I Have Two Flags in my Heart: Diasporic Citizenship of Jamaicans Living in Britain

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ABSTRACT

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and their diasporas have become key actors in the international arena. This study investigates the issue of how to create rights and obligations for Jamaicans living in Britain that are consistent with their citizenship in both host and home societies, despite their different obligations and responsibilities to home and host nations. Additionally, the study seeks to assess the problem of the conflict, or contradiction, between a new form of nationalism – trans-nationalism – and a controversial form of citizenship – diasporic citizenship.

This study is anchored by the theory of acculturation and employs a qualitative methodology based on structured interviews and focus groups. The study finds that while many Jamaicans have found ways to improve their lives in Britain, they struggle to feel a sense of belonging to that country. Secondly, Jamaicans in Britain are racialised and 'othered' through stereotypical perceptions regarding their national identities. They find solace in their Jamaican identity to cope with their marginalisation and exclusion in British society. Their diasporic citizenship is leveraged to challenge exclusion in Britain. The study's main contribution is providing insights into the migratory phenomenon of Jamaica. Overall, the study suggests that there is a continued existence and resilience of a community with a sense of shared belonging to Jamaica. This is a vital resource that needs to be harnessed and engaged with, given the diaspora's potential to influence British foreign policy towards Jamaica and its role in Jamaica's development.

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Tengo dos banderas en mi corazón: ciudadanía diaspórica de los jamaiquinos que viven en Gran Bretaña

RESUMEN

Los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID) y las diásporas se han convertido en actores clave en el ámbito internacional. Este estudio investiga el tema de cómo crear derechos y obligaciones para los jamaiquinos que viven en Gran Bretaña, que sean consistentes con su ciudadanía tanto en las sociedades anfitrionas como de origen, a pesar de sus diferentes obligaciones y responsabilidades con las naciones anfitrionas y de origen. Además, el estudio busca captar la problemática –conflicto o contradicción entre una nueva forma de nacionalismo– del transnacionalismo, y una controvertida forma de ciudadanía –la ciudadanía de la diáspora–.

Este estudio está anclado en la teoría de la aculturación y emplea una metodología cualitativa basada en entrevistas estructuradas y grupos focales. El estudio encuentra que, si bien muchos jamaiquinos en Gran Bretaña han encontrado formas de mejorar sus vidas, luchan por tener un sentido de pertenencia a ese país. En segundo lugar, los jamaiquinos en Gran Bretaña son racializados y catalogados como "el otro" a través de percepciones estereotipadas con respecto a sus identidades nacionales. Encuentran consuelo en su identidad jamaiquina para hacer frente a su marginación y exclusión en la sociedad británica. Su ciudadanía diaspórica se aprovecha para desafiar la exclusión en Gran Bretaña. La principal contribución del estudio es proporcionar información sobre el fenómeno migratorio de Jamaica. En general, el estudio sugiere que hay una existencia y resiliencia continua de una comunidad de pertenencia compartida en Jamaica. Este es un recurso vital que debe aprovecharse y comprometerse, dado el potencial de la diáspora para influir en la política exterior británica hacia Jamaica y su papel en el desarrollo de esta.

Palabras clave: ciudadanía diaspórica; diáspora jamaiquina; diplomacia diaspórica; aculturación.

INTRODUCTION

"I am both Jamaican and British but Jamaican first and British second. I am loyal to two places, I have two flags in my heart, and I have a right to participate in these places." [Sandra, a 55 -year-old midwife, who has been living in London for 37 years]

The quote above, from a participant in this present study, suggests that for many Jamaicans in the diaspora, their identities and loyalties are not fixed to one place. Irrespective of where they reside, the nationals of a country are vital resources and foundations of that country. Transnational Caribbean immigrants see themselves "here" and "there" and create multiple sites of loyalty (Plaza, 2006). Drawing on ideas espoused by Cohen (1997), these individuals "remain socially, politically, cultur-

ally and economically part of the nation states from which they migrated" (p. 136). This duality/"in-betweenness" has consequences for how they participate in both their host country and country of origin. A diasporic ethnicity, Gilroy (1993) argues, "operates within the parameters of a double consciousness, active in an individual no longer in her/his country of origin" (p. 126). Hall (1992) describes identity, for diaspora populations as a 'moveable feast' which means that it is fluid and continuously altered (p. 277). What is more, individuals who maintain connections to their country of origin "achieve the best of both worlds-culture and identity in the former; money, wealth, and skills in the latter" (Conway, 2003, p. 314).

The Jamaican diaspora is viewed as one of Jamaica's most valuable resources. This study emphasizes the fact that Jamaicans in Britain have a sense of belonging that is not tied to a single state. They use complex strategies to negotiate citizenship and construct membership in their romanticized homeland and diasporic residence. While they value both Jamaican and British citizenship, many feel alienated from mainstream British society. This stems from their exposure to multiple forms of discrimination, racism, and negative stereotypes, which complicate their struggle to feel welcome in Britain and undermines their ability to enjoy full citizenship rights and equal participation.

Several Jamaicans in Britain wrestle with otherness and identity categories imposed by British people. Despite holding British citizenship, some experience second-class membership in British society. In the absence of formal recognition as full British citizens, some have used rhetoric to perform British citizenship. The researcher seeks to understand the meanings Jamaicans in Britain attribute to citizenship, and how their experiences fit into the larger debates concerning identity and belonging. Participant narratives reveal how they make meaning of their journeys and how their experiences shape their attachments (to Jamaica and Britain) based on interwoven factors like age, gender, economic status, and length of time lived in Britain.

Like most SIDS, Jamaica has been plagued by factors like poverty and unemployment that push its citizens to seek better opportunities abroad (Thomas-Hope, 1999; Lewis, 2007). This emigration has arguably compromised Jamaica's development and democracy. It has prompted a need for Jamaica to consider its geopolitical realities as it seeks to deepen its engagement with the diaspora. Similarly, with the contentious debates concerning British deportation flights, Jamaicans in the diaspora casting an absentee vote in Jamaica's elections, and social integration in a post-Brexit world, it is necessary for members of the Jamaican Diaspora to regularise their immigration status to improve their participation in both Britain and Jamaica. Laguerre (2016) explains that "diasporic citizenship, because it is appropriated by the immigrants, has policy implications for both the sending and the receiving state" (p. 176). Diasporic citizenship is not limited to how Jamaicans in Britain access and experience citizenship rights in Britain, it also concentrates on their ability to exercise citizenship rights in relation to Jamaica.

The discussion in this article is situated in diaspora studies and the International Rela-

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tions literature on citizenship and brings these into conversation with the literature on identity. The study is based on five research questions that seek to answer how Jamaicans living in Britain leverage their diasporic citizenship:

1. Do Jamaicans living in Britain feel welcome in Britain?
2. How do Jamaicans living in Britain articulate membership and envisage citizenship?
3. What strategies do Jamaicans in Britain use to claim membership and reinforce belonging to Jamaica and Britain?
4. What can Jamaicans living in Britain expect to get out of a diasporic experience?
5. What are the legal, economic, and psychological (affiliative) dimensions that should justify/give rise to the involvement of the Jamaicans living in Britain in Jamaica's political and civic life?

Caglar (2015) posits that "there are often categories of people who are legal citizens according to the laws of a state yet face various forms of exclusions and the denial of civil rights because they are not considered to be truly part of the nation" (p. 637) .It is important to understand how Jamaicans in Britain make sense of citizenship and negotiate their position as British Jamaicans to assert their rights to education, healthcare, or employment.

Belonging to a diaspora means "reformulating one's minoritized position by asserting one's full belonging elsewhere" (Parreñas & Siu 2007, p. 13). The Jamaican Diaspora refers to a "social space created by populations of Jamaican ancestry who have lived periods of

their lives outside the territorial boundaries of the island, but whose identities connect with the people and cultural practices of the island" (Mullings, 2011, p. 25). While there is a growing body of research that looks at citizenship (Nyers, 2007; Linklater, 2007; Gordon, 2014), there is limited research on how British Jamaicans situate themselves within the larger frameworks of citizenship in Jamaica and Britain

This study finds that some Jamaicans in Britain, as non-citizens, participate as active citizens in British society despite not having legal recognition. Some participants acquire British citizenship but still see themselves as Jamaicans primarily. Additionally, some participants are living illegally in Britain and this status predisposes them to several vulnerabilities, which have meant that they have fewer opportunities to improve their lives, often preventing them from fully developing their human potential. These groups of participants might attempt to acquire legal status and/or British citizenship to access and secure better economic resources, employment opportunities, benefits, and services in Britain. This situation, among others, causes Jamaicans in Britain to develop an interest in immigration, security, political participation, and human rights issues. These actions provoke the questions of identifying with whom, how, and why. Here, such individuals contribute to Jamaica while making use of the economic opportunities in Britain. This flexibility is not just about mere material contributions but navigating the pressures to assimilate.

This paper makes the case that Jamaicans in Britain are better able to contribute to development in both countries when they are

protected and empowered socially, economically, and in terms of their basic human rights, regardless of their immigration status. They must be encouraged to participate in British political life, particularly by gaining the right to vote, while preserving this right in Jamaica. Secondly, traditional concepts of citizenship, especially in the legal dimension, are too rigidly constructed and must be rethought to account for diasporic citizenship.

Çalışkan (2014) maintains that "diasporic citizenship emerges out of the tension between the negotiations of displacement (diaspora) and the politics of accommodation (citizenship)" (p. 37). This highlights how people navigate their multiple attachments to the countries they were born in and those in which they reside, their struggle for rights, and how they reconcile these factors with their citizenship status. The study is anchored by the acculturation theory to explain how immigrants adapt to the host country's norms, values, and way of life while maintaining deep ties with the home country (Berry, 1992). It provides a useful lens to understand how Jamaicans in Britain have used rhetoric to perform British citizenship. The study is also shaped by the notion of a transnational Caribbean which characterises the region as a cultural area that transcends national borders and extends to where a cultural group has constructed its distinctive identity (see Mains, 2004; Vertovec, 2009). The objective of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive review of how citizenship is acquired. Rather, it seeks to highlight the unsettling aspects of a nationally-bound concept of citizenship to consider how people use their own means to construct belonging and claim rights across multiple countries.

The concept of transnational citizenship might overlap with dual citizenship - citizenship across (two/more) nations. This study seeks to capture the problem of the conflict, or contradiction, between a new form of nationalism – trans-nationalism – and a controversial form of citizenship – dual (or transnational) citizenship. That is, rights and obligations that are consistent with 'good citizenship', and democratic rights of participation in both home and host societies. However, the prevailing international system, based on state-centric structures provides too rigid and inflexible a tension between the obligation to nation-states that limit democratic rights of transnational participation. This is a new and unresolved problem in international relations, specifically, the international relations of democracy. The problem is how to create rights and obligations for the diaspora that are consistent with their citizenship in both host and home societies, despite their different obligations and responsibilities to home and host nations, which can have security implications. Citizenship, in this way, is largely defined by rights across territories.

Diasporic citizenship is based on the idea that people acquire multiple sites of loyalty and attachments to places as they move and live their lives between and across them. They experience a conflict (of laws and sentiments) between nationalism (in relation to the home society), and citizenship (in relation to the host society) that can best be resolved through a new status of diasporic citizenship.

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Scholarship on transnationalism and citizenship in IR has generally rested on a conflation of nation, state, and territory. The diaspora discourse is incidentally multidisciplinary and the themes underpinning this study do not fit neatly within the boundaries of IR or Political Science, at least not in the traditional sense.

Secondly, this study provides a lens to understand the Jamaican government and its diaspora, and their influence as transnational actors on each other, as diaspora diplomacy is an understudied dimension of Caribbean IR (Minto-Coy & Chrysostome, 2019; King & Melvin, 1999). Some pervasive features of states like Jamaica are limited economic resources and military power, and the increasing reliance on state diplomacy. The Jamaican Diaspora symbolises a new potential for transnational diplomacy, which represents the power of nationals through their own initiatives and associations abroad (see Buddan, 2005).

Jamaica has a growing number of embassies, consulates, and investors across the globe. However, in comparison to Britain, Jamaica lacks transcendence and institutional reach across borders. The Jamaican diaspora, being strategically located and having access to diverse networks and resources, strengthens the potential for knowledge sharing and can serve as a diplomatic tool to promote Jamaica's interests abroad.

This study pursues an area of research that deals with soft power considerations and contributes to the literature on diasporic citizenship through empirical data garnered from Jamaicans living in Britain, based on structured interviews and focus groups. The study's main contribution is to provide insight into migratory consequences for Jamaica. The possibilities for diasporic citizenship include strengthening how diasporas participate and engage in the development of their homelands and empowering members to overcome the problems they face in the host country, like marginalisation and discrimination, by negotiating their access to rights and citizenship.

Jamaica, in the contemporary global environment, faces severe adversities and vulnerabilities, which necessitate greater introspection of its foreign policy. Jamaica has a large and vibrant diaspora that has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving the country. Some members maintain strong connections to the country and do not feel less Jamaican despite not physically residing there "on the rock". The Jamaican Diaspora has strong interstate and intrastate capabilities; it connects individuals, families, and communities to each other and State to State. It represents a vehicle through which Jamaican nationals aboard can organise to influence the policies of other countries and promote the advancement of fundamental human rights in their homeland and host societies. This article is a timely intervention into the relatively limited discussion in Caribbean Political Science and IR on leveraging diasporic citizenship and the role of the Jamaican diaspora in British foreign policy towards Jamaica. The insights generated by this study could potentially be useful for policymakers interested in better supporting Afro-Caribbean people in Britain.

BACKGROUND

Insufficiently British in Greener Pastures? The Jamaican Diaspora in Britain

Globally, Jamaica is ranked among the countries with the highest levels of skilled migration (Chevannes & Ricketts, 2012). Remittances from the Jamaican Diaspora contribute to over 20% of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2020) and an often-overlooked point is that its members have the capacity to lobby foreign governments and various international organisations (Koinova, 2012). Acquiring a passport from countries like Britain, the United States of America or Canada has meant that there are incentives for people from developing countries to improve their livelihoods and the conditions of their relatives in their countries of origin. It is on such bases that a discussion about home and shifting conceptions of social responsibility, loyalty, accountability, and identity must be interrogated.

Jamaica's diaspora is as large as its resident population (Mullings, 2011). The presence of Jamaicans in Britain dates to 1947 when 100 Jamaicans sailed for Liverpool on the SS Ormonde (Mead, 2009). The Empire Windrush in 1948, carried 492 Caribbean people to London to fill labour gaps and rebuild war-torn Britain (Lowe, 2021). Despite the appearance of a welcoming reception, people from the Commonwealth confronted racialised British immigration policies (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005). The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted Commonwealth migrants full citizenship rights, but they lacked substantive forms of belonging as they were undermined by hostility and discrimination. Secondly, before passing the 1971 Immigration Act, the British government had granted Commonwealth citizens indefinite right to remain. This regularised their immigration status. Despite the rhetoric advocating for a reduction in the rights of Caribbean people to be afforded permanent settlement in Britain, Jamaican enclaves flourished in places like London.

Britain is one of Jamaica's oldest diaspora populations and an estimated 340,000 Jamaican–born individuals live there (International Organization for Migration (IOM), quoted in Luton, 2007). Interestingly, Jamaicans represent the tenth-largest immigrant group in Britain, although some Jamaicans in Britain experience acute levels of exclusion which take the form of problems like racism, discrimination in housing and employment, violence, and intrusive policing (Paul, 1992; Allahar, 2011; Collins, 2001). These factors erode their ability to feel a part of Britain but strengthen their ties to Jamaica.

Among the Anglophone Caribbean territories, Jamaicans constitute the largest group of West Indians in Britain (Foner, 2009). Although the Jamaican Diaspora is widely spread throughout Britain, it is concentrated in Greater London and the West Midlands. Despite many shared characteristics, variations with respect to class, interests, gender, educational attainment, and age can be identified in this multigenerational diaspora. One could also argue that the Jamaican Diaspora

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in Britain is not homogenous or monolithic (Smith, 2018).[1]

This article is organised in the following ways. Firstly, the research methodology is explained. Next, an illustrative review of the literature on citizenship is provided, and this is followed by the results and the discussion sections of the study.

METHODS

This section outlines how data was collected for this study. Data for this qualitative study was generated through two focus groups (n=30) and structured interviews (n=50) with Jamaicans living in Britain. This sample (N=80) represents individuals who were all born in Jamaica and are currently living in Britain. These participants were selected from five of the largest British cities (London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Glasgow) which have some of the largest concentrations of Jamaicans in Britain. The study was conducted from April 2020-March 2021.

A qualitative approach was deemed more appropriate to offer insight into the varied experiences of Jamaicans living in Britain to better understand their social reality. The selection criteria were based on the objectives of the research and participants' interaction with British culture. Thus, only those individuals who are above 18 years old, who were born

in Jamaica, and have been living in Britain for at least a decade, participated in the study. Participants were also selected based on their expressed interest in the study.

To recruit participants, the researcher sent letters of invitation to representatives of diaspora associations in Britain, and potential study participants were identified. Individuals who expressed a desire to participate in the study were later contacted. A snowballing sampling technique was also used to recruit participants.

Descriptive statistics of the sample are provided below:

Sample: Most participants were between 41-61 years old. Women accounted for 55% of the sample. In terms of length of residence in Britain, the majority (50%) have lived there between ten and 20 years. More than half (56%) possess a British passport and have membership in diaspora organisations (63%). With respect to their employment status, 52% are full-time workers. Some 72% own assets in Jamaica. Secondary education was the highest level of education for the majority (40%). The demographic profile of the participants demonstrates that they are not a homogenous group of individuals. Instead, they have diverse backgrounds with extensive spheres of influence and competencies, sources of knowledge, resources, and skills that can be harnessed in innovative ways to enhance the development of both Britain and Jamaica.

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[1] Tribalism is a feature of Jamaica's political culture, and the British-Jamaican Diaspora is not politically homogenous.

Focus groups

Focus groups were employed due to their ability to capture and explore the opinions, perceptions, and beliefs held by Jamaicans in Britain so that meaningful analyses can be drawn (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). Such discussions in this study were treated as conversational pieces which allowed the researcher to delineate patterns from a group setting. Two focus groups were conducted with participants drawn from London and Birmingham. Each focus group consisted of 15 members and lasted two hours, during which participants shared their personal and collective experiences over Facebook and Zoom.

Structured Interviews

Interviewees were asked 15 questions. On average, each interview lasted 1 hour. All interviews were conducted on Zoom. Participants were asked questions like, *"What are the main challenges that you face in Britain?", "Does having a British passport allow you to feel a sense of attachment to Britain?", "As someone born in Jamaica and living abroad, how do you define yourself?",* and *"Do you trust the British government?".*

The study was carried out while Jamaica was on the receiving end of intense waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and due to travel restrictions, the online format of data collection impacted the study as there was no physical contact with participants. However, with Facebook and Zoom, it was cheaper and easier to schedule, host, and conduct interviews. Sessions were more interactive, and the researcher

was able to eliminate the prohibitive cost of travelling to Britain at that time.

CODING AND PROCEDURES

Ethical considerations were adhered to so that participants in the study would not be subjected to physical harm. Participants signed an informed consent form and were notified that their participation would be voluntary, their responses would be kept confidential, that they could withdraw from the study without any penalty, and that no material/monetary incentives would be provided for participating in the study. They were given pseudonyms and their responses were recorded and transcribed with their permission. Each participant was informed about the purpose, methods, and intended use of the research.

The data gathered from this study was analysed using the 'constant comparative method' (Boeije, 2002). Participant narratives from focus group and individual interviews were transcribed and repeatedly read in an open-ended manner to establish familiarity with key themes. Key phrases/words were selected from transcripts to illustrate participants' experiences. Recurring phrases were colour-coded, and notes were made in the margins of each transcript. Examples of themes (e.g., struggle to belong) were selected and organised into theoretically-meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence. Participants who reported concerns about living in Britain, like *'I feel like an outsider,'* or, *'I don't feel welcome',* were coded as *struggle to belong.*

The section below provides a review of the literature on citizenship.

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CITIZENSHIP

For SIDS like Jamaica, diaspora engagement can be complementary in terms of lobbying and campaigning to improve the conditions of the homeland, and also organisation to improve the welfare of the immigrant group in the host country. However, the sensitivity of this issue has brought the questions of social responsibility, state responsibility, legitimacy, and loyalty to the fore as, by virtue of not being resident in the homeland, nationals abroad can make decisions that they are unlikely to feel the direct impact of. Acknowledging the stark realities of a harsh global environment and attempting to reimagine the possibilities to overcome some of its vulnerabilities, one could argue that the diaspora is Jamaica's most potent civil society that exists outside of its shores (Smith, 2018).

While there is extensive literature on various aspects of the Jamaican diaspora, diasporic citizenship remains an unstudied aspect of this community. This article makes the case that classical notions of citizenship, especially in the legal dimension, are too rigidly constructed and must be rethought to account for diasporic citizenship. Diasporic citizenship develops from the premise that people have a right to participate in public life and that their lives, identities, and responsibilities transcend and overlap borders, giving them multiple sites of loyalty.

Diasporic citizenship is important because, in particular cases, people choose to live diasporic lives to smooth the progress of their immigrant experiences (Parreñas & Siu, 2007). Here, they create, negotiate, and perform a sense of belonging, which is not tied to a single state (Laguerre, 2016).

Citizenship is a contested term. For Somers (2008) it is not merely "the right to have rights", it must be recognised as a right to be included and to participate in the political landscape (p. 25). Citizenship "represents a relationship between the individual and the state, in which the two are bound together by reciprocal rights and obligations" (Heywood, 1994, p. 155). Citizenship refers to membership in a group and a political community. It is also a meaning-making process built on agents and structures like civil society, schools, the economy, family, and households.

The challenge to bounded political communities is that with the contemporary processes of globalisation, more people have multiple sites of loyalty and many immigrants wrestle with negotiating a place in their respective host country while maintaining strong cultural attachments to their country of origin (see Kadioglu, 1998). The concept of citizenship with its emphasis on rights and responsibilities is "too narrowly defined" to exclusively "exist between individuals and a single state" (Frey, 2003, p. 93). The actions of diaspora communities cannot be neatly compartmentalised in one state, which justifies the search for a more broadly defined meaning of citizenship.

Some immigrant groups in Britain have confronted challenges in exercising their rights, while they also experience uneven socio-economic protection and limited social mobility (Li, 2018; Faist, 2000). They struggle to achieve full legal and social citizenship and their experiences of discrimination in areas like

health, education, and employment are often based on race (Fernando, 1993). The denial of basic rights has perpetuated a physical and psychological sense of statelessness, alienation, and estrangement among communities and individuals in the Black Diaspora (see Chakraborty, 2021). Yang (2020) infers that racial conflict stems from the competitive attitude of the working class towards blacks. Furthermore, "this British-style, heavily nationalist approach has led to black immigrants being denied for a long time, nor have they been able to affirm the legitimacy of blacks" (Yang, 2020, p. 690).

Despite acquiring British citizenship, many groups are treated as second-class citizens which affects their subjective well-being and their sense of belonging to Britain (Grosvenor, 1999). Additionally, some immigrants undergo unease between formal citizenship and societal membership. Smith (2018) surmises that Jamaicans in Britain struggle with "multiple feelings of non-belonging in varying degrees" (p. 258).

Afro-Caribbean people in Britain have sought to navigate the racial politics of immigration control and negotiate their identity in a British society that is changing. History is also replete with evidence that people affiliated with the Black diaspora in several countries such as the USA, UK, and Canada have experienced a discursive tradition of being treated as 'deportable subjects' (Davies, 2001, p. 949). Paul (1997) observes that post-war notions of British citizenship were rooted in inconsistencies between the official classification of who had the right to enter Britain and the informal presumptions of who could become or count

as British. These binarisms (insider/outsider) potentially marginalise some groups of immigrants and exacerbate their struggle to belong. These varied interpretations represent 'selfing' and 'othering'. For example, to what degree can naturalised and permanent residents in Britain identify as being British? (see Giddens, 1991). Fortier (2021) contends that British citizenship must be assessed in a historical context. With reference to the Windrush scandal, she writes that "racially minoritized subjects …are perpetually migratised as non-citizens, which in turn racialises British citizenship as white" (p. 6).

For diaspora populations, the struggle for citizenship is not only one that is related to rights and the distribution of resources but also one that is related to the struggle for recognition (Barbalet, 1988). There are varied motivations for acquiring citizenship. Given the "instrumental and sentimental value of citizenship" migrants may have a higher proclivity to naturalize if they can do so while maintaining the citizenship of their country of origin (Vink *et al.*, 2021, p. 754). Some immigrants acquire citizenship in their host country, yet they struggle to feel accepted and gain full membership in that country (Aleinikoff & Klusmeyer, 2001; Bloemraad, 2017).

Some immigrants resist racialisation and are aware of the limits they experience in terms of belonging and citizenship in Britain. Hussain and Bagguley (2005) find that many British-Pakistanis feel excluded on many fronts in Britain, especially due to barriers like race and ethnicity. Thus, claiming a British identity has been challenging and many do not perceive their citizenship identities as strong.

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Drawing on the case of Palestinians in Sweden, Lindholm (2021) asserts that attaining Swedish citizenship is valued and viewed as a milestone in the lives of such individuals due to having a desirable passport, the right to vote, and social protection. Vertovec (2009) speaks of a "citizenship of convenience" (p. 92). Ong (1999) observes that migrants acknowledge the costs and benefits of their extra-territorial status and will strategically tap into them to improve their situation.

It can be argued that the idea of citizenship is coincidentally used to define a British identity that equates to being British, which is, to a large extent, conflated with citizenship (Meer, *et al.*, 2010). Delanty (2000) notes that citizenship is no longer wholly concerned with the struggle for social and political equality; rather it has become a major stage for battles over cultural identity and demands for the recognition of group differences. At the very least, the foregoing is the beginning of understanding what is at stake for the performance, and processes, of citizenship in diasporic spaces.

Citizenship, viewed in terms of rights, is too limited. Generally, diaspora communities do not feature comfortably in this national/liberal approach to citizenship. Some members of various diaspora communities find it difficult to consolidate their place in such conditions because citizenship is tied to the state, while the diaspora is not. Diasporas, therefore, enable modes of belonging and identity to be revisited (see Bloemraad, 2006; Rogers & Muir, 2007). This approach directs attention to Anderson's (1983) seminal work on imagined communities. Many Jamaicans in the diaspora encounter discrimination and racism.

While they live in various locations worldwide and may never meet each other, they are aware of each other's existence, shared customs, and heritage. Some develop a common sense of identity and see themselves as belonging to an imagined community that transcends geographical boundaries. While certain aspects of Anderson's (1983) imagined communities embody the Jamaican case, the key element that makes the Jamaican diaspora a community is not the sharp difference between 'real' and 'imagined'. Rather, it is the contrast between affiliation and non-affiliation. That is whether people identify as Jamaicans and all that being Jamaican entails, despite not residing in Jamaica. There are also those who feel strongly British and intensely Jamaican at once and those who support Britain/Jamaica in some specific situations (e.g., sports).

While there is a burgeoning literature on the Jamaican diaspora, little is known about how Jamaicans in Britain negotiate the boundaries of British citizenship and their lived experiences as citizens and non-citizens. Their struggle with British citizenship is evidenced by a myriad of developments, such as immigrant-led protests and the creation of diaspora associations that are mobilised for better representation of their political rights. Undoubtedly, in the absence of formal recognition as full citizens, British Jamaicans have used rhetoric to perform British citizenship. They have struggled for inclusion without discarding their cultural distinctiveness, redefining what it means to be British. Interestingly, because attachment to a nation can no longer reasonably be assumed to be territorially bound, national citizenship with a strict

institutionalization of rights and the insistence that people need to exclusively belong to one country needs to be revised to account for people with multiple sites of loyalty.

Generally, diasporas blur the distinction between seemingly dichotomous categories of the public and private spheres of political participation (see Arendt, 1998). Interestingly, conventional notions of citizenship, more generally, are entrenched in the elaboration of this public/private divide. Diaspora communities perturb this common-sense formulation to show broadly how citizenship practices have changed, are changing, and as a result, how our understandings of what it means to belong to a political body have as well. The results of the study are reported below.

RESULTS

This section of this article reports the data generated from two focus groups (n=30) and structured interviews (n=50) with Jamaicans living in Britain (N=80). The following five themes emerged from the analysis:

Theme 1: The struggle to belong

The findings of this study reveal that most of the study's participants do not feel welcome in Britain. They experience a lack of rootedness in Britain, a country which they indicated, constructs them as *second-class citizens*. All participants encountered racism and discrimination in Britain which complicated their struggle to belong. Their narratives also indicate that a sense of diasporic consciousness developed, and diaspora organisations

were created to help them cope with feelings of out-of-placeness, which made them feel like second-class citizens and misfits in a country that Jamaicans have worked hard to rebuild. Participants also indicated that the Windrush scandal also exacerbated their struggle to belong. A typical response came from Jenny, a 56-year-old teacher who lives in London. She explains:

I feel betrayed by the British government. The Windrush scandal has stripped many of us as Jamaicans of our dignity. I'm not a criminal, I pay taxes and help people daily, yet I'm treated differently. Sometimes people here treat Jamaicans with scorn. We know that we don't belong here; our home is in Jamaica and Heaven. Britain can be a good place in some ways, but the reality is that it just allows us to earn despite the discomfort.

While many participants experienced negative stereotypes, stigmatised otherness, imposed identities, and racism in Britain, they believed that such problems have helped them to deepen their ties to Jamaica. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter allowed them to reach out to other Jamaicans in Britain and connect with their networks, families, and friends in Jamaica. While all participants experienced discrimination and racism in various aspects of their daily lives in Britain, they found solace in their *Jamaicaness*. Participants like Annette, who is 54 years old and works at a club, said that despite living in a legal limbo of not being eligible for British citizenship and being homeless with a part-time job, she is able to survive as what she calls a *"cultural citizen"* in Britain because of her attachments to Jamaica.

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David, a 44-year-old entrepreneur who lives in Leeds struggles with feeling British despite being naturalised. His views are typical:

There is no escape from racism and discrimination here. It's sickening. I feel minimised in society but I'm an overcomer because I know that I will not be rejected among my fellow Jamaicans in foreign and at Yard… I'm glad I have Facebook so I can link up with my people. Yes, I have a British passport that I paid a lot of money to get, but that passport doesn't make me feel British. The Police still stop and search for nothing…Jamaica is my home. My granny in Jamaica taught me that "if you want good, your nose has to run." So, I'm here making the best of what life has to offer.

Shanie, a dietician, stated that, "I applied for several jobs and most times I felt that I was rejected not because I didn't have the qualifications, but because of my skin colour." This kind of rejection acts as an impediment to the social, political, and economic integration of many participants and makes them "feel insufficiently British" like Barry, 44, who works as a mechanic and is highlighted in this study.

Participants reported that they have a fragile sense of belonging and ownership in British politics and the economy. Hence, they reported that they experienced a subordinated type of membership in all levels of British society. Belonging is reified through organisational membership, social networks, and social groups to facilitate a sense of acceptance. Joining diaspora associations and participating in non-electoral politics, for instance, allowed them to negotiate British politics. Most participants expressed the view that racism and their love for Jamaica compelled them to contribute to Jamaica where they feel they are more accepted.

Theme 2: **Concerns with Legal Status**

Participants expressed concerns about their legal status. Many alluded to the favourable options that citizenship provides. They spoke less about their social responsibilities. Most participants viewed the acquisition of British citizenship in purely practical terms which they perceived as a route to enhance their economic and professional prospects. Participants expressed that naturalisation has not offered them a sense of belonging to Britain.

Most participants have a pragmatic view of citizenship. Their experiences concerning life in Britain were coherent. All participants reported that their British citizenship allowed them better access to services, jobs, and ease of travel. Those without British citizenship noted the precarious position that their status had placed them in and deepened their motivations, as Roy, a 51-year-old entertainer, declared, *to* "get their papers straightened out".

Theme 3: **Expectations of Diasporic Experiences**

With reference to the expectations that can be garnered from their diasporic experiences, participants highlighted that as Jamaican nationals abroad, the Jamaican government has the responsibility to protect them. They believed that the British government should

also exercise such responsibilities to help them to better integrate. Gillian, 39 years old, who works in a café said:

> I have lived in Leeds 12 years. I am involved in the political life, sports, and culture of both Britain and Jamaica. I travelled to Jamaica to vote in the last general elections because that is my duty. I feel that with the current Prime Minister in Jamaica, the views of the diaspora and the government are suitably aligned. I participated in the Windrush protests in Parliament Square and I have partnered with an advocacy group based in Kingston, Jamaica to strengthen the call for reparations from enslavement. I believe though, that both Boris Johnson and Andrew Holness can speak up more to protect the interests of Jamaicans in Britain so that Windrush victims can get compensation for the wrongs against them and to halt the deportation of persons to Jamaica with non-criminal convictions. These are things that our diaspora associations must focus on so that we can feel that we are vital members of communities.

Although some Jamaicans living in Britain are treated as outsiders and grapple with multiple feelings of rejection in the country, their exposure to the British political system and experiences and attitudes learned in that country have shaped their expectations of Jamaican politics. Paulette, a 50-year-old doctor, made the following point about membership in diaspora associations to acquire political visibility:

> I went to university here and in Jamaica as well. I think there is something of value that I can contribute to both Jamaica and Britain. Jamaica needs a more informed citizenry to hold corrupt politicians accountable. I am exposed to British values and

strong democracy; I can bring change to Jamaica. I am not talking only about voting in elections but organising in our diaspora associations and getting my voice heard.

The findings of the study reveal that some Jamaicans in Britain experience a gap between the rhetoric of citizenship's inclusion and the reality of exclusion. They struggle to achieve not just legal citizenship, but also political citizenship and full social citizenship (for example, in the labour market and housing). Some participants experience various degrees of unbelonging which stems from their encounters with racism, and discrimination. These factors complicate their ability to fit in. Some participants obtain national rights and access to services, but do not feel that they belong to Britain given their experiences of exclusion. Their experience is that of the 'outsider' which is reinforced by Courtney, a 42 year old tattoo artist who laments being "an outsider in a foreign country."

Theme 4: Identity Negotiation

According to the participants in this study, their existence in the diaspora often complicates their understanding and construction of identity. In response to the question "How do you define yourself?" Participants like Queenie said that "As a Rastafarian, I would say I am a West Indian of African heritage, Jamaican by birth but I am British Jamaican by choice. I live between two worlds, culturally and geographically." Some notable themes in negotiating their identities were 'opportunity', and 'neither belonging here nor there.'

Few of the study participants (10%) reported feeling torn between Jamaica and Britain. For them, the process of negotiating their identity takes into consideration how they are perceived in Britain and Jamaica especially when they visit the latter. Verna, a chef, recounts:

I have visited Jamaica 8 times since I have lived here. Some years ago, when I visited Jamaica, I went to the market, and someone asked me: Where are you from? I answered I am from Mandeville; I was born there. The person said -but you look and sound like one of them English people and you have an accent…These kinds of conversations tell me about my identity…For many people in Mandeville, I am English, and they no longer see me as Jamaican. For people in London, I am Jamaican and will never be an English woman.

Erica, a 38-year-old teacher refers to her Jamaican passport as part of her *"identity"*. Some participants use diasporic citizenship to assert membership in both Jamaica and Britain. They articulate membership and envisage citizenship in various ways. One of the most prominent examples of the experiences of negotiating one's identity, claiming membership and, incorporating Jamaican traditions in everyday experiences, was reported by Yanik, a 36-year-old accountant. She explained:

I am thankful that I have a chance to raise my family here. British citizenship means that I have access to better economic opportunities and that I won't be deported. It does not mean that people will see me as British, or I will feel 100 percent British. I will always be a Jamaican despite being a British citizen. I

always see myself firstly as a product of Jamaica and try to preserve my island identity. I contribute to Jamaica because that is where I am from and Britain because that is where I live. I have come to accept that life is hard here for minorities. The good values, work ethic, and manners that were instilled in me from Jamaica helped me to move upward in society. I am proud of who I am. British citizenship gives me a shot at upward mobility and my Jamaican heritage and culture give me the courage to thrive.

Theme 5: **Attachment to Jamaica**

Some participants reported that they faced several categories of stigma and discrimination, and these negative experiences push them to develop greater levels of attachment to Jamaica. Living outside of Jamaica did not prevent them from feeling Jamaican. Tim, a 36-year-old welder, boldly asserted "Many people treat us like dirt…I don't live in Jamaica, but it is my home. I contribute, celebrate Jamaican holidays, eat Jamaican foods, and support Jamaican athletes. I am Jamaican to the bone."

DISCUSSION

The section above examined how Jamaicans in Britain construct belonging across countries, make sense of citizenship, and negotiate their position as British- Jamaicans asserting, for example, their rights to education, healthcare, or employment. The findings shed light on how these individuals forge a sense of attachment and obligation to both Britain and Jamaica.

The discussion of diasporic citizenship in the British Jamaican context is not limited to how members of this group access and experi-

ence citizenship rights in Britain. It also concentrates on their ability to exercise citizenship rights in relation to Jamaica. British Jamaicans have the right to be consulted, to have some form of representation, and enjoy protection from the Jamaican state. These provisions help them in two ways. Firstly, they help to develop a strong sense of identity and affinity to Jamaica. Secondly, they provide an incentive to be involved in Jamaica and legitimising their role as part of Jamaican society.

With racialised and exclusionary politics, some participants in this study have developed a complex relationship with Britain. They live an insider/outsider existence which is partly explained by alienation and isolation, struggles with belonging, and political loyalties. This finding corresponds to attitudes identified in previous studies (Paul, 1992; Collins, 2001; Yang, 2020).

This study's findings suggest the need for improved coordination of services to make people feel welcome in their communities. Participants are aware of how they are constructed and positioned as outsiders in the discourse on British citizenship. These negative encounters cause them to develop deeper loyalties to Jamaica than to Britain. They also find solace in their Jamaican identity. This corroborates the previous research findings of Smith (2018) and Plaza (2000) who maintain that British Jamaicans have a strong sense of attachment to Jamaica which is the foundation of their identity. For some Jamaicans living in Britain, the distrust of British politicians has shaped their interests and involvement in Jamaica's affairs. A strong sense of attachment to Jamaica and the barriers encountered in Britain fuel their

transnational political behaviour. Consistent with the theory of acculturation, they adopt various aspects of British culture, but continue to see themselves primarily as Jamaicans (Berry, 1992).

Belonging is reified through organisational membership, social networks, and social groups to facilitate a sense of acceptance. Participants in this study expressed the view that they maintain their attachments to Jamaica. This allows them to be engaged in Jamaica's affairs and participate in diaspora activities as a way of deconstructing the reality of their marginalisation in Britain. Their diaspora communities and groups are used as tools to deconstruct stereotypes and racialised encounters, while also allowing the articulation of positive collective and individual memories of Jamaica. Other participants feel that getting involved in the political process through diaspora associations, lobbying, writing in newspaper columns, and online petitions are ways of changing the negative perceptions of Jamaicans in Britain. Such findings are buttressed by the work of Laguerre (2016) who arrives at similar conclusions about Haitians in America.

While some of the participants in this study do not anticipate a permanent return to Jamaica, they are keen to be involved in the decision-making processes in Jamaica and are driven by a passion to see an improvement in the quality of life there. Although they believe that racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, coupled with their knowledge of both Britain and Jamaica, as well as material, and monetary contributions have given them strong motivations to participate in Jamaica's affairs, they

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also feel that corruption, high levels of crime, and a lack of good governance undermine their level of involvement in Jamaica's affairs. On a positive note, other participants believe that the posture of the Jamaican government towards the diaspora has influenced their political activities in both Britain and Jamaica.

Many participants in this study do not see themselves as British. They believe that they have a limited capacity to shape the formal political sphere in Britain. With this constraint, they turn to a range of non-electoral behaviours, including attending town hall meetings, signing petitions, writing to their Member of Parliament (MP), and lobbying. Diaspora associations also function as channels through which they negotiate membership in Britain and strengthen a sense of community.

According to the sampled population, most British-Jamaicans, and by extension Afro-Caribbeans are intensely loyal to the British Labour Party (BLP). There has been a drop in voter participation, especially among the British Jamaican population that traditionally provided a strong base of support for the Party. This decline is linked to factors like the BLP's performance since 2010, the Windrush scandal, the anti-immigration rhetoric, and Brexit. Arguably, the problem facing Jamaicans living in Britain is not merely about political discontent or economic dislocation. It is also related to the congruence of Britain's imminent political, social, economic, and identity crises.

The study of diaspora citizenship is linked to political participation. It is traditionally a study of party and political identification, that is, what parties voters identify with and why. This study of transnational political participa-tion is, by the same logic, interested in what nation voters identify with, and as a subset, what parties and movements citizens identify with as voters or as non-voting participants in that nation. The result is the shift from party to nation primarily, and party secondarily. There is also the shift from voters to citizens primarily and voters secondarily. In the first case, legal citizenship was taken for granted. It was the social and economic status that needed improving and that attracted rural people to urban areas in Britain. In the second case, neither legal or socio-economic citizenship nor status could be taken for granted. These shifts could be hypothesized as reflecting a phenomenon in a similar vein to what took place under modernization, except that it is not the effect of rural to urban migration, but of migration from countries of lower to higher levels of development that is being considered. Both movements broadly reflect a similar social, economic, and political phenomenon. However, the common purpose is the search for a better life (see Thomas-Hope, 1999; Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

In the traditional expression of modernisation, migrants were incorporated into urban life through political parties and trade unions. Their search for socio-economic improvements and benefits of citizenship were promised through the appeal of the party and the union. Otherwise, rural migrants would be marginalised in urban ghettos or become political functionaries in these places. In the newer transnational expression of modernisation, migrants were incorporated into host societies by pre-existing migrant communities, parties, and unions as well. Thus, most of the

participants in this study supported the BLP because of its perceived commitment to social justice and equality. However, in both cases, a crisis developed.

In the first case, that of trans-regionalism (rural to urban), a crisis of citizenship developed. Not all migrants could, or would, be accommodated and benefit from the rights of citizenship – jobs, education, health, respect, and equality. Class systems developed in the urban areas often leading to inequality and poverty for the marginalised. Crime and violence often accompanied this situation. In the second case, that of transnationalism (less developed to more developed country), a similar crisis resulted. A crisis of citizenship also resulted. Furthermore, the usual class lines are more complicated by race and nationality. This is what is meant by 'British society facing an 'identity crisis', as this crisis is different because it is transnational rather than trans-regional.

Most of the participants in this study hold British citizenship but argued that they experience second-class membership in Britain. Their relegated status stems from their inability to feel accepted and exercise full citizenship rights and inclusive participation. These findings are consistent with previous findings of Hussain & Bagguley (2005). One could argue that there is a gap in connecting formal status and substantive belonging with active citizenship.

Legally, some participants may not be able to qualify as British citizens. Yet, they qualify under other dimensions of what citizenship entails. Socially, they offer services to their communities and are involved in trade unions, voluntary and charitable associations, youth groups, sports clubs, churches, entertainment, and town hall meetings. They also use diaspora networks and associations to organise their citizenship. Furthermore, as members of local communities, they have assumed most obligations and responsibilities of local citizenship. Economically, they pay taxes on cars and properties, for instance. Yet nationally they are politically disenfranchised and cannot vote on taxes, education, health, or other issues that directly affect them. Moreover, some do not hold a British passport. They belong to the society although with limited rights as homeowners, renters, consumers, families, taxpayers, workers, members of specific groups, and service providers. These findings are consistent with Faist's (2000) work on 'dimensions of citizenship' and 'realms of membership'.

The study finds that for several participants, a British passport was acquired for pragmatic reasons and the aspiration to obtain benefits. Such findings are corroborated by Lindholm (2021), Vertovec (2009), and Ong (1999). Some participants associated being British with having a passport and having access to social services and welfare benefits. Some felt that although possessing a British passport was a desirable instrument, it played little significance in helping them to develop strong ties of belonging with British society due to the pressures they face. They viewed their Jamaican passports as a source of national pride which also affords them rights, for example, to work without a work permit and vote in Jamaica's general and local government elections.

Participants were divided on the issue of diaspora absentee voting. They felt that they

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should be given an equal chance to participate in national development and that their exposure to British culture and democratic values could help to improve the Jamaican political landscape. However, several participants felt that the current conditions in Jamaica were not ripe for diaspora voting. These concerns are understandable considering Jamaica's political culture of clientelism, and the concern around difficulties in managing Jamaica's governmental elections including fraud. This study makes the case that given the threats and opportunities confronting Jamaica in the international system, diaspora diplomacy should be considered as part of Jamaica's foreign policy strategy. This reality should allow Jamaican nationals in Britain, for instance, to properly organise themselves to influence the decisions that are taken towards Jamaica by British authorities.

Many participants in this study perform their belonging in ways that are not dictated by the legality of citizenship. They construct diasporic citizenship to assert belonging and claim membership in Britain and Jamaica. Their diasporic citizenship is leveraged to challenge exclusion in Britain. The politics of belonging in the Jamaican Diaspora in Britain can be best understood through the notion of diasporic citizenship to highlight the processes linked to the construction and negotiation of identity.

This study highlights that the notion of Britishness is not fully formed among many Jamaicans. This is partially due to exclusion and discrimination. The study contributes to the debate that in IR, our notions of citizenship are tied to a legalistic, institutional, and specific geography and need to be revisited.

Individuals with multiple identities, two flags in their heart or even one flag in their heart with multiple loyalties, who make significant contributions to a community, irrespective of their "legal" status must be accounted for.

LIMITATIONS

With the use of a purposive sampling technique, the findings of this study are not generalizable. Most participants were recruited via diaspora associations. The study's findings might have been different if a broader range of individuals were interviewed. While diaspora associations shape the construction of the identity of members, it should be noted that there are Jamaicans in Britain who are not active members of diaspora associations. However, they use various strategies to preserve their *Jamaicanness* and maintain connections to Jamaica. In terms of directions for future research, this analysis could be deepened by comparing the experiences of Jamaicans in Britain with those in locations like the USA or with other Caribbean groups in Britain. To understand the Jamaican diaspora, one needs to be conscious of country differences and possibly even differences between regions and generations in the same country.

CONCLUSION

Legally, some British-Jamaicans have acquired the formal status of British citizenship, yet they cling to a sense of themselves as citizens of Jamaica. Others have not acquired British citizenship but feel British. People in the latter category create an ambiguous grey area

because they cannot neatly categorise their experiences in law. Their view of citizenship and the basis of inclusive citizenship is mainly based on habitation or occupation rather than on naturalisation. This situation arguably creates a nuanced justification for belonging, protection, and entitlement from the states they identify with. Expanding the definition of citizenship reduces the scope for cheating, unlawful behaviour, the cost to immigration management defending and deporting people, and people's anger at the authorities when they are told that they are illegal aliens.

A more nuanced approach to citizenship in an era of globalisation does not imply that rights and entitlements generated from traditional conceptions have now entirely ceased to function. Rather, it promotes the idea that classical notions of national citizenship, which operate in territorially-bound nation-states, no longer have the same currency in multicultural and ethnically and culturally heterogeneous settings.

Some British Jamaicans as non-citizens of Britain have loyalties and attachments that transcend Britain. Nonetheless, they are calling for the same democratic rights, protection, inclusion, participation, and entitlements as full citizens of Britain. They adopt British attitudes, habits, values, and symbols to cope with their new environment and negotiate the boundaries of belonging. They have social entitlements but, in some cases, they face a lack of solidarity with the white British population. Interestingly, because the kind of citizenship that they enjoy cannot be neatly compartmentalised, the state needs a concept of citizenship that is not exclusively built for the convenience of the state. Instead, it needs one that is built to address the realities of transnational actors who are part of the state. Here, it is not only important to consider who can be defined as a citizen, it is even more pressing to understand how the system sees and make sense of these groups as misfits. This brings Jamaicans in Britain into the larger public discourse about 'Britishness' and British identity.

Generally, the grey areas in citizenship in which diasporas fall, complicate the overall study of citizenship. In the contemporary era, these grey areas have grown with the experiences of people who negotiate their daily lives and existence across borders. Spatially-bound concepts of citizenship are weak in accounting for the experiences of people with multiple attachments. A diasporic concept will allow members of the diaspora to speak of citizenship from the standpoint of their lived experiences and make practical sense of the legal, political, social, and other categories of citizenship.

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