

Göttingen Series in
Sociological Biographical Research

Gabriele Rosenthal (Ed.)

Transnational Biographies

Changing We-images, Collective Belongings
and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees



Göttingen University Press

Gabriele Rosenthal (Ed.)
Transnational Biographies

This work is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).



Published in 2022 by Göttingen University Press as volume 9 in the series
“Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research”

Gabriele Rosenthal (Ed.)

Transnational Biographies

Changing We-images, Collective
Belongings and Power Chances
of Migrants and Refugees

Göttingen Series in Sociological
Biographical Research
Volume 9

Göttingen University Press
2022

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

„Göttinger Beiträge zur soziologischen Biographieforschung/Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research“

edited by

Prof. Dr. Maria Pohn-Lauggas E-Mail: maria.pohn-lauggas@uni-goettingen.de

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rosenthal E-Mail: grosent@gwdg.de

Dr. Nicole Witte E-Mail: nwitte@gwdg.de

Dr. Arne Worm E-Mail: aworm@uni-goettingen.de

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Center of Methods in Social Sciences
Goßlerstr. 19
37073 Göttingen

This work is protected by German Intellectual Property Right Law.
It is also available as an Open Access version through the publisher's homepage and the Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK) (<http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de>).
The license terms of the online version apply.

Setting and layout: Bernd Kasperek
Cover picture: Artur Bogner



© 2022 Universitätsverlag Göttingen
<https://univerlag.uni-goettingen.de>
ISBN: 978-3-86395-571-7
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2187>
ISSN: 2699-0989
eISSN: 2699-0997

Foreword by the editors

In recent years, methods in biographical research that are anchored in social constructivism and the sociology of knowledge have become established in the Center of Methods in Social Sciences at Georg-August University, Göttingen. In this context, a large amount of innovative and empirically sound research on a great variety of topics has been carried out. This new series is intended to do justice to this development. The editors wish to offer a forum for studies in the field of sociology written in German or English, whether doctoral dissertations, research reports or scholarly articles, which are based on the methodologies developed at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences. The studies published in the series shall include research works focused on methods and methodological developments as well as on material topics.

Maria Pohn-Lauggas, Gabriele Rosenthal, Nicole Witte, Arne Worm

Preface

This book is the result of research and fieldwork carried out between 2017 and 2022 in the context of three projects funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The two related projects “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany” and “The social construction of border zones: A comparison of two geopolitical cases” involved research on migrants in different parts of the world. For another project, “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946”, field research was carried out in Greater Amman.

We are deeply grateful to the many people who were willing to be interviewed and to give us insights into their lives and their personal histories. Without their support, our research and this book would not have been possible. Later on, some of them also worked for us as field assistants. We owe them a great debt of gratitude. For reasons of data protection, we cannot mention them, or any other interviewees, by name. All names, and certain personal data, of the people we interviewed, those who worked for us, and their relatives and friends, have been changed in order to ensure that they cannot be identified.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all those colleagues who, in addition to the authors, commented on and proofread the articles in this volume. First of all, our thanks go to Artur Bogner for supporting us with his regional and expert knowledge during all phases of the research, and for his critical comments on the various chapters. Our sincere thanks also go to Friederike von Ass, Isabella Enzler, Sarah Könecke, Miriam Schäfer, Vasiliki Vourvachaki and Markus Widmann for their valuable assistance with correcting and finalizing the manuscript.

We are also very grateful to Ruth Schubert for her painstaking translations and for pointing out inconsistencies or inaccuracies in our use of the English language.

Although each chapter of this volume appears under the name of the main author or authors, both the analysis and interpretation of empirical findings and

the formulation of theoretical syntheses are the result of discussions by the teams of the respective research projects.

Gabriele Rosenthal
Berlin, December 2022

Contents

1	Introduction	7
	<i>Gabriele Rosenthal</i>	
I	The front-stage and back-stage presentations of African migrants in the diaspora	17
2	On the rules for front-stage self- and we-presentations	19
	<i>Gabriele Rosenthal</i>	
3	Migrants from Senegal: Integrated in religious, national and multinational networks	27
	<i>Gabriele Rosenthal, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Arne Worm</i>	
4	Migrants from Mauritania: On the existence of slavery today and the unequal power chances of the Bidhan, the Soudan and the Haratin	81
	<i>Gabriele Rosenthal, Ahmed Albaba, Lucas Cé Sangalli</i>	
5	Contested we- and they-images among people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in Germany	115
	<i>Lucas Cé Sangalli</i>	

II	Migration courses in the context of ambivalent cross-border entanglements	171
6	Precarious transnationality <i>Eva Bahl, Arne Worm</i>	173
7	Forced migration of Kurdish activist women to Germany: Navigating through a political movement, an armed conflict, and an engaged diaspora <i>Sevil Çakır Kılınçoğlu</i>	221
III	Changes in a transnational migrant society: Social figurations and everyday life in Jordan	239
8	Jordan/Amman as a changing arrival context: From polarization between old-established residents and refugees to fragmentation and new fronts <i>Hendrik Hinrichsen, Johannes Becker</i>	241
9	Translocal vs. localized networks: How they shape migration, life chances and long-term establishment in Jordan <i>Hendrik Hinrichsen, Johannes Becker</i>	267
	Literature	283
	Transcription symbols	317
	About the Authors	319

1 Introduction

Gabriele Rosenthal

General questions. How do people who have had to leave, or who have chosen to leave, their home environment look back on their life histories and migration paths? What were the dynamics and processes that led to their decisions, and how do these people explain their motives when speaking from their present perspective? The empirical studies presented here show that migrants often have not just one but several reasons for leaving their homes, or that their decision to leave was the culmination of a chain of events. The major reason for their migration was not always a desire to improve their financial situation, or that of their family members who remained at home, although many of our interviewees first give this as their reason. Another question arises in connection with discourses in the diaspora¹: to what extent does the present situation of migrants depend on the society or social context in which they are now living? Which social and historical constellations enable some migrants to successfully realize their goals, and what obstacles make it impossible for others to do so? This book examines these questions on the basis of the life stories of people who tend to be labeled as “irregular” or “illegal” immigrants in the hegemonic social discourses of their respective arrival societies,

Rosenthal, G. (2022): Introduction. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2203>

¹ We use the concept of diaspora in the sense proposed by Rogers Brubaker (2005: 5ff.) who discussed three constitutive criteria of diaspora: “dispersion in space”, “orientation to a homeland”, and “boundary maintenance”.

and who have to struggle with the legal and social consequences of this social (or political or legal) label.

The answers we offer to these questions are based on the results of interpretative or qualitative studies carried out at the University of Göttingen in the context of three research projects on the situation of migrants in western and southern Europe, Brazil and Jordan, led by the editor of this volume, and funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The following chapters present the family and life histories of people who have migrated from very different collective and biographical constellations, and with very different future goals. The studies are all based on a biographical and figurational approach. They have in common that they follow the principles of social constructivism and figurational sociology, and that they are designed as multi-method field research with a special focus on biographical case reconstruction (see Bogner/Rosenthal in press, 2017, 2020; Rosenthal 2018, 2004). In addition to biographical-narrative interviews,² we conducted group discussions, family interviews and participant observations. As will be shown in the following chapters, the choice of data collection methods, the order in which these methods were applied, and the way different methods were combined depended in each case on how we were able to access the field and on the particular conditions in the field.

The social constructivist and biographical framework of our research methodology means first and foremost that we attempt to reconstruct the biographical courses and the subjective interpretation patterns of our interviewees. We also adopt the principles of figurational sociology, in the tradition of Norbert Elias (e.g. 2008[1994]), which means that, as far as is possible with the available data, we try to reconstruct the collective and historical backgrounds of the interviewees, their membership of various we-groups, and their changing collective belongings and power chances in the dynamic figurations of diverse and changing we-groups or groupings to which they belong.

Most of the studies (chs. 2–7) were carried out in connection with the DFG-funded project “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany”.³ For this project, in addition to new field studies in Germany and Brazil, the authors also conducted follow-up interviews with migrants we had first interviewed in the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta between 2014 and 2018 for an earlier project entitled “The social construction of border zones: A comparison of two geopolitical cases”.⁴ These are people who live today in various

² For a detailed introduction to this interview technique, see Rosenthal (2018: ch. 5). On the method of biographical case reconstruction, see Rosenthal (2018: ch. 6, 2004).

³ This project (RO 827/21-1;2) is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The duration is from February 2019 to January 2023. Team members are: Dr. Eva Bahl, Dr. Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu, Lucas Cé Sangalli, M.A., Dr. Arne Worm. The student members of the research team are Margherita Cusmano, Merve Eryoldas, Tim Sievert and Tom Weiss. Available at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/607273.html> [Accessed on March 30, 2022].

⁴ This project (RO 827/19-1; 2) was led by Gabriele Rosenthal and also funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). For this project, Eva Bahl, Gabriele Rosenthal and Arne Worm did field

western European countries or in Morocco, and with whom we have maintained contact and regularly conducted online interviews. The chapters on “Changes in a transnational migrant society” (chs. 8 and 9) are the result of fieldwork we carried out in Jordan for the DFG-funded project entitled “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946”⁵ and relate partly to the second and third generations of refugee families in Jordan.

Comparing the data gathered in these different research contexts reveals differences in the degree to which migrants participate and feel included in the social life of their countries of arrival, the degree to which they are engaged in transnational and transregional practices and networks, and in their present social realities and future perspectives. In other words, such a comparison shows that the everyday life of migrants and their chances for realizing their goals depend very much on their arrival context, as well as on their society of origin and their migration course. We consider the perspective of the individual migrants with regard to their conditions and experiences of participation in their arrival contexts. They pursue very different goals and interpret their migration projects accordingly as successful or failed, promising or without prospects. While some intend to stay for only a few years in order to work (see in particular ch. 3), and others plan to settle in the new country on a permanent basis (see in particular chs. 6, 8 and 9), yet others left their country of origin because they suffered displacement or persecution and now face a very uncertain future (see for instance ch. 9). I wish to emphasize here that the authors of the articles in this volume have no normative concept of what constitutes successful participation or inclusion in the new society. Rather, we try to find out, from the perspective of the migrants themselves, whether they can achieve what they had planned, whether and how their plans have changed in the course of their migration, or whether they are struggling with an uncertain, and in some cases threatening, future horizon. As we will show, the way the migrants consider their future, and their differing degrees of attachment to their context of arrival or their context of origin, depend very much on their ethnic or regional origin and the reasons for their migration. Further, we will show the role that is played by active integration in, or withdrawal from, transnational networks and we-groups (including groups consisting of family members).

The contributions to this volume show very different individual and collective self-presentations, migration constellations, migration routes, and present living conditions and power chances in the country of arrival of our interviewees – and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic which started in spring 2020. In every

research at the Moroccan-Spanish border, and Prof. Dr. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev and Dr. Nir Gazit at the border between Israel and Egypt. Available at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/477891.html> [Accessed on March 30, 2022].

⁵ This project (RO 827/20-1;2) is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) for the period April 2017 to September 2022. Team members: Dr. Ahmed Albaba, Dr. Johannes Becker, Dr. Hendrik Hinrichsen and Dolly Abdul Karim, M.A. (2017–2018). Available at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/555157.html> [Accessed on March 30, 2022].

case, we examine the extent to which their present situation is determined by their collective and individual past; in other words, how their family history or their own past life before their migration affects the way they are living in their country of arrival. We also consider how their lives are affected by their legal status in the host country. Especially in the chapters relating to Jordan (chs. 8 and 9), the authors look closely at how the interviewed migrants experience their relations with various groupings of old-established residents in this arrival context, and how these figurations of social groupings with different we-images have changed in the course of social transformation processes.

The empirical studies presented here thus focus on reconstructing those components which have had, and still have, a decisive influence on the present life of the migrants and their descendants. We ask which social and biographical constellations before, during and after a migration make it easier or more difficult for migrants to settle and participate in their host countries and to pursue the goals with which their migration is linked. By comparing very different groupings of migrants, with different migration courses, and different countries of origin and of arrival, we will show how a) their collective and biographical courses, b) their migration processes, c) their new everyday world, and d) their changing opportunities for participation in the country of arrival (in which legal aspects play an important role), contribute to shaping their life courses and their present situation.

On the significance of a person's country and region of origin and the need to avoid methodological nationalism. If one considers the way we have grouped the following studies of migrants according to countries, one could easily accuse us of methodological nationalism or methodological ethnicization, as defined by Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (2002). If we take the subchapters on "African migrants", for instance, it will appear that we have grouped these migrants together on the basis of their country of origin, even though this is not always what distinguishes the different groupings, and often has little influence on their present situation in their country of arrival. However, taking the example of three African countries of origin, we will elucidate how nationality and membership of a particular ethnic or ethno-political (or religious or regional) grouping can shape a person's migration course, and his or her life in the country of arrival. On the basis of an extensive collection of data from observations, group discussions and interviews with Senegalese in the diaspora (Brazil, Germany and Morocco), Gabriele Rosenthal, Lucas Cé Sangalli and Arne Worm discuss the unbroken power in the diaspora of the Sufi brotherhoods and the Wolof-speaking community. These very influential groupings impose rules concerning how people should talk about Senegal, both within their groupings and with outsiders. While these people know that they must deny the existence of conflicts between the different we-groups, there is no such rule in the community of migrants from Mauritania. This is shown by Gabriele Rosenthal, Ahmed Albaba and Lucas Cé Sangalli in their discussion of data collected in various arrival contexts (Spain, France and Germany). The cases

of the Mauritanian migrants show how living in the diaspora can lead to the opening of a dialogue on social inequalities and the continued existence of slavery in Mauritania. At the same time, however, our analyses of interviews with African migrants show how hard it can be to abandon the rules of internalized and quasi-institutionalized discourses, and how much the way the migrants speak depends on the framing of the interviews and the networks to which they belong. In his study of refugees from the Republic of Sudan living in Germany, Lucas Cé Sangalli reveals how the violent collective conflicts they have experienced in their country of origin between different ethnic, regional or religious we-groups continue to influence their life in the diaspora and the boundaries between different groupings. In particular, the local and ethnic origin of refugees significantly influences the outcome of their asylum procedure, and in some cases this leads to changes in their constructions of collective belonging.

Our analyses of interviews with migrants from these three countries show that we always need to take into account not only their national and ethnic belongings, but also the particular regions from which they come. That the family history and individual biography of a person from Darfur differ, for instance, from those of a person from another region of the Republic of Sudan will be obvious to anyone who conducts biographical interviews. In other cases, however, such as interviewees from Senegal who use an extremely homogenizing discourse when speaking about their different we-groups, it is necessary to do some background research on their collective histories before, during and after colonization, and on how borders have changed in the region. This makes it easier to understand the transnational family connections in what are today neighboring countries, which can be observed in many families, and the resulting possibility that people may present themselves as having more than one country of origin, as in the case of a migrant from Mauritania whose maternal family of origin is in Mali (ch. 4).

In general, we have tried to ascertain to what degree the migrants' present situation, the possibility of their returning to their country of origin, and their chances of a future in their country of arrival, are determined by legal and political regimes in their country of origin and country of arrival. Throughout the chapters of this book, it is very clear that the nationality, or claimed nationality, of the migrants plays a decisive role in determining their chances of creating a future for themselves in their country of arrival, whether this is Brazil, a country in western or southern Europe, or Jordan. This can be seen very clearly in the comparison by Hendrik Hinrichsen and Johannes Becker (chs. 8 and 9) of different groupings of immigrants in Greater Amman. The studies presented here also show to what extent the society of origin and membership of particular ethnic, religious or political we-groups influence the networks which migrants choose to be part of in the diaspora, and the intensity of their activities within these networks, whether multinational, national or regional. This is made very clear by Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu's discussion of Kurdish female activists who left Turkey to seek safety in Germany. After initially avoiding having anything to do with Kurdish political networks in

their host country, they became actively engaged in such networks in Germany after a few years had passed. A good example of continuous network membership is provided by the people from Senegal we interviewed in Brazil (ch. 3). Apart from contacts associated with their work, they interact almost exclusively with members of the Senegalese Wolof-speaking community. This is very different in the case of our interviewees from Mauritania and from the Republic of Sudan. These people clearly strive to distance themselves in the diaspora from certain ethnic or political we-groups from their home country as a result of the collective violent conflicts there. Nevertheless, in their collective constructions of belonging they feel attached to their 'homeland' and distinguish themselves from their host society, which, as argued by Rogers Brubaker (2005), is constitutive of the existence of a diaspora.

It is important to note that we have always been open for the discovery of different comparison contexts when analyzing our interviews or cases (which may be individuals, families or cliques), following the criteria of theoretical sampling and maximal or minimal contrastive comparison, as developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967). For example, we might find that the regions or countries of origin of the migrants are not the decisive component for comparison in respect of specific differences, such as finding themselves in extremely precarious situations during their migration (ch. 6). Similar procedures for making comparisons, based on empirical findings, have been proposed by authors such as Anja Weiss (2010), whose program for methodological cosmopolitanism requires taking into account historical contexts and the meso- and microlevels.⁶ The studies in this volume thus present important comparative findings relating to certain components of the migrants' present situation, their we- and they-images, and asymmetric power balances between different groupings. In the following chapters, we will discuss the observations or empirical findings which prompted us to make minimal or maximal contrastive comparisons of which groupings, and we will explain or reflect on how the sample was developed in certain groupings or field contexts. For us as biographical researchers, it is self-evident that before formulating assumptions in respect of a certain grouping or milieu or social space, we must first try to reconstruct the diverse we-groups and social networks to which individual migrants belong, taking into account that these change in the course of their lives. This is in compliance, for instance, with the argument formulated by Nina Glick Schiller, Ayse Çağlar and Thaddeus Guldbrandsen (2006: 614), that there should be no *a priori* categorization of units of analysis. The important point is that the *meaning* of a person's nationality or belonging to a certain ethnic, political or religious grouping should not be simply assumed without further examination, but should always be the subject of empirical investigation, as also argued for instance by Thomas Faist (2011: 31). In migration studies, the question of which

⁶ See the articles in the Special Issue of *Current Sociology* "Theorizing societalization across borders", which, as the editors say in the introduction, "suggest that grand theories move away from explaining all social phenomena in a generalizing way towards paying more attention to historical context and meso- and micro-level processes" (Amelina *et al.* 2020: 8).

we-groups migrants feel they belong to (often several groups which may or may not overlap) is always an empirical question, as well as questions such as which collective memories they have, whether these have changed in the course of their lives, which networks and social spaces they move in, and whether these are composed of people with a heterogeneous or homogeneous origin.

On the significance of migration courses and arrival societies. In the chapters in part I of the book, entitled “The front-stage and back-stage presentations of African migrants in the diaspora”, Ahmed Albaba, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Gabriele Rosenthal and Arne Worm discuss the meaning for their present life of the migrants’ family and life histories in their respective contexts of origin, while in the subsequent chapters the discussion is more strongly focused on their migration courses and their present life in their societies of arrival. The chapters in part II (“Migration courses in the context of ambivalent cross-border entanglements”, chs. 6 and 7) present cases of migrants from different contexts of origin who have lived through phases of extreme danger or stress, whether in their home country, during their migration, or today in their host country. In chapter 6 on “Precarious Transnationality”, Eva Bahl and Arne Worm present case studies which show that transnational biographies are not always felt to be an asset, a kind of transnational capital, but may be experienced as stressful or even threatening. The authors compare the biographical courses of migrants who found themselves in precarious circumstances for a limited period during their migration, with other cases in which the migrants were permanently in extremely precarious situations. They show, for instance, that experiences of collective violence and resulting sequential traumatizations, i.e. extreme traumatizations, can be a component that contributes significantly to the continuation of a precarious situation in the society of arrival. The cases they discuss also show how migrants are able to improve their situation if they have a stable social network in which the other members do not only expect to be given support, especially financial support. On the other hand, the obligation to send remittances to their families of orientation or families of procreation often makes it difficult for migrants to become established in their society of arrival, and can lead to a financially precarious situation.

The chapter by Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu, which deals with female Kurdish activists who have come to Germany from Turkey to escape persecution, also makes clear the enormous significance for their present lives of collective violence experienced in the past, and of the political engagement of many of these women. The author shows how the Kurdish networks in the diaspora are still powerful and attractive for these women, despite certain conflicts, and how the networks give them greater power to act.

In the chapters in part III (“Changes in a transnational migrant society”), Hendrik Hinrichsen and Johannes Becker focus on Jordan, a country which from 1948 onward has been strongly affected by the arrival of successive groupings of refugees. In this geographical space which has been deeply influenced by processes of flight

and migration, the question repeatedly arises: “Who is a migrant and who is an old-established resident?” The authors show how the answer to this question has changed over the years. Thus, the clear boundary or polarization between Palestinian we-groups and the so-called original Jordanians, which existed from the 1940s to the 1990s, has become blurred following the arrival of new migrant groupings, although not with the same intensity in all social milieus. However, the authors show that this phenomenon is due not only to the arrival of new groupings, but also to other changes within society as a whole, including transformation of the historically developed patronage networks used by the regime, or the creation of a more restrictive border and immigration policy.

On the challenges of doing fieldwork in times of Covid-19. Finally, we would like to point out that not every aspect of fieldwork can be planned. The way we were able to develop our samples depended very much on fortuities such as how easy or difficult it was to access the field, the opportunities open to us for observations and interviews, being invited by migrants to their festivals or other activities, finding field assistants with appropriate language skills, and not least our own language skills. In the initial phases of a field study, we have to find out the best way to access the field and what chances are open to us. Only after analyzing the first data collected can we decide how to proceed and how to compose the next sample. But this is not always easy to plan, partly because our open approach means engaging with the field and accepting the conditions we find there, and also because we work in fields where unexpected changes can make planning difficult. In both current research projects, data collection in the field was seriously affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and in the period from March 2020 to spring 2022 we had to cancel our plans for fieldwork in Jordan, Brazil and Germany. What could we do, when not only was it impossible for us to enter Jordan or Brazil, but, more importantly, when the people living there, and especially migrants and refugees, were facing extremely precarious circumstances? At the sites of our previous fieldwork, we had worked with field assistants who themselves belonged to the groupings we were investigating. Some of them were people with whom we had already conducted biographical interviews. And we had kept in contact with many of our interviewees via online social media platforms and digital messaging and video apps, so that we decided to use these existing contacts via the internet. The follow-up interviews we conducted with migrants and refugees – including some currently living in western Europe – on their situation in times of Covid-19 made us painfully aware of the effects of the various lockdown measures and the loss of sources of income. This, as well as certain methodological considerations, led us to offer them an opportunity to conduct online interviews for us; in the case of the project in Jordan, this included interviews with members of their families in their country of origin. This turned out to be an extremely useful research technique. On the one hand, the data obtained gave us a more differentiated and detailed view of the lifeworlds of the refugees. And on the other hand, it inspired

important methodological reflections on conducting online interviews and the significance of the socio-spatial and communicative setting in which the interaction takes place (see Bahl/Rosenthal 2021). The empirical findings from this phase of our research will often be referred to in the following chapters.

Part I

The front-stage and back-stage presentations of African migrants in the diaspora

2 On the rules for front-stage self- and we-presentations

Gabriele Rosenthal

In a park in Berlin, the author met a group of Black men¹ and had the impression they were speaking Twi and Ghanaian English. She took the liberty of asking them: “Are you from Ghana?” One young man answered: “No, from Africa” and hurried away on his bicycle. This was followed by a pleasant conversation with the other five men about those regions of Ghana which the author has visited in recent years. These regions are in the north where hardly anyone speaks Twi, and are often regarded by southerners as Ghana’s backward hinterland. The men explained that they came from different parts of southern Ghana and Nigeria. And they said that the man who had gone off on his bike was from Senegal. However, these five men were evidently making an effort to communicate something like African unity, and they obviously wanted to keep this conversation short and very general. Everyone present knew what the men were probably doing in this park –

Rosenthal, G. (2022): On the rules for front-stage self- and we-presentations. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 19–26. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2204>

¹ We, the authors of the articles in this volume, write Black with a capital letter, following the advice of our colleagues at the “Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland” (see Schearer/Haruna 2013: 17). The aim is to show “that this is a constructed categorization, and not a real ‘feature’ based on skin color” (see Eggers *et al.* 2017: 13). Since ‘white’ is also a constructed categorization, I place this word in single inverted commas. However, we need to be aware that such rules do not make it easier to shake off the racism that has been practised and institutionalized for centuries, and to do justice to the self-descriptions of Black, or Arab, people, which are contested even within their own we-groups.

selling drugs. However, from my empirical experience, I assume that their different regional origins – I deliberately do not speak here of different “nationalities” or countries of origin, because this is not always the significant dividing factor in West Africa – are also a reason for not wanting to carry on long conversations in this setting. Here we need to take into account that state and regional boundaries shaped the social realities of these people before their migration, and at the same time the country they claim to come from is key to their present chances of being granted permission to stay in their country of arrival.

The meeting described above illustrates, as if seen through a magnifying glass, several phenomena which my co-workers and I have been able to observe since 2014 in our studies of so-called irregular migration courses and present situations of migrants in Germany, Brazil, and the Spanish enclaves in North Africa.² In addition to the rehearsed and internalized rules for talking to members of the ‘white’ population established in these countries in the sense of what may and what may not be talked about, and the practical necessity on the front stage of an illegalized or illegalizable activity of not becoming engaged in deep or long conversations, we also witness here the phenomenon of a homogenizing presentation as “Africans”. Thus, a homogenizing and often derogatory they-image that is widespread among the ‘white’ population is mirrored, ironically in this case, by Africans who know that questions like “Where do you come from?” are prompted by an attitude that is at least potentially stigmatizing. As the author has been able to observe, migrants from Africa also know from their experience that ‘white’ people, or Europeans in general, possess very little knowledge about African countries and the geography of Africa. But for me this question is a key that opens up conversations once it is clear to the people addressed that it is based on a real interest in their place of origin, and thus in their lives, because I do have some knowledge of “Africa”, or, as in the case described, of “Ghana”, because I have carried out research there. However, in my empirical experience and that of my colleagues, long exchanges are possible only with single individuals, and spontaneously organized group discussions only with members of the same, or related, we-groups. We observed this during our research in the Spanish exclaves in North Africa (see Bahl 2021; Worm 2019), during fieldwork in Brazil (Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b), and in the parks of Berlin. Sometimes the internalized rules for we- and self-presentations make it impossible for members of different groupings to engage in open dialogue, as will be shown in the case of a group discussion with Senegalese from different religious and ethnic groupings (see ch. 3). In such group discussions, as opposed to the short meeting with a group of dealers in the park described above, people may modify we-images presented on some other occasion, and speak about their we-groups in a more differentiated way. However, it would be wrong to assume that homogenizing we-images are presented only as a reaction to homogenizing they-images in countries with an established ‘white’ population. Our studies show

² See ch. 1, footnotes 3 and 4.

that, for very different reasons, our interviewees often *first* present a homogenizing we-image of ‘the Africans’ or the ‘Ghanaians’, the ‘Senegalese’ or the ‘Arabs’. The we-group to which they allocate themselves is often determined by the wish to conceal intra- and inter-collective conflicts from those who do not belong to the groupings involved, by the unequal power chances of different groupings, or by stigmatizing they-images within the we-group of ‘Africans’ or ‘Senegalese’ or ‘Arabs’. This shows that the rules of discourses in their regions or countries of origin are still powerful in the present and after their migration.

In the following studies of migrants from Senegal, Mauritania and Sudan, my colleagues and I will show how their self- and we-images become increasingly differentiated in the course of successive meetings and in different interview settings, and in general how their self-presentations change. We will try to decode the meaning of contradictions in the self-presentations, and of observations we made which also appear to be contradictory. Our aim is to show which rules govern front-stage we- and self-presentations. We borrow the term front stage from Erving Goffman (1956) to refer to the space that is visible to (potential) spectators. We will also discuss how these front-stage presentations differ from the insights we were occasionally given back stage, and especially whether, and to what extent, the curtains between these two ‘spaces’ are permeable or transparent.

But first, let us briefly reflect on why we distinguish “Black Africans” from the North Africans and people from the Middle East that we interviewed. In all contexts in which we have carried out field research, the term “Africans” is mostly used to refer to people from the Sahel or countries south of the Sahara, in both they- and we-images. More concretely, in most discourses it is used to refer only to Black people from Africa. In other words, North Africans are not “Africans”, and in our experience North Africans speak of “Africans” only in the sense of Black people in Africa. In the Sahel, or at least in the Republic of Sudan, this reflects the construction of Arab and non-Arab collective self-images, and is not necessarily a distinction based on skin color (a distinction or perception that is also shaped by historically established social constructions). It is a distinction that is drawn very sharply by our Arab interviewees from North Africa, who are not regarded as Black, or who do not define themselves as such,³ as well as by our Black interviewees from Africa. It also shapes the social realities of migrants, not only in their Western countries of arrival, but also in refugee camps on the African continent (see for instance Bahl 2015). This line of separation has its historical and social significance not *only* in the Eurocentric worldview of the colonial powers and their divisive policies, as Frantz Fanon (1963) has very aptly described, but also goes back to the trans-Saharan and intra-African slave trade (see for instance N’Diaye 2017[2008]), and the slave-like work conditions for Black Africans that still exist today in many parts of North Africa or the Sahel. In addition, almost all

³ See: <https://www.islamiq.de/2018/11/24/anti-schwarzer-rassismus-in-der-ummah/> [Accessed on July 27, 2022].

our interviewees experienced racism in North Africa during their migration. We must agree with Frantz Fanon (1963: 161) when he writes:

“Africa is divided into Black and White, and the names that are substituted—Africa South of the Sahara, Africa North of the Sahara—do not manage to hide this latent racism. Here, it is affirmed that White Africa has a thousand-year-old tradition of culture; that she is Mediterranean, that she is a continuation of Europe, and that she shares in Greco-Latin civilization. Black Africa is looked on as a region that is inert, brutal, uncivilized, in a word, savage” (Fanon 1963: 161).

And so, in the terms we use, and the regional, national and ethnic categorizations and distinctions we make when presenting the different groupings we have studied, we are confronted with the problem (or the risk) of perpetuating a latent racism that may be bound up with these terms and categorizations. Our research was a constant struggle to find the right words, between our own preconceptions and constructions of we- and they-groups, the “national”, state, ethnic or religious belongings presented to us in the interviews, and constructions of we- and they-groups which became more differentiated in the course of successive meetings. In presenting our research, and especially in our analyses, we have to take into account the fact that today a racialized interpretation pattern based on skin color shapes not only *discourses* and self- and they-images on the African continent, and in migrant communities in Europe and Brazil, but also these people’s *everyday social realities*, including their contact networks. In the following chapters, our aim is to describe the social realities of our interviewees adequately and clearly, and, not least, to take their perspectives and competences seriously. For want of better alternatives, we will therefore follow the dominant discourses in the different communities of Africans we had contact with, by using the terms and expressions they typically used themselves. We will show to what extent homogenizing we-images and they-images presented initially during interactions with us, with time become modified, vanish, or prove to be unchanging.

Our front-stage observations in both Brazil and in Germany showed great superficial similarities with regard to the line of separation between different groupings in the illegal or semi-legal work milieus. The life and work spheres of Black African migrants and those of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are clearly separate, and the same applies to groupings of Black Africans from the Sahel who define themselves as Arab and non-Arab. During the months we spent doing fieldwork in Brazil in 2019, my colleagues Eva Bahl, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves and myself initially perceived an apparently relaxed atmosphere between traders from different countries. But as time went on, we became increasingly aware of their unequal power chances, the social control to which they were subjected, and the way they were allocated different fields of work, different work places, and different things to sell. Separation or differentiation according to place of origin or collective belonging in the working environment, but

also in everyday activities and contacts, can also be observed in North Africa and along the migration routes. This separation can be very clearly observed, for example, in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa, both in the cities and around the centers for the temporary accommodation of immigrants (the so-called CETIs⁴) (Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2017: 116). Everyone here is waiting for permission to continue their journey to mainland Spain. In the interviews conducted by Eva Bahl, Arne Worm and myself, we were repeatedly told by Black Africans that the “Arabs” or “whites” were given preferential treatment, while they themselves were confronted with the negative they-image of themselves spread by the “Arabs” or “whites”.

This separation of the groupings can also be observed among street vendors in Germany and Brazil. In Hasenheide Park or Görlitzer Park in Berlin, the spatial separation between Arab and Black African dealers (practically all men) is easy to see. Both groupings sell drugs fairly openly in clearly separate parts of these two parks. In the interviews, we often heard of conflicts between them, sometimes involving the use of violence. One day, while walking in Hasenheide Park, the author and Artur Bogner were asked by a man from Iraq to call the police because a Black African with a gun had threatened to shoot him. The man was obviously afraid and so we called the police. We stayed with him outside the park until, after about a quarter of an hour, two police officers came to sort out the situation.

In Brazil, this separation is visible among street vendors on the beaches in Rio de Janeiro or in Salvador da Bahia, for instance, in terms of the goods they offer for sale and the places where they sell them, which clearly differ according to their place of origin; in other words, whether they have a stand or just a cloth on the ground where they spread out their wares, and whether they have a fixed place or wander about with a mobile vending tray. Migrants from Haiti generally spread their wares out on a cloth, always at the same place, and the women who work as hairdressers have a stand; but the Black Africans, most of them from Senegal, usually use a mobile vending tray or display case. During our field work in Rio de Janeiro, we tried to find out from our interviewees exactly who can work undisturbed as a street vendor, where, and when, who enforces the rules, and which rules vendors have to comply with if they don't want their wares to be confiscated, but we learned very little in this respect. We were told that the police carry out checks (as we frequently observed ourselves) which can result in the apparently very relaxed settings to suddenly breaking up, usually because the vendors are selling goods with fake designer labels (such as sunglasses or T-shirts). But we were not told who enforces the rules concerning who is allowed to sell what, at which place on the beach, or in which market in the city, and who the vendors have to hand over part of their earnings to. Everyone we asked told us that the vendors are not controlled by a mafia. But it is easy to see that there are clear rules governing who

⁴ CETI (Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes) is the official name of the reception centers for migrants who arrive in the Spanish enclaves and autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

can sell what, and where. For example, there are no “Syrian” vendors to be seen on the beach at Copacabana or Ipanema, but only in the city. Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, who attended an informal meeting in Rio of scholars engaged in migration studies, noted in her memo that her colleagues said it was common practice for vendors to pay other, more powerful, vendors in Rio a kind of fee or rent for the space they occupy. Maria wrote: “They also recalled that two years ago a Syrian immigrant was beaten on the street by another seller and it turned out that the aggression was linked to the fact that the immigrant was occupying that space without having paid for it.” When we asked our interviewees about this, however, they denied knowing anything about such payments. In other words, to this day we still cannot explain exactly who can work as a street vendor, where, and under what conditions. Here there is a need for further ethnographic field studies.

The same applies to the question of what lines of separation, and especially what conflicts, there are within the communities of Black Africans, and what complicated and changing processes of boundary making (Barth 1969; Lamont/Pendergrass/Pachuki 2015; Wimmer 2008) shape the everyday realities of these migrants. However, if one interacts with particular communities for a long time, then social lines of difference, and especially unequal power balances (as discussed by Norbert Elias) will start to appear. This is shown by Lucas Cé Sangalli, Arne Worm, and the author in their study of migrants from Senegal in Brazil (ch. 3). We will see that the homogenizing and harmonizing we-images presented front stage differ from what is revealed back stage. For example, we can observe important distinctions between certain ethnic or religious groupings which are not immediately obvious. In our research, we are frequently confronted with extremely controlled discourses, not only with regard to the present situation of the migrants in Germany or Brazil and their different communities, but also in respect of their biographical self-presentations as a whole, in other words, their life before their migration. Here, the interviewees follow discourse rules they learned at home, in the sense of what they must not speak about, the reasons that can be given to explain, for instance, why they left their village for the town, or in what contexts they can mention witchcraft or their sexual or political preferences. In addition, migrants learn rules for presenting themselves in the most advantageous way along their migration route and in their country of arrival, and how to apply these rules successfully, for example in the context of their asylum claims.

While in an earlier publication (see Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2017) we focused mainly on the different reasons migrants presented for having left their homes, in the following studies of migrants from Senegal (ch. 3), Mauritania (ch. 4) and Sudan (ch. 5) we will concentrate more on the rules for self- and we-presentations in the country of arrival. With a contrastive comparison of migrants from these three countries, we will show how figurations of different groupings and unequal power balances have been formed in the present and in their (collective) pasts, and how they affect the we- and self-presentations of migrants in the diaspora. We will

describe an extremely homogenizing discourse on the we-group of Muslims from *Senegal*, which forms a sharp contrast to the discourse on conflictual figurations and unequal power chances, still associated today with slavery, of several we- and they-groups in Mauritania. In Mauritania, these power inequalities are due to the dominance of the Arab-Berber “Moors”, the so-called Bidhan (Arabic for ‘whites’), which gives the Black population unequal power chances. The interviews with “Arab” and “non-Arab” Black people from Sudan show how their unequal power chances are explained discursively in terms of “being Arab”, in Sudan and in the diaspora.

In our comparison of these groupings, we will try to show how unequal power chances in the country of origin, and belonging to certain ethnic and religious we-groups, with support from the corresponding networks, contribute to shaping people’s migration courses and their present situation in the country of arrival. This also involves asking to what extent the inequalities experienced in the country of origin are perpetuated or reversed in the diaspora. The example of asylum seekers from Sudan in Germany shows clearly that ‘non-Arab’ Sudanese from Darfur are more likely to be granted permission to stay than ‘Arab’ Sudanese from other parts of Sudan. The case of migrants from Senegal in Brazil who belong to one of the two big Muslim brotherhoods, and who often have little formal education, shows how belonging to a brotherhood can prove to be extremely beneficial in getting to South America to seek work, and in finding work in Brazil. On the other hand, these migrants are subject to a high level of social control, and this severely restricts their life in the diaspora. In addition to obligations such as sending remittances to the family at home, these people also have financial obligations toward the brotherhood. This constellation gives them no opportunity to change their original plan of working abroad only for a limited time, marrying and founding a family in Senegal, and concentrating in Brazil exclusively on earning money. In contrast to this, we discuss the case of a Senegalese man in Germany who is not a member of a brotherhood, and who belongs to an outsider grouping in Senegal. This man has succeeded in obtaining a regular job in Berlin after completing three years’ training in a municipal organization. This is similar to the case of a Black Mauritanian who, like some of the Senegalese we interviewed in Brazil, attended a Quranic school for many years, and therefore did not learn much French before leaving his country. In France, he improved his French and successfully trained as a cook. By contrast, in the case of the Senegalese in Brazil who have social contacts only within their brotherhoods, learning the language of the country in which they are living today is generally restricted to what they need for their work. In general terms, we can say that those who migrated without the help of specific networks, and who are dependent on their own resources, succeed in leading an independent life in their country of arrival. This is all the more surprising in cases where people have suffered extreme traumatization during their migration, meaning they have had traumatizing experiences over long periods, to the extent that they feared they would not survive, and who are living with the consequences

of extreme traumatization. If they are able to make plans for their future in their country of arrival, meaning if they are not expelled or forced into illegality, they have much better chances to develop their talents and participate in their new society than those who migrated with the help of networks such as the Muslim brotherhoods and who had hardly any serious problems during their migration.⁵

This comparison makes very clear what Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka has observed in various empirical studies: “the tension between individual freedom and the safety collectivities can offer to their members” (2020: 115). Pfaff-Czarnecka shows that some people find inclusion restrictive and confining, and inclusion “comes at the price of loyalty, displays of consensus (often submission) and the pooling of resources” (ibid.: 126, see also 2021). On the other hand, however, the success of a migration project, both during the migration and in the country of arrival, often depends on belonging to a certain network. The empirical questions which arise here are: What costs are bound up with belonging to certain we-groups or milieus, and how far do these we-groups and networks (or the discourses that prevail in them) allow multiple belongings (see in particular Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013)? Another question is: Which constellations in the migration course are favorable for maintaining close ties to the we-group, and which lead to these ties being cut?

⁵ This includes, for instance, those who traveled to Brazil with a tourist visa during the 2014 FIFA World Cup with the intention of spending some time there to work and earn money, and who mostly stayed for many years, much longer than they originally planned.

3 Migrants from Senegal: Integrated in religious, national and multinational networks

Gabriele Rosenthal, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Arne Worm

3.1 Introduction

Among the migrants from very different regions or countries of origin whom we interviewed in Brazil, Western Europe and North Africa, one group stands out in particular because its members present a very harmonious and homogenizing we-image and speak of their home country in purely positive terms, without any critical judgements. We are referring to the Senegalese men we interviewed in Brazil who, apart from their work, (inter-)act almost entirely within the social networks of their Islamic brotherhoods, and in most cases also migrated with the help of these brotherhood networks. On the basis of the empirical findings discussed below, we call this grouping **“those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”**. The interviewees who can be seen as representatives of this type insisted very firmly that, both in Senegal and in the diaspora,¹ differences in their ethnic or religious belongings are unimportant. They said that they all belonged, without any distinctions, to the we-group of Muslims from Senegal; and that Senegal is a country

Rosenthal, G./Cé Sangalli, L./Worm, A. (2022): Migrants from Senegal: Integrated in religious, national and multinational networks. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 27–80. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2205>

¹ Following Brubaker (2005), we use the term “diaspora” here to mean migrant groupings who regard their situation as “diasporic”, in other words who define themselves as being geographically separated from their original collective (regardless of whether this is a national, ethnic, religious or regional collective).

where everyone lives peacefully together. In the group discussion presented below, in which we interviewers were perceived as Christians, they told us that this also applies to relations between Muslims and Christians. This grouping of Senegalese migrants shares a very explicit we-image: “We are only here to work, we intend to go back to Senegal, and we are doing nothing wrong.” They typically say: “We obey the commandments of our Islamic brotherhoods and our religious leaders.” Those who have wives in Senegal underline that their wives do not have to go out to work, for that would go against their tradition, and that they send enough money home to them. Their life in Brazil is dominated by the desire to participate in the labor market in the diaspora, and to be able to send money to their family of origin or their family of procreation in Senegal. They try to spend as little money as possible, for instance by living in shared accommodation, learn (Brazilian) Portuguese only to the extent that they need it for their work, and restrict their social contacts to their religious Senegalese networks. These networks, which have connections with commercial Senegalese networks, not only in Brazil (see Heil 2021), helped them to become integrated in the labor market, and, for instance, supply the street vendors with goods. The migrants feel indebted, or are substantially indebted, to their network. There is no doubt that such a network involves mutual dependencies, and that it exercises a high degree of social control, although this is not openly spoken about by its members, who may not even be aware of it. It is clear that while belonging to such a network means being able to rely on its support, this creates obligations (see Pfaff-Czarnecka 2020: 126).

The representatives of this type migrated to Brazil in the context of these religious networks. Some were able to enter Brazil directly and fairly easily, for example with a 90-day tourist visa during the FIFA World Cup in 2014 or the Olympic Games in 2016. Others made a long, and often difficult, journey through other South American countries (mostly through Ecuador), but with a relatively easy border crossing into Brazil. Most of the Senegalese we interviewed had applied for refugee status in Brazil. During the period that their applications are under review by the Brazilian authorities, they have a legal right to stay in Brazil. Some also had work permits.² In fall 2019 most of our interviewees were granted a residence permit under a decree issued by the Brazilian government. They owe this in part to the efforts of the “Association of Senegalese Residents in Rio de Janeiro” and of Caritas, as well as other (Christian) religious associations, mainly led by Brazilians who welcome and support immigrants (see Heil 2021: 139f.).

On the basis of our interviews and participant observations, we will discuss below how the self- and we-presentations of our interviewees are clearly dominated by this homogenizing and harmonizing we-image. At the same time, we will reveal signs of cracks in it, and that to a certain extent it is belied by daily practice. This does not mean that we wish to question the peaceful co-existence of different

² On the fairly straightforward paths for the legalization of migrants and refugees in Brazil, see Cé Sangalli/dos Santos Gonçalves (2020: 85f.).

religious and ethnic groupings in Senegal, or simply dismiss it as a we-discourse of this grouping of Senegalese. After all, along with Ghana, Senegal has been one of the most stable African countries since independence (1960), with many largely non-violent changes of government, and peaceful co-existence of different religious groupings. Leonardo A. Villalón, for example, writes:

“[...] socio-political cleavages based on religion, whether between Muslim and non-Muslim or between Sufi orders, are virtually non-existent; and outside a very small urban minority there is virtually no opposition to the much-touted principle of *l'état laïc*, the secular state” (2006[1995]: 2).

Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that in Senegal there is increasing dissatisfaction with working conditions or unemployment and the lack of career opportunities for young people, along with public protests against corruption, and demands for more democracy and freedom of opinion. This became manifest, for instance, during the violent protests in March 2021, which were initially triggered by the arrest of Ousmane Sonko, an opposition leader who was accused of having committed rape. The protests rapidly escalated to include demands for less corruption in the government, and gained anti-colonial overtones which translated into persecution and harassment of allegedly French citizens, and the destruction of French supermarkets and oil stations.³ However, there is no sign of this dissatisfaction in our interviews. Instead, it is striking how often and how vehemently we are presented with this image of the peaceful co-existence of different groupings in Senegal. In contrast to our interviews with migrants from Mauritania (ch. 4), the interviews we conducted with members of this grouping contain no explicitly critical comments on exploitation in the sense of slave-like conditions, for instance in the Quranic schools, on the discrimination of particular groupings, or on the history of slavery and the slave trade. Again and again (even in our current online interviews with Senegalese living in Brazil), we notice that mentions of even small differences are taken back again in the next breath. The answer (which we will return to below) given by Bassam to a question put by Lucas Cé Sangalli via a messaging app (January 2021), whether there is any difference between the Sarakole and the Soninke or whether these are just two names for the same ethnic grouping, is a good example of this phenomenon:

“There is a difference of dialect, you see, the dialect is very different. It is a bit different [...] It's a bit different but it is the same thing” (Follow-up interview, January 2021, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French).

³ Human Rights Watch, March 12, 2021. “Senegal: Respect Free Expression, Assembly.” Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/12/senegal-respect-free-expression-assembly> [Accessed on May 4, 2021].

In the interviews with men in this grouping, questions about ethnic or religious differences in Senegal are typically answered in this way, with statements proceeding from “very different” or “a bit different” to “there is no difference”.

This leads to the question, what happens in dialogues in which a Senegalese man or woman does not cultivate this we-image, or for whom this image does not correspond to his or her daily experience. We will consider this question below in the light of our own observations and group discussions (see chs. 3.2-3.4). On the basis of our interviews with Senegalese who do not present this we-image, we will discuss which specific biographical constellations lead to their being much more involved than the others in multinational and multi-ethnic networks and milieus, and what this means for their participation in the social life of their host country. We conducted a total of seven interviews with members of this grouping. None of these interviewees had relied on assistance from Senegalese brotherhoods. We call this grouping “**those who migrated without the help of brotherhoods**”, in contradistinction to “those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”. It includes two women who had both separated from their husbands in Senegal some years before their migration, who had traveled alone to a country with better employment opportunities, and who are able to pay for the education of their children (and, in the case of Aida, also her sister) in Senegal by sending remittances (ch. 3.3). One of these two women lived in Brazil, the other in Morocco at the time of our interviews. The three men in this grouping live in Brazil, Germany and Italy. One of them,⁴ who came to Western Europe with a tourist visa as a young man in 1993, today plays in a well-known band in Italy, and is active in an anti-racism movement. In contrast to the men in the grouping of “those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”, he lives in Italy with his wife, who is also from Senegal, and his children.

In order to find out which components contribute to these successful migrations without any obvious help from the brotherhoods, and to the much greater participation of these migrants in social contexts in the diaspora in which Senegalese are not predominant, we will concentrate, in addition to the biographies of the two women, on Fary in Brazil and Youssoupha in Germany (ch. 3.4).

First a word concerning the data on which our study is based. To this day we are in contact with most of our interviewees via online services and have conducted several follow-up interviews (see Bahl/Rosenthal 2021). In addition to the interviews with the Senegalese man in Germany and the three Senegalese in Italy, we have a large amount of data from Brazil. During fieldwork in Brazil between September and November 2019, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Gabriele Rosenthal, Eva Bahl and Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves conducted biographical-narrative inter-

⁴ Margherita Cusmano conducted two online interviews with this man in November 2020. The interview language was Italian and in an informal conversation he said that he speaks Italian with his wife and children. Margherita also interviewed two Senegalese living in Italy, who entered the country under a family reunification scheme.

views⁵ with ten men and one woman from Senegal, several ethnographic interviews (in particular with street vendors and participants at religious festivals), and two group discussions. The above-named researchers were all invited to the Magal in Niterói,⁶ the highest religious festival of the Murids. In addition, they spent some time at two Baye Fall festivals on the beach at Copacabana (in Rio de Janeiro).

All the people from Senegal that we interviewed had traveled to Brazil by air with a tourist visa, or to some other South American country and from there overland to Brazil. In contrast to many other migrants presented in this volume, they do not look back on their journey to Brazil as a traumatizing experience. Moreover, they all have a legal residence status in the country where they are living and do not have to fear being deported. Apart from their difficulties due to the pandemic, we assume that they have all been able to achieve the purpose for which they came. With the exception of those living in Germany, all the Senegalese migrants we interviewed speak Wolof⁷ (the Wolof are the biggest ethnic group in Senegal, but the Wolof-speaking community includes many other ethnic groups) and belong to one of the two most influential Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal. Belonging to the Wolof language community or ethnic group (which constitutes around 40% of the population in Senegal), and belonging to one of these two brotherhoods, are both important for an understanding of the following cases. We will therefore briefly give a few details to make this clear.

The Senegalese we spoke to exemplify the phenomenon of increasing Wolofization in Senegal, which has been discussed in the literature. This phenomenon is related not only to the increasing use of Wolof as a lingua franca (see McLaughlin 2008), but also to its growing social and cultural dominance. As a result, members of other ethnic groups are beginning to define themselves as Wolof. Villalón (2006[1995]: 49) comments on this as follows: “Within Senegal, however, answers to the question of who is a Wolof are complicated and highly nebulous.” Especially in urban contexts “there are those who identify themselves as ethnically Wolof because Wolof is the only language they speak, even though their parents might be Joola or Seereer” (McLaughlin 2008: 90).

Apart from those living in Germany, all the Senegalese we interviewed belonged to a Sufi order, either the Tijaniyyah (the Tijani) or the Muridiyya (the Murids), or

⁵ Most of the interviews took place in Rio de Janeiro. We also carried out interviews and participant observations in Porto Alegre, Salvador da Bahia, and in rural parts of Rio Grande do Sul.

⁶ Magal is the annual religious festival of the Murids in Tuba, which is the most important city in Senegal economically, and the spiritual center of the Murids. Millions of pilgrims come to Tuba for the festival in memory of Sheikh Amadou Bamba, the founder of the brotherhood. This festival is also celebrated by the communities in the diaspora.

⁷ The official language in Senegal is French, and 20 other languages are recognized as national languages (*langues nationales*). Wolof is the most widely used lingua franca and is spoken as first or second language by over two thirds of the population. Villalón (2006[1995]: 49) estimated 71% in 1988, and McLaughlin (2008: 85) reported 90% in 2008.

a subgroup of the Murids, the Baye Fall.⁸ The Tijaniyya is the biggest brotherhood in Senegal and in West Africa. It was founded about one hundred years before the Muridiyya by Al-Tijani (1737–1813), who was born in Algeria and buried in Fez (Morocco). The Murids are usually described as the most influential brotherhood in Senegal. However, as shown for example by Villalón (2006[1995]) and Loimeier (2006: 210), at the beginning of the 20th century the Tijaniyya increasingly gained political influence in Senegal. The Muridiyya was founded by Amadou Bamba (1850–1927), who was born in Senegal and belonged to the Wolof ethnic grouping. Amadou Bamba aimed to combine Islam with Senegalese traditions. In other words, Murid Islam connects the universalistic religion of Islam with “traditional religions” (see Monteil 1962; Diouf 2000: 685) and thus sees itself as a form of African Islam. This means that the Murids are closer to Senegal as a nation and the ethnic grouping of the Wolof than the Tijani, who have a more transnational orientation. The Baye Fall, to whom we will return, are a subgroup of the Murids. This group was founded by Ibrahim Fall (about 1858–1930), one of the most prominent disciples of Sheikh Amadou Bamba. While the most important values for the Murids are “work” and “pray” (see Prothmann 2017: 78), Ibrahim Fall and his followers shifted their whole aim in life to serving their Sheikh (their marabout, or spiritual leader). And as Villalón (2006[1995]: 69) puts it: “work and submission have actually replaced the observance of even the rudiments of Islam.” Since the Baye Fall see their main task as unconditional work for their Sheikh, especially during religious festivals and Ramadan, they observe neither the fast during Ramadan nor the five daily prayers. Villalón (*ibid.*) and other authors point out that although the Baye Fall occupy an important place in the Murid brotherhood – for instance during the Magal – and reference is repeatedly made to the story of their founding and their close relationship to Bamba, they are nevertheless a source of embarrassment for the Murids because of their lifestyle (not only their clothing and their dreadlocks, but also their consumption of marijuana). In an ethnographic study carried out in West Africa, Neil J. Savishinski (1994) shows that the Murids will not criticize the Baye Fall in public, but that in private some do show an ambivalent attitude toward them (*ibid.*: 215). Not unimportant here is the stigmatizing they-image that they are ‘crazy’ or bad Muslims, which was applied to them from the beginning by people outside the brotherhood, and in the first place by the French in the colonial period (see Pezeril 2008). Despite this blame gossip, the Baye Fall are increasingly gaining prestige and becoming more autonomous from the brotherhood of the Murids, especially in the Senegalese diaspora. Ester Massó Guijarro (2013–2014, 2016a, 2016b) discusses this in her empirical study of Senegalese migrants in Spain. She points out that a striving for more autonomy can also be observed in urban areas of Senegal. The need for autonomy is bound up with the fact that there is a tendency for Murids in the

⁸ The oldest brotherhood in Senegal is the Qadiriyya, which was founded in Baghdad in the 11th century.

diaspora to become Baye Fall (ibid. 2013–2014: 27f.). In any case, the constructions concerning the meaning of belonging to one of the brotherhoods, both in the religious discourses and in the everyday practices of their members, are much more complicated, more in flux, and also more contested than the homogenizing we-image presented on the front stage, to which we will turn in the following.

3.2 “Those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”: The presentation of a homogeneous and harmonious we-group of Senegalese

We are all Muslims and we are only in Brazil to work. “The only difference between the Baye Fall and the Murids is that the Baye Fall serve the others.” This is what Lucas Cé Sangalli was told by a Senegalese migrant – whom we will call **Babukar** – in Brazil. Babukar thus expresses the idea shared by the Baye Fall of a division between work and prayer, which is presented front stage with reference to Sheikh Ibrahim Fall who devoted his life completely to serving Amadou Bamba (from fetching water to cooking his meals). Let us consider the context in which Babukar says this. Babukar found it necessary to explain this correct we-presentation as members of the Murid Muslim brotherhood because of a disagreement with the Senegalese **Deme O.**, a man who was due to be interviewed later on by Lucas. This disagreement is a good example of what we frequently observed in Brazil: it is clearly an attempt to present the homogenizing we-image on the front stage, and as a member of the Murid brotherhood not to say anything negative about the Baye Fall. Even if Murids, but also Tijani, spoke to us in very different contexts about the Baye Fall as a they-group distinct from their own we-group, by saying “that’s the way they do it (for instance drumming)” or “that’s how they dress”, it was nevertheless always emphasized that the Baye Fall are Murids. The very fact that this is always insisted on so vehemently implies that there could be doubts in the matter, or that the speakers think that we, as non-Senegalese, could see it differently. The argument that they are only in Brazil to work and are doing nothing wrong is shared by migrants from other countries or groupings, and is usually a reaction to contrary they-images spread by old-established residents. This we-image corresponds to the religious values of the Senegalese brotherhoods. But the insistence on “we are all Muslims” is something which we heard so consistently only from the Senegalese in Brazil. For this reason, and because of our participant observations, we decided to examine this phenomenon more closely. The dialogues discussed below arose from questions put by us. We deliberately asked about differences between the religious groupings, and also between ethnic groupings. These rather provocative interview questions were based on a first analysis of the data we had collected on the grouping of Senegalese migrants. We rarely asked questions of this kind in interviews with members of other groupings, or in very different

ways, depending on our findings, as we will show in connection with interviews with migrants from Mauritania and Sudan (see chs. 4 and 5).

Let us consider the course of the disagreement referred to above.⁹ Lucas Cé Sangalli wanted to provoke the two men a bit and asked whether they were Baye Fall, even though he suspected they were not, for instance because of the way they were dressed. First Babukar answered that they were all Murids, whether Baye Fall or not. But he is contradicted here by Deme who says: “no there are differences.” This is followed by a discussion between the two men in Wolof which lasts for several minutes. Even though Lucas could not understand what they were saying, it was clear to him that they were having an argument. We can interpret this dialogue, which they carried on knowing that Lucas couldn’t understand them, as a kind of back stage performance, as Goffman would put it. In this respect, Goffman (1956: 70) says: “Here the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no one is present to be affronted by them; here poor members of the team, who are expressively inept, can be schooled or dropped from the performance.” In the argument we have described, the consequence of this “training” was that Deme corrected his faux pas and told Lucas, the white Brazilian researcher: “We are all Muslims.” By referring in this way to the bigger we-group, he avoids causing a conflict by explaining the difference between the Murids and the Baye Fall. But Lucas doesn’t give up. He says he knows this, but that he noticed big differences at the Magal, the religious festival of the Murids, in Niterói. He says that these differences were visible not only in dress, but also in the different tasks performed at the festival, where the Baye Fall worked in the kitchen while the Murids prayed. Babukar then made the statement quoted above, that the only difference is that the Baye Fall serve the others.

The biographical interview with Deme (born 1983) shows that he does not always find it easy in practice to keep the requirements and prohibitions which he is supposed to observe as a Muslim. Our impression is that during his years in the diaspora (since 2014) there was a phase during which he distanced himself to a certain extent from the brotherhood. For instance, he tells Lucas that he had sexual relations with Brazilian women who were Christians – although, as he says himself, this is something a Murid would not do. We assume that the phase in which he felt free to disregard the prohibitions came to an end in 2019, because that was when, at his own wish, his marriage to his cousin was celebrated in Senegal in his absence. His wife, who now lives in his father’s house, has no income of her own and is dependent on his remittances. In other words, Deme, who has not been in Senegal for many years, is married without having seen his wife since the marriage or for a good many years before that. Since the marriage, his parents have started asking him to send more money home. Although he makes clear in the interview that meeting these obligations is very hard, he repeatedly resorts to the discourse: we are

⁹ The following account is based on the detailed observation memo which Lucas Cé Sangalli made in Salvador in November 2019.

only here to work so that we can help the family. Although he spoke at one point of having had sexual relations with Brazilian women, in other parts of the interview he says firmly that Murids would never have sex with Brazilian women, would never cheat on their wives, and would never do anything bad. His determination to use this discourse is reflected in the ten-minute introductory presentation which he made in response to the request to tell the story of his life. He concentrates completely on this discourse. He argues at length that his religion forbids him to sleep with other women or to be dishonest in trading; rather, it requires him to care for his parents and his wife in Senegal, to show them respect, to work, to earn money, and to send the money home.

The unequal power chances of the Baye Fall on the back stage in Brazil. The authors and their colleagues Eva and Maria were invited to attend the Magal in the Teatro Popular de Niterói on October 17, 2019. Here, they were able to observe how the above-described division of work between Murids and Baye Fall can lead to conflicts. In the printed program, the “Entry of the Baye Fall” into the prayer room where the Murids and Tijani had been praying since early morning was scheduled for 12 noon. There was no question of this, however, because the Baye Fall together with the Senegalese women were busy in the kitchen, preparing the very substantial midday meal which was served at about 3:30 pm. Their tasks in connection with serving the others, especially working in the kitchen, washing the dishes, and making preparations for the evening meal, kept them busy until early evening. Then we observed the following situation: **Bassam**, a member of the Baye Fall whom we had interviewed a week earlier, told Lucas: “We are angry”, because the president of the local Murid organization (the Daairas) had further postponed the “Entry of the Baye Fall” which involved drumming and dancing. Lucas saw how the Baye Fall stood around talking to each other, and then how they went outside the building in which the prayer room was located and began drumming and dancing there. The women members of this brotherhood followed them and joined in the dancing. **Bayou**, whom we had already met several times, and who organized contact with possible interviewees for us, made the terse observation to Lucas: “That’s the Baye Falls for you.” Bayou is a member of the Tijani order and in many different contexts he made similar comments on the they-group of the Baye Fall, saying: that’s how they are, like this or like that. We will not go into the intrareligious discourse here. But from the uninformed perspective of outside observers during the Magal festival, we see a clear power gap between the Murids and the Baye Fall, although this was not mentioned in any way by the members of these groupings, and, as we learn from reports, this differs in the host countries, depending on the conditions in which they find themselves. As pointed out by several authors, the Baye Fall networks are very supportive of their members, and Bayefallism makes it easier for migrants to participate in the social life of the new society. As a result, the Baye Fall community is attractive for Murids in the ‘diaspora’:

“In the migrant diaspora, Bayefaalism seems to be a particularly attractive adscription for Murid people who were not previously Baye-Faal. This because of two main reasons: 1) Bayefaalism allows greater freedom in practicing the Murid faith without losing an ideal connection to the founding fathers of the Murid community, and this might make for easier integration into the prevalently non-Muslim societies which host the migrants; 2) Bayefaalism offers a very strong support group in the new society, emphasizing close links between members, and making Baye-Faal members almost like an ‘urban tribe’” (Massó Guijarro 2013–2014: 28).

However, our encounters with Senegalese in Rio de Janeiro were shaped by a subtle but clear demonstration of the superiority of those who do not belong to the Baye Fall.

It should also be mentioned that at the Magal festival there was a situation in which the power inequality between men and women caused a slight irritation. The women were responsible for preparing the food together with the Baye Fall. While on the morning of the festival the women sat together with the men in the prayer hall, albeit outside the prayer area, in the afternoon this was not allowed by the religious leaders, who enforced strict separation of the sexes.

One may ask what is the analytical value of our observations? This division of responsibilities is not unusual in many religious communities. We are not concerned here with discussing its historical origin and development, or the complex religious discourses of the Muslim brotherhoods and their different subgroupings in Senegal. We cannot do justice to this topic with our study, any more than to the changing and complex relations to the Senegalese state, and the changing power balances between the different groupings in Senegal.¹⁰ Rather, our aim is to reveal the extent to which certain contradictions and power inequalities in the figurations of different groupings in the community of Senegalese migrant workers in Brazil are perceptible in their self-presentations and their practices, and, as we will show below, that many of them follow life courses which do not match these self- and we-images (chs. 3.3 and 3.4).

On the fragility of the harmonizing we-image and the subtle struggle for an established position. In order to scrutinize this extremely harmonizing we-image more closely, we arranged a group discussion with three men who each belonged to one of the three brotherhoods, who were living in Rio de Janeiro, and who were earning money as street vendors. All three were about the same age, in their mid thirties: they all claimed to have been born in 1986 (which is the date recorded in their papers). We wanted to find out to what extent, and in what way, they would maintain the above-described homogenizing and harmonizing image in conversation with each other. At the time of this meeting at the end of October 2019, we had already met them in different contexts and conducted interviews

¹⁰ On this topic, see for instance Loimeier (1999, 2006); Villalón (2006[1995]).

with them. They were all present at the Magal festival and knew each other well. We have already introduced **Bayou**, who belongs to the Tijani, and **Bassam**, who belongs to the Baye Fall. The third person was **Amadou**, who is a Murid.

Bayou was the one who had helped us with finding people for interviews, had organized another group discussion with ten men, and had invited us to the festivals. He had met Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, who is a Catholic nun, shortly after his arrival in Brazil in 2014. At the time (and up to 2018) she was the director of the Migrant Assistant Center of Caxias do Sul (Centro de Atendimento ao Migrante¹¹). Bayou feels he owes Maria a debt of gratitude for her help. He had also hoped to get legal advice for people he knew who, unlike himself, had no secure right to residence in Brazil.¹² Maria did her best to help, especially in the first group discussion, to which the persons concerned brought their papers and the notices they had received from the Brazilian authorities. In conversations with Eva and Maria, at which no other Senegalese were present, Bayou often spoke about how the Tijani differ from the Murids and the Baye Fall. He said the latter were not so strict in following the religious rules and for Brazilians it was easier to convert to them. However, he did not speak about these differences in the biographical interview with him, in which Amadou translated from Wolof into French for the two interviewers, Eva and Maria, or in any other situation where another Senegalese was present. Amadou also translated the Wolof parts of the two group discussions we conducted and two individual interviews. But he refused to let us conduct a biographical interview with him, saying that he had had a very difficult life and that talking about it would be too painful. However, we do know a bit about **Amadou's** biography. He grew up in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, attended a state school, and therefore has a very good knowledge of French. He obtained a BA in the social sciences in Dakar, and then decided to emigrate, "because his responsibility got bigger", as he puts it, and he has been working as a beach vendor in Brazil since 2013. Amadou is one of those Senegalese who interrupted their educational career or gave up a good job in Senegal, in order to earn more money abroad, as described for instance by Bruno Riccio (2001: 589) in his field study of Senegalese in Italy. Unlike the other two men, whose wives live in Senegal, Amadou is not married. In 2018, Amadou traveled home to Senegal with the intention of staying there in order to continue his studies, but, as he told us, he decided to return to Brazil because of the responsibility he bore for his family. Since we met him, Amadou has migrated to the US through Central America.

Amadou and **Bayou** are friends, but they first met in Brazil. Bayou was born in the Tambacounda region, close to the border with Gambia, and belongs to

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.parceiros.org.br/atendimentomigrante> [Accessed on February 18, 2021].

¹² The legal situation changed in December 2019 which came as a surprise not only to us, but also to the Senegalese migrants: the Brazilian government issued an ordinance which gave Senegalese migrants who had applied for refugee status the right to apply for regular residence permits. Available at: <https://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/portaria-interministerial-n-10-de-5-de-dezembro-de-2019-231852423> [Accessed on November 6, 2020].

the ethnic grouping of the Toucouleur, while Amadou belongs to the Sarakole. Important for the interaction in the group discussion, as we will show below, is that neither of them is Wolof. Between the ages of four and eighteen, Bayou lived in a daara, i.e. a traditional Muslim educational institution (“Quranic school”), led by a marabout. This means that Bayou did not attend a state school and did not learn French. Like other students of the Quran, he can read the Quran but he does not speak modern Arabic. Unlike the other two men, he speaks very little Portuguese. After leaving the daara, he worked for some years on his father’s farm. In 2011 he went to work in Dakar, the capital, because of the family’s precarious financial situation and his responsibility as the eldest son of his father (his mother is his father’s first wife), and also to earn money for his bridewealth. In 2014 he flew to Brazil under arrangements for the soccer World Cup. He had married in the previous year. He is the only one of his father’s sons to be earning money abroad and he carries a heavy responsibility on his shoulders. In the individual interview with him, he says that he is responsible for the whole family, and his relatives and other people he knows often call him and say they need money. Bayou has had a residence permit in Brazil since 2015, and in May 2021 he was thus able to fly to Senegal and visit his family. In 2022, he followed a similar route to that of his friend, Amadou, to the US.

In all our meetings, we were impressed by the respect with which the other Senegalese treated him, which was explained as being due to his religious training. In the group discussion, Amadou expresses his admiration for Bayou. He explains that because of his childhood and youth in the Quranic school, Bayou is better prepared for life, he knows what it’s like to be hungry, “in the daara he learned to be hungry, to be without parents”. He makes a comparison between Bayou and himself, and says that he cried when he left Senegal because he had never left his parents before, but with Bayou “*it’s different with him, he is prepared, he won’t cry*”.

It is striking that while frequent references are made in the group discussion and in other conversations to Bayou’s very hard life in the daara, the hunger he suffered and the difficult living conditions he had to endure, neither Bayou nor Amadou make these remarks with a critical undertone. In the biographical interview with him, Bayou speaks about the hard life he led, with work and prayer from morning to late in the evening. He says that once he actually escaped and ran home, but his father took him back. Amadou sums up the story told by Bayou in this interview as follows: “Childhood in Senegal is no leisure time. You get prepared for the future.”

This presentation is a stark contrast to the way Mohammed from Mauritania (see ch. 4.3) compares his time in the Quranic school with slavery, especially when he had to perform hard, unpaid work without food and water. It cannot be said that the Quranic schools in Senegal treat the children any better than those in Mauritania; in Senegal they are frequently sent out to beg. In reports by Human

Rights Watch,¹³ for example, the conditions in Quranic schools in Senegal are described very clearly as being akin to slavery:

“At least 50,000 children attending hundreds of residential Quranic schools, or daaras, in Senegal are subjected to conditions akin to slavery and forced to endure often extreme forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by the teachers, or marabouts, who serve as their de facto guardians. By no means do all Quranic schools run such regimes, but many marabouts force the children, known as talibés, to beg on the streets for long hours – a practice that meets the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) definition of a worst form of child labor – and subject them to often brutal physical and psychological abuse. The marabouts are also grossly negligent in fulfilling the children’s basic needs, including food, shelter, and healthcare, despite adequate resources in most urban daaras, brought in primarily by the children themselves.”¹⁴

A Senegalese interviewed by Donna Perry describes the exploitation of the children in very drastic terms:

“‘A mother would never treat her child this way! Marabouts treat talibés like slaves, that’s all they are! [...] All they are is donkeys (beasts of burden) [...] And not only do they work like donkeys but they’re beaten like them, too!’” (Perry 2004: 65).

We cannot say what Bayou experienced in the fourteen years he spent in the daara. Nor can we tell what associations were made by the other two participants in the group discussion when Bayou talked of the hard life he led in the daara. To us, however, it seems that the lack of critical remarks about Quranic schools is compatible with the generally positive image of Senegal which these men strive to convey.

The third man in this group, **Bassam**, also takes care to present this positive image. He belongs to the Baye Fall brotherhood, and, like Amadou, he has an excellent knowledge of French because he had a state education in Senegal. Gabriele, Lucas, Eva and Maria, met him at a Baye Fall festival to celebrate the first day

¹³ See: Human Rights Watch, April 15, 2010. “‘Off the Backs of the Children.’ Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibés in Senegal.” Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/04/15/back-children/forced-begging-and-other-abuses-against-talibes-senegal> [Accessed on May 6, 2021]. For the 2019 report, see: Human Rights Watch, June 11, 2019. “There Is Enormous Suffering”: Serious Abuses against Talibé Children in Senegal, 2017-2018.” Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/06/11/there-enormous-suffering/serious-abuses-against-talibe-children-senegal-2017-2018> [Accessed on May 6, 2021].

¹⁴ See: Human Rights Watch, April 15, 2010. “‘Off the Backs of the Children.’ Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibés in Senegal.” Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/04/15/back-children/forced-begging-and-other-abuses-against-talibes-senegal> [Accessed on May 6, 2021].

of Safar, the second month in the Islamic calendar. Bayou, who accompanied us to the festival on the beach, introduced him to us with the remark that Bassam could speak Portuguese. Bassam showed that he was glad to have someone to talk to, and told us straight away that he didn't like Brazil, that he would like to fly home to Senegal for a visit, but that he hadn't yet got his papers – meaning a residence permit. Although he now has these papers, he still cannot fly because of the travel restrictions in connection with Covid-19. In addition, the loss of earnings has made it very difficult for him to send money home. Shortly before this conversation with Bassam, we had conducted a group discussion with eight Senegalese in which we had only heard praise of Brazil, so that we were very surprised by this open criticism, especially since two of us are Brazilians. He agreed readily to be interviewed by Gabriele and Lucas. Bassam was born in about 1986 in Pikine, a city founded by the colonial government in the region of Dakar in 1952,¹⁵ as the second son of the second wife of his father. He grew up in Pikine. He was first sent to a Quranic school for two years. In 1993, when he was about seven, he was admitted to a private French school in Senegal, which he finished in 2003. He got married in 2012 and in 2015 his son was born. In 2017, when the financial situation was difficult, he decided to go and work in Brazil, where his brother was already working and had obtained Brazilian citizenship. Bassam succeeded in entering Brazil via Ecuador. In 2018, his brother moved to Spain, where their sister lives (a daughter of the first wife of their father).

In his biographical interview with Gabriele and Lucas, Bassam said he was a member of the Baye Fall, at the same time insisting that the Baye Fall are Murids, but he made clear that his most important collective belonging is his Senegalese nationality. When asked by Gabriele whether he identified himself first and foremost as Baye Fall, Muslim, Wolof or Senegalese, he answered:

“The first is our nationality, Senegal, the second is Murid, Murid means Baye Fall and Baye Fall means Murid, but the first is the nationality Senegal, the second Murid, Baye Fall, and Wolof is our language, in Senegal we speak Wolof” (Biographical-narrative interview, October 2019, Rio de Janeiro, interviewers: Gabriele Rosenthal/Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French).

We will return below to the significance of these constructions of collective belonging which were emphasized in the individual interview with us.

All three men were present at the group discussion which took place one evening in October 2019 in the apartment we had rented in Rio. The discussion was conducted by Eva and Lucas mainly in French, because this was familiar to Amadou and Bassam, and occasionally in Portuguese. It was agreed that, as far as possible, Amadou should translate what was said into Wolof for Bayou, and what was said by Bayou into French for the interviewers. This arrangement meant that Bayou was

¹⁵ On the founding of this city, see Prothmann (2017: 58ff.).

to some extent excluded from the dialogue between Amadou and Bassam, which, as we will show, in part concerned the Wolof spoken by Bayou.¹⁶

How should we imagine this situation? As we will show below, the differences between the three men that are negotiated in this discussion are not clear to outsiders on the surface. Indeed, only after a very close analysis of the text were we able to read between the lines and reconstruct the implied conflicts or negotiation of power inequalities. But the framing of the discussion and the first ten minutes of the recording are enough to suggest that Bassam did not feel comfortable in this situation. He did not behave as he had done in the individual interview with Lucas and Gabriele. In that interview he had obviously been pleased to meet them, he had plenty of time, he was ready for small talk and a meal together, and above all he had no problem with meeting their eyes. On the first date we arranged for the group discussion, he said he couldn't come because he had a headache. On the second appointed date, which he had wanted to have a bit later in the day than Amadou and Bayou, he came early. In contrast to the individual interview, he was dressed in a very modern Baye Fall style. He was wearing shorts, a Foo Fighters t-shirt (an American rock band), a cap like those which Baye Fall like to wear, and an oversized wooden necklace with two words inscribed on it relating to the Sheikh of the Murids: "Bamba Fepp" (Bamba everywhere). When the other two men arrived, he gave Eva the impression, as she wrote in her observation memo, that he no longer felt comfortable and kept looking at his cell phone. Eva further noted: "Bassam frequently spoke messages into his smartphone while others were speaking and he generally avoided eye contact with the others." However, the interviewers were surprised that he was the one who answered the first interview question, and then interrupted the subsequent long speech by Amadou, by saying in Wolof: "Amadou, move on to something else, let's get on with it quickly, I've already said something about this, MOVE ON to something else." Amadou doesn't let this disturb him, and goes on talking. Bassam interrupts him again and says in Wolof: "Amadou I've got to go and clean my glasses." By this he means the sunglasses he sells on the beach at Rio. Even after this, Amadou goes on talking for several minutes in French. Thus, Amadou does not accept the change of language. Here it must be said that neither of the two interviewers understands Wolof, so that they were not aware of the significance of these interruptions by Bassam in this situation. And so when Amadou indicates that he has finished, Eva asks Bayou what he thinks about this question. Even without considering the content of this dialogue, it seems clear that Amadou isn't unduly disturbed by Bassam's remarks. We will now look at the content of these first sequences in the interview. In the same way that Bassam was asked about his collective belongings at the end of the individual interview with him, Eva asks the three men in the group discussion what

¹⁶ The whole group discussion was transcribed and all parts in Wolof and Portuguese – including those which were not translated during the discussion – were translated into French by two colleagues from Senegal, Sambalaye Diop and Kassoum Diémé.

they think is their most important we-group. Bassam takes the lead and gives the following answer:

“That’s easy to answer, in Senegal the first people that you follow are the religious chiefs. They show us the right path we must follow, but the others, those are the ethnic groups, there are the Wolof, Toucouleur, Fulbe, Serer, Diola, those are ethnic groups, but we all, we are the same, because we all believe in God. The first people we follow are the religious chiefs because they are our leaders, they lead us to God, they show us, they teach us the good practices of Islam. [...] The chiefs religion the religious chiefs are the first, in Senegal, because they are our leaders, do you understand? The others- but we all we are the, we ALL we are THE SAME we are the we are Muslims.”

Bassam’s answer concentrates on a common connection. He begins here with religion, and not with nationality, as he did in the individual interview. At the same time, by beginning with the important information that the “religious” chiefs give the most important guidance, he effectively creates a difference between himself and the two other men. It is a difference which Amadou and Bayou must accept as indisputable. Each of the three follows a different marabout. In this way, Bassam can indicate that he is not the same as the others without making any explicit reference to the difference. And he continues:

“All are the same, the same father, the same mother, if you see a Senegalese, a friend like yourself, you see him as your BROTHER or like your SISTER, because we all we are Senegalese. That’s how it is in Senegal. Is that clear?”

He asks whether the two interviewers have got the message, which they confirm. By finishing his statement in this way, Bassam constructs a contrast between “we Senegalese” and “you interviewers” who have to understand. By doing so, he avoids making a distinction between you and us in terms of religious belonging, and thus does not categorize the interviewers as unbelievers. The following sequences show that, or to what extent, it is the question of the right faith that is at stake here. Amadou then explains the historical development of Senegal, saying that it was first inhabited by different ethnic groupings, then the Fulbe came to the area, and only later the Islamic mission. He continues: *“beyond belonging to an ethnic group there is one’s faith.”* In accordance with the dominant discourse in Senegal, he goes on to say that religion prevents conflicts between the ethnic groups in Senegal: *“religion forbids you to harm your brother.”* At this point, Bassam urges Amadou for the first time to *“move on to something else”*. Amadou continues speaking about the important role played by the marabouts. Again he is interrupted by Bassam who says he needs to go and clean his glasses – in other words he wants to end the group discussion as quickly as possible. Amadou isn’t bothered, and goes on to

explain that all people in Senegal – including Christians – are brothers: “*Despite religious, ethnic differences or different brotherhoods, the Senegalese enjoy brotherly relations.*” Amadou emphasizes that this is anchored in Senegalese society, in contrast to the neighboring countries, and that everyone is free to choose their religion. He says firmly: “*Let everyone believe what he wants to and respect him.*” Eva now turns to Bayou and asks what he thinks. The following dialogue between Bayou and Amadou is in Wolof. First Bayou says: “*The boys have said everything*” and repeats several times: “*Everybody knows in Senegal that all are Muslims and all are the same*” (Wolof: *pesk ñeep bena lañ*). Amadou doesn’t give up, puts the question again twice, and then explicitly expresses his respect for Bayou: “*But say what you think, anything you can add is important.*” In his answer he very explicitly repeats that all are the same, such as when he says: “*All religions aspire to a unity of brotherliness between people, all religions preach brotherliness and Murids and Tijani work for Mohammed.*” Amadou explains that Sheikh Bamba was a Tijani before he became a Murid. He says: “*There isn’t any difference, it’s the same, it’s a bit like two horses going the same way.*”

The discussion goes on for over an hour before Bassam leaves after a long argument with Amadou (in Wolof). Bassam wanted to end the group discussion and to continue on some other day, but Amadou told him that he and Bayou wanted to stay. Before this argument, Bassam had joined in a long and heated debate over which ethnic grouping they and the members of their family belong to. The striking thing here is the contrast between the they-images they have of each other and their self-images. For example, Bassam asserts that Bayou is a Bambara (a group of traditional crop farmers who make up only about 1% of the Senegalese population, Keese 2015: 89). He is corrected by both Amadou and Bayou, who say that Bayou is a Toucouleur (about 11.2%). Bayou jokingly refers to Amadou as a Serer (the third biggest ethnic grouping in Senegal with about 14.8%), only to be corrected by him who says no, he is a Sarakole (1.1%) like his mother and his father.¹⁷ The interesting point here is that Bassam, who belongs to the biggest and most powerful ethnic grouping in Senegal, the Wolof (43.7%, Keese 2015: 89), claims to know which grouping Bayou belongs to and makes clear that he is not a Wolof. On the other hand, Bayou, who knows very well that Amadou belongs to the Sarakole, a very small grouping, makes him a member of the third biggest grouping in Senegal, which has a joking relationship with the Toucouleur, the grouping to which Bayou belongs.¹⁸

¹⁷ The data are taken from Keese (2015: 89). We find similar data relating to a census taken in 2013, but with a lower figure for Wolof: “36% Wolof, 23% Fulbe and Toucouleur, 15% Serer, 6% Diola, 4% Mandingo, 2% Lébous, Sarakole, Malinke and others; Moors.” Available at: <https://www.bpb.de/nac-hschlagen/lexika/fischer-weltalmanach/65787/senegalletzte> [Accessed on May 31, 2021].

¹⁸ Joking relationships between ethnic groupings or between relatives by marriage are a widespread phenomenon in Africa, and in other parts of the world. This was discussed notably by Radcliffe-Brown in 1940. He defines it as “a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence”

The interviewer responds to this dialogue by remarking that these belongings are obviously important. This is confirmed by Amadou who says: “*Everyone loves their identity.*” The reader might object that this dialogue is only an answer to the questions put by the interviewer, and actually shows that a person’s ethnic belonging has no great significance, whether in Senegal or in the diaspora. However, this interpretation loses its plausibility in the light of the way the dialogue between the three men continued – and it must be emphasized that this was not triggered by a question from the interviewers. They discuss the issue of who speaks the language of his ethnic grouping and who speaks “proper” Wolof. Especially Bassam makes clear that, in contrast to the other two men, he not only speaks Wolof but also belongs to the ethnic grouping of the Wolof. A heated argument develops about whether Wolof is a uniform language, as Bassam claims, or whether it differs in different regions. Amadou says, for instance, that in Dakar Wolof is mixed with French (see McLaughlin 2008: 93) and that different kinds of Wolof are spoken in different regions. But Bassam won’t admit that there are differences and he begins a quarrel, mainly with Bayou, over the use of certain words. For example, when Bayou mentions the example of the word *kojaara* (for spoon), he says:

“That’s the first time I’ve heard this word, by God, that’s the first time, do you see I’m Wolof I was born in Dakar.”

Let us take a closer look at the following exchange between Amadou and Bassam. This is how Amadou responds to the above remark by Bassam:

“But you have to- the problem is that you have to accept if he ((Bayou)) says *kojaara*, perhaps they say *kojaara* where he comes from.”

Then Bassam says:

“No it’s because- why I’m arguing with him about it, why I’m arguing with him about it, if you go out you see a Senegalese, you say to him *kojaara* he will say to you WHAT, what is *kojaara*.”

Amadou corrects him and says that he should ask a Senegalese from the region where Bayou grew up. Now Bassam goes so far as to start making fun of Bayou:

“No, he lives nearly in Gambia, he doesn’t live in Senegal ((laughs)).”

It is evident that in these sequences there is a subtle discussion of differences between various groupings, and of the issue: education in a daara versus education in a state school where French is learned in addition to Wolof. Amadou, who, like

(Radcliffe-Brown 1940: 195). De Jong (2005: 408) argues that in Senegal joking relationships are important and serve “to moderate interethnic relations.”

Bassam, attended a state school, and also has a university degree, several times defends Bayou against Bassam and demands that he should be respected because of his religious training and the hardships he suffered during the long years he spent in a daara. This argument reveals a latent competition, or dispute over who is more competent, between Amadou and Bassam. Amadou repeatedly gives long historical explanations and shows Bassam that his historical knowledge is greater. Amadou's comment on the mixing of Wolof and French is probably also a reference to the difference between the language that is spoken in a daara and the language that is spoken in state schools.

When the interviewer asks a new question – about the differences between state schools and Quranic schools – Bassam takes his leave. Lucas goes out with him. Outside, Bassam tells Lucas that Bayou and Amadou are different from him, belong to a different milieu, and says he will explain this to Lucas later. Unfortunately, it was not possible to arrange another meeting with Bassam in 2019, because the research team left the country just a few days after this group discussion. Lucas, who has stayed in contact with Bassam via a messaging app, reminded him about this in June 2020. Bassam responded by explaining the different ethnic groupings in Senegal. He made very clear how the fact that he is a Wolof distinguishes him from Amadou and Bayou. He emphasized that all his relatives are Wolof, including his wife, while Amadou and Bayou belong to other groupings. Bassam is obviously proud of his ethnic belonging, as well as of the fact that his family of origin live in an urban environment. According to our interpretation, the dynamic of the group discussion is shaped by Bassam's role as an outsider in the figuration of the brotherhoods, while in the ethnic and regional figurations he sees himself, and can be seen by others, as established. When the discussion turns toward the complex social reality of different ethno-linguistic belongings in Senegal, Amadou's and Bayou's arguments and perspectives gain discursive prominence. We can say that Bassam is interactively disempowered as an established (or "proper") Wolof speaker. He is already in a weaker position in the brotherhood hierarchy, and then finds himself in a situation in which he is denied his sovereignty of definition over ethnic distinctions, to which he obviously thinks he is entitled due to his "privileged" position as someone who comes from an urban Wolof family.

We do not want to overstretch our interpretation of these constructions of belonging, which are repeatedly thematized and differ according to the context. But we do want to point out how strongly speaking about them is influenced by the rules of the dominant discourse among the Senegalese, and by the particular context or the people who are present. What Bassam says in this online interview about Lucas's comment that in Senegal the Baye Fall are discriminated against by the others is also interesting:

“Well, you see there is the good and the bad ((Baye Fall)). There are people that say they're Baye Fall but they're not Baye Fall in fact, because they drink. A Baye Fall doesn't drink alcohol. Baye Fall doesn't smoke. I forgot. If you

see someone who drinks and smokes, he is Baye Fall in his own way. If you see someone who drinks alcohol and smokes and he loves a lot of women and do these things he is a Baye Fall only from the mouth out (French: *par langage*), but not in his heart. That's because of those people we did the discussion" (Follow-up interview, June 2020, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French).

Bassam argues that it was because of these bad Baye Fall that they had this discussion about the Baye Fall. What he forgot, we don't know. A striking feature of this passage is that the question of true and false, or "good" and "bad", Baye Fall was not mentioned in the group discussion before Bassam left the room. Rather, all three men sang the praises of the Baye Fall. The negative image is probably always co-present with the positive image, since it is a component of the discourse and the blame gossip in respect of the Baye Fall, both in Senegal and in the diaspora, where many Murids convert to the Baye Fall in order to gain more freedom. The negative image says that the bad Baye Fall smoke cannabis and drink alcohol, and – a component that Bassam perhaps didn't want to mention – have sex with non-Muslim women (see Massó Guijarro 2013–2014, 2016a; Pezeril 2008). Charlotte Pezeril shows that the Baye Fall were stigmatized right from the time of Ibrahim Fall, both by the French colonial authorities and by religious leaders, and points out that this negative they-image and stigmatization of the Baye Fall still exist in Senegal, even if to a lesser extent (Pezeril 2008: 792).

And so, it is not surprising that after Bassam's departure on that evening, Amadou and Bayou tell the interviewers that he had not been in a daara and was therefore not a proper Baye Fall. Rather, he had only learned "*to live like the Baye Fall, in his own way*". They also say that there are Baye Fall who smoke and drink alcohol, but that this is against the rules laid down by Ibrahim Fall. It is not clear whether they think this applies to Bassam.

Perhaps rather boldly, we interpret the way they stigmatize him as a "false" Baye Fall as an attempt to make up for the fact that Bassam is a "true" or native-born Wolof, in contrast to Bayou and Amadou. This whole group discussion centers around the question of who is "true" and who is "false" in respect of religion or ethnic belonging or as a speaker of Wolof, which is in contradiction to the claim that 'we Senegalese are all the same'.

From these interviews, it is clear that the presentation of a we-group is strongly influenced by the context of the interaction and the participating persons. A crucial component of this interactional dynamic is the they-image our interviewees ascribed to us as white German and Brazilian researchers. Amadou makes this point very succinctly:

"You are not only just a Muslim, you represent a continent, that means Africa. You must remember this, because when you go away, they won't say you're a Muslim, they'll say you're an African. You'll be called an African, so you represent a whole continent"

During the group discussion, this self-presentation is mainly used to show that Africans are distinct from Black Brazilians. This is important because Brazilians tend to mistake the Senegalese for Black Brazilians because of their skin color, and apply to them their they-image of Black people as being thieves on the beach. Amadou and Bayou argue vehemently that Africans are different, but that neither the white nor the Black Brazilians are aware of this, and that they have no idea what Africa is like:

“They don’t move away from here [...] they watch television that only shows war in Africa ((all laugh)) [...] so you’ll be afraid ((all laugh)) yes I thought you lived in the trees, so they are afraid of us”

3.3 Migration from Senegal outside the brotherhood networks: Biographical processes of empowerment

Later we will discuss the biographies of two Senegalese men, one of whom presents the homogenizing we-image of the Senegalese in a weak form, while the other does not present it at all, and whose practice in both cases does not correspond to this image. But before this, we will look at the biographies of two Senegalese women who migrated without a partner and without the help of a brotherhood. The biographical trajectories and the present life of these two women, whom we will call Bintu and Aida, differ not only from the men we have presented above, but also from all the Senegalese women who live in the diaspora with their husbands. Unlike those Senegalese women who migrated together with their partners, Bintu and Aida have multinational social networks rather than religious networks. The biographies and present networks of these two women match the findings of other empirical studies, such as the quantitative study by Sorana Toma and Sophie Vause titled “Independent Versus Partner-Related Migration” which compares cases of women from Senegal and from the Democratic Republic of Congo (2013). The authors write:

“In contrast to partner-related migrants, women migrating autonomously make a more extensive use of their social networks as they also rely on extended family members and friends and are especially influenced by the presence abroad of other women. Furthermore, long-term migrants, whom we can presume to command a higher level of resources, are especially important in independent migration, perhaps as they are more likely to assume the responsibility of a woman migrating alone” (ibid.: 548).

The majority of Senegalese women in the diaspora migrated with their partners (Toma/Vause 2013: 547) and live with their husbands. This helps to explain why Senegalese women who migrate alone are far more dependent on, or use,

networks of other single immigrant women and often live with them in shared accommodation.

Apart from a few short ethnographic interviews during our participant observations of Senegalese wives in Brazil, and despite repeated efforts, we succeeded in conducting a biographical interview only with Bintu. Aida, whose case we will discuss below, lives in Morocco. As in the case of several other female migrants from West Africa or the MENA region, we take it that these two women agreed to a biographical interview because they had migrated without a partner and did not have to ask anybody for permission. Bintu's position in Brazil is independent from the migrant community of her fellow Senegalese. In Tangier, Aida is in a strong position and plays an important role as the owner of a restaurant which serves as a meeting place for her own national community. Both women were free to decide about taking part in a biographical interview. Married women, by contrast, usually have to seek the approval of their husbands. We were told this very clearly by a well-established Senegalese man who had lived in Brazil for many years, and with whom we had a long conversation at the Magal festival. We asked him whether he could help us to arrange interviews with Senegalese women. He advised us to talk to the religious leader at the festival, and to ask whether we could interview his wife.¹⁹ But he was very doubtful whether he would agree, and whether we would be able to interview any women at all. This would always need the approval of their husbands.²⁰ Several Senegalese women turned down our request, saying "you have to ask my husband". In all cases the husbands refused to agree when we asked them. And the married men we interviewed could not help us because their wives are in Senegal.²¹

In an online interview with Lucas in spring 2021,²² Bintu, who is presented below, describes the husband's power of decision very graphically as follows:

"You have to ask for authorization for everything, that you have to do. A married woman must ask for the permission of the husband. It is like that the rule, [...] everything [...] if you (2) have to go out of home, to go to a certain place (1) if you want to do something, everything, you have to talk to your husband you have to ask for permission, [...] for example if you want to visit your mother who lives in the other side of the city you have to ask for permission that tomorrow I will- he will not say no, but the rule is like that" (Follow-up interview, April 2021, Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from Portuguese).

¹⁹ Later on, our colleague Maria do Carmo visited the marabout's shop, where his wife also worked, but did not ask him if she could interview his wife, because she had gained the impression that this would be an improper question.

²⁰ We had the same experience in the Christian community of migrants from Haiti. However, there we were able to conduct an interview with two women after their partners had agreed.

²¹ Similar difficulties with access to the field have been described by other scholars, such as Jane Freedman (2012) who interviewed female migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Morocco.

²² This and all other interviews with Bintu were conducted in Portuguese.

Both Bintu and Aida have liberated themselves from this kind of unequal relationship. Some years before migrating, they both left their husbands, taking their children with them. They provided for their children and other relatives, emigrated without husbands, and today they live without their children in the ‘migrant diaspora’. The parallels in the biographies of these two women, besides their voluntary separation from their husbands, are that before they were married they had established positions in their families of origin because they were successful traders, and that with their own income they were able to pay for the schooling of their children (and in Aida’s case also siblings), and continue to do so today. Like many other migrants, especially from Central America (see for instance Bahl 2008; Carling/Menjivar/Schmalzbauer 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo/Avila 1997), they traveled to another country without their children in order to earn a better income that would enable them to pay for their children’s education, and send a large part of their earnings to the family at home. The present life of these two women is very different from that of the men we have presented above. Like their families of origin, they both belong to the Tijaniyya Sufi order, but, unlike the men in the ‘migrant diaspora’, their social networks are not primarily the networks of this order. Nevertheless, the fact that Bintu and Aida belong to the Tijaniyya is not unconnected with their business success and their independence as women. Compared to other brotherhoods, it is easier for women in this order to establish themselves as traders, both in Senegal and in the diaspora. Both women went to Quranic schools for a few years in addition to attending state schools. Bintu was supported in her business activities by her brotherhood while she was in Senegal, and Aida receives some support from members of the Tijaniyya in Morocco. Fatima Ait Ben Lmadani (2018: 179) points out that migration from Senegal to Morocco, and the trade which took place long before the creation of the present-day state borders, were practiced especially by women from the Tijaniyya. She says that the women were “authorized” by their husbands to carry out trading activities between Senegal and Morocco because Morocco is a Muslim country and is regarded as a sister country of the Tijaniyya (ibid.). For all Senegalese it is relatively easy to go and work in Morocco, since they do not need a visa to cross the border.²³ A tourist visa or work permit is only required after 90 days in the country. Thus, while both women were supported by the Tijaniyya brotherhood for a certain time, **their migration did not take place primarily with the help of this brotherhood.**

The social and cultural capital of these women, both during their migration and today in their host countries, results from their education and their membership of various networks in which they play an active role. It is important to note here that both women had to leave school early, between the ages of twelve and

²³ Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2021. “List of countries whose citizens are exempted from entry visa into Morocco.” Available at: <https://www.consulat.ma/en/list-countries-whose-citizens-are-exempted-entry-visa-morocco> [Accessed on June 6, 2021].

fourteen, due to the financial situation of their fathers, but that this was not the end of their education; rather, like other women we interviewed (see the case of Mina Ahmed in ch. 6.3.2), they taught themselves the foreign languages that were so useful for their migration. In addition to French, Aida speaks some Arabic and English. And Bintu is now fluent in Portuguese. Paradoxically, leaving school early, and the pressure to start working as traders arising from the poor financial situation of their families, gave them greater autonomy, social competence in dealing with people from other contexts, and a more powerful position as women, both in their family of origin and in their family of procreation.

Bintu, who was born in the Kaolack region of Senegal in 1975, made an important contribution to the income of her family of origin as a young girl, and to the income of her family of procreation after her marriage in 1991 at the age of fifteen. In about 2005 she left her husband (who died about six years later). In 2014, aged 39, Bintu went to work in Brazil. She was able to travel under the arrangements for the soccer World Cup. She had the approval of her mother and the financial support of her sister, who had earned money for several years in Europe. Bintu now works as a hairdresser on the beach in Rio and during the pandemic in 2020/21 she also sold clothes on the street.

Aida was born in a Wolof family in Dakar in the mid 1980s.²⁴ She earned money as a market trader from the age of about fourteen or fifteen, in order to support her parents after her father became seriously ill. After leaving her husband – she says in 2009, but we think it was a few years later than this – she established herself as a trader between Morocco and Senegal, learned French, and emigrated to Morocco somewhere between 2012 and 2014. Since Senegalese do not need a visa for Morocco, it was relatively easy for her to travel back and forth, sometimes by air and sometimes overland. She took over a small restaurant in Tangier from two Senegalese who had migrated to Europe, but it had to be closed in summer 2020 because of the pandemic. Aida has a residence permit for Morocco, where she is well established. And Bintu has a residence permit for Brazil. She would like to have Brazilian citizenship, which would enable her to travel to Europe and make it easier and less expensive to occasionally fly to Senegal. Aida supports those of her children who are now students at the university in Dakar, for instance by paying the rent for their apartment. But she mainly sends money home for those children who are living with her sister and her mother (now about eight and twelve years old), to ensure that they are able to stay in school.

Before turning to the interviews with Bintu, which throw more light on the rules of the dominant front-stage discourse of the Senegalese, let us consider some important aspects of **Aida's** biography which reveal more similarities between these two women, and especially a process of emancipation and financial independence.

²⁴ There are some contradictions and ambiguities in the years and ages given by Aida, so that they need to be treated with care. However, the order of events is correct, especially the fact that the second child was born after she had left her husband.

Eva Bahl and Lucas first met her in Tangier during their fieldwork in North Africa in 2018.²⁵ The Senegalese restaurant was known as a meeting place for Black Africans and had been recommended to them by other migrants. Aida, the owner of the restaurant, talked to them willingly, and they exchanged contact details. In November 2020, Lucas conducted an online biographical interview with Aida, and a follow-up interview in March 2021.²⁶ In these interviews, it became clear that the marriage arranged by her father had caused her suffering, but that she did not want to talk about this to Lucas. She was about seventeen at the time of the marriage and was already established as a trader in the market. She did not want to be married to this man. In the follow-up interview, in response to a question by Lucas, she admits that her husband only worked occasionally: “sometimes he works sometimes not.” This didn’t please her and she says: “Sometimes men help women there but not all of them. I did not have this opportunity.” She openly criticizes the mentality in Senegal which says that women should not leave the house, because this creates many problems: “to give you an example [...] in Senegal the father of my children in the beginning he told me ‘do not work do not do anything’.” The couple was evidently dependent on Aida’s income, but in the follow-up interview we can read between the lines that, while her husband expected her to work in the market, this also led to conflicts between the two. A daughter was born in about 2008 while the marriage was still intact, and her son was born in about 2012, after she had left him with the support of her mother. It appears to us that serious problems must have occurred in this marriage.

The economic situation of Aida’s family became precarious after the death of her father in about 2010, and she helped to support her mother and her three younger sisters. Aida began to set up trade relations between Morocco and Senegal, buying goods in Morocco and selling them in the market in Dakar. And she began to learn French. In addition to economic reasons, we assume that she decided to migrate to Morocco because, as a divorced woman with two children, she wanted to escape the social pressure to remarry. When asked what it was like for her as a divorced woman in Senegal, she answered: “not easy, especially marriages in the family”, and explains that before her marriage she did not know the truth about her husband. And so she underlines that because she is living in Tangier: “my family won’t choose my husband now.” Aida is now together with a migrant from Senegal in Tangier, and moved in with him during the pandemic, because she could not pay the rent for her apartment.

In Senegal, she would have been expected to remarry, with the attendant risk of experiencing another failed marriage. In Senegal, divorce and remarriage can often be observed, as well as a high number of widows due to the fact that the husband

²⁵ This fieldwork was related to a previous DFG-funded project titled “The social construction of border zones” (2014–2019). Available at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/477891.html> [Accessed on June 1, 2021].

²⁶ All interviews with Aida were conducted in French.

is often much older than the wife. This is commented on, for instance, by Sylvie Lambert, Dominique van de Walle and Paola Villar (2017: 2):

“Divorce is frequent and widowhood is a common predicament for women, due in particular to the fact that women marry older men. In 2006/2007, spousal age gaps (male age minus female) averaged 11.2 in urban and 12.9 in rural areas. At the same date, around 18.5% of ever married adult women were currently widows or had remarried after widowhood and 13.2% were currently divorced or remarried following a divorce. Women confronted with divorce or widowhood most often remarry, and may well face one, or more, further marriage dissolutions during their lives. Remarriage appears to take place relatively rapidly: the median duration between widowhood and remarriage among those who remarry is one year. For those who are divorced it is two years.”

Let us consider the striking similarities with **Bintu**. Making contact with her was also very easy. Lucas and Maria met Bintu in October 2019 on the beach at Rio, where she had a stand for braiding hair. At first, the two researchers did not realize that she was a Senegalese woman, because she was dressed in t-shirt and jeans like the Haitian or Brazilian women, and not in a traditional African tunic (Wolof: *mboubeu*) like the other Senegalese women we knew. Only after some small talk did Bintu recognize Maria, whom she had met in 2014 when Maria was the director of the Migrant Assistant Center of Caxias do Sul. Maria wrote in her field notes: “First I thought she is Haitian, only during our conversation I realized she comes from Senegal.” We learned that Bintu is integrated in a network of Afro-Brazilians and migrants from Haiti and that she lives with a Haitian woman and her daughter in a small house in an area that Bintu herself describes as a favela, a derogatory term in Brazil for a very poor area. This woman is a Christian, and is also divorced from her husband. This is how Bintu explains why she does not live near the beach, where she works, as other Senegalese do:

“Because here there are no Senegalese women, all are with husbands you know [...] single women it’s difficult to find, right. I live with another girl and her daughter her husband abandoned her and- she also traveled, now she she’s alone and we share the house” (Biographical-narrative interview, October 2019, Rio de Janeiro, interviewer: Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, translated from Portuguese).

Maria was able to conduct two interviews with Bintu, and to ask some further questions via a messaging app. In addition, Lucas conducted another online interview in spring 2021.

Bintu’s present way of life can be explained by the fact that her migration took place without the aid of a religious network. In Brazil she is integrated in a network

of Black female migrants and is beginning to become interested in Christianity. She speaks to Maria about this only in the second interview, in which she also reveals other things which she has not mentioned before, as we will show. She says she had a dream in which Jesus appeared to her as a Muslim. She thinks a lot about this dream. The only people she has told about it are her marabout in Senegal, with whom she speaks about once a month via a messaging app, and her mother. Now she asks Maria whether Jesus was a good person. In this dialogue, Bintu is fully aware that Maria is a Christian and a nun. To us, this dream, and the fact that she asks a nun for assurance about Jesus, suggests that Bintu is beginning to find Christianity attractive. This is probably the result of living with a Christian woman, and having contact with Christian women in general.

The components that triggered her migration to Brazil were the separation from her husband in 2005, her financial situation as a single woman with two children, and wanting to help her mother. Especially since the death of her father in 2012, she is responsible, together with her sisters, for providing for her mother. She evidently has a very weak position in her *father's family*. She is a daughter of her father's third wife, who has a total of eighteen children, with no son from Bintu's mother, a constellation which made the situation of Bintu's mother financially precarious before and especially after his death, and which led to her three daughters going abroad to work. But let us go back to Bintu's youth: when she was in her early adolescence, her father had serious financial problems, and Bintu had to leave school and go to work so that she could contribute to the family income. She started by selling sweets on the street, until the Tijaniyya brotherhood arranged for her to be given a stall in the city's central market where she was able to sell fruit and vegetables. When she got married – against the wish of her father – she continued working in the market. Her husband suffered from diabetes and was dependent on the income earned by his wife. From what Bintu says, it is clear that her income gave her a relatively powerful position in her family of procreation, as well as in her *maternal family of origin* both before her marriage and after her divorce. However, her status as a trader is not only bound up with financial independence and a privileged position in the family. Donna L. Perry (2005) discusses how the status of men in the Wolof community is affected when married women go out to work: “As women expand into petty trade and men become dependent on their dependents, new domestic tensions emerge around issues of labor, financial control, mobility, space, and sexuality” (ibid.: 209). The married men we interviewed in Senegal all underlined that their wives do not go out to work and that they themselves are responsible for providing for their families of procreation. Perry also says that, especially among rural Wolof, women who work in the weekly markets (*louma*) have a bad reputation among men: “Men are particularly vexed that louma-goers ignore Islamic restrictions on mixing men and women in public spaces.” They also claim that the markets are places of licen-

tiousness and prostitution (*ibid.*: 216).²⁷ We can assume that this stigmatization of market women is also felt in the migrant diaspora by single Senegalese women who work as traders, especially in a country like Morocco, with its patriarchal gender order, where women who earn their own income are rare and regarded as abnormal (and thus socially degraded) (see Constantinidis *et al.* 2018).

In the case of Bintu, her husband, like Aida's husband, was dependent on the money earned by his wife as a market woman. Bintu's husband helped her in her work. He bought goods in the surrounding villages and brought them to her in the market. He became even more dependent on his wife when his leg had to be amputated following a motorbike accident and because of his diabetes. Perhaps his decision to marry another wife in what was for him a precarious situation, and while Bintu was pregnant for the third time, was due to the figuration in which he had less power than his wife. Bintu was strictly opposed to this marriage. She accused him of not thinking of its economic consequences, and generalizes this as follows:

“In Senegal people arrange a marriage without considering the consequences. When men who don't work arrange a marriage and then have children, they will suffer” (Biographical-narrative interview, October 2019, Rio de Janeiro, interviewer: Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, translated from Portuguese).

In the interview, Bintu explains that she felt cheated by her husband, and she says very firmly: “I don't want to share a man so I left.” Since this statement would not be acceptable in the context of the Islamic brotherhoods, it seems to us that she probably learned that she could say it through her contacts with Christian women in Brazil. At any rate, Bintu – now heavily pregnant – went back to her mother's house with her two children. The child that was born after the separation died at the age of six months.

A decision to leave one's husband is acceptable in the Wolof community, as explained for instance by the Senegalese lawyer and women's rights campaigner Bintu K. Camara (2007: 796):

“The Wolof say, quite simply, ‘ku am se'yu aay am fe'yu aay’ (‘whoever has a conjugal home also has a home to go back to’). Marriage does not make a woman lose her legal capacity. Consequently, she keeps the right to go out to work and manage her property. While each spouse must contribute to upkeep of the household, indigenous law entitles spouses to do whatever they want with their money once that duty is fulfilled. Hence, in cases of separation or divorce, a woman is not left destitute” (Camara 2007: 796).

²⁷ See also Adjamagbo *et al.* (2006) or Kana (1972).

Bintu wanted a divorce but her husband died before this could be formalized. This was ten years ago and when asked by Maria whether she would like to marry again, Bintu answers: “No, men are all the same.” As in Aida’s case, we assume that Bintu decided to migrate in order to escape from the social pressure to marry again, or that she didn’t want to let a second marriage get in the way of her desired migration.

We have now seen how critically these two women speak about the power inequalities they experienced in their marriages in Senegal. We will conclude with a discussion of the way Bintu speaks about her ethnic belonging, because in the first interview we conducted with her she clearly adopts the discourse that prevails in the Senegalese community in Brazil, while this is not observable in later exchanges. Like most of the other Senegalese we talked to, in the first interview Bintu presents herself as a Wolof and says she migrated for economic reasons. She does not make any reference to her difficult position in Senegal as an unmarried mother. By describing her ethnic belonging as Wolof, she uses the discourse which probably results from the process known as Wolofization in Senegal. In a follow-up interview which Maria do Carmo conducted with Bintu in Rio de Janeiro five days after the biographical interview, and which was more like a back-stage chat than a discussion on the Senegalese front stage, Bintu explains that like her father, she belongs to the Serer, and that her mother comes from Mauritania and is a “Naar”:

“I am a Serer [...] because my father is Serer but he speaks Wolof [...] because everyone there speaks Wolof [...] my mother is Naar” (Follow-up interview, October 2019, Rio de Janeiro, interviewer: Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, translated from Portuguese).

In order to clarify what Bintu means by “Naar”, a very ambiguous term that has different connotations, our colleague Maria contacted Bintu again via a messaging app and asked her how to spell it and what it means. Bintu associates it with the Black people in Mauritania, the ‘Haratin’ (‘Black Moors’) as against the dominant ‘Bidan’ (‘White Moors’).²⁸ Bintu explains that in Wolof ‘*naar*’ means ‘moor’; but she says explicitly that this refers only to the Black people in Mauritania. With this she breaks a taboo and speaks about a ‘secret’, as she calls it. She says that her mother left Mauritania and came to Senegal with her family when she was four years old: “because there are Arabs, white men, and there was a lot of racism and a lot of wars.” She says that members of the Bidan attacked the village where her mother was living with her family at that time, and comments:

“Now they make a secr- a secret, but before it was flagrant (Portuguese: *flagrante*) [...] there is racism [...] my mother never went back.”

²⁸ The Black people in this sense constitute about 40% of the population in Mauritania; see ch. 4.3.

In other words, Bintu thinks it's impossible to speak openly about racism in Mauritania, or about the enslavement of Black people there, which still exists in certain forms (see ch. 4.3).

By describing her mother as a “Naar”, Bintu is perhaps perpetuating a they-image adopted in Mauritania from the “white” Berber (*Amazigh*) Arabs. James Webb (1994: XXVI) comments on the derogatory they-image associated with this term in the Senegambia region:

“desert people referred to as Naar, which signified ‘Arabic speaker’. The folk etymology of the term ‘Naar’ is contested: some Black Senegambians contend that it means ‘liar’ (thus underscoring the perceived unreliability of desert people); some White Mauritians insist that it is derived from the Arabic word for fire (thus indicating that desert people are dangerous like fire).”

Bintu doesn't know about this. In April 2021, Lucas conducted an online interview with her and again tried to find out what Bintu knows about the Naar. Bintu says that the Naar are an ethnic group like the Soninke; but at the same time – as in the interview with Maria – she subsumes the whole Black population of Mauritania under the term Naar. At any rate, Bintu understands Naar as a name the people give themselves, a view shared by Tidiane N'Diaye (2017[2008]: 46), in contrast to Webb. N'Diaye points out that people in Mauritania who live close to the border with Senegal (on the right bank or *rive droite* of the Senegal river) call themselves Naar.

In the interview with Lucas, Bintu cannot say any more about the history of her family in Mauritania than what she has already said. However, in contrast to what she said earlier, she now says that her mother was just a few months old when the family fled from Mauritania, and that her grandmother left their home village carrying her as a baby in her arms. We assume that Bintu was told very little about these events by her mother or her maternal grandparents. From the few bits of information she heard, she must have created certain images in her head, such as that of her grandmother carrying a baby in her arms. Her grandfather is not present in this image.

How can we interpret the fact that Bintu presented herself as Wolof in the first interview and as Serer in the follow-up interview? This is a phenomenon that we frequently observed. It has been discussed, among others, by Lucas Cé Sangalli and Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves (2020: 66-70) in connection with a case study of a migrant from Senegal in Brazil who is also a Serer. After the Wolof and the Fulbe, the Serer are the third largest ethnic grouping in Senegal. Many of them speak Wolof. We need to be aware here that “the categories of language on the one hand, and cultural group identification on the other hand, are also frequently blurred”, as Alexander Keese (2015: 89) puts it in his analysis of the “Wolofization” of Senegal. Keese (*ibid.*: 92) (see Villalón 2006[1995]: 51f.)

points out that the ethnic group of the Serer has split into two, on the one hand the ‘true Serer’, who still speak Serer (a Niger-Congo language) and refuse to be called Wolof, and on the other hand those who speak Wolof and follow Wolof traditions.

The figurations of different ethnic and religious groupings in Senegal cannot be transferred one-to-one to the diaspora. It is clear that in Senegal there are regional differences in majority and minority relations and power inequalities, and that Senegalese in the diaspora are dependent on existing migrant networks, *especially when they first arrive*. The biographies of these two women, like those of the two men whom we will present in the next section, show that having to turn to multinational networks because of an outsider position, and the resulting separation (whether abrupt or gradual) from the networks of the brotherhoods, can be instrumental in getting established in the host country.

3.4 Two outsiders in the we-group of Senegalese in Brazil and in Germany

Preliminary remark. In our data, we have two biographies of Senegalese men who **migrated without the help of the brotherhoods**, like these two women. They are not integrated in the communities of migrants from Senegal but live and work in a multi-national milieu. These two men are Fary (born 1977 in Dakar, Senegal), who has lived in Brazil since 2013, and Youssoupha (born about 1992), who has lived in Germany since 2010. Although their family histories and their biographies are very different, there are some striking similarities. Both men are fluent in the language of the country where they are living today, in contrast to those Senegalese we interviewed in Brazil who **migrated with the help of brotherhoods**, and whose social contacts today are mainly restricted to these groupings. These two men speak their mother tongue only when they have contact with people in or from their home country. In their we- and self-presentations, there is no sign of the harmonizing and homogenizing we-image that was presented to us by those who “migrated with the help of brotherhoods”. If we knew nothing about the Islamic brotherhoods in Senegal, the interviews with Fary and Youssoupha would leave us with the impression that there are no brotherhoods in Senegal, or we would fail to see their enormous significance for people’s daily life and for politics in the country. Although Fary was socialized in Senegal in a family that belongs to the Wolof and the Murids, he has hardly any face-to-face contacts with members of this brotherhood or with Senegalese migrants in general. Only in the last interview, in answer to direct questions by the interviewer, do we learn that he and his family belong to the Murid brotherhood. Youssoupha and his family do not belong to a brotherhood and do not speak Wolof. And unlike those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods, these two men have no plans to return to Senegal, at

least not at the time of the interviews. They both come from families in Senegal that own land and cannot be described as poor. But they do not mention this in their first interviews with us. Another thing they have in common is that our image of them changed considerably in the course of our research. On the one hand, this was probably because their growing trust in us interviewers enabled them to speak more openly and to ignore the rules of the dominant discourses in their we-groups. On the other hand, it was perhaps a result of our reading and research on the social reality and social history of Senegal, which enabled us to ask more specific questions. This experience showed us how easy it is to interpret the biographies of migrants wrongly if we know too little about their contexts of origin, or if we unquestioningly accept their we- and self-representations as an account of what they really experienced, especially before their migration, without trying to critically reconstruct the rules of the prevailing discourses. Since we are not experts on Senegal's past and present history, or on other interviewees' societies of origin, we constantly had to ask ourselves how far we could go in our background research without losing sight of the concrete persons and their histories and experiences. In other words, how can we prevent ourselves from overlooking their particular perspectives of their individual and collective history, and interpreting information too hastily in the light of knowledge gained from our reading?

In the discussion below, we will try to show how our image of these two men changed over time, especially in the case of Fary, and that we were not able to obtain answers to all of our questions. In the case of Fary, for instance, this applies to certain questions concerning his life before he migrated. In the case of Youssoupha, on the other hand, we can show how he gained confidence and spoke more openly from interview to interview, so that we learned more about the tension between loyalty to his parents in Senegal and his life in Germany.

3.4.1 Life as the only Senegalese in a small town in southern Brazil

Fary's everyday life in Brazil is not closely connected to other members of the Senegalese community and the brotherhoods. He describes himself "as the only Senegalese in the town", which is inhabited mainly by descendants of migrants from Germany and Italy. Fary is married to a woman from Cuba, who has converted from Christianity to Islam. He communicates with his wife in Spanish and with his children in Portuguese. In his daily life in Brazil he hardly ever speaks Wolof. The social worker who arranged the contact and the interview also told Lucas that Fary was the only Senegalese in this town. She knew Fary from her voluntary work for a Catholic organization that offers help for migrants arriving in Brazil. In this town, there are no mosques or collective prayer groups. Fary and his wife, who has converted to Islam, pray in their home and celebrate the religious festivals there without the presence of any other Senegalese. They invite Haitian and Brazilian friends to festivals such as Magal, which means that the guests are almost exclusively Christians. Fary works as a street vendor in one of the main

shopping streets where he has a fixed place. In addition, he has set up an office where migrants can send money abroad. Today, mainly his wife works there. The couple have two children of pre-school age.

Lucas Cé Sangalli interviewed Fary in September 2019 and stayed in contact with him via social media.²⁹ In November 2021, when we had already written a first draft of this chapter, Lucas conducted a long online biographical interview with him because he had many questions concerning Fary's life before his migration. This interview confirmed what we had already assumed: that there are problems in Fary's family of origin about which he does not wish to speak, and that these are probably due to biographical experiences before his migration or reasons connected with his family history; that he has hardly any contact with the brotherhoods; and in particular that he does not want to talk about his relationship with the brotherhoods and possible differences between them. However, in this last interview with him, we gained some new information which very much changed our image of him and his family. This includes the very important information that Fary had married two wives in Senegal and has four children (aged 22, 18, 15 and 8) from these two marriages. We also learned that the children are not living with their mothers but with his mother. Before he left, Fary had purchased a piece of land and a house for his mother. This also affected our hypotheses as to why Fary felt so strongly obliged to send money regularly to his mother. We now presume that his remittances are mainly intended as support for his four children and not, as we had supposed, for his family of origin. All this showed that we had been wrong in our assumption that he had married for the first time in Brazil very late, at the age of about 36, and that this was probably connected with a very precarious financial situation before his migration. That his situation was not precarious is shown by the following statement: "Tuba is where my father and I have houses." Thus, we learned from this case how useful it can be to conduct several interviews and how careful we need to be with our interpretations.

Let us consider the most important points in Fary's biography. As already mentioned, he was born in a Wolof family in the capital Dakar in 1977. Before migrating, he worked in Senegal, like his father, as a woodworker and blacksmith (*lawbe* and *tëgg*). Because the status of these occupations is probably not insignificant for a person's socialization in Wolof society, which is characterized by an endogamous social stratification system, like other ethnic groupings in the region, we assumed that his father and his whole family belonged to *artisan* castes (*lawbe* and *tëgg*).³⁰ Even if the social differences, and the associated restrictions with regard to occupation, are becoming blurred in present-day society in Senegal, especially in big cities like Dakar, a distinction is still made between nobility, clerics, castes and slaves. Among the Wolof, woodworkers and blacksmiths (*lawbe* and *tëgg*) belong to *non-*

²⁹ Communication was sometimes in French, but mainly in Portuguese, because Fary is no longer confident in French.

³⁰ On the caste system in various ethnic groupings in West Africa, see Tamari (1991).

noble castes.³¹ Because of the possible biographical significance of belonging to a certain caste, Lucas asked about this explicitly in the last interview. Fary answers: “This has been there ((in Senegal)) but now is changing.” Lucas had to ask several times before Fary told him that he, his whole family, and the two women he had married in Senegal all belong to the griots (*gégél*), meaning the caste of professional musicians, praise-singers, genealogists and story tellers. This also means belonging to a non-noble caste, with a clear rule that one must marry within the same caste, but nonetheless there are significant differences between griots and artisans. In Senegalese society, the social status of griots or *gégél* differs from region to region, and is less important in big cities like Dakar, but it also depends on their skill and success as griots. They-images of them are full of contradictions, ranging from utter contempt, to fear, to great admiration. These contradictions are reflected in the social science literature. For instance, Isabelle Leymarie-Ortiz (1979: 183), an anthropologist, writes that, “even though the griots have a low social status, they are greatly admired musicians and entertainers without whose artistry many Wolof claim they could not live”. Tolia Nikprowetzky (1963), himself a composer, says that while some of them work in other occupations, others have a high reputation and earn a good income. He underlines the contradiction between negative images of them, on the one hand, and admiration for their talents, on the other. On the basis of her fieldwork in a rural Wolof community, Judith T. Irvine (2018) reports that the griots are excluded from the community, to the extent that they are not buried in the same cemetery as other people, and in earlier times were not buried at all: “In fact, in past centuries griots were not to be buried in the ground at all, in this part of Senegal” (ibid.: 28). We could go deeper into current changes in the importance of castes, their different rules, the position of the *gégél* in the Murid brotherhood, and their sometimes drastic exclusion from social life, or regional differences. But let us consider what Fary says himself, for this might help us to learn what this means to him:

“I am a lost *gégél* because there are people who know things of *gégél* ((laughing)) I don’t know anything bro [...] what I can do as *gégél* is to play drums the only thing I know I can play drum very well, more than that nothing cause *gégél* they sing, play drum and dance” (Follow-up interview, November 2021, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from Portuguese).

He says he is a lost *gégél* because he does not have all the professional skills that a *gégél* needs. As we know from earlier interviews, he and his father also worked in other occupations, mostly outside Senegal, and probably neither of them ever worked as a *gégél*. For 46 years now, his father has mostly worked in France, and stays in Senegal only for short periods. Fary himself left Senegal when he was 13

³¹ The Wolof of Senegal historically had four non-noble castes of artisans (*nyenyoy*), the woodworkers (*lawbe*), the leatherworkers (*uudé*), the blacksmiths and jewellers (*tégg*), the weavers (*ràbbkat*) and the bards or griots (*gégél*) (Tamari 1991: 228).

or 14 and went to work in Guinea, where he lived for many years. He is clearly unwilling to speak about the caste to which he belongs, which suggests that for him, and probably for his family as a whole, this is a difficult topic and not simply an unimportant one. However, it is not clear to us what makes it so difficult: embarrassment over belonging to this caste, a desire to deny that he belongs to it, or his lack of professional experience as a *gévél*. Interestingly, Fary plays down the importance, not only of his belonging to the *gévél*, but also of his belonging to the Murids. He broached neither of these topics in the first interviews, and it is clear that he is reluctant to talk about them. In the last interview, he says explicitly that he doesn't want to discuss differences between the brotherhoods because this could cause conflicts. Like the other men whom we interviewed in Brazil, he also underlines that the brotherhoods "are all the same", but then he continues as follows:

"To tell you the truth I don't know much much about religion [...] because if I tell- this are just words [...] you can say things that hurt people (Portuguese: *que pica gente*) you can say things people don't like, so I don't want to go in detail."

And later he says: "I don't want to talk about religion." In addition to problems which existed before his departure from Senegal, this avoidance of the topics of religion, belonging to a brotherhood and belonging to a caste may be connected with his marriage in Brazil to a woman from Cuba. It is important to realize that, for the Wolof in Senegal, caste status is a much greater barrier to intermarriage than ethnicity or religion. This is made clear by Villalón, for instance, who adds: "Because caste cuts across ethnicity among most Senegalese groups, and since cross-ethnic marriages are widely tolerated as long as they do not cross caste lines, the salience of ethnicity is further undercut. The caste system, in fact, at times blurs with ethnicity" (2006[1995]: 57).

Let us take a look at other things we learned about Fary's life story. His father was absent during his childhood and youth, because he had gone to work in France and the family depended on his remittances. Fary lived with his mother, who was his father's first wife, and his three older siblings, two brothers and a sister, in his paternal uncle's compound. Over the years, Fary's mother gave birth to four more children. Despite having to provide for many children and several wives, Fary's father was able to buy a house in Tuba with the money he earned in France. Tuba is a large city west of the capital. It was founded by the Murids, for whom it is a 'holy city'. Later, Fary's mother moved to Tuba with her children. Fary says that his father sent money home for his education. From the age of seven, he attended both a Quranic school and a state school where French was the language of instruction. But he left school at the age of ten: "I studied only 3 years. I did not like to go to school", and he says that this was against the wish of his parents. He could neither read nor write then, and even today only with difficulty. As

he says in the interview, at ten years old he earned money by working as a street vendor. When he was 13 or 14 he went to work in Guinea-Conakry. We wonder whether these biographical choices were due to problematic dynamics in his family. But Fary doesn't mention, or avoids mentioning, any problems. He only says that instead of going to school he wanted to earn money to help his family, by which he probably means mainly his mother. As we learned in the last interview, his parents have separated and his mother is living in the house that Fary bought for her. But we do not know when his mother moved out of his father's house and Fary is not inclined to talk about it. In response to our question, he says: "it is complicated, let's let's come back to Brazil." He always shows that he would rather talk about his present life in Brazil than about the time before he migrated.

In Guinea-Conakry Fary learned to speak some French and Susu. After about 15 years he returned to Senegal, first to Tuba and later to Dakar. Here he worked as a woodworker and blacksmith. In the last interview we learn of his two marriages and the birth of his children. The first child was born in about 1999 or 2000 and the fourth shortly before he left for Brazil in 2013. He had to marry the first wife when she became pregnant. In about 2005 he then married a cousin on his father's side. The marriage had been arranged by his father. These women belong to the same caste, and grew up in the same neighborhood as Fary. Fary experienced his first marriages very differently from his marriage in Brazil, which was a love match, and he speaks very differently about them: "There is no real thing, you do not know the woman, one day you see and you marry. You have to look for the woman you want." He adds: "The woman that we are given there is never truth", and we interpret "truth" as meaning that an arranged marriage cannot be a love match. This criticism of arranged marriages, and thus of the rules of his we-group, is remarkable because it is the only criticism of the rules in Senegal that Fary expresses in the interviews with us.

Fary's mother lives in the house he bought for her in Tuba with his four children, but without their mothers. He explains that the two women still belong to his family, but that he no longer considers them as his wives. We learned in the first interview that a younger sister of Fary had migrated to Spain before his own departure. His own attempt to get to France with the aid of smugglers failed. His father refused to give him money to help him to emigrate. He says that he was 36 years old when his mother and his sister in Spain gave him money for a flight to Ecuador, from where he traveled to Brazil.

We see this reluctance to talk about his life before his migration – which contrasts with his willingness to talk about his life in Brazil – as a clear indication that there were problems in his family of origin and that he failed in his attempts to found a family of his own. The beginning of his presentation in the first interview, after we asked him to tell us his life story and that of his family, can also be seen as a confirmation of this reading:

“My history of my family of my life ok has nothing, nothing, nothing bad that I can say. Because I live with my family together, then just we don’t have much, much, money ok that’s why I want to leave, I leave Br- I leave Senegal to come here to help my family there, then my- my life too has nothing, nothing complicated too, because I’m here in Brazil, I’m already married here, then I have two children, here then I’m also working, helping my family there too (2) that’s it” (Biographical-narrative interview, September 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from Portuguese).

This presentation of an unproblematic biography and family history is maintained by Fary in all passages, and uses the explanation that we have so often been told by others, that he had to leave Senegal in order to be able to send money to his family. We had concluded from this that his family must be very poor. In the first interview, Fary succeeded in giving the impression that he had left Senegal only for economic reasons, without mentioning that he has four older children there. When Lucas asks him about the financial situation of his family in Senegal, he does not say anything about his own circumstances, but first explains that his father has many children from several wives. After the above-quoted passage, he continues:

“Not all work. Few of them work. Because of that, I can’t stay there because we don’t have help so I left to help them. My mother and father are alive so I left to help them. My mother has 8 children. I am a bit older so I can help them. So, I left to help them there.”

Because of this and other remarks he made in the first biographical interview about financial problems in his family of origin, we asked ourselves why Fary, as his mother’s third son, felt responsible for sending remittances to the family, and why his father did not want to help him to emigrate. We supposed that his aim was to support his mother and his siblings from this marriage, rather than his father with his other wives and children. We also formulated the hypothesis that his decision to leave school early and to go and work in Guinea was due to a similar constellation, and was somehow connected with problems between his parents. The information we were given in the last interview, that he had bought a house for his mother and his four children, changed our impression of the family’s situation, but confirmed our supposition that there were conflicts between his parents. It seems clear that his main reason for emigrating was to be able to support his own children financially. We suppose that there were also other reasons, but we cannot say what they were.

Let us take a brief look at the biographical course of his migration and his life in Brazil. It was much easier to reconstruct this course on the basis of Fary’s detailed and consistent accounts. Fary flew by plane to Quito, Ecuador, and entered Brazil through the northern border at Acre, where he filed an application for refugee status and regularized his situation in Brazil. In 2013, shortly after arriving in Brazil

(!), he met his future wife Alina, who was introduced to him by an acquaintance, himself a migrant from Haiti. The story of how he met Alina shows how quickly he wanted to form a friendship with her and how he tries to legitimize this relationship with a Christian woman from another country in religious terms. He says it was the will of God:

“God wanted us to meet although she can’t speak French and I can speak French and English and she speaks Spanish and I can’t so we talk without language. ((changes from Portuguese to French)). It is God who knows it (French: *C’est Dieu qui sait*). She came- I saw her and she arrived two, three days after me. My friend told me she spoke Spanish. ((The friend asked)) ‘How will you flirt with her without knowing her language?’ I was with a Haitian friend who spoke Spanish so he called her for me. Then she met with me but we spoke three words and could not talk anymore. I hugged her in front of the door and kissed her [...] nowadays we have two kids. We are together for six years. We are married in my religion” (Biographical-narrative interview, September 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from Portuguese/French).

By saying that God wanted them to meet and that he and his wife were married “in his religion”, he demonstrates his loyalty to the marriage rules and the faith of his milieu of origin.

Before marrying Alina and having children with her, Fary continued his migration to São Paulo (southeastern Brazil), where he met some Senegalese who bought him a ticket to travel to southern Brazil. In the countryside of southern Brazil, he worked for short periods in different cities, especially in temporary jobs and in slaughterhouses. Alina had continued her migration without Fary to another state in southern Brazil. They kept in contact through their smartphones. They arranged their reunion in a city in southern Brazil and married in June 2013. As the next quotation shows, Fary wanted to return to Senegal after facing the hard reality of working in a slaughterhouse, but his wife’s first pregnancy and his limited financial resources led him to settle in southern Brazil with his family of procreation:

“I had physical problems and work was heavy there. I asked to get out to go back to Senegal. But I didn’t have enough money. They paid me 300 Reais and my sister sent me 1,000 Euros so I could buy some things and I started to sell them on the streets. Then I found out my wife was pregnant so I stayed here.”

In contrast to “those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”, who are frequently supplied with goods within the brotherhood networks, Fary’s sister sent him money to buy goods, which enabled him to begin working as a hawker in the city’s main shopping street.

Lucas kept in touch with Fary during the Covid-19 pandemic through a messaging app and heard that Fary and Alina were having increasing financial problems. In July 2020, Fary told Lucas that the falling value of the Brazilian currency (BRL), combined with increased housing and food prices in Brazil, had made the cost of living so high that sending money to Senegal was impossible, and this troubled him because: "The family in Senegal depends on us. They expect that we will work and send money to them. This is difficult." The problems have increased in the course of the pandemic and Fary is now considering trying to get to the US with his family, which is a dangerous route, or to Canada or Europe: "If I had the means, I would leave Brazil now to go to US, Canada, or Europe." He knows four Senegalese who once lived in a nearby city and who have set off for the US.

It is clear that his relationship with his family in Senegal is tied up with the expectation that he will send money to his mother and his children. Besides sending money home, the continuity in his life is his practice of Islam, albeit independently of any direct contact with a Muslim community. He sometimes has contact with other migrants from Senegal, as shown by the fact that some Senegalese helped him to pay for a ticket for a flight to southern Brazil, but these contacts are rather rudimentary. Unlike the professed intentions of "those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods", Fary is determined to become established in Brazilian society, or at any rate somewhere outside Senegal. Fary follows the discourse that prevails in the brotherhoods insofar as he says that he migrated in order to be able to send money to his family in Senegal, but two other essential parts of this discourse are absent in his presentation: he does not declare that he intends to go back to Senegal, and he does not present the homogenizing we-image that denies any difference between the different religious communities in Senegal. However, he is unwilling to speak about these differences or his criticism of the brotherhoods.

We suppose that this self-presentation and this life course are shaped by constellations in the history of his family in Senegal which influenced his work decisions, his migration, and his choice of a wife who is not from Senegal. In practice, Fary has increasingly distanced himself from his milieu of origin and become focused on making a living outside Senegal. We can assume that this was made possible and encouraged by his problematic past in Senegal, and that he can now concentrate on the family he has founded in Brazil. He does all that is expected of him in the sense that he is a practicing Muslim, he is bringing up his children in the Islamic faith, he sends money to his mother and his children in Senegal, and he does not say anything negative about his experiences in Senegal. He avoids the social control of the Islamic brotherhoods, but stays in contact with individual migrants from Senegal.

3.4.2 Migration from Senegal to Germany in the context of a family milieu of established outsiders

Common to all the cases discussed in the previous sections is that belonging to one of the Muslim brotherhoods is a relevant component of the family and biographical contexts within which these migrants act. However, as we have shown, this does not mean that all their biographies and migration projects are affected in the same way by this belonging. Accordingly, it does not always play the same role in their self- and we-presentations. On the contrary, there are very clear differences between those migrants from Senegal whose migration projects are bound up in a consistent and very *close* way with the transnational networks of the brotherhoods, and those to whom this does not apply. As a contrast to the type of **“those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”** (ch. 3.2), we have discussed the cases of Bintu, Aida and Fary. Their family histories and biographies show connections with the brotherhoods and their festivals and rituals. But their migrations and their everyday lives are not influenced in any (directly) visible way by members of the religious brotherhoods. In these cases, this is the result of different biographical processes. Compared to the we-presentation of “those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods”, the interviewees in the contrasting cases speak much more openly about social differentiations, conflicts and inequalities in Senegal and in the diaspora. Their perspectives give an insight into how effectively the front stage harmonizing we-image conceals the extremely complex forms of social boundary making (Barth 1969; Lamont/Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013) that structure both intra- and intergroup relations between the brotherhood members, and power inequalities in connection with regional, ethno-linguistic, gender, and class- or milieu-related belongings in Senegal and in the diaspora.

Below, we will compare these findings with the biography of a man who migrated from Senegal to Germany, and whose case forms a contrast to the other cases on several levels:

1. his biographical self-presentation, in which his migration project is presented in a highly individualized manner on the front stage, while biographically significant components like belonging to certain we-groups are kept back stage,
2. an ambivalent to-and-fro in his present life in Germany, between active participation in multinational milieus with their more universalistic value terms and concepts, and efforts to meet familial role expectations,
3. and the fact that he comes from a family of “established outsiders” in the Senegal-Gambia border region which belongs neither to one of the brotherhoods nor to the Wolof-speaking community.

Youssoupha, as we will call him, was born in the early 1990s in a Maninka-speaking Sunni family. They lived in eastern Senegal, in a village in the region

of Tambacounda, close to the border with Gambia. At the age of about 17, together with a half-brother, he traveled via Dakar, the capital, to join the family of his father's brother in Spain. This uncle had migrated to Spain like several other uncles in the 1980s/1990s. This transnational family network is of great significance not only for Youssoupha's migration project, but also for the whole family system. About a year after moving to Spain, Youssoupha continued his migration project alone. In 2010, when the global financial crisis had a serious impact on the Spanish economy, he traveled through Switzerland to Germany. His first years in Berlin were a very difficult phase because of his very precarious residence status. In his first ten years in Germany, Youssoupha went to school and completed grade 10 (German: Realschule), and later grade 12 (German: Fachabitur). After this he began as a trainee with the Berlin Stadtwerke, the municipal utilities. By this means, and with much help from an NGO that provides assistance for refugees, he was able to obtain a residence permit (German: Aufenthaltserlaubnis) in about 2018.

Youssoupha was in the second year of his vocational training, which filled the largest part of his day, when we met him in a skate park in Berlin in February 2020. At this time, he had been living in Germany for about ten years. Gabriele Rosenthal and Arne Worm conducted a first biographical interview with him in a nearby cafe. Up to the writing of this chapter in spring 2022, Arne was in regular contact with Youssoupha. Besides constant contact via a messenger service, three narrative telephone interviews were conducted at intervals of about six months (May 2020, October 2020, June 2021; each lasting about one hour), plus a face-to-face follow-up interview in Berlin in October 2021 (Arne Worm and Lucas Cé Sangalli). The skate park where we first met Youssoupha is where he regularly goes in his free time to meet friends and acquaintances, most of whom are also from West Africa. Within his peer group, his closest contacts are migrants from Gambia or people who are also Mande-speaking. Some of them are living in much more precarious situations than Youssoupha, both financially and in terms of their residency status. In his private life, he has no intensive everyday contacts with other migrants from Senegal, nor with white Germans. Thus, like Bintu, Aida and Fary, he is mainly involved in migrant, multinational and multi-ethnic communities. This includes occasionally going to a mosque, especially on the occasion of Islamic holidays. Another clear sign of acting in multinational contexts is his marriage at the age of 20 with a woman from a German-Turkish family. When we met him in 2020, Youssoupha was in the middle of a divorce process which was stressful for him, and which he did not want to talk about in the first interview. Overall, Youssoupha presented himself in the first biographical interview in extremely individual terms, and with a clear focus on the positive, successful aspects of his migration project. We kept in contact and were able to follow the course of his biographical developments in 2020 and 2021, which were very much affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, despite the difficult conditions due to the pandemic, Youssoupha successfully concluded his

training, completed the divorce from his first wife, and married a woman from his home village in Senegal, with whom he has a son. Today, his marriage can be described as transnational: Youssoupha returned to Berlin and has a permanent job in the organization where he was trained, while his wife and son live in his family's compound in Tambacounda.

Our close contact with Youssoupha over a period of two years, in which we built up a relationship of trust, meant that we heard a lot about his divorce from his first wife, whom he had married in Germany, and his subsequent marriage to a woman from the same ethnic, local, social and religious milieu. Below, we will look more closely at how Youssoupha experienced this process that created central points of tension in his biography and family history. But first, we will show how Youssoupha presented his life story, his family, and social reality in Senegal in the interviews, and how this changed over time. Youssoupha's self-presentation follows a pattern in which an individual and autonomous migration project is presented front stage, while his belonging to we-groups is pushed to the back stage. It seems that the relationship between the front-stage and back-stage we-images in Youssoupha's case is exactly the opposite of what it is in the we-presentations of "those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods" in Brazil.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the first biographical-narrative interview with Youssoupha, which Gabriele and Arne conducted with him in February 2020 in Berlin. The first sequences of the interview contain in a nutshell the essential structural features that characterize his presentation of his life story and his migration. Youssoupha responded to the initial invitation to tell the story of his family and his life as follows:

"Well yes as I said luckily I (2) did not come over yes (2) not over how do you say (2) not over the sea or anything like that but I had relatives in Spain, like uncles and so on they have lived there for over twenty years and they are the ones who brought me to Europe, I was seventeen that was two thousand and nine, and yes I went to Spain and I lived there for a year, and then [...] when I was eighteen I tried to find work but then in 2009 there was a crisis in Spain so there was no work or anything [...] I tried to work or to get training there but I had no luck and then I thought ok now I am grown up I can yes: look after myself and then I decided to go to Switzerland" (Biographical-narrative interview, February 2020, Berlin, interviewers: Gabriele Rosenthal/Arne Worm, translated from German).

At first, Youssoupha's account of his life is completely focused on the story of his migration in the narrow sense. Here – and in the rest of his autonomously structured biographical self-presentation – he says hardly anything about different phases of his life before his migration, and thus very little about his family and his collective milieu of origin. We have observed that this migration-oriented pattern is typical of first interviews with migrants in Germany. According to our analyses,

it points to the powerful influence of social and symbolic distinctions between “migrant” and “non-migrants” in Germany, within which “migrants” are addressed structurally in respect of their “ability and willingness to become integrated”, and the (il-)legitimateness of their migration projects.³² For Youssoupha, as for many of our interviewees in Germany, the situation in which he interacts with white researchers who have been socialized in Germany is structurally a frame in which his own migration project as an individual and “autonomous” activity must occupy the front stage. In the case of Youssoupha, the remarkable thing is that he fills this migration-oriented self-presentation with a very individuating narrative. In the interview as a whole there are no front-stage references to we-groups, and no presentation of a we-image. Thus, he positions himself neither in a we-group of refugees or migrant diaspora, nor in a we-group of family members or other people back home. One aspect of his family, the transnational network formed by his uncles, is mentioned briefly, but only in so far as it plays a role in his ‘individual’ or – as he describes it – relatively autonomous migration project. He says that “actually” it was because of them that he first came to Europe, but that his migration was basically the result of his own decisions: this is how we can sum up the emerging pattern of his presentation. While he formulates his relationship with his relatives in Spain here in the past tense (“I had relatives in Spain”), we will see that contact with these relatives is a central biographical field for him in the present.

In the rest of his biographical self-presentation, Youssoupha continues to focus entirely on his “individual” migration, especially the difficult time following his arrival in Berlin, after spending a few days in Switzerland. He recounts how he lived in a center for unaccompanied minors, and in the first years had an uncertain residency status. In order to reduce the very real likelihood of being expelled³³ on attaining majority, Youssoupha said on arrival that he was from Gambia. In the interview, he describes vividly how hard this phase was for him, and how, in cooperation with an NGO that offers assistance to young refugees, he decided to apply for a residence permit on the basis of his Senegalese origin shortly before he turned 18:

“In the end the stress was so high then I decided now I’ll take my real identity come what may” (Biographical-narrative interview, February 2020, Berlin, interviewers: Gabriele Rosenthal/Arne Worm, translated from German).

In the rest of the interview, he concentrated on telling us how he succeeded in overcoming this difficult initial phase, which lasted several years, by learning Ger-

³² On the state of the debate in Germany on “integration” and “integration studies” see Pries 2021.

³³ In many EU countries, Senegal is designated as a “safe third country” (in Germany since 1993), so that applications for asylum by Senegalese are not as a rule admitted for assessment (see Costello 2016). In Germany, Gambia was removed from the list of “safe third countries” in 1995, but the acceptance rate for Gambian refugees in Germany is nevertheless very low (see Altrogge/Zanker 2019).

man and gaining educational and vocational qualifications. At the end of his biographical self-presentation, he sums up by saying: “*I’d say I’m doing quite well.*” His account of his life suggests a presentation designed to comply with the hegemonic Western discourse of highly individualized decisions and plans.

In the first interview, Youssoupha told us very little about his family background, and when he mentioned it, then only incidentally, from the distanced and describing perspective of a migrant whose biographical horizon is set by his individual experience of arriving in Germany. “*By African standards we were relatively well off*”, is how Youssoupha describes the economic situation of his family, with reference to the land and domestic animals they possessed. Youssoupha also responded to our questions about his ethno-linguistic and regional belonging in a rather distanced manner: “*We are Malinka*” and “*We come from the south, like from Casamance and Tambacounda.*” He also told us that in Germany he has occasionally been accused by Wolof-speaking Senegalese – he says, as a joke – of not being a “proper Senegalese”. He attaches no importance to this.

As we learned in the questioning part of this interview, and especially in the follow-up interviews, the individuated and migration-oriented self-presentation should not be interpreted as meaning that belonging to we-groups and social differentiations along ethno-linguistic, milieu-related and regional lines have no significance for Youssoupha’s migration project and his present situation: the opposite is the case, as we will show in our discussion of his biography below. For instance, we interpret the fact that he is not worried by suggestions that he is not a proper Senegalese, or that he is in a disadvantaged social position, as meaning that Youssoupha was socialized in we-group contexts with a very stable we-image. This can be very clearly seen when, at the end of the first biographical interview, Gabriele Rosenthal asks Youssoupha directly which religious group he belongs to, a topic which he had not mentioned explicitly:

“Y.: Ah well I’m a Muslim

G.R.: Yes I know that but I mean Baye Fall or

Y: Yes well whether I um yes [...] well where I come from well we are just normal Muslims because those Baye Fall or Murids or whatever it’s well those Wolofs they have that but because that is well really that is they are really all Muslims [...] in any case well where I come from we are just Muslims there’s nothing like that there [...] in my place, we live well I come from a small village with something like two thousand people so it’s just a small small village well by African standards but there: so all these differences don’t exist there” (Biographical-narrative interview, February 2020, Berlin, interviewers: Gabriele Rosenthal/Arne Worm, translated from German)

On the one hand, Youssoupha clearly states here that the people in his home village did not belong to brotherhoods. On the other hand, he makes a clear connection

between ethnic and regional belonging and the brotherhoods (“*it’s those Wolofs*”). Here, he makes very clear (for instance by saying: “*we are just normal Muslims*”) that he distances himself from all the distinctions between different Muslim belongings within the brotherhoods. We interpret this as a clear sign that Youssoupha was socialized into a Muslim Malinka we-group with a very stable we-image, due in part to the fact that his family was “established”, on both the local and the regional level. In the follow-up interviews, and especially as a result of the relationship of trust that we built up over time, we learned a lot more about Youssoupha’s family and his own life. In these interviews, he clearly expressed his critical view of Senegal as a country lacking future perspectives for members of his generation, which he sees mainly as a result of colonialism and its consequences. However, he did this from the position of a migrant who has established himself in Germany and is thus able to reflect in a detached manner on structural problems in Senegal. In contrast to the homogenizing and harmonizing self-presentations of the Senegalese in Brazil who belong to brotherhoods, Youssoupha spoke very openly about lines of difference and conflict in Senegal, and especially about the political wrangling and armed clashes in the Casamance region.³⁴ In further interviews, we saw more clearly that Youssoupha is in the middle of a process of navigating his relations with his milieu of origin and his present reality as an upwardly mobile migrant in Germany. Here, we return to our insights into Youssoupha’s “failed marriage” in Germany and subsequent partnership with a woman from his home village, which constitutes a core dynamic of this management process. Youssoupha talked most freely about this topic after his divorce from his German-Turkish ex-wife had gone through (2021). In this interview, he reflects at length on how in 2015 he began a love relationship with a woman from a German-Turkish family and subsequently married her. Following his difficult first years, he felt this marked his successful establishment in Germany. However, Youssoupha’s family of origin did not approve of this marriage, and he describes how hard his uncle in Spain tried to persuade him not to marry this girl. He says that this constellation caused stress in their marriage. Youssoupha describes the conflict with his family of origin as follows:

“Your family, they don’t know anything different, what does this mean for us, he’s married to somebody from there, will we ever see the child, will we lose our son to another kind of upbringing, [...] and they make=put pressure on you, that you should be the way you were when you came here, but you can’t because you’re living in a new environment and you have to adapt to it, the problems this causes make it difficult for many marriages to stay intact” (Follow-up interview, June 2021, interviewer: Arne Worm, translated from German).

³⁴ The “Casamance conflict” over independence of the region is one of the longest secession conflicts in the world. The height of the armed fighting was in the 1980s and 1990s (see Foucher 2018).

In the interview in which he talks about this conflict and his new partnership, Youssoupha also reflects on what it means to belong to a “noble” family. The way he fluctuates between closeness and distance in respect of this component of his belonging can be seen clearly in the following passage:

“Yes, and again I have friends here who don’t have this problem [...] there are also families again who don’t care what their children do, but I well, don’t come from well, how do you say it, um well not not a religious family but I mean well conservative [...] well where I come from too where I come from there is still today still that there are different kinds of families well there are noble families and there are others well that’s how we call them well non-noble families [...] and I was=I am from such a noble family” (Follow-up interview, June 2021, interviewer: Arne Worm, translated from German).

For Youssoupha, this ‘external conflict’ increasingly became an ‘inner’ conflict: to him, his family’s disapproval of his marriage, and the fact that they regarded it as a failure to meet family expectations of loyalty and reciprocity, seemed like a loss of internalized opportunities for meaning:

“Two years of marriage, more and more arguments, when we fight, I think, yes okay, well, is this marriage really possible, so many problems, my family is ((not)) happy with me why am I doing this [...] sometimes I wished why are you from that place but we are we can’t just change our identity or somehow because what you’ve been taught as a child that is anchored in you that stays in you even if you adapt more can, there are people who completely adapt to a new culture and a new life with no problems but there are also people like me who don’t feel comfortable with that” (Follow-up interview, June 2021, interviewer: Arne Worm, translated from German).

Youssoupha experienced this constellation as a serious dilemma with respect to his positioning and participation strategies in Germany, because from his perspective his divorce and new partnership with a woman in his home village mean that he fails to meet hegemonic expectations in Germany in respect of the integration of migrants. In the interview Youssoupha reflects at length on the problem that for non-migrant white Germans this confirms the stereotype of the migrant who cannot adapt to German ways. Here again we see the powerful influence of the integration discourse in Germany, to which Youssoupha himself ascribes a certain legitimacy. This dilemma which Youssoupha is struggling to come to terms with, in a biographical sense, is, to borrow from the German sociologist Aladin El-Mafaalani, a typical dynamic of social climbing in migration contexts, which El-Mafaalani refers to as “sphere discrepancy”:

“[...] the parents expect a high degree of loyalty to the traditional habitus of the home (inner sphere), and at the same time outstanding success in education and career (outer sphere). Thus, we are not just talking about different

forms of sociality that one can acquire and put into practice in various ways, but about expectations of reproduction with regard to a traditional habitus and identity (expectations of loyalty), on the one hand, and expectations of transformation with regard to social and economic living standards (expectations of improvement), on the other hand” (El-Mafaalani 2017: 71f., translated by Ruth Schubert).

On the one hand, Youssoupha deals with this discrepancy by meeting the expectations of his family and thus restoring or even increasing his symbolic acceptance or “social and economic capital” within the family system. For example, the fact that his new wife is now living with his family in his home village means that she can play the role expected by the family of helping Youssoupha’s mother to perform care work, and by taking care of her. This enables Youssoupha to contribute to the family’s social and economic capital, and he probably sees it as a way of repaying his ‘debts’. Here, it is evident that the different “forms of capital” (as defined by Pierre Bourdieu 1986), including the symbolic capital of recognition, are directly interrelated.³⁵ This partnership gives Youssoupha a more powerful position in his family, although this is also due to his symbolic and economic achievements in Germany. In Germany, on the other hand, as shown above, Youssoupha is aware that this lays him open to accusations of not being capable of integration. Our analysis shows that this dynamic explains why his dilemma is kept in the background in the first interview, allowing him to give a very individuated front-stage presentation of himself.

If we now look more closely at the course of Youssoupha’s migration in the light of the changing history of his family, we will see why he feels so strongly bound to this family context. Youssoupha’s migration to Germany fits into a long history in which the family’s locally established position enables its members to migrate, while at the same time their mobility serves to maintain or improve this position. It can be assumed that this dialectic between using family power and resources to make migration possible, on the one hand, and using migration to increase the resources, on the other hand, is a powerful means of reinforcing social bonds within the family. In the figuration with the Wolof in Senegal, the family is excluded from access to their means of power which are based on membership of brotherhoods and established Wolof ethnic or linguistic networks in the urban centers, but as an established and transnational family it possesses other power resources.

From a multigenerational perspective, Youssoupha’s family history is basically the history of a family whose members enjoy an established position in the rural border region between eastern Senegal and Gambia, but at the same time can be considered as outsiders in the figuration with established milieus in the urban centers of northern Senegal. Within the complex social transformation processes that

³⁵ This would not be different if Youssoupha had been born in any other social and regional context where for many families marriage alliances are an important source of social and economic capital.

took place in this region in the course of the 20th century (the postcolonial state-building process, urbanization, growing devaluation of the peasant agrarian economy; see Diouf 2001; Calabrese 2016; McLaughlin 2008), there were changes in the economic, social and symbolic sources of power on which the position of the family is based in the local context. While possessing cattle and land (especially peanut production), as well as cross-border relations between Senegal and Gambia, gradually lost their economic significance, growing importance was attached to remittances sent by family members who migrated to Europe in the decades following independence, particularly in the 1980s. At the same time, the power balances in Senegal shifted in favor of the urban centers which are dominated by Wolof as the lingua franca (see Ngom 2004) and the transnational networks of the brotherhoods. Youssoupha's migration in 2007, that is so full of tension, is closely bound up with the history of this family of "established outsiders". He navigates between obligations and loyalty toward his family, milieu-specific internalized knowledge of what constitutes a "successful life" as a member of a "noble" family, including a certain "(p)ride in the incarnation of one's group charisma in one's own person" (Elias 2008[1994]: 9), and realizing his own autonomous plans for the future.

At the time of his birth in the early 1990s, Youssoupha's Malinka-speaking³⁶ family of origin in Tambacounda can be said to have had less power chances and thus to have been in an outsider position within the figurations in Senegal based on "membership of a brotherhood" and "ethno-linguistic belonging". In the follow-up interviews, we tried to find out more about boundary-making processes in Senegal, and asked Youssoupha for instance what role ethnicized boundaries play in people's everyday realities and participation chances. In the first telephone interview, Arne asked him directly how ethnicity affects people's chances of participation in Senegal:

Y.: If you come from up there I mean from the villages and live for five six seven years in the capital, then you will speak Wolof as if you come from there

A.: so it's really a town-village difference

Y.: yes well it's like when a German from Saxony speaks standard German so well that you can't tell whether he comes from Hanover or Saxony, that's what it's like

A.: but I've also heard that if you want to get on you need to speak Wolof

Y.: yes, well you must, **no** (3) well you know it's difficult to be so long in the capital without learning Wolof, as I said, well, I've never heard that someone didn't get a job because he's Wolof or Maninka I don't think we have

³⁶ "Speakers of Mande languages in Senegal constitute only 6 per cent of the population, but they belong to a much larger linguistic and ethnic area that encompasses a large part of West Africa" (McLaughlin 2008: 92). On the sociohistory of "Mandinguization" in Senegambia see Thomson 2011.

that problem” (Follow-up interview, May 2021, interviewer: Arne Worm, translated from German)

The way Youssoupha explains the structure of social inequality in Senegal is very revealing. On the one hand, he emphasizes – in all the interviews – that ethnic differentiations are not important for social positioning and that there are no conflicts along lines of ethnic difference. For Youssoupha, the most important things you need for social advancement or an established position are social networks and connections in the city, the center, Dakar. Indirectly, he says that the ability to speak Wolof is the standard: if you can speak Wolof, then ethnic differences are not important.³⁷ Conversely, this implies a social practice of demarcation and differentiation, and ultimately an established-outsider figuration. In the quotation, Youssoupha shows that he thinks regional origin affects one’s participation chances, in addition to the ability to speak Wolof. His home region, the rural eastern part of Senegal, which is marginalized in comparison to the urban centers, especially the region of Dakar, thus also plays a role in creating social inequality.

However, Youssoupha’s family has enough economic, symbolic and social sources of power to make it an established family within the local context. On the one hand, this is because they have been settled in the Senegal-Gambia border region for many generations, they possess land and cattle, they hold local political and religious leadership positions, and they have a “noble” status. On the other hand, at the time of Youssoupha’s birth the family had transnational capital which also helped to give them an established position, specifically their family connections in Spain after his uncles had moved there in the 1980s and 1990s. This integrated we-group in the form of a multigenerational family network is a powerful resource for the family as a whole. It means that the family members interact to form a close-knit mutual support community, and maintain their we-image as a “noble” family. Diverse resources are produced by this family system, including socio-economic and socio-political resources, but they also need to be fed into the system; and the family has means of coercion which it can use to make its members comply with its expectations.

Let us take a brief look at the history of this family in the context of colonial and postcolonial transformations in the region of Tambacounda, where the family has lived for many generations. Tambacounda became a colonial border region in the narrow sense following the Berlin Conference (1878) and the drawing of a border between Gambia as a British colony and Senegal as a French colony (1888). It was referred to by the French colonial administration as “Sénégal oriental” (East Senegal). While in the course of Senegal’s history as a colony, and later as an independent country, political, administrative and economic power became increasingly concentrated in the urban centers, in the case of Youssoupha’s family

³⁷ In their empirical study of the political views of young people in Senegal, Crossouard and Dunne (2015) come to the conclusion that young people from the Tambacounda region regard themselves as being disadvantaged in comparison to the urban centers.

the creation of a colonial border contributed to strengthening the social position of the family in the regional context. In the 1940s, some parts of the family, including Youssoupha's great-grandparents, crossed over to the British colony of Gambia to escape forced recruitment by France during the Second World War (see Perfect/Evans 2013: 67f.). According to Youssoupha, these family members founded a village in Gambia. They took on the role of imams and held high-ranking offices in the community, which were symbolic and economic sources of power. As described by the historian Paul Nugent, the colonial and later international border led to a substantial contraband trade, which provided an income for people living along the border (Nugent 2019: 408).³⁸ In the following years, cross-border mobility and contraband trade continued to be common in the border region. At the same time, the branch of the family in Gambia maintained close relations with the rest of the family in Senegal across the relatively porous border. For the family, this cross-border network was a source of economic and social power, besides its status as a noble family and its possession of land and cattle in Gambia and in Senegal (peanut production was probably an important source of income for the family up to the middle of the 20th century). Youssoupha's father was born in the eastern region of Gambia and attended a Quranic school there. A few years later and after the independence of Senegal (1965) and Gambia (1966), he returned to the family's home village (probably in the 1970s). This was at a time when the population was growing rapidly in the Tambacounda region (Nugent 2019: 429). We do not know when his parents married, but we know that they both belonged to the "caste" of the "nobility" (on the significance of what is referred to in the specialist literature as "belonging to castes" in Senegal, see also the section on Fary, ch. 3.4.1). Youssoupha's mother is his father's first wife and Youssoupha is the first son. His father married three other wives and Youssoupha has many siblings. They all live together (or, as in Youssoupha's case, lived for a long time) in a compound which forms the socio-spatial center of his family. The family owns land in several places, including in Gambia, and Youssoupha's father moves to and fro between these different places. Two of Youssoupha's brothers were sent to Quranic schools in Gambia. Maintaining these cross-border relations thus plays a decisive role within the family system, as the historian Miriam Khan shows in her study of the Senegambia region:

"[...] there has been a longstanding practice where Gambians receive religious education in Senegal or Senegalese do the same thing in the Gambia. This practice ensures long-term intergenerational family links. Cross border mobility for religious reasons has been an important market for cross-border transport" (Khan 2019: 3).

³⁸ According to Nugent, this trade was due in part to the different levels of taxation in Senegal and Gambia. He argues that both phenomena were reasons why, at the time of formal independence, the two colonial entities were not united within a single state (Nugent 2019).

Brothers of Youssoupha's father migrated to the region of Girona in Spain at a time when social transformation processes had led to the increasing devaluation of income based on the sale of agricultural products, economic structural adjustments had been made following changes in the world market (and the WTO programs) (see Jegen 2020), and demographic transformations were taking place.³⁹ The migration of Youssoupha's uncles was part of a large-scale migration movement to Spain from the Senegambia region in the 1980s:

“By the end of the 1980s, rural-to-urban migration and especially emigration to Europe and North America become common coping strategies – and enduring ones [...] Spain is the leading destination country for Gambian migrants with an estimated 22,000 Gambian nationals residing there in 2012” (Kebbeh 2013).

This migration strategy was very significant for the whole family system. Youssoupha's uncles regularly send remittances to the family in Tambacounda. Youssoupha's socialization and his own migration in 2007 after completing 10th grade at school, are structured much more strongly by his family history and family bonds than is suggested by his self-presentation in the first biographical interview. Considered in the light of his family history and collective history, Youssoupha's migration reproduces a multigenerational pattern of working to maintain the family's status, to which he is tied, on the one hand, and from which he has (in part) distanced himself, on the other hand. His bond to his family of origin enables him to rise up the social ladder but also imposes obligations on him. The anthropologist Kurt Graw has reconstructed this dynamic for Mande-speaking migrants from Senegal and Gambia in Spain:

“[...] part of the problem here results perhaps from the fact that the same social relations that explicitly or implicitly exert pressure upon the individual are the same social relations upon which the individual socially, emotionally, and in most cases also economically depends upon, a situation triggering different reactions in different individuals” (Graw 2012: 35).

Youssoupha's migration project, like those of the members of Muslim brotherhood networks discussed above, thus depends strongly on his membership of a network, in his case his family network. He navigates between making plans that correspond to his family's expectations and his milieu-specific internalized knowledge of what constitutes a “successful life” (including returning home, expectations in respect of marriage, and symbolic recognition in the local community), and other plans that fail to meet the expectations passed on within the family, and correspond more to the generational transformations in Senegal and other experiences during the migration process. As we have shown, Youssoupha is currently trying to manage his

³⁹ On the Senegambian “diaspora” in Girona see Heil 2020; Jegen 2020.

complicated biographical processes. On the one hand, he is negotiating his relationship with his family of origin and their values and we-images which constitute for him a source of self-respect and at the same time an ambivalent (transnational) tie. On the other hand, as part of his migration process he has experienced, or is experiencing, a transformation of his own self-image, a social rise, and he is negotiating central coordinates for this transformation in multinational milieus in Berlin. When speaking in Germany about this complicated constellation, he obviously feels that his relationship with his family of origin and positioning himself in ethnic and religious we-groups is very ambivalent and multi-layered, and therefore pushes them to the “back stage” of his biographical self-presentation. This also shows that the “integration discourse” in Germany – in the sense that migrants are expected to adapt to the arrival society – is very powerful and does not allow for migration-specific dilemmas and ambivalences. Here we must remember that Yousoupha has lived in Germany for more than ten years, and that he negotiates his positioning in Germany and in the transnational family network differently from those Senegalese in our sample who have lived in Brazil for only a short time. But it would be oversimplified to assume that Youssoupha’s migration project follows a linear logic of becoming more distanced from his context of origin as he becomes more settled in the arrival society. The interesting aspect of his case is the way he navigates a typical migration-specific dilemma: becoming more powerful in his context of origin, especially his family of origin, is based on becoming more settled in Germany, which at the same time increases the bonds of mutual dependency within his family (economically and in terms of prestige). It must be emphasized that the hegemonic integration or assimilation discourse in Germany is not only blind to these ambivalent, multi-layered processes, but also helps to create them.

3.5 Conclusion

What new insights, what empirical findings have we gained from these detailed case studies? Firstly, in the course of our research – including empirical studies of migrants from other African countries – it became very clear to us how important obligations to networks, especially family we-groups back home, are to the migrants generally. In the case of those who migrated with the help of brotherhoods this predominantly concerns belonging to their religious we-groups in their local context of origin. As we have shown in the case of Youssoupha, these obligations should also be understood as way of repaying assistance that has been received. This assistance may be in the form of financing a person’s migration, or education, whether in a Quranic school or in a state school, but also emotional support given by the family and other communities in the home context. To borrow the words of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and Geraldine M. Spark (1973), the migrants need to balance their “debt accounts”, to create a balance between giving and getting.

On the one hand, the migrants' we-groups in Senegal, with all the associated loyalties and expectations, are a strong source of support both during their migration and for their life in the society of arrival. But on the other hand, these ties can also turn out to be an obstacle in the process of getting settled in the new society. The case of Youssoupha is a very clear example of oscillation between a life in multinational milieus in the diaspora, and a life that conforms to the expectations of a we-group in the home country, in this case his family. We need to remember here that obligations toward their we-groups in their societies of origin are generally much stronger than in countries of the so-called Global North. To put it differently, in Senegal we observe a fundamental positioning and anchoring of the "I" in the "we", in other words, a we-I balance, in the sense proposed by Norbert Elias (1991), in which the we is dominant. These interdependencies and the different functions of we-groups are of course embedded in global inequality structures and power balances, as well as diverging regional histories. In the context of migration, this dependency is a complex and ambivalent social reality for the migrants, as our cases show. It can go together with closely following the rules of the dominant discourses in their we-groups and networks, which were powerful before their migration, and which continue to be so in the society of arrival, sometimes to an even greater degree. For many individuals, an important role is played by economic issues which do not always (directly) take the form of financial transactions, or return for assistance provided in the form of money, but instead belong in the category of mutual services within a "gift economy". Navigating through these dependencies can hinder learning the language skills necessary for establishing oneself in a new social context. Here, we have been able to show that certain dependencies on we-groups and networks constitute an obstacle to learning a new language and building support networks outside one's own language group. A decisive component in respect of learning a new language is the migrants' previous education, or cultural capital. This implies that social inequalities within migrant groupings tend to be reproduced in the arrival process. The ability to speak, or opportunities to learn, other languages significantly increases a person's "socio spatial autonomy" (Weiss 2018) – or power chances – in terms of choosing the levels of engagement with, or distancing from, we-groups in migration contexts. This is clearly illustrated by our interviewees who represent the type of those who did not migrate with the help of brotherhoods.

Another important finding in respect of the grouping of migrants from Senegal is that the power inequalities between the different groupings in the country of origin often continue to exist in the diaspora and are evident in their interactions. In the grouping of migrants from Sudan, these power inequalities clearly shift, depending on each person's chances of being granted permission to stay in Germany (see ch. 5). In the grouping of migrants from Mauritania, power conflicts are carried on more openly than in the home country, and the power balance can thus change in the diaspora (see ch. 4). In the grouping of migrants from Senegal, power inequalities are thematized in a much more subtle manner, possibly because

of the discourses which continue to be influential. As a result, it is easy for researchers such as ourselves to overlook the power inequalities: the more powerful position of members of the Wolof-speaking community, the different degrees of prestige of the brotherhoods, and the exclusion or discrimination of certain ethnic groupings.

4 Migrants from Mauritania: On the existence of slavery today and the unequal power chances of the Bidhan, the Soudan and the Haratin

Gabriele Rosenthal, Ahmed Albaba, Lucas Cé Sangalli

4.1 Slavery: An open or a taboo subject in Mauritania?

In contrast to our interviewees from Senegal, the people we interviewed who are members of Mauritanian communities in the West European diaspora did not hesitate to tell us which ethnic grouping, or we-group, they belonged to, or to talk about the figurations of different groupings in Mauritania, violent conflicts between them in the past, and their own experiences of discrimination. Up to now we have only been able to talk to men from Mauritania, but it is clear that for them slavery is a very present and highly controversial topic. Even if they argue in our interviews¹ with them that unpaid work in Quranic schools, or unpaid work carried out by people in their own communities is not slave labor in any strict sense, but, as they say, belongs to their “tradition”, this nevertheless raises the question of slave labor. Our interviewees from Senegal broach this topic only

Rosenthal, G./Albaba, A./Cé Sangalli, L. (2022): Migrants from Mauritania: On the existence of slavery today and the unequal power chances of the Bidhan, the Soudan and the Haratin. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 81–113. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2206>

¹ Apart from some ethnographic interviews, the authors conducted 6 biographical interviews with Mauritanians, and were able to conduct follow-up interviews with several of them (mostly online). In addition, Lucas Cé Sangalli and Tom Weiss took part in an event at which a Mauritanian spoke about his experience of slavery.

implicitly, if at all, although forms of unpaid work still exist there among ethnic groupings such as the Wolof or the Soninke, and especially in Quranic schools (see ch. 3; Perry 2004: 59, 65; Zoumanigui 2016: 187). These differences which we observed in our interviews with migrants from Senegal and Mauritania correspond to the everyday, political and religious discourses in these countries, as well as in research in the social sciences on slavery in these countries.

Besides the question whether there are people in Mauritania who live in slave-like conditions today, or in which periods it was legal, or illegal, to “own” slaves, it is interesting to observe the different views of the various groupings and political movements in the country concerning whether slavery is a religious problem relating to interpretation of the Quran and Islamic traditions, a racist problem based on skin color, or a “social” problem in the sense of economic exploitation (see McDougall 2005: 967f.; Hall 2020). We may note here that the discourse on racism, with its reference to skin color, sees slavery only in terms of people enslaved by the ‘whites’ or the ‘Arabs’, and explicitly contests or denies (in other words refuses to accept or to thematize) the notion that there was a slave trade and slave ownership within Black groupings (see below).

Based on our empirical data, we will focus here on what we were told about slaves and slavery by people we encountered in the course of our study of migrants in Western Europe, and discuss the patterns of interpretation displayed by the different interviewees. We will consider how this subject was thematized, by which members of which groupings, and in which contexts. Firstly, this focus is a result of the obvious importance of this subject for the people from Mauritania whom we interviewed, and of the evident changes that took place in their interpretation patterns during their migration. Secondly, we are interested in the question whether and to what extent the conflict constellations and social figurations that exist between different groupings in their home country are maintained or modified in the countries in which they live today outside Mauritania, and whether this is affected by the social networks to which they belong. As shown by our analyses of interviews with migrants from other countries, their social networks differ depending on which groupings or we-groups they belong to, which discourses they use, and who gives them support in their country of arrival. The networks of the migrants from Mauritania are structured very differently from the networks of the Senegalese Islamic brotherhoods described in the previous chapter. While most of our Senegalese interviewees underline the harmonious relations between different groupings in Senegal, our interviews with Mauritians are full of references to conflicts between different groupings and in many cases also to the continuity of slavery in their home country.

Since we were not very familiar with the history of Mauritania, it was difficult for us as interviewers to understand all the references to the different groupings and their conflicts, and we suppose that the readers of this chapter may have the same problem. We will therefore try to explain here the figurations of various groupings in Mauritania. We will begin with what we were told by a Mauritanian whom we

will call Mohammed. The first two interviews with Mohammed were conducted by Gabriele Rosenthal and Ahmed Albaba in fall 2014 during field work in the Spanish enclave of Melilla, where Mohammed was living in the refugee camp. For both of them, it was the first time they had interviewed someone from Mauritania. Mohammed obviously realized that the two interviewers – a white woman from Germany and an Arab man from Palestine – knew very little about his country. So he explained the situation as follows:

“There are Arabs and Blacks ((in Mauritania)). The Arabs are rich. The Blacks ((Arabic: *al-sud*)) are called Haratin, but I am a Soninke. There are also others, called Fula or Fulani ((also called Fulbe)), and they are a bit not so black and not so light-colored. There are always disputes between us and the Fulani. We do not like each other, because there are not many ministers from our tribe ((Arabic: *qabila*)), the Fulanis have more power in the country than people from my tribe. We are the weakest in Mauritania. Most of the ministers are Bidhan, Fulani or Haratin, most people in the government are from these three tribes” (2nd interview, fall 2014).

In order to understand this sequence properly, it is necessary to have some background knowledge concerning the different groupings mentioned by Mohammed. He confuses “tribes” such as the Soninke or the Fulani with other kinds of groupings such as the Haratin. In contrast to the members of a “tribe”, the Haratin do not define and describe themselves in terms of belonging to an ethnic grouping, but in terms of the past history of their family, or even themselves, as “slaves”.

By “Arabs” Mohammed means the “white Moors”, who in Mauritania are called Bidhan (Arabic for “white”). In another interview conducted a few days after this one, he explained that Blacks were often enslaved by the Bidhan, while in the first interview he only said that the Arabs are rich and powerful in contrast to Black Mauritians. For him, this is what makes the Blacks different from the whites. The interesting thing in the above quotation is that he first refers to all Blacks as Haratin, but then gives himself a special position: “but I am a Soninke.” To understand this, and especially to avoid thinking that the Haratin are a “tribe” in the sense that the Soninke are a “tribe”, it is important to know that the population of Mauritania can be roughly divided into three groupings: the Bidhan (Arabic: “white”), the Haratin (Arabic: “the newly freed”)² and the Soudan (Arabic: “black”). The dominant grouping in Mauritania is that of the ‘white Moors’, or, as Mohammed says, the “Arabs”. They make up about one

² This is only one possible translation, but appropriate for Mauritania. For a discussion of the term “Haratin”, over which there is disagreement concerning whether it is derived from an Arabic or a Berber word meaning “dark color”, and of the very different Haratin communities, see McDougall (2020: 18) or Rossi (2020: 190f.). The important point is that the Haratin and the Blacks in Morocco (such as in the Dra Valley) and other parts of West Africa do not necessarily have a family history of being enslaved (Hall 2020: 97; McDougall 2020: 22, 28ff.; Taine-Cheikh 2020: 88f.).

third of the population. According to Mohammed, the non-‘whites’, who are first referred to by him as the “Blacks”, are divided into two groupings, the Haratin and the Soudan, with very different collective histories, and very different we- and self-images. The Soudan, who represent between 30 and 40 percent of the population and live mainly in the south of the country, include not only the Soninke but also the Fulani. Mohammed makes very clear that the Fulani do not belong to his we-group, saying that they are “another tribe” quite distinct from his “tribe”, and underlining that their skin is of a lighter color.

Most Haratin in Mauritania see themselves as the descendants of former slaves of the Bidhan (Bales 2012: 80). Because Mohammed joins the Haratin and the Soudan together, calling them the Blacks (Arabic: *Soudan*), this could create the impression that both groupings are freed slaves of the Bidhan. But this obscures the fact that the Soudan were also involved in the slave trade and enslaved other people. This applies especially to the Soninke (Manchuelle 1989a: 90; Zeuske 2013: 332), but also to the Halpulaar'en and Wolof (Hardung 2010: 28; McDougall 2005: 963). To this day, there are cases of people who live and work in their compounds under slave-like conditions (N'Diaye 2016: 115). The silence and denial surrounding these past or present practices will be discussed in more detail below.

But first some considerations on skin color, which seems to play an important role in the distinction between white and Black people in real everyday social situations. Yet skin color is not always the decisive or most important component for making an outward distinction between the we-groups, and it is not true that all members of the Bidhan can be distinguished clearly from all members of the other groupings by a lighter skin color.³ This is so, despite the fact that they are referred to in the Mauritanian discourse as either “whites” or “Arabs” (depending on the context of the dialogue, see below) and are perceived as such, as can be seen in the statements made by our interviewees. We mention this because our interviewees speak about their own skin color or that of other groupings, and this plays a significant role in the we- and they-images they present, depending on the framing of the interviews and the collective belonging of the interviewees as ‘Arab’, ‘African’, ‘Black’ or ‘white’. Our concern is to understand and explain how such categorizations can change or even be contradictory, depending on the framing of the interviews. These terms are applied on the basis of real or ascribed characteristics, and may have positive, negative or neutral connotations. The important

³ For a history of race and processes of racialization in West Africa, see Hall (2011: Parts I and IV). For the “racialization” of slavery, see El Hamel (2013: ch. 4). On the interplay of slavery, race, and color prejudice, see El Hamel (ibid.). Fortier (2020: 174ff.) and Wiley (2020: 212f.) argue that in spite of the relatively common use of color-related terms by groups in Mauritania, these should not necessarily be (exclusively) seen as references to race and skin color. Wiley (2020: 217) points out the different frames of reference to which an explicit or apparently clear description of skin color can relate: “these terms [...] sometimes refer to skin color, sometimes to ethnicity, sometimes to (slave) status, sometimes to a (relatively) higher social status”.

point is that, depending on the context, they serve as a means of distancing oneself from other groupings, or as a means of including certain other groupings, for instance for the purpose of forming alliances. We speak here of categorizations and not of labels, because labels in the tradition of the labeling approach developed by Howard S. Becker (1963) are always negative. Our aim is to reconstruct as far as possible the different connotations of these terms as used by our interviewees. It is important to note that as far as possible we follow the self-definitions of the different groupings. We have no intention of getting involved in the highly charged (socio-)political discourse about which grouping belongs or does not belong to “the Arabs”. We use the term ‘Arab’ to refer to those who apply it to themselves. The question of who belongs to which grouping is a contentious issue in Mauritania. For example, in the mid 1990s some members of the Fulbe claimed they are of Arab origin, meaning that they belong to the Arab grouping and not to that, or those, of the “Black Africans”.⁴

So what is the significance for Mohammed of belonging to the Soudan, and especially to the ethnic grouping of the Soninke in Mauritania? The Soninke are found in several West African countries and differ in their way of life and their history depending on the region where they live (Sy 2000: 51). The greatest number lives in Mali. In Mauritania, they are a relatively small grouping, in contrast to the Fulbe or the Tukolor, and make up a very low percentage of the whole population.⁵ However, as we will show in the case of Mohammed’s family (see ch. 4.3), many families in this grouping are spread across national borders. They may own land in neighboring countries, or go to live there for a time in order to work or to receive education. When considering how people distance themselves from the Haratin or include themselves in a we-group consisting of the whole “Black population”, it is important to remember that in West Africa in precolonial times the Soninke played a significant role as slave raiders, slave traders and slave owners. François Manchuelle (1989a: 90), for example, writes:

“Moreover, although the Soninke were not the only ones to trade in slaves in the Senegambia, they were so involved in this traffic that nineteenth-century European observers almost assumed that all slave traders in the area were Soninke. The Soninke traded in slaves all over the Western Sudan, and were

⁴ McDougall, Brhane and Ruf (2003: 80) show that this is based on the desire not to belong to the most marginalized grouping in Mauritania: “The argument has been further developed to claim that their Hassanyia-speaking, Arab-culture ‘identity’ had been stolen when the black African Halpulaar enslaved their ancestors. In this country divided not by slavery but by historically constructed race, in the 1990s black Africans were more marginalized than haratin and beidan ‘client groups’ (*zenaga*).”

⁵ The data available in the literature on the population of Mauritania differ and are also controversial: “It is difficult to provide transparent data on the ethnic composition of the population since the Mauritanian government systematically refuses to disaggregate the data in terms of ethnicity” (see Minority Rights Group International, “World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Mauritania”. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/country/mauritania/> [Accessed on July 27, 2021]).

among the main suppliers of the Senegambian Atlantic slave trade through the Senegal and Gambia river valleys.”

We will discuss below the long-term continuities in power relations between the Soninke and the groupings that were formerly enslaved by them. The important point here is that in Mauritania today these groupings are in a far weaker position than the Haratin, the former slaves of the Bidhan, who possess the power resource of strong internal group cohesion.⁶ Many Haratin have become established in economic terms, and some hold political offices (McDougall/Brhane/Ruf 2003: 70). However, the Haratin have no collective memory of the we-groups they belonged to before their enslavement. While the Soudan identify themselves very clearly as belonging to particular ethnic groupings, such as the Fulbe, the Tukolor or the Soninke, and have different we-images, collective memories and transnational networks, members of the Haratin in Mauritania have no sense of ethnic belonging. Their “knowledge” of such ‘continuities’ or (socio-)genealogical connections has become lost due to their history of enslavement (see Diallo 1993: 21; Osswald 2009: 259). In other words, their we-image – in contrast to that of the Haratin in Morocco – is based on their past as slaves (see Hall 2020), and not on the shared history of an ethnic grouping or any other concrete we-group that existed before their enslavement.

The fact that people were enslaved by both the Bidhan and the Soudan, and the question of which grouping the former slaves of the Soudan belong to, i.e. whether the Haratin grouping includes only those who were enslaved by the Bidhan (and not by the Soudan), and whether the former ‘slaves’ of the Soudan now belong to their masters’ ethnic groupings, increases the extreme inconsistency of the discourses. These discourses have changed considerably in the past thirty years. Thus, Urs Peter Ruf (1999: 10), with reference to his first field research in Mauritania in 1992 when he was working for a PhD in sociology, writes:

“I was struck by people speaking publicly and without any uneasiness of their slaves and former slaves. A little later I became acquainted with settlements inhabited exclusively by slaves and former slaves, and I realised that these people live in the worst conditions I had ever seen thus far [...] I was able to witness slaves still experiencing maltreatment by their masters, a great number of slaves and former slaves living in highly ambivalent relations with masters and former masters.”

The habit of speaking openly about other people as slaves, and the social prestige attached to owing slaves, has changed over the years, following amendments to the laws on the abolition of slavery, and the formation of coalitions between

⁶ On group cohesion as a significant power resource, see the study of established and outsiders by Elias and Scotson (2008[1965]); especially Elias (2008[1994]: 4ff.). See also Bogner (2003); Popitz (1968).

members of the Bidhan and members of the Haratin. From the 1990s onward, some Haratin rose to occupy influential positions and became integrated in the state apparatus, which is controlled by Bidhan. They showed loyalty toward the Bidhan and adopted their discourses on slavery, while others were, and still are, living in slave-like conditions (see McDougall 2005: 981f.), and still others were arrested because of their political activities in the struggle against slavery.⁷ We also need to remember that the relationship between the Haratin and the Soudan is very strained due to the crisis between Mauritania and Senegal, which lasted from 1989 to 1991, in the course of which massacres took place in both countries.⁸ This crisis began in April 1989 in Mauritania with violent conflicts between the Bidhan and the Soudan in the south of the country. Encouraged by the government, and sometimes together with government troops, members of the Haratin participated in violent attacks on the Soudan⁹ (Bales 2012: 89; McDougall 2005: 969). Over 70,000 Soudan, who in they-images were sweepingly referred to as Senegalese, were expelled or fled to the neighboring countries of Senegal and Mali (Bales 2012: 90).¹⁰ By contrast, thousands of Haratin were repatriated from Senegal to Mauritania (McDougall 2005: 968).

The difference between the former Black slave traders and owners, the Soudan, and the people formerly enslaved by them is hardly ever thematized by the Soudan in Mauritania today. Soninke in the diaspora are busy founding anti-slavery organizations.¹¹ However, these organizations concentrate on thematizing the power imbalance between them and the Arabs, their unequal chances with regard to edu-

⁷ Persecution and incarceration of anti-slavery activists in Mauritania remains relatively common (see Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization, February 15, 2019, "Timeline: Crackdown on Anti-Slavery Movement in Mauritania Continues after Release of Biram Dah Abeid". Available at: <https://unpo.org/article/17712> [Accessed on April 29, 2021]; McDougall/Brhane/Ruf (2003: 67). For a description of the "book-burning" of Biram Dah Abeid (IRA-Mauritania) and the series of incarcerations that followed, see McDougall (2020: 24f.).

⁸ The New York Times, April 27, 1989, "At Least 40 Are Dead in Mauritania Attacks". Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/04/27/world/at-least-40-are-dead-in-mauritania-attacks.html> [Accessed on April 29, 2021].

Der Spiegel, May 7, 1989, "Schäbige Apartheid" (Neglected Apartheid). Available at: <http://maga.zin.spiegel.de/EpubDelivery/spiegel/pdf/13494049> [Accessed on April 29, 2021].

Le Monde, May 18, 1989. "Maures contre Nègro-Africains" (Moors against Black-Africans). Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/05/18/maures-contre-negro-africains_4143251_1819218.html [Accessed on April 29, 2021].

⁹ In this connection it must be pointed out that the Haratin have collective memories of the Halpulaar and the Soninke as slave traders, and they know that today there are still people living among them in slave-like conditions (McDougall/Brhane/Ruf 2003: 73).

¹⁰ Only in 2008, thanks to the newly elected President Abdallahi, were the first refugees (numbering between 20,000 and 50,000 altogether) able to return to Mauritania (see Bahrenburg/Richter 2008: 5).

¹¹ For example, the *Ganbaanaxu Fedde – L'Association des ressortissants mauritaniens pour l'éradication de la pratique de l'esclavage et ses séquelles* (The Association of Mauritanian Nationals for the Eradication of the Practice of Slavery and its Aftermath). Available at: <https://www.ganbaanaxufedde.com> [Accessed on June 28, 2021]. The association presents itself on its website as an "association working for the awareness of mentalities on the stigmatizations related to the system of the castes in Black-

cation and social advancement, and their experiences of discrimination. They avoid any mention of slavery within the non-Arab population, or plainly deny it in their *present* public image. Members of the Soudan usually deny that they, or their forebears, were once slave owners and slave traders. As we have already shown, this image fails to do justice to this part of the past in this region, where up to the beginning of the last century¹² it was mainly the Soninke who sold people as slaves, who let slaves work for them, and whose agricultural production was largely based on slave labor (Manchuelle 1989a, 1989b; Zeuske 2013: 332).¹³ A large part of the population in this region between the river Niger and the upper Senegal were slaves of the Soninke:

“Soninke slaves at the end of the nineteenth century never seem to have numbered less than thirty per cent of the population, and they were in some regions well over fifty per cent” (Manchuelle 1989a: 90).

Today, descendants of slaves still work under similar conditions in the compounds and fields of the Soninke and other Soudan groupings. Mohammed, the Soninke man we have already quoted, told us very firmly that such unpaid work in return for board and lodging has nothing to do with slavery, and that these people belong to the family (by which he means the extended family or clan). In a way, this is a kind of “caste system” which can be seen as a continuity of slavery within the Black groupings such as the Soninke, Fulbe and Wolof.¹⁴ Among the Soninke, this can be seen for instance in the fact that former slaves¹⁵ may not sit in the front row in the mosque, and may not be buried in the same cemetery as their ‘masters’.¹⁶ They assist on important ritual occasions and ceremonies, carry heavy

Mauritanian environments”. Conflicts between Soninke in the diaspora due to the “maintenance” of practices associated to slavery have been discussed in the literature, especially the case of France (Botte 2011: 121; Pelckmans 2013: 57ff.).

¹² The end of the slave *trade* in French West Africa took place during the French colonial occupation, with a decree for the abolition of the slave trade in 1902.

¹³ Based on several historical sources, Manchuelle (1989a: 90) argues that the Soninke were the main suppliers in the “Senegambian Atlantic slave trade”.

¹⁴ Fortier (2020: 172f.) proposes an understanding of the term *hartani* connected to a notion of “purity” and nobility similar to caste differentiations, in which *harr* designates “purity” while *haratani* alludes to “impurity”. Regarding the interplay of caste and slave status in West African societies, Klein (1998: 7) explains that members of a low caste were not enslaved, but many were forced to perform unpaid work for members of higher castes. With reference to West Africa, Klein writes: “There were also elite slaves. Wherever slavery existed, some slaves were powerful and privileged. In societies where slavery did not evolve into a mode of production, slavery was primarily a means to recruit people who served the elite: eunuchs, concubines, servants, soldiers.”

¹⁵ It is important to stress that in different groupings, different forms of servitude and enslavement were (or still are) practiced, and different terms were used to refer to them (at least in the past). Amongst the Soninke (as in several other groupings in the historical region of the western Sudan), an important differentiation was made between people who were enslaved by purchase or by capture (*komo*) and those who were “born in slavery” or “born in the house” (*woroso*) (Klein 1998: 5).

¹⁶ United Nations Human Rights Council, August 16, 2010, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shahinian” (2010: 5f.)

bags, give massages, or take care of animals (Klein 1998: 5; Pelckmans 2013: 54f.). The United Nations General Assembly Report of 2010 contained the following remarks on Mauritania as a ‘caste-based society’:

“While the practice of slavery is illegal, deeply embedded discriminatory attitudes form part of the basis of slavery in Mauritania. The country’s stratified, caste-based society means that even those who are former slaves or descendants of former slaves still live under the shroud of their “slave class” and are ostracized from society. As a result of discriminatory practices, former slaves often end up in service and manual labour positions in urban areas. When they rise above their strata, former slaves still experience discrimination. The Special Rapporteur heard of a situation where a minister, who happened to be from a lower caste in the Soninke community, was appointed and yet the people from his own community refused to recognize him. This shows that, even where the Government has used positive discrimination, such persons have faced setbacks, as certain communities have refused to let go of old traditional beliefs in caste-based slavery. The person appointed to a senior position is not respected” (UN GA 2010: 13)¹⁷.

As we will show below (ch. 4.3), there are members of the Bidhan who aggressively deny that slavery continued to exist after independence (November 1960), or who refer to the renewed prohibition of slavery in 1980, and the legally anchored possibility of criminal proceedings.¹⁸ Such legislative measures have a long history in the country. The French colonial government prohibited the slave *trade* in its West African colonies in 1902, and the keeping of slaves in 1905; however, this did not put an end to the keeping of slaves. There was another prohibition shortly after independence in 1961, and, mainly as a response to international pressure, again in 1980/1981.¹⁹ However, so-called domestic slavery continued to exist largely unhindered throughout these decades, and, as we have pointed out, still exists to a certain extent today. Not until 2007 was a law passed allowing the *prosecution* of slaveholders. This law was passed during the short period of office of President Ould Cheik Abdallahi (in office from April 19th, 2007 until the military coup

Available at: https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/slavery/rapporteur/docs/A.HRC.15.20.Add.2_en.pdf [Accessed on April 29, 2021].

¹⁷ See footnote 16.

¹⁸ The perspective of the government (largely composed of Bidhan) is that after the so-called democratization of the country, “the regime has the responsibility to defend itself against those who would ‘use’ the issue of slavery to undermine elected officials. Opposition leaders accuse the regime of concealing the persistence of slavery” (McDougall/Brhane/Ruf 2003: 69).

¹⁹ On July 5th, 1980 the government announced that slavery would be abolished, but the decree was not put into effect until November 9th, 1981. “The national government invoked the religious reasoning that Islam had always intended to first convert non-believers (slaves), and then manumit them. The only slavery justified within Islam was slavery imposed as the result of *jihad*” (McDougall 2005: 963).

on August 6th, 2008). During this phase, a member of the Haratin, Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, was elected as the President of Mauritania's Assemblée Nationale (see Bahrenburg/Richter 2008; Hardung 2010). Boulkheir, a son of former slaves, who fought in the 1960s for the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the Haratin, retained this position until January 2014.²⁰

Certain forms of slavery and servitude continue to exist in that the descendants of former slaves are often not paid for their work (or receive parts of the harvest or food they themselves worked for), and in practice have no means of taking legal action against their employers. For many former slaves who were freed in the legal sense in 1981, little changed in their lives: “for most legal freedom was never translated into actual freedom” (Bales 2012: 81). In the Human Rights Report issued in 2013 by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the US Department of State²¹ we read:

“Former slaves and their descendants remained in a dependent status in part due to a lack of marketable skills, poverty, and persistent drought. Such practices occurred primarily in areas where educational levels were generally low or a barter economy still prevailed, and in urban centers, including Nouakchott, where slavery-like domestic service existed.”

In its 2015 annual report on human trafficking, the US State Department concludes that around 20% of the population of Mauritania lives in slavery:

“Held for generations by slave-holding families, persons subjected to slavery are forced to work without pay as cattle herders and domestic servants. Some boys from within Mauritania and other West African countries who study at Quranic schools – referred to as *talibes* – are subsequently subjected to forced begging by corrupt *imams*. *Talibe* victims live in harsh conditions and do not attend school; many are forced to beg for food and to earn a daily financial quota to pay the *imam*.”²²

In 2015 a new anti-slavery law was passed which raised the maximum penalty from ten to twenty years imprisonment, and which was extended to cover other

²⁰ Boulkheir was one of the founders of El Hor, which was set up in 1974 as a Haratin movement. The decisive point about the members of the El Hor movement is that, because they knew that slavery also existed within Black groupings, they regarded slavery as a social problem and not as a racist problem: “It underscored that it was not a ‘black’ party and that Mauritania’s issues were not racial [...] It became a voice of *haratin* who saw their future closely allied with the *beidan*, and most certainly not with the former slave-holding populations of the south” (McDougall 2005: 967).

²¹ Unites States Department of State, 2013, “Mauritania 2013 Human Rights Report”. Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/220348.pdf> [Accessed on June 20, 2021].

²² Unites States Department of State, 2015, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 - Country Narratives – Mauritania”. Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2015/243490.htm> [Accessed on June 24, 2021].

practices such as inherited slavery or early forced marriage.²³ In 2018, however, the US State Department criticized that: “The Government of Mauritania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.”²⁴ This report – which agrees with the complaints of Haratin activists (see ch. 4.3) – says:

“However, authorities penalized trafficking victims, continued to prevent certain anti-slavery activists from operating within the country, and increased harassment of anti-slavery activists.”

The man we present below, a Haratin, belongs to an organization of anti-slavery activists in Mauritania (we mention no names to preserve their anonymity). He was arrested several times because of his political activities and spent two years in prison.

4.2 The dispute between a Haratin and a Bidhan

How contested the subject of “discrimination and enslavement of the Black population” is, not only in Mauritania, but also in the diaspora, was made clear during an event in Berlin which was attended by Lucas Cé Sangalli and Tom Weiss (we will not name the organizers for reasons of data protection). They documented what happened there in detail in their observation memo.²⁵ Samba, as we will call him, who was born in 1966, told how his family and himself were formerly enslaved, and that he had been engaged for many years in Mauritania in the political struggle against slavery. Above all, he spoke about his desire to fight against denial of this topic. Samba was born as the son of an enslaved woman, and thus also belonged to the “master”, a term he used consistently to refer to slave owners. It used to be a common situation in Mauritania that children of enslaved women belonged to the owner of the mother, regardless of who the father was. The result was that while slaveholders were willing to set men free, they often kept the women (see McDougall 2005: 961). As we learned during a biographical interview with Samba conducted soon after this event,²⁶ he lived with his mother and siblings in a tent near the master’s house and had to work for him at an early age. However,

²³ UN Human Rights Officer, August 21, 2015, “Mauritanian new anti-slavery law”. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16338&LangID=E> [Accessed on March 6, 2021].

²⁴ United States Department of State, 2018, “2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Mauritania”. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report/mauritania/> [Accessed on March 7, 2021].

²⁵ The following account is based on the observation memo and the partly verbatim transcript of the dialogue quoted here that was made by Tom Weiss and Lucas Cé Sangalli.

²⁶ The interview was conducted in English by Lucas Cé Sangalli and Tom Weiss one day after the event.

as he told us, Samba was one of the few Haratin of his generation whose master allowed him to attend a state school in Mauritania in the 1970s. The other children in the school called him a “slave”. He says: “It was shameful for me. I felt I am less. I am not like them”, and – as he says in his presentation in the interview – he began to rebel against this ascription, and especially against the tasks that were set him by his master’s son. He was fifteen when slavery was abolished by law in 1981, and he began to follow a self-determined path, becoming increasingly politicized and politically active. He went to university, began to work for an anti-slavery organization, and was a founder of one of the first Haratin parties, Al Hor. But, as he says in his individual interview, he could not persuade his mother to leave her master. “She used to say: ‘Slavery is from God. We can’t go against the command of God’”. He says his mother believed that her service as a slave would open the way to paradise for her. And he told Lucas that many people in West Africa still think that “slavery is part of Islam”.²⁷ People who still live in slave-like conditions frequently define themselves as belonging to their master’s family, and “believe they are placed by God into their master’s household, and that to leave it would be sinful” (Bales 2012: 84f.).

However, the self-definition of slaves and their definition by others have changed considerably in Mauritania in recent years. Samba commented on this changed situation as follows:

“At first, slavery was the daily life. We accepted slavery. Then during my high school time and university, the movements started. The first movement against slavery. Right now, it is divided. There is a small group against a big group – they are in the government, the slave owners, the religious, the traditional. The people against are small number, the educated people from ex-slaves, who are in the university, working somewhere as teachers [...]”

Let us go back to the above-mentioned event. After Samba’s talk, an approximately 40-year old Arab Mauritanian, whom we will call Moustapha, stood up and said:

“I only hear about slavery in Germany, I never saw a slave. Poverty makes no difference amongst people or groups. I come from the capital. I have Black friends and Arab friends and African friends [...]. I am born in 1982 [...]. I never met a slave or a former slave or someone from a slave family [...] what an ideology, myth or lie. There are laws. In Mauritania you can go to the police [to denounce enslavement] and people go to jail.”

Moustapha also stressed that for him there was no difference between “Blacks” and “whites” – and this was the first time that someone explicitly used these terms at this event. Samba then declared that this objection was a perfect example of the debate in Mauritania. Turning to Moustapha, he said:

²⁷ On this discussion, see Botte (2002: 26); Hall (2020: 103ff.); Brown (2019: ch. 3).

“Your question surprised me. You have my example. My story. You can’t say there are not different communities. There are Arabs and Haratin, the ex-slaves. I mentioned slavery is not as it was twenty years ago.”

Turning back to the audience, he explained:

“This is an example of the debate about the situation in Mauritania. He is from the ex-enslaver families. This is the discourse. Ex-slaves say what I say. Ex-masters say what he said. Mali, Niger, Morocco, Libya, there is slavery everywhere. **Black Africans have slaves** [authors’ emphasis]. The other difference is the color, like my cousin here [referring to the Arab who questioned him]. It is a different color. The others, they have slaves but slaves are not so visible because they have the same color in other Black African societies. For them it is very bad to talk that there is slavery in Mauritania. The problem is not that there is no law but the enforcement of the law.”

In his explanations – including in the individual interviews with him – Samba constantly distinguishes between “Arabs”, “Haratin”, and “Black Africans”. Samba explains at length that in other West African countries (formerly) enslaved people cannot be identified by the color of their skin, but in Mauritania a person’s skin color is enough to show their status as a slave. Here we should note that Lucas who, unlike Tom, had thought about this issue, could not see much difference in the skin color of the two men, but that he identified Moustapha as an Arab because of his clothing and his habitus. We point this out because the terms used to refer to the we- or they-groups: whites, Arabs, Blacks, Soudan (Arabic for black), Bidhan (Arabic for white), or Haratin, play a significant role in the discourses (McDougall 2020: 28ff.; Fortier 2020: 174ff.; Wiley 2020: 212f.), and because categorization as “Black” or “white” is very important in respect of the power imbalance in the figuration of the Haratin (as the ex-slaves of the Bidhan) and the Soudan. We also need to remember that the fathers of many children of female slaves were their “white” masters (see Bales 2012: 84). Nevertheless, these children were, and still are, categorized as “Black”, regardless of their skin color.

It is significant that Samba clearly distances himself from ‘the Arabs’ and thus expresses something like pride in his own grouping, the Black Mauritians. He makes hardly any mention of “Black Africans” as slaveholders. At the event, he explicitly said of the “Arabs”: “It is a fight against the Arabs, a fight against the government.” It was also noticeable that Samba used the terms “masters” and “Arabs” more or less synonymously. These are probably the components of his talk that Moustapha found most provoking. Moreover, Samba sometimes used arguments that were critical of Islam. On the one hand, he said that slavery is a false interpretation of Islam, and on the other hand he several times accused Islam of being responsible for slavery.

A remarkable feature of the interaction between these two men was that Moustapha – who spoke in German, while Samba spoke in English – did not look at Samba, but only at the chairperson of the discussion and the interpreter. Samba felt provoked by this and commented on his refusal to make eye contact; Moustapha then looked at him. Another striking feature is that Samba first addressed Moustapha as brother, but toward the end, as in the above-quoted passage, only as “cousin”.²⁸

The situation was uncomfortable, not only for Samba, who told us that this often happens to him at such events, but also for Moustapha, who spoke afterwards to Lucas and Tom and insisted that he had not intended to insult Samba.²⁹

In this dispute, slavery is denied by an “Arab” Mauritanian, and one of the formerly enslaved people opposes this with the evidence of his own experience. We were not able to observe whether a dialogue developed out of this exchange. It is important to note that the official, dominant discourse in Mauritania supports the arguments put forward here by the Bidhan. Thus, in the biographical interview conducted with him, Samba explains to Lucas that in former times the slaveholders saw it as an honor to own slaves, and justified this with the notion that “slavery is part of Islam”. By contrast, today they say “my family never had slaves”, and the current president would insist that “there is no slavery in Mauritania”. At the event, Samba also referred to an argument that was put to us emphatically by a member of the Soudan, a Soninke: that unpaid workers in the family or community were formerly regarded as a sign of economic success. In the past they were referred to proudly as slaves, and today as cousins (i.e. not brothers and sisters) who help the family voluntarily.

4.3 Discriminated as a Black man in Mauritania and supported in France today by ‘Muslim-Arab’ networks

Entangled in contradictory arguments. In this section we will show to what extent a member of the Soudan, a Soninke, mentions the topic of slavery today, and especially how what he says changes from interview to interview, in the period from fall 2014 to spring 2021. It should be noted that we interpret the way he speaks about Mauritania as reflecting the extent to which he mixes with ‘white’ Muslim Arabs. Further, we look at whether he uses his ethnic grouping as his frame of

²⁸ On the usage of the term cousin and relationships of “cousinage”, see Wiley (2020: 217); Taine-Cheikh (2020: 88).

²⁹ We tried several times to get Moustapha to agree to an interview. He often took some time to answer our messages but finally agreed. However, each time we tried to set a date and time for the interview, it took him days to answer and the interview never took place. In contrast to Samba, with whom Lucas had regular contact, the exchanges with Moustapha always gave Lucas the impression of ambivalence: on the one hand, he was willing to cooperate, or at least wanted to give this impression, but at the same time he shied away from an interview.

reference or whether his ideas are shaped by Islamic patterns of interpretation, and especially whether his lifestyle at the time of speaking is more secular or more religious, with a corresponding understanding of “Islam” in each case. We conclude that this entanglement in different patterns of argumentation is not (only) an individual problem, but that it reflects the socialization of a Soninke from Mauritania, who, like his grandfather, his father and his brothers, spent many years in Quranic schools with Arab teachers, i.e. Bidhan. Here he developed a sense of loyalty to the Arab imams, on the one hand, while on the other hand he experienced suffering and exploitation under them (see below), so that an ambivalent attitude can be expected, a combination of contradictory perspectives on the topic of ‘slavery’, or, to put it more generally, on ‘the relationship between Bidhan and Haratin’.

By conducting multiple interviews with people from different regions and countries over a period of several years, we have been able to observe changing reasons for migrating and the thematization of social inequality, discrimination and political persecution (see Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2017). Very often in these interviews, the person first explains their migration as being due to economic reasons, and only after several interviews do we learn that it was really motivated by experiences of discrimination or political persecution, or both.

We will use the interviews with Mohammed (born in 1990) to show how we- and self-presentations can change from interview to interview. These interviews took place when Mohammed was in different life situations, and, significantly, they were conducted by different interviewers. As already mentioned, in fall 2014 Ahmed Albaba and Gabriele Rosenthal conducted two detailed biographical interviews with him in the Spanish enclave of Melilla, where he spent several months living in the refugee camp, and occasionally exchanged small talk with him in front of the camp. In November 2015, when Mohammed was living in a very precarious situation in France, they conducted the first long telephone interview with him. These interviews were conducted in Arabic and translated by Ahmed into German for Gabriele after each short sequence. Mohammed knew from the first meeting that Ahmed is a Palestinian from the West Bank. Contact has been maintained with him since this time via an online social network. Direct communication with Mohammed is almost impossible for Gabriele, because of her limited knowledge of Arabic and French. For this reason, she relies on her colleagues to hold online interviews with Mohammed from time to time. Online interviews were conducted in spring 2016 by our colleague Mahadi Ahmed (at that time a refugee from the Republic of the Sudan; since then he has obtained German citizenship), and in spring 2018 by our colleague Hala Budeir (she was a migrant from Jordan in Germany). Between May 2019 and March 2021, Ahmed conducted ten online interviews in Arabic with Mohammed.

Our analysis of these interviews shows how members of the Soudan can become entangled in contradictory attempts at justification in view of their own “tradition” of slave holding and their religious, Islamic socialization, and how complex it can be to talk about one’s own experience of being exploited in slave-like constellations,

when one has (at least in part) internalized other dominant discourses that reflect the political power relations in the country.³⁰ Since spring 2015 Mohammed has lived in Lyon, the third biggest city in France. Mohammed's arguments sometimes correspond to the discourse that dominates in the community of "white Moors" (the Bidhan), and sometimes they reflect the discourse that criticizes the Bidhan for keeping slaves. During different phases and in different situations since his arrival, these arguments change depending on whether he is integrated in a 'Muslim-Arab' community, i.e. in a Mosque community whose members are mainly migrants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, with two imams from Algeria, or whether he is living independently of such networks. In spring 2020 during the lockdown due to the pandemic, when Mohammed was living in Paris with four men from Mauritania who also belong to the ethnic grouping of the Soninke, he showed a strong tendency to adopt the discourse which denies the existence of slavery in Mauritania or any difference between the Soninke and the Bidhan. In this phase (in contrast to previous or later interviews), he is not inclined to use the term "slavery" with reference to the slave-like conditions he experienced himself in Mauritania. We will discuss this period of his life in detail below.

In several interviews, Mohammed becomes entangled in contradictions over this topic – and in respect of the question who belongs to which grouping, especially who is an Arab and who is not – and uses different arguments at different times. In particular, he finds it difficult to apply the term slave labor to the unpaid work still performed today in Soninke communities by descendants of former slaves (and thus not the domestic work performed by family members in subsistence economies which is usually unpaid). The changes in his patterns of argumentation are clearly influenced by the fact that after his arrival in France in spring 2015 he increasingly began to reflect on his own experiences of discrimination as a Soninke in Mauritania. He then explicitly defined as slavery the unpaid work he was made to do in the Quranic school for members of the Bidhan. Through reading on the internet and hearing reports on the radio and on TV (and most probably through Soninke associations that are actively opposed to slavery and are increasingly common in France), he got to know more and more about slavery as practiced in the communities of the Bidhan, but also of the Soudan. However, he repeatedly became dependent on 'Muslim-Arab' networks in France, and as a result became entangled in collective discourses, or the usual arguments in them that deny the existence of slavery. Before we proceed to a closer analysis of these changes, taking into account Mohammed's biography and the history of his family, we will quote a long exchange between him and Ahmed which shows the inconsistency of his arguments within a single interview. This dialogue took place in an online interview that Ahmed conducted with Mohammed in October 2020. Ahmed reminds Mohammed that in an earlier online interview he had mentioned that in France he

³⁰ On the way Mauritians change their self-descriptions depending on the situation, see for instance Ruf (1999) and McDougall/Brhane/Ruf (2003).

had started reading about slavery in Mauritania. Mohammed responds to this by referring to the time of the Prophet Mohammed and arguing that there were slaves in former times; he then complains about those Haratin who come to Europe and make money by talking about slavery. He continues:

“Everything they say is lies just to come to Europe. They go to Europe and say slavery is whatever. The whites do this and that to the Blacks. It’s all a lie. It’s just a business and when they get money, they don’t give any of it to the poor, they keep it all for themselves.”

When Ahmed replies that there are documentary reports on slavery in Mauritania, Mohammed has difficulty answering, especially in view of his own experience of slavery in a Quranic school:

“Ahmed, there was slavery at that time, but not today. For me slavery means the original slavery, that a person, that you are only like an animal, tied to the house. When they say to you: Do that! Then you do it without pay and without anything in return. That is slavery for me. I can give you an example: When I was in the Quranic school, some white people came to the teacher. They were looking for laborers who would work without payment and without anything in return, for nothing. They came to the teacher and said to him: We are looking for someone to help us with the work. And we went with them and they gave us nothing; no money, nothing to eat and nothing to drink, nothing. This can be called slavery. But in my personal view, I have not seen slavery in Mauritania. There are people who say there is ((slavery)), but for me this is not slavery.”

What Mohammed means by “at that time” is not clear in this passage. On the one hand, it refers to the time he spent at his first Quranic school in Kiffa, the provincial capital (from 2000 to 2004), but at the beginning of the sequence on slavery he says firmly that there was slavery at the time of the Prophet Mohammed, but not today. In what he says next, his remarks are even more inconsistent:

“Ahmed: Hold on, I’m not sure I understand. You mean that you were used as a slave

Mohammed: Yes, when I was at the Quranic school in the village of Kiffa, when we were there, you can call it slavery. Because we ((our parents)) paid money to learn the Quran. But he ((the teacher)), when his relatives came to him, he gave us to them, to work for his relatives without money, for free, without anything

Ahmed: So you mean that there is slavery in Mauritania

Mohammed: Yes, in this way yes”

However, this is followed by a long explanation in which he takes back this definition of slavery. Then Mohammed says that there is slavery among the Blacks, and not only among the Arabs, but neither the Haratin nor the journalists ever talk about it:

“Mohammed: [...] among the Blacks, there is slavery among them in Mauritania, but the Haratin don't talk about it, they only talk about the Arabs, but not about the Blacks, there are some Blacks who say there are Blacks who enslave ((other Blacks)). This exists, but the journalists don't talk about the Blacks.”

Mohammed probably uses this argument to distance himself from the grouping of the Haratin and the journalists who write about slavery. But Mohammed thus finds himself again referring to slavery in his own grouping, in a we-group to which he regards himself as belonging. And so it is not surprising that he again tries to take this back. Ahmed first repeats what he has said:

“Ahmed: You mean you have a problem with this, or your idea or criticism is that slavery exists not only among whites but also among Blacks?”

Mohammed: Among the Blacks. There are some who speak about it and say that some of them enslave the others. In the place where I lived they say that it is slavery ((Arabic: Abudiya)).”

Interesting here is the reference to his hometown in the southeast of Mauritania. This is thus an indirect reference to his family which, as we will show, is well established there. Mohammed then goes to great pains to explain that although family members perform unpaid work – as is frequently the case in his extended family – this is not slavery. One could object here that this is unpaid work by former slaves or their descendants who were declared to be members of the family. Mohammed adds that some people would call this slavery, but in his opinion it is “tradition”. This is quite different from the unpaid work he had to do in the Quranic school: “working for nothing, without food, without drink.” Here he presents a stringent argument to the effect that among the Soninke such unpaid workers are given board and lodging so that this is not slavery. Before describing Mohammed's situation at the time of this interview, and the different phases of his life in France before and after this interview, we will first give a short account of his biography and family history, based mainly on the two biographical interviews conducted with him in Melilla in 2014.³¹

³¹ For a more detailed discussion of Mohammed's biography, see Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm (2017: 117–128).

The story of Mohammed's life up to fall 2014. This phase of his life could be summed up briefly as follows: from a strict religious upbringing and a hard time in the Quranic school to increasing 'political' socialization which played an important role in his decision to migrate.

Mohammed was born around 1990 as the second son of his mother, who was his father's second wife, and as the sixth son of his father. The family lived in a big village in the province of Sélibaby (close to the borders with Mali and Senegal). In this village his father's family owns large plots of land. Mohammed's father (born about 1949) is an imam, like his grandfather and his elder brothers. His father was educated in Mali and in Senegal. Most of the time his father did not live with his family, but worked at times in Senegal and at times in Mali, and during Mohammed's childhood he went to work for three years in France (from about 1999 to 2002). Mohammed's paternal and maternal families come from the region of what is today Mali; both families possess land there, and some relatives, especially on his mother's side, still live there today. Here it should be noted that up to 1958 the territories of Senegal, Mauritania and what is now Mali belonged to French West Africa, the federation of French colonial territories in West Africa,³² and the largest grouping of Soninke lived, and still live, in Mali (see Klein 1998: 70f., 105). It is clear that this family has a wide transnational network, religious educational capital, and large amounts of land. For Mohammed and his family, at least during his childhood, engaging in "duty-free" petty trade between Mali, Senegal and Mauritania, and easily moving back and forth between these countries, constituted an unquestioned part of their everyday reality. Even after 1999, when Mauritania decided to leave the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), this freedom of movement was still possible on the basis of bilateral agreements between these countries (see Dünwald 2015: 7). The history of Mohammed's family illustrates how for generations these people have been used to migrating temporarily to another country, whether for economic or for educational reasons. Taking everything together, it seems clear that this is a well-established family, and in view of the amount of land they possessed they probably had enslaved people working on their fields and in their compounds. Since these people were given board and lodging, and were declared to be members of the clan, Mohammed, and probably also his relatives, did not consider them as slaves.

In his early childhood Mohammed lived for some years – up to about 1998 or 2000 – in Mali in the family of his father's brother, together with his mother and his younger siblings. During this time Mohammed was taught by his uncle, meaning he learned to recite the Quran in Arabic, but without understanding what he was saying. At that time his oldest brother was already studying in Saudi Arabia. It seems likely that the move to Mali was motivated by the violent conflicts between

³² In 1958 the French colonies became autonomous republics within the *Communauté Française* – with the exception of Guinea, which chose independence. Mauritania, Senegal and Mali became independent in 1960.

Mauritania and Senegal, which lasted from 1989 to 1991, the period during which Mohammed was born. Tens of thousands of Soudan fled to Senegal, and at times the border was closed. Unfortunately, we do not know where Mohammed's father and other family members were at this time, or how they experienced the events. It is possible that his father was living in Senegal at the time. In 2015, when Mohammed was already living in France, Ahmed asked him via an online social network about the conflict between Mauritania and Senegal in 1989; interestingly, Mohammed connected this conflict with the topic of slavery:

“[...] there were problems between Blacks and whites, they killed the Blacks and took away their animals and their land, the Blacks fled to Senegal, they took the Blacks as slaves and sold them to the Moroccans, there is this problem with slavery in Mauritania.”

As we will show, Mohammed made this comment at a time when he was busy collecting information about slavery in Mauritania. What he says about the sale of slaves to Morocco shows that he is confusing different historical periods here, but his mention of the problem with slavery in Mauritania is a reference to the present-day situation.

Let us return to his life in Mauritania. In 2000, when Mohammed was around ten years old, his father sent him to a Quranic school in Kiffa. He lived with the imam (“a Bidhan”) there for four years and – in accordance with precolonial traditions (Manchuelle 1989a: 95) – had to work for him, although his father paid school fees. Mainly he had to look after his teacher's sheep and cows. And, as seen in the above-quoted passages, he was “loaned out” by his ‘teacher’ to work for other people without pay. Although Mohammed complained to his father about this unjust treatment, and pleaded with him to be allowed to leave this Quranic school, his father at first refused. In other words, although Mohammed comes from an established family of imams, his father accepted these conditions in the school. Mohammed explains to us that the imams in the Quranic schools were always Arabs (i.e. Bidhan or ‘whites’), but that many of the children who had to work for them were Blacks. We can take it that the father experienced such conditions himself during his training, and that this at least partly explains why he refused to listen to Mohammed's complaints.

Around 2004, when he was about 14, Mohammed's father let him leave this school – he tells us why in a later interview – and he spent a few years in a Quranic school in the capital, Nouakchott. After this he attended an Islamic school – with long interruptions – which had a special focus on religious training, but at the same time prepared students for the *baccalauréat*, which qualified them for university entrance. This meant that Mohammed had to learn French, because up to this point he had learned only Arabic, the language of the Bidhan, in addition to Soninke, his mother tongue. He told us that although he was taught French once a week in the last years at school, he did not pay enough attention, and so

did not learn to write it. Mohammed believes that this is one reason why he did not pass the final exams in 2013. It seems to us that the reason why Mohammed had problems with the subjects and teaching methods in his last school is that he had spent so many years in Quranic schools, where he was mainly occupied with memorizing the Quran. In Nouakchott, he had to work for several hours each day after school; this was probably another reason why he failed the final exams, even though he stayed in school for several extra years.

This school was of special significance for Mohammed, because it was the first time he had teachers who were Soudan (or “Black”). He told us that most of his teachers were Fulbe and that “they taught us that there would be a democracy here (in Mauritania), I was glad, because then we would all be equally important” (2nd Interview 2014 in Melilla). The short period of democratization in Mauritania from 2006 to 2008, when Mohammed was between 16 and 18 years old, surely played an important role in his political socialization. In April 2007, President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi came to power following the country’s first democratic elections. Abdallahi, himself a Bidhan, or “white”, tried to help the Black population in the country, initiating, among other things, a law making slavery a punishable offence, and the “return of the Black Africans who were displaced in 1989” (Bahrenburg/Richter 2008: 5, translated from German). However, in August 2008 there was another military coup and this president was deposed.

Mohammed’s great disappointment over the continuing inequality between the groupings in Mauritania was the reason why in 2013 he decided to leave the country and travel to France. The reasons for this decision are presented very differently in the two interviews we conducted in Melilla, as we will show below.

He left with the agreement of his father – who had previously refused to let him go and join his brother in Saudi Arabia – only after promising to send money to the family regularly from Europe.³³ His greatest wish was to join a soccer team in Saudi Arabia, which his brother could arrange. But his father wanted to prevent this. While he was at school, Mohammed spent the little time he had between school and his work in the evenings in the market playing soccer, to the annoyance of this father. For Mohammed, in Mauritania, and even more in France, playing in a soccer team meant meeting members of other ethnic groupings, imitating successful soccer players, wearing smart Western clothing (as can be seen in his posts on an online social network), and dreaming of a career as a soccer player. We mention this because his biography and the interviews with him are permeated by the theme of *the conflict between playing soccer and living a religious life as a Muslim*. Before leaving Mauritania, he had almost completed his training as an imam, and this opened doors for him during his migration, especially during the time he spent in the refugee camp in Melilla, but also later on in France.

³³ One year later, we were able to interview Mohammed’s younger brother in Melilla in fall 2015. His father had granted him permission to go abroad, too. He also said his father had accepted, or demanded, a promise to send money home to him.

His migration route took him to Mali (where he worked for six months), and then across the Algerian desert to Morocco. In Morocco an extremely difficult time began. Several times he was beaten and robbed by the Moroccan police; once he was sent from Nador to Casablanca along with other migrants. Finally, he lived for several weeks in the forest on Mount Gourougou. In this forest, different groups are organized according to their countries or regions of origin and each group is headed by a “president”, as they call him. In spring 2014 he was chosen by the president to take part in an “assault” on the border, which was carried out in stages by several hundred people. On this day Mohammed and many others succeeded in getting over the border fence and entering the Spanish enclave of Melilla. At the time we got to know him, he was living in the refugee camp in a relatively good position. His good command of Arabic (and moderate knowledge of French), together with his training as an imam, gave him a certain degree of prestige in the camp. Here, where in the fall of 2014 about 60 percent of the inhabitants came from Syria,³⁴ he had more contact with the Arabic-speaking Syrians and with other Arabic-speaking people than with francophone migrants from West Africa. Due to his religious training, he was one of the few people who could lead the prayers in the mosque in the refugee center. However, he was not permitted to play this role (which brings considerable prestige) in the mosque in Melilla, outside the refugee center, because he was Black, as he told us. But inside the center he was treated with respect and formed many contacts among the Arab and Kurdish Muslims. He also told us: “if a Syrian wants to talk to an African, they call me to come and translate.” The demonstrative way in which he practiced and emphasized his religion should probably also be seen in the context of this figuration; it increased his power chances in Melilla at the time we conducted the first biographical interviews with him. Our analysis of all the interviews with him shows that the figurations he was involved in with other groupings, and his resulting power chances, constantly changed in the different countries and regions he passed through during his migration, and especially after his arrival in France. On the migration route to North Africa, these figurations depended on his ethnic belonging far more than his “national” belonging, on his language skills, and on the information he gathered. The latter includes, in particular, knowing what to name as one’s country of origin. And, as shown by his experience in France, Mohammed can make good use of his transnational family capital. In 2018 he succeeded in obtaining a passport from the Malian Embassy. In an online interview in November 2019, he told us that he had abandoned his Mauritanian passport during his migration because he feared that it might be a disadvantage when crossing the border into Europe, and especially during asylum proceedings. He continues:

³⁴ El Faro de Melilla, October 14, 2014, “El colectivo sirio ya representa al 60% de inmigrantes que viven en el CETI” (The Syrian collective already represents 60% of the immigrants living in the CETI). Available at: <https://elfarodemelilla.es/el-colectivo-sirio-ya-representa-al-60-de-inmigrantes-que-viven-en-el-ceti/> [Accessed on November 3, 2021].

“When I was in Paris, I went to the Mauritanian Embassy and I said to him, I had a passport, but I left it and everything else on the way. They told me ‘you must go back to Mauritania and do the papers there’. Then I said, I said to the Embassy, I said ‘do you know why I left Mauritania?’ He said ‘why’, I said ‘I had no rights in Mauritania, in my country and in my home I am like a foreigner, I have no human rights in my own country and I left and my family we were all like slaves.’”

It is unclear whether this dialogue really took place, or whether during the asylum procedure in France, unlike in Melilla, he claimed to be from Mali. At any rate he was registered as Mauritanian in the CETI (Center for Temporary Stay of Immigrants)³⁵ in Melilla, which belongs to Spain, and in later interviews in 2019 he told us that his Mauritanian passport had expired, and a new passport had been issued to him at the Malian Embassy in Paris. It is clear that the nationality named by migrants along their migration route and during the asylum procedure plays a significant role in whether or not their application is successful, and that this differs from country to country (even within the EU). It is clear that migrant communities discuss among themselves what nationalities and what reasons for seeking asylum are the most effective to prevent being deported. In an interview in the fall of 2015, Mohammed’s younger brother and his cousin told us that in the CETI in Melilla it was customary among migrants from Mali to say that they came from Mauritania, because then – or so they believed – they could not so easily be deported from Spain. However, it must be said here that migrants from Mauritania are not completely protected from being sent back to Mauritania from Spain. Since 2003 there has been an agreement between Spain and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania which makes deportation possible.³⁶

Two very different self-presentations in Melilla. Before discussing Mohammed’s subsequent experiences and his present life in France, we will consider the two interviews with him in Melilla, in which big differences are noticeable in his biographical self-presentations. In the first interview, in which Mohammed avoiding making eye contact with Gabriele and communicated almost entirely with Ahmed, despite the fact that Gabriele was conducting the interview and Ahmed was only translating, Mohammed spoke mainly about the differences between the poor and the rich in Mauritania. The topic of slavery was not explicitly mentioned in this interview. Rather, Mohammed declared that he had left Mauritania because he could no longer endure the everyday experience of discrimination as a Black in his country, which meant he had very poor employment chances:

³⁵ CETI (*Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes*) is the official name of the reception center for migrants who reach Spain via the enclaves and “autonomous cities” of Ceuta and Melilla.

³⁶ Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática, August 4, 2003, “Aplicación Provisional del Acuerdo entre el Reino de España y la República Islámica de Mauritania en materia de inmigración”. Available at: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2003-15555 [Accessed on April 21, 2021].

“despite your good education you don’t get the jobs you’re entitled to, they are only for rich people [...] well, the president³⁷ is supposed to be educated, but there are people who haven’t learned anything, and they have the same job as you, they haven’t studied anything, but you have, you er they, you study and get no work, that’s why I left the country” (1st Interview 2014).

This kind of reference to social inequality – rich people versus poor people in Mauritania – ran through the whole first interview. This changed in the second interview a few days later. He now spoke explicitly about slavery and narrated situations that he had experienced himself. This was clearly due to the fact that Gabriele began the second interview by saying: “We haven’t talked yet about the practice of slavery which still exists in Mauritania.” Mohammed’s body language changed completely. He turned toward Gabriele, in contrast to the first interview, sought eye contact with her, and during the whole of the interview spoke to her rather than to Ahmed. This was surprising, since the two interviewers had assumed that Mohammed wanted to avoid eye contact with a woman because of his religious convictions. Following this initial question by Gabriele, Mohammed’s attitude to her changed, not only in this interview, but also in all subsequent contacts. They are still in contact today via an online social network. In response to Gabriele’s opening remark in the second interview, Mohammed first said:

“Mohammed: [...] well the new president ((Aziz)) wants to abolish it, but the people in the streets say still slaves ((Arabic: *abd*)) er and so and eh, eh, even Black people are called in the streets eh (2) *Haratin* in Arabic.”

He went on to say that he was a Soninke, spoke about the on-going conflicts with the Fulbe, and complained that not many people from his ethnic grouping became ministers. In contrast to the first interview, he spoke here about the difference between “Blacks” and “Arabs”, instead of between poor and rich people. He talked about the discrimination or denial of future opportunities that he experienced as a Black student, the obstacles put in the way of his career chances, and the way he was exploited by being made to do unpaid work. He told us about a girl he knew who worked in the household of an “Arab”, but instead of paying her a wage, the man reported her to the police as a thief. Mohammed said that when he heard about this, it was the final straw: it was clear to him that he did not want to work in Mauritania, and he decided to leave, a plan he had been nursing for a long time. In a telephone interview in May 2016, conducted by Mahadi, our Sudanese colleague, he said that he had had a similar experience, and had been imprisoned for three days by the police (see below). We cannot judge which story is closer to what really happened, or whether these stories are true. The important thing to realize is that this kind of self-presentation is influenced not only by the conditions for granting asylum, but also by the internalized discourse in the home country,

³⁷ This is a reference to Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who was in office from 2009 until 2019.

and by the person with whom the interaction is taking place. In the interview in Melilla, perhaps pride prevented Mohammed from telling Gabriele that he had been accused of theft and put in prison. It is also conceivable that in the context of his application for asylum he transformed what someone else had experienced into something he had experienced himself. However, he tells the story of his arrest and imprisonment in such detail that we are inclined to believe the story is true.

It is clear that Mohammed frames his self-presentation differently in the first and the second interviews. While in the first interview he explains his migration as being due to economic problems, following the pattern used by many migrants from West Africa, this changes very noticeably in the second interview (and in several subsequent online interviews). Our analysis of all the interviews with him shows that Mohammed's migration course was certainly due in part to the established tradition of temporary labor migration among male Soninke,³⁸ but is also a result of his experiences of racist or ethno-political or "ethnic" discrimination. Mohammed was socialized in school at a time when Mauritania was developing a more open discourse on human rights and the equality of "Black" and "white" people, and this was certainly a decisive factor in his decision to leave.

Precarious situation in France in the first two years. Mohammed has been in Europe since 2015. He was transferred to the Spanish mainland in spring 2015 after almost a year in Melilla. From there he traveled to France, where during the first months he lived under extremely difficult conditions, sometimes without a roof over his head. For a few months a French woman who regularly helps refugees let him live in her apartment, together with others in a similar situation. This is something that Mohammed still mentions today when talking about how liberal and multicultural France is.

He is currently living in Lyon, which has a large Muslim population and many mosques, from which he has often received support. In a long telephone interview in **November 2015**, Ahmed and Gabriele were informed about his situation there. Mohammed had attended language courses because his French was hardly enough for an ordinary conversation, had sought refuge in mosques, found temporary accommodation, and lived from begging. For a few weeks he had been able to substitute for an imam (an Algerian) who was ill, which meant he was given board and lodging in the mosque. In **spring 2016**, our colleague Mahadi Ahmed conducted an online interview with Mohammed and spoke to him several times by telephone. These follow-up interviews showed that in this period Mohammed

³⁸ The Soninke are one of the West African groupings with the highest number of people who migrate in search of work, especially to France (Manchuelle 1989a: 90). Manchuelle points out that in villages in the region Mohammed comes from it is not uncommon for around 60% of the male inhabitants to be permanently absent. In the literature, migration is discussed as a part of their culture (Jónsson 2008; Manchuelle 1989a). After the end of the colonial period, more and more young men migrated to France, until restrictions on immigration were imposed in 1974. The society and way of life of the Soninke "has become more and more dependent on migrants' remittances for its social reproduction" (Chastanet 1992: 145).

was increasingly reinterpreting his biographical experiences in the light of the lack of rights of the Black population in Mauritania, and that in France he had begun to read about the history of the Soninke, which he had learned nothing about when he was at school. In respect of a telephone interview that took place in June 2016, Mahadi writes: “When we reached the question of the domination of Arabs in Mauritania, his tone changed quite surprisingly, became louder and angry.” In this context, Mohammed again referred to his time in the Quranic school in Kiffa, and for the first time in an interview with us he described his experience there as a kind of slavery:

“Mohammed: I had to work like a slave ((Arabic: *abd*)), although my father paid about 50 Euros in fees, Arabs came to our school and said they needed students ((Arabic: *tullab*)) to work for them, and it affected the grade you were given if you didn’t work like hell for them in the desert, and we couldn’t escape

Mahadi: Didn’t you complain?

Mohammed: No, you were filled with fear, for example whether it is *haram* [forbidden by Islamic laws] to look at a woman’s face, you had to do what they wanted, and you had to refrain from doing anything they said you shouldn’t do”

In an interview a few weeks earlier, Mohammed told Mahadi that he had worked for an Arab in the capital who called the police when Mohammed asked for his wages. The Arab accused him of stealing money, so he was arrested and put in prison for three days. In this interview he spoke very openly about racism in Mauritania: “Blacks were working with whites as slaves. Bidhan are considering all Black people as slaves.”

At first, we thought that Mohammed’s increasing willingness to speak openly about slavery in Mauritania was due to the fact that these interviews were conducted by a refugee from the Republic of the Sudan. This was certainly one reason why, in the interviews with Mahadi, of whom he knew that he came from the Republic of the Sudan and whom he probably did not perceive as an Arab, contrary to his own self-definition (see ch. 5), Mohammed felt able to speak in very critical terms about “the Arabs” who enslave Black people. In addition, it is noticeable that Mohammed does not use the religious expressions that he uses in almost all the interviews with Ahmed. At first, we interpreted this as also being due to the different interviewers. However, we subsequently identified another very significant component that determined the way he spoke about slavery and his use of religious expressions: this is his involvement with ‘white’, Arab-Muslim networks, on which he increasingly relied for support in his precarious situation during the pandemic. We observed that when Mohammed spoke about ‘whites’ or ‘Arabs’ in the context of Mauritania, he meant the Bidhan, and when he spoke of ‘Arabs’

in the context of France, he meant ‘white’ Arabs from North Africa. In order to be sure that we were right about this, Ahmed conducted another interview with him in March 2021 which clearly supported this interpretation. In this interview, Mohammed several times changed his frame of reference – between a pan-Arab and an Islamic discourse – and entangled himself in the contradictions generally associated with the questions “Who is an Arab?” and “Which countries count as Arab countries?” In the frame of the Islamic discourse, he explained that there are also Black Arabs. He refers to Bilal, a Black slave (with an Arab father and an Ethiopian mother), who was ransomed and appointed as a muezzin by Abu Bakr (father-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed) by order of the Prophet (see Bales 2012: 100f.). Mohammed also tries to make language a criterion of differentiation between Arabs and other groupings, but this does not really help because he has to admit that there are Arabs in Morocco who speak Tamazight instead of Arabic. The importance of this issue for him, or for the Soudan in general, is revealed by his clear position concerning “the lands of the Arabs” in the sense of: the land belongs to those who are regarded as Arabs and not to those who (like himself) are not Arabs and who, like the Soninke, do not want to define themselves as such.

Establishment in France and a more secular life up to spring 2020. Let us go back to the course of Mohammed’s life. From 2017 onward, his financial situation gradually improved, and he developed a remarkably positive and optimistic view of his life in France. In **spring 2018** our Jordanian colleague Hala conducted an interview with him. He told her that he had been granted permission to stay in France for one year, that he was living in a room of his own in a state institution, and that he had successfully completed his training as a cook at a vocational school. He was evidently pleased with what he had learned in France, besides the language. He had already sent off some applications for work as a cook. The subsequent online interviews which Ahmed conducted with him showed that his life was becoming increasingly stabilized. He started working in a Vietnamese restaurant, owned, as he underlines, by a Jew, continued attending classes at the language school, played soccer in a club, and was able to send his mother 100 euros each month. He obtained a passport from the Malian embassy (with the aid of his mother’s Malian birth certificate), was granted a residence permit for France, and was planning to make a visit to Mauritania. He sent Ahmed and Gabriele some photos of his soccer team. A friend from Guinea had succeeded in making money from soccer, and Mohammed was also planning to turn his hobby into a career. His self-presentation on this social media account was clearly becoming more and more secular, with soccer as the central focus. He told Ahmed that he went to parties with non-Muslim colleagues from work and players from his soccer club. He underlined that he had never done anything like this in Mauritania. He said that in Europe human rights are respected and that these are “the countries of the Jews and the Christians” (online interview **May 2019**). During this period, his religion was not visible, either in the interviews or in his posts on an online social

network. In telephone conversations with Ahmed, it was evident that he observed neither Ramadan nor the five daily prayers. **In October 2019** he said very firmly to Ahmed, “There is slavery in Mauritania, I saw that myself”, and spoke about how he was beaten in the Quranic school: “The teacher tied us up and beat us with a stick you wouldn’t even beat an animal with.” One student died after being beaten. Mohammed’s father then allowed him to change to another school. As already mentioned, during vacations at home Mohammed had begged several times to be allowed to leave this school, but his father always made him go back. He obviously has very painful memories of these four years in Kiffa and in this interview they lead to a remarkable statement about Mauritania:

“I can forget everything, except for this school. You are only there to learn the Quran by heart. Soccer, music forbidden, everything was forbidden. [...] In Mauritania there is a difference between Arabs and Blacks. As a Black, whatever you do in reality, you will be treated unfairly. I hate Mauritania, there’s only death there.”

It is clear that Mohammed’s religious socialization in the Quranic schools and his experience of unequal power chances between Arabs and Blacks – which he associates with slavery – are two inseparable topics for him. There is a great ambivalence between his desire for a secular life as a soccer player in France and his critical attitude to Mauritania, on the one hand, and the duty delegated to him by his father to live a religious life, with all the associated contradictions, on the other. This ambivalence is further reinforced by his knowledge that in the past people were held in slave-like conditions within his own community and his own family. Thus, in an interview in **December 2019**, Mohammed rejected the notion of slavery among the Soninke as an erroneous interpretation of unpaid work. It is clear that in the meantime he had read or heard about this on the internet:

“There were slaves who worked without a salary among the Soninke. But it is different among the Soninke. It is not real slavery. [...] There are people on the internet who say that there is slavery among the Soninke. But that’s not true. They make no distinction between slavery and custom. Real slavery exists only between the Haratin and the Bidhan. You work without salary. I experienced that myself. You must work without salary.”

In spring 2020, before the pandemic led to the first lockdowns in France, Mohammed flew to Mauritania with his Malian passport to visit his family for about three weeks. For this he used the annual leave from his work to which he was entitled. While he was there, he stayed in contact with Ahmed and sent him photos showing him wearing the traditional dress of his people. In an interview that Ahmed conducted with him in **October 2020**, which we have already quoted at length, he says that he had changed, especially in respect of his clothing. But everyone was happy to see him. Especially the children were pleased with the presents

he gave them. One can assume that he felt he was in an established position, and he tried to convey his positive image of France to his friends and his family. He says that his friends in Mauritania wanted to know how it is possible to live as a Muslim in France, asking for instance: “How can you live with people who don’t have the same skin color or the same religion as you?” Mohammed says he explained to them that no one in France would stop you from praying or fasting, that you don’t have to give up your religion, and that even when he is working in the restaurant, he is allowed to go and pray. He also told his friends that it is possible to live together with Christians and Jews in France, and that there are human rights there, and even rights for animals. And he concludes:

“I think that in Africa they don’t know how to value a person. But in Europe animals have rights and humans have rights. Where I come from, in Africa, you don’t have any rights, you have no rights as a human and certainly not as an animal.”

He adds that in France skin color is unimportant, and: “for me, we can talk and laugh together. I’m not interested in the color of your skin or your religion.”

Return to religion in the phase that began in March 2020. This strikingly positive view of his situation in France changed dramatically as a result of the lockdown which began soon after Mohammed returned in mid March 2020. For a few months he actually regretted that he had come back. All restaurants had to close and he lost his job. Because of his precarious situation, he moved to Paris, where he lived for three months with a man he knew from Mauritania, a Soninke from his home town. This man had three nephews who were also living in his apartment at this time because of the lockdown. They are about the same age as Mohammed and were at the Quranic school with him. Mohammed was now completely focused on adapting to life with these four men, who, at least at this time, had strictly religious habits. Because of a leg injury he was also unable to play football at this time. As we have already pointed out, all our interviews with Mohammed show that playing soccer represents for him a secular life in contrast to a religious life. In Paris he began to perform regular prayers again, together with the men he was living with. In an interview with Ahmed which took place at the **end of March 2020**, he uses religious expressions when he speaks, as he did in the interviews in Melilla. While in Melilla this was just a reflection of everyday discourses in a religious milieu, in March 2020 he presents arguments to justify Islam. His self-presentation during this phase is very different from the way he speaks about himself in the preceding and the following phases. For instance, in an interview in **June 2020** he says: “*I didn’t come to Europe to play soccer, but to work, to earn money and to help my family.*” In this, he shows a desire to comply with the duties delegated to him by his father: to work, not to play soccer, and to send money home. This submission to his father’s wishes correlates with submission to an apologetic and “religious” discourse. Not only that religion is again in

the foreground in this phase, but it is associated with submission to an apologetic discourse in respect of social injustice in Mauritania. Thus, in this interview Mohammed completely denies that there is any difference between Arabs and Blacks, and the existence of slavery:

“Originally, slavery meant having to work for a master without pay. You only got something to eat and drink. I’ve never seen that in Mauritania. But I hear on the radio that there is slavery. For me, yes there are more human rights among the Arabs than among the Blacks. Most of the poor people are Black. And the Arabs have money because they are educated. But many Blacks aren’t. They don’t go to school and they don’t do anything. That is something, well, what can I say? People claim there is slavery in Mauritania. But for me there is no slavery” (Messaging App Interview June 2020).

After this interview we wondered whether Ahmed had spoken with the same man, because what he said was so different from earlier interviews.

Back to a secular life. However, subsequent interviews, from October 2020 onward, and especially one in **February 2021**, are more like those that took place before spring 2020. In particular, the topic of religion recedes into the background. Mohammed is living again in Lyon and is able to play soccer again occasionally. And he reverts to the discourse that criticizes slavery in Mauritania. He tells Ahmed that he has become less religious, and that he goes to the mosque only occasionally when he needs money, and in order to meet people he can speak Arabic with. Financially he can survive, because his two-year employment contract means that he is entitled to receive benefits from the state, and he has a job in the fish market. Here, he works alongside people with very different nationalities and religions. But his friends are all Arabs, by which he means Arabs from North Africa. He has a room with its own bathroom in a hostel where people from many different countries live. But he says that he cooks mainly with “Arabs, Mauritians and people from Somalia”, because they share the same lifestyle (by which he means that they all observe the Islamic dietary laws) and he can converse with them in Arabic. From what he says, it is clear that his Arab friends in Lyon are not from Mauritania, and that he distinguishes between Arabs and Africans:

“I cook food with my Arab friends, because I speak Arabic, and with some Africans and there are some Mauritians in my town who sometimes come here and we cook in the same place and eat together in the same place and also with the Somalis.”

In spring 2021, despite his close contacts with Arabs, he again expresses criticism of the Bidhan, and it seems to us that he does not connect his Arab friends in Lyon with the Arabs in Mauritania. At the same time he speaks of the Arabs in Mauritania with a kind of admiration because of their education:

“In Mauritania, we Blacks are more than the Arabs. But the Arabs rule the country. Perhaps slavery plays a role. They send their children to good schools. The Arabs know how to make money and they are educated, we Blacks are not.”

When Ahmed tries to remind him of his own painful experiences with Arabs, it is clear that he needs to forget this and to become reconciled with the Arabs:

“Yes, it’s true, but I’ve forgotten all that. There used to be something like slavery, but not any more. It’s better to forget it than to keep thinking about it. I suffered but I got an education and I learned Arabic. Not all Arabs are like that. In France I couldn’t speak French. It’s taken a long time to learn the language. Most of my friends are Arabs, because of the language.”

This quotation shows how closely he, and members of other African groupings, are tied to the Arab communities by a shared language, especially a written language.

4.4 Summary

If we consider the changing we- and self-presentations in the interviews with Mohammed, then it is very clear that the way he speaks about social injustice and his experiences of discrimination as a Black man in Mauritania can change depending on the circumstances in which he is living. This finding also applies to other interviewees. In Mohammed’s case, his changing self-presentations and we- and they-images represent a field of tension we can call ‘secular life versus religious life’. As we see it, this field of tension existed before his migration and was probably an important component in his decision to leave West Africa. His desire for a more secular life existed when he was still in Mauritania. In practical terms, he shaped his lifestyle accordingly when he was living in the capital, away from his family and away from the context of a Quranic school, for instance by playing soccer. The desire to join his brother in Saudi Arabia and to make a career there as a soccer player was an important motivation for his migration project, and he hoped to find similar opportunities in France.

The components which determine the way he speaks about his experiences of discrimination as a member of the Soudan in Mauritania, and about slavery in general and his definition of it, are:

- a) the different situations in which he found himself before leaving his home country, during his migration, and in the country where he is currently living, France;
- b) the networks from which he has received support, i.e. whether these are Muslim groups or mosque communities and their imams, or multicultural, secular communities;

- c) the patterns of interpretation he internalized in his home country;
- d) his relations with his milieu and family of origin, and
- e) his acquired knowledge of the history of his own people and the history of slavery in the region;
- f) the different thematic framings of the interviews, and
- g) the ethnic and religious belongings he ascribes to the interviewers.

These components, which we understand as parts with functional significance for the distinct patterns or Gestalts of his we- and self-presentations, in line with the Gestalt theory (Gurwitsch 2010[1964]: 135), can easily be generalized beyond this case. But the weight of each component and the way they combine and interact differs from case to case. In the case of Mohammed, the ethnic and religious belongings he ascribes to the interviewers, for instance, play a less important role than we first thought (see Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2017: 120f.). His current circumstances at the time of the interview are much more significant, and determine the frame of reference he chooses for his self- and we-presentation. When his presentation is framed with a secular pattern of arguments, he acknowledges that there is slavery in Mauritania, but when using Muslim-religious arguments as a frame, he denies its existence. The interviews with him show clearly how he struggles to keep these two patterns of argumentation separate. In terms of Gestalt theory, this can be formulated as follows: for this man there are currently two figures which cannot be combined or even brought close to each other. In the many interviews with Mohammed, it became clear that his desire for a more secular and especially more multicultural life – with soccer and, as he says in one interview, listening to modern popular music – and the possibility of being able to live this kind of life, is clearly linked to being able to think critically about social injustice in Mauritania and the dominance of the Bidhan. However, his extremely precarious life in France – including being homeless for a time – and his resulting dependence on certain Arabo-Islamic networks, which tend to be strongly religious, requires submission to the discourse of denial that predominates in these networks. His submission to this discourse and return to a religious life clearly happened while he was living in Paris with other Soninke from his home town during the lockdown. In this situation, he was reminded of how his father had delegated to him the obligation to lead a religious life in France. This goes together with denying that there are people who live in slave-like conditions in the communities of the Soninke. In other words, in the context of his Muslim-Arab community in Lyon, Mohammed feels freer to speak about the slave-like conditions in the Quranic schools in Mauritania than he does in the social context of the Soninke with whom he was living in Paris.

Mohammed has relatively easy access to various networks, which he can choose quite freely, in contrast for example to the Senegalese we interviewed who belong to

a brotherhood. This is connected with his ability to speak Arabic and his religious training as an imam, which give him access to mosque communities in France – as was the case during his migration – where he is treated with respect.

What does this mean for his life in France, his chances for participation, and for a process of inclusion in French society? The case of Mohammed throws light on the constantly changing interaction between the different components. The components which could contribute to a successful process of inclusion are in this case: having paid employment and accommodation in a context in which people from very different parts of the world and with different religious belongings work and live together, the ability to communicate both in Arabic and in French, and having access to various networks and milieus. These components help him to develop secular patterns of argumentation, such as the separation of religion and state, and especially the equality of all people before the law.

So how does someone like Mohammed, who struggles with accepting the fact that people live in slave-like conditions in the communities of the Bidhan as well as in those of the Soudan, relate to Mauritians who adopt a different stance, or who belong to a different grouping? Attitudes to slavery among these three groupings cannot be described as simply as may appear from the three men we have presented in this chapter. Thus, among the Mauritanian anti-slavery activists in France, but also in Mauritania, there are members of both the Bidhan and the Soudan. However, if we consider the case of Mohammed together with the case discussed above of a member of the Bidhan who vehemently denies the existence of slavery in Mauritania, and that of a member of the Haratin who spent his early years as a slave because he was the son of an enslaved mother and who now demands recognition of this painful history, we can construct a type from the figuration of these three groupings which is applicable beyond these three cases. A member of the Soudan who has himself suffered from discrimination and exploitation by Bidhan, and who comes from a family which, to this day, lets people work for them in slave-like conditions, is caught between the position of the Bidhan who deny the existence of slavery, who are socially dominant, and who have greater power chances than the other groupings, and that of the former slaves of the Bidhan who are gradually gaining political influence in Mauritania. The ambivalence of his feelings concerning the topic of slavery, and thus also concerning the more general issue of social inequality in Mauritania, is made more intense for this member of the Soudan by the past and present history of his own ethnic grouping.

5 Contested we- and they-images among people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in Germany

Lucas Cé Sangalli

5.1 The figuration of the “Zurqa” and the “Arabs” in Sudan

In the previous chapters, we have discussed in detail the contrasting power chances and we-images of West African migrants from Senegal and Mauritania. Most of our interviewees from Senegal present themselves as a harmonious we-group (see ch. 3), and those from Mauritania thematize (see Gurwitsch/Embree 1974) the entanglements between enslavement and the different power chances of members of different groupings (see ch. 4). I will contrast these images with those from our

Cé Sangalli, L. (2022): Contested we- and they-images among people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in Germany. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 115–169. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2207>

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rosenthal, and Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schultz, Dr. Artur Bogner, Dr. Eva Bahl, and Dr. Arne Worm, for their comments and suggestions on a previous version of this chapter. I also would like to thank my colleagues at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences (MZS) at the University of Göttingen for participating in the analysis of the material, and my colleagues from the Colloquium organized by Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schultz for their comments in the case of Umar (see ch. 5.4.3). Moreover, I am grateful to Ahmed Albaba, Mahadi Ahmed, Enass Nours, and all others who helped with translations and/or fieldwork. This research was carried out in connection with the project “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany” (RO 827/21-1; February 2019 – January 2022) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), and with a doctoral scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (April 2019 – March 2023).

interviews with people who migrated to Germany from Darfur and other regions of Sudan. A striking aspect is that several interviewees thematize collective violence in their initial presentations, but frame the conflicts in Darfur and other parts of Sudan – and thus their migration projects – quite differently. Let me start with the example of an interview with Junayd Ahmad.

The initial presentation of **Junayd Ahmad** (born in 1998 as registered in his documents in Germany; actually born in 1992), as I call him, clearly shows the intertwining of collective violence and life stories. After some brief information about the meaning of his name and the region he comes from in Darfur, he tells about his school time in the context of “the war between the north and the south”, and how this conflict spread to his home region and became part of his family’s history and his own life history:

“I went to school in 1999. In this place there were no schools. We only had Quranic schools. The war between the north and the south [the Second Sudanese Civil War, 1983-2005, L.C.S] was still going on parallel to this time. I always perceived it as a holy war, so they call it *jihad*. Then, it spread out to Darfur. The first victim of this war was my uncle. He was famous within our family. He was young. 23 years old” (Biographical-narrative interview, May 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

Junayd continues and introduces the perception of the war in Darfur as a war between the “Africans” and the “Arabs”:

“[...] this was what people called the war between African (Arabic: *afriqia*) and Arab tribes (Arabic: *qabila*¹). The war continued in this way till 2001 then it got worse from 2001 on and then they burned down villages, raped women, killed men, and killed children. Their goal was to kill every single man and to enslave women [...]”

For those readers familiar with the history of the conflicts in Darfur, it is probably clear from this form of presentation of the conflict that this interviewee comes from the Darfur region and belongs to the grouping of the “Africans”, as translated into English by our interpreter Mahadi Ahmed, himself an “Arab” from Sudan.² During our meetings, Junayd used a broader we-grouping of “Africans” to refer to the non-“Arabs” of Sudan. For more localized references to his we-group in

¹ I use the term “*qabila*” (translated into English as “tribe”) because it is the emic term the interviewees used in our interactions. Very rarely the term was used to refer to “the external imposition of group identities associated with colonial policy” (Hassan/Ray 2009: 18). Often it was used as a self-description of ethnicized belonging.

² Mahadi Ahmed assisted me during fieldwork and put me in contact with several people from Sudan. He also spent some time discussing the interviews with me. I am most grateful for his competent assistance.

Darfur, he used the term “Zurqa” (Sudanese Arabic: *lit.* blue). Mahadi explained that this term can have pejorative connotations, depending on who uses it. The term is derived from the Arabic word for black (see Hassan/Ray 2009: 19) and is to some extent an image of others used by some of those who define themselves as “Arabs” in Sudan to refer to people they define as non-“Arabs” from Darfur (see de Waal 2005: 199, 2015; Sharkey 2008: 27). In other words, the term “Zurqa” includes the non-“Arabs” from Darfur. This grouping includes the ethnic we-groups of the Fur, Masalit, Daju, Zaghawa, and others, but this distinction is not made by all interviewees from the grouping of the “Zurqa”. This suggests – as will be discussed below – that they adopt the homogenizing they-image as non-“Arabs” from Darfur in certain contexts. Moreover, some interviewees who belong to the “Zurqa” groupings, like Junayd, challenged the self-definitions of people as “Arabs” from Darfur. They often referred to them as “Africans” or “Zurqa” who “forgot their language and their history”.

The enormous relevance of this differentiation between the “Zurqa”, the “Africans”, and the “Arabs” in the interviews I conducted, especially among people from Darfur, and the extent to which we can assume which grouping the speaker belongs to from the way the conflict is presented, as in the above quotation, will be discussed in more detail below. Junayd continues by bringing the history of collective violence in Sudan and in Darfur into relation with his own experiences of it alongside his family:

“[...] around 2003 they burned down our place, burned down the place for the second time. They raped women and in this day they raped thirteen-no, thirty women. I was witnessing that, 2003, I was 12 years old.”

First, against the background of the history of a country that has been marked by collective violence for generations, it should be pointed out that the embedding of one’s own life story in the context of a local history of collective violence is to be expected. Besides this commonality shared by interviewees who fled in the context of the violent conflicts and political transformations in Sudan, a central empirical finding of my study is that members of different groupings have very different ways of talking about violence and the history of violent conflicts in Sudan and their home regions. To present their individual and collective histories, they often rely on *ethnicized we- and they-images*. That is, ethnicized belongings play a significant role in their we- and self-presentations, and are a central component in shaping the processes of remembering, especially among my interviewees from Darfur. This includes the fact that in the interviews I conducted in Germany, the “Zurqa”, who do not self-define as “Arabs”, mostly speak about the “Arabs” from Sudan as the perpetrators of acts of violence (see Popitz 2017[1992]: ch. 2) against them, their families, and their we-groups.³

³ I use the term “acts of violence” and “violent acts” following the sociology of power and violence developed by Heinrich Popitz (2017[1992]: 25): “The most straightforward form of power is the

In the literature on Darfur and Sudan, many authors argue that we need to avoid ethnicized representations of the conflicts and the people involved, because this is reductionist, colonial, and at times racist (see O'Brien 1986; Spaulding/Kaptejins 1991: 149f.; Behrends 2008: 48; El-Battahani 2009: 43f.; Madibbo 2012: 304f.). And other studies have discussed how violent conflicts themselves can imply ethnicizing logics (Elwert 1995; Lentz 1997: 170f.; Suliman 1997; Bogner 1998: 209ff., 2004; Rosenthal 2004b; de Waal 2005: 200; Hassan/Ray 2009: 18). My findings show that these ethnicized images and categories are a powerful socially constructed social reality with which my interviewees are confronted in their lifeworlds in the diaspora, especially among other Darfurians and Sudanese. Not only that these images shape their we- and self-presentations, but they also prove to be extremely contested. For example, they are a relevant component in establishing who participates in which groups, as well as in shaping the chances of being granted asylum in Western Europe. For instance, Junayd told me that in their applications to the German authorities for asylum, some individuals explicitly state that they belong to the "Zurqa" groupings, such as the Fur, the Masalit, or the Zaghawa.⁴ Allegedly, this increases their chances of being recognized as victims of persecution in their home regions, which entitles them to refugee status in Germany. Similarly, the French asylum system enforces an ethnicized and regional differentiation of asylum applications, where members of certain groupings have higher chances of staying in the country with a legalized status (see Gout 2020). Against the background of the use of these ethnic categories in the asylum system in Western Europe, and the necessity to prove that they have experienced collective violence in their home regions, it is not surprising that these components shape the biographies and lifeworlds of people from Sudan living in the diaspora. In other words, in a context in which one is expected to prove that one has experienced violence in the past, it is clear that the contentiousness of the ethnicized images must be understood not only in relation to a synchronic negotiation of differences between groups in the present, but also in relation to the differing and contested collective histories and interpretations available to members of different we-groups. What proved to be important for me was to determine how ethnicized and other belongings become *biographically* relevant for people. This means that not only belonging to an ethnic we-group becomes relevant, but also other forms of belonging.⁵ This also

sheer power of action: the power to inflict harm on others in an action aimed at them – the power to 'do something to them'. In other words, I reconstruct the changing power chances members of certain groupings have to act violently and especially to inflict physical harm in different figurations with members of other groupings.

⁴ As a part of the procedure of seeking asylum in Germany, the "personal interview is the applicant's **most important appointment within his/her asylum procedure** [emphasis in the original]" in which "they describe their biographies and situations, tell of their travel route and of the persecution which they have personally suffered". Available at: <https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Asyl/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylverfahrens/Anhoerung/anhoerung-node.html> [Accessed on March 5, 2022].

⁵ Other authors have written about the need to reconstruct the changing character of ethnic and other belongings in Sudan in relation to the dominant discourses in diaspora communities, at different

means that ethnicized we- and they-images have different meanings according to the interdependencies of the figurations in which people present themselves. For example, they can become a matter of political contentiousness in certain figurations (see Schlee/Werner 1996; Salih 1998), or be a reference to a shared language or collective “origin” in another. What made reconstructing the interrelations between life history, ethnicity, migration, and self-presentations more complex was that the interviewees looked back on very different experiences of being affected by collective violence in the process of the conflict(s) and/or their migration course(s).

I was confronted with the empirical question of determining which figurations, and in which different periods of life, one or another belonging was relevant for these people who had experienced collective violence and/or migration processes. In this chapter I will explore the different ways in which people who have migrated from Darfur and other regions of Sudan present themselves and their migration courses, and how this relates to their family history and their own life history, as well as to their experiences of violence. Based on case reconstructions, my central finding is that the very different ways of being affected by violence plays a significant role *not only* in the processes leading to migration, *but also* in the migration course itself. And these different migration chances are intertwined with ethnicized we- and they-images, such as the “Zurqa” and the “Arabs”, as well as with a (collective) history that allows you to understand yourself as belonging to an ethnic we-group and being recognized as such. My analysis of the data on the difference between the we- and self-presentations of an interviewee who belongs to the “Zurqa” groupings from Darfur, whose life and migration were extremely affected by physical violence, and two other interviewees who belong to the “Arab” groupings from Darfur and the River Nile regions, who have been less affected by violence, show that:

1. those affected by physical violence and marginalization talk about their experiences of violence in the past – and in doing so often use ethnicized we- and they-images;
2. those less affected by violence tend to de-thematize conflicts in Sudan and avoid the question of who is responsible for them.

In order to present these findings, I will first give some historical background on the conflicts in Darfur, particularly focusing on the figuration between the “Zurqa” and the “Arab” groupings in Sudan (see ch. 5.2). I will then briefly discuss the figurational and biographical approach I used for this study (see ch. 5.3.1),

moments, and in different places (see Schultz 2010, 2011, 2015). Sociologist Ulrike Schultz (2015: 162) stresses that ethnic belonging is “negotiated in people’s everyday lives” and “what belonging means is contested and articulated, according to Fredrik Barth (1969), at the border. The negotiation of the border does not only happen from the outside – as in racist attributions – but is also part of an internal negotiation process” (translated from German by the author). See also Vermeulen/Govers (2000[1994]).

and elaborate in more detail how the field access, my positioning, and that of other people shaped the framing of the interviews, and provided important results regarding which topics are thematized in front of whom, and the balance between trust and mistrust (see ch. 5.3.2). This gives an insight into the dynamics of interaction in the diaspora in different settings. I will then discuss three cases based on biographical-narrative interviews with three men from Sudan (see ch. 5.4): Ahmad, who belongs to the “Arab” Rubatab from the River Nile region of Sudan (see ch. 5.4.1); Taha, who belongs to the “Arabs” from Darfur (see 5.4.2); and Umar, who belongs to the “Zurqa” Daju from Darfur (see ch. 5.4.3). A contrastive comparison of these cases, together with analyses of other interviews, shows the extent to which the life stories of the Sudanese in the present are shaped by:

- a) discourses and official procedures in Germany (including the asylum regime and the asylum interviews at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), and the framing of the interviews with us;
- b) discourses and practices in diaspora communities of people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan in Germany (which tend to produce ethnicized ascriptions of belonging to groups of either “victims” or “perpetrators” of violent acts);
- c) the ethnic, religious, and political groupings they belonged to in their regions of origin;
- d) the very different experiences of (collective) violence before and during their migration courses.

I will also show to what extent the stories people tell in the present (their life stories) intertwine with the experiences they have lived through in the past (their life histories). In other words, how people’s individual and collective past before, during, and after their migration shapes the stories they tell in the present. In the last chapter I will conclude with a discussion of the entanglement of *biographical* and *collective* functions of changing ethnicized belongings with the collective memories of we-groups (see ch. 5.5).

5.2 Socio-historical background: The figurations between the “Zurqa” and the “Arab” groupings in Darfur and other regions of Sudan

In April 2019, the regime of Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir (1989–2019) ended after popular uprisings in Sudan and in the diaspora. In the context of my study, it is important to keep in mind that during the regime led by Bashir – and even

before it – the government of Sudan based in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital, enforced an official and renewed agenda of “Arabization” and “Islamization” for regions with a significant population of non-“Arabs” (see Sharkey 2008; Behrends 2008: 51).⁶ Bashir’s regime expanded its power opportunities by supplying weapons to local leaders, especially the so-called “Arabs” from northern Sudan (see Behrends 2008: 36). In the 1990s, Bashir said the regime of Sudan was “‘fighting for [the] Sudan’s Arab-Islamic existence’, that its policies to impose Islamic law and Arabic were merely a reflection of divine will, and that its war against dissidents was a jihad” (Sharkey 2008: 42). During the 1990s, before the escalation of the conflicts in Darfur in 2003, which I will describe in more detail below, Bashir’s regime supplied weapons to some of the local “Arab” groups in Darfur to enable them to fight against groups defined by the regime as non-“Arabs” (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 49f.). The efforts of the government led by Bashir to *racialize* and *ethnify* groupings in Sudan were often referred to by my interviewees from Darfur – “Arabs” and non-“Arabs” alike – as an important element for explaining the conflicts in their country. The entanglements between the expansion of power chances by the central government and its local allies, the resistance from those who were targeted by them, and the legitimization of the use of physical (collective) violence by all parties has contributed for the present perception of the ethnicized they- and we-images as a “political issue” in certain contexts. In this pattern of argumentation, Bashir often appears associated with the “Janjawiid”, the government-backed militias who “explicitly represent themselves as Arabs ridding the land of ‘Blacks’” (O’Brien 2015: 214). At the same time, leaders from Darfur increasingly relied on the use of a discourse of “negligence” of the region and of part of its population to organize (armed) opposition groups. In the literature (de Waal 2016: 133), the composition of these groups is often described as running across ethnic lines, such as Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit. And these leaders themselves explored the notion of forming ethnically diverse groups to attract supporters (and to exclude others).⁷ As the political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani (2009: 251, 254, 258f.) assumes, even if “all armed movements in Darfur were predominantly ethnic”, participation in the opposition groups became transformed in the course of the conflict(s) and presumably included at times “Arabs” from Darfur, too (see Behrends 2008: 51).

Now, conflicts were by no means new; they had a long history in the region. Power disputes between and within groupings had existed already before the periods of “Turco-Egyptian” (1821–1885) and “Anglo-Egyptian” rule (1899–

⁶ At different times in the more recent history of Sudan, the government led by Umar al-Bashir and its supporters publicly celebrated the Islamic past as a way of forging national belonging to the detriment of other belongings. In a public speech in December 2013, Bashir evoked the Islamic past, “so that we can forget [the tribal, ethnic, regional] differences [among us], all of our differences, my friends. We have a nation that we are proud of, and we have a people of which we are proud” (Salomon 2016: 51).

⁷ Al Jazeera, May 15, 2010. “Who are Sudan’s JEM rebels?”. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2010/5/15/who-are-sudans-jem-rebels> [Accessed on February 8, 2022].

1956) (see O’Fahey 1973; Makris 1996: 161ff.; Behrends 2008; Alawad Sikainga 2021[1996]: ch. 1). This appeared, for example, in the collective relationships of enslavement and forced servitude (see O’Fahey 1973; Kapteijns 1984; Lovejoy 2011[1983]: 70; Mire 2005[1985]: 102f.; Sharkey 2008: 28f.). At the same time, the arrival of British forces contributed to transforming the character of interdependencies:

“There can be no denying, for example, that some Sudanese elites who were educated by the British and worked in close association with them developed cultural and racial conceptions that came closer to British ideas than to rural Sudanese ones. Indeed, such conceptions have dominated much of Sudanese public discourse since well before independence in 1956” (O’Brien 2015: 208).

Similarly, the changing and contextual character of ethnic belonging and group allegiance is a significant aspect of the collective history of Darfur (see Behrends 2008). Historian Rex Seán O’Fahey provides an interpretation of the conflict in Darfur against the background of broader power transformations in power balances:

“No administrative unit in Darfur was ethnically pure. What seems to have happened in these last years is the hardening of an ideological/racist divide, speeded up by outside forces. [...] some Arab and African groups reach local accommodations with their neighbours; in other areas there is brutal ethnic cleansing, often with government support; other groups oscillate between being Arab or not. [...] The overall picture is one of a disintegrating or, at least, a very rapidly changing society” (O’Fahey 2006: 36f).

Contrary to the impression given by the polarized ethnicized discourses and categories in the present, several historical sources – and the interviewees themselves – point out the undeniably entangled (and sometimes cooperative) character of people’s origins in this region (see O’Fahey 1973: 30; Hassan 1993: 26; Hassan/Ray 2009: 19; Mamdani 2009: 106f., 148f.; Mukhtar Musa 2010: 553ff.; Vezzadini 2012; Hashim 2019: 3ff.; Mustafa Abusharaf 2021: ch. 2). Despite this, a divisive use of the images of the “Zurqa”, the “Africans”, and the “Arabs” remains powerful in the present and is a relevant component in self-definitions of belonging. In the more recent history of Darfur (from 1916 to the present, little more than a century), its interpretation as a “marginalized” region of Sudan has gained momentum (see Prunier 2005). This is true especially for the period after the escalation of the conflicts in Darfur in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when ethnicized we-and-they-images were used for the cooptation of fighters, as described by some of my interviewees, and by various observers (see El-Battahani 2009: 51ff.; Mamdani 2009: 259). Among other factors, at least since the 1980s, this has contributed to making Darfur one of the regions in the world affected by the forced dislocation

of individuals and families (see Jaspars/Buchanan-Smith/Abdul-Jalil 2021). Similarly, the deterioration of livelihoods has made the role of mercenary an attractive source of income for some families (see Young *et al.* 2005). Paid soldiers from Darfur have fought, and still fight, in other conflicts, from Libya and Chad to Yemen.⁸ This has furthered the stigmatization of migrants from Darfur along their migration courses in the region, where they are often treated as members of militias or armed groups that promote violence in other countries (see Hastrup 2013: 155). Even if the historical character of the ethnicized we- and they-images, and their use for the perpetration and justification of violence, might give the impression that they were formed and remained the same throughout the centuries, the complexities of biographies – both in Sudan and in the diaspora – tell a different story.

5.3 Research on the Sudanese diaspora in Germany

5.3.1 A biographical and figurational approach to they- and we-images

A central aspect of pursuing a socio-constructivist biographical and figurational approach to we- and they-images is the processual character of biographies, meaning that the different life courses of people coming from Darfur and other regions of Sudan show the transformations we- and they-images go through in different periods of the individual, familial, and collective history, and in different social figurations. As the sociologist Norbert Elias points out, these we-images have not only an *individual* function but also a *social* one, connected to the collective memory and the transmission of experiences and meanings through generations of different we-groups:

“[...] a we-image, however, which often takes the form of a process of greater or lesser length, has not only an individual function but an important social one [...] The living on of a past group in the memory of a present one has the function of a collective memory. If a previously independent group gives up its autonomy, whether through union with other units or by assimilation to a more powerful one, this affects not only those living at the time. Much that has happened in past generations, that has lived on in the collective memory, in the we-image of the group, changes or loses its meaning when the group’s identity and therefore its we-image change” (Elias 2001: 223f.).

That is, it becomes clear that the existence and use of different we- and they-images by members of different groupings is connected to historical power asymmetries

⁸ The New York Times, December 28, 2018. “On the Front Line of the Saudi War in Yemen: Child Soldiers From Darfur”. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/28/world/africa/saudi-sudan-yemen-child-fighters.html> [Accessed on November 15, 2021].

between them and to the transmission of knowledge between generations. To borrow the terms of Elias, the explanation of these power asymmetries is not based on *identifying* one group or another, so much as on showing how their *interdependence* came to be, and was transformed, over time:

“the socio-dynamics of the relationship of groups bonded to each as established and outsiders are determined by the manner of their bonding, not by any of the characteristics possessed by the groups concerned independently of it.” (Elias 2008[1994]: 16).

Thus, in the analysis I present in this chapter, it is not a matter of determining ‘who belongs to which group’ and ‘which group(s) are the perpetrators of violent acts and which are the victim(s)’, but of reconstructing in detail the complexities contained in biographies – which must not to be exclusively *reduced to* these images. More importantly, it is a matter of determining which *biographical* and *collective* functions these images have, and how they change in different contexts over time; in other words, what quality power interdependencies between people who self-define, or are defined by others, as “Zurqa”, “African”, or “Arab” have for members of these groupings, and how they shape the changing we- and they-images used in biographical we- and self-presentations. Thus, by reconstructing their biographical sociogenesis, it is possible to avoid one of the main traps when writing about collective violence in general: that of assuming that the often polarized images (of “victims” and “perpetrators”, for example) used by people in the present to organize their experiences of violence in the past have always been the same, or have retained the same relevance throughout their lives. Moreover, to a certain extent, this often polarized *rationalization* in the present corresponds to the form in which people experienced violent acts in the past, and plays a central role in shaping how they talk about their individual, familial, and collective experiences. In other words, it influences – in part – how people who have migrated from Sudan to Germany remember and present their experiences in the diaspora. And this is a central component in the constitution of participation chances in the society of arrival because it is relevant for:

- a) the definition of which (larger) groups people want to be part of/can be part of (and which they explicitly avoid), and
- b) their different and changing interpretations of their belonging to we-groups in various contexts and periods of their lives.

A figurational and biographical approach gives insights into the changing aspects of group allegiances and the changing character of power chances available to members of different groupings at certain moments of their lives. The main contribution of this chapter is to evaluate the we- and they-images presented by interviewees in the light of their past experiences, instead of taking them at face-value

in interactions and observations in the present. Furthermore, I am interested in the questions: a) to what extent are the we- and they-images of members of the “Zurqa” and the “Arab” groupings reinforced or transformed by discourses prevailing in the society of arrival; and b) how does this interact with the interviewee’s current perspective on their collective and individual past. The sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal writes about the relevance of the contemporary framing(s) of situations such as interviews or observation settings, and how this relevance intertwines with belonging and collective memories:

“The contemporary framing or even the diverse and at times conflicting framings of the situations of remembrance and narration entail constructions of belonging on the part of those who remember and those who speak or write about their remembrances, i.e. to which we-groups do they feel a sense of belonging and which collective memories are connected with it” (Rosenthal 2016: 32).

Thus, instead of taking the relevance of the ethnicized we- and they-images for granted, let us consider how they became more or less relevant in my fieldwork and in the self-presentations of people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in Germany. However, the phenomenon of relevance as a biographical and situative variable applies to more or less all we-images and belongings.

5.3.2 “Charged” self-presentations: Between trust and mistrust

In the interviews with people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan, the we- and self-presentations are much more strongly determined by the collective belongings of the interviewees, or the belongings attributed to them, than is the case in the interviews with the migrants from Senegal and Mauritania (see ch. 3 and ch. 4). Therefore, I will first make some remarks on my research. I conducted 14 biographical-narrative interviews with women and men (born between the 1960s and the late 1990s) who migrated to Germany from Darfur and other regions of Sudan between October 2018 and July 2020. Since the interviewees speak of “Sudan” to refer to the Republic of the Sudan in the interviews, I will use this emic (and legal) category in this chapter. With one exception, I conducted all the face-to-face interviews together with Mahadi Ahmed, who translated the Arabic parts of the interviews. Mahadi belongs to the grouping or we-group of Sudanese who are regarded as “Arabs” in Sudan. Several interviewees were aware of his ethnic belonging, even if this was not explicitly thematized in the interviews. Mahadi was persecuted during the regime of Umar al-Bashir due to his political activities. He escaped from Sudan to Western Europe through Turkey and Greece in 2009. Besides the face-to-face interviews conducted in Germany, predominantly in cooperation with Mahadi Ahmed, I conducted three online biographical-narrative interviews: two with Sudanese men who live in Jordan, and one with a young man from Darfur who attempted to migrate to Western Europe and lives in Uganda.

Furthermore, I have another 48 biographical interviews at my disposal, conducted in Amman, Jordan, between June 2020 and April 2022 by our field assistants and interviewees. In this chapter, I will not focus on the research carried out in Jordan for my doctoral thesis. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that the we- and they-images presented by people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan in the interviews in Jordan differ from those in Germany. For example, in many of them the “Janjawiid” appear as “perpetrators” but not necessarily in association with the “Arabs”. While some of these interviewees downplayed their collective past as “African” in the interviews, others made explicit denunciations of racialized prejudice experienced in interactions with the “Arabs” and members of international organizations in Amman, Jordan. Moreover, their history before migration plays a significant role regarding where people belonging to different groupings migrate to. And this points to the influence that their current situation and the place where they live have on their we- and self-presentations. This comparison with the interviews conducted in Germany suggests that hegemonic discourses in the diaspora are a relevant component in shaping biographical we- and self-presentations.

As I have already mentioned, the way people look back into their past from a present perspective – be it during participant observations or during interviews – intertwines with definitions of the situation and the belongings they ascribe to other participants in the situation of interaction (see Goffman 1956: 1ff.; Rosenthal 2018: 37ff.). Below I will show how analyzing the way in which Mahadi and myself were defined by interviewees during our interactions gave us insights into the rules and norms of the we-groups they belonged to, regarding which topics could be thematized and how experiences should be presented, both in front of us and behind our backs. The interactional character of these situations and the changing framings of the interview are clear in the following example from an interview with Junayd, whom I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. This interview is a continuation of the first biographical interview with him, and was conducted together with Mahadi in June 2019, one month after our first meeting with Junayd. We conducted the interview at the beginning of my study, before realizing the importance of the role played by someone like Mahadi (framed as “an Arab from Khartoum” in certain situations, as will become clear below) in shaping the we- and self-presentations of the Sudanese. Junayd belongs to the Fur from Darfur, and, as one can see in the following quotation, he framed Mahadi at this point of the interview as “coming from Khartoum”. The connection of this perceived origin with “the civilizational project” of the “Arabs” became clearer later. In this part of the interview, Junayd explains the different “problems” (Arabic: *mushkila*) in Sudan and their relation to the different “projects” for the country. He directly addresses Mahadi:

“The other project that could be dangerous on all of Sudan is the civilizational project and you know this civilizational project ((laughs)) [...]”

(Follow-up interview, June 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

Junayd continues, but changes from Arabic to English to address me directly *without translation from Arabic into English by Mahadi*. At first, he suggests the overlapping similarities between the “Arab” and the “Islamic” projects and then differentiates between the “Muslim” and the “Christian” “Arabs”.

“[...] the Islam civilization project oder [German for *or*, L.C.S.] the Arab civilization project- but the Arabs which are Muslims because a lot of Arabs are not Muslims they are Christians, for example in Lebanon Egypt- [...]” (Follow-up interview, June 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, original in English).

At this point, Mahadi interrupts Junayd and says in Arabic that he needs to use the bathroom. He leaves and I stay alone with Junayd in the room. Junayd goes on and becomes unsure about my loyalty to Mahadi. As I noted in a memo, my impression at that time was that he feared I would share information with Mahadi.⁹ The reasons for that were not clear to me at the time, nor during the interview. Then, I still had the idea that my role as a Brazilian “outsider” would be more reason for distrust than talking with a “fellow” Sudanese. Since then, I have learned that it is the other way around. To go back to the interaction with Junayd: in the absence of Mahadi, he continued and said something that in retrospect I interpret as a “criticism” of the fact that I was conducting interviews with a co-interviewer who belonged to the groups Junayd framed as being responsible for the “Arab and Islamic civilizational project”. He said:

“[...] I think I didn’t=I didn’t- I wanted to say something because ahm- ((stutters)) I think Mahadi is from Khartoum and he is a very=very good person, I believe ((laughs)) [...] but now the one important thing in Sudan or the dangerous thing in Sudan is that they didn’t like the Black people // uhum // the- the Black people they [think they are, L.C.S.] useless, they want to kill them they want to destroy this language this- their history, everything” (Follow-up interview, June 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, original in English).

The meaning of this association of Mahadi with “the Arabs from Khartoum” and its role in Junayd’s definition of the situation became clearer after another interview with Junayd at which Mahadi was not present. Junayd explained that in some situations “the Arabs from the North” and “the Arabs from Khartoum” are perceived

⁹ We write detailed observation memos for the situation of the interview, participant observation, and other (also online) contexts of interaction with interviewees. This allows us to document changes regarding our interpretation of cases and our feelings during and after fieldwork. On the criteria for writing and analyzing field notes and observation memos, see Rosenthal (2018: 81ff., 97ff.).

as belonging to the coalition that holds power in Sudan (“the elites”) and is responsible for many atrocities in Darfur and other regions of Sudan. For our purpose, it can be noted that certain members of these groups indeed held high-ranking positions in the army and in the government before, during, and after the regime led by Bashir. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has accused some of them of collaborating with Bashir in “five counts of crimes against humanity”, “two counts of war crimes”, and “three counts of genocide [...] allegedly committed at least between 2003 and 2008 in Darfur, Sudan”.¹⁰

These conversations with Junayd taught me to pay more attention to the impact of the translator’s ethnicity, as well as my own, depending on who we were interviewing from Sudan. My awareness of the tacit attribution of ethnic belonging in the interviews in Germany increased in the course of the investigation, and especially after evaluation of the first interviews. Thus, it became a central component in deciding how to proceed in further interviews. Both in Germany and in Jordan, I started taking care to conduct interviews with people of different ethnicities from Sudan and having interviewers of different ethnicities. My current sample includes people from different ethnic we-groups and groupings from Darfur and other regions of Sudan: Daju, Fur, Masalit, Tunjur, Arabs from different “tribes”, families, and regions, as well as those born in Darfur but raised across the border in Chad, and especially from different regions (Darfur, the North, the Blue Nile, to name but a few). However, as the quotation below from the interview with Junayd shows, the balance between fear and mistrust is not exclusive to interactions between the “Zurqa” and the “Arabs”. Here, Junayd refers to the trust – or lack of it – in interactions between the “Zurqa” groupings of the Fur and the Zaghawa, a clear sign of changing trust relations:

“I am a Fur. For example, if I sat with a Zaghawa, it is possible if I, a Furawi and a Zaghawa sat together, I might trust the Arab and not the al Zaghawa” (Biographical-narrative interview, May 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated by Mahadi Ahmed).

Clearly, trust between Darfurians and Sudanese is an important component for them in the present. Junayd goes on to establish a connection between the we- and they-images with explanations for the conflict. This quotation shows the fear and mistrust that is connected with the we- and they-images of the “Zurqa” and the “Arabs”:

“[...] the central government in Khartoum was trying to create troubles between people, so they told the Arabs about the Zurqa, they told them [the

¹⁰ International Criminal Court, Al Bashir Case, ICC-02/05-01/09. Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir> [Accessed on October 27, 2021]. For a discussion of the challenges faced by the ICC in proving the crime of genocide in Darfur, see Philippe Gout (2019).

Arabs, L.C.S.] to go and fight [the Zurqa, L.C.S]. The people did not believe them and were emphasizing that ‘we should not believe them’ [...]” (Biographical-narrative interview, May 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

In the continuation of the interview, the connection between these we- and they-images of the “Zurqa” and the “Arabs” in the context of Darfur and the widespread fear among neighbors and families becomes clear. The analysis of my interviews, as I will show below in the case of Umar, indicates that the familiarity and closeness of people in Darfur – knowing who belongs to which family and group and where they live – increasingly became a matter of survival. This also appears in the first follow-up interview with Junayd in June 2019, when he refers to Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the general who would later lead the coup d’état in Sudan in October 2021. In the following long quotation, his argumentation pattern, and especially his glorified view of the community of different groups in Darfur, is quite clear. Junayd refers to al-Burhan as the person in charge of coopting the “Arab” militias from Darfur to kill the “Zurqa”, their neighbors, and that this by no means applies to all the “Arabs”:

“[...] for sure there were some Arabs that were willing to kill a big number of people, **but** most Arabs said ‘We can’t. We are not able to kill our neighbors and to kill people. We want to leave the country’. The men who listened to Burhan’s call **JOINED** these killer fighters, and they were the ones who described to people the villages because they already know the area and who’s in it. They know whose house is that and who lives in it. **ALL** these houses. They were even standing at night, at one a.m. in the night. Someone could come knocking at a door. You offer him to enter, feed him, give him something to drink and to stay in the night. He leaves when he wants to. There was trust. No man assaults another man. If you found a needle in the street you turn to him and ask him if it’s his. **THIS** was the only thing that let these people control and burn the villages because the **few** Arabs knew the area. They knew all of Darfur, village by village. **Even** when they attacked the villages men were covering their heads, because it was possible that he might be someone you know, ate with you, or was a friend of yours, married to a woman from your family, and that you know him **VERY WELL**” (Follow-up interview, June 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

The problem now is that no one really knows whether the other person – as familiar as they might be – is likely to be one of the killers or not. Thus, Junayd explains he did not trust even his family members. He himself had the phantasy that his father, a “Zurqa” Fur, knew about the attack on their village when people were raped and killed, and houses were burned down. Junayd, then 12 years old,

thinks his father left him, his siblings, his mother, and other relatives to die. The extent to which these phantasies and speculations are true or not is unimportant here. The crucial point is that Junayd thinks they are correct. Thus, to understand his interpretations of the forced dislocation he experienced with a part of his family, and his argumentation patterns in the present, we must consider his phantasies that his father knew about the attacks. This helps to explain his participation in the “Zurqa” armed groups in Darfur some years after, which led to improved chances for him to leave the country later in his life.

As I have shown above, speculation and mistrust can be a central component in interrelationships between family members or neighbors. Thus, it is not surprising that during this fieldwork there were speculations regarding my allegiance to Mahadi, frequent accusations of being part of different secret services, and allegations that we shared information with the government of Sudan.¹¹ These accusations were made especially in one case connected with the topic of rape, with information that was shared with us and followed by an explicit death threat should we share it with anyone else. At first, Mahadi and I played the threat down. Only after recognizing the fear of being physically attacked did we agree. We initially struggled to take the threat seriously, because it came from someone we framed as “a victim” and could easily empathize with. Mistrust and speculations were also a central component in the interviews in Jordan. The interviewees faced similar accusations of being part of the secret service. In parallel interviews that I conducted with people from Central America, West Africa, and the Middle East, this was not the case. Against this background, it is clear that the speculations people have regarding others, and the accusations based on them, are not uncommon among those who were socialized under authoritarian regimes in Sudan, even before the rise of Umar al-Bashir to power in 1989. On the contrary, they are a central component of the lifeworld of many people living in the diaspora, especially those who have experienced a need to hide their belongings in the past, or who have heard that Sudanese agents infiltrate refugee camps in Western Europe.¹² This is of course not exclusive to the situation of Sudan. Gabriele Rosenthal and Lukas Hofmann (in press) write about similar difficulties in Kampala, Uganda, when they tried to conduct interviews with people from Eritrea, but found they were often unwilling due to fear of different secret services and “the highly charged antag-

¹¹ Here it is important to stress that we regard anonymization of the material as a priority, and encrypt all files that might lead to the identification of people and/or sources.

¹² The norms and rules of socialization in the different we-groups – ethnic or political, for example – under authoritarian regimes in Sudan, and their effect on individuals in the present, are clear in the case of **Sabbha Amin** (born 1967), which I discuss in detail in my dissertation. In 1981, when she was around 14 years old, she moved in with her aunt, her uncle, and their recently born daughter. During this period, she lived and acted socially as the older daughter of her uncle, who was on the wanted list of the government of Ja’afar Numayri (1969–1985) because of his participation in the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) (see Hale 2012). This constellation required her to follow certain rules to avoid the identification of her uncle and his family as communists. This had a significant impact on her biography, and on her escape to a (communist) country later on in her life.

onism toward white people, or people from NGOs or the mass media". In the case of the interviews I conducted together with Mahadi, the fact that I was not framed as "a German" also played an important role. As Mahadi told me, almost all the interviewees would have refused to do an interview with "a German". At the same time, others refused to give interviews to "researchers", having in mind that both Mahadi and I studied at universities. This shows that ethnic belonging was not necessarily the most important aspect of our interactions. The fact that both Mahadi and I are men must also be considered as a reason why we have more men than women in our sample. Moreover, more men migrate from Darfur and other regions of Sudan (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 59). Due to the very dangerous character of some of the migration routes available to people who belong to less established groupings from these regions, women and children may find themselves in more vulnerable positions than men (see Ben-Ze'ev/Gazit 2020: 5, 14). Another important component is the fact that men in Darfur are often encouraged by their families, and in certain contexts even expected, to undertake these dangerous journeys (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 58f.).

5.4 Three case studies:

Diverging self-presentations and migration courses

I will now turn to the way the migration courses and the changes of belongings of three interviewees are embedded in their collective, family, and life histories. I will contrast the cases of two interviewees who belong to the "Arab" groupings with the case of one interviewee who belongs to the "Zurqa" groupings. It will become clear that the "Arabs" are not a homogeneous grouping, but differ significantly in their regional belongings. At the same time, those belonging to the "Arabs" were not "directly" affected by collective violence in Darfur nor in other regions of Sudan. They also have more "migration capital" in North Africa and the Near East, and in Western Europe (for example, by being socialized with Arabic as their mother tongue) than the member of the "Zurqa". The life and migration of the interviewee who belongs to the "Zurqa" differs from the other two men in that his life course is repeatedly and massively shaped by processes of collective and physical violence. His case also shows the hindering of the power chances currently available to his family in their home region, Darfur.

These striking differences between the three men are manifest on the level of their we- and self-presentations. The members of the "Arab" groupings, which are less affected by violence, are more often confronted in the diaspora with the question of who is to "blame" for the violence. Thus, they tend to avoid using we-images that address (potential or real) responsibility for violent acts. In the case of one of the "Arabs", this is done by referring to a recently discovered "Eritrean" background in order to show that he and his family are different from other more

established “Arabs”. The other “Arab” emphasizes that “we are all Africans” in Germany. In the case of the member of the “Zurqa” grouping, who experienced extreme and protracted violence, there is a willingness and a need to speak about responsibilities and about the perpetrators of violence. In other words, he relies more on the dominant ethnicized discourse of a conflict between “Africans” and “Arabs”, in which the latter appear as “the perpetrators”.

In summary, as other interviews I have conducted also show, I can say that while those affected by physical violence want and need to talk about it, and do so in a more homogenizing and essentialist way, those belonging to groups that a) are more established, b) were/are less affected by physical violence, and c) perhaps even participated in the perpetration of violent acts *are able to differentiate themselves from the image of “the Arabs as perpetrators of violence”*.

5.4.1 The migration course of a member of the “Arabs” from the River Nile region of Sudan

As already mentioned, differentiation between belonging to Sudan and belonging to Darfur was a relevant component in the interviews conducted in Germany. Interviewees who belonged to the “Arab” groupings tended, at least initially, to focus on their national Sudanese belonging rather than their regional belonging. They often did not mention their “Arab” belonging. However, their regional belonging appeared more prominently when they spoke about the prejudice they faced in interactions with members of other more established “Arab” groupings. The interview with **Ahmad Hassan** (born 1984), as I will call him, shows that a homogenized image of the “Arabs” does not correspond to how people who formerly belonged to the less established “Arab” groupings retrospectively interpret their socialization in Sudan. This case gives insights into how experiences along the migration course – in this case, increasingly alongside people from Eritrea – shapes how people present themselves, their families, and their we-groups in the present of the interview and in everyday situations. Ahmad was born in Teyrat, River Nile state, the region where other generations of his family lived before him. The relevance of this “regional” belonging is manifest in the decision of his mother, who lived in Khartoum with Ahmad’s father, to travel to their hometown to give birth to Ahmad, their ninth child. Ahmad and his family come from an “Arab” Rubatab family which he defines as “traditional”. As he explains, traditional in this context refers to their life in a place that is less urbanized compared to Khartoum, Sudan’s capital, where his family lived. Moreover, it refers to the way his parents turned to Salafism following the return to Sudan of one of his uncles after a period in Saudi Arabia. Today, as Mahadi Ahmed told me, the Rubatab are regarded as one of the main riverain “Arab” groups in Sudan. Despite this, in the literature the history of the Rubatab is connected with the subordination and enslavement of members of different groupings that led to differentiation processes – some of them on the linguistic level of spoken Arabic – among the “Arabs” (Ibrahim 1988: 227f.). Ahmad

did not refer to the collective history of the Rubatab when we visited him in Heilbronn, in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. The references to the past in his introduction of himself and his family mean “traditional”, which can be seen as a marker of difference, but which is difficult to grasp at first. He did not explicitly present himself as an “Arab”. This belonging was implicit in the interaction, which took place mainly in Arabic, with some English. Instead, he presented himself as someone who increasingly became aware of his family’s “Eritrean” origins and customs. Interestingly, Ahmad joined groups of Eritreans during his migration, and his establishment in Germany is due to his work as a translator in this diaspora community. Ahmad lived among Eritreans mainly while in Patras, Greece, where he learned to speak and read Tigre and Tigrinya, languages associated with the history of different ethnic groupings in Eritrea (and, with variations, also Ethiopia). Upon his arrival in Germany, Ahmad filed his asylum claim as someone who had escaped from Eritrea, and he lives and works mainly among a community of Eritreans. He did not mention the story presented in his asylum claim at any point of the interview. I heard about his asylum claim procedure during the time Mahadi and I spent with Ahmad and some of his friends in Heilbronn. Ahmad and Mahadi had met in Turkey during their very difficult and dangerous migration to the European Union in 2009. Ahmad invited us to his house in Heilbronn, and we stayed for the night. Mahadi and I conducted a biographical-narrative interview with Ahmad in his apartment. We had time to interact outside the context of the interview and to meet some of his friends. Some of them had been granted refugee status on the basis of their Eritrean background. Since Ahmad comes from a region of Sudan which is not associated with collective violence, he knew that his chances of being recognized as a refugee in Germany were lower than those of people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan that are associated by the German authorities with violent conflicts. However, Ahmad was granted refugee status on the basis of his being Eritrean. The German authorities sent him to Heilbronn, where other Eritreans lived. Living among Eritreans since his migration, Ahmad has increasingly begun to see the practices of his family in Sudan as an indicator of their “Eritrean” background, despite understanding themselves as “Arabs”. As he remembers it in the present, this happened while he was at school in Khartoum and was due to the way he spoke Arabic:

“I come from a very traditional family so they were born and grew in small villages. They used to be- they have a very traditional life. At some point they became traditionally religious, more religious (2) so I realized when I went to the kindergarten and school that I was different from the people so my school mates- I used to love the way I spoke Arabic- it was a different accent they used to, this was the language I talked to my family and relatives so this was like a turning point the time I realized I had to change my language and adapt and also my behavior to look like these peo-

ple” (Biographical-narrative interview, June 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

I interpret “these people” in the quotation as meaning the more established “Arabs” who lived in Khartoum, in a more urbanized context compared to the “small villages” where his relatives were born. Against the background of the Rubatab system of land ownership associated with “village people” (see Ibrahim 1988: 227), we can imagine that Ahmad’s family belonged to the “village people”. However, the decisive point in Ahmad’s quotation is his retrospective differentiation of his family as Arabic speakers – and here I assume also as “Arabs” – from other more established “Arabs”. To understand Ahmad’s presentation in the interview with myself and Mahadi, it is necessary to consider the power chances available to Ahmad, and how his contact with people who were not from Sudan along the migration course and in the diaspora led to reinterpretations of his familial belonging in the present. As Ahmad does not come from a region in Sudan which would facilitate his asylum claim in Germany, it was important for him to migrate alongside people from Eritrea. We can also assume that if he had migrated with members of the “Zurqa” from Darfur, he could easily be framed as a “riverain Arab” from the region of Khartoum. Thus, it was easier for Ahmad to migrate and claim asylum in Germany in close contact with a group of people from Eritrea. This led to his increasing involvement with groups of Eritreans, to the point that today he not only works as a Tigre and Tigrinya translator in Germany, despite Arabic being his mother tongue, but increasingly sees his familial history and traditions in the light of an “eritreanized” past.

The intertwining of language and changing belongings is a central component that explains the different power opportunities and the chances of migration available to members of different groupings in Sudan. I will show these differences in the case studies presented here, especially in the contrasting ways belongings are ascribed to members of different groupings depending on the way they speak, or do not speak, Arabic. These external ascriptions of belonging can lead to the perpetration of violent acts against certain groups, as I will show. In the case of Ahmad, despite the discrimination based on his accent, he and his family were not confronted with acts of violence while living in Sudan as far as we know. This is a significant difference from the other cases, especially those of the “Zurqa”, the “Africans”, and the “Arabs” who participated in opposition groups against the regime led by Umar al-Bashir. Ahmad’s migration chances were very different from those of Taha and Umar, who were both born and raised in Darfur. As I will show in the cases of Taha and Umar, “Arabs” and “Africans” from Darfur can face accent-based discrimination when speaking Arabic, especially upon moving to Khartoum. However, for almost all interviewees from “Arab” groupings, belonging to the we-ideal of “Sudan as a nation” did not appear to be an issue. I assume that the connection between their “Arab” belonging, the we-ideal of Sudan as an “Islamic” and “Arab” country, and their mother tongue is relatively uncon-

tested and taken for granted in their everyday lives, at least in Sudan and among other “Arabs” from Sudan in the diaspora. And that is so despite any prejudice they might have encountered in situations with more established “Arabs”. Moreover, Arabic and its variations are used in official documents and state bureaucracy, and is taught in schools in Sudan and other countries in the region. And it often has the power of becoming a lingua franca among certain communities of migrants living in Western Europe, too. Based on my interviews, it is possible to say that those who had Arabic as their mother tongue often experienced a more privileged migration course than those who could not speak Arabic, even in contrast with members of the “Arabs” from Darfur.¹³

5.4.2 The migration course of a member of the “Arabs” from Darfur

The case of Taha illustrates important dynamics shaping the migration courses through the Sahel to Western Europe of people who were born and raised as “Arabs” in Darfur, have Arabic as their mother tongue, and are often perceived as “Arabs” by other Sudanese.¹⁴ It shows that collective violence in Darfur affected members of different groupings and their families differently. This created very diverse constellations for migration in the region. Taha’s case also gives insights into how “Arabs” from Darfur can find themselves in positions along their migration courses in which members of more established groupings perceive and treat them as “Blacks” and/or “Africans”.¹⁵ Even if these positions often translate into experiences of racialized prejudice, they are often much more established and secure than the position of those who are not defined as “Arabs” in the dominant discourses in

¹³ The component of a predominant lingua franca and the privileges connected to migration are not exclusive to languages from outside the African continent. The use of Wolof – a lingua franca of some regions in Senegal – played a significant role in shaping the we- and self-presentations of many interviewees from Senegal (see ch. 3). Thus, I take early socialization in a language which has the status of a lingua franca in certain regions as a possible indicator of the establishment of migration courses. The role language plays in establishment in the diaspora – especially Arabic in Arabic-speaking communities in Western Europe – is clear in the case of Mohamed from Mauritania in France (see ch. 4).

¹⁴ It is important to refer to the discourse that “Arabs” from Darfur are not “Arabs” but rather “Africans” who self-define as “Arabs” (see Hassan/Ray 2009: 19). That is, Taha and his group could well be defined in certain contexts as “Africans” or even as “Zurqa” by people who belong to other groupings in Sudan. Taha himself was increasingly confronted with being regarded as “African” during his migration. However, even if he does so in our interview in Germany, he did not admit to belonging to the “Blacks”, for example.

¹⁵ “Black Africans”, “Africans”, and “Blacks” are emic terms used by several of the interviewees. Their use varied in the interviews, as well as by the same person in different interviews. My colleagues and I capitalize “Black” to stress its character as a social construct (see ch. 1). This is particularly relevant in the case of people who migrate from figurations in which these socially constructed they-images are used to perpetrate and/or justify different forms of violence against them. In the interviews, they often appear alongside references to “slave” (Arabic: *abd*), “the one with the black/brown skin” in Jordan (Arabic: *abu samra*), or a more homogenized (and often pejorative) reference to “the Fur” (Arabic: *furawi*). We also have to take into consideration that these terms have an enormous significance in the context of the history of slavery in Sudan (see Makris 1996; Madut Jok 2001; Sharkey 2008: 28; Vezzadini 2010; Hale 2012).

these figurations. As I will show, this shapes not only their power opportunities and their migration chances in Libya and Western Europe, but the form in which they present themselves and their we-groups in the present, and how they look back on their past and talk about migration. The main finding in my analysis of Taha's case is his refusal to talk about specific topics. Taha explicitly refused to talk about his family history and his concrete ethnic belonging. But for Mahadi, with whom I conducted the interview with Taha in March 2019, Taha's "Arab" and Darfurian belongings became evident during the interview, especially since Mahadi belongs to an "Arab" grouping from Sudan. When I asked Taha to tell us his life story and the history of his family, he instead offered to talk only about himself and his migration to Germany. He said he did not want to speak about his family. At first, Mahadi and I did not understand why Taha, in contrast to our other interviewees, refused to tell us his familial and collective histories. It took some time to understand the reasons for the tense atmosphere during the interview, and why he would cut off his contact with other Sudanese in the following years. Taha felt threatened because of his "Arab" background, as I will explain below.

Let us consider how we first established contact with Taha. Mahadi had met him around 2013 during a demonstration for the rights of migrants in Hamburg, Germany. Alongside German activists and migrants, especially West Africans and Darfurians, they protested, among other things, for a safer legal status for migrants in Germany.¹⁶ They remained in contact and Mahadi invited Taha to our interview in 2019 because he was one of those known in the community of activists in Hamburg as "the Lampedusa migrants". Like several other migrants living in Hamburg at that time, Taha had arrived on the island of Lampedusa, Italy, in May 2011, after living in Libya for some time. Against the background of popular protests and the rise in collective violence in Libya in the first months of 2011, more than 25,000 migrants from "Africa" arrived in Lampedusa in May 2011.¹⁷ Taha used the image of "we the African migrants" to present himself in our interview, and emphasized his political activities in Italy and Germany protesting for the rights of migrants living in the European Union. In this context, we can assume Taha increasingly adopted the image of "African" as his self-description, an image we can suppose he did not use in Sudan, and that this increased his power chances among activists in Germany. Also, all Sudanese ("Arab" or not) are most

¹⁶ TAZ, October 20, 2013. "Hoffnung in Berlin, Hilfe in Hamburg. Available at: <https://taz.de/!5056780/> [Accessed on January 4, 2022].

¹⁷ Reuters, May 6, 2011. "Hundreds more migrants reach Italy from Africa". Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-migrants/hundreds-more-migrants-reach-italy-from-africa-idUKTRE7451CN20110506> [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

At the time, the Libyan ambassador to Italy, Abdulhafed Gaddur, said about Mu'ammar Qadhafi, Libya's *de facto* leader: "Gaddafi was in charge. He led the illegal immigration. He said he wanted to make Lampedusa 'black', full of Africans" (translated from Italian by the author). The Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini accused Qadhafi of helping migrants to "flood" the European Union, too. Available in Italian at: https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2011/08/26/news/lampedusa_gheddafi-20902391/ [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

likely to be seen as “African” by people living in Western Europe, often ignorant about the internal differentiations between “the Sudanese” and “the Africans”.¹⁸ Thus, it can also be interpreted as the adoption of the they-image with which Taha is permanently confronted in Germany. We can also assume that Taha increasingly emphasized his “African” (and not his “Arab”) background because of the ethnicized discourse in the diaspora on the conflict in Darfur by members of the “African” and/or the “Zurqa” groupings, and their more established position in relation to the “Arabs” from Sudan in Germany in certain contexts. Members of the “Zurqa” from Darfur and “Africans” from other regions of Sudan who are scarred by collective violence have a higher chance of being recognized as refugees in Western Europe than “Arabs” from Sudan, because 1) they are represented as “victims” of collective violence in the dominant discourses, and 2) many of them experienced physical violence in their home regions. In the course of our contacts with Taha, and in the questioning period of the interview with him, it became clear that he felt threatened by any thematization of ethnic belonging, which he perceived as a politicized topic in this context. Taha gave an example of “the problem with tribes” (Arabic: *qabila*) in everyday conversations with his friends in Germany:

“I never discuss this on the street. For example, when I talk to my friends, I try not to personalize or mention the name of the tribe because if I did I would be personalizing one of my friends if he belongs to that tribe, and he might hate me [...] even on the street, when we talk politics, I say tribes in general, I don’t mention names [...] there was this guy who was talking and mentioned the name of a certain tribe, and someone from the same tribe stood up and said ‘no we did not do that’” (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

It is not possible to say whether Taha has experienced threats from other people among the communities from Darfur in Germany, but the above quotation indicates how contested ethnic belonging can be in the context of a more politicized interpretation of the topic. We can assume, for example, that in the diaspora his identifiable “Arab” and Darfurian belongings could result in accusations and speculations regarding his allegiance to the regime of Umar al-Bashir and/or local groupings of supporters.¹⁹ He might even have thought about the participation

¹⁸ The New York Times, March 15, 2022. “One from Sudan, one from Ukraine: Two refugees had vastly different experiences at the Polish border”. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/14/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-belarus.html> [Accessed on March 15, 2022].

¹⁹ For example, we know that some “Zurqa” who lived in Germany tried to kill our interviewee **Halid Hasan** (born in 1969 in the region of al-Gezira), who belongs to the Batahin “Arabs” from riverain Sudan, under the assumption he had collaborated with the government led by Umar al-Bashir. Halid, however, did not talk about this with us.

of members of his family and we-group, or their acquiescence in the perpetration of acts of violence in Darfur. These dynamics were a relevant component of Taha's lifeworld in Germany, as indicated at several points in his interview. For example, he explicitly distanced himself in his self- and we-presentations from a homogenized "Arab" grouping in Sudan. He differentiated between the "northern Arabs" (to which Mahadi partially belongs), the "riverain Arabs", and the "Arabs from Darfur". In this complex navigation of belongings, Taha distanced himself from the groupings backed by Bashir's central government, to whom, alongside the "rebel groups" in Darfur, he attributed blame for the problems in Darfur:

"It's correct that we blame the government for this- like 90% percent, but also the people, like, the people who held weapons against the government [...] I hate the government and at the same time I don't approve of the ideas of the opposition" (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

He continues by telling us his present view of what the different groups should work for in Sudan: "to build a country, a country without tribe." On the latent level, I interpret the pattern of argumentation that avoids talking in terms of "tribes" as a way of distancing himself, his family, and his we-group in Darfur from possible ascriptions of responsibility – be it by the German authorities, be it by other Darfurians – for the perpetration of violent acts, and/or for collaboration with the central government of Umar al-Bashir. Despite that, it was clear to Mahadi that he belonged to one of the "Arab" groupings in Darfur. We can safely assume that among the Sudanese in the diaspora, especially those from Darfur, Taha would be seen as "Arab", too. From the conversations we had with him, we cannot deduce the extent to which Taha, his family and his friends were involved in the perpetration of violence, and/or collaborated in acts of violence in Darfur. For Mahadi and myself, the question also arose of whether Taha was an informant to the government of Umar al-Bashir. This assumption gains plausibility if we consider the very established course of his migration, especially the possession of official papers from Sudan, as I will show below. For other Sudanese, there is obviously also a suspicion in the air of his allegiance to the "Arabs" of Darfur, the "perpetrators" in this context. And this elaborate and not harmless "biographic navigation" (see Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 2; Rosenthal 2021: 3f.) between different belongings and self-presentations is one of the reasons why he eventually cut off his contact with other Sudanese in the diaspora. Taking a look at the context of his birth may help to explain how it came about that someone who belongs to the "Arabs" from Darfur presents himself in the diaspora in Germany with the image of "we the migrants from Africa", at the same time avoiding the risk of talking in ethnic terms, or of telling his family history.

Taha's birth in 1985 in al-Geneina (Darfur) and the drought of 1983–1984 in Dar Masalit (Darfur-Chad). Taha was born in Geneina (Western Darfur, Chadian border) in 1985 to an Arabic-speaking Muslim family in a mainly Masalit (“Zurqa”) town. It is not clear to which grouping Taha and his family belonged. Based on Mahadi's tacit knowledge, we can assume, as I have already explained, that they belonged to an “Arab” grouping from Darfur, such as the northern Riza-yqat or the Bani Husayn. Taha's family settled in Geneina in previous generations and one of his uncles lived in Libya. He indicated the relevance of the distinction between nomads (pastoralists) and settled groups in the region: “like of course problems at the beginning were between shepherds and farmers”. We do not know how many siblings Taha had, nor whether his father had other wives. However, we know that Taha had at least two other brothers. Taha and his family spoke Arabic at home, and they often traveled to Khartoum, Sudan's capital. Even if Taha presented his family as “very poor”, his childhood in Geneina suggests the opposite. In 1983 and 1984, a very severe drought affected the border region between Chad and Darfur (see Behrends 2008: 44ff.). This led to famine and many families had to leave this region in the following years. Population pressure and food insecurity affected Geneina, an important town on the route connecting Chad and Khartoum (see de Waal 1989a; 1989b). However, it seems that Taha's family was not directly affected by this event. Despite the fact that his family lived in a mainly Masalit area, they managed to establish themselves in a relatively “secure” position in Geneina.

The rise of Umar al-Bashir to power in 1989 and changing attitudes toward ethnic belonging in Darfur (1989–2006). Power imbalances in the region were transformed significantly in the late 1980s (see Behrends 2008: 44ff.), when Taha was between two and five years old. Umar al-Bashir rose to power in Khartoum in 1989 through a military coup. Musa Hilal, one of the main leaders of the Um Jalul branch of the Mahamid-Rizhaygat “Arabs”, became increasingly powerful in Darfur (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 35ff.). The ethnicized public discourses gained relevance in everyday life, and once again an official agenda of “Islamization” was set for Sudan (see Young *et al.* 2009: ch. 3, 51f.). For Taha's life course, this meant he grew up in a context in which Islamic education in Darfur became a priority for the self-defined “Arab” government in Khartoum. He had schoolmates from different ethnicities, and he told us they used to make jokes about ethnic belonging in his early school years. However, with the increase in ethnicized tensions in the region, they avoided the topic when they were in high school. In other words, he started to taboo his ethnic belonging already during his childhood. During the late 1990s and early 2000s when Taha was around 15 years old, there were increasing tensions and conflicts between “the Arabs” and the Masalit where Taha and his family lived (see Behrends 2008: 47ff.; Flint/de Waal 2008: 58ff.). Bashir's government allied with certain “Arab” groups, and some Masalit “espoused a radical anti-Arab agenda” (Flint/de Waal 2008: 59). The conflicts between Masalit and

“Arab” pastoralists escalated, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency, while both groups became armed and trained militia groups (Young *et al.* 2005: 164). These militias were composed especially of “the Arabs”, to which Taha and his family possibly belong to. Against this background, Taha finished high school, a significant achievement in this context, and started to work in different jobs. His maternal uncle offered him a job in his supermarket. The relatively established position of Taha and his family is clear from the quotation below, which shows how the deterioration of livelihoods affected people from the countryside, in contrast to his family:

“I didn’t suffer like them, because I’m in the center of the city. I mean I’m not living in the villages. I’m in the city, but all the people have suffered from wars. Like, they left, for example- like, not from my family- but a lot of people has suffered, like our neighbors. They had their families living in the villages, who had to leave” (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masi).

The more established and safer position of Taha’s family in a context of increasing collective violence translated into a focus on the lack of job opportunities during this period in Geneina: “The problems made it much worse, because all people around the city- for example, the West went to the city. There were no job opportunities.” Taha and his family experienced the conflict at this point mainly as a lack of labor, with economic deterioration of the family’s situation. Against this background, in 2005, Taha, then 20 years old, traveled back and forth between Geneina and Khartoum. He told us he bought used telephones in the capital to sell in Geneina. At the end of 2006, Taha moved from Geneina to El Fasher, the regional capital of Northern Darfur, then controlled by “Arab” groupings from Darfur, as he told us. In the following weeks, he migrated to Libya through the desert on the back of a pick-up truck with other migrants, a very dangerous route used by other people from Darfur, especially “Arabs”, during this period (see Young *et al.* 2009: 64f.). Taha mentioned that people died during this journey, but it is not clear whether he witnessed dead bodies along the route, nor whether he received support from his family for the trip. He told us that his uncle in Libya did not help, nor did he have contact with him. They traveled through Mellit and Kufra and reached Tripoli.

Relative establishment in Libya (2006–2011). In Tripoli, Libya’s capital, Taha worked as a cleaner in a supermarket. He had other jobs, too, such as in a car shop. He had acquaintances from Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Somalia, but not from Libya. Eventually, his main source of income was from jobs obtained by offering his labor in a public space, a sort of square. During this period, Taha earned enough to help his family in Darfur with money: “actually my family does not depend on me, but

I do this out of conscience.” The fact that he could send money to his relatives contributed to his feelings of satisfaction during this period: “I liked the situation in Libya [...] finding a better life and helping my family.” Another significant aspect of Taha’s establishment in Libya was his legalized status. He visited the Sudanese embassy and, as he tells, was given a passport with a 6-months visa, a clear indication he was not perceived by the embassy staff as a threat to the regime of Umar al-Bashir. Despite this relatively privileged financial and legal position in Tripoli, Taha focused in his presentation on his marginalized condition as an “African” in relation to “the Libyans”:

“People avoid the police for a reason. 90% or 80% of Sudanese came to Libya illegally, like they don’t have passports [...] not only Sudanese, all of us all of the Africans, like the foreigners that live in Libya, they also came illegally, and that’s why they are trying to avoid everything that involves the police” (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

Taha’s legalized status in Tripoli and his access to the Sudanese embassy put him in a more established position than many other migrants, especially those from Darfur. Nonetheless, his outsider position in relation to “the Libyans” was undeniable. For example, Libyan police officers arrested Taha and his friends and asked for a ransom. Taha presents his experiences in Libya as “close to slavery”:

“When we were in Libya it was also close to slavery, too. For example, like you work until your payment is over. That was also like slavery for me, like you have a work for a week, you get paid for 4 days, and the other 3 days you don’t [...] it happened to me and to a lot of people I know [...] all Africans that came from Africa are suffering from the same thing from Libyans like the curses of a Black people and such. We call it racism” (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

In this quotation, he expands his belonging to a we-group of “all Africans that came from Africa”, and thus excludes “the North Africans”. In doing so, he avoids pointing out that he talks from a much more empowered position than other people who had similar experiences but who belonged to groupings that are not perceived as “Arabs”, such as the “Zurqa”. That he can talk of “racism” here indicates a significant level of empowerment, and socialization in a we-group whose members interpret such experiences as violations of their rights. This does not change the fact that members of such a relatively established grouping experienced discrimination in Libya. The general experiences of “the Africans” in Libya, referred to in the quotation above, show the situation with which “Arabs” from Darfur, such as Taha, are confronted when they migrate to so-called “Arab” countries, where they

are defined as “Blacks” and/or “Africans” in interactions with members of established local groupings. Thus, we can say that Taha was able to establish himself in financial terms after he left Darfur, but was increasingly perceived and treated by others as a “Black African”. More importantly, while the they-image of Taha as a “Black African” had negative aspects, as he emphasized in his we- and self-presentation, this extended “we” also increased his power chances. He was aware of the *collective uses* a broader we-image as “African” can have in different contexts in Germany.

Changing power balances in Libya and migration to Italy (2011). The overall situation in Libya deteriorated in February 2011 amid uprisings in other countries in the region. Violent protests broke out in Benghazi between groups opposed to Qadhafi’s rule and pro-Qadhafi forces, and spread to other cities. During this period, several of Taha’s friends moved to the Shousha refugee camp established in Tunisia (close to the Libyan border) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As he told us, this route became blocked after some cities fell into the hands of opposition forces. During this period, the Sudanese embassy in Tripoli offered support to Sudanese citizens willing to return to Sudan. Taha visited the embassy several times, but remained in Tripoli. He told us that after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces bombed Tripoli, Qadhafi made a speech on television stating that people would be allowed to migrate freely – without control by the Libyan Coast Guard – across the Mediterranean Sea. Taha told us Qadhafi’s speech was a turning point for him, and he decided to leave Libya after around five years there. He was aware of the ways smugglers and the Libyan police treated migrants, and avoided putting himself in such a position. After Qadhafi’s speech, Taha witnessed government officials in the streets openly asking people if they wanted to board a boat to Europe. In this context, Taha, then 26 years old, paid a small amount of money, as he told us, to government officials and boarded a ship to Italy in May 2011. This took place only three months after the escalation of violence in Tripoli. He said it was a relatively big ship with around 760 people from different countries, such as Tunisia, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, and Bangladesh. The following quotation from Taha’s interview shows how the risks attached to migrating on a boat across the Mediterranean had changed for members of different groupings in Libya:

“Back in the day, the people used to travel illegally without the state knowing, and the police would meet them on the way- the Libyan police and let them go back from where they came. But here you are traveling with the police, when we were on the move, two boats came with us for almost half an hour on the way, and then they went back [...] the only reason that we were not afraid is because we traveled with the help of the state. Before, people traveled and didn’t trust the smugglers, and secondly you could be able to go, but the police would make you go back and pay money” (Biographical-

narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed; translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

Today, Taha knows that he crossed the Mediterranean in a safer position than many others. Alongside other migrants, he arrived on the island of Lampedusa, Italy, in May 2011. They were received in a migration center and registered. In a matter of days, they were transferred to continental Italy and allocated to a small town in the region of Campania under the care of Caritas, a Catholic organization. Taha was among Sudanese, Somalis, Eritreans, and Tunisians. According to him, they organized themselves and started a series of protests and hunger strikes to improve their legal and housing situation. Eventually, the UNHCR intervened and Italian authorities relocated them separately to different towns. They were allowed to stay in temporary refugee centers. According to Taha, when they received papers that gave them a legalized status in the European Union, they were no longer entitled to stay in refugee centers. He told us the Italian authorities gave them 500 Euros and evicted them from the place where they lived.

Activism and relative establishment in Germany (2013–present). Taha migrated to Germany legally, as he had the appropriate documents, around December 2013. He had no acquaintances in the country. He went to Hamburg, where he received support from activists and other migrants who organized demonstrations at St. Pauli Church. The migrants living there were portrayed in German media as “Africans”, especially West Africans who had lived in Libya.²⁰ They became known as “the Lampedusa migrants/refugees” (German: *Lampedusa MigrantInnen/Flüchtlinge/Geflüchtete*) and gained widespread media and academic attention in Germany (see Niess 2018: 17f.). During protests organized by these groups in Hamburg, Taha met Mahadi Ahmed. At that period, Taha lived with three Sudanese roommates, two Fur and one Zaghawa, and attended events where the conflict in Darfur was discussed by activists. That is, we can assume that for the first time after leaving Sudan, he was exposed to the discourse that blames the actions of “the Arabs” in his home region. In this context, he started to drink heavily and to spend money in betting houses. In 2014, when the German authorities negotiated the end of the protests by migrants living in Hamburg, Taha arranged his situation individually with the neighborhood administration and a religious institution. He was provided with accommodation, was granted permission to stay in Germany for three years (German: *Aufenthaltsurlaubnis*), as he had already obtained a legalized status in Italy, and was told to attend an integration course. This was in clear contrast to the situation of other “migrants from Lampedusa”. Many of them had their asylum claims rejected by the German

²⁰ For details, see the interview with Ahmad Ali, a Daju from Darfur who is nowadays a migration activist and member of the “Lampedusa in Hamburg”. Available in German at: <http://www.schattenblick.de/infopool/politik/report/prin0309.html> [Accessed on January 4, 2022].

authorities and were deported, or stayed in Germany with an *illegalized* status.²¹ As of 2019, when I conducted the interview with Taha, then 34 years old, he was doing a training course (German: *Ausbildung*) and received a monthly allowance from the local government. When I asked him if he sent money to his family, he answered they did not need it.²² I asked if he planned to marry and he said he was single and happy. As of 2021, Taha finished his training course and was employed by a company in Germany, presumably with a formal contract. He had cut off his contact with other Sudanese we knew, and stopped going to the betting house where he was regularly seen.

Summary. The migration course of Taha, and his establishment in Germany through his initial participation in a group of activists, illustrates the increasing use in Western Europe of a *politicized* we-image as “African” by a member of the “Arab” groupings from Darfur. This enables him to distance himself and his we-group from accusations of perpetrating acts of violence in his home region, and at the same time increased his power chances by gaining refugee status in Germany. His experiences and those of his family in Darfur show, however, that violent acts did not directly affect him and his family in the same way as their neighbors, for example. In the present, Taha explains his migration from Darfur to Libya as being due to the “lack of jobs”. His experiences in Libya show access to privileged information due to his knowledge of Arabic, which shaped his safe migration across the Mediterranean to Italy. However, his knowledge of Arabic did not prevent discrimination based on not being recognized as “Arab” in the figuration with “the Libyans”. And in the present, it is clear that, even if some members of “Arabs” from Darfur actively seek to distance themselves from “the perpetrators” of acts of violence by presenting themselves as “Africans” in Germany, suspicion, speculation, and confrontation with this image remain a central component of their everyday life in the diaspora. This negatively affects group cohesion and contact with fellow Darfurians and Sudanese living in Germany.

5.4.3 The migration course of a member of the “Zurqa” from Darfur

Changing self- and we-presentations in context. The privilege of being a native speaker of Arabic, and relatively unquestioned belonging to a we-ideal of “Sudan as an Arab nation”, did not apply to our “Zurqa” interviewees. Here, the case of

²¹ Hamburger Abendblatt, July 28, 2016. “Was wurde aus den Lampedusa-Flüchtlingen?”. Available in German at: <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article207956031/Was-wurde-aus-den-Lampedusa-Fluechtlingen.html> [Accessed on January 4, 2022].

²² As of April 2021, a series of conflicts between “Arab” groups and “Zurqa” Masalit continued to take place in Geneina. See The Washington Post, April 20, 2021. “Massacres threaten to engulf Darfur, where revenge has substituted for justice”. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/20/darfur-sudan-massacres/> [Accessed on January 4, 2022]. We have no information if Taha’s family was directly affected by this conflict but it indicates the contentious character ethnic belongings still have in some contexts in Taha’s hometown.

Umar Yayia (born 1996), whose mother tongue is Daju and who learned Arabic at the age of 17, can be seen as typical. It helps us to understand how linguistic belonging is intertwined with ethnicized we- and they-images in the presentation of experiences of collective violence and the different migration chances available to members of different groupings. A detailed presentation of the case of Umar will serve to exemplify the challenges we are confronted with when evaluating autobiographical sources. This case also shows the challenges we face if we do not want to simply retell stories (the presented life story) and present them as a reflection of reality (see Rosenthal 1993b, 1994, 2013). Here, I will show how a member of “the Zurqa”, a Daju, talks in the present about his experiences of collective violence, and how, in his initial presentation and from one interview to another, his use of ethnicized we- and they-images changes in argumentation patterns concerning a conflict between “the Arabs” and “the Africans”. In 2018 and 2019, I conducted three interviews alone with Umar in Kassel, a city in northern Hesse, Germany, where other people from Darfur live. I conducted the first interview in November 2018, when the regime led by Umar al-Bashir in Sudan seemed to be as established as it had been in the previous three decades, and almost one year after Umar Yayia had moved from France to Germany after threats of deportation. In his initial presentation, the first part of the interview, in answer to a biographical and narrative question (see Rosenthal 2018: 134f.), Umar mainly used an argumentative pattern of ethnicized conflict in the Darfur, his region of origin. He spoke about his Daju belonging only when I asked about it. In this initial presentation, Umar did not mention important experiences during his migration that contradict the dominant discourse of a conflict between “the Janjawiid” and “the Arabs”, on the one hand, and “the Africans”, on the other. In contrast to other “Zurqa” interviewees whose mother tongue is Arabic or who learned this language at an early age, Umar did not use the term “Zurqa” to refer to his broader we-group, but rather the French and German terms for “Africans” (French: *Africains*; German: *Afrikaner*). He presented his migration as an escape from accusations of religious conversion against himself and his family members by the police and neighbors in their hometown. He presented this conflict against the background of the overall “problem” (Arabic: *mushqila*) that “the Arabs” and “the Janjawiid” had created with the “people of Darfur”. In other words, he uses “Arabs” and “Janjawiid” interchangeably, and at the same time he excludes them from belonging to the “people of Darfur”. There was no mention of the fact that the neighbors who attacked his family in the context which led to his escape from Sudan belonged – like he did – to “Zurqa” groupings. Similarly, Umar did not mention his tortuous migration through the desert from Egypt to Israel, his deportation from Israel, his forced work in a prison in Sudan, and his escape through Niger, where he was forced to look for gold, before reaching Libya and experiencing three failed attempts to cross by boat to Italy. During our first two encounters, totaling more than seven hours, Umar never mentioned the family disputes over inheritance in his familial constellation. A reference to these disputes appeared only in our last

interview in February 2019. Even though the interviews were conducted within a period of less than three months and by the same person, they show transformations in the we- and they-images he uses, and – parallel to my own development – an increasing orientation towards German language and society. In the first two interviews, Umar spoke mainly in French, which I interpret as a sign of linguistic orientation toward the period he spent in France from December 2016 until his migration to Germany in October 2017. We did the last interview in German at his request, something I interpret as a step forward in the process of establishing himself in Germany. In the last interview, Umar presented a more nuanced image of the conflicts in Darfur, and his belonging to a Daju we-group in Sudan was more prominent, as I was able to ask more informed questions about it. During this time, public demonstrations against Bashir's regime in Sudan had gained momentum, and Umar spoke about his phantasies regarding the position of his father as a "rebel" who fought against the regime. This last interview took place in his apartment, to which he had recently moved. I kept in contact with Umar at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and am still in contact with him at the time of writing.

I interpret the way Umar speaks about a conflict between "the Africans" and "the Arabs", and the changes in his we- and self-presentation, as reflecting his involvement in we-groups and groupings of "Africans" he would also define as "Blacks" while living in Western Europe. In other words, his retrospective view of his individual and collective history acquires a collective function in the present among the we-groups he has been part of in France and Germany. These we-groups consist of people from different regions of West and East Africa, all of whom Umar refers to as "Blacks" and "Africans". It is clear that they are not "the Zurqa", for example, but Umar embeds his belonging to the Daju of Darfur in the broader we-grouping of "Black Africans" he lives with in Western Europe. And by doing so, he excludes all "Arabs" from Darfur and other regions of Sudan from this grouping. I will show how the patterns of interpretation in these groups in the diaspora have the power to shape the way Umar looks back at his life and the collective situation in his home region, or the patterns of argumentation he uses in the present when he looks back at his familial and collective histories. In the light of my analysis of other interviews with people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan, it is clear that these different patterns of argumentation, and the discord between we- and they-images used by members of different groupings, is an expression of their socialization in different we-groups before migrating, as well as in the diaspora. To understand these changes in the present, I will situate these we- and they-images *biographically* to explain how they were formed and became transformed on the level of his *experienced life history*. By this I mean how he came to understand himself and his family as belonging to the "African" Daju, and which experiences in the past he connects this with, from his present perspective as someone who belongs to a (broader) group of "Black Africans" in Western Europe.

Umar's birth and life until his work in the gold mines of Jabal Amir, Darfur (1996–2014). I summarize this period of Umar's life as growing up without a father in the context of escalating collective violence, and stepping into the position of oldest male member of the household. This brought familial conflicts that intertwine with his migration to the region of Jabal Amir, where he experienced an outsider position in the figuration with "the Arabs" in Darfur.

Umar was born in 1996 as the first son of his mother, his father's second wife. His father was first married to another woman with whom he had a son. Umar lived with his mother and maternal grandmother in Um Shalaya, a city in Darfur, where his father owned a house. His father also had an apartment in Zanglei, a regional capital situated around 100 kilometers from Um Shalaya. This relatively established position of the family in Darfur has to be seen against the background of the career of Umar's father in the Armed Forces of Sudan, and the history of Umar's paternal family, as transmitted to him. During the 1970s and 1980s, Umar's paternal grandfather worked in an Italian company in Libya. At that time, Libya had an attractive economy and was a popular destination for migrants (see Hamood 2006: 17ff.; Tonah/Codjoe 2020). This more established condition on the paternal side is one of the main components that led to the academic accomplishments of Umar's father, who lived and studied in Egypt for around ten years. During this period, he learned Arabic. According to Umar, after returning to Sudan, his father became a sergeant and a general in the Armed Forces of Sudan under the government of Umar al-Bashir. Umar says that his father also traveled to Germany and Turkey at some point in his career. Umar's father married two other women, who lived in the same family house in Um Shalaya. All his wives were Daju, but Umar's mother belonged to the same Daju family as Umar's father. Both his maternal and paternal families had lived in the region of Um Shalaya for at least two generations. Daju was presumably their mother tongue, while Arabic was spoken only in his paternal family (we can suppose Umar's father learned it in Egypt and his grandfather in Libya). There are different groups of Daju across Darfur and Chad. The literature and other interviewees portray them as "ancestors" who were there before the arrival of groups of Muslims, Arabs, or even Fur, in the region that is currently known as Darfur (see O'Fahey/Spaulding 2017[1974]: 108ff.; Mamdani 2009: 80f.). Colonial sources and oral histories portray the Daju as a powerful group established in the region of Dar Daju, currently Darfur (see Macintosh 1931; O'Fahey/Spaulding 2017[1974]: 108ff.). Against this background, we can say that Umar's family was relatively well established in the figuration with other groupings in Darfur, and had a transnational history of migration to Arabic-speaking regions, at least in the generations of his father and grandfather. This relative establishment in the region can be seen in the trips through Darfur that Umar undertook with his father during his childhood. They visited places that are significant for the collective memory of the Daju in Darfur, such as the city of Nyala, regarded as the capital of the group, and the region of Jabal Um Khurdus. Despite these trips in Darfur, Umar's father never took him to Khartoum or other

parts of Sudan. This suggests an orientation in the paternal family towards Darfur and the history of the Daju, while at the same time having a knowledge of Arabic. Umar's mother and maternal grandmother grew up in Darfur, spoke Daju and some Tama,²³ but very little Arabic.

In his early childhood, Umar lived with his mother and grandmother (with the exception of the brief period when his mother had a conflict with his father, moved out of his house without the right to take Umar with her, and then became reconciled with the help of their families), and his father, who sporadically spent some time with them. Umar and his mother lived on a separate floor in a building owned by his father. His father's other wives and children lived on the other floors. We can assume that Umar's education and upbringing was mainly oriented toward his maternal family in their everyday life in Um Shalaya. Somewhere between 1997 and 2003, his parents had a second child, who died of complications soon after birth. In 2000, when Umar was 4 years old, Khalil Ibrahim, a former Ministry of Education from Darfur, founded the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of the main armed opposition groups in Darfur, the members of which were mainly Zaghawa. The creation of these groups took place soon after, or concomitantly with, the publication of the two volumes of the "Black Book" in May 2000 and August 2002. This book, among other reasons, gave rise to a public discourse on the "neglect of Darfur" by the government in Khartoum (see El-Tom 2003; Saeed Takana 2016: 7; Sørbo 2018: 28). Around 2002, when Umar was 6 years old, he attended a Quranic school for a period. Umar indicated that the Quranic school and Arabic were important to his father, but his mother did not think it was important to learn Arabic. Against this background, I assume the interruption of Umar's studies is connected to the overall escalation of tensions in Sudan and the increasing anti-"Arab" (and Arabic) sentiments at that time in Darfur (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 59). From his present perspective, Umar looks back at this period of his life and interprets the absence of his father as meaning that he was a "rebel" at the JEM:

"I was 10 years: and I think- no, 5 years 7 years it's, my father he was, my father [...] he was a rebel too [...] they call Dr. Khalil, they studied together too [...] my father, always (1) always he left, it's been, maybe 6 months 8 months he just came to our house there, you see, left with those military and rebel people. One week he's going to come, he was visiting us (1) [...] he's going to come to town, he's afraid" (First follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

²³ Tama is the language spoken by different Tama groups spread across the Dar Tama region in Chad and in Saraf Omra and Kabkabiya in Darfur (see Darfuriian Voices 2010: 25). These cities are relatively close to Um Shalaya, where Umar's family had settled. In Chad, the Tama had different conflicts with the Zaghawa and played a significant role in the civil war (see Tubiana 2008: 28ff.).

The quotation gives us some idea how Umar came to explain the absence of his father during his childhood in a context of escalation of violence. In the quotation, Umar suggests his father feared going outside their house while visiting them. This could indeed be connected with his activities as a “rebel” but might also be due to other reasons Umar is not aware of. In the absence of his father, Umar increasingly stepped into the role of male companion to his mother and his grandmother when they left the house. Especially with the birth of his other siblings approximately in about 2000 and 2002, Umar’s role in the family would increasingly be that of the oldest brother and male companion, especially so that his mother could raise the children. He would accompany his mother when she went to fetch water, for example, or to the market. Based on his present orientation, these activities indicate a context of vulnerability for women and children, whom he imagined groups from outside Um Shalaya could kidnap or kill. Even if he explicitly refers to fear of their kidnapping and murder, we can assume that he himself was afraid he would be the target of these attacks. He says about his mother:

“She can’t go alone, she must go with ah one or two person or three person because she=if- she is a woman if she goes alone [...] then these- take all women that go outside the city, they do everything they want, that is the problem, that is why we have fear from our mother or our eh sister or so. If you are two persons at home and big men, you go- one person goes, one person stays at home. And then one helps the women where they want to go. Want to go to the supermarket or so, you have to go with them, together (2) That is why I was with my mother” (Second follow-up interview, February 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from German by the author).

We cannot say to what extent Umar was *de facto* a sort of “guardian” for the other family members in the absence of his father, or whether this corresponds only to his present perspective and feelings of guilt for leaving his family of origin behind when he migrated. At the same time, it is clear that women and children – as well as men – could be harmed in the region of Darfur where Umar and his family lived during this period. We can say that Umar was in a position of increasing responsibility due to his age and a gendered perception of his role in the family and in this *milieu*. Even if he did not talk about this, we can assume this position came with phantasies and uncertainty regarding what could happen to him or his family if he “failed” to protect them. Especially after 2003 and 2004, when Umar was 8 years old, conflicts in the region escalated significantly (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 116ff.). His father sporadically visited the family and his paternal and maternal uncles lived in the United Arab Emirates and Canada. Umar mentions that attacks from “the Janjawiid” took place in Um Shalaya during this period, which he presented as “small wars” (German: *kleine Kriege*). As Umar himself puts it, he was too young to remember the details of these attacks, but in the

quotation below he describes the stories told by his parents about this period as “believable” for him. In other words, from his present perspective, “the Janjawiid” and “the Arabs” appear as “the perpetrators” of violent acts against his family and we-group in their hometown.

“I have seen, but this eh eh I don’t know this- what happened- problem- this first war or so then I was a bit small [...] many people this- they died or so eh since I eh I have asked my father so, m- my mother also has explained [...] very sad this story [...] I believe everything my father says” (Second follow-up interview, February 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from German by the author).

Umar’s father remained mostly absent from the everyday life of the family in Um Shalaya in the next years. In 2008, when Umar was 12 years old, he lived with his mother, grandmother, and four younger siblings, two girls and two boys. At some point – it is unclear to Umar precisely when this happened – his father stopped visiting or contacting them. According to Umar, the family did not face financial difficulties in the absence of the main economic “provider”, because his father had left money in the bank and other kinds of property. Umar has several phantasies regarding his father’s disappearance, all of them embedded in the overall conflict in Sudan. One of his phantasies is that his father died in a “big war” in Khartoum in 2007 or 2008 – he is not sure. Indeed, the forces of the JEM carried out a series of attacks in Khartoum and Omdurman in May 2008.²⁴ After these attacks, several JEM members were captured and killed by government forces. However, it is not possible to say with certainty whether Umar’s father participated in these attacks, died in combat, or was murdered by government forces. We know that after this period he no longer had regular contact with his family in Um Shalaya, and Umar had to live without knowing whether his father would ever return home. In this context, it is not difficult to imagine that Umar’s family would expect him to become the family provider, especially if we consider his uncles lived abroad and were not able to take care of them directly in Um Shalaya. When I asked him during our last meeting if the uncles offered support when his father disappeared, Umar answered: “we have everything, we do not need anything like help [...] we don’t need money or so.” Around 2010, when Umar was 14 years old, he says that there was a series of attacks by “the Janjawiid” and “the Arabs” on the property of his family in Um Shalaya in the absence of his father. However, it is not clear whether there was a significative deterioration of the financial situation of the family in this context. We know his mother kept taking care of the children and Umar helped her. Umar presents this period of his life as financially comfortable, as he believed his family had money. Only during our last meeting did Umar

²⁴ The New York Times, August 17, 2008. “Sudan Sentences 8 Rebels to Death for Khartoum Raid”. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/world/africa/18sudan.html> [Accessed on February 15, 2022].

speak for the first time about a dispute inside his familial constellation over the way he used the money left by his father. He described a situation in which he went with his “girlfriend” (German: *Freundin*) to a celebration during the visit of an Iman to Um Shalaya. As he puts it, he offered a high amount of money as a sort of “tribute” to the Iman. He explains the logic behind his behavior, presented retrospectively as due to being a “child” (German: *Kind*) back then:

“When you have money- I have=have money he has money and we go to- there is an Iman comes singing or something when you come when you- he=he=he gives a bit of money yes he gives a bit of money- you have to say ‘shit he gave’- I had to give more, then people say I have lots of money” (Second follow-up interview, February 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from German by the author).

I interpret the argumentative pattern in this quotation as a form of socioeconomic and religious differentiation, meaning that people give money publicly to the Iman to show off their power. If we consider the burdening position of Umar in his familial constellation at this time, we might regard this act as a way of showing a potential spouse and her family members that he could afford a wedding and the establishment of a family of procreation. However, it becomes clear that not everyone in Umar’s family agreed with his attitude. Different members of his family of origin had different perceptions regarding who was entitled to use the money from Umar’s father. This conflict shows the intertwining between a more or less individual attitude to spending money, the mobilization of different factions within the extended family to control this attitude, and how Umar seeks to increase his power chances in this constellation. Umar’s uncle in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, called him to remind him the money also belonged to his other siblings. Against this background, Umar explains his migration to work in the gold mines in Jabal Amir, northern Darfur, in 2012: “I was a bit angry [...] now I don’t need my father’s money or the other money, I want to look for my money alone- that’s what I got in Jabal Amir.” This pattern of argumentation, a present perspective focused on disputes within the familial constellation, has components that explain Umar’s migration from Um Shalaya to Jabal Amir, which were absent from the previous interviews. In our first meetings, Umar presented his migration to Jabal Amir as being embedded in the conflict between “the Africans” and “the Arabs”. Only at our third meeting did he speak more openly about the family dispute.

Thus, against the background of disputes within the familial constellation over the money left by Umar’s father, he migrated to work in the gold mines in Jabal Amir in 2012. While in Jabal Amir, Umar had contact with people outside his Daju-speaking we-group, especially with Arabic speakers who belonged to other “Zurqa” groupings. This shows that even migration within Darfur makes very different power chances available to members of different groupings. The dispute

over the access to the gold mines in Jabal Amir has led to conflicts between different “Arab” groupings, especially the Bani Husayn and the Rizayqat, some of them supported by forces from Khartoum.²⁵ Many migrants, mainly young adults, have moved to the region in the past decade in what is referred to in the literature as one of the main “gold rushes” in the region (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 46f.). In this context, Umar was in regular contact with non-“Arab” and “Arab” groupings outside his hometown. In 2012 and 2013, Umar, then with around 17 years, moved between Um Shalaya and Jabal Amir to work. He used his motorcycle, and sometimes his car, to travel to the region. He explained how the activities in the gold mines worked: Umar formed a group mainly with other Daju speakers, around 5 or 6 men, who helped each other in the mines. The work in the gold mines can be dangerous. Not only did Umar lose friends there, but bigger incidents happened during this period, not necessarily connected to collective violence.²⁶ Umar says that during a first period in Jabal Amir, he and his group were able to make decent profits from the gold, even though they were forced to share them with those who controlled the mines. However, when disputes over the control of access to the gold mines escalated between two of the main “Arab” groups from Darfur, problems increased for Umar and his team: “you speak your mother tongue, they say that you must speak only Arabic, but I’m not Arab.” According to Umar and other sources,²⁷ during this period there were several conflicts over control of the gold mines in the region. Umar presented these conflicts as being between two so-called “Arab” “tribes” from Darfur, the Bani Husayn and the Rizayqat. These power disputes led to explicit control over who belonged to each group or, as Umar puts it, “teamer”²⁸. These explicit definitions of belonging determined who was allowed to work in one place or another, and even who should be killed. According to Umar, these differentiations relied especially on linguistic belonging, because, as he puts it, “all look the same in Darfur”. From his present perspective, he defines all of them as “Black Africans”. Umar was captured, robbed, and held hostage at different times by groups controlling the region

²⁵ See: Reuters, October 8, 2013. “Special Report: Darfur’s deadly gold rush.” Available at: <https://graphics.thomsonreuters.com/13/10/DAFUR-GOLD.pdf> [Accessed on December 9, 2021]; Enough Project/Satellite Sentinel Project, May, 2013. “Darfur’s gold rush.” Available at: http://enoughproject.org/files/Darfur_Gold_Rush.pdf [Accessed on December 9, 2021]; Reuters, October 8, 2013. “Special Report: The Darfur conflict’s deadly gold rush”. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-darfur-gold-idUSBRE99707G20131008> [Accessed on December 9, 2021].

²⁶ BBC, May 4, 2013. “Sudan Jebel Amir gold mine collapse rescue called off”. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22412407> [Accessed on December 9, 2021].

²⁷ Enough Project/Satellite Sentinel Project, May, 2013. “Darfur’s gold rush.” Available at: http://enoughproject.org/files/Darfur_Gold_Rush.pdf [Accessed on December 9, 2021].

²⁸ I interpret “teamer” as “team”. At several points of the interviews, Umar used “teamer” to refer to his own ethnic group, the Daju. I use this emic term in my work because it expresses the quality of a group of people who believe in a similar goal and who come together and act alongside each other to reach a common goal. As I will show, the migration courses through the Sahel and the Sinai rely on “teams” and are not an individual effort for those whose power chances are lower (see Ben-Ze’ev/Gazit 2020: 11).

of Jabal Amir. Often, his release was negotiated with members of his team, who would pay ransom. These networks of support played an important role for Umar during this period. Even if they were often based on linguistic belonging, there were situations that included speakers of other languages, too. An example is the way Umar met Djon, a man from Jabal Nuba whom he says spoke Nuer. It is not clear if Djon in fact spoke Nuer or another language associated with the groupings living in Jabal Nuba, but Umar explained that they were able to understand each other, despite the fact that Umar speaks only “a bit of Nuer”, as he says. Jabal Nuba is a region in South Kordofan, close to the border with South Sudan (see Ille 2011). The region is home to the “African” Nuba groupings who have been one of the main targets of the regime of Umar al-Bashir in military campaigns in South Kordofan (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 23f.). According to Umar, it was not clear to him whether Djon was a Muslim, nor whether he was Nuba or Nuer, for example. However, Umar knew Djon’s home region was connected to intensive warfare, “big wars” (German: *große Kriege*) as he puts it. This is how Umar justifies his invitation to Djon to stay with him and his family for a period of rest in Um Shalaya. In the context of being part of the same “team” working in the gold mines of Jabal Amir, and of the difficulties Djon would have to travel to Jabal Nuba, they moved together to Um Shalaya.

A period of intensive displacement and continued hindering of movement (late 2013–November 2016). The exact sequence of events following the arrival of Umar and Djon in Um Shalaya, and the reasons for Umar’s departure from Sudan – especially the persecution of his family after he left Um Shalaya, which he only heard about later from his mother – is somewhat unclear. In any case, the family lost their property, were banned from their hometown, and three children were murdered. Besides Umar, only one brother survived. But Umar did not experience this directly himself, because he was not at home in Um Shalaya at that time; this circumstance probably led to a feeling of survivor guilt (see Niederland 1981), especially because three of his siblings were murdered in his absence. In the interview, he says his mother thought the escalating violence was due to the fact that Umar had brought his friend Djon home with him. When these extremely traumatizing events for the family took place, Umar was in a nearby town on business. Djon stayed in Um Shalaya with Umar’s family. In the interview, Umar says his mother told him that the people from Um Shalaya – whom Umar describes as “the people from my village [...] there are Daju, the Masalit, the Zaghawa, the Tama, too [...] we live together” – assumed Djon was a Christian. Apparently, they also accused Umar of having converted to Christianity. This is what happened, according to what Umar was told by his mother: Djon went to the market of Um Shalaya, and while he was there he made the sign of the cross, a form of Christian blessing. Other people saw this and asked him whether he was a Christian, and what a Christian was doing in Um Shalaya. According to what Umar’s mother said, Djon answered that he was staying at the house of Umar. The people in

the market called the police, who most probably belonged to the “Arab” Muslim groupings in this context. The situation escalated, and the police went to Umar’s house and interrogated his mother. His mother told them: “why is it a problem if Muslim or Christian, our God is the same.” Then she was arrested, together with her mother, Umar’s grandmother, and detained for some time at the police station. The police announced in Um Shalaya that they were looking for Umar. Umar says that a woman, who was a potential wife for him at that time, called to tell him that the police officers were looking for him and he should not return home. The police officers kept interrogating Umar’s mother to know his whereabouts. They also searched the family’s house again. When Umar’s mother and grandmother were released, they found that neighbors – at least that is what they assumed – had burned down their summer house, as Umar puts it, and that everything the family possessed, including important documents, had been destroyed in the fire. The other wives of Umar’s father were not in the summer house, where his siblings – all children of the same mother as Umar – were sleeping. During this attack on the family’s property, the three younger siblings of Umar (between about 6 and 12 years old) were killed. Umar says his mother believed that the perpetrators were her neighbors, who later told her that her children had been buried in the cemetery. They blamed the family for bringing such a “disgrace” upon them and said that they must leave Um Shalaya. So Umar’s mother, grandmother and the brother who had survived the raid had to go away from their hometown. Umar does not know what happened to Djon, his friend. The way I have presented these events is not intended to throw doubt on the murder of Umar’s siblings, the imprisonment of his mother and grandmother, the destruction of their summer house, and their expulsion from their hometown. But it does seem unlikely that Umar’s mother, from whom he heard about the attack only some time later, could know exactly what happened in her absence, who was responsible for it, and why. We may suppose that the accusation of converting to Christianity was only one factor that triggered this dramatic course of events, or was used as a pretext. However, as I will discuss in more detail below, if we consider that Umar believes the police in Sudan are still looking for him, and that his family members are still suffering discrimination, the idea becomes more plausible that he was accused of converting to Christianity, which was a capital offense in Sudan up to 2020.

At this point, in January 2014, Umar was in any case not aware of the death of his siblings and the persecution of his family, as he himself was fleeing from the Sudanese police to Cairo, Egypt’s capital. He had very limited means of communication, or no communication at all, with his surviving family members. While in Cairo, Umar used his money and some gold to pay Egyptian smugglers (“they speak Arabic, too, those are the people of Egypt”) to help him cross the Sinai desert to Israel.²⁹ The political instability and collective violence in Egypt after the rev-

²⁹ Egyptian researcher Ali al Raggal says that in Sinai “migrants are more prone to suffering” as “trafficking overlaps with slavery along the arduous journey in the desert. Many get killed on the road

olution in 2011 made the crossing of the Sinai even more dangerous than before. During this period, some “Arab” Bedouin groupings often kidnapped people (see Rosenthal/Hofmann, in press).³⁰ Umar crossed the desert in the Sinai alongside migrants from Eritrea, whom he says were shot dead, supposedly by the Egyptian military forces deployed in the region to combat groups connected to the Islamic State.³¹ According to Umar, the Eritreans were killed because they could not understand the orders shouted in Arabic. At this point of his life, Umar had learned some Arabic. He crossed the fence constructed by the Israeli forces together with other people, and entered Israeli territory, where the Israeli authorities immediately captured them around April 2014.³² In a notebook, Umar wrote about his capture in Arabic years later: “not sure if captured by civilians or police”. In an interview, Umar says:

“We are: Ahmad, Abdel-Aziz, Abdel-Shoukur, Ismael, Idris, Idris [...] three [...] they are dead, you- it is=it is military, you know, [...] I think we are (1) 10 people or- we are 7- we entered- but the 3 they are dead, they are dead” (Second follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

As we can see in this quotation, out of ten people who tried to cross the desert with Umar, only seven made it alive and crossed into Israeli territory.

Detention in Israel and deportation to Sudan. Umar expected to be able to file an application for asylum in Israel. Instead, the Israeli authorities took them to a facility in the desert, probably part of the Holot detention center. According to Human Rights Watch (2014: 26), “since mid-December 2013 [...] newly arriving Eritreans and Sudanese are detained in official detention centers before being transferred to a so-called ‘Residency Center’”.³³ Umar and the others were kept

from East Sudan to Sinai. [...] The trafficking route starts in East Sudan which is under the control of the Rachaida tribes and continues into the Eastern Sahara in Egypt, where other tribes are involved. Those migrants and refugees end up in warehouses in the North of Sinai hoping to get to Israel”. See: Assafir Al-Arabi, December 30, 2019. “Sinai. Migrants, smugglers and soldiers”. Available at: <https://assafirarabi.com/en/28469/2019/12/30/sinai-migrants-smugglers-and-soldiers/> [Accessed on December 16, 2021].

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, 2014. “‘I Wanted to Lie Down and Die’ Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt”. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0214_ForUpload_1_0.pdf [Accessed on December 16, 2021].

³¹ Assafir Al-Arabi, December 30, 2019. “Sinai. Migrants, smugglers and soldiers”. Available at: <https://assafirarabi.com/en/28469/2019/12/30/sinai-migrants-smugglers-and-soldiers/> [Accessed on August 12, 2022]; BBC, November 23, 2015. “Egypt border guards shoot Sudanese migrants dead”. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34902834> [Accessed on December 16, 2021].

³² The Times of Israel, December 6, 2015. “Some 200 asylum seekers cross into Israel despite Sinai fence”. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/some-200-asylum-seekers-crossed-into-israel-despite-sinai-fence/> [Accessed on December 16, 2021].

³³ Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2014. “‘Make Their Lives Miserable’ Israel’s Coercion of Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers to Leave Israel”. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default>

at the detention center with restricted mobility, but could make phone calls. In this context, Umar contacted his family, still suffering from persecution in Darfur. His mother informed him about the attack on their house and the killing of his siblings. Umar says his family thought he had been killed, too. We can imagine this was an extremely difficult time for him: being kept with restricted mobility, after a close confrontation with death in the desert, and then hearing about the death of his siblings, and the difficult situation of his family in Darfur. During this period, the Israeli authorities treated people in situations like that of Umar as “infiltrators”, and subjected them to detention and deportation.³⁴ Indeed, after a period of around eight months, the Israeli authorities gave Umar 3,000 US dollars and deported him to Khartoum, Sudan’s capital. It is not clear whether Umar had to sign a document. In any case, he could not read or write. It is fair to assume he was unaware they were sending him to Khartoum, especially when we consider his efforts to leave Sudan.

Imprisonment, torture, and forced labor in Khartoum; increasing power chances in South Khordofan. After short transit stops in Turkey and Ethiopia, Umar realized he was in Sudan because he heard Sudanese Arabic. Sudanese officials took him to an unknown location. Umar talked in our meetings about the violent acts he and other prisoners experienced at the hands of the Arabic-speaking Sudanese officials, many of whom did not speak Arabic, in these facilities. They were punished if they spoke in any language except Arabic, kept in solitary confinement with light deprivation, tortured with ice-cold water, and forced to work on construction sites carrying sacks of cement. To this day, it is not clear to Umar why the Sudanese authorities did this. He only heard the accusations the guards shouted at him: “what did you want in Israel? You are Sudan (French: *Soudan*), why don’t you want to stay in your country? [...] you know Israel is forbidden for Sudanese people.” He was unaware at that point that, according to Sudan’s penal code, Sudanese citizens who entered Israel were considered to have visited an “en-

t/files/reports/israel0914_ForUpload_1.pdf [Accessed on December 16, 2021]. On the biographical courses of Eritreans deported from Israel to Africa, see Rosenthal/Hofmann (in press).

³⁴ Theodore Baird (2015) writes: “The Israeli response to migrants entering from Sinai is to treat them as ‘infiltrators’ subject to detention and deportation, according to the much criticized 2012 ‘Anti-Infiltration Law’ and its subsequent reformulation in 2013. In 2013, it was estimated that approximately 200 survivors of torture and trafficking in Sinai were being detained in Israel since the implementation of the new law in June 2012. In addition, a 230 kilometer long, 7 meter high border fence was erected between Israel and Egyptian Sinai to prevent the entry of migrants crossing the Sinai desert. Preventing migrants from accessing protection or punishing asylum-seekers for unlawful entry is illegal under international refugee and human rights law (Israel has signed and ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention).” Available at: <https://www.revue-quartmonde.org/8193> [Accessed on December 16, 2021]. See also: Human Rights Watch, September, 2014. “‘Make Their Lives Miserable.’ Israel’s Coercion of Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers to Leave Israel” (2014: 39ff., 54). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/israel0914_ForUpload_1.pdf [Accessed on August 12, 2022].

emy state” and were “liable to a penalty of up to 10 years in prison”.³⁵ The 2014 Human Rights Watch report includes testimonies by witnesses of the violent acts perpetrated against people deported from Israel to Sudan, especially those from Darfur, who were tortured to make them disclose information about opposition groups and the “anti-Khartoum” protests organized in the diaspora in Israel (ibid.: 42ff.).

Even if Umar does not say that the regime forces perceived him as a political prisoner, he was treated as such by them. This means that for someone like Umar, who belongs to the “Zurqa” groupings in Darfur, his migration to Israel – even if it was connected to persecution in his hometown by other “Zurqa” and police forces, or simply to seek work – can become extremely politicized should he be deported to Khartoum. Thus, we can say the external ascription of belonging to the “Zurqa” was an important component in the constellation that led to Umar’s torture and forced labor while in detention in Khartoum after deportation from Israel. While in prison, the threat of death for him and his fellow inmates was omnipresent. Umar told how the guards removed fellow prisoners during the night, who never came back:

“Before we are- it’s a lot, I think hmm (1) Hassan, I think but I forgot his name, we are it’s- I think seven or but eight ahm [...] they came to take, for the night- I don’t know what they did, they are- I think they killed, they killed the people” (Second follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

Other inmates, imprisoned for a longer period, told him that those who managed to stay alive longer were eventually taken to Port Sudan, a harbor city in the Red Sea. There, they were forced to carry heavy sacks of salt in the port, where allegedly they died under the scorching sun. The following quotation gives an insight into his terrible situation:

“You are going to die here [...] there are people they say like ‘you stay here’ (1) there are people they stayed here, one year you stayed one year, then you want to go to Port Sudan, Port Sudan you want to go to Port Sudan? ((Umar laughs)) that’s it- people it’s over- you die there [...] I think one month you are working like that, you are dead (1)” (Second follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

One of the tasks Umar was forced to do was to load heavy sacks of cement into a truck, alongside other inmates. They covered the cargo with a tarpaulin. One day,

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2014. “‘Make Their Lives Miserable’ Israel’s Coercion of Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers to Leave Israel” (2014: 72). Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/09/09/make-their-lives-miserable/israels-coercion-eritrean-and-sudanese-asylum-seekers> [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

Umar jumped in the back of the truck and hid under the tarpaulin. His fellow inmates covered it up and finished preparing the cargo. Umar was afraid to jump out of the truck and be seen, so he waited until it got dark. When he climbed out of the truck, he could not identify where he was. Eventually, he met an elderly woman and her son, who told him they were in a small village in South Kordofan, a region which faced strong opposition from the government forces during Bashir's regime. They offered to take Umar somewhere else. Looking back at this time from his present perspective, Umar says "I want to go to Nyala or al-Geneina, I only want to leave, but I don't want to go to the capital". This illustrates the very different power chances that people belonging to different groupings think they have in different regions of Sudan. We can assume it was clear to Umar at this point that his presence in Khartoum would put his life at risk. It was also too risky for him to return to Darfur, where he was wanted by the police. Against this background, Umar went to Tina, on the border between Darfur and Chad, and arranged his further migration to Libya with smugglers in May 2015.

Captivity in the desert in Niger and further migration to Libya. This period of Umar's life shows how members of the "Zurqa" groupings can be in a marginalized position in other regions of the Sahel. Moreover, a Darfurian belonging plays an important role in stigmatization processes people experience in their migration through the region. Especially men from Darfur are perceived as mercenaries who fought "for pay", or they are accused of being "rebels" who fought against the central Sudanese government (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67).³⁶ Let us see how these processes shaped Umar's migration chances, and how he used some of the money from Israel, which he had hidden from the guards in the prison in Khartoum, to continue his migration. Umar used part of the money he got from the Israeli authorities to pay for a group of smugglers in Chad to take him to Libya on the back of a pick-up truck, together with other people. Instead, they were taken to a desert region in the Djado plateau, Niger.³⁷ There, the captors forced Umar and other people from Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia to look for gold. Umar says they forced him to work to pay for the cost of the journey:

"I wanted to leave like that, there are the- they took me, he told me 'we will look for gold' // L: he took you- // he took me, before I didn't know, he took me, they said 'we will look for gold, after you can leave' me I said 'no I want to go, I want to go to Libya I don't want to stay here'" (Second follow-up)

³⁶ Small Arms Survey, June, 2020. "Diaspora in Despair. Darfurian Mobility at a Time of International Disengagement". Available at: https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/HSBA-Report-Darfur-mobility_0.pdf [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

³⁷ There are several accounts of forced labor and coercion of people to search for gold in the region during this period (see Tubiana/Gramizzi 2017: 99; Tubiana/Gramizzi 2018: 68ff.; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 46, 66; or: The Atlantic, February 11, 2018. "A Dangerous Immigration Crackdown in West Africa." Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/niger-europe-migrants-jihad-africa/553019/> [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

The circumstances under which Umar and the remaining members of his group escaped this situation in the desert are unclear. He says his “team” managed to take control of the pick-up truck and drive to the border region with Libya in September 2015. They hired Libyan smugglers who took them through Qatrun, Murzuq, Um al-Aranib, and Sabha until they reached Tripoli, Libya’s capital. Umar paid for his migration with some of the gold he managed to keep for himself and some of the remaining money from the Israeli authorities.

The initial period Umar spent in Libya shows a decrease in his power chances in this constellation, which leads to the hindering of his migration, threats to his life and that of those around him, racialized discrimination, and collective violence. Since the overthrow of Qadhafi in early 2011, Libya has been scarred by outbursts of collective violence (see Al-Dayel/Anfinson/Anfinson 2021). Qadhafi hired mercenaries from Darfur to fight for him, which contributed to the perception in Libya of people from Darfur as pro-Qadhafi (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67). This is also how it is presented by Umar, but he distances himself in his presentation from the “rebels” and says he had friends from Eritrea, for example, and no contact with “the Arabs” or “the Libyans”. Moreover, Umar differentiates between “the Arabs” from Sudan and “the Arabs” from Libya. While talking about “the Libyans” as “the whites”, he presents the Sudanese, including “the Arabs”, as “the Blacks” in this context.

The period in Libya illustrates the different power chances available for those belonging to the “Zurqa” groupings, often perceived as “rebels” and “Black Africans” in Tripoli, as Umar explains. A friend of Umar from Eritrea helped him to find a job in a company in Tripoli. However, Umar had no “papers”. Upon the request of the employer that Umar should go to the embassy of Sudan in Tripoli to regularize his status, he said he feared capture and deportation to Sudan again. Umar’s life with an *illegalized* status affected his everyday life in Libya, as well as his migration chances. He feared the police would stop him in the streets, ask for his identity card, and deport him to Sudan. This fear is far from unfounded, especially for people from Africa south of the Sahara in Libya. There are reports of discriminatory arrests during this period and demands for ransom, even from the Libyan police (see Hamood 2006: 30ff.; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 58). Umar found himself in a marginalized position in terms of his power chances in the figuration with more established Sudanese, such as those who worked at the embassy, and with “the Libyans”. When he looks back at this period from his present perspective, he describes his experiences in Libya as “racism”. He says people would stop him in the street and ask “who are you?”, to which he would answer “I come from Sudan, I speak Arabic, but I am not Arab”. His presentation of himself as a speaker of Arabic seems to have played a significant role in interactions with members of more established groupings in Libya. His more marginalized position can

be seen in the way “the Arabs” sometimes refused to pay him for his work: “yes Arab men sometimes you have to go work at his place, then say ‘okay, I pay you no money’.” From his present perspective, Umar often defines them as “whites” or “Libyans”. Umar and those with whom he lived in Tripoli were also targeted with acts of violence perpetrated by “the Libyans” (French: *les gens de Libye*; the people of Libya), as he puts it. Umar’s present view of his time in Tripoli is marked by a retrospective differentiation between “white Libyans” and “Blacks”, who are presented in this constellation as “foreigners”:

“I was in Tripoli (Arabic: *Tarabulus*) [...] they come to beat- the people from Libya- Libya always there’s wa:r there are problems, ho=how the Libyans do that they are all: too they are, they are whites (French: *les blancs*) like you see Black people (French: *les Noirs*) in the streets like that they see like that, they think you’re a foreigner no, no Libyan is Black I think” (Biographical-narrative interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

Umar speaks about several situations in which “Blacks” were discriminated against in Tripoli and were the target of violent acts, especially by people he presents as Arabic-speaking Libyans. He mentions at least one situation in which “Libyans” kidnapped him and asked for ransom. Through the help of a friend from Eritrea, and of his mother who sent money, Umar was freed. He also witnessed “Libyans” killing people who lived with him. The quotation below shows the argumentation pattern he uses when he looks back at this period from his present perspective, and his conviction that his situation in Libya justified the dangerous crossing by sea to Europe. We can imagine that the threats to his life, and to the life of those around him, were not so clear to him at the time as suggested in the quotation. However, we can assume that fear of staying in this situation, as well as of crossing the Mediterranean to Europe, a relatively common route in 2015, had been lingering in his mind:

“How can I stay in Libya like that, that’s not possible, there are also wars every day there are problems, before I was afraid, I was afraid of the sea, **that’s a BIG sea I’m afraid** [...] at night they are in Libya they came (1) we don’t have defenses they killed too, in Libya, we were it’s: a room we were it could be (3) five people, yes five people, there are the Libyans (French: *les Libyens*) there are the people of Libya (French: *les gens de Libye*) they come enter like that, they kill with guns two people, we were three, me I said ‘no, I won’t stay here in Libya, too’” (Biographical-narrative interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

It was not difficult for Umar to find smugglers to help him cross the Mediterranean. He still had some money from his deportation from Israel and gold from Niger.

Upon making arrangements with the smugglers, Umar and other migrants got in a rubber boat to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. Close to the Libyan coast, Libyan coastguards captured their boat, arrested them, and took them back to the shore in Libya. They were beaten and robbed, and forced to call friends and family for money. During this period, these practices were relatively common in Libya, especially with members of more marginalized groupings, such as migrants from Africa south of the Sahara (see Hamood 2006: 30ff.; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 58). People from Darfur were a central target of coordinated actions between Libyan coastguards and members of militias involved in smuggling activities (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67). Umar speaks about his capture as follows:

“There’s a boat, I entered, there’s the Polizei ((police in German)) [...] they beat me like that for two days three days I give the money, they asked me, who has the money who has the money [...] I met a Gambian, he’s called Lamine, I met one: Sadiq he’s also Sudanese, Abdel=Shar- there were four Sudanese- they’re there it could be one year- they’ve lasted there, could be one year, they have no telephone to call the family, they have no money, they’re there for (1) me I was, I was ok I give you my money” (Biographical-narrative interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

Libyan coastguards caught Umar three times while trying to cross on a boat to Europe and he experienced similar situations every time. On his fourth attempt to cross to Europe in November 2016, he and 114 other people succeeded in avoiding the Libyan Coast Guard. Possibly, the smugglers had arranged this crossing with Libyan coastguards beforehand. In the interview, Umar describes the dangerous situation he and the others found themselves in during the crossing. This situation remains threatening for him even in the present:

“Our boat didn’t capsize, **our boat is good** but our fuel finished [...] a hundred and fourteen in one boat, there’s nothing to eat for two days, there are people they die, we were- it’s I think it’s (3) Ahmad [...] he stayed at my side too, he died in, he’s Eritrean too, ahn three women, me I think it’s eight or well nine they are- they are already dead, they died (1) [...] a: big boat (1) boat of fuel [...] they picked us there, but if there’s no boat that’s we we all dead” (Biographical-narrative interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

Once again, Umar’s life and that of those around him was at risk, a protracted pattern which started in Darfur, continued in the Sinai, in the prison in Khartoum, in the desert in Niger, in northern Libya, and now in the Mediterranean Sea. Umar and the others were rescued by an oil tanker and taken by the Italian authorities to Ventimiglia, northern Italy, close to the border with Monaco and France.

Between relative peace and deportation in Western Europe (November 2016–October 2017). His arrival in Italy was a significant improvement in Umar's life, as he was no longer in a context of persecution and collective violence. But he faced other challenges, such as the fact that he could not read or write, or understand certain languages. The Italian authorities registered Umar's fingerprints in Italy. He says he was not offered accommodation or help with submitting an asylum claim in Italy. His presentation of this period shows the importance, at least from his retrospective perspective, of the fact that no one committed violent acts against him: "there's no war, no one come beat me [...] I tell you there's no problems." Umar stayed in Italy for less than two months. He says the Italian police officers prompted him to look for asylum somewhere else in the European Union. He says that other migrants called friends or family members who lived in the European Union, and went to be reunited with them. He said many moved to France, Germany, and Sweden, but he had no idea what this meant as he thought everyone in "Europe" spoke the same language, English. He faced difficulties in understanding the documents people gave him. He says people perceived him as a foreigner and talked to him in English: "the people here in Europe, they think all- the people the Blacks they speak English." Against the background of receiving no support from the Italian authorities, and arriving in Italy in 2016 with people who migrated to other countries, Umar went on foot from Ventimiglia to Monaco and southern France in December 2016. There, he boarded a train. He was checked by police officers in the train, and they asked a man who spoke Arabic to translate: "they gave me a lot of papers [...] they gave me- it's a card, they told there are refugees there- go there, I was in Paris, a district they call Porte de la Chapelle." Umar went to the La Chapelle neighborhood in Paris, where other migrants lived at that time.³⁸ He received legal assistance in applying for asylum and was redirected by the French authorities to the region of Lyon. There, he attended a French course, and was given accommodation and a monthly allowance while the French authorities reviewed his asylum claim. During this period, a French family hosted Umar for some time, and he contacted a cousin living in France. In this context, learning French gained increasing relevance for Umar, because of the French family he lived with, and because of the Senegalese community he had contact with: "I had many friends there, too, there are the Senegalese, they only speak French." Besides French during his time in France he spoke Arabic and became part of a group of other migrants from Africa south of the Sahara. He started to write the dates of his previous migrations in Arabic in a notebook. In France he learned to read and write for the first time on his French course. We can assume that during this period of relative calm and stability he

³⁸ InfoMigrants, August 22, 2018. "A day in the hellish life of migrants at Porte de La Chapelle, Paris". Available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/webdoc/144/a-day-in-the-hellish-life-of-migrants-at-porte-de-la-chapelle-paris> [Accessed on December 27, 2021].

started to confront the painful situations he had experienced in the past. Perhaps he even started to think more about the difficult situation of his family in Sudan.

After almost one year living in Lyon, Umar and a group of other migrants received a letter stating they had been registered in Italy and, in accordance with the Dublin regulation enforced since 2013, they should return to the first country in the European Union where their fingerprints had been registered. Umar feared they would deport him to Sudan (“I had fear to go to Italy, if I go there they’ll send me to my country”). As a result of this decision, he lost his economic support, his accommodation, and his French documents. That is, his status in France was illegalized by the French authorities. Under these circumstances, Umar escaped by train to Germany in October 2017.

Relative establishment and plans for the future in Germany (October 2017–2021). While on the train to Germany, Umar was checked by police officers, and subsequently taken to a police station. As he had no documents, they registered his fingerprints and searched his backpack and telephone. Umar told them he did not know where to go. The police officers told him to go to Brunswick, where other Sudanese lived. The officers gave him food, water, and a ticket to Brunswick. Umar did his asylum interview in Brunswick and was recognized by German authorities as a refugee from Darfur. He received a temporary residence permit (German: *Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) which gave him a legalized status in Germany. He has to renew the permit every two years, and if the German authorities should define Darfur as a region where Umar’s life is no longer at risk, he may lose his refugee status and face the threat of deportation again. In the following months, Umar moved to Kassel. Several Sudanese, especially from Darfur, lived there. He attended an “integration course” (German: *Integrationskurs*), during which he had German language lessons. Umar lived for a while in an apartment provided by an organization for refugees, and received a monthly sum of money from the local government. During the first months, he shared an apartment with other migrants from Eritrea, Ivory Coast, and Sudan. By the time of our meeting in February 2019, he had moved to a small apartment in an area far from the city center and lived alone. He was still attending the “integration course”. Umar was “very happy” with his situation in Germany and the fact that he had received “papers”, as he said in our first interview.

Despite the relative stability and safety resulting from his legal situation in Germany, Umar had other difficulties, such as learning German and dealing with German bureaucracy. For example, he did not understand a letter from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in German asking if he would like to apply for family reunion.³⁹ Only when a friend saw the letter at his apartment and asked him why he did not apply for family reunion did Umar learn about its

³⁹ “Family asylum and family reunification”, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Available at: <https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/Familienasyl/Familiennachzug/familienasylfamiliennachzug-node.html> [Accessed on March 3, 2022].

content. It was already too late to apply for family reunion, as he explained in the interview. During this period, his mother, his grandmother, and his 15-year-old brother were living in a small village in Darfur, where they had limited access to electricity, and his brother no longer attended school because the village was small and his brother was afraid to go out of the house. Umar said people were still looking for him in Darfur, and punished his family: “they asked my mother where’s Umar Yahiya, they said they don’t know, they beat.” I interpret the continued persecution of the family in Darfur during this period, and the fact that his friends feared to have contact with his family members, as further confirmation of the hypothesis that the family is treated by “Arabs” and “Zurqa” alike as if they had converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, we still cannot say with certainty whether or not the “Zurqa” neighbors and the police in Um Shalaya, their hometown, used this conversion to seize Umar’s family property. The extremely difficult situation of his family in Darfur formed a contrast with his safe situation in Germany and dominated our first interviews. Understandably, his family’s situation occupied a central position in his everyday life in Germany:

“Every day now I am sad, I am ok here now, here in Germany, I eat very well I sleep very well I want to attend the course very well no one will come: say ‘Umar you’re this or that’ I don’t have problems I am ok every day I am very happy with my life, but I [...] talk to my mother, my mother she cries [...] she explains me all the problems they call me like that there are people they beat them, the night, **they beat her in her house** [...] I think that I can go back there I could die with her, like that together, I’m ok now, but my family they are problems too, but I’m not happy every day” (First follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

The increasing establishment of Umar in Germany came with easier access to communication with his mother, as he had a smartphone and could afford to call her. This meant more contact with the difficulties they experienced in Darfur: “here I think my problems are over, but the problem of my family remains, I can’t eat well I can’t sleep well I can’t concentrate on German classes.” We can assume the more regular contact with his family after his relative stabilization in Germany meant more direct confrontation with the fact that he had escaped the attack on his family in their hometown. He was no longer suffering from persecution – but this could not be said of his surviving family members still living in Darfur. It might seem to us that one important way to do justice to his position in his familial constellation would be to share some of the privileges of his established situation in Germany by remitting money to his family, as my colleagues and I have observed in other cases (see Brandhorst 2014: 263ff.; Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b: 40ff.). However, Umar explained that the precarious infrastructure of the village where his family lived did not allow this. He asked a friend in Germany to take some

money to his mother when he visited Darfur, but the friend refused because he feared punishment for having contact with her. We cannot say for sure whether Umar really wants to support his family, or whether he is trying to avoid contact with them. However, his description of the impacts the calls with his family have on his everyday life in Germany indicate a close confrontation with their situation in Darfur during this period. This shows how his more established position in the present comes with active work regarding his own past experiences and the current situation of his family.

While Umar could not send money to his family, he was able to find some empowerment through his contact with groups of other people who had migrated from West and East Africa to Germany. I met Umar and some of his friends by chance in downtown Kassel. As he puts it, his friends were not “Arabs” but they often spoke in Arabic, which was a sort of lingua franca among them. And an ethnicized differentiation played a role regarding the groups with which Umar interacted in Kassel. I assume this is connected with the group of “Black Africans” he spent more time with at this point, and which prominently determined his we- and self-presentation of an ethnicized conflict between “the Africans” and “the Arabs” during the interviews. Ethnic and linguistic belonging played a role in his search for a partner in Germany. During our interviews, his telephone rang several times. He told me it was a Daju woman he planned to visit in a nearby city. During our third meeting in February 2019, he explained he would like to marry a Daju speaker but it was difficult to find someone in Germany. In the following months of 2019, Umar finished his “integration course” and had plans to do a training course (German: *Ausbildung*) as a bus driver. As of 2021, Umar spoke fluent German and was working in short-term jobs (German: *Minijobs*) in Kassel. In December 2021, when I asked him how his family was, he told me they were doing well.

Summary. The migration courses of Umar in the Sahel and the Levant and of his family members in Darfur are marked by the protracted experience of collective violence. His experiences of physical violence in the past help to explain Umar’s willingness to talk about “the perpetrators” of violent acts against himself, his family, and his we-group in the present. For him, this is a form of increasing his power chances in the figuration with “the Arabs” from Sudan in the diaspora. And he uses ethnicized we- and they-images even if they do not necessarily correspond to the character of the religious-based accusations he and his family experienced in their hometown. Moreover, these ethnicized we- and they-images are a central component influencing which groups Umar turns to in the diaspora, and which groups he explicitly avoids.

5.5 Power chances and the biographical and collective functions of an ethnicized view of the past

The cases I have discussed in this chapter represent three different types with regard to the way their constructions of belonging to we-groups in Darfur and other regions of Sudan have changed in the course of their lives – especially since their departure from Sudan – and the way this affects their migration chances. The cases show how the migration courses of members of different groupings, as well as their experiences of violence in their region of origin before migration, are differently structured. In the light of these different life histories and the migration courses of these individuals, it becomes clear that some migration chances are available to those who belong to certain groupings but not to others. Similarly, the reconstruction of each experienced life history shows that the constellations from which people flee when they leave their home regions or countries are substantially different. Likewise, analysis of the presented life stories shows how the powerful ethnicized discourses in the diaspora – which continue to be co-determined by the dominant discourses of various groupings in Sudan and in the Global South in general – shape the biographical we- and self-presentations in the present. There is in every case a discrepancy between the dominant discourses in the present of the diaspora, which shape the self-presentations in the interviews, and the past experiences of the autobiographers, their families, and we-groups. I will summarize these differences below on the basis of the three example cases.

One of the cases discussed in this chapter is that of an “Arab” from the River Nile region of Sudan: neither he nor his family experienced collective violence in Sudan. We also observe this in the case of an “Arab” from Darfur. However, in the case of a “Zurqa” from Darfur, we have seen that both he and his family experienced massive violence. The victimizers in his case were not, as one might expect, people who belonged to the “Arab” groupings, but people who belonged to his own ethnic grouping, together with the police in his hometown. So what constructions of belonging do these three men present?

Ahmad, the “Arab” from the River Nile region of Sudan, avoids emphasizing his belonging to “the Arabs” from Sudan by using the construction of an “Eritrean” belonging. **Taha**, the “Arab” from Darfur, also avoids emphasizing his belonging to “the Arabs”. He does this by presenting his belonging to the broader we-group of “Africans”. **Umar**, who suffered violence from people belonging to his own grouping, the “Zurqa”, is the only one of these three men to present the discourse of a difference between “the Africans” and “the Arabs”. These findings make it clear that their self-presentations in the present are shaped by the discourses in the diaspora, and that these discourses are connected with their chances of being allowed to stay. Moreover, the reconstruction of their life stories shows how these present constructions of belonging differ from those in the past. The important question is, what are the biographical and collective functions (Elias 2001: 223f.) of the differing presentations of belonging in the present?

In the case of **Ahmad**, who belongs to “the Arabs” in Sudan, ethnic belonging to “the Arabs” and its thematization did not play such a central role in our interview as it did in the other cases. For this interviewee, the construction of a (national) Eritrean belonging plays an important role in his present. Ahmad’s presentation of the “Eritrean” background of his family shows the power of the rules of the discourses in the group of people from Eritrea, Egypt, and Sudan with whom he lives in the present, but more importantly the rules governing his chances for asylum in Germany. This is connected with a more or less strategic decision to increase his chances of staying in Germany by applying for asylum as “Eritrean”, and with his growing interest in delving into his familial and collective past in search of clues that will bring him closer to the we-group of Eritreans. Thus, the presentation of ethnicized we- and they-images in this case has the function of providing for his further establishment in Germany among other Eritreans. At the same time, it has the biographical function of explaining the differences in his family and we-group practices in their interdependencies with more established “Arabs” in Sudan. That is, it helps him to make sense of the discrimination he experienced as an “Arab” in Sudan. And this intertwines in the present with his process of reinterpreting his experiences in the past against the background of a recently discovered “Eritrean” collective and familial history. Thus, this case shows what function possible ethnic belongings in the family’s past can have in the present, however hard to perceive they may be for younger generations. Remembering this belonging may not only increase present chances of social participation, but can also serve to legitimize the family’s past history.

The case of **Taha**, who belongs to “the Arabs” in Darfur, shows the increasing use in Western Europe of a *politicized* we-image as “African”, which is related to his involvement in groups of “migration activists”. This helps people like himself to distance themselves from accusations of perpetrating violent acts in their home region. At the same time, it amplifies the chances of being granted refugee status in Germany. Taha’s life in Darfur shows that these violent acts did not directly affect him and his family. But in the present, even if those belonging to “the Arabs” from Darfur actively seek to distance themselves from the image of “perpetrators” of acts of violence by presenting themselves as “Africans”, suspicion and speculations in this regard remain central to their everyday life in the diaspora. Against this background, there is a deliberate de-thematization of ethnic belonging and of collective and familial histories. Thus, even if there were situations in which those belonging to “the Arabs” from Darfur were themselves the targets of violent acts, there is no mention of these experiences in public discourses. Among other things, this case shows how “switching” (see Elwert 1995) to a more inclusive we-group can serve to evade a negative they-image. Although the construction of a we-group of “Arabs” is conceivable, it would not be a more inclusive we-group in this case, because it would maintain the problematic distinction from groupings in the country of origin that do not define themselves as Arab or Muslim. In this case, the use

of “Africans” as a we-image is probably due to Taha’s desire not to present himself as an “Arab from Sudan”.

By contrast, the case of **Umar**, who belongs to “the Zurqa” from Darfur, shows the typical orientation toward the potent ethnicized discourse of a conflict between “the Africans” and “the Arabs”. However, the reconstruction of his life history shows that the experience his family had with their “Zurqa” neighbors does not correspond to this discourse. Umar and his family suffered violence not only from “the Arabs”, but also from “the Zurqa” in their hometown. His escape from Darfur was conditioned by his experience of violence. To admit that other “Zurqa” or “Africans” can target your own family contradicts the rules of the dominant collective discourse, which interprets the conflict in the country as one between “the Arabs” and “the Africans”, and Umar may also experience it as disloyalty to his father, who was a member of a “Zurqa” opposition group. Thus, the use of the polarized we- and they-images of “Arabs” and “Africans” serves to avoid the thematization of problematic differences between “Black Africans” in the figuration with “Arabs” from Sudan in the diaspora. This is connected with the fact that, in the diaspora, Umar mainly socializes with a “Black African” group, and actively avoids contact with “Arabs” – something we can explain by the experiences of his family and his local we-group with “the Arabs” in the past. This has the function of expanding his freedom to act (German: *Handlungsspielräume*) in Germany by creating group solidarity in the face of racialized discrimination in his everyday life. That is, it can also be a form of increasing his power chances in this constellation. This is reflected in his increasing pride in his collective history as a “Black African” Daju from Darfur.

The comparison of the three cases shows how constitutive the present in the diaspora is for the construction of collective belonging. In all three cases, the way the interviewees construct their collective belonging has one important function: securing a *legalized* status in the constellation with the German authorities. That is, the ethnicized we- and self-presentations effectively translate into becoming established in German society, with a much safer socioeconomic position than the speakers had in their home regions, or at any other point along their migration courses. The same cannot be said for securing the safety of “the Arabs” in the constellation with other “Africans” from Sudan or “Zurqa” in the diaspora in Germany. On a general level, we can assume that the current collective constructions of belonging serve to improve power chances, or, in other words, agency in the diaspora.

In this way, discourses, or the we- and they-images which are essential parts of these discourses, become established or institutionalized, and can contribute to the fact that these self-presentations increasingly distance their authors from their experienced past. This raises the question for further research of how far these discourses have the power to shape we- and self-presentations, to the point where the narrations become far removed from the actual experiences of individuals, their families, and we-groups, and thus significantly block processes of remembering

(see Rosenthal 2016). This would also hinder the intergenerational transmission of familial and collective memories, and the dominant discourses would become increasingly distanced from the experienced history of the respective we-groups in the country of origin. In other words, this has an impact not only on individual, but also on collective remembering. These are possible conclusions in all three cases.

In Ahmad's case, there is a reinterpretation of his family history, to the point we might speak of the reinvention of an "Eritrean" familial history. In the case of Taha, there is de-thematization of his familial and collective history in the constellation with other "Arab" Sudanese. We could suggest this hinders the transmission of certain components which are central for the we-image as "Arabs". By contrast, in the case of Umar, there is pride in his retrospective view of the past, an active search for the collective history of the "African" groupings and the Daju. He embeds this history in a broader concept of "Black African" ethnicized belonging in Germany. Interestingly, the image of a past without conflicts among "the Zurqa" or "the Africans" does not correspond to his experiences and those of his family in their hometown. While the two interviewees who belong to the "Arab" groupings de-thematize their collective history, the one who belongs to the "Zurqa" groupings is very much entangled in the dominant discourse. What explains the difference is that "the Arabs" come from a background where they can (and want to) avoid ethnicized we- and they-images of "Arabs as perpetrators" and "Africans and Zurqa as victims". And this is not *necessarily* connected to them being perpetrators of violent acts in the past or being involved with "the perpetrators". It is simply a matter of being able to present themselves differently from the interviewee who is a member of "the Zurqa" because their biography has been less affected by violence *in general*. Thus, for those who have suffered from violence, using homogenizing we- and they-images has a different function, which is not based exclusively on their situation in the diaspora. In other words, this is not only a part of the dominant discourse into which they have been socialized in the present, but it is also co-determined by actual experiences of collective violence and its ethnicized character in certain situations in the past.

Part II

Migration courses in the context of ambivalent cross-border entanglements

6 Precarious transnationality

Eva Bahl, Arne Worm

6.1 Introduction

In the course of our research, we have repeatedly met people whose migration to Germany or Brazil was not the first – or the last – experience of departing and arriving. They had already been through several migration constellations characterized by finding their way in a new local context while remaining embedded in networks of interdependence with people living elsewhere. We have often heard life stories told by people who have migrated several times, and whose biographies consist of a succession of insecure phases in different contexts. For example, in Brazil Eva Bahl interviewed Julius James from Sierra Leone. His migration to Brazil in 2018 was just a further episode in a family history and life history shaped by migration. Julius James was socialized in a family which had trade relations all over West Africa and over a long period he traveled regularly back and forth between Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and also had trade contacts in Guinea. His attempt to migrate to the Caribbean ended in Brazil. In the interviews, he repeatedly thematized his different experiences of departure and new beginning, but also his transregional family networks.

We will give a detailed account of Julius's family and migration history later on in this chapter. Some of our other interviewees, such as Fadel Darwish, who came to Brazil to escape from the armed conflict in Syria which broke out in 2011, were considering undertaking another transcontinental migration at the time of the

Bahl, E./Worm, A. (2022): Precarious transnationality. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 173–219. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2208>

interview, due to their very insecure situation in the “arrival context”. There have been members of Fadel’s family in Brazil for several generations, and that was an important reason for him to choose Brazil as a destination, but once he was there, he got much less support from them than he expected.

On the one hand, these short examples confirm what is an established assumption in migration studies: migrations are not linear and unidirectional processes of transition between clearly delimited local (or localizable) social contexts. This has repeatedly been underlined by social scientists involved in transnational research (Glick Schiller/Basch/Blanc-Szanton 1992; Portes/Guarnizo/Landolt 1999; Faist/Fauser/Reisenauer 2013). On the other hand, if we consider the case of Julius James, but also the cases of other migrants with whom we have maintained contact for many years for the purpose of our research,¹ then describing their highly dynamic and changing migration courses as “non-linear” would be an understatement. Mina Ahmed came as a refugee from Iraq to Jordan and lived there with her sister’s family, before moving again to Brazil, and later to Turkey. Maher Saifi, who grew up in Syria and regards himself as part of a Palestinian diaspora, lived for many years in Algeria before embarking on a journey to Europe with his family. These people have in common that they more or less permanently live in unstable, changing conditions which we will refer to in this chapter as “precarious transnationality” (see Bahl 2017).

We will focus here on the biographies of migrants from very different contexts of origin whose lives have been continuously shaped by precarity, or who found themselves in an extremely precarious situation for a certain period of time during their migration. The specific feature of these cases is that the migrants were firmly and continuously attached to transnational networks. However, we do not mean here the type of transnationality in which social entanglements across state borders function primarily as economic, social or symbolic resources for the migrants. Rather, the way they act within and in relation to transnational networks is characterized by an ambivalent “navigation” (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013), a “practice of moving across a moving environment” (Vigh 2009: 428). While “battling through”, the actors repeatedly have recourse to volatile structures, and their plans and social networks become alternately stabilized and destabilized.

In the cases presented here, the networks tend to be unstable and have very ambivalent effects. As argued by many authors who follow a transnationalism approach, the life stories and migration courses we present in this chapter show clearly that transnational connections and migration networks contribute significantly to shaping the everyday realities and strategies of migrants. Our methodol-

¹ This chapter is based on empirical findings from the project “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany – processes of inclusion and participation in the context of so-called irregular migration” (2019–2023; funded by the German Research Foundation: RO 827/21-1;2). For more information on the project, see chapter 1 (footnote 1). We sincerely thank all our colleagues who have contributed to this chapter: Ahmed Albaba, Artur Bogner, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Margherita Cusmano, Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, Gabriele Rosenthal and Tim Sievert.

ogy is based on observing long-term social processes (see ch. 1; Bahl/Worm 2021; Bahl/Rosenthal 2021), which means we have been confronted with different forms and dynamics of transnational relations, with the powerful influence of collective and family transnational networks that have developed over long periods, and with the short-term transformation of cross-border relations as a result of particular chains of events. Here, correlations between volatile and often ambivalent transnational networks, on the one hand, and living in very precarious circumstances, on the other, emerge as empirical features that are typical for many cases in our sample.

On a theoretical or conceptional level within transnationality and migration studies, it seems to us that these constellations have been less clearly studied than other, more stable or more institutionalized forms of transnationality. We will therefore define below what we regard as living in a state of “precarious transnationality”. In doing so, we will take into account current research on transnationality and precarity (ch. 6.2). We will then examine from a process perspective the conditions under which precarious transnationality develops, and its consequences. On the basis of our empirical analyses, we have reconstructed two types. We make a distinction between migration courses which can be described as “**constant navigation through precarious transnationality**”, and those which involve “**temporary navigation through precarious transnationality**”. In courses representing the **first** type, precarity, networks and migration interact in such a way that migrants constantly find themselves in insecure situations. They have to keep moving, and their circumstances do not become stabilized. In our comparison of cases, we will show the essential components of migration courses in which precarious transnationality is a long-term structural feature (ch. 6.3). After this, we will discuss the **second** type, which we call “**temporary navigation through precarious transnationality**”. Migration courses of this type share some of the features of type 1, but only for a limited period of time. In this section we will reconstruct the mechanisms that contribute to resolving constellations of precarious transnationality (ch. 6.4). In the summary, we contrast the two types in order to show the central components of the figurations generating these biographical phases and constellations (ch. 6.5).

6.2 Transnationality, precarity, precarious transnationality: Approaching the phenomenon

Transnational perspectives on migration phenomena have substantially influenced and expanded the field of sociological migration studies. There have been many discussions of the need for theoretical and empirical research perspectives that take into account the dynamic and complex interrelationships between migrations and social entanglements across (state) borders, and consider how these entanglements are created, how they are maintained, and how they change

(see Glick Schiller/Basch/Blanc-Szanton 1992; Faist 1998; Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2002; Pries 2019). Biographical approaches provide empirical evidence of the complex ways in which the social realities of migrants extend beyond national “containers” (Beck 2000: 23ff.) and are shaped by transnational action patterns, networks and constructions of belonging (see Apitzsch/Siouti 2007, 2014; Bahl 2017; Breckner 2007; Lutz 2011; Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2016; Rosenthal 1999; Ruokonen-Engler 2009). An important finding here is that transnational entanglements can become a resource, bringing for instance “advancement through education” (Apitzsch/Siouti 2014: 14; Siouti 2013), or a higher standing within the family system which can lead to a “reconfiguration of intrafamilial power hierarchies” (Brandhorst 2021: 7). Joining up the concepts of “precarity” and “transnationality” is not new. Thus, for example, Sabine Hess, in her study of action strategies of female au pair migrants who travel back and forth between Slovakia and Germany, discusses the “ambiguity and precarity of transnational migration projects” (Hess 2005: 164, translated from German by Ruth Schubert). She considers her results in the light of the debate which has existed ever since the “transnationalism approach” became established, a debate which is directed against an “excessively euphoric reading of the emergence of transnational spaces” (ibid., translated from German by Ruth Schubert). Nicola Piper and Matt Withers (2018) also argue that we need to bring the concepts of “precarity” and “transnationality” more closely together. They introduce the concept of “forced transnationalism” into the discussion. Like Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila (1997), they argue that more attention should be paid to gendered differences. The latter two authors also point out that in a transnational perspective it is important not to underestimate the power of state actors, and the corresponding legal norms and administrative practices, over the actions of transnational migrants. So, as diverse as these criticisms are, they share a perspective that focuses not only on the migrants’ agency but also on the harm and the challenges that transnational ways of living can entail for the persons affected.

A much-discussed difficulty in studies of **transnationality** is that it is a very broad concept. Here a distinction can be made between “transnationalism” as a theoretical approach, and “transnational” as a term to describe concrete empirical phenomena (see De Jong/Dannecker 2018). On the level of empirical observations, it is tempting to regard any practice that crosses state borders as transnational. In order to prevent transnationality from becoming a “‘catch-all and say nothing’ term” (Pries 2007: 17), we need to define which action patterns, manners of communitization, and social entanglements can be described as transnational.

We use the term to mean basically the same thing as “trans-state” or “cross-border” (see Faist/Fauser/Reisenauer 2013: 9). This usage involves a certain amount of fuzziness, for it is common knowledge that state borders are not “things-in-themselves”, in either a physical or a symbolic sense, but are historical products of legal and institutional processes. These assume very different forms

within and between different regions of the world. In addition, not all states are “nation states” in the narrow sense. The term “nation” has two meanings which are not always systematically distinguished: on the one hand, a political state, and on the other hand, a form of social community or “we-group”.² In the context of transnational research, we attach importance to reconstructing the correlations between the transnational action patterns of migrants and the concrete, historically developed border arrangements they have had to deal with. For our empirical analysis and a heuristic definition of precarious transnationality, we found the argument of Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser and Eveline Reisenauer (2013: 16) helpful. They propose that “transnationality” should be regarded as a spectrum of ties across state borders with differing degrees of intensity:

“Transnationality connotes the social practices of agents – individuals, groups, communities and organizations – across the borders of nation-states. The term denotes a spectrum of cross-border ties in various spheres of social life – familial, socio-cultural, economic and political – ranging from travel, through sending financial remittances, to exchanging ideas. [...] transnational ties can be understood as occupying a continuum from low to high – that is, from very few and short-lived ties to those that are multiple and dense and continuous over time” (Faist/Fauser/Reisenauer 2013: 16).

If we combine this definition with a biographical perspective, then the degree of intensity indicates the degree to which a person’s life is shaped symbolically and practically by relationships with people in other countries. From the perspective of biographical research, we need to ask how these relationships began and how they have changed within collective, familial and biographical processes. If, on this basis and from a biographical perspective, we now look at the migration courses which will be discussed in this chapter, a conceptional gap will become apparent: In the cases presented here, there is, on the one hand, a very high degree of transnationality, in the sense that it is biographically significant for the individuals concerned, and that they are integrated in transnational networks, while, on the other hand, their positions within the networks are extremely fragile and unstable. Despite its great importance, the network is not only a resource, in the sense of social or cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). We will return to this ambivalence below, when we define the concept of precarious transnationality. But first we will explain what we mean by precarity.

When we use the term **precarity**, we are referring to the biographical uncertainty and insecurity that arises from having a very restricted future horizon, or not having any long-term perspective. Thus, we follow discussions in which this

² Those migration phenomena that are investigated, for example, in studies of “internal migration” in Ghana (see Lentz 1998: 215–228) or China (see Gransow 2012) can be described as transnational, in the sense of moving between “national” we-groups, although no state borders are crossed.

term is not used exclusively to refer to insecure and flexible employment relationships in “Western” welfare states. It is true that the employment situation of the interviewees whose cases we will discuss, and their chances for economic reproduction, are an important component of their everyday realities, and precarious in the sense of being

“low paid, [...] with earnings that are at or below the poverty level and variable; insecure, meaning that there is uncertainty regarding the continuity of employment and the risk of job loss is high; with minimal worker control, such that the worker, either individually or collectively, has no say about their working conditions, wages or the pace of work; and unprotected, meaning that the work is not protected by law or collective agreements with respect to occupational safety and health, social protection, discrimination or other rights” (International Labour Organization 2016: 18).

However, we are concerned with more than just insecure incomes. Rather, “precarity” here means “complex, fragmented positionings and insecure ways of life, as well as unequal or restricted access to rights and opportunities for participation” (Pieper 2014: 111, translated from German by Ruth Schubert). In contrast to Pieper, who here refers to welfare state arrangements, we assume that these are only one form of social security that is supplemented by family, religious or other networks. While the fact that “precarity is also created by present-day border regimes which produce large numbers of undocumented workers” (ibid.: 124) is important, it can only partially explain the situation of the people presented in this chapter. Illegal jobs in the so-called informal sector³ and limited chances of obtaining a residence permit are components that reinforce each other in the cases discussed in this chapter. They have an unsettling effect and make it impossible to plan for the future, and this is often made worse by a lack of supportive and stabilizing we-groups (or comparable networks), and painful experiences of violence in the past.

In his much-quoted text “Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now”, Bourdieu referred to people with and without jobs, primarily in northern and western Europe, but he underlined an aspect that is also an essential feature of the situations discussed here, namely:

“the destructuring of existence, which is deprived among other things of its temporal structures, and the ensuing deterioration of the whole relationship to the world, time and space. [...] by making the whole future uncertain, it prevents all rational anticipation and, in particular, the basic belief and hope in the future that one needs in order to rebel, especially collectively, against present conditions, even the most intolerable” (Bourdieu 1998: 82).

³ For different economic and political definitions of “informality”, see Charnes (2012). For critical views of precarity as reflected in discussions on the concepts of marginality, exclusion and informality, see Munck (2013).

While Bourdieu understands that his discussions of “generalized subjective insecurity” (ibid.: 83) might be perceived as referring only to places, like France, with a “highly developed economy”, and, one might add, an existing welfare state, he argues that it is also “the origin of the demoralization and loss of militancy which one can observe (as I did in Algeria in the 1960s) in underdeveloped countries suffering very high rates of unemployment or underemployment and permanently haunted by the spectre of joblessness” (ibid.: 83).

Thus, while Bourdieu does make reference to studies relating to the Global South, critics have repeatedly noted that his definitions of precarity, like many others, treat the welfare state as the norm, and therefore have a Eurocentric bias (see for example Betti 2016). Sarah Mosoetsa, Joel Stillerman and Chris Tilly quote Akua Britwum, a Ghanaian specialist in labour studies, who captured this in a nutshell at an ILO conference when she said: “What you are calling precarious work sounds like what we in Ghana call work” (2016: 8). The need for a less Eurocentric and more nuanced analysis of modes of production in the Global South has been thoroughly discussed, for example by the Bielefeld Development Sociologists Working Group, through the use of concepts such as subsistence economy (e.g. Evers 1990), or informal sector (Elwert/Evers/Wilkens 1983). Ultimately, however, precarity and informality are often used interchangeably, and the distinction between these terms and concepts continues to be debated and challenged in its analytical precision. Consequently, Georg Elwert, Hans-Dieter Evers and Werner Wilkens argue that “the term informal sector can be used descriptively, but hardly analytically”. According to these authors, this sector can be described sociologically “as a ‘stratum of the unsecured,’ in which the search for security has absolute priority over income maximization” (1983: 281, translated from German by Ruth Schubert).

In using the term precarious, we follow this view and refer, 1. (as shown above) to the profound insecurity arising from precarious employment conditions, as well as other aspects such as an insecure residency status or experiences of violence, and the resulting impossibility of making plans for the future, and 2. to the perspectives of the actors and their interpretation of their situation as “precarious”. As Kalleberg puts it: “By ‘precarious work,’ I mean employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker” (2009: 2).

For us, the important points are to base our conclusions on empirical observations, to take the relevancies of the actors into account, and to reflect on normative assumptions which, from a global point of view, represent the exception rather than the norm.

On the basis of the above definitions of transnationality and precarity, **a constellation or situation in the migration process can be described as precarious transnationality** if it has the following combination of structural features which interact with each other:

(1) *A transnational network with a high but ambivalent degree of intensity.* From the perspective of the migrants, having a transnational network with a high degree of intensity means that they have cross-border ties which play a central role in their biographical decision-making. These ties can be of various kinds and are often interconnected (labor- and business-related obligations, obligations to friends or neighbors, loyalty to family or other we-groups, transnational family models developed over several generations, etc.). This degree of intensity is ambivalent because, on the one hand, transnational networks can be sources of financial, cultural or social support for migrants, while, on the other hand, transnational ties can also create very one-sided dependencies and obligations which the migrants find hard to deal with. This can be the case, for example, when the families of origin of the migrants depend on their remittances, or when the migrants depend, during their migration, on the solidarity and support of members of their network. We follow Norbert Elias in arguing that society is always characterized by mutual dependencies and unequal – but changing – power balances (Elias 1978: 74). If these dependencies are very one-sided, resulting in a very wide power gap, this can contribute substantially to the precarization of migration courses.

(2) *An extremely precarious, unstable life situation.* As explained above, by precarious life situation we mean a situation that is characterized by not being able to plan one's life, in other words an extremely uncertain future horizon. Such situations are clearly precarious in a financial sense, in line with the "narrow definition" of precarious, with reliance on jobs that offer no security and no perspectives. But there are other important factors, including an uncertain residency status, not knowing whether or when it will be possible to see one's family, partner or children again, or isolation and stress caused by being exposed to violence.

In cases where an extremely precarious life situation coincides with a transnational network with a high degree of intensity, we will speak of "precarious transnationality". Precarious transnationality is a critical biographical phase necessitating action to deal with the situation and, if possible, to resolve it.

On the basis of various example cases, we will discuss how our analyses reveal different types of emergence, perpetuation and transformation of precarious transnationality. As explained above, we will distinguish between those who permanently have to "battle" through constellations of precarious transnationality (type 1: "constant navigation") and those for whom this situation is only a relatively limited phase (type 2: "temporary navigation").

6.3 Constant navigation through precarious transnationality

In this section, we present two biographical case reconstructions as examples of migration courses that remain very precarious over a long period of time due to continuous mobility, multiple placements, and transnational networks. In both

cases, the migrants live in various places for many years in a succession of extremely unstable situations (among others, in financial terms and in respect of their residence status). Julius James from Sierra Leone represents a course that is constantly shaped by great responsibility for his family, and a high degree of transnational capital and resources, which are weakened as a result of different socio-historical events and processes. By contrast, Mina Ahmed from Iraq is threatened by her own family which forms part of the biographical and social situation she decided to leave. Thus, for her the main question is what networks she can build up independently of her family, and how she can find a safe place to live with a regular income and secure residency status, and thus opportunities to develop long-term future plans.

6.3.1 Julius James – Escape from collective violence, seeking independence, and family responsibility

We will first discuss the biography of a migrant from Sierra Leone. We have decided to present the case of this man in detail because it is shaped not only by losses and painful experiences, but also by power of agency and a strong will to improve his own situation and that of his close relatives. This case is typical of family and biographical processes of precarious transnationality, and exemplifies many of our empirical findings.

Eva Bahl first met Julius James in October 2019 in Rio de Janeiro⁴ and interviewed him in English together with Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves. Since then, Eva Bahl has stayed in contact with him. They have exchanged messages, and she has conducted six online follow-up interviews with him. The analysis of the case presented here includes the results of this process-related research which covered a period of more than two years.

Julius James left Sierra Leone with his family to escape from the civil war (1991–2002) and forced recruitment when he was about 18 years old. His mother was killed at the border, probably because she wanted to protect Julius from being forcibly recruited. Julius then went to Nigeria, his mother's country of origin, with his father and his siblings. The next few years were marked for him by a high degree of mobility, traveling back and forth between Nigeria and Sierra Leone. At the age of 38, when he was no longer able to stabilize his situation with this strategy, he decided to migrate to Trinidad, in the Caribbean. He was unable to enter the country, and was immediately put on a flight back home. During a stopover in Brazil, he succeeded in applying for asylum there.

The transnational spaces in the history of Julius James's life and migration thus clearly reach beyond his migration from Nigeria to Brazil, both temporally and

⁴ In addition to Eva Bahl, the co-author of this article, Gabriele Rosenthal, Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, and Lucas Cé Sangalli, were involved in this field research. It took place between October and November 2019 in various Brazilian cities. Further visits to the field could not take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

spatially. And while he is at present the only one in his nuclear family with a history of transcontinental migration, large parts of his extended family are very mobile within West Africa. On the one hand, Julius James profited frequently from his family's transregional connections, which meant that in a crisis he could always move to a new place and rely on finding a supportive family network and cultural capital there. But ultimately, these emplacements and support structures were always fragile, or were so weakened by external events, that for Julius James moving to another place was the last option in the struggle to maintain his own power of agency. We will discuss these findings in more detail below in the light of his biography.

In the interviews, Julius James presents his life story as being shaped by various crises. In this story, the violent death of his mother plays a prominent role and is presented as the starting point for many of his subsequent problems. In his self-presentation, he always speaks of his family in transnational or transregional terms. This can be seen in the first words of the first interview:

“Okay actually I’m from Sierra Leone in West Africa //I1: mhmh// during the war we – me with my family – we relocated to Nigeria because my mom’s from Nigeria, you know, and I’ve been in Nigeria for a long time yeah. Because of the problem, you know, so actually my family- I lost my mom during the war. So about my family my sister like my: my: father they are all in Nigeria [...] I go to Sierra Leone I was there studying life you know (2) on my own you know” (1st Interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 2019).

Thus, in the first sentences he uttered after being invited to tell the story of his life, he located himself and his family between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, spoke about how his mother was killed during the war, and highlighted the way he moved back and forth between the two countries. What he calls “studying life [...] on my own” is also a biographically relevant aspect. As we will show below, he must be seen in the context of his role as eldest son and provider.

Julius James was born in 1980 in Bo, Sierra Leone, as the first son of his parents. His father was a teacher, and his mother a trader. At the time of his birth he had two older sisters, and five more siblings were born after him.

With about 200,000 inhabitants⁵ Bo is the second largest city in Sierra Leone (after Freetown, the capital). Within this West African country, it is an important center for education and culture, as well as for trade. The ethnic and cultural composition of the population is very mixed, with no ethnic grouping occupying a clear majority position.

⁵ Figures vary between 174,000 and 233,000. Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/sierra-leone> [Accessed on October 26, 2021].

The social milieu in which he grew up can be described as urban middle class.⁶ According to Julius James, they had no financial worries, because his mother, who was from Nigeria, was a “good business woman”. His parents met through their fathers, who were business partners and friends. They both traded with the printed fabrics known as “Dutch prints” which are widespread in West Africa and which were originally produced in Holland.⁷ His mother migrated to Sierra Leone with her family at the time of the Biafran war, which lasted from 1967 to 1970 in her region of origin in the southeast of Nigeria. Her family was Igbo, and it was the Igbo who were fighting for independence from Nigeria’s central government (on this conflict, see Heerten/Moses 2014: 172ff.). The war caused such great economic and social damage that large numbers of people left the area and migrated to other parts of the country, other countries, or other regions of the world: “Migration [...] became a necessary means of survival” (Aham-Okoro 2017: 25).⁸ For the family of Julius James’s mother, the war resulted in a loss of social status. The family was wealthy because Julius James’s maternal grandfather was a successful businessman and owned many properties, but they had to leave everything behind when they left their home in Port Hartcourt. According to Julius James, when they returned after the war, only two of the buildings they owned were still there; the others had been destroyed or confiscated. Nevertheless, the family succeeded in re-establishing themselves as business people in Sierra Leone. In this, they were able to use their business connections which were spread across the whole of West Africa. Thus, Julius says his mother went on business trips to Guinea (Conakry), Nigeria, Ghana and Benin. His mother was the eldest daughter of her father and, like him, she bought and sold Dutch prints, but was also involved in the local gold trade and had her own shop.

Julius James’s father comes from the border region with Guinea-Conakry, and belongs to the ethnic grouping of the Susu, a minority grouping in Sierra Leone.⁹ He was a teacher, but, as we have already mentioned, he came from a family of traders. Thus, both of Julius’s parents came from families that were traders, and belonged to groupings that are known for their strong trade networks in the

⁶ Dieter Neubert and Florian Stoll point out that “it would be a gross simplification to regard Africa’s middle class as a uniform, socio-culturally homogeneous group with largely similar or identical attitudes and orientations” (2015: 3). Here, we mean only a socio-economic classification that is “above the poverty threshold” (ibid.: 1), with “greater consumption opportunities” (ibid.: 2).

⁷ The story of these cotton fabrics is a “peculiar story of copy and appropriation” (Sylvanus 2016: 4). They were produced by Dutch firms which copied Indonesian batik patterns. Today they are mainly produced in China, and used and worn in West Africa.

⁸ On the tradition of migration in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Igbo society, see Nwolis Okanga 2003, chs. 1 and 2.

⁹ In 1963 – two years after the independence of Sierra Leone – the census showed that they made up 3.1% of the total population (Keese 2016: 160). In the neighboring country of Guinea, according to the CIA Factbook, people who identify as Susu nowadays constitute 21.2% of the population. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea/> [Accessed on November 26, 2021].

region.¹⁰ In this context, the marriage of Julius's parents can be seen as the forming of an alliance. Kate Meagher, for instance, writes with regard to the trade networks of the Igbo:

“Throughout their history, cooperation across communal and ethnic cleavages has played a central role in Igbo economic survival and identity formation [...] strategic marriages [among other strategies have] contributed to expanding relations of trust, trade and commercial infrastructure outside the bounds of kinship and community” (Meagher 2010: 34f.).

Both his parents are Christians, his father Anglican and his mother Catholic. This means that in Sierra Leone, where 77% of the population are Muslims, they belong to a religious minority (Beresford Weekes/Bah 2015: 27). The ethnic and religious belongings mentioned here play a significant role in the family history and biography of Julius James because of the transnational trade connections and networks associated with them.

In 1991, when Julius James was eleven years old, civil war broke out in Sierra Leone with the increasing risk that Julius might be forcibly recruited. The war developed out of a complex conflict situation involving an almost bankrupt government, a “spill-over” from the Liberian civil war, the emergence of a rebel army, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the interests of diverse international actors (Hirsch 2001: 147ff.). It went on for eleven years, and different conflict parties recruited children to fight for them (Zack-Williams 2001). Julius went to school, but had to leave because of the war. For several years he was able to attend school only irregularly, or not at all.¹¹ When Julius James was about 18 and the war reached its peak around 1997, his parents decided to leave the country with him and his siblings. At the border crossing post, they were stopped by soldiers and Julius James's mother was shot dead. In several different interviews, he says that his mother was killed because she wanted to protect him and his siblings from being forcibly recruited. This is how he put it in the first interview:

¹⁰ On the Igbo trade networks, see for example Kanu 2019; Meagher 2010; Nwokocha 2015; Walther 2014. On Susu as an important commercial language, see for example Houis 1963: 10; Touré 2004: 9.

¹¹ There were various reasons why it was difficult to go to school. Cream Wright makes clear that during the war educational institutions were deliberately attacked: “In Sierra Leone the impact of civil war on education goes well beyond being ‘caught in the cross-fire’. Evidence suggests that far from being a casual victim of circumstances, education has been purposely and persistently targeted as an instrument of war as well as an arena for battle” (Wright 1997: 24). A report by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children points out that even before the war the school system in Sierra Leone was in a very poor condition, at least outside Freetown, the capital (see also Hirsch 2001: 147). The report refers to estimates that during the war 70% of school-age children had no access, or only restricted access, to education. It also says that: “During the war, expenditure on education was minimal [...] In addition, hundreds of thousands of students and teachers were displaced, and large numbers of schools were destroyed and looted” (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children 2004: 62).

“She DIED with bullets they kill her with bullets yes (4) during that time we are trying to escape. Because [...] once they see a grown-up boy they don’t want you to go out they want you to be a rebel to fight. So my mom tried to protect me for me not to go with them so: unfortunately that is when they killed her with the bullets” (1st Interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 2019).

And in the first follow-up interview:

I: did you have to fight in the war?

J: No. They tried but my mum rescued me, that’s why they killed my mum ((I: mmh)). They tried to- the rebels tried to take me as of then. But my mum did not accept that, she didn’t allow me. So because of that, that’s why my mum, I lost her. because of, the- I didn’t fight yeah but I experienced that yeah” (1st follow-up interview, online, April 14, 2020).

For Julius James, survival is bound up with a deep sense of guilt. He survived because his mother sacrificed herself for him. We can take it that this kind of “survivor guilt”, which has been studied by William G. Niederland in the context of Holocaust survivors, and which he described as a “lifelong burden of pain, shame, and guilt” (1981: 420), also exists in other contexts, such as not being recruited while many other children and adolescents were forced to fight in the war. Julius, his father, and his siblings survived the attack and managed to reach Nigeria, his mother’s country of origin. In one of the follow-up interviews, Julius says:

“When we are leaving the country //I: mhmh// she was killed. So, this is the challenges we //I: mh// most challenges I have in life. Because my mother was a great woman //I: mh// and maybe if we moved without losing her life, maybe the situation won’t be so much for me and my family //I: mh// Because she’s from Nigeria, she knows the whole situation, she knows what to do there //I: mhmh// So: when we get there it’s a different life, difficult life. But at least we are safe because when we leave the country we all could have lost our lives //I: mh// my dad my sister also we could have lost our lives” (3rd follow-up interview, online, November 17, 2020).

In this passage, he clearly visualizes his narrow escape and that not only he, but also his father and siblings, could have died that day. In addition, he sees his mother’s death as the reason why he and his siblings have had so many problems in life.

After arriving, Julius went to stay with his mother’s brother in Port Harcourt, the capital and largest city in Rivers State, southern Nigeria, and enrolled at a technical college there. Thus, he lived in the region from which his mother came,

where he could link up with family networks and had some prior knowledge of the culture and the language. For example, he spoke a little Igbo, a language that is widely spoken only in the southern provinces. At the same time, the infrastructure in the region was poor as a consequence of the Biafran war, in which the dominant Igbo had attempted to achieve secession from the rest of Nigeria. Furthermore, the region was “plagued even in pre-colonial times by severe land shortage” (Meagher 2010: 34). This and other components have meant that there has been a high rate of emigration to other regions of Nigeria, to neighboring countries, and to other parts of the world (Kanu 2019: 38f.).

While Julius tried to establish himself in the southeast of Nigeria, his father and his siblings stayed in the north, where his father became headmaster of a primary school.¹²

Around the time that Julius and his family came to Nigeria, the military government which had ruled for sixteen years came to an end with the parliamentary and presidential elections in February 1999 (Falola/Heaton 2008: 235). Obasanjo, a Yoruba, standing for the People’s Democratic Party, was elected president. However, his plans for the economic stabilization of Nigeria did not change the everyday realities of most Nigerians – and even less so those of a recently arrived refugee family.

“From 1999 to 2007 President Olusegun Obasanjo went about restoring the image of Nigeria in international circles, pushing a pro-democracy agenda and courting increased foreign investment. In some ways these efforts have been successful; in others they have not. [...] Although Obasanjo’s plans for economic development resulted in some improvements in small pockets of the country and for a small class of elites, in most of the country Nigerians remained poor, lacking basic necessities and social services such as health care, public transportation, and adequate educational facilities” (Falola/Heaton 2008: 242).

In the same year, in Lomé, the capital of Togo, a contested peace agreement¹³ was signed which was intended to put an end to the war in Sierra Leone. But the war ended only three years later, in 2002, when Julius was 22 years old. Julius and his family were now free to return to Sierra Leone, but no one immediately went back.

¹² The education system in Nigeria has serious infrastructural weaknesses. Many teachers are inadequately trained and badly paid (see BBC, “Why Nigeria’s educational system is in crisis - and how to fix it.” Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3RbFXDdBw3g0HQQ0fpyD0xF/why-nigerias-educational-system-is-in-crisis-and-how-to-fix-it> [Accessed on December 14, 2020]).

¹³ The peace agreement was controversial because it granted amnesty to Foday Sankoh, leader of the rebel army “Revolutionary United Front”, arranged the transformation of the RUF into a political party, and enabled Sankoh to hold the position of vice-president in a government of national reconciliation.

Julius wanted to work in Nigeria, but, as he puts it, his “start in life” was not easy. He sees this as being due to the death of his mother, who had networks and contacts there, and who had been responsible for a large part of the family income.

“I spent like four five years there [...] it was difficult for me then to start because my mom is not alive. She is the one who helped who supported me. My dad was a teacher [...] they were not paying any pension because he is in Nigeria now (1) so no one to help me then. And he tried a little for me to go to a technical school that he paid. So it was difficult for me to start life in Nigeria [...] One of my senior sisters – because I have two elder sisters – [...] they are working there some small work you know in Nigeria so they supported me with some money, you know, for me to see if I can travel so I go back to Sierra Leone to start life there” (1st Interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 2019).

This passage shows that he believes his mother would have been able to support him in a way that his father could not. His two older sisters gave him money to go back to Sierra Leone and make a life for himself there. Julius James thus began to travel back and forth between Nigeria, where his family was living, and Sierra Leone. He did not return to Bo, where he was born, but to the capital of Sierra Leone, Freetown. In Sierra Leone he had various jobs, for instance as a cook in Chinese restaurants, and in Nigeria he worked in his cousin’s commercial cleaning firm. But he also continued the family tradition of trading, by traveling to the market in Conakry (Guinea), buying men’s clothing and shoes there and reselling them in Sierra Leone. His knowledge of languages was a help to him here. He spoke Susu and during these trips he learned to communicate in French. In 2009, at the age of 29, he became the father of a son in Nigeria, but did not live with the mother. From this time on, he had financial responsibility not only for his siblings and his father, as the eldest son, but also for his son and the child’s mother.

The constellations within which Julius moved can be described as an intertwining of economic components, family dynamics, and collective historical events. His sisters supported him but with the expectation that he would support the family in the future. He was in Sierra Leone when Ebola broke out in 2014, and, although the borders were officially closed, he left the country to join his family in Nigeria. When the situation in Sierra Leone eased, he went back there and opened a workshop with money he had earned in Nigeria. In August 2017 there was flooding in the area of Freetown, and a landslide which affected Julius. Both his home and his workshop were destroyed, and an uncle of his died.

“I lost my place. Luckily for me I was not there, but I lost my friends and eh: I lost my uncle who stayed in my room: ((I: mmh)) and eh: I lost the place I’m working=my working place there, so because it’s close to my place, so: that’s it. But at least then: you know, when it happened, a lot of people

come to rescue and as of then I have to leave there, to go to Nigeria back to Nigeria to stay with my family” (1st follow-up interview, online, April 14, 2020).

When describing the great loss he suffered at that time, Julius underlines the help he and other victims received from many people. This emphasis should be seen in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which this follow-up interview was conducted. Living in Brazil during the pandemic made him feel very lonely and isolated (see below for more details of the fragility of his supportive networks).

But let us return to Julius’s life story. Being affected severely by the landslide made him give up his plan to establish himself in Sierra Leone, despite the support he was given. He says, “this is [...] my last situation that makes me to leave (completely)” (3rd follow-up interview, online, November 17, 2020). He returned to Nigeria for the last time and lived with his family in Borno State, in the northeast of Nigeria, in a region that was subject to attacks by Boko Haram, an Islamist militia.¹⁴ The Christian family often had to flee from the militia and its attacks. Julius was unemployed, but he helped his sisters who worked in the market. When the market was bombed by members of Boko Haram, his sisters also lost their source of income. Food markets are considered as “prime venues for targeting civilians and have seen numerous direct attacks [by Boko Haram]” (Van Den Hoek 2017: 6; see also Awodola/Oboshi 2015). Julius says that he and his sisters then sat around at home with nothing to do. By this time, their father had retired, and Julius describes the (presumably typical) difficulties he had when trying to obtain from the Nigerian government his pension payments as a former civil servant:

“When during the war when he goes to Nigeria, he **worked** as a teacher (headmaster) in the school in primary school. Normally they’re supposed paying him his pension but the government there is bad, too so //I1: mhmh// they are not doing anything for him” (1st Interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 2019).

The problem with the pension payments was probably aggravated by the fact that Julius’s father had been employed in Nigeria for only a part of his working life. It was in the context of this financial situation, as well as the risk of Boko Haram attacks, that in December 2018, with the help of his family, Julius James decided to purchase a plane ticket to Trinidad, where a friend of his was living and working. However, he was not allowed to enter the country and was immediately deported.

¹⁴ In 2016, the World Bank estimated the damage in this region at about six billion US dollars, with over two million refugees and displaced persons. It claimed that in Borno State around 30% of all private houses had been destroyed, as well as over 5,000 school buildings and more than 200 health facilities (see: BBC News. May 10, 2016. “Letter from Africa. How to rebuild Nigeria after Boko Haram.” Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36191512> [Accessed on January 07, 2021]).

During a stopover in Brazil, in Guarulhos airport in São Paulo, he managed to apply for asylum. He finally ended in Rio de Janeiro, where he was still living at the time of writing.

His situation in Rio was extremely precarious. He lived in various shelters for the homeless and was dependent on food donations. His situation improved a little when he came into contact with people at an Anglican church, which was mainly attended by expatriates working in the country for limited periods. He received material aid from them and could communicate with them in English – at the time of the first interview in 2019, he spoke hardly any Portuguese, although this changed during the following years. The church gave him money for rent and transport, and in return he performed voluntary work for the church, for instance social work in Rio's marginalized communities.

He suffered from the difficulty of keeping in touch with his son and his father. Their internet connection was too poor to make online calls, and he could not afford to make expensive transcontinental telephone calls. He also suffered because he was unable to fulfill his obligations as provider by sending money to his family. He felt responsible for his father and his son, but also indebted to his sisters who had paid for his flight to Trinidad. At the time of our follow-up interviews, his son contracted typhoid fever and had to be treated in hospital. This increased the pressure on Julius to find a way of changing his situation. Since it was not possible for him to send for his son to come and live with him – which was his wish, as he said in one of the interviews – he asked his sisters to take the boy. His son is now living with his sisters in Lagos. This means that Julius James can talk to him regularly, and is sure that he will get a basic school education and health care. However, this means that Julius is even more indebted to his sisters. They regularly confront him with an account of their expenses on behalf of his son and ask him to send money.

On the basis of this sketch of Julius James's biography and migration, we can show some of the components which create ambivalence in those life courses which we refer to as "precarious transnationality": on the one hand, a transnational family network and the resources it provides (contacts, languages, mutual support), and, on the other hand, a permanent state of crisis, navigating from one predicament to the next. The transnational network and positioning continue to play an important role in everyday practice and plans for the future, but the resources it provides are unable to halt or to stabilize increasing precarization. Some of these components are discussed below.

Established transnational capital: migration as a strategy that has been practiced for generations. Julius James's parents came from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and national contexts, but in both cases their families were integrated in trade networks that covered the whole of West Africa. This family background also affected Julius James's scope for action. Since becoming a young adult, he has spent his life moving from place to place and from country to country. These

movements were frequently related to socio-historical process or events: for his mother's family this was the Biafran war; for Julius James it was the civil war in Sierra Leone, the landslide in Freetown, the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, and attacks by Boko Haram in the northeast of Nigeria. For a long time, Julius had no intention of leaving West Africa. On the contrary, moving back and forth between two countries seemed to him the best way to improve his own situation, to escape from difficult situations, and to retain his power of agency. The family's transnational capital becomes clear if we take a look at Julius James's close relatives.

A family system on the move. In an interview conducted at the end of 2019, Julius James said that two of his brothers were in Ghana, but shortly afterward he wrote to Eva Bahl that they had moved to Benin. In one of the follow-up interviews (3rd follow-up interview, online, November 17, 2020), he said they were working as agents in the car trade, giving support to clients from Nigeria who wanted to buy a car.¹⁵ His sisters and his father are "internally displaced", having left Borno State in the northeast of Nigeria because of the terrorist activities of Boko Haram there. His sisters – and now also his son – live in Lagos, and his father in a house belonging to the family of his deceased wife, Julius's mother, in the southeast of Nigeria. It is evident that the family is still "on the move". During the period when Julius James was traveling back and forth between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, his father and his siblings had to move several times to escape the terror attacks of the Boko Haram militia.

Our analysis shows that the whole family system is "on the move". Familial and collective-history dynamics are also intertwined for James's siblings. Fleeing from the danger of being attacked by Boko Haram is only one aspect; it is combined with others, such as providing for family members in need (Julius's sisters gave a home to their father for a time, and later to Julius's son), or strategies for earning money (his brothers went to work in Benin).

In the case of Julius James himself, there are indications that he is still "on the move". We will show below that he continues to entertain the idea of migration as a strategy for improving his own situation and that of his family.

Brazil is a transit place and was not his original destination. When, after many years of mobility within West Africa, Julius James finally decided to begin a new migration project in the Caribbean, his plan was to go to a country where English is the official language, where there is a large Igbo diaspora,¹⁶ and where he hoped that a friend of his, who had already settled there, would help him to find work.

¹⁵ In 2014 BBC News reported on the second-hand car market in Cotonou, Benin, which provides jobs for thousands of people. Used cars imported legally from Europe are exported illegally from there to Nigeria, which has much stricter import regulations (See: BBC News. September 4, 2014. "Benin's second-hand car trade." Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-29061377> [Accessed on December 14, 2020]).

¹⁶ The Nigerian philosopher Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, in discussing the transatlantic slave trade, points out that "there was a huge concentration of the Igbos [...] in Jamaica and Trinidad" (2019: 37).

He never planned to go to Brazil, but it was his only chance to avoid being sent back to Nigeria, as he explains in the interview. Because we have stayed in contact with Julius, we know that he sees no future for himself in Brazil due to the economic situation, now aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In early 2022, he told us he was planning to leave Brazil, since he did not see how he could earn enough money to provide for both himself and his family. At first, he had hoped to be able to get Brazilian citizenship, which would make traveling much easier for him, but then he considered undertaking the dangerous and costly overland journey across the American continent to the US, with the hope of entering that country as an illegalized migrant. However, due to the risks (“people die every day” [6th follow-up interview]), about which he was regularly informed by his many contacts along the route, he then applied for a visa for Mexico. His second application, made after getting money from a friend, was successful. At the time of writing, he was planning to fly there. This project is also connected with his integration in dynamic and spatially mobile networks of West Africans. He is in contact with people who migrated along this route before him, who supply him with information, and would offer their help if he arrived at the place where they were. In particular a Nigerian friend of his, who flew to Mexico and is now living in California, where he has applied for asylum, is an important reference point for him.

That Brazil will most likely remain a transit place for Julius James, is, as already mentioned, connected with his responsibility for members of his family, and his financial obligations to them. We will discuss this component in the next section.

Flight from collective violence intertwined with family dynamics and mandates.

His roles as eldest son of his father and as father of a son involve clear expectations that Julius James will help to provide for the family. First and foremost, this means remittances, which at the moment he is unable to send. He feels responsible for his family, is in debt to his older sisters, and suffers because he is unable to fulfill their expectations. In the interviews, he frequently says that his father calls him and tells him about his problems: the roof needs repairing, he doesn't have enough money to buy what he needs. This got worse when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, because it affected the financial situation of his brothers in Benin. After the beginning of the pandemic, far fewer customers came from Nigeria to buy cars. Devaluation of the Naira (the Nigerian currency) further contributed to making business difficult for the brothers. Before the pandemic, they had occasionally been able to send money to their father and to Julius, which had been a great help.

At the same time, it was collective history processes and events such as the terrorist activities of the Boko Haram militia, the civil war and the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone, that made his different migration projects become concrete (first between Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and later to Trinidad). Escaping from collective

But it is unclear whether this collective-history connection played a role in Julius's decision to choose Trinidad as a migration destination.

violence, with the enormous losses, including financial losses, this entails, had also been experienced by his mother when she came to Sierra Leone with her family during the Biafran war. Another component, which we have been able to identify as being of central importance in the genesis and dynamics of precarious transnationality, is the role of networks.

The important role of transnational (family, religious, ethnic) networks. This case study shows very clearly that Julius James's transnational connections, and his competences such as a knowledge of different languages, are resources which he is often able to exploit, and which give him freedom to act even in times of crisis. They also give him stability, especially in the period when he is able to move back and forth between the regions of origin of his parents. However, due to the serious crises and disasters¹⁷ repeatedly experienced by him and his family, he is unable to develop a long-term sense of security and "normality". His situation in Brazil is also very insecure. At the time of our first interview in Rio in fall 2019, immediate existential dangers there seemed to have been averted for the time being, and economic worries and the difficulty of staying in touch with family took center stage. But this changed with the Covid-19 pandemic, which increased his isolation and clearly showed his lack of networks, or the fragility of those he had managed to build up: The Anglican church was no longer active and many of its members had left the country. It was now a question of how to survive in a country convulsed by the pandemic, and where (as everywhere) people in precarious situations find it difficult to obtain information and to adequately protect themselves. He says he is afraid of contracting Covid-19, because he thinks that if he should fall seriously ill there would be no one to care for him: "I don't want—I don't want to get it, because if I get it, it is no one who cares about me" (1st follow-up interview, online, April 14, 2020). In the follow-up interviews, Julius James draws parallels between the Covid-19 pandemic and other crises he has experienced (Ebola, landslide, civil war). But he sees an essential difference in that during those crises he was not short of money, and he could count on the support of his people "at home".

"During the Ebola, as I told you, I was working then, so I have money, during the lockdown at home at least I have money to eat. I know I'm in my country. I'm not afraid [...] I'm comfortable because I know I'm in my country, where- I'm only afraid, that I will not contract the- the Ebola disease, number one. Then, like during the disaster [the landslide, E.B.], it happened and we are all rescued, we lost families, and it happened I lost my properties—I lost my house—I lost my working place, yes but my life I have my life now ((I: mmh)). And people came to us because in my country

¹⁷ Elísio Macamo and Dieter Neubert define crisis as the moment when the "usual strategies no longer work and there is no certainty about how to deal with the event or its consequences" (2008: 860, translated from German by Ruth Schubert). They speak of disaster only "when emergency measures are ineffective and the event makes it difficult or impossible to implement them" (ibid.).

there are a lot of people who are sympathizing or who at least give me a place for some days, for some time before I tried to put myself in order then, I decided to go back to meet my family there, where they are in Nigeria, because they=they moved there during the war ((I: mmh)) I decided to go back, so, I will say this- this the Corona Virus is=is really, is really bad, is a bad experience but only when I experienced this kind of situation is more than Ebola problem and the- maybe during the war” (1st follow-up interview, online, April 14, 2020).

In the period when Julius James was moving back and forth between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, he relied on familial and ethnic networks and stocks of knowledge: in Nigeria he lived with a maternal uncle, and he spoke Susu and Igbo which were useful during his business trips to Guinea or in Nigeria. However, with his unplanned migration to Brazil, he could only rely on religious and migrant networks, although for him they did not constitute a *we*-group with the chance of collective, or collectively based, power of agency. There are very few migrants from Sierra Leone in Brazil,¹⁸ but migrants from Senegal, Nigeria, and other West African countries became important contact persons for Julius. Among other things, they give him financial or material help, and friendships have developed. These West African contacts also play an important role in his current plans to leave Brazil, because many of them are themselves on their way to the north, or have arrived in the US.

We will now present another case, which differs from that of Julius James in many respects: In addition to gender and region of origin, there are big differences in the initial constellation and the reasons for migrating. What the two cases have in common, as we will show, is the transnational character of the respective migration projects, which are at the same time characterized by unremitting precariousness.

6.3.2 Mina Ahmed – flight from familial and collective violence, formation of precarious transnational networks, always on the move

In this section, we will discuss the case of Mina Ahmed. Mina was first interviewed by Gabriele Rosenthal and Lucas Cé Sangalli, and a second interview was conducted by Lucas Cé Sangalli together with Eva Bahl. Both interviews took place during our fieldwork in Brazil in October 2019, and were conducted in English. Afterwards, we kept in touch with Mina by exchanging messages, and Eva

¹⁸ According to the Brazilian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, in 2017 there were 153 applications for asylum by Sierra Leone nationals, 34 in 2018 (the year Julius James arrived), and 26 in 2019. Available at: <https://portaldeimigracao.mj.gov.br/pt/dados/microdados/1733-obmigra/dados/microdados/401293-sti> [Accessed on November 24, 2020]. The number of approvals was lower than these figures. We are grateful to Maria do Carmo Santos Gonçalves for her assistance with finding these statistics.

Bahl conducted two online follow-up interviews. The combination of biographical-narrative interviews and follow-up interviews enabled us to take a closer look at the complex processuality of the case, and the limitations of Mina's power of agency in a precarious transnational space.

Mina fled from Iraq at the age of 33, and went to Jordan, a neighboring country, where she lived for six years. After this she migrated to Brazil, where she stayed for about three years before moving on to Turkey. Mina's migration project is an escape from violence, violence in her family of orientation, in her marriage, and in the overall societal context of a series of wars in Iraq from 1980 onward (see Franzén 2020: 251ff.). The interviews with Mina made clear that she is suffering from the consequences of sequential traumatization (as defined by Keilson 1992; see also Becker 2004). In all the conversations we had with her, she spoke quite openly about the traumatizing experiences in her life. She explained that her ability to speak about them is related to the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic treatment she received in Jordan. At various points of the interview, it is also clear that she has learned to dissociate.¹⁹ Thus, for example, she talks of her own experiences as if she is speaking about another person – that is how she describes it herself:

“When I go out from Iraq I go to Jordan and I take medicine, psychology medicine. I cannot talk about my daughters like this before [...] now I'm good I'm talking about them like I'm talking about another person, you know it's not my life it's- I think=I feel my life for another person” (1st Interview, October 22, 2019).

Interestingly, she presents her life story in a very individualized way. While the collective macro-violence in Iraq forms the framework within which she was more or less helplessly exposed to certain structures and actors, this violence is hardly ever explicitly mentioned and only forms the background in which she embeds her own story. This can be seen very clearly in one of the first sentences in the first interview with her: “I (far/fly) away from Iraq because my family wanted to kill me and my husband, my ex-husband [also wanted to kill me].” Here, at least at first sight, her migration is not presented as a wish to escape from collective macro-violence, as might be expected in the case of a refugee from Iraq. Rather, she says that she fled – as far away as possible – from her family, who wanted to kill her. And although she repeatedly refers to the social context in the subsequent sentences (“in Iraq is so difficult for women”, “[...there] they have a closed mind”), these remarks serve only to contextualize the behavior of her family toward her. In her

¹⁹ “Dissociation makes it possible to ‘dream oneself’ out of a difficult situation, or to be as unaware of it as possible by conjuring up fantasies during or after the traumatizing experience, in order to strip it of its reality (see Overkamp 2002; Putnam 1997). A person who repeatedly suffers traumatizing events tends to learn the mechanism of dissociation (see Lynn and Rhue 1994; Terr 1991, 16). However, for the persons concerned it is problematic that they resort to this mechanism unconsciously and have little control over it” (Bogner/Rosenthal/Schmiereck 2017: 66, footnote 28).

biographical self-presentation, the collective violence outside the family is pushed into the background by the violence to which she was subjected within her family. She seldom explicitly mentions the series of wars which affected the country from 1980 onward, and which to a certain extent made the violence possible from which she suffered in her family.

Let us take a closer look at Mina Ahmed's biography. She was born in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, in 1977, three years before the Iran-Iraq war started.²⁰ She was the youngest of ten siblings in a socio-economically marginalized Sunni family that originally came from a Sunni-dominated region in northern Iraq and still has numerous ties there. Mina was marginalized and targeted by violence within the family and at the same time she was dependent on her family in a highly unstable context of war and conflict. Her childhood and adolescence were marked by patriarchal violence, especially by her father, whom Mina describes as a violent alcoholic. The different wars in Iraq cover almost her whole life span, and this patriarchal violence is also marked by strong continuity. She suffered further violence in her marriage: At the age of 20, she was involuntarily married to a Shia man²¹ who was a member of a militia. Her father and brothers had arranged the marriage. Her husband was fifteen years older than her. She has two daughters from that marriage, who were born in 2001 (when Mina was 24) and 2006 (when Mina was 29). In 2008 (when Mina was 31), she gave birth to a baby boy that died half an hour after birth. She blames her husband for the death of her first son. She says that he made her carry heavy loads, and he had refused to pay for a curettage, which would have been necessary following the previous birth. She describes how she was regarded after the death of her son as a woman who is unable to bear sons, and was maltreated and increasingly marginalized by her husband. About one month later, during a period of ethno-religiously charged conflict, sparked by Al Qaeda's bombing in 2006 of the al-Askaria Shia Shrine in the city of Samarra, a city in Salah al-Din province (Saleem 2021: 5), she was abducted and tortured by an armed group:

"I- I don't remember anything else (3) I lost my mind. I don't remember anything else. So, when I wake up, they put something in my eyes and my

²⁰ This war lasted from 1980 to 1988, and at least half a million people were killed in Iran and Iraq. The devastating consequences of the war had a serious impact on the lives of the people in the region after it ended. "At the war's conclusion, Iraq's economy was shattered. The oil industry had lost much of its capacity and the country was saddled with debts to Western and Gulf creditors" (Franzén 2020: 251).

²¹ Johannes Becker and Hendrik Hinrichsen refer to inter-sectarian marriages as an often-mentioned and therefore "prominent example" of the "high level of everyday interaction between Sunnis and Shiites" (ch. 9, footnote 3 in this volume). Haddad discusses "sectarian relations in Arab Iraq" (2013) and criticizes that their differences and conflicts are either over-emphasized or neglected. He argues that, "The reality of inter-community relations [...] is often far more complex [...] and] more akin to a process; a constantly fluctuating relation that is responsive to changes in the socio economic and political climate" (ibid.: 116).

mouth and my hand and my legs. And they told me – I just hear voices – they told me we kidnapped you we don't [...] like to do anything to you, just we need your father pay for us (3)" (1st Interview, October 22, 2019).

After one month she was released even though her father was not able to pay the ransom. During the same period, her family of orientation, who lived near her in Baghdad, were threatened in the context of the Sunni-Shiite conflict, and fled to their region of origin in northern Iraq. After the abduction, Mina had to suffer further violence by her husband, and she even suspected him of having been in cahoots with the kidnappers. Mina explains that she was normally never allowed to go to the market by herself, and from the fact that, on the day of the abduction, her husband sent her to the market, she concludes that he was involved in the planning of her abduction. She relates this to the death of her baby son. However, this idea came to her mind only as part of a re-interpretation process that began when she heard her husband talking about abducting another woman – and she recognized the voices of her captors in her own house:

"When I came back after I know he is working with them because I hear the same voices when I kidnapped I- I hear the- the voices in my house (2) the same voices in my house, you know. And [...] he's talking with them about the kidnap of another woman, she's same like me. I'm from a Muslim Sunni family and he is Shiite, you know, so they kidnapped a woman like this to take money from her family" (1st Interview, October 22, 2019).

In this quote, she is probably referring to another Sunni woman ("same like me") whose abduction was planned by the Shia militia that her husband was involved with. In order to escape these extremely violent family structures, she left Iraq for Jordan in 2010²² at the age of 33. She departed secretly during the night, and had to leave her two daughters behind. They were nine and four years old at the time of her departure, and she hasn't seen them since. She went to Jordan, where a sister of hers had lived before moving on to the US. That sister's ex-husband, who still lives in Jordan, helped her to cross the border and took her to Amman, where she stayed with him and his new family in the first weeks:

"My sister she's living in Jordan before she goes to the US and her husband he is now some (2) driver man. He is working with a car to drive people from Iraq to Jordan, so eh: she is talking with him about me and told him my situation in Iraq and about, my husband. So he told her yes I can help

²² In 2010, "sectarianism [was] seemingly on the back foot" (Franzén 2020: 387), parliamentary elections took place, the US government ended their combat mission in Iraq, and toward the end of the year, protests against unemployment and corruption erupted in the context of the "Arab Spring". While the protests were repressed heavily, the government of Nouri al-Maliki also promised reforms (ibid.: 387f.).

her (2) to: take her from Baghdad and to come to Jordan. So he's helped me and I'm still talking with him. He is a good man, and he's taken me from Baghdad and drive me to eh Jordan to Amman. So I'm still eh the first time with my eh (2) in- in- si- my sister's house, in Jordan but she's in this time she's gone to the US with her sons. So I'm still living with her ex-husband and he- he does have another wife and another children [...] and after I talk with UNHCR, about my situation //I1: mhmh// because my sister's ex-husband he has told me he cannot help me anymore and I must go out from his house. So UNHCR take me and put me in a shelter for women" (2nd Interview, October 28, 2019).

In Amman, she was temporarily interned in a center for victims of torture. She hoped to be included in a resettlement program in North America. While one of her best friends, an Iraqi woman we call Ziyah whom she had met in Jordan, was able to settle in the US (and has obtained US citizenship), access to the program was denied to Mina because of her husband's involvement with a Shia militia. According to the logic of admission for resettlement, she would be a security risk because through family reunification her husband might be able to enter the United States legally. Mina explains that when your case has been rejected in such a way, it is difficult to be included in programs for other countries.

Our biographical case reconstruction shows that many other parts of her family system are also "on the move". In the context of the devastating political situation in Iraq, two of her sisters migrated to Egypt and Lebanon, and another sister, as mentioned above, first went to Jordan, and then moved on to the United States. However, according to our analysis, this is a "fraying family" rather than a stabilizing network. Mina told us in the interviews that she didn't have contact with most of her family members:

"I don't have any contact with my family [just with two of] my sisters just eh one in Iraq and one in the US."

Among other reasons, she says this is because they fear her violent husband:

"Interviewer: is the relationship between you and the sister in Baghdad not good or-

Mina: no she doesn't like talking with me: maybe she's afraid (from) her husband, from my ex-husband I don't know but she's afraid. So I don't like talking with her because her husband is not good (too)" (1st Interview, October 22, 2019).

What is crucial for the course of her biography is that Mina met evangelical Christians in Amman who were involved in social work with Iraqi refugees, and she converted to Christianity. This network enabled her to migrate to Brazil after she

had repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought resettlement in North America. This was necessary because she felt insecure due to the geographical proximity of Iraq, and now felt particularly vulnerable due to her conversion and the involvement of one of her brothers with the so-called Islamic State. Her decision to adopt Christianity can be interpreted as the creation of, or attachment to, a new (strong and very closed) we-group. At the same time, she hid this belonging from everyone outside her closest circle.

In 2016, six years after her arrival in Amman, she traveled to Brazil, presumably with the help of evangelical networks, and applied for asylum there. After her arrival, she was baptized in an evangelical church, something that had not been possible in Jordan (cf. Maggiolini 2015). She made friends with Christian Iraqis who had left Iraq earlier, and tried to earn a living by producing and selling Iraqi sweets. She changed her place of residence several times between 2016 and 2019, moving to different Brazilian cities, and finally – through social media networks of Iraqis in Brazil – found employment in an Iraqi shop.

In the second interview we conducted with her, Mina surprised us with the information that she was putting into practice her plans for an onward migration. Just a few days later, she flew to northern Iraq, where she applied for a Turkish visa, and traveled from there to Turkey. She planned to live with her sister and her Iraqi friend Ziyān, a Christian convert like herself. This friend, as already mentioned, had obtained US citizenship several years previously, but regularly spent time in Turkey. Mina hoped for a better residency status and more job opportunities there. In the interview, she expressed the frustration over her legal and financial status in Brazil that led to this decision:

“the people who helped me to come here they told me in one year you can take a passport (2) Brazilian passport (2) and I came and I- I found it's not true (2) eh: there is no paper ((laughing)). I'm- I'm here for three years and I cannot take any paper [...] I'm waiting and waiting and you know I feel I cannot wait more because I'm tired and I'm working and my salary is so down I cannot (2) pay my rent my apartment it's so small just one room and bathroom (2) so eh (2) I think=I feel like I cannot stay more because that I- I think to go: to [city] and after I go to Turkey to living with my sister (2) so that's it” (2nd Interview, October 28, 2019).

From the follow-up interviews and continued contact through messaging apps, we now know that her sister did not get a visa for Turkey and was unable to join Mina, but at least Mina was able to live with her friend Ziyān in Istanbul for a while.

What do we learn from this case? Mina's flight is marked by multiple and intermingling experiences of collective macro-violence and familial violence. While the collective history of macro-violence is downplayed or neglected in her presentation, she focuses very much on her experiences of familial violence and how she

escaped from it. From our interviews with her, we assume that she experienced sequential traumatization. And while she has not been in situations of existential danger – “extreme situations” as defined by Bruno Bettelheim²³ – since leaving Iraq, she hasn’t arrived in a safe place, either. Hans Keilson (1992), on the basis of his research on Jewish orphans, distinguishes between three phases of sequential traumatization. The third phase is the course of events after the (series of) extreme experiences that have led to the traumatization. He consequently underlines the importance of the social situation of traumatized persons after escaping from the immediate danger.

“Keilson’s concept implies a radical change in the understanding of trauma. Instead of an event that has consequences, we are now looking at a process in which the description of the changing traumatic situation is the framework that organizes our understanding of trauma” (Becker 2004: 5).

An examination of the phase of Mina’s biography following her escape from the violence she experienced in Iraq shows that her situation has not become stabilized in a way that would allow her to settle down and feel safe. Her migration process is characterized by restlessness. She is continually “on the run” so that she does not have to face her painful past.

Her onward migrations are always connected with the hope of being able to improve her life situation. However, what she thinks will lead to improvement in each case, or what she sees as a criterion for a secure life, changes during the time we have been in contact with her. She repeatedly suffers setbacks in her attempts to establish stabilizing networks or to (re)connect with a we-group, be it a religious or a family group. Her sister didn’t get the necessary visa to join her in Turkey. Her Iraqi friend Ziyan, with whom she was reunited in Turkey, has a US American passport, after being resettled there from Jordan several years previously, as noted above, and can potentially leave Turkey at any time to return to the United States (where Mina would not be able to follow her). While Mina didn’t really establish evangelical networks during her time in Brazil, and defines her religious beliefs as a private matter, they are a strong factor for identification as a Christian and making connections with other Christians. Life in a country with a culture dominated by Christians – as was the case in Brazil – seems very attractive and safe to her in retrospect. She often says that she doesn’t feel safe in Muslim environments anymore.

Over the last thirteen years – since she left Iraq for the first time – Mina has expanded her space of action and her networks significantly. She has lived in Jordan, Brazil, Iraq, and Turkey. She still maintains contact with people in all

²³ According to Bettelheim, “What characterized it [his and his fellow prisoners’ situation in the Nazi concentration camps] most was its inescapability; its uncertain duration, but potentiality for life; the fact that nothing about it was predictable; that one’s very life was in jeopardy at every moment and that one could do nothing about it” (Bettelheim 1943: 418, quoted from Becker 2004: 4).

these places, and also with her sister and her friend Ziyan in the United States. And while – according to Mina – her sisters in Egypt and Lebanon would be willing to receive her and to help her to start a new life, she prefers not to live in an Arab country anymore and avoids contact with this part of the family.

Thus, while there is a framework of transnational relationships, activities, and interactions between her, some of her sisters, and her newly established (mainly Christian, often also Iraqi) contacts, it does not give her stabilization or the usual resources of multiple emplacement. Rather, as our case reconstruction shows, she repeatedly tries to escape from phases of powerlessness by planning new migration projects.

6.3.3 Summary: Structural features of constant navigation through precarious transnationality

We have presented two cases to illustrate the type we call “constant navigation through precarious transnationality”. They both show a combination of living in very precarious circumstances and having transnational connections with a high degree of intensity. In contrast to the cases discussed below, Mina and Julius have both been in this situation for a long time, and there is no prospect of it changing in the near future. Common to the biographical courses of these two people are certain components which give a direction to the overall process of “constant navigation through precarious transnationality”, and which we will summarize briefly below.

The extent of macro- and micro-violence in the context of origin. In both cases, the collective and biographical constellations that led to migration are shaped by violence and violent conflicts. Both biographers were repeatedly exposed to serious violence, and experienced threatening situations from which they escaped with no long-term plan. Both of them had suffered traumatizing experiences over a long period, or sequential traumatization (as defined by Keilson 1992; Becker 2004). This has important consequences for their migration projects, affecting not only the ability of the migrants to plan their migration, but also in respect of their family networks. In both cases, it is relevant that the **escape from collective violence was intertwined with family dynamics** – although in very different ways. In Mina’s case she was subjected to violence within her family. As a result, she was not able to build networks outside the family. For Julius James, the violent death of his mother (in the context of macro-violence) had a significant impact, both economically and socially, in terms of contacts and networks. In addition, grief work was difficult, due to his situation not stabilizing in the long term. His responsibility for the well-being and the income of the family increased as a result of his mother’s death. Another aspect of his transnational responsibilities is that while his sisters supported him in his migration project(s), and have taken care of his son, they expect him to send money to them as soon as he can. For

both these migrants we can say that the conditions they found themselves in after their escape from a violent situation affected how they were able to live with its consequences. In other words, whether the consequences of traumatization are attenuated or amplified, or only appear after a time of latency (see the studies on Holocaust survivors by Eitinger 1964 and Landau/Litwin 2000), depends on the situation of the person after having left the acute traumatizing circumstances, because “trauma continues, even when the active persecution has stopped” (Becker 2004: 5).

Short-distance migration turns into long-distance migration. Both biographers experienced a series of violent events and other situations of crisis. In both cases, these events and the suffering caused by them did not lead directly to long-distance migration. Mina left Iraq and stayed in the neighboring country of Jordan for six years, before her new religious networks allowed her to move on to Brazil. For a long time, Julius James had no intention of leaving West Africa. On the contrary, moving back and forth between two places in West Africa (Nigeria and Sierra Leone) seemed to be the best way to change his situation, to escape from experiences of crisis, and thus to retain a certain amount of agency. For both migrants, Brazil was not the intended destination, nor was it perceived as the final point of a migration process that had already lasted for many years. In Mina’s case it has already become a transit country (and at the same time a place of nostalgia), and in Julius’s case it is likely to become one. We assume that the multiple changes of location that mark the life and migration courses of both biographers should be analyzed as an “outcome” of their changing and precarious transnational constellations, rather than as a “producing component”. In other words, their situation is not precarious because they’ve frequently moved to a new place; rather, they have moved to a new place frequently (and probably will continue to do so for some time) because their situations are so precarious.

Ending up in a place: A continuity of unplanned processes and events. Unplanned processes and events have played an important role in the migration courses of both these migrants. Mina and Julius both had the feeling of “ending up” in a place, rather than having planned to go there (as for example in the case of Julius James applying for asylum in Brazil). This also affects their attitude to the future, because the feeling of “not being in control” is perpetuated. This is a defining component of traumatizing situations, as well as being a symptom of trauma (see Kühner 2002: 35f.). We argue that the level of predictability and plannability differs greatly in different migration processes. While experiences of violence generally contribute to the disruption of everyday life routines and the ability to make plans for the future, even the process of fleeing from collective violence can be more organized and planned than in the cases presented here. This can be seen for example with the Syrian refugees who come to Brazil with humanitarian visas (see ch. 6.4.3).

Precarious financial situation and residency status. In both cases, the component of being unable to plan is intertwined with a precarious financial situation and insecure residency status. These migrants are both unemployed, or have only temporary employment, with no social security, no long-term perspectives, and low wages that are hardly enough to pay for necessities such as rent and food. A big difference between the two cases is the role played by “transnational responsibilities”. Julius James, in contrast to Mina Ahmed, is painfully aware of his obligation to support his family by sending remittances. A precarious residency status not only means limited opportunities for participation in the (temporary) “society of arrival”, but also affects how these migrants act within their transnational networks. As asylum seekers or refugees in Brazil and Turkey, their options for action are limited. Transnational practices like traveling back and forth between their family’s place of residence and their current country of residence, or moving freely from one country to another, are restricted or even impossible for them. Of course, economic factors also play a role here, but it is mainly the lack of a residence permit that prevents migrants from participating in transnational practices, as well as in practices and processes within the society of arrival, not least being able to earn enough money.

To conclude this section, let us now consider the ambivalent value of networks in the cases we have reconstructed. Both these migrants are part of biographically significant transnational networks. It would seem an “obvious” strategy to use these transnational networks to improve their own situation, and as a concrete migration resource. Mina wouldn’t have come to Brazil without the evangelical networks, and in Brazil she was supported by Iraqis who had arrived in the 1990s (probably in the context of the 1991 Gulf War or its aftermath), and had succeeded in becoming established. Julius also received a lot of support from the network of the Christian congregation he belonged to after his arrival in Brazil. And he would never have started planning migration to the Caribbean if it hadn’t been for a friend who had gone there some years before him. However, there is a clear difference: Julius James acted in the context of old-established family networks with a shared collective history, while Mina Ahmed’s transcontinental networks were formed only after she left Iraq. These arose not only from the migration of her sisters to the US, Egypt and Lebanon, but, even more importantly, from her conversion to Christianity and subsequent migration to Brazil.

However, as we have already pointed out, these networks are both ambivalent and volatile. They are ambivalent when they constitute a burden in the form of expectations of loyalty and support which cannot be fulfilled (as in the case of Julius James), or when they constitute an abstract or concrete threat because religious belongings need to be kept secret and contact is no longer possible with violent family members (as in the case of Mina Ahmed). Their volatility becomes evident when, for instance, supportive contact persons move somewhere else, or organizational actors close their doors because of the pandemic.

An essential difference between the cases of Mina and Julius and the cases we will discuss below is the degree to which the migrants feel that they are members of a (transnational) we-group. Although Julius and Mina can rely at different times on the support of various institutions and individuals, they never form a we-group with them in the sense of a shared we-image and collective memory. Their situation is individualized; their networks and support structures are correspondingly fragile and very dynamic. There is a correlation between this lack of a we-group and their precarious circumstances: with a we-group their situation would probably be less precarious, but at the same time this situation makes it difficult for them to become a member of a we-group, or to develop a sense of belonging to such a group.

6.4 Temporary navigation through precarious transnationality

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, constellations of precarious transnationality are characterized by the combination of an intensive but ambivalent form of integration in transnational networks, and a precarious life situation. The migration courses described in the previous section show how such a constellation can develop and become permanent. Membership of transnational networks, including core family networks, may be temporarily enabling and relieving, but can also be binding or burdensome. In particular, such networks do not necessarily help to stabilize the migrants' situation, and may even act as a hindrance. "Constant navigation through precarious transnationality" is experienced as an ambivalent back and forth between phases of empowerment and phases of powerlessness, within a web of transnational interdependencies. This creates the potential for gradually sliding into a "trajectory of suffering" (Riemann/Schütze 1991: 338). Characteristic of the cases we have presented is that the precarious constellations, with their transnational entanglements, are not resolved. In the light of these findings, we examined our whole sample, according to the principle of theoretical sampling (Glaser/Strauss 1967: 45ff.), looking for contrasting cases in which there are also constellations of precarious transnationality, but in which, for various reasons, the migration course develops in a different direction. These cases also show evidence of the dynamics reconstructed above which lead to the creation of constellations of precarious transnationality. But despite all their difficulties, the migrants in these cases do not get trapped in a migration course of the type we call "constant navigation".

Below we present some empirical findings in respect of the biographies of migrants, or groupings of migrants, in which precarity is combined with a high degree of transnationality only during a certain phase of their migration. We will discuss three empirical constellations that illustrate which components can save migrants from sliding into a course of "constant navigation through precarious transnationality". We will use the cases of migrants from Senegal in Brazil presented in chapter

3 to show how they navigate through situations that became precarious with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here, the relative **stability of the network** enables its members to manage and deal with their precarization (ch. 6.4.1). They represent the subtype “*collective action: getting through a period of precarious transnationality*”. After this, we will take the example of a migrant from Syria and his family to show how a very stable transnational family constellation was upset by the armed conflict that broke out in Syria in 2011, leading the family members to migrate collectively to Germany (ch. 6.4.2). This case represents a subtype we have called “*collective action: disintegration of transnational entanglements*”. Finally, we will discuss our empirical findings in respect of the situation of refugees from Syria in Brazil. Their migration is shaped, on the one hand, by the fact that they can rely on the network of a well-established and integrated transnational community, and that they have a secure residency status. On the other hand, in Brazil they suffer a steep drop in their social status and increasing precarity (ch. 6.4.3). Their established transnational networks provide some support, and guidance for their decisions and plans, but the precarity of their situation in Brazil after arrival is interpreted as a problem they must solve on their own. This is what distinguishes the representatives of this subtype, which we call “*individual action: marginalization within an established network*”, from the representatives of the first two subtypes of “temporary navigation through precarious transnationality”, who experience their situation more as a collective constellation, as a member of a family or other we-group.

6.4.1 Getting through a period of precarious transnationality: Senegalese networks in Brazil between precarization and restabilization in times of Covid-19 (Collective action I)

The Covid-19 pandemic had serious effects on the everyday realities of migrants who acted within transnational networks, and who were working in relatively volatile sectors before the pandemic (see Bahl/Rosenthal 2021). In addition to restricted opportunities for mobility and migration, and the risk of contracting the disease, many people lost their jobs in the informal sector. This tendency to precarization can be illustrated by the effects of the pandemic on the grouping of migrants from Senegal in Brazil presented in chapter 3.

In contrast to the escapes of Mina Ahmed and Julius James (ch. 6.3), migration from Senegal to Brazil in recent years constitutes a “common case” (see Bahl/Becker 2020: 11). Many Senegalese work in the informal sector, either as employees without a contract or with their own businesses, often in semi-legal activities (see Heil 2017, 2019; Mocellin 2017). Others are employed, for instance, in the slaughterhouses and brickworks in southern Brazil, often for outsourced companies (something not properly regulated by Brazilian legislation), which implies precarious work and housing conditions (see Cé Sangalli/Santos Gonçalves 2018; Repórter Brasil 2016; Tedesco 2016). Because contact was maintained with the interview-

wees over a long period (from end of 2019 until the time of finishing this chapter in 2022), it was possible to observe how the acute crisis due to the pandemic transformed a relatively stable transnational constellation. The effects of the pandemic in Brazil had a significant impact on the strategies of the Senegalese migrants for earning an income in the informal sector, which is a central component of their transnational migration projects (see Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021a, 2021b). Their very stable transnational relations, characterized by sending remittances, visiting the family in Senegal, and raising their own status within the family network, were transformed into a precarious constellation.

However, their integration in Muslim brotherhood networks, in combination with other components such as length of stay in Brazil, having savings, and having an official residence permit, meant that our interviewees were able to stabilize their situation, at least for a time. The strategies followed by the migrants were determined by their networks, whose relative power and degree of integration comes from the multigenerational horizon which ensures the continued existence of the Muslim brotherhoods (see ch. 3; see Rosenthal/Worm 2021). This enabled them, for instance, to migrate to other places within Brazil or in other countries on the American continent, if there were better chances to earn money there. In this they were often able to rely on mutual support and advice within the networks (see Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b).

To show how the situations of our Senegalese interviewees developed in the direction of precarious transnationality at the beginning of the pandemic, we will turn again briefly to the cases of Amadou Diop and Bayou Ndiaye (ch. 3). Amadou and Bayou are both in their mid-thirties. Their migration to Brazil (in 2013 and 2014 respectively) enabled them to make a big contribution, or the main contribution, to the income of their families in Senegal. They both earned their money as vendors of sunglasses and electronic devices on the beach at Copacabana. After the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, which hit Brazil very hard, due in part to the disastrous crisis management of the Bolsonaro government, they lost their source of income – tourism – for a long time. They were thus not in a position to send money home, which meant that the situation of their families in Senegal became more precarious. In the interviews we conducted with them during the first months of the pandemic, the fear that they would not be able to visit their families in the near future was also very present. In the meantime, at least those men among our interviewees who had founded families of their own in Senegal have been able to visit them (Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b: 42ff.). This is a clear indication that their situation had become stabilized, at least temporarily, and that such trips were again possible, not only financially and in terms of legal residence, but also with regard to mobility, which had been restricted for four months because

the airports in Brazil were closed.²⁴ The follow-up interviews we conducted at the end of 2021 showed that our interviewees wanted nothing more than to return to, or maintain, their established transnational model (remittances, regular trips to Senegal). Here, continued migrations are an important strategy. But the migrants from Senegal can always rely on their networks, with a high degree of internal integration, which were very important during their stay in Brazil (see ch. 3). Here we see again the great importance of cooperative and integrated networks in insecure circumstances, as discussed for instance by Elwert/Evans/Wilkens (1983: 293ff.).

The representatives of the following subtype also deal with a constellation of precarious transnationality by continuing their migration projects. However, unlike Julius James (ch. 6.3.1), who represents the type “constant navigation through precarious transnationality”, in these cases one-sided transnational obligations increasingly come to an end, or become less important and thus less of a burden.

6.4.2 Disintegration of transnational entanglements:

The Saifi family from Syria (Collective action II)

The second subtype has in common with the first subtype that a situation we describe as precarious transnationality develops within a migration course that was previously characterized by very stable integration in a transnational network. In phases of precarious transnationality, representatives of this subtype act collectively, meaning that the individuals who belong to the network agree on a solution, for instance to make further migrations. In this process, one-sided transnational obligations increasingly come to an end. As representatives of this subtype we will discuss the migration course of Maher Saifi and his family from Syria. We will show how, following escalation of the war in Syria after 2011, a transnational family model started to crack, became a precarious constellation, and finally resulted in the migration of various family members to Algeria, and then to Germany via Morocco, Spain and France.

Maher Saifi was born in a Syrian-Palestinian family in Damascus in the early 1970s. We met him when he was caught up in the phase of precarious transnationality, and conducted the first interview with him in the Spanish enclave of Melilla in North Africa in September 2014.²⁵ At that time, Maher was living in the local refugee camp together with other members of his family, and waiting to be moved to the Spanish mainland. During this phase, Arne Worm and our colleague Ahmed Albaba conducted two biographical interviews with Maher and

²⁴ Deutsche Welle, July 30, 2020. „Brasilien öffnet Flughäfen für Ausländer.“ Available at: <https://www.dw.com/de/brasilien-%C3%B6ffnet-flugh%C3%A4fen-f%C3%BCr-ausl%C3%A4nder/a-54374612> [Accessed on August 23, 2022].

²⁵ In September 2014, Arne Worm and Ahmed Albaba conducted two biographical narrative interviews with Maher Saifi in the Spanish enclave of Melilla. The research was part of the DFG project “The social construction of border zones” (RO 827/19-1 and 19-2). The case presented here is an extended version of shorter case presentations (Worm 2019, 2020), updated based on the follow-up interviews.

subsequently stayed in contact with him. Maher and other family members were able to migrate from Melilla to Germany, where they are living today. In April 2020 and May 2021, Ahmed Albaba conducted follow-up interviews by phone. By keeping in contact in this way, we have been able to reconstruct how a constellation of precarious transnationality was created during the course of the family's migration, and came to an end after their "arrival" in Germany. A decisive factor in this process is that this Syrian-Palestinian family had lived in a transnational family model since the early 2000s, when Maher migrated to Algeria.

Let us now take a look at how this transnational family model emerged, how it became transformed into precarious transnationality following escalation of the violent conflict in Syria, and how the family's subsequent migration course is embedded in the history of the family and Maher's biography.

For the Saifi family, having to leave Syria was their third experience of forced migration. Like many thousands of Palestinians, Maher's grandparents and parents arrived in Syria (as adolescents) in the course of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948/1949.²⁶ Together with members of the extended family, they lived in the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk. Getting re-established was possible due to the comprehensive legal and civic inclusion of Palestinian refugees in Syria (Brand 1988). However, Palestinians were not entitled to vote and were not given Syrian citizenship (Al-Hardan 2016: 50f.; Chatty 2010: 214; Brand 1988). Moreover, in the context of the conflict with Israel, the Syrian government argued that it was important to preserve the distinct "national identity" of the Palestinians, which would be lost if they were naturalized. Accordingly, the presentation of Palestinian nationalist symbols was not prohibited or even persecuted by the state, in contrast to corresponding statements by Kurds living in Syria. With regard to ethno-national belonging, double belonging became institutionalized for Palestinians in Syria. They were both Palestinians and Syrians:

"Palestinians who arrived in Syria in 1948, and their descendants, have been the only Palestinians who maintained their refugee status while enjoying full civic rights (bar the right to nationality and the vote) and obliged to perform duties (military service) in an Arab state to which they fled in 1948" (Al-Hardan 2016: 5).

The sociologist Sari Hanafi uses the term "not-yet-diaspora" (2003: 169) to describe this positioning of the Palestinians, in which keeping their "refugee status" and being granted temporary residence permits was accompanied by far-reaching "integration" in Syrian society (ibid.).

Let us come back to Maher and his family. After his birth in 1970, Maher's family history and his life history were strongly embedded in the Palestinian refugee

²⁶ Out of a total of approximately 700,000 Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes and migrate to neighboring countries at this time, between 90,000 and 100,000 went to Syria (Brand 1988: 621).

community in Yarmouk. The majority of Palestinian refugees in Syria lived here, and it became a political stronghold of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO):

“[...] because Yarmouk Camp was erected at the outskirts of Damascus, it was able to take part in the area’s rapid urbanization in the 1950s. Yarmouk also benefited from social and economic services provided by the PLO [...] throughout the 1960s, when the camp was considered the political capital of the Palestinian refugee struggle for the right of return and for Palestinian self-determination” (Gabiam 2018: 140).

Different members of Maher’s family were politically involved with Palestinian parties in Yarmouk, and played an important role in Maher’s recruitment as a fighter for a Palestinian militia group in Lebanon in the 1990s. For many years, Maher was an active member of an armed Palestinian opposition group in Lebanon. During this phase, he traveled back and forth between Lebanon, which was partially occupied by Syrian troops, and his family in Yarmouk. In the first half of the 1990s, Maher married a woman who also came from a Syrian-Palestinian family. They had four children.

In the early 2000s, when Maher was in danger of being arrested because he was a member of a prohibited Palestinian militia in Syria,²⁷ he fled to Algeria. He received help during his journey from transnational networks of politically active Palestinians.²⁸ In the following years, his family could visit him in Algeria, but not the other way round. From that time, Maher’s family lived in a transnational constellation. Maher was employed by an international construction company, which mainly sent him to various Arab countries, but also to southern Europe. He sent a part of his wages to his family, who were still living in Yarmouk in Syria.

At some point during the escalating war in Syria which started in 2011, Yarmouk became a hotspot of intense fighting between different militia groups. The camp was sealed off and the people there faced a hunger crisis (Morrison 2014). At about the same time, Algeria introduced tighter visa restrictions for Syrians.

Given the ongoing crisis in Yarmouk, Maher felt a growing responsibility to support his extended family, a responsibility that he was still struggling with when we interviewed him in his precarious situation in the refugee camp in Melilla:

“You have 20 people living there and between house rents and sending the money, I mean now whatever we make from our work we sent to the

²⁷ At the beginning of the 1990s, the Syrian state began a crackdown on PLO and Fatah affiliates in Syria (see Al-Hardan 2016: 69).

²⁸ In the context of Algeria’s support for the “Palestine Liberation Organization” (PLO) (see Heller 1995: 82ff.).

Yarmouk camp, some of them got out [...] and some of them are still trapped inside, from our family [...] there are some of them outside [...] and there is also my nephew's wife and she has a child and there's my daughter" (1st Interview, Melilla, September 16, 2015).

In Maher's case, a relatively stable transnational family model became fragile, first due to the escalating macro-violence, and then due to changes in border regimes, in his case the Algerian border regime. Transnational responsibilities dramatically intensified for him. The family decided to leave for Algeria, but only Maher's wife and two adolescent sons managed to get visas. Flying to Algeria also depended on having enough money to buy the tickets. In this phase of the conflict (from 2011 to 2014), it was fairly easy for people from Syria to enter Algeria. But in spring 2015, because of the high number of refugees from Syria, Algeria tightened the visa regulations for Syrian citizens and Palestinians from Syria. Maher's married daughter and her family left for Turkey. A whole family system was set in motion by the collective violence.

At this point in time, the family's migration project did not involve plans to use Algeria as a transit route to Europe (see Worm 2019: 226). In the absence of state support structures in Algeria, Maher and his family, like other families, had no help, apart from that of their informal networks, in trying to restabilize their lives. In the interview we conducted with him in Melilla, Maher said that Algerian discourses in respect of refugees from Syria were becoming increasingly stigmatizing and problematizing. We were told the same thing by other Syrian refugees. A constellation of precarious transnationality was developing. As a result of the increasing precarization of their situation in Algeria, the family selected one of Maher's sons to find out how easy it would be to migrate to Europe. He succeeded in reaching Germany, and so Maher and the other family members decided to join him there, choosing to use the route via the Spanish enclave of Melilla.

The family's decision to leave Algeria and to go to Europe was influenced by four components: (1) they saw no chance of returning to Syria in the near future because of the ongoing conflict; (2) they were suffering from growing economic and social marginalization in Algeria, and they saw no future there for their children, who were young adults at the time; (3) Maher had established (relatively loose) contacts with Syrians in Europe through his business activities; (4) most importantly, they were seeking a chance to get other family members out of Syria and Turkey. Maher described this constellation as follows in the first interview:

"I had to get out to a foreign country to reunify my family, I sacrifice all my work everything that I had over there just to bring [...] my family do you know what I mean?" (1st Interview, Melilla, September 16, 2015).

Having worked in various countries, moving his family to Europe seemed to him to be an obvious choice, but he didn't want to risk their lives by trying to cross

the Mediterranean in a boat. The family therefore decided to travel to Spain via Morocco, although this route is also precarious and dangerous: thus, to get past the land border between Algeria and Morocco, which has been officially closed since 1994 because of the dispute over Western Sahara, Maher and his family had to rely on the help of “smugglers”. However, crossing the EU’s external border at Melilla is less dangerous for Syrians than it is for Black migrants, who mostly have no choice but to try climbing over the six-meter-high border fence. But even for Syrians, it often requires several attempts (Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2017: 113). They need to disguise themselves as Moroccan laborers, and/or bribe the border officials, in order to be able to cross as part of the daily local border traffic.

Maher and his family stayed in Melilla for about six months, in very precarious circumstances. In this phase, it was unclear whether they would be allowed to stay in Europe, and some members of the family had not yet succeeded in crossing the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclave. One of his daughters had migrated from Syria to Turkey, and was living there in a difficult financial situation.

Finally, the family was moved from North Africa to the Iberian peninsula. This is a common administrative procedure for asylum seekers arriving in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, known as getting “Salida”, the Spanish word for exit (*ibid.*: 115). From there they traveled to Germany in 2015. We will not go into details here of how they became re-established in Germany. In the period 2015–2020, Maher and his family benefited from the fact that Germany had a favorable policy toward refugees from Syria, so that they obtained both recognition as refugees and a private apartment within a relatively short time. Another important component was that they had financial reserves.

Let us summarize the main components of this subtype: Because of the long civil war in Syria, the transnational family model became the precarious type for a limited time. But in Maher’s case this constellation emerged in the context of a family with a relatively high degree of cohesion, which decisively shaped the strategies they chose for dealing with their precarious transnationality. In contrast to the case of Mina Ahmed, the migration project of Maher and his family has the goal of re-establishing the family in a new place. Maher is still in close contact with relatives in Syria, but intrafamilial resources and mandates are directed primarily at getting firmly established in Germany. It is interesting that, in Maher’s case, this focus on the family of procreation is also shown by the way he clearly distances himself from an Arab refugee community in Germany in the follow-up interview conducted by Ahmed Albaba in April 2020. When talking to Ahmed Albaba (who also has a Palestinian background), Maher spoke in very negative terms about other refugees from Syria, saying that they spoil the reputation of “the Arabs” by their behavior. His they-image of other refugees involves ascriptions such as that they beg for help despite being given everything they need, that they make a show of their material wealth, and that they do not give their children a good upbringing. By contrast, he underlines how seriously he takes his responsibility for his own children. We interpret this as an indication that, in the new immigration context,

Maher has redefined the role he played before the family's migration, in order to assure biographical stability or continuity. His demonstrative dissociation from other refugees also shows that he regards himself – and his family – as being independent of networks outside the family. It can be assumed that the strategy of focusing on the narrow familial context is not only a dynamic due to the consequences of fleeing from Syria in 2015, but should also be interpreted in the wider context of this family's history as Palestinian refugees in Syria. Overall, the situation of Maher and his family has become stabilized during the time we have been in contact with him. This can be seen, for instance, in the way Maher speaks about his ethno-national belonging in successive interviews. In the interviews we conducted in Melilla in 2015, when he was in a very precarious situation, he spoke emphatically about how Palestinians are disadvantaged as a group in many societies. In a follow-up telephone interview conducted by our colleague Ahmed Albaba in April 2020, after reporting that the family had applied for unlimited residence permits for Germany, Maher made this comment:

“We are a people that has experienced many things and been through so much. Such a people with such experiences can manage anywhere” (1st follow-up interview by telephone, April 21, 2020).

In the case of Maher, the family's participation strategies are increasingly focused on Germany as their society of immigration. This means that their transnational action patterns and practices become less important, at least in the short and medium term. In this case, the need to escape from the violent conflict in the country of origin, Syria, coincided with an increasingly precarious situation in Algeria, with the result that a stable network was transformed into a constellation of precarious transnationality. The way Maher and his family reacted to this can be described as a form of collective action, in which transnational action patterns gradually ceased to exist.

As we have shown, in cases of the second type a constellation of precarious transnationality is also dealt with collectively. Below, we will show how the third subtype is distinct from subtypes 1 and 2, in which collective strategies play an important role.

6.4.3 Marginalization within an established network:

Migration courses of refugees from Syria in Brazil (Individual action)

In this section we will apply the concept of precarious transnationality to our findings concerning the grouping of refugees from Syria in Brazil. In setting up the typology presented in this chapter, the biggest problem was to decide how to categorize the members of this grouping, because it is not clear how their migration courses are affected by the bundle of factors we have identified as increasing or decreasing precarious transnationality. Because of this ambiguity, it is not easy in

these cases to assess whether precarious transnationality is only a phase, or whether it will become permanent in future. Below, we will describe in more detail the complicated interplay of components that influence their migration courses and their present life in Brazil, and explain why we see our Syrian interviewees in Brazil as representatives of type 2 (temporary navigation through precarious transnationality), on the one hand, and as a subtype that differs from the other two subtypes and is therefore instructive for the typology, on the other hand. But first some information about this grouping: Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Syria in spring 2011, around 10,000 people have migrated from Syria to Brazil. Since 2013 Syrians have been able to enter Brazil with a humanitarian visa, and in most cases are granted refugee status (Calegari/Baeninger 2016; Tekin 2017). Brazil currently hosts the biggest grouping of Syrian refugees in South America.²⁹

The following dynamic was clearly observable in the cases of those refugees from Syria in Brazil with whom we conducted biographical interviews. On the one hand, their migration was made possible by support from their established social networks between Brazil and Syria. On the other hand, in the concrete situation of their arrival in Brazil, this network capital did not help them to the extent they had hoped for in respect of social participation and social status. Thus, our interviewees from Syria told us that in Brazil they felt they had lost their social status and were in a precarious position. Many had become street vendors in order to earn enough money to survive. On a superficial level, our interviews with people from Syria in Brazil³⁰ suggest that there are certain similarities between their migration courses and those of Mina Ahmed from Iraq and Julius James from Sierra Leone. They migrated in order to escape from collective (macro-)violence, in their case the escalating dynamic of violence and civil war in Syria since 2011. But these components are accompanied by others, which “cushion” the constellation of precarious transnationality, in contrast to the cases of Mina Ahmed and Julius James: 1. the migration course was on the whole planned (and went more or less according to plan); 2. the families of origin were not financially dependent on our interviewees; and 3. they were part of a relatively well-established “we-group” in the society of arrival. We will discuss these points below.

The migrations of our Syrian interviewees are characterized by a relatively high degree of predictability – to the extent that this is an appropriate term in the context of fleeing from the violence and complex transformation processes in Syria. In many cases, people decided to leave Syria to avoid being recruited into the Syrian army. The reason for choosing Brazil as a destination, a decision that frequently involved the extended family, was the existence of contacts in Brazil, often relatives,

²⁹ BBC News Brasil. September 9, 2015. Brasil acolhe mais sírios que países na rota europeia de refugiados. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2015/09/150904_brasil_refugiados_sirios_comparacao_internacional_lgb [Accessed on January 31, 2018].

³⁰ We conducted a total of six ethnographic and two biographical interviews with refugees from Syria in Brazil. The interviews were conducted by Eva Bahl, Lucas Cé Sangalli, Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves and Gabriele Rosenthal.

and the fact that entry into the country was not difficult, especially in comparison to the European Union.

Our interviewees from Syria do not feel under pressure from their families of origin to use their migration projects to generate resources for the family. On the contrary, they say that they are dependent on their families (who send them money, for example). Most of the people we spoke to had not yet founded a family of their own, so that they had no responsibilities in this respect. This clearly contrasts with the case of Maher Saifi (ch. 6.4.2) or that of Julius James (ch. 6.3.1), where a one-sided obligation to provide for the family of origin and/or the family of procreation is an important component of their “precarious transnationality”.

Our Syrian interviewees not only have personal contacts in Brazil, often members of their extended family, but are also part of a transnational community of Brazilians with a Middle East background that has existed for several generations, and which can be described as a well-established and very present community in Brazil. These old-established networks between Brazil and the Middle East help to make migration possible, and, to a certain degree, give the migrants a sense of “regional” solidarity” (Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b: 53). But, as already pointed out, this relationship is precarious or ambivalent, because during their “arrival process” the Syrian refugees discover that their network, including members of their extended family, provides much less help in getting settled than they had hoped. They also feel that their dependence on these networks is very one-sided. Thus, our interviewees say they had little freedom to decide themselves in what form they were supported by their local family members or other contacts. Whether they needed a job, local information, or a place to live, they felt they were bound by the decisions of their supporters, and at the same time were obliged to show their gratitude.

The case of Fadel Darwish,³¹ who comes from an Alawite family in Tartous (Syria), enabled us to observe the importance for refugees from Syria of the tradition of migration from the Levant to Brazil which has existed since the end of the 19th century (see Truzzi 2018). Fadel Darwish went to Brazil in 2017 in order to evade conscription into the army. His migration to Brazil took place in the context of a transnational family network. His grandfather (his mother’s father) moved to Brazil in the 1960s, had a fruit shop there, and returned to Syria some years later “after having earned enough money”, as Fadel puts it. Other family members stayed in Brazil. So, nowadays he has several relatives who are well-established in Brazil. They work at important media outlets, are actors, and own real estate all over Rio. This is why Fadel’s parents persuaded him to migrate to Brazil. Although these relatives supported Fadel in the beginning, at the time of our interview in 2019, he seemed to be frustrated by the very limited support they were willing

³¹ Fadel Darwish was interviewed (in Portuguese) by Eva Bahl and Lucas Cé Sangalli in Rio de Janeiro in October 2019. We would like to thank Nathalia Louruz de Mello for transcription and translation of the interview (Portuguese-English). This case is described by Eva Bahl in the research report “Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19” (Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b: 51f.).

to give him. At the time of the interview, Fadel was unemployed, and his father was sending him money from Syria to help him pay for his daily needs. In Fadel's case, the transnational family network was important for his migration course on at least two levels. First, his migration to Brazil would probably not have taken place without the history of migration in his family and the support that his relatives were able to give him, at least in the beginning. And second, Fadel Darwish is one of the few people among our interviewees in Brazil who currently receive financial support from the family in the home region.

Our findings in respect of the everyday realities of refugees from Syria show the ambivalence of transnational networks. People migrate from Syria to Brazil in the context of a transnational community that has been established for several generations, and which has led to the creation of concrete family networks. Transnational migrants know that they belong to this community, and can interpret it as a we-group, with a we-image they more or less share, while at the same time suffering during the migration process from individual marginalization within the network. Thus, in these cases there is a risk of developing in the direction of type 1. This may happen, for example, if their family in the home country gets into difficulties, while they are trapped in the low-wage sector, or some other kind of crisis arises. Fadel, for instance, wonders whether he would have better chances in Europe:

“I am trying to do something but I think that I will leave to another country and get to some country in Europe [...] go to Germany for example, a country in Europe to get a better opportunity [...] it's about the general situation of refugee here // I: uhum // everybody here works with sale of *sfiha*, *quibe*³² or works at a store, it's not a dream for anyone. [...] actually I'm going through a bad moment for me now it won't work here, I think it won't work. I have to study. [Here] I don't have time to study to go to a college. If I'm at another country that gives me an opportunity, I'll study. I won't stay here selling *sfiha*” (1st Interview, Rio de Janeiro, October 25, 2019).

Our previous analyses suggest that, if Fadel's financially precarious situation were to include the component of “transnational responsibilities”, as in the case of Julius James, then he would feel obliged to continue his migration, in order to escape from a constellation of increasingly precarious transnationality.

³² *Sfiha*, a kind of mini pizza with minced meat, and *kibbeh*, egg-shaped bulgur dumplings with minced meat and onions, are both common food in the countries of the Levant. They were introduced to Brazil by migrants from the region and are now a popular fast food there. Many Syrian refugees work as vendors of “Arabic” food in the streets.

6.4.4 Summary: Structural features of temporary navigation through precarious transnationality

In the migration courses presented above, precarious transnationality constitutes a phase. In contrast to the cases which represent type 1, precarious transnationality as a critical situation is resolved in a relatively short period of time, or tends to be resolved. We will now sum up the dynamics which lead to migrants finding themselves in this constellation, and, on the other hand, to its being resolved, or turning out to be only temporary.

The processes that can potentially lead to precarious transnationality in type 2 are basically not different from those in type 1. On the one hand, these involve a financial situation and a residency status that are uncertain, or become more uncertain, for the migrants, as can be observed in all the cases presented above. On the other hand, the migrants' original collective (normally their families) may become more dependent on them, for instance due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as in the case of the Senegalese in Brazil, or due to violent conflict, as in the case of Maher and his family. Our empirical studies reveal an important difference between type 2 and type 1: for the migrants' power of agency, and thus their concrete resources and their confidence that they will be able to deal with a phase of precarious transnationality, the degree of stability of their network(s) before the beginning of the precarious phase is crucial. The subtypes differ according to the extent to which the phase of precarious transnationality is felt to be the common problem of a we-group that can be solved by collective action. Our study of the Senegalese community in Brazil shows that their precarization was a collective experience, and that through their we-group they benefited from favorable conditions for getting through this phase. Although no one knows how the Covid-19 pandemic will play out in future, our findings suggest that the members of the Senegalese community in Brazil will succeed in maintaining their transnational practices, despite the ever-present threat of precarization. A pattern of collective action can also be observed in the case of Maher Saifi. Together with his family, he reacted to a constellation of precarious transnationality by continuing his migration. In this process, the transnational family model in the narrow sense came to an end. The refugees from Syria in Brazil live in the context of a relatively well-established community with a Middle East background that has been settled in Brazil for several generations, but in Brazil they suffer from a big drop in their financial and social status and are marginalized within their networks. However, in these cases the families of origin are generally not dependent on the Syrian refugees in Brazil.

6.5 Conclusion: Focusing on precarious transnationality

In this chapter we have examined constellations within migration courses which in our view have received too little attention in the field of transnationally ori-

ented migration research: the complex ways in which migrants who are integrated in a transnational network experience and deal with various forms of precarity in “arrival contexts” (for instance in terms of housing conditions, employment, or residency status) in the context of this integration. We have discussed these constellations, which we refer to as precarious transnationality, from a process perspective, by reconstructing the processes of emergence, perpetuation, and transformation of such constellations. Thus, on the one hand, we have been able to show once again that precarious employment or an insecure residency status play a big role in determining whether and how migrants can be involved in transnational practices such as sending remittances or traveling to see their families in their countries of origin. On the other hand, we have studied the emergence and the consequences of migration courses in which precarious transnationality is a structural feature over a long period of time and in different places.

This processual approach to the interrelation between migration, precarity and transnationality shows, on the one hand, that migrants act within transnational or transregional social spaces that may have developed over several generations. Collective and family histories are shaped by trans-state or pre-state mobility,³³ and the family history constitutes a form of capital. On the other hand, migrations lead to the creation of new relationships, and established networks change their character. The people whose migration courses we have reconstructed in this chapter all act within transnational networks, but are subject at the same time to local and nation-state-based migration regimes which means that they can get into very precarious situations, temporarily or permanently. In the face of continued socio-economic and social precarity, and reduced future perspectives, re-migrations and onward migrations are biographical strategies that people follow in order to improve their life situation, as we have repeatedly been able to observe. Moreover, our study shows that whole family systems are set in motion by constellations of precarious transnationality, with the result that families become scattered over various countries and different parts of the world.

As we have shown in this chapter, a processual approach enables us to distinguish between courses which are permanently shaped by navigation through precarious transnationality, and others in which precarious transnationality is an episode or a temporary situation that can be resolved by practical action, or which is ended by external events. So what is the difference between migration courses in which the migrants live permanently, or for a long time, in extremely precarious transnational constellations, and courses in which precarious transnationality is only a short biographical phase? Our findings show that precarious transnationality is mainly created and prolonged as a result of various forms of collective violence which shape migrations and transnational networks (a). The question of whether,

³³ This applies, for example, to regions in West Africa or the Ottoman Empire which became separated by colonial borders or the founding of postcolonial “nation states”. Thus, forms of mobility that were previously “normal” and unproblematic were transformed into (often illegalized) cross-border and transnational or trans-state practices (see Becker 2021a).

and to what extent, violence affects migrants and their transnational collectives has a substantial effect on the other three components: the ability to plan their migration projects (b), their own role within their networks (c), and the stability of the networks (d).

Let us take a closer look at these components:

- a) **Collective violence:** Processes of collective and intrafamilial violence have manifold consequences. They can disrupt we-groups and networks, as well as everyday routines. Furthermore, they can be traumatizing, and, as a consequence of these disruptions, can affect constructions of belonging. If we relate this to the cases we have discussed in this chapter, we will see that the experience and the consequences of prolonged collective and intrafamilial violence is not only the reason for migrating, or the constellation from which the migrants wish to escape, but is also what determines their opportunities and strategies in respect of being able, or unable, to rely on networks. In the cases of Mina Ahmed and Julius James, who we regard as belonging to type 1, this increases a tendency for the constellation of precarious transnationality to become permanent. In the cases which we have categorized as type 2, where the migrants remain in such a constellation for a relatively short time, either collective violence played no great role, as in the case of the Senegalese (taking the age of the interviewees into account), or the migrants are able to react to it collectively, as in the case of Syrians in Germany and Brazil.
- b) **Plannability, time and processuality:** Migrants who are in a constellation of precarious transnationality typically find it difficult to think and talk about their past lives, especially episodes of suffering and trauma, and feel unable to imagine and make plans for the future. With regard to the degree to which the migration project can be planned, there are clear differences between type 1 and type 2. The interviewees representing type 2 clearly found it easier to decide how to act in the near future than those belonging to type 1, who had a very restricted ability to make plans. In most cases, this was closely connected with the other two components: integration in stable networks (without very one-sided responsibilities and obligations) made it possible to make plans, even in situations of long-lasting collective macro-violence, as in the case of refugees from Syria. Border and residency regimes continue to play an important role in the plannability and predictability of migration courses, in other words these depend on how easy it is to enter a country, and whether the migrants can obtain secure and long-term residence permits.
- c) **Role of one-sided dependency within networks:** When migrants have serious obligations toward other members of their network, for instance to send remittances or provide care, and especially when these are one-sided

and cannot be successfully fulfilled, as in the cases of Julius James and Maher Saifi, this constitutes a financial and emotional burden. This adds to the difficulty of getting settled in a new social context. The burden is heavier if the relatives who are dependent on the remittances are also in a very precarious situation, and if the migrant feels that this responsibility is a problem to be solved individually, or a task to be performed individually. Thus, the expectation of their families that they will send remittances is very high in the case of our Senegalese interviewees in Brazil (ch. 6.4.1). However, they can depend on the support of a we-group to help them meet this expectation, to a much greater degree than Mina Ahmed (ch. 6.3.2) or Julius James (ch. 6.3.1), for example. The reverse situation can also be very burdensome, when migrants are dependent on family networks both in their region of origin and in their country of arrival. This is illustrated by the case of Fadel Darwish (ch. 6.4.3), a young Syrian living in Brazil, who is dependent on the support of his relatives there, and money sent to him by his father in Syria.

- d) **Stability of the networks:** Family and other networks can be or become unstable, for example if other members of the network also migrate, or due to long-lasting processes of collective violence. This can be seen in respect of the conflict in Syria, or, for instance, in the case of Julius James, whose family left Sierra Leone because of the civil war there, and was then subjected in Nigeria to great insecurity and internal displacement as a result of violence committed by Boko Haram.

The question whether migration courses are characterized by long-lasting constellations of precarious transnationality, which is extremely burdening for the migrants, depends on whether the components we have discussed above continue to play a role for a long time, or repeatedly recur over a long period. In the process, coincidences, i.e. constellations that occur unpredictably, can make a migration course develop in one direction or another. This makes migrants who are in a constellation of precarious transnationality very vulnerable. In the case of Mina Ahmed, for example, the rejection of her application for inclusion in a resettlement program (see ch. 6.3.2), was one of the reasons why she decided to migrate to Brazil. And Maher Saifi and his family (see ch. 6.4.2) were able to profit in Germany from a short time window in which Syrian refugees were automatically granted permission to stay, with good prospects of permanent residence.

The transition between the two types is fluid. Those cases which we have assigned to the type “constant navigation” could at some point become stabilized. And cases we have assigned to the type “temporary navigation” could slide into a long phase of precarious transnationality.

This analysis is based on research covering a period of about two years in which we frequently had contact with our interviewees, and on the hypotheses we have

formed in respect of possible future developments. We can only wait and see how these migration courses develop in the long term. We wish all our interviewees stabilization and improvement of their difficult transnational social realities.

7 Forced migration of Kurdish activist women to Germany: Navigating through a political movement, an armed conflict, and an engaged diaspora

Sevil akır Kılınođlu

7.1 Introduction

Transnational migration potentially alters the character of migrants' social, political, and individual commitments (Apitzsch/Siouti 2015; Palenga-Möllenbeck/Lutz 2016; Breckner 2007; Worm 2020). However, enduring political engagements spanning the course of one's entire life, prove to be very difficult to disrupt despite individual, and sometimes even organizational decisions to attempt just this. In this chapter, I aim to illustrate the challenges the Kurdish migrant women face before and after arriving in Germany in respect of making decisions regarding their individual and collective/political future commitments.

This chapter is based on interviews, follow-up interviews, and participant observations I have conducted with politically active Kurdish migrant women in Germany¹ who recently migrated to, and had to settle in, Germany for reasons related to their political activities in Turkey. My overall objective is to understand the im-

akır Kılınođlu, S. (2022): Forced migration of Kurdish activist women to Germany: Navigating through a political movement, an armed conflict, and an engaged diaspora. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 221–238. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2209>

¹ The fieldwork for this chapter was conducted in the context of a research project titled "Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and Germany – processes of inclusion and participation

plications for transnational migrant biographies of political engagement and subsequent persecution resulting in flight from an authoritarian political context. Political activism in the diaspora has always been significant for various migrant communities (Çakır-Kılınçoğlu 2020; Adamson 2016; Sökefeld 2006). However, the spread of authoritarianism globally and its increasingly repressive policies against people in opposition, especially in the Global South, is likely to cause an upsurge in political activism among migrants in the Global North, highlighting the ever-increasing importance of diaspora politics (Adamson 2016).

The term *diaspora* is historically associated with the communities that Jewish, Armenian, or recently Iranian people have established abroad. As used in social science literature, diaspora is generally understood as “any transnational group that maintains a sense of national or ethnic collective identity by cultivating strong ties with each other and with their real or imagined homeland” (Adamson 2016: 292). Thus, one can also talk about the Kurdish diaspora in Europe in general, and in Germany in particular, historically and currently, because of the steadily increasing number of Kurdish migrants and refugees since the 1960s, coming from Turkey, as well as other Middle Eastern countries, due to wars or the repressive political environment in the region. It is estimated, even though the numbers vary, that there are over 1 million Kurds in Europe and 85 percent of them are from Turkey (Eliassi 2021: 854). Even though the transnational character of the Kurdish political struggle has been the focus of a number of previous studies (Bruinessen 1999; Baser 2011; Baser/Emanuelsson/Toivanen 2015; Ayata 2011; Mügge 2013), the *biographical courses* of Kurdish people who had to flee their countries due to their political activism havenot received sufficient scholarly attention. To contribute to filling this gap, this chapter aims to analyze the impacts of the Kurdish political and armed conflict, forced migration, and the engaged Kurdish diaspora on the politically active Kurdish women in the context of their life histories and life stories.² The discussion revolves around the social and political constellations that paved the way for their flight from Turkey, the role of diaspora networks, and the influence of their individual and collective belonging to the Kurdish community on their relationship to political activism before and after their forced migration.

Especially since the elections in June 2015, with the breakdown of the peace process and the clampdown on the Kurdish political movement by the AKP regime, an increased migration of Kurds to Germany can be observed. Among them are many women politicians, journalists, academics, activists, and artists, as well as relatives of those who are persecuted and prosecuted. I have conducted five biographical narrative interviews as well as follow-up interviews with Kurdish activist women

in the context of so-called irregular migration” led by Gabriele Rosenthal at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences (MZS), Göttingen University.

² A distinction between life history and life story is made to emphasize the difference between an individual’s life experiences taking place in a certain socio-political and historical context, i.e., life history, and the ways in which they are narrated and presented by the individual, i.e., life story. For a detailed explanation of the distinction and its significance, see Rosenthal 1993.

who have arrived in Germany in this last episode of Kurdish political migration. By focusing on the cases of Sema and Eda,³ and with reference to the experiences of other women, I will analyze the complexity of decision-making processes for Kurdish women activists in the diaspora.

In the light of my empirical findings based on analysis of their life courses which have been shaped during dynamically changing political and social processes since the 1990s in Turkey, I conclude that staying politically active seems to be the most advantageous, if not inevitable, course of action for many Kurdish women inside or outside Turkey, given the political and social conditions they are surrounded by. Most of them cannot afford not to be active for reasons that I will explain below, and for many it is a privilege to be able to pursue an apolitical life. Therefore, the Kurdish women I have interviewed try to navigate the challenges of high-risk political activism, as well as transnational migration, with the least amount of “damage” or “cost”, while also considering alternative options. However, given the alternatives, staying close to an established political movement with resources, means, networks, and maybe more importantly, a strong women’s movement appears to be the most advantageous option for Kurdish women like Eda and Sema. Thus, rather than cutting their ties, even if they want or were forced to do this, they end up maintaining them, either as a source of emotional and social support, or because of future promising prospects.

7.2 An alternative approach to the Kurdish movement in Turkey and transnational (forced) migration of the Kurds

Obviously, a brief historical, political, and social background of the Kurdish movement is essential in order to understand the present context of Kurdish transnational migration from Turkey, women’s participation in it, and finally, its effects on the biographies of activist migrant women in Germany. However, as is the case with most long-lasting ethnic, national or political conflicts, it is close to impossible to give a comprehensive account of the Kurdish political struggle, even if we focus only on the last episode, since the 1980s. First of all, it is vital to keep in mind that Kurdish society is very diverse in Turkey. There are religious, linguistic, and socio-economic distinctions among the Kurds, not only in the historical Kurdistan but also within Turkey’s borders, in addition to the different ideological and political affiliations stemming from regional and historical developments in Turkey.

After the foundation of the new Turkish Republic in 1923 had put an end to the possibility of an independent nation state for the Kurds in the Middle East after WWI, the historical Kurdistan was eventually divided up by the borders of four nation states, namely Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. While the Kurds in each

³ Their names are masked to protect their identity.

country have initiated political resistance or independence movements ever since, the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion, the Ararat revolt, and the 1938 Dersim uprising were among the most serious insurrections of the Kurds against the centralized nation state in Turkey (Yüksel 2021). After their bloody repression, the most recent blow to Kurdish mobilization in the history of Turkey came after the 1980 coup d'état, in the aftermath of which Kurdish activists and politicians were imprisoned and tortured in the notorious Diyarbakir prison. The 1982 constitution that was ratified after the coup prohibited political parties based on Kurdish identity, and in 1983 using the Kurdish language was banned (Çağlayan 2007: 88). In this social and political environment, political and intellectual Kurdish activists established the PKK, the Kurdish Workers' Party, and launched an armed struggle against the Turkish state. Even though the ban on Kurdish was lifted later, the stigma around its usage and its arbitrary criminalization have continued until today, and almost every single political party the Kurds founded has been closed by the changing Turkish governments.

In short, the Kurdish political and military struggle and the repressive and violent response of the Turkish regime have been intense and extensive, especially during and since the 1990s. Not only politically active Kurds, but almost all members of Kurdish society have been, in one way or another, affected by and involved in this political conflict. Among them, for example, are the mothers of people who have disappeared,⁴ the families and relatives of thousands of people who became the victims of 'murders by unknown perpetrators', died either at the ranks of the PKK, or were assassinated by Kurdish Hizbullah.⁵ As one of my interviewees put it: "everyone has someone in their family killed in this conflict".

At this point, we might ask about the nature of the conflict around the "Kurdish issue" in Turkey. Is it an ethnic conflict, a civil war, or a political/social movement? I argue that we can reconstruct the individual and collective experiences and perceptions of Kurdish people in general, and Kurdish activist migrant women in particular, without necessarily answering this question. Because what matters most is the perspective of the actors, i.e. my interviewees, rather than the political discourse or the officially-assigned terminology around their struggle, which may change in the process of the long-lasting conflicts. We also need to acknowledge that the majority of concepts and theories in social movement studies have been developed in the Global North to define and explain mobilizations and movements which have been observed historically and contextually in the Global

⁴ Famously known as Saturday Mothers (*Cumartesi Anneleri*), Kurdish mothers have been demonstrating every Saturday in Galatasaray Square in Istanbul since 1995 to protest the disappearance of their children (Günçikan 1996).

⁵ Hizbullah emerged during the 1990s and attacked the members and sympathizers of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). It was responsible for the killings of more than a thousand people between 1992 and 1995 (Human Rights Watch). Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2000/02/16/what-turkeys-hizbullah/human-rights-watch-backgrounder> [Accessed on July 28, 2022]; See also: Kurt 2017.

North. The social movement literature refers predominantly to collective actions that have taken place under democratic regimes in “Western” societies in the second half of the 20th century. To differentiate other forms of collective action, especially in the Global South, revolutions, uprisings, insurgencies, and civil wars have been categorized and studied separately. Security or terrorism studies, on the other hand, have stigmatized these movements or organizations without paying attention to the micro-level processes. I suggest that the concept of contentious politics (McAdam/Tarrow/Tilly 2001) allows us to focus on what is common to all these various forms of collective action, as well as examining the roles of various actors from a relational and processual perspective. Moreover, the approaches of figurational sociology and biographical research allow us to reconstruct the experiences of individual biographies in the context of the collective histories and figurations of people’s we-groups and other groupings (Bogner/Rosenthal 2017, in press). By adopting these specific strands of social movement studies and social-constructivist and figurational biographical research, we can study even the most complex collective and individual constellations in the context of long-lasting conflict situations without limiting our analytical terminology to categories such as conflict, security, or terrorism studies.

7.3 Kurdish women’s movement: an exceptional example?

Regardless of the terminology used to define the Kurdish struggle in Turkey, what makes it unique is women’s extraordinary participation, manifestation, and representation at every level. Since women’s activities have been shaping not only the political, armed, and social movements, but also the everyday lives of individual Kurdish women, some background information concerning the context and the extent of women’s activism within the Kurdish movement will be given here.

The political involvement of Kurdish women has been in the spotlight, especially since the ‘Rojava Revolution’ in 2012 in Northern Syria, and their fight against ISIS as YPJ⁶ guerrillas has been present in the mainstream media and attracted popular interest in the Global North. However, it has been overlooked by mainstream popular and academic studies probably because it is seen as an auxiliary section of the main Kurdish national liberation movement. The fate of previous women’s resistance movements or movements, that thrived during the course of national liberation, has paved the way for a pessimistic or dismissive perception of women’s mobilization in similar contexts. Yet, Kurdish women have been active and played important roles in the Kurdish movement in Turkey ever since the Kurdish political struggle gained momentum in the 1980s (Çağlayan 2007, 2020). Both in the legal and political spheres, and in the armed movement spearheaded

⁶ YPJ stands for the Women’s Protection Units consisting mostly Kurdish women and is a part of armed forces of Rojava, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. YPJ fighters came to prominence during the war against the ISIS in Kobane in 2014 and 2015.

by the PKK, women have been present in the frontline, either as leading political figures, such as Leyla Zana⁷ and Gultan Kışanak,⁸ or as rank-and-file members of the grassroots movement. The origin of the Kurdish women's movement goes back to the establishment of the PKK. One of the two women among the founders of the PKK was Sakine Cansız. She played very important roles, first in the prison resistance in the 1990s and then in the revival of the PKK at the beginning of the 2000s, after Abdullah Öcalan was arrested. She was active in the diaspora until she was assassinated in 2012 in Paris, with two other Kurdish activist women, but she continues to be a role model to many Kurdish women. This is reflected, among other things, in the fact that she is often referred to by my interviewees.⁹

Given the conditions of the armed struggle the PKK had launched, it made perfect sense strategically to recruit women into its ranks as a human resource. Women accounted for one third of the militias in the 1990s; and like its counterparts, the PKK as a guerrilla army benefitted from women in “propaganda and intelligence activities, [...] street demonstrations [...] media and logistical support, [and] in armed struggle” (Sahin-Mencutek 2016: 480). Yet, as a result of their painstaking work, Kurdish women were able to establish the women's unit in the PKK only in 1995 and a women's party in 1999 (Jongerden 2017). As has been well documented in recent studies (Sahin-Mencutek 2016; Käser 2021), Kurdish women benefitted immensely from the legitimacy and empowerment their participation in the PKK brought about. Furthermore, women's empowerment and strong positioning in the Kurdish movement did not remain limited to their presence in the ranks of the PKK but expanded to other areas such as political and grassroots activism. In the 2000s, they managed to establish autonomous women's assemblies, women's quotas in pro-Kurdish rights parties, and a co-chair system for all elected positions (Erel/Acık 2020).

One of the most common critiques, especially in the Turkish mainstream discourse, of Kurdish women's activism and achievements is that they were introduced top-down by Abdullah Öcalan's¹⁰ instructions in his books and other writings and that they represent neither genuine grassroots activism nor conservative Kurdish society. However, Käser (2021) and Al-Ali/Tas (2021) stress in their studies that the

⁷ Leyla Zana was elected as a member of parliament in 1991 in Turkey; however, she was criticized for taking the oath in Kurdish in the Parliament and was eventually imprisoned in 1994 under various charges, including treason and PKK membership (Karlsson 2003).

⁸ Güten Kışanak pursued an active political career in pro-Kurdish parties and was elected Mayor of Diyarbakir in 2014. She was detained in 2016 and sentenced to 14 years and three months in prison for “being a member of a terrorist organization” and for “propaganda of a terrorist organization” in 2019. (Gülten Kışanak'a 14 yıl 3 ay, Sebhat Tuncel'e 15 yıl hapis cezası. *Gazete Duvar*. February 1, 2019. Available at: <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2019/02/01/gulten-kisanaka-14-yil-3-ay-sebahat-tuncel-15-yil-hapis-cezasi> [Accessed on February 16, 2022]).

⁹ I have interviewed on October 7, 2021 a close friend of Sakine Cansız who witnessed firsthand Sakine's activities in diaspora.

¹⁰ The founding member of the PKK and leader of the Kurdish movement in Turkey, who has been in prison since 1999.

Kurdish women they interviewed claimed the opposite. They argue that Öcalan felt the need to write his book *Ideology of Women's Liberation* as a result of women's active participation in the resistance, protest and armed struggle since the foundation of the PKK. My interviewees also spoke of their activism with no or little reference to Öcalan. Instead, they were very critical of lingering patriarchal attitudes, or discriminatory or sexist practices that need to be overcome. What they say regarding women's activism has little to do with glorification of a leader or a movement but describes the obstacles women have encountered along the way and the price they have paid to achieve their current position. I have also not observed among my interviewees a sense of achievement or satisfaction with the current situation of Kurdish women. They are instead very critical of the persistent patriarchal norms in Kurdish society, and, more importantly, of men's active and passive resistance to women's equality and equal participation in various political processes.

It is no secret that some Kurdish women joined the PKK to escape patriarchal familial and social norms and practices such as child marriage. However, there is no reason to assume that it was only the PKK that benefitted from women's participation; as Kandiyoti has articulated very well with her now famous concept of 'patriarchal bargains' women are capable of using even the most unlikely settings to their own advantage (Kandiyoti 1988). Thus, it is understandable that Kurdish activist women refute claims that the Kurdish women's movement was initiated and enforced from above, as an ideological imposition by Öcalan. They insist that what they have achieved is thanks to their unrelenting resistance and insistent fight for their rights since the 1990s, despite the Kurdish men who did all they could to stop women's activism against Öcalan's apparent "instructions" (Käser 2021: 905).

For the sake of my arguments, however, what matters is not the authentic origin of the Kurdish women's movement, or the true intentions of the political actors involved in Kurdish women's political empowerment; rather, it is the following conclusion that has been elaborated by Al-Ali and Tas: "Kurdish women activists have developed a gender awareness that has given rise to a strong Kurdish feminist movement, which in turn has been influencing the wider Kurdish political movement" (Al-Ali/Tas 2018: 456). According to the accounts of Kurdish women, it has never been an easy and unhindered process, and they still have a long way to go to achieve full equality with men in all the relevant areas. While the heavy repression of the Kurdish movement in Turkey since 2015 is one of the latest hindrances which led to the flight or imprisonment of most of them, the Rojava Revolution¹¹ seems to be considered as proof of what they can achieve, or inspiration for further engagement in politics and activism by Kurdish women both in the region and in diaspora, as confirmed by my interviewees.

¹¹ My interviewees call it a revolution, just like the activists involved in efforts to build a society based on direct democracy and self-governance in Rojava (Dirik 2021). Women's rights and equality between women and men have been one of the central objectives of the Rojava administration (Burç 2020).

7.4 “A typical Kurdish migration”¹² to Germany?

The cases of two women: Sema and Eda

Now, I would like to turn to the cases of two Kurdish women to illustrate how the context and movements described above interplay with the lives and decisions of Kurdish women in practice. Thus, I would like to introduce the contrastive cases of Sema and Eda, two Kurdish women who experienced forced migration to Germany during the recent clampdown on the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. I have selected their cases for this chapter because they have widely differing life courses and experiences in the Kurdish movement. I argue, however, that in the context of an active Kurdish political movement and women’s movement, and as a result of their forced migration, they face similar dilemmas in the diaspora in Germany. My analysis of their life courses and decision-making processes in the face of these dilemmas allows us to see their dynamically changing perceptions and interpretations of the Kurdish movement, the diaspora, and their respective positions in them.

Sema: A life shaped by the collective suffering and struggle of the Kurds. Sema was born to an established upper-middle-class family and came of age in the 1990s in Amed. The official name of the city is Diyarbakir, but it is better known as Amed among the Kurds. She presented her life story in the context of the collective history and suffering of the Kurds and described her childhood as traumatic. Right at the beginning of the interview, she explained to me:

“I’m not exaggerating, everyday minimum one was murdered, three were murdered. I’m not talking about a shootout in the countryside, like between the guerrillas and the TSK (Turkish Armed Forces). Civilians, on the streets, they were killed with great ease” (Interview in Turkish on February 25, 2020).

In addition, Selma herself had to witness the killing of her father. He was killed in front of her by two unidentified men when she was 10 years old. Clearly, this traumatic experience has influenced her entire life history, as well as the way she speaks about it in the present. She often referred to the killing of her father when describing events or explaining the actions of the people in her life, including herself. As the child of a “martyr”, she had to meet high societal and political expectations in Kurdish society at a very young age. She also suffered a lot because of her mother’s political career in the Kurdish movement, which began right after her father’s killing, and her consequent persecution by the security forces which

¹² Here I refer to the mainstream representation of Kurdish migration to Germany in the collective Turkish imaginary, which accuses Kurds of easily acquiring political asylum in Germany by “pretending” to be persecuted in Turkey. In this perception, most Kurds want to live in Germany, and they use the conflict or “alleged” discrimination against Kurds in Turkey as a pretext to seek asylum in Germany.

lasted for years. After her father's death, Sema's mother was invited by the Kurdish political movement to work actively in politics and ran in the elections. Sema had to adopt the role of both parents toward her younger siblings when her mother was occupied with the time-consuming and very dangerous Kurdish political activism of the period. Sema was very critical of this decision of the Kurdish movement at the time of the interview:

"I said this to them too, of course they had to fight and struggle [...] but they chose the mothers of the kids whose fathers were murdered, I call them popular martyrs, and made them run in the elections. We grew up without either a father or a mother in the most dangerous period. They didn't think what would happen to us if our mothers were also murdered. I see it differently, because of my anxieties. There were many people, they could have chosen them. Of course, our mothers would have contributed, but this much of immersion? My mom started in 1995 and we didn't see our mother until 2009."

The political engagement of her mother and its consequences impacted Sema's life as much as the loss of her father. She narrated several tragic and traumatic events she experienced with her siblings due to harassment by the security forces, whose main aim was to intimidate her mother. In short, Sema described her teenage years as very difficult due to her mother's imprisonment and absence for long stretches, which left scars on her relationship with her mother to this day.

In the meantime, Sema herself was participating in protests and politicized social and cultural events such as Newroz celebrations and experiencing violent encounters with the police. For example, once she was heavily beaten by the security forces for attending the Newroz celebrations. Later, she decided to study law at university, like many Kurds in Turkey have come to do. For this purpose, she moved to a relatively apolitical small city and stayed away from the political environment of her immediate social milieu. But even then, and despite her criticism of the Kurdish political movement, she said she felt the need to defend it against her Turkish friends at the university:

"They would ask why I support them (3) or why I adopt their ideology [...] I'd say because they supported us, they were always next us when my dad died. [...] HDP, HADEP¹³ [...] They said that these are our kids and defended our language, for example, if it wasn't for them maybe we had forgotten what is Kurdish, what is Kurd, who is our ancestors, where they come from [...]."

Sema eventually became a lawyer and began to take cases to defend Kurdish rights in the courts. During this time, she experienced first-hand the persecution and

¹³ She is referring to two of the political parties established by the Kurds.

prosecution of the Kurds in her professional life as a lawyer. She became engaged in NGOs that supported the families of imprisoned people, mostly Kurds. However, Sema stated that she had never considered leaving the country. She married a Kurdish man, who was one of her childhood friends. Right after they got married, her husband was sentenced to a prison term for his political activities. In 2019, when he learned of his conviction, he immediately left the country and came to Germany as a political refugee. Sema followed him several months later with her new-born baby.

During our first interview in February 2020, which was a year after she moved to Germany with a family reunification visa,¹⁴ Sema presented her biography as one of sacrifices for the Kurdish political movement and stated that she does not want a similar fate for her child. She was very critical of the Kurdish diaspora in Germany, too, and wanted to limit the role of the political movement in her life, even though this was not always supported by her husband.

“I say to them for example, stay away from my kid, it is a joke of course, but deep down, a little serious, stay away. I’m sorry, maybe it sounds stupid. But I say this everywhere, on every occasion, every time [...] before I chose, no, without my consent, I had to pay very heavy prices and that was not my choice. Sometimes I say, I wish I was a stupid, dumb, banal, assimilated Kurd who grew up in Istanbul. I would have been happy then, I’m not happy, at all. My only happiness is my husband and my kid. [...] I was a happy kid, my biggest happiness was my father. We had a very strong bonding, they took him away. I have a horrible communication problem with my mom because I haven’t seen her, she was always at activities.”

It was clear that Sema did not want to have a similar relationship with her own daughter to the one she had with her mother. She wanted to protect her daughter from what her mother could not spare her. Nevertheless, when I interviewed Sema again one and a half years later, in October 2021, the changes in her self-presentation, perceptions, and plans were very striking. She has started working closely with the Kurdish movement in the diaspora, especially with the women, and has become one of the regular participants in the movement’s activities.

“I couldn’t stay away, but I’m happy about it, it does me good. Since I’m born to this struggle, I can’t stand staying away, I see my father, cousins, uncle in my dreams. A woman friend of mine here asked me how someone

¹⁴ This visa type is defined on the official website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of Germany as follows: “Spouses and registered partners, parents and minor, unmarried children may migrate to Germany in order to join their family members in order to protect the institution of marriage and the family.” Available at: <https://www.BAMF.de/EN/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Familie/familie-node.html;jsessionid=D7CA41C295F4DE42F77576D8E62F8A64.intranet232> [Accessed on February 16, 2022].

like me could stay away, and told me we need you. But it's good, I hope I can contribute something, I'm active in several councils. [...] When there is a problem involving a woman, we, women in the women's council handle it. This is a good thing."

Sema was less critical of the Kurdish community in Germany, or more understanding of its potentials and limits. Yet, it was clear that she took seriously the task of changing the "old and conservative" mentality and attitudes, especially regarding the gender relations and lifestyle choices of new generations. She was also very optimistic about the prospect of change:

"I couldn't stay away, my husband is active, I was going to the events, I couldn't help it, solidarity is beautiful. But I still say that this is not the activism I was used to, I still say it. But it's going to get better, this new migration will change a lot of things. Political and educated people are coming, not for money, not for jobs, they are a different category, it's a political brain drain. They are both knowledgeable about the activism, because they are coming from within, and educated."

Here, one cannot help but ask what must have caused this drastic change in Sema's perceptions and plans. In addition to what she says above, I assume, in the light of what I was told by my other interviewees, that it has a lot to do with the time she has spent in Germany. She has seen the challenges of an isolated apolitical life in a foreign country, in addition to the potentials and opportunities the established Kurdish political diaspora offers. Moreover, she was very disappointed with the way even Germans who are supportive and show solidarity perceive Kurdish women. Sema was furious when a German acquaintance was surprised to hear that she had read a book they were discussing:

"In their eyes, Kurdish women [...] only stand in booths and sell food during events or throw stones during demonstrations. They don't want to see the educated ones. [...] But we will teach them that Kurdish women don't only bake or fight."

Consequently, it seems there is a combination of pull and push factors which has created the conditions for Sema to change her perceptions and decisions regarding both her individual future and her political mission in the Kurdish diaspora.

Eda: An ambivalent relationship with the Kurdish movement. Interestingly, a similar transition or change of perspective can also be observed in the case of another Kurdish woman, Eda, who has almost nothing in common with Sema due to her working-class background, her apolitical family, and her late but fully dedicated participation in the Kurdish movement. I would argue that the case of Eda can help us to better understand the dynamics, dilemmas, and potentials of

the socio-political constellations in which Kurdish women have found themselves after having to migrate to Germany as a result of the processes unfolding in Turkey since the 1990s and stretching to today's Kurdish diaspora in Germany.

Eda was born in a working-class family as the youngest of five siblings in Istanbul in 1988 and grew up in a squatter house located in a slum neighbourhood in which leftist groups were active. She presented herself as the only politically engaged person in her family and recounted her life story as a continuous search for "the right" political activity to realize her ambitions or the best political organization to achieve her political ideals as fast and efficiently as possible. At the same time, she described her political career as one of disappointments due to her anti-hierarchical, rebellious, and over-ambitious nature.

Eda was a late bloomer, in a political sense, and became radicalized relatively fast. Even though both of her parents were Alevi Kurds, they considered themselves mainly Alevi and advised their children to keep their Kurdish identity secret. The children were not allowed to visit the home town of their parents, Dersim, which was a city in Eastern Anatolia where the majority of the population is Alevi and Kurdish, under the pretext of violence in the region during the 1990s. Dersim is officially called Tunceli and occupies a significant place in the history and collective memory of the Kurds, because of the Dersim massacre that took place in 1937–1938 to suppress the resistance of the Alevi Kurds against the consolidation of power of the Turkish nation state, and during which thousands of Kurds were killed (Deniz 2020). Furthermore, she did not know about her Kurdish ethnic identity until a professor at the university targeted her after learning that she was from Dersim:

"When we started university and were asked where we were from, I said I am from Tunceli and our professor told me: 'oh, I see, you're one of those'. By questioning what he meant I found my way towards the Kurdish movement and discovered my Kurdish identity, because our families never sent us to the east of Turkey for the fear of terror. They did discourage us, whenever I asked about our relatives, it was forbidden to young people to go there. I had never been there; I had no idea. When he said this, I asked who those are, and he exclaimed: 'You're Kurds!' and I was really surprised and started to investigate. I've searched and found Kurdish students and focused on this and became politicized in the Kurdish movement" (Interview in Turkish on February 26, 2020).

As opposed to Sema, Eda had politically very active years at the university in Mersin, a medium size Turkish city in which Kurds have their own neighborhoods and a strong Kurdish movement. She described her university years as the best time of her life, during which she was able to read, discuss and learn a lot, while actively participating in the demonstrations and activities of the Kurdish students. She also remembered nostalgically the solidaristic relations between students from similar

socio-economic backgrounds. With the idealism of the university years and much enthusiasm, she went to Diyarbakir believing that she would be able to contribute to the Kurdish movement more actively, especially the women's organizations there. However, her idealism was met with the harsh realities of the local politics, which can still be very conservative, hierarchical, and patriarchal even in the women's organizations:

“I didn't come from within the Kurdish movement, I chose this as a result of my persuasions, I came from women's movement, of course I've read about this issue at the university, more or less. The Kurdish movement did a lot, but women did a lot too, they left their homes and joined the movement. But when they arrive, they are exposed to only one thing [...] Maybe with that woman too we had a problem [because of that]. Because I was very critical, she wasn't happy with me. There was a lot of gossip, and I was saying that we're a women's organization, instead of gossiping we should read and discuss. Because I came from such an organization in the university, we had a women's initiative, we used to work like that, used to sit and read in the apartments, explain with personal examples [...] When you go to the political field, you expect the same, with a lot of motivation. This didn't come true.”

Her anti-hierarchical expectations, combined with her feminist idealism, seem to result in her having serious problems in various organizations of the Kurdish political movement, during both her legal and illegal activities.

“No, I don't want to dramatize my situation, but I've experienced a lot in my own community, I was subjected to serious defaming. I was targeted, but I still say that this was the result of my choices, decisions and would never say that I wish I hadn't engaged in any political movement. I'm glad that I have become a politically engaged person.”

It is important to note that, despite the policies and practices based on gender equality and egalitarianism of the People's Democratic Party (*Hakların Demokratik Partisi – HDP*¹⁵), and the strong position of the Kurdish women's movement in many areas of social and political life in the Kurdish cities, it would be naïve to expect full equality between men and women, or a totally egalitarian perception or practice in everyday life and in every aspect of social and political life. Especially the armed military organizations of the movement, such as the PKK and YPJ,

¹⁵ The HDP is the pro-Kurdish political party, which gained worldwide fame for its gender egalitarian policies and practices such as co-presidency, as well as its unprecedented success in the June 2015 elections against the AKP. The HDP is still in the Turkish parliament and one of the main opposition forces to the AKP government, especially after the peace process broke down. It has been accused of undertaking terrorist activities and was threatened with closure by the AKP regime.

operate through hierarchical structures and strict discipline, despite the emphasis on women's increasing presence and engagement, as mentioned above.

After failing to persevere in grassroots activism and politics in Diyarbakir, the stronghold of the Kurdish movement, Eda turned to an academic career with the hope of gaining a "title" and thereby a little more authority in the sphere of political activism. She started doing a Masters at a private university in Istanbul; however, this time she encountered a different type of barrier to finding herself an activist network of like-minded people: her class or socio-economic background. She describes academic life at that university as an arena in which egos compete and information is instrumentalized as a status symbol.

"There I felt the class difference. Academia functions in its pink world. You discuss racism without mentioning what happened in Cizre,¹⁶ or without discussing Kurdish issues. They change the topic right away [...]."

Eda's academic and social activism was suddenly interrupted after she was targeted and accused of being a terrorist in the national press because of her romantic relationship with a politically prosecuted person. She fled the country immediately with a tourist visa and survived the first months in Europe thanks to the help of her close relatives. Then, she came to Germany after being admitted to a Masters program in European Studies. Unlike Sema, Eda did not contact the Kurdish political organizations in Germany because of the problems she experienced in Turkey. Instead, she socialized in the networks of newly arrived Kurdish and Turkish political migrants, especially women's groups, and she complains about problems similar to those she had in the academic environment in Istanbul:

"I still feel this class difference. We came here through academic channels, I'm a Masters student, not a signatory,¹⁷ but do you know how they treat you? If you're not a PhD student, they don't take you seriously. They treat you in a condescending way, those who come from Turkey are like this. [...] Women from Turkey, their concerns are different from ours. There are fractions even among us in Germany. There are differences based on class and cultural background even among women. Recently, I've begun to see many things through the lens of class."

¹⁶ She is referring to the killings of the civilians in the province of Cizre, Şırnak, during the 78-day curfew between December 14, 2015 and March 2, 2016 in the context of the most recent military operations by the Turkish army against the PKK. ("BBC Cizre'de sivil ölümleri iddialarını araştırdı." 2016. BBC News Türkçe. June 1, 2016. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/06/160601_cizre_bowen [Accessed on February 16, 2022]).

¹⁷ Here she refers to the groups of academics who are commonly known as Academics for Peace. They signed a petition called "We are not going to be a party to this crime" calling on the AKP government to stop the atrocities in the Kurdish cities in February 2016, and had to flee the country in high numbers due to persecution and prosecution by the government.

When I interviewed her for the first time in February 2020, she was still in the middle of a heated debate with a Kurdish political organization and its members because of a partly personal and partly political issue she had encountered in the past. She was very critical, and at the time she was convinced that she had no future in the Kurdish political movement and had no hope that it could stay true to the ideals and principles it aspires to, such as gender equality, due to its nepotism. Interestingly, Eda's stance had also changed a year and a half later, when I interviewed her in October 2021, and her definition of her political positioning vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue as well as the Kurdish political movement was striking:

“I like the Kurdish movement, I don't have a problem with the movement, but some people in the movement here, who try to survive here, I respect that too because they are fighting, but they make so many technical mistakes and I don't want to associate with those mistakes, I don't want to be with this group [...] but of course belonging to the movement, this is something you build, even if they kick you out, you belong to them. I find this weird, those Kurds called me opportunist or whatever concepts they use, traitor, and what not. And the state, on the contrary, because you're a Kurd, calls you a terrorist and criminalizes you.”

In between the two interviews, Eda, like Sema, had experienced a lot. First and foremost, she had to apply for political asylum, even though she resisted doing this for as long as possible in order to be able to go back to Turkey for familial reasons. She was granted asylum in Germany relatively quickly due to the high risk of imprisonment on political charges in Turkey. Furthermore, she has also been disappointed by the superficial interests of the German academics and activists she has encountered and has grown highly critical of what she calls the “romanticizing of Kurds” or the instrumentalizing of refugees among some Germans.

“I was accepted to an art program specially established for refugees in a university and assigned to a professor who has worked with the Kurds for years, and because I am a Kurd, they sent me to the cluster of that professor. But the professor was such a snob, when you ask a question in class she answers in a condescending way, when you send an email, she forwards it to her assistant. She never sees you as her equal and she claims that she is doing something in a political sphere, this is for refugees, unbelievable.”

Clearly, the mechanisms and dynamics that challenged and shaped Eda's life in Turkey continued to exert similar influences on her decision-making processes and individual and professional commitments after her forced transnational migration to Germany. The most prominent ones are as follows: her working-class socio-economic background, her ambivalent relationship with the Kurdish women's movement, and her problematic encounters with Turks. Interestingly, for both

Eda and Sema, the figuration of the Kurdish diaspora and migrant networks in Germany seems to contribute to a sense of continuity between the home country and the country of arrival, namely Turkey and Germany. Additionally, the limited or superficial experiences with the German public so far, even with activists in solidarity, seem to have not yet created the connections or sense of security these women need to be able to look for opportunities above and beyond their familiar networks and old convictions.

7.5 Conclusion

One of the most obvious findings of this analysis of the cases of Sema and Eda, in the light of my observations of the other Kurdish women, is that after almost three years in Germany, for both Sema and Eda, as for many others, active political engagement with the Kurdish movement in the diaspora appears to be a more appealing option than the alternatives, such as a more career-oriented, individualistic, or simply apolitical life, in spite of all the factors that seem to make this unlikely. In addition to the most obvious factor, which is the probability of estrangement from political activism that transnational migration might cause, there were other factors which would make opting for an apolitical life in Germany more “likely” for both women: Sema’s initial intention to stay away from the movement, and the conflict Eda had with actors in the movement, as we have seen above. Additionally, both Sema and Eda had the relevant cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986) or simply the means to be able to pursue an apolitical and individually focused life in Germany. However, against all odds, both find themselves in the middle of or close to the Kurdish movement at the end of three years. The question is why that has turned out to be the case for both of them and what might be the possible explanations for this finding.

First of all, it is safe to say that the Kurdish movement is more than just a political movement for Kurdish women. Rather, it is closely related to their everyday life, position, status, and prestige in society, in their networks, and in their private lives. Thus, Sema and Eda, who come from completely different backgrounds, who have had very diverse experiences, and who have ended up in Germany as a result of different sets of events, both found themselves better off being active in or close to the movement, by reclaiming it, and by trying to change it from within after negotiating different options in the diaspora. Of course, their decisions or current positions are not final. However, they are significant and show the strong attachment, both emotional and strategic, these women have for the Kurdish movement, based on their years of active participation.

Secondly, the nature of the Kurdish diaspora plays a significant role in their decision-making processes. The Kurdish diaspora in Germany is highly political because the reasons for the migration of most are strictly related to the political oppression in the countries they are from. They do not become politicized in

the diaspora, as is the case for many migrant and refugee communities, they have been already politicized back in their home countries. Third, their prospects and opportunities in Germany are mostly available indirectly via the diasporic or activist networks; this strengthens the importance of their ethnic belonging in their everyday life and increases the likelihood of their support for the political cause of the Kurds.

Fourth, the emotional and material networking support that the strong Kurdish movement offers in the diaspora plays a significant role in the decisions of the activist Kurdish women. The Kurdish movement still has a lot to offer, even to women who have recently arrived and who belong to a different generation of political activists despite the dangers or challenges. For example, the PKK is still considered a terrorist organization in Germany and some of the activities of the Kurdish movement are criminalized. Sema has found an internship position thanks to the activist networks in the diaspora. Eda regularly relies on the movement networks to find freelance jobs. Thus, women like Sema and Eda find emotional, pragmatic, or rational reasons to legitimize their attachment to the movement.

Last but not least, the well-established Kurdish women's movement seems to play a very significant role in the imaginary and everyday lives of Kurdish women, even in the diaspora. It seems to inspire them to continue the struggle and empowers them in their encounters with the patriarchal norms and practices which are more present in the diaspora. However, the strategic use of the women's cause or paying lip service to the feminist discourse by some in the Kurdish movement is not tolerated, as we have seen in the case of Eda. Additionally, this generation of activist Kurdish women seems to have developed an awareness, either via personal experience or through political activities, that women can only have an influence if they are present and involved. No matter how slow the process and how little that influence is, it is still better than nothing, than not having any say, or not benefitting from its resources. Many women I have talked to emphasized that they have seen and learned that Kurdish women have reached their current strong positions only by paying heavy prices; it was not granted to them from above, so it is understandable if they follow a similar strategy in the diaspora.

It can also be speculated that the Kurdish women instrumentalize the Kurdish political movement as much as the movement instrumentalizes them, to reach their goals or simply to survive and thrive, both in Turkey and in the diaspora. Eda's story is a good example of this, she navigates through layers and intersections of repression but uses Kurdish rights activism to get away from failed family relations, at first during her university education. Then she suffers because of the hierarchical tendencies in the Kurdish women's movement in local politics, but she does not give up and joins other organizations of the movement, until a dispute alienates her from the Kurdish movement. When she comes to Germany, she is very critical of the movement, and some actors in the movement decline to engage with her. However, she refuses to sever the ties completely and claims her right to be part of the struggle. A similar pattern of intermittent interaction with political activists

can also be observed during the course of Sema's life history. The empowering gender discourse of the Kurdish political movement certainly plays a role in women's decision to return or stay close to the movement.

As shown by the cases of Kurdish women that I have discussed, transnational migration does not represent a break in the biographical courses of individuals, as opposed to the individual or collective plans of the actors. Here, the role of the social milieus in which the biographies have been shaped since childhood, a strong sense of belonging to collective networks both in the home country and in the host country, in other words in the diaspora, and the individual biographical courses of members of politically active networks must be taken into account. As the example of Sema and those of my other interviewees have shown, the strong influence of collective discourses on the struggle of Kurdish people (not only in Turkey but also in Germany), continuing informal relationships with movement networks, and a dominant self-interpretation and identification as an active and engaged Kurd play a significant role in decision-making processes which should not be regarded as final. This is closely related to a strong sense of collective belonging and previous commitments, regardless of any self-imposed or organizationally imposed distance from the organizational networks. One also needs to include the challenge of building new networks and the fear of being left alone in a "foreign" country among the factors preventing these migrants from pursuing their individual independent paths, as one of my interviewees suggested: "It's not easy to be all alone in Germany." Furthermore, for educated migrants with certain privileges, like Sema and Eda, it seems that the romantic image of Kurdish fighters or activist women cultivated by some Germans causes resentment and can be perceived as condescending.

As a final point, in the light of the cases I have discussed, I would like to challenge the notions common in social movement studies of joining, staying in, or leaving a social or political movement, and the image of Kurdish refugees fleeing Turkey in the mainstream Turkish collective imaginary. The case of Sema shows us that after her long socialization in the violent conflict we cannot really talk about a participation practice, a moment of recruitment, persistence factors, and demobilization processes. Rather, both women move in and out of the political sphere, are pushed and pulled into the political movement, as a result of complex developments affecting their individual and familial trajectories, resulting from the collective history of Kurds and the Kurdish political movement in Turkey. Instead, we should talk about engaged biographies in relation to collective action and contentious politics, rather than activist careers. In contrast to mainstream assumptions, especially among Turks, regarding Kurdish migration to Germany, which is portrayed as intentional and desired by the Kurds, we can say that transnational migration is mostly forced, seen as a last resort because of political persecution or the threat of prosecution by the state, and is a big challenge for activist Kurds.

Part III

Changes in a transnational migrant society: Social figurations and everyday life in Jordan

8 Jordan/Amman as a changing arrival context: From polarization between old-established residents and refugees to fragmentation and new fronts

Hendrik Hinrichsen, Johannes Becker

8.1 Introduction:

Jordan in a region shaped by flight and migration

“46 years ago we used to have discussions whether you are Jordanian-Jordanian, or are you Palestinian-Jordanian, who is more Jordanian, but after the Syrians, after the refugees came in, we sided more, we united more.” (Amira, born 1997)

In this quotation, our interviewee Amira puts the most important developments in the migration history of Jordan in a nutshell. From her own perspective, she describes how the figurations and alliances of different groupings in Jordan have changed during the past decades. That is also the aim of this chapter: to reconstruct the changing figurations of transnational migrants and old-established residents in Amman, Jordan, and the effect of these changes on the everyday life of the inhabitants.

The quotation is taken from an interview we conducted in the context of a research project on the relationships between old-established residents and refugees or

Hinrichsen, H./Becker, J. (2022): Jordan/Amman as a changing arrival context: From polarization between old-established residents and refugees to fragmentation and new fronts. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 241–265. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2210>

migrants in Jordan.¹ Our interviewee is alluding here to the observable signs that we-images and belongings in Jordan are changing. While Jordanian-Jordanians, or Transjordanians,² used to be considered as the old-established residents, Jordanians with Palestinian origins were regarded as newcomers. In Jordan, these belongings were, and still are, a sensitive issue because they are bound up with a history of conflicts and distribution of resources within the country. However, in recent decades, as shown by the quotation, this issue has tended to become less relevant in the face of new distinctions and more complex figurations. This interviewee is aware that something has changed, and puts it down to the arrival of Syrian refugees since 2013.

However, we argue that this is only one aspect of the changes. For behind these changed we-images is a complex and changing figuration of different we-groups made up of old-established residents, migrants, and refugees, which we will examine in this chapter on the basis of the theories developed by Norbert Elias (Elias/Scotson (2008[1965]; Elias 2008[1994])). In various phases of Jordan's history, this figuration was characterized by smouldering conflict, sometimes open confrontation, between the we-groups. At present, however, we-groups are becoming somewhat fragmented and there seems to be a tendency to form new lines of conflict. This chapter is an attempt to trace these processes.

The national belongings mentioned in the quotation – Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian – are references to the big immigration movements into Jordan. The history of immigration to Jordan and Amman is complex and involves different groupings. In rough terms, for the time since 1946 when the “Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan” was founded, it is possible to identify three, or if counted along a temporal axis, five major groupings of refugees: Palestinians who came in 1947/48, 1967 and 1990/91; refugees from Iraq who came especially after 2003; and Syrian refugees who arrived after the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011. Today, over two thirds of the population of Jordan are immigrants, in the sense that they or their parents or grandparents came to this country as refugees or migrants. The city of Amman has been especially affected by the arrival of refugees. While it had 30,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 1940s, this number had risen to over four million by 2018. Because we wanted to study the relationships between different groupings in an urban context, our research was deliberately focused on the city of Amman and did not include the Syrian refugee camps in the north of Jordan.

However, the question of who is “more Jordanian”, which is referred to in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, is *not* an obvious question in the light of Jordan's history in the region. The refugees came to a ‘young’ country which

¹ We would like to thank Dr. Eva Bahl, Dr. Artur Bogner, Dr. Sevil Çakır Kılınçoğlu, Prof. Gabriele Rosenthal and Dr. Arne Worm for their comments and suggestions on a previous version of this chapter.

² The term “Transjordan” reflects the fact that the British mandate, established after the First World War, was separated in 1922 into Palestine (west of the River Jordan) and Transjordan (east of the River Jordan).

had taken on forms similar to the later independent state only in the first half of the 20th century. The territory was part of the Ottoman Empire up to 1918, before the borders of the British mandate in Transjordan were defined in the 1920s, roughly as they are today. Jordan became independent in 1946. The three major groupings of refugees in Jordan and the old-established residents share many socio-cultural features because – from a historical point of view – they are all from the same or neighboring regions. Thus, most of the refugees and the old-established population of Jordan are Sunni Arabs and speak the same language, despite dialectal differences. In general terms, there is a long history of regional contact and exchange, with people moving to and from the area of today's Jordan in the context of Bilad ash-Sham (or of Greater Syria, see Schayegh 2017; Becker 2021a), and this continued after independence. “Tribes” (Arabic: *ashair*) and family networks spanned large parts of the region. People's belonging was not defined in terms of national borders but in terms of which town (or region) they came from. Pan-Arab or Arab nationalist ideas were increasingly widespread from the late Ottoman period onwards. And in the second half of the 20th century it was not difficult for citizens of many of the young Arab countries to settle in another Arab country and obtain citizenship there. Today, the legal obstacles to be overcome are much greater, not least due to the arrival of so many refugees in recent decades.

Considering the context of this large, and to a certain degree integrated region, and Jordan's short history as a nation state, the questions ‘who is a proper Jordanian’ and ‘who does not belong here’ might appear rather absurd. And yet it is this background that makes it so interesting to reconstruct the differential and figurational dynamics which nevertheless exist in Jordan. This involves the questions how we- and they-images, resentments or power chances are created, and how they are transformed in the course of time.

In our analysis we will consider both the big picture – the process of forming a young state and border regime politics – and what we might call the small pictures, the individual experiences of refugees and migrants, whose stories begin long before their migration. When migrants arrive in Jordan, they bring individual and collective experiences, resources and diverse belongings with them. Building such a bridge is a complex and bold endeavour, and is not possible without considerable simplification. We believe nevertheless that by adopting this approach we will be able to provide deeper insights into complex developments within immigration societies. It is also an exercise in the difficult task of combining what are called the micro and the macro levels, but which nonetheless are two sides of the same coin.

Our analysis of various figurations of old-established residents and immigrants will also take into account, and critically reflect on, regionalist interpretations which have recently become more important in studies of refugee and migration movements in the Middle East. Regionalism in this sense is a cipher for the historical ties among different parts of the population and for translocal networks (see Chatelard 2010a; El-Abed 2014; Shami 1996; Chatty 2010). With regard to

the situation of refugees and migrants, research from this perspective highlights that the historical integration of the region has advantages for many people who do not live in (recent) refugee camps, both during and after their migration: easy communication, connection with existing networks, no feelings of estrangement in neighboring countries, and, in the past, only a rudimentary border regime. Giulia El Dardiry (2017: 704) sums up the significance of this “regionalist paradigm” for refugee movements within the Arab-speaking Middle East as follows:

“Recent scholarship on the Iraqi and Syrian displacements has highlighted how places of exile are conceptualized and experienced as familiar; how displacement has overlain long-established crossborder labor migration routes; how Arabism and religious identities [...] have shaped migration trajectories; and how regional understandings of hospitality and asylum have enabled refugees to self-settle in new places. This regionalist paradigm has been particularly important for research on Jordan, a country with intense fragmentations into and across its territory [...]. This focus on connection over fragmentation has troubled ahistorical and state-centric notions of belonging.”

In our empirical research in Jordan and especially Amman,³ *on the one hand* we take into account the translocal aspects of migrations that today are described as transnational. *On the other hand*, our empirical analyses based on this approach – especially biographical case reconstructions (Rosenthal 2004a) – show that it is necessary to relativize the assumption, based on the “regionalist paradigm”, that migration and arrival processes within the region are ‘easier’. Indeed, we hold the view that we need to assess the ambivalent and ambiguous character of “regionalist” connections, which are often related to conflicts on different levels.

Despite all their socio-cultural similarities, refugees in Jordan, both within the large heterogeneous grouping of refugees, and in relation to old-established groupings, differ in terms of power and participation chances. Today this is in part connected with residence regulations and the official registration of refugees. In the Middle East, national borders, passports, and refugee and immigration regimes have gradually come to play a more important role in recent decades, and have a significant effect on people’s collective and individual self- and they-images. But

³ In the context of our research project on “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants and old-established residents in Jordan since 1946”, which was launched in 2017, we have carried out intensive field research in Amman in order to investigate the relations between these groupings and, among them, various we-groups. Further team members: Dr. Ahmed Albaba, Dolly Abdul Karim, M.A. In over six months of joint field research, the authors, together with Gabriele Rosenthal, Dolly Abdul Karim and local field assistants, conducted 82 biographical-narrative interviews, seven group discussions, and a large number of participant observations and ethnographic interviews. We use a process-oriented approach which links “biographical research concentrated on individual biographies and family histories with figurational sociology, which is more strongly focused on collective and long-term transformation processes” (Bogner/Rosenthal in press).

even when they formally enjoy equal rights, such as Palestinian refugees in Jordan, refugees and old-established residents in Jordan do not have the same opportunities for power and participation. This can be traced back to the availability of land and the cooptation strategies developed over many years by the regime, in which the groupings that were present ‘earlier’ have higher chances. We will examine these different figurations of old-established residents and refugees from a historical perspective in the next chapter (ch. 8).

Further questioning the assumptions of the regionalist paradigm, a significant number of the refugees we spoke to in Amman were not members of translocal networks before their migration, or were not always aware of their “similarity” to people in other Arab regions. Rather, they were embedded in localized milieus, had seldom traveled outside their home province, and had no regional networks on which they could rely during and after their migration, and especially not in Jordan. The refugees we interviewed differ depending on whether they or their families were members of translocal networks before their migration, or whether their networks were limited to the local context. The question of whether their social network before their migration was translocal or only local is important for the situation of refugees in Jordan. Thus, on the basis of our empirical analyses we can construct two types of refugees: a privileged translocal type and a localized type with a precarious social status. To illustrate these types, we will discuss the contexts of origin and the family histories of a Syrian family and an Iraqi family in Amman (ch. 9).

8.2 Growing polarization between old-established residents and refugees: Transjordanians and Palestinian-Jordanian refugees (1940s–1980s)

The figuration of the so-called Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians has for decades determined the chances of participation and the we- and they-images of old-established residents, migrants and refugees in Jordan. We will show how this figuration between Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians was formed, and how the power and life chances of the people involved have changed. We have already seen that it is not easy to speak in general terms of “the old-established residents” and “the Transjordanians”, and it is quite clear that neither “the old-established residents” nor “the Palestinians” are a homogeneous grouping. In the course of this chapter we will look more closely at the distinctions.

In everyday life, the difference between old-established Jordanians and Palestinian Jordanians depends on whether it can be assumed or claimed that one’s family was settled in the mandate of Transjordan (the East Bank) *before* 1948, i.e. before the arrival of Palestinian refugees from the present-day national territory of Israel: “The



Figure 8.1: Administrative, political and road map of the middle east. Rainer Lesniewski/Shutterstock.com

distinction is one of national origin or lineage, not current citizenship” (Baylouny 2008: 278).

However, despite discursive unity, the old-established residents and the Palestinians are not perceived as uniform groupings, as the results of our analyses of interviews and observations clearly show. *Among the old-established residents*, those are often distinguished who see themselves as the ‘original’ inhabitants of the country because they belong to ethno-political we-groups (“tribes”).⁴ They are referred to as Transjordanians (“*Urduni-urduni*”, which means “Jordanian-Jordanians”). In addition, there are old-established residents who lived in the territory of present-day Jordan before 1948, but who do not count as “Transjordanians” because they do not trace their origin back to this geographical space. Their families came from what is today Syria, the Caucasus, Kurdistan, Palestine, Egypt or Libya.⁵ From the first half of the 20th century onward, representatives of these groupings played an important role in city and state as administrative and government officials, lead-

⁴ Arabic sg. *ashira*, pl. *ashair* (see Layne 1994). These are groups that are geographically associated with this territory.

⁵ As pointed out above, this phenomenon is related to the fact that many of today’s state borders in the Middle East are relatively recent creations, and it reflects the common translocal practices that were repeatedly came across (Becker 2021a).

ers of the armed forces or the security apparatus, or business elites (the parents of Omar ar-Razzaz, who was the Prime Minister up to 2020, came from Syria, for example).

The Transjordanians, or “Jordanian-Jordanians” – i.e. those who trace their origin back to the geographical space of present-day Jordan – are important for the figuration between old-established Jordanians and Palestinians, because for them the arrival of the Palestinians appeared as a threat to their dominant position in the country’s public sector. These fears were strongly reinforced by the Jordanian civil war in 1970/71 (see below). The “Transjordanians” see themselves as the original inhabitants of this territory because they belong to “tribes” that are regarded as being old-established. To us, it is clear that these ethno-political belongings are only one level of the complex, interwoven belongings and social positions in Jordan and Amman. But to this day belonging to a “tribe” has political and social significance in Jordan and Amman. It is based on competing we-groups whose we-images and (loose) internal integration existed before the creation of Transjordan in 1921 and continued to exist in view of the development of a complicated relationship with the government.

In contrast to these old-established residents, a very large part of the Jordanian population – today between 40 and 65 percent – was, and still is, regarded as “Palestinian” (El-Abed 2014: 86). Most of the “Palestinians”, or their forefathers, migrated to Jordan in the context of the Arab-Israeli wars in 1947/48 and 1967. Or they had moved to the East Bank in the period between 1948 and 1967, when the West Bank belonged to Jordan. At that time, like the refugees, people from the West Bank were given Jordanian passports. Thus, the distinction between old-established residents and Palestinians in Jordan today has little to do with legal status: nearly all Palestinians have more or less the same legal rights as the old-established groupings.⁶

The difference between Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians is not always clear-cut, as will be shown below when we discuss family connections, “mixed marriages”, and multiple belongings. Nevertheless, to this day experiences of difference are linked to the differentiation between Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians, with corresponding we- and they-images, resource flows and unequal power chances. The difference is embedded in long-term social transformation processes in Jordan.

The figuration of Transjordanians and Palestinians in state building and rent economy. The reasons why it was possible for a figuration of Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians to be formed in Jordan can be traced back to the Ottoman period and the phase of creation of the Jordanian state from 1921 onward. In this phase, emphasis was on the development of a quasi-state administration with a monopoly on the use of force and on taxation. The Hashemite rulers and the

⁶ This does not apply to the relatively small number (about 140,000) of Palestinians who fled to Jordan from Gaza during the war of 1967 and their descendants (see El-Abed 2005).

British mandate power gave positions in the administration and other rewards to the groupings that were settled there at that time in order to ensure their loyalty. The power chances of the Transjordanians can be explained, among other things, by their moderately hierarchical organization within a “tribe” under local, regional and national leaders, and the fact that these leaders have had access to the Jordanian ruling dynasty over long periods of the country’s history (Shryock/Howell 2001: 266). Other old-established residents, such as Syrians and different groupings of Circassians and Chechens (Muslim refugees from the Russian Empire) who were living in Amman before the formation of Transjordan as a state, also belonged to this elite circle and were given important positions (see Becker 2021b).⁷

The significance of the ‘early’ employment of local residents in the army, which was founded as the Arab Legion by the former British colonial power in the early 1920s, and gradually expanded, cannot be overestimated. It was the “solidity of its rural base, and the loyalty of an army largely composed of tribesmen in uniform” that helped the Hashemite regime to survive both Britain’s loss of hegemony in the Middle East and the integration of parts of Palestine into the Jordanian state (Tall 2000: 95f.; cf. Massad, 2001).

Following its defeat in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948/49, the Legion became the regular Jordanian army and was greatly expanded. In this phase, newly arrived Palestinians could also take advantage of employment opportunities in the army, but these were mostly limited to non-combat technical jobs.

The early favoring of old-established residents, which placed Palestinians in a disadvantaged position, increased between the 1950s and the 1980s. In the literature, this phase has frequently been described as the high point of the Jordanian (semi-)rentier state⁸ (Brynen 1992; Peters/Moore 2009). In (semi-)rentier states, state budgets are based to a high degree on external rents, such as revenue from oil or from military or development aid. Much attention has been paid to the connection between rents and the emergence of patron-client structures, i.e. support for certain groupings or people (often to the detriment of others) in a political or financial sense. In Jordan, state subsidies for things like food and fuel benefited the whole population, and thus also the Palestinians. But one can nevertheless say that, especially in the period between the 1950s and the 1980s, old-established residents, and in particular Transjordanians, were privileged, for example in terms of access to public employment and welfare services, financial support for tribal regions, and sometimes direct financial subsidies for the tribal leaders, but also various forms

⁷ A system of rotation has become established for the elites in leading positions in the government, which gives them certain benefits, while at the same time binding them to the royal house, and restricting their influence (Alon 2016: 15f.). These elites act as mediators who are able to give power chances and resources to their own people; in the case of the original Jordanians, for instance, this means the members of the “tribes” (Shryock/Howell 2001: 266). However, we must not imagine this as a form of social security, but as precarious social capital.

⁸ The term semi-rentier state expresses the fact that Jordan has no direct access to rents like the Gulf monarchies with their revenues from oil exports. However, financial aid from the Gulf monarchies, Great Britain or the US makes it indirectly dependent on such rents.

of political capital. In the strongholds of the Transjordanians, such as the cities of Karak or Ma'an, the employment rate in the public sector, for example, was up to 90 percent of the labor force (Baylouny 2008: 285). At the end of the 1980s, nearly 20 percent of the working population were employed in the police force or the army, in both of which Transjordanians play a dominant role (Brynen 1992: 82). The disadvantaged position of the Palestinians can also be seen – going back in time – in neglect of the West Bank, which belonged to Jordan between 1948 and 1967, and economic support for the East Bank, for example the promotion of agriculture in the Jordan valley.

The family histories and biographies of old-established residents which we collected and analyzed in the context of our research project underline the fact that patron-client relations in the (semi-)rentier state of Jordan play an important role in processes of social mobility and ties of loyalty to the rulers and the government. Elsewhere we have discussed in detail, for instance, the case of a Turkish-Circassian family that became part of the Jordanian elite at the time of the founding of the state (Becker 2021b). In the case of 'ordinary' "Transjordanians" we have also shown how members of the family or "tribe" are able to profit from positions and patronage networks going back to the time of the founding of the state (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press). These patronage relations are an open secret in Jordan, as shown by the following passage from an interview conducted in 2018⁹ with Eyad (b. 1991). His father's Transjordanian family is from the region around Irbid. At the time of the interview, his father was an officer in the Jordanian army. In the interview, Eyad speaks about how much Transjordanians benefit from having close ties to the government, in contrast to Palestinians:

"In Jordan we have two people, Palestinians and Jordanian people. [...] Not declared but implicitly [it] happened that the government it is for Jordanians because they are the people of this land. [...] If you want to go to any kind of ministry if you are Jordanian for sure you can find a connection for you [...]. If you are Palestinian you don't have this kind of connection."

At a later stage, when asked for more details about this, he says:

"It helps you in life [that my father is from Irbid] [...] when it comes to university. [...] Because my father was an army member we studied for free. [...] I had a chance to select pharmacy or civil engineering or engineering, the people outside they don't have a chance, they fill out the form and it is according to their marks. This [is] one of the big differences because of connections. [...] Jordanians have accessibility because they are the controlling party, because they are the majority or the 90 percent of government employees."¹⁰

⁹ Conducted in English by Hendrik Hinrichsen in March 2018.

¹⁰ Names and other details of all interviewees referred to in this chapter have been anonymized.

The dominant position of the Transjordanians as compared to the Palestinians, described here by Eyad, is a taboo subject in Jordan to this day because of the historical conflicts between these groupings. In our interviews, especially when they were recorded, this dominance is rarely mentioned so openly. Some interviewees asked us to stop recording when such topics came up. Eyad himself mentions this taboo, for instance when he says that the Palestinian-Jordanian question is “the most sensitive topic, you can’t declare a lot of statements about it”. That Eyad can say this so openly in the interview we conducted with him in 2018 is due to his biographical trajectory and that of his family. In the 1990s – a significant period in the collective history, which we will discuss below – Eyad’s family suffered a severe drop in their standard of living, and as a consequence their sense of loyalty toward the Jordanian regime was weakened. During the Arab Spring in Jordan in 2011-2012, Eyad was active in student groups that were moderately critical of the government. He developed an increasingly critical attitude toward the existing patronage relations, without engaging in serious opposition to the regime. Our empirical reconstructions show that from the 1990s onward the importance of patronage gradually became reduced, as a result of general changes in the country, especially socio-economic developments, which will be discussed below.¹¹

In the 1960s and 1970s, one reason why the preferential treatment of old-established residents in the public sector was possible was that the Palestinians could improve their life chances by going to work in the oil-rich Gulf states. Baylouny (2008: 290) says that “Jordan ‘solved’ its domestic integration problems through the export of primarily Palestinian labor”. The number of Jordanian migrant laborers working in the Gulf states increased sharply between 1960 and 1980. At the beginning of the 1980s, more than 30/40 percent of the Jordanian workforce, chiefly Palestinians, were employed in other Arab countries. At this time, remittances accounted for one third of the GNP (Barham 2017; Baylouny 2008: 285). In this phase, most families in Palestinian refugee camps in Amman had one or more family members working in the Gulf (Shami 1997). The remittances of the migrant laborers helped Palestinians in Jordan to improve their standard of living by building houses and purchasing consumer goods. This went along with the urban development of Amman, with new neighborhoods where members of the “new” middle class could build bigger houses for their families. Our interviewees often spoke about these improved living conditions for large parts of the population, compared with the very basic houses without electricity or running water which people lived in during the 1950s and 1960s.

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the rentier state model, with a strong public sector and huge numbers of migrant laborers, came under heavy pressure. This had consequences for the figuration of old-established resi-

¹¹ We have shown elsewhere that patronage had the additional effect of making it easier for people to adopt a sedentary lifestyle in an urban setting in the 1960s and 1970s, which in other geographical contexts led to very precarious situations (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press).

dents and Palestinians. Before looking more closely at this development, however, we should mention another event which was very significant for this figuration. The so-called Jordanian civil war of 1970/71, in which the Jordanian army fought against the PLO in Jordan, played an important role in the polarization of old-established residents and refugees, and its effects are still felt in Jordan today.

Increasing polarization of Transjordanians and Palestinians after the Jordanian civil war. In the second half of the 1960s, in the lead-up to the civil war, the PLO in Jordan increased in strength and clearly posed a threat to the sovereignty of the king and the Jordanian state (Shlaim 2008: 312). In Amman from 1968 onward, PLO militias exercised a considerable influence on life in the city, controlled several neighborhoods, and imposed compulsory levies on businesses and residents. This was perceived as a threat not only by the Jordanian regime, but also by the Transjordanians who supported it. They feared that Palestinian groupings would take control of the government. The conflict finally culminated in an open armed confrontation between the PLO and the Jordanian army which lasted from about June 1970 to July 1971.¹²

Although the aims of the PLO were not supported in the same way in all Palestinian milieus, and in some cases were even rejected, the civil war deepened existing lines of difference and conflict between Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians: “Black September, as it came to be called, and its aftermath left deep scars. As a result, an ‘East Banker first’ period was initiated” (Brand 2007: 2f.). On the one hand, the civil war resulted in a government policy of even greater privileges for Transjordanians. In the post-war period, “[East Bank] origin was considered ample qualification for jobs” (Baylouny 2008: 289). The Jordanian government carried out a series of ‘cleansings’ and sharply reduced the number of Jordanian Palestinians employed in the security forces, the public sector, and the media (Massad 2001: 213, 218).

On the other hand, the civil war stirred up mutual distrust and resentful they-images, in which the civil war, the granting of privileges, and the question of who is an old-established resident, were, and still are, interconnected. In our interviews and participant observations, reference was repeatedly made to tensions or mutual disdain between Transjordanians and Palestinians. In a frequently expressed they-image, for instance, the Palestinians, as a homogenized mass, are accused of having supported or sympathized with the PLO militias and their attempted coup, although they, the Jordanians, had welcomed them after the wars of 1948 and 1967. In this way, Palestinians are turned into foreigners or guests who are ungrateful and who should sooner or later go back to Palestine (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press). In a similar way, the Transjordanians are criticized for their privileged

¹² In September 1970, the so-called Black September, following two failed attacks on the Jordanian king, the shelling of Palestinian refugee camps, and a fragile ceasefire, the Jordanian army carried out a major offensive which defeated the Palestinian paramilitary groupings in Jordan and forced the PLO to retreat to Lebanon. Limited interventions by Syria and Israel also played a role in the conflict.

status, their loyalty to the regime, and their brutality, shown for instance by the merciless bombardment of Palestinian refugee camps in the civil war.

In certain milieus, though not all, this also meant that the two groupings lived separately with a mutual lack of understanding and internalized mutual rejection of each other. For instance, Hashim (b. 1983),¹³ a “Transjordanian” who grew up in Amman, says of his relationship with Palestinians when he was at school:

“We have a common culture between us and them, but at my time when I was in the school, no, it was a big distance between us and them. This distance was in terms of the way they speak, their slang language, their pronunciation completely different (from) us and sometimes this could make a barrier between each other. They always have their own subculture, their own (manners), they always alone and we are always alone.”

Hashim grew up in the 1980s in a neighborhood on the outskirts of Amman that was almost exclusively inhabited at that time by Transjordanians, and he only met Palestinians at school. In the above-quoted passage, Hashim refers to the fact that the two groups speak different dialects of Arabic. To this day, this is an important marker of difference, which can be exploited flexibly or strategically (see below). In the 1980s and 1990s, the social separation indicated in the quotation was reinforced by the mutual resentment resulting from the Black September conflict. Thus, as Hashim remembers in the interview, when he was at school his parents told him to keep away from Palestinians: “Our families kept discouraging us, please don’t interact, don’t engage, don’t trust those people.” Hashim’s parents, together with his extended family and other members of the “tribe” who lived in the same neighborhood, had experienced the battle for Amman during the civil war. During the fighting, the residents had been armed by the regime because the neighborhood was in an important strategic position. They were involved in clashes with Palestinian militias, who mined the access roads to the area.

The civil war is barely mentioned in official and wider public discourses on Jordanian history, even though it was an important experience for many people. There is a Palestinian urban milieu which is still to a great extent emotionally and mentally affected by the civil war, and which influences the social mood in Jordan, and especially in Amman, to this day. It consists of people who were either involved themselves, or whose parents or grandparents or neighbors were involved in secular Palestinian parties that were active in Jordan from the mid 1960s to 1971. After the civil war, the parties were largely banned and became insignificant

¹³ Johannes Becker conducted two interviews with Hashim in English in November 2018. Between October 2018 and January 2019, Hendrik Hinrichsen and Johannes Becker conducted biographical-narrative interviews with Hashim’s parents Ahmad and Nur, his father’s brother Munir, his brother Hamed, his sister Safa, and Safa’s daughters Amira und Leila. An interview was also conducted with a more distant relative Ibrahim, his Palestinian fellow student, and a Syrian family that lives nearby. The total duration of these interviews was 31 hours.

organizations in Jordan. However, they gave rise to a grouping beyond the former active members, with a clearly rejectionist attitude toward the Hashemite rulers and old-established Jordanians, and a strong emphasis on Palestinian collective history and Palestinian family history. The representatives of this grouping normally have migration biographies which have been shaped by their political activism (for instance with periods spent in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria or Tunisia because of their membership of Palestinian organizations). This milieu still exists today in Jordan, although many people left the country after the civil war, and some never returned. As an example we may cite our interview with Mahmoud (b. 1993). This man told us what is commonly said in his family with regard to the time following the Black September conflict. His extended family came originally from a village in the West Bank, and moved to Amman in the 1950s. During the civil war they moved into a Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of the city, where Mahmoud grew up and where his family still lives today. While some members of his extended family were active in the PLO, one grandfather was employed as an engineer in the Jordanian army. Mahmoud told us that, before going home to the refugee camp after work, his grandfather changed out of his uniform because he feared that otherwise he might be attacked. Mahmoud said that his family found the atmosphere after the civil war very difficult, and the army was omnipresent. At military checkpoints Palestinians were identified by their dialect and then beaten up. In his family no one spoke “about politics or about Palestine; everybody forgot Palestine”. He says that many people known to his family left the country:

“Yeah, and people started to think how they can get out of Jordan. Some of them went to Kuwait, [...] actually my friend his grandfather got killed, they left back to Palestine, they went back to Ramallah, and my grandfather’s uncle left to Brazil, my aunt and her husband left to Beirut and my friend’s family went to Kuwait, a lot of people left too.”

This, and similar passages from other interviews, suggest that the high number of Palestinian migrant laborers in various countries across the region during the 1970s and 1980s can in some cases be interpreted as hidden refugee migration.

In both formal and informal Palestinian refugee camps in Amman, Palestinian belonging and animosity against the Transjordanians are to this day significant components of everyday interpretations. On the one hand, this is because these social spaces are perceived from the outside as being Palestinian (although other refugees also live there). On the other hand, it is because many Palestinians are registered as refugees, and as such receive support from international organizations if they are poor – assistance which poor non-refugees cannot claim.

By contrast, in the next section we will look at Palestinian milieus in which these tensions do not play a big role in everyday life.

Figurations of Transjordanians and Palestinians and multiple, complex belongings. As we have shown, the cooptation of old-established residents by the regime

in a system of rentier-state patronage, which developed over many years, and the conflict-laden dynamic during the civil war had a polarizing effect on the old-established and Palestinian groupings. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that all parts of these two groupings were affected by this dynamic to the same degree. The biographical relevance of people's belongings and corresponding we-images differs considerably, and the significance of these belongings is different in different milieus, in different phases of the family history, and in different situative contexts. Thus, in everyday situations in many upper middle-class milieus in Amman, the question of whether a person is Transjordanian or Palestinian is only relevant in certain limited areas. These people became established in Amman for business reasons or because they worked in state institutions. Moreover, "mixed marriages" were common (Hanania 2014: 480), and less importance was attached to questions of belonging, or involvement in the civil war. In this milieu, people care little about, or may not even be aware of, their own group affiliation. Naila, who studied in Germany, took part in a group discussion in Amman with other young people from well-off families in the city.¹⁴ Her father is a doctor and a "Transjordanian", while her mother is from a Palestinian family. She recounts how her belief that she was a Palestinian was shaken:

"I thought actually for a very long time that I'm Palestinian ((laughing)), until I was in the fifth grade I used to think that I'm a Palestinian and then I knew the fact that my father is Jordanian. [...] One of my cousins from father's side has told me that we are not Palestinian, we are Jordanian. I was like: no we are Palestinian ((laughing)), she was like: no we are Jordanian, you don't know about it? I asked my parents and yeah my dad told me that we are Jordanian."

This shows that there is not always a clear separation between the two groupings. Families are often split up in different regions, and family histories are more complex than is suggested by attributing them to one or other of the groupings.

Another point in this regard is that many people did not mention their Palestinian "origin" in their interview, or in ordinary conversations with us. Perhaps this is because they feel that the important dates of 1948, 1967 and 1990 in their collective history have nothing to do with them, for instance because their own or their family's migration to the East Bank was independent of the discursively significant refugee movements in those years. Thus, in their case an important element that would make them feel they belong to the Palestinian groupings in Jordan is missing in their family history or biography: their place is in between the big migration and refugee movements.

Following our participant observations, interviews and group discussions we were able to reconstruct how interviewees made use of possible options in order

¹⁴ Group discussion held in March 2018 in English. Johannes Becker met the five participants (four women and one man) in a small café in a wealthy district of Amman.

to emphasize (situatedly) or ‘stage’ a Palestinian or Transjordanian belonging. The characteristics of the different belongings offer possibilities for concealing or revealing aspects of one’s collective identity or social background, as a kind of stigma management (Goffman 1986[1963]). In Amman, with its urban anonymity, the attribution of an expected Palestinian or Transjordanian self-image in personal interaction can be based on, but also actively produced through the flexible use of dialects that signal Palestinian or Transjordanian belonging. Omitting or emphasizing certain areas of one’s family history, or using “tribal” symbols can have a similar function.¹⁵ Another aspect of these practices is that people occasionally criticize others for simulating a fake belonging. For instance, one of our interviewees, Marwan, who is a Palestinian from the West Bank, says, with reference to his wife’s family origin, that she wrongly claims to be from a well-known Transjordanian family:

“They are Palestinians, but their family name is Rifai. So they claim that they are Jordanians, you know Rifai is a big family in Jordan. [They said:] I am a Rifai, but not a Palestinian. That’s how they exploited the name.”¹⁶

As we will show below, various transformation processes in Jordan have resulted in more everyday situations in which it is unimportant whether one belongs to an old-established or a Palestinian grouping, or which offer more freedom for situative constructions.

8.3 Changing figurations from the 1990s onward: The role of Iraqi and Syrian groupings

As mentioned above, the analyses we have carried out in the context of this research project indicate that since the 1990s the distinction between Transjordanians and Palestinian Jordanians – with the corresponding we- and they-images – has become less important not only in certain milieus, but also in society *as a whole*. By this we do not mean that this figuration has become totally irrelevant, but the degree of polarization between the groupings has diminished, we- and they-images have become blurred, and the social field has become more fragmented, with opportunities for new alliances (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press). This development is connected with two major transformation processes: on the one hand, changes in Jordan’s political economy before the backdrop of an economic crisis at the end of

¹⁵ As a common social practice in Amman, markers like family names, place of origin, or dialect are used to categorize interlocutors as either Palestinian or Transjordanian, and in the latter case their “tribal” sub-belonging.

¹⁶ The interview with Marwan was conducted in Arabic by Gabriele Rosenthal and Hala Budeir in December 2018. Two other interviews with Marwan were conducted by Johannes Becker in October 2018.

the 1990s, and, on the other hand, the arrival of large numbers of refugees with different backgrounds, first from Kuwait, then from Iraq, and finally from Syria. Our main focus below will be on the Iraqi and Syrian refugees, and how they affected the figurations in Jordan.¹⁷ Both processes – economic transformation, arrival of refugees – contributed to the development of a more dynamic field with multiple figurations, or a more multi-faceted figuration, and a decreasing importance of the distinction between Transjordanians and Palestinians.

Neoliberal restructuring of the rentier economy. From the end of the 1980s there was a severe economic crisis in Jordan. This was exacerbated by the second Gulf War in 1990/91, mainly because of the resulting forced migration of 300,000 Palestinians who had been working in Kuwait and sending remittances amounting to approximately one billion dollars per year, which had been vitally important for the Jordanian economy (Quamar 2019: 399). Jordan's strong economic relations with Iraq were also severely affected. The Jordanian regime, at first under Hussein, and from 1999 onward under Abdullah II, reacted by sharply reducing public spending, which led in the medium term to a general transformation of Jordan's political economy. In accordance with the International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment plan, the regime cut fuel and food subsidies, heavily curtailed the number of public employees, reduced public services, including health services, and privatized former state-owned enterprises. This resulted in a sharp rise in living costs.¹⁸ In order to assure their continued loyalty to the royal dynasty, the regime endeavored to preserve at least some of the privileges of the old-established groupings and elites. This meant that most of the remaining state resource flows were used to maintain the armed forces (Baylouny 2008: 301).

In the course of these transformations, many people's life chances deteriorated, with fewer opportunities to obtain posts and other benefits through patronage. This affected in particular the Transjordanian groupings in rural areas outside the city of Amman: "East Bank tribal communities have been hit hard by such coalitional shuffling, due to their historical dependence upon state support" (Yom 2014: 242). As a consequence, people gradually distanced themselves from the regime (Yom 2014: 238). This distancing from the regime found expression in food riots in Jordan as a protest against the abolition of food subsidies. Significantly, they were concentrated mainly in Ma'an in 1989 and Karak in 1996, two cities whose inhabitants are predominantly Transjordanian. And in the Jordanian Arab Spring, parts of the rural tribal base were a driving force behind the mobilization

¹⁷ Migration from Kuwait means the arrival of Palestinians in Jordan in 1990/1991. These were people who either themselves, or whose parents or grandparents had emigrated to Kuwait after 1948 from the East Bank, or from the West Bank, which at that time belonged to Jordan. Many of our interviewees had positions in management or public administration in Kuwait, and when they were forced to leave during or after the second Gulf War in 1990/91 they suffered a big drop in their socio-economic status.

¹⁸ "From 1992 to 1997, prices doubled on food, education, rent, and healthcare. Heat and electricity increased by 150%" (Baylouny 2008: 296).

of opponents of the regime. But such a distancing from the regime, and to some extent from the larger we-group of Transjordanians, can also be seen in urban milieus among middle-class Transjordanian groupings (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press). Thus, the changed political economy has also affected the figuration of old-established residents and refugees and their specific power balance. In this situation, a new phase of large-scale immigration began in the 1990s in Jordan, especially in Amman. In the following twenty-five years, large numbers of refugees from Kuwait, Iraq and Syria arrived in the country.

The arrival of Iraqi groupings from the 1990s. The 1990s saw the beginning of an increasing flow of immigrants from Iraq. Later, following the invasion of Iraq by US forces, several hundred thousand Iraqi refugees arrived in Jordan, the exact numbers being subject to discussion (Chatelard/Morris 2012: 8). Different groups of Iraqi refugees can be distinguished, depending on which socio-historical phase in Iraq led to their migration to Amman. Many of the refugees who came to Jordan in the 1990s, after the Gulf War and during the international embargo, were from the middle class in Baghdad. They correspondingly had many resources and many used Amman as a stepping-stone on their way to some other country (Chatelard/Morris 2012). However, even this socio-economically privileged refugee grouping found that entry and residence in Jordan were becoming more and more regulated and restricted. Up to the 1980s this had meant that citizens of many other Arab countries could take up residence in Jordan very easily and unbureaucratically. This was now seen in a different light, with stress on the temporary character and lack of legal rights of the refugees. Only with a large bank deposit was it possible to get a renewable residence permit, and this was bound up with various restrictions, for instance regarding permitted types of employment.

The stereotype that we repeatedly heard, especially in the middle-class milieu of Amman, refers to this economically privileged grouping: Iraqis are rich; they may have brought money into the economy, but since their arrival house prices have soared, so that is why the cost of living has risen so high in Amman. This view was clearly expressed, for instance, in a group discussion held in 2018 with five young Jordanians from the (upper) middle class in the west of Amman. All the participants in this discussion, among them Naila, Mariam and Sara who are quoted in the following excerpt, were from Palestinian or “mixed” Jordanian and Palestinian families, and had an academic education.¹⁹

Naila: I remember when the Iraqi people came to Jordan, it was hard times for the Jordanians because all the prices went up

Mariam: mhm true the houses

Naila: yeah the houses, the house, everything, I think every, the cars, prices everything went up because they came with their money ((Sara: mhm))

¹⁹ Cf. fn. 14.

Mariam: [...] my parents were trying to buy a new house and it was during the time the Iraqis were coming and

Naila: yeah, we ju- we just made it before they came ((all laugh))

Mariam: we couldn't, we could barely afford it ((laughs)) [...] was double or triple the

Naila: and we bought our house with thirty thousand, now our house is seventy or eighty thousand

The “hard times” which Naila mentions in the first line of the above quotation turn out in the rest of the sequence to have been not so “hard” for the participants in this discussion. As long-time residents, they had “managed” to avoid the “problem” before the arrival of the Iraqis, or did not feel it so much: the higher prices had no serious consequences for them because they came from well-off families. The “hard times” are clearly not really remembered as such, as evidenced by the casual tone of the remarks and the fact that they are accompanied by laughter. The otherness of the prosperous Iraqis is emphasized by localizing them in a particular closed space:

Naila: actually one of the most expensive expensive places here in Jordan, Umm Uthaina, now it is, the street names are places in Iraq because all the area it's just for Iraqi people

Mariam: yeah they all live there

The striking thing about this passage is the automatic way the stereotype of wealthy Iraqis who are responsible for the soaring prices is reproduced and shared. Quite casually and naturally, the participants in the discussion endorse each other's remarks and thus also their own privileged position. In other variants of this they-image, although they are blamed for driving up the prices, it is admitted that the Iraqis brought the country money and economic clout.

On the one hand, it is likely that the higher social status of this early grouping of Iraqi refugees in Jordan led to the development of this they-image. On the other hand, the emergence of the stereotype of the Iraqi who drove up the prices coincided with the economic crisis and economic reforms, the effects of which are still felt today, and which have resulted in a high rate of inflation. It would appear that this they-image served as a way of ‘explaining’ the effects of the economic transformation. At any rate, this passage from the group discussion suggests that all the participants can remember times when they (or their family) had to cope with increases in the cost of living and found it difficult to keep up their standard of living. At the same time, it shows that people are not fully aware of the different phases of Iraqi immigration. Analyses of our interviews and ethnographic observations or conversations show that Transjordanians and Palestinian groupings have very similar they-images of the wealthy Iraqis. In the case of the example

from the group discussion, we can also say that in their everyday life the privileged participants are unaware of the Iraqi refugees who live precarious lives in the poorer districts of Amman, as we will see below.

The Iraqi refugees who came later than those mentioned above, i.e. after 2003, the last being those who fled a few years ago from the so-called Islamic State, came to Amman from contexts of extreme, often confessionalized violence, and in many cases after a period of (forced) internal mobility (see Becker/Hinrichsen 2020). The Iraqis we interviewed during our fieldwork had all entered the country after 2003. These refugees face the same legal and administrative problems in Jordan as those who arrived earlier. Even more wealthy refugees are not granted permission to stay permanently, but if they deposit enough money in a bank they can ‘buy’ a renewable residence permit. In our interviews, we observed that this situation often led to a feeling that it was impossible to really settle in Amman, and in many cases a feeling of resignation due to the failure of attempts to move on to some other country.

We may cite here the example of Najiha (b. 1994).²⁰ She comes from an upper middle-class Shiite-Sunni family from Baghdad. Her father worked in Iraq as an engineer, and her mother in the offices of a big Western NGO. When this NGO moved its headquarters to Jordan in 2004, because of the looming civil war in Iraq, first her mother, and a year later the rest of the nuclear family, moved to Amman. Her mother had a work permit, and eventually the other family members were granted renewable residence permits. The financial position of this family was such that they were able to deposit the required sum in a bank. Najiha grew up and went to school in Amman. After gaining a master’s degree in the US, she found a job in Amman as an assistant in a research institute. In the interview, she explains the different hierarchies between the different groups of old-established residents and refugees:

“That is how we are perceived in here, as rich people. [...] If you don’t have a work visa you can get, what’s it called, I think you freeze 30,000 dollar, I think that is what my parents are doing. [...] It is all very much based on your finances, [but] when you think about that it’s very different hierarchies [...]. With Syrians some jobs it is easier to get work permits but they get discriminated in other ways. As Iraqis we don’t get discrimination from the society much because of the stereotype that we can boost the economy. [...] Palestinians can get work, Iraqis not so easily [...]. Will I always be stuck in jobs where I am not provided that much freedom to choose? I know many many jobs require you are a Jordanian, if not Jordanian then a particular type of [employment] residency [...]. Can I see a future? I am not so sure about that. If I was marrying a Jordanian it would be possible.”

²⁰ Johannes Becker interviewed Najiha in English on three occasions in Amman in fall 2018. The total time was six hours.

At another point Najiha says that further advancement in her career and in society would only be possible if

“we would get out of [...] the guest category you know it is not exactly like the Palestinians or the Syrians where they are an economic burden but here it is in the sense of we are welcome to a certain extent”.

Thanks to the financial situation of her parents and her educational qualifications, Najiha has a relatively secure and privileged position in Amman. But despite this, she chafes against the obstacles in everyday life which mean that even Iraqi refugees of her financial and social status do not have the same career chances or life chances as Jordanian citizens.

In contrast to Najiha's position, however, and in contrast to the widespread they-image of wealthy Iraqis, many refugees who came to Jordan from Iraq after 2003 are in a precarious situation, not only financially, especially in comparison to refugees from Syria, who have a more secure legal status. It is striking that, in contrast to the Syrian refugees, many of the Iraqis who arrived after 2003 had no social network in Amman. Thus, they lacked a resource which could have helped to smooth their arrival process. Because of this, their life in Jordan is difficult. No matter whether they hope to be able to move on to some other country or not, it is more difficult for them to make long-term plans than for people from Syria. In the next chapter (ch. 9) we will take a closer look at the migration and arrival process of an Iraqi family that is living in Amman in very precarious circumstances. Besides their residency status and financial situation, the precarization of the members of this family is due to the fact that they come from a “localized milieu” in central Iraq, and not only have no network of friends, relatives or earlier acquaintances in Amman, but have also lost contact in the course of their migration with their region of origin and their extended family there (ch. 9.3). Therefore they suffer from a lack of social capital compared to other, competing groupings. For various reasons, this precarized grouping of Iraqi refugees is not visible in the they-image of Iraqis shared by the Transjordanians and Palestinians.

The arrival of refugees from Syria after 2011. This is different with respect to the Syrians who, from 2011 onward, came to Jordan in large numbers to escape the civil war in their country. The they-images with which more longstanding residents – both Transjordanians and Palestinians – refer to them tend to be problematizing and derogatory. As we can observe in our interviews and ethnographic material, the they-images of Syrian refugees that circulate in Amman posit that there is a close socio-cultural relationship between Jordanians and Syrians, in the sense that they all belong to one geographic, social and cultural space, often called “Greater Syria” or “Bilad ash-Sham”. On the other hand, despite the very diverse socio-economic origins of the refugees, they are widely spoken of in disparaging terms as being rustic, narrow-minded and conservative, and are perceived, especially by Palestinians, as “cheap” competition in the informal labor market.

The difference in the they-images of Iraqis and Syrians may be due to the high number of refugees who entered the country in a relatively short period, and their high visibility due to strict registration and the existence of huge refugee camps. In August 2015, there were more than 650,000 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan. The Jordanian government claimed that the real figure was in the region of 1.3 million (Lenner 2016: 11–13). The administrative efforts by government authorities and non-government actors to keep a register have also influenced they-images in respect of Syrian refugees. Jordan has not signed the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. However, an agreement between UNHCR and the Jordanian government that was signed in 1998 and updated in 2014 regulates the legal conditions for the protection of refugees. Thus, in Jordan, it is relatively recent that the government has taken a considerable degree of control over the everyday realities of refugees, for instance through the issuing of residency or work permits, which has created increasing restrictions for them (see Lenner/Turner 2018). In contrast to the refugees from Iraq, those from Syria – and relevant for our interviews were only those living in the city, and not in the UN camp – were registered more systematically from the beginning by the UNHCR and by Jordanian government officials. This means they have to comply with more regulations than the Iraqi refugees, but at the same time they have a more clearly defined residency status and receive more reliable and calculable assistance from the UNHCR. Some observers have seen a connection between the improved registration of Syrian refugees and Jordan's long dependence on external rents, sometimes referred to as refugee rentierism (Tsourapas 2022). The fact that the Syrian refugees are registered means that Jordan has better access to international aid. It also makes the Syrians more visible compared to earlier groupings of immigrants.

Besides being registered, another factor that plays an important role in the arrival processes and participation chances of Syrian refugees in Amman is how far they can rely on existing (family) networks in Jordan to provide them with contacts and assistance. It is clear from our analyses that the Syrian refugees are more likely to have such networks than Iraqi refugees, especially those who are living in precarious situations. These “Syrian” networks are the result of earlier migrations with longstanding translocal or transnational family connections (Becker 2021a). In the biographies we have analyzed, the forced migration to Jordan from the end of the 1970s of Muslim Brothers who were persecuted in Syria, a refugee movement which has received little attention by scholars, also led to the creation of Syrian-Jordanian networks, as we will show in the case study discussed in chapter 9.2.

The existence of longstanding translocal networks, and how they are affected by the registration of Syrians in Jordan, can be seen for instance in the individual and

family history of our interviewee Azima (b. 1983; for details see Becker 2021a).²¹ The members of Azima's Druze family in the past three generations have had extensive experience of translocal migration within the region known as Bilad ash-Sham (in the areas of today's Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel and Jordan) where borders played a limited role. For a long time in this region it was quite normal to cross what are today (in most cases) international borders. Family members moved back and forth between different cities in the region. The family members showed great flexibility in assuming, accumulating or giving up different nationalities. Azima's mother was born in Amman, studied in Beirut, married Azima's father in Syria, accompanied him to Saudi-Arabia, and then returned to Syria. In about 2006, Azima, our interviewee, migrated from Syria to Jordan. After the beginning of the civil war, she offered help to many Syrians, both old acquaintances and strangers, on their arrival in Amman. With the refugee crisis and the increased registration of refugees, she found herself being more clearly, or more often, categorized as Syrian than before, with all the corresponding hurdles and restrictions in respect of residency, employment opportunities, and so on. She felt this, for instance, before going on a business trip. She was forced to apply for refugee status with the corresponding UNHCR documents and the Jordanian government's "White Card":

"This is where the shock started and I told them: I'm not a refugee, I'm not an asylum seeker, I'm just living in here. They were like: yeah but these are the documents that you need, you like it or you don't. So I went back to the office and I started screaming and crying and aah I was like: I'm not a refugee, I'm not seeking asylum. And I went through this denying period, for a couple of days, then I got really tired and finally I went."

Having to register as a refugee did not (at first) fit her own idea that she was living in Amman as a "normal person" and that her nationality was unimportant.

While it is true that the registration of Syrian refugees gives them certain rights to take up regular employment, nevertheless very many of them try to eke out a living in Jordan's large informal sector. In our interviews and conversations with people in the (permanent) Palestinian refugee camps, and in the poorer districts of East Amman which are inhabited largely by Palestinians, we were frequently told that they felt the competition of Syrian refugees, and of illegalized refugees from Iraq. They say this applies to the granting of international aid, but especially to job-seeking in the informal labor market, where a common they-image is that 'the Iraqis' or 'the Syrians' push down the wages in factories, for instance.

In view of this competition, the question arises of how the relationships between the different refugee groupings are affected by their being subjected to different

²¹ Johannes Becker interviewed Azima in English during two meetings in Amman in spring 2017. The total time was six hours. He met Azima frequently for follow-up talks.

administrative regulations. In our interviews and conversations, Iraqi refugees frequently comment on what they see as the preferential treatment of Syrian refugees and their apparently better living conditions. Thus, the Iraqi musician Zainab, a Shia Muslim from Basra who came to Amman in 2010 with her Sunni husband, repeatedly returns to this topic in our interview with her. She complains that the Syrians have a better residency status, receive aid from UNHCR, have better access to the labor market, and that since their arrival it is hard to find affordable housing. She reacts to this unequal treatment with incomprehension and anger.²²

As one would expect, our Syrian interviewees do not refer to the fact that they have advantages which Iraqi refugees do not have. In both groupings, however, it is striking that differences between themselves and the Palestinians and Transjordanians – and experiences of discrimination, for instance when their difficult social position is exploited by an employer – are emphasized much more than differences in legal status between Syrians and Iraqis. Some interviewees point out that Syrians and Iraqis share the same fate. Samar, who came to Amman from Iraq in 2012, puts this very vividly in her interview.²³ She says that life is hard “because it is a principle in Jordan, as a Syrian or Iraqi you cannot talk”. She is referring here in particular to the fact that, because of her precarious position in the country, she cannot protest when she receives poor pay or irregular pay for her work (the case of Samar and her family is discussed in detail in chapter 9.3).

8.4 Summary: From polarization to fragmentation and new opposing fronts. The new fault line between old-established residents and newcomers in the 1990s

The above-described processes show that the arrival of large numbers of refugees, especially from Syria and Iraq, helped to reduce the importance of the Palestinian-Jordanian question as a line of social conflict with corresponding we- and they-images. Some of the people we interviewed or talked to said clearly that the figurations of old-established residents and Palestinians had receded into the background, and that the focus had shifted to the Syrians, with a tendency to ignore the Iraqi groupings. At this point we may remember the quotations at the beginning of the chapter. There, Amira, a Transjordanian, argues that the question which used to be important, “whether you are Jordanian or are you Palestinian Jordanian, who is more Jordanian”, had been pushed aside by the arrival of the Syrians. She says that the arrival of the refugees made the Palestinians and the Transjordanians feel “united more as one”. This view of the changed opposing fronts runs through many other interviews and conversations. For example, a Palestinian participant in

²² Interview with Zainab conducted in Arabic by Dolly Abdul Karim in November 2017.

²³ Interview conducted in Arabic by Hendrik Hinrichsen and Samira Qatuni in November 2018.

the above-mentioned group discussion with young, well-off Jordanians said, with the approval of the others:

“I actually think that now you know the refugee crisis and you know many Syrians coming to Jordan and it kind of shifted the attention, or it kind of decreased the conflict.”

Thus, our analyses of biographies and family histories reveal the social transformation behind this shift of focus to the Syrians and a reduced importance of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Transjordanians. They show how up to the 1990s Transjordanians' and Palestinians' lives were shaped by differing degrees of inclusion in rentier-state patronage or translocal labor migration, the existence of separate lifeworlds in adjacent urban neighborhoods, and the effects of political mobilization during the civil war. These heterogeneous aspects all contributed to creating an atmosphere of conflict in the everyday lives of Transjordanians and Palestinians, which was reflected in resentful *we-* and *they-*images.

The relationship between Transjordanians and Palestinian-Jordanian refugees is still an established line of social conflict today. But as we have been able to reconstruct, the earlier phase of polarization between these two groupings, which is clearly visible in the biographies and family histories, was succeeded around the 1990s by a phase in which Transjordanians and Palestinian *we-*groups appear to have lost something of their mutual distrust and internal integration. The social field is becoming more fragmented, with new opposing fronts (Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm in press). On the one hand, this is related to the fact that from the 1990s, with the arrival of large numbers of refugees from Iraq, and especially from Syria, new outsider groupings were formed, which led to a redefinition of who counts as an old-established resident. The Syrian groupings now have the status of visible outsiders who are the target of derogatory *they-*images. A certain amount of rivalry exists between the Iraqi and Syrian groupings, as well as a hierarchy resulting from legal and administrative rules that favor the Syrians. However, the dynamic of *we-* and *they-*images which suggest that Syrians and Iraqis share a common lot also indicates that they may find common ground against the Transjordanians *and* the Palestinians. These shifts in the figurations are embedded in a transformation of the rentier-state patronage relations which were predominant in Jordan for a long time. In the course of this transformation, the power gap between Transjordanians and Palestinians has been reduced. These shifts have been accompanied by a more restrictive border and immigration policy, which in turn has created a distinction between old (Palestinian) and new (Iraqi and Syrian) refugee groupings. It is conceivable that an established-outsider relationship may develop in the future along the fault line created in the 1990s, with Transjordanians and Palestinians together as the established, and Iraqis and Syrians as the outsiders.

While the regionalist paradigm, as we have pointed out above, lays emphasis on how the historical integration of the region in respect of mobility, *we-*images,

hospitality, and other aspects, helps refugees to become self-settled, our analyses clearly show that in Jordan old-established residents have better power and participation chances. The degree to which, or the ease with which refugees can become settled depends on when they entered the country, in other words in which phase of the long transformation process. Our process analysis thus reveals not only the longstanding regional integration that one would expect from the perspective of the regionalist paradigm, with its critique of “ahistorical and state-centric notions of belonging” (El Dardiry 2017:704), but also a dynamic network of established-outsider figurations with asymmetrical power balances.

9 Translocal vs. localized networks: How they shape migration, life chances and long-term establishment in Jordan

Hendrik Hinrichsen, Johannes Becker

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have shown how the different power and life chances of old-established residents and different refugee groupings *in Jordan* have emerged and been transformed in a protracted historical process. Our aim, in the context of Jordan, was to relativize the regionalist paradigm, which authors use to argue that participation is ‘easier’ for refugees who migrate between different Middle Eastern countries. In this chapter, we will continue this argument by focusing on the whole migration process, starting with the regions of origin of the refugees, in order to show how this affects their chances of participation in Jordan. This will contribute to a better appreciation of differences between and within refugee groupings in Amman. Analyzing the genesis of their migration processes thus adds new dimensions to the empirical findings presented so far on the positioning of refugees in Amman. In the recent literature on refugee movements, attention has been drawn to the importance of embedding processes of flight and migration in their biographical and socio-historical contexts (Rosenthal/Bahl/Worm 2016; Worm 2019) and the significance of “refugee journeys” (BenEzer/Zetter 2015).

Hinrichsen, H./Becker, J. (2022): Translocal vs. localized networks: How they shape migration, life chances and long-term establishment in Jordan. In: Rosenthal, G. (Ed.): *Transnational Biographies: Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 267–281. <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2022-2211>

This helps us to see how the structure of processes of flight and migration depends on how the refugees were embedded in society before they left their homes, and on how these processes are interconnected with the collective history of the region and events that take place during their migration. From this perspective it is clear that such processes are often family projects. They are influenced by the situation in the extended family and the nuclear family, as well as by collective history processes. On the one hand, this means that the course of a migration and how refugees settle in their new environment can be influenced by their family members or family network. Inversely, family dynamics and social networks can be affected when members migrate, in the sense that family ties or a person's position in the family may be weakened or reinforced.

Our analyses throw doubt on the idea of an Arab regionalism that includes most milieus or social classes. At the same time, we did indeed find indications of the relevance of transregional orientations in our case studies of refugees from different Middle Eastern countries, especially in one type of refugee which tends to be influential. Thus, in our sample we can reconstruct two types: on the one hand, a type with **strong translocal (network) ties** which is associated with participation in the arrival context because of support by translocal familial or social networks; and, on the other hand, a type with **weak translocal (network) ties** which is connected with a precarious life situation after arrival because of lacking intact networks, or lost contact with social or familial networks.

The first type, **strong translocal (network) ties**, is an indicator of relatively successful establishment in Amman, based to a large extent on translocal integration in family and other networks going back into the past (Becker 2021a; Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm 2021). In these cases, the migration process takes place within the network, and the routes followed are fairly predictable. To illustrate this type, we will present below the case of the family of Najib, who came to Jordan as a refugee from Syria. This case shows how helpful it is for refugees to have family members who have migrated earlier, whether voluntarily or not, and who have formed social or kinship networks in the context of arrival.

The second type features **weak translocal (network) ties**. Here, the refugee comes from a family whose patterns of action do not involve translocal mobility, so that no regional networks have been formed. Refugees of this type have few connections, or none at all, outside their home province, and thus have no translocal transnational networks. They have no one they can contact during their migration, and, importantly, they lose contact with their family and friends back home. For these people, the migration process is characterized by disorganization, with successive attempts to find a place to stay; they suffer from this experience, which marks the beginning of a downward trajectory in social, economic and cultural terms. We will illustrate this with the case of the family of Abu and Um Uthman, who left their home in Iraq and finally arrived in Amman. For such families, just moving to another province within the same state is enough to make them feel like strangers. Using the family of Abu and Um Uthman as an example, we will

show how their positioning and their experiences in Amman are affected by the fact that they come from such a localized milieu. Thus, it is clearly not possible to make any generalized assumption that refugees will find it easy to settle because of the similarity between their context of “origin” and the context of “arrival”, and because they can rely on translocal networks. Such an assumption ignores the existence of purely local (often family-centered) biographies or milieus.¹ In these cases, the refugees or their families have very little “translocal social capital”, or none at all.

9.2 Participation in the arrival context thanks to strong translocal (network) ties²

The following story of a Syrian family is mainly based on interviews with the eldest son of the family, Najib (b. 1994 in Damascus), which were conducted in Arabic by Hendrik Hinrichsen and Dolly Abdul Karim in March 2018, and which lasted for a total of approximately six and a half hours. In contrast to the ‘Iraqi case’ presented below (9.3), we were unable to interview other members of the family. But we were able to gain some insights into the familial and socio-historical context of Najib’s life story through the interviews, in which he told us in a detailed way about the history of his family.

In order to understand how existing networks contributed to shaping the migration of Najib and his family of orientation in 2012, we need to consider the family history and socio-historical developments in Syria or Damascus since the 1970s. For several generations, the family of Najib’s father had lived in a province south of the city of Damascus where they were farmers. In recent decades, this area became increasingly (sub)urbanized. Najib’s father, Bilal (b. 1953), studied mathematics and then worked as a teacher. Following structural changes and expansion of the education sector, people from the rural milieus were increasingly able to work as wage earners in the public sector (see Perthes 1990: 203ff.). Najib says that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, his father, Bilal, was an active member of Islamic groups opposed to the Syrian regime. During a widespread campaign of repression which culminated in the massacre of Hama in 1982, Bilal was arrested and spent eleven years in prison. This repressive campaign, and the massacre, in which, according to different estimates, between 10,000 and 40,000 people were killed (Lefèvre 2013: 128), was made a taboo subject in the official Syrian discourse. According to Najib, Bilal’s imprisonment was not spoken about within the nuclear family as far as possible. However, it was an open secret in Syria that political prisoners were given inadequate food, and subjected to torture and fear

¹ Understood here as social macro-milieu. For a discussion of the concept of milieus and its application to social contexts in the Global South, see Neubert/Stoll 2015.

² For a detailed analysis of this case, see Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm 2021.

of death, and that the prisoners' families were not informed of their whereabouts, or even of their death.

Like Bilal, many members of Najib's mother's family supported Islamic opposition groups. The family, which regarded itself as urban, lived in Damascus and belonged to the milieu of the 'independent middle classes' (Perthes 1990: 195-199). This was originally a family of craftsmen, but many turned to trading when the situation of these social classes improved in the 1970s. Members of this milieu were often conservative Muslims and actively religious. At first, they were among the hardest critics of the Assad regime. While one part of the petty bourgeoisie – especially in Damascus – came to terms with the regime over the years, another part supported the Islamic opposition and became its largest grouping of supporters.

Najib's mother Ibtisam had a brother, Dawoud, who was a member of Islamic opposition groups, and close to the Syrian Muslim Brothers. He was able to avoid arrest and fled to Jordan, where he settled in Amman. Najib did not say exactly when this happened, but probably in the early 1980s. In the literature, there are scattered references to Syrians who fled to Jordan at the beginning of the 1980s after sympathizing with the Muslim Brothers (see for instance Lefèvre 2013: 165, or Dorai 2018: 115). Their number must have run into the thousands. Their migration is one of the many "small" immigration movements of refugees that have entered Jordan and received little attention in the media, such as refugees from the Lebanese civil war or the Libyan civil war. In other interviews, old-established Jordanians made a clear distinction between this grouping and the "present-day" refugees from Syria. They said the earlier refugees were persecuted because of their religion by the Alawite rulers and were more honorable than "this rubbish" of today, as one Transjordanian interviewee emphatically put it. These interviewees also said that the earlier refugees were well integrated because of their connections with the royal house and worked in NGOs that benefited Jordanian society to this day.

To return to the history of Najib's family, it is quite likely that his father Bilal and his uncle Dawoud met in the course of their oppositional activities. Bilal married Dawoud's sister Ibtisam in 1993, just a few months after he was released from prison. Ibtisam (b. 1965) was a nurse, and, in accordance with the patrilineal marriage norms, she moved to the home of her husband. However, Bilal's family rejected her, as Najib put it tersely, but firmly, in the interview. This rejection was connected with her urban background and resulting differences, with inheritance disputes, and with their different political positionings: parts of Bilal's family had close connections with the Syrian regime, or were at least loyal to it.

Najib was born in 1994 as the first child and the eldest son. In the following years, three daughters were born, and after nine years another son. His father Bilal did not return to teaching after his release from prison, but took on a physically very demanding job, even though – as Najib remembers – he was not very strong as a result of the torture and neglect he had suffered while he was in prison. After an accident at work, he was partially paralyzed for two years and was unable to work.

His wife, Ibtisam had to give up her job as a nurse in order to care for him. During this phase, Najib's nuclear family was already dependent on financial assistance from members of his mother's family. Dawoud had successfully established himself in Jordan, like many former Syrian Muslim Brothers who enjoyed the protection of King Hussein. He had successfully founded a business of his own, obtained Jordanian citizenship, and was fully integrated in the urban life of Amman. The family in Syria probably depended largely on his financial support. But in his childhood and adolescence, Najib also contributed to the family income by taking on small jobs. His father's illness and inability to work, and the support received from the family of Najib's mother, surely created closeness to the mother's family and their ideas at this time – and greater distancing from Bilal's own family.

After finishing secondary school, Najib started at university in Damascus, and this coincided with the beginning of the protests against the Syrian regime. Najib took part in the demonstrations. The different political loyalties between his mother's family and his father's family now became apparent: in 2011 Bilal was arrested and imprisoned for two weeks. Najib believes that his father's own brother had denounced him. Najib's story implies that when the conflict in Syria escalated, the family was confronted with the question: who is on whose side? There followed a complete break between Bilal's family, on the one hand, and Najib's nuclear family and his mother's family, on the other. The members of his nuclear family were clearly on the side of his mother's family. When the increasingly militarized fighting came close to the family home, Ibtisam decided to go and stay with her relatives in another area of Damascus, taking her children, including Najib, with her; Bilal chose to stay behind. Shortly afterwards he was killed by advancing soldiers or militiamen. In the interview, Najib described in detail how he found and buried his father's body after a dangerous journey into the area which was held by militias loyal to the government. For him, this was a key biographical experience and a turning point in his life. He said that he cried only when other family members were not present, because he was now responsible for the family and he had to be strong.

After Bilal's death in 2012, Ibtisam took Najib and his siblings to Jordan. In Amman she contacted her brother Dawoud. He lives with his nuclear family in a middle-class neighborhood in Amman, and in the first weeks after their arrival, Najib, his mother and his siblings were able to stay in his home. Dawoud's family and neighborhood network played a vital role in helping the family to get settled in Amman. Dawoud helped Najib and his family to find temporary accommodation, and later a home of their own, and he helped Najib with finding work. Najib strove to take advantage of the opportunities which this network in Amman offered for gaining a foothold in the city. Thus, the family was able to rely on the friendly support of people in the surrounding neighborhood who actively helped them to become settled in Jordan. Najib says it was through these people that they found a place to live, and that the Jordanian landlord even charged them a reduced rent.

After their arrival, the family arranged for Najib's sisters and his younger brother to continue their school education. For Najib, this meant that he needed to make a bigger contribution to the family income. At this point he was able to use the family network. During the day he attended a course in journalism at an international training institute. In the evening or at night he worked in the kitchens of restaurants, and at the weekend as a porter. In 2014, at the age of about 20, Najib started wondering if he should try to move to some other part of the world, for example Europe. This was a major topic among refugees of his age. Many of his fellow students and friends – Najib speaks of at least ten – had left, including one of Dawoud's sons who had gone to Germany. Najib told us in the interview that he had to decide between leaving and buying a good laptop which would enable him to make a living in Jordan. When he was suddenly offered a job as internet editor in an NGO he decided to stay in Jordan – not least, as he told us, to please his mother who did not want him to leave. Today he is a freelancer but is nevertheless paid a monthly salary by a firm – an administrative trick to get round the rule that Syrians may not be employed for his kind of work.

Although they had been able to settle in Amman comparatively “easily”, Najib and the other members of his family were often confronted with the ambivalent ascriptions and they-images we have mentioned: Syrian refugees are rustic, conservative, and “cheap” competitors in the labor market (ch. 8.3). These form a contrast to the way the family was received in the neighborhood. Najib was confronted with these negative images in everyday situations, especially in taxis (in Amman taxis are a common means of transport), and he was sometimes subjected to verbal abuse. As a result, he increasingly tried to hide his Syrian accent in public places.

While this family could count on the support of Najib's maternal uncle who had lived in Amman for many years, other families we interviewed were not in such a fortunate position. In other words, his uncle's migration over 35 years previously has an effect on Najib's life in the present, and without it his family would lack a major source of support in their new environment. In Amman, this family is able to mobilize existing familial or family-based networks and resources and has positive ‘integration experiences’ (help from neighbors, employment opportunities). But at the same time Najib has to deal with legal and structural discrimination (he needs a work permit, he is not allowed to own a car, his mobility is restricted, etc.), and negative they-images or, in other words, stigmatization (Syrians take jobs away, having to hide his accent). The distinctions made as a result of a strengthening national discourse, in a context of relatively young nation states, means that Syrians are now regarded as ‘Others’, despite the fact that for a long time the emphasis was on similarities within the region known as Bilad ash-Sham.

Our reconstruction of Najib's life story and family history shows how closely his migration from Syria to Jordan and the decisions that were made were interconnected with his family's past and the region's collective history. The decision to migrate, the course of the migration process, and its consequences, cannot be

understood by considering only the present phase of ‘arrival and life in Jordan’. Rather, we need to look at how the whole biography and family history is embedded in migration and refugee movements in the greater region of Bilad ash-Sham.

9.3 Precarious situation due to weak translocal (network) ties

In contrast to the experience of Najib and his family, and against the assumptions of the regionalist paradigm, the family of Abu and Um Uthman found themselves in Amman in an extremely difficult situation, with a severe drop in their social status and painful experiences of otherness. This family represents the type featuring weak translocal (network) ties, which applies to several cases in our sample. The decisive point about this type is that there is a connection between the precarious situation of the family in Amman and the fact that before their migration their social networks were mostly restricted to their local context. Socialization in a predominantly local milieu not only makes it more difficult to deal with the situation in Amman, but also makes the whole migration process difficult, always having to move on, and suffering a loss of social status (or, in other words, a loss of social and symbolic capital).

In contrast to our case study of the family of Najib, the authors were able to conduct interviews with five members of this family who belong to two different generations. The mother Um Uthman is a friend of one of our field assistants, and helped us to make contact with other family members. In addition to the two parents, *Abu Uthman* and *Um Uthman*, we interviewed the eldest son *Uthman*, and two daughters, *Aya* and *Samar*.

Locally rooted family. Many members of the families of origin of Abu and Um Uthman (both born in the first half of the 1970s) were farmers for several generations in the predominantly agricultural governorate of Diyala. The families of Abu and Um Uthman lived in an agricultural area on the edge of a large city. Both parents grew up in relatively stable family, regional and economic conditions. Their families of origin both belonged to the same “clan” in the governorate. The majority of people in the governorate were Sunni Arabs, but there were also ethnic or religious minorities, including Kurds, Turkmen and Shiites. The paternal grandmother was a Shiite, like some spouses of the many siblings of Abu and Um Uthman.³

³ The family members we interviewed all regard themselves as Sunni but all insist that their religious belonging never used to play a role in their everyday lives. Here it should be noted that in modern Iraq there was a high level of everyday interaction between Sunnis and Shiites, and the many inter-confessional marriages are frequently mentioned as a prominent example of this. In the Baath period, confessional belonging was ‘officially’ subordinated to a national Iraqi collective self-image and was not mentioned openly. Differences were publicly negated and not discussed, but at the same time people were aware of them and passed them on latently or indirectly within their own grouping (Haddad 2013).

Um and Abu Uthman each had seven siblings, and, besides those whose main source of income was farming, they had family members who were soldiers or who had gone to live in the surrounding cities. So far as we know, there were no family members living abroad, neither did the family know of any when we asked them directly about this, unlike other cases we investigated in Amman, such as the families of Najib (ch. 9.2) or Azima (ch. 8.3). Abu Uthman only left his home region to serve and work in the army for four years in a region three hours away by car. Before they got married themselves in 1995, two of Abu Uthman's brothers had already married two of Um Uthman's sisters, which shows the local focus of these families' visions of the future. Between 1995 and 2001, Abu Uthman and Um Uthman had four children, two boys and two girls.

Complex process of flight in the course of the US invasion and the civil war.

Iraq had been constantly involved in armed conflicts in the previous decades, but the significance of 2003 as an interpretation point lies in the change of the governmental system and the power vacuum arising from de-Baathification. This brought about the dissolution of the government and administrative structures, which ended in a situation approaching civil war and loss of the state monopoly on violence. In the following years, phases of insecurity and violence burst unpredictably and abruptly into the everyday life of our interviewees in the form of raids, abductions, murders or attacks. Threats (e.g. on house walls), intimidation, or, later, confessionalization of the often violent conflicts and the forced dissolution of confessionally mixed marriages became dominant.

Six months after the beginning of the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, the nuclear family of Abu and Um Uthman moved away from their home area, first to Baghdad. In their home area, the ethno-religiously mixed governorate of Diyala – and especially in the immediate environment of the family, where Sunnis and Shiites lived side by side – an armed struggle for predominance (quite certainly influenced from outside) began shortly after the invasion, so that the everyday life of the residents was affected by collective violence and acts of intimidation. About six months later, when they felt unsafe in Baghdad, the family moved to another governorate about 200 kilometers away, which is predominantly Sunni. The family members cultivated land there themselves, but also worked for local farmers. All the family members we interviewed mentioned or told stories of their negative experiences during this period. They remember that the authorities and the local residents treated them with suspicion and a lack of solidarity, that various members of the family fell ill, which they believe was due to the change of climate, and that their efforts to grow crops failed because the soil was different. The older children (the eldest son Uthman was about nine years old) could not attend school regularly because they were increasingly needed to help with working in the fields and selling the produce.

Despite the fact that they were in a Sunni environment within Iraq, the family suffered from extreme feelings of otherness, of not belonging, as Abu Uthman makes clear:

“Life there is hard, hard, very hard, the stranger remains a stranger among them. You can’t say, I have friends here or I have this and that. No, they treat you like a stranger, you’re from another province and not from their home region.”

This fostered the increasing familial and social isolation of the nuclear family, since this was the first time that they so clearly appeared as a separate unit. Their migration to another governorate was criticized and disapproved of by members of the extended family in their area of origin in Diyala. The relatives regarded the act of leaving one’s “own land” as shameful and unacceptable. Aya says:

“They say: How can we live in a foreign place? We can’t live [anywhere else], how can we leave our houses and our land here? That is why they have not left. My father [...] took money from my grandfather and left home [...]. Then he said [to them, well] his brothers have a lot of money, he said to them: Send me [money] [...], my children have nothing to eat, so that they can eat and whatever. No one sent him anything and no one helped him and no one listened to him, by God.”

What the family experienced in their new place in another governorate shows how restricted the family’s previous spatial horizon was, and their lack of connections within Iraq.

In about 2006, after two or three years there, the family returned to Baghdad and from there back to Diyala. But after 2006 the region was devastated by violent clashes between al-Qaeda and Shiite militias and by constant campaigns against the civilian population. In this period, Abu Uthman was captured and interrogated by US troops, and subsequently handed over to the Iraqi security forces who put him under arrest as a criminal. He suffered torture (deprivation of food and water, physical abuse) both by Shiite Iraqi militias and American units. After about three months his father purchased his freedom. Abu Uthman suffers to this day from the long-term effects of injuries sustained during his torture and his migration. He was unable to work for long periods, and cannot perform strenuous work. His daughter Aya says that his feeling of helplessness finds expression in impatience, attempts at control, and angry outbursts.

In 2006, after his release, Abu Uthman moved to Amman in Jordan. He was then about forty years old. His wife and children engaged in a circular, to-and-fro migration process which lasted until 2014. By this time all the members of the nuclear family had settled permanently in Amman.

During their complex migration process before finally settling in Amman, the members of the family underwent considerable suffering and experiences of violence. We cannot here describe all the stages of their migration. However, we will briefly outline at least one event which is reported in detail by the family members in the interviews independently of each other and which they all agree was a very drastic experience. After Abu Uthman had gone to Amman, the remaining members of the family were at first accommodated in the house of Abu Uthman's father. In 2009 Um Uthman's sister got married in the family home which they had left in 2003. On this day, there was a suicide attack on a café in the nearby Shiite area, which cost many lives. Shiite militias then attacked their neighborhood. They entered the family house and threatened to rape the women and kill the men. The son Uthman and an uncle got away by running across the fields, and were followed later by the women. Our interviewees seem to have difficulty concentrating on this event, when they describe it. The daughters Samar and Aya accepted our invitations to describe in detail what happened. However, their narratives are full of pauses and incomplete sentences and passages, and the account of *one* threatening situation includes mentions of other threatening situations or parts of them – which is an indication of a traumatizing experience (Rosenthal 2021). Samar talks about the dead bodies she saw lying in the street, including that of a neighbor. Aya says she sleeps badly to this day. The son Uthman describes in detail how he ran across ditches and fields, constantly in fear of being discovered. After the attack, the family left this region, and, even if this was not their initial plan, they all finally arrived in Amman, via different routes and at different times.

Arrival in Amman and attempts to get settled. When the members of the family arrived in Amman, they hoped that they would soon be able to emigrate to the US. Like many Iraqi refugees, they saw Amman only as a stopover (Chatelard 2010a). Contrary to their expectations, however, the city gradually became the family's permanent place of residence. This was due on the one hand to the legal conditions which we have explained above. Iraqis who remain in Jordan after their visas have expired are not deported but are treated in a way as “guests” (Mason 2011). As “guests” the refugees are allowed access (if at all) only to basic health and education services and they are not allowed to work. They can get a residence and work permit only if they have deposited the requisite sum in a bank (as mentioned above in ch. 8.3). Many can only find precarious, underpaid jobs in the informal sector. The legal conditions prevent them from becoming settled and catalyze feelings of being excluded, so that it is easy to exploit them as they move down the social and socio-economic ladder (Chatelard 2010a; El-Abed 2014; El Dardiry 2017; Mason 2011). On the other hand, their immobilization due to the legal conditions led to experiences in Amman similar to those which the family members had already had in the course of their migration: the parents Abu and Um Uthman reacted to these experiences of structural otherness and impoverishment by taking their children out of school so that they could earn money or get married. The family members

had precarious jobs, and became increasingly distanced from their previous life as farmers and from their extended family in Iraq. They gradually lost contact with everyone they had known in Iraq, including their relatives. Géraldine Chatelard (2010b: 60) observes that the Iraqi refugees who become most impoverished are those who have no contacts in Amman, and who fail to obtain a legal residence status. Chatelard underlines that the members of this grouping frequently “survive” only with the support of relatives outside Jordan.⁴ However, the family of Abu and Um Uthman could not rely on such support. The family members made many efforts to overcome their impoverishment and the social isolation which increased in the course of their migration. But, as we will show, the family sank further into poverty as a result of their attempts to legalize their residence status.

When the family arrived in Amman, they rented a basement apartment in a poor neighborhood in the east of the city. In the beginning, Abu Uthman worked as a day labourer, but he was often cheated out of his wages, and he suffered from the physical effects of torture during his imprisonment and injuries sustained during his migration. There were times when he was unable to work, or was unable to perform strenuous physical work. Um Uthman found employment with a tailor. She was working for the first time outside the family home, which was a new experience for her. As she herself underlined, this went very much against her upbringing and socialization, and at first triggered feelings of powerlessness. Two children attended local schools in Amman, while another son was sent away from his school because the family did not have a residence permit. Aya, the eldest daughter present in Amman (about twelve years then, in 2012), took on responsibility for providing for her younger siblings. During the first two years in Amman, the family often lacked basic necessities. In the interviews with them, the children speak of days when they went hungry. A local mosque helped them out with clothing. As in the Iraqi province they had fled to, the family was largely isolated, with no outside help, and stayed together as a unit. Although they did experience solidarity in a few instances, they mainly found their neighbors just as cold and unfriendly as in the Iraqi governorate they had fled to. They tell of neighbors who dumped trash in front of their basement apartment and asked what they as “Iraqis” were doing there. Abu Uthman sums up the connection between discrimination, feelings of otherness and disadvantageous legal situation as follows:

“Apart from that you’re like in an open prison. Because you have absolutely no rights. If you speak to someone, [even] just a boy in the street, he’ll say: be quiet or I’ll get you deported.”

In this quotation, the difference in legal status and social age finds expression in a power gap between a Jordanian child and the Iraqi man. The Iraqi man is helpless

⁴ It has been shown that in the 2000s almost every second Iraqi household in Amman depended on money sent from Iraq (see Mason 2011: 362).

in the face of such taunts. This shows how people in Amman can suffer from rejection and hostility despite all socio-cultural similarities.

From 2011 the family received money from the UNHCR, probably from a special fund to help the most needy families. However, this money was not enough to cover their daily needs. As a result, the children increasingly played a role in helping to improve their material situation. In 2012 the twelve-year-old daughter left school, which she had attended for five years. She and her sister (aged 16) began to work in a confectionery factory, which was illegal due to the employment restrictions for Iraqis. Their younger brother Hassan later worked in the same factory. They sacrificed their educational careers to ensuring a basic income for the family, and their jobs were highly precarious and badly paid in comparison to local standards. The eldest son Uthman had attended school only sporadically.

Meanwhile, the family gradually lost contact with their relatives in Iraq. During the first precarious phase in Amman, Abu Uthman had several times asked his siblings and members of the extended family for financial support, but they had all refused. His relatives in Iraq thought that his situation was a kind of punishment, because he had left his land and his house, which his brothers would never have done: they had all kept their land and had sufficient economic capital. The family of Abu and Um Uthman were the only members of the extended family who did not live in their home area in Diyala and were therefore isolated in the family network. In the interview with her in 2018, Um Uthman says that she had spoken to her brothers on the phone only once since her arrival in Amman, which is also a clear indication of estrangement from the family in Iraq.

For a long time the future hopes of the family lay in emigration to the US. They twice applied to the UNHCR for resettlement, but both times their application was turned down (the second time in 2014), probably because of Abu Uthman's imprisonment and his past as a soldier during Saddam Hussein's government (see also ch. 6.2). It became increasingly clear that the temporary situation in Amman was becoming permanent. The family's slowly changing orientation became manifest in two marriages. One son and one daughter of Abu and Um Uthman married into the same Palestinian-Jordanian family in Amman. We were able to conduct interviews with five members of this poor Palestinian family which belongs to one of the most marginalized milieus in Amman. The interviews showed that the family members had grown up in conditions of extreme poverty, that several of them have been involved in criminal activities, and that others have had significant experiences of violence.⁵ Compared to the family of Abu Uthman, this family evidently comes from a much more precarious background, not only in economic terms, but also in respect of physical integrity.

One reason why the members of the Iraqi family decided to enter into these marriages was the hope and expectation that this could be a means of legalizing

⁵ Five interviews with members of this Palestinian family were conducted by the authors, assisted by two field assistants, in Arabic, sometimes with translation into English, in the fall and winter of 2018.

their status in Amman, as we were told in the interviews. This is connected with their need to feel settled and put down roots after a long, exhausting phase of being on the move. For example, the eldest son Uthman, who married a daughter of the Jordanian-Palestinian family in about 2015, hoped that after his marriage he would be able to get a Jordanian 'family book' and that this would improve his chances of getting a residence or work permit. Foreign husbands of Jordanian women are otherwise not normally entitled to a residence permit (and certainly not to citizenship). This is what Uthman said:

"There was no other way that would help me or get me a job, except to marry and get a Jordanian family book [...]. But my father didn't agree with marrying a Jordanian. He wanted to fetch one of his brothers' daughters for me. But my uncles in Iraq didn't help me. They didn't support me, none of them took me in. There's no reason why I should ask for the hand of one of their daughters [...]. And anyway I want to get married so that I can live, and I don't want to marry so I can wander about [...]. So I said [to his future parents-in-law]: agree [to this marriage], and I won't leave this country [...], I'm here with you, I'll marry and stay here in Amman."

The growing tendency on the part of Uthman and of the rest of the family to put down roots in Amman, in spite of the father's wishes, which is indicated in this quote, can be seen for example in the marriage contract, which contains a clause providing for payment of a high fine should Uthman go back to Iraq, thus making remigration difficult.

This growing separation from their home region and family networks in Iraq is also evident in the mention of the negotiation process between Uthman and his father. Various members of the family say that Abu Uthman failed in his attempt to arrange a marriage between his son and one of his brothers' daughters, in accordance with old family customs and marriage practices. With the argument that they had received no help from their relatives in Iraq and lost contact with them, Uthman and his mother persuaded Abu Uthman to let his son marry a girl from the above-mentioned Palestinian family in Amman. Two years later the second-oldest daughter Aya married a son of the same Palestinian-Jordanian family. These marriages also mark a shift in the power balance within the family to the disadvantage of the father Abu Uthman, who had opposed them, and in favour of the children and their mother.

The family of Abu and Um Uthman represent the type of refugees we have defined as those who find themselves in a precarious situation after arrival because they have no strong translocal network, or because they have lost contact with the local network in their home region. Characteristic of this type is embedment in a predominantly localized milieu before migration, and a migration process that can be described as a descent into precarious living conditions. In general terms, this trajectory shows that, when refugee migration involves the (successive) loss of a localized milieu that is based on the intergenerational transmission of access to land,

it will lead to transformations, adaptations and practical challenges. In the case of the family of Abu and Um Uthman, the significance of coming from a localized milieu for the dynamics of their migration and how they experienced it can already be seen in what happened when they decided to move to a nearby province within their own country. This move to a geographically close and apparently culturally similar area within the same region was experienced as a breakdown of their familiar everyday structures and a loss of social status, in other words of social and symbolic capital. Depending on the type, it is clear that the degree of translocal and transnational mobility before the migration, (changing) family and social networks during migration or after arrival, and the structure of the migration process (direct or indirect, complex and largely unplanned) are interconnected. The contrasting types we have presented here are helpful for distinguishing the different experiential spaces and social positions of refugees and migrants in Amman. Not only are these expressed in their legal and administrative situation in the arrival context or in their different social positions, but also in their translocal or local positioning before migration and in the character of their migration process.

9.4 Conclusion

Jordan is a country that has been heavily affected by refugee and migration movements within a historically integrated region. Under the cipher of regionalism, scholars have tended to assume that mobility and resettlement processes are easier for refugees and migrants within the larger region and especially in Jordan. The argument is that migration from neighboring countries and arrival processes are 'easier' due to the historical integration of the region, including a common language, existing social networks, local constructions of hospitality, and a feeling of belonging.

While this certainly holds some truth, our empirical studies show that this regionalist paradigm needs to be relativized and differentiated. From a processual and transgenerational perspective, we have at first analyzed in chapter 8 how, in the Jordanian context, different power and life chances between old-established residents and various groupings of refugees have emerged and changed. We have shown how relations between Palestinians and Transjordanians were polarized between the 1940s and the 1990s, and how there are signs that these groups have lost something of their mutual distrust and internal integration since the 1990s. A future development is conceivable in which a new figuration is formed along the fault line created in the 1990s, with the Transjordanians and Palestinians as the more old-established residents and the Syrian and Iraqi refugees as the outsiders.

Thus, there are changing answers to the question of who is old-established in Jordan. This is not just due to the arrival of new groupings, but to the fact that their arrival is intertwined with other historical transformation processes: changes in the rentier-state cooptation strategies developed over many years by the regime,

the polarizing effect of the civil war, and the emergence of a more restrictive border and immigration policy. These processes – on the micro and the macro level – have interacted in such a way that the boundary between old-established residents and newcomers in Jordan has shifted. We have shown that unequal power relations and different participation chances have developed between the groupings – including the relations between Palestinians and Transjordanians – despite their socio-cultural similarities (in respect of language, ethnic belonging, etc.), and despite their broad legal equality and transregional integration.

In addition to pointing out that, despite transnational integration and “similarities” between the groupings, it is important not to underestimate their power asymmetries and differing participation chances. We have also tried, in chapter 9, to direct attention to the fact that many refugees in Jordan are not embedded in translocal networks, do not find communication easy, and do not have the feeling that they are in a familiar environment. To demonstrate this, we have presented in this chapter two contrasting types of migration and settlement processes. In our example of the first type, the family had social networks which it could rely on for support during their migration and the process of getting settled in Jordan. Such networks are often a result of earlier refugee movements in the context of regional integration. In our example of the second type, the family came from a highly localized (family) network and milieu and this led to increasing precarization and immobilization in the course of their migration and in respect of their life chances in Jordan. A further important point here is that they have lost contact with their relatives in the area of origin. But both types have in common that the structuring of the migration and settlement process is determined by family dynamics, both in the nuclear family and in the extended family.

We hope that we were able in these two chapters, considering both the “big picture” and the “small picture” in our analyses, to contribute to a better understanding of a complex arrival context and its changing figurations in the past 70 years.

Literature

- Adamson, Fiona B. (2016): The Growing Importance of Diaspora Politics. *Current History*, 115 (784): 291–297.
- Adjamagbo, Agnès / Antoine, Philippe / Béguy, Donatien / Dial, Fatou Binetou (2006): *Comment les femmes concilient-elles mariage et travail à Dakar et à Lomé?* Paris: DIAL.
- Aham-Okoro, Sussie U. (2017): *Igbo Women in the Diaspora and Community Development in Southeastern Nigeria. Gender, Migration, and Development in Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Ait Ben Lmadani, Fatima (2018): Senegalese Migrants in Morocco. From a Gender Perspective. In: Hiralal, Kalpana / Jinnah, Zaheera (eds.): *Gender and Mobility in Africa. Borders, Bodies and Boundaries*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 175–186.
- Al-Ali, Nadjé / Tas, Latif (2018): Reconsidering Nationalism and Feminism. The Kurdish Political Movement in Turkey. *Nations and Nationalism*, 24 (2): 453–473. DOI: 10.1111/nana.12383.
- Al-Ali, Nadjé / Tas, Latif (2021): Kurdish Women's Struggles with Gender Equality. From Ideology to Practice. *Third World Quarterly*, 42 (9): 2133–2151. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2021.1906642.
- Alawad Sikainga, Ahmad (2021[1996]): *Slaves into Workers. Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan*. New York: University of Texas Press. DOI: 10.7560/776944.

- Al-Dayel, Nadia / Anfinson, Aaron / Anfinson, Graeme (2021): Captivity, Migration, and Power in Libya. *Journal of Human Trafficking*. DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2021.1908032.
- Al-Hardan, Anaheed (2016): *Palestinians in Syria. Nakba Memories of Shattered Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Alon, Yoav (2016): From Abdullah (I) to Abdullah (II). The Monarchy, the Tribes and the Shaykhly Families in Jordan, 1920–2012. In: Rabi, Uzi (ed.): *Tribes and States in a Changing Middle East*. London: Hurst, 11–35.
- Amelina, Anna / Boatcă, Manuela / Bongaerts, Gregor / Weiss, Anja (2020): Theorizing Societalization Across Borders. Globality, Transnationality, Postcoloniality. *Current Sociology*, 69 (3): 1–12.
- Apitzsch, Ursula / Siouti, Irini (2007): *Biographical Analysis as an Interdisciplinary Research Perspective in the Field of Migration Studies*. York: University of York. Available at: http://www.york.ac.uk/res/researchintegration/Integrative_Research_Methods/Apitzsch%20Biographical%20Analysis%20April%202007.pdf (Accessed on September 21, 2022).
- Apitzsch, Ursula / Siouti, Irini (2014): Transnational Biographies. *ZQF–Zeitschrift für Qualitative Forschung*, 15 (1-2): 11–23.
- Altrogge, Judith / Zanker, Franzisca (2019): *The Political Economy of Migration Governance in the Gambia*. Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI). Available at: https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/medam_gambia_a_report_altrogge_zanker.pdf (Accessed on February 21, 2022).
- Awodola, Bosede / Oboshi, Agyeno (2015): Terrorism in Northern Nigeria. A Threat to Food Security in Maiduguri. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6 (3): 11–17. Available at: <https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/6455> (Accessed on October 6, 2021).
- Ayata, Bilgin (2011): Kurdish Transnational Politics and Turkey's Changing Kurdish Policy. The Journey of Kurdish Broadcasting from Europe to Turkey. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 19 (4): 523–533. DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2011.639988.
- Bahl, Eva (2008): Gleichzeitig Vater und Mutter – Migration von El Salvador in die USA und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Geschlechter. *Informationszentrum 3. Welt (iz3W)*. 60 Jahre Menschenrechte, 307: 14–16.
- Bahl, Eva (2015): „We Can Earn Lots of Money in Our Country. It Was Never Our Plan to Go to Europe“. Geschichten von einer komplexen Grenze. *Movements. Journal für kritische Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung*, 1 (1). Available at: <https://movements-journal.org/issues/01.grenzregime/17.bahl-melilla-grenze.pdf> (Accessed on March 21, 2022).

- Bahl, Eva (2017): Precarious Transnational Biographies. Moroccan Juveniles in the Spanish Enclaves Ceuta and Melilla. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South. Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus, 185–208.
- Bahl, Eva (2021): *Verflochtene Geschichten im postkolonialen Grenzraum. Biographien, Zugehörigkeiten und Erinnerungspraktiken in Ceuta und Melilla*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 6. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press. DOI: 10.17875/gup2021-1600.
- Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (2020): Global Processes of Flight and Migration. How Case Studies Help to Understand Their Complex and Heterogeneous Character. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 9–21. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1311.
- Bahl, Eva / Cé Sangalli, Lucas (2021a): *Migration Research in Brazil in Times of Covid-19. Conversations with Alejandro Goldberg, Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, Ercilio Langa, Kassoum Dieme and Maria del Carmen Villarreal Villarreal*. Global Migration Studies, 3. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies. DOI: 10.3249/2702-7872-gms-3.
- Bahl, Eva / Cé Sangalli, Lucas (2021b): Interviews with Refugees and Migrants in Brazil. In: Bahl, Eva / Rosenthal, Gabriele (eds.): *Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19. A Research Report on Interviews with Migrants in the Middle East and Europe and Migrants and Indigenous People in South America*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies, 32–54. DOI: 10.3249/2702-7872-gms-4.
- Bahl, Eva / Rosenthal, Gabriele (eds.) (2021): *Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19. A Research Report on Interviews with Migrants in the Middle East and Europe and Migrants and Indigenous People in South America*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies. DOI: 10.3249/2702-7872-gms-4.
- Bahl, Eva / Worm, Arne (2021): Follow-Up-Interviews im Rahmen biographischer Fallrekonstruktionen. Prozessorientierte und methodenflexible Zugänge zu prekärer Transnationalität. In: Blättel-Mink, Birgit (ed.): *Gesellschaft unter Spannung. Verhandlungen des 40. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie 2020*. Available at: https://publikationen.soziologie.de/index.php/kongressband_2020/article/view/1342 (Accessed on April 5, 2022).

- Bahrenburg, Hannes / Richter, Thomas (2008): *Nur ein Intermezzo? Zum Scheitern der Demokratisierung in Mauretanien*. GIGA Focus Nahost, 11. Hamburg: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies – Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien, Institut für Nahost-Studien. URN: <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-273978>.
- Baird, Theodore (2015): Human Trafficking and Torture in Sinai. *Revue Quart Monde*, 233 (1). Available at: <https://www.revue-quartmonde.org/8193> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Bales, Kevin (2012): *Disposable People. A New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Barham, Nasim (2017): *Arbeitsmigration aus Jordanien in die Golfstaaten*. Länderprofil Jordanien. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). Available at: <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/251248/arbeitsmigration-aus-jordanien> (Accessed on March 30, 2022).
- Barth, Fredrik (1969): Introduction. In: Barth, Fredrik (ed.): *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. London: Allen & Unwin, 9–38.
- Baser, Bahar (2011): *Kurdish Diaspora Political Activism in Europe with a Particular Focus on Great Britain*. Working Paper. Berghof Peace Support/Centre for Just Peace and Democracy. Available at: <http://cadmus.eui.eu//handle/1814/18114> (Accessed on August 9, 2022).
- Baser, Bahar / Emanuelsson, Ann-Catrin / Toivanen, Mari (2015): (In)Visible Spaces and Tactics of Transnational Engagement. A Multi-Dimensional Approach to the Kurdish Diaspora. *Kurdish Studies*, 3 (2): 128–150. DOI: 10.33182/ks.v3i2.411.
- Baylouny, Anne Marie (2008): Militarizing Welfare. Neo-liberalism and Jordanian Policy. *Middle East Journal*, 62 (2): 277–303.
- Beck, Ulrich (2000): *What is Globalization?* Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press.
- Becker, David (2004): *Dealing with the Consequences of Organised Violence in Trauma Work*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. Available at: <https://berghof-foundation.org/library/dealing-with-the-consequences-of-organised-violence-in-trauma-work> (Accessed on December 22, 2021).
- Becker, Howard S. (1963): *Outsiders. Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.

- Becker, Johannes (2021a): Refugees, Migration and the Tightening Borders in the Middle East. Perspective from Biographical Research on the Re-Figuration of Spaces and Cross-Cultural Comparison. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 22 (2), Art. 8. DOI: 10.17169/fqs-22.2.3598.
- Becker, Johannes (2021b): Wie Kooptationen Familiengeschichten bestimmen. Auf- und Abstieg in der Periode des jordanischen Staatsaufbaus. *Leviathan*, 49 (3): 314–336.
- Becker, Johannes / Hinrichsen, Hendrik (2020): Transformatorische Fluchtverläufe. Migration aus lokalisierten Milieus und Etablierung in einem neuen Kontext am Beispiel irakischer Geflüchteter in Jordanien. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 163–181. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1319.
- Becker, Johannes / Hinrichsen, Hendrik / Worm, Arne (2021): Fluchtmigration von Syrien nach Jordanien im familiengeschichtlichen und regional-historischen Kontext. Zum Nutzen einer biographietheoretischen und figurationssoziologischen Forschungsperspektive. In: Köttig, Michaela / Witte, Nicole (eds.): *Biographie und Kollektivgeschichte*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 276–291.
- Becker, Johannes / Hinrichsen, Hendrik / Worm, Arne (in press): On the Emergence and Changing Positions of Old-established Groupings in Migration Contexts: A Process Perspective on Group Formation in Jordan. *Current Sociology Monograph. Special Issue on Reconstructive Biographical Research*.
- Behrends, Andrea (2008): Neither Nomads Versus Settlers nor Ethnic Conflicts. The Long History of Changing Alliances and Politicized Groups on the Chad/Sudan Border. In: Rottenburg, Richard (ed.): *Nomadic-Sedentary Relations and Failing State Institutions in Darfur and Kordofan (Sudan)*. Halle: Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 25–70.
- BenEzer, Gadi / Zetter, Roger (2015): Searching for Directions. Conceptual and Methodological Challenges in Researching Refugee Journeys. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28 (3): 297–318.
- Ben-Ze'ev, Efrat / Gazit, Nir (2020): The Fickle Zone. Borderland and Borderlanders on the Egyptian-Israeli Front. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/08865655.2020.1847168.

- Beresford Weekes, Samuel / Bah, Silleh (2015): *Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census. Thematic Report on Population Structure and Population Distribution*. Available at: https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/Census/2015/sl_2015_phc_thematic_report_on_pop_structure_and_pop_distribution.pdf (Accessed on February 11, 2022).
- Bettelheim, Bruno (1943): Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 38 (4): 417-452.
- Betti, Eloisa (2016): Precarious Work. Norm or Exception of Capitalism? Historicizing a Contemporary Debate. A Global Gendered Perspective. *IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference Proceedings*, XXXV: 1-19.
- Bogner, Artur (1998): Gewaltkonflikte und der Wandel sozialer Fremdheit in Nordghana. In: Münkler, Herfried (ed.): *Die Herausforderung durch das Fremde*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 201-303.
- Bogner, Artur (2003): Macht und die Genese sozialer Gruppen. *Sociologus*, 53 (2): 167-181.
- Bogner, Artur (2004): Ethnizität und die soziale Organisation physischer Gewalt. Ein Modell des Tribalismus in postimperialen Kontexten. In Eckert, Julia (ed.): *Anthropologie der Konflikte. Georg Elwerts konflikttheoretische Thesen in der Diskussion*. Bielefeld: transcript, 58-87. DOI: 10.1515/9783839402719-003.
- Bogner, Artur / Rosenthal, Gabriele (2017): Biographies – Discourses – Figurations. Methodological Considerations from the Perspectives of Social Constructivism and Figurationist Sociology. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South. Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus, 15-49.
- Bogner, Artur / Rosenthal, Gabriele / Schmiereck, Josephine (2017): Familial and Life (Hi)Stories of Former Child Soldiers of the LRA in Northern Uganda. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South. Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus, 50-102.
- Bogner, Artur / Rosenthal, Gabriele (2020): *Child Soldiers in Context. Biographies, Familial and Collective Trajectories in Northern Uganda*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 2. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1325.
- Bogner, Artur / Rosenthal, Gabriele (in press): Social-Constructivist and Figurationist Biographical Research. *Current Sociology Monograph. Special Issue on Reconstructive Biographical Research*.

- Boszormeny-Nagy, Ivan / Spark, Geraldine M. (1973): *Invisible Loyalties*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Botte, Roger (2002): Westafrika. Der Ruf nach gleichen Rechten wird lauter. *Der Überblick. Zeitschrift für ökumenische Begegnung und internationale Zusammenarbeit*, 38 (1). Available at: <http://www.der-ueberblick.de/ueberblick.archive/one.ueberblick.article/ueberblick1034.html?entry=page.200201.026> (Accessed on August 24, 2021).
- Botte, Roger (2011): Esclaves et Prolétaires. Les Migrants Soninkés en France. *La Pensée*, 386: 119–130.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986): The Forms of Capital. In: Richardson, John G. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, 241–260.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998): Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now. In: Bourdieu, Pierre: *Acts of Resistance. Against the New Myths of Our Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 81–87.
- Brand, Laurie (1988): Palestinians in Syria. The Politics of Integration. *Middle East Journal*, 42 (4): 621–637.
- Brand, Laurie A. (2007): *State, Citizenship, and Diaspora. The Cases of Jordan and Lebanon*. Working Paper 146. San Diego: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California. Available at: https://ccis.ucsd.edu/_files/wp146.pdf (Accessed on June 20, 2022).
- Brandhorst, Rosa (2014): Transnational Families in Cuba and Germany. On the Intersection Between Isolation, Restrictions, and Agency. *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes*, 38 (2): 254–278.
- Brandhorst, Rosa (2021): The Migration Motive and Transnational Engagement Nexus. A Case Study of Transnational Families Between Cuba and Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: 1–23. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2021.1878874.
- Breckner, Roswitha (2007): Case-Oriented Comparative Approaches. The Biographical Perspective as Opportunity and Challenge in Migration Research. In: Schittenhelm, Karin (ed.): *Concepts and Methods in Migration Research. Conference Reader*, 113–152.
- Brown, Jonathan A. C. (2019): *Slavery and Islam*. London: Oneworld Academic.
- Brubaker, Rogers (2005): The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28 (1): 1–19.

- Bruinessen, Martin van (1999): *The Kurds in Movement. Migrations, Mobilisations, Communications and the Globalisation of the Kurdish Question*. Working Paper 14, Islamic Area Studies Project. Available at: <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/20510> (Accessed on September 14, 2022).
- Burç, Rosa (2020): Non-Territorial Autonomy and Gender Equality. The Case of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria – Rojava. *Filozofija i Društvo*, 31 (3): 319–339.
- Brynen, Rex (1992): Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World. The Case of Jordan. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 25 (1): 69–97.
- Çağlayan, Handan (2007): *Analar, yoldaşlar, tanrıçalar: Kürt hareketinde kadınlar ve kadın kimliğinin oluşumu*. İletişim Yayınları.
- Çağlayan, Handan (2020): *Women in the Kurdish Movement. Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Çakır-Kılınçoğlu, Sevil (2020): Staying Politically Active in Exile. Kurdish Activists in Germany. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 201–219. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1321.
- Calabrese, Arianna (2016): Rural Emergings, Urban Imaginings. The Effect of Urbanization on Senegalese Ethnic Identity. *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*, 2362. Available at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2362 (Accessed on March 30, 2022).
- Calegari, Marília / Baeninger, Rosana (2016): From Syria to Brazil. *Forced Migration Review*, 51: 96.
- Camara, Bintu K. (2007): Women and the Law. A Critique of Senegalese Family Law. *Social Identities. Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 13 (6): 787–800.
- Carling, Jørgen / Menjívar, Cecilia / Schmalzbauer, Leah (2012): Central Themes in the Study of Transnational Parenthood. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38 (2): 191–217.
- Cé Sangalli, Lucas / dos Santos Gonçalves, Maria do Carmo (2018): A Abordagem Biográfica das Migrações Transnacionais. Os Casos Haitiano e Senegalês no Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa (Auto)Biográfica*, 3: 91–108.

- Cé Sangalli, Lucas / dos Santos Gonçalves, Maria do Carmo (2020): Migrants and Refugees from Ghana and Haiti in Southern Brazil. Familial Constellations and Processes of Escape. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 83–102. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1315.
- Charmes, Jacques (2012): The Informal Economy Worldwide. Trends and Characteristics. *Margin. The Journal of Applied Economic Research*, 6 (2): 103–132. DOI: 10.1177/097380101200600202.
- Chastanet, Monique (1992): Survival Strategies of a Sahelian Society. The Case of the Soninke in Senegal from the Middle of the Nineteenth Century to the Present. *Food and Foodways*, 5 (2): 127–149.
- Chatelard, Géraldine (2010a): What Visibility Conceals. Re-Embedding Refugee Migration from Iraq. In: Chatty, Dawn / Finlayson, Bill (eds.): *Dispossession and Displacement. Forced Migration in the Middle East and Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17–44.
- Chatelard, Géraldine (2010b): Cross-Border Mobility of Iraqi Refugees. *Forced Migration Review*, 34: 60–61.
- Chatelard, Géraldine / Morris, Tim (2012): Editorial Essay. Iraqi Refugees, Beyond the Urban Refugee Paradigm. *Refuge. Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 28 (1): 3–14. DOI: 10.25071/1920-7336.36083.
- Chatty, Dawn (2010): *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Constantinidis, Christina / Lebègue, Typhaine / El Abboubi, Manal / Salman, Noura (2018): How Families Shape Women's Entrepreneurial Success in Morocco. An Intersectional Study. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 25 (8): 1786–1808. DOI: 10.1108/IJEBR-12-2017-0501.
- Costello, Cathryn (2016): Safe Country? Says Who? *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 28 (4): 601–622.
- Crossouard, Barbara / Dunne, Máiréad (2015): Politics, Gender and Youth Citizenship in Senegal. Youth Policing of Dissent and Diversity. *International Review of Education*, 61: 43–60. DOI: 10.1007/s11159-015-9466-0.
- Darfurian Voices (2010): *Documenting Darfurian Refugees' Views on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation*. 24 Hours for Darfur. Available at: <https://sites.tufts.edu/bennaimarkrowse/files/2021/02/DARFURIAN-VOICES-Full-Color-English-Final-Report.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).

- Deniz, Dilşa (2020): Re-Assessing the Genocide of Kurdish Alevi in Der-sim, 1937–38. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 14 (2): 20–43. DOI: 10.5038/1911-9933.14.2.1728.
- De Jong, Ferdinand (2005): A Joking Nation. Conflict Resolution in Senegal. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / La Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 39 (2): 389–413.
- De Jong, Sarah / Dannecker, Petra (2018): Connecting and Confronting Transnationalism. Bridging Concepts and Moving Critique. *Identities*, 25 (5): 493–506.
- De Waal, Alex (1989a): Famine Mortality. A Case Study of Darfur, Sudan 1984–5. *Population Studies*, 43 (1): 5–24. DOI: 10.1080/0032472031000143826.
- De Waal, Alex (1989b): *Famine that Kills. Darfur, Sudan*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- De Waal, Alex (2005): Who are the Darfurians? Arab and African Identities, Violence and External Engagement. *African Affairs*, 104 (415): 181–205.
- De Waal, Alex (2015): Evidence and Narratives. Recounting Lethal Violence in Darfur, Sudan. In: Abramowitz, Sharon / Panter-Brick, Catherine (eds.): *Medical Humanitarianism. Ethnographies of Practice*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 77–95. DOI: 10.9783/9780812291698-006.
- De Waal, Alex (2016): Sudan. Patterns of Violence and Imperfect Endings. In: Conley-Zilkic, Bridget (ed.): *How Mass Atrocities End*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 121–149. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781316407578.005.
- Diallo, Garba (1993): *Mauritania – The Other Apartheid?* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (Current African Issues). URN: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-316>.
- Diouf, Mamadou (2000): The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism. *Public Culture*, 12 (3): 679–702.
- Diouf, Mamadou (2001): *Histoire du Sénégal. Le modèle islamo-wolof et ses périphéries*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Dirik, Dilar (2021): Stateless Citizenship. ‘Radical Democracy as Consciousness-Raising’ in the Rojava Revolution. *Identities*, 29 (1): 1–18. DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2021.1970978.
- Doraï, Kamel (2018): Conflict and Migration in the Middle East. Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. In: Karakoulaki, Marianna / Southgate, Laura / Steiner, Jakob (eds.): *Critical Perspectives on Migration in the Twenty-First Century*. Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 113–126.

- Dünnwald, Stephan (2015): Remote Control? Europäisches Migrationsmanagement in Mauretanien und Mali. *Movements. Journal für kritische Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung*, 1 (1). Available at: <https://movements-journal.org/issues/01.grenzregime/08.duennwald--remote-control-mali-mauretanien.html> (Accessed on May 28, 2021).
- Eggers, Maureen Maisha / Kilomba, Grada / Piesche, Peggy / Arndt, Susan (2017): Konzeptionelle Überlegungen. In: Eggers, Maureen Maisha / Kilomba, Grada / Piesche, Peggy / Arndt, Susan (eds.): *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*. Münster: Unrast, 11–13.
- Eitinger, Leo (1964): *Concentration Camp Survivors in Norway and Israel*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- El-Abed, Oroub (2005): Immobile Palestinians. The Impact of Policies and Practice on Palestinians from Gaza in Jordan. In: Jaber, Hana / Métral, Françoise (eds.): *Mondes en Mouvements, Migrants et Migrations au Moyen-Orient au tournant du XXIème Siècle*. Beirut: Institut Français de Proche Orient (IFPO), 81–93.
- El-Abed, Oroub (2014): The Discourse of Guesthood. Forced Migrants in Jordan. In: Fábos, Anita / Isotalo, Riina (eds.): *Managing Muslim Mobilities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 81–100.
- El-Battahani, Atta (2009): Ideological Expansionist Movements versus Historical Indigenous Rights in the Darfur Region of Sudan. From Actual Homicide to Potential Genocide. In: Hassan, Salah M. / Ray, Carina E. (eds.): *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan. A Critical Reader*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 43–67.
- El Dardiry, Giulia (2017): People Eat People. The Influence of Socioeconomic Conditions on Experiences of Displacement in Jordan. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49 (4): 701–719.
- El Hamel, Chouki (2013): *Black Morocco. A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- El-Mafaalani, Aladin (2017): Sphärendiskrepanz und Erwartungsdilemma. Migrationsspezifische Ambivalenzen sozialer Mobilität. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 63 (6): 708–725. DOI: 10.25656/01:1882.
- Elias, Norbert (1978): *What is Sociology?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Elias, Norbert (1991): Changes in the We-I Balance. In: Elias, Norbert: *The Society of Individuals*. Ed. by Michael Schröter. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 153–238.
- Elias, Norbert (2001): *The Society of Individuals*. New York: Continuum.

- Elias, Norbert (2008[1994]): Towards a Theory of Established-Outsider Relations. In: Elias, Norbert / Scotson, John L. (eds.): *The Established and the Outsiders*. The collected works of Norbert Elias. Vol. 4. Ed. by Cas Wouters. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1–36.
- Elias, Norbert / Scotson, John L. (2008[1965]): *The Established and the Outsiders*. The collected works of Norbert Elias. Vol. 4. Ed. by Cas Wouters. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.
- Eliassi, Barzoo (2021): Kurdish Diaspora. A Transnational Imagined Community. In: Gunes, Cengiz / Bozarslan, Hamit / Yadirgi, Veli (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Kurds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 848–868. DOI: 10.1017/9781108623711.035.
- El-Tom, Abdullahi Osman (2003): The Black Book of Sudan. Imbalance of Wealth and Power in Sudan. *Journal of African National Affairs*, 1 (2): 25–35. Available at: <http://www.ossrea.net/publications/newsletter/oct02/article9.htm> (Accessed on October 28, 2021).
- Elwert, Georg (1995): Boundaries, Cohesion and Switching. On We-Groups in Ethnic, National and Religious Forms. *Bulletin de l'APAD*, 10. Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/apad/1111> (Accessed on August 11, 2022).
- Elwert, Georg / Evers, Hans-Dieter / Wilkens, Werner (1983): Die Suche nach Sicherheit. Kombinierte Produktionsformen im sogenannten informellen Sektor. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 12 (4): 281–296.
- Erel, Umut / Acik, Necla (2020): Enacting Intersectional Multilayered Citizenship. Kurdish Women's Politics. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 27 (4): 479–501.
- Evers, Hans-Dieter (1990): Subsistenzproduktion und Hausarbeit. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 19 (6): 471–473. DOI: 10.1515/zfsoz-1990-0606.
- Faist, Thomas (1998): Transnational Social Spaces out of International Migration. Evolution, Significance and Future Prospects. *European Journal of Sociology*, 39: 213–247.
- Faist, Thomas (2011): *Transnationalism. Migrant Incorporation beyond Methodological Nationalism*. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Heimatkunde. Migrationspolitisches Portal. Available at: <https://heimatkunde.boell.de/de/2011/05/18/transnationalism-migrant-incorporation-beyond-methodological-nationalism> (Accessed on March 21, 2022).
- Faist, Thomas / Fauser, Margit / Reisenauer, Eveline (2013): *Transnational Migration*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Falola, Toyin / Heaton, Matthew M. (2008): *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fanon, Frantz (1963): *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- Flint, Julie / de Waal, Alex (2008): *Darfur. A New History of a Long War*. London: Zed Books.
- Foucher, Vincent (2018): The Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance. The Illusion of Separatism in Senegal? In: de Vries, Lotje / Englebert, Pierre / Schomerus, Mareike (eds.): *Secessionism in African Politics. Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, Disenchantment*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 265–292.
- Fortier, Corinne (2020): Genre, Status, et Ethnicisation des Haratin de Mauritanie. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (eds.): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage. La Question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 171–186.
- Franzén, Johan (2020): *Pride and Power. A Modern History of Iraq*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Freedman, Jane (2012): Analysing the Gendered Insecurities of Migration. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 14 (1): 36–55.
- Gabiam, Nell (2018): Rethinking Camps. Palestinian Refugees in Damascus, Syria. In: Gmelch, George / Kuppinger, Petra (eds.): *Urban Life. Readings in Anthropology of the City*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 137–152.
- Glaser, Barney G. / Strauss, Anselm L. (1967): *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine.
- Glick Schiller, Nina / Basch, Linda / Blanc-Szanton, Cristina (1992): Transnationalism. A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645 (1): 1–24.
- Glick Schiller, Nina / Çağlar, Ayşe / Guldbrandsen, Thaddeus C. (2006): Beyond the Ethnic Lens. Locality, Globality, and Born-Again Incorporation. *American Ethnologist*, 33 (4): 612–633.
- Goffman, Erving (1956): *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, Erving (1986[1963]): *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York/London/Toronto: Touchstone.
- Gout, Philippe (2019): Beyond the Law. The Evidentiary Making of the Darfur Genocide. In: Moradi, Fazil / Rottenburg, Richard (eds.): *Tele-Evidence. On the Translatability of Modernity's Violence. Special Issue Critical Studies*, 4: 25–44.

- Gout, Philippe (2020): The International Protection of Refugees. An Insight into the French Asylum Court's Response to the Sudanese Making of Identities. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 240: 873–893.
- Gransow, Bettina (2012): *Internal Migration in China – Opportunity or Trap?* Kurzdossier. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). Available at: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/kurzdossiers/151359/internal-migration-in-china-opportunity-or-trap/> (Accessed on February 16, 2022).
- Graw, Knut (2012): On the Cause of Migration. Being and Nothingness in the African-European Border Zone. In: Graw, Knut / Schielke, Samuli (eds.): *The Global Horizon. Expectations of Migration in Africa and the Middle East*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 23–42.
- Günçikan, Berat (1996): *Cumartesi Anneleri*. Istanbul: İletişim.
- Gurwitsch, Aron / Embree, Lester (1974): On Thematization. *Research in Phenomenology*, 4: 35–49.
- Gurwitsch, Aron (2010[1964]): *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973). Volume III. The Field of Consciousness. Theme, Thematic Field, and Margin*. Ed. by Richard M. Zaner. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Haddad, Fanar (2013): Sectarian Relations in Arab Iraq. Contextualising the Civil War of 2006–2007. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 40 (2): 115–138. DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2013.790289.
- Hale, Sondra (2012): Memory Work as Resistance. Eritrean and Sudanese Women in Conflict Zones. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32 (2): 429–436.
- Hall, Bruce S. (2011): *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, Bruce S. (2020): Memory, Slavery, and Muslim Citizenship in the Post-Emancipation Circum-Saharan World. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (2020): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage. La Question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 95–108.
- Hamood, Sara (2006): *African Transit Migration through Libya to Europe. The Human Cost*. Cairo: The American University of Cairo, Forced Migration and Refuge Studies. Available at: <http://migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/hamood-libya.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Hanafi, Sari (2003): Rethinking the Palestinians Abroad as a Diaspora. The Relationships between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories. *International Social Science Review*, 4 (1–2): 157–182.

- Hanania, Marwan D. (2014): The Impact of the Palestinian Refugee Crisis on the Development of Amman, 1947–1958. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 41 (4): 461–482.
- Hardung, Christine (2010): Das Gesetz n° 2007–048 zur Ahndung der Sklaverei in seinem diskursiven Kontext (Mauretanien). *Inamo*, 61: 27–33.
- Hassan, Yusuf (1993): Some Aspects of the Relationships Between Central and Eastern Bilad al-Sudan. *Dirasat Ifriqiyya (Khartoum)*, 10.
- Hassan, Salah M. / Ray, Carina E. (2009): Introduction. Critically Reading Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan. In: Hassan, Salah M. / Ray, Carina E. (eds.): *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan. A Critical Reader*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 15–28.
- Hashim, Mohammed Jalal (2019): *To Be or Not to Be. Sudan at Crossroads. A Pan-African Perspective*. Dar-es-Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota.
- Hastrup, Anders (2013): *The War in Darfur. Reclaiming Sudanese History*. London: Routledge.
- Heerten, Lasse / Moses, Dirk (2014): The Nigeria–Biafra War. Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16 (2/3): 169–203.
- Heil, Tilmann (2017): ‘Perder, só perder. Vendedores senegaleses durante os jogos olímpicos no Rio de Janeiro’. In: Tedesco, João Carlos / Kleidermacher, Gisele (eds.): *A imigração senegalesa no Brasil e na Argentina. Múltiplos olhares*. Porto Alegre: EST Edições, 229–253.
- Heil, Tilmann (2019): *Conviviality on the Brink*. Mecila Working Paper Series 14. São Paulo: The Maria Sibylla Merian International Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences Conviviality–Inequality in Latin America. Available at: https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_3247869/component/file_3247870/content (Accessed on January 12, 2021).
- Heil, Tilmann (2020): *Comparing Conviviality. Living with Difference in Catalonia and Casamance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heil, Tilmann (2021): Interweaving the Fabric of Urban Infrastructure. The Emergence of a Senegalese Presence in Rio de Janeiro. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 45 (1): 133–149.
- Heller, Christian (1995): *Die Außenpolitik der Demokratischen Volksrepublik Algerien 1979 bis 1992*. Marburg: Tectum.
- Hess, Sabine (2005): Transnationale Räume. Widerständige soziale Sphären oder neue Form der globalen Zurichtung von Arbeitskraft? *Peripherie*, 25 (97/98): 151–171.

- Hirsch, John L. (2001): War in Sierra Leone. *Survival. Global Politics and Strategy*, 43 (3): 145–162.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette / Avila, Ernestine (1997): “I’m Here, but I’m There”. The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood. *Gender & Society*, 11 (5): 548–571.
- Houis, Maurice (1963): *Étude descriptive de la langue Susu*. Dakar: IFAN.
- Ibrahim, Abdullahi Ali (1988): Breaking the Pen of Harold Macmichael. The Ja’aliyyin Identity Revisited. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21 (2): 217–231.
- Ille, Enrico (2011): *Tracing Golden Past. Historical Narratives about Shaybun and Shawabna in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan*. Leipzig: Ille & Riemer.
- International Labour Organization (2016): *Non-Standard Employment Around the World. Understanding Challenges, Shaping Prospects*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Irvine, Judith T. (2018): Divided Values, Shadow Languages. Positioning and Perspective in Linguistic Ideologies. *Signs and Society*, 6 (1): 25–44. DOI: 10.1086/695142.
- Jaspars, Susanne / Buchanan-Smith, Margie / Abdul-Jalil, Musa Adam (2021): Darfuri Journeys to Europe. Causes, Risks and Humanitarian Abandonment. *International Migration*, 59 (3): 63–78. DOI: 10.1111/imig.12723.
- Jegen, Leonie (2020): *The Political Economy of Migration Governance in Senegal*. Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI). Available at: https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/medam_senegal_jegen.pdf (Accessed on September 22, 2022).
- Jongerden, Joost (2017): Gender Equality and Radical Democracy. Contractions and Conflicts in Relation to the ‘New Paradigm’ within the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). *Anatoli. De l’Adriatique à La Caspienne. Territoires, Politique, Sociétés*, 8: 233–256. DOI: 10.4000/anatoli.618.
- Jónsson, Gunvor (2008): *Migration Aspirations and Immobility in a Malian Soninke Village*. International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Paper Series, 10. Available at: <https://www.migrationinstitute.org/publications/wp-10-08> (Accessed on May 28, 2021).
- Kalleberg, Arne L. (2009): Precarious Work, Insecure Workers. Employment Relations in Transition. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (1): 1–22. DOI: 10.1177/000312240907400101.
- Kana, Maimouna (1972): The Status of Married Women under Customary Law in Senegal. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 20 (4): 716–723.

- Kandiyoti, Deniz (1988): Bargaining with Patriarchy. *Gender & Society*, 2 (3): 274–290. DOI: 10.1177/089124388002003004.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony (2019): Igbo Migration and the Future of Traditional Paradigms. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 2 (5): 34–42.
- Kapteijns, Lidwien (1984): The Use of Slaves in Precolonial Western Dar Fur. The Case of Dar Masalit, 1870–1905. *Northeast African Studies*, 6 (1/2): 105–126.
- Karlsson, Helena (2003): Politics, Gender, and Genre. The Kurds and ‘The West’. Writings from Prison by Leyla Zana. *Journal of Women’s History*, 15 (3): 158–160. DOI: 10.1353/jowh.2003.0072.
- Käser, Isabel (2021): A Struggle within a Struggle. A History of the Kurdistan Women’s Freedom Movement, 1978–2019. In: Gunes, Cengiz / Bozarslan, Hamit / Yadirgi, Veli (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Kurds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 893–919. DOI: 10.1017/9781108623711.037.
- Kebbeh, C. Omar (2013): *The Gambia. Migration in Africa’s “Smiling Coast”*. Migration Information Source. Washington: Migration Policy Institute. Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gambia-migration-africas-smiling-coast> (Accessed on March 30, 2022).
- Keese, Alexander (2015): *Ethnicity and the Colonial State. Finding and Representing Group Identifications in a Coastal West African and Global Perspective (1850–1960)*. Leiden: Brill. DOI: 10.1163/9789004307353.
- Keilson, Hans (1992): *Sequential Traumatization in Children. A Clinical and Statistical Follow-up Study on the Fate of the Jewish War Orphans in the Netherlands*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press.
- Khan, Mariama (2019): *The Gambia-Senegal-Border. Issues in Regional Integration*. London: Routledge.
- Klein, Martin (1998): *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kühner, Angela (2002): *Kollektive Traumata. Annahmen, Argumente, Konzepte. Eine Bestandsaufnahme nach dem 11. September*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. URN: <https://d-nb.info/1077105673/34>.
- Kurt, Mehmet (2017): *Kurdish Hizbullah in Turkey. Islamism, Violence and the State*. London: Pluto Press.
- Landau, Ruth / Litwin, Howard (2000): The Effects of Extreme Early Stress in Very Old Age. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 13 (3): 473–487. DOI: 10.1023/A:1007737425260.

- Lambert, Sylvie / van de Walle, Dominique / Villar, Paola (2017): *Marital Trajectories and Women's Wellbeing in Senegal*. WIDER Working Paper 2017/124. Helsinki: UNU-WIDER. DOI: 10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2017/350-9.
- Lamont, Michèle / Molnár, Virág (2002): The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 167–195.
- Lamont, Michèle / Pendergrass, Sabrina / Pachucki, Mark (2015): Symbolic Boundaries. In: Wright, James D. (ed.): *International Encyclopedia of the Social Behavioral Sciences*, 23. Amsterdam/Boston/Heidelberg/London: Elsevier, 850–855.
- Layne, Linda Louise (1994): *Home and Homeland. The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lefèvre, Raphaël (2013): *Ashes of Hama. The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lenner, Katharina (2016): *Blasts from the Past. Policy Legacies and Memories in the Making of the Jordanian Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis*. EUI Working Papers, Max Weber Red Number Series, 32. Florence: European University Institute.
- Lenner, Katharina / Turner, Lewis (2018): Making Refugees Work? The Politics of Integrating Syrian Refugees into the Labor Market in Jordan. *Middle East Critique*, 28 (1): 65–95. DOI: 10.1080/19436149.2018.1462601.
- Lentz, Carola (1997): Ethnizität und die Interpretation der Vergangenheit. In: Deutsch, Jan-Georg / Wirz, Albert (eds.): *Geschichte in Afrika. Einführung in Probleme und Debatten*. Berlin: Arabisches Buch, 149–174.
- Lentz, Carola (1998): *Die Konstruktion von Ethnizität. Eine politische Geschichte Nord-West Ghanas, 1870–1990*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Leymarie-Ortiz, Isabelle (1979): The Griots of Senegal and Change. *Africa. Rivista Trimestrale di Studi e Documentazione dell'Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, 34 (3): 183–197.
- Loimeier, Roman (1999): Political Dimensions of the Relationship between Sufi Brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal. In: De Jong, Frederick / Radtke, Bernd (eds.): *Islamic Mysticism Contested. Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*. Leiden: Brill, 341–356.
- Loimeier, Roman (2006): Political Islam in Contemporary Senegal. In: Bröning, Michael / Weiss, Holger (eds.): *Politischer Islam in Westafrika. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*. Hamburg: LIT, 189–218.
- Lovejoy, Paul E. (2011[1983]): *Transformations in Slavery. A History of Slavery in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lutz, Helma (2011): *The New Maids. Transnational Women and the Care Economy*. London: Zed Books.
- Lynn, Steven Jay / Rhue, Judith W. (1994): *Dissociation. Clinical and Theoretical Perspectives*. New York/London: Guilford.
- Macamo, Elísio / Neubert, Dieter (2008): Erwartung an Sicherheit. Subjektive Katastrophenwahrnehmungen und Bedingungen der Bewältigung am Beispiel Mosambiks und Deutschlands. In: Rehberg, Karl-Siegbert (ed.): *Die Natur der Gesellschaft. Verhandlungen des 33. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in Kassel 2006*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 858–874.
- Macintosh, Edward Hyde (1931): A Note on the Dago Tribe. *Sudan Notes and Records*, 14 (2): 171–177.
- Madibbo, Amal Ibrahim (2012): Conflict and the Conceptions of Identities in the Sudan. *Current Sociology*, 60 (3): 302–319.
- Madut Jok, Jok (2001): *War and Slavery in Sudan*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Maggiolini, Paolo (2015): Christian Churches and Arab Christians in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions*, 171: 37–58. DOI: 10.4000/assr.27010.
- Makris, Gerasimos P. (1996): Slavery, Possession and History. The Construction of the Self Among Slave Descendants in the Sudan. *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute*, 66 (2): 159–182.
- Mamdani, Mahmood (2009): *Saviors and Survivors. Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Manchuelle, François (1989a): Slavery, Emancipation and Labour Migration in West Africa. The Case of the Soninke. *Journal of African History*, 30 (1): 89–106.
- Manchuelle, François (1989b): The “Patriarchal Ideal” of Soninke Labor Migrants. From Slave Owners to Employers of Free Labor. *Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 23 (1): 106–125.
- Mason, Victoria (2011): The Im/Mobilities of Iraqi Refugees in Jordan. Pan-Arabism, ‘Hospitality’ and the Figure of the ‘Refugee’. *Mobilities. Special Issue Mobilities and Forced Migration*, 6 (3): 353–373. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2011.590035.
- Massad, Joseph Andoni (2001): *Colonial Effects. The Making of National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Massó Guijarro, Ester (2013–2014): Baye-Faal in Senegal, Baye-Faal in Lavapiés, Baye-Faal in the Sacromonte Caves. Diasporic Transnationalism of a Sufi Heterodoxy. *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 12 (2): 25–30.
- Massó Guijarro, Ester (2016a): Transnational Baye-fallism. Transformation of a Sufi Heterodoxy through Diasporic Circulation. *African Diaspora*, 9 (1–2): 77–99. DOI: 10.1163/18725465-00901007.
- Massó Guijarro, Ester (2016b): Diáspora bayfal en España. Disputando la migración senegalesa murid. *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares*, 71: 191–214. DOI: 10.3989/rdtp.2016.01.007.
- McAdam, Doug / Tarrow, Sidney / Tilly, Charles (2001): *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDougall, Elizabeth Ann (2005): Living the Legacy of Slavery. Between Discourse and Reality. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 45 (3): 957–986.
- McDougall, Elizabeth Ann (2020): Introduction. “Who Are the haratin?” Asking the Right Questions. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (eds): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage. La Question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 15–48.
- McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Brhane, Meskerem / Ruf, Urs Peter (2003): Legacy of Slavery. Promise of Democracy. Mauritania Enters the 21st Century. In: Smith, Malinda S. (ed.): *Globalizing Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 67–88.
- McLaughlin, Fiona (2008): Senegal. The Emergence of a National Lingua Franca. In: Simpson, Andrew (ed.): *Language and national identity in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 79–97.
- Meagher, Kate (2010): The Informalization of Belonging. Igbo Informal Enterprise and National Cohesion from Below. *Africa Development*, 34 (1): 31–46. DOI: 10.4314/ad.v34i1.57355.
- Mire, Lawrence (2005[1985]): Al-Zubayr Pasha and the Zariba Based Slave Trade in the Bahr al-Ghazal 1855–1879. In: Willis, John Ralph (ed.): *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa. Volume II*. London: Frank Cass, 100–120.
- Mocellin, Maria Clara (2017): Deslocamentos e trabalho ambulante entre jovens senegaleses no Rio Grande do Sul. In: Tedesco, João Carlos / Kleidermacher, Gisele (eds.): *A imigração senegalesa no Brasil e na Argentina. múltiplos olhares*. Porto Alegre: EST Edições, 339–357.
- Monteil, Vincent (1962): Une confrérie musulmane. Les Mourides du Sénégal. *Archives de Sociologie des Religions*, 14: 77–101.

- Morrison, Leah (2014): The Vulnerability of Palestinian Refugees from Syria. *Forced Migration Review*, 47: 41–42.
- Mosoetsa, Sarah / Stillerman, Joel / Tilly, Charles (2016): Precarious Labor, South and North. An Introduction. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 89: 5–19. DOI: 10.1017/S0147547916000028.
- Mügge, Liza (2013): Women in Transnational Migrant Activism. Supporting Social Justice Claims of Homeland Political Organizations. *Studies in Social Justice*, 7 (1): 65–81. DOI: 10.26522/ssj.v7i1.1055.
- Mukhtar Musa, Abdu (2010): Marginalization and Ethnicization in the Sudan. *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 3 (4), 551–562.
- Munck, Ronaldo (2013): The Precariat. A View from the South. *Third World Quarterly*, 34 (5): 747–762.
- Mustafa Abusharaf, Rogaia (2021): *Darfur Allegory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. DOI: 10.7208/9780226761862.
- N'Diaye, Sidi (2016): Des “Restes” Résistants en Milieu Soninké. Esclavage, Sens de l’Honneur et Mécanismes d’Émancipation. *Presses de Sciences Po*, 72 (3): 113–125.
- N'Diaye, Tidiane (2017[2008]): *Le Génocide Voilé. Enquête Historique*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Neubert, Dieter / Stoll, Florian (2015): *Socio-Cultural Diversity of the African Middle Class. The Case of Urban Kenya*. Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers 14. Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Bayreuth. Available at: <https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/2500/> (Accessed on February 26, 2020).
- Ngom, Fallou (2004): Ethnic Identity and Linguistic Hybridization in Senegal. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 170: 95–111. DOI: 10.1515/ijsl.2004.2004.170.95.
- Niederland, William G. (1981): The Survivor Syndrome. Further Observations and Dimensions. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 29 (2): 413–425. DOI: 10.1177/000306518102900207.
- Niess, Birgit (2018): *Lampedusa in Hamburg. Wie ein Protest die Stadt bewegte. Eine Ethnografie*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.
- Nikprowetzky, Tolia (1963): The Griots of Senegal and Their Instruments. *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, 15: 79–82.
- Nugent, Paul (2019): *Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in West Africa. The Centrality of the Margins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/9781139105828.

- Nwokocha, Ezebunwa E. (2015): *Igbos in Ibadan, Nigeria. Migration, Integration and Challenges*. Paper presented at the 7th African Population Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. Available at: <https://uaps2015.princeton.edu/papers/151597> (Accessed on August 30, 2022).
- Nwolisa Okanga, Eloka C. P. (2003): *Njepu Amaka – Migration is Rewarding. A Sociocultural Anthropological Study of Global Economic Migration. White Man's Magic, Women Trafficking, Business, and Ethnicity Among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Peter Lang.
- O'Brien, Jay (1986): Toward a Reconstitution of Ethnicity. Capitalist Expansion and Cultural Dynamics in Sudan. *American Anthropologist*, 88 (4): 898–907.
- O'Brien, Jay (2015): Identity Conflicts and Culture Concepts. Insights from Sudan. In: Assal, Munzoul A. M. / Abdul-Jalil, Musa Adam (eds.): *Past, Present, and Future. Fifty Years of Anthropology in Sudan*. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 191–222.
- O'Fahey, Rex Seán (1973): Slavery and the Slave Trade in Dār Fūr. *The Journal of African History*, 14 (1), 29–43.
- O'Fahey, Rex Seán (2006): Does Darfur Have a Future in the Sudan? *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 30 (1): 27–39.
- O'Fahey, Rex Seán / Spaulding, Jay L. (2017[1974]): *Kingdoms of the Sudan*. London: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781315451138.
- Osswald, Rainer (2009): Rassismus und Sklaverei als Rechtsproblem in Nord- und Westafrika. In: Jokisch, Benjamin / Rebstock, Ulrich / Conrad, Lawrence I. (eds.): *Fremde, Feinde und Kurioses. Innen- und Außenansichten unseres muslimischen Nachbarn*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 253–278.
- Overkamp, Bettina (2002): Erfolgreiche Diagnostik dissoziativer Symptome und Störungen. Ein Überblick. In: Sachsse, Ulrich / Özkan, Ibrahim / Streeck-Fischer, Annette (eds.): *Traumatherapie. Was ist erfolgreich?*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 13–27.
- Palenga-Möllnbeck, Ewa / Lutz, Helma (2016): Fatherhood and Masculinities in Post-Socialist Europe. The Challenges of Transnational Migration. In: Kilkey, Majella / Palenga-Möllnbeck, Ewa (eds.): *Family Life in an Age of Migration and Mobility. Global Perspectives through the Life Course*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 213–236. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-52099-9_10.
- Pelckmans, Lotte (2013): Moving Memories of Slavery among West African Migrants in Urban Contexts (Bamako, Paris). *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 29 (1): 45–67.

- Perfect, David / Evans, Martin (2013): Trouble with the Neighbours? Contemporary Constructions and Colonial Legacies in Relations between Senegal and Gambia. In: Griffiths, Claire H. (ed.): *Contesting Historical Divides in Franco-phone Africa*. Chester: University of Chester, 59–91.
- Perry, Donna L. (2004): Muslim Child Disciples, Global Civil Society, and Children's Rights in Senegal. The Discourses of Strategic Structuralism. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77 (1): 47–86.
- Perry, Donna L. (2005): Wolof Women, Economic Liberalization, and the Crisis of Masculinity in Rural Senegal. *Ethnology*, 44 (3): 207–226.
- Perthes, Volker (1990): *Staat und Gesellschaft in Syrien. 1970–1989*. Hamburg: Deutsches Orient Institut.
- Peters, Anne Mariel / Moore, Pete W. (2009): Beyond Boom and Bust. External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44 (3): 256–285.
- Pezeril, Charlotte (2008): Histoire d'une stigmatisation paradoxale, entre islam, colonisation et "auto-étiquetage". Les Baay Faal du Sénégal. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 192: 791–814. DOI: 10.4000/etudesafricaines.15513.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna (2013): *Multiple Belonging and the Challenges to Biographic Navigation*. MMG Working Paper 13-05. Available at: https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/download/2604196/2940663/WP_13-05_Pfaff-Czarnecka_Multiple%20belonging.pdf (Accessed on March 30, 2022).
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna (2020): From 'Identity' to 'Belonging' in Social Research. Plurality, Social Boundaries, and the Politics of the Self. *European Scientific Journal*, 16 (31): 113–134. Available at: <https://ejournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/13739> (Accessed on April 29, 2021).
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna (2021): Biographische Navigation durch kollektive Konstellationen. In: Köttig, Michaela / Witte, Nicole (eds.): *Biographie und Kollektivgeschichte*. Weinheim: Beltz, 321–338.
- Pieper, Marianne (2014): Prekarität aus post-operaistischer Perspektive. In: Marchart, Oliver (ed.): *Facetten der Prekarisierungsgesellschaft. Prekäre Verhältnisse. Sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf die Prekarisierung von Arbeit und Leben*. Bielefeld: transcript, 109–136.
- Piper, Nicola / Withers, Matt (2018): Forced Transnationalism and Temporary Labour Migration. Implications for Understanding Migrant Rights. *Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 25: 558–575.
- Popitz, Heinrich (1968): *Prozesse der Machtbildung*. Tübingen: Mohr.

- Popitz, Heinrich (2017[1992]): *Phenomena of Power*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Portes, Alejandro / Guarnizo, Luis E. / Landolt, Patricia (1999): The Study of Transnationalism. Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22: 217–237. DOI: 10.1080/014198799329468.
- Pries, Ludger (2007): *Transnationalism. Trendy Catch-all or Specific Research Programme? A Proposal for Transnational Organisation Studies as a Micro-macro-link*. COMCAD Working Papers, 34. Bielefeld: Universität Bielefeld. Available at: <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-51144-0> (Accessed on August 3, 2022).
- Pries, Ludger (2019): The Momentum of Transnational Social Spaces in Mexico-US-migration. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7 (34). DOI: 10.1186/s40878-019-0135-5.
- Pries, Ludger (2021): Migration. In: Hollstein, Bettina / Greshoff, Rainer / Schimank, Uwe / Weiss, Anja (eds.): *Soziologie. Sociology in the German-Speaking World. Special Issue Soziologische Revue 2020*. Oldenburg: De Gruyter Oldenbourg. DOI: 10.1515/9783110627275.
- Prothmann, Sebastian (2017): *Lifeworlds of Young Men Beyond Migration and Immobility in Pikine, Senegal*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Prunier, Gérard (2005): *Darfur. The Ambiguous Genocide*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Putnam, Frank W. (1997): *Dissociation in Children and Adolescents. A Developmental Perspective*. New York: Guilford Publications.
- Qamar, Md. Muddassir (2019): Relations with Saudi Arabia. In: Kumaraswamy, P. R. (ed.): *The Palgrave Handbook of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 393–406.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald (1940): On Joking Relationships. *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute*, 13 (3): 195–210. DOI: 10.2307/1156093.
- Repórter Brasil (2016): *A indústria do frango no Brasil*. Monitor 2. Available at: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Monitor2_PT.pdf (Accessed on April 11, 2022).
- Riccio, Bruno (2001): From “Ethnic Group” to “Transnational Community”? Senegalese Migrants’ Ambivalent Experiences and Multiple Trajectories. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27 (4): 583–599.

- Riemann, Gerhard / Schütze, Fritz (1991): "Trajectory" as a Basic Theoretical Concept for Analyzing Suffering and Disorderly Social Processes. In: Maines, David R. (ed.): *Social Organization and Social Process. Essays in Honor of Anselm Strauss*. New York: de Gruyter, 333–357. URN: <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-7214>.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (1993a): Reconstruction of Life Stories. Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews. *The Narrative Study of Lives*, 1 (1): 59–91.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (1993b): Die erzählte Lebensgeschichte. Eine zuverlässige historische Quelle? In: Weber, Wolfgang (ed.): *Spurensuche. Neue Methoden in der Geschichtswissenschaft*. Regensburg: Roderer, 8–17.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (1994): Die erzählte Lebensgeschichte als historisch-soziale Realität. Methodologische Implikationen für die Analyse biographischer Texte. In: Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (eds.): *Alltagskultur, Subjektivität und Geschichte*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 125–138.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (1999): Migrationen und Leben in multikulturellen Milieus. Nationale Zugehörigkeit zur Herstellung von familien- und lebensgeschichtlicher Kontinuität. In: Apitzsch, Ursula (ed.): *Migration und Traditionsbildung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 22–34. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-322-91622-8_2.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2004a): Biographical Research. In: Seale, Clive / Gobo, Giampietro / Gubrium, Jaber. F. / Silverman, David (eds.): *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, 48–64.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2004b): ‚Ethnisierung der Biographie‘ und Traumatisierung. In: Ottersbach, Markus / Yildiz, Erol (eds.): *Migration in der metropolitanen Gesellschaft. Zwischen Ethnisierung und globaler Neuorientierung*. Münster: Lit, 217–227.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2013): Über die Zuverlässigkeit autobiographischer Texte. In: Frei, Norbert / Kansteiner, Wulf (eds.): *Den Holocaust erzählen*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 165–172.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2016): The Social Construction of Individual and Collective Memory. In: Sebald, Gerd / Wagle, Jatin (eds.): *Theorizing Social Memories. Concepts, Temporality, Functions*. London: Routledge, 32–55.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2018): *Interpretive Social Research*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press. DOI: 10.17875/gup2018-1103.

- Rosenthal, Gabriele (2021): General Design and Findings of Our Research. In: Bahl, Eva / Rosenthal, Gabriele (eds.): *Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19. A Research Report on Interviews with Migrants in the Middle East and Europe and Migrants and Indigenous People in South America*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies, 2–12. DOI: 10.3249/2702-7872-gms-4.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bahl, Eva / Worm, Arne (2016): Illegalisierte Migrationsverläufe aus biografiethoretischer und figurationssoziologischer Perspektive. Die Landgrenze zwischen Spanien und Marokko. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 17 (3), Art. 10. Available at: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2686/4012 (Accessed on May 5, 2020).
- Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bahl, Eva / Worm, Arne (2017): Illegalized Migration Courses from the Perspective of Biographical Research and Figurational Sociology. The Land Border between Spain and Morocco. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South. Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus, 103–159.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele / Hofmann, Lukas (forthcoming): On the Present Situation and Future Perspectives of Eritrean Migrants. Deported from Israel, Stranded in Kampala. In: Pohn-Lauggas, Maria / Tonah, Steve / Worm, Arne (eds.): *Exile, Flight, Persecution*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele / Worm, Arne (2021): On the Significance of Powerful We-Groups and Legal Status During the Pandemic. In: Bahl, Eva / Rosenthal, Gabriele (eds.): *Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19. A Research Report on Interviews with Migrants in the Middle East and Europe and Migrants and Indigenous People in South America*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies, 107–120. DOI: 10.3249/2702-7872-gms-4.
- Rossi, Benedetta (2020): From Slavery? Rethinking Slave Descent as an Analytical Category. The Case of the Mauritanian and Moroccan Haratin. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (eds.): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage: la Question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 187–206.
- Ruf, Urs Peter (1999): *Ending Slavery. Hierarchy, Dependency and Gender in Central Mauritania*. Bielefeld: transcript.

- Ruokonen-Engler, Minna-Kristiina (2009): De/Constructing Difference. A Biographical Perspective on Constructions of Ethnicity as Transnational Positionality. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele / Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography. Ethnographical and Biographical Perspectives*. Münster: Lit, 251–265.
- Saeed Takana, Yousif Suliman (2016): *Darfur. Struggle of Power and Resources, 1650-2002*. Bergen, Norway: Chr. Michelsen Institute. Available at: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/5795-darfur-struggle-of-power-and-resources-1650-2002.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Sahin-Mencutek, Zeynep (2016): Strong in the Movement, Strong in the Party. Women's Representation in the Kurdish Party of Turkey. *Political Studies*, 64 (2): 470–487.
- Sallem, Zmkan Ali (2021): *The King of Salah al-Din. The Power of Iraq's Sunni Elites*. Conflict Research Programme. London: London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at: <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/108541/> (Accessed on August 3, 2022).
- Salih, M. A. Mohamed (1998): Other Identities. Politics of Sudanese Discursive Narratives. *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 5 (1): 5–31.
- Salomon, Noah (2016): *For the Love of the Prophet. An Ethnography of Sudan's Islamic State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Savishinski, Neil J. (1994): The Baye Fall of Senegambia. Muslim Rastas in the Promised Land. *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute*, 64 (2): 211–219.
- Schayegh, Cyrus (2017): *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shami, Seteney (1996): Transnationalism and Refugee Studies. Rethinking Forced Migration and Identity in the Middle East. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 9 (1): 3–26.
- Shami, Seteney (1997): Domesticity Reconfigured. Women in Squatter Areas of Amman. In: Chatty, Dawn / Rabo, Annika (eds.): *Organizing Women. Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East*. New York: Berg, 81–99.

- Schearer, Jamie / Haruna, Hadija (2013): Über Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland berichten. Historischer Überblick über die Entstehung der Afrikaner_innenbilder in Deutschland aus kolonialhistorischer Perspektive. In: AntiDiskriminierungsbüro (ADB) Köln / Öffentlichkeit gegen Gewalt e.V. (eds.): *Leitfaden für einen rassismuskritischen Sprachgebrauch. Handreichung für Journalist_innen*. Köln: Antidiskriminierungs-Büro (ADG), 17–23. Available at: https://www.oegg.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Leitfaden_PDF_2014.pdf (Accessed on June 15, 2020).
- Schlee, Günther / Werner, Karin (1996): Inklusion und Exklusion. Die Dynamik von Grenzziehungen im Spannungsfeld von Markt, Staat und Ethnizität. In: Schlee, Günther / Werner, Karin (eds.): *Inklusion und Exklusion*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 9–36.
- Schultz, Ulrike (2010): Negotiating Belonging after the CPA. The Case of the Bari Youth in Khartoum Sudan. In: Beswick, Stephanie / Spaulding, Jay / Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn / Lobban, Richard A. Jr. (eds.): *Sudan's Wars and Peace Agreements*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 137–159.
- Schultz, Ulrike (2011): Intersektionalität, Ethnie und Geschlecht. Umsetzung in der qualitativen Sozialforschung. In: Smykalla, Sandra / Vinz, Dagmar (eds.): *Intersektionalität zwischen Gender und Diversity*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 128–143.
- Schultz, Ulrike (2015): „Als ob es nur Dinka und Nuer gibt...“. Ethnische Zugehörigkeiten in Khartoum und Juba. In: Hauck, Gerhard / Lenz, Ilse / Wienold, Hanns (eds.): *Entwicklung, Gewalt, Gedächtnis*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 157–176.
- Sharkey, Heather J. (2008): Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan. The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race. *African Affairs*, 107 (426), 21–43. DOI: 10.1093/afraf/adm068.
- Shlaim, Avi (2008): *Lion of Jordan. The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*. London: Penguin.
- Shryock, Andrew / Howell, Sally (2001): “Ever a Guest in Our House”. The Emir Abdullah, Shaykh Majid Al-Adwan, and the Practice of Jordanian House Politics, as Remembered by Umm Sultan, the Widow of Majid. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33 (2): 247–269.
- Siouti, Irimi (2013): *Transnationale Biographien. Eine biographieanalytische Studie über Transmigrationsprozesse bei der Nachfolgeneration griechischer Arbeitsmigranten*. Bielefeld: transcript.

- Sökefeld, Martin (2006): Mobilizing in Transnational Space. A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora. *Global Networks*, 6 (3): 265–284. DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00144.x.
- Sørbø, Gunnar M. (2018): Livelihoods, Conflicts and Ethnicity. Reflections on the History and Relevance of Anthropological Research Cooperation in Sudan. *Forum for Development Studies*, 45 (1): 25–46. DOI: 10.1080/08039410.2017.1366361.
- Spaulding, Jay / Kapteijns, Lidwien (1991): The Orientalist Paradigm in the Historiography of the Late Precolonial Sudan. In: O'Brien, Jay / Roseberry, William (eds.): *Golden Ages, Dark Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 139–151. DOI: 10.1525/9780520327450-008.
- Suliman, Mohamed (1997): *Ethnicity from Perception to Cause of Violent Conflicts. The Case of the Fur and Nuba Conflicts in Western Sudan*. Paper presented at CONTICI International Workshop, 8–11 July, Bern, Switzerland. Available at: https://peacemediation.ch/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Suliman_1997_Inversion-of-Ethnicity.pdf (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Sy, Yaya (2000): L'esclavage chez les Soninkés. Du village à Paris. *Journal des Africanistes*, 70: 43–69.
- Sylvanus, Nina (2016): *Cloth, Gender, and Materiality in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Taine-Cheikh, Catherine (2020): “Haratin”. Une enquête au pays des mots. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (eds.): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage. La question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 73–94.
- Tall, Tariq (2000): The Politics of Rural Policy in East Jordan, 1920–1989. In: Mundy, Martha / Musallam, Basim (eds.): *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 90–98.
- Tamari, Tal (1991): The Development of Caste Systems in West Africa. *The Journal of African History*, 32 (2): 221–250. DOI: 10.1017/s0021853700025718.
- Tedesco, João Carlos (2016): “Com a Faca No Pescoço”. Trabalho, Mercado e Religião. A Certificação Halal e os Imigrantes nos Frigoríficos de Aves No Sul do País. *Revista Signos*, 37 (2): 157–177. DOI: 10.22410/issn.1983-0378.v37i2a2016.1084.
- Tekin, Segah (2017): From 19th Century to Syrian Civil War. South America as a Syrian Migration Destination and the Case of Brazil. *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. Special Issue Middle East and Migration*: 53–79. DOI: 10.26513/tocd.313047.

- Terr, Leonore C. (1991): Childhood Traumas. An Outline and Overview. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 148 (1): 10–20.
- Thomson, Steven (2011): Revisiting “Mandingization” in Coastal Gambia and Casamance (Senegal). Four Approaches to Ethnic Change. *African Studies Review*, 54 (2): 95–121.
- Toma, Sorana / Vause, Sophie (2013): On Their Own? A Study of Independent versus Partner-Related Migration from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 34 (5): 533–552. DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2013.827832.
- Tonah, Steve / Codjoe, Emmanuel (2020): Risking It All. Irregular Migration from Ghana through Libya to Europe and Its Impact on the Left-Behind Family Members. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 25–40.
- Touré, Aboubacar (2004): *Parlons Soso. Langue et Culture du Peuple de la Guinée Maritime*. Paris: L’Harmattan.
- Truzzi, Oswaldo (2018): *Syrian and Lebanese Patrícios in São Paulo. From the Levant to Brazil*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Tsourapas, Gerasimos (2022): *The Jordan Compact*. MAGYC Working Paper. Available at: https://www.magyc.uliege.be/upload/docs/application/pdf/2022-05/d.2.6_v3_april2022.pdf (Accessed on August 25, 2022).
- Tubiana, Jérôme (2008): *The Chad–Sudan Proxy War and the ‘Darfurization’ of Chad. Myths and Reality*. HSBA Working Paper, 12. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. Available at: <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/HSBA-WP-12-Chad-Sudan-Proxy-War.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Tubiana, Jérôme / Gramizzi, Claudio (2017): *Tubu Trouble. State and Statelessness in the Chad–Sudan–Libya Triangle*. HSBA Working Paper, 43. Geneva: Small Arms Survey / Conflict Armament Research. Available at: <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-CAR-WP43-Chad-Sudan-Libya.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Tubiana, Jérôme / Gramizzi, Claudio (2018): *Lost in Trans-nation. Tubu and Other Armed Groups and Smugglers along Libya’s Southern Border*. HSBA and SANA Report. Geneva: Small Arms Survey / Conflict Armament Research. Available at: <https://smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-SANA-Report-Lost-in-Trans-nation.pdf> (Accessed on August 12, 2022).

- Tubiana, Jérôme / Warin, Clotilde / Saleh Mangare, Mahamat (2020): *Diaspora in Despair – Darfuran Mobility at a Time of International Disengagement*. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. Available at: https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/HSBA-Report-Darfur-mobility_1.pdf (Accessed on August 12, 2022).
- Van Den Hoek, Jamon (2017): *Agricultural Market Activity and Boko Haram Attacks in Northeastern Nigeria*. West African Papers, 9. OECD Publishing. DOI: 10.1787/13ba9f2e-en.
- Vermeulen, Hans / Govers, Cora (2000[1994]): Introduction. In: Vermeulen, Hans / Govers, Cora (eds.): *The Anthropology of Ethnicity. Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1–9.
- Vezzadini, Elena (2010): Making the Sudanese. Slavery Policies and Hegemony Construction in Early Colonial Sudan. In: Spaulding, Jay / Beswick, Stephanie / Fluher Lobban, Caroline / Lobban, Richard (eds.): *Sudan's Wars and Peace Agreements*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 71–101.
- Vezzadini, Elena (2012): Identity, History and Power in the Historiography of Sudan. Some thoughts on Holt and Daly's A History of Modern Sudan. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / La Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 46 (3): 439–451. DOI: 10.1080/00083968.2012.737533.
- Vigh, Henrik (2009): Motion Squared. A Second Look at the Concept of Social Navigation. *Anthropological Theory*, 9 (4): 419–438.
- Villalón, Leonardo A. (2006[1995]): *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal. Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511598647.
- Walther, Oliver J. (2014): Trade Networks in West Africa. A Social Network Approach. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 52: 179–203. DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X14000032.
- Webb, James L. A. (1994): *Desert Frontier. Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600–1850*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Weiss, Anja (2010): Vergleiche jenseits des Nationalstaats. Methodologischer Kosmopolitismus in der soziologischen Forschung über hochqualifizierte Migration. *Soziale Welt*, 61 (3/4): 295–311.
- Weiss, Anja (2018): Becoming a Refugee. A Life-Course Approach to Migration under Duress. *Sociologias*, 20 (49): 110–141. DOI: 10.1590/15174522-02004904.

- Wiley, Katherine (2020): Being Haratin? Being Hadriyyin? Fluid Meanings of Ethnic Terms in Mauritania's Assaba Region. In: McDougall, Elizabeth Ann / Lahbib Nouhi, Mohamed (eds.): *Devenir Visibles dans le Sillage de l'Esclavage. La Question Haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*. L'Ouest Saharien. Cahiers d'études pluridisciplinaires. Volumes 10–11. Paris: L'Harmattan, 209–223.
- Wimmer, Andreas (2008): Elementary Strategies of Ethnic Boundary Making. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31 (6): 1025–1055. DOI: 10.1080/01419870801905612.
- Wimmer, Andreas (2013): *Ethnic Boundary Making. Institutions, Power, Networks*. Oxford [et al.]: Oxford University Press.
- Wimmer, Andreas / Glick Schiller, Nina (2002): Methodological Nationalism and Beyond. Nation-State-Building, Migration and the Social Sciences. *Global Networks*, 2 (4): 301–334.
- Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2004): *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies*. New York. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-survey-education-emergencies> (Accessed on August 30, 2022).
- Worm, Arne (2019): *Fluchtmigration aus Syrien. Eine biographietheoretische und figurationssoziologische Studie*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 1. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press. DOI: 10.17875/gup2019-1228.
- Worm, Arne (2020): Zur Verbindung einer transnationalen mit einer biographietheoretischen Perspektive in der Fluchtforschung. Migrationsverläufe im Kontext des syrischen Bürgerkrieges. In: Bahl, Eva / Becker, Johannes (eds.): *Global Processes of Flight and Migration. The Explanatory Power of Case Studies*. Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, 4. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 103–122. DOI: 10.17875/gup2020-1316.
- Wright, Cream (1997): *Reflections on Sierra Leone. A Case Study*. Final Report and Case Studies of the Workshop on “Educational Destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies”, organised Jointly by the International Bureau of Education and the University of Geneva, 17–30. Available at: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Publications/free_publications/Tawil3e.pdf (Accessed on October 26, 2021).
- Yom, Sean L. (2014): Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan. The Case of the Hirak Movement. *Middle East Journal*, 68 (2): 229–247.
- Young, Helen / Osman, Abdul Monim / Aklilu, Yakob / Dale, Rebecca / Badri, Babiker / Abdullah Fuddle, Abdul Jabbar (2005): *Darfur – Livelihoods under Siege*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University. Available at: <https://fic.tufts.edu/assets/Young-Darfur-Livelihoods-Under-Seige.pdf> (Accessed on October 26, 2021).

- Young, Helen/ Osman, Abdal Monium / Abusin, Ahmed Malik / Asher, Michael / Egemi, Omer (2009): *Livelihoods, Power and Choice. The Vulnerability of the Northern Rizaygat, Darfur, Sudan*. Somerville, MA: Tufts University (Research Report). Available at: www.alnap.org/resource/11347 (Accessed on October 26, 2021).
- Yüksel, Metin (2021): Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism in the Interwar Period. In: Gunes, Cengiz / Bozarslan, Hamit / Yadirgi, Veli (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Kurds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 205–228. DOI: 10.1017/9781108623711.008.
- Zack-Williams, Alfred B. (1999): Sierra Leone. The Political Economy of Civil War, 1991–1998. *Third World Quarterly*, 20: 143–162. DOI: 10.1080/01436599913965.
- Zeuske, Michael (2013): *Handbuch Geschichte der Sklaverei*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. DOI: 10.1515/9783110278811.
- Zoumanigui, Antoinette (2016): On the Talibé Phenomenon. A Look into the Complex Nature of Forced Child Begging in Senegal. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 24: 185–203.

Transcription symbols

(says he)	approximate transcription
()	incomprehensible (space between brackets approximately corresponding to length/duration of passage)
((slowly)) ((coughs))	transcriber's comments, also descriptions of moods and non-verbal utterances or sounds
\ ... ((slowly))\	\ marks beginning and end of phenomenon
((vividly)) ...	general change of mood, probably continuing
,	brief pause
(5)	pause in full seconds
many mo- , more	sudden halt / faltering / (self-)interruption
ye=yes	rapid speech, words closely linked
ye:s	sound lengthened
'yes'	softly, in a low voice
never	syllable (sound) stressed
NO	loudly
<u>NEVER</u>	stress (emphasis) during passage spoken in a loud voice
Speaker 1: and so #we went#	simultaneous utterances
Speaker 2: #hmmhm yes#	

About the Authors

Ahmed Albaba holds a PhD in social sciences from the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen. Currently a freelance researcher and lecturer, he worked in several DFG research projects at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen, from 2012 to 2021. He also lectured in qualitative social methods at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. Ahmed Albaba studied Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies and Psychology in Birzeit (Palestine) and Cologne. Outside of university, he worked as a psychological counselor in Jerusalem, a social pedagogical worker in Cologne, and a legal guardian for unaccompanied minor refugees in Lower Saxony. Research interests: Interpretive methods, migration research, biographical and generational research, collective memory, history and present of the Middle East.

Eva Bahl is a postdoctoral researcher at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen, where she is involved in various international research projects in the fields of migration, borders, and collective memories. In the summer term 2022, she was a Visiting Professor (with a focus on Gender and Postcolonial Studies) at the University of Vienna (Department of Development Studies). Her dissertation, completed in 2020, examined memory practices and constructions of belonging in the Spanish border towns of Ceuta and Melilla. Another regional focus of her work is South and Central America. Her research interests include historical sociology, global sociology & post/colonial entanglements, migration and border studies, gender studies, collective memory & practices of remembrance, interpretive sociology, biographical research, and ethnography.

Johannes Becker is a postdoctoral researcher and coordinator of the project “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946”, located at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen.

gen. His research is centered around the interrelationship of biographies, history and space in the context of social transformation processes ranging from the formation of national borders to reconfiguration of urban environments. Extensive research experience with a regional focus in the Middle East about cities, migration, and families.

Sevil Çakır Kılınçoğlu has a PhD in Middle Eastern studies, from Leiden University. She is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen since 2020. She has been teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on research methods, social movements, gender, and the Global South. Her research interests include social movements in the Global South, gender, migration, political violence, and biographical research. She has published on the activism of migrants, women's political engagement and activist biographies.

Lucas Cé Sangalli is a researcher at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen. He is currently a researcher in the projects "Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany" and "Individual and collective memories of slavery and the slave trade: A contrastive comparison of different communities, generations and groupings in Ghana and Brazil", both funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). His doctoral project deals with changing relevancies of belongings and the transmission of collective memory in the case of Sudanese living in Germany and Jordan. He has been awarded a scholarship for doctoral studies by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD; 2019-2023). He wrote his master's thesis on changing belongings of migrants from Haiti in southern Brazil at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil (2015). His research interests include sociology of knowledge, figurational sociology, interpretive methodology (especially biographical methods), memory, ethnicity, and migration.

Hendrik Hinrichsen is currently lecturer at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen and researcher in the project "Dynamic figurations* of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946: Between peaceable and tension-ridden co-existence?", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). His PhD focused on the 'Oslo Generation' in Palestinian society in the West Bank. His research interests include biographical research, figurational sociology, generational research, Middle East studies and qualitative methods in social sciences.

Gabriele Rosenthal is a sociologist and Professor of Qualitative Methodology at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen in Germany. Major research on the intergenerational impact of the collective and familial history

on biographical structures and actional patterns of individuals and family systems. Actual research on migration, ethnicity, collective and armed conflicts, and trauma.

Arne Worm is a postdoctoral researcher at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Göttingen. His dissertation, completed in 2019, deals with processes of refugee migration from the violent conflict in Syria. He has worked on the experiences and social positioning of refugees in various projects funded by the German Research Foundation: “Belonging to the outsider and established groupings: Palestinians and Israelis in various figurations” (2010–2015), “The social construction of border zones: A comparison of two geopolitical cases” (2014–2019), and “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany” (2019–2022). His research interests include interpretative research methods, biographical research, figural sociology, sociology of migration and socio-political conflicts.

Every day many people leave the place where they live and move to some other place, where they settle permanently or stay for many years. The contributions to this volume are based on the results of three empirical research projects which set out to investigate the situation of migrants in Jordan, Brazil, Germany and other European countries. The articles focus on migrants at their place of arrival and ask questions such as: How do they look back on their life histories and migration paths? What dynamics and processes led up to their migration projects and how do they explain their motives? The studies in this volume show that leaving and arriving are interrelated: leaving one's home region is part of a long process, partly planned and partly unplanned, which is determined by complex collective, familial and individual constellations, and which has significant consequences for the action patterns and participation strategies of migrants in their arrival societies. This book also shows which constellations enable some migrants to realize their goals in their present situation, and which constraints or obstacles make it impossible for others to do so.

ISBN: 978-3-86395-571-7
ISSN: 2699-0989
eISSN: 2699-0997

 GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

Göttingen University Press