

Age, narrative and migration: the life course and life histories of Bengali elders in London.

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Gardner, Katy (2002) *Age, narrative and migration: the life course and life histories of Bengali elders in London*. London. ISBN 9781859733134

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Abstract

Whilst the vast majority of recent research on identity and ethnicity amongst South Asians in Britain has focused on young people, this book deals with Bengali elders, the first generation of migrants from Sylhet, in Bangladesh. Many of these elders face the processes of ageing, sickness and finally death, in a country where they do not necessarily feel they belong. The ways in which they talk about and deal with this, and the ambivalence towards Britain and Bangladesh lies at the heart of the book. Centrally, the book is based on women's life stories. In her analysis of these, Gardner shows how narratives play an important role in the construction of collective and individual identity and are key domains for the articulation of gender and age. Underlying these narratives, and sometimes hidden within their gaps and silences, are often other issues and concerns. Using post-structural narrative devices, the elders talk about the contradictions and disjunctions of transmigration, their relationship to, and sometimes resistance to, the British State, and what they often present as the breakdown of traditional values. The book shows that histories, stories and identity are not just narrated through words, but also through actions and practices theorized in studies of migration.

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