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Young people's articulations and geographies of diasporic politics: Perspectives from the Greek, Jewish and Palestinian diasporas

Elizabeth Mavroudi

Loughborough University, United Kingdom

A B S T R A C T

This paper examines the geographies of how young people, aged 11–25, in the Greek, Jewish and Palestinian diasporas in the Midlands region of England articulate notions of formal and informal politics. In doing so, it connects work on diasporic politics with work on the geographies of diaspora, young people's politics, and, in particular, diasporic youth politics. The paper discusses how young people have views on politics and on being political but feel that they struggle to have their voices heard by those in positions of power. At the same time, it paints a picture of how these participants articulate such feelings of politics in complex, multi-scalar, multi-directional ways. In doing so, they are potentially creating new spaces to feel and be political. The paper therefore stresses that it is important that diasporic politics takes into account the views of young people and that assumptions should not be made as to where such politics are located.

1. Introduction

Research[1] is increasingly focusing on the importance of recognising the voices, politics, experiences and actions of young people in their everyday lives and whether they feel empowered, listened to or marginalised and ignored (Elwood & Mitchell, 2012; Holloway et al., 2019; Kallio et al. 2016; Ní Laoire et al., 2010; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2010). Young people thus can be seen as political actors (Silva Dias & Menezes, 2014; Skelton, 2010) not just from a micro-spatial, local perspective but also from a macro-spatial global one which views young people as active and important members of societies, citizenship and democracies (Blazek & Kraftl, 2015). This stresses the need to explore and better understand how politics forms part of young people's everyday lives (Holloway et al., 2019) and to examine what it means to them in terms of imagining and realising positive changes for the better in terms of their own lives, those of their peers and wider communities. Above all, it necessitates exploring and accepting young people's conceptualisations of the political (O'Toole, 2003) as well as the need for nuanced understandings of what constitutes youth politics, which move beyond narrow conceptualisations of the political and where politics is located.[2]

Children and young people are interested in global issues and geopolitics (Benwell & Hopkins, 2016; Hörschelmann, 2008; Hörschelmann and Refaie, 2014; Woon, 2017), and are politicised and

engage in nationhood (Colombo & Rebughini, 2019; Habashi, 2008). They are actively, rather than passively, involved in their migration journeys and it is important to examine their specific experiences, performances and perceptions (Assmuth et al., 2018; Gardner, 2012; Tyrrell et al., 2013). However, there is a need for more research on transnational and diasporic migrant children and their perceptions of politics, especially in relation to them as political beings (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013a) and from a geographical perspective in particular.

This paper therefore adds to such literature through its exploration of the ways in which young people aged 11–25 in the Greek, Jewish and Palestinian diasporas in the Midlands region of England, UK[3] articulate notions of politics, political change and what these mean to them in relation to complex, multiple and interconnected spaces and scales. This paper makes a contribution in three key related areas: the first is in relation to work on young people with a diasporic and transnational migration background whose views (and particularly those under the age of 18) on politics are often hidden. The second is in relation to the geographies of diaspora and the political activities of young people in diaspora, from a geographical perspective. The third is in the field of diasporic politics which I argue can be strengthened from using perspectives on young people's politics. It is through such a focus that the paper also adds to the literature on the geographies of diaspora: because of the reality that these young people in diaspora are being political in

[2] In this paper, politics is used in a broad and inclusive way to mean both formal and informal politics, as imagined and practiced in everyday lives and embedded within aspects such as friendships, school, community, and religion which diasporic youth see as relevant to their lives.

[3] This paper deliberately uses the term young people to include those under and over the age of 18 as an encompassing and inclusive term.

geographically complex ways.

The paper will first outline relevant literatures before discussing the methods and context. The empirical section is divided into two: perceptions of politics; and views on the potential for political change with both sections focusing on multiple scales and spaces.

2. Young people, diaspora and politics: a geographical approach

There has been an increasing amount of research on young people with a migrant background and their identities (see e.g. Adams, 2009; Clini et al., 2021; Dwyer, 1999; Erdal & Strømsø, 2018; Fathi and Ní Laoire, 2021; Moskal, 2015; Reynolds & Zontini, 2016; Tyrrell et al., 2013; Zeitlyn & Mand, 2012). There has also been work on issues of inclusion in particular (Faas, 2016; Åkerblom & Harju, 2021) and on the everyday politics of migrant and refugee children in the context of home-making (Archambault, 2012; McDonnell, 2021). However, there has been less specifically on their politics, political identities and political aspirations. An exception can be seen in the work of those who focus on refugee youth who stress both the desperate situation but also the potential hope and agency that participants can have (Bloch et al., 2011; Chatty, 2009; Evans, 2020; Kallio et al. 2021; Karlsson, 2019; Kayaalp, 2020; Lems, 2020).

In relation to such potential political agency and from a geographical perspective, Elwood and Mitchell (2012) discuss what they call 'sites of politics': " [this] allows us to recognize children as political even in circumstances in which they are not free to confront, act, or intervene. This is important as it recognises that being political is an active process". This is linked also to Wood's (2012) discussion of liminal spaces of politics in the context of children's political geographies. For Wood, liminality stresses how young people are positioned in-between formal and informal politics in 'spaces of uncertainty' (338) in 'less seen political geographies' (345) which are important to explore because this generation needs to be listened to in 'societies committed to social justice' (Wood 2012). The concept of liminality also allows us to view and analyse young people's politics in a way which connects young people to formal politics and to wider geopolitical, social and environmental justice issues. Additionally, such an appreciation of young people's informal politics stresses that they can be active without formal participation through, for example, knowledge of, and concern about, political and broader issues (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, p. 97e98, cited in Hörschelmann, 2008, p. 590). In similar ways, work on young refugees and politics stresses how they are often acutely aware of injustice and rights that they often do not feel they have (Karlsson, 2019). Such work focuses on young people' everyday politics as ways they can potentially counter and negotiate structural inequalities, injustices and power relations. However, articulations of everyday politics are multi-scalar and connected to multiple spaces and scales within local, national and international contexts.

Therefore, it is important to note that work on the politics of young people with a diasporic background and with complex identities and cross border (dis)connections is also increasing, but more is needed, especially in relation to them as political beings (although see Bak & von Brömssen, 2010; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013b; Garbin & Godin, 2013; Baser, 2015; Michail & Christou, 2016; Blachnicka-Ciacek, 2018; Akom Ankobrey et al., 2022). There is a need to further explore how or whether young people might resist or subvert parental, peer and formal, elite narratives of nation, belonging and politics and how they are using new ways to connect with one another and their homelands (Leurs, 2015; Müller-Funk, 2019). This is especially the case in relation to research on diasporic politics with under 18 year olds; it is important not to view them as 'nonpolitical' (Faria, 2014) because they lack access to formal, public political spaces. However, this is specifically why it is important to speak to them: because they are often hidden in research on diasporic politics.

Work has also stressed that diasporic youth (although this is often over 18 year olds) frame politics in broader terms than older generations rather than solely homeland issues (as Toivanen also discusses in relation to work on youth in diaspora in Toivanen & Baser Ozturk, 2020; see also Blachnika-Ciacek, 2018 and Salih et al., 2020). For example, Mansour and Sabry (2017) in their work on Arab diasporic children in London which focuses on media and the politics of belonging, stress how the children they spoke to performed their identities in relation to their often limited knowledge of parental homelands. Other work on diaspora also stresses the differences and potential tensions between different generations in terms of identities, memories and politics (Garbin & Godin, 2013; Cook & Waite, 2016; Doornbos & Dragojlovic, 2022; Kallis et al., 2022). Therefore, we cannot make assumptions about the role and practices of diasporic youth, especially in relation to politics. This is also because diasporas and migrant groups and their lives and identities are complex and there is a need to define them in more inclusive, flexible ways (Morawska, 2011; Christou & Mavroudi, 2015; Mavroudi, 2020) as well as trace and unravel the (dis)connections, boundary deconstructions and dynamic transformations of diaspora space (Ashutosh, 2020).

The work of Dar (2018) on children's politics from a transnational migrant and diasporic perspective is useful to consider as it helps to re-imagine what we mean by politics for young people with such cross-border, multi-scalar backgrounds who are constantly and dynamically negotiating Othering, difference, in/exclusion, racism, and prejudice. Accordingly, although there is an important need to recognize diasporic young people's voices, agency and perspectives, these cannot be separated from their everyday lives, histories, contexts and the wider power relations which continue to shape their lives and their politics (Nayak, 2017). They are grounded, situated, enabled and constrained in very particular ways as a result of this migrant, diasporic background and this means they are positioned differently to 'mainstream' youth without a migrant or ethnic minority background (Hosseini, 2013). Such border crossings and transitions (between contexts and in relation to age and other intersectionalities) serve to further complicate diasporic and migrant youth lives, identities and hybridities (Evans, 2020). For others, the creation of safe liminal spaces in which to perform elements in their lives that have been silenced but also to explore the sometimes challenging tensions between different identities are potentially helpful (Gembus, 2018). Such complex juxtapositions of identity and politics stresses how the two are often related in the lives and everyday practices of young people with a migrant and diasporic background. This is because they are continuously engaged in the politics of (self)representation, narration, articulation and performance of who they are, where and how they belong and how and to what extent they feel in/excluded. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that research stresses the continuing appeal of the national, ethnicity and religious markers (Waite & Cook, 2012; Valentine & Sporton, 2009) for young migrants, refugees and those in diaspora even as they negotiate them in complex and potentially hybrid, translocal, transnational and plural ways. Such work on in-between identities is relevant to politics because it stresses how youth migrant and diasporic politics also needs to be viewed potentially as a complex mixture of intersectionalities, spaces and scales.[4] Work by Terriquez and Milkman (2021), Blachnicka-Ciacek (2018), Salih et al. (2020), Wood and Homolja (2021) for example stresses how young people in diaspora from similar and different backgrounds can come together and express solidarities using shared global concerns such as Black Lives Matter and human rights discourses. Liminality (Wood, 2012) and in-betweenness can therefore also be relevant for young people in diaspora because they are not only experiencing this liminality between P/politics but also between different cross-border scales, spaces and times.

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[4] However, it should be noted that diasporic youth identity of the young people in this research project is not the main focus of this paper and is discussed elsewhere (Mavroudi and Silva Huxter 2022).

3. Context and methods

This research builds on prior research with young people in the Greek, Jewish and Palestinian diasporas in a UK context, which has often focused on issues such as identity, language, education and generational differences. In relation to the Greek Cypriot diaspora, work has focused on language and identity negotiations (Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2001; Georgakopoulou & Finnis, 2009 as well as identity and religion across generations (Kallis et al., 2022). However, there has been much less work on young people from a non Cypriot Greek background, particularly under 18 year olds so there is very little research to discuss (although see Mavroudi & Silva Huxter, 2022). More recent work on adults has focused on recent Greek migration to the UK as a result of the post 2008 economic and political crisis in Greece (Chalari & Koutantou, 2020; Labrianidis, 2014; Pratsinakis et al., 2020) as well as on the ways the Greek diaspora is creating new online spaces (Georgalou, 2021).

In terms of the Jewish diaspora, work on young people has focused on tensions within ideas and realities of Jewishness (Abramson, 2011; Mills, 2015; Samson, 2018) as well as the challenges around faith-based schooling, the construction and negotiation of boundaries around what are diverse Jewish identities (Valins, 2003). Finally, Samson et al. (2018) stress the need to listen to personal and meaningful Jewish identities which are increasingly complex and diverse. However, there seems to be much less research on young diasporic Jewish perceptions and practices of politics.

In terms of young people in the Palestinian diaspora in a UK context, Blachnicka-Ciacek's (2018) work outlines how second generation Palestinians negotiate Palestinian 'long-distance post-nationalism' beyond adherence to roots in ways that frame the Palestinian cause with broader social and political human rights and justice movements. Similarly, Salih et al. (2020) show how the Palestinian Youth Movement also practices a form of diasporic activism which encompasses intersectional identities and conceives of Palestine as part of wider, global struggles against colonialism. Gabiam and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2017) also highlight how Palestinians in diaspora negotiate their cause in relation to wider Arab uprisings. Hence, Palestinian diasporic politics can be seen as part of their ongoing articulation and juxtaposition of national and global identities and politics.

The research this paper is based on did not aim to conduct a comparative analysis but rather views the three diasporic groups side by side as a way to explore differences and similarities between them. A qualitative approach which aimed to enable open-ended and flexible discussions was deemed most appropriate (Hopkins et al., 2018) and interviews were chosen to enable young people to freely speak their mind. The East, North and West Midlands of England was the primary location for the research, although a small number of interviews did also take place in London where opportunities arose. The Midlands were chosen for logistical and pragmatic reasons; as a part time academic with caring responsibilities and without substantial research assistance support, such matters were important for me to consider. These locations also ensured a non-London focus as a means to explore diasporic groups beyond a capital city. This was done to help appraise the connections and disconnections that young people had with others in diaspora and beyond across multiple scales which are often more hidden in non global city and capital city locations.

Boddy (2014, p. 101) stresses the "need to 'get muddy' – to make ethics tensions, and ethnocentric assumptions, explicit throughout every stage and aspect of the research process" in research with young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This challenging but important issue of 'ethical reflexivity' (e.g. in the case of research with young refugees - see Block et al., 2013) is one that we (myself and my research assistant) were acutely aware of as we both have migrant backgrounds and cross-border connections to elsewhere. It was therefore very important for the researchers to be transparent, explicit and honest about their own backgrounds and children and young people were often interested in our migration stories. For me, an additional link with one of the diasporic groups meant that an insider/outsider relationship also had to be negotiated and this often involved more lengthy discussions around issues to do with background, language and the homeland; it also meant that there was sometimes greater rapport between the participants and the researcher. I also had prior research experience with all 3 diasporic groups. So for all three groups, I had some prior knowledge and understanding of potential issues, sensitivities, ethical concerns and tensions within the diasporic group and their homelands. This also helps explain why these three groups were chosen over others: on the one hand, there is a lack of research on young people in these diasporas in a UK context and on the other, I perceived that my prior research with these groups was advantageous and helpful.

In-depth interviews lasting between 40 and 60 min were conducted with 42 young people aged between 11 and 25; 16 were Greek; 14 were Jewish and 12 were Palestinian. 38 were aged between 11 and 18 and 4 between 18 and 25. Initially 26 gatekeepers were approached and interviewed (8 Jewish, 8 Palestinian and 10 Greek); these comprised leaders and members of diaspora-related religious institutions, schools and organisations. Some parents were also interviewed; of these some were the parents of children that we also interviewed but not all.

The sampling strategy was opportunistic; the intention was to try and locate as varied and as wide a cross section as possible in order to get a range of voices, perspectives and backgrounds. This is why there is such a broad age range - to increase the number of potential participants. At the outset, the age range was 11–18 but this was extended to 25 during the research when it initially seemed that we might struggle to recruit younger children. Such issues around access and trust are to be expected in such research with diasporic under 18 years olds (Mansour & Sabry, 2017). Children whose parents (or at least 1 parent) were Greek, Palestinian or Jewish were also included in this research.

The research underwent a rigorous ethical process of approval and all young people were provided with a participant information sheet, child assent form and were interviewed with the informed consent of one parent. Young people were located via their parents or directly via gatekeepers. Interviews took place in a variety of settings as chosen by the young people and their parents: these included homes, supplementary schools, and religious spaces. In some cases, and especially with younger children, one or both parents were present in the room either listening directly or doing another activity close by. This was unavoidable in certain situations and it was important to build trust with parents and young people; therefore, if they wished to be interviewed in this way we agreed to it. Finally, it should be noted that young people were not explicitly asked what gender they identified with; I was told what their gender identities were by their parents in the process of setting up the interviews.

4. Perceptions of politics and being political

The first part of the empirical section will focus on children and young people's perceptions of politics and of being political at multiple, cross-cutting, everyday scales. I would like to start this section with some views on politics as being broad and expansive and as part of everyday life:

> I think it's just the way that everybody lives their life and the way that people decide on how their lives should be lived. Because obviously you know lots of places are democratic, and so we get to vote and say, oh yeah, we want our country, we want it to be run this way. Sometimes that doesn't happen because sometimes people,

politicians lie, but like … I just feel like it's the way that … politics, I feel it's the way that everyone kind of makes decisions about their lives. (Oren, 17 year old male, East Midlands, Jewish diaspora, second generation[5])

Here, we see very clearly that Oren views politics and being political in formal and informal ways together; he doesn't clearly differentiate between the two. Thus formal and informal, local and global are intermeshed as he articulates his main association with politics: as a decision-making process which is part of people's everyday lives, in which politicians have an often negative role to play. Adil echoes Oren's views of politics as expansive and broad and although he agrees that it is part of everyday lives and conversations, he is more positive about the process of politics as a means to create positive change:

So politics, I think that politics is something that is in everything. You know, I think that everyone experiences politics and everyone loves politics, they might not know it, in that everyone loves gossip, everyone loves drama, everyone loves talking, drama and gossip, that's, I think that's a form of politics in everyday life, you know, conversations, that's politics, and I do think that although politics does have a kind of image of people in suits sitting at Parliament talking about topics that might not be, you know just politics might seem like something that's inaccessible, I do think that when you boil it down, politics is something that's, you know it's … if you look at it as an action you know to be politically active, is that you know you enjoy having conversations and enjoy you know talking about ways in which you can improve the world around you. (Adil, 17 year old male, West Midlands, Palestinian diaspora, second generation)

He goes on to stress that

just because I'm Palestinian doesn't mean that you know I am inclined to fight for Palestinian rights. whatever, what's happening there is unjust and I do feel passionate about helping people within unjust systems that do require help. So it, as much as it is an obligation, it's also a passion and an interest and a love for help … for helping other people.

Here he seems to be framing politics in a broader context in terms of a struggle for justice across borders and for all people, not just Palestinians; this is in line with research by Blachnika-Ciacek (2018) and Salih et al. (2020) who also notice such a trend for young Palestinians to do this.

Amira also echoed an understanding of politics that was formal but at the same time, she strongly associated this with decision-making and on the use of politics as a means to change lives for the better. Here, she associates politics with the national UK scale but later on in her interview, she is also acutely aware of the need for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Politics … Like it includes with the Parliament, includes with the Queen, includes with the Prime Minister … and it … and there's going to be votes and there's different things that are going to go on, that they have to decide on whether to do or whether not to do, like opinions and stuff that can change lives. That's what I understand.

It's just horrendous, like children my age and younger, my sister's age and that, they get treated horrendously. Like you're not supposed to kill a child younger, and like they've done nothing, they haven't hurt you nor … done anything bad, they've had their right to get to … have an education, they have their right to go home safely,

they have their right to stay with their family. … like the rights we have here for children, like we're learning them in school, that we have the right to have an education, we have the right to … have the right not to work or anything, it's just like there, like it doesn't count for them, it's just … they … whatever happened, they're gone, or they're injured. And it's not fair because like I'm living here happily, I'm getting my education, I'm eating, I have a TV, I have a house, I have everything I need, but then there, they don't know when their house might get bombed, they don't know if they're going to die. It's just horrendous.

(Amira, 11 year old female, East Midlands, Palestinian diaspora, second generation)

Amira clearly connects her life in the East Midlands with the lives of children in Palestine; this national and global sense of the need for justice is also linked to specific contexts where she feels that there is acute injustice and which she connects in embodied ways to her own existence. She is negotiating difference and stressing the need for justice within and across borders and this can be seen as politics. The same can be seen in Naomi's views as she relates her own life to the lives of other young people who are in a less privileged position:

I'm in a very safe environment, so there's nice people instead of like nasty people who could hurt you or like … like I'm protected by like my house and my family (Naomi, 12 year old female, Jewish diaspora, East Midlands, second generation)

For Amira, Naomi and Adil, their politics is both felt and articulated at multiple scales and spaces but also firmly located in everyday lives, in emotional and material ways. Thus, one can see their political identities as being very much influenced by their migrant and diasporic positionings (Hosseini, 2013).

In similar ways and based on a mixture of national, European and homeland contexts, Aris displayed some confident views on politics and politicians as we can see in the extract below, in which his mother was also listening in:

Do you have an opinion on Theresa May[6] at all?

I think she's better than Tsipras but … I don't know, I

hope they get them both out as quick as possible, so we

can get Grexit too.

My God! (Aris's mother)

So what don't you like about Tsipras?

Nothing really!

 (Aris, 11 year old male, West Midlands, Greek diaspora, second generation)

This comparison of different national contexts also came out very clearly in my conversation with Mahmoud:

OK, what do you know about the politics in this country? I mean do you …

It's not like Syria.

It's not like Syria

There is the justice here.

Mm mm.

It's not like in Syria, some … one person can make war.

(Mahmoud, 11 year old male, West Midlands, Palestinian diaspora,

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[5] For the Jewish diaspora, it was sometimes hard to get a sense of which generation exactly the young people belonged to because it is a very old diaspora. Generation in this sense denotes when their immediate family came to the UK so if their parents moved to the UK from elsewhere then I deemed them to be second generation in the context of their lives in the UK.

[6] At the time of research Theresa May was the Prime Minister of the UK and Alexis Tsipras was Prime Minister of Greece.

first generation).

Mahmoud, who is Palestinian and whose family have refugee status but was born and raised in Syria before moving to the UK a few years before the interview took place, succinctly and powerfully articulated the value and importance of politics for human freedom from conflict and conversely, the role it can play in creating war. Young participants were aware of conflicts and crises globally, but also in areas where they felt they had connections to. So, young people in the Jewish and Palestinian diasporas mentioned the Palestinian territories and Israel and young people in the Greek diaspora mentioned the economic and political crisis in Greece (Mavroudi, 2022). However, there was some ambivalence, particularly by young people in the Jewish diaspora around the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in the Holy Land and this was potentially related to ambiguous perceptions of Israel as a homeland for them (I discuss this in another paper-Mavroudi & Silva Huxter, 2022):

> Well there's just been a lot of like fighting between them on who deserves to have what area and stuff. And a lot of … I don't follow it massively but … I mean I was actually in the country at the time of some of the big like riots or something, we weren't in the … that part of the country, but I was in the country at the time it was … But yeah, I don't follow like a lot of the stuff in Israel, but if there's a big thing that happens then I'll probably find out about it. (Samuel, 12 year old male, Jewish diaspora, East Midlands, third generation).

The young people mentioned in this section display political selves and opinions through their engagement with the world around them, at cross-cutting scales and spaces. We get a clear sense that for them, politics is enacted and felt at multi-scalar, and in multi-directional ways as research on children's views on global politics also demonstrates (Hörschelmann and Refaie, 2014). As Furlong and Cartmel (1997: 97e98, cited in Hörschelmann, 2008, p. 590) outline, children and young people's politics need to be viewed through a broad lens which encompasses their daily lives and spaces. Their 'sites of politics' (Elwood & Mitchell, 2012) can be seen in their views and articulations of politics and on issues they feel passionate about, which are a product of both their diasporic backgrounds and lived experiences (Dar, 2012). However, one can also say that such views result in an inbetween-ness or liminality (Wood, 2012) as they actively negotiate these intertwining scales and spaces with seeming ease but also with potential discomfort. As a result, their 'sites of politics' are therefore potentially both emotionally empowering and disempowering for them as their diverse influences and interests juxtapose to make them feel passionate about issues they feel are important. However, and here we see similarities to work on youth refugee politics and feelings of hope and desperation (Kallio et al. 2021; Kayaalp, 2020, pp. 1–19; Lems, 2020), it also can make them aware of the power inequalities that continue to exist, and their own positionalities as young people with a limited voice and ability to create changes, as the next section explores.

5. Perceptions of political change and having a voice

It is clear, therefore, that young people with a diasporic background have political opinions, are interested in politics and are political in their own way. However, what was also very evident was that they didn't feel that their views and opinions were listened to by people in positions of power, like politicians. This is why research has stressed the need to take young people's political views into account (Skelton, 2010). Amal felt this very strongly and related it to her identity as Palestinian more specifically:

> When you open your voice too much, you will get caught and you will get … [they] will get rid of … So my voice is heard to an extent with my friends, my family ….But as in like publicly I wouldn't say certain things ….Yeah, because I'd feel I would be a target. (Amal, 21

year old female, Palestinian diaspora, East Midlands, first generation)

Throughout the interview it was clear that Amal doesn't feel safe publicly expressing her views in the UK context in which she lives because of the power that she feels Israel has and which extends globally and which could have an impact on her ability to enter Palestine because of Israeli control of Palestinian borders. So when Amal is thinking of her strong political opinions, even though she feels safe living in the UK, she does not feel comfortable always sharing those views publicly because of the global way in which power and control is enacted beyond borders. Therefore, her politics and her embodied sense of being 'here' in the UK is intricately interwoven with what is happening in Israel and the Palestine. She therefore feels empowered to an extent but also disempowered because of power relations abroad which she feels still affect her. In some ways, this is similar to work by Kallio et al. (2021) on refugee youth and 'radical hope' whereby agency and being political is hidden and is enacted in mundane ways. For Amal, this is because she wants to be politically active and have her voice heard but, at the same time, feels constrained within her everyday life and these negotiations and feelings of empowerment and disempowerment are positioned and affected by multi-scalar spaces of (dis)connection and power. Leurs (2015) makes a similar observation on feelings of empowerment and disempowerment in relation to Moroccan Dutch youth. The same can be said for Amira (and for many other young people we spoke to as well) who clearly feels connected to Palestine and wants to make a difference to the lives of young Palestinians there:

> So it's just that, I think everyone deserves … every child deserves to be heard or seen. Like in Palestine, children don't get to be heard or seen, their voice doesn't count. There, they don't get seen … …
>
> (Amira, 11 year old female, Palestinian diaspora, East Midlands, second generation)

For other young people, being heard relates to formal politics and the need, for example, to extend voting to younger age groups:

> I think that everybody should have their voice being heard. So every single vote should count. So even like younger ones need to vote … because when it's like a vote and my mum and dad have voted, I'm like, who did you vote, who did you vote?! (Aris, 11 year old male, West Midlands, Greek diaspora, second generation)

Here, Aris expresses his frustration that his political opinions do not 'count' more formally. Aris also hints at discussions with his parents about politics and this was true in other participant families where young people stressed how speaking about issues that were important to them paved the way for their own views on politics:

> mainly I found out because of my parents, because they're involved with lots of different things, and they talk about it a lot because they want us to know a lot about it, so we can engage with lots of events and everything. And that's how I think I've learnt about it mainly. (Amira, 11 year old female, Palestinian diaspora, East Midlands, second generation).

Oren has clearly thought about the value and need to include young people's opinions in decision-making and how young people need to be better enabled to be involved in such processes:

> I like when people know my opinion and the opinions of other people my age, because the opinion of everyone I feel matters equally. And you know up until recently, in the grand scheme of things, I feel like the general consensus was that the opinion of young people didn't matter as much as it should really.
>
> **And do you have kind of any ideas about you know how that could happen at all? Is it something you've thought about?**

I feel like that opportunity needs to be kind of … just help be created by the people that are in charge in general, because if one young person tries to say like, come on, everyone else that's my age, let's do something big, occasionally people might join in, but I feel like most of the time it would be like, what can we do, we're young. And I feel like if the people that do have the power to help us do help us, help like … do help us to have opportunities to make decisions and to have a voice heard, then … I feel like that's the way to do it right now. (Oren, 17 year old male, Jewish diaspora, East Midlands, second generation)

Agapi, who has one parent from Central Africa and one who is Greek, also explains what she thinks in relation to this, namely that it is a shame that those in positions of power do not make the time and effort to listen to the views of younger people:

I think yeah, definitely, they could do more, they could listen to the younger people and they could make a difference, a big difference, because they are in that position of power. (Agapi, 11 year old female, Greek diaspora, North Midlands, second generation).

Agapi then goes on to talk about issues she feels strongly about such as smoking in Greece and cars there not respecting zebra crossings. In this discussion, she also discusses more global environmental issues such climate change but also changes she wants to see in her local area like at school. This is reminiscent of research by Mansour and Sabry (2017) on diasporic Arab children in the sense that their participants were influenced by wider global cultural icons as well as more localised concerns. Similarly, Naomi discusses that it is important that young people's views should be listened to by relaying an article she read in The Week Junior on the Manchester Arena bombing by Sara Hussein, an 11 year old girl she found inspirational:

She [Sara Hussein] wrote about the 2017 bomb attack at the Manchester Arena, at the Ariana Grande concert, …I think that this is important because not many people listen to what young people have to say, but I think that things like this should be listened because like it could help make the world a better place.… because like not a lot of people like listen to younger people. [This is because] they think that we're like … we don't … not that we don't care but like that we don't really understand things, like about climate change, like people don't really listen to children because like they think they're just like silly kids who just like don't really care, but like some people do … She [Sara Hussein] said people might think that it's coming … people might think that because it's coming from an eleven year old I can't make a difference but we can because words are … powerful. (Naomi, 12 years old, Jewish diaspora, East Midlands, second plus generation)

Here, Naomi is stressing how young people should have a voice and be listened to because they have views which she feels are important and need to be heard. The fact that she is relaying and praising the views of an 11 year old Muslim girl who was talking about the need for tolerance and understanding in a diverse UK also belies the fact that Naomi's vision of politics is one where young people, no matter their religious, national or ethnic background, are important and that change can be instigated. This can happen through the powerful words and actions of young people who have grown up in diaspora and are able to spread messages of peace which span and encompass multiple religions, nations and contexts. This forms an important rationale for focusing on the views of diasporic young people: because their complex identities and 'transnational habitus' (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016) make them potentially more in tune to difference, in/exclusion and diversity (Hosseini, 2013).

However, such views of political change are also bound up in potential difficulties and ambivalences and are not always easy for young people to articulate. Thomas was raised in Greece and feels Greek. However, his family are originally from West Africa and moved to the UK a few years before the interview took place. During the interview Thomas tended to answer in short answers and didn't give much away in terms of his feelings or opinions until it came to a question on changes he would like to see. Here, he immediately said "bullying … change bullying". We had a short discussion on this and it transpired that he had sought help for this issue and that it was better now but it demonstrated how, for children and young people, politics and the need for change is intensely personal and related to their daily lives and experiences. However, the next thing he mentioned in terms of change was: "We should help … like low income countries. Like … making deals with them" (Thomas, 13 year old male, Greek diaspora, North Midlands, first generation). Here Thomas was directly relating politics with changes more globally and the unequal power relations between richer and poorer countries, which was also a comment perhaps on his own positionality. However, it is also a reminder that young migrants and those in diaspora are affected by geopolitical power inequalities (Nayak, 2017; Hosseini, 2013). For Dar (2018), it is only by explicitly examining these connections of diasporic young people and how they are positioned within them that we can get a sense and begin to explore and place their politics and identities. Through such glimpses of their grounded, multi-scalar positionality, spaces and perceptions of the world and communities in which they live and feel (dis)connected to, we begin to get a sense of their feelings around injustice and not having a political voice which is heard.

Other young people we spoke to, such as Daniel below, also inadvertently discussed the complexities of having their own views in relation to their parents who they understand have influenced them:

Because you've grown up thinking that … because when like it's still current times, you grow up, the parents are always right, or like adults have like more chance of being right than kids. And it's not always true I don't think. It's probably true most of the time but I don't think it's always true. (Daniel, 13 year old male, Jewish diaspora, East Midlands, third plus generation)

Daniel's views demonstrate the liminality that young people feel, as they negotiate their own views in relation to power relations within their own families; his own ambivalence also belies this tension between feeling that young people have important views but also bowing down to parental knowledge and opinions.

Evi's and other young participants' words are reminiscent of work which stresses the need to listen to young people's views and not to ignore or make assumptions about them (Chryssochoou & Barrett, 2017; O'Toole, 2003). Similarly, her words and others in this paper are a reminder that the views of young people in diaspora are often marginalised and ignored by adults and those in positions of power within diasporic and transnational communities but also more broadly within society because they are seen as 'nonpolitical' (Faria, 2014). Her words, and those of others we spoke to, also hint at the tensions of inter-generational diasporic politics as young people and younger generations carve out visions they feel are important to them which may be influenced by, but also subvert and disagree with, the views and memories of older generations such as their parents and grandparents (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013b; Michail & Christou, 2016; Wilmers & Chernobrov, 2019). As a result, young people can use new or different spaces of politics, such as online, to try and share their views (Leurs, 2015; Müller-Funk, 2019) and connect to one another but this is not without issues.

Earlier, Oren hinted at the need to better support children and young people in political decision-making. Other young participants did comment on some ways forward but acknowledged that there were still in/exclusions:

for me, I don't know, growing, as I've got older, I've found that there are on-line communities where like I felt sort of like made more included in the sense that like, OK, when I'm scrolling through Twitter and it's … somebody's like not written a post in Arabic,

they've written a post in like phonetic Arabic, so with like English like character set, and then I can like … that makes me feel like blooming amazing, right?! Because I'm like, I'm sort of I guess in on the joke and I understand what it says and … so … yeah, I guess maybe, yeah, I do feel excluded at some point, but that's like what I'm … that was like the norm and when I do maybe like find a joke or something that like I can understand, that then that moves it **…** it's more that like I feel more included (Khalid, 23 year old male, Palestinian diaspora, West Midlands, second generation)

It is clear from this example and others earlier that feelings of politics and being political are linked to feelings of in/exclusion which have been brought about because of the diasporic positionalities of young people. In turn, these feelings of belonging can influence how, why *and where* young people feel about and practice politics.

The virtual world is clearly a space where young people felt that there were options for engaging with politics and with issues they felt passionate about but this wasn't necessarily easy or straightforward to do, as Amira outlines below:

Yeah, because I don't know, like how do I do it? Like do I do it on You Tube, do I do it on what or whatever, or I don't know, do I have to start doing a community or whatever, I don't know. And it's just confusing for me because I would like to do it, like I think I can speak up and everything, and I'm confident enough to do it in front of everyone, I don't mind. But I don't really know how I would be able to do it, that's the problem (Amira, 11 year old female, Palestinian diaspora, East Midlands, second generation)

For those who are second generation plus, carving out political spaces of identity and politics which have the potential to be empowering is an option. They feel that they can use their in-betweenness to their advantage to push the agenda of issues they feel are important and it is because of their background and ability to merge and mix different contexts, spaces and spaces that they are potentially able to do this:

So what we end up with is something that is called strategic hybridity, which is basically when you move strategically between both parts of your identity, and you can form the strong ties to the UK, because at the end of the day you live here, like you speak English but then we speak Arabic, a lot of us, and you can't run away from that part of you. But at the same time, you can forge new and dynamic links to the homeland, whether that's through technology, whether that's through regular visits if you're able to, or it's through even activism, that is something, well like keeping traditions alive, that's something that I think a lot of young people would, are able to relate to more, rather than referring to things that have happened to them, because it didn't happen to us specifically. And this is a concept known as the third space. So if there's hybrid space where you can take what it means to be Palestine and then forge it with what it means to be British and Muslim and Arab and all the rest of it …. I think we can be both without having to choose (youth session participant at Palestinian conference Dec 2, 018[7])

This ties into broader debates around the role of second plus generation migrant youth and their identities and politics as 'in-between' but also the particular role that young migrants and those in diaspora can play in relation to political change because of their multiple national and cultural positionings and belongings (also see Leurs, 2015 on Moroccan Dutch youth and their digital spaces). It is telling that this

session was the only one in English at the conference; language itself can be an issue for different generations in diaspora (Mavroudi, 2020) and is a reminder that such hybridity and the notion of a third space may be seen as an active choice of agency and empowerment for those who see themselves as between generations and cultures (Godin & Doná, 2016; Gembus, 2018).

Finally, some young people discussed the value of being involved in activism and in youth groups which were geared towards young people so that they could have their voices heard. This also suggests that within diasporic communities there are issues with different generations and the politics of control and representation:

talking about the older generation in the Palestinian community and the younger community, sometimes, and I've mentioned this quite a lot, I feel like the younger generation is kind of pushed aside and marginalised and not really listened to and not really given a voice, even though we have a lot to say, like we are a generation that haven't been to Palestine, are restricted from going back home, the older generation, you've lived it, you've seen it, you've spent time with family. And then there's us that have lived here and been raised here and can't go back home or can't see family or have missed spending time with our grandparents, haven't even seen our grandparents. So there's this built up anger that we have, that we kind of want to you know someone to hear us as well. And again, maybe we would probably do things differently, have like a more inclusive Palestinian community, really involve younger children from a smaller age, rather than just focusing on talks and conferences (Leela, 24 year old female, Palestinian diaspora, London, second generation).

For Leela and others, having inclusive spaces where they could be themselves, identity and politics wise, and be political at the same time were important. They are carving out new spaces of inclusive politics in informal ways: through their conversations off and online, within educational establishments, with their peers and within across different spaces and places, at cross-cutting scales (Salih et al., 2020). Their world is national, local, transnational, translocal and global: this is what identity and politics means for young people in diaspora. They are enabled and potentially constrained by all these myriad influences through time, space and place as they attempt to develop their own politics of meaning and empowerment.

6. Conclusions

This paper has made a contribution in three key related areas: the first is in relation to work on young people with a diasporic and transnational migration background. The second is in relation to the geographies of diaspora and the political activities of young people in diaspora, from a geographical perspective. The third is in the field of diasporic politics which I argue can be strengthened from using perspectives on young people's politics. From a political geography perspective, this paper has stressed in line with other work that it is important include young people's views and articulations of politics and political change in relation to time, space and place. The vast majority of young participants had political opinions and political views and there were things they wanted to change. Their thoughts around injustice and the need for political and social change were linked to their perceptions around their inability to effect change because of their age and how they are treated by adults and those in positions of power. Therefore, despite their strong opinions, they often felt disillusioned and disempowered. They discussed politics and issues they felt were important using interchangeable, cross cutting and interrelated scales and spaces whereby they saw their own positionalities as embedded in embodied, material, multiple ways (Dar, 2018; Hosseini, 2013) as a result of their 'transnational habitus' (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016). Through their articulations around politics and political change, it became clear that they were both empowered by the reality that they had views they were felt were

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[7] This was a session on young people in the Palestinian diaspora in Britain at a conference on Palestinians in Britain and formed part of a wider Palestine Festival, organised by the Palestinian Forum in Britain, 15-16th December 2018. The organisers gave permission for our presence there. The panel speakers at this session were young Palestinians so what we see in the quote are the views of one of the speakers.

important but also disempowered because these views were often not taken seriously by adults and that these feelings and negotiations were positioned within and affected by multi-scalar spaces of (dis)connection and power.

The main contribution of this paper is therefore the finding that the ways in which diasporic youth articulate and deal with the political moves beyond local/global, here/there, P/politics dichotomies and distinctions to foreground the positioned manner in which they are political that are both separate, but also connected to adult worlds. Their 'sites of politics' (Elwood & Mitchell, 2012) are therefore liminal (Wood, 2012) as they counter the persistence of formal and adult centred versions of politics which leave no space for young people's perceptions and actions of politics. In the process, they are potentially creating new, more inclusive, multiple, reflexive and flexible 'political identities' (Hosseini, 2013) and spaces influenced by their diasporic positionalities and their multi-scalar lives and identities. These cross-border, cross-scalar connections and spaces both enable and constrain their feelings and articulations of justice and socio-political change.

There is, therefore, a need to define diasporic youth politics and mobilisation in broader and more inclusive and flexible terms in order to assess the nuanced ways in which young people engage with politics more generally and not just in relation to activism or mobilisation around assumed 'homelands' to which their relationships might be ambivalent or fraught (Wilmers & Chernobrov, 2019). At the same time, we need to trace how it takes place within daily lives stretched and embedded within multiple scales and spaces. Their politics of home, belonging and connection and the ways in which they perceive political and social change in relation to space and scale need to be further examined because they embody the reality of increasingly complex and diverse communities.

Declaration of competing interest

I declare that I have no conflicts of interest for this paper.

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