

Ethnographic Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Algerian British immigrants in the UK

by

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2022

In memory of my father who accompanied me during the journey

To my mother, you are, and will be the best part of my life

In memory of grandma Nouara, who left us silently

Abstract

The Algerian community in the United Kingdom is under-studied, and the existing studies have tackled it mainly within the refugee framework, which reflects the history of Algerian immigration to the UK. Adding to this existing scholarship, this research explores ethnographically the lived experiences of Algerian British individuals as dual nationals and the meaning they give to their dual national belonging. The present qualitative research occupies an academic interdisciplinary position and adds to the existing literature of migration studies, transnationalism, feminism, gender studies, and ethnography. The data generated in this thesis made use of the inductive approach of ethnography, immersion in fieldwork with research participants who are first generation Algerian British male and female adults, qualitative interviews, participant observation and fieldnotes.

To explore the objectives of this research, fieldwork was conducted in London in two main sites. One is a public space, of a ‘non-ordinary’ nature which was in the form of protest demonstrations or what has been called *el-Hirak*, where the participants were Algerian British, and the other site is a non-public space in ‘an ordinary’ circumstance, a form of social gatherings organised by Algerian British females. Using different techniques of recruiting, the sample size in this research was around 70, where the number of potential participants was 18. The findings of this research demonstrated that the lived experiences of dual nationals can be given meaning at different levels (politically, culturally and socially). These meanings were complex, ambivalent, and mostly characterised with research participants’ subjectivity, personal motives, gender, and socio-cultural backgrounds where their experiences were nested. Holders of dual citizenship undergo a series of criticisms as being a problematic category challenging the ideals of the nation-state, mainly in relation to loyalty, and their ability to simultaneously take part in the political affairs of two states. However, this PhD’s findings have shown Algerian British individuals were transnationally navigating without great difficulty membership of the two states, and the simultaneous membership was complementary at different levels.

Acknowledgement

I am curious to know how I would show my gratitude to you if you were alive, dear father. But I can only say that you are the person to whom I am most grateful, though you did not witness any part of my PhD experience, yet you are the only reason for its happening. I also deeply acknowledge the role of my mother in my life who knows that I am worth it. Her genuine care was my guardian angel not only during the PhD journey, but in a lifetime.

This work would have not been completed without the help and assistance of my research participants. I am so grateful to every single individual, both men and women, who took part in it. I am so thankful to the brave Algerian women who took part in this research and who shared with me their experiences. Thank you all for your time, trust, care. You were like a family, you have taught me a lot, and your stories are worth telling.

I would like to thank all the professional bodies who facilitated this project, starting with the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for funding this research. My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor Prof. Shane Blackman, who was there since the beginning of the PhD journey and who made it a valuable learning journey. Thank you very much for your guidance, genuine advice, kindness, emotional and intellectual support during the PhD hard times. I also thank supervisor Dr. Harshad Keval for his wise advice and for helping me develop myself critically and to think beneath the surface. I am grateful too to all my other PhD colleagues and academics for their help, with a special thanks to Dr. Lidis Garbovan for her generosity, humility with regard sharing knowledge, advice and help during the PhD's uncertain times.

I could only be strong during this journey with the mental support and care of my sisters and brothers whom I love the most. Thank you for your unconditional love and care. A special thanks to my nephews and nieces whose existence was my source of positivity during my journey. A special thanks goes to my niece and sister the doctor to-be Ryma Chetouane for her genuine care. This PhD journey, for me, was way more than just an academic journey, it was a journey full of struggle, personal and emotional challenges and a constant negotiation, thus, I can only say thanks to the people who were there for me unconditionally and emotionally.

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Introduction

This research takes an interdisciplinary position. It broadly covers subjects in sociology and ethnography. One reason for this is the (feminist) ethnographic approach embraced throughout the research. Using the sensitivity of ethnography, it specifically fits in migration studies, transnationalism and discourses of (dual) citizenship and gender. This qualitative research is about the construction of national identities among holders of dual citizenship. It explores ethnographically how first generation Algerian British immigrants make sense of their dual belonging as holders of both Algerian and British citizenship/nationality and how they maintain their transnational and simultaneous ties with both the homeland and the country of settlement.

This PhD research was conducted using an ethnographic approach through being immersed in fieldwork with research participants who are first generation Algerian-born immigrants¹¹ naturalised British individuals. Research participants of this study who were both males and females have migrated to the UK from between the period of the late 70s to the early 2000s because of the Algerian civil war launched in the 90s. Research participants who were naturalised as British and able to return to Algeria were observed being attached to the homeland regardless of the spatial dislocation. The sample size was approximately 70 individuals, and the number of the key participants who were interviewed and observed was 18 (see annex 1 containing biographical introductions to research participants). Fieldwork took place in London for an extended period of one year. Alongside the interaction with research participants in different spaces and contexts, two major sites were explored in this research, one in a public space where research participants were engaged in protest demonstrations for the homeland or what has been called *el-Hirak*, the other was a female-only space where Algerian women were engaged in social and cultural gatherings. Ethnographically, it was the research participants who contributed to the selection of those spaces because of their significance in making sense of their Algerian identity and belonging, which were illustrated in their political involvement in the Algerian politics from distance, as well as their involvement in the cultural reproduction of the Algerian nation in an Algerian female-only space.

It is important to trace the Algerian immigration history to the UK in order to explain the significance of conducting this research. It is noted that Britain was not an obvious destination for Algerian emigrants compared to France which is the traditional destination due to the shared

colonial history between Algeria and France (Sayad, 1999:295). Though the migratory flow of Algerians to the French metropole already existed during the French occupation, the number had dramatically increased after independence. Lyons (2014: 132) states that: “according to official statistics, about 262.000 Algerians immigrated to France in 1963, 269.000 in 1964”. Among those Algerians were “the Pieds-Noirs, the Jews and the Harkis [who] tended to see themselves as exiled individuals rather than part of the [Algerian] diaspora” (Guemar, 2017:9). Unlike the Moroccans and the Tunisians who “began to arrive [in the UK] in the 1960s, largely in response to labour shortages” (Joffé, 2007:1), Algerians arrived in higher numbers in the late 80s. Before that and originally, Algerians were introduced to the British Empire centuries ago: “from the early seventeenth century [via] Jewish trading networks [which] played a key role in these relations since they had an accepted legal status in both settings” (Christelow, 2012:9). The root of today’s Algerian community in the UK, whose number is “according to the Algerian consulate, around 65,000 Algerians live in the UK” (Boukrami, Guemar, and Northey, 2022: 2) is traced back to the big exodus of Algerians which started during the period of 1980s October Riots and the subsequent Civil War which started in 1992. The violence and the annihilation caused by the radical terrorists during that Civil War led to the migration of many Algerians to both traditional destinations (France) and non-traditional ones (such as the UK). In the conceptualisation of the Algerian immigration to the UK, there were two major factors, internal and external, which pushed Algerians to see the UK as a plausible destination. The internal factors were related to the rise of religious fundamentalism and the Civil War. External factors were related to no longer seeing France as a suitable country to migrate to. Unlike the profiles of migrants of the post-independence era who went to France because of their knowledge of that country (culturally and linguistically), the rise of the Algerian emigration to the UK was “partly due to the changing profile of the new Algerian emigrants, who have culturally less in common with the French than the long-settled Algerian communities in France” (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009:22). Another motive was related to the discrimination and immigration reforms, mainly for: “those who engage in Harraga¹ [...] rejected France where they knew that Algerians were frequently stopped for identity checks in the street, and bound with a derogatory stereotype rooted in Islamophobia or *beuronoia*²” (Christelow, 2012: 158). On a more official scale, it was known

¹ Harraga (الحرقاة) is a word in Arabic, whose literal translation is “burners”. It refers to a category of people who migrate illegally to another country and who remain undocumented in the country they migrate to.

² *Beuronoia* is a term given to those who are originally from North Africa mainly the Maghreb and who were born in Europe.

that there were bilateral agreements between Algeria and France, targeting mainly asylum seekers, where “France would return failed asylum seekers’ applications and illegal immigrants” (Collyer, 2004: 394), leading them ultimately to lose hope in France as a destination. On the other side of the Channel, Britain was making itself look welcoming to many Algerians, not only to refugees but also to Algerian religious fundamentalists, who mainly went to London which was “home to a number of Algerian veterans” (Christelow, 2012:159) and other “extremist elements of Algerian conflicts” (Collyer, 2004:392).

Algerian women were part of the Algerian migratory flow which started in the post-independence era. The feminisation of the Algerian emigration in that period was launched by Algerian intellectual women who left Algeria in the 1970s (Guemar, 2016:76). Concerning the emigration of women to the UK in the 90s, women fled from Algeria escaping the double oppression they were experiencing, the one resulting from the Civil War where women were targeted for assassination, rape and kidnapping (Guemar, 2018:2), and the gender-based oppression of the patriarchal Algerian society per se.

The Algerian community in the UK which is comprised of both documented and undocumented migrants (Department of Communities and Local Government 2009:6) is “characterised by dispersal and fragmentation” (Wilford, 2016:43) and does not constitute a strong community like the one in France or the Asian one in the UK, for example. The British authorities had long considered Algerians as non-threatening, until the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the 7/7 London Bombings which dramatically changed the way Muslims were perceived in the West. Attitudes towards the Algerian community changed and “came in for ever-greater scrutiny” (Joffé, 2007:4), not necessarily due to the fact that it had a Muslim affiliation, but because it was reported that: “much evidence was revealed by the British police authorities [...] that Algerians were linked to terrorism and their contact with radicals in Britain” (Christelow, 2012:159).

Existing studies about the Algerian community revealed that Algerians in the UK, though dispersed, are mainly located in London comprising “one of the largest Algerian populations outside [Algeria]” (Wilford, 2016: 42). It was found that Algerians maintain a strong sense “of a shared national identity and common culture [...] strong memories of the homeland and close connections with friends and family members living [in Algeria]” (Wilford, 2016: 13). Additionally, it was observed (as will be explored further in this research) that the Algerian community in the UK was engaging transnationally in the political affairs of Algeria or what

has been called as the *Hirak* (Boukrami, Guemar, and Northey, 2022: 2), which is an anti-regime movement launched in Algeria in 2019, which was extended to the Algerian diaspora. The engagement of the Algerian diaspora in the *Hirak* “was regarded as a means through which migrants and their descendants maintain ties with the homeland” (Rouibah, 2020:164).

This PhD will extend the already existing knowledge about the Algerian community in the UK which is under-studied compared to the Algerian community in France, the “traditional locus of Algerian exile” (Guemar, 2017:26). It will also add to the existing studies which covered the Algerian forced migration and the Algerian refugees in the UK. This study records the post-refugee and post-forced migration aspect of the Algerian immigration in the UK by exploring the transnational practices of the Algerian British towards the homeland as well as their settlement in the host country as being officially part of the British political community.

I examine how Algerian British research participants make sense of their belonging to Algeria through engaging transnationally and from a distance in maintaining ties with the homeland, politically and culturally. I also explore how they negotiate their settlement through analysing the meaning they give to British citizenship as well as their subjective identification with the host. As the population under study is part of two states as dual citizens, an investigation is carried out into how Algerian dual nationals make sense of their simultaneous official membership as well as their dual feeling of belonging.

In order to explore how Algerian British individuals make sense of their belonging to Algeria and maintain their ties with it, I rely on investigating how the population under study expressed such contact with Algeria in different settings (public and non-public) and situations (non-ordinariness and ordinariness). The place where research participants were maintaining ties with Algeria in a public space and in a non-ordinary circumstance was the protest demonstrations space, where the Algerian anti-regime movement was extended to London by the Algerian community. Exploring ethnographically those protest demonstrations was particularly relevant because the dispersed Algerian community was visibly joined together in a single space for a reason related to their country of origin. And more importantly, being immersed with Algerian British dual nationals while they protested provided a relevant context to understand how they make sense of their belonging and attachment to Algeria from a social movement context.

This research investigates how women make sense of their belonging to Algeria, taking into consideration their gender identity as women. Exploring how Algerian British women make

sense of their belonging to and tie maintenance with Algeria was achieved by being immersed with them at ‘an Algerian female-only space’, a private space where they hold ordinary social gatherings on a regular basis. Beside the relevance of exploring the female space to foster the investigation of the research problem, examining the Algerian British women in their female space was an attempt to disrupt the ‘homogenising’ women migrants undergo in migration both as a theory and as a phenomenon.

Because I am looking at the transnational and border crossing of Algerian British, this research unpacks the journey of research participants towards the acquisition of British citizenship. Doing so is relevant, because it enables exploring their subjective identification with the host, as well as how they negotiate their identities as British citizens. And in order to investigate how research participants make sense of their dual membership, belonging and attachment, I rely on both a *lived* simultaneous participation which took place when fieldwork was being carried out, and on research participants’ narratives about the way they make sense of their simultaneous and dual belonging to Algeria and the host.

Beside the academic motivations which led to conducting this research, mainly those related to the fact that the Algerian community in the UK is under-studied from the transnational framework which does not solely document how migrants maintain ties with the homeland, but also with the nation-state of the host, this research is fuelled by my personal motivation. Originally, the idea of researching migrants grew from an interest in migration as a research field and as a phenomenon per se, which flourished when I wrote a BA dissertation on US High-Skilled Immigration. However, conducting research in the field of migration resonates strongly with personal motives. I was born and raised in Algeria, growing up in a society whose members dream of leaving Algeria one day and going to Europe. I was, and *still* am listening everywhere to expressions like: “*mabqat Ga’ada fi had el Bled*” (no staying in Algerian is left), and “*yakulni al-hut w mayakulnish ad-dud*” (I’d rather be eaten by fish than by worms), an expression which means that individuals prefer leaving Algeria through small boats, knowing that they are highly vulnerable to dying in the sea and being eaten by fish, yet they prefer that scenario instead of staying, dying, and being buried and eaten by worms in Algeria. People’s desires of leaving Algeria are fuelled with push and pull factors, that Algeria is no longer a good place to stay in, on the one hand, and the ‘utopian’ image portrayed in the Algerian mind about ‘*lhih*’ (there) or the Global North, on the other hand. Additionally, the Algerian passport does not guarantee entry to countries Algerians dream about without visas which are hard to get. Therefore, the Algerians who left Algeria and headed to countries in the

Global North and who could obtain *kwaghat* (legal documents of settlement and host's nationality) are considered successful in their migratory history. When the chance was presented to me to pursue a PhD in one of those countries of the Global North, it became possible for me not only to discover the world many Algerians fantasise about, but also to explore the lived experiences of Algerians who left Algeria, and investigate my personal questions like: Do they feel saved from the life they could have endured in Algeria as many assume? What is their perception of the nationality they acquired and which many Algerians back in Algeria dream about? Conducting this research would undoubtedly feed my curiosity!

Nourished with personal motives and the recognition that there are personal sensibilities which impacted the process of this research, as well as discovering that the lived experiences of Algerian British as dual nationals are constructed from the product of the intersection of historical moments (pre-migration and post-migration), the outcome of this PhD led to structuring a thesis that is the product of the unexpected trajectories of the ethnographic fieldwork.

Thesis structure

Chapter one ‘the Literature Review’ of the research critically reviews relevant literature, concepts and theories. The theoretical/critical framework reflects the lens I looked through, summarised in the transnational and the feminist framework. A critical engagement with literature is provided which reviews different theories and concepts the research is interested in. Finally, the socio-historical background which the research fits into is developed.

Chapter two ‘the Research Design and Methodology’ covers a thorough explanation of the research methodology followed in exploring the research problem. It summarises my philosophical and ontological position and attempts to explain the relevance behind selecting the ethnographic and feminist approach. Because of the emergence of ethnography's ‘reflexive turn’, I attempt to explain how I position ‘myself’ in the research. Practical procedures like data generation strategies, interpretation, and ethical considerations are explained in the methodology chapter.

Chapter three. ‘Extending the Inside to the Outside’: an ethnographic exploration of Algerian protests in London is an empirical chapter providing a thick description of protest demonstrations undertaken by research participants. This ethnographic exploration unpacks

how Algerian British make sense of their participation in a public space and in a non-ordinary moment for the homeland. It goes beyond the migrants' activism framework to cover possible narratives made by research participants about their belonging to Algeria and how they maintain ties with it.

Chapter four “We are in Algeria”: an ethnographic exploration of the Algerian female-only space is an exploration to how Algerian British women construct their belonging and attachment to Algeria in a female space through ordinary social gatherings. This chapter reveals how meaning is constructed by women in their own way, and how they are playing agency in constructing their belonging to Algeria in their own terms.

Chapter five ‘Journey to Britishness’ is an empirical chapter about research participants' belonging to the host country. The research looks at how Algerian British make sense of their simultaneous belonging to two nations, and the previous two chapters unpack how Algerians make sense of their Algerianness in different contexts. This chapter looks at the ‘British’ side, whether it is related to British citizenship or the subjective identification to the British nation of research participants. It explores how Algerian British make sense of their journey towards the acquisition of British citizenship, and how they make sense of their belonging to the host's nation.

Chapter six ‘Simultaneity: Participation and Attachment’ aims to unpack how Algerian British make sense of their simultaneous membership and belonging. Doing so is conducted by investigating how they simultaneously and transnationally participate in the two states of Algeria and the UK. It also aims to understand how Algerian British subjectively give meaning to their simultaneous attachment to and identification with the two nations of belonging.

The Conclusion chapter summarises research findings and demonstrates the research implications, propositions for further research as well as personal reflections generated from the experience of conducting this PhD.

The Appendices which are inserted at the end of the thesis contain ethnographic descriptions and visuals which enable the reader to construct an image about the story of research participants' lived experiences as dual nationals.

1

Literature Review

Introduction

Divided broadly into three parts, this chapter critically reviews the relevant literature related to this PhD. It is comprised of the theoretical framework of the thesis, a selective reviewing of concepts and theories relevant to this research, and the socio-historical background. The interdisciplinarity and the ethnographic position of this research led me to immerse myself in the literature covered in this chapter.

The theoretical foundations of this research are located in the fields of migration studies, feminism and ethnography. This research is about Algerian British dual nationals, which fits with the transnational approach to migration studies. My stance regarding feminism as a theory starts with the fundamental question: ‘Whose feminism?’. I sought in transnational and Islamic feminism ideas which I believe have resonance with understanding the experiences of Algerian women, taking into consideration their differences and identities. This research is inspired also from the feminist approach to ethnography and research in general. In this review of literature, I attempt to critically review concepts and theories relevant to this PhD. In doing this I have relied on selecting literature that could help in interpreting the data generated in the fieldwork. The socio-historical background remains important in this research. Interpreting the data led to my understanding that Algerian British research participants’ experiences and how they are living their dual membership and belonging arose from the impact of social, political and historical structures. The framework is divided into three parts. The first part is a historical summary of Algeria’s nation-building from the post-independence era until the genesis of the popular movement in 2019. The second part focuses on the history and the story of Algerian women. A particular focus was on the patriarchal structure they faced during the colonial and post-independence eras, and how such structures hampered women’s mobility in the social and political spheres, a reality mostly justified with religion, Algerian social conservatism, and cultural mores. As stated earlier, these contexts helped interpreting the data, which means that they were still impacting the post-migratory lives of research participants. In looking at the Britishness of research participants, a selective report is provided in the third part, which

focuses mainly on major discourses about the unfinished debate between Britishness (national identity, British nationalism, British citizenship) and immigrants.

1.1 The theoretical framework

By the theoretical framework, I am referring to the critical lens which guided my understanding of the different phenomena related to this ethnographic research. Its relevance lies in its ability to guide the study and making sense and interpreting the data. It covers the transnational approach to migration studies as well as feminism.

1.1.1 Transnationalism

This PhD research which is located at the field of migration studies attempts to look at how Algerian British individuals make sense of and give meaning to their dual belonging as dual nationals and citizens. Therefore, the lens through which this research looks at those phenomena is that of ‘transnationalism’. Before unpacking what transnationalism stands for, I would like to speak about the concept of the ‘Nation-State’ which is highly related to transnationalism and its emergence as an analytical concept in the field of migration.

Nation-State

‘Nation-state’ is a term associated with different meanings within different discourses. Firstly, the state is “an organized political entity with a territory” (Joffe, 2018:3), for which there is an organised government exercising authority over that territory. A Nation-State is a state “whose primary loyalty is to a cultural self-identity, which we call a nation or nationality” (Pick, 2016:6). Benedict Anderson (2016:6) defines the term nation as “an imagined political community”. Nation-state and nationalism fall into the discourse that they are Western modern inventions. Anderson associates the emergence of nationalism as a result of modernity (Anderson, 2016:46). These discourses also reinforce that a nation bears the characteristics of inclusivity and exclusivity in a sense that: “the inside is national, and the outside is not” (Dufoix, 2008:1364), and it is standing for preserving the unity of the nation and the interests of the people it represents by acting as “the principle body of affiliation” (Hutnyk Karla and Kaur, 2005:20) that welds “the locals to a single place” (Cohen 2001:135). Thus, the nation-

state is an entity that makes people believe they belong to and have the same geographical location, history and culture (Smith, 2000: 796).

The existence of migrants inside the nation-state presents a particular challenge to it. Because identities are not static and migrants' identities are multiple, nation-state homogeneity is challenged at different levels by the performance and articulation of identification these groups manifest inside its borders, mainly preserving ties with their homelands. What concerns the advocates of Nationalist ideology is loyalty: to whom is the loyalty of migrants and diasporic groups owned? Nationalists believe that it should be owned by the ideals of a nation-state. Diasporic groups break "the rigid frontiers" (Hall, 2019:214) imposed by the nation-states, because in diasporic situations, they articulate and position their identification at the margin, out of the centre of the nation state. Their identification is shaped by their perception of their origins and the journey that led them to migrate, as well as the way they are inserted and situated in the country of settlement.

Because of the rise of technology and increased speed of mobility and communication, and the proliferation of the transnational corporate interest in the late twentieth century, the world became what Marshall McLuhan (1964) calls "the global village". The exclusive framework invoked by the nation-state was challenged by the globalisation framework that allows openness and flexibility leading ultimately to de-territorialised identities and loyalties, in turn leading "[p]olitical scientists [to] worry that their field might vanish along with their favourite object, the nation-state, if globalization truly creates a "world without borders" (Appadurai, 2001:1). Cohen (1996:517) states that "in the age of globalization, the world is being organized vertically by nation-states and regions, but horizontally by an overlapping, permeable, multiple systems of interactions". In this new system, diasporic experiences are shaped differently, adding to the effects of globalisation and de-centring the rigidity of the borders of nation-states and engaging in constructing identities outside those borders.

Transnational framework

International migrants and migration have always been approached and analysed within a single unit of reference, the nation-state, which led to reinforcing "the strongly imagined norm of national and stable communities disrupted by migrants" (Anderson, 2019: 3). This resulted in neglecting or undermining the variant dynamics these groups create, and ignoring other possible and plausible, yet efficient intellectual paradigms of analysis which can enrich and

interpret the phenomenon of migration. What came to characterise the discipline of migration in the post war era was the hegemonic conceptualisation of the methodological nationalism in the construction of the human knowledge. The knowledge generated from the phenomenon of migration was not immune from such hegemony. Methodological nationalism is defined as the assumptions that: “the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Schiller and Wimmer, 2002:302), and that: “the national state institutions are the main context within which migration occurs and for which migration is relevant” (Faist, 2012:53). Schiller and Wimmer (2002:310) argue that in following the trend of the nationalist doctrine, migrants are perceived as “antinomies to an orderly working of the state and society”, and in studying them within the methodological nationalist approach, immigrants’ value is reduced to being considered only as “national means of income” (Schiller and Wimmer, 2002: 310) by the receiving state. Transnationalism became “an expansive paradigm that has reshaped the study of immigrants and diaspora populations” (Chaudhary and Moss, 2019: 1).

Studying migration within this framework does not only weaken the understanding of the experience of immigrants per se, but also prevents the possibility of understanding the migration as a global phenomenon from a broad and multifaceted lens. Methodological nationalism has resulted in conceptualising immigrants as permanent settlers in the country of settlement, who need to assimilate and acquire forcibly the culture and the language in that country. These conceptions were considered as no longer sufficient, therefore a call for a paradigmatic shift was made that would voice the cross-border movements of immigrants. Thus, the approach of transnationalism emerged. Although this approach is a shifting perspective away from methodological nationalism, it should be borne in mind that it does not neglect fully -at least in the discipline of migration- the nation state, because transnationalism “proposes the national state as one of the possible social frameworks in which to situate empirical studies” (Faist, 2012:55).

The transnational framework addresses a set of issues related to the transnationalisation of immigrants. Transnationalism as a process is defined as an action “by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origins and settlement” (Lazar, 2011:70). This link and relation are de facto a border crossing outside the confines of the nation-state. The crossing of borders results in the creation of social fields that exceed geographical, political and cultural limits, and is undertaken individually by immigrants, “grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants”

(Basch, Blanc-Szanton and Schiller, 1992:5.), or collectively in forms of associations and multinational companies, political social movement...etc. Transnationalisation implies the possibility for immigrants to hold multiple memberships through which they identify themselves and participate simultaneously. These simultaneous memberships, from a transnational perspective “can co-exist or even more, [...] reinforce each other” (Birka, Blatter, and Schlenker, 2017:420). Examples of such multiple membership could be religious, ethnic and national (for example transnational citizenship or Dual citizenship). Within the processes of transnationalisation of migrants is the increasing emergence of transnational citizenship. Bauböck (2017:1) argues that within the conceptualisations of citizenship, the term transnational citizenship “belongs to a broader family concept that uses the national citizenship as a reference point to phenomena that do not fit the template and unique identity relation between citizen and nation-states”, and within such conceptualisation, transnationalism refers “to boundary crossing practices, rights, identities and status” (Bauböck, 2017:2).

Positioning this research within the transnational framework has a particular resonance because of its interest in unpacking the way Algerian British people make sense of their dual belonging and citizenship, because that framework recognises the mutability and border crossing of migrants and does not undermine the knowledge of migrants’ experience by referring exclusively to one nation-state.

1.1.2 Feminism

Feminism is defined as “the struggle to end sexist oppression” (hooks, 1984: 26). This research is inspired from a feminist perspective, particularly that shaped by transnational feminism. Transnational feminism appeared as a response to the 80s’ international women’s movement or what has been termed as ‘Global Sisterhood’ inclusive feminist project. Universal or Global Sisterhood is embodied in Robin Morgan’s anthology of feminist writings (*Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*: 1984) whose set of assumptions considered women from various cultural backgrounds as homogeneous sharing the same interests, oppressions, and experiences. This unified feminism was critiqued for “articulating [a] romanticized and utopian view of women around the world, offering a single model for understanding gender issues and underscoring the similarities of women’s experiences and oppressions” (Bryan-Davis, Díaz and Enns, 2021:5).

The Global Sisterhood approach was critiqued as being an embodiment of a travelling feminism from the West or the Global North to the women from the East or the Global South. Ahmed (2017:4) considers that travelling as “a travelling assumption, one that tells a feminist story in a certain way, a story that is much repeated; history of how feminism acquired utility as an imperial gift”. Thus, Global sisterhood has been critiqued for replicating the feminist imperial agenda which assumes being the saviour of women from the non-Western countries by promoting the Western lifestyles and liberal democracies (Adam, Madison and Thomas, 2018:5). Chandra Mohanty critiques the global sisterhood framework in relation to history. She (1992: 78-79) argues that:

The particular notion of universal sisterhood seems predicated on the erasure of the history and effects of contemporary imperialism. Robin Morgan seems to situate all women (including herself) outside the contemporary world history, leading to what I see as her ultimate suggestion that transcendence rather than engagement in the model of future social change. And this, I think, is a model which can have dangerous implications for women who do not and cannot speak from a location of white, western, middle class privilege.

Transnational feminism provides an alternative to the global sisterhood approach by taking into consideration the differences of women’s experiences and oppressions. It emerged from the feminist scholarship of Mohanty (in *Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse*, 1988) and Spivak mainly in her seminal essay: ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (1988) where there is wary of a “broader ethical and methodological problem facing left-wing intellectuals who are concerned to address the oppressed, a problem she also identifies in the work of western feminists’ intellectuals” (Morton, 2007:111). Their scholarship emerged as a reaction to the exclusion of women from the Global South and ‘Third World’ from the feminist social change agenda. Transnational feminism focuses on intersectionality³ and how “structures of inequality, identities, and places intersect, are relational and historically produced. Gender, races, class, sexuality, nation and global economy differently situated women” (Park, 2011:24). What centrally lies at the transnational feminists’ perspectives is a focus on the argument that women are not a homogeneous category, they instead explore differences of experiences and

³ ‘Intersectionality’ is a term first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, a very complex and used term by academics, activists, policy advocates, as well as different disciplines like gender studies...etc. Bilge and Collins (2016:2) provides general description to intersectionality as: “a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other”.

inequalities between women. “Transnational feminism perspectives focus on diverse experiences of women who live within, between, and at the margins of boundaries of nation-states around the globe; they transcend nation-state boundaries and speak to a wide range of interacting forces that have impact on gendered relationship and experiences in a geopolitical context” (Bryan-Davis, Díaz and Enns, 2021:11).

Using a transnational feminist approach in this research is related to the recognition that women’s experiences are different and that there are intersecting identities and factors shaping those experiences. As women in this research are Algerian immigrant dual nationals who crossed territorial borders from Algeria to the country of settlement and who are culturally from the global south who migrated to the global north, a transnational feminist framework which takes into consideration the impact of those intersected identities is useful to unpack the experiences and the inequalities lived by those women in theory and practice.

Islamic feminism

This research is inspired from the Islamic feminists’ thinking mainly regarding their engagement with the interpretation of sacred religious texts. Islamic feminism shares the same perspective of transnational feminism, and fits into the paradigm of feminism as an analytical approach for its convergence to break gender hierarchy and power relations between the sexes. Islamic feminists could not relate only to the inequalities Muslim women endure, on the one hand, because of Western feminists’ stance against the patriarchy⁴ of their own religion and culture, and on the other hand, because “for both the colonialists and the modernizing secularists, Islamic law was the embodiment of a backward system that had to be rejected or tamed in the name of progress” (Mir-Hosseini, 2006:639).

Advocates of Islamic feminism delayed their movement until the end of the twentieth century. When Islamism took the lead in Muslim countries who used Islamic principles in ruling, particularly the patriarchal interpretation of the religion, feminists from Muslim and socially conservative countries reacted to the validation of sacred texts’ interpretations (Qur’an and *Hadith*) which were mainly made by men to reinforce the inequality and control over women.

⁴ “[T]he notion of ‘patriarchy’ [...] has been widely used by feminist theorists to describe the autonomous system of women’s subordination in society” (Yuval-Davis 1997b: 6)

It emerged from a category of women who were intellectually equipped driven by a consciousness that was questioning the interpretation of sacred and religious texts and stood against the past hegemonic patriarchal modelling of discourse that had created a division which put a Muslim woman inferior to a Muslim man. The reason why women were absent while male scholars were producing interpretations is because, Amina Wadud a leading Islamic feminist argues, women were preoccupied with domestic life even in the early period of Islam which blocked their access to following an intellectual training (Wadud, 1989:167).

Islamic feminism “is the first theology-driven feminist discourse” (Badran, 2010:2), not against religion, on the contrary it is faith-oriented. Its advocates “came to see no inherent or logical link between Islamic ideals and patriarchy, no contradiction between Islamic faith and feminism” (Mir-Hosseini, 2006: 639-640). It is a movement centring around discourse of gender, women and equality in Islam, resisting how Muslim men interpreted the Qur’an and came to name this as valid and not subject to change. Consequently, the project aims for “the production of alternative, gender-sensitive religious knowledge” (Al-Sharmani, 2014:83). Islamic feminists attempt to prove that the inequalities imbedded in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and classical exegetical interpretations are a human construction not a divine manifestation in a sense that even the inequalities generated from *fiqh* “contradict the very essence of divine justice as revealed in the Koran and how Islam’s sacred text have been tainted by the ideologies of their interpreters” (Mir-Hosseini, 2006:642). Islamic feminism also identified inequalities and gender relations in the conditions of the diaspora. Wadud (1989: 161-162) argues that women are considered as a minority when they occupy both a diasporic non-Muslim space and Muslim space. In the first case, they could be inserted into a racialised discourse and exclusion in the political, economic and social affairs of the host, and in the second case be treated as a second-class citizen.

In this research, what was useful from the Islamic feminist approach is its ability to decipher the relation between religion, sexism and patriarchy, mainly in relation to how the interpretation of sacred religious texts was considered impactful in constructing gender relations both in fieldwork (between researcher and research participants) and in the lives of Algerian women research participants.

1.2 Selective review of literature: a critical engagement

This section critically reviews relevant concepts and theories employed throughout the research. The selection of this literature was based on how it shaped the analysis and interpretation and how findings can inform that existing literature.

1.2.1 Long-distance nationalism

I want to briefly unpack the concept of long-distance nationalism to distinguish it from traditional nationalism, mainly because it is adopted by diasporic groups and migrants who live outside the nation, and in this research, by the participants. Diasporic groups and migrants maintain connections with their nation of origin while being in another nation and are engaged in the building of the nation-state of their home of origin. This is called “long-distance nationalism”, a term first coined by Benedict Anderson (1992), which flourished in the literature of social sciences in the late of the 20th century due to mass migration and the development in communication technology which connects people from different territories and creates transnational spaces.

Long-distance nationalism implements practices of nationalism. This begs the question: what makes long-distance nationalism different from general nationalism ideology? In other words, how does the nationalism of a nationalist who lives inside the borders of a nation compare with the nationalism of a long-distance nationalist who lives in another nation but maintains links with the homeland? It is argued that the nationalism practised by diasporic groups is different from that practised by those living in the home nation and this is because “diasporic and homeland groups live in different realities” (Demmers, 2002:95). Others argue that both types of nationalism imply territorial claiming, shared identity and history (Schiller, 2005:571; Sobral, 2018:50). For Sobral (2018: 50) “[t]he main specific point of differentiation in relation to conventional nationalism is that this type of nationalism is a product of transnationalism, that is, of the keeping of a transnational field of social relations between those who migrated and those who stayed”.

Long-distance nationalists are linked to the government of their ancestral nation via political participation. Schiller (2005:574) proposes four political stances the long-distance nationalist can have. These are “(1) anticolonialism, (2) separatism, (3) regime change, and (4) participation”. That category maintains links with the nation of origins because its leaders sometimes need the intervention of the diaspora and encourage their participation and

representation on the one hand. On the other hand, the conception of national identity and nationalism among the nation of settlement is also vital in the engagement of diasporic groups in the homeland affairs because this conception could be “racialised” and based on biological origins which excludes these groups from belonging to the host nation. Sobral (2018: 54-55) adds to Schiller’s claim about the political engagement of diasporic groups as a focal action to be called long-distance nationalism, that “remembering” could also constitute long-distance nationalism. He means by remembering the national ceremonies and celebrations as a form of informal long-distance nationalism which he noticed during his study on the Santomean migrants in Portugal who were engaged in remembering home through “rejoicing, talking, dancing, eating, drinking, enjoying conversation and the togetherness, recreating the type of commensality on interactions they would be having in their homeland” (Sobral, 2018:55).

This research uses the term of long-distance to unpack the political engagement of Algerian British from distance in an internal affair during the era of the Algerian *Hirak* which was launched on the 2019. Through ethnographic immersion in field work with research participants, it further explores how long-distance nationalism is approached by Algerian British protesters which gives another meaning to Anderson’s traditional conception of migrants’ long-distance nationalism.

1.2.2. Social movements and migration

The term social movement cannot be reduced to one single definition. Efforts from the traditional schools and contemporary ones from the Global North are still seeking to provide explanations for understanding and analysing social movements. Many scholars have provided the tools for theorising social movements, but it is argued that these efforts are problematic in a sense that these “definitions inevitably reflect the theoretical assumption of the theorist” (Herring and Morris, 1987:2) or some definitions “are too broad, such that they include phenomena which we could not wish to call social movements, and yet any attempt to narrow the definition down seems destined to exclude certain movements” (Crossley 2002:2). Social movement signifies an involvement in a collective behavior or action where individuals: “petition, assemble, strike, march, occupy premises, obstruct traffic, set fires, and attack others with intent to do bodily harm” (Tarrow, 2008:146). Social movements emerge as a reaction to a dissatisfaction with the existing order. They are considered “a special type of conflicts” (Touraine, 2008:212). Blumer (2008:64) views social movements “as collective enterprise to

establish a new order of life”. He adds that collective action takes place as a result of the gradual changes or as he calls it “cultural drifts” in the values of people. These cultural drifts “stand for a general shift in the ideas of people, particularly along the line of conceptions people have of themselves and of their rights and privilege” (Blumer, 2008:65).

More recent theories of social movements have attempted to make a break with classical paradigms of analysing social movements because of the inadequacy of the old paradigms. New Social Movements (NSM)s’ theorists like Jürgen Habermas, Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci advocate such a break. The NSMs theory developed as a reaction to the change of conflicts in Western societies which are no longer around material production, but around “cultural production, social integration and socialization” (Habermas, 2008:201), and “life world, such as body, health, and sexual identity; the neighbourhood, city, and the physical environment; the cultural, ethnic, national, the linguistic heritage and identity” (Offe, 2008:209).

The existing approaches were limited and did not capture the uniqueness of different types of social movements. An example of this uniqueness where the social movement scholars did not sufficiently develop theory was “the transnationality of social movements” (Reddy, 2016: 66). The transnational developments “are relatively recent addition to the vast social movement literature. The interest in transnational social movements has largely avoided consideration of transnational migrant communities or diasporas” (Collyer, 2008: 689). Though migrants might be absent in the theory of social movements, yet there was a growing interest among various scholars advocating “the use of social movement framework in the analysis of migrant mobilization” (Quinsaat, 2013: 953). Their mobilisation has gained the attention of scholars of transnational political contention (Roura, 2016:3). Additionally, while ‘diaspora’ is a contested term due to scholarly consensus about who does and who does not constitute a diasporic category (Brubaker, 2005:3), the mobilisation of diasporic groups contributed to adopting a framework which could provide clues and insights in the understanding of the concept of social movement (Quinsaat, 2016:1015; Sökefeld, 2006:268).

Migrants through different activisms have contributed to a change in politics, culture, and economy of both the homeland and the host (Underhill, 2019:370). They have shown a considerable participation in conflicts from abroad driven by nationalist claims, interests, and roles in the politics and homelands’ nation-states building. Biswas (2004:270) argues that diasporic nationalism occurs because “of the oppression in the host or home country”, and this

is dependent on the historical records of whether there has been any history of exile as in the case of Chagossians who were expelled from the Islands of Chagos by the British to Mauritius; political asylum; or an emerging activism due to the emergence of conflicts in the home of origin.

Migrants' activism could be defined as a "dynamic process by which political entrepreneurs deploy resources, frames and identities to make claims about homeland issues" (Quinsa, 2016:1015). While migrants and diasporic groups attempt to bring issues to host countries' platforms which could not be freely exposed in the home of origins where these issues originally emerged (Sökefeld, 2006:270), they still are subject to challenges in those host countries. Quinsa (2016:1015) problematises migrants' activism when "their sending and receiving states have weak relations, and the homeland conflict is invisible in the uneven geographies of power". Similarly, Chaudhary and Moss (2019: 6) link the existence of colonial ties between migrants' homeland and receiving country in fostering migrants' transnational political activism, arguing that "[s]uch post-colonial relations may involve sustained engagement where the host government maintains economic and political interests in the former colonial territory".

Diasporic groups and their descendants also have participated in mobilisation in the host nation as a consequence of their treatment due to their identities. These movements took place either in the Global North or the Global South, emerged because of the intersection of the history of these groups' arrival and the political systems of these regions. Afro-descendants in the Americas participated in these kinds of social movements. These movements analytically had a special treatment with racism and "in doing so, they align themselves theoretically with the concept of global apartheid, the centrality of racial subordination, especially in nations where progressive and social democratic governments contend of power" (Mullings, 2009:7). Women, for example, also took part in Afro-descendants' movements adding to the agenda of the movement a call for gender representation. For example, in 1980s' Brazil, women mobilised by launching an organisation "disenchanted with traditional white feminist as well as male-dominated black organization" (Paschel and Sawyer, 2009:27). Other groups from the Global South were engaged in activism for their identity recognition and inclusion. Indians indentured in Fiji, Trinidad, Tobago and South Africa under the British indenture system during colonialism claimed recognition of their Indian-ness and their multiple identities. However, their mobilisation inside these areas was weak and leaned on "second generation migration that are mainly in the West" (Reddy, 2016:7) to fuel them with resources.

In Europe, diasporic groups and their descendants mobilise as a reaction to their racialisation. Racial and ethnic profiling came to characterise the criminal laws in Europe targeting “people of African descent, Roma, Latino/as, Asians, and others in Europe who are not considered to be white” (Lusane, 2009:197). In the UK, activists from African backgrounds with the participation of whites launched large number of anti-racist NGOs and demonstrations as a reaction to racism and racial profiling toward black people. A significant example of such mobilisation was the demonstrations for the Stephen Lawrence case which condemned the racism of the UK police (Lusane, 2009:202), ultimately leading to The Race Relations Amendment Act in 2000. The 9/11 and the London Bombing events intensified the racial discrimination, Islamophobia and control over the Global South population. As a result, organisations of Black and Asian activists campaigned to resist the Islamophobic treatment of Muslim people in Britain.

The emergence of the Arab Spring in the MENA⁵ region and its extension to outside this region by its migrants and diasporic agents added new contexts of exploring migrants’ activism. For example, the Libyan diaspora was reported as being active politically during the Libyan anti-government protests (Alunni, 2019: 258). The de-territorialisation of these movements which were anti-government mobilisations and calls for democratic transitions are recent, thus they remain under-documented theoretically and empirically. This research tries to fill the gap in this regard by ethnographically exploring how Algerian British who live in the UK were engaged in the Algerian anti-regime movement which was calling for a democratic transition which started on 22 February 2019. The transnational activism of the Algerian emigrants in the political matters of Algeria had been witnessed mainly when there were political conflicts in Algeria, for example, during the Black Berber Spring in 2001 (Collyer, 2008: 698). On a more recent scale, the Algerian community in the UK was observed engaged in activism during the global pandemic, which was less focused on homeland politics, but was a form of social solidarity addressed from the Algerians in the UK “particularly towards those excluded from citizenship in both countries” (Boukrami, Guemar and Northey, 2022: 17). Adding to the records of the Algerian migrants’ transnational activism, this research further explores how Algerians, holders of dual citizenship, made sense of their transnational engagement in the internal affairs of the homeland during the era when Algeria was witnessing an emergence of series of popular movements.

⁵ MENA: is the abbreviation to Middle East and North Africa.

1.2.3 Women's migration

Migration used to be considered as an androcentric phenomenon in the field of migration and diaspora studies. Migrants were treated as homogenous groups characterised by masculinity while the attitudes towards the gender dimension were neutral and ignored. Although women made up a considerable proportion of migrants' communities, yet they were considered as "passive agents" (Mehta, 2018:4). Their recognition was limited to treating them as men's companions as spouses, daughters, and mothers. In the beginning of the second half of the 20th century "the phrase "migrants and their families" was a code for "male migrants and their wives and children"" (Boyd and Grieco, 2003:1).

The theoretical and empirical models used by the scholarship of migration and diaspora studies focused on the experiences of immigrants and their economic contribution (Pande, 2018:4; Sharma, 2018:41), leaving no space for the uniqueness of 'femaleness' among women immigrants in shaping these experiences and post-migration journey in general, assuming their experiences to be similar to men's, though these women "indubitably carry different definitions, remnants and experiences of culture" (Vatsa, 2016:65). The lack of effort to incorporate the uniqueness of women's experience in international migration theories led to a failure in exploring and understanding the conditions leading women to engage in transnational mobility, the reasons pushing them to migrate, and their insertion in the new country (Boyd and Grieco, 2003:1).

Including a gender dimension to traditional migration theorising opens realms of research from multiple perspectives. "The narratives shifted to analysing how gender shapes both the material experience of migration and the ways in which diaspora are conceived and represented in gendered terms" (Pande, 2018:6), and privileging terms of "belonging, negotiating domestic roles and re-defining changing diasporic identities as diaspora intersects with gender, race and class in new geographical spaces" (Mehta, 2018:16) as well as the existing models of patriarchy. Researching women's experiences in diaspora requires treating them as a non-homogeneous category that has a pattern of immigration. One must bear in mind the intergroup dynamics that influence their lived experiences. Vatsa (2016:67) argues that: "one cannot really emphasise on any category (be it the probability of constructing one single definition of a 'woman, a 'migrant', an 'immigrant' or a 'cultural heritage') that is fixed especially when they have to be negotiated in a new context".

Before delving into the lived experiences of women in contexts of migration and diaspora, I would like to cover mainly the experiences of women who come from a background where they are considered as ‘the guardian of the nation’. In such contexts, there is a relation between the nationalist project and women, where women signify the “mothers of patriots, as symbols of boundaries and as carriers of culture” (Anthias, 1998:473). The lived experiences of women migrants who have such a relation with their natal nations are largely shaped by the traditional life and values they left behind. In some diasporic communities like Pakistani communities, the traditional role of women remains intact in the host as they continue to immerse themselves in preserving their role (Basit, 2017:5). Women from India are considered the “bearers of Indian tradition” (Pande, 2018:1) because the framework within which they migrate is fed with a patriarchal model and the preservation of culture. The duty of women while being in diaspora is the embodiment of the nation of the origin in the host, “women perform the rituals, follow the traditions, celebrate the festivals and act as a link between the home culture and the host nation” (Sharma, 2018: 45).

Under patriarchal codes, women in the diaspora are expected to fulfil domestic roles and maintain a cultural continuity and transmission to children. However, their authority and power change because of the immigration and diasporic condition leading to transcending domestic borders altering patriarchal structures due to the social and economic changes occurring both in the origin and host countries (Pande, 2018:9). Using their professional skills, the mobility outside the house for labour in that diasporic condition enables women to move freely outside and to socialise beyond family networks and forge an identity that is impacted by the outside contact. Brah (1996:59) argues that “[t]he workplace offers the women the opportunity to socialise with a wide range of people, to break out of their isolation and to be able to share their concerns with other women”.

Women in diaspora face multiple challenges at multiple levels, ranging from both their position in relation to the homeland and the host. They endure the condition of double imprisonment, on the one hand restricted by the patriarchal norms of the household which situates their role solely inside the boundaries of the family where “female subordination to male authority plays itself out” (Boyd and Grieco, 2003:3), and on the other hand being imprisoned in the metamorphic sense by being an “outsider from the culture of the host” (Vatsa, 2016:72). Affected by the ‘imported’ patriarchy, women are forced to adopt and are controlled by the tradition of the country of origin. One of the major means of control is forced marriage among women, even those who were born in the host, and there is other unequal social and economic

treatment based on rigid patriarchal and gendered power relations already existing in the culture of the homeland. The consequences of these conflicts “can range from sexual violence, alcoholic or drug abuse resulting in intimate partner violence. The inevitable consequences of these forms of violence are usually broken families and wrecked marriages, where women disproportionately bear the burden as well as consequences” (Reddy, 2018:169).

Women’s lived experience is greatly shaped by how the host positions them. For example, Brah (1996:74) argues that the position within gender relations among Asian women in post - World War II and contemporary Britain is continuous to the imperial and colonial discourse that was governing women in those eras. Additionally, women might feel frustrated after coming to the host because of the imagined future they had before they migrated. These expectations about the host countries, mainly those of the West, range from the belief that women in these countries are “western liberated, educated, empowered and free women” (Sharma 2018:44). Leaving the home of origins according to these women is to free themselves and escape the existing patriarchal control that socially stigmatises them (see Nagatomo, 2012). However, they are shocked by the actual reality mainly because of what is expected from them inside the household on the one hand, and on the other hand, undergoing the impact of the intersection of “ethnicity, gender and class [which] may construct multiple, uneven and contradictory social patterns of domination and subordination” (Anthias, 1998:574) in the host. However, it was argued that women migrants do not remain passive to the reality constructed due to their migration, they develop agency of survival in the host. “For immigrant women, the cultural modalities in host societies offer many ways to challenge, transform, or negotiate traditional prescriptions of womanhood, women’s work, and identities, among others. In doing so, these women, arguably, engage in *feminist practice* and become feminists on their own sans the label” (Bonifacio, 2012:6).

Women’s spatiality

This research ethnographically explores Algerian British women’s spatiality through exploring how they make sense of their belonging to Algeria in a female-only space. The study of spaces and spatiality in general remains the interest of geographers and feminist geographers, yet ethnographers researching migration and transnationalism seek to find relevant insights from individuals’ spatiality. A paradigmatic shift took place in the study of space regarding its meanings, which became approached as “a social product, or a complex construct that affects

spatial practices and perceptions” (Sharobeem, 2015: 18). Scholarly consensus, thus, further argued that spaces cannot be approached rigidly and outside the social perspective and this is in order to subvert hegemonic understanding. For example, Wrede (2015: 10) argues that “the understanding of spaces as multiple, shifting, heterogeneous, situational, and contested may help subvert the oppressor-oppressed paradigm, the opposition between those with power to shape knowledge and spatial practice and those who suffer from them”. Departing from the principle of that paradigmatic shift, spaces are “conceived today as processual, relationally ordered systems” (Löw, 2006: 120), and through studying them, we can explore individuals’ identities construction, factors and power leading them to occupy them. Lincoln (2012: 34) argues that by studying the space people occupy, or for example, young people’s spatiality “we are able to explore the intricacies and mundanities of everyday life, the many layers that make up a young person’s youth culture within the wider context of their lives, while also examining how and why these cultures shift and how they are consumed”. Spaces which could be public and private also inform people’s moralities as “they are morally coded correct and incorrect and regulated based on the practices known (or believed) to take place and the reputation of the people occupying those spaces” (Freeman, 2005: 149).

Gender is decisive in demarcating individuals’ spatiality and the relationships between them are “complicated and are influenced by framework of power” (Sethi, 2018: 398), since both are socially constructed. The influence of gender does not stand solely by itself in defining ‘who occupies what space’, there are other intersected factors like religion, culture, sexuality, society and the list can go long. Women’s spatiality is constructed from the intersection of femaleness, and patriarchal and social understanding of that femaleness which thus could justify the gendering of spaces and perpetuation of surveillance and patronisation on women and their spatiality. Because the public space is less occupied by women as it “is often countered by concerns about their safety” (Sethi, 2018: 399), in Western and non-Western societies, the home as structured from ideological and social principles, is a “woman’s place” (Velentine, 2001: 63). Religion demarcates women’s spatiality, for example in Muslim societies, what determines the defining of the private and public space is largely “on the Islamic notion of mahram⁶” (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2001: 304) and the “wearing of a veil” (Babiano et al., 2019: 281). The private space like houses is what Muslim women mostly

⁶*Mahram* of the woman in Islam is of a male gender that cannot marry and have a sexual intercourse with her. The *Mahram* of a woman is her father, brother, uncle, son, nephew, grandfather and stepfather or son in law.

occupy as it enables individuals to be more in control of their personal identities and to be themselves (Philip, 2009:24) in a sense they can display who they are freely, without the prejudice and stigma from the general views of the society. Moreover, it also “acts as an identity space, a space of production, consumption, resistance and rebellion” (Lincoln, 2012:41).

For many Muslim societies, the domestic space of the house remains the place which imposes patriarchal restrictions on Muslim women, first by their parents and brothers, and then by their husbands after marrying (Ayari and Brosseau, 2005:282; Philip, 2009:24). This control and surveillance are most of the time related to religious discourse about women’s visibility and bodies which should not be exposed in public space, which in Muslim contexts are defined to be occupied by men. What could be intertwined with women’s spatiality, particularly Muslim women’s, is the relationship between the moral order and women, in the sense that generally women are perceived as the guardians of purity through preserving their bodies and sexualities as explored by studies on “geographical and historical contexts [which] shed light on the centrality of women’s body in shaping moral orders” (Freeman, 2005:149). Therefore, if Muslim women occupy public spaces, a set of rules, religion-driven, must be embraced to preserve that purity:

Women must be kept separate from unrelated men by restricting them to domestic spaces within the confines of the family. If they enter the public masculine space, then they must ensure that their sexuality is firmly constrained through the coverage of the head and the body. Hair is regarded as being sexually enticing as the body. It forms part of what the Qur’an refers to as women’s “ornaments” that they must hide from the gaze of unrelated men. Thus, prior to venturing out, they must cover their hair and hide the contour of their body by creating private space around the body, thus desexualising it” (Mohammed, 2005:183).

However, the confines of the house hold other meanings, ranging from two contradictory identifications: control and agency simultaneously. It is a space of a controlled sexuality and purity as well as a space where gendered roles are well established, where women bear the duty of motherhood and domestic requirements towards children and husband. On the other hand, it is a space of agency through which they feel safe and are intimately knowledgeable of it as well as a space for socialising and worship (Philip, 2009:24).

Women from socially conservative and patriarchal societies which clearly demarcate women’s spatiality, which is mainly reduced to the occupation of private space, migrate within frameworks of such demarcation and conception. Because the perception of women’s purity

remains the same, those demarcations: “may become especially significant if the diasporic context” (Mohammed, 2005:183). What shapes the mobility of women in diaspora is also informed by, for example, gender regulations, perceptions of women’s bodies, pre-migration and post migration experiences, and religion. For Muslim women who move abroad from their countries, these factors can intersect. For example, Silvey (2005:128) argues that “the intersection between gender and religion is thus crucial in our understanding of socio-spatial networks shape women’s migration”. She noticed that in the immigration of Indonesian women who migrate to Saudi Arabia, religion is omnipresent in the decision of movement (which is for doing Pilgrimage), in their post-migration experience, as well as the spaces they occupy. These women migrants besides migrating to perform the religious duty, carry with them views of their sexual purity regarding the space they must occupy. While these demarcations could originate from the cultural norms and women’s position and image of the nation, yet the country of settlement also determines (negatively sometimes) women migrants’ spatiality, based on the cultural, social and religious differences between the homeland and the host country. For example, Babiano et al. (2019: 286) found out that “both Islamophobia and the cultural incompatibility of public spaces in Australia to migrant’s cultural expectations affect women’s experiences in public space”.

As seen, the spatial dichotomous division between the private and public as a frame of reference when speaking of men and women division is shared among both Western and non-Western societies. Feminists too developed interest in studying spatiality taking into consideration the relationship between patriarchy and spatial divisions leading ultimately to enriching spatial studies. They mainly emphasised the inherited monopoly of the public space which is men’s space, where others like “women, migrants and ethnic minorities, were put out of sight or muted” (Babiano et al., 2019: 271). Feminist critiques challenged “the binarisms and power hierarchies that are manifest in and strengthened through human interaction with space” (Wrede, 2015: 12), as well as challenging “the dualistic (male/female, public/private, home/work) ways of thinking and the collapsing of boundaries” (Vallentine, 2001: 70). Feminists’ criticism about the dichotomy between the private/public was critiqued by other feminists who believe that these perspectives which encourage dissolving the private and public boundaries match the global feminist approach and they are not applicable to other societies like for example Arab societies (Abbas and Heur, 2014: 1217). Other black feminists as well emphasise the role of private space as a site of resistance, subverting the conception of the homeplace “whose structure was defined less by whether or not black women and men

were conforming to sexist behavior norms and more by our struggle to uplift ourselves as a people, our struggle to resist racist domination” (hooks, 1991: 47).

This research will explore non-Western migrant women in Western societies through the exploration of a female only space. It adds to the studies of Muslim women migrants’ spatiality through exploring the female space taking into consideration gender, religion, national and cultural identities, and how identities are constructed in the female space by women migrants. Doing so will go beyond the traditional approach of exploring women’s spatiality which is limited mostly to public spaces and private spaces like homes. This ethnographic exploration will both inform women migrants’ spatiality and explore how we could examine the migration of women in different contexts.

1.2.5 Citizenship

Citizenship has become a popular subject of debate in the last few years, appropriated by the humanities and social sciences scholars as a reaction to globalisation (Isin and Turner, 2002:1; Faist and Kivisto, 2007:1), including political philosophers whose interest lies in understanding the legal rights and duties between citizens and states of membership (Benton, 2010:10), and feminists to address women’s oppression and the relation between gender and citizenship, away from the classic right-duty concern (Faulks, 2000:2), and the list could go on. Historically, the idea of citizenship is traced back to the ancient Greece *polis* (city), however, the systematic development of the citizenship theory started to flourish by the time of Aristotle. Its ancient existence led to the emergence of its “various forms across history” (Balibar, 2015:2). Thus, the classic Greek citizenship “was very different in its function from citizenship in the modern period” (Faulks, 2000:14).

“Citizenship is a notoriously polyvalent concept, with many meanings and implications” (Joppke, 2010:10). The most obvious definition of citizenship is that it is the legal status of membership of a political and geographical community which entails a sense of reciprocity between the individuals and the state (Faulks, 2000:13), i.e. a package of rights, benefits as well as duties and obligations. Citizenship is the permit through which members are distinguished from non-members (Bauböck, 2017:1; Simonsen, 2017:1), from who is a Citizen and who is a Denizen⁷ (or other).

⁷“The term ‘denizen’ was introduced to immigration theory to emphasise the convergence between the legal rights of permanent residents non-citizens and citizens” (Benton 2010: 11)

Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul (2008:154) state that citizenship can be disaggregated into four dimensions: legal status (who is entitled to be citizen and who is not), rights (equality in law), political participation (evolving through time as it was historically exclusionary based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion and class), and a sense of belonging. It is argued that these dimensions can overlap and complement with each other, but this is not necessarily so as they can also clash with each other (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2008: 591- 592; Bloemraad, 2015). Other terminological consensus as well is found in the literature and theories covering the fundamental dimensions and axes of citizenship, stating for example that: “Citizenship [...] bring[s] within its orbit three fundamental issues: how the boundaries of membership within polities should be defined (extent); how the benefits and burdens of membership should be allocated (content); and how the ‘thickness’ of identities of members should be comprehended and accommodated (depth)” (Isin and Turner, 2002:4).

Citizenship is not just a legal status which determines the official bond with the state, it was and remains in constant redefinition and transformation under the influence and challenge of a certain kind of politics, discourses, processes, social struggle of recognitions and the interference of certain factors which determines the relationship between people and their communities and states. Yuval-Davis (1997a:16) identifies “Gender, sexuality, age, and ability as well as ethnicity and class” as factors which determine such relationship, and the list can go on, and thus, rendering citizenship can be not merely understood as “legal status but as political and social recognition and economic redistribution” (Isin and Turner, 2002:2).

Another angle from which to look at regarding citizenship as not merely an official link with the state is that it is not a one-way system, and relationship through which the state only demarcates the regulations and law of this relationship, even people within this relationship are entitled ‘to perform’ their citizenship. Modood (2013:118) states that citizenship implies the engagement with civic debates and practices through individuals` initiatives, voluntary practices, and “ways of imagining and remaking ourselves as a country and expressing our sense of commonalities and differences” (Modood, 2013:118). Looking at citizenship from such an angle means the inclusion of society in the state-individual relationship to become a three-dimensional relationship between individual, state and society.

Access to citizenship can be based on the birthplace (*Jus Soli*), or the origins of parents (*Jus Sanguinis*), or both. However, not everybody desiring the acquisition of citizenship of any country meets these two criteria, as is the case of international migrants who are given the

citizenship of the country of settlement, who acquire it through naturalisation after fulfilling certain requirements. These different systems through which access to citizenship operates demonstrate how the latter functions as being inclusionary and /or exclusionary simultaneously.

Citizenship and immigrants

It is particularly international migration which widely influences the conceptualisation of citizenship on the one hand, and on the other hand, migrants are most of the time the category which undergoes the different systems of inclusion and exclusion of citizenship. What lies historically at the centre of constructing and defining citizenship is the nation-states (Faist, 2000:201), and such an influence continues to be held by them. Also, in conceptualising citizenship, political sociologists have shown an awareness of the centrality of the state in doing so (Bloemraad, 2015:594). The different forms of nationalism of nations justify the system through which citizenships are obtained, which ultimately influence the acquisition of citizenship among the newcomers to the nation-state. Ethnic Nationalism is associated with the principle of belonging based on descentance which matches the *Jus Sanguinis* citizenship-based system, and the Civic Nationalism whose principle of belonging to the nation is based on the belief that: “all citizens are co-nationals by virtue of this status, their shared political values, and their desire to live together to put these values into practice” (Larin, 2020:131) coincides with the *Jus Soli* principles of citizenship which provides the descendants of immigrants access to citizenship and an easier naturalisation (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008:158). As much as the different forms of Nationalism influence immigrants because of its interference in structuring formal and legal principles and values regarding the process of acquiring citizenship, immigrants do not play a passive role in shaping the citizenship of the receiving country, their presence leads increasingly to challenge the held belief principle of the citizenship within the nation-state’s borders.

1.2.6 Dual citizenship

The concept of dual citizenship is central to this PhD, because it is mainly the fact that Algerian British are holders of two citizenships simultaneously which provides a possibility for Algerian British to develop sense of belonging to one or two states of membership as well as the possibility for understanding the lived experiences of Algerian British as dual national

(citizens). The dual citizenship is the holding of two citizenships of two nation-states simultaneously. It is held either by birth or by choice through naturalisation. The rise of dual citizenship is justified in various ways by the sovereign states. Political and economic factors, historical experiences ideologies and nationalist sentiments (Park, 2014:193), problematic categories like married women (Harpaz and Mateos, 2019:4), and the inclusive understanding of nationhood (Faist, Gerder and Rieple, 2004:935) are all factors leading to the recognition of dual citizenship. Yet one major reason was due to the rise and frequency of migration in a world characterised by globalisation.

The adoption of dual citizenship did not always exist in discourse of citizenship, and this is because it was challenged and not tolerated. Harpaz and Mateos (2019:8) describe the shift to legitimising dual citizenship as “a post-exclusive turn in citizenship”. The shift initially had to undergo the resistance of the nation-state to the allowance of dual citizenship. Nation-state which was central to the traditional conceptualisation of citizenship prohibited dual citizenship, “as it undermines the single and exclusive link between an individual and sovereign Nation-states” (Bloemraad, 2004:390). Following such perspective, from the mid-nineteenth century until the Cold war, acquiring a new citizenship meant losing the previous citizenship by renouncing it as a condition for nationality, and the principle was ‘one nationality for one person’. For example, a British citizen who would acquire American citizenship would lose British citizenship under the legislation of both Britain and the USA.

Dual citizenship was considered as an anomaly and “as an irregularity of the same kind as statelessness” (Bauböck, 2017:4). And the holders of dual citizenship have been considered as ‘deviant’ in the modern nation-state system. The major concern of governments who prevented it was the multiple political participation of dual nationals in multiple polities (LÅce, 2015:3), stopping it by means of international treaties and regulations. Another reason given for their refusal was the perceived connection between dual citizenship and acts of treason and espionage (Faist, Gerder and Rieple, 2004:932; Harpaz and Mateos, 2019:845). Yet another issue central to the discourse of dual citizenship is that of loyalty. Being dual national implies being loyal to two nation-states in terms of rights and obligations, and the traditional system of modern nation-states perceives divided and multiple loyalties as “not possible, if institutionalizing dual citizenship would lead to a lower importance of belonging” (LÅce, 2015:5).

Dual citizenship is strongly linked to transnationalism as a theory and as a process. First, dual citizenship is considered as the obvious illustration of transnational citizenship. It is widely argued that the increasing dual citizenship is a result of the increasing political and economic demands of individuals which surpasses territorial boundaries in the era of transnationalism (LÃce, 2015:15), and the decline of the nation-state which controls people's movements (Park 2014:191). Therefore, it is people's transnational activities and border crossing which push them to strongly demand dual citizenship. From another angle, citizenship is not only the effect of transnationalism; it is also a strategy to increase transnationalism and border crossing. For example, holding more than one passport offers individuals easy access to different geopolitical spaces. Additionally, dual citizenship does not only imply relation with polities or states, also "it designates dual identities, reflecting attachment to both sending and receiving countries" (Bloemraad, 2004:394).

As a cause and effect of transnationalism, it might be thought that dual citizenship challenges the traditional conception of citizenship and the centrality of nation-states. However, it is argued that the growing tolerance of dual citizenship is also a strategy to reinforce the power of the nation-states, because though dual citizenship promotes multiple membership, participation and attachment across boundaries, yet the nation-state is still the guarantor and the body which gives the citizenship (Bloemraad, 2004:393; Park, 2014:191).

Policy making's favourable stance to dual citizenship especially in states of many immigrants is a solution to the long-held problem of immigrants' integration to the country of settlement. Providing the newcomers with the right to naturalise without having to abandon the citizenship of the country of origin is used as a strategy to make them politically engaged and interested which would lead ultimately to their integration and successful incorporation (Faist, Gerder and Rieple, 2004:914). It is not known or guaranteed that this would be the consequence of allowing citizenships to immigrants. Immigrants opt for acquiring other nationality besides the nationality of the country of origins for various reasons, there are those who either acquire it for instrumental reasons, or to meet the policy-making expectation that of the political participation (Birka, Blatter, and Schlenker, 2017:422), and there are other citizens, who are non-resident, perceive the second citizenship as compensatory citizenship because it makes up for limitations" of the primary citizenship or homeland's (Harpaz, 2019:900).

1.3 Socio-historical backgrounds

Providing an extended literature review about socio-historical contexts is particularly relevant in this PhD. Although at the beginning of this research, immersing into the literature of these contexts was undoubtedly a must, yet during the process of generating the data as well as the process of making sense of it, it was surprising for me to realise that understanding the lived experiences of Algerian British people as immigrants was highly linked and nested within socio-historical contexts. These contexts are rooted in the history of Algeria, which in one way or another shaped their experiences either prior to their migration or afterwards. The socio-historical background highlights the history of Algeria while it was attempting to build an independent nation through resistance and a project of decolonisation which was like any decolonisation “a violent phenomenon” (Fanon, 2001:28). Its attempt to build a nation in the post-independence era leaned on particular nationalist agendas which, as with any nationalist project, often ended in the creation of unity and disunity simultaneously, and internal conflicts illustrated mainly in the two remarkable historical conflicts that of the Berber Spring as well as the Civil War. The instability of Algeria which had elements of a social, economic, political and identity nature stretched from post-independence right until today and a recent illustration to that is notably the emergence of series of popular movements in Algeria in 2019 which were extended to outside Algeria by the Algerian diaspora. What is as well emphasised in the literature of the socio-historical context is the position of the Algerian woman in pre-colonial, colonial and post-independent Algeria and the different patriarchal structures she endured from the indigenous community as well as the colonial power. This socio-historical context would promote the understanding of the lived experience of Algerian immigrants women who though they no longer live in Algeria, yet the gender relations system existing in Algeria prior and post migration *still* influences them outside Algeria.

In the last part of the socio-historical context, I cover the major debates about ‘Britishness’ in relation to immigrants. These debates have particular resonance for Algerian British. I speak first about the major climates that influenced the construction of the British national identity and how the arrival of immigrants both influenced and resulted in the British national identity model. As to different aspects in Britain which demonstrate either directly or indirectly the nature of its nationalism, the British citizenship which is argued to some extent is the reflection of British nationalist philosophy, is as well unpacked in this literature review.

3.1.1 Algeria: the building of a nation

In this selective historical report, I will focus on remarkable historical moments which have a particular influence on the lived experiences of research participants of this research. I mainly want to focus on the relevant discourse which surrounded the Algerian nation-building project after independence from French colonialism in 1962. I highlight, in chronological order, the nationalist agenda right after the independence, the Berber Spring in the 80s, the Civil War in the 90s, and the genesis of the *Hirak* which remains one of the most relevant events which took place since the Civil War.

The occupation of Algeria by France was more than a territorial domination. It was detrimental to Algerian identity, the self-identification of Algerian people and their psychology. In a nutshell, “it was a colonization of men and minds, of ‘bodies and souls’” (Sayad, 1999: 285). After decolonisation, Algeria was among those nations which sought to create its national identity, a mission which remained the interest of those who took part in the Algerian Revolutionary War (1954-1962). The backbone of Algeria’s nationalist project was fed with antagonism to the French colonialism, by “denigrating the colonial state whilst promising the people a better future under an indigenous government” (Hill, 2006:3).

To do so, the model adopted by the Algerian leaders to define ‘what it is to be an Algerian’ (under the government of the first president of the independent Algeria, Ahmed Ben Bella as well as the following governments under the presidency of Houari Boumediene and Chadli Benjedid) was fuelled with the Pan-Arabism⁸ ideology. In the demarcation of an Algerian national identity, they implemented the model of being a ‘Muslim Arab’ by promoting the project of Arabisation, a project which is not only an antithesis agenda to the remnants of French colonialism but is arguably a project “closely tied to Islamic ideologies” (Sharkey, 2012:428).

Parekh (2000:253) argues that charting any nationalist project “highlights some features, ignores or marginalises others”, a scenario the Algerian nationalist project arrived at while building a nation at the same time both anti-colonial and *Arabisée*, neglecting and marginalising groups who identify as Algerian, yet not as Arabs, at least linguistically.

⁸ Pan Arabism is a doctrine whose ideas originated in the early decade of the 20th century; its principle is rooted in the uniting all Arab countries into one Arab nation.

Imposing the Arabic language as the only and official national language, excluded both those who are not *Arabophone* and those who had been combatants against French colonialism yet because they had received a French education only “spoke a dialectical Arabic but read and wrote in French” (Vince, 2009:159). The majority of individuals who were impacted by the marginalisation of the nationalist project were the Berbers. The Berbers are the indigenous population of North Africa, in Algeria known as Kabyles where they live in ‘*la Kabylie*’ region, situated in the North and Southeast of Algiers. Their language is ‘Tamazight’. During the French colonialism, the Kabylie region was not excluded from France’s *mission civilatrice*, where the French assimilationist agenda perceived the Kabyles as less problematic assuming that their ethnic identity was antagonistic to an Islamic identity (Christelow, 2012:11). Though fighting hand in hand with the rest of Algerians against the French colonialism, yet the Kabyles felt the exclusion from the nation building project which denigrated their ethnic and linguistic identity, and the banning of any action promoting non-Arabic identities, an attitude which ultimately led to violence. A very provocative action was taken by the Algerian authorities in 1980 to ban a university lecture about poetry in Tamazight, and this led to an active uprising of university students in *la Kabylie* and Algiers giving rise to the emergence of the Berber Spring, a series of strikes and boycotts from Kabyles against security forces, claiming the recognition of their language as a national language and their culture in defining the Algerian identity (Hill, 2006:10). Two decades later and after another more severe movement called the Black Spring (2001), Tamazight was officially recognised as a national language in 2002 and an official language in 2016.

Another key historical event which stood against the nation building project was the waging of a civil war in the 1990s. This was triggered by political destabilisation which Algeria witnessed during that period. When the political Islamist party Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) won the municipal and the parliamentary elections in 1991, the military forces refused FIS’s arrival in power and announced a state of emergency and put many activists of the Islamist party in jail. This led to the emergence of Islamic guerrillas which fought against the Government and the Algerian civilians causing bloody, psychological massacres and the disappearance of many Algerian individuals, to the extent that this particular historical era was referred to as ‘the Black Decade’, lasting until 2002. Pushing aside the FIS was justified by the Islamic ideologies it advocated and its plans regarding transforming Algeria into an Islamic state acting under the principle of Sharia (Islamic laws) in all aspects of Algerian society (Hill, 2006: 13), an agenda considered as ““foreign” and “un-Algerian”” (Vince, 2009:162).

After the end of the civil war, Algeria gradually witnessed social and economic healing from the destruction of the civil war, yet what remained politically was the persistent power of the FLN party, and AbdelAziz Bouteflika as the president of Algeria from the end of the 90s until his resignation in 2019, under the pressure of the popular movement or what has been called *el-Hirak*. The outbreak of the *Hirak* took place on 22 February 2019, a date which then and according to a decree signed by the current president of Algeria became “a national day of fraternity and cohesion between the people and the Army of democracy” (Embassy of Algeria to the United States of America, 2020). The *Hirak* originally emerged as a reaction to Bouteflika’s 5th presidency candidacy. He had been given credit for adopting the national reconciliation project with radical terrorists after the Civil War (Tlemçani, 2008:6) but he was refused by Algerians the chance to run for another presidential election, mainly due to his inability to govern because of his ill health.

The mobilisation of Algerians took place peacefully and was also extended outside Algeria by the Algerian diaspora in Europe and North Africa (Ouaissa, 2021:51). The *Hirak* is considered as “an unstructured popular movement” (Lassel, 2020:37) because it does not represent any party-political structure or ideology (Ouaissa, 2021:52). Though the motto of these movements was ‘*silmia silmia*’ (peaceful peaceful), many commentators were sceptical, expecting these peaceful movements to lapse into violence as had happened during the Arab Spring in Syria, Egypt and other Arab nations eight years before. However, it was observed that the early days of the *Hirak* were “more positive in outlook than Arab Spring” (Bentahar, 2020:12), though the ex-prime minister Ouyahia was reminding the Algerians about the past experiences like the Civil War, a strategy as argued “to deter from the participating in manifestations against the candidacy of AbdelAziz Bouteflika” (Zeraoulia, 2020: 26).

After the resistance of Algerian protesters against the candidacy of Bouteflika, the latter resigned on the 11 March 2019, yet the popular movements were still taking place until the global pandemic of Covid-19 broke out. What characterised the agenda of the Algerian *Hirak* even after the resignation of Bouteflika was summarised in the expression of ‘*Yetnahaw Ga’a*’ (they all should go). This famous expression was coined by an Algerian young man who interrupted live media coverage from the Sky Arabic Chanel which was reporting on the evening of Bouteflika’s resignation the reaction of the Algerians in Algiers. While the journalist was reporting that Algerians are out to celebrate their achievement to see Bouteflika resigning, the young man interrupted her and corrected her by saying that they are not celebrating, they are protesting for more changes, and that the whole political system should

be reformed. The expression of '*Yetnahaw Ga'a*' which carries a "symbolic, culturally and politically" value" (Bentahar, 2020:7) became the justification for the persistence of the popular movement which was calling for a radical change in the politics of Algeria and seeing the *Eissaba* (gangs of political figures) who were put on trial for the theft of money.

Besides the political and economic claims, the popular movement was also characterised by nationalist discourses about the Algerian national identity (Bentahar, 2020:12). One illustration to this was using the issue of identity to divide the unity of the movements, mainly when the army Chief, during summer 2019, banned protesters from publicly waving the Berber flag (see appendix 1) on the pretext that no flag should be waved apart from the Algerian national flag. He justified this prohibition saying that: "There is only one flag that is the unique symbol of Algeria's independence, territorial integrity and popular unity" (Ghanmi, 2019). This incident received different reactions from different groups: "some political activists who considered the flag as a sign of regionalism and divisiveness [and] Amazigh ethnic group, on the other hand, asserted that the decision of prohibiting the Berber during the demonstration was more than just an ideological game to separate the Algerians" (Al-Khadra, Hamdan, Kessar, and Rabab'Ah, 2021: 9).

This PhD research is about the Algerians in the UK where the ethnographic fieldwork took place and where Algerian British participants were observed and interviewed. Yet, it was clear that the events that characterised both the political and the social life of Algeria from the post-independent era until the genesis of the popular movements in Algeria in 2019 had an impact on Algerian research participants in their post-migration life. A more concrete illustration to this was their participation from a distance in the popular movement, where this research explored the meaning they gave to their engagement as individuals living outside Algeria and as holders of the citizenship of the country of settlement.

1.3.2. Women in Algeria

A key feature of this PhD is the ethnographic exploration of the Algerian women migrant in the UK, who though they no longer live in Algeria, yet their migratory experiences are shaped by the position of the Algerian woman socially, culturally and politically in Algeria. Therefore, here I will explore the position of Algerian women from pre-independence to post-independence and contemporary Algeria, because they are a category which was to a great

extent affected, most of the time, negatively by the nation-building agenda. The position of Algerian women both during the pre-war, revolutionary war and independent Algeria was ambivalent, summarised by Bennoune as:

[R]epeatedly caught between conflicting forces, as if facing a choice of oppressors: colonialism versus indigenous patriarchy; cultural imperialism versus “traditions”; and Islamic fundamentalism versus neo-liberalism. For an Algerian feminist, to criticize one force was to be accused of supporting its “opposite”, an often altogether false construction (Bennoune, 1995: 51).

Speaking of the realities of women in pre-Revolutionary War when Algeria was under the French colonialist rule, a woman’s position was influenced by colonialism’s established order and the social structure of the Algerian community, leading to her isolation and silencing (Lazreg, 1994:99). Gender relations under the indigenous order was characterised by spatial division, with women occupying the household and taking care of the children, apart from some French Muslim women who were occupying the public sphere for education (Vince, 2009:159). Algerian woman was expected to show “the specifically feminine virtues, *lah’ia* [decency], modesty, reserve, orient the whole female body downwards towards the ground, the inside, the house, whereas male excellence, *nif* [pride], is asserted towards upward, outwards, towards other men” (Bourdieu, 2012:94). The encounter of Algerian women with the colonialists was constructed around subordination, marginalisation and misrepresentation. Even the encounter of these women with French ‘feminists’ was not immune from othering and misrepresentation. What these feminists wrote about Algerian women remains subject to criticism due to their inability to, at least, understand women’s languages. While Algerian women were supposed to be spoken about, they were “thoroughly objectified” (Lazreg, 1994:39), and “throughout the 1950s and 1960s, various monographs on women appeared with the aim of “guiding” Algerian women towards the ideal of French womanhood and downgrading their religion and customs” (Lazreg, 1988: 91)

What remains central in the conceptualisation of the relation between Algerian women and the French colonialists is *el-Hayek* (veil). *El-Hayek* is usually a beige single piece of cloth which covers the face and the whole body. Veiled women created contestations for the colonialist. In the one hand, “the veil allows Algerian women to create a situation of imbalance [...] they can see without being seen; without making themselves visible” (Bourdieu, 2012:114). On the other hand, veiled women were subject to the colonial gaze because the veil during the European and colonial expansion back in the eighteenth century was perceived as a marker of inferiority and a barrier to getting knowledge from women (Alrasheed, 2013:20) leading

ultimately the colonialists to develop “the metaphoric ‘need’ to unveil so called exotic and alien cultures, by “lying them bare” and bringing them into conformity with ideological norms of the dominant hegemonies” (Naidu, 2009:20). Algerian women were not immune from such colonial gaze and French colonialism “was bent on unveiling Algeria” (Fanon, 1967:59) under the pretence that doing so protects the humiliated woman and frees her from the indigenous patriarchy.

“In the late nineteenth centuries [...] women played an important, if in many ways complex part in the anti-colonial struggles - from involvement in military campaigns to less orthodox forms of resistance” (Young, 2009:362), and Algerian women were no exception in the national liberation movement, joining the male *Moudjahidin* subverting “gendered ethnoreligious stereotypes” (Vince, 2010:463), and whose participation “projected as the symbol of the progressive nature of the nationalist movement, seamlessly embodying ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’” (Vince, 2013:33). Women’ roles were instrumental in the revolutionary war, “with few exceptions, the nature of this participation fit in the “traditional” pattern of gender roles, where men held positions of responsibility and command, and women executed orders” (Lazreg, 1994:124), serving different positions and embracing the depth of the struggle of the war (Fanon, 1967:66). Though they endured all types of violence torture and rape yet their recognition in the revolutionary war “remains secondary” (Bouatta, 1997:2).

The nationalist movement in post-independent Algeria to a great extent was governing the position of Algerian women in the private and the public sphere. Though their position during the revolutionary war was characterised by subversion to tradition, yet “women as tropes of culture, identity and nation will continue to be used in postcolonial Algeria” (Lazreg, 1994:172), as “it is widely claimed by oppositional – and many scholarly – voices that the post-independence period saw Algerian women ‘sent back into the kitchen’ by a patriarchal nationalist movement” (Vince 2013: 33). Nationality, citizenship and family codes were based on Islamic laws creating limited liberties for women. Some women sought empowerment through education and engagement in the labour force. Many feminists were seeking to redefine gender relations and women’s position in the Family Code, yet due to the economic crisis which haunted Algerian in the post-independence period, women’s rights claims were considered as secondary matters (Bennoune, 1995:54; Tlemçani, 2016:244) compared to the economic problems and crises.

Algerian women were highly influenced by the Islamic fundamentalism of the 90s, seeing the reimposition of Islamic principles and control over their sexuality (Rohloff, 2012:15). Islamism could be considered as “one of the sexual apartheid” (Bennoune, 1995:65), where Algerian women endure measures of control regarding legalising polygamy and limiting their decision about divorce matters. Women were instructed to wear the veil and it became the hallmark of their religiosity (Lazreg, 1994:218). However, many women from anti-fundamentalism NGOs resisted the wearing of the veil and strove to promote women’s freedom and emancipation, leading some extremists to chase and kill them. One of the famous figures resisting publicly against wearing the veil was Katia Bengana, 17 years old, who was killed after going out to protest against the veil (Turshen, 2002: 898)

After the end of the civil war, violence and fundamentalism, and the appearance of multi-party system in Algeria, Algerian women were relatively ‘freed’. They could finally take part in the political life by organising political parties for the first time since the pre-Revolutionary War where they were active in politics through organising women’s association, yet “those associations were part of existing political parties where women’s political participation was an extension to the ideologies of those parties (Bouatta, 1997:1).

With the assistance of women activists and NGOs, AbdelAziz Bouteflika made reforms in the Family Code first in 2005 granting more rights to women in divorce matters and the ability to transmit citizenship to children, and in 2015 the bill was greatly amended in women’s favour, promoting more legal equality between women and men. The existing laws were in contradiction to women’s reality which was characterised with their increased presence in the public sphere (Tlemçani, 2016: 244). For example, many sectors were increasingly becoming feminised like the juridical sector. In promoting their visibility in politics, the government adopted a quota system which ensures that 30 % of elected bodies would include women. This unprecedented recognition was approached by feminists’ activists as not a favour but as their efforts to pressure the government for such recognition (Lassel, 2020: 39).

The emergence of the *Hirak* created an opportunity for Algerian women to address their struggle as being second class citizens. Even with those existing reforms, women’s political presence remains weak, and the Family Code does not serve their side. Algerian women and feminists constructed what was called ‘the Feminist Square’, a space located in the central faculty of Algiers where women feminists and activists met every Friday (Volpi, 2020: 7), claiming appeals to the Family Code and rights for education, work, freedom and safety in

public spaces (Lassel, 2020:43). The Feminist Square was fiercely attacked, an act that demonstrates the exclusion of women's demands within *el-Hirak*'s demands. Research has shown that after these attacks, women turned to social media and created a space of resistance that protected them from attacks in physical spaces, yet the change of the platform to a virtual one demonstrated "simultaneously empowering and oppressing dynamics" (Braktia, 2020:112), because women were still being attacked for claiming their demands.

1.3.1 Britishness: national identity and citizenship

The research looks at how Algerian British make sense of their Britishness as citizens and as part of the nation, therefore this section covers the historical background of the British national identity and the British citizenship.

1.3.3.1 British national identity

Historically, the UK came to be unified in the eighteenth century "by virtue of the civil pact (rooted in ... an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant ascendancy), which associated significantly different cultures –Scotland, and Wales with England" (Hall, 2019:104). Ward (2004:115) states that: "neither have there been clear cut "communities" in Britain since 1870, of the Irish and the British, of the Jew and the Gentile, of the black and white, of the English and the others". However, what came to characterise post-war Britain is its becoming a community of communities that joins "many different groups, interests and identities, from Home Counties English to Gaels, Geordies and Mancunians to Liverpudlians, Irish to Pakistanis, African-Caribbeans to Indians" (The Parekh Report, 2002:10).

The British national identity is shaped by historical sequences the UK went through, embedded in different discourses related to modern, imperial, colonial legacies and the post-war era. National identity is a multifaceted term, not stable and static, and it is centred on what thoroughly signifies individuals from a particular nation. Parekh (2000:253) loosely defines it as "the identity of the political community" and argues that it is characterised with its complexity and elusiveness in a sense that its meaning cannot be reduced into a single and clear definition and its features cannot exclusively be "summed up in few neat propositions" (Parekh, 2000:253). The British national identity follows such trajectories in its demarcation. Ward (2004:3) clearly defines Britishness as:

What people mean when they identify themselves individually and collectively as ‘being British’. This identification relates to the political, economic, social, cultural and personal surroundings they find themselves in at the time they choose to think about their Britishness.

Defining Britishness implies discourses of superiority, nested in discourses of differences, shaped profoundly by historical experiences of imperialism and colonialism, which “has framed the “other” as a constitutive element of the British identity” (Hall, 2019:104). Though the British nationalist agenda was charted to preserve the union of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, other factors led to rethinking what signifies the British identity in the post-war era. The welfare state agenda along with the end of the empire and the weakening of the monarchy, the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales and the joining of the EU community gave a new form to Britishness. However, what impacted the homogeneity and the assumption that Britishness means ‘whiteness’ was the arrival of immigrants of Afro-Caribbean, African and Asian origins. These groups were welcomed in post-war Britain because of the need for a workforce and cheap labour. They were faced with ‘a doubled faced policy’, in a sense that their labour was cherished, yet because of their skin colour and origins they were racialised and ethnicised, where ‘race’ was usually applied to Afro-Caribbeans and ‘ethnicity’ to Asians (Hall, 2019:109) by mainstream discourses of the nation. Overall, two policies characterised the dealing with immigrants and the charting of the British character in post-war Britain, that of assimilation and then multiculturalism.

Assimilation. In the light of those changes, the awareness of British political analysts to preserve the homogeneity of Britishness from the ‘other’ proliferated. The political voice that debated the British national identity at that moment adopted the model of assimilation which was reproduced by the New Right View group. A view fulfilled by the visions of Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher. The advocates of the New Right View fundamentally shared the vision of the individuality, purity and the uniqueness of the UK. Immigrants from African and Asian backgrounds were considered as a threat, famously declared by Thatcher’s ‘Swamped’ speech (1978) and Powell’s ‘Rivers of Blood’ (1968).

Under the assimilationist philosophy, immigrants were forced to give up on their identities and to comply with that agenda, a challenging task because identities are multiple, fluid and not always primordial. The assimilationist policy was far from being void from flaws, it was an agenda that gave recourse to the imperial practice of superiority of Britain (Zriba, 2018:87),

and it contributed to creating a racist discourse and failed to integrate minorities. Parekh (2000:260) condemns the advocates of assimilation as “narrow, exclusive, dogmatic, intolerant, backward looking and uninspiring”.

Multiculturalism. “Although its meaning is varied and contested, there is a general consensus that multiculturalism involves valorising ethnic and cultural diversity” (Faist and Kivisto, 2007:7). Adopting multiculturalism as a political doctrine⁹ can be seen as “the means taken to broaden the definition of national identity so that it incorporates as diverse an assortment of cultural differences as possible” (Asari, Halikiopoulou and Mock, 2008:3). Modood (2007: 2) defines the political idea of multiculturalism as: “the recognition of group difference with the public sphere of laws, politics, democratic discourses and the terms of a shared citizenship and identity”.

Britishness started to take a new form in the 1980s due to pluralism and the drift to multicultural policy was nurtured in the 1990s. Initially multiculturalism was present in lived experiences and then took a form of political ideology (Zriba, 2008:81). The multiculturalist agenda was supported by the Labour government which attempted to redefine the British national identity emphasising “the plural and dynamic character of British society” (Modood, 2007:10) and membership of the global sphere and Europe (Parekh, 2000:260).

Though multicultural policy looked promising to immigrants, Britain was facing “the failure to produce a discourse to integrate various ethnic group under the umbrella of a common British identity” (Asari, Halikiopoulou and Mock, 2008:1) because “just as British national identity is dynamic and diverse so are those ethnic minorities; they make up heterogeneous and multidimensional entities” (Zriba, 2004:89). Minorities in Britain are faced with the British national identity and their identities of origins in a multicultural ground. In order to negotiate their identities, they adopted mechanisms to deal with this question, “some retain exclusive sense of their original national (or other) nationalities [...] other migrants and their descendants have seen it is natural to identify themselves as British” (Ward, 2004:114). Britishness was seen as vulnerable to dual loyalties of immigrants and their children; for example, the involvement of British citizens from minorities backgrounds in the race riots of 2001 was

⁹ “*ism*” tends to convert “multiculturalism” into a political doctrine (Hall 2019: 96).

interpreted as “the absence of a civic British identity” (Asari, Halikiopoulou and Mock, 2008:2) and an “intercultural malaise in Britain” (Zriba, 2018: 81).

Much rhetoric proliferated about the need for resetting the Britishness agenda under the shadow of considering multiculturalism as a failed framework, which led to fragmentation instead of unity. Modood (2007: 10) argues that 2001 was the year when multiculturalism in Britain witnessed crisis mainly because of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a crisis further prolonged after 7/7 London Bombings. It was observed that attacks on multiculturalism were implicitly attacks on Islam (Allen, 2015: 7), and negative media representation pushed Muslims for the “reinvigoration of minority political religious identities” (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2013: 691) and destabilising the “British Muslims’ identities with the solidification of Muslimness and the relinquishment of Britishness” (Mythen, 2012:398). Lastly, the reiteration and the shift in vision of the British national identity explicitly aims at the union of the British nation but it implies the discourses of difference ultimately leading to the dichotomy of the ‘us’ vis-à-vis the Muslims’ ‘them’:

[T]he Britishness agenda [is] a political vehicle that employs formal and informal discursive strategies in relations to notions of British identity to differentiate, demarcate and discriminate against Muslims, this is achieved by pitting notions of British and Muslim identity against each other as a means of establishing a dichotomous ‘us’ and ‘them’ relationship (Allen, 2015:2).

Though the discourse around multiculturalism and resistance to it was related to Muslims, yet a more recent discourse around multiculturalism has been central around Brexit. It was argued that the issue of Brexit is again an issue of the British national identity (Bell, 2021:356), questioning whether Britain is part of Europe, and a process which will have high impact on UK’s immigration policy (Martill and Straiger, 2018: 1). Whether multiculturalism failed or not, there still seems an unfinished debate about what constitutes the British national identity, and the story of Brexit was an illustration to such unfinished debate (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2016: 4). Another space where British nationalism is mirrored is the construction of the British citizenship which I shall turn to now.

1.3.3.2 British citizenship

British Citizenship did not exist prior to 1707. Prior to this date, there existed English citizenship. However, after the Act of Union of 1707 that united the Parliament of England with the Parliament of Scotland to form the Parliament of Great Britain and the creation of the

United Kingdom of Great Britain, the notion of 'British' emerged. At that time, being British was constructed based on the principle of Jus Soli regardless of the parentage ties (Prahbat, 2018: 9). However, British citizenship appeared as a category in the 1948 British Nationality Act which created the status "Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies" (CUKC).

From that period to this period, the requirements to access to the British citizenship changed depending on different factors, that is why today, in conceptualising the British citizenship it appears to be a multi-layered concept (Puzzo, 2016: 2). A good starting point is T.H. Marshall's definition of citizenship in his essay on citizenship in post-war Britain (1950). He divided citizenship into three parts: civil, political, and social. The civil is composed of, for example, the rights and freedoms of an individual; the political is composed of the right to participate in the exercise of political power; and the social element of citizenship is about social welfare and security. However, his approach to citizenship was criticised. One aspect through which the concept was modified and customised was the arrivals of the mass migration from the post-war era until now. The journey of immigrants to British citizenship is achieved after crossing three 'gates' (Morrice, 2017: 59), the first gate is proving a legal entry of immigrants to the UK; this is in a form of a short-term residency visa granted for work or study. Once the visas expire, immigrants are obliged to leave the UK or are deported. The second gate is success in securing the status of permanent residence described as having an Indefinite Leave to Remain. The holders of this status can freely enter and stay permanently in the UK without risking being deported outside the UK. The third gate is that of naturalisation through which immigrants become officially British citizens and hold a British passport. Access to British passport is tolerated with the fulfilment of a set of requirements. Now, the acquisition of the British citizenship among immigrants is conditioned with fulfilling requirements. One regime that characterised the process of acquiring the British citizenship is testing applicants' ability to show mastery of the English language and knowledge regarding the life in the UK. Once they pass the testing phase, successful applicants attend ceremonies which are considered as significant and a symbolic procedure in acquiring British citizenship (Bassel, Khan and Monforte, 2018:5), and applicants are asked to take oath and swear their loyalty to the queen.

It is widely recognised that British citizenship does not solely hold a legal and formal sense. It is argued the British citizenship system is an illustration of the British national identity. A justification for this is the inclusion of the Life in the UK Test and language test in the journey to citizenship illustrating how the national identity entered the process of application (Prahbat,

2018:15). The embodiment of values of the nation and national identity in the British citizenship regime was a consequence of the presence of immigrants inside the UK's state borders and their willingness to acquire the official status of citizens. These immigrants- particularly Muslims- were particularly reported by media seen as presenting a cultural threat.

Though immigrants' access to citizenship is tolerated through the system of naturalisation, however, the centrality of the national identity principle in the process of naturalisation makes the access to citizenship regime exclusive and this has given rise to stratification of migrants. Applications that can easily access to the British citizenship are most likely to be from a Westernised background whose culture is similar to Britain (Morrice, 2017:606). Another category which has recently shown least resistance and has experienced least difficulty in becoming British citizens are those who are from non-EU regions, having historical (colonial) ties with England (Prahbat, 2018: 12-13). The category, which is eligible to apply for British citizenship, yet struggles to access it is the category of migrants who are not from the EU region, which does not have a historical link with Britain, and who are from socio-cultural backgrounds different from UK's. Morrice (2017:606) who critiques the ignorance of the UK citizenship regime of the gender criterion, argues that it is particularly women migrants who undergo exclusion from citizenship within this category because of their inability to fulfil language requirements and the financial expenses of the process.

Conclusion

The literature review provided the theoretical underpinning of the research, summarised into the transnational approach to migration studies as well as the feminism approach. The selective literature which covered theories and concepts was diverse, illustrating the complexities, simultaneity and fluidity of the spaces navigated by of dual nationals/citizens who are both concerned with the homeland and the country of settlement. It is comprised from literature of long-distance nationalism and migrants' social movements about how migrants, though living abroad manage to maintain ties with the country of origins. Women migrants' have demonstrated that their experiences are more complex, needing to be explored taking into consideration different aspects related to for example femaleness, patriarchy, social conservatism, and religion. The literature above traced how women migrants, mainly those who are originally from a background different from the host's, are always in constant negotiation of the gaps generated from those differences. The outcome of exploring the sense

of belonging of Algerian British females and males as dual nationals led to the discovery that their constructed meanings are not separate from the socio-historical factors which impacted both their pre-migration and post-migration lives.

Finally, the literature review is a reflection to the interdisciplinarity of the research which was promoted by the ethnographic approach as well as the unexpected trajectory that characterises that approach, encouraging flexibility and immersion.

2

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This research followed strategic planning and a methodological framework which covers the choices made about “cases to study, methods of data gathering etc” (Silverman, 2005: 4) and “the broader philosophical and theoretical framework” (Brewer, 2000: 2). I embraced an ethnographic approach which guided the process of conducting the research from accessing to research fields to generating and interpreting the data.

This chapter describes those procedures by starting with providing the research questions this ethnographic research explores. I then provide a description of the contexts of the fields of investigation and research participants. Following that, I clarify how the ethnographic approach leads to generating data from the various sources and how I use different data-generating tools and how the data is interpreted. Because this research is qualitative, an explanation of the ethical procedures is provided.

A detailed account of these practical procedures is followed by an explanation of my philosophical stances regarding the question of ontology and epistemology. Following that, I clarify the value of the ethnographic approach in conducting this research which is located in the field of migration as well as its feminist position. Because as a researcher, I acknowledge that the researcher cannot separate herself from the research process, I explain my positionality and reflexivity in relation to the research process and research participants.

2.1 Research questions

Broadly, this research explores the following research question which is branched into two sub-questions:

- 1- How do Algerian British individuals make sense of their dual national belonging as holders of dual citizenship?
 - a- How do they make sense of their belonging to Algeria?
 - b- How to they make sense of their belonging to the UK?

2.2 Contexts of fieldwork: an introduction to research fields and research participants

In order to explore these research questions, I have conducted an ethnographic fieldwork which led me to immerse myself for approximately a one year period at different research sites with the population this research is interested to investigate. I shall now turn to speak about these contexts.

2.2.1 Research fields

This section deals with the context of the research fields where the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted. I will focus mainly on the fields which were the centre of attention in this research, Algerian protests in London (London's *Hirak*) and the female-only space field, while bearing in mind that there were other fields which were constructed through interaction with research participants outside these spaces.

London protests field

The inclusion of the activism of Algerians in London was not in the beginning part of the research, and this is because at that time it did not exist either in Algeria or among the diaspora. However, I started considering its exploration after attending a protest demonstration in London, which I had seen as an opportunity to observe the population this research is interested in gathered in a single place, and a good opportunity for recruitment. After reflecting on the nature of individuals' engagement in that field as well as the persistence of that engagement over time, I welcomed the possibility of exploring the activism of the Algerian British, but I centrally perceived it as relevant because it would illustrate how they make sense of their belonging to Algeria and how, though they live abroad and are holders of the host's citizenship, yet they are maintaining transnational ties with Algeria through activism.

Female-only space field

Like the previous research field, the inclusion of the female-only space appeared after the start of the research, mainly when I encountered the gatekeeper who enabled me to access and see what happens inside that space. It was the first time I had encountered social gatherings of Algerian women immigrants undertaken on regular basis, and they were characterised by

spontaneity. I, therefore, reflected on that regularity and the spontaneity and realised that their gatherings were part of their lived experiences as Algerian women.

I selected the inclusion of the female-only space considering two points of measurement: first, that of the position of the woman migrant per se in migration studies, and second the relation of the female-only space with London's *Hirak*. As for the first point, women immigrants' lived experiences have long been studied from the androcentric viewpoint which characterises migration theorising. Thus, as an attempt to deviate from such homogenising, I took the opportunity of accessing the female-only space to explore how Algerian women immigrants live their Algerianness. As for the relation with the *Hirak*, I consider the female-only space as a complementary to the *Hirak* at different levels. It was observed that women were not omnipresent in London's *Hirak* compared to men, thus, further exploring the lived experience of Algerian women in different spaces and situations, which would enrich the account of how research participants live their Algerianness outside Algeria. Another complementary relation is the different nature of the fields: while the *Hirak* is a non-ordinary phenomenon in the sense that it emerged due to dissatisfaction and within a clearly defined framework which possesses a clear structure and objectives around specific discourses (that of politics mainly), the female-only space is constructed around ordinariness, i.e., there is no particular structure or particular circulating discourse in women's gatherings. The two spaces meet at a point that they both inform how Algerian British individuals maintain an attachment with Algeria, despite the different ways of doing so.

Thus, the selection of research fields was not based on the assumption that they were already there waiting to be discovered. They were instead "ethnographically meaningful not only as a physical infrastructure, but also through the ways in which it is "brought into being" by the social actors that co-produce the phenomenon to be studied" (Boccagni and Schrooten 2018:212). In other words, the inclusion of the two mentioned fields took place because of the involvement of the population under study in them, which could only be given meaning based on how that population construct them.

2.2.2 Research participants

Research participants in this research had different degrees of participation, there were those who maintained a direct and sustained contact with the researcher, others had a casual contact and mostly underwent observations.

Sample size

The sample size was approximately 70, and the number of the research participants who were interviewed was 18.

The profiles

The research participants of this research were first generation immigrants living in the UK, whose age range was between 35 and 70 (see annex containing biographical introductions to research participants). They had migrated at different points in time from the late 70s to the early years of the 21st century. However, the majority migrated in the 90s. Different reasons led to the migration of this group, but the main reason was the Civil War in Algeria as well as the insecurity there. Others migrated to meet academic ambitions, aiming to return to Algeria. However, driven by other circumstances related primarily to the insecurity in Algeria, they decided to settle down in Britain. Professional motives, cultural curiosity about the receiving country, as well as joining partners mainly for women were other reasons of migration.

Research participants were holders of British citizenship, acquired depending on the UK citizenship system at the time they were naturalised. There were those who gained it without the 'Life in the UK' Test, whereas others had to pass it. These research participants lived in different regions in London: North-East, North-West, South-West and Central London either with their partners (wives and husbands), children, or alone due to the death of their partners or divorce. Professionally, they had different jobs related to teaching languages, engineering, freelance journalism and project management, childcare...etc. The other category inactive professionally were mainly those who were retired as well as women who were mostly active in the private sphere of the family.

The recruitment of research participants

Criteria of recruitment. The criteria to take part in this research were to be Algerian and a holder of the British citizenship, adult or young adult person, and most importantly the willingness to take part of the research voluntarily.

Techniques of recruitment. I deployed planned, unplanned, and snowball sampling methods (explained below) of recruitment, depending on the situation and the setting:

- a- Planned in a sense that I contacted people via social networks like Facebook. I found profiles mainly on Facebook pages about the Algerian community in the UK. While contacting individuals, I mentioned at the outset that: “I am a PhD student from Algeria, awarded a scholarship from the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research”. I also contacted some Algerian authorities working in the Algerian Consulate in London to put me in direct contact with people who met the criteria.
- b- The unplanned recruiting was held when I was just doing daily activities and unexpectedly got engaged in casual conversations in different settings. For example, I met one of the participants at Gatwick Airport, who while we were both waiting to be called to embark in the plane to go to Algeria, asked me what I do in Britain. I seized the opportunity to ask her to be part of my research when she started talking to me enthusiastically about the Algerian *Hirak*.
- c- Snowball sampling was another means of recruitment. It is a technique based on participants’ and non-participants’ initiatives to help me find other research participants who were either their family members, friends, or acquaintances. Those individuals who were recruited using the snowball sampling mostly accepted to be part of the research because they trusted the mediators.

The process of recruitment in this research was also exclusionary in a sense that at the ethnographic fieldwork I had built rapport with Algerians-born individuals who were willing to be part of my research, but because of its objectives they were excluded. Exploring London’s *Hirak* and female only space led me to find more Algerians in the two spaces, since the two locations offered belonging and identification with Algeria through political activism and cultural reproduction of the Algerian nation.

Through interacting with them, I realised that they had different migrant’s statuses, for example there were students on short term visas, political refugees, Algerian-born naturalised French and permanent residents. Additionally, throughout the ethnographic fieldnote I came across those who were Algerian-born individuals, residents in the UK, who were at that time working on the naturalisation through preparing for the Life in the UK Test and the language test, yet because they were still not British at that time, they were not further observed and interviewed. Because the research aims to explore the lived experiences of Algerian British individuals, I made sure to recruit participants whose experiences and their means of attachment to Algerian were diverse. Doing so was to exclude some individuals who met the criteria of participation, but because I was driven by the idea that I should include different participants who had

different experiences and stories, they were excluded from the study. For example, at London's *Hirak* there were many Algerian British political activists whom I could interview, yet because the research was not only about this category, I had to exclude several of them and include other individuals of diverse statuses to make a balance in relation to the lived experiences this research was trying to explore.

Access and recruitment at protests and female-only space fields

In the fields of the *Hirak* and Female-only space, I initially had to gain access from the gatekeepers to recruit participants. Access can be defined as “the appropriate ethical and academic practice used to gain entry to a given community for the purpose of conducting formal research” (Jensen, 2008:20). Ethical considerations are involved in gaining access which have “to do with those whose permission *ought* to be asked, as well as whose agreement *needs* to be obtained if initial access to be granted” (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007:42). The category of people who can grant access to researchers are called gatekeepers. The gatekeepers are the people who have the power to grant or refuse the access of researchers in the field. They also can play the role of the facilitator or mediator, enabling the researcher to know whose participation in the research is compatible with recruitment requirements as they have “the inside information” (Jensen, 2008:2) of the field.

Because this ethnographic study is conducted in both public (protests) and limited-access (female space) settings, accessing and recruiting participants were negotiated differently. Recruiting participants at the protest was impacted by the nature of the setting itself which was a public one. Ethnographers argue that access to public settings is not problematic (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007:44; Jensen 2008:30), yet in this research I aimed to ask for access in public settings to avoid any misunderstandings as well as to protect myself. The protest took place publicly in central London. I gained consent to access it from the gatekeepers after I introduced myself as an Algerian PhD student in Sociology who was *there* at the protest platform because it was relevant to my research. The gatekeepers in this context were both female and male organisers who wore orange and yellow Hi Vis vests. After gaining their consent, the next phase was to gain access to the population who met the criteria of recruitment. Doing so was facilitated by gatekeepers who put me in touch with research participants. Also, I was able to gain access to research participants through opportunities which arose of interaction with them by, for example, seizing the chance of having an informal chat, then

speaking about my research. However, in all those casual conversations, I did not try to take any information from them without letting them know that I was a researcher.

In the female-only space where not anyone can physically access it, a gatekeeper was the facilitator to put me in touch with research participants who were engaged inside that space. I met the gatekeeper by chance, and she gave me the consent to attend women's gatherings. She introduced me to women attending the gathering as a researcher and gave me access to their WhatsApp group where they gave information about their gatherings.

2.3 Data Generation

The data generation process in this research was done using the conventional tools of ethnography, those of participant observation, interviews and fieldnotes. However, before going into details about how I generated data, I would like to speak about my immersion with research participants in the field which was decisive in collecting rich and different types of data.

2.3.1 Immersion

Immersion is a relevant technique ethnographers must embrace to efficiently understand the lives and experiences of research participants and the meaning they give to them. Classical ethnographies produced, for example by Malinowski, have shown that they were successfully achieved after the ethnographer had lived for a long period of time with the population under study. The ethnographer needs to make sure that she/he is physically and socially close to research participants in the research field. The deep immersion places the researcher in a position so as to know "directly and forcibly" (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995:2) how the population lives its daily lives.

My first strategy to achieve immersion was to move from Canterbury to London so that I became close to the population under study, which is mostly based in London. Once I met research participants, I immersed myself with them in different situations and with different degrees of social and physical closeness. This closeness was negotiated between me and them and they showed interest in getting close to me in different contexts. While they knew that I was dealing with them in the capacity of a researcher, research participants initiated many propositions to me to accompany them for walks in their weekends, days-off or after work. I went with them to their favourite parks, cafés, restaurants, friends' houses, shopping centres,

art galleries, exhibitions, training, polling station, sitting for long time and listening to music...etc. They as well used to call me to ask me whether I might be interested in meeting their children. They invited me to their houses where I was able to see them cooking, cleaning, praying...etc. The immersion with research participants enabled me to understand the meaning they give and types of interaction and engagements they make in their surroundings.

2.3.2 Participant observation

Participant observation is the closest tool to ethnography as it has become “the almost identity-given method for ethnographers” (Boccagni and Schrooten, 2018:210). It has inherently been used in many types of research both in natural science (in laboratories) and social research (Brewer, 2000:59). In social research, participant observation involves the long-term immersion of the researcher in the life of research participants, and collecting data by observing, listening, and asking questions about the different meanings they attribute to their activities and phenomenon and emotions (Brewer 2000:59; Bryman, 2012:432; Spradley, 1980:7). The value of observation lies in its ability to provide research with “an immense amount of detailed description” (Becker, 1958:652).

In this research, there were different degrees of participation while doing observations. The nature of the setting as well as the relationship with participants decided those degrees. At different times I was: 1- a non-participant observer; 2- a passive observer; 3- an active participant observer; 4- a fully-participant observer.

- 1- *Non-Participant Observer*. Being a non-participant observer or merely an observer is to not be involved with research participants, but just to observe them. It could be so because the field requires such a position as simply participation is not possible. I could do observations without participation on many occasions. For example, I was observing from a distance research participants at the protest demonstrations where they were protesting and delivering speeches. Also, when I used to go to participants' houses, I used to observe artefacts like sculpture, canvas and other decoration whose meaning is constructed by research participants in relation to Algeria.
- 2- *Passive-Participant observer*. In this capacity, the ethnographer is present in the field observing without any interaction. I was a passive-participant observer in the initial encounters in the research field. This is because initially I did not know anybody and I was trying to understand the behaviours of the population involved in the research field.

For example, when I first went to protest settings and women's gatherings, I had no engagement or interaction. And this was because I felt shy and confused. I used to spend hours just sitting or standing in corners and only observing what is going on, like for example observing how people were interacting at protest demonstrations, and how for example women were cooking in their gatherings. I was simply as Spradley calls it (1980: 59) a "bystander", [or] "spectator". Being a passive-participant observer will eventually be transformed into being more of an active participant. However, sometimes the researcher takes the position of being in between a passive-participant observer and an active-participant observer. In this research, I attended many protests and to a certain extent, I upgraded my position from being a "spectator" to being more active through interacting, talking to people, marching with them, but without necessarily joining them when they applauded, chanted or held signs.

- 3- *Active-Participant Observer*. Moving to an active participation took place after I had spent a long time in the field and after the approval of research participant to move to active participation. I made initiatives to participate in the routines of research participants in different settings and contexts. For example, when I used to visit them in their houses, I used to help them cooking by chopping vegetables and washing the dishes. As for women's gatherings, my participation was more active because I was more comfortable in circulating in their space and offering help to wash the dishes and clean the space. In the beginning, women would comment that I was a student and a guest, and I should not bother myself to help them, but over time I found myself involving myself spontaneously; a fact which rendered women as well spontaneously to give me some tasks like any other woman there in their space.
- 4- *Full-participant Observer*. There were moments where I was fully involved in what research participants were doing. This involvement was embodied in participating with them in training. I did with them two certified training sessions, in Emergency First Aid and Food and Safety. Calls of caution are made because the more the ethnographer knows about the situation as an ordinary participant, the harder studying the research participants as an ethnographer becomes. The training sessions I attended with research participants required me to be as attentive and focused as any other trainee which gave me a very tiny space for observing research participants. However, looking at the bigger picture, the involvement of research participants in those training sessions generated information about the interest they have in different aspects in life, and most importantly those trainings do take place only occasionally.

These degrees of observation were not pre-given or planned, they were instead constructed and negotiated depending on the context and research participants. I should acknowledge that the degree of participation was not solely encouraged because of methodological requirement i.e. participant observation is fundamental in ethnography. Instead, I leaned on the shared social and cultural values I had with research participants to decide the degree of participation. For example, in Algeria it is common that when someone goes to visit someone else in their houses, she/he engages in helping in cooking and cleaning without necessarily being asked to do so. Being 'there' with research participants and observing them enabled me to productively understand their lived experiences in different sites as migrants.

2.3.3 Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes are notes taken by the ethnographer who does fieldwork. It involves the process of putting the social life into written words in any fashion (descriptive, reflective...etc.) for studying and investigating. Therefore, fieldnotes are data which will ultimately be analysed by the ethnographer. They could be "jottings, full notes, intellectual ideas, and emotional reflections that are created during the fieldwork process" (O'Reilly, 2009:70). These notes could be of different contents, all attempt to provide deep description to the research field in relation to the research problem during the strong involvement of the ethnographer (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995:4-5).

There is no straightforwardness in the process of taking fieldnotes and this is because it involves making personal choices: I used a field diary (See appendix 2), laptop, phone, and the phone's internal recorder to record fieldnotes. Therefore, the fieldnotes taken were either written by hand using a pen or by computer or phone keyboard or were in a form of verbal account. For the how to do it question, there isn't a designed method to do it, however, Atkinson and Hammersley (2007:142) argue that notetaking is a "skill demanding repeated assessment of purposes and priorities, and of the costs and benefits of different strategies".

In the beginning of the process of fieldnote taking, I deployed what the famous maxim 'when in doubt, write it down' implies. I was writing down all that I thought was relevant at the moment of observation or later on once I had left the field. The content was about the description of the fields I had access to, events I attended, impressions about participants in the initial contacts, personal reflections, drawings about the physical architecture of settings, as well copying the exact statements made by research participants. However, the fieldnotes

started containing more reflective and engaged accounts as I started to develop understanding of the context of research (in the field and with research participants). Eventually, the fieldnotes produced were overall written in Arabic, French, English, Kabyle languages.

2.3.4 Interviews

Interviews are important tools in undertaking research because they obtain relevant data that could not be found elsewhere. These data might be “verbal reports of behaviour, meaning, attitude and feelings” (Brewer, 2000:63). Interviews have the ability to provide the researcher with a “privileged access” (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:32) to the basic lived experiences of people.

Ethnography “not only involves participating and observing, watching and hearing, but also asking questions and listening to the answer” (O’Reilly, 2009:18), in other words, interviewing. Interviewing in ethnography “opens realms of meaning that permeate beyond rote of information or finding the “truth of matter”” (Madison, 2019:35), because if we merely observe people without asking and questioning their behaviours and the meaning they tend to give to those behaviours, the truth would be distorted. Also, research participants’ behaviours are not self-evident as they could be interpreted differently by ethnographers from their perspective if research participants are not given the chance to interpret them verbally during any form of interviews.

Before I turn to speak about how I conducted interviews, I would like to speak first about the measures taken to guarantee the success of the interviews and making the research participants comfortable and open to express themselves.

Language

Language is a tool of communication as well as a tool of constructing reality. Because I am writing the thesis in the English language on the one hand, and on the other hand, I and research participants have a non-English native language, thinking about the language I shall use to conduct interviews inevitably needed negotiation and reflection. The issue was mainly centred around what language research participants would be comfortable to use while answering my interview questions. Initially, I opted for knowing implicitly what language they can easily use to speak and decided to ask them to use that language they can comfortably use while answering

the questions. These languages were Algerian colloquial Arabic, Kabyle, English and French. I used this approach to enable the research participants to express themselves freely, without making them interpret or translate to me ‘the culture’ or ‘meaning’ or ‘experiences’ from their mother tongue to English language. Spradley (1979:20) argues that “the more an informant translates for [the ethnographer’s] convenience, the more that informant’s cultural reality becomes distorted”. This strategy enabled me to know how they think and perceive their social world and the meanings using their own language without making them confused between ‘expressing’ themselves and finding the right word in the translation. Beside the efficient outcome of this strategy, encouraging research participants to express themselves in their own language is one of the ways to break power relations between the researcher and the researched and to empower the research participants by insisting on the relevance of their selection of words and language to express themselves.

The setting

The setting of the interviews was dependent on first, the activities research participants were doing while I was next to them, and second, whether there were prior arrangements between me and them for an interview. In this case, they either proposed the venue of the meetings or they let me choose it. Generally, interviews were conducted in cafés, bus stations, protest fields, female-only space venue, houses, public libraries, online via video calls using Skype and WhatsApp...etc.

The process

First, the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and the phone’s internal recorder as well as a notebook used to write down any statement that triggered my attention. The duration of the interviews was between twenty minutes to two hours.

There were interviews that I scheduled before with research participants, either in places where we usually meet, elsewhere or via online platforms. Also walking interviews were conducted. “To engage in a walking interview is to ‘follow’ someone ethnographically– a walk on their ‘daily round’ [...] in their ‘natural environment’” (O’Neill and Roberts, 2020: 17). These types of interviews conducted without an already planned schedule when research participants were engaged in their routine activities. They took place in forms of conversations while I was

observing them. For example, when one of the participants asked me at the last minute to accompany her to the polling station to vote in the UK general election, I started recording and interviewing her without having any prepared questions.

The interviews I made with research participants were in the form of conversations. The flow of the interview was natural in a sense that the topics covered were flexible. The focus was more on what research participants express and say, that is why I made sure that the flow of the interview went in a non-hierarchical way, avoiding being authoritarian or mechanical in taking the lead of the flow. At the beginning of the interviews, I attempted to explain to the research participants about the involvement of the research, what is it about, and the purpose of conducting the interview with them. Once they understood all those points, then I started asking questions. Another technique I deployed in order to ensure that interviews were guided by me is to remind research participants that any expressions they make are relevant to my research, as well as using expressions like: ‘interesting!’ or ‘really?’ on their statements. Oakley (1981: 37) argues that these expressions help creating “a completely permissive atmosphere in which the subject is free to express himself without any fear of disapproval, admonition or dispute and without advice from the interviewer”.

Formulating interview questions is a challenging task (Madison 2019:35) and a demand for avoiding the making of leading questions is raised. Leading questions should be avoided in the ethnographic interview in order not to produce firm answers or mere yes or no answers. In this research, I do not assume that the interviews were successful from the very beginning, however asking the appropriate questions evolved through time as well as due to the familiarity between me and the research participants. I formulated interview questions (See appendix 3) depending on this familiarity as well as the type of context which research participants were engaged at the time the interviews were conducted. I attempted to not ask leading questions and made sure that research participants understood the questions by reformulating them in case they wanted clarification.

In the beginning of the interviews, I leaned on descriptive questions which were mainly related to the history of research participants’ migration. Descriptive questions allow the research participants to express smoothly their experiences without being analytical. The strategy of starting with a descriptive question also helps to reduce the degree of awkwardness if there is any during the interview, and to ease the atmosphere, making the research participants comfortable. Additionally, starting with descriptive questions enables the researcher to track

the relevant and selected incidents of research participants which will ultimately lead to creating other interview questions.

The list of interview questions was prepared prior to a planned interview, but I often ended up asking other questions and this is because of the follow up questions generated from research participants' answers. Follow up questions are important in the ethnographic interview as they "can be crucial for digging below the surface appearance" (Thomas, 1993:14). All in all, during the interviews research participants were left to play an active role in shaping the flow of the interview from the selection of the language to the generation of other questions based on their answers.

Transcription

Because some data were verbal in nature, turning them into a written account or transcribing them was necessary. While transcription could be a boring and time-consuming process, it is argued that it is part of the data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006:87). I approached the phase of transcription as an opportunity to familiarise myself with the nature of the data generated. Both verbal and non-verbal (sigh, hesitation...etc.) were all turned into a verbatim account. One particular challenge was the different languages used by research participants who were often using more than one language. So, there were interviews which were fully undertaken in the English language, in Algerian colloquial Arabic, or the French language. Others were mixture of the Algerian colloquial Arabic, English, Kabyle and French. However, and because I fortunately understand those four languages, the transcription was smooth in a sense that I did not need to translate at that stage. The translation was left after the transcription. At that stage I only turned the Algerian colloquial Arabic and Kabyle verbal expressions into written words using the Latin script.

The transcription process was more than just mechanical, because while I was transcribing, I was simultaneously making analysis by jotting notes in forms of codes, comments, or further questions to be asked to research participants. Also, a rigorous process of transcription was deployed to convert what was exactly said into written words. For example, I was careful with regard to where I put punctuations fearing that a failure to do so would alter the meaning of the verbal account. One way to reassure that, was to listen again to the recordings.

Translation

Language plays a central role in qualitative research as the latter works within words. Language difference is sensed mainly when the language of the group under study is different from the language of the research, even if the researcher and the researched share the same language. Researchers speaking the same language as research participants may not initially consider the language difference between their research participants' and the language of the research publication when accessing them and generating data from them. Yet, this difference starts to manifest its impact when the researcher starts processing and interpreting the data to ultimately disseminate its outcome to non-research participants' language. Ultimately, the process of translation takes a part in that.

In qualitative research, the translation surpasses a mere mechanical nature. Approaching translation as a mechanical process or even the translation per se generates questions around representation. Translation does not merely involve looking for the equivalent words from the original language to the target language, it involves interpretation as well. "Challenges in the interpretation and representation of meaning may be experienced in any communicative action but are more complicated when cultural contexts differ and interlingual translation is required" (Abma et al., 2010:204). Temple and Young (2004:175) push further the issues of meaning and interpretation in the process of translation, to link the process to power relations across languages and argue that "[i]t is not just a question of the problematic nature of meanings across language but of the status of the language involved *and* the status of the users of the language within the translation enterprise" and further argue that "[t]ranslation itself has the power to reinforce or to subvert long-standing cross-cultural relationships but that power rests in how translation is executed and integrated into research design, not in the fact of the translation per se" (Temple and Young, 2004:175). Therefore, it could be noted that the translation process involves theoretical and epistemological implications.

Language differences and translation were particularly crucial in this research, mainly because the group under study were immigrants from non-English language country and the research is in English language. Also, because fieldwork took place when this group- while being from the same background – was engaged collectively in different contexts, thus, using their original language, as well as the fact that the researcher encouraged the research participants to use the language so that they would feel comfortable using during interviews. Translation was used in this research by the researcher i.e., I had a researcher/translator role. Though understanding the language of the group under study was undoubtedly a positive criterion, however I concretely

faced the challenge of translating meaning and interpretation from one language to another language, mainly the translation was conducted in between different cultural contexts on the one hand, and whether the target language was contributing in a way to misrepresentation of research participants' experiences and meanings on the other hand.

To overcome these issues, I opted for using a range of data generation techniques to make sure that I made sense of what I observed while giving as closely as possible the meaning intended by the research participants. For example, fieldnotes that were generated were accompanied by research participants' meaning through interviews. Another deployed method is that after transcribing and translating, those translations were sent via emails to some research participants who were willing to read the translation to know whether meanings in the original language closely matched the meaning in the target language.

2.3.5 Visuals

The engagement of ethnography in the use of visual technology is recognised to be a "a process of continuous innovation" (Pink 2013: 34) in the discipline. Visuals (photographs and videos) were collected throughout the process of fieldwork using professional and phone's camera. The purpose of collecting visuals was primarily for the sake of boosting the observational account while writing the fieldnotes and be able to have a clear picture of the observed contexts.

2.4 Making sense of data and interpretation

Agreeing with Geertz's principle that "ethnography is thick description" (Geertz, 1993, p.14), I have generated data from different sites which needed analysis and interpretation in order to explore the research issue with the aim of investigating the lived experiences of Algerian British as dual nationals and the meanings they give to their belonging.

Analysis "proceeds by examining some phenomenon, diving it into its constituent parts, then identifying the relationships among the parts and their relationship to the whole" (Spradley, 1997, p.92). Data analysis and interpretation in this research was approached as a craft which requires efforts to make it organic and reflexive. Firstly, this research borrowed from Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory approach (1967) to data analysis, mainly the approach of simultaneously generating and analysing data, and the theoretical sampling. Grounded theory (GT) "begins with inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between

data, analysing, using comparative methods, and keeps you interacting and involved with data and emerging analysis” (Charmaz, 2014, p.1). Approaching ethnographic data from a grounded theory perspective could move “ethnographic research towards theoretical interpretation” (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2007, p.160). What was borrowed from the GT approach in this research was its inductive stance which makes analysis grounded in the data. Exploring the *Hirak* and female-only social gatherings sites evolved through the ethnographic fieldwork. I was overwhelmingly collecting data that at that time I did not know whether it was relevant to my project. Yet, through the simultaneous data collection and analysis, I avoided randomly gathering lengthy and non-focused piles of data that would be discovered as such if I checked it after fieldwork. For example, immersing myself in the data I collected at women’s gatherings led me to find the theme of food and identity, which ultimately directed my next move towards where I would ‘theoretically’ sample, which was from women who were engaged in culinary practices at that site to interpret the relation between food, identity and women migrants’ spatiality.

After inductively coding interview data and fieldnotes (using Microsoft Word program), searching of themes through holistically looking at the data, different themes emerged where research participants’ accounts of experiences and meaning in different contexts were identified. The journey towards analysing the data was reflexive to identify and understand from both a holistic and specific approach, how different data sets fit together to capture the experiences of research participants, or in other words, how the particular fits in the general and vice-versa.

Interpreting data in this research was to look for meanings in the constructed data and attempting to go beyond what the manifest meaning provides and dig beneath the surface by invoking a critical stance from different theories (for example feminism), which ultimately would lead to a layered interpretation. My attitude was to stay as close as I could to the data and to people’s lived experiences, while constantly reflecting and questioning my interpretation. Believing that people’s experiences are shaped by power structure and different contexts, the interpretation of the data relied on the lens of shadowing multiple social and historical contexts and broader frames of reference which influenced the lives of research participants.

The outcome of the simultaneous and recursive ‘jumping’ outside the bubble of the generated data for holistically capturing how pieces of data fit together, and diving inside for a closer

examination of particular aspects led to dividing the outcome of my interpretation to four empirical chapters which provided an exploration of the constructed meanings about Algerian British individuals' duality (membership and belonging). The outcome of interpreting resulted in shedding light on how research participants construct their Algerian identity outside Algeria in different spaces and in different situations, how they construct their Britishness, and how they negotiate their dual belonging.

Finally, the process of making sense and the interpretation of the generated data *is* an interpretation, which not only strives to avoid separating the data from its producer (research participants), but also provides an interpretation which does not claim to be discovering exact, true meanings.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Researchers are required to disclose the ethical consideration of the research. This stance has got an exceptional resonance while doing qualitative research and this is because of “the commitment of qualitative methodology to a reflective stance on the research process and on its intellectual/ emotional/ political outcomes including the power relationship between the researcher and the researched” (Bresler, 1996:135). Doing ethnographic research implements an in-depth involvement with the group studied, therefore the researcher needs to maintain a higher awareness of ethical practices that ensure the protection of the research participants from misrepresentation and harm. Madison (2019:109) argues that [w]hen we enter the field, we enter the life world of others, and we enter with the ethical intent to do good”. In this study, ethical commitment was sought to ensure the protection of the research participants and the data provided by them. One of the early steps that I undertook was gaining the ethical approval from the CCCU's ethics committee which was granted after revision from the parties involved in the committee. I also took measures to secure the consent of research participants as well as maintaining confidentiality to protect them.

2.5.1 The informed consent

Broadly speaking, obtaining informed consent is related to providing information to the research participants involved in the research and providing them with the “power of freedom of choice” (Arifin, 2018:30) to take part of the research. Research participants of this research

were given a thorough explanation of the research's involvement along with what I expected from them. The explanation was made orally through the usage of an academic language and a less formal language to avoid any confusion or lack of understanding. A participant information sheet (See Appendix 5) was provided to them which explains the involvement of the research. Time was given to them to read it. There are research participants who read it fully, and others who did not want to because they think that I already gave them enough information, yet I endeavoured to read it for them.

I sought both verbal and written consent from research participants. The oral consent was recorded and the written was by giving them the consent form to sign it. I made it clear that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time during the research process without even giving the reason.

2.5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in social research is central ethical practice that ensures that no harm can be caused to research participants through their involvement in the study, because personal information could be generated during data collection process. Anonymity and preserving privacy of the research participants and the data were maintained in this research to guarantee the confidentiality.

Anonymity

Research participants showed different levels of desire for anonymity. As I intended to make the research participants anonymous, there were some who have shown interest in being identified. The desire of the research participants to be identified with what they say or believe “may help participants to maintain ownership of the content and meanings of their narratives” (Richards and Schwartz, 2002:138). However, I attempted to anonymise the name of the research participants and gave them pseudonyms. The anonymity was maintained right after collecting the data and before the phase of the transcription.

Visuals provide a big degree of identification if they are used as data in research in the sense that what has been hidden by the anonymisation could be identified by visuals like pictures. Part of the fieldwork I did was undertaken in public space which made me reflect on the issues

of confidentiality and the protection of the research participants during the dissemination process, mainly in relation to taking pictures. “It is legal to photograph structures, objects and people in public settings” (Crow and Wiles, 2008:2), however, this permission was crucial and challenging in the case of this research mainly in the social movement of the Algerian *Hirak* in London. Pictures were taken while I was doing fieldwork, however a careful selection of what could be published was maintained in order to prevent the identification of both the research participants and the other people who were involved in the social movement, because though taking pictures in a public setting is permitted people can still object to having their photos taken. I selected pictures that do not provide a big degree of identification, for example, I did not take pictures that show the faces of men and women, I instead positioned myself in the back and took pictures. In the same context, research participants who were involved in delivering speeches in the stage set by the organisers in the Algerian *Hirak* in London did not mind having their pictures taken and published by me when they were speaking in public; however, I attempted not to do so. Although “the absence of photographs is no guarantee of anonymity, and their presence, sensitively handled, may contribute to more rather than less acceptable representation of research participants” (Crow and Wiles, 2008:4), deciding this was driven by ethical motive that one day they might regret having pictures that show their participation in the social movement published in the one hand, and my awareness that once their pictures are published there will be no control of how these “representations are interpreted and given meaning by their readers, viewers or audience” (Pink, 2013:64) on the other hand.

Privacy and data storage

Efforts were made to ensure the privacy of the data. I maintained caution while I was collecting data from research participants by making sure that nobody was listening to what the interviewee was saying. Transcribing interviews also required measures for maintaining privacy. The transcription was made in a private place where I could be sure that no one could listen; besides, I used earphones to listen to the recordings. The data was stored in a personal laptop that could be accessed only through a password. And the data that was in a form of fieldnotes recorded in the phone was removed to the laptop. As for the data recorded in hard copies like field diaries, I am still very cautious in storing them in places where only I could have access.

2.6 Philosophical perspectives

Unveiling the philosophical perspectives is linked to research and “philosophical enquiry” (Berger and Luckmann, 1991:13). These perspectives –commonly referred to as paradigms– are important in research, as they help to explicitly demonstrate the set of assumptions made by the researcher which will ultimately lead to the justification of choices made throughout the research. The use of the term paradigm in scientific research flourished from Kuhn’s thoughts mainly in his book of “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” (1962). “In SSR, Kuhn begins to use the term paradigm to refer to the entire cluster of problems, methods, theoretical principles, metaphysical assumptions, concepts, and evaluative standards that are present to some degree or other on the concrete, infinitive scientific achievement” (Orman, 2016:49)

Social inquiry and social scientists are also concerned with these philosophical underpinnings. These choices are related to the applied research design, data generation, analysis and interpretation of the data. These philosophical perspectives include the researcher’s beliefs about the nature of reality or social world (ontology), and the nature of knowledge (epistemology).

Ontology is a branch of philosophy which deals with the nature of reality, or in other words with “existence and what things exist in the world and how we categorize them” (Scales, 2013:3). The questions accompanying the ontological assumptions are related to whether “there is a social reality existing independently from human conceptions and interpretations or only, contexts specific ones” (Barnard et al., 2003:4). There are two major ontological theories about the social world, exclusively opposite to one another: realism and idealism. Realism assumes that reality exists independently of a human mind’s understanding and that there is a distinction between the nature of the world or social world and a human’s understanding and perceptions of the nature of that world. The opposite assumption is the idealist theory which assumes that no reality exists independently from a human’s mind i.e., the reality of the external world is not independent on a human’s perception and thoughts (Blaikie, 2018:13) through socially constructed meanings (Barnard et al., 2003:5). Ontologically, the assumptions held by the me as a researcher in this research follow idealist thinking. I see reality of the social world not independent from the conception of human’s understanding and thoughts, therefore, there are multiple realities socially constructed by an individual’s mind and not a single reality independent from our conceptions. Contextually, as I am looking at how British Algerians construct their identities and the different meanings they give to their lived experiences, I

believe that these do not exist out of the research participants' understanding, they are instead constructed and given meaning by them, therefore, there are multiple understandings to these identities and experiences. These do not exist unless research participants make sense of them.

The other philosophical branch which defines the philosophical stance of the social scientists is that of epistemology. Epistemology deals with the theories of knowledge and the questions of 'how do we know what we know' and 'how can social reality be known?'. In social research, epistemological theories make claims about the procedure of the social scientist to generate reliable knowledge. The epistemological stance followed in this research is that of constructionism, which is associated with idealist ontology. Constructionism is an alternative to the held beliefs of empiricism that knowledge: "is neither discovered from an external reality nor produced by reason independently of such reality. It is the outcome of people having to make sense of their encounters with the physical world and with other people" (Blaikie, 2018:22). Ontologically, I assumed that the reality of research participants is interpreted and constructed by them depending on their conceptions, and the knowledge of the nature of their interpretations and constructions I seek to know, I do not assume that they are waiting to be discovered. I therefore seek to construct knowledge based on research participants' interpretations and constructions. Following the social constructionist tradition with regard to "truth theory" (Blaikie, 2018:23; Burr, 2015:223), I do not assume I will be able to make a single and permanent truthful account or piece of knowledge. Instead, I assume as a researcher that the interpretations of the social world as well as how research participants construct their identities and make sense of their lived experiences are only one of many other possible interpretations.

In sum, having idealist ontological assumptions with the held belief that knowledge is socially constructed, the philosophical paradigm in this research is the interpretivist paradigm since there is an emphasis on the value of human interpretation about the social world, precisely based on the researcher and research participants' interpretations. Unlike the positivist paradigm, which suggests that social research can be undertaken following the tradition of the scientific method which is carried out independently and free from the researcher and the researched's interpretation, interpretivism claims that the researcher's understanding of the social world of participants is achieved through understanding how research participants give meaning to that social world.

2.7 The ethnographic approach

This research was conducted using the ethnographic approach, which takes into consideration the uniqueness of migrants' lived experiences. Ethnography is a qualitative approach, derived originally from anthropology whose basic method is participant observation, and which gained popularity in social research. It is Malinowski who pioneered a systematic ethnography in his famous introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), where he clarified the importance of giving the detailed account of the methods used in collecting ethnographic materials.

Ethnography drives the researcher to be *there* in the field and to be part of it, observing what is going on there and how different phenomena happen. Atkinson and Hammersley (2007:3) define the characteristics of ethnography as involving the ethnographer “participating, overtly and covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts - in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry”. Geertz (1993:6) states that these procedures do not completely define ethnography, “what defines it is the kind of intellectual effort in it; an elaborative venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle: “thick description””.

One relevant characteristic of ethnography is its ability to “describe and explain the articulation of macro structures with members’ lived experiences, micro-interactions, and a deep appreciation to members’ meanings” (Fitzgerald, 2006:12). Another relevant characteristic of the ethnographic approach is the flexibility and adaptability of the methodology in the changing conditions of the research process and research questions as: “its empirical orientation encourages incorporation of newly discovered relevant variables” (Mahler and Pessar, 2006:31), whereas other approaches to social research embrace the deductive, bottom-up process and the testing of hypotheses.

Approaching migration studies from an ethnographic perspective is well established. It was the Chicago School of Sociology which was known for developing a huge interest in migration studies in relation to the lived experiences of immigrants and their assimilation into American society in the early years of the 20th century. Herbert A. Miller and Robert E. Park’s book “*Old World Traits Transplanted*” which was published in 1921 summarised the Chicago School’s views in the field of migration (Kivisto, 1990:457). Until the second half of that century, there was still remarkable developing interest in people’ s mobility in those fields (Boccagni and

Schrooten, 2018:215). Ethnography became a popular methodological approach in migration studies (Vives, 2012:64). While previous studies on migration treated the subject using the Methodological Nationalism approach, yet with the paradigmatic shift that came to characterise the field of migration with the emergence of transnationalism, some ethnographies embraced the shift. The book of “*Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*” by Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton (1993) was an extended ethnographic research about migration which used the new paradigm. Thus, different ways emerged in conducting ethnographies about transnational migration and lived experiences of migrants, like multi-sited ethnography (Fitzgerald, 2006; Boccagni and Schrooten, 2018), online ethnography (Boccagni and Schrooten), or single-sited ethnography (Gielis, 2011:257).

The significance of studying transnational migration and migrants’ lived experiences using an ethnographic lens lies in the ability of ethnography to delve into people’s daily life and experience by not relying only on what migrants say in surveys, which might only be their self-presentation which does not always match or correspond with their words. Therefore, ethnography’s data generation tools can generate data which delve beyond participants’ self-representation. Boccagni and Schrooten (2018:216) argue that the unmatching of self-representation and behaviours of individuals “is particularly important in the study of human mobility, as there are many reasons for the discrepancies between self-reported responses and the actual behaviours of migrants. Respondents might deliberately not report certain activities that are considered suspect or illegal”.

Bearing in mind all these significant features, this research embraced the ethnographic lens. One of the reasons which led me to choose the ethnographic approach is the ability and the flexibility of this methodology in the ‘unexpected’ incidents and events which may occur during the research, and the ability to deviate and shift from the original plans of the research to take directions the researcher thinks are worth exploring. In my PhD proposal and even after a period since I started the PhD, the objective of the research was to look at how Algerians in Britain make sense of their dual national belongings. While these objectives remained somehow the same, however, the means to understand and unpack this took an unexpected trajectory, mainly with the outbreak of the *Hirak* in Algeria and its extension to the UK among Algerians (6 months after the beginning of the research), as well as my encounter with the female-only space which took place almost a year after I started my PhD. I thought that exploring those fields would be informative and insightful about the lived experiences of

Algerians in Britain, since the two spaces speak about how Algerians maintain links with Algeria in different settings and situations. Adopting other approaches instead of ethnography would have probably led to sticking to a rigid plan, and missing other possibilities and opportunities.

Because I was interested in Algerians in Britain and understanding their sense of belonging, I undoubtedly needed an approach which paved the way for accessing the different social domains of research participants. One way to do so was to be immersed physically with individuals. The ethnographic approach undoubtedly offers such opportunity to be close to individuals. Additionally, a good understanding of individuals' meanings in research would be achieved if the data was diverse, and this is what I found useful in ethnography's data generation methods. I relied very much on participant observation in this research, where I observed research participants engaged in different settings and situations. And with using the interviews, I could get a good sense of what I observed, as well the meanings research participants gave to their engagements in those settings and situations.

2.7.1 Feminist ethnography

This research is inspired from the feminist perspective of ethnography and feminist methodology. Feminist ethnography cannot be reduced to one single and clear definition. This approach is "not certain, institutional, unchallenged, contained, uncomplicated, or value free" (Mendez and Wolf, 2012:17). Its principles lie in between "the struggle over the definition and goals of feminism and the multiple practices known collectively as ethnography" (Schrock 2013:48). Historically, the interest of ethnography in gender and relations between males and females led to the emergence of a feminist approach to ethnography in social sciences and anthropology. Prior to this interest, women's writings within ethnography were given less value. The reason behind that was "because of their content which included personal narratives, and, most often, reflections on the author's experiences with women in the field. These exclusions reinforced the idea that ethnographies of women's lives are forms of specialized and secondary knowledge" (Schrock, 2013: 52). On a broader level, feminist ethnography attempts to produce knowledge about women's lives in a specific cultural context and is interested to explore the marginalisation and oppression women endure in their lived experiences. And since gender has been inserted in migration studies, feminist ethnographers developed an interest in nation-state and transnational borders, "in doing so, they have refused

essentialized notions of the nation. Instead, they ask, whose nation? And how gendered technologies employed to constitute the nation and police inclusion?” (Mahler and Pessar, 2006:39). Yet, feminist ethnographers do not “simply look at women, they are informed by feminist politics and acknowledge that gender cannot be separated from race, class, and sexual identity” (O’Reilly, 2009:4).

What centrally lies in feminist ethnography are the principles of feminist methodology. Feminist methodology stands against the different held assumptions of positivism, mainly the positionality of the researcher in the positivist enquiry which places her/him as being superior as well the ‘standardised’ and ‘reductionist’ methods adopted by positivist researchers to collecting data (O’Reilly, 2009:3). What intrinsically resides at the centre of feminist methodology in social sciences is “the intersection of knowledge, power, and gender” (Hackney and Warren, 2000: 2). Again, this approach does not recognise the positivist, even feminist empiricist, absolute, objective and value free knowledge. Similar to critical research, feminist research attempts to probe the regimes of knowledge by deconstructing and debunking the judgmental, white, androcentric, heterosexual, middle class, ‘universal’ knowledge, and proposes other possibilities of knowledge, advocating “an integrative, trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge which grounds theory contextually in the concrete realm of women’s everyday lives” (Stacey, 1988:21), “about and from the position of subalter(n)ity” (Vives, 2012:62).

Feminist researchers argue producing a limited and a “situated knowledge” (Haraway, 1988:583), where the researcher is required to “address how her complex identity and positionality (her belonging to certain categories of gender, race, socio-economic class, nationality and so forth) influence each stage of the research process” (Vives, 2012, 63), and ultimately the type of the produced knowledge. Feminist methodology as well looks carefully at the issue of power in the research process and attempts to “promote awareness of and minimize the ways in which hierarchies of power and domination are reproduced through the course of the research” (Mendez and Wolf, 2012:6). To do so, feminist methods use “prescriptive ethics” (Skeggs, 2007:433) of “equality, intimacy, dialogue and reciprocity between researchers and participants” (Checker, Davis and Schuller, 2014:408) and empowering research participants (O’Reilly, 2009:3).

Bearing these in mind, this research borrows from the principles of feminist ethnography or methodology at different levels. This research attempts to avoid the androcentric perception of

migration which considers women as a homogenous category along with ‘men’. Thus, this research looks at how women live their ‘Algerian-ness’ in female-only space and seeks to uncover how their gender identity influences their lived experiences. Seeking in female-only space as a source of ‘knowing’ about Algerian women provides insights from a perspective of women and provides other possible sources of knowledge.

Besides the existence of women to define this research as a feminist one, this research also acknowledges the perspectives the feminist researchers hold about the necessity of the researcher to acknowledge her/his positionality and its roles in the process of the research and producing knowledge. I argue that my identity (which will be discussed in the next section) potentially influenced my understanding as well as the type of knowledge I could access, therefore, I acknowledge that the knowledge produced in this research is one limited outcome and vision influenced by my positionality and identity. Finally, I adopted the vision of the feminist methodology regarding the relationship between the researcher and the researched. I acknowledge that during the process of data generation and meeting with research participants, the relation between the researcher/researched was not exclusive or a one-way system, it was instead more egalitarian and reciprocal.

2.8 “Myself” in the research field

Because I acknowledge that the researcher’s self cannot separate her/himself from the research process and knowledge production, this section attempts to speak about how ‘myself’ was involved in the research process. Firstly, I speak about how I position myself in relation to research participants, as well as how research participants react to my positionality. I then speak about how such positioning played a key role in the process of ‘producing knowledge’, which then led to embracing a ‘reflexive’ attitude to negotiate the impact of that positioning.

2.8.1 Positioning me

Positionality “acknowledges and recognizes that researchers are part of the social worlds they are researching and that this world has already been interpreted by existing social actors” (Holmes, 2020: 3). My positionality in this research helped me gain access to knowledge from research participants. Accessing knowledge is related to the distance or ‘proximity’ (one example of such proximity is any type of identity) the researcher has with research participants,

as well as how these two groups interact in a specific context. Ethnographic research has always been concerned with the access to “insider knowledge” (Hodkinson, 2005:18), which in the case of this research is understanding the lived experiences of Algerian British individuals and the way they make sense of their dual national belonging. Insider knowledge is gained by the researcher through accessing inside the research group. In sociology, talking about accessing knowledge or what Merton (1972) calls “privileged access” generates discourses about the degree of insider-ness and outsider-ness of the researcher in relation to the group under study. Firstly, the insider researcher is an individual with proximity (cultural, gender proximity ...etc.) with her/his research participants. An outsider researcher is unfamiliar with the group under study. The degree of insider-ness and outsider-ness is decisive in the discourse of knowledge production. For example, Merton (1972:15) argues that there is what is called an “insider doctrine” that “holds that one has a monopolistic or privileged access to knowledge or is wholly excluded from it by virtue of one’s membership or social position”.

Contextually, ethnographic research attempts to understand and interpret culture through “(1) the inside perspective of ethnographers who strive to describe a particular culture in its own terms, and (2) the outside perspective of comparativist researchers, who attempt to describe differences across cultures in terms of general, external standard” (Ames et al., 1999:781). These perspectives are called emic and etic perspectives. “Emic perspectives are those taken by a researcher who is a member of the community being studied. Etic perspectives are those taken by a researcher who is an outsider of the community being studied” (Grabowski et al., 2011:1). Being an insider puts the ethnographer in the position of familiarity with the culture being studied and therefore facilitates access to insider knowledge and building relations with research participants. However, being an insider has disadvantages because having knowledge about the culture studied may lead the ethnographer to think that there are aspects “not worth spelling out or even talking about, because they are to be taken for granted” (Keval, 2009:227). Advantages can also be generated from research made by an outsider which puts the ethnographer in a rigorous mission motivated by “critical and intellectual endeavour” (Keval, 2009:227). However, being an outsider could generate issues of judgement while describing the culture studied, not forgetting that the access of an outsider to the group under study could be hampered because of that status of being ‘an outsider’ per se.

Speaking about ‘positioning me’ in relation to identity, my identity — as a 26-year-old (my age when I was doing fieldwork) Algerian, Kabyle, female, Muslim, PhD researcher in Sociology, who is fluent in Arabic, Colloquial Algerian Arabic, Berber, English and French

languages — was to a greater extent impactful in accessing research participants, or ‘knowledge production’. In relation to the discourse of insider-ness and outsider-ness, I considered myself in ‘proximity’ with research participants as well as in the fields which they were engaged in, thus I was an insider due to the sharing of some identity features, mainly that of being ‘Algerian’ and ‘female’, which could justify my interest in situations of the *Hirak* of Algerians in London and female-only space. I cannot assume that ‘my choices’ of including the *Hirak* and the female-only space were motivated only by my critical and academic stance: that they could be relevant because they represent two spaces where research participants speak of their lived ‘Algerian-ness’. However, my personal sensibilities towards the two spaces contributed to include them in my research. Fortunately for me, the academic relevance did not clash or contradict with those sensibilities!

Speaking about those sensibilities, as an Algerian, I supported the outbreak of the *Hirak* in Algeria and in the diaspora, as it gave opportunities to voice peoples’ demands and to construct a democratic Algeria, as well as the creation of a social solidarity among Algerians. As for the female-only space, my sensibilities towards the position of the Algerian woman in relation to: on the one hand discourses of Algerian society, culture, religion, politics...etc., and the position of the woman from the Global South who lives in the Global North on the other hand — have always been a subject of my interest, mainly as an Algerian woman from the Global South. So overall, as an Algerian female individual, I could relate to many narratives and meanings research participants were giving, which technically positioned me as ‘an insider’. However, this does not mean that I was exclusively ‘an insider’ and not ‘an outsider’. While the identity of the researcher would automatically classify whether she/he is an outsider or insider based on commonalities and differences, yet her/his holding one exclusive position may (if not surely) be impossible on research involving human beings as a source of knowledge. If in the very beginning of my PhD stage I *naively* assumed that I could easily access the population studied¹⁰, however, once I started doing fieldwork, I realised that research participants did not consider me all the time as either an insider or outsider. I was simply both in different situations and circumstances. In other words, my degree of insider-ness and outsider-ness was not a clear-

¹⁰ In 2018 a few months after I started my PhD, I had a conversation with another PhD students who was one year ahead. She asked me worryingly whether I have made initial contacts with the population studied. I responded to her that while I am a bit anxious about the matter of access, yet I told her that I am planning to go to Finsbury Park (London) where there are many Algerians there, who because I am Algerians, and they are Algerians they will surely help me. She responded with a serious tone that I was making assumptions. While I thought that she was right “theoretically”, however, after I started making initial contacts her serious answer was again brought back in my mind.

cut one and was fluctuated, depending on how research participants perceived me along with my identity package.

2.8.2 Reflexivity

Acknowledging that I do have a positionality in research (either a self-positioning or positioning by the research participants) automatically leads to acknowledging the researcher's active role in the process of knowledge production, which is a reflexive one – involving reflexivity. Reflexivity in ethnography is the way in which the 'personal' of the researcher affects the production of knowledge. Ethnography was criticised for being a method of colonialism and “for upholding colonial knowledge and power” (James, 2016:2), and these criticisms “led to a call for reflexivity in a sense that studies of others must also be studies of ourselves in our relationships with those others” (Davies, 1999:12). Reflexivity is an ongoing process which enables the researcher to be aware of the nature of her/his positionality, interaction and relations with research participants as well as the context and spaces where those interactions are taking place. “The emphasis on reflexivity has created new opportunities for ethnography focus on locality, multiple voices, participations and exchange, dialogue, emotion, involvement and biography” (Blackman, 2016:66). It is simply turning back to oneself (Davies, 1999:4; Madison, 2019:8).

My reflexive attitudes in the process of the production of knowledge were nurtured from how my research participants perceived me along with my identity. Or it is the nature of the way research participants positioned me either as insider or outsider which led me to reflect on that positioning. Therefore, my reflexive account, which will be discussed below, was characterised by 1- being aware of the privileges I had when research participants perceive me as an insider; 2- negotiating the intersection of my role as a researcher when my identity blocks and facilitates simultaneously my access to research participants and knowledge, 3- knowing that mostly the access to knowledge is dependent on research participants and that relations with them must not be stratified or dichotomised, thus, feeling the need to build relations with them based on reciprocity.

The Algerian 'piston'

The fact that I am Algerian researching an Algerian population made me reflect on the privilege I have from such commonality. In other words, my identity as an Algerian researcher enabled

me to have an easy access to research participants. There were many instances where I could make sense of the meaning research participants give while expressing their lived Algerianness. Mainly the language was a relevant facilitator to understand research participants as I speak the languages research participants speak, a fact which is relevant while doing research (Davies, 1999:76). Knowing the language of the population studied enabled me to understand the different discourses related to history, politics, economy, culture, religion, satire...etc. research participants were engaged in.

While the commonalities were considered by me as a privilege, yet still I had to negotiate the access to research participants and build rapport with them. What turned out to be a facilitator to accessing and building rapport is the perception of research participants about the fact of being part of research conducted by someone from the same background as them. In other words, with some research participants the matter was not to be part of a research project as much as it was to be part of research by someone from Algeria. For example, while I was seeking to approach Mourad a male key participant, he approved by answering that: “[he is] going to do the Algerian *piston* with [me]”. “Having a *piston*” is a French expression commonly used in Algeria which figuratively means that someone knows someone else who holds a degree of power and is able to help the former person using that power. To relate this to the context of this research, I had the *piston* offered from research participants so that I could have access to them and this *piston* is related to the fact I was an Algerian person. This *piston* or privileged access (Merton, 1972:11) enabled me to understand that during research process or access to knowledge, the process needs more than negotiating the systematic procedures of research, i.e., the researcher would approach research participants and explain what the research was about, and the latter would accept or refuse to take part. Instead, it is a system of social relations and subjectivities embodied in how research participants socially and culturally perceive the researcher who approaches them. And based on these perceptions, researchers are given access to knowledge.

Gendered fieldwork

In social research, “gender shapes the interaction in our settings; it shapes entrée, trust, research roles, and relationships” (Hackney and Warren, 2000: 5). In some ethnographic sites I was immersed in, neither my Algerian identity, religion, nor my role as a researcher was the key to access, but only my ‘femaleness’. Here I relate to a female-only space where Algerian women

make their gatherings. The space is by definition designed for females, therefore, any attempt to access it physically requires being a female too. However, I only assume that I ‘physically’ could access because I was a female, and this does not mean that being a female guarantees access and acceptance from females in that space i.e., probably also what boosted the ability to access and build rapport with research participants in that field was because of sharing other identity features like being an Algerian, Kabyle Muslim person. However, I would like to focus just on the fact that because I was a female my access was guaranteed, because the same reason which led to accessing was the same reason which fully blocked my access simultaneously in different fields and situations.

The moments when my femaleness, regardless of having a status of researcher, was the factor which blocked my access were mainly when I had to approach men or space mostly occupied by men. My femaleness was not standing by itself when my access was blocked, it was instead intersected with conceptions of religion of the population studied about relation between men and women and conceptions of (hetero)sexual relationships. One example to illustrate that, while I was trying to negotiate access with a man in his 50s who is first generation Muslim Algerian-British, his opinion regarding being interviewed by a woman (even in a public space) was driven by his conception of Islamic jurisprudence about a woman talking to a man who is not her *Mahram*. In other words, he explained to me that he cannot be part of my research emphasising the Prophet Mohamed’s *Hadith* that: “No man is privately alone with a woman; but their third is Satan” (Reported by At-Tirmidhi and authenticated by Al-Albani). To make this clear, the meaning of the *Hadith* was that if a woman physically sits with a man who is not her Mahram, the third party who is present is *Satan* who would drag both of them to commit sins. Regardless of whether or not I lean on that *Hadith* as a Muslim woman to manage my relations and spatiality with men who are not my *Mahram*, and as a woman who comes from a background which demarcates clearly gender relations and the spatiality of men and women, yet, when conducting this research bearing in mind such religious or social conception was (naively) not part of my agenda. In other words, I did not carry with me the social principles which influenced my upbringing, as I mainly focused on the context through which I might initiate contact with men, being a research context per se, and not for other reasons related to building a non-professional relationship. And also, mainly I stand for what Islamic feminism stands for in relation to the fact that the classical exegetical interpretations of Quran and Hadith are human construction and not divine in a sense that even the inequalities generated from *fiqh* (jurisprudence) “contradict the very essence of divine justice as revealed in Koran and how

Islam's sacred text have been tainted by ideologies of their interpreters" (Mir-Husseini, 2006:642) which ultimately led to hampering "our perceptions of the relevance of that universal message in our context" (Wadud-Muhsin, 1989:167). I mainly focus on what Islamic feminism suggests in relation to considering the context through which to interpret sacred and Islamic texts. Reading the previously cited *Hadith* of the prophet Mohamed from such perspective would result in considering the fact that the context that joins me a female with a Muslim man is a professional context.

While this remains my vision, yet the man who because I was a woman and he was man, blocked my ability to have knowledge from him demonstrates to what extent my status as a researcher was invisible for him. Instead, he relied on his religious convictions to assess my request to have him as a research participant. Approaching individuals from the same backgrounds surely grants the *piston*, yet it becomes challenging when a researcher who comes from the background of the researched is exposed to the researched's conception of gender relations. Having an identity which simultaneously guarantees, and blocks access led me to be very understanding of people's subjective assessments of situations without being judgmental and taking situations personally. These attitudes build in the researcher a resilience in case the access to knowledge is blocked. Embracing such attitudes would lead to avoid the disappointments of a gendered fieldwork.

Relations with research participants

The relation between the researcher and the researched is characterised by differences in position, privilege, the degree of power, authority and hierarchy (Manning 2018:317). Establishing rapport requires breaking these hierarchal divisions between the two regardless of who is in the position of authority. In the process of building rapport with research participants, I knew that my mission was to gain knowledge from them as a researcher. However, the relation with them was more than just a static researcher/researched relation. This shift was because research participants contributed to creating other dynamics to our relationship, a fact which urged me to react to that demand. These dynamics emerged because research participants were keener to develop other types of relationships with me which surpasses the researcher/researched relation. My response to such research participants' requests was an attempt to break power relations and maintain reciprocity.

One way to develop reciprocity in the field is to respond to research participants' desire to create personal relationships with the researcher. In ethnography, "fieldwork represents an intrusion into a system of relationship" (Stacey, 1988:23) and building personal relationship with research participants is "a common experience" (Davies,1999: 88). Friendship is commonly a type of relationship that occurs between the ethnographer and research participants. Though the development of such a friendship is unpredictable for the researcher and her/his role, yet Blackman and Commane (2012: 235) argue that "if the researcher's identity as 'researcher' fades over time and they become an accepted part of the group studied, this shows how successful the approach has been and how the researched and the researched become one".

My experiences of friendship with research participants started when mutual trust was built, mainly when they started to be more interested in talking to me and meeting with me outside the domain of research and beyond the fieldwork, as well as when they started being open to disclose information about their private lives and asking my opinions about a decision related to personal relationships like marriage and divorce. My reaction to research participants' perception towards our relationship was not to rigidly maintain my role as a researcher. I instead worked to meet their expectations of me i.e., to be their friends. Though the researcher's encounter with research participants is driven with the research requirements, however and even if research participants are aware of what is expected from them, yet they might conflate the role of the researcher by wanting to develop other personal relationships like friendship. In my case, I had to negotiate the unexpected demands from research participants by not blocking the possibility to develop friendship with them as well. The main reason for doing that was to break from the exploitative attitude of the researcher who exhaustively takes from the research participants without giving back to them what they need from her/him.

Conclusion

This methodology explained the methodological choices undertaken by me to address the research questions. Before giving a detailed account and justification of the choice of the ethnographic methodology, I explained how the interpretivist paradigm shaped my philosophical principles regarding epistemology and the nature of reality which is assumed as socially constructed. This paradigm stands in contradiction with the positivist paradigm which assumes that there is one objective truth.

I have explained how the ethnographic approach fits well with investigations into the lived experiences of immigrants. Ethnography enabled me to be flexible regarding being ready to be engaged with the unexpected nature of the field of investigation. In this PhD, the immersion which was promoted by the ethnographic approach led me explore spaces which were not initially part of the original plan and this was because I could physically get close to research participants and get a sense of how they live their duality as Algerians and British in their everyday life.

Embracing the ‘the reflexive turn’ of the ethnography, I have explained how ‘myself’ was not inseparable from the process of this research, from the choice of the fields to the negotiation of access with research participants. Inspired from feminist methodology, I have demonstrated how my relations with the research participants was built upon reciprocity and mutual ‘giving’, as well as embracing the principle of providing them with a space to voice themselves and construct knowledge from their positions and perspectives.

3

‘Extending the Inside to the Outside’: an ethnographic exploration of Algerian protests in London

Introduction

By ‘extending the Inside to the Outside’, I refer to how Algerian British research participants transnationally extended the Algerian protest movements outside Algeria. This chapter ethnographically explores research participants’ activism in what I call London’s *Hirak*¹¹. The exploration is relevant to this research as it enables an investigation into Algerian British dual nationals’ sense of their belonging to Algeria through maintenance of transnational ties illustrated by an engagement in protest demonstrations in the country of settlement for the homeland.

Divided into three sections, this chapter makes a link between research participants’ activism with the fact that though they are abroad they are still involved in the country of origin’s internal affairs. The first section demonstrates the motives leading research participants to mobilise. The second part of this chapter positions London’s *Hirak* within the story of the original Algerian *Hirak*, as well as the roles played by Algerian British research participants in that movement. They admitted that their mobilisation was an extension of the Algerian *Hirak*, yet their geographical position, being outside Algeria, provided insights relevant to the transnationality of the social movement as well as the role of migrants’ nationalism. The last part of this chapter provides constructed meanings given by research participants about their activism as Algerian external citizens and immigrants.

3.1 “We were expecting it”: watching from a distance

This section attempts to demonstrate to what extent Algerian British, though abroad, still maintain ties with Algeria, which then justifies their participation in the *Hirak* story through the creation of London’s *Hirak*. At a broader level, the genesis of the *Hirak* was an opportunity

¹¹ I will continually use the expression “London’s *Hirak*” to first, to distinguish it from the *Hirak* taking place in Algeria and elsewhere, as well as to refer to the activism Algerian British research participants are engaged in in the UK.

to ask them whether though they are spatially out of Algeria they are following what is going on there. At every formal or informal interview I conducted with them, there was (subjective) assessment of the political, economic, and social situation in Algeria. Across the data, I could generate a list of ‘the unpleasant issues’ research participants shared. This included disagreements with the ruling regime and the state, corruption, lack of freedom, individual respect, and opportunities. Therefore, the outbreak of the *Hirak* in Algeria was welcomed by research participants as an opportunity to address those mentioned issues.

To refer to the Algerian uprising, they used expression like “an awakening” and “revolution” and have commented on the peaceful nature of the protests in Algeria. All research participants from those activists at London’s *Hirak* to those Algerian British who have never been present at the latter movement, have shown positive agreement to the uprising of Algerians in Algeria. The sense of agreement was justified subjectively by research participants. For example, Yamina’s positive stance towards the outbreak of the *Hirak* was justified with the fact that: “[she] wants[s] peace for [her] country”, a rather emotional motive. Mustapha for example believes that: “[a]s Algeria is a democratic state, every citizen has got the right to claim, to protest”, linking his favourable agreement regarding the act of protesting with a pragmatic judgment, which is that protesting is permitted if it is guaranteed by the law¹². Nadjat believes that: “[Algerians] have the right to proclaim democratic Algeria and the president in the right place, a better Algeria for Algerians and growing youth”. Salim as well hailed the *Hirak*, saying that: “it’s absolutely wonderful, it’s beautiful and how the *Hirak* came out of nowhere”. While Salim believes that the *Hirak* was an unexpected event, Mourad who is an activist gave a different opinion by saying that:

Mourad: We were expecting it, because me personally, I have been following, I read a lot and I follow a lot and I try to make analysis. Since the Internet entered Algeria, I noticed something: a change among the youth. Whenever I go to Algeria, fewer young people in the street. When I ask my friends: “where are your children?” I am told: “he is at home with his phone”. I understood that the young people are trying to understand things, they are trying to learn things, and they are trying to know how people are living [...] this will create a desire among the young people. And what happened on the 22nd of February was that the young people went out first, before us.

¹² Article 52 from the Algerian constitution states that: “Freedom of association and public assembly shall be guaranteed upon obtaining a permit. The law shall determine the modalities for exercising these freedoms.”

Mourad arrived at such conclusion after critically analysing the changing behaviour of Algerian youth who were spending their time on the web discovering the outside world. Mourad's analyses, observations, and predictions about the future of Algeria though he is an immigrant may be driven by his desire to see changes in Algeria. He is aware that he is unable to create the change himself, instead, will have to wait until young people in Algeria develop the desire to create that change. Another interpretation which will then make sense in the following sections is that the activism of migrants – at least in the case of the Algerians in the UK– is only fuelled from the internal events of the homeland, and then extended to the outside. Though Algerians living abroad are in contact with Algeria in different ways, yet the outbreak of *Hirak* provided a strong context through which they discuss the country of origin.

Research participants' knowledge of what is going on in Algeria begs the question of what is their source of that knowledge? From the data and fieldwork I conducted in different spaces like research participants' houses, I realised that electronic media were central in enabling research participants to know about what was going on in Algeria, especially during the *Hirak* period. The following two quotes are extracts from my field diary about my first impression when I was visiting both the house of Zahra and Nadjat at the end of 2019:

Once I entered the house [of Zahra], what I could hear apart from her voice was a discourse about Algeria and Algerian politics from her phone [...] We directly started the conversation about what is going on in Algeria after I commented on the sounds I heard. She told me that she got anxious because of what is happening in Algeria.

I met [Nadjat] in her house [...] when I entered her house, I could hear her TV. She was listening to a channel that delivers the Algerian *Hirak*. I commented and told her that she was updated. She told me about how beautiful those people were who were demonstrating and told me that they had been demonstrating for almost 10 months. She told me: "Look at those people who are intelligent, full of ideas".

When I entered the houses I could hear that both Zahra and Nadjat were using media devices like internet and television, respectively, to follow what was happening in Algeria, and it was an opportunity to conclude that they keep themselves updated with what was going on there at crucial times without my having to intervene as a researcher – by either asking them directly or being physically present which might influence their behaviour in front of me – in making them articulate how they keep themselves updated.

The impressions generated from research participants in their houses about the relation between media consumption and being updated with what was going on in Algeria was one part which

emphasised the role of media for Algerian communities outside Algeria in the age of the *Hirak*. However, the role of media was twofold, it enabled Algerian British individuals to follow day by day the *Hirak*, and at the same time was used to promote Algerian activism in London. During fieldwork at protest demonstrations, I observed Aymen recording live videos and posting them on the official Facebook page of London's *Hirak*. This Facebook is no longer found. At a broader level, transnational television came to emerge during *Hirak* period which involves on a 24/7 basis programs imported from Algeria about the *Hirak* and the issues of the political transition. One famous channel was *El-Magharibia* which broadcasts from London. Some political activists whom I saw were taking part in London *Hirak* were broadcasting on that transnational TV channel. And, during the Covid-19 pandemic, media platforms were used as an alternative and sole platform for the *Hirak*'s activists in London.

Through the fieldwork, it was found that media had an impact on research participants' activism, by initially connecting them to what is going on as well as leading them to engage in a form of a nationalism (which will be discussed later) through extending issues from the homeland to the host land. In general, "mass media have a potential impact on public opinions and perceptions" (Al-Khadra Hamdan, Kessar, and Rabab'Ah, 2021:2). Transnationally speaking, media originating from the homeland or broadly from the global media influence the formation of cultural identity and identity politics of transnational and diasporic communities (King and Wood 2001:2; Widjanarko 2007:74).

From Mourad's words and the fieldnotes generated from observing Zahra and Nadjat, it seems that the images imported from the country of origin contribute to preserving and producing a sense of belonging for research participants towards Algeria. It was Algerians in Algeria who contributed to enhancing that sense of belonging through their activism, be it the youth for Mourad, the "intelligent, full of ideas" people for Nadjat, or the people whom Zahra was listening to on her phone the moment I stepped inside her house. In other words, it was Algerians who had never met or been seen by research participants who stimulated the 'watching from a distance' as well as doing actions through which research participants could feel concerned and supportive. From this sense, Algeria is 'an imagined community' by which "members [...] will never know most of their fellow members, meet them [...] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communions" (Anderson, 2016:6). This imagination is transnational in a sense that individuals living outside its borders identify themselves with their fellow Algerians inside Algeria and share the ideals of the communion. At the basic level, a communion related to sharing the same homeland, and at another level sharing the ideals of the

Hirak. One illustration of this, is the extension of the *Hirak* from inside Algeria to the outside by transnational agents, which are identified in this research as Algerian British.

3.2 Algerian Protests in London: *an extension of the inside to the outside*

The role of the media can develop to leading migrants to move and take actions (King and Wood, 2001:1). Whether media and communication technology of the globalised world was the only stimulator to Algerians in UK to move and take action, or only a partial one, the *Hirak* of Algeria was imported from outside its original spatial cradle: Algeria. Transnational approaches emphasise the role of migrants in creating de-territorialised politics from the homeland and re-territorialisation in the host. The ethnographic exploration of London's *Hirak* is an illustration of a transnational process, undertaken by Algerian British. Divided into four major parts, descriptively and analytically, this part of the chapter will provide an illustration of the characterising point which demonstrates the extension of *Hirak* to UK, where Algerian research participants were among the architects of such mobilisation. The first part traces the matching points between Algeria's *Hirak* and London's *Hirak*. The next part provides an ethnographic account generated from a one-year period of fieldwork and immersion with the Algerian British research participants at London's *Hirak*. The following part positions London's *Hirak* and its agents as a category which is mobilising outside for a *nationalist* agenda. The final part explains –from the data– the exclusivity and limitation of the latter nationalist agenda through which gender implications are one of the reasons for that.

3.2.1 The genesis of the Algerian protests in London

Across the data generated from research participants and London's *Hirak*, as well as a close observation of the Algerian *Hirak* in Algeria, I could generate three descriptive categories which demonstrate that London's *Hirak* was (consciously) an extension to the *Hirak* of Algeria. These are summarised into: chronological parallelism where the major events characterising the Algerian internal *Hirak* were also highlighted at London's *Hirak*; research participants' joining of the *Hirak* due to sharing their identity with fellow Algerians in Algeria; as well as the extension of Algerians' protest claims and demands to become an interest of Algerian British research participants as well though they live abroad.

Chronological parallelism

The idea of chronological parallelism broadly posits that the spatial and geographical dislocation that the Algerian British have undergone did not prevent them from being chronologically and periodically (at broader level historically) on the same page with the Algerian protesters in Algeria. The latter started marching on a national scale on Friday 22 February 2019. The next day of Saturday 23 February 2019 Algerians, among them research participants, started protesting and marching in London. For example, Nacira responded that she started protesting in “the beginning, from the 23 of February”. Both Algerians’ activism inside and outside Algeria went in parallel regarding when the two movements took place. In Algeria and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (which somehow changed the structure of both movements¹³), the protests in Algeria took place every Friday in different big urban areas (Algiers, Tizi-Ouzou...etc) after Friday prayers, and in London, the protest took place a day after, on every Saturday.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of the protests undertaken from February 2019 to early 2020 in London was 56, similar to Algeria’s total. Due to government regulation in both Algeria and Britain, which ordered the adoption of social distancing measures in the early months of 2020, the *Hirak* was postponed. Once the first national lockdown was lifted in England, Algerian protesters went back to protesting, following social distancing measures, while Algeria was still under partial or full lockdown.

Another more crucial illustration of the extent to which London’s *Hirak* was an extension of Algeria’s is the content of speeches and debates adopted at the *Hirak* of the Algerian community in UK. What I mean by the content is the discourses and different topics adopted at London’s *Hirak* which were informed by the ongoing discourses Algeria’s *Hirak* was concerned about. During a one-year period of fieldwork, major events which chronologically characterised the debate and the discourse of both movements can be summarised as: 1- Bouteflika’s resignation and a call for “*Yatnahaw Ga’aa*¹⁴”; 2- the appointment of a provisional government which called for the organisation of presidential elections, which was opposed by the *Hirakists*¹⁵ in Algeria, London, and elsewhere; 3- the finally achieved presidential election on 12th December 2019 which was resisted by some research participants; 4- the appointment

¹³ Because of the prohibition of the social gatherings, Algerian protesters both in Algeria and outside used other mechanism to cope to the new changes when maintaining their activism. For example, they were observed using online platforms like Facebook to do so.

¹⁴ “*Yatnahaw Ga’aa*” incident is explained in the literature review chapter.

¹⁵ *Hirakists* (Plural of *Hirakist*) designates the protesters who are pro- *Hirak*.

of Abdel Madjid Tebboune as the president of Algeria; and 5- the celebration of the first anniversary of the *Hirak* on the 22nd February 2020 (see appendix 6).

Joining the Hirak: identity implications

Research participants who took part in London's *Hirak* and those who did not take part in it were asked about their opinion regarding the outbreak of the movement in London. The reason behind some participants' non-participation was neither in relation to their disagreement nor to the lack of interest in London's *Hirak*, but instead they expressed their absence because of health issues or lack of time. For example, Salim thinks of London's *Hirak* as: "it's great, it unifies people for the right reason", and Hamza said that: "It's definitely worth it [and a] good sign that you want change in your country [...] Heartily I am with them". Although they did not take part physically at London's *Hirak*, yet research participants showed support for the legitimacy of the outbreak of the Algerian *Hirak* outside Algeria.

As for either those participants who attend the *Hirak*, or the reason behind the outbreak of the *Hirak* in London per se, the answer is simply that the latter emerged because of the internal *Hirak* in Algeria:

Public Speaker: Our *Hirak* is just an extension to the internal *Hirak* of Algeria.

Mourad: Protest movements outside are only an extension to what is going on inside that's it [...] when the inside stops, the outside stops.

Both quotations demonstrate that the emergence of activism of Algerians in the UK was a result of the emergence of Algeria's *Hirak*. The first quote is an introductory expression to the London *Hirak* protests, repetitively and publicly said at every protest (in Arabic) by the activist in charge of launching the demonstrations, as it could be used as a reminder of the nature of their activism. Similarly, Mourad states that the engagement of Algerians outside Algeria regarding the uprising is also an extension to the internal uprising, and the destiny of the activism of the outside is conditional on the internal activism's destiny, a vision mostly shared by many other research participants; for example, Mahmoud expressed that: "we go along with whatever they decide in Algeria [...] if they decide in Algeria to stop protesting, this people will stop protesting".

It could be understood that Algerians' activism abroad started after the uprising of Algerians in Algeria. However, during an informal chat with Aymen, a dual national Algerian British activist, he told me that he, along with other Algerians in the UK, was trying to mobilise Algerians by the end of 2018. It is rarely mentioned that the uprising of Algerians in Algeria was fuelled by the activism of the Algerian diaspora, instead it has been reported that it started in Algeria and then was extended by the Algerian community in the UK, Europe, and North America.

Tarrow (2008:147) argues that: “[t]he coordination of collective action depends on the trust and cooperation that are generated among participants by shared understanding and identities”. This statement could resonate with the Algerian British joining the *Hirak* and in fact could explain that joining. The shared understanding of the political situation of Algeria which made the Algerians in Algeria mobilise was enough for Algerians outside Algeria to label the Algerian *Hirak* as legitimate. Regarding the shared identity no statement was found in the data through which research participants would question their eligibility and legitimacy to take part of any Algerian matter. In other words, even if they are abroad and holders of another citizenship, as long as they identify with the Algerian identity, they feel that any Algerian matter is theirs as well. All in all, Algerian British research participants extended the validity of Tarrow' s statement, and the shared understanding and identities can surpass territorial boundaries by transnational agents.

Extending the claims

Crucial illustrations demonstrating that London's protests were an extension of the Algerian *Hirak* were the demands which the protesters were calling for during their protests, which were through the signs and slogans (see appendix 7 for the slogan map designed by the Algerian protesters in London) and speeches. Research participants as well have demonstrated the motives of their activism as similar to those of Algerians who were protesting in Algeria, and their demands were also an extension of internal demands. For example, Mahmoud expressed to me during a protest that “we don't have to have a hidden agenda to topple the government”. One of the crucial demands made was at the level of the Algeria state, for example the expression of “*madania madania*” (civil state, civil state) was also chanted at London's protests. This expression was recently used during the Egyptian uprising in 2011. ““Civil State” as a mode of state, one can notice that the term has not been picked up by the mainstream

academia yet, with the exception of recent political and social Arabic literature” (IFAIR, 2014). Algerians’ protests in the UK were targeting reforms at the level of the Algerian state. For example, research participants justified their activism with their demand of democratisation and reforms in the state of Algeria, for example Samia: “want[s] a state of right” and Nadjat states that: “we are doing political demands, we don’t want the system. We want a free Algeria, an egalitarian Algeria, a democratic Algeria”. If the demands of Algerians in Algeria are mainly related to seeing changes at the level of the Algerian state and the political bodies, extending the *Hirak* by the Algerians abroad demonstrates that though they are overseas, they still prove to have a position in the story of this change and they impose their presence in the decisive matters of the Algerian state.

Northey (2021: 17) argues that the *Hirak* of Algeria had significance “in term of citizenship, identity and democracy”. Edwards (2014: 82) makes a link between the role of social movement in democratisation and citizenship and argues that movements that claim democratisation are called ‘citizenship movements’ through which citizens make claims targeting “the nation state explicitly with their demands for political rights and inclusion” (Edwards, 2014:82). Therefore, the *Hirak* could be as well classified as a “citizenship movement” targeting the state of Algeria for democratisation. Algerian British through justifying their mobilisation with critiquing the state demonstrate the fact that though they are external citizens, the spatial dislocation did not prevent them from making demands of their state of origin. Though in conflict with it, the Algerian British still feel that they are part of the Algerian state as citizens (chapter six will explain further their political relation with the Algerian state).

Here the focus has been on developing a descriptive clarification of London’s *Hirak* as an extension to the internal *Hirak* of Algeria. Making it an extension was an intentional action undertaken by Algerian British research participants. As previously mentioned, Algeria is ‘transnationally imagined’ by transnational agents who are – in this research – Algerian British who though they have never met their Algerian fellow protesters in Algeria, yet they extended the internal ideals of the communion which is the *Hirak* to the outside.

It was found that Algerian British research participants do not have a hidden agenda and from the three categories there is a concrete intention to follow exactly the footsteps of Algerians protesters in Algeria, but through the immersion inside the research field of London’s *Hirak*, I could generate that though the latter is an extension, there is an agency in London’s *Hirak*. I

shall now turn to provide an ethnographic account of the observations inside the protest demonstrations of Algerians in the UK in a one-year period which traces the agency and the roles of Algerian British research participants in London's *Hirak*.

3.2.2. Inside London's *Hirak*: Roles

Embracing an ethnographic immersion led to discovering that London's *Hirak* is a movement which created its own structure that I name 'the routine of London *Hirak*' (see appendix 8), a series of conventions and routines that – as observed – characterised the activism of Algerians in the UK. However, in this section I would like to focus mainly on research participants' roles in London's *Hirak*. According to my observations and an extensive immersion with research participants, I concluded that the category maintained three major roles at London's *Hirak* as: protest organisers, speechmakers, and protesters.

Protest organisers. Some Algerian British maintained the role of protest organisers at London's *Hirak*, among them research participants like Aymen and Asya. The protest organisers were easy to recognise due to yellow and orange high visibility vests. These Hi Vis Vests had, printed on their back the official website of the Algerian *Hirak* as well an Arabic expression stating: 'the Algerian protest in London'. The ability to become an organiser was not determined by any gender criterion, but I observed that the number of males was higher than of females.

The eligibility to become protest organisers was made transparent as clarified publicly at the protest demonstration by Asya:

Asya: [W]e are normal people, those wearing orange vests are Algerian volunteers. [...] we have no political bias [...] we don't talk in the name of nobody. We have one goal only [...] which is in every week we find a place, we get the permission so that the Algerian community gathers, that's it.

Making their position clear publicly and explicitly broke the assumption that since they were organisers, they automatically held ideological powers in the *Hirak*. The eligibility to be part of the organising team at London's *Hirak* was accessible to any Algerian, as during protests I witnessed the organisers inviting the participants of the *Hirak* to be part of the organising team.

Being the first to arrive and the last to leave the protests, organisers maintained three major roles covering legal, logistical, and organisational matters. As mentioned by Asya publicly and confirmed to me by Aymen, one of the major roles played by the organising team is to legalise

London's *Hirak*, i.e., obtaining permission from the local authorities for their protest marches, a requirement cited on the website of the UK Government. The other major role which remained important at protests was to manage logistical matters, from before the start of protests to the end. Logistics like bringing the protest equipment, distributing copies of the Algerian national anthem and leaflets, gathering money from the protester to cover the expenses of the protests, monitoring the marches by standing in the front and back lines of the marches, making video recordings. Another crucial role was enabling a smooth flow for the delivery of speeches, from setting up the stage to the provision of a list of the public speechmakers.

Public speechmakers and Stage. Making speeches – as was observed – was relevant in the structure of London's *Hirak*. I will provide a description of the stage (see appendix 9), then speak about the occupation of Algerian British research participants on the stage. As mentioned previously, the stage which stood on the opposite side of the protesters was set up by the organisers who arrived before the protesters and speechmakers and brought the stage's equipment. This equipment was the Algerian national flag held on wooden poles; signs taped on wood boards; big black speakers with wheels used for marches and another one which was black and bigger, set up on a steel stand; microphones; a big green tent, large table to put small equipment and water; and a black box for effect control. The green tent where a large Algerian national flag was put, was set up on the right side of the Algerian embassy and in front of big mural's building. In between the front space of the tent, a white sign in a rectangle shape was put and taped on the steel poles that handle the tent.

The stage was used by the organisers to make any relevant announcement. Yet the most crucial roles it performed was as a platform to deliver speeches related to the protests. Like the organising team, the speechmakers were Algerians, and the Algerian British research participants were part of them. Speechmakers were males and females, yet the number of males was higher than of females. The delivery of speeches took place from after announcing the official start of the protests usually at 2.30 pm and after playing the Algerian national anthem, to the announcement of the protest closure at around 5pm, and each speech took up from 5 to 10 minutes. Speechmakers usually stood next to the stage and waited for their turns. They either came prepared with a speech written down on sheets they carried in their hands, or they improvised. The names of the speech makers were not designated prior to the start of the protest, as each time I observed Aymen carrying a sheet of a paper and pen, and keeps moving between the crowd, asking speechmakers whether they were ready that day to say something

on the stage. Though I observed that he usually goes straight away to individuals who stood on the stage, but he also asked people who never did that to deliver speeches. I, during the early stage of fieldwork, was requested by him to stand on the stage and speak, an offer which I declined.

Algerian British among them research participants as well bore the role of speechmakers, among them were Mahmoud and Mourad. The language used by them was English, usually by Mahmoud, Kabyle by Farid; accompanied by a translation in Algerian colloquial Arabic, and the Algerian colloquial Arabic by Mourad. When research participants stepped on the stage, they carried the microphone and sometimes a sheet of paper which contained a speech. They always started their speech by greeting the protesters, and then delivered the speech using different techniques, adopted by them purposefully as recounted by Mourad:

Mourad: I, before, was not talking in public [...] public address is very difficult [...] On the first time I don't know who told me to go up and talk. I had three points in my head, when I looked at people and I wanted to say the first point I forgot it [...] then I ended up saying something completely different. so, the first time it was like that [...] then with time I said no! do not say anything [...] people must be respected, and it must be objective. If you want to talk to public, you have to transmit something otherwise it's better to subside. Then I started preparing at home.

Here is an illustration of the efforts put by Mourad to deliver a speech. First, having closely watched his speeches, he most of the time speaks about the political issues (like most of the speeches delivered at London's *Hirak*) that led to the emergence of the *Hirak* per se, and gives a more updated discourse about the *Hirak*. But he also speaks of apolitical matters. He told me that: "Obviously, the discourse needs to contain a bit of everything: the situation of immigrants here, the *Harraga* people, [...] the social situation". While his strategy is to remain "objective", Mahmoud another Algerian British speechmaker who unlike Mourad already possesses speech skills because he takes part at Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner prior to the *Hirak*, delivers speeches which he described as "quite emotional". Recurrent moments of high emotions are present everywhere at London's *Hirak*, demonstrated and triggered mainly by speechmakers. For example, I remember one of the speechmakers he was speaking with rage and tears while delivering his talk. Emotions are part of our social life, and social movements are no exception, in fact there is a strong link between emotions and social movements. Jasper (1998: 398) argues that: "unusual actions probably involve even more, and more complex feelings" and adds that "there would be no social movements if we did not have emotional responses" (Jasper, 1998: 405). Taking the role of emotions even further, Calhoun (2008: 295) states that this "goes

beyond evoking emotions to attract members to recurrently reproducing them in order to secure commitment, maintain shared meanings, and indeed, offer the “high” of emotional release as a “selective incentive” to their participants”. Whether emotions were used as incentives by speechmakers to attract *Hirak* supporters is not known. Yet, as long as speechmakers’ speech content was not controlled by any ideology, at as at least as stated by Mourad, who said that the objective of his speeches: “was guiding [...] I speak about me, I cannot talk under the name of *Hirak* and no one does” this demonstrated that the techniques deployed by Algerian British speechmakers – either Mourad’s objectivity, Mahmoud’s emotions, – were probably driven by personal motives, since these speechmakers were simply protesters who had volunteered to be speechmakers.

Protesters. By protesters, I am referring to those individuals who were neither organisers, nor speechmakers, but were participants in the protests and marches at London’s *Hirak*, which Algerian British research participants remained part of. The research participants had different positions, structurally and spatially. As long as my focus was on Algerian British protesters, among them Nacira, Zahra, Samia, and Mustapha, I noticed that they attended London’s *Hirak* on a regular basis, unless they were sick. Spatially, they stood on the opposite side of the stage, and were relatively dispersed within the protest, and during marches they marched in between the organisers’ front and last lines. They held signs, flags, made video recordings, attended marches, chanted out loud. Women made *zgharit* (ululation) a form of high-pitched vocal sound, which in Algeria is practised during moments of joy and celebrations. These ululations could be “a sign of feminine presence-through voice” (Geesey, 1996: 159) at the Algerian protests in London. Protesters through participating created a space to socialise with other Algerians and to talk about political issues as well as about personal issues (as I witnessed when an Algerian British male was complaining to another woman that his ex-wife married him just because he had the British citizenship, and that he will make sure next time to marry a woman who is British, as a reassurance that she will not accept him because he is British). Protesters also engaged with the speechmakers by listening carefully to them, whom they might agree or disagree with (for example Mustapha expressed to me while a political figure was delivering a speech that he does not like the fact that the latter is using the standard Arabic instead of the Algerian colloquial Arabic that he understands). They also brought food and cakes for other protesters...etc. One of the major roles that I discovered during Asya’s public statement about the source of the protests’ expenses was that: “this is people’s *Hirak*, and we

take the money from the people”, and the blue money box that I saw many times held by the organisers who moved between the protesters was a proof of Asya’ s statement.

From the fieldwork, it was found that the three roles operated by Algerian British research participants did not exist in a vacuum within the realm of social movement process and collective action, they were instead integral and constituted a framework through which social movements were looked at recently. Social movement theory (SMT) has been revisited due to the limitation of some existing approaches which poorly explain social movement (SM) and collective actions. One of those approaches is the traditional psychological interpretation of SM which focuses on emotions of grievance and anger as the sole leading factor to collective actions. Resource mobilisation theory (RMT) appeared as the alternative approach to the ‘emotion’ approach, emphasising “the importance of structural factors, such as the availability of resources to a collectivity and the position of the individuals in social networks” (Klandermans, 2008:247). The resources which are mobilised respectively according to Edwards (2014:44) and Klandermans (2008:251), are “tangible” or “material” resources, and “intangible” and “non-material” resources. Research participants’ roles match the idea that there is a resource mobilisation which could possibly be categorised as tangible resources like: protest expenses and purchasing the equipment, as well as intangible resources like the offered and the volunteered labour of the protest organisers, protesters support and the skills developed by speechmakers to make their speeches efficient.

The resource mobilisation and the roles operated at least by Algerian British research participants at London’s *Hirak* could demonstrate to what extent it was structured. Thus, it could be deduced that that being geographically far, as well as a holder of the citizenship of the country of the host, did not prevent Algerian British to remain transnationally active agents in the story of the *Hirak*, concretizing more *structurally* and *systematically* the ideals of the communion of the imagined community with the fellow citizens.

3.2.3 ‘Nationalist Community, Faithful to the *Hirak*’

The expression of ‘Nationalist community, faithful to the *Hirak*’ (جالية وطنية، للحراك وفية) is an expression repeatedly chanted in Arabic at London’s protest demonstrations, which in a way summarises the nature of the action taken by Algerians in London’s *Hirak*. First, ‘community’ was translated from Arabic to English, and the original word in Arabic was “الجالية” which contextually means a community of expatriates. Therefore, the word community here means

the group of people outside Algeria. Making this clear is relevant to deconstruct what the group taking part in London's *Hirak* meant by 'nationalist' and what the word 'nationalist' implies in their situation as Algerians living outside Algeria who take part in political demonstrations about Algeria. The expression suggests that because the community defines and sees itself as nationalist, therefore it bears the duty of being faithful to *Hirak*, or it might also mean that they justify their participation in the *Hirak* because they are nationalists.

Besides defining themselves as being nationalist, it was observed during protest demonstrations and marches at London's *Hirak* that there were other forms of the symbolic and cultural reproduction of the nation (Algeria). One example is the Algerian national anthem, which was played at the start of every protest, a symbol of "musical and textual" nature (Pavković 2020:501), by which protest participants sang in a simultaneous fashion. Anderson (2016:145) relates the singing of an anthem by fellow citizens who are unknown to each other simultaneously or as he names it 'unisonance': "as a physical reproduction of the imagined community". Another form of symbol observed at the marches and protests of London's *Hirak* are the Algerian national flags which were either hung on poles or held by Algerian protesters, including Algerian British research participants. National flags are considered as visual symbols of the nation and the hanging of the national flags that are generally found in state buildings, unnoticed, is classified as having ideological implication to the reproduction of the nation or what has been termed as "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1999). Billig (1999: 8) clarifies that: "[t]he metonymic image of banal nationalism is not the flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building". The waving of the Algerian flag at the protests of Algerians could be far from being a form of 'banal nationalism', due to the conscious and occasional act of making the Algerian flag visible, and this is what I have observed at protest demonstration that protesters brought out the Algerian flags from their bags and backpacks upon their arrival at the protest venue, carried it during marches, and hid it at the end of the protests. However, I cannot fully assume that either flagging Algeria is conscious or is a form of Billig's banal nationalism, as it would probably not be possible to identify whether holding the flag is part of protesters' mundane and unconscious act in their everyday life, though through my observations at research participants' houses, for example when I entered Zahra's house I saw that the flag of Algeria was placed on the living room table.

Bearing in mind all the possible implications of the above-mentioned symbols in the idea of nationalism, I would like to focus only on the implicit recognition of the statement of: "a

nationalist community”. It is the distance between this group of people and Algeria which makes their nationalism ‘a long-distance nationalism’. Even without having to articulate the statement of being (long-distance) nationalists, the activism of Algerians is by definition a long-distance nationalism, and this is because of making an attachment with the country of origins through their political stances: that of the change of regime, one of the proposed political stances which according to Schiller (2005:574) can be adopted by long distant nationalists. Yet, Algerians’ long-distance nationalism could not just be limited to their political matters, yet the inclusion of the issue of Algerians’ national identity as well demonstrates that they are engaged in nation building from distance (which will be detailed later).

Being long-distance nationalists opens a discussion about at least the conception of Benedict Anderson who coined the term long distance nationalism in 1992 about migrants’ political engagement which, according to him, contributes to conflicts in the homeland and where these migrants act from a safest side without accountability (Anderson, 1992:11). This might put the Algerian *Hirakists* who take part in the *Hirak* outside Algeria under suspicion regarding their engagement, mainly since they live in another nation-state, who perhaps (and surely among research participants) hold the citizenship of that state and are considered safe from the socio-economic and political instability of Algeria. However, insisting on the fact that their “*Hirak* in an extension of the inside”, that they do not have a hidden agenda, and that they will stop protesting if the internal *Hirak* will stop are all justifications that Algerian long-distance nationalism is not to generate conflicts and crises in Algeria since the *Hirak* emerged in the first place in Algeria. It could be a form of ‘a benign’ long distance nationalism. In sum, the emergence of long-distance nationalism among participants and protesters was a selected process i.e., it took place after the genesis of popular movements in Algeria, where taking part of them is not obligatory in Algeria, let alone outside Algeria leading ultimately to classify them as long-distance nationalists.

3.2.4 Gendering the *Hirak*?

Algerians’ long-distance nationalism might be critiqued from the Andersonian perspective for intensifying conflicts in the homeland without posing themselves to risks, yet their participation is as well not void from harm and risk to themselves though they live outside Algeria. However, throughout fieldwork I noticed that the potential for this harm and risk mainly seemed focused

on women activists and protesters. The following quote is extracted from the field diary, which demonstrates how women in the female-only space reacted to Asya's activism at London's *Hirak*:

[Women] were discussing the issue of the involvement of the woman in politics which could be dangerous for her and this is through a serious debate that took place when they were speaking about the participation of [Asya] in the *Hirak* in London. She who one of the ladies called her: "she is a big activist". They warned her from not going anymore there. She replied them that: "we want to build the Algeria of tomorrow" and she does not regret it and is convinced to taking part of the activism before: "I do not regret it ok? for my country" and that this activism is for "change, positive change". [women] expressed disagreement, and [Yamina] said: "we don't love politics, we are free, we love liberty", and [Asya] replied to them: "you are scared" and responded that she only fears Allah. Another responded to her using a Quranic verse: "and Allah told you don't throw yourself with your hands into destruction". Then, they started giving her the scenarios in case she keeps going. [Yamina] told her she got things in her hands: "your children, don't let go" [...] another one told her that she needs to think in case they jail her she risks to be raped in the prison (field diary 2019).

Firstly, this discussion was held during my participation at Algerian women's gatherings in their female-only space (which will be discussed in the following chapter). It was between Asya an ex-member of the organising team of London's *Hirak* and the rest of women who did not take part in that *Hirak*. Overall, the discussion was about the disagreement and fear of women about Asya's involvement in the *Hirak*. Her statement of "we want to build the Algeria of tomorrow" is a direct expression of Asya's long-distance nationalism, i.e., though she is abroad she is engaged in the building of Algeria from outside, and that her activism is for positive change. On the other hand, Yamina's justification for disagreeing with Asya's participation and probably even her own non-participation is related to not loving politics but rather loving freedom.

Freedom in relation to Algerian women's activism is a concern. For example, there is a relation between Yamina's conception of freedom and taking part in the *Hirak*, the same is for Samia, who shows a concern about her activism in London's *Hirak* in relation to her freedom. She expressed to me this concern during an interview after she had been told by an Algerian political figure and activist who lives outside Algeria that: "it's us now [...] the immigrants and diaspora to try to help our brothers who are in Algeria". She replied to him that: "if I talk as I think in a press conference for example and there are people who do not like my idea, I come to the airport of Houari Boumédiène [in Algeria] and get put in a box, will you come and take me out from that box?". She then told me: "Are we part as much as that will keep me safe?"

Because I love my freedom so much, and you see what Mohamed Ali said when they ask him to go and fight for America against Vietnam? He said: ‘I love America it’s my country, but I love freedom so much to destroy it and to go to fight for America’ [...] I am nearly the same on that matter of philosophy, I love my country, but I love my freedom so much”.

The lack of freedom of speech, mainly in political affairs is an issue in Algeria. A more recent illustration of this in the story of the *Hirak* is that many protesters and activists were detained by the authorities for expressing their political views and critiquing certain political bodies and were accused of “harming state authorities” (Guemar and Northey, 2021). While these scenarios chase Algerians back in Algeria, yet through Yamina’s preference for freedom instead of political involvement, and Samia’s cautious mechanism to preserve her freedom illustrate the risk that even emigrants lack freedom though they live abroad. The reason behind their caution is related to the fact that, as Samia expressed, one day they will go to Algeria and will be punished. This concern is not limited to women only, I heard many times among men protesters their fear of ‘being waited for in Algeria’s airport’ to be caught and jailed as a result of their activism.

In relation to women’s discussion, Asya believes that women’s reluctance to mobilise is due to their fear. And the way she was responded that: “Allah told you don’t throw yourself with your hands into destruction” demonstrates the degree through which women connect political activism to self-destruction. So, this might indicate that probably the reason of being reluctant to get involved in ‘long-distance nationalism’ as Yamina expressed: not loving politics yet linking activism to destruction as well signifies to what extent activism is considered as a danger and threat to women who disagree with Asya’s participation. Additionally, women have precise fears as to how Asya could be harmed because of her activism: her children, risk of being jailed and raped. This gives a clear picture that they feel that Asya is at risk through her activism because she is a woman.

Another justification for the feeling of risk and fear that women face because of their activism in the *Hirak* even though they are outside Algeria, is that throughout fieldwork and interaction with participants, the category which though it takes part in the protests yet they either feel scared and threatened or were *at that present* time undergoing threat is the category of women protesters. For example, during field work at protests, I heard Aymen speaking to Amina a dual national. He thanked her because she did well by replying to someone on Facebook. After I asked her what does Aymen mean, she told me that people who are against the *Hirak* keep

insulting the protesters through Facebook. By replying to those negative comments, Amina said that she was receiving threats via private message; for example, she received a picture of a Kalashnikov from an unknown person and was called “*Harkia*”¹⁶. She told me that: “I know what I am doing is right [...] I am for the right thing”. Similarly, to Asya, her intention in taking part is driven with the belief of doing a good thing. What is interesting is that Amina received insults mainly in relation to the fact that she is a woman. She stated during a conversation that:

[W]hen they don’t know how to reply, they start saying go and cover yourself, you don’t have a man who hides you.

Though the quote does not state explicitly that Amina is being threatened because she thinks she is a woman, however, there is an implicit indication that her ‘femaleness’ is used as a justification against her among the category of people (they could be men or women) who criticise her activism. There are two relevant points in the quote, the first one is how Amina was ‘patronised’ over the fact that she does not wear the veil, and the other one is that she does not have a man in her life, that is why she is doing what she is doing in relation to the *Hirak*. Both remarks meet in the point that Amina’s activism is seen as being contradictory to the exemplar of the veiled, ‘protectee’ woman from the protector man (be it husband, brother...etc depending on intentions of the person who said that to Amina).

Before exploring further into the implication of femaleness, women and democratic transition and anti-regime revolutions in the context of migration, I would like to give a picture of some realities women faced during their participation in the *Hirak* in Algeria. The response to women’s participation was not welcomed by everybody. Many of them have undergone series of critiques and were told to stay at home because they ‘belong to the kitchen’. A more shocking incident is the widespread video on social media in 2019 from a 39-year Algerian man living in Britain warning women not to go out to claim their ‘freedom’ and threatening them with acid if they go out. The man was arrested by the British authorities “on suspicion of malicious communications and conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm” (Gantzer, 2019).

The violence against women during democratic revolutions was not solely limited to women in Algeria. It was reported as well that during the Arab spring (Tunisia for example), sexual violence and harassment were committed against women (Johansson-Nogués, 2013:399). If women in Algeria do have a very small space in the *Hirak*, the same is true for women in the

¹⁶ *Harkia* or *Harki* is a category of native Algerian people who used to serve as auxiliaries in the French army during the French occupation in Algeria from 1954-1962.

UK, knowing that women's activism in London's *Hirak* was not necessarily in relation to claiming their portions in *Hirak* as women (feminist demands), which might give some excuses to attack their activism or giving excuses that their matters are not an urgent matter' as was replied to the Feminist Square in Algeria. In other words, women's claims in London's *Hirak* were as well an extension of Algerian *Hirak*, whose agendas were regime change and a state of democracy. Therefore, women activists as well were doing long-distance nationalism, however, it should be mentioned that the long-distance nationalism of Algerian migrants as well as the nationalism of Algerian women in Algeria was challenged by the socio-cultural aspect and patriarchy. In other words, the conditions of migration do not seem to have improved the freedom of mobilisation and political participation of Algerian migrants' women outside Algeria.

To sum up, because of the interplay of the sociocultural context with 'the deterministic' biology or femaleness, and the socially stigmatisation and patriarchy practised on women which limit their political participation under the pretence that such participation does not match the designed ideal of femininity, women migrants as well are haunted by such assumptions which relatively exclude them from long-distance nationalism agenda, rendering the *Hirak* (in Algeria or outside) similarly to other spaces in the Algerian society a 'gendered' space. A clarification is needed here, by saying that they were excluded from the realisation of *Hirak*'s agenda, I do not mean that women are explicitly prohibited from mobilising outside Algeria (many time public speakers in the *Hirak* platform thanked women's attendance and support), however the way women expressed their concerns regarding risk and safety demonstrates a form of a hidden power and a blockade they face from taking part in the democratic transition and anti-regime revolutions of the homeland in their desired way.

3.3 Giving meaning to Algerian protests in London

The previous sections gave a holistic picture of the nature of London's *Hirak* and research participants' activism. This section aims to delve into the meanings research participants gave to their activism as *Algerian immigrants* living abroad. These Algerians who were protesting and marching could be seen through their collective action as a homogeneous group. However, through my immersion with them at protests, I realised that these people gave meanings to their activism differently and were at different levels more heterogeneous than homogeneous. They could be homogeneous in a sense that these people were present together in the time and the

space. However, their presence does not necessarily mean that they were all Algerians, and if yes, this did not mean that they all were there for the *Hirak*'s cause.

Therefore, though the original cause of the *Hirak* was for a change of the political regime, a cause which was extended by the Algerians in the UK, yet research participants in this research have given other meanings in relation to their participation besides their anti-regime agenda. These meanings are nested in the realm of memories, time and personal experiences prior to migration and post-migration experiences, and the meaning they give to their 'Algerian-ness' in relation to those experiences. Four points summarised research participants' constructed meaning about their engagement at London's *Hirak*. These are in relation to: giving a voice to the Algerian fellow nationals who live in Algeria, plans to construct the Algeria they are desiring to return to in the future, considering the movement as an opportunity to rethink the Algerian national identity, as well as seeing the *Hirak* as the hope through which they might revive the dreams which were devastated prior to their migration.

3.3.1 'What made me go there is just to support the Algerian people in Algeria, nothing for me': voicing the silenced

The population involved in London's *Hirak* has always made it clear that their activism was an extension to the Inside *Hirak* of Algeria. However, the meaning they gave to their participation is different from the way Algerians in Algeria gave to their uprising. It was found that the reason behind the involvement of research participants lays in the role they could play in this national affair, but not only as a (homogeneous or heterogeneous) group who joined the Algerian cause and made it credible and strong because many Algerians inside and outside Algeria supported that cause. However, the London *Hirakists*' role, according to how they expressed it, lay in their role as immigrants living outside the Algerian national borders per se. Before moving further to explore how research participants made sense of their role, the whole London's *Hirak* positioned itself in the story of the *Hirak* as relevant because it was outside, not inside. It was widely repeated at protest demonstrations that, as highlighted by a dual national journalist and activist many times that: "A very important point, we as expatriates do have the possibility to have a role". He clearly links the possibility to have a role only as bearers of 'expatriates' status, a link which was clearly stated by research participants.

Research participants who were engaged in the protest demonstrations and were committed to taking part in it on a regular basis have made it clear that their engagement was for Algeria and

the Algerians in Algeria as expressed by Samia about the motives leading her to attend London's *Hirak* every Saturday: "I came to discuss Algeria itself. Me it's Algeria which interests me!". And it is particularly the desire of seeing change in Algeria, which is of interest to research participants in taking part in London's *Hirak*, for example, Mourad expressed that:

Mourad: [F]or me, I speak about me [...] two things: the thing is to establish the social cohesion that did not really exist. We don't have a social cohesion. All people are divided, and everyone looks for his interest in a way or another [...] The second thing is to orient people towards a direction where there is a common denominator they agree upon towards a society [...] where there is an egalitarian society, where there is justice.

Throughout my observation of Mourad's speeches, he seemed to devote importance to Algeria's social problems and providing solutions to them. The quote demonstrates a kind of deviation from the original *Hirak*'s agenda, that of regime change, yet at the same time it demonstrates how immigrants though outside the country of origin, remain analytical to the social aspects of an Algeria they do not live in. Here Mourad and other research participants did not solely diagnose the problems of Algeria, they actively took part in addressing and fixing those problems.

The question which is asked here is how these individuals will benefit from change occurring in Algeria. Research participants explained that their participation was not limited to whether it would directly benefit them, it was instead related to the role they think they have to play as Algerians living outside Algeria. Nacira stated:

Nacira: What made me go there is just to support the Algerians people in Algeria, nothing for me. Because if I start to think about myself, I don't need anything from Algeria. I am happy, I am living in the UK. I have everything. I am working; my children are going at the moment to a very good school [...] they got everything. We don't need more. So, we can travel everywhere whenever we want and wherever we want.

The motive behind Nacira's participation in London's *Hirak* is that she is doing something for the Algerian people in Algeria. She seems to separate herself and her personal ambitions from the outcome of the *Hirak*. The way she justifies that her involvement in London's *Hirak* is not for her is by the fact that she lives in the UK where she and her children can access different resources, and also as a holder of a British passport, she can access different territories anytime. Nacira is not the only participant who states that their activism is for Algerians in Algeria, linking this to the fact that they live in a 'better' place than their fellow-nationals. Mahmoud for example states that: "of course we are better off here, we are not suffering all the problems

in Algeria”. He as well emphasises that taking part in the issues of the homeland is neither conditional on the physical presence in Algeria, nor necessarily enduring the same problems Algerians endure in Algeria. Therefore, the outcome and the benefits resulting from the *Hirak* will benefit them in an indirect way as expressed by Nacira: “I am gonna get anything [...] But whatever is going to change in Algeria [...] it’s going to be positive for the Algerians [...] what [*Hirak*] benefits, is good for us”.

The stance of Nacira and research participants who admitted that their activism is for Algerians in Algeria opens avenues to understanding how they think they could be ‘influential’ for the people inside Algeria. Different understandings were given from research participants about this. For example, Mahmoud replied to my question I asked him during the demonstration of the 1st anniversary of the *Hirak*: “what makes you come?”, he replied that the reason is: “contributing to the whole society [which is] Algeria”. The contribution of immigrants is recognised either towards the host country or the country of origin where they maintain links and mobilise resources from a distance. In the case of Mahmoud, using the *Hirak*’s platform to concretise that contribution is a way of helping Algerian society. As he is a public speaker, his contribution is as he names it: “awareness” because according to him: “there are things, certain facts people don’t know, particularly among the Algerian people”. Even Mourad during an interview told me that the *Hirak* was an opportunity to be a plus: “[S]o on the 22nd of February an occasion came to us to transmit, to guide a little bit the people towards positivism”. Both research participants think that they can be a source of knowledge, and so they used *Hirak*’s platform to build a knowledge bridge from the outside to the inside through which Algerians in Algeria will benefit. Transmitting knowledge is not the only purpose of Algerians’ activism outside, another ‘abstract’ contribution is that of a psychological support. Again, according to Mahmoud’s and Mourad’s respective perceptions, London’s *Hirak*: “lifts the spirit of Algerians” and is “just a moral support for [...] the Algerians who are inside Algeria”. Joining a national cause by Algerians living outside Algeria for supporting the fellow nationals illustrates that the former’s ability to contribute is neither conditional on their physical presence in Algeria nor on their material contribution (remittance). The contribution can be in forms of abstract mechanisms defined by the immigrants, which as well may play a role in intensifying the link between them with the country of origins.

While these remain subjective ways of contributing to the country of origins, on a more official scale, London’s *Hirak* defined itself acting not only as an extension of the inside *Hirak*, but it

also deployed this extension to empower the inside's *Hirak*. As stated publicly at London's protest by Hamid, a dual national public speaker and journalist:

[O]ur presence, especially us who are outside Algeria [...] we do have a role. And this role lies in supporting the inside, to be the gates [and] voices, to be the model. At the same time, we deal with free forces in these countries [...] free jurists, free journalists.

The quote demonstrates to what extent the role of London's *Hirak* was becoming more engaged and active. It was stated previously that research participants mentioned that they are supporting the Algerians inside Algeria by providing 'abstract' resources and transmissions, yet in this quote, it seems like there is a transition in terms of the role played in the story of the *Hirak* to a more action-taking phase. This vision is as well shared among dual national activists; for example, Aymen defined their activism as speaking for and voicing the Algerians back in Algeria. The following is an extract from my field diary:

[Aymen] told me that they are protesting because the press is not listening to them and that there is a misleading media. Therefore, they are the alternative media. He said that their activism is maintained as a pressure from the outside, so that people from inside Algeria could not be suppressed as they have people who are monitoring from outside.

It could be understood that Algerians protesting in London are taking the responsibility over ensuring that the Algerian internal *Hirak* is heard outside Algeria, in this case the UK. Protesting and marching in urban areas publicly could be justified by their desire for the outside world to hear about the issues happening in Algeria, and at the same time, as mentioned previously by Hamid, using the advantage of being outside Algeria to launch contacts with free forces to make the Algerian cause heard. At the same time, as stated by Aymen, playing the role of the 'protector' or the 'guardian' for the Algerian people through exerting pressure on powers standing against the Algerian people's will inside Algeria.

Thus, research participants' motives of taking part in the *Hirak* demonstrate (but not exclusively as will be discussed in the following point) that they were doing what they were doing for the Algerian people and 'nothing for them'. And one reason for that is that they live in a safer place than Algeria. Therefore, they structured their activism as being a form of support and voice to the inside, a fact which hints that they are in a 'privileged' position to do so vis-à-vis the individuals who are/need to be voiced and spoken for in 'free forces', for example. Speaking for others who are under-privileged is an act put under criticism for ethical reasons, because sometimes while the intention of the privileged to speak for the under-

privileged and the oppressed is to empower them, it may turn to be more oppressing and disempowering (Alcoff, 1991:7). One reason for such a reversal scenario could be that the privileged do not know the suffering of the oppressed because they do not endure the same experiences, or do not have same identities. How could this be related to Algerians outside Algeria vis-à-vis the Algerians inside Algeria? Nacira expressed that: “The *Hirak* is about the Algerian people, we know their suffering. We know what they are suffering of”, a statement which states that the lived experiences of Algerians in Algeria are familiar to Algerians outside Algeria. Additionally, it is ‘Algerians’ speaking about ‘Algerians’, i.e., the identity matching requirement of the legitimate process of speaking for others is ‘symbolically’ met.

Sharing the same national identity as well as knowing or sharing the same lived experiences of the fellow nationals would not mean that the initiative of importing the Algerian cause and voicing the Algerians outside was problematic. This again supports the idea that their long-distance nationalism is void from intention to create any internal conflict. In sum, having the opportunity not to endure the problems existing in the homeland as well as even being a national of the country of the host, these do not prevent dual nationals from taking the initiative to voice the malaise that fellow nationals endure in the homeland. They do so by mobilising the resources available to them in the host country and take an active role to have impact on the internal issues.

3.3.2 The conditional return

Findings from the fieldwork indicated that research participants were taking part in the protests for the Algerians in Algeria, and not for themselves. However, there was an indirect way in which Algerians outside Algeria were protesting for *themselves* as well. In other words, there is a strong relation between taking part in realising the *Hirak*’ s agenda and research participants’ possible future plans of returning to the homeland. Migration studies are familiar with the expression of the “the Myth of Return” that indicates that migrants do hold in their minds the possibility and the dream of returning to the homeland one day. Al-Rasheed (1994:199) states that: “the myth of return describes a frame of mind, rooted in the person’s psychology, previous experiences, present, and aspirations towards the future”. The aspiration towards the future is what characterised the conception of research participants towards “the myth of return”. Again Al-Rasheed (1994:202) distinguishes between the conception of return among immigrants and refugees and this is because of the two categories’ different relations

with the homeland. According to him, the relation of the immigrants with the homeland is less problematic. Although some of research participants were once refugees, yet their current situation has changed and this is because they became naturalised in the country of settlement, and more significantly, the Algerian civil war which drove them to leave Algeria no longer exists. However, their conception of returning to Algeria remains problematic and this is because of the ‘present of Algeria’.

Thus, there appeared a strong link between both Algeria’s London *Hirak* and research participants’ plans of returning to Algeria. I will discuss this later in the section. First, let’s shed light on the perception of research participants who took part in London’s *Hirak* about the question of whether they are considering returning one day to Algeria. Their thoughts were summarised into two categories: *the first category* which does not plan to return to Algeria yet actively takes part in the *Hirak*; and *the second category* which desires to return to Algeria, but with conditions.

The participants of the first category who consider the option of returning think that returning is not a solution because of the roots they have established in the country of settlement as parents of second-generation children:

Samia: Some of my good friends, for them one day they will go back, and Algeria is the only country they have. Yes, Algeria is my own country, it’s the only country I have but I have two children who grew up here. Do you think my two children decide now or tomorrow to stay and I go back to Algeria? No! do you really think I will punish my children if I die to say “oh you carry my body to Algeria”, well maybe my daughter will like to put some flowers every week on my grave or my grandchildren. So, the choice is very very hard to make.

The obligation that has emerged in her post-migration experience and becoming a mother have become decisive in the destiny of Samia vis-à-vis Algeria. She does not oppose the idea of returning to Algeria because of her attachment to it. i.e., if she is more attached to it, the chance of returning is high. On the contrary, she admits that Algeria is the only country she has, yet she does not consider the option of returning. It is the roots she released as mother of two children which have become decisive in assessing the issue of the return. She as well assumes her status as a mother, who, if she dies would not bother her children to take her body to Algeria. Slightly similar is the approach of Mourad regarding the relation between the post-migration life and the return to Algeria:

Mourad: Look, the programs that they are launching to bring back the competences to Algeria, they forget that they are talking about another immigration. It means we are trying to demand people to do another immigration, to leave the place where they have got their families, pensions, they have their rights, they made friends, they have got relations in that society, and then go again to a society when you go you find a lot of people who do not know you, only your friends who you have grown up with, even their children do not know you. Once the one returns back, you need to fit again because the mentality has changed, because the psychology of the society has changed. It is not easy. The communication of people with people has changed, the terminology they use changed [...] it is completely another type of immigration which people are asked to do!

Mourad seems to critique the initiatives of some parties to push the skilled people to return to Algeria. Like Samia, he thinks that the roots they constructed and the life they built in the host country would not make their return to Algeria easy. Additionally, the possible changes which took place in Algeria during their absence would make it hard to cope again. Therefore, he believes that the return to Algeria should not be taken for granted. What is intriguing in Mourad's statement is that he considers that returning to Algeria as "another immigration" which needs to be negotiated as was the first movement from Algeria to the host. Bearing in mind the facts that it is not easy to leave the place which they became part of (subjectively or through official relation with the state as citizens), and that the country of Algeria has changed in the meantime and become strange, Mourad does not seem to attribute the word 'return' in relation to going and living again in Algeria as much as he would consider it as 'another immigration', a new type of migration from the country of settlement to the country of origins.

Research participants from *the second category*, who are planning to return to Algeria, have set up in their minds conditions and standards Algeria needs to meet in order for them to be able to return permanently, though some of them have already tried to return and their project did not work. Zahra for example told me during an interview that: "many times I want to sell and go, and when I go there, I look: 'what's wrong with me?'" Her hesitation is due to her experience in Algeria while she was trying to return, she said: "you go to the post office you have to queue, they don't talk to you, like you are nothing, life expensive, everything is not alright". The reasons preventing Zahra from returning are shared among other research participants who might consider the option as being dependent on the situation of Algeria and a better life quality there:

- 1- Zahra: I mean if tomorrow my country going to be good and good law
[...] tomorrow I will move.

2- *SB: so, if things are better in Algeria, will you?*

Hamza: I will jump, I will dive first. I will go and live in my country.

The conditions Algerians ‘set up’ to Algeria so that they can return lie in the heart of the *Hirak*’s agenda. The latter, as previously mentioned, stands for the change in Algeria towards a democratic, prosperous country of law. What was not mentioned by the uprising of Algerians in Algeria is the return of the Algerians living abroad, yet these immigrants have a strong hope to see changes in Algeria so that they will conditionally return. But for London’s protesters, the opportunity of taking part by action in making those conditions realised is what led them to protest in London, and this is precisely what led Aymen to join the protest. The following is an extract from my field diary about an informal conversation I had with Aymen:

[T]hat the reason that made them do the *Hirak* is that they want to return to Algeria if it’s fixed. He told me that he tried to settle down in Algeria twice, but he could not because of the system. He then related this to the people who do not attend the *Hirak*. He told me that people who do not attend London’s protests are not thinking properly and that the *Hirak* will fix Algeria and many Algerians will go back there and live.

There is a direct link between Aymen’s driving motive for activism and his desire to return to Algeria. Instead of sitting and watching Algerians back in Algeria taking part in a democratic transition which will construct Algerian participants’ desires to live in, they actively took in that journey. However, taking part in the *Hirak* was not solely undertaken by those desiring to return, as previously mentioned Samia and Mourad are not keen to return to Algeria, yet they were activists in the *Hirak*. Generally, the myth of return implies memories and knowledge of what had been left before and the desire to return in the future to find it. However, in the case of the research participants they hope to return, conditionally, in the future to a new Algeria that they have never seen before and which does not look like either the one they lived in during the period before they left Algeria, or the present version. Thus, they are absent now and working on returning in the future through their activism.

3.3.3 London’s *Hirak* as an opportunity to rethink identity

London’s *Hirak* brought to its plans the matter of Algerian national identity in protests, signs, and discourse. One reason behind this is that what constructs and what does not construct the Algerian national identity has been and remains a complex issue that marked Algerian history at least from after the independence era. Defining the identity of post-independent Algeria was detrimental for many Algerians who belong to ethnic minorities who saw that the demarcation

of the Algerian national identity model excluded them. Algerian immigrants are among the people who were impacted by such demarcation which was fuelled by an anti-colonial, Pan-Arabism agenda which excluded their Berber identity for example. And in the 90s Islamic resurgence has deeply changed what constitutes the national identity of Algeria. These confusions and uncertainties persisted until the outbreak of the *Hirak* in Algeria. While the primary issue of the genesis of the *Hirak* was to get rid of the regime, it gradually touched the issue of the national identity and regionalism. The provocative speech of Algeria's army chief who said that: "there is one flag that is the unique symbol of Algeria's independence, territorial integrity and popular unity", adding: "Algeria has only one flag for which millions of Algerians have fallen as martyrs", and this led to the prohibition of carrying other flags like Amazigh flag, but only the Algerian national flag in protest demonstrations in Algeria.

Before moving further in speaking about the relationship between the Algerian national identity issues and London's *Hirak*, research participants have expressed their dissatisfaction and the on-going confusion of identity changes Algeria went through in the post-independence period and in the 90s which most of the time were the motives leading them to leave Algeria and migrate. However, there are others who decided to wait and leave Algeria a few years after the outbreak of the civil war. Research participants expressed the persistent impact of confusions that took place around the Algerian identity even after growing older. Hamza, for example, said that: "Algerian culture was a mixture, it was a pot [...] The stew when you put everything and you don't know what you are putting until you grow up and you are 50, 60, and it's too old to change what you have to change and you accept it, it's already there and it's fighting in your mind". Samia, of Kabyle origins, also expressed to me the confusion that Algerians were facing because of the impact of French colonialism in post-independence Algeria, mainly in relation to education, she stated that:

In schools, we did not know if we are French or Kabyle. They were teaching us French. In Algiers, we did not know what we are Algerian or French. When we think, we don't know how to think, do we think with the language that teaching us at school? Or do we think with the language our moms speak to us at home".

The feeling of confusion was not the sole issue for her, she as well felt excluded by the rest of Algerians because of the fact she speaks Kabyle and French, she expressed:

[S]o when you take someone from my generation and from Kabylie, we speak both languages, we dream with both languages, so we don't not know

what we are. Then you end up in your country where they tell you: “you are not Algerian, you are *Gawriya*”¹⁷.

Though the language which is studied at school or the environment where she was brought up were not of her choice, yet her ‘Algerianness’ was questioned. Her ethnic identity as being part of the Kabyle community in Algeria was also one of the reasons which made her excluded and othered from her entourage. For example, she expressed to me an incident she lived in the workplace:

So, I mean there is a time where I will have colleagues in the reception in the hotel, they will be talking to each other and they will be saying: ‘oh she did not understand’, only because [...] I don’t get involved in their own conversation, so they go: “she does not understand, she is kabyle, she does not understand”.

These experiences shaped her post-migration life as an immigrant, in a sense that the label of ‘a foreigner’ in the country of settlement is easy to bear; for example, she told me: “arriving here [...] when they say foreigner, some people get offended. I don’t, it doesn’t bother me because I feel the foreigner in my own country”. The lived experience of Samia is the example of how the agenda of building a nation and setting an exclusive defined national identity to individuals is the same agenda that excluded others’ identities who are part of that nation, a fact which creates an immunity once leaving the country of origin to settle in another country which could categorise people based on their origins.

The most radical attempt to break from the colonial heritage was the rise of Islamism that appeared to shape every aspect of the Algerian society in the 90s. Some research participants have considered this shift a negative step which led them to mourn the Algeria that existed before that period. The sudden religiosity that came to shape almost every aspect of the Algerian everyday life led Mustapha and Salim in a constant wonder of the reason and the necessity behind that shift. Mustapha for example commented about this religiosity: “as if our grandparents were not Muslims, as if we were not a nation!”. He seems to doubt the necessity of that new religiosity since the nation was already established with a defined religion of Islam. While the sudden emergence of religiosity in Algeria could have been welcome among Algerians, but for Salim for example the phenomenon made him question his existence in Algeria. He stated: “It was not a pleasant place, people changed, mentality changed [...] from one day to the other people discovered religious stuff [...] It was not the place where I grew up

¹⁷ *Gawriya* is a word in colloquial Algerian which means foreign woman or girl coming from Europe.

in”. And it is particularly this change which made Salim: “[leave] all that behind and come to London”. The situation of Salim is an expression of how one can feel a stranger in the place where she/he was born, and this is due to the power applied on them that could not be felt explicitly, mainly because Algeria was already a Muslim country. Lazreg (1998: 44) could explain this clearly and defined Algerian Islamism as a form of recolonisation: in order to implement certain behaviours, it took advantage of the familiarity of Algerians with Islam and the Arabic languages, yet according to her these behaviours are: “alien to the historical and daily experiences of the individual Algerian”, and it is particularly this unfamiliarity which was felt by both Mustapha and Salim.

The issue of the Algerian national identity was brought implicitly and explicitly to the platform of London’s *Hirak*. For example, at protest demonstrations research participants who were both interviewed and observed while speaking in public have expressed the impact of the *Hirak* on preserving and uniting Algerians and have warned against regionalism. For example, some dual national women were observed holding signs containing expressions like: ‘brothers, brothers, no regionalism’ and ‘Kabyles and Arabs, brother brothers’ (see appendix 10) right after the spread of the prohibition of the Amazigh flag. Research participants as well through their public speeches at London’s *Hirak* insisted on the unity of Algerians regardless of the origins. For example, Mahmoud during his public speech emphasised the relationship between the unity of Algerians and their success, he stated publicly: “the unity of Algerians is mandatory. Without unity we cannot succeed”.

The platform of London’s *Hirak* did not only warn against the disunity of Algerians, but as well praised their activism which joined people and united them inside and outside Algeria. For example, Mourad saw London’s *Hirak* as an opportunity which enabled him to meet a lot of Algerians, and Mahmoud expressed that: “The good thing about [*Hirak*], from my point of view is that it’s the first time where I see Algerians [...] after nine years getting together [...] talking to each other, mingling with each other”.

The long-held issue of identity which was considered confusing to research participants before they migrated was again awakened by the outbreak of the *Hirak* which paved the way to a great extent for the implementation of the identity issues in its political agenda. In Algeria, the incident of prohibiting the Amazigh flag at protest demonstrations was responded to with refusal and resistance among protesters, and the protesters who carried that flag were arrested and jailed. And because the protesters in London were to an extent ‘safe’ from being arrested

if they carried the Amazigh flag, they freely carried it including Samia and others who wrapped it around their shoulders. London's *Hirak* condemned the prohibition of the Berber flag and included in its program the inclusion of the Berber identity as one of the pillars of the national identity of Algeria. This inclusion was explicitly introduced by implementing the Kabyle language as a means of communication in the public speeches at protest demonstrations. Farid delivered speeches in Kabyle at protest demonstrations, followed by a translation in Algerian colloquial Arabic. Some protesters expressed themselves in the Kabyle language like for example Samia, who chanted: "Ulaç Smah Ulaç!" (no forgiveness!). And to support the Kabyles who were detained in Algeria because they were carrying the Berber flag, protesters in London left a space to discuss issues about these people by either delivering speeches condemning those detentions, or organising exhibitions, where they put up the pictures of those detained.

Individuals decide to migrate and leave their countries for various reasons, depending on the pulling and pushing factors from respectively both the receiving country and the country of origins. Yet, research participants besides expressing that many reasons led them to leave Algeria which were mainly related to security and lack of opportunities there, yet the population was as well pushed to leave the country because of change of the identity by either excluding identities or implementing identities which were not part of what they consider part of the authentic Algerian identity, leading to the feeling "of being a stranger" in one's country. The outbreak of the *Hirak* led to an awakening on the issue of the identity crises and the marginalisation of protesters and research participants who took part in London's *Hirak*. However, the moment was seized as an opportunity to rethink, correct, and redefine by inserting their identity within the demarcation of the Algerian national identity, an opportunity which had been out of their hands and control in the past, mainly since some participants left Algeria due to their dissatisfaction with the exclusion of their identities. It should be said that the fact that they were claiming their identity by protesting from outside Algeria was in their favour as they had the freedom to at least carry the Amazigh flag. The involvement of migrants in the discourse of the national identity of the country of origins could be driven with different motives, in the case of research participants it was for claiming and empowering themselves, yet whatever the meaning is given to such involvement, it informed the role of these migrants in constructing and shaping the identity and nation-building of the homeland, from a distance.

3.3.4 Reviving the dream: *'Algeria cries'*

Besides the anti-regime agenda, the identity matter and the role Algerian protesters could play to support Algerians inside Algeria, London's *Hirak* dealt also with its protesters' pre-migration experiences which were mostly characterised by disappointment, traumas, and contempt (identity marginalisation for example) in the country of origins. These experiences mostly led them to migrate. Research participants' main reasons for leaving Algeria were pushing factors, mainly the crises of the 90s' civil war which drove many Algerians to seek asylum in different countries, mainly the UK. Therefore, the migration of the majority of research participants was 'a forced migration', defined by them in expressions like: "running away" to the unknown, the search for security for them and their children. Research participants also have made it clear that their migration was not for seeking better economic opportunities as they expressed that their financial situations were more than good when they left Algeria. For Nadjat who came to the UK after the success of her asylum application said that: "I had my career in Algeria, I worked, and I had everything, a house, [...] a car". Samia gave an explanation of the type of the migration of Algerians of her generation and compared with the economic migration of her parents' generation: "I guess my generation is more of the respect of the individual". She then summarised the nature of the migration of her generation:

Samia: That point the whole of my generation were trying to migrate, because when you had you know an Algerian person trying to settle down in Russia. It's not a way, is it? That person is not going to make himself rich when he goes and settle down in Russia. That person is running away from something which we could not figure out at that time. It took us years to understand we are actually running away because actually we don't see things the same way [...] politically. [...] Running away from the unknown event, which was then happening after, you know?

SB: The events that took place in your country?

Samia: yeah, which was the civil war.

What could be understood from Samia's description of the characteristics of her generation's migration from Algeria is that it is not relational to the receiving countries which will help them to develop themselves, but instead it is a forced migration resulting from the unpleasant circumstances in Algeria. The quote demonstrates that there was not a scrutiny with regard the choice of the receiving country, what seemed to matter was just to leave Algeria.

The forced migration and the environment through which this forced migration took place were discussed at London's *Hirak*. It was clearly mentioned that the *Hirak* was for the Algerians in Algeria, however, the platform of London as well spoke of the experiences of immigrants and

their departure from Algeria, as for example stated by an Algerian French activist during his public speech that: “Algeria cries the migration of the skills, Algeria cries its scientists who are absent [...] Algeria cries her children who died in the sea”. This excerpt demonstrates the ongoing forced migration in Algeria, and the distress of Algeria after the departure of its children who despite Algeria needs them yet were forced to leave it. Algerian protesters in London’s *Hirak* publicly spoke about their sufferings and trauma especially if the date of the day of their protest coincided with a pre-migration important day. For example, once the protest took place on the 5th October 2019, the anniversary of the events of the 5th October 1988 Riots when Algerians went for protest demonstrations, a public speaker was recalling traumatic incidents of that day where he saw dead bodies as a result of the riots. Speaking about these past incidents was accompanied by tears by the speaker and the attendees.

The *Hirak* was the first popular national uprising since October Riots incident and a moment to revive those memories. However, it was a moment where the once forced migrants were given a hope to change the scenario which was once out of their hands and control:

Mourad: There was a dream when we were young, we used to see it. [...] we, the children of independence or those who were born a bit earlier than us in the 50s or 60s, we used to remember it [...] that dream was almost embodied in Boumediene, his discourses, his dreams, his programmes. And the Algerian man used go abroad Algeria with value, it’s psychological! [...]. We saw ourselves that we will become a global power but eventually that dream was devastated, true! It was devastated by people who governed the country [...] But something happened in Algeria, I do not know, an infiltration or something like that happened where they destroyed that dream. That dream did not die in us, we of that period. This year an opportunity came to us to mobilise everybody, to get back again that dream.

Mourad seems to make a connection between his past and the moment of the *Hirak*. He stated that the post-independence period was a period characterised with optimism about Algeria and the Algerian people. The optimism that was felt made them develop a state of mind that the Algerian individual is confident when he crosses the territorial borders of Algeria, and that Algeria will become globally powerful. However, he seemed to lose that dream because of the government of that time and other reasons he could not identify. “That dream did not die in us” demonstrates the hope Mourad has carried throughout all that period until the genesis of the *Hirak* which was the stimulator to revive the dream by doing something towards its realisation. And since the dream has political dimensions and would require reforms, seizing the chance in the *Hirak* was a plausible initiative. The political turmoil and security issues of the 1990s which took place in Algeria victimised many Algerians, however, the Algerians who left Algeria were

probably more affected despite the assumption that said that they saved themselves. They endured a double struggle: that of seeing one's country through a period of destruction and being forced to leave it. Enduring such experiences as well justified why they took part in an uprising whose outcome might make it up for them as individuals who endured such a double struggle compared to fellow Algerians in Algeria. Therefore, it could be said that migrants' intervention in the matters of the country of origins was fuelled with memories of trauma and hope from their pre-migration life which does not seem to fade away in post-migration life and conditions. These memories are used to empower and justify their involvement in the internal affairs of the homeland, from a distance.

Conclusion

The ethnographic exploration to London's *Hirak* provided multifarious insights. Overall, findings indicated that research participants considered themselves as being concerned with the *Hirak*, both as external citizens and as individuals who were originally from Algeria. What was interestingly discovered was that although Algerian research participants lived outside Algeria, they not only made sure of being updated with whatever happened there, they also interfered from a distance by behaving both accountably towards the state of Algeria and responsibly towards the nation and Algerian fellow-nationals. By acting as transnational agents, research participants did not only extend the internal *Hirak*, but as well added, systematically, their version of activism, which was not the same as the internal *Hirak*, and this is because of their spatial dislocation as well as their status as being emigrants. This resulted in the creation of a 'citizenship movement' from external citizens who as well label themselves as being (benign) long-distance nationalists, a movement which legitimately inserted and imposed its position and relevance in the whole story of the *Hirak* but also was relatively exclusionary to Algerian women migrants. It was found that women were reluctant to take part in the *Hirak*, and the women who did take part in it were undergoing a series of threats justified by Algerian patriarchy whose logic is to (directly or indirectly) discredit women's engagement in the Algerian political scene. This led to finding that London's *Hirak* is to a certain extent as a gendered space as other spaces in Algeria, and the movement of Algerian women outside Algeria did not seem to alter the internal controlling patriarchy.

Although one might think that the political activism of migrants is only about politics let alone if it is extended from the homeland, however findings indicated that exploring ethnographically

London's *Hirak* led to discovering relevant insights about Algerian British research participants' sense of belonging, that could probably not be discovered elsewhere. The meaning they constructed regarding their joining of the *Hirak* was informed by their status as Algerians living abroad as well as their migration historical records, before leaving Algeria as well as well the reasons which pushed them to leave it. London's *Hirak* was an opportunity to speak out about their 'Algerianness', even though the internal movement's agenda was not directly for the emigrants.

“We are in Algeria”: an ethnographic exploration of the Algerian female-only space

Introduction

It is through making the familiar strange the exploration of the Algerian female only space came to exist in this PhD. Knowing that the position of the Algerian women was in a way limited in Algerian protesters’ long-distance nationalism, this chapter provides other angles regarding how Algerians in the UK construct their belonging to and maintain ties with Algeria. The previous chapter explored how Algerian British research participants maintain transnational ties with Algeria at non-ordinary setting and situation characterised by activism and resource mobilisation, and this chapter explores how Algerian British women maintain ties with Algeria in *their own way*, in *their own space* and in an ordinary setting and situation. It is about women’s gatherings organised by Algerian British women in a female only space. Women’s gatherings were identified as part of women’s everyday life, and the intersection of women’s status as being Algerians, females, migrants who occupied the female space which led to discovering that exploring migrant women’s spatiality might provide relevant insights about women’s lived Algerianness and ties maintenance with the homeland.

This chapter is comprised of three major sections. The first section explains what I meant earlier by ‘making the familiar strange’, a technique I deployed which led to generating knowledge which would have been taken for granted. The second section provides ethnographic descriptions to enable the reader to have a holistic image of what happens inside Algerian female-only space, using description of the atmosphere of women’s social gatherings. The last parts dig beneath the surface and attempts to give meanings to what happens at women’s gatherings in their Algerian female space, meanings constructed by those Algerian women who occupy that space which are mostly related to women’s nationalism, belonging and identity.

4.1 Encountering the female-only space: *making the familiar strange*

In this section, I aim to explain how the exploration of the female-only space came to be part in this PhD, from visiting Algerian women’s gatherings to ethnographically exploring them. My first encounter with Algerian women took place when I met Asya, an active member in

these women's gatherings at a funeral of the wife of an Algerian individual. I had already seen Asya taking part in London's *Hirak* organising team. At the funeral I told her about my research. She then told me that she along with other Algerian women hold social gatherings in London and accepted that I come and see by myself what they do. We exchanged our phone numbers, and she gave me the address of the gatherings. On the same night, she gave me a lift to the tube station where from distance she showed me the venue of the gathering in London. It was after a few weeks following meeting Asya that I found that the women's gathering is part of a community project, itself part of a local organisation, in London.

I took the bus a few weeks after meeting Asya and headed to the place on a Thursday morning. Once I arrived at the area, I put the exact address of the place on Google Maps and followed the path. On my phone, it said that the place was exactly one minute walk from the bus stop, however, it took me more than that. While I was supposed to arrive at 12:30 pm, I arrived at 1 pm. I got lost in the place, because though my GPS was saying that I arrived, yet I could not see any building similar to the one I saw on Google Maps. At that moment, I dropped a message to Asya and told her so that she could guide me to the place. I waited four minutes and then called her directly. She responded to me and then she went out of the building and saw me from a distance and then started guiding me. We met and kissed each other. She took me inside the building and introduced me as a PhD student researching Algerians abroad. I kissed all the women who were inside. They were welcoming and warm to me. They served me tea and asked me to have lunch with them. The menu of that day was *Tikerbabine*, a Kabyle traditional meal I am *familiar* with because of my Kabyle origins.

Throughout my fieldwork, I kept participating every Thursday in the gatherings. In the early weeks I was coming at 12pm, then I decided to come early at around 9:30 am, the time when the building was opened by a woman who lives very close to the area. Sometimes, I would come early and wait outside until that woman showed up, and sometimes I would come and find the building open. Every week I entered directly, kissed and hugged all the women who as well welcomed me.

The following are extracts from my field diary about my early reflections and impressions about women and their gatherings:

[t]hey are very spontaneous, very spontaneous [...] they are like any women in Algeria. I cannot see any difference.

I feel that it's the space where they want to feel that they live in Algeria.

They feed me true food! Like mom's food.

It was particularly that perception, that what I observed was very similar to what I would usually see in relation to women in Algeria, which led me to question myself about what new insights women's gatherings in a female-only space could bring to the set of knowledge produced about the lived experiences of dual national women in the UK, and how they make sense of their Algerian belonging abroad. The reflections meant that I was familiar with what I was observing and experiencing. However, this (dormant) familiarity was not nested from any academic or research fieldwork conducted in Algeria about women. Stimulating the familiarity was based primarily on the fact that I was an Algerian woman who had spent most of her life in Algeria, who culturally, religiously, and socially would understand why Algerian women would: make female-only gatherings; make physical greetings by kissing and hugging with other women they do not necessarily know (the act of kissing women was familiar to me though I was there in the capacity of a researcher); cook certain dishes...etc.

My reflections were as well driven with a sense of amazement related to the fact that what women do in their gatherings is relatively similar to what women do in Algeria despite *being outside Algeria*, a fact which led me want to find the unfamiliar from the familiar. Exploring the female only space is part of process of social defamiliarisation, as a strategy initiated by me to explore the Algerian female space and go beyond the fact that it seemed familiar, mundane, and ordinary. This is a strategy which gets round the impact of being a researcher "working in familiar territory [where] there is a danger that [my] findings will be overshadowed by the enclosed, self-contained world of common understanding" (Mannay, 2016:31). Defamiliarisation is a concept introduced by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his famous essay "Art as Techniques" (1917) which means seeing the strange in the familiar or making the familiar strange. Social defamiliarisation – it is argued - has "almost the status of a mantra among ethnographers" (Sikes, 2006:538).

I deployed some techniques to achieve defamiliarisation by starting to ask questions like 'what is going on out there in women's gatherings?', and the usage of available ethnographic methods like observation to generate data. Although I was familiar with what I was observing; for example, in relation to food preparation, or why women would make the space accessible to women only, yet I was asking women those questions. Across the data, I found repetitive expressions where women would say to me "you know", meaning they knew that I was familiar with some aspects, yet I attempted to defamiliarise myself and my experiences by asking more questions and clarifications.

4.2 Inside the female-only space: ethnographic descriptions

Divided into two parts, this section provides an ethnographic description generated from my immersion in British Algerian women's gatherings. The first part summarises the repetitive routines I observed taking place regularly at women's gatherings every Thursday. To provide a holistic picture, the following part uses the conversational interaction of women to understand the nature of the Algerian female space.

4.2.1. Thursday (s) spent in female-only space

Though the surface area of the space is relatively small it is well-equipped to meet women's needs (for example, small and equipped kitchen, tables and chairs), many things happened in the gatherings (see appendix 11 for the physical description of the space). Throughout my attendance, I discovered that the activities conducted during women's gatherings are not necessarily built upon an already set up structure and plans, yet there are days where they agree on doing a particular activity, like sport, sewing, celebrating birthday parties...etc. What remains central at women's gatherings is that it is a space of leisure where they have fun as expressed respectively by Yamina and Karima, two Algerian British research participants that: "I enjoy it, me and the other Algerian ladies", and "we talk and have fun".

First, the gatherings are *for* and *organised by* Algerian women. These women are originally from different parts of Algeria, mainly Algiers, and they live in different parts in London. Most of them came to the UK with their husbands in the late 1980s, early 1990s, and early 2000s. Their age range is between 30 and 50. Most of them are mothers to male and female children of different ages. "All these are British!" pointed out Asya when she introduced me to the women. But during my conversations with them, there were some women who are not British yet, but working on becoming so through preparing for naturalisation testing. However, there are some women who are eligible to apply for the British citizenship, but reluctant to do so for personal reasons, religious beliefs, and the UK citizenship system per se. But the majority are Algerian British whom I observed and interviewed. The educational level of women varies from one to another. There are those who were educated in Algeria and others finished their education in the UK. They have different levels of education in subjects for example, in economics and management. Professionally, they have an active work life related to freelance journalism, beauty, sewing, teaching languages, babysitting, cooking...etc. There are others who remain housewives. Throughout my observations, I discovered that women research participants have different clothing styles. The difference lies mainly in whether they are veiled

or not. Only two Algerian women do not wear the veil. The veiled women's clothing style is ranged from those who wear long skirts, dresses, trousers, headscarves, and *jilbab*¹⁸.

The gatherings of the Algerian women take place every Thursday, from 9:30 am and it ends around 6 pm. The place where women meet is opened at 9:30 am by a woman who lives nearby. Prior to opening it, she always sends a message to a WhatsApp group chat which women are part of, asking them for confirmation whether they are coming to the gatherings, if not she would not open the place. Yet, throughout field work, I have never witnessed a cancellation of the gathering apart from the Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdown which obliged women to postpone their gatherings.

I observed that the first thing the woman does when opening the place of the gathering is to turn on the heaters when it is cold. She then opens the storage closet and grabs cups, homemade cakes stored on big plastic containers, small spoons, peppermint and green tea bags, and instant coffee. She puts everything in the middle of the table. She puts the cups, tea, coffee, and the spoons on a white tray, and puts every type of cake separately on medium size plates.

Women then start arriving between 10am and 12 pm. They either come alone or with their children. They sometimes bring with them missing ingredients requested by the other women for the dish to be made that day. When they enter the place, they use different ways of greetings from English language and Algerian dialects. Expressions like: "good morning", "*Ahla ya jma'at el khir*" (hello good people) etc. They make physical contact by hugging and kissing each other on the cheeks. Making such physical contact upon their arrival is not limited to only to those women they know, they do so even to women they do not know. For example, not all women knew me during my first attendances, yet they would kiss me on cheeks. When they meet, they ask each other if they are doing well, about their news, life, children, and husbands. They also ask whether a particular woman - if known - is coming that day, if not, they would phone her.

Women remove their coats and scarves, but there are women who prefer to keep their scarves. They put their bags and coats in the coat rack which is in the entry of the building. After removing their coats and scarves, women sit on chairs or stand and observe the women who cook. If there are not enough chairs, they bring some from the hall. Their children whose

¹⁸ *Jilbab* is a long and loose one-piece dress or two pieces which covers the head and the rest of the body of women.

number is sometimes 5, who are both females and males, who are under the age of 6 sit on another table designed for children and play with Lego, do colouring or jigsaw puzzles.

Through my several attendances, I noticed that there are women who attend every Thursday and others who occasionally do. When they notice that one of them is not coming any more, they call her and ask her about her reason for absence. The women who do not come have reasons related to being ill, their children get ill, or because they are away in Algeria, work, or other preoccupations. After making themselves comfortable, women are served hot drinks like peppermint tea or coffee by the women who already arrive before them, or they do it by themselves. They have drinks with cookies or fresh bread and sometimes they ask the cook woman if the food is ready.

The activities during the gatherings are divided between women, there are those who are in charge of preparing the food. Generally, Karima and Yamina do that. The other women keep themselves busy doing other things until food is served. They sit on the chairs and get busy with sewing and knitting; for example, Fadila and sometimes Karima - were observed - doing such activity. Other women keep observing them and talking to them. Other women do some cleaning. Once food is served everybody takes their seats, except those who volunteer to serve it. Food is served to women and children. But sometimes women would serve themselves. Once they have finished eating, they start cleaning the table. Women who did not contribute to cooking washes the dishes. While the dishes are being washed, a woman always is asked to make the Algerian authentic tea with mint. Once the dishes are washed, the cutlery for tea is put on the table along with gatherings-made cookies or bread, and *Barad Atay* (tea in a tea pot). Once tea is served, women return to their seats and start drinking tea and speaking of any subject with each other. Once finished, they start tidying up the place by putting food in the fridge and in the closet and distributing the leftovers with each other. Other women keep cleaning by washing the tea cutlery and brushing the floor. They then start wearing their veils and coats to leave the place. Most of them leave the place alone and take the bus after saying goodbye and kissing women, others wait for their husbands to come with their cars. The woman who opens the place is the last person to leave, as she needs to close it after she has turned off the electricity and the heaters.

Although it is the culinary practices through which women keep themselves busy at their gatherings, yet women keep moving all around the space. They go to toilet, do ablutions, and pray on the same room, answer phone calls and video calls, talk to their children, kiss, and hug

each other. At the female-only space, women's non-verbal practices are unstructured and could not be formalised with a set of characteristics. What instead remain relevant to explore is the verbal account of women at their gatherings, which could inform the nature of the Algerian female space occupied by Algerian British women.

4.2.2. Same sex speech: power implication?

There is a strong link between language, power, and gender. Firstly, combining language and power goes both ways: "language is [...] intricately tied to how power is actually manifest" (Kramarae, O'Barr, and Schulz, 1984:11), and "the phenomenon of power and its resultant effect, dominance, is prominent in our conceptualisation of interpersonal communication in social settings" (Mulac, 1989:249). Speaking of gender and language, conversation remains a social interaction through which we can understand sex roles (see West and Zimmerman, 1975). It is argued that the different social context women and men are exposed to in their experiences is as well reflected in their use of word and conversational interactions (Borker and Maltz, 1988:200). Bearing these in mind, I think that the exploration of the female only space can be a fertile research field for qualitative researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds (linguistics, gender, discourse analysis...etc), who have a particular interest in the dynamics of same-sex conversations and communications. Yet my focus in this section is to unpack the nature of the female space in relation to power using speech dynamics.

What I noticed is that the language, conversations, and discourse adopted by women in the space was not guided by any system compared to London's protests field, where the prominent discourse was related to politics. This emphasises the mundane and ordinary nature of women's gatherings which I mentioned above. It is not necessarily assumed that women speak of a particular subject when they gather as conversations take place spontaneously and become a result of women's 'gathering' per se, which means women's interaction with each other, matching the principle of a conversation that it "grows out of interaction of its participants, rather than being directed by a single individual or series of individuals" (Borker and Maltz, 1988:211). In fact, having unstructured conversations and speaking about any subject is itself an agenda charted by women in their gatherings, as I have been told by Asya that: "we can discuss any subject openly".

Firstly, the language used by women reflects that they carried with them from Algeria the linguistic heritage once they migrated. They use mainly the *darija* (colloquial Algerian Arabic),

mixed with French and English language. The English language is not mastered by all the women as I observed that some of them understand it but find it hard to use it when expressing themselves. Women from Kabyle origin like Asya and Karima speak Kabyle language but only with those who understand it. All Algerian British women use the code-switching technique of communication when they speak, which is alternating between Darija, French, English and sometimes Kabyle in one single expression. The following extract from my field diary demonstrates such a technique:

“hna khatina la politique, we are free nhabo la liberté” (field diary 2019)

‘*hna khatina*’ and ‘*nhabo*’ are two words in *Darija*, whose meanings in English are: ‘we are not into’ and ‘we love’, respectively, ‘*la politique*’ and ‘*la liberté*’ are two French words whose meanings in English are: ‘politics’ and ‘freedom’, respectively. The overall meaning of the expression is: ‘we are not into politics, we are free, we love liberty’.

As previously mentioned, discussing any subject is part of women’s agenda at their gatherings, that is why it might be impossible to reduce the content of women’s conversation into specific category (ies). However, across the fieldnotes generated, some emerging contexts to women’s conversation covered issues about their families in Algeria, children, culinary practices, the politics of Algeria mainly during the *Hirak* period, religious interpretations, and the list can go on. However, there are some types of conversations that reflect the femaleness of the space. In other words, women engage in conversations which are about femaleness and womanhood. For examples, speaking of their hetero relationships in front of other women; like for example speaking about how their husbands would react if a male guest comes to their house, or whether their husbands help them doing domestic labour. Another crucial aspect which makes their conversations feminine is their openness about speaking of menstruation, pregnancy, breast-feeding and labour. For example, an Algerian British woman who – when I was doing fieldwork – delivered a baby and brought her afterwards to the gatherings, was receiving friendly advice from women about breast-feeding. While these remain conversations that can characterise any women’s conversation, but I witnessed conversation as well about women’s struggles and suffering as a result of the intersection of their femaleness and the fact that they are immigrants. For example, when Asya was speaking in detail about her labour which was painful. She related the hardship to the fact that she was alone in ‘*el ghorba*’¹⁹. She commented

¹⁹ *el-ghorba* is an Arabic word, used in a colloquial context to designate the social field where emigrants live after leaving the homeland. Its literal meaning is “strangeness”, and the technical terminology is “diaspora”.

that: “I swear we are brave” and she added that they as Algerian immigrants were brave as women who live in *el-ghorba*.

Emotions as well are part of women’s conversations expressed differently depending on the situation. When they are happy, they express this through ululations which may be “interpreted as a form of women’s communication, one of pure emotion” (Geesey, 1996: 159), for example when a woman who was granted a house entered, women started ululating and congratulating her. Emotions of sadness as well accompanied women’s conversation; for example, Yamina was observed dropping tears when women were speaking about the disunity of the Algerian community in the UK.

Through my observation to the interactive conversations between women, I noticed that their relationship with each other is constructed around spontaneity, yet respect. They exchange compliments, agree upon an idea, disagree, and give constructive critiques when disagreeing. Religious topics and the education of children, for example, are two subjects though which women would have different visions upon which they agree and disagree. Sometimes, they would interrupt each other, but doing it is accompanied with expressions like: ‘sorry for interrupting you’ or using common Algerian expression used upon interruption as part of good manners like: ‘I cut your words with honey’ or ‘sorry, your words are of high value’, then continuing speaking.

Crucially, my observations of women’s conversations made me realise that they insist on breaking any hierarchal structures between them. Beside the absence of any ‘bossy’ tone while communicating with each other, the expression of ‘any suggestions?’ is widely omnipresent at women’s gatherings which regardless of the context through which it was used, complements what I observed in relation to concluding that decisions are made collectively, taking into consideration all women’s opinions. Another concrete example I witnessed during women’s interactive conversation about breaking hierarchy was when Yamina told Asya: “You are the Boss!”, then Asya replied to her: “I am not a boss, we don’t have a boss here”. This example does not only demonstrate that there is a breaking of hierarchies between women, knowing that bossiness “denies equality” (Borker and Maltz, 1988:200), but in fact there is an awareness of existing hierarchies, and an intentional action to break them.

The conversations and the speech operating at female only space is by definition a same-sex conversation. There are sets of features which characterise woman-to-woman conversations, like for example having the freedom to speak of their femininity, safe from any source of stigma

(masculine or social). Emotions, resistance to hardships, agency illustrated in the ability of speaking of any subject all are characteristics of woman to woman talk. Exploring female conversations as well led to discovering that woman-to-woman speech is emancipatory in a sense that there is an attempt to effortlessly or intentionally break power hierarchies which are found in cross-sex conversations where men “enjoy power in society and also in conversation” (Borker and Maltz, 1988:198).

4.3 Making sense of the Algerian female-only space

The previous parts provided description of what happens in Algerian-females only space gatherings. This part attempts to dig beneath the surface to understand the meaning women give to their gatherings in their females-only space.

4.3.1 Algerian females-only space: needs’ fulfilment

Endeavouring to understand how Algerian British research participants make sense of their gatherings generated insights related to the fact that the space was created by them as a response to their needs as: women, Algerian, immigrants who migrated from the global south to the global north. Therefore, the space was customised to meet their needs. The result of such customisation led to rendering the place gradually exclusionary. In other words, it is a female-only space which excludes men, and particularly an Algerian-female only space which matches the needs of the Algerian female woman immigrants, and a time-space for women only.

‘Ici, les hommes c’est Interdit’: veil and safety

“*Ici, les hommes c’est Interdit*”, said a woman loudly and with a serious tone during women’s gatherings; an expression in French language which means literally in English language that: ‘here, men are forbidden’, ‘not permitted’, or ‘not allowed’. As mentioned previously, my access to women’s space demanded at first that I should be a female. During the whole time spent with women at their gatherings, I never saw an adult man attending the gatherings. I witnessed that any attempt from any adult male to gain access to that space was reacted to with resistance and refusal. The following quote is extracted from the field diary about an incident which took place at the females only space:

A veiled woman entered the place with her little child and an adult man. Once women saw the adult man they were surprised and shocked and said expression like: “oh a man”, “what is he doing here”. One woman who usually wears the *Jilbab* [face veil] hid herself behind [Yamina] and got down on her knees behind her the moment she saw the man as she wasn’t wearing the *Jilbab*. Women then told [Asya] to talk to the man. [Asya] was busy eating and talking to another woman at the same time. She then heard women saying her name and then saw the man on her right side and got up so quickly while having food in her mouth and told the man: “excuse me can you stand outside there is only women here”. The man did not say any word he left straight away [...].

This incident is a clear illustration of how the space is closed to men’s presence. Women did not assume the ‘too late’ presence of the man, but instead asked him to leave the space the moment he entered. The woman hid herself behind Yamina because she was without her *Jilbab*. She ‘disappeared’ from the man’s sight by her act of hiding behind Yamina, an act she would probably not do if she was wearing her *Jilbab*. Yamina who was wearing the headscarf was fine that the woman has hidden herself behind her instead of hiding herself as well. Linking the fact that the woman had hidden herself because she was not wearing the veil remains a hypothesis. However, the followings quotes are explanations by research participants about the fact that the space is free of males’ presence and is only for females:

Asya: it’s just for women, so there are no men involved. So, in this space it is safe for them, they feel safe so they can remove their headscarf.

Fadila: do not forget that we are all *Hijabi*, and because sometimes we do sport there, we like to put music, we pull down the curtains, and we take off our veils and be more comfortable.

Both affirm reasons of exclusion of men from their gatherings. Asya links the space as being safe because of the ability to remove the veil and according to Fadila, feeling comfortable justifies their desire to make the space for females only, due to the ability to do activities that require them to remove the veil. First, the headscarf and the *Jilbab* function as markers of the religious identity of Muslim women. In a Muslim context, it is argued that veiling plays a role of a system that takes out women from the male gaze (Gökarıksel and Secor, 2014:178). In Western and non-Muslim context, the veil has got different connotations and meanings based on assumptions; like for example, veiled women are “oppressed women” (Naidu, 2009: 24) and “viewed a priori as suspect outsiders” (Vince, 2009:167). And besides the colonial gaze, Alrasheed (2013:20) distinguishes another way of seeing the veil in non-Muslim context as being that of nationalism “which translates Muslim women as symbols of anti-nationality and inability to assimilate”. Muslim women living in Western societies are exposed to their patriarchy and its control of

feminine corporality's norms, and the veil challenges such normality. Glapka (2018:218) argues that in the Western context: "stripped from the traditional attributes of heterosexual female beauty, the veiled woman represents the opposite of the 'normate', whose identity is largely premised on her heterosexual attractiveness".

Both research participants link the absence of men as leading to the fact of taking off the headscarves. Therefore, the absence of men is related to their body visibility since the veil plays the role of hiding some parts of the female body. Asya labels the space that allows women to remove the headscarf and renders what the latter has made invisible visible as a safe space. Safety has become a gendered concept due to the growing risks and challenges facing women in different spaces. Female-only spaces attempt to identify the risks and fears women face, thereby, attempting to make women feel safe from those constraints (Lewis, Redpath, Remnant, and Sharp, 2015:9), and in the context of migration, female-only spaces are also attributed to safety under the shadow of being with individuals of the shared identity and backgrounds (Green and Singleton, 2007:121). If we consider safety from this perspective (i.e., Algerian women feel safe because they share the same identity of being veiled inside the female space), it would not be that: if they are in the female-only space and they *wear* the veil, they would be safe from the patriarchal surveillance or the male gaze. However, from women's words, it is the ability of *removing* the headscarf that made the space safe for them. Therefore, the safety of the space lies in the ability of showing their body shape hidden by the veil outside female-only space. In this case, the female-only space is the Hijab in its "spatial" dimension (Mernissi, 1991:93) that serves the purpose of the veil of women that separates women from men and prevents the male gaze, therefore having agency over their body in relation to what they want to be visible and invisible from their bodies without having to negotiate that male gaze, or any other gaze!

'Algerian' Females-Only Space

This section attempts to explain the reason behind making the space for *Algerians* only. During my attendance at women's gatherings, I noticed that there were only Algerian women. Later on, I discovered making of the gathering for Algerian women only is a consequence and a reaction to their lived experiences as immigrants and women. First of all, I asked them why they decided to make those gatherings. The answers were related to the fact that the gatherings were an answer to Algerian women's request as explained by Asya who told me that: "because

it was a demand for it". This demand was nested in the fact that women did not have spaces that gather them and join them outside their houses. She further affirmed during an interview the unavailability of place that join them saying that: "the ladies especially the Algerians ones [...] had nothing".

Below is the response of Fadila when I asked her why there are only Algerian females in their gathering:

I tell you why, because there are Algerians who don't know how to speak English very well. Plus, when other people of other backgrounds join us, welcome! there is no problem of course [...]. But when we chat between us, you have to speak English you understand me? You have to, other they don't understand which is rude if we start speaking with Algerian only and there are other women, other people, they don't understand us. It's a little bit annoying for them.

Fadila attributes the presence of only Algerian women and the absence of women from other backgrounds to the issue of communication and language. Her argument is that a lack of communication will take place if the space joins women from other nationalities i.e., not everyone can speak English and not everyone can speak Algerian language. This illustrates that the inability to master the language of the host country will block Algerian women from meeting women of other nationalities and will limit their network in the host. Another interpretation could be that the link made by Fadila between speaking the same language and being understood, and therefore rendering the space for Algerians has got identity implications, in the sense that there seems to be a strong link between the success of women's conversations and their (similar) backgrounds, as argued by Tannen (1988:2017) that: "[i]t is sharing of conversational strategies that created the feeling of satisfaction which accompanies and follows successful conversation: the sense of being understood, being "on the same wave length", belonging, and therefore sharing identity".

Fadila's point of view regarding the presence of the Algerian women is not different from Asya's vision in the following quotes, mainly if we compare their views regarding the fact that Algerian women are (culturally and linguistically) different from other women from other nationalities, resulting in the creation of barriers to access to other spaces. Yet there is a potential that they create other mechanisms to create spaces *for them*. However, from Asya's words, there could be other avenues of interpretation about the meaning of leisure in the lives of immigrants in the Western society:

Asya: You know our culture in Algeria, the men go to work. The neighbour ladies they come out; they talk to each other. They don't have this here so. For example, the foreign ladies every weekend go clubbing, everything, but for us it's different.

Asya: Well, I think first of all it's very necessary because from a cultural point of view you know you talk about English people, English ladies or any other culture they, it's very easy for them to adjust, to go out at late time and have fun and stuff. For our culture it's different, so we miss a place where ladies can come.

The two quotes of Asya could be interpreted from at least two perspectives. The first is regarding the preconceived image Algerian women have about the leisure life of Western women in the Western societies. In other words, the culture of clubbing does not necessarily represent the leisure life of all Western women in the one hand, and on the other hand, creating female space for women mainly mothers could as well part of women in Western societies. The second is regarding the way women have different approaches, depending on a particular cultural framework and how women identify themselves in a specific culture. In the first quote Asya identifies how women used to spend their times in Algeria which was talking to female neighbours when men are not around, a thing which does not exist in the host country because women do have other ways of spending their times like clubbing, knowing according to her that club culture is different to them. In the second quote she links the necessity to make their gatherings with regard to culture, i.e., it is the lines drawn by the culture which decide how individuals — in this case women — define their leisure life, affirming Rojek's statement that culture is one of the "most suitable context[s] to locate leisure forms and practices" (Rojek, 2006:38). The spread of night life in the culture of women's leisure is not compatible with the leisure culture of Algerian women, leading to a difficulty in adjusting to mainstream ways in the host country. Thus, this urged them to create their own way of spending time which matches the requirements of their cultural origins.

Early Western theorising on leisure embraced a male perspective in defining leisure experiences "which was posited as dependent upon a complementary to paid work which was assumed to be universal and dominant" (Wearing, 1998:162). Research in gender embraced the 'add women and stir' principle, resulting in "gender stereotyping of activities of women's leisure" (Kovac and Trussell, 2015:196), and inference of "ideological imperatives and societal expectations" in constructing women's leisure (Henderson and Shaw, 2006: 216-217). However, from Asya's words, the approach to leisure of the Western woman is not compatible with Algerian women's. Non-Western women as well have undergone marginalisation from

the emerging feminist approach of leisure, neglecting their particular experiences of oppression and subordination. Wearing (1998:173) argues that they endured a double subordination on the theory of leisure by being: “virtually invisible in theories of leisure which are predicated on dominant modes of production and paid work [and being] excluded from most feminist theory and consequently from feminist leisure theory and research”. Therefore, there is a call for a new approach which transcends the traditional approach which remains inadequate to account for other people’s experience who are not from the West (Bhattacharya, 2006:81). Whether Algerian women in their gathering are aware of such invisibility or not, they intentionally or unintentionally transcend those hegemonic ways that characterise the leisure life of women in Western world and create their own meaning of leisure informed by the fact that they are Algerian immigrant women. The interplay of these three identities shapes their experience of leisure.

Making the space for Algerian women is self-evident and this is because of the collective perception of Algerian women about leisure ways nurtured from the culture of the country of origin. However, the meaning of leisure of these women could not be analysed without looking at the impact of patriarchal structure and gender relations of Algeria, and their persistence in post-migratory life mainly in leisure matters. Asya’ s statements of: “You know our culture in Algeria, the men go to work. The neighbor ladies they come out, they talk to each other”, shows the exclusion of men’s presence in women’s lived leisure experiences; and the statement of: “English ladies or any other culture they, it’s very easy for them to adjust, to go out at late time” demonstrates the persistence of Algeria’s patriarchal power, and how after migrating to a place where women as men are allowed to go out late as part of their leisure life (going to night clubs), yet Algerian women cannot do the same thing, because in Algeria unlike men, women do not go out at night. Agreeing on the same principles of women’s leisure experience, Algerian women in their female space do not need to negotiate different perceptions as their leisure experiences are with women only, and as they are from the same background they are collectively familiar with Algerian leisure practices (dance, food, sewing, socialising... etc.).

Women’s time

The previous sections demonstrated meanings women give to the female-only space and provided meaning to it as a physical space (spatial dimension of the veil), and abstract space created as a result of the intersection of their status as Algerian, immigrant, women. Similar to

the latter attributed meaning (abstract meaning), the intersection of ‘time’ emerged while attempting to unpack the meanings generated from women about their gatherings in the female-only space. The following quotes are extracts from interviews conducted with Yamina, Karima, and Fadila who relate to time when expressing the meaning of their gatherings in their female-only space:

Yamina: when it comes Thursdays, we expect that day.

Karima: we have Thursday, one a day in the week. We wait for it impatiently. And me with all enthusiasm [...] I wake up early and I get ready [...] and I go.

Fadila: In your house you are really busy with your children, you go do groceries, like robot, [...] very busy, you don’t have time for yourself. However, on Thursday you go there, it’s your time.

The three quotes include ‘Thursday(s)’ though the questions asked by me prior to those answers did not emphasise why they meet particularly on ‘Thursdays’. This deliberate mentioning of the word ‘Thursday’ may not necessarily be analytically relevant here, but it could tell that in expressing anything related to their gatherings, the day of Thursday is relevant in their calendar. The three research participants demonstrated that the day where they make their gatherings is both expected and impatiently and enthusiastically waited for. It is part of their weekly routine. This begs the question of what does that day signify to them? Fadila in her quote makes a distinction between the time spent in the house and the activities associated with it and the time spent in the Algerian female-only space. She clearly stated that in her house she bears the responsibility of the household by taking care of her children and doing groceries. Her statement of ‘like a robot’ can mean that she does not have agency over the activities she does and saying that: “you don’t have time for yourself” means that neither her activities nor the time devoted to accomplishing those activities are for her. This could be a justification to how the day of Thursday is relevant to her. She clearly mentioned that the time spent in the Algerian female space is *her time*.

Before discussing further, the notion of women’s time in relation to the female-only space, the following quotes express the significance of the time spent there:

Karima: when you are with people like that and they cook, you have the desire to show that you are the best, and that you are confident in what you are doing as well.

Fadila: you feel that you build your confidence more [...] This woman empowers this woman; this woman pushes this woman to something positive

of course in relation to education or learning or her health or psychological side.

The two comments demonstrate the significance of the time spent in the Algerian-females only space. There is a considerable significance of that time on their personality and self-growth. The time spent in that space enables Karima to show her talent and raises her competitive spirit with regard to what interests her (cooking). Fadila approaches the moments lived in the space as impactful on her personality and as a space of empowerment. The activities which women relate to in expressing the appreciation of the time spent in the female-only space are not very different from those conducted outside that space mainly in their houses. However, the difference lies in: To whom are these activities addressed? And on which basis? And what are the implications of gender in defining those activities?. Most women research participants expressed to me that they mostly occupy the household and bear the responsibility of domestic labour and looking after children, while their husbands mostly are the breadwinners. Even if these women are engaged in the financial gain for their families, yet they still maintain their roles as responsible for domestic duties and the time spent in fulfilling remains an obligatory time. However, devoting time every week to spend it at the female-only space is a border crossing and a deconstruction to the socially constructed and the gendered domestic field. Agreeing with Wearing (1998:149) that another space attributed to leisure is “time space”, i.e., the time spent by Algerian women in the (physically) female-only space, is a time space for them. Adding to that, it is a time-space which allows them to have agency over their time and how they distribute it in doing different activities and freeing themselves from the duties attributed to them in other spaces because they are women. Researching women’s time, in the Algerian female only space led to discovering that there are some practices ‘dutifully’ completed in their houses which are still conducted in that space. This begs the question: what are the different meanings given to the same practices conducted by them but in different spaces? In one of the coming sections, a detailed account given to the practice of cooking —a practice completed by women in both their houses and in their female-only space—will attempt to address this question.

4.3.2 ‘We are in Algeria’: constructing Algeria in Algerian female-only space

Besides the attributed meanings Algerian women constructed about the female-only space which were mostly related to the ability of the space to provide women agency over their

bodies, leisure practices, and time, the female-only space was approached by Algerian women on the basis that it is a space which reminds them of, if not links them to Algeria:

Yamina: It seems like we are in Algeria, yeah exactly like in Algeria.

Fadila: Every Thursday I feel I grabbed my suitcase and went to Algeria. It's like I go to see my family and I return.

Karima: When all Algerians are there, you feel that it is a part that comes from Algeria. You don't feel that you are an outsider, or you are far.

Research participants imagine the space as Algeria, knowing that they are not there physically. Yamina demonstrates how she imagines that she is in Algeria when she is in that space. Fadila, though she is geographically outside Algeria, yet from her experience she shows that there is a possibility to travel without necessarily crossing territorial boundaries. Similarly to the two previous quotes, Karima stated that the space is an extension of Algeria, and it is as such for her, because there are Algerians there. Linking the female-only space in its physical or abstract connotation among research participants was not merely significant for Algerian women only regarding their status as immigrant women who are in need for a space for socialisation and empowerment...etc. Their gatherings in the space with their fellow Algerian women was also a means to address their national belonging and identity. Two meanings emerged in relation to how women construct Algeria in their female-only space, one related to the factor of being with “*Bent Bledi*” (daughter, or girl, or the descendant of my country) and the feeling of nostalgia.

Therapeutic space and ‘Bent Bledi’

The following quote is extracted from a post-migration lived experience of Fadila:

Fadila: In the beginning when I was alone, I got depressed. There are no Algerians, no Muslims [...] My GP coordinated me with the councillor to see a therapist. I talked too much, but it is not the same as when I talk in my language. I could not transmit to her what I feel hundred percent though I speak English [...] But when you talk to the daughter of your country, it is like you empty your heart and you know exactly; you use exactly the same words. [...] it is a big relief when you empty your heart. And you receive from them all the women. Every woman gives you something and advice [...] As I told you, this woman supports this woman mainly the psychological side. Really, I swear you empty your heart, you feel yourself at ease when you leave from there.

Here is Fadila's lived experience regarding her mental health. Although she was seeing a therapist to help her to get over her depression, yet it was not sufficient, and this was due to the inability to transmit her suffering (in the English language), as she would do if she was speaking in her own language and to a woman who is from the same background as her. She accredits the Algerian female-only space which enabled her to express herself fully because in there, where there are the daughters of her country, she finds a way of expressing herself. Though the focus is to explore how the presence of the '*Bent Bledi*' is intersected in defining the space as Algeria by women, yet from the quote it is undeniably clear how women migrants are not only vulnerable to mental health issues but assisting them therapeutically can be inefficient. Clearly, Fadila demonstrates that the knowledge of language is not the guarantor for a successful assistance of a woman therapist to the immigrant woman patient who suffers from depression. The fact that Fadila felt that she can "empty her heart, [and feels] at ease when [she leaves] from there" when she is with "the daughters of her country" who approach their relationship on the basis, as she said to me that: "[they] all agree on the same mentality, thinking, [they] understand each other" means that it was the inability of the therapist to understand at least the mentality and thinking of Fadila which led ultimately to the failing of the therapy.

In order not to embrace the global sisterhood framework, Heshmati, Pitre, and Rasheed (2020) in their paper, provide propositions to feminist therapists from the Global North they *should* maintain to help their Muslim women migrants clients from the Global South. Propositions like they should invest their time to build trust with Muslim communities, learning about the social systems impacting the clients, and distinguishing between their cultural beliefs and assumptions and their clients'. If therapists embrace those propositions, there is a potential that women migrants like Fadila and others who probably are isolated from even the consolation of the 'daughters of their country', and women who were forced to migrate from their countries and refugees could be assisted mentally.

Beside the therapeutic implication which characterises the space, linking the space as "Algeria" was related to women's relationship with each other. Apart from believing that they share the same collective identity, meanings, and interest, they also represent for each other the alternative family which they have left in Algeria. The majority of women participating stated that the space reminds them of their family. For example, Yamina told me that: "The atmosphere, the people, you know, it sounds like you are with your family, exactly the same". Considering each other as part of one's family they have left behind in Algeria reinforces the emotional power their space can generate, dragging women to avoid missing attending those

gatherings, as they are constructed as therapies helping women to overcome hardships and mental issues due to their migratory experiences.

*The nostalgia of the Bled*²⁰

The following comments from Karima and Fadila reveal the nostalgic implications of the Algerian female space about the *Bled*:

Karima: you feel like the nostalgia of The *Bled*, of your parents. In a way it makes up to you [...] to revive that *lema* and ambience of the *Bled*.

Fadila: You empty there all that nostalgia that you have [...] We want to revive what our parents, what we have lived in Algeria before. That *lema*. the family warmth, you see, there is something about Algeria, I don't know how to describe it. Really it's the nostalgia, *tout court*.

Here we see the relationship between women's space of gathering and their lived experiences in Algeria prior to their migration. Besides women's statement about the direct link between remembering and their space, during my participation with them at their social gatherings, I heard them many times speaking about the past and recalling memories. These memories are intertwined with comparisons related mainly to their way of life when they were young girls, and the ways of life of "Now's" young Algerian girl; for example to the changing perception of modesty and decency between the two generations and how "Now's" young girl became emancipated to finish their higher education which was not the case when they were young girls, as well as how the former young girl became more open with regard to menstruation, unlike them who were brought up with the belief that they should hide matters related to their menstruation especially in front of men.

Though their remembering of past experiences can be an unintentional act, yet women are aware that the space triggers their memory and the feeling of nostalgia. In the first quote, Karima feels that the space both causes the feeling of being nostalgic to the *Bled* (Algeria) and her family, and at the same time it is a compensatory space where she can revive what has been lived back in Algeria. Similarly, Fadila seeks in the space a means for emptying the cumulative nostalgia, and a space where to revive what has been lived before in Algeria. Her usage of the term "*tout court*" is an attempt from her to emphasise the strong feeling of nostalgia that she cannot deconstruct or concretely explain. Both participants use the word *lema*, an Algerian

²⁰ *Bled* in Algerian colloquial Arabic means the country of origin

word which means gathering of people. Reviving the *lema* in the female-only space in a way justifies why women make the gatherings the way they do.

It is the atmosphere and the practices conducted in the space which have got a relation with nostalgia. Unlike the classical meaning that nostalgia is a pathological attachment to the past and the home, women give a more positive meaning to nostalgia that of “romanticization of the past” (Gerber, 2016:295), expressed by remembering positive moments spent in the past with their parents. The nostalgia felt by women is related to the fact that they are immigrants away from Algeria. Jetten and Smeekes (2019:134) state that immigrants can experience national nostalgia as a result of being away from home both in space and time. Women at the Algerian female-only space experience both spatial and temporal nostalgia. The spatial one is the emotion defined as the longings for Algeria arising from the spatial separation, i.e., they are absent from Algeria. The temporal is the feeling of longing for the ‘past’ experiences lived in Algeria. As a reaction to this spatial and temporal nostalgia, women take action to deal with their nostalgia and not merely feel it. They do so by ‘reviving’ what has been lived and emptying nostalgia, and actively creating an imagined transnational space nurtured from the longing for the spatial and temporal lived experiences. By a transnational imagined space, I mean that by practices they conduct in their Algerian female-only space they are engaged both in making contact ‘in their own way’ with Algeria, not only in a spatial dimension, but also in temporal dimension where women in a way travel back through time and recall their experiences when they were in Algeria.

Both the therapeutic and nostalgic implications in imagining the space as being ‘like Algeria’ demonstrate that the attachment to the country of origin and ‘creatively’ the creation of transnational fields that connect migrants to the country of origin are a result of subjective experiences. In the case of Algerian women, they attribute the space as Algeria as a result of their own subjective perception and relation with each other as women from the same background on the one hand, and the power of the space in triggering nostalgia by reviving what has been ‘*nostalgised*’ in their Algerian-female only space on the other hand. For example, one practice used by women to trigger nostalgia is their culinary practices.

4.4 Culinary practices: identity manifestation

Algerian cuisine traces its roots back to the diverse cultural and civilisational contacts with many people who visited, invaded, and traded with Algeria. Algerian traditional food is

comprised of a combination of Berber, Turkish, French, and Arabic flavours. These combinations which characterise the Algerian traditional food were omnipresent in the Algerian female-only space where culinary practices, as I observed during my ethnographic fieldwork, remain a relevant part of women's gatherings (see appendix 12 about food made at the female-only space).

Right after opening the place, women start having conversations about food and what to cook that day. Yamina told me that prior to coming to the place, women phone each other and agree on what to cook that day. She and Karima are generally in charge of cooking. Every one of them makes her own dish or more than one in one day.

As the Algerian women are from different regions and ethnic backgrounds, the process of making food (peeling vegetables, spicing, cooking it either by frying, simmering, grilling or boiling, seasoning, presenting and decorating it in plates) projects the diversity of their origins. They cook traditional food from different parts of Algeria, and other dishes like for example Pizza and Spaghetti which are originally from Europe, yet these dishes are very common in Algerian cuisine.

The ingredients used to cook are sometimes brought from Algeria, for example the dish called "*batata Fliou*" was made using potatoes and the pennyroyal herb, which was brought from Algeria by Fadila. Because it is hard to find it in England, when Asya saw it in the bag she was surprised that she had not seen it since she left Algeria. Other dishes from the North, the West and the East of Algeria are as well in the menu list of women's gathering. The ingredients used are fresh vegetables and fruits which are peeled and washed in the kitchen of women's space, and dry beans, species either bought from markets in England or brought from Algeria. They also use meat (chicken, lamb, and beef meat) to prepare the dishes, though I noticed that they mainly cook vegetarian dishes. For seasoning and frying, they use vegetable oil and olive oil. Dairy products are also used to make the food, like eggs, milk, butter and cheese. They make soups like '*marga loubya fssas*' (cranberry beans soup) and '*chorba a'dess*' (lentil soup). I noticed that whenever they want to say the word '*a'dess*' which is an Arabic word signifying lentil, they add to it a rhythmic Algerian expression of '*koul w dess*' which means 'eat and hide'. '*Karantika*' is a famous dish in the West of Algeria which is mainly sold in street food markets as a snack, was many times prepared by women. It is made mainly from the flour of chickpeas, eggs and water and spices. '*Chkchouka*' is also another famous Algerian dish, cooked by women, made mainly with onions and tomatoes.

Kabyle dishes are also omnipresent in women's menus which are mainly cooked by Karima who is originally from La Kabylie. She sometimes makes couscous with steamed vegetables. This dish has got many names in Kabyle, it could be called 'akfal' or 'boumfawar'. 'Achopadh' is another famous Kabyle dish made with semolina dough. It is baked, cooked, cut into pieces, dried, and then put in hot milk and olive oil. However, all that the women did was putting the pieces in milk because it was already prepared and brought by Karima from Algeria. The dish is eaten very hot, that is why Karima was insisting that women should eat it directly once it is ready. She ate it while it was very hot. As I was sitting next to her, I saw her sweating in the face and Yamina told her that she is sweating as if she was in the sauna.

Though they do not bake the dough of 'Achopadh' during their gathering, they bake, using their hands, food in a typical Algerian big wood bowl. They usually bake 'khobz eddar' (Home's bread) and 'fir' (flat bread with semolina) using their hands. This bread is not usually in the planned menu, it is instead baked on the request of women. It is not always baked by the same person; other women take the initiative to make it, using different methods through which they discuss these differences in relation to their regions. For example, there are those who use the baking powder and yeast and those who just mix semolina with oil, salt and water. Old Algerian traditional cookies also are baked by women 'halwat el Taba'a' (cookies of mold), baked with plain flour, oil, sugar, baking powder and eggs.

From the fieldwork, the reason behind the interest given to cooking as well as cooking the Algerian traditional food which requires times, knowledge and technique led to discovering that their culinary practices are not only for the pleasure of eating per se. It is also a symbol of identity and identity manifestation, that needs to be preserved, used to maintain unity, as well as a stimulator of another type of nostalgia. The coming section will explain this.

Culinary practices: preserving the heritage, unity and nostalgia

The following quote is extracted from an interview with Asya during a gathering:

SB: I've noticed that you basically cook Algerian traditional food. Is it part of your project?

Asya: It came by itself. It was not planned. The plan at the beginning was to them to mix with the culture in England, cook from England and everything. But the demand was that you know, we want to keep our culture. It's very easy to lose it when you are abroad [...] They [women] were so worried to lose our traditions and everything.

What could be understood implicitly from the quote is that cooking during women's gathering is not just for sake of eating, instead it has got an implication that it is actually an agenda structured by women which informs to what extent they link culinary practices to culture, identity and womanhood. Women cook traditional food because there is a fear that they might lose it abroad. Fearing to lose one's culture or identity is not new among migrants, and a means of preventing this from happening is to carry and to preserve whatever the word culture and identity implies with them to the receiving country. Contextually for Algerian women abroad, fearing to losing the culture is embodied in fearing to lose the traditional Algerian food and culinary practices in general, and preserving the culture is synonymous to preserving that food and those practices. Food is part of identity, and: "the statement of "we are what we eat" is adequately conceptualized in the idea of 'foodways'" (Imilan, 2015:229), and in the context of migration, food and culinary practices are symbolic representations not excluded from shaping identities and experiences of immigrants abroad (Parveen, 2016:55).

One way to preserve the traditional culinary practices among British Algerian women at their gatherings is embracing authenticity. Karima told me during an interview that: "me I am a kind of person in the gathering who loves cooking [...] I love a lot the traditional cooking, the authentic Algerian, traditional cooking", and dishes prepared by her justify the extent to which she maintains authenticity. Another way to embrace authenticity among women in cooking is the usage of ingredients brought from Algeria, despite their possible availability in England, for example Fadila said: "when the last time I went to Algeria, I asked them [women] what you need? they said olives and pennyroyal herb, I brought olives and pennyroyal herb". Some utensils like wooden spoons and vessels, as well as metal tea pots were also brought from Algeria. Food preparation is another practice which demonstrates women's endeavour to maintain authenticity because each dish is cooked from scratch without using any readymade ingredients. While cooking, women exchange recipes and show each other different ways of doing a certain dish based on their mothers' ancient recipes. In this context, exchanging recipes becomes: "intergenerational cultural transmission between women [which] provide a link to the homeland and the past, as well as creating an identity for a diasporic community" (Parveen, 2016:55). Remembering is both a motive and a result stemming from cooking Algerian authentic food. As a motive, it was expressed by Karima saying that: "We cook things that are really of old times, we remember them", and a result as Yamina' reaction when the dish *Berkoukess* served on a big wooden vessel was put on the table in front of her and commented enthusiastically: "oh lala, that's the heritage, it's like you are in the *Bled*" (extracted from field

diary), making instantly a link between her and the *Bled* through whatever the dish which was in front of her triggered in her memory regarding Algeria.

Besides the intention to preserving the Algerian authentic food, women consider culinary practices as a means to join them together, and this is what was expressed by both Karima who told me that: “we make a dish and, we share what we call *el Melh* [...] we share *el Melh* between us”, and Asya’s justification to why they cook in their gatherings: “We understand that food [...] gathers people around [...] Food is always something that joins people”. ‘Sharing *el-Melh*’ (literally translated as ‘sharing salt’), is a common metaphorical Algerian expression meaning once people share each other’s food, they automatically become committed and loyal to each other. Speaking of Asya’s statement: “food is always something that joins people” could be symbolically performed with the fact that during a women’s gathering, as was observed, food is put in the middle of the table and women are joined around it. Approaching their culinary practices in female-only space as a maintenance of their unity is another expression that shows to what extent women’s attempt to preserve authenticity, because the meaning of “sharing *el-Melh*” is grounded in the Algerian culture, particularly the Algerian culinary culture.

Bearing the responsibility of preserving the traditional Algerian food by certain practices among women in the female-only space could be interpreted with regard to different overlapping factors and relations, for example the relation between culinary practices or food, women’s nationalism and women’s spatiality. The context of migration both shapes those relations and it also influences (possibly reinforcing or perpetuating) the dynamics of these relations. Speaking of women and culinary practices, women play a significant role in the realm of cooking and culinary practices especially among nations which are categorised by a rigid, patriarchal vision of nationhood which limits the mobility of women to the private sphere like houses where her major task is to take care of the household and cook for the members of her family. The patriarchal vision of the nation of Algeria that woman is its guardian and custodian, accordingly, leads to gendered spatial divisions. Occupying the private sphere is a normality in Algerian woman’s life in Algeria where she bears the responsibility of taking care of the husband and children by cooking. Occupying the public sphere by her does neither alter the former normality, nor the responsibilities generated from such normality which then becomes gendered for example: cooking (for husband and children in the house) becomes associated as a female practice.

The context of migration perpetuates such vision of nationhood, gendered spatiality and practices. i.e., the Algerian woman possibly migrates within the same framework of patriarchy and bears the duties of the custodian of the nation while being abroad. The perception of the gendered culinary practices inside the domestic household abroad among Algerian women migrants is not different from what it would be if they were in Algeria, however, it cannot be assumed that the culinary practice among these women is only limited to cooking and feeding their husbands and children. In other words, there could be intentions (as in the female-only space) regarding preserving the traditions and transmitting them to their children even in the domestic household. The question that needs to be asked is to what extent the meaning of cooking in the domestic field and in the female-only space is different? One basic difference is that in the former setting it could be a 'gendered practice', addressed to husbands and children, and in the latter as women expressed, cooking is constructed without or with less influence of any patriarchal system of power which defines which practice is for female and males. Another interpretation could be that while the settled systems of patriarchy and gendered practices are subject to challenge in the female-only space, at the same time it could be argued that still the narratives generated from women about their cooking, that of preserving the culture seems to perpetuate the fact that women migrants are the reproducer of the culture and the custodian of the nation. However, it should not be assumed that bearing the responsibility of preserving the culture even in the female-only space is a result of an understanding generated among women that they as well carry with them in their space regime of power that of patriarchy. Thus, they assume the dutiful mission of preserving the culture 'out of conviction'.

Besides the implication of using food to embrace the status of being the ambassador of the Algerian culture abroad, there is also a strong link between food and the attachment to Algeria. Nostalgia which was both a motive and a consequence leading women to cook Algerian authentic food in the female-only space gives a picture of the possible mechanisms Algerian women use to express their attachment and belonging to Algeria. And because culinary practices are mostly common as a female practice in Algeria, outside Algeria, it not only persists in being a female practice, but it is also used to maintain links with Algeria, rendering the means of attachment to the country of origin as a process determined by femaleness.

4.5 Mothers' space

In this section I look at women's motherhood and how they maintain their status as 'mothers' in the female-only space. First of all, during my attendance in women's gatherings, their

children were always present. Their age range was different, from less than one year to 18 years old. However, what I noticed is that the presence of girls is more than boys and their age range is different. For example, in the category of teenage, only girls are present. Boys who come to women's gatherings are generally under 10. Children either come with their mothers from the beginning of gathering, or later on, when they finish school.

The relationship between children and women (who are not necessarily their mothers) is grounded in the Algerian social relation system between children and adults. For example, as in Algeria, children call women who are not their mothers as *tata*, a common expression in Algeria used to call a woman who is older than the person calling her. On the other hand, women call children who are not theirs as *benti* (my daughter) and *weldi* (my son).

Approaching women's children by having casual conversation with them made me realise that they speak Algerian colloquial Arabic besides English language though they were born and raised in the UK. This made me question to what extent they are attached to Algeria. One teenage girl and a daughter of a woman told me that she loves Algeria very much and wishes to go and live there. Another direct way through which I could have an answer to my question is my attendance to an event organised by women for their children, that of an art exhibition and contest whose theme was: 'Algeria seen by the eyes of the children of the Algerian immigrants in Britain'. In this event, children of women participated by drawing pictures of how they imagine Algeria. They drew different canvases related to ancient Algeria and its history, like: Tassili rock paintings, Constantine's Bridge, Casbah of Algiers, Tuareg people ...etc.

Children's knowledge of Algeria and women's encouragement of their children to take part in events that display attachment to the country of Algeria, demonstrate to what extent women embrace the role of responsibility of engraving such attachment. This responsibility is mainly intersected with their status as mothers. The following quote demonstrates how women see their roles as mothers abroad:

Fadila: The man in this country works [...] he has got work because you have to pay the bills [...] he goes to work. In *ghorba* [abroad] it is not easy, that is not easy at all. However, the role of the woman, I think she does ten times more than the man. why? because the man is outside working, he does not know what is going on, however the woman takes and brings back [children] from school, watches over her children, mainly teenagers, [...] so you have to be the mother, you are the father, you are the doctor, you are the nurse, you are the teacher, you are everything, all in one.

Fadila and the other women have got the same vision that the context of being abroad (*ghorba*) reinforces the fact that the husband is mostly absent from the house during the day seeking breadwinning to meet financial requirements, while the mother's duty regarding children becomes more demanding embodied in abstract duties and multitasking. Embracing such duties is held by women with their proper conviction that, as Fadila told me: "education is done by woman not the man" and Karima's leaning, during an interview, on the Egyptian poet Hafez Ibrahim's famous quote: "the mother is a school if she is well prepared, a noble nation is prepared".

Besides the powerful factors generated from the fact of being abroad which urges the man to spend more time outside and the intensification of the mothers' duties as the educator and the custodian of the nation, women also face another challenge and clash, that of performing their roles in a country whose values are different from theirs:

Fadila: I think the Algerian woman, I feel that she bears the responsibility more and cares more [...] the responsibility of children regarding religion or education or morals which is very hard to keep them in the middle, it is very very hard, because at home there is education, and outside they receive an education completely different, and they meet different people, and they see things that you say to them no no!

The quote expressed to what extent Fadila sees her role as a mother as hard, because she additionally needs to negotiate the fact that what she transmits to children in the house is subject to challenge because of what is learned outside the house. Fadila stated religion, education, and morals as mainly the challenging zones. The challenge is mainly about how to: "keep them in middle" i.e., finding a balance, because children cannot exclusively occupy one single space: the inside or the outside of the house. Throughout my immersion with women in their gatherings, I repeatedly heard how challenging the upbringing of their children is. And they, to a greater extent, agree about the same sources of concern that of fearing of religious deviance, drugs, roaming in the streets alone. However, one space according to them which challenges the transmission of religion and values to children is school, mainly its inclusion to sex education. I asked them in the gathering how do they respond to the inclusion of sex education (heterosexuality and homosexuality) in school curriculum, I have been told that since Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy allows them as parents to withdraw their children from attending primary school sex education classes, they would preferably opt for not letting their children attend. This act is common among communities who belong to conservative backgrounds (Blackman and Mahendru 2019: 1039). Thus, motherhood

experience is shaped and governed by the fact they are Algerian women first generation immigrants who live in different social contexts in Britain.

Women do not just express their concerns regarding their children's upbringing in their gatherings, they instead attempt to convert the space into a space which concretely addresses those concerns with the presence of their children:

Fadila: I am really happy that even our children, there is a place where they meet the people of their country [...] it's really really important [...]. So, we meet there, children, little young girls, they meet between them, they exchange ideas, they talk, they make relations, they go out together, they meet up [...] which is good. [...] I don't lie to you, I prefer that my children really meet Algerians to preserve that, because I am hundred percent sure that ninety percent of Algerians preserve their customs, traditions, and everything at home. So, almost we have one way of education we the Algerian women to our children, mainly about religion.

Fadila expresses a positive feeling towards the fact that the space where they meet as well enables children and "young girls" to meet, socialise, and make relations. "I prefer that my children meet Algerians" is an expression which hints that the presence of children in Algerian female-only space is part of women's agenda. One way to justify that in the quote is the reassurance of Fadila that Algerians preserve the tradition and have got one way of intergenerational transmission and upbringing in the private sphere. This ultimately will lead at least Fadila to arrange that her children, mainly her two young girls, meet with other women's children and young girls, and while meeting they would relate to each other's way of thinking and feel compatible with one another. So, it is women's compatibility with regard to how to raise children which paves the way for harmonious socialising of children during their gatherings and outside. As much as the space is safe for women, the space according to them is as well safe for their children, away from the clashing outside world.

If children through their socialising are indirectly (as illustrated from Fadila) taking part in the process of intensifying their parents' way of upbringing and transmission, are there any other direct mechanisms of transmission during the women's gathering, not from child to child, or from parent to child in the private sphere, but from mothers to child in Algerian female-only space? If yes, what causes it? The following quote is extracted from the field diary when women were making plans for their children in their gatherings:

[Asya] said that this week they are going to teach girls at secondary school age how to make "*Kesra*" [...] Another lady responded to her that to teach them how to make el-Mhajib. [...] [Jawhar] told her are you going to teach

them only cooking? And told her why you don't teach them something else before cooking. [Karima] told her we teach them to bake. [Jawhar] responded: what for? that they need to learn things for young girls, cooking will be learned at home [...] Another lady said it's good to learn it now [...] [Karima] said "the traditional kitchen" [and added] that at the age of nine she was making couscous, at the age of ten she was baking [...] [Yamina] said: "Can I talk? [...] I don't know how it happens in France but here it's important that children learn how to make sandwiches". [Jawhar] told her: "children, girls and boys [...] because here I hear girls [...] [Karima] said generally girls because she said "women give birth to children and educate them" [and added] how were our mothers?! [...] [Jawhar] told her "our mother used not to work outside; we do".

The fieldnote demonstrates a disagreement between women, mainly between Jawhar who, firstly, is an Algerian woman who lives in France, secondly, it was the first and last time I saw her in women's gatherings. The extract demonstrates a strong debate between women who were planning to organise culinary teaching sessions to girls of the secondary school, whereas the other woman questions why particularly 'girls' who are receiving the culinary lessons, and rather proposes other things to be taught to them (things for young girls). Her stance demonstrates how she perceives the irrelevance of teaching young girls cooking at that stage. The way women responded to her disagreement was different. Yamina thinks that in Britain, children need to know how to make sandwiches. Jawhar agrees with Yamina with the condition that this teaching should be addressed to both girl and boys. However, Karima insists on teaching girls in particular, and because women are in charge of giving birth to children legitimates addressing culinary courses to secondary year girls. Her statement of "how were our mothers?!" is not a question waiting for an answer, it is instead Karima's argument that because "our mothers" were as such, 'we' need to be how they were, and transmit this to 'our daughters'. When becoming mothers, women become responsible "for the reproduction of the collectively not only in physical terms, but also in ideological terms through the transmission of cultural to future generation" (Mohamed 2005:182). While this transmission seems mostly to take place in the private sphere, it is as well sought during women's gatherings, from mother to daughter.

However, it should be borne in mind that young girls do not only receive the transmission of culinary practices during women's gatherings, as I have been told that women were as well organising dancing sessions to young girls where they teach them how to dance *Assimi*, Kabyle and *Shawi* dancing styles. It might be assumed that while women emphasise transmitting culinary practices, they are in a way drawing in their daughters' minds that becoming a wife and 'domesticity' is their destiny. However, this remains an assumption accusing women

migrants from socially conservative backgrounds whose daughters need saving from domesticity. Algerian women in female space were also observed emphasising to their daughters the importance of achieving a good education and meeting their ambitions, for example, Fadila, a mother of two teenage girls, expressed to me during an interview that she wants women's children to organise tuition sessions at the place where women make gatherings so they can exchange and learn from each other.

The presence of children at the Algerian female-only space demonstrated how women not only perform their duties as mothers inside the household, but they also harmoniously embrace their status of mothers outside, where they have other agency in 'mothering'. Though they think they are responsible for the upbringing of their children yet including their children in their space and devoting activities for them demonstrates how flexible they are in terms of performing their duties. Instead of deploying strict and rigid methods in transmitting the values of the country of origin, they as well create space for their children to interact, socialise and learn from each other. The women's agenda not only embraces a hierarchical vertical relation between (woman) adult and child, embodied in women's feeling of the need for teaching children the traditions, values and religion of the country of origin. It also includes making their children meet with each other, providing knowledge generated from each other through egalitarian-horizontal relationships and processes (child to child), an innovative mechanism deployed by women mothers to efficiently perform their duties as the guardian of the nation, a duty they do not seem to oppose.

Conclusion

My ethnographic immersion with women during their gatherings along with the deployed techniques of 'defamiliarisation' led to construct relevant findings about women migrants' spatiality. Overall, the exploration of the Algerian female-only space aimed to provide insights about how Algerian British women make sense of their Algerian belonging and how they maintain ties with the homeland in a female-only space context. Digging beneath the surface resulted in understanding that women give meaning to their gatherings beyond the mundane aspect of 'gathering' per se. They constructed meaning referring to identity, resistance, nationalism and agency. Firstly, the existence of the Algerian female-only space was both a cause and a consequence of their status as Algerians, females, immigrants, mothers originally from the global south living in the global north. And the intersection of these led to the creation

of coping mechanisms through which women make sense of their belonging to Algeria and still make ties with it using their *way* and agency.

As far as their Algerian identity is concerned, Algerian British who occupy the Algerian female space have demonstrated their strong commitment towards their role as women in preserving the culture of their origins by either embracing authenticity in their culinary practices or being the custodian of the nation as mothers. Although being the guardian of the nation abroad could be a sign of a perpetuation of the patriarchal structure, yet Algerian women at the female-only space were willingly 'embracing' the role of the women who preserve the nation's culture and ideals.

Findings indicated that the Algerian female-only space enabled women to have agency over their bodies, mobility, conversations, mothering.... etc., yet what was interesting is that some agency was a result of the fact that they are Algerian women from an Algerian background who had moved to settle down in a context they consider as different. Instead of following the mainstream ways, women created mechanisms and strategies fueled with the heritage of the country of origins to cope with that difference, therefore intensifying their attachment and identification with Algeria.

The Journey to Britishness

Introduction

Transnational migrants not only engage in the homeland's affairs as explored in London's *Hirak* and Algerian female-only space ethnographies, they are also engaged in the country of settlement, mainly since they are officially recognised as citizens. Therefore, this chapter attempts to cover the journey of Algerians towards the acquisition of British citizenship. It aims to explore how Algerians construct meanings regarding the acquisition of the host citizenship as well as being its citizens. This encompasses shedding light on the perspective of naturalised citizens given the citizenship systems and regimes they have to comply with in order officially to be members. Since national identity is concerned with the citizenship discourse, the chapter also unpacks how far the naturalised citizens could make the link between official membership and identification with the national story.

Relying on interviews, my field diary and data which expressed directly and indirectly research participants' constructed meanings regarding British citizenship as well as how they make sense of subjectively belonging to the host, the chapter is comprised of three parts. It starts with the process of naturalisation they had to negotiate to become citizens as well as their understanding of the process vis-à-vis the state's agenda and requirements (politics of belonging). Though the requirements and ideals of citizenship are well demarcated by the state, the second part explores the different meanings research participants give to holding British citizenship. The last part unpacks whether research participants' official belonging to the state is equivalent to a subjective feeling and identification with the nation.

5.1 'Becoming' British: journey towards naturalisation

Because Algerian research participants have not always been British citizens, unpacking the transitional phase of not being to *becoming* citizens is relevant. Therefore, this section aims to provide an overview of Algerian research participants' journey towards the acquisition of British citizenship through naturalisation. Although the trajectories, challenges, and circumstances leading them to become British citizens were different, they all got there based on a well-defined 'politics of belonging'. Yuval Davis (2011:11) states that the politics of

belonging “comprise specific projects aimed at constructing belonging to a particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways in very specific boundaries”. She further adds that: “who is a member, and how does one become this? [...] this depends on particular politics project of belonging and how they define the pathways to membership of particular nation” (Yuval-Davis, 2011:90). Citizenship implies being a member of a political community which is in its turn defined by specific boundaries. Having no legal right of acquiring citizenship, whether through the Jus Sanguinis or the Jus Soli principle, Algerian research participants accessed the British citizenship through naturalisation after passing through the three gates of being: temporary residents, then permanent residents, to finally ‘becoming’ officially citizens.

When research participants arrived in the UK, they held different immigrants’ statuses. They were students, asylum seekers, married to British citizens...etc. If we put these into one category, before becoming citizens, they were constructed by the UK’s politics of who is part and who is not (belonging) as strangers, aliens, denizens...etc. Through the UK naturalisation’s filtering agenda, those constructions ‘theoretically’ vanished after achieving success in the naturalisation process, which entails “a politics of becoming” (Kostakopoulou, 2003: 89), because “it is designed to ensure that settlers can become full-fledged members” (Kostakopoulou, 2003:89).

In the literature review there was a focus on individuals’ eligibility requirements in applying for British citizenship, and here, I will focus on the ‘Testing’ aspect of the citizenship regime which research participants have undergone (knowing that there were a few of them who did not go through testing). There is an assumption that: “it is the practice of immigrants groups, as much as their beliefs, which cause concern and have led to civic integration and citizenship tests” (Slade, 2010: 18). In general citizenship tests are based on linguistic ability and knowledge regarding the culture of the country. Research participants who were granted citizenship through testing did so when the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002) enacted the requirement that those applying for naturalisation should have “sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom”. In sum, “The British test is computer based, multiple choice and directly tests readings” (Hargreaves, 2010:109). Individuals are tested based on information found in the official handbook for the ‘Life in the UK’ test. The test is comprised of 24 questions about the customs and traditions of the British nation to be answered in 45 minutes. Language testing is also required for those applying for British citizenship, apart

from some exceptional cases (for example, when applicants over 65, having long-term mental or physical issues).

Though success at the test leads (but not exclusively as there are other requirements) to the success of applicants, the citizenship testing regimes being controlled by nation-states “are mechanisms of exclusions” (Slade, 2010:8). Throughout my ethnographic fieldwork in London as well as my daily encounters with Algerians since I lived in East London, an area where the Algerian community was visible (in Leyton, Walthamstow, Finsbury Park), the citizenship test remained as the main obstacle to individuals I met who are legally eligible to apply for citizenship. Women are impacted much more than men by such an obstacle. For example, some Algerian women whom I met at the female-only space were eligible to apply for citizenship through the testing route, yet it was precisely the language testing which stood as a barrier to legal access to the UK political community. At women’s gatherings in their female-only space, many times women eligible to apply for citizenship were told by the other British Algerian women to start working on the naturalisation process, but they agreed on the fact that the language test is hard. Women migrants’ inaccessibility to citizenship of the host nation is justified by the fact that they “not only have the lowest literacy levels, but tend to occupy the most vulnerable migrant statuses, are less likely to be able to access ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] classes, have fewer financial resources” (Morrice, 2017:606). This ultimately leads to concluding that women migrants are subject to an exclusionary politics of belonging.

After processing the citizenship applications, successful applicants are then invited to attend the ceremonies to complete the final part of becoming citizens and be given the official certificate which constitutes legal evidence of the acquisition of the British citizenship. Algerian British research participants after the success of their application have been called to attend the ceremony. For example, during my fieldwork at the Algerian women female-only space, Asya asked women: “Who remembers the ceremony when she became British?”. The following is an extract from the field diary which reflects women’s memories of the ceremony:

Yamina said I did not attend it and that in their time it was easy not like now and another affirmed that [...] another said they have given her a medal, and Asma added that they have given them pens because they were touched by the austerity. Another lady said that that they just gave her certificate [...] Asya said that she attended the ceremony of naturalisation and man of law asked to repeat after him: “you repeat after me, you raise your right hand, and you say you say your name [...]”.

Apart from having the naturalisation's ceremony as part of their memories, Algerian British women had different trajectories regarding the process of acquiring the citizenship. There were those who did not have to attend the ceremony, and there were those like Asya who attended it and did what originally characterised the British citizenship ceremony per se, which is doing the Oath of allegiance²¹ or the affirmation of allegiance²² and Pledge²³. Attending the ceremony is mandatory for any successful applicant over 18 years old.

The process of naturalisation which encompasses at the start demonstration of language expertise and knowledge of UK culture, and ends with attending the citizenship ceremony, which is mandatory, at which there is a declaration of allegiance to the sovereign monarch, a commitment to comply with the state's laws, embrace its civic values and fulfil the duties towards its citizenry remains theoretical and mechanical, in the sense that it would not be possible to assess whether the applicants have 'genuinely' any desire to know the language, to know the culture for a better integration, to be loyal to the monarch and to embrace the civic principle of the citizenship. The following is a quote which demonstrates the feeling of Fadila about naturalisation:

Fadila: I feel comfortable, I don't have to worry that they will arrest me.

What could be understood from Fadila's comment is that she looks at naturalisation only as a process taking her out from the category of being an "alien" or "other" who is a threat to the collectivity. Her vision regarding the naturalisation is similar to all the other research participants'. For example, Mustapha and Samia respectively defined the process of being naturalised as "it's like you are legally" and "protection". On a different, yet a direct fashion, Hamza stated that in the time when he acquired the citizenship there was: "no ceremony, no hassle" meaning he might perceive all the ceremonial underpinnings of naturalisation (oath of allegiance and pledge) as unnecessary, knowing also that he acquired the citizenship before the 2002 Nationality Act which enacted the testing requirement.

²¹ **Oath of Allegiance** implies saying at the ceremony (at the time when I am writing): "I (name), swear by the Almighty God that, on becoming a British citizen, I will be faithful and bear the true allegiance to Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors, according to law".

²² **The Affirmation of allegiance** implies saying at the ceremony (at the time when I am writing): "I, (name) do solemnly sincerely and truly declare and affirm that on becoming a British Citizen, I will be faithful and bear the true allegiance to her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, her Heirs and Successors, according to law".

²³ **Pledge** implies saying at the ceremony that: "I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom and respect its rights and freedom. I will uphold its democratic values. I will observe its laws faithfully and fulfil my duties and obligations as a British citizen".

Joining research participants' perspective with Hamza's vision towards the citizenship ceremony together would disappoint the utopian vision and the rigidity of the naturalisation agenda. In other words, while the naturalisation process clearly implements a project of a national identity starting from the tests which are imposed because of "fear [of] the loss of national identity" (Slade, 2010:4) to "oath and citizenship ceremonies [which] serve to accentuate the nationality of citizenship" (Kostakopoulou, 2003:100). In other words, the designers of the naturalisation processes and the individuals to whom the processes are addressed to do not seem to be on the same page. In the case of Algerian British research participants, the naturalisation process does not seem to be perceived for what it was designed for, i.e., implementing nationality in the citizenship, at least during the process of naturalisation.

While the naturalisation implies moving from being an alien to becoming 'loyal' and 'culturally and linguistically knowledgeable' for a better integration, research participants look partially at the mantras of naturalisation and see it only as 'transitional' phase: from being non-citizen to becoming a legal citizen. A disclaimer is needed here, it is only the theoretical idealistic expectations sought through the naturalisation requirements which might not be grasped by Algerian research participants, a fact which does not conclude that as British citizens they do not participate in the civic debates, are not loyal to the monarch, do not fulfil their duties or show interest in embracing British values and in feeling part of the British nation. It is through unpacking the meaning research participants give to citizenship as well as their subjective identification with the nation story which can either prove or disprove whether individuals grasped the essence of the theoretical requirements of naturalisation, and this is what will be explored in the two following sections.

5.2. British citizenship: constructions and meanings

The previous section demonstrated whether there is a matching point between the theoretical underpinning of the naturalisation process with the naturalised research participants' perception of that process. This section attempts to unpack the meanings given to the fact of being a citizen. Findings from research participants' data led to discovering that British citizenship is seen from three dimensions: nationally, globally and from the 'deservedness' framework.

5.2.1. The Privilege dimension of citizenship ‘Inside’

When trying to make sense of the attributed meanings given to being British citizens, some research participants constructed those meanings on a national scale inside the British state. Their perceptions at the national level were in relation to privilege dimensions the British citizenship *can* and *cannot* grant to the newly naturalised citizens.

The following are quotes which suggest to what extent the British citizenship can be a source of privileges at different levels:

Mourad: you live normally, you can work, you can do everything.

Khadija: Sometimes you are asked: what is your state? When you say it, it makes it easy, it makes your life easy. For example, there are courses that you cannot do, or maybe you need to pay double if you are not British. So that can make life easier, it helps, truly it helps!

Research participants perceive the acquisition of the British citizenship from its ability to grant them access to different resources inaccessible to those who do not hold the status of ‘citizens’. DeJaeghere (2008:368) states that “[p]rivilege and power as citizens varied based on accesses to resources and knowledge”. Therefore, any access permitted only via the bearing of the status ‘citizen’ by definition renders that citizenship as a ‘citizenship of privilege’. The two quotes provide a break from the rigid frontiers of citizenship which entails (more prominently) a link between the individual and the nation-state and instead provide another angle of relationships which citizenship is part of. Research participants intrinsically emphasise the relationship between citizenship and economy or the labour market, and knowledge or culture in general.

The economic resources accessed because of the citizenship as stated by Mourad demonstrate the economic entitlements upon becoming a British citizen. Turner (1997:10) categorises the access to economic resources guaranteed to citizens as an illustration of the extent citizenship is used to control the scarce resources which are not distributed on an egalitarian basis and at the same time it is a protector to citizens’ economic interests in a capitalist society. This applied to Mourad and others who noticed the impact of citizenship acquisition on their economic life. Upon naturalisation, they became entitled to have their share in economic scarce resources. The second quote, as well demonstrates to what extent citizenship is a source of knowledge.

What could be understood from research participants’ privilege approach to citizenship as a provider of, for example, economic resources is that again citizenship is perceived as a guarantor of privileges not allowed to non-citizens. Seeing citizenship as such could be both a

cause and effect. As a cause, my hypothesis is that states attempt to tighten their boundaries through imposing exclusionary requirements upon naturalisation as well as language and cultural knowledge testing in order not to make it easy for individuals to access scarce resources without intending to develop a genuine sense of belonging and shared values with the nation and behaving dutifully in that sense. As an effect, as clearly demonstrated by research participants, individuals who are either aliens or even denizens have probably felt the impact of the lack of certain entitlements because of their status, which justifiably would lead them to relate to the acquired citizenship mainly from its privilege dimension, if not deciding to access to citizenship just for those privileges.

Another aspect looked from by research participants towards citizenship– which is close to modern citizenship essence or centre is that of ‘Rights’. Or in other words, perceiving citizenship from its ability to grant rights to individuals. The following is a quote from Asya in relation to the privilege of citizenship rights and voting:

Asya: [W]e live in this country, we get affected by anything that happens, really, in the economics, in the society, anything. So, you know [...] obviously it’s a right [...] but I take it as a duty. Legally it’s a right but I take it as a duty. It’s my duty to take part in the election and voice myself what I want and what I don’t want, and that’s why we came to vote”

Overall, the quote provides a link between being a citizen and one of the social rights (that of expressing one’s opinion through political means, allowed by the state only through holding the status of a citizen). I recorded Asya’s comment on the 12th of December 2019 when I accompanied her to the polling station in East London, where she voted in the British general election. Asya was not the only research participant who took part in that vote, most research participants did by either going personally or by post. They even disclosed to me that they voted for the Labour Party. Research participants’ endeavour to take part in the vote means that they are being active in consuming the rights guaranteed by the citizenship knowing that as being denizens they were entitled to vote but only locally, whereas only official citizens are given the right to vote in general elections. From Asya’s quote, we can see that though she was not always a citizen, yet once she became so, she actively started taking part in voting believing that this will ultimately lead to a change. Therefore, the privilege dimension resulting from accessing the right to vote is the acquisition of a citizenship which is developed legitimately to ‘an engaged citizenship’. Research participants’ development of an engaged citizenship means that naturalised individuals show willingness to develop a pragmatic relation

with the state of membership, instead of acting as passive agents in a society which accepted them as one of its members.

Voicing oneself through voting for parties which advocate one's interest seems to be far from harmful. This begs the question of: "what about those who are entitled as official citizens to vote but do not? The following is a statement from Hamza who is reluctant to vote:

SB: So, you're voting for the general election?

Hamza: No, I don't. I never voted.

SB: Why?

Hamza: Big question, good question, I don't know to be honest with you. I don't want to vote and give my vote to somebody who doesn't do good deeds. There is a reasoning of religion as well in that.

Hamza's reluctance to vote is justified by his religious affiliation as a Muslim (as he would identify himself during the interviews). He seems to see himself a Muslim first (maybe only), then British (if at all) in the political implications of the citizenship of the country of residence. Or in other words, he does not seem to privatise his Muslimness, instead, deploys it in citizenship matters. I would like first to provide a context regarding the political life of Muslims in Western, democratic, and secular societies. Tariq Ramadan states that the status of citizens given to Muslims in Western societies "entails extensive prerogative and requires a serious reflection on that status in the light of the Islamic resources" (Ramadan, 2005:158). He further states that there are two ways Muslim scholars treat this matter: "thinkers from the traditionalist and literalist schools of thought [who] refuse any kind of contextualized approach on the basis that the Islamic principles²⁴ are not open to interpretation [...] Other scholars have considered in the light of actual situation (al-waqi). This means engagement in *ijtihad*²⁵ to make is possible

²⁴ Islamic principles "summarized five main points: (1) There are not "elections" in Islam (it is not a Qur'anic term, and the relation between the individual and the political leaders is a contract of allegiance [*baya*]); (2) one may not desire [political] office, on the basis of the Prophetic tradition (among others) "We do not give (political) authority to those who ask for it or ardently desire it"; (3) A Muslim can give allegiance only to a Muslim and must otherwise abstain from all political involvement; (4) A Muslim must respect the political authority exercised by a Muslim, even if it is not ideal, on the basis of the Qur'anic verse that commands Muslim to obey God, his prophet, and "those who exercise (political) authority"; (5) The democratic system (not a *shura*), and a Muslim in the United States or Europe, outside his natural home (dar al-islam), must distance himself from any support for a system opposed to Islamic value" (Ramadan 2005: 158-159).

²⁵ *Ijtihad*: "literally "effort", it has become a technical term meaning the effort accomplished by jurist, either to extract a law of a ruling from unexplicit scriptural sources or to formulate a specific legal opinion in the absence of texts of references" (Ramadan 2005: 254).

to draw a broad outline for Muslim involvement in the Western societies” (Ramadan, 2005:158-159).

Hamza does not clarify whether he follows the traditionalist or a reformist school. Either way, he provides a justification to his reluctance to vote, driven from religion, which is that of refusing to vote for someone who is not worth it. In a nutshell, his measurement criteria regarding voting must be in accord with his conscience and morality. This could illustrate a mechanism of negotiation that faces Muslims in the West who, in the case of Hamza, would work closely within the limits of the Islamic law. This begs the question of: do one’s religious beliefs undermine citizenship? And more contextually: does religious reasoning allow Muslims to be good citizens?. Tariq Modood (2013:125) states that: “Religious discourses are legitimate civic discourses”. This could apply to Hamza’s justification that he does not vote because of moral reasons and good intentions: “I don’t want to vote and give my vote to somebody who doesn’t do good deeds”. But whether the religious discourses are always legitimate civic discourses for the case of Muslim citizens in the West, the opposite seems not only hard for the political community, but as well the Muslims who might be in constant negotiation, or sometimes no possible negotiation due to the clash between religion and civic discourse, depriving themselves from the privilege guaranteed by their acquired citizenship.

Becoming part of the political community though they are not originally from it was not taken for granted among research participants. Instead, they consider the privilege of being inserted on equal basis within the majority due to the acquisition of citizenship:

Mustapha: “Citizen” is like you have exactly the same rights as the native of this country.

Yamina: I am a British citizen, so I have the right to do as a normal British, as an English you know. So, I have the right just like his equally, there isn’t any difference. When it comes to the belief, he believes what he believes, [...] we have you know what we believe.

Research participants emphasise the inclusionary aspect of citizenship, which I will illustrate later. But what seems to be intrinsically focused among research participants’ statements is an appraisal of the ‘equality’ aspect of citizenship. All those included under the status of citizens are “presumed to have equal standing” (Glenn, 2000:1). Yamina’s emphasis on being as equal as the English individual regardless of the different beliefs illustrates to what extent the citizenship regime does not (theoretically) consider ethnic, racial and religious differences among citizens. This means that citizenship can be a system to achieve social solidarity and

cohesion that binds citizens together regardless of their diversities, a fact which seems to be appreciated among research participants.

Citizenship as an enabler for creating social cohesion and equality hints at its inclusionary aspect. The following comments give illustration to the extent the inclusionary aspect is considered beyond a privilege dimension among research participants:

Nadjat: [British citizenship] has given me a lot, because I feel there is a diversity, as I told you to be British and to be Algerian.

Nadjat: Being British, why not! [...] Being British does not mean that you must not be Muslim, you must not be that; you must not dress up like this; you must take off the veil. Me, as long as they did not say this, I am happy. Because they [...] respected my religion, and the way I wear clothes.

From the first quote, the inclusionary aspect of the British citizenship does not seem to oblige individuals to denigrate their previous citizenships. Thus, through naturalisation dual citizenship holders become dual nationals and part of two political communities as well as being legally equal with fellow nationals from the two states of membership. The second quote illustrates another inclusionary aspect of the citizenship which does not oblige individuals to negotiate their religious choices upon naturalisation. In other words, although the Muslim veil in Britain is “a contested signifier in contemporary public and media discourse” (Dwyer, Meer and Modood, 2010:105), yet Muslim women are not obliged to remove the veil as a condition to become British citizens. As I previously mentioned the inclusionary aspect is not solely a privilege, it is as well a cause or a condition and this is what is illustrated by Nadjat through her emphasis that as long as she has not been asked to change her dress code, she does not mind being British. In other words, this could mean that if she was asked to do so she would probably not consider being naturalised. This ultimately led to concluding that the inclusionary aspect of citizenship is a condition advocated by the individuals who are entitled to become citizens. Therefore, though the legitimate guarantor to citizenship is the nation-state, yet even those considered denizens seem to have conditions the nation-state needs to meet to accept to become citizens. These conditions are –at least for Nadjat- related to religion.

On theoretical grounds, citizenship is the provider of equality, social cohesion, and inclusion. However, research participants’ lived experiences illustrate counter-narratives to those mentioned privileges:

Zahra: Have you seen when you go to the hospital? Yeah, when you fill the form, you have to say which ethnicity or something like that. I don’t like to

fill that form. I find it racist. Why you have to put which country I come from? If you are African or if you are this? I leave it just blank. I don't say I am British I am Algerian [...]. And even I say, last time, to my GP [...] I said: "no, I don't like that". They want to point to you which country you come from. If you are here for 30 -40 years, you are part of this country. [...] You mean if I go to hospital for instance now and you say I am African or I am that that, you mean you treat me less than other? That is my thinking [...] I said they are going to treat us differently. They say "no". I said this is my thinking. [...] You should not ask me that, that is very rude.

Mahmoud: When it comes to a job in this country, there is what we call the equal opps where you have to tick a box and you have the colour. Before they reach for selection, your CV will be thrown, will be binned. First of all, if you were born in this country [...] if you are English person, white English person priority number one then [...] number two is the people born in this country and then Europeans and then migrants [...] So, most English people are tolerant, and they accept migration, but you do see segregation when it comes to work [...] When you want to get to certain level, it's hard. And by the settled system, 'you have no experience blablabla' they send you nice letter saying: 'sorry, have experience you can go back'. But the bottom line because you don't fit in the society [...] you don't understand the codes of the society, your ancestors are not from this country. There are jobs only English people can do.

Although they are officially citizens, research participants do seem to disclose where they originally come from in different institutions. Disclosing where they come from for research participants seems to have a negative impact on their lives. In the case of Zahra, she believed that providing information that she is not originally from the UK would hamper her access to fully enjoy health care as a citizen. If we deconstruct her perception of finding filling those forms as 'racist', that type of racism is different from the 'old racism', it is instead related to structural racism which is embedded indirectly in institutions' regulations which reinforce inequities in employment, education...etc. This type of racism has a particular effect on racial and ethnic health inequities (Ford and Gee, 2011:116). Though Zahra is being given 'an innocent' justification that filling the form is far from embedding health inequities, yet another female Algerian British participant has disclosed to me that she has been ill-treated by a doctor at the hospital and has been called as a 'junk lady'. She - because at that time - did neither know English language, nor knew her rights and so could not do anything about the incident. She told me that: "If I understood that day, if I knew my rights, I would have complained. He didn't have the right!".

Mahmoud seems to be aware that regardless of being officially a citizen and being skilled, there are other criteria to access to labour market and better opportunities, criteria related to one's origins. Because marginality can operate structurally (Blackman and Rogers 2017: 6), Mahmoud seems to be marginalised from the structural system of labour market. He nicely puts it by saying "by a settled system", another possible illustration of structural or institutional racism which indirectly segregates applicants far from legitimate criteria (skills), but for one's 'out of hands' origins. This seems contradictory because citizenship could be precisely the tool for an egalitarian access to scarce resources, yet from individuals life experiences, citizenship does not seem to do much for nations where racialisation of minorities persists. The process of acquiring citizenship is based on exclusion. But, once being a citizen, citizenship then becomes a mechanism for producing inclusion. Too much optimism with this, and research participants' lived experience seem to say otherwise. Citizenship's equality and possession of rights mask inequality and hierarchy as stated by Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul (2008:156): "The rights approach [to citizenship] holds out the promise of full equality before the law for all members of a state but leaves unresolved how to transform formal into substantive equality". Being equal in law, yet still feeling marginalised, demonstrates to what extent there is an exclusionary dimension within the inclusionary privilege of citizenship. In sum, this illustrates that citizens are equal, but some citizens are more privileged than others.

5.2.2. Citizenship of privilege 'Outside'

Before delving into how the British citizenship is seen as a privilege 'outside' or from its global dimension, I would like first to contextualise briefly the global dimension of a nation-state's citizenship using historical referencing. Castles (2005:690) observed that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc was followed by a new world order that divided the world into North and South. He further states that: "[t]his world order can be seen as a hierarchical *nation-state system*. Moreover, the varying power of states is reflected in a similar hierarchy of rights and freedoms of each state's peoples: hierarchical citizenship" (Castles, 2005: 690). This order had implications in dual national research participants' narratives.

British citizenship was perceived by research participants from its ability to provide privileges 'outside'. Unlike the privilege dimension inside illustrated previously, the outside dimension is related to seeing the privileges of citizenship from a global dimension, outside the nation-state. Citizenship if seen from its global dimension is closely related to the link between

citizenship and a passport which, by definition, is designed to enable people's mobility globally and identification to belonging to a specific nation-state when being abroad (Yuval-Davis, 2011:75).

The granting of the British citizenship is accompanied with the eligibility to apply for the passport, though naturalisation does not necessarily guarantee the success of holding a passport. However, all the research participants hold a British passport, and most of them link *de facto* having the British citizenship as *just* an enabler to have privileges for free mobility globally:

Mourad: [T]o be honest, the only different that being formally British makes is the passport that makes your life easier. You can travel anywhere you want.

Hamza: But it's mainly documents [...] to travel and to be free. I would tell you lies if I say something else.

Research participants perceive the British citizenship as only a guarantor to their mobility and access to countries UK citizens are permitted to enter because of their status as British citizens. From the ethnographic fieldwork, I have been witnessing how easily research participants were travelling all over Europe without needing a visa to do so. Countries they have visited when I was in recent contact with them were France, Belgium, and Italy. As far as the Algerian passport is concerned, mono-national Algerians can at least access those three countries with visas. Using citizenship as a pass to enter countries which the home of origins' citizenship does not provide begs the question of: how is the new citizenship regarded among the naturalised foreign individuals? Yuval-Davis (1997a: 4) argues that: "[t]he interest in citizenship is not the narrow formalistic meanings of having the right to carry a specific passport. It addresses an overall concept encapsulating the relationship between individual, state and society". While this remains 'the mantra' of what citizenship implies, the naturalised foreign individuals seem to challenge this and use the privileges of what the new citizenship can offer neither in the UK nor in Algeria, but globally, and fill the gap of the differences characterising both citizenships in terms of strengths at the global level. This, of course, may disappoint and give an excuse to those advocating against the dual citizenship approach to emphasise the accusation of disloyalty among dual nationals who still maintain ties with the homeland through transnational and transborder practices. However, it is as well worthwhile to look at the reasons which lead the naturalised to look at citizenship from *only* its ability to grant a mobility privilege, and link this to the existing global hierarchy and citizenships' and nation-states' global stratification.

The following is a research participant's comment after being asked about the meaning he gives to the British citizenship:

Hamza: Well, I think it makes you bigger than what you are mainly you can travel a lot freely and respected in a way in different countries like Saudi Arabia [...] You are much respected than others.

Again, Hamza also thinks that citizenship can grant him free travel. The statement of "I think it makes you bigger than what you are" can be interpreted from a political and sociological point of the dual citizenship discourse. The political point of view suggests that one possesses both the citizenship of the homeland and of the host's, therefore giving her an equal membership and political participation with fellow-citizens of both countries (though it is not always the case, as in the case of Algeria if someone wants to run for the presidency and other high state positions renouncing other citizenship (s) is mandatory according to the 2020 constitution). Thus, the individual enjoys full rights and privileges and fills the gap of any limitation characterising any of the two citizenships inside the nation-state. The sociological point is related to how the individual perceives herself and is perceived by others outside the two states of membership, under citizenship regimes' inequality and hegemony. Jaghai and Waas (2018:414) raise a relevant point by saying that: "[i]n matter, not just whether you have a nationality, but *which* nationality that is". Globally, the matter is which passport travellers have and of whose state. Therefore, the ability to travel and being "much respected than others" because of the British citizenship urges to unpack the nature of the that citizenship per se. The latter might be a "compensatory" (Harpaz, 2019:900) Western citizenship that makes up for the non-Western Southern Algerian citizenship's limitation. Therefore, it is a premium citizenship for the dual nationals Algerian British. Premium citizenships extend their holders' life opportunities, mobility and one's positive image globally compared to non-Western mono-nationals (Harpaz and Mateos, 2019:7; Spiro, 2019:880), a fact which could substantiate why research participants would perceive the British citizenship only from its global privilege dimension. The already existing world of unequal citizenships at the global level and the access of individuals to premium citizenship might lead one to conclude that insisting on acquiring premium citizenships among individuals for global privileges leads to intensifying the global hierarchies of nation-states and citizenship without looking for a way to break those hierarchies. However, dual nationals should not be accused of contributing to those disparities because the act of acquiring other citizenship is sometimes consequential on those nation-states and citizenships' hierarchies i.e., they would probably not consider becoming citizens if their

original nationality was *powerful* globally, and might not have left their country of origin in the first place!

5.2.3 A deserved citizenship: ‘*a win-win partnership*’

Research participants admitted that the British citizenship provided them with both privileges inside and outside. Others perceived the acquisition of citizenship from a ‘merit’ perspective:

1- SB: *what does it mean to you to be a British citizen?*

Zahra: Nothing, just citizen, that’s it. Maybe I am a good citizen. Maybe I deserve that.

2- Zahra: I think I deserve it, because I am a good person.

Zahra emphasises that granting her the status of citizen of the UK is consequential and conditional on the fact she is a good person. However, her statement of “I deserve that” is interesting because maybe without knowing, the link between “deserving the citizenship” is engraved in the discourse of citizenship and naturalisation. Yuval-Davis (2011:40) argues that the deserved citizenship “is but one extreme technology among many others which developed in recent years in numerous countries to maintain some stability and control of the citizenship boundaries of belonging”. This leads us to unpack to what extent British citizenship is to be deserved. Earning and deserving the British citizenship comes to characterise the agenda of the UK’s naturalisation process and those who will potentially be granted the citizenship must deserve it (Puzzo, 2016:5). The introduction of the language and cultural testing could be an illustration of the extent to which applicants need to deserve the citizenship through proving that they know enough about the country’s values. Not to mention, that the exclusion of the citizenship system is also intended to entitle only those who deserve various public services, access to scarce resources, and social rights. However, what Zahra means by deserving the citizenship is far from considering it as such because she is aware that testing requirements prove applicants’ deservedness. This is because she has been living in the UK for more than forty years, and she told me that she became a citizen before the framework of testing and ceremonies was applied. She, instead, links her deservedness to a personal character of hers, that of being a good person, challenging *the systematic deservedness*. Again, this could be an example of the extent the designers of the naturalisation requirements are not on the same page as applicants.

Like Zahra, other research participants as well perceive the citizenship as something they deserve as long as they are engaged in the host country’s citizenship’s civic debate:

Mahmoud: [I]t's a success but at the same time we are contributing to British society. They should know that I worked in Oxfam, did a lot of voluntary and I am willing to do voluntary work as a way of expressing my gratitude to them.

Samia: Like I said, if I don't feel British, I will not get involved in Camden council and the community. I lead the residents of Regent's Park myself.

Research participants' comments demonstrate that being 'British citizens' is not just a status, it is as well accompanied with performative roles. However, while being citizens automatically carries the duty of taking part in those roles, research participants seem to modify the equation by replacing it with a win-win partnership equation. For example, Mahmoud acknowledges that the acquisition of citizenship is a success, however he as well emphasises that he is doing something in return. The same is true for Samia who, because she feels she is British, she is involved in civic activities. Doing it out of gratitude or because of feeling that the one is British, both research participants take a pragmatic active stance regarding British citizenship and meet the criterion of being 'active citizens' by their participation within the community. Taking part within the community is as well encouraged by the ideals of earned citizenship (Puzzo, 2016:5) and is extended to the actual 'performing' of citizenship which is not limited to practices related to law and political participation, but all that civic discourses encompass, like volunteering and participating in the community (Modood, 2013:118). Besides considering that citizenship is as much a source of privilege as they would in return show that they deserve it, research participants are among those naturalised individuals whose active performance of citizenship stands against the held assumption the naturalised people do not dutifully contribute to the civic debate of the acquired citizenship.

The fieldwork suggested that research participants' constructions of British citizenship are multifarious. The points of reference were in relation to the nation-state, global dimensions, and inter-relation with the state. They had agency in those constructions, though not all the time as there were existing powers applied on them either inside the state or on a more global level because of the existing world order. This section showed how British citizens of Algerian origins make sense of their official status, but just as citizenship is also about the sense of belonging to the nation, the following section deals with how that category makes sense of the subjective belonging to the host nation.

5.3 Britishness: subjective identification and attachment

This section deals with the subjective identification and meanings given to Algerian British research participants' Britishness, as an identity rather than a citizenship. In other words, I aim to explore whether becoming a citizen means feeling part of the national story. Citizenship has a "dual character" (Castles, 2005:689), it entails belonging to a political community and having a relation with a community on issues of law. However, citizenship as well denotes belonging to a national entity demarcated by a specific cultural identity. The introduction of the citizenship test which required a knowledge of the language and the cultural values demonstrate such a dual character. Including the identity in belonging to the political community is an effort to promote "vision of integration and membership" (Kostakopoulou, 2008:108) among the would-be citizens. The British citizenship system as previously mentioned possesses such a vision through its naturalisation prerequisites. The question is to what extent those efforts are adopted among the naturalised citizens.

Findings indicated that research participants' sense of belonging was not based on the fact that they were citizens, as much as on relying on multiple overlapping factors, not just their history, their identity of origins and other personal factors. It was found that their lived experiences were shaped by a set of mechanisms they deployed in order to manage their sense of belonging in the host nation.

5.3.1. Familiarity with Europe

Research participants demonstrated a positive attachment and to a certain extent a successful integration in the host society which would have taken place without necessarily being citizens. It took place instead because of pre-existing colonial ties:

Nadjat: We are not very different from the European culture, speaking as an Algerian. We have been colonised by the French. We do have a second culture. So, coming here to Great Britain, I mean we are *francisé*. So, the culture, for example: mind always open [...] we saw what is going on in Europe. All the things there in the world: in the world of fashion, clothing, technology, in the way of speaking, studying etc. It's almost identical. So, coming to a European country, it was not difficult.

Mahmoud: Look, if we talk about the Algerians in this country, their integration is much easier, because we have that kind of contact, historical contact with the rest of Europe. It won't shock us to see somebody drinking cappuccino, tea, or whatever [...] sitting on the table with forks and knives. We know it!

It was found that Algerian British research participants refer to Britain and Europe interchangeably without any reference to the current discourse of Brexit and whether Britain is European. It is as if in their imagination they are similar, yet, in two quotes, using Britain and Europe is somehow given justification for such an interchangeable usage, grounded in the relationship not between Britain and Europe but between Algeria with Britain and Europe. This relationship is about the history of colonialism where the two sides were part of, obviously, in an opposite and dichotomous way, that of (ex)coloniser/(ex)colonised relationship.

Regarding Algerians' integration in Britain, research participants justify the easiness of their integration in the host with their familiarity with Europe which pre-existed their migration, and which was inherited from colonialism. This familiarity could be traced back both in the colonial era per se or after decolonisation. Speaking of Africa during the colonial era, imperialism was more than just economic and political subjugations, it was as well a cultural one. Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (2005:3) refers to the cultural subjugation as "the cultural bomb" unleashed by the imperialist power against the colonised, a bomb saturated with the orientalist vision that: "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures" (Said 2019:7). Decolonisation and independence of the African countries was a transition from a direct exploitation to a more in-dependence (Young 2003:3) status with the ex-coloniser, or in other words, from colonialism to neo-colonialism. Although neo-colonialism implied originally a form of economic hegemony and dominance of the ex-coloniser on the ex-colonised, the argument of the inherence of the cultural hegemony was analytically developed. Wa Thiong'o (1993:52) states that: "under neo-colonialism, the cultural and the psychological aspect of imperialism become even more important as instruments of mental and spiritual coercion".

Referring this to the context of Algerians, research participants admit the influence of the colonial-French and the European culture, inherited even after decolonisation, knowing that the charting of the Algerian national identity after independence was anti-colonial, to get rid of any economic, political, and cultural imperialism. And during the ethnographic exploration of London's *Hirak*, protesters were chanting against French neo-colonialism and were holding signs to express that (see appendix 13). Whatever the efforts, "the past continues to speak to us" (Hall, 1990:226). Research participants' past continues to speak to them in the diaspora, and maybe more powerfully because Britain was an imperial colonial power, like France and the rest of the European countries. Through "the transported ordinariness" (Tomlinson, 1991:1) received from Europe when they were in Algeria, they could easily integrate in the host nation.

I refer to ‘ordinariness’ as a category that joins research participants’ life aspects of familiarity with Europe, which are as mentioned in the quotes, related to for example: knowing European food etiquettes, being open-minded...etc.

However, the familiarity with European culture as the guarantor for an easy integration was resisted by some other research participants, Samia expressed to me that: “say that ‘Algeria is more European than Algerian’, this exactly destroys our identity and I refuse that”. She instead justifies the adaptation of Algerians outside Algeria because: “the Algerian adapts wherever you put him”. Some research participants think that having an Algerian identity, the French identity and the British culture acquired due to their migration create internal conflicts, as expressed by Hamza who said that he has: “three cultures [...] that’s why we have this clash of cultures in mind”.

This research found that these postcolonial identities can inform citizenship discourses. In other words, while citizenship implies a sense of attachment as well to the nation and integration, it turned out to be that naturalised citizens do not rely much on the citizenship testing regime in their integration as much as they rely on the power of history, even that of colonialism and subjugation. “We are here because you were there” (Mehta, 2019:8) as replied Mehta’s grandfather of Indian origin who migrated to London, during a moment of lived xenophobia in London, whereas Algerian British research participants demonstrated that: ‘they adapt and integrate in the host, because colonialism was there’, simply because the contact of Algerians with the Europeans took place when the Europeans went to Algeria, not when the Algerians went to Europe, after the in-dependence of independence.

5.3.2. “You can be British but understand nothing of Britishness”: it is not only a status

Citizenship is not only belonging to a political community and a legal system, but also about the feeling of belonging and acquiring the host’s values. However, research participants challenge the idea that being citizens through the nationalist naturalisation agenda leads automatically to developing those subjective feelings. Instead, they believe that they should develop those subjective feelings, but on their own personal and voluntary basis:

Mustapha: Britishness it’s you who develop it, not them who develop it, you understand? It’s how you live in England, it’s how to integrate. If you want to integrate within your community, you just stay within your community [...] You be stuck in *Halal* chicken, *Halal* meat, [...] “did you pray *Asr*?”. You can be British, but you understand nothing of Britishness. Some people

they choose to be like that, you keep stuck like you lived in Algeria as you live here.

Mahmoud: the thing you are part of the culture, you have to forget about your own culture. There are certain things you say no, if you don't drink, you don't, if you don't eat whatever, if you don't eat pork, you don't.

Research participants' comments demonstrate that a set of mechanisms of negotiation must be deployed regarding their integration and insertion in the host country. First, there seems to be an awareness that being a citizen has nothing to do with feeling British, and if the state has granted citizenship, developing subjective attachment to the host is left on the shoulders of the naturalised citizens. Speaking of the mechanism of negotiation emphasised by research participants, from the quotes it could be deduced that these mechanisms are deployed because there seems to be a shared vision that the values of the host might be in contradiction with the homeland's values, which ultimately, leads to developing personal strategies to cope with those contradictions. Overall, coping strategies are mostly at the expense of the values of the country of origins, and the point of reference is most of the time derived from religion. In the first quote, Mustapha suggests that the naturalised citizens are at a crossroads between either integrating inside their minority communities or stepping out from them. And as far as he is concerned, he stated that: "so to integrate in the pot of the native society and move forward, you have to get out", a relatively radical strategy in order not to be 'stuck' in one's original tradition, believing that this would lead to not making any difference between leaving and staying in Algeria. A slightly similar vision is shared by Salim who suggests that if individuals do not show the will to embrace the values of the host, this might cause a feeling of discomfort. He stated that: "you are not going to be comfortable if you don't do the first step because you are the guest, you came here. This country has been like this for thousands of years". Thus, living in the host requires personal initiatives of adjustment from the guests who migrated to a place whose values are already defined and settled, not vice versa.

Though research participants think that for a better integration they need to step out from the cultural values bubble of the country of origins, yet the degree of 'stepping out' is limited in a sense that there are some values which should not be negotiated at the expense of one's original cultural values to integrate in the host. This is clearly expressed by Mahmoud who suggests that forgetting one's own culture should not always be applicable. From his comment, it could be deduced that individuals notice that there are some aspects permitted in the host country that are prohibited or forbidden in homelands' values. And through these degrees of permissibility, as well as the source which defines this permissibility, which is mainly of religious origins,

they develop mechanisms of negotiation. Not drinking alcohol and eating pork are requirements derived from religious references. Therefore, this demonstrates to what extent religion remains the aspect through which no negotiations are made, and no sense of belonging could possibly be developed if it would contradict one's religious beliefs. A vision, as hinted by Mustapha would hamper the integration of individuals in the host. Ramadan (2005:9) makes a point that: "Western Muslims, because they are undergoing the experience of becoming established in new societies, have no choice but to go back to the beginning and study their points of references to delineate and distinguish what, in their religion, is unchangeable (*thabit*) from what is subject to change (*mutaghayir*), and to measure, from the inside, what they have achieved and what they have lost by being in the West". Islamic jurisprudence can systematically (either flexibly by considering as for example advocated by Islamic feminism the contexts or not) defines what is *thabit* and *mutaghayir*. Research participants' management of their lived experiences in the host demonstrate that they have a certain agency over the interference of religion meaning they define by themselves what is *thabit* and what is *mutaghayir*, and accordingly, decide to what extent they step out from the values of the country of origin to embrace the host's values.

However, individuals who advocate embracing the values of the host do not always seem to make negotiations at the expense of the country of origins' values simply because embracing the host's values is not always in contradiction with the homeland's values, ultimately leading individuals to identity with the host without making big efforts:

- 1- Mustapha: the good thing about being British it that you contribute towards Britishness without knowing it.

SB: How is this?

Mustapha: I give you an example, you queue like them, that's a simply an example, without knowing it. And then after that you start realizing [...] I think that's part of being British. I feel you ask someone what's Britishness for you: is queue, it is queuing [...] queueing is very British really.

- 2- Salim: I will try to do it like you [...] you play football in Sunday I play football in Sunday [...] you have a party? I am coming, what can I do? I can help, I am part of the society, I am integrating."

These comments give insights to how Algerian British research participants lived their Britishness at a societal level. They expressed their joining to Britishness in relation to queueing, playing football, joining parties unproblematically, intentionally and effortlessly.

These are mundane practices that face research participants in the host who ultimately give it meaning that it is their way of being part of Britishness. One might think that these are not challenging moments since they are part of everyday life which do not necessarily demand energy to negotiate them. However, research participants in their lived experiences have shown initiatives to take part in some traditions characterising the host and at the same time unfamiliar to the country of origins. One of these traditions is the celebration of Christmas, and the following quote indicates Samia's preparations:

Samia: When it comes to Christmas, for example, because Christmas is coming, we did twice turkey, but we did not eat it because it's too dry. So, we will make kind of roasted leg of lamb [...] Yorkshire pudding and this is purely English. And I will have roasted potatoes, roasted vegetables just like English way.

Because I was doing fieldwork at a time when Christmas was approaching, I realised that there are many research participants who take part in it. Samia's way of preparing for Christmas and making sure that it is done in the English way demonstrates to what extent she is not only being a citizen, but actually is taking part culturally in Britishness. Similarly, Salim's cultural vision attributed to Christmas is that he celebrates it because: "it is part of the folklore". Other research participants as well give other meanings to the celebration of Christmas like Mustapha who sent me on WhatsApp a picture of his family's Christmas tree where gifts were underneath, and he told me that: "Xmas for us it's mid-winter breaks to gather all together", a rather attributed social meaning. Therefore, it could be understood that the way individuals interpret a certain phenomenon (celebration of Christmas for example) justifies their act of non/participation in it. From this perspective, it could be said that the 'individualist' or 'personal' interpretations can deconstruct and challenge hegemonic regimes of interpretations. To contextualise this, Christmas can be unfamiliar to Algerian's rituals, yet Algerian research participants seem prone to take part because of the attributed meanings they give to that ritual. These personal interpretations are considered as a facilitator that legitimise their active participation in the host's values, and at the same time could be used as a defense mechanism against incompatibilities and controversies between one's original identity and the host identity.

Thus, research participants consider being British citizens as different from feeling and doing Britishness in its subjective connotation. Yet this did not prevent them from actively developing attachment to the values of the host, categorically, partially, and effortlessly at the expense of homeland's values. This made them meet, voluntarily, the expectations of the UK's

citizenship regime which aims for the promotion of the naturalised sense of identification with the host values.

5.3.3. 'British' is a status only

Like the previous category, some research participants make a distinction between citizenship and its identity underpinning and subjective identification. At the same time and unlike that previous category, they seem to separate the status of being citizens from feeling part of the host:

Zahra: I don't feel like I am British. It's not because I do have the nationality, it means I am British. I am a British citizen, yeah.

Nacira: I am not going to tell you that because I am British, therefore, I celebrate Christmas. I don't have to because I am Muslim.

Research participants' comments make it crystal clear that the status of being citizens is not self-evidently equal to feeling British. It seems that they consciously challenge any conflation that might label them subjectively with Britishness just because they are part of the political community. Zahra's comment could be a disappointment to the ideal of citizenship which entails that citizen should feel that they are part of the nation. Similarly, but indirectly is Nacira's stance which clarifies a kind of a dis-identification with the host values. By indirectly, I mean that unlike Zahra who mentioned a dichotomous stance between being British and feeling British, Nacira distinguished that being a citizen does not lead her to celebrate Christmas. Again, religion is the reference point for Algerian British research participants' degree of dis/identification with the host's values. One interpretation is that framing her situation as becoming/being British does not forcibly lead to celebrating Christmas means how close is the subjective identification with Britishness to the idea of celebrating Christmas. And again, the degree of dis/identification with the host is not only about the religion of the origins, but as well about the clash between the latter with the host's religion. This ultimately led some research participants like Nacira to let their Muslimness demarcate their level of interaction in the host and their degree of attachment to it. While some research participants' stance towards the fact that being a citizen under the politics of belonging agenda does not mean that they, in return, feel they belong the moment they have been granted the citizenship, other research participants' sense of belonging remains in constant revision:

Hamza: three years I found out that I don't belong to this society [...] because of alcoholism, because of drugs and things like that and sex and all these things.

Realising that he no longer belongs to the British society only three years ago, knowing that he was British citizen for more than twenty years could mean that he felt that he belonged before that. Knowing that most of the time “experiences of racism, discrimination and xenophobia often generate feeling of ‘partial belonging’ or of non-belonging, since people are likely to develop a sense of attachment to the country only if it includes them” (Kostakopoulou 2008:108), yet I do not aim to assess the criteria he relied on to conclude that he no longer belongs because it is unclear whether the point of reference is religion, morality, personal experiences...etc, I would like instead to focus on the idea that he *changed* his vision regarding belonging. This could lead one to conclude that belonging is not always primordial, it is a dynamic process based on subjective assessment of individuals in the host country regardless of when they became citizens.

Thus, naturalised British citizens have shown an awareness that being is not feeling where they intentionally took part in defining that equation. However, this could not always be the case as subjective identification and belonging remain in constant revision based on subjective assessments charted by the individuals themselves.

5.3.4 Combining

The following extracts demonstrate some of research participants' lived experiences which summarise a strategy about their lived Britishness:

Mustapha: like when I speak with a foreigner accent, sometimes I do it on purpose just to highlight the fact that I am not from here, but I am from here at the same time [...] I like to speak English with my natural accent.

Samia: [I]t was a program[me] of ITV I think four five years ago, and I took part in that program myself. That's in cookery to determine how I live my British[ness]. So, the journalist asked me the same question as you saying: “how do you think this soup will be British? Yeah, because I made a soup and flatbread, kesra that we do in Bled [...] so she told me: “that is North African”, and I said: “yes, my mom cooks that when I was very young nearly every day of the week” [...] She said: “how do you [...] want us to consider this within the British? Because it says, “the British best dish”, the title of the program”. So, I looked at her and said: “well that is made with British ingredients, is it?”. She was like: “what do you mean?”. I said: “where I am buying all the ingredients? They all locally bought, including the

semolina”, I said: “semolina is made in Wembley” [...] she goes: “yeah”. I said: “so that is North African dish made with British ingredient, so that will be a British soup, you want it or not?”. And we made soup, we made *shorba*, the *hrira* [...] And on that day, I walked home winner. [...] You see? you make a soup which is called *shorba* but that’s British ingredient. So, you can say Algerian style [...] made in Britain. So automatically it’s British for me.

Research participants seem to try to modify any rigid definition to show how they should be ‘British’ and push the boundaries further by joining their Britishness aspects borrowed from the country of origin. Mustapha seems to intentionally reveal that he is a foreigner though he holds British citizenship, which means again that citizenship does not automatically equal being seen as British. However, he does not want to be identified as a foreigner only, as he also wants to be identified as part of the host nation. So, he speaks English which is the host’s language but with his natural accent. This reproduction which could be mundane, is created because Mustapha seems to occupy a liminal space where he combines both an aspect of the host with one which he identified as his “natural”.

In the second quote, the mechanism of combining is as well deployed by Samia when expressing her Britishness in a programme where the theme is about one of the cultural reproductions of Britishness: food, because food as well can be considered as a practice defining citizens’ identity and sense of belonging (Slade, 2010:9). While trying to articulate her Britishness, Samia was seen as deviating from the concept of the TV program because she had cooked food from Algerian origins which are as well part of her childhood memories. While attempting to respond to the criticism she had received, she did not deny the fact that the food she was cooking was Algerian or North African, she instead insisted that even if it was Algerian, as long as the ingredients used to cook that Algerian food were made in Britain, the dish *for her* was British. This could illustrate that Samia and others while defining their Britishness, take an active stance in doing so. And through the intentional combining of any aspects originating from the country of origin to express their belonging to the host, it could be because of their inability or unwillingness on the one hand to be exclusively identified as part of the host, on the other hand they do not want to have a divorce with the identity of origins. The ability to combine, however, is not applicable always intentionally, in a sense that it might only be successful if the interference of their identity does not stand in contradiction (depending on the meaning they give to that contradiction) with their Britishness which therefore creates a harmonious combination. In all the cases, combining the identity of origins in defining the British side and belonging to the host means that individuals do not resist being identified as

British, but it is instead the impact of the identity of the homeland which remains omnipresent in defining themselves in the host, creating plural forms of integration without denigrating any aspect of their identity.

5.3.5. Selectivity and Blurriness

Research findings indicated that some research participants had shown resistance to being fully identified as part of the host nation and to being fully not part of it, they instead expressed that they deploy a mechanism that works for them to avoid any categorical dis/identification:

Karima: something good in this country I take it. We are in a European country, there are good things we take them. But those negative things we get rid of them, I make them away from me.

Nacira: So, you are British, you respect people, you respect the community. And you don't have to be like them. You don't have to follow them for everything [...] we have our culture [...] We are part of the community; we do our best to be part of the community. But nobody comes and say: you have to do that, or to do that, or to follow us. This is democracy.

Besides resisting the idea that since they are British (as indirectly expressed by Karima and directly expressed by Nacira) therefore, they need to 'act as one', not in relation to the official status, but regarding the subjective belonging and identification, research participants do not seem to show a state of full identification with the host or a resistance to that, instead there is a negotiation based on a conscious strategy, that of selectivity. In other words, taking what works for them and leaving what does not. Karima is among those individuals who seem to perceive Britain as European in their imagination, who de facto justifies her understanding that being in a European country could automatically lead to finding positive aspects she would embrace and negative aspects she would avoid. Similarly with Nacira's comment: she makes it directly clear that if she is British, democratically speaking, she is not obliged to follow all the host's values on the one hand. On the other hand, any cultural reproduction could be made without necessarily following the host's culture, because simply they already have a culture! She as well seems to be selective to reach a balance of being part of the community but on her own terms.

Another mechanism like the selectivity one, which does not clearly lead to concluding whether there is a categorical dis/identification is that of 'blurriness'. I refer to blurriness as a mechanism which makes the distinction of whether Algerian British want to be identified with

the host or not while taking part of the host values which sometimes remains problematic to the identity of origins' values. I will unpack this regarding the perception of celebrating Christmas. The following is an extract from an ethnographic fieldwork conducted at the female-only space by the end of December 2019:

On Thursday when I as usual went to the gathering of women, [Asya] was preparing for the Christmas party. She brought the LED lights and some of the ornaments and has shown me the gifts, candies, and chocolate she bought [...] she brought a very long wire of led lights, she tried them first to see if they work so that she starts hanging them. I offered her my help and started helping her and I seized the moment to ask her what is the significance of celebrating Christmas and whether it's for a religious purpose. She told me that she did not name it as a Christmas party but as a Winter party because in that area there were a lot of Muslims, and the objective was inclusion and getting everybody together. She told me that she did not name the tree as a "Christmas tree" but as a sweet tree. She said that those were her ideas and were good because giving those names make people psychologically accept the idea of coming to have a gift from Santa because she said that Santa has nothing to do with religion of Christianity and get chocolate from the sweet tree not Christmas tree. She told me that those names made the Muslims come.

In these ethnographic fieldnotes it could clearly be seen that Asya denies the fact that she is planning to celebrate Christmas by using language which, she thinks, will have a psychological impact on Muslim individuals to swallow the idea of attending the party. I attended the party which took place a week after generating those fieldnotes. I remember when I arrived at the place of the party which took place in Algerian women-only space, the decoration and the atmosphere was relatively close to a Christmas party theme. For example, the outside of the place was decorated with led lights and a wreath. The inside was decorated with various Christmas decorations. The tables were wrapped by blue and red tablecloth where different types of cakes, drinks and crisps were put. Other tables were used to put on them wrapped gifts, cards, and bunches of red Poinsettias. The roof was decorated with ornaments and the walls were decorated with wrapping paper, baubles, Christmas hats and a red Christmas stocking. The 'Sweet Tree' as called by Asya was put on the corner and was wrapped with led lights, candy canes and a snowflake on the top. During that day, the atmosphere was more festive than usual when women do their normal social gatherings. Music was played and the songs played were from different genres like Rai, Bedouin, Kabyle and Shawi. However, the songs that were repetitive were Maria Carey's "All I want for Christmas is you" and "Last Christmas" song.

Feeling slightly confused after seeing the decoration that looks like Christmas and intentionally modifying the names by getting rid of the name of 'Christmas', I only had to immerse myself with British Algerian women research participants who were attending the party to know how they interpreted their attendance. The following is an extract from the field diary:

Even without asking them, women were having conversations about celebrating Christmas. One of them told me: "do you see the Muslims, they celebrate Christmas", another British Algerian replied to her: "Christmas is a day before" because the party was taking place on the 19 December. A woman commented on a top worn by a veiled British Algerian who was wearing a blue Christmas jumper, was given to her -she told me- from her workplace. She told her: "Hijab and jumper of Merry Christmas", the woman replied to her: "I did not come for Christmas I came to dance".

All the fieldnotes provided above demonstrate to what extent problematising Christmas is related to research participants' religion: Islam, from Asya' s attempt to change the name so that particularly the Muslim category would come, the research participant's comment she gave me that hints that there seems to be a contradiction that "Muslim celebrate Christmas", to the astonishment of the women on seeing the women wearing the veil with a Christmas jumper. However, unlike other research participants from the previous category who categorically stand against the idea of celebrating Christmas, or another category which admits that they celebrate Christmas because of cultural and social reasons, this category gets involved in celebrating a party which is identical to Christmas party theme, and at the same time tries to refer to the same act as: not taking part in a Christmas ritual, and instead gives other justifications related to for example, changing the names and attending the party for dancing only. Voloder (2012:77) notes that: "migrants' interpretations of Christmas are affected by the migration from one context to another and are part of their attempts to reconcile their positioning within the current space". This could resonate well with migrants coming from Muslim background where the celebrating of Christmas is problematic because of fundamental reasons. It as well resonates with the way research participants manage their attitudes towards taking part in the host's tradition in the light of the vision of religion about that tradition. Understanding whether they identity with the host while celebrating Christmas is blurred because in the one hand, they take part in it, and on the other hand they try to customise the perception of Christmas so that it becomes psychologically acceptable. Therefore, the sense of belonging or unbelonging is blurred and could not be reduced to one single conclusion.

Conclusion

The chapter aimed at exploring how Algerians make sense of the acquired British citizenship which would enable them to act transnationally along with the ties they maintain with Algeria as external citizens as well as nationals. It looked also at the subjective attachment to the host and whether in whatsoever way it was constructed based on the official belonging to the political community.

Speaking about the acquisition of citizenship, I started first by exploring how Algerian British citizens made sense of the UK's naturalisation process and requirements. Findings indicated that research participants looked at that process as only a transitional phase from being denizens to citizens, and looked at how they would benefit from the citizen status entitlements not available to others. As citizens, research participants provided different narratives regarding the fact of holding the British citizenship, summarised into approaching it from its privilege dimensions both inside the UK state (access to scarce resources, inclusivity, civic participation and active citizenship), globally (free mobility), and their inter-relation with the state (win-win partnership). Though British citizenship was considered as a compensatory citizenship, yet gaining that citizenship as seen from the privilege dimension leads automatically to concluding that we are governed by a hierarchical world order, inequality and hegemony.

Although there seems to be an implementation of the national identity in citizenship, as seen through testing, to promote the integration of the would-be citizens, findings indicated that research participants' identification with the host was not relational to either the naturalisation requirements or the fact of holding British citizenship per se. Findings regarding how British citizens of Algerian backgrounds make sense of their belonging to the host indicated that instead of relying on what had been 'instructed' by the citizenship regime about the promotion of integration and sense of belonging, this was not more powerful than how history (neo/colonialism, neo/imperialism) and individuals' self-ascribed identity (ethnicity, nationality, religion) could govern the way they developed attachment to the host society. Concluding whether research participants had got categorically a sense of belonging to the host or not could be reductionist. That is why findings indicated that the naturalised citizens deploy set of mechanisms of negotiation developed as a consequence to their subjective assessment to what extent there is a in/compatibility between the host' values and the homeland's values, and upon those assessments they figure out their own way of integrating and developing a sense of belonging to the nation of the second citizenship.

Simultaneity: Participation and Attachment

Introduction

This PhD on Algerian British research participants as holders of dual citizenship has found that they were performing transnational practices for both the country of origins and the country of settlement. In terms of attachment, it was found that Algerian British dual citizens were relatively attached to the two nations of membership. So far, these were explored exclusively by taking as a point of reference either how they were participating in their Algerianness regardless of their Britishness and vice versa, this final empirical chapter attempts to look at their simultaneous participation and attachment taking into consideration their duality as dual citizens/nationals.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the simultaneity engendered as a result of their dual status as official members of two states. It explores how Algerian British research participants make sense of their simultaneous relation with the state and how they make sense of their simultaneous participation legitimised by the states of membership as citizens. The second part covers how research participants make sense of their dual and simultaneous belonging and attachment to the two nations where they are considered as nationals as well the way they self-identify under the Algeria-British dual identity.

6.1 Framing relations with states of membership

The aim of this section is to explore how research participants dual citizens makes sense of their relations with the two states of membership vis-à-vis one another, and how they perceive their positions as citizens in the two states. Doing so is relevant because it informs us of the transitional journey from being committed to one state to being committed to more than one after becoming dual citizens. This section as well shows the transnational practices of research participants through a simultaneous participation, which was enabled due to their legal and official status as citizens. In other words, how they maintain their legal tie with the host's state and simultaneously, and through transnational practice, maintain their relationship with the homeland's state as external citizens, who though they are outside its borders yet under the

status of being external citizens they still have rights, duties and are recognised by the polity even if they are temporarily or permanently outside its territory (Bauböck, 2009:478).

Exploring the simultaneous participation of Algerian British research participants took advantage of the coincidence of having the Algerian presidential election on the same day as the British general election. Doing so was relevant as it provided a realistic lived simultaneous experience that actually took place while the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted.

6.1.1. Understanding one's membership through 'comparison'

In this section, I aim to unpack how Algerian British research participants make sense of their simultaneous membership in relation to how they think they are positioned in both states. It was found that they constantly, maybe unintentionally, compare the way they are positioned in both states as citizens. The following two quotes from them will explore what I mean by that:

Mourad: If it was the Algerian passport, it will be difficult to get the status and you must wait for some time and go to the embassy stuff like that. British passport you can just have the electronic visa and go. It's much much easier and you can apply for the passport online.

Zahra: Here if you have got rights, you have got rights. In Algeria you have got the right, and you don't take it, that's the problem of Algeria.

The two quotes were selected to illustrate what I mean by the constant comparison, knowing that there are many examples from other research participants. However, I opted to choose these two quotes because the areas and subjects of comparison mentioned were widely repeated among the other research participants. In the first quote, the one might think that the emphasis is on the nature of the Algerian passport compared to the British one or vice versa, but it is not the case, because first, this point was already explored in the previous chapter which concluded that the British passport is a premium passport which made it up for the limitation of the Algerian passport globally, and second the passport is about the global dimension of the citizenship, yet the focus here is about the way research participants make sense of their membership *inside* the states. The choice of Mourad's quote is because there is a comparison between the paperwork system of Algeria and the UK, a subject of comparison which was widely repeated among the other research participants. In the second quote, the subject of comparison is so close to the ideals of citizenship, that of the right to having rights, which was as well explored by many other research participants. Other subjects of comparison were the meaning of democracy, justice, and freedom of speech in both states, the Algerian and the

British one. The attention here is to dig beneath the surface and unpack the relation between holding dual citizenship and the act of comparing per se. Including in the body of analysis the aspect of comparison could be simplistic, but it should be borne in mind that it was engendered from their status as citizens who are concerned by the two states and how as well, they are the states' concern, both the Algerian and the British one.

Overall, the way research participants compare their relationship with the two states is structured in an oppositional way. In other words, they frame their relationship with one state and comparatively frame their relationship with the other state. The outcome of these comparisons led to find that they problematise their relationship with the Algerian state, and make a positive assessment about the British state. That is, the matter of that problematisation seems to be fixed and solved by the British state, as shown in the previous quotes. Besides considering that British citizenship as a source of privilege which grants them rights (as seen in the previous chapter), a privilege which could justifiably be consumed because they are geographically living inside the UK, research participants seem demanding as well to the responsibility of the Algerian state towards them as (external) citizens though they do not live there.

The previous points of comparison could be summarised in the duties and responsibilities of the (two) states in granting the privileges to which research participants were entitled because of their (dual) citizenship status. The following quote as well summarises another type of comparison which the dual citizen makes between the two states of membership:

SB: So, you wish that the Algerian election would be like this election?

Asya: Yes, in two seconds in and out, very simple, yeah, one police officer you know, yeah: “good afternoon how are you”, very kind and that’s it [...] There is not cheating, or people standing there to watch out.

Asya seems to appraise the attitude of the police officer and the voting process which I observed when I accompanied her on the 12th December 2019 to the polling station when she was voting for the British general elections. She would like the same process for the Algerian electoral system. Unlike the areas of comparison seen previously which are about the assessment of the duties of the states towards its citizens, Asya’s point of comparison is regarding the civic participation which is a prerequisite for an active citizenship. Her evaluation of the electoral system and the actual taking part in it could mean that the nature of the system has an impact on the civic participation of individuals, which either boosts it because of the availability of

suitable conditions to practice the active citizenship ideals or hampers it because of the absence of those conditions.

The research participants' knowledge of the system of the two states of membership and their relation to them as formal citizens demonstrate that dual citizenship enabled dual citizens to navigate legally those systems. The outcome of that navigation, from the findings, led me to realise that dual citizens develop a critical knowledge and assessment of, firstly, the nature of the state (democratic or not), and secondly, the politics of citizenship of those states or in other words, how they are positioned in them as citizens.

From the research participants' navigation between the Algerian and British states, it was found that they identified flaws regarding their formal relation with the Algerian state, they probably did so only because of the toleration of the British state to become British citizens which enabled them to identify the differences between the two states in relation to how both treat their citizens on the one hand, and how the states' systems impact their civic participation (active citizenship) on the other hand. Research participants identify positively with the British state, but only when the Algerian state is part of the comparison equation. What I mean by that is that the British citizenship could be a compensatory to the limitations of the Algerian citizenship not only globally as seen in the previous chapter (passport matters) but as well in citizen-state relationship. There seems to be a controversy regarding the privilege and compensatory dimension of the British citizenship. As seen previously, British citizenship is a source of privilege for the naturalised Algerian British who were able to access the scarce resources, while it was found that 'all British citizens were equal, but some citizens were more equal than others'. At the same time, it is also a source of privilege compared to Algerian citizenship. This demonstrates again the Janus-faced aspect of the British citizenship which provides a limited privilege inside the British state mainly to those who are not originally from the UK, and at the same time guarantees privilege vis-à-vis the state of origins to those who are not originally from the UK.

6.1.2. Lived simultaneous participation

Algerian British research participants shared the tendency to simultaneously participate in both the homeland and the host nation. This simultaneous participation is legitimised due to their dual and simultaneous membership as citizens. Simultaneity asserts that migrants can be involved in two countries at the same time. Therefore, dual citizenship can grant such practice.

Birka, Blatter, and Schlenker (2017:420) state that: “dual citizens are especially predestined to practise such a simultaneous involvement because their status allows, and potentially stimulates, multiple identifications and participation”. This section will further explain the simultaneous participation of Algerian British research participants. I selectively attempted to cover their simultaneous participation as dual citizens in the two states of membership through voting, because the research fieldwork coincided with such a *lived* simultaneous political participation from Algerian British towards the Algerian and the British states.

As seen in the ethnography of London’s *Hirak*, the movement could be called a citizenship movement, where Algerian research participants set up demands addressed to the Algerian state. Their participation as external citizens was by definition, a high participation because of the non-ordinary nature of social movements per se, not because they are emigrants/immigrants. However, I do not intend to put this high participation in the simultaneity equation discussed in this section for two reasons: the first is that I wouldn’t know if Algerian British research participants are selective when it comes to being engaged in high participation, in a sense they would only be involved as such if it is for the country of origin and if any kind of *Hirak* would take place in the host, they would /wouldn’t be involved. Second as seen in the ethnography of London’s *Hirak*, while research participants were making sense of their participation, though they mentioned that it is for Algerians inside Algeria and it is for them as emigrants who might return one day to Algeria, but it was not found out that their high participation and engagement in the internal affairs of the homeland was related to their settlement in the host or to how the host was treating them as immigrants and minorities.

Thus, I will focus on their simultaneous involvement through voting, knowing that voting is close to the discourse of citizenship and the votes which Algerian British research participants were simultaneously involved in took place only because of their status as dual citizens. The outcome of tracing the simultaneous participations (through voting) of Algerian British dual citizens led to finding three categories: the first category demonstrates a weak simultaneous participation as result of emigration per se, the second category demonstrates a weak to a non-existent simultaneous participation because of reasons unrelated to the emigration, the third category which is by its turn divided into two subcategories demonstrates an active simultaneous participation.

The following is an extract from an interview conducted with a female British research participant whose simultaneous participation illustrate the aforementioned *first category*:

SB: will you vote on the 12 of December, there will be election, the Algerian election, and the British election the general election?

Khadija: sometimes I vote sometimes I don't. It depends.

SB: it depends? you are speaking about the Algerian or the British?

Khadija: yes, sometimes I vote, sometimes I don't, just depends on that day. I am not so much into their politics.

SB: ah ok. And for the Algerian?

Khadija: Algerian, still not sure. I need to do research about it, what is the best.

SB: let's speak about previous experience.

Khadija: if I used to vote in Algeria?

SB: yes.

Khadija: I used to vote, yes, I used to vote and work for the vote in the municipality.

The extract summarises Khadija's electoral attitude from prior migration to post-migration. When she was in Algeria, she was not only taking part in the vote, but she was also active in contributing to organising those votes. Once she migrated and became a holder of dual citizenship, she demonstrated a weak political participation in both the British state and the Algerian state. From this, it could be understood that her participation in the Algerian vote was somehow conditioned by the fact that she is physically present in Algeria. But this does not imply that since she now lives in the UK, she shows a strong participation in the country's politics because she is physically there. The lack of participation in one country could be compensated for with a strong participation in the other one. However, dual citizenship holders can demonstrate a weak participation in both the states of membership, and the fact they are naturalised does not mean that they take part in the host state political affairs and the fact they are external citizens does not mean they keep engaged in the decision-making of the homeland's politics as they used to when they were living inside its territory.

The second category's simultaneous participation is almost non-existent, it neither participates in UK's politics nor Algeria's:

1- Hamza: I never voted in any country.

2- *SB: Which politics do you think influence you, British politics or Algerian politics?*

Hamza: none can affect me. The only thing that can affect me is the Islamic religion if it's applied properly.

As seen in the previous chapter, Hamza's political participation in the UK is shaped by his Muslim identity, or in other words, he sees himself as a Muslim first. However, while trying to understand whether he is active in civic participation entailed with his status as an external Algerian citizen, it turned to be that he as well sees himself as Muslim, neither a dual citizen nor a mono citizen (Algerian or British). From the quotes above, he seems to be neither interested nor engaged in the two states of membership's politics. However, he illustrates that his interest is mainly oriented towards the Islamic religion. During an interview, Hamza told me something relevant, indirectly hinting at his political orientation. He told me:

Hamza: before they went to the FIS in Algeria, I was there, and I was helping people to go and vote for them because they wanted to establish religion and I trusted them. But at the end I said thanks god they did not win because they had conflicts amongst them and they accepted everybody without checking [...] you need to be a very good Imam, a learned person in the religion to establish it and to practice it with simple methods, with ease to people. Don't make people afraid of it.

The quote states Hamza's supportive vision to his desire to see the establishment of religion in politics. He was supportive of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the 90s when its members were advocating the application of the Islamic principles in the Algerian state. However, and because of internal conflicts he stopped supporting them and instead advocated a good knowledge to establish religion. Here I mainly aim to focus on Hamza's favorable conditions for a political participation in Algeria which -for him- was desired to be the establishment of religion in the state. His vision could be seen as a counter-narrative to modernity, which 'invented' nationalism, nation-state and which developed the modern version of citizenship, a modernity though it is as well imported to Muslim nations who became nation-states which found "their origin neither in Islam nor in Umma but in European thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially relating to the French revolution of 1789" (Kamali 2009:122). Yet, this modernity is challenged by individuals who advocate *their* version of citizenship brought from religious principles. All in all, being inactive in civic participation for both the country of origin and that of settlement does not only give justice to dual citizens who are accused by the logic of the classic nation-state that the latter is only interested in the politics of one of the states of membership, at the expense of the other, it as well demonstrates to what extent dual citizens, mainly Muslims are more attached to a similar version to citizenship of

religion, knowing that even before modernity, Islam established principles similar to citizenship (Salam, 1997:133).

The third category demonstrated a strong simultaneous participation for both states of membership as external citizens and as naturalised citizens. This category is divided into two sub-categories, which are similar in terms of being active in participation in the UK's politics through voting, with the first sub-category showing resistance to voting in Algeria's presidential election, whereas the second sub-category actively takes part in the latter's election.

For the *first sub-category*, one may wonder why the group does not participate in Algeria's election, yet I classified it as a category illustrating strong simultaneous participation. Their resistance to vote in the Algerian votes is de facto a way of participating:

SB: today as well, there is the Algerian vote. Did you vote?

Asya: (sigh) unfortunately it's completely different thing and we wish, we wanted if the circumstances were not like these, we would go and vote for our country and we choose a president. But in these circumstances do not allow it because that would be against the thing that led to *el-Hirak* originally which was we change the system.

Again, Asya's words were produced a few minutes after voting for the UK general elections. Her reluctance to vote for the Algerian presidential election is far from being indifferent about it, but it is an attempt not to go against the *Hirak*'s demand, among others, about not organising presidential elections until after the candidates of the previous regime had stepped aside. This vision is shared among most research participants who are part of London's *Hirak*. For example, Nacira was observed during a march chanting out loud: "there is no vote, we swear we won't do it" (field diary). And when I asked her later whether she will vote, she replied: "not the Algerian, the British one". A same stance was demonstrated by Nadjat who told me: "I have the opportunity to vote, I will vote here [...] but I will not vote for the Algerian government, I am not happy, I am not happy with the five members". Another one, Zahra who takes part in London's *Hirak*, said that: "I don't believe in the vote there", meaning in Algeria.

From research participants' comments, it could easily be deduced that their reluctance to vote in the Algerian presidential election is far from because they want to be passive in the decision-making of Algeria as external citizens. They either do not vote because they are busy taking part of high-participation nature like the *Hirak* within which if such participation reaches its

objective, will ultimately lead them to take part in voting, or because they are more concerned about the credibility of the electoral system in Algeria per se.

The *second sub-category*, which could probably contradict the previous category but unintentionally, takes part of the voting far from standing against the *Hirak* but instead their participation could be interpreted regarding their status of dual citizens and their status as immigrants. The following is an extract from the field diary:

I asked [Salim] if he votes for Algeria. He said yes, he does. I asked him if he's gonna vote on the 12th of December. He said that he'll do two votes at that day, the British vote and the Algerian presidency vote. I told him how comes to vote for a country you are not living in. He said that things might change in Britain and he will need to return and said: "*biladouk biladouk*" meaning 'your country is your country'. He added that his vote of now might affect in the future when he will probably be back.

Salim's participation in the Algerian vote demonstrates to what extent dual citizenship extends to people possibilities and opportunities. More than that, it as well could be a source which guarantees the interest of its holders. As seen, Salim's driving motive to participate in Algeria's vote is related to future plans regarding returning to it one day by taking part in its politics to pave a way to return to a place which meets his political desires. This could remind us of the vision of the protesters in London's *Hirak* (in the third chapter) who admitted that their return to Algeria would be conditional on a successful outcome for their activism. However, what seems to be interesting is that Salim links his plans to return to the host, as if his return is dependent on events in the host which might ultimately impact him.

Before speaking about any possible impact that could force Salim to leave the UK even if he was a citizen, I would like to speak about a real pessimistic side of the dual citizenship, which does not necessarily justify Salim's simultaneous participation, yet remains applicable on him as a dual citizen. It should be emphasised how privileged are dual citizens who can at any time decide to move freely to either of the countries of membership and enjoy their social and political rights entailed from the citizenship and nationality. Though this privilege seems to be so attached to dual citizenship discourse, however dual citizenship is simultaneously a permanent and a precarious status. Before developing this point, I would like to point to the fact that Algerian British dual citizens research participants have both the Algerian and the British citizenship or nationality *originally* and through *naturalisation*, respectively. The

original Algerian nationality²⁶ is given based on either the Jus Soli or Jus Sanguinis principle, and the British acquired nationality through naturalisation. It is sometimes the difference between having the citizenship or nationality originally or through acquisition which informs the permanent and precarious status of dual citizenship. To put in the context of the dual citizenship of British Algerian citizens, though they seem to be protected by both the British and Algerian state, yet at any moment they can become holders of only one citizenship. And in the future, it might happen that the acquired citizenship might be lost – in this case the British one.

I would like to speak first about how both Algeria and UK act in the matter of the citizenship loss. The terms used for such an incident are denationalisation or citizenship revocation. Speaking of the British state's, nationality laws, the UK takes measures to denationalise citizens for security, a "deprivation of citizenship on 'conducive to the public good' grounds for those who pose a threat to the UK or whose conduct involves very high harm [and] deprivation of citizenship on 'fraud' grounds for those who obtained their citizenship fraudulently and so were never entitled to it in the first place" (GOV.UK, 2021). Therefore, the denationalisation seems to be reserved to any British national regardless of grounds under which she/he is so, however it was observed that in the UK: "the denationalization has become effectively reserved for naturalized citizens from Muslim-majority countries" (Ellermann, 2020:2469). And a more recent amendment in the British Nationality law which created a backlash mainly among minorities is the Nationality and Border Bills 2021 which is for the time being still undergoing readings in the Parliament Chambers. A bill which proposes that the British citizenship could be stripped without notice. On the other side and according to the Algerian Nationality Law: "Every person who has applied for nationality may have it revoked" (article 22). However, in March 2021, the appointed Minister of Justice proposed an amendment Act which states that Algerian *original* nationals living in the diaspora, may have their nationality revoked if they take part in: "acts causing serious prejudice to the interests of the state and or were collaborating with a country considered as an enemy" (Osman, 2021). However, it was widely repeated that this project is "an attempt to counter the pro-democracy movement of the *Hirak*" (the New Arab Staff, 2021) mainly since the Algerian diaspora was mobilised for the *Hirak* cause. The proposition was, as announced the Algerian president on a

²⁶ Article 6 from Algerian Nationality Law: The one is considered Algerian if born from an Algerian father or an Algerian mother.

Article 7 from Algerian Nationality Law: The one is considered Algerian by birth in Algeria.

press meeting, withdrawn, because it was ill-interpreted. He as well promoted dual and multi nationality at the same press meeting. Therefore, in the Algerian Nationality Law the stripping or the citizenship deprivation is (for now) only reserved for those who acquired the Algerian nationality through naturalisation.

As seen, every state has its policy regarding the deprivation of the citizenship, the common point is that the practice is most of the time driven by security reasons. However, it should be borne in mind that applying the act of depriving citizenship is hard and this is because there is a huge international promotion to fight against statelessness, and “the 1961 Convention of the Reduction of Statelessness prohibits a state from depriving a person of his or her nationality if it results in the person being stateless, unless the nationality was obtained by misrepresentation or fraud” (Hong, 2021:163). However, dual nationals do not seem to fall in the category which risks being stateless if deprived from citizenship. In the context of Algerian British research participants, they remain theoretically and hypothetically vulnerable to the loss of British citizenship, but of course only if the British legal system thinks they should be because of those mentioned grounds. The point I want to arrive at is that their status of dual citizens is precarious, and their journey to naturalisation is not only a linear journey that of *becoming*. If they fall into the category of those who are considered as a risk to the UK security or who became citizens illegitimately, their naturalisation journey would be put in reverse motion, from: *becoming* to *un-becoming*.

Returning to Salim’s predictions, neither does his stance mean that he takes such a position regarding his simultaneous participation because of his knowledge of the precarious nature of his dual citizenship, nor does it hint that he is liable to be stripped of his British citizenship which would cause him to return to Algeria. Simply, it could be seen how though he is a dual citizen yet is skeptical if not feeling unsafe in the host, and his statement “*biladouk biladouk*” (your country is your country) could mean that he puts the country of origin without hesitation as an option and a destination in case any scenario happens because it is originally and legitimately one’s country which would never disappoint.

The simultaneous participation was approached differently among research participants. However, what was prevalent across the data findings was that their simultaneous participation through taking part in the decision-making process in the two states of membership’s elections was not antagonistic in a sense that a participation in one state alters, is in contradiction to, or devalues the relevance of the participation in the other state. On the one hand, the majority take

part in the British vote, while at the same time being reluctant to vote in the Algerian elections. The reason is unrelated to their active participation in the British state, it is instead related to the Algerian state system, and as seen before, their reluctance is another kind of participation. Their involvement in the two states as dual citizens was not a burden in the sense that they had to make an exclusive choice, quite the contrary they have proven that it is possible to take part in the politics of the two countries effortlessly.

However, it should as well be recognised that not finding any difficulty and the urge to negotiate the double and simultaneous involvement could be because the involvement in one state is not at the expense of the other state or would in whatsoever way denigrate its sovereignty. A final remark, the transnational and simultaneous participation of dual citizens in the two states of membership, in the case of Algerian British, means that they did not consider the geographical and the time aspect of the holding of citizenship. Holding the title of external citizens means that they are geographically outside the territory of Algeria, but this did not prevent them from being politically engaged from a distance. And becoming citizens through naturalisation means that they were not always considered citizens of the British state, yet once they became so, they defend their interest in decision-making under their status.

6.2 Dual attachment and identification

The previous section looked at the simultaneous participation of Algerian British research participants and their relations with the two states of membership. Findings indicated that they positively identify with the British state and are involved in the decision-making of the homelands in the capacity of being external citizens. Complying with the laws of the states where they are members is obligatory and enjoying the privileges such as the extended packages of rights, opportunities, and the navigation of the states' system is not something to reject, as the dual membership can lead to compensating the limitations generated from a single membership. Therefore, this means that dual citizens' relation with states as well as dual participation are built upon rationality for defending one's interest, legally. This section focuses on subjectivity, not rationality. In other words, it aims to unpack how Algerian British dual nationals make sense of their dual and simultaneous belonging and attachment to the two nations where they are considered as citizens. The section as well looks at Algerian research participants' perception of their dual identity as being Algerian-British.

It would not be possible to speak about dual citizens or nationals' dual attachment without referring to the loyalty issue, which is at the center of dual citizenship discourse, and which was and still remains the stimulator to any toleration and amendment regarding dual citizenship. The famous criticism through which dual citizenship is fought is that its toleration is a form of bigamy, as the American statesman George Bancroft stated that he would: "as soon tolerate a man with two wives as a man with two countries" (cited in Joppke, 2010:47). This section, though, will not directly assess whether research participants are loyal to one nation over another, but instead will deduce how they disrupt the rigidity of being 'either/ or' loyal to one nation over the other, and the causal relation that 'being dual national leads to being loyal to either one country of membership over the other.

Research findings suggest that research participants while expressing their dual attachment do not always refer to it because of the fact they are dual citizens/nationals, they do so due the impact of other factors subjectively identified by them. And as far as dual identification is concerned, research participants self-identified themselves differently within the dual/hyphenated identity of 'Algerian-British'.

6.2.1 "*Algeria is my mother and Britain is my wife*": the conditional and unconditional attachment

Research participants expressed the dual attachment equally, yet not on the same grounds. The lens looked at to have such a vision is regarding the fact that one nation is one's land of origin, and the other is not:

Mustapha: Algeria is my mother and Britain is my wife, you know, it's exactly the same. The mother is the one gives you, or puts you, gives you birth and raise you up. And wife is you marry her because you felt, you know, you were in love with her charm [...] I love both, I love both really.

Mustapha uses a personification to express how he perceives Algeria and Britain, and under the essence of that personification he expressed how he is emotionally attached to them. Or in other words, the attachment is equal, yet the ground of constructing that equal attachment is not the same. First, what is interesting is that he considers both nations as women, a not-new yet a classic attribution, because woman: "symbolizes in many cultures the spirit of the collectivity" (Yuval Davis, 1997a:45). Using transitive relation technique, we can deduce that he loves Algeria because it/she gave him birth and raised him up, and he loves Britain because he fell for its/her charm. This particularly challenges 'the bigamy' mantra, because simply

individuals subjectively give attributes which are disruptive to hegemonic ideas, a simple example is Mustapha who neither considers both nations as having exclusively attributes of the 'wife', nor those of the 'mother'. Each nation subjectively has a unique position for him. Justifying the love towards the country of origin because it is the mother for either a resident or an emigrant like Mustapha is to say that emotional attachment towards that country is unconditional since the one cannot choose the mother and the birth country. This unconditional attachment towards Algeria simply because it is the country of origin is shared by Algerian British research participants though they no longer live in it either voluntarily or as a result of a forced migration, for example Nadjat told me while referring to her attachment to Algeria that: "I cannot cut my umbilical cord, it's like an umbilical cord, I have been always attached to this country". And the problematic relation with the state of Algeria does not in any way denigrate the attachment. Quite the contrary it is sometimes that strong attachment which fuels their activism, long distance nationalism and critiquing the political system of the state. Considering Britain as the wife means perceiving *her* far from deterministic biological ties like umbilical cords. Therefore, the attachment to Britain was constructed, and choosing it as a destination over any other destination or over staying in Algeria could mean that it provided them with conditions through which developing attachment was constructed.

The attachment to Algeria is justified with the fact that it is the country of the origin, and it takes the shape of an unconditional attachment if the attachment to the other nation of settlement is put in the equation. And within that equation, they construct their attachment to the UK in the form of a conditional relation:

1- Salim: Algeria is always in my heart. England is just the same. It's adopted me, it gave me all the chances I ask for and looked very well after my kid. So, I really feel I have two countries.

2- SB: *Do you feel that this is your country? Or even if you have the nationality, it does not mean that this is your country [...] compared to Algeria*

Karima: No, me I feel that this is my second country, you understand? Algeria is my original country, and this is my second country. Because in this country, we lived in and we are medically treated here, we worked here, and we did a lot of things here. Also, we must not be ungrateful, we came here during hard times [...] I don't be ungrateful, as it is said. This is also my second country. I am careful to it as I am careful towards my original country.

The comments show a strong attachment and positive identification with both homeland and the host, without preference. However, the conditional and unconditional variables characterise such dual equal attachment, in a sense that Algeria is unconditionally attached to, and the country of settlement is conditionally attached to. Salim unjustifiably holds Algeria in his heart, and justifiably develops the reasons why he holds England²⁷ in his heart, reasons mainly related to how it treated him. Ultimately, not only factually having two countries under the dual citizenship umbrella but embracing the emotional side of feeling having two countries. Similar to that is Karima who said that she considered that the host is her country where she behaves dutifully and protectively towards it not in relation to the fact of being a citizen, but because of how it treated her when she needed it. What is remarkable is that the development of high attachment to the host is based on gratitude. This was not only limited to Karima, but most research participants felt that they are grateful to the UK, mainly in relation to how it accepted their asylum applications when Algeria was witnessing the civil war in the 90s. Needless to mention, she is as well unconditionally and unjustifiably attached to Algeria under the grounds of origins.

While the attachment to Algeria remains unconditional as it cannot be denigrated, the high attachment and feelings towards the nation of settlement, not only is conditional, but it is also developed because it has provided them with what Algeria has failed to provide. For example, Mustapha and Fadila respectively expressed that: “the difficult situation that exist in our country, is maybe less hard in this country”, and “I feel here more protected than in Algeria [...] I love Algeria, you don’t believe how much, however and unfortunately, we start to feel that this is our country”.

The dual attachment of Algerian British research participants is constructed unproblematically because of the attributes given by them to both the homeland and the host. They are emotionally attached to Algeria unconditionally simply because it is the mother they have not chosen and are as well attached emotionally and feel they belong to the host as they belong to Algeria, conditionally, in a sense that it needed to deserve the possibility that individuals would feel attached to it. In the case of dual nationals whose migration archives were characterised with forced migration and the unpleasant circumstances in the country of origin, and who believe that the host embodied them, the feeling of attachment towards the latter is high. However, it cannot compete with the attachment they develop towards the homeland. That high attachment

²⁷ It was found out across the data the research participants refer to England, Great Britain, and UK interchangeably.

is probably justified with the fact that the host made it up for the homelands' responsibility towards them.

From research participants' unconditional and conditional attachment, we could deduce that there is no way dual nationals neglect or alter their feeling of belonging and attachment to the homeland even if they are highly attached to the host. Their high attachment to the host which is justified due to the fact it made it up for the homeland would probably never be approached without referring to their homeland, not to forget that unlike the attachment to Algeria which remains intact, or maybe even intensified after migration, the attachment to the host is a dynamic process. And most importantly, research participants demonstrated that a dual attachment could exist, and having feelings for both countries simultaneously could co-exist.

6.2.2 Personal and societal implications: 'Trousers'

If the reference point for maintaining unconditionally and developing conditionally equal attachment respectively with Algeria and Britain were because one country is the origin and the other made it up for that country of origin, then findings indicated that there is another point of reference through which research participants define their dual attachment. This section thus attempts to develop that point of reference which is about the interference of personal and societal variables in constructing the sense of belonging and attachment for Algerian British research participants, mainly women. The following are two interview extracts conducted with Samia. The first extract, which is used to make sense of her lived experience in a hotel where she worked in the management sector in 1990s' Algeria, as well as her analysis about Algerian society at that period. And the second one is her perception of the host.

- 1- Samia: I think two three days down the line, I was off duty, I was not working but I had to pass by the reception to go to my room because I was staying in the hotel, and I was wearing trousers. I always wear trousers [...] so, coming with the trousers [...] the guy turns around, I learned this from him, I am saying it as he said it, he goes: "Allah's curse on those women who are in similitude of men". And again, naively, because I come from Kabyle, I really didn't know what he means, [laugh] why he is saying that? I walked away. The following day I was talking with another colleague [...] "why that man [...] why he told you that word yesterday?" He told me: "as because you when you passed by, you were wearing, you looked like a man". I told him: "seriously". He told me: "yes". So, I think things like that made me think yeah Algiers is not for me [...] You know things like that you know made me in the 90s in the end of 80s and the beginning of the 90s made me think: this is impossible, you know, it was becoming impossible, the whole society

was actually effervescent before 88 but people were not seeing it [...] in a sense, people did not know what foot to dance on. They did not know if they are into the French culture, an Arabic, they did not understand Islam of the way it works. And they think they all become Imams, you know, they all know to do exegesis. If there is any exegesis against the women, they are right, they make it pass, they make you guilty hundred percent.

- 2- Samia: this country for me is quite, yes, they did welcome me! They accepted me for what I am. They did not look to change me (laugh), they did not say: [Samia] you cannot wear trousers! [Samia] can wear trousers! [...] [Samia] did not have to change how she wants to speak. [Samia] can speak with respect. some people will listen to her, but some will not. but fine, that's not a problem

SB: it's like you are yourself here?

Samia: Exactly, exactly!

The first quote demonstrates how Samia's clothing style created a controversy from a man who analysed Samia's style using a religious framework. From the religion of Islam, it was reported that: "The Prophet [pbuh] cursed effeminate men those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of women and those women who assume the manners of men" (Al-Bukhari,²⁸ 1997:418). It seems like Samia, according to that man's logic, is cursed because she was in similitude with men through the wearing of the trousers. And her astonishment after being given the explanation from the other colleague could mean that the reasons for wearing trousers were far from wanting to look like a man. What is relevant is how she links this experience with first the fact she does not belong to that place, and at a broader level how she disidentifies with the society because of the effervescent status it became, the identity crisis it witnessed and the Islamic resurgence, which for her resulted in giving individuals power and legitimacy to becoming Imams (religious men) and preaching though they might not be defined as imams. Algeria during the 90s witnessed the invasion of religious discourse in almost every aspect of life and led to the interference of religion in the everyday life of Algerians, one proof of this is that even the personal life and choice (like wearing trousers) was subject to religious and theological scrutiny.

Samia made an interesting point, which is about how people all started all interpreting sacred texts. For her such religious interpretations negatively targeted women. Islamic feminists found lacuna of Islamism on Muslim women in Muslim societies and argue that: "[it] was

²⁸Imam Muhammed al-Bukhari is a Persian scholar who is mostly known for his *Hadith* collection *Sahih al-Bukhari* which is about the prophet's words, habits and life. He is a famous scholar in the prophetic *Hadith*.

bent on re-imposing, in the name of religion, patriarchal thinking and practices” (Badran, 2010:1). In the case of Samia, reading and interpreting the former Hadith which was reported from the prophet Mohamed centuries ago from a male perspective who worked at the hotel about her as woman was discriminatory in a sense that because she was wearing trousers she probably was labelled as ‘cursed’. The Islamic feminist scholarship is critically engaged against the immutability of human interpretation of religious texts and advocates taking into consideration the context while interpreting. Reading what was reported from the prophet Mohamed taking from the Islamic feminist perspective would not position Samia the same way as the male-dominant immutable exegesis and would ultimately emancipate her and give her justice that would not clash with her personal choice.

The second quote from Samia illustrates how the former experience at the workplace marked her and remains part of her memory even after migration. The experience was used by her as a tool to reflect on her position in the country of settlement. She cherished the host country because it enabled her freely to wear “trousers”. Bringing out the ability to wear trousers in the host implies broadly that her personal choices are respected and not subject to any power or fuelled with any human-made agendas that would label her as *cursed*. She shows preference towards the country which met her personal demands, which for her are about being respected, accepted and listened to, and more importantly being able to be herself, where the societal aspect is not judgmental or dominant over personal freedom and choice. From Samia’s words, the migration’s journey emancipated her to ‘wear trousers’ and provided her with immunity against the patriarchal structure that was hampering and trespassing on her freedom when she was in Algeria. Considering the migration to Britain as emancipatory was shared by many Algerian women in this research. And the emphasis among them in referring to such emancipation was the fact that the interference of conservatism and Islam in their mobility in different spaces was no longer a burden once they migrated to the Western world, even though they identified with Islam as Muslim women, but what they seem to critique is how that religion was wrongly used to justify their inability to be free.

Unlike the migration (even feminist) discourse that reports that women from patriarchal societies migrate within the same patriarchal system and endure a double oppression, first as women, second as a minority in a mainstream society, there are women who approach the settlement country as a liberatory arena that does not stigmatise them based on their femaleness. It should be noticed that it is liberatory journey only from the patriarchy of the country of origin and the power relations between the women and men of that same patriarchal country which

used religion to suppress women's freedom. This means that these women once they migrate might feel safe from the homeland's patriarchy, yet they can endure other types of probably religion-free oppression and power from the mainstream society based on many aspects like: their femaleness, being migrants, being Muslim, being from the global South. Amina Wadud-Muhsin (1989:162) argues that: "the relationship between Muslim women and men in non-Muslim societies is usually better than the relationship between Muslim men and women in Muslim societies". Women who consider the journey of migration as emancipatory because it emancipated them from those who use religion against them as women could identify very well with Wadud's remark. The same statement could be far from being applicable to those women who wear the veil in the host out of their own religious convictions, who could be subject to the non-Muslim gaze. It is those gender relation mechanisms deciphered by women who opposed the patriarchy of the homeland which led to the sense of questioning their compatibility with it, at the same time identifying positively with the host which does not have those particular patriarchal attributes. The more individuals feel that their personal choices do not clash the societal aspects, the higher their sense of attachment.

6.2.3 Espousing being 'Algerian' and 'British': dual identification

Being dual citizens or simultaneously Algerian British citizens is a fact for research participants involved in this research. This section attempts to look at whether Algerian British citizens research participants perceive themselves as holders of a dual identity as Algerian British not in the legal sense, but through subjective self-identification. Many immigrants who self-identify as having dual identity, who simultaneously self-identify with the identity of the homeland and the identity of the country of settlement undergo what is termed identity denial, meaning that for the host they are denied being part of it under the pretence that they are 'too ethnic', and at the same time they are delegitimised by their co-ethnics under the pretence that they are 'too' part of the host (Cárdenas, Fleischmann and Verkuyten 2021 :194-195). This section, thus, attempts to cover how research participants self-identify in the hyphenated identity of Algerian-British and whether they feel that they have a dual identity. Hyphenated identities could reflect individuals' multiple identification and "simultaneous relationships with different places and disrupt notions of essentialized identities" (Emejulu, Konstantoni and Kustatscher, 2018: 480)

In expressing their self-identification with the dual or hyphenated identities as Algerian-British, research participants have shown two ways of self-identifying. The first way was to strongly identify with one only side within the hyphenated identity, yet without fully denigrating the other side. The other way an equal, complementary self-identification with the dual or hyphenated identity.

'Algerian' and/over 'British'

Some research participants when asked on which side of the hyphen they stand, (i.e., whether they self-identify as Algeria or British or both) have expressed a resistance to enmesh the Algerian identity and the British identity because the two identities do not seem to be complementary:

Nacira: I am Algerian and British, but I can't say I am half British half Algerian

Khadija: I feel more Algerian, more Algerian yeh. I am trying my best to be more, stay. I don't want 'being Algerian' goes.

Both research participants do not seem to conflate the simultaneous self-identification as Algerian British as conditional with being simultaneously Algerian British citizens. They seem to self-identify themselves within the hyphen out of the simultaneous legal membership. Though they self-identify themselves differently or unequally within the hyphenated identity, yet they do not seem to completely dis-identify with one component of the dual identity. Therefore, they have a simultaneous self-identification as being Algerian British, yet not equally so. For example, Nacira does not seem to denigrate any identity within the hyphen, yet she simultaneously self-identifies herself as Algerian and British, however making it clear that she cannot identify as half Algerian half British means that for her the two are not complementary or maybe she feels more Algerian or British over British or Algerian, respectively. The second quote clearly demonstrates a simultaneous self-identification, yet not on equal grounds, and adding to this an active stance towards strongly developing a self-identification with one component of the hyphenated identity, in her case, the Algerian identity. Research participants who strongly feel more Algerian than British are most of the time those individuals who seem to not conflate the becoming of citizen equalling developing an attachment with the host and self-identifying with it.

‘Algerian-British’: two-ness

The second category does not only self-identify as Algerian British, but unlike the previous category, self-identifies equally in the hyphenated Algerian-British identity:

1- SB: *“do you feel more British or more Algerian?”*

Salim: I feel exactly the same. I don’t have a silly nationalism.

2- Nadjat: fifty fifty [...] I feel Algerian, and I feel British. I am happy to be bi-national.

Besides being dual citizens, both research participants of this category self-identify as Algerian-British, simultaneously and equally, without any preference to one side of the hyphenated identities. The statement of Salim that he does not have a ‘silly nationalism’ resonates with the duality discussed in this research. Although his statement could be interpreted differently due to the endless discourses and controversies surrounding the term ‘nationalism’, yet one plausible interpretation is that he is aware of the rigid side taking, primordialism and even essentialism which are familiar to discourses of nationalism. However, he seems to challenge this by actually feeling that there is a possibility of having equal self-identification with the component of the hyphenated identities. This as well can challenge the idea that naturalised citizens cannot develop a sense of belonging to the nation, as well it challenges the identity denial minority groups undergo.

As far as the loyalty discourse is concerned, it is precisely this category which self-identifies as equally Algerian British which feels that the issue of loyalty is a crucial matter that needs negotiation and rethinking. However, while trying to explore the issue of loyalty among this category, I relied mostly on their spontaneous perception of loyalty as well as their lived experiences. Some research participants - without asking them - have elaborated the issues of loyalty as dual nationals:

Salim: Both countries I die for.

Samia: If there is a political debate between France and England, me I will support England, me I will always support England however it will be. Even if they are wrong, I will stand for England, I don’t care, that’s me [...] But if there is a debate England and Algeria. I will walk away from the debate [...] within England, I give you an example [...] when Algeria played against England in Brazil, the world cup, my colleagues turned around and some of them were English, some of them aren’t English said: “what are you supporting tonight?”. I looked at them and said: “I am going to Finsbury Park

myself to have coffee or end up having lunch somewhere". I said: "I am not supporting anyone", "why?" they say. I say: "I have three principles. Principles one: I live in England. Principles two: Algeria is my country, if I don't support them, my own sister will not be proud of me. England where I lived, if I don't support them, I am not loyal to what they gave me and what I felt within this country. Therefore, I am not supporting anyone". And I didn't watch the match. I walked away, but they had draw which is good. [...] Even in football, I do have my own way to see things. I cannot support Algeria and let England because I lived 30 years in this country. It's the country which supported me and told me "very welcome" when I needed them. And I cannot not support Algeria because it's the country of my parents and it's also where I am from [...] So it's here where there is a conflict in me if we talk about the life of an immigrant. Even now I keep living it because I need to find the balance.

Both quotes illustrate aspects where dual nationals' dual loyalty and allegiance is put under scrutiny. The two quotes illustrate aspects where the loyalty of citizens towards the state is questioned, "the willingness to go to war and identification with national sport team" (Slade, 2010:9). However, the quotes do not cover mono nationals' loyalty stance, they cover dual nationals', and in both, research participants do not seem to show any exclusive side-taking for any country in case there is a confrontation between the two countries. Being ready to die for a country is closely related to the military sacrifice for one's country. Dual citizenship discourses raise questions about dual citizens' military positions, "for whom does one fight in the event of a military conflict" (Bloemraad, Kortweg and Yurdakul, 2008:169). For Salim, he is ready to sacrifice for both countries, yet it is not known how he would answer/ behave if the Algerian and UK enter to a military confrontation. What could be deduced is that though it is common to die for one's homeland, even as being emigrant, yet, Salim has provided another narrative that even if you are not originally from a particular country, yet you still can sacrifice your life for it, breaking the assumption that accuses dual citizens of being loyal to only the country of origin. The same is true for Samia who unconditionally would be loyal to the host if it stands in confrontation with another country, apart from Algeria. Unlike Salim who gives his stance regarding loyalty theoretically, Samia shares a lived experience where her loyalty was put under scrutiny. We cannot speak of the relation between supporting national sport teams and the loyalty of minorities in the British context without referring to Tebbit test or what is famously known as the 'cricket test'. During an interview in 1990, the British conservative member Norman Tebbit, while being sceptical about the loyalty of British Asians immigrants stated that: "A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It is an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are? I think we have got real problems in that regard". Though

not similar, which football team British dual nationals would support could be somehow close to the passing or failing of the cricket test. What is interesting is that dual nationals' loyalty is seriously put under the spotlight in their everyday life, as happened to Samia when she was asked about which team she supports. She, thus, opted for neutrality and provided explanations for such a stance. One might think that she states that she is neutral because she wanted to save her image in front of the people who asked her. She embraced neutrality because of issues related to loyalty, a vision she truly seems to embrace even when being 'off-spotlight' i.e., when she is not asked about her opinion in front of people. She believes that a series of disappointment will be generated if she takes one side, disappointment not necessarily generated towards her origins or the host, but disappointment she will personally feel about herself. Though she does not seem to fail 'the football version' of the Tebbit test (I would not say she passed it because we do not know whether 'passing' for Norman Tebbit is to support only the British side, or even being neutral could be equal to passing!) but standing neutral for her causes her internal conflict as an immigrant, meaning neutrality does not give relief. Unlike the widespread assumption that the loyalty of dual citizens is a concern to the nation-states, Samia provided another version of that narrative which is that the loyalty is as much a concern of the state as it is a concern of the immigrants which sometimes causes them discomfort, placing emphasis on the interference of emotions and feelings in expressing one's loyalty.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Algerian British research participants make sense of their simultaneity as being parts of two states and how they construct their dual attachment and dual identifications. Exploring their simultaneity regarding their official membership of two states led to discovering that holding two citizenships enabled them to navigate two state systems where they were first able to trace any anomalies generated from a single membership and single state-citizen relationship. As far as simultaneous participation is concerned, relying on data generated from a lived political simultaneity research participant were engaged in during this PhD fieldwork, a simultaneity only legitimised due to their dual official membership, led to discover that Algerian British dual citizens are unproblematically and simultaneously taking part in the decision making of the two states of membership, and their transnational practices are sometimes complementary.

As far as dual attachment is concerned, Algerian British research participants have expressed the possibility of being equally attached to both the homeland and the host unproblematically. The way they expressed their dual attachment was in relation to factors they subjectively identify, like for example labelling one country as the origin and the other not. Others expressed the dual attachment in relation to gender relations characterising any nation, and upon those characteristics the dual attachment was given meaning. As far as the hyphenated identity is concerned, research participants recognised bearing a dual identity. Though their self-identification was approached differently, the difference lying in the degree of identification given to any side of the hyphenated identity, the Algerian and the British.

Conclusion

Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a summary of the PhD research. This research was about how Algerian British first-generation immigrants made sense of their dual belonging as dual citizens/nationals. The issue was explored ethnographically through my immersion with research participants in fieldwork which took place in London. Conducting this research which was located in migration studies, gender and ethnography led to being engaged with literature that helped make sense of the data generated and research participants' constructed meanings. The research deviated from the methodological nationalism which took solely one nation-state as a unique unit of analysis which considered migrants as permanent settlers. Inspired from the transnational framework, this research took into consideration how Algerian British made sense of their belonging to Algeria and maintenance of their ties with it in different contexts like a protest movement and a female space, how they constructed their Britishness as a citizenship and as an identity, as well as their simultaneous and dual participation and attachment to the two countries. In this conclusion, I would like to address the outcome of this ethnographic exploration, where I will firstly address the value of the methodological approach, that of ethnography, which was particularly relevant in conducting the research. Under the title of 'joining the puzzle', I will seek to summarise the findings of this research whose data, fieldwork and interpretation were influenced by the unexpected trajectory of the ethnographic fieldwork. Because the research had an interdisciplinary position, I will contextualise its contribution. I will then speak about the limitations I have faced in completing this research. Future recommendations and personal reflections are also highlighted in this concluding chapter.

Methodology: *the ethnographic approach*

The methodology of this qualitative research was ethnography combined with feminist methodology and ethnography's reflexive turn. Before speaking about the relevance of the methodological choices taken throughout the research, I would like to emphasise that the unexpected trajectories characterising the ethnographic enquiry led to exploring domains which were not part of the PhD's original plans. The exploration of the Algerian protests in London and Algerian social gatherings at a female-only space were not part of my agenda when I initially started fieldwork. They only became so when Algerian British research participants

were part of them as well when my personal responsiveness both to the emergence of the *Hirak* and to the discovery of a female space occupied by Algerian women. I welcomed the possibility of exploring those spaces, mainly since I was given access, as I saw it an opportunity, to understand better how research participants were constructing and living their dual belonging from different angles and contexts in a more naturalistic fashion. The ethnographic approach provided relevant devices which were somehow predestined to serve this research well, mainly through immersion. I acknowledge that it was through the practical procedures deployed, that of moving to live in London, attending on a regular basis protest demonstrations, marches, women's gatherings, accompanying research participants in different places and sharing with them different moments and incidents which enabled me to generate rich and diverse data, build rapport and trust with research participants and the co-construction of knowledge. Backing up the observations with the interviews led to avoiding research participants' misrepresentation as I had the chance to ask and confirm my interpretation with research participants' opinions during interviews.

The immersion led to generating most of the time inductively rich data which made the filtering and making sense of it a laborious and challenging task. However, with the simultaneous process of data collection and analysis which was inspired from the grounded theory approach of analysis, the scope of interest was narrowed down while carrying out the fieldwork. The combination of data collection with analysis enabled me to analyse observational accounts and then go back to the fieldwork to ask research participants how they constructed meaning about them. Agreeing with Denzin (1998: 405) that "in human disciplines, there is only interpretation", I interpreted the data relying on different theories and socio-historical backgrounds. Regarding the interpretation, making sure to provide a "thick description" (Geertz, 1993), justified the analytical and descriptive nature in data dissemination chapters.

Embracing ethnography's reflexive turn along with aspects of feminism methodology resulted in recognising oneself as impactful during the research process. My identity as a 28 year-old (my age now) Algerian Berber female Muslim individual who was in proximity with the population studied challenged any assumption about the fixity of the researcher's role. Throughout fieldwork, I was both an insider and an outsider, categorised as such by research participants. Through making the familiar strange, I intentionally made myself an outsider at times, while at others I was an insider. Thus, my conclusion regarding the discourse of insider-ness and outsider-ness is that these positions are always relative.

I acknowledge that though I sought to inform research participants about my identity as a researcher, throughout fieldwork this identity was blurred. Informed by the feminist methodology, that of breaking hierarchies and deconstructing the perpetuity of the superiority of the researcher vis-à-vis the researched, I explained how I maintained my role as a researcher, but actively attempted to build personal relationships with research participants based on their desires. In doing so, I was driven by the principle of not being exploitative and merely taking without giving back. Reflexively, during fieldwork, I developed an awareness of how my identity put me in a privileged position with research participants who facilitated my access because I was Algerian, and because “gender [...] poses specific concerns, among the most salient of which are the place of body, sexuality and sexual identity among and between researchers and respondents” (Hackney and Warren, 2000: 3), my identity as a female led to construct a gendered fieldwork which ultimately impacted my access to research participants. Thus, the ethnographic fieldwork taught me that knowledge is accessed based on how research participants socially and culturally perceive the researcher, and the research process is a system of personal and social relationships which need negotiation and emotional intelligence alongside the research context’s relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Making sense of the research findings: *joining the puzzle*

The outcome led to designing a PhD thesis that yielded to the flexible approach and the adaptation of the ethnographic fieldwork’s unexpected events. Each empirical chapter was designed to provide one part of the story of how Algerian British make sense of their duality as Algerian British. Therefore, here I seize the chance to join the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together to address the research problem and summarize the research findings. These findings are discussed under three major titles which are about research participants’ Algerianness, Britishness, and their simultaneous membership and attachment.

‘Algerianness’: *London’s Hiraak & Female-only space*

In this conclusion, I use the term ‘Algerianness’ to refer to the sense of belonging and the feeling of being Algerian, as well as research participants’ transnational practices that are directed towards the homeland. In this research, I looked at the Algerian British research participants’ Algerianness via the exploration of what I called London’s *Hiraak* and the Algerian female-only space. Research participants were transnationally engaged in both spaces and

contexts through which they spoke about their sense of belonging to Algeria though they live abroad, and their identity as Algerian external citizens and nationals. I found that Algerian British research participants always acknowledged their Algerian heritage and the legitimate belonging and identification with it though they were abroad, as well as the continuous impact of their lived experiences in Algeria prior to their migration to the UK. All these were lived, expressed, and manifested differently depending on the contexts and individuals themselves.

The exploration of London's *Hirak* led to link the objectives of the research to include input from moments of agitation, migrants' activism and mobilisation. The *Hirak* of Algerians in the UK led to constructing insights about an Algerian British sense of belonging to Algeria. The mobilisation was for and about Algeria, and it was identified by Algerian British activists as an extension to the Algerian internal *Hirak* which was launched originally on the 22 February 2019. I explained the role of media in fuelling the activism of Algerians in the diaspora which not only made them aware of what was going on in Algeria, but also allowed them to be analytical and visionary to a possible mobilisation from the Algerians in Algeria. Findings indicated that media created a bridge between them and Algeria, leading them ultimately to take action and mobilise by extending the internal affair and creating transnational agency. To illustrate that London's *Hirak* was an extension of the Algerian internal *Hirak*, I traced three main matching criteria between the two movements. These were the fact that both were chronologically in parallel in relation to, for example, having the same number of the protests undertaken (which was disrupted because of the outbreak of the global pandemic), the legitimate joining of the *Hirak* movement because of having a shared understanding and identity with fellow-nationals in Algeria regardless of the spatial dislocation, as well as sharing the same demand targeting the Algerian state and showing accountability to it like any other Algerian citizen. Critically, recognising London's *Hirak* as an extension did not mean that the internal movement and its extension could be studied within the same framework, and this is simply because the difference between the two is in relation to the recognition of the activists of London's *Hirak* about their roles as agents living outside Algeria. Being immersed with research participants while protesting and marching led to finding that their activism was structured with both a tangible and intangible resource mobilisation. Thus, the research found out that London's *Hirak* was an extension to the internal movement, yet possessed its own position and structure.

Besides finding that Algerian British research participants' acknowledgement of the agency they could play transnationally in the story of the *Hirak* though they were abroad, they also

seized the opportunity of their activism to insist on their role as nationalists who were faithful to the Algerian nation. Technically, they were acting as long-distance nationalists who interfered from a distance in a national matter. It was argued that migrants' "long-distance processes tend to involve political actors who are acting from a safe distance and, who therefore, do not put their safety at risk, while being eager to promote risk strategies in their homeland" (Conversi, 2011: 1359). However, data clarified that their long-distance nationalism was benign and would not harm the stability of Algeria in the way described by Conversi. It was found that the perception of the Algerian British of their activism was far from creating any instabilities in Algeria, simply because their activism was an extension, and if the internal movement ended, theirs would end as well.

Benign long-distance nationalism was found in the meaning research participants gave to their mobilisation; meanings constructed subjectively by referring to their status as emigrants who left Algeria. In fact, it was found that the *Hirak* movement led to reviving what was buried and silenced, and provided an opportunity to speak out of their experiences prior to their migration, though the movement was a political, anti-regime and citizenship movement. It was found that research participants' initiative to mobilise in London's *Hirak* was to give an external voice to their mono-national fellow Algerians whose sufferings were familiar to them, as well as being a bridge of knowledge and emotional support. Acknowledging their privileged situation as being outside Algeria mainly as part of the political community of the British state, some research participants justified their mobilisation by their plans to return to Algeria which neither looks like the Algeria they left, nor Algeria of the *Hirak* era. Therefore, they actively took part in a movement they thought would create a new Algeria they might wish to return to in the future. As far as the Algerian identity is concerned and from the constructed meanings about research participants' activism, it was found that their activism was also about speaking of the marginalisation they had undergone in Algeria when the Algerian identity was being charted, which excluded their minority identity such as the Berber identity. Speaking about the national identity issue at London's *Hirak* demonstrated long-distance nationalism from another angle.

Being able to ethnographically explore London's *Hirak* which was an extension of the internal *Hirak* was not solely useful to investigate the transnational political activism of the population under study. The exploration was also useful because of the effortless identity manifestation and the manifestation of an effervescent sense of belonging in a non-ordinary circumstance (social movement). I also attempted to join the puzzle of what non-ordinariness could tell us

about research participants' Algerianness by unpacking what ordinary circumstances could inform us. And here I am referring to the female-only space. I considered the outcome of the investigation of London's *Hirak* as complementary to the investigation of the Algerian female-only space for three main reasons: women's position in migration studies, the position of the Algerian women migrants in the benign long-distance nationalist agenda, and the method I used to explore non-ordinary and ordinary lived moments by the population under study to richly capture their 'Algerianness'.

Before summarising what the female-only space could tell us about 'Algerianness', I would like briefly to develop those three reasons. Inspired by the transnational feminism and feminism critique of the androcentric theorising of diaspora and migration where gender in migration is marginalised (Parreñas, 2009: 2), I tried to deviate from considering women migrants as a homogeneous category whose experiences are identical to those of Algerian male migrants. Doing so turned out to be a useful idea because it was found out that the efforts of the Algerian British to join the long-distance nationalism were limited by the relative perpetuation of patriarchal structures which limited Algerian women's mobility in political and anti-regime movements in migratory and diasporic conditions. Their mobilisation though not directly resisted, was considered as unsafe under the conception of femininity idealism, leaving little space for women migrants in transnational anti-regime movements.

The exploration of the Algerian female-only space, which was undertaken after making the familiar strange, led to the capture of how British Algerian women made sense of their Algerian belonging and identity in a female-only space, which was characterised by ordinariness. Making social gatherings spontaneous was part of women's agenda where they freely moved in their space. Female spaces "are created as response to social or even religious requirements" (Abbas and Heur, 2014: 1271), and this somehow justified the creation of the Algerian female-only space by Algerian British research participants. In addition to that, the outcome of being immersed at that space led to realising that the creation of an Algerian female-only space was a result of the women's status as Algerian women who were Muslim migrants to the Global North. The existence of the Algerian female space was a response to the incompatibilities Algerian women identified with mainstream ways, for example, in the leisure life and managing mental health issues. Therefore, women via the activities and the meaning they gave to their social gatherings at the female-only space they shared with the daughters of their country, led to finding that they were intentionally and unintentionally deconstructing hegemonic ways by giving their own version of women's life as migrants in their own ways,

borrowing from the heritage they carried with them from Algeria, either culture, religion or their roles as women in preserving the ideals of the nation. In terms of Algerian belonging, women labelled imaginatively their space as 'Algeria' because it both reminded them of their country and the memories of their lives there. There seemed to be an intentional occupation within that space to keep imagining it like Algeria, by spatially and temporally 'nostalgising' what had been left behind in Algeria, from scheduling regularly the gatherings with the daughters of their country to cooking food that reminded them of Algeria.

As far as the relationship between nationalism and women is concerned, the exploration of Algerian female-only space led to finding that women were continuing to bear their duties as carriers of the culture and guardians of the nation. These duties could be inescapable even if they migrated to other countries, as women from conservative societies mostly migrate within the same gender relations framework characterising the homeland. But the outcome about Algerian women's nationalism in the female-only space demonstrated that women were still maintaining their roles as the custodian of Algeria through embracing authenticity; for example, in the culinary practice, or making sure to make inter-generational transfers from mothers to children. However, what differentiated those duties which were manifested at the female-only space from other spaces was that women were having agency over the designed mission made for them because of the deterministic biology or femaleness. In other words, they were embracing their status as the custodian of the nation out of conviction, sometimes as a response to the incompatibilities they faced with the mainstream ways. Female space was a space which captured how women migrants deconstructed the double power structure practices on them outside the Algerian female-only space as being women from Algerian backgrounds who felt the perpetuation of the homelands' patriarchal structure on the one hand, and the marginalisation and patronisation they might encounter as Algerian Muslim women from the Global South who had migrated to the Global North on the other hand.

In sum, the sense of belonging to Algeria and identification with it was unpacked using diverse materials depending on the context, be it at moment of activism or mundane social gatherings. In both moments, there was a strong sense of identification to Algeria both as external citizens or nationals as well as a strong sense of attachment and belonging which was not denigrated because of the spatial dislocation. Quite the contrary, research participants showed the ability to extend internal affairs outside and imagining that they were in Algeria without crossing territorial borders.

‘Britishness’

Informed by the transnational framework which recognises the tie maintenance of dual nationals to the states of membership, and because this research looked at the meaning to Algerian British dual nationals of their dual belonging and affiliation, I explored the meaning they gave to their Britishness. Findings focused on tracing their journey of becoming British citizens and the meaning they gave to the UK’s naturalisation process and evaluating whether being British citizens meant developing a sense of belonging and identification with the host nation. Because of the ‘nationalist’ dimension of the UK citizenship, the findings highlighted the relation between the fact of being a citizen and the subjective identification with the host nation.

The outcome of exploring how Algerian British research participants made sense of ‘becoming’ citizens led to find that they looked upon naturalisation as a process which guaranteed entitlements to successful applicants. Thus, upon naturalisation the interest was more towards the ability to access scarce resources. However, I clarified that it was only the naturalisation step, which was seen from the accessibility it provides, meaning that the perception of being citizens and the sense of belonging to the host nation were still to be investigated.

The thesis shared how Algerian research participants made sense of the British citizenship in the light of the active citizenship discourse which encourages citizens to be actively participating in the state civic debates and being engaged in the matters of the polity. The meaning given to holding British citizenship was multifarious among research participants who did not solely look at it from the active citizenship dimension. It was given meaning from three levels. There were those who looked at it from its privilege dimension inside the British state, globally and those who constructed it from the angle of the active citizenship discourse, yet pragmatically. Speaking of the privilege dimension of British citizenship inside the state, research participants analysed their official membership of the host country as a source of privilege because of its inclusionary aspect that did not denigrate their Algerian nationality or their religion. However, some research participants showed an awareness of the exclusionary aspect of the citizenship within its inclusionary dimension in their daily lives mainly since they were not originally citizens. On a global scale, some research participants looked at citizenship from its ability to enable free mobility. This led to generating a conclusion that the British citizenship is a premium citizenship which improved the limited global access the Algerian

citizenship provides. Though seeing the British citizenship from its global dimension could upset the nationalist discourse and give reasons to reduce the access to dual citizenship, yet the existence of strong and weak citizenships implies that the world order is governed by an existing global inequality and hierarchy. Feeling the privilege dimensions of citizenship inside the state or globally, some research participants resisted the proposition that the privilege of the British citizenship was a favour, they instead perceived it under the framework of deservedness, meaning that they were engaged in a win-win partnership with the British state, where each is doing a favour for the other.

Because it is known that citizens are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging to the host nation, I explored to what extent being British means feeling attached subjectively to the British nation. Investigating the sense of belonging and attachment of migrants was by leaning on the ‘fact of being citizens’ as a reference point through which I explored the sense of belonging and attachment of research participants in the host nation. Findings indicated that being officially citizens had nothing to do with the subjective identification and sense of belonging. That is, the politics of belonging did not influence the belonging per se. Therefore, research participants provided different narratives about how they were attached to the host as citizens and their integration. All in all, it was not the implementation of the national identity which was decisive in their sense of belonging and attachment to the host. These were developed dynamically by relying on historical records of colonialism and neo-colonialism, the extent the values of the host might or might not be subjectively and individually assessed by research participants as compatible or incompatible with the values of the origins (culture and religion), and upon those assessments they deployed set of negotiation mechanism in order ‘to survive’ socially and culturally in the host nation.

‘Dual’ and ‘Simultaneous’: *participation and attachment*

This PhD explored Algerian British research participants’ duality and simultaneity as dual citizens and nationals, officially and subjectively, or in other words, the enmeshment of their ‘Algerianness’ and ‘Britishness’. I did so by exploring how they made sense of their simultaneous political membership and participation, and also how they subjectively defined their dual attachment to both the two nations of which they are officially members, and how they self-identified themselves in the Algerian-British hyphenated identity.

Exploring how research participants made sense of their simultaneous membership of and relation with the two states of membership led to finding that Algerian British dual citizenship caused them to navigate the two states' systems legally through which they would identify their position as citizens from one state to another. Findings indicated that Algerian British research participants identified positively with their relationship with the British state as citizens compared to their relationship with the Algerian state either as citizens before they migrated or as external citizens. Their participation in the citizenship movement or London's *Hirak* expressed the dissatisfaction generated from their relationship with the Algerian state. Another relevant point this research arrived at is that they were still claiming their rights from the Algerian state though they do not live inside its territory, and they were as well demanding their rights from the British state though they have not always been citizens.

To further unpack how they perceived their simultaneous relationship with the two states of membership, this research tackled research participants' simultaneous political participation as citizens. I relied on a 'lived' simultaneity I witnessed when I was doing fieldwork, illustrated in seizing the opportunity of the coincidence of having the British general election on the same day as the Algerian Presidential Election, where both took place on the 12th December 2019. I investigated how Algerian British dual nationals who were eligible to take part in those elections made sense of their simultaneous participation. Findings indicated that the simultaneous participation in the decision making of both states was taking place among Algerian British dual citizens of this research, though with different degrees. Voting took place unproblematically and without any sense of antagonism or negotiations. When they were voting for the UK elections, they did not approach it as denigrating to their participation in the decision making of Algeria. And their high participation embodied in being transnationally active in re-territorialising an internal affair in the host did not prevent them from defending their interest in the UK state. I have argued that one reason for their unproblematic simultaneous participation was that when they expressed their involvement in one state of membership, they did not relate it to the other membership. Although this research has provided an optimistic side of the dual citizenship that allowed dual citizens to enjoy privileges and the rights to defend their interests, yet exploring the driving motives for dual citizens' simultaneous political engagement led to the finding that dual citizenship in this context was about protection, yet a temporary protection because it was a precarious status which could render dual citizens to become mono citizens based on the state's will. The data suggested how particularly the Algerian and the British nationality laws were showing ambivalence when the

research was taking place. And for the time being and under both the *current* Algerian and the British Nationality Laws, Algerian British dual citizens could be at risk of losing British citizenship.

The sense of belonging to the two nations of membership was constructed differently. But assessing the dual sense of belonging and attachment among Algerian British dual nationals led to finding that they have developed unproblematically an equal sense of emotional attachment towards both Algeria and the host nation. The attachment to Algeria was unconditional and has never undergone negotiation, whereas the attachment to the host was created conditionally because it made it up for the country of origin. Other societal aspects and gender relations which characterised both the homeland and the country of settlement were as well decisive in constructing the sense of belonging, mainly for women. The unproblematic equal attachment of the two nations was developed to an equal sense of identification in the hyphenated identity they constructed, by either being dual citizens or subjectively being holder of a dual identity, that of Algerian-British. Algerian British participants acknowledged having a hyphenated identity, yet the degree of identification was different. Some admitted having a hyphenated identity, yet they mostly identified with the Algerian identity more than the British, and others expressed that they have a sense of two-ness to the hyphenated, i.e., they self-identify as Algerian and British, simultaneously, which was leading them to struggle to define to whom they were loyal.

Contribution, transferability, and the limitation of the ethnographic fieldwork

In this section, I will discuss the contribution of conducting this ethnographic research, the transferability of its findings, as well as the limitations of the ethnographic fieldwork.

Contribution and transferability

Speaking of the contribution of the PhD, this research has what I refer to as contextual implication. By this I mean that it provided insights about the immigration of Algerians in the UK, a context which remains understudied. Many studies have focused on the migratory flow of Algerians to France (Meynier et Meynier, 2011; Sayad 1999), justifiably due to the status of this immigration and the colonial history between Algeria and France (Cohen, 2017: 30). These research findings indicated that “Algerians make up one of France’s largest ethnic groups” (Lyons, 2014: 126), and because of the colonial history, many (naturalised French) found French identity “out of reach [and] [t]he experience of this population proves that the symbolic

boundaries around the French identity are not malleable” (Beaman, 2017: 82). This PhD provided a different migratory context of Algerians and immigration of Algerians to destinations other than the ex-metropole and sought to explore the Britishness of Algerians as a citizenship and identity. This PhD added to the existing studies of Algerian immigrants to the UK which were mainly conducted within a refugee framework, which was justifiably due to the type of the Algerian immigration to the UK per se which emerged mainly from the 1990s. This research moved beyond the existing approaches to studying the Algerian immigration to the UK and explored the transnational border crossing of Algerian British as Algerian external citizens and naturalised British, through which it was found that though they were naturalised and were able to return to Algeria, yet they provided narratives regarding the persistence of the forced migration and refugee memories in shaping their experience even as dual nationals.

An important contribution of the thesis is related to spatiality and its intersection with gender and migration. This research studied women’s spatiality and ethnographically explored a female space in migratory contexts and provided insights about the lived experiences of Algerian British women through exploring their spatiality. It turned out to be that the patriarchal positioning of the Algerian women and the vision of the social conservatism as well as the Algerian vision of nationhood which positions women as its guardian, upon migration women do not only need to negotiate these factors, but as well negotiating the social and cultural incompatibilities of the new setting, leading them to create spaces which are of agency and resistance.

Speaking of the findings’ limitations and their transferability, the thesis demonstrated a possible transferability of its findings, and at the same time some limitation. The ethnographic nature of the study could be transferable to other contexts. A thick description which provided detailed focus on the social and cultural backgrounds of research participants, as well as the detailed account of the inclusionary and exclusionary strategies of the recruitment criteria could facilitate the assessment of the findings’ transferability.

This research found that Algerian British dual nationals have challenged the idea that loyalty, political and emotional involvement belong to one nation state. It also found that participants challenged the essentialised idea of ‘home’ and ‘return’ as permanent constructs where there is only one home dislocated individuals ‘naturally’ will return to. These findings could be transferable to other populations who were displaced from their country of origins because of

internal conflicts, and who were able to acquire the citizenship of the receiving country (for example the Syrian born refugees naturalised Turkish who went to Turkey). Knowing that upon becoming dual nationals and able to return to their homes because of the fully or partial end of internal conflicts in their countries of origins, yet they shifted their situations from mono-national refugees to transnational agents able to navigate simultaneously two states of membership and rendering the idea of home and return as fluid and mutable constructs, both temporally and spatially.

Limitations: transferability and overcoming the ethnographic fieldwork's shortcomings

Conducting this research was full of challenges which normally characterise an ethnographic inquiry. The challenges I faced were mainly when I was exploring the Algerian protests in London. Nilan (2002: 380) argues that “often difficult and dangerous fieldwork is worth the experience because of the highly politically potent nature of the data, which is almost impossible to collect by any other mean”. The exploration of those protests was useful in this research, yet it was demanding in term of building trust with the population under study and this is because of the political nature of the setting. As with any ethnographer who has conducted research at protests, “the most threatening to the management of relation with respondents was [...] political position” (Pilkington, 2016: 26). My presence at the protests was subject to scrutiny as I underwent many times a type of ‘identity check’ where I was asked who I was and whether I was a journalist, mainly by the protests’ organisers (who were not my research participants). Therefore, I always made sure to carry my student ID and gave details of who I was and what my research was about.

Another research issue I encountered was the outbreak of the global pandemic which paralysed the generation of more data through making observations and face-to-face interviews. Because ethnographic fieldwork was in a form of popular and social gatherings, the social distancing measures altered all types of data collection. This led me to find alternative methods of contacting research participants which were through online platforms.

Speaking of the findings’ limitations, I have previously mentioned that transferability of the findings to other contexts, where the assessment of that transferability could be facilitated by the thick description. The in-depth exploration of the Algerian *Hirak* and the Algerian female space took place when I seized the opportunity for fieldwork because of the *Hirak* in London and I encountered the chance to be part of an Algerian female-space. This research opportunity reveals its possible limitation as the findings were generated from the special focus given to what was happening inside London’s *Hirak* and the Algerian female only space.

In other words, exploring the two spaces led me to discover a high sense of belonging to Algeria and identification with the Algerian national and cultural identity. These were contextual in the way that Algerian British dual nationals who were involved in this research expressed their Algerianness shaped by the nature of two spaces, which means that exploring the same group beyond the two spaces or the same group outside those spaces, would generate other findings regarding the sense of belonging.

Future research recommendation

For future research it would be valuable to explore the dual citizenship and sense of national belonging of Algerian British, especially those who were involved in the *Hirak* movement to assess their post-*Hirak* identity construction as dual nationals, as well as to assess whether the sense of belonging is static or fluid shaped by temporal aspects and incidents (like the unexpected outbreak of the *Hirak* which was extended to outside Algeria).

Other future areas of research could explore from a political perspective the involvement of the Algerian diaspora in Algeria, mainly during the *Hirak* period, through an engagement with the literature that traces the history of the Algerian politics and the genesis of the *Hirak* (Benharrats, 2021; Willis, 2022). Political activism in the *Hirak* of the Algerian diaspora is relatively a recent phenomenon, this could be relevant for researchers in the field of migration as well as social movements. Future research needs to further explore the activism of the Algerian diaspora using the transnational social movement framework employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach, by making comparative studies between the activism of Algerians in different countries, for example between the *Hirak* undertaken by Algerians in France and London. This could either be conducted from migration and transnational frameworks or social movement theory. Making comparative studies across local and transnational social movements is as well an angle worth exploring, for example between Algeria's *Hirak* and the diaspora's *Hirak*. Another possible research could explore the de-territorialisation of democratic transition movements in the MENA regions to the diaspora.

The global pandemic of Covid-19 paralysed the activism of Algerians in London in public spaces. Yet the activism was mobilised on online platforms, therefore, further research can explore the transnational activism in online and virtual platforms. Future research could as well explore thoroughly the relationship between gender and transnational movements.

Personal reflexions

This PhD revolutionised me, both at the personal and intellectual level. Despite the physical, psychological, and emotional challenges I faced in my fieldwork, my thirst to know more about my research participants always kept me up. It is because I embraced the conviction that the choice of the PhD subject and topic matched my personal preference and personality. In other words, the academic curiosity and the desire to meet PhD objectives ‘added up’ with my personal curiosity. I was always answering my Algerian, mainly female, PhD colleagues who were thinking that I was taking the ethnographic fieldwork so seriously by being immersed with research participants all the time that the former conviction kept me resilient during fieldwork. I simply enjoyed it!

Speaking of what I learned in this PhD at the personal level, research participants of this research have opened my eyes to appreciate Algeria. Thanks to them for teaching me to recognise the values of one’s country which are sometimes taken for granted by individuals who live inside its territory.

At the academic and intellectual level, if I would describe the PhD journey in one expression, it would be that it is ‘a metamorphous learning journey’, a very classic expression, yet the PhD journey, mainly the one conducted ethnographically about individuals’ transnationality enabled me to digest a huge amount of information and knowledge in a designated period of time. Most importantly, the PhD made me embrace the idea that I can learn anything, because simply everything is learned, not innately known.

One of the challenges I faced during my PhD was the deviation from the original plans and embarking on fields which were not part of my original agendas. It took me a year to turn the perception of such deviation from challenging to perceive is as ‘a strength’. Here I am referring to the exploration of London’s *Hirak* and ‘Algerian female-space’. I knew that I could change my mind and stick to the original plans, but I was convinced that as long as I was looking at how Algerian British individuals make meaning of their dual national belonging, the exploration would provide an insight of that meaning from the perspective of the population studied.

Finally, the Quranic verse of: “and ye are given but a little knowledge thereof” (verse 85, Surah Al-Isra), remains my ‘philosophical’ motto through which I conclude that the interpretations of this research *are* just an interpretation.

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Annex. Research participants short biographies

- Farid is an Algerian-born naturalised British male. He is aged between 50 and 60. He migrated to the UK in the 90s. I met him at the London's *Hirak* where he was introduced to me by Mustapha. He is a speechmaker whose speech is mainly in Kabyle language.
- Hamid is an Algerian-born naturalised British male journalist. He is aged between 50 and 60. He migrated to the UK in the 80s as a student. He was introduced to me by a French Algerian woman at London's *Hirak*. He is a speechmaker at London's *Hirak*.
- Aymen is an Algerian-born naturalised British male through naturalisation. He is aged between 40 and 50. He migrated to the UK in the 90s. I met him at London's *Hirak* through other individuals. Aymen is part of the organising team at the protest demonstrations.
- Amina is an Algerian-born naturalised British female. She is aged between 40 and 50. She migrated in the early 2000s. I met her at London's *Hirak* and interacted with her in a group meeting with other Algerian protesters in London. Amina was observed attending on regular basis London's *Hirak* by the end of 2019.
- Mustapha is an Algerian-born naturalised-British male participant. He is 59 years old. He migrated to the UK in the late 80s. I met him at London's *Hirak*. Mustapha attended London's *Hirak* on regular basis as a protester and was observed interacting on group with other protesters after the end of the protest demonstrations.
- Hamza is an Algerian-born naturalised British male participant. He is aged between 60 and 70. He migrated to the UK in the 70s. I met him at a police station where we both had paperwork to sort out. Before retiring, Hamza was a teacher in Algeria and arriving to the UK, he became a wholesaler.
- Mahmoud is an Algerian-born naturalised British male individual. He is aged between 50 and 60. He left Algeria in the early 90s. He was a teacher of English language and continued teaching in the UK. I firstly knew him through Facebook after sending him a message asking him whether he could be part of my research. Mahmoud was also a speechmaker at London's *Hirak*.

- Salim is an Algerian-born naturalised British male individual. He is aged between 50 and 60. He left Algeria in the early 90s. He migrated to the UK on a student visa. He is worker in Transport for London. I firstly knew him through Facebook after I contacted him asking him whether he could be part of my research. We then met in different public places in London for interviews.
- Asya is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 40 and 45. She left Algeria in the early 2000s. Asya works as a freelancer in journalism and projects managements. I met her at a funeral of Algerian person's wife. Asya was observed taking part of the organising team at London's *Hirak*, as well as a participant at Algerian female only gatherings explored in the research.
- Zahra is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 70 and 80. She left Algeria in the late 70s. I met her at London's *Hirak* where she was among the protesters attending the protests on regular basis.
- Khadija is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 30 and 40. She left Algeria and migrated to the UK joining her Algerian-born naturalised British husband. I have been introduced to her by another research participants. Khadija is teacher of Arabic.
- Nadjat is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She in aged between 60 and 70. She left Algeria in mid-90s and migrated to the UK as a refugee. She worked as babysitter for many years before retiring. I met her at London's Gatwick airport and asked her if she could be part of my research.
- Fadila is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 40 and 50. She migrated to the UK in the early 2000s, joining her Algerian husband. She is a mother, housewife, and a seamstress. I met Fadila at the Algerian female only gatherings where she is an active member of those gatherings.
- Yamina is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 50 and 60. She left Algeria in the late 80s. I met het at the Algerian female only gatherings she regularly attends.

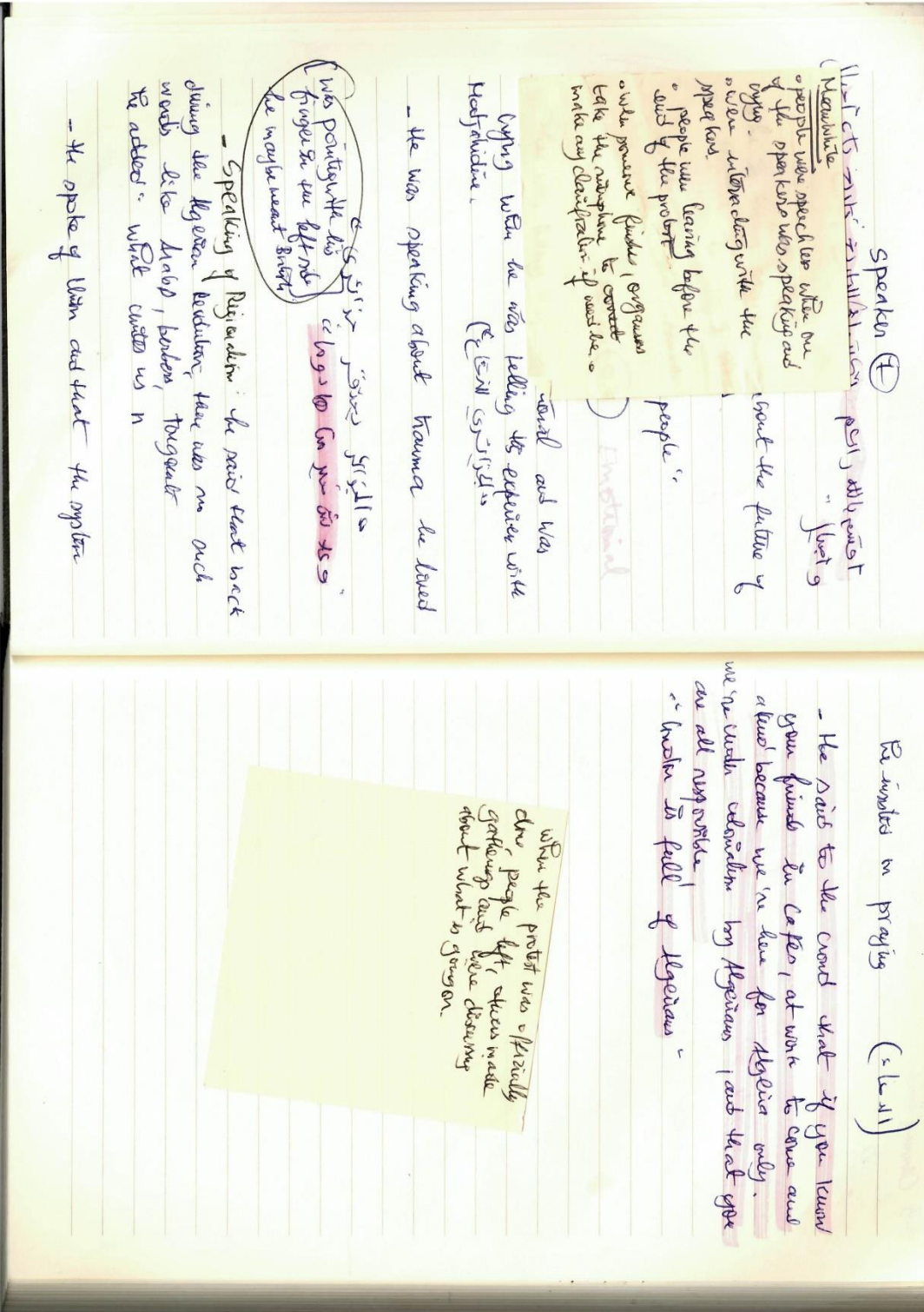
- Karima is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 50 and 60. she left Algeria in the mid-90s. she is a freelance cook. I met her at the Algerian female only gathering through Asya.
- Nacira is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 40 and 50. She left Algeria in the early 2000s. I met her at the Algerian protests in London, while she was among protesters who attended on regular basis.
- Samia is an Algerian-born naturalised British female individual. She is aged between 50 and 60. She left Algeria in the early 90s. She is a worker in the TfL. I was introduced to Samia through Mahmoud. She was among the protesters who attended London's *Hirak*.
- Mourad is an Algerian-born naturalised British male individual. He is aged between 50 and 60. He left Algeria in the early 90s. He was introduced to me by a protest organiser at London's *Hirak* where he was known there for delivering speeches.

Appendices

Appendix 1. The Berber Flag



Appendix 2. extracts from field diary



- did being Algerian impact your integration in the new country?

Politics:

- What about the vote?
- Politics of Algeria?

The identity in the community of the Algerian women

- What does this gathering mean to you?
- How is your experience as a woman?
- How do you view and how you became?

Reflection

It takes long the hub because a price to spare to know each family. Very much

Reflection towards attending the gathering of the Algerian ladies every Thursday
Reflection + personal reflection.

• I kind all the same

me as well. I feel the warmth of certain ladies there. They takes of me and drink, they give me food and they take to come to their houses
• I really go love giving there. All of them have got their own temper and personal

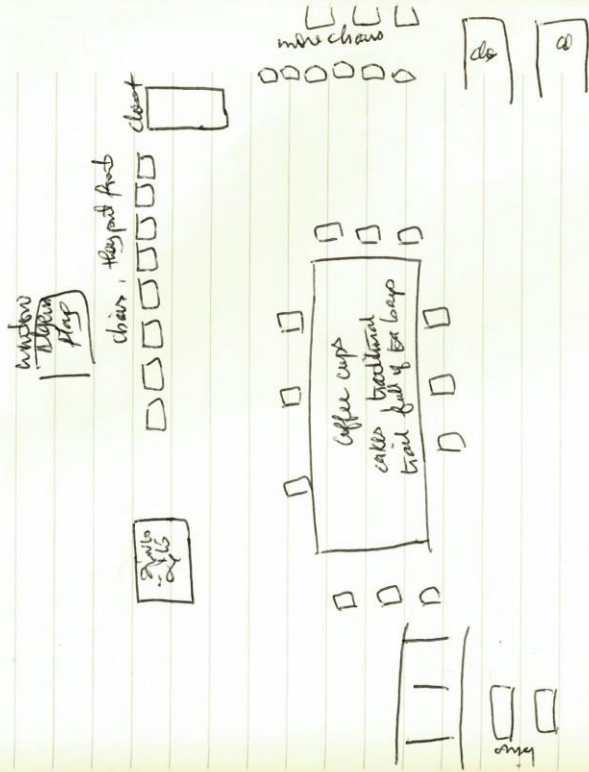
• They are very spontaneous, very spontaneous
• They are like any woman in Algeria
• I cannot see any difference.

• I feel that it's the space where they want to have feel that they live in Algeria.

Canning town Star Lane

- what can you say about you belonging to Algeria
- British? what does it mean to you
- do you feel more Algerian or British?
- vote

November 20/9



- a lot of paintings are damaged in walls door
- names in Arabic, the name of their children
- they name, they drive the kitchen
- water in the restaurant and hospital (wall equipped with what they need)
- they drive and say a wall.
- they all (not all) put the veil, nail with plates, pants, etc.

Appendix 3. Interview Questions' sample

Because of the ethnographic nature of the research and the interest in exploring different sites and contexts, the interview questions were asked according to those contexts. Also, the following interview questions were not rigidly prepared and followed, because most of the interviews were informal and conversational generated around spontaneous questions asked to research participants.

The following sample of interview questions is divided according to the sites and contexts of exploration.

Interview questions conducted at London's *Hirak*

- What makes you attend London's *Hirak* every Saturday?
- What could benefit you from Algerian's *Hirak* or London's *Hirak* agendas as someone who lives outside Algeria?
- Do you think your participation in impactful for Algeria?
- How comes you are taking part in a movement about Algeria, yet you do not live there?

Interview questions conducted at an Algerian Female-Only space

- What makes you attend that women's gathering every Thursday?
- Does your attendance have a relation with the fact that you are an Algerian woman immigrant?
- How can this space link you with Algeria?

Interview question about Britishness

- When did you acquire the British citizenship?
- What does the British citizenship mean to you?
- Does being British mean that you feel part of the British society?

Interview questions about the dual citizenship and belonging

- What does it mean to you to be a dual national?
- Do you participate in the political life of the two countries where you are considered as a citizen?
- Do you feel part of Algeria or Britain?

Appendix 4. Interview coding

Selecto, the soft drink every day, buying meat from the Algerian. There is a Halal butchery of an Algerian, I have never been to there (...) why I do that ? why? there are Halal, there are Halal butchery everywhere, they are Lebanese, Pakistanis. The multicultural is this. The wealth of the multicultural is here. The communitarianism could be a danger because it restrains you from knowing others. They block you to know others and me, I am against this. I lie if I say yes, I never buy meat from the Algerian. It's not because I am against the Algerians (...) I adore my Algerian compatriots. When we meet with friends, we joke about everything. We talk about everything. We talk about everything and nothing. That's true. But I talk (...) I can add a plus. We are Algerians, we are not communitarians. We don't have the sense of the communautarisme, we have never grown up with this. Even in France (...) that's true, we can create a neighborhood (...). I think we are Amazigh; we are free men. We have freedom within us. We don't accept to be obliged to do things. Me, I speak about myself, that's my experience. I shop from Tesco, as I shop from Island, as I shop from Waitrose as I shop from Mark and Spencer. I don't have a particular. I love this freedom of choosing. In this I tell you the truth, I work on a lot on it, I enjoy. And I like to go to Morocco, I adore the Moroccans (...) I adore the Tunisians, I like when I go to my country, I adore the Algerians, and I like moving. This country made me grow a lot, though I grew up. The best thing you can have in this country is to be tolerant. The tolerance is the balance of the life, it moves you forward, it opens doors for you, it opens your eyes.

Commented [n1]: the definition of communautarisme

Commented [n2]: multiculturalism

Commented [n3]: the danger of communautarisme

Commented [n4]: against communautarisme

Commented [n5]: meeting the compatriots

Commented [n6]: Algerians and communautarisme

Commented [n7]: « us » and identity

Commented [n8]: « us » and freedom

Commented [n9]: Freedom of choice

Commented [n10]: the host and tolerance

you acquire tolerance here?

I brought it from my country. I brought with me. I was tolerant. Being tolerant is what? what is to be tolerant? is something you learn from childhood. as the English say, the English flag, live and let people live. live and let people live. everyone with his respect, everyone with his value. that's it (...) the society. I see the balance starts from the family. it's the family unit: how the brother values his sister (...) the older values the little (...) the children value the father (...). The fundamental starts there. If we don't grow up with that fundamental, your life is meaningless, you live lost. As the proverb says, the person lives stupid (...). The tolerance, I learned it in our house, I saw how my father values my mother, my elder brother how he values my sister, my older sister how she values my little brother. we say only good words to each other, we talk with kindness, we talk a lot about good things. I have my children (...) we debate

Commented [n11]: Tolerance and Algeria

Commented [n12]: the role of family

Commented [n13]: family and tolerance

Appendix 5. participant information sheet

Research Title

Negotiating Dual National Belonging: A Qualitative study on British-Algerian Immigrants and their Descendants in the UK.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by *Siham BENZAI*.

Background

The research is about the studies of diaspora and national belonging. It aims at investigating how British-Algerian are coping with the fact that they are both citizens of Britain and Algeria and how this affects their identity formation and how the population studied perceives their national belonging. The research also attempts at gathering data from the population concerned through interviews and observation.

What will you be required to do?

- The participants in this research are required to be British-Algerian and a young adult male or female age 18 and above.
- The researcher will ask questions in relation to the participants' belonging. How they perceive the fact that they are part of two nations and to whom their national loyalty of owed? To Britain or Algeria? How they are constructing their identities in relation to their dual national belonging?
- The researcher is expected to take video and participants of participants to see how they are behaving when they are protesting against the political regime of their nation.

To participate in this research, you must be:

- **British-Algerian.**
- **Adult or young adult individual.**

Procedures

Participants will take part in interviews and will be asked questions and expected to respond and provide any information they think that it answers the questions. This procedure will be done in public or private place where both the researcher and the participants agree about.

With the consent of the participants, Videos, photos and audio recording will also be taken to be used in the analysis of the data.

Feedback

The feedback will be during the interview as the conversational interviews will be conducted.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

On the legal basis of consent all data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored. Research participants will be anonymized, and any personal data will be used for PhD Research and peer reviewed articles. Data can only be accessed by my supervisors and will be included in the completed PhD and will be read by the examiners.

After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous and held for a period of 3 years and then they will be destroyed.

Dissemination of results

The result of the research will be published in a peer reviewed academic journal. PhD or MA will be published on the CCCU library.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to (i) withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason, (ii) request to see all your personal data held in association with this project, (iii) request that the processing of your personal data is restricted, (iv) request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

Process for withdrawing consent

You are free to withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason. To do this *participants will inform me by phone or email.*

Any questions?

Please contact: Benzai Siham

at email s.benzai1291@canterbury.ac.uk or **phone** 07737249780

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Appendix 6. Sign about the first anniversary of the *Hirak* (picture taken by me)



Appendix 7. Slogan map (picture taken by me)



Appendix 8. The routine of London's *Hirak*

After one-year of physical immersion at London's *Hirak*, I could generate through observation how the latter is conducted. From the data generated, I realised that the consistency of London's *Hirak* which was nested from the fact that it is an extension to the internal *Hirak*, led to the creation of a series of routines which came to characterise the *Hirak* of London. I would like to summarise these routines from prior to the official start of protest demonstrations, the official start of the protest, and the end of the protest.

To record what happens *prior to the official start of the protest*, I used to come a few minutes early before the arrival of the protesters. As mentioned previously, London's *Hirak* is a form of protests demonstrations and marches undertaken regularly until the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic on regular basis every Saturday. The individuals involved in these series of assembly start coming to the main location of the protest, which is on the right side of the main door of the Algerian Embassy in central London. The former start arriving gradually either individually, with friends, or families. By around 2:30 pm and 2:45 pm, the place of the gathering becomes crowded. The number of the attended at every protest demonstration differs, depending on different situations and occasions. For example, Mahmoud an activist at London's *Hirak* told me in a middle of protest that: "we are not so many, sometimes 150. At the beginning with 300 [or] 400. Now, the number is shrinking". However, he related the high number of attended in relation to whether there was good advertisement. For example, on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the *Hirak*, I observed that the number of the protest participants were higher compared to the previous protest I attended. Aymen the organiser told me that while they were seeking the permission from the local authorities to organise the protest match on the 1st anniversary, they were asked how many individuals they approximately would attend the occasion. They provided to the former authorities a number which turned out to be way lower compared to the actual number of the attendees of that day. Aymen told me during the protest of the 1st anniversary that there were more than a thousand individuals. Mahmoud commented on the number that: "the good thing about today because it was good advertising". Even research participants Zahra and Nacira who interrupted their attendance to the *Hirak* due to health issues attended the first anniversary. The weather is another decisive on the number of participants. For example, once it was cold and raining, I noticed that the number was low.

The Algerians in London's *Hirak* are of all age range: toddlers, children, young adults, adults and old people. And the number of adults is more than the number of young people. Gender wise, both females and males take part of the protests, yet the number of men is higher than the

number of women. Spatiality wise, the division between the two sexes is slightly remarkable. I observed that women do have the tendency to stand in a place where there are women only, and the same implies to men. However, during the protests the spatial mobility of both sexes becomes flexible and uncategorical.

People at the protest have different clothing styles. They wear casual items, suits, sometimes Algerian traditional clothes (Kabyle ethnic dress and Algerian *Hayek*), sport's outfit, dresses for women mainly those who are veiled, jeans, trousers, beret hats, caps, flat shoes, and rarely heels worn by women. Bags of big and small sizes are carried by women, and backpacks by men. People as well dress themselves depending on the weather, when it is cold, they wear jackets and coats, and when it is warm, they wear short sleeve shirts. To be in accordance with the theme of the protest, people wear personalised tops with slogans about the context of the *Hirak*. For example, whenever Latifa a dual national in the 50s attends the protests wear a white shirt written on it in red in Arabic "*Irhalou*" (Leave!). The statement "Irhalou!" is repeated at London's *Hirak* which is addressed to the Algerian political leaders the *Hirak* is seeking to remove from the Algerian political scene. Additionally, there are a considerable number of protesters who put above their clothes and on their shoulders or heads the Algerian national flag and the Berber flag. Or they instead wrap those flags around their necks or waists, or simply carry them with their hands.

From my interaction with the participants and among them research participants of the *Hirak*, I found that they are originally from different region from Algeria, mainly the north. There were those from the extreme East of the country like Annaba, and the West like Wahran, from Saida when my family lives, and the Kabyle region like Tizi Ouzou. These people left Algeria and came to settle in the UK in different periods of time and because of different reasons. There are also second-generation Algerians. Protesters have different professional profiles: teachers, journalists, technicians, students, political and social activists, professional cooks, dieticians, housekeepers, housewives, academics, retired people...etc. Their citizenship status differs, depending mainly on the history of immigration. Among them Algerian British first generation who are this research's focus, one citizenship holders like Algerians, French Algerians...etc.

The official start of the protest starts when the crowd gathers, and the organisers of the protest think that the number of the participants is enough to announce the official start of their protest demonstration and when the stage is set. The official start of the protest is announced after one of the speech makers holds the microphone and starts welcoming in both Arabic both colloquial

and standard the protesters and thanking them for their attendance. He usually uses the expression of “Our Blessed *Hirak*” to refer to their activism. While making the announcement of the protest, he states the number of the protests they achieved, and always reminding that their “*Hirak* is just an extension to the internal *Hirak* of Algeria”. After this traditional introduction, he asks the attendees of the *Hirak* to prepare themselves to listen to the national anthem, in the meantime the organisers start distributing copies of the written version of the anthem to the attendees. Once the anthem is played out loud using the speakers, recognising the sudden changing behaviour of the attendees is easy. If they are sitting, they stand up with a straight posture, they interrupt their conversations with a sudden silence if they were having any. I, for example was having a conversation with Asma during the protest, once the anthem started playing, she told me to finish the conversation after the anthem is played. The organisers stand together in front of the tent and the stage, in an opposite position to the attendees. The majority of people start singing out loud when it is played by either reading from the copies or without reading anything. Once the playing of the anthem is over, people start applauding and shouting, and women making ululations.

The time spent from the end of playing the national anthem to 5pm the official end of the protest demonstrations (apart from the event of the first anniversary when the protests started at 12 pm and ended at 6 pm) is constructed mainly upon: a delivery of speeches at the stage by speech makers, whose contents matches the demands of the Algerian *Hirak* in Algeria, under the supervision and organisations of the protest organisers who generally introduce the speakers to the protesters. Protesters in these times follow what is delivered from those speech, chant, and socialise with the other protesters.

The end of the protest takes place generally at 5 pm (but sometimes it surpasses with a few minutes). Sometime the protesters are ordered by the police authorities to stop, leaving some public speakers without the chance to present their prepared speeches. I recall once Mahmoud became angry and upset when the organisers told him that he is unable to deliver his speech because it was nearly 5pm. Upon finishing the protests, the same person who announces the official start hold the microphone to announce the closure. He thanks the attendees for their attendance and encourages them attend other coming protests. After the closure is made, the crowd starts to disperse on many directions, and the organisers start packing the equipment. Sometimes, the protesters who remain at the place of the protests along with the organisers take a big picture together which is posted later on the then existing official Facebook page of London’s *Hirak*. This picture is held by a camera man who records using his professional

camera the protest demonstration from the beginning of the protest until the end, including the marches.

I was able to stay close to research participants and protest participants in general to see what they do after the protest end. I discovered that they make other gatherings in Costa café, a few meters away from the Algerian Embassy and the main location of the Algerian *Hirak*. They usually take a big space in the basement of the café, and as long as their number of them is 17 or more, they join tables together to be sit, and order coffee, cakes, and water. They discuss different topics either in big, small groups, or in one group. These topics are mostly related to the *Hirak*, the history of the Algerian identity, religion, the Algerian civil War...etc. for example, Rafik a British Algerian young adult male once said out loud: “we don’t know who we are”. His tone triggered the other Algerians through which they started speaking about the history of the Algerian identity, mentioning the occupation of the Ottomans by Mustapha, and the Kabyle by Aymen and Rafik, as well as the question of the origins of Algerians. This unstructured gatherings at the café end at late night around 10 pm or 11pm where the Algerians leave as groups of individually.

Appendix 9. Algerian protests' stage in London



Appendix 10. signs designed in Arabic whose meaning is “brothers brothers, no regionalism” and “Kabyle and Arabs, brothers brothers” (picture took from the official page of London’s *Hirak* which was deleted)



Appendix 11. The physical description of the female only space

Algerian women gather in a building with only one ground floor whose architecture is modern. Its walls from outside are built with brick and has a roof top. In its four walls, three walls have two windows; the other wall has one window. There is one big green entry door. Entering the building is done by stepping onto a very small pathway which enables the wheelchairs and buggies to pass through. There is a litter on the left side of the entry door whose colour is black and gold. However, I have been told by Asya that she painted it and put a plan on it so that it would not be used as a litter, yet I noticed that people would still use it as a bin, which was leading Asya to think to omit the word litter to avoid any confusion. Inside the building, there is a small hall. One of its walls is decorated with a painting made by women's children that addresses a welcoming message to whoever enter there. It is written: "*When you enter this loving centre consider yourself one of the special members of an extraordinary family*".

There is a coat rack for clothes and chairs in case women want to grab when those which are inside are insufficient. Directly in front of the entry door from the inside, there is a toilet and baby changing room. On the left side there is also another toilet. On the right side is the big room where women sit, cook, and do all their activities during their gatherings. The room is neither very big nor very small. Its size is adequate for the number of women and their children. The number of women is around 30, though it rarely happens that all this number is present per gathering, but it happens so when there are special occasions like birthday parties. The place is also adequate for cooking, storing food, as well as for children to play.

There are three big storage closets. Two of them which are on the right side of the door of the room do belong to the Algerian women. The other one is for the Bangladeshi women group who-I have been told- do gatherings on other days. The closet of the Algeria women is used to store food, spices, utensils, and other tools used during their gatherings. It is locked with keys when women clear the place.

When I entered for the first time to the place, the thing that attracted my attention the most was the two hanged national flags: the Algerian national flag and the British Union Jack which were displayed in in inside part of the window, which as well block the visibility of the inside from outside. I commented on the Algerian flag to Karima, and she told me: "of course it's the identity". Asya on the other hand told me once, that she put the Algerian flag first and then put the British Union Jack as a way of showing respect. She told me that she doesn't want people to think that they are displaying only the Algerian flag though they are in another country. This

means that the flagging of Algeria was intentional, and the flagging of Britain was 'consequential'. Algeria was symbolically reproduced and imagined through the flag, even though the ordinariness nature of women's gatherings could mean that the Algerian flag was not hanged with a fervently.

In the room, there are big tables joined together in the middle, surrounded by chairs. These tables are covered by tablecloth, brought from Algerian by an Algerian woman. The tables are left empty by the end of the gathering. There is a small kitchen in the room, furnished with a white sink, two taps of cold and hot water, drawers where kitchen utensils (either brought from Algeria or England) are put, a blender, microwave, refrigerator, toaster oven, single ring electric hotplate, an electric multi cooker, and two white bins. And for security, equipment like fire blanket is available on the kitchen side. Near one of the corners of the room, there is a small closet where above it, is put sewing machines used to teach women and young girls sewing. And next to those machines, a black lantern painted by Asya on one of its glass side the letter "ⵎ", a character in Tifinagh and a symbol of the Amazigh origin. The roof and the walls are decorated with colourful flags and paintings –I have been told– were made by women's children.

Appendix 12. traditional food made at the Algerian female-only space



Appendix 13. picture taken at London's *Hirak*

