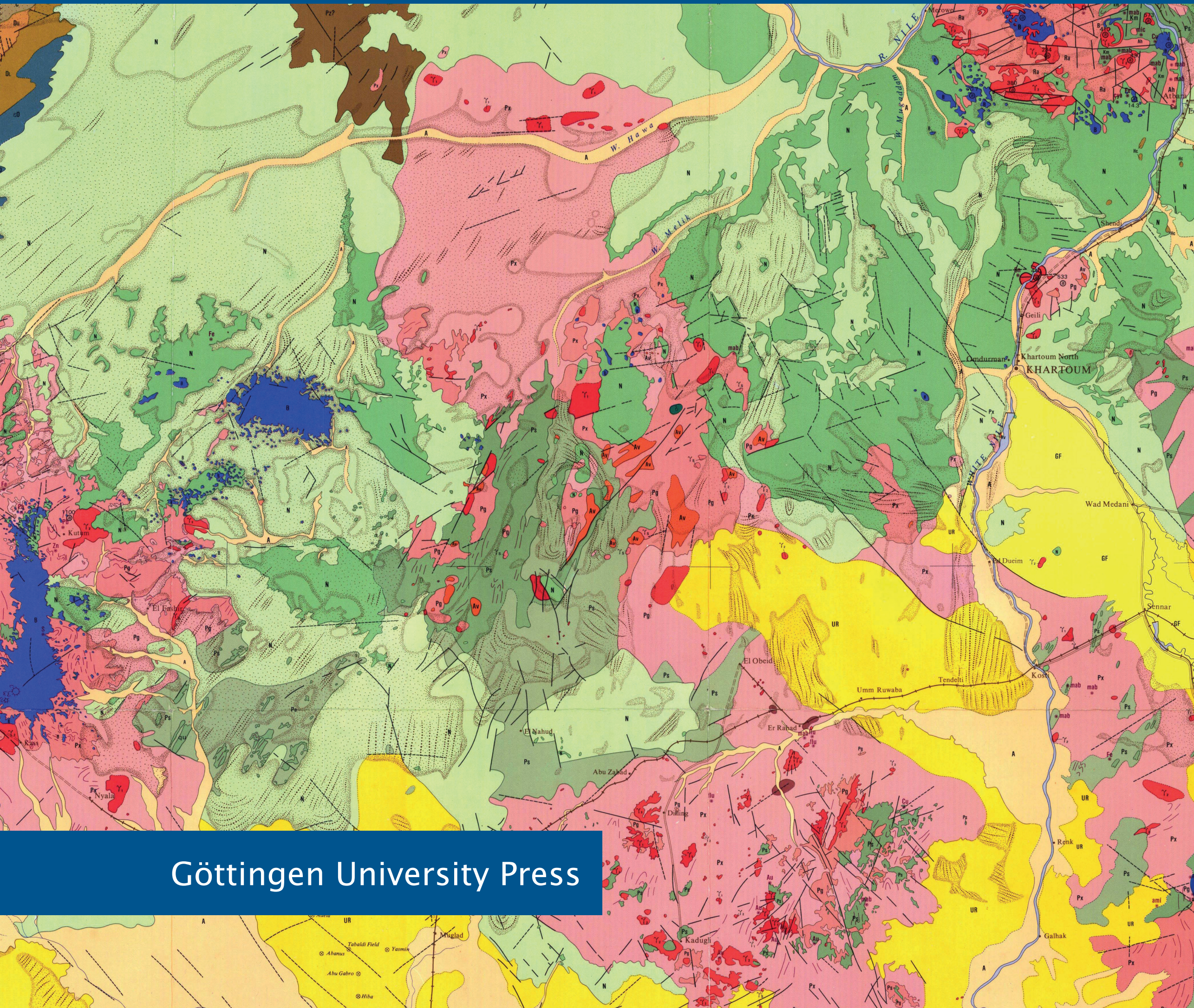
Göttingen Series in
Sociological Biographical Research

Lucas Cé Sangalli

Migrants from Sudan in Germany and Jordan

Changing Belongings in the Context of Life and Family Histories



Göttingen University Press

Lucas Cé Sangalli

Migrants from Sudan in Germany and Jordan

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Published in 2024 by Göttingen University Press as volume 11 in the series
“Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research”

Lucas Cé Sangalli

Migrants from Sudan in Germany and Jordan

Changing Belongings in the Context of Life and Family Histories

Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research
Volume 11

Göttingen University Press
2024

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at https://dnb.dnb.de.

Published with the support of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

“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: g.rosenthal@uni-goettingen.de
Dr. Nicole Witte	E-Mail: Nicole.Witte@uni-goettingen.de
Dr. Arne Worm	E-Mail: arne.worm@uni-goettingen.de

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Institute of Methods and Methodological Principles in the Social Sciences
Goßlerstr. 19
37073 Göttingen

Dissertation, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

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

Typesetting and layout: Lucas Cé Sangalli
Cover picture: Geological Publisher: Map of the Sudan. Ministry of Energy & Mines, Geological & Mineral Resources Department, Khartoum (1981). CC BY-SA 4.0. Available at: https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/content/geological-map-sudan.

GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN IN PUBLICA COMMODA SEIT 1737

© 2024 Universitätsverlag Göttingen, Göttingen
https://univerlag.uni-goettingen.de
ISBN: 978-3-86395-643-1
DOI: https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2024-2653
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 the University of 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

Contents

Acknowledgements 11

1 Changing constructions of belonging 15

  1.1 Introduction to the topic of study 15

  1.2 Research context and outline of the book 20

2 Changing relevancies of collective belonging 25

  2.1 Preliminary remarks 25

  2.2 Theoretical and methodological framework of the study 26

    2.2.1 Power interdependencies and constructions of belonging 26

    2.2.2 The social transmission of knowledge and collective belongings 27

    2.2.3 Changing relevancies of belonging and power chances 29

    2.2.4 Constructions of belonging and processes of remembering 31

    2.2.5 Migration and the transmission of we- and they-images 33

  2.3 Contributions of the study 35

  2.4 Research process and methodological approach 40

    2.4.1 Methods of data generation 40

    2.4.2 Methods of data analysis 42

    2.4.3 Development of the design of the study and sample 48

  2.5 Summary 56

3 The development of ethnopolitical figurations in Darfur and Sudan 59

3.1 Preliminary remarks 59

3.2 Insights into the constitution of figurations and groupings 60

3.3 The Nile figuration 74

Excursus – Contested views of Nile Valley civilizations 76

3.4 The Marra figuration 79

3.5 The expansion of groupings from the Nile into Darfur (1874–2019) 83

3.5.1 Decreasing power of Fur-speaking groupings (1874–1955) 84

Excursus – Contested views of Sudanese independence 97

3.5.2 Islamist discourses and the escalation of violence (1955–2019) 100

Excursus – International groupings and the presentation of life stories 109

3.6 The power of Arabs from Darfur in the Nile (2019–2024) 131

3.7 Summary. Sociohistorical power inequalities and belonging 134

4 Migrants from Sudan in Germany 141

4.1 Preliminary remarks 141

4.2 The characteristics of field access in Germany 142

4.3 The figuration of so-called Africans and old-established Germans 149

4.4 Changing presentations of belonging and experiences of migration 160

4.4.1 The migration course of an Arab from the River Nile region 161

4.4.2 The migration course of an Arab from Darfur 165

4.4.3 The migration course of a ‘Zurqa’ from Darfur 179

4.5 Summary. Power chances and ethnicized views of the past 202

5 Migrants from Sudan and their descendants in Jordan 207

5.1 Preliminary remarks 207

5.2 The characteristics of field access in Jordan 209

5.3 The figuration of Sudanese ‘refugees’ and more established Arabs 213

5.4 The transmission of we- and they-images in Sudanese families 216

5.4.1 The contrastive comparison of two families 216

5.4.2 The Nasr Family: Thematization of the family past and belonging to a we-group 218
5.4.3 The Hamid Family: Dethematization of the family past and lack of group cohesion 242
5.5 Summary. Contrasting views of the past among Sudanese groupings 273

6 Summary of empirical findings and conclusion 277
6.1 Preliminary remarks 277
6.2 Contrastive comparison of findings in Germany and Jordan 278
6.3 Experiences of violence and dominant belongings 282
6.4 Components shaping the transmission of we- and they-images 288
6.5 Contributions of the study and potential research 291

Transcription symbols 297

Literature 299

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of research and fieldwork conducted between 2018 and 2023 within two research projects funded by the German Research Foundation under the supervision of Gabriele Rosenthal, “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946” (RO 827/21-12) and “Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany” (RO 827/20-2). My research was also funded by a doctoral scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

I am grateful to the people who participated in this study by sharing their life stories, knowledge about Sudan, and much more. Without their willingness and patience, this book would not have been possible. Mahadi Ahmed assisted me during fieldwork in Germany and put me in contact with several of them. He also spent time discussing interviews from Germany and Jordan. Isaac Hajr, Ali Hassan, and Abubakar Ibrahim, whom I can only refer to by pseudonyms, went from interviewee to interviewer and, along with the work of Ahmed Ababa and Hala Budeir, made research in Jordan possible even during the Covid-19 pandemic. I feel deeply indebted to them for their generous assistance.

I would also like to thank those who participated in supervising this study, analyzing the empirical material, and proofreading the final manuscript. My thanks go first to Gabriele Rosenthal, who was my first supervisor during my doctoral studies

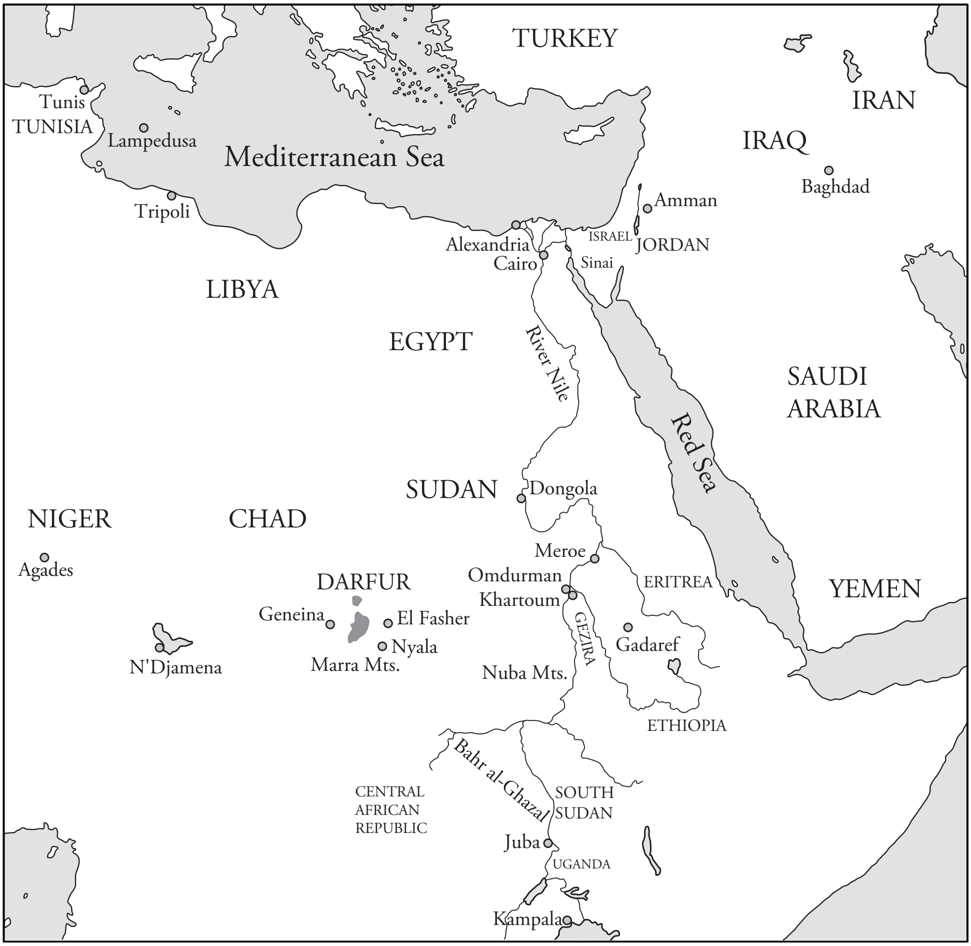
at the University of Göttingen, and Artur Bogner, who kindly shared his experience from years of fieldwork in Africa and his time as Norbert Elias's secretary. This book would not have been possible without their liberal support, painstaking work, and constant encouragement over the years. I would like to express my gratitude to the other members of the thesis committee, Ulrike Schultz, who shared her knowledge of Sudan with me and introduced me to colleagues at her colloquium in Friedensau, and Maria Pohn-Lauggas, for her support of this work and my current research. I am grateful to my colleagues at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen, especially those who read parts of the manuscript, Eva Bahl, Johannes Becker, Hendrik Hinrichsen, Miriam Schäfer, and Arne Worm. I am also indebted to my other colleagues at the Center of Methods and the colloquium at Friedensau, who participated in the analysis of the empirical data. Finally, I am grateful to those who helped with translations and transcriptions in Arabic, French, German, and English. Many thanks to Shadia Abdelmoneim, Mahadi Ahmed, Ahmed Albaba, Lukas Hofmann, Enass Masri, and Ulrike Schmid. Special thanks to Ruth Schubert for proofreading the text and pointing out inconsistencies in the arguments.

I thank the Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace, and Rights at the Ahfad University for Women, Sudan, and the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations at the University of Oldenburg, Germany, for funding discussion of the findings with scholars and artists in Entebbe, Uganda. Although it was not possible to travel to Sudan as originally planned due to the war in 2023, I benefitted from the discussion with colleagues based in Uganda.

It has been a privilege to be able to count on the support of all of you – and many others – during this time.

Lucas Cé Sangalli
Berlin, May 2024

Map 1. The Marra and Nile Figurations


TURKEY
IRAN
Tunis
TUNISIA
Lampedusa
Mediterranean Sea
IRAQ
Baghdad
Amman
Tripoli
Alexandria
ISRAEL
JORDAN
Cairo
Sinai
LIBYA
EGYPT
River Nile
SAUDI
ARABIA
Red Sea
SUDAN
Dongola
NIGER
CHAD
Meroe
Agades
Omdurman
ERITREA
DARFUR
YEMEN
Khartoum
Geneina
El Fasher
GEZIRA
Gadaref
Nyala
N'Djamena
Marra Mts.
Nuba Mts.
ETHIOPIA
Bahr al-Ghazal
CENTRAL
AFRICAN
REPUBLIC
SOUTH
SUDAN
Juba
UGANDA
Kampala

Source: Lucas Cé Sangalli (2024).

1 Changing constructions of belonging in the context of life and family histories

1.1 Introduction to the topic of study

This study deals with the family histories and life stories of people who migrated from Sudan, especially from the region of Darfur, and who currently live in the diaspora in Germany and Jordan. The participants in this study refer to the Republic of the Sudan as 'Sudan', which is regarded by them as their home or the land where their ancestors come from. In this sense, they are Sudanese or descendants of Sudanese who regard themselves as living in the diaspora.[1] In addition to reconstructing the life histories of the interviewees from Sudan and their descendants, a central question that I pursued in this study was how people talk about themselves, their families and the groupings and groups to which they belong when looking back at their individual and collective past and recounting their experiences of migration, their life stories and the history of their families and collectives. In this book, I will show to which we-groups and groupings they felt, and still feel, that they belong, the images of these groupings with which they have been confronted in interactions with other people, and how these images have changed in the course of their lives.[2] The groups we belong to and participate in are where we concretely experience power interdependencies (see Elias [1939]2001: Part 1). That is, people's experiences of dominant everyday discourses in the groupings and groups they belong to shape the extent to which certain views and versions of the past become more or less plausible for them when talking about their experiences. And their participation in these groups and groupings shapes the knowledge people living in the diaspora have to construct themselves, their collective belongings, and how they regard their interdependencies with others. That is, how they present themselves and their experiences – such as of migration – in different ways. At this point, it is important to emphasize the heuristic differentiation between *views* and *versions* of the sociohistorically constructed past used in this book. With *views of the past* I mean the current attitude of individuals toward their past and the dominant belongings shaping their retrospective interpretations. These views correspond to the changing and anachronistic projection of certain images to interpret past experiences and histories. By *versions of the past* I mean the stories and historical interpretations people present in connection with their individual, familial, and collective histories. These are used, for instance, on a discursive level to legitimize their views and actions, and to contest other perspectives. Views and versions of the past are interdependent with lived-through experiences and the knowledge intergenerationally transmitted in the we-groups people belong to.

---

[1] How far interviewees regarded themselves as belonging to a 'diaspora' was empirically determined in each case. I did not assume a homogeneous Sudanese diaspora but reconstructed how and under which circumstances people regarded themselves as belonging to a certain diaspora (see Brubaker 2005: 5ff., especially 12; 2017).

With this question regarding constructions of belonging, the research interest lies in the sociogenesis of the images people from Sudan and their descendants have of themselves in relation to others and which they use to construct their autobiographies while living in the diaspora. Through these autobiographical constructions, they regard their life stories in relation to broader histories – and sociohistorical power inequalities – of their home regions and collectives. That is, they use the we- and they-images they learned in their families and groupings to construct their belongings in the diaspora. To reconstruct the power interdependencies that shape autobiographical constructions of belonging in the present, this study looks into the experiences of individuals before, during and after migration. It does this by pursuing the question of how their constructions of belonging changed in their home country, on the migration course, and in the diaspora, as well as to what extent these constructions of belonging are constituted by the concrete experiences people and previous generations of their families and groupings lived through in the past. By making a contrastive comparison of different societies, lived-through histories, and versions of the past, I will show how the experiences people and their ancestors had before and during migration, their current situation, and the quite different power chances in Jordanian and German societies shape constructions of collective belonging. Thus, the study shows how these constructions can serve to legitimize and contest sociohistorical power inequalities.

---

[2] Following the sociologist Rogers Brubaker (2002: 167ff.), I speak of groupings as distinct from groups, or, following the sociologist Norbert Elias ([1987]2001: 216f.), of we-groups (see ch. 2.2.1). We-groups or groups are those in which people often participate in face-to-face interactions with other members of the group and in relation to whom they regard their own belonging as relatively uncontested. In accordance with sociologist Norbert Elias ([1987]2001: 210f., especially 224), people in we-groups have a we-feeling or we-image and therefore a collective memory. Groupings, on the other hand, do not presuppose that people see themselves as belonging to them, but are sociohistorically constructed, and people have such a belonging ascribed to them in everyday life.

It is not surprising that this research interest is the result of a study of people who migrated from Sudan, especially from the region of Darfur, and who live today in two different societies shaped by the recent arrival of so-called migrants and refugees. Darfur alone has been the home of more than thirty ethnic groupings and 'tribes', or even one hundred, depending on one's definition (see Prunier 2005: 186; Flint/de Waal 2008: 6; Mosely Lesch 1998: 15ff.).[3] More than twelve different languages are spoken in the region, and it is not uncommon for people to speak other languages besides their mother tongue. It is also not uncommon for families to have members who trace their origins to different ethnic, religious, or linguistic groupings and to regions ranging from the Arabian Peninsula to West Africa and beyond (see Collins 2008: 4ff.).

The outcomes of these entangled familial and collective histories have favored alliances at certain times and led to phases of different forms of collective physical violence at others, such as processes of enslavement, anti-colonial and counter-authoritarian uprisings, and armed conflict. Crucial in these conflicts have been the sociohistorically constructed relevancies that ethnicized (tribal) and racialized we- and they-images of victims and perpetrators of violence have gained, as shown in the interviews conducted in this study. Thus, it was important for me to empirically reconstruct the concrete experiences that people lived through in the past, and the norms and rules they learned in the groupings they participated in for emphasizing one or another interdependence between different we- and they-images when talking about themselves and the others. I tried to avoid retrospectively projecting notions of, for example, ethnicity and race from my standpoint, and instead to reconstruct in detail which sociohistorical power asymmetries in various figurations were shaped and interpreted already in the past – and not only from the current perspective of the interviewees – as an interdependence of superiority of one grouping *in relation to* the so-called inferiority of another. In the interviews, for example, while members of some groupings traced their genealogies to an Arab origin, others did not understand themselves as Arabs and contested self-descriptions of so-called Arab Sudanese. At the same time, emphasizing the phase in the collective past of the family history that goes back to the Arabian Peninsula and thematizing close family ties to the prophet did not necessarily mean a feeling of superiority. However, these presentations of the past can be used, for example, to legitimize the perpetration of acts of violence against groupings socially constructed as inferior within the collective histories of these families, groupings, and regions. The charged nature of these discourses and interdependencies was also manifest in contestations of the notion of Sudan as an 'Arab' nation. For many interviewees, as they put it, Sudanese people are – or should be – all 'Blacks', 'Africans', or 'Black Africans' whose origins lie in different groupings.[4] They do not necessarily regard themselves as Arabs, such as the Daju and Fur, to name just a few from Darfur, even if some interviewees belonging to these groupings would refer to Arab ancestors among the Fur. For some it is a matter of pride while for others it is a matter of power, especially in politics. Being based only on sociohistorically constructed perceived skin tone differences, this is not enough to define belongings in this case. As one interviewee from Darfur puts it, "we look the same color". Several interviewees came up with rationalizations to explain how they perceived socially constructed differences in clothing, physical features and the way people act, to legitimize and contest different views of the collective past. This is despite the variations these differentiations can have even inside families, and that more often than not people are aware of their overlapping belongings and entangled family ties. Crucial for my study is that even when constructed differences between one or another person and groupings were not prominent, they still served to orient actions, legitimize everyday discourses, and shape interpretations of belonging. In the terms of sociologist Norbert Elias ([1987]2001: 223f.), they acquired individual and collective functions. And in the context of Sudan and Darfur, these have been used by members of different groupings to justify the perpetration of acts of violence against members of other groupings, families, and entire communities in the past and in the present.

---

[3] I use the term tribe (Sudanese Arabic: *qabila*) because it is the socially constructed emic term used by the interviewees in interactions. Very rarely the term was used to refer to colonial policy (Hassan/Ray 2009: 18), even though sociohistorical power inequalities that emerged or were reinforced by the arrival of groupings from present-day Egypt, Turkey, and the United Kingdom can still shape life situations in Sudan (see ch. 3.5). The term was often used as a self-description of ethnicized (tribal) belonging. Differentiations between family, clan, tribe, and ethnic grouping are made in this book on the basis of empirical cases when they were relevant for interviewees.

---

[4] I write 'Black' and 'Zurqa' with a capital letter to stress this is a sociohistorically constructed image instead of "a real 'feature' based on skin color" (see Eggers *et al.* 2017: 13). Similarly, 'white', 'Brown', and 'Arab' are sociohistorically constructed images. For this reason, I place certain words in single inverted commas to emphasize their character as sociohistorical constructions against the background of sociohistorical power inequalities that have often become institutionalized to the detriment of less established groupings in many societies. In other words, belongings implied by these images tend to be taken as unchangeable when in fact they are contested by many interviewees, especially within their own we-groups and families (see ch. 4.3 and ch. 5.4). I capitalize certain words to emphasize their use in the interviews as explicit descriptors of a we-feeling and we-image of belonging.

Thus, it becomes clear that constructions of collective belonging in this case intertwine with contrasting and sometimes overlapping collective memories of violence, migration, and settlement. It is not difficult to imagine that this has contributed to the contested aspect of negotiations of belongings in Darfur and other regions of Sudan. Similarly, it is easy to imagine that each party has its own stories about its grouping, which remain powerful in shaping – and are at the same time shaped by – individual and familial memories. Not only that, they also influence people's power chances in terms of concrete opportunities available to members of certain groupings to leave their home regions, to avoid experiences of violence, to participate in different groups, and to construct autobiographical presentations of themselves and the others: that is, their autobiographical we-, they- and self-presentations (see Bogner/Rosenthal 2023: 4f.).

All this does not mean that the contested character that ethnicized (tribal) belonging can have in Sudan is the only relevant interdependence between individuals and the groups and groupings they belong to. Similarly, this does not mean that belonging to an ethnicized (tribal) grouping is *always relevant* for them, *always contested*, or that it *remains relevant* throughout their lives and in different generations of the same family and grouping. However, my analysis of the interviews conducted in this study reconstructs how the sociological phenomenon of the ethnicization of we- and they-images often *becomes dominant* in relation to other possible belongings that remain in the background in autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations of Sudanese migrants, especially those from Darfur. The study empirically demonstrates the relevancies that collective and regional belongings have for presentations of the self and others in the interviews conducted with people from Sudan living in the diaspora, and the concrete sociohistorical power inequalities – especially in contexts of physical violence – that members of different groupings experienced before, during and after migration. Through a contrastive comparison of interviews conducted in Germany and Jordan, the study shows what significance the current life of Sudanese migrants in these two societies has for their they-, we- and self-presentations, and how these are mutually constituted by their lived-through experiences in the past.

The study combines social-constructivist sociology of knowledge in the tradition of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann with the sociology of processes developed by Norbert Elias and historical sociology. From the standpoint of a social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach as proposed by Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal (2017, 2023), and using a multimethod research approach with a focus on biographical-narrative interviews, I pursue the following question:

> How do changing power chances and the different experiences that come with them in the different societies where people from Sudan and their descendants lived before, during and after migration shape:
>
> a) autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations in different situations and phases of life; and
>
> b) the transmission of we- and they-images inside families and we-groups.

I initially looked into which constructions of belonging could be found in Germany and in Jordan. After this, it was important to empirically determine the extent to which different belongings were relevant for people on their migration courses and in shaping, for instance, their concrete experiences of different forms of violence, their chances for migration or their ability to participate in different groups after arriving in Germany and Jordan. The study examines the differences in the various groupings and differences in the German and Jordanian societies and reconstructs the power interdependencies between individuals and the groupings to which they belong in different societies. The findings of the study show that the charged interrelations between experiences of different forms of violence and the autobiographical constructions of Sudanese migrants and their descendants are telling, not only in the specific case of Sudan, but also generally in respect of sociological components shaping autobiographical presentations and the transmission of we- and they-images in the diaspora. Thus, the study contributes to understanding and explaining the relations between sociohistorical power inequalities, processes of migration in the context of collective violence, and autobiographical constructions of collective belonging in the diaspora.

1.2 Research context and outline of the book

This book was written in the context of two international research projects funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and with the support of a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).[5] For these projects, biographical-narrative interviews with 64 Sudanese migrants were conducted in Germany and in Jordan, as well as participant observation, face-to-face and online follow-up interviews and, in one case, a group discussion with Sudanese living in Germany during the period between October 2018 and September 2023. As I discuss later, the development of the sample followed the criteria of theoretical sampling and the circular logic of theories grounded in empirical fieldwork, in the tradition of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss ([1967]2006). This led to the definition of different we-groups or we-groupings which were used by interviewees in establishing their dominant relations of belonging and that shaped how they looked back on their individual and collective past to construct their biographies and to talk about their experiences. The chapters of this book follow the relevancies reconstructed on the basis of empirical cases from the sample in Germany and in Jordan. This approach to theoretical generalizations grounded in the empirical data led to the conclusion that when we speak about belongings with people from Sudan living abroad – and with people who fled from constellations shaped by processes of collective physical violence in general – it is necessary to empirically determine:

---

[5] The projects (RO 827/20-2; April 2017 – September 2022; RO 827/21-12; February 2019 – January 2023) were coordinated by Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rosenthal at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen, and included Dr. Eva Bahl, Dr. Johannes Becker, Dr. Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu, Dr. Hendrik Hinrichsen, and Dr. Arne Worm as research assistants. Other project members were Dr. Ahmed Albaba, Dolly Abdul Karim, Prof. Ali Abdallah Alalwan, Margherita Cusmano, Dr. Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, Marwan Duhoki, Merve Eryoldas, Nathalia Louruz de Mello, Sameera Qatouni, Prof. Dr. Hermílio Santos, Tim Sievert, and Tom Weiss. This study was made possible by a DAAD scholarship for doctoral studies for the period April 2019 to March 2023, and a research assistantship scholarship from the Göttingen Graduate School of Social Sciences (GGG) provided by the STIBET programme of the DAAD between October and December 2018.

1. the different forms of violence experienced by people in relation to other experiences they lived through in the past;
2. their current situations and the groups and groupings in which they participate in the present; and
3. the components shaping the family dialogue and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and collective memories in different groupings.

Violence as a sociological interest is not exclusive to the case of Sudan, or more relevant in the case of Sudan than in other societies. As pointed out by sociologist Heinrich Popitz ([1986]2017: ch. 2, especially 27), we as humans have the capacity to inflict physical violence, and this is a crucial part of everyday life in families and groupings in all societies. And in general power manifests itself in concrete terms – e.g., in different forms of violence – in the groups and groupings to which we belong (see Bogner 2003: 172ff., especially 173). This means the findings of this study are significant not only for research on migration and violence, but also for studies on collective belongings in general, as will become clear in the following chapters.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2 “Changing relevancies of collective belonging”, the theoretical framework determined in the process of this investigation is presented. In this chapter, I discuss how it was possible to empirically reconstruct the *transformation of relevancies* that belonging to certain groupings in Sudan gave rise to throughout the life of the same person and for members of different generations of the same family or grouping, especially in relation to their experiences of migration. Then, the methods and methodological procedures used to pursue the principles sketched in the theoretical framework are presented. In addition to the benefits of biographical-narrative interviews, I show how valuable follow-up interviews and interviews with various family members can be for the reconstruction of changing relevancies of belonging in the light of different – and often, but not necessarily, contested – collective histories in Sudan.

In Chapter 3 "The development of ethnopolitical figurations in Darfur and Sudan", I present an empirically based interpretation of the development of sociohistorical power inequalities in two main figurations – the Marra and Nile figurations, as I call them – in what is today the Republic of the Sudan. Based on empirical cases, I show how sociohistorical power interdependencies – and the concrete power chances and experiences they gave to members of different groupings in the past – configure the different relevancies of belonging of Sudanese and their descendants in the diaspora. Here, I discuss the contested versions of the past that members of different groupings have, and how some of them gained more or less legitimacy among certain groupings but not others.

In Chapter 4 "Migrants from Sudan in Germany", I discuss in detail the figurations in which interviewees from Sudan live in the Federal Republic of Germany. I focus on biographical case reconstructions of members of three empirically determined groupings from Sudan: 'Zurqa' ('Blacks') from Darfur, 'Arabs' from Darfur and 'Arabs' from riverain Sudan. Based on these case reconstructions, I show the different power chances members of these groupings and their families experienced in the past, and how these collective belongings shape the dominant we- and they-images people use in the present. In this chapter, I empirically demonstrate how dominant ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images are shaped not only by institutional procedures of asylum in Western Europe, but also by concrete experiences, such as diverse forms of violence, that members of different groupings lived through before, during, and after their migration. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the biographical and collective functions of an ethnicized view of the past and how it potentially shapes transmission of the collective memories of the we-groups that previous genealogical generations belonged to in Sudan.

In Chapter 5 "Migrants from Sudan and their descendants in Jordan", I introduce the figurations between different groupings in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I focus on two case reconstructions of families who migrated from two different regions of Sudan and the Middle East to Jordan. In this chapter, I discuss the components shaping the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images in families. The cases presented demonstrate how experiences of different forms of violence are a central component in the transmission of a we-image and consequently the knowledge at hand available to Sudanese born in the diaspora. I show how important it is to reconstruct in detail how different experiences inside the family – especially experiences of physical sexualized violence – shape collective constructions of belonging and the transmission of images. Constructions of belonging are not only a matter of sociohistorical power inequalities in the societies in which people live in the present but are also based on concrete experiences they lived through within their own families and we-groups. I show that an outcome of the different transmission of we- and they-images is that members of certain groupings do not – and cannot – interpret their life stories and their outsider positions in the diaspora as a part of broader sociohistorical power asymmetries, because they lack explicit knowledge about the family past and the power inequalities experienced by previous generations of their families and groupings.

In the final chapter, Chapter 6 "Summary of empirical findings and conclusion", I present a contrastive comparison of the empirical findings from Germany and Jordan. One important finding is a similarity: both more established Arab groupings in Jordan and old-established German groupings in Germany reject the self-definition as Arabs of Sudanese in the diaspora. Further, I discuss my empirical findings regarding the interrelation between experiences of various forms of violence and dominant constructions of belonging by showing which components shape the transmission of we- and they-images inside families and we-groups. The chapter addresses the methodological implications of a theoretical framework of changing relevancies of belonging for the study of violence and migration, as a contribution to research on sociohistorical power transformations and interdependencies. The chapter concludes with questions that remain open and could inform further research in this field.

2 Changing relevancies of collective belonging

2.1 Preliminary remarks

This chapter presents an empirically determined theoretical framework for the study of changing relevancies of belonging in the individual, familial, and collective histories of people who migrated from Sudan and their descendants. This theoretical framework results from the empirical application of a social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach (Bogner/Rosenthal 2009, 2017, 2023; Rosenthal 2016b; Rosenthal/Bogner 2017) to the study of constructions of belonging presented by Sudanese living in Germany and Jordan when looking back on their individual and collective past. The first part of the chapter discusses the sociological relevance of the study of constructions of belonging by focusing on power interdependencies that are the outcome of the mutual constitution of individuals and societies in the tradition of sociologist Norbert Elias ([1939]2001: Part 1) (ch. 2.2). After this, I discuss how sociohistorical power inequalities shape processes of remembering and changing relevancies of belonging from the standpoint of the sociology of phenomenological influence of Alfred Schütz and Aron Gurwitsch and the sociology of knowledge of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman. I also discuss the interdependencies between power, processes of remembering and constructions of belonging, following the social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach of Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal. The second part of the chapter shows how this study contributes significantly to the study of constructions of belonging and the transmission of knowledge and collective memories in cases of migration in contexts of collective violence (ch. 2.3). The third part presents the methods used throughout the research process – based on the circular logic of the generation of grounded theories in the tradition of Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser ([1967]2006) – to empirically establish the theoretical framework introduced in the first part of the chapter (ch. 2.4). The chapter concludes with a summary of the components that are important for a reconstructive study of concrete changing power chances influencing not only the ability to migrate of people belonging to different groupings but also the construction of their presentations of the self, their experiences, and the others in the diaspora.

2.2 Theoretical and methodological framework of the study

2.2.1 Power interdependencies and constructions of belonging

We are born into webs of interdependencies with other people who were alive before our birth. That is, no human being is born outside power entanglements consisting of their families, their groupings, or the institutions in charge of them or in which they are socialized and in which they participate (see Elias [1939]2001: 14f.). These webs of power interdependencies between individuals and groupings are what sociologist Norbert Elias calls *figurations*, the basic constituent of society (see Elias 1978: 130ff.), or more appropriately, societies in plural. These webs stretch through time, in the form of generations that existed before us and will continue to exist after us, as well as through space, as interdependencies become increasingly complex and expand beyond families and local communities to include groupings in other places (see Elias [1987]2001: 163ff.). At times, these webs can foster the autonomous development of 'individuals', for example when families, extended or nuclear, fund the migration project of a person. At other times, the same webs can hinder autonomous life courses, because they create obligations. This can mean that a migrant has to return from abroad in order to take care of a relative. In other words, the constellations in which people are born and raised can increase their concrete power chances to act with a certain degree of autonomy, or constrain their scope of action. What is crucial is that these figurations and participation in groups and groupings shape the concrete way in which individuals *experience power chances*, i.e., the ability to act with more or less autonomy in particular situations throughout their lives (see also Bogner 1986: 393f., 398). Such an understanding of belonging assumes that individuals always participate in groupings and we-groups, and that these groupings and we-groups have the potential to foster or hinder the limited scope of action –

the concrete power chances – that people have in societies. As a result, conflicts may arise between individuals and the groupings and groups they belong to, and can also emerge between groupings with unequal power. The power differential between groupings can lead to different forms of violence, including physical violence, in certain figurations (see Popitz [1986]2017: ch. 2, especially 27). This puts at risk not only the biological existence of groupings and individuals, but also the intergenerational transmission of their collective and individual memories and various forms of knowledge. In other words, it can influence how we learn to talk about the interdependencies between the groupings we refer to as 'us' and 'we' in relation to those we call 'them' and 'they'. As symbolic beings (see Elias 1989: 199), we must understand our actions and ourselves *in relation to* the groupings and groups we belong to. And we act in the world based on perceptions and interpretations gained from our participation in these groups and groupings. We construct ourselves *and our biographies* as part of the groups we call 'us', a we-group, in relation to others, whom we call 'them'. And our autobiographical constructions are an outcome of the entanglements between our more individualized relevance systems with the dominant relevancies in the groupings and groups in which we were socialized and in which we participate (see Schütz/Luckmann 1973: 182ff., especially 215ff.). The way we learn to name the groupings we participate in and construct ourselves as part of is also a matter of power. And the creation and transformation of these power asymmetries intertwines with the unequal transmission of explicit and tacit knowledge inside the groupings and we-groups to which we belong.

2.2.2 The social transmission of knowledge and collective belongings

The different groupings and we-groups into which people are born constitutes the background against which they learn to differentiate themselves from other groupings in various ways, for example, through the use of different words to refer to 'us' in relation to 'them', or learning norms and rules for things that 'we' do that 'they' do not do. It is in the groupings to which people belong that they learn about and develop diverse ways of naming the interdependencies between 'us' and 'them'. We learn to name our relations with the others through our participation in the groupings we call 'us', our we-groups. We learn to follow certain rules to the point that we no longer consciously reflect on the reasons why we have certain attitudes in relation to others, or certain patterns of interpretation – sedimented in images we create of us and the others – to refer to people we construct as belonging to one grouping or another (see Elias [1976]2008: 22; Berger/Luckmann [1966]1991: 63ff.; Schütz/Luckmann 1973: ch. 4). These norms and rules can be contested, but can also gain plausibility, be regarded as legitimate, and become institutionalized (see Berger/Luckmann [1966]1991: 65ff.) so that they configure the collective memories negotiated and transmitted by different generations of families and communities. They become latent – but not less powerful – and shape the different worldviews and the knowledge that members of different groupings have for interpreting reality (ibid. 147ff.). One important component in the transmission of the collective memories of groupings is the interdependency between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that becomes more or less crystallized in images of us and images of others. These images – which Norbert Elias refers also as “memory images” (Elias 1989: 345) – reduce the overwhelming quality of experiences, as well as other symbolic dimensions, to certain functions:

> “knowledge mainly to the function of symbols as means of orientation, language mainly to their function as means of communication, thought mainly to their function as means of exploration” (Elias 1989: 345).

These images are reductions that entail both knowledge connected to experiences *in the past*, and the norms and rules learned in groupings and groups to talk about knowledge gained *in the present*. That is, they shape not only past experiences but also the process of remembering them in the present. In the terms of Norbert Elias ([1976]2008: especially 27ff.), these images of the self, images of us, and images of the others (i.e., self-, we- and they-images) are interdependent and contain each other:

> “[A] person’s we-image and we-ideal form as much part of a person’s self-image and self-ideal as the image and ideal of him- or herself as the unique person to which he or she refers as ‘I’” (Elias [1976]2008: 27).

For individuals born into certain groupings, some images of us and the others will be available to help them make sense of the world and to construct their own more or less individualized images of themselves, as well as the relation they establish with their sociohistorically constructed individual and collective ‘pasts’. Over time, certain groupings become increasingly relevant for people and for their experience of the world and can potentially become we-groups (see Elwert 1989; Elias [1976]2008: 27ff.). More fundamentally, our self-perceptions and our emotional involvement is intertwined with our we-groups. We-groups are powerful in orienting our actions through the establishment and development of norms and rules and in the construction and organization of our socially shared lifeworlds (see Gurwitsch 1962; Schütz [1932]1967, 1945). We see ourselves and are seen by others and act in the world as representatives of a we-group, or different we-groups and we-groupings, which become “a layer of the social habitus built very deeply and firmly into the personality structure of the individual” (see Elias [1987]2001: 209). We can experience a sense of pride through our participation in a we-group, which can be our family, for example, or groupings of people we meet later in life. Through participation in different groupings and we-groups, people explicitly learn certain we- and they-images and how to use them, which become part of their knowledge *at hand* (see Gurwitsch 1962: 57; see also Schütz 1953: 4ff.). They use this knowledge to construct themselves as belonging to one group or another, to one family or another, and eventually to construct and interpret their life stories as part of the life history of one family, group, local community, region – but not another. Understanding this is crucial for this study because it presupposes that when people talk about themselves and the others, they are not talking about 'individuals' or presenting an 'individual' life story, but rather interactively producing knowledge and presenting in concrete terms the sociohistorical power inequalities which affect the way in which certain groupings in specific figurations transmit their we- and they-images from one generation to another (see also Elias 1989: 342; 345ff.). This means, for example, that someone born in a family with a 'slave' background in Sudan can tell their story and the history of their family and their group without explicitly mentioning that the grouping in which they were born experienced enslavement in the figuration with more powerful groupings in the past (see ch. 4.4.3). They can more or less decide which specific phases of their collective history they will focus on when talking about themselves and the others. However, they cannot choose how others will perceive them, even if they can try to influence how they are perceived by others, e.g., to counter stigmatization processes. They cannot change which sociohistorical power inequalities members of previous generations of the grouping they belong – their ancestors – experienced in the past. Or that in the case of migration in contexts of collective physical violence, the threat of a violent death shapes perceptions of limited power chances in the present (see Worm 2019: 267ff.). This raises the question of the interdependencies between power chances in the present and changing relevancies in the presentation of belongings.

2.2.3 Changing relevancies of belonging and power chances

The themes to which people attach relevance when attempting to construct their individual and collective past in interview situations or other interactions are shaped by sociohistorical power inequalities. In other words, from all the experiences a person has lived through in their life and the experiences lived through by members of previous generations, only some will appear relevant to a person looking back on the past and talking about it. These relevancies are shaped, among other things, by the power chances that talking about certain things and not others – the thematization and dethematization of certain aspects of the past – bring to members of different groupings (see Rosenthal 2016b: 33). People can take the chance to "expand their scope of decisions" in different figurations with other individuals and groupings (see Elias [1939]2001: 52), using their stocks of knowledge which have been shaped by the unequal transmission of knowledge in societies. The belongings people emphasize when presenting themselves and the others are an outcome of socio-historical processes and power interdependencies. People learn certain rules and norms of presentation in the different groupings to which they belong. In other words, participation in groups and the transmission of the collective memories of the we-group are central components shaping the knowledge at hand available to people to talk about themselves and the others, to present themselves as part of broader (hi)stories, and to construct their belonging to one grouping or another. And this knowledge can be used by people to increase their power chances by contesting the constructions of belonging of others, or throwing doubt on different versions of the past presented by members of other groupings or even inside their own we-groups (see ch. 3). Such an understanding implies that the relevance of belonging to one or another we-group changes for a person, not only in specific interactions but also throughout their life, and in relation to the different interdependencies established with other groupings and individuals. If belonging to a family of 'slaves' or 'nobles' has been transmitted as a source of shame or pride in the family, this does not necessarily mean that the person will not have the opportunity to learn, through their participation in other groupings, to interpret this belonging in another way in other phase of their life. The same applies in the case of different generations in the same family or grouping. If certain members interpret their group belonging as a matter of shame, this can be reinterpreted by subsequent generations. Crucial for such reinterpretations is the knowledge regarding the use of we- and they-images that is transmitted through participation in different groupings. In other words, people must *biographically* experience these reinterpretations of the way they talk about themselves and the others as giving them the chance to participate in other groupings they would like to be part of, or enabling them and their we-groups to become more established. The increase in power chances is not only a matter of self-perception, but also a collective phenomenon, when emphasizing belonging to one specific grouping brings more power chances than mentioning another. And this is often also the result of internalizing the norms and rules of the we-group rather than a self-reflected action. That is, people have the power to decide how they present themselves in interactions. They might remember certain aspects of the history of their family and grouping and choose not to talk about them, or to present them in different ways. However, they have limited power to decide how they will be perceived by others, and they have no power to change the experiences they had in the past, such as being born in one grouping or another, or to change the experiences that previous generations of these groupings had in connection with certain belongings ascribed to them. For example, people may feel the need to distance themselves from the stigma of belonging to a family with slave status. Thus, they can talk about themselves and their family in different ways, without explicitly referring to certain belongings, or by dethematizing certain aspects of the past (see ch. 4.4.3). However, they cannot change the fact that their ancestors experienced enslavement and servitude in figurations with members of more established groupings, or that these power differentials shaped the collective familial past. Thus, when people talk about themselves and the others, they have the power to do it in different ways – they can feel the need to present themselves and the others in different forms – but they cannot change what they and the previous generations of the groupings they belong lived through or how they experienced it in the past. This leads to the need to clarify how processes of remembering shape constructions of belonging.

2.2.4 Constructions of belonging and processes of remembering

When people temporalize themselves by looking back on their socially constructed past (see Berger 1963: 54ff.; Berger/Luckmann 1991: 117, 120ff.) and interpret themselves in relation to the past of the groupings they feel they belong to, they rely on the stocks of knowledge to which they have access in the situation in which they are talking about themselves and the others.[6] In other words, the way people talk about themselves and the others – and the way they construct their belongings – is an outcome of the development of sociohistorical power inequalities and interdependencies that have shaped the unequal transmission of various forms of knowledge between groupings (see also Rosenthal [2005]2018: 161ff., especially 162). This means that people can change the way they talk about themselves, when they have the impression that in certain interactions it is more advantageous to thematize particular phases of their individual life history and not others, or a certain belonging to the detriment of others, or certain phases of the familial and collective past while "disengaging thematization" of others (Gurwitsch/Embree 1974: 37).[7] These different ways of looking back at the individual and collective past and talking about certain topics while avoiding others are interdependent with power inequalities between groupings in a figuration (see Rosenthal 2016b: 32). On the relation between constructions of belonging and thematization of the collective past, sociologists Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal (2023: 4) write:

---

[6] I use stocks of knowledge and knowledge at hand in the tradition of the sociology of phenomenological influence of Alfred Schütz ([1932]1967). Reality and knowledge are used in the tradition of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who "define 'reality' as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot 'wish them away')" and "'knowledge' as the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics" (Berger/Luckmann [1966]1991: 13).

[7] I use the terms thematization, disengaging thematization and dethematization in the tradition of Aron Gurwitsch (1964) and Gabriele Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 63). Gurwitsch discusses these terms especially in the paper "On Thematization", edited by Lester Embree and published posthumously (Gurwitsch/Embree 1974). See also the remarks by Rosenthal on Schütz's theory of relevance ([1995]2024: ch. 2.2) and Bogner/Rosenthal (2023: 4).

> "we need to look at the 'historicocultural' or collective circumstances in which the interviewees were active and were socialized and which shaped their stocks of knowledge, their experiences, and their biographical choices in the past and the present. In addition, we need to show which groupings dethematize or deny specific subject areas and historical events, and which groupings introduce them and talk about them."

Thus, it is possible to say that the different ways of looking back on the past, remembering certain experiences while avoiding the thematization of others, interpreting them in a specific way, and choosing whether or not to make them a part of the presented life and family (hi)stories are a matter of group belonging. This does not change the fact that when people thematize one part of the past and their relation with one specific we-group, other possible we-relations (see Elias 1989: 200; Schütz/Luckmann 1973: 61ff.) of belonging and their thematization remain in the background. In other words, they are dethematized but configure the background against which certain thematization needs – or power chances created by the thematization of certain topics and not others – become dominant in a particular interaction and in the construction of autobiographical presentations. This does not mean that what is dethematized is not powerful. On the contrary, some we- and they-images are transmitted from one generation to another in explicit relation to others that are not. This has consequences for the transmission of mother tongues or religious belonging, for example. And it does not mean they are no longer part of the stocks of knowledge at hand of people when they want to talk about themselves and the others in the present. They still shape the way people talk – or do not talk – about certain parts of their lives and the family past, or how they disengage thematization of certain parts of their collective history (see ch. 5.4). Thus, what is dethematized also shapes the family dialogue, for example, as the unspoken "has biographical significance and has to be imaginatively filled in to become comprehensible" (Pohn-Lauggas 2019: 3). This understanding implies that we cannot rely only on the explicit knowledge generated in interactions. It is necessary to consider the sociohistorical and biographical backgrounds that configure the emergence of certain thematization or dethematization needs, to be sensitized to the interdependence between the transmission of tacit and explicit forms of knowledge, and to consider that people construct their belongings based on speculations and fantasies about their individual and collective past (see ch. 5.4.3).

2.2.5 The transmission of we- and they-images in the context of collective violence and migration[8]

A central aspect of pursuing a social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach to we- and they-images in the context of migration is the processual character – in the sense of a socially constructed sequential embedment in temporality – of biographical constructions and sociohistorical phases, meaning that the different life courses and family histories of people show the transformations their we- and they-images go through in different phases of their individual, familial, and collective history and in different social figurations. Besides this, the intergenerational character of knowledge and memory transmission – the different ways members of the same family or grouping regard their individual and collective past and negotiate different versions (see Pohn-Lauggas 2019: 4) – often makes processes of transmission of we- and they-images a contested or contrastive matter. 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 memories and the transmission of experiences and meanings through genealogical 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 [1987]2001: 223f.).

Clearly, the existence and use of different we- and they-images by members of different groupings and within the same families and groupings are connected to sociohistorical power asymmetries across and between them, and to the transmission of knowledge between generations. To borrow the terms of Elias, the explanation of these power inequalities 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

---

[8] A previous version of this text was published as a chapter in the book "Transnational Biographies: Changing We-images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees" (see Cé Sangalli 2022: 123ff.).

> any of the characteristics possessed by the groups concerned independently of it" (Elias [1976]2008: 16).

Thus, in the analysis I present in this book, it is not a matter of determining who belongs to which group, or which groups are 'perpetrators' of violent acts and which are 'victims'. It is crucial to reconstruct in detail the complexities contained in biographies and in family dialogues – which must not be exclusively reduced to we- and they-images, as mentioned above in respect of the quality of memory images. More importantly, it is a matter of determining which *biographical* and *collective* functions these images have and how they change in different situations over time; in other words, what quality power interdependencies between people who self-define, or are defined by others, as 'Zurqa' ('Black'), 'African' or 'Arab', for example, have for members of these groupings, and how they shape the changing we- and they-images used in autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations. Thus, by reconstructing their historical and 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 and in previous generations of their families. 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 experiences. Among other components, it influences how people who have migrated from Sudan and their descendants remember and present their past experiences. And this is a central component in the constitution of participation chances in the so-called societies of arrival because it is relevant for:

a) the definition of which groups and groupings people want to be part of/can be part of and which they explicitly avoid (see ch. 4.3 and ch. 5.3),

b) their different and changing interpretations of their belonging to we-groups and groupings in various contexts and phases of their lives (see ch. 4.4), and

c) the processes of transmission of knowledge and the collective memories in different families, we-groups, and groupings (see ch. 5.4).

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 in certain phases of their lives and in different genealogical generations of families and groupings. Therefore, this study evaluates the we-, they-, and self-images presented by interviewees in the light of their past experiences and the sociohistorical power inequalities shaping their intergenerational transmission, instead of taking them at face-value in interactions and during observations in the present. Furthermore, I pursue the empirical questions:

> a) to what extent are the we- and they-images of members of different groupings reinforced or transformed by discourses prevailing in the society of arrival (Germany and Jordan); and
>
> b) how does this interact with the interviewees' current views on their collective and individual past.

The sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal writes about the relevance of the contemporary framings 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 2016b: 32).

Thus, the phenomenon of relevance as a biographical, situative and intergenerational variable applies to more or less all images and belongings. In this study, instead of taking the relevance of certain we- and they-images for granted, I empirically reconstruct how they became more or less relevant in various interviews and observations during fieldwork (see ch. 4.2 and ch. 5.2) and in the autobiographical constructions of people from Sudan, especially from Darfur, and their descendants living in Germany and Jordan (see ch. 4.4 and ch. 5.4).

2.3 Contributions of the study

This study combines a biographical approach with a social-constructivist sociology oriented toward transformations in power differentials shaping figurational interdependencies between groupings (see Bogner/Rosenthal 2023; Becker 2017; Pohn-Lauggas 2019; Worm 2019; Hinrichsen 2020; Schäfer 2021; Bahl 2021). This offered an empirically-grounded framework for the study of changing power chances in the case of Sudanese migrants and their descendants, and how they shape the way people talk about themselves, their experiences and the others. The main contribution of this study is the empirical demonstration that it is not sufficient to describe changing relevancies of belonging situationally (depending on power chances in different figurations in the present): it is also necessary to explain their sociogenesis and transformations in the sociohistorical long term (see ch. 3) and biographically (throughout the life of the same person; see ch. 4.4) in their interdependence with the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images (the transmission of knowledge and the collective memories of we-groups; see ch. 5.4). Besides this, on the basis of cases of people who experienced migration from Sudan, the study empirically demonstrates how some we-relations become more dominant than others and configure the background against which certain belongings become manifest on the discursive level. This means that power chances experienced in the present situation influence the way people look back on their past, and certain experiences become more relevant to the point that they become manifest in present interactions. In the cases analyzed in this study, this means determining how far dominant everyday discourses in the groupings and we-groups in which people participate in the diaspora shape their autobiographical we-, they- and self-presentations (see ch. 4.4 and ch. 5.4); or how experiences before migration and along the migration course, such as physical violence, were interpreted in the past and how they are remembered in the present when people from different regions of Sudan talk about them in relation to the collective histories of their groupings and home regions. They do not define what is relevant for them in the process of remembering *individually*, but they "assess correctly what the situation ought to be for them and then act accordingly" (Goffman 1974: 1f.; see also Rosenthal 2006). Empirically, this means it is necessary to reconstruct the *collective* and *biographical* relevancies of we- and they-images, and their role as components in the transmission of the collective memories of different groupings of Sudan, instead of assuming that certain belongings, such as being Sudanese, are relevant for all of them or had similar relevance for people in the past, or for different members of the same family and grouping (see Cé Sangalli 2022). The implications of this understanding are that we need to avoid defining sets of categories *a priori*, such as gender, class, and social age, for example, or assuming that they all have the same *situational* and *biographical* relevance for members of different groupings. Moreover, it is also necessary in the analysis to avoid projecting these categories retrospectively onto past power changes and experiences. Instead, it is crucial to empirically reconstruct which constructions of belonging become more or less relevant in different situations and different phases of the life of the same person and for members of different groupings *in relation to other possible we-relations* that configure the background from which the relation to one we-group becomes dominant or loses relevance. Only then it is possible to reconstruct the different power chances that presentations of belonging bring to members of different groupings and how they acquire different social and biographical functions (see Elias [1987]2001: 223f.). As I will show in the next chapters, this involves determining how far experiences of different forms of violence shape the transmission of group pride and we- and they-images inside families and we-groups (see ch. 4.4 and ch. 5.4). When it comes to the study of migration, this understanding is important because only by reconstructing the concrete contexts of development and transformation of these different perspectives it is possible to explain:

a) the participation processes of people who have experienced migration in the context of collective violence, and

b) the concrete power chances available to them for participation in the social constellations in which they live in the present.

By examining empirical cases of people who have experienced migration from Sudan, and the concrete experiences of people and their families, this study contributes to discussions on the predetermination of relevance by researcher when predefining a set of categories to be used in the analysis of 'subjective' experiences and processes of differentiation and boundary-making in the present (Barth 1969; Wimmer 2008, 2013). As I will discuss below, these empirically-determined contributions based on case studies of Sudanese living in the diaspora and their descendants were made possible by following specific principles in interpretive social research (see ch. 2.4).

1. Regarding the predetermination of a set of categories of analysis and the relevance of their interdependencies, such as gender, class, and race, the use of a method of data generation with an open question allowed for considering the interviewee's dominant relevancies in relation to other belongings, and how they became transformed throughout the interaction, in different interviews with the same person and for different members of the same family and grouping. This was crucial for considering certain social phenomena that have increasingly become far removed from sociological academic discussions and public discourses regarding migration in Sudan, for example, the way the prohibition of processes of enslavement upon the arrival of the British in the region influenced the thematization of slavery and slave status in different groupings (see ch. 3.5.1). While the participation of dominant British groupings led to marginalization of the topic in some groupings, it did not transform the norms and rules in all we-groups in the same way, especially in respect of how perceptions of the existence of an enslaved ancestor in the family shaped concrete power chances of migration or marriage (see ch. 4.4.3). In summary, we cannot retrospectively assume that current power inequalities are all based on racialized prejudice if we are to explain the changing relevancies of we- and they-images beyond power chances in the present (see Elias [1969]1983: 210ff.). Similarly, if we are to understand and explain how belonging to one grouping or another increasingly gained more plausibility for people *in relation to other possible belongings*, then we cannot assume that all categories of analysis are equally plausible or legitimate for people in their everyday lives, or that even if they become relevant in a present interaction they will remain relevant in the future. We need to ask why certain belongings become dominant in relation to others, i.e., to reconstruct the *quality of*

interdependencies and their sociohistorical development. The crucial aspect is to understand and explain the formation and transformation of interpretation patterns based on people's perspectives, how they change throughout their lives due to the experience of different power chances, and how some remain more or less powerful in shaping the way individuals and families negotiate how they look back on the past. In concrete terms, this means not assuming beforehand which belongings will be relevant in shaping power chances, based on the literature relating to this topic, or on our own interpretations of how power inequalities shape societies. Instead of assuming that a certain category of analysis will shape the life course of a person born in Darfur and their participation in different we-groups, I first looked into the sociohistorical context of the person's birth, the figurations (such as the family, for example) in which the person was born, and the person's interpretations regarding the circumstances and conditions they believe shaped their lives and led them to contest or transform these circumstances (see ch. 4.4 and ch. 5.4). By reconstructing the concrete ways in which power chances in certain constellations shape family and life courses, I avoided the assumption that categories predefined by the researchers – or more established in the literature – are always relevant or have the *same* relevance for people and different members of the same family and we-group throughout different phases of their lives and in previous generations. This approach to power inequalities was important in order to avoid the assumption that certain categories of analysis are always relevant or have unchanging relevance in the production of knowledge. Thus, by showing on the basis of empirical individual and familial cases how power transformations shape the migration courses of members of different groupings and their descendants, this study contributes to the discussion on the importance of being sensitized to *changing relevancies* of belonging in relation to different lived through experiences, their entanglements with the transmission of we- and they-images, and consequently the different stocks of knowledge at hand available to members of different groupings. This observation leads to the second contribution of the study.

2. With regard to the description of processes of differentiation in the present, a prominent field of studies is that of boundary-making (see Barth 1969; Wimmer 2008; 2013) and processes of doing and undoing of differences (see Brubaker 2015; Hirschauer 2021, 2023). One of the most influential studies in this field was written by anthropologist Fredrik Barth (1967; 1969; 2002) based on his work with people from Darfur and southern Sudan. This remains one of the most influential theories on ethnicity in the field. As Barth ([1994]2000: 13) noted, he privileged synchronic processes of boundary-making during his work in Sudan. This has led to criticism of Barth's ahistoricism and suggestions for overcoming it in empirical studies (see Vermeulen/Govers [1994]2000). Regarding his previous studies on Sudan, Barth identified the need to focus

> "on persons and interpersonal interaction […] the management of selves in the complex context of relationships, demands, values and ideas; the resultant experiences of self-value, and the embracements and rejections of symbols" (Barth [1994]2000: 21).

Because I was aware of this criticism, I focus on a sociohistorical reconstruction of power inequalities that shape *changing relevancies in constructions of they-, we- and self-presentations of belonging*. In other words, the changing relevance of (tribalized) ethnic belonging both in Sudan and in the diaspora *in relation to* other sociohistorical belongings (see ethnicization of biographies in ch. 4.3). More importantly, I consider how these belongings became more or less plausible for people in their everyday lives – their processes of *sociobiographical legitimation* – when looking back on their past and talking about their experiences. And similarly, I analyze how people contest or make use – Barth's "embracements and rejections of symbols"– of external ascriptions of belonging affecting themselves, their groupings, and their families, and which sociohistorical power transformations have led to one belonging being regarded as more or less plausible as an explanation for the loss or increase of their power chances. My study is based on an understanding of biographies as social constructs (see Fischer/Kohli 1987; Fischer-Rosenthal 2000; Rosenthal 1995) penetrated by power inequalities on the level of the transmission of knowledge (the interdependencies between we- and they-images and their transformation in images of the self), and in the terms of the mutual constitution of individuals and societies (Elias [1939]2001: 3ff.). In a social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach, this means not only considering peoples' perspectives and experiences of social phenomena, but also making a detailed sociohistorical reconstruction of how the *quality of interdependencies* between individuals and groupings changes. This focus is not so much on processes of differentiation and boundary-making as on how changing power asymmetries shape interdependencies. It means considering the perspective of those who live through social phenomena in their everyday life in their mutual constitution with others and society. More than processes of differentiation, it considers processes of the establishment of power interdependencies: there is no difference or boundary without the creation of interdependencies and peoples' experiences of them. How people learn to name these interdependencies and the intergenerationally transmitted knowledge at hand they have to make sense of them are a central part of the analysis of these constructions of belonging (see ch. 2.2.2). This also implies sensitization to a processual and temporal approach to belongings derived from the focus on biographical constructions of belonging instead of identities (see Fischer-Rosenthal 1995; Rosenthal 1997a: 21ff.; Brubaker/Cooper 2000; Calhoun 2003; Schultz 2010: 138f., 2022; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011, 2013, 2020). To understand how my empirical contributions were possible, I will next discuss which research principles and methods of data generation and analysis I used.

2.4 Research process and methodological approach

2.4.1 Methods of data generation

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that to investigate power transformations and how they shape the lives and family histories of members of different groupings it is necessary to use methods that:

a) consider the interpretive character of the way people make sense of their lifeworlds while being open to their changing relevancies,

b) explain how people construct themselves *in relation to* and *in interdependence with* others,

c) understand that the way people talk about themselves and the others does not necessarily correspond to their experiences in the past or to the experiences of previous generations of their families and we-groups, and

d) reconstruct social phenomena as processes that change over time, in space, and in the *dimension of symbols* (see Elias 1989: 200) learned by people in the groupings to which they belong.

For my study, I followed the principles of social interpretive research as discussed by Gabriele Rosenthal ([2005]2018: ch. 2) and based mainly on the work of Alfred Schütz (1962), Thomas Wilson (1970) and Christa Hoffmann-Riem (1980). I combined the use of biographical-narrative interviews as proposed by Fritz Schütze (1977, [2007]2016) and Gabriele Rosenthal ([2005]2018) in the tradition of a multi-method research design (Bogner/Rosenthal 2023: 7) that used – depending on access to the field – participant observation, group discussion, interviews with and between different family members, and a critical analysis of historical sources.

The open character of biographical-narrative interviews allowed my interviewees to set their own relevancies regarding their life story, and the history of their families and the groupings to which they felt they belonged. As suggested by Gabriele Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 139ff.) in accordance with Fritz Schütze (1977, [2007]2016), I started by asking the interviewees to tell me their whole life story and the history of their family. I did not define beforehand who were their families or which parts of their individual and collective past were more relevant for this study. This means I did not conduct interviews with a set of predefined questions, or with a specific interest in mind, and in the first phase of the interview I avoided asking 'why' questions. As far as possible, I tried to remain open to the relevancies of my interviewees and to the new or unexpected forms of knowledge that emerged in different interactions. In the subsequent phases of the interview, I asked questions to generate narrations following the order of the interviewee's presentation in the first phase. Toward the end of the interview, I asked more focused questions about certain topics (see Schütze 1983: 285ff.; Rosenthal [2005]2018: 139ff.). Asking narrative questions allowed me to get closer to the way people experienced certain situations in the past (see Schütze 1977: 1; Rosenthal [2005]2018: 135ff.). As will become clearer in my discussion of analytical procedures, the heuristic separation between the way people talk about their experiences in the present and how they experienced power inequalities in the past is a central part of this study. Sensitized to this heuristic separation and its methodological implications (see Rosenthal [1995]2024: ch. 6), I addressed the sociohistorical character of constructions of belonging through three main procedures developed in the course of the investigation:

> 1. In order to be able to reconstruct changes in relevancies on the level of *presentations* of belonging, I conducted more than one interview with the same person, in different contexts and with long periods of time between interviews when possible. This helped in reconstructing changing perceptions of legitimacy or contestation in the use of certain we- and they-images and views of past that became more or less dominant in different situations and phases of the life of the same person.
>
> 2. I conducted interviews with different members of the same family and grouping in order to reconstruct different perspectives on the collective past inside the same we-group in the present, i.e., different "slices or modes of knowing" to use the terms of Barney Glaser and Anselm Straus ([1967]2006: 68). This contrast between historical sources and perspectives helped in reconstructing which versions of the past and we- and they-images became more or less dominant in different generations of the same family and we-group/grouping.
>
> 3. Changing interviewers, including interviewees interested in conducting interviews, helped me to reconstruct how far this affected the presentations of belonging by interviewees. That is, how the different belongings of the interviewers shaped the framing of interactions.

The combination of interviews with participant observation and group discussion was defined empirically, from situation to situation. In contexts in which biographical-narrative interviews were not possible, I used ethnographic interviews, or changed to a group discussion when others joined the interaction, putting an end to the individual biographical-narrative interview. These setting transformations played a central role in the analysis of my data and gave insights into the transformation of presentations of belonging in the front and back regions of everyday life (see Goffman 1956: especially ch. 3). Participant observation gave me insights into power dynamics on a synchronic level and helped with the description of processes of differentiation and interdependencies between the use of we- and they-images in the present. In Germany, for example, I participated in demonstrations against the regime of Umar al-Bashir and met some delegates of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan. These experiences, which were registered in detailed observation memos (see Rosenthal [2005]2018: 81ff., 97ff.), were useful as evidence of the dominant relevancies of ethnic and regional belonging outside the interview context. They provided more differentiated perspectives on the conflicts in Sudan and their development, the way members of different groupings had different views of the past, and their skepticism regarding fellow Sudanese in the diaspora and members of the transitional government (see Cé Sangalli 2022: 125ff.). This was helpful in the process of saturating the empirically defined we- and they-images used in biographical-narrative interviews. In contrast to participant observations, biographical-narrative interviews were helpful for showing how the relevancies of these we- and they-images changed *biographically* from a diachronic perspective. As I will discuss below, this relied on the combination of different methods and on the degree of control used for testing empirically generated interpretations.

2.4.2 Methods of data analysis

An important methodological stance in the analysis of the material was the heuristic separation between the levels of *presentation* and *experience*, and how they co-produce each other, to borrow the terms of sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal ([1995]2024; [2005]2018: 166ff.). Alongside the notion of sensitization – as called for by Herbert Blumer (1954) – to how power inequalities shape stocks of knowledge and consequently the constructions of belonging presented by people in interviews and other situations, further reconstructive procedures of analysis were used. The processual character of belonging demanded the reconstruction of transformations and changing interdependencies, following the principle that interactions in interviews or in participant observation take place in sequences which are not random but follow the development of sociohistorical power inequalities. That is, people participating in interactions interpret situations and make sense of them to orient their subsequent temporalized actions. This was addressed by following the basic assumptions and principles of interpretive social research, such as the principles of communication, and an approach that is both interpretive and reconstructive (see Hoffmann-Riem 1980: 343ff.; Rosenthal [2005]2018: ch. 2). My approach was interpretive in the sense of showing how patterns of interpretation were shaped by the unequal transmission of knowledge between generations, how some interpretations gained more legitimacy in certain groupings to the point where they dominated discourses, and how they changed in different encounters with the same person or for members of the same family or grouping. Thus, one can say that people interpret discourses in a process that transforms them in everyday life (see Keller 2006: 232; 2011: 52). These biographical appropriations of everyday discourses that emerge in biographical narratives give important insights into different types of discourses (see Pohn-Lauggas 2016: 4ff.) and power figurations (see Bogner/Rosenthal 2017), and at the same time people's individualized power to act and interpret. My approach was reconstructive in the sense that other external sources (see ch. 3.2), apart from the interviews, were used to reconstruct the view that people had in the past of themselves and the others, and how the different figurations people lived in before arriving in Germany and in Jordan were formed and transformed. Central to this logic is the notion that the sequential order in which experiences took place in the past and are presented in the interview is important (see Oevermann *et al.* [1979]1987). As I will discuss in detail below, my interpretations of the empirical material were aided by participating in collective data analysis sessions, and by pursuing the steps for biographical case reconstructions developed by Gabriele Rosenthal:

> "1. Analysis of the biographical data (event data, including historical data) → preparation for step 3; 2. Thematic field analysis (structure of self-presentation; reconstruction of the narrated life story); 3. Reconstruction of the experienced life history; 4. Microanalysis of individual text segments (can be carried out at any point during the analysis); 5. Contrastive comparison of life history and life story; 6. Development of types and contrastive comparison of several cases" (Rosenthal [2005]2018: 168).

I will give examples to illustrate how following these analytical steps allowed me to pursue the entanglements between power transformations and constructions of belonging. The important point is that I formulated my research question regarding changing belongings only after concluding the case reconstructions.

1. The first step of the analysis – sequential analysis of the objective or biographical data in accordance with the suggestion of Ulrich Oevermann (see Oevermann/Allert/Konau 1980; Rosenthal [2005]2018: 168ff.) – consists in the heuristic separation of *presented life and family stories* and *lived-through life and family histories*. For this study, it is crucial to understand, for example, that the way people talk about the we-groups and groupings they belong to do not necessarily correspond to the way they experienced their belonging to these groupings and we-groups in the past, or how they experienced interdependencies with other members of their groups and groupings or between groupings. Thus, the first step consisted in separating data that is more or less independent from people's current interpretations. This means data concerning the collective histories of the region, the interviewees' groupings, families, and individuals that lived before them, and the organization of this data in chronological order. In this way, we can see the sociohistorical power inequalities that configured the constellation in which people were born and which shaped their subsequent life course. At this point, I was not interested in how people

experienced their belonging to a non-Arab grouping in the past, for example, but rather in the fact that even if people do not perceive themselves as belonging to a non-Arab grouping of Sudan, they and their families could have had this belonging ascribed to them by others in the past.

This step of analysis organizes the data independently from the relevancies of the interviewees, but rather in chronological order. This allowed me to reconstruct in the next step how presentations of belonging relate to other possible we-relations that remain in the background, or which topics are thematized or dethematized in the individual, familial and collective histories.

2. The second step of analysis consists in segmentation of the transcribed text of the interview, which follows specific rules of transcription (see Transcription Symbols). Based on a detailed transcription of textual and non-textual elements of the interaction, I carried out a text and thematic field analysis. In this I followed the principle developed by Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 175 ff.) based on Aron Gurwitsch's (1964) thematic field analysis, in combination with the methodological approach of Wolfram Fischer (1982) and the method of text analysis of Fritz Schütze (1983, [2007]2016). This step helps to scrutinize the power asymmetries – and norms and rules of thematization and dethematization – that people interactionally produce when talking about themselves, their experiences, and the others. In other words, the "social, institutional and group-specific rules, or the rules of different discourses" which "prescribe *what*, *how*, *when*, and in what contexts, may, or may not, be thematized" (Rosenthal [2005]2018: 165, emphasis in the original). At this point I am interested in which forms of belonging are thematized in the present, and the sequence in which their thematization becomes relevant throughout the interaction, as well as in relation to which other topics they are thematized or dethematized. Here it is crucial to reconstruct patterns of interpretation regarding certain experiences or certain phases of the familial and collective histories, as well as the way people present the dialogue in their families and we-groups concerning the past. Regarding constructions of belonging, it is particularly interesting to examine the "rules for the selection of what is thematized and what is dethematized" (Rosenthal [2005]2018: 63), which become clear in a further step.

3. In the third step of analysis, I reconstructed the experienced life history, or the way people experienced different power asymmetries in a specific sequence in the past (see Rosenthal [2005]2018: 181ff.). This means, for example, how they experienced their belonging to different groupings, their interdependencies with other family/group members and between groupings, and in which constellation some became dominant, i.e., their biographical significance in the past and its transformation. This presupposes that the way people talk about themselves and the we-groups and groupings they belong to in the present are shaped by power asymmetries experienced in the situation of remembering in the present, which differ from

people's experiences in the past. We cannot assume that a we-image as Fur, for example, used by an interviewee in the present, had the same meaning for this person in the past, or that the relevance of this belonging was similar in different phases in the life of the same person or for different members of the same family or grouping. Similarly, we cannot assume that certain interdependencies between we- and they-images in the present correspond to the way these interdependencies were experienced by people in the past. As I will show in detail in one empirical case, this step allowed me to reconstruct past experiences as much as possible, such as the experience of physical violence inside the family or we-group, and to see how the way these experiences are presented – in this case as gendered violence – can differ from the way they were experienced in the past, when the interviewee was only six years old (see ch. 5.4.3). This sequential reconstruction allowed me to show how certain interdependencies between we- and they-images emerged and developed, and how others lost relevance for the interviewees. In addition, this step gave me insights into the groupings in which people participated in the past, and how certain we- and they-images gained relevance during certain phases of their lives. For example, it enabled me to show in which figurations in the past a person experienced certain power asymmetries in the form of physical violence, and, more importantly, how this person interpreted these experiences at the time of living through them. As in the example mentioned, even if the concrete experiences of violence lived through in the past are presented in the interview in the broader context of gendered violence, this is a retrospective interpretation on the part of the interviewee, as this step of the analysis shows clearly that he experienced it in a different way when he was living through the sequential and protracted phase when his mother suffocated him until he passed out. This step allowed me to develop new interpretations regarding the relevancy of belonging to a grouping. It also served as preparation for the reconstruction of changing relevancies of belonging in the fifth step. That is, to *explain* why certain we-relations thematized in the present have become dominant, while others remain in the background, and why people distance themselves from their own experiences in the past, or those of previous genealogical generations within their families and groupings.

4. Before I go in detail about the fifth step, it is important to note that throughout the analytical process, I relied on a sequential microanalysis of the text, especially of those segments relevant to a more detailed reconstruction of belongings. This step was particularly useful for testing hypotheses, for example regarding belongings and concrete experiences of violence in the past, as it presupposes that case structures can be found in short textual passages which reveal the latent meaning and rules governing the structures of experience and presentation of the general case (see Oevermann *et al.* [1979]1987; Rosenthal [2005]2018: 185). It also presupposes that the we- and they-images used by people are manifestations of broader power

asymmetries in sociohistorical figurations (see Elias 1989: 341f.). This step enabled me to empirically test hypotheses developed in the second step regarding what was concretely experienced in the past, and how this is thematized or dethematized in the presentation. It helped me to see what remained between the lines and which forms of implicit knowledge were manifested in different ways (for example, in pauses, stuttering, etc.).

5. The fifth step of data analysis consists in a contrastive comparison between the levels of the *presented life story* and the *experienced life history* against the background of the familial and collective history. At this point, I sought possible explanations for differences between what interviewees experienced concretely in the past and how they talk about it today. For example, it can be that someone does not mention their experience of sexualized violence or downplays it in the present (see ch. 3.5.2 and ch. 5.4.3). It can also be that someone talks about the Arabs as perpetrators of violence in Darfur against the Africans even if this does not correspond to the experiences of physical violence lived through by their family members (see ch. 4.4.3). I am not only interested in showing how these we- and they-images are thematized in the present in interdependence with the topic 'perpetration of violence'. I am also interested in explaining the sociogenesis of present perspectives against the background of sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped the individual and familial life courses. For example, people may begin to understand themselves as belonging to a we-group of Zurqa (Blacks) during a certain phase of their life, and this belonging may then be transformed by experiencing participation in new groups or figurations. Based on their participation in other groups, people may learn to reinterpret the images they use to talk about their experiences, which helps to explain the increasing dominance of certain we-relations in the present and their processes of sociobiographical legitimation. At this point, it is important to show how certain we-images are a source of pride or of stigmatization, leading to participation in, or avoidance of, certain groups in the present (and consequently group cohesion). This step showed which we-relations remained in the background and were dethematized in the interview, and which rules governed the thematization and dethematization of certain parts of the individual and collective past. It showed which of my hypotheses regarding previous phases of a person's life and previous generations remained plausible after a detailed reconstruction of the case. In other words, it explained individual attitudes toward the past.

6. After finishing the case reconstructions, I began the construction of types, in connection with my research question regarding changing constructions of belonging in the course of migration from Sudan to Germany and to Jordan. For the sample in Germany, I established types based on the questions: a) how people change their constructions of belonging in the present; and b) how far dominant we- and they-images used in presentations of belonging correspond to the experiences people

lived through before and during their migration. I also considered how far the migrants' we- and they-images correspond to and are shaped by experiences they lived through in previous phases of their lives and by previous generations of their families (see ch. 4.5). For the sample in Jordan, I asked how far the we- and they-images used by the genealogical generation that experienced migration from Sudan continue to be relevant for the genealogical generation of Sudanese born in the diaspora, and which components – such as the concrete experiences family members lived through in the past – shape the transmission of we- and they-images in the we-group (in this case on the level of families) (see ch. 5.5). This led me to a typification of the thematization and dethematization of the family past and its interdependence with the components shaping the transmission of we- and they-images in families.

A last important remark on the process of analysis concerns the way hypotheses for the interpretation of cases are tested, validated, and refuted, i.e., the intersubjective verifiability of the interpretations (see Rosenthal [2005]2018: 87f.). The logic governing the development of interpretations and their testing on the basis of abduction is that the sequential experiences with the same interviewee or throughout the textual transcription of the interaction are used as empirical material for testing hypotheses and readings. The case interpretations are explained *in the case* and not through external analogies. For this, even speculations that remain open after interviews or observations, but which retain their explanatory power throughout empirical testing, must be considered (see ch. 5.4.3). This comes from the understanding that not only what is manifest in interactions and explicitly transmitted in the family dialogue is relevant when people talk about themselves and the others (see Rosenthal 2010a: Part 1; 2010b: 157; Pohn-Lauggas 2019: 3f.). The unspoken, in the form, for example, of certain phases of the collective past that are not explicitly transmitted, configure the background from which autobiographical constructions emerge. This means that what is dethematized is interdependent with what is thematized concerning the collective histories of the family or we-groups. An important part of this process of creating different possible readings during the analysis and testing their empirical plausibility is conducting several interviews with the same person and participating in groups for collective data analysis.

Collective data interpretation in analysis groups. My analysis of the empirical material was aided by group discussion under the supervision of sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen between January 2019 and January 2022. Central to this research approach is the inclusion of researchers from different backgrounds in the procedure of verifying and falsifying readings. I am indebted to my colleagues at the Center of Methods for their collective findings, especially for the discussions we had in connection with the research projects "Biographies of Migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and Germany" and "Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946". I also profited from the support of Maria Pohn-Lauggas in the field of image analysis (see Breckner/Liebhart/Pohn-Lauggas 2021; Breckner 2021), for instance in the case of posters calling for demonstrations against the regime of Umar al-Bashir in Sudan. This was useful for testing the relevance of presentations of violence and reconstructing different interpretations offered by people who saw these images in public spaces in Germany. I also enjoyed the support of colleagues in the research group led by sociologist Ulrike Schultz at Friedensau University. Even if the choices regarding the presentation of this analysis were mine, my decisions were aided by discussions in these two main research groups.

2.4.3 Development of the design of the study and sample

Sample. With regard to Sudanese migrants in Germany, especially from the region of Darfur, this study is based on 14 biographical-narrative interviews conducted by myself between October 2018 and July 2020. Due to the restrictions affecting travel – and fieldwork – during the Covid-19 pandemic (see ch. 5.2), 51 biographical interviews with Sudanese migrants and their descendants in Jordan were conducted between May 2019 and September 2022, either online by myself or in person by four field assistants. These latter interviews mainly took place in Amman, Jordan's capital, between June 2020 and April 2022. The total sample in Germany and Jordan was composed of interviews with 64 people, including interviews I conducted with people who did not succeed in their attempts to migrate from Sudan to Western Europe. Some interviews were conducted with the same person by different interviewers, in order to reconstruct, among other things, how changes in the interviewer shaped presentations (see ch. 2.4.2). Before introducing the interviewers, I will give more information about the people who participated in this study. All information about the participants in this study has been modified so that they cannot be identified. The interviewees were born between the 1950s and the early 2000s. Approximately fifty per cent of the interviewees came from Darfur, or were born in Khartoum or in the diaspora to families from Darfur. More than eighty percent were males. There are various reasons for this. One is that in the context of the history of Darfur, a region that has been shaped by processes of collective violence in recent decades (see ch. 3.5.2), it is possible to observe that women often support, and even expect, men to migrate (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 59). Other reasons are that women are less willing to risk migrating across the region, due to the dangerous routes available to members of marginalized groupings (see Ben Ze'ev/Gazit 2020: 5, 14), and that the sociopolitical conditions in Sudan hinder the migration of women, especially single women (Assal 2011: 8). The women in the sample in Germany, for example, came from more established families and, in contrast to many of the male interviewees, who often experienced massive physical violence during their migration course, they arrived in Germany by plane. The female interviewees in Jordan had mostly migrated with their husbands. I was aware that in the fields of refugee research and research on armed conflicts in general scholars tend to focus on the perspectives and experiences of men to the detriment of women (see El-Bushra/Piza Lopez 1994: 30; El-Bushra/Sahl 2005: 34ff.; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014). I therefore tried as much as possible to counter this tendency by including female interviewers to work on the cases of female interviewees (see ch. 3.5.1, ch. 3.5.2, ch. 5.4.2, and ch. 5.4.3), but in practice it was easier to get men to agree to be interviewed.

Out of the total number of interviews, all of which were evaluated globally according to the criteria suggested by Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 81ff.), I reconstructed three cases on the level of individual biographies based on three biographical-narrative interviews conducted in Germany (see ch. 4.4), and two cases on the level of families based on six biographical interviews conducted in Jordan (see ch. 5.4). After the first interviews, I did a global analysis of the material based on written memos, which showed the dominant relevancies of ethnic and regional belongings (see ch. 4.2). I selected further interviewees using the criteria of minimal and maximal contrast for theoretical sampling developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss ([1967]2006: ch. 3, especially 55ff.; see also Rosenthal [2005]2018: 83ff.). Besides these criteria, the contrast between 'Sudanese born in Sudan' and 'Sudanese born in the diaspora' was used for the selection of interviewees in Jordan, as will become clear below.

Table 1. Sample (n total=64)

	Darfur	Other Regions	Women	Men	Author's Interviews	Assistants' Interviews
Germany	7	7	2	12	14	0
Jordan	32	19	9	42	2	49

I also conducted several follow-up interviews – online and face-to-face – with interviewees, and in some cases also with their family members, between February 2019 and December 2023 and I have remained in contact with some of them up to the time of writing.

Interviewers. Except for the first interview, I conducted all the face-to-face interviews in Germany 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. Many interviewees were aware of his belonging, even if they did not explicitly thematize it in the interviews. Mahadi left Sudan against the background of persecution during the regime of Umar al-Bashir in connection with his political activities. I am indebted to him for his support, and for the time he spent with me discussing the findings that emerged during fieldwork. These discussions were important for refining the initial research question and first sample, which focused on constructions of collective belonging of people from Sudan living in Germany. After the first interviews, it became clear that ethnicized (tribal) we- and they- images and regional belonging to Darfur were dominant in autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations of interviewees, especially among those who experienced physical violence or in whose families and we-groups experiences of physical violence had been ethnicized in the past (see Cé Sangalli 2022). An important decision regarding how to proceed in the conducting of interviews was to change interviewers in order to test how the belongings ascribed to the interviewers shaped the framings of the interviews and constructions of belonging of the interviewees. The table below shows the interviewers who contributed to this study, and belongings that played a role in shaping the autobiographical presentations.

Table 2. Interviewers

Interviewer	*Place of birth and present-day national belonging(s)*	*Ascribed ethnicity in place of birth*
Lucas (male)	b. 1988 in Southern Brazil (Brazilian and Italian)	Syrian and Italian family ('white' Arab Brazilian)
Mahadi (male)	b. 1983 in Khartoum, Sudan (Sudanese and German)	Northern Arab family, partially from Darfur
Ahmed (male)	b. 1972 in Albira, West Bank (German)	Arab Palestinian family
Hala (female)	b. 1992 in Amman, Jordan (Jordanian)	Arab Palestinian family
Isaac (male)	b. 1991 in Amman, Jordan (Sudanese)	Masalit and Zaghawa families from Darfur/Arab family from Palestine
Abubakar (male)	b. 1998 in Baghdad, Iraq (Sudanese)	Beni Amir Arab family from Gadaref region
Ali (male)	b. 1969 in Southern Darfur, Sudan (Sudanese)	Zaghawa family from Darfur

The ways in which different privileges enjoyed by the interviewers shaped the interactions and presentations of belonging are discussed in detail on the basis of concrete case examples in other chapters (see ch. 4.2 and ch. 5.2). For now, it is sufficient to say that being perceived as a non-German and a migrant facilitated field access for me in Germany, while being perceived as an academic hindered some interviews, as did in some cases the perception of partnering with a member of an Arab Sudanese grouping in Germany (see ch. 4.2). There were non-negligible restrictions in field access in the context of speculations regarding my involvement and that of other interviewers with secret services (see ch. 4.2 and ch. 5.2). This skepticism appeared in interviews in Germany and in Jordan with Sudanese and non-Sudanese interviewees. The fact that most interviewers were men, apart from Hala Budeir, who conducted interviews with Sudanese in Jordan, shaped the thematization of certain topics, such as experiences of sexualized violence. However, this did not hinder all interviewees from thematizing this topic with me or with other interviewees (see the case of the Hassan family in ch. 3.5.2, ch. 4.2, and ch. 5.4.3).

Language, translation, and transcription of interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic. The interviews conducted in Arabic in Germany were translated into English and German for me by Mahadi Ahmed. The we- and they-images presented in the interviews were mainly expressed in Arabic and not in other Darfurian languages, such as Fur and Daju. In many cases, the Arabic terms were used by interviewees when talking with people who spoke their mother tongue. For most of them, Arabic was perceived as the dominant language in the figuration in Sudan. This means that interviews were conducted mainly in the language of the dominant groupings in Sudan. In Germany I worked alongside a translator who was regarded as belonging to the Arabs of riverain Sudan (see ch. 4.3). This was a framing that I had always to consider in the analysis of the empirical material. Most of the people who helped to transcribe the interviews and to translate them from Arabic into English and German had Arabic as their mother tongue. In a study of the power chances of members of different groupings in Sudan, this is an important observation, showing that the production of knowledge is shaped by a language that many of the interviewees, especially those from Darfur, do not regard as their mother tongue. While not speaking the mother tongue of the interviewees was a major limitation for me, I nevertheless tried to counter this tendency by explicitly asking them how they would refer to certain we- and they-images in their mother tongue(s), and to focus on oral traditions and biographical narratives as important sources of knowledge production (see Falola 2022: ch. 3). It is important to consider that experiences of migration and life in the diaspora are often influenced by multilingual autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations in everyday life. Thus, recurring to stocks of knowledge shaped by different languages can be seen as a central component in the construction of life and family histories of such people. The ability of the interviewees to switch between different languages can be seen as a resource developed by living in multilingual lifeworlds, which shapes their experiences and processes of remembering, especially in the diaspora.

Effects of stories of violence and development of engagement. Most of the interviewees in the sample had experienced physical violence themselves, including torture, participated in armed groups, or witnessed the perpetration of physical violence against people close to them. The impacts of this became clear in the situation of interview. After the interviews I conducted in Germany or after considering the interviews conducted in Jordan, I spent time discussing them with Mahadi Ahmed, Isaac Hamid and Abubakar Nasr, the interviewers in Jordan (see ch. 5.2). We exchanged impressions regarding the interviews and came up with ways to keep in touch with the interviewees when possible. In Germany, I accompanied some people to professional psychologists or centers specialized in providing professional assistance to victims of persecution and torture. In the interview setting, I made the limitations of my professional training clear as a way of managing expectations regarding how I could assist interviewees. I tried as much as possible to keep a channel open for interviewees to communicate with me throughout the research process and subsequently. When possible and if people asked for it, I contacted institutions and legal groups in charge of collecting testimonies to be used in the prosecution of Umar al-Bashir and his supporters at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Some interviewees regarded the procedures at this court as politically motivated, so that they changed their minds and decided not to collaborate with this institution. I myself was in regular contact with a professional therapist trained in trauma therapy who gave me advice regarding how to behave during the interviews and helped me to deal with the impact certain stories had on me. This was crucial in reflecting on my position as a listener to life stories shaped by detailed narrations of the perpetration of different forms of violence.

Development of the contrastive comparison between Germany and Jordan. The dominant relevancies of ethnic and regional belongings in the autobiographical presentations of Sudanese interviewees – especially Darfurians – were relatively clear after the first interviews and a global analysis based on memos (see ch. 4.2). Sensitized to these relevancies and based on the criteria of minimal and maximal contrast for theoretical sampling (Glaser/Strauss [1967]2006: ch. 3), I conducted further interviews with people belonging to different ethnic (tribal) groupings and regions of Sudan, in order to reconstruct how far these belongings were relevant for them. I did not use Sudanese nationality as a selection criterion for inclusion in the sample. This allowed me to interview people belonging to nomadic groupings who had a more transnational lifestyle, and others who were born in Darfur but grew up in Chad and are Chadian citizens (in this case, who see themselves as belonging to a Darfurian family when in Chad, but who are regarded by Darfurians as Chadians).

I also interviewed people who belonged to ethnic groupings that are not inside the legal territory of the Republic of the Sudan and took into consideration that certain regions and the people living in them, such as Darfur, were separated by national borders relatively recently (see ch. 3.5.1). In addition, fieldwork in Jordan allowed the inclusion of people who were born in the diaspora in Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan, and who never lived for long periods in Sudan but who are regarded as Sudanese citizens or regard themselves as belonging to ethnic groupings from what is today the Republic of the Sudan. This avoided a focus on national belonging in the development of the sample, while at the same time it took into account the interviewees' dominant relevancies of ethnicized (tribal) belonging, as suggested in other studies relating to Sudan (see Schultz 2015: 158). As suggested by sociologist Ulrike Schultz (2015: 158) in her study on belongings among South Sudanese in the diaspora, I focused on contradictions and shifting relevancies of belonging in different interviews with the same person and family, in order to reverse the process of participating in the construction of ethnicized (tribal) belongings and to ensure that other belongings were also made visible. I reconstructed the changing relevancies of belonging from a figurational and biographical standpoint, in the light of the observation that "ethnic belonging is a complex taxonomic system with multiple, sometimes overlapping, belongings" and that "to understand individual parts of this system, the other components of the system must be kept in mind" (Schultz 2015: 163). In other words, it is necessary to be sensitized to the dominance of certain belongings, while at the same time avoiding the risk of further strengthening a tribal perspective. I tried to avoid following only ethnicized (tribal) criteria in the development of the sample, by conducting further interviews with open biographical-narrative questions independently of ethnic belonging. At the same time, I concretely reconstructed sociohistorical power asymmetries inside and across groupings, such as interdependencies based on ascriptions of status in the context of collective histories of slavery and servitude or social hierarchization. I analyzed these interviews to test the first theoretical findings regarding the interdependencies between ethnicized we- and they-images and the relevance of regional belonging. And I kept in mind the background of other possible we-relations that were not dominant in the interactions. Based on the relevancies of the interviewees, and the we- and they-images they presented, I was sensitized to their awareness of belonging to one of two groupings: the 'Zurqa' ('Blacks') or the 'Arabs'. These we- and they-images were presented in a polarized way, in the sense that the Zurqa, or so-called non-Arab groupings, especially from Darfur, such as the Daju, Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit (see El-Tom 2009a: 85), often appeared as victims of physical or other forms of violence perpetrated by the Arabs (see also de Waal 2005: 199, 2015; Sharkey 2008: 27; Hassan/Ray 2009: 19). It is crucial to mention that the they-image of Zurqa – which can be translated as 'Blacks' into English (Sudanese Arabic: *lit.* blue) – can acquire very pejorative meanings, depending on who uses it and how, i.e., depending on the quality of the interdependencies established by people (see ch. 3.5.2). However, it was the increasing use of this stigmatizing term as a we-image for transforming power balances in favor of outsider groupings in the figuration in Sudan, especially Darfur, that made it so interesting in the interviews (see ch. 4.2). Sensitized to these ethnicized images, I looked into the dominant relevancies of regional belonging in the presentations, and the quality of its interdependence with ethnicized (tribal) images. Thus, I considered the processes of biographical emplacement (Becker 2019: ch. 4) that interviewees constructed with regard to certain regions or more localized communities, and which they- and we-images they used in this respect. This led to a further differentiation between groupings *from* Darfur and groupings *from* Sudan in a marked demonstration of the relevance of sociohistorically constructed origins. For those who constructed a belonging to Sudan, often those living in the so-called riverain regions of the country, this belonging often remained implicit in the interviews. For interviewees born in Darfur and other marginalized regions of the country, it was important to make their local belonging clear. The components that explain this will be discussed later. It is important to mention that I focused on the region of Darfur, despite interviewing people from other sociohistorically marginalized regions of Sudan, often shaped by collective physical violence, such as South Kordofan, the Blue Nile, Eastern Sudan and what is present-day South Sudan, due to the variation of the collective histories of groupings living in these regions. This might suggest that the life and family histories of people from these regions are less important: on the contrary, the global analysis of interviews with people from these regions shows clearly how processes of collective physical violence have shaped power chances, families, and life courses. This points to the need for further studies that reconstruct in detail how contrasting views of the past are relevant in shaping constructions of belonging. By examining their belonging to ethnicized groupings and regions, I was able to establish three broad groupings in the figuration in Sudan based on the dominant relevancies of my interviewees – especially Darfurians – when looking back on their past and talking about their experiences: a grouping of non-Arab Zurqa (Blacks) from Darfur, a grouping of Arabs from Darfur, and a broad grouping of Arabs from Sudan. These groupings do not include non-Arabs from other regions, such as South Kordofan or Blue Nile. Very rapidly, it became clear to me that the interdependencies between these groupings in the figuration of present-day Sudanese society were connected, among other things, to experiences of collective violence, and that they underwent transformations when people migrated. This led me to look into how processes of collective violence affected members of different groupings. It also became important to reconstruct in detail how the members of these groupings presented their we-relations. In the light of these findings, I developed a more differentiated definition of violence, as the biographical we-, they- and self-presentations seemed to be shaped, among other components, by the *different forms of violence* experienced by members of different groupings and families. This led me to examine how *physical* violence, in the sense of bodily harm that threatens the life of people (see Popitz [1986]2017: 27), and different forms of participation in the perpetration or experience of acts of violence, shaped the way people talked about themselves and the others. Based on these findings, I adapted the research question to include the way in which different experiences of (physical) violence have shaped the transmission of we- and they-images; for example, in interviews with members of the Zurqa, 'Arabs' were always the perpetrators and 'Africans' the victims of violence. Sensitized to these differences following interviews in Germany with migrants who had first sought refuge in Arabic-speaking societies, such as Jordan, and only after that in Germany, I decided to conduct further interviews with Sudanese living in Jordan to establish a comparison. It is important to note that the comparison between migrants from Sudan in Germany and Jordan emerged empirically in the course of earlier fieldwork for a project in Jordan and through the biographies of interviewees in Germany (see the case of Atifa Yousif in ch. 3.5.2). It is also important to note that some people who were interviewed in Jordan have since migrated to Germany (see ch. 5.4.2).

The fieldwork in Jordan had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and face-to-face interviews were not possible. I addressed this problem by using online interviews and mobilizing interviewees to open up the field in Jordan (see Bahl/Rosenthal 2021; Rosenthal 2022b: 14f.). This allowed some interviewees to participate in the research by choosing whom to include in the sample, or to interview members of their family. Phone calls allowed me to discuss with them how to proceed in the development of the sample, and to learn from their experiences in the field. In other words, I was able to include their perspectives in the production of knowledge via phone discussions. I was guided by their relevancies in deciding who to include in the sample, and who should contact and conduct interviews in each grouping (see ch. 5.2). This allowed the participation of interviewers who belong to groupings that are not regarded as Arabs in Sudan in the research process. The fact that migration from Sudan to Jordan and other countries in the Middle East has been taking place on a larger scale and for a longer period than to Germany (see Abusharaf 1997; Murphy *et al.* 2016) made it possible to investigate other aspects of the research question, such as the transmission of we- and they-images among different genealogical generations of Sudanese families. This allowed me to include in the sample people who were born in the diaspora (see ch. 5.4).

Moreover, the interviews in Jordan provided material for comparison with the interviews conducted in Germany. In the terms of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss ([1967]2006: 69), "different slices of data are seen as tests of each other, not as different modes of knowing that must be explained and integrated theoretically".

While Jordan is a country in which old-established groupings regard themselves and their nation as Arabs in the present, a belonging often denied to the Sudanese (see ch. 5.3), in Germany the old-established groupings often use prejudiced they-images of Arabs and Muslims and regard all Sudanese migrants as Blacks and Africans, something many of them contested (see ch. 4.3). As I will discuss in the empirical chapters, for the interviewees their different belongings were important in the ascription of responsibility for violence in Sudan and the division of groupings into 'perpetrators' and 'victims', based on interpretations of the conflict in their home regions (see Cé Sangalli 2022). The comparison between constructions of belonging in Jordan, a society dominated by a grouping that see themselves as Arab, with those in Germany, where members of the dominating grouping do not regard themselves as Arabs, allowed me to refine the empirically grounded theory, especially by examining the "diversity of modes of knowing" (Glaser/Strauss [1967]2006: 69) regarding interdependencies between the empirically determined we- and they-images of the migrants. This research approach played a central role in determining the findings of the study, and consequently in the contribution it makes to *understanding* and *explaining* changing relevancies of belonging in concrete cases of migration from Sudan, against the background of power transformations that become manifest in different forms of collective (physical) violence. Before turning to the sociohistorical development of power inequalities in figurations in present-day Sudan, I will summarize some of the consequences that the discussion presented in this chapter has for the following chapters.

2.5 Summary

The discussions in this chapter are important for considering the concrete changing power balances, the escalation and de-escalation of power differentials that have the potential to become physical violence, and processes of migration that take place against this background. These components summarize the sociohistorical and power-centered notion of belonging discussed above (ch. 2.2).

1. The notion that different groupings have different power chances means that members of certain groupings can act with physical violence against members of other groupings or members of their own groups and families. With regard to collective (physical) violence between different groupings, it is important in the context of Sudan, especially Darfur, that certain groupings were able to pursue the extermination of entire families or groups whose belongings were defined by those with more power. Among other things, this was possible through the creation of different interdependencies between we- and they-images and the use of different discourses to legitimize actions. An outcome of these power inequalities is that various forms

of violence have affected members of different groupings in very different ways throughout history, as I will show in the following chapters.

2. Members of different groupings have different stocks of knowledge when looking back on their past and the experiences they, their we-groups and previous generations of their families and groupings have lived through, including violence and migration. This means that they use different we- and they-images to talk about these experiences in the present, and to interpret their past in respect of participating in different groupings in Sudan and in the diaspora. These versions and views of the sociohistorically constructed past can be contested or gain sociobiographical legitimacy in the changing figurations between different groupings. The formation and transformation of stocks of knowledge is interdependent with the development of sociohistorical power inequalities (ch. 3).

3. Members of different groupings have different sociohistorical power chances, ranging from the chance of survival in situations of physical violence, for example, to opportunities to leave situations of forced or coerced work. They have different power chances to transmit their collective histories and collective memories – in the form of we- and they-images – as some are more threatened by acts of physical violence than others. Similarly, they have different chances for escaping threats to their lives, which includes their chances of migration to escape from constellations that put their life and the life of those around them at risk.

4. The unequal transmission of explicit knowledge shapes the different we- and they-images at hand in the present for members of different groupings to talk about themselves and the others, and to participate in the societies in which they live. This means that members of certain groupings might construct others as perpetrators and avoid contact with them, for example. This is a central component of processes of participation in so-called arrival societies, such as Germany and Jordan (ch. 4 and ch. 5). Moreover, the explicit we- and they-images transmitted to people living in the diaspora by previous generations shapes their ability to construct their belonging to groupings that their ancestors belonged to in the past. Consequently, it shapes the explicit images people have – or lack – in the present for interpreting their life stories as part of broader familial and collective histories. Members of some groupings do not have the explicit knowledge necessary to understand their more or less established life situations against the sociohistorical power inequalities previous generations of their groupings lived through in the past.

5. Belonging to one or another grouping can become politicized in certain contexts, especially when power asymmetries lead to different forms of physical violence. In these contexts, it is possible that ethnicized perceptions of belonging or the ascription of religious belonging can be used on a discursive level as a justification or legitimation for the perpetration of physical violence against certain groupings. Such an understanding is crucial in the case of Sudan, as I will show, because

processes of ethnicization – processes in which certain ethnic groupings become dominant – are interdependent with the ethnicization of biographies (see ch. 4.3). In such contexts, as shown in the next chapter, we can talk of ethnopolitical groupings or we-groups, especially when more powerful groupings can use the state apparatus and institutions to persecute and exterminate other groupings, defined by them in ethnic or religious terms in dominant public discourses.

Belonging to a particular grouping can become trivialized to the point we no longer actively reflect on it. But this is not so in situations where members of more established groupings use this belonging to justify the perpetration of acts of violence. This is crucial in the case of Darfur, where processes of collective physical violence have often been connected to attacks in which members of certain groupings shout, for example, ‘we want to get rid of all Zurqa’. The interdependencies between these we- and they-images, and the way they are used in autobiographical they-, we-, and self-presentations, will become clear in the following chapters. In the next chapter, I will turn to the sociohistorical formation of power chances of groupings living in two different figurations in what is today Sudan. This will help to show that power chances are not purely a result of current constellations, and to avoid the risk of a ‘sociological retreat into the present’ (Elias 1987).

3 The development of ethnopolitical figurations in Darfur and Sudan

3.1 Preliminary remarks

In the previous chapter, I presented the theoretical framework of the study and discussed the methodological approach used to reconstruct the experiences that interviewees from Sudan, especially from Darfur, and their families lived through in the past, and the way they talk about them in the present. In this chapter, I will look into the sociogenesis of the dominant we- and they-images that I came across in interviews, situations of participant observation, and other sources of information about the past. From the standpoint of figurational sociology and based on the interviews generated in this study, I will discuss an empirically based interpretation of the formation of two overlapping figurations in what is regarded in the present by interviewees as Sudan. Through a reconstruction of the development of sociohistorical power inequalities in these figurations and based on interviewees' contrastive interpretations of the past, I will show how certain versions of the past have become dominant among certain groupings, and even been institutionalized, while others are contested. The chapter starts with remarks on the constitution and development of different groupings and figurations (ch. 3.2). Then, based on the dominant interpretations of their individual and collective past presented by interviewees, I introduce what I call the Nile figuration (ch. 3.3) and the Marra figuration (ch. 3.4). After that, I discuss how more powerful groupings from the Nile figuration were able to expand into Darfur by the end of the nineteenth century (ch. 3.5). Subsequently, I discuss the perception that so-called Arab groupings from Darfur have recently been gaining power in the Nile figuration, which is seen by some interviewees as one of the causes for the escalation of warfare in Sudan since 2023 (ch. 3.6).

I will focus in this chapter on the long-term processes in which certain versions of the past gained legitimacy among certain groupings and became contested among others. This gives an insight into the changing character of the past as a sociohistorical construction. Moreover, it shows the interrelations between views of the past and processes of remembering, and how the presentation of different versions of their collective histories brings various power chances for members of different groupings from Sudan. The chapter concludes with a summary of components to which I was sensitized when reconstructing the concrete power chances created by the presentation of changing belongings. These are interrelated with the power asymmetries that shaped the experiences of members of different families and groupings in different phases of their collective histories (ch. 3.7).

3.2 Insights into the constitution of figurations and groupings

The development of sociohistorical power inequalities has put certain groupings and groups in powerful positions in the present. These sociohistorical developments configure the background of the they-, we- and self-images used by people and families when they talk about their experiences and those of previous generations. From a sociological standpoint, people make use of different versions of the past to situate themselves and their action sociohistorically in different groupings. In Sudan, some of these groupings became increasingly politicized in the course of time, to the point, as I will show, where we can refer to them as ethnopolitical groupings. This has affected the power chances available to members of certain groupings, in the different regions of Sudan where they were born, and in the countries to which they have migrated. The reconstruction of the development of these sociohistorical power asymmetries will help to explain how different stocks of knowledge were developed in the past. In the interviews and participant observations conducted for this study, people and their families constructed their collective belongings and talked about the past differently, because, among other things, they had different power chances and lived through different experiences in the past. People find that the way they talk about themselves and their collective histories affects their power chances in the societies where they live. We need to bear in mind, following Norbert Elias and his idea of processual sociology, that power interdependencies that favor one grouping rather than another are neither controllable nor teleological. On the contrary, in a long-term perspective they are uncontrollable (see Elias 1978: 68f., [1981]2008). In other words, power inequalities favoring one grouping during a certain sociohistorical phase may be transformed in favor of another grouping, i.e., the development of sociohistorical power inequalities is neither unidirectional nor definitive. Nevertheless, Elias assumes a very general long-term trend toward a global multi-polar world-figuration, and within nation-states toward a relative equalization of power chances between established and outsider groupings. But among the main reasons for this global diagnosis is the unplanned and incalculable nature of social processes. First, I will make some preliminary remarks concerning the reconstruction of the collective past and how I was guided by interviewees' relevancies in this study, while at the same time reconstructing broader sociohistorical processes that interviewees might not have been aware of during our interactions.

Definitions of regions and groupings following interviewees' relevancies. To avoid focusing only on the present-day we-images as Darfurian or Sudanese used by the interviewees, I contrasted them with archeological evidence for the existence of different societies in regions where groupings established themselves. Here it is important not to take material evidence, such as a certain style of pottery or urban planning, as indicative of the existence and function of a we-image in the past. However, it gives an idea of the different forms of settlement – and nomadic and semi-nomadic livelihoods, very important in this context – that developed in the past. I also contrasted the interviewees' presentations with a critical analysis of archival documents written by foreigners (see Browne 1799; al-Tunisi [1845]2018; Nachtigal 1879–1889; Felkin 1886; MacMichael [1921]2011; see also Abusharaf 2021: 36ff.), and other sources, such as court proceedings, personal diaries, and the diverse and changing views of the past of different family or grouping members. To avoid projecting my own relevancies, I reconstructed familial and local histories in order to understand which we- and they-images people used when constructing their life stories in relation to broader familial, collective, and regional histories. This has important methodological implications, as I did not rely only on the interviewees' relevancies, but also reconstructed different versions of the past and the relevancies that come with them. From a sociological standpoint, this puts the focus on how certain views of the past are legitimated or contested by members of different families and groupings, rather than on establishing a definitive or accurate historical version. Besides avoiding an essentializing notion of individual, familial, and collective histories, this concentration on changing versions and sources helped me to empirically determine two main figurations, with a focus on the collective histories of Darfurians, whose power interdependencies are entangled with figurations in other regions, such as present-day Chad, Libya, South Sudan and Egypt. The first figuration, the Nile figuration as I call it, is formed by groupings – nomadic or not – along the Nile Valley, from the Mediterranean coast down to present-day Upper Nile, and Uganda. These societies have been interdependent for centuries, through the establishment of trade routes, and, more importantly, the exchange of people, their families, and their we- and they-images, through different processes, such as enslavement, commerce, or migration. The second figuration, the Marra figuration, as I call it, includes different groupings that have lived in the past, and others that still live today, in the region that approximately covers the Marra mountains in present-day Darfur, the lake Chad basin in present-day southern Chad, and parts of present-day northern South Sudan and Central African Republic.

From a long-term perspective, it is important to note that ecological climates, a central component for the establishment and survival of human populations in these regions, were transformed substantially, often through human action. For example, the Marra Mountains in present-day Darfur have provided protection from attacks by foreigners and neighbors in the past, and from air strikes by the central government in the twenty-first century (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.2). The Nile Valley allowed the settlement of certain groupings and the development of agricultural techniques in an otherwise arid region. The Nile River facilitated the incursion of groupings close to the Mediterranean into more southerly parts of the African continent and vice-versa. This geographical background led, on the one hand, to the promotion of commerce, and, on the other, to different forms of 'foreign' occupation, violence, servitude, and enslavement. Certainly, we cannot assume that these geographical settings remained unchanged over time, or that present-day societies in these regions correspond to those of the past. Intensive processes of migration, intermarriage and enslavement have shaped these societies for centuries. Present-day Sudan is situated at a crossroads between the Middle East, Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa south of the Sahara. It is plausible that groupings in these regions have historically formed very diverse families and communities, despite the dominant everyday discourses in the present that tend to present an essentialist idea of Arabs and clear genealogies of families 'originally' from the Arabian Peninsula (see the case of the Nasr family in ch. 5.4.2). Crucial for the establishment of continuity between the images used in the present and those used in the past are the processes of remembering, and how different we- and they-images have been transmitted, or not transmitted, in families and groupings.

This raises another question: how did groupings living in these regions in the past regard themselves? Were the current notions of belonging to Darfur, to Sudan or to other regions equally significant in the past? More importantly, can we speak of the 'same' groupings living in these regions, even if they use the 'same' they- and we-images today as in the past?

As mentioned above, most of the interviewees in this study come from the region of present-day Darfur (see ch. 2.4.3). For this reason, this chapter focuses on the figuration of present-day Darfur, or Marra figuration, *in relation to* the figuration that developed along the Nile Valley, or Nile figuration. To explain how the Republic of the Sudan and Darfur came to be powerful elements of sociopolitical self-definitions in the present, we must address another question that emerged while I was analyzing the empirical material: how were these regions and the groupings living in them self-defined and defined by others in the past? In the group discussion, interviews and participant observations conducted in this study, people used they-, we- and self-images to talk about the regions and groupings they felt they belonged and to establish their relations with other groupings and places. From our present perspective, the habitualization and institutionalization of these images gives the false impression that these regions and groupings have always been similar, or that groupings in the past used these same we-images. It is possible that at least some of the interviewees are indeed descended from – or are socially constructed as descendants of – people who lived in a certain region for many genealogical generations in the past, and that they use the same we-images as their ancestors did, whether as Arabs or Fur. However, even if these we-images could be shown to be linguistically congruent, we must not assume that they are semantically congruent, i.e., that they had the same meaning or biographical and collective functions for the members of previous generations in the family or we-group. Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that the they-images that emerged in interdependence with these we-images refer to the same groupings in the present and in the past, or that these interdependencies have the same qualities as those in the past. Put bluntly, it is possible that those who defined themselves as Arabs in the past would not recognize their descendants as Arabs in the present, for example. Or that self-definition as an Arab in the past was a reason for stigmatization rather than pride, as is the case today under certain circumstances. Images and terms, such as ‘slaves’, are in this context polysemic. Their use in the present to refer to one or another grouping cannot be taken as an immediate correspondence to experiences in the past associated with these images.

Taking into account the challenges of an archeology of differences (see Jones 1997, especially ch. 2; McCollough/Edwards 2007) and the social construction of the past (see Bond/Gilliam 1994), we can try to reconstruct: a) potential meanings that we- and they-images had in certain sociohistorical constellations in various societies, and b) which concrete power chances were available to members of different groupings, in relation to c) the power interdependencies between individuals and groupings in the past (see Elias [1969]1983: 211f.). Upon the discovery of new sources, archeological or historical documents, we can modify or discard these sociohistorical interpretations. Thus, we must admit a certain degree of speculation in the reconstruction of the past, which is an important component of a sociology of memory and processes of remembering: people must live and act in societies and fill the gaps regarding the experiences of previous generations that were not explicitly transmitted. And they do this, like researchers, through speculations regarding their 'origins' and 'ancestors'. In other words, speculations and fantasies about the collective and familial past are a central component of the social construction of reality and people's everyday actions, and thus a central concern of sociological studies. These speculations are confirmed or transformed when people – and social scientists – find new sources of information about the past that are regarded as legitimate, which brings us to the next topic.

Processes of contestation and legitimation of versions of the past and their sources. This sociological study focuses on how different versions of the past are presented by people and negotiated in their families and the groups and groupings to which they belong. It pursues this focus by showing the processes through which they gain biographical and intergenerational legitimacy; in other words, how they become more or less plausible for people in their everyday lives and how this is part of processes of transformation of relevancies. This will become clear in the following chapters. I will show which interpretations of the past were sufficiently powerful among the members of different groupings to be transmitted in families and we-groups (see ch. 5.4), and which sources of information about their individual and collective past were available to members of different groupings. I will also show which power chances different groupings had for learning about themselves and their we-groups. This means that in certain groupings oral tradition and family history have more legitimacy than archeological evidence, for example, or a text written by an Arab or Western European author in the nineteenth century. If someone has learned a specific version of the past inside their family and uses this particular interpretation to guide their present actions, then I have treated this version as sociologically relevant for this study. I have compared oral traditions with information from other sources to reconstruct the power asymmetries that shaped them, and the power asymmetries in the present that lead to some sources being regarded with more or less legitimacy by one grouping and other sources by another. For example, if someone believes that their family ancestor was a close companion to an important religious figure during the seventh century, and this belief shapes their concrete actions in the present, then we must assume this is a social phenomenon shaping their present power chances and their migration course in the region, even if they have no personal connection with this ancestor.

This raises the question of which versions of the past – and we- and they-images that come with them – are powerful enough to reach the present independently from lived-through biographical experiences, i.e., experiences concretely lived through by individuals or by the immediately preceding genealogical generations in their families. We must always assume that the versions of the past of less powerful groupings in particular sociohistorical figurations have fewer chances of being explicitly transmitted, especially regarding families or groups who have been partially or completely exterminated, or who have learned to hide their belonging, such as those we retrospectively interpret today as LGBTQIA+ groupings in Sudan (see Berridge 2023). Often, historical research in respect of Darfur and Sudan focuses on the military accomplishments of certain groupings, or the political accomplishments of powerful men who negotiated peace or started wars, while oral traditions often focus on the genealogies of 'royal' or 'noble' families and clans. This produces versions of the past in which less powerful groupings, such as 'slaves' or women and children, are marginalized. Having a powerful position within a grouping is important in terms of the transmission of its collective history. This applies even to those who are unable to leave biological descendants, such as so-called eunuchs who were enslaved and experienced physical violence, but who enjoyed a fair amount of influence at court (al-Tunisi [1845]2018: 135) and who caused their groupings to be recorded in written sources by foreigners. However, while more marginalized groupings might disappear from versions of the past dominant among established groupings, this does not mean that their descendants do not form a significant part of societies in the present. But it means that their we- and they-images – and their versions of the past – most probably were not explicitly transmitted or remain dethematized and stigmatized in the present. During this study, I was confronted with such situations during analysis of the empirical material, as entire villages or large parts of the families of interviewees had been exterminated in attacks, or they looked back on their family past with shame because they thought their ancestors were 'uncivilized' and 'primitive', so that they had no interest in the history of their families and groupings. I tried to counter the tendency to focus on the history of more powerful groupings in two main ways: 1. by making detailed empirical case reconstructions of the life and family histories of 'ordinary' people and their everyday relevancies (see ch. 4 and ch. 5); and 2. by relying on speculations regarding the power chances available in the past to members of different groupings, where we know from other sources (such as archival documents or archeological evidence) that they existed but whose versions of the past were not explicitly transmitted, or which completely disappeared. I will illustrate this methodological stance in the reconstruction of diverse versions of the past with an empirical example from an autobiographical presentation.

Together with Mahadi Ahmed, himself from Sudan (see ch. 2.4 and ch. 4.2), I conducted a biographical-narrative interview in Germany in May 2019 with **Halid Hasan** (born in 1969 in the region of Gezira, riverain Sudan). When I asked Halid to tell me his life story and the history of his family, he replied: "which version would you like to hear? I can tell you the one that pleases you the most." I asked him to tell me the version he would like me to hear. Initially, Halid did not thematize the physical violence he experienced in his childhood while working for an elderly man. The version of his past that included references to this physical violence and other topics co-present with it emerged only in the course of our interaction, when I explicitly asked about certain phases of his life: "when he [the elderly man, L.C.S.] was angry, he took me by my arms and hit me on the wall." Initially, Halid does not tell how processes of collective violence shaped his life course and his family history. He presents himself proudly as Muslim and Arab. Later, he changes his positive initial presentation and talks about experiencing many conflicts in the Muslim groups he was part of in Sudan, and being denied participation in many others. This points to the fact that there are different perspectives and definitions of what is a Muslim and Arab in Sudan, and that presenting oneself as such does not necessarily bring more power chances. One must be regarded by others as being in a legitimately powerful position. On one occasion, Halid had to leave the city because, according to his version of the story, he accused the Iman three times of being a 'pederast'. The interview with Halid and his exchanges with Mahadi Ahmed, who translated the interview from Arabic into English, suggest that his present homophobic views are connected with sexualized experiences with other men that he himself lived through in Sudan. Even if these experiences are impossible to reconstruct, the interview with him gives insights into topics that are difficult for him to talk about in the interaction with us when looking back at his collective past and the history of Sudan. During another interaction with Mahadi on the phone, Halid openly thematized Arab 'superiority' and suggested other groupings in Sudan are 'backward' and 'slaves', presumably a perspective he was hesitant about sharing in an interaction at which I was present. Similarly, in the interview with me, he avoided talking about accusations made against him of having perpetrated violence in Sudan. We know from other sources that Sudanese living in the same city as him in Germany, especially those from Darfur, accuse Halid of being a member of the Janjawiid in Sudan, a militia that gained power during the 1990s and perpetrated acts of physical violence in Darfur. This led to unsuccessful attempts by Darfurians to kill Halid in Germany. In our interview, Halid says that he belongs to the Batahin Arabs of riverain Sudan. For him, it was important to construct himself as belonging to this we-grouping, and to tell us of his 'path to discovery' as a Muslim. Now, what does the interview with Halid, the way he looks back on the past, and the problems he has had with other Muslim Arabs in Sudan and non-Arab Darfurians in the diaspora, tell us about the legitimation of different versions of the past?

> 1. Halid's initial presentation in the interview shows he is aware that there are topics he can thematize to present himself in one light or another to us and to the others that remain in the background of his presentation. In other words, he can construct himself and a version of his collective past that legitimizes – or at least makes more plausible – his presentation to me and Mahadi, who in this interaction represents a more established Arab Muslim from riverain Sudan (i.e., a grouping to which Halid was denied belonging in Sudan, despite regarding himself as one of them).
>
> 2. Halid's experience of being accused of belonging to the Janjawiid and of having committed war crimes in Sudan shows that this is a relevant issue in the diaspora for other Sudanese, who, even if they cannot prove their accusations, ascribe a belonging to him and regard this ascription as a legitimation for physical violence.

The use of different versions of the past to justify different we- and they-images is not exclusive to Halid's case. On the contrary, it shapes all interactions in the context of this study. What is crucial here is that even if accusations or ascriptions of belonging to one grouping or another are false, they are regarded as plausible and legitimate in the light of the interpretation of the past that is dominant in the particular grouping and as far as they have gained biographical legitimacy for these people. These legitimized versions of the past may then be translated into concrete action. From a sociological standpoint, my research interest lies in examining how these different versions of the past gain legitimacy or are contested by members of different groupings, rather than establishing whether they are 'objectively' legitimate. Thus, sensitized to power asymmetries in the colonial and foreign production of knowledge, I used historical sources, such as archeological evidence, court proceedings, symbolic representations of the past (such as maps and other images), and historical texts produced by foreigners, in order to contrast them with the *presentations of the past* I came across in interviews and during observations. I also critically contrasted these documents with modern scientific literature on Sudan. My aim was to reconstruct as far as possible how the concrete power chances available to members of different groupings in various figurations have changed over time and which power asymmetries have shaped the production and legitimation of various versions of the past.

Sociogenesis of we- and they-images in Sudan. A central aspect of we- and they-images is that they are not used alone or in essentializing ways (i.e., they change over time, interactions, generations). Thus, the quality of the interdependencies between we- and they-images established by people is more important for this study than separate or intersecting categories of analysis. For example, the use of a self-definition as Arab is reconstructed *in relation to* a definition of others as *Sudanii* and its sociohistorical meanings. More importantly, it is crucial to see these interdependencies against the background of changing power balances in sociohistorical figurations, and against the background of the contrastive collective memories of groupings. In other words, these interdependencies change *constantly* not only between people and groupings but also throughout the life of the same person and for different generations of the same grouping, community or family. I will again use the case of Halid as an example. In the present, and in the interaction with me and Mahadi, who himself is regarded as an Arab Muslim from Sudan, it was important for Halid, as already pointed out, when looking back on his past, to present himself and the grouping he belongs to as Arab and Muslim. His belonging to the gendered notion of man was dethematized, or the possible association of his 'tribe' with a broader grouping that in the past was spoken of in racialized they-images, and presented in colonial sources as being among the "cruel slave-traders" in Sudan (see Scottish Geographical Magazine 1899: 71). Similarly, when talking to us, Halid did not thematize any potential belonging of his ancestors to marginalized or low-status groupings, in particular slaves, people who may have increasingly regarded themselves as Arabs and Muslims, but who historically had been forcibly assimilated into more powerful families and groupings. In other words, Halid can concretely disentangle himself from this sociohistorical association in the interaction with us, partly because I did not have sufficient knowledge at the time of the interview to ask more about this phase of the collective history of his we-grouping, while Mahadi felt this was not a relevant topic to be discussed in the interaction. However, even if we can retrospectively ascribe belonging to these groupings to Halid, we cannot assume that they saw themselves as Muslim or Arab in the past, or that Hamid's ancestors would regard him as such. And here it is important to understand that any reconstruction of the power chances available to members of different groupings in the past and of the sociogenesis of relevancies of different images in the past comes with a certain degree of speculation. From the standpoint of a sociology of processes and historical sociology, it is not useful to seek a clear point in the past when self-definition as an Arab became a source of pride, or defining oneself as a Muslim and being regarded as such became crucial for avoiding physical violence (e.g., to avoid being regarded as enslaveable by others). And this is so because there was not a clear point when this became relevant for *all* members of *all* groupings in this figuration. From a processual perspective, it is evident that relevancies change because they are entangled with power interdependencies, which in themselves are always in transformation. However, there is a clear limitation to the we- and they-images that can become relevant for people to use under certain circumstances. What limits their use is explicit knowledge concerning them, and whether this knowledge was transmitted inside the we-groups. If Halid had not explicitly learned about his belonging to the Batahin Arabs through his participation in a group or grouping, then he would not have learned how to construct himself using this we-image. As shown above (see ch. 2.2.5), a central component of power chances and constructions of belonging is the process of explicit transmission of we- and they-images within the we-group. If Halid had been born in a family belonging to a grouping defined in the past as slaves or in a group with similar status, but was raised as the son of a man regarded as noble, then he would not have enough explicit knowledge to present himself as belonging to a grouping of slave descendants, and to claim, for example, the right to reparations or measures to equalize power asymmetries in the present. Similarly, if Halid was not socialized into a discourse with dominant images of 'we Muslims' as opposed to the others, then he cannot construct his autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations using these images. On the other hand, he may not have any explicit knowledge about the history of his family as slaves, but other people may have such knowledge or believe that it is so, and may be aware of the possibility of accusing someone of belonging to a grouping they do not *de facto* belong to as a way of increasing their own concrete power chances. This means that processes of legitimation and contestation of these we- and they-images are sociohistorically constructed. They rely on different versions of the past and are shaped by processes of remembering in the present, as well as the different quality of interdependencies established between we- and they-images. Moreover, these relevancies are developed against the background of different stocks of knowledge transmitted in different groupings throughout history, and the collective histories of different groupings. This means that some groupings benefitted from sociohistorical power chances that others did not. For example, someone born in a region of Sudan that was not affected by collective violence in the past might have attended a Quranic school, learned to read in Arabic, and benefitted from being perceived as a legitimate Muslim, to the extent this became a central component of the person's own self-image. Besides the sociohistorical processes of transmission, legitimation, and contestation of knowledge, there are also sociohistorical power inequalities that configured different regions of Sudan and that still shape the very different power chances available in the present to members of different groupings. At the same time, it is important to note that there were certain power inequalities, and images associated with them, that were not transmitted – or lost relevance – in the course of history. And even if they are not readily available in the present to be used by people, this does not necessarily mean that the lived-through experiences of previous generations – and the power inequalities related to them – were not tacitly transmitted. Not knowing about the experiences of previous generations, or not having certain we- and they-images at hand to construct oneself, does not mean that these sociohistorical power inequalities do not contribute to shaping life and family courses in the present. On the contrary, this lack of explicit knowledge about the previous generations of families and groupings can play a central role in shaping the current marginalized position of groupings and families in the present (see ch. 5.4.3). I will next briefly introduce the we- and they-images used by interviewees when talking about the groupings living today in Darfur and Sudan, before discussing their collective histories.

They- and we-images of 'Darfur' and 'Sudan' in the figuration with Arabs and Europeans in the past. Let us begin with the we- and they-images of Darfur and Sudan used in the interviews in this study. This will help to introduce the two main figurations which are the focus of this chapter. These two we- and they-images are powerful in the present, as they are used in the constructions of belonging of the interviewees. For those who regard themselves as Darfurians and Sudanese, they are not mutually exclusive; rather, there are certain interdependencies between them. For example, some interviewees from Darfur believe they are excluded from participation in Sudanese institutions. They say about state institutions in Sudan: "I am Sudanese, too, it is my right" (see ch. 4.4.3). From a figurational perspective, these images share the fact that they were first used – like the they-image of Arabs – by members of groupings who did not come from these regions. They were external descriptors that eventually became we-images. The way these regions and the people living in them have been sociohistorically constructed in texts in Arabic, French, German and English homogenizes the peoples and their histories before the arrival of these more powerful foreigners (see Browne 1799; al-Tunisi [1845]2018; Nachtigal 1879–1889; Felkin 1886; MacMichael [1921]2011). And it was done mainly using they-images in the context of processes of enslavement, religious expansion, and colonization. What is crucial is that the collective histories of the arrival of so-called Arab, Ottoman and European outsiders in these regions are entangled with processes of the expansion of the religions they regarded as their own (Coptic Greeks), the expansion of commerce, the enslavement of people, and different 'civilizational projects' (Ottoman and British imperialism and Egyptian expansionism along the Nile). These processes often entailed feelings of superiority on the part of the more powerful groupings, who organized military expeditions or proselytist missions to bring their 'culture' to so-called local communities, families, and groupings, as well as to expand the frontiers of enslavement – following their own conception of the term – and commercial ties. Retrospectively, we could define these processes as the consequence of racialized and supremacist ideologies. Knowledge produced about the others – and the resulting we- and they-images – is sociohistorically interdependent with the development of power inequalities. However, we cannot assume it was always like that, or that it was like that for *all* groupings in *all* regions. To avoid retrospective use of the dominant categories of analysis in the present and current interpretations, we must reconstruct in detail the interviewees' personal stories and their embedment in particular familial and regional histories (i.e., the collective background from which the more or less individualized presentations of life stories emerge). In the course of these long-term processes, they-images that had a pejorative connotation, and which were often associated with feelings of superiority (which are registered in detail in accounts of foreigners who traveled through the region; see Abusharaf 2021: ch. 2), were increasingly adopted as a we-image by the groupings to which they were used to refer. And these polysemic we-images increasingly changed their meanings, as I will show, to the point that they became a source of pride and were used to bind together people who regarded themselves as Darfurians, for example, in relation to other regions of Sudan (see ch. 3.5.2). The crucial aspect of these we- and they-images is that there are collective memories of sociohistorical power inequalities that hover in the background of their use in the present. Since their initial recorded use in texts, these images have been used by members of more established groupings, first Arabs and Muslims and later Europeans, to establish what they saw as their superiority over the *Sudanii*. And these socially constructed ascriptions were often used by more established groupings of foreigners to legitimize the perpetration of physical violence. In summary, in the collective histories of these regions, some groupings have been sociohistorically constructed as being less powerful. Only recently have these images been reinterpreted in public everyday discourses in Sudan, and in the diaspora, as a source of pride and as an incentive for collective action by a we-grouping that claims more participation in central power. An empirical example of these transformations can be seen in the interrelation between the we- and they-images of Arabs and non-Arabs or Africans used by the interviewees in the present.

The figuration between Arab Muslims and groupings who do not regard themselves as Arab in Sudan. Many interviewees referred to the groupings living in the riverain regions in the north of Sudan as Arabs and Muslims. For them, these groupings often appeared as the most powerful in the country. Especially for non-Arab interviewees, Arabs and Muslims are perceived as the most privileged, mainly in terms of participation in governmental institutions and having higher positions in the armed forces, or as benefitting more from relations with the British and the Egyptians. This homogenized they-image hides important status interdependencies inside and across groupings, as well as gendered roles, and various Muslim denominations. Not all groupings who live in the riverain region understand themselves as Arabs, even if they are Muslims and/or speak Arabic. Also, not all can be regarded as established groupings. Moreover, there are groupings who perceive themselves as Arabs, but do not speak Arabic. The important point is that in the dominant everyday discourses among Sudanese living in the diaspora in Germany and in Jordan, the northern region of riverain Sudan is associated with privileged groupings of Muslim Arabs. As we will see below, there are high chances that the ancestors of these groupings were living in the region or in nearby areas before the reception of Arabic and Islam. The homogenized perceptions and accusations of privilege cover up the fact that for centuries non-Arab groupings, such as more established Fur families, had considerable power chances, greater than those of more marginalized Arab families. And importantly, a significant number of non-Arab groupings from Darfur – as well as certain groupings of Arabs from riverain Sudan – came to regard themselves as Muslims, even if they were not regarded by more established Muslims as 'proper' Muslims. Among other things, this was related to the continuation of practices that were regarded as pagan by more established Muslim groupings. In other words, there were no definitive positive associations attached to one belonging or another, but rather a situational negotiation with members of different groupings throughout history (see Prunier 2005: 4ff.). What we observe here is that power interdependencies tend to be shaped by the denial of belonging. That is, some groupings contest the fact that other groupings are *de facto* Arabs. The dominant trend in the construction of belonging is claiming to be Arab, rather than claiming belonging to other groupings, such as Blacks or Africans.

In a similar way, groupings living in present-day South Sudan are often referred to as Africans or non-Arabs and are often presented as pagans or Christians by those belonging to groupings from northern Sudan. This is similar for groupings living in the Nuba Mountains, in present-day South Kordofan. Some interviewees from riverain Arab groupings describe them as 'backward', 'slaves', 'primitives', and a range of other they-images that establish them as inferior in relation to those who self-define as Arabs (see also Prunier 2005: 10). Like Darfurians in general, as I will discuss below, they are presented by members of more established groupings as if they were 'less than human'. And this they-image is used to legitimize everyday discourses that deny them leading positions in the modern state bureaucracy. However, in contrast to Darfurians, some groupings from these regions have been targeted in the past by groupings who regard themselves as Darfurians in the present (ibid.). And, as mentioned above, certain well established non-Arab families from Darfur have enjoyed greater participation in the central government in the past than more marginalized groupings from the riverain region. This means that belonging to Darfur does not automatically mean marginalization, as everyday discourses in Darfur, especially after the early 2000s, might suggest.

In the interviews, people living in Darfur are referred to either as members of non-Arab groupings or as Arabs. The Arabs are not associated with nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles, as they often are in the literature (ibid.: 7). The relationship between Arabs and nomadism seems to belong to the past, although there are still nomadic groupings living in Darfur: in the context of political institutions that favor sedentarized groupings, this could be a reason for marginalization (see Young/Ismail

2019). The Arabs often appear as constituting the militias of the Janjawiid.[9] *Jiin* is Arabic for spirit, and a possible English translation of Janjawiid is 'spirits on horseback' (see Prunier 2005: xvi; Flint/de Waal 2008: 54f.; El-Tom 2009a: 90ff.). The Janjawiid are often depicted by interviewees as 'violent', 'uncivilized', and 'bandits', who take any chance to gain power, even if this involves committing crimes, murdering people, or destroying entire villages. Interestingly, despite the claims made by the central government of Bashir, which supported them, that they were conducting a religious war (Arabic: *jihad*), in some interviews the Janjawiid were described as possessed by demons or bad spirits (Arabic: *jinn*). What is significant here is that the accounts of acts of physical violence in Darfur in the recent past often involve references to the Janjawiid and their ethnicized (tribal) belongings. However, in several interviews there is also a religious dimension that overlaps with ethnic belonging, not necessarily referring to the perpetrators as Muslims, but rather as possessed by spirits. This pejorative association suggests that the Arabs from Darfur are to a certain extent less Muslim than other Arabs of Sudan. In the they-image used by members of more established groupings, especially in riverain Sudan, Darfurians are homogenized as 'Furs' (Arabic: *furawi*). Even though the Fur are the numerical majority in the region, and the Fur language had the status of a lingua franca among ruling 'elites' in the past, there are other ethnic groupings in Darfur, such as the Masalit, Zaghawa, Daju, Tama, Rizayqat, and others (see Mosely Lesch 1998: 15ff.; Prunier 2005: 4ff.). They are often referred to in terms similar to those mentioned above.

In summary, on the level of dominant everyday discourses among Sudanese communities living in the diaspora today, it is possible to say that in the figuration in the present-day Republic of the Sudan, riverain groupings are perceived – and often see themselves, too – as being in a position of superiority in relation to Darfurians and groupings living in what is present-day South Sudan. And this superiority is bound up with a sense of being Arab and Muslim. Darfurians tend to be seen as Muslims by the riverain Arabs (even if of a lower status than their own), while the South Sudanese are seen mainly as pagans and sometimes as Christians. These hierarchical interdependencies overlap with different and changing belongings, especially various statuses inside and across groupings.

Even if these we- and they-images reduce complexities and project a perception of stasis that does not stand up to empirical scrutiny, they remain powerful in orienting peoples' actions toward each other, and they relate certain tribes to specific lands, as I will show below. These dominant everyday discourses among Sudanese communities favor more established groupings, and make them powerful in present-day societies. However, there are other components that help to keep the powerful grouping of Muslims and Arabs settled along the Nile Valley in a position that gives them sway over members of more marginalized groupings in present-day Darfur, South Kordofan, parts of Eastern Sudan, and South Sudan – even if the outbreak of war in 2023 put in check sociohistorically established positions along the Nile. The sociogenesis of these power asymmetries will become clearer by considering the Marra figuration and the Nile figuration, and their different phases of development. The separation into different phases is merely analytical, and the criteria I used for this were the significant power transformations that eventually led to changes in the position of more established groupings in these figurations. Empirically, these phases overlap, and it is not so important to determine when one phase starts and another ends, as power asymmetries are always in transformation. This form of analysis gives us a long-term perspective, which helps us to avoid "the retreat of Sociologists into the present" (Elias 1987: 223), and the essentialization of life stories and collective histories, by focusing on processes of power transformation.

---

[9] See The European Sudanese Public Affairs Council, n.d.. "'A word that means everything and nothing': The 'Janjaweed' in Darfur". Available at: http://www.espac.org/darfur/the-janweed.asp#23 [Accessed on May 23, 2023].

3.3 The Nile figuration

This sociohistorical figuration can be summarized as being based on the increasing authority of established Arabic-speaking groupings settled in the region of the Nile delta or lower Nile, close to the Mediterranean Sea in present-day Egypt, over those in the upper Nile regions, who often did not regard Arabic as their mother tongue. In other words, it shows the increasing power chances brought by self-declaring as Arab, speaking certain forms of the Arabic language, and being regarded as legitimate Muslims in relation to those regarded as pagans or who had pre-Islamic elements in their practices. Claiming to be descended from the prophet Mohammed or a close relative of the prophet was a source of legitimacy, even among groupings that did not necessarily regard themselves as Arabs. Being able to trace their origin to what would become the Arabian Peninsula gave these people more power in their dealings with groupings settled in the regions of the second and fourth cataracts of the Nile River in present-day Sudan. These in turn took the power chances that arose from their contact with groupings from the lower Nile. They learned Arabic and established themselves in more powerful positions in relation to those in the upper regions of the Nile, in present-day South Sudan and northern Uganda. Groupings from the upper Nile posed serious threats to societies established in the middle Nile, who resisted the occupation of their lands. However, these societies and their armies were sustained by enslaved people from regions where communities were raided in the interior of the African continent, especially those without centralized authorities. From here people were sold into enslavement in the regions of the lower and middle Nile. Even today, the power concentrated in the hands of established Arabic-speaking groupings in Cairo is superior to the control exerted by Arabic-speaking groupings in Khartoum and groupings in Juba over other groupings in this Nile figuration. This becomes clear in the reconstruction of different phases of the Nile figuration, as I will show below.

The pre-Islamic phase in Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt and Nubia (c. 300 BC–641 AD). From this period, there are historical documents from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt that register the presence of groupings referred to as Arabs in Greek (Ἄραψ) and Coptic, who lived in different regions, including the Sinai (see Honigman 2002: 45, 52; Macdonald 2009: 281, 290ff.). In these sources, Arabs refers to groupings with certain occupations, such as merchants (Macdonald 2009: 283f.). It seems that there was no unified they-image of Arabs during this phase, nor any record of Arab used as a we-image. In present-day Jordan and the Arabian Peninsula, the term Arab is used to allude to various heterogenous groupings, and especially people with a more or less nomadic way of life, similar to the they-image of Bedouins (see especially Honigman 2002: 45f.; Macdonald 2009: 290ff.; Macdonald *et al.* 2015). It is unclear whether Arabic was used in the past to refer to a form of proto-Arabic (Macdonald 2009: 303ff.). Regarding self-definitions as Arab in this period, there are very few available sources, and it is uncertain what it meant for those using it as a self-image (ibid.: 285). Coptic and Greek references to Arabs in Ptolemaic Egypt – before the emergence of Islam and the rise to power of Arabic-speaking groupings – show that Arab was not a we-image for one specific grouping, nor a suggestion of common ancestry. As a they-image that predates Islam, it shows the essentializing character of the current use of Arab as a we-image by the interviewees in this study. They claim it refers to the fact that they are descendants of the prophet Mohammed, or of someone close to him. Also important in these definitions of who is Arab is the association with certain occupations or social positions, especially people involved in trade, or regarded as such. Thus, being Arab is not necessarily an ethnicized notion but can also refer to a certain social status. How far this was regarded as a positive ascription in certain sociohistorical figurations becomes clear in the following historical phases. In the context of the interviews for this study, the power chances gained by self-definition as Arab come from emphasizing the interdependence between one's own grouping and groupings regarded as pagans or Christians. In other words, from the current perspective of the interviewees, Arabs belong to Islam, which is not surprising if we consider the collective histories of the different groupings in the region. Those interviewees who do not regard themselves as Arabs explicitly mention that they have experienced interactions with Arabs in Cairo who were Christians. Thus, they contest the notion held by some groupings in present-day Sudan that Arab means Muslim. Members of groupings who regard themselves as Arabs, especially from riverain Sudan, evidently feel a need to emphasize their connection with groupings in the Arabian Peninsula, to the detriment of those living in the Nile Valley, especially in the region of present-day Eritrea and Ethiopia (see ch. 5.4.2). This perspective of the past dethematizes how local religions and beliefs have deeply shaped Islam. Similarly, by providing a normative way of being Arab and being Muslim it ignores the very different collective histories of groupings that gave rise to various forms of being Muslim and Arab in these figurations, as shown in the interviews. It also suggests that the collective histories of local groupings were not explicitly transmitted or that people learned to regard certain local ways of being an Arab and a Muslim with a degree of shame, to the point that they prefer to construct their family origins in the Arabian Peninsula rather than in regions of Africa (see ch. 5.4.2). This raises the question of how the image of being Arab increasingly overlapped with specific ways of speaking Arabic and religious belonging in the Nile figuration, and how it became significant for people to self-declare as Arab in this region and to see it as a source of pride.

Excursus – Contested views of Nile Valley civilizations

The domination of the Nile figuration by Greek- and Coptic-speaking groupings in the lower Nile was preceded in history by the Kingdom of Kush and Nubian civilizations. Several interviewees referred to this pre-Arabic and pre-Islamic phase of their collective history to point out the African origins of Pharaohs and civilizations. They remarked that the most powerful groupings in the region were Arabs or non-African, and only retrospectively that they were Black. Although the groupings living in this region during this phase were not Muslims, this was not so relevant in the interviews. The comments made regarding this phase of the Nile figuration shows how long past phases of their collective histories are still relevant for people in Sudan today. The Kush and the Nubians are often presented as advanced civilizations in interviews with Sudanese who do not regard themselves as Arabs. For many of them, there is a deliberate attempt by groupings in Sudan who regard themselves as Arabs to dethematize these phases of the collective history. Importantly, they predate the arrival of Islam in the region and the increasing power to be gained from a self-image as Arab. And this allows its changing interpretations to be used as important sources of pride by groupings who regard themselves as marginalized in Sudan today, and who do not share the we-image of Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation. In the interviews, people refer to the country's material heritage, such as the Meroe pyramids, to counter the dominant image in everyday discourses outside Sudan that the Nile Valley civilizations were mainly Arab. This interpretation of the past has gained prominence among the African diaspora, in societies profoundly shaped by processes of enslavement in the Americas. It has given rise to calls to abandon Eurocentric interpretations of the past in favor of

Afrocentric perspectives which emphasize pre-Arab and pre-Islamic civilizations, such as that of the Nubians, for example. While for some authors this perspective homogenizes the very different collective histories of the groupings living in the ancient Nile figuration, just as Eurocentric perspectives do,[10] others point out that it is not easy to change negative images of Africans institutionalized in the production of knowledge as 'uncivilized' groupings (see El-Tayeb: 2001: 39). The dethematization of "'race' for judging the past" (ibid.: 45) has been interpreted as resistance to changing the sociohistorically constructed they-images of Africans as inferior to Arabs and Europeans. These contested views of the past, alongside increasing legitimation of a homogenized Nubian past to thematize national unity in Sudan, and the retrospective racialization of groupings, played an important role in demonstrations and discussions during the revolutionary processes in Sudan in 2019 (see ch. 3.5.2).[11]

The expansion of Islam by Arabic-speaking groupings into the middle Nile, Old Dongola (c. 642–14th century). In order to show how, in the Nile figuration, the image of being Arab increasingly overlapped with speaking Arabic and religious belonging and became significant for people in this region, it is necessary to consider the interdependencies developed between the Nubian kingdoms established in the middle Nile and the Arabic-speaking Muslim groupings in the lower Nile. These different societies had complex social hierarchies in which different social positions – and their changing character – did not necessarily overlap with the ethnicized images used today, such as 'Africans' and 'Arabs'. In other words, it is not useful to project the notion of African civilizations retrospectively onto this phase when considering the power chances available to members of the different groupings at that time. They presumably did not see themselves as Africans, which was a they-image used by foreigners to refer to groupings with very different collective histories in the region (see Shaw 2014: 527; see also Nkrumah 1963: 132). Based on historical sources, it is possible to say that Muslim Arab armies expanded into Egypt in 640 and attempted a military expansion in the middle Nile, present-day riverain Sudan, in 652 (see El Hamel 2013: 113f.). The Nubian kingdoms, which most probably did not see themselves as belonging to a we-grouping of Nubians, had already adopted Christian, Greek and Coptic elements from their interactions with groupings that migrated earlier along the Nile Valley (see Rubenson 1996; Edwards 2004: 212ff.). These groupings negotiated the conditions of the expansion of Islamic groupings – which differed among themselves and did not represent a homogenized unity – in the region through the celebration of the so-called pact (Arabic: *baqt*), a treaty which, among other things, established that Nubian groupings would send people annually to perform coerced labor in societies in the lower Nile (see Spaulding 1995: 591ff.; Edwards 2011: 88f.; Searcy 2011: 10). People in the Nubian kingdoms then raided families and non-state communities to the south (Spaulding 1995: 591ff.), which fostered the forced migration of people from these groupings to live as soldiers, concubines, and servants in societies in the lower Nile (Baer 1967; Ewald 1988; La Rue 2013, 2017, 2018; Bruning 2020). This is crucial because it gives insights into the existence of groupings and occupations in these societies not defined by ethnicized or religious belongings. According to some authors, the existence of varying statuses in these societies, and their association with different regional origins, contributed to the use of 'Nubians' and '*Sudanii*' as they-images (see Johnson 1989: 82; Sharkey 1994) to refer in a homogenizing way to the people and the regions they came from. In other words, they were often forced to participate in their arrival societies, where they had lower power chances and were framed as slaves (Arabic: *abiid*) and servants by more powerful groupings in a way that ignored their we-images and collective histories in their regions of origin in the middle and upper Nile. It is important to mention at this point that the image as 'slave' can also be a retrospective interpretation of interdependencies between members of groupings in different positions of power. This means that any reconstruction of the meanings that the image as slave acquired in these various societies must consider status differentiations in diverse local languages. Regarding the Nile figuration, we can assume that groupings participating in the *baqt* had better power chances in relation to those living in the raided communities, especially against the background of the intense commerce of enslaved people that would follow in the Nile Valley in the coming centuries (see Ewald 1988; Collins 1992). By the fourteenth century in the region of Old Dongola, the capital of the Makurian state in riverain Nile, power became increasingly concentrated in the hands of Arabic-speaking groupings who practiced Islam (Edwards 2004: 216). We can assume that in this context of changing power balances in favor of certain groupings of Muslims and Arabic-speaking groupings, learning Arabic brought increasing power chances in terms of negotiating with groupings from the lower Nile and the Arabian Peninsula, as had been the case earlier with the adoption of Greek, Coptic and Christianity. From a processual standpoint, this does not mean that learning Arabic or being regarded as an Arab brought more power chances in *all* figurations and sociohistorical phases. It also does not mean that there was only one way of being Arab, but rather that there were different ways – in interdependence with other images, such as being Black – which shaped power chances differently at different times (see ch. 4.4.1). In the following centuries, the Nile figuration transformed significantly, especially in terms of the power amassed by non-Arab groupings in the upper Nile (see Sikainga 1996: 7ff.). However, these power transformations largely developed independently from power transformations in the Marra figuration. Despite this, several interviewees from Darfur who do not regard themselves as Arabs see the origin of their ancestors and we-groupings, such as the Daju (see ch. 4.4.3), in the migration of people from the Nile Valley – the Nubian kingdoms – to the Marra Mountains.

---

[10] See Kwame Anthony Appiah, May 10, 1993. "Fallacies of Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism". Available at: https://www.aei.org/research-products/speech/fallacies-of-eurocentrism-and-afrocentrism/ [Accessed on March 4, 2023].

[11] See Noah Salomon, n.d. "What Lies Beneath the Sands: Archaeologies of Presence in Revolutionary Sudan". Available at https://pomeps.org/what-lies-beneath-the-sands-archaeologies-of-presence-in-revolutionary-sudan [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

See Black Women Radicals, n.d. "#KeepEyesOnSudan: The revolution in Sudan and why it is far from over". Available at https://www.blackwomenradicals.com/blog-feed/kol-al-balad-darfur-the-revolution-in-sudan-and-why-it-is-far-from-over-vObbm [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

3.4 The Marra figuration

The Marra figuration consists of groupings who presumably left the Nile figuration before the arrival of Islam and settled in different regions that form present-day Darfur along the Marra Mountains. The Marra figuration developed from groupings that developed centralized power in the region of the Marra Mountains under the dominance of a Fur-speaking grouping and one ruling family, the Keira. This family and the Dar Fur Sultanate, while preserving important pre-Islamic practices, adopted their version of Islam as the religion of the ruling groupings. Their downfall was brought about by the emergence of other regional powers and disputes over control in the trading of enslaved people, which was a central component in the interdependencies between the groupings in this region and groupings of the Nile figuration. Throughout this phase (c. 1650–1874), a Fur-speaking ruling grouping was able to keep conflicts with less powerful groupings and neighboring sultanates under control. The monopoly of violence was ensured by the forced conscription of people captured in raids on the southern fringes of Darfur, in parts of present-day South Sudan and the Central African Republic. This created a relatively stable source of people who had to fight in the Darfur army, and allowed control over the trade routes to Khartoum, Cairo and Tripoli, which “arguably represents one of the oldest, most enduring, and complex multidirectional patterns of human flow” in history (Miran 2022: 1). Below, I will discuss in detail how these processes and interdependencies developed and transformed.

From a ‘Land of the Daju’ to a ‘Land of the Fur’ (c. 12th century–1874). In the interviews conducted for this study, the dominant view of power distribution in the Marra figuration relates land (Arabic: *dar*) to an ethnicized (tribal) grouping regarded as having dominated and ruled the region in the past. Despite the fact that several different tribalized ethnic groupings lived in the region and intermarried, while others migrated to and through it, or the fact that different statuses inside and across groupings still shape autobiographical constructions (see ch. 4.4.1 and ch. 4.4.3), most versions of the past presented by the interviewees describe the region as dominated initially by the Daju and subsequently by the Tunjur and the Fur. Smaller groupings depended on their protection from raids and attacks by more powerful groupings (see Kapteijns/Spaulding 1988: 25, 409; Prunier 2005: 11). This still serves as a source of pride for people who see themselves as Daju (see ch. 4.4.3). And this is crucial in the sense that the Daju were able to construct and intergenerationally transmit a we-image that is independent from self-interpretation as Arabs. Some of them have managed to preserve the Daju language (with localized variations) and a genealogy of their rulers (used by people today to trace their origins to Daju 'noble' families). In the collective memory, certain places have been passed down through the generations that are still regarded by members of various ethnic groupings as being associated with the Daju, such as Nyala, often presented as the Daju capital by interviewees.

The presence of groupings and individuals living around the Marra mountains dates at least to the twelfth century, when a Daju-speaking grouping was able to concentrate power in the form of a sultanate, as suggested by Arab sources produced in 1154 by Muhammad al-Idrisi (see O'Fahey 2018: xi) and oral histories recorded by the Tunisian Muhammad ibn al-Tunisi in 1803 and the Prussian-German Gustav Nachtigal in 1874 (see al-Tunisi [1845]2018: 7ff.; Nachtigal 1889: 355ff., [1889]1971: 272ff.). According to them, and supported by oral traditions, the position of sultan was later reserved for members of other groupings, first the Tunjur and then the Fur (see McGregor 2000: 26, 34; 2011: 131f.). It is unclear how far Daju and Tunjur were they-images, perceptions of difference by those visiting the region, or whether the ruling families saw themselves as a single dynasty based on intermarriage. It is also unclear whether they distinguished between Daju and Tunjur in the same way as my interviewees. An important component in the legitimation of claims to the powerful position of sultan was the creation and intergenerational transmission of genealogies for families and clans in the region. At least during this phase, this helped to keep members of certain groupings that are nowadays regarded as Arabs from Darfur far from central power, or at least 'assimilated' into the we-image of more powerful local families (see Prunier 2005: 8). This is in contrast to the Nile figuration, where Arabic-speaking 'elites' rose to power during this phase. In the Marra figuration, local groupings "grew up into multi-ethnic polities, but rooted in an African sacral kingship paradigm. The Arabs as groups have played no part in state-formation" (O'Fahey/Tubiana 2007: 8).

By the eighteenth century, the Fur Sultanate had adopted Islam (at least at the 'court'), and a multi-ethnic Fur-speaking court ruled over other groupings in the region without any major external interventions until the end of the nineteenth century. This first phase of this figuration is characterized – at least in the oral tradition – by powerful ruling groupings able to counter the expansion of more established groupings from neighboring sultanates, such as Wadai. They were able to keep power in their hands, at times with the use of physical violence, despite internal power struggles.

The sultanates established in the region relied on the control of trade routes and enslaving grounds to keep power in the hands of Fur-speaking groupings. For the period of transition between Dar Tunjur and Dar Fur, there are important documents from courts in Cairo dating from 1609 and 1620 that suggest how the they-image of Tunjur transitioned into a they-image of Fur in the context of collective histories of enslavement and the trade of enslaved persons. The Marra and the Nile figurations had long been connected by caravan routes that transported goods, people and enslaved people (see Sikainga 1996: 9). Comparable to images of Nubians and *Sudanii* in the lower Nile, Dar Tunjur and Dar Fur were thus homogenized as the regions of origin of slaves (see McGregor 2000: 87). As in the Nile figuration, power in the Marra figuration was based on processes of enslavement and different forms of forced servitude (see Nachtigal [1889]1971: 307f.; O'Fahey 1973; Sikainga 1996: 8; Edwards 2011: 96ff.; Nugud 2011: ch. 3). These processes served – with different levels of coercion and physical violence – to integrate members of other groupings into more powerful groupings and families, but at the same time provided concrete power chances:

> "For many people, slavery was the means by which they moved from rural to urban life. In most cases, this experience would have been deeply oppressive, but for some it provided opportunities" (Thomas 2010: 47).

Thus, enslavement by members of more powerful families or groupings could offer chances for social mobility, by marrying into established families or gaining prestigious and powerful positions at the court or in the army (see al-Tunisi [1845]2018: 53). Enslaved women and girls were often forced into marriage without their consent (see Quirk/Rossi 2022: 247f.). These were power chances that were not normally available to members of non-noble families: "slavery transformed the societies of Bahr al-Ghazal, and brought people from the margins into military or marital hierarchies at the centre of the state" (Thomas 2010: 48). What is significant in this sociohistorical constellation is that people belonging to different groupings and with different social statuses married – or were forced into marriage. Thus, from a reconstructive perspective, it is clear that families intermarried, and that on the level of family histories – and the experiences previous generations lived through – people from groupings with very different power chances ended up as part of the same family. In other words, despite the contrasting experiences we can trace in family histories, often only one dominant belonging was transmitted to the following generations. This was apparently the case in the interviews conducted in this study. Especially slave ancestry tended to be dethematized in favor of images of the family as nobles or royals – perceptions that regulated important components of inheritance and power along the Nile and in Dar Fur for centuries (see O'Fahey/Sikainga ([1974]2017: 46, 85ff., 193; Sikainga 1996: 5ff.).

The relevance of enslavement among groupings in the Nile and the Marra figurations becomes clear with what represents a turning point in the collective history of Darfur, and which led to the demise of the Darfur Sultanate. There are no references to this phase in the interviews conducted for this study, despite its historical importance in the collective histories of different groupings of the region. One possible explanation for this dethematization is that this phase is strongly entangled with the participation of Darfurian groupings in the capture and trading of people in regions that belong to present-day South Sudan and the Central African Republic (as well as groupings that moved further south and whose descendants presumably live in present-day northern Uganda). As different groupings in present-day Darfur use a discourse of the region as neglected and marginalized in relation to groupings in power in riverain Sudan, it seems plausible that they would prefer to ignore the fact that in the recent past Darfurian groupings enslaved the ancestors of those living in regions of present-day South Sudan, Central African Republic and Uganda. This is a source of accusations by groupings in present-day South Sudan that they have been subjected to attacks perpetrated by groupings from Darfur, as I was able to observe in the interviews. Much of the power of the Darfur Sultanate – and of other societies throughout the region – was based on the forced conscription of slave-soldiers from neighboring regions (see Johnson 1989: 73; Sikainga 1989: 75). Thus, groupings in Darfur, and in Sudan in general, have always been shaped by the arrival of outsiders who, despite their enslavement, had opportunities for becoming established, for example by rising to high ranks in the armies (see Vezzadini 2012a: 444). On the other hand, rise in rank did not necessarily correspond to the cessation of experiences of prejudice based on real or alleged slave ancestry. In several interviews, significant reference was made to the polysemic uses of the image of slave (Arabic: *abd*) in the past and in the present, in connection with relations of superiority and inferiority in the collective histories of various groupings and families. However, many interviewees from Darfur did not have access to formal education and did not explicitly learn in their families about the collective histories of various forms of slavery and servitude in their home regions. Moreover, a central component in the dethematization of different forms of slavery in Sudan is that archives and documents about the topic remain "completely forbidden" (see Abdul Jalil 2023: 98; see also Sikainga 1996: xvii). It is also important that in multilingual societies like Darfur and Sudan, people construct status hierarchies and origin markers in subtle ways that are not always easily apprehensible or explicit to outsiders. However, many interviewees had been confronted with the homogenizing they-image as slave in

Arabic ascribed to them when they migrated to riverain Sudan, North Africa, or the Middle East (see ch. 4.4.3 and ch. 5.3).

The strong influence of established British groupings over the ruling groupings in Cairo at the end of the nineteenth century contributed to a constellation in which transformations affecting the trade routes along the Nile Valley, especially the attitude of the Turco-Egyptian administration toward the trade of enslaved persons that gained sway in the Nile figuration, led to the development of powerful 'warlords' (see Sikainga 1996: 12ff.). These individuals managed to avoid law enforcement both by the Turco-Egyptian Ottoman administration in riverain Sudan (1820–1881) and by Darfurian sultans. They were able to recruit and conscript armies at the southern border of the Dar Fur Sultanate, which had been the main hunting ground of Darfurian groupings for enslaving people (see Kapteijns 1984; Flint/de Waal: 2008: 8f.; Behrends 2008: 31; Thomas 2010: 42ff.; Edwards 2011: 96ff.). These struggles for control over the enslaving grounds shaped disputes over trade routes in the region, and restricted the sources of people who were sold as slaves by Darfurian sultans, as well as of those forced to fight in their armies. Against this background, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were marked for the established Fur-speaking groupings of the Marra figuration by the arrival of more powerful outsiders. First, in the figure of warlord and slave trader al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur, who aligned with Turco-Egyptian forces, and then with the British.

3.5 The expansion of groupings from the Nile figuration into Darfur (1874–2019)

The twentieth century was shaped by the increasing weakening of the old-established Fur-speaking groupings, the transition of power from the British into the hands of the non-Darfurian riverain groupings of the Nile, and the equalization of power between groupings in Darfur. The lack of regional groupings capable of concentrating power, as in the antecedent phase of the Marra figuration, contributed to the escalation of processes of collective physical violence in Darfur and neighboring regions. Due to ecological constraints, such as droughts and food pressure, many Darfurians left the region. This translated into the consolidation of a Darfurian diaspora in other regions of Sudan, especially those privileged by the British administration, as well as in North Africa, the Middle East, and later Western Europe.

3.5.1 Decreasing power of Fur-speaking groupings and growing influence of British-backed groupings in Darfur (1874–1955)

The Nile figuration had been under the rule of Turco-Egyptian Ottoman forces since the 1820s. The arrival of the British brought to the Nile figuration – at least on the level of everyday discourses among established groupings – demands for the cessation of processes of enslavement along the Nile Valley. The increasing hindering of enslavement in the upper Nile led groups – including those from Western Europe and the Middle East – that relied on raids to capture people and to sell them into enslavement in other areas of the Nile Valley to move to regions on the southern border of Darfur, in present-day South Sudan and the Central African Republic. These regions were under the control of Fur-speaking groupings from the Marra figuration, who authorized other groupings to capture people for enslavement and conscription into the Darfurian army of the sultan there. This meant that Turco-Egyptian control – and consequently British influence – was less prominent in the region.

The arrival of al-Zubayr and Turco-Egyptian forces (1874–1881). One of the main slave-raiders and traders who acted in the Nile Valley and became an important figure in the balance of forces in these figurations was al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur, a Ja'ali who led his personal army into the territory of Bahr al-Ghazal, to the south of Darfur (see O'Fahey 2018: xvii). There, he fought Baggara nomads who raided settlements within the sphere of influence of the Darfur sultan (see Jok 2001: 21ff.). From the present perspective, al-Zubayr's belonging can be interpreted as riverain Arab, and the Baggara groupings can be retrospectively interpreted as Arabs from Darfur. While these we- and they-images only became powerful after the 1970s (see Behrends 2007: 107), it is noteworthy that interviewees from Darfur present the activities of these groupings against their collective histories of physical violence in the region. After al-Zubayr and his army had secured the means to continue their trade and the expansion of their army with enslaved soldiers, he allied with the Turco-Egyptian forces and attacked the Dar Fur Sultanate. Turco-Egyptian forces attacked the Darfurian army in Kordofan, a region that had been occupied by the Dar Fur Sultanate. Al-Zubayr led his army into Darfur, where he killed the sultan in 1874 (see O'Fahey 2018: xvii). In 1881, the Turco-Egyptian administration negotiated with al-Zubayr, and Turco-Egyptian groupings ruled over the Nile Valley and installed so-called shadow sultans in Darfur (O'Fahey/Tubiana 2007: 10f.). Fur and other local Darfurian groupings who opposed al-Zubayr and the Turco-Egyptian forces were able to settle their differences and stand together, ceasing open warfare among themselves. The occupation of the Dar Fur Sultanate by al-Zubayr, and subsequently by Turco-Ottoman forces, had a significant effect on the collective history of the region. While the Fur-speaking court had access to

Arabic-speaking scribes who kept court records, including genealogies (see O'Fahey 2018: xiii), most of the non-Arabic speaking Fur groupings relied on oral tradition for tracing their family origins: "Following the conquest of Zubayr Pasha, multigenerational collections most probably were destroyed or sent to Cairo" (McGregor 2000: 18). Among other components, it was the increasing power of British groupings in the Nile figuration that created new interdependencies, while control over enslavement processes enabled al-Zubayr and Turco-Egyptian forces to expand their power into the Marra figuration. Groupings in the Marra figuration thus became entangled during this phase in long chains of interdependence stretching from El Fasher to Khartoum, Cairo, Tripoli and London. What began to be increasingly regarded as foreign forces in the Nile figuration would see their power in the region being contested in the following decades.

Mahadist nationalism and British repression (1882–1898). In 1881, Muhammad Ahmad, a Nubian Sufi leader, claimed to be the Mahadi, 'the rightly guided one' (see O'Fahey 1999: 268; Salomon 2016: 32). With his supporters, the Ansar, he fought what they presented as a holy war for the independence of Sudan from foreign forces (see Kapteijns 1985: 73; Warburg 2003: 94ff.). This phase saw important transformations in both the Nile and the Marra figurations (see Prunier 2005: 18ff.; O'Fahey 2018: xviii). One of the crucial components of this phase was the increasing organization of a sense of 'nation' among groupings in riverain Sudan, especially different Muslim groupings, to counter what they perceived as the foreign presence, including that of Egyptians (see O'Fahey 1999: 267f.). At the same time that a localized we-ideal as an Islamic collective was growing up in the lower Nile (see Warburg 1992a: 42ff.), this notion opposed different forms of being a Muslim in the Nile and Marra figurations. Different ways of practicing Islam, the social construction of 'holy families', and the way people regarded themselves and the others as Muslims, henceforth shaped politics along the Nile (see Warburg 2003: 1ff.; Salih Karrar 1992). These aspects continue to be a central component of we- and self-images of Sudanese living in the diaspora, shaping their pride in belonging to certain Muslim groupings which they relate to groupings from this historical phase (see ch. 5.4.2). These very different collective histories of Muslim and other religious groupings along the Nile clearly contrast with the more homogenized notion of Arabs and Muslims often presented by interviewees. A concrete example of the changing alliances between groupings is that Ahmad, the self-proclaimed Mahadi, enjoyed the support of different groupings, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, who felt oppressed by the increasing taxation imposed by the Turco-Egyptian regime (see Holt [1961]1970: 79). The insurrection gained momentum in different regions, even among groupings who did not regard themselves as Arabs, such as the Nuer, Shilluk and Anuak of Bahr al-Ghazal (see Thomas 2010: 45f.). Some authors see the attempts from the late 1850s onwards by Egyptian administrators, under British pressure, to control the slave-trade along the Nile as an important factor leading to power transformations in this figuration (see Holt [1961]1970: 59ff.; Warburg 1992a: 2ff.). Sources suggest that the slave trade was the predominant occupation of groupings in northern riverain Sudan by 1877 (Searcy 2010: 63), and members of these groupings played an important role in supporting the revolution that succeeded in overthrowing the Turco-Egyptian government and defeated British troops in Khartoum in 1885.

During the Mahadiyya regime that followed, leaders focused on the discourse of a tribeless Sudan, projecting a we-image of unity that was important in the fight against British and Turco-Egyptian forces. Not only did it hide the different collective histories of groupings in the region, but also focused on certain ways of being a Muslim and being an Arab in relation to changing ethnicized constructions of belonging:

> "To be a Muslim in a Fur-speaking village in Jabal Marra means something different than to be a Muslim in a Ja'aliyyin village near Shendi on the Nile; to be a Fur Muslim or a Ja'ali Muslim in Khartoum has yet another significance. In turn, these meanings are different from deliberate adherence to a specific Islamist political ideology" (O'Fahey 1996: 259).

In the context of the changing relevancy of belongings that had shaped the collective and familial histories of people in the Nile and Marra figurations, the new regime destroyed genealogies and made it easier for members of marginalized groupings to assume governmental positions: "It was an important moment in Sudanese history, when people from a violent periphery were challenging an older order – and becoming drawn into a powerful economic system based in Khartoum" (Thomas 2010: 46). Nevertheless, the power chances were higher for groupings who regarded themselves as Muslims, especially those from the riverain region of Sudan. However, there were Muslim groupings that did not back the regime, and who therefore did not have the same power chances (see O'Fahey 1999: 276ff.; Salomon 2016: 36). These power disputes led to attempts to centralize power by relying on the support of nomadic groupings from Darfur, the present-day Arabs from Darfur, and fostering their migration to Khartoum (see Holt [1961]1970: 79f.; Sikainga 1996: 31). This transformed power balances in the Marra figuration, as the historically less powerful Arab groupings from Darfur allied with the central government. These alliances with riverain groupings underline the very different collective histories of groupings in Darfur, and the way they have allied sociohistorically with groupings from other regions in order to increase their local power chances, especially against non-Arab groupings in Darfur.

Mahadiyya groupings reached Darfur around 1882 (see O'Fahey 2018: xviii; Prunier 2005: 18ff.). By then, chiefdoms and smaller sultanates, such as Bideyat, Zaghawa, Tama, Dar Qimr and Dar Masalit, that served as allies to Darfur, surrendered to the Mahadi, or allied with the Sultanate of Wadai: "Large numbers of the Fur population sought refuge in the east, where most of them were enslaved either by the border sultanates or Wadai" (Behrends 2007: 104). The supporters of the self-proclaimed Mahadi tried to control the Keira dynasty in Darfur, the ruling family of the Dar Fur Sultanate, by imprisoning Ali Dinar, the Keira heir to the sultanate, in Omdurman in 1893 (see O'Fahey 2018: xviii). **Ibrahim Ali** (born in 1991), an interviewee whose family comes from Darfur, looks back on this phase of the region's collective history:

> "When the British colonized the Sudan, they made an alliance with Ali Dinar to fight the Turkish colonizers. They are fighting in many battles in Omdurman. And they fought the Turkish and Egyptian forces who colonized Sudan" (Online follow-up interview, October 2020, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

In Ibrahim's presentation, he sees the alliance of the British colonial forces with the ruling family of Darfur as a central component of resistance against Egyptian and Turkish colonization. The presence of these very different and powerful groupings gives an idea of the complexity of power disputes in Darfur and Sudan during this phase. By 1898, Anglo-Egyptian troops had regained control over Sudan after the massive use of physical violence. In the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement, British groupings allied with the Egyptians to put an end to European imperial disputes in the region. In practice, the British concentrated administrative powers in their own hands. In the coming years, they increasingly removed Egyptians from administrative positions and substituted them with members of established groupings from Sudan that they regarded as being more loyal to them.

For some authors, it was fear of Mahadiyya and Sufi Islam that led the British to pair up with certain groupings and enforce what they perceived orthodox Islam in Sudan, which appeared more compatible with British interests (see Salomon 2016: 38ff.). It is clear that, despite the multiplicity of Muslim orders and statuses within Islamic groupings, being a Muslim and the interdependence of this with being Arab continued to bring greater power chances along the Nile and in Darfur than being regarded by the British as pagan or unorthodox. To a certain extent, a British-backed form of Islam was fostered by the colonial administration, even if only among groupings hoping to expand their power chances by allying with the British. According to some authors, this British attitude contributed to shaping religious orders and their organization (ibid.). In addition, the British introduced institutions of modern state bureaucracy (ibid.: 41ff.), for example, a new system of land tenure, new methods of taxation, and a system of courts (Holt [1961]1970: 119). In other words, especially in the riverain regions, the arrival of the British and the new administration came with a new range of power chances, such as participation in a modern state bureaucracy. The processes of production of knowledge introduced by British administrators, who had relied, among other things, on their commitment to abolitionism to legitimize the colonization of Sudan (see Vezzadini 2010: 74), created new they- and we-images for people in this figuration, as clearly shown in the increasing tabooing of slavery. However, even if slavery was prohibited on a discursive legal level, different forms of work that resembled it, or that were based on low wages, were admitted by the British administration. This deepened the sociohistorical power inequalities between groupings living in urbanized regions as against those in more rural areas (see Sikainga 1996: xv). It contributed to changing explicit we- and they-images in everyday discourses, but not necessarily to the transformation of practices. As in other Western European colonies in Africa, it was not uncommon that "slave owners threatened by anti-slavery reforms frequently redefined their slaves as wives, concubines or dependents" (Quirk/Rossi 2022: 251). One concrete power chance for women and girls was to be married and made part of the family, even if in practice they were treated as servants: "in general, slave ancestry functions as a family secret: rarely talked about in public yet still consequential in private" (ibid.: 273). This shows how the thematization of enslavement and slave status in the dominant anti-slavery discourse among British groupings contributed to new and complex ways of maintaining people in positions of subordination (see Sikainga 1999: 37ff.). The need to hide the continuing practices of enslavement can be seen in the ways the topic was dealt with by the colonial authorities:

> "As in theory there was no slavery in the Sudan, the Governor General Annual Reports and the Reports of the Antislavery Department much preferred to use the term 'domestic servant' instead of 'slave'. However, colonial sources use even more frequently another term, Sudanese, which in the context of slavery did not indicate an inhabitant of the Sudan, but was the English translation of the Arabic term Sudani, a term that indicates slave descent. Another term frequently used in the sources was Black, as a synonym for Sudanese" (Vezzadini: 2010: 76).

The institutionalization under British rule of Sudanese as a they-image meaning 'of slave descent' led to its being used by established groupings in the riverain region who regarded themselves as Arabs (see Vezzadini 2010: 82), and who – to a certain extent – were recognized as such by the British authorities. The preferential treatment accorded by the British administrators to so-called Arabs as against Blacks, or to Muslims as against pagans, contributed to the usage in colonial records of referring to groupings who were homogenized in an ahistorical they-image as 'Sudani':

> "The second generation Sudanis had notoriously lost the language of their ancestors and apparently also their ethnic customs; in fact, they were sometimes referred to as the 'detribalized negroids'. Instead, their common point was a fictive absence of origins, or rather, the erasure of their origins forced upon them by the situation. This, however, does not mean that they believed in their own absence of origins" (Vezzadini 2010: 80).

These interdependencies between we- and they-images of Sudanese and Arabs, against the background of processes of enslavement, influenced colonial policies enforced by the British administrators and processes of the production of knowledge in the following decades (see Vezzadini 2010: 91). Some authors see this as a vital factor explaining "a nation that partially still prefers to be Arab instead of Sudanese" (ibid.). This helps to understand the interdependencies between the we- and they-images of Darfurians and Sudanese that are relevant in the interviews I have discussed above, or how ethnicized (tribal) belongings overlap with other latent status ascriptions and power asymmetries in the collective histories of groupings living in present-day Sudan. British initiatives and the institutionalization of status hierarchies fostered power asymmetries already present before the arrival of British groupings. Historian Heather J. Sharkey has summed this up as follows:

> "British officials respected local status hierarchies and reinforced them through education policies. They did so by favouring high status 'Arab' males for the academic educations that would lead to administrative jobs, in the process co-opting these men and thwarting their resistance to the regime. Meanwhile, they guided those of slave descent, whom the British in the early years of the twentieth century variously called 'Sudanese' or 'detribalized blacks', into army careers and manual jobs. In fact, these 'Sudanese' soldiers and officers, assigned to Sudan's rural peripheries, also played an important role in propagating Arabic culture" (Sharkey 2008: 29).

The negligence of Darfurians by the British administration further marginalized them in the figuration of Darfurians, Sudanese and Arabs. At the same time, the British ignorance of certain local histories contributed to the tabooing and overlooking of other intra- and inter-grouping interdependencies. From a figurational perspective, these processes did not have a controllable character, in the sense that groupings planned the outcomes that their decisions would have for other groupings in subsequent sociohistorical phases. The processes through which certain we- and they-images were not explicitly transmitted, while certain norms and rules in and between groupings shaped sociohistorical developments, are clear only in retrospect. Retrospectively, it is possible to say that this sociohistorical phase shaped the latent transmission of status ascriptions and their institutionalization by the colonial regime. It requires a careful reconstruction of family and local histories to understand and explain the changing quality of interdependencies between the we- and they-images used by interviewees in the present, especially on a latent level. Such reconstructions can also help to explain the changing status asymmetries inside groupings that are homogenized in dominant discourses, not only in academia, but also among different Sudanese communities in the diaspora (see ch. 4 and ch. 5).

A region entangled in the violence of European regimes. The period that saw the arrival or intensification of European imperial ambitions in Africa – after the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 – significantly shaped biographical and familial courses in Africa in the early twentieth century. European expansionism globalized feelings of superiority (see Said 1994: xiii) through the imposition of Western interpretations of power, particular they- and we-images being used to legitimize processes of invasion and settlement, at least on a discursive level. The case of the British presence in Sudan, and its outcomes for Darfur, is not different. Italian, Belgian, French and British groupings fought each other for the lands of local populations living in the Sudan in the early twentieth century (see Holt [1961]1970: 114f.). In the Nile figuration, the British allied with established Egyptian groupings from the lower Nile in order to settle the power balance in the region in their favor. This led to the signature of the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement, opening up the path for the emergence of the so-called modern Sudan. In the region that used to be the Wadai Sultanate – at the border with Darfur – French groupings restricted the power of old-established local groupings, defeated the forces of al-Zubayr in 1900, and relied on local collaborators to mold the French Chad according to French ambitions. They enforced local structures (French: *chefs de village*, *chefs de canton*) and increased the power of local chiefs, who held judicial and police functions and could collect taxes (Behrends 2007: 107). The transformation of the boundary between Wadai and Darfur into a border between French and British territories created new power chances for families in the region, such as new migration opportunities for those who could afford to travel long distances (see ch. 5.4.3). Along with these new opportunities, stricter controls were introduced in the border zone, emerging from different and often conflicting ideas of freedom and movement. War erupted in Europe in 1914 and involved the forces of the Ottoman Empire, which had occupied Sudan between 1820 and 1881. For people in the Nile and the Marra figurations, this meant that both British and Turco-Egyptian forces were caught up in much broader power struggles.

Darfur was initially left out of the British plans but was soon caught up in a web of power interdependencies that extended far beyond the Nile. From the western side of Lake Chad, French forces advanced in the direction of the neighboring

Wadai Sultanate, whose population fell under French rule in 1909. Those living in the smaller border sultanates of Zaghawa, Tama, Masalit, Sila and Runga had to submit to Darfur's authority (Behrends 2007: 105). Aware of the power disputes in Western Europe, which would lead to collective physical violence in 1914, Ali Dinar challenged both French and British power by seeking autonomy for the Dar Fur Sultanate. To justify assuming control over Darfur, the British supported a propaganda campaign alleging that Dinar had allied with the Turks, who were German allies (O'Fahey 2018: xix; Slight 2010: 238). The British invaded Darfur in 1916, slaughtered several thousand men north of El Fasher, the capital, and killed Ali Dinar with his two sons (see Slight 2010). The entangled character of the new interdependencies of the Marra figuration is exemplified in the diplomatic settlement for the centuries-old local border between Wadai, by then under French rule, and Darfur, by then under Anglo-Egyptian rule. This settlement was agreed on in 1921 in Cairo, Paris and London, geographically distant from the Marra Mountains and the local populations (see Behrends 2007: 105ff.). These power transformations shaped the everyday life of the groupings living in the border space:

> "Although the people living in the area were still freely crossing the border in both directions, they adapted to thinking in terms of belonging to national states in addition to their various regional, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliations" (Behrends 2007: 106).

Besides another layer of state control, new power chances arose, such as being able to migrate with documents issued by the new national authorities, and to travel to imperial domains in other regions of the world. These migration chances created by national belonging and the associated rights gained increasing significance, and to this day they are a part of intergenerationally transmitted knowledge regarding the belongings of previous genealogical generations of families from this region who currently live in the diaspora (see the case of the Hamid family in ch. 5.4.3).

Darfur under Anglo-Egyptian administration (1916–1955). Darfurians in general did not have the same power chances as members of the established riverain groupings for participation in the institutions created by the British in Sudan. Although members of established families from Darfur – Arabs and non-Arabs alike – were able to participate to some extent alongside established groupings in the Nile figuration, power chances for marginalized groupings from Darfur came mainly through migration from Darfur to other regions of Sudan (see O'Fahey 2018: xx). By this time, the Fur Keira dynasty had been exterminated by foreigners, and administrative power was in the hands of the British. Darfur became a province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. In the coming decades, the development of the region would be subject to decisions made in London, Cairo and Khartoum. Certain groupings, especially in riverain Sudan, took the concrete power chances of coming closer to the British, and learned the advantages of securing positions for themselves in the early Sudanese state apparatus. The quotation below shows how the British interpreted the situation when they occupied the region, their sense of superiority, and the we- and they-images that were current at the time:

> “The Soudanese are of many tribes, but two main races can be clearly distinguished: the aboriginal natives, and the Arab settlers. […] The bravery of the aboriginals is outweighed by the intelligence of the invaders and their superior force of character […] The dominant race of Arab invaders was unceasingly spreading its blood, religion, customs, and language among the black aboriginal population, and at the same time it harried and enslaved them” (Churchill [1899]2013: 7).

The first-hand account in the quotation above is from the soldier Winston Churchill, who took part in the war against the local Mahadists in 1898, which paved the way for the return of the British to Sudan. Churchill’s views were published in newspapers in London at the time and provide an idea of the mindset of the British. The racialized we- and they-images, and the supremacist ideology they entail, were translated into different policies implemented by the British in Sudan in the following decades, until its independence. Besides enforcing British interpretations of slavery and freedom, administrative divisions and political organizations were based on sociohistorically constructed tribes and races (see MacMichael [1921]2011: 52ff.), who were ascribed the right to rule over specific lands (Arabic: *dar*). Among other things, this gave a disproportional relevance to British interpretations of the relations between ethnicized and often racialized (tribal) groupings in different regions (see Idris 2005, 2013: ch. 2; Jok 2007: 3ff.; Willis 2015). For some authors, the crucial factor making ethnicized belongings relevant in Sudan is that, despite the abolition of enslavement and images associated with it, “British officials in the Sudan conceived of labor in ethnic terms” (Sikainga 1996: xiii). And in the collective memories of different groupings, the association of different statuses with particular occupations and social positions continued to regulate social rules and norms, such as those relating to marriage (see Prunier 2005: 78). Attempts to contest these powerful ascriptions were controlled “with the use of physical coercive force to keep people within ethnically defined territorial units” (Vaughn 2015: 9). Some local authorities took advantage of the British policy to concentrate power and land in their own hands. The institutionalization of tribalized images and hierarchies enabled them to improve their power chances under the system of indirect rule, in which the British delegated their authority to people they regarded as being local chiefs. Thus, British ethno-linguistic categorizations played a central role in the institutionalization of power in Sudan (see Miller 2015: 134ff.). This form of power distribution had been used earlier by Turco-Egyptian groupings, but had been abolished during the Mahadiyya. With time, these they-images were seen by the chiefs as providing an opportunity to consolidate their own position in local figurations, as was the case in Darfur:

> "At one level the bribes, fines and extra-legal taxation that chiefs extracted from their subjects, exercising and abusing their powers as the local functionaries of the state, created sometimes new forms of structural violence within local societies. Chiefs also inflicted physical violence on the bodies of subjects who refused to fulfil their demands. Torture and flogging were central to the character of chiefly authority in parts of Darfur, and it was these forms of violence and abuse which very much defined the state at the local level in these areas" (Vaughn 2015: 9).

The use of indirect rule in Darfur shows how policies based on we- and they-images strengthened by the British reinforced existing sociohistorical power inequalities, and produced new ones, which gained force of law in the newly created modern state bureaucracy (see Prunier 2005: 29f.; El-Battahani [2004]2009; Behrends 2007: 106ff.). Under the British, people's rights and duties were derived mainly from notions of their racialized and ethnicized tribal belonging (see Mamdani 2005; Schultz 2015: 159), as well as British normative interpretations of Islamic belonging (see Salomon 2016: 38ff.) and abolitionism. Especially in Darfur, ascriptions of tribal belonging to certain territories favored settled groupings, to the detriment of those with a nomadic way of life, for whom it was not so easy to agree on a centralized authority (see Flint/de Waal 2005: 41f.). This contributed to the marginalization of nomadic groupings in Darfur, such as the northern Rizayqat, who are seen today as Arabs from Darfur by interviewees, and often accused of being perpetrators of physical violence in the region (see ch. 4.4.2; see also Young *et al.* 2009: ch. 2). Some authors argue that the British opted to rule Darfur in the same way as the sultans, so that "theories of 'indirect rule' introduced in other parts of the Sudan were thus irrelevant in Darfur" (O'Fahey 2018: xx). In any case, power interdependencies between groupings in Darfur and those from Western Europe shaped the way different forms of knowledge were institutionalized and transmitted in the subsequent decades.

Contrasting worldviews and the institutionalization of sociohistorical power inequalities by British initiatives. British groupings in Sudan arrived with British-led plans for a modern state bureaucracy, schools, hospitals, and army reforms, among others. There were British-led initiatives to create and expand technical courses to teach local people skills that would enable them to participate in the state apparatus and the modern British-inspired bureaucracy. Access to careers in the army, for example, became available to members of different groupings. Terminology reflecting the distinction between 'royals' and 'commoners' in the United

Kingdom gained prominence and overlapped with local ideas of authority and legitimacy, including in Darfur. The British relied on recruiting labor from marginalized groupings, and access to formal education, based on Western curricula, was not available in all regions. Gendered ascriptions also played a role here, with the creation of paths to formal education for girls and women. Policies reflecting the worldview of British groupings led to attempts to make slave status irrelevant in respect of recruitment into the armed forces. However, this was balanced by the need of the British to concede to powerful norms and rules in different groupings, and to accept that, while certain socially constructed belongings could easily be changed in terms of legislation, this did not necessarily apply to practices and attitudes (see Vezzadini 2010: 75ff., 91). However, participation in the armed forces was not restricted, and provided important career chances for people from marginalized regions of Sudan (which included at this time what is present-day South Sudan). These power chances shaped new life and family courses, even if often in positions of subordination to British, Egyptian and more established Sudanese individuals (often from riverain Sudan). In more urbanized areas, British groupings fostered class differentiations based on the collective history of different groupings in Europe, giving rise to important syndicates and worker's associations that would shape the politics and international ties of the county in the following decades. This paved the way for the reception of Western class ideologies, encouraged critical attitudes toward ruling elites, and eventually led to the formation of an important communist party in Sudan. British initiatives thus fostered new and institutionalized sociohistorical power inequalities. Based on the production of an impressive quantity of ethnolinguistic materials that legitimized constructions of class, religious, ethnic, and racial differences (see de Waal 2005: 192f.), British groupings used differentiations between the northern and the southern Sudanese to guide and enforce governmental initiatives. There were investments in institutions of higher formal education in the regions of riverain groupings in northern Sudan, while southern Sudan was left to the 'civilizational' initiatives of Western missionaries (see Holt [1961]1970: 149). One of the outcomes of this was that English became established as the dominant colonial language in southern Sudan, and an increasing number of people there joined Christian groupings. This contributed to the socially constructed and institutionalized perception of two Sudans: one so-called Christian and African in the 'south', and another Muslim and Arab in the 'north'. Linguistic divisions, and the institutionalization of these divisions in institutions of formal education by the British hindered the participation of southern Sudanese in the mainly Arabic-speaking state apparatus in northern Sudan (ibid.). In the south, British groupings prohibited "Islamic missionary activities and, at times, the Arabic language" (Schultz 2015: 163f.). These laws did not hinder people from the south from migrating to the north or learning to speak Arabic, but there were no incentives for this from British-backed institutions.

In the first half of the twentieth century, many Darfurians migrated to other parts of Sudan and abroad, looking for greater power chances in terms of agriculture or formal education, for example. In the case of migration inside Sudan, this meant they became part of a figuration in which old-established riverain groupings could frame them as westerners, or migrants from Darfur, the west of Sudan. The socio-economic development of some regions in Sudan due to British investment in agricultural schemes remains dominant in the collective memory of some families, and is in some cases regarded today as an important source of pride in being Arab, Muslim and Sudanese (see ch. 5.4.2). Old-established groupings, such as the descendants of Turco-Egyptian officials (see the case of Sabbha Amin in ch. 3.5.2) or Arabic-speaking groupings settled in riverain Sudan, could profit from the establishment of previous generations in their families to act promptly in taking advantage of new institutions. One example of this is the irrigation scheme in Gezira planned by the British and implemented in 1925 with a workforce of locals and migrants from different regions, whose work significantly contributed to the concentration of resources in the Gezira region in riverain Sudan (see Sikainga 1996: xiii; Bernal 1997). Such administrative decisions helped to sediment concrete unequal chances in terms of access to state-sponsored initiatives for communities living in different regions of Sudan. In contrast to the investments in Gezira under British administration, in 1935 Darfur had four schools, no maternity clinic, no railway, and no major roads outside urbanized towns.[12]

With growing pressure from some groupings for autonomy, the British controlled who was given concrete power chances to participate in the Sudanese state apparatus, for example through military or formal education. This guaranteed that British interests would be safeguarded in the event of independence, and diminished the influence of Egyptian groupings over the government in Sudan (see Holt [1961]1970: 144ff.). The British encouraged groupings in Sudan who followed the British we-ideal of a Sudanese nation, so that having a British-type education was an important component shaping power asymmetries. The power disputes between Cairo and London allowed nationalist Sudanese groupings formed by people of different statuses to contest British power by changing their allegiance to Cairo unionists, who opposed the idea of an independent Sudan and called for a Nile Union with Egypt (ibid.: 150f.; Warburg 1992a: 62ff.). Often, religious belonging, especially belonging to different Muslim denominations, was important in establishing alliances between different ethnic groupings from Darfur and riverain Sudan and groupings in other parts of northern Africa (see Warburg 1992a: 96ff.). In the decades preceding Sudanese independence, British interests prevailed, and power transitioned into the hands of groupings who shared the British we-ideal of a Sudanese nation, and who did not pose great risks to the British in the region. The preparations for the so-called new nation heavily relied on this alliance. An important factor shaping the transmission of collective memories was the institutionalization of certain views of the past in schoolbooks of the period:

---

[12] New Internationalist, June, 2007. “Darfur – A History”. Available at https://newint.org/features/2007/06/01/history [Accessed on January 13, 2023].

> "The different actors of the educational process (textbook authors, teachers and pupils) were invariably presumed to be Muslim in the text of the three history handbooks jointly produced by British and Northern Sudanese educators between 1948 and 1950" (Seri-Hersch 2020: 794).

The alliance between the British and established Sudanese groupings led to the creation of the parliamentary Republic of Sudan in 1955. Under the pressure of established groupings from riverain Sudan, the British gave "all powerful positions to the northern Muslim elites, thereby solidifying Muslim domination in the country" (Behrends 2007: 108). Many Darfurians and members of groupings from other regions – especially in southern Sudan – felt left out in respect of these power chances. Among other things, perceptions of exclusion and marginalization from central power led to southern Sudanese groupings in the Equatoria Corps of the Sudan Defense Force taking arms in 1955 in a fight for self-determination. This gave rise to a civil war. It is not clear whether these groups received widespread local support, or how far their interests were only those of established families and groupings in southern Sudan, in other words, how far the armed struggle corresponded to the interests of groupings that had a low status in previous phases of the collective history, such as those who were seen as being descendants of slaves, or belonging to other low-status groupings. Some interpretations see British alliances with established riverain groupings as a result of the collective history of slavery in the region:

> "The British transfer of power to the already powerful northern elite helped to enforce this group's already long existing perception that the non-Muslim southern Sudanese as well as the Muslim sedentary populations of parts of northern Sudan were "zurqa" – black – and thus potential slaves, to be excluded from participation in the exclusive circles of national rule" (Behrends 2007: 109).

On the level of everyday discourses, the use of images based on the different collective histories of enslavement and servitude in the region still emerges from time to time. Interviewees mention that they are confronted especially with the they-image of slave (Arabic: *abd*) in their interactions with people in Khartoum, Sudan's capital on the Nile. In the past, for many members of established riverain Sudanese groupings, the association of the word Sudan – the potential name for the independent nation – with local interpretations of slavery was presumably something to be forgotten or at least transformed (see Sharkey 2003: ch. 2). On the other hand, the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation became increasingly dominant among governing groups in Khartoum (see Schultz 2015: 163f.). It is contestable whether the transition of Sudan, from being a British and Egyptian condominium to being an independent nation that is *de facto* representative of all the collective histories and experiences of its different groupings, was successfully accomplished. This is related not only to the fact that different versions of the past exist among members of different Arab and Muslim groupings (or the different proscriptive and exclusionary ways of being Muslim and Arab which they learn), but also to the fact that different constructions of collective belonging have been transmitted in the families and we-groups of non-Arab groupings from regions such as Darfur. This remains a sociologically relevant matter among Darfurian migrants and their descendants in the diaspora, as can be seen in the following empirical example.

Excursus – Contested views of Sudanese independence

How do different views of the independence of Sudan shape the power chances of members of different groupings living in the diaspora in the present? And who is regarded as having legitimacy to talk in the name of which groupings in the diaspora? I will answer these questions by empirically demonstrating how views of the past are still disputed between Sudanese born and raised in Sudan and those born in the diaspora, in terms of their ethnicized belongings and the belongings of their ancestors in Sudan. I will contrast the perspectives of people from two different regions – Darfur and Gadaref in riverain Sudan – regarding their experience of planning an event in Jordan in 2020 to commemorate the independence of Sudan. They were both interviewed by Abubakar Nasr (born in 1998), a Sudanese born in Iraq, who is regarded in the Sudanese diaspora as an Arab. **Adam Salah** (born in 1994) (see ch. 3.5.2 and ch. 5.3), who comes from Darfur and does not see himself as Arab, experienced physical violence in his home region and moved to a shantytown in the periphery of Khartoum (see Bakhit 2020: 921ff.). He lived there for many years before migrating to Jordan, where he currently has refugee status. From his present perspective, he talks about the politicized character of conflicts in his home country and in the diaspora:

> "The conflicts I had with Sudanese in Jordan have a political nature. The type of people I had problems with in Khartoum live here as well. They do everything they can to hinder marginalized people (Arabic: *mohamashin*) from improving themselves, to study, to get further with their lives, to make a political career, they think if we let them become what they wish, they will turn against us […]" (Biographical interview, Amman, April 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

From the quotation, we see that for Adam it is important to explain his perception that members of groupings that hindered his participation in certain institutions and groupings in Sudan keep doing so in the diaspora. He gives an example of the way members of established groupings in Sudan hinder the chances of participation of members of marginalized groupings in the diaspora, recounting in detail an event organized to commemorate Sudan's independence. Adam makes clear what he thinks about Sudanese independence:

> "[…] since Sudan got its independence, we people of Darfur gained nothing. How they dare to celebrate such a day? If we do so, we will send a false message to the world. Maybe some people of Sudan got independent, but others did not […]"

He continues by presenting a version of the past that suggests the autonomy of *all* Sudanese, and says the organizers of the event are 'making life harder for those who are Sudanese refugees' in Jordan. He concludes: "Sudan is not independent yet" (Arabic: *al sudan ma istagal*). For him, it is crucial that some Sudanese experienced war while others did not. He tells what he said to the organizers of the event:

> "[…] 'you never had to flee the war like us, why are you celebrating such a day? You tell the world a false story about Sudan'. More importantly, they were organizing this event in the name of all refugees. We told them 'you don't have the right to use our names'".

Adam's presentation shows that while members of some groupings are able to celebrate the independence of Sudan, there are others who suffer in Sudan from the dominance of more powerful groupings under whom they have experienced violence, and who still need to become independent. Adam says that he tried to deliver a speech during the event in Jordan, but allegedly the organizers refused to allow this, which led to a conflict. The Jordanian police intervened, and the dispute is still before a Jordanian court. I will now turn to the presentation of the same commemorative event by a member of a Sudanese family in Jordan that is seen as belonging to the Arabs from riverain Sudan by other Sudanese living in Jordan (see ch. 5.4.2). **Hiba Nasr** (born in 1992) is a Sudanese citizen born in Iraq. She was interviewed by her brother, Abubakar, in Jordan, where they lived together with their parents at the time. She belongs to a grouping of Sudanese born in the diaspora and, in contrast to her parents, who were born and raised in the Gadaref region of Sudan and who proudly regard themselves as Arab Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula, Hiba and her brother regard themselves as Africans (see ch. 5.4.2). However, as the quotation below shows, this construction of belonging is challenged by members of other groupings from Sudan living in the diaspora, such as Adam. Hiba says she was invited by a group of Sudanese living in the diaspora to give a speech at the event celebrating the independence of Sudan. She believes she has knowledge about the collective history of Sudan: "I am one of the people in Jordan who is familiar with the Sudanese heritage, and I love it very much." From her presentation, it is clear that Hiba has a view of the collective history of Sudan that is different from that of members of other groupings organizing the event. She continues:

> "They are from several tribes, but they know the heritage of some, and the legacy of two tribes remains. I had to explain it. When I was talking a person came in and asked what we were doing […] The matter is because they speak a language other than Arabic, so he told them 'How can you allow this Arab girl to lead you as she pleases?' I asked the person 'Sorry, why did you say this? I am not an Arab, I am Sudanese like you', he told me 'no, you are Arab' I didn't know what he meant […]" (Biographical interview, Amman, April 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Shadia Abdelmoneim).

The quotation shows that Hiba believed she knew about the collective history of Sudan and its tribes. In her presentation, she argues that knowing Arabic gives her legitimacy for talking about the Sudanese past. And the questions posed by another person – presumably Adam Salah – suggest the contested character of the version of the past presented by Hiba at the event. Hiba says that after the conflict, some people dropped out of the organization of the event. In Hiba's words quoted below, the we- and they-images that are relevant when she tries to interpret this conflict from her present perspective become clear:

> "[…] we, what they call Arabs, stayed with us, with a small group to complete the project […] and when the show started the matter turned into a tribal struggle. One of them says 'in my area there are hungry people' and the other says 'in my area there are people dying and you are here celebrating' and so on. I am not there and celebrate during their suffering and I am not a system to complete my accountability for this and they do not live there with them but live here with us."

Now, what do these examples tell us about processes of remembering in the present, the power chances with which they are entangled, and the constructions of belonging of Sudanese living in the diaspora? First, they show that different views of the past are contested or legitimized inside different groupings and we-groups in the diaspora. Like other experiences belonging to the collective memories of Sudanese and Darfurians, they are used in the present to create positions in which some claim to represent others, while others contest such claims. Crucially, Hiba argues that these contrasting views of the past, and thematization of the conflicts connected to them, are a central component shaping power asymmetries between members of different Sudanese groupings in the diaspora, and that efforts to dethematize these conflicts do not solve the issue: "Tribal conflict exists, no matter what we say or do, it exists and negatively affects the lives of the Sudanese. We did not end the problem; we just covered it up."

3.5.2 Islamist discourses and the escalation of violence in Darfur (1955–2019)

Parliamentary Regime (1956–1958) and the 1960s in Sudan. With independence, power passed from Egyptian and British groupings into the hands of established Arabic-speaking groupings in the Republic of Sudan. From the retrospective perspective of the interviewees, this period is presented as a peaceful transition from British rule to the rule of a riverain Arab 'elite'. But in the interviews, the Arabs from Sudan are often presented as being much more violent than the British colonial forces, because many interviewees belong to we-groups and groupings that have experienced physical violence perpetrated by them recently. In other words, from their current perspective, the presentation of Arabs as perpetrators has more relevance for them than the thematization of Ottoman or British violence. This is a result of the institutionalization of sociohistorical power inequalities in the hierarchies of the modern Sudanese state by forces from different Western European countries. This inequality was reflected in the configuration of the armed forces and the state apparatus, as well as in the infrastructure available in different parts of Sudan, such as formal education institutions which increased the chances of participation in the state bureaucracy of members of certain groupings. Against this background, the groupings in power during the short-lived parliamentary regime were diplomatic to the British, spoke mainly Arabic, and navigated the power chances brought by a we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation in their interdependencies with groupings in Cairo, and with those in riverain Sudan who regarded themselves in specific ways as Arabs and Muslims (see Holt [1961]1970: 164ff.). For all more or less civilian governments of independent Sudan, negotiations with armed groups were sociopolitically crucial, whether with the Sudanese Armed Forces, or with armed groups in different regions of the country who contested the concentration of power in Khartoum. This was not different from previous phases, when powerful armed groupings from the lower Nile and the United Kingdom participated *in loco* in this figuration. However, the new geographical figuration brought to the forefront groupings which under previous regimes were portrayed as natives. Debates over 'natives' as against 'settlers' became increasingly politicized during this phase. Public discourses that had been used in the past to mobilize popular support against the Turco-Egyptian or British foreign forces lost their relevance, and new we- and they-images served to legitimize and contest the perpetration of physical violence in Sudan. Against the background of power transformations in former colonies in Africa, this phase was marked by the increasing relevance of polarized discourses on Pan-

Africanism and Pan-Arabism (see Nkrumah 1963; 'Abd Al-Rahim 1970; Madibbo 2012; Ylönen 2017; Seri-Hersch 2020; see also Schramm 2010: 59ff.). While in other countries Pan-Africanism often found in European colonial powers a suitable antagonist that helped domestic groupings to overlook their differences, in Sudan it was not necessary to look to Europe. The Sudanese figuration provided a more powerful grouping that could be framed – and whose members often framed themselves – as having foreign origins in the Arabian Peninsula. Despite this, some Arab groupings claimed that they arrived in what is present-day riverain Sudan before non-Arab groupings (see Mosely Lesch 1998: 15ff.). In the interviews, certain members of non-Arab groupings from Darfur mentioned that Arab nomadic groupings were the first to arrive in what is present-day northern Darfur in the past. Some of them see their ancestors as Arabs, as shown in the genealogies of certain Darfurian rulers (see Holt [1961]1970: 26; O'Fahey 2018: xi). According to some interviewees, these entangled family histories can serve as a means of settling disputes, by stressing the temporally distant but common familial origins of groupings that are constructed as opponents today. The allegiance of the new regime to a pan-Arab we-ideal can be seen in the fact that Sudan joined the Arab League in 1956. In Darfur there were no major transformations in terms of law and land tenure from the previous British-led regime, which had enforced the same norms and rules as the earlier sultans. Thus, the growing power of self-declared groupings of Arabs in Khartoum lent legitimation to the feeling of Darfurians that they were excluded from the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation, despite the fact that most Darfurians regarded themselves as Muslims. The construction of the nation was led by elites who had benefitted from Western formal education in British-oriented institutions in the previous phase. These groupings tried to make belonging to Sudan relevant on a national level, rather than recognizing the very different collective histories of the groupings living in the country.

> "After independence, the governments, most of which were solely staffed by northern Sudanese elites, pursued a policy of Arabization and Islamization. This policy also aimed at developing a national identity apart from tribal belongings and is also referred to as a policy of Sudanization" (Schultz 2015: 163f.; translated from German by the author).

Whether groupings from Darfur were always and *de facto* excluded from participation in the state bureaucracy is an empirical question that can only be answered by reconstructing family histories. Indeed, some members of non-Arab Muslim families from Darfur benefitted from posts in the Sudanese Armed Forces which gave them greater privileges than members of marginalized Arab families from the riverain region. They were able to pursue their education in various countries of North Africa or the Middle East, besides learning Arabic (see ch. 4.4.3). However, the most powerful positions remained dominated by northern Arab groupings from riverain Sudan (see Mukhtar Musa 2010: 558). Some authors see the emergence of a stronger we-feeling as Darfurian as a result of the increasing interdependencies between groupings in the Nile figuration and the Marra figuration:

> "As the new Darfur elite increasingly participated in national politics in Khartoum, their regional identity was taken over by wider party allegiances which in turn sharpened ethnic divisions in Darfur itself. These ethnic divisions – Fur, Arab (Baqqara), Zaghawa and others were to be simplified into Arab and *zurq* ('Black')" (O'Fahey 1996: 256).

Participation in the Sudanese Armed Forces brought increasing chances of power for members of groupings from different regions, in terms of having access to formal education and a career in the state apparatus. The brief parliamentary period ended with a bloodless coup in November 1958, when a small group of Army officers took charge of the administration because they feared the growing closeness between Sudanese and Egyptian leaders (see Holt [1961]1970: 180f.).

Under the new regime, the Sudanese Communist Party, which had acted with illegalized status since the 1940s, was persecuted. This led to the polarization of student groupings between the Muslim Brotherhood and Communism, even though religious and political belongings often overlapped. One example of such overlapping is the family history of **Sabbha Amin** (born in 1967), whom I interviewed in Germany. Her paternal family were Turks who established themselves as administrators during the period of Ottoman-Egyptian rule. Her maternal family are descendants of Beja, a grouping historically established in eastern Sudan who gradually adopted Arabic and Islam as components of their we-image, while preserving some pre-Islamic practices (see Prunier 2005: 78), as Sabbha explained. Sabbha's family benefitted from opportunities to study in Western institutions in Eastern Europe and received support from the Sudanese Communist Party, created in 1946. Her family members increasingly regarded themselves as communists, and experienced this belonging as associated with repression, persecution, and physical violence in the form of assassination by different central regimes. Sabbha and her family learned to hide their communist belonging and were forced to live underground for long periods. Despite the apparent paradox in Western eyes of being communists and Muslims, the family was able to navigate the repressive politics of Islamist governments toward communists in Sudan in their family history. Many members of the family were able to participate in less repressive governments, but often with the fear of potential persecution. During the 1960s, a central component in increasing the participation of marginalized groupings concerned voting rights. For example, initiatives of the Islamic Charter Front, headed by Hassan al-Turabi between 1964 until 1969, expanded the political participation of women (see

Warburg 1995: 230ff.). The resulting increased power chances for women gave them access to formal education and led to their presence in universities and in the state bureaucracy. The 1960s were also shaped by the politicization of student groups in which women played a crucial role (e.g., the Women's Union of the Sudanese Communist Party) (see Hale 2005: 35f.). This increasingly made student political associations at universities a target of political persecution by different authoritarian regimes (see Glade 2019: 112ff.). The fragmentation of political leaders under the parliamentary regime had paved the way for power disputes between people who regarded themselves as belonging to different political and ideological groupings that did not necessarily overlap with ethnicized belongings (see O'Fahey 1996; Prunier 2005: 40f.). This led to the need to build alliances in Khartoum with sometimes unexpected allies, which contributed to the volatility of governments during the 1960s. An example of this constellation is the rise to power of Ja'afar Numairy, a military officer.

The growing influence of 'Islamist' groupings in Khartoum and the deterioration of livelihoods in Darfur (1970–80s). After a period of political disputes and coups, Ja'afar Numairy overthrew the civilian government of Ismail al-Azhari in 1969. Numairy's biography illustrates how the British 'project' of Sudan created power chances for members of established riverain groupings, and how it shaped very different life histories. Numairy's family was from Dongola, an important city in the collective memory of interviewees belonging to groupings from riverain Sudan. Numairy received formal education in institutions shaped by British-oriented curricula and had a successful career in the Sudanese armed forces. Against the background of polarization between the United States and the Soviet Union in the global figuration of the so-called Cold War, Numairy's government initially relied on the support of communist groupings, including the southern 'rebel' leader John Garang. The government enforced socialist and pan-Arabist reforms, similar to those of other countries in the region, which can be seen as a move toward increasing Soviet interdependency. The power of Islamist groupings became clear in the decision by Numairy to exile Sadiq al-Mahadi, a descendant of the Mahadi (see ch. 3.5.1), who had gained political support in riverain Sudan and in the lower Nile. Mahadi moved to Egypt, where he was backed by the Egyptian pan-Arabist leader, Jamal Abdel Nasser (in office 1954–1970). Concomitantly, the government in Khartoum was antagonized by the growing influence of groupings in power in Egypt through the National Unionist Party and Sadiq's Islamist supporters. What characterizes this phase is the consolidation of politicized views of Islam and Arabism and their influence in politics, especially in the Nile figuration (see Warburg 2003: 152ff.). Several coup attempts were followed by increasing repression from Numairy's government. By 1971, Ja'afar Numairy suffered a coup from communist groupings, but regained control. Against this background, he moved away from Soviet support and closer to Maoist China, whose military advisers trained the Sudanese Army (see Smolansky 1978: 6). This period was shaped by important military alliances and foreign arms suppliers that would play a significant role in the armed conflicts in Sudan in the coming decades. The Sudanese army had been trained by British groupings since the country's independence in 1956. This changed in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967, when relations with the United States and West Germany were severed (see Wai 1979: 308). By 1969, armed groupings in southern Sudan allegedly received arms from Israel via Ethiopia and Uganda. Between 1968 and 1971, the Soviet Union supplied arms and training to the central government (Chaudhri 1975: 20ff.). And Egypt shaped Sudanese politics through the provision of missiles and military equipment in the 1970s.

The rise to power of Numairy – who had served in the past with troops stationed in Darfur – shaped Darfur's political situation in different ways (see O'Fahey 2018: xx). Especially after 1971, the government sought to abolish the system of Native Administration (referred to as indirect rule by some authors) in Darfur in favor of a more modern local administration (ibid.: xxi). Increasing suspicion between tribal leaderships and university-educated Darfurians emerged against the background of the end of the system (see Behrends 2007: 106f.). Some specialists interpret this period as leading to the disappearance of expertise in terms of knowledge regarding norms and rules for regulating land tenure and resolving ethnicized (tribal) conflicts. At the same time it reveals the entrenched character of power held by local chiefs and the lack of "'modern' university-trained governmental workers to replace them" (O'Fahey 2018: xxi). The elders and chiefs were regarded as the keepers of knowledge regarding the collective history of alliances and conflicts between the different tribes of Darfur (see O'Fahey/Tubiana 2007: 14f.). The central government, busy coping with power disputes in riverain Sudan, showed little interest in the situation in Darfur. This opened up a range of power chances for local authorities to ally with regional groupings across the borders in Chad and Libya (see Prunier 2005: 42ff.). From Libya, Mu'ammar Qadhafi's influence became increasingly felt in Darfur, and different variations of pan-Arab, pan-African and pan-Islamic discourses gained ground, despite Qadhafi's supremacist views regarding the 'Blacks' (ibid.: 44). Qadhafi fostered the creation of the Arab Gathering (Arabic: *Tajammu al-Arabi*) of the Islamic Legion in Darfur in 1972, described by some as "a militantly racist and pan-Arabist organization which stressed the 'Arab' character" of the region (ibid.: 45; see also Lemarchand 2006: 5f.).

Against these changing power asymmetries, Numairy and Sadiq al-Mahadi became reconciled in 1977 and some civil liberties were restored in Sudan. Numairy increasingly allied with Islamist groupings. Hassan al-Turabi, who had been imprisoned and exiled after the coup in 1969, returned to Sudan and became Justice

Minister in 1979 (see Noble-Frapin 2009: 79f.). In 1983, Numairy attempted to balance the increasing influence of Islamist groupings under Sadiq al-Mahadi in Egypt by recognizing sharia as a source of legislation in Sudan, hoping to improve his position among supporters in riverain Sudan (see Warburg 1990). In this socio-historical context, however, such initiatives meant losing the support of leftist groupings that had initially supported the government, and of some southern groupings, who saw their further marginalization in the fostering of the we-ideal of Sudan as a Muslim and Arab nation (see Warburg 1990: 632f.; Mukhtar Musa 2010: 557; Salomon 2016: 81). For families and groupings who regarded themselves as communists, and who had been persecuted since the 1971 coup attempt, such as the family of **Sabbha Amin**, mentioned above, this meant further deterioration of their situation. Members of Sabbha's family were forced to change their names, separate from other family members, adopt different social roles, and live under the constant threat of violent death. Those who had opportunities to escape left Sudan with the help of international communist regimes. Sabbha, then a teenager, left to study in Eastern Europe, an education which would shape her political engagement and women's rights activism when she returned to Sudan. Numairy's government had been under increased pressure from Islamists at least since 1981, which translated into a closer alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. Members of Islamist groupings had increasing power chances during this period, even if conflicts arose between them (see Warburg 1990: 630ff.). The enforcement of conservative policies based on certain interpretations of Islam became a recurrent pattern of political action by different groupings that enjoyed power in Khartoum. This furthered conflicts with southern groupings who were excluded from power. The civil war with southern groupings regained momentum in 1983, increasing the engagement of all sides with arms suppliers. For Darfurians, this period established their access to weapons (Lemarchand 2006: 6; Behrends 2007: 113f.). Moreover, the volatile scenario in Khartoum, Cairo, Tripoli, and N'Djamena offered power chances for members of different armed groups from Darfur (see Prunier 2005: 57ff.).

During the 1980s, local groupings in Darfur fought each other against the background of drought and land disputes connected to, among other things, institutional reforms shaped by British-led initiatives in the Marra figuration. The decentralization of power throughout the period of British domination contributed to the creation of a figuration where alliances with other groupings from Chad, Libya or riverain Sudan rapidly led to the perpetration of acts of violence. This period was marked by shifting power alliances between leaders such as Ja'afar Numairy in Sudan, Mu'ammar Qadhafi in Libya, and Hissène Habré in Chad, who recruited supporters among different groupings in Darfur (see Prunier 2005: 55ff.). When necessary, they used ethnicized (tribal) belongings and family ties to refer to historical alliances and compromises, which aided the construction, plausibility, and legitimation of different versions of the past. That is, individuals and groupings who were able to legitimize certain versions of past conflicts and alliances between groupings could participate in the political processes. These alliances often resulted in the perpetration of physical violence, especially in the context of droughts and harvest failures in 1983 and 1984, which aggravated problems of land access and famine in Darfur (see de Waal 1989a, 1989b; Prunier 2005: 47ff.; Abouyoub 2012). Groupings that had fewer power chances in terms of land access during the British administration were affected, such as the Arab camel herders of northern Darfur (Tubiana 2007: 73). This often turned into localized 'tribal' conflicts over land in Darfur (see Bromwich 2018), which were not disentangled from broader power interdependencies in the Nile figuration. Many families left their homes. Marginalized groupings living in rural areas were especially affected, and there was a big increase in migration and pressure on urbanized centers in the region, such as in Geneina (see ch. 4.4.2).

During this period, groupings participating in the Chadian civil war spread across the border, and Qadhafi supported expansion of the conflict into Darfur (Prunier 2005: 70; Behrends 2007: 112). There is strong evidence that camel herding nomads of northern Darfur, such as the northern Rizayqat, started to use a politicized and ethnicized we-image as Arabs, against the background of not being recognized during the British administration as entitled to their own land – differently from the southern Rizayqat (see Behrends 2007: 106). All these factors contributed to the increase in ethnicized (tribal) tensions, fueled, among other things, by the availability of firearms from the conflicts in Chad. Habré seized the opportunity to move into Darfur, and took over the central government in Chad in 1982 with support from Zaghawa groupings in Chad (ibid). Qadhafi countered Habré's success in Chad by recruiting Arab groupings from Darfur to oppose Habré's rule (ibid.: 114). The fall of Ja'afar Numairy, a supporter of Habré in Chad, after popular uprisings, paved the way for Qadhafi to recruit people with more freedom in Darfur (ibid.). Sadiq al-Mahadi had lived in Tripoli during the Numairy government, which contributed to expanding the influence of groupings from Tripoli in Darfur. Life as a mercenary in Darfur and across the border represented a concrete chance for power. For families, this came with the fear that its members would participate in armed groups in Chad or in southern Sudan (see ch. 4.4.3). By 1984, John Garang, a leader in southern Sudan who openly opposed the central government, introduced on the discursive level we- and they-images that became increasingly dominant among so-called rebel groupings in the south and in Darfur. These polarized we- and they-images accused the central government of Numairy of practicing a policy of 'divide and rule' among people living in the marginalized regions of Sudan:

> "The oppressor has divided the Sudanese people into Northerners and Southerners; Westerners and Easterners [...] Muslims and Christians, and into Arabs and Africans" (Garang [1983]1992: 19).

The increasing militarization of different groupings during this period led to the deterioration of livelihoods of members of marginalized groupings. From the interviews, it is clear that people in Darfur and southern Sudan believe that members of all armed groups perpetrated acts of physical violence against civilians. Many families and individuals had their lives and family histories shaped by the escalation of different forms of violence and the use of polarized we- and they-images. The present-day dominant everyday discourse among Darfurian communities in the diaspora speaks of a conflict between Arabs and Africans or Arabs and non-Arabs in Darfur during the 1980s. However, this does not entirely correspond to the complexity of experiences that families and individuals lived through during this phase, including violence inflicted on them by their own family members. This is in clear contrast to the discourse that attributes responsibility for the perpetration of violence exclusively to Arabs. More importantly, the dominant discourse ignores experiences of violence within so-called African groupings and we-groups (see ch. 4.4.3), or power disputes within so-called Arab groupings from Darfur (see ch. 4.4.2) and other regions of Sudan (see ch. 4.4.1). Conflicts between the Fur and the Zaghawa, for example, two groupings which are currently regarded as Africans (although the Zaghawa can be seen as Zurqa in Chad, they are seen as Arabs by some non-Arab groupings in Darfur; see Prunier 2005: 45) were not irrelevant for the collective histories of these groupings, and still shape constructions of belonging in the present, even if these conflicts were often dethematized in the interviews (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.2). Other interviewees see in this period the origin of current conflicts in Darfur, and present them as initially between groupings of 'farmers' and 'nomads' (see ch. 4.4.2). In this context, non-Arab groupings such as the Fur and Masalit are retrospectively regarded as farmers, based on their dominant form of livelihood, in contrast to Arab nomadic groupings of cattle herders (Sudanese Arabic: *Baggara*) and camel herders (Sudanese Arabic: *Abbala*), such as the Rizayqat of northern Darfur. Localized conflicts between groupings in Darfur continued in the subsequent decades and shaped livelihoods, migration chances and familial and collective histories in the region (see ch. 4.2 and ch. 5.3).

The broader entanglements of the disputes in the context of the Cold War became clear with the change in the attitude of the United States toward Sudan. Reagan's administration (1981–1989) increased aid to Sudan and installed air bases near Port Sudan. Jaʿafar Numairy's government in Khartoum grew increasingly unstable against the background of the resumption of the civil war and higher food and transportation prices. This led to a general strike in Khartoum in 1985 (see Berridge 2015: ch. 2). Numairy's Defense Minister ousted him in a bloodless military coup in 1985 against the background of popular protests (see Delaney 2011: 58; Bakhit 2020: 931). For Darfurians, this meant that Qadhafi no longer had to deal with the opposition of Numairy – a supporter of Habré in Chad – who had been countering the advances of Qadhafi in Darfur (see Behrends 2007: 114). In Sudan, the results of the 1986 election brought Sadiq al-Mahadi and the Umma Party to power, in a coalition government with the National Islamic Front (led by his brother-in-law Hassan al-Turabi), the Democratic Unionist Party (representative of the influence of Cairo groupings under the leadership of Mohammed al-Mirghani), and southern parties. These election results meant that Islamist groupings from riverain Sudan remained in power.

The rise to power of Sadiq al-Mahadi, who lived in Tripoli during the Numairy government, fostered the influence of groupings from Tripoli in Darfur. In the following years, Darfurians witnessed a massive influx of weapons, and political instability in the border region with Chad (ibid.: 114). Mercenaries, recruited both locally and from abroad, increased in number in Darfur. Groupings and families from Darfur became entangled in power disputes between southern and northern riverain Sudan. Sadiq al-Mahadi recruited armed fighters among the southern Rizayqat of Darfur (Arabic: *murahilin*) to counter the forces led by Garang in southern Sudan (ibid.: 125; Prunier 2005: 86; see also ch. 4.4.2). The Fur, who had been dealing with the expansion of the Zaghawa into what they regarded as their lands, were targeted by Rizayqat militias (see Marchal 2006). In 1987, Habré, who was in power in Chad, armed Fur, Masalit and other Darfurian groupings, who felt neglected by the central government of Sudan, to counter a potential coup against himself, allegedly planned with support from governing groupings in Khartoum (Behrends 2007: 125). These power struggles dragged Darfurian groupings into armed conflicts throughout the region. There are estimates that between 1985 and 1988 almost ten thousand people died in Darfur, either in armed conflicts or due to droughts (Prunier 2005: 65). In the following years, many others were killed in the conflict between the government of Sadiq al-Mahadi and those fighting for the independence of southern Sudan. As a result of the dire sociopolitical conditions during the 1970s and the 1980s in Sudan, many young Sudanese migrated to the Gulf countries (see Abusharaf 1997), where they saw higher chances of finding jobs, saving money, and marrying into families from Sudan (see ch. 5.4.2). This gave rise to a transnational figuration of groupings living in the diaspora in the Middle East and those living in Sudan. The socioeconomic and political power of Sudanese living abroad became an important source of support, both for groupings in power in Khartoum, and for the opposition. The internal disputes form the background that led to the overthrow of Sadiq al-Mahadi in a military coup in June 1989. The developments in Sudan had attracted foreigners in the form of journalists, activists, international organizations, and academics. During this period, the use of life stories and the creation of images associated with violence became dominant, both in Sudan and in the diaspora, as a way of gaining opportunities to leave Sudan, of benefitting from humanitarian aid, or of obtaining a safer legal status in the diaspora (see Kindersley 2015: 209f.).

Excursus – International groupings and the presentation of life stories

The existence of foreign groupings able to provide aid, media coverage, and help with legal procedures connected with migration and asylum made people aware that power chances could be created by talking about themselves and the others in a particular way, and especially by speaking about their experiences of displacement and violence. Sociohistorical developments in Darfur were shaped not only by massive collective violence, but also by the arrival of foreign groupings offering aid and media coverage. It is thus important to avoid regarding the interviewees who participated in this study as passive victims, or taking their presentations as a platform for them 'to speak' (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.3). The sedimentation of sociohistorical power inequalities during this phase of the collective history of Darfur and Sudan shows the importance of a heuristic separation between dominant discourses in the *presentation of belongings* and the *lived-through experiences of individuals and families*. Some authors interpret this period during the 1980s in Sudan as one when deep power asymmetries became almost institutionalized in the way those affected by collective physical violence learned to present themselves to foreigners in order to increase their own power chances:

> "Personal stories were instrumentalized as declarations of historical authority, an assertion of a right to speak for the past as an 'author.' This authority – and the legitimacy and social clout potentially gained by publishing a life history – backed the assertions and demands made within the story" (Kindersley 2015: 216).

Certain presentations of the past became important for legitimizing decisions to escape the war and avoiding "accusations of defection or desertion" (ibid.). These patterns of argumentation were used by those who succeeded in leaving the region and who enjoyed the 'privileges' of having refugee status in some other country. According to some authors, these patterns of argumentation developed to counter the growing perception among those who were left behind that refugees had better chances of gaining an education and embarking on a professional career than those who stayed 'to fight for their country' (ibid.). When analyzing interviews, it is important to remember that people learned to navigate the available power chances by presenting their stories in terms of the dominant we- and they-images used not only by the different groupings in their region, but also by international groupings, such as academics, activists, and journalists:

> "By editing a life history for potential public consumption and permanent publishing, the storytellers were part of a broader Sudanese debate on wartime experience, and how personal experiences should be remembered. Life stories were a presentation of a practical, revised national history; the Sudanese narrators edited, rephrased and resituated their own histories in a broader historical narrative" (Kindersley 2015: 217).

The increase in personal and familial power chances in Sudan gained by telling one or another version of the collective past, and by constructing one's life story as belonging to the broader history of collective physical violence in the country, became a legitimate appropriation of the past in a figuration where the marginalized – those whose life and family courses were shaped by processes of physical violence and the threat of violent death – learned they could counter the dominant discourses of groupings in power in Khartoum through interactions with outsiders from international agencies and media outlets. In other words, learning how to present oneself and one's families offered better chances of survival in the context of physical violence, better migration opportunities, and hopes of establishment in the diaspora. Thus, the explicit knowledge at hand regarding the norms and rules of we-, they- and self-presentation became a central component in expanding power chances in Darfur and Sudan. In other words, those who belonged to certain groupings and learned how to use these we- and they-images were able to benefit from presenting their experiences to members of powerful groupings from different parts of the world. As I will show, these processes are bound up with the transmission of we- and they-images by previous generations, which are used in the construction of autobiographical presentations in the present (see ch. 5.4). During the 1980s, the changing constructions of belonging in the region became entangled with globalized power interdependencies, and remain so to this day, as shown by the interviews conducted for this study (see ch. 4 and ch. 5).

The increasing public relevance of discourses on Islamism and Arabism and the crimes of genocide in Darfur under Umar al-Bashir (1989–2019). The military coup that removed Sadiq al-Mahadi in June 1989 and installed Umar al-Bashir as head of state shaped the next three decades, with the increasing power of groupings in Khartoum. Al-Bashir and his changing allies saw in the expansion of a certain interpretation of Islam the *raison d'être* of the Sudanese Arab state. The government politicized different topics and groupings to justify what they saw as a 'civilizational project' and to legitimate initiatives that excluded a significant part of Sudan's citizens (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 26f.; Sharkey 2008: 42). Even if in public discourses the government, like previous governments, increasingly used the we-image of Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation, it continued to disenfranchise groupings from regions such as southern Sudan, Darfur, the Blue Nile, and the Nuba Mountains, as well as groupings from riverain Sudan living in the northern, eastern and central parts of the country (see Ylönen 2009: 42ff.; Berridge 2019: 2ff.; Mukhtar Musa 2010; 556ff.). What is crucial to understand is that these government discourses also affected certain groupings that regarded themselves as Muslims and Arabs, especially in Darfur and other regions of riverain Sudan, but that were not regarded, at least on a discursive level, as proper Arabs or Muslims by more established groupings (see ch. 5.4.2). Initiatives of the central government during this phase fostered the power chances of certain groupings that collaborated with the central government, including, for instance, some of the so-called Arab groupings from Darfur. To enforce its interpretation of 'Arabism' and 'Islamism', the government attempted to enforce the sharia in the southern region and increased its repression of southern opposition groupings. An important component of al-Bashir's strategy for remaining in power was the decision to arm groupings to fight each other in Darfur. This made power concentration in the hands of one grouping more difficult, and helped to keep Darfurians enmeshed in localized conflicts, allowing al-Bashir to balance the power of the Sudanese Army in Khartoum (see Hassan 2022: 259). The Sudanese army had been an important source of military officers who led coups against previous governments. The strengthening of Islamism in everyday life is clear in the case of **Sabbha Amin**, whom I have already introduced. Sabbha returned to Sudan from Eastern Europe at the time of al-Bashir's rise to power in Khartoum. She married, had two daughters, and found work in the state apparatus. After two decades, she divorced her husband with support from her family of origin, and moved to live alone with her daughters, working to earn her own living. Sabbha, who is a women's rights activist inspired by her life in Communist Eastern Europe, as she puts it, remembers the prejudice she faced as a divorced mother living in eastern Sudan during this period. From her current perspective, one of the most challenging aspects of living in Sudan was the negative attitude of other Muslim women toward her, and the prejudice she experienced as a 'divorced mother'. She experienced this mainly in the form of gossip about her, and sexualized harassment by her male bosses at work. Against the background of an increasingly authoritarian state led chiefly by men in powerful positions in the armed forces, her actions and opinions were increasingly regarded – and treated by state forces – as a threat to national security and the project of an Islamic nation.

Repressive state practices became the norm in this period in Sudan, with several cases of torture of people accused of dissidence. Those of my interviewees who lived through this phase of the history of Sudan, and who do not regard themselves as supporters of the regime, had their life courses shaped by unfounded accusations of participation in opposition groups. They experienced indiscriminate arrests, referred to by many of the interviewees as political arrests. Many of them found that universities, and the privileges of university education, increasingly politicized the 'tribal' conflicts in Sudan. Patterns of interpretation in which tribal belongings were seen as being used by the Bashir regime to 'divide and rule' Darfur became dominant in the student milieu (see ch. 4.4.2). Government agents infiltrated different groupings, especially in universities and youth organizations. There was an atmosphere of distrust, and a constant fear of physical violence. Some of the interviewees left their home country under these circumstances. Others were accused of being dissidents or collaborating (e.g., sharing information) with so-called rebels, and many were tortured.

Power transitions in Khartoum created interdependencies with groupings in Darfur and shaped power asymmetries in the region during the 1990s. Important leadership positions and land rights were given to so-called Arab allies of al-Bashir who had not held land rights or political offices in Darfur before (Behrends 2007: 116f.). A decrease in the authority of the three main landholding non-Arab groupings in Darfur – the Zaghawa, the Fur and the Masalit – meant that their leaders were now mere 'tribal chiefs' (ibid.; see also Mukhtar Musa 2010: 559). These power transformations in the Marra figuration raised important questions regarding concrete power chances available for Darfurians. With al-Bashir's rise to power and the backing of a pro-Islamist and pro-Arab discourse by the established groupings in riverain Sudan, it is not difficult to imagine that power chances increased for certain groupings in Darfur who could regard themselves as Arabs and Muslims (although most of the non-Arab groupings also regarded themselves as Muslims). Against the background of the loss of power of the old-established Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit, the so-called Arabs from Darfur increasingly emphasized their Arab belonging as against those they regarded as 'Blacks' (Sudanese Arabic: *zurqa*). This attitude toward the collective histories of groupings in the region increasingly brought them closer to the established groupings in power in Khartoum. A central component of the relationship between Arabs and Blacks in Darfur was the socio-historically constructed notion of the superiority of the Arabs, which was used to justify the seizing of land and to legitimize the perpetration of physical violence. For the old-established groupings whose land rights had been recognized by the British administration, such as the Fur (see Reyna 2010: 1299), the renewed alliance between riverain Arabs and Arabs from Darfur meant they were in danger of losing their land (on which they relied to produce food for subsistence), and of being exterminated by the central government or by local groupings who constructed not only them, but also groupings from other regions (such as southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains) as a threat to the proclaimed we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation.

Between 1987 and 1999, at least three documents were produced which give us insights into the racialization of certain we- and they-images in Darfur, and their potential use for legitimizing the perpetration of physical violence against groupings regarded as inferior. This phase in Darfur shows the changing interdependencies between local groupings and two governments in Khartoum, that of Sadiq al-Mahadi and, after the military coup of June 1989, that of Umar al-Bashir. In 1987, the Arab Gathering (Arabic: *Tajammu al-Arabi*), at which Musa Hilal of the Mahamid Rizayqat played an important role (see ch. 4.4.2; see also Flint/de Waal 2008: 36ff.; Prunier 2005: 45), and which allegedly was supported by Qadhafi and the Libyan pan-Arabist and pan-Islamist paramilitary forces of the Islamic Legion, manifested supremacist views in an open letter to Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahadi (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 50). In the letter, the authors claimed that Arab "tribes" from Darfur were "deprived of true representation in the leadership of Darfur region" and demanded half of the government positions in Darfur (ibid.). Explicitly emphasizing a racialized interdependence between we- and they-images, the letter threatened that "should the neglect of the Arab race continue, […] then there could be catastrophe, with dire consequences" (ibid.). Supremacist views also appeared in the we- and they-images used by interviewees when talking about this phase of the collective histories of Sudan and Darfur (see the case of Halid Hasan in ch. 3.2). Similar images were used in a document produced by the Executive Committee of the Arab Gathering. This document, of which "no verified copy […] has been published" (de Waal 2022: 45), became known as *Qoreish 1*, and appeared in 1988 after the appointment by Sadiq al-Mahadi of a Fur individual to an important government position in Darfur. The document recommended that:

> "'volunteers' should be infiltrated into zurga areas 'to stop production in these areas, to eliminate their leaders' and to create conflicts among zurga tribes 'to ensure their disunity'. 'All possible means' should be used to disrupt zurga schools" (Flint/de Waal 2008: 51).

Besides explicitly referring to the importance of attacking institutions, such as schools, responsible for the transmission of knowledge among 'Black' groupings, the document clearly identified the need to disrupt their cohesion, a component which is important from a figurational perspective for the transmission of belonging and power differentials (see ch. 2.2.5). Under both al-Mahadi and al-Bashir, the central government pursued a policy of non-intervention in conflicts between Arab and Fur groupings (1987–89) and Arab and Masalit groupings (1995–99). This suggests that the fostering of power asymmetries was increasingly important, despite the fact that it led to the migration of tens of thousands of Sudanese to Chad (see Reyna 2010: 1299; Behrends 2007: 116). The threat of violence by the Bashir regime after June 1989 paved the way for alliances between non-Arab Darfurian groupings who had fought each other during the 1980s. The Fur and the Zaghawa, referred to as non-Arab 'Blacks' by those in Darfur who regarded themselves as Arabs, joined forces to resist the threat of losing power in the region. The quotation below, which is attributed by Julie Flint and Alex de Waal to Suleiman Hassaballa Suleiman, a Fur leader at the time, gives insight in the sociogenesis of Janjawiid groupings, and shows that power chances in this figuration depended on the capacity to mobilize human support and obtain arms for the perpetration of acts of violence against members of other groupings:

> "I heard the word 'Janjawiid' for the first time in 1987 – from the Arabs themselves. Beginning in 1986, under Sadiq al Mahdi, the government began arming and training Arab tribes against non-Arabs and making conferences with them. They were given small salaries, and food for themselves and their horses" (Flint/de Waal 2008: 66f.).

In 1991, after denouncing the arming of Arabs in Darfur to a commissioner in the region, Suleiman was captured by army officers (by then under the command of al-Bashir) who tied him to a tree, called him "slave" and "black monkey", and broke his foot (Flint/de Waal 2008: 67). This episode shows how the attackers used they-images based on the collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Darfur and along the Nile to legitimize the perpetration of physical violence.

The exclusion of non-Arab groupings from Darfur from power in their home region gained momentum when al-Bashir's government changed Darfur's administrative boundaries in 1994 and created new chieftaincies in 1995. The new chieftaincy positions were given to Arabs, and the Fur and Masalit groupings were disenfranchised (ibid.: 57; Prunier 2005: 74f.). In 1995, members of local Arab groupings attacked Masalit villages around Geneina (Flint/de Waal 2008: 61; see also ch. 4.4.2). Al-Bashir's government continued to arm pro-government groupings in Darfur to counter Masalit groupings. A third document illustrating the supremacist and racialized character of we- and they-images is the *Qoreish 2*, written in 1998. The authorship of this document remains disputed, but no Arab grouping from Darfur publicly condemned it (see El-Tom 2009b; Flint/de Waal 2008: 52). According to Flint and de Waal (ibid.), the document expressed "a convergence of Arab supremacy and Islamic extremism". These authors sum its message up as follows:

> "Those who trace their lineage to the Prophet Mohamed are the true custodians of Islam and therefore entitled to rule Muslim lands. Adherents regard Sudan's riverine elite as 'half-caste' Nubian-Egyptians and believe the country's only authentic Arabs are the Juhayna, the direct descendants of the Qoreish, who crossed the Sahara from Libya in the Middle Ages. They claim that these immigrants found an empty land stretching from the Nile to Lake Chad, and say this land should now be governed by their descendants – the present-day Abbala and Baggara Arabs" (Flint/de Waal 2008: 51).

Claims to power in this phase – as in previous sociohistorical phases (see ch. 3.3) – relied on the presentation of special versions of the past in the form of genealogical constructions of being related to the inner circle of the prophet Mohammed (see Holt 1981; Ibrahim 1988; Spaulding 2000: 326). The *Qoreish 2* referred to other we- and they-images that are also used by my Arab interviewees from Darfur in their constructions of collective belonging, especially those whose families belong to Arab groupings (see ch. 4.4.2). The *Qoreish 2* distinguished between the Saharan or Juhayna Arabs and the Arabs of the Nile (i.e., those from riverain Sudan) (see de Waal 2022: 45). It claimed, among other things, that the Arabs of the Nile did not back "the project of Arab domination of Chad and Darfur" (ibid.). Thus, various groupings that regarded themselves as Arabs in Darfur, Sudan, and neighboring countries, have very different collective histories.[13] Despite these differences, power asymmetries tended to be homogenized in the polarized presentation of conflicts between 'Arabs' and 'Africans' in dominant everyday discourses, and did not always correspond to the lived-through experiences of people in Darfur (see ch. 4). In fact, people also experienced physical violence within the Arab and non-Arab groupings of which they constructed themselves as members (see ch. 4.4.3). People quickly understood that, in a context of profound power asymmetries, it was crucial to learn to navigate alliances with members of different groupings and to be able to refer to different collective histories. The transnational character of the agenda set in *Qoreish 2* shows the complexity of the shifting alliances between groupings in different countries. Besides suggesting infiltration in various government institutions in Sudan to counter "the 'hybrid' riverine tribes that 'have been an obstacle for us for more than a century'", *Qoreish 2* planned the domination of Darfur and Kordofan through alliances with other groupings (including the non-Arab Dinka of southern Sudan) as a way to guarantee pastures for the animals of nomads in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic (Flint/de Waal 2008: 51f.). Moreover, it referred to the importance of alliances with groupings in Libya and the Gulf States (ibid.). The document resonated with the "worldviews of the young men who would soon be flocking to Darfur's Arab militias" (ibid.: 52). At the same time that Arabs in Darfur were changing alliances, important power transformations occurred in Khartoum. Conflicts between different Arab and Islamist groupings emerged in the capital through the declaration by al-Bashir of a national state of emergency in December 1999. This forced Hassan al-Turabi, seen as a sort of 'guide' of the Sudanese Islamist Revolution, to leave the presidency of Sudan's parliament in a 'soft coup', which hindered his political influence in Khartoum and fostered the mobilization of allies in rural areas, including Darfur and, later, southern Sudan (see Prunier

---

[13] See Small Arms Survey, Julie Flint, 2010. "The Other War: Inter-Arab Conflict in Darfur". Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/123329/SWP_22.pdf [Accessed on July 4, 2023].

2005: 81ff.). The alliances he formed against al-Bashir contributed to the formation of armed groups in Darfur, in spite of the fact that certain local groupings distrusted al-Turabi's Islamist agenda (ibid. 86f.).

The 2000s were shaped in Darfur by massive dislocation of people due the formation of armed opposition groups and the challenges of everyday life in a context of growing collective violence. Joining a militia group became a concrete power chance for many people. From the interviews conducted for this study, it is clear that this enabled the formation of armed groups around individuals and families, which were used for political claims on the national level. Kinship was used to mobilize recruits to fight, and ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images were used by all sides involved in the conflicts to gather support and to legitimize the perpetration of physical violence against entire families and villages (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.3). Control over the supply of weapons and the consolidation of personal armies, as well as access to gold mines, increased the power chances of leaders from Darfur who aligned with established groupings in Khartoum and in other countries. These alliances were also countered by the creation of new interdependencies among non-Arab groupings in Darfur. A manuscript known as the Black Book (Arabic: *kitab al-aswad*), which appeared in 2000, provided a framework for explaining the conflict and legitimizing it on a political level (see Prunier 2005: 77; 85). This document detailed the marginalization and neglect of Darfur and its people in terms of political participation in the central government in Khartoum (El-Tom 2003). Whether marginalized groupings in Darfur who had never had a chance to learn how to read heard about the contents of the book is unclear. However, several interviewees referred to it and to the notion of Darfur as a marginalized region of Sudan (see ch. 4.4.3). In other words, it still plays a powerful role in everyday discourses among Darfurians, and influences interpretations of this phase of the collective history. **Adam Salah** (born in 1994), whom I have already introduced, was born in a Fur family at a time when ethnicized (tribal) discourses were becoming increasingly relevant. Due to the dangers of collective physical violence in Darfur, Adam migrated to the capital, Khartoum, where he lived among other Darfurians who left the region at this time, in an area on the outskirts of the city which is still associated with the presence of families from marginalized groupings (see Bakhit 2020).[14] From Adam's current perspective in the diaspora in Jordan, he describes his experience of marginalization:

> "Racism in Khartoum is hard. Let's talk about the regime of al-Bashir. They tried to force people to live in the way they understand as good […] they

---

[14] See Assafir Al-Arabi, May 21, 2022. "The Slums of Khartoum: On Life's Edge". Available at: https://assafirarabi.com/en/45200/2022/05/21/the-slums-of-khartoum-on-lifes-edge/ [Accessed on July 4, 2023].

> don't see people the same. Poor people who live in slums (Arabic: *hamish*) are quite forgotten. No streets, no water […] we are not humans in their eyes […]" (Biographical interview, Amman, April 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

The quotation shows Adam's retrospective interpretation of his life as an internally dislocated Darfurian in the capital, establishing a hierarchy between 'us' and 'them', in which 'we' are not regarded as humans by 'them'. He continues by talking about 'them', using a pattern of argumentation characteristic of this dominant everyday discourse among Darfurians who do not see themselves as Arabs:

> "[…] they aim to make Black people (Arabic: *assud*) suffer psychologically. Same strategies are designed against Black girls. They are perceived with less beauty because of their color of skin. They force them to use whitening creams, they want them to imitate Arab women, to be like them. At the end all this leads to self-hatred. In short: their ultimate aim is to Arabize the Sudanese people."

In this quotation we see how Adam interprets gendered body transformations and the lack of we-group pride in relation to the broader process of 'Arabizing' the Sudanese people. He shows that even matters such as using whitening creams became politicized during the 2000s. Regarding this phase of the collective histories of Sudan and Darfur, Darfurians from all groupings speak in the interviews about how collective violence shaped their family and life courses. Arab and non-Arab interviewees alike blamed both the armed opposition groups in Darfur and the forces led by al-Bashir for the perpetration of violence (see also Behrends 2008: 51ff.). I will turn to the emergence of some of these armed groupings and their ethnicized character on the level of everyday discourses to give a better idea of how armed conflicts in the region shaped the lives not only of those who took up arms, but also of civilians.

Khalil Ibrahim Mohamed, an Islamist who was Education Minister for Darfur in the 1990s and who is regarded as a descendant of established Zaghawa families, set up the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), an armed opposition movement in Darfur, in 2001 (see Prunier 2005: 93; Flint/de Waal 2008: 100). He was close to Hassan al-Turabi and reckoned with the support of 'tribal' leaders in Darfur (Flint/de Waal 2008: 100). Different ethnic groupings formed the Justice and Equality Movement, but their local base was the Zaghawa Kobe of the border region with Chad, mainly Islamists (ibid.). Khalil opposed the separation of Darfur from Sudan and aspired to become president of the country (ibid.). Already in 2001, some Darfurians who opposed the government in Khartoum attacked government positions (see Behrends 2007: 119).

However, Islamist influence was not the only factor leading to the development of armed groups and alliances in Darfur. After meeting with John Garang, Darfurian horse chiefs ('horse chief' was a 'tribal' position with responsibility for organizing group defenses in the case of conflicts) gathered local supporters and formed another armed opposition group, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) (see Prunier 2005: 93; Behrends 2007: 118f.). It seems that they received broad support from the local population and recruited members mainly from Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa Twer groupings (ibid.). At first, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army was headed by Abdel Wahid al-Nur, a Fur, and the secretary was Minni Minnawi, a Zaghawa Twer (ibid.). In contrast to Ibrahim Mohamed of the Justice and Equality Movement, al-Nur and Minnawi did not have political careers before the conflict, which gave them fewer power chances in terms of gaining international supporters, and contributed to the conscription of locals, especially in rural areas of Darfur. They thus had a broader ethnic base than the Justice and Equality Movement (ibid.: 120; Prunier 2005: 94).

Although the ethnic (tribal) composition of these armed groups changed over time, both are retrospectively regarded by interviewees as African groupings from Darfur. The Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit belong to what the racialized discourse that legitimized the perpetration of violence frames as the 'Blacks' from Darfur, or the Zurqa from Darfur. Historian Gérard Prunier (2005: 94) points out that both these armed groups "had little respect for the traditional tribal authorities that had administered Darfur for so long". Thus, different views grew up of the collective histories of the region, and people developed new perspectives regarding legitimate positions of authority inside their own ethnicized (tribal) groupings. These politicized ethnic views of the past did not necessarily correspond to other views of ethnic belonging (and the power asymmetries in terms of status positions that come with them) transmitted in families, we-groups and groupings. And, as reports at the time pointed out, this created a "generational dimension", neglected by many analysts, in which "the young rebels do not appear to trust those [traditional tribal, L.C.S.] leaders and at times have abducted, attacked or evicted them from areas under their control" (International Crisis Group 2004: 19).[15] Some interviewees referred to these intergenerational differences, especially regarding the diverse perspectives on how conflicts emerged in Darfur in the 1980s, the processes of negotiation based on the norms and rules of the different ethnicized (tribal) groupings (i.e., so-called traditional authorities), and how armed group formation in the 2000s challenged these norms (see ch. 4.4.2). Thus, interdependencies between groupings in Darfur and Sudan are shaped by an important component that potentially leads to conflict and which is often neglected in analyses: the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images regarding the collective histories of groupings in the region, and the norms and rules that come with them.[16] Access to firearms and the formation of new groups created power chances for young Darfurians with different ethnic backgrounds. Through the use of physical force, they were able to contest the authority of traditional tribal leaders which had hitherto been regarded as having a certain degree of legitimacy. This also put in check the different degrees of institutionalization that these traditional positions had gained in earlier periods, for example through the so-called Native Administration system. At the same time, powerful positions in these sociohistorically recent groupings and groups must also be regarded in the light of the power that members of certain families and previous generations had in the past, such as in the case of Musa Hilal and his position in the Janjawiid (see de Waal 2004). The norms and rules of the elder generation of their own we-groups were adapted by the younger genealogical generation to enhance their own power chances.

---

[15] See International Crisis Group, March 25, 2004. "Darfur Rising: Sudan's New Crisis". Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/darfur-rising-sudans-new-crisis [Accessed on March 9, 2024].

As a result of the development of armed groups, the conflicts between forces of the Darfurian opposition groupings and forces of the central government escalated after February 2003, when a garrison in eastern Darfur was attacked by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army. The members of this group initially called themselves the Darfur Liberation Front, while the central government referred to them as "the new armed group from Jebel Marra" (Prunier 2005: 93). At this time, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army joined forces (Behrends 2007: 121). An important difference between the two groups is that the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army was opposed to Islamist groupings that declared the support of Darfurians for al-Turabi, who was closer to the Justice and Equality Movement (see Marchal 2004: 53f.). Al-Bashir continued to foster repression in Darfur by further militarizing the Janjawiid (see Prunier 2005: 97), whose members came mainly from the southern Darfurian Rizayqat (see Behrends 2007: 125). Prunier explains the attractiveness of participating in these increasingly militarized and politicized forces as follows:

> "Sociologically the *Janjaweed* seem to have been of six main origins: former bandits and highwaymen who had been 'in the trade', since the 1980s; demobilized soldiers from the regular army; young members of Arab tribes having a running land conflict with a neighbouring 'African' group – most appeared to be members of the smaller Arab tribes; common criminals who were pardoned and released from gaol if they joined the militia; fanatical

---

[16] See also United States Institute of Peace, 2012. "Traditional Authorities' Peacemaking Role in Darfur". Available at: https://files.ethz.ch/isn/155469/PW83.pdf [Accessed on March 9, 2024].

> members of the Tajammu al-Arabi [Arab Gathering, L.C.S.]; and young and unemployed 'Arab' men, quite similar to those who joined the rebels on the 'African' side" (Prunier 2005: 97f.).

Other sources suggest that the Janjawiid were also militant members of the camel herding northern Darfurian Rizayqat and allies from Chad (see Flint/de Waal 2005: 41f.; Behrends 2007: 125). The extent to which this phase of the collective histories of different groupings is tabooed in present-day interactions, and how it shapes the transmission of collective belongings in the diaspora, is empirically investigated in another chapter (see ch. 4.4.2). What is clear is that joining the Janjawiid – regardless of tribal allegiances – provided an opportunity for members of different groupings in the region to increase their power chances through participation in an armed group that received support from established riverain groupings in Khartoum, as well as from international groupings. During 2003 and 2004, the Janjawiid carried out brutal attacks on groupings in Darfur seen as non-Arab (especially Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa but also Daju), and destroyed their villages (see ch. 4.4.3). The support of the central government became clear when members of the Janjawiid were integrated into the Sudan Armed Forces, joining for instance the Popular Defense Forces and the Border Guards (see Prunier 2005: 98). The possibility of joining armed militias, whether for or against the government of Sudan, thus offered concrete power chance for many young Darfurians. One author points to the uncontrollable character of armed groupings during this period: "All sides neither effectively commanding their own people nor being able to stop large-scale banditry or prevent splinter groups from forming" (Behrends 2007: 126).

Among the interviewees involved in this study, there are people who participated, or who are descendants of people who participated, in one of the two armed opposition groups mentioned above (see ch. 4.4.3), as well as people who participated, or have family members who participated, in the Janjawiid militias (see ch. 4.4.2). Some of those who joined the so-called rebel groupings in their early teens said they were taken by elder members to watch from afar how 'the Arabs destroy our villages', and that this motivated them to join. This is in contrast to claims that there was "no need for recruiting child soldiers" in Darfur because "young jobless high school graduates and high school dropouts were the main source of recruitment" for the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (Prunier 2005: 94, 202). Some interviewees witnessed sexualized violence, torture, and murder of family members and neighbors, and participated at an early age in burying the bodies of neighbors and family members in common graves. They eventually participated in armed fighting, and experienced bombardments by the central government while seeking refuge in the Marra Mountains (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.3; see also Prunier 2005: 100f.). Others joined the Justice and Equality Movement or the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army because this seemed the only way to survive in Darfur at this time. Some, who had been injured or lost body parts in the conflict, were taken to hospitals in Chad for treatment, where they filed applications for asylum with international organizations. For some interviewees, allegiance to an armed movement overlapped not only with their tribal belonging but also with their own familial belonging, in the sense that their relatives participated in one or the other movement (see ch. 4.4.3). The complexity of these interdependencies and the experiences lived through by the interviewees and members of their we-groups and families during this phase of the collective histories of Darfur and Sudan cannot be explained by the polarized we- and they-images of a conflict between Arabs as perpetrators and Africans as victims, even if these are dominant in the way the interviewees talk about their experiences in the present. Different belongings overlapped in this context of escalating violence, such as the gendered roles and expectations in families that those children who were perceived as 'stronger' would take up arms, or the different ways sexualized violence was perpetrated against women, men, boys, and girls in front of other family members. Power asymmetries inside families and we-groups shaped not only one's chances of avoiding being targeted by different forms of violence, but also the chances that some members had of surviving and escaping certain constellations. Given the quality of power interdependencies experienced by many Darfurians during this time, it is not surprising that regional and ethnic belongings are very sensitive topics for many interviewees in the present, as will be shown in the empirical chapters (see ch. 4 and ch. 5), and in the case of the Hassan family described below.

The different ways in which the conflict affected ordinary women and men (Seri-Hersch/Vezzadini/Revilla 2023), and the gendered interdependencies it still has in the diaspora, can be seen in the case of the Hassan family, who were interviewed in Jordan in April 2021 by Isaac Hamid, himself born in the diaspora to a family that is part Darfurian and part Palestinian. **Shama Hassan** (born in 1974), a Fur woman born in Khartoum, and **Ali Hassan** (born in 1969), her Zaghawa partner, were attacked by the Janjawiid at their home in southern Darfur in 2003 (see ch. 5.2). Their case gives us insights into how the experience of different forms of violence still shapes the everyday life of those living in the diaspora, influencing the groups and groupings they want to participate in or avoid, as well as their chances of having biological descendants and transmitting the we- and they-images of their we-groups. The experiences they lived through in this phase of their lives are unfortunately representative of the experiences lived through by many other families and communities in Darfur at that time, especially those who were regarded as non-Arab or Blacks (see Prunier 2005: 100ff.). Shama's family is from El Fasher, Darfur. Her father acquired a plot of land on which she and her husband built a house near Nyala, southern Darfur. She describes this phase of her life as follows:

> "The well-known problem occurred between 2003 and 2004, the Janjawiid problem in our town. Of course, there was theft, looting and rape. Many atrocities occurred. We can say that the city was completely destroyed and security became a big problem. […] living there became very difficult […]" (Biographical interview, April 2021, Amman, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, translated from Arabic by Shadia Abdelmoneim).

Her presentation of this period corresponds to the expectation of a focus on violence and rape, phenomena that were widely reported in different media outlets at that time, and which were observed in Darfur as recently as 2023.[17] As in many other interviews with Darfurians (see ch. 4.4.3), she ascribes this violent behavior to the Janjawiid. She constructs her own life story in relation to the collective history of the region and the way the history of her family was shaped by the Janjawiid problem:

> "[…] I'm talking about my own problem that happened to me. One day in the morning my husband and I were in the house, four people jumped into our house, masked, about eight in the morning they hit my husband, we had some belongings they took, and I myself had a special problem that I do not like to list."

It is clear that Shama does not want to tell the interviewer any details of her 'special problem' in that situation. We can assume that even after almost two decades it is difficult for her to thematize it. After the attack, Shama and her husband were forced to leave their house and move to a refugee camp, where they lived for some time. She never had contact with her family of origin again, who used to live in the same town as them: "my mother and father were killed, and our house was completely burned and became a destroyed piece of land." With regard to the transmission of the collective memories of the family and we-group, Shama's case shows how the physical extermination of her family of origin hindered the explicit transmission of we-images between family members. In other words, if Shama and Ali have children in the diaspora, they will not be able to learn from their maternal grandparents about the past and listen to their version of the conflict and how it affected the family history. The same can be said of other interviewees belonging to marginalized groupings in the Sudanese figuration. I will now turn to the interview with Shama's husband, Ali Hassan. The interview with Ali gives us insights into the rules and norms governing the dethematization and thematization of sexualized violence experienced during this phase of the collective past of the affected groupings. It explains the biological limitations to the transmission of the family history and the we-image of the groups the ancestors belonged to. Ali says:

---

[17] See Aljazeera, July 30, 2005. "UN report: Rape in Darfur continues". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2005/7/30/un-report-rape-in-darfur-continues [Accessed on August 20, 2023].

See Aljazeera, August 17, 2023. "HRW, UN raise alarm over rape accusations against Sudan's RSF". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/17/hrw-un-raise-alarm-over-rape-accusations-against-sudans-rsf [Accessed on August 20, 2023].

> "This was one of the secrets, but of course I can explain it to you in precise detail […] in fact, we are a family in particular, my wife and I, we went through unnatural circumstances, in 2003 we were in our town and her father, may God have mercy on him, had a farm. When the incidents (Arabic: *kubaisba*) happened in the days of the Janjawiid […]" (Biographical interview, April 2021, Amman, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, translated from Arabic by Shadia Abdelmoneim).

Like Shama, Ali presents this phase of the collective past as the 'days of the Janjawiid' and frames what happened to his family as a secret. Differently from Shama, he wants to talk about it. He continues:

> "[…] four people jumped in the house we lived in, we heard gunshots in the street, which we are used to, but on that day, the gunshot was not far away, it was close to our house. It was around eight and a half or nine o'clock, we were having tea and I was getting ready to go about my work. Four people jumped into our house, you can see the marks on my body, they beat me […] they stabbed me, before they stabbed me, of course when they jumped. It is my duty to protect my wife and myself […]"

It becomes clear that their everyday life in Darfur during this period was shaped by the 'normalization' of gunfire in the neighborhood. This does not make the experience less traumatic for him. He presents a gendered role regarding his duty to protect his wife. The relevance of the gendered aspect becomes clear in the continuation of his narration:

> "[…] I will be frank with you. This is a non-speakable word. Some things may be investigated. But these are the things that I went through, when they jumped into our house, my wife stood behind my back and I spoke to them, one of them shot me but did not hit me, in fact I was afraid, and when I avoided the shot, they stabbed me in the leg from behind and raped my wife in front of my eyes. I did not faint, but I imagined that I would die. I never thought they would leave me. Of course, they could have shot me while I was lying on the ground. They are four, two of them grabbed me, put the shoe on my neck, when my wife screamed, they hit her with the back of the Kalashnikov […] they hit her in the head and she lost her ear with the blow. They raped her and after a while we heard loud screams in the street."

Like Shama, Ali presents this experience of brutal violence as being difficult to talk about. It serves as an example of how individuals who are in a more powerful position in a figuration with others can inflict physical harm on the others. This summarizes the power relations in the figuration of those ascribed to Zurqa groupings and the groupings in Darfur backed by established groupings in riverain Sudan. Ali believes that other people witnessed what happened to them, which aggravates his feeling that the attack was a violation of their home, their family, and their physical bodies. It was not uncommon during this period that women – and potentially also boys and men – who experienced sexualized violence were physically marked so they could be identified in other situations (see Prunier 2005: 100). Moreover, it is a situation that was experienced as public even if there were no direct witnesses: "as I lay on the ground trampling on me, some people stood in the wall of our house. Of course, the walls there are short. I mean when one stands, he can see what's going on inside." Ali believes people witnessed Shama, presented as his wife in this situation, being physically violated by other men, the Janjawiid. It is implicit that he experienced it as a violation of his role as a 'man' and 'protector' of his family. It is known that during this period the Janjawiid openly said that they would 'rape' women as a form of shaming some groupings while retaking their land (ibid.: 102). The impression that Ali was affected by the discourse of those who perpetrated violence against his we-group, and that it remains an issue for him in the diaspora, shows the intertwinement between group pride, the dialogue in the family, and the transmission of we- and they-images related to experiences of difference forms of violence (see ch. 5.4). It also empirically demonstrates how they-images present in the discourses of dominant groupings – and especially the lived-through experiences associated with them – potentially become part of self-images. We do not know if Ali speaks openly about this event with Shama, but we know he believes that others in their home region learned about it. From his current perspective, he sees this as one reason why they had to leave Sudan: "After the rape the story spread in the city, my wife leaving the house and roaming freely became difficult." And this still plays a role in influencing which groups Shama and Ali take care to avoid in the diaspora in the present: "even here in Jordan, her movements became limited because we met people here who know people there who talked about us." The different forms of physical violence they experienced in their hometown continue to shape how they look back on their individual and collective past when talking about their experiences of migration. And the attack they suffered has put an end to the transmission of we- and they-images in the family and the constitution of a family of procreation: "We have no children, my wife was pregnant, but after the rape, she had complications and lost the ability to have children."

Similar experiences during this phase of the collective history of Darfur were not uncommon among interviewees belonging to marginalized groupings, as shown in their presentations. In other words, similar experiences form the collective memories of many families. And a central component of the we-image of Darfurians is having suffered from different forms of physical violence (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.3). In September 2004, the United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, used the term genocide in respect of the acts of violence perpetrated by the Janjawiid in Darfur with the support of the Sudanese government.[18] While it is not easy to juridically prosecute these acts as genocide (see de Waal 2005: 201f.; Gout 2019), different sources estimate between 40,000 and 400,000 direct and indirect deaths for the period between September 2003 and July 2005 (see Prunier 2005: 91, 148ff.; Straus 2015: ch. 8, 232f.; de Waal 2016: 125; 2022: 55ff.).[19] While backing up the perpetration of violence in Darfur, the Khartoum government signed a peace agreement with southern opposition groupings under John Garang in January 2005, ending the civil war between 'northern' and 'southern' Sudanese groups. In the same year, the Sudan Liberation Movement split between a mainly Zaghawa section under the leadership of Minni Minnawi, and a mainly Fur section under Abdel Wahid (see Behrends 2007: 120; de Waal 2022: 50). As a result, power in Darfur became fragmented and split between Fur and Zaghawa groupings, affecting access to land and causing many to migrate. This contributed to the formation of Darfurian diasporas, not only in other parts of Sudan, and especially in Khartoum, as we have seen in the case of Adam Salah, but also in other countries. The international attention this attracted (see Prunier 2005: 125ff.; Mamdani 2009: 19ff.; Hamilton 2011) meant that people's power chances for leaving the region could be enhanced by the way they presented their experiences in interactions with representatives of different organizations (see excursus in ch. 3.5.2). On July 2008, the International Criminal Court (ICC) filed genocide charges against Umar al-Bashir and other members of his government on the basis of their activities in Darfur. Umar al-Bashir was accused of:

> "five counts of crimes against humanity: murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture, and rape; two counts of war crimes: intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking part in hostilities, and pillaging; three counts of genocide: by killing, by causing serious bodily or mental harm, and by deliberately inflicting on each target group conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's

---

[18] See The Atlantic, August 17, 2011. "Inside Colin Powell's Decision to Declare Genocide in Darfur". Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/08/inside-colin-powells-decision-to-declare-genocide-in-darfur/243560/ [Accessed on January 1, 2023].

[19] See United States Government Accountability Office, November 2006. "Darfur Crisis. Death Estimates Demonstrate Severity of Crisis but Their Accuracy and Credibility Could Be Enhanced". Available at: https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-07-24.pdf [Accessed on January 1, 2023].

> physical destruction, allegedly committed at least between 2003 and 2008 in Darfur, Sudan."[20]

Throughout the period of the escalation of violence in Darfur, and after the decrease in its intensity, the central government was conducting negotiations with armed groups in southern Sudan. These negotiations led to the decisions that culminated in the independence of South Sudan in 2011. Conflicts between Khartoum and the south ceased but continued on a different scale in Darfur. This fostered migration in the following years to countries such as Libya, Egypt or Israel, and across the Mediterranean to Europe (see ch. 4). Individuals and families who had been affected by collective violence in Darfur and now lived in the diaspora in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt were affected by the escalation of processes of collective violence in these countries in the context of the deposition of rulers in 2011 (see ch. 4.4.2 and ch. 4.4.3). Members of the Darfurian armed movements living in exile organized networks of support and funding that contributed to sustaining armed conflicts in Darfur. This led to the formation of a transnational figuration between groupings in the diaspora and those living in Sudan and Darfur. While some interviewees and their families experienced physical violence in the early 2000s (see ch. 4.4.2), others had similar experiences at a later time, whether in Darfur, in other parts of Sudan, or in North Africa (see ch. 4.4.3). Some interviewees had migrated in the context of regime changes before the 2000s, and did not experience physical violence in their home regions in Sudan (see ch. 5.4.2). These different constellations have led to the publication of various studies devoted to the formation of Sudanese diasporas in various regions of the world (e.g., Fàbos 2002, 2007, 2012; Shandy 2003, 2006; Assal 2006; Abusabib 2007; Johnson 2009; Kustenbauder 2013; Phillips 2013; Weissköppel 2013; Ensor 2016; Wilcock 2018; Reumert 2020; Medani 2021: ch. 2; Richlen 2021; Bassi/Brücker/Franck 2022). Data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that between 1.2 and 1.7 million Sudanese lived abroad as of 2011.[21]

The case of **Atifa Yousif** (born in 1971), who belongs to an established Arab family from riverain Sudan, and who has lived in the diaspora in Jordan and in Germany, shows how the dire conditions of the regime led by Umar al-Bashir also put at risk the life of members of established groupings who were not directly affected by collective violence. Atifa has suffered from severe anemia since 2005, which requires weekly treatment in a hospital. The deterioration of hospital conditions in Sudan during the regime of Umar al-Bashir put her life at risk, and that of other Sudanese in need of health treatment. The established position of Atifa and her family allowed her to travel to different countries for treatment between 2010 and 2018, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Malaysia, Kenya, Niger, Germany, and Switzerland. Among other things, due to easier access to a medical visa for treatment in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Arabic being her mother tongue, she stayed in Jordan several times during this period. Like Atifa, many interviewees in this study traveled to Jordan under this legal category, especially those affected by physical violence in the Darfur conflict (see ch. 5.3). Atifa's migration to Jordan took place against the background of cuts in the healthcare system in 2012 under the government of al-Bashir. Allegedly, the government cut investment in healthcare infrastructure and health services because of the high costs of armed conflicts in various regions of the country. Atifa had gathered support from other patients to demand better healthcare in Khartoum. They wrote letters to the health minister and other governmental institutions, as well as to journalists. Government authorities increasingly regarded her actions as a threat to the regime. Her brother had studied in Germany and was living there. He helped her to visit Germany for short periods and to seek treatment from 2010. In 2018, with the help of her brother and her sister, Atifa migrated with her two daughters to Hamburg, Germany. Atifa's migration from Sudan challenges simplistic explanations of how armed conflicts shape family and life courses. Even though she belonged to an established grouping in riverain Sudan, this did not necessarily mean that her life was not at risk, due to the interdependencies between the budget available to the central government for healthcare and the need to allocate human and financial resources to suppress conflicts in other regions, such as Darfur. At the same time, Atifa had higher power chances and was able to seek treatment abroad, something interviewees belonging to marginalized groupings did not have without support from international agencies.

---

[20] See International Criminal Court, n.d.. "Al Bashir Case, The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, ICC-02/05-01/09". Available at: https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir [Accessed on July 4, 2023).

[21] See International Organization for Migration, 2011. "Migration in Sudan 2011. A country profile". Available at: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mpsudan_18nov2013_final.pdf [Accessed on June 24, 2023].

The migration courses available to members of marginalized groupings, such as those from Darfur, became increasingly expensive and dangerous with time (see Tubiana/Warin/Saeneen, 2018: 49ff.).[22] This contributed to the attractiveness of participation in armed militias as a source of income (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 28ff., 67).[23] This fostered the stigmatization of Darfurians, who were often seen by others as 'criminals' and 'bandits' (ibid.). During the 2010s, different Janjawiid groupings became institutionalized in the state apparatus of the Republic of the Sudan. After originally using the rhetoric of Arab superiority to legitimize the perpetration of physical violence against those they framed as non-Arab Zurqa in Darfur, they became a grouping that was increasingly significant in power disputes in riverain Sudan. Under the leadership of local leaders in Darfur, such as Musa Hilal – and not without conflicts (see ch. 4.4.3) – different Arab militias from Darfur had secured the control of migration and arms routes, as well as gold mines, which were central in expanding their power chances. Parts of the Janjawiid were restructured in 2013 and became the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), under the leadership of Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. Dagalo is an Abbala belonging to the Mahariya branch of the northern Rizayqat Arabs from Darfur (see Flint/de Waal 2005: 260, 284). This institutionalization of power in the hands of Dagalo, who can be seen as an Arab from Darfur in this context, took place in connection with changing interdependencies between the al-Bashir government and local leaders in Darfur who were in leading positions in the Janjawiid in the early 2000s.[24] Despite the mainly Arab composition of these forces and their history of Arab supremacism, there are reports by interviewees that members of non-Arab groupings felt attracted by the power chances to be gained from participation in the Rapid Support Forces (see also Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 28ff.). And this is so despite the fact that these forces participated in the fight of the central government against opposition groupings in marginalized regions, such as Darfur.[25] In the same year, 2013, Umar al-Bashir publicly denounced "attempts to splinter the people of Sudan and to foster differences between the people by reawakening regionalism and racism" and used the image of a Sudan without tribes – echoing attempts to promote a 'tribeless' Sudan in the discourse of leaders during the Mahadiyya regime – to foster the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation:

---

[22] See Clingendael, September 2018. "Multilateral Damage: The Impact of EU Migration Policies on Central Saharan Routes". Available at: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/multilateral-damage.pdf [Accessed on January 20, 2022].

[23] See 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].

> "[…] 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: 49f.).

This quotation from al-Bashir's speech summarizes the dominant discourse among established groupings during his regime, which dethematized the different collective histories of groupings in the country and the sociohistorical inequalities shaping their power chances. For three decades, al-Bashir's regime saw the weakening of trade unions, universities, civil society initiatives, and political parties, while relying on the support of changing alliances with pro-government local leaders and groupings.[26] Toward the end of 2018, his rule became increasingly contested in the context of growing dissatisfaction among the population due, among other things, to the price of food and demands for greater democratic guarantees and liberties in the country. There were demonstrations throughout the country (see Bakhit 2020: 932f.) which were supported by members of marginalized groupings, including those who regarded themselves as Arabs and lived in the riverain regions (see Berridge 2020), as well as by politicized university students, medical associations, and other civilian groupings. As in previous uprisings against other authoritarian governments in Sudan, women of different backgrounds played an important role in the call for al-Bashir to step down (see Nugdalla 2020).[27] Different groupings in the diaspora, many of whom had experienced torture and other forms of violence before their migration, demonstrated against the regime and found ways to support the protesters in Sudan.[28] Both in the diaspora and in Sudan, slogans were used which throw light on some of the demands being made. One is particularly relevant for studies of the collective histories of Darfur and Darfurians and the development of we-images: "we are all Darfur" or "the whole country is Darfur", depending on the translation into English (see Casciarri/Manfredi 2020: 42). This slogan, which can be interpreted as a form of solidarity with the perception of Darfur and its people as sociohistorically marginalized by central governments of Sudan and as targets of repressive violence, was contested in online forums by people who claimed to be Darfurians and by some Darfurian interviewees. They used a pattern of argumentation similar to that used by those Darfurians in Jordan who objected to the way the independence of Sudan was commemorated by members of non-Darfurian groupings (see excursus in ch. 3.5.1). The argument can be summarized as 'who can speak in the name of Darfurians?' According to interviewees from Darfur, certainly not members of established Sudanese groupings who have not lived through the same experiences of exclusion and physical violence as Darfurians, nor Darfurians regarded as perpetrators of physical violence against their neighbors. For some interviewees, the slogan suggests a homogenized 'we' that shows ignorance of the collective histories of diverse groupings from Darfur. Some of the protests were organized and documented online – a common practice since the Arab Spring in 2011 (see Kadoda/Hale 2015) – so that online discussions registered various perspectives regarding who was socially constructed as having legitimacy to speak on behalf of others. When communications were available, the use of social media platforms also played an important role in the organization of sit-ins and the documentation of violence perpetrated by the regime forces against non-violent protesters (see Lamoureaux *et al.* 2021; Izzeldin Malik 2022; Abdul Jalil 2023). As in these social media discussions, the Darfurian interviewees claimed that their marginalization in Sudan was worse than that of non-Darfurians. On the other hand, South Sudanese accused Darfurian groupings of participating in the past in processes of enslavement and perpetration of violence against groupings that lived in the region of present-day South Sudan. And members of other groupings changed the focus to a common Nubian collective past, presented as a way of unifying all Sudanese by dethematizing diversity (see excursus in ch. 3.3). Thus, we can see how the diversity of ethnicized (tribal) groupings in Sudan and their contrasting collective histories makes it difficult to construct a nation with representatives that are regarded as legitimate by members of all groupings. Some interviewees saw the dethematization of tribal differences as the only way to achieve 'one' Sudan.

---

[24] See Aljazeera, May 3, 2023. "Could an old tribal foe undercut Sudan's Hemedti?". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/3/could-an-old-tribal-foe-undercut-sudans-hemedti [Accessed on March 6, 2024].

[25] See Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2015. "'Men With No Mercy'. Rapid Support Forces Attacks against Civilians in Darfur, Sudan". Available at https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/09/men-no-mercy/rapid-support-forces-attacks-against-civilians-darfur-sudan [Accessed on January 6, 2023].

---

[26] See International Crisis Group, June 22, 2023. "A Race against Time to Halt Sudan's Collapse". Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/b190-race-against-time-halt-sudans-collapse [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

[27] See Open Democracy, November 28, 2021. "Women have always been at the forefront of Sudanese resistance". Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/women-have-always-been-at-the-forefront-of-sudanese-resistance/ [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

[28] See The Guardian, April 21, 2019. "Sudan's displaced citizens stir revolt from the sidelines". Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/21/sudan-diaspora-stir-revolt-from-overseas [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

See Aljazeera, August 25, 2019. "'The diaspora is key in helping stabilise a better Sudan'". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2019/8/25/the-diaspora-is-key-in-helping-stabilise-a-better-sudan [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

The will to join forces and overlook differences in order to fight an authoritarian ruler who had been in power for three decades is summarized in the presentation of the 'revolution' by **Ibrahim Ali** (born in 1991 in a non-Arab family in Darfur). Ibrahim was living in Khartoum at the time I conducted an online interview with him, and had participated in the organization of sit-ins and demonstrations: "The revolution led all Sudanese to collaborate. Nobody wants to talk about Africans and Arabs." From a figurational perspective, subsuming oneself under a broader we-image as Sudanese means greater chances of removing power from the hands of al-Bashir's regime. However, Ibrahim mentions another concern which he relates to the powerful position he ascribes to groupings living in the diaspora: "There are some voices who are outside who are trying to talk about separating Darfur." Ibrahim's comments throw light on the potential conflicts that the thematization of different collective histories in Sudan can bring. Comparable to the case of South Sudan, a strong we-ideal of Darfur as a nation can be used to support demands for autonomy by different groups, and this is perceived as a problem by members of certain groupings, even by some Darfurians interviewed for this study. The joint efforts of the protesters gained momentum, and in April 2019 the overthrow of Umar al-Bashir in a coup was announced by the Sudanese Armed Forces under the leadership of Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, backed up by the Rapid Support Forces led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, both former supporters of al-Bashir who had actively participated in the perpetration of crimes in Darfur.

3.6 The increasing power of Arabs from Darfur in the Nile figuration (2019–2024)

The transitional government – the Transitional Sovereignty Council (2019–2021) – led by civilians but mainly relying on the main groupings that supported the previous regime, such as the Sudanese Armed Forces under al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces under Dagalo, quickly led to further repression. Among the established groupings in riverain Sudan which historically had higher chances of participating in the central government, Dagalo's position illustrates how the use of we-images as Arabs and Muslims supposes certain ways of being Arab and Muslim. Dagalo was presumably regarded as an outsider from Darfur, despite the (armed) support he had managed to acquire from members of different groupings – especially Arabs – in the previous decades.[29] The presentation of Dagalo and many of his supporters as Darfurians conceals their participation in attacks against the so-called Blacks in Darfur. In other words, a central component of the conflicts in the Marra and Nile figurations since the 1980s is the military and para-military power chances related to the careers – and the alliances established both locally and internationally – that Dagalo and al-Burhan were able to pursue while participating in pro-Bashir armed groups in Darfur (see the case of Junayd Ahmad in ch. 4.2).[30] With different degrees of accountability, both are regarded by interviewees as the perpetrators of acts of physical violence against non-Arab groupings in Darfur. Moreover, Dagalo and al-Burhan are presented in interviews as being responsible for the massacre in Khartoum in June 2019 that killed more than one hundred people protesting in favor of a civilian-led democratic government.

In 2020 a potential step toward the de-escalation of collective violence in Darfur was taken by the Transitional Sovereignty Council when, together with various armed opposition groups, it signed the Juba Peace Agreement. These prospects for stabilization in Darfur changed when al-Burhan and the second-in-command, Dagalo, led a coup in October 2021 and dissolved the Transitional Sovereignty

---

[29] See AP News, August 6, 2019. "A new strongman in Sudan? Experts aren't so sure". Available at: https://apnews.com/article/fd1c3fcd5d2e45468bca29de5010c0ee [Accessed on January 7, 2023].

See Foreign Affairs, November 11, 2021. "Countering Sudan's Coup". Available at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/sudan/countering-sudans-coup [Accessed on January 7, 2023].

[30] See The New York Times, April 15, 2023. "Who is Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the head of Sudan's military?". Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/15/world/africa/sudan-military-abdel-fattah-al-burhan.html [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

Council.[31] Increasing disagreement between Dagalo, backed by the Rapid Support Forces, and al-Burhan, backed by the Sudanese Armed Forces, escalated into open warfare in 2023. Interviewees also speculate about the involvement of international governments and groups (e.g., Wagner Group), which support different sides of the conflict and are interested in resources in Sudan, such as access to the gold mines in Darfur. They claim that the United Arab Emirates and Russia back up Dagalo, while Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran support the Sudanese Armed Forces. From a figurational perspective, the war of 2023 in Sudan can be seen as a result of the increasing concentration of power in the hands of pro-government armed groups in Darfur. It exemplifies the uncontrollable character of power interdependencies, as al-Bashir surely did not expect, when he armed local pro-government militias in Darfur in the early 2000s (see de Waal 2004: 716), that local Arab leaders would amass enough power in the coming years to make Sudan's capital the stage of a war. The war of 2023 has also had important effects on the everyday life of Sudanese in different parts of the country, through the escalation of processes of collective violence that have otherwise shaped marginalized groupings in southern Sudan, Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan and eastern Sudan (see Berridge 2019). Consequently, processes of migration are currently shaping the realities of members of established groupings. As of July 2023, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that over 3 million people in Sudan had been displaced.[32] Estimates increased to 10.7 million people displaced by conflicts, out of which nine million were displaced within Sudan in January 2024.[33] The others migrated to neighboring countries. The fact that almost all regions of the country are currently affected by collective violence increases the risk that versions of the past and of the current war (2023–2024) told by members of established groupings will become dominant. For Darfurians, this means that their stories and knowledge of the past will be driven to the margins of the collective history of Sudan.

The power differentials in the figuration between the Rapid Support Forces led by Dagalo and the Sudanese Armed Forces led by al-Burhan have resulted in the further deterioration of livelihoods in different regions of Sudan. For Darfurians, this has translated into the reemergence of localized conflicts and new claims of genocide and 'tribal' conflict.[34] Particularly Masalit groupings in the region of Geneina have been targeted.[35] Moreover, opposition groupings in Darfur, such as the non-Arab forces of Minni Minnawi, governor of the region, and in South Kordofan, such as the mainly Nuba forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, have seized the opportunity to take up arms to defend themselves against armed groups fighting for control of the country.[36] With the increasing support of Dagalo by foreign leaders,[37] Musa Hilal, who led Janjawiid militias in Darfur in the early 2000s, declared his support for the Sudanese Armed Forces to counter Dagalo's Rapid Support Forces. His declarations were contested by leaders of his own ethnic grouping, who stated that "the tribe has not authorized any individual or entity to speak on its behalf, whether it is Musa Hilal, the Mahamid Coordination Committee, or any other."[38] For many Darfurians, disagreements between and within groupings potentially mean famine and genocide, as a past of collective violence perpetrated by these three armed groups in the region continues to shape family and life histories in the present.[39] The complexity of these changing alliances is illustrated by the support that non-Arab armed groups from Darfur that opposed the central government of Sudan under al-Bashir, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minnawi, felt compelled to declare to the Sudanese Armed Forces in November 2023. This not only shows how an exclusive focus on ethnicized (tribal) belongings fails to explain allegiances in the context of rapidly shifting power transformations in the region, but also how the focus on power struggles between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces has contributed to the dethematization in dominant everyday discourses in Sudan and in the diaspora of the popular civilian demands that led to these power transformations with the overthrow of al-Bashir. Now we may ask, what are the sociological implications of these different collective histories for the study of constructions of belonging?

---

[31] See Aljazeera, April 16, 2023. "Who is al-Burhan, Sudan's military de facto head of state?". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/16/who-is-al-burhan-sudans-military-de-facto-head-of-state [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

[32] See International Organization for Migration, July 6, 2023. "Nearly 3 Million Displaced by Conflict in Sudan". Available at: https://www.iom.int/news/nearly-3-million-displaced-conflict-sudan [Accessed on July 10, 2023].

[33] See International Organization for Migration, January 26, 2024. "Dire Plight of More Than 10 Million Now Displaced by Conflicts in Sudan Must Not be Ignored". Available at: https://www.iom.int/news/dire-plight-more-10-million-now-displaced-conflicts-sudan-must-not-be-ignored#:~:text=Geneva%2FPort%20Sudan%2C%2026%20January,Organization%20for%20Migration%20(IOM) [Accessed on March 8, 2024].

---

[34] See BBC, June 15, 2023. "Sudan conflict: West Darfur governor killed after genocide claim". Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65914569# [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

[35] See Human Rights Watch, May 9, 2024. "'The Massalit Will Not Come Home'. Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan". Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/05/09/massalit-will-not-come-home/ethnic-cleansing-and-crimes-against-humanity-el [Accessed on May 29, 2024].

[36] See International Crisis Group, June 22, 2023. "A Race against Time to Halt Sudan's Collapse". Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/b190-race-against-time-halt-sudans-collapse [Accessed on July 5, 2023].

[37] See Reuters, December 27, 2023. "Sudan RSF leader visits Uganda in first known wartime foreign trip". Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudan-rsf-leader-visits-uganda-first-known-wartime-foreign-trip-2023-12-27/ [Accessed on January 4, 2024].

[38] See Radio Tamazuj, April 26, 2024. "Mahamid tribal leaders trash Musa Hilal's declaration to support SAF". Available at: https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/mahamid-tribal-leaders-trash-musa-hilals-declaration-to-support-saf [Accessed on May 29, 2024].

[39] See Refugees International, February 2024. "Bearing Witness: Atrocities and Looming Hunger in Darfur". Available at: https://d3jwam0i5codb7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Eastern-Chad-Report-Jan-2024-1.pdf [Accessed on March 8, 2024].

3.7 Summary. Sociohistorical power inequalities and constructions of belonging

I have discussed in this chapter the sociological relevance of an approach that seeks to reconstruct changing power chances available to members of various groupings in different sociohistorical phases. I have shown how belonging to different groupings intertwines with the different degrees of legitimacy of various versions of the past. From a sociological and biographical standpoint this is crucial because people are socially constructed as historical actors in interactions with other people in the present. That is, when presenting their individual and collective views of the past, they construct their life stories in relation to their family histories and the histories of their collectives. And they do this against the background of sociohistorical power inequalities that shape the transmission of knowledge in their families and we-groups. Using the interviews conducted for this study, I have discussed two empirically defined interpretations of the sociohistorical development of differing power chances available to members of groupings living in different regions of present-day Sudan. This led to the heuristic definition of two main figurations – the Nile figuration in the Nile basin and the Marra figuration in the Darfur region. As I have shown, the groupings in these figurations have been shaped by the sociohistorical development of power inequalities – which should not be taken as unidirectional nor unchangeable. Based on the reconstruction of these power inequalities sketched in this chapter, I will summarize this discussion in terms of the belongings (and the sociohistorical power chances that come with them) that we need to be aware of, before turning to the empirical cases in the following chapters. The biographical and familial case reconstructions illustrate these changing belongings and their sociohistorically constituted relevancies for people who have migrated from Darfur and other regions of Sudan to Germany and Jordan. As discussed in the previous chapter, these belongings are heuristic notions (see ch. 2). In the biographical presentations of the interviewees, we see that certain belongings dominate in particular contexts, in different phases of the life of the same person, and for members of different generations of the same family or grouping. As I have already shown (see ch. 2.3), the sociohistorical background is important for sociological studies because it is not a matter of defining certain categories of belonging beforehand and showing their interdependencies, but of reconstructing the sociohistorical meanings of belongings, their development, changes in the interdependencies between different belongings, and changes in the interdependencies between we- and they-images (e.g., the sociohistorically constructed superiority of one grouping over others). In this chapter, I have shown this with a focus on Darfur in relation to Sudan. I have demonstrated how different ethnicized (tribal) belongings gained relevance in each figuration, and how their meanings overlap not only with external ascriptions of belonging, but also with status ascriptions within and across different groupings.

Power chances in Sudan are shaped by the regional and localized belongings a person has at birth. Being born in Darfur comes with being entangled in collective histories shaped by sociohistorical power inequalities. This affects a person's chances of participation not only in institutions fostered by successive central governments in the region – and consequently in established and dominant groupings – but also in groupings with collective histories that for a long time have been relatively autonomous from the Nile figuration. Being born in Darfur, or in one of the regional capitals associated with the collective memories of different groupings, such as El Fasher, Geneina, Nyala or Zalengei, can come with higher power chances in a figuration between local Darfurians and foreigners. Moreover, more or less individualized life stories and family histories are presented in relation to the histories of the region, which make it possible to construct one's power chances in the present against the background of broader – and in the context of Darfur often more politicized – sociohistorical power inequalities resulting from processes that are presented as Arabization, Ottoman occupation, or British colonialism (see ch. 5.4.1). Questions that became important for my case reconstructions were:

> a) How far was the region in which the interviewee was born and grew up shaped by different processes of enslavement and servitude (in its various forms and associated statuses, e.g. intra-African, trans-Saharan, Red Sea trade) and which groupings were part of figurations across time? Were people from a specific region, community, or grouping forcibly conscripted into armies, militias, or indentured servitude? Which chances of participation did outsiders have in comparison to families regarded as being from the region? Which forms of status ascription besides 'slave' represented lower chances of participation in established groupings? Which forms of violence shaped the region? How did these processes affect families and communities and how do people talk about these experiences? What kind of explicit and implicit knowledge of the past was transmitted, or not transmitted, in families and communities?
>
> b) How far was the region shaped by institutions and initiatives planned by the dominant groupings in the figuration, such as agricultural resources (e.g., agricultural schemes, land access, control of infestations affecting crops and herds, etc.), the control and eradication of diseases transmissible to humans (e.g., access to knowledge and resources used in traditional medicine, control

of cattle and crop diseases, health institutions), or institutions and practices for the transmission of knowledge (Quran schools, British-shaped schools, universities, formal health education, intergenerational groups in which the collective memories of we-groups are handed down, etc.).

Being born in a region or community where there are institutionalized forms of the transmission of knowledge for handing down the worldview of the dominant grouping increases the power chances of individuals belonging to established groupings. This overlaps with familial belonging, as such people have greater scope for action with regard to deciding to leave their family and community, their home region or their home country. These two components correspond to the varying degrees of establishment of families and groupings empirically observed in this study.

However, being born in certain regions of Sudan can be a source of stigmatization, as in the case of Darfurian interviewees who were regarded by established riverain groupings as 'slaves' or as belonging to other low-status groupings. On the other hand, regional belonging brought Darfurians together in protests against the central regime in 2019 and led to concerted action. Racialized prejudice shapes constellations that lead to migration. Also noteworthy is that certain groupings have knowledge of migration routes through the region while others do not (and certain armed groups physically control these migration routes).

Power chances are also shaped by familial and we-group belonging, such as the position one has in the familial constellation and changing roles and expectations in the family and community (e.g., gendered roles). The family and we-groups in which a person is born, the family's social position in the local figuration, and the position of the individual in the familial constellation (for instance their genealogical generation) are significant for the reconstruction of constellations that lead to migration. Important questions that make it possible to reconstruct power asymmetries connected to the familial and we-group constellation (e.g., status and role interdependencies) and the transmission of a we-image in the family and we-group are:

a) In what circumstances do people *regard* the we-image of the family and we-group with pride and when do they feel the need to hide their familial and group belonging?

b) In what situations do people *learn* to feel proud or ashamed of their familial and we-group belongings?

For example, has a we-image been transmitted intergenerationally that the family is a 'noble' family? Is this a matter of pride? What about a we-image of the family and we-group as having ancestors who were enslaved or belonged to low-status groupings? Do people learn to talk about this with pride or to hide it? In which contexts do people learn to present their family and themselves as belonging to a we-group of ‘noble’ origin, or of ‘slave’ background, for example? What power chances arise from or are hindered by these presentations? In which figurations do these presentations create more chances to participate in certain groupings and groups, and in which others do they hinder participation?

The transmission of knowledge inside the family, we-group, and local community led to questions regarding which members are entitled to have access to certain forms of knowledge, and which are perceived as being destined for other activities and roles. For example, who is perceived inside the familial and we-group constellation as someone that elder generations will spend time talking with? Which norms and rules in the family and we-group shape these perceptions of who is entitled to knowledge? Which members of the family and community are perceived as being capable of going to school, and which are ascribed roles such as marrying into a more powerful family, joining one or the other armed group, staying with the elders at home, or fetching water (an activity that can be risky in contexts of collective physical violence). These roles are connected to expectations within the family and we-group regarding the more individualized responsibilities people must assume in relation to other family, we-group, and community members. They often overlap with gendered and social age expectations and roles. For this study, I determined empirically from case to case the extent to which these roles overlapped in the familial and we-group constellation, and how they changed with power transformations in the family and in other figurations. An empirical approach to this question showed how gendered roles, for example, are ascribed and negotiated inside families, and according to different and changing norms and rules in we-groups. Often, these roles are embedded in the broader norms and rules of we-groupings, such as the case of so-called honor killings among certain Bedouin groupings in Jordan (see ch. 5.4.3). In other words, it is not useful to predetermine how far a sociological phenomenon is a matter connected to gender, family, or ethnicity, but rather to show the power interdependencies shaping the sociogenesis and transformations of relevancies that socially construct gendered or ethnicized phenomena. Precisely because of these changing power interdependencies within and across belongings, many components that I will discuss below are interdependent with familial and regional belongings. From the interviewees’ perspectives, belonging to an ethnic grouping or to a grouping of slave descendants, for example, is often regarded (i.e., sociohistorically constructed by the interviewees) as interdependent with their familial and regional belongings and histories, especially in terms of their ‘ancestry’. I found that questions regarding marriage negotiations were a good way to uncover the overlapping of familial belonging with other belongings, and to reconstruct dethematized belongings, such as slave status or belonging to a family of nobles (see ch. 4.4.3). Questions about marriage negotiations proved to be an important test of tacit norms and rules in the we-groups. Hiba Nasr, an interviewee born in Iraq, explains how ethnicized (tribal) belongings continue to be relevant even for Sudanese families in the diaspora, like hers: “racism appears more in cases when one proposes marriage. The first question in the family is about the tribe.” This is crucial because, in the case of marriage between members of different ethnicized (tribal) groupings, the norms and rules of the dominant belonging will be used to regulate conflicts between individuals and families. Familial belonging and positions in the family constellation can shape land access, the inheritance rights of children and wives, or religious and political positions, such as that of collective and individual custody of the land, to name just a few.

Familial belonging often overlapped in various ways with the linguistic belonging of the interviewees, such as proficiency in reading and interpreting texts, or dealing with the state bureaucracy. I also asked questions regarding the dominant language(s) spoken in the family. This is important in multilingual societies, such as Darfur and Sudan, where family members might come from different linguistic backgrounds or speak more than one language in their everyday lives. I was interested in which languages– and consequently we- and they-images – were transmitted in the family by different generations, which members learned which languages, and whether they learned them by participating in groups outside the family. I sought to avoid essentialist perspectives that tend to equate speaking a particular language with belonging to an established grouping. Thus, it is important to reconstruct how far the dominant language in the figuration where people live is also the dominant language in the family and community. Especially in connection with the perpetration of physical violence and chances of migration, the interviews showed that linguistic belonging is commonly used to presume ethnic belonging, especially in Darfur (see ch. 4.4.3). Linguistic belonging can also be a source of discrimination, which can decrease power chances. In this context, dialectal variations can affect belonging to a grouping of Arabs, for example, when those who are perceived as speaking improper Arabic (Sudanese Arabic: *rottana*) have their belonging to the more established grouping denied (see ch. 4.4.1). When it comes to migration, the transmission of knowledge regarding which regions are easier or less dangerous to pass through depends on having a shared language, and speaking the local language increases chances for participation in established groupings in arrival societies.

The reconstruction of ethnic (tribal) belonging and its role in establishing relations of ‘inferiority’ and ‘superiority’ was important for this study, against the background of processes of racialization and politicization. Ethnic belonging was often seen by the interviewees as an extension of familial belonging. They often interpreted gendered roles in terms of the norms and rules of their ethnic we-groupings (see ch. 5.4.3). Ethnicized (tribal) belongings have been politicized and de-politicized in different phases of the history of Sudan and Darfur, and interviewees used ethnicized and racialized we- and they-images to thematize the collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Darfur, Sudan and other parts of northern Africa (see ch. 4.4.2). This was clearly a central component influencing concrete chances of migration in the region, and the forms of violence experienced by members of different groupings before and during their migration (see ch. 4.4.3). To avoid essentializing ethnicized (tribal) belongings, it was crucial to reconstruct cross-grouping and intra-grouping statuses and interdependencies, such as ascriptions of belonging to different occupations (butchers, blacksmiths, etc.) and their changing local and sociohistorical meanings. These were often connected with marriage prohibitions, for example, and gave me concrete examples of how ethnic belonging is not necessarily dominant for members of the same ethnic grouping. Against the background of the collective histories of Darfur and Sudan, religious belonging often overlapped with certain ways of being an Arab, at least on the level of the presentations by the interviewees, even if their lived-through experiences showed the opposite. Combining these belongings with we-images of superiority was often used in this region in the past to legitimize processes of physical violence. Belonging to a single homogeneous grouping of Muslim Arabs is far from the empirical reality of Sudan, as there are groupings who are Muslims but who do not speak Arabic or regard themselves as Arabs. And there are others who speak Arabic and practice Islam but do not regard themselves as Arabs. More importantly, there are various ways of being a Muslim in Sudan, and these are related to different power chances. In the interviews, religious belonging, especially Muslim belonging or belonging to specific Muslim groupings, often remained in the background of constructions of belonging. In other words, the interviewees tended to dethematize their religious belonging. In general, it was implicit in the interactions that Sudanese are Muslims, but more differentiated Muslim belongings emerged in responses to follow-up questions (see ch. 5.4.2). Religious belonging was explicitly thematized when it had served to justify the perpetration of physical violence against the interviewee and their we-group, in which case persecution because of religious belonging in the region of origin was presented as a legitimate ground for asylum claims (see ch. 4.4.3).

For some interviewees, national belonging to Sudan in terms of citizenship and duties was significant. While some underlined the importance of fighting for their rights as Sudanese, and presented a we-image inclusive of the diversity of other groupings in Sudanese society, others felt a strong belonging to a particular region, such as Darfur, and participated in groups fighting for the independence of this region from Sudan. And while some benefitted from their rights as Sudanese citizens in Sudan and in the diaspora, others who belonged to more marginalized groupings and had been persecuted by national forces avoided state institutions, such as embassies, in the countries to which they had migrated, due to their fear of persecution and deportation. These differences shaped the migration chances of interviewees in concrete ways, for example in terms of access to papers (see ch. 4.4.3). The use of different national citizenships in previous phases of Sudan's history created important chances for migration, which shaped different generations of Sudanese citizens born in Sudan and in the diaspora (see ch. 5.4.3). Differentiations based on national belonging among Sudanese living in the diaspora show the relevance of belonging to groupings with contrasting generational experiences. Those who live as Sudanese nationals in the diaspora can be ascribed to two main groupings: *Sudanese who experienced migration from Sudan* and *Sudanese born in the diaspora*. Life under authoritarian regimes and the experience of collective violence in Sudan are relevant for some Sudanese, in contrast to others who do not see the government as a threat, or those born in the diaspora. Similarly, a younger generation of Darfurians who experienced the escalation of violence in Darfur during their childhood in the 2000s ascribes responsibility for the conflict to older generations, as many of them put it in the interviews. This applies particularly to non-Arab Darfurians, whose dominant belonging is often to Darfur rather than to Sudan. They have no sense of belonging to the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation.

All these sociohistorically constructed forms of belonging are shaped by power differentials on the level of everyday discourses in different groupings and communities, and guide peoples' actions in their everyday lives. And they can easily become politicized in particular situations and interactions. Throughout the histories of Darfur and Sudan, they have fostered participation in political parties, armed and non-armed movements, groupings, and we-groups. They have been used by established groupings to legitimize their higher power chances. They have also been used to legitimize different forms of violence, and hence have often constituted the background that led individuals and families to leave their home region or to migrate from Sudan. On the other hand, and not less importantly, people have organized themselves to contest the politicized uses of belongings that have been ascribed to them or to previous generations of their families and groupings. How presentations of belonging change their significance in different phases of the life of the same person and different generations of the same family or grouping, and how the sociohistorical power inequalities discussed in this chapter configure the background from which presentations of belonging emerge, will become clear in the following empirical chapters. These chapters will show the explicit knowledge at hand that enables people to make sense of their own lives and their family histories against the background of the broader sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped the collective histories of their groupings. This is important for a sociological study because this knowledge – and the different views of the past that come with it – is used in interactions in the present to back up claims of belonging to one or another grouping. In other words, these views of the past are interdependent with the changing biographical legitimation that they acquire, both intergenerationally and during the lives of members of different groupings.

4 Migrants from Sudan in Germany

4.1 Preliminary remarks

I will focus in this chapter on the findings of interviews conducted with people who migrated from Darfur and other regions of Sudan to Germany. I concluded the previous chapter with a discussion regarding the development and transformation of sociohistorical power inequalities that configure the background against which Sudanese people and their descendants sociohistorically construct their autobiographical presentations. In this chapter, I will empirically demonstrate how belonging to certain groupings becomes more important than other belongings in different phases of the life of the same person before, during and after experiences of migration. I will first discuss the characteristics of field access in Germany, and how this shaped changing relevancies in the constructions of belonging presented by the interviewees, i.e., how they constructed their life stories as part of broader family and collective histories (ch. 4.2). I will then discuss how these presentations intertwine with the experiences people lived through in the past, the dominant everyday discourses in groupings and communities of Sudanese in Germany, the interactions of the interviewees with members of established groupings in the diaspora, the power inequalities shaping asylum regimes in Western Europe, and the politicization of ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images (ch. 4.3). After this, I focus on a reconstruction of a) the changing presentations of belonging in different interviews with the same person, and b) the concrete chances of migration that these people had before leaving their home regions, during their migration courses, and in the diaspora in Germany, with reference to their ascribed belonging as 'Arabs' from riverain Sudan, 'Arabs' from Darfur or 'Zurqa' ('Blacks') from Darfur (ch. 4.4). I conclude with a discussion of how power chances in the present shape the way people see their individual and collective past when talking about their experiences of migration and constructing their belonging to one or another grouping (ch. 4.5). Following an analysis of the different ways people construct their belonging to we-groups and groupings in Sudan, and how this has changed in the course of their lives, I present three types. The empirical cases show that the way people talk about themselves and the others in the present is often far removed from their actual experiences and those of their families, and the experiences of the we-groups or groupings to which their ancestors belonged. I discuss in the summary how this potentially hinders the intergenerational transmission to descendants born in the diaspora of we- and they-images, and the memories and explicit knowledge about migration.

4.2 The characteristics of field access in Germany[40]

I conducted biographical-narrative interviews and several follow-up interviews in Germany between November 2018 and June 2023, as part of the project "Biographies of migrants from Syria and West Africa in Brazil and in Germany" (see ch. 2.3). In the interviews with people who had experienced migration from Sudan, especially from Darfur, the they-, we- and self-presentations are much more strongly influenced by the collective belongings of the interviewers, or the belongings attributed to them, than is the case in the interviews with migrants from other regions of Africa that I conducted for the same project.[41] All interviewees from the sample in Germany are first-generation migrants from Sudan. That is, they belong to the genealogical generation that was born in Sudan and experienced migration from Sudan. This is important because the findings from the analysis of the interviews with Sudanese born in the diaspora show other relevancies in the way they look back on their individual and collective past (see ch. 5).

I will first make some remarks on my research in Germany. 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

---

[40] A previous version of parts of this chapter was published in the book "Transnational Biographies: Changing We-images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees" (see Cé Sangalli 2022).

[41] For the case of Ghana, see Cé Sangalli/dos Santos Gonçalves 2020; Senegal, see Rosenthal/Cé Sangalli/Worm 2022; and Mauritania, see Rosenthal/Albaba/Cé Sangalli 2022.

Sudan between October 2018 and July 2020. With one exception, I conducted all the face-to-face interviews together with **Mahadi Ahmed** (born in 1983 in Khartoum), 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, and this is how he was regarded by most of the interviewees in Germany. They 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 these face-to-face interviews conducted in Germany, I conducted one online biographical-narrative interview with a young man from Darfur who had attempted to migrate to Western Europe. This contact allowed me to include in my study the perspective of those who did not succeed in their migration attempts. I met this contact in person in 2020 when he visited Germany with a delegation of the short-lived Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan. And I also interviewed him in person in Uganda in December 2023. Differently from the sample in Jordan, I have not yet been able to conduct interviews in Germany with Sudanese who were born and live in the diaspora (e.g., Weissköppel 2004; 2013).

As I have already mentioned, the way people look back on their past from their present perspective depends on their definition of the present situation and the belongings they ascribe to other participants in the present interaction (see Goffman 1956: 1ff.; Rosenthal 2018: 37ff.). I will show below how analyzing the way in which the interviewees defined Mahadi Ahmed and myself 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 are clear in the following example from an interview with **Junayd Ahmad** (born in 1998 as registered in his documents in Germany; actually born in 1992 in Darfur). This interview is a continuation of the first biographical interview with him, and was conducted 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 this case) in shaping the autobiographical presentations of interviewees from Sudan. Junayd belongs to the Fur from Darfur, a grouping that falls under the they-image of the non-Arab 'Blacks' of Darfur or 'Zurqa' (see El-Tom 2009a: 85ff.). As shown by the following quotation, Junayd 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, as he puts it, became clearer later in our interaction. 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 by Mahadi. At first, he speaks of similarities between the Arab and the Islamic projects, and then differentiates between the Muslim and the Christian Arabs.

> “[…] the Islam civilization project oder [*or* in German, 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- […]” (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 was that he feared I would share information with Mahadi.[42] The reasons for that were not clear to me at the time, nor during the interview. I still had the idea that my role as a Brazilian outsider would create more 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 sa:y 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” (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 as belonging to the coalition that holds power in Sudan (the so-called 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 groupings indeed held high-ranking positions in the army and in the government before, during, and after the regime led by al-Bashir. And as I have already mentioned (see ch. 3.5.2), the International Criminal Court (ICC) has accused some of them of collaborating with Umar al-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".[43]

---

[42] I wrote detailed observation memos relating to the interview, participant observation, and other (also online) contexts of interaction with interviewees. This allows me to document changes regarding interpretations of cases and feelings during and after fieldwork. On the criteria for writing and analyzing field notes and observation memos, see Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 81ff., 97ff.).

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. My awareness of the tacit attribution and relevance of ethnicized belongings 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 and having interviewers of different ethnicities. My 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 (e.g., Darfur, the North, the Blue Nile). 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 (Blacks) and the Arabs, as he puts it. In this context, the term Zurqa is a they-image used by those who regard themselves as Arabs to refer to those they regard as non-Arabs, who are often – but not exclusively – from Darfur. Another clarification is necessary. I focus in this chapter on the non-Arab groupings from Darfur. This means leaving out important non-Arab groupings in the Nile figuration, such as those in southern Sudan (present-day South Sudan), the Nuba Mountains, or even in riverain Sudan. I also do not consider groupings from the so-called Dar Fertit region (parts of present-day Central African Republic and South Sudan) who were often regarded in the past as non-Arabs and non-Muslims – so-called pagans – and had these ascriptions used by established non-Arab groupings from Darfur to justify, among other things, the perpetration of physical violence against them, especially in the context of enslavement (see ch. 3.4; Prunier 2005: 10). Against the background of the different collective histories of these groupings, it is not surprising that the use of the term Zurqa can acquire very pejorative meanings depending on who uses it, as it was – and still is – used to legitimate the perpetration of acts of physical violence by members of Arab groupings in Darfur (see ch. 3.5.2). It is to the diversity of different collective histories of groupings living in Darfur that Junayd latently refers when he talks about the lack of trust in interactions between members of different Zurqa groupings, in this case the non-Arab Fur and Zaghawa from Darfur,[44] a clear sign of changing trust relations:

---

[43] See 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 International Criminal Court in proving the crime of genocide in Darfur, see Philippe Gout (2019).

> "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 from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

Clearly, trust between Darfurians and Sudanese is important 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 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'."

In the continuation of the interview, the interdependencies 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, 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 and who led the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in their war against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) after May 2023 (see ch. 3.6). In the following quotation, his argumentation pattern, and especially his glorified view of the community of different groupings and groups in Darfur, is quite clear. Junayd refers to al-Burhan as the person in charge of coopting Arab militias from Darfur to kill the Zurqa, their neighbors, and says that this by no means applies to all 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

---

[44] The Zaghawa can be regarded as Zurqa in Libya and Chad but as Arabs in Darfur in some situations (see Prunier 2005: 45).

> Burhan's call **JOINED** these killer fighters […] 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 that he did not trust even his family members. He himself imagined that his father, a Zurqa Fur, knew about the attack on their village when people were raped and killed, and houses were burned down. To understand Junayd's retrospective idea that his father was involved with the government in Khartoum, it is necessary to consider religious belonging. His father had an important Muslim position in Darfur, which Junayd uses in the present to explain his father's allegiance to the Islamist government of al-Bashir. Thus, religious status, and the allegiances attached to it, can provide ground for suspicion, even within families. Junayd, who was twelve years old at the time, thinks his father left him, his siblings, his mother, and other relatives to die. The extent to which these fantasies 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 belief that his father knew about the attacks. This helps to explain Junayd's later participation in Zurqa armed opposition groups in Darfur, which led to improved chances for him to leave the country, because he lost one leg in an air raid by the central government, was transferred to a hospital in a neighboring country, and eventually was able to leave the country on a medical visa.

As I have shown above, speculation and mistrust can be a central component of 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. These accusations were made especially in one case connected with the topic of sexualized violence or rape, as interviewees often put it. In this case, information 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 possibility of being physically attacked did we agree. We initially found it hard to take the threat seriously, because it came from someone we framed as a victim and could easily empathize with. Mistrust and speculation were also a central feature of the interviews in Jordan (see ch. 5.2). The interviewers there 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 belonging in the past (see the case of Sabbha Amin in ch. 3.5.2), or who have heard that Sudanese agents infiltrate refugee camps in Western Europe (see ch. 4.4.2).[45] In the case of the interviews I conducted together with Mahadi, the fact that I was not framed as German also played an important role. As Mahadi told me, almost all the interviewees would have refused to do an interview with Germans. Others refused to give interviews to researchers, having in mind that both Mahadi and I had studied at universities. This shows that ethnic belonging was not necessarily always the most important component shaping 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 in Germany. And the women that we were able to include in the sample are from established families, had access to formal education, and had lived in other countries outside Africa before arriving in Germany. This is a contrast to most of the men in the sample, who only in rare cases had access to formal education or had lived outside Africa before coming to Germany. While the women we interviewed had traveled by air, the men had arrived in southern Europe after crossing the Mediterranean from Libya, Egypt or Turkey. It is a fact that more men than women 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 find themselves in more vulnerable positions than men (see Ben-Ze'ev/Gazit 2020: 5, 14). Another important aspect 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.).

The we- and they-images connected with different constructions of belonging in the diaspora, and the way they are associated with the perpetration of acts of physical violence in Sudan, became clear not only in the context of interviews in

---

[45] This is of course not exclusive to the situation of Sudan and can also be seen, for example, in the case of Eritreans in Kampala, Uganda (see Rosenthal/Hofmann 2023: 105). I have been able to observe this myself in the case of Rwandan migrants living in Uganda, who said they were afraid to thematize ethnicized belonging in the diaspora, due to government interdependencies between Rwanda and Uganda. Interviewees from Uganda told me they were afraid of talking about the ethnicized belonging of Rwandans in Uganda because of potential repression by the Rwandan government.

Germany, but also during participant observation. The case of **Halid Hasan** (born in 1969 in the region of Gezira), who belongs to the Batahin Arabs from riverain Sudan, exemplifies how ascriptions of belonging can lead to physical violence in the diaspora. I know that members of non-Arab groupings from Darfur living in Germany tried to kill Halid under the assumption he had collaborated with the government led by Umar al-Bashir (see ch. 3.2). He was accused of being part of Janjawiid militias. Halid, however, did not talk about this with me and Mahadi during our interview. We learned this information from sources outside the context of interview. In other words, he did not thematize this image in which Arabs appear as the perpetrators of violence in Sudan. Focusing his presentation on the 'terrible' way Germans treated him and other Africans was more relevant for him in the interaction with us. We can say that Halid's subsumption under a homogenized they-image of Africans in Germany brought him greater chances to avoid the suspicion – which he latently thematized off record with us when he mentioned he was accused in Sudan of carrying a gun that had been used in a murder – of having participated in militias hired to exterminate Zurqa individuals and families in Darfur, whom in other conversations with Mahadi he referred to as 'inferior' and as 'slaves' (Arabic: *abiid*). To understand how it was possible for him to be subsumed under such a they-image, we need to consider the figuration between Africans and old-established Germans in Germany, where Germans tend to see all Sudanese simply as 'Blacks' or 'Africans'.

4.3 The figuration of so-called Africans and old-established Germans in Germany

For the sake of this discussion, the term old-established Germans is used here to refer to Germans who have been living in Germany for generations and other Europeans living in the country who socially construct themselves as whites. My analysis of the interviews shows that these people strongly tend to subsume the different groupings of Sudanese under the they-image of Africans who are denied belonging to the grouping of whites. In other words, even those who regarded themselves as Arabs in Sudan tend to be perceived as Africans or Blacks in their interactions with old-established Germans and Europeans. We were told by many interviewees that their skin color determined how they were perceived by established groupings in Germany who saw themselves as belonging to the grouping of whites. This is particularly interesting in the case of interviewees who in Sudan regarded themselves as Arabs, and not Zurqa (Blacks), because in figurations with non-Sudanese Arabs in Germany (such as Syrians) or with old-established white Germans they increasingly experience contestation of their belonging to a grouping of Arabs. The perception of Arabs from Sudan as Blacks and as Africans by old-established Germans also influences the way members of Zurqa groupings contest the Arab belonging of Arab Sudanese. Backed up by the dominant everyday discourse in Germany that all Sudanese are Africans, members of the Zurqa emphasize that Arab Sudanese are in fact Africans. Interviewees of all groupings from Sudan mentioned experiences of racialized prejudice in interactions with old-established Germans and members of other groupings of migrants, such as Syrians, Russians, or Ukrainians. However, no one mentioned having experienced physical violence in Germany. This does not mean they are not confronted with the threat of physical violence, especially in neighborhoods which the interviewees associated with support for far-right politicians and discourses of racialized superiority. This is not surprising when we consider that members of groups who believe in their racial superiority are employed in important state institutions in Germany.[46]

These racialized images play a role in the everyday life of the interviewees, who are confronted with them despite the existence of Germans and Europeans who regard themselves as descendants of Africans and who call Western Europe their home (see Amoateng 1989; El-Tayeb 1999: 155ff., 2001; Ransiek 2019: ch. 2). From a sociological perspective, being regarded as white in Germany means enjoying an established position, from which I have myself benefited in some interactions, for instance, when framed as Syrian by interviewees. In other situations, however, for instance when framed as Syrian or Turkish by old-established Germans, I have been regarded as an outsider: "whiteness is not a worldview but a position of power and as such a collective legacy of racism that is also at play when *whites* do not (want to) acknowledge it" (Arndt 2017: 43, emphasis in the original, translated from German by the author). In other words, the dethematization of we-images as whites and Germans by old-established Germans corresponds to the dethematization of socio-historical power inequalities that have favored the established position of whites in German society (see Frankenberg 1993; Ransiek 2019: 12). The pseudo-scientific racial theories developed in Germany, and their use by groupings of old-established Germans to legitimize the perpetration of acts of physical violence in the German colonies, as well as the planned extermination of certain groupings in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century (see Burleigh/Wippermann 1991: ch. 2; Weikart 2003; Teicher 2020: 11ff.), still continue to shape attitudes of German superiority, as manifested in the they-image of Blacks and Africans mentioned by the Sudanese interviewees. Many interviewees interpret the racialized we- and they-images with which they are confronted in interactions with old-established Germans in the present in the light of the collective history of National Socialism in Germany.

---

[46] See The New York Times, June 10, 2021. "Elite German Police Unit Disbanded Over Far-Right Group Chat". Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/10/world/europe/german-police-far-right.html [Accessed on June 23, 2023].

For those interviewees who regarded themselves as Arabs in Sudan, it is hard to accept that members of old-established white German groupings and other groupings of migrants that do not come from Sudan should regard them as Blacks and Africans. For many interviewees this racialized they-image also involves being confronted with prejudice associated with their religious belonging as Muslims.

The same cannot be said of members of groupings who had been denied Arab belonging in Sudan. They had often found themselves in marginalized situations in Sudan and along their migration courses to Western Europe, especially in the Sahel or the Middle East. We- and they-images as Africans and Blacks are socially constructed emic terms used by these interviewees. The way the terms were used varied, including their use by the same person in different interviews. This is particularly clear in the case of people who had migrated from figurations in which these terms served as socially constructed they-images to justify the use of different forms of violence against them. In the interviews in Germany and in Jordan (see ch. 5), these images were often accompanied by the terms 'slave' (Arabic: *abd*), 'the one with the black/brown skin' in Jordan (Arabic: *abu samra*), or the more homogenized (and often pejorative) term 'Fur' (Arabic: *furawi*). It is crucial to consider that these polysemic terms have an enormous significance in the context of the collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Darfur and Sudan (see ch. 3.5; see also Makris 1996; Jok 2001; Sharkey 2008: 28; Vezzadini 2012b, 2018; Hale 2012: 431f.). In other words, in addition to being confronted with the racialized worldviews these they-images are associated with in Germany, these interviewees have also been confronted with their use as references to collective histories of enslavement in their home regions and along their migration courses. Their presentations show that they have had to face racialized they-images in figurations in Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Israel, Turkey, and Ukraine that associate the socially constructed perception of a dark skin with the status of slave, a pejorative term in these societies. Several interviewees in Germany mentioned they were called slaves in interactions with members of established groupings in Africa, such as Arabs in Sudan and Egypt or Libyans in Libya (see ch. 4.4.3), as well as in Europe. In Western Europe, they were told by some of those they regarded as Europeans to return to Africa. More importantly, this form of violence was not always restricted to the level of discourse. Some of them had experienced forced labor and enslavement in Sudan, in the Sahel or in Libya (see ch. 4.4.3). It is not surprising that they-images of being Africans and Blacks were used by them as we-images for claiming their rights when they arrived in Germany, as in the past they had led to the restriction of movement, or even incarceration, in Sudan. Some interviewees took the chance – for different reasons – to participate in groupings or we-groups in Germany that resisted these external ascriptions (see ch. 4.4). They openly contested their subsumption under a they-image as Blacks or Africans. This was often the case with members of groupings who did not regard themselves as Arabs in Sudan. Those who regarded themselves as Arab only on rare occasions constructed themselves in the diaspora as being Black or African. These were often Arabs who participated in groups of activists, or who had access to formal education (e.g., by enrolling at university in Germany). In other words, explicit resistance to subsumption under racialized and ethnicized they-images was connected with increasing participation in groups of activists and formal education. People who found themselves in more marginalized positions often suffered more from the ethnicization and racialization of their biographies (see ch. 4.4).

The analysis of the interviews conducted in Germany shows that further differentiation regarding status interdependencies among Sudanese groupings and communities in the diaspora is necessary if we are to explain how sociohistorical power inequalities experienced by people and their families in Sudan were transformed during migration, and still shape their different power chances. What became clear during fieldwork in Germany – and in the interviews in Jordan with the grouping of Sudanese who experienced migration from Sudan in contrast to those born in the diaspora (see ch. 5.3) – is that the homogenized they-image as Africans used by members of established groupings to refer to the Sudanese hides important sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped different life courses and family histories, chances for migration, and especially the very different ways in which processes of collective violence were experienced by individuals and their groupings, i.e., their different collective histories. How different experiences in Sudan shape autobiographical constructions in the diaspora is shown below.

Contested versions of the past and the dominance of ethnic and regional belongings. It is striking that the interviewees in Germany, who were all born in Sudan and experienced migration from Sudan, thematize the history of collective violence in their initial presentations, but frame the conflicts – and thus their migration projects – quite differently. In other words, they feel the need to present themselves and their families by thematizing how processes of collective violence in Sudan shaped the history of their region, as well as their family and life courses. This empirical finding shows the crucial importance of experiences of collective violence for those affected by these conflicts. The initial presentation by **Junayd Ahmad** (born in 1992), introduced above, demonstrates exemplarily the intertwinement of experiences of collective physical violence with the construction of family histories and life stories. After some brief information about the meaning of his name and the region he comes from in Darfur, Junayd tells about his school time in the context of “the war between the north and the south” (see ch.3.5.2), 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 then introduces his views of the war in Darfur as a war between Africans and Arabs:

> "[…] this was what people called the war between African (Arabic: *afriqia*) and Arab tribes (Arabic: *qabila*). 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 familiar with the collective history of the conflicts in Darfur, it is probably clear from this form of presentation of the conflict that Junayd comes from the Darfur region and belongs to the grouping of Africans, as translated into English by Mahadi, himself an Arab from Sudan. During our meetings in Germany, Junayd used a broader we-grouping of Africans to refer to those he did not regard as Arabs in Sudan. For more localized references to his we-group in 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 El-Tom 2009a: 85ff.; Hassan/Ray 2009: 19) and is often used by people who define themselves as Arabs in Sudan to refer to people they define as non-Arabs from Darfur (see ch. 3.5.2; see also de Waal 2005: 199, 2015: 84ff.; Sharkey 2008: 27). In other words, the sociohistorically constructed term Zurqa (Blacks) designates those who are not perceived as Arabs in Darfur. The grouping of the Zurqa includes the ethnic groupings of the Fur, Masalit, Daju, Zaghawa, and others, but this distinction is not made by all interviewees from this grouping. This suggests that to a certain extent they are able to accept the homogenizing they-image as non-Arabs or Africans from Darfur, for example in everyday interactions in Western Europe (see 4.3). Some interviewees who belong to the Zurqa grouping, like Junayd, challenge the self-definition as Arabs by people from Darfur. They often refer to them as Africans or Zurqa who 'forgot their language and their history'. That is, people question the legitimacy of the versions of the collective histories of these groupings presented by some of their members when constructing their collective belongings. Below I will show how people construct interdependencies between these we- and they-images while talking about themselves, the others, and their experiences, in order to expand their power chances in interactions with members of more established groupings. In addition, I will discuss how these images are related to the contestation of certain views of the past, and to what extent people reinterpret stigmatizing they-images as a we-image that brings them more power chances in certain figurations.

In the interviews I conducted in Germany, especially among people from Darfur – but also among first-generation Sudanese in Jordan (see ch. 5.3) – the enormous relevance of interdependencies between images of Zurqa, African, and Arab groupings, and the extent to which we can assume which grouping the speaker belongs to from the way they present their collective histories and its conflicts, as in the above quotation, is apparent in the way people talk about different experiences of violence, including sexualized violence (see the case of the Hassan family in ch. 3.5.2). This becomes clear in the continuation of the interview with Junayd. He recalls the collective violence in Sudan and in Darfur in terms of his own and his family's experience of it:

> "[…] 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 histories of a country and a region that has been marked by collective violence for generations, it should be pointed out that the construction of one's own life story in relation to 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 finding is that members of different groupings have very different ways of talking about violence and the histories 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 they-, we- and self-presentations, and are central to shaping the processes of remembering, especially among interviewees from Darfur. In the terms of figurational sociology, people experience a social process of ethnicization of biographies (see also Rosenthal 2004). This means that, over time, ethnicized perspectives of the past, and constructions of the collective history relying on ethnicized images, have gained plausibility in their we-groups, groupings and local communities, and in their own lives. In other words, these ethnicized images gain sociobiographical legitimacy because they are shaped by the biographical experiences people live through in different phases of their lives. This includes the fact that in the interviews I conducted in Germany, as well as among first-generation migrants from Sudan in Jordan (see ch. 5.3), the Zurqa, who do not self-define as Arabs, mostly speak about the Arabs from Sudan and the Janjawiid as the perpetrators of acts of physical violence against them, their families, and their we-groups.

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 (i.e., it reproduces racialized perspectives of people) (see O'Brien 1986, 2015; Spaulding/Kapteijns 1991: 149f.; Behrends 2008: 48; El-Battahani [2004]2009: 43f.; Madibbo 2012: 304f.). Other studies have discussed how violent conflicts in Sudan can imply ethnicizing logics (Suliman 1997; de Waal 2005: 200; Hassan/Ray 2009: 18). My findings show that these ethnicized images and categories are a powerful sociohistorically constructed reality with which the interviewees are confronted in their lifeworlds in Sudan and in the diaspora, especially in interactions with other Darfurians and Sudanese, but also during the asylum procedures. As I have shown above, sociohistorical power inequalities have developed and been transformed in relation to these ethnicized images, especially against the background of processes of collective violence and different forms of enslavement and servitude (see ch. 3). They have been used by members of established groupings to maintain their more powerful positions in relation to members of other groupings in Sudan, as well as to justify status interdependencies and the perpetration of physical violence (see ch. 3.5.2). To ignore their sociohistorical relevancies and the different collective histories of these groupings would mean overlooking the fact that members of different sociohistorically constructed groupings have had very different chances of participation in power in the figurations in Sudan. Similarly, a sociological analysis focused on the present would fail to take into account the sociohistorical background against which these images developed and have been used, and the stigmatization processes associated, for example, with slave descent, or the ways in which members of certain groupings contest these images when they are used to justify different forms of violence against them. Not only do these images shape the they-, we- and self-presentations of my interviewees, but they are also contested and the legitimacy of certain versions of the past is questioned. They play an important role in determining 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 for asylum to the German authorities, some individuals explicitly state that they belong to Zurqa groupings, such as the Fur, the Masalit, or the Zaghawa. In Germany, the "personal interview is the applicant's *most important appointment within his/her asylum procedure* [emphasis in the original]". In this interview "they describe their biographies and situations, tell of their travel route and of the persecution which they have personally suffered".[47] The presentation of a life story that is regarded as plausible by the authorities allegedly increases people's chances of being recognized as victims of persecution in their home regions, which entitles them to refugee status in Germany. Thus, life stories and family and collective histories are central to the study of migration to Western Europe. Similarly, the French asylum system is based on ethnicized and regional differentiation, where members of certain tribalized groupings from Sudan have higher chances of staying in the country with a legalized status (see Gout 2020). Some studies of Sudanese refugees have pointed out the politicization of discourses shaping life stories, and argue that this explains the dominant focus on violence in interviewees' presentations:

> "Being 'a refugee' is a powerful concept that has developed an associated rhetoric and vocabulary; in order to be a refugee, you must be *overwhelmed* or *traumatized*, *uprooted* in a *perilous exodus*" (Kindersley 2015: 221; emphasis in the original).

Even if people are expected to make a plausible case that their life is in danger before they can be granted refugee status in Western Europe, we must avoid falling into the trap of overlooking the fact that presented life stories are *social* constructs (see Fischer/Kohli 1987; Rosenthal [2005]2018: 155ff.). In other words, they are the outcome of collective power interdependencies and experiences lived through by people, and the intergenerationally transmitted stocks of latent and explicit knowledge they have at hand to talk about their experiences in the present (see ch. 2.1). Put simply, when conducting interpretive research, we must differentiate heuristically between presentation and experience, whether in the analysis of presented life stories, or in the interpretation of historical sources, interviews, photographs or observation memos (see Bogner/Rosenthal 2023: 570). We cannot deny the *reality* of a presented life story by claiming it represents an ideologized discourse, or just one particular version of the past. Rather, we must reconstruct the processes and changing relevancies that have led to this life story being presented in this way and not in another. We must try to uncover the norms and rules that make a certain presentation – or view of the past – more plausible in a particular interaction, and how it relates to lived-through experiences in different phases of the life of the same person, and in different generations of the same family and grouping. This will help us to understand the sociohistorical power inequalities that have led to this presentation, and the sociogenesis of the they- and we-images used in it (see ch. 2.1.5).

Against the background of the use of ethnic categories in asylum procedures in Western Europe, and the necessity to prove that one has suffered persecution in one's home region, it is not surprising that these components shape the autobiographical constructions of people from Sudan living in the diaspora. Thus, the contentiousness of the ethnicized images must be understood not only in relation to a synchronic negotiation of differences between groupings in the present, but also in relation to the differing collective histories and interpretations available to members of different we-groups and groupings. What proved to be important in this study was the observation that ethnicized and other belongings are *biographically* relevant for people, and that the biographical legitimacy of these belongings can change in the course of a person's life, or in different interviews (see also Schultz 2022: 65). This means that ethnicized we- and they-images have different meanings according to the interdependencies of the figurations in which people present themselves, as well as the interdependencies in the figurations in which people experienced certain phenomena in the past. Ethnicized (tribal) belongings and images can be considered as a matter of political contentiousness in one figuration (see Schlee/Werner 1996; Salih 1998), or as a reference to a shared language or collective origin in another. Reconstructing the interrelations between life history, ethnicity, migration, and autobiographical presentations turned out to be highly complex because the interviewees looked back on very different experiences of collective violence, both in Sudan and during their migration.

---

[47] See Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, November 28, 2018. "The personal interview". Available at: https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylverfahrens/Anhoerung/anhoerung-node.html [Accessed on March 5, 2022].

During my fieldwork in Germany, I was confronted with the empirical question of which figurations, and in which different phases of life, one or another belonging was relevant for those who had experienced collective violence and migration. I will therefore 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 familial and collective histories and their own life history, as well as to their experiences of different forms of violence. Based on biographical case reconstructions, my central finding is that the way in which people are affected by different forms of violence plays a significant role, not only in the processes leading to migration, but also in the migration course itself, and in the way people talk about it and about themselves in the present. Different migration chances and experiences of violence are intertwined with ethnicized we- and they-images, such as the Zurqa and the Arabs, as well as with collective histories that allow people to understand themselves as belonging to a particular ethnic we-group. My analysis of the they-, 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 were less affected by violence, shows that:

1. those affected by physical violence and marginalization talk about these experiences using ethnicized we- and they-images, and refer to their perception of sociohistorical processes of marginalization affecting their we-groups and regions;

2. those less affected by violence or who can be regarded as potential perpetrators of violence tend to dethematize conflicts in Sudan and avoid the question of who is responsible for them.

Those who perpetrated acts of physical violence can also be seen as affected by violence, although they were in more powerful positions than those they targeted. This is important when we focus on power asymmetries and interdependencies between so-called victimizers and victims because both experiences shape views of the past and constructions of collective belonging, as becomes clear in the empirical case studies.

I have already discussed how access to the field, my positioning, and that of other people, influenced the framing of the interviews, as well as some of my findings regarding which topics are thematized in front of whom, and the balance between trust and mistrust. This gives a good insight into the dynamics of interaction in the diaspora, and a differentiated picture of status interdependencies between members of different groupings who migrated from Sudan to Germany. It is not surprising that the interviewees' linguistic and ethnic belongings in their regions of origin continue to influence which groups or groupings they are willing or able to participate in. I will illustrate this with a discussion of three cases based on biographical-narrative interviews, and in one case several follow-up interviews: Ahmad Hassan (born in 1984), who belongs to the Rubatab Arabs from the River Nile region of Sudan; Taha Abdalla (born in 1985), who belongs to the Mahamid Rizayqat Arabs from northern Darfur; and Umar Yahyia (born in 1996), who belongs to the Daju Zurqa (Blacks) from Darfur. A contrastive comparison of these cases, together with analyses of other interviews, shows the extent to which the life stories and family histories of the Sudanese in the present are influenced by:

a) discourses and official procedures in Germany (including asylum procedures and asylum interviews at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), and the framing of the interviews with the interviewers;

b) everyday discourses and practices among communities of people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in Germany (which tend to produce ethnicized ascriptions of belonging, labeling people either as 'victims' or as 'perpetrators' of violent acts);

c) the ethnic, religious, and political groupings they belonged to in their regions of origin;

d) their very different experiences of violence before and during their migration courses;

e) the knowledge at hand intergenerationally transmitted in their families and we-groups.

I will also show how the stories people tell in the present (life stories) intertwine with the experiences they have lived through in the past (life histories). In other words, how people's individual and collective past before, during, and after their migration shapes the stories and versions of the past they tell in the present. This will enable me to draw conclusions concerning how people who have migrated from Sudan to Germany and to Jordan and their descendants (see ch. 5.4) remember and talk about their experiences in the diaspora. In terms of the processes of migration, this is what affects participation chances in the so-called societies of arrival because on it depend:

a) the definition of which (larger) groups and groupings people want to be, or can be, part of (and which they explicitly avoid),

b) people's interpretations of their belonging to we-groups and groupings in various situations and phases of their lives (the knowledge they acquire and changes in their interpretation patterns in respect of themselves and the others through their participation in different groups), and

c) the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images (i.e., the collective memories of different we-groups and groupings).

A social-constructivist 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 phases of their lives and in different generations of families and groupings (see ch. 2). The empirical case reconstructions that I will present evaluate the we-, they- and self-images presented by interviewees in the light of their past experiences, instead of taking them at face value. I am interested in the questions: a) to what extent the we- and they-images of members of different groupings are reinforced or transformed by discourses prevailing in the society of arrival; and b) how this interacts with the interviewee's current perspective and attitude to their collective and individual past. The chapter concludes with a discussion on collective memories and the biographical and collective functions of changing ethnicized (tribal) belongings.

4.4 Changing presentations of belonging and contrasting experiences of migration

I will now turn to the way the migration courses of three interviewees, and changes in their presentations of belonging, are shaped by their individual, familial, and collective histories. I will contrast the cases of two interviewees who belong to Arab groupings with the case of one interviewee who belongs to a Zurqa grouping. It will become clear that the Arabs are not a homogeneous grouping but differ significantly in their regional belongings, as well as in other important ways, such as status interdependencies across and inside groupings, access to formal education, and other sociohistorical power inequalities that form the background of their autobiographical constructions. At the same time, those belonging to the Arabs presumably – because they do not talk explicitly about it – were not directly affected by collective physical violence in Darfur or in other regions of Sudan, even if in one case there is information from other sources regarding his participation or the participation of members of his extended family of origin in the perpetration of acts of physical violence. By being socialized with Arabic as their mother tongue, the Arabs have more knowledge regarding migration routes in North Africa and the Near East, and in Western Europe, than the member of the Zurqa. The life and migration of the interviewee who belongs to the Zurqa differ from those of the other two men in that his life course has been repeatedly and massively shaped by different processes of collective and physical violence. His case also shows how the power chances available to his family were severely hindered in their home region, Darfur, at least during the period between 2018 and 2024.

These differences between the three men are manifest on the level of their autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations. The members of the Arab groupings, who were presumably less affected by processes of physical violence, are more often confronted in the diaspora with the question of who is to blame for the violence in Darfur and Sudan. Thus, they tend to avoid using we-images that suggest potential or real responsibility for violent acts in their home country. 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 Arabs from Sudan. The other Arab emphasizes that ‘we are all Africans’. In the case of the member of the Zurqa grouping, who experienced extreme and protracted physical violence, there is a willingness and a need to speak about responsibilities and about the perpetrators of violence in his home region. In other words, he relies on the dominant ethnicized discourse of a conflict between Africans and Arabs, in which the latter appear as the perpetrators of violence.

As other interviews I have conducted show, it is possible to say that while those affected by physical violence want and need to talk about it, and do so in a homogenizing and essentializing way, those belonging to we-groups and groupings that, a) are more established, b) presumably were or are less affected by physical violence, and c) perhaps even participated in the perpetration of acts of physical violence, seek to disassociate themselves and their groupings and families from the they-image of Arabs as perpetrators of violence in Sudan.

4.4.1 The migration course of an Arab from the River Nile region

In the eyes of other Sudanese living in the diaspora, **Ahmad Hassan** (born in 1984) is a member of the so-called Arabs from riverain Sudan who enjoy privileges in terms of participation in central power and state institutions (see ch. 3.5.1). Even if Ahmad does not regard himself as a privileged person, and even if his Arabic accent has led to experiences of discrimination in interactions with other more established Arabs in Sudan and in the diaspora, his migration course and family history are telling in terms of the more established background from which he comes, in comparison to members of groupings from Darfur. Despite this, his increasing participation during his migration course and in the diaspora in groups from Ethiopia and Eritrea led him to regard himself and his family as Eritreans. The analysis of his presentation shows that this is connected not only with the power chances that claiming this belonging offers him in the diaspora, but also with the stigmatization processes affecting Eritreans and Ethiopians in his home region in Sudan.[48] Thus, Ahmad's is a case in which a familial past connected to a we-image as Eritreans gives him more power in the diaspora, to the extent that it begins to hinder the transmission of the we-image as Arabs that was dominant in his family of origin in Sudan.

I have already pointed out that the difference between belonging to Sudan and belonging to Darfur was an important component of 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 explicitly mention their Arab belonging. It was, nonetheless, obvious to Mahadi that they were Arabs and Muslims, even if more differentiated belongings within these groupings were not always so clear. 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 shows that a homogenized image of the Arabs does not correspond to how former members of the less established Arab groupings retrospectively interpret their socialization in Sudan, or how they experienced it in the past. This case gives insights into how experiences along the migration course – in this case, increasingly alongside people from Eritrea – affect the way people present themselves, their families, and their we-groups in the present of the interview and in everyday situations. Similarly, it shows the sociobiographical processes and experiences through which different views of the past gain more legitimacy for people. Ahmad was born in Teyrat, River Nile state, the region where other genealogical 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 than 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, a sign of the family's more differentiated Muslim belonging. Today, as Mahadi Ahmed told me, the Rubatab are regarded as one of the main riverain Arab groupings 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 histories of the various Rubatab groupings when we visited him in 2019 in Heilbronn, in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. He also did not explicitly present himself as an Arab. This belonging was implicit throughout the interaction, which took place mainly in Arabic, and occasionally in English. Instead, he presented himself as someone who increasingly became aware of his family's Eritrean origins and customs, as he puts it. 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. That is, his experiences of participation and establishment among Eritrean groupings increasingly legitimate his own constructions of himself and his ancestors as belonging to the Eritreans. 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 application 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 application at any point of the interview. I heard about his asylum 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 difficult and dangerous migration to the European Union in 2009. Ahmad invited us to his home 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, who participated with Ahmad in a group discussion organized by us. Some of them had been granted refugee status on the basis of their Eritrean background. Since Ahmad comes from a region of Sudan which was not associated with collective violence back then in 2019, 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.[49] 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, a change happened while he was at school in Khartoum and was due to the way he spoke Arabic:

---

[48] See Aljazeera, December 28, 2019. "Xenophobia threatens to undermine Sudan's revolution". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/12/28/xenophobia-threatens-to-undermine-sudans-revolution [Accessed on March 13, 2024].

> "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 people" (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 established Arabs who lived in Khartoum, in a more urbanized context than 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. This belonging means having lower power chances than those living in established positions in Khartoum. Potentially, Ahmed's family is an Arab family that experienced migration to the city, a significant belonging in terms of power chances in this sociohistorical context. However, the decisive point in the above quotation is that in retrospect he sees his family, who were Arabic speakers, and so I assume also Arabs, as having a status different from that of other more established Arabs. For him, the dominant feature in the presentation of his belonging is the way he and his family spoke Arabic, which he experienced during childhood as being different from the Arabic spoken by his school mates. Besides revealing more differentiated status ascriptions inside Arabic-speaking groupings, Ahmad's experience also shows the intergenerational relevance that speaking a certain variety of Arabic can have and how it comes with different power chances already among children during school. According to interviewees, certain varieties of Arabic are pejoratively referred to as gibberish and are a criterion for inferring belongings in the same way as other non-Arabic languages in Sudan (Sudanese Arabic: *rottana*) (see Prunier 2005: xvii). To understand Ahmad's presentation in the interview, it is necessary to consider the power chances available to him, and how his contact with people who were not from Sudan along his 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 easily entitle him to asylum in Germany, it was advantageous for him to migrate alongside people from Eritrea. We can assume that if he had migrated with members of Zurqa groupings from Darfur, he would have been framed by them as a riverain Arab from the region of Khartoum, which would have lowered his chances of being granted refugee status. 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 practices in the light of an 'Eritreanized' past.

---

[49] Meanwhile, with the escalation of conflicts in Sudan in 2023, there are reports that people from riverain Sudan also qualify for asylum in Western Europe (see ch. 3.6).

The intertwinement of language and changing belongings is a central component that explains the different power chances and the chances of migration available to members of different groupings in Sudan. I will show in the following case studies 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 members of certain groups. In the case of Ahmad, despite the discrimination based on his way of speaking Arabic, he and his family did not experience acts of physical violence in Sudan, as far as we know, at least until the war of 2023. This is an important contrast to the other cases, especially those of Zurqa and Arabs who participated in armed opposition groups against the regimes before, during and after that of Umar al-Bashir (see the case of Sabbha Amin in ch. 3.5.2). Ahmad's migration chances were very different from those of Taha and Umar, who were born and raised in Darfur. As we will see in the cases of Taha and Umar, Arabs and non-Arabs 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 an Arab and Muslim 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 uncontested 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. In other words, it is a language institutionalized by different state apparatuses in the wider region, which certainly has an important effect on the transmission of we- and they-images, as well as strengthening sociohistorical power inequalities in terms of formal knowledge transmission. Moreover, Arabic often serves as a lingua franca between different communities of migrants living in Western Europe. Based on my interviews, it is possible to say that those who had Arabic as their mother tongue experienced a more privileged migration course than those who could not speak Arabic, including members of the Arabs from Darfur.

4.4.2 The migration course of an Arab from Darfur

In the eyes of Sudanese living in the diaspora, **Taha Abdalla** (born in 1985) is an Arab from the region of Darfur, although members of other groupings from Darfur who do not regard themselves as Arabs, such as Junayd Ahmad (see ch. 4.2) and Umar Yahyia (see ch. 4.4.3), can contest Taha's self-definition, and that of his collective grouping, as Arab. Others would say they are Africans who claim to be Arabs. This is not an individual experience lived by Taha, but rather part of a broader politicized discourse on how belonging to African or Arab groupings shapes, among other things, the future of the country (see Hashim 2019). And similarly, while Taha and his family are framed as Arabs in Darfur, upon their migration to Libya and in Western Europe, they become Africans in the eyes of members of more established groupings, as will become clear. While this is connected with experiences of racialized discrimination in some figurations, it increases power chances in other figurations, as can be seen in Taha's presentation as a migration activist in Germany.

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. More importantly, Taha's grouping has been constructed sociohistorically as one that experienced marginalization in the Marra figuration in relation to non-Arab groupings, such as the Fur, the Masalit and the Zaghawa, especially in the context of the institutionalization of power inequalities by the British colonial administration (see ch. 3.5.1). Despite discursive construction of his grouping as a marginalized Arab grouping from Darfur, Taha's birth in an established family and his migration course from Darfur to Germany, involving crossing the Mediterranean, show that he has enjoyed certain privileges which he downplays in his self-presentation. Moreover, his case shows that collective violence in Darfur affected members of different groupings and their families differently. In the case of Taha, it becomes clear that family members were perpetrators of physical violence against members of more marginalized groupings in Darfur – the so-called Zurqa – especially during the early 2000s. This violence created very diverse chances for migration in the region, especially against the background of the collective histories of enslavement and servitude and the use of certain we- and they-images for the legitimation of violence, as can still be observed today.[50] Taha's case also gives insights into how Arabs from Darfur can find themselves in situations along their migration courses in which members of more established groupings perceive and treat them as Blacks and/or Africans. While this can translate into experiences of racialized prejudice, they are generally in a more secure position than those who are not defined as Arabs, such as the Zurqa, in the dominant everyday discourses, especially in different regions of Sudan and North Africa. This influences not only their migration chances, but also the way they present themselves and their we-groups, and how they look back on their past. An important finding in my analysis of Taha's case is his refusal to thematize certain topics in our interview. Taha explicitly refused to talk about his family history and his concrete ethnic (tribal) belonging. However, for Mahadi, with whom I conducted the interview with Taha in March 2019, Taha's Arab and Darfurian belongings soon became evident, especially since Mahadi belongs to an Arab Ja'ali 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 all our other interviewees, should refuse to tell us his familial and collective histories. It took some time for us to understand the reasons for the tense atmosphere during the interview. And we observed in the following years that he cut off his contact with several other Sudanese. Evidently, Taha felt threatened because of the history of his extended family and his Arab background.

Almost five years after our interview with Taha, Mahadi casually met a friend from Sudan in Hamburg in December 2023, who is also a friend of Taha's. Amir Salah, who belongs to a non-Arab grouping from the border region between Chad and Darfur, talked with Mahadi about the 'violence' of the Janjawiid, which is how many interviewees refer to the Rapid Support Forces and their actions in Darfur in the context of the escalation of violence in Sudan in 2023. To Mahadi's surprise, Amir said he thought that Taha may have been a member of a Janjawiid militia in Darfur in the past. Mahadi asked more about this, and Amir revealed that Taha's uncle was a well-known leader of Janjawiid militias during the early 2000s at the apex of violence in Darfur (see ch. 3.5.2). This information confirmed our hypothesis, formed in 2019, that Taha belonged to an Arab family from Darfur. In fact, Taha's family belongs to the powerful Um Jalul clan of the so-called Arab Mahamid of Darfur (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 33f., 41). The Mahamid are one of the three branches of a larger grouping of camel-herding tribes of the Arab Rizayqat of northern Darfur (ibid.: 8). And Taha's uncle was presented as early as July 2004 by the US State Department "as one of six militia leaders alleged to be responsible for serious crimes in Darfur", besides recruiting and commanding Janjawiid militias in the course of the escalation of violence in the early 2000s, when Taha was around 18 years old.[51]

---

[50] See United Nations News, June 24, 2023. "Sudan: OHCHR calls for 'urgent action' to end militia attacks on people fleeing El Geneina". Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138072 [Accessed on June 25, 2023].

Let us consider how we first established contact with Taha. Mahadi had met him, and also Amir Salah, around 2013 at a demonstration for the rights of migrants in Hamburg, Germany. Alongside German activists, the migrants, especially West Africans and Darfurians, were demanding, among other things, a safer legal status for migrants in Germany.[52] They stayed 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, more than 25,000 migrants from Africa arrived in Lampedusa in May 2011.[53] 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

---

[51] See Human Rights Watch, January 20, 2008. "Sudan: Notorious Janjaweed Leader Promoted". Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/01/20/sudan-notorious-janjaweed-leader-promoted [Accessed on March 6, 2024].

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

[53] See 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 of 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].

(Arab or not) are likely to be seen as African by people living in Western Europe, who are often ignorant of the diverse collective histories of people from Sudan, and Africa in general (see ch. 4.3).[54] Thus, Taha's choice can be interpreted as adoption of the they-image with which he is permanently confronted in Germany, and that it corresponds to his experience of life in Italy alongside a group of other African migrants. On the other hand, 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 Zurqa groupings. When it comes to being recognized as refugees in Germany, the Zurqa groupings are in a better position, because of their victimization by the so-called Arabs in Darfur. Members of the Zurqa from Darfur and so-called Africans from other regions of Sudan who are scarred by collective violence had higher chances of being recognized as refugees in Western Europe than Arabs from Sudan until the war of 2023, because a) they were more often represented as victims of collective violence in the dominant media and juridical discourses in Germany, and b) many of them *de facto* 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 (tribal and familial) belonging, which he perceived as a politicized topic. In the interview Taha gave an example of the 'problem' with tribes (Arabic: *qabila*) in everyday conversations with his friends in Germany:

> "I never discuss this [tribal belonging, L.C.S.] 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 himself has experienced threats from people belonging to the communities from Darfur in Germany, but the above quotation indicates how politicized ethnic tribal belonging can be. We can assume, for example, that in the diaspora his identifiable Arab and Darfurian belongings could result in speculations regarding his allegiance to the regime of Umar al-Bashir and/or local groupings of supporters. Taha might even be confronted with accusations that members of his extended family and we-group participated or acquiesced 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 construction of interdependencies of belonging between members of various groupings, Taha distanced himself from the groupings backed by al-Bashir's central government, to whom, alongside the 'rebel' groups in Darfur, he attributed blame for the problems in Darfur:

---

[54] See 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].

> "It's correct that we blame the government for this- like ninety 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".

He continued 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 his avoidance of 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 this, it was clear to Mahadi that Taha belonged to one of the Arab groupings in Darfur, for which we found empirical evidence in 2023. This shows that among the Sudanese in the diaspora, especially those from Darfur, Taha is seen as an Arab. From the conversations we had with him, we cannot deduce the extent to which Taha, his family and his friends were involved 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 or another powerful group. This assumption gains plausibility if we consider the course of his migration, which was made easier by the possession of official papers from Sudan. For other Sudanese, there is obviously also a suspicion in the air of his allegiance to the Arabs from Darfur, the perpetrators of violence in this context. With a family history deeply entangled in the collective history of physical violence in Darfur, this elaborate "biographic navigation" (see Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 2; Rosenthal 2021: 3f.) between different belongings and self-presentations led to Taha eventually cutting off his contacts with other Sudanese we knew in the diaspora. Taking a look at the sociohistorical power inequalities into which he was born, his family history, and the experiences he lived through in different phases of his life, will help to explain how it came about that someone who belongs to the Arabs from Darfur should present himself in the diaspora in Germany with the image of 'we the migrants from Africa', while avoiding the risk of talking in ethnicized (tribal) terms, or of revealing his family history.

Taha's birth in 1985 in Geneina and the drought of 1983–1984 in Dar Masalit (Darfur–Chad border region). Taha was born in Geneina (Western Darfur, Chadian border) in 1985 to an Arabic-speaking Muslim family belonging to an established clan of the northern camel-herder Rizayqat Arabs in a mainly Masalit Zurqa town (see de Waal 2004). Taha's family settled in Geneina in previous generations, and at least one of his uncles lived in Libya at some point. From Taha's current perspective on the collective history of his family, it is important to distinguish between nomads (pastoralists) and settled groupings, because he relates this to the collective history of conflicts 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, because he refused to talk about it. 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. I interpret this as indicating that they enjoyed an established position in the figuration with other Arab groupings in riverain Sudan, because he does not mention experiences of discrimination in this context. Even if Taha presents his family as 'very poor', his childhood in Geneina suggests the opposite, especially given the extremely difficult living conditions for many other families in the region at the time of his birth. In 1983 and 1984, a very severe drought affected the border region between Chad and Darfur (see ch. 3.5.2; see also Behrends 2008: 44ff.). This led to famine and many families had to leave the 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, Taha's presentation of this phase of his life suggests that his family was not directly affected by the famine, although it becomes clear, at least retrospectively, that there was 'suffering' in the region at this time:

> "The family would help you like your father, your mother, or your uncle and so we were just kids we would just go to school and not think about others suffering" (Biographical-narrative interview, March 2019, interviewers: Lucas Cé Sangalli/Mahadi Ahmed, translated from Arabic by Enass Masri).

We can see that suffering affects the others but Taha speaks of support in his family, especially from an uncle. Even though his family lived in a region sociohistorically dominated by Masalit groupings, regarded as Zurqa (Blacks) in this context, Taha's family managed to establish themselves in a relatively secure position in Geneina during Taha's first years.

The polarization of ethnicized (tribal) belonging in Darfur and the development of armed Arab militias (1989–2006). Power imbalances in the region were transformed significantly in the late 1980s (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 (see ch. 3.5.2). Musa Hilal, one of the main leaders of the Um Jalul clan of the Mahamid Rizayqat Arabs, became increasingly powerful in Darfur, which we can assume had an influence on Taha's family and life course due to kinship ties with Musa Hilal (see de Waal 2004: 716; Flint/de Waal 2008: 35ff.; de Waal 2022: 47ff.). During this time, ethnicized everyday discourses gained relevance in Darfur and Sudan (see ch. 3.5.2), and 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 Arab and Islamic government in Khartoum. Taha 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 started to dethematize the topic when they were in high school. In other words, he started to taboo his ethnicized (tribal) belonging already during childhood. During the late 1990s and early 2000s when Taha was around 15 years old, there were increasing tensions and conflicts between Arab and Masalit groupings where Taha and his family lived (see Behrends 2008: 47ff.; Flint/de Waal 2008: 58ff.). Al-Bashir's government allied with certain Arab groupings from Darfur, 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 members of different groupings became armed and trained militia groups (Young *et al.* 2005: 164; see also ch. 3.5.2). These militias were composed especially by members of the so-called Arabs, and presumably Taha's uncle led some of these Janjawiid militias. Against this background, Taha finished high school, a significant achievement in these sociohistorical circumstances, and started to work, 'doing different jobs', as he puts it. He was around 17 years old. At this point, he refers again to the same uncle who offered support during his childhood: "my uncle owned a minimarket that I also worked in to help the family." Again, the relevance of his familial belonging and the support received from his we-group are clear. Unclear is how far working in different jobs to help the family is connected to the collective history of physical violence in his home region. However, there can be no doubt that Taha had the chance of participation in an armed Arab group. We can assume that his we-group would expect him to participate in the perpetration of violence. Based on information from sources outside the interview context, it is plausible that during this phase of his life Taha's uncle, who was in charge of recruiting and leading Janjawiid militias, would count on Taha's participation in attacks against so-called Zurqa individuals and families in Darfur.

In the interaction with us, Taha tries to distance himself and his family from one of his uncles. It remains unclear whether this is a reference to the uncle who led Janjawiid groups in the early 2000s because he dethematizes it in the interview:

> "It's correct that there is one member of my family that has different thoughts like tribal sensitivity so he talks about this tribe and that tribe […] even though his brother or uncle talks about tribalism he would say that 'no, this is wrong, don't talk like that'".

What is crucial here is Taha's current perception that he must disassociate himself and his family from the attitude of other relatives toward tribalism. Thus, the problematic thematization of tribal belonging in his family is made clear in his presentation. As he controls the way he talks about this phase of the family past, it is not possible to reconstruct in detail how far this corresponds to how he experienced it in the past. For Mahadi, following his conversation with Taha's acquaintance, Amir Salah, mentioned above, it is possible that Taha participated in the Janjawiid and in the perpetration of acts of physical violence during this time. We can only speculate – as other people in the diaspora do regarding Taha, his family, and his grouping – about his involvement with the Janjawiid, or the effects that the perpetration of acts of physical violence such as the murdering and rape of civilians (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 35f.) potentially had on his life course, his decision to leave Darfur, and the way he talks about himself, his experiences, and his family history in the present. If his experiences of violence and power asymmetries during this phase remain unclear, the relatively established position of Taha and his family can be seen in the quotation below. It shows his perspective on how the deterioration of livelihoods affected people from the countryside more than 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".

The more established and safer position of Taha's family in a context of increasing collective violence is also clear in his 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." Latently, it would even be possible to read between the lines and say that Taha thinks the problem was not the perpetration of violence by certain groups in the region, but rather the migrants and internally displaced persons from the countryside seeking refuge in Geneina. This reading is plausible if we consider that Taha and his family experienced the conflict during this phase mainly as a lack of job opportunities, with economic deterioration of their social position. Against this background, in 2005, Taha, then 20 years old, took the chance to travel 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 was given a chance to migrate 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 northern 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 an uncle who lived in Libya at the time did not help, nor did he have contact with him. They traveled through Mellit and Kufra and reached Tripoli.

Relative establishment in Libya and confrontations with the they-image of Blacks (2006–2011). In Tripoli, Libya's capital, Taha worked as a cleaner in a supermarket. He had other jobs, too, for instance 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 phase: "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 says, was given a passport with a 6-month visa, a clear indication he was not perceived by the embassy staff as a threat to the regime of Umar al-Bashir, which could be the case with members of other groupings, especially from Darfur. The established position of Taha's family in Darfur and his own position in Libya during this time could also be connected with the appointment of one of his uncles as special advisor to al-Bashir in 2008.[55] Despite the very established position of his family members – which he dethematizes in the interview – and Taha's relatively privileged financial and legal situation in Tripoli, he focuses in his presentation on his marginalized condition as an African in relation to the Libyans during this phase of his life:

> "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."

---

[55] See Human Rights Watch, January 20, 2008. "Sudan: Notorious Janjaweed Leader Promoted". Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/01/20/sudan-notorious-janjaweed-leader-promoted [Accessed on March 6, 2024].

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 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 […] 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."

In this quotation, Taha expands his belonging to a we-grouping of 'all Africans that came from Africa', and thus excludes North Africans, presumably Libyans, in this self-definition. 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, or those groupings who do not speak Arabic. That he can talk of racism here indicates a significant level of empowerment, and socialization in groups or groupings whose members learned to interpret such experiences as violations of their rights. More importantly, Taha learned to present his experiences in Libya metaphorically as slavery, which is relevant when we consider the collective histories of his established family, clan and tribe, potentially associated with enslavers in the collective history of Darfur rather than slaves (see ch. 3.4). However, in his interaction with us in Germany, making an association between Africans and slavery in Libya increases his power chances, because he can present himself as a victim. This fits into the media coverage in Germany on the conditions of migrants in Libya and the not uncommon allusion to slavery in media discourses.[56] This does not change the fact that even members of such a relatively established grouping experienced certain forms of racialized and ethnicized discrimination in Libya. The general experience of Africans in Libya, referred to in the quotation above, shows 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 old-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 belonging to the Blacks. More importantly, while the they-image of Taha as a Black had negative aspects for him, as he emphasized, the politicized use of the we-image of Africans increased his power chances in

---

[56] See Der Spiegel, December 7, 2017. "Libyens Sklavenmärkte. Das Erbe des arabischen Rassismus (Libya's slave markets. The legacy of Arab racism)". Available in German at: https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/libyen-sklavenmaerkte-das-erbe-des-arabischen-rassismus-a-1181801.html [Accessed on June 25, 2023].

Germany. He became aware of the collective uses a broader we-image as African can have in certain interactions in Germany, which differed significantly from its negative associations in the groupings in which he had been socialized.

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, including where Taha lived. 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. At the time, 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 Libyan cities in March 2011, 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. 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 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 crossing the Mediterranean on a boat had changed in his perception:

> "The only reason that we were not afraid [to cross the Mediterranean, L.C.S.] 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."

Today, Taha is aware he experienced the crossing of the Mediterranean in a much safer position than many other migrants. From his current perspective, he acknowledges that he did not experience it as a threat to his life. Alongside other migrants, Taha arrived on the island of Lampedusa, Italy, in May 2011. They were received in a migration center and registered by Italian authorities. 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 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (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. Despite the difficulty of finding housing in Italy, Taha's life was no longer at risk as it would have been in Libya.

Activism and relative establishment in Germany (2013–2023). 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.[57] They became known as the Lampedusa migrants/refugees (German: *Lampedusa MigrantInnen/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 and Amir Salah. At that time, Taha was living with three other Sudanese, two Fur and one Zaghawa, and attended events where the conflicts in Darfur were discussed by activists and in which the Arabs were presented as perpetrators of violence. We can assume that, for the first time since leaving Sudan, he was exposed to the discourse that blames Arabs for the violence perpetrated in his home region. During this time, Taha also 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 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: *Aufenthaltserlaubnis*), 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 so-called migrants from Lampedusa. Many of them had their asylum claims rejected by the German authorities and were either deported or stayed in Germany with an illegalized status.[58] By 2014, Taha's relatives had become increasingly dissatisfied with the rule of al-Bashir and they created an oppositional council, which I take as a clear indication of the increasing power of his extended family in Sudan.[59] The involvement of his family members in politics helps to explain why ethnicized (tribal) ascriptions of belonging were so problematic for him among other Sudanese in the diaspora. It also gives insights into the problems he might face if he returned to Sudan, as his family was a potential threat to the regime. In the following years, Taha's relatives openly challenged al-Bashir's power. Under an order by al-Bashir, his uncle was put in prison by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, a member of the same Rizayqat Arabs from Darfur as Taha, but who belongs to a different branch. While Taha and his uncle belong to the Mahamid branch of the Rizayqat, Dagalo belongs to the Mahariya, which shows that homogenized notions of Arabs from Darfur hide important power asymmetries inside the same groupings and familial constellations. This is relevant because it helps to explain Taha's reticence in the interview in the presence of another Arab, Mahadi Ahmed. In 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. I asked if he planned to marry, and he said he was single and happy.

---

[57] 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" group. Available in German at: http://www.schattenblick.de/infopool/politik/report/prin0309.html [Accessed on January 4, 2022].

In 2021, Taha finished his training course and was employed by a company in Germany, presumably with a formal contract. He had cut off all contact with other Sudanese we knew, and stopped going to the betting house where he was regularly seen. Mahadi and I lost contact with Taha at this time. His hometown had been deeply affected over the past few years by conflicts that are presented by locals as tribal conflicts.[60] In the same year, his uncle was pardoned by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, then commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, and by Dagalo, then in charge of the Rapid Support Forces. This shows the entanglement of Taha's family with power transformations in both Darfur and Khartoum.[61] With the escalation after May 2023 of the war in Sudan between the two commanders who pardoned Taha's uncle, members of Zurqa Masalit groupings were killed by local Arab forces, and many inhabitants of Geneina migrated to Chad. Sources reported that Arab militias shouted that they were 'slaves' to Masalit individuals and families while driving them out of Geneina.[62] Even if Mahadi and I no longer have contact with Taha, it is fair to assume that the situation of his family was affected by these processes of collective physical violence in their home region.[63] It is also safe to assume that the escalation of violence between Arabs and Zurqa in Geneina in 2023 will have made it even more difficult for Taha to thematize his family history, the participation of his relatives in acts of violence, and their collective belongings.

---

[58] See 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].

[59] See Aljazeera, May 3, 2023. "Could an old tribal foe undercut Sudan's Hemedti?". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/3/could-an-old-tribal-foe-undercut-sudans-hemedti [Accessed on March 6, 2024].

[60] Starting in April 2021, and especially after the escalation of violence in Sudan in April 2023, a series of conflicts between Arab and Zurqa Masalit groupings took place in Geneina. The regional West Darfur governor was killed after claiming in a television interview that Arab militias and the Rapid Support Forces were attacking and killing individuals and families in the region (see ch. 3.6). I do not know whether Taha's family were directly involved in these conflicts, but they show the contentious character ethnicized (tribal) belonging still has in Taha's hometown.

See BBC, June 15, 2023. "Sudan conflict: West Darfur governor killed after genocide claim". Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65914569 [Accessed on July 3, 2023].

Summary. The migration course of Taha, and his establishment in Germany through his initial participation in a group of activists, shows the increasing use in Western Europe of a politicized we-image as African by a member of Arab groupings from Darfur. This enables him to shield himself and his we-group from accusations of perpetrating acts of violence in his home region, and at the same time increases his chances of gaining refugee status in Germany. However, his experiences and those of his family in Darfur show that violent acts did not affect him and his family in the same way as their neighbors. In the interview, Taha explains his migration from Darfur to Libya as being due to a lack of jobs. His experiences in Libya show access to privileged information due to his knowledge of Arabic, which shaped his safer 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 old-established Libyans. Here, he was regarded as Black, a they-image used by himself and his family members to legitimize on a discursive level the perpetration of physical violence against members of other groupings in their home region. And it is clear that even if members of Arab groupings from Darfur present themselves as Africans in Germany, in order to distance themselves from the perpetrators of acts of violence, they cannot completely avoid suspicion, speculation, and even open accusations in their everyday life. And this negatively affects group cohesion and contact with fellow Darfurians and Sudanese living in Germany.

---

[61] See Aljazeera, May 3, 2023. "Could an old tribal foe undercut Sudan's Hemedti?". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/3/could-an-old-tribal-foe-undercut-sudans-hemedti [Accessed on March 6, 2024].

[62] See United Nations News, June 24, 2023. "Sudan: OHCHR calls for 'urgent action' to end militia attacks on people fleeing El Geneina". Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138072 [Accessed on June 25, 2023].

[63] See Aljazeera, June 13, 2023. "Ethnic violence in Sudan raises genocide alarm as war rages on". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/13/ethnic-violence-in-sudan-raises-genocide-alarm-as-war-rages-on [Accessed on July 3, 2023].

4.4.3 The migration course of a ‘Zurqa’ from Darfur

Changing autobiographical presentations in different interviews with the same person. The power chances that come in Darfur from being a native speaker of Arabic, and from being recognized by others as a member of a grouping with a relatively unquestioned belonging to the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation, did not apply to those interviewees belonging to the groupings of the Blacks, or the Zurqa as they are called in their home region. Here, the case of **Umar Yahyia** (born in 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 (tribal) we- and they-images in the presentation of experiences of collective violence and migration. Umar’s case shows the varying migration chances available to members of different groupings inside Darfur and Sudan, as well as throughout northern Africa and the Levant. It also shows the very difficult experiences that constitute the migration courses of those regarded as Blacks throughout the region. A detailed presentation of the case of Umar will serve to exemplify the challenges we are confronted with when evaluating autobiographical sources. This case 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 1993, 1994, 2013). Here, I will show how a member of the Zurqa, a Daju, looks back at his individual and collective past when talking in the present about his experiences of violence and those of his family and we-groups. We will see how, in his initial presentation and from one interview to another, his use of ethnicized we- and they-images and argumentation patterns concerning the conflict between Arabs and Africans changes. These correspond at first to the dominant discourses in the asylum procedure and the media in Germany (and also in many other figurations) concerning the collective history of his home region. But while living in the diaspora he evidently develops a more differentiated and self-reflected view that increasingly questions this polarized discourse. He begins to refer to the power ‘interests’ of members of all groupings in Darfur and Sudan, including those of his own family members who participated in armed opposition groups. I was able to observe these changing autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations because I conducted several interviews with Umar with long intervals between them. During the period between our first interview in November 2018 and our last interview in June 2022, power relations in Sudan changed. The regime of Umar al-Bashir, which at the time of my first interview with Umar in 2018 seemed to be as firmly in place as in previous decades, was shaken by popular protests in the streets that culminated in his removal from power (see ch. 3.6). By the time I conducted the last interview with Umar in 2022, the Transitional Sovereignty Council had been overthrown in a coup led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in October 2021. After that, power disputes led to the escalation of violence in different regions of the country and the outbreak of civil war in Sudan in 2023. This affected Umar's family who were still living in Darfur. As of 2024, I am still in contact with Umar, who has informed me that communication with his family members has broken down.

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. This was almost one year after Umar had moved from France to Germany after threats of deportation. I kept in touch with him during this period and conducted a longer follow-up interview with him in July 2022 in the same place. At the time of the second interview, Umar's situation in Germany had become stabilized, he could speak fluent German, and the situation of his family in Darfur – who had been suffering persecution at the time of the first interview – had changed for the better. In a discussion of the changing relevancies of autobiographical presentations in Umar's interviews I will show how transformations in power inequalities in Sudan shape the dominant they- and we-images used by people living in the diaspora when speaking about their past experiences in the present. But first let us consider Umar's presentation in the first interview conducted in November 2018. In his initial presentation, the first part of the interview, in answer to a request to tell me about his life story and the history of his family (see Rosenthal [2005]2018: 134f.), Umar mainly used an argumentative pattern of ethnicized (tribal) conflict in Darfur, his home region. He spoke about his Daju belonging only when I explicitly asked about his ethnic or 'tribal' belonging, as he puts it. In this initial presentation, Umar did not mention important experiences during his migration that contradict the dominant everyday discourse in Darfurian communities in Germany of a conflict between Janjawiid and Arabs, on the one hand, and 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*). We could say that these we-images had gained biographical plausibility for him to refer to his we-grouping in certain interactions in Germany. In Sudan and among other Sudanese in the diaspora, he and his family are seen as belonging to the Zurqa or 'Blacks' from Darfur. While in Germany he may also be framed as Black by old-established Germans, this they-image has very different biographical and collective functions in Germany than Zurqa has against the background of the sociohistorical power inequalities that developed in Darfur and Sudan (see ch. 3.3 and ch. 3.4). During our first meeting, Umar presented his migration from Darfur as an escape from accusations of religious conversion from Islam to Christianity against himself and his family members by the police and neighbors in their hometown in Darfur. He presented this conflict against the background of the overall 'problem' (Arabic: *mushqila*) that Arabs and Janjawiid created for 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 (and on a speculative level potentially even to his extended family). His family was presented as an important we-group that was attacked by the Arabs and the Janjawiid in Darfur. There was no thematization of conflicts inside this we-group that could have been connected to his decision to migrate. 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 made to search for gold under threat of death, 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 follow-up 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 Umar uses, and – parallel to my own development – an increasing orientation toward German language and society. In the first two interviews, Umar spoke mainly in French, which I interpret as being due to the time 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, which I see as a step forward in the process of establishing himself in Germany and participating in groups that speak German. In the 2019 interview, Umar presented a more nuanced image of the conflicts in Darfur, and his belonging to a Daju we-group in Sudan gained relevance, as I was able to ask more informed questions about it. During this time, public demonstrations against Umar al-Bashir's regime in Sudan had gained momentum, and Umar spoke about his fantasies regarding the position of his father as a 'rebel', as he puts it, who fought against the regime. This interview took place in his apartment, to which he had recently moved. During these interviews in 2018 and 2019, Umar's family was suffering persecution in Sudan. This was a central component of his preoccupations at that time and certainly contributed to his thematization in our encounters of the conflict in his home region and the presentation of his family as victims of them, the Arabs and the Janjawiid.

I interpret the way Umar speaks about a conflict between Africans and Arabs in the first interviews, and the changes in his they-, we- and self-presentations, as reflecting his involvement in we-groups and groupings of so-called Africans he would also define as Blacks while living in Western Europe. In other words, his retrospective view of his individual and collective histories acquires a collective function in the present among the we-groups he has been part of in France and Germany. These we-groups consisted during this period 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 necessarily Blacks in the sociohistorical sense of Zurqa, as many do not come from Sudan, but Umar embeds his belonging to the Daju of Darfur in the broader we-grouping of Black Africans he lived with during this time in Western Europe. And by doing so, he excluded all Arabs from Darfur and other regions of Sudan from this grouping. As will become clear in the reconstruction of the experiences Umar lived through together with other Africans along his migration course, the experience of racialized discrimination in different phases of his life is a crucial component of his constructions of belonging. For Umar, being African is sociobiographically legitimate in the light of the experiences he lived through, especially experiences of physical violence, because he was regarded as belonging to a grouping of Blacks, or Africans in the eyes of old-established white Germans in Western Europe (see ch. 4.3).

In the following years, Umar learned to understand German, which enabled him to read German texts and to become aware of written discourses. He also participated in groups which included people he defines as Arabs. This led to transformations in his autobiographical constructions and his views of the past. I kept in contact with Umar at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and conducted another interview with him in July 2022 in Kassel. At this point, not only had al-Bashir been removed from power in a revolutionary process in Sudan, but the power-sharing civilian and military council that led the country for a brief period had been deposed through a military coup in October 2021. In the interview in 2022, Umar presented a more complex image of the Janjawiid, who now included members of all groupings, Arabs and Africans alike. He questioned the decision of his father to join the rebels in the fight against the central government in the early 2000s. He increasingly started to regard power disputes in Sudan as being due to the ‘self-interest’, as he puts it, of all parties. He even became concerned that his younger brother – by then a teenager living in the border region between Darfur and Chad – might join the Janjawiid militias (meaning in this context the Rapid Support Forces), given the opportunities they offered to get money fast (see ch. 3.5.2). Umar also thematized conflicts inside his we-group. To a certain extent, this was due to the fact that his family was no longer at risk of persecution in Darfur. Umar spoke in detail about a conflict between his maternal grandmother and his mother, which tells us something about the norms and rules in Umar’s we-group and local meanings of enslavement and servitude. According to him, they come from a family that is regarded as a ‘noble’ Daju family, as I will discuss in detail below. Umar says that his mother, who had been living with his maternal grandmother for decades after her husband, Umar’s father, joined the rebels, decided to marry another man. The problem with this was that his grandmother believed that this man belonged to a family of ‘slave descendants', as he puts it. According to Umar, his grandmother told his mother she would taint their family and reputation by marrying into such a family (see also Prunier 2005: 78). Although, according to Umar, his mother did not plan to have more children, he says that his grandmother used the argument that their children would be born with a slave background to justify her opposition to the marriage. I had the impression that Umar felt uncomfortable with the topic, which I interpret as a sign of his socialization in groups in Germany that use the everyday discourse that 'we are all equal', irrespectively of family 'background', or, in other words, a socially constructed family history. Indeed, Umar himself remarked several times during this interview that the Sudanese all suffer equally from the fighting for power among different groups. He acknowledged that there were different collective histories and groupings in Sudan, as well as contrasting views of the past. This was a much more differentiated view of the conflicts in Sudan than the polarized ethnicized (tribal) one he had presented during our first meetings. His presentation seemed closer to the diverse experiences which members of his family and other groupings had lived through, especially in terms of the power asymmetries and interdependencies inside his own we-group and across groupings that were not necessarily related to being Arab or African. However, it is clear that the norms and rules of his we-group in Darfur continue to play a powerful role in shaping his presentation in the diaspora. He told me, for example, that he would respect the will of his mother and grandmother regarding his own marriage in the diaspora. They would expect him to marry a Daju, but he said "Daju or not it doesn't matter", thus making tribal belonging less relevant on the level of his presentation. However, Umar has not talked concretely with his family about the possibility of marrying outside the Daju we-group or, as in the case of his mother, marrying outside a so-called noble Daju family. Let us consider how far the norms and rules regarding what to thematize and with whom learned by Umar in his home region, and the extent to which they remain powerful in the diaspora and shape the way he looks back on the past. We may note that the construction of belonging to a noble Daju family still hinders Umar in the present from referring to certain experiences he has lived through as slavery or enslavement, because of the collective history of images of slave and its local uses in Darfur and Sudan (see ch. 3.5). By interpreting his experiences as enslavement, Umar would lower the status of his family of origin. In other words, the different collective histories of groupings from Darfur prevent him from talking about his experiences in Sudan, Niger, Libya and Egypt as slavery, because he regards himself and his family as nobles. And this is so even though his life course shows that someone belonging to an established Zurqa family in Darfur can be forced into enslavement and forced labor in different figurations in Sudan and North Africa. 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 or lived-through experiences in different we-groups and groupings before migrating, as well as in the diaspora. To understand the changes in Umar's relevancies 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 they gained biographical legitimacy to the point that he came to understand himself and his family as belonging to the African Daju.

Umar's birth and life until his work in the gold mines of Jabal Amir, Darfur (1996–2014). I summarize this phase of Umar's life as being born in an established family in Darfur, growing up without a father in the context of escalating collective violence, and assuming 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 various Arab groupings in Darfur.

Umar was born in 1996 as the first son of his mother, his father's second wife, in a Muslim Daju-speaking Daju family. His father was first married to another woman with whom he had a son. However, it is unclear if his elder brother had inheritance rights in this constellation. It is clear that in the part of the family settled in Um Shalaya, central Darfur, where Umar was born and where his father married other wives, Umar was in the most favorable position in the familial constellation with regard to inheritance rights in the event of his father's death, in accordance with the patrilineal norms and rules of his Daju grouping. Umar lived with his mother and maternal grandmother in Um Shalaya in a house owned by his father and shared with his other wives and children. His father also had an apartment in Zalengei, a regional capital situated around 100 kilometers from Um Shalaya. This relatively financially secure position of the family in Darfur must 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 it was 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 for many families from Africa south of the Sahara and was a popular destination for migrants (see Hamood 2006: 17ff.; Tonah/Codjoe 2020). This 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 also had the opportunity to learn Arabic. This shows that some non-Arab groupings from Darfur had opportunities to attend formal educational institutions in the wider region. To a certain extent, the family history of Umar's father refutes the dominant notion that Darfurians always and in all contexts had very low participation chances in the Republic of the Sudan. After his return to Sudan, Umar's father became a sergeant and later a general in the Sudanese Armed Forces under the government of Umar al-Bashir. Umar believes that his father also traveled to Germany and Turkey at some point in his career. As a result, Umar's father was able to marry and provide for two other wives, who lived in the same family house in Um Shalaya. All the wives were Daju, but only Umar's mother was descended from the same Daju family – the Yahyia – as Umar's father. In other words, as Umar sees it from his present perspective, they were 'real' or 'original' Daju, which I interpret as a distinction in terms of power compared to the families of origin of the other wives and children. Thus, important power asymmetries in the family we-group become clear: not only did Umar and his mother have more power than the other wives and children of his father, but they also had more power in the eyes of his father because they came from the same 'noble' ancestors. These ancestors had lived in the region of Um Shalaya, which is very fertile, for at least two generations. Daju was presumably their mother tongue (at least this is the language that became dominant in the family and was intergenerationally transmitted down to the present), while Arabic was spoken only in Umar's paternal family (by his father, who learned it in Egypt, and his paternal grandfather, who learned it in Libya, which gives Arabic a gendered character in the family). In the past, different Daju groupings lived across Darfur and Chad in a region that was known as the Land of the Daju (Arabic: *Dar Daju*) and eventually became known as the Land of the Fur (see ch. 3.4). The Daju are constructed sociohistorically by interviewees from different groupings, and in the literature, as ancestors who were present in the region that is currently known as Darfur before the arrival of Muslim, Arab, or Fur groupings (see O'Fahey/Spaulding [1974]2017: 108ff.; Mamdani 2009: 80f.). Colonial sources and oral histories portray the Daju as a powerful grouping (see Macintosh 1931; O'Fahey/Spaulding [1974]2017: 108ff.). This helps to explain why Umar regards his Daju belonging and that of his family in the present as an important source of we-group pride. Not only is the history of his family that was transmitted to him a history of a powerful collective, but also the history of their tribe. The intergenerational relevance of pride associated with Daju belonging in the Yahyia family is clear from the trips Umar's father undertook with him during his childhood to places that are important in the collective memory of the Daju. They visited together Nyala, regarded as the capital of the Daju, and the region of Jabal Um Khurdus, which also plays an important role in Daju collective history. I interpret the fact that Umar's father never took him to visit Khartoum or other parts of Sudan as a sign of the increasing relevance that belonging to Darfur had for his family during this time. Despite his father knowing how to speak Arabic, Umar's mother and maternal grandmother spoke Daju and Tama, but little Arabic.

The powerful position of Umar's mother in the familial constellation can be seen in the context of a conflict that took place during his early childhood. The reasons for the conflict are unclear to Umar (I presume it was connected to his father's decision to marry another wife without the approval of Umar's mother), but we know that she moved out with Umar (a baby at the time), although according to the customary norms and rules of the we-grouping she did not have the right to take Umar with her. According to the version of the past transmitted to Umar by his mother, she only returned to his father's house because they belong to the same family, the Yahyia, and their relatives intervened in favor of a reconciliation. In the following years, his father spent time with Umar and his mother only sporadically. They lived in the same family building as the other wives and children of his father, but on separate floors. Retrospectively, Umar remembers this time as one in which he played with his siblings and was often taken care of by his father's other wives. The dominance of his mother – and consequently the Daju language and maternal belonging – in his upbringing is clear from his presentation. He says that his mother was skeptical regarding institutions of formal education in Darfur because she thought that learning Arabic was not important. Against the background of the regional history (see ch. 3.4), we can assume that this skepticism toward Arabic and Arabs is something Umar experienced in his family from an early age. His life course and that of his family became increasingly entangled in the collective history of the region in the coming decades.

In 2000, when Umar was 4 years old, Khalil Ibrahim, a former Minister 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 development of armed groups in Darfur took place soon after, or concomitantly with, the publication of the two volumes of the Black Book in May 2000 and August 2002 (see ch. 3.5.2). This book fostered a public everyday discourse about the neglect of Darfur by the government in Khartoum (see El-Tom 2003; Saeed Takana 2016: 7; Sørbø 2018: 28). Around 2002, when Umar was 6 years old, he started to attend a Quranic school. In the interview, Umar indicated that the Quranic school and Arabic were important to his father, but not to his mother. The power struggles inside Umar's familial constellation between his father and his mother during this phase must be seen in the light of power asymmetries in the broader figuration between Arab and non-Arab groupings in the region, and the increasing polarization of everyday discourses about an Arab and Zurqa divide. Umar experienced this polarization between a mother who was loyal to the Daju and a father who was in favor of learning Arabic. Umar had his studies of Arabic and the Quran interrupted in the context of the escalation of tensions in Sudan and increasing anti-Arab (and Arabic in this case) sentiments in Darfur (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 59). Presumably, his mother was aware of his father's political aspirations, and feared he would abandon the family to fight, or even die, in conflict. At the same time, the disappearance of his father in the subsequent decades of his life could be connected with a conflict his father had with Umar's mother (or with another of his wives living in Um Shalaya). Even if it is not possible to reconstruct the reasons – not even for Umar himself – we know that Umar's perspective of this part of his family past was transmitted to him by his mother. And in this version of the past, his father is presented as a sort of hero, being constructed as one of the 'rebels' in the collective histories of physical violence in Darfur and Sudan. From his present perspective, Umar looks back at this phase of his life and interprets the absence of his father as being connected with his participation in the Justice and Equality Movement:

> "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 Doctor Khalil, they studied together too […] my father, always (1) always he left-" (First follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

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 absence of his father, Umar increasingly stepped into the role of male companion to his mother and his grandmother whenever they left the house. Especially with the birth of his siblings in about 2000 and 2002, Umar's gendered role in the family would increasingly be that of the oldest brother and male companion. He accompanied his mother and sister whenever they went to fetch water or to the market because, as he puts it, they feared they would be attacked: "they do everything they want [to the women, L.C.S.]." Umar talks about his fear that his family members could be abducted – and presumably the fear that he himself could be targeted – using an undefined 'they'. When I asked him who 'they' were, he made clear that he meant the Janjawiid and the Arabs, but we can assume that this was not so clear to him at the time, when he felt obliged to act as the protector of his family. At the same time, we cannot say whether Umar was *de facto* a sort of guardian for other family members in the absence of his father, or whether this corresponds more to his present perspective and feelings of guilt for leaving his family of origin behind when he migrated. However, he experienced growing up as the eldest male in his family from a very early age and in a context of great insecurity. Especially after 2003 and 2004, when Umar was 8 years old, conflicts in the region escalated significantly (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 116ff.). During this time, his father came only occasionally to visit the family, and his paternal and maternal uncles lived in the United Arab Emirates and Canada. Umar mentions that attacks by the Janjawiid, as he calls them from his present perspective, took place in Um Shalaya, too. He says he was too young to remember details of the attacks, but the quotation below gives insights into the transmission of experiences of armed violence during this phase inside his family and in his hometown. He describes the stories told by his parents, which he still regards as credible. Regarding attacks during the early 2000s, Umar says:

> "I have seen, but this eh eh I don't know this- what happened- [...] 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" (Second follow-up interview, February 2019, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from German by the author).

In the passages of our interviews concerning this phase of protracted insecurity in the region, Umar often uses 'they' in a homogenized way. I interpret this as meaning that he experienced the perpetrators of violence or the attackers in an unclear way at the time. In other words, in this phase of his life it was not clear to him who were the Daju, the Africans, or the Blacks, and who were the Arabs or the Janjawiid. These we- and they-images only gained meaning for him in relation to the experiences he lived through while participating in different we-groups in the following phases of his life. The above quotation also shows how we- and they-images were transmitted intergenerationally: he emphasizes several times that he cannot remember those times in detail but that he finds his parents' stories about the past plausible. And we can assume that this means mainly his mother's version of the past, because Umar's father was absent for long periods. According to Umar, the family did not face financial difficulties in the absence of his father because he left money in the bank and other kinds of property, such as animals, although these were raided and stolen (presumably by the Janjawiid). Umar has several fantasies regarding his father's disappearance, all of them constructed against the background of the history of conflicts in Sudan. One of his fantasies is that his father died in a 'big war' in Khartoum, which is not possible to prove and bring to a closure.[64] However, we know that his father no longer had regular contact with his family in Um Shalaya. It is not difficult to imagine that Umar's mother, maternal grandmother, and his siblings would expect him to become the family provider in this constellation. Umar presents this phase in a different way. When I asked if his uncles offered support when his father disappeared, he answered: "we have everything, we do not need anything like help." At the same time, it becomes clear that the family remained under threat. Around 2010, when Umar was 14 years old, a series of attacks by the Janjawiid and the Arabs occurred against property of his family in Um Shalaya. They stole animals and a car. Despite these attacks, Umar presents this phase of their life as financially comfortable. However, during this period a dispute inside his familial constellation emerged over the ways Umar used the money left by his father. The members of his extended family of origin had different opinions regarding who was entitled to the money. In the third interview, Umar relates his migration to work in the gold mines in Jabal Amir, northern Darfur, in 2012, to these conflicts over money in the family: "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 initial interviews. In our first meetings, Umar presented his migration to Jabal Amir as being embedded in the polarized conflict between the Africans and the Arabs. Only at our third meeting did he speak more openly about the relation between conflicts in his family and his decision to migrate for work.

---

[64] See 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].

Umar's work in Jabal Amir represents an important phase in his life, as he had contact with people outside his Daju-speaking we-group. More importantly, he experienced conflicts over control of the gold mines and of migration routes between different Arab groupings from Darfur, such as the Bani Husayn and the Rizayqat, some of them supported by forces from Khartoum.[65] At the time, many migrants contributed to a gold rush in the region (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 46f.).[66] In 2012 and 2013, Umar, then around 17 years old, moved between Um Shalaya and Jabal Amir to work in the gold mines. He formed a group with five or six other men who helped each other. The work in the gold mines can be very dangerous, and Umar experienced the loss of friends due to a collapse in one mine.[67] Umar and his group were able to make decent profits from the gold, which they were forced to share with those in control of the mines. This changed when disputes between Arab groupings over control of the mines escalated. Umar increasingly experienced the relevance of his non-Arab belonging and the disadvantages that came with it in Darfur: "you speak your mother tongue, they say that you must speak only Arabic, but I'm not Arab." The control of group belonging was used to determine who was allowed to work in each particular place, and even who should be killed. According to Umar, these differentiations were based on linguistic belonging, because otherwise, as he puts it, ‘all look the same in Darfur’. Umar experienced different forms of physical violence during this phase, which he interprets as being connected with ascriptions of tribal belonging. He was captured, robbed, tortured, and held hostage at different times by different Arab groups controlling Jabal Amir. His release was negotiated by members of his group of colleagues. The people who supported him represented the Sudanese and international diversity of the region. He experienced participation in groups of people with different tribal, religious, and linguistic belongings during this phase. Among these people, Umar met Djon, a young man from Jabal Nuba who, like Umar, had migrated from a region affected by collective violence (see Ille 2011). Jabal Nuba is a region in South Kordofan, close to the border with South Sudan, and home to non-Arab Nuba groupings who were attacked under the regime of Umar al-Bashir in military campaigns (see Flint/de Waal 2008: 23f.). From his present perspective, Umar says that it was not clear for him back then that Djon was Christian and Nuba. He explains that asking someone about his religion and tribe is ‘a bit racist’. However, Umar was aware that Djon came from a region affected by violence, and this is how he justifies his invitation to Djon to stay with him and his family for a period of rest in Um Shalaya. They were part of the same group working in the gold mines of Jabal Amir, and they traveled together to Um Shalaya in 2013.

---

[65] 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].

See 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].

[66] When members of the Rizayqat claimed control of the gold mines in Jabal Amir, the leader of their forces was a relative of Taha Abdalla, discussed in the previous section. This illustrates the very different power chances available to Umar's family and grouping in relation to the chances of Taha's family and grouping in Jabal Amir.

[67] See 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].

A phase of protracted 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 is somewhat unclear, as are the reasons for Umar’s departure from Sudan and the persecution of his family, which he only heard about later from his mother. We know, however, that his nuclear family lost their property, three of his siblings were murdered, and his mother, grandmother and surviving brother were banned from their hometown. 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 (with whom he shared the same mother and father) 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 while 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, a capital offense in this context. 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, as suggested in Umar's presentation, most probably belonged to Arab and Muslim groupings. The situation escalated, and the police went to Umar's house and interrogated his mother. According to Umar, his mother answered: "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 his mother's family possessed, including important documents, had been destroyed in the fire. The other wives of Umar's father were not in this summer house, where his siblings – all children of the same mother as Umar – were sleeping. During this attack on the family's property, Umar's three younger siblings (aged between about 6 and 12) 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 only brother who had survived the attack had to leave 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 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 component that triggered this course of events or was used as a pretext for other actions. It is not so important here to know exactly what happened, and it is obviously difficult for Umar to understand and explain what led to these events. We could speculate, for example, that the other wives of Umar's father saw a chance to exclude the main male heir from inheritance, and consequently the family of his mother, which was in a more powerful position in the familial constellation. At any rate, the story about religious belonging transmitted to Umar by his mother seems plausible for him. And if we consider that

Umar believes the police in Sudan kept looking for him, and that his family members suffered discrimination and persecution in the following phase, it does seem possible that he was accused of converting to Christianity, which was a capital offense in Sudan up to 2020.[68]

At this point of his life, in January 2014, Umar was 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 limited means of communication, or no communication at all, with his surviving family members. While in Cairo, Umar used his money and some gold from Jabal Amir to pay Egyptian smugglers to help him cross the Sinai desert to Israel. During this phase, Umar increasingly participated in groupings that spoke Arabic and had to learn to speak Arabic, or at least to understand it, to improve his migration chances. The political instability and collective violence in Egypt after the revolution in 2011 made the crossing of the Sinai even more dangerous than before. During this period, Bedouin Arab groups often kidnapped people (see Rosenthal/Hofmann 2023: 106).[69] 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.[70] According to Umar, the Eritreans were killed because they could not understand the orders shouted in Arabic. Around April 2014 he crossed the fence constructed by the Israeli forces together with a group of other people, and entered Israeli territory, where the Israeli authorities immediately captured them.[71] In a notebook which I was able to use as a source for reconstructing his life history, Umar wrote in Arabic about his capture years later: "not sure if captured by civilians or police". Increasingly, he experienced state forces such as border control officers and police as a threat. In an interview, he says: "We are: Ahmad, Abdel-Aziz, Abdel-Shoukur, Ismael, Idris, Idris […] they are dead, you- it is=it is military, you know". Umar goes on to say that out of ten people who tried to cross the desert with him, only seven made it alive and crossed into Israeli territory.

---

[68] See Aljazeera, July 12, 2020. "Changes in criminal law as Sudan annuls apostasy death sentence". Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/12/changes-in-criminal-law-as-sudan-annuls-apostasy-death-sentence [Accessed on December 15, 2021].

[69] See 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].

[70] 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 from East Sudan to Sinai".

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].

[71] See 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].

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'."[72] Umar and the others were kept at the detention center with restricted mobility in Israel 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: experiencing 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 phase, the Israeli authorities treated people in situations like that of Umar as infiltrators and subjected them to detention and deportation.[73] 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 he 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 in the previous phase of his life.

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, presumably in Khartoum, where he was imprisoned. Umar talked in our meetings about the violent acts he and other prisoners experienced at the hands of the Arabic-speaking Sudanese officials. He told me that many of those imprisoned did not speak Arabic. Like Umar, they were physically punished if they spoke in any language other than 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, why don't you want to stay in your country? […] you know Israel is forbidden for Sudanese people'." The they-image of Sudan that Umar uses here in riverain Sudan has significant associations with the collective histories of enslavement in the Nile figuration (see ch. 3.5.1). Like Zurqa, Sudan can be a pejorative reference to Blacks, or even slaves. In other words, Umar experienced punishment and imprisonment in connection with the use of these ethnicized and racialized they-images in Khartoum. He was unaware at that time that, according to Sudan's penal code, Sudanese citizens who entered Israel were considered to have visited an enemy state and were "liable to a penalty of up to 10 years in prison".[74] 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. Thus, he experienced the politicization on a discursive level of ethnicized they-images used by members of more established groupings to justify acts of physical violence. This means that for Umar, who belongs to the Zurqa groupings in Darfur, his migration to Israel – whether due to persecution in his hometown by both Zurqa and Arab police, or simply to look for a job – became politicized when he was deported back to Khartoum. It is possible to say that the external ascription of belonging to the Zurqa or Blacks was an important component in the constellation that led to Umar's torture and forced labor while in detention in Khartoum. While in prison, the threat of death for him and his fellow inmates was omnipresent. Umar spoke of how the guards removed fellow prisoners during the night, who never came back:

---

[72] See 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/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 (2023).

[73] 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". Available at: https://www.revue-quartmonde.org/8193 [Accessed on December 16, 2021].

> "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, who had been imprisoned for a longer period, told him that those who managed to stay alive were eventually taken to Port Sudan, a harbor city on the Red Sea. There, they were forced to carry heavy sacks of salt in the port, where allegedly they died under the scorching sun. Umar experienced this phase as a threat to his life: "You are going to die here." Among other activities, Umar was forced by guards to load heavy sacks of cement into a truck. With the support of other inmates, Umar was able to escape on the back of a truck, hidden under a tarpaulin.

---

[74] See 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].

He did not feel that Khartoum was safe and looked for chances to go to some other region: “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 shows the very different power chances that people belonging to different groupings think they have in different regions of Sudan. It was also risky for Umar to return to his hometown in Darfur, where he was wanted by the police. Instead, he went to Tina, on the border between Darfur and Chad, and arranged his further migration to Libya with smugglers in May 2015.

The next phase of Umar’s life shows that members of Zurqa or Black groupings can find themselves in marginalized positions in other regions of the Sahel and North Africa, and that a Darfurian belonging plays an important role in stigmatization processes experienced by migrants in these regions. Especially men from Darfur can be confronted with perceptions of being mercenaries who fought for pay, or are accused of being rebels who fought against the central Sudanese government and participated in conflicts in Libya (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67).[75] 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 on the Djado plateau, Niger.[76] It is not clear who captured him, due in part to the fact that Umar has no knowledge about the different groupings living in the region. This lack of knowledge regarding, for instance, local languages, or which migration routes were safer, put Umar’s life at risk in different situations, such as in the desert in Niger. There, the captors forced him and other people from Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia to look for gold. The captors used guns to dissuade them from making any attempts of escape. Umar says they justified his coerced work as payment 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’” (Second follow-up interview, November 2018, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, translated from French by the author).

Umar does not know for how long he was coerced to look for gold in the desert in Niger. It is also striking that he does not present this phase as slavery or analogous to it, especially if we take into account the sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped interdependencies between 'captors' and 'captives' and entanglements between 'nobility' and 'slavery' in his home region, which contrast with interpretations of slavery and servitude in groupings in Niger (see Rossi 2009). One plausible explanation is that it is difficult for Umar to think about this time when he experienced massive constraints to his migration, and to integrate it in his current construction of belonging to a Daju family of noble origin. Umar experienced his position in the figuration in Niger as one in which he was unfairly forced to work and had to escape to survive. The circumstances under which Umar and the surviving 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 Libyan border in September 2015. He seems to imply that those left behind in the desert had been killed or died after he and the others left with the vehicle. The important point is that Umar experienced forced labor and restrictions to his movement in Khartoum and Niger, and in both these figurations he relied on the support of a group of people to regain autonomy to escape and continue his migration – maybe even at the price of killing others or leaving them to die. His participation in these groups, consisting mainly of so-called Blacks of different nationalities, can be regarded as an important component shaping his changing relevancies of belonging. Umar and those who escaped with him hired Libyan smugglers who took them through Qatrun, Murzuq, Um al-Aranib, and Sabha until they reached Tripoli, Libya's capital. Umar paid for their services with some of the gold he kept and some of the remaining money he had been given in Israel.

---

[75] See 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].

[76] 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].

The initial period Umar spent in Libya shows a loss of power chances in this constellation, resulting in the hindering of his migration, threats to his life and that of those around him, racialized discrimination, and collective physical violence. At this time, different Libyan groupings were involved in armed conflicts (see Al-Dayel/Anfinson/Anfinson 2021). Before his overthrow in early 2011, Qadhafi had hired mercenaries from Darfur to fight for him, which contributed to the perception of Darfurians as pro-Qadhafi (see Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67). In his presentation of the time he lived in Libya, Umar distances himself from the groups of 'rebels' and says he had friends from Eritrea but no contact with the Arabs or the Libyans. He differentiates between the Arabs from Sudan and the Arabs from Libya. He presents Libyan Arabs as whites and Sudanese Arabs as Blacks in this figuration. We may assume that this is because he found himself in a marginalized position in Libya, and experienced racialized discrimination and ascription to groupings of slaves or servants (Arabic: *abiid*) and Blacks, an ascription which was also applied to Arab Sudanese. In Libya, Umar found there were different ways of being an Arab (he had known people defining themselves as Arabs already in Darfur, Sudan, Egypt, Chad and Niger, for instance). We can say that he had always felt that he was in a less established position than the Arabs. One means of countering this was learning to speak Arabic, which gained increasing relevance in Libya. 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.” Despite speaking the language, he often felt badly treated by the Arabs from Libya: “Arab men sometimes you have to go work at his place, then say ‘okay, I pay you no money’.” His lack of papers made it difficult for him to have access to better jobs in this figuration. And crucially, his illegalized status in Libya – which must be seen in connection with his illegalized status in Sudan, where he was wanted by the police and could not ask for a passport, for example – led to the deepening of his fear of state authorities during this phase. He says that because he feared being deported to Sudan, he could not ask for help at the Sudanese embassy, for example, and his illegalized status in Libya made him hide from the Libyan police, known for their indiscriminate arrest and abuse of migrants (see Hamood 2006: 30ff.; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 58). He even experienced arrest by the Libyan police and relied on the help of friends to pay ransom. He increasingly presents his experiences – at least retrospectively – as racism. He uses polarized images of Blacks and whites when remembering this phase of this life and talking about his experiences, especially those of physical violence in the form of beatings:

> “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).

Being Black, as Umar argues, means being a foreigner in North Africa. He speaks of situations in which Blacks were discriminated against in Tripoli and were the target of physically violent acts, especially by people he presents as Arabic-speaking white Libyans. The relevance of being Black, white, or Arab dominates his presentation of this phase of his life. The quotation below is a concrete example of how he constructs these belongings as power interdependencies that lead to experiences of physical violence, especially when he was kept – alongside many other migrants – in captivity in a sort of house by members of more powerful Libyan groupings:

> “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).

Umar retrospectively explains his decision to cross the sea on a boat, despite his fears – he was aware of the dangers involved and the risk to his life – as being due to the experience of different forms of violence (such as racialized discrimination, unpaid work, indiscriminate arrest by police forces, captivity, killings and torture): "how can I stay in Libya like that, that's not possible, there are also wars every day there are problems." Umar contacted smugglers who arranged for him and other migrants to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in a rubber dinghy during the night. Close to the Libyan coast, Libyan coastguards captured their boat, arrested them, and took them back to the shore in Libya. Umar and the people with him were beaten and robbed and forced to call friends and family for money. His family was still suffering from persecution in Darfur, and he had very limited communication with them, which made it impossible to ask for money. The practices mentioned above were relatively common in Libya, especially toward migrants from Africa south of the Sahara (see Hamood 2006: 30ff.; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 58; Tubiana/Warin/Saleh Mangare 2020: 67). Umar was caught by Libyan coastguards three times while trying to cross on a boat to Europe and experienced similar forms of physical violence every time. On his fourth attempt in November 2016, he and 114 other people succeeded in avoiding the Libyan coastguards (possibly because the smugglers had arranged the crossing with them beforehand). In the interview, Umar describes the dangerous situation he and the others found themselves in during the crossing. It remains threatening for him even in the present:

> "Our boat didn't capsize, our boat is good but our fuel finished […] there's nothing to eat for two days, there are people they die (3) Ahmad […] 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 […] 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 repeated 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 deportation and relative establishment in Western Europe (November 2016–September 2023). Umar's arrival in Italy was a significant improvement in his life situation, as he was no longer subject to persecution and explicit threats to his life. But he faced other challenges, such as being unable to read, write or understand certain languages. The Italian authorities registered Umar's fingerprints. He says he was not offered accommodation or help with submitting an asylum claim. His presentation of this phase shows the importance, at least from his present perspective, of the cessation of threats of physical violence against him: "there's no war, no one come beat me." 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. Some people he knew were reunited with relatives in France, Germany and Sweden. Umar says he could not read and had difficulties understanding the authorities and their suggestions. He experienced his arrival in Italy and the contrast with sociohistorical power inequalities in his home region in Darfur as overwhelming. Language was a crucial element, as well as having his life story and the collective history of his groupings homogenized in the eyes of more established Europeans: "the people here in Europe, they think all- the people the Blacks they speak English." In Europe, he experienced a new relevance of the they-image as Black, which not only influenced the groups he was able to participate in, but also exposed him to racialized discrimination. This clearly affects, among other things, his retrospective view of his past. He says he received no support from the Italian authorities, and that this is one reason why he walked from Ventimiglia to Monaco and southern France in December 2016. In France, he feared he would fall asleep in the streets and freeze to death. With the aid of other migrants and French police officers, he traveled by train to the La Chapelle neighborhood in Paris, where other migrants lived at that time.[77] 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 tried to contact a distant cousin who was living in France. Learning French gained increasing relevance for Umar, because of the French family he lived with and his group of Senegalese friends. During this time, he learned to write and read in the Latin alphabet. He also started to write down the dates of his previous migrations in Arabic in a notebook. We can assume that during this period of relative stability he started to confront the painful situations he had experienced in the past. Perhaps he even started to think 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 were registered. Umar feared they would deport him to Sudan. As a result of this official decision, he lost his income, 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.

---

[77] See 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].

With the assistance of police officers in Germany, Umar was directed to Brunswick, where he did his asylum interview. According to him, the focus of this interview was the religious persecution he and his family had experienced in Darfur. This version of his past and that of his family was regarded as credible by the German authorities, and he was granted recognition as a refugee some months later. He received a temporary residence permit (German: *Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) that gave him a legalized status in Germany, which he must renew every two years. Like other migrants from Darfur and Sudan, Umar knows there is a risk of deportation if the German authorities should define Darfur as a region where his life is no longer at risk. In the following months, Umar moved to Kassel, where many Sudanese, especially from Darfur, were living. He attended an 'integration' course (German: *Integrationskurs*), and learned to speak and understand German. He received a monthly sum of money from the local government and assistance in finding accommodation. Initially, 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 his 'papers', as he said in our first interview. But the situation of his family in Darfur – still facing persecution during this time – worried him. Allegedly, he missed the opportunity of family reunion because he did not understand the German in a letter from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).[78] Umar said people were still looking for him in Darfur and punished his family: "they asked my mother where's Umar Yahyia, they said they don't know, they beat." The protracted persecution of his surviving family members in Darfur can be seen 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 the Zurqa neighbors, the police, or even members of their own family in Um Shalaya, their hometown, used these accusations and the ensuing persecution to seize the property of Umar's family. It might seem that one 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., 2021; Bahl/Cé Sangalli 2021b: 40ff.). However, Umar explained that the infrastructure of the village where his family was living did not allow this. His familial and ethnic belonging has acquired particular relevance in the diaspora, despite the geographical separation. This corresponds to the norms and rules of his Daju we-group, and even after more than five years living in Germany, without visiting Sudan or meeting his family members, Umar still feels obliged to fulfill the expectations of his mother and maternal grandmother to marry a Daju woman, in order to maintain the generation born in the diaspora as 'real' Daju, as he puts it.

---

[78] See Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), November 14, 2019. "Family asylum and family reunification". Available at: https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/FamilienasylFamiliennachzug/familienasylfamiliennachzug-node.html [Accessed on March 3, 2022].

Umar finished his integration course in the following year and had plans to start a training course (German: *Ausbildung*) as a bus driver. By 2021, Umar spoke fluent German and worked in short-term jobs in Kassel. By the beginning of 2023, his family was no longer being persecuted in Darfur. They managed to settle in a region close to the Chadian border where they were not at risk. However, a conflict regarding his mother's remarriage broke out between her and Umar's maternal grandmother, and they no longer lived together. Other 'problems', as he puts it, emerged during this time. By phone, Umar tried to dissuade his brother, now a teenager, from moving to Chad. Umar feared he could join armed militias, which he presented as the Janjawiid, or groups connected to the Rapid Support Forces in the region. This fear increased with the escalation of collective violence and the outbreak of war in Sudan in May 2023. When I asked him in August 2023 how the war affected his family in Darfur, Umar said he had lost contact with them. He discarded the hypothesis that they had left for Chad because he believed his mother would have contacted him in that case. He had the fantasy that his family might have been killed or was in a difficult position in Darfur. Umar wrote to me in German: "it is a very difficult time."

Summary. The migration courses and power chances of Umar in the Sahel and the Levant, and the situation of his family members in Darfur, are characterized by different forms 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 way 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 religious-based accusations he and his family faced in their hometown in the figuration with other non-Arab groupings. 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.

4.5 Summary. Power chances and the 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 affected 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 configured. In the light of these different life histories and migration courses, it is 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 influenced by the dominant discourses of various groupings in Sudan and in the Global South in general – shape the autobiographical we- and self-presentations in the present. There is in every case a discrepancy between the dominant everyday discourses in the present of the diaspora, which shape the 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 physical violence in Sudan in a position of less power, at least not until the escalation of processes of collective violence in May 2023. We also observe this in the case of an Arab from Darfur. However, in the case of a Zurqa or 'Black' from Darfur, we have seen that both he and his family experienced massive physical violence in positions of less power and that the family history is shaped by the participation of the father in armed groups. The victimizers in his case were not, as one might expect, people who belonged to the so-called Arab groupings, but people who belonged to his own ethnic grouping, together with the police in his hometown and maybe even with the support of the extended family. So, what constructions of belonging do these three men present?

Ahmad Hassan, 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 Abdalla**, the Arab from Darfur, also avoids emphasizing his belonging to Arab groupings. He does this by presenting his belonging to the broader we-group of Africans. **Umar Yahyia**, who suffered violence from people belonging to his own grouping, the Zurqa, is the only one of these three men to present the polarized discourse of a difference between Africans and Arabs. These findings make it clear that their they-, we- and self-presentations in the present are shaped by various 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.; see also ch. 2.2.5) of the differing and changing presentations of belonging in the present?

In the case of **Ahmad Hassan**, who belongs to the Rubatab Arabs from Sudan, thematization of his ethnic belonging to the Arabs 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 is crucial in his present situation. Ahmad's presentation of the Eritrean background of his family shows the power of the rules of the everyday 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 riverain 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 these belongings may not only increase present chances of social participation but can also serve to legitimize the family's past history.

The case of **Taha Abdalla**, who belongs to the Mahamid Rizayqat Arabs from 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 physically violent acts did not target him and his family, as far as he thematizes this (indirectly, we know Taha's family members potentially oversaw the perpetration of acts of physical violence during the early 2000s in Darfur in more powerful positions than others). 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 dethematization 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 everyday discourses in the diaspora. Among other things, this case shows how "switching" (see Elwert 1995, 1997) 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 Yahyia**, who belongs to the Daju Zurqa from Darfur, shows the typical orientation toward the potent ethnicized discourses of a conflict between 'Africans' and 'Arabs'. However, the reconstruction of his life history shows that the experience his family had with their Zurqa neighbors and inside their own family does not correspond to these discourses. Umar and his family suffered violence not only from Arabs, but also from Zurqa in their hometown. His escape from Darfur was conditioned by this experience of violence. To admit that other Zurqa or Africans can target your own family contradicts the rules of the dominant collective discourses, which interpret the conflict in the country as one between Arabs and Africans. Thus, the use of the polarized we- and they-images of Arabs and Africans serves to avoid the thematization of problematic differences between Blacks and Africans in the figuration with Arabs from Sudan in the diaspora. Among other things, this is connected with Umar's participation in the diaspora mainly in groups of Blacks and Africans, and his active avoidance of contact with Arabs, something we can explain by the experiences of his family and his local we-group with massive violence perpetrated by Arabs in the past. This has the function of expanding his power chances in Germany by creating group solidarity in the face of racialized discrimination in his everyday life. This is reflected in his increasing pride in his collective history as Black, African and Daju from Darfur and in his use of the potent we-image of his family as a 'noble' Daju family.

The contrastive comparison of the three cases shows how constitutive the present in the diaspora is for the construction of collective belongings. In all three cases, the way the interviewees construct their collective belongings has one important function: securing a legalized status in the constellation with the German authorities. That is, the ethnicized they-, we- and self-presentations effectively translate into becoming established in German society, with a much safer socioeconomic position than the autobiographers had in their home regions, or at any other point along their migration courses. On a general level, we can assume that their current constructions of belonging serve to improve the power chances, or the agency of these migrants in the diaspora.

In this way, discourses, or the we- and they-images which are part 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 and that of their families. This raises the question for further research of how far these discourses have the power to shape they-, we- and self-presentations to the point where the narrations and stories become far removed from the actual experiences of individuals, their families and we-groups, and thus significantly block processes of remembering (see Rosenthal 2016b) and the transmission of we- and they-images used by previous generations in families and we-groups to talk about the experiences they lived through. 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. Moreover, it potentially shapes the power chances of Sudanese descendants by hindering the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images (i.e., the explicit knowledge at hand for those born in the diaspora). These are possible conclusions in all three cases.

In Ahmad's case, there is a reinterpretation of his family history, to the point where we might speak of the reinvention of an Eritrean familial history. In the case of Taha, there is dethematization of his familial and collective histories in the figuration with other Sudanese Arabs. We could suggest this hinders the transmission of certain components which are central to the we-image as Arabs. By contrast, in the case of Umar, there is pride in his retrospective view of the past, and an active search for the collective histories of the African and Daju groupings. He constructs these histories in interdependence with Black and African ethnicized belongings 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 dethematize their collective histories, the one who belongs to a Zurqa grouping is very much entangled in the dominant everyday discourses in the diaspora. 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 lack of power and experiences of physical violence. For those who have experienced violence in less powerful positions, using homogenizing we- and they-images has a different function, which is not based exclusively on their situation in the diaspora. This is not only a part of the dominant everyday discourses to which they are exposed in the present, but it is also shaped by actual experiences of collective physical violence and its ethnicized and racialized character in certain situations in the past. In the following chapter, I will focus on the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images. Particularly, I will look into other potential interdependencies between we- and they-images which are not so markedly shaped by an ethnicized view of the past as in the empirical findings discussed in this chapter.

5 Migrants from Sudan and their descendants in Jordan

5.1 Preliminary remarks

In the previous chapter, I showed the migration chances available to members of different groupings from Sudan, especially from Darfur, through the Sahel, northern Africa, the Near East and across the Mediterranean into Western Europe. In the conclusion, I discussed how dominant everyday discourses – and consequently ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images – in Sudanese communities in the diaspora shape the transmission of collective memories. My analysis showed that the way people talk about themselves and the others in the present can be far removed from the actual experiences of individuals, their families, and we-groups, especially in situations in which ethnicized views of the past dominate autobiographical presentations. And this can significantly transform processes of remembering and hinder the intergenerational transmission of familial and collective memories of violence and migration to descendants born in the diaspora. The sample in Germany – in contrast to the sample in Jordan – does not show whether, and how, the we- and they-images used by the genealogical generation that experienced migration from Sudan when talking about themselves and the others are used in the constructions of belonging of their descendants born in the diaspora.

In this chapter, I will show that long-term processes of migration from Sudan to countries in the Middle East have given rise to a grouping of *Sudanese born in the diaspora* in figurations dominated by members of established Arab groupings, as in Jordan. The first part of the chapter discusses the development of the sample and field access in Jordan (ch. 5.2). Next, I show how the sample relates to the various groupings present in the Jordanian figuration, dominated by non-Sudanese Arab groupings (ch. 5.3). The third part of the chapter presents two case reconstructions involving whole families (ch. 5.4). These reconstructions empirically demonstrate components affecting the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images: a) physical separation from the family (we-group); b) marriage into more or less established groupings; c) the different forms of (physical) violence experienced by members of the family in different phases of their lives, and d) the dialogue in the family about the family past. I will discuss how experiences of different forms of violence in the past, and its thematization and dethematization in the family dialogue, shape the transmission of group pride and ethnic belonging in the case of Sudanese families living in Amman, Jordan's capital. The Nasr family represents a case in which the past in Sudan is thematized and knowledge about this past is explicitly passed on to the descendants (ch. 5.4.2). I will show how this type correlates with a high level of group cohesion and pride in belonging to a 'Sudanese' we-group. This is in contrast to the case of the Hamid family, in which the family past in Sudan is not discussed (i.e., not explicitly thematized) (ch. 5.4.3). In the latter type, the family members lack group cohesion, show hardly any group pride, and no pride in belonging to a 'Sudanese' we-group. This difference correlates with the different forms of violence experienced by family members, not only in Sudan, but also during their migration and in the diaspora. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how having or not having explicit knowledge of the past affects the power chances available to members of various groupings of Sudanese and their descendants living in the diaspora. These two contrasting family cases show that, while some interviewees can proudly construct their collective belonging to the groupings of their ancestors in Sudan, others have no explicit knowledge of the we-groups and we-groupings which previous generations of their family belonged to. For the latter, it is difficult in the present to interpret their current power chances in relation to the collective histories of the groupings their ancestors belonged to. An important finding is that they are unable to construct their autobiographical presentations against the broader sociohistorical background of power inequalities and experiences that made their families choose to live in the diaspora. I will discuss this in relation to the different views of the past that exist within the same family, and their interdependence with processes of sociobiographical legitimation of different versions of the collective and family histories (ch. 5.5).

5.2 The characteristics of field access in Jordan

As already mentioned (see ch. 2.4.3), the interviews in Jordan were conducted between May 2019 and September 2022 as part of the project entitled “Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and longtime residents in Jordan since 1946: between peaceable and tension-ridden co-existence?”. I had planned to conduct fieldwork in Amman, Jordan’s capital, in March 2020, alongside my colleagues Gabriele Rosenthal and Ahmed Albaba. The Covid-19 pandemic made this impossible, but as we had already established contacts in Jordan, we were able with their help to integrate people from Sudan living in Jordan as field assistants. I will show how their choices of people to interview, the challenges they faced in conducting interviews in certain milieux, and the skepticism of some participants, give us insights into the figuration of groupings in Jordanian society. Working with people framed by other interviewees as coming from Sudan provided a more nuanced picture of the Sudanese groupings living in the diaspora in Jordan, and of status interdependencies inside and across groupings.

I had at my disposal for the analysis a total of 51 interviews conducted in Jordan with people from Sudan and their descendants. These interviews were conducted by myself, Hala Budeir, a field assistant from Palestine, Ahmed Albaba, a colleague from Palestine, and by three Sudanese field assistants in Amman.[79] We interviewed people belonging to the first genealogical generation of migrants born in Sudan (n=40), as well as members of the second generation, and, in one case, the third generation, all born in the diaspora in Palestine, Iraq or Jordan (n=11). Most of the interviewees had fled from Darfur (n=32) and most of them came from families that do not regard themselves as Arabs. Based on initial online interviews, further interviews took place in the field in Amman. I had already conducted interviews with Sudanese living in a figuration dominated by non-Arab groupings in Germany, and the findings from my analysis of these interviews helped me to recognize the groupings from Sudan that emerged with the development of the sample in Jordan. I was able to distinguish between findings relating to a figuration dominated by *Sudanese Arabs* in Sudan, a figuration dominated by *non-Sudanese Arabs* in Jordan, and a figuration dominated by *non-Arabs* in Germany (see ch. 4.3). Initially, our field assistant **Hala Budeir** (born in 1992 in Jordan in a Palestinian family) had interviewed some contacts from Sudan, especially from Darfur, in Jordan in 2019. One of these interviewees then contacted other potential interviewees on the ground. I conducted an online biographical-narrative interview with one of these contacts,

---

[79] I will not disclose their names because it would be possible to identify the families reconstructed further in the chapter. I discuss details of the samples in Germany and in Jordan, and how different interviewers shaped the autobiographical they-, we- and self-presentations, in another chapter (see ch. 2.4.3).

Isaac Hamid (born in 1991 in Jordan in a family of Palestinians and Masalit and Zaghawa Zurqa Darfurians). Isaac showed interest in my research, and I engaged him to conduct more interviews during the Covid-19 pandemic. A central component in my close relation with Isaac is the fact he speaks fluent English, which allowed me to overcome my lack of knowledge of Arabic. It was also important that he had a relatively stable internet connection, which enabled me to maintain regular contact with him throughout the project, and still at the time of writing. I always invited him to talk about his experiences while conducting the interviews. Having conducted such interviews in Germany, I knew he would be confronted with graphic stories of violence – especially in Darfur – and that this could be particularly hard for him, because his maternal grandfather and his father were born in so-called Zurqa or Black groupings of the Zaghawa and Masalit. It was important for me to support Isaac in conducting biographical interviews, not only by sharing my know-how with him, but also by listening to his perspectives, learning from them, and discussing his feelings in this process.

Isaac first interviewed his group of friends, many of whom were born in the diaspora. Isaac did not interview his family, although initially he told me his sister was interested in participating in this project. However, she opted out later. Some of the circumstances that led to her decision will become clear below. Isaac, his sister, and their mother belong to the grouping of Sudanese born in the diaspora. This definition is based on my analysis of the interviews, and on their experiences of migration. Isaac and his sister were born in Jordan, while his mother was born in Palestine to a Darfurian father and a Palestinian mother (probably also with family origins in Africa). Isaac said he had difficulties accessing the grouping he defined as 'Sudanese refugees' and from whom it was important for him to differentiate himself. As he puts it: "they speak Sudanese." I interpret this as a demonstration of the fact that Isaac, who was raised speaking Jordanian Arabic, participates in a different lifeworld in Jordan than that of those who speak what he considers Sudanese Arabic, or other languages from Sudan, even though they are all recognized by the Jordanian authorities as Sudanese nationals. To help him access the Sudanese 'refugees', Isaac coopted an acquaintance of his, **Abubakar Nasr** (born in 1998 in Iraq in a family of Beni Amir Arab Sudanese). Abubakar became a field assistant in the project, and I conducted an online biographical-narrative interview with him. As Isaac explains in a memo, he believed Abubakar would be perceived by the Sudanese refugees as 'one of them'. Abubakar does not see himself as a refugee, and although he and his family could have applied for asylum in Jordan, they never lived with refugee status there. While Isaac's maternal and paternal families can trace their origin to the non-Arab Masalit and Zaghawa groupings of Darfur, Abubakar belongs to a family that is regarded by other Sudanese in Jordan as Arab and who, at least in the generation of his parents, regard themselves as Arabs and as Sudanese (see ch. 5.4). In contrast to Isaac, Abubakar initially conducted interviews with his family members living in Jordan. This already suggests that there is an open dialogue about the past in the family. After interviewing his family, Abubakar interviewed people he regards as Sudanese refugees, mostly non-Arabs from Darfur. Isaac and Abubakar coopted a third field assistant, **Ali Hassan** (born in 1969 in a Zaghawa family in Darfur), who gave them access to this grouping, of which he was a member (see ch. 3.5.2). The reasons for the skepticism of members of the Sudanese refugees toward talking with outsiders, as Isaac was framed by them, will become clear. The quotation below from the interview conducted by Isaac with Ali in April 2021 gives an idea of the diverse constructions of belonging in the Sudanese communities in Jordan. It shows why field access was not easy in Jordan, and gives an idea of what can be talked about, with whom, and in which circumstances. Toward the end of the interview, after telling Isaac in detail about the violence perpetrated by the Janjawiid against him and his family (see the case of the Hassan family in ch. 3.5.2), Ali apologizes to Isaac, who had posted a message in a group made up of Sudanese refugees in an online messaging app, asking if someone was interested in participating in the research project:

> “When you wrote in the group, we Sudanese, we talked to each other, and they asked me, perhaps because I am the oldest, and we all talked about our doubts about you, and we really thought that you were affiliated with the intelligence […]” (Biographical interview, April 2021, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, translated from Arabic by Shadia Abdelmoneim).

Ali explicitly thematizes the skepticism of the group he defines as Sudanese – and from which he excludes Isaac in this interaction – in relation to the message posted on their chat platform. Ali explains how he dealt with the mistrust by doing a background check on Isaac’s social media. This balance between trust and mistrust also shaped the sample development in Germany (see ch. 4.2), and Isaac told me he experienced being accused of collaborating with the secret service by other interviewees in Jordan, too. Among other things, we can assume that the norms and rules for protection of the we-group, learned during socialization under an authoritarian regime, do not simply disappear with geographical distance from Sudan (Cé Sangalli 2022: 125ff.). On the contrary, they can become relevant – and shape action – especially when people living in the diaspora have contact with members of groupings from their home regions. For many Sudanese, especially Darfurians, the reason why they chose to live in the diaspora was the perpetration of physical violence by neighboring groupings in their home regions (see ch. 4.2). For our sample development, this means that members of certain groupings were reluctant to be interviewed because of the belongings they ascribed to the interviewers. On the other hand, we cannot assume that having interviewers regarded as closer, or even belonging to the same grouping, would solve the skepticism without raising other questions. This becomes clear in the continuation of the interview with Ali, when Isaac asks if he knows Yasser, a contact of his from Sudan who is living in Jordan. Ali answers:

> "[…] yes, I know Yasser, he is from Darfur. It would be better to let Yasser send the message in the group. If Yasser had sent the message, it would have been a cause for comfort in the hearts of the people in the group. But if Yasser did this interview with me, I wouldn't be as frank with him as I was with you. There are things that cannot be said to everyone."

From the analysis of the interview with Ali and his wife, **Shama Hassan** (born in 1974), it becomes clear that 'things that cannot be said' refers to their experiences of sexualized physical violence in Darfur (see ch. 3.5.2). We can speculate that in the interviews Ali conducted for us, as a member of the Sudanese refugees, certain topics, such as experiences of sexualized violence, were dethematized in interactions with other members of this grouping. And this brings us to the important issue of which topics are thematized with whom inside the we-group, according to which norms and rules, and how this relates to the way people are socially constructed as belonging to one grouping or another. This confirms the importance of my methodological decision to have different interviewers conducting interviews with the same person, and different interviews conducted with the same person in different phases of their lives. The analysis of interviews conducted with the same person by different people allowed me to saturate the findings in respect of the presentation of certain belongings in one or another interaction, and which topics are thematized while talking about certain belongings. This methodological stance helped to avoid essentializing the relevance of the we- and they-images, constructions of belonging and stories presented by interviewees, both in Jordan and in Germany (see ch. 2.4.1). As will become clear, this helped me to reconstruct how certain we- and they-images become dominant and gain legitimacy in which interactions and in which phases of the life of a person, family history or grouping. In addition, it was possible to reconstruct *how relevancies change as a component of power transformations experienced by people*. This methodological decision helped me to saturate the findings from Germany and Jordan, such as the relevance of Darfurian belonging, mentioned by Ali in the quotation above. In the interviews conducted with the Sudanese refugees, who had lower chances of participation in legalized activities offered by the Jordanian state compared with members of other groupings, the topics of marginalization (Arabic: *tahmish*) and racism (Arabic: *ensuria*) were often thematized in connection with Darfurian belonging. I will show which insights this brings regarding lifeworlds and everyday experiences of members of the Sudanese refugees in the figuration dominated by non-Sudanese Arabs in Jordan.

5.3 The figuration of Sudanese ‘refugees’ and more established Arabs in Jordan

Based on Ali’s views expressed in the above quotation and on my analysis of other interviews from the Jordanian sample, it is possible to divide the Sudanese grouping in Jordan into those who *experienced migration from Sudan* – often regarded by old-established groupings as Sudanese ‘refugees’ – and those *born in the diaspora*. Akin to the findings in Germany, further attention to power asymmetries in these groupings is important. Within the Sudanese grouping in Jordan, there are those for whom it is important to regard themselves as coming from Arab families (see ch. 5.4.2), in contrast to those who do not see their family as Arab. They have in common that they all feel marginalized and discriminated against by members of established Arab groupings from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq and Syria. In other words, differently from the figuration in Sudan, power asymmetries in the Jordanian figuration between various Arab groupings can lead to situations in which Arabs from Sudan are denied Arab belonging by more established Arabs in Jordan. As I will show, these belongings are shaped, among other things, by sociohistorically constructed perceptions of skin color tones and references to racialized prejudice made against the background of the collective histories and different local meanings of enslavement and servitude in Sudan and the Middle East.

There is an overall feeling among the Sudanese interviewees that – alongside people who have migrated from Yemen and Somalia – they are in more marginalized positions than Jordanians, Palestinians, Iraqis and Syrians. In the interviews, those Sudanese who do not regard themselves as Arabs also thematize their experiences of marginalization and racism, as they put, in their home region, as well as in the diaspora. My analysis of the interviews in Jordan shows that Darfurians who do not regard themselves or their families as Arabs – the so-called Zurqa or ‘Blacks’ – have lower chances throughout their life course in terms of accessing formal education and jobs. As we have seen in the biographical reconstructions in the previous chapter, these power chances were low in their home region before their migration (see the case of Adam Salah in ch. 3.5.1 and ch. 3.5.2). Most interviewees belonging to Zurqa groupings migrated legally with a medical visa from Sudan to Jordan, where they applied for asylum (see also Murphy *et al.* 2016).[80] Some of them have refugee status in Jordan and expect to be transferred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to a safe third country, preferably in Western

---

[80] Since 2019, the Jordanian authorities have made it increasingly illegal to enter Jordan with a medical, tourist, study or work visa and then apply for asylum.

See Open Democracy, April 24, 2023. “Non-Syrian refugees refused assistance in Jordan”. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/non-syrian-refugees-refused-humanitarian-aid-in-jordan/ [Accessed on May 23, 2023].

Europe, North America or Australia. Others have applied for asylum and are waiting for a decision, and some never had access to a legalized status or found themselves with an illegalized status due to the strict Jordanian laws. Experiences of marginalization and racialized prejudice were mentioned by most of the Darfurian interviewees, and are clear in the interview with **Adam Salah** (born in 1994), a member of the Sudanese refugees born in a Zurqa Fur family in Darfur. In this interview, conducted in April 2021 by Abubakar, who is framed as belonging to the Arab Sudanese in this context, Adam talked about experiences that several interviewees in Jordan also mentioned. Adam was interviewed in Amman, where he has been living with his wife and children with the status of refugees since 2013, after moving in 2009 from Darfur to Khartoum to study, as he explains in his presentation. From his present perspective, he explains to Abubakar the reasons for his migration from Darfur to the capital:

> "It is related with historical injustice, racism (Arabic: *ensuria*), marginalization (Arabic: *tahmish*), and finally ethnic cleansing policies (Arabic: *ibaada*) […]" (Biographical interview, April 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

I will look closely at Adam's present interpretation of the reasons for his migration and for the conflict in his home region, Darfur, because they represent an important dominant everyday discourse in the interviews conducted in Jordan with those framed as Sudanese refugees. The first aspect is the historical dimension of Adam's interpretation of the conflict, and his perception that it is transmitted inside families. In this version of the past, the conflict is presented as related to the family dialogue about experiences of violence in the family history. The quotation below from the same interview shows how the origins of the conflict are currently interpreted as a part of family histories, and how this concerns different conflict parties from Adam's perspective:

> "[…] this applies for both Arabs and Fur. Some people think because my grandfather has a problem with *x* or *z*, then I must have the same problem with them. It is hatred. They inherited this hatred from their families […]"

Thus, Adam sees the reasons that led to the conflictual situation in the present as being inherited from previous generations. This demonstrates the importance of reconstructing the transmission of collective memories regarding experiences of physical violence – 'ethnic cleansing', as he puts – within families in order to understand and explain the constellations that led people to migrate from Darfur and Sudan. The second aspect is the current relevance for Adam of using racialized interpretations to explain his experiences in Sudan and in Jordan. Adam formulates it in the following way:

> "[…] racism manifests in Khartoum in a way and in Darfur in another. […] Some people want to Arabize the Africans (Arabic: *afriiqin*), or we can say Arabize the Azzunug ((a person – *zungi* – or a group of people who have darker skin)). They aim to Arabize them, but the Azzunug never accepted that. They ((the Arabs)) are mocking us because we refused to integrate in their world, I mean accepting their culture. They are ignorant of our culture, they don't think it's worth to be perceived as a culture. I mean the culture of *al-zurqa* ((*azrag* means blue)). They think we have less value than them just because of our color of skin. They name others by *ahmar* ((red)), *aswad* ((black)) et cetera and everybody who has a dark skin they call *nobi* […] I was surprised in the beginning in Jordan because I found out that they call black people *abu samra* ((*asmar* is not a color)), you know, we get angry. Why they call us by such a name? By the name of our color of skin. I haven't called anyone so. Why they did? They can call me by my name […] they should call me sir" (translated from Arabic and commented by Mahadi Ahmed).

This long quotation clearly shows the racialized character of Adam's present interpretation of his experiences along his migration course in Darfur, Sudan and Jordan. He uses terms in Arabic that can acquire derogatory meanings in different situations, such as Zanj[81] (Arabic: black; also country of the Blacks). The they-image of Zanj has historically been used by foreigners to refer in a homogenizing way to different groupings, especially against the background of processes of enslavement by so-called Arab groupings in East Africa (see Tolmacheva 1986: 105). The important point is that – like many other Sudanese living in Jordan – Adam latently refers to the collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Sudan and the Middle East to make sense of the way he, and other members of the groupings he constructs himself as belonging to, are treated in the figuration with more established groupings in Sudan and in Jordan. Similarly, many interviewees explicitly mention that they and their families are regarded as slaves (Arabic: *abiid*) by members of more established groupings in Sudan and in Jordan. We cannot tell from the above quotation whether Adam explicitly knows about the collective histories and local meanings of enslavement and servitude in these societies, or whether he was socialized in a milieu that regards the use of terms such as Zanj and Zurqa as politically problematic because of these collective histories. However, we can infer his need to challenge these definitions and to contest their use by members of Arab groupings. Likewise, he manifests his pride of his culture and of belonging to Zanj and Zurqa groupings. Abubakar, who himself has had several experiences of racialized prejudice in Jordan but whose family is perceived by Adam as Arabs from Sudan, as I have already discussed (see the case of Hiba Nasr in the excursus in ch. 3.5.1), says to Adam: "it is very provocative, isn't?" Adam's response is an example of how racialized prejudice in Jordan has the potential to result in physical violence against members of the Sudanese refugees framed as Zurqa and/or Zanj: "It is. Yes. Kids throw stones at me in the streets, you know. They call you with ugly names." Adam's interview shows the importance of considering the various ways in which experiences of different forms of violence in the past, and their potential use to legitimize the cause of physical violence in the present, are interpreted by members of different groupings. In other words, which explicit knowledge at hand people have in the present to interpret their own experiences, and the experiences of other members of their groupings, as part of collective histories of power inequality. This helps us to understand and explain processes of migration from Sudan, such as the racialized pattern of interpretation that regards these experiences from the present perspective of migrants in Jordan as a component that led to their migration, and which is related to the collective memories of marginalization and injustice which people believe their groupings experienced in their home regions in the past. In the next section, besides the reconstruction of lived-through experiences that constitute family histories, I will discuss other components present in the quotation from Adam's interview, such as the changing relevancies of we- and they-images and the connection between pride in belonging to certain we-groups and the power chances members of different groupings have in Jordan.

---

[81] The term Zanj is associated with the particular collective histories of enslavement and the fight against it in the Middle East. The so-called Zanj Rebellion in Iraq (c. 869) is an example of how images developed against the background of processes of various forms of enslavement and servitude in Africa and the Middle East throughout the centuries. In Eastern Africa, Zanj was used by Arabic-speaking foreigners to subsume many different groupings under a homogenized image, consequently diminishing the relevance of self-differentiations and varying collective histories (see Tolmacheva 1986).

See Mohammed Elnaiem, February 4, 2021. "What Was the Zanj Rebellion?". Available at: https://daily.jstor.org/what-was-the-zanj-rebellion/ [Accessed on May 23, 2023].

5.4 The transmission of we- and they-images in Sudanese families in Jordan

5.4.1 The contrastive comparison of two families

In this section, I will empirically demonstrate how the relevance of certain belongings and we- and they-images changes in different phases of the family history, and for different members of the same family. The empirical findings from two case reconstructions challenge essentialist definitions of ethnicity, as well as claims of extreme constructionism, i.e., that ethnicity and other belongings can be constructed without any, or with only a few, collective constraints. People are born in groupings with a previous history, and are socialized with the collective memories of experiences lived through by members of previous generations. While some people try to distance themselves from the belongings of previous generations, as in the case of Hiba and her brother Abubakar of the Nasr family (see excursus in ch. 3.5.1 and ch. 5.4.2), others let their actions be guided by the collective histories of their regions of origin and their families. This can happen even in cases where people are born in the diaspora and have never been to the region or country of origin of their ancestors. By contrast, there are people born in the diaspora who find it overwhelming to deal with speculations and fantasies regarding the family past. And this can serve as an important component shaping we-group pride – or the lack of it – in certain circumstances, as exemplified by the case of the Hamid family (ch. 5.4.3).

My focus here is on the level of the we-group, in this case the family of origin. This allows me to investigate another level of the construction of collective belongings, that of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and collective memories, i.e., the transmission of relevancies of we- and they-images, besides the more individualized autobiographical constructions discussed above (see ch. 4.3). For this purpose, I compare and contrast the current family dialogues of two male interviewees born in the diaspora in Iraq and Jordan. Since the interviews, one of them has migrated from Jordan to Germany. I will consider the components that shape their attitudes in the present to their familial past, and how these configure their knowledge at hand regarding the belonging of their ancestors and the collective memories of what they and their families regard as their home regions. As I will empirically demonstrate, what the descendants of migrants born in the diaspora learn about the groupings their ancestors belonged to in the regions they regard as their home, and the experiences previous generations of their families lived through there, is shaped by sociohistorical power inequalities. My reconstruction of these two cases shows that the main components influencing the family dialogue and the we-image transmitted in these families, besides more individualized biographical experiences, are: a) physical separation from family members; b) marriage into more or less established groupings; c) the forms of violence experienced by family members; d) whether physical violence was experienced inside the we-group, with the we-group, and/or outside the we-group; and e) the development of certain interdependencies between members of the we-group.

It is necessary to stress that the dialogue in the family is always subject to change. If one family did not talk about certain experiences until the present of the interviews, this does not mean that this will not change in the future. As I will show in the case of the Hamid family, the interviews helped to make one of the family members feel interested in the family history. However, certain topics, such as fantasies regarding sexualized violence, remained dethematized between some family members. It is important to note that there is no such a thing as non-transmission of collective memories within the we-group, unless people are physically separated from their family. People might not be informed explicitly about certain aspects of the collective histories of their ancestors, but on a latent level this knowledge becomes manifest in different ways, as shown by case studies of families of Holocaust survivors (see Rosenthal [1997]2010a: 17). Even if someone does not explicitly learn about the history of their family or earlier we- and they-images, and does not speak the mother tongue of their ancestors, this does not necessarily mean they will not learn to follow the rules which previous generations of the we-group were socialized into. However, the descendants will no longer have the explicit knowledge at hand to use the former we- and they-images in the present when looking back at their individual and collective past and talking about their own experiences of migration and those of their families. In other words, they will have a limited range of possibilities to construct their belongings in interactions in the present, and to construct their own life stories as part of broader sociohistorical circumstances that shaped the history of their family and the home region of their ancestors.

5.4.2 The Nasr Family: Thematization of the family past and belonging to a we-group

A Beni Amir Arab family from riverain Sudan

The process of data generation in the family. Abubakar Nasr (born in 1998) was first interviewed in March 2021 in Amman by our field assistant Isaac Hamid. Their families had met and become friends in Jordan. After the interview with Abubakar, Isaac asked him if he was interested in conducting interviews, too. Subsequently, also in March 2021, Abubakar conducted interviews with his parents, Amna (born in 1972) and Ahmed (born in 1953), and with his sister, Hiba (born in 1994). They were living together in Jordan at the time of the interviews. His older brother, Nasif (born in 1992), lived in Omdurman, Sudan. Besides these interviews, I conducted an online biographical-narrative interview with Abubakar in April 2022. Abubakar migrated from Jordan to Germany at the end of 2022, and his older brother moved from Sudan to the Sultanate of Oman in the same year, before the war of 2023 in Sudan.

The family history of the Nasr family is configured by different processes of migration against the background of the escalation of collective violence in Eastern Africa and the Middle East before they settled in Jordan. Their family history serves to show that other regions of Sudan besides Darfur are also affected by processes of marginalization along the Nile Valley. In the eyes of the Sudanese living in the diaspora, the Nasr family can be framed as an Arab Beni Amir family from riverain Sudan, a belonging contested by many.

Abubakar and his two elder siblings, Nasif and Hiba, were born in Baghdad, Iraq. His paternal family comes from what is present-day Eritrea, and both his maternal and paternal families trace their origins to the Beni Amir of the Arabian Peninsula. They believe their ancestors migrated from the region of present-day Saudi

Arabia to Eastern Africa and settled in the region of Gadaref, Sudan. The father, Ahmed Nasr, was born in Gadaref in 1953 in a Muslim family of Beni Amir Arabs. We know he had at least two other siblings. Ahmed was born shortly before Sudanese independence from British administration in 1956. The mother, Amna, was born in 1972 in a Muslim Beni Amir family who spoke Arabic, too. Ahmed migrated in 1978 to study in the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia). He concluded his studies in 1983, briefly returned to Sudan and migrated in 1985 to Baghdad, Iraq. He traveled back to Sudan in 1989. There, Ahmed married Amna, who had finished high school. Together, they returned in the same year to Iraq. In Iraq, Amna gave birth to three children (Nasif in 1992, Hiba in 1994, Abubakar in 1998) against the background of the recent end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the Gulf War (1990–1991). The family migrated to Jordan via Iran in 2003 upon the US invasion of Iraq. The family settled in Amman, Jordan's capital, where the children attended high school. The older son, Nasif, concluded his studies in Sudan and moved to Oman in 2022, where he currently lives. Abubakar migrated to Germany in late 2022. In the next section, I will discuss how the family past was thematized in the interviews.

The dialogue in the Nasr family: Changing relevancies of the we-image as Africans and Arabs

The interviews with Amna and Ahmed Nasr, and their children Hiba and Abubakar, show how the relevance of belonging to a grouping of so-called Arabs or Africans becomes dominant in the presentation of different phases of the family history and for different members. The components that led to the contrasting dominant perspectives of the past that different members of the Nasr family – some born in Sudan and others in Iraq – have in the present will become clearer in the next subchapter, which focuses on the experiences lived through in the past by members of the Nasr family.

In the interview I conducted online with Abubakar, I asked him to tell me about his life story and the history of his family. In contrast to other interviewees of his generation, such as those in the Hamid family (see ch. 5.4.3), Abubakar presented his life story against the background of the history of migration of his family, which he had already talked about in his initial presentation. Both in his interview with me and in his interview with Isaac Hamid, he described himself as African and Sudanese. He presented the migration to Amman from Baghdad, where he was born in 1998, as a decision made by his father in the context of the invasion of Iraq by American troops in 2003. He spoke in detail about the experiences of his parents and about the period following their arrival in Jordan, when Abubakar was still a child. His interview with me led to the assumption that he had spoken at length with someone in the family about the family history. In the questioning part of our interview, I learned that this person was Amna, his mother. I also learned that they spoke about it mainly because during his childhood he witnessed his mother having, as he puts, ‘panic attacks’, when she would break down in tears at home. In the interview with Isaac he did not thematize this (nor did Amna in her interview). He told me his family experienced the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 and the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, while living in Baghdad, Iraq’s capital, and that his mother still suffered the consequences of living through these experiences. Abubakar was born in Baghdad in 1998, and when he was less than 5 years old his family escaped with him via Iran to Amman, Jordan, at the end of 2003. He and his siblings grew up in Jordan as Sudanese citizens. I asked him if he spoke with his siblings about their experiences in Iraq, and he told me he only talks with his parents about it. He told me his siblings do not like discussing this phase of the family history with their parents. He sums up his attitude toward the family past by saying: “I ask everything I feel I want to ask because it is my right to know.”

As I will show, Abubakar’s attitude toward the family past and his parents’ experiences of collective physical violence is shaped by the quality of his relationship with his mother in the familial constellation. Ahmed, Abubakar’s father, is ascribed by the other family members the role of ‘protector’: he took care that they did not suffer from physical violence, while providing for them financially. As a result, they are able to live with a legalized status in Jordan. My analysis of the interviews show that these roles are embedded in the gendered and religious norms and rules of the we-group with regard to what is expected of a man in accordance with the interpretations of the elder generation of the family. This reflects the rules and norms of their Muslim and Arab we-group in Sudan, where Abubakar’s father lived until he was 36 years old. Amna, Abubakar’s mother, is proud of her role as ‘mother’ and ‘housewife’, as she puts it, and for certain periods she held office in a committee for the rights of Sudanese women in Amman. From her present perspective, with regard to her role after marrying Ahmed, she says: “A woman should join her husband wherever he is.” This summarizes her front-stage presentation of her role in the family and of her retrospective explanation of her experiences of migration. From the interview I conducted with Abubakar, I learned that Amna feels comfortable showing her feelings in front of other family members, including crying, and Abubakar learned to take these opportunities to ask more about herself, her experiences, and the family past. This form of interdependence between Abubakar and Amna is crucial in this familial constellation for the thematization of experiences of physical violence in the family history, and for showing, for example, that Amna did not always follow her husband, but also migrated on her own when she thought it appropriate.

All members of the family were affected by collective violence in Iraq and by their experiences of migration. They lived through the bombardment of Baghdad by American forces, the formation of militias who threatened foreigners in Iraq, and life in so-called refugee camps in Iran. It is unclear, however, whether the family experienced physical violence in Gadaref, Sudan, or before that in the previous generations in Eritrea. The dominant experiences of physical violence in the family are related to the phase of life in Iraq. However, more important is that they experienced their migration from Iraq together, and recognize the support members of their we-group provided to each other when they look back at these different phases. For example, Abubakar is able to see that his father acted to protect him and his family in contexts of violent conflict. Abubakar is the youngest child in the family, and openly thematizes with his mother the fears she still has in the present, including fantasies about what happened to her friends in Iraq, from whom she never heard again after the war. These interdependencies have developed into a dialogue in the family where Abubakar and Amna comfort each other, even if they have differing interpretations of their family origins. Amna presents the family as Arab, while Abubakar presents himself and his family as African. To understand this, we must remember that these members of different generations of the same family lived through different experiences in Sudan, Iraq and Jordan, and that they do not interpret their belongings and experiences in the same way because their chances of participation in Jordanian society depend on how they are able to present themselves. In other words, different views of the past acquire sociobiographical legitimacy for members of the same we-group. While Amna thinks that the family 'will never settle' in Jordan, Abubakar feels 'at home' in Amman. To explain these contrasting views, I will turn to the presentation of the family history and the constructions of collective belonging in the interviews with the members of the Nasr family.

The presentation of the family history in the interviews conducted by Abubakar with his family. The presentation by the different members of the Nasr family of the ethnic we-group that their ancestors belonged to in Eastern Africa, and how they talk about the origins of their family, shows the empirical limitations of an essentializing understanding of ethnicized we- and they-images. It also shows the importance of reconstructing these images in relation to the different experiences the members of the family lived through and in relation to the power chances available to members of the same family and we-group – but of different genealogical generations – in various constellations. Ahmed, Abubakar's father, and Amna, his mother, were both born and raised in a Muslim Beni Amir family in the region of Gadaref, riverain Sudan. From their current perspective, Amna and Ahmed present a similar story in their interviews of the settlement of their Beni Amir families in the region of Gadaref. In both cases, the Beni Amir and Gadaref are praised and appear closely tied to Sudan and Islam. If we were to take their presentations of their Beni Amir we-group as all there is to say, we would conclude that they are very Sudanese, very Muslim and very Arab. In the literature, and in their son's version of the family history, the Beni Amir are portrayed as being of Eritrean origin, proud of their own non-Arabic language and customs, and at least skeptical of their allegiance to Arab groupings of Sudan (see Stahl-Göken 2022: 605). First, I will show how different family members introduced their belonging to the Beni Amir, and then I will discuss how the importance of being perceived as Arabs is entangled with the increased power chances in previous generations of the family through their migration and settlement in riverain Sudan, where they were part of a figuration dominated by various Muslim and Arab groupings (see ch. 3.3). It is relevant here that Amna was aware that her son, Abubakar, was working with Isaac, whose family she knows, along with their non-Arab family history. She was also aware that the interviews were for a project at a German university. These components contributed to the fact that I learned about certain experiences Amna had lived through only after the online interview I conducted with Abubakar. Amna presents herself and her we-group in the present to her son Abubakar:

> "I belong to the Beni Amir. Our ancestors come from the Arabian Peninsula. They have migrated to Sudan thousands of years ago. The majority are living in the eastern part, others in the middle of Sudan" (Biographical interview, March 2021, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

This condensed introduction leaves no doubt regarding Amna's belongings and the relevance of her relation with the Arabian Peninsula. She continues: "We are the *ashraf* (Sudanese Arabic: nobles or highborn)." As Mahadi Ahmed, who translated the interviews into English and belongs himself to an Arab grouping from Sudan, explained in a memo: "I am not sure if Amna meant the 'pure ones', but some people are known to perceive themselves as such in Sudan." This can be a reference to the "kinsmen of Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahadi" (Collins 2008: xx; see also O'Fahey 1999: 269), who led the Mahadiyya, and would bring the Nasr family – at least in their presentation – closer to the we-ideal of Sudan as an Islamic and Arab nation and to the circle of Mahadi descendants (see ch. 3.5.1). Amna's self-presentation could also indicate a leaning toward interpretations of Islam potentially related to the increasing influence of Salafi groupings in the region (see Ahmed 2015: 166ff.), which gains plausibility with the visits of the elder son to Saudi Arabia. At any rate, it is possible to assume that from her current perspective in Amman, she feels proud of belonging to a family whose origins are 'noble'. She constructs her life story as part of a collective history beginning in the Arabian Peninsula, and presumably as belonging to the family of the Mahadi. Ahmed, her husband, frames their origins in a similar way:

> "Our descendants came originally from today Saudi Arabia. They migrated to Sudan, coming from different directions, Port Sudan, Eritrea, as I mentioned, you find Beni Amir everywhere in Sudan, even in Magrib […]" (Biographical interview, March 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

The quotation shows that for Ahmed, too, it is important to trace his origins to Saudi Arabia. From his present perspective, he sees the migration of their ancestors as being related to their religious belonging: "They aimed to distribute the message of prophet Mohammed." The relevance of a specific interpretation of Islamic belonging in its connection with Mohammed, and its relation to the Arabic language, appears in the continuation of the interview, when Ahmed thematizes linguistic belonging:

> "We have different dialects. Our first language is Arabic. We shouldn't forget that they were the takers and bringers of the message of Mohammed, they are Muslims."

From Ahmed's retrospective view of the familial past and his presentation of the familial belongings, it is not difficult to conclude that in Amman, in a figuration mainly dominated by diverse old-established Muslim and Arab families (see Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm 2023: 612ff.), stressing a Muslim and Arab past that brings the family closer to the Arabian Peninsula creates some sort of commonality that might translate into establishment. By contrast, in an interview that Isaac conducted with Abubakar by telephone before the interviews with his parents, Abubakar, in contrast to his parents, presented himself, his family, and the region they come from, Gadaref, as African:

> "Most of the ethnic groups there [Gadaref, L.C.S.] see themselves as Africans. My family comes originally from Ethiopia. They migrated at some point to Sudan. I think it was during the 80s or the 70s. They decided to go to Sudan because Sudan is a rich country. It has a lot of water resources, the thing they didn't have in the place where they live before. Sudan has the Nile, so my family sought a place to reside in there. They found the best place" (Biographical interview, March 2021, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed.).

What is striking in Abubakar's presentation is his emphasis on the phase of the family past that sets them closer to Africa in contrast to the dominant relevance of the Arabian Peninsula in his parents' presentations. Abubakar emphasizes a more recent phase of the family history than his parents in the interviews. Besides this, it is not clear if Abubakar confuses Eritrea with Ethiopia, as the first is often associated in the literature and by his parents with the Beni Amir, or if they indeed belonged to a group of Beni Amir who lived in Ethiopia and migrated from there to Sudan. What is crucial is that in his present situation in Jordan, Abubakar has learned to define the region where his family lived and the region where his family comes from in terms of an African grouping. As the other interviews with him show, and as his own experiences in Jordan confirm, belonging to a Muslim we-group or defining himself and his family as Arabs is not as relevant for him in the present as it is for his parents. On the contrary, he seems proud of his African origins. However, the family members are denied African belonging – in the sense of non-Arabs from Sudan – by other Sudanese living in Jordan, especially those from Darfur, as the interaction between his sister and a non-Arab Darfurian in Amman shows (see excursus in ch. 3.5.1). Thus, in interactions with other Sudanese in Amman, the Nasr family are regarded as Arabs from riverain Sudan. The above quotation shows that Abubakar shares with his parents the positive image of Gadaref and Sudan. The interviews in this family suggest that they experienced relative establishment in the period they lived in Gadaref, Sudan. This seems to be an important component of the shared current attitude of the family members toward the country and the region to which they proudly construct their belonging. This may be due to the fact that they did not experience collective physical violence in Gadaref or Sudan. However, this does not seem to be a decisive component in this case because, as I will show below, their experiences of physical violence in Iraq do not prevent them from presenting a positive image of their life in that country, especially in the case of Ahmed.

Before I go into more detail regarding their life in Iraq, I will discuss Ahmed's present view of Gadaref, as it helps to explain from whom Abubakar, like his sister, learned about the positive aspects of the region: "It's an important city, a multicultural city, agricultural city, right. That's why people from all over Sudan come to live and work here. People call it 'the food basket of Sudan'."[82] Ahmed feels proud of the region of Gadaref and its agricultural potential, and regards it as the home region of the family. Later in the interview, Ahmed mentions to his son a problem in the region of Gadaref: "water access." This structure of praising and showing pride in a place or group, and then pointing out an important 'problem', as he puts it, characterizes the thematization of various topics in Ahmed's interview. Despite the problems, Ahmed believes he lived 'a good life'. Indeed, Ahmed and his family seem to have been able to establish themselves better than other groupings that migrated from different regions to Gadaref, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, such as those from Darfur or those who escaped the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (see Miller 2005). Even when Ahmed complains to his son Abubakar about the lack of opportunities in Sudan, such as access to higher education and jobs in the 1980s, he manifests pride in being Sudanese. In other words, he shares the we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation, and this is a source of pride for him and for his family. As Amna indicates, she is proud to be from Gadaref, too: “Gadaref is an agricultural region, everything grows in there. Sudan depends strongly on us.”

---

[82] During the 1970s, some Gulf countries funded projects to establish Sudan as the 'Arab breadbasket' to counter their dependence on non-Arab countries (see Verhoeven 2011: 685ff.; 2015: 63ff.; Woertz 2013: ch. 6).

From the interviews, it is clear that the Nasr family is keen to present being Sudanese as a source of pride and as something positive. Abubakar and his sister Hiba share this view in the present, even though they were born in Iraq and lived in Sudan only for a very short time during their childhood. Abubakar and Amna, like Ahmed, presented an overall positive image of their lives, even for the phase in which they experienced war in Iraq. Ahmed also feels a need to emphasize in the interview that his migration to Iraq – which led to the migration of Amna and the birth of their children in the diaspora – was positive. There is no room for admitting that this was likely to put their lives at risk, which is in fact what happened. Thus, Amna and Ahmed focus mainly on the positive images they have of Iraq, and Amna does not explicitly say in the interview that had she not married Ahmed, most probably she would not have experienced the wars in Iraq. As we will see, Amna’s hesitation to thematize the violence she experienced while living in Iraq with her husband Ahmed, is countered in the familial constellation with the establishment of a close relationship between her and her son, Abubakar. This is a central component shaping the family dialogue and the thematization of her experiences of physical violence before and after Abubakar’s birth. At the same time, in her presentation, Amna is careful – at least on the front stage – to dethematize conflicts and present a peaceful image of Sudan and their time in Iraq that corroborates her husband’s similar positive perspectives, even if his decision to migrate to Iraq with her put their life at risk. For example, when Abubakar asks about the ‘tribal complexity’ of Sudan, she explicitly downplays differences – and latently potential conflicts – and stresses the positive character of the region, which she presents as representative of the whole country:

> “The east is a kind of small Sudan in itself. Arabs and others. Also, Eritreans and Ethiopians. […] We live in peace. No difference between us” (Biographical interview, March 2021, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

It becomes clear that, at least in the present, Amna sees Sudan as a place where there are the Arabs and the others, and that it is first and foremost a peaceful country. Her belief in a we-image of Sudan as an Arab and Muslim nation is clear. The father Ahmed shares a similar perspective, in which religious belonging dominates:

> “Sudan, Jordan and Iraq are Arab countries they share the same culture. Here in Jordan you got to see that the society is tribally structured, you see, it is like Sudan, we share the same culture, the same language and more

> importantly we believe in the same religion. No difference between us at all" (Biographical interview, March 2021, interviewer: Abubakar Nasr, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

Below, I will show how it is possible that a family whose members see their common origins in the ethnic grouping of the Beni Amir, and in the diverse region of Gadaref, should construct their collective belongings differently, in terms of two polarized extremes: either as 'Africans' or as 'Arabs'. This polarization in the Nasr family shows the quality of interdependencies between such images in the familial constellation, as well as in Sudan and Jordan. And this has to do with the biographical experiences of Amna and Ahmed: their socialization into the everyday discourses of their Beni Amir families in Gadaref, Sudan, and their current situation in Jordan. Their self-definition as Arabs and Muslims gives them a more powerful position in the present – especially in the figuration with other non-Arab people in Amman – by challenging external ascriptions by members of old-established Arab groupings in Jordan that deny them Arab belonging. These constructions of belonging help them to sustain a positive image of their migration to Iraq – regarded by them as part of the broader Arab and Muslim community – and to avoid explicitly thematizing with Abubakar the reasons why they decided to move to a region characterized by collective violence, and to settle and raise their children there despite the risks to their lives. In the case of Abubakar, who was mainly socialized in Jordan, his presentation is dominated by his experiences of racialized discrimination in Jordan and his everyday confrontation with a they-image as African in the figuration with old-established Arab Jordanians and established Arab Palestinians. As I will show, this racialized discrimination – from peers and teachers – is the most important experience of his childhood and youth in Amman. In the present, to self-declare as African increases his power chances in the groups he participates in, which are mainly constituted by non-Arabs, and in which he feels, as he puts it, 'empowered'. The reasons for Abubakar's contrasting view of the past, compared to that of his parents, become clear when we reconstruct the sequence of experiences in his life course and in previous genealogical generations of his family.

The family history of the Nasr family

Migration from Eastern Africa and establishment in riverain Sudan. As I have shown, Ahmed and Amna refer to the migration of their Beni Amir Muslim ancestors from the Arabian Peninsula into Eastern Africa and Sudan. As for Abubakar, we do not know exactly in which constellation his Beni Amir grandparents migrated from present-day Ethiopia or Eritrea and settled in the region of Gadaref, eastern Sudan, by the river Nile. Abubakar learned from his parents about his family past, which is a remarkable source of power for someone born in the diaspora in this constellation. This allows him, for example, to regard his current power chances in Jordan against the background of the sociohistorical power inequalities that led to his ancestors' migration to riverain Sudan. He believes that they migrated because of drought and difficulties in gaining access to water in the region of present-day Eritrea or Ethiopia, and perhaps also collective physical violence in the context of land access. More importantly – and in clear contrast to his parents' presentation of the peaceful life of their ancestors in the Arabian Peninsula – Abubakar believes that his ancestors' migration to Sudan took place against the background of 'tribal' conflicts:

> "The area where they used to live before they migrated was tribally structured. Each tribe was given a place to live in. A complex story. So, the place that was given to each one varies. Some got bigger places, others smaller. The distribution and how it was measured depended on the fact how big and powerful the tribe is. I don't know, I learned they left for Sudan for these reasons, the lack of water" (Biographical interview, March 2021, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, via telephone, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

In this quotation, it is clear that he connects – from his current perspective – access to land and other resources, such as water, to the power of different tribes. In other words, he learned in his family that their ancestors left this region against the background of a figuration in which they had lower power chances. It is unclear whether their ancestors experienced physical violence and were forced out of the region in the context of land disputes. At any rate, Abubakar learned that the ancestors' decision to migrate led to a more established position in Gadaref, Sudan, which in this sociohistorical context also means an improvement in terms of land access. From other sources, we learn that in the past the Beni Amir were mainly a nomadic grouping living in the border region of Eritrea, and that some members settled in Sudan (Stahl-Göken 2022: 605). The figuration in this region of Sudan was dominated by groupings who increasingly self-defined as Arabs and Muslims, which often favored those speaking Arabic in their negotiations with more established groupings from the lower Nile (see ch. 3.3). If we consider the collective histories of Beni Amir groupings, we can assume that many did not speak Arabic as their mother tongue and did not have Islam as their main religion. However, we know from Amna that her family spoke Arabic when she was born, and the interviews suggest that it was the same case in Ahmed's family. Some groupings of Beni Amir speak their own language, which suggests that at some point in their history the families of Amna and Ahmed considered it to be in their interest to learn Arabic, observe Islamic norms and rules, and subsume themselves under a we-image of Arabs and Muslims. Against this background, Ahmed Nasr was born in Gadaref in 1953 in a Muslim Beni Amir family settled in the region. During this period, the British administrators negotiated with established local groupings, who regarded themselves as Arabs and spoke Arabic, over participation in the state apparatus, which grew after Sudanese independence in 1956 (see ch. 3.5.1), when Ahmed was 3 years old. At this point, Ahmed's family already spoke Arabic. In the following decades, Gadaref – in contrast to Darfur, for example – benefited from government investments, especially in terms of hydraulic and agricultural infrastructure (see Verhoeven 2015: 61ff., 174). This led to different processes of urbanization, including investment in schools and hospitals, and attracted people from different regions (see ch. 3.5.1). Ahmed grew up in the context of these sociohistorical transformations, and he benefited from power chances that were available in the region to members of certain groupings (see ch. 3.5). He experienced, for example, the way in which the Sudanese were formed by the British colonial administration and more powerful Arab groupings in the Nile figuration, meaning those who subscribed to a we-ideal of Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation (see ch. 3.5.1). The relevance that the we-image as Sudanese still has for him in the diaspora can be interpreted as an empirical example of the power of these sociohistorical processes in shaping autobiographical constructions. This is particularly remarkable when we consider that, in Sudan, many of those belonging to the Beni Amir are perceived and self-define as Beja, people who have opposed so-called Arab groupings in the region and have been considered as marginalized during certain historical phases (see Prunier 2005: 78). In some ways, the different Beja groupings reveal the limitations of polarized images as Africans or Arabs, because they show how some groupings in the Nile figuration experienced marginalization in relation to more established Arab groupings (see ch. 5.4.2). A concrete example of the collective challenge to the concentration of power in the hands of so-called Arab groupings was the foundation of the Beja Congress in the region in 1957, when Ahmed was 4 years old. In the region of Gadaref, the allegiance of certain groupings of the Beja, such as the Beni Amir, to the Arabs was regarded as problematic by other Beja groupings:

> "This problem has particular significance because the Beni Amar have managed to achieve a higher standard of living than other Beja groups and this is sometimes attributed to their closer relations with the government and its security organs" (Young 2007: 27).

According to this interpretation of the collective history of the Beni Amir, they are regarded by other Beja groupings as more likely to foster 'Islamist' views, which made more established Beja groupings try to hinder their access to land and their power chances in Sudan (see Young 2007: 27). Against this background, it is clear why allegiance to the more established Arabs and Muslims in the Nile figuration is a source of distinction and power in the present for Ahmed, who was socialized in this region during this phase. At the same time, the fact that established Arab

Sudanese perceive the Beni Amir not necessarily as Arabs, but as Arabized, helps to explain why Abubakar and his sister define themselves as Africans in the present. The experience of conflicts in the past between the different Beja we-groupings allows the different generations of the family to construct their belongings in the present by focusing on one or another phase of the collective history of their Beni Amir grouping. The power chances that opened up for those self-declaring as Arabs and Muslims in this region of Sudan can be seen in the fact that Ahmed completed his high school studies – with Arabic as the medium of instruction – in Gadaref around 1971. In the following years, Ahmed took on different jobs, and was unemployed for a while, but could count on the support of his family.

Amna's birth constellation in Gadaref and the further establishment of Ahmed through migration (1972–1984). Amna was born in Gadaref in 1972 in a Muslim Beni Amir family. She was born and raised speaking Arabic as her mother tongue and has at least three brothers. Around 1978, when Amna started attending school, where the teaching was in Arabic, Ahmed migrated to the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, then part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since 1961, at the initiative of Josip Broz Tito, president of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1953–1980), the Sudanese government had taken part in the Non-Aligned Movement. There were cooperation arrangements between the countries, and Ahmed benefited from the creation of chances for migration and further formal education in Slovenia. This enabled him to gain the skills necessary for participation in the modern state bureaucracy dominated by Arabic speakers in Sudan: "I finished my school in Gadaref and I was lucky to get the chance to go to ex-Yugoslavia, in Slovenia, to study. I studied economy and administration." During this period, Amna changed to an all-girls school in Gadaref and continued her studies in Arabic. She experienced a gendered separation in her formal education from her early years. Ahmed finished his university education in Slovenia in 1983, at the age of 31, and returned to Khartoum, Sudan's capital. Ahmed presents his return to Khartoum as marked by difficulties in finding a job. In 1983 the civil war between 'northern' and 'southern' Sudan broke out again (see ch. 3.5.2). Even if Ahmed does not refer to being affected by collective violence during this time, we can suppose he experienced the polarization of ethnic, religious and regional belongings that took place in this context, as well as the threat of conscription into the Sudanese armed forces. In 1983, the Sudanese president, Ja'afar Numairy, introduced sharia law, which can be interpreted as potentially favoring those who saw themselves as a certain kind of Muslim, such as Ahmed and Amna's families (see ch. 3.5.2).

Increasing instability in Sudan and Ahmed's migration to Baghdad, Iraq (1985–1989). The year 1985 was marked by popular unrest, and Numairy was deposed by a Transitional Military Council (see ch. 3.5.2). Against this background, Ahmed borrowed money from his friends and flew with other friends to Baghdad, Iraq's capital. Since the 1970s, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates had been the main destinations for Sudanese migrants, especially for groupings from the northern region (see Abusharaf 1997: 520f.). Iraq offered them better paid jobs and better living standards (see Guha 1977; Abusharaf 1997: 520). In his presentation, Ahmed tells Isaac that he migrated to Iraq with the idea of continuing his education by pursuing a master's degree there. He does not offer any reason why he did not carry out this plan, such as, for example, the prejudice he might have faced in relation to more established groupings in Iraq. He justifies his decision to work as a taxi driver in Baghdad as a way of earning money so that he could marry and establish a family of procreation. He was able to count on the support of a sizeable Sudanese community living in Baghdad during this time. Despite the interruption of Ahmed's formal education at this point of his life, his accomplishments and those of Amna are outstanding if we consider that the literacy rate is very low among Beni Amir groupings (Miller 2005: 15).

In the coming years, Ahmed was able to establish himself in Baghdad. When he was in his late thirties, he was able to save money and to live in the country, apparently without concerns regarding his legal status. Abubakar recounts what he heard from his father about Iraq during this phase of the family history, a presentation that dethematizes any difficult experiences his father might have had as a recently arrived 'migrant': "They didn't consider anybody from the Middle East as a foreigner. You don't need any papers or any documents, you just show your national passport." Amna's family also experienced a relatively secure position in Sudan during this phase, despite the fact that other regions of the country were caught up in civil war (see ch. 3.5). Amna left high school in Gadaref in 1989, when she was 16 years old. During this time, Ahmed traveled home and arranged his marriage with her. Ahmed and Amna do not go into details about the negotiations, but we can assume their families were involved in this decision if we consider they married according to Beni Amir norms. Amna says briefly: "I couldn't go further with education because I got married." The argumentative character of the sentence and the fact she thematizes her marriage in relation to the interruption of her formal education suggests that these topics are co-present for her. To what extent Amna, then 16 years old, wished to marry Ahmed, then 37 years, is not clear. In any case, as her presentation of the next phase in their married life shows, she learned to talk about it on the front stage as a 'good' experience. Amna migrated to Baghdad in 1989 after marrying Ahmed. When Abubakar asked in the interview if she moved to Iraq 'just to join your husband', she answered: "Yes, sure. A woman should join her husband wherever he is." He insists on knowing more and asks her about her situation in Iraq soon after her arrival. She answers:

> "It was very good. Very good. I can't say more than that. Work, life, Iraqis are nice people. We were treated so nicely by the Iraqis" (Biographical interview, March 2021, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

One wonders if she has a reason for remarking that she 'can't say more'. As I will show below, this is probably connected to the fact that Amna increasingly learned to dethematize her experiences of physical violence in Iraq, at least on the front stage. As Abubakar revealed in his interview with me, this phase still triggers panic attacks in her. However, she did not thematize it herself in her interview.

Up to this point, we have followed the relatively privileged paths that both Ahmed and Amna were able to follow in the Beni Amir milieu, followed by establishment as a family in Baghdad among an Arabic-speaking and Muslim Sudanese milieu. Especially in the case of Ahmed, we see how his power chances increased through migration, enabling him to further his formal education in Slovenia, to leave his home country in the context of civil war, and to find a job that allowed him to marry Amna in accordance with the expectations of their families and we-group. In other words, they were able to meet the expectation of their Beni Amir families to marry inside the we-group, as their families knew each other in Gadaref.

Between the establishment of the family of procreation and the protracted experience of collective physical violence in Iraq (1990–2003). In August 1990, when Amna was 18 and Ahmed was 38, Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, authorized the invasion and occupation of the State of Kuwait. The invasion took place amidst the long-lasting economic strains resulting from the conflict between Iran and Iraq (1980–1988). The Gulf War (1990–1991) commenced with a massive aerial bombing campaign by Iraqi forces in February 1991, which lasted for more than forty consecutive days (see Lopez 1991). Apart from the material damage caused by this "total war" (ibid.: 30), there were also the adverse effects of sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, which particularly affected the livelihoods of migrants and women (see Cainkar 1993). In 1989, Umar al-Bashir rose to power in Sudan (see ch. 3.5.2). As the Sudanese government had aligned with the Iraqi government during the conflict, many Sudanese individuals found themselves in a critical situation in the diaspora and could not visit Sudan during this period (see Abusharaf 1998: 31f.; Assal 2007: 6). Against this background, Ahmed and Amna decided to migrate to Tehran, Iran. After spending a week there, they received assistance from the Red Cross and were transferred to Sudan. After around eight months of occupation of Kuwait, the US-led military coalition removed the Iraqi forces from Kuwait in February 1991. Ahmed and Amna had had to leave all their belongings in Iraq. When the conflict came to an end, around six months after their relocation to Sudan in 1991, they returned to Baghdad. In the interview with Abubakar, Amna talks in a controlled way about this period. This makes it difficult to reconstruct how she experienced these conflicts. From the argumentative character of her presentation of this difficult phase of the family history, we can see that Amna has learned to control her emotions when looking back at her life soon after marriage, which involved separation from her family of origin and migration. To a certain extent, analysis of the interviews with different members of the family suggests that Amna learned not to talk about these negative experiences in Iraq – at least on the front stage – because this could be seen as challenging Ahmed's decision to migrate to the country under these circumstances. This loyalty to Ahmed, and her support of his positive interpretations of this difficult phase, help us to understand the overwhelming emotion that remembering this phase of their life still has for her in the present, as Abubakar revealed to me in an interview. After returning to Baghdad, Ahmed and Amna established their family of procreation in Iraq. Nasif, their first son, was born in 1992, when Amna and Ahmed were 20 and 39 respectively. Ahmed continued working as a taxi driver, and Amna managed the household. We do not know whether Ahmed also sent money to his family of origin while living in Iraq. In June 1993, US President Bill Clinton ordered retaliation strikes in downtown Baghdad with 23 Tomahawk cruise missiles.[83] In the following year, 1994, Amna gave birth to their first daughter, Hiba. And in March 1998, Amna gave birth to their second son, Abubakar. Abubakar's brother was 6 years old by then and had started attending school in Baghdad. His mother was 26 and his father 45. All the children were registered as Sudanese citizens in Iraq and lived there with legalized status. Nine months after Abubakar's birth, the United States and the United Kingdom started the Operation Desert Fox, which included a four-day bombing campaign, allegedly to destroy facilities of the Iraqi government containing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.[84] After the end of the Gulf War in 1991, and with the implementation of a no-fly zone over northern and southern Iraq, the bombing of Iraqi assets by the US military occurred relatively often (see von Sponeck 2006: ch. 3). For Abubakar and his family, this meant getting used to the sound of explosions in Baghdad and knowing where to find shelter. Abubakar's early childhood and the schooling of his siblings took place against this background. From the interviews, we learn that their life in Baghdad became increasingly affected by collective armed violence. The price of goods increased, and neighbors sold their houses to raise money to leave the country. According to Abubakar's present view, it was his father who decided to stay in Baghdad: "Each year it was becoming more and more difficult. My dad could not go back to Sudan. There is no war in Sudan, but he said 'I can't live there'." Ahmed himself says he could not find a job in Sudan. It is difficult to reconstruct the exact circumstances that led the family to stay, but the decision to remain in Baghdad during this period is ascribed to Ahmed by the other family members. It also supports the interpretation that their life in Iraq represented at least for Ahmed more establishment than life in Sudan during this phase.

---

[83] See The Washington Post, June 27, 1993. "U.S. Strikes Iraq for Plot to Kill Bush". Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/iraq/timeline/062793.htm [Accessed on April 30, 2022].

[84] See The Washington Post, January 17, 1999. "The Difference Was in the Details". Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/iraq/analysis.htm [Accessed on April 30, 2022].

In the following years, Nasif and Hiba continued to go to school, and the bombings led by the US coalition intensified. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in US territory, the US government intensified its threats to the government of Saddam Hussein. After the escalation of US military operations in Iraq, US forces invaded the country in March 2003, and toppled Saddam Hussein's government. The battle reached Baghdad in March-April, and life in the city became critical.[85] By then, Abubakar was 5 years old, Hiba was 9, Nasif was 11, and their parents were 31 and 50. When I asked Abubakar to tell me about a situation he remembers with his mother, he answered:

> "When the war started, and there were bombings. She said once she was just tired and we were all just afraid and we went to the rooftop. We saw the sky full of stars and rockets destroying everything. There is this rocket that, when reaches the destination, it opens. It was me, my dad, my mom, and the two siblings waiting until it hits [...] only this picture I have in my head" (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

For Abubakar in his current situation, his memories of living in Iraq are mainly mediated by the stories he has heard from his parents. It is difficult to know precisely how they experienced the events they lived through at that time, but his present attitude toward this phase is helpful for understanding certain aspects of the family dialogue. Ahmed, as we have seen, focuses in his interview mainly on his financial gains in Baghdad and how this helped him to establish his own family. Abubakar told me that Nasif and Hiba show no interest in talking about this time with other members of the family, even if he supposes they remember it in more detail. Both Nasif and Hiba went to school in Baghdad, had friends there, and were older than Abubakar. Abubakar says he talks about this phase mainly with his parents, especially his mother: "My parents had so much memories. Neighbors fighting and killing each other. Steal money, steal car. Some gold and stuff. People were just going crazy."[86] With the invasion of Iraq by US forces, the security situation in Baghdad continued to deteriorate. As Abubakar heard from his parents: "It reached the point it is not safe to leave at night. The government announced a lockdown that you can't leave your apartment, and the government threw bombs." From his present perspective and based on the stories he heard from his parents about this critical phase of the family history, Abubakar recounts how his father took them out of Baghdad:

---

[85] See USA Today, June 4, 2003. "From the battered streets of Baghdad, it's clear: 'The battle has reached us'". Available at: https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-04-06-baghdad-usat_x.htm [Accessed on April 30, 2022].

> "He could not do anything so he was trying to take us to a safe area. We jumped in his car and drove around the country. There is a small place, we hid" (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

In Abubakar's presentation, Ahmed appears again as the one responsible for taking the decisions for the family and latently as their protector. The fact that Ahmed owned a car and had some money decisively shaped the circumstances of their flight. Abubakar explains, however, that they had to stay hidden and wait for the intensity of the conflict to diminish before leaving the small village where they found shelter. Around May 2003, months after the invasion, Abubakar's family was able to fly to Tehran, Iran, where they stayed in a camp for people escaping from the conflict.

The time the family spent in this 'refugee' camp – they were not formally recognized as refugees – was full of uncertainties, as it was unclear where they could go. Abubakar says: "We stayed in a camp for three months and it was the worse so many miscommunications the Iranian didn't communicate well so people were suffering." When I asked him if he remembered something from the time they lived in a tent in the camp in Iran, he told me in detail about a situation when his father was queuing for food, and military forces entered and started to beat people: "That is the only situation that I remember this one I saw with my eyes. I felt a weird feeling I never felt before. I didn't understand what is happening. People getting beaten for food." Again, Abubakar presents a memory of his father caring for the family in a context of physical violence. Whether this corresponds to the way all family members experienced Ahmed back then it is not possible to say, but we know that they stayed together. Amna was 31 years old at this time, and found herself once again as a migrant in a constellation shaped by collective physical violence.

---

[86] With the fall of the government of Saddam Hussein, migrants, refugees and other non-nationals were "subjected to harassment, violent attacks, and forced evictions from their homes. Small groups of Iraqi men typically perpetrated the attacks, usually warning those targeted to leave Iraq. Hundreds of foreigners, particularly Palestinians, Iranian Kurds, Sudanese, Somalis, among other nationalities, chose to flee as a result" (Human rights Watch 2003).

See Human Rights Watch, May 9, 2003. "Flight From Iraq. Attacks on Refugees and Other Foreigners and Their Treatment in Jordan". Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/05/09/flight-iraq/attacks-refugees-and-other-foreigners-and-their-treatment-jordan [Accessed on April 30, 2022].

Abubakar says about his mother during this period: “I remember a situation my mom had some panic attacks, and she was going crazy, and she was overwhelmed with the whole situation.” And at another point of the interview:

> “She was running around in the camp running and crying. He [Ahmed, L.C.S.] is also going around just crying and had these flashbacks in their head seeing everything burning down. She had friends. She doesn’t know if they are dead or alive. ‘It is difficult to have these memories of them in my head. I don’t know if they are alive or not.’ If you have these memories, you’ll have these ups and downs all the time” (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

We can imagine that for Abubakar and his siblings, to experience their parents in such situations represented a significant break with their everyday lives in the previous phase in Baghdad, where they had a house. The above quotation shows that Ahmed, who is usually presented by the different family members as being in control, revealed his vulnerability in this situation. From the quotation, it is difficult to know what were the feelings of each of the family members, and especially what Abubakar felt in at the time. Perhaps he can give these details only because he heard about them from his parents, and perhaps he fills the gaps with fantasies. What is crucial is that Abubakar closely entangles his own feelings in the present with the feelings his parents seem to have experienced in the past. In other words, remembering this phase of the family past binds them and their collective history together in the present as a we-group. Not only does Abubakar share their feelings in the present, but he feels that he experienced his parents side by side, comforting each other and trying to protect him in the past.

Toward the end of 2003, Abubakar (5), Nasif (11), Hiba (9), Amna (31) and Ahmed (50) took a flight organized by a United Nations agency to Amman, Jordan’s capital. Presumably, the flight was planned to take them back to Khartoum via Amman. However, Ahmed says he negotiated a temporary stay in Amman with the authorities. From Abubakar’s current perspective, the decision to stay in Amman was taken by his father, who again appears in the most powerful position in the familial constellation.

I have already pointed out that in their presentations, Ahmed and Amna – the generation that experienced migration from Sudan – see the phase of the family history in Iraq in a more positive light. This is possible through their emphasis on having a group of Sudanese friends and on establishing their family of procreation in that country. Both look back and talk about this phase in terms of the ‘good life’. However, as I have shown, a reconstruction of the reasons that led to their departure from Iraq shows a sequence of experiences of physical violence that significantly transformed their everyday life in Baghdad and led them to Iran and Jordan. The relevance of these experiences becomes clear in the way Abubakar sums them up: "We have these two images, and you don't know what happened in between. Suddenly it shifted to war." My analysis of the interviews with the Nasr family shows that the open dialogue in the family, especially between Abubakar and Amna, about this phase is connected with the more positive image the parents present. Their focus on positive aspects allows them to speak openly about their experiences in the course of the war, such as the overwhelming feelings that come with Amna's fantasies regarding the fate of friends in Iraq who did not have similar migration chances. As I will show next, this dialogue is interdependent with Abubakar's increasing participation in Jordan in a group of people who lived through similar experiences of war in Iraq, their contestation of the images presented by his parents, and how Abubakar uses this to ask his parents more about the past.

Settlement in Amman and the experience of stigmatization (2004–2007). Their arrival in Amman came with challenges for the Nasr family. Ahmed had no job and decided not to apply for refugee status, which potentially would entitle them to a monthly allowance provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Abubakar says they had contact with other Sudanese living in Amman: "There are some Sudanese living here, so they hosted us until we felt relieved. My dad said the situation was safe." However, we know from Amna's interview with Abubakar that she was not comfortable with the situation at the time. Amna returned with the children to Sudan for six months:

> "It was very much hard. We arrived with nothing left in our hands. No home, nothing. I must return back to Sudan, because I couldn't keep on life that way. My husband stayed. I returned to him after he found a job and settled down" (Biographical interview, March 2021, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

The support Amna had from her family of origin in Sudan, and the fact that she had the necessary financial resources and papers to travel, show the relatively established position of the family even in this difficult constellation, where she lived physically separated from Ahmed. Around 2004, Ahmed was hired as a driver at the Slovenian Consulate in Amman, which provided a stable income and a visa for the whole family to live in Jordan. Amna took care of reuniting all the family members in Amman. One of Abubakar's uncles also moved to Amman. The children were registered in an English school. Abubakar and Hiba were in the same class because Hiba was kept out of school during the war in Iraq. They increasingly established themselves in the Sudanese community in Jordan. Amna worked in the Office of Women's Affairs of the Sudanese Committee in Amman. During this time Abubakar experienced fewer power chances than his colleagues who belonged to more established groupings at school. From his present perspective, he says he realized the different statuses of the children at school in terms of free access to schoolbooks: “each year you need to buy the books. Like the Jordanians, Syrians and Palestinians, they get the book for free. But for Sudanese, Somali, Yemeni, they all have to buy the books. When you separate between people to buy the books, this sticks in your mind.” The they-image of Sudanese and non-Arab increasingly shaped his experiences at school. During his first three years, from the ages of 8 to 11, Abubakar suffered harassment from his peers and teachers alike. He even changed how he styled his hair to avoid it. From his present perspective, he interprets it as being due to his belonging to a grouping of Blacks:

> “We were the first group of black people who arrived in Jordan. As a kid, I remember people calling me black (Arabic: *aswad*) or brown (Arabic: *abu samra*). It hurt me. It was hard to digest. So I grew up with these heavy memories” (Biographical interview, March 2021, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, via telephone, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

Confrontations with the they-image as Black and African ascribed to him during this phase help to explain the biographical relevance of his focus on the African belonging of the family. Despite Abubakar’s difficult experiences of discrimination at school, this phase was one of stabilization and establishment for the family, whose members became increasingly bonded as an outcome of some challenging situations. For example, a connection between experiences lived through during the war in Iraq and situations experienced in Jordan became manifest when Amna, who was driving a car with Ahmed and Abubakar, drove off the road and crashed. From his present perspective, Abubakar remembers that Amna experienced another ‘panic attack’. In the interview I conducted with him, Abubakar told me that he had recently asked his mother how she felt during the car crash. In other words, these experiences are used by him in the present to open a dialogue with her. According to Abubakar, Amna told him that the accident triggered her memories of the war in Iraq, and she thought they would die. Abubakar remembers that his father comforted her after the accident. The experience of such situations when the family members seek to comfort each other help to explain how Abubakar’s family increasingly became a group to which he feels proud to belong. This gains relevance in the context of harassment by his teachers and peers at school. He received support from his we-group in contexts of physical violence, accidents, or harassment, and this shapes his present view of his family during this phase: “Our life as a family was good, but the feeling lingering on you, you are a stranger, the harassment you are facing daily was unbearable, a bad feeling, a killing feeling.”

The sedimentation of the family as a source of support and Abubakar's increasing self-esteem (2008–2022). The support Abubakar received from his parents can be seen in their decision to send him to a different school in 2008, when Abubakar was 11 years old. From his present perspective, he says: "It was a turning point in my life. We thought the new school had a bad reputation. People spoke bad of it." In the eyes of more established groupings, the reputation of the new school was associated with the children of marginalized groupings in Amman. There, Abubakar had contact with peers who had lived through similar experiences as himself, such as collective physical violence in Iraq:

> "They become friends of mine. I have the accent of Iraqis. I was so interested. I was born in Iraq and my friends are from Iraq. So, this is my intention. To know. It is still a place they consider home, and I don't remember that much. Also, my colleagues from school- how they faced this big drama and are traumatized by it, and don't want to speak about it. This got me willing to ask them" (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

Here it is interesting that Abubakar looks back at a difficult phase of his life, and explains that one of the reasons for getting closer to people was his curiosity to learn more about their experiences of the war in Iraq, a biographical experience he also lived through. At this time, Abubakar was a teenager and became interested in learning more about his life in Iraq and that of his family before his birth. As we have seen, his mother was willing to talk about their time in Iraq with him. He remembers situations in which he saw Amna crying in a room in their house and asked her what was going on. He remembers that Amna was worried about the friends they left in Iraq, from whom she never heard again. Abubakar became increasingly curious about Iraq through his participation in a group of Iraqi peers, with similar family histories. These friendships helped him to open up the dialogue in his family about their life in Iraq. Through the dialogue with his family members, Abubakar gained a better understanding of what happened in his own past, which brought him closer to his Iraqi friends. At the same time, what he was told by these friends contrasted with the romanticized version of their life in Iraq that was dominant in his own family. This led him to ask more questions about his family's experiences of violence in Iraq, which seems to have been dethematized by his parents, as shown in their presentations in the interviews. Abubakar recounts an interaction with an Iraqi friend who contested the image of Iraq transmitted by Abubakar's parents:

> "I told him 'I am born in Iraq and I know some nice words, my parents love Iraq, it is a super nice country'. He told 'Yeah, but at the same time, it was really bad. If it was a good country, then why it is destroyed now. Why they

> make us suffer?" (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

Abubakar increasingly learned to differentiate the circumstances that led people to escape from Iraq, and this helped his understanding of his own history and that of the country where he was born. He learned that some of his Iraqi friends did not want to talk about their life in Iraq. And from his present perspective, Abubakar points to a reason for this, which shows the importance of his family as a we-group for him:

> "There are some people who didn't leave with their families. I left with my family, but some others didn't leave with their families. I met someone else that till today don't know if their parents are alive or not" (Biographical-narrative interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

Around 2011, when Abubakar was around 13, he started to play soccer in the school team. He traveled with the team and participated in competitions. His participation in soccer teams allowed him to get support from teachers and peers and brought him closer to his siblings. Abubakar says of Nasif, his brother: "I don't have personal stories about him. He was just in school and studies until eight grade in Iraq then we moved to Jordan. He is this person who is really silent." And regarding his sister, Hiba, whom he presents as the 'opposite' of his brother, he remembers her as 'playing football with males and chilling out'. Abubakar thinks that his sister had a more relaxed life than himself or his brother. This interpretation is constructed by him against the background of gendered expectations: "I felt that Jordan and Iraq is the same thing for women, they will study, marry. It was not difficult for her. Since she was born, she knows what she will do." Gendered norms in the we-group were at the basis of the decision to invest money in the formal education of Abubakar's elder brother to the detriment of his sister.

The elder brother, Nasir, finished high school and negotiated with Ahmed over going to study in Sudan. As Abubakar says, Ahmed did not want Nasif to move to Sudan, where they still had relatives living in Gadaref and Khartoum. But Nasif argued that it was necessary 'because foreigners have to pay a lot for university in Amman.' Nasif registered in a university course especially for Sudanese who lived abroad and returned to Sudan. He shared an apartment there with other Sudanese who were born in the Middle East. Abubakar says he understands his brother's decision to return to Sudan: "I grew up in this country. My brother didn't […] I feel Jordan is my home. And Sudan is not home because I don't have one single friend in there." In the following years, Abubakar started high school with a grant for being an athlete. And playing soccer brought him closer to other people he defines as Africans in Amman. From his present perspective, this led to the expansion of his power chances in Jordanian society, as he says in an interview conducted with him by Isaac, framed in this constellation as an African:

> "For us Africans, it is difficult to integrate, to be accepted. The best way for us to get to know others and to be part of this society is through sport and football. Somehow, there is no race. It is less important in this context […] we Africans are becoming the biggest African community in the Middle East" (Biographical interview, March 2021, interviewer: Isaac Hamid, via telephone, translated from Arabic by Mahadi Ahmed).

The quotation helps to explain how his participation in various groups in Amman taught Abubakar to appreciate the African belonging of his family. It also becomes clear that he uses race retrospectively to explain why it was difficult to become 'integrated' in Jordanian society. The life course of Abubakar's sister Hiba illustrates how gendered social norms in the we-group can reduce a person's chances of benefiting from formal education and participating in Jordanian society. Around 2015, Abubakar and Hiba finished high school. Abubakar explains that his sister wanted to pursue a university course in medicine, but the fact that Ahmed was sending money to support Nasif's studies in Sudan hindered her educational career: "One sibling has to study and the other one has to wait. Her passion is to study and she didn't study." Abubakar says that Hiba looked for jobs, but their Sudanese citizenship made it difficult to find formal employment. After finishing high school, Abubakar tried to pursue a career in professional soccer, which he interprets as being hindered by his Sudanese citizenship. He says his attempt to join a soccer team was rejected, while his friend, who was a Jordanian citizen, was accepted. Other power chances that were unavailable to non-Jordanian citizens also shaped his life course. The higher costs of university education in Amman for non-citizens are one of the reasons why Abubakar chose a two-year degree course in engineering which had easier access for foreigners. Despite this degree, in the following years Abubakar performed different jobs, such as serving coffee at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, a temporary job his father got him. Abubakar explained he expected to be hired by them, but instead a Jordanian was hired in his place. He says they told him they did not like his hairstyle, because 'it is not this Jordanian hair'. One important way he found to increase his power chances in Jordan was by attending language courses, where he met people from abroad. It was at the language school that Abubakar met his German girlfriend. During the Covid-19 pandemic, his father was able to keep his job, but he and his sister were unable to find work. Nasif finished his studies in Sudan in 2019 and moved in the following years to Oman, where he currently lives. Hiba kept looking for a job in Jordan. Ahmed continued to work as a driver at the Slovenian Consulate while Amna took care of the household. It is still Ahmed's regular work contract that allows all the members of his family to stay with a legal visa in Jordan. Amna sums up the situation thus: "we still cannot settle down, really. I don't know if the day will come when we are finally completely settled." As a result of the power chances available to this grouping in the Jordanian figuration, Abubakar was able to get a student visa and migrated to Germany with support from his girlfriend in late 2022.

Summary. The Nasr family represents a type in which the past in Sudan and the experiences of physical violence along the migration course to Jordan are thematized, and knowledge about this past is explicitly passed on to the descendants. This type is characterized by a high level of group cohesion and pride in belonging to a Sudanese we-group. In the intergenerational dialogue, we see in this type that the relevancies of the younger genealogical generation born in the diaspora regarding the familial and collective past contrast with those of the generation born and raised in Sudan. This is because in the diaspora the members of the younger generation participate in groupings who regard themselves as Blacks and Africans and who use these we- and they-images to interpret their experiences in Jordan in relation to members of old-established Arab groupings. The generation born and raised in Sudan learn to present themselves as Arabs to avoid, among other things, processes of stigmatization in their home region, as well as to expand their power chances in that figuration and in Iraq and Jordan. They do not interpret their experiences in Sudan and in the diaspora as connected to the African origins of their family, nor do they talk about being confronted with they-images as Blacks. Among other things, it was Abubakar's participation in a group of Africans that led him to interpret certain experiences in his past as racialized prejudice, which contrasts with his parents' interpretations of the family past, and with those of other non-Arab Sudanese in the diaspora, who regard the Nasr family as Arabs (see excursus in ch. 3.5.1). In other words, by biographically reconstructing the changing relevancies of the we- and they-images in different phases of Abubakar's life course and in the history of his family, it becomes clear that his participation in certain groups outside his family allowed him to learn about the collective histories of other groupings from the African continent, to develop his self-esteem and to be socialized in discourses that allowed him to interpret the family past in a contrasting way to that of his parents. For him, it is more relevant to say in the present that he and his family are Africans and that they experienced racism as Africans in interactions with Jordanians and Palestinians. For his parents, it is more relevant to say they are Arabs and Muslims and to dethematize experiences of racialized prejudice or being denied Arab belonging in interactions with members of old-established Arab groupings in Sudan, Iraq and Jordan. The chances the parents had for learning how to interpret the experiences they lived through in these figurations of being confronted with the they-image as Africans and Blacks were different from those of Abubakar in Jordan. In other words, Abubakar learned about racialized discrimination in the Middle East and Sudan outside his Arab family and benefited in Jordan from the power chances brought by subsuming himself under a we-image of African and coming closer to a group of friends who supported him. However, even if the two generations cannot agree on an African or Arab interpretation of the family past, they all proudly feel Sudanese. Against the background of the collective histories of different groupings in Sudan, the subsumption of the generation born in the diaspora under the we-image of Africans also functions to avoid accusations by other Sudanese living in the diaspora, especially Darfurians, of belonging to the grouping of Arab perpetrators of violence in Sudan. As I have shown, the two main components shaping the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images, and the attitude of the generation born in the diaspora toward the past, are the marriage of the parents inside the same ethnic we-grouping from the home region, and the way the family members comfort and support each other in the face of physical violence, especially along the migration course.

As I will show next, the pride of belonging to the we-group of Sudanese and the mutual support inside the Nasr family contrasts with the findings in the case of the Hamid family, whose ancestors come from the region of Darfur.

5.4.3 The Hamid Family: Dethematization of the family past and lack of group cohesion

A 'Zurqa' family from Darfur with Palestinian family members

The process of data generation in the family. Hala Budeir, my Palestinian and Jordanian field assistant, conducted an interview with Isaac Hamid (born in 1991) in July 2020. This was a relatively short interview (20 minutes on tape). Due to the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, I conducted an online biographical-narrative interview with Isaac in October 2020 (105 minutes on tape). During 2021 and 2023, my Palestinian and German colleague Ahmed Albaba conducted one interview with Isaac, and I conducted eight online follow-up interviews with him. As shown above, Isaac assisted us by conducting interviews with Sudanese living in Amman (see ch. 5.2). In addition, Isaac conducted a short biographical interview (7 minutes on tape) with his mother, Shadia Hamid (born in 1952), in April 2022. I tried to conduct an interview with Aida Hamid (born in 1994), Isaac's sister. Initially she agreed to do the interview, but then cancelled. The reasons for this, as well as for the short duration of Isaac's interview with his mother, has to do, as I will show, with several family secrets and the danger of becoming a victim of honor killings in the family. I will discuss this in detail, as I assume that the markedly conflictual family constellation can explain Isaac's constructions of belonging and his attitude to his Sudanese father.

In the eyes of other Sudanese in the diaspora, the Hamid family can be framed as Zurqa or Black – meaning non-Arabs from Darfur in this context (see ch. 3.5.2). Some members of this family married into families from Palestine and Jordan. It seems that previous generations of the Palestinian maternal family migrated to Palestine from a region in the African continent. Besides this, the family history is shaped by different processes of migration that we can trace to Darfur at the end of the nineteenth century, when this region was caught up in colonial disputes between France and the United Kingdom (see ch. 3.5.1). It serves as an empirical example of how a sense of belonging to the more powerful grouping from that historical phase, the French, remains powerful in the family. Their experiences of migration took place in the context of the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and then the occupation of the West Bank and escalation of processes of collective violence which led the family to migrate to Jordan in the 1960s.

Isaac was born in Amman, Jordan's capital, in 1991. Both his maternal and paternal families had a long history of migration, going back to the regions of Darfur, Sudan and Palestine. His maternal grandfather was born in a Masalit family in what is nowadays the border region between Darfur and Chad. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he migrated to Palestine, and married two women there. Shadia, Isaac's mother, was born in Tulkarm, Palestine, in 1952. She is regarded by Isaac in the present as Arab, even though he speculates that her family must have migrated from Africa at some point. In fact, Isaac's mother is a member of the second generation of migrants from Sudan in the Middle East. In 1961, when she was nine years old, the family migrated with her to Amman, Jordan. They were entitled to Jordanian citizenship because of the Palestinian grandmother (see Brun/Fàbos/El-Abed 2017: 224ff.; Becker/Hinrichsen/Worm 2023: 612). Shadia married a man belonging to a Jordanian Bedouin grouping and had four children with him. In unclear circumstances – it was not possible to find out if she had divorced or separated from her Jordanian husband at this point – Shadia met Ahmed, Isaac's father, in Amman in the late 1980s. Ahmed comes from a Zaghawa family from Darfur, a grouping, like the Masalit grouping of Isaac's maternal grandfather, regarded as non-Arab or Black by other Sudanese. Ahmed migrated to Amman in the 1980s, where he had two children with Shadia, Isaac and his sister, Aida, in the early 1990s. Isaac and Aida grew up in Amman as so-called non-citizen children of Jordanian mothers. They had restricted legal rights in the figuration with the Jordanian state. We can only understand the course of the family history if we consider the figurations in the family, and especially the biographical course of Isaac's older half-sister, Nada Saleh (born in the 1970s). During the childhood of Isaac and Aida, Nada, who was separated from her husband, became pregnant with her second child. Against this background, Shadia migrated to Egypt with Nada (pregnant), Nada's daughter, Isaac and Aida. After Nada's son was born in 1998 in Egypt, they returned to Jordan, where they lived in separate houses from Hassan, Shadia's Jordanian husband and Nada's father, and Shadia's elder sons. Soon after their return to Amman, Ahmed, Isaac's Sudanese father, lived for a short period with the family. It was only when Isaac and Aida were teenagers that they were recognized as Sudanese citizens, which changed their legal status in relation to the Jordanian authorities. They went from being non-citizen children of a Jordanian mother to Sudanese citizens in Jordan.

These very complex legal and social situations in the Hamid family already suggest changing relevancies of we- and they-images – and their intergenerational transmission – in the family dialogue. Based on the interviews, we know more about Isaac's maternal family. The reasons for this are a central component configuring this case. However, before going into details, I will discuss the different ways Shadia and Isaac Hamid look back on their family history, and how their perspectives of the past at times complement and at times contradict each other.

The presentation of the family past in the Hamid family: Africans living under the norms and rules of Arabs

In this section, I will show how the interviews with Shadia Hamid and her son, Isaac Hamid, give insights into how they differ – from their present perspectives – in their construction of the dominant belongings of their family. While Shadia sees her family as Africans who migrated to Jordan, Isaac's dominant interpretation is that they live 'like the Arabs'. This leads him, for example, to define his family as Bedouin Arabs in his interaction with Hala Budeir, herself from a family of Palestinian Arabs. Both Shadia and her son Isaac are Sudanese born in the diaspora (in Palestine and Jordan, respectively), and the components shaping the complementary ways they regard the family past are explained below. One of the outcomes of the dominance of certain we-images to the detriment of others is that Isaac never heard – or does not remember – that his maternal grandfather belonged to the Masalit of Dar Masalit, something he learned only after conducting the interviews for us. First, I will show how they presented themselves and their family in the interviews.

When Hala Budeir asked Isaac about the belonging of his family members during an interview in July 2020, the relevance of gendered belonging in the context of the patriarchal norms of citizenship of the Jordanian state became dominant:

> "Me and my sister don't have the Jordanian passport, it depends on whether your father is Jordanian, or you don't get a Jordanian passport" (Biographical interview, July 2020, interviewer: Hala Budeir, translated from Arabic by Ahmed Albaba).

It is remarkable that the relevance of Sudanese belonging remains in the background, despite his maternal grandfather and his father being born and raised in Darfur, Sudan (in Masalit and Zaghawa families respectively). At the time, Isaac knew very little about the history of his family in Sudan and Palestine. For example, he knew only that his father's family was Zaghawa from Darfur, and that his maternal grandfather was from the same region. And he was unfamiliar with the collective histories of various groupings from Darfur. He learned more about this after conducting interviews with people from the same home region as his family. Similarly, he did not know much about the marriage of his Masalit maternal grandfather with his Palestinian maternal grandmother, whom he regards as Arab but believes that previous generations of her family migrated from Africa to Palestine. From the quotation above, we can see that for Isaac it is relevant that he and his sister do not have Jordanian citizenship. Hala continues by asking him how he would define his religion. Isaac tells her:

> "I can imagine that one of these designations suits me only partially [...] there are not many labels, these generally does not describe exactly [...]."

At this point, the complexity of the matter of definition is set for Isaac. Hala then asks how his family would self-define. Isaac answers:

> "[...] my family is the ones I live with, everyone in my family is from a different place. My mother doesn't consider herself Palestinian. She doesn't recognize her family either. She doesn't associate with her family [...]."

Two aspects concerning the family past and their belongings become relevant: the need for Isaac to differentiate the family that he lives with from the other part of the family and that they come from different places, suggesting different belongings in this context. Hala's question – which presupposes clear definitions of belonging – can be only partially answered by Isaac, whose family history includes different regions, groupings, and collective histories. In other words, it demonstrates the experience of people with similar family histories of having to choose to emphasize one or another belonging in interactions in their everyday lives. The reasons for this explicit separation from another part of the family – and consequently from their history and their belongings – will become clear below. For now, it is important that Isaac does not define himself or his mother as Sudanese or Palestinian in the interaction. Despite the relevance of the information, the fact that different members of his family come from Masalit and Zaghawa groupings from present-day Darfur, or that his maternal grandmother was a Palestinian Arab potentially from an African family, gains no explicit dominance. These belongings remain in the background in the interaction with Hala, who asks Isaac if his mother, Shadia, would define herself as Palestinian. It is clear that for Hala, the Palestinian interviewer, this would be a plausible definition. Isaac answers about his mother:

> "[…] I doubt she thinks of herself that way. I don't think she thinks about it *yaani* ((an Arabic expression equivalent to English 'I mean' or 'you know')) if you were to ask her, she won't answer you […] if I absolutely have to define her, I would call her a very very strong woman, but I won't do her justice with another description […]."

The quotation confirms that from Isaac's present perspective, his dominant definition of his mother in Jordan is a gendered one. However, he explains to Hala:

> "[…] she came from Palestine. If it is a serious matter, she defines herself that way, but only to answer the question and no more than that […]."

He then tells Hala how they negotiate their belongings when they feel they must do it:

> "[…] when I am asked where I am from, I say from Jordan, but when I am asked about my origin, I have to say from Sudan, but only to answer the question. Not more than that […]."

In other words, Isaac distances himself from Sudan, as he distances his mother's belonging from Palestine. These are places of origin and 'no more than that'. Hala, herself an Arab, bluntly asks: "Ok, do you consider yourself Arab?"

> "[…] (8) yes, because we had to go through the experiences that are intended for the Arabs. All the scenarios in my life are influenced by it, starting from father to mother, siblings, family, and places where we lived, there were only Arabs. I imagine if we had been in another place, everything would have been different, then it would be easier, then my life would be much easier, or maybe not […] but the designation that I was born in a place where Arabs live, and my family is Arab, put us in trouble and consequences that were not necessary and don't have to be. That is, why do you have to fear for your daughter that she would be murdered by her own family and have to flee to another country that you don't know, just because we live in conditions like the Arabs" (Biographical interview, July 2020, interviewer: Hala Budeir, translated from Arabic by Ahmed Albaba).

In the quotation, it is possible to see that the most relevant self-definition for Isaac in this interaction is that he and his family are Arabs. And he explicitly relates being Arab in this context to the "trouble and consequences" they have lived through. To understand what he means, it is necessary to consider his family history and the collective history of various groupings in Jordan. Isaac refers in the quotation to the threat of physical violence his elder half-sister faced from her Jordanian father and brothers when she got pregnant outside marriage and, as Isaac puts is, 'they had to kill her to restore their honor'. Against this background, Shadia escaped to Egypt with her daughters and granddaughter, as well as Isaac, to avoid the honor killing of her eldest daughter by the elder men in the family, i.e., her daughter's brothers and father. As the quotation shows, this threat of violence is the crucial experience that makes Isaac see his family from his present perspective as Arabs in the Jordanian and Bedouin sense and in terms of the norms and rules of these groupings. That is, the norms and rules of the Arab and Bedouin groupings from Jordan are not necessarily the same as those of Arab groupings from Sudan, even if members of all these groupings subsume themselves under the we-image of Arabs. This somewhat long quotation explains the relevance of gendered belonging in this constellation, as well as the connection Isaac makes – from his present perspective – with the rules and norms of the we-group they had to consider themselves as belonging to, the Arabs from Jordan. We can say that, for him, belonging to the Arabs gained relevance against the background of their need to migrate in the context of the threat of death in the family. These experiences legitimately shaped them as Arabs in his eyes.

In the continuation of their interaction, Hala, a Palestinian Arab, asks 'who are the Arabs?', to which Isaac answers: "the Jordanians, the Bedouin." So, from Isaac's present perspective, the Arabs are the Jordanian Bedouins in the Jordanian figuration (see also Layne 1994: 12ff.). Against the background of his family history, the Hashemite and the Sudanese are excluded from Arab belonging in this construction, and so-called Bedouin groupings with diverse collective histories are homogenized in one broader we-image. To understand the extent to which this is connected to his interpretation of his mother as a strong woman and the experiences of physical violence and power disparities in his family as a we-group of Bedouins, it is necessary to look into the collective histories of Bedouin groupings in Jordan and his family history. In his pattern of argument, the dominant construction of belonging is based not only on collective memories – the transmission of which was hindered in his case, as I will show – but also on the family's current power chances and the experience or threat of physical violence arising from the norms and rules of his we-grouping, in this case, the Bedouin Arabs from Jordan. What is interesting in this self-definition is that while Isaac is a Sudanese citizen in the figuration with the Jordanian state, he does not construct a belonging to Sudan, or to the ethnic groupings his family members come from in Darfur (the Masalit and the Zaghawa). These belongings gain relevance for him – and only to a certain extent – after conducting interviews with people who had migrated from Sudan to Jordan, through which he learned more about the collective histories of these groupings. It is decisive that Isaac feels the need to separate the presentation of the belongings of the various members of his family. As I will show, this hinders the transmission to him of we-images as Masalit, Zaghawa, Sudanese or Palestinian. Unlike Shadia, as will become clear, Isaac does not define his experiences in Jordan as African. He does not interpret the power chances he has in Jordan against a collective history of Africans. This is different in Shadia's interview with Isaac in April 2022. From her present perspective, the they-image as African with which the Jordanian authorities regarded her Masalit father when he migrated to Jordan from Palestine remains dominant. When she talks about her family, she says: “in Jordan no African can get the Jordanian citizenship.” In circumstances that remain unclear to Shadia, her father was able to obtain French citizenship while in Chad/Dar Masalit, and upon his migration to Palestine. When talking about the family past in her interview with Isaac, she accords this French citizenship greater relevance than her father’s Masalit belonging or her mother’s Palestinian belonging. Overall, the family history transmitted to Isaac is mainly connected to his maternal grandfather’s history. To a certain extent, the history of the family of his maternal grandmother and the we-image as Palestinians and Arabs – or as Africans who migrated to Palestine – have lost their sociobiographical legitimacy for both Isaac and Shadia, who do not regard themselves as Palestinians.

The changing relevancies of belongings – and how burdening they can be for people in certain circumstances – become clear in Isaac’s initial presentation in the online biographical-narrative interview I conducted with him in October 2020. When I asked him to tell me his life story and the history of his family, he presented them separately. He first told his life story and after concluding it, he told the history of his family. I interpret this separation as an attempt to reduce the complexity of a family past that stretches through different geographical regions and ethnic groupings, i.e., different collective histories, and as a desire to distance himself from the family past. In other words, he does not construct his own life story in relation to the history of his family and the we-groupings his ancestors belonged to in Sudan or Palestine. This interpretation, and the components that led to the explicit transmission to Isaac of certain we-images but not others, become clear when we consider the collective histories of the groupings they belong to and the history of the family. As I will show in the case reconstruction of the Hamid family, one of the central outcomes of the non-transmission of we- and they-images in the generation born in the diaspora is that Isaac does not have explicit knowledge at hand to construct his current power chances in Amman in relation to the collective histories of his we-groups and family. In other words, both the mother Shadia and especially her son Isaac cannot further empower themselves in the diaspora by referring to their collective histories and saying that colonial and post-independence sociohistorical power inequalities in Darfur, Chad, Sudan and Palestine have shaped their marginalized position in Jordanian society. The ways in which these sociohistorical power inequalities have configured the concrete power chances in their life and that of previous generations of their family and groupings in Darfur, Sudan and Palestine will become clear in the following section.

The family history of the Hamid family

Dar Masalit and the constitution of a Masalit and Arab family in Palestine (c. 1890s–1950s). The family of Isaac's maternal grandfather belonged to the Masalit and lived in the Dar Masalit region, which nowadays comprises the border region between Chad and Darfur in Sudan (see Behrends 2008: 30f.). The Masalit were one of the most powerful groupings living in this region, which eventually fell under the control of the French administration in 1921 (Chad) and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium forces, which ruled Sudan between 1898 and 1956 (see Behrends 2008: 34ff.; ch. 3.5.1). The power chances brought by these foreign occupations are clear in the fact that Isaac's maternal grandfather was able to have a French passport. Isaac and Shadia also speculate that he migrated to France at some point in his life. They regard Shadia's father as coming from a Masalit grouping in Chad and as Darfurian. As far as the history transmitted in the family goes, he was able to migrate to Palestine, by then under British rule like Sudan, with a French passport (or an authorization to travel) (see Warburg 1992b). Like Isaac and his mother Shadia, we do not know exactly when his maternal grandfather migrated to Palestine. In the interview Isaac conducted with his mother, when he asks her the reasons for the migration of her father to Palestine, she answers: "I don't know, he never told me." In Palestine, Isaac's grandfather lived for a period in Jerusalem, where he met and married two women from Palestine. One of these women, Shadia's mother, probably had African origins. She is regarded by Isaac in the present as Arab, and he speculates that at least part of her family migrated from the African continent to the Levant. At some point, Isaac's maternal grandparents moved from Jerusalem to Tulkarm, Palestine. Between 1920 and 1947, Tulkarm was under British Mandatory rule according to the terms of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. Between November 1947 and July 1949, more than 700,000 Palestinians were forced out of their homes by Jewish military and paramilitary forces (Haganah, IDF) in a context of widespread fear and collective violence that became known among those who experienced these acts of violence as the 1948 catastrophe (Arabic: *an-Nakbah*) (see Morris 2008; Rosenthal 2016a: 207). Isaac's grandfather was a police officer under the mandate government in Palestine and it is likely that the family was aware of the deterioration of their safety in the country. There are reports that when the British forces started to leave the region before 1948, "people had to fend for themselves as best as they could" (see Hallaj 2008: 68). The fact that Isaac's maternal family stayed in Tulkarm during this phase suggests they were able to maintain themselves in a relatively safe position for some time, or that they were in such a marginalized position that their chances to migrate were extremely low. One important indication of this is the birth of Shadia, Isaac's mother, in 1952 in Tulkarm, in a Sunni Muslim family. She was the daughter of Isaac's grandfather with his first wife. Shadia had only one brother from the same mother and more than ten other siblings from his father's second wife. During Shadia's childhood, Tulkarm was under Jordanian administration. Shadia went to school here and grew up with Arabic as her mother tongue. She did not learn to speak Masalit. Her mother passed away in unclear circumstances during Shadia's early childhood. She grew up under the care of her father's second wife, a Palestinian speaker of Arabic. In other words, Shadia grew up physically separated from her biological mother, which significantly affected transmission of the collective histories of her mother's Palestinian ancestors. In 1961, when Shadia was 9 years old, she migrated with her father, her siblings and her father's second wife to Amman, Jordan's capital. We do not know how processes of collective physical violence affected the family during this period. When Isaac asked Shadia about the context of their migration, she presented it as a decision taken by her father: "He just left for Jordan […] I was attending the school by this time. A boarding school. I had to leave. I left. I joined him to Jordan." The hindered transmission in the family of explicit knowledge about these circumstances is not accidental, as I will show in my analysis of the family dialogue about the past. For example, much of the historical data presented in this chapter was not available to Isaac before I explicitly asked about it, and he spontaneously offered to ask his mother. We only know through his mother that his father's 'tribe' are the Zaghawa, and that his paternal family lived in Darfur. In contrast to the Masalit ethnic belonging of his maternal family, Isaac was aware of his father's Zaghawa ethnic belonging before our first interview. He had learned about it through Shadia. The power chances associated with the establishment of his maternal family in Amman in the generation of Isaac's grandparents, as I will show, help to understand the more prominent orientation toward the history of the maternal family and their life in Palestine.

Settlement in Amman and the constitution of a Jordanian family (1960s–1970s). This phase of the family history shows that Africans (as Shadia says) with Palestinian family histories had greater opportunities to settle in Amman in the 1960s. It shows that the family had an established position based on a gendered determination of legal citizenship that allowed the children of Jordanian men to 'inherit' Jordanian citizenship (and the legal rights and responsibilities that come with it). However, the children of Jordanian women were treated as non-citizens by the Jordanian state. During this phase, Isaac's maternal family became firmly oriented toward the norms and rules of the established Bedouin Arabs in the figuration with Palestinians and Sudanese groupings in Amman.

Isaac's maternal family arrived in Amman in 1961. At this time, Shadia's father, Isaac's maternal grandfather, was working as a police officer for the Jordanian forces and as driver for a Jordanian politician. Shadia speaks about the improvement of his legal situation in Jordan: "by this time he had both a Palestinian and French passport

[…] but in Jordan no African can get the Jordanian citizenship." Shadia's definition of her family as African in the present helps us to understand the context in which her father expanded their power chances as Africans from Darfur by migrating and obtaining Palestinian and Jordanian citizenship. Jordanian citizenship was available for people who left the West Bank in the broader context of the so-called catastrophe (Arabic: *an-Nakbah*) of 1948, and before 1967, so that Isaac's maternal grandfather became a Jordanian national. Through his nationality, all his children, including Shadia, became Jordanian nationals. How her father, an African, managed to get Jordanian citizenship still puzzles Shadia: "His friends, Monir, Mohammed and others were denied it. All of them had been working for the police." We also do not know what happened to her father's presumed French passport in this context, but Shadia and her siblings did not have access to a similar legal status. Shadia's power chances and those of her Palestinian family were also affected by the legal transformations after the so-called setback (Arabic: *al-Naksa*) of 1967.[87] As her family migrated to Amman between 1948 and 1967, they never had a Palestinian identification card. This still shapes her dislocated relationship with the West Bank in the present: "Those who left after the war [of 1967, L.C.S.] might be able to travel. I can't. I went once to the authority and asked about it. I was told I'm not entitled to it." Under these legal conditions and as a Jordanian citizen, Shadia continued her studies in Amman. She was at high school, aged 16, when her father passed away around 1968. In Isaac's present perspective, a conflict between Shadia and her siblings emerged in the context of her father's death. Isaac uses the passing of his grandfather to explain in the present the non-supportive relationship Shadia had, and still has, with her siblings who live in Amman. We do not know what happened during this time, as Isaac does not feel comfortable asking his mother about details. However, we know that Shadia managed to finish high school and work for a newspaper before marrying Hassan Saleh, a Jordanian belonging to the Bedouin Arabs.[88] It is not clear to what extent her marriage was arranged by her family or if her husband had other wives. Isaac only mentions that her husband was 'much older' than her. Isaac's present view of his stepfather, as he refers to him, and the generation to which Isaac ascribes him, sheds light on the rules and norms into which he understands his mother married or was married into. This explanation emerged when I asked him about the experiences of violence in his family:

---

[87] In the course of this conflict, also referred to as the Six-Day War, the Israeli forces occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem, territories then administered by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (see Rosenthal 2016a: 211f.). For Shadia's family, this meant the territories of Tulkarm were no longer administered by the Jordanian authorities, but by the Israelis.

[88] The legislation concerning nationality in Jordan at the time distinguished between Arabs and non-Arabs (also Bedouins).

See Law No. 6 of 1954 on Nationality (last amended 1987), January 1, 1954. Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ea13.html [Accessed on April 19, 2022].

> “He was very traditional. Very Muslim. He had all the old methods of how things should be *yanni* he was very traditional. Old school *yanni*. Bedouin kind of old school. Things have certain ways. Women should stay at home. They should do- women should cook, clean, the basic idea of a woman. Women are- women are very sacred to the men so they should be protected and yeah they- and sex is only to their husband if she got married she can’t have a boyfriend or go on dates it is *haram* it is dishonorable for them” (Follow-up interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

The above quotation shows the present view Isaac has of Shadia’s husband and of his mother’s situation at that time. We cannot assume Shadia herself shared this perception in the past, but Isaac’s point of view – here an expert outsider to the relationship – shows power asymmetries in the lifeworld into which he would later be born and socialized, and the very different power chances and social expectations of different members of the family in this constellation. First, Isaac presents this issue as a matter of religious belonging, but at the same time it is a matter of the old methods of the Bedouins. More importantly, he emphasizes the relevance of a temporal differentiation. That is, it is a matter of the interdependencies between different generations and the negotiation of the expectations regarding the roles of women and men in the familial constellation. During the 1970s and 1980s, when Shadia was in her 20s and 30s, she had a daughter with Hassan, Nada Saleh, and three sons. All of them were Jordanian citizens because of their father’s citizenship. These children attended school in Amman and eventually married. We do not know much about this phase because it was tabooed in the dialogue between Isaac and Shadia.

Family secrets and the constitution of a Sudanese family in Amman (1980s–1996). This phase of the family history is a period that Isaac finds ‘uncomfortable’ talking about with his mother. Isaac associates the dethematization of events during this period with the experiences that Nada, his elder half-sister, lived through. When I asked him what he imagined might have happened to Nada during this time, he says bluntly: “A lot of ideas. Maybe she was abused, oppressed by her dad, the Jordanian way of living. I don’t know specifically.” Speculations regarding sexualized abuse inside the family, and how his mother met his father, still hinder the dialogue between Isaac and Shadia about the time preceding his birth. And these are a central component shaping his attitude to the family past and his constructions of belonging.

We know that in the late 1980s, Shadia met Ahmed Hamid, a man who belonged to the Zaghawa from Darfur, and who migrated from Sudan to Jordan at this time. During the 1970s and 1980s, Darfur was affected by droughts, which culminated in the 1983/84 famine and in the escalation of conflicts in the region (Behrends 2008: 44). The extent to which these transformations directly shaped the constellation that led to the migration of Ahmed to Amman is not clear. In Jordan, Ahmed worked as a machine operator for a company drilling wells in the desert. In the early 1990s, Shadia got pregnant after a relationship with Ahmed. The exact circumstances are uncertain. My analysis of the case shows that these uncertainties form the background of the relationship between Shadia and Isaac in the present. That is, they shape the current attitude Isaac has to his familial and collective past – his own individual past, too – and are thus a central component of his autobiographical constructions in the interviews. We can see this in the way he answered when I asked about dates in this period. He said: "I don't ask a lot of questions." I asked him if he had the impression his family members did not want to talk about it, and he answered: "They can talk if I ask. They can tell me if I ask." We could say that Isaac's pattern of argumentation in this sequence removes the burden from his mother of not talking about the family past with him. At the same time, it implies that he believes it is his responsibility if he wants to know more about this phase of the family history. After this sequence, he offered to conduct an interview with Shadia and ask her some questions. He asked me what I would like to know. Among other topics, I suggested he might ask Shadia about the time she met Ahmed, his father, but 'only if you feel comfortable'. In doing so, I had already framed this topic as uncomfortable by implying it would be uncomfortable for him. Thus, I started to taboo this phase, too, although I did not realize it at the time. I became aware of this only when Isaac called me to talk about the interview he conducted with his mother. I asked him to tell me how their conversation developed. Isaac answered:

> "Er actually it was er short ((laughs)) er cause my mother now she is fasting now it is Ramadan // uhum // so she couldn't er *yanni* I didn't want to ask her a lot of questions um so I yeah it was mainly short er brief er I asked specific questions and she gave me like straight answers er it was er *yanni* I=I thought er it would be uncomfortable for me but it was actually er ok […] I think anybody would be a bit uncomfortable if they had to go to their family and just randomly ask *yanni* their parents about er their history like how you met my dad […] so yeah this part made it uncomfortable. I think when I knew what to ask exactly it made it easier" (Follow-up interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

I did not ask Isaac to conduct the interview during Ramadan. He spontaneously suggested to do it. We could interpret this passage as a justification for the length of the interview, which he interprets as short. I interpret it as an internalized justification: it is more convenient for him to argue that the reason for the brief interaction is Ramadan, instead of admitting the real reason. But Isaac continues by saying openly that he felt uncomfortable. This suggests that Ramadan played a less important role in determining the perceived length of the interview. We can assume he was surprised that the interview with his mother was shorter than all other interviews he had conducted (it lasted less than 7 minutes). He also says he had the impression it would be easier if he knew exactly what to ask her. I had previously sent him some questions, one explicitly asking for Shadia to tell how she met Ahmed. Isaac asked all the other questions I had suggested, as well as questions he came up with (when I spoke to him about the interview, I told him he could ask whatever he wanted to know about his family). After he reported to me the questions he asked Shadia, I noticed he did not refer to the time Shadia met Ahmed. I explicitly asked him if she told him more about his father's family and how she met him. He answered that he did not ask her. I insisted and asked him again if he had posed this question to his mother. He answered:

> "I didn't even er I didn't ask. Er she just *yanni* I just asked her about her father. She met my father er in um- er er- I didn't ask her actually I totally ignored asking about my father" (Follow-up interview, April 2022, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

I will discuss below the sequence of experiences in the family history that took place during the time Shadia met Ahmed. They help to explain why thematization of this phase makes Isaac uncomfortable. I had to deal with a high level of speculation, since both Isaac and I do not know much about this period. However, Isaac himself has to deal with speculations about this matter in the present. I assume, then, that speculations about this phase of the family history are a central component shaping the family dialogue and Isaac's attitudes in the present toward his family members and the family past. If we are to follow the version of the story Shadia transmitted to Isaac – and which he manifestly accepts as reality – then Shadia and Ahmed had a relationship in the late 1980s or early 1990s and Isaac is the child born from this encounter. Against the Bedouin Arab background of Shadia's life with her husband and family during this time, it is difficult to believe that this took place without major conflicts with her husband, Hassan. In fact, the sequence of events in the family in the coming phase suggests the opposite. It is unclear if the relationship Shadia had with Ahmed took place outside her marriage, if her husband was aware of it, or if they were separated. Having in mind the expectations of the Bedouin Arab milieu discussed above, and the development of the life course of Nada, Isaac's elder half-sister, in the following decades, we must consider two main hypotheses that could explain – among others – the uncomfortable character that thematization of this phase in the dialogue between Isaac and Shadia has in the present and the creation of a family secret:

> 1. Shadia had a relationship outside her marriage and had to lie about the paternity of the child. To admit she had a relationship with another man who was not her husband would mean a breach of honor in relation to the norms and rules of the Bedouin Arab family. Her husband and her sons would be socially entitled, and expected, to kill her to restore the honor of the family;
>
> 2. Another hypothesis – based, among other things, on Isaac's strong will not to learn more about this past – is that Nada, Shadia's daughter, who was 21 years old when Isaac was born, had a relationship outside her marriage or even inside the family, and that the same rules – that she must be killed – were applied by the we-group. It is possible that Shadia negotiated with her husband and sons that she should be accepted as the mother of the child, so they would not have to kill Nada to restore their honor. The biological paternity of the child became a family secret which has not been revealed to the following generations but shapes the background against which their biographies, their explicit knowledge about the past, and their ability to talk about themselves and the family are configured.

We do not know whether Shadia will ever say openly who was the father of her child (she was by then around 38 years old), or whether it was in fact Nada who was pregnant and her mother tried to cover it up to protect her from the we-group. Both these scenarios are plausible, not only because of the orientation toward the Bedouin Arab code of honor in this sociohistorical constellation (see Heydari/Teymoori/Trappes 2021), but also in the light of the further development of the family history. We do not know whether Nada and Ahmed were already addicted to alcohol at this point, as they would become later. The further course of the familial disputes indicates that this phase can explain the development of their addiction. For instance, the story agreed between Shadia and Isaac is that she no longer had a relationship with her husband when she got pregnant by Ahmed (an apparent contradiction if we consider that the child was born in Hassan's household, as I show below). In this version, Isaac is the son of Shadia and Ahmed. This version of the past minimizes the possibility of sexualized violence inside or outside the family toward Nada. It also minimizes speculations that Isaac is Nada's son with a member of the family or with some other man. In the light of the development of conflicts in the familial constellation, all these versions seem plausible. And Isaac's relationship with the family past before his birth is evidently the result of these overwhelming speculations concerning the experiences of different family members in this phase. Regarding his Sudanese father and the speculations about the relationship between his parents, Isaac says:

> "I was born and he [Ahmed, his father, L.C.S] wasn't there already. It was all the way from the beginning. There are so much things that I don't know about the story. Basically yeah er what I know is that he- er was alcoholic and abuses er um=um- um suffered from many problems."

It is not clear who or what Ahmed abuses. Isaac thematizes abuse while talking about his father, interrupts the sentence and changes the topic. It is also difficult to say how far Isaac remembers this from his own experience, or whether this is what his mother Shadia told him about this phase of the family history. It is necessary to emphasize that I am not contesting Shadia's version of the family history. Her story – negotiated with Isaac and with other members of the family as a credible version of the past – still has the power to shape Isaac's attitude toward his family members in the present, and how he looks back on the past. In order to explain Isaac's attitude toward the family past, and how it shapes his autobiographical presentations in the present, I will seek to explain how this came to be. That is, I will reconstruct the sociogenesis of the uncomfortable quality of the interdependencies in the figuration of Isaac and his mother, which leads him to avoid certain topics in his dialogue with her in the present. I will consider who has the power in the family to influence which versions of the past are thematized, which versions become dominant in the familial constellation (and how they change), who has access to explicit knowledge about the past, and how the transmission of explicit knowledge shapes the different power chances inside the familial constellation and in the figuration with the Bedouin Arabs in Jordan. To explain this, I will turn to Isaac's birth constellation and show how his birth changed the power chances of his other family members.

As he was told by his mother, Shadia, Isaac was born in 1991 in Amman, Jordan, as the fifth son of his mother and the first child of his mother with his father. Both parents come from Muslim Sunni families with members of previous generations from Darfur and Palestine. Both his maternal and paternal families were at least partially from groupings that in the current everyday discourses in the Sudanese diaspora would be referred to as Zurqa or Blacks, the Zaghawa and the Masalit. As Isaac puts it from his present perspective, he is often confronted in Jordan with the they-image of 'Brown' (Arabic: *abu samra*) in interactions with members of more established groupings, especially Bedouin Arabs. Isaac's parents were not married, which could have been considered a criminal offense according to Jordanian law. His father lived in Amman as a Sudanese citizen and his mother as a Jordanian citizen. In this sociolegal constellation, Isaac was born in Jordanian territory without the right to Jordanian citizenship. Isaac's unclear legal status was clarified in the following years when he was registered by the Jordanian authorities as a non-citizen child of a Jordanian mother.[89] In the Jordanian legal discourse, such people are often referred to as children of Jordanian women (Arabic: *abna' al-urduniyat*). This status comes with several implications in terms of power chances in this figuration, as summarized by Human Rights Watch:

> "Jordanian law discriminates against Jordanian women by not permitting them to pass their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men [...] Many of these children were born and raised in Jordan and have known no other home. Yet the government treats them as foreign nationals with no permanent right to live or work in the country, and restricts their ability to own property, travel from and return to Jordan, afford higher education, and obtain government-funded health care. The multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination often severely diminish their prospects and place undue economic and social burdens on their families."[90]

The legal status Isaac was born into configures power imbalances in his familial figuration between the children Shadia had with a Jordanian father and the child she had with a Sudanese father. Even if Isaac was born and socialized in a family oriented toward the norms and rules of the Jordanian Bedouin Arabs, he had an illegalized status in the figuration with the Jordanian state. The legalization of his status in Jordan came only after his mother registered him as a so-called non-citizen. The different power chances inside the familial constellation, as well as in the figuration with members of more established groupings, such as Jordanian citizens, become clear in Isaac's later life course. At this point, it is sufficient to bear in mind that, in this familial constellation, the Sudanese origin of his father fosters status ascriptions that distinguish between Jordanian 'citizens' and 'non-citizens'. It is also important that during this time Isaac did not have Sudanese documents because his mother and her Sudanese partner did not marry. We know that during the first years of his life, Isaac lived in the household headed by Shadia's Jordanian husband, alongside Nada and Shadia's three elder sons. As of 1993, when Isaac was two years old, Nada gave birth to a daughter. Nada's daughter was born with Jordanian citizenship, which suggests she was registered with the Jordanian authorities as the daughter of Nada's Jordanian husband. In 1994, Shadia, then 43 years old, gave birth to Aida, Isaac's younger sister, whose father was the same as Isaac's. Aida was born, like Isaac, with the legal status of non-citizen, due to the Sudanese belonging of their father. They had no Sudanese documents at this time. Eventually, Shadia registered them as non-citizens, which meant they had to renew their visas to stay in Jordan each year. At some point during this phase, Nada, in her 20s, separated from her husband and moved together with her daughter to Hassan's home with Shadia, Isaac and Aida. The circumstances of the separation, and the intensity of Nada's dependence on alcohol at this time, remain unclear. As far as Isaac remembers his elder half-sister, she was already dependent on alcohol:

---

[89] See Human Rights Watch, "'I Just Want Him to Live Like Other Jordanians' Treatment of Non-Citizen Children of Jordanian Mothers", April 24, 2018. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/04/24/i-just-want-him-live-other-jordanians/treatment-non-citizen-children-jordanian [Accessed on April 19, 2022].

[90] See Human rights Watch, "Q&A: Status of Non-Citizen Children of Jordanian Mothers". Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/01/qa-status-non-citizen-children-jordanian-mothers [Accessed on April 19, 2022].

> "She's older when I was born the whole thing was already there. When I started to realize things it was all there. I think something happened. I never thought […] maybe she was abused, oppressed by her dad the Jordanian way of living. I don't know specifically […] very strict way of living. Bedouin. The girl does some things and the men do some things. The basic Arab way. Very old-school" (Biographical-narrative interview, October 2020, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

This quotation shows important aspects of Isaac's view of this phase of his family history from his present perspective. The first is the perception that the 'whole thing' was already there when he was born. That is, the period prior to his birth is relevant for him in the definition of his present situation. More importantly, he has open questions and fantasies about this phase and says that 'he never thought' about it. We can assume he has thought about it, but that it is difficult in the present to verbally express his fantasies about what happened. Moreover, like the way he presents his father, he thematizes abuse in connection with his elder half-sister, Nada, and more importantly inside the family. In terms of his belonging, these fantasies about the experiences of his other family members in the phase that led to his birth helps us to understand what he meant in his interview with Hala, the Palestinian interviewer, when he described his mother as a 'very strong woman'. That is, she became a very strong woman in the figuration with her husband and sons, and was embedded in a family and we-group that lives in accordance with the norms that Isaac ascribes to the Jordanian Bedouin Arabs. At this point, Isaac presents a more nuanced picture of Jordanian belonging: on the one hand, everyone in his family follows the norms and rules of a Bedouin Arab we-group, and, on the other hand, part of his family are citizens in the figuration with the state of Jordan.

It is helpful to remember that the position of Nada, Isaac's elder half-sister, in the familial constellation was embedded in their belonging to the we-grouping of Bedouin Arabs from Jordan. Nada challenges the role expected of her by her father and family. She breaches the 'honorable' norms and values of this we-group by drinking alcohol and separating from her husband. This becomes critical in 1996 when Nada gets pregnant from an unknown man. The high price of alcoholic beverages in Amman and her physical dependency on them suggest, together with other hints in Isaac's presentation, that during this phase Nada found ways to obtain alcohol which did not directly involve taking money from her father.

Bedouin rules and escape to Egypt (1997–1999). This period of two years is chronologically short in the family history but is a significative component that shapes the family dialogue in the present between those who experienced these violent circumstances. This phase illustrates the very different power chances of members of the family in relation to the Bedouin Arab we-group in Amman. It also shows how they led a part of the family to geographical dislocation and physical separation from the more established part of the Bedouin Jordanian family. The escape of some members of the family from Amman created new constellations of power in which power asymmetries were transformed into new forms of physical violence. For Isaac's life course, this phase represents further marginalization in the figuration with Bedouin Arab Jordanians.

In 1997, Isaac was 6 years old, and Nada was in her late twenties. At this point, they lived in the house of Hassan, Shadia's husband and Nada's father, alongside Shadia (45), Nada's daughter (4), Aida (3) and Nada's brothers. When Nada became pregnant, Shadia migrated with her children and grandchildren to Cairo, Egypt. From his current perspective, Isaac justifies this escape in terms of Nada's pregnancy and conflict with the male members of this Bedouin Arab family:

> "We went in secret. The whole came out as a surprise. My mother had to take my sister to Egypt because she got pregnant and she wasn't married. She thought her dad might kill her. He would definitely kill her. She took us and went to *yanni* I remember it was at night" (Follow-up interview, April 2022; interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

For Isaac, besides having to move out against his will from the house where he lived with his family, this meant geographical separation from his stepfather and elder half-brothers, to whom he might have had a certain degree of attachment. Concerning the transmission of we- and they-images, Isaac's situation shows the blocking of transmission of collective memories from certain parts of the familial past, and consequently the we-groupings that were part of it. In other words, Isaac and his younger sister lived during this time without talking to, or having contact with, his biological father or the male part of the Bedouin social family. From his present perspective, Isaac interprets this separation against the background of the norms and rules in the dominant grouping in this figuration, the Bedouin Arabs:

> "It is very dishonorable if a woman got pregnant without being married this is *haram* and Arabs are very strict about this. Even until today some women die because of honor crime they call it you have to redeem your honor by killing the woman who did this if she did something."

This passage helps to explain the relevance of gendered ascriptions in the we-grouping, and how they can become associated to the threat of physical violence. From Isaac's present perspective, he gives hints that the dialogue with his mother and the quality of the relationship that developed between them under such circumstances relied on tacit knowledge:

> "Even on our way to Egypt I knew my sister got pregnant. My mother didn't tell me specifically, but I could pick things out. It was very obvious. I was aware of the whole thing from the start. It wasn't something that you can hide."

Isaac's retrospective view of this situation is one in which he believes he knew what was going on, although there is no open thematization of it between family members. This shows that an interdependence was developing between Shadia and Isaac, something which would become stronger in the following years. Isaac's experience of living in a household led by Shadia – in contrast to his mother's other sons – partially explains why in the present he tends to follow a discourse that challenges the role women are expected to play in relation to the norms and rules of the Bedouin Arabs. Isaac lived in Cairo with his family in a small room after a period of living among 'gypsies', as he puts it. At that time, Isaac was not socialized into the dominant everyday discourses of the Bedouin Arabs, and he witnessed the different forms of violence his mother and sister lived through in the context of this we-group. It is not surprising that he finds it difficult in the present to feel proud of belonging to the Bedouin Arabs. The way Isaac's life course was shaped by the gendered norms and rules he associates with the Bedouin Arabs is different from the way these same expectations shaped the life courses of the other sons of Shadia and Hassan, who eventually married women in Amman, bought their own houses and created their own families of procreation. In other words, they established themselves, remained physically together in the same place, and most probably ensured the transmission to their descendants of their we- and they-images.

The fact that Shadia had to take care of her other children by herself when in Cairo contributed to the perception that Isaac has in the present of his mother as an absent figure in that phase. Her decision to protect the life of her elder daughter and the need to earn money to provide for the household led to neglect of the formal education of Isaac and his sister, who did not attend school while in Egypt. His mother worked during most hours of the day and returned home only at night: "My mother had anger issues. She doesn't speak much. She was either busy working or she was sleeping […] she did anything to get money basically." Shadia had to work long hours to provide for her children and grandchildren, and Isaac most probably felt left aside in this context. His quotation also gives plausibility to the interpretation that Shadia felt compelled to earn money through sex work, in order to cope with the role of a single parent providing for a household with three small children and her pregnant daughter. The tabooed character of this topic among other Sudanese interviewees in Jordan (see ch. 3.5.2) explains why Isaac did not thematize this with his mother. However, it is a plausible reading for this phase of the life of Shadia in Egypt. What gives further plausibility to her stressful situation in Cairo is that she increasingly acted with physical violence toward Isaac. When I asked him a situation he remembers with his mother, he answered: “I remember me passing out four times while growing up cause my mom beat the shit out of me.” From his present perspective, he interprets this in terms of her gendered position in the family:

> “She got way too physical with me a number of times […] I was a kid. I felt scared. That’s the most important thing. Mainly scared of the whole experience […] I was the only male around. I thought she hated men at that point. Everything went wrong because of men around her and the guy who got my sister pregnant.”

In this quotation, it is clear that the fear Isaac felt of his mother as a child is an important experience in his relationship with her. We can assume that in the past it was not so clear to him that there could be a gender-based rationalization for his mother’s actions based on the norms and rules of the Bedouin Arabs, as he has come to see in the present. It can also be that explaining the physical violence against himself as a result of societal gendered roles allows him in the present to avoid dealing with the speculation that his mother saw him, a son outside her marriage with Hassan, as one of the reasons why they had to flee to Egypt. It is even possible that he thinks Shadia may have been involved in activities regarded as a threat to the image of the we-group, such as sex work, already in the phase when she cut off contact with her family of origin after the death of her mother. The crucial point in all these plausible speculations is that the role ascribed to women and girls by their we-groups means they may find themselves in situations in which they feel compelled to leave their families in order to remain alive or to protect other members of their we-group. Unfortunately, we have no insight into Shadia’s view of this phase. As Isaac conducted the interviews – and since these topics are tabooed in their dialogue and among Sudanese in the diaspora (see the case of the Hassan family in ch. 3.5.2) – we can assume that her physically violent actions toward him during this phase remain dethematized in their dialogue. Even if this might change in the future, it is still a component shaping the transmission of we- and they-images against the background of experiences of physical violence in the family and the taboo of sexualized violence in the we-group. We have no evidence for the speculations mentioned above, but we cannot ignore them if we want to explain the overwhelming character that the dialogue between Isaac and Shadia can assume in the present. We must also regard these speculations about Shadia's potential activities as a sex worker against the background of gendered prejudice toward women, as it seems unlikely that similar speculations would be plausible for Isaac and the we-group if Shadia were a man.

Regarding this time in Egypt, Isaac remembers that Nada, his elder half-sister, had the power to stop his mother from physically hurting him. In other words, Nada took care that Isaac was not physically hurt by their mother: "If my mother choked me she [Nada, L.C.S.] used to scream to tell her I will die so things go easier. My sister used to step in." Nada's protective attitude toward Isaac during this phase gives further plausibility to the idea that he was in fact her child. It might be that she felt she should act as his social mother in such situations. Even if we cannot put this to the proof, we can assume that this idea was plausible for Isaac in the past, and that he may have thought about this and experienced Nada during this time as his main protector in the family. Isaac knows from reports by other children of his mother, and from his own experiences, that Shadia got physically violent with them, too. It is not something he currently sees as exclusive to his relationship with her, but he interprets her physical aggression toward him in Egypt as violence against 'the only man' in the figuration where she had some power. Nada gave birth to her second child in 1998. From his present perspective, Isaac says: "I remember staying with a random family in Egypt and a period after we have a baby. I don't know how my mother know them. Maybe she asked someone in the streets." In 1999, Shadia and her family returned to Amman, Jordan.

Return to Jordan and the Sudanese father (1999–2006). In contrast to the experiences of Shadia's sons and their father, this phase of the family history is marked by the experience of protracted housing insecurity in Jordan. This was connected, among other things, with the low power chances of Ahmed, Isaac's father, as a migrant from Darfur, Sudan, which rendered him unable to join established groupings in the Jordanian figuration.

Upon their return to Amman, Shadia (47) consolidated her position as a single parent and household provider. She rented an apartment for herself, Nada (late 20s) and Nada's two children (7, 1), Isaac (8) and Aida (6), in the region of Jabal Amman, Amman. In other words, she and Nada did not return to the household of Shadia's husband. The escape to Egypt meant the end of Shadia's marriage with her Jordanian husband. The fact that she kept working – as a housekeeper in a hotel and then as a security guard – suggests they had no financial support from her siblings, or from Nada's father, or from other members of her family of origin. In this situation, Shadia was able to enroll Isaac and Aida in a public school. The children's status as non-citizens made access to formal education difficult for them, as they had to pay for the schoolbooks that were free for other children, such as Jordanian citizens or Palestinian refugees. Isaac and Aida were schoolmates, as theirs was a mixed Muslim school. The years Isaac spent in Egypt led to his starting school in the same class as his sister. Isaac explains how he increasingly realized he was denied Jordanian belonging by his peers at school: "I remember the language. When I came back, I was talking a bit Egyptian. Different from Jordanians. I remember they used to make fun of my accent." In Amman, Nada became pregnant by a person unknown to Isaac, and gave birth to a baby girl in 2000. At this point, Shadia was responsible for three of her children and three grandchildren. Isaac says that a sense of community emerged during this phase when he visited the mosque with his mother and siblings and played with other children from the neighborhood. At the same time, he increasingly understood himself and his sister as 'different':

> "I knew I was different. Everybody was in the school and I couldn't go. It was confusing cause in our house everybody is Jordanian except me and my sister. At that point I say it was the first time I had to deal with 'where are you from and what country this is?'"

The implications of the legal differences mentioned in the quotation are that to be enrolled in school and to stay in it was always a challenge, as the legal situation of Isaac and Aida was framed as problematic by Jordanian authorities. Isaac and his sister had no Sudanese papers and changed to different schools around 2003. Isaac, then 12 years, was enrolled in an all-boys Muslim public school near Jabal Amman. This period was marked by the return of Ahmed, his father, from Sudan after going there in 2004 due to the death of Isaac's paternal grandfather. Upon his return in 2005, when Isaac was around 14, Ahmed moved into their home. This same year Isaac changed from the all-boys Muslim school to a private boys-and-girls Christian school for which his mother managed to get him a grant. Isaac remembers the change to the Christian school in positive terms. However, the presence of his father in the household came with challenges. At that time, his father and Nada were heavily addicted to alcohol. Isaac talks about Nada during this time: "many times she passed out on the couch, the cigarette in her hand. She used to come home drunk. She could barely stand up." Isaac summarizes the approximately two months his father lived with them as follows: "the first two weeks were basically good but then things went down very fast. He was so arrogant. He hated everybody at some point I felt that. He used to gamble a lot." Isaac's father left Shadia's household and lived for a time with the family of one of her sons. It is unclear how this happened, but it suggests the relationship with the family of her former partner was not necessarily conflictual. The alcoholic addiction of Isaac's father affected the situation of Shadia and her family, as they were constantly evicted because Ahmed returned drunk, and the neighbors complained, so that they moved from home to home. Ahmed's addiction most probably left little room for Isaac to strengthen his relationship with him, and maybe learn more about his family past. It is also an important component shaping Isaac's will to distance himself from his father – and from learning more about him and the family past – even in the present. It also helps to explain why Isaac is not proud of his father, or of the we-groupings represented by him, such as Sudan, Darfur, or the Zaghawa. The critical health condition of his father most probably led him to minimize his attachment to someone he could easily lose. He speaks about how Ahmed would come to the house drunk when Shadia was out at work: "At some point it felt scary because many of these times my mom wasn't home, so we had to lock the door, to get evicted." In the interview I conducted with him in October 2020, he summarizes this phase and his relationship with his father: "I feel nothing about this. I never felt like home. The whole idea like home. People have a room you look at it, memories. I never had. I was always ready to move. It's empty." Not only was it difficult for him to establish a relationship with Ahmed, his father, but also having to move from one home to another hindered attachments and processes of remembering. When it comes to transmission of the collective memories of the we-groups and groupings Ahmed belonged to, we can assume that his addiction acted as a component hindering his dialogue with Isaac and Aida. Isaac also changed schools several times during this period. In contrast to the boys-only Muslim schools, he evidently enjoyed more liberty with regard to the rules of how he could dress and what he could do in the periods he studied in Christian schools. The difficult legal situation of Isaac and Aida shaped their chances of accessing formal education, which always had to be negotiated on a personal basis by Shadia. For Isaac, this phase is remembered as one of changing schools and houses, feeling the increasing pressure to contribute financially to the family, and witnessing the deteriorating health of his elder sister and father due to their addiction, combined with the fear he still had of his mother: "I was scared by her [Shadia, L.C.S.]. I'm still scared. I was claustrophobic in school. I couldn't get in small room. I felt suffocated." Isaac increasingly learned to detach himself from his feelings and to deal with more urgent everyday situations, such as observing the school routine and helping his mother find a house: "At that moment, I didn't have emotions about it. It's like it's a different person [Isaac's father, L.C.S.] I got to experience and being a whole new person this alcoholic person. Soon my consciousness it was me and my mother." The 'emotionlessness' Isaac mentions is how he remembers this phase in the present, and gives an indication of how this closer contact with his 'Sudanese father', as he puts it, became relevant for his biography and still shapes his attitude toward his past and that of his family.

The situation of Shadia's other sons during this time concretely reveals the lower power chances available to Isaac and the part of the family living with Shadia. Shadia's sons, all of whom had moved to their own houses and carried on the business left by Hassan, who had passed away of lung cancer, were again in contact with her. Their housing situation was very different from that of their mother and sister, and their Sudanese siblings. They did not help Shadia or other family members financially. Shadia kept working and taking care of the household mostly by herself. The circumstances in which she married Isaac's father are unclear. It is possible she did this as a way of regularizing the legal status of Isaac and Aida, with the result that they were recognized as Sudanese citizens in the figuration with the Jordanian state. The increasing dependence on alcohol of Ahmed and Nada made Isaac the older person in this constellation alongside Shadia. It is easy to understand that he began to feel more and more close to his mother and to realize that she expected him to work and earn money to support the family. He comments on this phase as follows:

> "I believe she made some fucked up decisions like marrying my dad and her first husband. Why would you have two more children if you already had four. I believe she made a lot of bad decisions, but she didn't deserve the outcome."

This quotation represents the present view Isaac has of his birth and his mother. It implies that he still finds it difficult to explain why his mother gave birth to him. This is an important component of his feeling of self-worth, and intertwines with the we-image of a group and family worth standing up for. Thus, Isaac feels that the we-group did not need him, and that he wishes he had not been born and raised in this constellation. Around 2005, when Isaac and Aida were 14 and 12 respectively, Shadia took steps to see that Ahmed would no longer put the family at risk of eviction:

> "She went to the police and told them 'my husband needs to be deported'. Two guys- two police officers came and took him. They came they knocked. He didn't struggle. My mom already told him the day before."

Isaac repeats he did not feel any emotion regarding the deportation of his father. However, when I asked him at the end of the interview which was the worst moment of his life, he mentioned, alongside another moment, the deportation of his father. While Shadia had managed to eliminate one of the causes of their regular eviction, the physical separation of the family from Ahmed meant there was now no chance of learning about the collective memories of his we-groups in Darfur and the history of his family directly from him. However, the insecure housing situation of the family was also related to Nada's alcohol dependence, as Isaac remarks: "I don't know what is with this family with alcohol. Very mental issues. Extremely alcoholic. She was also one of the reasons we had to move a lot." Around 2006, Isaac (15) was living with Shadia (54), Nada (30s), Nada's elder daughter (13), Aida (12), Nada's son (8) and Nada's younger daughter (6). At this time, Shadia changed

Isaac from the Christian school and enrolled him again in an all-boys Muslim school. As he puts it in the present, “I think my mom felt bad and she wanted me to stay close to Islam religion”. As Isaac remembers, Shadia, Aida, and Nada’s elder daughter observed Islamic customs more rigorously than himself or Nada at that point. According to Isaac’s present perspective, the all-boys school represented constraints over his body and he was not happy with his mother’s decision: “They had strict rules. You can’t put- wear gel- you can’t have a cool haircut. Things have to be Islamic. I hated it.” At the end of this phase of his life, Isaac felt closer to his mother and to Islamic rules, was *de facto* Sudanese and had his contact with his father – and consequently to the we- and they-images of his paternal family – hindered by the latter’s deportation to Sudan. When Isaac looks back on this period, he comments: “This whole combination of single mom and drunk dad makes people get defenses. It’s not usual.”

Coming of age in Amman and the emergence of the past (2007–2022). In the phase of the family history just described, Isaac increasingly felt detached from his family, which he currently interprets as a form of defense. This shaped his perception of his self-worth and the higher power chances he experienced through his belonging to the we-group of Bedouin Arabs and the we-group of Sudanese. The phase that follows represents greater individualized autonomy in relation to the groups and family into which Isaac was socialized, while at the same time he increasingly felt the ‘burden’ of being the elder male in the familial constellation. The attitude of distancing himself from his collective and familial past was relativized by the less strict orientation of his school and friends during this phase. That is, drinking and smoking weed in a group of people with similar familial and biographical experiences led to the emergence of memories and self-reflection regarding previous phase of his life. Isaac’s more recent life course and present situation ends up challenging not only the customary norms of the we-group of Bedouin Arabs and Muslims – which potentially expands his power chances – but also faces concrete constraints that come through the enforcement of the laws of the Hashemite Kingdom.

In 2007, when Isaac was 17 years old, he negotiated with Shadia his return to the Christian Adventist School. During this period, when he was in 8th grade, Isaac increasingly established relationships with peers and participated in activities and groups outside his family. Besides playing basketball in the school team and traveling to competitions, he had contact with alcohol and weed through school colleagues and his girlfriend. The friends he connected with back then, as he remembers in the present, had had similar experiences as himself:

> "My friends are basically having the same situation as me but most of them- not most, two of them let's say ahm learned with their mom their dad either passed away or wasn't there so they grew up with a single mom, so it was easier for them."

In the interview with Hala, he says: "most people I know are not Arabs *yaani* my best friends are not Arabs." In the last years of high school, Isaac increasingly experienced pressure from Shadia: "At some point I think my mother had a burden put on me. She put a lot of pressure on me. She used to tell me every couple of days 'you need to finish school so fast and save us from this situation'. It scared me." Isaac increasingly protected himself from the pressure in various ways, which eventually put him in an illegalized position in relation to the Jordanian law. He went out with friends, drank alcohol, smoked weed, participated in an artistic milieu, and had contact with foreigners, like tourists and expats working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I interpret this as a form of detachment from his everyday life and the burdening quality he retrospectively ascribes to the interdependencies in the family. This distancing from the family is connected by him with increasing awareness and reflection on his past experiences and his position in the family. When I asked him at what point in his life he started to think about his experiences in Egypt, Isaac answered: "Maybe 16, 17 when I start to become a teenager around that time. At that time, I was introduced to alcohol. I got my first drink. I started to feel more like a grown-up." In 2010, Isaac finished high school but did not sit the exams to go to university. He presents this as if he was not interested in going to university. However, his legal situation as a Sudanese citizen or as a non-citizen child of a Jordanian mother lowered his chances of being admitted to university. On the other hand, Aida, who was in a similar legal situation, finished school during this period and started a university course in physiotherapy in Amman. And the children of Nada, all of whom have Jordanian citizenship except the one born in Egypt, went to school during this period. Shadia remained the main provider of the household and continued to work as a security guard. In 2010, Isaac started a course in engineering with a grant, which he concluded after two years. The course did not require a high school certificate, and Isaac could get a student visa with it and legally stay in Jordan.

In the following years, Isaac had a group of friends, with whom he felt 'at home' and supported, and with them he used substances which are illegalized by the strict laws of the Hashemite Kingdom. At the same time, his participation in more diverse groups allowed him to learn and practice English, and to become autonomous from his 'more religious' mother, sister, and niece ("they pray every day, the Islam thing is a bit important for them"). Their increasing participation in a religious grouping should be seen against the background of their protracted housing insecurity, and the difficult circumstances they lived through in the past with Ahmed and Nada.

Especially if we consider their lack of formal support from the Jordanian state, it is easy to see that their contact with the community at the Mosque in Jabal Amman was a source of assistance. During this phase, Nada suffered complications due to her heavy dependence on alcohol and she died in 2018, in her late 40s. In retrospect, Isaac believes that her passing was a turning point for the family, as "the situation became calmer". At the same time, her death made it impossible for Isaac to talk with her about the past, and to clear up certain speculations regarding his birth. Shadia (66 years old) retired from her work as a security guard, and Nada's children (25, 20 and 18) all finished high school. Aida (24) finished her physiotherapy degree and started to work in that area. They all contributed to the finances of the family. By contrast, Shadia's sons, who were in a much more established position, lived with their families of procreation, and ran the business inherited from their father in Amman.

We can suppose that witnessing the deterioration of Nada's health was burdening for the members of the family who lived with her. About this phase of their lives, Isaac speaks briefly: "She overdosed on alcohol. She drank to death." In another interview, he says: "She was a whole mess." While Isaac expresses anger regarding this situation, he acknowledges how painful it was, and still is, for him. When I asked him to tell me about a difficult moment in his life, he referred to his father's deportation, as I have already mentioned, and the death of his sister: "I was sad because I was disappointed. Why can't people do better?" He speaks about Nada's passing in a distanced and controlled way, similar to the way he talks about his father's deportation. I interpret this as a form of protection from the overwhelming character that remembering these events still has in the present. It is not difficult to understand that he felt the situation 'became calmer'. On the other hand, Isaac only partially admits how these experiences shaped his life, or how far they are embedded in the sociohistorically marginalized position his family experienced in Darfur, Sudan, Palestine, and Jordan for several generations, especially after it became headed by a woman under very patriarchal social norms. To a certain extent, Isaac cannot construct his own life course and the course of his sister in these broader sociohistorical processes because he lacks the explicit knowledge to do it. The story of how the Masalit grandfather succeeded in becoming established with the help of a French passport became dominant in comparison to the history of marginalization experienced by the various family members in Palestine and Jordan (and probably also in Africa). On the other hand, Isaac interprets their current situation as an outcome of the collective norms and rules enforced by the male members of his Bedouin Arab family: "they killed her." Here it is important to differentiate the forms of violence that led to Nada's and Ahmed's dependence on alcohol from other experiences of physical violence in the family. Even though according to Jordanian law the male members of her family cannot be accused of causing Nada's death, this does not diminish Isaac's conviction that their rules led to her death. If we analyze this period of Isaac's life and his familial constellation, we can say that they achieved greater establishment than his father and sister. And this was made possible, among other things, by his increasing participation in groups outside his family and his orientation toward their rules. His activities with his groups of friends also brought the risk of being caught breaking the laws of the Hashemite Kingdom. The hindering of his power chances was concretely manifested in the control exercised by the Jordanian authorities.[91] Isaac was sent to prison by the Jordanian police three times during his twenties. From his current perspective, he plays down how enforcement of the Hashemite Kingdom's law shaped his life course: "I went to jail once with my friend it was fun and again also with friends and third time with my girlfriend." As will become clear, these experiences show that Isaac is framed by police officers as non-Jordanian – despite being born and raised in Jordan – and perceived by them as a threat. From his present perspective, Isaac narrates a situation when he was confronted with these they-images in Amman, and how his proficiency in Jordanian Arabic concretely increased his power chances in these circumstances:

> "I was coming home late with some friends. They were all Jordanian and a cop stopped us. He took our IDs. I gave my card he asked 'what are you doing here?' He got this weird look. 'Why are you talking like us like a Jordanian actually?' He felt I was mocking him. That I was imitating the way he speaks. 'No, I was born here. Why I wouldn't speak Jordanian?' 'Ah ok'. It happens very often when people ask me where I am from. I have always to explain I was born here. I never felt I belong" (Biographical-narrative interview, October 2020, interviewer: Lucas Cé Sangalli, original in English).

Isaac explains this attitude on the part of police officers in Jordan in terms of the external ascription of belonging to a socially constructed grouping known as Black in contrast to those constructed as white: "When I was young I had a situation with cops cause I am black […] and I had to be imprisoned for four months, but if I was white, it would be different ((laughs))." In prison, his legal status as non-Jordanian meant physical segregation: "I was put basically with the foreigners. They segregate the foreigners from the Jordanian prisoners." Even if he refuses to acknowledge how these experiences shaped his health and his life course, he describes how he felt and how he concretely changed his behavior: "You start getting anxiety smoking after you go to jail. You don't actually chill. Maybe someone knows. I started panicking so I stopped."

---

[91] The control of people, especially migrants, who are framed as Brown or Black, a practice known as ethnic profiling in other contexts, by police forces in Amman is widely reported and denounced in different sources.

See Mixed Migration, July 23, 2020. "Somalis and Yemenis of mixed origin stranded and struggling in Jordan's capital". Available at: http://www.mixedmigration.org/articles/somalis-and-yemenis-of-mixed-origin-stranded-and-struggling-in-jordans-capital/ [Accessed on April 23, 2022].

Now, how do these sociobiographical experiences relate to the transmission of knowledge and collective memories in this case? We could say it is difficult for Isaac to recognize his lower power chances as a foreigner in certain constellations because he does not see himself as such, and indeed he is not. However, this is how he is framed by the Jordanian authorities and in his everyday life when he experiences racialized prejudice from more established Jordanians. He also does not see himself as belonging to the Sudanese from Darfur, who come together to denounce the sociohistorical marginalization of their region, especially in relation to more established groupings of Arabs from different countries (see ch. 5.3). This is plausible because in the case of the Sudanese, Isaac never learned about their collective histories, or about the we- and they-images used in previous generations of the groupings his ancestors belonged to. Moreover, he does not, and cannot, construct a belonging to the Black Jordanians,[92] who have different collective histories:

> "There is some population of black Jordanians. They all live in some area in Jordan […] they tend to live together. Black Jordanians were born here and raised by father and grandfather as being Jordanian, they speak Jordanian, served in the military, they can vote. The Sudanese, they can't."

Isaac distinguishes Black Jordanians from the Sudanese, not only by their regional belonging but also by their legal rights as Jordanian citizens, to which Isaac is not entitled despite being born and raised in the country. In other words, there was no explicit transmission of the collective histories of Black Jordanian, Sudanese or Darfurian groupings to Isaac. In the present, he lacks the explicit knowledge, the we- and they-images, to construct his belonging to one of these groupings, or to interpret his current power chances against this sociohistorical background and the sociohistorical inequalities that have shaped their histories. Despite this, he can expand his power chances by avoiding stigmatizing they-images and by focusing on a group of friends who lived through similar experiences, whose families have similar histories, and which he feels proud of belonging to. At the same time, by subsuming himself and his family under the we-image of Bedouin Arabs, he relies on the dominant we-images of powerful groupings in the Jordanian figuration, which to a certain extent further hinder him from learning more about the lived-through experiences of his ancestors in Africa and their migration to the Middle East. Among his group of friends, Isaac was recognized as a talented artist, and was invited to present his drawings in different galleries in Amman. The changing relevancies of his belongings in different interactions are made clear in the following passage:

---

[92] On her experience in Jordan, Kawther Berhanu writes that Afro-Jordanians come mainly from Al-Ghor (the Jordan River Valley) and the Afro-Palestinian community (which could be a plausible construction of belonging for Isaac's mother, Shadia, and consequently for himself, had this collective history been explicitly transmitted in their family). She reports situations in which she had the impression that Black Jordanians would rather self-define as Arabs than as Africans, a they-image that some of them would seek to distance themselves from.

See Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, May 11, 2018. "Constructions of Black Identities within Jordan". Available at: https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/constructions-of-black-identities-within-jordan [Accessed on April 24, 2022].

> “I never felt Sudanese. I speak Jordanian, I was born here. I only feel Sudanese when I have to do paperwork. I never felt relation to Sudan. I never felt Sudan is my original place I have to go back. I never had any emotional attachment to Sudan. I trained myself not to feel anything // L: do you get the feeling you belong to // I don’t. Basically with my friends. When I am with somebody I am comfortable with I do feel like home, but the place wouldn’t even matter so I am more attached to people than places.”

Besides this crucial perception of being attached to people rather than places, we see in the next quotation how Isaac interprets his birth in a specific constellation as something he cannot escape from. When I asked him if he felt the need to escape when confronted with the history of his family, he answered:

> “All the time. Still till now. I am paying rent for my family. I work, but I am too good of a person to do it. My dream is having literally no family. I would pay anything. Literally give you half of my life if I can live alone if I can feel responsible only for myself. Not just me, also my sister. My niece also works, and she pays what she can. But when you take one out, it affects the whole system. It’s not just me, but basically you can’t take one out of this equation. We became dependent on each other.”

In 2022, after a difficult period of housing insecurity and the closure of art galleries during the Covid-19 pandemic, Isaac received a grant from an Emirati institution that supports young artists in Jordan. As Isaac makes clear in the quotation above, he shares with Shadia, his sister, and his siblings the financial responsibility of paying the rent in the context of increasing rental prices in their neighborhood. Concerning his current relationship with Shadia and, consequently, the family dialogue, he concludes: “I never held a grudge. I can know how to feel about it if it would help me or not. I would think about what she did. I can’t be very emotional about it because it wouldn’t benefit a situation that’s already very complicated.” In other words, he has learned to navigate his feelings in the present by positioning himself at a safe distance from their past, which also means establishing a controlled relationship with Shadia. And this decision involves leaving certain parts of the past unspoken for the time being.

Summary. The Hamid family represents a type in which the past in Sudan and other experiences of physical violence in the family are dethematized and knowledge about this past is not explicitly passed on to the descendants. This type is characterized by lower group cohesion, shows hardly any group pride and no pride in belonging to a Sudanese we-group. This is empirically demonstrated in the reconstruction of the sociogenesis of the interdependencies between two family members, Shadia and her son Isaac. They are, respectively, second and third generation Sudanese with Darfurian and Palestinian families, both born in the diaspora. Besides marriage into families from Palestine and Jordan, and the physical separation of family members (by death, the threat of violence and deportation), different forms of violence in the family history, speculations and fantasies about these forms of violence, and the experiencing of them inside the we-group are components hindering the transmission of we- and they-images of the groupings from Darfur and Palestine to their descendants born in the diaspora. It is possible to say that the ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images dominant in the community of Sudanese 'refugees' (see ch. 5.3) or in the Darfurian diaspora (see ch. 4.3) have little or no relevance among the genealogical generations born in the diaspora. Similarly, belonging to a we-group of Sudanese has little or no relevance, to the point that the younger generation no longer feels the need to construct their collective belongings to this we-image. One of the outcomes of this hindering of the explicit transmission of images is that members of the younger generation born in the diaspora no longer have at hand the explicit knowledge to construct themselves as members of the non-Arab Masalit and Zaghawa groupings to which their ancestors belonged in Darfur, Sudan. Similarly, they have only a limited knowledge of the collective histories of these groupings. Consequently, they do not interpret their family's current power chances in Jordan against the background of their family history. On the contrary, it is more relevant for them to talk about themselves as members of established groupings in the figuration in Jordan, such as the Bedouin Arabs. To construct their belonging to the Bedouin Arabs is sociobiographically more meaningful because of the experiences – especially various forms of physical violence – they have lived through among members of this powerful we-grouping in Jordan. This shows how constructions of collective belonging are closely interdependent with experiences lived through inside the family, and how they shape the stocks of knowledge at hand for members of different generations.

5.5 Summary. Contrasting views of the past among Sudanese groupings in Jordan

In this chapter, I have discussed two main groupings based on the interviews in Jordan, *Sudanese who experienced migration from Sudan* and *Sudanese born in the diaspora*. I have shown that the experiences members of these groupings lived through in different figurations in Sudan, along their migration courses, and in the diaspora shape their autobiographical constructions of belonging. Here, I will summarize some of these experiences and discuss which views of their individual and collective past are dominant for them when constructing their belongings, and for determining which groups and groupings they can participate in.

Racialized and ethnicized they-images in Jordan against the background of collective histories of enslavement and servitude in the Middle East. In general, discrimination based on socially constructed perceptions of skin color is part of the everyday experiences of Sudanese migrants in Jordan and was mentioned in almost all interviews. Especially first generation non-Arab migrants from Darfur, but also second and third generation interviewees, mentioned experiences of discrimination in non-governmental organizations, in Jordanian institutions, and in the streets. Old-established Jordanians and other 'refugees' often do not see Sudanese people as Arabs, regardless of their ethnic origin or their mother tongue. They are homogenized under they-images of Brown (Arabic: *abu samra*), Black, or African. Several of the racialized and ethnicized they-images with which Sudanese are confronted in their everyday lives in Jordan were associated by interviewees with the collective histories and meanings of enslavement and servitude in these societies. Many interviewees mentioned that they were called slave (Arabic: *abd*) by more established Arabs in Jordan. Their experiences of racialized prejudice not only shaped their present constructions of belonging, but also led to potential and explicit experiences of physical violence (ch. 5.3). While the discursive position of Black non-Arab Sudanese is relatively clear, their position in relation to other groupings in Jordan is more complex. For example, their legal status is diverse, as there are long-time residents from Sudan who have obtained citizenship through marriage, and complex constellations of various legal statuses within the same family (ch. 5.4.3). These differences between various Sudanese groupings become particularly clear when we consider the different genealogical generations.

We- and they-images in different genealogical generations of Sudanese living in Jordan. There were clear differences in the we- and they-images of members of the first generation of Sudanese migrants and members of the second and third generations. The first-generation interviewees refer to the interdependencies between Zurqa or Blacks in Darfur and the armed militia of the Janjawiid, which until the

2000s was composed almost exclusively of members of Arab groupings from Sudan. By contrast, in the second or third generation of Sudanese born in Palestine and Jordan, other we- and they-images gain relevance, such as gendered interdependencies in the we-group, various legal statuses, national belongings, formal educational backgrounds, and language skills. As the case reconstructions show, it is more important for them to be understood and seen as Jordanian, especially through language competence (ch. 5.4.1). Conflicts within Sudan, on the other hand, recede into the background for those born in the diaspora. This is an important difference between Sudanese groupings that have been living in Jordan for several generations and those who have arrived in more recent years as refugees after experiencing different forms of violence in Sudan.

There are also considerable differences in the they-images of the first generation of migrants and those born in the diaspora. In the first generation (i.e., those who migrated from Sudan), Jordanians were the dominant they-image, which in this case includes Palestinians, besides other national refugee groupings (Iraqis, Syrians, Yemenis, Somalis). The interdependencies between these groupings are constructed by interviewees within a hierarchy: Iraqi and Syrian refugees are perceived as receiving preferential treatment from non-governmental organizations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Jordanian state. They have more opportunities for resettlement in other countries, access to health care, and better educational and employment chances in Jordan. Yemenis, Somalis, and Sudanese are presented as being in a lower position in the hierarchy, and as discriminated against by members of established groupings.

The second and third generations of Sudanese (those born, for instance, in Palestine, Iraq or Jordan) make finer distinctions between the different groupings within the Jordanian population – for example, between Bedouins, Palestinians and other Jordanian groupings. The cases show that the way the interviewees born in the diaspora talk about themselves and the others is influenced by their exposure to racialized images such as ‘Black’ or ‘Brown’, and that the mastery of a Jordanian dialect when speaking Arabic plays a significant role for them, in distinction to the first-generation Sudanese migrants who speak Sudanese Arabic or other Sudanese languages (Fur, Masalit, etc.).

These findings become clear in the contrastive comparison between the family cases reconstructed in this chapter. While some interviewees can proudly construct their collective belongings to the groupings of their ancestors in Sudan and Eastern Africa, others did not explicitly learn about the we-groups and we-groupings previous generations belonged to in Sudan and Palestine. For them, it is difficult to interpret the power chances of the groups in which they participate in terms of the collective histories of the groupings of their ancestors. They are unable to construct their biographies against the broader sociohistorical background of power inequalities that led their families to migrate and live in the diaspora. The explicit knowledge at hand that people have, or do not have, shape the different views of the past inside their families and groupings. And these contrasting views are interdependent with processes of sociobiographical legitimation of different versions of the family and collective histories experienced by the interviewees. Now, what do these contrasting views of the past tell us about the intergenerational negotiation of constructions of belonging of descendants of migrants born in the diaspora and the processes of sociobiographical legitimation of we- and they-images?

A crucial finding in this regard is that experiences of different forms of violence shape the constructions of belonging of those born in the diaspora. In contrast to those who experienced physical violence and persecution in Darfur, for whom ethnicized (tribal) we- and they-images are dominant in their autobiographical presentations, in the cases of the two families discussed in this chapter other belongings are affected by experiences of violence. These include the gendered norms and rules of the Bedouin Arabs from Jordan, collective violence experienced in Iraq, and other forms of violence experienced inside the we-group that are not necessarily connected with ethnic and regional belonging but with *power asymmetries within the we-group*. These cases empirically demonstrate the need to reconstruct the family history in detail, in order to see the status interdependencies between and across groupings, which influence access to formal education or higher power chances of participation in more established groupings.

The different experiences of members of the **Nasr family** have led to a contrast between the views of the past that different generations of the family have in the present. For those who have experienced racialized and ethnicized violence in Jordan, it is plausible that they should look back on their individual and collective past as Africans and Blacks. This is in contrast to members of their families who experienced the need to establish themselves in relation to Arab and Muslim groupings in figurations in Sudan and in the Middle East (ch. 5.4.2). Among the members of the **Hamid family**, those born in Jordan see themselves as belonging to the Bedouin Arabs, and interpret the violence they and other family members experienced inside the family in relation to the norms and rules of their Jordanian we-group. This contrasts with the view of the past of the generation born in Palestine who grew up in Jordan. For the members of this genealogical generation, the image as African remains dominant in the present. Moreover, it becomes a plausible construction of collective belongings based on the experiences of marginalization and establishment (e.g., acquisition of citizenship rights) lived through and learned about regarding the generation born in Darfur. In this case, the processes of intergenerational negotiation of the family past show that some members of the family interpret their experiences in terms of a dominant belonging to the Bedouin Arabs from Jordan, while others regard themselves as Africans in Palestine and Jordan (ch. 5.4.3). In both generations, these belongings are far removed from the we-images used by their ancestors and the collective histories of their Masalit and Zaghawa groupings in Darfur. In the next chapter, I will summarize the findings of the study in a comparison of the results from Jordan and Germany.

6 Summary of empirical findings and conclusion

6.1 Preliminary remarks

In the foregoing chapters, I have pursued the question of how constructions of belonging of migrants from the Republic of the Sudan and their descendants become transformed in relation to their experiences before, during and after migration to the Federal Republic of Germany and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Based on the sociology of knowledge, historical sociology, and a social-constructivist figurational and biographical approach, I have shown how people who have experienced migration from Sudan and their descendants construct themselves in relation to the histories of their families and collectives, and how these constructions are a central component shaping their power chances in contemporary societies. With a focus on the experiences and histories of people and groupings from Darfur, I have empirically reconstructed two main sociohistorical power figurations in what is present-day Sudan: the Nile and the Marra figurations. I have demonstrated how these sociohistorical figurations remain powerful, configuring the background from which constructions of belonging to various groupings of Sudan are possible in the diaspora, and how sociohistorical power inequalities shape current asymmetries in terms of stocks of knowledge at hand for people to talk about themselves, the others, and their experiences in various societies. Based on biographical and familial case reconstructions, I have shown how power transformations before, during, and after migration shape the different ways people from Sudan and their descendants look back on their individual and collective past. I have reconstructed in detail their autobiographical constructions in various situations in the diaspora, various phases of life, and different generations in the same family and grouping. In this chapter, I will make a contrastive comparison of the empirical findings from Germany with those from Jordan (ch. 6.2). Then, I discuss the interrelations between experiences of various forms of violence and dominant constructions of belonging in the present (ch. 6.3). I will then summarize the components shaping the transmission of we- and they-images, and consequently of belonging, used in autobiographical presentations of the self and the others (ch. 6.4). I will conclude with some remarks regarding how these findings can contribute to future studies (ch. 6.5).

6.2 Contrastive comparison of findings in Germany and Jordan

A comparison of diaspora groupings from various regions of the Republic of the Sudan living in Germany and Jordan gives insights into the different lifeworlds and participation chances of migrants and their descendants in these societies. While experiences of violence before, during, and after migration are a central component shaping the current constructions of belonging and autobiographical presentations of Sudanese migrants in both countries, the meanings of images used by people to construct their life and family histories varies in relation to the collective histories of groupings in Jordan and in Germany and those of their ancestors in Sudan and other regions. Although all interviewees share Sudanese ancestry, the ways they construct themselves, their family, and their collective histories change over time, depending on their biographical experiences, the sociobiographical legitimacy of we- and they-images in the we-groups in which they participate, and the experiences of their ancestors. While belonging to certain ethnicized groupings is dominant in the autobiographical constructions of those living in Germany (ch. 4.5), for interviewees in Jordan, especially those born in the diaspora, the relevance of the belongings of previous generations of their families and groupings plays a different role (ch. 5.5). A significant component explaining these differences is the fact that presenting oneself as belonging to one grouping or another affects one's power chances when dealing with the asylum authorities in these countries. At least until the escalation of conflict and war in Sudan in 2023, asylum procedures in Germany strengthened ethnicized notions of Africans as victims of violence in Sudan, especially those from Darfur (ch. 4.3). People regarded as Africans and Darfurians had greater chances of being granted refugee status in Germany, which explains the dominance of certain we-relations in autobiographical constructions, and the dethematization of other belongings, such as being Arab. This means that, in contrast to the interdependencies between Zurqa ('Blacks') and Arabs in Darfur and Sudan, in the diaspora the Zurqa ('Blacks') find themselves in a more powerful position than the Arabs. The changing relevance of these images can be seen in constructions of personal and family histories of migrants, where the collective histories of Arab groupings from Darfur can be deliberately dethematized (ch. 4.4.2).

The situation with regard to asylum chances in Jordan is different. In this country, interviewees from Sudan, especially Darfurians who do not regard themselves as Arabs and who migrated after the early 2000s, complained that employees belonging to certain non-Arab 'tribes' from Darfur privileged members of their own ethnicized (tribal) groupings in terms of resettlement and asylum chances. For example, interviewees share the perception that Fur employees of international agencies in charge of asylum procedures in Jordan favored other Fur. This finding points to sociohistorical power inequalities that were not dominant among interviewees in Germany and to status interdependencies across ethnicized (tribal) belongings. Members of certain ethnicized (tribal) groupings from Darfur have more chances to pursue careers in international organizations in Jordan than other non-Arab groupings from Sudan.

Another significant component explaining differences in Germany and Jordan are the various constellations in Sudan during different sociohistorical phases that led to migration to Jordan and to Germany. While most of those regarded as Sudanese 'refugees' migrated to Jordan and Germany in the context of violence in Darfur after the early 2000s, it was possible to include in the sample in Jordan members of families and their descendants who had migrated from Sudan in the early 1900s and in the 1980s. Besides giving insights into colonial interdependencies created by the presence of Western European groupings in Africa and the Levant, the contested character of these intergenerational power asymmetries becomes clear in situations that bring together members of these various Sudanese groupings and generations in Jordan (excursus in ch. 3.5.1). Those who come from Sudanese regions they regard as less privileged, such as Darfur, like to emphasize that those who are perceived as Arabs, and who presumably experienced less racism and other forms of violence in Sudan, do not have legitimacy to speak on behalf of all Sudanese refugees in Jordan. In Jordan, those who regard themselves as Arabs and Muslims and have Arabic as their mother tongue are evidently in a more powerful position than those who regard themselves as non-Arabs and have other languages as their mother tongue. Even though members of non-Arab groupings have better chances of obtaining employment in international organizations in Jordan, the interdependencies between Arabs and non-Arabs from Sudan tend to favor Arabs, as in the figurations in Sudan. Among other things, this can be explained by the more powerful position of old-established Arab and Muslim groupings in Jordan. Although Arab groupings from Jordan have collective histories different from those of Arab groupings from Darfur and Sudan, being perceived as Arab and Muslim potentially brings more chances of establishment in Jordan than being perceived as non-Arab or African. This is the case even if gendered norms and rules among the so-called Bedouin Arabs, for example, contrast with those of Arab groupings from Darfur and Sudan (ch. 5.4.3). In the case of the Darfurian interviewees, who are mostly Muslim, religious belonging potentially brings establishment in Jordan in contrast to other groupings from Sudan who do not regard themselves as Muslims. This does not mean that Arabs from Sudan are necessarily in a similar position to Arabs from other parts of the Middle East living in Jordan. Sudanese Arabs can also have their Arab belonging denied by groupings from Jordan, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq, for example. In Germany, unlike in Jordan, members of Arab and Muslim groupings from Sudan are often socially constructed as Africans on the basis of skin tone ascriptions socio-historically constructed by old-established German and European groupings. That is, self-ascriptions as Arabs and Muslims do not bring the same benefits in Germany as they do in Jordan, which is dominated by old-established Arab and Muslim groupings. Thus, the comparison of the findings shows a similarity between Germany and Jordan: both more established Arab groupings in Jordan and the old-established German groupings in Germany reject the self-definition as Arabs of Sudanese in the diaspora.

As I have empirically demonstrated, the use of these images, their interdependencies, and their changing meanings vary inside the same families and groupings in Germany and Jordan (ch. 4.2 and ch. 5.2). While collective histories and polysemic uses of enslavement and servitude powerfully shape the they-images that migrants from Sudan are confronted with in their everyday life in Jordan, this is not observed in the same terms in relation to the collective histories of old-established groupings in Germany. The interviews show that images of Africans, Arabs, Blacks, and Muslims are used in Germany against the background of collective histories of imperial expansionism and colonialism in various regions of the African continent. These images played an important role in the emergence and establishment of pseudo-scientific racial theories that culminated in the massive perpetration of physical violence by old-established Germans during National Socialism in Germany (1933–1945). In this sense, processes of racialization and ethnicization in Germany contrast with those in Jordan, in which the collective histories of migrants from the African continent have been shaped, among other things, by processes of enslavement and servitude and the different meanings these terms acquire in various societies of the Middle East. The contrast with Jordan shows how these images and their different collective histories shape sociolegal categories in the asylum procedures in these countries. In Germany and other Western European countries there is a predominant conviction that members of various ‘tribal’ African groupings are the victims of violence in Sudan. But the experiences reported by asylum applicants from Sudan in Jordan show that ethnicized (tribal) belonging is used to criticize the perception that employees of international organizations in charge of managing asylum and resettlement in Jordan favor their own tribal groupings.

Another important finding is that if we want to understand and explain the concrete chances of participation that members of various groupings from Sudan have before their migration, along their migration courses, and in the diaspora, then we must reconstruct in detail the sociohistorical power inequalities that shape their personal, familial, and collective histories. This includes reconstructing the norms and rules of the groupings in Sudan to which the interviewees' ancestors belonged, and how much explicit knowledge of these belongings was transmitted to later generations. This throws light on the various lifeworlds of migrants in the diaspora in Germany and Jordan which are shaped by the knowledge and collective memories transmitted in their families and we-groups. Thus, if someone has experienced physical violence perpetrated by members of certain groupings in Darfur or Sudan, this will influence which groups the person seeks contact with in the diaspora. This is reflected in the complaints by interviewees that only members of certain tribalized groupings are employed in the asylum system in Jordan. Migrants belonging to certain groupings tend not to trust these institutions, although their situation and that of their descendants depends on them. While having lower chances of participation in the central government in Sudan corresponds to the experiences of Darfurians interviewed in Germany and Jordan, the findings in Jordan show that we also need to consider experiences of marginalization of families and groupings from other regions of Sudan (ch. 5.4.2). In these cases, other belongings besides region and ethnicity play a role, such as gendered relations interpreted against the background of the collective histories of groupings from Jordan (e.g., Bedouin Arabs) or other regions in Eastern Africa (e.g., present-day Eritrea and Ethiopia).

The diversity of constellations that have led to migration from Sudan becomes clear in the interviews with different genealogical generations of Sudanese in Jordan. These interviews make it possible to contrast the collective histories of families that migrated from Sudan in the early 1900s and lived in Palestine and Iraq before moving to Jordan (ch. 5.4). This allows insights into the familial and collective histories of groupings from the African continent that are often excluded from collective histories of Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan. Here, an important finding across groupings and generations in Germany and Jordan is the relevance of experiences of various forms of violence in the definition of dominant belongings and their transmission to generations born in the diaspora. While in Germany and Jordan the generation that experienced migration from Sudan tends to have experienced various forms of physical violence in their home regions that still significantly shape their belongings in the diaspora (ch. 4.5 and ch. 5.3), those born in Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan have experienced other forms of violence which are crucial as a component shaping the dominance and dethematization of belongings in the present (ch. 5.5).

6.3 On the interrelation between experiences of violence and dominant belongings

An important finding from the sample in Germany and from interviews with different genealogical generations in Jordan is the interrelation between experiences of various forms of violence and the constitution of dominant belongings presented by Sudanese in interactions in the diaspora. Especially in cases where people, or members of their we-groups, have experienced physical violence due to their belonging to a specific grouping, this belonging remains dominant in autobiographical constructions, whether it is a combination of religious belonging and ethnicized (tribal) belonging (ch. 4.4.3) or the interpretation of gendered norms and rules regarding a specific ethnic grouping (ch. 5.4.3). These constructions of belonging are relevant in different ways, both for those who have experienced physical violence in powerless positions and want to talk about it using ethnicized dominant everyday discourses (ch. 4.4.3), and for those who have experienced physical violence as perpetrators and who prefer to dethematize ethnicized (tribal) belongings (ch. 4.4.2). What is significant is that constructions of belonging and different views and versions of the past that become dominant are intertwined with processes of sociobiographical legitimation in the sense that they gain biographical legitimacy for people and groupings in relation to experiences and stocks of knowledge at hand to interpret them (ch. 5.5). As I have empirically demonstrated, a central component shaping these processes is the experience of different forms of violence and the we-groups in which people learn to interpret and talk about their experiences using certain images and not others.

This becomes particularly clear in the analysis of interviews with Sudanese in Germany and Jordan. The findings show that most interviewees experienced collective violence and violence in their families and we-groups. For those who experienced physical violence and those whose families and we-groups were affected by it – which means most of the interviewees in Germany and in Jordan – the thematization of collective violence in Sudan was relevant in the interviews. When talking about how experiences of different forms of violence had shaped their migration courses and their life stories, and the history of their families and we-groups, many used ethnicized we- and they-images. These images often took the form of Africans as ‘victims’ of violence and Arabs as ‘perpetrators’ and dominated their autobiographical constructions (ch. 4.3 and ch. 5.3). This was certainly the case for interviewees from the region of Darfur, especially those who experienced the conflicts there, which is not surprising as groupings living in that region have collective histories characterized by sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped their experiences, chances of migration and participation in more established groupings in Sudan (ch. 3.5). This partially explains the dominant role played by their regional belonging to Darfur rather than to Sudan in their presentations in the interviews. Those who were born and grew up in other regions of Sudan, or in groupings that were less affected by processes of collective violence, tended to dethematize violence in its various forms in Sudan (ch. 4.4.1). However, the autobiographical presentations of those belonging to more established groupings in Sudan, and who participated in activities that could be framed by different authoritarian regimes as opposition to the government, such as those feminist movements or in student alliances, were dominated by memories of incarceration, governmental accusations of conspiracy, the murder of friends, family, and colleagues, and physical and psychological torture. And for those born in the diaspora, other forms of violence, such as racialized discrimination in Jordan and conflicts in Palestine and Iraq, were more dominant in their presentations than the participation of their ancestors in processes of collective violence in the Marra and Nile figurations (ch. 5.4).

Among interviewees in Germany and in Jordan who had migrated from Darfur, it was not unusual that they constructed their belongings to outsider groupings in Sudan, such as the Zurqa ('Blacks'). For many of them it was important to present their interdependencies in the figuration with more established groupings in Sudan as shaped by the perpetration of violence by the Arabs and the Janjawiid. In other words, ethnicized we- and they-images were a central component shaping their retrospective view of the past and the processes of ethnicization of their biographies (ch. 4.3). In these cases, autobiographical constructions of the self and the others using ethnicized images gained legitimacy in relation to experiences people lived through in various phases of their lives and alongside members of their we-groups. These images remain dominant in their autobiographical constructions in the diaspora. The dominant relevance of ethnicized we- and they-images is shaped by the power chances these images bring in terms of the asylum process both in Germany (because they lead to the granting of refugee status), and in Jordan (because they offer a chance of resettlement in another county, especially with the aid of members of the same ethnic grouping).

I have also shown that the reconstruction of power inequalities in present figurations is not sufficient to explain the ethnicization of biographies. Thus, I have reconstructed the different experiences and concrete chances of migration of three groupings, empirically defined on the basis of interviewees' relevancies for the Marra and Nile figurations in the Republic of the Sudan, that of the 'Zurqa' ('Blacks') from Darfur, the 'Arabs' from Darfur and the 'Arabs' from riverain Sudan (ch. 4.4). I have demonstrated that many of the experiences people lived through were already ethnicized in the past, even if the meaning of belonging to an ethnic we-group changed in different phases of their lives, and contrasts with the meaning that the same image, such as Arab, acquires in different figurations in Jordan and Germany. I have shown that many migrants had experienced situations in which their belonging to Darfur (Arabic: *furawi*) was used by members of more established groupings to discriminate against them, especially in regions of riverain Sudan, but also along their migration courses in North Africa. The reconstruction of these experiences, how their presentation in one way or another acquires sociobiographical legitimacy for people and groupings, and how they configure the dominant belonging to Darfur in autobiographical presentations is a crucial finding of this study.

Furthermore, it is clear that constructions of belonging that are very much shaped by processes of physical violence are not so easy to change or to be reinterpreted. If people have been persecuted because of a certain belonging that is ascribed to them – whether (tribal) ethnic, regional, gendered, or religious – this becomes a significant feature of their biography or of the biography of other members of their we-groups and families (ch. 4.4.3 and ch. 5.4.3). Even if they want to avoid these external ascriptions and the respective they-images, it is not easy for them to leave this past behind. In other words, they can change their interpretations of the experiences they and their family members lived through in the past, and the way they talk about them in the present – their life *stories* and *presentations* – but they cannot change the fact that they lived through them and that these *experiences are part of their history* and the *collective histories* of their ancestors. Moreover, dethematizing these experiences and belongings to focus on different we-relations in the present does not mean that we-relations experienced in the past are less powerful in shaping their autobiographical constructions. This means that ethnic and regional belongings were not only relevant for many interviewees in the present, but were also shaped by the way different experiences of violence were lived through in the past, especially in their home regions. And this explains, for example, the dominance of these belongings in cases where life stories were constructed in relation to broader processes of physical violence (ch. 4.3).

However, the careful reconstruction of experiences that people and individuals in their families lived through in the past shows that experiences of violence, especially of physical violence, had not *always* been interpreted or connected with ethnic and regional belonging. I have shown that in many cases the experiences people lived through in the past were connected to other belongings, such as the perception of their inferiority in figurations with more established groupings in Libya, or the multiple meanings that certain images acquire in relation to the different collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Darfur, Sudan, North Africa, and the Middle East (ch. 4.4.3). Members of some groupings experienced violence from neighbors who belonged to the same we-groupings as they did. Such experiences were often not presented by interviewees as the reason for their migration, and yet a detailed reconstruction of their life history shows that this was in fact the case – among other reasons, such as conflicts in the family and community (ch. 4.4.3). I was able to reconstruct how ethnicized views of the past increasingly hindered the thematization of certain forms of violence, especially those experienced inside we-groups (ch. 4.5). The way Sudanese migrants constructed their life stories and the history of their families and collectives had evidently become increasingly removed from the experiences they and previous generations of their families and groupings had lived through in the past. This shows how the institutionalization of certain forms of presentation, their transmission, and the dominance of certain discourses can lead to the construction of life stories that are far removed from the experiences people lived through in their families.

Based on these findings, I developed the three main groupings in the Marra and Nile figurations ('Zurqa' from Darfur, 'Arabs' from Darfur and 'Arabs' from riverain Sudan) on the basis of the changing relevancies of people who experienced migration from Sudan. In the light of the different life histories and migration courses experienced by individuals, it became clear that some migration chances are available to those belonging to certain groupings but not to others. Similarly, reconstruction of the experienced life history showed that people leave their home regions in Sudan in diverse constellations. After these reconstructions, I examined – from the standpoint of the figurational sociology of Norbert Elias (ch. 2.2.5) – the biographical and collective functions of ethnicized views of the past in relation to current power chances in the diaspora (ch. 4.5). I have been able to show that in some cases ethnicized views of the past increase people's chances of participation in certain groupings in the diaspora, which helps them to become more established (ch. 4.4.1). In other cases, people use an ethnicized view of the past to subsume themselves under a broader and less differentiated we-grouping, Africans. This enables them – with limited success – to avoid external ascriptions by other Darfurians in the diaspora, such as that of being perpetrators of violence in Sudan (ch. 4.4.2). In other words, it helps them to avoid accountability for crimes in their home region. And in other cases, belonging to a broader and less differentiated we-grouping of Africans creates a we-feeling for groupings that experienced marginalization in figurations before and during their migration, but whose circumstances have improved significantly in the diaspora in Germany, at least in terms of no longer being targeted by acts of physical violence (ch. 4.4.3).

The changing character of presentations of belonging also becomes clear in the cases of interviews conducted with members of different genealogical generations in Jordan. Using the findings regarding the dominance of ethnic and regional belonging among people who experienced migration from Sudan, I reconstructed how far these relevancies were transmitted to Sudanese born in the diaspora. On the basis of interviews with members of different generations of the same family, I have discussed the contrastive views of the past that can be empirically reconstructed among members of the same families and groupings. I have shown that for members of the family born in Sudan it is more important to emphasize a phase of the family past that brings the family and their we-image closer to the Arabs and Islam, while for those born in Iraq and Jordan – figurations dominated by non-Sudanese Arab groupings – it is more important to thematize the African past of the family (ch. 5.4.2) and to dethematize Arab belonging (ch. 3.5.1). In other words, essentialized images of collective belonging need to be reconstructed in relation to the concrete experiences different members of the family lived through if we want to explain their collective and biographical functions, in the terms of figurational sociology (ch. 2.2.5). This includes reconstructing the processes in which different versions of the familial and collective past attain various degrees of legitimacy in relation to the experiences people live through in different phases of their lives. This has proved to be particularly useful to avoid essentializing individual, familial, or collective histories by showing how versions of the past are interrelated with processes of remembering and power transformations. Focusing on the notion of changing belongings is useful for reconstructing these transformations and power asymmetries inside and across groupings, and explaining empirical observations such as that other belongings besides ethnicity and region can be relevant for migrants (ch. 5.4.1).

Using the empirical cases of two families from Sudan in Jordan, I have demonstrated that experiences of physical violence resulting from gendered norms and rules inside the family, or speculations regarding sexualized violence can make those born in the diaspora uninterested in knowing more about the family past. This influences their ability to construct their belonging and their life stories in relation to broader sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped the lives of their family members. It significantly hinders the transmission of collective belongings because these interviewees did not explicitly learn or are not interested in learning about the groupings to which their ancestors belonged in the regions where they lived before migration (ch. 5.4.3). These cases demonstrate how experiences of, and speculations and fantasies about, different forms of violence in the past and their thematization in the family dialogue are interdependent with the transmission of group pride and belonging (ch. 5.4). The dethematization of phases of the family past makes it necessary in the analysis to indulge in speculation about the non-explicit transmission of knowledge regarding the family and collective histories. As I have shown, speculations and fantasies about the past of one's family and the circumstances surrounding one's birth shape processes of remembering and how different versions of the past are transmitted, gain or lose plausibility, and become part of the knowledge at hand that people use to construct their belongings in the present (ch. 5.4.3).

Besides what is thematized and dethematized in interviews, we must reconstruct speculations and fantasies regarding the past and their influence over constructions of belonging in the present. I found that experiences of violence in the family, and especially sexualized violence, give rise to speculations about the past. Based on this finding, I have discussed how experiences of various forms of violence and the different norms and rules for talking about them in we-groups and groupings shape the transmission of we-images and pride in the case of Sudanese born in the diaspora. I have empirically demonstrated how the transmission of collective memories is interdependent with the explicit knowledge that members belonging to different groupings born in the diaspora have or do not have to construct themselves and present their life stories as part of their broader familial and collective histories. This led to the reconstruction of the various forms of violence experienced by people because they proved to be connected to different norms and rules for their thematization and dethematization. As I have shown, speculations that others may have witnessed the perpetration of certain forms of violence against their family members in communities in Sudan play a role in the diaspora when it comes to deciding in which groups and groupings people want to participate and which they want to avoid (excursus in ch. 3.5.2).

This more nuanced approach to the reconstruction of experiences of violence based on interviewee's perspectives and their interdependencies with various dominant discourses was made possible by the combination of figurational sociology and a biographical approach, with reference to historical sociology and the sociology of knowledge. This offered the advantage of focusing not on polarized discourses and images, such as Arabs and Africans, but on reconstructing how the *interdependencies* between we- and they-images are created and maintained in different concrete sociohistorical figurations, such as families and groupings, and during various phases of life and in different generations. The focus on these interdependencies shows that constructions of belonging are more complex than the negotiation of power chances and dominant discourses in the present. They are also interrelated with sociohistorical power inequalities lived through in the family, and especially the explicit transmission of knowledge regarding the groupings to which the ancestors belonged and the measure of pride in belonging to one's family and we-groups.

For studies of belonging, an important consequence of this finding is that we cannot reconstruct only power dynamics shaping belonging in the present and in relation to boundary negotiations or processes of differentiation between groupings. We also need to reconstruct power asymmetries – and the concrete experiences associated with them – inside the we-group, such as the family and community, which shape the transmission of collective memories and histories. That is, constructions and negotiations of difference cannot simply be explained in terms of the interdependencies created between groupings experienced as 'us' and 'them'. We need to consider the power interdependencies across groupings and especially inside the ‘us’ grouping. Even if these may not be manifest in an interview, conducting interviews with different family members or several interviews with the same person – as well as continued contact with interviewees – can bring methodological advantages. Similarly, the reconstruction of experiences in the family past and their relation to the family dialogue gives insight into the explicit and latent knowledge people have at hand in the present to construct themselves and the others. Thus, it is important to reconstruct the components that shape the transmission of we- and they-images.

6.4 Components shaping the transmission of we- and they-images

The case reconstructions based on interviews with Sudanese migrants and their descendants in Germany and Jordan show that the main components influencing the intergenerational transmission of we- and they-images – and consequently of belongings – are:

a) the sociohistorical power inequalities shaping the family and regions in which people are born (people’s birth figurations);

b) the concrete experiences of (lack of) power, especially different forms of violence lived through by members of the family in different phases of their lives, and the norms and rules for talking about these experiences in we-groups (the intergenerational transmission of knowledge);

c) the transformations in figurations – and consequently power chances – before, during and after migration;

d) marriage into more or less established groupings;

e) physical separation from the family or other we-groups;

f) the dialogue about the past in the family (the intergenerational transmission of memories).

I have discussed in detail the relevance of sociohistorical power inequalities shaping the family, region, local communities and groupings in which people are born and how they configure the background from which possible we-relations emerge for members of various groupings in the present (ch. 3.7). This corresponds to the figurations into which people are born in their home regions, i.e., the power interdependencies and status asymmetries inside and across groupings in various sociohistorical figurations. It is important that experiences in previous generations that are dethematized in the present – such as slavery in its various forms and sociohistorical meanings – remain powerful even when people do not explicitly learn about them.

In other words, the intergenerational transmission of knowledge regarding the collective histories of groupings and families shapes the power chances people will have in the future and their life courses. This is connected to the chances that members of different groupings and regions have regarding, for example, access to formal education or a religious school, learning languages, or how to name power interdependencies in one way or another (ch. 3.7).

The second component is related to the potential for physical violence that power asymmetries have between and across groupings and individuals in figurations in Sudan, along the migration course and in the diaspora. As I showed on the basis of empirical cases, this component threatens the existence of entire families and communities, or people's chances to have biological descendants (ch. 3.5.2). This hinders the transmission of we- and they-images to later genealogical generations. Besides this, the norms and rules in different groupings regarding how to talk about certain experiences – especially experiences of violence inside the we-group – can lead, as I have shown, to dethematization of the family past in general (ch. 5.4.3). This is particularly connected to experiences interpreted as sexualized violence (ch. 3.5.2, ch. 4.3, and ch. 5.4.3). Processes of violence that could be politicized and were more present in public discourses or in the dominant everyday discourses in different groupings in the diaspora were more openly thematized in the autobiographical presentations. One important outcome is that these dominant everyday discourses – among groups of activists, for example – hindered people from talking about other experiences and using we- and they-images connected to them that contested or contradicted these discourses. In some cases it was possible to reconstruct that the dominance of the need to thematize violence or to use more politicized we-images hindered the transmission of we- and they-images related to other experiences in the past (ch. 4.5). As I have shown, the use of politicized we-images as Africans against the background of collective histories of enslavement and servitude in Libya enabled people to avoid confrontation with possible ascriptions of belonging to the perpetrators of violence in Darfur and Sudan (ch. 4.4.2). This component is central to the family dialogue and the transmission of collective memories and knowledge in we-groups, as I will discuss below.

The power chances people gain by presenting themselves in one way or another change in relation to the different figurations they find themselves in before, during and after migration. This affects the transmission of we- and they-images. As the empirical case reconstructions show, to present oneself as Arab in certain regions of Sudan (the home region) and North Africa (along the migration course) can bring concrete migration chances or hinder physical violence (ch. 4.4). Many of those from more marginalized groupings in Darfur had migrated through different regions of Sudan and northern Africa, where they experienced racialized discrimination and different forms of violence, and they-images as slaves and *furawi*. They also experienced prejudice due to language or accent, as often Arabic was not their mother tongue. However, even if members of Zurqa groupings are in an outsider position in relation to Arab groupings in Sudan, upon arriving in Libya both groupings find themselves in outsider positions in relation to established Libyan groupings. Thus, these power asymmetries and the experiences connected to them change in the course of migration, as in the figuration between Sudanese asylum applicants and immigration authorities in Germany or international organizations in Jordan. The case studies show that even we- and they-images such as that of belonging to a 'slave' (Arabic: *abd*) family or a 'noble' family can be used by members of different groupings to present their experiences in the diaspora in various ways. While some who did not experience coerced labor presented their life circumstances in Libya as similar to slavery (ch. 4.4.2), others who were captured and forced to work in the desert in the Sahel do not interpret these experiences in the light of the collective histories of enslavement and servitude in the region (ch. 4.4.3). Thus, which images are used and the biographical and collective functions they acquire change in relation to diverse collective histories and power transformations in various figurations.

Another interesting observation is that what were once they-images could increasingly become we-images in the family through processes of marriage into more established groupings. The case studies show that we-images as Africans, or as Zaghawa and Masalit from Darfur, were less relevant where members of non-Arab groupings from Darfur had married into families in Palestine and Bedouin Arab families in Jordan (ch. 5.4.3). These cases show that physical separation from their we-group or family played an important role in shaping people's explicit we- and they-images in the present. Processes of deportation and participation of family members in armed groups separates family members and hinders the transmission of knowledge about ancestry and the collective memories of parts of the family (ch. 4.4.3 and ch. 5.4.3). Similarly, the death – violent or not – of family members also hinders the transmission of knowledge about the past and collective memories (ch. 3.5.2 and ch. 5.4.3).

To a certain extent, all the components mentioned above are related to the family dialogue about the family past, which involves the transmission of knowledge, collective memories and histories regarding the experiences lived through by members of the we-group. The knowledge people have in their families about previous generations and the concrete experiences they have lived through is a matter of power. Discussions regarding how children should be raised in the family, who can talk about which topics, and who can ask questions in the family constellation, influence how family members learn about the past and talk about the collective histories of their ancestors. The norms and rules of the family – which must be seen as part of the norms and rules of the broader we-groupings the family belongs to (ch. 5.4.3) – shape the attitude in the present that different members have in relation to the familial past (ch. 5.4). Among other things, they influence feelings of pride in belonging to the family and we-groups, a component affecting power chances and group cohesion in societies. This shapes the we-images people have at hand to talk about themselves and their experiences, as they learn in the family how to use certain images in speaking of experiences of violence, or when to manifest pride and when to hide certain belongings. This is clear in the cases where those born in the diaspora who do not have explicit knowledge about the family past cannot understand their life stories and their current circumstances, or those of their families, in relation to the history of sociohistorical power inequalities that have influenced the outsider position of their families and groupings, such as processes of colonial and authoritarian violence in Sudan.

These components are not exhaustive but can serve to sensitize future researchers to the need for more studies of ways in which the power chances of migrants are interdependent with the transmission of knowledge and collective memories in their families, communities and groupings. How these components concretely influence people's life courses and the ways people construct their belongings in the diaspora are a matter of empirical research.

6.5 Contributions of the study and potential research

I have already discussed how my research can lead to the inclusion of people's changing relevancies in the study of social phenomena instead of relying on the anachronistic retrospective projection of predefined categories of analysis (ch. 2.3). This approach allowed me to empirically develop distinct groupings in Sudan that remain relevant among Sudanese communities in the diaspora: 'Zurqa' from Darfur, 'Arabs' from Darfur, and 'Arabs' from Sudan. These groupings were reconstructed based on interviews using open questions in contrast to categories used in asylum procedures that prioritize national belongings or reinforce tribal belongings. By focusing on the way the relevancies of migrants change over time, depending on their experiences in the past and the power chances available to them in the present, this study contributes to a less essentialist notion of belonging. Instead, it takes into account the sociohistorical power inequalities that form the background limited by asymmetrical stocks of knowledge from which people's constructions of belonging emerge. Belonging arises from being born in a particular power figuration and learning through participation in groups to understand and present oneself and the others in polysemic ways. Among other things, the experience of groupness makes certain constructions of belonging dominant throughout the life of the same person and in different generations of the same family, community or grouping. Based on this sociohistorical notion of belonging and having in mind the empirical cases of people who experienced migration from Darfur and Sudan discussed in this work, it becomes clear that:

a) ethnic and regional belonging continue to be relevant for people from Darfur and other regions of Sudan living in the diaspora;

b) ethnic and regional belonging play different roles along the migration course;

c) ethnic and regional belonging do not play the same role in the diaspora as they did before migration (they may lead, for instance, to increasing power chances in the diaspora); and

d) ethnic and regional belonging intertwine with power asymmetries and experiences – such as experiences of physical violence – inside families, we-groups, and communities.

This does not mean that ethnic belonging changes upon migration, but that we need to consider power transformations if we want to understand and explain changing relevancies in constructions of belonging. In the tradition of figurational sociology, these findings show that the functions of ethnicized we- and they-images differ according to the changing power chances available to members of different ethnic groupings from Sudan before and after their migration. And these changing functions influence how images are transmitted latently and explicitly to further generations of Sudanese in the diaspora. By examining how people construct their life stories against the background of the history of their families and collectives, this study shows that people have a limited range of possibilities to construct their belongings and their versions of the past. This means that even if they can change how they interpret their belonging to certain groupings, they cannot change the sociohistorical power inequalities and the individual and collective experiences that shape their home region, or the experiences that previous generations and members of their families and groupings lived through in the past.

This sociohistorical notion of belonging is based on empirical studies of belonging that take into account the changing relevancies of migrants in relation to their power chances in the present, and the need to reconstruct in detail concrete individual experiences shaping the horizon of possible new interpretations of the past. As I have empirically demonstrated, power dynamics inside families and groupings are as important for constructions of collective belonging as so-called collective or structural power inequalities (ch. 5.4.3). These findings illustrate the potential of studies on constructions of belonging that focus on the interdependence between the transmission of knowledge and collective memories in families and communities, and the transformation of power inequalities between and across groupings in societies.

From a methodological point of view, it was possible to reconstruct these power interdependencies and the changing relevancies in autobiographical constructions of belonging by making a contrastive comparison of various presentations of the past (ch. 2.4). A contrastive comparison of the various views and versions of the past presented by the same person in different interviews and with various interviewers, and in interviews with different members of the same family and groupings, proved useful in addressing the changing character of power asymmetries inside and across groupings. This also helped to avoid essentializing individual, familial, and collective histories by allowing the reconstruction of different versions of the past, how these versions attain sociobiographical legitimacy among people and groupings, and how they can be contested. In the empirical case of Sudan, it becomes clear that when making biographical and collective reconstructions of the past we must avoid essentializing we- and they-images, such as Zurqa and Arab. It is necessary to reconstruct in detail how the meanings of these images changed biographically and in different generations and groupings in different sociohistorical phases. Using a figurational and biographical approach, I tried to reconstruct the long-term development and transformation of sociohistorical power inequalities in the home regions of individuals, families, communities, and groupings (ch. 3.7). For the analysis, this meant avoiding focusing on a descriptive level on how people deal with the they-images they are confronted with in their societies of arrival and the strategies they develop to counter them, in favor of reconstructing the sociogenesis of the changing relevancies of these we- and they-images in different phases of their lives (ch. 4.4), in different generations of the same family and grouping (ch. 5.4), and against the background of the collective histories of their groupings and societies (ch. 3.2).

The focus on processes of transformation demanded methodological adaptations. This was made possible by comparing various sources (e.g., interviews, written sources like court proceedings, personal diaries, maps, among others) and versions of the socially constructed past and reconstructing different power figurations in present-day Sudan on the basis of empirical cases and historical research (ch. 3.3 and ch. 3.4). This included a detailed reconstruction of the development and transformation of power interdependencies on the level of individual, familial, and collective histories. This made it possible to determine the biographical and collective functions of we- and they-images and their interdependence with the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and collective memories (ch. 4.5 and ch. 5.5). This gave insights into the norms and rules of the groupings where people learned how to present themselves, the polysemic quality of images of the self and the others, and how this can change from one interaction to another. It also allowed me to avoid the trap of reproducing or analyzing only the level of presentations (life stories) and of only considering explicitly thematized and manifest aspects of the past. Here, the main advantage came from separating two heuristic levels of analysis, that of *presentations* and that of *experiences*, in the tradition of Gabriele Rosenthal (ch. 2.4). The focus of the study on changing power asymmetries and their interdependencies with presentations of belonging was methodologically addressed by conducting more than one interview with the same person, if possible by different interviewers, and conducting interviews with different members of the family and grouping. This allowed me to show how the relevancies of these migrants are entangled with dominant everyday discourses in the groups and groupings in which they participate in different phases of their lives, and how these groupings and images of the self and the others change as a result of processes of participation in the societies where they live. These considerations, developed on the basis of empirical cases, make a significant contribution to the sociological study of violence and migration, especially regarding the interrelation between experiences of violence and dominant constructions of belonging in the diaspora.

Regarding sociological studies of violence, an important contribution is sensitization to the need to reconstruct in detail how people have learned in the various groups they have participated in at different times in their lives to interpret the violence they have experienced. Some may regard it as a more or less individualized part of their life stories, while others may construct it as part of the sociohistorical power inequalities that have shaped the histories of their families and collectives. My empirical findings show that different forms of violence are subject to different norms and rules regarding their thematization or dethematization, and that people learn these norms and rules in their families and we-groups. If someone has not explicitly learned to name certain experiences as a violation of their bodies and their rights, then they will not have the necessary knowledge at hand to interpret these experiences as such and to act upon it. The same applies to using they-images of groupings as perpetrators or victims. In the context of this study, I have shown that belongings often overlap during the life of the same person and in families and groupings. Not having certain we- and they-images at hand – or the explicit knowledge needed to construct oneself as part of one or another grouping – can hinder a person's chances of coming together with others in a group they feel proud of belonging to or participating in collectives that can lead to the transformation of power asymmetries. An empirical example of such processes of we-group formation is the use of we-images during the revolutionary developments in Sudan in 2019 (ch. 3.5.2).

These findings also contribute to the sociological study of migration. Besides avoiding a static notion of power and belonging, focusing on *processes of power transformation* allows the reconstruction of migrants' changing lifeworlds and power chances. The focus on people's relevancies, and power interdependencies between and across groupings, avoids emphasizing set categories of analysis in the study of migration, such as ethnic or national belonging. Instead, the reconstruction of the sociobiographical experiences that make one belonging dominant in relation to other potential we-relations makes it possible to study social inequalities and their transformation from a power-sensitive perspective. Similarly, the focus on transformations gives insights into the diverse ways in which we- and they-images are interdependent with knowledge transmission and asylum processes in various countries. At the same time, it shows how migrants use the polysemic quality of these images to increase their power chances in the diaspora and to contest the positions of more powerful groupings.

These contributions have been made possible by pursuing a specific research logic in which the use of an open initial question in biographical-narrative interviews was crucial (ch. 2.4). Besides this, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic which put an end to onsite fieldwork in Jordan, it proved methodologically advantageous to conduct online biographical-narrative interviews and follow-up interviews, in combination with inviting interviewees to act as interviewers (ch. 2.4.3, ch. 4.2, and ch. 5.2). While conducting online interviews was constrained by inequalities such as people's lack of access to a smart phone, the participation of interviewees in the definition of the sample led to the inclusion of members of marginalized groupings in Jordan. When they interviewed members of their own families, I used this as an opportunity to analyze family dialogues. The potential for combining different methods and forms of interviewing, as well as including interviewees as active participants in the production of knowledge, can be seen in the findings from the research in Jordan (ch. 5.5). Moreover, through the strategy of conducting more than one interview with the same person and members of the same families and groupings, it was possible to make a contrastive comparison of the different presentations, which proved useful in terms of reconstructing transformations in power interdependencies. This benefited methodologically from a further comparison with other sources of knowledge about the past, such as the use of various we- and they-images in interviews with other people, historical documents, court proceedings, personal diaries, and specialized literature (ch. 3.2).

The escalation of collective violence in Sudan in 2023 brought new dynamics to the shaping of individual biographies and family histories through armed conflicts in the country (ch. 3.6). Certain forms of physical violence that were hitherto restricted to so-called marginalized regions of the country spread to other regions, especially the capital. This points to another important finding of this study that comes from a contrastive comparison of interviews with the same interviewees before, during, and after the war in 2023: accounts of the violence experienced by people belonging to established groupings in Sudan have increasingly pushed stories of violence in marginalized regions out of everyday public discourses and media reports. Additional research is necessary to reconstruct which versions of the current conflicts will become dominant in autobiographical presentations of Sudanese living in the diaspora. These developments show that processes of migration from Sudan and the lives of people from Sudan living in the diaspora deserve increasing attention. In this sense, studies that reconstruct old and new constellations leading to migration, and the experiences members of various groupings live through along their migration courses, will be required. This book contributes with an empirical approach that focuses on the changing relevancies of migrants while following specific procedures from social interpretive research. The inclusion of people belonging to more marginalized groupings in the production of knowledge, and the production of knowledge focusing on their own changing relevancies, can help to fill lacunae in individual, familial, and collective histories. This can pave the way for studies that help people to gain explicit knowledge about the sociohistorical power inequalities shaping their current social situations.

Transcription symbols

The following transcription symbols and rules were used to reconstruct changes in speakers, pauses and non-verbal expressions in this study (see Bergmann 1988: 21).

((laughs))	Transcriber’s comments, also description of moods and non-verbal utterances or sounds
//	Marks the beginning and end of phenomenon, such as change in speaker
,	Brief pause
(3)	Pause in full seconds
any oth- another	Sudden halt/faltering/(self-)interruption
and=and	Rapid speech, words closely linked
su::re	Sound lengthened
‘yes of course’	Indirect speech
mother	Syllable (sound) stressed
ALL	Loudly
[Arabs, L.C.S.]	Textual addition by the author
[…]	Textual omission

Source: Rosenthal ([2005]2018: 83f.).

Literature

’Abd Al-Rahim, Muddathir (1970): Arabism, Africanism, and Self-Identification in the Sudan. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8 (2): 233–249.

Abdul Jalil, Mahassin (2023): From the Terraces of Celebrated Narratives to the Cellars of Tarnished History: Obliterating Knowledge in Sudanese and Arab Historiography. In: Vezzadini, Elena/Seri-Hersch, Iris/Revilla, Lucie/Poussier, Anaël/Abdul Jalil, Mahassin (eds.): *Ordinary Sudan, 1504–2019*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 87–118.

Abouyoub, Younes (2012): Climate: The Forgotten Culprit. The Ecological Dimension of the Darfur Conflict. *Race, Gender & Class*, 19 (1/2): 150–176.

Abusabib, Mohamed (2007): Sudanese Diaspora in Sweden: Challenges and Prospects for Contribution to Democratization and Reconstruction Effort in Sudan. In: Dahre, Ulf J. (ed.): *The Role of Diasporas in Peace, Democracy and Development in the Horn of Africa*. Lund: Media-Tryck Sociologen, 117–122.

Abusharaf, Rogaia M. (1997): Sudanese Migration to the New World: Socio-economic Characteristics. *International Migration*, 35 (4): 513–536.

Abusharaf, Rogaia M. (1998): War, Politics, and Religion: An Exploration of the Determinants of Southern Sudanese Migration to the United States and Canada. *Northeast African Studies*, 5 (1): 31–46.

Abusharaf, Rogaia M. (2021): *Darfur Allegory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ahmed, Einas (2015): Militant Salafism in Sudan. *Islamic Africa*, 6 (1–2): 164–84.

Al-Dayel, Nadia/Anfinson, Aaron/Anfinson, Graeme (2021): Captivity, Migration, and Power in Libya. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 9 (3): 280–298.

Al-Tunisi, Muhammad ibn Umar ([1845]2018): *In Darfur. An Account of the Sultanate and Its People. Volumes One and Two*. New York: New York University Press.

Amoateng, John (1989): Black Germans – The Best Hidden Minority in Germany. *New Political Science*, 8 (1–2): 101–109.

Arndt, Susan (2017): Rassismus. Eine viel zu lange Geschichte. In: Fereidooni, Karim/El, Meral (eds.): *Rassismuskritik und Widerstandsformen*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 29–45.

Assal, Munzoul (2006): The Emerging Sudanese Diaspora: Challenges and Potentials for Post-War Reconstruction. *Journal of Future Studies*, 1 (2): 1–21.

Assal, Munzoul (2007): *Refugees to and from Sudan*. Cairo: American University in Cairo. Available at: https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=f8f91919b2c8c8215738bcd6bacc9ac2d0e5e5f6 [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Assal, Munzoul (2011): *Gender and Migration in Sudan: Socio-political Aspects*. Migration Policy Centre. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/1814/15590 [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Baer, Gabriel (1967): Slavery in Nineteenth Century Egypt. *The Journal of African History*, 8 (3): 417–441.

Bahl, Eva (2021): *Verflochtene Geschichten im postkolonialen Grenzraum. Biographien, Zugehörigkeiten und Erinnerungspraktiken in Ceuta und Melilla*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Bahl, Eva/Cé Sangalli, Lucas (2021a): *Migration Research in Brazil in Times of Covid-19*. Global Migration Studies, 3. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies.

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*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies, 32–54.

Bahl, Eva/Rosenthal, Gabriele (eds.) (2021): *Navigating Through Increasing Social Inequalities in Times of Covid-19*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies.

Bakhit, Mohamed A. G. (2020): Shantytowns Identity versus Middle Class Identity. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 240: 919–941.

Barth, Fredrik (1967): Economic Spheres in Darfur. In: Firth, Raymond (ed.): *Themes in Economic Anthropology*. London: Tavistock Publications, 149–174.

Barth, Fredrik (1969): Introduction. In: Barth, Fredrik (ed.): *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. London: Allen & Unwin, 9–38.

Barth, Fredrik ([1994]2000): Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity. In: Vermeulen, Hans/Govers, Cora (eds.): *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 11–32.

Barth, Fredrik (2002): An Anthropology of Knowledge. *Current Anthropology*, 43 (1): 1–18.

Bassi, Marie/Brücker, Pauline/Franck, Alice (2022): Supporting a Revolution from Afar: The Construction of Unity between Generations of Sudanese Exiles in France. *Mediterranean Politics*.

Becker, Johannes (2017): *Verortungen in der Jerusalemer Altstadt: Lebensgeschichten und Alltag in einem engen urbanen Raum*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Becker, Johannes (2019): Orte und Verortungen als raumsoziologische Perspektive zur Analyse von Lebensgeschichten. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20 (1).

Becker, Johannes/Hinrichsen, Hendrik/Worm, Arne (2023): On the Emergence and Changing Positions of Old-Established Groupings in Migration Contexts: A Process Perspective on Group Formation in Jordan. *Current Sociology*, 71 (4): 607–626.

Ben-Ze'ev, Efrat/Gazit, Nir (2020): The Fickle Zone. Borderland and Borderlanders on the Egyptian-Israeli Front. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 37 (5): 1–21.

Behrends, Andrea (2007): The Darfur Conflict and the Chad/Sudan Border – Regional Context and Local Re-configurations. *Sociologus*, 57 (1): 99–131.

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.

Berger, Peter L. (1963): *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor.

Berger, Peter L./Luckmann, Thomas ([1966]1991): *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Bergmann, Jörg R. (1988): *Ethnomethodologie und Konversationsanalyse*. Studienbrief der Fern Universität Hagen, FB Erziehungs-, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften, Kurseinheit 2.

Bernal, Victoria (1997): Colonial Moral Economy and the Discipline of Development: The Gezira Scheme and "Modern" Sudan. *Cultural Anthropology*, 12 (4): 447–479.

Berridge, Willow J. (2015): *Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan: The "Khartoum Springs" of 1964 and 1985*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Berridge, Willow J. (2020): Briefing: The Uprising in Sudan. *African Affairs*, 119 (474): 164–176.

Berridge, Willow J. (2023): Colonial Homophobia: Externalising Queerness in Condominium Sudan. In: Vezzadini, Elena/Seri-Hersch, Iris/Revilla, Lucie/Poussier, Anaël/Abdul Jalil, Mahassin (eds.): *Ordinary Sudan, 1504–2019*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 361–386.

Blumer, Herbert (1954): What Is Wrong with Social Theory? *American Sociological Review*, 19 (1): 3–10.

Bond, George Clement/Gilliam, Angela (1994): Introduction. In: Bond, George Clement/Gilliam, Angela (ed.): *Social Construction of the Past. Representation as Power*. London/New York: Routledge, 1–22.

Bogner, Artur (1986): The Structure of Social Processes: A Commentary on the Sociology of Norbert Elias. *Sociology*, 20 (3): 387–411.

Bogner, Artur (2003): Macht und die Genese sozialer Gruppen. *Sociologus*, 53 (2): 167–181.

Bogner, Artur/Rosenthal, Gabriele (2009). Introduction: Ethnicity, Biography and Options of Belonging. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele/Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography*. Berlin: Lit, 9–23.

Bogner, Artur/Rosenthal, Gabriele (2017): Biographies – Discourses – Figurations. Methodological Considerations from the Perspectives of Social Constructivism and Figurational Sociology. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele/Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus, 15–49.

Bogner, Artur/Rosenthal, Gabriele (2023): Social-Constructivist and Figurational Biographical Research. *Current Sociology*, 71 (4): 567–586.

Brandhorst, Rosa M. (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 M. (2021): The Migration Motive and Transnational Engagement Nexus. A Case Study of Transnational Families Between Cuba and Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49 (7): 1–23.

Breckner, Roswitha (2021): Challenges of Hermeneutic Image Interpretation: Visual Segment Analysis as a Way to Explore Visual Meaning. In: Morikawa, Takemitsu (ed.): *Inquiries into Humans and Societies: Studies in Sociology, Psychology and Education*. Tokyo: Keio University, 65–79.

Breckner, Roswitha/Liebhart, Karin/Pohn-Lauggas, Maria (2021): *Sozialwissenschaftliche Analysen von Bild- und Medienwelten*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Bromwich, Brendan (2018): Power, Contested Institutions and Land: Repoliticising Analysis of Natural Resources and Conflict in Darfur. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 12 (1): 1–21.

Browne, William George (1799): *Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria, from the year 1792 to 1798*. London: T. Cadell Junior and W. Davies.

Brubaker, Rogers/Cooper, Frederick (2000): Beyond "Identity". *Theory and Society*, 29: 1–47.

Brubaker, Rogers (2002): Ethnicity Without Groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie/Europäisches Archiv Für Soziologie*, 43 (2): 163–189.

Brubaker, Rogers (2005): The 'Diaspora' Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28 (1): 1–19.

Brubaker, Rogers (2015): *Grounds for Difference*. Cambridge. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers (2017): Revisiting "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40 (9): 1556–1561.

Brun, Cathrine/Fàbos, Anita H./El-Abed, Oroub (2017): Displaced Citizens and Abject Living: The Categorical Discomfort with Subjects Out of Place. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift – Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 71 (4): 220–232.

Bruning, Jelle (2020): Slave Trade Dynamics in Abbasid Egypt: The Papyrological Evidence. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 63 (5-6): 682–742.

Burleigh, Michael/Wippermann, Wolfgang (1991): *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cainkar, Louise (1993): The Gulf War, Sanctions and the Lives of Iraqi Women. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 15 (2): 15–51.

Calhoun, Craig (2003): The Variability of Belonging: A Reply to Rogers Brubaker. *Ethnicities*, 3 (4): 558–568.

Casciarri, Barbara/Manfredi, Stefano (2020): *Freedom, Peace and Justice. A Glossary of the Third Sudanese Revolution*. Working Paper 2, AUF Project Arabité, islamité, "soudanité"/Being Arab, Muslim, Sudanese, Khartoum. Available at: https://cedejsudan.hypotheses.org/files/2020/03/Working-Paper-2_Barbara-Casciarri-Stefano-Manfredi_A-Glossary-of-the-Third-Sudanese-Revolution_March-2020-1.pdf [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Cé Sangalli, Lucas (2022): Contested We- and They-Images Among People from Darfur and Other Regions of Sudan Living in Germany. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.): *Transnational Biographies. Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 115–169.

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: Göttingen University Press, 83–102.

Chaudhri, Mohammad A. (1975): Foreign Policy of Sudan under President Numeiri. *Pakistan Horizon*, 28 (4): 19–52.

Churchill, Winston ([1899]2013): *The River War: An Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan*. United States: Skyhorse.

Collins, Robert O. (1992): The Nilotic Slave Trade: Past and Present. *Slavery & Abolition*, 13 (1): 140-161.

Collins, Robert O. (2008): *A History of Modern Sudan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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].

Delaney, Matthew J. (2011): John Garang and Sudanism: A Peculiar and Resilient Nationalist Ideology. *The Forum: Journal of History*, 3 (1): 57–78.

De Waal, Alex (1989a): Famine Mortality. A Case Study of Darfur, Sudan 1984–5. *Population Studies*, 43 (1): 5–24.

De Waal, Alex (1989b): *Famine that Kills. Darfur, Sudan*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

De Waal, Alex (2004): Counter-Insurgency on the Cheap. *Review of African Political Economy*, 31 (102): 716–725.

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: Alane Abramowitz, Sharon / Panter-Brick, Catherine (eds.): *Medical Humanitarianism. Ethnographies of Practice*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 77–95.

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.

De Waal, Alex (2022): The Conflict in Darfur, Sudan: Background and Overview (Expert Witness Statement at the International Criminal Court). Medford: Tufts University. Available at: https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/files/2022/04/AdW-expert-witness-statement-DF-for-ICC.pdf [Accessed on March 8, 2024].

Edwards, David N. (2004): *The Nubian Past. An Archaeology of Sudan*. London/New York: Routledge.

Edwards, David N. (2011): Slavery and Slaving in the Medieval and Post-Medieval Kingdoms of the Middle Nile. In: Lane, Paul/MacDonald, Kevin C. (eds.): *Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory*. Proceedings of the British Academy. London: British Academy Scholarship, 79–108.

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.

El-Battahani, Atta ([2004]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: Cornell University Press, 43–67.

El-Bushra, Judy/Piza Lopez, Eugenia (1994): *Development in Conflict: The Gender Dimension*. Oxfam Discussion Paper 3. Oxford: Oxfam.

El-Bushra, Judy/Sahl, Ibrahim M. G. (2005): *Cycles of Violence: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict*. Nairobi: ACORD.

El Hamel, Chouki (2013): *Black Morocco. A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elias, Norbert (1978): *What is Sociology?* New York: Columbia University Press.

Elias, Norbert ([1969]1983): *The Court Society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Elias, Norbert (1987): The Retreat of Sociologists into the Present. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 4 (2–3): 223–247.

Elias, Norbert (1989) *The Symbol Theory*. London: Sage.

Elias, Norbert ([1939]2001): The Society of Individuals. In: Elias, Norbert: *The Society of Individuals*. New York: Continuum, 1–66.

Elias, Norbert ([1987]2001): Changes in the We-I Balance. In: Elias, Norbert: *The Society of Individuals*. New York: Continuum, 153–237.

Elias, Norbert ([1976]2008): 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 ([1981]2008): Power and Civilisation. *Journal of Power*, 1 (2): 135–142.

El-Tayeb, Fatima (1999): “Blood Is a Very Special Juice”: Racialized Bodies and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany. *International Review of Social History*, 44 (7): 149–169.

El-Tayeb, Fatima (2001): *Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um »Rasse« und nationale Identität 1890–1933*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag.

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.

El-Tom, Abdullahi (2009a): Darfur People: Too Black for the Arab-Islamic Project of Sudan. In: Hassan, Salah M./Ray, Carina E. (eds.): *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan. A Critical Reader*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 84–102.

El-Tom, Abdullahi (2009b): The Arab Congregation and the Ideology of Genocide in Darfur, Sudan. *Journal of African National Affairs*, 3 (2): 27–51.

Elwert, Georg (1989): Nationalismus und Ethnizität. Über die Bildung von Wir-Gruppen. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 41 (3): 440–464.

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 (1997): Switching of We-Group Identities: The Alevis as a Case Among Many Others. In: *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East.* Leiden: Brill, 65–85.

Ensor, Marisa O. (2016): South Sudanese Diaspora Children: Contested Notions of Childhood, Uprootedness, and Belonging Among Young Refugees in the US. In: Seeberg, Marie L./Goździak, Elżbieta (eds.): *Contested Childhoods: Growing up in Migrancy*. IMISCOE Research Series. Cham: Springer, 61–77.

Ewald, Janet J. (1988): The Nile Valley System and the Red Sea Slave Trade 1820–1880. *Slavery & Abolition*, 9 (3): 71–92.

Fàbos, Anita H. (2007): Between Citizenship and Belonging: Transnational Ethnic Strategies of Arab Muslim Sudanese in the Diaspora. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning/Women, Gender & Research*, 203 (Special Issue on Gender and Transnationalism in the Middle East): 49–61.

Fàbos, Anita H. (2002): Sudanese Identity in Diaspora and the Meaning of Home: The Transformative Role of Sudanese NGOs in Cairo. In: Al-Ali, Nadje/Koser, Khalid (ed.): *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. London/New York: Routledge, 34–50.

Fàbos, Anita (2012): Resisting Blackness, Embracing Rightness: How Muslim Arab Sudanese Women Negotiate Their Identity in the Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35 (2): 218–237.

Falola, Toyin (2022): *Decolonizing African Knowledge: Autoethnography and African Epistemologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Felkin, Robert W. (1886): Notes on the For Tribe of Central Africa. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1884–85*, 13: 205–265.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena (2014): Gender and Forced Migration. In: Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena/Loescher, Gil/Long, Katy/Sigona, Nando: *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 395–408.

Fischer, Wolfram (1982): *Time and Chronic Illness. A Study on the Social Constitution of Temporality*. Berkeley: Self-published.

Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram (1995): The Problem with Identity: Biography as Solution to Some (Post-)Modernist Dilemmas. *Comenius*, 15 (3): 250–265.

Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram (2000): Biographical Work and Biographical Structuring in Present-Day Societies. In: Chamberlayne, Prue/Bornat, Joanna/Wengraf, Tom (eds.): *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science*. London: Routledge, 109–125.

Fischer, Wolfram/Kohli, Martin (1987): Biographieforschung. In: Voges, Wolfgang (ed.): *Methoden der Biographie- und Lebenslaufforschung*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 25–49.

Flint, Julie/de Waal, Alex (2008): *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War*. London/New York: Zed Books/International African Institute.

Frankenberg, Ruth (1993): *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Garang (de Mabior), John ([1983]1992): *The Call for Democracy in Sudan: John Garang Speaks*. Ed. by Mansour Khalid. London/New York: Kegan Paul International.

Glade, Rebecca (2019): 'Shama Will Not Dance': University of Khartoum Politics, 1964–69. *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*, 89 (5): 109–126.

Glaser, Barney G./Strauss, Anselm L. ([1967]2006): *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Jersey: Aldine.

Goffman, Erving (1956): *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.

Goffman, Erving (1974): *Frame analysis. An essay on the organization of experience*. London: Harper and Row.

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.

Guha, Amalendu (1977): Brain Drain Issue and Indicators on Brain-Drain. *International Migration*, 15 (1): 3–20.

Gurwitsch, Aron (1962): The Common-Sense World as Social Reality: A Discourse on Alfred Schutz. *Social Research*, 29 (1): 50–72.

Gurwitsch, Aron (1964): *The Field of Consciousness*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Gurwitsch, Aron/Embree, Lester (1974): On Thematization. *Research in Phenomenology*, 4: 35–49.

Hale, Sondra (2005): Activating the Gender Local: Transnational Ideologies and 'Women's Culture' in Northern Sudan. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 1 (1): 29–52.

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.

Hallaj, Muhammad (2008): Recollections of the Nakba Through a Teenager's Eyes. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 38 (1): 66–73.

Hamilton, Rebecca J. (2011): *Fighting for Darfur: Public Action and the Struggle to Stop Genocide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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].

Hashim, Mohammed Jalal (2019): *To Be or Not to Be. Sudan at Crossroads. A Pan-African Perspective*. Dar-es-Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota.

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: Cornell University Press, 15–28.

Hassan, Yousif (2022): The Evolution of the Sudanese Authoritarian State: The December Uprising and the Unravelling of a 'Persistent' Autocracy. In: Topak, Ozgun/Mekouar, Merouan/Cavatorta, Francesco (eds.): *New Authoritarian Practices in the Middle East and North Africa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 252–275.

Heydari, Arash/Teymoori, Ali/Trappes, Rose (2021): Honor Killing as a Dark Side of Modernity: Prevalence, Common Discourses, and a Critical View. *Social Science Information*, 60 (1): 86–106.

Hinrichsen, Hendrik (2020): *Die Generation Oslo im Westjordanland. Historische Generationen in prozesssoziologischer Perspektive*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Hirschauer, Stefan (2021): Un/doing Differences. The Contingency of Social Affiliations. In: Pelillo-Hestermeyer, Giulia/Gaupp, Lisa (ed.): *Diversity and Otherness. Transcultural Insights into Norms, Practices and Negotiations*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 62–95.

Hirschauer, Stefan (2023): Telling People Apart: Outline of a Theory of Human Differentiation. *Sociological Theory*, 41 (4): 352–376.

Hoffmann-Riem, Christa (1980): Die Sozialforschung einer interpretativen Soziologie. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 32 (2): 339–371.

Holt, Peter M. ([1961]1970): *A Modern History of the Sudan, From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Holt, Peter M. (1981): The Genealogy of a Sudanese Holy Family. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 44 (2): 262–272.

Honigman, Sylvie (2002): Les divers sens de l'ethnique Ἄραψ dans les sources documentaires grecques d'Égypte. *Ancient Society*, 32: 43–72.

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.

Idris, Amir H. (2005): *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Idris, Amir H. (2013): *Identity, Citizenship, and Violence in Two Sudans: Reimagining a Common Future*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ille, Enrico (2011): *Tracing Golden Past. Historical Narratives About Shaybun and Shawabna in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan*. Leipzig: Ille & Riemer.

Izzeldin Malik, Saadia (2022): Sudan's December Revolution of 2018: The Ecology of Youth Connective and Collective Activism. *Information, Communication & Society*, 25 (10): 1495–1510.

Johnson, Douglas H. (1989): The Structure of a Legacy: Military Slavery in Northeast Africa. *Ethnohistory*, 36 (1): 72–88.

Johnson, Douglas H. (2009): Tribe or Nationality? The Sudanese Diaspora and the Kenyan Nubis. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 3 (1): 112–131.

Jok, Jok Madut (2001): *War and Slavery in Sudan*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jok, Jok Madut (2007): *Sudan: Race, Religion and Violence*. Oxford: One World.

Jones, Siân (1997): *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*. London/New York: Routledge.

Kadoda, Gada/Hale, Sondra (2015): Contemporary Youth Movements and the Role of Social Media in Sudan. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, 49 (1): 215–236.

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.

Kapteijns, Lidwien (1985): *Mahdish Faith and Sudanic Tradition*. London: Routledge.

Kapteijns, Lidwien/Spaulding, Jay (1988): *After the Millennium: Diplomatic Correspondence from Wadaï and Dâr Fûr on the Eve of Colonial Conquest, 1885–1916*. Lansing: Michigan state University.

Keller, Reiner (2006): Analysing Discourse. An Approach from the Sociology of Knowledge. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 31 (2): 223–242.

Keller, Reiner (2011): The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD). *Human Studies*, 34 (1): 43–65.

Kindersley, Nicki (2015): Southern Sudanese Narratives of Displacement, and the Ambiguity of "Voice". *History in Africa*, 42: 203–237.

Kustenbauder, Matthew (2013): The Politicization of Religious Identity in Sudan, with Special Reference to Oral Histories of the Sudanese Diaspora in America. In: Adogame, Afe/Shankar, Shobana (eds.): *Religion on the Move! New Dynamics of Religious Expansion in a Globalizing World*. Leiden: Brill, 397–424.

Lamoureaux, Siri/Ille, Enrico/Fadlalla, Amal H./Sureau, Timm (2021): What Makes a Revolution 'Real'? A Discussion on Social Media and Al-Thawra الثورة in Sudan. In: Rottenburg, Richard/Gueye, Oulimata/McHardy, Julien/Ziegler, Philipp (eds.): *Digital Imaginaries: African Positions Beyond Binaries*. Bielefeld/Berlin: Kerber, 124–145.

La Rue, George M. (2013): Zenneb and Saint-André's Cruise Up the Nile to Dongola: An Enslaved Woman from Dar Fur (Sudan) and Her Self-Presentation. In: Bellagamba, Alice/Greene, Sandra E./Klein, Martin A. (eds.): *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 220–238.

La Rue, George M. (2017): Seeking Freedom in Multiple Contexts. *Journal of Global Slavery*, 2 (1-2): 11–43.

La Rue, George M. (2018): Egypt's Slaving Frontier: Environment, Enslavement, Social Transformations, and the Local Use of Slaves in the Sudan, 1780–1880. In: Campbell, Gwyn (eds.): *Bondage and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World*. Palgrave Series in Indian Ocean World Studies. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 163–185.

Layne, Linda L. (1994): *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lemarchand, René (2006): Unsimplifying Darfur. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 1 (1): 1–12.

Lopez, George A. (1991): The Gulf War: Not So Clean. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 47 (7): 30–35.

Macdonald, Michael C. A. (2009): Arabs, Arabias and Arabic Before Late Antiquity. *Topoi*, 16 (1): 277–332.

Macdonald, Michael C. A./Corcella, Aldo/Daryaee, Touraj/Fisher, Greg/Gibbs, Matt/Lewin, Ariel/Violante, Donata/Whately, Conor (2015): Arabs and Empires Before the Sixth Century. In: Fisher, Greg (ed.): *Arabs and Empire Before Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11–89.

Macintosh, Edward H. (1931): A Note on the Dago Tribe. *Sudan Notes and Records*, 14 (2): 171–177.

MacMichael, Harold A. ([1921]2011): *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan: And Some Account of the People Who Preceded Them and of the Tribes Inhabiting Dárfūr*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Madibbo, Amal Ibrahim (2012): Conflict and the Conceptions of Identities in the Sudan. *Current Sociology*, 60 (3): 302–319.

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 (2005): *Political Identity, Citizenship and Ethnicity in Post-Colonial Africa*. Keynote at World Bank, New Frontiers of Social Policy, 12–15.

Mamdani, Mahmood (2009): *Saviors and Survivors. Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. London/New York: Pantheon Books.

Marchal, Roland (2004): Le Soudan d'un conflit à l'autre. *Les Études du CERI*, 107–108: 1–59.

Marchal, Roland (2006): Chad/Darfur: How Two Crises Merge. *Review of African Political Economy*, 33 (109): 467–482.

McCollough, Thomas C./Edwards, Douglas (2007): The Archaeology of Difference: Setting the Stage. In: Edwards, Douglas/McCollough, Thomas C. (ed.): *The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class and the "Other" in Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers*. Alexandria: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1–11.

McGregor, Andrew J. (2000): *The Stone Monuments and Antiquities of the Jebel Marra Region, Darfur, Sudan, c. 1000–1750 AD*. Doctoral Thesis. Toronto: University of Toronto.

McGregor, Andrew J. (2011): Palaces in the Mountains: An Introduction to the Archaeological Heritage of the Sultanate of Darfur. *Sudan & Nubia*, 15: 129–141.

Medani, Khalid M. (2021): *Black Markets and Militants: Informal Networks in the Middle East and Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, Catherine (2005): Power, Land and Ethnicity in the Kassala-Gedaref States. In: Miller, Catherine (ed.): *Land, Ethnicity and Political Legitimacy in Eastern Sudan*. Cairo: CEDEJ, 3–58.

Miller, Catherine (2015): Retour sur les catégorisations ethno-linguistiques au Soudan: entre construction allogène, appropriation autochtone et perpétuel réajustement. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 49 (1): 127–146.

Miran, Jonathan (2022): Red Sea Slave Trade. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. Available at: https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-868 [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Morris, Benny (2008): *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. Yale: Yale University Press.

Mosely Lesch, Ann (1998): *The Sudan: Contested National Identities*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mukhtar Musa, Abdu (2010): Marginalization and Ethnicization in the Sudan: How the Elite Failed to Stabilize a Diverse Country. *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 3 (4): 551–562.

Murphy, Emma/Todman, Will/Taylor, Abbie/Davis, Rochelle (2016): Sudanese and Somali refugees in Jordan. *Middle East Report 279*. Available at: https://merip.org/2016/09/sudanese-and-somali-refugees-in-jordan/ [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Nachtigal, Gustav (1889): *Sahara und Sudan. Ergebnisse sechsjähriger Reisen in Afrika* (Dritter Theil). Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus.

Nachtigal, Gustav ([1889]1971): *Sahara and Sudan IV: Wadai and Darfur*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Niederland, William G. (1981): The Survivor Syndrome. Further Observations and Dimensions. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 29 (2): 413–425.

Niess, Birgit (2018): *Lampedusa in Hamburg. Wie ein Protest die Stadt bewegte. Eine Ethnografie*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Nkrumah, Kwame (1963): *Africa Must Unite*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Noble-Frapin, Ben (2009): The Role of Islam in Sudanese Politics: A Socio-Historical Perspective. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 20: 69–82.

Nugdalla, Sarah O. (2020): The Revolution Continues: Sudanese Women's Activism. In: Okech, Awino (ed.): *Gender, Protests and Political Change in Africa*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 107–130.

Nugud, Mohamed I. (2013): *Slavery in the Sudan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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 (1996): Islam and Ethnicity in the Sudan. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26 (3): 258–267.

O'Fahey, Rex Seán (1999): Sufism in Suspense: The Sudanese Mahdi and the Sufis. In: de Jong, Fredrick/Radtke, Bernd (eds.): *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*. Leiden: Brill, 267–282.

O'Fahey, Rex Seán (2018): Foreword. In: Davies, Humphrey (ed.): *In Darfur: An Account of the Sultanate and Its People, Volume One (Vol. 12)*. New York: NYU Press, ix–xx.

O'Fahey, Rex Seán/Spaulding, Jay L. ([1974]2017): *Kingdoms of the Sudan*. London: Routledge.

O'Fahey, Rex Seán/Tubiana, Jérôme (2007): *Darfur: Historical and Contemporary Aspects*. Bergen: Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. Available at: www.smi.uib.no/darfur/A%20DARFUR%20WHOS%20WH03.pdf [Accessed on September 3, 2023].

Oevermann, Ulrich/Allert, Tilman/Konau, Elisabeth (1980): Zur Logik der Interpretation von Interviewtexten. In: Heinze, Thomas / Klusemann, Hans W./Soeffner, Hans G. (eds.): *Interpretationen einer Bildungsgeschichte*. Bensheim: päd. extra buchverlag, 15–69.

Oevermann, Ulrich/Allert, Tilman/Konau, Elisabeth/Krambeck, Jürgen ([1979]1987): Structures of Meaning and Objective Hermeneutics. In: Meja, Volker/Misgeld, Dieter/Stehr, Nico (eds.): *Modern German Sociology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 436–459.

Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna (2011): From 'Identity' to 'Belonging' in Social Research: Plurality, Social Boundaries, and the Politics of the Self. In: Albiez, Sara/Castro, Nelly/Jüssen, Lara/Joukhana, Eva (eds.): *Ethnicity, Citizenship and Belonging: Practices, Theory and Spatial Dimensions*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 199–220.

Pfaff-Czarnecka, Joanna (2013): Multiple Belonging and the Challenges to Biographic Navigation. In: *Max-Planck-Institut zur Erforschung multireligiöser und multiethnischer Gesellschaften*, MMG Working Paper 13-05, Göttingen. 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.

Phillips, Melissa (2013): Being South Sudanese in the Diaspora: Exploring the Relationship Between Pre-Migration, Identity and Labelling. In: Marlowe, Jay/Harris, Anne/Lyons, Tanya (eds.): *South Sudanese Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand: Reconciling the Past with the Present*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 67–84.

Pohn-Lauggas, Maria (2016): Biography and Discourse. A Biography and Discourse Analysis Combining Case Study on Women's Involvement in National Socialism. *Current Sociology*, 65 (7): 1–18.

Pohn-Lauggas, Maria (2019): Memory in the Shadow of a Family History of Resistance: A Case Study of the Significance of Collective Memories for Intergenerational Memory in Austrian Families. *Memory Studies*, 14 (2): 1–17.

Popitz, Heinrich (2017[1986]): *Phenomena of Power*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Prunier, Gérard (2005): *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Quirk, Joel/Rossi, Benedetta (2022): Slavery and Marriage in African Societies. *Slavery & Abolition*, 43 (2): 245–284.

Ransiek, Anna (2019): *Rassismus in Deutschland. Eine macht-reflexive, biographietheoretische und diskursanalytische Studie*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Reumert, Anna S. (2020): Good Guys, Mad City: Etiquettes of Migration Among Sudanese Men in Beirut. *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies*, 7 (2): 48–69.

Reyna, Stephen P. (2010): The Disasters of War in Darfur, 1950–2004. *Third World Quarterly*, 31 (8): 1297–1320.

Richlen, Lisa (2023): Imported Conflict? Regime Change in Sudan as a Trigger for Unity Amongst Sudanese in Israel. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49 (11): 2896–2913.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (1993): 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 (1997): National Identity or Multicultural Autobiography? Theoretical Concepts of Biographical Constitution Grounded in Case Reconstructions. *The Narrative Study of Lives*, 5: 21–39.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2004): ‚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 (2006): The Narrated Life Story: On the Interrelation Between Experience, Memory and Narration. In: *Narrative, Memory & Knowledge: Representations, Aesthetics, Contexts*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 1–16.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.) (2010a): *The Holocaust in Three Generations. Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime*. Opladen: Budrich.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2010b): Zur Interdependenz von kollektivem Gedächtnis und Erinnerungspraxis. Kultursoziologie aus biographietheoretischer Perspektive. In: Wohlrab-Sahr, Monika (ed.): *Kultursoziologie. Paradigmen, Methoden, Fragestellungen*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 151–175.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2013): Über die Zuverlässigkeit autobiographischer Texte. In: Frei, Norbert/Kansteiner, Wulf (eds.): *Den Holocaust erzählen*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 165–172.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.) (2016a): *Established and Outsiders at the Same Time*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2016b): 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.

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*. Global Migration Studies, 4. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies, 2–12.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.) (2022a): *Transnational Biographies. Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2022b): Introduction. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.): *Transnational Biographies. Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 7–15.

Rosenthal, Gabriele ([1995]2024): *Experienced Life and Narrated Life Story. Gestalt and Structure of Biographical Self-Presentations*. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus.

Rosenthal, Gabriele/Albaba, Ahmed/Cé Sangalli, Lucas (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, Gabriele (ed.): *Transnational Biographies. Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 81–113.

Rosenthal, Gabriele/Bogner, Artur (2017): Introduction. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele/Bogner, Artur (eds.): *Biographies in the Global South. Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 9–14.

Rosenthal, Gabriele/Cé Sangalli, Lucas/Worm, Arne (2022): Migrants from Senegal: Integrated in Religious, National or Multinational Networks. In: Rosenthal, Gabriele (ed.): *Transnational Biographies. Changing We-Images, Collective Belongings and Power Chances of Migrants and Refugees*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 27–80.

Rosenthal, Gabriele/Hofmann, Lukas (2023): 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, 99–121.

Rossi, Benedetta (2009): Slavery and Migration: Social and Physical Mobility in Ader (Niger). In: Rossi, Benedetta (ed.): *Reconfiguring Slavery: West African Trajectories*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 182–206.

Rubenson, Samuel (1996): The Transition from Coptic to Arabic. *Égypte/Monde árabe*, 27-28: 77–92.

Said, Edward (1994): *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

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].

Salih, M. A. Mohamed (1998): Other Identities. Politics of Sudanese Discursive Narratives. *Identities. Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 5 (1): 5–31.

Salih Karrar, Ali (1992): *The Sufi Brotherhoods in the Sudan*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Salomon, Noah (2016): *For the Love of the Prophet. An Ethnography of Sudan's Islamic State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Schäfer, Miriam (2021): *Polizist*in werden – Polizist*in sein. Strukturen und Widersprüche polizeilicher Arbeit*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Schramm, Katharina (2010): African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press Inc.

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: Spaulding, Jay/Beswick, Stephanie/Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn/Lobban, Richard A. Jr. (eds.): *Sudan's Wars and Peace Agreements*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 137–159.

Schultz, Ulrike (2015): „Als ob es nur Dinka und Nuer gibt…". Ethnische Zugehörigkeiten in Khartum und Juba. In: Hauck, Gerhard/Lenz, Ilse/Wienold, Hanns (eds.): *Entwicklung, Gewalt, Gedächtnis*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 157–176.

Schultz, Ulrike (2022): Don't Call Me a Foreigner: Place Making in Khartoum and Juba Between 2006–2018. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 22 (1): 53–70.

Schütz, Alfred (1945): On Multiple Realities. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 5 (4): 533–576.

Schütz, Alfred (1953): Common-Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 14 (1): 1–38.

Schütz, Alfred (1962): *The Problem of Social Reality: Collected Papers I*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Schütz, Alfred ([1932]1967): *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Schütz, Alfred/Luckmann, Thomas (1973): *The Structures of the Life-World, Vol.1*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Schütze, Fritz (1977): *Die Technik des narrativen Interviews in Interaktionsfeldstudien*. Arbeitsberichte und Forschungsmaterialien No. 1, Universität Bielefeld, Fakultät für Soziologie.

Schütze, Fritz (1983): Biographieforschung und narratives Interview. *Neue Praxis*, 3: 283–293.

Schütze, Fritz ([2007]2016): Biography Analysis on the Empirical Base of Autobiographical Narratives: How to Analyse Autobiographical Narrative Interviews. In: Schütze, Fritz: *Sozialwissenschaftliche Prozessanalyse: Grundlagen Der Qualitativen Sozialforschung*. Leverkusen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 75–116.

Scottish Geographical Magazine (1899): The Egyptian Sudan. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 15 (2): 57–74.

Searcy, Kim (2010): The Sudanese Mahdī's Attitudes on Slavery and Emancipation. *Islamic Africa*, 1 (1): 63–83.

Searcy, Kim (2011): *The Formation of the Sudanese Mahdist State: Ceremony and Symbols of Authority: 1882–1898*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Seri-Hersch, Iris (2020): Arabization and Islamization in the Making of the Sudanese "Postcolonial" State (1946-1964). *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 240: 779–804.

Seri-Hersch, Iris/Vezzadini, Elena/Revilla, Lucie (2023): Introduction: Bringing Ordinary People Back into Sudan Studies. In: Vezzadini, Elena/Seri-Hersch, Iris/Revilla, Lucie/Poussier, Anaël/Abdul Jalil, Mahassin (eds.): *Ordinary Sudan, 1504–2019*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1–34.

Shandy, Dianna J. (2002): Transnational Linkages Between Refugees in Africa and in the Diaspora. *Forced Migration Review*, 16: 7–8.

Shandy, Dianna J. (2006): Global Transactions: Sudanese Refugees Sending Money Home. *Refuge: Canada's Periodical on Refugees*, 23 (2): 28–35.

Sharkey, Heather J. (1994): Luxury, Status, and the Importance of Slavery in the Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Northern Sudan. *Northeast African Studies*, 1 (2/3): 187–206.

Sharkey, Heather J. (2003): *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press

Sharkey, Heather J. (2008): Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan. The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race. *African Affairs*, 107 (426): 21–43.

Shaw, Brent D. (2014): Who Are You? Africa and Africans. In: McInerney, Jeremy (ed.): *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 527–540.

Sikainga, Ahmed Alawad (1989): The Legacy of Slavery and Slave Trade in the Western Bahr Al-Ghazal, 1850–1939. *Northeast African Studies*, 11 (2): 75–95.

Sikainga, Ahmed Alawad (1996): *Slaves into Workers: Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Slight, John (2010): British Perceptions and Responses to Sultan Ali Dinar of Darfur, 1915–16. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 38 (2): 237–260.

Smolansky, Oles M. (1978): Soviet Policy in the Middle East. *Current History*, 74 (433): 5–39.

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.

Spaulding, Jay (1995): Medieval Christian Nubia and the Islamic World: A Reconsideration of the Baqt Treaty. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 28 (3): 577–594.

Spaulding, Jay (2000): The Chronology of Sudanese Arabic Genealogical Tradition. *History in Africa*, 27: 325–337.

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: Imagining the Past in Anthropology and History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 139–151.

Stahl-Göken, Michaela (2022): Sedentarization of Cross-Border Tribes and Mixed Migration Movements – Beni Amir in Eastern Sudan. In: Bach, Jean-Nicolas/Abbink, Jon/Ancel, Stéphane/Abdel Aziz, Azza Ahmed/Fantini, Emanuele/Ferras, Patrick/Mwakimako, Hassan/Nallet, Clélie/Ylönen, Aleksi/Záhoík, Jan (eds.): *Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa*. London: Routledge, 605–617.

Straus, Scott (2015): *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

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].

Teicher, Amir (2020): *Social Mendelism: Genetics and the Politics of Race in Germany, 1900–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, Edward (2010): *The Kafia Kingi Enclave. People, Politics and History in the North-South Boundary Zone of Western Sudan*. London: Rift Valley Institute.

Tolmacheva, Marina (1986): Toward a Definition of the Term Zanj. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 21 (1): 105–113.

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: Göttingen University Press, 25–40.

Tubiana, Jérôme (2007): Darfur: A Conflict for Land? In: de Waal, Alex (ed.): *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 68–91.

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/Saeneen, Gaffer Mohammud Saeneen (2018): *Multilateral Damage: The Impact of EU Migration Policies on Central Saharan Routes*. The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

Tubiana, Jérôme/Warin, Clotilde/Saleh Mangare, Mahamat (2020): *Diaspora in Despair*. 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].

Vaughan, Chris (2015): *Darfur: Colonial Violence, Sultanic Legacies and Local Politics, 1916–1956*. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer.

Verhoeven, Harry (2011): Climate Change, Conflict and Development in Sudan: Global Neo-Malthusian Narratives and Local Power Struggles. *Development and Change*, 42: 679–707.

Verhoeven, Harry (2015): *Water, Civilisation and Power in Sudan: The Political Economy of Military-Islamist State Building*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vermeulen, Hans/Govers, Cora ([1994]2000): 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/Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn/Lobban, Richard A. Jr. (eds.): *Sudan's Wars and Peace Agreements*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 71–101.

Vezzadini, Elena (2012a): 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*, 46 (3): 439–451.

Vezzadini, Elena (2012b): Making Sūdānī, Making Slaves: Essentialism, Subalternity, and the State in Colonial and Postcolonial Sudan. In: Quirk, Joel/Vigneswaran, Darshan (eds.): *Slavery, Migration and Contemporary Bondage in Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 95–121.

Vezzadini, Elena (2018): 'Black' Sudanese with "a Veneer of College Education": Nationalism, Elite Formation, and Racial Policies, 1900–1925. In: Taddia, Irma/Negash, Tekeste (eds.): *State Institution and Leadership in Africa*. Padova: Libreria Universitaria, 159–188.

Von Sponeck, Hans-Christof (2006): *A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Wai, Dunstan M. (1979): The Sudan: Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations under Nimiery. *African Affairs*, 78 (312): 297–317.

Warburg, Gabriel R. (1990): The Sharia in Sudan: Implementation and Repercussions, 1983–1989. *Middle East Journal*, 44 (4): 624–637.

Warburg, Gabriel R. (1992a): *Historical Discord in the Nile Valley*. London: Hurst & Company.

Warburg, Gabriel R. (1992b): The Sudan and Israel: An Episode in Bilateral Relations. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (2): 385–396.

Warburg, Gabriel R. (1995): Mahdism and Islamism in Sudan. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27 (2): 219–236.

Warburg, Gabriel (2003): *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan since the Mahdiyya*. London: Hurst & Madison.

Weikart, Richard (2003): Progress Through Racial Extermination: Social Darwinism, Eugenics, and Pacifism in Germany, 1860–1918. *German Studies Review*, 26 (2): 273–294.

Weissköppel, Cordula (2004): A Sudanese Snackbar in Berlin. Presence and Vitalization of Sudanese Culture in the Diaspora. In: Probst, Peter/Spittler, Gerd (ed.): *Between Resistance and Expansion. Explorations of Local Vitality in Africa*. Münster: Lit, 91–111.

Weissköppel, Cordula (2013): Translocality in Transnational Space. Sudanese Migrants in a Protestant Church in Germany. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development (UAS)*, 42 (2): 255–304.

Wilcock, Cathy (2018): Mobilising Towards and Imagining Homelands: Diaspora Formation Among U.K. Sudanese. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44 (3): 363–381.

Willis, Justin (2015): The Southern Problem: Representing Sudan's Southern Provinces to c. 1970. *The Journal of African History*, 56 (2): 281–300.

Wilson, Thomas P. (1970): Normative and Interpretive Paradigms in Sociology. In: Douglas, Jack D. (ed.): *Understanding Everyday Life. Toward the Reconstruction of Sociological Knowledge*. Chicago: Aldine, 57–79.

Wimmer, Andreas (2008): Elementary Strategies of Ethnic Boundary Making. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31 (6): 1025–1055.

Wimmer, Andreas (2013): *Ethnic Boundary Making. Institutions, Power, Networks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Woertz, Eckart (2013): *Oil for Food: The Global Food Crisis and the Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Worm, Arne (2019): *Fluchtmigration aus Syrien. Eine biographietheoretische und figurationssoziologische Studie*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

Ylönen, Aleksi (2009): On Sources of Political Violence in Africa: The Case of "Marginalizing State" in Sudan. *Política y Cultura*, 32: 37–59.

Ylönen, Aleksi (2017): Confronting the "Arab North": Interpretations of Slavery and Religion in Southern Sudanese Separatist Resistance. In: Walker, Ilain/Ramos, M. João/Kaarsholm, Preben (eds.): *Fluid Networks and Hegemonic Powers in the Western Indian Ocean.* Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Internacionais, 103–129.

Young, Helen/Osman, Abdul Monim/Aklilu, Yakob/Dale, Rebecca/Badri, Babiker/Abdullah Fuddle, Abdul Jabbar (2005): *Darfur – Livelihoods Under Siege*. Medford: Feinstein International Famine Center. 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: Tufts University. Available at: www.alnap.org/resource/11347 [Accessed on October 26, 2021].

Young, Helen/Ismail, Musa Adam (2019): Complexity, Continuity and Change: Livelihood Resilience in the Darfur Region of Sudan. *Disasters*, 43: 318–344.

Young, John (2007): *The Eastern Front and the Struggle Against Marginalization*. Geneve: Small Arms Survey. Available at: https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/HSBA-WP-03-Eastern-Front.pdf [Accessed on October 22, 2021].

This book offers a transnational comparison of Sudanese diasporas and different generations of migrants in Germany and Jordan. It provides an empirically based framework to study the power dynamics that Sudanese individuals and groupings experience as they construct their life, family, and collective histories. This notion of autobiographical constructions shows that belonging among Sudanese migrants and their descendants is linked not only to their experiences and processes of remembering, but also to sociohistorical power inequalities and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. This approach provides empirical insights into how different versions of the sociohistorically constructed past interrelate with experiences of violence.

GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

ISBN: 978-3-86395-643-1
ISSN: 2699-0989
eISSN: 2699-0997

Göttingen University Press