

IMISCOE Research Series

Jill Ahrens
Russell King *Editors*

Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism

Complex Trajectories, Practices and Ties

IMISCOE

OPEN ACCESS

 Springer

IMISCOE Research Series

Now accepted for Scopus! Content available on the Scopus site in spring 2021.

This series is the official book series of IMISCOE, the largest network of excellence on migration and diversity in the world. It comprises publications which present empirical and theoretical research on different aspects of international migration. The authors are all specialists, and the publications a rich source of information for researchers and others involved in international migration studies. The series is published under the editorial supervision of the IMISCOE Editorial Committee which includes leading scholars from all over Europe. The series, which contains more than eighty titles already, is internationally peer reviewed which ensures that the book published in this series continue to present excellent academic standards and scholarly quality. Most of the books are available open access.

Jill Ahrens • Russell King
Editors

Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism

Complex Trajectories, Practices and Ties

 Springer

Editors

Jill Ahrens
Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance
Utrecht University
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Russell King
Department of Geography
University of Sussex
Brighton, Falmer, UK



ISSN 2364-4087

ISSN 2364-4095 (electronic)

IMISCOE Research Series

ISBN 978-3-031-12502-7

ISBN 978-3-031-12503-4 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2023. This book is an open access publication.

Open Access This book is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the book's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the book's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface

The idea for this book stems from the editors' shared interest in people whose lives are embedded in multiple countries and places. Moving away from the simplistic understanding of migration as a move between one origin and a single destination, the editors and the chapter authors stress the fluidity and non-linearity of the migration process. The volume emphasises the variety of migration paths and sequences and proposes multi-sited field studies to capture this complexity. Onward migrants, by the nature of their multi-step migration trajectories, straddle multiple borders. Their transnationally mobile lives involve cross-border visits, remittance-sending and staying in touch with relatives and friends in a variety of places. Yet people's repeat and ongoing mobilities and ties to multiple places are often treated as extraordinary. Our approach in this book is to visualise migration as fragmented, stepwise and best understood as processual, situational and relational. Even though recent scholarship acknowledges more complex mobilities and connections across borders, space and time, frameworks such as transnationalism are still generally applied with a bifocal lens. Our aim is to geographically broaden the way in which transnational ties and mobilities are perceived and analysed through exploring the concept and practice of *onward migration* and the complementary analytical approach of *multi-sited transnationalism*.

The constituent chapters in this volume highlight the variety of types, circumstances and geographical contexts for onward migration, alongside equally varied expressions of multi-sited transnationalism. Chapter authors emphasise the multi-directionality of transnational ties and the various ways of researching them. They unveil experiences from diverse spatial settings, including those in various destination countries, those 'on the road' and those who stay put in countries of origin. Authors also illustrate how the intensity of transnational connections evolves and is re-mapped over time, dependent not only on the sequence of onward moves but also on changing family and household composition in different locations as well as the changing aspirations of individuals and their wider families.

The chapters in this book were first presented and discussed at a double-session panel organised within the 17th IMISCOE Annual Conference, held online at the University of Luxembourg from 30 June to 2 July 2020. The online format worked

perfectly, and we thank the Luxembourg organisers for making the conference go ahead virtually. The overall theme of the IMISCOE conference was ‘Crossing Borders, Connecting Cultures’, and we felt that our workshop fitted nicely into the mission statement of the conference, which was ‘to deepen our understanding of the complexity and diversity of migration experiences on the one hand and the possibilities of connecting different migrant experiences and groups of people on the other’. Following an open call for papers, we selected abstracts and papers which dealt with a variety of migrant categories, trajectories and geographical settings. Once the draft chapters were written, before or just after the conference, a constructive review process was put in place, whereby each chapter was reviewed by the two editors and one other anonymous chapter author from the book. We thank the chapter authors for their willing participation in this process, both as referees and as revisers of their own chapters. All chapters were subsequently reviewed by two anonymous referees and revised once more. We would also like to thank the referees for their critical remarks and constructive feedback for this edited volume.

Utrecht, The Netherlands

Jill Ahrens

Brighton, Falmer, UK

Russell King

Acknowledgement

Work on this edited book was made possible thanks to funding received from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant No. 706550. We thank the IMISCOE editorial board for granting this book a 75 per cent Open Access fee waiver, and we are indebted to Malmö University's Institute for Migration (MIM) for covering the remainder of the OA fee and enabling the book to benefit from the meticulous editorial work carried out by Jenny Money.

Contents

1	Onward Migration and Transnationalism: What Are the Interconnections?	1
	Jill Ahrens and Russell King	
2	Becoming Destination(s)? Complex Migration Trajectories, Transnational Lifeworlds and Migration Decisions	23
	Marta Bivand Erdal, Lubomiła Korzeniewska, and Davide Bertelli	
3	For the Sake of Our Children? A Mixed-Methods Study of the Family Dynamics of Intra-European Mobility Among Somalis	45
	Marloes de Hoon and Ilse van Liempt	
4	Remittance-Sending Behaviour Along Migration Trajectories: The Case of Senegalese, Ghanaian and Congolese Migrants	77
	Wendy Flikweert, Özge Bilgili, and Kim Caarls	
5	Ambivalent Entanglements: Syrian Refugees' Network Relations and (Im)mobilities in Protracted Displacement	99
	Sarah A. Tobin, Benjamin Etzold, Fawwaz Momani, Tamara Adel Al Yakoub, Rola Fares Saleem AlMassad, and Ahmad Ghanem Shdefat	
6	Onward Migration from an Aspirations–Capabilities Framework: The Multi-sited Transnational Practices of Sudanese Families Across Europe, Sudan and Beyond	121
	Ester Serra Mingot	
7	‘Somehow I’m an Expat and He’s a Migrant’: Intersectional Identities, Multiple Migrations and Family Decision-Making Amongst Middling Migrant Couples	139
	Rosie Roberts	

8	Multinational Migration in the Global South: Complex and Non-linear Trajectories of Senegalese Migrants in Brazil	159
	Philipp Roman Jung	
9	Bonds of Transnationalism and Freedom of Mobility: Intra-European Onward Migrants Before and After Brexit	179
	Francesco Della Puppa and Djordje Sredanovic	
10	Education as a Means of Facilitating Onward Migration and Transnational Participation for South Sudanese Refugee Communities	199
	Deirdre Patterson	
11	On the Road Again: Onward Migration and Transnational Subjectivity Among Portuguese-Guinean Migrants in Peterborough (UK)	219
	Ambra Formenti	

About the Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Jill Ahrens is a postdoctoral researcher in the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and a research associate in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex, UK. Previously, she held a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowship at Utrecht University, focusing on the mobilities of students and staff at international branch campuses in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). She has held other visiting positions at universities in Germany, Norway, Portugal and the UAE. She completed her PhD in Geography at the University of Sussex, for which she conducted research into the onward migrations of Nigerians towards, within and beyond Europe. Her broad research interests include youth, skills and employment; the interactions between integration and transnationalism; migration and development; and onward migration.

Russell King is Professor of Geography at the University of Sussex, UK, and Visiting Professor of Migration Studies at Malmö University, Sweden. Prior to moving to Sussex, he was Professor of Geography at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and Lecturer in Geography at the University of Leicester, UK. During his career, he has developed research interests in most forms of migration, including directing major funded research projects on return migration to Southern Italy, contemporary Irish migration, international retirement migration to Southern Europe, Albanian migration, international student mobility, second-generation 'return' migration to Greece and contemporary youth migration within Europe.

Contributors

Tamara Adel Al Yakoub is Assistant Professor of Public Administration at Yarmouk University (YU). She obtained her PhD in public policy in 2018 from Keele University, UK. Tamara has previous experience working with international aid agencies, and she worked for the public sector in Jordan as a senior specialist. Tamara is a consultant and certified trainer in the previously mentioned fields in addition to women's empowerment and leadership. Since 2019, Tamara has held numerous administrative positions at YU, including the section head of the Public Administration Department and later was appointed as deputy director for Princess Basma Center for Jordanian Women's Studies. She is a team lead for women's empowerment in the 'Enhancing female participation in the workforce in Jordan' project funded by MEPI.

Rola Fares Saleem AlMassad is currently a PhD candidate in psychological counselling at Yarmouk University (YU), Jordan. She obtained her Master's degree in psychological counselling from YU. She worked as a field researcher in the TRAFIG Project funded by EU-Horizon-2020. Currently, she is working alongside her studies as a public relations manager.

Davide Bertelli is a PhD candidate in migration, religion and coexistence at the Norwegian University VID (Vitenskapelig Høyskolen). The provisional title of his doctoral thesis is 'Negotiating Belonging in Contested Spaces: Queer and Religious Migrants in London and Oslo'. His doctoral research examines notions of belonging, identity formation at individual and community level, and the implications for religious organisations and the development of queer-inclusive spaces of faith. Prior to that, Davide worked as a research assistant at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway as part of two research projects. For the DIASPOLitic (Understanding the Political Dynamics of Émigré Communities in an Era of European Democratic Backsliding) project, he co-authored two forthcoming articles. Before that, he contributed to the GOVCIT (Governing and Experiencing Citizenship in Multicultural Scandinavia) project, for which he co-authored the final report. Davide holds a Master's degree in Human Geography from the University of Oslo (Norway), where he graduated with a dissertation on sense of belonging and political participation among migrants in a northern Italian city. His broad academic interests include migration, political participation, belonging and queer studies.

Özge Bilgili is Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Social Science at Utrecht University, where she is a member of the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER). Since 2016, Özge is the chair of the Dutch Association for Migration Research (DAMR), board member of IMISCOE and its Standing Committee on Migrant Transnationalism, affiliated researcher at United

Nations University MERIT, and a nominated member of Utrecht Young Academy. Previously, she was a postdoctoral researcher at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, a senior researcher for the Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 project, and a Thomas J. Alexander fellow at the Education and Skills Department of the OECD. Her research is at the intersections of migrant integration, transnationalism, mobility and development studies and benefits from a wide range of disciplines including sociology, political science, economics and (social) psychology. As a migration scholar, she regularly conducts research for international organisations (Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI), Migration Policy Group (MPG), ICMPD, OECD, IOM, UNHCR, and SDC) and national governments. Özge is competent in both qualitative and quantitative research skills, and has extensive research experience in OECD countries, European Member States, North and West African Countries (e.g. Morocco, Senegal, Benin), The Great Lakes Region (e.g. Rwanda and Benin), Ethiopia and finally, of course, her country of origin, Turkey.

Kim Caarls is an independent researcher with a background in social work and has been working in academia for the past 10 years. She obtained her PhD from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University and worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI). She studied the consequences of international migration for migrants' life courses and the role of welfare systems in origin and destination countries for migration patterns within and towards Europe. During this time, she has been involved in many large-scale international research projects (FaMiLife, MobileWelfare, MAFE), working together with both academic institutions, as well as various national and international NGOs. She currently works as an independent researcher and consultant with expertise in the areas of international migration, migrant integration, refugee and asylum (labour market) integration, migrant (transnational) families, inequality, and child development. Her geographical focus lies with migration between Africa and Europe. Methodologically, she is experienced in a wide array of quantitative research methods, including longitudinal analyses, as well as various qualitative methods.

Marloes de Hoon is a PhD candidate in migration studies in the Political Science department of Maastricht University. Her PhD project is part of the Institute for Transnational and Euregional Cross Border Cooperation and Mobility (ITEM) and focuses on mobility trajectories of people after obtaining asylum in the Netherlands. Using population register data, the aim is to map out mobility trajectories and to explain some of the patterns. Marloes' broader research interests include citizenship acquisition, forced migration, transnationalism and social inclusion.

Francesco Della Puppa is a senior researcher in sociology in the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage at Ca' Foscari University, Italy, and a member of the Master's programme titled 'Immigration: Migration Phenomena and Social Transformations'. He obtained his PhD in Social Sciences from the University of

Padua. Francesco carries out teaching and research activities on issues relating to Bangladeshi diaspora and onward migration, refugees and asylum seekers outside of the Italian reception system, migrant families and family reunification, migrant work, and racial discrimination

Marta Bivand Erdal is research director and Research Professor of Migration Studies at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). As a human geographer, she is interested in the causes and consequences of migration and migrant transnationalism in both emigration and immigration contexts. This has led to research on remittances, migration and development; return mobilities; citizenship, nation and diversity; migration and religion; and the interactions of migrant integration and transnational ties. Marta's work draws on interview, focus group and survey data, emphasising a systematic approach to both data collection and analysis. Her research spans different categories of migrants, including refugees, labour migrants and return migrants, and includes the perspectives of migrants, non-migrant populations as well as of state and non-state actors in emigration and immigration contexts. Her work includes analysis of Afghan, Filipino, Pakistani, Polish and Sri Lankan migration and transnationalism, a focus on emigration from Pakistan and Poland, and a focus on immigration and diversifying societies in Norway and the UK. She has published on a broad range of themes connected with international migration in geography and migration studies journals, among others, in *Comparative Migration Studies*, *Ethnicities*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *International Migration*, *International Migration Review*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Geoforum*, *Global Networks*, *Political Geography*, *Population, Space and Place* and *Social and Cultural Geography*. Marta is an editorial board member for the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and regularly serves as a reviewer for funding bodies, journals and book publishers.

Benjamin Etzold is a social geographer and migration scholar with more than 14 years of experience in studying people's vulnerability and livelihoods, trajectories of migration and displacement, as well as informal labour relations and patterns of food security. He holds a PhD in geography from the University of Bonn, which he obtained for his research on the livelihoods of street vendors and political contestations in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Benjamin now works at the peace and conflict study centre BICC in Germany, and leads the international and interdisciplinary EU-funded research project TRAFIG ('Transnational Figurations of Displacement') as scientific coordinator. The TRAFIG projects looks into the role of mobility and translocal connectivity for people in protracted displacement situations.

Wendy Flikweert is an independent researcher with a background in human geography and international development studies. She graduated from Utrecht University with a research Master's in Migration, Ethnic Relations and Multiculturalism. During her academic career, she has been involved in an OECD research project on the educational integration of newcomers in the Netherlands, and an EU Horizon 2020 project on ethnic inequality in the European labour market. In these projects,

she combined both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Moreover, she has complemented her academic programme with external training in Belgrade – a summer school on ‘migrants, borders, power(s): contemporary struggles, moral claims and regimes of (im)mobility’ – and in Athens – a winter school on ‘migration in the margins of Europe’. Additionally, after graduation, she has applied her academic knowledge and added a more practical element by working at the migration department of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Addis Ababa. Currently, she is working for an NGO in the Netherlands, where she is involved with internal knowledge exchange, evaluations and learning.

Ambra Formenti is an associated researcher at the Centre for Research in Anthropology, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (CIA-FCSH/NOVA). She holds a PhD in anthropology (ICS, University of Lisbon), for which she conducted research on Guinean Evangelical Christianity in Lisbon. She conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Italy, Portugal, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania and the UK. Her most recent research project explored the recent changes in migration patterns from Portugal to the UK. Her interests include mobility, labour and religion in Africa and in the African diaspora. Her work is published in international peer-reviewed journals such as *African Diaspora*, *Pentecostudies*, *Journal of Religion in Africa* and *Etnográfica*.

Philipp Roman Jung is a PhD candidate in migration studies at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning (IGOT), University of Lisbon. He holds a Master’s degree in African studies from the ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, and a bachelor’s degree in African development studies in geography from the University of Bayreuth. For his doctoral research, he studies the mobility trajectories of Senegalese migrants in Brazil with a focus on migrants’ agency and the dynamic nature of migration aspirations and decisions. Prior to that, he participated in the international project *DiasporaLink-Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship as a Development Link between Home and Residence Countries* and the research project *African societies facing global dynamics: Turbulences between external intervention, migration, and food insecurity*. These projects analysed the migration from Senegal to Cape Verde and the reverse flows of remittances and their impacts on households in Senegal. His research interests are South-South migration, the linkage between migration and other forms of mobility, as well as economic and social aspects of migrant entrepreneurship.

Lubomila Korzeniewska a graduate from the University of Gdańsk, Poland, is a psychologist with extended training in cross-cultural psychology and psychology of gender. Her research focuses on migration, with a particular interest in the migrants’ health and well-being, acculturation and identity. She has conducted research both in Poland (formerly affiliated with the University of Gdańsk) and in Norway (Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO). As a former researcher at PRIO, she was part of the established migration research group, where she conducted research focusing on migrants in Norway within research projects concerning citizenship, migrants’

transnational ties and the roles of the Norwegian welfare state. Her recent publications include *Deskilling unpacked: Comparing Filipino and Polish migrant nurses' professional experiences in Norway*, co-authored with Marta Bivand Erdal and published in *Migration Studies* (2019), and a PRIO policy brief 'Paying Taxes and Accessing Welfare across Borders' (2018).

Ester Serra Mingot completed her bachelor's degree in translation and interpreting at the University of Alicante (Spain). After working several years as an interpreter, language teacher and tour guide in the Middle East, she obtained a Master's degree in international relations, safety and development at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), with focus in Middle Eastern politics and the role of women in the Egyptian Arab Spring. In 2013, she completed the Erasmus Mundus Master of Migrations and Intercultural Relations course at Oldenburg University (Germany), Stavanger University (Norway), and Ahfad University (Sudan), where she focused on the challenges faced by South Sudanese women living in Khartoum after the separation of the two countries. From 2014 till 2018, Ester conducted her joint PhD at the Universities of Maastricht and Aix-Marseille. In her study, 'Protecting across Borders', she investigated the transnational social protection of Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands and the UK, and their families back home. Ester is currently a postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, where she is working on the social protection infrastructures of African Migrants in Mexico.

Fawwaz Momani is Professor of Psychological Counseling. He is a former director of the Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Forced Migration Studies Centre at Yarmouk University (YU) in Jordan. He has expertise in forced migration and has many distinguished publications in the field of forced migration. He is a member of the T20 Task Force on Forced Migration. Fawwaz has participated in many international conferences and has several grants with many international funding agencies for implementing projects related to refugees and the host community. In 2020, Fawwaz was appointed chair of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) at YU.

Deirdre Patterson is an applied anthropologist trained at the University of Sussex and San José State University. Her research interests include transnational social networks, particularly marginalised populations, with a specific focus on twenty-first century migrant family dynamics. She completed her PhD examining the ways in which South Sudanese refugees living in Kakuma Refugee Camp challenged their vulnerability within the refugee system through the development of transnational familial bonds. Deirdre is interested in exploring the experiences of socially vulnerable communities through in-depth and multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork.

Rosie Roberts is Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the University of South Australia. Her research focuses on middling forms of transnational migration into and out of Australia. She has recently published a book entitled *Ongoing Mobility Trajectories: Lived Experiences of Global Migration* (Springer 2019), examining

the ways migrants enact agency and negotiate risk under the spatial and temporal conditions of multi-stage and ongoing migration pathways. Her collaborative projects include a recent co-edited book with Associate Professor Shanthi Robertson, which provides a critical exploration of middling transnationalism (Routledge, 2022) as well as an ongoing project examining issues of diversity and equity within the cultural and creative industries.

Ahmad Ghanem Shdefat is currently a PhD candidate in Special Education in Egypt. He obtained his Master's degree in special education from Yarmouk University (YU). He worked as a field researcher in the TRAFIG Project funded by EU-Horizon-2020. He has also worked as field researcher in an IRC-funded project on early childhood, and he is a certified trainer in Youth Empowerment related initiatives. Currently, he is working alongside his studies as a Lecturer at Jadara University.

Djordje Sredanovic is a FRS-FNRS research fellow in the Research Group of Ethnic Relations, Migration and Equality (GERME) laboratory and Université Libre de Bruxelles. He obtained his PhD from the University of Padua and has worked also at the University of Bologna and the University of Manchester. As a sociologist specialising in citizenship and migration, he has worked on the meanings and uses of citizenship among migrants and local factory workers in Italy, the implementation of citizenship policies in Belgium and the UK, the comparative study of citizenship policies, the representation of migrants in the media, and asylum policies in Italy. Djordje is currently working on the impact of Brexit on the meanings and values of EU and national citizenships among UK citizens, EU27 citizens, and third-country nationals in the UK and Belgium. His work has been published in journals such as *International Political Science Review*, *Citizenship Studies*, *International Migration*, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* and *Patterns of Prejudice*.

Sarah A. Tobin is a research professor at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway. She obtained a PhD in anthropology from Boston University in 2011. Her work explores Islamic piety, economy, migration and displacement in the Middle East. She is currently leading several large research projects on Syrian refugee and humanitarian policy in urban Jordan and Sudan, as well as the camps of Za'atari, Azraq and Cyber City. She is the author of *Everyday Piety: Islam and Economy in Jordan* (Cornell University Press, 2016). Her recent articles, 'Modelling Exile: Syrian women gather to discuss prophetic examples in Jordan' (2020, *Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, Ed. Justine Howe, Routledge, pp. 282–296) and 'Self-Making in Exile: Moral Emplacement by Syrian Refugee Women in Jordan' (2020, *Journal of Religious Ethics*), focus on the ways that especially vulnerable Syrian refugee women turn to Islam as a means of dealing with conditions of exile in Jordan. Sarah has a longstanding and positive relationship with the Jordanian government, UN Agencies and the NGOs involved in assisting refugees throughout the Middle East. With over 10 years of experience in Jordan, Sarah is a well-received and reputed scholar on contemporary affairs in the country.

Ilse van Liempt is Associate Professor of Urban Geography and one of the leaders of the Focus Area on Migration and Societal Change at Utrecht University. Her research interests lie particularly in the areas of forced migration, transnationalism, identity, and homemaking and belonging. Ilse has been a Marie Curie Research Fellow at Sussex University studying onward migration of Somali refugees upon which this chapter is based.

Chapter 1

Onward Migration and Transnationalism: What Are the Interconnections?



Jill Ahrens and Russell King

1.1 Introduction

The global map of migration continuously evolves, sometimes with a steady rhythm whereby existing patterns are reinforced or slightly changed, at other times punctuated by sudden, epochal shifts. Several key events over the last two decades, such as the 2008 financial crisis, the so-called refugee crisis in 2015–2016 and, latterly, the Covid-19 pandemic, have fundamentally reconfigured previous human mobility dynamics. For the UK, the loss of ‘free movement’ as a result of the Brexit referendum is having more regionally specific impacts on migration flows. In addition, we will likely feel the impacts of other enduring challenges that will further diversify and fragment global mobility and migration patterns, such as the worrying spread of xenophobic and racist attitudes over recent years or the longer-term impact of climate change. The vilification of immigrants has led to travel restrictions for certain ethnic groups as well as an increase in harassment of and attacks on visible minorities. The effects of global warming and associated extreme weather events on migration and mobility are less easy to predict but will surely be made manifest. After the recent COP26 meeting in Glasgow in November 2021, the signs are already there.

Many of these unsettling processes have been framed as crises, both real and perceived, and thereby also offer an opportunity for critical reflection (Collyer & King, 2016). This has led to the questioning of the relevance and appropriateness of

J. Ahrens (✉)

Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, Falmer, UK

e-mail: J.A.Ahrens@uu.nl

R. King

Department of Geography, University of Sussex, Brighton, Falmer, UK

Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM), Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden

certain categorisations and conceptualisations which are commonly applied in the study of migration. Who is considered a migrant? What are origin countries, transit countries and destination countries? Who gets to decide which migration flows are to be stimulated and which are to be restricted or even banned? Why do migrants stay and why do they leave?

Estimates that predate these recent epochal events have already indicated that between 20 and 50 per cent of immigrants leave their destination country within 5 years of arrival (OECD, 2008). This means that a high proportion of migrants depart from their destination country in order to either (temporarily) return to their origin country or to onward migrate to a new destination country. There is an established literature on return migration which has provided new insights into the motivations and experiences of returning migrants and their various forms of ‘return’.¹ In contrast, onward migration remains a relatively under-researched migration trajectory. We argue that this is because migration has generally been conceptualised as a bipolar process between an origin country and a single destination country. The (possible or actual) moves to any further destinations have, therefore, often been disregarded.

Onward migrants have experience of staying in two or more destination countries for extended periods of time. Their trajectories are excellent illustrations of the fact that migration decisions are not one-off, single-dimension impulses taken at a given moment in time. Rather, they are, as Erdal et al. eloquently express in the opening paragraph of the next chapter, processual and relational processes which evolve over time. In parallel to this, migration journeys are found to be fragmented, incomplete, open-ended and often unplanned (Collyer, 2007; Crawley & Jones, 2021). The linked notions of a complex migration trajectory (Erdal et al. Chap. 2) or a migratory career (Martiniello & Rea, 2014) both look at how people navigate a range of potential pathways that are ongoing and unfinished. To reinforce this crucial point, we can do no better than to quote from Jung’s Chap. 8 in this book:

A growing number of scholarly accounts call for a consideration of the fluidity and non-linearity of migration processes ... and the dynamic nature of migration intentions and decisions... Due to structural factors such as immigration laws and economic opportunities, migration has become increasingly complex, often including long and perilous journeys, transiting through a variety of countries and regions and consisting of phases of mobility and immobility, emplacement and displacement. In this context a clear distinction between transit and destination country becomes less evident and the origin–destination model reveals itself as increasingly unable to capture migration strategies and the complexity of migration processes.

This extract lays a convincing foundation for our focus on onward migration in this book. It also prefigures an acknowledgement of the importance of time in the sequencing of moves and stays. In particular, we need to appreciate how linear, chronological time intersects with life-stage events – both planned and unexpected – and with other more-structural changes, like the aforementioned

¹For a recent, comprehensive overview of the field of return migration, see King and Kuschminder (2022).

global economic crisis or geopolitical events such as a refugee-producing civil war or the migration-loaded decision of the UK to leave the EU.

Yet onward migration is difficult to quantify, because current migration statistics and population register data only offer an incomplete picture. Large-scale surveys like the Migrations between Africa and Europe (MAFE) longitudinal survey or the Swiss-based NCCR Migration–Mobility Survey provide some more detailed insights into the prevalence and patterns of onward migration, respectively amongst specific African migrant groups or in particular destination countries like Switzerland (Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Zufferey, 2019). In addition, there are several recent empirical studies which suggest that onward migration is a fairly common migration trajectory amongst a wide range of migrant categories and in different geographical regions (see, for instance, Ahrens et al., 2016; Della Puppa et al., 2021; Paul & Yeoh, 2021).

In public and media discourses about highly mobile individuals – who might or might not include the specific category of onward migrants – it is usually cosmopolitan businesspeople from the Global North who dominate imaginations (Hannerz, 1990). At least before the Covid-19 pandemic, these elites were seen as jet-setting around the world for business meetings and moving from country to country at will and without restrictions (Beaverstock, 2005; Ossman, 2013). In her research with working-class Filipino and Indonesian migrants, Anju Mary Paul (2017) challenges this notion that cosmopolitan knowledge of the world is the preserve of elites. Paul shows how her ‘capital-constrained’ research participants undertake strategic step-wise migrations as migrant domestic workers to Singapore, Hong Kong, Italy or Cyprus which enable them to accumulate further skills, knowledge and resources, so that they can reach Canada and the US as their ultimate favoured destinations.

Several studies have been carried out on the onward migration of asylum-seekers and refugee populations. Seeing that asylum-seekers usually cannot freely decide which country they flee to in search of protection and many European receiving countries disperse asylum-seekers to remote parts of the country, onward migration allows them to move to a place of their own choosing (Lindley & van Hear, 2007; van Liempt, 2011a, b; Kelly, 2013; de Hoon et al., 2020; see also de Hoon and van Liempt, and Serra Mingot, respectively Chaps. 3 and 6 in this volume). Another example is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement programme, where onward migration is used as one of the ‘durable solutions’² that are open to a small proportion of refugees who face protracted displacement and cannot return to their origin country. Some resettlement refugees also engage in further internal secondary or onward movements after arriving in their new country of residence (Ott, 2011).

Furthermore, migrant families often establish multi-sited households and their geographical configuration can evolve over time and during their migration project (Siu, 2005; Das Gupta, 2015; Moret, 2018; Ramos, 2018; Jolivet, 2020). The

²The three UNHCR ‘durable solutions’ include return to the origin country after a period of temporary protection, long-term settlement in the country of asylum and resettlement in a third country (Ott, 2011).

multiple moves of different family members can occur in a temporarily lagged manner, often in response to migration restrictions or individual needs at different life-course stages (Ahrens, 2022; Carling & Erdal, 2014; Ramos, 2018). Family migration can also involve complex movements to different destination countries that span across generations (Bhachu, 1985; Voigt-Graf, 2004; Francisco-Menchavez, 2020). These circumstances, too, are illustrated by many of the chapters that follow.

What the aforementioned examples show is that, even though all these migrants live in multiple destination countries, their trajectories comprise different configurations of migrations and mobilities that change and evolve over time, often across generations. Contextual factors that further pattern these mobilities include the acquisition of citizenship and enhanced mobility rights (Lindley & van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2016; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; de Hoon et al., 2020), unemployment due to economic crises (Ahrens, 2013; Mas Giralt, 2017; Della Puppa, 2018; Ramos, 2018), experiences of discrimination and racism (Kelly, 2013; Das Gupta, 2015; Ahrens et al., 2016) and the expectation of better opportunities in another country (Kelly & Hedman, 2016). Furthermore, the lived experiences of onward migrants vary greatly, often dependent on the migrants' legal status, socio-economic background, educational level, gender, 'race' and ethnicity. It may be even safe to say that hardly any of these migrants would label themselves as an 'onward migrant'. So what value is there in conceptualising this migration process as onward migration?

The overall aim of this introductory chapter is to examine how onward migration and transnational mobilities are interconnected. For this purpose, we draw on the empirical chapters in this edited volume, as well as on other published research on onward migration.

We start off with a definition of onward migration. We then introduce the term 'multi-sited transnationalism' with the specific aim of broadening the analysis of migrant transnationalism beyond its common bipolar framing – restricted to the origin country and one destination country. Given that onward migration is an unfolding and open-ended migration trajectory, this also calls, by extension, for a broadened multi-sited (and multi-directional) conceptualisation of transnational mobilities, ties and practices. Subsequently, we examine how transnationalism can shape onward migration intentions and experiences. For instance, short visits to new destinations can enable individuals to better prepare for onward migration. Reciprocally, we explore how different onward migration patterns may result in varying forms and directions of transnationalism. Onward migrants, for example, may not only stay in touch with friends and relatives in their origin country but also maintain transnational ties with individuals in a previous country of residence or other destinations. Thereby we draw attention to the role of onward migration in shaping complex global mobility patterns and transnational links. Finally, this chapter offers some methodological reflections on how to research onward migration in a multi-sited transnational context.

1.2 Defining Onward Migration

Onward migration can be defined as a spatial trajectory that involves extended stays in two or more destination countries. Acknowledging that any migrant can be a potential onward (or return) migrant allows for a more open-ended and processual understanding of migration. After living in one destination country, migrants may decide to move to one or more new destinations. Countries and places thus can change from being destinations to becoming points of departure.

Furthermore, this longer-term view of migration processes over the lifecourse of individual migrants or even across generations of a migrant family, encourages us to question how migrants are categorised (as students, asylum-seekers, labour migrants, trailing family members, etc.). When onward migrants move through various stages of mobility and settlement in different destination countries, the motivations for their moves change, as do the categorisations that are attached to these migrants. Therefore, it is necessary to envisage a more dynamic understanding of migration categories that takes into account the fluidity (and potential multiplicity) of migrant categories and the social positions that migrants inhabit over time and throughout their ‘migration project’ or ‘migration career’ (Martiniello & Rea, 2014).

Despite growing scholarly interest in recent years in trajectories that span multiple countries, we would like to stress that complex multinational migrations are nothing new. Onward migration has always formed part of a scholarly understanding of global mobility patterns. Early theorisations of migration by Ravenstein (1885, 1889) and Mabogunje (1970) already described migration processes that occurred in stages along particular pathways – from smaller villages, via towns, to the bigger cities. Writing at the time of large-scale population movement following the Industrial Revolution, Ravenstein took the example of Irish migrants living in London. He argued that they were unlikely to have travelled directly from their Irish rural community or hometown but, instead, first arrived in port cities like Liverpool and then worked in several other parts of England before settling in the British capital.

At the same time, it is equally important to highlight that (onward) migrants are not necessarily constantly ‘on the move’, nor should we assume that they want to be. The moves of onward migrants have been compared to those of footloose ‘cosmopolitans’ or ‘nomads’ (Ossman, 2013) but they nevertheless often build deep and meaningful connections with the places and people where they live. Following Hägerstrand’s insightful definition of migration as a change to an individual’s ‘centre of gravity’ (Hägerstrand, 1957, 27), one may argue that onward migrants can have multiple centres of gravity over time and throughout their lives. Thus, it is important to study the spatial mobility of onward migrants – alongside the desires and strategies of non-migrants (and one-step migrants) to ‘stay in place’ – as another possible response to changing contextual and life circumstances (Schewel, 2020).

We propose onward migration as an overarching concept that can bring together the growing literature on this topic. This literature has remained rather disparate, partly due to the many terms used to label this type of migration. Such terms include

transit migration (Collyer, 2007; Schapendonk, 2013, 2020), fragmented migration (Collyer & de Haas, 2012), secondary movement (Ott, 2011), stepwise migration (Konadu-Agyemang, 1999; Paul, 2017; Francisco-Menchavez, 2020), post-migration movement (Moret, 2018), multinational migration (Paul & Yeoh, 2021), twice migration (Bhachu, 1985; Das Gupta, 2005, 2021; Della Puppa & King, 2019), triangular migration (DeVoretz et al., 2003), sequential migration (Faggian et al., 2006), third-country migration (Tan & Hugo, 2017) and serial migration (Ossman, 2013; Zufferey, 2019). Along with others (e.g. Lindley & van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2016; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; Della Puppa et al., 2021), we privilege onward migration as a clear and unambiguous term and build this book around this claim.³ Moreover, we believe that onward migration is also more comprehensive than the other concepts that describe particular types of spatial trajectories of specific migrant categories. Importantly, onward migration implies a more open-ended trajectory because it does not limit the migration project to a certain number of moves (i.e. twice migration) or indeed suggest continuous relocations (i.e. serial migration).

1.3 Multi-sited Transnationalism

Transnationalism is part and parcel of globalisation; at the same time this dual theoretical lens offers distinct insights. During the latter years of the twentieth century and throughout the early twenty-first century, globalisation has given rise to new social formations and networks constituted by rapidly developing information and communication technologies, which have resulted in more interactions and interconnections between different countries and world regions. Meanwhile, transnationalism is concerned with the cross-border connections and practices of individuals, communities and institutions that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994). In this edited book, we focus on migrant transnationalism, sometimes referred to as ‘transnationalism from below’ (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

One of the key contributions of the pioneering literature on transnationalism during the 1990s was to challenge the ‘sedentary bias’ that tended to dominate the social sciences, including migration research. Glick Schiller et al. (1992) argued that, after leaving their origin country, transmigrants can become firmly ‘rooted’ in a destination country and, by splitting time and resources, can simultaneously maintain multiple linkages to their origin country. The cross-border activities and relationships of migrants can be cultural, social, political, economic, etc. Furthermore, the linkages which migrants forge are not fixed but are continuously evolving and ‘becoming’ – meaning that they can wax, wane or fade away completely over time.

³The one source of ambiguity that we identify is whether onward migration only involves a direct onward move from one country of settlement to another or whether it can also involve a temporary return to the country of origin as an intermediate step before the re-emigration to a different country.

These engagements across international borders can mean that migrants also develop dual, hybrid or conflicting identities and senses of belonging.

By highlighting migrants' cross-border connections, transnationalism also intends to overcome 'methodological nationalism', an implicit theoretical stance which took the nation state as a self-evident unit for the analysis of social and historical processes. In their seminal book *Nations Unbound*, Basch et al. (1994, 7, emphasis added) state that transmigrants 'take actions, make decisions and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them to two or more nation-states'. Nevertheless, empirical research on transnationalism has tended to focus on a particular destination country whilst giving some consideration to the transnational moves, connections and identifications with the migrant origin country. In so doing, such research has inadvertently fallen into the trap of swapping methodological nationalism for 'methodological bi-nationalism' (Sperling, 2014), which does not adequately reflect the complex lifeworlds of (onward) migrants.

One further shortcoming of theorisations of transnationalism is the assumption that the transnational ties and mobilities of migrants by default are solely directed at their origin country. This supposed uni-directionality of transnational ties can arguably be linked to understandings of diasporic communities, which have traditionally been defined by their strong 'homeland orientation' (see the critique by Brubaker, 2005). More recent studies offer a more diversified picture of transnational ties and activities. Mazzucato (2011), for instance, highlights the 'reverse remittances' that non-migrants in Ghana send to migrants abroad in order to support their journeys to and the initial arrival phase in Germany. Similarly, research about the second generation has identified the 'inter-destination transnationalism' that connects young Latinos in Europe with cousins and other family members living in the US (Sperling, 2014). Based on empirical work conducted by the contributing authors in this edited volume, we conceptualise transnationality as potentially both multi-directional and multi-national, reflecting the staged trajectories of onward migrants.

Thus, we propose an explicitly multi-sited conceptualisation of transnationalism because it helps to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of transnational mobilities and ties. We thereby follow calls for a broader definition of transnationalism that captures the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people, organisations or institutions across the borders of nation-states' (Vertovec, 1999, 447). Our conceptualisation of multi-sited transnationalism contributes to the two schools of thought within the research on transnationalism in different ways (cf. Itzigssohn et al., 1999). For scholars who subscribe to the 'social field' interpretation of transnationalism (Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004), focused on creating communities that transcend borders, multi-sited transnationalism could be interpreted as an expansion of the transnational field to include multiple and possibly shifting centres. While, for those scholars who favour a practice-oriented interpretation of transnationalism (e.g. Guarnizo et al., 2003), focused on specific transnational ties and actions, multi-sited transnationalism can be understood as nodes of contact in different destinations which mirror the spatial configurations of social networks – either at the individual or the community level.

There are many ways in which this preliminary discussion on multi-sited transnationalism could be extended. One obvious implication is methodological: how do we study migrants who are repeatedly ‘on the move’ through a sequence of origins and destinations which are themselves often reversed, i.e. when destinations become origins and *vice versa*? We reflect on this in the final section of the chapter and invite readers to examine the methodological foundations and field techniques of the ten chapters that follow. For now, we briefly take the discussion forward on a more theoretical and epistemological plane.

First, it is clear that onward migration, along with return migration, re-emigration and circular, transit and other forms of migration and mobility, complicates the single-origin-single-destination approach to conceptualising migration and transnationalism; however, in what way do such complex migration trajectories ‘speak back’ to migration theory? A recent paper by Paul and Yeoh (2021) gives some useful indications, shifting the debate from the standard bifocal lens of transnationalism – ‘here’ and ‘there’ – to underscore the complexity of what they term ‘multinational migrations’, which include onward migration. This complexity has many dimensions, starting from the inherent spatio-temporal variety of multiform migrations. Onward migration takes place for a variety of reasons, not just economic improvement; such motives may be mixed and change over time, with each move and according to the migrant’s lifecourse circumstances. Onward migration comprises migrants of different social classes, occupations and legal statuses and not just cosmopolitan elites. The final target destination may be planned from the outset – but only be attainable via intermediate stages – or the migration trajectory may take a more organic, evolutionary form or be based on pure serendipity and random events. As the chapters of this book illustrate, migrants may or may not move up through a hierarchy of increasingly ‘desirable’ destinations; ‘lateral’ or even ‘downward’ moves may occur due to *forces majeures* or to strategic, intermediate decisions (see, especially, Chap. 8 by Jung on Senegalese migrations for a good illustration of this). Jung’s chapter is in line with a recent paper by Schapendonk (2021) which critiques the ‘grand narrative’ of onward migration which frames it as a staged process involving a South-North directionality and a progression up the ‘hierarchy’ of targeted destinations.

A second key point about multinational and onward migrations made by Paul and Yeoh (2021, 6–8) is that they are increasingly shaped by what Xiang and Lindquist (2014) have termed ‘the infrastructures of migration’. Defined as ‘the systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition [migration and] mobility’ (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014, S124), migration infrastructures comprise five dimensions: commercial (recruitment agencies, smugglers etc.), regulatory (state and other apparatuses and regulations governing international movement), technological (transport and communications), humanitarian (NGOs and international aid to migrants) and social (migrants’ networks and social capital). Again, the chapters that follow provide ample evidence of the critical role of these aspects in the way that onward migration is facilitated, shaped and also sometimes blocked.

Third, and reflecting to a certain extent the infrastructures of migration, onward migration is often related to changes in migrants' categorisation and their relationship with place and transnational ties. Often, migrants are not only moving onwards between countries but also shifting their status between that of tourist, visitor, student, working migrant and attached family member and from one legal status to another, more or less 'legal'. Migrant categorisation also intersects with country of origin, citizenship, 'race' or ethnicity, gender, education and other variables. Such an intersectional categorisation is also present in some of the chapters that follow, most notably in Roberts' Chap. 7, where intersectional identities in multiple onward migrations are narrated through the perspective of the female partner in heterosexual migrant couples. Roberts unveils gender-differentiated experiences of transnationalism, career progression and life satisfaction, mediated by nationality, 'race' and access to different citizenships in various global locations.

1.4 The Effects of Transnationalism on Intentions and Experiences of Onward Migration

Migrants wishing to relocate can make use of their evolving transnational connections in order to visit and (re-)familiarise themselves with their origin country or other destinations. Carling and Erdal (2014) originally coined the term 'exploratory transnationalism' to refer to the return visits of migrants to their origin country. These shorter return trips can be useful in enabling migrants who have spent a considerable time abroad to re-acquaint themselves with the local context and prepare for an eventual return migration (Duval, 2004). For onward migrants, however, 'exploratory transnationalism' can be arguably even more crucial, as it enables them to test the waters in a place or country where they have not lived before and helps them to convert their migration intentions into more concrete plans (Ahrens et al., 2016).

Onward migration is often the result of an interplay of particular drivers and obstacles. For some migrants, the desire to onward migrate is formed when they have secured more-stable residence papers or become naturalised citizens. There are various reasons why migrants may decide to migrate again at this point. First, stable residence papers or citizenship usually also afford them enhanced mobility rights. Second, having a stable residence in one destination country can also be perceived as a type of insurance should the next move not turn out as planned. Third, having spent many years in one destination country equips migrants with more detailed knowledge about the opportunities and shortcomings of their current place of residence – and maybe even of other countries. Researching Polish and Filipino nurses in Norway who had lived and worked in various countries before their latest move, Erdal et al. (Chap. 2) describe how, through their prior moves, migrants acquire 'tangible transnational capital' in the form of life skills, know-how and comparative advantage in the global market for healthcare workers.

Even after becoming citizens of a destination country, some migrants may feel that they do not have access to desired opportunities which may result in ‘reactive transnationalism’ (Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002). Such a reactive pushback might normally be expected to be directed at their origin country, but it could equally pull them towards another new destination or previous country of residence, especially if their own country continues to offer them little hope of a sustainable future livelihood. Formenti (Chap. 11) argues that, because of the discrimination and the language barrier that Portuguese-Guineans face in the labour market in Peterborough, they develop a greater sense of belonging and identification with ‘Portuguesehood’ following their onward migration from Lisbon. This new-found Lusophone identity enhances their social networks locally in Peterborough, but it also stimulates transnational ‘return’ visits in another direction, namely to their previous country of residence, Portugal (see also Ahrens, 2022).

Yet not all migrants have stable residence papers or citizenship to facilitate an onward migration. Ahrens (2013) found that Nigerian residents in Spain were severely affected by the austerity measures introduced following the 2008 financial crisis. They engaged in semi-legal moves to other EU member states, where they had the right to stay or visit but not always to work. In contrast, in countries like the United Arab Emirates, circular and onward migration is a way of life for the large and highly diversified migrant community. The *kafala* system means that all migrants, including those born in the country, are issued with a short-term, renewable visa that ties them to a sponsor – usually their employer (Ali, 2011). Once their employment contract is over, or they reach retirement age, they are generally compelled to leave the UAE, and many such migrants are creative in using their accumulated transnational ties – for instance to their other family members or to places where they have previously lived or been educated – to fashion trajectories of return or onward migration (Ali, 2011).

1.5 The Variegated Effects of Onward Migration on Transnationalism

In the following subsections we discuss the different ways in which onward migration can affect migrants’ experiences of transnationalism and their emerging transnational identities.

1.5.1 *Inter-generational Transnationalism*

In her pioneering book on international onward migration, Parminder Bhachu (1985) documents the ‘twice migration’ of East African Sikhs to the UK. They were part of a wider group of South Asians in East Africa, comprising wealthy Gujarati entrepreneurs (who had lived in East Africa for centuries) and Punjabi indentured

workers (who built the Kenya–Uganda rail lines). When the newly independent nation states introduced Africanisation policies from 1968 onwards, these groups were an obvious target. However, they found that, despite their official status as British subjects, they were unable to enter Britain freely. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act subjected Commonwealth citizens to immigration controls for the first time. Alarmed by the influx of thousands of East African Asian families, the British government further tightened controls in 1968. On the whole, the settlement of substantial numbers of East African Asian families in places such as West London and Leicester, cities which already hosted large Indian-origin migrant communities, was successful, partly because of these co-ethnic links and partly because of the professional and entrepreneurial orientation of the migrants.

Voigt-Graf (2004) illustrates the diverse nature of transnational networks by developing different spatial models for the three Indian migrant communities which are part of her research. She argues that, where cultural links to the original diasporic ‘hearth’ are lost, migrant communities might come to regard a place where they have lived for an extended amount of time as the ‘new centre’. This was the case for some Indo-Fijian twice migrants who, after migrating to Australia, regarded Fiji as their ‘new centre’ because they no longer maintained strong kinship ties to India.

In this volume, Della Puppa and Sredanovic (Chap. 9) find that Italian-Bangladeshis and their children who have onward migrated to London from Northern Italy become homesick not for their Bangladeshi homeland but for Italy, where many have spent most of their lives and which evokes a newer sense of home pending an improved integration in London. Hence, they visit Italy frequently and Bangladesh rarely, not just for logistical and financial considerations but also for affective reasons. They miss the climate, the coffee, the ice cream and the more relaxed social environment of Italy, which they contrast with the hard work, low pay, stress and general grimness of life in London (see also King & Della Puppa, 2021). The main motive for their onward transfer to London, facilitated by the acquisition of Italian (and hence ‘European’) citizenship in pre-Brexit times, was to advance the educational and career prospects of their Italian-born children, which can be considered another form of inter-generational transnationalism – passing the benefits of onward migration to the next generation.

Several other chapters likewise focus, mainly or partly, on the inter-generational dimension of onward migration, where the future of the children, in what de Hoon and van Liempt (Chap. 3) call the ‘transnational educational field’, becomes the main rationale for the move. Within Europe, the UK features as the onward migration destination of choice, for a series of reasons which resonate across different cases – Italian-Bangladeshis, as noted above (see Chap. 9), Dutch Somalis (de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3), Dutch Sudanese (Serra Mingot, Chap. 6) and Portuguese-Guineans (Formenti, Chap. 11). Acquiring, respectively, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese citizenship facilitated these onward migrations to the UK but the pull factor was the British comprehensive education system, seen to be more inclusive towards ‘visibly different’ migrant- and refugee-origin children and to offer them better life-chances and careers, including access to higher education. In contrast, the

Dutch system, for instance, tends to ‘condemn’ refugee-origin children to lower streams and qualifications, not helped by teachers’ low expectations of such children. Finally, the importance of children pursuing their education in the globally relevant English language is seen as highly advantageous over being taught in Italian, Dutch or Portuguese.

A different kind of cross-generational transnationalism is described by Patterson in Chap. 10. South Sudanese refugees housed in the vast Kakuma camp in Northern Kenya see education as their only escape from protracted displacement; however, this is available only to a fortunate few who can win scholarships to study abroad and be supported by remittances sent by older relatives who have already onward migrated to North America, Australia and the UK.

1.5.2 Split Transnationalism

Onward migration often takes place by different family members in a temporally lagged fashion, because certain family members are unable or unwilling to relocate together or because the move takes place in a strategically staged manner (Ahrens et al., 2016). The emergence of multi-local households is often determined by the infrastructure of immigration regimes, which can make it difficult to bring family members to destination countries in the Global North because the migrants applying for family reunification or family formation often have to comply with an income threshold, as family members often do not have recourse to public welfare funds in their first few years after arrival.

In other scenarios, one member of the family – often the male household head (cf. Della Puppa and Sredanovic, Chap. 9; Formenti, Chap. 11) – makes the onward migration first in order to ‘test the water’ and prepare the ground for family reunion. However, in the Dutch-Somali case (de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3), it is more common for women to be the onward-migration pioneers to the UK. Often separated or divorced, with their (former) husbands remaining in the Netherlands or returning to Somalia, the women are both the carers and the breadwinners of their families relocated to the UK. Dutch register data reveal that around half of Somali transnational families are ‘scattered’ due to the combination of onward migration and ‘absent fathers’. This case study also puts up for scrutiny the commonsense notion that children onward migrate with their parents; in the Dutch-Somali case many children move either on their own or with a relative who is not their biological parent. This extension of the standard model of the nuclear family implicit in much Western migration scholarship is also found in the case-study material from other chapters in the book, notably Chap. 6 (Serra Mingot) which takes the Sudanese extended family as its unit of analysis and Chap. 10 (Patterson) where successful South Sudanese refugees in the US and elsewhere send remittances to support the education of younger pupils and students in Kenya who may not be their close relatives.

Finally, Tobin et al. (Chap. 5), using the conceptual framework of ‘transnational figurations of displacement’, examine the family and kin-based networks mobilised by Syrian refugees seeking onward mobility within and beyond Jordan as their first place of refuge. Here, as with the South Sudanese in Kakuma, onward migration is an aspiration, an imaginary, rather than a realistic prospect, for the vast majority of refugees, which often results in families being split because of the rigorous legal restrictions on entry to ‘third’ countries. This is summed up in the description of interviewee Um-Hosam who ‘is now alone with one son in Jordan while [the rest of] her family are flung across the globe’.

1.5.3 Widening and Re-routed Transnationalism

Onward migration self-evidently widens the transnational range beyond its conventional bipolar form to a multi-polar expression of an origin country and two or more destinations. Whilst some chapters in the book explicitly deal with one onward-migration destination, sometimes defined as the ‘third country’ (de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3; cf. also Serra Mingot, Chap. 6; Della Puppa and Sredanovic, Chap. 9; Formenti, Chap. 11), other chapters detail a series of more complex spatial trajectories, including Erdal et al., Chap. 2; Flikweert et al., Chap. 4; Roberts, Chap. 7; and Jung, Chap. 8.

Jung (in Chap. 8) examines the widening transnational practices of male Senegalese onward migrants in Brazil.⁴ Some of his research participants arrived in Brazil via Cape Verde or Argentina. Their trajectories and plans to settle are often shaped by chance encounters that make them consider new destinations. They tend to remain mobile between a growing number of destination countries, which Jung likens to a ‘widening horizon’ of possible destinations. Nevertheless, Senegalese migrants maintain strong transnational ties with their immediate family members who stayed put in Senegal and exhibit the transnational behaviour of target earners, as they make considerable investments in their origin country in preparation for their envisaged permanent return to Senegal.

Erdal et al. (Chap. 2) present a study about the complex multi-sited transnational lives of nurses from both Poland and the Philippines who were working in Norway at the time of interview but who had previously lived in other destinations like Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and the UK. The authors emphasise the importance of temporality in understanding the ways in which the transnational ties and networks of their research participants evolved over time and how their perspectives on destinations also changed in response to macro-level processes and their own life-stage. Even though the research participants had not necessarily

⁴In contrast to other chapters in the book, Jung privileges the concept of multinational migration (following Paul & Yeoh, 2021) as an umbrella term to embrace the different types of multiple movements within an individual migrant’s lifetime. Jung sees this concept as more appropriate to capture the complex, dynamic and open-ended trajectories of his Senegalese participants.

planned to go to or settle in Norway, nonetheless many of them had stayed in the country for several years. Therefore, Erdal and her colleagues refer to this process of familiarisation with different places as Norway ‘becoming destination(s)’.

The notion of ‘becoming destinations’ is also applicable to the two biographical case studies presented by Roberts in Chap. 7. Two married couples, one of Bangladeshi origin (Nahid and Amit) and the other a mixed partnership between white Australian Sophie and black Ghanaian Daniel, navigate their complex single and coupled trajectories around the world, taking in multiple destinations, some of which are resided in more than once at different life-stages. In this way, the two couples develop strong transnational ties with several different countries; some of these ties are shared by both partners in the couple, while others are advantageous to one partner but not to the other for intersecting reasons of ‘race’, religion, life-stage and career and income-earning opportunities.

By contrast, Flikweert et al. (Chap. 4) focus less on which countries are navigated via onward migration and more on what happens there in terms of migrants’ ability to send remittances to their African home countries – Ghana, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Intriguingly, the authors find that being ‘on the move’ in onward migration increases migrants’ propensity to be gainfully employed and to send remittances, compared to migrants who are settled in their final destination.

In the book’s other remittance-focused study (Patterson, Chap. 10), the remittances are sent not to the origin country – South Sudan – but to young family members and even sometimes to non-kin who show strong academic promise and reside in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya – an example of what might be called ‘re-routed transnationalism’, like the Italian-Bangladeshis in London (Della Puppa and Sredanovic, Chap. 9) whose transnational ties to Bangladesh fade away, to be replaced by Italy as their nostalgic reference-point.

1.6 Onward Migration and Multi-sited Transnationalism: Implications for Research Methods

Throughout this book, onward migration is framed as a part of complex, non-linear migration trajectories which, in some cases, are planned and stepwise and, in other cases, are subject to unplanned and unexpected turns of events. As well as the spatial multi-locality which such onward migrations produce, often resulting in the splitting and scattering of transnational family structures, a temporal perspective is also important, as Erdal et al. stress in Chap. 2. Time is itself a complex construct in the various ways in which it intersects with onward migration. Amongst the many temporalities involved are the simple, chronological, linear time against which all (im)mobilities are recorded; biographical or life-course time, especially the way that onward migration is related to key life events for an individual or a family; what we might call ‘structural time’, comprising economic cycles of boom and recession

or geopolitical processes such as EU integration policy and ‘free movement’; and, finally, the temporal ruptures of more sudden events such as the Brexit referendum or the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. For onward migration, all these temporalities are potentially valid; however, particularly important is the life-course perspective, which sees onward migration as a multi-sited longitudinal family trajectory to fulfil changing aspirations where, however, not all family members can benefit equally. As Serra Mingot cogently states (Chap. 6), examined through a life-course temporal lens, ‘migration can lead to new conceptualisations of the temporality of the life course’ as well as the inverse: ‘personal conceptions of the temporality of the life course can often lead to [onward] migration’.

How, then, to capture methodologically the space–time specificities of onward migrations and their associated multi-sited transnational effects? The chapters in this book offer some guidelines, as do the papers collected by Collins and Huang (2012). In the present book, Tobin et al. (Chap. 5) suggest that ‘translocal figurations of family and kin’, which they see as both ‘classical sociological configurations’ and ‘ambivalent entanglements’, are an appropriate frame to document the dynamically changing socio-spatial constellations formed by a people (Syrian refugees in Jordan) desperate to escape to another country where their lives will be better. Serra Mingot (Chap. 6) mentions multi-sited matched-sample ethnographic methods for a better understanding of the ‘bigger picture’ of the onward migration of Somali refugees into and within Europe. Both Erdal et al. (Chap. 2) and Jung (Chap. 8) also propose more explicitly graphical methods to portray the spatio-temporal routings of the successive migrations of transnational individuals and their families – in the first case (Filipino and Polish nurses in Norway) in the form of conventional cartographic mapping and, in the second (Senegalese onward migrants in Brazil), in the form of ‘migration history charts’ (cf. Carling, 2012).

We want to extend these guidelines to a more solid methodological statement. Our starting-point is the landmark paper by George Marcus (1995) on ‘multi-sited ethnography’ in which he encouraged field researchers to ‘follow the people’ (1995, 106). Building on King (2018), we take forward Marcus’ entreaty to consider the extent to which multi-sited transnationalism can indeed be studied through the technique of multi-sited ethnography, whilst incorporating some of the critiques of Marcus’ formulation originating from more ‘place-bound’ anthropologists.

Surprisingly, Marcus had little to say about migration in his 1995 paper: just a few lines, plus a passing reference to transnationalism, even though the defined object of study of multi-sited transnationalism is ‘ultimately mobile and multiply situated’ (1995, 102). Instead, his paper takes the broader remit of examining ‘the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space’ (1995, 96). It has been for others to expand the discussion on the utility of multi-sited ethnography for studies in migration, transnationalism and diaspora (for instance, Gallo, 2009; Mand, 2011; Riccio, 2011; Beauchemin, 2014; Boccagni, 2016; King, 2018; Francisco-Menchavez, 2020; and see Hage, 2005 for a sharply critical view).

As Mark-Anthony Falzon notes (2009, 4), the success-story of multi-sited ethnography reflects an increasing awareness of globalisation, transnationalism and the social construction of space and place – and of the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in the

social sciences since the 1990s. This has led to the perceived inadequacy of single-sited research and of single localities as units of analysis in an increasingly mobile world. Falzon (2009, 1–2) develops and expands Marcus' definition of multi-sited ethnography in the following terms:

Marcus argued that multi-sited ethnography defines as its objective the study of social phenomena [migration *par excellence*] that cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single site... The essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connections ... and relationships across space... Research design proceeds by a series of juxtapositions... In terms of method, multi-sited ethnography involves a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves ... via sojourns in two or more places.

From this definition and these guidelines, the expectations are clear: the migration researcher 'follows the people' (onward migrants) to their next destination and carries out fieldwork in the various places (origin, plus two or more destinations) that the migrants inhabit.

Of course, in reality things are not so simple and this is where the various critiques of multi-sited ethnography and the responses to them come in. Falzon (2009), Coleman and von Hellermann (2011), Boccagni (2016) and King (2018) give balanced overviews of this critical debate, most of which touch on the dilution of ethnographic fieldwork when it is spread across multiple sites and the logistical challenges of carrying out research within a compact timeframe across places that may be very far apart in terms of geographical and cultural distance. The critical charge against Marcusian multi-sited ethnography has been led by Candea's (2007) argument in defence of the single bounded field-site and Hage's (2005) disbelief that multi-sited ethnography is even possible.⁵

The criticism that in-depth ethnographic fieldwork cannot be carried out across multiple sites because of time and resource constraints is countered as follows. First, when studying migrants' onward migration and multi-sited transnationalism, it is not so much a deep understanding of the sites themselves which is important but, rather, the ties, relationships, networks and movements between them, since these are the elements that make up the multi-sited 'transnational social fields' (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). The key, then, is 'mobile ethnography' (King, 2018, 45). Like the onward-migrating research subjects, the researcher combines periods of static fieldwork with being 'on the move' (Falzon, 2009, 9). There is a growing literature on 'mobile methods' which is of obvious relevance to researching migrants who are moving repeatedly (see, especially, Büscher et al., 2010). Onward migration and other complex migration trajectories involve a dialectical relationship between mobility and immobility (since a migrant has to 'stay put' for a certain threshold of time in order to be recorded as a migrant and not as a tourist or visitor) and the multi-sited field approach offers the researcher the chance to study both stasis and movement across borders within a transnational or translocal perspective (Amelina & Faist, 2012; Amelina et al., 2012).

⁵Marcus has himself responded to and, to some extent, accepted, some of these criticisms in his subsequent writing (see, especially, Marcus, 2008, 2009, 2011).

A second arena of debate centres around the definition of ethnography. If the term ‘multi-sited ethnography’ is replaced by ‘multi-sited methods’ or ‘multi-sited fieldwork’, many of the concerns of the more-purist anthropologists about the time necessary for a deep immersion and understanding of ‘the field’ disappear. In practice, as several of the following chapters demonstrate, most field research with onward migrants involves in-depth qualitative interviews, sometimes only in one place (where the migrants currently are), sometimes in two or more places. Such interviews are often combined, according to the methodological statements of the chapter authors, with participant observation. Whether such a combination is sufficient to qualify for the label of ‘ethnography’ is a matter of debate. Certainly, on the plus side, the combination of a multi-sited approach and mixed methods, often involving quantitative survey data, gives the possibility to triangulate the findings and more statistically rigorous results (see Beauchemin, 2014; also Chaps. 2, 3 and 4 of this book, respectively by Erdal et al., de Hoon and van Liempt, and Flikweert et al.).

Whilst the ‘lone’ migration researcher, ethnographer or otherwise, can follow people, things and themes throughout time and across space and borders, there are other research strategies that involve teamwork and collaboration. Such approaches are common in funded research projects with multiple partners employing mixed methods, several disciplines and a comparative dimension (Fitzgerald, 2006). In this way, the multi-sitedness of field research can be synchronous, being both ‘here’ and ‘there’ (and ‘there’; cf. Hannerz, 2003) at the same time, perhaps achieving the methodological rigour of matched samples (Mazzucato, 2009). The research *équipe* model avoids the risk of the single field researcher being in the ‘wrong’ place or engaging in ‘bouncing’ (Burawoy, 2003, 673) or ‘hopping’ (Hage, 2005, 465) between different sites in a yo-yo fashion (Wulff, 2007, 139–145).

A final set of perspectives on multi-sited research involves bringing in some less traditional aspects of the practice, reflecting new methods of collecting data and envisioning onward migration as imaginaries. First, Marcus’ (2009: 184) idea of the multi-sited imaginary is highly relevant to onward migration since migrants develop visions and desires of where they would like to (onward) migrate to. Migration thus becomes a ‘horizon of imagination’ (Graw & Schielke, 2012). Yet the actual move may never happen or may only happen much later when circumstances change or when the move can take place via one or more intermediate destinations. Several chapters in the book discuss, implicitly or explicitly, the imaginaries of ideal destinations (see, in particular, Erdal et al., Chap. 2; Tobin et al., Chap. 5; Jung, Chap. 8; Patterson, Chap. 10). Second, the advent of technologies of instant, cheap communication not only affects migrants’ ability to stay in touch with each other and with ‘home’ across transnational space but also facilitates researchers’ ability to ‘follow the migrants’ via telephone calls, Skype interviews and other instantaneous channels (as noted by Roberts, Chap. 7). Finally, in a move towards what Marcus (2008) and others (Coleman & von Hellermann, 2011) have termed ‘para-ethnography’, smaller-sample, in-depth field research *with* (rather than ‘on’) onward migrants can consist of working with selected participants who, in effect, become co-investigators in the co-creation of knowledge. This may also involve situations where the lead

researcher is auto-ethnographically involved in the topic under investigation, either as a member of the migrant group being researched or through other aspects of their life experience. After all, how many researchers forging their own academic careers are themselves onward migrants?

References

- Ahrens, J. (2013). Suspended in Eurocrisis: New immobilities and semi-legal migrations amongst Nigerians living in Spain. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 22(1), 115–139.
- Ahrens, J. (2022). Returning to where? Onward migration and diverse 'return' mobilities amongst Nigerian transnational families in Europe. *African Diaspora*, 14
- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran, and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Ali, S. (2011). Going and coming and going again: Second-generation migrants in Dubai. *Mobilities*, 6(4), 553–568.
- Amelina, A., & Faist, T. (2012). De-nationalising the national in research methodologies: Key concepts in transnational studies on migration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(10), 1707–1724.
- Amelina, A., Faist, T., Glick Schiller, N., & Nergiz, D. D. (2012). Methodological predicaments of cross-border studies. In A. Amelina, T. Faist, N. Glick Schiller, & D. D. Nergiz (Eds.), *Beyond methodological nationalism: Research methodologies for cross-border studies* (pp. 1–19). Routledge.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (Eds.). (1994). *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*. Routledge.
- Beauchemin, C. (2014). A manifesto for quantitative multi-sited approaches to international migration. *International Migration Review*, 48(4), 921–938.
- Beaverstock, J. V. (2005). Transnational elites in the city: British highly skilled inter-company transferees in New York City's financial district. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2), 245–268.
- Bhachu, P. (1985). *Twice migrants: East African Sikh settlers in Britain*. Tavistock.
- Boccagni, P. (2016). From the multi-sited to the in-between: Ethnography as a way of delving into migrants' transnational relationships. *International Journal on Social Research Methodology*, 19(1), 1–16.
- Brubaker, R. (2005). The diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1), 1–15.
- Burawoy, M. (2003). Revisits: An outline of a theory of reflexive ethnography. *American Sociological Review*, 68(5), 645–679.
- Büscher, M., Urry, J., & Witchger, G. (Eds.). (2010). *Mobile methods*. Routledge.
- Candea, M. (2007). Arbitrary locations: In defence of the bounded field-site. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(1), 167–184.
- Carling, J. (2012). Collecting, analysing and presenting migration histories. In C. Vargas-Silva (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in migration* (pp. 137–162). Edward Elgar.
- Carling, J., & Erdal, M. B. (2014). Return migration and transnationalism: How are the two connected? *International Migration*, 52(6), 2–12.
- Coleman, S., & von Hellermann, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Multi-sited ethnography: Problems and possibilities in the translocation of field methods*. Routledge.
- Collins, F. L., & Huang, S. (Eds.). (2012). Special section on migration methodologies. *Area*, 44(3), 270–304.
- Collyer, M. (2007). In-between places: Trans-Saharan transit migrants in Morocco and the fragmented journey to Europe. *Antipode*, 39(4), 668–690.
- Collyer, M., & de Haas, H. (2012). Developing dynamic categorisations of transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 468–481.

- Collyer, M., & King, R. (2016). Narrating Europe's migration and refugee 'crisis'. *Human Geography*, 9(2), 1–12.
- Crawley, H., & Jones, K. (2021). Beyond here and there: (Re)conceptualising migrant journeys and the 'in-between'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(14), 3226–3242.
- Das Gupta, T. (2005). Twice migrated: Political economy of South Asian immigrants from the Middle East to Canada. *International Journal of the Humanities*, 3(9), 263–274.
- Das Gupta, T. (2015). Gulf husbands and Canadian wives: Transnationalism from below among South Asians – A classed, gendered, and racialized phenomenon. In G. Man & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Engendering transnational voices: Studies in family, work, and identity* (pp. 1–17). Wilfried Laurier University Press.
- Das Gupta, T. (2021). *Twice migrated, twice displaced: Indian and Pakistani transnational households in Canada*. UBC Press.
- de Hoon, M. D., Vink, M., & Schmeets, H. (2020). A ticket to mobility? Naturalisation and subsequent migration of refugees after obtaining asylum in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(7), 1185–1204.
- Della Puppa, F. (2018). Ambivalent mobilities and survival strategies of Moroccan and Bangladeshi families in Italy in times of crisis. *Sociology*, 52(3), 464–479.
- Della Puppa, F., & King, R. (2019). The new 'twice migrants': Motivations, experiences and disillusionments of Italian-Bangladeshi relocating to London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(11), 1936–1952.
- Della Puppa, F., Montagna, N., & Kofman, E. (2021). Special issue: Onward migration and intra-European mobilities: A critical and theoretical overview. *International Migration*, 59, 1–13.
- DeVoretz, D. J., Ma, J., & Zhang, K. (2003). Triangular human capital flows: Some empirical evidence from Hong Kong. In J. G. Reitz (Ed.), *Host societies and the reception of immigrants* (pp. 469–492). University of California, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- Duval, D. T. (2004). Linking return visits and return migration among Commonwealth Eastern Caribbean migrants in Toronto. *Global Networks*, 4(1), 51–67.
- Faggian, A., McCann, P., & Sheppard, S. (2006). An analysis of ethnic differences in UK graduate migration behaviour. *The Annals of Regional Science*, 40(2), 461–471.
- Falzon, M.-A. (Ed.). (2009). *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research*. Ashgate.
- Fitzgerald, D. (2006). Towards a theoretical ethnography of migration. *Qualitative Research*, 29(1), 1–24.
- Francisco-Menchavez, V. (2020). All in the family: Transnational families and stepwise migration strategies. *Geographical Research*, 58(4), 377–387.
- Gallo, E. (2009). Is the right place the right time? Reflections on multi-sited ethnography in the age of migration. In M.-A. Falzon (Ed.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research* (pp. 87–102). Ashgate.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Santon, C. (1992). Towards a transnational perspective on migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645, 1–24.
- Graw, K., & Schielke, S. (Eds.). (2012). *The global horizon: Expectations of migration in Africa and the Middle East*. Leuven University Press.
- Guarnizo, L. E., Portes, A., & Haller, W. (2003). Assimilation and transnationalism: Determinants of transnational political action among contemporary migrants. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(6), 1211–1248.
- Hage, G. (2005). A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community. *Anthropological Theory*, 5(4), 463–475.
- Hägerstrand, T. (1957). Migration and area. In D. Hannerberg, T. Hägerstrand, & B. Odeving (Eds.), *Migration in Sweden: A symposium* (pp. 27–158). C.W.K. Gleerup.
- Hannerz, U. (1990). Cosmopolitans and locals in world culture. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 7(2/3), 237–251.
- Hannerz, U. (2003). Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on multi-sited ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4(2), 201–216.

- Itzigsohn, J., & Saucedo, S. G. (2002). Immigrant incorporation and sociocultural transnationalism. *International Migration Review*, 36(3), 766–798.
- Itzigsohn, J., Dore Cabral, C., Hernandez Medina, E., & Vazquez, O. (1999). Mapping Dominican transnationalism: Narrow and broad transnational practices. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 316–339.
- Jolivet, D. (2020). Post-2008 multi-sited household practices: Between Morocco, Spain and Norway. *International Migration*, 58(1), 45–60.
- Kelly, M. (2013). *Onward migration: The transnational trajectories of Iranians leaving Sweden*. Uppsala University, Geographica 1.
- Kelly, M., & Hedman, L. (2016). Between opportunity and constraint: Understanding the onward migration of highly educated Iranian refugees from Sweden. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 17(3), 649–667.
- King, R. (2018). Context-based qualitative research and multi-sited migration studies in Europe. In R. Zapata-Barrero & E. Yalaz (Eds.), *Qualitative research in Europe migration* (pp. 35–56). Springer Open.
- King, R., & Della Puppa, F. (2021). Times of work and social life: Bangladeshi migrants in Northwest Italy and London. *International Migration Review*, 55(2), 402–430.
- King, R., & Kuschminder, K. (Eds.). (2022). *Handbook of return migration*. Edward Elgar.
- Konadu-Agyemang, K. (1999). Characteristics and migration experience of Africans in Canada with specific reference to Ghanaians in greater Toronto. *Canadian Geographer*, 43(4), 400–414.
- Levitt, P. (2001). *The transnational villagers*. University of California Press.
- Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039.
- Lindley, A., & van Hear, N. (2007). *New Europeans on the move: A preliminary review of the onward migration of refugees within the European Union*. University of Oxford, Centre on Migration Policy and Society (COMPAS) Working Papers No. 57.
- Mabogunje, A. L. (1970). Systems approach to a theory of rural-urban migration. *Geographical Analysis*, 2(1), 1–18.
- Mand, K. (2011). Researching lives in motion: Multi-sited strategies in a transnational context. In S. Coleman & P. von Hellermann (Eds.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Problems and possibilities in the translocation of field methods* (pp. 41–53). Routledge.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95–117.
- Marcus, G. E. (2008). The ends of ethnography: Social/cultural anthropology's signature form of producing knowledge in transition. *Cultural Anthropology*, 23(1), 1–14.
- Marcus, G. E. (2009). Multi-sited ethnography: Notes and queries. In M.-A. Falzon (Ed.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research* (pp. 181–196). Ashgate.
- Marcus, G. E. (2011). Multi-sited ethnography: Five or six things I know about it now. In S. Coleman & P. von Hellermann (Eds.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Problems and possibilities in the translocation of field matters* (pp. 16–32). Routledge.
- Martiniello, M., & Rea, A. (2014). The concept of migratory careers: Elements for a new theoretical perspective of contemporary human mobility. *Current Sociology*, 62(7), 1079–1096.
- Mas Giralt, R. (2017). Onward migration as a coping strategy? Latin Americans moving from Spain to the UK post-2008. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(3), e2017.
- Mazzucato, V. (2009). Bridging boundaries with a transnational research approach: A simultaneous matched sample methodology. In M.-A. Falzon (Ed.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research* (pp. 215–231). Ashgate.
- Mazzucato, V. (2011). Reverse remittances in the migration–development nexus: Two-way flows between Ghana and the Netherlands. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(5), 454–468.
- Moret, J. (2018). *European Somalis' post-migration movements: Mobility capital and the transnationalisation of resources*. Springer.
- OECD. (2008). *International migration outlook, SOPEMI 2008*. OECD.

- Ortensi, L. E., & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E. (2018). Moving on? Gender, education, and citizenship as key factors among short-term onward migration planners. *Population, Space and Place*, 24(5), e2135.
- Ossman, S. (2013). *Moving matters: Paths of serial migration*. Stanford University Press.
- Ott, E. (2011). *Get up and go: Refugee resettlement and secondary migration in the USA*. UNHCR, Policy Development and Evaluation Service.
- Paul, A. M. (2017). *Multinational maids: Stepwise migration in a global labor market*. Cambridge University Press.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2021). Studying multinational migrations: Speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 1–145.
- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Ravenstein, E. G. (1885). The laws of migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 48(2), 167–235.
- Ravenstein, E. G. (1889). The laws of migration. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 52(2), 241–305.
- Riccio, B. (2011). Exploring Senegalese translocal spaces: Reflections on multi-sited research. In S. Coleman & P. von Hellermann (Eds.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Problems and possibilities in the translocation of field methods* (pp. 73–88). Routledge.
- Schapendonk, J. (2013). From transit migrants to trading migrants: Development opportunities for Nigerians in the transnational trade sector of Istanbul. *Sustainability*, 5(7), 2856–2873.
- Schapendonk, J. (2020). *Finding ways through Eurospace: West African movers re-viewing Europe from the inside*. Berghahn.
- Schapendonk, J. (2021). Counter moves: Destabilizing the grand narrative of onward migration and secondary movements in Europe. *International Migration*, 59(6), 45–58.
- Schewel, K. (2020). Understanding immobility: Moving beyond the mobility bias in migration studies. *International Migration Review*, 54(2), 328–355.
- Siu, L. C. D. (2005). *Memories of a future home: Diasporic citizenship of Chinese in Panama*. Stanford University Press.
- Smith, M. P., & Guarnizo, L. E. (Eds.). (1998). *Transnationalism from below*. Transaction.
- Sperling, J. (2014). Conceptualising ‘inter-destination transnationalism’: The presence and implication of coethnic ties between destination societies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(7), 1097–1115.
- Tan, G., & Hugo, G. (2017). The transnational migration strategies of Chinese and Indian students in Australia. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(6), e2038.
- Toma, S., & Castagnone, E. (2015). What drives onward mobility within Europe? The case of Senegalese migrations between France, Italy and Spain. *Population*, 70(1), 65–95.
- van Liempt, I. (2011a). Young Dutch Somalis in the UK: Citizenship, identities and belonging in a transnational triangle. *Mobilities*, 6(4), 569–583.
- van Liempt, I. (2011b). ‘And then one day they all moved to Leicester’: The relocation of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK explained. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(3), 254–266.
- Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 447–462.
- Voigt-Graf, C. (2004). Towards a geography of transnational spaces: Indian transnational communities in Australia. *Global Networks*, 4(1), 25–49.
- Wulff, H. (2007). *Dancing at the crossroads: Memory and mobility in Ireland*. Berghahn.
- Xiang, B., & Lindquist, J. (2014). Migrant infrastructure. *International Migration Review*, 48(S1), S122–S148.
- Zufferey, J. (2019). Who are the serial movers? Sociodemographic profiles and reasons to migrate to Switzerland among multiple international migrants. In I. Steiner & P. Wanner (Eds.), *Migrants and expats: The Swiss migration and mobility nexus* (pp. 83–100). Springer Open.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 2

Becoming Destination(s)? Complex Migration Trajectories, Transnational Lifeworlds and Migration Decisions



Marta Bivand Erdal, Lubomila Korzeniewska, and Davide Bertelli

2.1 Introduction

Understanding migrant decision-making and the roles of destinations therein has been a preoccupation of migration theory and immigration policies for decades (McHugh, 1984; Haug, 2008; Klabunde & Willekens, 2016; Van Hear et al., 2018). Increasingly, it is acknowledged that migration decisions are not one-off decisions made in clearly identifiable moments but are, instead, processual and relational decision-making processes which evolve over time (Thompson, 2017; Zhang, 2018). As a parallel, migration journeys are found to be fractured, segmented or incomplete and in need of alternative conceptualisations in the face of open-ended, unplanned or ‘liquid’ migration – as in the case of intra-EU mobility (Engbersen et al., 2010; Bygnes & Erdal, 2017; Mallett & Hagen-Zanker, 2018; Schapendonk et al., 2020).

Among our nurse-migrant interlocutors in Norway, we were struck by the presence of complex migration trajectories, of emigration and return, re-migration and onward migration. This raised the questions ‘Why Norway?’ and ‘For how long?’ – in other words, about Norway as ‘the destination’. These were among the questions pursued in 30 semi-structured interviews with nurse migrants. We build this chapter on the above dataset, with specific analytical emphasis on nurse-migrants’ experiences of complex migration trajectories between Poland, the Philippines and Norway as well as other destinations such as Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands,

M. B. Erdal (✉) · L. Korzeniewska
Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Oslo, Norway
e-mail: Marta@prio.no

D. Bertelli
Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Oslo, Norway
Centre of Mission and Global Studies, VID Vitenskapelig Høyskolen, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: davide.bertelli@vid.no

Saudi Arabia, Sweden and the UK. Thus, Norway was the first ‘onward’ destination for some of our interviewees; others had been to several destinations prior to Norway, while some were contemplating onward – and return – migration in the future.

The chapter addresses three theoretically oriented questions which, together, shed light on the possibilities and limitations of the current theorisation of migration decision-making and, more specifically, on the roles implicitly or explicitly designated to ‘destinations’. First, we want to understand the geographical patterns of the specific complex migration trajectories of the nurses whom we interviewed, in order to cast light on the role of destinations in their migration decision-making processes, both for initial and for onward migration. Second, we explore the role of transnational ties and networks – constituting a form of multi-sited transnationalism for some – in the evolving complex migration trajectories found. Third, we investigate the role of time and temporal considerations in shifting perspectives on origin, destination and future outlook.

We argue that a fresh and critical perspective may contribute to an adjustment of prevailing migration theories which, implicitly or explicitly, continue to suffer from what we might call a ‘destination’ bias, even when migrants’ transnational social lifeworlds are acknowledged. In other words, assumptions about the salience and roles of destinations in migration processes, implicitly (e.g., due to data availability) or explicitly (e.g., due to funding from public bodies in particular states), shape existing knowledge and theorisation of migration-decisions. The contribution we make in this chapter builds on the case of professional, predominantly female, often South-North migrants, whose migration experiences have not, to date, been formative of migration theory, despite the volume of interdisciplinary research on and, specifically, the policy interest in nurse migration (e.g., Van Riemsdijk, 2010; Goździak, 2016; Thompson & Walton-Roberts, 2019; Vaughn et al., 2020).

We now develop our argument on migration decisions in complex migration trajectories, by reviewing some existing theoretical perspectives on migration decisions, the roles of transnational networks and temporal perspectives. Following the presentation of our methods, we start our analysis by mapping the complex migration trajectories found in our data, tracing how these come together and the different ways in which ‘destinations’ matter. Subsequently we explore the transnational lifeworlds of nurse migrants which shape their complex migration trajectories, thus revisiting debates on transnational networks and migration destinations and emphasising multi-stage and onward migration possibilities. Finally, we consider future outlooks on onward migration and return among our nurse-migrant interviewees: we discuss the ways in which time, age and different life-cycle stages matter in changing perspectives. We find that the place of residence over a long period of time may, for some, become ‘the destination’ it initially was not – including, for some, as the result of a feeling of *migration fatigue* more than as an active choice. In the conclusion we offer some reflections on the theoretical implications and relevance of our findings – pointing to similarities with studies of liquid migration and fractured journeys, among others – and argue for the need for further conceptual and

methodological scrutiny of the role of ‘destinations’ as this evolves over time and hence how we, as migration scholars, understand migration decision-making.

2.2 Migration Decisions in Complex Migration Trajectories

Whereas the role of destinations in explaining migration decisions has been scrutinised and critically assessed, we suggest that the perspective of complex migration trajectories is a useful one from which to re-engage with the role of destinations in migration decision-making (see also, in this book, Chap. 4 by Flikweert et al. and Chap. 8 by Jung). This is for the simple reason that it makes the basic distinction between the decision to leave and the choice of destination, a distinction which is very obvious when multiple destinations are part of the picture. In our case, when interviewing Filipino and Polish nurses in Norway who had had at least one previous ‘migration destination’ prior to Norway, reflections about the decision to migrate, to go to the first destination, to return or migrate onwards and to re-migrate after return – and to which destination – were all necessary and integral to the migration stories which were shared.

In this section we therefore first revisit extant work on understanding migration decisions broadly, including the balance between rational choice and relational factors. Second, we discuss perspectives on migration decision-making which recognise the role of transnational ties and social networks. Thirdly, we discuss work on time and temporalities in migration studies and suggest that there are productive ways in which a focus on the role of time – in the context of complex migration trajectories – can help to move the theorisation of migration decision-making beyond a too-narrow focus on destinations.

2.2.1 *Understanding Migration Decisions*

Since Ravenstein’s (1885) ‘laws of migration’, migration theory has sought to explain and predict migration flows, often by means of comparing traits of the place of origin with those of the place of destination. What are often referred to as ‘push–pull’ models of migration (Lee, 1966) build on this basic idea and, through this, are indeed able to explain migration in some contexts and under some circumstances.

In neoclassical economics, wage differentials between places of origin and destination are a key explanatory factor (e.g. Harris & Todaro, 1970), drawing on a rational-choice mode of understanding human actions. Approaches to explaining migration decisions from other social-science disciplines, including anthropology, geography and sociology, have foregrounded the interplay of structure and agency, of asymmetrical access to information and of interpersonal and relational dimensions (see, e.g., Bakewell, 2010). The comparative advantages of the destination,

when compared with the place of origin, remain central in theories of migration today, discussing the central ‘migration drivers’ (De Haas et al., 2019).

The ‘New Economics of Labour Migration’ or NELM approach (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Massey et al., 1993) contributed important insights which emphasised the household perspective, often more salient than an individual perspective, when seeking to explain migration decisions in many contexts globally. This underscored the need for a relational understanding of factors in the place of origin which, in different ways, impacted on migration decision-making.

Increasingly, migration decisions are acknowledged to be embedded within interpersonal relationships, reflecting composite migration drivers which may be described as ‘predisposing, proximate, precipitating and mediating drivers’ (Van Hear et al., 2012, 13; see also Van Hear et al., 2018). In other words, migration decisions can be unpacked in stages, even beyond two-step approaches to migration theory, which recognise the aspiration and the capability to migrate as distinct from one another (Carling, 2002). The stages of migration decision-making processes, in the context of complex migration trajectories, are multiple and often non-linear and involve different timescales and changing relationships, with the notion of ‘destination’ as a final port of call, very much based on the specific circumstances at hand (Carling & Haugen, 2021).

Recent contributions to migration studies increasingly engage with such complex migration trajectories, drawing attention to the unexpected turns of migration journeys and thus also the changing role of destinations (see the review by Ahrens and King, Chap. 1). These latter either become the destination or never materialise, whatever may have been the plan at the point of an initial migration decision (Westcott & Robertson, 2017; Valenta, 2020; Crawley & Jones, 2021; Snel et al., 2021). Some of the research includes analyses of internal migration, which may or may not be part of a migration trajectory, including international migration. This scholarship also spans migration in contexts ranging from violent conflict to labour migration to the Gulf States but is equally relevant to considerations of high-skilled intra-European migrants (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Ryan, 2019). This work also underscores the need for further theorisation of the roles of – and assumptions about – ‘destinations’ in migration decisions.

2.2.2 Transnational Ties and Social Networks

From the point of departure of seeking to understand migration decision-making and the role of multiple destinations therein, when several migration destinations over time are already involved, several strands of literature are relevant. The salience of social networks is highlighted in migration theory, especially in efforts to explain migration decisions and destination choices (see, e.g., Bakewell et al., 2016). The role of transnational ties and existing transnational social fields, both in facilitating migration itself and in easing settlement processes and thus also feeding into the

attraction of particular destinations for specific migrant populations, is well-evidenced (Haug, 2008; Ryan et al., 2009; Lubbers et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, analyses of recent intra-EU mobility suggest that migration can also be less centred on destinations. Sometimes this is referred to as ‘liquid’ or ‘open-ended’ migration, in a context of free mobility such as that within the EU and EEA. This form of migration defies many of the parameters of migration theories developed in the context of South-North migration, from contexts of origin countries with significantly lower levels of income and living standards compared to contexts of destination and, notably, with significant migration regulation involved. Furthermore, the literature on ‘secondary movements’ or ‘onward migration’ underscores the role of social networks and transnational ties and also points to the salience of time and a longitudinal perspective for understanding migration decisions and destination choices (Monti, 2020).

Analyses of the migration journeys – e.g. to Europe across the Mediterranean – among migrants without regular status in Europe, reveal ‘fractured journeys’ (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019). On the one hand, these studies show that destinations, beyond merely defining ‘Europe’ as one, are beyond the realm of choice for many migrants, who rely on smugglers. On the other, some journeys of migrants without regular status resemble the liquid nature of intra-EU mobility, despite the radically different circumstances (Schapendonk et al., 2020).

Whereas the role of transnational ties – and obligations – is central to efforts to explain initial migration decisions and destination choices, we find fewer attempts to understand the role of transnational obligations for migration decisions in the case of complex migration trajectories, including onward movement and re-migration post-return (but see Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2019; Francisco-Menchavez, 2020; McCarthy, 2020). Can it be assumed that these migration decisions and destination choices are identical to those which are relevant prior to the initial migration? If not, how and why might they be different? These questions lead us to the third body of literature on which we draw in this chapter – work on the role of time in international migration and, more specifically, in relation to migration decisions and destination choices from a temporal perspective.

2.2.3 The Role of Time and Temporal Perspectives

Migration studies have undergone what may be referred to as a ‘temporal turn’ in the past two decades (Cwerner, 2001; Gabaccia, 2014; Page et al., 2017), where a renewed interest in the role of time and temporalities has become mainstream. Such interest in the temporal dimensions of migration has led to work on waiting, temporariness and liminality (Noussia & Lyons, 2009; Vaughn et al., 2020), has continued longstanding demographic traditions of the analysis of generations, cohorts and life-cycle stages (see, e.g., Erdal & Ezzati, 2015; Ramos, 2018) and emphasised the importance of acknowledging the roles of the past, present and the future in efforts to understand migration processes.

The passage of time and changing life-cycle stages affect individuals' and families' perspectives, showing future choices in a new light in which a cost–benefit analysis may be evaluated differently from one decade to another. The applicability of this basic human insight into migration research has methodological consequences (Robertson, 2015). There are also important conceptual dimensions, not only in the recognition that migration decisions are not one-off decisions made at a particular point in time but which, rather, merit being seen as processes embedded in individuals' and families' lifeworlds and shaped by opportunities and constraints, as well as obligations, hopes and desires, which may be less tangible (Collins, 2018). This is not to say that temporal perspectives on migration processes necessarily differ entirely from more rationally oriented perspectives, although a reified 'idea of the migrant as a utility-maximising individual' arguably needs challenging in the face of the empirical evidence to hand (De Haas, 2011, 20; Collins, 2018, 965).

Instead, a temporal lens puts the different ways of evaluating circumstances in context and allows space for combining changing rational and relational considerations. Herein lies the role of change or, as Francis Collins (2018) argues, migration as fundamental to the *becoming* processes of migrants as individual human beings. Thus, in analyses of migration narratives – in our case, foregrounding complex migration trajectories – change, hope, desire, disillusionment and disappointment are all integral to the process of becoming: migration necessarily plays a significant role for individual migrants in shifting their perspectives, commitments and priorities and affecting how, for some, places previously seen as stepping-stones on the migratory trajectory *become*, in fact, destinations. Following McGarrigle and Ascensão (2017) and Salamońska (2017) we argue that conceptual discussions of migration processes with a temporal lens have much to benefit from further engagement with empirical analyses of multiple migration, onward migration and various forms of circulation. Here we also draw on work conducted among Asian migrants in Australia, drawing attention to the roles of intimacy and time as these evolve in the context of migration regulation and the escalating use of temporariness within such regulation (Robertson, 2020).

Our analysis of the roles which 'destinations' play in migration decision-making in the context of complex migration trajectories is anchored in our interviews. Simultaneously, we also draw heavily on existing insights in migration studies, pertaining to decision-making about migration. We find that analyses of decisions about return migration offer an interesting view. Amparo González-Ferrer et al. (2014) hypothesise about the salience of a number of factors, with which we also engage: the role of distance and cost, the impact of restrictive immigration policies, the location of family networks transnationally and the heterogeneity of migration motives and, hence, logics which operate in migration decision-making.

2.3 Methods and Data

This chapter builds on a set of 30 interviews with Filipino and Polish migrant nurses conducted in either English and Norwegian or Polish and Norwegian in Norway.¹ Our dataset was subject to multiple readings and systematic coding in NVIVO. We were struck by the complex migration trajectories of some interviewees and thus we applied an inductive approach to identify a subsample of eight nurse migrants. We conducted a further in-depth analysis of interviews with the eight individuals who all had international migration experience prior to arrival in Norway.

Of these eight interviewees, three were born in Poland and five in the Philippines: they all moved abroad as adults. The sample is based on mainly female perspectives (seven), with one male perspective. Regarding age, the variation is considerable, as the youngest was 26 and the eldest 64. Their length of stay in Norway at the time of the interview also offers a certain degree of variation, spanning from 4 months to 13 years. The experience that all participants in this subsample had in common was international migration prior to their arrival in Norway. Belgium, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and the UK are all countries in which the interlocutors worked as nurses, health-workers or au-pairs. Most of the stays in these countries were short-term or summer jobs, with the exception of Clarissa² (see Fig. 2.1 below) who, prior to moving to Norway, lived in Sweden for almost 20 years in addition to previous nursing training in the country – one of her daughters and her ex-husband still live there.

In relation to family, most of our interviewees migrated individually and only one moved with the whole family. Three have children: one in the country of origin and two in the previous country of choice. Clarissa's case is more complex as she has one child and grandchildren in the Philippines and one child in Sweden. From a professional perspective and with the exception of only one who underwent nursing training in Sweden, our interviewees all have a nursing-education background, with training completed in the country of origin. Due to the nature of their migration trajectories, they all learnt and became fluent in Norwegian as adults, after their move to Norway.

Data were collected in the greater Oslo area between Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018. We conducted follow-up interviews with those respondents who signalled important events approaching in the near future when we met for the first time. Their life situations changed substantially over a short period because of significant events such as pregnancy, moving into a new apartment, reunification with a spouse or starting a new job. Follow-up interviews enriched the dataset substantially, enabling in-depth analysis of the roles of time and the temporal aspects of migration

¹For our interviewees, Norwegian was the language of instruction at work and they would naturally incorporate Norwegian vocabulary while speaking about work-related issues. Sometimes they switched on and off between the two languages and spoke whole sentences in Norwegian/English or Polish/Norwegian.

²All names used in the chapter are pseudonyms.



Fig. 2.1 Nurse migrants’ complex migration trajectories

decisions. Norway repeatedly came up as an onward destination which was otherwise unplanned at origin in Poland or in the Philippines.

2.4 Mapping Complex Migration Trajectories

We start this section by introducing the migration trajectories which we analyse in the remainder of this chapter. Figure 2.1 shows the complex geographical migration patterns consisting of South-South and South-North migration, migration within the EEA and internal mobility within Norway. These include initial emigration, return migration, onward migration and re-migration (international as well as internal). Interviewees No. 4 (Blessica), 5 (Anna) and 7 (Paulina) moved back to the country of origin before the further trajectory to Norway; others did not. Circular migration and seasonal work comprise stages of the migration paths of two nurses – Nos 7, Paulina and 8, Clarissa – and pose a challenge to the linear outline of migration trajectories. The diversity of these latter and the instances of internal migration within Norwegian borders problematise the destination-oriented approach to migration, as we return to later in this chapter.

While emigration from the country of origin was viewed as an opportunity to boost the nurse-migrants' career or improve their personal or family economy across our sample, Norway was not a first 'country of choice'. Surprisingly, even for some of the interviewees themselves, they crossed the Norwegian border and spent substantial time in a country which they had often not considered as a destination for long-term settlement. Thus, when answering the question 'Why Norway?' our interviewees often re-traced their steps to a time before they left Poland or the Philippines. To present the complex migration trajectories we found and analyse how decision-making about migration emerged therein, we follow a chronological order, starting from the choice to become a nurse, through their migration experiences in the first countries of immigration and to how Norway became a migration destination on their trajectories.

Nursing as a profession is linked to a robust mobility potential, due to a worldwide shortage of healthcare professionals. As is well evidenced in the literature on nurse migration, the Philippines is a very specific context in terms of nurse education for export (Choy, 1998; Ball, 2004; McKay, 2016; Thompson & Walton-Roberts, 2019). For some of our interviewed nurses, the choice of a nursing degree was also, to a great extent, motivated by the wish to improve their personal and family economy through an expected income made as a nurse abroad. Lorna was not the only interviewee who was initially afraid of blood and shunned a career in nursing at first. However, the migration opportunities linked to becoming a nurse and the economic profits she envisaged determined a last-minute change in her education plan:

We have the American dream, they call it. Because it's very common, like, a lot of Filipino nurses go to America, and, you know, see a lot. They have a good life and a good salary and all that stuff. And a lot of my friends also studied nursing. At first, I was like [...] I wanted to study accounting. I was with my mum, and suddenly I thought 'Oh, maybe I can try nursing!'

The desired South-North mobility and employment opportunities in the first 'countries of choice' are bound to complex legislative frameworks. Increasing restrictions on migration and challenges to the authorisation of foreign medical degrees in the US and Canada promoted the choice of EEA countries or the Gulf States. These were initially planned to play the role of stepping-stones in Filipino nurses' migration trajectories, still with the planned destination of North America. In contrast, in our sample, the Polish nurses aimed for mobility within EEA borders only; thus, the stepping-stone approach is nationality-specific in our data. Among both Filipino and Polish nurse migrants, different strategies were utilised to initially leave the country of origin. These included seasonal labour migration in the health-care sector, labour migration linked to regular employment as a nurse, health-worker or care-giver and also family migration and reunification options as well as au-pair cultural-exchange programmes abroad.

Clarissa made use of family reunification, married and started a family in Sweden, where she also received her nursing training and gained extensive work experience. Meanwhile, the au-pair scheme implied a match with a host family

abroad and the Filipino nurses who chose this migration strategy were open to the idea of this cultural exchange programme in multiple locations in Western and Northern Europe; thus they were flexible about their 'destination'. Temporary contracts for au-pairs providing short-term residence permission in their first country of immigration led the nurses to seek further alternatives for staying abroad. Migration to Norway appears to be an accidental consequence of a match with a new host family. As Lorna pointed out:

It just happened that the family from Norway was the one I was matched with. For me it didn't matter. I could go to Denmark, or, yeah, Sweden or anywhere, because [...] being an au-pair was the easiest way for us, for example Filipinos, to go to a different country.

For nurses who employed the labour migration or family migration scheme for their onward journey to Norway, the choice of the latter as a destination was largely dictated by the high demand for healthcare professionals in the country. This was linked to the anticipated ease in obtaining the necessary documents and an attractive income, higher than that which was likely in their first country of immigration. We find that previous migration experiences, often neutral or negative in nurse-migrants' narratives, were also important in the migration decision-making process.

The emotional aspect mattered particularly for some interviewees, who did not feel at home in their first country of immigration. Anna left the UK, moved back to Poland and subsequently left for Norway. She said:

Already after my Bachelor's I went to England. I worked there for two years. I started missing our country [Poland]. I didn't take to it in my heart. England is not close to my heart; I didn't put down roots there. My fellow students from the BA joined me [in England]. They've put down roots there. They have jobs, children, marriage, friends. I came back to Poland. I studied for my Master's and I was employed in the Operating Room. But I only held out for two years. With that [low] pay.

The idea of income comparisons in the evaluation of migration destination choices is both obvious and, of course, a key tenet of existing theorisation. However, both economic and emotional considerations mattered for Anna, whose migration trajectory, in a simplified manner, could be summarised as follows: a low salary in Poland, migration to the UK, negative emotions, return migration to Poland, a low salary, migration to Norway, negative emotions, internal migration in Norway and no return to Poland. Anna's case is indicative of the transformation – the process of becoming – to which migrants with complex trajectories expose themselves which, in some cases, may lead to tangible transnational capital in terms of skills, know-how and comparative advantage in the labour market.

The internal migration in which Anna engaged is another aspect of the complex migration trajectories which we identified, where we found that a move within Norway or, indeed, other countries, could have implications comparable to international resettlement (cf. King & Skeldon, 2010). Paulina, a nurse with migration experience from the Netherlands, decided to move on to Norway because of the landscape and leisure activities available. During the interview, she said: 'Holland is too flat' and expressed a desire to live surrounded by a mountainous landscape. She moved to Norway through a recruitment agency and had no choice over the

specific location in Norway to which she was sent. The mismatch of expectations and the current location far away from mountains were the main factors which led Paulina to a further move, which places internal migration centrally within her trajectory.

Other nurses who came to Norway through recruitment agencies followed a similar settlement pattern in which the demand for nurses was the main factor determining where they would be sent. Consequently, this raises questions about the nurses' degree of choice of 'destination', beyond choosing the country. These issues, although in a radically different context, are similar to those of decentralised refugee-settlement programmes in many European countries, whether for resettled refugees or for asylum-seekers who are granted refugee status: even when the country is a chosen destination, the place in which you live may well not be. The Filipino nurses who were part of the au-pair scheme agreed to move to wherever in Norway their 'match' family was located. For nurses who had some agency in the choice of a specific place in Norway and those who moved internally within the country, their networks – both personal and professional – played a major role in the migration decision-making process. In other words, the presence of family, friends, fellow graduates and religious and diaspora communities mattered for their choice of Norway as a destination country, not least for the choice of specific locations within Norway.

2.5 Transnational Ties and Networks

In our analysis of how complex migration trajectories contribute to shedding light on the role of destinations in migrant decision-making processes, we now turn to the role of transnational networks. Transnational ties and networks are a central feature of analyses of contemporary migration, foregrounding remittances, care obligations and the role of visits. Several other chapters in this volume exemplify these interconnections: see, especially, de Hoon and van Liempt (Chap. 3), Flikweert et al. (Chap. 4), Tobin et al. (Chap. 5), Jung (Chap. 8) and Formenti (Chap. 11). In our interviews, we also found experiences of and reflections about these kinds of transnational practice. Our purpose in this section is to show their relevance in the context of attempting to better understand migration decision-making processes and the role of destinations therein.

Following Bakewell et al. (2016), our analysis supports previous contributions which have brought attention to the role of social networks, where we find a multiplicity of locations to be of relevance simultaneously – suggesting the salience of multi-sited transnationalism.

Danilo had lived in Norway for 5 years, following his migration experience in Denmark. His case, however, constitutes a clear example of how transnational networks and familial obligations are interlinked with decision-making about onward migration. His family created a transnational support strategy which he himself calls a 'migration culture', with financial commitment to the family system as a core

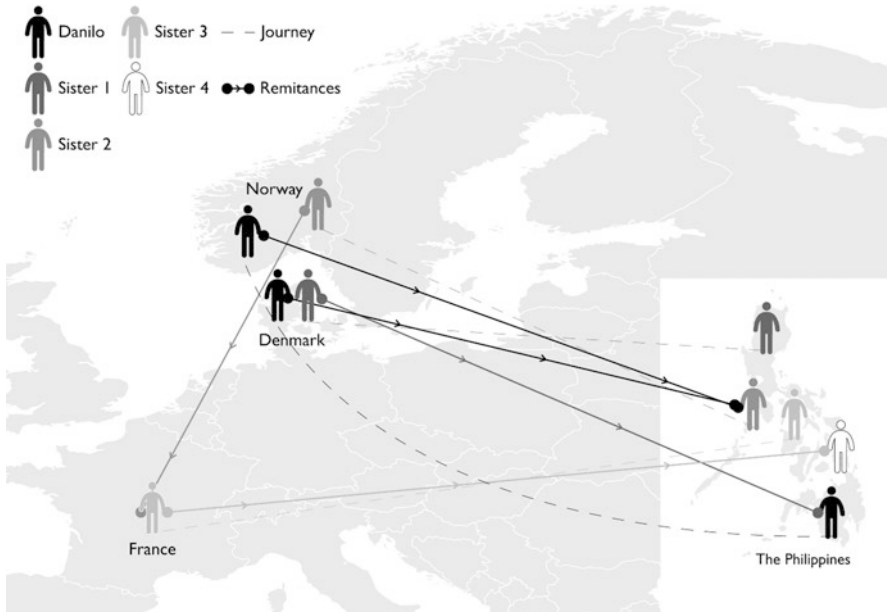


Fig. 2.2 Remittance flows in Danilo's family

element. Danilo's and his siblings' places of residence stretch across four different countries, as visualised in Fig. 2.2.

Danilo's transnational family illustrates a system where one family member first receives remittances from a relative to complete higher education and then, at later stage, is expected to financially support another family member. While migration can be a personal decision in order to benefit from better working conditions in a chosen destination country, the financial obligations towards relatives sometimes push nurses to go abroad and stay outside their countries of origin for a substantial period.

According to our Filipino interviewees, it is impossible to significantly support a relative with a salary as a nurse in the Philippines. In other words, the labour migration and long-term trajectories figure as a response to either common family material needs – like Danilo's need to finance his sibling's education – or family-specific needs, like that of supporting a father with a chronic disease, as expressed in the interview with another Filipino nurse in Norway, Dorothy.

Although the differences in national social-security policies put greater pressure on Filipino than on Polish nurses to provide for their relatives, we observed several individual factors against the nationality divide in our sample. These include having or not having younger siblings or children, the nurses' own health and the age of family members living outside of Norway, which strongly shape whether or not an interviewee sends remittances and for how long.

The international experience of other family members can shape migration decisions and affect the choice of destination. In Danilo's case, his older sister was the

first to migrate to Denmark and created an avenue for him to follow. In contrast, Anna's brother's migration experience incited her to actively reject his migration destination.

Anna is a Polish nurse with migration experience from the UK, where she spent a few years prior to her return to Poland and her onward migration to Norway. She has a brother who emigrated from Poland before she did. He lives in Sweden and was one of the driving forces behind Anna's migration to Norway, as she recounts:

If I were to go to Norway on my own (...), knowing the costs of living here, I would have to take out a loan. And how to do it? [...] Luckily, I have a brother who lives in Sweden. My brother would be able to lend me money. He kept on telling me 'As a nurse, you will not get better paid anywhere in the world than in Norway. I can tell you with my work experience from here [Sweden]. Swedes move to Norway, don't even think of coming here to be in the same country as me. It's just Norway which is an option for you. Close to Poland, few cultural differences between us and them. This will be very easy. Go there, only there [Norway]. You'll be there alone, but it's not a problem for you since you are looking [for work] in some emirates. Think how long it would take to fly to Poland'. That was true. All those factors mattered.

Anna's example highlights the significance of networks beyond the country of origin, in multiple sites. Anna used the 'lessons learnt' by another migrant. Her brother was able to identify factors which were relevant for Anna when she was planning another move away from Poland. The family networks in this case serve as a source of insider knowledge. In spite of other examples of nurses who join their networks, Anna's brother's advice to not join him in Sweden places her personal gain from migration over her potential desires to either keep the family together or to re-join them.

The easy mobility between Norway and Poland that Anna's brother referred to was significant for many interviewed nurses who are able to visit Poland frequently and to be visited by family members and friends in Norway. This is not such an easy option for Filipino citizens due to the different migration regimes and the more time-consuming and expensive travel.

Both Danilo and Anna moved abroad alone, without a partner or children; nor did they have children at the time of the interview. Due to the importance of life-stage and age, a third case which we now introduce adds important insights and shades to the story on transnational networks and obligations spanning nation-state borders.

Clarissa is one of the nurses with the longest migration experience. Due to her multiple national identities, Clarissa's example challenges the traditional origin–destination divide, for what is 'origin' and what is 'destination' for a Filipino-Swedish migrant who has lived in Norway for more than 10 years? Clarissa was born in the Philippines and left for Sweden as a young adult, leaving her first child behind in the Philippines. She has a Swedish nursing degree – which is automatically recognised in Norway – and Swedish citizenship which enables friction-free mobility within the EEA. During the interview she used the word 'countrymen' several times. When asked to clarify to whom she was referring, Filipinos or Swedes, she replied:

Fili (...) I mean both. Because sometimes when (...). We always have Swedish nurses [at work] and since I speak the [Swedish] language, they know that I've been living in Sweden.

In some ways, Clarissa felt that home was still the Philippines where her house was and to where she wants to move back to make the most of the pensions from Sweden and Norway for her retirement. Although living in Norway and emotionally attached to the Philippines, Sweden is still important as her second, now adult, child lives there. Her family ties include locations in Norway, the Philippines and Sweden, where her spouse, children and grandchildren now live. Thus, for Clarissa, multi-sited transnationalism is engrained in who she is and how she has and will live her life.

The here and now of transnational networks and obligations maintained over time links not only to past migration choices and family stories but also to future settlement plans dictated by both personal and family situations and priorities. We continue the analysis by now turning to the effects of the passage of time.

2.6 Future Outlook and Changing Perspectives on Destinations

A temporal lens is integral to considering both the future and the past and in evaluating changing perspectives on destination choices. Our analysis connects narratives on past decisions about migration with considerations about potential onward movement, whether as return migration, as onward migration to another country, as internal migration within Norway or, indeed, also as the option of a transnational way of living spanning several locations (Carling et al., 2021). We find age and life-stage to make a difference, perhaps unsurprisingly, as well as what we term a 'migration fatigue' which results from our interviewees' complex past migration trajectories. This migration fatigue is revealing of the fact that the roles of and perspectives on 'destinations' in individual migration projects change over time.

Hence, a temporal lens when considering migration decisions and the role of destinations becomes particularly pertinent when exploring the issue of the future in the context of complex migration trajectories. Given that we analyse interviews with Filipino and Polish nurse migrants, it is worth considering what assumptions might be made about their positionality as migrants – in terms of mobility opportunities and constraints – given their nationalities and their profession as nurses (Van Riemsdijk, 2010). At the time when the interviews were conducted, the nurses with complex migration trajectories were able to decide upon their future, in spite of restrictive migration policies. As skilled workers with attractive nursing skills and international experience, they are in the position to consider and to choose to migrate onwards to other locations if they so desire, in a very different way to many other migrants globally, not the least compared with many migrants moving from Asian-origin countries to Europe.

We found that the nurses we interviewed all had initial plans about using Norway as a stepping-stone in their migration projects, to perhaps later go back to previous destination countries or to their country of origin or even to migrate onwards to a different destination, as discussed above. Nevertheless, at the time of interview, those nurses with complex migration trajectories were all living in Norway and had, in some sense, ‘settled’ there, either with a long-term view for a certain period of time or with the idea of staying until retirement age. In Lorna’s words, the American dream she referred to in an earlier quote was no longer a reality:

I have some family in the US. I have my aunt, she’s also a nurse there and, yeah, I have some cousins in the US too. But I really feel like (...). I don’t know, America, like, just seen in the news, like, a lot of, you know, shootings (...). I don’t feel (...) I don’t feel like going to the US anymore.

When asked about their future plans, some clearly stated that, from the perspective of the present, they wanted to stay in Norway looking forward. Against the backdrop of the complex migration trajectories which we analyse in this chapter, we found that, after having tried different realities, a certain degree of migration fatigue emerged – not with the moving *per se* but with repeatedly finding a new place in a new setting. Whereas our interlocutors had actively not *chosen* Norway as a primary destination for their migration, at this juncture it appears that Norway had *become* their destination. So why Norway and not the previous location they had lived in? Indeed, why was the option of returning to their country of origin not pursued, given that they had initially not chosen Norway as a destination?

Dorothy, at the time of our follow-up interview, wished to settle permanently in Norway due to her family situation although, not that long ago, she had planned to move back to Denmark, her previous migration destination country:

So, I just decided to come here and probably, like, save [money] and then go back to Denmark to continue with the language, ‘cause it’s easier to be a nurse there compared to Norway.

For Dorothy and other nurses, Norway has *become* the destination, from a point of departure where it was not actively *chosen* as a destination. From the data we see that elements of safe, well-paid employment, a generous welfare state and a good work–life balance all influence the decision to remain, at least for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the door to return migration is left open – or at least is not closed.

Learning a foreign language as an adult is a challenge which all our interviewees stressed. Norwegian language skills essentially do not add up to capital which can be easily transferred and used elsewhere in the world. This makes turning Norway into an unplanned destination, different from an English-speaking country. While nursing allows for agency, due to the global need for nurses, simultaneously, the profession requires excellent communication skills, a familiarity with informal language – slang – as well as a good medical vocabulary. Meanwhile, none of our interviewees had learned Norwegian before obtaining their nursing degree, underscoring the disconnect between their present-day nursing careers in Norway and the country as a migration destination for them. Blessica is one of the nurses who no longer wants to learn yet another language as an adult due to the effort it entails:

I'm done with learning languages because it's very hard to have a language barrier. You cannot express yourself, like, when you want to help the patient [...]. Norway is the third foreign country I've lived in, with yet another language barrier. So it's quite hard, sometimes you feel so dumb. At work, it's like, okay, but sometimes you have no choice but to learn. I did that. I was quite (...). At first, I had a lot of fear in me and I was so exhausted after every duty I had at work, because I had to translate everything in my mind, think in English, then in Norwegian, Norwegian-English (...).

Emilia, who moved with the whole family from Poland to Belgium and then migrated on to Norway and bought a house there, said that she adjusts to the rest of the family, who are settled in Norway now: 'I am the one who's in the trap', she said, referring to the fact that Norway was not – and is not – her destination of choice. However, for Emilia, primarily due to family considerations, Norway has become the destination for now and for the mid-term perspective, at least.

Echoing Emilia's reflections, other nurse migrants also kept the door open to future onward or return migration, seeing Norway as somewhere to stay only until a certain point in time – such as retirement – which is common more generally among many migrants moving to work in Norway. Some also spoke of more open-ended trajectories, like Paulina, who decided to migrate internally in Norway first, then maybe go to Canada or another location, with a good dose of adapting to what life brings. In these more open-ended future outlooks, we also found that multi-sited transnationalism mattered, including where migrants' children were living and consideration of their remittance obligations both today and those anticipated for the future.

Thus, a temporal lens aids our analysis by foregrounding how the past, present and future are viewed from the perspective of the present and compared, for example with the perspective prior to migration or to the most recent migration to Norway. We also find that life-course stages intersect with changing perspectives on the past, present and future. An obvious point, perhaps, but future outlooks and considerations about Norway as a *de facto* destination of sorts, differ radically between our migrant-nurse interlocutors in their 20s or 30s and those in their 50s and 60s. Interviewing migrants who are at different life phases enables different analytical perspectives on the life-course in the narratives.

Clarissa, whom we introduced earlier, is in her 60s and the time span between her two migration moves – from the Philippines to Sweden then, subsequently, from Sweden to Norway – is wide. She had different plans and prospects for the future when she moved from the Philippines to Sweden. At the time of our interview, she was looking forward to retirement in the Philippines, where she will have a Swedish and a Norwegian old-age pension and where she envisages a degree of circulation. Her future outlook is different now that her reference point is her retirement age and – on the basis of now having a citizenship which offers her mobility resources and a pension enabling financial resources – the ability to live transnationally if she so desires in the future. Clarissa's story illustrates a key insight from our analysis – there is not always a clear answer to the question 'What is a destination?'

2.7 Conclusion

We suggest that the theorisation of migration decision-making may benefit from the analysis of reflections from the perspective of those following complex migration trajectories. We argue that the insights gained on the role of destinations in migration decision-making among predominantly female, skilled, regular migrants, moving from places which are still often viewed as the global periphery, are worth further integrating into the body of mainstream migration theory. We offer three conclusions to this end.

First, migration decisions are neither entirely open-ended processes nor are they possible to pin-point and see as entirely individualised. Instead, we find much in our study to support analyses of migration decisions which encompass processual dimensions. This is critical in two ways. We find that there is much to glean from traditional migration theory, in the sense that economic differences do matter as migration decisions are often built on what is otherwise referred to as wage differentials. However, there is always also the collective dimension at play, often embedded within family networks which may be stretched internally or internationally by migration. The relational dimensions thus need to be taken into account in order to explain migration decisions, especially as these are intertwined rather than existing as two parallel considerations. We also find that migration decisions would benefit from being understood as processual, in that, increasingly, migration is found to be stepwise, fractured – perhaps usefully understood as a journey or as liquid. In our analysis we can maybe best see that migration decisions need to be understood more fully by taking on the role of what is unplanned and unforeseen, yet still materialises as part of an individual's migration project, often but not always, in response to migration regulations.

Second, nurse migrants' narratives reveal agency in individuals who are often economically independent, having multiple resources, drawing on multi-sited transnational networks and actively capitalising on the experience of having managed in different national contexts on the global labour market. This empowered image of predominantly female migrant nurses, both white and non-white, whose positionality might be traditionally viewed as a limitation rather than an opportunity to migrate overseas, emerged from our analysis.

Third, we find that an active choice of internal onward migration within Norway can have comparable implications as international migration in terms of professional development and economic gains but without the costs that international migration entails. Migrant nurses can therefore show autonomy and agency by actively building on their mobility resources and experience gained in Norway to transfer these to new locations internally within the country.

Finally, we start and finish this chapter with the paradox that, despite an active non-choice of Norway as 'the destination', the country has become the destination – at present, for the time being and, for some, with a longer-term perspective. We find that Norway – as a destination of onward migration – was usually not the result of the fulfilment of a plan initially made. However, the view of Norway as the current

destination might also change at some point in the future and over the life-course. While the notion of destinations is pervasive in both migration theories and immigration policies, in fact, the idea of ‘the destination’ is neither as singular nor as straightforward as it may appear. For nurse migrants, we find that destinations may *become*. The becoming of destinations might happen *de facto*, by choice or by resignation, willingly or with resistance; the temporal view might be permanent or open-ended, seen as part of migration projects to be continued and reflective of lives that are embedded in transnational social networks across multiple sites.

Acknowledgments This research was part of the project *Migration for Welfare: Nurses within Three Regimes of Immigration and Integration into the Norwegian Welfare State* (WELLMIG), funded by the Research Council of Norway. We would like to thank Gee Berry (PRIO) for her help with producing the figures and the WELLMIG research team, members of PRIO’s Migration Centre, the editors of this volume and the designated reviewers, for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

References

- Bakewell, O. (2010). Some reflections on structure and agency in migration theory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1689–1708.
- Bakewell, O., Engbersen, G., Fonseca, M. L., & Horst, C. (Eds.). (2016). *Beyond networks: Feedback in international migration*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ball, R. E. (2004). Divergent development, racialised rights: Globalised labour markets and the trade of nurses. The case of the Philippines. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 27(2), 119–133.
- Bygnes, S., & Erdal, M. B. (2017). Liquid migration, grounded lives: Considerations about future mobility and settlement among Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 102–118.
- Carling, J. R. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(1), 5–42.
- Carling, J., & Haugen, H. Ø. (2021). Circumstantial migration: How Gambian journeys to China enrich migration theory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(12), 2778–2795.
- Carling, J., Erdal, M. B., & Talleraas, C. (2021). Living in two countries: Transnational living as an alternative to migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 27(5), e2471.
- Choy, C. C. (1998). *The export of womanpower: A transnational history of Filipino nurse migration to the United States* (PhD thesis). University of California, Los Angeles.
- Collins, F. L. (2018). Desire as a theory for migration studies: Temporality, assemblage and becoming in the narratives of migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 964–980.
- Crawley, H., & Hagen-Zanker, J. (2019). Deciding where to go: Policies, people and perceptions shaping destination preferences. *International Migration*, 57(1), 20–35.
- Crawley, H., & Jones, K. (2021). Beyond here and there: (Re)conceptualising migrant journeys and the ‘in-between’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(14), 3226–3242.
- Cwerner, S. B. (2001). The times of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(1), 7–36.
- De Haas, H. (2011). *The determinants of international migration*. University of Oxford, International Migration Institute Working Paper No. 32.
- De Haas, H., Czaika, M., Flahaux, M. L., Mahendra, E., Natter, K., Vezzoli, S., & Villares-Varela, M. (2019). International migration: Trends, determinants, and policy effects. *Population and Development Review*, 45(4), 885–922.

- Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & De Boom, J. (2010). 'A van full of poles': Liquid migration from central and Eastern Europe. In R. Black, G. Engbersen, M. Okólski, & C. Panțiru (Eds.), *A continent moving west? EU enlargement and labour migration from central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 115–140). Amsterdam University Press.
- Erdal, M. B., & Ezzati, R. (2015). 'Where are you from' or 'when did you come'? Temporal dimensions in migrants' reflections about settlement and return. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(7), 1202–1217.
- Erdal, M. B., & Oeppen, C. (2018). Forced to leave? The discursive and analytical significance of describing migration as forced and voluntary. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 981–998.
- Francisco-Menchavez, V. (2020). All in the family: Transnational families and stepwise migration strategies. *Geographical Research*, 58(4), 377–387.
- Gabaccia, D. R. (2014). Time and temporality in migration studies. In C. B. Brettell & J. F. Hollifield (Eds.), *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines* (pp. 37–66). Routledge.
- González-Ferrer, A., Baizán, P., Beauchemin, C., Kraus, E., Schoumaker, B., & Black, R. (2014). Distance, transnational arrangements, and return decisions of Senegalese, Ghanaian, and Congolese migrants. *International Migration Review*, 48(4), 939–971.
- Goździak, E. (2016). Biała emigracja: Variegated mobility of Polish care workers. *Social Identities*, 22(1), 26–43.
- Harris, J. R., & Todaro, M. P. (1970). Migration, unemployment and development: A two-sector analysis. *The American Economic Review*, 60(1), 126–142.
- Haug, S. (2008). Migration networks and migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(4), 585–605.
- King, R., & Skeldon, R. (2010). 'Mind the gap!' Integrating approaches to internal and international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1619–1646.
- Klabunde, A., & Willekens, F. (2016). Decision-making in agent-based models of migration: State of the art and challenges. *European Journal of Population*, 32(1), 73–97.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57.
- Lubbers, M. J., Verdery, A. M., & Molina, J. L. (2020). Social networks and transnational social fields: A review of quantitative and mixed-methods approaches. *International Migration Review*, 54(1), 177–204.
- Mallett, R., & Hagen-Zanker, J. (2018). Forced migration trajectories: An analysis of journey- and decision-making among Eritrean and Syrian arrivals to Europe. *Migration and Development*, 7(3), 341–351.
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J. E. (1993). Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19(3), 431–466.
- McCarthy, H. N. (2020). Onward migration of Latin American families: Negotiating citizenship and mobility in times of crisis. *International Migration*, 59(6), 59–76.
- McGarrigle, J., & Ascensão, E. (2017). Temporalities of onward migration: Long-term temporariness, cyclical labour arrangements and lived time in the city. In E. Mavroudi, B. Page, & A. Christou (Eds.), *Timespace and international migration* (pp. 77–90). Edward Elgar.
- McHugh, K. E. (1984). Explaining migration intentions and destination selection. *The Professional Geographer*, 36(3), 315–325.
- McKay, D. (2016). *An archipelago of care: Filipino migrants and global networks*. Indiana University Press.
- Monti, A. (2020). Re-emigration of foreign-born residents from Sweden: 1990–2015. *Population, Space and Place*, 26(2), e2285.
- Noussia, A., & Lyons, M. (2009). Inhabiting spaces of liminality: Migrants in Omonia, Athens. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(4), 601–624.
- Page, B., Christou, A., & Mavroudi, E. (2017). Introduction: From time to timespace and forward to time again in migration studies. In E. Mavroudi, B. Page, & A. Christou (Eds.), *Timespace and international migration* (pp. 1–16). Edward Elgar.

- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Ravenstein, E. G. (1885). The laws of migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 48(2), 167–235.
- Robertson, S. (2015). The temporalities of international migration: Implications for ethnographic research. In S. Castles, D. Ozkul, & M. Arias Cubas (Eds.), *Social transformation and migration: National and local experiences in South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Australia* (pp. 45–60). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robertson, S. (2020). Suspending, settling, sponsoring: The intimate chronomobilities of young Asian migrants in Australia. *Global Networks*, 20(4), 677–696.
- Ryan, L. (2019). Narratives of settling in contexts of mobility: A comparative analysis of Irish and Polish highly qualified women migrants in London. *International Migration*, 57(3), 177–191.
- Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., & Siara, B. (2009). Family strategies and transnational migration: Recent Polish migrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(1), 61–77.
- Salamońska, J. (2017). *Multiple migration: Researching the multiple temporalities and spatialities of migration*. University of Warsaw, Centre of Migration Research Working Paper No. 102/160.
- Schapendonk, J., van Liempt, I., Schwarz, I., & Steel, G. (2020). Re-routing migration geographies: Migrants, trajectories and mobility regimes. *Geoforum*, 116, 211–216.
- Serra Mingot, E., & Mazzucato, V. (2019). Moving for a ‘better welfare’? The case of transnational Sudanese families. *Global Networks*, 19(2), 139–157.
- Snel, E., Bilgili, Ö., & Staring, R. (2021). Migration trajectories and transnational support within and beyond Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(14), 3209–3225.
- Stark, O., & Bloom, D. E. (1985). The new economics of labor migration. *The American Economic Review*, 75(2), 173–178.
- Thompson, M. (2017). Migration decision-making: A geographical imaginations approach. *Area*, 49(1), 77–84.
- Thompson, M., & Walton-Roberts, M. (2019). International nurse migration from India and the Philippines: The challenge of meeting the sustainable development goals in training, orderly migration and healthcare worker retention. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(14), 2583–2599.
- Valenta, M. (2020). Itinerant labour: Conceptualising circular, serial and stepwise migrations to the Arab gulf and onwards. *Migration and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2020.1810897>
- Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O., & Long, K. (2012). *Drivers of migration*. University of Sussex, Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium Working Paper No. 1.
- Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O., & Long, K. (2018). Push-pull plus: Reconsidering the drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 927–944.
- Van Riemsdijk, M. (2010). Variegated privileges of whiteness: Lived experiences of Polish nurses in Norway. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11(2), 117–137.
- Vaughn, T., Seeberg, M. L., & Gotehus, A. (2020). Waiting: Migrant nurses in Norway. *Time & Society*, 29(1), 187–222.
- Westcott, H., & Robertson, S. (2017). Childcare, mobility decisions and ‘staggered’ migration. *Migration, Mobility and Displacement*, 3(1), 85–100.
- Zhang, V. (2018). Im/mobilising the migration decision. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(2), 199–216.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 3

For the Sake of Our Children?

A Mixed-Methods Study of the Family Dynamics of Intra-European Mobility Among Somalis



Marloes de Hoon and Ilse van Liempt

3.1 Introduction

In the literature, the intra-EU mobility of citizens born outside Europe is predominantly understood as a response to the limitations of their lives as economically and culturally marginalised citizens (Van Liempt, 2011a, b; Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Ahrens et al., 2016; Della Puppa, 2018a; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; Ramos, 2018; De Hoon et al., 2019; Moret, 2020). While arrival in Europe meant a loss of socio-economic status for many, onward mobility¹ provides migrants with opportunities to access better positions (Van Liempt, 2011a; Moret, 2020). Most empirical contributions assume that these mobility practices are part of a family strategy. It is therefore surprising that little attention has been paid to intergenerational dynamics *within* families around onward-mobility projects within Europe (see also Chap. 6 by Mingot, Chap. 9 by Della Puppa and Sredanovic and Chap. 11 by Formenti).

The existing literature (e.g. Djajić, 2008) often highlights the desire of parents to keep the family united when (re-)migrating. This is in keeping with neoclassical migration theory, in which female spouses and their children are seen as ‘assets’ that simply move together with the male breadwinner. Recent studies, however, paint a more complex picture, in which all members of the family can be proactive

¹In this chapter, onward mobility is defined as a long-term move (more than 8 months) to a country other than the country of origin or of asylum. Throughout the chapter we refer to this new destination country as the ‘third country’.

M. de Hoon

Department of Political Science, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

I. van Liempt (✉)

Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University,
Utrecht, The Netherlands

e-mail: I.C.vanLiempt@uu.nl

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*,
IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_3

in migration decision-making, with their unique roles, aspirations, needs and opportunities (Kelly, 2013; Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2017; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). Such dynamics may result in temporary family separation and the creation or continued existence of a transnational family.

Even when a more complex picture of migration planning is provided, the position of the children in this process remains underexposed. Studies that *do* highlight the role of children in migration predominantly point to the ‘binding effect’ of children in the host country, in particular when they are enrolled in school (Dustmann, 2003a; Djajić, 2008; Trevena et al., 2013; Erdal & Ezzati, 2015). Yet, an emerging body of literature argues that children may also form an important reason to migrate again, especially when relocation opens up new educational opportunities that foster intergenerational social mobility (Hagelskamp et al., 2010). Moreover, parents may envision a transnational (or even a ‘cosmopolitan’) future for their children that is not always catered for in the country of initial settlement (Van Liempt, 2011c; Della Puppa & King, 2018). We seek to contribute to this debate by focusing on the intergenerational dimension within families and presenting a case study that increases our understanding of when, why and with whom Somali children and their family members move onwards.

The onward mobility of Dutch Somali families to the United Kingdom (UK) provides a rich and suitable case, because of the relatively high onward-mobility rates among both single persons and families. Moreover, there is a great variety in family composition and the presence, age and number of children upon arrival in the Netherlands. Although their onward mobility has been extensively documented, both quantitative research designs (e.g. Van den Reek & Hussein, 2003; Lindley & Van Hear, 2007) as well as qualitative contributions (Van Liempt, 2011b) have largely overlooked the intergenerational dimensions of onward-mobility planning. Using a mixed-methods design, we bring together two high-quality bodies of data to explore the drivers of and dynamics within onward-mobility projects in Somali families.

This chapter continues, firstly, with a discussion of the phenomenon of onward mobility in relation to children’s education and upbringing. Secondly, we briefly explain the historical and institutional context of Somali migration to the Netherlands and, thirdly, explain the quantitative and qualitative data that we employ in this study. In the penultimate section, analyses of register data and interview data in combination provide empirical insights into the intergenerational dimensions around onward-mobility planning. These findings are summarised and discussed in the last section.

3.2 Family Onward Mobility

Various studies examine how migration is informed by gendered obligations and expectations – for example, the idea that men are expected to provide for the family (Van Dalen et al., 2005; Cooke, 2008; Jolivet, 2020). Men’s preferences, however, do not always dominate in the migration decision-making, as illustrated by cases in

which women are both the carers for *and* the breadwinners of the transnational family (Baldassar & Merla, 2013; Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2017). Women are shown to be active participants in onward migration decision-making, not only because of their employment (potential) (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018) but also in their voicing of concerns regarding their offspring (Lindley & Van Hear, 2007).

The literature shows a general preference among mothers to remain in the country of settlement and to avoid disruptions in their children's schooling (Lindley & Van Hear, 2007; Trevena et al., 2013). More generally, research suggests that, once family unification is established, the presence of children enhances the integration of the family in the country of residence, making the onward mobility of the family or one of its members less likely (Dustmann, 2003a; Erdal & Ezzati, 2015; Sajons, 2016). Mobility is often seen by parents as disruptive and hampering the integration of their children into schooling systems that are confined to national borders (Erdal & Ezzati, 2015; Trevena et al., 2013). Indeed, educational systems are generally not designed to support children who live transnational lives (Van Geel, 2019). This generates the expectation that children who arrived in the host country at a young age will, instead of moving again in the near future, be prone to remain, together with their parents, at least until successful completion of their education (*Hypothesis 1a*).

A key argument in these studies is that subsequent family migration² is not only driven by the economic perspectives of the parent(s). In addition, concerns about the offspring are included in the equation, with or without their direct involvement in the migration decision (Dustmann, 2003a; Bushin, 2009; Hutchins, 2011). The theoretical mechanism, as developed in economic contributions, implies that parents' migration decisions are informed by the expected future educational and economic career(s) of their child(ren) (Dustmann, 2003a; Djajić, 2008). Dustmann (2003a) finds that the birth of a child generally reduces the likelihood of parents returning to their country of origin. He also concludes that this effect is stronger for boys than for girls, which is interpreted as evidence that parental concerns about the future of their offspring depend on the sex of the child, with a greater emphasis on the economic performance of male offspring in the host country.³ While these results form an important addition to studies departing from a single (male) breadwinner model, a sole focus on labour-market performance is too narrow to adequately capture the multi-layered family considerations behind migration.

²We use the term 'subsequent migration' in reference to both return and onward migration.

³By relying on the randomness of the gender of a child, Dustmann (2003a) provides an elegant empirical test of the presumed effect of the birth of a child on return migration. In addition to the finding that this *generally* reduces the likelihood of return (he stresses that a reversed effect – return plans influencing fertility decisions – cannot be ruled out), the results indicate unequal associations with return plans according to gender. The magnitude of the effect in the case of boys is stronger, which Dustmann interprets as beneficial aspects of possibly advantageous labour-market conditions and earnings prospects in the host country weighing less for female than for male offspring (2003a, 819).

3.2.1 *A Family Approach to Onward Mobility*

We intend to build on the general theoretical model put forward by Dustmann (2003b) and Djajić (2008) by assessing some of the critical underlying assumptions. First, emigration from a host country is by no means necessarily directed towards the origin country. Migration to a third country appears to be more common than return among specific groups of migrants, as found for forced migrants in the Netherlands (De Hoon et al., 2019). Second, the implicit assumption that children always move together with their parents should be put up for scrutiny. Instead of remaining a family unity, one of the parents may relocate after migration, while the spouse and (some of) the children remain in the host country. Moreover, children can migrate independently of their parents. To address these two shortcomings in the literature, we analyse onward mobility in the context of the family, allowing observations of both independent onward mobility as well as onward mobility with one or both parents. In the remainder of this section, we develop refined hypotheses before introducing our empirical case to study intergenerational dynamics in onward mobility.

3.2.2 *Timing of Entry and Educational Trajectories*

It is a foregone conclusion that school systems matter for children's educational trajectories (Entorf & Lauk, 2008; Crul, 2013; Van de Werfhorst, 2019). In a tracking tradition such as the Dutch educational context, children are placed, at a fixed age, into a specific track for all subjects. Track placement is primarily based on a standardised test but is known to also depend on parents' ability and efforts to influence this outcome (Forster & van de Werfhorst, 2020). Parental resources such as their own educational attainment as well as their knowledge of the educational system all affect their children's initial placement and their likelihood of successfully (upwardly) navigating the system. Consequently, children with a migration background⁴ are generally placed in lower tracks and more often ones lower than those corresponding to their test scores, compared to their 'native' counterparts (Crul, 2013).

Tracking implies that underperforming children, for example those who did not manage to realise their full potential up until the moment of tracking, are sorted into streams that offer poor opportunities to move upwards and access higher education. For migrants, the timing of arrival therefore largely determines the opportunities available to make up for the learning disabilities that arise from language deficits and interruptions in schooling. Arriving in the host country at a later age,

⁴The assumed mechanism is that parents who received their education abroad and arrived in the host country at a later age are generally less informed about host-country education and generally less proficient in the new language compared to parents who were born in the host country.

particularly at age 12 or older, can thus be detrimental. Moreover, the ‘side-tracking’ of migrant children aged between 12 and 18, which is common in European education systems, tends to negatively affect the school attainment of refugee children in particular (Crul et al., 2017; Folke, 2018; Koehler & Schneider, 2019). In the Dutch context, this side-tracking (*Internationale schakelklas, ISK*), which targets ‘first-generation’ migrant children, generally offers a poor prelude to mainstream education, limiting their ‘upstreaming’ possibilities. Arriving at an older age may thus spur a desire to increase opportunities elsewhere, for example in a more comprehensive educational system.⁵

There is a more general argument to be made concerning the timing of arrival in the host country and the mobility trajectories of migrant children. The literature reveals a positive association between children’s age at arrival and the return intentions (of their parents). The general theoretical reasoning behind this implies that the younger children are at the moment of entry into the new society, the stronger their orientation towards this country and the less likely they are to intend to forsake it (Erdal & Ezzati, 2015). In what follows, an alternative hypothesis concerning age at arrival and onward mobility is put forward.

3.2.3 *Timing of Entry and Onward Mobility*

The interplay between migration and the educational trajectories of children alters when considering onward migration, instead of return, as an alternative to remaining in the host country. Where new migration projects are concerned, there are indications that the presence of school-aged children in the household and concerns about their education spur rather than obstruct migration (Lindley & Van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2016; Della Puppa & King, 2018; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). Indeed, educational experiences in the country of origin and opportunities in other locations may form the very reason why parents engage in onward mobility.

Della Puppa and King (2018) illustrate how Italian Bangladeshi families decide to move to the United Kingdom because of their dissatisfaction with the Italian education system and their aspirations to raise and educate their children in an English educational system in anticipation of a global future. We expect such aspirations to be shared, particularly among families in protracted refugee situations, as their near and presumably also long-term futures will unfold in exile, in a ‘transnational social field’ (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). One can argue that migrating once again may be the most fruitful for children when they are young, as they adapt relatively easily to new (educational) environments. This generates the expectation that the younger children are at arrival, the more likely they are to engage in onward mobility (*Hypothesis 1b*).

⁵A comprehensive school is a state school for elementary- or secondary-age children that does not select its intake on the basis of academic achievement or aptitude.

While family unity may be the preferred option of most families, this condition is neither easily achieved nor automatically maintained. As such we also explore the possibility of children migrating on their own.⁶ In line with Djajić (2008), we expect such forms of independent migration of children to be the most common in the case of larger families, because of the variation in the timing of migration between the different members of the family (*Hypothesis 2*). These independent migrations are likely to take place at critical moments in the educational trajectory, resulting in twists in migration propensities over time, rather than a linear relationship between the age of the child and migration propensities.

3.3 Case Description: The Onward Mobility of Dutch Somalis

Migration from Somalia to the Netherlands has a relatively short history, starting from the late 1980s when the Somali civil war forced large numbers of the population to flee to neighbouring or more-distant countries. More people were forced across the borders after military dictator Siad Barre was overthrown by a coup in 1991. Largely motivated by the search for asylum, Somalis went to live in various regions and countries across the globe, from the Middle East to North America, Australia and Europe. The Netherlands was a main destination for Somalis⁷ within Europe as a result of its asylum policies and procedures⁸ but in other respects this country was not necessarily the most obvious place to settle (see also Van Liempt, 2011a). Many Somalis speak English and are used to the British (education) system as a result of a shared colonial past. The Somali population in Europe is a young population, due to the arrival of many young asylum-seekers and the high birth rate of the settled community.

Families may travel together to exercise their right to asylum. Often, however, one member travels ahead to lodge an individual asylum claim; upon receiving a positive answer, he or she then applies for family reunification. For Somalis – and refugees more generally – the papers necessary to prove their identity are not easily obtained, which may complicate family reunification or even completely rule out this possibility. About a quarter of all Somalis who arrived in the period concerned came under a family reunification regulation. In contrast to other migrant groups,

⁶ Within this context, it is critical to stress the role that a host country plays in facilitating the mobility of the family or some of its members, because citizenship is not necessarily obtained by all family members at the same time (see Labussière & Vink, 2020).

⁷ The number of Somali asylum applicants amounted to 29,590 persons in the period 1990–1999. The official number of Somalis in the Netherlands fluctuated between 17,156 in 1996, 13,691 in 2006 and 24,951 in 2020 (CBS Statline, 2020).

⁸ Most asylum applicants of Somali origin were allocated (temporary) categorical protection from 1993 to 2001, which resulted, in the majority of cases, in a permanent residence permit.

family reunification often implied that the husband and one or more children joined the female first applicant (Van Liempt, 2007). Moreover, the widespread practice of shared parenthood results in children being reared and supported by member(s) of the family network who are not necessarily their biological parents (Orellana et al., 2001). This combination of Somali familyhood and the imposition of the ‘nuclear family paradigm’ through Western family-reunification policies has resulted in the creation and maintenance of transnational families. Research in various contexts indeed indicates that Somali families are characterised by transnationalism, with family members often moving back and forth between different nation states (Al-Sharmani, 2004). We thus assume families to be only partially (and perhaps temporarily) reunited in the new country of residence, which has implications for their onward mobility process.

Being granted a residence permit in the Netherlands marks the end of a period of insecurity and forced passivity and of the educational interruptions experienced by children – caused by both their forced international migration and the multiple involuntary relocations that followed between asylum places across the country. Based on the institutional school arrangements (see Sect. 3.2.2), we mark four critical stages in children’s careers: pre-school (up to age 5), obligatory primary schooling (age 5–12), secondary education (from age 12) and, finally, the transition from education to the labour market (different ages, depending on the type of education). Studies concerning the educational attainment of refugee groups demonstrate that young Somali adults mostly obtain a diploma of the lower levels of vocational education – generally resulting in limited labour-market prospects – and that the share of dropouts is remarkably high in comparison to other pupils with a refugee background (Dourleijn et al., 2011). Whether the educational careers of Somali children are (consequently) re-routed across the national border is empirically explored in the next sections of this chapter.

3.4 Data and Methods

Population register data and data from ethnographic fieldwork are used to gain broad as well as in-depth insights into families’ onward mobility decision-making and outcomes. One may at first question the value of using population register data for studying onward migration, given its inherent national character. In what follows, we explain how we make use of these population registers in dialogue with ethnographic data, to overcome what is often referred to as ‘methodological nationalism’ (e.g. Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Anderson, 2019). The two data sources are discussed separately in this section, before being brought together in the analysis section.

3.4.1 *Quantitative Data*

Our research sample is based on the total population of Somali children who were registered as asylum migrants in the Netherlands in the period 1995–1999, before reaching the age of 16 ($N = 2457$). These data are available through the System of Social-Statistical Datasets (SSD), a dataset that contains individual-level information on the population residing in the Netherlands (Bakker et al., 2014).

It is noteworthy that almost three in ten children ($N = 735$) had no parent (whether registered biological parent or legal guardian) residing in the Netherlands throughout the observation period.⁹ We restrict our quantitative analysis to children who had at least one registered parent or legal guardian. Furthermore, children who had not acquired Dutch citizenship over the observation period ($N = 273$ or 15.7 per cent) are left out of the analysis for two reasons. First, children without citizenship may have disappeared from the population register because of non-voluntary emigration, events that we do not aim to theoretically and empirically consider. Second, the interviewee sample exclusively consists of Somalis who hold a Dutch passport, hence omitting those without citizenship makes for a more adequate match between our data sources. This leaves a sample of 1467 Dutch Somali children and information on 2182 parents which we incorporate into the analysis. Children and their families are followed over a period of 15 years since their first registration in a Dutch municipality.

We chose to take children as the ‘reference point’ in the family because following the parent(s) would obscure the mobility of children who move with only one parent or independently of their parents, which happened in the majority of the cases (see Table 3.2, below). The observation that in only 52.3 per cent of the cases did all siblings (registered in the Netherlands) migrate together further validates an empirical approach that takes into account the differences in outcomes between siblings by following each of them separately.

Population register data provide a unique opportunity to link multiple generations. For the analyses presented in this chapter, children are linked to their parents as well as to siblings – through the parent(s). In so doing, the family as observed in the data excludes members who are not (registered) in the Netherlands. It is important to keep this in mind while interpreting the results, as we agree with other scholars that family relations – and transnational familyhood in particular – often incorporate several households within and across national borders (Borell et al., 2014; Johnsdotter, 2015). The number of family members who are identified should be regarded as in the lower range of the actual number of nuclear family members.

⁹ It is possible that a share of the children without registered parents had actually been reunited with a parent who left the country before 31 December of the year of registration. This could apply to 156 children (6.3 per cent of the total sample), who were marked as being part of a household with at least one parent but were never linked to a parent or legal guardian on the population registers. For refugee children from other countries, this amounts to just 3.0 per cent (355 out of 11,764).

3.4.2 *A Comparison Group: Protracted Refugees*

To assess whether our findings are specific to people of Somali descent or are, more broadly, generalisable, we run separate models for a comparison group of refugees, sharing the transnational or ‘scattered’ feature of Somalis. The literature suggests that onward mobility is considered a viable alternative for return or long-term settlement in the country of asylum, in particular when migrants have pre-existing links to other destinations. Onward mobility may, in such cases, reflect a family (re-)unification or the search to join one’s own community. We approximate ‘scattered families’ with a refugee background by means of the UNHCR definition of *protracted refugees*¹⁰ and, as such, marked 14 countries or regions that produce(d) large numbers of refugees living in exile for an extended period of time (see Table A3.1 for countries and frequencies). Although this list in principle concerns forced migrants who applied for asylum in *developing* countries, a substantial share of these origin groups made it to ‘the West’. The selected sending countries are indeed also among the main origin countries of asylum migrants in various European countries.

3.4.3 *Qualitative Data: Interviews with Somali Parents and Young Adolescents*

In addition to the register data, we draw upon qualitative data, collected in a study on Dutch Somalis’ onward mobility to the United Kingdom. At the core of this project was fieldwork with Somalis in Leicester and London between 2008 and 2010 (see Table A3.2 for a sample description). London and Leicester were chosen because both cities house a substantial number of Dutch Somalis (Van den Reek & Hussein, 2003). Not only do these qualitative data provide in-depth insights into onward mobility decision-making but they also allow us to unveil factors, practices and outcomes that are situated across borders or are inherently transnational.

The 33 in-depth interviews were conducted with a mix of parents and children (14 female and 19 male Somalis).¹¹ The age at the moment of interviewing ranged from 20 to 62 years, that at migration to the Netherlands from 1 to 39 and at onward mobility from 12 to 48. All interviews were conducted in Dutch or English and subsequently transcribed.

¹⁰A crude measure of refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who were in exile in developing countries for five or more years up until 2005.

¹¹Access points for the interviews were Somali community organisations in London and Leicester and shops in neighbourhoods with large concentrations of Somalis; Dutch Somalis were also approached at Somali events. The second author was also introduced to Dutch Somalis in London and Leicester through Somalis she had interviewed earlier in the Netherlands in the context of her PhD research (Van Liempt, 2007).

3.5 Adopting a Multi-methods Approach

The two bodies of longitudinal data and research methods are brought together in a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The type of questions we address here on the intergenerational dimensions around onward mobility and the role of children guided us in the development of our research design. Within mixed-methods research, this approach – where the type of information is central – is called ‘pragmatic relativism’ (Tashakkori et al., 1998).

In addition to the patterns which we structurally identify based on the registers, the stories collected through interviewing serve to tease out the motivations behind the family migration decision-making of Somali parents and the role of children within these decisions.

The literature on combining methods indicates that there are different ways in which data sources can be brought together in terms of timing. In our case the qualitative data were already collected before we started analysing the quantitative data. As such, the quantitative data collection was inspired by and analysed in conjunction with insights from the qualitative data. In the analysis we integrated the results from both methods as a form of triangulation, focusing mostly on the complementarity of the data.

3.5.1 Register Data Sample Characteristics

The statistics in Table 3.1 provide a general overview of the composition of the Somali children in our register sample. Both sexes make up close to half of the population, with a slight over-representation of boys (52.6 per cent). New-borns and one-year-olds are quite low in number, which is a direct result of the restriction of our sample to children who were *born in Somalia*. Both the migration trajectory as well as the path to municipal registration are lengthy processes, which results in children entering the registers at a later age. The great majority of our sample (ages 0–16), eight out of ten children, arrived before reaching secondary-school age.

Somali families in the Netherlands are relatively large, with almost half of the children entering the registers with three or more siblings. Another remarkable feature is the absence of their fathers in the Dutch context. About half (48.1 per cent)¹²

¹²Children are only linked with parents who were on the registers on or after 31 December 1995. In a proportion of the cases, the fathers were the first asylum applicants, followed after approval by their wife and/or children. In situations where the father left before the end of the year (31 December), he was removed from the registers and thus not linked to the children in our data. If this was common, we would expect the share of children registered without their father to be higher among those who arrived early in the year (the earlier, the more time passes before the end of the calendar year in which the father may have ‘slipped through’ the registers). Such a correlation between month of arrival and parental composition was not found.

Table 3.1 Register data description, Somali children and comparison group (protracted refugees)

	Somali children		Comparison group	
	N	%	N	%
Female	696	47.4	4864	49.0
Male	771	52.6	5063	51.0
Age category t0				
0–5	348	23.7	2611	26.3
5–12	830	56.6	5377	53.2
12–16	289	19.7	1942	19.5
Parents registered in the Netherlands				
Only mother registered	705	48.1	1146	11.5
Only father registered	47	3.2	114	1.1
Two registered parents	715	48.7	8667	87.3
N (1st gen) siblings in NL				
0 siblings	198	13.5	1216	12.2
1 sibling	321	21.9	2471	24.9
2 siblings	260	17.7	2614	26.3
3 siblings	282	19.2	1942	19.6
4 siblings	190	13.0	935	9.4
5 or more siblings	216	14.7	749	7.5
Household type t0				
One-person household	3	0.2	5	0.1
With non-married parents	66	4.5	503	5.1
With married parents	423	28.8	6570	66.2
One-parent household	821	56.0	2396	24.1
Other household	85	5.8	198	2.0
Institutional household	61	4.2	192	1.9
Missing	8	0.5	63	0.6
Year of registration				
1995	362	24.7	1349	13.6
1996	596	40.6	2050	20.7
1997	235	16.0	2364	23.8
1998	118	8.0	2107	21.2
1999	156	10.6	2057	20.7
Continued stay in the Netherlands ($tI-t^N$)	536	36.5	7082	71.3
Onward mobility ($tI-t^N$)	931	63.5	2845	28.7
Total	1467	100.0	9927	100.0

Source: Statistics Netherlands, SSB

of the children of Somali origin in our sample had lived separately from their father during their entire period of residence in the Netherlands, while this amounts to 12.3 per cent for other children (protracted refugees) who arrived in the same period.

This situation of absent fathers fits the picture of ‘scattered families’ that was painted in many of the interviews. (Unofficial) divorces are common and some fathers have second wives but, even if the marriage of the parents is still intact and not shared, fathers are frequently physically (and emotionally) absent for Somali children (see also Haga, 2020; Ismael, 2020).

We follow the research population over an extended period of time, starting at 31 December of the year of entry onto the municipal registers up until the move or over a period of a maximum of 15 years (180 months). A crucial and unique asset of our data is the information concerning emigration. If residents decide to leave the Netherlands for a period of at least 8 months, they are expected to inform the municipality about the destination and migration date. As these records do not capture unreported emigrations, we deduce an additional category of emigration based on removals from the registers – that is, when the authorities have ascertained that a person or family is no longer residing at the recorded address. In our analysis we focus on emigration from the Netherlands, under the assumption that both registered onward migrants and children who have left without deregistering have resettled in a third country over the course of time.¹³ The figures in the bottom rows of Table 3.1 indicate not only that onward mobility is highly common among Somali children in an absolute sense (63.5 per cent) but also that, by the end of the observation period, this percentage is more than twice the share of onward migrants for the comparison group (28.7 per cent). Note that both Somali children and children in the comparison group have formally become Dutch citizens over time.

3.5.2 Analyses: Event History Models and Covariates

We first present non-parametric event-history models (Kaplan-Meier curves) to provide a general picture of the timing and magnitude of onward mobility among Somali children. These outcomes are complemented with a set of models to predict the probability of a single event, namely the onward mobility of the child versus their continued stay in the Netherlands. Cause-specific hazard models are performed to estimate the role of covariates in differentiated, *competing* events: migration with one or both parents (A) or independent migration, without parents (B).

By means of Cox proportional hazard models, we estimate how the probability of onward mobility is conditioned by a set of key characteristics. Sex is included as a dummy variable that takes value 1 for females; their male counterparts form the reference category. In line with the educational stages, as discussed in the case

¹³We compare the results of our models to model specifications based on a stricter operationalisation of ‘onward migration’ to test this assumption. The results are in general comparable but are much more pronounced for the gender variable, which is, in all likelihood, partly driven by differences in propensities (or willingness) to *register* (onward) migration, instead of differences in *actual* migration behaviour. We therefore interpret the results from the main models as more conservative than these additional models.

description section, age at arrival is included as a categorical variable with the reference category made up of children who arrived at pre-school age (0–5) – when school is not yet mandatory – and two additional categories of children who arrived at primary-school age (5–12) or aged 12–16 years. The *family/parental situation* in the Netherlands is also measured as a time-independent categorical variable, differentiating between children who had only their mother registered in the Netherlands (reference category), those who had only their father registered and those who had both parents registered in the Netherlands. It should be noted that this variable is fixed, meaning that it does not vary over the observation period.¹⁴ In addition, we incorporate a set of control variables to increase the accuracy of the estimation of the main effects.

We include the number of foreign-born siblings in the Netherlands (continuous), a dummy capturing whether the child is the oldest in the family (in the Netherlands), a time-varying dummy for mothers who gave birth to a child (a younger sibling) born on Dutch soil and a time-varying categorical variable measuring the employment situation of the parents. The number of years until Dutch citizenship acquisition (the speed of naturalisation) is also included in the extended models. Lastly, related to the refugee dispersal policy and residential locations in the Netherlands, we control for a set of time-varying residential variables, including the years between municipal registration and allocation to a regular dwelling, internal mobility (inter-municipality mobility up until time t) and residency in one out of five municipalities with the largest Somali community.¹⁵

3.6 Findings

3.6.1 Differentiated Onward Mobility: A Family Approach

To begin with, the interviews clearly show that onward mobility does not naturally imply a relocation of all (nuclear) family members simultaneously – on the contrary, that appears to be an exception (see Table A3.2, columns 7 and 8). Drawing upon the register data, the wide occurrence of differentiated family migration becomes visible (see Table 3.2). Of all Dutch Somali children who left for a third country during the observation period, about half (51.5 per cent) migrated with only one of their parents – mostly the mother – and more than a quarter (30.8 per cent) left the Netherlands without a parent or legal guardian. Patterns of ‘differentiated’ mobility are not exclusively found among Somali families. Although children in the comparison group more often than Somalis move with two parents instead of one, migrating without parents is the most common outcome among children in this subpopulation (48.3 per cent).

¹⁴ Having both parents registered implies that both the mother and the father *at some point in time* were entered onto the municipal registers.

¹⁵ Rotterdam, Tilburg, The Hague, Amsterdam, Eindhoven.

Table 3.2 Onward mobility (OM) composition

	Somali origin		Comparison group	
	N	%	N	%
With both parents	160	17.7	805	33.0
With one parent	466	51.5	805	18.7
Without parents	279	30.8	1178	48.3
Total OM	905	100.0	2438	100.0
Siblings all together	406	52.3	1285	60.4
Total children with first-generation siblings	777	100.0	2128	100.0

Source: Statistics Netherlands, SSB

Note: When restricting the sample to children with two registered parents, the percentage of children migrating with both parents is significantly higher and the share of independent migrations lower than for the full sample. However, the pattern of a relatively high percentage of children migrating with one parent – 37.5 among Somali children versus 18.0 for the comparison group – is similar

Our family approach reveals the variation in timing of onward mobility across members of the family. The qualitative data additionally reveal how Somali mothers often stayed behind with the youngest child in order for him or her to finish elementary school, while older children can travel on their own and/or will be taken care of by (extended) family members in the third country. Ekram (ID#31),¹⁶ a young Somali woman, for example, explained how her father had come first to the UK, while her mother decided to stay behind in the Netherlands with the youngest children: ‘My mother decided to stay with us. We were still at a point in our education where transferring could have had a tremendous impact.’

3.6.2 Age at Arrival and Timing of Onward Mobility

In this section, we discuss the empirical results concerning the role that the age of children at arrival in the first country of settlement plays in onward-mobility projects. We test the hypothesis (1a) that children who were young (particularly of pre-school age: 0–5) when arriving in the Netherlands are the least likely to migrate again, with or without their parents.

Before discussing the results from the multivariate analysis, we present a descriptive picture of the magnitude and timing of the onward mobility of children of Somali origin, by means of Kaplan-Meier cumulative hazard curves (Fig. 3.1). For each point in time, this curve gives the cumulative hazard rate, which is the event rate (onward mobility) at time t conditional on surviving (staying in the Netherlands) up to or beyond time t . The relatively flat curves in the first months indicate that onward mobility hardly ever occurs before 3 years after initial registration. After

¹⁶We use pseudonyms for all interlocutors. The ID numbers refer to Table A3.2.

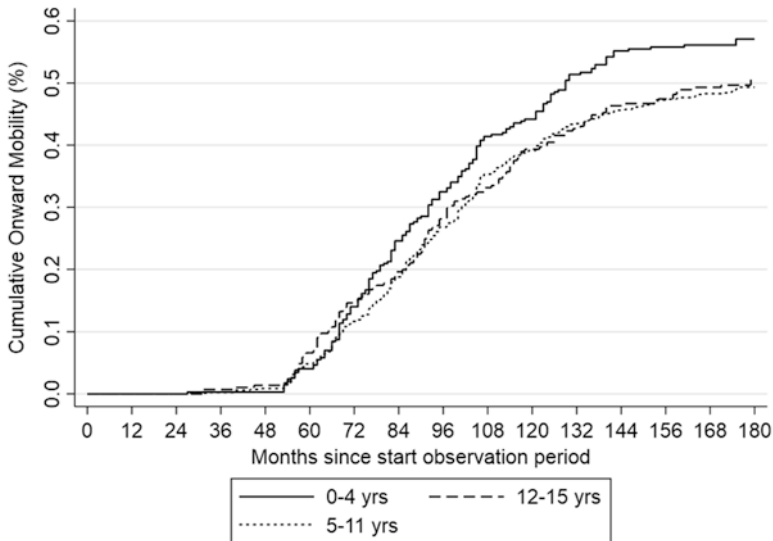


Fig. 3.1 Kaplan Meier curve cumulative onward mobility rate Somali children (N = 1467). (Source: Statistics Netherlands, SSB)

about 4.5 years (54 months), the hazard rates clearly increase, with peaks in the period between five and 7 years after registration, marking the 2 years following citizenship acquisition for most individuals in the sample.

Based on the cumulative onward-mobility rate at the end of the observation period (see Fig. 3.1), we conclude that the youngest children in the sample – aged up to 4 years old at arrival – are more likely to migrate again than those who arrived at mandatory school age (5–12). This gap in cumulative onward-mobility rates starts to manifest itself after 72 months (six years) since registration and remains significant over time. The line for the youngest children is steepest in the period of 4.5–6.5 years after registration, indicating that the odds of onward mobility among these children is highest relatively soon after entry in the Netherlands, when they are in primary education. However, more generally we observe that the bulk of children of Somali origin who left for the UK or another country did so after having spent an extended period in the Netherlands of which they became a citizen.

For children in elementary education, it is arguably relatively easy to switch schools and (even) school systems, compared to children who arrived at primary-school age and are transiting into secondary education in the first years after arrival. This partly supports our alternative hypothesis (1b). The difference in onward-mobility rates between the youngest group and children of primary-school age at arrival remains significant when controlling for a set of other characteristics and

appears robust across a number of model specifications.¹⁷ The oldest age group (12–16) shows no significant differences to the middle group, which clearly demonstrates the non-linear nature of the relationship between age at arrival and onward mobility.

3.6.3 *Motivations for and Timing of Onward Mobility*

We turn to our qualitative data to gain insights into the motivations for the onward mobility of Somali families and the decision-making process. The data clearly demonstrate the dominant role of the parents in decision-making processes that often explicitly concern the educational paths of the child. Much emphasis is placed on foreign educational systems – the British system in particular – which are thought to offer better opportunities for (migrant) children than those in which these latter were raised.

In line with previous studies pertaining not only to Somali (Al-Sharmani, 2010) but also to Iranian (Kelly, 2013) and Moroccan and Bangladeshi (Della Puppa, 2018b) families who migrated to mainland Europe, the parents generally shared the belief that the British education system is more meritocratic and inclusive. They believe that this school system provides more opportunities for the next generation compared to those in other European countries. In addition to the idea that higher education is more accessible, the role of language (English) in education and the broader possibilities for religious education were enticing to parents, which partially stems from a desire to raise their children within their own communities. Related to the language and diasporic motives is the aim to prepare children for a future that is likely to be transnational. This is illustrated by a Somali mother (Fatumo, ID#13), who moved with her four children to Leicester while her husband remained in the Netherlands. When asked what her main reason for moving was, she replied:

Here there are more opportunities. Studying, for the children, is much better; here they can go to university and here you can give your children a religious upbringing. I did not have a clue about opening a shop back then; that came later.

The quote illustrates that mothers often consider the opportunities for their children before exploring their own likelihood of starting a new career elsewhere – like Fatumo, who ran a successful business in Leicester at the time of the interview.

The younger the children are, the more easily they adjust to new (learning) environments. For those who aim to facilitate their children’s chance of obtaining a degree in foreign higher education, it is thus advantageous to have them enrolled in

¹⁷See Table A3.4 in the appendix. Results from slightly different model specifications (e.g. in which we added a continuous age at arrival variable) yielded no substantially different effects (insignificant effect of age continuous). Tables are available upon request.

the system before the transition from secondary to higher education. While, in the case of return migration, parents will often align this event with the completion of their children's (formal) education, the pattern appears different when it comes to onward mobility. This is sensible when return is considered the end of a migration cycle, as opposed to onward mobility – which is merely a continuation of the migratory trajectory. In the presence of a large diaspora network in other countries and the absence of options for safe and sustainable return, families with younger children particularly will try their luck elsewhere. The fact that similar patterns are found for the comparison group (see below) lends further support to this argument.

Based on the extended event-history model coefficients (Fig. 3.2), we find that children who were registered either with both parents or only with their father are *less* likely to migrate again than those who only had their mother residing in the Netherlands (Fig. 3.2, left-hand panel; Table A3.4 Model 1b). This is remarkable, given that such associations are not found among children in the comparison group (Model 1b, right-hand column; Fig. 3.2, right-hand panel). Somali children not only generally travel together with their mother to arrive in the asylum country but are also accompanied by their mothers when engaging in onward mobility (Table 3.2). This finding resonates with the literature on the rearing practices of Somali parents

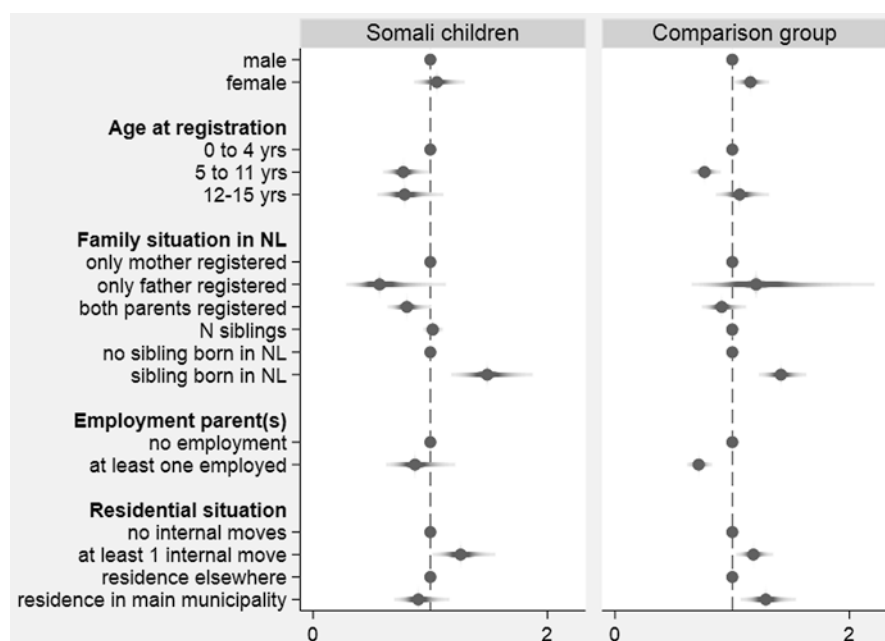


Fig. 3.2 Hazard ratio plots onward mobility, Somali children (left panel, N = 1415) and comparison group (right panel, N = 9794), other control variables included (see Table A3.4, Model 1B)

in various contexts, including the Middle East and the United States, highlighting among other things the high priority given in particular to *female* members of the family. Female offspring are expected to take over the role of providing for the transnational family in the near future (Al-Sharmani, 2004, 2006, 2010). It is, moreover, argued that women, more often than their male counterparts, possess and rely on formal mobility capital (e.g. refugee status or a European passport) for mobility and residential purposes (Al-Sharmani, 2004).

In addition to theoretical expectations concerning the age of children and timing of migration, we hypothesised that those in large families are more prone to onward mobility than children in relatively small families. The hazard ratio (HR) for the number of siblings in the Netherlands is positive but insignificant. Being the oldest child in the family does increase the onward-mobility odds but only significantly for children in the comparison group (HR 1.25). Children who have a sibling born in the Netherlands are more likely to migrate again than their counterparts whose mother did not give birth to a child on Dutch soil. The positive hazard ratio of this covariate for both groups (HR 1.49 and HR 1.42) suggests that new-borns in the family are positively related to onward mobility, not only for Somalis but for children with a protracted refugee background more generally. This constitutes additional support for our argument that parents will seek to migrate again while their children are still young, even if these latter largely or even exclusively grew up in the country of residence.

Just like family formation and expansion, employment opportunities generally form a core part of family livelihood strategies. Results concerning the socio-economic position of the parent(s) in the Netherlands indicate that, whereas parental employment reduces the hazard of migration for the comparison group (HR 0.71), the effect is insignificant for children of Somali descent. In other words, whether Somali parents have formal employment or not does not significantly relate to the mobility outcomes of their children. This resonates with the idea that children's onward mobility is not primarily driven by the economic position of their parents but, rather, depends on considerations concerning various family members – not least their own position and perspectives. On the other hand, it should be noted that employment constraints are not fully (or adequately) captured in our models. Rather than whether or not the parent has paid employment, it is the *quality* of the job which may actually be driving onward mobility. Entrepreneurial and employment constraints were indeed widely expressed by the interviewees, regardless of their (formal) economic position. So even if parents had been successful in finding employment, the quality of the job was often insufficient, which led them to search for better opportunities elsewhere.

The coefficients of the control variables in the extended models provide some interesting insights that deserve a mention. Internal mobility is positively associated with international migration. Children who changed their residential location in the Netherlands are more likely to leave the country than those who remained in the municipality of initial settlement. This holds true for both Somali children (HR 1.26) and children in the comparison group (HR 1.18). Internal relocation thus

presents itself as part of a wider mobility trajectory for children and families that comprises multiple international moves, rather than an alternative for international border-crossing. The lion's share of the interviewees had, indeed, also relocated internally before moving to the UK, often motivated by employment, educational and housing opportunities and revealing clear similarities to motivations for international relocation. Residing in one of the five municipalities with the largest Somali community does not significantly decrease the onward-mobility propensity.

3.6.4 *Mothers as Main Migration Decision-Makers*

Our results highlight the transnational character of many Somali families, where the mother typically lives and moves together with one or more of her children. Most Somali children who obtained asylum in the Netherlands migrated only with their mother in the first place (see Table 3.1). This is consistent with previous insights into child-rearing and role divisions in Somali families in the West (e.g. Degni et al., 2006; Haga, 2020; Ismael, 2020). The responsibilities that are usually borne by the women – taking care of the household and family – are often further expanded after migration (Borell et al., 2014), resulting in greater informal power. This is reflected in the considerations of mothers about their own position and location, as well as the position(s) and perspectives of the children. When Nawal (ID#3) was asked who made the decision to migrate again, she responded:

My mother, she was the main decision-maker, she was the one who said we needed to go, life was getting harder here in the Netherlands and we had lots of relatives in the UK. For my mother it was much easier here, most of our relatives are in the UK, America and Egypt. She was very lonely in the Netherlands. My father came to the Netherlands later – he was in Somalia for a long time – but still most of our relatives were not in the Netherlands.

Interviewer: Did you agree?

My brothers did not know much – they were young – and my mother consulted a lot with me. I am the oldest, I am the only girl. They knew – my mother informed us all – but I don't know if they really understood.

Ibrahim (ID#19) also illustrates how important his mother was in making the final decision to move on to the UK.

In 2001, when I started my exams at high school, my brother wanted to continue his study in the US. He had just finished his higher education (HBO) but in the US they said 'You are from the Netherlands and we also have a university in the UK, maybe that is a better option for you'. Then he went to have a look and did a bit of research on how it all works. My father thought it was a good idea; he had been a student himself so he knew how it all worked. My mother was the one who eventually decided. She said 'If the schools are better – no, not better but quicker – if the time it takes you to get a diploma is shorter, and it is easier to get access, then why should we not take this opportunity?'

In the process of 'rearing devoted and dependable children' (Al-Sharmani, 2006, 62), Somali parents seek to support their children in navigating the educational field

that may transcend international borders, making the mobility of these children essential. One could argue that this applies more generally to those mothers who are part of a large and dispersed diaspora network (see, for example, Jolivet, 2020 for the role of Moroccan mothers). The pattern of children residing and moving with their mothers is, however, not (convincingly) discerned among individuals in the comparison groups, which leads us to provisionally interpret this dynamic as being quite specific to Somalis.

3.6.5 Children Maturing: ‘Independent’ Versus Accompanied Mobility

In this section we delve deeper into the engagement of Somali offspring in onward mobility without their parents, which is observed for three out of ten children (30.8 per cent). The histogram in Fig. 3.3 shows the occurrence of onward migration by composition, for each month of the observation period. Whereas migration with one or both parent(s) peaks in the first 6 years after arrival, peaks for independent migration are observed after about 7 to 8 years and after a period of 15 years.

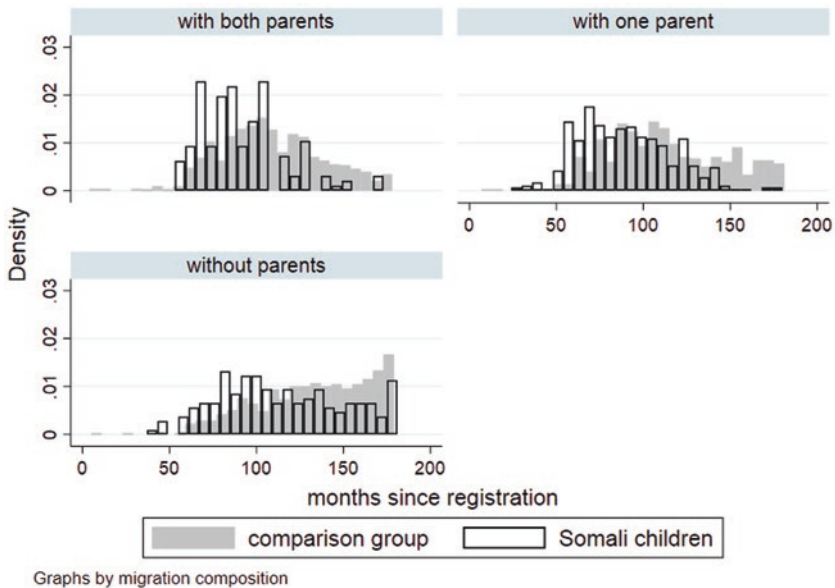


Fig. 3.3 Histogram time of onward mobility by migration composition (Somali children N = 905, comparison group N = 2438)

What catches the eye are the peaks in onward mobility among Somali children and young adults after roughly 6 years of registered residency in the Netherlands. This clearly corresponds to the required (legal) length of stay for naturalisation eligibility. Regardless of the composition, most onward mobility takes place relatively soon after Somalis have become Dutch citizens. For children in the comparison group, the peaks occur later in time and are somewhat flatter. Interestingly, whereas the occurrence of ‘independent’ onward mobility for Somalis decreases after this first peak of seven to 8 years, onward mobility among members of the comparison group continues to increase over time.

Concerning the age at migration we find, perhaps unsurprisingly, that children who arrive in the first country of settlement at an older age, have a higher hazard of onward migration without their parents than children who arrived before reaching compulsory school age (Fig. A3.2). In addition, engagement in internal mobility (between municipalities) increases the hazard of independent onward migration in particular.¹⁸ Children reaching adolescence move independently of their parents after having changed their residence in the Netherlands. The timing of their migration will depend on their own family formation process, rather than on the family planning of their parents. This is illustrated by Ayaan (ID#22), a young Somali woman who states:

My brother, he left for the UK very quickly. He could not get access to university in the Netherlands so he left, already in 1991 he left for London, on his own, because he wanted to study. We all stayed in the Netherlands. I stayed in the Netherlands another 10 years and then I also went. When my brother left, I had just started high school. After that I continued my higher education in social juridical services and worked for the Refugee Council and the Migrant Rights Centre. My brother wanted to study here and I believe my mother thought that it would then be best to all move together.

Interviewer: And one of your sisters stayed in the Netherlands?

Yes, she wanted to move only after completion of her studies, but she got married, gave birth to a child and now is still there (in the Netherlands).

Our findings show that (the timing of) migration is the outcome of the careful consideration of the opportunities and attachments of multiple members of the family, where close involvement with the children, for mothers in particular, becomes apparent. Moreover, refugee children arriving at high-school age generally spent more time in the Netherlands, before migrating to a third country independently of their parents. For both generations – parents and their children who landed in the Dutch context for asylum purposes – family formation processes are often intertwined with onward mobility.

¹⁸ Coefficients of the extended models are not included in this chapter. Results from these (and more) model specifications are available upon request.

3.7 Concluding Discussion

This chapter has presented an examination of intergenerational dynamics within the onward-mobility arrangements of Somali families. Register and interview data are analysed in conjunction, offering unique insights into general patterns of family onward mobility as well as the underlying considerations of various family members. We find that, contrary to earlier findings concerning the role of children in migration planning, Somali children who arrived at a young (pre-school) age are more likely to engage in onward mobility with one or both parents and do so at a somewhat faster pace in comparison to children who arrived at primary-school age. This holds true more generally among protracted refugees who arrived in the Netherlands as minors. The qualitative insights reveal the multifactorial motivations of parent(s) to uproot their children once again. Parents generally feel that their children will be better off in the British education system, with enticing elements such as the accessibility of universities, English as the official language and the availability of religious education (see also Chap. 9 by Della Puppa and Sredanovic).

Our results further highlight the key role that mothers play in managing the onward mobility of various members of the family. Children mostly engage in onward mobility together with their mothers, who also ‘pioneered’ the asylum-motivated migration to the Netherlands. This contrasts with previously found patterns of stepwise family onward migration, where mothers and children typically followed the male head of the family (Herrera, 2012; Jolivet, 2020). The ‘reversed’ gendered patterns for both arrival in the Netherlands and onward mobility appear to be specific to Somalis (this pattern was not found for the comparison group). This is in line with in-depth qualitative insights into Somali transnational familyhood, revealing the high priority of mobility by female members of the family who are expected to cater for the migration of their offspring while trying to avoid disruptions in the children’s education.

Children who arrived aged 11 or older – and thus skipped the transition to secondary education – are the most likely to move independently of their parents. Such manifestations of onward mobility without the parents are common among Somali children who arrived as young adolescents. Among the comparison group, being a girl and being the oldest child in the household also increase the likelihood of this scenario occurring. The timing of independent migration differs from migration involving one or both parents, as it only unfolds after a relatively long period of time (with a peak at 15 years since first registration in the Netherlands). These findings merit further empirical investigation into the mobility trajectories of refugee children, the role of their parents and their own family formation and their independent paths towards new destinations.

The interview material provides some indication that the perceived educational perspectives overseas did not always materialise (cf. Patterson, Chap. 10). Anecdotal evidence points to the underperformance and/or drop-out of – mainly – Somali

boys, who were consequently ‘sent back’ to Somalia or to their country of citizenship. The continuation or abandonment of educational trajectories is largely beyond the scope of our empirical contribution and deserves more attention in order to better grasp the open dimension and multi-directedness of the mobility trajectories of young Dutch Somalis and other young (protracted) refugees alike. As clearly demonstrated in this chapter, many refugee children will – rather than settling permanently in the country that granted them asylum – remain on the move, facilitated by the presence of family and community members in different parts of the globe. Future research into the settlement and return of refugees should therefore incorporate this long-neglected option of continued mobility, which may under certain conditions provide a viable approach to sustaining a livelihood.

Whereas this chapter represents a clear innovation in onward-mobility research by adopting a family approach, we do acknowledge its limits in accounting for the ties with other family members such as extended kin or community members and the role of social capital, in driving or facilitating the migration of Somali children, particularly in the case of ‘independent’ mobility. Multi-sited longitudinal or retrospective survey approaches are needed to further narrow this gap. Lastly, we acknowledge that no clear causal conclusions can be drawn based on our empirical contribution. Both the age at which children arrive in the Netherlands as well as their onward mobility may be associated with unobserved (family) characteristics. The present chapter provides various points of entry through which to further scrutinise refined theoretical expectations concerning family dynamics in onward mobility.

Appendix

Tables

Table A3.1 Frequencies protracted refugees by origin country

	N	%
Afghanistan	5248	52.9
Angola	185	1.9
Congo (DR)	226	2.3
Iraq	3936	39.6
Sudan	196	2.0
Sri Lanka	66	0.7
Other (Eritrea, Morocco, Myanmar, Vietnam) ^a	70	0.7
Total	9927	100.0

Source: Statistics Netherlands

^aCountries with <50 observations

Table A.3.2 Sample description, qualitative data

#	F/M	NL	Age	UK	Age	Family composition in NL	Family composition in 2008 (UK)	Migration motivation(s)
1	M	1993	25	2003	35	With 3 children	3 children born in NL, 2 children born in UK	Moved for father to get a university degree
2	F	1986	1	2004	18	With mother and 5 sisters	Mother and 3 sisters in Birmingham, 1 sister in Leicester, 1 sister in London. 9-month-old daughter	Father decided to move because of British education
3	F	1996	13	2002	19	Young woman	Mother decided to move to the UK. Gave birth to a daughter in UK	More family in the UK, mother decided to move there
4	F	1995	25	2002	32	With mother	Mother went alone to UK; father was never in NL, joined them in UK	Moved to be with other Somalis, everyone she knew left for the UK at one point
5	M	1989	1	2000	12	With mother, father, 2 older brothers, 2 older sisters	Moved with his mother. Father has returned to Somalia. Mother wants to join him: waits for youngest child to finish education in UK. 2 older brothers (who stayed in NL) and 2 older sisters who went to university (in the UK)	Mother wanted to come to UK for social reasons and education. Respondent dropped out of school (in UK), owns a business
6	M	1992	14	2006	30	Unaccompanied	Got married, had children and divorced in NL (ex-wife and children still in NL)	Cultural reasons and ambition
7	F	1992	23	2002	33	Unaccompanied	Been in Kenya for 2 years in between, her two daughters stayed with father in UK	Business opportunities
8	M	1992	39	2001	48	With wife and 5 daughters	Wife had studied in UK before, then went back to Somalia (before the war) before coming to NL. Five daughters in year of move	Economic opportunities and social reasons
9	M	1994	37	2002	45	With wife, 7 children born in NL	Family with 8 children (1 born in the UK)	Business opportunities and social reasons

10	F	1989	26	2001	38	With husband and 4 children (born in Somalia), 6 children born in NL	Oldest child remained in the Netherlands, 1 child born in UK	Husband could not find work in NL, even though trained as a VET
11	F	1990	28	2005	43	With husband and son (born in NL), got divorced	With son who is now 10 (7 when moved), ex-husband still in NL	Came 'late': did not want to move onward initially but anti-Muslim sentiments and political climate in the Netherlands persuaded her.
12	M	1989	25	2005	41	Got married in the Netherlands	With wife and 3 children	Moved for educational and job opportunities for children
13	F	1992	35	2002	45	With husband and children (born in Somalia), 2 children born in NL	With 4 children without husband (still in NL)	Moved for education of children (more rewarded on their qualities in the British system)
14	M	1992	23	1998	29	Got married in the Netherlands	Living with his wife, her family and their 2 children in the UK	Moved for wife, her family decided to move to the UK when they got married and she was only 18 years old and did not want to miss her family
15	M	1992	20	2001	29	Got married in the Netherlands, 2 children born in NL	With wife and 6 children (4 born in UK)	Moved because of religious education opportunities for children
16	F	1989	30	2000	41	With 6 children	With 6 children (2 live on their own already)	Moved for opportunities, felt restricted in the Netherlands for herself and also for her children
17	M	1990	24	1996	30	Unaccompanied	With wife and 3 children	Found a British Somali wife
18	M	1993	10	2004	19	With older pregnant sister (35) and her child	Moved alone to the UK, sister moved to Kenya for career	To start a new life after shock of brother dying
19	M	1987	3	2001	16	With mother, father and siblings	With mother and all children except 1 who stayed in the Netherlands. Father also stayed there (divorced)	To get more opportunities, to get into university

(continued)

Table A3.2 (continued)

#	F/M	NL	Age	UK	Age	Family composition in NL	Family composition in 2008 (UK)	Migration motivation(s)
20	F	1989	14	2002	27	With (pregnant) stepmother and 3 brothers aged 19, 1, 2	Moved alone, brother had moved to the UK in 1991, they did not get asylum soon and he wanted to study in the UK	Moved for political reasons, anti-Islamic sentiments, had a good job in the Netherlands
21	F	Born in NL 1987	x	2002	15	Born in NL	As a family	For social reasons of parents, now in second year of East London University and married
22	F	1989	2	2004	17	With mother, 1-year-old sister and older brother	Brother had already moved for studies and other sister joined later	Moved to do Islamic studies in the UK
23	M	1994	20	2005	31	Unaccompanied	Grew up with aunt in Djibouti who only had girls and wanted a son. Wife and three children came one year later to the UK. One child born in UK	Work and educational opportunities are the most important.
24	M	1993	19	1999	25	Unaccompanied	Moved on his own, stayed with uncle. Now has a wife and three children (3,4,6)	Went as exchange student from School of Applied Sciences in NL to university in UK
25	M	1989	26	1996	33	Unaccompanied	Moved on his own. Found wife in the UK and has children now	Had to earn money to be able to send money to Somalia.
26	M	1989	16	2000	27	With mother, brothers and sisters	Moved on his own	To broaden horizons. After finishing study in NL he had the opportunity to do an MBA in the UK
27	M	1993	28	2000	36	Unaccompanied	Moved on his own, found work within 2 months	To find employment
28	M	1994	9	2000	15	With other (single child), father (divorced) in Somalia	Moved on his own	To play at a professional football club
29	M	1992	29	2000	37	Unaccompanied	Moved with family	Could not find a job, now runs a Somali education centre
30	F	NL born 1988		2001	13	With mother, older siblings	Moved with mother, older brothers and sisters had all moved before	For education of the children

31	F	1989	4	2004	19	With father, mother and siblings	Father moved first in 2003, other children followed, mother in 2008 (last family member)	Moved after graduation, for work/ educational opportunities
32	M	1988	17	2000	29	With mother	Father moved first in 2003. Was in the Netherlands with his mother	To get married
33	F	1991	28	2004	41	With husband and daughter	Moved with daughter, 2, husband stayed behind	For educational and labour careers

Source: fieldwork with Somalis in Leicester and London between 2008 and 2010

Table A3.3 Cox PH model onward migration, hazard ratio's Model 1

	Somali				Comparison group			
	HR	sig	lb	ub	HR	sig	lb	ub
Sex (ref. = male)	1.10		0.95	1.27	1.16	**	1.05	1.27
Age at arrival (ref. = 0 – 4 yrs)								
5–11 yrs	0.79	**	0.66	0.94	0.77	***	0.69	0.87
12–16 yrs	0.82		0.66	1.02	1.07		0.94	1.23
N individuals	1467				9926			
N events	726				1681			
N observations	16,596				138,736			
ll	–4010				–12,574			

Source: Statistics Netherlands

Notes: Stratified by year of registration; *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Table A3.4 Cox PH model onward migration, hazard ratio's Model 1B

	Somali origin				Comparison group			
	HR	sig	lb	ub	HR	sig	lb	ub
Sex (ref. = male)	1.06		0.90	1.23	1.16	**	1.05	1.27
Age at registration (years)								
6–11 (ref. = 0–5)	0.77	**	0.63	0.93	0.76	*	0.67	0.87
12–16	0.78		0.60	1.02	1.06		0.91	1.25
Age time variant	0.98		0.93	1.03	1.01		0.97	1.04
Family situation in NL								
Only father registered (ref. = only mother)	0.57	*	0.33	0.96	1.20		0.76	1.91
Both parents registered (ref. = only mother)	0.80	*	0.67	0.95	0.91		0.78	1.06
Number of siblings	1/04		0.96	1.09	1.00		0.96	1.04
Oldest child in family (ref. = no)	1.08		0.88	1.32	1.25	***	1.11	1.42
Only child in household (ref. = no)	0.91				0.82	*	0.68	0.98
Sibling born in NL (ref. = no)	1.49	***	1.25	1.77	1.42	***	1.27	1.58
Parental employment (ref. = no)								
At least one employed	0.87		0.68	1.12	0.71	***	0.64	0.80
Residential situation								
Internal mobility (ref. = no)	1.26	**	1.07	1.48	1.18	***	1.07	1.31
Residence in main municipality (ref. = no)	0.90		0.74	1.09	1.29	***	1.12	1.48
Years until naturalisation	0.80	***	0.77	0.83	0.89	***	0.86	0.91
Years since allocation	108	*	1.02	1.14	1.04	*	1.00	1.08
Number of individuals	1437				9894			
Number of observations	12,256				110,035			
Number of events	702				1659			
ll	–3763				–12,333			

Source: Statistics Netherlands

Notes: Stratified by years of registration; *** p < 0.001. ** p < 0.01. * p < 0.05

Figures

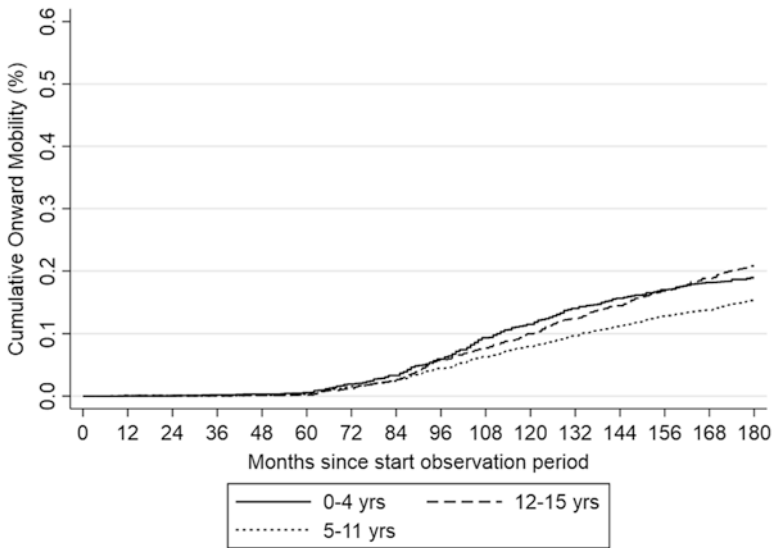


Fig. A3.1 Kaplan Meier curve cumulative onward mobility rate comparison group (N = 9927). (Source: Statistics Netherlands, SSB)

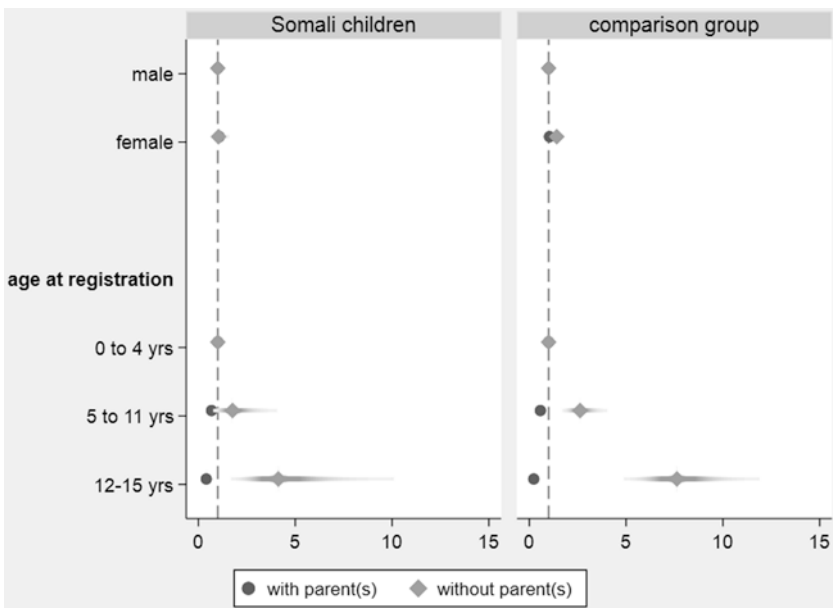


Fig. A3.2 Hazard ratio plots onward mobility, Somali children (left panel, N = 1415) and comparison group (right panel, N = 9794), other control variables included (Table available upon request)

References

- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Al-Sharmani, M. (2004). *Refugees and citizens: The Somali diaspora in Cairo*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Al-Sharmani, M. (2006). Living transnationally: Somali diasporic women in Cairo. *International Migration*, 44(1), 55–77.
- Al-Sharmani, M. (2010). Transnational family networks in the Somali diaspora in Egypt: Women's roles and differentiated experiences. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 17(4), 499–518.
- Anderson, B. (2019). New directions in migration studies: Towards methodological de-nationalism. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1), 1–13.
- Bakker, B. F., Van Rooijen, J., & Van Toor, L. (2014). The system of social statistical datasets of statistics Netherlands: An integral approach to the production of register-based social statistics. *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, 30(4), 411–424.
- Baldassar, L., & Merla, L. (2013). *Transnational families, migration and the circulation of care: Understanding mobility and absence in family life*. Routledge.
- Borell, K., Rask, E., & Warsame, M. (2014). Gendered family roles and expectations in transnational Somali refugee families: An exploratory multiple-site study. *International Journal of Child, Youth & Family Studies*, 5(2), 296–307.
- Bushin, N. (2009). Researching family migration decision-making: A children-in-families approach. *Population, Space and Place*, 15(5), 429–443.
- CBS Statline. (2020). Bevolking; leeftijd, migratieachtergrond, geslacht, regio, 1 jan. 1996–2020. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/cijfers/detail/37713>
- Cooke, T. J. (2008). Migration in a family way. *Population, Space and Place*, 14(4), 255–265.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Crul, M. (2013). Snakes and ladders in educational systems: Access to higher education for second-generation Turks in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(9), 1383–1401.
- Crul, M., Keskiner, E., Schneider, J., Lelie, F., Ghaemina, S., Bauböck, R., & Tripkovic, M. (2017). No lost generation? Education for refugee children: A comparison between Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey. In R. Bauböck & M. Tripkovic (Eds.), *The integration of migrants and refugees* (pp. 62–80). European University Institute.
- De Hoon, M., Vink, M., & Schmeets, H. (2019). A ticket to mobility? Naturalisation and subsequent migration of refugees after obtaining asylum in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(7), 1185–1204.
- Degni, F., Pöntinen, S., & Mölsä, M. (2006). Somali parents' experiences of bringing up children in Finland: Exploring social-cultural change within migrant households. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-7.3.139>
- Della Puppa, F. (2018a). Ambivalent mobilities and survival strategies of Moroccan and Bangladeshi families in Italy in times of crisis. *Sociology*, 52(3), 464–479.
- Della Puppa, F. (2018b). Multiple migrations and intra-European mobilities of Italian naturalized migrants. *Revista de Cercetare și Intervenție Socială*, 61, 91–103.
- Della Puppa, F., & King, R. (2018). The new 'twice migrants': Motivations, experiences and disillusionments of Italian-Bangladeshis relocating to London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(11), 1936–1952.
- Djajić, S. (2008). Immigrant parents and children: An analysis of decisions related to return migration. *Review of Development Economics*, 12(3), 469–485.
- Dourleijn, E., Muller, P., Dagevos, J., Vogels, R., van Doorn, M., & Permentier, M. (2011). *Vluchtelingengroepen in Nederland*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Dustmann, C. (2003a). Children and return migration. *Journal of Population Economics*, 16(4), 815–830.

- Dustmann, C. (2003b). Return migration, wage differentials, and the optimal migration duration. *European Economic Review*, 47(2), 353–369.
- Entorf, H., & Lauk, M. J. (2008). Peer effects, social multipliers and migrants at school: An international comparison. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(4), 633–654.
- Erdal, M. B., & Ezzati, R. (2015). ‘Where are you from’ or ‘when did you come’? Temporal dimensions in migrants’ reflections about settlement and return. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(7), 1202–1217.
- Folke, J. N. (2018). Moving on or moving back? The temporalities of migrant students’ lived versus imagined school careers. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(9), 1506–1522.
- Forster, A. G., & van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2020). Navigating institutions: Parents’ knowledge of the educational system and students’ success in education. *European Sociological Review*, 36(1), 48–64.
- Haga, R. (2020). Somali parents in Sweden: Navigating parenting and child Well-being. In M. Tiilikainen, M. Al-Sharmani, & S. Mustasaari (Eds.), *Wellbeing of transnational Muslim families. Marriage, law and gender* (pp. 95–111). Routledge.
- Hagelskamp, C., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Hughes, D. J. (2010). Migrating to opportunities: How family migration motivations shape academic trajectories among newcomer immigrant youth. *Journal of Social Issues*, 66(4), 717–739.
- Herrera, G. (2012). Starting over again? Crisis, gender and social reproduction among Ecuadorian migrants in Spain. *Feminist Economics*, 18(2), 125–148.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). In-depth interview. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *The practice of qualitative research* (pp. 119–148). Sage.
- Hutchins, T. J. (2011). ‘They told us in a curry shop’: Child–adult relations in the context of family migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(8), 1219–1235.
- Johnsdotter, S. (2015). European Somali children dumped? On families, parents, and children in a transnational context. *European Journal of Social Work*, 18(1), 81–96.
- Jolivet, D. (2020). Post-2008 multi-sited household practices: Between Morocco, Spain and Norway. *International Migration*, 58(1), 45–60.
- Kelly, M. (2013). *Onward migration: The transnational trajectories of Iranians leaving Sweden* (PhD thesis). University of Uppsala, Department of Social and Economic Geography.
- Koehler, C., & Schneider, J. (2019). Young refugees in education: The particular challenges of school systems in Europe. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(28), 1–20.
- Labussière, M., & Vink, M. (2020). The intergenerational impact of naturalisation reforms: The citizenship status of children of immigrants in the Netherlands, 1995–2016. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(13), 2742–2763.
- Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039.
- Lindley, A., & Van Hear, N. (2007). *New Europeans on the move: A preliminary review of the onward migration of refugees within the European Union*. University of Oxford, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper No. 57.
- Moret, J. (2020). Mobility capital: Somali migrants’ trajectories of (im)mobilities and the negotiation of social inequalities across borders. *Geoforum*, 116, 235–242.
- Orellana, M. F., Thorne, B., Chee, A., & Lam, W. S. E. (2001). Transnational childhoods: The participation of children in processes of family migration. *Social Problems*, 48(4), 572–591.
- Ortensi, L. E., & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E. (2018). Moving on? Gender, education, and citizenship as key factors among short-term onward migration planners. *Population, Space and Place*, 24(5), e2135.
- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Sajons, C. (2016). Does granting citizenship to immigrant children affect family outmigration? *Journal of Population Economics*, 29(2), 395–420.

- Serra Mingot, E., & Mazzucato, V. (2017). Mobile populations in immobile welfare systems: A typology of institutions providing social welfare and protection within a mobility framework. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 29(4), 787–805.
- Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C., & Teddlie, C. B. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage.
- Ismael, A. A. (2020). Transnational Finnish-Somali families and children's wellbeing. In M. Tiilikainen, M. Al-Sharmani, & S. Mustasaari (Eds.), *Wellbeing of transnational Muslim families. Marriage, law and gender* (pp. 129–146). Routledge.
- Toma, S., & Castagnone, E. (2015). What drives onward mobility within Europe? The case of Senegalese migration between France, Italy and Spain. *Population*, 70(1), 65–94.
- Trevena, P., McGhee, D., & Heath, S. (2013). Location, location? A critical examination of patterns and determinants of internal mobility among post-accession polish migrants in the UK. *Population, Space and Place*, 19(6), 671–687.
- Van Dalen, H. P., Groenewold, G., & Schoorl, J. J. (2005). Out of Africa: What drives the pressure to emigrate? *Journal of Population Economics*, 18(4), 741–778.
- Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2019). Early tracking and social inequality in educational attainment: Educational reforms in 21 European countries. *American Journal of Education*, 126(1), 65–99.
- Van den Reek, E. W., & Hussein, A. I. (2003). *Somaliërs op doorreis: Verhuisgedrag van Nederlandse Somaliërs naar Engeland*. Wetenschapswinkel Universiteit van Tilburg.
- Van Geel, J. (2019). Conflicting framings: Young Ghanaians' and Dutch education professionals' views on the impact of mobility on education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 63, 163–179.
- Van Liempt, I. (2007). *Navigating borders. An inside perspective into the process of human smuggling*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Van Liempt, I. (2011a). 'And then one day they all moved to Leicester': The relocation of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK explained. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(3), 254–266.
- Van Liempt, I. (2011b). From Dutch dispersal to ethnic enclaves in the UK: The relationship between segregation and integration examined through the eyes of Somalis. *Urban Studies*, 48(16), 3385–3398.
- Van Liempt, I. (2011c). Young Dutch Somalis in the UK: Citizenship, identities and belonging in a transnational triangle. *Mobilities*, 6(4), 569–583.
- Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, 2(4), 301–334.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 4

Remittance-Sending Behaviour Along Migration Trajectories: The Case of Senegalese, Ghanaian and Congolese Migrants



Wendy Flikweert, Özge Bilgili, and Kim Caarls

4.1 Introduction

With an increase in global migration (at least until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic) and with recent technological and communication developments that facilitate migrants' transnational engagement, there is a growing interest in understanding the determinants of economic transnationalism. Monetary remittances are a form of transnational economic activity that is part of the relations which migrants may keep across nation states' geographical, political and cultural boundaries (Al-Ali et al., 2001a; Glick Schiller, 2008; Vertovec, 2009). The amount of transnational monetary transfers has increased rapidly: in 2018, remittances to lower- and middle-income countries were estimated to have reached US\$529 billion (then around €448 billion), an increase of almost 10 per cent compared to the previous year (World Bank, 2019).

Besides their potential adverse effects (e.g. increased inequality) it is, overall, often argued that remittances have great developmental potential (De Haas, 2005). Monetary remittances can contribute to improving the living conditions of households in migrants' origin countries, as they provide a safety-net in poorer areas and go directly to people in need. Moreover, remittances can contribute to the increased economic activity and investment propensity of families abroad, potentially leading

W. Flikweert (✉)

Independent Researcher, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: wendyflikweert@hotmail.com

Ö. Bilgili

Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
e-mail: O.Bilgili@uu.nl

K. Caarls

Independent Researcher, The Hague, The Netherlands
e-mail: kim@kimcaarls.com

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*,
IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_4

to an increase in the general prosperity of migrant-sending regions in the long term (Taylor et al., 1996; De Haas, 2003, 2005).

While there has been great interest in remittances for decades – due, *inter alia*, to their potentially positive impact on the livelihoods of migrants' families (e.g., Taylor et al., 1996; De Haas, 2003) – the research field remains limited in certain aspects. Particularly, as we argue in this chapter, most studies on economic remittances are dominated by a static view of migration: it assumes that people leave their origin countries behind, settle down in one reception country and then start remitting (Malkki, 1992). This leads to a limited understanding of remittance-sending behaviour because it assumes that migrants remit only when they consider themselves to be settled in the destination country. However, many migrants may also remit *during* their journeys. While the vast majority of research focuses on migrants who consider that they have reached their final destination, little is known about the economic remittance-sending behaviour of migrants who are on the move.

In fact, the increasing restriction of legal migration and intensified controls at European borders have led to more complex, fragmented and diverse migration trajectories (Dahinden, 2010; Collyer et al., 2012; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014; Snel et al., 2021). Migrants who spend longer periods of time *en route* may have diverse (and more dangerous) experiences between departure and arrival (Schapendonk, 2009). Thus far, there is little scientific understanding of how these experiences may affect migrants' transnational engagements such as remittance-sending. If we assume that remittances mostly support families in migrant-sending countries by providing a safety-net or an income enabling them to maintain a basic standard of living, it is relevant to gain more insight into how these situations influence migrants' remittance-sending behaviour. Our research contributes to filling this gap in the literature by exploring differences in remittance-sending behaviour among migrants in relation to their mobility patterns. More specifically, we aim to understand how and why migrants' remittance-sending behaviour differs when they consider themselves to be on the move and when they are settled. Using retrospective, longitudinal data from the Migrations between Africa and Europe (MAFE) project, we investigate how being on the move relates to the remittance-sending behaviour of Senegalese, Ghanaian and Congolese migrants along their migration trajectories.

4.2 Sub-Saharan Migration Routes to Europe

As a response to increased border controls or changing situations in transit countries, migration routes, trends and patterns between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe have shifted continuously over time (Lessault & Beauchemin, 2009; Schoumaker et al., 2018). While a large number of sub-Saharan migrants entered Europe by air, a significant number reached Europe's territories overland and by sea (Caarls et al., 2021). Among this latter group, a wide variety of modes of transport and routes were used to enter Europe. Around the turn of the twenty-first century, the main departure points for sub-Saharan migrants were from Northern Morocco for travel to Spain, Melilla or Ceuta, from Libya and Tunisia to Lampedusa, Sicily and Malta

and from the West African coast for migrants travelling to the Canary Islands (Schoumaker et al., 2018). Senegalese migrants mainly set off either directly to the Canary Islands by boat or overland to Morocco or Mauritania. Ghanaians either headed to Africa's West Coast or crossed the Sahara to Morocco or Libya, while the Congolese commonly migrated to Europe via North Africa.

Additionally, 'traditional' destination countries have changed for sub-Saharan African migrants (Mazzucato et al., 2015). Although increased border controls have made migration to Europe more difficult, the increasing lack of opportunities in African destination countries and the growing demand for cheap labour in Southern Europe in particular have increased migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and people have emigrated to new destination countries. Whereas around 3 million sub-Saharan African migrants were living in Europe in 2000, this number had increased to 3.9 million by 2011 (Schoumaker et al., 2018). In the 2000s, Senegalese destinations in Europe were mainly Italy and Spain, even though they primarily used to migrate to France. Ghanaians mostly migrated to the UK, the US and new European destination countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. Congolese migration itineraries shifted differently. With the abolition of apartheid in South Africa and the ending of the Angolan War in the early 2000s, new economic opportunities were created in the region, which decreased the number of Congolese migrating to Europe.

4.3 Conceptualising Migration Trajectories

In order to show that migration experiences go beyond initial points of 'departure' and 'arrival', scholars have often used various terms to acknowledge that migration does not usually have a clear end-point but can involve secondary, onward, return or circular migration (Ehrkamp, 2019). In Chap. 2, Erdal et al. suggest the term 'complex migration trajectories'. As such, migration is characterised by multidirectionality and complexity, with deep entanglement between mobility and immobility along migrants' routes (Düvell, 2006; Collyer, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2019). To recognise this (im)mobility – aggravated by strict state immigration regimes (Düvell, 2006) and therefore, at least to a certain extent, involuntary – the term 'transit migration' has commonly been used. This is defined as 'the situation between emigration and settlement that is characterised by an indefinite migrant stay, legal or illegal, and may or may not develop into further migration depending on a series of structural and individual factors' (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou, 2008, 4) and is often thought to be anticipated before migrants depart from their origin countries (Castagnone, 2011).

However, as transit migration is often not a choice, nor is it always intended or planned, the 'initial' aim of reaching a specific country is not always realised and changes along their journeys (Düvell, 2006; Collyer, 2007). Rather, transit stays are characterised by indefiniteness that may result in (involuntary) settlement (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou, 2008). In addition, merely categorising transit migration as a phase between departure and arrival does not reflect migrants' changing aims and different experiences along their trajectories, whereby migrants change

their plans, adapt to new environments and explore opportunities in countries of stay (Andersson, 2016; Massey et al., 2016; Staring, 2018). A broader interpretation that reflects migrants' embodied experiences along their journeys is therefore needed. Hence, we turn to Coutin's (2005) term '*en route*'¹ to explore how transit migration can be experienced as a 'liminal state that positions migrants simultaneously outside (in transition, not yet arrived), yet inside (travelling through), national space' (Coutin, 2005, 196). Along migration journeys, migrants can be physically present in 'precarious transit zones' (Hess, 2012) while being excluded from the rights and protection mechanisms which citizens of that state enjoy.

Being *en route*/on the move is often characterised by particular living conditions that increase migrants' vulnerability and poverty – conditions such as semi-protection, social exclusion, a lack of state protection or outright hostility (Coutin, 2005; Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou, 2008). This precariousness is mainly driven by two mechanisms (Düvell, 2006). First, it is produced by nation states, international regulations or border regimes (e.g., the increased securitisation of the EU's outer borders) as they exclude certain migrants from conventional protection regimes and restrict them from legally reaching their territories, thereby creating challenges for the protection of human rights and access to basic services. Second, this precariousness is driven by social class. Whereas wealthier migrants can afford to pay for a direct flight or provide savings to obtain a visa, poorer migrants are inclined to use less expensive modes of travel, usually overland or by sea (Düvell, 2006).

In this chapter, we explore how Senegalese, Ghanaian and Congolese migrants engage in sending economic remittances to their origin countries while considering themselves to be on the move rather than being settled. We understand being *en route* as a lived experience (Düvell, 2006), meaning that migrants themselves are 'experiencing subjects' (Eastmond, 2007) who have defined, in hindsight, what they experienced as stays to settle or stays with the intention of moving onwards. This overcomes the constraints that previous research raises, arguing that concepts – such as transit migration – should be studied not only as a socio-political condition but also as a way of experiencing the world (Willen, 2007). It allows moving beyond over-generalised notions of transit migration and acknowledges the wide diversity in transit zones and migrants' different realities in transit (Collyer et al., 2012; Hess, 2012).

Against this backdrop, we argue that our regard as researchers should move towards the experiences of migrants *en route* who are also likely to be sending remittances from different places which they do not consider to be their final destination. These remittance flows can be both to countries of origin or elsewhere where they have social ties (as also demonstrated in Patterson's Chap. 10 in this book). In fact, previous research has also highlighted the importance of reverse remittances, which support migrants on the road and abroad (Mazzucato, 2011). While we

¹We also use 'being on the move' as a translation of this terminology and refer to the two terms interchangeably.

acknowledge that remittances can be sent to and from diverse places, due to data limitations this chapter focuses on the remittance-sending behaviour of migrants only towards their country of origin.

4.4 Remittance-Sending Capacity and Incentives of Migrants *En Route*

Although being *en route* is initially expected to be a temporary experience without the intention to settle down in the country of stay, it is often unclear how such a stay will develop (Düvell, 2006). Migrants might be hindered in moving onwards and their future decisions might be dependent on the available and affordable choices, a local network or migrant smugglers or brokers (Collyer, 2010). Following the life-cycle theory of consumption (Dustmann, 1997), this insecurity and precariousness could lead migrants in temporary stays to save their money in order to ensure their future consumption. This implies that they are more likely to prioritise money as a means to contribute to reaching their future destinations, instead of investing it in relationships with the origin country. Consequently, money sent through remittances is less likely to be prioritised over more direct expenditure on their onward migration, leading migrants *en route* to (temporarily) refrain from sending remittances. Therefore, we expect that *migrants en route are less likely to remit compared to migrants who consider themselves to be settled*.

Several factors could further explain the expected difference between remittance-sending behaviour *en route* compared to that when settled. The particular living conditions and opportunities of being *en route* are likely to influence migrants' remittance-sending behaviour, as engagement in transnational activities (i.e. sending remittances) is closely related to migrants' transnational capabilities to engage in these exchanges (Bilgili, 2014, 2015). These transnational capabilities include two elements. First, migrants need the capacity to engage in transnational activities (Al-Ali et al., 2001b). When it comes to monetary remittances, this depends, for example, on migrants' wages, on alternative forms of income or on their savings. These capacities are influenced by the local context and the characteristics of the country of origin, as the skills and resources available to migrants to engage in transnational activities are influenced by their social networks, opportunities and the length of time spent in the country of stay (Carling & Hoelscher, 2013). Second, engagement in sending remittances depends on the migrants' incentives to remit and their willingness to prioritise money spent on these remittances over other expenditure (Bilgili, 2015). These incentives depend on migrants' connections and attachment with both their origin country and their countries of stay. In order to remit, it is a prerequisite that migrants identify with the social, economic and political processes in their origin countries (Al-Ali et al., 2001b).

In this research, we first investigate whether migrants' employment status in their country of stay, as a transnational capacity, can explain possible differences in remittance-sending behaviour. Previous research has shown that income and employment status are closely related to sending remittances, as migrants

struggling to cover their living expenses in the host country are limited in their possibilities to remit (Hagen-Zanker & Siegel, 2007; Carling & Hoelscher, 2013). Several studies found that those with higher incomes or with permanent contracts were more likely to remit (Carling & Hoelscher, 2013; Bilgili, 2014, 2015). Similarly, *those with more stable economic positions are likely to be in less precarious situations and are, therefore, more likely to remit.*

Migrants who are *en route* rely more on informal labour opportunities and social networks influencing their strategies and objectives (Hess, 2012). They might be more likely to work in precarious jobs and therefore have more unstable labour-market positions. Moreover, being in a perceived situation of limbo – neither ‘here’ nor ‘there’ – can be paralysing. It might prevent them from actively looking for employment, as the stay is probably expected to only be temporary but could, meanwhile, develop in a longer or even a permanent stay (Al-Ali et al., 2001a). Being in a more precarious situation might make it more difficult to save money and send remittances (Cox et al., 1998). Therefore, we expect that *migrants who are en route are less likely to be employed and are therefore less likely to remit, compared to migrants who are settled.*

Another factor influencing migrants’ capacity to remit is their legal status in the host country (Al-Ali et al., 2001a). Although there is no consensus in the literature, there is a common view that the insecurity of migrants’ legal status poses obstacles to their engagement in remittance-sending behaviour (Van Meeteren, 2012). Irregular migrants who are structurally excluded might experience (legal) barriers to formal institutional participation, hampering their ability to engage in cross-border activities (Portes, 2001; Bloch, 2008; Vickstrom & Beauchemin, 2016) and undermining a stable situation compared to regular migrants. Since not having a legal status could also make migrants reluctant to engage in activities that jeopardise them – as not abiding by the law could lead to fines, imprisonment or deportation (Pinger, 2010; Vickstrom & Beauchemin, 2016) and the insecurity of no legal status also limits the freedom to move around – this situation could also lead to psychological problems, such as apathy and non-commitment (Al-Ali et al., 2001a).

Importantly, being *en route* is not intrinsically related to illegality, as it is a process intersecting various other migration categories. Irregular migrants, asylum applicants, refugees, documented migrants and migrants who have been trafficked may all experience fragmented journeys (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 2008; Collyer, 2010). However, migrants who are *en route* are more likely to be excluded from conventional protection regimes, challenging the protection of their human rights and access to basic services (Düvell, 2006). These structural barriers might, in turn, hamper their likelihood of obtaining a legal status. Moreover, as being on the move is envisioned to be temporary, migrants might be less inclined to make an effort to obtain a legal status in this host country. Accordingly, we expect that *migrants en route are less likely to have a fully regular status and are therefore less likely to remit, compared to migrants who consider themselves to be settled.*

Although migrants’ economic position and legal status while being *en route* are expected to hamper their remittance-sending behaviour, these capacities play no role if there is no obligation or incentive to send money to their origin countries (Bilgili, 2014). Previous research has shown that different incentives can determine

monetary transfers. First, remittances can be sent out of pure self-interest, whereby migrants invest and accumulate assets in their origin country (Hagen-Zanker & Siegel, 2007; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2009). Feelings of attachment to the origin country might be higher for those who have assets, resulting in a strong motivation to remit. Second, economic remittances can also function as a contractual arrangement between migrants and their families in origin countries, as a strategy to diversify income resources to support the household (see Lucas & Stark, 1985). In this way, both migrants and households can mitigate their risks and are insured against financial shocks: the household supports the migrant by contributing to their migration costs and, in turn, receives remittances from the migrant as a form of income. Remittances are then sent to repay the loans which migrants took out to pay the costs of migration. Lastly, migrants could also remit because they want to take care of their families for altruistic reasons, as they feel concerned about their families' well-being (Hagen-Zanker & Siegel, 2007; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2009).

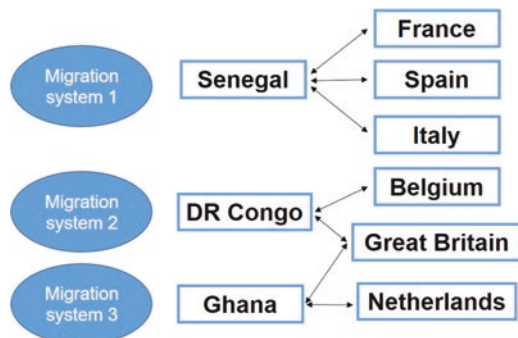
Although previous research found that having both assets and family in origin countries is an important incentive for migrants to send remittances, their effect may be less strong for migrants who are in more precarious situations, such as those who still consider themselves to be on the move. Therefore, we expect that *migrants who own assets and/or have family members in their origin countries are more likely to remit but that this relationship will be weaker when they are en route.*

4.5 Methods

4.5.1 Data and Participants

This research used data from the Migrations between Africa and Europe (MAFE) project. Identical surveys were conducted in six European countries – Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, the UK and the Netherlands – and the three sub-Saharan African countries of Ghana, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo or DR Congo (Beauchemin et al., 2014). The countries were part of three distinct migration systems (see Fig. 4.1): Senegalese migration was studied in Senegal, France, Spain and Italy, Congolese migration in DR Congo, Belgium and Great Britain, and Ghanaian migration in Ghana and the Netherlands.

Fig. 4.1 Structure of MAFE data depicting where retrospective surveys have been conducted. (Adapted from Beauchemin et al., 2014)



migration in Ghana, the UK and the Netherlands. This multi-sited approach allowed us to realise the aim of the MAFE project: to recognise that migration is not a linear process (from Africa to Europe) but, rather, a process between Africa and Europe, by also including onward, circular and return migration (Beauchemin, 2012).

This research only used data from respondents who had been, at the time of data collection, staying in one of the six European countries for at least one year. Data collection only took place in the major cities where the majority of migrants stayed. Except for Spain, quota sampling was used to select respondents (Beauchemin et al., 2014). These quotas were set by age and gender. Additionally, in France, socio-occupational status was included as an extra criterion and in Belgium and the UK the place of residence was a criterion. Different recruitment methods were used, including approaching respondents in public spaces and churches, through snowballing or through interviewers' contacts. Only in Spain was a random selection of participants possible through the population register. The data were collected between 2008 and 2010 (Beauchemin et al., 2014). Respondents were eligible if they were between 25 and 75 years old at the time of the survey, were born in one of the three African countries and had – or had had – the nationality of their origin country.

The data comprise individual life histories collected through biographic questionnaires. Respondents were asked to provide retrospective information on their family, economic and residential history. In total, 1450 migrants were interviewed in Europe. After only selecting those who were over 18 years old at the time of emigration from their origin country, our final sample consisted of 1439 respondents, of whom 601 were Senegalese, 426 were Congolese and 412 were Ghanaian (see Table 4.1 for further specification). On average, respondents were 39 years old when they completed the survey. Moreover, most were generally highly educated: at the time of the survey, 41.7 per cent had completed university, with only 5.6 per cent reporting they did not complete any schooling.

Table 4.1 Sample size per European country and migrants' countries of origin

	Senegalese	Congolese	Ghanaian	Total
Spain	198			198
Italy	205			205
France	198			198
Belgium		278		278
United Kingdom		148	149	297
Netherlands			263	263
Total	601	426	412	1,439

4.5.2 Measures

- **Sending economic remittances.** The dependent variable in this research records whether or not respondents sent economic remittances to their origin countries in a specific year – over 95 per cent did so. Given our focus in this research, we excluded remittances that were sent to other countries and focused only on whether respondents remitted in a particular year or not. Since respondents only reported when they did remit as a response to the question, the years when they were abroad and did not report sending remittances were coded as 0. Consequently, this variable had no missing values.
- **Being *en route*.** For the independent variable ‘being *en route*’, which indicates whether a migrant is considered to be on the move or settled, we combined information from three questions into a binary variable.² We defined being *en route* as either a short or a long stay retrospectively described as a ‘transit stay’ by the respondent or as ‘not having a clear idea about the next destination’. Being settled included when the respondent considered the country as a place to settle or at the time when the respondent arrived in the country of stay he or she had considered it to be their final destination, where they had planned to go from the outset. From the total number of observed years, information from 5 years was missing (less than 1 per cent).
- **Economic position.** Two questions were used as indicators to measure respondents’ economic position. First, it was determined whether respondents were employed or unemployed during a stay. A binary variable was created from a question that distinguishes between 0 (unemployed; also includes being an apprentice, trainee or intern or helping family member in a family business or farm) or 1 (employed). Those who answered an earlier question saying that they were studying, unemployed, homemakers, retired or inactive did not get this question and were coded as being unemployed. For respondents with missing values on this question, the International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status (ISEI) values were used to determine whether they were employed or not. After this, 1 per cent of the responses to this question were missing. Respondents’ subjective wealth was measured by asking whether, all-in-all, respondents would say that, during this period, they had enough to live on day-to-day, with three categories: Yes absolutely; No, not at all; It depended. The answer categories

²First, respondents had defined their short stays (less than a year) as a holiday trip, a business trip, a country where they stopped over before migrating to another country (transit), or a country where they intended to stay and settle down. Secondly, for stays of more than a year, respondents had given the reason for choosing the country of stay rather than another country, to which, among others, they could have responded it was a transit stay. Third, respondents had indicated whether, upon arrival, they considered the country of stay their final destination, they did not have a clear idea about the country they wanted to go to, or they had in mind to go elsewhere, it was therefore a transit country.

were re-coded so that a higher number reflects an increase in satisfaction. From the total number of observed years, 1 per cent of the responses to this question were missing.

- **Legal status.** Two questions about respondents' residence and work permits throughout their lives were combined to create the variable legal status. For each year, we recorded whether or not respondents had a residence permit or did not need one. The same was done for work permits. These two indicators were combined into a variable that consisted of three categories: precarious status (no residence permit), semi-regular status (only residence permit) and fully regular status (both residence and work permit). As a work permit is usually combined or granted simultaneously with a residence permit or as a prerequisite for obtaining a work permit, only having a work permit but not a residence permit was considered a 'precarious legal status' (Vickstrom, 2014) – an insecure status which does not grant similar (basic) rights compared to a residence permit. When respondents included information on one permit but had a missing value on the other permit in the same year, we coded the missing value as 0 to keep the information provided on the other permit. After this, in 8.8 per cent of the total number of observed years, information on neither residence nor work permit was reported and they were therefore coded as missing values.
- **Family in origin country.** We used available information about respondents' children, partner(s), parents, brothers and sisters to determine, for each year, whether or not they resided in the country of origin while the respondent was abroad. From this information, a binary variable was constructed: 1 (has family member(s) in the country of origin) and 0 (has no family members in the country of origin). When no family members were reported, we coded these years as not having family members in the origin country.
- **Assets in origin country.** One question captured whether respondents had been or still were the owners of plots of land, houses, businesses, ventures or commercial premises in their origin countries. If they owned any of these assets, they provided us with the start and end dates. From this information, we constructed a binary variable that captures whether or not respondents owned assets in a specific year. When respondents did not report any assets in a particular year, we coded it as 0.
- **Controls.** We controlled for respondents' sex and country of birth (both recorded by the interviewer), as previous studies found different remittance-sending patterns by national origin and sex (Carling, 2008; Bilgili, 2014). Since Carling (2008) also found that age positively influences remittance-sending behaviour when controlling for time since migration, respondents' age and length of stay were controlled for. Length of stay was constructed from the number of years someone had spent in a country since arrival. Upon return to a previous host country, the variable continued counting from the years they stayed during their earlier visit. Upon re-migration to another country, the variable started counting at Year One again.

Additionally, educational level was included as a control because a higher educational level can result in a higher income and a more stable job, affecting the propensity to remit (Bilgili, 2014). Respondents reported the number of years of schooling and the last school year they attended. Using this information, a time-variant measure for educational level was constructed. Respondents' educational level was lowered by one point for each year prior to the final school year. The educational level stayed the same in periods during which education was interrupted. From this range, education was coded in six categories: no schooling, some schooling (1–6 years), primary school (7–10 years), lower-secondary (11–13 years), upper-secondary (14–15) and university (16–23). There were no missing values for the control variables.

4.5.3 Analytical Strategy

To account for the longitudinal data structure, a person period file was created that included yearly information for each respondent. This means that a single respondent could appear in multiple lines of the data file, reflecting several years of their life. This file reflected information valid on the 1st of January of each year (e.g., their employment status, subjective wealth, legal status, etc.). Since we were interested in migrants' remittance-sending behaviour in the years in which they lived abroad, we excluded the years in which respondents stayed in their origin countries. The 5 years with missing values on the independent variable 'being *en route*' were excluded from the analysis. In total, the number of observed years from all respondents together was 20,590.

For the main analyses, we ran the models in Mplus, taking into account the multi-level structure by clustering the data on respondents. Mplus allowed us to integrate the different paths of our model simultaneously using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Missing values on the dependent variables were handled using the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) option in Mplus. FIML ignores missing values on a dependent variable if there are valid cases on other variables in the same person–year.

We decided to use the complex survey method to analyse our data. Compared to a random effect specification, the complex method makes fewer assumptions about a person over time and is therefore considered to be more reliable, with less bias but also less power. We used the robust weighted least-squares estimator because the dependent variable is binary. For the standard errors of the direct and indirect effects, bootstrapping with 1000 samples was used. For the categorical mediator permit, we calculated the indirect effects through marginal effects while, for the ordinal mediator subjective wealth, a continuous latent variable with categorical indicators was constructed to calculate the indirect effects.

4.6 Results

4.6.1 Descriptive Results

Table 4.2 contains information on both time-variant and time-constant variables. For the time-variant variables, the information presented was an average across the total number of observed years of all respondents. For the time-constant variables, the observations for each respondent did not vary across the years (e.g. sex, country

Table 4.2 Descriptive results for full sample

	N	Range	Mean/Prop.	SD
Time-varying variables	20,595			
<i>Dependent variable</i>				
Sending remittances	20,595	0/1	0.62	
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Being <i>en route</i>	20,590	0/1	0.10	
Family in origin country	20,595	0/1	0.25	
Assets in origin country	20,595	0/1	0.36	
Employed	20,397	0/1	0.70	
Subjective wealth	20,382	1/3	2.71	0.55
Not at all satisfied			4.60	
It depended			20.40	
Absolutely satisfied			75.10	
Legal status	18,787	1/3	2.56	0.75
No residence permit			15.40	
Only residence permit			13.50	
Full legal status (including work permit)			71.10	
<i>Control variables</i>				
Educational level	20,595	0/5	3.49	1.57
No schooling			6.20	
Some schooling			7.70	
Primary school			11.90	
Lower-secondary school			17.90	
Upper-secondary school			18.00	
University			38.40	
Age	20,595	18–75	36.46	9.66
Length of stay (years)	20,595	1–48	9.09	7.47
Time-constant variables	1,439			
<i>Control variables</i>				
Female	1,439	0/1	0.46	
Country of origin	1,439	1/3		
Ghana			28.60	
Congo			29.60	
Senegal			41.80	

of origin) and we therefore only presented these descriptive results per individual and not across the years (1439 respondents).

In almost two-thirds of the total observed years, respondents sent remittances. However, respondents reported being *en route* in only 10 per cent of the total number of observed years. When comparing the number of temporary stays to the total number of migration trips (1651), 18 per cent of the total number of different migration trips were classified as migrants being *en route*.

Over the years, respondents were often employed (70 per cent) and in over three-quarters of the observed years, respondents stated they had quite enough to live on. In the majority of observed years (71.1 per cent), respondents reported having a fully regular status, compared to having no residence permit in only 15.4 per cent of the years. In a quarter of the observed years, respondents reported having family in their origin country and in about a third of the observed years said that they owned one or more assets in their origin country.

4.6.2 Analytical Results

We estimated three structural models with control variables (Table 4.3). Following our first hypothesis, we initially estimated the direct relationship between being *en route* and sending remittances in a model without mediators and predictors (Model A). Then we estimated a model which included them (Model B). Third, we estimated our full model (Fig. 4.2) and included the hypothesised interactions between being in transit and owning assets and between being in transit and having family in the origin country (Model C). As we found one of the hypothesised interactions was significant and the effect of the other one did not change compared to Model B, we turned to Model C for the analysis of our results regarding the remaining hypotheses.

As in our first hypothesis, we expected that migrants who were on the move would be less likely to send remittances, compared to migrants who considered themselves to be settled. However, we found that the relationship between being *en route* and remitting was insignificant (Model A).³

Secondly, we expected migrants' economic positions to partially explain the main relationship. We indeed found that employment status and subjective wealth were both significantly and positively related to the probability of sending remittances (resp. $\beta = .260$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .076$, $p = .042$). This means that being

³As sub-Saharan African migrants are a heterogeneous group and there is a great variety in migration causes and patterns (Schoumaker et al., 2018), it was of interest to test our model for each migrant group separately. Although some previous findings became insignificant in these models, possibly due to lower sample sizes, we generally found comparable results and the relationships pointed in similar directions. Interestingly, in line with our first hypothesis but contrary to our previous findings, we did find that Senegalese who were *en route* were less likely to remit, compared to when they were not *en route*. For Ghanaian and Congolese migrants we did not find a significant relationship.

Table 4.3 Results of logistic regression analysis on sending remittances (N=20,590, estimated with WLSMV)

	Model A			Model B: without interaction terms			Model C: with interaction terms		
	Sending remittances	Employment status	Subjective wealth	Legal status	Sending remittances	Employment status	Subjective wealth	Legal status	Sending remittances
Being <i>en route</i>	0.025 (0.029)	0.194 (0.071)**	-0.266 (0.081)**	-0.183 (0.082)*	0.055 (0.087)	0.271 (0.092)**	-0.286 (0.097)**	-0.331 (0.107)**	-0.037 (0.117)
Family in origin country					-0.082 (0.069)				-0.071 (0.074)
Family <i>X en route</i>									-0.078 (0.180)
Assets in origin country					0.260 (0.067)***				0.230 (0.071)**
Assets <i>X en route</i>									0.319 (0.160)*
Employed					0.258 (0.036)***				0.260 (0.036)***
Subjective wealth					0.077 (0.037)*				0.076 (0.037)*
Legal status					-0.013 (0.035)				-0.014 (0.035)
<i>Controls</i>									
Length of stay	0.009 (0.003)**	0.056 (0.010)***	0.031 (0.009)**	0.129 (0.011)***	0.008 (0.010)	0.056 (0.010)***	0.031 (0.009)**	0.129 (0.011)***	0.008 (0.010)
Length of stay squared	0.000 (0.000)**	-0.001 (0.000)**	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.001)*	-0.001 (0.000)†	-0.001 (0.000)**	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.001)*	-0.001 (0.000)†
Educational level	0.001 (0.008)	-0.019 (0.022)	0.143 (0.023)***	0.092 (0.023)***	-0.003 (0.027)	-0.019 (0.022)	0.142 (0.023)***	0.091 (0.022)***	-0.003 (0.027)
Age	0.056 (0.005)***	0.159 (0.017)***	0.006 (0.015)	-0.028 (0.018)	0.115 (0.016)***	0.160 (0.017)***	0.006 (0.015)	-0.029 (0.018)	0.114 (0.016)***

Age squared	-0.001 (0.000)***	-0.002 (0.000)***	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)***	-0.002 (0.000)***	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)***
Female	-0.043 (0.021)*	-0.433 (0.050)***	0.103 (0.064)	-0.011 (0.065)	-0.433 (0.050)***	0.103 (0.064)	0.118 (0.056)*	-0.011 (0.065)
Country of origin								
Ghana	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Congo	-0.125 (0.028)***	-1.006 (0.064)***	0.172 (0.084)*	-0.039 (0.069)	-1.008 (0.064)***	0.173 (0.084)*	-0.037 (0.069)	-0.097 (0.094)
Senegal	0.097 (0.027)***	0.044 (0.078)	0.182 (0.086)*	0.279 (0.086)**	0.046 (0.078)	0.183 (0.086)*	0.132 (0.079)†	0.279 (0.086)**
<i>Indirect effects of transit on remitting</i>								
Via employment status				0.050 (0.020)**				0.071 (0.026)**
Via subjective wealth				-0.021 (0.012)†				-0.022 (0.014)
Via legal status				0.002 (0.007)				0.005 (0.012)

Note: Subjective wealth is a continuous latent variable with ordinal measures. It is 3-valued. Legal status is continuous as predictor and ordinal as outcome variable. The computation of indirect effect as marginal effects (on average) accounts for the dual treatment of the mediator. The categories of these variables are provided in the descriptive table; notation of coefficients in table β (σ); Reported p-values are 2-sided; †p < .10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

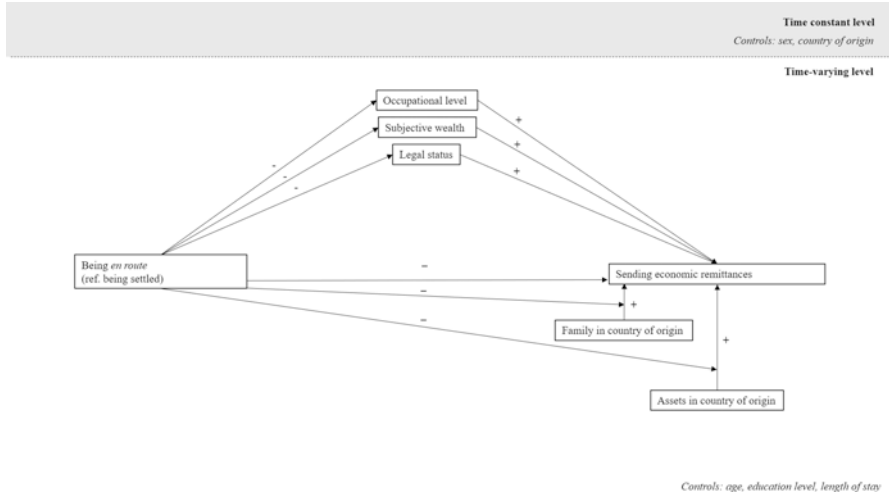


Fig. 4.2 Conceptual model

employed or being more satisfied with their financial situation made them more likely to remit. Moreover, we found that migrants who were on the move were less likely to have a satisfactory subjective wealth ($\beta = -.286, p = .003$) but, on the other hand, were more likely to be employed ($\beta = .271, p = .003$) compared to those who considered themselves to no longer be on the move.

Contrary to this hypothesis, we found that employment status was significantly and positively mediating the relationship between being *en route* and sending remittances (total indirect effect: $\beta = .071, p = .007$). This means that migrants who were on the move were more likely to be employed and were, therefore, more likely to remit. We did not find that migrants’ subjective wealth negatively mediated the relationship between being *en route* and sending remittances.

Moreover, we hypothesised that migrants who were *en route* were less likely to have a fully regular status and would, therefore, be less likely to remit. However, we did not find that having a more secure legal status was significantly related to sending remittances. We did find that those who were *en route* were less likely to have a fully regular status, compared to those who were settled ($\beta = -.331, p = .002$).

According to our fourth hypothesis, we expected that migrants who owned assets or had family in their origin country would be more likely to remit but this relationship would be weaker when they were *en route*. We in fact found that the odds of remitting were 1.3 times as high for those who had assets in their origin country compared to those who did not have assets ($\beta = .230, p = .001$). Contrary to our expectations, we found that being *en route* significantly and positively moderated this relationship ($\beta = .319, p = .046$) as the relationship between owning assets in the origin country and sending remittances was stronger for those who were *en route*. However, we did not find that having family in the origin country was significantly related to sending remittances and we also did not find support for the notion that being *en route* significantly moderated this relationship.

4.7 Discussion

This chapter aimed to explain the extent to which and how Senegalese, Ghanaian and Congolese migrants' remittance-sending behaviour is affected by being *en route* (or not) along their migration trajectories. Overall, we hypothesised that migrants *en route* would (temporarily) refrain from sending remittances but we did not find evidence of this. Although we did not find overall support for the hypothesis that being on the move decreased migrants' probability to remit, our results support the idea that migrants' capacities influenced their remittance-sending behaviour. Those who were employed and were more satisfied with their financial situation were more likely to remit. This is in line with previous research and supports the capabilities approach. In other words, migrants' engagement in transnational activities depends on their transnational capacities (Al-Ali et al., 2001b; Bilgili, 2014, 2015). However, migrants' legal status did not affect their remittance-sending behaviour. This is not uncommon, as there is no consensus in the literature that having a more secure legal status is always positively related to migrants' remittance-sending behaviour. Previous research, for example, found that undocumented migrants remitted more compared to documented ones (Sana, 2005; Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2006).

As expected, we found that being on the move was negatively related to having a full and regular status. Migrants in temporary stay situations were more likely to be excluded from conventional protection regimes which, in turn, imposes structural barriers that hamper their chances to obtain a legal status (Düvell, 2006). Moreover, being *en route* was also negatively related to migrants' subjective wealth. This, together with a reduced legal status, is in line with previous research stating that transit zones are characterised by precariousness (Hess, 2012).

Contrary to our predictions, we found that being on the move was positively related to being employed, compared to having reached the final destination. This, in turn, also partially explained why migrants would, instead, be more likely to remit while they were *en route*. As transit countries are characterised by greater informality (Hess, 2012), migrants might indeed be more likely to be employed because of a large informal sector, possibly explaining this positive relationship. Additionally, in many economically developed destination countries, there is an educational mismatch for immigrants on the labour market because, for example, of discrimination and the lack of recognition of diplomas or language skills (Piracha & Vadean, 2013). This could increase the likelihood of (initial) unemployment in economically developed destination countries, compared to areas where migrants stay temporarily.

These findings partly indicate that longer and more complex migration journeys are characterised by increased precariousness, as migrants reported a worse subjective wealth and a more precarious legal status while they were *en route*. However, the higher likelihood of being employed in these periods – which in turn increased their probability of remitting – could have worked as a safety-net in times of uncertainty. In this way, migrants then remitted to their origin countries to strengthen

their connections and ‘purchase’ insurance at times of personal risk (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2006) instead of (temporarily) refraining from remitting. In other words, in light of the increased likelihood of their having to go back home due to their precarious situation and increased future insecurity, migrants on the move may have chosen to send remittances back to their country of origin (Dustmann, 1997).

Following the capabilities approach, migrants’ attachment to their origin country was also an important determinant of sending remittances. As expected, we found that owning assets in origin countries was positively related to sending remittances, compared to not owning assets. This is in line with previous research that found that migrants who are more attached to their origin countries are more willing to prioritise spending money on remittances over other expenditure (Carling & Hoelscher, 2013). However, no such relationship was found between having immediate family in origin countries and sending remittances. Our mere focus on the nuclear family in the origin country could, therefore, possibly explain the absence of a significant relationship, as those without immediate family in the origin country might also remit to other relatives.

Additionally, we expected that, for those who were in transit, the positive relationships between attachment to origin countries and remitting would be weaker, since they were in more precarious situations and would, therefore, temporarily refrain from sending remittances. However, we found the relationship between owning assets and remitting was, in fact, stronger for those who were in transit. This could indicate further support for the argument that insecure or precarious transit stays might lead migrants to intensify or strengthen their connections with their origin countries by sending remittances. Future research should study in more depth these dynamics and also consider reverse remittances for migrants who are *en route*. Focusing on bi-directional engagements where migrants on the move also receive transnational social and economic support is central not only for understanding the experiences of migrants whose journeys are longer, fragmented and more complex than ever before but also for shedding light onto the effects of these journeys on the lives of those left behind.

4.8 Data Limitations and Multi-sited Transnationalism Research

Firstly, MAFE data reflect the experiences of migrants who arrived in European countries where they considered themselves to be settled. This means that the experiences of migrants who were in transit countries and were hindered from moving on, were not represented in the data. This implies that we might have underestimated the effect of particular living conditions and opportunities for migrants on the move, as we only had information from those who reached one of the six European countries. As such experiences are partially driven by social class (Düvell, 2006),

poorer and more vulnerable migrants might experience greater precariousness, possibly preventing them from moving onwards.

Secondly, the use of retrospective data has several limitations. Retrospective information about transitory periods could reflect what respondents believed was happening, instead of what was actually happening (Düvell, 2006). It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether respondents reported their actual intentions upon arrival in a country or whether subsequent events, such as re-migration or settlement, influenced the way in which they classified their host country.

Considering both limitations, using a so-called mobile methods approach could be one way to move away from selecting European destination countries as the starting point for sampling migrants (Amelina & Faist, 2012). Quantitative or qualitative data are then collected by following migrants along their trajectories instead of sampling them in (European) destination countries. By interviewing the same migrants at different moments along their migration trajectories, migration can then be studied longitudinally and capture migration dynamics and changing aspirations (Castagnone, 2011). Such a multi-sited and longitudinal method would move away from ‘methodological nationalism’ and make steps towards a truly transnational perspective for studying complex migration trajectories and transnational engagements.

In conclusion, our research provides a deeper understanding of how sub-Saharan African migrants’ trajectories between Africa and Europe affect their remittances-sending behaviour. By moving away from the simplistic view of migration as a one-time act from point of departure to destination, we aimed to better reflect the realities of migrants’ lives and to bring this approach also to the study of remittances (Collyer & de Haas, 2012; Snel et al., 2021). Although we did not find support for the idea that being *en route* is negatively related to the probability of sending remittances, our results demonstrated that migrants’ capabilities to remit change along their migration trajectories. We therefore conclude by highlighting the importance of including a(n) (im)mobility perspective in the study of remittances and the need for a fuller understanding of how frictions and experiences along more-complex migration trajectories affect remittance-sending behaviour.

References

- Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001a). Refugees and transnationalism: The experience of Bosnians and Eritreans in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(4), 615–634.
- Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001b). The limits to ‘transnationalism’: Bosnian and Eritrean refugees in Europe as emerging transnational communities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24(4), 578–600.
- Amelina, A., & Faist, T. (2012). De-naturalizing the national in research methodologies: Key concepts of transnational studies in migration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(10), 1707–1724.
- Amuedo-Dorantes, C., & Pozo, S. (2006). Remittances as insurance: Evidence from Mexican immigrants. *Journal of Population Economics*, 19(2), 227–254.

- Andersson, R. (2016). Europe's failed 'fight' against irregular migration: Ethnographic notes on a counterproductive industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(7), 1055–1075.
- Beauchemin, C. (2012). *Migrations between Africa and Europe: Rationale for a survey design*. MAFE methodological note 5. INED. https://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/en/methodological_notes/
- Beauchemin, C., Amétépé, F., Bringe, A., Caporali, A., Lejbowicz, T., Morisset, A., Thevenin, M., & Schoumaker, B. (2014). *Introduction to the MAFE datasets*. MAFE methodological note 7. INED. https://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/en/methodological_notes/
- Bilgili, Ö. (2014). *Simultaneity in transnational migration research: Links between migrants' host and home country orientation*. Boekenplan.
- Bilgili, Ö. (2015). Economic integration to send money back home? *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 13(4), 379–400.
- Bloch, A. (2008). Zimbabweans in Britain: Transnational activities and capabilities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(2), 287–305.
- Caarls, K., Bilgili, Ö., & Fransen, S. (2021). Evolution of migration trajectories and transnational social networks over time: A study among sub-Saharan African migrants in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(14), 3310–3328.
- Carling, J. (2008). The determinants of migrant remittances. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 24(3), 582–599.
- Carling, J., & Hoelscher, K. (2013). The capacity and desire to remit: Comparing local and transnational influences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(6), 939–958.
- Castagnone, E. (2011). Transit migration: A piece of the complex mobility puzzle. The case of Senegalese migration. *Cahiers de l'Urmis* 13 [online]. <http://journals.openedition.org/urmis/927>
- Collyer, M. (2007). In-between places: Trans-Saharan transit migrants in Morocco and the fragmented journey to Europe. *Antipode*, 39(4), 668–690.
- Collyer, M. (2010). Stranded migrants and fragmentary journeys. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 23(3), 273–293.
- Collyer, M., & de Haas, H. (2012). Developing dynamic categorisations of transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 468–481.
- Collyer, M., Düvell, F., & de Haas, H. (2012). Critical approaches to transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 407–414.
- Coutin, S. B. (2005). Being en route. *American Anthropologist*, 107(2), 195–206.
- Cox, D., Eser, Z., & Jimenez, E. (1998). Motives for private transfers over the life cycle: An analytical framework and evidence for Peru. *Journal of Development Economics*, 55(1), 57–80.
- Dahinden, J. (2010). Cabaret dancers 'settle down in order to stay mobile?' Bridging theoretical orientations within transnational migration studies. *Social Politics*, 17(3), 323–348.
- De Haas, H. (2003). *Migration and development in southern Morocco. The disparate socio-economic impacts of out-migration on the Todgha Oasis Valley* (Unpublished PhD thesis). University of Nijmegen. <https://heindehaas.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/de-haas-2003-phd-thesis-migration-and-development-in-southern-morocco-the-disparate-socio-economic-impacts-of-out-migration-on-the-todgha-oasis-valley.pdf>
- De Haas, H. (2005). International migration, remittances and development: Myths and facts. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1269–1284.
- Dustmann, C. (1997). Return migration, uncertainty and precautionary savings. *Journal of Development Economics*, 52(2), 295–316.
- Düvell, F. (2006). *Crossing the fringes of Europe: Transit migration in the EU's neighbourhood*. University of Oxford, COMPAS Working Paper No. 06–33. https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2006/wp-2006-033-duvell_fringe_migration/
- Eastmond, M. (2007). Stories as lived experience: Narratives in forced migration research. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 248–264.
- Ehrkamp, P. (2019). Geographies of migration III: Transit and transnationalism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(6), 1202–1211.

- Glick Schiller, N. (2008). *Beyond methodological ethnicity: Local and transnational pathways of immigrant incorporation*. University of Malmö, Willy Brandt series of working papers in international migration and ethnic relations no. 2/08. <http://muep.mau.se/handle/2043/7491>
- Hagen-Zanker, J., & Siegel, M. (2007). *The determinants of remittances: A review of the literature*. Maastricht University, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance Working Paper No. 003. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1095719
- Hess, S. (2012). De-naturalising transit migration. Theory and methods of an ethnographic regime analysis. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 428–440.
- Lessault, D., & Beauchemin, C. (2009). Ni invasion, ni exode: Regards statistiques sur les migrations d'Afrique subsaharienne. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 25(1), 163–194.
- Lucas, R., & Stark, O. (1985). The new economics of labor migration. *The American Economic Review*, 75(2), 173–178.
- Malkki, L. (1992). *National Geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees*. *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), 24–44.
- Massey, D. S., Durand, J., & Pren, K. A. (2016). Why border enforcement backfired? *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(5), 1557–1600.
- Mazzucato, V. (2011). Reverse remittances in the migration–development nexus: Two-way flows between Ghana and the Netherlands. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(5), 454–468.
- Mazzucato, V., Schans, D., Carls, K., & Beauchemin, C. (2015). Transnational families between Africa and Europe. *International Migration Review*, 49(1), 142–172.
- Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou, A. (2008). *Transit migration: The missing link between emigration and settlement*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pinger, P. (2010). Come back or stay? Spend here or there? Return and remittances: The case of Moldova. *International Migration*, 48(5), 142–173.
- Piracha, M., & Vadean, F. (2013). Migrant educational mismatch and the labor market. In A. F. Constant & K. F. Zimmermann (Eds.), *International handbook on the economics of migration* (pp. 176–192). Edward Elgar.
- Portes, A. (2001). Introduction: The debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism. *Global Networks*, 1(3), 181–193.
- Ruiz, I., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2009). To send, or not to send: That is the question. A review of the literature on workers' remittances. *Journal of Business Strategies*, 26(1), 73–98.
- Sana, M. (2005). Buying membership in the transnational community: Migrant remittances, social status, and assimilation. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 24(3), 231–261.
- Schapendonk, J. (2009). Moving and mediating: A mobile view on sub-Saharan African migration towards Europe. In M. Fernández-Ardévol & A. Ros Híjar (Eds.), *Communication technologies in Latin America and Africa: A multidisciplinary perspective* (pp. 293–318). The Internet Interdisciplinary Institute.
- Schapendonk, J., & Steel, G. (2014). Following migrant trajectories: The im/mobility of sub-Saharan Africans en route to the European Union. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(2), 262–270.
- Schoumaker, B., Flahaux, M. L., Beauchemin, C., Schans, D., Mazzucato, V., & Sakho, P. (2018). African migration: Diversity and changes. In C. Beauchemin (Ed.), *Migration between Africa and Europe* (pp. 35–79). Springer.
- Snel, E., Bilgili, Ö., & Staring, R. (2021). Migration trajectories and transnational support within and beyond Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(14), 3209–3225.
- Staring, R. (2018). Willen alle migranten naar Europa? Observaties vanuit Aksaray. In F. Gerritsen & H. van der Heijden (Eds.), *Standplaats Istanbul. Lange lijnen in de cultuurgeschiedenis van Turkije* (pp. 182–191). Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas.
- Taylor, J. E., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Massey, D. S., & Pellegrino, A. (1996). International migration and community development. *Population Index*, 62(3), 397–418.
- Van Meeteren, M. (2012). Transnational activities and aspirations of irregular migrants in Belgium and the Netherlands. *Global Networks*, 12(3), 314–332.

- Vertovec, S. (2009). Introduction: Transnationalism, migrant transnationalism and transformation. In S. Vertovec (Ed.), *Transnationalism* (pp. 1–26). Routledge.
- Vickstrom, E. (2014). Pathways into irregular status among Senegalese migrants in Europe. *International Migration Review*, 48(4), 1062–1099.
- Vickstrom, E. R., & Beauchemin, C. (2016). Irregular status, territorial confinement, and blocked transnationalism: Legal constraints on circulation and remittances of Senegalese migrants in France, Italy, and Spain. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 4(15), 1–29.
- Willen, S. S. (2007). Toward a critical phenomenology of ‘illegality’: State power, criminalization, and abjectivity among undocumented migrant workers in Tel Aviv, Israel. *International Migration*, 45(3), 8–38.
- World Bank. (2019). *Record high remittances sent globally in 2018*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/04/08/record-high-remittances-sent-globally-in-2018>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 5

Ambivalent Entanglements: Syrian Refugees' Network Relations and (Im)mobilities in Protracted Displacement



Sarah A. Tobin, Benjamin Etzold, Fawwaz Momani, Tamara Adel Al Yakoub, Rola Fares Saleem AlMassad, and Ahmad Ghanem Shdefat

5.1 Introduction

In September 2019 we interviewed Mohammed, a 29-year-old Syrian refugee in the northern Jordanian city of Ramtha. He shared with us his journey into Jordan and the ways in which his family network has been divided by their situation of protracted displacement. His story provides important insights into understanding the impact of family networks on mobility aspirations. He said:

I came to Jordan with my uncle and my cousin. When we arrived, in 2011, it was about seven months after the beginning of the revolution. My uncle introduced me to his maternal uncle, who is Jordanian. My uncle sent me immediately to work in the construction sector with him. I spent two years working in this field and sending money to my family back home. In 2013, my family joined me here because the situation in Syria was difficult. When my family arrived, they lived with me at home and settled down here. Later, my father

S. A. Tobin (✉)
Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway
e-mail: sarah.tobin@cmi.no

B. Etzold
Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), Bonn, Germany
e-mail: benjamin.etzold@bicc.de

F. Momani · R. F. S. AlMassad
Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan
e-mail: fawwazm@yu.edu.jo; rolamasad80@yahoo.com

T. Adel Al Yakoub
Department of Public Administration, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan
e-mail: tamara@yu.edu.jo

A. G. Shdefat
Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan
Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan
e-mail: ahmadghanem324@yahoo.com

moved to Germany. He has been there for four years now. My mother and my siblings will join him as he applied for a family reunion there. All of them are now doing the interviews for that. Morally and psychologically, I would prefer to move to Britain. My brothers-in-law have told me that life and work in Britain are different and more convenient. Everyone has his own life. I prefer to be independent.

In the 10 years of violent conflict in Syria, 5.6 million Syrians – more than a quarter of the country's pre-war population – have fled from the war, from political persecution, conscription in the military or dwindling livelihood security in the war-torn country. Most have fled to the neighbouring countries of Turkey (currently around 3.6 million Syrian refugees), Lebanon (more than 1 million), Jordan (approximately 655,000) and Iraq (more than 246,000) (UNHCR, 2018). As the war in Syria continues and the underlying political conflicts remain unsolved, the options and hopes for return are dwindling for many of the displaced. Worse still, most continue to live in exile under highly insecure and precarious conditions – or to put it in the UNHCR's terms, in 'a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo'. In such protracted displacement situations, the lives of refugees 'may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile' (UNHCR, 2004, 1).

Since the UNCHR established this definition, the number of people who fall into the category of being in a protracted refugee situation has steadily increased to around 16 million by the end of 2019 (UNHCR, 2020). For more and more people, the three normally discussed 'durable solutions' of resettlement, local integration and repatriation are thus out of reach (see Kraler et al., 2020 for a critical discussion of the emergence and the value of the notion of durable solutions). While establishing camps and providing for refugees in countries of reception is an important element of humanitarian relief, maintaining a bureaucracy of aid in and through organised camps over a longer period of time might actually contribute to protracting displacement rather than solving refugees' plight, especially if no adequate space for social inclusion and economic self-sufficiency are built up simultaneously (Hyndman & Giles, 2016; Betts et al., 2017). Solutions which are more sustainable would thus have to be embedded in clear political and economic strategies and linked to conflict management, peacebuilding and development actions (Loescher & Milner, 2008). Moreover, given the fact that displaced families often lead multi-local lives and rely on mobility and cross-border transfers, transnationalism has now been proposed as a fourth durable solution to forced displacement (Van Hear, 2006; Cohen & Van Hear, 2017). Recent literature on transnational migration has emphasised social actors' ability to be mobile as key in this development (Black & King, 2004; Piper, 2009). This warrants attention not only on return migration but also on other forms of secondary migration, including onward migration outside of the first country of refuge (Jeffery & Murison, 2011).

It is this latter string of the debate to which we want to add our contribution, which is based on collaborative research within the framework of the project

'Transnational Figurations of Displacement' (TRAFIG).¹ In our project we consider displaced persons' mobility and their own network connections as socioeconomic and socio-psychological resources that they draw from and utilise in order to live with and eventually overcome protracted displacement. In order to better understand the multiple mobilities that are part of displaced people's trajectories and to comprehend the central role of family, kin relations and other local, translocal and transnational networks in their everyday lives, we make use of the concept of 'translocal figurations of displacement', which is inspired by figurational sociology – a meso-level approach emphasising the processual character of life and which centres around the networks of interdependent human beings – and which we combine with state-of-the-art studies on forced displacement as well as key literature on migrants' transnationalism and translocality (Etzold et al., 2019).

For this chapter we draw on the comprehensive findings of our TRAFIG team's empirical research in Jordan, where we utilised a mixed methodology to better understand Syrian refugees' trajectories into and out of protracted displacement. Based on these rich empirical insights we show that translocal family relations and kin networks do indeed play a decisive role in displaced people's lives. They shaped Syrians' journeys to and within Jordan until they reached their current location, they open up locally available opportunities to sustain one's life in the short and mid-term and for longer-term integration and they structure future (intended or imagined) mobilities, both return movements towards 'home' or onward migration to other third countries. The translocal figurations within which people are embedded inevitably also have quite ambivalent effects on displaced people's lives. Reuniting with one's family in Jordan or moving on to Western Europe or other 'future elsewhere' is often highly idealised, whereas the presence in the 'everyday here' can be full of frustration, dependencies and conflicts. Our contribution discusses these ambivalent entanglements and, in particular, the role that (im)mobilities play in this regard.

A central finding which we present here is that Syrian refugees relied heavily upon extended family and kin networks for movement into and throughout Jordan. Once in Jordan, Syrians continue to cultivate onward migration aspirations to move, to be or to reunite with extended family and kin networks 'elsewhere'. However, these aspirations are highly ambivalent, entangled in concerns and interests about the role of the families and kin networks, dependencies and perceived requirements, conflicts and ruptures. Protracted displaced situations for these Syrians have created

¹TRAFIG, Transnational Figurations of Displacement, is an EU-funded Horizon 2020 research and innovation project (Grant No. 822453). From 2019 to 2022, 12 partner organisations investigate long-lasting displacement situations at multiple sites in Asia, Africa and Europe and analyse the options to improve displaced people's lives. The project aims to generate new knowledge to help to develop solutions for protracted displacement that are tailored to the needs and capacities of persons affected by it. TRAFIG looks at how transnational and local networks as well as mobility are used as resources by displaced people to manage their everyday lives. See Etzold et al. (2019) for details on the TRAFIG concept and Tobin et al. (2020) for preliminary findings in Jordan.

conditions of unrealised and idealised futures, aspirations for something better and imaginations of a family life that is likely to never come to pass.

This chapter investigates Syrian refugees' mobilities and 'onward' orientation as a means to understand their embeddedness in social figurations in Jordan and beyond. We examine the ways in which translocal and transnational networks shape refugees' experiences and mobility *to* and *within* Jordan and their aspirations *beyond* Jordan. We thus examine not only actual mobilities to and within Jordan but also the desires and intentions of Syrian refugees to 'move on' in their lives. In particular, we provide evidence that – what we call – figurations of family and kin provide key structures and contours to the mobility experienced by Syrians to and within Jordan and to their aspirations to leave Jordan especially through (1) knowledge-sharing and (2) trust-based interactions.

5.2 Entangled (Im)mobilities: Refugees' Positioning in Translocal Figurations of Displacement

5.2.1 Social Figurations

This chapter builds on German sociologist Norbert Elias's (1978) figurational sociology and stresses the networks and interdependencies of displaced people at and across distinct places and, in particular, the transnational dimensions of social figurations that stretch across the borders of nation states (see Etzold et al., 2019). The figurational approach is a meso-level concept that can be used to describe the organisation and contingent emergence of social life and the inherent interdependence of actors and groups. It is also a useful concept with which to overcome the division within sociology between a micro-perspective that focuses on individual actors, their perceptions and actions on the one hand and a macro-perspective that centres on structures and functions.² According to Elias, figurations are dynamic social constellations between interdependent individuals that are produced in and through interactions and transactions. Social life thus evolves in and is significantly shaped by power relations and multiple, often overlapping, social networks or the differently structured 'chains of interdependence' that bind people to one another (Elias, 1978; Baur & Ernst, 2011).

While the notion of figurations can be applied at multiple social levels (Etzold et al., 2019), the family is a particularly important social figuration, which is marked by somewhat dense and intimate social relations. Castrén and Ketokivi (2015) apply a figurational approach to studying family relationships, demonstrating that these are simultaneously personally lived and embedded in wider 'webs of relationships' that are both constraining and enabling. Families and kin networks, in a figurational reading, thus constitute dense figurations which are highly dynamic in their

²See Dépelteau and Landini (2013) for a useful and comprehensive introduction to Elias' work.

make-up and expressions and which also reflect 'lived ambivalences between personal affinities and relational expectations' (Castrén & Ketokivi, 2015, 1). In the context of migration and forced displacement, figurations of family and kin can be seen as a – maybe the most – central social form of unity, belonging and support which also provide essential resources for mobility as well as lives in immobility (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Long, 2014). Yet family and relations can also become unstable, unreliable and disrupted – in many cases, displacement literally breaks these family figurations apart (Silver et al., 2018; Belloni, 2019; Lokot, 2020).

5.2.2 *From Protracted Displacement and Multi-sited Transnationalism to Translocal Figurations of Displacement*

The figurational approach is an inherently process- and temporality-oriented concept. Methodologically, it helps us to assess how structures and practices evolve and dissolve dynamically. It is thus suitable for analysing figurations of family and kin and their transformations over time. At a broader scale level, we can also apply a figurational lens in forced migration and refugee studies (Sökefeld, 2015; Rosenthal & Bogner, 2017). Figurations of displacement inevitably come into being when people are forcibly displaced in the context of violent conflict, when they flee from or are decoupled from the state in which they once lived or when they are forced to take on positions in new social settings in countries of first reception or asylum (Etzold et al., 2019). Such figurations of displacement can become protracted if the displaced people's abilities and *de facto* available options to rebuild their lives after displacement are severely limited over long periods of time. Protracted displacement is shaped by violent practices, policies, laws, institutional settings and discourses in multiple nation states and places that, together, continue to prevent people from returning to their country of origin, from realising their potential and integrating in the place of (first) reception and from moving on to third countries to seek a future (Etzold et al., 2019).

Despite 'being stuck in immobility' in one place, displaced people's lives are, however, not limited to one place only. Their social relations, including family and kin networks, often spread across multiple places and several nation states, as research on transnational mobility and diaspora relations of, for instance, Afghan or Somali refugees has demonstrated (Al-Ali et al., 2001; Horst, 2006; Harpviken, 2014; see also de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3 in this volume). Acknowledging this central predicament, we examine Syrians' protracted displacement from a figurational perspective as described above. By addressing the concerns of displaced persons for mobility, this approach enables an examination of both structure and agency in terms of the rigidity of systems and the capacities of individuals to change them. Figurations are useful to employ here because they are forms of durable

connectivity that persist in the face of borders, policies and social and cultural practices that might otherwise serve to sever such ties.

‘Translocal figurations of displacement’ are constituted by de-territorialised interdependency relations, communication and transactions between nodal places in networks – for instance, the multiple interlinked sites where displaced family members live. In this chapter, we approach the questions and concerns of mobility through the lens of the extensive family and kin networks and ties – figurations of family and kin – into which displaced persons tap and in which they live. Mobility is then not only physical or geographic and place-based but is expressed in social, cultural, economic and political connections, identities and experiences that are multi-directional, non-linear and not limited to simply one locale. As the vast literature on transnationalism and translocality demonstrates, refugees and other migrants can and do exist in multiple places at the same point in time; they are simultaneously situated across different locales (Brickell & Datta, 2011). Their social practices and life-worlds are thus grounded in multi-nodal relations of translocal networks (Faist et al., 2013; Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Dahinden, 2017). As translocal figurations of displacement are constantly being reproduced through the practices of displaced people themselves and by those of other actors such as host states and communities or humanitarian NGOs, they are also re-configured by the changing power relations and by the way in which connections are being spun and dissolved. Here we thus want to highlight the dynamics in figurations of displacement – how they are transformed, become protracted or are resolved – and the role which translocal networks play in this regard.

5.3 The Protracted Displacement of Syrian Refugees in Jordan

Jordan has provided refuge to more than 1 million Syrians, over half of whom are registered as refugees (Sullivan & Tobin, 2014). Current figures place the refugee population at approximately 650,000, with around 120,000 refugees (19 per cent) living in camp settings, the two largest of which are Zaatari and Azraq (Ledwith, 2014; UNHCR, 2020). While much attention has been given to the camps, the majority of the Syrian refugees in Jordan now live in urban areas and cities and many initially left the camps under the *kafala* or ‘sponsorship’ system. To be allowed to leave a camp, a Jordanian national had to act as a legal guardian or sponsor (*kafil*), which permitted a Syrian refugee to leave. The *kafala* system applied to displaced refugees from Syria but was gradually dismantled and finally scrapped in 2015 (Alahmed, 2015). It is believed that some 34,000 Syrians have returned to Syria, both voluntarily and involuntarily (Edwards & Al-Hourani, 2019).

For the larger TRAFIG project from which the data for this chapter are drawn, we selected three urban field sites – the largest urban locations for Syrian refugees in North Jordan (Irbid and Mafraq) – while the third site (Zaatari) is Jordan’s largest

(or at least most famous) refugee camp for Syrians. Irbid is the research site which we focus on here. Prior to the influx of Syrian refugees, Irbid was the second-largest urban area in the country (after the capital Amman) and was well-known for both urban crowding and a large number of institutions for higher education (UNHCR, 2016). In 2016, about 30 per cent – or nearly 110,000 – of the country's urban refugees lived in the larger Irbid area (UNHCR, 2016; Tiltnes et al., 2019).

For most of these refugees, return to Syria or onward migration to Western Europe or North America are simply not realistic options (Federman, 2019). By the end of 2019 (UNHCR, 2019), 5952 individuals had been submitted for resettlement in 13 countries, and over 5000 refugees left Jordan in 2020 to rebuild their lives in a third country. In line with global trends, however, the number of resettlement places available for refugees in Jordan continues to decrease and remains far from meeting the estimated 75,000 refugees who need resettlement from Jordan. Returning to Syria is also difficult (Edwards & Al-Hourani, 2019). According to the UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR, 34,000 registered Syrian refugees have returned from Jordan since October 2018, when a key border crossing was reopened after years of closure. This is a fraction of the 650,000 registered Syrian refugees remaining in Jordan but a dramatic jump from previous years, when annual returns hovered at around 7000. This situation is compounded by the severe challenges to building an economically viable and secure livelihood in Jordan, where 90 per cent of Syrian refugees rely upon aid and institutional transfers (Tiltnes et al., 2019). As a result of the constraining forces and blocked pathways to resolving their conditions of protracted displacement (Etzold et al., 2019), Syrian refugees often find themselves contemplating, imagining and dreaming of better lives elsewhere but with few pathways to realise these ideas.

5.4 Syrians' Entangled (Im)mobilities To, Within and Beyond Jordan

Utilising 23 biographical interviews with 17 women and 6 men aged in their 20s, 30s and 40s, we examine the ways in which figurational networks of family and kin shaped and reshape refugees' experiences with and desires for mobility *into* and *within* Jordan and their aspirations *beyond* Jordan. In particular, we found that family and kin networks provide key socio-cultural structures and figurational contours to the mobility experienced by Syrians through (1) knowledge-sharing and (2) trust-based interactions. We acknowledge that organising our analysis into this pattern of *into-within-beyond* Jordan may reinforce the linear and singular narratives of migration mobility. However, we believe that the content of each section complicates that narrative, demonstrating that it is not nearly as straightforward as such a formation might imply. Thus, we begin by highlighting two of our in-depth biographical interviews to demonstrate the complex influence of family and kin-network figurations on mobility trajectories and aspirations.

The methodological contributions of using both biographical research and figurational sociology is explained in-depth in Rosenthal and Bogner (2017, 15–18). While biographical research concentrates on the individual recounting of events, experiences, and affect, figurational sociology has a stronger focus on the “collective and long-term processes” (17). When combined, analyses are able to reveal the “interrelations of dominant discourses and power inequalities within and between social grouping and figurations” (17). Through this innovative methodological approach, the meaning of first-hand experiences are understood and explained – not in isolation – but within the context of a transnational life-history of displacement that goes into-within-beyond nation-states. This method distinctly enables the processual analysis of figurational sociology, and it reconstructs the “emergence, persistence and modification of social phenomena... taking into account the permanent intertwining of life courses and biographical (self-)interpretations” (18). Rather than asking “why” – for example, “Why did you go to Jordan? Why did you leave the refugee camp? And why do you want to move to Europe?” – this method asks about the individual and collective history, circumstances, and course of events that brought forth this particular biographical constellation for both the individual and the collective. Thus, we argue that figurational sociology can be well-received through in-depth biographical interviews such as those that we have conducted.

5.4.1 In-Depth Biographical Interviews

As discussed above, one powerful way to better capture the powerful dynamics that family and kin networks have on mobility for Syrians in Jordan is through in-depth biographical interviews. Life histories provide an opportunity to draw new connections between life events that are often non-linear and multi-directional, with extensive collective influences. ‘Life histories are records of individuals’ personal experiences and the connections between them and past social events, while auto/biography treats these accounts not as established facts but as social constructions requiring further investigation and re-interpretation’ (Payne & Payne, 2004, 1). This is because people actively interpret the world in which they live, and in doing so engage in processes of the construction of the collective or ‘social’, including the individual and shared actions and by their individual and shared interpretations of it (Rosenthal & Bogner, 2017, 9).

It is this ability to understand the social constructions of life narratives in biographical interviews that is so valuable in capturing figurations of family and kin and their transformations. We start our empirical analysis with two interview case studies.

5.4.1.1 Biographical Interview 1: Um-Baha³

Um-Baha is a married woman from Daraa, in southern Syria. She is in her late 40s, a mother of nine children and has elementary-level education. She was in Daraa with her family when the Syrian crisis began. Jordan was the closest country and they began thinking of going there – presumably for a short time – and that they would return after 2 or 3 months. Jordan was also the first choice because Um-Baha's husband knows the country well, as he has visited it regularly with family and friends since 1999. Um-Baha's husband and four oldest sons began preparing for the journey to Jordan before her and the rest of the children. Um-Baha's mobility aspirations were oriented around fear for her children: she was afraid to stay in Syria with them, afraid to make the journey and endanger them and afraid to be somewhere new where she would be unable to help them as they needed. Thus, she did not want to leave Syria but one of her daughters had the traumatic experience of being sexually assaulted and several of her sons had been arrested by the Assad regime. After their release, her sons pushed to leave for Jordan.

The father and the oldest sons left Syria together in January 2013 and entered Jordan through the regular border, with the plan that they would get everything set up – such as an apartment, jobs and other arrangements – so that the rest of the family could join them later. Um-Baha followed a few weeks later with her five other children. She said:

We were a big group of people who travelled to Jordan together from Daraa. I didn't know those we were travelling with, but I knew my husband was waiting for me in Jordan. Some people who had been doing this coordination [of Syrians out of Syria] charged us for it. They put us at the border. They were paid smugglers. I only saw them when they took us from our place in Daraa and dropped us at the border with Jordan. They organised the journey to the Naseeb border in Jordan. Then we were taken by the Jordanian army to Zaatari. In Zaatari – it was not a good place to stay. We arrived in January 2013 and it was snowing. It was so difficult. They gave us blankets but it wasn't enough. We were freezing.

Um-Baha and her five children were able to leave Zaatari after only 3 days because of her husband 'vouching' for her through the *kafala* (sponsorship) system. They first lived together in a neighbourhood outside Irbid called Kafa Raqab, and the Norwegian Refugee Council initially paid their rent. However, they did not like living outside the city and preferred to live closer to Irbid, even though they felt that the rent, water and electricity were too expensive in the city. Based on the recommendations of family members in Ramtha, including her mother, father and brothers, the family moved there a few months after arriving in Jordan in the spring of 2013. Now they are planning to stay in Ramtha. Um-Baha said, 'No one has prevented me from moving but, as for me, I prefer to stay in Ramtha'. This is – at least to some degree – attributable to the presence of her family. Eight of her nine children now live in Ramtha, her parents and siblings are there and, together with her husband, this family figuration is residing in Ramtha and within a five-minute walk of each other. The one daughter not in Ramtha married and has moved back to Syria

³All names are pseudonyms.

with her husband and their five children. They regret having returned to Syria and would like to go back to Jordan – presumably because they fear for their safety – but cannot do so due to border restrictions.

Um-Baha dreams of a better life. Economic conditions in Jordan are hard and the family must work together to make ends meet. Her sister and brother-in-law and their children were resettled in the USA in 2015 (they had arrived in Jordan before Um-Baha) and they keep in touch. This prompts her to think about the possibilities for improving her own life as well. When asked if she intends to stay in Jordan, she said, ‘No. This is not a good life for my boys here. I am thinking of a country other than Syria, a better place for my boys’. However, any real possibilities for onward migration are thwarted because her oldest married son refuses to travel to Europe and her grandchildren would not be eligible to go with her due to family reunification restrictions: Um-Baha is worried that any onward migration would split the family apart.

She said that they would consider returning to Syria to be near her daughter if the security situation improved. However, even if it did improve, she has a hard time imagining how they could do go back since they would be ‘starting from zero and my boys would have to go and serve in the army’. Her family in Syria has advised her not to return with her sons. She said, ‘It’s like the lottery – the settlement of conscription debts is not necessarily a given. Maybe they won’t have to go to jail for not serving but they could still be conscripted again’.

If she had a choice and the opportunity, Um-Baha would prefer to move to Canada, the UK or the USA. She said, ‘I’ve heard that men have secure jobs and health care and medication for everyone is important. My sister is in the US – her fourth year now – and says everything is good and perfect. But she is so distant from other family’. At one point, Um-Baha collected information from family and friends who are in the USA, cultivating her mobility aspirations to move there. They advised her to go; likewise for the UK. She started pushing a bit and asked her family members in those countries to submit the paperwork for family reunification in order to bring her. However:

Then I noticed that they apologised and deferred and said ‘Its too long and complicated’. Our relationship has grown distant. I keep asking the UNHCR about it. But they said our request is in the queue. For now, family is the most important factor for staying in Ramtha. I keep thinking about a better life for my kids, especially my 19-year-old son. He has health problems. I would like to secure my kids a better life and better work, wherever that might be.

5.4.1.2 Biographical Interview #2: Um-Alaa

The second biographical case is that of 44-year-old Um-Alaa, who is also from Daraa and lives in Ramtha. She has elementary-level education and was married – and subsequently separated – in Syria. She and her former husband have five children. During the protests and at the beginning of the crisis, her oldest son was arrested for protesting and was taken into custody in a Syrian prison. After 5 days he returned home, having been tortured and badly beaten. The next day Um-Alaa

took her children to Jordan, in the hope of receiving medical treatment for her son there. They entered Jordan legally and her eldest was taken immediately to hospital. Um-Alaa says,

The journey was easy for us because it was so early in the crisis. This was only seven months into the crisis (in October 2011) so everyone was helpful and we could enter Jordan legally and were welcomed. I paid extra money for our passports to be made the same day my son came home. When we were exiting the Syrian side of the border, the police saw my son and said 'You were the one calling for *hurriya* (freedom)'. I was silent and we didn't say anything. They let us go. We had to leave. I was so worried that what happened to my oldest son would happen to the three younger ones. We had to leave to protect them. I was so afraid.

They stayed in Um-Alaa's brother's house in Jordan for a week or two. However, she experienced harassment from her sister-in-law. 'She said she didn't like me or my older sons. She's the same age as my older sons, so it wasn't appropriate to stay there'.

The next apartment they found was in a basement and they stayed there for 6 months until she found another house. Her brother did not help her in any way. In the absence of a strong family and kin network, she and her children subsisted with the help of humanitarian aid and were supported by various NGOs in the provision of household goods and blankets. Um-Alaa's eldest son returned to Syria and stayed there for 2 years [presumably to fight in the crisis]. Um-Alaa tried her best to get him back to Jordan, reminding him that it was not safe for him in Syria but 'He wasn't convinced. He had to see it for himself. Eventually he returned to Jordan by irregular means and had to pass through Zaatari'. Her sons were able to start working and secure rent. However, she explains that it is expensive and difficult to make ends meet:

No one has forced us to stay here in Ramtha but we stay because it's cheaper than other places outside Ramtha. And the culture and lifestyle are more similar to Daraa. I prefer this to Irbid, because the local Jordanians are more understanding and flexible. For example, the landlord can accept not getting rent for two months. In Irbid, they would go to court to get the rent. It's too hard in Jordan and it's really expensive. I have some distant family members who have returned to Syria and who regretted it. But my family encourage me to stay in Jordan because it's better for us and safer and, if we return, the boys will be taken by the army. We talk on the phone sometimes but the police in Syria are always listening. Once I was foolish enough to ask them about returning to Syria and my sister said, 'Shut up! Don't talk about this!' If the regime knew we are coming back, they would take my sons immediately.

Every 6 or 7 months, Um-Alaa receives about 200 Jordanian *dinars* (250 euros) for her sons from her mother-in-law, who is in Irbid. Um-Alaa's husband has not visited her or the children in Jordan for more than 4 years. He lives in Kuwait – where he has been for an unknown length of time – and does not regularly send remittances. Her sister was granted asylum in Canada sometime before 2015. She sent remittances to Um-Alaa once; however, her husband told her not to send Um-Alaa any more money. Um-Alaa says, 'Each one is thinking about himself. The war has split my family and I more than ever. The war has made us crude. No one supports me. I have no one to complain to, I only can say "*Al-Hamdulillah*" (praise God)'.

Um-Alaa applied for resettlement in another country but this was denied. She said,

It is mainly because of my husband. He doesn't help us at all and still he – even in his absence – he's causing me problems. When I applied for resettlement they said, 'Why are you asking for resettlement when you have a hard-working and wealthy husband?' My sister was lucky because she left Syria six months after me and was living in a very poor house when the UNHCR came to assess her situation. When they asked her about why she stayed there, she replied that this was all she could afford. But when they came to my house, they saw a better situation, so I was denied resettlement. ... I don't want to stay in Jordan, and I don't want to return to Syria. I don't have a house there anymore. The house has been destroyed and taken over by other groups. My sons would be taken. If I had daughters, it would be different. So I will stay here. Worrying about the rent is much better than worrying about your sons getting arrested and conscripted.

As the stories of Um-Baha and Um-Alaa demonstrate, mobility is not a straightforward and linear trajectory. Rather, mobilities are anchored in past experiences, subject to current realities and informed by future hopes and imaginaries. All of these are entangled in figurations of family and kin that invoke knowledge-sharing and trust-based interactions. In what follows, we break down the complexities of mobilities into *to/through/beyond* in order to illuminate the key players in place, the ambiguities of family figurations and the necessary knowledge-sharing and trust-based interactions which Syrians require as they consider their future elsewhere.

5.4.2 Arriving

We experienced death while we were alive (Um-Majid).

All our interviewees described haunting scenes of death and destruction in Syria. The need to leave the country and quickly – often the same day as a key family member died or returned from imprisonment – was reported by nearly all of our respondents. One of the first findings we gathered in our research is that the opposition groups in Syria played a critical role in helping people to leave Syria for Jordan; in this instance it was actually non-family and kin networks who provided knowledge-sharing and trust-based interactions. Three interviewees (Omar, Rayan, Abdullah) indicated that the opposition groups in Syria played a major role in securing their safe passage to the Jordanian border. Omar reported that the opposition groups used to keep a list of people who wanted to go to Jordan. When they gave their names at the opposition check points, they were treated especially well. The refugees were given the contact information of other people who had passed the same checkpoint, information about where to go, knowledge about the security situation and even coffee, tea and food. Rayan said that he was also well-received by the Jordanian soldiers after crossing the border and that they gave him everything he needed for the transfer to camp Zaatari. Finally, Abdullah did not name the opposition groups as such but explained that there was a 'group of like-minded people' who assisted him, his wife and their only son in their passage to Jordan. He

indicated that the group gave them transportation, food and drink and left them in front of the Jordanian military for transport into the country for free. He indicated that 'This group of people has permission to travel to the border areas', which is how they were able to facilitate the family's passage.

This group referred to above is one set of key players beyond family networks which provided support for mobility and passage into Jordan. This demonstrates that non-family networks may work to 'fill in a gap' of knowledge or trust when needed but, of course, they cannot be relied upon in the same way as family networks. Opposition groups were often paid for their 'services' rather than providing them for free for family. In other words, the Syrians were very lucky that they had received support from opposition groups and that they had the resources to pay for it if needed.

Yet, not everyone was so lucky: one woman we interviewed (Um-Hussein) indicated, for example, that her house in Syria was sited in a militarily strategic location next to the police station. In an effort to confiscate her house for military operations, the police forcibly removed her from it and beat her to the point that she needed to go to Jordan for medical treatment. Her daughter and son were also badly injured in this event and in need of medical care in Jordan while her husband was then killed by the police. Driven out by warring factions, she migrated to Jordan with her children and sister, whose husband was also killed in Syria, and are now living in the same house in Jordan. Others (Hanan; Um-Khalid; Jasmine) reported that opposition groups in Syria would bring in a large bus that could transfer 40–50 people and demand that the Syrians leave, driving them to Jordan. The families would quickly organise themselves into large groups and travel on the buses together.

In addition to these encounters with opposition groups in Syria, family and kin networks played a key role in these passages out of the country and into Jordan, mainly because all our respondents travelled in such groups and often remained in those groups in Jordan, which had longer-term impacts upon residency patterns there. Family groups who were also neighbours prior to displacement were particularly strong and stable figurations this way: they went to Jordan together and were then mobile together within Jordan, especially in our field sites. Thus, we found not only that figurations of family, kin and as neighbourhoods are strongly interlinked but also that these connectivities proved to be essential for their respective mobilities within Jordan.

5.4.3 *Moving Within*

I wanted to move out as soon as possible (Noura).

Most of the interviewees who had entered Jordan by irregular means were sent to Zaatari. All those whom we interviewed who came through Zaatari described hating the camp due to the dire conditions they experienced there – no bathrooms, no drinking water and an inhospitable environment without adequate protection from the weather and the elements. Um-Baha said:

When we saw Al-Zaatari camp – Wow!! – I wondered how the people there could tolerate it; there were no tents and it was raining as we arrived there in the winter (January 2013). At the time, it was snowing; we could not sleep because it was too cold and lots of snow; there were no sheets except one blanket for each person which they gave us when we arrived.

Um-Wael and Noura even said, on seeing and experiencing Zaatari, that they would have been better off if they had died in Syria.

Our research shows that figurations of family and kin and mobility out of Zaatari were highly intertwined. Roughly, there were two groups of Syrians in Zaatari: those who had extended family in Jordan and those who did not. For the latter, their only means of leaving Zaatari was to ‘skip out’ and leave, knowing that they were jeopardising their legal status in Jordan and their ability to receive UNHCR assistance.

For the former, they were able to invoke trust-based interactions in their family and kin networks to leave Zaatari under the *kafala* or ‘sponsorship’ system, as Um-Baha experienced it above. A Jordanian national had to act as legal guardian or sponsor (*kafil*) in order for a Syrian refugee to be permitted to leave the camp. This demonstrated a very high level of trust: if the Syrian who was ‘bailed out’ of Zaatari was in trouble (legally, socially, financially, etc.), the sponsor (*kafil*) was ‘on the hook’ in the eyes of the Jordanian government. The *kafala* system applied to displaced refugees from Syria but was gradually dismantled and finally scrapped in 2015 (Alahmed, 2015). All our interviewees arrived before the dismantling of the *kafala* and many reported that their extended family networks in Jordan were a key element in their mobility out of Zaatari through these trust-based interactions. Um-Wael, from Daraa, Syria, even explained that the *kafala* had so strengthened her family networks that she sought to bring more family members from Syria to Jordan, then through and out of the camp via the *kafala* system. However, by that time (2015) the border had closed. Jordan was no longer taking Syrian refugees and they were unable to assist Syrian family members this way.

Waleed, also from Daraa said that he went in 2013 after consulting with his family first. He moved to Jordan with everyone except his married daughter because she was with her husband and their children. They moved as a group with family and neighbours from Daraa. He was motivated to leave Syria because he was afraid that his wife and daughters would be raped, as he heard other people had experienced this. He chose Jordan because he believed that he would not be mature enough to start a new life in a completely new country. He said that he knew Jordan and was more comfortable with the decision to go there and to do so with his extended family: ‘It didn’t feel so foreign’. He said he had family in Zaatari camp, the Mafraq area and around Jordan in general. Others echoed a similar sentiment.

Many, if not most, of the Syrian families we interviewed had extended family and kin networks in the Jordanian city of Ramtha, which facilitated their movement there in knowledge-sharing and trust-based interactions. They specifically facilitated their movement through promises of further strengthening the connections inside their figurations of family and kin through marriage and commercial relationships. In fact, so many Syrians from the Daraa region have now moved to Ramtha

that one – Um-Osama – said, ‘Ramtha even looks like Daraa’. Um-Rashid, a Syrian woman we interviewed, had multiple family and kin networks, which facilitated her move to Ramtha with her nuclear family. However, her husband’s family was in Irbid and she thought they could get help from his family and kin network. They moved to Irbid for 2 months to join the husband’s family network but ended up disliking it and returned to Ramtha. Ramtha, some interviewees reported, has the highest rate of integration for Syrians in Jordan, making it an especially valued location for those Syrians keen on maintaining their family and kin-network relations and trust-based interactions.⁴

In our research we also found that many displaced persons were simultaneously embedded in multiple and overlapping figurations of family and kin, with the option of facilitating mobility in differing directions. Multiple migrations and iterations of movement within Jordan were then also the results of access to these multi-nodal networks. Some interviewees indicated that, in the earlier days and years of Syrian migration to Irbid, people simply had to take whatever housing they could find based on knowledge-sharing provided by family members. They believed that the situation was temporary and that they would be returning to Syria soon. Thus, they accepted housing wherever they could afford it. Over time, it became clear that the Syrian crisis would be more long-lasting and the Syrians began to find more permanent places, again obtained through knowledge-sharing in their family and kin networks. Many began a process of urban-to-rural migration to the surrounding villages as a means to limit their housing costs. For example, some moved to the semi-urban area of Ajloun. However, it was not overly friendly to Syrians, as it is a closed tribal area for Jordanians. Without other Syrians around, early migrants to the area turned to kin and family networks again for help to return to urban areas. Family and kin networks have played such a strong role for mobility that quite specific residency patterns of Syrian refugees have become established within Jordan: for example, we have found that Syrians from Aleppo and Damascus typically go to Amman and people from Daraa go to Ramtha and Irbid.

Another example was Um-Hosam, who had previously worked in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where she had a good financial status and lifestyle. She had visited Syria a few weeks before the crisis because she was preparing for her third son’s wedding to a locally resident Syrian woman. She stayed with her other two sons while her husband returned to the UAE. The crisis began and she was stuck in Syria, unable to return to join her husband. She fled by irregular means to Jordan (that is, without the proper border-crossing documentation and the processing of her refugee status with the Government of Jordan or the UNHCR) with her three sons, her brothers and her parents and they were immediately placed in Zaatari. They were able to use the *kafala* process with local family members and to leave Zaatari. After a time, her two oldest sons went on to Turkey then fled overseas and on to the UK. Her parents used their extended family networks to move to Doha, Qatar. She is now in Jordan with her youngest son who is still in school. She feels that she has

⁴On the wider findings of the research on Jordan, see Tobin et al. (2020).

lost everything: not only did she lose a well-paid job in the UAE but also, because of multiple family and kin networks and their use by her family members, she is now alone with one son in Jordan while her family are flung across the globe. In this case, family and kin networks left some members behind without support.

Having close family and kin networks does not automatically mean that Syrians desire to live with or next to their family members. Many Syrians indicated that ‘family is far away’, even if they are in the same region or country of Jordan. This echoes the work of Lokot (2020), in which the ambiguities of family relations emerge as simultaneously limiting social interactions with ‘outsiders’ while also having a greater potential to unravel.

5.4.4 *Moving On*

Frankly speaking, no, we don’t intend to stay in Jordan. But we haven’t found a country to move to. So, in Jordan we live in a spacious prison (Leila).

One important topic of conversation amongst our interviewees was whether or not returning to Syria would be feasible. Some Syrians in Jordan have, of course, already returned. Estimates vary but most cite the economic challenges of living in Jordan as a main driver for some 34,000+ Syrians to return from there (Edwards & Al-Hourani, 2019). The decision not to return to Syria (which constitutes all our interviewees, as we do not have access to those who returned to Syria), is not always an easy one and is often fraught with trauma and bad memories of the crisis in Syria, even as life in Jordan presents its own host of challenges. A few women whom we interviewed said that they would not go back there in the near future because of such memories of Syria. One woman, Israa, recounted how her mother was shot and the family buried her body outside the house and next to a window. She said:

All of us (me and my uncles) decided that we did not have any hope of staying [in Syria]. At the time [as they were leaving], my grandmother wanted to go to her house and she was diabetic. While she was climbing the stairs, they just shot her. She was crippled and died on the spot; we crawled on the ground to drag her from her empty house and buried her in the yard under our window... I will return home someday and remember her outside that window.

In this case, we see mobility imaginaries and family relations intimately intertwined.

Some families are now split as a result of some members returning to Syria while others remain in Jordan. As in the case of Um-Baha, Um-Osama reported that her older son had returned to Syria to be near family and he is therefore no longer able to come back to Jordan. She has applied for permission to visit him and her family in Syria with guaranteed return to Jordan. She has no desire to go onwards to Germany, despite being offered asylum there under the terms of family reunification, because she would be even further away from her son and family in Syria. Furthermore, her sons in Jordan with her are unable to go to Syria or Germany under the current legal rules and thus she feels that staying in Jordan with them is best. In this case our interviewee is weighing different powerful and compelling ties

in her family and kin-network relationships. As a result of these globally dispersed social relations of Syrians, most of our interviewees expressed some desire to travel outside Jordan but not necessary for permanent relocation. Some, such as Um-Osama, Un-Faisal, Um-Mustafa and Hanan, wished to travel temporarily to rekindle and protect their figurations of family and kin only but not necessarily to live with them in a new place.

We inquired about our interviewees' onward migration aspirations from Jordan, asking about their motivations, possibilities, desires and preferences. Many reported that, if they were to leave Jordan, they would either return to Syria or go on to Europe. Comments such as this one by Jasmine were relatively common: 'We are thinking of moving, but we cannot afford it. We have no country in mind, but we would choose Britain'. There are restrictions against Syrians entering other Arab countries, even Gulf states where they have relatives, which made them less-frequently referenced. Family reunification is perceived to be easier in Europe than in the Gulf states. Some information about mobility possibilities came from the internet, as Israa found: 'My cousin has been in Britain for nine years now. They are doing very well. He has three daughters. We searched their profiles on the net and found out that they are living well'.

The Syrians we interviewed described an image of Europe in which they would have a better life, lifestyle, gardens/outdoor life, better work and better opportunities for the children's education. One woman, Um-Saif, said, 'I want my kids to go back to school. I cannot afford to send them to private school. Their achievement is now below satisfactory. I wish I could move to another country to get a better education for my children'. Another, Jasmine, said, 'My cousin is in Denmark. She told me that life there is good, too. She does not pay house rent. The government supports them with everything'. Such comments – like that of Um-Saif – were often prefaced with reference to the knowledge-sharing networks that the Syrians used to imagine such futures, such as 'They [relatives already in Britain] tell us... The role of family and kin networks in knowledge-sharing was key in the cultivation of mobility aspirations and imagining new futures. Furthermore, their role in trust-based interactions was also important. Any steps which family members took towards actual onward mobility (through asylum applications to the UNHCR or family reunification, for example) were grounded in pre-existing family and kin networks that provided actionable knowledge and information. The movement to Europe is often encouraged by family members who already live there and provide knowledge on the journey and the conditions 'elsewhere' and who are also a trusted and a potential source of necessary finances for a very challenging onward journey.

We also found that market and demographic perceptions also constitute an important driver for Syrian aspirations for onward migration to Europe: Syrians did not want to migrate to countries where there was already a large presence of Syrian refugees for fear of 'overtaxing' the system and labour markets. Those who expressed a desire for Germany often selected it due to family reunion. However, the perception was that there are already a large number of Syrians in Germany and our interviewees more frequently preferred to go to other countries where there are fewer Syrians in order to have been economic opportunities – other Syrians are

economic competition. As Waleed said: 'Britain is my favourite but, if I had the chance to move to another country such as Canada or Germany, I would'. Most were averse to France, due to the colonial history and political relations between France and Syria. Sweden and Norway were mentioned only a few times due to family networks there. The USA was overwhelmingly not preferred and several interviewees refused to migrate there. One refused because she was afraid of the high crime rates in the USA.

The UK was the most preferred choice of the Syrians whom we interviewed, followed by Canada. Syrians in Jordan with family members in the UK were said to encourage their pursuit of family immigration to the UK, with claims of free healthcare, education and housing. UK support for refugees is seen as generous (compared with other countries) and is considered the ideal country amongst our interviewees. Syrians came to these conclusions based on their wider knowledge-sharing and on the information provided by family members and, more specifically, by other, mostly kin, contacts already living there. Widely positive expressions of being happy and satisfied with the healthcare and education in the UK and experiences of being treated well by society and the government are frequently shared within transnational social figurations. There is an overlap between trust-based interactions and knowledge-sharing in this case: there is a very popular facebook group for Syrians in the UK and any Syrians in Jordan who are given the opportunity to go to the UK describe the developing smaller knowledge-transfer groups and receiving a tour and orientation in the UK together.

However, the likelihood of gaining asylum or being granted onward migration to Europe was considered quite slim and random. We encountered one unusual case of a Syrian, Nidal, who opted out of his networks in order to increase his poverty and vulnerability as a means to – presumably – increase his chances for UNHCR-sponsored asylum. He refused to apply for jobs or work so that he could focus on applying for asylum instead. He has a wife and child and his wife is pregnant again. He has not been offered UNHCR-sponsored asylum. We are calling this 'strategic marginalisation' or 'strategic impoverishment'.

5.5 Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the complex and myriad ways in which figurations of family and kin shape Syrian refugees' experiences and mobility *to* and *within* Jordan and their aspirations *beyond* the country. Through qualitative interviews, we examine the ways in which family and kin networks provide key structures and contours to the mobility experienced and desired by Syrians to/in/beyond Jordan, especially through knowledge-sharing and trust-based interactions.

Knowledge-sharing in family and kin networks proved key for providing the information that Syrians used to assess whether and how they could – or should – be mobile. It was vital for the development of informed decisions in areas such as health, safety, education, work and future prospects. In general, the more extensive

(in terms of network density and spatial dispersion) these knowledge-sharing networks are – especially in family and kin forms – the more confident Syrians in Jordan were about their actual and prospective mobility.

However, it is not the case that family and kin networks were always positive influences. As Lokot (2020) and Stevens (2016) have shown, family and kin networks amongst Syrians in Jordan are extremely taxed, brittle and thin. Due to the protractedness of the Syrian crisis, family members are now scattered around the world. On the one hand, this meant more possibilities, both imagined and real, for mobility through family reunification or resettlement – or even within Jordan between cities and towns. On the other, the extensive and distant ties of family networks could – and did – split families, in ways that were both painful and frustrating, resulting in missed funerals, births and everyday companionship. Trust-based interactions within translocal figurations of family and kin were ambiguous; they tended to provide for both safety and security out of Syria and within Jordan, even as entangled future aspirations. Based on those experiences, many Syrians imagined the possibilities of mobility outside of Jordan, only to find these hopes not being fulfilled as family and kin relations are less robust or reliable than expected or even breaking up and thus not providing any support and orientation at all.

Overall, our research shows that close and strong ties to members of the (extended) family who live in the same country of reception or in other nations do provide essential support and a sense of identity and unity in protracted displacement situations. The translocal figurations of family and kin can, however, also be seen as ‘ambivalent entanglements’ that cannot provide the necessary information or resources or can even block opportunities to move out of protractedness. Such situations render possibilities for onward mobility more imaginary than real for many of these Syrians.

Future research would benefit from a gendered analysis of these networks – who supports and nurtures these networks, who provides information and access, who benefits from them and in which ways. Surely gender plays a role in untangling these ambivalences, finding patterns of attachment and rupture and uncovering ways in which Syrians may find solutions to the ongoing challenges of protracted displacement?

References

- Alahmed, M. (2015, Summer). *Status-less in Cyber City. Middle East Research and Information Project*. Available from: <https://www.merip.org/mer/mer275/status-less-cyber-city>
- Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001). Refugees and transnationalism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(4), 615–634.
- Baldassar, L., & Merla, L. (Eds.). (2014). *Transnational families, migration and the circulation of care*. Routledge.
- Baur, N., & Ernst, S. (2011). Towards a process-oriented methodology. *The Sociological Review*, 59(1), 119–139.
- Belloni, M. (2019). Breaking free from tradition: Women, national service and migration in Eritrea. *Migration Letters*, 16(4), 491–501.

- Betts, A., Bloom, L., Kaplan, J., & Omata, N. (2017). *Refugee economies*. Oxford University Press.
- Black, R., & King, R. (2004). Migration, return and development in West Africa. *Population, Space and Place*, 10(2), 75–83.
- Brickell, K., & Datta, A. (2011). Introduction. In K. Brickell & A. Datta (Eds.), *Translocal geographies. Spaces, places, connections* (pp. 3–20). Ashgate.
- Bryceson, D., & Vuorela, U. (2002). Transnational families in the twenty-first century. In D. F. Bryceson & U. Vuorela (Eds.), *The transnational family: New European frontiers and global networks* (pp. 3–30). Berg.
- Castrén, A.-M., & Ketokivi, K. (2015). Studying the complex dynamics of family relationships. *Sociological Research Online*, 20(1), 1–14.
- Cohen, R., & Van Hear, N. (2017). Visions of refugia. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 18(3), 494–504.
- Dahinden, J. (2017). Transnationalism reloaded. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(9), 1474–1485.
- Dépelteau, F., & Landini, T. S. (Eds.). (2013). *Norbert Elias and social theory*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Edwards, M., & Al-Hourani, N. (2019, November 19). Weighed down by economic woes, Syrian refugees head home from Jordan, *the humanitarian*. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/11/19/Syrian-refugees-return-Jordan>
- Elias, N. (1978). *What is sociology?* Columbia University Press.
- Etzold, B., Belloni, M., King, R., Kraler, A., & Pastore, F. (2019). *Transnational figurations of displacement: Conceptualising protracted displacement and translocal connectivity through a process-oriented perspective*. BICC, TRAFIG Working Paper No. 1. https://trafig.eu/output/working-papers/2019-01/D1.1-TRAFIG_working_paper_No_01-31-05-2019.pdf
- Faist, T., Fauser, M., & Reisenauer, E. (2013). *Transnational migration*. Polity Press.
- Federman, J. (2019, September 11). Trapped in Jordan, Syrian refugees see no way home, *APNews*. <https://apnews.com/article/88751634e6494043bb23e468bb4de5aa>
- Greiner, C., & Sakdapolrak, P. (2013). Translocality: Concepts, applications and emerging research perspectives. *Geography Compass*, 7(5), 373–384.
- Harpviken, K. B. (2014). Split return: Transnational household strategies in afghan repatriation. *International Migration*, 52(6), 57–71.
- Horst, C. (2006). *Transnational nomads*. Berghahn.
- Hyndman, J., & Giles, W. (2016). *Refugees in extended exile*. Routledge.
- Jeffery, L., & Murison, J. (2011). The temporal, social, spatial, and legal dimensions of return and onward migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(2), 131–139.
- Kraler, A., Fourer, M., Knudsen, A. J., Kwaks, J., Mielke, K., Noack, M., Tobin, S., & Wilson, C. (2020). *Learning from the past: Protracted displacement in the post-World War II period*. BICC, TRAFIG Working Paper No. 2.
- Ledwith, A. (2014). *Zaatari: The instant city*. Affordable Housing Institute. <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/ahi-publication-zaatari-the-instant-city-pdf-140829.pdf>
- Loescher, G., & Milner, J. (2008). Understanding the problem of protracted refugee situations. In G. Loescher, J. Milner, E. Newman, & G. G. Troeller (Eds.), *Protracted refugee situations: Political, human rights and security implications* (pp. 20–42). United Nations University Press.
- Lokot, M. (2020). ‘Blood doesn’t become water’? Syrian social relations during displacement. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 33(3), 555–576.
- Long, J. C. (2014). Diasporic families. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(2), 243–252.
- Payne, G., & Payne, J. (2004). *Key concepts in social research*. Sage.
- Piper, N. (2009). The complex interconnections of the migration–development nexus: A social perspective. *Population, Space and Place*, 15(2), 93–101.
- Rosenthal, G., & Bogner, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Biographies in the Global South. Life stories embedded in figurations and discourses*. Campus Verlag.
- Silver, A. M., Edelblute, H., Mouw, T., & Chávez, S. (2018). Fractured families, connected community. *International Migration*, 56(6), 153–168.

- Sökefeld, M. (2015). Spaces of conflict in everyday life. In M. Sökefeld (Ed.), *Spaces of conflict in everyday life: Perspectives across Asia* (pp. 9–31). Transcript.
- Stevens, M. R. (2016). The collapse of social networks among Syrian refugees in urban Jordan. *Contemporary Levant*, 1(1), 51–63.
- Sullivan, D., & Tobin, S. A. (2014, October 14). *Security and resilience among Syrian refugees in Jordan*. Middle East Research and Information Project. <https://www.merip.org/mero/mero101414>
- Tiltnes, Å. A., Zhang, H., & Pedersen, J. (2019). *The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan*. Fafo Foundation. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67914.pdf>
- Tobin, S. A., Momani, F., Knudsen, A. J., Al Jarrah, R., & Adel Al Yakoub, T. (2020). *TRAFIG internal fieldwork report: Jordan. Period 1 (July–December 2019)*. mman: TRAFIG Preliminary Workshop Report.
- UNHCR. (2004). *Protracted refugee situations*. <https://www.unhcr.org/40c982172.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2016). *Jordan Factsheet: Field Office*. Irbid (October–December 2016) – Jordan. ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/unhcr-jordan-factsheet-field-office-irbid-october-december-2016>
- UNHCR. (2018). *Syria emergency*. <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>
- UNHCR. (2019). *UNHCR continues to support refugees in Jordan throughout 2019*. UNHCR continues to support refugees in Jordan throughout 2019 – UNHCR Jordan.
- UNHCR. (2020). *Total persons of concern (Syria 3RP)*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>
- Van Hear, N. (2006). Refugees in diaspora: From durable solutions to transnational relations. *Refuge*, 23(1), 9–14.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 6

Onward Migration from an Aspirations–Capabilities Framework: The Multi-sited Transnational Practices of Sudanese Families Across Europe, Sudan and Beyond



Ester Serra Mingot

6.1 Introduction

In the summer of 2019, I met Ibrahim¹ and his brother, Hafiz, in a small village in Sweden. I had first met Ibrahim (48) and his family – his wife Noor (47) and their three children – in 2015, when I started my fieldwork in the Netherlands. Noor and her mother arrived in the Netherlands as asylum-seekers in 1999. At around the same time, Ibrahim had also arrived there seeking asylum. They met and married in the asylum-seeking camp in the Netherlands, where they waited around 8 years to obtain their refugee status. Once this was granted, Ibrahim, Noor and her mother moved to social housing and began receiving social assistance until, several years later, Ibrahim was able to validate his university degree and find work as a doctor.

Eleven years later, having acquired Dutch citizenship, Noor and Ibrahim decided to move to the UK as EU migrants with their two children. This was because, like many Sudanese, they felt that the Dutch education system discriminated against their children because of their migration background. In fact, research has shown that, in the Netherlands, teachers often underestimate the potential of migrant students, which hinders their access to university (see Klooster et al., 2016; OECD, 2016). In Sudan, however, a tertiary education is both a source of prestige for the family and a sort of old-age insurance in that well-educated children are expected to have better job opportunities and thus to be better able to provide for their ageing parents in the future (Gasim, 2010; Serra Mingot, 2020a). In addition to this, until the late 1980s, many northern Sudanese arrived in the UK to study or as

¹Pseudonyms have been used to ensure the anonymity of the respondents.

E. Serra Mingot (✉)
Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany
e-mail: ester.s.mingot@gmail.com

professionals, business people or academics (IOM, 2006). Having a British education often led to highly-paid jobs in Sudan or the Gulf, which gave migrants and their families a much higher socio-economic status.

In 2010, Noor and her children moved to the UK, while Ibrahim stayed in the Netherlands to finish his registration as a doctor. In fact, although he had a medical degree from an Eastern European university, it took him several years to validate it and be able to work in the Netherlands. When Noor and her children arrived in the UK, they moved in with her brother-in-law, Mustafa, who was studying there. Soon after, Noor discovered she was having complications with the pregnancy of her third child. While, in the Netherlands, she had been kept under close observation and given the necessary treatment, in the UK, the public healthcare service did not meet her expectations and she returned to the Netherlands in a somewhat weaker state of health.

During one of my visits to their house in the Netherlands, Ibrahim told me how they were thinking of moving to Sweden. According to him, this Nordic country gave him more chances to grow professionally as a doctor and there was less discrimination. Ibrahim complained of how he was tired of the anti-migrant discourse in the Netherlands and, after having visited Sweden several times to test the waters, he felt it was a better choice. Noor, however, did not think the same. After having spent so many years in the Netherlands, she felt like she had grown used to the country, she had her friends, she spoke the language well and she did not really feel like starting over again in Sweden. As for the children, Ibrahim told me, they were fine moving to Sweden because, for them, it was like an adventure, like going on holiday. By mid-2017 the whole family had moved to Sweden.

When I met Ibrahim and his brother Hafiz in Sweden in 2019, however, things had not been going as expected. They had struggled to find accommodation; people were kind, he explained, but very closed and overall they felt very isolated. Ibrahim was still willing to give it a try for a bit longer but, in January 2021, they all had moved back to the Netherlands. As Ibrahim explained, the feeling of isolation had become stronger and their children had been experiencing discrimination and bullying in school, as a result of which they had packed their bags and returned to the Netherlands, where they were still living when I was writing this chapter.²

In past decades, the arrival of refugees in the industrialised countries of the Global North went hand-in-hand with negative connotations attached to the word 'refugee' or 'asylum-seeker'. The concept of 'force' linked to these migrant groups implies a lack of choice, which tends to disregard their agency and aspirations (Ghorashi, 2005). Refugees are often depicted as powerless victims in need of protection and who are highly dependent on welfare-state provisions (Ghorashi, 2005; Ludwig, 2016). This is actually one of the arguments why generous welfare systems are often speculated to be an important driver for (onward) migration decisions (Borjas, 1999; De Jong & de Valk, 2019). This idea also leads frequently to an

²For a detailed account of the trajectories of the different members of this particular family, see Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2019.

expectation of a certain degree of gratitude for any help given to migrants. In fact, refugees who do not conform to emotional expectations – appearing to enjoy themselves too much or travelling ‘home’ too often – are sometimes viewed as suspects and their status as true refugees questioned – indeed, a lack of agency and aspirations is an expected characteristic of refugees (Graham, 2002).

Migrants and refugees’ aspirations, however, are complex (see Paul & Yeoh, 2020) and do not always align with the receiving state’s ideas on what they are supposed to aspire to and *when*. For example, in some European countries, such as the Netherlands, asylum-seekers are not encouraged to aspire to too many things. Although asylum-seekers’ basic needs (e.g. accommodation, a weekly allowance and medical and other costs) are provided for by the state, they have very limited access to the formal labour market and education during the asylum process – the latter of which can often take years (see also de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3, on the situation of Somalis in the Netherlands). Even when refugee status is granted, they must go through a process of re-socialisation into the host society (Ghorashi, 2005; Van Heelsum, 2017; Serra-Mingot, 2018). Such re-socialisation, together with the lengthy asylum process, limited personal development and interactions with society, means that many refugees can only apply for a job for the first time at a relatively advanced age in a very competitive labour market (Serra-Mingot & Mazzucato, 2019). Yet, while refugees are rendered dependent on the state for several years (Ghorashi, 2005; Bakker et al., 2014), they are blamed for such dependency when, after being awarded refugee status, they are not able or *willing* to do any job for which they are often overqualified.

Despite the different institutional constraints throughout the asylum process and later – be this when they become refugees or are undocumented – asylum-seekers and refugees do have a certain degree of agency, as the opening vignette of this chapter has shown. In fact, the story of Noor and Ibrahim shows the multi-sited transnational strategies of a Dutch-Sudanese family (moving from the Netherlands to the UK, back to the Netherlands, onwards to Sweden and then finally back to the Netherlands again) to fulfil their aspirations at different migration and life-course stages. The different degrees of agency at these stages play a crucial role in shaping the migrants’ aspirations, which are intrinsically linked to the context in which they live and to their individual views on their personal options, preferences and expectations, shaped by the cultural, political and socio-economic conditions ‘back home’ (Allsopp et al., 2014). Moreover, the meaning and content of migrants’ aspirations change within their migratory projects, since they are at a crossroads of personal, collective and normative dimensions (Carling & Collins, 2018).

This chapter illustrates the onward migration strategies in which Sudanese migrants engage in order to overcome the constraints that macro structures (e.g. migration and welfare systems) exercise over their aspirations throughout their life-course, which is expected to develop in a certain way according to the ‘refugee’ label which they have been assigned. Through the lens of an aspirations–capabilities framework (De Haas, 2021), this chapter explores how migrants navigate institutional limitations with family obligations, individual aspirations and capabilities. Here, aspirations are defined as future plans, ambitions or goals, inspired and

formulated in the present social context, with a varying degree of clarity or vagueness (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996; Gutman & Akerman, 2008), while capability refers to the ability of individuals to lead lives which they value and to enhance the options they have (Sen, 1999).

This contribution draws on ethnographic data collected for a bigger research project on transnational social protection for Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands and the UK and their families back home. Rather than looking at the individual migrant, this research took extended families as the main unit of analysis. This allowed us to uncover not only trans-national aspects of aspirations but also trans-temporal ones. Indeed, looking at migration not only as a geographical but also as a trans-temporal process helps us to see how nation states also impose control through time in very powerful ways – for example by prolonging family separation or by limiting future job expectations (Coe, 2016). Drawing on the life stories of Dutch-Sudanese migrants in the UK (or elsewhere), this chapter contributes to our understanding of the links between aspirations, capabilities and onward migration by looking at mobility as a multi-sited longitudinal family trajectory through which to fulfil aspirations throughout the life-course. In doing so, this chapter casts some light on three methodological issues encountered multinational migrations studies, namely: complexity, multispatiality and extended temporality (Paul & Yeoh, 2020, 356).

6.2 Being Pushed to, Wanting to *or* Simply Being Able to Move?

In recent decades, migration studies has remained a somewhat under-theorised field of inquiry. To date, most migration theories have focused on trying to come up with generalised explanations for migration (Castles et al., 2014; De Haas, 2021). Rather than theory development, we have witnessed an increase in the number of empirical studies on migration which, abandoning the big-picture migration theory-making, have shown us a huge diversity in migration experiences across different ethnic, gender and class groups (De Haas, 2021). As a reaction to state bias and so-called ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002), recent anthropological research has aimed at conceptualising the transnational lives and experiences of migrants from a migrant-centered perspective. At the same time, economists, sociologists and demographers have increasingly focused on quantitative analysis to explain the causes and impacts of migration, very often along the lines of ‘push–pull’ theories (De Haas, 2021). Neither qualitative nor quantitative approaches have been able to properly capture the role of structural factors (e.g. inequality, power and states) in shaping migration processes nor to develop an insightful idea of human agency that goes beyond the opportunistic-utilitarian assumptions of neo-classical models or the portrayal of migrants as passive victims of capitalism (De Haas, 2021).

For the purpose of this chapter, agency is understood as people’s more or less limited ability to make independent choices and to impose these on the world, thus forming the structures that shape people’s opportunities (De Haas, 2021). In this regard, structures refer to patterns of social relations, beliefs and behaviours. Factors and institutions such as class, religion, gender, ethnicity, networks and markets sustain inequalities and limit the opportunities which people have, as well as the socio-economic and cultural resources which they can access. This constrains not only their agency but also their ideas, knowledge and self-consciousness of what can be done (De Haas, 2021). In fact, people’s access to economic (material), social (other people) and cultural (ideas and knowledge) resources shapes their ability to move, their preferences and aspirations (to move or stay), their choice of destination and their ability to find a job or housing (De Haas, 2021).

People’s life aspirations are defined as future plans, ambitions or goals – inspired and formulated in the present social context, with a varying degree of clarity or vagueness – which are affected by culture, education, personal disposition and imaginaries (Ray, 2003; Gutman & Akerman, 2008; De Haas, 2021).

Aspirations not only vary hugely across different social and cultural contexts but also tend to change as people move through their life course. In fact, people’s life aspirations and their perceptions of opportunities ‘here’ and ‘there’ may trigger a desire to migrate (Carling & Schewel, 2018). The extent to which changing preferences lead to migration aspirations depends on the degree to which people feel that their needs can be fulfilled (or not) locally (Carling & Collins, 2018).

In fact, migratory agency is often associated with the act of moving and settling in another country. Yet, real agency also involves the option to not act and to remain *in situ* (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). From this perspective, migration is defined by de Haas (2021, 17) as:

a function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures, in which migration aspirations are a function of people’s general life aspirations and perceived geographical opportunity structures [and] migration capabilities are contingent on positive (‘freedom to’) and negative (‘freedom from’) liberties.

Several studies have highlighted the ability of migrants to defy government restrictions and discrimination by migrating over closed borders, by buying in the services of a myriad of migration intermediaries and brokers, by forging new networks or by establishing communities and their own economic structures in destination countries (Agunias, 2009; Ambrosini, 2017). It is thus as unrealistic to depict migrants as victims fleeing situations of despair as it is to depict them as totally rational and free actors who make calculated cost–benefit decisions. This shows that it is thus crucial to simultaneously account for both structure and agency in understanding processes and experiences of migration (Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2018, 2019; De Haas, 2021).

With very few exceptions (see Wang & Collins, 2020), most studies on migration and aspirations to date have tended to focus on space, disregarding the role of time (this point is particularly emphasised by Erdal et al. in Chap. 2). Besides inevitably

involving geographical movements, migration³ is a crucial biographical event that often leads to disorder in one's timeline. In traditional accounts of migration, time is often understood as linear and compartmentalised in a series of *normal* stages, starting with pre-migration, followed by the migration itself and finishing with either settlement or return. This view assumes not only that migrants can foresee their future trajectories but also that they have complete agency over their migration decisions and can therefore plan their migration strategies accordingly (Carling & Collins, 2018). Even though migration projects are informed by migrants' aspirations and priorities, migration trajectories are subject to constant change, where decision-making is ongoing and ever-evolving (Cojocaru, 2016). The meaning of human action depends on its timing and particularly on its timeliness – namely, its occurring at the right or wrong moment according to personal understandings (Bourdieu, 1972). Yet, the management of a person's time to fulfil specific aspirations – at particular life stages – is not simply an individual matter, since it develops in a specific social context.

Migration aspirations cannot be separated from public temporal norms about appropriate life-course evolution and the right timing of migration (Wang & Collins, 2020). In industrialised countries of the Global North, the welfare state plays a crucial role in organising people's life courses in a life-long biographical pattern, since they define clear-cut situations (e.g. childhood for education, adulthood for work and old-age for rest) and roles – e.g. men have traditionally been assigned the role of head of the family and breadwinner, while women's time has been organised less rigidly, focusing more on the domestic sphere and care-giving (Guillemard, 2005). Most welfare states, however, have been assumed to address the needs of their citizens living within the geographical borders of the nation-state. Therefore, in the context of migration, aspirations are not only shaped by biographical events (e.g. (un)employment, divorce, having children and retirement) but also by current migration and geographically fixed welfare regimes which migrants must navigate to accommodate their life plans but which may not fit in the institutional context of the receiving country. States thus play a crucial role in the timing of migration by establishing, for instance, time-based eligibility requirements (e.g. age), time limits on visas or on how long asylum-seekers must wait until they are allowed to work. Under these circumstances, migrants need to either reshape their aspirations and tailor them to new circumstances or aim to fulfill them by moving on to another country (Ahrens et al., 2016; Scheibelhofer, 2018).

³In this article I include migrants whose migration status changed over time (e.g. from asylum-seekers and refugees to labour or undocumented migrants). Asylum-seekers might obtain refugee status or become undocumented. If they become refugees, many obtain the citizenship of the receiving country, while others might decide to move somewhere else and become labour migrants. Throughout all these different stages, people's aspirations change and adapt. By including migrants with different legal statuses, I was able to observe common aspects in their aspirations and the strategies they employed to fulfil them, which expand beyond migration labels. Therefore, throughout this article I use the term 'migrant' to refer to people who left their country of origin and are now living elsewhere. Only when the migration status is crucial to understanding certain arguments do I make use of the specific word that determines the legal status of the individuals involved.

Migration can lead to new conceptions of the temporality of the life course; however, the other way around, personal conceptions of the temporality of the life course often lead to migration (Coe, 2016). For example, migrants who intended to remain permanently in a host country can suddenly decide to return to the origin country or move elsewhere when certain life-course events happen (e.g. a sick relative back home, a divorce, educational needs, etc.). Similarly, receiving states, especially those with stricter migration and welfare regulations, have the power to impose their own temporal order on migrants' lives, preventing the latter from orchestrating their lives according to their own individual aspirations and socio-cultural expectations. The ways in which states – through their migration and welfare regulations – control the development of migrants' life courses often lead to the latter's further onward mobility to fulfil certain aspirations. Migration, thus, is temporally relevant because it is filled with uncertainty, a time during which migrants must continuously re-imagine their future aspirations and adjust their trajectories (Cojocaru, 2016).

Yet, to date, most approaches addressing the links between welfare and migration have looked mostly at the financial aspects, overshadowing the dynamic interplay with the individual life course (De Jong & de Valk, 2019). The life-course approach is built around five principles: life-span development, agency, time and place, timing and linked lives (Elder et al., 2003; Levy & Buhmann, 2016). Each of these principles is grounded in the idea that individual lives are embedded within transtemporal and translocal webs, stressing the dynamics that bind individual lives to structural conditions (Bailey, 2009). Indeed, the impact that macro-level circumstances – such as the welfare system and the migration regime – have on migration decisions may vary over a person's life (De Jong & de Valk, 2019). In this chapter, I follow Coulter and his colleagues' conceptualisation of life-course links and connections by distinguishing two levels: the micro level – where the principles of agency and linked lives highlight the fact that life trajectories are configured by a person's individual choices, ties and obligations with other people in their social networks – and the meso/macro level, where the principles of timing, lifespan development and time focus on the connections binding individual lives to structural conditions (Coulter et al., 2016).

Migrants' aspirations, as well as the national welfare and migration systems in which they are shaped, are not gender-neutral. Gender norms concerning the roles of women and men at a given time and place influence women's and men's aspirations (Elias et al., 2018). The cases presented in this chapter show that personal aspirations can also challenge gender norms. As feminist scholarship has demonstrated, migrants' aspirations are linked to socially gendered norms and expectations – e.g. men as the main breadwinners (Charsley & Ersanilli, 2019) and women as care-givers (Scheibelhofer, 2018) – which, at the same time, presents them with gendered challenges and opportunities (Carling & Schewel, 2018; Scheibelhofer, 2018). Migration involves some degree of dislocation from the cultural and social contexts in which gender ideals and practices are generated, which may result in a loss of power and status. In particular, work and family are key domains in which tensions around gendered aspirations arise (Charsley & Ersanilli, 2019). For

example, the downward mobility experienced by many migrants may result in them taking lower-status jobs or being unemployed, which undermines their ability to fulfil a breadwinner role (Charsley & Ersanilli, 2019). Under these circumstances, however, migrants might choose to be ‘strategically flexible’ with their gendered aspirations if the ‘trade off’ is agreeable to them – for example, accepting a job beneath their own or indeed their families’ aspirations, may reap other benefits, such as the ability to financially support their families (Batnitzky et al., 2009).

6.3 Data and Methods

The data presented in this chapter are part of a bigger research project, based on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork with Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands and the UK and their families back in Sudan, conducted during 2015–2016. It is important to point out that, although the full-time fieldwork, so to speak, finished by December 2016, I maintained an active contact with several respondents until the end of 2019. This multi-sited research was conducted using in-depth biographical interviews, informal conversations and observations with 21 and 22 respondents in the Netherlands and the UK, respectively, and with 19 of the migrants’ matched family members (mostly parents and siblings) in Sudan. Several respondents in the UK had moved from the Netherlands so that, in some cases, matched samples spanned across the Netherlands, the UK and Sudan. This allowed for a more complete view of how migrants navigate different social protection systems. Using a matched-sample methodology is especially suited to studying social-protection strategies for transnational families, since it allows the researcher to better understand the migrants’ family needs as well as their particular socio-economic and cultural contexts. This becomes crucial to understanding the management of gendered and generational expectations.

The research participants were recruited through multiple gatekeepers and snowball sampling with different starting points. The sample included roughly half men and half women of ages varying from their early 20s to their late 50s, including single men, married couples and divorced parents with children. Although many arrived in Europe with a tertiary-education degree, experiences of downward mobility were common. Interviews and observations were conducted by me in English and Arabic, in familiar environments for the respondents, mostly in their homes. The interviews lasted between 2 and 4 h, while observations ranged in duration, from attending specific events with the participants to spending a full week living with them in their homes. At the request of the respondents, most interviews were recorded through note-taking. The in-depth interviews and observations allowed me to construct the life histories of the different family members and to place individual experiences and attitudes within the extended family, capturing a living picture of family constellations across time and space.

Sudanese migration to Europe is a relatively recent and somewhat under-studied phenomenon (Abusabib, 2007). Prior to the late 1980s, a relatively small number of

doctors, engineers and academics started to arrive in Western countries, especially the UK (IOM, 2006). However, it was not until the Islamist military coup in 1989 that the arrival of Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers became more visible. Moreover, in the last 20 years, regional conflicts, increasing inflation and conflicts in neighbouring countries have resulted in thousands of Sudanese moving outside their country to be able to sustain their families (IOM, 2015). Thus, the Sudanese diaspora is a diverse group in terms of legal (e.g. documented labour migrants, family migrants [mostly women], refugees, asylum-seekers or undocumented migrants), ethnic and socio-economic status.⁴ Such heterogeneity allowed for a maximum variation sample, to investigate the role of different socio-economic and legal statuses in the social protection arrangements in which the migrants and their families ‘back home’ engage.

The selection of the UK and the Netherlands was based on three reasons. First, the different welfare and migration policy systems in these countries were expected to inform the role which more-or-less-restrictive policies have in the form of social protection that migrants engage in. Traditionally the Netherlands belongs to the so-called continental regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), which has been described as highly inclusive, structured and one of the most generous in the world for all its legal residents (Zorlu, 2011). The British welfare regime, however, is part of the Anglo-Irish or liberal group, characterised by means testing, little redistribution of incomes, modest social-insurance plans and the primacy of the market, which leads to greater social inequality (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In the last few years, however, the two countries have acted to reduce asylum numbers, and the associated costs, by adopting deterrent approaches to asylum support – e.g. restrictive access to benefits, employment and housing (Bakker et al., 2016).

Second, the fact that the Sudanese community in the UK is bigger and longer established than in the Netherlands was expected to have an impact on the way in which migrants engage in personal social networks to make their social protection arrangements. Third, many Sudanese living in the Netherlands have family members or close friends living in the UK. While some of them moved directly from Sudan to the UK, others moved after living in the Netherlands for some time. This allowed me to explore the links between intra-European mobility, welfare and aspirations throughout the life course.

6.4 Whose Aspirations?

The opening vignette of this chapter illustrated how a Dutch-Sudanese family makes use of their capabilities to move onwards and fulfil their life aspirations. The following paragraphs elaborate on other onward mobility cases which illustrate the intersection of two phenomena: the capability to fulfil one’s aspirations by moving

⁴The region of origin in Sudan was taken as a proxy for different socio-economic statuses.

onwards and the role of the family in these multi-sited strategies. The life stories of these men and women, their life-course needs and their onward-migration strategies were encountered in different forms and combinations in most Sudanese families in this research. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rich account of how mobility is used as a tool to fulfil the migrants' aspirations rather than to explain its prevalence. These particular cases also show how aspirations are shaped by a range of intersecting factors, including gender, the extent to which the migration is forced or voluntary and sociocultural understandings of what could or should be achieved by the migratory experience (Allsopp et al., 2014).

Like Noor and Ibrahim, in the UK I met many Dutch-Sudanese who had moved there for their children's education. Yet, sometimes finding the 'best place' for children was not so straightforward. Yassir was also a Dutch-Sudanese man who had moved to the UK in 2008 because of his children. Yassir and his wife, Boutheina, thought that it would be better for them to grow up in a bigger Muslim community with English as their main language. Soon, however, they found out that the UK was probably not the best place for their children. Shortly after arrival, one of Yassir's children started to misbehave in school and the teacher arranged for a meeting with Yassir. During this meeting, Yassir slapped his child when he was rude to the teacher. What Yassir saw as a form of discipline, the teacher saw as a form of abuse, as a result of which, after a long process, Yassir not only lost his job but also received a criminal record. In view of the difficulties of disciplining their children in the UK, something which, according to Yassir and his wife, was leading their children to grow up without values, in 2010 Boutheina and the children went to Sudan to put them 'on the straight path'. In Sudan, however, Boutheina found the same problem that they faced in the UK: while it was easy to control the girls, the boys spent the whole time on the streets. Therefore, in 2012 they returned to UK again where, at the time of the interview, their eldest son was about to be placed in a young offenders' institution.

Another significant number of my respondents, mostly men, had moved for a different, yet family-related, reason: being able to start a family. Ismail (45) is a good example. I met Ismail at an open-air music festival in the Netherlands in the autumn of 2015. He was a friend of one of my gatekeepers, who joined us at the event. Together with us there was also Eisam (Ismail's brother) and Samir who, as my gatekeeper explained, had spent 20 years unsuccessfully applying for refugee status in the Netherlands.

That very evening at the venue, Ismail told me how frustrated he was when, having finished his Master's in Agriculture at a renowned Dutch University, he had not been successful in finding a job in his field. Ismail had arrived in the Netherlands in 2003 as an asylum-seeker. He had spent over 5 years in and out of the Dutch asylum system, a time during which he was only allowed to work under very limited conditions. In the Netherlands, the basic needs of asylum-seekers are provided for by the state. Yet, their access to the formal labour market and education is quite limited (Bakker et al., 2016). Despite the difficulties, Ismail started to work picking apples for a few hours a week, as he saw this opportunity as a way to get to know the Dutch language and society, which would facilitate his future life in the Netherlands.

After several rejections and appeals, he was officially granted refugee status in 2008. Although Ismail received social assistance in the Netherlands, which was enough to sustain him, he had to combine this with different informal jobs, because he was still responsible for providing for his extended family back home. Even though the family is the core focus of the welfare state, welfare support is directed solely at citizens and legal residents of a particular country – in this case, the Netherlands. This becomes sometimes problematic for migrants and refugees, whose family members are often abroad, in countries where the state does not have a strong and institutionalised social-security system that covers its citizens' basic needs. For instance, whenever an emergency or event happened in Sudan (e.g. a wedding, a funeral or a medical emergency), Ismail, like many other respondents, was expected to support them financially even though the social-assistance money he received was not enough to take care of his extended family back home.

In our second interview, Ismail told me that he was going to Sudan for the first time in more than 12 years. Although he was happy to see his family again, he was also worried about his family's expectations and the huge financial investment. In fact, his trip to Sudan was going to be more than just a visit. In fact, at 42, Ismail was supposed to be getting married.

In January 2016, when I met Ismail again, he was already a married man. Whereas at our previous meeting he had always been concerned with finding a 'good job', his aspirations had now changed and his main priority now was to bring his wife to Europe. He was worried, however, that it was not going to be possible to do so in the Netherlands due to the country's immigration regulations, which required him to have at least a one-year contract with a minimum monthly salary of around €1500.

One month later, in February 2016, I met Ismail again and he told me he was going to Sudan. 'I bring her, and then what? ... without a job, without anything...'. With a mixture of resentment, anger and hopelessness, Ismail said that, after weighing up the different options, the best was to go back home, where he could maybe have some opportunities. At this time, moving to the UK was out of the question, especially when, after having been there several times to explore, he had realised that many of his Sudanese friends there were highly educated but had ended up working as security guards.

In the summer of 2017, I met Ismail again in the Netherlands. Despite his efforts, he had not succeeded in find a job in Sudan. Therefore, in the end he decided to pack up his things and move to the UK in September. Ismail was not looking forward to moving to the UK, where he would probably have to put an end to his career aspirations. Yet, 'in the UK they give you more space to do whatever you want', he said and that was his priority, especially because his wife was pregnant.

This is a paradoxical situation, since the UK has, in theory, a higher minimum income threshold for family reunion than the Netherlands (see Kofman, 2018). In practice, however, the experiences of the respondents in this study pointed to a much easier process. According to Ismail, for instance, all he was asked to provide when applying for family reunion in the UK were three monthly income pay-slips. 'If you have a contract, it is fine; otherwise, you can work with zero [hour] or open

contracts. I just need to show that I'm working and earning a minimum for three months', Ismail said. As he pointed out, as an EU citizen the most important thing was to have a National Insurance Number, a formal address in the UK and a British bank account. The strict and more controlled Dutch migration and welfare system thus becomes much more problematic for those men who wish to start their family in the way that was expected of them (e.g. marrying a relative from Sudan).

Ismail's circumstances were not unique. During my fieldwork in the UK, I encountered several Dutch-Sudanese men who, despite their wish to remain in the Netherlands, had had to move on to another country to fulfil their basic life-course aspirations, such as marriage or starting a family. Like Ismail, none of the other respondents in a similar situation aspired to move to the UK. On the contrary, they all talked fondly of the Netherlands and the values and benefits the country gave them. For these migrants, leaving the Netherlands and moving to the UK was mostly due to the life-course aspiration (and family expectations) to start their own family. In fact, as several respondents explained, they would probably not have left if they had been able to reunite their family in the Netherlands. The life aspiration of getting married and starting a family was therefore 'put on hold' by national structural constraints, which actually pushed many of these people to move to another country.

Since he arrived in the Netherlands as an asylum-seeker, Ismail's opportunities to fulfil his aspirations (e.g. deciding where to live, what to study and what to do for a job) had been constantly constrained by different state mechanisms. As forced migrants, refugees are not expected to have major aspirations to perform highly-skilled jobs, therefore many of them are pushed to do vocational training and start working as soon as possible. In fact, the personal aspiration to better develop oneself professionally was another of the main triggers for onward migration, especially for women. Hanadi's case is a good example of this. Hanadi (47) arrived in the Netherlands as an asylum-seeker in 1995 with her then husband. Their asylum process took over 2 years, during which time she had her first daughter. While Hanadi was waiting for her legal status she found that asylum-seekers were not allowed to work or volunteer, which was very frustrating for her, since her aim was to quickly learn Dutch and continue with her studies and her career as a lawyer. Once refugee status was granted, she soon realised that studying or working was not an option for her because she had a baby. In the Netherlands, it was only in the late 1980s that the traditional male-breadwinner model was restructured, bringing more women into the labour force. However, the new system created a 'one-and-a-half-earner' model, restructuring women's time while leaving men's untouched. The high childcare costs and employment being mostly part-time encourages mothers to withdraw from employment or to work part-time (Evertsson et al., 2009). This was a situation faced by many of my female respondents in the Netherlands who, due to the dispersal policy for refugees, often lived in small villages where they lacked the social networks which could potentially help with childcare. Moreover, the gender role of care-giver also aligned with the Sudanese ideal of child-rearing, which is mostly performed by women (see Serra Mingot, 2020b). For Hanadi, this situation increased her frustration of having to be at home, even though her aspiration was to

work and grow professionally. Therefore, 5 years later, once they obtained their Dutch nationality, they moved to the UK.

Looking back at her life in the Netherlands, Hanadi felt that the Netherlands, with a better social security system, more generous benefits and superior housing quality, allowed for an overall better lifestyle. Yet, it was in the UK that she had managed to accomplish her aspirations. Besides her feeling of discrimination in the Netherlands and the difficulty of the language, she pointed to the excessive control of the Dutch system as a major problem: ‘In the Netherlands, even if you want to work in a supermarket, you have to go through one year of training [...]. I was ambitious to do more and more but the system puts you down’.

In fact, while in the Netherlands neither she nor her husband had ever been able to have a formal job, in the UK Hanadi became a successful social worker (since 2008) and her (now) ex-husband had started his own company. As soon as she arrived in the UK she started English lessons. Although she would have liked to join a BA degree as soon as possible, she had to wait 3 years before she could apply for a study loan. While she waited, however, she worked as a catering assistant in a school, as a part-time interpreter for the NHS, and took a preparatory course to become a social worker. From 2005 to 2008 she studied full-time and worked part-time.

6.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The different cases presented in this chapter have illustrated how migrants navigate institutional limitations with family obligations, individual aspirations and capabilities. From the lens of an aspirations–capabilities framework, the chapter has investigated the links between aspirations and onward migration within the current European migration and welfare regimes. In labelling refugees as passive victims in need of help, these regimes largely ignore their agency and aspirations, thus creating a situation that perpetuates social dependence and enhances further migration as a way to fulfil life aspirations. Moreover, this idea that refugees are vulnerable victims and do not (or should not) have too many aspirations, together with the long asylum and integration processes and the strict migration and welfare regulations, lead to disruptions in their life-course aspirations.

The cases presented here have shown how migrants with a refugee background, rather than being passive actors, often have a clear set of objectives when they arrive in the first country of asylum – a combination of their own aspirations and their families’ expectations. In this regard, a multi-sited matched-sample methodology becomes crucial if one is to better understand how certain aspirations and expectations must be fulfilled. For example, conducting research with Noor’s and Ibrahim’s family members in the UK and Sudan allowed me to have a more nuanced understanding of (family) mobility decisions in order to fulfil intergenerational needs, both now and in the future (see Serra-Mingot & Mazzucato, 2019). The fulfilment of such aspirations and expectations, however, does not take place in a void. On the

contrary, they are shaped over time in response to the institutional structures in the country of migration, which have not been designed to accommodate the needs of transnational populations. Therefore, for many migrants, the timely realisation of personal aspirations collides with a series of institutional limitations in the receiving country, which sometimes leads them to move onwards to another country.

Drawing on the specific cases of Sudanese migrants across the Netherlands and the UK, this chapter has shown that both life aspirations and the capability to realise them are not simply an individual matter but often a family decision. The cases presented here have demonstrated that moving onwards is closely related to the family's needs at particular life-course stages. For some, after having spent many years waiting in the asylum process or trying to find a *proper* job, moving onwards seems to be the last resort if they are to be able to take their spouses with them and start a family. For others, moving onwards is seen as a means to improve themselves personally, which has a direct impact on their families. Finally, for yet others, moving to the UK is done for their sake of their children in order to give them a better education which will pay off in their old age.

This study has empirically illustrated the influence of structural factors on the onward migration decisions of refugees seeking to fulfil their personal aspirations. This has several implications for the study of aspirations and migration decisions. First, theories that address international (forced) migration as a one-time, life-long move are not appropriate when assessing the patterns of onward migration seen in this chapter. Especially in the cases of forced migration, refugees are often seen as devoid of agency and aspirations and are therefore expected to remain in the country in which they are given asylum or to move back to their home countries if the situation there improves. Yet, refugees have very clear educational and occupation aspirations, which are often put on hold or even abandoned altogether in the receiving country. Onward migration may thus become the means to achieve such aspirations. Therefore, in order to address these migration patterns, a life-course approach should be better integrated in conceptual models on international migration.

Although studies of onward migration have made invaluable contributions to the literature, the temporal aspect needs to be better developed. Following Ibrahim's and Noor's family for over 6 years allowed me to better understand the links between family members' aspirations, their onward moves and their capabilities to do so at the different migration stages. In fact, onward migration has mostly looked at migrants who move to a third country (in this case Sudan—the Netherlands—the UK). Yet, what this chapter has shown is that there might be a fourth and a fifth country and then a *return* to the first country of migration. In this case, it might be more useful to talk about multi-sited trajectories, which would avoid the idea of (more or less temporary) settlement that the concept of migration evokes.

Second, the chapter highlights the importance of family strategies and inequalities in the study of migration aspirations. This is an important contribution to the conceptualisation of onward migration which, to date, has mostly focused on the individual migrant. Multi-sited matched-sample ethnographic methods allow for a better understanding of 'the bigger picture' of onward moves. As the cases have shown, moving onwards for the sake of the family (be it directly or indirectly) has a

different impact on the various family members, depending on their age, gender and resources (e.g. financial, educational, social, etc.). In fact, to fulfil the aspirations of a particular family member, the others might suffer or have to make sacrifices. This is especially the case for the children in the family, who are often ‘moved around’ based on the parents’ ideas of what is actually best for them and where this can be best achieved. Addressing onward mobility from a family perspective rather than an individual one might provide relevant insights into intra-familial conflict and inequalities. Future research could address how aspirations within families are negotiated: who gets to decide where to go and when? And most importantly, who ends up suffering the consequences?

Finally, an important methodological remark must be made. As studies have highlighted, conducting research on onward or multinational migration presents researchers with three main methodological problems: complexity, multispatiality and extended temporality (Paul & Yeoh, 2020). In other words, understanding these complex migration dynamics, where different interconnected people (e.g. families) move across multiple countries, due to a myriad of life-course-related reasons, throughout a relatively long period of time requires a remarkable investment of time, money and personal effort. This particular study was only possible thanks to the generous funding throughout the 4 years that allowed the researcher to travel across different locations for a relatively long period of time. Unfortunately, however, this is often not the reality for many researchers, therefore alternative and less expensive methods should be further explored. Last but not least, the personal toll that this type of research takes on the researcher must not be underestimated. On the one hand, having to be constantly on the move from one location to another is highly disruptive (e.g. having to sometimes pay for two accommodations simultaneously, dealing with migration incompatibility issues). On the other hand, keeping in contact with the respondents throughout the years is emotionally and psychologically draining. While conducting research in an ethical manner has a great deal of importance in most current funding schemes, such ethical concerns should also consider and address the individual researcher’s physical and psychological needs.

References

- Abusabib, M. (2007). Sudanese diaspora in Sweden: Challenges and prospects for contribution to democratization and reconstruction effort in Sudan. In U. J. Dahre (Ed.), *The role of diasporas in peace, democracy and development in the Horn of Africa* (pp. 117–122). Media-Tryck Sociologen.
- Agunias, D. R. (2009). *Guiding the invisible hand: Making migration intermediaries work for development*. UNDP.
- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Allsopp, J., Chase, E., & Mitchell, M. (2014). The tactics of time and status: Young people’s experiences of building futures while subject to immigration control in Britain. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28(2), 163–182.

- Ambrosini, M. (2017). Why irregular migrants arrive and remain: The role of intermediaries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(11), 1813–1830.
- Bailey, A. J. (2009). Population geography: Lifecourse matters. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(3), 407–418.
- Bakker, L., Dagevos, J., & Engbersen, G. (2014). The importance of resources and security in the socio-economic integration of refugees. A study on the impact of length of stay in asylum accommodation and residence status on socio-economic integration for the four largest refugee groups in the Netherlands. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 15(3), 431–448.
- Bakker, L., Cheung, S. Y., & Phillimore, J. (2016). The asylum-integration paradox: Comparing asylum support systems and refugee integration in the Netherlands and the UK. *International Migration*, 54(4), 118–132.
- Batnitzky, A., McDowell, L., & Dyer, S. (2009). Flexible and strategic masculinities: The working lives and gendered identities of male migrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(8), 1275–1293.
- Borjas, G. J. (1999). Immigration and welfare magnet. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 17(4), 607–637.
- Bourdieu, P. (1972). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carling, J., & Collins, F. (2018). Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 909–926.
- Carling, J., & Schewel, K. (2018). Revisiting aspiration and ability in international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 945–963.
- Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2014). *The age of migration. International population movements in the modern world*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charsley, K., & Ersanilli, E. (2019). The ‘mangetar trap’? Work, family and Pakistani migrant husbands. *Normat*, 14(2), 128–145.
- Coe, C. (2016). Orchestrating care in time: Ghanaian migrant women, family, and reciprocity. *American Anthropologist*, 118(1), 37–48.
- Cojocaru, O. (2016). *Time and migration studies. Theoretical and methodological intersections*. University of Warsaw, Centre of Migration Research Working Paper No. 91/149.
- Coulter, R., van Ham, M., & Findlay, A. M. (2016). Re-thinking residential mobility: Linking lives through time and space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(3), 352–374.
- De Haas, H. (2021). A theory of migration: The aspirations–capabilities framework. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9(1), 8.
- De Jong, P. W., & de Valk, H. A. G. (2019). Intra-European migration decisions and welfare systems: The missing life course link. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(9), 1773–1791.
- Elder, G. H., Kirkpatrick Johnson, M., & Crosnoe, R. (2003). The emergence and development of life course theory. In T. J. Mortimer & M. J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 3–19). Plenum.
- Elias, M., Mudege, N., Lopez, D. E., Najjar, D., Kandiwa, V., Luis, J., Yila, J., Tegbaru, A., Ibrahim, G., Badstue, L., Njuguna-Mungai, E., & Bentaibi, A. (2018). Gendered aspirations and occupations among rural youth, in agriculture and beyond: A cross-regional prescriptive. *Journal of Gender, Agriculture and Food Security*, 3(1), 82–107.
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Polity Press.
- Evertsson, M., England, P., Mooi-Reci, I., et al. (2009). Is gender inequality greater at lower or higher educational levels?: Common patterns in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. *Social Politics* 16(2), 210–241.
- Gasim, G. (2010). Reflecting on Sudan’s higher education revolution under Al-Bashir’s regime. *Comparative & International Higher Education*, 2, 50–53.
- Ghorashi, H. (2005). Agents of change or passive victims: The impact of welfare states (the case of the Netherlands) on refugees. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 18(2), 181–198.

- Graham, M. (2002). Emotional bureaucracies: Emotions, civil servants, and immigrants in the Swedish welfare state. *Ethos*, 30(3), 199–226.
- Guillemard, A.-M. (2005). The advent of a flexible life course and the reconfigurations of welfare. In J. Goul Andersen & A.-M. Guillemard (Eds.), *The changing face of welfare: Consequences and outcomes from a citizenship perspective* (pp. 55–73). Policy Press Scholarship Online.
- Gutman, L. M., & Akerman, R. (2008). *Determinants of aspirations*. University of London, Institute of Education, Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning Report No. 27.
- IOM. (2006). *Sudan: Mapping exercise*. Retrieved from http://www.iomlondon.org/doc/mapping/IOM_ETHIOPIA.pdf
- IOM. (2015). *2015 Situation report on international migration, displacement and development in a changing Arab region*. International Organization for Migration.
- Klooster, E., Kocak, S., & Day, M. (2016). *Mbo en de stagemarkt, wat is de rol van discriminatie?* Retrieved from <https://www.kis.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/Publicaties/mbo-stagemarkt-rol-van-discriminatie.pdf>
- Kofman, E. (2018). Family migration as a class matter. *International Migration*, 56(4), 33–46.
- Levy, R., & Buhlmann, F. (2016). Towards a socio-structural framework for life course analysis. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 30, 30–34.
- Ludwig, B. (2016). 'Wiping the refugee dust from my feet': Advantages and burdens of refugee status and the refugee label. *International Migration*, 54(1), 5–18.
- OECD. (2016). *The Netherlands 2016: Foundations for the future*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264257658-en>
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2020). Methodological innovations in studying multinational migrations. *Geographical Research*, 58(4), 355–364.
- Quaglia, R. J., & Cobb, C. D. (1996). Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12(3), 127–132.
- Ray, D. (2003). Aspirations, poverty, and economic change. In A. V. Banerjee, R. Bénabou, & D. Mookherjee (Eds.), *Understanding poverty* (pp. 409–421). Oxford University Press.
- Scheibelhofer, E. (2018). Shifting migration aspirations in second modernity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 999–1014.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Anchor Books.
- Serra-Mingot, E. (2018). *Protecting across borders. Sudanese families across the Netherlands, the UK and Sudan*. University of Maastricht and Marseilles: University of Aix Marseilles.
- Serra Mingot, E. (2020a). Ageing across borders: The role of Sudanese elderly parents in the process of kin and home making within transnational families. In B. Pasveer, O. Synnes, & I. Moser (Eds.), *Ways of home making in care for later life* (pp. 249–269). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Serra Mingot, E. (2020b). The gendered burden of transnational care-receiving: Sudanese families across The Netherlands, the UK and Sudan. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 27(4), 546–567.
- Serra Mingot, E., & Mazzucato, V. (2018). Providing social protection to mobile populations: Symbiotic relationships between migrants and welfare institutions. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(13), 2127–2143.
- Serra Mingot, E., & Mazzucato, V. (2019). Moving for a 'better welfare'? The case of transnational SudaKnese families. *Global Networks*, 19(2), 139–157.
- Van Heelsum, A. (2017). Aspirations and frustrations: Experiences of recent refugees in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(13), 2137–2150.
- Wang, B., & Collins, F. (2020). Temporally distributed aspirations: New Chinese migrants to New Zealand and the figuring of migration futures. *Sociology*, 54(3), 573–590.
- Wimmer A., & Glick-Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks* 2(4), 301–334. Available from: <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/1471-0374.00043>
- Zorlu, A. (2011). *Immigrant participation in welfare benefits in the Netherlands*. Institute for the Study of Labor, Working Paper No. 6128.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 7

‘Somehow I’m an Expat and He’s a Migrant’: Intersectional Identities, Multiple Migrations and Family Decision-Making Amongst Middling Migrant Couples



Rosie Roberts

7.1 Introduction

Transnational career and family strategies involve ongoing negotiations of intra-family gender relations and broader socio-political contexts, barriers and opportunities. This chapter is told through the lens of the female member of two heterosexual couples. The first couple (Nahid and Amit) were born in Bangladesh and have, thus far, lived in five countries with multiple long-term return settlements to Australia, where they are currently living with their children (who were born in three different countries). The second couple (Sophie and Daniel) have lived in four countries as a couple and are both currently living in the UK with their two children, where they are going through the process of applying for British citizenship. Sophie was born in Australia, Daniel in Ghana; their first child was born in Australia and their second in the UK. Through an analysis of the experiences of these couples, this chapter traces the shifts in their pathways and decision-making. They have experienced a degree of career decline at significant life-course moments, such as having and raising children, which has resulted in gender-differentiated career progression. Yet while these couples experience structural and familial constraints in realising their professional aspirations through migration, they also seek to re-negotiate these tensions over time and through multiple migrations.

The analysis draws upon data from a longitudinal research project which examined the experiences of a group of migrants who were, at the time of the first research interview, tertiary educated, had professional experience in their fields and had links to Australia (as an origin and/or destination) at some point in their lives. The research aimed to understand specific forms of migration that are ongoing and unfinished rather than more traditional and permanent forms of migration that are characterised

R. Roberts (✉)

UniSA Creative, University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA, Australia

e-mail: Rosie.Roberts@unisa.edu.au

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*, MISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_7

139

by linear, settler narratives. The research also examined the relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of migrant lives and belonging. As skilled and educated migrants, the participants involved in this research can be described as relatively privileged. Yet their stories show that privilege intersects in complex ways with the shifting ‘value’ of educational and professional experience and with gendered, classed and racialised identities, transforming over time and in relationship to different settlement contexts. Participants’ experiences highlight the often contradictory and sometimes simultaneous experiences of flexibility and risk, social mobility and ongoing precarity, belonging and exclusion, over the course of their lives. This chapter contributes to an emerging scholarship on onward migration trajectories and the broad spectrum of experiences within the migrant ‘middle’ and the varied constraints and affordances this positionality can involve (Marcu, 2019; Scott, 2019; Robertson & Roberts, 2022).

Migrants’ sense of belonging to the places in which they live is often fragile, where their social positioning can frame them such that they are constructed as inadequate or non-citizens, both practically and emotionally. Through an intersectional lens, I offer a reframing of how decision-making can shift between partners relationally, temporally and spatially. The development of an intersectional research lens – that includes a range of interweaving social hierarchies (such as race, class, gender and religion) – emerged, in response to critiques, by ‘feminists of colour’ and transnational feminists seeking to understand the complex layering of ‘privilege and subordination of diverse men and women’ (Purkayastha, 2010, 30). This perspective has been generative for scholars examining contemporary experiences of migration where people’s lives are constructed through relations that span transnational contexts (Purkayastha, 2010). Multiple levels of people’s experiences are structured through such an environment of privilege and subjugation – their personal biographies; the way their ‘community’ experience and cultural context are shaped by race, class, religion, sexuality and gender amongst other social positionings; and the systemic hierarchies embedded within the fabric of social institutions (Collins, 1990, 227).

In this chapter I am seeking to make visible the ways in which intersecting positionalities shape and transform experiences over time, with some positionalities having greater or lesser salience at different times and in different places (e.g. religion and spirituality were important factors in Nahid’s migration story but not central to every relocation). I acknowledge that the chapter draws on the concepts of both racialisation and ethnicity and that participants’ interview excerpts often use both terms interchangeably. My usage does not seek to equate the two but, instead, takes the perspective that racialisation is more socially imposed and hierarchical whereas ethnicity can be more fluid and fragmented and encompass multiple attachments. To a greater extent, ‘ethnicity’ can be negotiated through individual preferences and identity practices, while also acknowledging that both terms (race and ethnicity) have been used to subjugate people. I similarly take the perspective that religion is commonly used to describe institutionalised behaviour and spirituality as the practices of an individual.

The first section traces some of the current literature that conceptualises middling and ongoing migration as well as research that brings together space, time and migration to examine the relational and familial dimensions of migrant lives and decision-making. I then explain the methodological approach adopted in my wider research project from which the empirical data in this chapter are derived. Through detailed case studies, the third section takes an intersectional and spatio-temporal approach to analysing the stories of these two couples in order to examine experiences of ongoing mobility, showing how structural constraints, emotions and varied social locations and identities intersect in shaping family roles and decision-making processes.

7.2 Middling Mobility, Onward Migration and Transnational Families

Conradson and Latham's (2005) early framing of middling migrants described them as usually, though not always, well-educated and as occupying a middle-class socio-economic status. While useful, this definition resulted in the demarcation of a wide segment of migrants, where more-recent studies have begun to show that, far from being a homogenous category, the 'middle' includes a diverse range of encounters, non-linear movements, varied migrant classifications, shifting class statuses and mixed experiences of temporariness and permanency (Scott, 2019; Robertson & Roberts, 2022). In addition to spatiality, the 'temporal turn' in migration studies increasingly contests binaries such as student/worker, tourist/worker, skilled/unskilled and temporary/permanent within contemporary migration policy, where experiences of the 'middle' can be conceptualised as dynamic and multiply constructed (Parutis, 2014; Rutten & Verstappen, 2014; Baas, 2017; Scott, 2019; Robertson, 2020). By understanding the pathways of middling transnationals over their life-course, a broader and more-mobile range of relationships with place and time than those attributed to isolated categories like managerial elites or lower-waged labour sectors becomes evident. Rather than a unified classification, this 'middling' space involves varied social locations and identities, socio-economic statuses, migration classifications and contexts. It also involves diverse mobility motivations including international education (Robertson, 2014), working holidays (Clarke, 2005), lifestyle (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016) and skilled employment (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014) as well as tactical mobility where people utilise a range of visa classifications, which may belie their skills and experience, in order to negotiate immigration governance structures in pursuing long-term settlement options (Roberts, 2021).

Through life-course approaches, an increasing recognition of much research on the experiences of middling migrants is the ways in which people navigate a range of spatial pathways that are ongoing and unfinished. As a consequence, a myriad of terms have been developed to capture the processual and open-ended nature of

mobility pathways, as pointed out by Ahrens and King in the opening chapter of this book. For example, the term ‘step-wise migration’ has been used to describe how individuals and families undertake migration pathways that involve a hierarchical dimension of decision-making, strategically relocating to destination countries, working their way up to a final migration location, ‘accumulating sufficient migrant capital in the process so as to eventually gain legal entry into their preferred destinations, often in the West’ (Paul, 2018, 1842; see also Conway, 1980). The intentionality and pre-determination of stepping through a range of destination countries distinguishes this form of migration from onward and ongoing migration trajectories, which often hinge more on chance and a real-time responsiveness to changing personal and political contexts. However, distinctions between on-going and step-wise can become blurred if we take account of shifts in decision-making and circumstances over time. What began as step-wise migration may transform into on-going or onward migration and may not be hierarchical but involve a series of returns to countries of origin when initial plans do not eventuate, new professional opportunities emerge or the needs of family transform plans (Roberts, 2021). These intermediate steps, which can result in multiple moves between countries over the life course, have been theorised through a variety of terms including onward and step-wise as well as serial, multiple and transit migration (Ossman, 2013; Ahrens et al., 2016; Paul, 2017).

Paul and Yeoh (2021) recently proposed a new umbrella term, ‘multinational migrations’, to capture such complex movements across multiple destinations, which are subject to people’s personal imaginations and aspirations as much as shaped by migration regimes and infrastructures. This framing valuably captures multiple national shifts over the life course, though it does not necessarily capture the multiple sub-national shifts (both physical relocations and shifts in migrant classification and subjectivity) that may occur as migrants pursue their migration ‘projects’. By contrast, ‘staggered’ (Robertson, 2014), ‘multi-stage’ (Mares, 2018) or ‘complex’ (Erdal et al. this book, Chap. 2) migration trajectories also refer to internal navigations between visa categories in a destination country which disrupt linear settler-citizen pathways. Staggered migration shows how migrants navigate not only multiple migrations between destination countries but also multiple migration statuses and locations within those migration countries (e.g. from international students, to graduate temporary workers, to permanent residents) or from regional to urban contexts, as migrants utilise migration policies to increase their chances for long-term residency options.

While terms and their emphases might differ, what is common across this body of research is that single-origin-single-destination models for thinking about movement have become increasingly problematised (see Ahrens and King, Chap. 1, this collection). People frequently adopt onwards international migration tactics, seeking to leverage the social, cultural, economic and networked capital they have accrued in successive destination countries to advance their prospects of moving to the next location. Sometimes this can be a conscious and deliberate strategy and at other times responsive to changing circumstances, experiences of exclusion and discrimination and chance events and opportunities, often negotiated within family

decision-making contexts. In particular, feminist accounts of migration have critiqued the literature that fails to acknowledge the role of gender in skilled labour mobility (Kofman, 2000; Nagel, 2005). Not only are the stories of skilled women not heavily featured within the dominant narratives of skilled and middling migration but also women have rarely been understood as active agents in migration decision-making over time and space. The literature on skilled migration was historically a story of male migration, with women occupying the status of the 'tied', 'accompanying' or 'trailing' migrant (Boyle et al., 1999; Cooke, 2001). As a consequence, many women experience migrations of 'risk' as they negotiate significant career disruption and, often, increases in domestic responsibilities. Kofman (2014) and Raghuram (2008) argue that attention must be paid to skilled women as movers in their own right as well as co-movers. People experience migration through positionalities shaped by complex intersections between classed, gendered and racialised identities. Differentially positioned migrants are able to enact varying degrees of temporal, spatial and relational agency to support entry, exit and stasis in destination countries and labour markets, by 'choice and constraint' (Buckley et al., 2017; McIlwaine & Bunge, 2019).

Research has long focused on experiences of place, examining the 'spatial reorganization of social relations' (Massey, 1994, 4) and how people, ideas, objects and relationships transcend borders and can be multiply located (May & Thrift, 2001; Walsh, 2009). More recently, there has been a shift to bring migration, intimacy and time together, to take account of the temporalities associated with transnational families and sustaining intimacy over time and at a distance, where separation can be prolonged and migration futures uncertain (Vogel, 2016; Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Robertson, 2020; Yeoh et al., 2020). A common theme in this literature is an examination of how relationships are maintained in the absence of face-to-face presence and the strategies for sustaining connections through emotional labour at a distance. This has included a focus on how domestic home life can be maintained through communication technologies, connecting geographically distant family members, as well as how this is impacted by social inequalities and the degree of network capital one possesses (Acedera & Yeoh, 2019). Unlike research that focuses on caring at a distance, this chapter examines geographically proximate romantic partnerships where couples usually migrate together, enmeshing people's lives, choices and futures through the interplay of individual and dual desires and aspirations and within immigration governance structures which dictate where they can go, when they can stay and under what conditions.

7.3 Methods

While the focus on 'couples' was not part of the initial design of the wider research project and therefore only two interviews were undertaken with both members of a couple, it was an area that emerged across all interviews as an important factor shaping migrant experiences and decision-making. For the two migration stories told in

this chapter, interviews were only conducted with the female member of the couple, who represented the experiences of both them and their partners. I acknowledge that not interviewing both members of the couple is a limitation. However, the longitudinal nature of this research, which included multiple interviews with the female member of each couple, did provide valuable insights into the perspectives of their male partners. In addition, centring female voices in narratives of migration is an important counter-response to the over-emphasis on the perspectives of male 'lead' migrants in many previous studies.

Participants in this research were tertiary-educated, had a minimum of 3 years' professional experience in their fields and had lived at some stage of their lives in Australia, which allowed for multiple relocations, attachments and identifications. Interviews began in 2010 and informal conversations were had with some participants annually, up to 2017. Participants were asked to provide retrospective narratives of their migration experiences in order to capture the shifts in their migration pathways and the differing contexts of their mobility, not just during the data-collection period but over the duration of their lives. In the first round of formal in-depth narrative interviews conducted in 2010, 33 participants were interviewed. They were then invited to participate in an additional formal interview in 2012 ($n = 25$) and again in 2017 ($n = 14$).¹

As participants were not situated in one location, interviews were conducted face-to-face and via Skype and email. Initial interviewees were invited to participate in the research by way of the researchers' personal and professional contacts and their networks, as well as through migrant community groups in Adelaide, Australia. At the time of the first interview, the participants ranged in age from their late 20s to their late 60s, with the majority aged between 35 and 45. The participants were born in a range of countries including Australia, Canada, India, China, Venezuela, England, Scotland, Poland, Bosnia, Germany, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Finland, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Brazil. They were also trained in a diverse range of occupations (e.g. as academics, teachers, scientists, managers, social workers, engineers, chefs and nurses and in finance and logistics, communications, public policy and international development). Participants spent between three and 10 years on temporary visas in a range of destination countries, often tactically transitioning across varied visa classifications (e.g. working holiday, student, spousal, bridging and permanent residency visas). The interviews were conducted in English, were audio-recorded and lasted between one and two hours; interview questions revolved around participants' motivations for migration and their migration histories over time and space, strategies for moving (visas, etc.) and future migration intentions. Participants were also asked to narrate their memories of arrivals and departures, their material practices of homemaking and belonging and the ways in which their social and cultural identities shifted over time and interacted with different relocation contexts. The

¹The third round of data collection was an addition to the original project, with a shorter timeline and reduced scope. The sample was largely determined by those who had the same contact details as those on file from our previous correspondence.

interviews were coded into emergent themes and all names used in the interview extracts are pseudonyms.²

7.4 'Not This Time, I Won't Go': The Enmeshing and Re-negotiation of Migrant Futures Over Time and Space

Through a spatial and temporal lens, Nahid and Amit's experiences both reinforce and problematise the label of the 'trailing spouse'. Nahid's ethnic background is Bengali. She was born and raised in a Muslim family in Bangladesh and attended English-speaking schools and colleges run by Christian-American missionaries, in Dhaka in East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh in 1971) and Karachi, in West Pakistan (now Pakistan). Nahid married in 1981 while she was studying for a Master of Arts at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh. After her marriage, she relocated to the United States on a spousal student (F-1) visa to join her husband, who was pursuing his doctoral degree at the University of Texas. She lived with her husband in the US from 1981 to 1982 and studied history at the University of Texas. After her husband's completion of a PhD in Petroleum Engineering, they moved to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia where they remained from 1982 to 1987. They moved so that he could take up a professional position in his field and improve their economic circumstances. In addition to employment opportunities, they were also motivated to leave the US because of the temporary nature of their student visas as well as the degree of culture shock they experienced between the American culture and their own. They relocated to Dhahran with their Bangladeshi passports, accompanied by a work visa. Nahid expressed how happy she was to be 'living in the Muslim world again' and that her stay in Saudi Arabia also gave her the opportunity to 'perform the *Umrah*', a pilgrimage to Mecca undertaken outside the prescribed *Hajj* period. For Nahid and her husband, the motivation to relocate to Saudi Arabia was based on cultural and religious factors as well as economic opportunities (Kabir, 2007). After 5 years, Nahid's husband decided that there was not enough employment security for them to stay in Saudi Arabia, which would force them to leave if his contract expired. While Nahid was reluctant to migrate away from a Muslim country, in 1987 they decided to apply to migrate to Australia on a skilled-migrant visa to try and secure a stronger economic future for their family. During this time she was the fulltime carer of their children. Nahid said it was her husband who largely determined the decision to move and that she complied with some reluctance because, like their first move to the US, they were again moving to a non-Muslim country, which would be culturally different from their original homeland. Nahid's husband

²With the exception of Nahid, who requested that her first name be used and who provided written consent to do so.

won a position working in the oil and gas industry and, after 3 years living in Brisbane and Adelaide, they gained Australian citizenship.

In 1990, Nahid and her husband and children moved again, this time to Muscat in Oman (carrying their Australian passports and a work visa for Oman). Their children were born in three different countries (Bangladesh, Australia and Oman) and all have Australian citizenship. As a couple, they have had different motivations for migration. For Nahid, the move to Oman was 'a spiritual move back to a Muslim country', allowing her to expose her children to their Islamic culture. For her husband, it was a 'financial move' prompted by an attractive job offer. However, there was long-term job insecurity in Muscat similar to that in Dhahran, where temporary skilled workers were only employed on a contract basis with no pathways towards citizenship and, after 5 years, they returned to Australia where Nahid pursued her Master's and PhD degrees. She described how she had never desired or aspired to undertake a PhD or work in academia.

My husband had a PhD and a 'good job'. Living in the Middle East I was a very happy young mum and I'm glad I did that at that time because that's the time when the children need you but, when we moved to Brisbane, my husband bought a house very close to the University and he said, you know, 'The university is very close, perhaps you can, if you want, pursue your studies'. At that time I had my Master's. I was not very happy with his comment. I used to think, 'Why is he telling me this, I don't want to go back to the university' but, when my youngest son started going to pre-school, then I started getting bored... I had so much time to myself... So I went to the university... and that's how I started... My husband is also very progressive-minded, which again helped me to come to where I am. But it also depends, there could be women who are very smart and who want to have a career but they may not be privileged to have a home environment which gives them the facility or the opportunity. So I think I have been very privileged in that respect.

For many participants in the broader project, family and career timelines intersected, with women often experiencing a career decline and a slowing of their previous professional trajectory whilst they undertook the majority of the family's childcare. In contrast, Nahid developed her aspirations for further education and professional development through her mobility. It was only once her children were in school that she began to seek these opportunities as she had more time on her hands. In 2004, Nahid and her family moved to Perth. In 2005, her husband moved to the UK for employment but this time Nahid did not relocate as she had developed 'strong connections' to Perth, both personally and professionally.

I had my work here and I said, 'Not this time, I won't go' because it's again another effort to establish the new place. It's the children, it's our self and it's just, it's our belonging.

While Nahid belonged to a patriarchally organised Muslim family, where her husband was the central decision-maker, her community and research activities also opened up paths for renegotiating circumstances over time. She secured a research position at a university in Perth (2005–2009) and her husband returned after 1 year working in the UK. While based in Perth, Nahid won a visiting fellowship at a university in the USA (August 2009–July 2011). Later, in 2011, she moved back to Australia to work as a senior research fellow (2011–2015). Nahid's migration story highlights how decisions around migration are linked to life-course transitions, such

as having children and deciding where to raise them. While the discourses around skilled and middling migration are often individualistic, suggesting that migrants design their own biographies and trajectories, in reality these decisions are often made in family contexts and in response to what countries offer in terms of visa conditions and economic opportunities as well as in relation to gendered, spiritual and emotional desires and expectations (i.e. the desire to raise their children in a Muslim environment). Through migration, many women experience significant career disruption and, often, increases in domestic responsibilities, despite their high level of educational and professional experience (Ho, 2006; Suto, 2009). This re-orientation of women away from paid work and towards the domestic sphere is one of the outcomes that may arise, at least temporarily, for skilled female migrants who relocate with their partners (Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007; Shen, 2013). While international mobility capital (e.g. international qualifications, networks and professional experience) is seen as a desirable attribute, it can also be highly gendered, reproducing the dichotomy of public masculinity (during early migrations, Nahid's spouse relocated for work or study) and private femininity (during early migrations, Nahid followed and undertook the majority of the childcare), even when they were initially a dual-career household in Bangladesh. However, while Nahid may have experienced some structural and gendered constraints in realising her professional aspirations through migration, she also exerts agency, negotiating the circumstances of their professional and family lives, over time and in different contexts. If we were to take a snapshot approach to Nahid's life, she may be constructed as a 'trailing spouse', particularly in her early migrations. As time passed, she gained educational capital (a Master's and a PhD in Australia) and developed stronger professional and personal ties to her home in Australia, making the decision not to move to the UK when her husband did. Their second migration to the US (2009–2011) was also instigated by Nahid so she could take up a research position. Shinozaki (2014) has described this as 'pendulum mobility' and 'taking career turns'. Nahid's experience shows how transnational migration, which involves career as well as cultural, spiritual and emotional considerations, requires continual negotiation rather than being fixed. While we cannot downplay the structural constraints (in terms of visa conditions) or gender and religious norms shaping family roles (in terms of who does the majority of the childcare), it is also important to make visible the agency of skilled women within family contexts where partners continually re-negotiate the changing expectations and needs of one another over time.

Over multiple interviews, Nahid often described how she took pride in her multiple identities – Bangladeshi (her heritage), Muslim (her religion/Muslim *umma*) and Australian (her nationality) – and believes that her transnational mobility has 'added to [her] self-esteem and feelings of stability', rather than dislocation, wherever she may live. In a seemingly contradictory way, it has been experiences of ongoing mobility that have allowed her to establish belonging in various destinations.

I would consider myself as a trans-migrant, who has lived in so many places, learned and cherished so many cultures. When I was in Saudi Arabia or in Oman, when I saw other people's cultures, I respected that, I still have that in my memory. That has added to my

career, in living in a new country, so it is a cultural capital not a cultural deficit. I would consider myself as a trans-migrant, whose roots are in Bangladesh, where I was born and raised, but along with it, with different places, carrying cultural capital. I have been very privileged and have interacted and integrated wherever I went.

Nahid views her multiple relocations as facilitating important resources and cultural capital that accumulate over time and space, travelling with her and facilitating easier integration into a range of settlement countries. She also sees the contributions and connections which she makes to local communities through her research work as another important factor in developing a sense of 'feeling at home' in multiple places. However, as she acknowledges, not everyone is as able to easily carry cultural capital across borders. Classed, racialised and gendered identities intersect with levels of education and professional experience in differing ways and during different migrations, influencing the degree to which one can claim and feel a sense of belonging. Nahid reflects on her relative privilege in relation to being able to consider Australia home.

I can consider it home because I'm economically assured. My husband has a good job. We live in a prestigious northern suburb. So we are living in a very privileged condition. We don't have to worry about financial matters or economic disadvantage. Our children went to private schools ...I think that acceptance should come from within. But if I was living in a ghetto, in an enclaved environment, if my husband didn't get a job, if my husband was an engineer but he was rejected for his colour or his name, my mentality, my temperament would have been very different. I would have been very non-accepting of other cultures. A lot of factors come into play. Or if I had, like, eight or 10 children or, say, a big family and my husband was very conservative, even if I had economic affluency, then I couldn't have interacted with [other communities as much], so it is a lot of factors that can help someone to carry on with their cultural capital.

There exists a complex interplay of multiple markers of difference – like 'race', class and gender – that construct social positioning and the degree to which one can convert social and cultural resources into economic resources and a sense of belonging in various migration contexts (Anthias, 2001). Nahid and Amit's experience has been one where their educational and professional resources have largely been valued in relocation contexts. Differential migrant incorporation depends on a range of intersecting factors or capitals – like language ability or accent and skill recognition – and the extent to which they can be carried across borders or that the economic position gained in one country can be utilised in another context (e.g. Nahid and her husband had enough economic capital from previous relocations to ensure their children had access to private education in Australia). Nahid also constructs new forms of migration-specific cultural capital over time and through multiple migrations (as a migrant who carries 'cultural capital' with her where her multiple interactions with diverse people and cultures allow for easier integration in new places). Nahid is able to mobilise these personal resources in improving their participation in labour markets and a sense of belonging in Australian society more generally. However, she acknowledges that had her family experienced racism, had fewer financial resources or lived in a more ethnically and economically 'enclaved' community, this may have influenced the degree of openness they felt towards other

cultures and communities and their sense of belonging in various settlement countries. As Riaño and Baghdadi (2007, 181) suggest, 'at any given time in an individual's working lifetime, class, ethnicity, and gender may in fact take on positive or negative roles, depending on the socio-spatial context'. As the second migration story shows, Daniel (though economically privileged, skilled and educated), experienced racism in the UK, which has intensified following Brexit and in the context of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

7.5 'It Was Like They'd Never Met a Man Who Has Had Caring Responsibilities Before': Entanglements of Gendered and Racialised Identities Within Family Contexts

Sophie was born in Adelaide, Australia. When she was 21, she travelled to Tanzania to work as a teacher for a year. She was motivated to live there because of a prior experience visiting Africa (Zimbabwe and Zambia) as an 18-year-old, during her first year of university. She loved the experience and knew that she wanted to return for a longer period of time once she completed her degree. When she returned to Australia and finished her undergraduate programme in Creative Arts, she enrolled in a Graduate Diploma in teaching so she could return to Africa as a qualified teacher. Once she finished her Diploma in Education, she was advised by friends and mentors to gain experience as a teacher in Australia first. While she took their advice and spent several years working in Australia, she didn't enjoy it and so used her profession to fund her way through a Master's in International Development with the intention of moving back to Africa. When Sophie finished her MA, she found it difficult to find work in Africa and her Master's supervisor encouraged her to apply for a PhD instead, where she focused her research on Ghana. During her candidature she said she 'got bored' and decided to relocate to London for a few years and take a break from study. In London, she started working as an academic support officer in citizenship and human rights at a university. Whilst there, her manager encouraged her to complete her PhD. However, visa complications changed her plans. Sophie travelled to the UK on a Working Holiday Visa rather than through a skilled visa category. The week she was due to apply for a skilled migrant visa, the UK announced changes to the 'points-based system', which subsequently 'created a backlog of six months for visa processing'. Sophie had run out of work rights on her WHV and had to leave. She did not want to return to Australia, saying 'I didn't feel like I belonged there anymore' so, instead, travelled to Ghana to undertake her doctoral research. While there, Sophie met and fell in love with her husband, Daniel. They decided to both move back to Australia because obtaining visas for the UK was seen as too difficult for them – although getting a visa to Australia for her then-fiancé proved just as difficult. They ended up living in Kenya for 8 months waiting

for their visas to clear. While Sophie loved living in Nairobi, Daniel did not, as she explains:

I realise now that my experience was different to his as I was always afforded a certain privilege as a white person in Africa. As a West African, he was more often discriminated against or insulted for not speaking the local language. So expectations on him were different to the expectations on me.

Their time in Nairobi underscores how couples can experience the same location in divergent ways – rather than a homogenous experience of belonging or not belonging, particularly as racialised identities interact with local contexts. Paradoxically, Sophie felt a sense of inclusion due to her ‘whiteness’ and not being a local, whereas Daniel was discriminated against for not being local enough. While living in Kenya, Sophie was also pregnant with their first child, which gave them the impetus to move back to Australia, as the medical appointments were too expensive and Daniel’s visa had finally been approved. The ability of Sophie to draw upon her Australian citizenship, allowing her and Daniel to return to Australia to make use of cheaper healthcare, intersects with academic discussions about transnational social protections (Faist & Bilecen, 2015). The cross-border social protection that Sophie and her family are afforded, as Australian citizens, to some degree reinforces existing inequalities previously framed within national welfare states around who is able to choose where to access the best and most affordable healthcare and education.

After 3 years in Australia, Sophie applied for and accepted an international development role in the UK. They both migrated there on a Tier Two Skilled-Migrant Visa. As well as deciding to relocate to access professional opportunities, she described how they were motivated to move to the UK because they felt it was more socially progressive and globally connected. Sophie said they were also motivated to leave because of Daniel’s experiences of racism in Australia.

My Ghanaian husband had some difficult encounters with racism in Australia – both outright and everyday racism – which was starting to wear thin. I also didn’t like my mixed-race daughter always being the only brown person in the room, which was probably mainly due to the work and social circles we seemed to fall into, as there are clearly a lot of brown people in Australia.

Feelings of racism from the host society resulted in the strengthening or redirecting of affective attachments to transnational social fields and destinations outside of Australia, in the hope that the same issues would not persist. While Sophie described motivations for relocation that included work opportunities, the decision to move was also closely intertwined with the personal and emotional experiences of her family. For her husband and her children, Sophie wanted to live in a place where she felt cultural and linguistic diversity was a more accepted and normalised experience. She felt that the UK presented this opportunity although she also acknowledges the recent return to forms of nationalist rhetoric, in a post-Brexit England, aimed at tightening borders and restricting immigration. Sophie’s experiences also show how ‘making homes’ varies at different life stages. When she was living overseas as a single person on a Working Holiday Visa, much of her sense of belonging was connected to the social group around her and having like-minded people to

'have fun and experience that life with'. Now, as a mother and wife, she feels it is her small family unit that 'makes a home together' wherever they might be living. She makes migration decisions based on whether the location they live in is 'open and accepting' of her children.

I am a white Australian, with mixed-race children. I believe the fact that my children are mixed race is important to my migration decisions so, although it is their ethnic identity, it is also part of my decision-making around new homes and locations.

Sophie and Daniel have now been living in the UK for 6 years. Her work (focused on improving educational outcomes for people in Africa) previously required her to travel to either Africa or the US on a monthly basis. Because of the frequency of Sophie's work-related travel, her husband has been the primary carer for both of their children for the majority of their early years, though he is also highly skilled and educated (a Master's degree in Business). Sophie reflected on the intersections between employment and childcare for both Daniel and herself:

The issues around the gender pay gap cannot be resolved outside of the domestic labour issue. Men need to receive the same rights as women to parent their children. Women need to receive the same rights as men to pursue their careers. I think this intersects with gender more than migration. But there is some overlap. For example, because I was the skilled migrant (sponsored by my employer), Daniel had to move with no job and look after [our daughter] when we first moved to Oxford. At his first job interview they asked him thousands of questions on how he felt about taking a long break for caring responsibilities and they seemed to focus on it more than on his actual skills and work experience. It was like they'd never met a man who has had caring responsibilities before.

When skilled migrant women in the broader research project described their employment experiences, they said that their time out of the workforce caring for their children left 'a huge gap in their CV' which lowered their chances of employment and slowed their career progression. They were penalised by employers for not having recent experience or skills. Discussion of childcare, key to explaining this gap, was rarely acknowledged or discussed by their prospective employers. However, in reverse, Daniel wanted to discuss the relevancy of his skills and experience with prospective employers but they were instead fascinated by the time he had taken to care for their children – because it was seen as transgressing traditional gender norms related to the labour of childcare. This may not have increased his employment chances but it did make visible the important role of 'caring' in a way that women in the broader project did not experience in employment discussions. Yet Sophie has also suffered professionally because she is a mother. She describes how her employer has questioned her ability to undertake significant overseas travel, making a judgement that she should be at home with her children more – even though Sophie and Daniel negotiated within their family unit that he would take on the role of primary carer. For Sophie, employers saw an irreconcilable tension between being a 'good employee' and a 'good mother' because her role required significant overseas travel, an assumption that is unlikely to be applied in the same way to men, in studies of male-led migration.

Sophie also acknowledges the differential privileges afforded to her as opposed to her husband. She reflected on the terminology associated with particular migrant

bodies and the level to which people can claim belonging or the right to long-term residency. Now living in the UK, they often joke about how Sophie is described by those around her as an 'expat' whereas Daniel is described as a 'migrant'.

The terminology around expats and migrants in the UK does seem to have a rather racist ideology around it. People justify the language saying that expats intend to leave but I think my husband expresses a desire to leave more than I do and somehow I'm an expat and he's a migrant.

In this excerpt, the concept of belonging can be analysed in two ways. Firstly, it can be used to understand how migrants negotiate their citizenship and belonging at an individual level, how they understand their positioning in society and exert agency in their relocation strategies (i.e. Sophie wants to stay in the UK and sees herself as a migrant whereas Daniel wants to leave and feels more like an expat). Secondly, it can be used to understand how the nation – through government policy and media representations – positions migrants through discourses of belonging and citizenship, inclusion and exclusion, which are attached to different migrant classifications and terms (i.e. the perception that Sophie, as a white woman, is a skilled and educated 'expat' who will eventually return home or move to another country while Daniel, as a black Ghanaian man, is positioned as an unskilled 'migrant' who is seeking long-term residency and who, it is assumed, will not leave). While 'expatriate' literally refers to 'a person who lives outside their native country', the term is controversial because in contemporary usage it is largely reserved for white Western migrants (Fechter & Walsh, 2010). Both terms – 'expat' and 'migrant' – make assumptions about class, 'race', occupation and skill. Scholars have suggested that the social positioning of individuals around racial and gendered identities can powerfully shape their 'differential inclusions' in relation to belonging (Ho, 2009). Not only does this have an impact on the physical mobility opportunities and levels of security, permanency and citizenship that individual migrants can expect but it also has an impact on the way in which some migrants are perceived by others, which does not correspond with how they view themselves, their intentions and their motivations for mobility.

This example also highlights the inequality of passports – how the white, western and educated member of this couple is positioned by broader society as a 'knowledge migrant', who passes relatively smoothly through immigration governance structures and across borders and who may desire to leave again, while the other member is viewed (incorrectly) as less-educated and as holding the 'wrong' visa; who must, according to that society, have a pre-determined desire to stay (Wagner, 2014). Sophie's international mobility experience and capital can be more easily mobilised as resources for seeking employment, yet Daniel's positioning as a migrant is racialised in a way that diminishes his mobility capital (as equally skilled and educated) so that, rather than a resource, it also becomes a source of discrimination. As Lundström (2017) similarly argues, the framing of the 'migrant' as a pre-constituted non-white, non-privileged, non-Western subject, who is seeking permanency in the West, is contrasted against other migrant types, such as 'expats' and 'lifestyle migrants', as white, privileged, Western and more likely to be engaged

in ongoing mobility pathways, thereby concealing other migrant subjects who do not fit this image. Both Lundström (2017) and Knowles and Harper (2009) suggest that, while the literature has persistently examined the interconnections between race and migration, it has simultaneously disconnected whiteness and migration within migration studies. Accounting for whiteness and other forms of privilege (like gender and class) in accounts of migration is necessary if we are to understand the varied forms of social and cultural capital that migrants possess and the ways in which these resources are reconfigured, utilised and/or diminished over time and in different settlement contexts, facilitating or constraining people's migration experiences.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how multiple relocations over a person's life influence the intimate lives and decision-making of middling migrant couples as they negotiate the coordination and alignment, divergence and disruption, of expectations and needs. Participants' life courses cannot be fully understood as individual trajectories but as relational mobility projects that involve people in complex entanglements with family, intersecting privileges of gender, class and race, governmental policy, political contexts and embedded and emotional geographies of home and attachment that continually transform over time. Through the stories of two couples, two key arguments are made in relation to middling migration. Firstly, that the experience of middling migration is highly differentiated and often involves ongoing migrations, which necessitate longitudinal and life-course research processes in order to bring these dynamics into view. Through the stories of Nahid, Amit, Sophie and Daniel, we can see how the 'middle' encompasses a diversity of migration statuses (labour migration, spousal, international education) and varied social positionalities that become more or less salient in different migration contexts and under changing social and political circumstances (e.g. Daniel's experiences in the UK following Brexit). Secondly, I argue that not only does the catch-all of 'middling' encompass diverse experiences but that this diversity is intensified within migrant couples, where an individual's migration status, decision-making and social positioning are simultaneously entangled with the experiences and positioning of their partner. It is not just that these two couples provide two different renderings of middling migration when compared to one another but that their experiences also show that the couples themselves cannot be viewed as a unified entity/subject either.

In addition, I have suggested that we need to understand not only that women are movers in their own right but also that the dynamics of the decision-making do not exist at two ends of a spectrum (those who lead and those who follow in the migration process). While, with the first couple, mobility is shown to be highly gendered, I also argue that temporal perspectives illuminate how mobility can be more varied and complex than 'men as the primary or lead migrant' and 'women as the tied migrant'. There are moments of contestation and renegotiation even when situated

within traditional/patriarchal structures of social life (Toader & Dahinden, 2018). Decision-making is complex and continually shifts along this spectrum as a result of intra-family circumstances and priorities as well as the conditions of migration policy in various destination countries. Nahid's and Daniel's experiences show that women (and, less frequently, men) may migrate through family migration streams, which overshadow their education and experience. This is particularly the case for women who enter the country as an accompanying spouse and often intersects with caring responsibilities, as women gravitate away from the workforce post-migration to care for children. For Nahid, focusing on childcare responsibilities post-migration was a responsibility she actively claimed for herself, though it did have an impact on her career progression in the short term. When one member of a couple feels a sense of belonging or experiences upward social mobility as a consequence of migration, the other member of that couple may simultaneously experience social exclusion or slowed career progression. However, such experiences should not be read as static or fixed but, rather, as fluctuating over time and in different settlement contexts. Through a focus on 'intimate chronomobilities', recent research is now arguing for a closer examination of how romantic partnerships 'entangle individuals' mobility timings and futures with their partners in terms of choices and desires, but also in terms of the possibilities afforded through governance structures' (Robertson, 2020, 692). Taking a longitudinal approach to understanding migrant practices of 'the middle', allows for a deeper understanding of how people renegotiate career strategies and transnational family lives spatially and temporally in a 'fine balancing act' within shifting intra-family gender relations (Shinozaki, 2014).

As Sophie's and Daniel's story shows, different types of migrants fit (or do not fit) racialised constructions of national belonging, where one member of the couple can carry institutionalised and embodied capital across national borders more easily than the other. Anthias (2001, 634) utilises the term 'translocational' to describe the complex matrix of positionality experienced by those who are 'at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialisation'. Migrant couples can experience concurrent processes of belonging and non-belonging within their everyday lives, as family units reconfigure identities and attachments across time and space. The intimacies and emotions associated with migration become more complex when examining the lives of migrant couples, where the bringing together of two lives both necessitates and complicates a 'synchronization of expectations and needs, of communication and understandings, of livelihoods and care' (Wagner, 2014, 81). Racialised issues did not come to the fore in Nahid's account to the extent that they did for Daniel. There may be multiple contextual factors at play that have shaped their experiences in differing ways. As Nahid reflected, she believes part of the reason why their family did not experience forms of racism in the way that she has seen happen to other Bangladeshi migrants in Australia was their class positioning. They were able to transport their class status in Bangladesh to Australia and accumulated additional economic and cultural capital through their multiple migrations outside of these two countries. What is interesting is that both couples could be described as middling migrants yet Daniel's and Sophie's middle-classness could not transcend the

racialised social positioning of Daniel as someone who was presumed to be a low-waged migrant seeking long-term settlement security in the UK.

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, it is clear that, within migration research, single-origin-single-destination models for thinking about movement have become increasingly problematised. People frequently adopt onward international-migration tactics, seeking to leverage the social, cultural, economic and networked capital they have accrued in successive destination countries to advance their prospects of moving to the next location. Perhaps it does not matter so much what terms we employ to define this multiplicity and complexity in conceptual terms (as staggered, on-going, step-wise or multi-stage) but more that our research, methodologically, is able to capture this complexity through multi-sited, narrative-driven, longitudinal designs which are attuned to relational, temporal and spatial dynamics. This openness is critical to examining any form of mobility yet is particularly so when researching experiences of middling migration. The theoretical breadth of 'the middle' can erase the complexity and diversity of experiences within it because of its inherent expansiveness. Much more empirical research is needed that captures the complexity of middling-migrant pathways that are often ongoing, as well as the shifting positionalities and subjectivities of migrants, further developing our understanding of the variable spaces between temporariness and permanency, choice and constraint, flexibility and precarity, inclusion and exclusion. The experience of onward migration and therefore the presence of multiple relocation countries, each with different structures of opportunity and marginalisation, challenges migration researchers to consider more closely the transnational, intimate and relational subjectivities of people.

References

- Acedera, K. A., & Yeoh, B. (2019). 'Making time': Long-distance marriages and the temporalities of the transnational family. *Current Sociology*, 67(2), 250–272.
- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Anthias, F. (2001). New hybridities, old concepts: The limits of 'culture'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24(4), 619–641.
- Baas, M. (2017). The mobile middle: Indian skilled migrants in Singapore and the 'middling' space between migration categories. *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, 1(1), 47–63.
- Benson, M., & O'Reilly, K. (Eds.). (2016). *Lifestyle migration: Expectations, aspirations and experiences*. Ashgate.
- Boyle, P., Cooke, T., Halfacree, K., & Smith, D. (1999). Gender inequality in employment status following family migration in GB and the US: The effect of relative occupational status. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 19(9–11), 109–143.
- Buckley, M., McPhee, S., & Rogaly, B. (2017). Labour geographies on the move: Migration, migrant status, and work in the 21st century. *Geoforum*, 78, 153–158.
- Clarke, N. (2005). Detailing transnational lives of the middle: British working holidaymakers in Australia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2), 307–322.
- Collins, P. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

- Conradson, D., & Latham, A. (2005). Transnational urbanism: Attending to everyday practices and mobilities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2), 227–233.
- Conway, D. (1980). Step-wise migration: Toward a clarification of the mechanism. *International Migration Review*, 14(1), 3–14.
- Cooke, J. (2001). 'Trailing wife' or 'trailing mother'? The effect of parental status on the relationship between family migration and the labor-market participation of married women. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 33(3), 419–430.
- Faist, T., & Bilecen, B. (2015). Social inequalities through the lens of social protection: Notes on the transnational social question. *Population, Space and Place*, 21(3), 282–293.
- Fechter, M., & Walsh, K. (2010). Examining 'expatriate' continuities: Postcolonial approaches to mobile professionals. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(8), 1197–1210.
- Ho, C. (2006). Migration as feminisation? Chinese women's experiences of work and family in Australia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 23(3), 497–514.
- Ho, E. (2009). Constituting citizenship through the emotions: Singaporean transmigrants in London. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 99(4), 788–804.
- Kabir, N. (2007). Why I call Australia 'home'? A transmigrant's perspective. *Media and Culture*, 10(4). Retrieved from <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0708/15-kabir.php>
- Knowles, C., & Harper, D. A. (2009). *Hong Kong: Migrant lives, landscapes, and journeys*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kofman, E. (2000). The invisibility of skilled female migrants and gender relations in studies of skilled migration in Europe. *International Journal of Population Geography*, 6(1), 45–59.
- Kofman, E. (2014). Towards a gendered evaluation of (highly) skilled immigration policies in Europe. *International Migration*, 52(3), 116–128.
- Lundström, C. (2017). The white side of migration: Reflections on race, citizenship and belonging in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 7(2), 79–87.
- Marcu, S. (2019). The limits to mobility: Precarious work experiences among young eastern Europeans in Spain. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 51(4), 913–930.
- Mares, P. (2018). *All work, no stay? Is the ideal of Australia as a nation of permanent settlement giving way to a new reality of Australia as a guest-worker society?* <https://www.sbs.com.au/allworknostay/>. Accessed 2018, August 18
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. University of Minnesota Press.
- May, J., & Thrift, N. (Eds.). (2001). *Timespace: Geographies of temporality*. Routledge.
- McIlwaine, C., & Bunge, D. (2019). Onward precarity, mobility, and migration among Latin Americans in London. *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, 51(2), 601–619.
- Nagel, C. (2005). Skilled migration in global cities from 'Other' perspectives: British Arabs, identity politics, and local embeddedness. *Geoforum*, 36(2), 197–210.
- Ossman, S. (2013). *Moving matters: Paths of serial migration*. Stanford University Press.
- Parutis, V. (2014). 'Economic migrants' or 'middling transnationals'? East European migrants' experiences of work in the UK. *International Migration*, 52(1), 36–55.
- Paul, A. M. (2017). *Multinational maids: Stepwise migration in a global labor market*. Cambridge University Press.
- Paul, A. M. (2018). Stepwise international migration: A multistage migration pattern for the aspiring migrant. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(6), 1842–1886.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. (2021). Studying multinational migrations, speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 3–17.
- Purkayastha, B. (2010). Interrogating intersectionality: Contemporary globalisation and racialised gendering in the lives of highly educated south Asian Americans and their children. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 31(1), 29–47.
- Raghuram, P. (2008). Migrant women in male-dominated sectors of the labour market: A research agenda. *Population, Space and Place*, 14(1), 43–57.
- Riaño, Y., & Baghdadi, N. (2007). Understanding the labour market participation of skilled immigrant women in Switzerland: The interplay of class, ethnicity and gender. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 8(2), 163–183.

- Roberts, R. (2021). 'His visa is made of rubber': Tactics and risk under conditions of multi-stage migration to Australia. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 22(3), 319–338.
- Robertson, S. (2014). The temporalities of international migration: Implications for ethnographic research. In S. Castles, D. Ozkul, & M. Cubas (Eds.), *Social transformation and migration: National and local experiences in South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Australia* (pp. 45–60). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robertson, S. (2020). Suspending, settling, sponsoring: The intimate chronomobilities of young Asian migrants in Australia. *Global Networks*, 20(4), 677–696.
- Robertson, S., & Roberts, R. (2022). *Rethinking privilege and social mobility in middle-class migration: Migrants 'in-between'*. Routledge.
- Rutten, M., & Verstappen, S. (2014). Middling migration: Contradictory mobility experiences of Indian youth in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(8), 1217–1235.
- Ryan, L., & Mulholland, J. (2014). Trading places: French highly skilled migrants negotiating mobility and emplacement in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(4), 584–600.
- Scott, S. (2019). New middle-class labor migrants. In S. Ratuva (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of ethnicity* (pp. 1729–1748). Springer Singapore.
- Shen, H. (2013). Mind the gender gap: Despite improvements, female scientists continue to face discrimination, unequal pay and funding disparities. *Nature*, 495, 22–25.
- Shinozaki, K. (2014). Career strategies and spatial mobility among skilled migrants in Germany: The role of gender in the work–family interaction. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 105(5), 526–541.
- Suto, M. (2009). Compromised careers: The occupational transition of immigration and resettlement. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation*, 32(4), 417–429.
- Toader, A., & Dahinden, J. (2018). Family configurations and arrangements in the transnational mobility of early-career academics: Does gender make twice the difference? *Migration Letters*, 15(1), 67–84.
- Vogel, E. (2016). Ongoing endings: Migration, love, and ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(6), 673–691.
- Wagner, L. (2014). Rhythms of a transnational marriage: Temporal topologies of borders in a knowledge migrant family. *Etnofoor*, 26(1), 81–105.
- Walsh, K. (2009). Geographies of the heart in transnational spaces: Love and the intimate lives of British migrants in Dubai. *Mobilities*, 4(3), 427–445.
- Yeoh, B., Somaiha, B. C., Lam, T., & Acedera, K. (2020). Doing family in 'time of migration': Care temporalities and gender politics in Southeast Asia. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(6), 1709–1725.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 8

Multinational Migration in the Global South: Complex and Non-linear Trajectories of Senegalese Migrants in Brazil



Philipp Roman Jung

8.1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, Brazil has gradually taken a complex and important, although in quantitative terms peripheral, position in Senegalese migrations and is more widely spoken of in the context of Senegalese mobilities. Higher education students were the first to migrate in small numbers to Brazil in the 1990s. This migration was partly promoted through government programmes and, although later movements are barely connected to it, a clear separation is not feasible. The second important movement involved Brazil as a transit country for migration to Argentina, which started in the late 1990s (Minvielle, 2015; Vammen, 2019). Due to the absence of an Argentinian diplomatic mission in Senegal, migrants instead applied for a visa at the Brazilian Embassy in Dakar, with the objective of using the country as an entry point in South America. There are roughly 3000 Senegalese living in Brazil's southern neighbouring country and many of them entered Argentina by crossing the border from Brazil (Kleidermacher, 2016).

Although there have been isolated cases of Senegalese settling earlier in Brazil, the available statistics as well as interviews and conversations with Senegalese immigrants and Brazilian migration scholars all indicate that the number of Senegalese residing in South America's biggest country started to grow slowly around 2008 and increased strongly between 2013 and 2016 (Jung, 2019). Some 824 residence permits were issued for Senegalese in Brazil between 2010 and 2017. The statistics for asylum requests by Senegalese since 2010 indicate a higher number and greater increase of Senegalese immigration – in total, 8486 Senegalese applied for asylum between 2010 and 2018 (BRASIL, 2020). However, for Senegalese, the likelihood of gaining asylum is very small. Only 14 out of 5281

P. R. Jung (✉)

Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning (IGOT), Universidade de Lisboa,
Lisbon, Portugal

e-mail: pjung@campus.ul.pt

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*,
MISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_8

159

requests had been granted by May 2017.¹ Nevertheless, most Senegalese use this process to gain temporary permission to stay and work in Brazil and, later, to try to get a residence permit through other procedures. Special situations or cases omitted from the law were the legal frame for most residence permits issued to Senegalese between 2010 and 2015 (Silva et al., 2018). In November 2019 the Brazilian government decided to allow Senegalese with an open asylum request to apply for a residence permit through a special procedure (BRASIL, 2019). It is important to point out that the statistics only represent those who are officially registered in Brazil or have applied for asylum. ‘Illegal’ entries and Senegalese who had already left the country are not captured by these statistics. Consequently, only a rough estimate of the Senegalese community is possible.

Senegalese immigration in Brazil is closely linked to economic and geopolitical developments on different scales, including Brazil’s high national economic growth during the first decade of the twenty-first century and the 2008 economic crisis – with its strong impact on countries like Spain and Italy, both important destinations for Senegalese migrants (see Flikweert et al. Chap. 4). Moreover, this period is characterised by increasing difficulties for Senegalese in migrating, whether ‘regularly’ or ‘irregularly’, to Europe due to restrictive immigration policies and migration control (Adepoju et al., 2009; Finotelli & Sciortino, 2013; Casas-Cortes et al., 2014). Many of my interviewees stated that they applied first for a visa for a European country or the USA but their requests were denied. Brazil, together with Cape Verde and Argentina, from where migrants moved later to Brazil, were considered as alternatives for emigration. Some authors also suggest that Brazil is an important transit point for migrants trying to move to North America (Marcelino & Cerrutti, 2011; Minvielle, 2015).

Brazil serves as a hub for Senegalese multinational migration, both as a destination and as the origin of movements that are connected to a variety of regions, including countries in Africa, Europe and South and North America. Some Senegalese pioneers did not come from their home country but from their last country of residence. These multinational migrations are an important factor which helped to put Brazil on the ‘migratory map’ of Senegalese. They are facilitated through and shaped by transnational networks and ties that connect people from different national backgrounds at different places but are, simultaneously, the cause for the formation of these transnational spaces (Faist, 2000) by creating connections to new places. These movements question the dichotomy of country of origin and destination in migration studies and the assumption of migration as a unique and linear act, which starts with the development of migratory aspirations in the country of origin and ends with the arrival and integration at the destination.

This chapter focuses on multinational migrations by Senegalese migrants in Brazil, addressing, on the one hand, already-occurred movements from Cape Verde and Argentina to Brazil and, on the other, aspirations to migrate further – to Europe,

¹Interview with Diego Nepomuceno Nardi, Durable Solutions Assistant at UNHCR Brazil (09 May 2017, Brasília).

North America or Australia. The study draws on empirical data resulting from qualitative, ethnographic fieldwork in four very different Brazilian cities: São Paulo, Praia Grande, Caxias do Sul and Passo Fundo. The results show how transnational ties and practices, involving a plurality of actors and places, influence multinational migration. The study thus questions not only the focus on ties which connect country of origin and destination but also the ethnic lens in migration research (Glick Schiller et al., 2008). Moreover, it highlights how migratory capital (Paul, 2015) develops at different places and moments of the migratory trajectory. Finally, the results draw attention to the impact of temporary forms of mobility and migratory experiences on decisions, intentions and strategies for onward movement.

8.2 Aspirations and Capability in Multinational Migration

A growing number of scholarly accounts call for a consideration of the fluidity and non-linearity of migration processes (Amit & Knowles, 2017; Amrith, 2020) and the dynamic nature of migration intentions and decisions (Wissink et al., 2013). Due to structural factors, such as immigration laws and economic opportunities, migration has become increasingly complex, often including long and perilous journeys, transiting through a variety of countries and regions and consisting of phases of mobility and immobility, emplacement and displacement. In this context a clear distinction between transit and destination country becomes less evident and the origin–destination model reveals itself as increasingly unable to capture migration strategies and the complexity of migration processes. Moreover, migration intentions and aspirations foreseen in migratory projects cannot be understood as closed or defined at the beginning of a journey (Janssens, 2018). Migrants adapt to changing conditions. They reflect constantly on the circumstances they encounter, identify new opportunities and obstacles and react to them (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014; Zeleke, 2017). Migratory aspirations may also change during the migration and the life course, for instance by becoming a parent. Consequently, migration itself should not be understood as a linear process – as if migrants follow and execute, step by step, a plan elaborated at the place of origin – or solely as the unique movement from one country to another. Migrants aspire to achieve something by moving and not just to move. Hernández-Carretero (2017) argues that emigration and return should be understood as stages in the same project of socio-economic prosperity. In this sense, multinational migration can be examined as further stages of the same project and not as a new one.

Multiple movements between a variety of countries and settlement in more than two countries in one's life course are not rare cases in today's world. There exists a range of different names and concepts to describe the continuation of migratory movements, most prominently the terms 'onward' and 'stepwise' migration (see the review by Ahrens and King, Chap. 1). While there are many similarities between them, they are not interchangeable. Onward migration can be defined as a secondary migratory movement, which occurs after living for a certain period of time in one

destination country and is directed to another country, which is not the one of origin (King & Karamoschou, 2019). It is not planned or intended in advance on departure from the country of origin. Some authors emphasise that onward migration is a reaction to changing circumstances at the destination. The 2008 economic crisis, for instance, triggered movements within the European Union of migrants who settled first in Southern European countries (Ramos, 2018; King & Karamoschou, 2019) or resulted in intentions or the desire to do so (Esteves et al., 2017). However, onward migration is not only caused by extraordinary events. The desire for self-improvement – for example educational or economic – and the search for a better future for one's children or family can be important reasons for moving again to another country. These desires result partly from a dissatisfaction with opportunities in the host society and experiences of discrimination (Ahrens et al., 2016). With regards to onward movements within the EU, various authors highlight how the acquisition of EU member-state citizenship is a decisive element both as a facilitator and a motive for onward migration (Ahrens et al., 2016; McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2017; De Hoon et al., 2019; Della Puppa & Morad, 2019). Favourable economic conditions and immigration policies may not be found at the same place and migrants use multiple movements as a strategy to achieve them in different countries.

Stepwise migration describes the movement to a country with the intention to leave it again and continue the migratory trajectory at a later stage. It 'includes multiple stops (of substantive duration) in various intermediate locations as part of an intentional, hierarchical progression toward an individual migrant's preferred destination' (Paul, 2011, 1844). Stepwise migration can be understood as a multistage migration strategy, which migrants apply to move up a hierarchy of destinations. Insufficient migratory capital to overcome different types of barriers, for instance restrictive immigration policies, prevents migrants from going directly to a preferred destination. Stepwise migration allows migrants to acquire and accumulate migratory capital in its different forms (Bourdieu, 1986), which can support further movements. In her research about stepwise migration by Filipino migrants, Paul (2015) shows that the next step of a migratory project is not always predictable and previously planned. The project needs to be open to alterations and allow the migrant to be flexible and react to the circumstances. Paul also indicates that a migrant may have a range of preferred destinations and not just one. Destination hierarchies orient migration journeys. They order the world according to a normative scale of values, expectations and meanings. This 'cosmology of destinations' 'connects shared imaginaries about places with moral judgements and values related to migration destinations and goals' (Belloni, 2020, 7). Values, expectations and meanings are not only attributed to a country but also to the migrant. In other words, the moral worthiness of a migrant overlaps with the attractiveness of the country which he/she was able to reach (Belloni, 2020, 2).

While, in theory, the timing of the intention to move again draws a clear line between onward and stepwise migration, in reality, this differentiation may be more blurred. The different periods of stepwise migration can extend to several years. At the same time, a migrant may leave the supposed destination already after a short period of time. Several studies about transit migration and migration trajectories

show that intentions need to be conceptualised in consideration of their dynamic and fluid nature (Collyer & de Haas, 2012; Wissink et al., 2013; Schapendonk, 2017; Zeleke, 2017). Paul and Yeoh (2020) suggest multinational migration as an umbrella term to embrace the different types of multiple movements within one's lifetime. They define multinational migration as the movements of international migrants across more than one overseas destination with significant time spent in each country. These movements are composed of 'complex, dynamic, and open-ended trajectories that are contingent on shifting and uneven capitals, structured by fluid multinational migration infrastructures, and shaped by migrants' evolving geographical imaginaries, aspirations and sense of themselves' (Paul & Yeoh, 2020, p. 3). The trajectories do not necessarily move up a hierarchy of countries but can also include downwards and lateral movements. They can consist of circular and repetitive movements, not only unidirectional ones. Intentions for multinational migration can be planned before leaving the country of origin or arise during the journey. Finally, Paul and Yeoh highlight that, beside migrants' capital, it is the embeddedness in migration infrastructures (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014; Lin et al., 2017), which enables or restrains multinational migration.

The concept of multinational migration describes migration as open-ended trajectories during which migration aspirations and intentions as well as the ability to move evolve and change. These evolutions and changes are often determined by specific circumstances which the migrants encounter during their trajectory. Graw and Schielke's (2012) conceptualisation of migration as a horizon of imagination and action is a useful tool with which to approach the embeddedness of migration processes at places. A horizon, in its literal sense as the outer realm of the vision, changes with movement. Following Graw and Schielke's understanding, horizon refers also to what is familiar, known and imaginable for a person. In this sense, movement indicates not only a change of the horizon of the physical space but also a possible change of perspective and expectations. These shifts of the horizon result, for example, from new acquaintances, new information, exposure to different sources of media or the acquiring of new migratory capital. However, they can also be an outcome of emerging opportunities and specific circumstances. These opportunities can channel movements in directions that were not previously intended or foreseen and can trigger unplanned departures. Carling and Haugen (2020) suggest the concept of circumstantial migration to describe the unpredictable ways in which migration trajectories and experiences unfold under the influence of coincidence and micro-level contexts. Coincidental factors that act at the micro-level include chance encounters with others, good or bad luck at critical junctures and the accidental discovery of opportunities. The authors argue that the consideration and analysis of coincidence and micro-level contexts allows us to understand 'the twists and turns as constitutive elements of many migration experiences' – i.e., the non-linearity of migration – as well as the 'prominent role circumstances play under certain migration regimes' (Carling & Haugen, 2020, p. 2780). Moreover, it allows the examination of the interrelation between plans and serendipities. The movements of Senegalese migrants in Brazil include both onward and stepwise migration and often can be defined as circumstantial migration. I decided to opt for the term

‘multinational migration’, since its definition incorporates the movement of all three types.

8.3 Methodology

The empirical data presented in this chapter result from four periods of fieldwork, each lasting from 2 to 4 months and conducted between 2017 and 2019. Using biographical interviews and ethnographic methods, I studied the trajectories of Senegalese migrants in the city of São Paulo and in Praia Grande – a coastal town which is located about 80 km east of the metropolis – and in the two medium-sized cities of Caxias do Sul and Passo Fundo, which are important industrial and agricultural sites in Brazil’s most southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. The four cities were chosen due to their importance in Senegalese immigration in Brazil. São Paulo, Caxias do Sul and Passo Fundo all have relatively large Senegalese communities but are also important for other forms of mobility and circulation of Senegalese within the country. Praia Grande is a popular, temporary destination for Senegalese street-hawkers, who sell their products on the beaches during the Brazilian summer months. The research was part of a wider doctoral project about Senegalese migration to Brazil. For this chapter, I focus on 11 interviews with Senegalese migrants who either have experience of multinational migration or expressed their intention to move again to another country. Except for one interview via Skype with a Senegalese who moved from Brazil to Portugal, all interviews were conducted during my fieldwork in Brazil, using either Portuguese or French. I translated the interview passages used in this chapter to English. Additionally, a migration history chart or MHC (Carling, 2012) was elaborated together with the migrants (see Fig. 8.1).

Internal movements – both in Senegal and Brazil – and international movements were recorded in the MHC and are represented as horizontal segments of the trajectory. Vertical segments indicate the time spent at a specific place. The temporal axis of the MHC was divided in years and consequently movements of shorter duration were not recorded. However, during the interviews it became clear that these short-term movements were often important for later decisions about multinational migration. In the beginning the objective was to collect information about the family’s migration history but the size of many families with members who reside in a great variety of countries complicated this task. Instead, the MHC focused on the life trajectory of the migrant and those family members or friends who influenced it more directly. Figure 8.1 is an example of a digitalised version of the MHC and shows the trajectories of Sadio² (S.), who will be presented below. Sadio has 13 siblings in total, all from his father’s polygamous marriage, but only his older brother (O.B.) and his youngest brother (Y.B.) emigrated too and are included in the

²Names are changed to guarantee the anonymity of the participants.

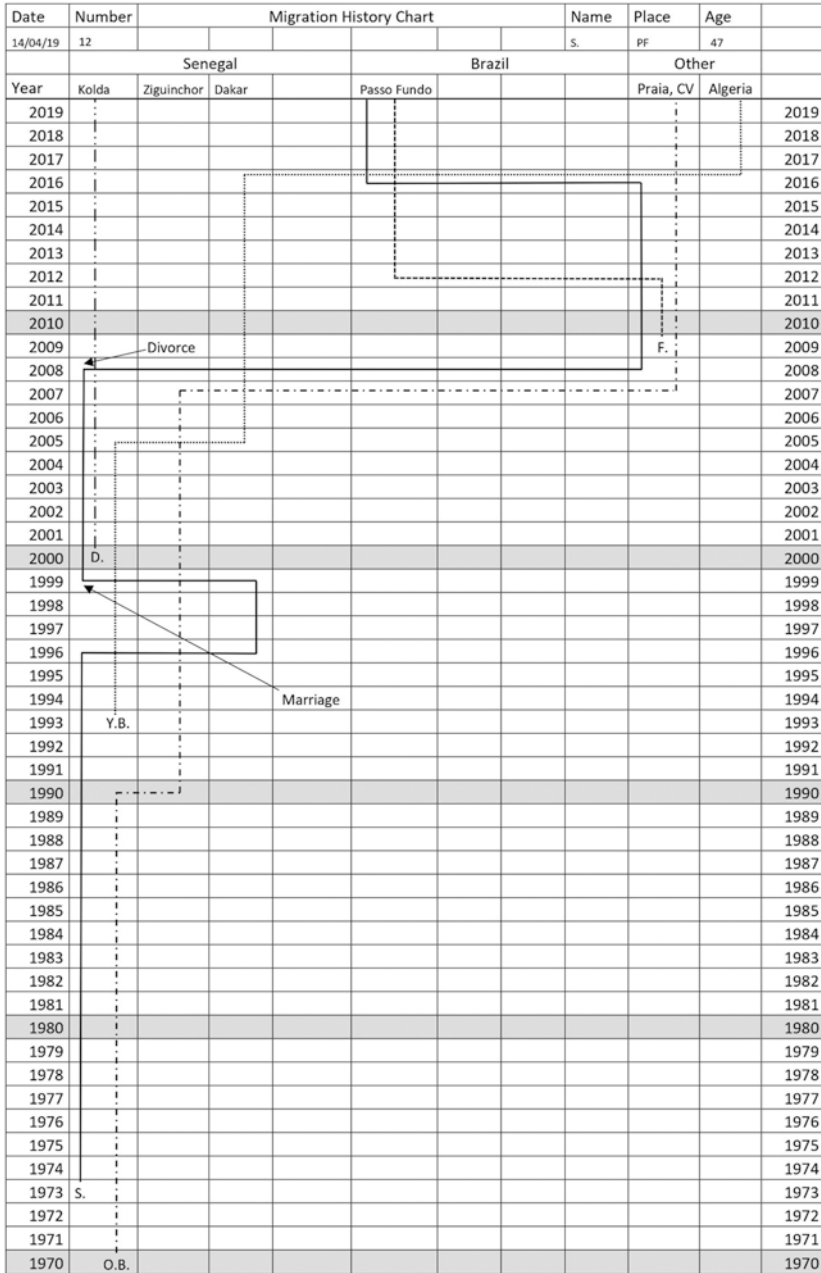


Fig. 8.1 Example of a migration history chart

MHC. Furthermore, the MHC indicates the year of Sadio's marriage and divorce, which both influenced his movements, and the birth of his daughter (D.). F. is a friend, whose acquaintance Sadio made in Cape Verde in 2009, and who influenced his movement to Brazil.

MHC and interviews are complementary tools for the study of migration trajectories. The MHC helped the interviewee to recall the timing of movements by relating them to events, year or age (see Carling, 2012, pp. 150–151). Its visual aspect facilitates the identification of stages of life, the interconnections between different individual trajectories and transnational social relations. In most cases, the elaboration of the MHC took place before conducting the interview. The movements and stages of life identified through the MHC later served as an orientation during the interview. In the two cases in which the MHC was only elaborated at a later stage, it allowed to cross check the timing of movements indicated in the interview. More in-depth information about migration decisions and movements were collected through the interviews. Moreover, ethnographical methods in the form of informal conversations and observations were important for the data collection and noted in a field diary.

With one exception, all the cases analysed here are men. This reflects the gender distribution of Senegalese immigrants in Brazil, who are mainly men between 19 and 50 years old (Tedesco & Mello, 2015; Herédia & Gonçalves, 2017). Only 1.6 per cent of an immigration stock of 3173 Senegalese in the state of Rio Grande do Sul are women (Uebel, 2017). This is not surprising, since Senegalese emigration is generally rather a male domain (SENEGAL, 2018). The participants are mainly from the region of Dakar, different cities in the so-called peanut basin and the Casamance and have diverse ethnic backgrounds. Their age ranges from 22 to 47 years and their civil status includes unmarried, married and separated. Some migrants originate from poor families, while others have a middle-class background with fathers who worked as public servants. The class background reflects itself in some cases in the level of education, which include qualifications in primary and secondary school and academic diplomas as well as Quran schools.

8.4 Multinational Migration to and from Brazil

8.4.1 *Multinational Migration from Cape Verde*

The Cape Verde archipelago lies about 500 km west of Senegal's coast. The multinational migration of (West) African migrants from Cape Verde to Brazil can be understood as a new chapter in the archipelago's long history as an intersection between Africa, South America and Europe. Due to their strategic position in the Atlantic, the islands were an important transit point in both the transatlantic slave trade and, later, for steamships, which needed to reload coal for their voyages between Europe and South America. Cape Verde is widely known for its long

history of emigration (Batalha & Carling, 2008) but, since the second half of the 1990s, the country has witnessed the arrival of citizens of ECOWAS member states.³ Especially in the beginning, the islands were considered as a stepping-stone for migrants aiming to reach the EU. However, restrictive migration policies in EU countries, together with increasing border controls in Cape Verdean waters – for example, in the form of military cooperation with European countries – hindered these movements (Marcelino & Farahi, 2011; Furtado, 2013). Additionally, a constant economic growth, especially due to the booming construction and tourism sectors and both lower financial burdens with regards to the migration and legal entry barriers in Cape Verde, attracted a growing number of West African migrants, among them Senegalese, who are the second biggest group of citizens from other ECOWAS countries (Jung, 2015). As movements from Cape Verde to Europe became more difficult, migrants started to look westwards for alternatives. The following three cases are examples of this reorientation.

Sadio is a 47-year-old Fulani from the region of Kolda in the Casamance. It was difficult to gain a living and support the family in Senegal and, after he separated from his wife, with whom he has one child, he decided to emigrate to Cape Verde in 2008. He moved to the capital, Praia, where a friend and his older brother already lived, with the expectation that it would be easier to gain a living there. However, from the beginning he did not see Cape Verde as his final destination. Instead, he intended to move again to Spain, Portugal or Brazil. In Praia he worked in construction but his revenue was not enough to really improve his and his family's life. The situation became even more difficult with the decline of job opportunities in the building sector. 'I had to leave there, otherwise nothing would get better', Sadio told me. His intention to move to Spain, Portugal or Brazil remained strong but it was not easy to realise. Getting a visa for the two European countries was too difficult and soon he abandoned the idea to move there. Through Guinea-Bissauan and Senegalese merchants who travelled regularly for their commerce between Cape Verde and Brazil and a friend who had already migrated to Brazil in 2012, he informed himself about the possibilities and regulations to move to South America instead. Visa regulations for Brazil were much easier but his next migratory step was delayed. He explained to me the financial reasons for this delay. '[M]oney was very difficult to earn. I also had to help my family in Senegal. I needed some time to save the money necessary to leave. It took a while'.

It took him 8 years before he was finally able to leave Cap Verde. He travelled to Brazil on a one-month business visa in October 2016. After arriving in Recife, in the north-east of Brazil, Sadio went to Fortaleza, where a Senegalese friend with whom he had worked in Cape Verde lived. The friend helped him to apply for asylum. He stayed for 4 months in Fortaleza, waiting for news from another Senegalese, also an acquaintance from Cape Verde, who was looking for a job for him in Passo Fundo, the city where Saido now lives and works. Sadio did not only consider Cape Verde

³The protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment permits nationals of the 15 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states free movement in the regional bloc.

as a stepping-stone to another destination, which turned out to be Brazil but he also aspires to climb higher up his hierarchy of destinations and move to Europe or North America after getting a residence permit or Brazilian nationality. This highlights the complex detours which migrants need to make to arrive at the top of their hierarchy. The different steps of Sadio's trajectory were always facilitated through personal contacts, which helped him to prepare his movements or to get the legal documents and find employment in Brazil. However, his migration aspirations were also reinforced through these contacts and the experience of friends who had already moved to Brazil or who circulate between the South American country and Cape Verde.

In contrast to Sadio, 47-year-old Mamadou, a Kaolack native and father of three children, did not plan his move to Brazil in advance. His intentions to move there developed naturally, as he puts it, in the pursuit of personal development. His migration journey started in 2004, shortly after his first child was born, when he decided to move to Praia to discover the world outside Senegal. After several jobs, Mamadou took advantage of his training as an electrician and successfully opened his own cybercafé 6 years later. His wife and first daughter joined him and another daughter was born in Cape Verde. Nevertheless, after another 3 years and a short vacation in Brazil, he developed the idea of moving again. Being the owner of a small business allowed him to apply for a business visa at the Brazilian embassy in Praia. During his first trip to Brazil in early 2013, Mamadou visited a Guinea-Bissauan friend in Fortaleza, whom he had met earlier in Cape Verde. The dimension of Brazil impressed him and he saw opportunities to achieve more in his life, as he explained in an interview in December 2017:

You always want something and when you get there, you want something else. This is a normal evolution. I did not run away from Cape Verde. I did not have any specific problems. [...] I worked normally, I had the documents, I had the residency, everything. I visited Brazil once for a 15-day vacation. When I visited Brazil those 15 days, I saw that Brazil is very big. There are a lot of things to do. Cape Verde is very small. For those who want to do many things, the space is limited. So, I told myself: 'I am going to Brazil, I think I will be able to do some things there'.

It would be wrong to limit his desire for improvement solely to economic aspects. During the interviews, he emphasised regularly the importance of challenges for his personal development. 'I do not want to stay at a place where my head does not work' was one of his expressions. In one of our first conversations he also stated the increasing criminality and insecurity in Praia as another reason for his desire to leave Cape Verde. Although he relativised the importance of this aspect during the interview, he still said:

Cape Verde is very good, but when I left there, there were security problems too, mainly for foreigners. Sometimes, when you are a foreign worker, there is a situation. There are a lot of young guys who do not want to work. They may mug you. We saw many cases [like that].

After a few months back in Cape Verde, he returned with a three-month business visa to Brazil in August 2013. This time, after arriving in Fortaleza, he continued his journey to Rio Grande do Sul. He knew that there already existed an established

Senegalese community and his nephew had moved there from Cape Verde in 2010. However, Mamadou had still not decided to stay in Brazil.

Even in these three months I still did not decide to stop, because I left everything ready in Cape Verde. I did not sell the store. I did not sell anything. I left a friend taking care of it, because I did not know if I would be able to stay here. In these three months, I looked around. I looked at the procedure of documentation, because I always said 'If I do not have a legal document to stay here, I will go back'. I did not want to stay here in a clandestine way. So, during those three months, I got everything ready. I saw that I could wait for a while. Because, anyway, if I am not able to do anything, I will go back to Cape Verde.

During his first journey to Brazil, his wife took care of the business but, this time, Mamadou intended to stay in Brazil. Therefore, his wife and daughters returned to Senegal to live closer to the wider family in Kaolack and a friend temporarily managed the cybercafé. Mamadou used his cybercafé as a safety-net in two ways. First, he knew that he could always return to Cape Verde without the necessity to start something new in the case that he could not stay legally or lacked economic opportunities in Brazil. Secondly, he continued to receive a revenue, which helped him to cope until he opened a new store in Passo Fundo and started to earn money in Brazil. When I met Mamadou for the first time in December 2017, he was already well established but had not lost his desire for improvement and challenges. In 2019, he started a technical course at a federal institute in Passo Fundo with the objective of improving his knowledge of informatics and expanding the services offered at his shop. He told me that he dreams of bringing his wife and three children to Brazil but currently lacks the financial means. He also never excluded a further onward movement. Mamadou always emphasised that his trajectory depends on the circumstances and opportunities which he will encounter and he never wanted to commit himself to a specific place. This even takes into account a desired but not determined return to Senegal at a later stage. Mamadou's movement was facilitated and shaped through transnational practises. His case highlights how short-term mobility can lead to the development of multinational migration intentions. The experiences he made during his vacation were crucial for his decision. Furthermore, due to the continuous income he received from his business in Praia, he was later able to see how things would develop in Brazil. However, this form of exploratory transnationalism (Dimitriadis, 2021) clearly depends on different forms of capital, the most obvious being the financial means to visit a place before taking a decision. Sadio did not possess the resources for it.

This also holds true for the last example. Abdoulaye is a 31-year-old single man from Pikine on the periphery of Dakar. After a friend, a Senegalese immigrant in Cape Verde, told him about the opportunities there, he moved to Praia in 2016. He aspired to new experiences and to earn enough money to realise his own projects and support his family. For nearly 2 years he worked as a street hawker in Praia. As in the case of Mamadou, his intention for multinational migration developed only after moving to Cape Verde. As the following interview extract (São Paulo, February 2019) shows, it was, on the one hand, the result of his desire to migrate out of Africa – this was reinforced by friends who told him about Brazil and the success which Senegalese have there – and, on the other, of specific circumstances.

I did not want to leave at first, because I started to work well there. [...]. I did very well there. But we stayed in Africa. This is South America. Brazil. I wanted to know something from somewhere else. Brazil and Europe. I heard friends talking about Brazil, that Brazil is good for us. Senegalese are doing well there. The money from Brazil is also better than in Cape Verde. It is good for us to go to Brazil and work there. I did not ask for a visa for Brazil, because I had a friend who knew a Brazilian who has a sailboat there. My friend called me. He said that a boat is coming that will go to Brazil. I told myself 'I want to go. I will go there'.

Abdoulaye already wished to have experiences outside Africa and heard about possibilities in Brazil before his friend told him about the boat sailing to Brazil. However, in the end, it was the sudden emergence of an opportunity to go to Brazil that was crucial for his decision to move onwards and his intention became concrete. He paid 1000 euros for a place on a catamaran and, together with 24 other migrants – most of them Senegalese – and two Brazilian smugglers, he left Mindelo in Cape Verde with Recife as the destination. The journey was supposed to take 18 days but the mast broke at one point. The catamaran floated around until Brazilian fishermen rescued them close to the coast of Maranhão after 35 days at sea. According to Abdoulaye, this was only the second time that migrant-smuggling by sea from Cape Verde to Brazil occurred but, due to the dramatic events, it was also the last time. It would be an exaggeration to speak in this case about an established migration industry (Cranston et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the smuggling can be understood as part of the development of migration infrastructures between the two countries which involves different actors, modes of transportation and regulatory processes. In our second interview, Abdoulaye told me about two Senegalese friends with Cape Verdean citizenship who entered Brazil on a tourist visa some months after him. While Abdoulaye lacked the different forms of migratory capital in comparison to his friends or Mamadou and Sadio, who both travelled on a business visa to Brazil, it was not this insufficiency which determined his way of travelling. Instead, it was the advent of an opportunity that prompted him to move to Brazil. He did not try or even look for other ways to enter Brazil.

8.4.2 *Multinational Migration from Argentina*

Senegalese immigration in Argentina and Brazil are intertwined with each other in many forms and onward movements are one example of this relationship. Senegalese migrants move regularly between the two South American countries, sometimes in response to economic crises in the respective country, to buy and sell goods in two different markets or in the search for legal documents. While, in the beginning, Brazil was mainly a transit country for Senegalese migrants heading to Argentina, it later became a destination of movements in the other direction. One example for both movements is the case of Assis, a young unmarried man from the region of Thiès. In 2009, at only 19 years old, he felt the pressure and the desire to emigrate.

After an unsuccessful attempt to get a visa for the USA, where his older brother lives, he decided to emigrate to Argentina, where another brother already resided. He travelled to Brazil on a tourist visa and visited several cities on his way southwards. Senegalese migrants in Rio de Janeiro told him that street trading works better in Argentina than in Brazil. This reinforced his decision to go to Argentina. However, the reality in Buenos Aires was much harder than he thought, as he said in his interview in Caxias do Sul in April 2018.

[M]y brother even showed me how to sell. But I cannot sell. I did not know how to sell. I never did [before]. [...] You stay in a place like that. But when the inspectors arrive, you have to run around or you have to keep changing places. In Argentina, people go to the bars. [...] And in the bars, when you get there, the Argentinians are very bad. They treat us badly. [...] Sometimes you get there, they take your stuff, they offer you beer or throw it at you. Madness, you know? But I stayed there for six months, working as a street hawker. [...] Almost twice a week, every week, we had fights with the Argentinians. There was a time when the police already knew me. They got there: 'Bah, you again'. [...] They bother you a lot. Then, after Brazil started to give out documents, I came back here. First, I came to get a document, then I went back to Argentina.

Selling in the streets and bars of Buenos Aires constantly created conflicts between Assis, Argentinians and the police. When Assis received the information that 'Brazil gives documents' to immigrants, he refers here to the general amnesty of 2009; he did not hesitate and decided to go to Passo Fundo to request his own documents. Although he could have applied for a residence permit in any Brazilian city, he preferred the town in Rio Grande do Sul because he had heard about another Senegalese who had lived there for 10 years. They did not know each other before but Assis thought that, due to their common nationality, the man would support him like all *Senegalese help each other*.

In Passo Fundo there was a guy who helped in the way Senegalese help each other. That person was incredible. He did so much for others. He helped everyone who went there to get a job. We, everybody who went there, a lot of people learned from him. [...] When we arrived there, he had already been there for 10 years and has never seen another Senegalese or returned to Senegal. He was lost here. When [we came] he was so happy and said: 'I never thought that one day another Senegalese would arrive'. He helped us a lot. [...] That is [the reason] why everyone went to Passo Fundo. Here in Brazil, the first place that received Senegalese immigrants was Passo Fundo because of him.

He first went to Brazil just to get his residence permit, which would allow him free movement within the MERCOSUL⁴ zone and returned to Argentina after the successful request. However, his experience in Passo Fundo and the prospect of formal employment there changed his intentions and a few weeks later he decided to move back to Brazil. His decision cannot be understood only as a result of economic factors. Street-selling in Buenos Aires represented, for Assis, not only economic difficulties but also perpetual conflicts. Formal employment in Brazil, on the other hand, promised a constant salary without the permanent fear of getting caught, or offended or being attacked. The case of Assis is only one example of the multinational

⁴South American Economic Organization.

migrations of Senegalese from Argentina to Brazil. Many of the Senegalese pioneers who arrived in Passo Fundo looking for legal documents and formal employment came from Argentina (Tedesco & Mello, 2015).

In her analysis of how opportunities resulting from a regularisation programme for undocumented migrants in Argentina in 2013 were perceived by Senegalese street-hawkers, Vammen (2017, 49) writes:

The promises of onward migration to Brazil were repeated again and again among street hawkers, building up a collective hope that things might be different in another geographical context. The new document and their expectations of what the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016 could generate in the way of commerce and other possibilities seemed to inspire onward migration.

The movements of Senegalese between the two countries are shaped by real or imagined economic opportunities, immigration legislation – for example the regularisation programmes in Brazil in 2009 and in Argentina in 2013 – and networks of kin and friendship, religious affiliation or ethnicity. While economic growth in Brazil corresponded to the hopes of Senegalese migrants for an easier integration in the formal labour market until 2014/2015, the following economic crisis, which started in 2014 and deteriorated in 2015 and 2016, hampered their success of finding employment. A few of my interviewees lost their jobs during the crisis and started to sell on the streets. The ongoing economic crisis results in new intentions and desires for multinational migration.

8.4.3 The Multinational Migration Intentions of Senegalese in Brazil

Without doubt economic factors play an important role in the development of intentions to leave Brazil and move to another country. Disappointment and disillusion with the economic situation there are widespread among Senegalese migrants (Jung, 2021). Showing his frustration, Moussa, a 27-year-old Senegalese interviewed in Passo Fundo in April 2019 said:

There are some who managed to get a good job. There are some who do very well here. Others do not. (For) others, things are worse. For me, the hope that I had, the things I expected, I have not found here yet. I tried for a while, but if I look at it, if I look well, I think it is a waste of time. Things are not as we wanted them to be.

While some migrants had unrealistic expectations and the idea of Brazil as a new ‘El Dorado’ turned out to be an illusion, others had a more accurate image but could not foresee the economic crisis. Still others, who arrived during Brazil’s economic boom and had benefited from the demand for labour, lost their employment or did not see any perspective of staying in Brazil. Demba, a 47-year-old Senegalese with a Brazilian passport, who currently lives with his Brazilian wife in Porto, Portugal,

referred, in his interview of June 2019, to the deterioration of the situation in Brazil as his main motive to leave the country after 20 years.

We became interested in Portugal, when the economic problems in Brazil started in 2016 and also because of the violence. [...] We saw the country; things were not going well. [...] And we started to watch videos on YouTube about Brazilians who went to Portugal and other countries but mainly Portugal. They talked about the differences and the possibilities of emigrating there. What really drew our attention was that I could come here to do a Master's degree [...]. It was one of the legal ways to be able to live here. You are either an entrepreneur or a student. [...] Since I had a degree in Brazil which was recognised here, I saw that this was the most appropriate way for me to come here. I would have the possibility of a visa and I was also told that students would have the possibility to work if it does not interfere with the class schedule. So, I saw this opportunity.

In contrast to the cases presented earlier, Demba did not try to gather information through personal contacts but used online channels like YouTube. The use of the internet for information-seeking seems not be widespread among Senegalese migrants in general. Intentions for onward movements from Brazil are often determined by a hierarchy of destination countries, with North America and Europe at the top. Each destination has a different status associated with it. Migration to the USA is regarded as better and more desirable than migration to Brazil which, in the words of some migrants, is almost the same as Senegal. Some migrants even aspire to move despite their economic success in Brazil. This desire results, on the one hand, from questions related to status and, on the other, from migrants imagining that things will be even better in another country, as demonstrated by Assis (Caxias do Sul, April 2019).

Look, nowadays I have grown more. This is important. People say that humans are like this. When you achieve one thing, you are already thinking about another. I am in the store, it is ok, but I'm thinking about something else. I have ideas. Do I travel or not? [...] I want to grow more, to travel again. Or sometimes I think that the store will improve to the extent that I will no longer think about leaving here. [...] I do not know either, because the biggest concern I have today is my store. If it were not for my store, I would be already out of the country. You see the achievements of other brothers at another place. I do not know if it will be the same for me when I get there. I could get there and realise that it was better here. But we always [think about it]. It is the same thing that we feel when we leave our country. We think that there it will be better than here. [...] The plan is to stay here for now. But if I find something better, if I get a visa to go to another country, I will reconsider it. [...] If I can get a visa today, in a month I must prepare myself to see how I'm going to get out.

This citation from the interview with Assis, whom we have already met, shows the dynamic nature of migration decisions. The development of intentions and aspirations is no linear process. Assis is happy with his achievements in Brazil but the idea of climbing the destination hierarchy seems never to leave his mind. Like many Senegalese, he is attracted by Anglo-Saxon countries. He has already tried twice to get a visa for the US, once from Senegal and once from Brazil. When I met him in 2018, he was trying to get a tourist visa for Canada but this request was later denied. He told me that if Canada does not work, he will try to go to England.

About one year later, he was trying to get a visa for Australia and a private enterprise was taking care of his request. Assis is one of two migrants whom I met in Brazil, who applied several times for a visa for different countries but, until now, were never successful. While this visa *lottery* could be understood as a strong wish to leave Brazil, Assis' intentions are dynamic and adapt themselves to the circumstances. Migration is as an active learning process. As we saw above, Assis arrived as a young 20-year-old in South America and, according to him, with absolutely no idea of what to expect. The experience that imagined opportunities can differ from the reality encountered in a country and his knowledge of the difficulties of starting from zero impacted on his approach to further movements – he does not want to take risks.

I only think about leaving for three months. Only three months. After three months, I will come back. Go out to see and come back. [...] I go there just to analyse. I analyse, see how it is there and then I come back here. [...] I could imagine something else and (when) I get there, the reality is different. So first I want to keep my store, let someone take care of it. Then I will visit another [country] and see what happens on the other side and if it's better I'll come back here and see how I'm going to solve it.

Assis intends to let someone, preferably a relative, look after his store during his time away. This strategy resembles that used by Mamadou for his migration from Cape Verde to Brazil. A temporary movement for exploration purposes as a strategy to minimise the risk of disillusionment and failure was also mentioned by other migrants, especially those who are doing relatively well in Brazil. Migration experiences are a crucial element for this approach. The concern over starting again in a new country and undergoing the same difficulties that they successfully had overcome in Brazil, lead to an attempt to minimise the risks. By contrast, migrants who have nothing to lose or no other obligations in Brazil – for example a family – would often not hesitate to move again to another country. Moussa, who expressed his disappointment with his migratory experience in Brazil, has no doubts and intends to leave Brazil as soon as possible and move to Canada. 'If I get a visa tomorrow morning, I'm leaving tomorrow', he told me without showing any fear that migrating to Canada could be unsuccessful as well. However, I recently spoke with Moussa⁵ and his situation in Brazil has completely changed. He has moved from South Brazil to the North and currently lives in Belém in the Amazon Delta. There he once helped a Senegalese woman who travelled to Brazil to buy chili peppers. Through this experience he discovered, almost by coincidence, a new income opportunity and now works as a middleman between Senegalese and Chinese buyers and Brazilian producers. At least for the time being, his intention of onward migration is suspended. This and the other cases show the heterogeneity and fluidity of multinational migration intentions and preparations by Senegalese immigrants in Brazil.

⁵Telephone call on 03 January 2021.

8.5 Conclusion

In one form or another, multinational migration is an integral part of Senegalese migration to Brazil. Onward migration from Cape Verde, the movement across the border from Argentina or the intention to move to an EU country or North America, all demonstrate how Senegalese immigration in Brazil is embedded in wider contexts of (global) mobility. Multinational migrations to Brazil are a central factor in the discovery of Brazil by Senegalese migrants and generally also paved the way for the direct migration from Senegal to Brazil which started later. Self-improvement is the main motive for multinational migration directed to and from Brazil. Here, aspirations with regards to better employment opportunities and higher income are very important. However, self-improvement also refers to personal growth resulting from experiences in a new country or continent and the search for new challenges. While Brazil's economic growth first attracted Senegalese migrants in Cape Verde and Argentina, the ongoing economic crisis creates intentions to leave Brazil. There is, nevertheless, no clear-cut point in time when movements changed direction. Until now, movements in both directions happened simultaneously. This indicates that each migrant evaluates conditions differently. While some migrants are disappointed with the situation in Brazil, others found better conditions than at their last place of residence. Important for the understanding of multinational migration intentions from Brazil is the different status which is associated with each destination as well as the status that is accorded to migrants themselves for reaching particular destinations (Belloni, 2020). The USA is higher on the destination hierarchy and a Senegalese who managed to go there is regarded differently to one who lives in Brazil.

Aspirations for onward movement are constructed in transnational spaces. Many of the interviewees have relatives and friends in several countries. These kinship or friendship ties connect different places and are a part of those transnational spaces which span more than two countries. While relationships based on kinship or common origin are especially important in the decision to leave Senegal, in the cases presented here, people's intentions for multinational migration are often embedded in relationships which developed during the migration journey and often include friends and acquaintances of a different nationality. The results show that intentions for onward movements and the strategies to do so are situated in specific localities. The examples of Mamadou – who uses his store in Cape Verde as a safety-net – or of Abdoulaye and how his intention to move to Brazil was constructed in Praia, demonstrate this situatedness. A Senegalese who moved to Cape Verde may have never imagined that, at some point in his life, he would visit Brazil – much less live there. However, the migration to Cape Verde changed the migratory horizon. The spatial and temporal dimensions of the migratory trajectory are open-ended and not fixed. This openness also implies that a migrant may not move at all or may decide to return to his home country or last country of residence. Migration intentions are dynamic. They change over time and adapt to circumstances and the emergence of

opportunities. Finally, the study demonstrates how different forms of mobility intersect. Temporary movements either result in intentions for multinational migration or are used for exploration purposes.

Acknowledgements I would like to thank Russell King, Jill Ahrens and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback. My special gratitude goes to the Senegalese migrants, who shared their experiences and histories with me. This research was supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (grant number PD/BD/128347/2017) and the DiasporaLink Program financed by the Research Executive Agency (grant number 645471).

References

- Adepoju, A., Van Noorloos, F., & Zoomers, A. (2009). Europe's migration agreements with migrant-sending countries in the global south: A critical review. *International Migration*, 48(3), 42–75.
- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran, and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Amit, V., & Knowles, C. (2017). Improvising and navigating mobilities: Tacking in everyday life. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 34(7–8), 165–179.
- Amrith, M. (2020). The linear imagination, stalled: Changing temporal horizons in migrant journeys. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 127–145.
- Batalha, L., & Carling, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Transnational archipelago: Perspectives on cape Verdean migration and diaspora*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Belloni, M. (2020). Cosmologies and migration: On worldviews and their influence on mobility and immobility. *Identities*, 1–19.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–558). Greenwood Press.
- BRASIL. (2019). *Portaria Interministerial N° 10, De 5 de Dezembro de 2019' M. d. E. d. J. e. S. Pública*. Ministro de Estado da Justiça e Segurança Pública, Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores.
- BRASIL. (2020). *Portal de Dados do Ministério da Justiça*. Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública. <http://dados.mj.gov.br/dataset/comite-nacional-para-os-refugiados>.
- Carling, J. (2012). Collecting, analysing and presenting migration histories. In C. Vargas-Silva (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in migration* (pp. 137–162). Edward Elgar.
- Carling, J., & Haugen, H. Ø. (2020). Circumstantial migration: How Gambian journeys to China enrich migration theory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(12), 2778–2795.
- Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S., & Pickles, J. (2014). 'Good neighbours make good fences': Seahorse operations, border externalization and extra-territoriality. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(3), 231–251.
- Collyer, M., & de Haas, H. (2012). Developing dynamic categorisations of transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 468–481.
- Cranston, S., Schapendonk, J., & Spaan, E. (2018). New directions in exploring the migration industries: Introduction to special issue. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(4), 543–557.
- De Hoon, M., Vink, M., & Schmeets, H. (2019). A ticket to mobility? Naturalisation and subsequent migration of refugees after obtaining asylum in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(7), 1185–1204.
- Della Puppa, F., & Morad, M. (2019). Migrants in Italy, citizens in Europe? Trajectories, experiences and motivations of the multiple mobilities of Italian-Bangladeshis relocating to London. *Studi Emigrazione*, 56(215), 473–491.

- Dimitriadis, I. (2021). Onward migration aspirations and transnational practices of migrant construction workers amidst economic crisis: Exploring new opportunities and facing barriers. *International Migration*, 59(6), 128–141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12803>
- Esteves, A. I. P., Fonseca, M. L. C. D. S., & Malheiros, J. D. S. M. (2017). Labour market integration of immigrants in Portugal in times of austerity: Resilience, in situ responses and re-emigration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(14), 2375–2391.
- Faist, T. (2000). *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*. Clarendon Press.
- Finotelli, C., & Sciortino, G. (2013). Through the gates of the fortress: European visa policies and the limits of immigration control. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 14(1), 80–101.
- Furtado, C. B. D. J. (2013, June 27–29). *Cape Verde: Migration dynamics between 60s of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first century*. Paper presented at the 5th European Conference on African Studies, African dynamics in a multipolar world. Lisbon.
- Glick Schiller, N., Çağlar, A., & Gulbrandsen, T. C. (2008). Beyond the ethnic lens: Locality, globality, and born-again incorporation. *American Ethnologist*, 33(4), 612–633.
- Graw, K., & Schielke, S. (2012). Introduction: Reflections on migratory expectations in Africa and beyond. In K. Graw & S. Schielke (Eds.), *The global horizon: Expectations of migration in Africa and the Middle East* (pp. 7–22). Leuven University Press.
- Herédia, V. B. M., & Gonçalves, M. D. C. S. (2017). Deslocamentos populacionais no Sul do Brasil: O caso dos senegaleses. In J. C. Tedesco & G. Kleidermacher (Eds.), *A imigração senegalesa no Brasil e na Argentina: Múltiplos olhares* (pp. 209–228). EST Edições.
- Hernández-Carretero, M. (2017). Hope and uncertainty in Senegalese migration to Spain: Taking chances on emigration but not upon return. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (Eds.), *Hope and uncertainty in contemporary African migration* (pp. 113–133). Routledge.
- Janssens, M. C. W. (2018). Spatial mobility and social becoming: The journeys of four central African students in Congo-Kinshasa. *Geoforum*, 116, 252–261.
- Jung, P. R. (2015). Migration, remittances and development: A case study of Senegalese labour migrants on the island of Boa Vista, Cape Verde. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, 29(1), 77–101.
- Jung, P. R. (2019). Desenvolvimento de processos migratórios do Senegal para o Brasil e suas alterações. In J. C. Tedesco (Ed.), *Imigração senegalesa: múltiplas dimensões* (Vol. 2, pp. 45–76). EST Edições.
- Jung, P. R. (2021). Hope, disillusion and coincidence in migratory decisions by Senegalese migrants in Brazil. *Social Inclusion*, 9(1), 268–277. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i1.3721>
- King, R., & Karamoschou, C. (2019). Fragmented and fluid mobilities: The role of onward migration in the new map of Europe and the Balkans. *Migracijske i Etničke Teme*, 35(2), 141–169.
- Kleidermacher, G. (2016). De sur a sur: Movimientos transmigratorios de senegaleses hacia Argentina. *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, 114, 183–205.
- Lin, W., Lindquist, J., Xiang, B., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2017). Migration infrastructures and the production of migrant mobilities. *Mobilities*, 12(2), 167–174.
- Marcelino, P. F., & Cerrutti, M. (2011, September 22–23). *Recent African immigration to South America: The cases of Argentina and Brazil in the regional context*. Paper presented at the interregional workshop on strengthening capacities to deal with international migration: 'Examining development, institutional and policy aspects of migration between Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean', Geneva.
- Marcelino, P. F., & Farahi, H. (2011). Transitional African spaces in comparative analysis: Inclusion, exclusion and informality in Morocco and Cape Verde. *Third World Quarterly*, 32(5), 883–904.
- McGarrigle, J., & Ascensão, E. (2017). Emplaced mobilities: Lisbon as a translocality in the migration journeys of Punjabi Sikhs to Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(5), 809–828.
- Minvielle, R. (2015). L'Amérique du Sud ou l'émergence d'un nouveau théâtre des migrations africaines. *Afrique et Développement*, 40(1), 19–39.
- Paul, A. M. (2011). Stepwise international migration: A multistage migration pattern for the aspiring migrant. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(6), 1842–1886.

- Paul, A. M. (2015). Capital and mobility in the stepwise international migrations of Filipino migrant domestic workers. *Migration Studies*, 3(3), 438–459.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2020). Studying multinational migrations, speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 3–17.
- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Schapendonk, J. (2017). The multiplicity of transit: The waiting and onward mobility of African migrants in the European Union. *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*, 3(2–3), 208–227.
- Schapendonk, J., & Steel, G. (2014). Following migrant trajectories: The im/mobility of sub-Saharan Africans en route to the European Union. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(2), 262–270.
- SENEGAL. (2018). *Situation économique et sociale du Sénégal en 2015*. Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie, Ministère de l’Economie, des Finances et du Plan, République du Sénégal.
- Silva, F. R., Lima, C. F., & Fernandes, D. M. (2018). O caso de imigrantes haitianos, congolese, senegaleses e ganese e a relação com o mundo do trabalho no Brasil. In R. Baeninger, L. M. Bógus, J. B. Moreira, L. R. Vedovato, D. M. Fernandes, M. R. D. Souza, C. S. Baltar, R. G. Peres, T. C. Waldman, & L. F. A. Magalhães (Eds.), *Migrações Sul-Sul* (pp. 446–462). Campinas, SP.
- Tedesco, J. C., & Mello, P. A. T. D. (2015). *Senegaleses no centro-norte do Rio Grande do Sul: Imigração laboral e dinâmica social*. Letra&Vida.
- Uebel, R. R. G. (2017). Senegaleses no Rio Grande do Sul: Panorama e perfil do novo fluxo migratório ‘África-Sul do Brasil’. In J. C. Tedesco & G. Kleidermacher (Eds.), *A imigração senegalesa no Brasil e na Argentina: Múltiplos olhares* (pp. 185–207). EST Edições.
- Vammen, I. M. S. (2017). Sticking to god. Brokers of hope in Senegalese migration to Argentina. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (Eds.), *Hope and uncertainty in contemporary African migration* (pp. 40–57). Routledge.
- Vammen, I. M. S. (2019). New contested borderlands: Senegalese migrants en route to Argentina. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(8), 1–17.
- Wissink, M., Düvell, F., & van Eerdewijk, A. (2013). Dynamic migration intentions and the impact of socio-institutional environments: A transit migration hub in Turkey. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(7), 1087–1105.
- Xiang, B., & Lindquist, J. (2014). Migration infrastructure. *International Migration Review*, 48(S1), S122–S148.
- Zelege, M. (2017). Too many winds to consider; which way and when to sail!: Ethiopian female transit migrants in Djibouti and the dynamics of their decision-making. *African and Black Diaspora*, 12(1), 49–63.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 9

Bonds of Transnationalism and Freedom of Mobility: Intra-European Onward Migrants Before and After Brexit



Francesco Della Puppa and Djordje Sredanovic

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we explore how the phenomena described by transnationalism and mobility theory intersect with onward migration in the context of Brexit. We do so using in-depth interviews collected in two research projects, the first one with citizens of the 27 current EU member states ('EU27 citizens') in the UK and with Britons in Belgium and the second one with Bangladeshis who naturalised in Italy before moving to the UK. We argue that transnationalism and mobility describe distinct, if not diverging, phenomena. These are, respectively, significant links to two or more specific social contexts (transnationalism) and the possibility of migration plans that are open-ended in terms of both possible destinations and duration (mobility). In this sense, transnational links can limit the open-ended nature of onward migration plans by focusing on a smaller number of contexts with which one has stronger links. Further, onward migration can erode the strength of transnational links by putting the links with the country of origin in competition with those of the country of first migration.

Unlike the other chapters in this book, our analysis is not limited to the field of transnationalism, but compares the fields of transnational and mobility studies, while considering the internal variation of both fields. Our study of the relations between transnationalism and onward migration takes also in account that the two phenomena might weaken each other, with transnational links being eroded by

F. Della Puppa (✉)

Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Italy
e-mail: francesco.dellapuppa@unive.it

D. Sredanovic

F.R.S.-FNRS; Group for Research on Ethnic Relations, Migration and Equality (GERME)
Laboratory, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: djordje.sredanovic@ulb.be

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*,
IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_9

179

onward migration and strong transnational links potentially making a return migration – rather than an onward one – more probable.

Favell (2008) suggested that EU freedom of movement introduces significant changes to international mobility in terms of the possibility to enact temporary and open-ended mobility plans. It has been noted how there are limits to this open-endedness, including processes of anchoring linked to life stages (Ryan, 2019; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). However, EU freedom of movement, while far from absolute (see, e.g., Barbulescu, 2017, Laffleur & Mescoli, 2018), indeed removes two of the main limits to mobility. These are the visa system that regulates and stratifies the possibility of moving to specific destinations (e.g. Neumayer, 2006) and deportability policies (De Genova, 2002) which, combined, limit further mobility by increasing the cost of the initial arrival and reducing the opportunities to leave the context of arrival safe in the knowledge of being able to return (e.g. Massey et al., 2002). Brexit has limited the capacity to move or the *motility* (Kaufmann et al., 2004) of different groups. UK citizens have lost their EU citizenship, EU27 citizens in the UK are no longer protected by EU norms and third-country nationals have limits to their ability to move to the UK by obtaining EU27 citizenship. In such a context the different groups, after having experienced significant motility for a variable number of years (depending on when they became EU citizens), are often motivated either to stabilise their situation by naturalising or to plan onward or return migration as a reaction to the reduction of guarantees in the country of residence (McGhee et al., 2017). However, they need to do so in a context of diminishing motility (Sredanovic, 2021).

In this chapter, we explore how transnationalism and mobility intersect in the experiences and plans of our interviewees. We examine how the obtaining of EU citizenship and completed onward mobility can redefine transnational activities such as periodic returns to the country of origin and remittances. We further explore how transnational links can orient and define potential future mobility plans, while acknowledging that future migration is always very hard to estimate (Carling & Schewel, 2018) and that intra-EU mobility plans, in particular, could have been over-estimated both by researchers and by the interviewees in recent literature (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

In the following sections we first engage in a theoretical discussion of transnationalism, mobility and onward migration, together with some background data on the three populations of reference and of their mobility as a consequence of Brexit. We then present the methodology used in the two research projects and discuss in turn the results of our research projects. In the case of Della Puppa's research, we look at how the acquisition of EU citizenship, entrance into the EU freedom of movement system and completed onward migration all influence transnational activities such as periodic returns and remittances. In the case of Sredanovic's research, we look at how potential onward migrations are influenced by the interplay of transnational links and mobility orientations.

9.2 Transnationalism, Mobility and Onward Migration

Transnationalism and mobility are usually treated if not as synonyms, then as concepts that have overlap and synergy. For example, Faist, one of the main theoreticians of transnationalism, has explicitly presented it as a theory of mobility (2013, 1638), while Hui (2016) has argued that the lesser success of mobility theory in migration studies is due to mobility being perceived as a synonym for transnationalism.

Such a perception is perhaps justified considering that both theoretical approaches have been developed in reaction to a previous consensus on migration. Such a consensus saw migration as an exceptional moment in a person's biography, followed by the weakening of links with the context of origin and either intergenerational assimilation in the context of destination (e.g. Park, 1928) or the formation of distinct ethnic groups (e.g. Glazer & Moynihan, 1963).

However, the core definitions of the two theories indicate different phenomena and it is our argument – to our knowledge not explored before in the literature – that such phenomena might be partially incompatible.

Transnational theory was proposed by Glick Schiller et al. (1992) to underline the continued links which migrants had with the context of origin, without – for this reason – lacking contact with the context of destination or forming segregated ethnic groups. In this sense, transnationalism is a theory of simultaneity (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004), reflecting the social co-presence of migrants in (at least) two social contexts.

Most anglophone literature starts the discussion of mobility theory with the work of Urry (2000, 2007). However, many of the elements of mobility theory used in migration studies were proposed in earlier publications within migration studies in France by Tarrus (1992, 2000) and Morokvasic (1992, 1996, 1999). Mobility theory, since the formulations of Tarrus and Morokvasic, is mostly critical of the idea of migration as an exceptional, life-defining event. It argues for the need to conceptualise what is usually defined as migration along with certain kinds of mobility previously excluded from migration studies, including temporary migration, commuting, business trips and tourism. Further, mobility theory sees migration as more temporary and open-ended than the classic approach to migration which sees it as limited to a few life-defining movements.¹ Further theorisations of mobility have insisted on the role of imagination in anticipating (or substituting for) mobility (Salazar, 2011) and on the need to explain stasis rather than leaving it as the unexplored norm (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013).

¹As Hui (2016) underlines, there are other aspects of mobility theory, as defined by Urry (2000, 2007), that have been less incorporated in migration studies, including attention to other-than-human mobilities (objects, information, capital) and to the physical infrastructures (airports, roads) that allow mobility – the attention to the temporariness and open-endedness of human mobility remains, however, the main contribution of the theory to migration studies.

Theoretical reflection about the differences between transnationalism and mobility is relatively rare (for some exceptions, see King, 2012; Hui, 2016). When the two concepts are not simply used as synonyms, the tendency is to describe one as the subset of the other. Transnationalism is defined as a form of human mobility alongside other forms and along with non-human mobility (e.g. Hannam et al., 2006), while mobility is defined as a dimension of transnationalism along with socio-cultural and political links (e.g. Portes et al., 1999). By looking at the core dimensions of each theorisation, rather than trying to reduce one to the other, we can highlight the different phenomena described by the two theories.

Even when focusing on the core dimensions, there are certainly overlaps between the two concepts, although they can also help to further underline the differences. Repeated short-term return mobility, such as taking holidays in the context of origin, is a kind of mobility that is important for the creation and maintenance of transnational links. However, this kind of mobility seems to have been under-theorised not only in traditional migration studies but also in transnational theory or even limited to other concepts (return visits – King & Christou, 2011; recreational transnationalism – Carling & Bivand Erdal, 2014; tourism – Klekowski von Koppenfels et al., 2015). Another kind of mobility which is under-explored by traditional migration studies and that has received attention in transnational studies is circular migration (e.g. Sandu, 2005; Triandafyllidou, 2013 – the phenomenon was indeed introduced in mobility studies as ‘commuting migration’, see Morokvasic, 1992, 1996). However, the different approach of the two theories is revealing. Transnational theory seems more apt to describe ongoing and regular mobility. If circular migration breaks off or redirects to other destinations it becomes of less interest to transnational theory and may even be considered a failure. Mobility theory, on the contrary, insists both on the potential open-endedness and temporariness of all sorts of mobilities and on the social relevance of less-than-permanent mobility. Transnational approaches further tended to focus methodologically on the links between two specific countries, giving less attention to other possible mobilities, something that has created dissatisfaction among the original authors of transnational theory (Glick Schiller, 2007) and has more recently been criticised within multinational/onward migration studies (Paul & Yeoh, 2020).

In a specular way, some mobility theory, often under the labels of fluidity or cosmopolitanism, has absolutised mobility, announcing the end of barriers, states and local societies. Such an approach contrasts with the early attention which transnational theory has given to the continued role of the state (Basch et al., 1994) and was criticised by theorists of transnationality as ignoring the stratification of opportunities for mobility (Faist, 2013).

Generally, in the literature, there are different perspectives and, consequently, definitions that describe multiple mobilities within the same migration trajectory. The concept of ‘transit migration’ was adopted to analyse the transit of asylum-seekers and irregular migrants directed towards a destination context other than the one in which they find themselves (Mueller, 2004; Collyer, 2007; Collyer & de

Haas, 2010; Düvell, 2012). The expression ‘secondary migration’ has been used to reflect on the trajectories of citizens from countries of the ‘Global South’ who have stayed regularly and in a prolonged manner over time but temporarily, in national contexts with advanced economies, before reaching the final destination context (for Europe see Bang Nielsen, 2004; for North America refer to Takenaka, 2007). Such experience of mobility is described through the construct of ‘stepwise international migration’ which, however, brings it back to a deliberate strategy adopted by migrants to accumulate the economic, social and relational resources necessary to reach the ultimate goal of migration, the ‘dream destinations’ – usually in Europe and/or North America (Mueller, 2004; King & Newbold, 2007; Paul, 2011, 2015; Tsujimoto, 2016). The term ‘multiple migrations’ explains the journey of a migrant that first started from the country of origin to a primary destination, intersecting with other spatialities and temporalities of migration (Salamonska, 2017); after a period of residence in the first settlement, the migrant again moves to the second country to fulfil his or her migration goal. In the same way, migrations may happen in several locations in a person’s life (Bhachu, 2015; Ciobanu, 2015). It has been argued that, in these cases of ‘multiple migration mobilities’, migrants have a clear plan for the intermediate and final countries of settlement (Ahrens et al., 2016; Mas Giralt, 2017). Paul and Yeoh (2020, 2021) have recently proposed ‘multinational migration’ to indicate long-term permanence in two or more countries in addition to the country of origin. Their approach is partly in opposition to the emphasis of transnational studies on only two countries at a time (Paul & Yeoh, 2021) to which we return in the conclusions.

The term ‘onward migration’ (Nekby, 2006; Mas Giralt, 2017; Ramos, 2018; Della Puppa & King, 2019) is part of the framework of the reflections on intra-European mobility (EMN, 2013; Sarpong et al., 2020). This phenomenon can be understood as a form of reactivation of migration mobility, due to an increased ‘motility’ (Kaufmann et al., 2004; see also Paul, 2015; Moret, 2018). This is the case for third-country nationals who use their new citizenship acquired in an EU country – sometimes an indefinite leave to remain – to move to another EU country (Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Danaj & Çaro, 2016; Della Puppa, 2018; Ramos, 2018; Della Puppa & King, 2019). In this case, these new migration movements interweave internal mobility and international migration (De Genova & Peutz, 2010; King & Skeldon, 2010; Wagner & Hassel, 2016). They continue the process of geographical settlement and social stabilisation in Europe of migrants from the Global South and are frequently directed to the former colonial metropolises of their home countries, which still attract them on the basis of linguistic, cultural, family and social links (Van Liempt, 2011; Ahrens et al., 2016; Della Puppa & King, 2019), as also noted elsewhere in this book (Chap. 3 by de Hoon and van Liempt and Chap. 11 by Formenti).

9.3 Intra-EU Mobile People and Brexit as a Trigger for Further Mobility

In this section we discuss the groups involved in our research, as well as the way in which Brexit redefines and triggers mobility. The 2016 Referendum and the following Brexit process has called significant attention to mobility between the UK and the EU27, although more to EU27 citizens than to Britons in EU27 member states. The latter have been stereotyped in public discourse as white, middle-class retirees concentrated particularly in touristic areas of Spain. Research on the group – which, in 2019, included between 1 and 2.2 million people – has, however, shown its diversity. It has underlined how the majority are of working age (Benson & O'Reilly, 2018) and the specificity of the non-white experiences among the group (Benson & Lewis, 2019). Statbel (the Belgian national statistical service) estimated that Britons in Belgium without Belgian nationality on 1 January 2020 were around 19,000 – a number that is decreasing mainly because of the acquisitions of nationality. The group grew significantly between 1965 and 1980, around the 1973 entry of the UK in the EU (Hermia & Perrin, 2012) and has remained relatively stationary since then. The important number of those working for or in relation to supranational institutions (mainly the EU but also, for example, NATO) means that the group is probably more middle-class than Britons in the rest of Europe.

EU27 citizens in the UK numbered some 3.7 million in 2019 (ONS, 2020). With the exceptions of active recruitment from Poland and Latvia after World War II and of the arrivals of Italians in the 1950s and 1960s, most of the significant arrivals from current EU27 member states started in the 1990s (D'Angelo & Kofman, 2017) following the process of EU enlargement. The group is also highly diverse both in terms of geographic origins (five of the six largest foreign national groups in the UK are from the EU – Poland, Romania, Republic of Ireland, Italy and Portugal)² and in terms of positioning within the UK class structure. However, Johnston et al. (2015) have highlighted a tendency among Eastern EU citizens to be both concentrated in less-qualified jobs and overqualified in relation to them. An additional diversity of the group comes from the fact that it includes significant numbers of naturalised onward migrants, among whom Dutch Somalis (e.g. Van Liempt, 2011) and Spanish Latin Americans (e.g. Mas Giralt, 2017) have been the subject of research.³ Italo-Bangladeshis are another group of naturalised onward migrants studied in one of the research projects presented here.

The Bangladeshi community constitutes the sixth non-EU community in Italy, with over 130,000 individuals. It is a relatively recent migration, which has consolidated since the 1990s (Priori, 2012). Despite this, many Bangladeshis in Italy, now

²If we consider place of birth rather than citizenship, the picture is slightly different, as EU citizens have historically naturalised in lower numbers. ONS considers only one citizenship per respondent, which means that third-country nationals who acquired an EU27 citizenship might be underestimated.

³See also Chaps. 3 (by de Hoon and van Liempt) and 6 (by Serra Mingot) in this volume.

Italian citizens with a European passport, have undertaken or are planning to undertake a new migration, defined as ‘onward migration’ (Della Puppa & Sredanovic, 2017; Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2017; Della Puppa, 2018; Della Puppa & King, 2019). These are mostly male migrant workers who, following family reunion with their wives and children in Italy, acquired citizenship after over 10 years of continuous residence in the country. Their new migration would be fuelled by the aspirations of upward social mobility that migrants have for their children (Della Puppa & King, 2019); this especially after the global economic crisis that has hit increasingly hard the working class of the countries of Mediterranean Europe but also in conjunction with the beginning of a new family cycle which sees them as mature fathers, with children facing higher education. Thus, the biographical and family cycle intertwine with the migration cycle and the evolution of their civic status. Moreover, the United Kingdom and, above all, London, is represented as a context in which an ‘ethnic’ conception of citizenship does not exist and, therefore, it would be possible to move away from the condition of ‘foreigner’ and ‘migrant’. An additional factor is the attraction that the UK exercises by virtue of its welfare system, considered more inclusive than the ‘Mediterranean’ one (Della Puppa, 2018; Della Puppa & King, 2019).

In a previous article (Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020) we highlighted how the Italo-Bangladeshis, as ‘naturalised’ EU citizens and ‘EU citizens at birth’ (that is, those who are citizens since birth of current EU member states) show different attitudes towards further mobility. Sredanovic’s EU27 interviewees in the UK (as well as British interviewees in Belgium) showed a much stronger orientation to potential further onward migration within the EU, while the Italo-Bangladeshis were more likely to dismiss further migration plans or to limit them to return migration to Italy. However, since one of the reasons for the onward migration of the Italo-Bangladeshis was the search for a more inclusive welfare state, the possible exclusion from the public benefits system of EU citizens in the UK raises many concerns for this category of interviewees (Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020). We argued that one reason for this was the larger confidence of EU citizens ‘by birth’ in the use of EU freedom of mobility and the fact that the Italo-Bangladeshis saw their position in the UK as the result of a longer migratory pathway.

As mentioned, Brexit introduces significant reasons for the further migration of all the groups, including the loss of rights linked to EU freedom of movement and, in the UK, fears of xenophobia and economic downturn (Sredanovic, 2021). EU27 citizens in the UK have left in significant numbers and new arrivals have slowed down, especially from Central and Eastern EU member states. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, been masking the impact of Brexit, and the situation, which is particularly volatile and difficult to predict (cf. Sredanovic, 2021), could change significantly in the near future.

9.4 Method

The two research projects behind this chapter were conducted separately by Della Puppa and Sredanovic but have been the object, for a number of years, of a cooperative comparative analysis (e.g. Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020).

Della Puppa conducted 30 interviews with Italo-Bangladeshis who naturalised in Italy before moving to the UK; the interviews were collected between 2016 (including the period before the Brexit referendum) and 2018 in the UK. Della Puppa started from different points of access to the field and continued collecting interviews via the snowball method. The interviewees were all men, in their 30s to 50s, with at least 15 years of residence in Italy before moving to the UK. The years of residence were not a selection criterion for inclusion in this study but, rather, a characteristic that all interviewees happened to share as, in order to acquire Italian citizenship, there is a requirement of 10 years of continuous residence in the country, plus a few years for the bureaucratic procedures and waiting for the answer. Furthermore, the focus of the project is on men because, in the migration from Bangladesh to Italy, the first migrant is almost always a man (Della Puppa, 2014) and, therefore, the men are those who first acquire Italian citizenship and can carry out (and make it possible for their partners) further intra-European migration. We recognise that adopting this generational and gender perspective has limitations; however, this does not imply gender-blindness. Coming from middle-class families in Bangladesh, they were in working-class jobs both in Italy (mostly in the industrial sector) and the UK (mostly in the service sector). They lived mostly in London, except for a few who were living in Essex. The interviews focused on their migratory experiences and strategies both in Italy and in the UK, as well as the background in Bangladesh, the impact of the Brexit process and the experiences of work, family and interactions with the state (including welfare and the school system) in the UK.

Sredanovic presents here in-depth interviews conducted between 2018 and early 2020 (that is, in the period between the 2016 Brexit referendum and Brexit leaving day on 31 January 2020). These include 26 interviews with EU27 citizens in the UK and 16 interviews with UK citizens in Belgium. The EU27 interviewees lived in different areas of Great Britain, were in the majority women (17, compared to 9 men), were aged between their mid-20s and their 50s and were skewed towards the middle class. The countries of origin included Italy (7), Spain (5), France and Germany (3 each), Greece and Poland (2 each) and Austria, Belgium, Croatia and Hungary (1 each). The UK citizens interviewed also lived in different areas of Belgium. They were balanced in terms of gender, had ages ranging from their mid-20s to their 70s and were also skewed toward the middle class. The interviewees either answered calls on social media or were contacted through the snowball procedure. The interview guide included questions about their memories of the day after the referendum, about their migratory history in the country of residence (particularly in terms of bureaucratic problems) and their fears and expectations linked to the Brexit process. It further explored measures taken (or not) to obtain

permanent residence or nationality and their opinions in relation to the negotiations between the UK government and the EU authorities. The interviews were conducted mostly in English but, in some cases in the UK, were conducted in Italian, French or Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian.

9.5 Reshaping Transnational Practices

In the case of the Italo-Bangladeshis, obtaining EU citizenship brought them access to EU freedom of movement and an onward migration which redefined their transnational practices. Shortly after their arrival in the UK, the Brexit process started endangering their recently obtained EU freedom of movement.

As we have shown elsewhere (Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020), the UK (and London) also represented a particular attraction for the Italo-Bangladeshis by virtue of its welfare system (Della Puppa & King, 2019). Therefore, the prospect of the UK's exit from the EU was actually perceived as a threat, even by the Italo-Bangladeshis who had already relocated: their main fears for the outcome of the referendum were related to their possible exclusion from the system of 'benefits' to which EU citizens could have access in London. In fact, one of the issues on which the electoral campaign for the referendum was played out was exactly that – the use of benefits and so-called 'welfare shopping' (Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020). Despite these fears, the Italo-Bangladeshis interviewed dismissed plans for further migration (or a return migration to Italy) after their relocation to London. On the contrary, their onward migration to the UK is described as a definitive choice (at least until their children reach complete socio-economic independence) which, at present, shapes their transnational practices.

Here, then, we will look at the changes that the new intra-European migration regime has produced in the transnational practices of Italo-Bangladeshis. Specifically, two dimensions will be taken into account which reveal forms of transnationalism observed in the intertwining of the migration cycle and the biographical and family cycle: periodical returns to the country of origin and the sending of remittances.

9.5.1 *A Re-oriented Transnationalism*

The Bangladeshi migrant respondents stayed in Italy for a long period, to the point that many of them spent more than half of their lives there. The time spent in Italy, of course, also affected their identity perceptions, friendship ties, and emotional horizons, prompting them to frequent returns to the country that constituted their first migratory destination in Europe. In the words of Bintu and Maahnoor, respectively:

Of course I go back to Italy when I can! I feel more Italian than Bengali and I don't feel English at all. I came away from Bangladesh when I was young and spent more than half of my life in Italy. I have many friends in Italy, I am in contact with them by phone, Skype... So I often go back to Bolzano, I have many Bengali friends there but also Italian friends. When I come back, I never sleep in a hotel, friends always host me.

I don't feel anything for England. I feel that my country is Italy. I don't even feel that my country is Bangladesh. Yes, it is Bangladesh but I grew up in Italy, my son was born in Italy, studied there for two years – my country is Italy. Then I have my younger brother and my older brother who still live in Italy – they have children, my nephews, therefore, I often go to Italy. My relatives are almost all in Italy, two brothers, nephews...

Therefore, onward migration would seem to have reoriented the transnational practices and trajectories of the Italo-Bangladeshis who have relocated to the UK, intensifying periodic trips to Italy and making return to the country of birth more sporadic, as confirmed, for example, by Aanu – who was going to return to Bangladesh after an absence of 7 years, compared to continuous returns to Italy – or by Brion who, similarly, spends a much longer time between trips to Bangladesh, compared to the frequency of visits to relatives resident in Italy:

I am going to Bangladesh in July, I already bought the ticket. But I've been away for a long time, since 2011... that's a lot. Because then I moved here and... On the other hand I return more often to Italy, since I am here in England I have already gone twice and I will be back in a month. I go to my brother who still lives there, I go on vacation, my daughters are also happy this way.

I returned to Bangladesh the last time in February 2016. [...] In Italy, we go back every three or four months or my wife goes there on her own, because her family is in Italy. We are very homesick [for Italy] but we go there often, so...

These interview extracts highlight the importance of family ties in shaping and reorienting transnational periodic returns. On the one hand, as Aanu and Brion said, the long stay in Italy has allowed the recomposition of an extended family circle, including ascendant and side relatives, in the first country of destination of their migration biography and this, understandably, has reconfigured the orientation of their transnational travels. On the other hand, today, the Italo-Bangladeshi onward migrants are in another phase of their family and migration cycle: no longer single young men with the duty to contribute to the economy of the family of origin in Bangladesh by sending remittances to parents, but mature fathers with children of school age and, often, without close family ties in the country of origin where, in the meantime, the parents have died – or, in turn, have been reunited in Europe – and there are only a few relatives left behind. This is what emerges from the words of many respondents. Below, those of Rintu and Apon, respectively:

Yes, for me every opportunity is good to return to Italy: as soon as I can, I go, to find friends and have a short holiday... However, in Bangladesh, there is no longer anyone, I return rarely: my mum lives with us here in London, my father is dead, my brothers also live here or in Italy.

My mum and dad are dead. We were a big family as we are five brothers and two sisters... my two older brothers are here and another one who I go to visit often is in Italy. On the other hand, since my parents died, I don't go to Bangladesh that often.

It should be underlined that this frequent travel to Italy is a practice that the arrival of Brexit has partially made more complicated from a bureaucratic and, perhaps, economic point of view but which, at the time of the interviews, did not seem to be abandoned.

In addition to the reconfiguration of the onward migrants' family priorities, the greater economic and organisational accessibility of an intra-European journey compared to an inter-continental movement also played an important role in re-designing their transnational trajectories. In fact, in addition to being able to have numerous friends and family, who can offer them comfortable hospitality, the flight connections between the UK and Italy are much more affordable than those between any European country – including the UK – and Bangladesh, as Tanu and Magan, respectively, explain:

I go to Italy quite often. Every year, especially in summer, I stay a couple of weeks, I go on vacation, to eat some ice cream, drink coffee... Because it costs little now, with EasyJet or Ryanair, it costs very little.

Do you know how many times I go to Italy? At least three times a year but even more, sometimes even four or five times. When it's cheap, I get tickets: I leave on Friday and I go back on Sunday with the last flight. I am always hosted by Bengali or Italian friends.

Therefore, onward migration does not affect transnationalism (in its dimension of periodic returns to the country of origin), by stopping it, but changes its direction by making it converge towards Italy. From another perspective, it could be said that transnational activities became more complex, combining frequent trips to Italy with the more sporadic returns to Bangladesh.

At the basis of this phenomenon, there seems to be a multiplicity of identity, emotional, family, economic and social factors. First of all, Italy is the country where intense friendships and even family ties have been woven and strengthened, while the 'migration seniority' and the alternation of generations and family cycles has attenuated or weakened significant parental relationships in Bangladesh. Secondly, for the Italo-Bangladeshis in London, many of whom have spent more than half of their life away from Bangladesh, their country of origin becomes Italy, the first country of destination of their migration experience, where they spent the years of their youth and of important biographical experiences and towards which there is an intense nostalgia. Finally, the organisational ease and economic accessibility that characterise travel to Italy compared to returns to Bangladesh should not be overlooked. It remains to be seen whether and how Brexit will modify this organisational and economic accessibility.

9.5.2 *Changes in Remittance Practices in the Intertwining of the Migration and the Family Cycle*

Remittances have been analysed by some authors as a thermometer of the intensity of migrants' transnational ties (e.g. Boccagni, 2013, 2017). For this reason, it might be useful to observe what the impact is on this practice of the onward migration of European citizens of third-country-national origin.⁴

Once again, the interviews highlighted the weight of the years spent in Italy as well as the change in economic and material conditions of the Italo-Bangladeshi families, once relocated in the UK and, specifically in London: a city characterised by a high cost of living and where respondents managed to find work almost exclusively in the hypertrophic low-skilled tertiary sector (Della Puppa & King, 2019), through a process of contractual deregulation already described in terms of a 'new migrant division of labor' (May et al., 2007; see also Della Puppa & King, 2019; King & Della Puppa, 2021).

In fact, some interviewees explained how remittances sent in the years spent in Italy have helped family members at home with their economic needs. Others stressed the impossibility of sending a regular economic contribution to Bangladesh in the face of the increase in expenses and the reduction of wages suffered after the relocation to London. This is an aspect that, probably, with Brexit and the consequent risk of exclusion from the benefits system, will further increase. Here are the words of, first, Shafur and, second, Bayazeed:

I don't send money to Bangladesh anymore because, working in Italy and sending the money there, I built a five-story building there and now my mum lives in one of these and takes the rent from the others, so now I can think only about my family here in London.

I don't send money to my family back in Bangladesh anymore. Here it is still not possible because I have no surplus, my salary is too low and the life here is too expensive, even though I get benefits...

In addition to the impact on the transnational travel of Italo-Bangladeshi onward migrants, the succession of the migration and family cycle and, therefore, the disappearance of the closest family members in the country of origin, also have a similar impact on their transnational economic transactions. In fact, the event that the most influences the sending of remittances is the death of the parents left behind. When this happens, the biographical passage of migrants who, from the condition of unmarried children 'move' towards that of men with a family of their own, is now complete: now they are *exclusively* husbands and fathers (Della Puppa, 2014). With this, therefore, the moral obligations, the debt of gratitude and the 'family duty' also end. Now, the migrants may be rationally and emotionally focused only on their nuclear family in Europe, as Abul says:

I used to send money but now my parents are gone. My brothers are there [Bangladesh], but they don't need money. Before, my heart and head were in Bangladesh. Now that my dad is

⁴As opposed to the reverse line of causation – the impact of onward mobility on remittances – analysed by Flikweert et al. in Chap. 4.

dead, my heart and head are here [in Italy and Europe]. I always sent money there to help my dad but now my family is only here [in Italy and Europe].

The residual practice of sending goods to relatives at home takes on more symbolic and celebratory features. This aspect is also confirmed by Rahaman:

I was sending [remittances] but, as my father died last year, actually I don't need to send money anymore, so now I just send something, sometimes, some gifts to my brothers and sisters: in our religion, there are two big ceremonies: Eid – you know, at the end and after Ramadan. In these times, I send something to them as a gift.

If the 'fronds' of the onward migrants and their families are turned to the future and the realisation of the children's lives, especially through investment in their education outside Italy (Della Puppa & King, 2019), the 'roots' of the family of origin are fed by remittances of a non-strictly financial nature, such as gifts.

9.6 Potential Onward Migrants: EU27 Citizens in the UK and Britons in Belgium

Among the UK and EU27 citizens interviewed by Sredanovic, remittances were not a common practice, both because of the higher incomes in the countries of origin and because the composition of the interviewees was somewhat biased towards the middle class. Periodic returns to the country of origin were usually taken for granted given the lesser distance and associated costs and migration controls (although, for some interviewees, ensuring their continuation was a reason to naturalise – Sredanovic, 2020). On the other hand, Brexit entailed a rather widespread orientation towards open-ended plans for potential future mobility, be it onward or return. However, some of the interviewees, those with the strongest transnational links, were less likely to have open-ended plans and focused more on return migration to countries in which they had previously lived. In this sense exploring their plans for the future can also help to understand how transnational links influence (and in some cases might discourage) onward migration.

Some of the interviewees from the research presented in this section showed limited interest in further migration as a result of Brexit and were strongly determined to remain in the current country of residence, be that the UK or Belgium, despite the changes brought about by Brexit. For most of them the country of residence was the first country of migration, although some had previous migratory history and, in a few cases, an extensive experience which included several countries of residence.

Among the majority who had given some thought to either onward or return migration, many had an appreciation of open-ended, mobile potential migration plans. One explanation for this was that all the interviewees participating in the research (except one of the EU27 citizens interviewed in the UK) were against Brexit. In addition to claiming the right to remain in the country of residence, another way to express resistance to Brexit was to appreciate the motility

guaranteed by the EU freedom of movement. This was particularly the case among the Britons in Belgium who were able or who aimed to maintain their EU citizenship rights by obtaining the citizenship of an EU27 member state. In these cases the potential onward migration was described in particularly open-ended ways by Ilaria (an Italian in the UK) and Sarah (a Briton in Belgium) respectively:

It is clear that I have been here for several years. I would like to remain... I mean, I do not need to leave tomorrow and so on but, in the long term, I see more issues for England than for the rest of Europe. In any case I say 'Well folks, I have the rest of Europe I can go to'. I can go to work anywhere, I can decide to go back to Italy.

... once she [her daughter] is settled in life, then I can do what I like. And I could always go back to the UK. Now I can go to Ireland and, thanks to my Irish passport, I am still welcome and I use that word because I will still have the right to go and move to wherever I want, be it a Greek island, be it, you know, Scandinavia somewhere, you know, be it the former Eastern Europe.

Ralf, a German interviewee who moved from the UK to Norway, had completed his onward migration as a consequence of Brexit and now had open-ended migration plans:

I'm originally German, so Germany was one of the options we [he and his wife] were thinking about and then, in an academic setting, it's always hard to find something for two people. So we both started applying to places or talking to contacts and then Norway is just what happened to come out first.

In this case the onward migration was accelerated by an episode of racial harassment which Ralf's Indian wife experienced and the interview extract shows how the couple was ready to move to the first country in which they found a work opportunity.

For those – in particular spouses – who had stronger transnational links to another EU member state, the onward migration plans were more clear-cut and, in some cases, focused on a single country. Trevor, a Briton living in Belgium, for example, had plans to potentially move to France – the country of birth of his wife – and had obtained French citizenship by marriage for that very reason. Beverley, another Briton living in Belgium, had also considered moving to Spain, the country of origin of her husband but, having school-age children and not being able to obtain Spanish citizenship without first establishing residence there, was stopping her. Transnational links and substantial previous migratory experience can also focus potential future mobility plans. Matteo, an Italian who worked for several years in Spain before moving to the UK, felt 'too old' (despite only being in his 40s) for temporary mobility and had return migration to Barcelona as the main plan if he had to leave the UK because of Brexit.

No, that [leaving the UK for a year and two and then going back] is not so much something I'd do. In part because I am a certain age, let's say [...]. I would already find it difficult to go to a new place and start again. Because, let's say, I instinctively would think of going back to Spain, even if the Spanish political climate dissuades me. [...] I spent exactly eight years in Barcelona. So, let's say, on the one hand that's the default hypothesis that I would consider because, obviously, other than speaking Italian, Spanish and English... that would be the easiest thing.

Perhaps a clearer example of how transnationalism can limit open-ended migration plans can be given by comparing two young Spanish couples living in the UK. Fernando and Guacimara and Verónica and Sebastian are two couples in which the partners come from different regions of Spain. Both the couples were interested in remaining in the UK and were open to further migration only in the case of the worsening of Brexit. Comparing their plans shows significant differences in how open-ended these were. First, Fernando says:

Moving to Barcelona would be like starting over again, with no support from family or friends, or whatever. [...] We have considered, for example, since our [his company's] head offices are in the south of France [...] yeah, we don't speak French at all. [...] There's also a bit of industry in my speciality in Lisbon but, again, we don't speak Portuguese.

Sebastian: I was thinking of Ireland.

Verónica: Yeah, we're thinking of Ireland.

Sebastian: I mean, it's just over there, we can swim over.

Verónica: A ferry.

Sebastian: And they speak English, so we don't have to learn another language. But it wouldn't be even a problem, because she [Verónica] speaks German. I am not sure how your French is? My French is terrible, I mean, I understand French, but...

Verónica: It's not super good, but I think I could cope with working in French if I spent some time brushing it up...

Fernando and Guacimara have two small children – who have been recognised as 'anchoring' elements (Ryan, 2019), while Verónica and Sebastian do not have children. However, the main difference is that Fernando and Guacimara felt that they could find resources by moving to Madrid, including a house they would be able to use. Verónica and Sebastian on the other hand, while having links with family and friends in Spain, felt that there was no single place in Spain in which they could live together and have resources to fall back on. From the extracts, we can see how Fernando and Guacimara tend to exclude mobility destinations other than Madrid, including another destination within Spain. Verónica and Sebastian tend to be more optimistic about other destinations, not having a single destination to which they feel particularly linked.

9.7 Conclusions

Comparing the interviews from the two research projects shines a light on the interactions between mobility and transnationalism. Transnationalism was originally formulated (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994) to explain the intensity and durability of the strong links of migrants in the US with a single other country, that of origin. Mobility theory in migration studies, on the other hand, has always focused on open-endedness and on the plurality of possible future destinations.

For our Italo-Bangladeshi interviewees, the acquisition of EU citizenship increased their motility and brought about onward migration. As a consequence,

some transnational practices were completely redefined. Periodic returns were partly refocused away from Bangladesh and towards Italy, while remittances were reduced. Again, this is also linked to other factors, including the reduction of family ties with Bangladesh (the death of parents and/or other relatives moving to Italy or the UK) and, for remittances, the decrease in available income in the UK. The Brexit process threatened to take away a significant part of their newfound motility but they were unlikely to respond to this loss of right by planning further post-Brexit onward mobility (Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020).

EU27 citizens 'by birth' and UK citizens in Belgium have, in most cases, spent a much longer time taking for granted the motility that the Italo-Bangladeshis obtained only after a long migratory experience. Some transnational practices, such as remittances, were unusual among the groups, while others such as periodic returns were taken for granted. Brexit resulted in them having a generally positive attitude to intra-European mobility (Sredanovic, 2021; Sredanovic & Della Puppa, 2020) and, in this case, our research shows indications that transnational links can actually contain and delimit mobility plans. Some interviewees with stronger transnational links to the country of origin or with previous experience of onward migration were more likely to consider only return migration in answer to Brexit. On the other hand, some interviewees going through their first migration experience and/or having weaker links with the country of origin were more likely to see different options in front of them as a counter-measure to the risk of losing their rights and opportunities in the context of Brexit. This is obviously not a general rule – other interviewees considered only return migration without apparent transnational links to explain the orientation or did not consider any further mobility at all. The comparison of the two cases also shows how, pre-Brexit, access to the EU freedom of movement and consequent onward migration has weakened certain transnational links, while the post-Brexit context of (partial) loss of EU freedom of movement led to some interviewees planning return or onward migration, in which the existing transnational links delimited the open-endedness of possible destinations.

Paul and Yeoh (2021) have recently suggested the need to shift from a trans- to a multi-national approach to migration. We welcome their methodological approach but our findings further suggest that some of the phenomena made visible by the transnational approach, including regular returns and remittances, might be weaker in the context of onward migration. From this point of view, combining different approaches rather than redefining transnational theory to cover all dimensions of migration might be more fruitful. More generally, our results suggest that it would be fruitful not to consider transnationalism and mobility as synonyms but, rather, as capturing different aspects of the experiences of geographically mobile people. More specifically, they show how further mobility tends to redefine transnational activities and how transnational links can not only facilitate specific mobilities, but also make others less likely.

References

- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran, and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Bang Nielsen, K. (2004). *Next stop Britain: The influence of transnational networks on the secondary movement of Danish Somalis*. University of Sussex. Sussex Centre for Migration Research Working Paper No. 22.
- Barbulescu, R. (2017). From international migration to freedom of movement and back? Southern Europeans moving north in the era of retrenchment of freedom of movement rights. In J. M. Lafleur & M. Stanek (Eds.), *South-north migration of EU citizens in times of crisis* (pp. 15–32). Springer.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., & Szanton Blanc, C. (1994). *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments and deterritorialized nation-states*. Routledge.
- Benson, M., & Lewis, C. (2019). Brexit, British people of colour in the EU-27 and everyday racism in Britain and Europe. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(13), 2211–2228.
- Benson, M., & O'Reilly, K. (2018). *Long read: Let's ditch the stereotypes about the Britons who live in the EU*. LSE Brexit, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/10/01/long-read-lets-ditch-the-stereotypes-about-britons-who-live-in-the-eu/>
- Bhachu, P. (2015). Twice migrants and multiple migrants. In J. Stone, R. D. Dennis, & P. Rizova (Eds.), *Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of race, ethnicity, and nationalism*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663202.wberen661>
- Boccagni, P. (2013). 'Who should we help first?' Transnational helping practices in Ecuadorian migration. *International Migration*, 51(2), 191–208.
- Boccagni, P. (2017). Addressing transnational needs through migration? An inquiry into the reach and consequences of migrants' social protection across borders. *Global Social Policy*, 17(2), 168–187.
- Carling, J., & Bivand Erdal, M. (2014). Return migration and transnationalism: How are the two connected? *International Migration*, 52(6), 2–12.
- Carling, J., & Schewel, K. (2018). Revisiting aspiration and ability in international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 945–963.
- Ciobanu, R. O. (2015). Multiple migration flows of Romanians. *Mobilities*, 10(3), 466–485.
- Collyer, M. (2007). In-between places: Trans-Saharan transit migrants in Morocco and the fragmented journey to Europe. *Antipode*, 39(4), 668–690.
- Collyer, M., & de Haas, H. (2010). Developing dynamic categorisations of transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 468–481.
- D'Angelo, A., & Kofman, E. (2017). UK: Large-scale European migration and the challenge to EU free movement. In J. M. Lafleur & M. Stanek (Eds.), *South-north migration of EU citizens in times of crisis* (pp. 175–192). Springer.
- Danaj, S., & Çaro, E. (2016). Becoming an EU citizen through Italy: The experience of Albanian immigrants. *Mondi Migranti*, 3, 95–108.
- De Genova, N. P. (2002). Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 419–447.
- De Genova, N., & Peutz, N. (Eds.). (2010). *The deportation regime. Sovereignty, space and the freedom of movement*. Duke University Press.
- Della Puppa, F. (2014). *Uomini in cammino. Il lavoro della maschilità tra Bangladesh e Italia*. Rosenberg & Sellier.
- Della Puppa, F. (2018). Ambivalent mobilities and survival strategies of Moroccan and Bangladeshi families in Italy in times of crisis. *Sociology*, 52(3), 464–479.
- Della Puppa, F., & King, R. (2019). The new 'twice migrants': Motivations, experiences and disillusionments of Italian-Bangladeshi relocating to London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(11), 1936–1952.
- Della Puppa, F., & Sredanovic, D. (2017). Citizen to stay or citizen to go? Naturalization, security, and mobility of migrants in Italy. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 15(4), 366–383.

- Düvell, F. (2012). Transit migration: A blurred and politicized concept. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 415–427.
- EMN. (2013). *Intra-EU mobility of third-country nationals*. European Migration Network.
- Faist, T. (2013). The mobility turn: A new paradigm for social sciences? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(11), 1637–1646.
- Favell, A. (2008). The new face of East–West migration in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(5), 701–716.
- Glazer, N., & Moynihan, D. P. (1963). *Beyond the melting pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*. MIT Press.
- Glick Schiller, N. (2007). *Beyond the nation-state and its units of analysis: Towards a new research agenda for migration studies. Essentials of migration theory*. COMCAD Working Paper No. 33.
- Glick Schiller, N., & Salazar, N. B. (2013). Regimes of mobility across the globe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(2), 183–200.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645, 1–24.
- Hannam, K., Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). Editorial: Mobilities, immobilities and moorings. *Mobilities*, 1(1), 1–22.
- Hermia, J.-P., & Perrin, N. (2012). L'implantation des ressortissants européens à Bruxelles. Des logiques migratoires originales? In G. Masuy-Stroobant (Ed.), *L'Élargissement de l'Union Européenne: Enjeux et implications socio-démographiques* (pp. 349–376). Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain.
- Hui, A. (2016). The boundaries of interdisciplinary fields: Temporalities shaping the past and future of dialogue between migration and mobilities research. *Mobilities*, 11(1), 66–82.
- Johnston, R., Khattab, N., & Manley, D. (2015). East versus west? Over-qualification and earnings among the UK's European migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41(2), 196–218.
- Kaufmann, V., Bergman, M. M., & Joye, D. (2004). Motility: Mobility as capital. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(4), 745–756.
- Kilkey, M., & Ryan, L. (2021). 'Unsettling events': Understanding migrants' responses to geo-political transformative episodes through a life-course lens. *International Migration Review*, 55(1), 227–253.
- King, R. (2012). Geography and migration studies: Retrospect and prospect. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(2), 134–153.
- King, R., & Christou, A. (2011). Of counter-diaspora and reverse transnationalism: Return mobilities to and from the ancestral homeland. *Mobilities*, 6(4), 451–466.
- King, R., & Della Puppa, F. (2021). Times of work and social life: Bangladeshi migrants in Northeast Italy and London. *International Migration Review*, 55(2), 402–430.
- King, K. M., & Newbold, K. B. (2007). Onward emigration to the United States by Canadian immigrants between 1995 and 2000. *International Migration Review*, 41(4), 909–929.
- King, R., & Skeldon, R. (2010). 'Mind the gap!' Integrating approaches to internal and international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1619–1646.
- Klekowski von Koppenfels, A., Mulholland, J., & Ryan, L. (2015). 'Gotta go visit family': Reconsidering the relationship between tourism and transnationalism. *Population, Space and Place*, 21(7), 612–624.
- Laffeur, J.-M., & Mescoli, E. (2018). Creating undocumented EU migrants through welfare: A conceptualization of undeserving and precarious citizenship. *Sociology*, 52(3), 480–496.
- Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039.
- Mas Giralt, R. (2017). Onward migration as a coping strategy? Latin Americans moving from Spain to the UK post-2008. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(3), e2017.
- Massey, D. E., Durand, J., & Malone, N. J. (2002). *Beyond smoke and mirrors: Mexican immigration in an era of economic integration*. Russell Sage Foundation.

- May, J., Wills, J., Datta, K., Evans, Y., Herbert, J., & McIlwaine, C. (2007). Keeping London working: Global cities, the British state and London's new migrant division of labour. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32(2), 151–167.
- McGhee, D., Moreh, C., & Vlachantoni, A. (2017). An 'undeliberate determinacy'? The changing migration strategies of Polish migrants in the UK in times of Brexit. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(13), 2109–2130.
- Moret, J. (2018). *European Somalis' post-migration movement mobility capital and the transnationalisation of resources*. Springer.
- Morokvasic, M. (1992). A migration pendulaire: Les Polonais en Allemagne. *Hommes et Migrations*, 1155, 31–36.
- Morokvasic, M. (1996). Entre l'Est et l'Ouest, des migrations pendulaires. In M. Morokvasic & R. Hedwig (Eds.), *Migrants: Les nouvelles mobilités en Europe* (pp. 119–158). L'Harmattan.
- Morokvasic, M. (1999). La mobilité transnationale comme ressource: Le cas des migrants de l'Europe de l'Est. *Cultures & Conflits*, 33–34, 2–12.
- Mueller, R. E. (2004). Transmigration from Canada to the United States: How many 'foreigners' are leaving the country? *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses*, 8, 79–105.
- Nekby, L. (2006). The emigration of immigrants: Return vs onward migration. Evidence from Sweden. *Journal of Population Economics*, 19(2), 197–226.
- Neumayer, E. (2006). Unequal access to foreign spaces: How states use visa restrictions to regulate mobility in a globalized world. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(1), 72–84.
- ONS. (2020). *Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: January 2019 to December 2019*. Office for National Statistics.
- Park, R. E. (1928). Human migration and the marginal man. *American Journal of Sociology*, 33(6), 881–893.
- Paul, A. M. (2011). Stepwise international migration: A multi-stage migration pattern for the aspiring migrant. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(6), 1842–1886.
- Paul, A. M. (2015). Capital and mobility in the stepwise international migrations of Filipino migrant domestic workers. *Migration Studies*, 3(3), 438–459.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2020). Methodological innovations in studying multinational migrations. *Geographical Research*, 58(4), 355–364.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2021). Studying multinational migrations: Speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 3–17.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 217–237.
- Priori, A. (2012). *Romer probashira. Reti sociali e itinerari transnazionali bangladesi a Roma*. Meti.
- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Ryan, L. (2019). Narratives of settling in contexts of mobility: A comparative analysis of Irish and Polish highly qualified women migrants in London. *International Migration*, 57(3), 177–191.
- Salamonska, J. (2017). *Multiple migration. Researching the multiple temporalities and spatialities of migration*. Centre of Migration Research.
- Salazar, N. B. (2011). The power of imagination in transnational mobilities. *Identities*, 18(6), 576–598.
- Sandu, D. (2005). Emerging transnational migration from Romanian villages. *Current Sociology*, 53(4), 555–582.
- Sarpong, D., Maclean, M., & Eyoung, J. E. (2020). Cross-state mobility of European naturalised third-country nationals. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 27(1), 50–69.
- Sredanovic, D. (2020). The tactics and strategies of naturalisation: UK and EU27 citizens in the context of Brexit. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01369183X.2020.1844003>

- Sredanovic, D. (2021). Brexit as a trigger and an obstacle to onwards and return migration. *International Migration*, 59(6), 93–108.
- Sredanovic, D., & Della Puppa, F. (2017). Lasciare l'Italia? Le seconde migrazioni tra cittadinanza e crisi economica. *Studi Emigrazione*, 54(205), 111–128.
- Sredanovic, D., & Della Puppa, F. (2020). Aspettative, immaginari e progettualità di mobilità e stanzialità nel quadro della Brexit: Cittadini dalla nascita e 'naturalizzati'. *Polis*, 35(1), 85–108.
- Takenaka, A. (2007). Secondary migration: Who re-migrates and why these migrants matter. *The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/secondary-migration-who-re-migrates-and-why-these-migrants-matter>
- Tarrius, A. (1992). *Les fourmis d'Europe: Migrants riches, migrants pauvres et nouvelles villes internationales*. L'Harmattan.
- Tarrius, A. (2000). *Les nouveaux cosmopolitismes: Mobilités, identités, territoires*. Éditions de l'Aube.
- Toma, S., & Castagnone, E. (2015). What drives onward mobility within Europe? The case of Senegalese migration between France, Italy and Spain. *Population-E*, 70(1), 65–96.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (Ed.). (2013). *Circular migration between Europe and its neighbourhood: Choice or necessity?* Oxford University Press.
- Tsujimoto, T. (2016). Affective friendship that constructs globally spanning transnationalism: The onward migration of Filipino workers from South Korea to Canada. *Mobilities*, 11(2), 323–341.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology beyond societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century*. Routledge.
- Urry, J. (2007). *Mobilities*. Polity Press.
- Van Liempt, I. (2011). 'And then one day they all moved to Leicester': Somalis' relocation from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom. *Population, Space and Place*, 17(3), 254–266.
- Wagner, B., & Hassel, A. (Eds.). (2016). Labour mobility in the EU: Between economic freedom and labour standards. *Transfer*, 22(2), 143–144.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 10

Education as a Means of Facilitating Onward Migration and Transnational Participation for South Sudanese Refugee Communities



Deirdre Patterson

10.1 Setting the Scene

I sat in the living room of Mark and Rebecca, a South Sudanese married couple in their 30s, listening to their stories as child refugees who fled from southern Sudan in the early 1990s and finally found their way to Kakuma refugee camp. Both were educated by various humanitarian agencies in the camp until they were eventually resettled by the UNHCR to live in San Jose, California with a small community of other South Sudanese refugees. Both Mark and Rebecca (not their real names) valued education highly and their extended families' tuition fees in Kenya were the primary expense for which their remittances were used. At the time, Rebecca was going to nursing school part-time while working in a retail store and Mark had just completed his MBA at an online university. Struggling to find full-time employment in the San Francisco Bay area that matched his qualifications, Mark said that between 2011 and 2013 he regularly returned to South Sudan for up to 6 months at a time to work as a business consultant. These efforts were his attempt to help to develop South Sudan as an independent nation, which had to come to a halt at the end of 2013 when civil war broke out in South Sudan only 2 years after its independence from Sudan.

At the time of our interview in 2015, they were struggling financially to care for their five children in one of the most expensive regions in the US; however, they both argued that, without their education they and their family in Africa would be significantly worse off. Education led to financial security, a freedom that many of their family members severely lacked as refugees in Kenya. Mark and Rebecca's story is one that became tangled in the complicated migrations built on the intertwining relationship between the pursuit of education and the restrictions of being a refugee, whether it be dependency on the humanitarian system or coping with the

D. Patterson (✉)

School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, Falmer, UK

e-mail: D.Patterson@sussex.ac.uk

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*,
MISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_10

199

instability in one's homeland. The population represented in this chapter had been displaced from South Sudan several times in the previous four decades, fleeing to refugee camps in the neighbouring nations of Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Some members of their diaspora had the opportunity to resettle in Western nations like the US or Canada, enabling them to both pursue their own education and fund the education of their extended family members still living as refugees in Kakuma. Others maintain a more liminal lifestyle, pursuing limited migration opportunities based on the strength of their social networks.

As suggested by Chanoff (2005) and El Jack (2012), education symbolises freedom for this population – something which they have arguably lacked after generations of oppression and persecution – and leads to self-reliance, employment opportunities, livelihood development and thus independence from the limitations of their refugee status. This chapter explores how the pursuit of education facilitated onward migration practices, first throughout Kenya and Uganda and then to Western nations, through the sending of transnational remittances to pay the cost of tuition, the careful navigation of social networks contributing to mentorship roles within families and extended communities, and the establishment of ties to humanitarian or charity organisations.

Based on the data presented, I argue that the pursuit of education contributed to onward mobility practices for Kakuma's South Sudanese community, often directly contrasting with the immobility associated with their refugee status. The people represented in this chapter navigated their limited financial resources in combination with their transnational social networks and the potential resources provided by the humanitarian aid system. If lucky, the South Sudanese men and women of Kakuma were able to attend secondary school outside the refugee camp and to eventually go to university in Nairobi or in a Western nation. Scholarships, whether in the form of remittances from family members living in another nation, small community organisations formed by the South Sudanese diaspora or large aid organisations, enabled refugees to transcend the limitations of their refugee status during the course of their education and potentially afterwards.

The chapter begins by briefly examining the liminality of Kenya's refugees and the need to rely on educational opportunities to ensure mobility. Onward mobility for this population was particularly important because, as many South Sudanese men and women in Kakuma argued, as soon as refugees in Kenya complete their education they are often forced to return to the camp unless they can find further educational opportunities or employment made available through their education. The next section examines the existing literature on why education is so highly valued among this population and how it is associated with refugee empowerment and onward mobility practices. There is then a brief overview of transnationalism and the ways in which transnational networks facilitate the exchange of social and financial capital, particularly among those who have been displaced by war. The succeeding four sections are based on the values and experiences of this population, particularly their investment in the future, their ability to attend secondary school outside Kakuma, the ways in which they navigated their opportunities to pursue higher education and, finally, the experiences of refugee immobility after the completion of their education. Together, these experiences represent a combination of

liminality associated with my participants' refugee status and of mobility made accessible through opportunities to pursue their education. Finally, the chapter ends by conceptualising what education and onward mobility – and often immobility – mean for the South Sudanese community of Kakuma and their wider diaspora. In the case of this population, education – facilitated by onward migration practices – is perceived to be the solution their socio-economic marginalisation as refugees.

10.2 Displacement, Social Liminality and Diasporic Investment

South Sudan, recognised as southern Sudan prior to 2011, has been in a near constant state of civil unrest or civil war since Sudan's independence in 1956. Since the 1950s, the region has witnessed three civil wars based primarily on ethnic discrimination and the imbalance of power and representation within the national government. The refugee population who are the subject of this chapter have been refugees for decades, living in a protracted state of exile in Kenya for almost 30 years, during which time their freedom of movement and ability to develop their livelihoods have been severely restricted.

Kakuma has been the host of South Sudanese refugee populations since its inauguration in 1992, totalling approximately 90,000 people at the time of this study in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). The majority of my participants identified as members of the 'Lost Boys of Sudan' community or their children and had consequently either been born inside the refugee camp or had lived there since childhood.¹

In order to receive protection and assistance from humanitarian organisations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the majority of refugees in Kenya are required to live inside refugee camps like Kakuma. Kakuma lies on the far north-west border of Kenya in an extremely remote and arid location, on traditionally inhospitable land of seasonal flood plains. Once a refugee is registered within a camp in Kenya his or her freedom of movement is severely restricted, only granted for 'adequate and compelling reasons' such as employment, education, the pursuit of specialised healthcare, immigration purposes and, in rare cases, on business grounds (Betts et al., 2018; RCK, n.d.).

Due to the lack of employment opportunities available legally, the refugee residents of this camp remain dependent on food rations and healthcare provided by humanitarian organisations, aid which has been argued to have gradually decreased over the previous decades due to the lack of funding (Verdirame, 1999; Crisp, 2002; Bartolomei et al., 2003; Ossome, 2013; World Food Programme, 2017). Due to their

¹ The Lost Boys of Sudan were a refugee population of primarily unaccompanied minors who were targeted by both the Sudanese military forces and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. It is estimated by various authors that anywhere between 10,000 and 20,000 boys fled southern Sudan and walked to Ethiopia and then Kakuma refugee camp between 1983 and 1992 (Scott-Villiers et al., 1993; Verdirame, 1999; Chanoff, 2005; Horn, 2010; Ossome, 2013; Sanghi et al., 2016).

inability to acquire legal work permits in Kenya because of their *prima facie* refugee status, the vast majority of refugees who work in Kakuma are labelled as ‘volunteers’ who work for an incentive that is a fraction of what a Kenyan national would make for the same job (Verdirame, 1999; Horst, 2006; Betts et al., 2018). Consequently, the salaries that refugees in Kakuma are entitled to earn are barely enough to supplement their insufficient food rations and healthcare and are rarely enough to help refugees pay for the tuition and school supplies of their children’s education. Consequently, the refugees of this community who continue to live inside Kakuma live in a state of restricted mobility and significant insecurity, forcibly placed on them due to their victim status and lack of alternative options.

Among Kakuma’s South Sudanese transnational participants and their families who chose to support them, education was the most important investment in the future welfare of both themselves as individuals and of their extended families. Almost all the participants in this study argued that it was the responsibility of each family member to care for the welfare of the others in their community, with the primary aim of ensuring the continued survival of their family network. Investing in the education of this population, whether by paying for tuition or by facilitating the social networks needed to receive a scholarship, ensured that the refugees of Kakuma could leave the refugee setting, at least temporarily, to attend secondary school and potentially university throughout Kenya and Uganda and, in rare cases, the US or Canada.

10.3 Education, Onward Mobility and Refugee Empowerment

Several studies written about the South Sudanese refugee community, internationally recognised as the Lost Boys of Sudan, many of whom have been resettled to places like the US and Canada, suggest that the members of this population are active transnational participants and place significant importance on the role of education within their community. In Chanoff’s (2005) study, resettled Lost Boys said that, during their time in Kakuma, they began to see the difference in the quality of life and available opportunities between the educated and the uneducated. El Jack (2012, 20) claims that refugees in Kakuma are taught that education helps them to rebuild their post-war communities and that many South Sudanese began to perceive education as a ‘means of survival and a driving force to succeed’. The aspiration to pursue education, and the value that they placed on it, are reflected in the rates in which the South Sudanese diaspora pursue higher education and invest in the education of the young adults of their families living in Africa (Patterson, 2020).

In a study on Kakuma’s youth, the attainment of higher education was equated with the ability to leave the camp, to aid in the rebuilding of their home nations and to earn enough money to adequately support themselves and their extended families. As suggested by Bellino (2018, 542) and Patterson (2020), the aspiration to pursue higher forms of education ‘broadened future possibilities’ by directly

contrasting with the social liminality and the physical immobility of life as a refugee in Kakuma. In both these studies, nearly every young person interviewed argued that education was crucial to their livelihoods and expressed an interest in attending university, thus desiring migration to elsewhere in Kenya or potentially to another nation.

A recent study conducted by Betts et al. (2018) on Kakuma argues that approximately 1000 refugees travelled to Nairobi for educational purposes in 2017, particularly to attend university; this figure, however, is not representative of all education migration networks from Kakuma due to the study's failure to acknowledge how many students travelled outside of Kakuma to attend secondary school or university elsewhere in East Africa. The pursuit of secondary education outside the refugee camp was particularly important to students and their transnational family members who chose to support them due to the perception that the quality and extent of their education constituted the solution to their social liminality as protracted refugees (Patterson, 2020). Many students in Kakuma who dreamt of becoming working professionals believed that the education which they received in the camp was inadequate due to the lack of resources and the teachers who typically lacked training and experience (Mareng, 2010; Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Mendenhall et al., 2015; Patterson, 2020).

Bellino (2018) argues that returns on the financial investments made in education, such as the cost of tuition, were highly dependent on subsequent migration and a presumed status shift. For example, the highest sought-after university scholarship available to Kakuma's youth was provided by an organisation called the Windle Trust. This scholarship guaranteed a university education in Canada and Canadian citizenship and ensured that its recipients could become leaders within their families and communities, capable of financially supporting them in the future. Bellino suggests that education was strongly interlinked with social, economic and spatial mobility for Kakuma's youth.

One question, raised by King and Raghuram (2013) and Raghuram (2013), is why people migrate through the pursuit of education. Do people migrate to pursue education or pursue education in order to migrate? Or, as evidenced by other chapters in this book (de Hoon and van Liempt, Chap. 3; Della Puppa and Sredanovic, Chap. 9; Formenti, Chap. 11), do parents migrate in order to improve the educational opportunities for their children? King and Raghuram argue that much of the existing literature on international students ignores the diversity of experiences and goals of education-based migration, failing to critically interrogate the words 'student' and 'international'. These authors argue that experiences of mobility vary significantly based on a student's level of study, destination country, overall life trajectory and the environment in which education is pursued. It is crucial to examine the degree of constraint determined by cost (fees, the availability of scholarships and cost of living) and the availability of accessible educational opportunities. They suggest that most of the current research on international student migration focuses on the middle and upper classes, thus ignoring the experiences and push factors which encourage students from impoverished backgrounds to migrate in the pursuit of their education and the obstacles which they face.

The pursuit of education in sub-Saharan Africa is closely related to mobility, whether this be physical, social or economic. Porter et al. (2010) suggest that young people's lives in this region of the world are commonly shaped by their economic and political exclusion and that access to both education and physical mobility can be a key factor in determining their ability to escape marginalisation. As argued by King and Raghuram (2013) and Raghuram (2013), it is important to consider these and other variations of motivation to pursue migration through education. Migration for secondary school and university education is common in Africa and is perceived to be an escape from poverty due to the assumption of increased social mobility and livelihood development. In the refugee context, in which education is one of the few justifications for migration out of the camp setting in Kenya, it is perceived to be a pathway out of the refugee system in which students are investing in their ability to become leaders within their families and their ability to earn a living wage.

There are several factors which are likely to influence a student's desire to migrate to urban locations or to a foreign nation in pursuit of their tertiary education, in particular. According to Kritz (2013) and Rosenzweig (2006), the primary push factor for students leaving their region or nation of residence is the lack of accessible universities in their home nation or current nation of residence. In contrast, pull factors encouraging students to migrate to cities or other countries include the prospect of earning higher wages. Varghese (2008) extends these potential pull factors by also including an ideological affinity to the place of migration, whether because a student is proficient in the language spoken there or because of a university's perceived academic superiority and relaxed visa regulations for student migrants. Furthermore, Raghuram (2013) and Waters (2006) argue that the pursuit of mobility through international education aids the development not just of human capital (i.e. transferable skills and knowledge) but also of social and cultural capital through social mobility within a migrant's sending country.

In the case of refugee displacement and protracted exile, education is associated with both physical and cognitive mobility – an escape from the restrictiveness of life as a refugee (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). When a refugee in Kenya's access to services and protection is dependent on their residence within a refugee camp and they are faced with an unknown future, education is empowerment. Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010) argue that access to higher education enables refugees to move beyond their displacement and expand their ability to make strategic life decisions as the quality and quantity of information and skills accessible to them expands and improves. In Kakuma, specifically, education has been shown to be positively correlated with the ability to speak multiple languages, the development of skills and the ability to translate these skills into income-generating activities (Betts et al., 2018).

Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010, 4) suggest that, among refugees who have graduated from secondary school, pursuing higher education is an 'almost universal desire' due to the perception of its emancipatory potential. However, access to a university education implies several barriers for refugees, including the extreme cost in comparison to their income-generating abilities, the lack of documentation lost during war and the lack of recognition of their academic credentials for their

education in a refugee camp. Therefore, the most common ways in which universities become accessible to refugees are through remittances, scholarships and/or access to free or low-fee services provided by NGOs in collaboration with universities.

10.4 Transnational Networks, Remittances and Funding Education

Transnationalism has been described as the economic, social and political networks between multi-stranded communities that transcend geographic location and borders between nations (Basch et al., 2005). The theory on transnational migration patterns examines the ‘strength of ties’ and the embeddedness of interpersonal relationships, collective membership beyond the borders between nations, a sense of shared values and expectations, loyalty and mutual reciprocity among a community who share a common identity and homeland (Vertovec, 2003). Transnational social practices imply an exchange of ideas, money and various social resources through active communication with community members in other nations, the preservation of important relationships and the establishment of networks which link groups of people in multiple nations together.

Mata-Codesal et al. (2011) argue that transnational practices – specifically, the exchange of social and economic resources – typically follow a linear flow of people, money, material goods, socio-cultural influences and human relations. Transnational practices create what these authors identify as ‘corridors’ between nations of immigration and emigration, strung between the bonds of the migrants and their family members who remained behind. The authors found that remittance corridors were embedded within the structural relationships of dependency between transnational participants. Transnational ties are argued by Faist (2000) to be based on mutual obligation, reciprocity and community solidarity and are built upon strong familial bonds and community membership. These sustained ties between individuals and groups facilitate the exchange of ideas and resources for the economic and social advancement of both the migrants and their communities in their homeland or elsewhere in the world.

It is important to note that remittances do not always flow from the nation of migration to the nation of origin or the homeland. Just as people have developed onward migration habits, moving from one nation to another out of necessity or in pursuit for a better life, their transnational social and financial networks are similarly strung between multiple nations, often overlapping and interconnected (for another African example, in the context of remittances, see Chap. 4 by Flikweert et al.). For example, among refugee communities who often practice onward migration due to conflict, policy decisions or simply in search of a better life, Van Hear (2003) theorises what he identifies as domains of migration and, thus, potential transnational networks, among refugee communities. He argues that refugee

networks have the ability to connect community members both between and within a refugee population's home nations, nations of asylum and nations of resettlement. According to Van Hear's model, refugee social and economic remittances have the potential to flow in multiple directions not only between the homeland and a nation of migration but also between two nations of migration.

Active transnational kinship networks and the sending of remittances to low- and middle-income households have been shown by multiple studies to contribute to an increased access to education, higher quality nutrition, sanitation and healthcare (Edwards & Ureta, 2003; Adams & Page, 2005; Hildebrandt & McKenzie, 2005; Adams, 2006; Acosta et al., 2015). These studies suggest that remittances have the potential to significantly influence the long-term welfare of the recipients by reducing extreme poverty and increasing access to new labour markets, educational resources and adequate healthcare and nutrition. When education is one of the few opportunities accessible for refugees, enabling them to leave the camp, escape the limitations of their refugee status and engage in onward migration patterns, the cost of education is likely to become the primary investment of a refugee transnational community.

10.5 Methodology

This chapter is based on data amassed during two research studies, my MA and PhD theses respectively, collected in California, the UK and in Kakuma refugee camp in north-west Kenya between August 2015 and July 2018. These studies each examined transnational activity among resettled refugees who were supporting refugee family members and protracted refugees living in Kakuma, all members of the South Sudanese diaspora. For these research projects, I utilised a combination of participant observation to examine family life as well as semi-structured interviews to understand the dynamics of their transnational activity.

This data represents the experiences of 80 refugees living in Kenya and 21 resettled refugees and economic migrants living in the US and the UK who sought to support the education of their families throughout East Africa. The men and women who participated ranged in age between 18 and 69 years old and expressed a wide variety of experiences of displacement, mobility, transnational participation and the pursuit of education.

Education, migration, transnational participation and the refugee status of either themselves or their family members were themes addressed in both the participant recruitment and data collection for these studies, all representing key influencing factors in their aspirations for the future, their past experiences of onward movement and their continued networks of attachment. I was introduced to my key informants in both the US and the UK through our mutual involvement in small charity organisations developed by the local South Sudanese community to empower members of their diaspora, locally and transnationally, to develop their livelihoods and pursue education. In California, specifically, I worked with a faith-based

organisation called Hope with South Sudan which raised money to fund the education of South Sudanese refugee children living in Kakuma.

In Kakuma refugee camp, I recruited four men who identified themselves as leaders within their communities in the camp to help me to find people who received money from family members abroad. Between November 2017 and July 2018, I followed these men throughout the refugee camp, shared meals with their families and talked on the phone with their brothers and sisters living in the West. More importantly, I watched, listened and participated in the struggles for freedom experienced by the men and women of this community who persisted in their desire for an education and a drive to live beyond the refugee camp.

10.6 An Investment in Their Future

Education was the most common investment among the South Sudanese transnational participants living in Kakuma who were interviewed for this research. When the participants received remittances that were not for emergencies, such as a lack of food or a medical issue, the money was most often spent on school supplies, uniforms and, when possible, tuition at a school outside the refugee camp. Within this community, education was strongly associated with the future advancement of the family unit as a whole and the ability of young adults to become leaders capable of supporting both themselves and their community. Rosie, a mother of three young children, argued that ‘our children’s education is the development of the world. If a child is educated, he will help his community. He can become a doctor or a teacher and help others’. Since education implied significant costs for my refugee participants, the importance placed on its potential as an investment went beyond the needs of the individual receiving the education and extended to the belief that a child would eventually be able to support his or her parents, siblings and other community members.

Coupled with the pursuit of education through physical and social mobility was a strong sense that it was the responsibility of the members of this community to contribute what little they had for the future advancement of the family as a whole. For example, Rosie, above, said that she sold a portion of her already limited food rations each month to pay for her children’s school supplies in the form of notebooks, pens and uniforms. This sacrifice ensured that her children could continue their education, potentially excel in their exams and become leaders of their community in the future, capable of helping others.

Of the 21 transnational participants who lived in either the US or the UK, all believed that, because they were fortunate enough to be able to leave East Africa to move to a Western nation and to earn a significantly higher wage due to their education, it was their responsibility to care for others in their community. Within the South Sudanese diaspora, care often took the form of committing to pay for the tuition of a child in their family or using their social networks to find someone who could. Ensuring that these refugee children had access to education meant that they

would, firstly, be entitled to leave the refugee camp at least temporarily and, secondly, that they would potentially gain access to further educational or employment opportunities that they would not have had access to if they continued to live inside Kakuma.

Although most of the young adults who contributed to this study were striving to get out of Kakuma due to its physical restrictions, I met two women who specifically chose to go to the refugee camp for its educational opportunities. Although the quality of education accessible to refugees in Kakuma was poor, it was also free. When no other opportunities were available and in a culture in which girls were significantly under-educated compared to boys, a free education in a refugee camp was an investment towards their social advancement, even if this was also accompanied by a temporary restriction of their physical mobility.

One 18-year-old girl named Achienne² had recently arrived in Kakuma from South Sudan at the time of her interview and dreamed of becoming a human-rights lawyer for women experiencing sexual abuse during the civil war. Her dream was less focused on livelihood development and more on personal freedom and the ability to participate in the nation-rebuilding process when the time came. She commented, 'if I had not come to Kakuma then I would have been married off by now and have a baby. I would not have been able to go to school and I would not be able to help my community'. For Achienne, her move to Kakuma to register as a refugee and then the pursuit of her higher education, whether it be in Nairobi or in the US/Canada, were simply necessary steps for her to eventually return to South Sudan socio-economically empowered to make a difference.

A girl by the name of Ann also chose to live in Kakuma for similar reasons, even if mobility implied the restriction of mobility associated with one's refugee status. Prior coming to Kakuma, Ann and her parents had been living in Nakuru Town, several hours north of Nairobi. However, since her family were South Sudanese and living outside a refugee camp, they were considered illegal economic migrants and could therefore not earn enough money to pay for Ann's tuition fees.³ She said that her parents had decided that she should move to Kakuma with her grandparents and register as a refugee in order to qualify for the free, although limited, education to which refugees are entitled. 'I came [to Kakuma] because I need a future. I need an education to support my family'. Even though Ann would have preferred to receive her secondary-school education outside the refugee camp, due to the cost of tuition fees and the inability for refugees in Kenya to earn a sustainable living, moving to pursue an education in this case meant risking limiting her mobility in the future due to her refugee status.

²For ethical and confidentiality reasons, all names of participants in this study are pseudonyms.

³I found that it was not uncommon for South Sudanese refugees to live outside a refugee camp in Kenya if they could afford to do so. Although they risked being classified as illegal economic migrants facing regular harassment by the local police seeking bribes and could be deported back to South Sudan, the socio-economic freedom and agency gained outside the camp and not accessible inside were worth it. Of the 21 remittance-senders who participated in this study, 18 had family who lived outside the refugee camp and throughout Kenya and were financially supporting this lifestyle.

10.7 Attending School on the Outside and Dreaming Big

Education – secondary school in particular – was often pursued outside of Kakuma if possible for a variety of reasons. As mentioned previously, the pursuit of education was one of the few reasons for which refugees in Kenya were granted official movement passes by the UNHCR and the Kenyan government, enabling a registered refugee to travel outside the refugee camp and within Kenya legally. The ability to go to school outside Kakuma meant that, over the course of their education, they were treated like any other student in Kenya and not limited to their refugee status. Just as regular Kenyan secondary schools lured refugee students in with their disconnection from the refugee system, the conditions of life as a student in Kakuma were a significant push factor. Students claimed that it was not uncommon for as many as 200 students to be in each classroom, taught by unqualified teachers, in extreme heat, all contributing to poor study conditions. These standards within the classroom, coupled with the lack of electricity to provide light by which to read at night and the vast distances required to walk to school, contributed to the feeling that students were performing far below their potential ability.

Achienne and her brother Isaac argued, respectively, that:

[s]chool in the camp is very hard. It's very hot and dusty and you cannot concentrate on your books. Even though we have an education in the camp it is not a conducive environment. At home we do not have electricity. When we come home we cannot study because it is so hot. It greatly affects the children who are here who want to have a future.

As a student, the climate is terrible for studying. I have to walk for an hour to get to school. During lunch I cannot study well because it is hot. After I come back from school I am tired and feel like sleeping all day. Many of the schools [in the camp] do not have qualified teachers and many don't even attend lessons, so the students are not serious.

Opportunities to pursue mobility through education varied significantly in location and were dependent on the extent of their social networks. Due to their limited ability to afford transportation and boarding fees, some refugee parents chose to send their children to a Kenyan school directly outside the refugee camp, which required tuition fees but was still considerably cheaper compared to elsewhere in Kenya. One man – Gabriel – claimed that, due to the poor quality of education of the schools in the camp, he chose to send his two children to secondary school in Kakuma Town, neighbouring the camp. 'In town there is serious learning unlike in the camp. When they get the chance to go to a real school, they can get a better life and a job and provide for their family'. In the case of Gabriel's children, their tuition costs him 30,000 Kenyan shillings (£225) each year for his two children in addition to the cost of their *boda boda* (motorcycle taxi) to and from the camp each day. Even though he could not afford to send his children to boarding school elsewhere in Kenya, he invested what little money he had to get his children out of the refugee camp for their education, even if it was just in the neighbouring town.

When possible, refugees who had sufficiently strong social networks, whether on a transnational or a local scale, often managed to find someone or an organisation to sponsor their secondary education, one term at a time. To the members of this

community, the ability to go to school outside the refugee camp implied potential costs but was rewarded with a higher standard of education and a reduction in their limited mobility associated with their refugee status. Of the 80 men and women living in Kakuma who participated in this study, 12 were able to attend secondary school outside the refugee camp; their tuition fees were paid either by family members abroad through remittances, by sponsors through community organisations established in Western nations or through international scholarships.

A 23-year-old man named Jok, who had graduated from secondary school 3 years before his interview, explained how he found someone to sponsor his education:

I had a sponsor in Australia who was paying my school fees until I completed high school. My friend was close to [my sponsor] so he connected me to him ... he supported me for four years. They chose a school in Kitale for me because of the low school fees and found guardians for me to live with.

In Jok's case, his sponsor was a resettled South Sudanese man who was a friend of a friend and who arranged to pay for Jok's secondary-school education. This arrangement included the sending of tuition fees every term and finding a guardian to house Jok in exchange for him maintaining good grades throughout his education.

Another man – Sam – said that his uncle financially supported his secondary education in Nakuru until one year before his graduation. Due to his own financial struggles in the US, his uncle suddenly had to stop paying Sam's tuition fees. Faced with the risk of dropping out and being forced to return to Kakuma without a secondary-school degree, Sam's teachers worked together to find him a scholarship. 'I played football and brought attention to the school, so they gave me a scholarship'. In Sam's case, when his transnational family network was suddenly incapable of supporting his education in a Kenyan secondary school, his extended social network that he had developed during his education filled in the financial gaps and thus prevented his forced move back to Kakuma before he had graduated.

Of the 20 young adults aged 18–25 living as refugees in Kenya who participated in this study, all expressed interest in pursuing higher education. For these men and women, university was strongly associated with physical mobility and their livelihood development directly contrasting with the liminality of their current lifestyle as refugees in Kakuma. University education represented an escape from the harsh environment of Kakuma and the unleashing of their potential that had been stifled by the refugee system.

Most of these men and women expressed an interest in attending university outside Africa, particularly in the US, Canada and Australia, where the majority of their transnational family members resided. While university in Kenya or Uganda equated to the potential for higher salaries and a legal right to work in Kenya, university in a Western nation implied potential citizenship of that nation and an escape from their refugee status. Achienne's brother, Isaac, aspired to go to medical school and, at the time of his interview, had set his sights on living in the US with his uncle. 'He wants me to go to [university] near where he lives – like George Washington University or Georgetown. He is trying to help me find a scholarship. I know that

this is the time to apply for university, but I am not really sure where to start'. Despite most of these young adults expressing an interest in attending university in a Western nation, none had the economic resources to fund their higher education – particularly outside Kenya – nor any knowledge of how to apply for a placement or funding in these foreign universities.

10.8 Navigating Aid, Social Networks and Opportunities for Higher Education

Due to the limited earning ability of refugees in Kenya, in order to gain access to higher education these young adults needed to carefully navigate their social networks and the resources provided by various aid organisations. One 19-year-old woman named Jess had recently graduated from a prestigious school in Kakuma and decided to live with family and friends in Nairobi in order to find funding opportunities for her university education. Jess had travelled to and was temporarily living in Nairobi in order to network with friends of friends and various aid organisations who would sit down with her. 'I want to become a doctor. I would like to leave Kenya if possible but I need money to support myself'. If successful in getting funding and obtaining a medical degree, Jess wanted to travel back to Kakuma and help the members of her community to fight the diseases and malnutrition associated with their poverty and the inhospitable environment of the camp.

Four of the participants in this study, all men, were attending or had attended an institution of higher education at the time of their interview; three of these universities were in Nairobi and one in Kampala, Uganda. For all these men, their educations were paid for by church-sponsored community organisations based in Western nations. Two of these men, James and Patrick, had received university scholarships because of their role as leaders, elders and pastors in Kakuma. In comparison, the two other men – Ajak and Mike – both under the age of 25, claimed that they were selected for a scholarship because of their sisters' relationships in the US and Canada with their funding organisations.

Ajak, the brother of Rebecca, who was introduced at the beginning of this chapter, managed to be sponsored throughout his entire secondary school and university education. In collaboration with several members of the Lost Boys community in San José, California and their church, Mark and Rebecca helped to create an organisation called Hope with South Sudan whose sole purpose was to fund the education of South Sudanese refugees in Kakuma, primarily the extended family of its board members. Due to the strength of his transnational family relationships and their social networks in California, Ajak was fortunate enough to leave Kakuma to attend both school and university in Nairobi for 8 years. The organisations which funded the education of these men were dependent on the continued support of the South Sudanese diaspora and their cultural and religious communities. Due to the extent of their sisters' social networks, Ajak was able to study political science at the

University of Nairobi and Mike studied cyber security at Kabete National Polytechnic and was hired to work in IT for his university.

At the time of his interview Ajak was planning on moving back to South Sudan because he had recently been hired as an intern with a government organisation. He said 'I know the war is not over, but the current government needs help. I can do that'. Like Achienne, Ajak believed that it was the responsibility of their generation to aid in the nation-rebuilding process and was willing to move back to South Sudan, currently in the midst of a civil war, to help to change their nation for the better. In these cases, their education, whether it be in Kakuma, throughout Kenya or elsewhere in the world, acted as a stepping-stone on their return to South Sudan as educated citizens capable of creating change.

Finally, I interviewed two men whose children were given scholarships through the Windle Trust, which allowed them to attend a Canadian university of their choice on a full scholarship. One man, named Lee, explained:

My daughter has always gotten perfect grades since primary school. Because she did so well in the national exams, she got a scholarship to attend secondary school in Lodwar. When she finished she was ranked sixth in the nation and now she studies business in Vancouver.

Andrew talked of similar experiences in which his son was picked to study engineering at the University of Alberta. 'He plans to stay there and work as an engineer. Once he is able to support us, he wants to bring me and his wife and children to Canada to live with him'.

The Windle Trust scholarship was particularly sought after by Kakuma's young adult community because being chosen meant that they would also be entitled to Canadian citizenship. In this way they would be able to work freely and to financially support their family members who continued to live in Kakuma as refugees. Although the selection process was incredibly competitive, this scholarship was also the most accessible method by which to leave the refugee camp permanently for both the recipients and their family members. Access to education and the ability to navigate humanitarian aid opportunities entitled some refugees to lives and careers beyond the liminality of their refugee status and were therefore often sought after by almost all the participants in this study who were then living in Kakuma.

10.9 Post-education and Refugee Immobility

An important aspect of the experiences of Kakuma's South Sudanese refugee population is what happens after the completion of their education. Since the mobility of the men and women represented in this chapter was conditional on their enrollment in an educational institution due their refugee status, they were often forced to return to the refugee camp after they had graduated. At the time of their interview, both Jok and Sam had graduated from secondary school in Kitale and Nakuru; however, since their refugee movement permit only entitled them to move freely

throughout Kenya during the course of their education, they were forced to move back to the refugee camp, where they were both ‘volunteering’ as teachers in exchange for an incentive of 7000 Kenyan shillings (£50) per month. James and Patrick spoke of similar experiences despite both graduating with BAs from Kenyan and Ugandan universities. Since these men were not entitled to receive a work permit in Kenya due to their refugee status and the restriction of their rights, they were forced to return to Kakuma. At the time of their interview, both James and Patrick were unemployed in the camp, incapable of utilising their undergraduate degrees and were undertaking unpaid roles as pastors and community leaders within their neighbourhoods.

Similarly, there were several participants who had never had the opportunity to leave Kakuma, despite the pursuit of their education, due to their limited ability to pay the tuition fees and to utilise their social networks to find funding opportunities. Although both Achienne and Ann chose to go to Kakuma specifically for their education, they needed to do so due to the lack of available opportunities elsewhere. Achienne left South Sudan to become a refugee in Kenya because of the lack of educational opportunities for girls in her home nation and her desire to aid in the rebuilding of South Sudan through her education. Comparatively, Ann was already living in Kenya – outside the refugee camp, albeit illegally – but chose to go to Kakuma as a refugee because she was entitled to free tuition in the camp. Although Gabriel’s children were fortunate enough to find funding for their education in Kakuma Town, due to the limited financial resources available to his family, they were not able to afford boarding fees and were therefore forced to return to the refugee camp in the evenings.

Finally, there are refugees who were balancing the conditions of refugee immobility and the pursuit of mobility through education. Jess had completed her education in Kakuma and, at the time of her interview, had travelled to Nairobi, illegally and without a movement pass, in an attempt to utilise her social networks to find a university scholarship either through a humanitarian aid organisation or a transnational or local community organisation. She was willing to risk potential deportation back to South Sudan by illegally travelling to Nairobi in the attempt to find opportunities which would allow her to pursue her education and move on from the liminality of her refugee status.

The experiences of Mark, Rebecca, Ajak, Mike and the children of Lee and Andrew were the exceptions in the mobility of the refugees of this population after the completion of their education. These men and women were able to successfully navigate the resources available to them through a combination of humanitarian assistance and social networks which offered resettlement opportunities, scholarships and employment after the completion of their education. It was the exceptional cases that provided hope that the education of the refugee children of their community would lead to onward mobility, particularly after the completion of their degrees. However, the majority of the people who were fortunate enough to be able to move outside the refugee camp in pursuit of their education were also forced to return due to their inability to break free of their refugee status in Kenya.

10.10 Conceptualising Education, Opportunity and (Im) Mobility

In many ways, education equated to the ability to leave the liminality of the refugee camp and their refugee status through what Bellino (2018, 542) identifies as the ‘broaden[ing] of their possibilities’. After three decades and several generations of South Sudanese refugees who were raised and lived the majority of their lives inside Kakuma, education represented hope and opportunity. At the physical level, the pursuit of education enabled this refugee community to migrate from one place to another beyond the boundaries of the camp. As one of the few exceptions to the limitations of their freedom of mobility in Kenya, enrollment in a Kenyan educational institution facilitated the ability for refugees to apply for movement passes. This entitlement meant that these men and women could travel within Kenya without fear of harassment by the police or of deportation to South Sudan. If a student managed to achieve high enough marks and was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship, the pursuit of higher education also supported onward migration practices to nations like Uganda, the US and Canada or back to South Sudan.

Education and the mobility associated with it, both physical and social, enabled refugees to seek an existence beyond the limitations of their refugee status and to work towards the advancement of their and their families’ welfare and livelihood development. For many of the members of this community, Kakuma represented three decades-worth of social, economic and political marginalisation developed upon a system of dependency. In comparison, education directly contrasted with this liminal lifestyle by giving refugee students the opportunity to pursue migration throughout Kenya and potentially elsewhere in the world. To many of the participants in this study, education – pursued mostly through local and transnational community networks and resources – was perceived to be the solution to their displacement.

I found that the pursuit of education and the migratory aspirations and opportunities associated with it, was strongly influenced by the bonds of kinship developed across transnational networks. As represented by Mark and Rebecca’s story in this chapter, the members of the South Sudanese diaspora who gained the opportunity to settle in the US and the UK highly valued education and the opportunities that it gave towards the advancement of their families and communities, whether perceived or actual. In an effort to pass down their success to the next generation of refugees within their community, financial remittances were sent to the refugee camp with the intention of investing in the future of their transnational community through the payment of tuition fees and school supplies.

Transnational community organisations and friendship networks which developed among members of the South Sudanese diaspora living in Western nations were also regularly utilised to fund the education of refugees living in camps like Kakuma. As illustrated by Hope with South Sudan, these community organisations collectively raised money to send groups of refugee children from Kakuma to schools throughout Kenya, often funding both their secondary school and university

education. Similarly, as represented by Jok's story, when transnational family members were not able to meet the financial expectations placed on them by their refugee family members, it was not uncommon for these networks to facilitate sponsors outside of their family network. If not connected through a community organisation, South Sudanese young adults might have their tuition fees, school supplies and cost of living covered by a friend of a family member or friend of a friend for the duration of their studies.

One particular question which this chapter raises is whether the refugees represented in this study migrated to pursue an education or sought an education as an opportunity to migrate (cf. King & Raghuram, 2013). Based on the experiences of the men and women represented, education, migration and the future advancement of them and their families, including an escape from the liminality of their refugee status, were strongly interrelated. As discussed above, education was one of the few justifications for migration for refugees within Kenya, who were otherwise limited by policies which restricted their freedom of movement. The pursuit of education was legal for refugees in Kenya, was relatively affordable (particularly with the help of transnational family members and members of the South Sudanese diaspora) and offered a potential escape from both within the refugee camp physically and from the limitations of their refugee status existentially.

Both onward-migration practices and the pursuit of education enabled these men and women to dream of future opportunities for themselves as individuals, their families and the future stability of their home nation. Some just wanted the opportunity to leave the refugee camp with the legal right to their freedom of movement which the vast majority of their refugee family and community members were denied. For the young adults in this study, many of whom were born and spent most of their lives in Kakuma, education and mobility meant that they could aspire to develop a better future for their people. Education outside the camp entitled them to dream of becoming doctors and lawyers, to help their families and friends in Kakuma and to help to rebuild their home nation of South Sudan. Finally, whether pursued in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, elsewhere in Kenya or Africa, education enabled the members of this diaspora to facilitate the further advancement and mobility of those left behind in Kakuma.

10.11 Strung Between Liminality and Mobility

The pursuit of education through mobility was strongly associated with my participants' social mobility and directly contrasted the liminality of life in the refugee camp. For the men and women who were fortunate enough to receive funding for their education, whether it was through remittances from family abroad or international scholarships, education implied physical, social and cognitive mobility and a break, at least temporarily, from the refugee system which restricts them.

Interestingly, three of the people represented in this chapter (Mark, Achienne and Ajak) all had aspirations to use their education to return to their home nation of

South Sudan and aid in the nation-rebuilding process. Whether it be the development of the economy through business, aiding in the political stability of the government or ensuring justice for victims of human-rights violations committed during the war, these participants believed that their education was the key to their nation's future. In these cases, physical mobility through East Africa and elsewhere in the world entitled them to significant social mobility and the ability to be leaders within their community capable of creating change in their nation of origin.

All the stories in this chapter represented circular onward-mobility patterns due to a combination of their refugee status and the restrictions associated with it, their opportunities to migrate through the pursuit of their education and their aspirations for employment after the completion of their education. It was not uncommon for participants to move from South Sudan to Kakuma, to elsewhere in Kenya, to a Western nation and then back to East Africa.

Each person's established social networks – whether transnational or local – and ability to navigate aid and funding opportunities strongly influenced how far a refugee was able to migrate. If they were lucky, these men and women might have found ways to stay in Nairobi or in a Western nation or may have willingly moved back to South Sudan if they had reasonable career prospects. However, the vast majority of my participants in Kakuma were forced to move back to the refugee camp after the completion of their education. Due to their liminal status within Kenya and in which the pursuit of education only offered temporary mobility, the inability to find further opportunities through their social networks and limited humanitarian aid resources resulted in their continued social and economic liminality. Although education empowered these men and women to migrate beyond the limitations of their refugee status during the course of their education, unless they were able to find further opportunities, the extent of their mobility both physically and socially was restricted.

References

- Acosta, P., Fajnzylber, P., & Lopez, J. H. (2015). The impact of remittances on poverty and human capital: Evidence from Latin American household surveys. In J. Connell & R. Brown (Eds.), *Migration and remittances* (pp. 59–98). Edward Elgar.
- Adams, R. H., Jr. (2006). International remittances and the household: Analysis and review of global evidence. *Journal of African Economies*, 15(S2), 396–425.
- Adams, R. H., Jr., & Page, J. (2005). Do international migration and remittances reduce poverty in developing countries? *World Development*, 33(10), 1645–1669.
- Bartolomei, L., Pittaway, E., & Pittaway, E. E. (2003). Who am I? Identity and citizenship in Kakuma refugee camp. *Development*, 46(3), 87–93.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., & Szanton Blanc, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states*. Routledge.
- Bellino, M. J. (2018). Youth aspirations in Kakuma refugee camp: Education as a means for social, spatial, and economic (im)mobility. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 16(4), 541–556.
- Betts, A., Omata, N., & Sterck, O. (2018). *Refugee economies in Kenya*. University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre.

- Chanoff, D. (2005). 'Education is my mother and my father': How the lost boys of Sudan escaped the destruction of their ancient culture and landed in the 21st century. *The American Scholar*, 74(4), 35–45.
- Crisp, J. (2002). *No solution in sight: The problem of protracted refugee situations in Africa*. University of California San Diego, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Working Paper No. 68.
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2015). *The educational experiences of refugee children in countries of first asylum*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2017). Refugee education: Education for an unknowable future. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 47(1), 14–24.
- Dryden-Peterson, S., & Giles, W. (2010). Introduction: Higher education for refugees. *Refuge*, 27(2), 3–9.
- Edwards, A. C., & Ureta, M. (2003). International migration, remittances, and schooling: Evidence from El Salvador. *Journal of Development Economics*, 72(2), 429–461.
- El Jack, A. (2012). 'Education is my mother and father': The 'invisible' women of Sudan. *Refuge*, 27(2), 19–29.
- Faist, T. (2000). Transnationalization in international migration: Implications for the study of citizenship and culture. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(2), 189–222.
- Hildebrandt, N., & McKenzie, D. J. (2005). The effects of migration on child health in Mexico. *Economia*, 6(1), 257–289.
- Horn, R. (2010). A study of the emotional and psychological wellbeing of refugees in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 5(4), 20–32.
- Horst, C. (2006). *Transnational nomads: How Somalis cope with refugee life in Dadaab camps of Kenya*. Berghahn.
- King, R., & Raghuram, P. (2013). International student migration: Mapping the field and new research agendas. *Population, Space and Place*, 19(2), 127–137.
- Kritz, M. M. (2013). International student mobility and tertiary education capacity in Africa. *International Migration*, 53(1), 29–49.
- Mareng, C. D. (2010). Reflections on refugee students' major perceptions on education in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. *International Education*, 21(5), 473–481.
- Mata-Codesal, D., King, R., & Vullnetari, J. (2011). *Of corridors and dyads: Unpacking the family dynamics of remittance transfers to Albania and Ecuador*. University of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Working Paper No. 66.
- Mendenhall, M., Dryden-Peterson, S., Bartlett, L., Ndirangu, C., Imonje, R., Gakunga, D., Gichuhi, L., Nyagah, G., Okoth, U., & Tangelder, M. (2015). Quality education for refugees in Kenya: Pedagogy in urban Nairobi and Kakuma refugee camp settings. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 1(1), 92–130.
- Ossome, M. (2013). Abduction, confinement and sexual violence against south Sudanese women and girls in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. In E. Grawert (Ed.), *After the comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan* (pp. 158–175). Boydell and Brewer.
- Patterson, D. (2020). *Challenging refugeeeness in Kakuma: South Sudanese refugee efforts to contest marginalisation and vulnerability through transnational participation*. University of Sussex, PhD in Anthropology.
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Mashiri, M., Dube, S., & Maponya, G. (2010). Youthscapes and escapes in rural Africa: Education, mobility and livelihood trajectories for young people in eastern cape, South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 22(8), 1090–1101.
- Raghuram, P. (2013). Theorising the spaces of student migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 19(2), 138–154.
- RCK. (n.d.). *Refugees, asylum seekers and returnees*. Refugee Consortium of Kenya. Online at: <http://www.rckkenya.org/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-returnees/>
- Rosenzweig, M. R. (2006). Global wage differences and international student flows. In S. M. Collins & C. Graham (Eds.), *Brookings trade forum 2006: Global labor markets* (pp. 57–96). Brookings Institution Press.

- Sanghi, A., Onder, H., & Vemuru, V. (2016). 'Yes' in my backyard? *The economics of refugees and their social dynamics in Kakuma, Kenya*. World Bank Group and UNHCR: Report No. AUS14056.
- Scott-Villiers, A., Scott-Villiers, P., & Dodge, C. P. (1993). Repatriation of 150,000 South Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia: The manipulation of civilians in a situation of civil conflict. *Disasters*, 17(3), 202–217.
- UNHCR. (2018). *Kakuma camp population statistics by country or origin, sex, and age group*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/kenya-kakuma-camp-population-statistics-country-origin-sex-and-age-group-31-may-2018>
- Van Hear, N. (2003). *From durable solutions to transnational relations: Home and exile among refugee diasporas*. UNHCR New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 83.
- Varghese, N. V. (2008). *Globalisation of higher education and cross-border student mobility*. International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Verdirame, G. (1999). Human rights and refugees: The case of Kenya. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 12(1), 54–77.
- Vertovec, S. (2003). Migration and other modes of transnationalism: Towards conceptual cross-fertilization. *International Migration Review*, 37(3), 641–665.
- Waters, J. L. (2006). Geographies of capital: Education, international migration and family strategies between Hong Kong and Canada. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(2), 179–192.
- World Food Programme. (2017). *WFP cuts food rations for refugees in Kenya amidst funding shortfalls*. <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-cuts-food-rations-refugees-kenya-amidst-funding-shortfalls#:~:text=2%20October%202017-,WFP%20Cuts%20Food%20Rations%20For%20Refugees%20In%20Kenya%20Amidst%20Funding,Kenya%20due%20to%20insufficient%20funding>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.



Chapter 11

On the Road Again: Onward Migration and Transnational Subjectivity Among Portuguese-Guinean Migrants in Peterborough (UK)



Ambra Formenti

11.1 Introduction

A growing literature has developed which studies migration as a non-linear process, beyond the bipolar model of origin–destination. These works have shown how migrants’ trajectories are often more complex than a one-way movement, involving several dislocations in a lifetime, triggered by personal vicissitudes as well as large-scale processes. Focusing on specific diasporic populations, scholars have proposed a number of designations for these multiple mobilities, including: ‘twice-migration’ (Bhachu 1985), ‘serial migration’ (Ossman, 2004), ‘transit migration’ (Collyer & de Haas, 2012), ‘stepwise migration’ (Schapendonk, 2010; Paul, 2011) and ‘onward migration’ (Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Ahrens et al., 2016; Montagna et al., 2021). Following the initiative of Ahrens and King in their opening chapter to this book, Anju Mary Paul and Brenda Yeoh have recently proposed to gather these terms under a new umbrella term – ‘multinational migrations’ – to cover the different movements of international migrants across more than one country (Anju & Yeoh, 2020). In the present chapter, I contribute to this scholarship by presenting an anthropological account of the transnational lives of Portuguese-Guinean migrants in Peterborough (UK). These are Bissau-Guinean citizens who lived in Portugal and then moved onwards to the UK, benefiting from the acquisition of Portuguese citizenship. To describe their experiences I use the notion of onward migration, a term that does not convey the idea of an established trajectory but leaves open the possibility that migrants may change their plans in reaction to their first migration experience (Ahrens et al., 2016). By focusing on this case, I discuss how transnational connections, practices and belongings between more than one country contribute to

A. Formenti (✉)

Centre for Research in Anthropology, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

© The Author(s) 2023

J. Ahrens, R. King (eds.), *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism*, IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12503-4_11

219

the emergence of specific forms of subjectivity, marked by ‘multiple identifications’ (Ossman, 2004) in terms of nationality, language, leisure and food. In so doing, I dialogue with authors who have studied onward migration to the UK as a response to the 2008 financial crisis and its social consequences in Southern Europe (Mas Giral, 2016; Della Puppa, 2018; McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2018; Ramos, 2018; Mapril, 2019; McIlwaine & Bunge, 2019; King & Della Puppa, 2021). More generally, the case of Portuguese-Guineans resonates with that of other onward migrants who moved from Southern to Northern Europe as a ‘survival strategy’ in times of crisis (Della Puppa, 2018).

In the first part of the chapter, I trace the changing pathways of the Bissau-Guinean diaspora since the 1980s to the present, showing how Guinean migration shifted from a post-colonial pattern, focused on the ex-metropolis, to a multi-polar situation, marked by dispersal across Europe (Nafafé, 2016). The second section is dedicated to my interlocutors’ decision to move onwards, in reaction to the financial and social crisis that hit Portugal in the aftermath of the 2008 economic downturn. The third part describes the transnational lives of my interlocutors, analysing the activities and relations that situate them in a transnational social field, including multiple places in Guinea-Bissau, Portugal, the UK and other countries across the world. The last section shows how these practices and connections result in distinct forms of subjectivity, marked by specific challenges and skills. The challenges concern the creation of coherence among contrasting norms, practices and gendered roles associated with different locations. Tastes and skills include confidence about displacement, cultural competence to manage difference and the ability to elaborate comparisons between different social contexts. I analyse the ways in which my subjects manage these multiple identifications and perform them according to different situations. Then, I argue that Portuguese-Guineans, together with other Portuguese-speaking migrants, contribute to producing a *lusotopic* sense of community, which appropriates and transforms the urban space in which they live. I expand on the concept of *lusotopy* later in the chapter.

The chapter builds on ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Peterborough, during three visits between 2016 and 2018, as part of a research project exploring the recent changes in migration patterns from Portugal to the UK. During this period, I carried out participant observation in leisure, recruitment and workspaces frequented by both Guinean- and Portuguese-born citizens. This experience enabled me to observe labour relations among migrants from different backgrounds. The bulk of my data consists in 12 life-story interviews with Portuguese-Guinean onward migrants who settled in Peterborough and its surroundings after a first stage of migration in Greater Lisbon (Portugal). I also conducted 11 in-depth interviews with Portuguese-born migrants living in Peterborough. While spending time with some of my interviewees at parties, going shopping, running errands and other social occasions, I was able to engage in several informal conversations with other Portuguese-Guinean and Portuguese-born citizens. Among my Portuguese-Guinean interviewees there were three women and nine men, aged between 36 and 57 years, some of whom had children of school age. They arrived in Portugal between 1983 and 2008 and resettled in the UK between 2008 and 2016. All were holders of dual

nationality. The interviews took place at their homes or in cafés and were conducted in Portuguese and translated by me. Interviewees' names are fictitious, in order to protect their privacy.

My positionality as a female, white Italian in this diasporic context has certainly influenced the ethnographic encounter. Although many of my interviewees were men, my fieldwork gatekeeper was a woman. She introduced me to many of my interlocutors and directed my attention to certain issues rather than others. For instance, my analysis of gender relations in this context owes much to our dialogue. As always, ethnography is a co-production (Pina Cabral, 2013). Furthermore, the fact that I speak Portuguese fluently and have lived for several years in Lisbon helped me to find many points of contact with my interviewees, positioning myself in the vast and shifting world of lusotopy.

11.2 The Changing Roads of the Guinean Diaspora

Guinea-Bissau is a small Western African country, with a population of 1.5 million inhabitants marked by pronounced ethnic plurality, including more than 20 ethnic groups living in the hinterland, as well as urbanised people of mixed ancestry concentrated in the Bissau region. The country gained independence in 1973–1974, after a long and bloody war against Portuguese colonial rule. Since then, Guinea-Bissau has witnessed three *coups d'état* and a civil war (1998–1999). More generally, post-colonial times have been marked by political unrest, institutional collapse, constant economic decline and growing emigration. International outflows have intensified in recent decades, especially after the civil war, which produced waves of refugees and worsened the political and economic situation of the country. In addition to the old routes to Senegal and the Gambia, contemporary movements extend to Europe and beyond (Abranches, 2013, 2014; Nafafé, 2016).

Until the early 2000s, the main hub of the Bissau-Guinean diaspora in Europe was Portugal, where Guinean residents accounted for the sixth-largest foreign group according to the 2011 census. The social and cultural make-up of the Guinean population living in Portugal includes an urban, educated and creolised social layer and a segment marked by greater ethnic diversity and lower educational levels. Despite their different backgrounds, these sub-groups occupy the same low-skilled sectors of the labour market: the building industry for men and catering and domestic service for women. Moreover, they are residentially concentrated in the marginal areas of Greater Lisbon (Machado, 2002). Based on the existence of enduring links with the place of origin and the absorption of ethnic divisions into a wider national identity, scholars have portrayed Guinean migrants in Portugal as a diasporic community (Quintino, 2004; Saraiva, 2008; Abranches, 2013).

Over the last two decades of the twentieth century, this group was predominantly composed of young males, some of them undocumented. Since then, most migrants have realised family reunification with their relatives who had been left in

Guinea-Bissau and many were able to afford Portuguese citizenship.¹ Furthermore, large-scale shifts in the global economy contributed to a change to their plans for the future. The effects of the 2008 global recession were extremely strong in Portugal, where the implementation of austerity measures to tackle the public sovereign debt resulted in a profound economic and social crisis (Lima, 2016). The outcomes were rising rates of unemployment, a growing cost of living, the dismantling of welfare, social and economic precariousness, a general feeling of uncertainty about the future and a dramatic rise in emigration (Marques & Góis, 2017; Pereira & Azevedo, 2019). While many Portuguese-born citizens left their country for old and new destinations, international migrants either returned to their homeland or moved onwards (McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2018). Bissau-Guinean migrants were particularly hit by the crisis, due to the huge decline of the construction sector. While many were made redundant, others saw their employment situation rapidly worsen. As the persistence of political and economic instability hindered their return to Guinea-Bissau, most of them opted to move to other European countries – such as Spain, France, Germany and the UK – as Portuguese citizens. The dispersal across Europe of the Bissau-Guinean diasporic community did not prevent migrants from remaining connected with both Guinea-Bissau and Portugal through transnational practices, spiritual bonds, links with relatives back home and a common sense of attachment to the country of origin. Their onward movement marked a new phase of migration from Guinea-Bissau, shifting from a post-colonial pattern to a multi-polar situation. While the previous moves were driven by long-standing links with the ex-metropolis, a cultural and linguistic affinity and a legal facility, the present trend is led by socio-economic dynamics and labour-market cleavages within the EU (Nafafé, 2016).

Within this framework, many Bissau-Guinean migrants joined the massive wave of people who moved from Portugal to the UK in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis.² Portuguese emigration to the UK began to experience considerable growth at the turn of the millennium, becoming the main destination for Portuguese emigration since 2011 (Observatório da Emigração, 2019). The post-2008 wave consisted of layers as diverse as young and qualified workers in search of career advancement, working-class migrants employed in the low-skilled sectors of the labour market and onward migrants who were born outside Portugal and moved to the UK on a Portuguese passport. Some authors have described this heterogeneous population as a ‘Portuguese-speaking diaspora’ (Beswick & Dinneen, 2010) or a ‘Lusophone multinational group’ (Almeida & Corkill, 2010), brought together by language use as a sociocultural practice, common employment patterns and transnational links to Portugal. In this chapter, I attempt to give a more nuanced view of this social configuration by focusing on the transnational lives of Portuguese-Guinean migrants based in Peterborough.

¹ Access to Portuguese citizenship was eased under a new law in 2006, starting after 6 years’ legal residence in the country (Healy, 2011; McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2018).

² Inflows from Portugal reached a peak of 30,000 entries in 2013 and continued in the following years, although the slight recovery of the Portuguese economy and the uncertainties associated with Brexit produced a recent slowdown of this trend (Observatório da Emigração, 2019).

11.3 The Decision to Move Onwards

My interlocutors were middle-aged men and women who were born in Bissau, migrated to Great Lisbon between the early 1980s and the early 2000s and resettled in the UK with their families after 2008. They moved to Portugal on international scholarships,³ through family reunification or on health visas and found employment in construction, cleaning and care services. Most were happy with their livelihood, as they were able to support their families in Portugal while sending remittances to their relatives back home. Nevertheless, some were thinking of moving on in search of job opportunities that were more suited to their qualifications. Meanwhile, the crisis broke out in Portugal. Hence, whether they became unemployed or were afraid of losing their jobs, they started to make plans for a new migration, activating their connections with relatives and friends who were living abroad. The reasons for choosing the UK were multiple: some believed that learning English would improve their chances of professional mobility when back in Portugal or Guinea-Bissau, while others wanted to invest in their children's education. Everyone had heard from their acquaintances that the UK was a 'land of opportunities', with a flourishing labour market and a strong welfare system that especially supported single mothers. Peterborough was a particularly attractive destination due to the presence there of a large Portuguese-speaking community, the low cost of housing and the high labour demand. So, once they had acquired Portuguese citizenship, they immediately started to organise their relocation. This frequently involved a brief period in which a family member was received by a relative or friend, to enable an exploration of the labour and housing opportunities in the place of destination, while the rest of the family joined him or her later. In some cases, single or divorced men travelled alone. By way of example, I quote the accounts of Neto and Nelito respectively about their decision to move to the UK:

My wife did 12 years of service in the same company [a sandwich shop]. Even after she graduated she never worked in her area of study [...]. Moreover, with the economic situation worsening in Portugal, we felt that if she never succeeded before, now [...] she would hardly be able to handle it. [...] Although I was already working well and had a good job, she would never have one. And this was one of the reasons why we moved here [to Peterborough].

I had my boss, I always worked with him, he built houses to sell. Suddenly the crisis came, construction stopped, and there, without work, I decided to move here. [...] I stayed three to four years there, I lived on unemployment benefits. The money I received was not enough – 170 euros per month [...] I had the rent, water and electricity to pay and my children to sustain. In addition, I had my brothers in Portugal still studying. [...] First I went to London, where a friend received me. I stayed there for two weeks, then another friend invited me to work here [in Peterborough]. I moved in 2012 [...]. I never had the idea of

³In the post-independence period, the Guinean government set up bilateral agreements to send students to Portuguese universities as there was no university in Guinea. Although these scholarships prescribed the return of graduates to their homeland, few went back from Portugal. Instead, many ended up working on building sites and in other low-skilled workplaces, swelling the ranks of the 'brain drain' from Guinea-Bissau (Nafafé, 2016).

emigrating, because I know that Europe is almost the same. There is work here as there is there. Same situation. In my case it was my friend [who convinced me to emigrate]. I wanted to go to France but my friend said to me: 'Come here, to see if you can get anything'. He even paid for the ticket.

On the one hand, these narratives show how migration plans are based on complex calculations of pros and cons, involving mixed motivations and ongoing assessments of the changing situation in sending and receiving countries. On the other hand, they highlight the crucial role of the Portuguese crisis in the final decision of my interlocutors to relocate to the UK. In this sense, they are in line with recent works that studied onward migration from Southern Europe to the UK as a consequence of the post-2008 crisis (Mas Giral, 2016; Della Puppa, 2018; McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2018; Ramos, 2018; Mapril, 2019; McIlwaine & Bunge, 2019; King & Della Puppa, 2021). Indeed, the economic crisis hit the southern countries of the euro-zone particularly hard, with disruptive effects on migrants' livelihoods (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017). Like migrants from Spain and Italy resettling in the UK, my interviewees describe their choice as a response to the economic downturn which badly affected migrant families and changed their expectations of the future, in a context of growing social inequalities. Indeed, the crisis also had a strong impact in the UK, in terms of austerity measures, low growth, wage decline and deteriorating working conditions. However, the country managed to maintain high levels of employment over the following decade, attracting waves of workers from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe (Rogaly, 2020). Like other onward migrants, my participants experienced this new relocation in a different phase of life to when they left their homeland: now, they were no longer young and single but parents with school-age children (Della Puppa, 2018). The parallel extends to the field of legal status: as other South–North onward migrants, my subjects used their new status as EU citizens as a form of 'citizenship to go' (Della Puppa & Sredanovic, 2016), which enhanced their 'motility' (Kaufmann et al., 2004) and allowed them to enjoy free movement across the EU (refer to Della Puppa and Sredanovic, Chap. 9 in this volume). Their experiences reveal that while, at the macro level, Portugal appears today as a 'turntable' (Marques & Góis, 2012, 215) and a transit country, things are more nuanced where migrants' strategies are concerned. While many third-country nationals may see Portugal as a gateway to Northern Europe, my subjects were prepared to stay there permanently from the moment of their first move. For many, onward migration was not initially an option. Other participants were unsure about their final destination. Eventually, they chose Peterborough based on information from compatriots who were residing there, ready to receive them and confident that they would find a job within days. Therefore, their second move was a way to deal with greater socio-economic changes. Their ongoing link with Portugal is evident not only in their transnational connections with relatives back there but also in their sense of attachment to what many of my subjects call their 'second homeland'.

A final remark concerns the attitude of my interlocutors to the future. Recent literature has explored the role of Brexit as potential trigger of mobility for EU citizens in the UK (e.g. Lulle et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2020; Sredanovic, 2020). Most of my subjects were worried about the possible negative effects of Brexit, including

economic depression, an increase in the cost of living and a tightening of migration policies. However, at the time of my fieldwork none were making short-term plans for return or onward migration. The common view was that ‘for those who work and pay taxes there will be no problems, even after Brexit’. They were, therefore, waiting to see further developments, while keeping an eye on the situation in Portugal, in their countries of origin or elsewhere and being ready to leave the UK if a job opportunity came up abroad.

11.4 Transnational Lives, Diasporic Spaces

Peterborough is a medium-sized city in Cambridgeshire (East Anglia), with around 200,000 residents. Since it was declared a ‘new town’ in the 1960s, its population has rapidly risen due to the arrival of national and international migrants attracted by a labour demand in industry and services and, more recently, in logistics and food production, processing and packing. The first international newcomers were Italian workers, who arrived in the 1950s to work in brick production. In the late-twentieth century, the main migrant group came from Commonwealth countries, particularly Pakistan and India. The current wave started in 2004 – at the time of EU enlargement – and is mainly formed of European workers. In recent decades, temporary employment agencies have blossomed in the area, in order to both recruit and supervise this army of migrant labour. The infrastructure of private labour-providers, good road and rail links and relatively cheap land available for the installation of warehouses – all these factors attracted many distribution corporations to Peterborough and its hinterland, creating an enclave for the food industry and logistics. The result is ‘a sub-regional labour market, with an urban hub at its core where workers are housed’ and a countryside where labour takes place (Rogaly, 2020, 25). This spatial configuration is connected with what Ben Rogaly has recently called a ‘local labour regime’ (Rogaly, 2020, 83), marked by the association of temporary, non-unionised and low-paid jobs with international migrant workers.

According to the last census (2011), with 1530 individuals, Portugal was the third country of origin – after Poland and Lithuania – of EU citizens living in Peterborough. In addition, the census counted a higher number (2118) of Portuguese speakers. As I will show, these figures do not reflect the fluid situation of Portuguese-Guinean households, marked by multilingualism and manifold places of birth. Nonetheless, they reveal the diversification of the migrant population hailing from Portugal, which includes both Portuguese-born and post-colonial citizens. In particular, Peterborough is home to one of the largest Portuguese-Guinean communities in the UK, although specific statistics are lacking.⁴ Yet, citizens who were born in other former colonies are also present, including people from East Timor, Angola,

⁴The EU Census Hub 2011 database reports 1890 individuals born in Guinea-Bissau with EU citizenship (other than British) residing in England and Wales in 2011 (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-and-housing-census/census-data/2011-census>).

Brazil, Cape Verde and Mozambique. Besides the Portuguese passport, one of the crucial glues that holds together this grouping is language. In fact, although Kriol⁵ and other idioms are spoken at home and between fellow countrymen and women, Portuguese constitutes a vehicular language in places of work, leisure and worship. Most Portuguese-speaking workers are concentrated in just a few factories and warehouses located in the surroundings or refer to the same recruitment agencies, where they can count on Portuguese-speaking clerks. In addition, they meet in the Portuguese cafés, restaurants and grocery stores that blossom in the city centre and display symbols of ‘Portuguesehood’, including the national flag, images of regional specialities and Portuguese place names, such as ‘O Sado’, ‘Café Algarve’ and ‘Vilamoura’.

At the time of their arrival, all my subjects were employed on ‘zero-hour’ contracts by local temporary agencies, working in food-packaging centres and warehouses around Peterborough and holding low-skilled positions. After a year or so, most were able to get permanent jobs and direct contracts with owner companies, while a minority remained on the temporary labour market. Among those who obtained stable employment, three took on more-skilled functions in the field of quality control. In their case, higher education levels and the acquisition of fluency in English were central in their career advancement. Regardless of their job position, all my subjects had better salaries than those they received in Lisbon but complained about the cost of living, which was arguably higher than in Portugal. Thanks to their higher income, they were able to send remittances to their relatives who had been left in Portugal and Guinea-Bissau.

Interestingly, my subjects’ mobility had increased since they had settled in Peterborough. For instance, when they had to deal with Guinean bureaucracy – for births, deaths and the renewal of documents – they used to go to Lisbon, as there is no Guinean consular office in the UK. Likewise, they preferred to handle Portuguese paperwork in Lisbon instead of having recourse to the Portuguese embassy in London. As they explained to me, it was cheaper to reach nearby Stansted Airport by train and get a low-cost flight to Lisbon than travel to London and take the underground to the Portuguese consulate in the city centre. In some cases, their greater spending power allowed them to travel to Guinea-Bissau; when they were living in Portugal this was too expensive in relation to their salary, as Fanta explained in her interview:

In 2010 we [her nuclear family] all went to Guinea-Bissau, we went there to visit the family, we stayed there for a month and it was very good. It was the first time in 10 years, after coming here. Then we went in 2013 and we are planning to go next year. When we were in Portugal we couldn’t; now with a higher salary, benefits, etc. [it’s easier].

⁵The so-called Creole society arose in the fifteenth century from the interactions between Portuguese and Cape Verdean navigators and native groups, in outposts dedicated to slave trade on the Upper-Guinean coast. It was in this context that emerged Kriol – a language aimed at simplifying communication between foreign and local groups – which is now the national *lingua franca* in Guinea-Bissau (Knörr & Trajano-Filho, 2010).

Although trips to Bissau were less frequent, travels to Lisbon were common among my subjects, as they were affordable for all budgets. While they went to Lisbon, they took the opportunity to handle paperwork, visit relatives who lived there and buy objects and food that they could not find in Peterborough. Actually, whereas several grocers were selling Portuguese food and drinks in Peterborough, it was cheaper to stock up in Lisbon. There, my interlocutors could also rely on a large market of Guinean products, which is constantly supplied by an informal small-scale transnational trade taking place between the airports of Lisbon and Bissau, exchanging goods via passengers' luggage (Abranches, 2013). Likewise, when back in Peterborough, Portuguese and Guinean products were redistributed among relatives and friends.

Finally, many of my subjects engaged in 'politics of homeland' (Vertovec, 2009), participating in various ways in a diasporic Guinean political space. First, some of them collaborated in the ongoing construction of a formalised relationship with the Guinean state. In particular, they were involved in the 2018–2019 electoral process, which included, for the first time, a voter registration among the Bissau-Guinean diaspora in the UK. In 2013, an alteration to the Guinean electoral law extended the voting right to the diaspora. Accordingly, two Deputies were appointed in the 2014 elections, one for Africa and one for Europe, where the voter registration was limited to Portugal, Spain and France (EU EOM, 2014; Nafafé, 2016). In 2018, the electoral process was extended to the UK, due to the growing number of Bissau-Guinean migrants residing there. Some of my interlocutors participated in the election campaign and in the organisation of the voter registration. In their view, this was a way to quantify the Bissau-Guinean presence in the UK and put pressure on the Guinean government to establish a consular office in London. However, according to them, the election process was 'a failure' – due to a lack of organisation, few citizens managed to reach the contact points and to be registered. Second, most of my subjects contributed to the national political debate via social media. Indeed, social networking has recently played a crucial role in maintaining strong ties between Guinea-Bissau and its diaspora around the world, by bringing news about the home country and fostering political debate (Nafafé, 2016). My subjects kept connected via a growing number of internet blogs created in Guinea-Bissau and the diaspora, such as *Ditadura do Consenso* (<http://ditaduraconsenso.blogspot.com>), *Didinho* (<http://www.didinho.org>), *Doka Internacional* (<http://dokainternacionaldenunciante.blogspot.co>) and *Intelectuais Balantas na Diáspora* (<http://tchogue.blogspot.com>).⁶ Through these blogs, Bissau-Guinean migrants keep themselves informed about elections and everyday news in their country of origin, discuss

⁶As José Lingna Nafafé has pointed out, these blogs constitute 'a media outlet unregulated by state control' (Nafafé, 2016, 154), used by independent journalists and intellectuals to contest the Guinean government and denounce corruption, the mismanagement of resources and human rights violations. This is particularly evident in the first-mentioned blog ('Dictatorship of consensus' in English). As its creator, Aly Silva, explained in an interview, the blog's name hints at how authoritarian policies meet with general approval in the country (<https://pt.globalvoices.org/2010/11/21/guine-bissau-ditadura-do-consenso-e-a-tentacao-de-aly-pela-denuncia/>).

topics of national interest and engage in the debate on the relationship between homeland and diaspora. In addition, my interviewees participated in several transnational and local-based Facebook groups, such as *Voz Da Diáspora Guineense* (<https://www.facebook.com/vozdadiasporaguineense/>) and *Luso Guineenses no Reino Unido* (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LusoGuineensesUk/>). Besides allowing political participation, internet channels simplified the organisation of solidarity initiatives directed at the country of origin. For instance, the church group to which Antónia belonged in her youth is now dispersed across many countries but is kept connected via Skype and WhatsApp, both of which are used to organise donations to development projects, the shipping of clothes and toys and visits to Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, far from being limited to dualistic links between ‘home’ and ‘host’ countries, social media support transnational networks connecting the multiple hubs of the Guinean diaspora.

In sum, my subjects engaged in a set of actions and social relations that simultaneously link them to their previous homes, their current place of residence and other locations of the Bissau-Guinean diaspora. Their transnational ‘ways of being’ reveal how Portuguese-Guineans living in Peterborough are embedded in multi-sited ‘transnational social fields’, through which ideas, practices and resources are unevenly combined and transformed (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Concurrently, their participation in activities and institutions located in three different nation states generates specific categories of identity. In the next section, I illustrate how my interlocutors acknowledge and play with such multiple categories of identity, creating plural and flexible ‘ways of belonging’ (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

11.5 Transnational Subjectivities, Lusotopic Locality

In this final section, I try to answer Pnina Werbner’s question about ‘what a transnational subjectivity might be like’ (1999, 17). Following Sherry Ortner, I understand subjectivity as ‘the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear, and so forth that animate acting subjects’, as well as ‘the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes of affect, thought and so on’ (2006, 31). As Henrietta Moore has observed, theories of the subject owe much to Foucault’s dual conception of the subject/self: on the one hand, we are always subject to someone else through forms of subjection; on the other, we can recognise ourselves as a subject through a creative process of subjectivation (Foucault, 1985; Moore, 2007). In other words, both power and agency are entailed in the social production of subjects. In a similar vein, scholars have described transnational subjectivities as shaped by a dialectical process of disciplining and self-identification, involving regulation by nation states as well as individuals’ attempts to circumvent them and take control of their lives (Nonini & Ong, 1997). More specifically, Susan Ossman (2004, 2013) has analysed the lives of ‘serial migrants’ – that is, people who have lived in at least three countries for a significant period of time – to explore how this specific way of moving produces new kinds of subject. In examining the

experience of Portuguese-Guinean onward migrants, I try to intersect the existing scholarship on transnational subjectivity with Ossman's insights into serial migration. On the one hand, I pay attention to the ways in which my interlocutors are struggling to create self-continuity across different places and lifetimes. On the other, I argue that their 'multiple identifications' (Ossman, 2004) are rooted in specific configurations of class, nationality, language, race and culture, which have shaped their subjectivities in the course of their journey.

Central to migrants' experience is what has been called a 'transnational habitus' (Vertovec, 2009) – a set of conscious and non-conscious dispositions, values and perceptions that guide the action of migrants with reference to different social and cultural settings. As Ossman (2004, 113) has pointed out, this process becomes more complex in the case of serial migrants: while migrants' lives are informed by a duality of 'home' and 'host' country, the introduction of a 'third space' reconfigures this dual orientation. The result is the emergence of new challenges, tastes and skills. Challenges are about creating continuity and coherence between the different norms, meanings and practices that people have acquired in their movement across multiple locations. Tastes and skills include a confidence that the processes involved in displacement will go smoothly, a cultural competence to manage differences between systems of meaning and a tendency to compare different contexts through forms of 'social reflexivity' (Ossman, 2013, 153).

11.5.1 Lost in Genderscapes

Gender is one crucial sphere in which contrasting orientations can compete, generating conflicts between individuals. Insofar as subjects are shaped by specific – and frequently unequal – gender relationships, associated with culturally constructed values and notions, the exposure to other gender patterns can lead individuals to take up different subject positions, modifying power relations within families and affecting gender identities and senses of self (Moore, 2007; Vertovec, 2009). The shift to a new genderscape had a strong impact on gender relations among my subjects. Whereas my female interlocutors tended to experience more freedom and economic independence in the new setting, many men complained of a loss of status. Conflicts resulting from changes in power balance between partners apparently led many couples and families to split up in the new country of residence.

The story of Antónia and Mamadu is a paradigmatic case. Antónia was born in Bissau and moved to Portugal on a study visa. She completed high school in Portugal, then found employment with a cleaning company. Mamadu arrived in Portugal with his father when he was a child and started early to work in construction. They met in Lisbon and married in Guinea-Bissau in a traditional ceremony. After a year their first child was born, followed by the second, 2 years later. Then Mamadu moved to France, working with a Portuguese building company and going to Portugal in the holidays. However, the job was precarious and he often experienced payment in arrears. Meanwhile, the economic situation worsened in Portugal.

The expenses were accumulating and Antónia's salary was not enough to support the household. So she decided to move to Peterborough, where she had acquaintances. She went initially with her children and her husband joined them after a few months. After working 1 year with a temp agency, Antónia found permanent employment with a cleaning company. At the same time, she applied for council housing. She took care of the paperwork and was registered as the head of a single-parent family. Since then, she has dealt with state bureaucracy and family benefits. When he arrived, Mamadu was also recruited by a temp agency but he felt unable to adapt to the poor working conditions and exhausting work schedules. Furthermore, their relationship began to deteriorate, even as far as physical abuse. Mamadu was unhappy and blamed Antónia for having brought him there against his will. As he was convinced that his wife was hiding the money from state aid, he stopped contributing to family expenses. When I met him in 2016, Mamadu was living on his own. Antónia told me that she was satisfied with her life in the UK. When I asked her about the future, she said that she was more inclined to return to Guinea-Bissau than to Portugal. Yet, if there were problems caused by Brexit, she would go back to Portugal, because living conditions in Guinea-Bissau were still too bad and were unlikely to recover in the short term. For now, she was going to stay in the UK until her children finished their studies and became independent. By contrast, Mamadu admitted that, if he got a job in Portugal, he would return there immediately. 'The immigrant's life in the UK is too stressful', he said, 'You wake up at five in the morning and you're only back home at night [...]. It's sad, we arrived [in Europe] many years ago and we're still in search of the future'. Concerning Brexit, he confessed that, if British people wanted to send migrants away, he would not mind – at least he would have 'an excuse to leave'. His plan for the future was to set up a taxi business in Bissau.

Antónia's and Mamadu's comments below on how gender relations changed with the new stage of migration reflect their contrasting perspectives on this topic as well as the clash of contradictory laws and value systems in Guinea-Bissau, Portugal and the UK. The first quote is from Antónia, the second from Mamadu.

Here in England, there is a lot of separation [among migrant couples]. Because of stress, because of money... Men keep most of their money, saying that women have more power. They say that women are protected [by law], they feel bad about it, and they want to retaliate, while we women don't let them. They think we are receiving a lot of money from the state, [...] they get... jealous, angry, and then they don't want to do their duty. Even when they work they say: 'Ah, you are receiving the children's allowance, where is the allowance money?'. Many women are living without a husband because of that [...]. Especially Guinean men, they say that women control the paperwork, they don't feel good about it [...]. In Portugal we were fine with our husbands, husband and wife were fine, although we had no money. We understood each other [...]. Yet, there are also women who abuse their position. [...] They call the cops right away and the cops take the husbands out. Here, you just call the cops and the husband has to leave [...]. My husband and I have been at odds with each other for a long time [...], but I would not call the police against the father of my children. I wouldn't. We were not [getting on] well but we stayed here together for months. No problem, he was in his corner, I was in mine, even when he got his room and left, fine.

You know, here, especially Guinean women ... It's not just Antónia, it happens a lot here. When they get here, they get confused. Because she is working, you are working, there is

no respect anymore, it cannot be. I, at least, I feel... do you understand Spanish? I feel like a *maricon* [...]. A man, at home, he has to [...] dictate, to be respected. This is essential, nothing more [...]. Imagine, you always go out with your friends, today, tomorrow... you forget that you are married. [...]. You come back home, you're going to make a meal at ten o'clock. What time am I expected to eat? I go to work at dawn. [...] I told her many times, she didn't respect... and yet, I didn't forget that I'm in England. You know why? Women are ruling here, it's true! [...] Do you know how it happens here, with women's law? You know, the Queen ordered it. Women will be never mistreated and so they forget that there are also women who abuse. For example, a couple makes a mess, they beat each other, when they call the police, you go directly to the police station [...]. A hug is enough to screw up a man, they don't even ask! Is that justice? [...]. In Portugal, if there is a problem between wife and husband, [the cops] get there to make peace. They don't want to know, they don't want to judge anyone. They say: 'The neighbours are complaining about noise, we don't want to come back here again', then they leave.

11.5.2 *New Tastes and Skills*

Despite the difficulties resulting from the clash of contrasting frames of reference, onward migration provided my subjects with new skills. First, they acquired 'a sense of how to move with grace' (Ossman, 2013, 94). In Portuguese, the act of emigrating is commonly referred to as *saltar* (to jump). This expression has its origins in Portuguese emigration to France in the 1960s and 1970s, when restrictive policies enforced by the authoritarian Portuguese regime forced people to emigrate illegally, risking their lives to cross the border in the mountainous north of the Iberian peninsula. At that time, emigrating was a true 'leap in the dark', as Christian De Chalonge impressively recounted in his film *The Jump* (1968).⁷ Although nowadays emigration is a much less risky undertaking, the expression evokes the burden of anxiety that every migration entails: crossing a border, learning a new language and a new way of life and searching for work and accommodation. All this might appear as a troubling leap into the unknown for those who move for the first time. However, as Ossman has observed, 'the experience of a first migration is important in gaining the confidence to move a second time' (2013, 94). As my interlocutor Fernando puts it: 'Since we had already run risk, there would be no risk that we've not already run and that cannot serve as an experience for this new phase of migration that we chose to start'. Like other Portuguese-Guineans I knew in the UK, Fernando moved to Portugal as an international student. He completed his degree in sociology but could not find any employment in his field of study, so worked in a factory until he acquired Portuguese citizenship and fled to the UK, where his spouse and children were already established. After 5 years, he is now fluent in English and works as a quality controller in a packing house belonging to a large retail chain. He told me that improving his English was a challenge for him and his

⁷Through the story of a Portuguese carpenter, who risked his life by crossing the Spanish border to escape the colonial war and find a job in Paris, this film draws a picture of the massive Portuguese illegal immigration to France.

wife but that, little by little, they were evolving, although they were still ‘in the struggle’ to adjust to a different culture. By contrast, their children adapted faster to the new environment. Among Portuguese-Guineans, the switch between languages is a hallmark of intergenerational interactions. When I visited my interlocutors in their homes, it was common to hear them addressing their offspring in Portuguese. The older children, who were generally born in Lisbon, replied in Portuguese, while the younger ones, who were being socialised in Britain, answered in English. By contrast, Kriol is the preferential language between the adults, who were mostly born in Bissau. The following quote from Fernando reflects the mix of languages and eating habits that cut across generations in Portuguese-Guinean households:

At home we speak Kriol, Portuguese with the children and English, because at this moment my wife speaks Portuguese with our daughter, but she tends to respond in English. When we came to England she was four years old, but now English is prevalent. She makes that mix, she starts to change the order of words in the sentence. Nonetheless, we try to speak the three languages: Kriol between my wife and I, Portuguese and English with the children. Food continues to be Guinean and Portuguese specialities. This is because, unfortunately, we have not yet managed to adapt to English cuisine which, for me, does not have the flavour [laugh] that Portuguese and Guinean food does. It’s based on rice (Guinean) and potatoes (Portuguese) food.

It is interesting to note that the time spent in Portugal left a profound mark on their eating habits and tastes. Most of my interlocutors ate African food at home but went to Portuguese restaurants when they ‘miss[ed] Portuguese food’, as they used to say. While many specialist stores were selling Portuguese products in Peterborough, my subjects preferred to stock up on foodstuffs during their trips to Lisbon, where they could also count on a flourishing market of Guinean goods. Olive oil and *bacalhau* (salted codfish) were particularly sought after. As Sobral and Rodrigues (2013: 619) have pointed out, ‘Salt cod has a unique status in Portuguese cuisine, as it is both a very common food, and a symbol of the Portuguese national identity’. Significantly, my interlocutors seemed to have embodied the taste for this type of food, as is evident in Fernando’s words:

Many times on our trips to Portugal [...] we bring *bacalhau* and take it to share with friends. We try to never miss. Here they have it, but it’s different [...]. They call it cod, it’s a normal fish for them, [but] we like that salt cod, Portuguese style, which has a different flavour.

My subjects’ preference for Portuguese rather than English restaurants and cafés deserves a separate discussion, as it goes beyond the sphere of food and drink, to include the scope of economy, socialisation, leisure, culture and temporality. The Portuguese café is a microcosm of all this. Indeed, it is a kind of total social fact. It is not by chance that those cafés, restaurants and grocery stores that offer regional products in many places where the Portuguese diaspora is living are commonly referred as *comércio da saudade* (nostalgia trading). Scholars have already stressed the importance of commercial activities with overtly Portuguese names in providing services to Portuguese migrants and highlighting their presence in the ‘Little Portugals’ across the world (for the British case, see Beswick & Pozo-Gutiérrez, 2010). These sites also become key meeting places between Portuguese-born and Portuguese-Guinean migrants in Peterborough, especially during the football

matches of Portuguese teams. As I will show later, the display of ‘Portugueseness’ symbols in these places – including a broad range of images, names, objects and practices – plays a crucial role in the construction of a Portuguese-Guinean identity within a larger Portuguese-speaking environment. This is evident in Neto’s considerations about the relevance of the ‘coffee culture’ in the lives of Portuguese-Guinean onward migrants:

The standard of living I had in Portugal, I missed it very much when I left. The affectivity that we have, a simple habit that can even be banal, coffee. Coffee culture, going to a café, sitting, having a drink, reading a book, reading a newspaper, even bringing things from school, studying, I don’t know, I missed it so much. [...] It was one of the things I never expected it would influence me, but it did. For me it was an absence I felt [in Luton], because there are no cafés there [...]. The traditional English café is totally different from Portuguese, so this also affected me a lot. When I came to Peterborough, I realised that there was this... there are more Portuguese, we can sit down, talk about something, talk about politics and those things, for me it made all the difference. [...] I am talking about migrants’ quality [of life]. You come here, have a job, get a house and have more or less an environment, some situations like Portugal, the community, the cafés, the services, these things, all this makes Peterborough a town with essential living conditions.

Besides developing their confidence, flexibility and adaptability to a new environment, the experience of a second migration bestowed, on my interlocutors, keen powers of observation. As happens with other onward migrants, the introduction of a third space produced a critical distancing that offered my subjects a new perspective on their prior homelands. This ‘social reflexivity’ (Ossman, 2013, 153) enabled them to make systematic comparisons between different social contexts. Reflections about racism are a case in point. In my interlocutors’ view, racism exists everywhere but it takes different forms in Portugal and the UK, as Edgar and Nelito point out in their respective interview extracts below:

It’s very complicated for an African to grow professionally in Portugal. It’s different here [in the UK], I think it’s different. You have many foreigners in important positions here [...]. How many Africans did you see there [in Portugal], for instance in the government, in state departments, [...] taking on important charges? But it’s not that people are not competent – the opportunity is lacking. [...] I don’t know if it’s racism, I think it’s more protection for nationals. [...] As long as every Portuguese who is there does not have a good job in their area, they will not let in the outsiders... In England it’s different. First and foremost, the Englishman does not want to do this, so they give these opportunities to foreigners, to do what is theirs.

[In the UK], racism is about money. There’s so little money. It can be racism as well, if we think that the majority of the working population in England are immigrants. [Migrants] have a lower cost. Because it’s not English people who are receiving [the minimum wage], it’s us immigrants. So this is racism.

These observations confirm the findings of scholars who studied the expressions of racism in Portugal. Indeed, racist beliefs and forms of racism in daily interactions are commonplace in Portugal, although they tend to be obliterated from public opinion (Vala et al., 1999). Yet, racism is, above all, a structural phenomenon, as the legacy of colonial relations translates into a system of discrimination against African migrants and afro-descendants in the fields of justice, law, labour, housing and education (Gorjão Henriques, 2018; Alves, 2019; Raposo et al., 2019). Concurrently,

the critical gaze of my subjects extends to British society, where structural racism is palpable in the system of labour division – in which the heaviest, most precarious and least-paid jobs are mostly carried out by migrant workers. Their view echoes Ben Rogaly’s analysis of workers’ racialisation in Peterborough’s local labour regime. Building on the notion of ‘racial capitalism’ (Robinson, 1983; Lowe, 2015; Bhattacharyya, 2018), Rogaly (2020) has shown how the incorporation of international migrants into the local labour market is functional to profit production, as capitalist employers use culturally and socially constructed differences such as race, gender and nationality to exploit, divide and control workers.

11.5.3 *Lusotopic Communities*

In the fields, food factories, packing companies and warehouses around Peterborough, where trade-union membership has followed the national trend of decline, the migrant workforce appears divided by national and linguistic cleavages rather than united by class consciousness. In the workplaces where most of my interlocutors were employed, the competition for better positions erected boundaries between national groups. Such rivalry is exacerbated by the zero-hour system, through which temp agencies manage the fluctuations in labour demand. Significantly, labour-providers employ migrant clerks to recruit and manage their fellow countrymen and countrywomen. Allegedly, this is a way to facilitate communication with a non-English-speaking population but it becomes a cause of friction among workers in moments of low production. In particular, my interlocutors used to blame Eastern Europeans – often merged under the label of ‘Poles’ and seen as their direct competitors on the labour market – for favouring their friends and compatriots in recruitment. ‘The Poles’, said Nelito, ‘control everything [...]. The manager is up there, he doesn’t see how people are doing. They are the bosses. Of course, they will push for their race’. In the words of Jonathan Friedman (2002, 34), this super-diverse ecosystem appears as ‘a world divided into “ethnically” differentiated classes’.

Within this framework, the Portuguese language turns out to be the glue that holds together the multi-ethnic group coming from Portugal, creating cohesion and distinction from other groupings. So, as Carlos stressed in his interview, Portuguese-speaking people formed bonds of brotherhood through self-help practices:

Here we are friends, we are brothers! [...]. It doesn’t matter if you are white or black, we are the same. Because we are all foreigners, aren’t we? So, drawing the conclusion, we have to support each other [...]. I think that Portuguese immigrants already know what immigration life is, and so they try to show more solidarity with others [...]. Imagine, for example, you have a colleague who lost his job. Even if you are Portuguese, and if you have the opportunity at the place where you work, you will try to give this person a reference, to get the job [...]. In the case of [...] death, people always try to be supportive, to help the family, no matter if you are Guinean or Portuguese, everyone helps.

These relations of solidarity do not erase the differences between Portuguese-born and Portuguese-Guinean migrants but focus on their commonalities in an attempt to create a larger aggregate, as a form of protection in a competitive environment. Apparently, a common identity is being constructed in workplaces and strengthened in Portuguese cafés, where an enlarged ‘Portuguesehood’ is nurtured and negotiated through language, food and football cheer. Indeed, the post-colonial relationship between Portuguese-born and Portuguese-Guinean subjects – or ‘white Portuguese’ and ‘black Portuguese’, as my interlocutors used to say – appears reconfigured in the diasporic setting, where both groups have comparable social positions, needs, rights and legal status. Of course, the ‘production of locality’ (Appadurai, 1996) in such a ‘super-diverse’ context (Vertovec, 2007) is by no means an easy task. Actually, my interlocutors often complained about the excess of envy and selfishness among migrants coming from Portugal. For instance, previous attempts to establish Portuguese and Guinean self-help associations failed, due to fights and differences between members. So far, the most successful initiative has been a Portuguese festival, which has taken place in Peterborough every summer since 2014 to commemorate Portuguese Day. In the words of its founder, Paulo Batista, the idea was to ‘bring together the Portuguese community’, in order ‘to create conviviality’ and ‘have a little bit of Portuguese traditions to show outside’. However, he admitted, the festival ‘hasn’t changed anything on a daily basis’. In this case, the Portuguese-speaking community appears less an actual reality than a symbolic construction and a political project (Cohen, 1985; Baumann, 1996; Mapril, 2014), which is used to enhance unity and cohesion among migrants who share a link to Portugal, either by birth or through naturalisation.

Notwithstanding the centrality of the Portuguese language in this context, it is necessary to clarify the notion of Lusophony. Many scholars have disclosed the ambivalences in this concept, which is not only a linguistic common ground for people living around the Atlantic Ocean but also the historical legacy of Portuguese colonial rule (Sarró & Blanes, 2009; see also Almeida, 2002). First, whilst Portuguese was adopted as the official language in many African countries, including Guinea-Bissau, it is actually only spoken by a narrow minority of people there. Second, Lusophony has been criticised as ‘a neo-imperialist ideology’ (Cahen & Dos Santos, 2018, 199) that considers language as a ‘Portuguese gift’ (Almeida, 2002, 198) while concealing the inherent violence of Portuguese dominion. In order to avoid the pitfalls of this notion, several scholars have adopted the word ‘lusotopy’; suggesting a condensation of space and time, this term refers to ‘contemporary spaces stemming from Portuguese history and colonization [...] on the four continents and in numerous diasporas’ (Cahen & Dos Santos, 2018, 192). As João Pina Cabral (2014, 13) has observed, despite the association of the Portuguese culture and language with memories of colonialism, ‘it is often the very historicity of the reified lusotopy that gives rise to a localised sense of community’ in specific sites. I argue that Peterborough is one such place. By establishing bonds of solidarity in the workplace and participating in the performance of an enlarged national identity in Portuguese cafés, restaurants and shops, Portuguese-Guineans are creating a lusotopic environment.

11.6 Conclusion

Moving beyond the duality of ‘home’ and ‘host’ country, an emerging literature has shown how migrant trajectories can be more complex and fragmented than a one-way movement from an origin to a destination, encompassing as it does multiple countries and localities over time. This outlook presupposes a diachronic perspective, entailing a special attention to time as a key element in the analysis of human mobility (King & Della Puppa, 2021). The focus on time has led several authors to include longitudinal data in their studies, adopting a wide timeframe and following the stepwise journeys of their interlocutors (Toma & Castagnone, 2015; Della Puppa, 2018; Ramos, 2018). Students of onward migration have paid special attention to time-related issues, such as the role of life-course junctures in secondary migrations (Ramos, 2018) and the impact of different local labour regimes on the temporalities of migrants’ daily lives (King & Della Puppa, 2021). Furthermore, these works contribute to a broader understanding of transnationalism, showing how migrants can maintain connections across more than two countries (Ahrens et al., 2016). Finally, they enrich the analysis of transnational subjectivities, bringing to light the effects of particular ways of moving on migrants’ sense of self (Ossman, 2013).

In dialogue with this growing literature, in this chapter I have explored how onward migration produces specific kinds of transnational subjectivity, by examining the personal experiences of some Portuguese-Guinean migrants who moved onwards from Portugal to the UK. Particularly, I showed how their movement provides them with multiple identifications in terms of nationality, language, race, leisure and food, creating new challenges as well as new tastes and skills. My interlocutors’ experiences of self-constitution can be understood within ‘a non-unitary theory of the subject’ (Moore, 2007, 41), insofar as they took up different, often mutually contradictory, subject positions at various times, referring to multiple social and cultural contexts in an open-ended process of subjectification. Rather than conceiving their individual and collective identities as fixed, they performed their identifications according to given circumstances and different interlocutors. They played with the ‘lightweight sense of identity’ of lusotopy (Cahen & Dos Santos, 2018, 193) in a contextual way, as a means to produce locality (Appadurai, 1996) in a diasporic and post-colonial space. On the one hand, my interlocutors expressed their enduring attachment to Portugal with sentences like ‘Portugal is ours’ or ‘Portugal is our second home’. On the other, they stressed a stronger love for their place of origin, regardless of their legal status as Portuguese citizens. After all, as Mamadu put it, ‘I’m not a cynic, I don’t say I’m Portuguese just because it suits me. This is not about documents, it’s about my heart. And I know my heart is African’.

Acknowledgments I would like to thank the Portuguese Science Foundation (FCT), which funded this article under the strategic plan of the Centre for Research in Anthropology (CRIA) (UID/ANT/04038/2013). I also wish to express my gratitude to all my interlocutors, to my friend Uilwsagne Da Costa, to the anonymous reviewers, to Dr. Francesco Vacchiano, as well as to the participants in the panel ‘Onward migration and multi-sited transnationalism: complex trajectories, practices and ties’ (17th IMISCOE Annual Conference, 2020).

References

- Abranches, M. (2013). When people stay and things make their way: Airports, mobilities and materialities of a transnational landscape. *Mobilities*, 8(4), 506–527.
- Abranches, M. (2014). Remitting wealth, reciprocating health? The ‘travel’ of the land from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal. *American Ethnologist*, 41(2), 261–275.
- Ahrens, J., Kelly, M., & van Liempt, I. (2016). Free movement? The onward migration of EU citizens born in Somalia, Iran, and Nigeria. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(1), 84–98.
- Almeida, M. V. (2002). ‘Longing for oneself’: Hybridism and miscegenation in colonial and post-colonial Portugal. *Etnográfica*, 6(1), 181–200.
- Almeida, J. C., & Corkill, D. (2010). Portuguese migrant workers in the UK: A case study of Thetford, Norfolk. *Portuguese Studies*, 26(1), 27–40.
- Alves, A. R. (2019). ‘Para eles, nós não somos humanos!’: Habitação, território e a monitorização de violências racializadas em Portugal. *Revista Direito e Práxis*, 10(3), 2068–2096.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Baumann, G. (1996). *Contesting culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*. Cambridge University Press.
- Beswick, J., & Dinneen, M. (2010). Introduction: The Portuguese-speaking diaspora in Great Britain and Ireland. *Portuguese Studies*, 26(1), 5–9.
- Beswick, J., & Pozo-Gutiérrez, A. (2010). Migrant identities, sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices: Portuguese and Spanish migrations to the south coast of England. *Portuguese Studies*, 26(1), 41–59.
- Bhachu, P. (1985). *Twice migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain*. Tavistock Publications.
- Bhattacharyya, G. (2018). *Rethinking racial capitalism: Questions of reproduction and survival*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cahen, M., & Dos Santos, I. (2018). Lusotopie, lusotopy. What legacy, what future? *Lusotopie*, 17(2), 187–203.
- Cohen, A. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*. Routledge.
- Collyer, M., & de Haas, H. (2012). Developing dynamic categorisations of transit migration. *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), 468–481.
- Della Puppa, F. (2018). Ambivalent mobilities and survival strategies of Moroccan and Bangladeshi families in Italy in times of crisis. *Sociology*, 52(3), 464–479.
- Della Puppa, F., & Sredanovic, D. (2016). Citizen to stay or citizen to go? Naturalization, security, and mobility of migrants in Italy. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 15(4), 366–383.
- EU EOM. (2014). *Guinea Bissau: Final report. Presidential and legislative elections 13 April 2014*. EU Election Observation Mission.
- Foucault, M. (1985). Sexuality and solitude. In M. Blonsky (Ed.), *On signs: A semiotic reader* (pp. 365–372). Basil Blackwell.
- Friedman, J. (2002). From roots to routes: Tropes for trippers. *Anthropological Theory*, 2(1), 21–36.
- Gorjão Henriques, J. (2018). *Racismo no país dos brancos costumes*. Edições Tinta da China.
- Healy, C. (2011). *Cidadania portuguesa: A nova lei da nacionalidade de 2006*. Observatório da Imigração, ACIDI, IP.
- Kaufmann, V., Bergman, M. M., & Joye, D. (2004). Motility: Mobility as capital. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(4), 745–756.
- King, R., & Della Puppa, F. (2021). Times of work and social life: Bangladeshi migrants in north-east Italy and London. *International Migration Review*, 55(2), 402–430.
- Knörr, J., & Trajano-Filho, W. (Eds.). (2010). *The powerful presence of the past: Integration and conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast*. Brill.
- Lafleur, J. M., & Stanek, M. (Eds.). (2017). *South–north migration of EU citizens in times of crisis*. Springer Open.
- Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039.

- Lima, A. P. (2016). Care as a factor for sustainability in situations of crisis: Portugal between the welfare state and interpersonal relationships. *Cadernos Pagu*, 46, 79–105.
- Lowe, L. (2015). *The intimacies of four continents*. Duke University Press.
- Lulle, A., King, R., Dvorakova, V., & Szkudlarek, A. (2019). Between disruptions and connections: ‘New’ European Union migrants in the United Kingdom before and after the Brexit. *Population, Space and Place*, 25(1), e2200.
- Machado, F. L. (2002). *Contrastes e continuidades: Migração, etnicidade e integração dos guineenses em Portugal*. Celta Editora.
- Mapril, J. (2014). A shahid minar in Lisbon: Long-distance nationalism, politics of memory and community among Luso-Bangladeshis. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 9, 1–20.
- Mapril, J. (2019). Waiting for a future in Lisbon: Borders, migrations and biographies. *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*, 5(4), 324–338.
- Marques, J. C., & Góis, P. (2012). A evolução do sistema migratório lusófono. Uma análise a partir da imigração e emigração portuguesa. *Revista Internacional em Língua Portuguesa*, 24, 213–232.
- Marques, J. C., & Góis, P. (2017). Structural emigration: The revival of Portuguese outflows. In J.-M. Lafleur & M. Stanek (Eds.), *South-north migration of EU citizens in times of crisis* (pp. 65–68). Springer.
- Mas Giralt, R. (2016). Onward migration as a coping strategy? Latin Americans moving from Spain to the UK post-2008. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(3), e2017.
- McCarthy, H. N. (2020). Onward migration of Latin American families: Negotiating citizenship and mobility in times of crisis. *International Migration*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12763>
- McGarrigle, J., & Ascensão, E. (2018). Emplaced mobilities: Lisbon as a translocality in the migration journeys of Punjabi Sikhs to Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(5), 809–828.
- McIlwaine, C., & Bunge, D. (2019). Onward precarity, mobility, and migration among Latin Americans in London. *Antipode*, 51(2), 601–619.
- Montagna, N., Della Puppa, F., & Kofman, E. (2021). Onward migration: An introduction. *International Migration*, 59(6), 8–15.
- Moore, H. (2007). *The subject of anthropology: Gender, symbolism and psychoanalysis*. Polity Press.
- Nafafé, J. L. (2016). The Guinean diaspora after 1998. In P. Chabal & T. Green (Eds.), *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-state to ‘narco-state’*. Hurst.
- Nonini, D. M., & Ong, A. (1997). Chinese transnationalism as an alternative modernity. In A. Ong & D. Nonini (Eds.), *Ungrounded empires: The cultural politics of modern Chinese transnationalism* (pp. 3–33). Routledge.
- Observatório da Emigração. (2019). *Portuguese emigration factbook 2018*. Observatório da Emigração, CIES-IUL, ISCTE-IUL.
- Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory*. Duke University Press.
- Ossman, S. (2004). Studies in serial migration. *International Migration*, 42(4), 111–121.
- Ossman, S. (2013). *Moving matters: Paths of serial migration*. Stanford University Press.
- Paul, A. M. (2011). Stepwise international migration: A multistage migration pattern for the aspiring migrant. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(6), 1842–1886.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2020). Studying multinational migrations: Speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 3–17.
- Pereira, C., & Azevedo, J. (Eds.). (2019). *New and old routes of Portuguese emigration: Uncertain futures at the periphery of Europe*. Springer Nature.
- Pina Cabral, J. (2013). The two faces of mutuality: Contemporary themes in anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 86(1), 257–275.
- Pina Cabral, J. (2014). Lusotopy as ecumene. In T. Hylland Eriksen, C. Garsten, & S. Randeria (Eds.), *Anthropology now and next: Essays in honor of Ulf Hannerz* (pp. 241–263). Berghahn.

- Quintino, M. C. R. (2004). *Migrações e etnicidade em terrenos portugueses: Guineenses—estratégias de invenção de uma comunidade*. Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas.
- Ramos, C. (2018). Onward migration from Spain to London in times of crisis: The importance of life-course junctures in secondary migrations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(11), 1841–1857.
- Raposo, O., Alves, A. R., Varela, P., & Roldão, C. (2019). Negro drama. Racismo, segregação e violência policial nas periferias de Lisboa. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 119, 5–28.
- Robinson, C. J. (1983). *Black marxism: The making of the black radical tradition*. Zed.
- Rogaly, B. (2020). *Stories from a migrant city: Living and working together in the shadow of Brexit*. Manchester University Press.
- Saraiva, C. (2008). Transnational migrants and transnational spirits: An African religion in Lisbon. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(2), 253–269.
- Sarró, R., & Blanes, R. L. (2009). Prophetic diasporas moving religion across the lusophone Atlantic. *African Diaspora*, 2(1), 52–72.
- Schapendonk, J. (2010). Staying put in moving sands: The stepwise migration process of sub-Saharan African migrants heading north. In U. Engel & P. Nugent (Eds.), *Respacing Africa* (pp. 113–138). Brill.
- Sobral, J. M., & Rodrigues, P. (2013). O ‘fiel amigo’: O bacalhau e a identidade portuguesa. *Etnográfica*, 17(3), 619–649.
- Sredanovic, D. (2020). Brexit as a trigger and an obstacle to onwards and return migration. *International Migration*, 59(6), 93–108.
- Toma, S., & Castagnone, E. (2015). What drives onward mobility within Europe? The case of Senegalese migration between France, Italy and Spain. *Population-E*, 70(1), 65–96.
- Vala, J., Brito, R., & Lopes, D. (1999). *Expressões do racismo em Portugal*. Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054.
- Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Routledge.
- Werbner, P. (1999). Global pathways. Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds. *Social Anthropology*, 7(1), 17–35.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

