Moreover, the shared interests and experiences within the KT communities instrumentally paved the way for the construction of an identity called *Türkiyeli*⁴ (People from Turkey). For instance, non-religious Turkish wholesaler Sancak established a joint venture with a religious, Kurdish wholesaler in order to produce meat related products. The wholesalers aligned their interests for the joint venture even though their ethnic and religious identities are a potential source of conflict in their home country. One of my interviewees explains how situational problems, grievances and interests in their daily lives paved the way to a socially constructed shared identity and networks solidarity:

There are lots of reasons that bind Turkish and Kurdish communities. The child of a Kurdish parent and child of a Turkish nationalist go to the same school. They both experience the same problems. They become closer. For instance, both Turks and Kurds have to have a resident permit to stay in the UK. They had to use the same consultancy and translation services. They exchange information in their neighbourhoods. They live in the same ghettos. They have adaptation problems. Children have poor educational success. As they do not see any future in school life they search for new areas of existence. Some of them become gang members. Both Turks and Kurds face the same problems in hospitals and elsewhere. When people from various social backgrounds sit next to each other, they can support each other. Another example is the riots (Referring to 2011 riots in the UK). All Turkish and Kurdish people supported each other. There is a political dissidence between Turks and Kurds in Turkey. The disintegration between Kurds and Turks is a problem in Turkey. Here, the shared common problems can bring people together (Zet, restaurant owner).

The shared experiences, problems and interests bring Kurdish and Turkish people into constant contact in their daily lives. Situational interests and shared experiences common to the Kurdish and Turkish communities resulted in a collective consciousness with in both communities. The mechanism at work in the KT communities could be labelled bounded solidarity (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993:1327). Bounded solidarity depends on the emerging feelings of “we-ness” among those facing a similar challenging issue (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993:1327-1328). It points to a process rather than a given, fixed embeddedness. Identification of shared interests and interest alignment in the UK promotes the construction of new identities.

4 As Erdemir and Vasta (2007:7) observed in their fieldwork with members of KT communities that their respondents’ self-identification was the Turkish neologism ‘*Türkiyeli*’. The term *Türkiyeli* has been used since the 1980s by some left-wing academics in Turkey to overcome the nationalistic discourse that identifies people of Turkey regardless of their religion and ethnic identity as Turkish. It proposes an umbrella identity that can encompass all ethnic and religious groups and move away from Turkish centered identity and nationalistic ideology. However, while the term ‘*Türkiyeli*’ does not have any uptake among both KT communities in Turkey, the majority of KT nationals whom I encountered in London also preferred to use the term ‘*Türkiyeli*’ to identify their communities. However, the salience of *Türkiyeli* identification does not mean that sub-ethnic and religious affiliations such as Alevi, Sunni, Kurdish-Alevi, Alevi-Kurdish or Turkish-Alevi are eroded.

Mobilisation of KT Networks

The second component of the collective resource mobilisation is mobilisation of networks. It involves the collective control and strategic activation of *forms of capital*⁵ that facilitates ethnic business ownership. More specifically, it entails the consumption of strategic information promoting ethnic businesses, economic capital, acquiring skills, reliable and cheap labour, reconstruction of cultural practices, and protection of business premises by the ethnic communities. It denotes the utilisation of strategically formed ethnic attachments to invoke economic interests.

According to the findings of the research, there is a link between KT groups' entrepreneurship and a strong sense of ethnic solidarity. KT communities managed to create self-help social networks and institutions. The activation of social, cultural, and economic capital in order to set-up and maintain their businesses was a response to the conditions posed by de-industrialisation, such as unemployment. Thus, in contrast to the individualistic conception of the entrepreneur as a risk taker (Brandstätter, 1997; Knight, 1921) who opens a business and attains success, the findings of the paper suggest that the salience of many collectivistic cultural practices and their transposition to a new setting after immigration was an essential resource for the KT communities. While village scale collectivistic cultural practices were, to a large extent, eroded during the textile industry years, when KT alike found employment as waged labourers, with the collapse of textile industry, unemployment and conditions in urban life activated collectivistic cultural practices such as *imece*⁶. Several interviewees stated that the re-enactment of *imece*, which is village level collaboration played a role in overcoming various problems in starting-up and maintaining businesses. For instance, Esnaf, chair of a craftsmen's union and a wholesaler states;

We came here via social solidarity. We didn't know how the society functions; we could not open bank accounts. We didn't have residence permit. Thus, we could not apply for bank loans to set-up businesses. We could generate capital via the Anatolian tradition called imece.

5 Bourdieu's (1986) theory of forms of capital emphasises the conflicts and power relations in stratified societies where capitals are not distributed equally (Swartz, 1997: 74). More specifically, Economic capital refers to the resources that can be immediately and directly transposable into money. Cultural capital exists in three subtype states, namely embodied, institutionalised and objectified. The embodied form of cultural capital refers to the "long standing dispositions of mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986:47) such as someone's dialect or accent, while the objectified state addresses goods such as books, machines, dictionaries, and paintings. Finally, in its institutionalised form, educational credentials such as certificates and diplomas are sources of cultural capital. However, cultural capital also includes informal skills, and features transmitted through family, peer groups, and associations. Social capital places emphasis on social interactions that raise the ability of an actor to act on behalf of her/his interests.

6 *Imece* is an Anatolian "tradition", which is village-scale collaboration based on the need for human power or economic capital. Collaboration could be for harvesting, constructing a water pipeline, providing security for village grazing borders with neighbouring villages. It denotes the collective action of the villagers (Erginkaya, 2012:10).

That was the way to set up businesses. They gathered capital via their relatives, friends, and acquaintances (Esnaf, chair of a craftsmen's union and a wholesaler).

While the above quote confines itself to the acquisition of economic capital the re-production of village scale collaboration is not limited to this, but also entails providing information, protection of business premises, providing free labour, gaining skills and training, putting pressure on local government to achieve favorable business conditions. The unwritten rule of *imece* is mutuality, reciprocity and underpinned by the threat of sanctions. The issue of threat of sanctions is discussed in the following sections.

The facilitation and transposition of cultural practices should be understood in relation to the contextual socio-economic class position of KT communities, rather than pre-existing. The strength and weakness of cultural ties in the KT communities is dependent on the mode of production and the degree of acquired economic, cultural and social capital.

As has been discussed, we can identify several problems arising during the processes for setting up and maintaining shops. For all of the problems, class based resources such as cultural, social and economic capitals were mobilised to improve the shopkeepers' place in society. The findings of the study suggest that all shopkeepers do not possess these capitals equally.⁷ The situation of Zeytin and Ates is representative of similar cases of people from middle class backgrounds who do not have a big family or home-town network in London. They could not rely on kinship and hometown network to borrow financial resources. Furthermore, both Zeytin and Ates set up restaurants and coffee-shops for the purpose of selling it for a better price to a co-ethnic. They initially required little capital to transform the vacant places into fully furnished small businesses during the 1990s. The candidates for those small businesses were co-ethnic ex-textile factory workers who were able to accumulate capital to invest in new opportunities for a livelihood. Because almost all of the ex-textile factory workers were from rural parts of Turkey, they did not have the skills or knowledge to set-up a shop; they did not know how to acquire a licence, how to decorate a shop, where to find reasonably priced and good quality products. The new opportunities for livelihood during the first half of the 1990s were the catering and retail businesses, where not many skills are required to establish and maintain the businesses. Consequently, there was a market for those service providers Zeytin and Ates functioned as middlemen between property owners and would-be entrepreneurs. In other words, the volume of social capital possessed by ex-textile factory workers enabled them to exchange the cultural capital of their co-ethnics. The sizes of the ethnic networks that could be effectively mobilised were rich in volume for mobilising economic capital, but weak in quality. Thus, ex-textile factory workers with greater social capital had

7 As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992 :99) mention, "two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ ... in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital while the other has little economic capital and cultural assets".

to buy co-ethnics cultural capital. Zeytin and Ates used their cultural capital to extract economic capital. In this way, they managed to accumulate capital for setting up their own businesses.

The ability to overcome these problems is dependent on the volume and quality of social capital. Shop owners from large co-ethnic networks managed to generate economic capital to set-up their businesses in a short period of time, while shop owners with no relatives utilised their cultural capital to generate capital to set up their shops.

Of course, cooperation and ethnic solidarity are not free of disputes and conflicts. Conflicts could arise from partnerships, loans provided within the community and setting-up the same kind of shop next to a co-ethnic shop owner. For instance, Aksoy's following statement is a clear example of capital accumulation by an imam via co-ethnic loan lenders:

Let me tell you how our imam has opened his shop. He was from Pazarçik, Maraş. He just visited his countryman and collected £28.000 in two days. If he does not pay it back then it would be disgrace for him (Aksoy, chair of a refugee organisation).

Thus, it is also important to see the sanctions associated with the loan. In some cases, the community associations prevent co-ethnics establishing businesses in direct competition with each other. The ways in which such conflicts can be resolved are collective goods for the business owners that ensure the continuity of cooperation. Without any mechanisms for solving the conflicts, collaboration cannot be sustained in the future. For instance, the capital provided to a co-ethnic without any interest rates would have to be returned in order to ensure future capital from within the community. Then, the question, of what shopkeepers do in times of conflict has to be answered. There are mainly two community organisations that work on dispute resolution amongst shopkeepers and both of them operate within the same principles and provide services to the Kurdish and Turkish shop-keepers. Cem, chair of a Kurdish organisation, sheds light on the issue of dispute resolution at the community organisation level:

I was the one who formulated the "peace assembly" in Halkevi. I registered it with the community legal service. It was based on the Jewish community's arbitration assemblies. It provides a service for finding a solution to a dispute. The decision made by the community organisations have to be respected. It is not possible to question the decision of the assembly as shopkeepers are dependent on the organisation for support provided regarding daily welfare issues. Yet, they open the shop with the financial help of the community organisations' cooperative. The peace assembly operates within the legal framework. Enforcement involves banishment, exclusion from the community in general. It shames the guilty party. He cannot return to his village in Turkey. He becomes a swindler, liar, and thief in the eyes of the community (Cem, chair of a community organisation).

Non-compliance with the decision of the organisation is unusual, firstly due to trust vested in the associations and the perceived benefits from compliance,

and secondly, as the threat of sanctions, without necessarily being implemented, underpins trust in social networks. The power of sanctions does not lie in their implementation but rather in their threat (Henry, 2004). Sanctions include ostracism, stigmatisation, expulsion, and forcing people to pay their fines by confiscating and selling property. Community organisations emerge as intermediaries between the parties in the dispute. They are reliable and respected by the community.

Opportunity Structure

The previous sections' main focus was the micro level analysis of the mobilisation model. They illustrate the internal capacity for acting towards a common end by assessing the usage of different levels of economic, cultural and social capital.

On the other hand, in this section, the main concern is how the economic and institutional context as well as regulatory structures influence and interact with the business owners' agency. As Marx (1852:3) famously put it: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past".

Similarly, would-be and existing business owners act according to their interests, albeit not in circumstances they choose. The wisdom, creativity and the resource mobilisation choices of KT business owners –agency-can only be understood and evaluated by focusing at the economic context and the legal regulatory framework – that is, structure. The ongoing interactions between business owners and the world around them determine not only the immediate outcomes of the businesses but also their development and potential influence over time.

The key recognition in the economic opportunity perspective is that entrepreneurs' prospects for setting up particular shops, strategies for mobilising resources, and development of small businesses are context dependent. An analysis therefore has to direct its attention to the world outside of the KT business owners, on the assumption that exogenous factors inhibit or enhance business development prospects.

The notion of opportunities would explain the more general process of choosing strategies from a spectrum of possibilities. According to the application of Tilly's resource mobilisation theory in this paper, tactics for resource mobilisation are a reflection of entrepreneurs optimising strategic opportunities in pursuit of particular ends at a particular time and place. It focuses on how a range of factors including economic shifts, competition, legal regulatory framework, and protection from attacks impact on the KT business development and mobilisation of social, cultural and economic capital in North London.

Since the Second World War, global labour markets have changed in two main phases. In the first phase, large numbers of migrant workers were invited

from developing countries to fill shortages of cheap labour to re-build the collapsed industry of Western European countries (Castles and Miller, 2003). Immigration has provided the capitalist class with cheap labour. However, the recession in the early 1970s shifted migration policy from recruiting to managing migration by favouring skilled migrants in advanced capitalist countries. The emergent global assembly line or transnationalisation of production during the early 1970s was a response to a labour movement that sustained higher wages and better working conditions in the advanced capitalist economies (Petras, 2006). That is to say, the profit maximising strategies of transnational capital led to the re-structuring of the global economy. This entailed the movement of manufacturing jobs from advanced capitalist economies to lower wage zones, while de-industrialisation involves the closure of plants, especially in the urban cores (Dicken, 2010:494). As Castles and Miller (1993:153) put it: *The entry of the countries of the South into the international migration arena may be seen as an inevitable consequence of the increasing integration of these areas in the world economy and into global systems of international relations and cultural interchange.*

Because of the macro structural factors, the opportunity structure for new immigrants change over time. Consequently, the global political economy is especially significant in understanding changing migration patterns (Collins, 2003:28). It is also important in explaining changes in the labour market and new paths of immigrant labour market incorporation. The global re-structuring of the economy through structural adjustment programmes creates migratory flows of people and new surplus populations within both developing countries and advanced capitalist economies. According to Westwood & Bhachu (1988:6-7), these have been regulated and disciplined by the self-help ethos of minority entrepreneurship since the 1980s. “Analysis of labour market processes in the 1980’s for the UK has shown that rising self-employment corresponded to phases of increasing unemployment” (Blanchflower and Oswald, 1991; cited in Strüder, 2003:4). It goes hand in hand with the urban riots, following which support for minority businesses was first introduced by governmental bodies. At a national level, the government signalled to the social policy of supporting small businesses after the 1981 Brixton riots. Boosting enterprise in disadvantaged areas was considered to be a policy measure against the ill-effects of restructuring. Lord Scarman (1981:11) on the Brixton riots contends:

Many of the young people of Brixton are born and raised in insecure social and economic conditions and in an impoverished physical environment. They share the desires and expectations which our materialist society encourages. At the same time, many of them fail to achieve educational success and on leaving school face the stark prospect of unemployment... Without close parental support, with no job to go to, and with few recreational facilities available, the young black person makes his life on the streets and in the seedy commercially run clubs of Brixton.

In order to secure social security, the statutory bodies identified the “long term need to provide useful, gainful employment and suitable educational,

recreational and leisure opportunities for young people, especially in the inner city” (ibid:108). The official report on the Brixton riots in South London, backed by Lord Scarman (1981) proposed that the fostering small business ownership among the black population would be a helpful in order to find solution for unemployment, criminality and welfare dependency. In other words, while one of the consequences of restructuring is mass unemployment in the old industrial cities of the developed world, promotion of self-employment could be a cure for the disturbances of restructuring.

The structural change in global political economy, which necessitates the collaboration of each individual national state, has also called attention to the de-regulation of the labour markets in the British context. The restructuring of the political economy in the UK, particularly in London, is a micro-cosmos of the global political economy as the UK has been responsible for developing and exporting a particular model of economic organisation and social relations to the rest of the world (Wills et. al., 2010:2).

The increase in service sector employment corresponds especially to the rapid growth in those sectors associated with the activities of ‘command and control’, so called FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate) industries (King, 1990; Massey, 2007; Sassen, 2001). Less well known is the extent of London’s economic dependence on the lower end of service labour power, which is filled by service workers who were born abroad (Wills et. al, 2010:29-30). According to the Greater London Authority, almost half (46 per cent) of London’s ‘elementary occupations’ such as household domestics, contract cleaners, bottlers, canners, sandwich makers, postal workers, waiters, hotel housekeepers, traffic wardens, and hospital porters are filled by migrant workers (Spence, 2005, cited in Wills et. al., 2010). It is this ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007) that keeps London working and providing cheaper goods and services for millions of ordinary Londoners. The shift from manufacturing to service sector employment in big metropolitan cities such as London, specifically with the decline of the UK’s textile industry, led members of KT communities set-up businesses principally in the small retail and catering sectors (IPPR, 2007:19). These are particularly coffee shops, restaurants and kebab houses, alongside other more recently set up businesses such as estate agents, hairdressers and florists, and are family-run ventures with a growing level of competition (Thomson, 2006:20-21).

In terms of the regulatory frameworks, the UK economic regime is lightly-regulated. The legal framework does not prevent potential entrepreneurs from setting up their shops. On the contrary, it encourages the setting up of retail and catering businesses. In addition, “comparative indicators suggest that the regulatory environment in the UK is relatively supportive to business” (House of Lords: Select Committee on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, 2013:72).

In terms of competition, the intensification of work emerges as an inevitable outcome of competition between KT shop owners and chain stores as well as within KT business owners. In order to survive, they are no longer able to hire

workers (Kesici, 2015: 216). The long working hours in the shop leads to 'imprisonment' and isolation from the outside world. Imprisonment and isolation, thus, contribute to the inability to participate in the wider issues of society and to relate to them (Dedeoğlu, 2014:62-63; Kesici, 2015: 219). They cannot develop their skills, such as attending courses to improve their English language. For instance, it is difficult to leave their shops or reserve time for matters related to them. This inhibits the development cultural and social capital of the KT business owners. Chain stores are a real threat to shop owners. Migrant shop owners sell ethnic products, which gives them a slight advantage and provides a small protection against chain stores.

There are some groups like Hackney Unites and Stokey Local campaigning against the development of chain stores. Stokey Local is largely a middle class British community response to the proposed development of a supermarket in Wilmer Place N16. The activities of middle class indigenous British people involved in the campaign entail leafleting, deciding further steps of protest, joining the consultations and giving press interviews, however, could not form links with KT shop-keepers. For instance, my informant, who owns an off-licence on the same street states:

The development of a Sainsbury's is going to affect our business. They are going to set-up their store next to us. They are going to sell the same products. Their offer is going to be better than ours. There is already one Sainsbury's a bit further away up the road and they are going to open another one. When we set-up this off-licence that Sainsbury's was not there. That Sainsbury's has affected our business, Iceland as well. In this area, just in front of us, a newsagent had to close down. Journalists from a TV channel came recently. They wanted to record an interview about the Sainsbury's. I cannot talk as such. It is hard. I refused and they went (Tutun, off-licence owner).

Several interviewees have also mentioned the negative effects of economic crisis. It was argued that the government, in order to bail out banks, raised the price of electricity, gas and increased the business rates of businesses. I was told that the price of the economic crisis has been paid by the poor people, who did not contribute to it. Due to economic crisis many businesses had to close down. As Ramazan, a mini-market owner states:

Lot of businesses had to close down because of the economic crisis. The expenditures have increased too much. The business rates, electricity, gas etc. Small businesses cannot survive (Ramazan, mini-market owner).

Competition between ethnic minority businesses and chain stores, high tax rates, parking regulations and security in the business premises are the major problems that the KT communities face. KT business owners can only mediate their claims via community organisations. In order to assert influence, they have recently established a craftsmen association. They collectively mobilise social networks to achieve a change in government policies. However, they could not voice their demands via major political channels as they have weak social

networks within mainstream British society in general. The cultural capital embedded within the KT communities is weak, which prevents them from running effective campaigns on various issues.

Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to explore the reasons for and the ways in which the KT communities manage to set up and maintain businesses in North London and why Turkish Cypriots are absent in small business ownership.

Each empirical section corresponds to a component of Tilly's (1978) collective resource mobilisation theory. Theory of collective resource mobilisation has three components. Each component of collective action is understood to be a set of processes. Each component can vary and the degree of mobilisation and collective action are dependent on the processes and interactions between the three components. Each of the components of the collective resource mobilisation also has a counterpart process: the change in the extent and or character of shared interests; the quality and volume of networks; and finally the mobilisation or demobilization of networks in setting-up and operating businesses.

The opportunity component of the mobilisation model focuses on external factors such as, changes in the global political economy, the legal, institutional settings, labour market policies and the existence of potential markets. The opportunity structure determines the incentives and obstacles affecting the group's ability to act in its own interests. Because of the macro structural factors, such as the changes in the global political economy, the opportunity structure for the members of KT communities changed over time. KT communities were aligned in their interest for setting-up small businesses. Members of the KT communities had a tendency of creating a common script in response to the features of the changing opportunity structure that confronted the communities of mainland Turkey. The use of interest alignment explains the reasons for setting up small businesses in the catering and retail sectors as a collective action in the KT communities and why this collective action, to a large extent, was not undertaken by the Turkish Cypriot community. The change in the character of shared interests within the Turkish Cypriot community explains the reason for the lack of small business ownership in the Turkish Cypriot community.

With regards to the second research question on how KT communities in London moved into small business ownership, the findings of the study suggest that KT communities managed to create self-help social networks and institutions. KT migrants to the UK responded, to a degree collectively to the conditions posed by de-industrialisation, such as unemployment. Ethnic institutions and social networks were established and strengthened in response to the welfare needs and interests of Kurdish and Turkish communities. The salience of many collectivistic cultural practices and their transposition to a new

setting after immigration was an essential resource for the KT communities. The re-enactment of *imece*, which is village level collaboration played a role in overcoming various problems in setting-up and maintaining catering and retail businesses. The various problems in the start-up and maintenance of small businesses include, obtaining capital, finding workers, dispute resolution, claim making to governmental bodies to sustain better business regulations, providing security for the business premises, and finally acquiring the information and skills for running their small businesses. Thus, the facilitation and transposition of cultural practices and activation of forms of capital should be understood in relation to the contextual socioeconomic class position of KT communities. The strength and weakness of cultural ties in the KT communities is dependent on the mode of production and the degree of acquired economic, cultural and social capital.

This study proposes a systematic new approach based on Tilly's resource mobilisation theory in understanding and analysing the business start-up and maintenance activities of the KT communities in North London. The advantages of utilising Tilly's model in ethnic minority small business ownership are: First, as economic sociologist Richard Swedberg (2003:4) states, the use of interests provides the opportunity "that one would otherwise fail to understand *the strength* (emphasis original) that underlies an action", i.e. what makes members of KT communities in London become small business owners. Collective resource mobilisation theory brings in the discussion on changes in global political economy affecting immigrants' interests and employability, particularly ethnic entrepreneurship. The theory of collective resource mobilisation emphasises the importance of macro-structural factors, i.e., shifts in the global political economy influencing ethnic entrepreneurship. Secondly, the use of *interest alignment* contributes to explaining the reasons for setting up small businesses in the catering and retail sectors as a collective action in the KT communities and why this collective action, to a large extent, was not undertaken by the Turkish Cypriot community. Thirdly, the operationalisation of Tilly's collective resource mobilisation enables us to understand the ways in which shared interests within the KT communities paved the way to new forms of ethnic attachments, such as *Türkiyeli*. The paper presents a picture of Kurdish and Turkish migrants, facing similar problems, who have socially constructed a common identity, namely *Türkiyeli* (People of Turkey) in Britain. The term '*Türkiyeli*' defines an identity constructed in the UK. As circumstances change, identities change. Grievances related to survival and adaptation to the host country play an important role in the conservation, dissolution and emergence of a newly constructed ethnic attachment. For instance, tensions and conflicts even that warfare related in the home country between Kurds and Turks have become a minor issue in the host country, while daily problems and practices related to their new context strengthened ties amongst Kurdish and Turkish groups. The findings regarding the second component of Tilly's theory, namely mobilisation of social networks, suggest

that Kurdish and Turkish migrants to the UK responded, to a degree collectively to the conditions posed by de-industrialisation, such as unemployment. They had to generate and mobilise entrepreneurial resources to set-up and maintain their small businesses. The ability to overcome various problems is dependent on the volume and quality of forms of capital. The third component of the theory enabled to focus on to the range of factors including economic shifts, competition, legal regulatory framework, and attacks impacting on the KT businesses.

There are some suggestions for future research: Firstly, the research could be built upon by conducting a similar study with the owners of the failing retail and catering businesses. Secondly, a longitudinal dimension to the study, which would include interviews with the same participants about their business success, would have been valuable. Thirdly, interviews with business owners in relatively small towns outside of London would have been valuable in order to compare and contrast the setting-up and maintenance activities of business owners. Fourthly, the gender dimensions of the subject in the study could be further examined. The current study has revealed that, in the catering and retail sectors, women have a more invisible position as helpers mostly to their husbands. Fifthly, a comparison between KT minority groups and other minorities within the same sectors that is the retail and catering industries in Britain could prove useful. This research, therefore, could enable the testing of the applicability of collective resource mobilisation theory by comparing whether the business start-up and maintenance activities revealed by KT business owners were any different from those of other minority groups, and hence, would allow a focus on these similarities and differences. Sixthly, a study focusing on the second generation KT communities could be undertaken to compare and contrast the differences and similarities to the first generation of the Turkish speaking community.

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