Navigating displacement: Trajecto-making among forced migrant and refugee children and youth

Giorgia Donà, University of East London, UK

Angela Veale, University College Cork, Ireland

Introduction

Growing up from childhood to adulthood is part of an individual's life course. Yet the developmental trajectories of many children and adolescents are disrupted by major life events. Among them, wars and displacements are crises of global proportions whose effects are felt by millions of children worldwide. An estimated 426 million children (over one in six) live in areas affected by conflict (Ostby et al., 2020). Many are forced to flee their places of origin. By the end of 2020, among the 82.4 million people who are forcibly displaced, an estimated 35 million (42%) are children living as internally displaced refugees or asylum seekers across the globe (UNHCR, 2021). The impacts of these ruptures are multi-layered; they are felt across a range of domains, including psychological, relational and cultural ones. Furthermore, the consequences of becoming a refugee unfold dynamically across time: they are felt in the present, but they also shape the imagined and strived-for future of children and young people.

Yet, until recently, much of the literature on children and youth experiencing conflict-induced displacements and migration has traditionally captured development or functioning at a single point in time and place, such as in camps, resettlement or return (Farmakopoulou et al., 2017; Smith, 2018).

This forced migration literature has also generally focussed on single categories of children as if these categories were self-contained and isolated; children in conflict, displaced children, children in resettlement and children as returnees (Chavez & Menjívar, 2017; Kandemir et al., 2018). Yet, these are often the same children who grow up from being children in conflict, to become refugee children across contexts of displacements at different times.

Furthermore, scholars who have adopted a child-centred approach to understanding the experience of children and youth in displacement have mainly relied on the concept of agency and resilience to show how children cope and adapt to conflict and displacement (Crawley, 2010; Werner, 2012). Yet, often they focus on children's individual and psychological predisposition or their strategies at single points in time or place. They often fail to address the fact that these negotiations are situated within children's and young people's overall life trajectories and that these occur within socio-cultural expectations of what it means to grow up.

How can we capture the dynamic interactions between developmental trajectories, forced migration trajectories and crises that go beyond single contexts, times and categories? And how do we capture children's active responses to crises due to conflict and displacement within broader life course trajectories that are culturally shaped?

In recent times, two trends are evident within research that examines the interactions between developmental and migration trajectories amidst crises. Firstly, there is a progression from

understanding displaced and refugee children in isolation (Kandemir et al., 2018; Thommessen et al., 2017; Thoresen et al., 2017) to viewing children and young people as embedded in the social ecologies of their family, friends, community and culture (Donà & Veale, 2011; Pontalti, 2021).

Secondly, research is moving beyond static, single-sited research to capture forced migrant, refugee and unaccompanied children across time and space; including examining children on the move and multi-sited fieldwork (Kaukko et al., 2017; Kordel & Weidinger, 2019; Veale & Donà, 2014).

This chapter contributes to this emerging literature on the intersections of developmental and migration trajectories. It seeks to highlight the non-linear developmental paths of displaced children and youth and to explore how children negotiate multiple transitions within their overall life trajectory, and the implications of this for research. Our justification for this analytic focus is based on our fieldwork in Africa, the Middle East and Europe (Donà, 2014, 2011; 2007, 2006; Donà & Veale, 2011; Veale & Donà, 2014, 2003; Veale & Andres, 2020). We have observed that forced migrant children are often the same people who, earlier in their lives, may have experienced the effects of armed conflicts and whose experiences of violence travel with them as they flee on their own or with family members in search of safety inside and across borders. Much research in forced migration has failed to engage sufficiently with developmental continuity and change.

The chapter focuses on transitions, disruptions and continuities in the developmental trajectories, across time and space, of children and young people who have been forced to move due to wars and generalised violence. It argues that children's and youth's agentic negotiations to overcome the challenges of violence and forced migration are best understood by situating

their strategies within a dynamic ecological context that accounts for aspirations and expectations about the future.

The next section reviews the research literature on refugee and displaced children's transitions and developmental trajectories. We then introduce two case studies through which we examine how refugee children and youth act on their circumstances in the 'here and now' while guided by a future orientation which, although uncertain and open-ended, organises their meaning-making and their agentive actions over time and across the geographical spaces and institutional (for example, legal, social, educational, family) systems with which they engage.

Ruptures, transitions and continuities in the developmental trajectories of forcibly displaced children and youth

Conflicts and forced migration intersect with the short- and long-term developmental trajectories of children and young people. We utilise Zittoun's (2020) definition of developmental trajectories as the person's unique developmental path "located in the social and cultural world which, first, gives the person the very conditions of living (it takes a group of human beings and centuries of transmissions to turn a new-born into what we would consider a human), and then, creates the conditions for life to unfold, and for the person to make unique choices and conducts which will both define her life trajectory, and affect the world, she is part of" (p. 656). In this model, the individual may go through multiple transitions as part of an ongoing process of adaptation between the individual and her environment(s). Often these are mild, but sometimes, a period of relative stability may come to an abrupt end, creating a rupture in which old routines and practices are shattered, invalidated or are no longer effective. New modes of acting or thinking are needed, sparking a period of transition as newfound ways of being or acting become

established (Zittoun, 2009). A rupture can be "a catalyst for intransitive change" (Zittoun, 2009, p. 5) from which there is no going back.

Increasingly, the research literature on displaced and refugee children is engaging with the ruptures in the lives of displaced children and youth. These myriad ruptures unfold across key spheres of children's lives, and reveal the complexity of their developmental trajectories in displacement. Children living under armed conflicts and those forced to flee experience multiple, sometimes simultaneous, losses, separations and disruptions in their family lives, in their educational paths, and in their roles, identities and future aspirations (Denov & Akesson, 2017; DeJong et al., 2017; Sossou, 2010). These multiple disruptions unfold over time as children grow up and transition to young adulthood while in displacement.

Forced migration often results in a rupture of family bonds as family members become separated across different countries or continents, often over many years. Forced migrant children may have family members who have disappeared or whose whereabouts are unknown, resulting in ambiguous loss, in which they must deal with a lack of information about their loved one (Solheim et al., 2016). Forced migration may disrupt children's role in the family from the role of a dependent child to having to work in the informal economy and actively contribute to the economic survival of their family (Akkesson & Sousa, 2020). Some children become separated from their families and enter migratory routes on their own as unaccompanied minors (Digidiki & Bhabha, 2018; Meloni, 2020; Thommessen et al., 2017; Smith, 2018).

One of the most consequential ruptures experienced by many forced migrant children and youth is to their educational trajectories (DeJong et al., 2017; Ottosdottir & Loncar, undated). Half of primary school children and 75% of adolescent refugees in emergency settings are out of school (UNHCR, 2016). Many other refugee children experience disrupted education. Within the EU,

for example, a large multi-country study carried out between 2016-2017 found that all recently arrived asylum seeking children and youth had experienced disrupted education; with some children having had little previous formal education while others had uninterrupted education up to the moment of flight from their country (Koehler, 2017). Furthermore, on arrival, child asylum seekers lived with their families in temporary facilities upon arrival. They often had to move from one asylum centre location to another so that educational disruption was an ongoing experience (Koehler, 2017).

These disruptions to education create particular difficulty at the point that adolescents seek to transition to young adulthood. For asylum-seeker children and youth in resettlement contexts for example, legal regimes determine where children live (for example, in asylum accommodation centres) and often limit their right to access third level education, and their rights to transition to the workforce (Sirriyeh & Ní Raghallaigh, 2018; Sleijpen et al., 2017). When this period lasts too long, refugee youth can experience their life as being "on hold", resulting in a form of mental fatigue from overloading associated with chronic uncertainty (Sleijpen et al., 2017). It is an ongoing challenge for forced migrant youth to acquire the right types of education and experience to transition to the position of being an economically self-supporting adult (Ni Laoire, 2020). While young forced migrants may prioritise employment, the transition from education to employment is complex and non-linear and a higher than average proportion of refugee youth remain unemployed or under-employed (Baker et al., 2021).

What emerges in this brief review is a picture that, while there may be a clearly identifiable displacement 'event', refugee children and youth experience multiple forms of rupture and disruption to their developmental trajectories that unfold in non-linear ways across different areas of their lives over time as children and youth grow up in displacement. Van Blerk et al. (2021) apply the concept of "ruptures" to their analysis of refugee youth experiences,

conceptualising a rupture as "a severing of expected life pathways and an extirpation of past social and cultural connections, current opportunities and future aspirations" (p. 2) and in a way that disrupts refugee youths "real and imagined futures in a fundamental way" (p. 6). This view sees the ruptures brought about by displacement removing the youth from or destroying the normative pathways into adulthood so youth are forced to navigate a winding pathway through education, work/livelihoods and family life to achieve their adult lives.

Rather than conceptualising change as 'rupture', other researchers identify change as a series of transitions involving adjustment across one or more domains researchers such as developmental (for example, from childhood to adolescence), situational (mobility and relocation) and role (duties) (Im, 2014; Stenvig et al., 2018; Denov & Blanchett-Cohen, 2016). Sleijpen et al. (2017) examined the transitions for young refugees negotiating a trajectory of flight from conflict, movement to a new country, through to 'moving on' with their lives through a focus on positive adjustment strategies. They found that most young refugees in the Netherlands experienced ups and downs in their ability to cope with a new environment but in spite of this, they persisted in negotiating the challenges they faced in different areas of their lives through the use of normative strategies such as performing at school, perceiving support from peers and parents, and participating in the new society. However, a small minority experienced a breakdown of their resilience strategies and just gave up. They noted: "It seemed that these participants saw their moment pass by,..their hope faded away." (Sleijpen et al., 2017, p. 358). Thus, their analysis implies a "make or break" narrative of developmental trajectories.

In negotiating transitions of time, place, developmental stage and role, other research highlights the open-ended and ongoing negotiations displaced children and youth face as they strive to build lives in exile. Chase and Allsopp (2020) studied the trajectories into adulthood of young refugees in the UK. They found a diversity of developmental trajectories; some youth

experienced ongoing precarity while others were prospering. Yet they argued that all their participants were striving to build an adult life through their mobility. The challenge of furthering one's developmental life project in a quest to establish a viable future (Chase & Allsopp, 2020) or "a liveable life" (Omland & Andenas, 2018, p. 78) becomes an organising framework for action amidst the uncertainty of life in displacement (see also Drummond Johansen & Varvin, 2020; Johnson & Gilligan, 2021; Kohli & Connolly, 2009).

Within and despite multiple spatial, temporal, relational and emotional ruptures and transitions, children and youth strive to find continuity between the past, present and future. There are continuities in developmental trajectories that need to be examined in greater detail.

Negotiating developmental trajectories in displacement: trajecto-making among forced migrant children and youth

The literature reviewed above shows that children and young people actively negotiate ruptures and transitions as a result of conflict and displacement and cope with changes across multiple domains (e.g., family, education, socio-legal and humanitarian settings) as they grow up across sites of displacement. They navigate self-social world-environment relationships and uneven transitions not in isolation but within broader socio-cultural expectations of what it means to grow up, such as going to school, being in a family, forming a family, finding a job, and having a positive identity, among others. They act with intentionality to meet those personal, familial and socio-cultural imaginations (Chase & Allsopp, 2020; Stenvig et al., 2018).

Trajecto-making

In this paper, we use the term *trajecto-making* to capture how children and young people navigate complex, uneven and non-linear ruptures and transitions within broader continuities in

developmental trajectories. We define trajecto-making as the intentional striving in the present towards a future that is yet uncertain, thus highlighting the specific "making" strategies that children and young people use. The concept captures an awareness that conflict and displacements force children to live lives that often are "out of sync" with normative age patterns and their own personal, family and socio-cultural expectations. Across developmental time, children and young people must strategize, and find ways to optimise opportunities to fashion some degree of synchronisation with their own desired trajectory, sustained by a sense of their 'ongoingness' into the future. Furthermore, experiences of conflict and displacements that are out of sync with the moral norms of a host community sometimes cannot be talked about or acknowledged in the new present, but they shape and define that present, for example, skills learnt in rebel groups or the secrets of life as an undocumented child migrant. In confronting disruptions and transitions, they strive to find continuity between the past, present and future through an ongoing readjustment of the dynamic making of their developmental and migratory trajectory. As they grow up, they show directionality in their developmental trajectory as they strive to bring about a desired future in the midst of disruptions, uncertainty and changing circumstances and environments.

Trajecto-making therefore is about engaging in negotiations with individuals, systems and structures. There are parameters and constraints to trajecto-making that reshape young people's personal developmental trajectories that are connected to migratory lines and are embedded in socio-political historical contexts. Our approach views refugee children's developmental trajectories as agentive, emergent and multi-directional. The usefulness of trajecto-making as a concept rests in its integrating the literature on refugee agency, usually focussed on the present, and the longitudinal literature on transitions and development, to which we add directionality and aspirations.

In the next section, we present twthat highlight different ways by whicho case studies children actively and internationally engage with non-linear developmental trajectories in the context of disruptions caused by armed conflicts and displacements. This first case study highlights the ways in which growing up as a child during genocide, refugee adolescent in the rebel army and adult returnee interconnect. It shows how a child grows up to take on different roles, how agency is exercised with intentionality, and how expectations about the future, such as return, influence choices in the present with reference to the future. In other words, trajecto-making amidst disruptions can be used to make visible connections between personal and national histories of forced migration; to show changing roles and relationships as family systems change as a result of being an asylum seeker; and compare the same cohort of displaced children and youth across contexts leading to differently unfolding life courses.

Trajecto-making in conflict, displacement and return

This first case study examines the trajecto-making of a child as he grows up amidst the disruptions caused by war and displacement. This case study is drawn from ethnographic research conducted between 2009 and 2018 in Rwanda and with Rwandans in the diaspora (see Doná, 2019). Innocent was a young Rwandan Hutu boy in 1994 when war and genocide unfolded across his country. Together with other family members, he fled across the border to Burundi towards the end of the genocide. His border crossing marked not only a spatial trajectory but also a categorical shift in subject positions from that of a child in war to that of a child refugee. It also is a step in the making of a new trajectory. While a child refugee, Innocent makes the decision to join the Burundian Hutu rebels and thus becomes a child soldier. Innocent says: "Once I arrived [in Burundi] I joined the Hutu rebellion. Three hundred of us left to join the rebels. Government soldiers fired at us as we made our way to the training camps, and only 40 arrived at our destination." The choice of joining the combatants is not only made in response to the immediate circumstances in which he finds himself, but it is also a choice made

with intentionality, and with purpose that is personal and collective, as it is linked to the group's aspirations for the future.

His personal trajectory of survival as a refugee shifts to that of a combatant who shares a vision for the future of one's ethnic group position in society. His trajecto-making drives him to go beyond the immediate survival as a victim in the present to become a child combatant with a vision for oneself and one's ethnic group in the future. While in the rebel group, Innocent is promoted from trainee soldier to sergeant. His thriving and moving higher up the military hierarchy shows another feature of trajecto-making, namely the intentional strife to grasp opportunities to improve status, conditions and social mobility.

Awareness of resentment towards Rwandans on the part of the Burundian rebels promoted him to exercise agency by strategizing his escape from the rebel group and return to Rwanda.

> I became informed that the Burundians wanted to kill all Rwandans at the end
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> of the rebellion and that they were going to start with those who had been at
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> school. I came up with the excuse that I wanted to recruit more Rwandans to
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> increase our contingent, and thus I managed to flee.

The ability to assess situations with agility and to change one's life trajectory when it becomes challenging shows the ways in which choices are made in response to the immediate situation but also with intention, goals and aspirations. Trajectories are made and re-made, adjusted and adapted to maximise internal and external opportunities.

Innocent returned to live in Rwanda, a move that fits with the broader imagined trajecto-making of refugee repatriation. His return to Rwanda as a young man marked his transition back to civilian life, when he embarked on a different trajecto-making path. From his new subject positionality of returnee and civilian, Innocent revives the aspiration to complete his education

that had been interrupted by armed conflict and displacement. "A benefactor brought me to Kigali where I managed to resume my secondary education and to obtain my high school degree in law". The resumption of his disrupted education shows that trajecto-making is not necessarily a linear process but one that entails discontinuities, shifts and resumptions. His new pathway opened to him with the intervention of a patron (benefactor) to highlight the relational quality of personal trajecto-making strategies. This re-synched his trajectory with those of his peers as a schoolboy civilian pursuing his future through education. He achieved a high school degree in law, which he expected would set him up for a future career.

Yet, as he grew up to be a young man in post-genocide Rwanda, Innocent's transition from education to employment proved difficult. "I am not able to have a good job. I even tried to enter the national police but so far I have not succeeded." His relationships also suffered. "My first marriage has failed, and so has the second." The aspirations to have a secure job and a family of one's own along his trajecto-making strategy are thwarted. Innocent's return to Rwanda as a member of the defeated ethnic group means that his past experience as combatant with the Hutu rebels is out of sync with the post-genocide realities of the country.

This lack of fulfilment of one's trajectory points to the fact that trajecto-making happens in a reciprocal relationship of the personal and the social, the internal and external environment. Trajecto-making is in the making through ongoing adjustment, rupture, and transition to constantly changing environments where his ethnic position and past may play a role. His present life is precarious and his future uncertain. Innocent is struggling with the making of his life trajectory and the future is being worked out. He is out of sync with societal expectations of successful return home and integration: "I sometimes steal, and I do simple jobs to survive. My future is unclear. I do not know what lies ahead of me."

Conflict and forced movements played a significant role in disrupting, and changing children's and young people's developmental trajectories. Innocents' story shows the reciprocal intersections of developmental and migratory trajectories.. Young people actively engage in trajecto-making even amidst disruptions and challenges. Where they end up is negotiated within the systems they engage with.

Trajecto-making in asylum: moving standpoints 'in and out' of family, education & legal systems

The second case study extends the analysis of trajecto-making to unpack the intersections of educational systems, migration systems (asylum, child protection) and family systems. It shows how trajecto-making involves not only a child striving for their projected future but also how this is enacted in the context of family structures and relations that work together while also changing as children grow up in exile. This case study was gathered in 2018-2020 as part of a research project examining the experiences of young people who, as adolescents, lived for a period of time in 'Direct Provision' asylum seeker accommodation centres with their families in Ireland (Veale et al., 2020). It explored their transition from the Direct Provision asylum system to community settings. Twelve interviews were conducted with youth aged 18-25 who had spent between five and ten years as asylum seekers during their childhood and/or adolescence.

Jez arrived in Ireland from an African country with his mother when he was seven years old. Shortly after arrival, their application for asylum was denied, and a deportation notice was issued for their removal from the country. This pushed Jez and his mother into hiding. This led to an immediate rupture as they fled their asylum accommodation to shelter with a relative. It also marked his transition from a legal subject position of asylum seeker to that of undocumented child migrant and with that, a shift from a status of protection to one of precarity and uncertainty.

This rupture was the first of many over the next four years as Jez moved with his mother to different parts of the country, entering and exiting different schools, and sometimes being out of school for long periods. Despite these interruptions, Jez managed to progress in his educational trajecto-making by keeping up with his age-mates.

At twelve years of age, tired of running, his mother reported to the authorities and they re-entered an accommodation centre for asylum seekers, and just like that, "after the years went by, we ended up going back into it" and with that, his legal status with respect to the asylum system was re-ordered.

However, some months later, while at school, immigration officers took his mother and Irish-born little brother into custody. A family friend arrived at school, took Jez out of class and helped him hide, while his mother and brother were deported. In Jez's life course, the deportation of his mother and little brother marked a dramatic rupture in his family life that had represented continuity amidst precarity. The collective family decision was that thirteen-year-old Jez should remain in Ireland. But he also articulated his stake in this decision by noting, "I can stay here and fight for my own self yano..Be given the opportunity to fight for my citizenship". This example of trajecto-making shows how he agentically strategised a fight for legal status within the realm of a collective family decision.

He was again undocumented and in hiding but "Eventually I think they [friends of mother] came to the conclusion to give me back to the government so I could be put into like foster care or something". Entry into foster care was another transition, and one in which he experienced very little agency but which required significant internal adaptation. He says: "Yeah ehmm for me it was a bit odd obviously … I had just been put into like a new family, new culture, new

environment, new everything like. I'm coming from an African household and placed into an Irish household." The use of the passive tense here highlights a moment of restricted trajecto-making, but in his meaning-making and negotiation of this experience, he chooses to emphasize a continuity of what it means to be in a family, a household member.

Because of his young age, it also meant he now entered the childcare system, another changing subject position and legal status as an unaccompanied minor. Yet while in foster care, his legal positioning was to the fore of his mind; as he explains: "I was still on the line as an asylum seeker. I didn't know where I stood at all until I was 16. I remember getting my first stamp for a visa which was ahh I think that probably just allows me to stay in the country and work."

In fact, this conferred limited legal rights, for example the right to residency but excluded the right to access third level education. In his supportive foster care placement, he had a realisation: "I realised like okay this is kinda like basically a normal life because the life we were living before - I wouldn't consider that anything normal". Here, he reflects agentically on his life and on his awareness of and desire for a normal life. This is a top trajecto-making organising strategy for Jez. His personal development, his family life and educational progression have been out of sync for years. Getting his first stamp was only a partially successful step because this protection status still carried limitations in access to education opportunities. Despite these limitations, Jez's exercised agency in the areas that he had control over, such as his education, while striving for a future he was able to hold in mind; "I did have some idea… I knew I was interested in the business field".

In one example of trajecto-making, he strategized what to prioritise as a way to get onto an educational trajectory that could position him for third level education. He put his energies into school, quitting all the sports he loved from the ages of 17 to 18 years to focus on preparation

for the Leaving Cert. His legal status meant he was ineligible for EU fees for University thus placing third level study out of reach. He reluctantly took a place in a pre-University course. He says: " If I could get this citizenship done. ..I could go to university and do what I really wanted to do…. yeah I was basically just forced to just do this [pre-University course] and at the same time think about the bigger picture". The ability to keep a future " big picture" in focus gave direction to his continued striving and agentive actions. His foster mother, he noted,

> "She goes beyond to help me try and obtain it [citizenship]- she went beyond
> cause *I have it now*". "This certificate -It took on a big meaning yeah …
> basically it solidified what my [biological] mum was fighting for the whole
> time. Like when I told her I got it she was like… singing on the phone to
> me…".

This captures both the individual and collective intentional, directional striving in trajecto-making.

The acquisition of citizenship was a key marker in Jez's trajecto-making. Jez negotiated multiple ruptures of immigration status, education and family structures as he engaged in future-oriented trajecto-making to achieve this aim.The citizenship ceremony was poignant as it was the realisation of both a personal and collective project of his natural, fictive and foster families and a collectively enacted 'fight to remain'. In highly constraining, changing circumstances, Jez exhibited agency in the ways he flexibly adapted to disruptions in the present through trajecto-making towards his sense of a desired future, by maximising opportunities where they arose and through engaging in social relationships in fluid and dynamic ways.

This case study offers an analysis of trajecto-making within the restrictions of the migration regime that captures directionality in the context of family upheavals and micro-transitions as he

forges a pathway 'in and out' of education, of asylum and child protection systems and as he changes and adapts his role in family structures. His goal, that of remaining in the host country, was accomplished not by the youth on his own but with and through his famil(ies), as a form of adaptive and collective trajecto-making.

Taken together, these two case studies, one situated in the global south and the other in the global north, show that, even though the types of ruptures and transitions Innocent and Jez experience are different, there are similarities: they are multiple, complex and disrupt 'normative' development trajectories. Both cases show that children grow up to take on different roles (e.g. in the family or the army), that agency is exercised with intentionality (return or acquiring citizenship), and how expectations about the future (marriage or studying) influence choices in the present. These children who grow up to become young adults shift positionality in relation to family, education, legal, child welfare and protection systems. Thus, the usefulness of trajecto-making rests in the active navigating, mediating, but they do it with an imagination of what they would like their life to be, not just about the present but in their imagined futures. Their trajecto-making connects personal and national histories of forced migration, individual and community histories, and survival amidst restrictive asylum and refugee systems.

Conclusion

This chapter contributes both conceptually and empirically to the analysis of the intersections of developmental and migration trajectories of children and young people who are forced to move due to armed conflicts (Chase & Allsopp, 2020; Denov & Blanchett-Cohen, 2017; Durmmond Johansen & Varvin, 2020). Conceptually, we introduced the term *trajecto-making* to capture the ways in which children and young people agentically navigate their way 'in and out' of relationships, contexts, and institutions in response to different disruptions, acting in the present

but simultaneously acting 'into' their future. Trajecto-making is about engaging in negotiations with individuals, systems and structures from the children's positionality.

The chapter confirms findings of existing literature that conflicts and forced migration have an impact on lives of children and young people both in countries of origin (Salami et al. 2020) and across borders (Kandemir et al., 2018; Kien et al., 2019), and these are both short-term (Denov & Akesson, 2017; Hart, 2014) and long-term (Müller et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2021; Tam et al., 2017). It contributed to this literature by showing how wars and displacements also create uneven and non-linear transitions that operate across multiple domains of development e.g., family, education, legal and humanitarian. An additional original contribution of the chapter to the emerging literature on young lives' transitions in displacement (Duque, 2017; Pontalti, 2021; Sirriyeh & Ní Raghallaigh, 2018; Zwi et al., 2017) was to show that within and despite multiple spatial, temporal, relational and emotional raptures, there are continuities in developmental trajectories that need to be examined in greater details.

Thus, it is important for scholars of forced migration and youth studies to build upon the navigation of transitions and disruptions across development trajectories in displacement by considering how these take place actively and with an imagination of what children and young people would like their life to be not just about the present but their imagined proximal or distant futures (Zittoun, 2020). Contributing to existing literature on children's and youth's agency and adaptive negotiations (Juang et al. 2018; Yaylaci, 2018), the chapter showed that strategies to overcome the challenges of armed conflicts and forced migration are best understood by situating them within an ecological context in which acting in the present is informed by an aspired for, and as yet uncertain future.

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