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Reasons for Giving Back?: Motivations for Engaging in Transnational Political Activism by Adult Children of Migrants from the Horn of Africa

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Thesis submitted for the qualification of PhD in Migration Studies

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

Abstract

This study explores the drivers for engaging in political transnational activism for the adult children of migrants from the Horn of Africa based in London (United Kingdom) and Washington, D.C. (United States). The key objectives are to identify the types of transnational political practices in which children of migrants engage, their motivations and the influence of social relations in settlement and origin societies, as well life experiences in transit countries.

In this way, the thesis addresses the growing body of literature on so-called “children of migrants” relations to their respective societies of settlement and origin, but where there has been a relative lack of research on how subsequent generations become motivated, or not, to engage in political activities in relation to their parents’ countries of origin. This research focuses on the personal family histories (including dealing with trauma and migration histories), lived experiences of self, and how social relationships growing up in the settlement society shape the decisions of this specific group of “grown up children of migrants” to engage politically with their parents’ country of origin.

Drawing on Østergaard-Nielsen (2003), the theoretical framework unpacks the different facets of political transnationalism, for this 1.5 and second-generation diaspora to engage in activism. The original empirical basis of the study consists of deep life history interviews with 40 research participants in London and Washington, D.C.. The participants shared unique insights into how their families’ pre-emigration histories influenced their identities and existing relations with the society of settlement, and thus guided their vision for the future they seek through activism.

The results demonstrate: First, that lived and intergenerational trauma is crucial to understanding children of migrants’ engagement in activism; Second, that experiences of multi-county migration importantly shape the thematic and geographical focus of activism; Third, that concerns with social justice are a central theme that mobilises children of migrants’ activism, and this is importantly mediated through identity formations; Fourth, world events (9/11; humanitarian crises) can trigger mobilisation.

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Chapter One – Introduction

In December 2018, in the midst of writing this thesis, a revolution erupted in Sudan¹; its third in the past 50 years. I watched as everyone with links to Sudan reached fever pitch; they wanted change, a Sudan in which they could prosper, and saw this moment as their chance, no matter the price. Like any revolution, it has not been an easy journey. While unbounded hopes and dreams led to the ousting of Omer Hassan al-Bashir on 11 April 2019, who ruled the country for nearly three decades, there were also low points, such as the massacre on 3 June 2019.² However, the Sudanese people were not dissuaded by such negative events, either in-country or in the diaspora, and they maintained steely determination in seeking civilian rule. At the end of writing this thesis, Sudan began a three-year transition period with impatient hopes for a better future.³

It was fascinating to see how the diaspora was galvanised, in particular 1.5 and second-generation adults, who I refer to as ‘children of migrants’.⁴ An unprecedented number of these children of migrants participated in solidarity protests, took to social media, attended Sudan-related events and continued to highlight and raise awareness of the protests that brought the country to a halt. This engagement highlighted that the motivations for engaging in activism are not simply circumstantial, but arise in response to an opportunity to fulfil a desire, duty or ambition.

¹ On 13 December 2018, secondary school students and residents of El-Damazin, the capital of the Blue Nile State, spontaneously took to the streets to protest worsening economic and living conditions. The protests quickly spread to other parts of the country, with demonstrations in Atbara – the ‘city of steel’ in the Nile State – on 17 December proving critical to unleashing countrywide protests in nearly every region, city and town.

² On 3 June 2019, which coincided with 29 Ramadan in the Islamic Calendar, armed government forces violently dispersed a peaceful sit-in outside the army’s headquarters in Khartoum, which resulted in the deaths of more than 130 protesters, 70 cases of rape and sexual assault and scores of people detained, disappeared and injured (Dahab et al., 2019).

³ This transition period entailed the dissolution of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the establishment of a mixed civilian-military council and a transitional cabinet, which included several diaspora figures, including the Prime Minister Dr Abdallah Hamdok.

⁴ These are people who were born in and/or have lived a significant portion of their childhood outside their countries of origin.

This leads to my motivations for taking on this project. The idea of this research did not arrive by chance, rather through a moment of serendipity. I had reached a stage in my career in the development and humanitarian sector when I no longer wanted to only 'do', I also wanted to think more deeply about what happens to migrants after their journeys; an idea provoked by my personal experience of being the child of migrants. Often, the question 'where are you from?' should yield a simple response, a particular geographical site. However, for many of those connected to multiple places, myself included, this is a loaded question, as how you look, speak, the passport you carry, and your values (among other factors) do not fit neatly within the socially constructed concepts that enable people to easily compartmentalise you into a single box. Yet, the onus always fell on me in such situations to facilitate this understanding. As time passed, I saw others who, like me, were also traversing multiple spaces, but these voices and stories seem to be missing, in the public, media, academia and among policymakers, particularly how their transitional identities place them in multiple spaces, both physically and metaphorically. How do such individuals engage with these different identities and spaces? My curiosity eventually led me to 'bite the bullet' and pursue answers to these questions, both personally and professionally; the questions addressed in this thesis.

As I had both worked and lived in the Horn of Africa, I was naturally drawn to focus on the region, but this was not the only reason for my choice. This region is often singularly portrayed as a source and site of terrorism, famine, poverty and war. While these horrific realities do exist and have devastating impacts on the lives of millions, we also need to recognise opportunities to change both this narrative and the reality. Diaspora can be a positive force as well as a spoiler, but it is undeniable that diasporas are increasingly important players in both the region and countries of settlement.

I wanted to see how links with the region have evolved across generations, particularly as there is now an established adult second generation due to historical migration from the region. Children of migrants – 1.5 and second-generation adults who were born in and/or raised outside

their family's country of origin – are the protagonists of this thesis, as they are often subjected to biased opinions in both societies of settlement and origin due to their national, racial, ethnic and religious identities, as well as these identities' intersections. In addition, the region is still reeling from the impact of current and former conflicts, and is thus a source of lived and intergenerational trauma as well as a constant reminder of migration histories. This makes children of migrants a unique group of individuals, and provides further insight into their motivations for engaging in activism: what from their past became the core of their historical narrative; how they weave these histories into their present as they transition to adulthood and establish their identities in countries of settlement; and how all these factors shape their ambitions and vision for the future.

1.1. Research objectives

This research tackles several areas in the fields of activism, diaspora⁵ and migration. In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to separate myth from fact as it pertains to migration. Migration is not a new phenomenon; it is part of human history. Academic, public and policy interest in migration started increasing at the end of the Cold War, with data being the core locus of interest, particularly the increase in international migrations. That increase has only continued, as there were 18.2 million recorded migrants in 1993 and, by 2019, that number reached an estimated 272 million, with two-thirds of migration occurring within and between Global South countries (United Nations, 2019). Migrants move from their home countries to one or multiple destinations; some see this move as temporary and intend to return to their countries of origin, while others make the host country their new home or become transnational migrants, a process that is continuously changing and evolving. However, it is migration from the Global South to the Global North that has captured public imagination and the interest of academics, the media and policymakers, often generating negative responses motivated by a variety of factors. In the US and

⁵ The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek words 'to sow and scatter', which refers to people who move following the onset of traumatic events in their homeland. It was initially a term used to refer to Jewish and Armenian people, and involved both voluntary and involuntary migration (Bakewell, 2008; Cohen, 2008).

UK, this thesis' main sites, adverse public opinion and political debate are fuelled by (among other factors) the global economic crisis, austerity and fears the majority are losing their demographic ground. In addition, broader political changes indicating the rise of populism, nationalism, and the far-right are also making migrants a target of negative sentiment.

Activism⁶ is a tool diasporas use to assert their agency, whether to secure better employment opportunities in their new home, wield political influence in elections in their origin countries or engage in humanitarian responses in third countries. This research aims to foster a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that propel diasporas to engage in activism. Most studies of migrant political transnationalism – e.g. Itzigsohn and Villacrés' study (2008) on migrants' transitional politics in the democratisation process in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador – and case studies of first-generation diasporic experiences overlook the second generation, their differing experiences and broader perspectives of evolving. By analysing the framework and practices of activism among 1.5 and second-generation diasporic subjects, referred to collectively as children of migrants, this thesis seeks to contribute to understandings of their motivations for engaging in activism. In addition, capturing the experiences of a unique group of individuals also provides further insight into such motivations.

By focusing on conflict-affected migrants, this research aims to foster a better understanding of children of migrants' behaviours of and motivations for political activity, as well as how these link to the transmission of traumatic experiences and events in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In addition, how various conditions impact the type and intensity of transnational political practices migrants choose are also crucial factors. Employing a case study of highly-skilled children of migrants from the Horn of Africa, I first explore individual migrant experiences, including the transmission of

⁶ Activism refers to actions by individuals, groups or entities – such as social movements and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – for the purpose of changing policies or behaviours.

knowledge, trauma and how migrant incorporation policies impact behaviours and types of transnational political practices. The trauma related to the migrant experience (pre, during and post-migration) – passed down through family and community narratives or personal memories – can be an impetus for children of migrants' political engagement, which are explored through life history interviews in this thesis. By looking at the broader context (macro), certain events can become 'indicators' in these narratives, which in turn can become motivational drivers for children of migrants.

A knowledge gap exists in political transnationalism literature on activism practices among children of migrants, including the motivation, type and geographical focus of their activism. Thus, the impetus on this thesis is to reconceptualise how political transnationalism framework analysis children of migrant's activism. These queries are explored through the following questions:

1. What type of transnational political practices are children of migrants engaged in?
2. What are their motivations for or aspirations of engaging in transnational political practices?
3. What influences, if any, do social relations have on children of migrants' motivations and the types of transnational political practices they engage in?

The first question sets the scene by creating a baseline of the type of transnational political practices in which children of migrants engage. In particular, the question queries what types of policies or actions children of migrants seek to influence. For example, do they pursue democratic change (political), an end to Female Genital Mutilation (social and cultural), to redress structural unemployment (economic) or a combination of these? What are the geographical remits of their activism? Do they seek to change or influence the situation in their countries of origin, are they focused on influencing social, economic or political issues in their countries of settlement, or is it even beyond the dichotomy of these two sites?

The second question seeks to understand children of migrants' motivations for and aspirations of engaging in transnational political practices. Motivation may not have a simple answer, as such requires an understanding of the context and background of children of migrants' histories. For example, why their family migrated, their family's stories and experiences of this particular time, and how these memories are shared intergenerationally.

The final question looks at the social relations children of migrants engage with in countries of residence and origin, as well as how these relations motivate their activism and shape its thematic and spatial focus. Familial, community and societal influences, such as religion, have a significant impact on children of migrants' identities, how they reflect on their past, how they establish their agency in the present and their ambitions for the future. These questions are oriented to draw out how children of migrants perceive their lives vis-à-vis the experiences of their parents and communities, as well as how this view affects children of migrants' sense of belonging at different levels, from family networks to identities based on religion, gender, ethnicity, or country of origin.

The case study explored in this thesis focuses on children of migrants from the Horn of Africa, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Rather than focusing on one country, I chose to focus on this region of origin for several reasons: to unpack the impact of the region's long history of complicated circumstances, ranging from conflicts and famine to inter-tribal disputes and fragile governments; the countries in this region all have closely interconnected social, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural linkages; and crises, violence, famine, displacement and loss have all led to unprecedented levels of migration within the region, as well as smaller numbers to the Global North, with similar timelines of migratory movements and somewhat similar receptions by host societies.

For countries of settlement, I chose the US and UK – in particular, their political capitals Washington, D.C. and London – as key hubs in the Global North for migrants from the Horn of Africa, both of which have different relationships with their migrant populations. These two diverse, multicultural cities have a significant impact on children of migrants' relationships with their society of settlement, thus providing important reflections on activism trends.

This study provides critical insight into children of migrants' motivations for engaging in activism and contributes to knowledge of their identity formation⁷ and the influence of relationships with societies of settlement and origin . In addition, this study offers insight into the processes that instigate children of migrants' activism, including its thematic and geographical focus. This is particularly relevant in the increasingly securitised environment migrants are facing, in particular, those from conflict-affected regions.

1.2. Why study children of migrant's activism?

This study builds on existing literature on children of migrants and contributes to understanding their identity formation, as well as how this formation is informed by their relationship with their societies of settlement and origin (Levitt and Waters, 2002; Levitt, 2009). Children of migrants are an important population overlooked in political transnationalism. They are a growing population, as there are a growing number of migrants globally, and thus are playing a larger role in areas such as employment in their countries of settlement. In the US, youth and young adults of migrant backgrounds are the fastest growing segment of the population, accounting for 27 percent in 2017 (Child Trends, 2018). In the UK, about 12 percent of the population is foreign-born (OECD/EU, 2015). Hence, children of migrants are important to furthering our understanding of identity formation, as well as how that influences their pathways and, specifically for this research,

⁷ A person's complex process of establishing a unique view of self, values, beliefs and goals drawn from their histories, language and culture (Hall, 1996).

drives their activism. This is particularly relevant in environments marked by increasing inequality, xenophobia and discrimination, which negatively impact relations between the majority society and minorities communities, particularly in the context of the Global North (Hellyer, 2008; Hafez and Mullins, 2015). Thus, it is critical to examine children of migrants' behaviours, understand their strengths and recognise the barriers they face.

The study of children of migrants' activism is at a critical juncture; they are a diverse group who are connected to multiple spaces and more likely than their peers to engage in transnational activism. Thus, children of migrants are more sensitive to geopolitical events that extend beyond origin and settlement countries. For example, we are currently witnessing an increasingly hostile environment for both settled and newly arrived migrant communities; the media coverage of and subsequent policy responses to the European 'migration crisis' (Collyer and King, 2016), along with negative profiling of settled migrant communities, especially those from conflict regions or particular ethnic groups, proves as much (Cochrane 2015). Hostilities in societies of settlement can be important factors in both encouraging and discouraging activism.

Furthermore, demographic shifts in countries of settlement also show the need for studies such as this, as research on children of migrants' activism is becoming more pertinent to planning future services, investments, and social, economic and political policy. For example, the US-born second-generation children of migrants are entering adulthood in an ageing society, which has profound social, economic and political ramifications (Rambaut, 2008). The caveat is within these minority groups, as diversity among them is often overlooked. There are also distinct differences in experience, such as migration journeys and reasons can differ significantly, whether it was forced or temporary for study or work. In addition, the world is a big place, and there are bound to be a diversity of backgrounds, such as educational attainment, socio-economic position and religion.

These factors also evolve generationally, which makes understanding the views and experiences of second and subsequent generation migrants ever more important.

Identities: Who are children of migrants?

The core of this study builds on current understandings of identity formation among children of migrants and contributes to how identity formation acts as a motivator for engagement in activism. Any comparison of different groups or search for causal relationships must be conducted within intersectional identities, notably consideration of economic, political, educational and sociological factors in both countries of settlement and origin. While there is a plethora of work on political transnationalism and children of migrants, studies largely look at the two separately, and thus there is only limited work on children of migrants' engagement in political transnationalism. Thus, this study attempts to reflect the multiple intersecting layers that comprise children of migrants' identities which, in turn, influence the thematic and geographical focus of their activism and its trigger, such as a critical event.

The term 'children of migrants' refers to the descents of migrants who were born in or raised outside the family's country of origin. The majority of studies on this group have looked solely at their integration into countries of settlement, such as educational attainment and construction of identities (see Levitt and Waters, 2002; Levitt, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018; Wessendorf, 2016; Liberatore, 2017; Imoagene, 2017). However, recently interest has also peaked around children of migrants' relationship with their countries of origin and how this informs their relationship with their societies of settlement. Research exemplifying this new trend includes: Kebede's study (2019) on the identity negotiations and transnational engagement of the second-generation African diaspora in the US; Liberatore's study (2018) on Somali women's navigation of their identities in Britain's increasingly hostile environment; and Imoagene's investigation (2017) of the multifaceted identities of second-generation Nigerian adults in the US and Britain.

While most studies on political transnationalism have focused on first-generation migrants, descendants of migrants have more recently started to attract interest, especially the second generation. Although there remain substantial gaps in the research, authors such as Crul, Schneider and Lelie (2012), Levitt and Waters (2002), Portes (2001), Fouron and Glick-Schiller (2002) and Rumbaut (2004) are among those generating new understandings of children of migrants.

Children of migrants' identities are key to their motivations for engaging in activism, as they embody a complex multiplicity reflecting both countries of origin and residence. Connection with countries of origin can be gained either through direct experience or transgenerational memories; memories that can include trauma, particularly in the case of forced migration, and are relevant to studying the impact of such phenomena and act as a catalyst for documenting critical historical events. For example, children of Holocaust survivors became a catalyst in constructing the narratives of trauma shared by their parents and family members, who generally attempted to suppress such memories (Shapira, 1998; Stein, 2009). It should also be noted that children of migrants integrate more easily into their societies of settlement than first-generation migrants or their parents, e.g. as children of migrants had the opportunity to obtain a formal education and professional skills in the Global North. Nonetheless, children of migrants can still be subjected to workplace discrimination, live in areas of high deprivation and be viewed with suspicion, which can have detrimental effects on their life outcomes (Precht, 2007; Brooks, 2011).

Political transnationalism oversight of children of migrants

Children of migrants have been overlooked in studies of political transnationalism. While a considerable amount has been published on political transnationalism in general, there is a dearth of research on children of migrants' political transnationalism. Available literature is primarily focused on first-generation migrants and their activities within the boundaries of countries of

settlement and origin. In reality, migrants are active in multiple sites (Waldinger, 2015 and 2017). Political transnationalism refers to migrants' civic engagement and activism either for change or to maintain the status quo in either country of settlement or origin. There is consensus on the definition of political transnationalism, but a divide on whether to include political activities outside formal institutions (Østergaard-Nielson, 2003; Itzigsohn, 2000; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). However, none of these definitions address activism generationally. Thus, this thesis employs an expansive definition of political transnational in order to establish a baseline of the types of activism practised. This definition includes activities through both formal and informal institutions, such as direct participation in public campaigns and engagement in lobbying (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). In addition, exploration of political transnationalism as it is currently defined is also taking place beyond the borders of countries of settlement and origin, in third countries or regions.

In the data collection stage, this research employed an expansive definition of political transnationalism in order to include a broader range of activities: both online and offline efforts to promote, impede or direct social, economic, political or environmental change, including both paid and voluntary engagement. However, this definition does not specify whether such activities take place in countries of settlement or origin, or whether violent or peaceful in nature. Such an expansive definition was necessary at the data collection stage due to the dearth of information on children of migrants' political practices and very limited research on their civic engagement in countries of settlement. Moreover, including this broad spectrum helped paint a fuller picture of children of migrants' motivations for their activism and a more precise understanding of its thematic and geographical focus.

1.3. Region of origin and cities of settlement

Population mobility within and from the Horn of Africa has a long history; for generations, for example, nomadic people have undertaken seasonal migration for a multitude of reasons, including herding their animals to fresh pastures (Kleist, 2004; Kibreab, 1997; Van Dijk et al., 2001). However, migration from the region has increased significantly in more recent history, with new patterns emerging over the last few decades driven by conflict, climate change, state economic failures and political discord (Maxwell and Watkins, 2003; Bariagaber, 2006). These conditions led to mass migration within the region, with millions displaced both internally and to neighbouring countries, turning the region into a major source, transit place and host region of migration (Research and Evidence Facility, 2017; Bariagaber, 1997). These mixed migration flows are comprised of traditional trans-border mobility, labour migration, refugee migration and irregular migration (Harwood et al, 2019).

The ripple effects of mass internal and cross border movements, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, have been felt both in and beyond the region. Geopolitical interests in the region led to military intervention and engagement by global powers, such as US military operations in Somalia in the early 1990s⁸ and multiple UN peacekeeping missions in Sudan⁹, South Sudan¹⁰, Somalia¹¹, Ethiopia and Eritrea¹². These interventions led to a securitised view of the region and media, and host government perception of migrants from the Horn of Africa as sources of insecurity (Bakewell, 2008; De Haas, 2007; Hammond, 2014). This points to the even more focused need to understand how the region's diasporas engage in transnational political activism and what opportunities this offers for those with a stake in the region.

⁸ The Battle of Mogadishu was part of an operation on 3 and 4 October 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia, between United States forces supported by UNOSOM II and Somali militiamen loyal to Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had the support of armed civilian fighters (Hesse, 2016).

⁹ The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and The African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, referred to by its acronym UNAMID.

¹⁰ United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

¹¹ The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

¹² The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)

I selected the US and UK as country of settlement case studies in order to outline a more nuanced picture of children of migrants' relations with their societies of settlement, including other minorities. Both countries are major Global North hubs for migrants from the Horn of Africa, with an estimated 427,800¹³ in the US and 216,249 in the UK¹⁴ (United Nations, 2019a). This research compares the experiences of children of migrants based in London and Washington, D.C., key cities for Horn of Africa migrants. Additionally, London is the UK's political and economic powerhouse, and Washington, D.C. is a key political hub for the US and an important base for national and international civil society.

One important component of the theoretical research framework used here is the difference between US and UK diasporic perspectives, and more broadly North American and European diasporic perspectives, of their host societies and what constitutes transnationalism. Several factors could have contributed to facilitating these divergent outlooks, such as migrant incorporation policies and practices, migrants' profiles and initial status in the host country, and whether they arrived as refugees, highly-skilled migrants or students, which affects how they are incorporated in the country of settlement.

This research provides an opportunity to explore debates on the development-migration nexus through the lens of children of migrants' transnational political practices. As such, it is important to explore the variation in North American and European literature on migrant incorporation, such as works by Brubaker (2001), Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003), Østergaard-Nielsen (2013), and key policies and events relevant to migrants in the US and UK. Finally, the data provides first-hand evidence of what may influence migrant communities' contributions to development in their countries or regions of origin.

¹³ This number excludes the South Sudanese and Djibouti diasporas, as there is no available data.

¹⁴ This number excludes the South Sudanese diaspora, as there is no available data.

1.4. Thesis roadmap

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, with Chapters Four, Five and Six presenting the main empirical findings. Preceding these is Chapter Two, *Theoretical Framework*, which looks at the key literature on children of migrants and political transnationalism. The first section of Chapter Two explores the key concepts of diaspora and transnationalism, setting the foundation of framing political transnationalism generationally. The next section deciphers who are children of migrants, what makes them unique, and explains why the term ‘children of migrants’ is used instead of 1.5 and second-generation diaspora. The following section uses Østergaard Nielsen’s framework (2003), which breaks down the different remits of transnational political practices among migrants, in its discussion of the different definitions of political transnationalism. Here, **immigrant politics** refers to migrants’ attempts to better their situation in their countries of settlement, such as lobbying for housing rights (Østergaard- Nielsen, 2003; Faist, 2000; Fennema and Tillie, 2001; Koopmans et al., 2005; Portes et al., 1999). Migrants’ relation to domestic or foreign policy in their countries of origin are referred to as **homeland politics** (Bauböck, 2003; Waldinger, 2017; Vertovec, 2009; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller, 2003), e.g. the role of the Irish diaspora in the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland and the subsequent Good Friday Agreement (Cochrane, 2007). **Emigrant politics** refers to the secure socio-economic and political rights migrants maintain in their countries of origin (Waldinger and Lauren Duquette-Rury, 2016). **Diaspora politics** are a reference to émigré or exiles who seek to put pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Finally, **translocal politics** refers to development and humanitarian initiatives to support communities in their place of origin (Faist, 2000; Collyer, 2006). The discussion here sets out the theories which relate political transnationalism to migrant activism in countries of settlement and origin to secure their rights and increase their political, economic and social influence. Chapter Two then goes on to discuss the motivation to engage in activism, looking at the role of lived and intergenerational trauma, diaspora as a transnational identity, and the relationship with the society of settlement.

The methodology for data collection and analysis are set out in Chapter Three, *Research Design and Methods*, along with the rationale for choices and decisions made in different phases of the research process. This study uses qualitative research methods, with life histories being the primary method. The life history approach guided this thesis's exploration of children of migrants' migratory journeys, whether experienced or the transmission of memories across generations. In addition, the data gathered through life history interviews is complemented by participant observation. The use of life histories was critical to investigating children of migrants' motivation for engaging in activism, as such is often multi-layered and influenced by relations with the societies of settlement and origin, as well as by major global events. I primarily employed snowballing techniques and tapping into existing personal and professional networks for outreach, as well as advertising through a blog and on social media. The interviews with research participants took place in London and Washington, D.C., with some online. Furthermore, this chapter also lays out the challenges and strategies of researching hard to reach populations, as well as employing a 'firewall' strategy as a researcher with personal ties to the individuals and communities under discussion.

Chapter Four, *Pre-emigration experiences: narratives of fight and flight from the Horn of Africa*, sets out the backgrounds of and historical drivers for children of migrants' family migration, the foundation of historical trajectories towards political transnationalism. The first section sets out an overview of the socio-economic and political context in the Horn of Africa that drove migration within and from the region, with a focus on the social, economic and political trends that led to mass migration; this section pay particular attention to the period between the 1970s and the 1990s, when most children of migrants' families emigrated. The second section looks at the decisions and strategies employed by children of migrants' families, particularly the prevalence of multi-country migration. The last part looks at how family histories are shared, and in the context of forced migration from the Horn of Africa, the prevalence of lived and inherited trauma in children of

migrants' narratives. By looking at children of migrants' histories, we gain a better understanding of their life trajectories and the foundations of their activism.

Chapter Five, *Journeys from childhood to adulthood – identity formation and agency*, seeks to understand the environment in which children of migrants grew up, including interactions with their societies of settlement and origin and how these interactions influenced their identity formation, such as values and belonging, giving insight into the various layers and spheres of influence that may encourage or impede children of migrants' activism. The first part of Chapter Five looks at children of migrants' experiences in their society of settlement and how these experiences became part of their narrative, values, and identity formation. In addition, this part examines children of migrants' interactions with their society of settlement, including other minorities in London and Washington, D.C. How such interactions may have heightened their similarities and differences with their societies of settlement and origin is discussed in more detail in the following sections, which draw on the narratives presented in Chapter Four to unpack diasporic identities, links to children of migrants' contexts and backgrounds (notably the transgenerational transmission of trauma), and addresses how this may have impacted their values and motivations for engaging in activism. Specifically, this section unpacks the identities that appeared central to the children of migrants cohort. This chapter is based on the research findings and broken down into the following narrative themes: religion, race/ethnicity/nationality, how these identities interplay and a discussion of intersectionality. What emerges in Chapter Five is that children of migrants' identity formations are complex and influenced by their experiences (including inherited memories) from their countries of origin, transit countries and relations with their society of settlement. These layers provide insight into children of migrants' motivations for engaging in activism.

Chapter Six, *Political transnationalism in question: charting children of migrants' path to activism*, reflects on how children of migrants draw from inherited memories, lived experiences and

their identities in their path toward engaging in activism. This chapter discusses how the existing framework needs to consider the type and focus (thematic and geographical) of activism and children of migrants' motivations for engaging in political transnationalism. An additional discussion covers the key tools enabling their activism, such as technology, institutions, and skills gained from their parents. This section examines why children of migrants might choose to engage in specific geographical spaces, particularly with reference to engagement beyond countries of settlement and origin, and sets a hypothesis for potential drivers.

The concluding chapter, Chapter Seven, outlines the main findings of this research. A first core finding is that lived and intergenerational trauma is crucial to understanding children of migrants' engagement in activism. Second, experiences of multi-county migration influenced the thematic and geographical focus of their activism. Third, social justice was a key theme in my research participants' activism. And finally, the fourth finding showed how geopolitical events galvanise children of migrants' activism.

Chapter Two - Theoretical Framework

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework of this thesis, with a focus on children of migrants¹⁵, political transnationalism and the factors that mobilise children of migrants' activism. In the first section, this chapter explores who children of migrants are, what makes them unique. Following on, the next section employs Østergaard Nielsen's framework (2003)¹⁶, breaking down the different remits of migrant activism in its discussion of definitions of political transnationalism. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the factors that motivate children of migrants' activism, looking specifically at lived and intergenerational trauma, identity formation, intersectionality, and children of migrants' relationship with societies of settlement.

2.1. Children of migrants: The 1.5 and second-generation diaspora

There is a limited but growing literature on children of migrants and transnationalism. *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation* by Levitt and Waters (2002) is one of the more important works in this field. This book is an anthology of empirical, theoretical and conceptual essays on the experiences of second-generation diasporas¹⁷; it provides fresh insight and challenges the fundamentals of transnationalism by drawing on both narrow and broad conceptualisations of the term, as well as the complexity of intergenerational relationships, which can influence interactions with societies of settlement and origin. Another interesting work by

¹⁵ 'Children of migrants' refers to 1.5 and second-generation diaspora; in other words, people born and/or who have lived a significant portion of their childhoods outside their countries of origin.

¹⁶ Østergaard-Nielsen outlines several categories with respect to migrant politics. *Immigrant politics* refers to migrants' attempts to better their situation in their countries of settlement, such as lobbying for housing rights. Migrants' relation to domestic or foreign policy in their countries of origin are referred to as *homeland politics*. *Emigrant politics* refers to the secure socio-economic and political rights migrants maintain in their countries of origin. *Diaspora politics* is a reference to émigré or exiles who seek to put pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Finally, *translocal politics* refers to development and humanitarian initiatives to support communities in their place of origin (2003, 762-763).

¹⁷ The term 'diaspora' is used to describe people who moved at the onset of traumatic events from a small geographical area in the homeland to other countries or regions (Cohen, 2008; Tölölyan, 1996; Hall, 1990; Brubaker, 2005). For the purpose of this thesis, the terms migrant and diaspora will be used interchangeably.

Wessendorf (2013) follows the stories of adult second-generation Italian immigrants raised in Switzerland and how they establish diverse types of transnational belonging to (dis)connect to Italy and Switzerland. However, most scholarship in this field views children of migrants' transnational practices through the lens of only two points: countries of settlement and origin. The central insight is that second and subsequent generations have less interaction with origin country, and much vested in their settlement countries. Thus, the majority of the literature implies that a transnational framework is insufficient for exploring children of migrants' interests and behaviours (Levitt, 2009). Most of the subsequent work looks at identity formation among children of migrants; identities emerging as transitional, as they are connecting to multiple imagined and physical spaces. However, these works are primarily anchored in how origin countries influence their relationship with societies of settlement.

Children of migrants' relationship with countries of residence and origin are continually changing. However, there is relatively little literature on how children of migrants mitigate some of the challenges they face. A series of recent studies point to the assertion of identities as a strategy employed by children of migrants to mitigate disadvantages they face in the society of settlement and establish agency. For example, Liberatore's study (2017) of Somali women's relationship with British society and their engagement with religion, political discourses, and public culture in London via the notion of the 'good diaspora', which highlights the agency these women command. In particular, this study looks at how Somali women mitigate the day-to-day difficulties they face within their communities and in an increasingly securitised UK. Imoagene (2017) delves into identity construction and the concept of black identity among the second-generation Nigerian diaspora in the US and UK, looking at how they balance and create a unique space shaped by race, ethnicity and class that counteracts their disadvantages in countries of settlement. This shows children of migrants embody cultures both inherited from their families and lived in their settlement countries, which they utilise to mitigate challenges and explore opportunities (Levitt, 2009).

Establishing definitions

There are several definitions of children of migrants including, and of particular interest to this thesis 1.5 and second-generation diaspora, who have both distinct differences and similarities. Foner defines the different generation of migrants as “first-generation” immigrants, their American-born children as the “second generation,” and their children in turn as the “third generation”, distinguishing between generations based on birth in country of settlement (2009: 3). However, this definition has a notable problem: it wrongly categorises children born in a third country as first generation in final country of settlement, even though second generation means those born outside their countries of origin. For example, skilled migrants may choose to remigrate to other countries where they may have better job offers (Finch, et al., 2009). Other studies consider a more specific definition of the second generation. King and Christou define second generation as ‘... children born in the host country to two immigrant parents, the latter being the first generation’ (2008: 5). However, as King and Christou themselves stress, this definition excludes other relevant variables, such as children who migrated at an early age. Again, they base their argument on those who arrive as children or are born in the country of final settlement to immigrant parents, but King and Christou do not speak to the issue of citizenship.

The 1.5 generation is regarded as part of the first-generation diaspora by official documents and censuses, even though the 1.5 generation is distinct. Indeed, the 1.5 generation’s relation with societies of settlement is much more akin to the second generation; for example, they are likely to attend school in the country of settlement and be exposed at an early age to the country’s society and institutions (Harklau, et al., 1999; Sweetman & van Ours, 2014). On the other hand, unlike the second generation, the 1.5 generation may remember the events that led to their families’ migration

and the process of travelling to countries of settlement. As for those from conflict-affected regions, the 1.5 generation may remember the conflict in their countries of origin (Kebede, 2010).¹⁸

However, like the second generation, the 1.5 generation are more likely to invest their resources and be civically engaged in their country of settlement, as they attempt to integrate and pursue upward mobility (Hammond et al., 2011). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) provide an expansive definition in their study of children of immigrants in the US, which includes children born to foreign parents in the host country and those who arrived pre-adolescence (2001: 23). Crul and Vermuelen follow a similar path, including foreign-born children in their definition of the second generation: ‘those born in the country of immigration or... who arrived before primary school’ (2003: 971). Agunias and Newland’s definition of diaspora likens to the status of emigrant, anchoring their definition in relations with countries of origin, including recent arrivals and their descendants who maintain ties with origin countries.

Diasporas are emigrants and their descendants who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin. The common thread among these recent arrivals and members of long-established communities is that they identify with their country of origin or ancestry and are willing to maintain ties to it. (2012: 2)

This definition shows the importance of anchoring diasporas and migrants relation in with origin countries and their agency in maintaining ties to these countries. It may be valid to distinguish those born in the country of final settlement from those who arrive as children, as the distinction carries different legal and residency statuses and experiences.¹⁹

itics. Emigrant politics refers to the secure socio-economic and political rights migrants maintain in their countries of origin. *Diaspora politics* is a reference to émigré or exiles who seek to put pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Finally, *translocal politics* refers to development and humanitarian initiatives to support communities in their place of origin (2003, 762-763).

¹⁸ The term ‘diaspora’ is used to describe people who moved at the onset of traumatic events from a small geographical area in the homeland to other countries or regions (Cohen, 2008; Tölölyan, 1996; Hall, 1990; Brubaker, 2005). For the purpose of this thesis, the terms migrant and diaspora will be used interchangeably.

¹⁹ Kebede refers to the 1.5 generation as ‘children who migrated between the ages of eight and twelve’ (2010: 5).

¹⁹ For example, children born in the US automatically gain citizenship regardless of their parents’ nationality; however, exceptions include those born to parents who are irregular migrants (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2013; Mapp and Hornung, 2016).

Despite some differences between the 1.5 and second generation, such as early childhood experiences in origin and third countries, they also share many similarities, such as linguistic and cultural knowledge of the society of settlement. In addition, the definition of migrants must be anchored in country of origin rather than country of settlement, and thus 'second generation' refers to people born and living outside their countries of origin, who have at least one emigrant parent, and want to maintain connections with their ancestry. With all this in mind, this thesis brings the 1.5 and second generation together under the broader umbrella of 'children of migrants', which includes those born and/or those who have lived a significant portion of their childhoods outside their countries of origin.

2.2. Political transnationalism

There are different forms of transnationalism²⁰ that link people and places across borders, including political activism²¹. Political transnationalism refers to a broad range of migrant political engagement including voting, membership in political parties, protesting, and lobbying in their countries of settlement and origin (Guarnizo et al., 2003; Bauböck, 2003). However, children of migrants' transnational activities and behaviours have been overlooked, as most studies only focus on this segment's interactions with the society of settlement. Thus, transnationalism literature has not considered children of migrants. This section sets out the definition of political transnationalism and its applicability in analysing children of migrants' activism.

²⁰ Transnationalism broadly refers to the processes of engagement between people and institutions across nation-states. however, there is not a singular definition of transnationalism and disagreements have continued unabated over the last few years (Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 1999; Itzigsohn, 2000; Portes, 2001; Bauböck, 2008; Levitt, 2010; Wessendorf, 2016; Waldinger, 2017).

²¹ Activism refers to actions by individuals, groups or entities – such as social movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – for the purpose of changing policies or behaviours.

Transnational political activities can occur through social grouping (either formal²² or informal²³), target state or society, focus on the political situation in migrants' origin (emigrant politics) or settlement countries (immigrant politics), target relations with other diaspora members (diaspora politics), or embody long-distance, inherited nationalist nostalgia and 'duty', which can be critical to driving migrants' engagement in political activism (Levitt, 2001 and 2009; Boccagni et al., 2016; Waldinger, 2015 and 2017). Political transnationalism is also confined within specific parameters: its geographical focus is on countries of settlement or origin; its political focus is on political activities, which can mean participating in elections and support for political parties, but also violent engagement (i.e. armed groups); and its frequency can be either regular or intermittent in response to political events (Levitt, 2009).

In this review of key work on political transnationalism, the following table categorises the variants of activism among migrants and frames the discourse using Østergaard Nielsen's framework (2003). The caveat here is that categorisations are based on the pervasive geographies of political transnationalism, which are limited to origin and settlement countries, and focus on first-generation migrants; thus, this framework tests the applicability of political transnationalism for analysing children of migrants' activism.

²² Formal institutions encapsulate rules and government structures that enforce these rules (Kaufmann et al, 2018).

²³ Informal institutions refer to non-state armed groups (except armed groups in active conflict), non-governmental organisations, think tanks, religious institutions and community organisations that are not lawmakers (North, 1997; Østergaard-Nielson, 2003; Guarnizo, et al., 2003).

Table 1: Definitions of political transnationalism and applicability for children of migrants activism

Category	Definitions	Applicability for children of migrants activism
<i>Immigrant politics</i>	'Immigrant politics are the political activities that migrants or refugees undertake to better their situation in the receiving country, such as obtaining more political, social and economic rights, fighting discrimination and the like' (2003: 762).	<p>Immigrant politics refers to political activities migrants undertake to better their situation in countries of settlement. This can be an essential space for children of migrants who may seek to dispel challenges they face, regardless of citizenship, such as the case of the Dreamers²⁴ in the US, who seek legal pathways to remain. Such politics become transnational when children of migrants' country of origin becomes involved in helping secure these rights. Interactions between origin countries and the descendants of their emigrants can take place if there are connections and vested interests. For example, Mali reached out to its diaspora to encourage investment in the country (Mendoza, 2009). Immigrant politics can also take different forms depending on the relationship between settlement and origin country — for example, the internment of Japanese Americans in the US during World War II.²⁵</p> <p>The framing of immigrant politics is key to analysing to children of migrant's activism. In particular, it relates to their relationship with their societies of settlement, and subsequently, their social, economic and political positioning.</p>
<i>Homeland politics</i>	'Homeland politics denotes migrants' and refugees' political activities pertaining to the domestic or foreign policy of the homeland. That is, it includes both opposition to and support for the current homeland political regime and its foreign policy goals. Yet, one of the main issues in the dialogue between migrants and their countries of origin is about their own legal, economic and political status in the homeland' (2003: 762).	Homeland politics are situated in the origin country's domestic or foreign policy. It includes both opposition to and support for the current political regime in country of origin and its foreign policy goals. However, as second and subsequent generations' relations weaken, homeland politics does not consider their types of potential engagements. In addition, and fundamentally, homeland politics assumes there are existing legal and economic links with the country of origin; links that may not exist for second and subsequent generations. For example, the 1950 Law of

²⁴ Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), also known as the Dreamers Act, is a US government programme created by the Obama administration in 2012 to allow people brought to the US as undocumented children the temporary right to live, study and work in the US. The Trump administration attempted to rescind DACA in 2017, but the decision was challenged in the courts and the administration was ordered to restore the programme (USCIS, 2018).

²⁵ More than 110,00 Japanese Americans were forced to live in internment camps following the attack by Japanese forces on Pearl Harbour in 1942 (Nagata and Cheng, 2003).

		<p>Return in Israel allows all Jewish persons and their descendants the right to citizenship (Lentin, 2016).</p> <p>Homeland politics, however, remains narrow in how it articulates children of migrant's activism. Thus, does not sufficiently address the facets of migrant's activism generationally.</p>
<i>Emigrant politics</i>	<p>'Migrants work towards the institutionalization of their transnational status as residents abroad who are economically, socially and politically engaged in their country of origin. They ask for favorable investment schemes, tax and toll exemptions, and regulation of pension schemes and child benefits. And interestingly in this context, they ask for extended channels for influence on politics at home, such as advisory councils, absentee voting rights, and the right to be candidates in elections' (2003: 762).</p>	<p>Emigrant politics, a subset of homeland politics, are situated in the assumption that emigrants already have some rights, rights they seek to extend; for example, voting in elections. Moreover, as discussed in various literature, children of migrants may have secured these rights in other sites depending on their citizenship status.</p> <p>However, emigrant politics is too narrow in setting out and analysing activism among children of migrants, as it is largely articulated within the remits of citizenship rights.</p>
<i>Diaspora politics</i>	<p>'Diaspora politics can be grouped as another subset of homeland political practices confined to those groups that are barred from direct participation in the political system of their homeland - or who do not even have a homeland political regime of their own to support/oppose - like the not so often used concept of emigre politics' (2003: 763).</p>	<p>Diaspora politics are the foil of homeland politics and strongly associated with forced migration. In the context of conflict, diaspora politics can include support for exiled opposition groups, armed groups, and lobbying for sanctions or the removal of a sitting government. By virtue of the term 'diaspora', these politics do not explicitly relate to citizenship rights and can take place across generations; for example, the Kurds quest for a homeland.²⁶ Thus, diaspora politics are relevant to framing children of migrant's activism in relation to origin countries/regions.</p>
<i>Translocal politics</i>	<p>'Initiatives from abroad to better the situation in local communities of origin. Engagement in development in the home community may have wider political ramifications as the empowerment of local communities serves as a catalyst for wider political change' (2003: 763).</p>	<p>Translocal politics are embedded in relations with specific localities rather than general nation-states. Thus, translocal politics are closely situated in the prism of identity and belonging. They are related to decentralised development initiatives aimed at bettering the situation in local communities of origin. Additionally, translocal politics can refer to responses to natural disasters or health emergencies,</p>

²⁶ The Kurds are an ethnic group of about 25-30 million people that straddle the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia. While the Kurdish people have historically attempted to establish an independent nation-state, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Turkish state, the Kurds became minorities in their respective countries (Izady, 2015).

		<p>such as the Filipino diaspora's response to Typhoon Haiyan, which may have focused assistance on specific localities.²⁷ However, translocal politics may also geographically extend to other sites, as these politics are dependent on a sense of belonging to specific sites. For children of migrants, translocal politics may embody broader identities and are, thus, connected to multiple sites; they may not engage in activities related to their family's specific communities in origin countries.</p> <p>For children of migrants, the framing of translocal is more relevant in relation to settlement countries rather than origin. This is largely due to how identities evolve across generations, which may be broader and not relate to sub-identities of origin countries.</p>
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As is clear from the above, political transnationalism categories are fluid and determined by multiple factors that cross economic, social, cultural and political shifts. A person can be engaged in one area and, at any given time, that engagement can drastically shift based on geopolitical events and personal circumstances. However, the categorisation excludes several critical elements, including limiting migrant activism to two geographical sites – origin and settlement countries – and discounting third countries. Thus, this categorisation overlooks multi-country migration, which is likely to feature in cases of irregular and forced migration. In addition, this categorisation also limits the analysis of migrant political transnationalism generationally, thus overlooking activism behaviours of descendants. Finally, this categorisation also neglects the role of lived and intergenerational trauma as a motive for activism.

²⁷ Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, also known as Yolanda, was one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded. The cyclone affected more than 14 million people, displacing more than four million and killing more than 6,000 (Tiller, 2014).

Immigrant politics

Immigrant politics refers to political activities migrants undertake to better their situation in settlement countries. Such politics becomes transnational when migrants' country of origin becomes involved in helping to secure those rights; for example, the Mexican government's provision of ID cards for nationals who are irregular migrants in the US, which enables them to receive medical treatment and open bank accounts (Massey et al., 2010).

Citizenship is a core component of immigrant politics, as it embodies the relationship between a person and the place they live as well as the understanding that political and economic processes bind them to the state's institutions, laws, rights and responsibilities (Cohen, 1999; Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). I analyse the concept of citizenship within the context of migration around four elements: citizenship as legal status; citizenship as rights; citizenship as belonging and identity, and citizenship as political participation (Samers and Collyer, 2016).

The first dimension is citizenship as a legal status, which is defined through civil, political and social rights. Here, the citizen is the legal person free to act according to the law and with the right to claim the law's protection. Citizenship can dictate the nationalist ideals and emotional connections one has with a place, but not the experience of association with another place. For example, Judaism is the core connection to Israel, but substantial divisions exist among communities from different places residing there, such as cases of discrimination against Ethiopian Jews (Ojanuga, 1993; Yerday, 2019).

The second element is citizenship as rights, which often relates to a range of social, economic and cultural rights (Joppke, 2007; Faist, 2009). However, this does not mean the citizen is informed or consulted in the formulation of these rights or that these rights are uniform for all people; indeed,

based on factors such as age or place of birth, different levels of citizenships are afforded. This is particularly relevant when one holds dual or multiple citizenships or has resided in many places; for example, British nationals who had lived outside the UK for over 15 years were barred from voting in the referendum on leaving the European Union (Higgins, 2019).

Belonging and identity membership in a political community, the third dimension, is citizenship as a distinct source of identity (Yuval-Davis, 2007). Thus, it is assumed citizens are individual political agents actively participating in the society's political institutions. However, in the context of children of migrants' relationship with societies of settlement, it is assumed that belonging is situated in relation to settlement and origin countries, disregarding how migrants can be influenced by and feel a belonging to multiple sites (Porters and Zhou, 1993). I, on the other hand, argue that children of migrants may draw on identities from different spaces and, to this end, also develop identities that help them discover more opportunities (Lacroix et al., 2016; Imoagene, 2017; Liberatore, 2017).

Finally, the fourth element considers citizenship as political participation, which can differ generationally based on the context. For example, minorities may not be able to fully engage due to structural factors, such as discrimination in educational institutions leading to a lack of understanding, of and thus access, to political institutions. On the other hand, origin countries may interfere in securing their emigrants' rights; for example, when Idi Amin expelled Uganda's minority Asian community, as they were British subjects, the British government sought to (unsuccessfully) pressure Amin to reverse his decision (Uche, 2017).

Through engagement in country of origin politics, migrants are more likely to engage in the political process in their country of settlement (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Bauböck and Faist;

Fennema and Tillie, 2001; Koopmans, Statham et al., 2005; Portes et al., 1999). Country of settlement politics can also influence and determine the political opportunities for migrant activism (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004), which can then transfer to migrants' children, as the society of settlement can have even greater influence on their children's activism by aligning it with social mobility (Portes, 2009; Papademetriou et al., 2009).

Migrants' social status can change significantly throughout their lifetimes, not just generationally. Migrants leave their lives and loved ones behind, often start with access to fewer resources than at home, and lack social connections in their society of settlement; the realisation of their drastically changed social status can have a profound impact on their social mobility trajectory (Lin, 2017; Feliciano and Lanuza, 2017). For example, the US does not recognise medical qualifications obtained in other countries and, as such, requires migrants to obtain additional accreditation in order to practise medicine, which can be lengthy and prohibitively expensive (American Immigration Council, 2018). This often means that migrants' socio-economic status in society of settlement is likely to be lower than in their country of origin, and the complex navigation of their new lives in their new homes can compound their pre-migration trauma (Schweitzer et al., 2006; Bhugra and Becker, 2005). Paradoxically, however, this is not always true for their children (Lin, 2017; Feliciano and Lanuza, 2017). And it is this space it is anticipated that children can engage in immigrant politics to secure their opportunities for upward social mobility that may not have been availed to their parents.

Homeland politics

Homeland politics denotes migrants' political activities related to the domestic or foreign policies of their origin countries or region, including opposition to and support for the current homeland political regime and its foreign policy goals. Homeland politics is also closely linked to

diaspora politics, although the latter is not specific to a recognised state, such as the Kurdish quest for a home nation (Keyman, 2016). Homeland politics is often the core of migrants' political transnationalism focus, and are conceived through engagement with origin country institutions. There is criticism of the narrow definition of political transnationalism, as outlined by Bauböck: 'political transnationalism is not only about a narrowly conceived set of activities through which migrants become involved in the domestic politics of their home countries; it also affects collective identities and conceptions of citizenship among the native populations in both receiving and sending societies' (2003: 700).

Homeland politics can also create tension for migrants in both countries of settlement and origin as, in essence, it is a competition for migrants' time and resources (Waldinger, 2017). Migrants seek both upward social mobility in their new homes and, at the same time, to ensure they provide for their families in origin countries. Steven Vertovec provides another typology:

[T]he politics of homeland can take a variety of forms, and entails: exile groups organizing themselves for return, groups lobbying on behalf of a homeland, external offices of political parties, migrant hometown associations, and opposition groups campaigning or planning actions to effect political change in the homeland. Some migrant associations also manage to carry out dual programmes of action aimed at both sending and receiving countries. (2009: 94)

Based on this definition, migrants maintain citizenships – or have access to citizenship like rights – that enable them to influence origin country politics. At the same time, these skills and interests are likely to translate or be applied in settlement country contexts. Thus, these definitions are situated on the premise that migrant activities often happen through or with formal institutions, rather than informal ones. Formal institutions are entities that have a written constitution, laws, policies, rights and regulations enforced by official authorities, such as governmental bodies, registered entities such as charities, and companies (Kaufmann et al., 2018). Informal institutions, on the other hand, do not have formal or written rules and are shaped by social norms, customs or traditions, including community and religious groups, family and peer networks (Leftwich & Sen, 2010; Jütting et al. 2007). Using a narrow conceptualisation of political transnationalism, such as

focusing on voting, limits analysis of activism among children of migrants, as such assumes migrants hold rights akin to citizens or the networks necessary to influence political processes in their origin countries.

Some countries of origin are attempting to establish closer links with their emigrant populations, with citizenship being a key component. For example, the number of countries recognising dual citizenship is notably increasing: in the 1960s, obtaining a second citizenship often meant losing origin country citizenship; by 2015, however, 70 percent of countries recognised, to varying degrees, dual or multiple citizenships (Vink, De Groot and Luk, 2015). In addition, an increasing number of countries are establishing ministries or similar institutions directly tasked with engaging their diaspora, e.g. Ethiopia, Armenia, Israel, and Kosovo (Smith, 2003; Gamlen, 2014). Such engagements range from developing or encouraging systems that support inward remittances to influence in policy and laws. For example, Senegal allocated 10 percent of its parliamentary seats to its diaspora (Uzelac, 2018). Governments also recruit their emigrants to lobby for their origin country's economic or foreign policy interests, as an increasing number of countries recognise that their diasporas can be important political allies, beyond voting and remittances.

However, countries of settlement also play an essential role in facilitating migrant political transnationalism with regards to origin countries, as established in scholarship on the Political Opportunity Structure (POS), which shows that country of settlement can advance or constrain migrants' proclivity for transnational engagement (Koopmans & Statham, 2001; Bermúdez, 2010; Bloemraad, 2006; Koopmans et al., 2005). Migrants must balance between the demands and needs of both countries of settlement and origin, which can create tension (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Waldinger, 2017).

Critical events can be the precursor for migrants' both regular and irregular political transnationalism (Levitt, 2001). This is reflected in how migrants' engagement in political transnationalism is often sporadic, with variation among those who are occasionally mobilised around political events in their countries of origin – such as elections – to those who engage in a sustained way through political parties and other structures (Portes et al., 2002; Itzigsohn et al., 1999). With an increasingly mobile population and rapid advancements in communications, technology, trade, transport and interconnectedness in every sphere – from economic to cultural – the intensity and regularity of migrants' interactions with their countries of origin have also increased (Baylis et al., 2017; Cole and Groes, 2016). This means that events in one location can have profound effects in another location, and thus we must test whether existing political transnationalism frameworks can account for multiple geographical and imagined spheres of activism among migrants, especially among their descendants.

Despite the lack of consensus around the definition of political transnationalism, all definitions have the commonality of stating that political transnationalism takes place through formal institutions, such as membership in political parties in countries of origin, monetary contributions to these parties, or active involvement in electoral campaigns (Itzigsohn, 2000; Koopmans et al. 2005; Guarnizo et al., 2003). However, both formal and informal institutions are situated in social relations and dependent on context; for example, the continued persecution of the Hazara²⁸ in Afghanistan means the Hazara diaspora may face discrimination in their engagement with Afghan institutions (Abraham and Busbridge, 2014). Thus, political transnationalism relates to a variety of political activities: those through formal structures, such as elections and political parties, or informal structures; those through either peaceful or violent means; and the regularity of such activities, whether regular or in response to critical events (Levitt, 2009).

²⁸ An ethnic group in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Emigrant politics

Emigrant politics occurs when migrants seek to further their socio-economic and political rights in countries of origin, such as advocating for tax exemptions. Levitt contends that people 'are all firmly rooted in a particular place and time, though their daily lives often depend on people, money, ideas, and resources located in another setting' (2001: 11). Thus, politics is an element of this exchange between emigrants and co-nationals in countries of origin (Cole and Groes, 2016).

Drawing on Guarnizo (2000) and Levitt (2001), Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) argues that political transnationalism should not only refer to a 'narrow' definition of activities, e.g. membership in political parties or hometown associations, but rather be 'broad' enough to also include occasional and irregular participation in meetings and events. This framework is valuable for evaluating individuals and groups who may become active during a critical event. For example, the European referendum in the UK, known as Brexit, has galvanised the country's emigrant population to vote, especially in Europe, with some even mounting a legal challenge to the 15-year voting restriction (Collard, 2019). This is a clear example of migrants seeking to secure their rights in both origin and settlement countries.

Much scholarship on diasporic communities focuses on questions of identity formation and recounts such communities' experiences in the nation-states in which they reside, but this focus overlooks the fact that diasporas can be pushed by both domestic and international events to engage in activism (Tarrow, 2005; Koopmans et. al., 2005). Political transnationalism is not only limited to behaviour, it also includes ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Thus, while 'core' transnationalism encapsulates activities that are regular, patterned and an integral part of an individual's life, 'expanded' transnationalism refers to more occasional practices (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003).

In framing 'expanded' political transnationalism, Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) employs a broad definition of transnational political practices that includes various forms of migrants' direct, cross-border participation in their country of origin's politics, as well as their indirect participation via the political institutions of their country of settlement and international organisations. Migrants also lobby to be represented and participate in decision-making through political means other than elections and influence political actors through other processes. For example, Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003) distinguish between electoral and non-electoral participation as forms of political transnationalism used by political officials and community leaders who seek to wield political power and influence the political environment in their countries of origin, stressing that migrants may seek to influence conditions in their countries of origin through both electoral and non-electoral means. However, these definitions limit the scope of analysis, as they present political transnationalism processes as linear despite these activities taking place in increasingly globalised settings. Migrants may choose to engage with migrants in countries other than their country of origin. For example, the global campaigns launched by Muslims against cartoons depicting the prophet Mohamed (Lindekilde, 2010).²⁹

Levitt criticises transnationalism's focus on consistent, sustained practices, as migrants more often engage in irregular transnational practices, such as in cases of a humanitarian crisis, marriage, and political change (2002). Also, engagement in transnationalism is not merely an activity, it is also part of the process of belonging; for example, maintaining relations with kin in places of origin (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004; Cole and Groes, 2016). Boccagni, Lafleur and Levitt propose 'that processes such as circulation, portability, and contact, viewed through a transnational optic, help to nuance recent research on political transnationalism and its empirical indicators – including, most notably, external voting' (2015: 1). Some scholars have sought to include non-political institutions – such as

²⁹ In 2005, there were widespread protests across the Muslim world, as well as countries with Muslim diasporas, after the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohamed. In Islam, creating images of the Prophet is prohibited (Masquera, 2018).

civil society organisations – in their definition of political transnationalism (Faist, 2000; Collyer, 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003), as well as how migrants link to development processes (Bakewell, 2009).

As they are ‘neither here nor there’, migrants may feel the need to affirm their place in their country of origin. Glick-Schiller et al. (1995) claim that migrants’ ability to experience incorporation in both countries of settlement and origin is the essence of transnationalism. Waldinger (2017) builds on this, theorising that a cross-border perspective can create tensions at either side of the chain. Generationally, this can translate into second and subsequent generations seeking to affirm their linkages with origin countries, which often take the form of ‘expanded’ transnational activities, such as participating in cultural events as part of awareness raising of harmful traditional practices.

Diaspora politics

Overlapping with homeland politics, diaspora politics denotes activities by émigrés seeking to apply pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Diaspora politics also carries a similar definition for exiles who are not allowed to partake in activities directly or stand in opposition to the sitting government, as well as for those without a recognised political regime of their own – e.g. the Kurds. In the political volatility of conflict-affected countries, the sitting government is unlikely to allow migrants, in particular émigrés, to participate in activism unless it is in support of the government. In a similar form, diaspora politics also outlines an imagined home. For example, the Kurdish diaspora – one of the largest stateless diasporas in the world – has long advocated for an independent homeland (Baser, 2011; Alinia and Eliassi, 2014). However, migrants can also seek to agitate such relationships and apply pressure to governments in countries of

settlement. For example, some Iranian-Americans lobbied the US government for friendlier policies toward Iran and in opposition to sanctions.³⁰

While there are several studies that look at the recurrent relationship between migrants and origin countries, their scope is primarily limited by the expectation that established entities and organisations exist to help facilitate diaspora engagement with origin countries. Itzigsohn defines political transnationalism as a realm of recurrent and institutionalised interactions and exchanges between migrants and their social and political organisations on the one hand, and the political institutions in their country of settlement on the other (2000: 1129-1130). This definition, however, limits our understanding of transnational political practices, confining the framework to countries with relative stability and formal institutions. In addition, this definition discounts the growing influence of non-governmental actors, such as armed groups and NGOs, especially in conflict settings (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Sheffer, 2003).

Diasporas have their own interests, inclinations and agendas, and these do not always align with those in origin countries, can sometimes fuel homeland–diaspora conflict, and have the potential to trigger origin-settlement country confrontations (Sheffer, 2003; Koinova, 2018; Dremmers, 2002). Moreover, diaspora engagement, especially in conflict or politically volatile countries, is often viewed with suspicion by policymakers, international organisations and other stakeholders (Smith and Stares, 2007). Indeed, studies on diaspora and conflict primarily focus on diasporas' negative role in prolonging conflict (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009; Demmers, 2002; Zunzer, 2004; Smith and Stares, 2007). These negative portrayals present diasporas as distant nationalists or fundamentalists fuelling conflict through economic and political support or intervention, with little risk to themselves (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2006; Mohamoud, 2006).

³⁰ However, it is also important to note that such lobbying is part of a wider US trade lobby that seeks improved diplomatic relations with Iran.

In recent years, however, there has been a general shift and perception has moved from seeing diasporas as negative influencers in fomenting and supporting conflict to recognising them as an asset in relief, peace-building, recovery and post-conflict reconstruction in countries of origin (Hammond et al., 2011; Horst and Gaas, 2009; Van Hear and Cohen, 2017). There is nothing new about diasporas offering support to origin country parties in conflict, whether in the form of diplomacy or support for armed opposition groups (Baser and Swain, 2008). For example, the Irish diaspora played a critical role by supporting parties in the conflict, such as diasporic support for the Irish Republican Army (IRA)³¹, but also played a pivotal role in the subsequent Good Friday Agreement³² (Cochrane, 2007).

By dividing their attention and engaging with the country of origin, migrants also risk neglecting their social mobility in country of settlement (Papademetriou, Somerville and Sumption, 2009). However, this is not the case for most, and often migrants who were politically active in their country of origin are more likely to be politically active in their country of settlement (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). This is especially pertinent with regards to children of migrants, as their parents' political activity is significant in encouraging their own political activity. Thus, the hypothesis is that children of migrants from politically active households are more likely to engage in political transnationalism.

Translocal politics

Translocal politics refers to initiatives originated abroad aimed at bettering the situation in local communities of origin (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). There is no clear definition for the term

³¹ The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is an armed opposition group that formed in 1921 and split into different factions over the years. Its political wing is Sinn Féin, a party that has represented Republican interests in Northern Ireland since the turn of the 20th century (Mac Ginty et. al., 2007).

³² The Good Friday Agreement, ratified in 1998, ended the more than three decades of civil conflict in Northern Ireland known as 'The Troubles'. The agreement negotiated the settlement of Northern Ireland's future by establishing a power-sharing assembly that governs by cross-community consent (Mac Ginty et. al., 2007).

‘translocal’, but it is best understood as translocal connections to family and kin through regular visits, plans to move, and being allied to the local in both countries of origin and settlement, which are continually changing and being reworked (Brickell and Datta, 2011; Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

Remittances³³ are one of the ways migrants extend their influence and rights in origin countries, but particularly in local communities. Most studies of migrants’ contributions to origin countries have focused on remittances and other transnational economic relationships with kin (Vélez-Torres and Agergaard, 2014). These economic exchanges have attracted widespread interest, such as origin countries’ increasing interest in developing diaspora policies that attract financial investment from their emigrant populations, but other contributions made by migrants have received less attention (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Having said so, remittances are often the primary added value of migrating. By sending remittances and supporting kin in countries of origin, migrants can gain upward social mobility that enables them to partake in activities as citizens; in some cases, as privileged citizens, thus the motivations need to be interrogated (Portes et al., 1999; McGregor, 2014). Thus, migrants can maintain and even increase their socio-economic and political influence in their country of origin (Cole and Groes, 2016). Therefore, even if migrants are not engaged in political activities through formal institutions, they still influence these processes by engaging their kin and sharing their changed values and perspectives, which, they are also influenced by the society of settlement.

The assumption that children of migrants are not engaged in political transnationalism is based on research of migrants’ remittances behaviour, which declines or even ceases from one generation to the next. However, while children of migrants may give fewer financial contributions,

³³ Remittances are personal monetary transfers of an employee’s compensation, or part of it, to kin (Maimbo and Ratha, 2005). However, remittances are increasingly seen as a tool of political, social and cultural transformation for migrants to influence origin countries (Ahmadov and Sasse, 2016; Krawatzek and Müller-Funk, 2018; Escriba-Folch et al, 2015).

they are more likely to be interested in knowledge and skills transfer (Liberatore, 2017). In addition, while it is often a minority that engages in transnational practices, and this engagement is most often occasional, informal transnational activities arising from critical events, even small actions can have a broader local and even regional impact over time (Levitt, 2009).

Critical events impact migrants' political transnational practices (Koinova, 2018; Horst, 2018G; Karabegovic, 2018). The regularity of transnational participation among diaspora groups is well illustrated by the temporary mobilisations that develop following critical events such as natural disasters, incidents of government repression or significant policy changes. Indeed, such mobilisations are perhaps more typical of transnational political involvement than formal electoral participation, which challenges more institutionally-focused approaches to political transnationalism (Collyer, 2008). For example, the diaspora's response to the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone was crucial to bringing the disease under control (Chikezie, 2015). Also, migrants might engage more in such incidents because of their knowledge of and connection to both international and local contexts.

Based on these debates, and in the context of conflict-affected diasporas, political transnationalism involves activities through both formal and informal institutions aimed at changing, ceasing or maintaining political structures, policies, and social, economic or political conditions or practices, whether through peaceful or violent means. However, a significant gap in the framing of political transnationalism is its dismissal of children of migrants and generational activities, as well as its requirement that activities take place solely between origin and settlement countries, rather than recognising that political transnationalism can draw on multiple identities, such as religion, to draw migrants' interest (McGregor and Pasura, 2014).

2.3. Motivation for engaging in activism

After highlighting the literature on children of migrants and political transnationalism, now I turn attention to what mobilises them. In order to assess the factors that instigate the 1.5 and second generation's engagement in or distancing from political transnationalism, I set out the key areas of motivation. First, lived and intergenerational trauma is significant, particularly in relation to forced migrations. Second, children of migrants' multiplicity of identities and links with both countries of origin and settlement through inherited memories and lived experiences in another important factor. Finally, their relationship with the society of settlement is also crucial, whether they have experienced positive or negative social mobility and well-being.

Children of migrants or their families engaged in different types of migration; knowing which kind is critical to understanding the context of their migration and their relationship with the society of settlement. There is both voluntary migration and involuntary migration. Involuntary migration is undertaken by people who may become recognised as refugees³⁴ or internally displaced persons (IDPs)³⁵, yet it should be noted that a person is not placed solely in one category, as again people move for different reasons at different times (Allen et al., 2018; Statham, 2019; Hall and Hardill, 2016). Voluntary and involuntary migratory movements vary in motivations, in how migrants depart their origin countries (as either regular or irregular migrants), and in how long they remain in the country of settlement; for example, whether people migrated as students, to participate in competitive sports, or to seek protection from persecution are important factors (Dustmann and Görlach, 2016; Strauss and McGrath, 2017). Another facet is multi-country migration, where people

³⁴ 'Refugee' is a legal status for a person who seeks protection outside their origin country due to the 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (UNHCR, 2011: 3).

³⁵ IDPs share the same traits as refugees and also require protection. Unlike refugees, however, IDPs remain under the protection of their own government and are defined as 'Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border' (Deng, 1999).

face different legal statues, motivations and conditions along their migratory journey; this phenomenon is often referred to as mixed migration³⁶, and can also involve crossing several international borders, known as ‘transit migration’³⁷ or fragmented journeys (Duvell and Pastore, 2008; Collyer and De Haas, 2012). Thus, these factors play an important role in children of migrants’ lives, how they interact with the world around them and, in turn, encourage or discourage their activism.

Lived and intergenerational trauma

Trauma is an acute, exceptionally distressing event or situation that causes psychological and physiological effects that overwhelm an individual’s ability to cope with terror and fears of death, torture or psychosis (Silove et al., 1997; Bhui et al., 2003; Schweitzer et al., 2006; Steel et al., 2017). The individual may feel emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed by events that can include abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and loss (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). The experiences of survivors of traumatic events, such as conflict, famine, terror attack and other life-threatening experiences, are transmitted to their children and subsequent generations (Fossion et al., 2015). Conflict diasporas are profoundly affected by the conflict in their origin countries, even from afar; it becomes part of their narrative and identities as individuals and communities (Vathi, 2015; Stein, 2009).

Exposure to trauma causes a rupture in a person’s life cycle, including their identity and routines, creating a state of *fixity*³⁸. The level of *fixity* and how a person affected by trauma responds determines their vulnerability, resilience, and how much their life changes (Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Danieli,

³⁶ Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities (Mixed Migration Centre, 2019).

³⁷ Transit migration refers to migrants moving through one or more countries in response to changing conditions, whether incentives or risks, in order to reach a final destination country (Düvell et al, 2014).

³⁸ Fixity is a reference to the state of being stuck in a particular time or event when a person experienced trauma (Danieli, 1998).

1998). The impact of trauma can vary depending on its time, duration, extent, and meaning for the individual, which can determine the severity of the trauma and its reoccurrence; for example, sexual violence was used systematically during the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, as a part of the tactics to break the community's resilience and their day-to-day lives (UNSG, 2017). As Danieli and Norris state: 'In the extreme, survival strategies generalize to a way of life and become enduring post trauma adaptational styles. These adaptational styles will thus shape the survivors' family lives and, in turn, their children's upbringing, emotional development, identity, and beliefs about themselves, their peers, their societies, and the world' (2016: 640). The effects of trauma do not remain with just the one person; there are also repercussions for the people around them. Often, changed behaviours, symptoms of coping, and altered values are passed on to the next generation, whether or not survivors speak of their trauma (Danieli, 1998; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Danieli, Norris, and Engdahl, 2016).

Survivors of traumatic events, such as conflict, famine, terror attack and other life-threatening situations, transmit their experiences to their children and subsequent generations. There is an abundance of psychological studies on the negative impacts of historical trauma on descendants, and extensive scholarly work describing the memory politics of silenced traumatic pasts (Kidron, 2003; Confino, 1997). Research on intergenerational trauma is also well established in psychology literature, but it is limited in scope due to lack of empirical data, and thus there is insufficient research on how trauma is transmitted (Danieli, 1998, 2007; Daud, Skoglund and Rydellius, 2005). Having said so, there is a growing literature positing that trauma is passed intergenerationally, often through family narratives (Laub, 1998; Danieli, et. Al., 2016). These family narratives are usually not confined to traumatic events but can also include values, beliefs, family histories and cultural traditions (Fiese and Sameroff, 1999). The 1947 partition³⁹ of India into the two states of India and Pakistan⁴⁰ is an example of how intergenerational memories can impact whole

³⁹ More than 14 million people were displaced by partition, which was marked by large-scale violence and an estimated two million dead (Bharadwaj et al, 2008).

⁴⁰ Bangladesh become independent from Pakistan in 1972.

nations for decades after the event, as animosity between India and Pakistan continues to endure. In turn, critical events, whether positive or negative, become entrenched and impact behaviours, views, and thus motivations for engaging in activism.

Subsequently, parents' trauma and coping mechanisms impact their children's development, identity, emotional attachments and beliefs about themselves (Cook et al., 2005). These stressors can harm children's mental health, leading to increased risk of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and other behavioural disorders (Heim and Nemeroff, 2001). For children of migrants' identity construction, the intergenerational transmission of memory – notably trauma – has significant impacts, which can be heightened or reduced by everyday experiences in society of settlement and interactions with kin and communities. Intergenerational trauma can leave lasting negative legacies on individuals and communities, which can include social mobility and mental health issues. For example, the impact of European colonisation⁴¹ on American Indian communities continues to be felt, as people are still suffering from mental health issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression (Whitbeck et al., 2004; Evans-Campbell, 2008). This shows that even if much time has passed or they are far away from the site where the trauma took place, its effects remain with survivors and their descendants (Schweitzer et al., 2006; Bhui et al., 2003).

Even if trauma is not directly experienced by family members, it can be experienced as a group or community, becoming part of a group's consciousness (Alexander, 2004).⁴² Thus, trauma is socially constructed; events are not inherently traumatic, instead 'trauma is a socially mediated

⁴¹ 1492 marked the start of European colonisation of the Americas, when a Spanish expedition led by the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus set sail on the voyage that was to lead to North America. The arrival of European colonisers brought new crops, animals, and diseases with devastating effect. Within the first four centuries of European contact, about 150 million American Indians are thought to have been killed through disease, ethnic cleansing and racial genocide (Garrett and Pitchette, 2000; Whitbeck et al., 2004).

⁴² Cultural trauma, according to Alexander (2004: 1), is a process that occurs when a group 'feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.'

attribution' (Alexander, 2004; Alexander et al., 2004; Olick, 2002; Sztompka, 2000). However, the sociological study of collective trauma often does not acknowledge its impact on descendants (Updegraff et al., 2008). This stands in contrast to the concept of diaspora, which is often related to traumatic events that manifest as collective memories (Alexander, 2004).

Descendants may seek increased protection for people who experience traumatic events or help facilitate their flight from the situation. If there are no opportunities or recourse to seek redress for the actual source of the trauma, people may displace⁴³ these emotions and/or focus on redressing them elsewhere. For example, Lord Dubs, a British Labour politician and former Member of Parliament, was a child refugee who fled the Nazis. In his own admission, his personal experience drove him to fight to protect unaccompanied refugee children in the UK in the midst of the European 'migration crisis'.⁴⁴

Migrant parents are often not forthcoming about their experiences because recounting traumatic events can lead to reliving the trauma (Stein, 2009). These omissions can lead to incoherent or unclear narratives, not dissimilar to victims of crimes who are unable to recount what happened in precise detail (Dembour and Haslam, 2004; Culbertson, 1995). However, the sharing of these traumatic experiences can have a profound effect on children of migrants' identities; it is one of the critical factors that drives them, consciously or not, to engage in political transnationalism. The lack of coherent narratives from parents and kin can drive children of migrants to seek information on their family or country of origin's history. This most commonly occurs when children of migrants are older and want a coherent historical narrative of their heritage to share with others and subsequent generations (Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 2003; Stein, 2009).

⁴³ The concept of displacement emerges from Freud's work on 'dream-work', which refers to emotions linked to particular (sometimes hostile) events and experiences that people do not have an opportunity to redress, and thus are redirected elsewhere and may be disproportionate (Freud, 1920).

⁴⁴ Lord Dubs sponsored an amendment to the UK's 2016 Immigration Act that offered safe passage to the UK for unaccompanied refugee children, which later became known as the 'Dubs Amendment' (McLaughlin, 2018).

Several psychological studies indicate that post-migration problems are often deeply intertwined with PTSD and emotional distress (Mazzeti, 2008; Castaneda et al., 2015; Steel et al., 2017). In addition, trauma-affected refugees experience post-migration stressors much more than non-conflict affected migrants, which can compound their emotional distress and lead to mental health problems (Steel et al., 2009). For example, children may have witnessed their parents' stress when seeking asylum, as it can take years to gain refugee status and deal with the financial difficulties and other challenges of settling in their new home (Hepstinall et al., 2004).

Lived and intergenerational traumas appear to raise children of migrants' perceptiveness of people around them and their potentially stressful experiences. Recent research by Greenberg et al. (2018) on the impact of childhood trauma on empathy levels shows elevated levels of empathy when such children become adults. Thus, one could argue that intergenerational memories of trauma make children of migrants more likely to engage in activism. In addition, children of migrants may not even focus on people of similar backgrounds, values or identities, meaning they can empathise with a broader range of people and causes.

Intersectionality, identities and agency

Studies of migrants' political transnationalism are often more focused on linkages to countries of origin than race and ethnicity⁴⁵ (Bauböck, 2003). Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in identity formation among children of migrants. Yuval-Davis (2006) has distinguished between three interrelated levels of belonging related to 'social locations', 'individual's emotional attachments to various collectivises', and the 'ethical and political value systems with

⁴⁵ Race and ethnic identities are socially constructed social categories, with race often denoting physical differences – such as skin colour – and ethnicity denoting shared culture, such as language, customs and religion (Edward et al., 2001). While race refers to dividing humans according to physical characteristics such as skin colour, facial features, and hair texture, it is really a social construct (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Ethnic identity refers to the quality of an individual's affiliation with his or her ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). It is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct, the development of which involves a process of *exploring* the meaning of one's identity and a sense of *commitment* or belonging to that identity (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Phinney, 2010).

which people judge their own and others' belonging/s'. Drawing on this conceptualisation of belonging, this thesis focuses on individuals' identities through highlighting the research participants' unique histories, lived experiences and future outlook.

Identity⁴⁶ formation is a person's complex process of establishing a unique view of self, values, beliefs and goals drawn from histories, language and culture (Hall, 1996). Children of migrants' identities evolve and are determined by several factors; factors such as political context and economic and social resources, which can impact and lead to different paths of incorporation in the society of settlement (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Rambaut, 1996). Race and ethnicity are two critical identifiers of migrants, which are often a source of not only prejudice, discrimination and inequality, but also of meaning, motivation and belonging (Waters and Eschbach, 1995). In her study of children of Nigerian migrants in the US and UK, Imogene (2017) outlines their notion of being 'black' and complex self-identification that draws on identities related to countries of settlement and origin, as well as a pan-Africanism and relations with fellow immigrants.

While intersectionality has provided considerable contributions in other fields, it remains under-theorised in migration studies (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). Intersectionality points to the importance of recognising that layers of oppression and discrimination – such as racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia – are interconnected and cannot be examined apart from one another (Crenshaw, 1991; Bastia, 2014; Anthias, 2012). In response to the propensity to examine identities as separate, Crenshaw (1991) highlighted the need to not overlook intra-group differences by analysing the dynamics in majority anti-racist and feminist movements, which overlook the race and gender dimensions of violence against women of colour, which are often ignored or misrepresented.

⁴⁶ 'An individual's identity involves interplay of many dimensions (e.g. biological, psychological, philosophical, interpersonal relations) that dynamically coexist throughout a lifetime' (Lev-Wiesel, 2007: 76).

Her work pointed to the importance of understanding discrimination through the intersection of multiple identities, whether perceived (immigration status, nationality and such) or actual (race).

Building on this framework to include religious, ethnic and national identities provides an even wider lens from which to view children of migrants' engagement in political transnationalism. Grosfoguel, Oso and Christou (2015) unpack the relationship between racism and intersectionality, as well as how this unpacking relates to migration theory, advancing the discussion of how geopolitical events impact particular migrants, notably those of Muslim backgrounds in the post-September 11th era⁴⁷. They raise pertinent questions related to how the relationship between power structures and different identities are changeable; how the fact that some identities may be sources of discrimination in the society of settlement impacts children of migrants' activism behaviours; and how minorities navigate relations with other ethnic minorities and the majority society.

Race and ethnicity are crucial variables in determining children of migrants' engagement with their countries of origin, societies of settlement and beyond (Levitt and Waters, 2002). Some authors, such as Fouron and Glick-Schiller (2001) and Waldinger (2017), suggest that a negative reception in or interaction with the society of settlement can lead children of migrants to pursue closer engagement with their countries of origin. Yet, there is increasing evidence that 1.5 and second generations are fusing identities from settlement and origin countries to reflect their complex and hybrid identities and belonging to multiple spaces (Chacko, 2016).

A legacy of slavery and colonialism, racial perceptions of what it means to be 'black' – such as skin colour, facial features and hair texture – have long plagued black communities in

⁴⁷ The 11 September 2001 attacks, also known as 9/11, were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks on the United States. The attackers hijacked four long-haul passenger planes and crashed two into the World Trade Centre in New York, one into the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C., and one outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The attacks killed 2,996 people, injured over 6,000, and caused substantial damage to infrastructure and property (Huddy et al, 2002; Doss, 2011).

predominately white or non-black societies and created a divide against and among minorities, in particular those who are 'black' based on their degree of skin colour 'darkness' or 'lightness' (Hunter, 2008; Bodenhorn and Ruebeck, 2007; Mukhtar, 2004). In the Caribbean in the 1800s, for example, the social hierarchy among slaves was determined by skin colour, as a marker of class,⁴⁸ determining 'success' and 'beauty' standards (Lynn, 2008; McNamee, 2018). These divisions are central to internalised racism⁴⁹, which impacts migrants' integration and often disadvantages them economically, socially and politically in countries of settlement (Pyke, 2010). For example, black children, particularly boys, are more likely to face more aggressive behaviour from adults despite the vulnerability of their age (Monroe, 2005).

Racism is a critical part of the intersectional framework, but the undercurrent of racism within black communities is often a missing element, as such are academically understudied, subtle and everyday occurrences (Tolia-Kelly, 2017). This undercurrent plays out in children of migrants' relationship with their society of settlement; how minorities navigate relations with other ethnic minorities and the majority society is significant (McCall, 2005; Grosfoguel, Oso and Christou, 2015). Discrimination between minorities is a survival mechanism for winning favour with the majority society. For example, Fox and Mogilnicka's study (2017) on the strategies Eastern European migrants use to integrate in the UK highlights how such strategies have also included pathological forms, such as racism. This points to the fact that when gauging diasporas' engagement with host societies, subtleties of migrant and proximal host⁵⁰ racism – particularly within internalised racism – must be recognised.

Gender also has a significant impact, as specific values applied to women and their access to education affects their careers (Ooyaan, 2015). Horn of Africa societies are mostly patriarchal.

⁴⁸ Light-skinned people often had the highest social status, and the social status lowered the darker the person's skin tone. This is still seen across many countries, such as in Brazil, India, and Japan.

⁴⁹ 'Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power' (Bivens, 1995).

⁵⁰ The concept of 'proximal host' refers to the group the absorbing society is likely to associate newly arrived immigrants with on the basis of their appearance, national origin and language, as well as how immigrants perceive themselves within the ethnic concept (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992; Levitt, 2009).

Women and girls often have more household chores and restrictions on who they can befriend and how they can dress and socialise. Young girls are regularly married at an early age and the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is prevalent, while men and boys have fewer domestic responsibilities and restrictions on socialising outside (Kipuri and Ridgwell, 2008). However, when these gendered values are applied in a different society, they are often transformed (Degni et al., 2006).

Religious identity is a 'bridge' to nationalism and emerges in social and historical contexts, demonstrating that its development is variable rather than static (Brubaker, 2012). In addition, religious identity can be a powerful base for personal identification and collective association, even more so than other identities (Peek, 2005). For example, in her study of Coptic diaspora philanthropy, Brinkerhoff (2019) shows that the faith-based diaspora's religious identity is a critical driver for their engagements. For example, despite differences, many Muslims in Europe share mosque spaces or make charitable contributions beyond their countries of origin (Erdal and Borchgrevink, 2017). Consequently, for people who see it as their 'duty' to help others, religion becomes a powerful motivator for engaging in activism (Levitt, 2009).

With experiences of multi-country migration, children of migrants are influenced by and connected to multiple sites. Here, Pollack's concept of the Third Culture Kid (TCK)⁵¹ comes into play, as it describes children who travel extensively or live in multiple locations, and are thus exposed to a multitude of cultures. However, not all children raised transnationally fit into the narrow definition of TCK often associated with those from privileged backgrounds. Thus, Van Reken puts forward the notion of a cross-culture kid – an expanded definition that includes those of mixed heritage, multi-

⁵¹ 'A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parent's culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into TCK's life experiences, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009: 13).

racial, and children of migrants or refugees – defining it as ‘a person who is living or has lived in – or meaningfully interacted with – two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during childhood (up to the age 18)’ (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009: 31). This argument situates children of migrants as ‘cosmopolitan’⁵² in their outlook and identities, as they belong both nowhere and everywhere.

Transnational links evolve and change over a person’s life cycle, and political transnationalism can become a vehicle setting children of migrants at odds with their society of settlement. As explained by Levitt: ‘While incorporation and transnational activism seemed to reinforce each other among adolescents, they seemed to work at cross-purposes in early adulthood’ (2009: 1230). The transition from childhood to adulthood is when identities change, and it is exactly this period that sheds light on what motivates children of migrants to engage in political transnationalism. Also, over time, migrants become embedded in their new homes and more affluent than their kin, which alters relationships (Cole and Groes, 2016). These relationships are even further altered by migrants’ offspring, who have a more imagined, less concrete connection with their country of origin (Waldinger, 2017).

Studies have shown there are clear differences across generations: while transnational practices and attachments often persist among both first and subsequent generations, they do not carry on as extensively for multiple reasons, such as declining language fluency (Levitt, 2009; Vertovec, 2005; Kasinitz et al., 2002; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001). This continuation is demonstrated in several studies, showing how children of migrants build or maintain links with their countries of

⁵² Cosmopolitanism is a transnational mode of practice, whereby actors construct bonds of mutual commitment and reciprocity across borders through public discourse and socio-political struggle (Kurasawa, 2004; Delanty, 2006).

origin, sometimes pursue a return 'home' to reassert their identities (Somerville, 2008; Reynolds, 2008), or directly participate in development initiatives (Hammond, et al, 2011).

This makes it critical to study children of migrants' political transnationalism by situating it in identity formation. Migrants often cluster around remembered or imagined 'homelands' and practise 'authentic home cultures' through food and music, although they still see a disconnect with their country of origin despite these efforts. Diasporas face the conundrum that the more time they spend outside their countries of origin, the more likely they are to absorb traits from the societies of settlement and even create new ones; thus, diasporas can find themselves not fitting in either location, as they are hybrid rather than of one thing (Ibid.). Paradoxically, as cultures are uprooted and moved, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become even more salient (Ferguson and Gupta, 2008). This sets diasporas as influencers with interests in multiple geographical locations.

Relations with the society of settlement

Migrants can experience incorporation in both countries of settlement and origin (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995), but this can also create tensions in both countries (Waldinger, 2017). Such tensions are critical to the interplay of being 'disadvantaged' in settlement countries and 'privileged' in origin countries. Perlmann's essay on second-generation transnationalism in Levitt and Water's *Changing Face of Home* (2002) highlights children of migrants from the Global South's potential influence in affluent countries: '*the consequences of the second generation's transnational behaviour may be exaggerated, for better or worse, by their relative wealth and influence*' (229). These resources make children of migrants essential players in engaging countries of origin, the results of which can be either positive or negative, as they can influence processes that they are not personally affected by.

Children of migrants are likely to have a different relationship with societies of settlement and origin than their parents, as they had the opportunity to learn the society of settlement's culture and thus have a closer relationship with it (Tip et al., 2017). In addition, children of migrants' attachment to their country of origin is also less intense than their parents; for example, not speaking their parents' mother tongue fluently (Levitt and Waters, 2002). Migrants from regions affected by conflict or humanitarian crisis often experience higher levels of stress than other migrant populations when settling in their new home (Schweitzer et al., 2006), and this can create additional challenges to their engagement with the society of settlement (Collyer et al., 2011; Mahamoud, 2006).

Children of migrants' relationship with societies of settlement and origin can transform in the face of critical events. For example, debates around the European refugee and migration 'crisis' led to a heightened negative discourse on refugees and migrants. Additionally, there is also increasing antagonism against minorities, in particular those of Muslim backgrounds, in the Global North (Collyer and King, 2016; Statham, 2018). Thus, migrants' relationship with settlement and origin countries is dynamic and continuously evolving, standing in contrast to the findings of current research on migrants' political transnationalism, which describe it as a fixed and static process (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Van Hear & Cohen, 2017; Waldinger, 2017). Contextualising this evolving and changing process is critical to theorising political transnationalism among migrants and their descendants, as the highly fragmented nature of migrants' political realities reflects the context of different sites of activism.

Children of migrants experience different relationships with societies of settlement based on multiple factors, such as ethnicity, gender or religion. In their study of post-1965 second-generation migrants, Portes and Zhou (1993) present their application of the segmented assimilation theory, which looks at how different immigrant groups assimilate into different segments of society and how this can lead to downward social mobility for the second generation. However, it is

important to highlight that this may not be true for all children of migrants. In their paper comparing first and second-generation Mexicans-Americans with African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and native whites, Waldinger and Feliciano (2004) divert from the above assertion, stating instead that the children of working-class immigrants will experience “downward assimilation” temporarily as they settle in their new homes, but will gain a foothold and then establish upward social mobility. This is the point at which subsequent generations reap the benefits of having learned and built networks in the country of settlement, as they seek upward social mobility driven by their family’s aspirations and expanded networks.

Schools have a significant impact on children of migrants’ identity formation and values. A child’s experience of migration is shaped by their interaction with the education system, which is notably different from the experience of non-migrant children (Gillborn, 1995). Thus, understanding migrant children’s school experiences is key to understanding much of their life experiences (Reynolds, 2008).

Regardless of skills, migrants often face discrimination in education and employment, which can extend to the next generation. Diversity in skills and knowledge is not always acceptable, and this can discourage migrants and their children from working in particular sectors (McGregor, 2007). For example, in the development and humanitarian sectors, where many international organisations have headquarters in European or North American capitals, issues of diversity are ever-present and can be exclusionary.⁵³ At the same time, those of migrant backgrounds have more opportunities to work in the not-for-profit sector due to their particular skill sets, such as linguistic and cultural

⁵³ For example, Amnesty International maintained a policy for decades that forbid individuals working on their countries of heritage as campaigners or researcher at its International Secretariat. This policy was known as Work on your Own Country (WOOC), and was argued it helped maintain impartiality and the organisation’s reputation for neutrality (Hopgood, 2006). This meant activists and researchers from migrant backgrounds or those with a partner or spouse from migrant backgrounds were excluded from working on their countries or regions of origin. This policy was brought to the Employment Tribunal as an issue of race discrimination in 2009 by an employee, and the policy was removed (Employment Tribunal, 2009).

knowledge. However, most types of employment available to migrants and their children are often characterised by lower quality, less income and more hurdles for promotion. For example, in their study of the experience of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff working in higher education, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) found that employment conditions and pay for BME staff were less favourable than non-BME staff (2009). This is reflected in an article by Tolia-Kelly (2017) on the day-to-day experiences of black women academics in geography, based in the UK and elsewhere in the Global North, which indicates the subtle undercurrent of inadvertent and direct racism. These microaggressions are also experienced by students in higher education, which can lead to feelings of isolation and marginalisation, and in turn impact their grades (El Magd, 2016).

When individuals migrate, they often maintain a strong connection with the norms of their countries of origin, particularly those related to the family. Migrants typically experience their heritage culture dynamically at home through family and kin, as well as outside the home at school, in the media and other public spaces (Giguère, Lalonde and Lou, 2010). However, to counteract discrimination and other challenges, migrants may also attempt to emulate the majority society. Children of migrants, on the other hand, may seek to develop identities that fit neither country of origin nor settlement, instead adapting their identities to create opportunities in different spaces. For example, tapping into larger Muslim or Arab identities, children of migrants from Muslim or Arab majority countries with citizenship in the Global North have been migrating to Gulf countries where they benefit from this dual status.⁵⁴ Moreover, some migrants use privileges in their origin countries to offset disadvantages in settlement countries.

In minority populations, family identity promotes well-being, a sense of purpose, motivation, and meaning (Fuligni, 2011). In some cases, however, this identity may not align with the

⁵⁴ Holding a privileged passport – i.e. from North America, Europe or Australia – and having some knowledge of the culture and language can prove an advantage. Some positions and salaries are based on nationality. Those with passports from North America, Europe and other Global North countries often hold these coveted jobs and associated benefits.

values espoused by the majority society, which can create even more of a gap between migrants and the society of settlement (Imogene, 2017). Children of migrants face numerous challenges to their belonging and identity in relation to the country of origin, as such is weakened by the demands and expectations – e.g. upward social mobility – of societies of settlement (Waldinger, 2017). However, this does not tell the whole story, as intergenerational transmission of trauma can be both a driver for and a deterrent to children of migrants' engagement in activism. This is a significant gap in the understanding of the interplay of being 'disadvantaged' in the society of settlement while, simultaneously, holding an 'advantageous' position in country of origin by virtue of accumulated resources, networks and social capital.

As previously discussed, citizenship can facilitate or impede children of migrants' sense of belonging in societies of settlement. Legal status and citizenship can be hidden in everyday interactions, but national identities become ethnicised and a source of exclusion (Waldinger, 2017). One such example was the spike in racially motivated attacks in the UK against persons seen as 'foreign', including white Europeans, following the Brexit referendum (Virdee and McGeever, 2018). Children of migrants face numerous challenges to their belonging, including growing anti-immigration sentiments in many parts of the Global North, which lead them to feel increasingly alienated (Brinkerhoff, 2008). Also, as Collyer (2013) suggests, citizenship has become more complex and multi-layered, extending beyond voting rights and relating to context and changes over time.

Macro-critical events have a significant impact on micro relations, including the relationship between migrants and societies of settlement and origin. For example, after the 7 July 2005 bombings in London and other major terror attacks by groups espousing Islamic identities, Muslim communities in the Global North have been cast as threats to the social cohesion and security of

their host societies, e.g. the Prevent⁵⁵ strategy in the UK (Akram and Johnson, 2001; Liberatore, 2017; Suárez-Orozco, 2018; Zorlu and Frijters, 2019).

Despite extensive study, there is no single theory or method that fully encapsulates political transnationalism generationally amongst migrants. And most academic work only examines such issues from the perspective of first-generation migrants. New efforts are needed to produce different standpoints, to present a framework for analysing activism that is applicable across multiple generations. While the literature on political transnationalism may not adequately deal with children of migrants, it still remains relevant to analysing their activism, as such can be influenced by their origin countries and status as minorities. As a framework, political transnationalism is valuable for studying migrant activism, but there are notable gaps in the current definitions.

As is discussed in this thesis's empirical chapters, the current framework fails, firstly, to consider the of impact pre-emigration histories on migrants, particularly the experience of lived and intergenerational trauma and how such affect migrants' relationship with the society of settlement and their future visions and aspirations. This is an important point when trying to understand motivations for engaging in activism. Secondly, migrants' experiences in societies of settlement – particularly those from conflict-affected countries experiencing discrimination and other cultural interactions – are central to identity formation and marked by global connections that render geopolitical events of more everyday significance. Thirdly, the framing of migrant political transnationalism is largely based on the activities of first generations, thus failing to consider the activism of their descendants. Despite political transnationalism's reference to transnational ties, the final gap in its framing is its limitation to two sites – i.e. settlement country and origin country (whether real or imagined) – excluding activism in third countries or regions.

⁵⁵ Prevent is a UK-wide strategy for counter-terrorism (HMG, 2011). The strategy has been criticised for fostering discrimination against people of Muslim backgrounds and inhibiting freedom of speech (Abbas, 2018).

Chapter Three - Research Design and Methods

In this chapter, I set out the research method for data collection and analysis. Firstly, I explain my orientation to the research process, positioning myself as a critical scholar. I then describe this research's methodology, arguing the life history approach was most apt for uncovering children of migrants' motivations for engaging in political transnationalism, and discuss the rationale for choices and decisions made during various stages of the research process. I then outline the piloting of the study and the profile of the research participants, followed by methods of outreach. Finally, I set out the data analysis tools and the challenges and ethical issues encountered during data collection and analysis.

3.1. Research participant and researcher profiles

The research participants were individuals born and/or raised outside their parents' country of origin. More than half the participants were born or raised in third countries before arriving in the UK or US. Based on migration patterns from the Horn of Africa to the US and UK, with the most significant numbers taking place in the 1980s and 1990s, I hypothesised that the children of these migrants would mostly be adults, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. The families of the children of migrants who participated in this research primarily hailed from the middle classes in their countries of origin and had social connections and economic resources that enabled them to travel to the US or UK, as only a smaller number came through resettlement programmes.

I selected the UK and US as case study sites for several reasons. Firstly, these are the countries in the Global North hosting the largest number of migrants from the Horn of Africa. The US, particularly Washington, D.C.⁵⁶, hosts a large number of migrants from the Horn of Africa; for

⁵⁶ For this research I am using Washington, D.C. to refer to the Washington Metropolitan Areas – Washington, Arlington, and Alexandria – also known as Districts of Maryland and Virginia (DMV).

example it is estimated there are than 210,000 people of Ethiopian ancestry (Chacko, 2016). The UK is the leading European destination for Horn of Africa migrants, even for those who initially migrated to other countries in Europe, such as Norway and the Netherlands (Holman and Holman, 2003). Secondly, the US and UK are essential sites for outlining a more nuanced picture of migrant incorporation in settlement countries, as well as how the relationship between home and host countries impact the type and level of transnational political practices among migrants. This research focuses on these countries' political capitals – London and Washington, D.C.⁵⁷ – as key cities in the Global North for migrant communities from the Horn of Africa, with the exception of the US Somali community, who mainly reside in Minnesota. London and Washington, D.C. also represent the difference in European and North American migration and integration policies, and critically, political capitals with substantial presence of non-governmental organisations, think tanks and similar entities that seek to influence policymaking. Unfortunately, it was not possible to research countries of origin for several reasons. The project not only lacked the time and resources necessary to cover the number of countries involved, but also countries of origin is somewhat outside the scope of this project's primary focus, i.e. children of migrants based in London⁵⁸ and Washington, D.C. as they navigate their day-to-day lives in a transnational space.

40⁵⁹ interviewees participated in this study; I held interviews primarily in London and Washington, D.C., as well as conducted several online interviews (please see Appendix 2 for details). The first round of interviews took place as part of the pilot study, held between June and August 2014, and involved participants based in or from London and Washington, D.C. Between September 2014 and March 2015, I conducted a further round of interviews using online communication tools⁶⁰. From the end of March 2015 to June 2015, I did my primary fieldwork in Washington, D.C., although I also conducted some additional (follow-up and new) interviews with research participants in the

⁵⁷ The population of Washington, D.C. and wider DMV area is 6,251,240 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018)

⁵⁸ London's population is estimated at 8,674,000 million (ONS, 2016).

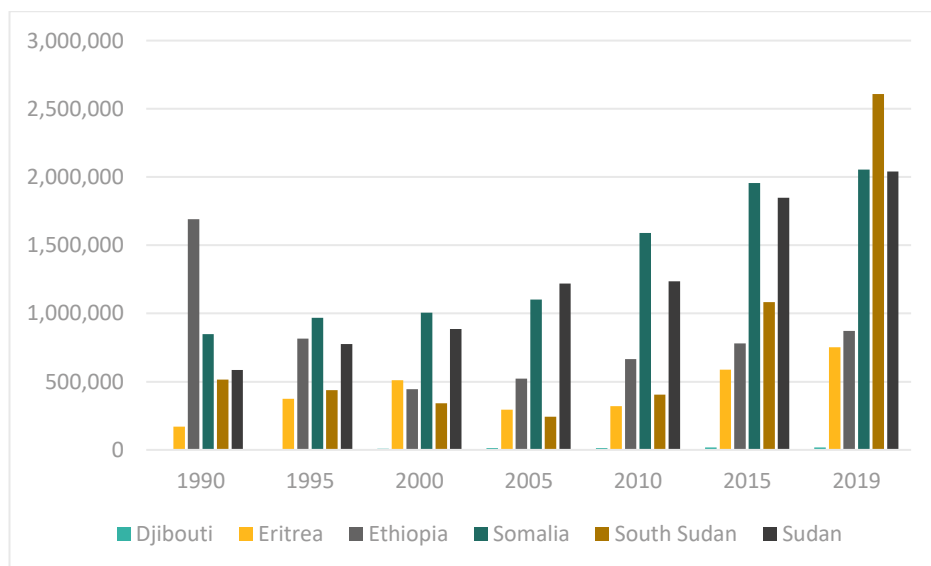
⁵⁹ Two interviews were removed prior to data analysis as they did not fit the criteria for the research.

⁶⁰ I used emails to connect followed by Skype for voice and video interviews.

US between July and September 2015. The second phase of my fieldwork, July 2015 – January 2016, consisted of interviews in London.

Although not a representative sample, I did want to cover a range of participants in terms of country of origin, gender, and city of settlement, and wide range of experiences and backgrounds, but this was not always possible. For example, there were only two participants with South Sudanese heritage. South Sudanese are a new diaspora compared to other groups from the Horn of Africa. Many came through resettlement programmes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, so there is a limited number who fall into the category ‘children of migrants’. Also, there were no research participants from Djibouti, as there was nearly nobody to approach either in the US and or the UK. There has not been a mass migration from Djibouti; it is more a transit point and hosts a small Somali refugee community. Djibouti is also the only French colony in the region and, as is the trend, most migrants tend to relocate to the country that formerly colonised theirs, except for the US. In terms of trends, all of the participants were university level graduates, with several holding postgraduate degrees.

Table 2: International migration from the Horn of Africa, 1990-2019



Sources: United Nations, 2019a

Table 3: Horn of Africa Population, and Migrants to the US and UK (2019)

Country	Origin countries population (in millions)	Migrants in the UK (2019)	Migrants in the US (2019)
Djibouti	973.557	487	No data
Eritrea	3,497.117	17,105	39,234
Ethiopia	11,2078.727	16,424	239,186
Somalia	15,442.906	161,723	100,433
South Sudan	11,062.114	No data	No data
Sudan	42,813.237	20,510	48,947

Sources: *United Nations, 2019a and 2019b*

In the US, Washington D.C. hosts the largest concentration of the Horn of Africa diaspora in the country, except for the Somali diaspora who largely reside in Minnesota state. The majority of children of migrants who participated in this study were originally based elsewhere in the US, but had migrated to Washington, D.C. for educational and work opportunities. In the UK, London hosts the largest concentration of diaspora from the Horn of Africa, with most living in areas with high populations of migrants and other marginalised groups, such as African-Caribbean, and among the most deprived areas of the city.

Table 4: Research participants

	Pseudonym	Age Group	Gender	Country(ies) of origin	City settlement
1	Adil	Early-30s	M	Eritrea/Sudan	London
2	Aida	Late-20s	F	Eritrea/Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
3	Aisha	Mid-30s	F	Sudan	London
4	Alia	Mid-30s	F	Eritrea	London
5	Aliyah	Mid-30s	F	Sudan	London
6	Almaz	Early-30s	F	Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
7	Amin	Mid-20s	M	Somalia	London
8	Amina	Early-30s	F	Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
9	Asia	Late-30s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
10	Aster	Early-20s	F	Eritrea/Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
11	Ayen	Mid 30s	M	South Sudan	Washington, D.C.
12	Dhalia	Early 30s	F	Sudan	London
13	Dut	Early 30s	M	South Sudan	London
14	Elsa	Mid 30s	F	Eritrea	Washington, D.C.
15	Faiz	Early 30s	M	Sudan	Washington, D.C. ⁶¹
16	Farah	Early 30s	M	Somalia	London
17	Hakim	Early 30s	M	Ethiopia	London
18	Helen	Late 20s	F	Eritrea	Washington, D.C.
19	Hiba	Late 20s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
20	Huda	Mid 20s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.

⁶¹ Was based in New York at time of the interview

21	Hussein	Late 20s	M	Sudan	London
22	Iman	Late 40s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
23	Jalila	Late 20s	F	Sudan	London
24	Jamal	Early 30s	M	Sudan	London
25	Jamila	Mid-30s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
26	Khadija	Mid 20s	F	Sudan	London
27	Khalil	Late 20s	M	Somalia	London
28	Lula	Mid 20s	F	Eritrea	London
29	Mariam	Mid 20s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
30	Meron	Early 20s	F	Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
31	Sarah	Mid 30s	F	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
32	Sharif	Early 30s	M	Sudan	Washington, D.C.
33	Tayseer	Early 30s	F	Sudan	London
34	Tigist	Early 30s	F	Eritrea/Ethiopia	Washington, D.C.
35	Ubax	Early 30s	F	Somalia	Washington, D.C.
36	Warda	Early 30s	F	Sudan	London
37	Wardi	Mid 20s	M	Sudan	London
38	Yodit	Mid 20s	F	Eritrea	London
39	Zahra	Early 30s	F	Sudan	London
40	Zaid	Mid 40s	M	Sudan/Nigeria	London

In 2014, I launched an online survey to supplement the data collected from interviews. The survey questions mirrored my guide questions for face-to-face interviews, and I had hoped to capture information I had no other way of gathering. However, there were not many responses to the survey, only three of which were validated, and these responses also did not convey the rich layering garnered through the life history interviews. I realised that this information would skew the data if, for example, there were no questions about something that came out strongly in face-to-face interviews, such as multi-country migration.

Criteria for research participants

Concerning engagement in political transnationalism, I used a very broad and generic definition of the term to include as many people involved in activism or civic engagement as possible, with no geographical limitations, whether local, national or international. In the use of the term 'political transnationalism', I often employed terminologies that fall within the remit of political transnationalism and were better understood. Based on consultations with participants, I often

reverted to using the word 'organising' in Washington, D.C. and 'activism' in London. In addition, I employed this broad definition because there were no baseline studies of the type of activities children of migrants engage in, and this research was an opportunity to establish such general outlines.

This broader definition also allowed for critical analysis of whether political transnationalism, according to its main definitions, is a suitable framework for analysing children of migrants' motivations for engaging in activism and types of practices. Below are my criteria for selecting research participants:

- They must be engaged in transnational political practices, defined as 'online or offline effort to promote, impede or direct social, economic, political or environmental change. This includes paid or voluntary engagement';
- They must be children of migrants, which for this study means 'persons born in the country of settlement to at least one foreign parent, and those who are foreign-born and arrived in the country of residence before the age of 12 or the start of high/secondary school';
- At least one of their parents must come from the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan);
- And, they are based or have been raised in London or Washington, D.C., including individuals who had spent considerable time in Washington, D.C. or London as adults away from their families.

Whether or not participants were citizens of the countries of settlement or origin was not a criterion, as this ensured the inclusion of interviewees who had lived in different countries before settling in the US or UK, but had not yet acquired citizenship. Additionally, several research

participants were internal migrants, as they had moved from different parts of the US or UK to these countries' respective capitals. There was also no specific criterion regarding intensity or regularity of children of migrants' activism, taking into consideration that activism among migrants is often sporadic (Guarnizo et al., 2003).

Being an 'Insider' researcher

This thesis is the culmination of personal and professional endeavours, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, to document and highlight the experiences of a unique group. It required me to reflect on my own experiences as a second-generation (born in Qatar), 1.5 (arrived in the UK as a 12 year-old), Third Culture Kid (TCK) (grew up in multiple countries), migrant (worked in multiple countries), professional activist (worked in international development and humanitarian sectors), black (from Africa), with an Arabic name, from a Muslim background, minority (part of a Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the UK), woman (having all those layers compound my experiences as a woman), and later on mother (responsibility to raise and pass my knowledge to the next generation). All these identities intersected and, as with many participants, I navigated different spaces by highlighting or suppressing some over others. However, for this research I needed to set out all these identities to the participants, to ensure transparency and build trust. For example, the research participants had an opportunity to ask me questions about my own family's migratory history, career trajectory and my choice to pursue this study.

There are advantages and disadvantages in my position as a researcher with experiences similar to the research participants, making it difficult to separate me the researcher from the research itself (Silverman, 2006; Hammersley, 1992). A noted disadvantage, as I discovered during the research process, was that my position made it take longer to gain participants trust, as they saw me as someone who understood the nuances and challenges children of migrants from the Horn of

Africa experience. This is not dissimilar to conducting human rights research, as an interlocutor with knowledge of the context often means heightened risk for a person divulging information. Thus, I allowed for more non-interview contact time to give potential participants the space to query and try to address any of their concerns. This extra time spent, in fact, became an advantage at the interview stage, as participants already felt comfortable and the interviews were more open and richer as a result and revealed more details about their lives that might not be available to someone regarded as an outsider. In addition, this trust ensured the efficacy of the snowball technique in this research, as participants were confident referring me to their friends and acquaintances.

Social knowledge as an 'insider' and socio-cultural cues were important to bridging trust; for example, familiarity with their cuisine or a few words in their language. These are small but critical gestures for building bridges with individuals who may require more time to open up about their experiences, families and identity formations. However, despite having that 'insider knowledge', I still experienced some challenges. While I had pre-existing links with children of migrants from the Horn of Africa in the US and UK, as well as having lived and worked across the region itself, I still needed trust in the research itself. Thus, I devised different strategies for reaching and engaging potential participants and, intrinsically, sought to learn about them as individuals, not just their activities at the time of interview. Through spending extended periods with individuals, I gave potential participants an opportunity to 'interview' me and understand my motivations for undertaking this research, thus helping them make an informed decision.

The process of contacting and engaging participants was very similar to my earlier professional experiences as a human rights researcher, taking into consideration the potential benefits and disadvantages a researcher of my background and immersion in the communities of research faces. Similarly, the reputation of the organisation you represent, your appearance (dress), language (dialect, accents and terms used) and such can determine the kind of information shared.

3.2. Research design and methods

I used qualitative multi-methods in carrying out this research. Life history was the core of my research method, complemented by participant observation. Life history was selected as a key tool in this research as it helps to capture personal accounts and, thus, gain insight into migratory journeys and their impact both on those who undertake them and subsequent generations. Additionally, such insight shines the light on the impact of major geopolitical events, different perspectives of these events, and how such events contribute to motivating children of migrants to engage in activism.

Life history

I chose life history approach because it brought contexts in multiple spaces to life and provided the opportunity to have more insight into adult children of migrants' motivations for engaging in activism. Life history is a method of qualitative research that records individuals' experiences and is frequently used in anthropology and health studies (Denzin, 1989 and Ojermark, 2007). There are different approaches within this thesis, and thus different terms are used to denote each (Denzin, 1989). For example, case study refers to an in-depth investigation of a person, group or event (Zucker, 2009), while 'The narrated life story represents the biographer's overall construction of his or her past and anticipated life, in which biographically relevant experiences are linked up in a temporally and thematically consistent pattern' (Fischer 1982, quoted by Rosenthal, 1993:2)

This methodology has several advantages, as it captures a living depiction of historical events that led to migration. At the same time, undertaking life history as the primary data collection method was risky. Conflict diaspora are often guarded and wary of questions (Koinova, 2018). Moreover, the life history approach was the main driver for immersing myself in the research

participants' environment and being open about my motivations for undertaking the research. During an initial presentation of this project, I had a fascinating reflection when a colleague advised me that being an 'insider' researcher might be more challenging than I anticipated.

In her study on migrants' digital connections with their countries of origin, Brinkerhoff (2009) found that using digital technology as a medium can both ease security concerns and facilitate access to hard to reach populations. This finding led to the development of a website, which drew from the information sheet, and allowed potential participants to review their information at their convenience and in their own interest (see Annex 3 for details).

As a method, life history facilitates the inclusion of a more holistic account of historical or critical events and considers what individuals denote as relevant and significant, thus taking into account character and context, in its understanding of people's perceptions (Roberts, 2002); this will be a crucial point later on when discussing pre-emigration histories. Life history is a unique form of data collection, as this method gives insight not only into the views of interviewees but also wider society, and shows how opinions and perspectives can evolve.

The intergenerational transmission of memories has made life history a vital method for bringing valuable insight to critical, sometimes traumatic, events; events difficult for a person to share. Life history captures the thought processes of interviewees and how they make sense of the world around them, particularly their views of historical events which had otherwise been neglected (Roberts, 2002). As I saw during this research, life history narratives provide an in-depth perspective of individuals' journeys and motivations. Such narratives can be used in lieu of methods such as directly asking someone their motivations for engaging in activism, which can often lead to simplistic answers that do not account for the broader context. For example, children of migrants spoke of

their views of critical events in their countries of origin and settlement, and these accounts may have differed or evolved from that of their parents, as intergenerational memories, or between those based in London and Washington, D.C.

In working with participants to gather life histories, researchers seek to understand the connections between several aspects of participants' lives (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Using life history, I am able to present an understanding of diaspora political transnationalism within various contexts, such as historical, economic, and cultural contexts, and unpack the power dynamics between distinct groups. This is especially significant when studying groups with multiple linkages to both physical and imaginary sites; for example, how a Muslim in India relates to an African-American Muslim in the US. In this respect, it was necessary for a common thread to run through all the interviews and even have a set of themes or questions to explore further topics, as with semi-structured interviews.

Marginalised voices and intersectionality

Life history is a valuable method also because it includes marginalised voices in research processes; it is used widely in feminist research, social class history, as well as the documenting of traumatic events, such as the Holocaust (Shapira, 1998; Stein, 2009). While research participants might not necessarily identify as 'marginalised', this feeling or fact can still come out in the interview process as respondents articulate their experiences in their respective contexts. This is especially significant because of the impact of identity – or the complex intersectionality of identities – effects a person's life, and the life history method manages to succinctly capture these complex relations. In addition, it is crucial to realise that attention to character and context is necessary for understanding people's feelings when conducting life history interviews (Beatty, 2010), and thus trust must be built between researcher and participants.

For this research, the life history method was critical to exploring the complexities of experience and identity formation among children of migrants, as it helped shed light on both nuances of experience in the participants own voice and how macro events may have affected their life trajectories and pathways (Atkinson, 1998). The process of migration and the influence of families and relations in society of settlement had a considerable impact on identity formation among children of migrants. Thus, using life history as a tool aided in both capturing and understanding the differences among a group otherwise considered to be socially homogenous and, in turn, capturing a phenomenon that might otherwise not be noticed (Parry, 2004).

However, there are some drawbacks to the life history method, most notably that it can be intensely time consuming, as the processes of data collection and analysis are quite in-depth. Also, as this in-depth process leads to a broad range in the information shared, it can become mentally and emotionally straining for both the interviewer and interviewee. In order to avoid such strain, it is essential to make time for more than one interview session, with sensitivity to the space and time of interview, as such helps to reduce anxiety. In this research, the life history method helped me capture a rich collection of narratives; the insights here would not have been gained using standard semi-structured interviews or similar methods.

Participant observation

In addition to life history, I also used participant observation as a method for adding context to the research participants' environment and general socio-economic setting. Participant observation required me to immerse myself in order to understand children of migrants' day-to-day lives and contexts, which included participating in local activities, events, conferences and seminars that were of professional interest to the research participants, before, during and after the data

collection to support the data analysis (see Annex 5 For details). Participant observation⁶² became a rich source of information, as it yielded insight into some of the social contexts and environments children of migrants from Africa in general experience, in particular those from the Horn of Africa.

Research participants saw the participant criteria and were able to decide themselves whether they felt they fit. In most cases, I had discussions with participants before the interview about the activism element of the criteria so we both had a clear idea of what this meant and were able to address any concerns. In connecting with research participants, I also learned more about their setting, gained a better understanding of their contexts, and saw how they managed their day-to-day lives and multiple identities.

3.3. Data collection and analysis strategies

Piloting the research

Piloting the research methods provided an opportunity not only to tweak my outreach and data collection strategies, but to also start building the networks and linkages I needed to carry out the bulk of the interviews in a later trip. To test the research strategy, I visited the US in June 2014 in order to find potential research participants and familiarise myself with the geography of Washington, D.C.. During this trip, I arranged meetings with relevant people from respective diaspora communities and attended seminars, conferences, and networking events where I both searched for potential research participants and came to understand the type of activism taking place there. One thing became clear quickly, my association with a familiar and respected institution was necessary for networking. Thus, as Georgetown University had hosted the pilot visit, people had reacted

⁶² Participant observation is a research method in which the researcher joins in with the group they are studying and observes their behaviour (Jorgensen, 2015).

favourably to this association, and the fact I was conducting academic research, it seemed prudent to maintain a link with an established educational institution.

Before starting this project, I had visited the US on several previous occasions, but had never been to Washington, D.C. Thus, it was necessary for me to familiarise myself with the geography of the city before starting my fieldwork, including its demographics, cultural practices, where most participants lived and worked, and the types of activities carried out by its residents. The importance of this pre-fieldwork trip became more evident when I returned for the second, more prolonged fieldwork, as participants I secured in my first visit became important allies in finding additional participants.

Being hosted by a recognised entity became more significant than originally predicted. The pilot study visit was hosted by Georgetown University and later George Washington University sponsored my extended fieldwork trip through their Visiting Scholar programme. My potential research participants were quite familiar with these institutions and, as such, it gave me a base from which to build relationships with them. In the UK, the University of Sussex was well known to my research participants, also due to its proximity to London, so there was no need to associate with a London-based university.

I utilised existing personal and professional networks⁶³ and started meeting with potential research participants. I met several who met the criteria as well as some who did not fall entirely within the scope but could make exciting contributions to the overall project. Some individuals were more accessible than others for a few reasons, including the time required for research participants to familiarise themselves with me; I was not yet known to them, and time was required to build trust

⁶³ This includes Georgetown University, who had a partnership with the University of Sussex.

and positive relationships. Indeed, I met and spoke with several individuals multiple times before then proceeding with their interviews.

There were significant advantages to conducting pilot interviews at an early stage, in particular meeting potential research participants and building trust, which culminated in more productive and informative interviews. I also had the opportunity to reflect on interviews conducted early, consider issues I might have missed or probed more deeply into, and include such omissions and insights at a later stage. Following the pilot interviews, I had a clearer idea of the flow of the interview process, including the time required and appropriate locations for interviews. In addition, I was better positioned to understand the strategies for reaching out to potential participants and what would interest and motivate them to take part in the project. As such, I was able to delve more deeply into their thoughts on identity, its link to types of transnational political practices they engage in, and their motivations.

During the pilot phase, it became clear that potential research participants might have lived in multiple countries and cities before arriving in London or Washington, D.C. This research includes those who were born or raised in third countries, and so there was not necessarily a natural network among them.

Outreach approaches

Children of migrants from the Horn of Africa are a unique group influenced both by country of settlement and origin. However, as this group hails from a conflict-affected region and belongs to minority groups in their society of settlement, outreach to children of migrants from the Horn of Africa required strategies similar to other hidden and hard to reach populations. Despite having ‘insider knowledge’, including existing links with children of migrants from the Horn of Africa in both

the US and UK, as well as having lived and worked across the Horn of Africa region itself, this was not enough for potential participants to trust me; that required time. Thus, I devised various strategies for reaching out and engaging with them, intrinsically seeking to learn about them as individuals, not just their activities at the time of interview.

Snowball technique

The pilot study highlighted that the snowball technique⁶⁴ was ideal for reaching out to potential research participants. However, it was not sufficient as a standalone method; I also had to explore alternative outreach methods, and this is when strategies for accessing hard to reach populations became relevant. For example, because of the dispersed nature of the group and lack of ‘gate keepers’, reaching out to one person was only likely to yield links to a few potential others.

My personal background, which is very similar to many of the participants, was also an important aspect of outreach. My background helped me to facilitate the interviews and ask relevant guiding questions that built on the participants’ narratives, as I am quite familiar with the historical context of migration in the region, cultural cues and languages. For example, some interviews were conducted in a mixture of Arabic and English, or employing a few words of Amharic.

There were some noted differences in the approaches I employed for outreach in Washington, D.C. and London. In Washington, D.C., there were more networking events for the African diaspora, especially second and subsequent generations, and thus more opportunities to meet potential research participants. In addition to attending networking events, in Washington, D.C. I also searched for other events that might appeal to children of migrants and joined mailing lists at George Washington University, the World Bank, and other key organisations in the city. These

⁶⁴ ‘*Snowball sampling*’ is where research participants recruit other participants for a test or study.

events were organised by national and international organisations with varied themes, e.g. events focused on refugee issues, professional networking and similar platforms. I also attended social events of the African diasporas, which were very prominent in Washington, D.C. I only attended a handful of community-based events as, from earlier experiences and discussions with various people, I learned that few adult children of migrants attended these community events and, as these events were not typically advertised on social media, they required a considerable amount of time to find without the relevant networks.

In London, there are numerous institutions working with migrant communities, and only a limited number of events or professional networks targeting children of migrants. Thus, utilising personal and professional networks was a key strategy in the UK, which also meant finding research participants was more challenging and time consuming. In London, I used a similar strategy to that in Washington, D.C., with a few adjustments for the London context. For example, August and early September are typically holiday periods in the UK, so there are very few events taking place at this time. However, there are a plethora of diaspora-led development and humanitarian organisations focused on countries of origin and driven by or engaged with the first generation. Thus, based on this understanding, I contacted some organisations focused on broader African issues to see if their members or staff might be interested in participating; I also contacted student union societies. Both of these strategies yielded positive results, as I engaged research participants from these networks.

There were no 'gatekeepers' to access research participants. Unlike the first generation, children of migrants did not have a singular site or reference point. Thus, I undertook multiple outreach strategies, such as attending a broader range of events and creating high visibility on social media, and allocated considerable time to informal discussions prior to and during the interview itself. Additionally, I looked at both Facebook and Twitter, as well as used the Google search engine to find blogs, websites, groups and organisations related to children of migrants from the Horn of

Africa based in Europe and North America, and then filtered it to the US and UK. This search provided a good overview of the types of initiatives children of migrants undertake and potential events and activities they are interested in.

Volunteering with local organisations might have been another entry point, but the group I was reaching out to were often not involved in activities and events organised by community organisations. So, I opted not to pursue this line of outreach, as working within diaspora or community organisations may have also narrowed my opportunities to meet children of migrants due to the fact that, I learned through experience and observation, they did not often attend community events specifically related to their countries of origin. This stands in contrast to the number of children of migrants working in civil society, international organisations and such. Thus, most children of migrants engaged in activism around broader themes – such as education, gender and minority rights – instead of those specifically relating to their country of origin. In addition, children of migrants also had alternative networks from their parents, e.g. from the university.

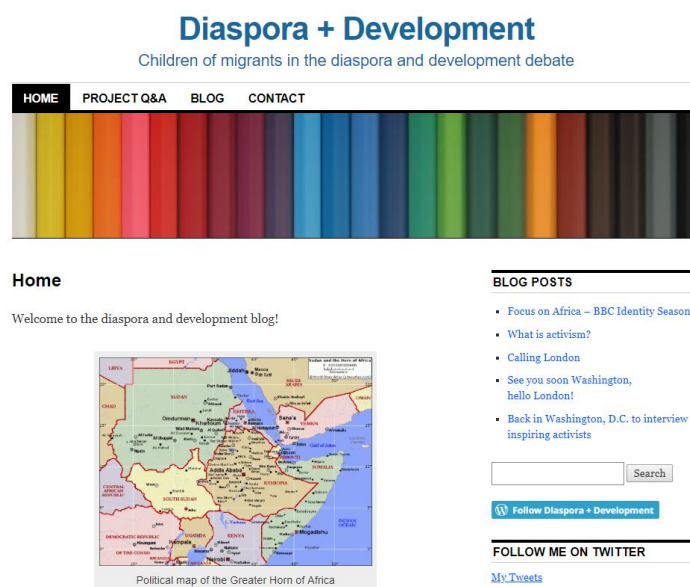
Use of technology

Children of migrants are a technologically savvy group, using online platforms and social media extensively for communication and information consumption (Suarez-Orozco, 2007). The majority of the research participants might be described as belonging to Generation Y. While there is no specific age group, Generation Y broadly refers to people born between the late 1970s and early 1990s (Bolton et al., 2013; Reisenwitz and Iyer, 2009). They are often referred to as ‘digital natives’, as they grew up with technology from a young age, are highly skilled at using it, and thus have a strong social media presence (Prensky, 2001). With this in mind, it was crucial to establish an online presence for outreach.

Based on the pilot's preliminary findings, I understood that trust was not something I could immediately gain; as my potential research participants mostly hailed from conflict-affected places, it was something I had expected. Thus, in my online engagement I listed basic information about my personal and professional backgrounds and gave the research high visibility both online and offline. This proved to be a productive method to engage research participants from outside my networks, as people approached me about participating and, in some cases, had been made aware of the research by a peer, who recommended they participate.

I set up a basic webpage⁶⁵ detailing the research objectives and a blog both giving further details on the research and discussing topics I thought might be of interest to the group. I also set up social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), where I posted a call for research participants and directly approached those with a large following who might fit the criteria or share the advert among their networks.

Illustration 1: Home page of PhD research blog site



⁶⁵ <https://diasporaanddevelopment.wordpress.com/>

The interview process

Interviews are the most suitable approach when seeking rich data on individuals' experiences and attitudes, but they can also be laborious to conduct and analyse. In my interviews, I tried to ask more open-ended questions in order to provide the space for the research participants to speak and learn more about their motivations for engaging in activism.

Once a participant agreed to take part in the research project, we then made arrangements to meet at a convenient time and place. Most interviews took place after office hours or over the weekend, as the majority of participants were working professionals. I held interviews in public places, such as cafes and restaurants, which allowed for the interview to have an informal feel.

The interview questions were based on my initial research design tested during the pilot phase. As my main research method was life history, these questions acted as a guide to ensure consistency across all interviews (see Annex 6 for an outline of these questions). The flow of each interview varied across research participants, and it was thus critical to ensure that I guided the conversation towards the key questions when the discussion veered away from the original point.

Some interviewees wanted to see the questions in advance, expecting a short question and answer format, as many had not experienced this type of interview before and might have found it highly intrusive. I explained the nature of such interviews, that they are biographical and more of an open conversation about their lives and families. If I had not done it in this way, I would have risked pre-prepared answers with not much room to probe further. I also explained that, if needed, we might have additional sessions, which turned out to be true for many of the interviews.

Once a person showed interest in participating, I emailed them with further details of the research, including an information sheet and consent form⁶⁶. The email also included links to the research blog, which further elaborated on the project, providing potential participants and other interested individuals with an overview of the topic, the interview process and how the data would be handled. This was key to gaining informed consent. Indeed, several people chose not to participate at this stage, but they did maintain contact due to their own interest in the research.

For online interviews, most participants preferred to conduct the interviews using audio-only calls; this was true no matter the strength of the internet connection. For online interviews, I used a free, widely available, and ubiquitous application for audio and video communications, Skype. I tested the application prior using it in interview in order to ensure quality and limit disruptions. I also found an additional application for audio and video recording. However, before recording anything, I spent time discussing any potential issues with research participants in order to ensure their comfort and safety, as I did in face-to-face interviews. In all interviews, I reiterated the safety of the data and participants' freedom to withdraw at any time. On a few occasions, when I had not been able to meet the research participant in person prior to interviewing them online, I met them for an informal conversation when I travelled to the research sites.

Hidden and hard to reach participants

It took a considerable amount of time to identify and interview the research participants for several reasons, including determining whether individuals fulfilled the criteria and allowing them time to ask questions or raise issues of concern. This time investment was crucial to building trust between me, as the researcher, and the research participants. As participants hailed from a conflict-affected region, disclosing information regarded as sensitive or reliving past traumas could have

⁶⁶ The consent form was approved by the University of Sussex ethical committee (see Annex 1).

caused distress. Lee (1993) suggests multiple ways of gaining access to hidden and hard to reach populations, finding advertising on social media to be a valuable outreach tool.

I used pseudonyms for all research participants in order to protect their confidentiality, even for those who did not request it. I did this for two reasons: confidentiality, for diasporas from regions with ongoing conflict or hostilities, offers more room for participants to freely express; and confidentiality as a preventative measure, as there might come a point in people's lives when they wish their narratives or opinions were not public.

In hindsight, this removed some element of the research participants' agency, as they may have wished to select their own pseudonym. However, I did not want to risk participants selecting the name of another participant and thus exposing that person. Giving anonymity to all research participants continued the spirit of confidentiality not only among the readers of the thesis but among the research participants themselves. In the selection of pseudonyms, I chose names associated with the participants' countries of origin. I used names in regular use or readily known in countries of origin. For example, I used the name Ubax for a participant with Somali origins; Ubax is the name of a famous Somali singer. Also, I do not detail participants' exact ages in this thesis, instead used decade-based age ranges, such as early 20s, mid-30s and late 40s.

I ensured that all quotes used in the thesis held no specific reference to the research participants; for example, the specific district or council they lived in or other identifiers. However, the reality is that not all identifiers can be removed if the information is relevant or enriches the data. For example, the university a participant attended might have been a significant influence on their transnational political practices. Thus, I followed a similar method to Karen Kaiser (2009), who

advocates modifying the consent process, by ensuring that not only were the consent forms signed, but all participants had made an informed decision to take part.

Meeting research participants more than once often led to a more honest and open sharing of experiences. The data collected in an interview was supported by participant observation of their spaces of engagement and interaction, such as social events, as well as my ongoing research on the Horn of Africa region as a practitioner in the development and humanitarian sectors. I developed a set of guide questions to help ease the interview process. These questions facilitated finding patterns in participants' activism and motivations in the interview process itself, finding common themes in the participants' accounts, and identifying how these relate to the context in both countries of settlement and origin, as well as identity formation.

During the interview, it was important not to limit the participants, and give them space to describe and talk about how they understood their experiences regarding identity and critical events. Particularly relevant is how identities evolve, which can be perceived differently by different people. Some research participants were not prepared to go ahead with the interview after the first meeting. In order to assure them, I spent more time explaining the project and my motivations. This extra time spent resulted in rich data, not all of which was captured in the interview, and so the blog became a platform to express and capture some such offline discussions.

Before each interview, I explained the process – either over email, the telephone or face-to-face – and how I planned to share and store the data. From offline discussions with research participants and other individuals, I learned that curiosity and a desire to understand their peers were the reasons most participants' chose to engage in the research, as some had limited interactions with others of a similar background, seeking to learn how they will be perceived.

It became clear that research participants wanted to present a neutral picture of current or former conflicts when describing migration from their countries of origin. This was often true when they had family who were still highly politicised, and participants feared reprisal; conflict, even if physically distant, can be brought to one's new home. This became apparent when recording the interviews, as interviewees often appeared careful in their description of current or former conflicts or political situations. When I was not recording, the trust established between us shone through and they clearly articulated their political opinions. Even at a geographical distance, migrants and their children can feel unsafe expressing themselves fully, which makes trust an essential element to researching groups from current or recent conflict. These somewhat parallels human rights research, which requires the narration of traumatic events and often the corroboration of several people. Such an interview necessitates sensitivity, as the person narrating the events will be reliving those memories.

Giving consent, whether verbal or written, was an important reassurance that research participants' information would be dealt with sensitively, confidentially, and diligently. To conveniently secure the forms, I developed an electronic version of the approved consent form for the research participants to read and sign on an iPad before starting the interview. All electronic equipment used to record and store the research information was password protected and accessible only by me to ensure confidentiality throughout the process.

Data analysis tools

In analysing life history interviews, I had to factor in approaches to the interview process from the outset. Crucially, I wanted to pursue inductive⁶⁷ methods to identify the broader themes of

⁶⁷ Creswell and Clark define the inductive researcher as someone who works from the 'bottom-up, using the participants' views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes (2018).

the interviews. In addition to listening to and reading the interviews, I also used NVivo to facilitate the data analysis and see if I had missed any gaps or patterns.

I used different methods and tools to analyse the data. To begin, I used Excel to organise research participants' basic data, such as name, location of the interview, and countries of origin and settlement. In the same table, I also listed when they became involved in activism, at what stage of their lifecycle, which brought to the fore their motivations and enabling factors for engaging in political transnationalism. I also used Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), with NVivo as the primary tool, to analyse transcribed interviews, and looked at the pattern of responses to the main research questions through the lens of grounded theory.

Most of the transcribing was done by a professional, apart from a few, more sensitive interviews (due to the nature of the information shared), which may have posed a risk to the interviewees. In addition, I also transcribed interviews where the sound or accents were difficult for the transcriber to decipher. Hiring the transcriber was a very useful strategy, as it provided me time away from the data and the space to triangulate the interviews with my participant observation. The transcriber came highly recommended and had extensive experience in transcribing and translation in both Arabic and English. Prior to starting the work, the transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement, which included a clause outlining that all files be deleted as soon as the work was completed. I sent the interviews for transcribing via email directly after finishing them, and we agreed that any Arabic words would be translated directly into English while transcribing.

This research is anchored in a comparative framework of lives in two cities. Comparative research methods have long been used in cross-cultural studies to identify, analyse and explain similarities and differences across societies (Davidov et al., 2018). Comparative research is generally

defined in two ways: either on the basis of its supposed core subject, which is almost always defined at the level of political and social systems (Lane and Ersson, 1994; Dogan and Pelassy, 1990), or by means of descriptive features that claim to enhance knowledge of politics and society as a process (Macridis and Burg, 1991). Comparative research can potentially enhance the rigour and utility of research into political transnationalism, helping it to gain a better understanding of how transgenerational narratives of social and historical events are embedded in concepts, methods, generated 'knowledge' and related actions, such as activism.

3.4. Challenges and Ethical Issues

One of the challenges of this study was the absence of 'gatekeepers', meaning I had to tap into alternative networks for outreach. Securing access without 'gatekeepers' meant also associating myself with trusted institutions; this was especially relevant in the US, as not all research participants were familiar with the University of Sussex. Being hosted by GWU was one of my key strategies to address this challenge, showing the importance of building relations through local, established formal and informal institutions when researching groups in multi-sites.

In addition, for a group of individuals affected by conflict – directly, indirectly, or through intergenerational memories – recounting their stories can be mentally and emotionally straining. Recalling critical events is never straight forward, as it is informed by whoever is doing the recounting, to whom they are recounting, and the broader context and setting. Research participants recounted their version of what led to their families' migration from their country of origin, which may have represented their parents' political views. Also, traumatic events need corroboration, as seen in human rights research. For example, I had initially planned to hold Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)⁶⁸ as a method of data collection. During the pilot study, however, it became clear holding

⁶⁸ FGDs are a form of qualitative research consisting of group interviews in which people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging.

FGDs was not feasible for several reasons. Firstly, the target group were not trustful of people from their communities, fearing what they said in the discussion was not confidential and might have implications for their families in either country of settlement or origin. Secondly, participants needed considerable time to build relations of trust with the research and researcher; going straight into a discussion group would not work. Thus, it became clear that one-to-one meetings would lead to much richer interviews, as the participants would feel confident in the handling of their data.

The main take away from the methods and methodology of data collection and analysis is: when working with hard-to-reach populations, without many entry points, it is essential to exercise sensitivity and adaptability before, during and after the interview. In addition, when dealing with people adept with technology, the use of online tools is key to facilitating engagement with and outreach to conflict-affected populations.

Chapter Four - Pre-emigration experiences: narratives of fight and flight from the Horn of Africa

4.1. Forced migration within and from the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa has historically been a region of strategic economic interests, geopolitical interests, and power struggles over its access to the Red Sea, which links Europe, Eastern Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia⁶⁹ (Nyut Yoh, 2003; Sharamo and Mesfin, 2011). These factors set the region as a stage of competition among global powers, who seek to control the region, over the past decades. For example, the Horn of Africa was part of proxy conflict during the Cold War⁷⁰, as well as continues to be one for the US's 'War on Terror'⁷¹ and piracy off the Somali coast⁷² (Møller, 2009; Nyut Yoh, 2003; Makinda, 1987). The region is also a site of intra and inter-conflicts, ethnic disputes, resources competition, religious radicalism and endemic climate crises, and thus a site of mass migration in and from the region.

Migration within and from the Horn of Africa is not a new phenomenon. Such migration is diverse and complex, with flows of forced and economic migration due to conflicts, climate change, economic deprivation, political instability, demographic changes and other challenges. Migration

⁶⁹ Sudan was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1821- 1885, when the Mahadia ended Ottoman rule. At the time, Britain felt the Mahadia directly threatened their interests in the Suez Canal in Egypt, which opened in 1869. In addition, many European powers were scrambling for territory in Africa to establish coaling stations for their ships, leading Britain to seek control over Sudan and establish Anglo-Egyptian rule from 1899 to 1955 (Møller, 2009). Engagement in the Horn of Africa continued during World War II, as Britain and its allies fought Italy in today's Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia in what was known as the East African Campaign (1940-1941) (Wrong, 2005). Decolonisation began in the region after WWII, as well as significant changes to Sudan's state formation. Sudan (including today's South Sudan) gained independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in 1956, Somalia followed shortly after in 1960, Djibouti gained independence from France in 1977 and the revolution toppled Emperor Selassie in Ethiopia in 1974 (Woodward, 2016; Bereketab, 2012).

⁷⁰ The Cold War refers to the rivalry that developed after World War II between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), also known more commonly as the Soviet Union, the US, and their respective allies (Baylis, Smith and Owens, 2017). And this played out on how the two Superpower supported Ethiopia and Somalia during the Ogaden War 1977- 1978 (Tareke, 2000; Abebe, 2000).

⁷¹ Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, President George W. Bush called for a global 'War on Terror', which became the impetus for subsequent military actions by the US and its allies, including the Iraq War in 2003.

⁷² Piracy off the Somali coast, mostly near Puntland in the north-east of the country, began in the early 2000s. International fishing vessels were the original targets of piracy, which later escalated to include shipping vessels in the Gulf of Aden, a major shipping artery (see Samatar et al, 2010).

trends in the Horn of Africa have been mixed over the past few decades, as the region plays a part in every step in migratory journeys: as host, origin, transit and settlement countries. The migratory flows have now reached unprecedented levels, with millions displaced and limited opportunities for regular migration. Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia are all origin, transit and destination countries for migrants in the region, while Eritrea and South Sudan are significant origin countries with large migratory flows to Kenya and Uganda (Merchand et al., 2017). A minority of migrants from this region – those with the resources to travel, seek refugee status, or be selected for resettlement programmes – move to other countries, including Europe and North America; those who migrate to the Gulf region are often economic migrants (Assal, 2006).

The focus of the following section is on the period between 1970 and 2000. This is when the majority of research participant or/and their families had begun their journeys and eventually leading them to the US and the UK.

Map 1: Horn of Africa



Eritrea

The Eritrean War of Independence,⁷³ which began in 1961,⁷⁴ came to define the Eritrean identity and left a lasting legacy of trauma. Eritrean separatist had engaged the Ethiopian government seeking independence; however, the targeting of these groups by the Ethiopian government became more pronounced after Ethiopian armed forces defeated the Somalis in Ogaden (1977-1978). The conflict was marred by endemic human rights violations, including the targeting of civilians, the use of napalm (chemical weapon), incommunicado detentions and torture (Kibreab, 2009). The long and brutal war for Eritrean independence left hundreds of thousands of people displaced in neighbouring countries, with a smaller number migrating to the Middle East, Europe, and North America (Selassie, 1989). As of 1990, about 500,000 Eritrean refugees were in Sudan alone (Ibid).⁷⁵

Ethiopia

Over the past several decades, Ethiopia has suffered from multiple crises which led to mass internal displacements and international migration, making it one of the largest producers of migrants in Africa (Bariagaber, 1997). Migration from Ethiopia, and including Eritrea prior to its independence in 1993, were driven by political conflict, environmental factors, and persecution (Bariagaber, 1999).

Following the 1974 revolution⁷⁶, large migratory movements began to arise, leading to massive refugee movement to neighbouring countries and further afield (Bariagaber, 1997).

⁷³ The Eritrean War of Independence was fought between the Ethiopian government and Eritrean separatists, both before and during the Ethiopian Civil War. The Eritrean War of Independence lasted from 1961 to 1991, and Eritrea became an independent state in 1993 (Woldemariam, 2016).

⁷⁴ In 1950, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution for the federation of Ethiopia and the Eritrea (UN General Assembly, 1950).

⁷⁵ It should be noted that it is difficult to know what the true number of refugees were prior to Eritrea's independence, as they would have been counted as Ethiopians.

⁷⁶ Emperor Haile Selassie ruled Ethiopia until his overthrow in 1974 by the communist-influenced government of Mengistu Haile Meriam (Bariagaber, 1997).

Mengistu's rule (1974-1991), often referred to as the 'Red Terror', was marked by a systematic campaign of targeted assassinations of potential opposition, including students and young people suspected of membership in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009). In part, the response compounded the already existing crisis that led to the 1984-1985 famine, in which an estimated one million died and millions more were displaced (Kumar, 1987).⁷⁷ Upon the establishment of a new government in 1991, more than 800,000 Ethiopian refugees were repatriated from Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and other countries (Hammond, 2014). Nonetheless, many also remained in their new countries and were joined by a new but smaller wave of migrants.

Somalia

Traditionally, pastoral nomad people, migration is a part of Somali culture, including as seafarers across the globe (Lewis, 2008). However, migration became a necessity for survival in the face of climate change and conflict, which escalated over the past three decades. One of the more significant international migratory movements from Somalia began in 1988 with the Somali government's military campaign against rebels in the north-west of the country and the near total destruction of Hargeisa (Gundel, 2002; Ingiriis, 2016).⁷⁸ The President of Somalia at the time, Saeed Barri⁷⁹, tried to quash the Somali National Movement (SNM)⁸⁰ through an aerial bombardment that resulted in a massive death toll (Bradbury, 2008). Millions were displaced, fleeing their homes to other parts of Somalia and neighbouring countries; around 800,000 to neighbouring Kenya alone,

⁷⁷ The famine was caused by a series of events. There was record low rainfall, the government had diverted much of its national budget to military spending against armed opposition, and the government had launched a series of programmes as part of its Marxist-Leninist agenda, including its 'villagization' programme, which led to the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of people (Zwede et al, 2010).

⁷⁸ The government responded with force, bombarding key cities, killing people *en masse* and displacing more than half a million people to Ethiopia (Bradbury, 2008).

⁷⁹ In 1970, Saad Barre proclaimed a socialist state, paving the way for close relations with the Soviet Union. In 1977, with the help of Soviet arms, Somalia attempted to seize the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, but was defeated by Soviet Union and Cuban backing for Ethiopia's Marxist inspired government (Ingiriis, 2016).

⁸⁰ The Somali National Movement (SNM) was mainly composed of the Issaq clan, who were responding to the southern clans' dominance over the government. In 1988, the SNM launched an offensive against the central government in Hargeisa and Burco (Ingiriis, 2016).

with a smaller number migrating further afield (Lindley and Hammond, 2014). The rebellion spread to the south of the country and into the capital Mogadishu, triggering the fall of the Somali government in 1991 and creating a power vacuum and lawlessness across much of the country (Ibid.). Somaliland declared independence after the overthrow of the Somali government in 1991.

After the fall on the government in 1991, Mogadishu was engulfed in violence, contributed to the triggering of a famine leading to an estimated 250,000 deaths (Healy and Bradbury, 2010). An estimated two million people were internally displaced and a further 1.5 million Somalis fled to neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and across the Red Sea to Yemen and smaller numbers went further afield, mainly to the Gulf region, Europe and North America (Hammond, 2014). Somalis have continued to migrate due to the challenging social, economic and political climate in the country (Van Hear et al., 2018). Somaliland has successfully managed to establish a political system and governmental institutions; however, despite its efforts, Somaliland has failed to be recognised as a sovereign state (Ibrahim, 2018).

South Sudan

South Sudanese migrated forcibly *en masse* during the most intense period of the Sudanese civil wars in the 1980s and 1990s⁸¹, most were displaced internally with larger numbers seeking sanctuary in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda (Salman, 2013). Before the succession⁸², Sudanese and South Sudanese living abroad were estimated at between 1.2 and 1.7 million (IOM, 2011). South Sudan has a relatively new diaspora in the Global North composed of mainly those who

⁸¹ The first civil war began in 1955, prior to independence, as South Sudan's desire for more autonomy led to an armed rebellion⁸¹, which continued until the 1972 peace agreement (Johnson, 2014). Peace lasted for only 11 years before war broke out again in 1983 and lasted until the 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which paved the way for South Sudan's independence (Ibid.)

⁸² The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005 by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan, ending the civil war in the south of the country (Ahmed, 2009).

came through resettlement programmes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as a small minority of exiled opposition and students.

Sudan

Even before its independence from the Egyptian-British condominium⁸³ in 1956, Sudan had unresolved constitutional tensions, civil war, and coup-prone central governments which led to a cycle of violence, low human development indicators and chronic humanitarian crises (de Waal, 1997; Young, 2005; Berridge, 2015). Migration to and from Sudan is part of the country's modern history, and has been particularly intense over the last three decades due to a weak economy, conflicts and climatic change (Woodward, 2013). These migrations have mostly flowed to neighbouring African countries and the Gulf region, the latter being an essential destination for Sudanese migrant labour (Assal, 2010). Another wave of mass migration took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, after the Islamist National Congress Party (NCP) seized power in 1989 and began its Arabisation and Islamisation project. Human rights violations were endemic, including the introduction of the so-called Ghost Houses⁸⁴, and many intellectuals, opposition figures, religious minorities and those deemed a threat to the government's rule fled the country (ibid.).

Sudan has also been a country of destination for migrants from neighbouring countries over the past four decades, including from Eritrea and Ethiopia (Assal, 2007)). Also, in relation to the research participants, Sudan was a key transit country for those from Eritrea and Ethiopia, who migrated onwards to the US and the UK.

⁸³ Today's Sudan and South Sudan were ruled by an Anglo Egyptian condominium from 1899 until its dissolution in 1956.

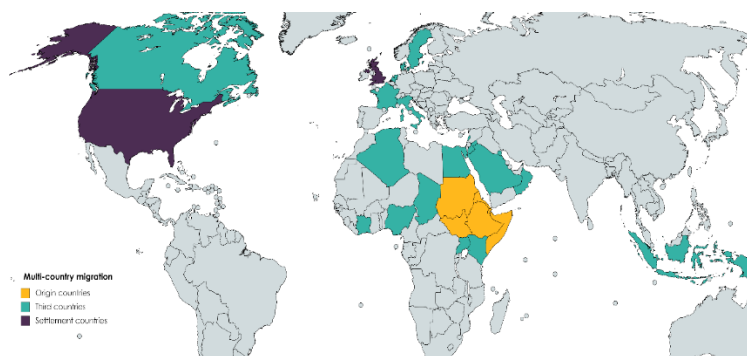
⁸⁴ During the early 1990s, the government set-up unofficial prisons to house political opponents across the capital and country. These unofficial prisons, or Ghost Houses ((بيوت الاشباح)), as they became known, were run by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), who reportedly held hundreds of detainees there incommunicado, with widespread accounts of gruesome torture and death in detention (Redress/SOAT, 2005).

4.2. Seeking a new home: multi-country migration

Due to its sudden nature, forced migration is often not a direct line; a person may have to travel through multiple locations before arriving at their final destination. Forced migration involves complex choices and responses, including navigating often complex legal and policy frameworks around whether migrants arrived in destination country irregularly, as economic migrants, as refugees or a combination of profiles, in addition to their needs and motives. In turn, charting migration simply between point A (origin) and point B (settlement) limits our understanding of migration strategies, as migrants often experience other countries for weeks, months, or years before finally arriving in their country of settlement (Düvell et al., 2014).

A key finding of this research is that the majority of research participants or their families (21 out of 40 research participants) lived in one or more countries before arriving in the US or UK. As shown in the maps below, participants' multi-country migration included numerous countries, including other Horn of Africa countries as temporary countries of settlement, notably Sudan and Ethiopia. There are several possible explanations for this result. For example, people moving to one country for immediate protection and then moving to another with clear plans and networks, taking into consideration longer-term social security, education and work opportunities. In addition, multi-country migration is inherent to the career choice of diplomats and those working with international organisations and companies.

Map 2: Migratory movement among children of migrants from the Horn of Africa



The prevalence of multi-country migration has implications for research on migrant activism, as it challenges current definitions of children of migrants that only consider those born or those who grew up in final country of settlement. The prevalence of multi-country migration shows that such definitions instead need to identify children of migrants as those born or raised outside their country of origin, as such takes into consideration the fact that many settled in multiple countries. For example, several of the research participants' families were based in the Gulf before critical events there meant they had to leave, and they could not return to their origin country. In addition, this enhanced definition considers the double diaspora, those who migrated generations before from their countries of origin, and then had to migrate again. For example, Coptic Christians who migrated from Egypt to Sudan in the 1800s, but then faced persecution in the early 1990s and had to leave Sudan (Abusharaf, 2002).

Among those who engaged in multi-country migration, a number of research participants' families were already economic migrants elsewhere when witnessing the changes in their countries of origin that led to their subsequent migration to the US or UK. Tayseer (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) spent her early childhood in Kuwait, as her parents had work there but hoped to return to Sudan in a few years. However, the 1989 military coup in Sudan meant that Tayseer's family could not return, as her father was a member of an opposition party and thus risked arrest, torture and even death. Her family had limited options; they had to leave Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion⁸⁵, but could not return to Sudan:

We were stuck in the middle of [the conflict], and so we could not leave for a good couple of months. We ended up being refugees, stuck in Kuwait, and we had to go to Jordan and wait at the UN camps for a couple of months until some country opened its door for us.

⁸⁵ In August 1990, Iraqi forces crossed the border into neighbouring Kuwait occupying the country for seven months, before a UN authorised military intervention, led by the US, that expelled the Iraqi forces (Alnasrawi, 2001).

It took the family months to leave Kuwait, and when they finally did, they had to move to several countries before finally arriving and settling in the UK. Tayseer's experience shows how forced migration leads people to make quick decisions for which they are unprepared; it is only once they move that such migrants can finally consider longer-term issues. Thus, multi-country migration becomes a critical strategy as migrants navigate new contexts and realities in order to establish long-term security. Aliyah's (female, mid-30s, Sudan, UK) family also experienced multi-country migration. Her father was a journalist in Sudan when the National Islamic Front (NIF) came to power in the 1989 military coup, and the family had to leave Sudan quickly the following year, when it became clear her father was at risk of arrest and torture:

[My father] had work beforehand, but because of the regime change, all the people were taken from their jobs who were not loyal to the government or were not politically affiliated with the government, so we left the country. He found a good job offer in Oman, so we stayed there for [a few] years. We came to [the UK] when I was 10 years old, and then we stayed [in this country]. We came [to the UK] seeking asylum because my father did not have a way of returning to Sudan. He was told that if he comes back, he will be endangering his life.

The situation is often precarious for temporary migrants with no pathway to permanent residency in the host country, and this precarity is even further compounded by changes in their origin countries. Many become stuck in a legal quagmire when seeking protection, as they cannot stay or return, and thus must find another country in which to seek refuge. For example, the main driver for Alia's (female, mid-30s, Eritrea, London) family migration to the UK was the likelihood of negative consequences upon return to Eritrea. Her family had lived in Saudi Arabia for several years, but their situation changed when a border conflict broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998-2000, with massive casualties on both sides and severe impacts on the economy.⁸⁶ This was a turning point for Eritrea, with a worsening human rights record leading to increased emigration from the country. Alia's family could not return to Eritrea because of the increased risk and had limited

⁸⁶ The Eritrean–Ethiopian border conflict broke out in 1998 near the town of Badame and officially ended in 2000. However, proxy conflict continued until diplomatic relations were resumed in 2018.

opportunities for protection in Saudi Arabia⁸⁷, so instead sought refuge in the UK that offered protection for refugees.

Alia's story mirrors the experiences of many research participants who migrated to the Gulf region before finally emigrating to the US or UK, mostly due to the lack of pathways to permanent settlement in the Gulf and, in turn, heightened risk of being forced to return to origin countries. Moreover, Alia's family's journey shows how legal status, as well as the choice of destination country, can change for migrants over time and along migratory journeys, whether due to personal circumstances or macro events. Decisions about destination country are also influenced by factors such as support networks, financing, and long-term settlement opportunities.

Children of migrants' experiences and sense of belonging are not limited to only two spaces; indeed, they associate with multiple locations and their identities extend beyond the boundaries of countries of origin and final settlement. This challenges the conceptualisation that migrant activism focuses only on origin or settlement country, as such disregards the fact that migratory journeys are often complicated, particularly when forced. This insight sheds light on the fact that migration means connecting to multiple physical and imagined spaces, rather than pigeonholed into countries of settlement and origin. For example, Third Culture Kids (TCK)⁸⁸ and global citizens⁸⁹ were terms used by research participants in explaining their experiences and feelings of connection to multiple spaces, or even everywhere.

⁸⁷ Foreigners are rarely granted citizenship by the Saudi Arabian Citizenship System. The only route to becoming a naturalised citizen is through marriage to a national (only males can pass citizenship to their children) and in exceptional circumstances when the King may grant citizenship (Altorki, 2000).

⁸⁸ The term 'Third Culture Kids' was coined by John and Ruth Useem in the 1950s to describe the children of American citizens working and living abroad who did not feel committed or belonging to one place (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009; Melles and Schwartz, 2013). 'Third Culture Kids' later evolved to become a term associated with children of diplomats and people working with international organisations or companies who spent a considerable time of their formative years outside their parents' culture.

⁸⁹ The term 'global citizen' refers to someone who is aware of, understands and is civically engaged with the wider world (Lilley et al, 2017).

4.3. Family narratives of ‘home’: lived and intergenerational trauma

A very striking trend in research participants’ narratives was how much trauma was embedded in their stories. Trauma, experienced individually or collectively, is often a consequence of events such as war, abuse, and natural disaster (Alexander, 2004; Danieli et al., 2016). These experiences have a profound effect and can be re-experienced over and over again by those it affects. Moreover, such traumas are even passed on intergenerationally.

When describing the events that led their family’s migration, most research participants appeared to distance themselves from the narrative in an attempt to not relive the experience, and concerned they may not have provided the full picture from piecing together historical accounts. Particularly in cases of multi-country migration, there are numerous layers and complexities that do not easily come to the surface. Forced migration was an experience shared by many research participants. Aisha (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) recalled her family leaving Sudan suddenly when she was a young child. Her father was politically active, and the National Islamic Front (NIF) government had begun a campaign of mass arrests, incommunicado detention, torture and killings to silence any opposition to their rule, which included her father’s political party.

We didn’t even pack half of our stuff, we just took a cab from my grandparents’ house and got onto a plane. And even when we were on the plane, the police came onto it, and they were going to pull my dad off, so we had to buy them off. So when we came [to the UK], my mother had to give them all her gold, all her money, so we literally came with whatever suitcases we had, nothing.

This is a compelling account of fear and loss in a moment. Even at such a young age, Aisha knew her father was at risk and this experience of fear remained with her, in how she articulates her family’s history, and subsequently shaped her identities. At the time of her family’s flight from Khartoum, Aisha may not have been aware of all the nuances; it is only as an adult that she pieced everything together. Yet, in many ways, this experience encouraged her to seek redress for injustices

she sees in the UK and drove her to pursue change in her own community. However, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the impetus to seek justice may not be linked only to Sudan or issues related to politics alone.

Symptoms of trauma may not be evident to a survivor; even if they choose to remain silent about it, they share its impact and it is picked up by their children. Tigest (female, early 30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) saw silence as the continuation of a form of resistance adopted by Eritreans during their struggle for independence, which also continued after achieving independence as a coping mechanism for trauma.

Many of the principles that were adopted [by Eritreans] were based on communism or Marxism, and so one of the rules for the way we fought and the way we organised was that you don't tell people, you don't share secrets, you don't continue to share all the stories, and that's that. I think that trying to get that out of people, one it brings back horrible memories, like Vietnam veterans, you know there are tons of Vietnam veterans who refuse to talk about anything they experienced because it's so traumatic. And two, it was also one of the foundations and principles that you just don't share. If that's at the core of one of the most important times of your life, you're probably going to apply it at other points in your life.

Silence or the concealing of stories is a central attribute of coping with traumatic events. Silence is often a much louder medium to convey trauma, and it is likely that traumatic memories had a significant impact on children of migrants' identities, including their relationship with their society of settlement. For example, Hiba (female, late 20s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) recalled the moment that instigated her interest in Sudan. After they left Sudan, her father began helping other new arrivals and refugees navigate the asylum process, the system in general, and settling into their new homes. For his work, Hiba's father also helped victims of torture write testimonies for their asylum cases. As a child, Hiba was curious about her father's documents and read some of the statements of torture victims.

I remember when I was very young, I probably should not have picked up the documents, but I read some of them. It was so horrific, I mean I was shocked that people could even imagine those kinds of torture. So again, that was probably what kept me [going].

Hiba was not just shocked by the testimonies, she also connected them to her own family's memories of leaving Sudan and seeking refuge in another country. Hiba's family had to leave Sudan when she was a child as, like many other research participants, her family had to escape the 1989 Islamist coup in Sudan. The realisation of their families' trauma, whether directly witnessed or learned from other sources, is critical in not only understanding their families' migration drivers but also children of migrants' identity formation, relations with their society of settlement, and engagement in activism, which are rooted in these historical narratives.

Making light of the seriousness trauma appears to be both another coping mechanism and a method by which children of migrants share their experiences. Elsa (female, mid-30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) recalled stories of her family members leaving Eritrea clandestinely, crossing the then Ethiopian border into the city of Kassala in eastern Sudan, and then travelling onto Khartoum; a migratory route still in use by those seeking to reach Egypt, Libya and Europe today (Collyer et al, 2015; Ahmed et al, 2018). Elsa's family appear to share their story in the form of jokes in order to downplay the dangers they faced.

[My aunt] had to sneak out in the 1970s, they had to sneak out and sleep [outside]. [My family] joke about it, my aunt jokes about how she had to sleep in the middle of the group on the floor or wherever they had to stop and put their shit down. ... She is very tiny, and she would sleep in the middle, so the hyenas wouldn't get her at night. So the joke was, this group of people travelling in a pack with the tiny people.

Elsa's family shared their description of events as a funny story, but the layers of trauma associated with it gives insight into life in Ethiopia during Eritrea's war of independence, and how both Eritreans and Ethiopians had to undertake even more risk in seeking protection. Human rights violations were perpetrated against many research participants' families, and for some, they remain at risk. Importantly, the fear associated with such violations becomes intergenerationally embedded in a community. In turn, these factors can impact children of migrants' decision to engage with origin

countries, particularly when the reasons their families migrated have not improved significantly, as with most countries in the Horn of Africa.

Zahra's (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) family migrated to the UK in the early 1990s initially by way of her father being offered a spot on a postgraduate course there, and then later applied for asylum. She recounted her father's experience of arrest and torture in Sudan before they left: '[My father] was in prison for three years, like after the first year of [his] marriage, and you know he was tortured, and a lot of his friends were killed.' Zahra also shared how her father's traumatic experience of torture remains in the family narrative and became a critical part of her identity formation, even if not expressed overtly. The trauma, even if not spoken about, still weighs on her family despite the time passed: 'He would not speak about it, until this day he will not speak about this experience.' This event had a profound effect on Zahra and, as will be discussed in later chapters, discouraged her from engaging politically with Sudan.

Another important finding is that many research participants were aware of or dealt with the effects of intergenerational trauma growing up, but often did not know the specific details. It is understandable that families and communities would try to shield their children from this. Thus, most research participants only became aware of their families' histories as teenagers and young adults. Meron (female, early 20s, Ethiopian, Washington, D.C.) was an adult when she learned of the forced disappearance of a family member during the Derg rule in Ethiopia: 'My grandmother lost her son at a young age because he was taken away. I don't know if you are familiar with the history of The Red Terror and Derg, so he was in that, and she hasn't heard from him since.' Meron later became interested not only in her family's history and Ethiopia, but also the African continent more widely. The memories shared by her family, and the wider community, were likely the precursor to her interest in international development, but could also be the main deterrent to her engagement in Ethiopia-related politics. This is a clear pattern among research participants; for example, Tigest

(early-30s, female, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) also avoided events or debates around Eritrean politics, despite her own father's involvement.

There is a correlation between the time children of migrants become interested in learning about their origin countries and when they begin engaging in activism. Critical events, whether positive or negative, are often a factor in instigating children of migrants' interest, particularly when such an event happens when they are teenagers or young adults. A considerable number of participants did not know the details of their family's migration until they were in secondary school or university. Reliving such experiences can cause considerable distress, and children of migrants are unlikely to have had the tools to make sense of that knowledge any earlier. Also, this is the time of transitioning into adulthood, when people start establishing their independence and identities. For example, Aster (female, early 20s, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) discovered as a teenager that her family were targeted by the Mengistu government in Ethiopia, forcing them to flee to the US.

The [Ethiopian government] burned down my grandfather's [property] and two of my uncles were burned, but they survived. They [also] shot at my dad and my grandfather. My dad was able to come to the US to accompany his brother, who was burnt and was coming for surgery, and that is how he got to the US.

As she grew up, Aster became aware that her friends from similar backgrounds also only learned of their family's migratory history as teenagers or young adults. This is a delicate time for children, as they transition into adulthood and assert their identities. However, unresolved trauma can negatively impact families, including causing mental health issues and clashes within the family and with the world around them.

Some children of migrants' narratives highlight how the traumatic events their parents experienced affected them profoundly. Tigest's (early-30s, female, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) parents left Eritrea, then part of Ethiopia, in the late 1970s when they learned of a government order

to arrest her father, who was part of the Eritrean underground resistance⁹⁰. Her father thus left Eritrea by crossing the Sudanese border and travelling onto Kassala in eastern Sudan, where there were several refugee camps at the time, and then went onto Khartoum. Tigest's mother and sibling joined him in Sudan a year later.

In 1978 [my mother] got a call saying, 'the Ethiopian Army has your husband and he is in prison.' But she knew that was not true, so she called him and told him, 'they are on to you and they know what you are doing, so you need to leave.' He figured out a way; he had to trick some army officials at the border by claiming he was with the Ethiopian army going to Sudan. In Kassala, I think there was a big refugee camp, a lot of Eritreans were ending up there, and finally, he got to Khartoum. My mum and my sister, who was just a baby, had to cross the border. And of course, like many other Eritreans, they paid people to smuggle them across the border at night, and they ended up in Kassala. I think they had to spend a year apart; then somebody told him that my mum and my sister are at the refugee camp. It [makes] me teary-eyed because he always cries when he talks about the first time he saw them; it was after a year and they all escaped, and then he saw them, he knew who his daughter was. This is a very emotional memory.

This feeling, when Tigest said 'this is a very emotional memory', is captured in the narratives of children of migrants from the Horn of Africa; memories of traumatic events, whether lived or inherited, affect them profoundly. As the region's current context is still marred by political and humanitarian crises, these memories are regularly brought to the fore. Thus, there is no let up or opportunity to forget and move on.

Critical events are essential to how historical events are conveyed, but also bring to the fore existing traumas. For example, Lula (female, mid-20s, Eritrea, London) recalled the period after independence when she felt Eritreans were finally at peace and ready to move on. However, in 1998 war broke out again between Ethiopia and Eritrea,⁹¹ which affected not only their citizens but also its diaspora. Despite being a young child at the time, Lula recalled how the war adversely affected her parents:

⁹⁰ An underground Eritrean resistance seeking independence from Ethiopia existed at the time, and coordinated with the armed groups.

⁹¹ On 6 May 1998, Ethiopian troops fired at an Eritrean patrol unit near the town of Badame. This incident triggered a chain reaction of events, with many people killed. A week later, on 13 May, Ethiopia declared war on Eritrea (Amnesty International, 1999).

I remember my dad seeing an old school [friend] and he [heard] about the incident, [but] he didn't really believe it. Then he realised when we switched on the news that war was happening again. I think after that, things just got more tense. I think that really moved my parents, I didn't really understand much myself, I was 7 or 8 at the time, but I picked up on it from my mum especially. I could tell that the whole idea of war coming back was scary for her; it kind of spooked her.

International media have covered the Horn of Africa's conflicts and crises over the years. Such coverage became a source of information for research participants, in addition to their family's narratives. However, media coverage may not necessarily reflect the nuances of the situation and, as is often the case with coverage of countries in the Global South, is often negative or lacks sensitivity for the challenges faced by the people enduring them (Wa'Njogu, 2009). For example, Yodit (female, late 20s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) recalled that the Eritrean war of independence was a common topic of family discussion when she was growing up, but very few people where she lived knew about the conflict. When she tried to explain where Eritrea is, she referred to Ethiopia as a point of reference:

When I was growing up, [Eritrea] was kind of unheard of. It was only made independent in 1991, so for the first part of the 90s, when I was growing up, people had not really heard of it. And then you'd say and try to explain where it is, that it's in the northeast of Africa bordering Ethiopia, and they'll be like, 'famine'. That's what they associate it with.

Yodit found this association distressing due to Eritreans' negative association with the Ethiopian state and the loss and trauma endured in the war of independence. In addition, in Europe, North America and many places around the world, Ethiopia became synonymous with famine; this association was perpetuated through the Band Aid/Live Aid phenomenon⁹² and similar initiatives, leading to the consolidation of negative portrayals of Ethiopia and the Global South in general.

⁹² Band Aid/Live Aid was a concert and music initiative that took place in July 1985. It was established to raise relief funds for the Ethiopian famine. Despite its success, the organisers faced considerable criticism ranging from accusations that the funds were being used by the Ethiopian government to the opposition to accusations of reinforcing negative stereotypes of Africans (Müller, 2013).

Children of migrants from politically active families learn of the conflict in their origin country at a much earlier age. Dut (male, early 30s, South Sudan, London) recalled listening to his father and his friends discussing the civil war in Sudan. As he grew older, Dut began asking questions about the war and what it all meant in relation to his life in London. He recalled a particular time when he felt distressed about what happens to people in conflicts, knowing that he could have been in a similar situation:

I asked my father what self-determination is, and he explained what was happening in Sudan. I was seven years old, and I understood there were people in South Sudan fighting to separate the country. I was like 'oh, OK, so who is this John Garang⁹³ guy?' And my father explained, but he didn't tell me all the nitty-gritty details. He told me later on in life that John Garang was the guy that was controversial, but was fighting the enemy which was the government. I knew at that age that the government was kidnapping people and sponsoring those groups of people along the border to do things, so I was quite traumatised. I don't think it was a good idea that I knew all this stuff at that age, because I would think about it at school. You know, I'd be at school, and I'd be thinking that this is why I'm in England: I'm escaping that. It was quite profound.

Despite being a child when he learned of the civil war, Dut understood that something terrible was happening; something that distressed him then and as an adult, when he was able to make sense of this knowledge. This knowledge and fear become fully realised and understood as children of migrants grow up and understand how such has affected their families, communities, and them as individuals.

Politically active families have a significant influence on children of migrants' activism practices. Being from a politically active family is not only a resource of knowledge, but also helps children of migrants develop skills for political engagement, such as networking and highly-developed intuition. Hakim (male, early 30s, Ethiopia, London) was very aware of the extent of his family's political activity; it was where he learned the skills that support his activism.

I remember at the age of 10 going on demonstrations when Ethiopia and Eritrea were first separated, that was in 1993. We used to go out, we had quite a big nationalistic feeling within our family, and I was part of that. Then, there was a bit of tension between the kids. My father knew a youth worker who you can get to join with the kids, but most of the kids were Eritrean,

⁹³ John Garang led the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) from 1983 until his death in 2005 (Thomas, 2015).

and we would talk. We would argue with each other as if we knew what we were talking about. So, they'd make fun of Ethiopia losing the war to Eritrea, and during the civil war. Obviously, they didn't understand that it wasn't a war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; it was civil war that everybody was fighting back in their country. Anyway, there was a lot of that kind of political thing coming out of the kids, so I found it easier to be friends with the Somali kids more than the Eritreans.

Politically active families also have significant influence over the narratives of their country of origin, such as holding negative views of other ethnic groups, and the relationship children of migrants build with it. In Hakim's case, he inherited this narrative as a child. However, growing up away from the direct influence of origin countries means having diverse influences and exposure to a broader range of perspectives. Thus, children of migrants' narratives, political leanings and opinions are likely to vary from their parents. For example, Elsa (female, mid-30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) had the chance to reflect on her parent's legacy as she transitioned from childhood to adulthood. For her, this legacy was a source of pride, that Eritrea became an independent country and has a seat at the United Nations table: 'I have consciously chosen to honour [my mother's] legacy and the hard work of my parents My dream job was [as a teenager], given everything that I was exposed to, to represent Eritrea at the United Nations.' There was euphoria in and about Eritrea when it became independent in 1993.⁹⁴ However, Elsa's dream to represent the newly independent country faded as the situation in Eritrea became more challenging, including the closing of political and civic spaces.⁹⁵ Eritrea's altered political scene has created schisms in the Eritrean diaspora between those who became staunchly pro-government and those who are opposed, with limited space for anything in between. Some second-generation Eritreans have joined these opposing sides, such as through joining the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ)⁹⁶. However, neither Elsa nor other research respondents from Eritrea are engaged in any such political activities; their activism is focused on countries of settlement or third countries, a clear

⁹⁴ A referendum was held for independence in 1991.

⁹⁵ Eritrea's 1998 border war and subsequent clamp down on opposition divided the Eritrean diaspora between those who remain firm believers in the current government and those who oppose it.

⁹⁶ The YPFDJ is the diaspora youth wing of Eritrea's ruling party.

indication they have distanced themselves from any direct engagement with Eritrean diaspora divisions.

Narratives of trauma are embedded in many children of migrants' personal histories, and also include historical insight into significant critical events. Khalil (male, late 20s, Somalia, London) was a young boy when his father was killed in the Somali government's assault on Hargeisa in 1988 and the rest of his family fled to Ethiopia, and then the UK. He was too young to remember all this, but it was essential for him to counter the narrative that the war began with the collapse of the Somali government in 1991.

Most people, when they talk about the war, they say that the Somali State collapsed in 1991. That's not necessarily true, because the war started in 1988. There was a vast number of people who deserted the war, and my family was displaced, and as time went, we fled to Ethiopia.

Khalil's account shed light of an important period in Somalia's history, which was consequential for the formation of Somaliland. It shows eyewitness accounts, which in this case, are articulated by the descendants of survivors, provide important insight into historical events.

Only a few research participants migrated to the US or UK on their own. Ayen (male, mid-30s, South Sudan, Washington, D.C.) became displaced as a child in contemporary South Sudan. He recalled Sudanese government forces attacking his village and being separated from his family in the ensuing chaos. Ayen became one of the Lost Boys, a group of around 40,000 children – mostly boys from the Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups – who were displaced or orphaned during the Sudanese Civil War of 1983–2005 (Geltman, et al. 2005). His journey took him to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya before finally being resettled in the US as an unaccompanied minor:

Some of the villages were attacked by the Sudanese army at the time, and that means that children and family members were killed indiscriminately. Those who survived left to other villages, but they could end up in those villages and find out that their relative there was running, or had been killed or ran to government garrisons such as Juba or Yiröl. For those who did not want to go, they might choose to go to Ethiopia. For me, my elder brothers left, and

my parents were really very old So I had to leave with the other kids and walk through Yirol to Ethiopia.

After several years living in the US, Ayen learned his mother had survived the attack on their village in the early 1990s and was alive. He was a child when he saw her last, and their reunion was poignant as it coincided with the succession of South Sudan: 'I met her for the first time on July 8th, 2011, the day before South Sudan was partitioned. So, that is the day I went to see my mother.'

The continued instability in the Horn of Africa either spurs children of migrants to engage in activism or deters them. This is interesting in terms of the type of strategies they develop to cope with the trauma embodied in family narratives, as well as the constant reminders as critical events continue to unfold in the region. Thus, understanding the Horn of Africa's socio-economic and political context is crucial as it gives insight into why children of migrants' families left their origin countries.

Another finding is that children of migrants have enduring yet tumultuous relationships with their origin countries through lived and intergenerational trauma. These memories are brought to the fore through unfolding critical events that act as reminders, sustaining the effects of trauma. However, what is unique about the experiences of this group of research participants was the prevalence of multi-country migration, and thus their perspectives extend beyond origin and final countries of settlement. In addition, experiences of trauma – whether experienced as children and not fully aware of its significance or inherited through family narratives – are the core that sets children of migrants on the path to activism.

As discussed in detail in the following chapter, the drivers of historical migration from the Horn of Africa become embedded in children of migrants' identities and, in turn, we learn how these

macro events both forced their family's migration and affect their relationship with the society of settlement. In addition, we also learn about children of migrants' identity formation and journey from childhood to adulthood, giving us insight into the precursor of their activism.

Chapter Five: Journeys from childhood to adulthood – identity formation and agency

In the previous chapter, I examined drivers of migration from the Horn of Africa and their emergence in children of migrants' narratives. Several key themes arose during analysis of these narratives, including the prominence of trauma, both lived and intergenerational, as children of migrants recounted their family's migration history. Additionally, over half the children of migrants who participated in this study or their families migrated to one or more countries before arriving in the US or UK, staying in these countries anywhere between a few months to several years. These elements can have a significant impact on children of migrants' life outcomes and, in turn, further insight into how their identities are formed as they transition from childhood into adulthood.

In this chapter, I unpack children of migrants' experiences growing up in London and Washington, D.C., as well as how their families' country of origin and their relationship with the society of settlement have shaped their identities and values as adults. In particular, this chapter looks at how the culmination of inherited and lived experiences, particularly trauma, is fundamental to understanding why children of migrants engage in activism. In addition, it also highlights children of migrants' feelings of being out of place, their sense of alienation from both societies of settlement and origin, as they try to reconcile the pressure to 'fit in'.

This chapter is structured around the key parameters of children of migrants' identity formation, rather comparing those in London with those in Washington, D.C. Indeed, there were very little differences between the experiences of children of migrants in the two cities, which can be due to several factors. Firstly, children of migrants in both cities share similar histories of a pre-emigration that led them or their families to leave. Also, children of migrants in both cities are more likely to

have had the networks and resources to undertake journeys to the US or UK; only a small group can really afford to do so. They are also minorities in both London and Washington, D.C., which are both political capitals that are highly cosmopolitan.

5.1. Challenges of growing up as a child of conflict

Lived and inherited trauma

As discussed in the previous chapter, trauma was very present in children of migrants' narratives, whether directly experienced or inherited. Trauma refers to distressing events affecting a person physically, psychologically, or both. Trauma has a significant influence on how a person interacts with the world around them, and for the research participants, trauma has had consequences on their relationship with the society of settlement, leading to potential negative interactions. A study by Steel et al. (2017) on pre-migration trauma among refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa in Sweden showed that conflict in origin countries had a significant influence on the mental wellbeing of study participants. More than 47 percent of the participants reported Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)⁹⁷ and 20 percent reported significant depressive⁹⁸ symptoms (Ibid.).

Trauma can also accelerate societal change among migrants and their kin, which can lead to an adversarial relationship with their communities and the society of settlement. Ayen (male, mid-30s, South Sudan, Washington, D.C.) was separated from his family as a young child when government forces attacked his village during the Sudanese civil war. As part of the '*Lost Boys*'⁹⁹,

⁹⁷ 'Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. Someone with PTSD often relives the traumatic event through nightmares and flashbacks, and may experience feelings of isolation, irritability and guilt, problems sleeping, such as insomnia, and find concentrating difficult. These symptoms are often severe and persistent enough to have a significant impact on the person's day-to-day life' (NHS, 2018).

⁹⁸ 'The symptoms of depression can be complex and vary widely between people. But as a rule, if you're depressed, you feel sad, hopeless and lose interest in things you used to enjoy. The symptoms persist for weeks or months and are bad enough to interfere with your work, social life and family life' (NHS, 2016).

⁹⁹ The lost boys are a group of more than 20,000 (mostly) boys from the Dinka and Nuer tribes who were separated and displaced during the Sudanese civil war, which took place largely in contemporary South Sudan (Biel, 2003).

Ayen fled with other children after the attack in search of safety. He and the other children were forced to not only deal with that trauma but to also the additional trauma of having to bury other children who died along the way.

A lot of children died [but] you could not know as a refugee. [By] the third year of the war, it was children burying other children. In the [Dinka] culture, children and women are not allowed to come near a dead person; it is only elders and ... [other] people [who] deal with the burying. [This is] because children and women are very emotional, so cannot come near a dead person. It was a big change in circumstances that children were burying each other.

It is not feasible to fully comprehend the societal impact of the trauma experienced by Ayen and other children affected by war. However, trauma not only affects individuals, but can also transform or accelerate change in cultural practices, whether positively or negatively. People originating from a conflict-affected region carry both memories of the conflict in their countries of origin and the divisions within their communities to their new homes. In turn, this creates additional challenges to their engagement with the society of settlement. One such example are the divisions among the Somali community in London: although they are often housed or choose to settle in neighbourhoods with other Somalis, maintaining close interactions, the relationship between co-ethnics is not always harmonious. Farah (male, early 30s, Somalia, London) reflected on why local councils view the Somali diaspora as problematic:

There were a lot of fights within our neighbourhood between Somali groups. The grievances and the hatred we brought here from Somalia, the two clans were passing it on. The two clans fighting in Somalia ended up as neighbours in [neighbourhood name omitted]. So, what do you expect? Their children went through the same issues; in our house, we used to fight one another, but why were we fighting? The local authorities were confused about why it was so difficult for Somalis to integrate with the rest of British society, and the answer is obvious: we cannot integrate with one another, let alone people with different faces, colours and values.

The Somali community faces challenges of alienation and marginalisation in the UK, but they are not the only ones; numerous other diaspora communities experience such challenges. This became the catalyst for Farah to seek positive relations in his community, supporting young people, but also reaching out to the majority society and building bridges to redress the disadvantages his community faces.

The country of settlement can also be a neutral space of healing and bringing communities together, often around an event or cause. For example, the collective Somali community's response to Barclays Bank's decision to close the accounts of several Somali remittance companies¹⁰⁰, a vital lifeline for family and kin in Somalia¹⁰¹. In this instance, first and second-generation Somalis and allies embarked on high-level campaigning and advocacy, which created traction and changed the tide. These examples show how diasporas can relocate conflicts from their countries of origin to their new homes, but also come together at times of collective crisis. The ability to both maintain and surpass conflict is also related to foreign policy dynamism in countries of settlement, as diasporas can engage in conflicts positively or negatively depending on the political opportunities available to them.

Diasporas can be resourceful conduits for or challenges to the country of origin's government; this is especially significant in conflict situations, as diasporas can be influential, and thus origin countries can attempt to contain their influence, such as curtailing the transmission of ideas. For example, communities within the Ethiopian diaspora – such as the Oromo community¹⁰² – have often had fraught relations with the Ethiopian government, potentially encouraging many to support not only their families through remittances, but also opposition groups through advocacy and financing.

Children of migrants are acutely challenged by the difficulties inherent in reconciling divergent values from their societies of settlement and origin. Parents can aggravate this situation, as they experience particularly high levels of stress-related acculturation challenges, may lack the

¹⁰⁰ In 2015, Barclays Bank, as part of counter-terrorism, bank de-risking and financial access, announced it would close the accounts of money transfer operators (MTOs). MTOs are key to the regulated transfer of remittances to Somalia, which amounts to around 1.3 Billion US Dollars a year, more than a quarter of the country's GDP. This led to a massive campaign by the Somali diaspora, MTOs, and development and humanitarian actors who recognised what an important lifeline diaspora remittances are for Somalia (Adeso et al, 2015; Hassan and Liberatore, 2016).

¹⁰¹ Remittances to Somalia projected to be 20.7 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2020 (IMF, 2018).

¹⁰² The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and have suffered a long history of marginalisation and discrimination (Abate, 2019).

necessary tools and support to manage, and at the same time seek to maintain links with kin and their origin countries. The society of settlement may be intolerant to differences and expect immigrants to fit into their system, and trauma can compound these challenges; challenges that require fundamentally different tools and coping mechanisms for survivors and their dependents. Warda (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) reflected on why her school peers from conflict-affected countries had more challenges than others: ‘Those kids came from war zones; what do they expect them to be like without proper guidance?’, Children of migrants from conflict-affected countries face more challenges than their peers from non-conflict migrant backgrounds or the majority society. Thus, children of migrants who engage in activism are unique, as they develop coping mechanisms to counteract these challenges, and show a high level of resilience.

Discrimination

Most children of migrants, particularly those based in London, spoke of the microaggressions they experienced in their society of settlement. Among the 40 interviewees, 24 experienced discrimination, including from other black minorities. Such discrimination varied from crude jokes on the playground or being side-lined by their teachers at school to more violent instances of physical and verbal assault based on race or ethnicity. While this is not a representative sample, such narratives do shed light on the subtle and direct microaggression faced by children of migrants.

Stereotypes, whether positive or negative, have a significant influence on children of migrants’ identity formation as they transitioned from childhood to adulthood. In particular, research participants pointed to the Western media’s either neglect or solely negative portrayal of the Horn of Africa. Such media coverage – notably of clashes, military coups and natural disasters – relegates the region and its people to a mere tragedy and informs the standard of how people in the US and

UK view Horn of Africa migrants, and Africans more broadly. These negative views profoundly impact children of migrants, as many research participants recalled feeling embarrassment by and ashamed of their identities. Role models and positive stories from the Horn of Africa are few and far between, and thus many children of migrants may internalise these negative views. As they grow, increase knowledge and strive for agency, reaching adulthood, that is the point at which they may begin further exploring who they are and their identities. They become almost like chameleons, navigating different spaces to counteract the disadvantage and challenges they innately know. They understand what it means to be black in the US or UK and, as such, look for ways to address that, whether through utilising their international experiences, linguistic skills or the like. In origin countries, in addition, they can utilise their knowledge of the culture to fit into parts of it, but also their privileged passport to access work opportunities otherwise not available.

Persistent negative stereotypes can have a damaging effect on children's self-confidence, increasing the likelihood of negative outcomes as they enter adulthood. While growing up, Khalil (male, late 20s, Somalia, London) felt ashamed of his Somali identity. Even though he saw himself as a 'model Somali person', he could not escape the negative media coverage of Somalia and the problems Somali diaspora communities in the UK faced:

It was embarrassing, seeing all those bad things on TV. And then, as time went, Somalis in the UK started going off the rails... Obviously, we had problems back home in Somalia, and then those problems occurred here, and then you think that has nothing to do with me. Now we have criminality; now we have a lot of those problems, those gangs, very negative, like benefit cheats.

Resisting negative stereotypes requires resilience and energy, building skills, knowledge and networks to achieve self-reliance and shape aspirations. Negative media coverage of origin countries perpetuates such stereotypes, which in turn can become the majority society's dominant view of migrants, affecting their relationship with the society of settlement. This became a battlefield for my research participants, leading them to seek and establish agency against a torrent of negative

stereotypes and, at the same time, also an impetus for some to engage in activism to readdress these imbalances.

Negative views of the Horn of Africa create a sense of shame and embarrassment for children of migrants, seeping even into relations with other migrants. For example, Amin (male, mid-20s, Somalia, London) recalled several incidents of encountering racist taunts by not just people from the majority society but those from other migrant backgrounds:

A large part of [the negative stereotype] was influenced by the famine, a large part of it was influenced by the war, a large part of it was influenced by the fact that whenever they saw Somalia on TV ... I mean I was a kid at the time, I never really knew, but it's just this idea that you're starving, this idea that you have no food, while you can tell by looking at me, I don't miss meals. I remember one argument I got into at school with a Moroccan guy when he called me a miracle, and the reason I was a miracle was because I was a fat Somali and he considered that miraculous. He didn't say it as an insult; he didn't say it as a joke. For him, it was like you could tell he was trying to figure out where to put me.

As is clear from Amin's example, negative stereotypes influence inter-migrant relations. Misconceptions among minority communities exist, and thus issues of discrimination may be just as present between migrants as in the majority society. For example, Fox and Mogilnicka's study (2017) of East European integration in the UK showed that the process of integration could take pathological forms on occasion, such as using racism to align with the UK majority society. In the case of children of migrants from the Horn of Africa interviewed for this study, this meant at times distancing themselves from society of settlement minorities with whom they shared racial or ethnic attributes, e.g. African-Americans in the US and African-Caribbeans in the UK. Both communities have been historically marginalised and face discrimination from the majority society and institutions sustained through negative stereotypes. However, children of migrants associated their acculturation to distancing themselves from other migrants or minorities as a strategy to counteract the challenges they may face as minorities. Thus, we see examples of children of migrants relaying experiences of their parents controlling whom they interact with the outside school.

Deprivation and privilege

Children of migrants are in a unique position of managing the interplay of privilege in origin countries and of deprivation¹⁰³ in their country of settlement. In their origin countries, they are privileged; armed with a coveted Western education and passport, they can access more opportunities for upward social mobility. However, such opportunities may not actually be available to them due to their real or perceived disadvantaged position in their country of settlement. For example, before embarking on a career in international development, Zahra (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) visited Sudan for work experience with civil society and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) after university. In the UK, and Global North in general, those who wish to work in the non-profit sector must often first work as unpaid volunteers and interns for months if not years, which is not feasible for those from low-income backgrounds. Zahra ended up staying in Sudan and gained substantial work experience before embarking on international opportunities. Despite her Sudanese heritage, her experiences in the UK solidified a broader pan-African identity within her. She took this identity to Sudan, where she was also not recognised as fully Sudanese by her family and community. While she did still feel some pressure to conform to Sudanese concepts of gender roles and behaviours, she was privileged in this regard but also an outcast.

There is a clear interplay between deprivation and privilege for children of migrants. Several research participants noted that due to their background as migrants or minorities, they are often perceived as deprived and unlikely to succeed. Regardless of their status in countries of origin, children of migrants felt their background gave rise to perceptions that they were unable to excel at school or achieve upward social mobility. Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) went to a private international primary school, taught predominantly in English, when her family lived in the Gulf. Because of her advanced language skills, she thought her transition to a British school would not be

¹⁰³ Deprivation can involve many things, such as poverty, inadequate housing, poor education and lack of jobs or social opportunities. It is often used as an indicator in determining social mobility opportunities (Hickman et al., 2008).

a challenge. Due to her migrant background, however, her teachers assumed she could not excel at school.

There were a lot of foreigners coming, and [they] put us in special classes in school. They are [supposed to] recognise the talents we have, [but] they sort of automatically assume, because being foreign meant you would be in a special category and presumed [you are] not as clever as the other children.

Despite growing up in areas affected by high deprivation, children of migrants' aspirations or social mobility trajectories were not diminished. This suggests that a family's socio-economic background in its country of origin may be essential to determining children of migrants' social mobility in their country of settlement or, at least, their striving for upward social mobility. This signifies that social status permeates the challenges in country of settlement, children of migrants are aware of this and, thus, can pool skills and knowledge to facilitate social mobility. As such, children of migrants are likely to engage in activism towards changing the challenges affecting them and others from similar backgrounds.

Several research participants felt that the institutions in their country of the settlement failed to help them reach their full potential due to negative stereotypes. Warda (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) was born in Sudan and lived briefly in a European country before her family moved and made London their home. She has positive memories of her time in a London primary school, but as she transitioned to secondary school, she saw challenges emerging for herself and many of her peers. Warda's school did not provide much support to their students and, while Warda's parents encouraged her and she excelled at school, children without similar support at home did not have the tools to counter their disadvantages. Reflecting on her formative years, Warda articulated the challenges faced by many of the children at her school:

Those kids are fleeing all sorts of stuff, and they are carrying trauma. Their parents have their own traumas, and some of them fell in with the wrong crowds. When I think back to my friends now, people I went to school with, you know the ones who did not join Da'esh or became extremist in some way, the ones who work in any kind of job, and some of them have families, and some of them do not. But most of the girls are married with kids, and they do house-related stuff now. Not many of them have gone to bachelor or postgrad; I think I could count maybe on my hands the people I know that have. So, it is for all the good things that I thought

provoked me in terms of my childhood; they definitely did not set you up to achieve very highly. That is the thing that had to come from your home, and if you have traumatised parents or parents who are not familiar with the system and do not know how to negotiate life in the UK, then you can fall through the cracks. Well, it sounds like a lot of people fell between the cracks, and it is so sad because some of them were so bright they just did not think they could do anything else. Sometimes it is not being given anything, but being told yes you can do it, that encouragement. That was not there because you are foreign, you are coming to a new place, and you don't know how to traverse the terrain. [If] someone tells you 'here is how you do it', and 'you can do it', and 'how you should do it', that is all you need, that is the only push you need; it is really a tragic thing.

Institutional racism¹⁰⁴ was embedded in Warda's school experience, highlighted by the lack of support, and had detrimental effects on children of migrants in addition to their lived and inherited trauma. Such challenges become not only hurdles for children of migrants as they grow up, but also a test of their resolve, and thus activism becomes a critical strategy.

For my research participants, work experience or volunteering in their countries of origin was also about gaining knowledge of the country independent from their family's views. Dhalia (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) was keen to learn about Sudan outside her family's purview. For her, volunteering offered her the opportunity to gain valuable experience and discover what it is to be Sudanese-British and explore Sudan independently:

I wanted to find out what it means to me, to be in Sudan, to be Sudanese, and a Brit, and in Sudan. It was good to see other parts of the town, good to cross the Nile and think oh wow this, I can claim this as a part of my heritage. I felt good, I felt empowered, and I thought to myself I had to do this by myself, I had to give myself Sudan back, I had to take it with my own hands, you know nobody was going to give it to me.

Work experience or volunteering was also an essential strategy for my interviewees to gain agency, as journeys to country of origin are often impacted by how people reflect on their heritage and values, giving them alternative insights. On such trips it becomes clear that children of migrants do not belong to the context of their family's memories, which are frozen in a particular time, and the situation and societies in their country of origin have evolved. This is also true when children of

¹⁰⁴ Institutional racism is defined as '[T]he collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (Macpherson Of Cluny, 1999: 6.34).

migrants realise their own internalised stereotypes of their country of origin from their society of settlement; it is a mirror to reflect on their values. On her first visit to Eritrea, Tigest (female, early 30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) was surprised by how much she had internalised the perception of Eritrea from the United States:

When I went [to Eritrea], I realised, one how American I was, but two how even I had stereotypes and generalisations of what Eritrea would be based on things that I knew. I was a little bit ashamed of myself because I thought I am Eritrean, [but] why would I think just because we are not as rich as other countries that our people would be unhappy?

As kids, children of migrants suffer the consequences of these negative stereotypes and also internalise them. However, as they transition to adulthood, children of migrants learn to assert their agency and understand and challenge these negative stereotypes. For Tigest, and many other research participants, feelings of guilt, shame, and similar negative emotions were significant to their drive to change the status quo and assert their agency; activism was an important vehicle for facilitating these changes.

5.2. Religion and religiosity - a link to 'home'?

Religious values and practices are transmitted to children of migrants, often by their parents and community, and include activities such as attending church or fasting during Ramadan. Religion was an essential identity for many research participants and played a significant role in determining their outcomes in terms of adherence to particular values and traditions. The majority of the of the research participants were from Muslim background, also considerable number were from Christian background (predominantly Orthodox).

Religion also determines children of migrants' relationship with the society of settlement, reducing or heightening a sense of alienation from the majority society. My research participants from Muslim backgrounds had experienced negative perceptions from the society of settlement, which created a sense of alienation for them. For example, Mariam (female, mid-20s, Sudan,

Washington, D.C.) excelled at school, was top of her class, but still felt alienated because she wore *hijab*. She recalled her first week in middle school and feeling side-lined by her teacher because of her religion:

I was the only girl with *hijab* in my entire middle school, not only that, but there were only five coloured kids in the entire school. I loved math, but after the first week of school I came back home crying, and my mum [asked] 'why are you crying?' I [responded], 'my teacher hates me... I think it's because I'm Muslim.' I was this little seventh grader, I [thought] she doesn't like me because I'm Muslim.

For Mariam, her religious identity became an obstacle to her interactions at school. Hers was the experience of a child growing up in the immediate aftermath of September 11th attacks and, despite being young, children from this time had negative experiences of interactions in public spaces, such as schools. Such children also reflect what they hear or see being experienced by their families and communities, whether a passing comment in the street or talking about employment struggles because of religion. As minors, children of migrants often adhere to religious identities depending on their parents; this is a value they are only able to challenge or fully embrace as adults.

However, while religious practices can differ significantly depending on ethnic and national backgrounds, in countries of settlement, as minorities, religious statutes can also bring people together. For example, despite differences, many Muslims in Europe share mosque spaces. In addition, for people who see it as their 'duty' to help others, religion can become a powerful motivator to engage in activism; for example, as part of *zakat*¹⁰⁵ or around a crisis, people can make charitable contributions not just limited to country of origin. For Mariam, her challenges at school and elsewhere drove her to find strength and belonging through region, which gave her a sense of being part of a transnational community:

¹⁰⁵ Zakat (زكاة) is the third pillar of Islam, which is giving alms of 2.5 percent of one's wealth to benefit the poor (Mohsin and Ismail, 2013).

I think if I was not Sudanese, but I was Muslim, I would still want to help the world, just because I would still feel that I am a part of a bigger community feeling, because Islam is all about the Ummah¹⁰⁶, the people, being part of something bigger.

Mariam's experience highlights the importance of religious identities in mobilising individuals for political, economic or social issues, examples of which also include how churches mobilised African-American political activism during the civil rights movement in the US.

However, it emerged throughout my interviews that negative perceptions of some religions can have significant ramifications on the relationship between children of migrants and the society of settlement. These ramifications differ from what their parents experience, as children of migrants' values and day-to-day experiences are different from that of their parents; for example, encounters at schools are not experienced by parents. Additional layers of discrimination, whether through microaggression or policies, contribute to an environment in which participants from Muslim backgrounds become guarded in interactions with the society of settlement. Moreover, as noted by many research participants, there is growing antagonism in many parts of the Global North towards those with Muslim backgrounds and racism against minorities is increasing, despite legal protections. These environments led some research participants to not be open about their Muslim background, while others embraced it more fully as an affirmation of their identity. For example, Sharif (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) was often guarded in his interactions with new people; he was not open about being a practising Muslim, fearing negative or hostile responses. The society of settlement's negative perceptions also affects children of migrants' relationship with other minorities. This is further compounded by intergenerational trauma, which can touch each person differently and affect their value systems. Sharif found it challenging to be open when first meeting other Sudanese people, whether Sudanese Americans or other Sudanese. He was not sure whether

¹⁰⁶ *Ummah* (الامة) is an Arabic word meaning community or people group, and also refers to a transnational religious community (Guhin, 2018).

their values aligned because he did not know the values they developed while navigating their lives in the US:

I want to be able to talk normally as a Sudanese person who practises Islam and lives in America with another Sudanese person, and practises Islam and speaks Arabic, but it's difficult to do so. In Sudan it's fine, you can go to your neighbour, you can go down the street, have a conversation with someone, and you don't need background, you don't need a venue, you don't need anything, it's just your brother, in your country, or your sister. But here in the States, it's difficult because you don't know the intention of this person, you don't know how Americanised they have become. You almost put your guard up when you first meet them, because [you ask yourself] 'I don't know if they're going to take what I'm saying back to the rest of the community.' Or I don't know if they are even going to care, or should I speak Arabic, or should I not speak Arabic, should I say I am going to pray, or should I not say [anything].

Sharif was not the only participant who spoke of a guarded response when meeting people from their countries of origin. Children of migrants recognise that living in the US or UK impacts individuals differently, and thus their values and strategies for navigating different spaces may not be the same. Thus, children of migrants may share values and experiences but, at the same time, their life trajectories may vary considerably. However, this is also a point of strength, as it can lead one to connect with people who also understand this underlying feeling of not belonging to one place. Adil (male, early 30s, Eritrea/Sudan, London) struggled with the hostilities people from Muslim backgrounds face, but it also became a source of identifying and connecting with others facing discrimination:

The whole Islamophobia kind of thing, it bonds you, it unites you, because you feel like OK, we're in this together. You look around, and there's not many of us, so maybe we should start bonding together more.

Although Sharif and Adel espoused different views and strategies, their examples show that coping mechanisms are embedded in being at heightened risk of targeting and ostracization, but can also be used as a source of strength to mitigate alienation and hostilities by the majority society. This shows divergence in how religion leads children of migrants to adopt significantly different strategies, depending on context, particularly if they navigate hostile spaces. It also shows how the

society of settlement's reactions to certain identities can influence children of migrants' pathways and drive their activism.

Children of migrants' parents may have taken certain cultural and religious practices for granted in their countries of origin, but are fearful of losing their roots in the society of settlement. As is often the case, religious and cultural practices are conflated, and parents become driven to present an extreme of their values to ensure at least part trickles down to their children, such as becoming more religious than they were in their origin country. Ubax (female, early 30s, Somalia, Washington, D.C.) experienced many restrictions to her socialising during her formative years. Despite wanting to build relationships with her peers, Ubax's parents would not allow her to interact with them outside school, which made it challenging to build friendships and share experiences:

My mum became more strict because I think she was a little bit afraid of us becoming too Americanised. That was very difficult; you want to make friends. You want to fit in, your whole aim was to fit in, and it's so hard to do that when you were raised in a very strict household.

The pressure of such family restrictions also set children of migrants apart from their peers, who may have fewer formal relations and less limits to interacting based on age, gender and other factors. Ziad (male, mid-40s, Sudan, London) recalled how he came to understand that his family's values were different from the society of settlement, and that he and other children of migrants felt these differences like their white peers did not.

At a very young age, you learn about hierarchy, whom to respect and how to talk to people, [like] this is your uncle, and how to greet people. Whereas I remember in other people's houses, all are on the same level, so the kids could go and their mother will be talking to another adult, and they'll be like 'hey mum, I want to get ice cream from the freezer', and she'll be like 'OK, Tommy' or whatever. It was very liberal, so these things, at that time, confused me to know that I was somehow different. I was not the only one that felt that way; there were Asians there who also had a similar background. We felt that somehow [for] white British [people], their lives were a lot easier, it was a lot friendlier. We wanted to be like them; we felt that something is missing in our lives because we did not understand the structure of our culture and identity and how it worked because it was not the norm at the time. I am not saying my parents were cruel because they were not, it was just that we had an order in which things were done in terms of how you talk and how you dress and then praying and things like that. Like when it was Eid, there was no Eid for the other kids, it was just Eid for us. At a very

young age, I started to feel that I was somehow different from the other children, so the issue of identity started with me very, very, [early] it was very difficult.

Diversity and discrimination in London and Washington, D.C. may not be as challenging today as it was 20 or 30 years ago, but there are several lessons to be learned from Ziad's example. The expectation of how to behave and embody cultural or religious practices was an issue many research participants struggled with as they grew up. In particular, they struggled with managing diverse identities along social, racial, national, and religious lines, among others, and, as a result, the creation of multiple and intersecting identities.

The profound influence that religion can have on children of migrant's identity formation offers the potential to reinforce and promote resilience. It is also a double-edged sword; in an environment when there are hostilities to a certain identity can also create conflict in their relationship with the society of settlement. In turn, religious identities can be a critical foundation in driving activism among children of migrants, whether to change negative perceptions or on the hand, they become an oppositional force to redress the discrimination they face.

5.3. 'Not black enough': race and ethnic politics in London and Washington, D.C.

'I was so concerned about people thinking, "am I black enough or Eritrean enough?"'

Tigest (female, early 30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.)

For children of migrants, race and ethnicity create a system in which they differ significantly, as the labels applied to them are often not based on self-identification only, but also on the imposition of a social construct. They hold a different positionality as a minority society: as black in

a majority white population, but also as minorities who did not fully belong to the box of being black, which has different histories and experiences in the US and UK. African-Americans are the dominant black group in the US, with a history steeped in the transatlantic slave trade¹⁰⁷ and subsequent civil rights movement (Eltis, 2001; Korstad and Lichtenstein, 2001). In the UK, on the other hand, the history of black people is steeped in colonialism and immigration from the former British Empire (Harper and Constantine, 2010). As recent arrivals by comparison, children of migrants' experiences and identification differ significantly from other black people.

Race emerged in my interviews as the central dividing line for children of migrants' relations with their society of settlement, especially their relationship with other black minorities. Being 'black' refers to everyone of African descent, with no distinctions made for specific details, such as features, hair texture or skin colour. However, even subtle differences in these 'black features' have created divisions among diverse black communities, a legacy of slavery and colonialism (Mukhtar, 2004). For example, skin colour¹⁰⁸ – as a marker of class – determined the social hierarchy of slaves in the Caribbean in the 1800s, and this legacy continues today across the world, as skin colour is seen as a marker of 'success' and 'beauty' standards (McNamee, 2018). These divisions are central to internalised racism, which impacts migrants' integration and can disadvantage them economically, socially and politically in the country of settlement.

Upon arrival to their new homes, many migrants may not be aware of the nuances of race relations in the country of settlement. On realising the power dynamics along racial and ethnic lines in the US and UK, which marginalise minorities such as black people, Horn of Africa migrants sought to distance themselves from being 'black'; instead choosing to be 'African' or another identity to

¹⁰⁷ The transatlantic slave trade with the Portuguese took place in the 15th century, where people from mainly West Africa were taken to the American colonies as slaves. The British became involved in the slave trade from the 16th century, which only ended in the 19th century (Chambers, 2001).

¹⁰⁸ Light-skinned people often had the highest social status, with the darker a person's skin implying the lower their social status. This is still seen across many countries, including Brazil, India, and Japan (Hunter, 2016).

distinguish themselves from other black people. These coping mechanisms provide them the impetus to seek opportunities for upward social mobility. For example, several research participants mentioned that their families did not allow them to befriend or socialise with their peers from the society of settlement, particularly minorities, as parents feared their influence, often regarded as unfavourable. For example, Aster (female, early 20s, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) recalled that her parents forbid her from watching African-American television channels and did not want her emulating their accent or style.

I remember my parents would not let me watch black TV, like 'there's a lot of slang language'. They didn't want me to do my hair in certain ways, they always wanted me to be respectful, and that was their perception of black people. I guess when you are coming to the US you see the extremes; you don't see all the colours of the rainbow.

In childhood, both male and female research participants experienced discrimination. A small number of those interviewed, all-male, faced physical and verbal aggression from other children and adults. Black children, particularly boys, are more likely to face more aggressive behaviour even from adults, despite the vulnerability of their age [Todd, et al., 2016]. Dut (male, early 30s, South Sudan, London) recalled an incident when his primary school principal both verbally and physically assaulted him as a five-year-old:

I was five years old and started primary school. All of a sudden, I realised I was black. I didn't really see any problems that happened to me in primary school, I had a good circle of friends, but I was different, I would notice favouritism for other races. For example, I was in primary school, and I had a friend, I can't remember his name because I was five years old, but it was in front of the copy machine, and there was a white kid, and then it [the copy machine] was like, beep, beep, and it kept beeping. It was out of control, and the paper was going everywhere, and I tried helping him, and we both tried to fix it. Then the Headmaster came, it was the end of lunch, and everybody had gone inside, and so the Headmaster came and was asking, 'what's going on?', and my white friend pointed at me. [The headmaster] told me to go back to the office, he told the young boy to go to class, and he took me to his office, and he stood me up, and he says, 'why are you breaking things?' I said, 'it wasn't me, it was the other guy', and he proceeded to say, 'would you like it if I was pushing your buttons? Do you like pressing buttons?' And he was poking me in the chest then; at the time, surprisingly, I wasn't very scared, I was more confused. I was five years old, and this grown man was poking me at the chest.

Dut continued to face increasing hostility and discrimination as he grew, particularly from his peers, which he attributed to his ethnicity. The culmination of these pressures at such a young

age hurt Dut and, by the age of 10, he felt he had no option but to stand up for himself and resorted to physical violence:

Any time a boy makes a joke about me being black, I would beat him up, so I became notorious, and I became what you call a bully, I became a rebel. I said I didn't care, so I was in trouble for fighting all the time, and I wasn't very academically focused.

It was only several years later, with his family's intervention and channelling his energy into sport, that Dut found the focus to begin excelling at school. Thus, families are the main safety net for children of migrants, not to only guide them from childhood to adulthood, but also to manage the negative effects of the daily stressors those facing discrimination experience. Children of migrants face considerable challenges as minorities, primarily associated with ethnicity and origin country. Amin (male, mid-20s, Somalia, London) had an experience similar to Dut as a five or six-year-old in London. On the way to school, he and his mother were subjected to racist taunts. Once, when he was alone, he was attacked by a white male adult:

I remember one time, I tried to stand up to them and one of the guys literally just grabbed me. Keep in mind that I was a small kid, and that was a grown-up. He grabbed me and threw me into the wall, and I ended up damaging my head, face and having scars, scratches and whatnot. That was life growing up in the area where we were the only Somali family on the block. It was constant difficulties not just with white people, but from other migrant families as well. There were other people from Caribbean or African backgrounds who were constantly just picking on you for no other reason than the fact that, for me, it seemed like it was we were Somalis.

Some research participants felt hindered by their minority status, as being a black male in both US and UK contexts is often negative. For example, African-Americans are five times more likely to be incarcerated than white Americans (NAACP, 2019). In England and Wales, black male defendants are three times more likely to be prosecuted than white male defendants (Ministry of Justice, 2017). Faiz (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) spoke to such hindrances when recounting his secondary school years, as this was the time he was inspired to attend Moorhouse, a prestigious all-black male colleague in the US, after writing an assignment about Martin Luther King

Jr.¹⁰⁹ Even though Faiz excelled at school, he felt his teacher had much lower expectations of him because of his race:

In my school, the black kids were the athletes, and that's it, so you get stereotyped. I remember being in chemistry class and I got a D on a test, and the teacher was like 'that's good', like that's good for you. But then to my classmate [who is white] next to me, she got an A, and [the teacher] said, 'you can do better'. So, there was this lower expectation. A teacher should have high expectations for all their class, but that's the realities in this country.

Faiz was frustrated; he saw that he was not encouraged to achieve because of conscious or unconscious biases¹¹⁰ based on race and gender, i.e. as a black male he is not expected to excel. The sense of not belonging, even as a minority, aggravated research participants' feeling of alienation, and in turn became a key factor in driving not only their activism, but also the type and focus of their direct action.

5.4. Balancing competing identities

Here, I use intersectionality to frame relations with settlement countries, particularly with regard to other minorities. The intersectionality framework looks at the different layers of identities – such as ethnicity, social class, age, religion and other forms of social stratification – as interwoven and inseparable, as well as their impact on marginalised groups (Crenshaw, 1989). I also look at how children of migrants develop strategies to counteract these disadvantages using skills, knowledge and transnational networks, which sheds light on how they establish agency through activism.

Identity formation sheds light on what may drive children of migrants to engage in activism and how their management of multiple identities affects their life trajectories, particularly how they highlight or hide some identities in different contexts. For example, Mariam (female, mid-20s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) described the multi-layered challenges she faces due to her multiple identities:

¹⁰⁹ Martin Luther King Jr. was social activist and Baptist Minister who played a critical impact on the civil rights movements in 1950s, and even after his assassination in 1968 (The King Center, 2019).

¹¹⁰ Unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias, refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in unconscious ways (Smolkowski et al, 2016).

‘Muslims, people like us with dark skin, finding out who we are is more complex than, let us say, someone not so meshed [very mixed] facing the same difficulties.’ Mariam’s relating to different identities – woman, Muslim, black from a migrant background – meant she faced challenges for each identity that differed from her peers; however, the combination of these identities can create different pathways for core identities and in turn, different reactions to a particular context. For example, Mariam enters a restaurant and is told there are no tables available, but a white woman of migrant background comes in after her and gets seated. This is Mariam’s comparator¹¹¹, they may have the same accent and even the same style of clothing, but the point of difference that led to their divergent experience is race.

As discussed in the previous chapter, more than half the research participants and their families lived in one or more countries before arriving in the US or UK. Thus, these geographical sites likely also influenced these children of migrants’ identity formation. For example, Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) was raised in the Gulf before moving with her family to the UK as a teenager. Sudan, the Gulf and the UK are all part of her experience and identities, as well as having influenced how she makes sense of the world around her:

You are not just Sudanese, you have come from the Middle East, you are Muslim as well, so there are so many things going on in your head. You are black as well, and African, so there are just too many things to kind of think about versus being British.

Aliyah, and many other research participants, draw their identities from lived and inherited experiences, including from multiple countries. Aliyah also makes judgement calls on which identities to emphasise or understate as she navigates different spaces and finds ways to fit into different identities, whether highlighting her African identity in a space dominated by people from Africa or her British identity in a space of dominated by white British people.

¹¹¹ The comparator concept is drawn from the UK’s Equality Act 2010. The comparator in cases of direct discrimination is when you are treated worse than someone else for certain reasons; for example, because you are disabled or because you are black. You do not need to be identical, but there must be sufficient similarities between the two persons to show that the reason for the lesser treatment is a particular characteristic, called ‘protected characteristics’. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011)

Children of migrants have multiple identities that differ from the majority society, other minorities and their parents, and thus have different perspectives of the world around them and how they connect to it. Khalil (male, late 20s, Somalia, London) went through a difficult journey establishing his identity, eventually finding he could not ascribe to just one:

At one time in my life, in my past, I would subscribe to be a black person, and then you find very quickly that there are different types of black here; that's diversity. Mostly, I still subscribe to being Muslim and being black, those are the most important things to me. But then you realise, beyond that, you also embrace the whole hip-hop culture or the urban culture, and then you realise this has its limitations as well. And then you think Somalia, and you realise I can work with this as a reference point, it's quite direct, there are no dilutions about what it is. It's like, it's exactly what it is, it's a country and a reference point. And then you realise, there are [many] Somalis.

Khalil realised he has more than one identity, but still had to undergo a difficult journey into adulthood of exploring different facets of his identities before he embraced all these identities. Khalil, like many of the children of migrants, came to understand that he does not fit into one box, as children of migrants are a jigsaw of identities that are continually changing. In addition, they manage these identities in different contexts by highlighting or reducing visibility of certain identities to reduce disadvantages and gain opportunities.

This multilayer of identities is a barrier to children of migrants' relationship with the society of settlement. In a sense, having multiple identities is perceived with suspicion by the society of settlement, as this society does not understand being connected to more than one place and fears a lack of loyalty. However, my research participants expressed that being assigned a singular identity was constraining for them. Dhalia (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) was cognizant of people's expectation of a singular identity:

I don't know what my niche is. Some people want to call me the black girl, some people want to call me the Muslim girl, some people want to call me the Arab girl, some people want to call me the doctor, some people want to call me the graduate, some people want to call me the migrant, etc. OK, great, thanks for all the labels, however, I'm not quite sure how I [can] react and how much I fit any of these.

Like Dhalia, most respondents felt they are expected to have a single identity; otherwise, they faced distrust from the society of settlement. Similarly, however, they also face the same

expectation and distrust from societies of origin, as children of migrants do not fit the spectrums of the origin society, whether that be not adhering to a certain identity – such as Nubian or Amhara – or not ostracising other ethnicities in conflict situations, but instead holding nuanced views of the conflict. This suggests that the assertion of identities is a strong motivational factor for children of migrants' engagement in activism, as a vehicle for establishing their agency in different spaces, whether in countries of settlement or origin.

The journey to forge their identities was often a complicated process for my research participants and, at the time, created schisms in families. Sarah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) spent years living with guilt as she tried to reconcile the different lives she had to lead and her comfortable spaces. It was only as an adult that she came to terms with and embraced her different identities and values:

For a long time, I did feel guilty, especially in those middle school and high school years, because it's like I'm doing so well at school, but I need to feel so guilty because culturally I'm not meeting this other area. Five years ago, [I] came to the realisation that it's not my fault that I was born Sudanese, and then I was flocked out of that culture completely, I never really grew up there. Once I realised that five years ago, I forgave myself for being who I am. I actually forgave [my parents], and I have forgiven myself.

Sarah's experience shows the often conflicted and complicated journeys children of migrants face. The challenges of migration do not stop when someone arrives at their final destination, but continue to have effects for generations. Managing multiple identities is a challenge for children of migrants, but is also something they recognise and embrace as it enables connection to multiple and diverse communities.

Constructing transnational identities

Ethnicity, nationality and other intersecting identities make it challenging for children of migrants to fit into one category, whether based on origin nationality, ethnicity or such, as they

experience a sense of both belonging to and alienation from both societies of settlement and origin. This was particularly apparent in how several research participants used the terms Third Culture Kids (TCK) and Global Citizens in defining themselves and their outlook. This is embedded in the conceptualisation of seeing themselves as cosmopolitans that expressed through embodying multiple identities.

The sense of alienation from society of settlement was more prominent among London-based respondents. For example, Adil (male, early 30s, Sudan/Eritrea, London) identified as British but felt his ethnicity prevents him from claiming a full British identity. Adil came to this realisation in his mid-20s, when a friend also with African migrant background accused him of being 'too whitewashed'¹¹²:

I identify myself, I would say British, but I don't look British. [But] I get all the British culture, all the referencing and stuff like that and I thought it was quite important..... but I don't care anymore because I realised that it's more important to have ethnicity and culture.

This sentiment of rejection grew out of a sense shame from their origin country identities, and, at the same time, being spurned by the society of settlement. For Adil, he had insider knowledge, the cultural cues and other references that allies him with being British, but this was enough; his ethnic identity and race became obstacles to feeling he fully belongs. Aisha (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) shared a similar sentiment. She grew up in London, regards it as home, but feels disconnected from British identity. For example, when travelling abroad, she tells people that she is from London, rather than saying she is British: 'London is definitely my home more than Sudan now, but I'm definitely aware that I'm not British.'

The sentiment of not feeling British raises an essential question on how the relationship with the society of settlement affects children of migrants. My respondents felt a sense of belonging in

¹¹² Here the term 'whitewashed' is used as derogatory term to mean a minority who has assimilated too much into the majority society (Pyke and Dang, 2003).

terms of the society of settlement language, English in this case, and had the accents, dialects, and other cultural traits that make them feel they belong. However, despite living in London, a thriving multicultural city, many felt rejected and alienated from the majority society. In comparison, Washington, D.C. respondents expressed a much stronger sense of American identity, despite the challenges they faced. This finding has implications for how the relationship with society of settlement may be an essential driver for activism, even more so than the country of origin. Moreover, this may also have implications on the geographical and thematic focuses of children of migrants' activism, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six.

For children of migrants, there is also a sense of alienation from the society of origin. This alienation can be based on linguistic knowledge, but also children of migrants' not fully connecting with the society of origin's values. For example, Almaz (female, early 30s, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) recognised early that she did not associate with the sub-identities in Ethiopia, which grew from living in different places and associating with multiple locations:

I personally don't consider myself Amhara or Tigray Ethiopian, I say I am Ethiopian then African, that is the extent of my identity because I can relate, I relate as much to [country omitted] and [nationality omitted] than I do to Ethiopians.

Children of migrants' identities are fluid, and they highlight different elements depending on their interactions with societies of settlement and origin. Among my research participants, the minority who engage in political activism in their countries of origin had the challenge of all their views being accepted in some realms and being othered as a foreigner in others. Asia (female, late 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) had difficulties being an activist on Sudan. While other activists based in Sudan or first generation in the diaspora welcomed her engagement around issues of civil and political rights, such as calling for the release of political detainees, when it came to discussions about rights seen as controversial, such as women and religious rights, she was often dismissed.

When I'm not talking about political detainees or when I'm not talking about women, but when things come [up] a controversial aspect. [For example] talking about apostasy or if we're talking about women's rights or something like that, people will immediately think of me as not Sudanese enough to talk about that and to be honest it's really hard for me to tell which part of me [Sudanese activists] wanted to be Sudanese.

Children of migrants are dissuaded from engaging in origin country politics because their identities and values do not fully align. For example, Jamila (female, mid-30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) felt her opinions were only valued when it suited the agenda of other Sudanese activists. For Jamila, this was difficult to come to terms with, as such activists were often more receptive to non-Sudanese views, in particular those from the Global North. These examples show that opportunities to engage in activism are not limited to settlement country; there also opportunities in origin countries. However, activism focused on origin countries is particularly tricky for children of migrants, which is even more true in contexts marred by conflict. Thus, children of migrants can be rejected by both societies of settlement and origin, forcing them to forge new spaces.

Multiple identities create challenges for children of migrants, but once they understand how to manage this in the spaces around them, such identities can also create opportunities in more diverse spaces. For example, Huda (female, mid-20s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) lived in different countries before finally arriving in the US as a young adult. Her diverse experiences informed her evolving identity during her formative years, she now associates with a more transnational and dynamic identity, and the way she introduces herself has changed many times. When attending university in the US, Huda faced hostilities from other minorities:

I had explained that I was Sudanese born in Saudi Arabia, so my friend from my first year here in the US, he commented and said, 'oh, I thought you were Saudi, and you didn't identify as Sudanese'. I said, 'I never do, I never said that'. So, at that time, I used to say I'm Afro-Arab¹¹³, for lack of a better term, and now I say I'm North Sudanese. I don't really explain the rest of the story, the Saudi part, because I've been away from Saudi for like [number omitted] years, so I don't fit that into the equation. [When] people ask where I was born, I mostly say Sudanese, ideally a citizen of the world.

¹¹³ Afro-Arab is reference to a complex intersection of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic of Arab and African identities, which is largely connected to people in the eastern coast, Horn and North Africa region (Khaleefa et al, 1996).

The dynamism of multiple identities offers children of migrants more opportunities to connect with a broader range of people from around the world who share similar sentiments. Ubax (female, early 30s, Somalia, Washington, D.C.) grew up in a predominantly white, middle-class area. When she attended university, Ubax was exposed to a much larger community of African diasporas and felt she could connect with them. This environment encouraged her to learn more about the continent and became a turning point for her:

[I] became interested in learning more about women coming from Africa, so I joined the African Caribbean student association. I became very close with a lot of the African students, and kind of developed a really strong bond with them, it was a really strong sisterhood, and I felt really comfortable in the environment, and that was really great.

Ubax did not feel she wholly belonged in the US; when growing up, she not only saw the difference between herself and her peers, but also felt family pressure to remain distant from the society of settlement. By not being able to emulate or fully embody either culture, research participants often felt guilty, particularly in relation to societies in origin countries. Ubax tried to manage the different pressures and expectations of both societies of settlement and origin, and felt guilty and fearful of disappointing her family if she was unable to fulfil these expectations. It was only as an adult that she accepted she was not a failure and began embracing the different facets of her identities. Ubax's reflections poignantly describe her journey of reconciling divergent values during her formative years, and her experience echoes that of almost all research participants. These experiences came to define them as adults and direct them towards choosing or creating unique spaces that do not fully adhere to either societies of settlement or origin. Along with intergenerational memories, these different pressures can be essential to children of migrants' search to assert their agency and utilisation of their multiple identities to manage relations with both societies of settlement and origin.

Nonetheless, the origin country is still an important resource and network for children of migrants. For example, the Somali diaspora is dispersed across the world, and while children of migrants of Somali heritage may not have the same networks as their parents, they are likely to form

transnational links based on cultural and linguistic connections with Somalia. Amin (male, mid-20s, Somalia, London) was part of a group of volunteers at his university in the UK who welcomed new students. He recalled an amusing instance of meeting another member of the Somali diaspora:

I remember we were waiting for one of the American students to turn up. This guy gets off the train, and we look at each other; he is a Somali, and he gets off the train, and we're both looking [at each other], and we started laughing. I had never seen this guy in my life, and we both started laughing. He says to me in Somali, 'are you laughing for the same reason I'm laughing?' And I'm like, 'yeah'. The fact that I'm standing at the train station like I'm British, welcome to my country, and he's getting off the train like I'm American, thank you for inviting me. But neither of us should be here.

The relationship with the country of origin differs not only according to generation, but also among children of migrants themselves. For example, how does the Ethiopian diaspora in the US and UK relate to each other? What are the codes of behaviour? What languages do they use? For some research participants, this manifested into what they described as an 'identity crisis'. Amina (female, early 30s, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) was raised in multiple countries before arriving in the US as a teenager. She associates with these different countries and finds it difficult to have just a dual Ethiopian-American identity:

I did not quite know how to associate with [the Ethiopian diaspora], I mean I did not know if they were Americans or Ethiopians. You go to an Ethiopian household, and you find parents who migrated to the US 30 years ago, but their children were born and raised here, and so you can see that identity crisis in plain (sight) in several households of Ethiopian descents. With the parents you have to be Ethiopian, as for the kids, they don't get that you have to be this Ethiopian-American, or American or whatever you call it, I think it has even magnified my identity crisis.

Children of migrants experience compounded pressure from the society of settlement, their families and country of origin communities to assert a singular identity, such as ethnicity, clan, or religion. However, children of migrants end up forging their own unique identities, rebelling against pre-assigned identities from either country of settlement or origin. These identities are fluid and intersect, creating a vibrant transnational space that they utilise to navigate their day-to-day lives, such as facilitating upward social mobility. This includes the differing gender values between societies in the countries of origin and settlement, which creates a conflict in values for children of migrants. For example, Horn of Africa societies are mostly patriarchal. Women and girls have more

household chores and restrictions on who they socialise with, dress and present themselves; in addition, there are high levels of early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)¹¹⁴. Men and boys, on the other hand, have fewer responsibilities in the home and fewer restrictions outside the home. However, bringing these gender values to the US and UK necessitates a transformation, as women have more equal rights, access to education and the like, and it is children of migrants who must manage these transformations. Ayen (male, mid-30s, South Sudan, Washington, D.C.) spoke to the pressures around what it means to be male, e.g. appropriate behaviour, the displaying of emotion, expectations, and perceptions of masculinity:

Coming from Sudanese culture, or African culture, we are trained, we are raised to suppress certain types of emotions. If you do not feel that, it can be a bad thing, and it could be a good thing, you internalise it and it becomes part of you; you do not complain about it, I am a man now.

Societal value systems in countries of origin are not always successfully integrated or have the desired result in countries of settlement, and gender has a particularly significant impact, such as how specific values are applied on women, girl, men and boys. In Ayen's case, he spoke to how patriarchal societies means incorporating masculinity concepts of mental wellness through internalising trauma.

This research has found that children of migrants create multiple identities that can facilitate their mobility, either through hiding or highlighting certain aspects depending on the social situation and context. Another layer brought to the fore is how they manage emotional intelligence, whether it is empathy to a cause or a heightened level of awareness of their surroundings. For example, children of migrants emphasise their African identity when speaking with someone of African heritage or accentuate belonging to London as an identity. In addition, being a minority means that some children of migrants face more risk of discrimination than their peers from the majority society,

¹¹⁴ According to the World Health Organisation, female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises of 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.' It has no health benefits and, in almost all cases, causes considerable complications to women's health, including urinary, vaginal and sexual problems, and increased risks during child birth (WHO, 2018).

and this creates a desire to 'fit in' by emphasising values held in high regard by the society of settlement, such as educational attainment or speaking the language with a distinct accent. As research participants became adults, they developed the skills and tools to operate in different spaces, utilise these identities to their advantage, and maximise available opportunities.

Identity formation among children of migrants extends beyond the national boundaries of origin and settlement countries, creating new transnational identities not linked to here or there, but instead connecting children of migrants to multiple spaces. These new identities are drawn from their origin and settlement countries, but are unique in their hybridity and agility, as children of migrants adapt themselves in response to opportunities and to mitigate risks from the impact of critical events and intergenerational trauma. However, having different values can create significant challenges for children of migrants.

Children of migrants face pressure to conform to norms and cultures from both their families and the society of settlement. These pressures create crises for children of migrants as they transition into adulthood; they must be agile in compromising between these competing values, as they belong nowhere. However, their connections to multiple spaces also creates a sense they belong everywhere; they are versatile and can connect to a broader range of people through different facets of their identities, whether based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or other factors. Critically, children of migrants develop tools to assert agency and counteract their disadvantages based on their position in different spaces. Their activism is unique, as they both belong to nowhere and belong to many physical and imagined spaces where their transitional insights and links to counteract challenges helps them create opportunities. In addition, children of migrants are affected by critical events in multiple sites, making them more likely to engage in activism than their peers in countries of settlement and origin.

Chapter Six - Political transnationalism in question: charting children of migrants' path to activism

In the previous chapter, I examined identity formation among children of migrants as they transition into adulthood. These experiences shed light on their relationships with societies of settlement and origin, in particular how they draw from inherited memories, lived experiences and their identities in their path toward engaging in activism. In this chapter, I investigate the different facets of children of migrants' activism, firstly looking at triggers, particularly critical events, and the factors setting their activism in motion. I highlight the four key categories of motivation – intergenerational memories, altruism, social justice, and assertion of identities – and then lay out the thematic and geographical focus of their activism.

6.1. Memories, history, and the future: understanding children of migrants' activism drivers

In this section, I present and discuss how personal experiences motivate children of migrants' activism. This is particularly relevant for conflict-affected diasporas, who have different types of experiences, particularly with regards to trauma and how it influences their relationship with the society of settlement.

Hailing from a conflict-affected region can have negative psychological impacts on a person, whether conflict was directly experienced or shared intergenerationally. Significantly, a delicate interplay of internal and external factors creates the 'perfect storm' that drives children of migrants' engagement in activism. These factors are intertwined with the thematic and geographical focus of activism; for example, activism around country of origin can be strongly associated with the motivation to give back or intergenerational trauma. Individual motivations can also be multiple and

change throughout a person's life; thus, there is an overlap in motives. Nonetheless, four distinct categories emerged from children of migrants' narratives interlinked to thematic and geographical focus:

Lived and intergenerational trauma: memories of traumatic events experienced by children of migrants' families, kin and communities, is a significant motivator for children of migrants to engage in activism. This emerged through their attempts to work or address issues of justice, protection, or raising awareness about the effects of conflict and similar issues. For example, joining protests against human rights violations and alluding to strategies that seek to redress injustices. Geographically, engagements by my research participants were not limited to countries of settlement or origin, they also engaged with other regions affected by similar crises.

Altruism: children of migrants' drive to 'give back', as a moral obligation, is a significant driver for their activism and manifests in different ways. Guilt is an undercurrent of this driver, as participants felt they had the opportunity to be protected and access to education and employment, unlike those left behind. This 'giving back' does not necessarily take the form of remittances, instead it mostly manifests in the giving of time and skills to different causes. While origin countries are the source of children of migrants' altruism, they are not necessarily the geographical sites children of migrants choose for charitable or philanthropic giving.

Social justice: children of migrants who experience disadvantages in education, employment and other sectors in their countries of settlement direct their energies to counteract these challenges. They seek upward social mobility in their countries of settlement both as individuals and collectively, for the benefit of those from similar backgrounds. This classification is defined around different types of activities, such as

hosting networking events and engaging in mentoring programmes for young minorities or other disadvantaged groups. Activities centred on social mobility are mostly focused on countries of settlement, as children of migrants are disadvantaged compared to the majority society but privileged in countries of origin. This category also intersects with altruism, as several research participants pursued professional careers in the development and humanitarian sectors; a choice that initially may have been driven by altruism, but subsequently became an opportunity for employment and upward social mobility.

Assertion of identities: identities emerged as a critical element in my respondents' narratives. As discussed in the previous chapter, children of migrants develop and associate with several identities, which intersect to create unique relationships with the societies of settlement and origin. In particular, their identities can be used as a vehicle for opportunity, as they can highlight or minimise identities based on the context. As a consequence, children of migrants' are motivated to assert agency through the expression and intersection of several identities, which can expand their spaces of opportunity and free expression.

Lived and intergenerational trauma

Experiences of lived and intergenerational trauma facilitate our understanding of identity formation among children of migrants, particularly from conflict-affected regions. The diasporic experience of conflict, even from afar, has a profound effect on them, and these traumas continue to be experienced for multiple generations (Danieli, 1998; Lev-Wiesel, 2007). Trauma can have adverse effects on children of migrants' psychological wellbeing, life course and opportunities for upward social mobility. Warda (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) saw the negative impacts of trauma on her peers growing up in London. For many, there was no space for them to redress or

cope with their trauma, a situation only further compounded by competing identities and discrimination by the society of settlement, which led to their downward social mobility.

Lived and intergenerational trauma can motivate children of migrants' engagement in activism, but can also deter their engagement with origin countries. Children of migrants are alienated from the day-to-day realities of their countries of origin, often do not share the connection their parents do in terms of networks or close knowledge of the context, and this creates an even wider generational divide. For Alia (female, mid-30s, Eritrea, London), Eritrea is a place that forms only part of her identities, as she is connected through kin, but it is not home. She shares this with first-generation parents who struggle with feeling alienated from their own children's experiences:

I am talking to parents now, and they [look at me] puzzled [asking] why their kids [are] not interested in getting involved in the Eritrean community, and I say to them, 'why would they?' They look at me [and say] 'excuse me [?]' They tell me about their experience, 'when we came [to the UK] in the '90s or the '80s or the '70s [...]'. [They] want [their kids] to belong [to Eritrea], but [I tell them] your kids were born here, this is home for them, they speak the language, for them, a non-Eritrean is a valid friend as [much] as an Eritrean.

Alia raises an important point here regarding how the values of migrants and their children differ. Parents expect their children to understand the difficulties and sacrifices they made in migrating, but this challenge is not limited to intergenerational relation, they also want their children to embody the same values. For example, Alia felt connected with people from diverse backgrounds, while first-generation migrants are more interested in staying within their national group. Children of migrants develop unique transnational identities, as they are not here or there, they are everywhere, and thus their lived experience in countries of settlement is only part of what explains their motivation for engaging in activism.

The effects of trauma might also dissuade children of migrants from engaging in activism in countries of origin. Interestingly, my research participants from politically active families learned their skills and drive from their families, but opted to get involved in different geographical and

thematic areas of activism. Only three of the 40 respondents directly participated in country of origin political issues. This suggests that political activism is driven by trauma, as children of migrants distance themselves from activism in origin countries experiencing politically volatile circumstances, as seen across the Horn of Africa. For Elsa (female, mid-30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.), coming from an activist family made engagement in activism feel like a responsibility:

A lot of Eritreans came [to the US] in 1981 and 1982. They [felt] safe and started having children. Many were refugees, fleeing the offensive when Mengistu used napalm against civilians, and the US changed its immigration policy... brought in loads of us, that group of young people born '83 to '85-'86. They are not carrying the same level of burden or obligation that our educated parents did.

Elsa's words show that trauma is a legacy that is difficult to escape, and many children of migrants seek to cope with trauma by distancing themselves from their countries of origin. Elsa wanted to distance herself because she felt that Eritrean political activism not only came at a high cost to her family's wellbeing and social mobility, but also, in the current Eritrean context, there were no middle ground options with which she could engage: 'There's a trauma that happens when you are a diaspora. I learned very early on that country came before family. I was so resentful of my father and even my mother.' This is a poignant reminder that children of migrants from activist families might feel forgotten amid massive political changes. Elsa gained invaluable skills and insight from her parents about how to engage in activism, but does not participate in issues affecting Eritrea. The combination of trauma related to her childhood and the Eritrean political environment pushed her away, instead, focusing her energy on African affairs.

Fundamentally, children of migrants feel antagonised by activism concerning origin countries. This is clear from the fact that only three research participants engage in political activism related to origin countries. Indeed, it appears the origin country context that led to their families' forced migration acts as deterrent for children of migrants, repelling them from participating in politics or other forms of activism directed there. This deterrent is founded in traumatic memories, whether experienced or inherited, which can be too painful to allow for direct engagement in the

country of origin, as memories of trauma can create a state of *fixate*¹¹⁵. Thus, while the person affected by trauma, whether lived or inherited, is galvanised by the anger of the perceived injustice of the trauma itself, they focus their energies on another site – a proxy of activism directed toward other causes – because of the internal crisis the original site can create for them. For example, both Elsa and Tigest were driven to engage in activism but opted not to focus their energies on Eritrea.

Context is also key to instigating children of migrants' activism. For example, the Horn of Africa region continues to be volatile, limiting opportunities for children of migrants to engage constructively; in addition, they are often also discouraged from engaging due to the increased risk to them or their family. For Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London), her father's experience of political activism, arrest and torture in Sudan discouraged her from political activism.

Because of my dad and how much he's associated with politics, I'm somewhat averse to it. Because I guess my dad is very strong in that arena and has been arrested over the years so many times. But I must have learned something from him because when he was [arrested] the last two times, I [was] quick on the ball in terms of activism and what to do and who to reach out to.

Aliyah is also disappointed by Sudanese politics. Political parties in Sudan, and even their members in the diaspora, are often disparate and divided along partisan, religious and ethnic lines. The conflicts and politically volatile situation in Sudan have repelled Aliyah from engaging in activism in the country, particularly political activism. Equally, however, she also realises her resilience and the skills she developed from her father's experiences. These qualities enabled her to work on community development in other countries and the UK:

I am a community activist really; I feel that the change will come from communities rather than individuals. I've seen my dad being individual so many times. It feels like [politicians] lost their element and don't do things with the community. It's because these individual [and] groups are just talking and fighting each other and not really doing things.

¹¹⁵ A state of fixate is when a person is not able to move on with their life cycle or bear to remember these memories (Alexander, 2004).

Aliyah and the other research participants want to make positive contributions and redress for injustices against their families or communities, but lived and inherited trauma from origin countries have created a gulf of fear and a lack of political opportunities to engage. Active conflicts and politically volatile situations perpetuate a sense of danger, even if a person is not physically in that space, and this makes the impact of trauma among children of migrants from the Horn of Africa even more significant. While they may not have experienced trauma directly, it is still not historical, as others are still experiencing trauma in their origin countries. This can push children of migrants away from activism in origin countries, and is one of the key reasons they choose to focus on other countries or regions. However, critical events can become the impetus for children of migrants to engage with origin countries, as seen in the examples of several research participants, such as the famine in Somalia in 2011¹¹⁶ or change in political leadership in Ethiopia in 2018¹¹⁷.

Most research participants acknowledged their trauma, or that of their families, but did not necessarily refer to it as a driver for their activism; indeed, they may not have been aware this is what drove them. For example, while Almaz (female, early 30s, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) never explicitly said why she wanted to engage in activism, one can still find her main driver in her family's history of having to leave Ethiopia when her father's life was at risk: 'My dad was one of the [position omitted] that survived, but at any point he could have died. A lot of his friends, you know his co-workers, most of them were killed. So as a matter of safety for him, he had to leave the country.' These inherited memories propelled Almaz to seek something she is passionate about, connecting her to Ethiopia through promoting its culture and arts, but it has also distanced her from wanting to engage politically. The knowledge that close family faced violence or could have died can be a

¹¹⁶ In July 2011, the UN declared a famine in southern Somalia as extreme drought across the Horn of Africa. The drought affected more than 3.1 million people in Somalia alone (Maxwell and Fitzpatrick, 2012).

¹¹⁷ After a turbulent three years for Ethiopia with large-scale anti-government protests, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, announced his resignation in February 2018. Desalegn was also the chair of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of four parties, triggered a contest paving the way for Abiy Ahmed. Ahmed, the first Oromo to become Prime Minister, was sworn-in in April 2018, and in earnest began mass unprecedented changes, including resumption of diplomatic relations after more than 20 years and the inclusion of women in key positions in government.

shocking revelation; some research participants shared their stories as factual anecdotes, while others had physical reactions, such as crying when recalling traumatic memories, even if not directly experienced. In addition, the fear and sense of danger that is part of the trauma is particularly relevant if the conditions that led to the family's flight remain in place.

With on-going conflict and political instability in the Horn of Africa, children of migrants avoid sub-identities related to their countries of origin, as ethnicities are often politicised. Children of migrants' identities have evolved beyond their families, as they are shaped by growing up outside their heritage countries and, thus, may not embody expectations related to sub-identities, such as language or cultural practices. However, children of migrants often carry the burden of the conflicts their families fled, whether as victims/survivor or aggressors. For example, Hussein (male, late 20s, Sudan, London) recalled an encounter when a white American man, a prospective investor in a project Hussein was involved in, asked him which part of Sudan he was from (before the secession of South Sudan). Hussein responded that he is from the north of the country. In the context of the conflict in Sudan, there is a presumption that those from the north are part of the aggressors, the government, even though they themselves may have been subjected to human rights violations. From his question and presumption, this man then alluded that Hussein must support the Sudanese government's attack on civilians in South Sudan¹¹⁸, because he is from the north. However, Hussein was aware of the complexity of this conflict and its endemic violations against marginalised groups, including the forced displacement, ethnic cleansing and genocide experienced by many Sudanese in the peripheries. This assumption triggered Hussein's intergenerational traumatic memories of his family's forced displacement to make way for the building of the Aswan Dam¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁸ The civil conflicts in Sudan are often simplified along regions and ethnicities. For example, during the civil war in South Sudan, international media often touted the simplified dichotomy of the 'Arab Muslim' northerners against 'Christian and animist' southerners. In reality, however, the situation is much more complex, as riverian groups in the north of the country have often dominated the political and economic power, but the central government has also targeted groups from these communities, leading to displacements and flight. Rather, Sudan is a complex microcosm of Africa, with a bridge to the Arab world.

¹¹⁹ In the early 1960s, around 50,000 Nubians in Wadi Halfa, a city in Northern Sudan near the Egyptian border, were forcibly resettled to make way for the Aswan Dam in Egypt (Hashim, 2010).

There was this person, this individual who was going to fund [us], and they are very wealthy, and they're from America. He was like 'which part of Sudan are you from?' And I was like, 'I'm from the north.' And they were like 'oohhh', and then paused. ...They were like, 'it's terrible what's happening in the South', and I was like, 'it is terrible.' That was a weird conversation because I just felt awkward. [Do I] drop the Nubian card, and tell them about the flood and everything? I don't know, but also people's understanding is too little, which is almost as bad as not knowing anything about Sudan.

Negative perceptions of origin country sub-identities, as well as adversarial relations between origin and settlement countries, can have detrimental effects on children of migrants. For example, those with European Union passports are eligible for visa-free entry into the United States, however dual nationals of certain countries, including Somalia and Sudan, or those who have travelled to listed countries are not entitled to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)¹²⁰ and must, therefore, apply for a visa. Moreover, to some extent negative perceptions of origin country sub-identities also feeds into the society of settlement's response to other identities, such as Muslim or black; it becomes another layer for rejecting or 'othering' individuals. Hussein's experience shows how racist remarks brought to the fore his family's trauma of forced displacement within Sudan before coming to the UK, and these types of incidents have a significant impact on the day-to-day lives of migrants. Such incidents heighten the sense of alienation and the impact of traumatic memories, which in turn can trigger children of migrants to pursue activism.

Children of migrants may have directly experienced the trauma in their countries of origin that led to their family's flight. However, those who did were children at the time and did not understand the significance of these experiences; they are only able to make sense of it as adults. For example, Tayseer recalled being a young child in Kuwait¹²¹, leaving during the war and only realising the gravity of the situation as an adult. Her family was separated for a couple of months as her father could not go to Sudan due to his political activism; they were reunited in Egypt and then

¹²⁰ Dual nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan or Syria, or those who have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, or Yemen have been ineligible for the Visa Waiver Program since 2011 (US Customs and Border Protection, 2019).

¹²¹ Tayseer's family were residing in Kuwait when Iraqi forces in August 1990 occupying the country for seven months before the expulsion of Iraqi forces by a UN authorised military intervention led by the US (Alnasrawi, 2001; Reuther, 2018).

travelled to the UK. She spoke about her peers' shocked responses to her story and her unawareness of the dangers as a child:

When I say [to other people] I was once a refugee, they would be like 'What? How could you be? What do you mean?' And I'll be like, 'I was in a war, and lots of people got shot and killed'... [I remember it] almost like flashbacks, but none of it was negative or made me depressed [then].... only as an adult when I heard my parents recount what they really went through, you know how scared they were. [Now] I realise how dangerous it was, but funnily enough [as a child] I just saw it as one big adventure.

Tayseer's recollection of her family fleeing Kuwait changed as she got older and learned how dangerous the situation really was for her family. Such lived and inherited trauma appears to raise children of migrants' perceptiveness about people around them and their potentially stressful experiences. Thus, one can posit that intergenerational memories of trauma cause children of migrants to be more likely to engage in activism; and, as the focus of such activism may not necessarily be people of similar backgrounds, this intergenerational memory also helps them empathise with a broader range of people and causes.

Overall, trauma is central to driving children of migrants' engagement in activism. Often, critical events trigger their engagement and influence the type and geographical focus of the activism they choose. However, trauma is not the only driver of children of migrants' activism, as such is also influenced by complex relations with the societies of settlement and origin.

Assertion of identities

Asserting agency through recognition and empowerment is one of the strategies children of migrants use to address disadvantage in the face of hostility from an oppositional or majority group. Children of migrants often feel they do not entirely fit into either society of settlement or origin, creating a sense they do not belong anywhere, regardless of their attempts. For example, Wardi (male, mid-20s, Sudan, London) grew up in multiple countries before his parents decided to settle in the UK. Despite limited personal relations with Sudanese people in the UK, Wardi saw himself as

Sudanese. Wardi felt rejected by the fact that he was regarded as a foreigner in Sudan, despite seeking to actively connect with Sudan through visits and family, but also did not feel he belongs in the UK.

This is when you see examples of children of migrants creating new spaces to fit in. For instance, Faiz (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) sought to organise social events to connect his peers with similar backgrounds – black, minority, university-educated men and women from African migrant backgrounds. He felt his peer group neither fit into mainstream professional networks - networks often dominated by white people, the majority ethnic group in the US – nor African-American networks, the ethnic minority often regarded as these children of migrants' closest counterparts in the US. Thus, this social space became a hub for those who felt they do not belong anywhere.

Negative stereotypes associated with pre-assigned identities in the society of settlement certainly influences the thematic focus of children of migrants' activism, with the majority focused their activism on social and economic issues. Such activism takes different forms, such as developing cultural events to connect with peers of similar minority backgrounds. Sharif (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) attempted to mitigate negative stereotypes by striving to fit into the society's 'ideal', downplaying his African and Muslim identities. However, Sharif found this experience to be quite counterproductive.

We had experienced 9/11. We had experienced a lot of turmoil, so that made me probably become more aware of who I am, and what I wanted to be. I started to make sure that, one, I am only myself and, two, I didn't try to portray someone that I wasn't because it was too taxing, and it took a lot away from my own life.

Sharif initially sought to appease his peers' negative perceptions and later shifted to portraying a positive impression of his multiple identities. Two factors could have driven this shift. Firstly, Sharif spoke of his experiences of discrimination from those in higher positions of power, and

so his initial reaction could have been part of a broader coping strategy that led to a heightened awareness of discrimination. Secondly, like most research participants, Sharif shifted towards gaining agency in the face of a torrent of challenges – from both societies of settlement and origin – and establishing his unique values. This directs us to children of migrants’ strategy to promote a positive image of their heritage cultures, which are often portrayed in a negative light. By creating a positive image, they generate pride and agency in that particular facet of their identity.

As discussed, the reasons why children of migrants engage in activism are complex and multi-layered. As explored in the previous chapter, children of migrants’ sense of belonging to both societies of settlement and origin creates an environment where they need alternative spaces to thrive by either utilising existing resources and networks or setting up new ones. One such example is the implication that their relationship with the society of settlement influences their motivation to engage in activism and its thematic and geographical focus, which I discuss in more detail in the following section.

Altruism

Altruism is children of migrants’ need to ‘give back’, which is drawn from their connection to origin countries. For their families’ point of view, this ‘giving back’ takes the form of remittances and sending other goods of monetary value to family in origin countries. For children of migrants, however, their concept of altruism extends geographically beyond kin and emphasises more sustainable contributions through skills and knowledge sharing. Many research participants expressed feeling guilty because of the privileges they experienced in the diaspora; privileges their peers in their countries of origin had no access to.

Guilt emanates from feeling privileged in origin countries, which sets children of migrants apart from their peers there. For example, most research participants carry a Western passport that gives them freedom to travel without restrictions, which is not true for origin country passports. Aisha (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) saw the difference between herself and her cousins during family holidays in Sudan. For a long time, she did not realise why there was a gulf in their communication and connection, which often translated to situations of being mocked for how she dressed and spoke Arabic.

I feel that I am really blessed, because whenever I go back to Sudan, and I meet my cousins or anyone else in my family, [they are] very different. My cousins haven't left Sudan.... so when I used to first go to Sudan in summer, you know when you're a teenager, I used to be aggravated by some of the things they said, and then one [time] it just clicked. How can I be so judgmental? And how do I expect those people to understand things when they never experienced it?

Aisha realised she had opportunities not available to her cousins because her parents migrated, even if it was to seek protection. She felt lucky and guilty at the same time, which drove her to engage in activism seeking to extend such opportunities to others.

However, there is another layer to the sense of guilt children of migrants feel: the effect of lived and inherited trauma, as those who experience trauma often feel guilty for surviving or escaping it. This can emerge through the pressure families exert on children of migrants to 'give back', which is also attributable to trauma. For Amin (male, mid-20s, Somalia, London), his association with Somalia is largely derived from stories his mother and other family members told him. These stories profoundly affected him and were central to establishing an imagined Somali identity: 'It's a feeling of a home I'm yet to live in, but I consider it home, if that makes sense.' This imagined Somali identity cemented Amin's link with Somalia and drove his activism. However, guilt was the underlying emotion driving him to give back through activism, prompting him to utilise his knowledge and skills for Somalia more generally. Amin's feeling of guilt comes from living a life that he feels afforded him safety, security and opportunities, while his peers in Somalia do not enjoy the same privileges: 'We had the ability to do something for them, and as we were doing it. It was sort of to get rid of the

feelings of guilt we had.’ Many children of migrants who participated in this study experienced this feeling of guilt when visiting or interacting with their countries of origin. This should come as no surprise, as migrants and diasporas often feel guilt towards their countries of origin; it is part of what compels them to send remittances, whether monetary, social or political.

The interplay of disadvantage and privilege is a prominent factor in children of migrants’ activism. For example, Khadija (Female, 26, Sudan, London) wanted to gain work experience after finishing her studies in the UK; but, as her family had limited social networks in the UK, they instead helped her to get work experience in Sudan, where they had established personal and professional networks. Khadija saw herself as underprivileged in the UK due to the intersection of her multiple identities – i.e. a black minority Muslim woman from a migrant background – which often led to fewer opportunities for upward social mobility. At the same time, however, she is privileged in the context of Sudan, as she holds a passport that allows for visa-free travel to numerous countries, had more educational opportunities and has foreign language skills. While in Sudan, Khadija saw first-hand the struggles young people face to gain skills in the job market:

[There was] this girl I was working with, and she was in [the office] every single day, and we were doing the same sort of thing, [but] I felt that she wasn’t progressing, she was just stuck there, but she did not know how she can move forward. I remember thinking and feeling very sad about it, to think she is deprived of that, knowing she is so hardworking and determined to make something of herself. Why does not she have access to that? You do not choose who your parents are or choose where you are born.

This experience prompted Khadija to try to address what she saw as a lack of opportunities for young professionals in Sudan, and Khadija’s case resonated with many other research participants, as they felt a lack of social and professional networks in which they fit in their country of settlement. Children of migrants’ families may not have had enough time to establish themselves in their new home, alongside their coping with their own experiences of trauma pre, during and post-migration. Thus, children of migrants develop unique insight into the interplay between disadvantage and privilege, which becomes a driver of their activism.

In summary, the motivation to engage in activism draws on feelings of duty and guilt, which leads to an altruistic response. This is also linked to trauma, as children of migrants feel guilty for 'surviving' or having opportunities and privileges their peers in origin countries do not.

Social justice

Children of migrants show ambition and strive to gain upward social mobility, whether as individuals or communities. This ambition is grounded in their relationship with the society of settlement, which is often informed by their minority status and a focus on socio-economic issues. The complexity of this relationship becomes clear as children of migrants experience more hurdles in securing educational and employment opportunities than their peers from the majority society, in addition to the fact that their families have not have had the opportunity or time to build networks and establish themselves. These factors propel children of migrants to engage in activism related to socio-economic issues, such as education and women's empowerment, to help advance their own social mobility and that of their peers of similar backgrounds.

Many children of migrants who participated in this project hail from middle-class families in their countries of origin, but their family's social status became lower in their new home. As new arrivals, migrants do not have the local knowledge or networks needed to navigate the new system and maintain or establish higher social statuses; this is often a struggle that children of migrants carry. Some children of migrants' families utilise networks in their countries of origin to create opportunities for their children, opportunities they may not have access to in their countries of settlement. For example, the opportunity to get work experience or a degree in courses with onerous entry requirements or prohibitive cost in countries of settlement, such as medicine. Indeed, several participants gained valuable work experience in their countries of origin; experience they did not have access to in their country of settlement. This interplay of disadvantage and privilege means

children of migrants utilise their privileged position in countries of origin to redress the disadvantages they face in countries of settlement, even obtaining employment opportunities in their country of settlement from the experience gained in country of origin.

As a consequence, children of migrants employ the strategy of pursuing activism as a profession to augment their influence. This is clear from the fact that a significant minority of research participants pursued careers in which they could advance and also have a social impact. For example, Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) pursued a career in law and decided to work with an organisation providing legal advice to refugees and other disadvantaged groups in London:

Being from Sudan, we are seeking asylum in this country, and now [see] what our country is going through. I have seen what my parents had to go through and everything, and that made me want to get into [international development] ... I was very interested in human rights because of what I know goes on in Sudan.

Aida (female, late-20s, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) was also cognizant of the fact that even though she gives back and utilises her privileged position to help others, she also wants to be financially secure. Her career in international development marries these different ambitions, but also working in this sector has raised questions for her regarding her motivations for helping others and how these have evolved over the years:

The whole White Saviour Complex part, people doing [development] because it's glamorous. I think I kind of feel guilty sometimes because I came to this realisation. What are my motivations for doing this work? My motivations are still so far from the 15-year-old girl, but I think at the end of the day I want to make a good living.

As a result of discrimination, children of migrants self-select and may have more opportunities based on aspects of their backgrounds that can be assets, such as linguistic knowledge. Thus, working in the not-for-profit sector is an opportunity for both individual advancement, as there is often not a level playing field for career advancement elsewhere, and to live out their moral commitment to social justice. This duality is akin to that of politicians who self-select to be leaders, as children of migrants are driven by both social justice and self-advancement at the same time.

The bridging of social mobility and altruism shows the complex spaces children of migrants navigate. They may not be interested in monetary remittances to kin in countries of origin, but they show their drive to contribute through using their skills and knowledge, as well as investment beyond origin countries, making them ready venture capitalist.

Network building, whether for professional or social purposes, is a key strategy children of migrants employ to alleviate their disadvantages in society of settlement and create new opportunities. For example, several participants, particularly in the US, were involved in or attended professional networking events that connected them to other migrants from minority backgrounds. Children of migrants are forging ahead to compete and create opportunities through such new spaces to build networks.

To circumvent disadvantages in the society of settlement, children of migrants can seek to promote a positive image of their origin countries. Participants expressed their hope that such would help open doors to more opportunities, but that their primary reason for pursuing this strategy was to empower themselves and establish agency. Sharif (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) is one such example, as he engages in activism focused on encouraging educational achievement among minorities. He wants to remedy inequalities and thinks the US provides numerous opportunities for social mobility, so decided that education was the best route to achieve this. His activism focuses on encouraging young people to utilise all the opportunities available to achieve their potential:

For me, my activism is education, and being able to know more, so you can empower yourselves, but also give your children the best opportunities. It's one thing to put them in school, make sure they eat well, and they're healthy, but it's another thing to make sure that you know what's going on. So you protect them from the bumps and bruises that are going to come, but also at the same time, you really take advantage of all the resources. There's so much that's offered in the US that we don't take advantage of that would just propel the mission that most parents have here. That is my activism, empowering adequacy, social empowerment.

Sharif and many other children of migrants are driven by the need to build resilience through self-empowerment and the empowerment of others of minority backgrounds. This came through in the multiple career moves several participants made, in order to develop skills and knowledge that align with this underlying drive. Undertaking more than average risk becomes part of children of migrants' assertion of their identities and control over their lives in the face structural limitations, such as institutional discrimination, in their countries of settlement.

Children of migrants struggle to manage the different motivations for engaging in activism, particularly pressure from their families to 'give back' to origin countries, while also competing with peers to secure jobs and seek upward social mobility in the society of settlement. Aida (female, late-20s, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) wanted to reconcile the pressure to give back with her need for upward social mobility. She felt different from her white peers because of her connection to Eritrea, a country with numerous development challenges, and this gave her legitimacy to work in the development sector. She recalled the first time she went on family holiday to Ethiopia as a teenager. When she arrived, she was shocked by the levels of poverty. She volunteered at a hospital and saw first-hand Ethiopia's debilitated health services, particularly as compared to the US. Despite her age, Aida wanted to do what she could to alleviate some of the suffering she saw.

It was my first time in a developing country, which also happened to be part of my ancestry. What I saw was a lot of poverty, like health and economic despair. Just seeing what I saw in Ethiopia, I felt very lucky and blessed. [I] felt it was somewhat part of my duty, being part of the diaspora, to do something and help.

However, Aida felt she betrayed her altruistic drive because she also wanted to be successful in her career. Balancing these expectations, the duty to give (financially or skills-wise) to country of origin and the desire to succeed in country of settlement, is clearly a challenge for children of migrants. They see their added value in contributing to origin countries – whether through remittances, knowledge transfer or cultural promotion – but their day-to-day reality exists in their countries of settlement, where they also want to succeed. Children of migrants face numerous challenges that require more effort to circumvent, which acts as a pull factor in addressing both their

sense of guilt and injustice. Thus, we see that children of migrants attempt to reconcile these competing aspirations particularly around critical events.

6.2. The spatial and thematic focus of children of migrants' activism

While a substantial minority concentrate on country of origin, most children of migrants focus their activism on settlement countries; interestingly, in addition, more than a third of research participants also focused on third countries or regions. Many participants engage in activism concerning economic and social issues, and a minority focus on political and cultural issues. To analyse these findings, I use Østergaard-Nielsen's (2003) framework for categorising the variety of transnational political practices among migrants¹²²; I aim to build on this work by looking at children of migrants' contrasting experiences, which I break down according to thematic and geographical parameters. For example, Østergaard-Nielsen's definition of 'immigrant politics' is orientated toward political activities migrants undertake to better their situation in their new homes, which equates to children of migrants' socio-economic activism with a focus on country of settlement. I also bring in different categorisations for children of migrants that are relevant to their different experiences, drivers and types of activism, as well as considers broader influences and extends beyond the settlement/origin country binary.

Here, I frame children of migrants' activism within three thematic areas: political, socio-economic and cultural. These three themes are more of a broad framework of the type of activities children of migrants engage in and linked to relevant international frameworks, such as the Charter

¹²² Immigrant politics refers to migrants' attempts to better their situation in their countries of settlement, such as lobbying for housing rights. Migrant's relation to domestic or foreign policy in their countries of origin are referred to as homeland politics. *Emigrant politics* refers to the secure socio-economic and political rights migrants remain in their countries of origin. *Diaspora politics* are a reference to émigré or exiles who seek to put pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Finally, *translocal politics* refers to development and humanitarian initiatives to support communities in their place of origin (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003).

for the United Nations¹²³ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹²⁴, guided these thematic divisions and helped set them within transnational activism.

Political: activities, actions, and policies that are used to gain and hold power in government, whether through peaceful or violent means. This includes transparency of government institutions, elections, security, conflict, political reform and peace-building. Thus, the political is geographically related to both origin and settlement countries, as it focuses on securing rights in these spaces. However, the political can also be transnational; for example, an Eritrean diaspora in the UK campaigning against Israeli policies that negatively impact Palestinians.

Socio-economic: community, local, international development and humanitarian-focused activities through institutions. These activities include addressing, promoting, or impending issues such as social protection for disadvantaged groups, education, health, religion, business, and the environment. For example, a person volunteering with a local organisation in London, delivering services to migrant groups or working with an international development organisation responding to humanitarian crises.

Cultural: activities aimed at promoting the arts, music, and other forms of cultural expression as part of the drive for social change. Cultural activities can also express concern regarding values, morality, lifestyles, and identities, and work outside structured organising, such as spoken word and graffiti art. Similar to socio-economic activism, cultural activities include local, national and global issues.

¹²³ The founding charter of the United Nations (United Nations, 1945).

¹²⁴ The SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly on 21 October 2015 that include ending poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth and tackle climate change (UN General Assembly, 2015).

However, while these are laid out here as three distinct categories, the division between them is not always so clear. Indeed, at times, the categories can be interlinked – for example, someone using music to seek political change in policies towards Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer (LGBTQ) communities – and activities can crosscut, as delivery of the activity rather than the end goal are the basis for categorisation. For instance, Faiz (male, early 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) organised events for African diaspora professionals across the US, creating social spaces for them to meet and network. However, while Faiz’s longer-term goal could have been to establish a strong constituency for securing additional rights for minorities, he never expressed this in our interview, and thus I categorise his activities as cultural activism. Another reason why the division can be less clear is that a person can be involved in more than one category. For example, Khalil (male, early 30s, Somalia, London) was politically engaged when Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006, but most of his subsequent activism focused on issues supporting migrant and minority communities in London, which is classified as socio-economic.

Geographies of activism

The geographical focus of children of migrants’ activism is not limited to countries of origin and settlement; it can also include third countries or regions. Most children of migrants focus their activism efforts in countries of settlement, but a considerable number also engage in activities related to origin countries. The focus on settlement country occurs for several reasons, one of which is the institutional racism and macroaggressions experienced by many, which gears their attention toward settlement countries. This focus relates to the power dynamics tipped against children of migrants, driving them to counteract discrimination and improve the opportunities available to them in country of settlement. Another reason they may have chosen to focus their activism on third countries is they espoused several identities, based on their experiences, and it became a coping

mechanism not to be limited by aligning to one identity, or the intersection of multiple identities allows children of migrants to connect with a broader range of peers and networks.

Most research participants experienced multi-country migration; they are connected to multiple spaces and are likely to be affected by critical events in numerous countries. Thus, children of migrants' memories, both lived and inherited, are not limited to countries of origin and final settlement, as they have absorbed even more cultures and diverse experiences. This connection to a multiplicity of spaces also provides additional impetus for children of migrants to engage in activism focused on a broader range of geographical locations. For example, Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) was raised in the Gulf before moving with her family to the UK as a teenager, so events in the Gulf interest her as much as those in Sudan or the UK.

This interest is what makes contextual activism in relation to third countries or regions pertinent, as the majority of research participants engaged in multi-country migration. Thus, children of migrants are influenced by more geographical sites than initially anticipated, demonstrating the importance of looking at migrant activism beyond the confines of settlement and origin countries. For example, Elsa (Female, 36, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) works extensively on issues affecting diaspora communities in the US and rights issues in Africa. She spoke about the fact that the drivers and skills for activism came from her parents, who were activists during the Eritrean struggle for independence, but this was not enough to persuade her to engage in long-term activism for Eritrea only. Similarly, Amina (female, early 30s, Ethiopia, Washington, D.C.) draws on Sudan as an example of a place she does not necessarily want to live, but it is a place where she wants to contribute her skills and knowledge to help alleviate poverty. She recognises that her interest extends beyond simply using her skills and knowledge, and not even limited to neighbouring Sudan, as she sees her transnational identity as a vehicle for activism around the world.

I don't see myself living in Sudan, but it doesn't stop me from wanting to help as much as I can at the same time. I have been living in America and interacting with so many people and having friends that are international, you realise why. I don't want just to help Sudan. I want to help the world. I don't want to be selfish and only give to one square inch of the world, it's not fair.

Geographies of activism also evolve around critical events and a person's life milestones. In her late teens and early 20s, Aliyah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, London) engaged in activism focused on the Sudanese community in London, but her interest became more transnational as she got older and associated with a broader black identity:

My interest become more diasporic, I guess, and more focused on the diaspora or black people in general and what we can do to change. While I guess in my late teens and early 20s, I was very much focused on my own community and Sudanese who relocated because my experiences still hadn't transferred outside that level to the next in the circle of development.

As they become exposed to more cultures and values, alongside critical macro and micro-events, children of migrants continuously make decisions about where they fit and where they see themselves. Thus, external influences play a significant role in informing geographies of activism. In the age of media, this should be no surprise, as it has become noticeably easier to connect with and meet more people. Hence, these online spaces are becoming more significant in drawing children of migrants toward different geographical locations. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement's¹²⁵ ability to draw support from individuals and groups in the UK and globally, even though it is based in the US.

Most children of migrants experience discrimination in the society of settlement, and this can increase significantly around critical events, such as the 7 July 2005 London bombings¹²⁶. This creates a sense of alienation among children of migrants, but also drives them to focus their activism

¹²⁵ Black Lives Matter is an international activist movement that grew from campaigns in the US against the systematic violence and racism against black people (Rickford, 2015).

¹²⁶ The London bombings were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks in London targeting commuters on the underground and a bus during morning rush hour traffic. There were 52 fatalities and some 700 injuries (Rubin et al, 2005).

in country of settlement, as they seek to assert their agency. Children of migrants develop strategies to circumvent these disadvantages by utilising their identities to navigate multiple spaces, access more opportunities and advance their careers. For example, Sarah (female, mid-30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) learned to utilise her migrant background to redress disadvantages in her day-to-day life and career:

As a black person in America, when you have international experience, generally speaking, people are impressed. And then when you're black, but you're from East Africa, or somewhere in Africa, or somewhere in Europe. They look at you differently. They see you more as this international person, and you don't necessarily get stereotyped into what they might think a black American is.

Sarah used her migrant background to counteract stereotypes of black people by highlighting her international connection, which she thinks is admired in the US. Her intersecting identities of woman, black, minority, Muslim and migrant provide her with the ability to show an international image, which sets her apart from other minorities in the US. In seeing how to challenge disadvantages, Sarah decided to help empower other minorities, changing careers to support young minorities in the US through education and developing tools to counteract discrimination.

However, alienation in settlement country does not always translate to seeking solutions through activism there. A considerable number of research participants attempted to focus their activism on origin countries, but faced too many obstacles. For example, Dhalia (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) had negative experiences of travelling and volunteering in Sudan:

I think Sudan is racist against these Sudanese expats and they need some cultural education. These Sudanese expats, especially the kids, need that contact. The idea to bring those two together, however, seems so nightmarish and culturally explosive.

Dhalia felt her Sudanese identity had been rejected, which is a feeling shared by many of the research participants who had similar experiences of feeling pushed away from connecting with their origin countries. Yet, they are still driven by the trauma from these countries, and this becomes part of their motivation to engage in activism focused on other geographical sites.

This finding links with several research participants, who sought to enable change by engaging in activism as a profession, notably in the development and humanitarian sectors. Their countries of origin were the impetus for their work in these sectors, but that did not necessarily mean they remained focused on those countries. For example, Ubax (Female, early 30s, Somalia, Washington, D.C.) sought to use her skills and knowledge in seeking change, but did not want to focus her efforts on Somalia, choosing instead to engage in international development in Africa more broadly.

Ongoing conflict and crises in origin countries are also notable obstacles to children of migrant's engagement in these countries. For example, the political situation in Sudan and multiple conflicts is often complicated and can reignite traumatic memories. Asia (female, late 30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) believed that being Sudanese is a burdensome identity for many children of migrants:

Growing up as Sudanese and a third culture, Sudanese is a very heavy identity, it is a very burdensome identity. And you know like whenever Sudan is in the media for a reason, and if you are not someone who either has the presence of an identity that is full of pride, regardless of all this negativity from the media, I think some people just don't want to deal with it. I know a lot of my friends in the Emirates who are Sudanese, they are Sudanese, but they end up staying abroad and sometimes just visiting for a brief period. But their engagement is minimal because they just don't want to deal with the burden; it is just too much.

Ongoing conflict creates a dilemma for how people engage with their origin countries, especially for those with a fractious relationship with the government. At the same time, the risks that forced either themselves or their parents to migrate may remain in place, and thus children of migrants' actions can still affect kin who stayed behind. Therefore, children of migrants engage in activism by proxy, focusing on other countries or regions.

What emerges clearly in this research is that children of migrants' focus on countries of settlement is driven by the disadvantages they face due to their backgrounds. Unexpectedly, a significant minority of research participants were involved in activism focused on third countries or

regions. There were some noted differences between those based in London, who mostly focused their activism on the UK, and those Washington, D.C., a considerable minority of whom focused on third countries or regions. Thus, we can hypothesise that discrimination is more endemic for children of migrants in London, requiring them to focus their activism on the UK. In comparison, those in Washington, D.C. had more opportunities and were more likely to focus their activism on origin or third countries.

As discussed, country of origin is not always the site of children of migrants' activism, and this is true for several reasons. Children of migrants' identities are associated with a broader range of physical and imagined geographical spaces. For example, a pan-African identity means an individual can fulfil their sense of duty by contributing to development initiatives in any of the 55 countries on the continent. Also, being a conflict-affected region, children of migrants from the Horn of Africa may not have a conducive relationship with their origin countries; for example, limited civil space can thwart their engagement there, and thus they redirect their sense of duty and guilt for the benefit of other places.

Activism themes

The thematic focus of children of migrants' activism varies, which is reflected in their geographical focus and drivers. Socio-economic activism was the dominant thematic area for activism among research participants; and there are several hypotheses for this. Relations with the society of settlement is a key driver for children of migrants to engage in socio-economic activism, as they face discrimination – including in education and the labour market – that undermines their ambitions for upward social mobility. Microaggressions and negative perceptions also play a significant role in driving children of migrants to claim their agency and counter their marginalisation in the country of settlement.

These findings are particularly interesting when considering political activism related to origin countries, as it suggests that children of migrants avoid overt forms of political activism around their countries of origin and even seek to disassociate themselves. Despite strong political opinions, participants did not express these views in interview, as they feared voicing such opinions could potentially harm their kin in countries of origin. The Horn of Africa can be volatile, and its diaspora can be part of this environment. For example, many Eritrean diaspora communities are perceived as highly politicised, as supporting either the opposition or the government, which allows limited space for those who wish to remain neutral. For Helen (late-20s, female, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.), this meant creating a space where she and her peers did not take a political position, instead focusing on their social mobility as a minority group in the US and building alternative support networks.

Conflicts in country of origin can transfer to the diaspora, but this does not mean children of migrants want to engage in politics in the same line as their parents. Instead, such conflicts often obstruct their political engagement, but there are exceptions to this finding, such as the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ)¹²⁷, which has Eritrean diaspora youth members. Hussein (male, late 20s, Sudan, London) believes most of Sudan's socio-economic problems and conflicts are political. Moreover, despite being interested in civic engagement in general, he actively avoids engaging in politics in Sudan as he fears it could adversely affect his family. His parents spend a considerable amount of time in Sudan, as they plan to move back; a growing trend among first-generation migrants approaching retirement age.

I find it hard not to criticise the government's policy because it's very ineffective, but that could risk consequences for my parents or relatives. I don't know; it's an interesting challenge; my friends who are interested in these things, the ones who are actually studying politics, they're more reluctant to do [politically related] things.

¹²⁷ The YPFDJ is a nationalist Eritrean diaspora youth organisation branch of the parent organisation, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), Eritrea's ruling party (Graf, 2018).

Families' expectation that their children politically align with them in origin countries is a significant cause of driving children of migrants away. This is particularly true in cases where there are substantial political divisions or conflicts, which is the case in Horn of Africa countries. Moreover, this is visible in how children of migrants are often politically absent, even missing from diaspora social events in London and Washington, D.C. There is almost a repulsion to connecting, with the exception of around critical events.

The findings around children of migrants' spatial and thematic focus of activism challenge political transnationalism's current focus on activism directed towards country of origin or settlement only. Children of migrants are also engaging in activism focused on socio-economic issues. Furthermore, activism in third countries and regions is much more prominent than originally anticipated, showing that children of migrants' complex identities connect them to multiple spaces, influenced by multi-country migration, which drives their engagement in transnational activism.

Children of migrants build new networks based on their intersecting identities that allow them to engage with a broader range of issues not limited to the boundaries of origin and settlement countries. This is likely also one of the reasons most research participants engage in socio-economic activism: their multiple identities facilitated engagement with a broader range of people which, in turn, led to the building of a network of allies across multiple spaces. These elements demonstrate not only the desire but also the concerted strategies of change-makers with ambitions of achieving tangible results for themselves and their networks.

6.3. Activism triggers: the role of geopolitical events in instigating children of migrants' activism

The instigation of activism is often a serendipitous moment for children of migrants. Prior to this, they already have the skills, interest and commitment, but have yet to find the specific cause that draws them to engage. Critical events are macro developments that can occur at the national, regional or global levels. These events can be adverse, such as natural disasters and conflicts; for example, Typhoon Haiyan¹²⁸ in 2013 and the Syrian Civil War. However, these events can also be positive, such as the signing of a peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which ended a 20-year proxy war¹²⁹.

Critical events can heighten particular identities for children of migrants, such as amplifying their origin country national identity during a crisis there, and can also disrupt claims of and connections to a specific country or cause. For example, the 11 September 2001 terror attack in the US had a significant impact on children of migrants, especially those with Muslim backgrounds, in both the US and elsewhere. This event negatively affected various facets of children of migrants' lives and families. Participants based in Washington, D.C. felt rejected by their society of settlement in the aftermath of the attack, despite their horror at the event and strong stance against it. While most research respondents were children or young adults at the time of the attack, they still felt the effects, as most saw and internalised the impact on their families and communities. While the changes they felt often took subtle forms, they still experienced it directly. For example, children of migrants were stopped more often at airports and subjected to additional searches. Asia (Asia, late-30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) was at university when 9/11 happened and very aware of the effects on those from minority communities. At a personal level, 9/11 created a sense of isolation and lack

¹²⁸ Typhoon Haiyan was the most powerful typhoon of all time. It made landfall in the Philippines in 2013, killing more than 6,000 people, displacing 4.1 million people, and disrupting the lives of millions more (Tiller, 2014).

¹²⁹ In July 2018, the Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed announced the normalisation of relations with Eritrea. The two countries had been in a perpetual state of proxy war since the border conflict of 1998, which ended with the Algiers Peace Accord in 2000. Since the armistice, the two countries have opened their borders and resumed diplomatic relations (Soliman and Demissie, 2019).

of belonging for Asia and felt her migrant background had a detrimental effect on her day-to-day life in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks: 'I had a high level of alienation [in the US]. I think the period was very hard, the post 9/11 period. Living in D.C., it was like all the warmongering, the Iraq war, the Islamophobia, the profiling, the hate crimes.' At the institutional level, this rejection emerged in securitisation policies targeting people of a similar background, even if not citizens, such as US travel restrictions on nationals from majority Muslim countries¹³⁰ as part of the broader tide of anti-Muslim sentiments in the Global North. In a sense, whenever there are reports of a terror attack in European or North American cities, children of migrants reject the event but also fear how it will affect them, how their colleagues and peers will treat them, even if they have no personal connection to or sympathy for the ideology driving that event.

There are also other consequences to the disruption of belonging, and activism becomes a route for children of migrants to counteract their marginalisation. For example, there is growing anti-immigrant sentiments in many parts of the Global North, in government policies and public opinion, leading children of migrants to feel an increased sense of alienation. There is no set formula laying out how discontent and isolation can lead to activism, whether positive or negative, but we can see that the interplay between internal (identity formation and family histories) and external (critical events) shows the importance of understanding the contexts children of migrants engage in every day.

Events in countries of settlement can also have a positive impact on children of migrants' day-to-day lives and instigate activism. For example, there was euphoria among minorities in the US when Barak Obama became the President in 2008. During the election campaign, several participants

¹³⁰ On 6 March 2017, President Donald Trump signed executive order 13780, '*Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*', into law, barring or restricting nationals from Libya, Yemen, Iran, Somalia, North Korea, Syria and some government officials from of Venezuela from entering the United States. This executive order revoked and replaced Executive Order 13769 issued on 27 January 2017, which restricted travel to the US for nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Homeland Security, 2019).

in Washington, D.C. were galvanised to take part, including Tigest (female, early 30s, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.):

Everyone who felt marginalised was like ‘my god, if we could have a black president, this is very incredible.’ And it [her involvement] was a mixture of being involved with the Eritrean diaspora for Obama and the African diaspora for Obama, and also just working for the campaign. I remember volunteering for the campaign, just by myself, and I don’t actually do things like this. I don’t even volunteer a lot, but I volunteered to jump on a bus and go to Ohio. I didn’t know anybody, so I jumped on the bus, and I went to Ohio. It was the most empowering [feeling].

Tigest and many others from migrant backgrounds were galvanised to engage in the election campaign; it was a point at which they felt connected to and part of American society. Thus, it is important to understand how reactions to specific groups, often evoked by critical events, can create an interconnectedness between specific identities.

While children of migrants do not always seek out activism, whether on a voluntary or professional basis, they have in them an undercurrent to seek change that can become the only viable choice when a critical event occurs, thus triggering their activism. This is seen in Tayseer’s (female, early 30s, Sudan, London) journey to establishing a charity. She had been interested in contributing her medical skills to a charity, but her family discouraged it. Tayseer’s parents, also medical professionals, struggled as first-generation migrants to secure long-term employment in the UK health sector and did not want Tayseer to face the same challenges. Thus, they pushed her to obtain a secure job.

[My father] was like, ‘go on, do this, finish this, this exam, and that exam’. It was constantly one thing after the other. I got to a point when I was just like, I’ve done too much too early, and I started to feel really agitated and claustrophobic. I wanted to delve into something a little bit more. Every time I decided or thought maybe I would take time out and work for MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières], he was like, ‘no, you do not need to, finish first and then do that because they want somebody who is highly skilled, and you are not there yet.’

Tayseer’s opportunity to break away from her parent’s ambitions arrived when the conflict in Sudan’s western region of Darfur erupted in 2003. She found herself being asked about Sudan by

colleagues, who enquired about the conflict and her family's safety.¹³¹ Tayseer had limited knowledge of the situation in Darfur at the time, and felt compelled to learn more so she could better respond to such questions. Tayseer's quest to learn about Darfur ignited her interest in discovering how she might use her skills to help civilians affected by the conflict. However, while this was the moment, the driver to engage in activism can be found in a much earlier period of her life: her experience as a child leaving Kuwait following Iraq's invasion. Her memories of this event, the trauma of which was compounded by the fact that her family were also not able to return to Sudan because of her father's political activism, had more impact on her as an adult than as a child. All these layers of events were brought to the fore when Tayseer was confronted with news of the conflict in Darfur; it became a catalyst for her engagement in activism.

This research shows that critical events not only heighten elements of children of migrants' identities but also instigate the evolution of new characteristics. Khalil (male, early 30s, Somalia, London) represents a relevant case among my research participants. In 2006, Ethiopia intervened in Somalia,¹³² and Khalil was among the numerous Somalis at home and in the diaspora who did not welcome this intervention. Despite not being involved in political activism related to either the UK or Somalia at the time, Khalil co-organised an event to raise awareness about the situation and show his opposition to the Ethiopian intervention. Khalil identified as a Somalilander¹³³ but decided to set aside these differences to embrace a broader Somalia identity. At that time, he felt a collective unified position as Somali was more critical, and divisions should be set aside:

I never could really relate to people of Somalia, being from Somaliland we had completely different backgrounds, but then suddenly you had this foreign occupier in Somalia, that was Ethiopia. So, forget the idea of the tribes and clans or the political conflict because now it was

¹³¹ Geographically, there is considerable distance – around 800 kilometres – between Darfur and Sudan's capital Khartoum, and the conflict was mainly confined to the Darfur. The exceptions to this were the government targeting of civilians across the country with links to Darfur and the attempted attack on Khartoum by one of the Darfuri rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), in May 2007 (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

¹³² In 2006, Ethiopia invaded Somalia to support the then Somalia Transitional Government (TFG) in their fight against the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which led to a high number of civilian casualties. Ethiopia withdrew two years later (Bamfo, 2010; Møller, 2009).

¹³³ Somaliland is a self-declared state that sought a distinctly different identity from Somalia; a legacy of the Siad Barre government's crackdown on the Hargeisa-based armed opposition group, the Somali National Movement (SNM), in 1988 (Hoehne, 2019).

all about, 'what are the Ethiopians doing on our land?' That is not something I can't tolerate, and all the Somalis from Djibouti, to Kenya, to Ethiopia, to Somalia, to Somaliland were united against the Ethiopians.

Ethiopia's incursion in the Somali conflict shook the Somali diaspora. Coupled with its closeness to Ramadan and the media images of displaced people, this event galvanised the Somali diaspora to not only provide humanitarian assistance but also lobby for the expulsion of Ethiopian troops. For example, Amin (male, mid-20s, Somalia, London) was shocked by the images of Somalia in the media. He was galvanised, along with many other children of migrants with Somali heritage, to assist in the humanitarian response to the crisis and raise money to send to Somalia. He was surprised by the positive response to his efforts from first-generation Somali migrants, as often they dismissed the second generation's connection to Somalia:

Basically, [we] organised in the space of a week. We started going around collecting money, we had gone on Somali TV and Somali Radio, we just did a lot, and we raised a decent amount The idea [was] when we deliver [the money] to the other side, we're going to call Somali TV and go public as to where the money has gone, so you avoid that typical 'well they just took the money and just used it for their own gains' and stuff like that. And it was just as you were walking down the street, the amount of random Somali women who would break down into tears when we were telling them what we were doing, and they just started praying for us and saying 'this is what we've been waiting for, youths that haven't been tainted'. It really does build into the idea of charity. We are doing something positive; we're doing something amazing.

Amin and Khalil were galvanised to raise humanitarian funds for Somalia and engage politically to advocate for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. The background to their actions was not simply empathy for the plight of civilians in Somalia, but also the context of their own family's pre-migration history. As both of their families had fled civil wars, Amin and Khalil had a heightened sense of empathy for people undergoing similar experiences. In addition, opposition to Ethiopia's military presence in Somalia is also intertwined with the geopolitical histories of the Ogaden war.¹³⁴ This shows how present-day events can not only bring memories of trauma to the fore, prompting

¹³⁴ In 1977-1978, Somalia launched a military offensive against Ethiopia over the disputed Ogaden region, a territory in Ethiopia inhabited by predominantly ethnic Somalis. This incursion was part of ambitions for uniting Greater Somalia, which includes all territories inhabited by ethnic Somalis – which were divided by colonial powers – in the Northern District of Kenya, Djibouti, Ogaden in Ethiopia and modern day Somalia, including Somaliland (Tareke, 2000).

children of migrants' activism, but also how these events can heighten or diminish particular identities, showing the fluidity of identity among children of migrants.

While critical macro-level events certainly play a crucial part in instigating children of migrants' activism, the internal, micro-level factors raise questions around how the interplay of internal and external environments act as drivers of activism. Helen (late-20s, female, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) articulated this difference in describing how she felt pushed away from engaging in Eritrean politics due to the deep divisions within the diaspora.

For a long time, I felt like I wanted to be a part of some type of community or organisation, but I couldn't align myself with YPFDJ¹³⁵. Then, when I looked at some of the opposition groups, I also didn't see myself represented in those groups either, and I couldn't say that I identified with their political ideologies.

Helen's experience demonstrates that the impact of such factors is not necessarily static, as despite having a negative association with Eritrea, her Eritrean identity was significant to driving her activism. Helen's stance was made even more evident during a visit by the Eritrean President Isais Afewerki to the United Nations in New York in 2011. This was a turning point for Helen, as she watched the anger of the community's opposing sides spill out onto the street in a confrontation between a young woman and an older man. Helen fit with neither group and, thus, wanted a space to articulate herself, her identities and her visions. That incident was to become the catalyst for the creation of a neutral space for the Eritrean diaspora, especially the second generation who did not want to engage in divisive Eritrean politics.

Critical events play an important role in galvanising children of migrants' activism, but this does not mean such activism will focus on those issues. The Arab Spring¹³⁶ in Egypt saw thousands of protesters on the streets of cities across the country; this became the inspiration for Huda's (mid-20s, female, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) engagement in activism. Huda lived in the Egyptian capital,

¹³⁵ The Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ).

¹³⁶ The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy uprisings that enveloped several largely Muslim countries, including Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Bahrain. The events in these nations generally began in the spring of 2011, which led to the name (Lotan et al, 2011).

Cairo, during the revolution, but as a Sudanese diaspora, she did not feel she could take part. However, the effects of the Arab Spring remained with her, and when protests broke out in Sudan in 2011¹³⁷, Huda wanted to be involved. Although she felt somewhat disconnected from the narrative of fighting injustice in Sudan, as she did not live these struggles, Huda utilised her transnational space to support Sudanese refugees in Egypt.

I was in Egypt around the time of the revolution, but I didn't really contribute to that. But when I went to Sudan there were protests happening, so I went out to see, I wanted to get a feel of what everyone was fighting for, the patriotism and everything. Then I knew I could understand people's struggles more when I went to Egypt. I worked more with Sudanese [based in Egypt] who were persecuted in Sudan. They had things happening to them in Sudan, so I was able to understand more [about] people's struggles, the systems, the brutality, and everything.

Building on her experience working with Sudanese refugees in Egypt, Huda continued to engage in activism when she moved to Washington, D.C. She used the knowledge acquired in Egypt to focus her efforts on changing US foreign policy towards Sudan.

The interplay of identities and motivation with critical events shows that such scenarios are complicated. Children of migrants must navigate multiple identities, which can be both advantageous – as they connect to different spaces – and make them feel like outsiders or imposters, whether concerning countries of settlement or origin. Huda and other participants were able to identify and navigate these often complicated scenarios and spaces, as they saw the added value of being transnational and bringing their skills and values to causes. Thus, critical events ignite elements of children of migrants' identities that become the motivators of their activism.

In conclusion, a degree of receptiveness is required before a critical event can ignite activism in children of migrants. Moreover, with multiple identities, children of migrants are more likely than their peers in either countries of settlement or origin to engage in activism, as they are connected to multiple sites and thus affected and influenced by more diverse issues. It can be true that critical

¹³⁷ In early 2011 protests broke out in Sudan, were settled, and began again in 2012 and 2013 (Medani, 2011 and Human Rights Watch, 2013).

events, whether negative or positive, can force identities or intergenerational memories to manifest much more strongly, spurring the drive for engagement in activism. However, this does not mean all children of migrants are activists; there are many who make a different choice. What these findings do suggest, nonetheless, is that children of migrants are more likely to engage in activism, by virtue of their multiple identities and connections with various geographical sites.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter looked at what motivates children of migrants to engage in activism, and yielded several key findings. Noteworthy among these findings is that children of migrants' activism does not always focus countries of settlement or origin, it can also focus on third countries or regions. This challenges the framing of migrant activism within the confines of settlement and origin countries only, as activism among children of migrants including third countries. Moreover, this was central to the finding that children of migrants draw motivation for their activism from origin countries, but can direct it toward other sites.

Other key findings include the prominent role of trauma in shaping children of migrants' activism, which revealed the interconnectedness and significant degree of reciprocity between how children of migrants view and comprehend the interplay of their relationship with the society of settlement (disadvantage) and origin (privilege). Central to these complex internal and external triggers are children of migrants' backgrounds, how they realise their racial and ethnocultural identities, and how these intersect, mediate and negotiate metaphorical constructions of 'home'. In particular, how geopolitical events can lead children of migrants to highlight or downplay some of their identities.

Critical events play a substantial role in instigating activism. Such events trigger specific memories, almost flashbacks, as well as lived and inherited trauma for those from conflict-affected

countries. Due to their multiple identities and connections to numerous places, children of migrants empathise and engage in activism beyond countries of settlement and origin, thus highlighting the limitations of framing migrant activism only within these geographical sites. Multi-country migration is experienced by most children of migrants' families, and this adds to the dynamism of this group.

Children of migrants learn the skills that facilitate their activism from their families, their societies of settlement and countries origin; skills such as communication and network building. However, the thematic and geographical focus of children of migrants' activism is not necessarily directed at origin or settlement countries. This results in the development of an array of skills and insights that are unique to children of migrants, making them exceptional within the sphere of activism, as they can cross boundaries between geographies, backgrounds, and values.

Chapter Seven - Conclusion and future work

Undertaking this research has been an invaluable learning experience for me. I gained much insight into the research process and it was often an exciting experience. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories, that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, but also immensely rewarding and even exhilarating. This scholarly and personal endeavour have brought interesting challenges to my perceptions as a practitioner on migration and what are the consequences of these movements. And importantly context is at the heart of understanding how people operate, the conditions that led to a person's migration becomes embedded into their stories and how they make sense and interact with the world around them. In this concluding chapter, I set out the main findings of the research.

7.1. Main research findings

This thesis examined transnational political practices among children of migrants, using Østergaard-Nielsen's (2003) framing of political transnationalism¹³⁸, focusing on those from the Horn of Africa based in London and Washington, D.C. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What type of transnational political practices are children of migrants engaged in?
2. What are their motivations for or aspirations of engaging in transnational political practices?

¹³⁸ *Immigrant politics* refers to migrants' attempts to better their situation in their countries of settlement, such as lobbying for housing rights. Migrants' relation to domestic or foreign policy in their countries of origin are referred to as *homeland politics*. *Emigrant politics* refers to the secure socio-economic and political rights migrants maintain in their countries of origin. *Diaspora politics* are a reference to émigré or exiles who seek to put pressure on governments in politically volatile or conflict-affected countries. Finally, *translocal politics* refers to development and humanitarian initiatives to support communities in their place of origin (2003, 762-763).

3. What influences, if any, do social relations have on children of migrants' motivations and the types of transnational political practices they engage in?

This research found that children of migrants' motivations and aspirations are not dictated by or limited to their countries of settlement and origin, instead, they use a transnational lens. Their journey to activism is related to a complex set of circumstances based on both macro geopolitical events and the micro-level lived experiences, inherited memories of their family's migration, and their day-to-day interactions with the society of settlement.

A first core finding is that lived and intergenerational trauma is crucial to understanding children of migrants' engagement in activism. Second, experiences of multi-country migration – sometimes prior to arriving in the final country of settlement – matter. More than a third of my research participants or their families experienced multi-country migration, and this influenced the thematic and geographical focus of their activism. Third, social justice was a key theme in my research participants' activism, which reveals the significance of identity formation and how children of migrants manage multiple, intersecting identities – highlighting some and downplaying others – in their relationship with the societies of settlement (disadvantage) and origin (privilege). And finally, the fourth finding this research showed how geopolitical events galvanise children of migrants' activism. And this is when their relationships and their identities become heightened and hidden as they circumnavigate the repercussions of these critical events.

Thus, we must look at children of migrants' activism cohesively, from three separate angles: firstly, we must look at their past in countries of origin and the conditions that led to their migration, including multi-country migration before arriving in the UK or US as final destination countries; secondly, we must turn attention to the present and look at their lived experiences, relations with

the society of settlement, and navigation of competing narratives of who they are and what they are supposed to be, with identity being at the centre; and lastly, we must look at their aspirations for the future, their goals, as a representation of their activism and the spaces they seek to create or change.

Looking at the past: Healing lived and intergenerational trauma

Lived and intergenerational trauma is a key impetus for activism among children of migrants, and this makes understanding their migration histories – in particular, the events that led to their families' migration – critical to our understanding of migrant engagement. What decisions did they make along the way? Did they know where they were going? Was there time for them to plan or was their migration sudden? Did they have support networks or resources, or were they alone? Was it a simple plane ride to their final destination or did it take them years to arrive there? All these factors are significant to children of migrants' narratives and how they see the world around them. For example, Elsa (mid-30s, female, Eritrea, Washington, D.C.), as discussed in Chapter Four, recalled her family's terrifying, clandestine trip across the Ethiopian-Sudanese border; what happened that forced her family to take such risks? She knows there is a terrible history, and even though she did not live it, she is angered by the injustice and pain her family endured. Thus, we can infer that this is the nucleus of her activism. However, how her activism manifests, including its thematic and geographically focus, is directed by her own lived experiences, the space of engagement and the issues faced by her or her community.

The effects of trauma can make acculturation even more challenging and cascade into critical life decisions. In particular, conflict diasporas are susceptible to mental health issues that have adverse effects on their relationship with the society of settlement, such as clinical depression. This, coupled with the stress of being in a new place with different rules, customs and language, can have long-lasting impacts on conflict diasporas and their descendants, as the effects of trauma seep into

everyday life, at school, in community spaces, in shops, and with their neighbours and others. However, children of migrants have a relationship with the society of settlement that differs from their parents. For example, children of migrants had close, day-to-day interactions with their peers at school, whilst their parents may not have had daily or intense interactions with the society of settlement. Also, children of migrants are more likely than their parents to speak the language of the country of settlement with a native accent, have cultural know-how and other inherent cultural and social cues that make them part of that society. Despite this, children of migrants are still outsiders, because they have different memories, values and identities than their peers and society in general. Indeed, children of migrant are also foreigners in their societies of origin in many ways, as they have forged other identities and do not belong solely to one site; they are connected to multiple spaces.

Despite the challenges of coping with lived and intergenerational trauma, children of migrants show much resilience, utilising unique coping mechanisms to deal with trauma and counteract challenges. For example, as discussed in Chapter Four, despite being displaced following a harrowing attack on his village and being separated from his family as a child, Ayen (male, mid-30s, South Sudan, Washington, D.C.) channelled his trauma towards embodying an American success story, build skills and knowledge, and obtain upward social mobility. As they are not fully embraced by either society of settlement or origin, children of migrants deftly navigate multiple identities to redress challenges they face in either place. This is exemplified by the case of Jamila (female, mid-30s, Sudan, Washington, D.C.), which was discussed in Chapter Six. Growing up in the Gulf region prior to settling to the US, Jamila felt rejected by Sudanese activists in her Sudan-focused activism, particularly when addressing controversial issues. However, she mitigated this rejection and maintained her engagement with Sudan through her American identity, establishing a professional angle to her engagement that allowed her to remain distant from inner Sudanese politics. At the same time, Jamila also felt her American identity is challenged in the US, and thus embraced a pan-African identity that connects her transnationally to other African diasporas.

The effects of trauma serve as both tools of and constraints to activism. This came through strongly in my interviewees' narratives of their relations with societies of settlement and origin, particularly in relation to the geographical focus of their activism, as their engagements extended to other regions – beyond countries of settlement and origin – affected by similar crises. For example, as discussed in Chapter Four, Aisha (mid-30s, female, Sudan, London) remembered vividly her family's flight from Sudan and their fear as security officials boarded the flight to arrest her father. The family had to bribe the officials with everything of value they had in order to stop the arrest. These memories have remained with Aisha, and have been key to dissuading her from working on Sudan; while she still wants to seek redress, it is too difficult for her both practically and emotionally, so she instead opted to focus on channelling her activism towards other contexts.

Context is important to understanding how trauma affects children of migrants' activism. The Horn of Africa, where all my participants hail from, is both a current and historically tumultuous region, with ongoing political crises, economic challenges, environmental degradation, conflicts and social upheaval. Thus, as this demographic learns of or experiences new and ongoing crises, the trauma is reexperienced. While individual healing may have occurred, the trauma still collectively endures, acting as a wound for children of migrants, who feel compelled to seek redress and heal their trauma. Thus, this trauma becomes a motivating factor for their engagement in activism.

Transnational lives: Multi-country migration

More than a third of my research participants or their families lived in different countries before arriving in the UK or the US, making transnational migration much more significant to the study of migrant activism. This finding was unexpected and suggested that children of migrants' motivations for engaging in activism are not limited to or necessarily influenced by countries of settlement and origin, but also potentially other countries and regions. This fundamentally

challenges the binaries of the political transnationalism framework, as those are built strictly around settlement and origin countries. However, this research shows that multi-country migration is common among forced migrants, as well as the fact that they absorb and build connections with these places. For example, as was explored in Chapter Five, Alia (mid-30s, female, Eritrea, London) and her family were living in the Gulf region with no apparent plans to move elsewhere. However, when the situation changed in Eritrea following the border war with neighbouring Ethiopia, her family feared they could no longer return to Eritrea and their residence in Saudi Arabia was somewhat precarious, as it was contingent on a job. Alia's family was part of a small minority with access to resources, in stark contrast to the millions with limited options. Thus, they were able to seek not only immediate safety but also consider future security. Having spent time in Saudi Arabia, Alia identified and connected to the country more than Eritrea.

Children of migrants have different levels of their identities, and their interests may not relate to physical connections with a country. Children of migrants' identification with their country of origin appears to be broader, including connections with other countries or region based on these identities. Several research participants identified religion as a significant identity, so they connect with people also along these lines. For example, when one gives *zakat*¹³⁹ at the end of Ramadan, this contribution is not necessarily distributed to kin or people from origin countries; it can be dispersed across Muslim countries.

The intergenerational transmission of trauma and relations with society of settlement are critical to children of migrants' engagement in activism. However, origin and settlement countries are not the only factors that drive and form the geographical and thematic focus of that activism. This is clear from the fact that most of this study's participants experienced – or their families

¹³⁹ *Zakat* (زكاة) is one of the five pillars of Islam; a form of alms regarded as a religious obligation. Each year, those who can donate a portion of their wealth (around 2.5 percent) to vulnerable people. *Zakat* is generally collected and distributed by charities (Suprayitno et al, 2017).

experienced – multi-country migration and their engagements are linked to their transitional identification with broader identities, such as pan-African.

The Present: Social justice in a hostile environment

Through my interviews, it emerged that children of migrants sought opportunities for upward social mobility as a key strategy in combatting the disadvantages they face in their society of settlement, and this social mobility was significant to motivating their activism. As discussed in Chapter Six, for example, Aida (late 20s, female, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Washington, D.C.) spoke of her internal battle regarding contributing to her origin countries, as she struggled with how to balance this with her ambition of upward social mobility. A small majority of children of migrants engaged in activism in countries of settlement rather than countries of origin, and the majority of those engaged with countries of origin were based in Washington, D.C., which is significant for several reasons.

Most research participants were focused on minority politics in their societies of settlement, as they sought to improve their social and economic standing. This engagement took different forms, such as developing cultural events to bring their peers together, but also disassociated them from other minorities facing discrimination by the majority society. For example, children of migrants in Washington, D.C. did not fully embrace the African-American identity, even though they face similar discrimination by the majority society. For example, as discussed in Chapter Six, Hiba (late-20s, female, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) did not relate to the African-American history of slavery; her historical narratives are drawn from the conflict in Sudan that drove her family to migrate. However, her day-to-day interactions with the majority society showed she was viewed along the same lines as African-Americans, although they have fundamentally different histories. This showed how the majority society does not consider the nuances of diverse historical narratives among black communities. Inherently, children of migrants experience different lived and intergenerational

traumas, and thus their connections, drivers and insights are different, as they are more influenced by their country of origin or other countries outside the settlement country. In addition, the source of trauma is still present in the context of the Horn of Africa, as conflicts and forced migration are ongoing, being a constant reminder.

Most of the research participants hailed from families who held a privileged social position in their countries of origin. This social status was carried to the country of settlement, driving children of migrants to strive to attain and sustain these privileges in the society of settlement. This is part of resilience-building against discrimination, as children of migrants experienced phenomenal pressure to succeed in response to feeling guilty for the sacrifices endured by their families, whether that be the trauma that forced their migration, the downward change in social status or other challenges.

The effects of trauma may not be present in children of migrants' day-to-day lives, but they may also experience situations in which they must deflect the effects of trauma. For example, when the conflict in Syria broke out in 2011, it drew a lot of global attention. For children of migrants, this conflict may have triggered memories of conflict in their countries of origin and, out of empathy, inspired them to act to help alleviate suffering on the conflict's frontlines. For example, as discussed in Chapter Five, Mariam (mid-20s, female, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) spoke about her connection to Sudan, her memories of the country and how it had affected her family. She spoke passionately about wanting to alleviate people's suffering, and this feeling was not bound to only two countries. The two countries Mariam is connected to were the cause and driver, but not the focus of her activism. Mariam was committed to helping anywhere people suffered from either man-made or natural disasters; her activism has no geographical boundaries. She connected with people on the basis of experience, rather than where they come from.

Children of migrants are driven to seek justice for the traumatising violations they or their families experienced, and may do so also in contexts outside their countries of origin and settlement.

This is particularly relevant when the context that drove their family's migration remains volatile, and they witness ongoing forced migration. So, on the one hand, children of migrants cannot directly engage with conflicts in their countries of origin due to fear of reprisals towards family who remain there but, on the other hand, still experience the conflict's negative effects through their close association with the source of their trauma, without necessarily having the tools to cope. In addition, their countries of settlement may not be the only space in which children of migrants seek justice, as they may feel more moved by a cause resembling the situation in their origin countries. Thus, a considerable number of children of migrants engage in third countries or regions.

Assertion of identities

Identity is fundamental to encouraging or discouraging children of migrants' activism, as well as influences the geographical and thematic focus of that activism. However, within the remit of political transnationalism, children of migrants may draw identities from their countries of origin but choose not to focus on these. Political transnationalism theories assume there is an inherent drive to engage with countries of origin, but this research shows that lived experiences and intergenerational memories are key for children of migrants and, in conflict contexts, trauma can have a profound positive or negative effect on their engagement.

Nevertheless, as identity is fluid and evolves, critical global events and everyday experiences also change motivations for engagement. However, identity is a core driver; it is the conglomeration of children of migrants' different contexts and interactions. For example, Wardi (mid-20s, male, Sudan, London) was connected to a variety of causes, as discussed in Chapter Five. His diverse interests hailed from his complex mesh of identities, such as his linguistic and cultural connections to the Arab world that propelled him to join the Arab society at university, but he also never felt fully part of this due to the racism he experienced from Arabs as a child. Wardi also embraced a Sudanese

identity, but was regarded as a foreigner when in Sudan, and a pan-African identity as he felt connection to other people originating from the continent. Such identities, which children of migrants heighten or hide based on complex circumstances, become the principles that motivates them to seek change through either impeding or creating spaces or conditions within society.

My research participants experienced a sense of both belonging to and alienation from societies of settlement and origin. This duality is driven by their connection to multiple sites, but fully belonging to none, and thus their identities became a mix of ideas, values and insights. My participants' identities were marked by transnational insights and connections; they were aware of this, as several self-identified as Third Culture Kids (TCK). The concept of TCK – a term often used for children of diplomats and employees of international organisations and companies – can assist us in understanding children of migrants' connections to multiple spaces. In particular, situating their identities as cosmopolitan, that allows a fluidity of identities that transcend cultural and physical borders.

However, as explored earlier, children of migrants' identities are not set; indeed, they more likely resemble a fluid jigsaw, as certain identities are heightened in particular contexts if this visibility will garner a positive response, such as displaying cultural connections to London when speaking to someone from another part of the UK. If they pose a risk, identities can also be hidden. For example, they might downplay their religious identity in a workplace where displaying religiosity might reduce opportunities for promotion. Of course, children of migrants do not have complete autonomy over their identities. Indeed, as both children and adults, the research participants have experienced disadvantages due to the intersectionality of some of these identities. For example, in order to distinguish herself from the African-American experience, several research participants highlighted international travel and outlook to an American audience. Children of migrants can also employ a combination of identities in order to be heard; for example, sharpening their origin country language

skills in order to gain more work opportunities. The amalgamation of these identities acts as the impetus for children of migrants' agency and social mobility. It is their inherent ability to read and know contexts that helps them develop tools to counteract the disadvantages they face.

Critical events galvanising activism

Critical geopolitical events significantly heighten trauma and, in turn, act as either an instigator of or detractor to engaging in activism, whether directed towards countries of origin or elsewhere. For my interviewees, such events appear to have pushed them to act; an instant reaction, similar to fight or flight. With tools, skills, knowledge and networks, children of migrants can deal with a crisis, even if employing coping mechanisms. For example, the humanitarian response to the drought in the Horn of Africa 2011-2011¹⁴⁰ propelled many communities, including children of migrants, to attempt to help however possible, whether through advocating for their country of settlement's government to increase aid, raising funds themselves or volunteering to contribute to the response in other ways. Such was the case for Amin (mid-20s, male, Somalia, London) who, along with friends, organised a campaign to raise funds for humanitarian assistance for those affected by the famine in Somalia in 2011 (discussed in Chapter Six). However, events in origin countries were not the only ones that propelled children of migrants' activism, events in settlement countries also had an impact. For example, as discussed in Chapter Five, Sharif (early-30s, male, Sudan, Washington, D.C.) knew something had changed in how the society was perceiving him following September 11th, even though he was still only school-age. While he may not have experienced any direct backlash, it seeped in through his family and community telling of incidents that had occurred, from the news, essentially all interactions with the majority society.

As most interviewees noted, changing geopolitical contexts significantly affects their day-to-day lives with detrimental effect. Perpetuated by the media and policy, public discourse in Europe,

¹⁴⁰ One of the worst droughts to hit the region in over 60 years, affecting more than 12.4 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. A famine was declared in Somalia in 2011 and ended in 2012 (Slim, 2012).

the US and numerous other countries is increasingly hostile towards migrants, whether they are recent arrivals or citizens for generations. Furthermore, these negative stereotypes also affect relationships among minorities, sometimes causing conflict among them. As discussed in Chapter Five, Amin (mid-20s, male, Somalia, London) and Hakim (early-30s, male, Ethiopia, London) both spoke poignantly about their time at school as particularly difficult, as they experienced racism from other minorities, particularly those of Caribbean heritage. This raises concerns around how divisive rhetoric and negative stereotypes creates an environment where minorities themselves also internalise the majority society's views of different minority groups. Most such stereotypes are derived from the portrayal of origin countries as places in perpetual crisis and downtrodden, and often people do not have the space to tell their stories. Yes, there is conflict, famine and other crises, but there are also numerous layers of complexities that are often overlooked.

Such events increase children of migrants' vulnerability, leading to feelings of ostracisation, whether intentional or not. It seeps through via newspaper articles, a colleague's passing comment, more difficulty finding work, and recognising how policies are undermining their sense of belonging. The assertion of one's belonging and person propels activism to counteract these feelings. Thus, traumatic experiences or inherited memories can push conflict diasporas to engage with both their country of origin and communities in the country of settlement, as this can reaffirm their identities and counteract negative perceptions and their impact. This came into play in Warda's experience (early-30s, female, Sudan, London) of asserting different identities, as well as seeking redress for injustices in the context of Sudan, which propelled her to work in Sudan as well as the wider region.

Geopolitical events are a critical trigger for opening spaces of engagement. Within the scope of this research, macro events were significant to instigating children of migrants' activism. Such critical events can take place in countries of settlement, origin or elsewhere, for example: the famine in the Horn of Africa in 2011 (Amin was galvanised, along with many other children of migrants with

Somali heritage, to assist in the humanitarian response to the crisis and raise money to send to Somalia, as discussed in Chapter Six); the 1998 border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and subsequent expulsion of citizens (Lula recalled how her parents became fearful as they recalled previous conflicts, discussed in Chapter Four); Ethiopia's support for the Somali transitional government to fight Islamic Courts (Khalil's became politically engaged when Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006, discussed in Chapter Six); and the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the subsequent separation of South Sudan (Ayen reuniting with his long-lost mother on the eve of South Sudan's independence on 8th July 2011, discussed in Chapter Four). However, access to political opportunity in country of settlement is needed to facilitate activism in relation to origin country. Further research on how transnational activism is changing is thus required.

Giving back - plagued by guilt for being 'privileged'?

Many research participants expressed the desire to give back, referring to their feelings of empathy and obligation from their origin country experience. Digging a bit deeper, however, one finds that guilt is really the underlying driver of their activism: guilt drawn from an internal negative state inside themselves; guilt as a consequence of trauma, whether lived or inherited; guilt for not enduring the dangers in their country of origin; guilt that they had opportunities to secure a stable future. However, these feelings also became key drivers for them to succeed, to create the 'ideal' space, to progress as a way to redress this underlying feeling of guilt or even the burden of having to resolve overwhelming challenges for themselves and others. This is the point when activism becomes a natural outlet for redressing some (if not all) of these layers that tie past, present and future together. As discussed in Chapter Five, Khadija (mid-20s, female, Sudan, London) spoke emotionally about her experience working closely with a young woman in Sudan, and her surprise, sadness and frustration with the situation: Khadija felt it was unfair that she had access to better tools and knowledge than the other woman. They could have been school friends and taken the same career path, yet they were worlds apart. Khadija had the coveted education and passport; she is the one

with better work opportunities, who can seek upward mobility. The other woman, despite her equal level of passion and commitment, would not necessarily have access to the opportunities Khadija (and other participants) had or will have. It is likely this woman saw the likes of my research participants as privileged. For Khadija, it was not a question of ability, it was a lottery: despite the circumstances that drove her family's migration, Khadija had access to opportunities this other woman did not, but she also still felt disadvantaged in London, as a black, Muslim woman is not likely to have the same opportunities as her white peers.

The interplay of being 'privileged' in origin countries and 'disadvantaged' in settlement countries comes into play in the generational differences between what is seen as 'valuable' activism in relation to origin countries. Here, there is a clear divergence between how diasporas are believed to engage with origin countries – i.e. financial remittances – and how children of migrants engage. On the face of it, this suggests that the large development and humanitarian presence in origin countries may contribute to children of migrants' desire to engage in a professionalised capacity. More research is needed to better understand the implications of international entities' presence in migrants' origin countries, as well as how this affects children of migrants' relationship with migrant populations in their countries of settlement.

How children of migrants are engaging in activism is also particularly fascinating in relation to countries of origin. Children of migrants are committed to contributing to their countries of origin, but none of my interviewees ever mentioned financial remittances as a route. In addition, participants actively sought to distance themselves from political activism. They were more interested in knowledge and skills transfer because, as they saw it, these have greater longevity. This is another area that needs further investigation.

Children of migrants' careers choices are embedded in their drive for social good, whether consciously or not, and that aspiration is drawn from countries of origin. However, social good is not

necessarily the target of their activism. It is clear from children of migrants' narratives and observations that managing the guilt and subsequent need to give back can also be detrimental to their social mobility in countries of settlement. There is a delicate interplay and critical events can thrust them towards different paths, even if temporarily, in fulfilling their urge to redress trauma and social mobility. Thus, many research participants chose careers as professionals in the development and humanitarian sectors or socially-driven ethos-based companies.

The children of migrants who participated in this research showed remarkable resilience in the face of numerous adversities. Resilience comes from many places, e.g. values, religious beliefs, and support networks. In addition, this unique cohort showed how they realised their own agency and life path through their experiences: Amina fought gender stereotypes within an Ethiopian community that sought to limit and dampen her ambitions; Sharif took the time to learn about Islam, so he was equipped to counter Islamophobia in the US through positive images of the religion; Tigest fought her own preconceptions that an Eritrean living in poverty can also find happiness; Ayen endured so much pain as one of the *Lost Boys*, but emerged as a resilient and successful man; Warda pursued further education in the face of systematic discrimination despite the fact that many of her peers were unable to; and the many others establishing their voices, identities and agency in their day-to-day lives.

7.2. How the research contributes to political transnationalism

This study has several implications for research on political transnationalism, particularly among forced migrants. The Horn of Africa continues to reel from crises, including political instability and conflict, and its diasporas are likely to be highly politicised. For example, many Eritrean diaspora communities are perceived as highly politicised, either supporting the opposition or the government, leaving little leeway for those who wish to remain neutral. However, children of migrants have

created their own nuances and opinions from the various influences in their lives, creating spaces where they can choose their own political positioning and mobility.

Connection to a national origin can persist over generations, even if there is limited physical exposure to communities in countries of origin, but this connection does not lead to an association with the countries' sub-identities. Significantly, most conflict and power struggle in the Horn of Africa are along (politicised) clan, tribal or ethnic lines. These sub-identities can be divisive and are likely a reason why children of migrants may choose not to associate. It is their 'get out card' from the conflicts their parents experienced and shared through intergenerational memories or direct narration. However, a lack of association with sub-identities can also be a disadvantage for children of migrants, as they may be rejected in origin countries for not fulfilling this expectation. Even so, this lack of association places children of migrants in a unique position outside their origin country, as they are more likely to have a nuanced political positioning. Moreover, this is even more pertinent for children of migrants who lived in multiple countries, as they are linked to and identify with numerous sites.

Hailing from a refugee family can sometimes mean engagement in activism related to your country of origin from an early age. This can include being part of the political opposition in exile, fundraising, participating in protests and voting, among other activities. Such activism might have been where many research participants learnt about politics and made the decision to stay away, seeing it as too challenging or difficult. For some, this activism helped them hone skills they now employ in different physical and imagined spaces.

There is an urgent need to rethink political transnationalism beyond the binary of origin and settlement countries. The geographical focus of children of migrants' activism in this study varied

between those focused on the country of settlement (issues of discrimination and social mobility), those focused on the country of origin (development and humanitarian aid), and those focused on third countries or regions. Thus, there is a clear need for additional research into the key tenets of geographies of activism among migrants.

Interaction with the society of settlement based on perceived and actual identities (race, gender, ethnicity, religion, languages and such), and the opportunities accordingly afforded (education, work, social and economic class, legal status), interplay based on the politics and context of the society of settlement. In those societies, children of migrants must fight stereotypes and increased discrimination. Nonetheless, the experience of identity formation among conflict diasporas can prove a useful framework for analysing children of migrants' activism, whether with positive ends, such as ending discriminatory laws or, in extreme cases, negative impact, such as joining groups that advocate violence.

However, the role of settlement countries is not limited to being the impetus for children of migrants' activism, as the societies' overall culture (legal and in practice) for their citizens as a whole must also be considered. For example, people in the Gulf may not have the opportunity to protest like someone in Brazil due to the political systems in place. Political opportunities and geopolitics are important determinants of whether activism is facilitated or impeded, and thus I draw the conclusion that settlement countries are an important factor in facilitating migrant activism. However, a lack of political opportunity does not mean that no avenues for activism exist; especially with the availability of technology, activism can now take place online or through subtler means to circumvent such challenges, such as through arts and culture.

This study's findings have several important implications for how we look at transnational migration and its impact on the type, focus and thematic issues of diaspora activism, particularly activism by those from regions historically and/or currently affected by conflict. One challenge for researchers in the field of migrant activism is how to understand motivations beyond countries of origin and settlement. More research is needed to understand transnational activism among migrants and its drivers.

7.3. Direction for future work

The experiences of conflict-affected diasporas, especially those from countries still reeling from conflict or its aftermath, differ from those who migrated for other reasons. In addition, with increasingly mobile populations and concepts of belonging, children of migrants' experiences lend insight into how conflict-affected diasporas cope in an increasingly changing environment that requires innovative responses; responses within academia and among diaspora groups, policymakers and organisations working in areas of conflict, development, humanitarianism and migration.

While trauma – lived and intergenerational – takes centre stage in driving children of migrants' activism, it is often only looked at in studies related to diaspora or migrant integration. This needs further unpacking through a migration studies lens, as there are now an increasing number of protracted conflicts and continued forced migration movements from these regions, and thus trauma will perpetuate without people having the opportunity to heal. Although there is considerable work on the impact of intergenerational trauma on refugee families, the linkage to activism is yet to be fully explored.

Children of migrants are likely to become migrants themselves in search of opportunities; migrating back to countries of origin or other countries. This phenomenon requires further research

to understand the specific triggers and how migration for opportunities is normalised and facilitated. This is the point that policymakers, as well as other actors in development and humanitarian spaces, need to recognise: diaspora activism is an exchange; it cannot be based on altruism alone.

Migrant engagements beyond countries of settlement and origin require further investigation. Multi-country migration influences children of migrants' engagement, as they are connected to multiple sites and, subsequently, their interests are not limited to settlement and origin countries only. These interests are, thus, situated in identity formations. Identity helps us make decisions about how to engage with the people around us, represents our beliefs and values, and is the continuity between our past, how we enact it in the present and our future aspirations. Identity among children of migrants is fluid and influenced by multi-country migration, trauma and critical events.

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Appendices

1. Consent form



CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Project title:	Children of migrants in the diaspora and development debate
Project Approval Reference:	ER/BA231/1

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be photographed or audio taped
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required
- I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in the focus group/s interview/s.
- I consent to the use of sections of photographs and audio tapes in publications
- Agree that the information provided can be used in further research projects.

☐ Tick this box if you agree to the use of videotape

The following clauses should be included in all consent forms:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

2- Information sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

STUDY TITLE

Children of migrants in the diaspora and development debate

INVITATION

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The research project is looking at motivations and effects of transnational political activities on development in home and host countries. The case study is children of migrants (1.5 and second generation diaspora/migrants) from the Horn of Africa based in London and Washington, D.C. The aim of the research is to understand what has motivated children of migrants to be engaged transnational political activities, such as campaigning for better access to employment opportunities for minorities, volunteering with an international development organisation, engaging in election activities in the country of origin, campaigning to end harmful traditional practices, development project in developing countries, and such. In turn, this can inform policy makers on the role this group in the diaspora and development debate.

The project will commence with preliminary field work in May to July 2014, and again between January 2015 to June 2015. The main sites will be London (UK) and Washington, D.C. (USA), including Washington metropolitan areas.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The research is focused on transnational political activities by children of migrants, whether through formal or informal institutions. For the purpose of this research project, children of migrants refers to people born in the country of residence to at least one foreign parent, and those who are foreign born and arrived in the country residence before the age of 12 or the start of high school. The main group of interest are those who originate from the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan and Sudan) based in London and Washington, D.C.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?

The individual participants would be approached using different methods, mainly through personal or professional networks, such as community organisations, relatives, etc. A total of 50-60 people will be sought for interviews, and an online questionnaire. The breakdown is as follows:

Children of migrants in the diaspora and development debate
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- 20- 30 people will be sought for long interviews, which can take one to two hours, depending on the participant. If more convenient for the interviewee, the interview can take place over several meetings;
- 4-6 focus group discussions, composed of 5-7 individuals each, which will take into account the diversity among the individuals, such as gender and country of origin. These interviews are likely to average around 2 hours, and can take place online; and
- a further 10 interviews with policy makers, community leaders and other stakeholders, which will range around half an hour to 1 hour.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The aim of the study is to inform policy makers on how to engage children of migrants in the diaspora and development debate, thus recognising their role as key actors. In turn, this will enable children of migrants to inform their own communities, and relevant stakeholder, on how they should be recognised and engage. Additionally, the study will further participants' knowledge and network with other like minded children of migrants, raising the prospects of other opportunities of projects or activities.

WILL MY INFORMATION IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All materials will be kept strictly confidential, this includes use of passwords to access digital data and the use of pseudonym and removal of any identifiers, if requested by the participants. The only people with access to the materials will be the researcher and the two supervisors of this research project. Upon the conclusion of the research project, any materials will be stored at the University of Sussex grounds.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?

If you would like to take part in the study, please email the researcher Ms. Bashair Ahmed at ba231@sussex.ac.uk.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The research project will contribute to a PhD thesis, which will be published and made available online the University of Sussex website.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

The research project is conducted by Ms. Bashair Ahmed, a self-funded PhD research student. Contact details are as follows:

Sussex Centre for Migration Research (SCMR), School of Global Studies
University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9SJ, UK
Email: ba231@sussex.ac.uk
Mobile: (UK) +44 [REDACTED]

WHO HAS APPROVED THIS STUDY?

Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC).

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CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, you can contact the two supervisors of this research project:

Prof Paul Statham

Professor of Migration (School of Global Studies)

University of Sussex, Arts B B362, Brighton, E. Sussex BN1 9RH, UK

Telephone: +44 1273 873374

Email: Paul.Statham@sussex.ac.uk

Dr Michael Collyer

Reader in Geography (Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Geography, International Development)

University of Sussex, Arts C C126, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9RH, UK

Telephone: +44 1273 872772 or +44 1273 877238

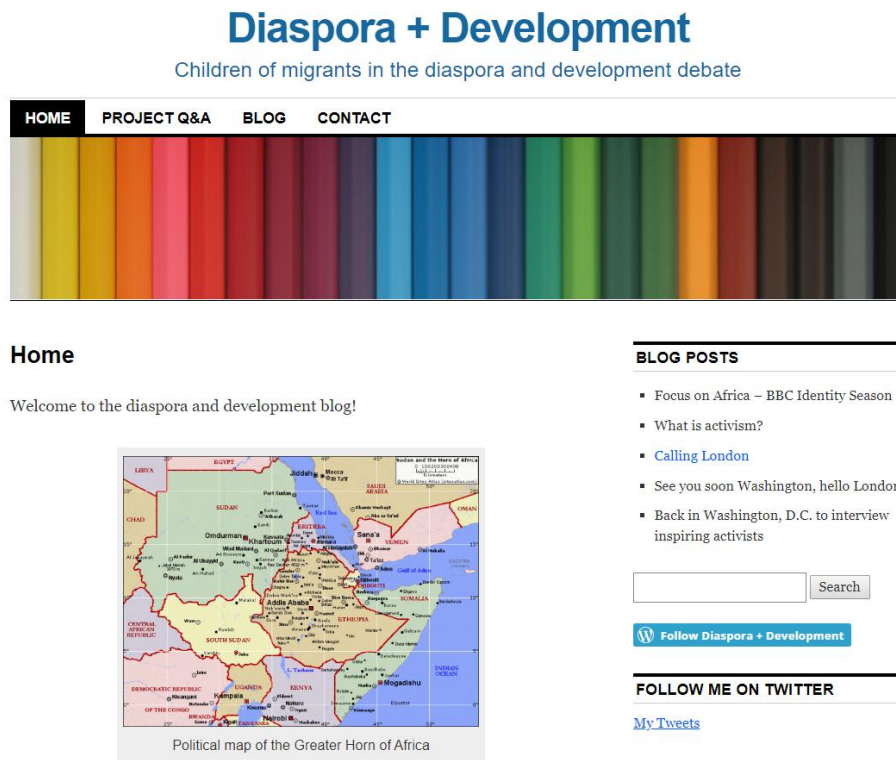
Email: M.Collyer@sussex.ac.uk

DATE

26 May 2014

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.

3. Project blog site



This [blog](#) provides updates and information relating to my PhD research project on organising and activism among the children of migrants and their role in the diaspora and development debate.

My research focuses on the motivations of 1.5 and second-generation migrants (children of migrants) to engage in organising or activism, whether in their countries of residence or origin. The main case study is of children of migrants from the Horn of Africa who are or were based in London (UK) and Washington D.C. (US).

By better understanding what drives this group to become engaged in organising or activism, such as campaigning for better access to employment opportunities for minorities, religious freedom, volunteering or working in development organisation, engaging in election activities, campaigning to end harmful traditional practices, I hope it will help inform policymakers on this group's role and potential in development.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to [get in touch!](#)

[hello London! →](#)

Back in Washington, D.C. to interview inspiring activists

Posted on 4 April 2015 | [Leave a comment](#) | [Edit](#)

I have just arrived in Washington, D.C. to start work as a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Global and International Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs, GWU. I am very excited to be working with this auspicious institute, but more importantly, the opportunity to interview some very inspiring people engaged in activism!

If you are, or know someone who is engaged in activism with origins from the Horn of Africa and based in or around DC, it will be great to chat to you. For any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

<https://diasporaanddevelopment.wordpress.com/contact/>



Chat over a cup pf coffee or tea

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- What is activism?
- [Calling London](#)
- See you soon Washington, hello London!
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What is activism?

Posted on [16 September 2015](#) | [Leave a comment](#) | [Edit](#)

I was asked by a friend whether I considered her an activist. I was taken aback by this question, she does fantastic work seeking economic development for the betterment of society. My immediate response was yes! However, even though her contribution is a form of activism*, but does this make her an activist by default? And what does it mean to be an activist?



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I have worked in the humanitarian and development sectors for many years including on human rights issues, yet I was never comfortable with referring to myself as activist or even saw it as a form of activism. Rather, I saw activist as those with high ideals and completely immersed in their cause of choice, but this is not the reality. Activism is also often a loaded term, for example it can mean being engaged in politics, yet it is so much more than that.



My friend's question made it pertinent to distinguish between defining an action as a form of activism and whether the person undertaking the action can be automatically defined as an activist. Activists or acts of activism are usually seen through particular knowledge/experience from the rose tinted lens of seeking a better world for all such as campaigning to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or seeking to reduce the impact of climate change. It can also include seeking negative change, such as far right groups using violence in opposing migration in Europe or Islamic State in Syria.

There are numerous description of what a activism is, but what does it mean in a smaller scale? For example, working as a youth volunteer with a community group supporting hosting of events- are you an activist? This is a form of activism, but to be defined as an activist I believe is a choice.

This brief reflection is not the end of my exploration about the subject, but an interlude to an in-depth dialogue. Look forward to hear your thoughts!

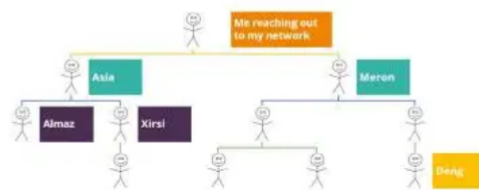
** For this research project activism is defined as ‘Online or offline effort to promote, impede or direct social, economic, political or environmental change. This includes paid or voluntary engagement’.*

See you soon Washington, hello London!

Posted on 21 June 2015 | [Leave a comment](#) | [Edit](#)

Same language, same food, same culture- or so I thought! The differences between the UK and America were bigger than I imagined. There were the obvious ones such as spelling and grammar and driving on the other side of the road, but also the realisation of the vastness of the country and how diverse it is. However, there were more surprises in store for me; for such a small place DC had so many museums (with free entry!), rivalling any European city, with my favourite being the [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#). I also got to learn more about DC's diverse demographics, with the largest being the African- African population, which is estimated to be more than 50 percent, compared to the 13 percent national average, earning DC the nickname ‘chocolate city’. Sadly the city is changing beyond recognition due to massive gentrification projects that shows no sign of dissipating.

I relished immersing myself in all things American during my stay in Washington, and I was very lucky to meet so many amazing people who took part in the research. How did I meet them? Well, it was not simple or easy. The diagrams below describes the initial plan:



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.....and reality was just a lot more fun.



**All of the names are pseudonyms*

Each interview was unique, some lasted about an hour or so and others required several meetings. Each person who took part in the project had a different story, and a different way of telling it.

Most of the interviews took place at cafes and restaurants, which also meant indulging in a variety of cuisines including American classics, East African food, Mexican and everything in between. Below are just a few of the tasty treats I was lucky to enjoy.



Project Q&A

What is the purpose of the study?

The research project seeks to investigate the motivations and effects of transnational political activities on development in countries of settlement and origin. The case study is children of migrants (1.5 and second generation) from the Horn of Africa* based or were based in London and Washington, D.C. The aim is to understand what has motivated children of migrants to be engaged in transnational political activities, such as campaigning for better access to employment opportunities for minorities, religious freedom, volunteering with an international development organisation, election activities in the country of origin, campaigning to end harmful traditional practices, development project in countries in the Global South, and such. In turn, this can inform policymakers on the role of this group in the diaspora and development debate.

Who is being invited to participate?

The research is focused on transnational political activities by children of migrants, whether through formal or informal institutions. For the purpose of this research project, children of migrants refer to people born in the country of residence to at least one foreign parent, or those who are foreign-born and arrived in the country residence before the age of 12 or the start of high school (note this is flexible). The main group of interest are those who originate from the Horn of Africa who are currently or were based in London or Washington, D.C.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you would like to take part in the study, you can contact the researcher, Ms Bashair Ahmed, through the [contact form](#).

What will happen if I decide to take part?

The individual participants would be approached using different methods, mainly through personal or professional networks, such as community organisations, relatives, etc. A total of 50-60 people will be sought for interviews, and an [online survey](#) is also available.

Once you have read the details about the research and you decide to take part, you can go the [contact page](#) to get in touch with the researcher. You will have the opportunity to comment on the findings of the research, which will be shared with all the research participants for feedback.

Once you have confirmed your interest, the researcher will send you further details about the research and a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The aim of the study is to inform policymakers on how to engage children of migrants in the diaspora, thus understanding their role in development, whether in the country of settlement or origin. In turn, this will enable children of migrants to inform their own communities, and relevant stakeholder, on how they should be recognised and engaged. Additionally, the study will further

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they should be recognised and engaged. Additionally, the study will further participants' knowledge and network with other like-minded children of migrants, raising the prospects of other opportunities to develop other projects or activities.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential?

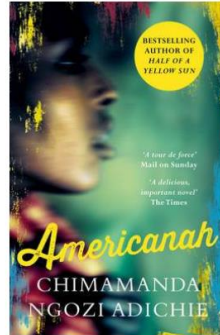
All materials will be kept strictly confidential, this includes the use of passwords to access digital data and the use of pseudonym and removal of any identifiers if requested by the research participants. The only people with access to the materials will be the researcher and the two supervisors of this research project. Upon the conclusion of the research project, any materials will be stored at the University of Sussex grounds.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The research project will contribute to a PhD thesis, which will be published and made available online on the University of Sussex website, as well as articles and publications associated with the research topic.

** For the purpose of this research the Horn of Africa includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.*

However, I did manage to sneak in some time to read a brilliant book by one of my favourite authors, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. 'Americanah' tells the tale of childhood sweethearts at school in Nigeria who take different paths as they pursue better lives in the United States and the United Kingdom. Alongside the dissection of race, explored through the eyes of the protagonists, Adichie delves into the challenges facing migrants and diasporas in the West.



I loved how the book evoked questions on racial, cultural and personal identity and the familiarity I felt with Ifemelu's and other characters' experiences. The character of risk-taking Ifemelu left me enchanted with the incessant determination by her, and other like her, who pack up and leave what they know in search of something better. But what really intrigued me was how class is portrayed. I felt this quote articulates my question on class in the diaspora brilliantly:

"Alexa and the other guests, and perhaps even Georgina, all understood the fleeing from war, from the kind of poverty that crushed human souls, but they would not understand the need to escape from the oppressive lethargy of

inspiring activists

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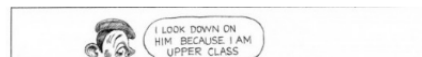
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"Alexa and the other guests, and perhaps even Georgina, all understood the fleeing from war, from the kind of poverty that crushed human souls, but they would not understand the need to escape from the oppressive lethargy of choicelessness. They would not understand why people like him who were raised well fed and watered but mired in dissatisfaction, conditioned from birth to look towards somewhere else, eternally convinced that real lives happened in that somewhere else, were now resolved to do dangerous things, illegal things, so as to leave, none of them starving, or raped, or from burned villages, but merely hungry for choice and certainty."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*

This quote highlights that many people in the West immediately equate poverty and conflict when they think of African migrants and diasporas. This generalisation does not take into account the many migrants who are not just struggling to live, but are struggling for choices. This something I also observed when meeting migrants and diasporas in the US, UK and elsewhere. It is not the whole picture, of course, nonetheless it shows migrants and diasporas are also striving for upward social mobility like many of their counterparts in the West.



Contact

If you would like to find out more about the research project, or to participate please fill in the following contact form:

Name (required)

Email (required)

Website

Comment (required)

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4. Social media engagement





Bashair Ahmed بشار احمد @bashairbitzakia · Jun 21, 2015

My latest blog entry 'See you soon Washington, hello London!' diasporaanddevelopment.wordpress.com/2015/06/21/see...



Bashair Ahmed بشار احمد @bashairbitzakia · Jun 3, 2015

Replying to @bashairbitzakia

@IOMatUN Fantastic to hear about Philippines diaspora engagement in humanitarian response, inc. crisis contingency plans



Bashair Ahmed بشار احمد @bashairbitzakia · Jun 3, 2015

@IOMatUN event on the role of #diaspora in #humanitarian response #diasporatalk





Bashair Ahmed بشار احمد @bashairbitzakia · Jun 21, 2016

Look forward to taking part at the event



EASYUK @EASYUK1 · Jun 21, 2016

We're excited @Infinite_Entity will join us to read #aPoemPerDay for Identity: Where is Home? event

#EASYUKIdentity



5. Examples of events attended



'Identity: Where is Home' and event organised by the Ethiopian Association of Students & Youth in the UK – EASYUK, 25 June 2016



DEMAC Workshop on Diaspora Engagement, 28 April 2016

In this special recording of the Africa Today podcast, Akwasi Sarpong, with the help of a panel and audience, as part of the BBC Identity season, explores how the movement of people, their ideas and information, is changing who we are and how we live - particularly in the diaspora. We are asking: "Do Africans living away from home have a stronger sense of identity, hold on longer to traditions, than the societies they have left behind?"

In the podcast, we hear from Zoe Adjonyoh, Bashair Ahmed, Dr GB Ajayi, and Ismail Einashe. We also have the BBC's Audrey Brown, and a letter she's written to London. Plus, an exclusive performance from two Afro Brit musicians - Vicky Sola and the performer known as Moelogo.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03rgpbm...>



BBC.CO.UK

Focus on Africa - BBC Identity, Focus on Africa - BBC World Service

'Identity' Focus on Africa – BBC, 18 April 2016



#AddisIdeasChat discussion on Twitter, 13 October 2015



'Youth in the West' seminar, organised by the Sudanese Community Information Center (SCIC), 9 September 2015



'Somali Week Festival' organised by Kayd Somali Arts and Culture, 12 July 2015

6. Guide questions

- Basic information: Name, Age group, Gender, country of settlement
- Professional or employment status
- Where were you born?
- What is your mother's country of origin
- What is your father's country of origin
- Why, when and to where to your family migrate?
- Which country did you attend primary school in?
- If you went to primary school in more than one country, please list here.
- Which country did you attend secondary/middle/high School in?
- If you went to Secondary/Middle/High school in more than one country, please list here.
- Which country did you attend college/university in?
- If you went to college/university in more than one country, please list here.
- Do you speak more than one language?
- If yes, please select all the languages that you speak
- What type of activism are you currently or were previously engaged in?
- Through what type of groups/institutions where/are you engaged with?
- When did you first engaged in activism/organising?
- How often were you involved in these activities?
- What has driven your activism/organising?
- How would you characterize your activism/organising?
- Do you think your contribution had impact?
- What do you want to achieve through your engagement in activism/organising?
- Which groups or individuals have encouraged you to be engaged in activism/organising?
- Which groups or individuals have discouraged you to be engaged in activism/organising?
- What do you envisage you will be doing in the future with regards to activism/organising?
- What opportunities and obstacles do you see in supporting activism/organising among children of migrants?
- What would encourage or support others to be engaged in activism/organising? Why?