

# Not inheriting the past

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In certain situations second-generation forced migrants may be expected and even encouraged to inherit 'the rage of their ancestors'.<sup>1</sup> My research into notions of identity and belonging in second-generation Lebanese who were brought up abroad after their parents were forced to flee the 1975-90 war in Lebanon suggests that the parents of my respondents either had no rage to transmit or deliberately chose not to transmit it.

Instead, they chose to teach their children generic notions of 'Lebaneseness' that did not reflect the sectarian divisions that were the cause of so much strife in Lebanon, preferring to promote peaceful coexistence and national, rather than sectarian, identity. The children internalised these notions, making them their own while at the same time connecting to the culture of the countries where they were brought up:

*"I love being Lebanese. I love my country for its beauty, its traditions, freedom in life and expression. However, I love Qatar because I find security with a job and many friends around."*

*"I had no idea that there were many different sects [in Lebanon]. I did not know, for example, that there was a significant Shi'a*

*or Christian community there or that the Druze sect even existed. My parents simply taught us that we were Lebanese."*

*"Being out of Lebanon and growing up in the diaspora has made me half-Swedish, half-Lebanese, and I try to take the good things from each culture."*

The only thing that detracts from these plural identities is a feeling some of the respondents have of not belonging anywhere, or rather of always belonging to the place where they are currently not:

*"There is an expression that says: the one that has two homes is never at home. That is what I feel sometimes – I have two homes and still I can't feel 100% at home in either of them."*

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1. Robben, A C G M, and Suárez-Orozco, M M, (eds) (2000) *Cultures under siege: collective violence and trauma*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p35.