Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan

Abdulkhalig Alhassan

Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Institute of Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILC)
Victoria University, Australia

February 2024

Abstract

Human mobility has been acknowledged by the UNDP as a way of improving wellbeing for many from regions that have experienced upheavals. The Horn of Africa in general, and Sudan in particular, have sent migrants to the Middle East, Europe, North America and, more recently, Australia. Sudanese migrants have lived in Australia for more than two decades. During this time, the wider Sudanese community has gone through a process of settlement and integration that is complex; that is, active in Sudanese socio-political dynamics, but marginally visible in terms of participation in Australian civic life. Sudanese immigrants' community formations tend to reflect the socio-political and ethno-linguistic patterns of interaction that they knew in Sudan. This study investigated the settlement and integration experiences of migrants from the Sudan. Given the diversity of the Sudanese people and their socio-political background, the study sought to examine whether they have been able to develop a diasporic identity (or identities) or remain a set of groups who have brought "home abroad".

The study adopted a phenomenological approach and a critical-realism paradigm to investigate the lived experiences of the Sudanese migrants based on how they have used the community as a socio-cultural space provided by Australian multiculturalism. Semi-structural interviews have been applied as methods by which 22 participants representing different categories: political activists, ethnic groups and self-identifying liberal women.

The findings showed that the migrants from the Sudan are one of the most heterogeneous migrant populations in Australia, and their identities revolve around ethnicities as well as their historical and socio-political status in their homeland. The major sub-categories of the community – the Nuba Mountains, Darfurians, Copts, the elite Arab stock, and more-progressive groups, including those self-identifying as liberal women, remain distinct communities. Australian multicultural spaces, which celebrate diversity, have partly supported this tendency of maintaining separate identities that mirror the entrenched identity fragmentation of the Sudan along the lines of social status and access or in-access to power.

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

I, Abdulkhalig Alhassan, declare that the PhD thesis entitled "**Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan"** is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

"I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures."

Ethics Declaration

"All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee HRE21-136."

Signature	Date
Abdulkhalig Alhassan	22/02/2024

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving and supportive mother, Sit Al-banat Alsayed, a single mother who sacrificed everything to give my younger brother and me a better life. And to my only brother and best friend, Alshafie Elsir Mohammed Alhassan, who has always been supportive and understanding. Also, I would like to dedicate it to my lovely children: Mohammed Alhassan, Waad Alhassan, Mustafa Alhassan, Muneib Alhassan, and Sophia Alhassan, with whom I experienced different stages of my life, as a father, a friend, and a human being. Last but not least, a special dedication to my late father, Elsir Mohammed Alhassan, socialist and trade unionist, who spared no effort for social justice and equity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all participants from the wider Sudanese community for their invaluable contributions in this research, and their generosity in sharing their time and their wonderful thoughts.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to many of my Sudanese friends who lived in other parts of the world for their precious debates through social media telephone calls, and for their helpful comments and the materials they provided and recommended. A special gratitude goes to my close friend in Sydney, Bakri Jabir, for his determined, encouraging, and unconditional support for this research, along with the intellectual thoughts he provided throughout the course.

I thank my fellow Ph.D. student Mabour, who has been in touch throughout the course, engaging and discussing in a give-and-take manner. We keep supporting each other during the difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic. His ongoing feedback was really supportive and valuable. Also, my sincere gratitude goes to my close friend, Abdulrahman Abdullah, for his insightful comments and the time he spent patiently reading the various drafts of my thesis.

My thanks go my supervisors Dr. Charles Mphande, PhD Coordinator, Graduate Program, International Community Development, and Associate Professor Mario Peucker, Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Sustainable Industries & Livable Cities (ISILC), for their passionate support and guidance in my coursework and research. I am indebted to them for their patience, understanding and enthusiasm, and the way they shared their knowledge through the whole year.

Besides my supervisors, I would like to thank my coursework professors: Dr. Rose Lucas, Professor Ron Adams, Associate Professor Deborah Zion, and Dr. David Bednall. Their efforts, professional attitudes, and the rich knowledge they passed to us is invaluable. Their ongoing feedback and comments have had significant impacts on my improvement throughout the course.

Last but not least, my gratitude goes to my family for the support and understanding they have shown throughout my years of study, which helped me to concentrate and focus on my work.

Table of Contents

Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan i
Abstract ii
Doctor of Philosophy Declaration iii
Dedication iv
Acknowledgements v
Table of Contents vi
List of abbreviations and a glossary of terms x
Chapter One 1
Introduction 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Historical background 2
1.2.1 Imagined homogeneity in a heterogeneous country 2
1.2.2 Ethnical loyalty over the national identity 3
1.2.3 Arabic language as a tool of Arabisation 3
1.2.4 Islam and identity politics in the Sudan 4
1.3 Background to the study 4
1.4 Research significance and contribution to knowledge 5
1.6 The study outline 7
Chapter Two 10
Literature Review 10
2.1 Forms of integration and the influence of homeland's politics among migrants' communities 10
2.2 Migrants from Sudan in North America and Europe 10
2.3 Sudanese migrant communities in Europe 11
2.4 Sudanese migrants in Australia 12
2.5 Sudanese migrants in Australia: Diaspora in the making? 14
Chapter Three 16
Research Design 16
3.1 Aims and Objectives 16
3.1.1 Aims of the study 16
3.1.2 Objectives of the study 16
3.2 Methodology 17
3.2.1 Qualitative approach 17

3.3 Phenomenology 18
3.4 Critical Realism 19
3.5 Participants 20
3.6 Methods 22
3.7 Data analysis 23
3.8 Positionality and the role of the researcher 24
3.9 The ethical concerns of the research 25
Chapter Four 27
Political activism among Sudanese migrants in Australia 27
4.1 Introduction 27
4.2 Political activism in Sudan: A historical background 28
4.3 Political activism as a call of duty 30
4.4 Homeland-oriented and non-homeland political activism 33
4.5 The formation of the offshoot political parties 36
4.6 Political activism and integration 38
4.7 Political activism and intra-community relationships 40
4.8 Capitalist Australia in the eyes of the communist participants 41
4.9 Commonalities and differences between Australia and Sudan as multi-cultural states 42
4.10 Discussion 43
Chapter Five 48
Liberal women in the wider Sudanese community 48
5.1 Introduction 48
5.2 Women's liberalism in Sudan: A historical background 48
5.3 Caught between liberalism and conservatism: Experiences of liberal women 51
5.4 What does it mean to be a liberal woman? 52
5.5 The influence of the social privilege 53
5.6 A liberal woman in the eyes of the community's women 55
5.7 The situation of in-betweenness: Conservative or liberal within and outside of the Sudanese community 57
5.8 Australian multiculturalism and women's empowerment 60
5.9 Discussion 62
Chapter Six 65
The intra-relationships of the wider Sudanese community in Australia 65
6.1 Introduction 65
6.2 The chapter outline 66
6.3 The issue of national identity in Sudan 67
6.4 Ethnic tensions among the Sudanese migrants in Australia 70
6.5 Islam and identity politics in the Sudan 80

6.6 Racism, discriminations, and ethnic tension in Sudan 86
6.7 The advantages of ethnic identity in Australia 91
6.8 Discussion 93
Chapter Seven 100
The Sudanese migrants and the interrelationships with the wider Australian society 100
7.1 Introduction 100
7.2 The influence of political divisions in the homeland 101
7.3 Community leadership 104
7.4 Conservative values 105
7.5 Language barrier and culture differences 110
7.6 The experience of the Coptic community 113
7.7 Discussion 114
C 122
hapter Eight 122
Integration process and challenges 122
8.1 Introduction 122
8.2 Defining integration 122
8.3 Defining integration from the participants' perspectives 124
8.4 Opportunities, the rule of law, and democracy as means of integration 127
8.5 Nostalgia and the desire to return to the homeland 130
8.6 Social status in Sudan and its impacts on migrants in Australia 137
8.7 Racism and discrimination in Australia 139
8.8 Communal values versus individuality and liberalism 142
8.9 Discussion 146
Chapter Nine 154
Conclusion 154
9.1 Introduction 154
9.2 Findings and key issues 155
9.3 The impacts of political activism 155
9.4 Self-identified liberal women in the wider Sudanese community 156
9.5 The intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community 157
9.6 The interrelationships between the Sudanese community and the wider Australian society 158
9.7 The Sudanese migrants and the integration process 159
9.8 Insights from the study 160
9.9 Limitations of this Study 162
9.10 Suggestions for further studies 163
References 165

List of Appendices 178
Appendix A: Consent Form 178
Appendix B: Information to participants involved in research. 181
Appendix C: Arabic translated consent form 184
Appendix D: information to participants involved in research. 186
Appendix E: Arabic Questionnaire 189
Appendix F: Arabic Questionnaire 191
Appendix G: Questionnaire 193

List of abbreviations and a glossary of terms

NIF National Islamic Front

Ghorba A term reflecting an intense feeling of longing for the home associated with a devastating sense of alienation when Sudanese people find themselves in exile.

Umma Party One of the largest political parties in Sudan.

Jihad This term has multiple meanings in Islamic theology. It literally means 'struggle' or striving and refers to Muslims' internal struggle of self-improvement (Greater Jihad), but *jihad* can also refer to a struggle or war against "non-believers" (Lesser Jihad).

Integration The term here has been used as an operational definition to reflect the processes of the negotiation of the immigrant's minor culture and the dominant Australian society culture.

Adaptation In this study, the term refers to the processes involved in familiarizing with the new host society's new social, cultural, political, regulatory environment, where the new immigrant finds their fit to make themselves meaningfully participating and contributing to society.

Chapter One

Introduction

Making someone feel seen, heard, and understood is the loudest way to love them (Poet: Wild faith)

1.1 Introduction

The influx of Sudanese people as migrants to live and settle in Western countries began after Islamists seized the power more than 30 years ago. According to Ahmed (2007, p.190), "In 1989 The National Islamic Front (NIF), the Sudanese Islamist party, worried that its project of restoring sharia law would fail, organized a coup d'état and overthrew the multiparty system that had been in power since 1985." Abusharaf (2002) attributed the decision of many Sudanese people to leave the country to the ongoing civil wars in various regions, the nation's economic failure, and Islamists' insistence on enforcing sharia law on a religiously diverse society. Before that, not many Sudanese had fled or emigrated from their country, apart from those who had moved to Arab Gulf states as guest workers since the early 1970s. This new emigration was associated with observed confusion among the Sudanese migrants' communities towards their new life in the host countries and their relationship with their homeland. Although this study is mainly concerned with the Sudanese migrants in Australia, it will draw also on the Sudanese communities' experiences elsewhere. such as in North America, Europe, and the UK. The North American experience is deemed important because Sudanese relocation to North America occurred prior to their emigration to Australia.

Sudanese immigrants to Australia have arrived in two main waves. The first wave took place in the late 1990s, encompassing a mix of ethnic Sudanese populations, although the majority were from South Sudan before its secession from Sudan. The second significant wave occurred in 2005, with the majority being from the Darfur region; these emigrants fled the country after the eruption of civil war, during which the regime in power committed genocide, as was well-documented by the international community.

This study seeks to empirically examine whether or not Sudanese migrants have been able to develop a diasporic identity (or identities), and if so, in what forms. To answer this question, the

study has explored the lived experiences of the Sudanese migrants in Australia since their arrival and how they have used the socio-cultural space provided by Australian multiculturalism. A related interest is in social intra-relationships that may reflect a "fossilized" Sudanese ethno-linguistic and socio-cultural background. The research investigated whether this feature aligns with Paul's (2013) conceptualisation of "double diaspora" in which diaspora and identity are in an endless dynamic evolving throughout space and time.

These observations raise questions regarding the influence of background socio-political factors among the Sudanese in general. One of the questions is how far political and social dynamics in Sudan continue to influence the Sudanese migrants' internal relationships in Australia. A further question is how far these homeland socio-political dynamics may affect their integration processes in host countries such as Australia.

Thus, the study seeks to explore the intra-relationships within the various sub-communities from Sudan against the backdrop of their ethnic, religious, and political divisions. Further, the study sets out to investigate the psychological connectedness of migrants with their homeland – described by Safran (1991) as *a myth of returning home*, to which they may cling when confronted with challenging realities in the host land and the homeland alike.

To contextualise this analysis, it is important to briefly shed light on the modern history of Sudan and the complexities it has been through since the independence from the British colonizers in 1956 and the reasons behind its failed attempts to build a consensual national identity reflecting the diversity of its people.

1.2 Historical background

1.2.1 Imagined homogeneity in a heterogeneous country

Race and ethnicity are among the most complex aspects in the formation of Sudanese cultural and national identities. De Waal (2007) attributed the identity crisis of Sudan, which has affected most of the marginalised groups of the wider society, to the country's richness and complexity. Although it seems there is no controversy regarding the existence of Sudanese heterogeneity – that

is, the presence of numerous cultural and ethnic groups is accepted as normal the insistence on forming a national identity exclusively on Islam and the Arabic language by the dominant north-central groups of the country, who inherited the country from the British colonial administrators in 1956, is one of the root causes of identity-related tensions since independence. According to Jok (2012, p. 26) the Northern elites' insistence on Islam, the Arabic language, and Arabic culture as markers of the national identity acts to deny Sudan's socio-cultural diversity.

1.2.2 Ethnical loyalty over the national identity

Idris (2012) attributes the lack of congruent unity among the diverse people who inhabit the Sudan to the rise of Arab-Islamic supremacy among the Northerners, which in turn, nullifies the meaning of citizenship. In the same line, Lesch (1998, p. 14) argues that "[r]acial, linguistic, and religious categories have become the basis for crucially important power relationship that has resulted in the peoples who live in the northern and central Nile Valley wielding disproportionate political and economic power". The way the British colonisers privileged the Arabic-speaking Northern riverain groups, and the way these groups maintained and developed the inherited resources to their ends created huge discrepancies between their region and the rest of the country. This situation of "centre-periphery", as De Waal (2007, p. 5) points out, makes Sudan "one of the most unequal countries in the world. National economic statistics are unreliable, but the best estimates are that about half the nation's income and assets are in the capital, as well as about 75% of the country's health professionals". As a result, prevailing racism, discrimination, and inequality have encouraged Sudanese minorities to favour their ethnic and tribal identities over the national one.

1.2.3 Arabic language as a tool of Arabisation

Sudan is a diverse country in terms of ethnicity, language, and religions. The complex heterogeneity of Sudan has been captured by Mugaddam (2013), who points out that the peoples of Sudan speak approximately 120 different languages. The areas of greatest linguistic diversity are the South, the Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile. Lesch (1998, p. 15) writes, "It is a land of extraordinary diversity, and analysts classify its twenty-six million residents among more than fifty ethnic groups, which they subdivide into at least 570 distinct peoples". Malwal (1990, pp. 75-86)

stated that hundreds of tribes speak more than 70 different languages, and profess many creeds, including Islam, Christianity, and paganism. Despite this demographic fact, the modern history of the country is the history of denying its own reality.

Post-colonial Sudanese politicians have considered the Arabic language as a pivotal tool to unify the country's people around a national identity. Successive post-colonial regimes applied top-down policies to achieve this goal. Sharkey (2008, p. 22) writes, "The post-colonial regimes imposed Arabic language as the language of education, a government policy referred to as *ta'rib.*" *Ta'rib* in this sense is one of several layers of the Arabisation process that is concerned with how the Arabic language spreads through cultural contact. Although *ta'rib* has resulted in the proliferation of Arabic, the policy of Arabisation overall has witnessed a clear failure and severe resistance from non-Arab ethnic groups.

1.2.4 Islam and identity politics in the Sudan

The relationship between religion and state is another problematic factor that can cast light on one of the most complicated aspects of the Sudanese identity. Deng (1995, p. 39) points out that the important role Islam has played in enforcing Arabisation policies upon the minorities in Sudan and the influence it has in molding the national identity around the Northerners' image is undeniable. Ethnicity, language, and religion as identity markers have failed to unify the Sudanese people around a consensual national identity. The reason behind that is successive governments' insistence since independence to enforce an identity of one ethnic group upon others in a significantly diverse society, a behaviour described by Harir (1994) as an ongoing recycling of the past. The current study will therefore investigate the arguably "fractured" Sudanese national identity and whether such experiences have an impact on the Sudanese diaspora formation.

1.3 Background to the study

In this study, the personal and public are interconnected. As a member of the Sudanese new and emerging communities who has lived in Australia for more than 20 years, I am one of thousands of the Sudanese people who left their country and scattered across the globe after Islamists seized

the political power in 1989. Sudanese migrants around the world left Sudan as people who had not been able to craft a unified national identity since independence in 1956. Arguably, the consequences of such a failure have affected their lived experiences and intra-relationships in the host countries to which they have gone.

Based on the available findings, it can be argued that the consequences of the fragmentation of Sudanese identity have influenced how the Sudanese new and emerging communities in Australia live and interrelate with each other and with the mainstream, and how they have divided themselves along ethno-linguistic, class, political, and religious affiliations. The study intends to explore their lived experiences and how they deal with and reflect on ideas of contested loyalties in their homeland versus their host land, the issue of belonging, the influence of homeland politics as well as socio-cultural factors, and the challenges of settlement and integration.

1.4 Research significance and contribution to knowledge

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 was the beginning of the end of an era referred to as the "Cold War" (Weiner, 1992; Suny, 1993). The subsequent global political and economic disruption hit developing countries particularly hard. Most ethno-national states either disintegrated or degenerated into political turmoil. The influx of migrants from Africa and Asia towards Europe, North America, and Australia has become a phenomenon that has gained significant research interest (Sheffer, 2003).

In Sudan in 1989, Islamists benefited from the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War to take over; they launched an all-out intensive war in the South of the country using a religious slogan, *Jihad*; this civil war later led to the secession of South Sudan in 2011. The war spread widely to include Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile, and the Eastern regions. Millions have been displaced and more than one million have fled the country searching for refuge elsewhere.

Sudanese-Australians are among those who form a considerable proportion of the Horn of Africa migrant communities in Australia. The Sudanese immigrants as a migrant group have not received much academic attention. The study primarily adopts an explorative approach to understand factors behind their settlement and integration challenges from their own perspectives. The

diasporic challenges faced by Sudanese in their settlement and integration needs to be investigated. Therefore, drawing on the phenomenology and critical realism approaches, the study examines their lived experiences since their arrival to Australia in terms of intra-relationships, political activism, gender relationships, and interrelationships with the wider Australian society as important factors in evolving an identifiable grouping with discernible diaspora characteristics. The UN Human Development Report (2009) demonstrated the positive impacts of migration on traditionally disadvantaged groups. The report pointed out that women and minority groups are examples of how communities could be empowered and liberated by migration. In this regard, migration could be seen as a fresh start or a second chance for individuals and groups who suffered discrimination and injustice in their own countries. In the case of Sudan, the study examined whether or not minority ethnic groups and women have been able to overcome the marginality status to which they were subjugated in Sudan, and to what extent, if so, have they succeeded in rebuilding their unique identities within the socio-cultural space in Australia.

Further, there are very limited studies on the migrant communities from Sudan in Australia that have paid attention to their rich diversity and the impact on their intra-relationships, on one hand, and their integration into the broader Australian society, on the other. In general, most the studies that have dealt with Sudanese migrants in Australia have mainly concentrated on the external factors confronting migrants in their integration process. In contrast, this study, besides its interest on external factors like racism, discrimination, and racial intolerance, has investigated the internal dynamic of the Sudanese migrants as self-agents who have the right to represent themselves and to reflect on their own diasporic journey. By doing that, the study pays attention to the internal dynamics of the Sudanese migrant communities, the way these entities have been used in political, social, and cultural activities, and the influence their internal dynamics have on the wider Sudanese community's integration process. In answering these questions, the study will make a significant contribution, and bring a fresh knowledge, to the field of diaspora studies and Australian multicultural policy makers, as well.

1.5 Concepts and terms

Integration and Adaptation are two important concepts used in this study. Given that these terms are not unanimously agreed upon, it is useful to clarify how they are deployed in this study.

Adaptation is regarded as a set of strategies used by individuals and groups through the process of acculturation, and it can take three different ideal-typical forms: adjustment, reaction and withdrawal. In the case of adjustment, the tendency individuals and groups show is to reduce the conflict between them and the environment they live in; this is the characteristic that the term adaptation often refers to (Berry, 1992). Integration is the option of retaining and maintaining some of the cultural characteristics while given individuals or groups merge with the dominant society (Berry, 1992). According to the model that has been developed by Berry, the receiving-culture acquisition and the heritage-culture retention intersect to create four categories: *assimilation* by which the receiving culture are adopted and the heritage culture discarded. *Rejection*, by which the receiving culture is rejected, and the heritage culture retained. *Integration*, by which receiving culture adopted and heritage culture retained. *Marginalisation*, by which the receiving and heritage culture both are rejected (Berry, 2017).

1.6 The study outline

A point of clarification regarding the layout of the chapters is important here. The study set out to investigate social intra-relationships that may reflect a "fossilized" Sudanese ethno-linguistic and socio-cultural background. The investigation has shown that the community groupings subscribed to a variety of values and outlooks such as conservative, collectivist or liberal. However, the interest of the study was on diaspora identity formation as multiple identities or not despite varying values and outlooks. As such, the chapter structuring has followed emerging themes around settlement and identity in Australia, whether or not Sudanese migrants have been able to develop a diasporic identity (or identities), and if so, in what forms, from the various distinct existing community groups. In light of this point, the rest of the thesis is laid out as follows.

Chapter One of the study has discussed the reason behind the Sudanese migration influx to Western countries dating from when Islamists seized power in June 1989. The chapter has also shed light on ethnicity, religion, and language as identity markers in contestation.

Chapter Two reviews the literature that deals with Sudanese migrants in different countries in North America, Europe, the UK, and Australia. It highlights and reflects on numerous studies conducted about the Sudanese migrants in the US, Canada, the UK, and Norway that investigate

the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants in those countries. Further, they investigate the challenges the migrants have encountered in their host countries and the ways they have adapted to their new environment. The chapter also discusses the literature related to Sudanese migrants in Australia, analysing these studies in methodological flow and their assumptions that Sudanese people are a homogeneous ethnic group, although, in fact, they are one of the most heterogeneous people on the planet. The final part of the chapter briefly discusses diasporism as a definition and a concept embedded one of the study's research questions.

Chapter Three discusses the research design of the study. Phenomenology and critical realism have been selected as methodologies to conduct the study. The chapter discusses in detail the effectiveness of phenomenology as a paradigm designed to give ordinary people the right to represent themselves instead of being represented. Further, the chapter discusses the ethical concerns usually intertwined with the participant interviews in any qualitative research, and the issue of positionality, which in this study represent my position as the researcher, as I am part of one of the Sudanese communities that are the subject of this research.

Chapter Four discusses the peculiarity of what Anderson (1998) calls "long-distance nationalism", by which migrants interfere in their homeland politics. The chapter briefly introduces the history of entrenched political activism in Sudan and discusses the phenomenon of offshoot political parties in Australia created by Sudanese political activists and the impacts of these parties on intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community in Australia, as well as their influence on homeland politics.

Chapter Five discusses the self-identifying liberal women within the wider Sudanese community, beginning with a brief history of women's liberalism in Sudan. Further, the chapter discusses the influence of liberal women's social privileges and the impacts on their identity as feminists and members of women's rights groups. It then reflects on the challenges they have been through within the wider Sudanese community as well as the labelling and stereotyping they have encountered from the Australian dominant culture.

Chapter Six examines the interrelationships between the wider Sudanese community and the mainstream Australian society, and the influence of homeland cleavages on building a broad

community that represents the whole of Sudanese migrants in Australia. It then examines to what extent this failure affects Sudanese migrants' interrelationships with the wider Australian society. It discusses the issue of leadership among the wider Sudanese community and leaders' influence on Sudanese migrants' "invisibility" and insularity. Further, the chapter discusses the impacts on what the study participants described as the dominance of conservative values on the holistic performance of the wider Sudanese community. The chapter then highlights the unique integrational experience of the Sudanese Coptic Community and the reasons behind their distinctive experiences.

Chapter Seven explores the intra-relationships of various groups of Sudanese migrants in Australia within the wider Sudanese community. The chapter discusses the history of racism and discrimination as root causes of the ethnic tension in Sudan. Further, the chapter discusses the influence of this history on the Sudanese migrants in Australia and its impacts on their social intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community. The chapter then discusses the formations of ethnic communities within the wider Sudanese community and the impacts they have in sustaining the division among them as migrants.

Chapter Eight discusses the challenges that have faced Sudanese migrants in Australia in their journey towards integration. The chapter briefly defines integration as a concept and reflects on the study participants' thoughts about what integration means to them as a concept and a way of life. Further, the chapter examines the privileges and disadvantages of the Sudanese migrants before moving to Australia and the impacts of their previous socioeconomic status on their integration into the broader Australia society. The chapter then discusses other factors besides racism and discrimination in Australia, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and communal and individual values, and their impacts on Sudanese migrants' integration process.

Chapter Nine concludes the study, highlighting its research findings and discussing its outcomes.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Forms of integration and the influence of homeland's politics among migrants' communities

Several studies have examined diaspora communities' challenges to integrating in Western countries. Sheffer (2013) argues that the complexity of diaspora integration originates in the peculiarity of the diaspora phenomenon itself and the impact it has on immigrants' situation in the host lands.

This section will offer an overview on the existing literature regarding the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants in North America, Europe, and the UK. While the studies differ in terms of their specific thematic focus and qualitative approaches, all investigate Sudanese behaviour in the diaspora in terms of integration and the influence of homeland politics on their integration in their respective host countries.

2.2 Migrants from Sudan in North America and Europe

The integration experiences of Sudanese migrant communities in North America and Europe, including the United Kingdom, which preceded the arrival of Sudanese migrants in Australia, have been examined extensively in the literature. In his study about the Sudanese migrants in Canada, Baird (2013) demonstrated that political divisions in Sudan have a significant influence on Sudanese migrant communities in Canada. Political activism expresses itself in ethnic and regional affiliations. Baird further mentions that the Sudanese migrants in Canada are quite active in the politics of their home country, and Baird points out that "[s]ince coming to Canada, 11 out of the 15 have been active in one or more associations, groups, or non-governmental organizations that have political goals; and a number of them have had leadership roles" (p. 53).

Abu Sharaf (2002) conducted an ethnographic study on the lived experiences of Sudanese migrant communities in the US and Canada, writing:

> Sudanese refer to life away from home…in an Arabic expression *ghorba*, denoting more than physical separation, or even exile, for it has powerful psychological dimensions. In linguistic terms, the antonym of *ghurba or garaba* means nearness, proximity, and kinship. For the Sudanese, the *ghorba* evokes loneliness, loss, uprootedness, nostalgia, and yearning for the familiar. It refers to a psychological state as well as a sense of alienation one finds away from family and friends back home (p. 157).

From this perspective, *ghorba* can work as a psychological barrier between Sudanese people and the contexts in which they find themselves. A feeling of denial to acknowledge the reality of the new context is compensated for by an exaggeration of the value of their culture and by isolating themselves from the mainstream. Such practices are demonstrated in attitudes and practices of one interviewee in Abu Sharaf's (2002, p. 134) investigation of the notion of *ghorba*: "In this country I only deal with Sudanese. It is true that we live in America, but our life is very different, and we do not have any relationship with anybody beside Sudanese. Here we live in our own zones."

2.3 Sudanese migrant communities in Europe

According to Assal (2006), the diasporas from Sudan in Norway reflect the ethnic and tribal diversity of Sudan. They are also the product of its contested political history and fragmented identity. Assal argues that the Sudanese people in Norway divide themselves along ethnic, religious, and political affiliations. Religion and political identities stand out as the most salient markers.

Similarly, Wilcock (2018) found that the Sudanese diaspora in the UK divide themselves along ethnic, religious and regional lines. "Within the broader UK Sudanese population, there are multiple associations who orientate towards to ethnic or regional 'homelands'; for example, *Darfur Union* (regional), *Massalit Community* in Exile (ethnic), *Nuba Mountains Solidarity* Abroad (regional)" (p. 372, italics in the original).

The findings of these studies suggest several conclusions. a) Political activism is common among new and emerging Sudanese communities. b) Ethnic identity and belonging override national identity. c) The fragmentation of the national identity is one of the root causes of Sudanese

migrants' divisions along ethnic, religious, and political lines. d) The inherited political system represented by the current political parties in the homeland encourages divisiveness between the Sudanese communities in the host lands. e) The feeling of *ghorba* among diasporic Sudanese communities is robust and pervasive.

2.4 Sudanese migrants in Australia

Sudanese Australians form a considerable proportion of the Horn of Africa migrant communities in Australia. The process of transitioning from refugee status to citizens in their host country has arguably involved many challenges.

Abundant research has directly dealt with the topic of Sudanese migrants in Australia. However, most of these studies have reduced the huge diversity of the Sudanese migrants in Australia to an examination of South Sudanese migrants only. Moreover, most of these studies have concentrated on the biases of Australian media reportage and government portrayals of settlement challenges faced by the Sudanese community. Gatt (2011) investigates the way Sudanese refugees have been treated by the Australian government and the media on many occasions. The author argues that Australia has always been torn between maintaining a homogenous Australian identity and accepting the reality of the society's heterogeneity.

Nunn (2010) addresses how the Australian media has represented Sudanese-Australians and covered their stories. Making the 2007 death of Liep Gony "an 18-year-old Sudanese-Australian man, [who] was assaulted in a suburb in Melbourne's outer south-east, later dying in hospital" – as a reference point of her research, Nunn argues that the media's deliberate portrayal of Sudanese people as strangers to the Australian's "norms" and "way of life" was deliberately meant to demonise them as criminals and a community prone to violence. Despite Gony being a victim of a crime committed by two non-Sudanese young people, the media coverage succeeded in portraying Sudanese as troublemakers who indulge in violence as an inseparable part of their life. Nunn points out that the way the media focuses on the physical distinctions of the Sudanese people has meant to single them out as strangers, a behaviour Nunn attributes to the politicisation of immigration policy as a way to gain votes.

Due (2008) questions the issue of loyalty as it has been constructed by the Australian media and adopted by the Australian politicians in their dealings with the Sudanese community. Reflecting on some newspaper articles written in the aftermath of Gony's death in 2007, Due argues that the mainstream media discourse is concentrated around the notion of Australian "norms" and "way of life" as aspects of Australian white identity. That is to say, the measurement of integration is based on the willingness the minorities show to "absorb" and display the whiteness identity of the mainstream.

These studies marginally address the interest of this thesis; however, the thesis intends to both explore the lived experiences of the Sudanese migrants in Australia and investigate the impact of the influence of homeland politics on their integration. To do that, the study positioned them as representatives of their own destiny, and story-tellers of their narratives about the way they live and how they make sense of their experiences as immigrants. Further, most of the studies that have addressed the lived experiences of Sudanese diaspora communities in Australia have not reflected or recognised the notable diversity of these communities, instead focusing their attention on South Sudanese communities. One study that did point out this diversity in groups that arrived in Australia between 2000 and 2006 is Borland and Mphande (2006). However, this study was primarily a catalogue of speakers of various languages, which the Victorian Government would consider using in communicating with them, rather than an exploration of the diversity of these language communities' experiences. A more recent work which shares interests with the present study is Fozdar, Prout-Quicke and Mickler (2022) who have explored Pan-Africanism in the increasing immigrant population from Africa, their meaningful contribution to Australia and their countries of origin, and finally their identity formation. While Fozdar et al (2022) have focused on the broad pan-African diaspora, the present study has examined in-depth whether or not people from the Sudan demonstrate in their settlement a Pan-Sudan diasporic identity or not. Further, the present study explores whether immigrants from the Sudan meaningfully engage with the Australian mainstream society in such a way as to demonstrate their finding feet on the ground in the new host society. The current study is a nuanced investigation of diasporism of African people, whose numbers are growing notably from a once Africa's largest country, the Sudan.

2.5 Sudanese migrants in Australia: Diaspora in the making?

Whether the Sudanese migrants have or have not been able to form diasporic identities since they began to arrive in Australia more than two decades ago is one of the main interests of this research. To provide a background to this question, this section will briefly define and discuss diasporism.

Diasporism, like many terms in the field of sociology, can be difficult to define precisely. Clifford (1994), out of his perplexity, writes, "An unruly crowd of descriptive/interpretive terms now jostle and converse in an effort to characterize the contact zones of nations, cultures, and regions: terms such as border, travel, creolization, transculturation, hybridity, and diaspora (as well as the looser diasporic)." The term historically was confined to the ancient Jewish, Greek, and Armenian migrants who were in exile for thousands of years due to invasion and persecution (Sheffer, 2003). However, more recently, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of many socialist Eastern Europe countries in its aftermath, hundreds of thousands of people have fled their countries to make their way to Western Europe, the US, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia to seek asylum or job opportunities. Further, most post-colonial countries in Africa and South America have witnessed a series of regime collapses that have led to vicious civil wars and the resulting displacement and flight of millions of their populations to seek refuge and safe places. This new and unprecedented phenomenon resulted in the resurrection and broader application of the term "diaspora" in the field of sociology. According to Safran (1991), the term is now used metaphorically to include several categories of people dispersed across the world as minorities. The challenges incipient migrants encounter in their new host countries usually take the form of structural barriers such as language, culture, and the degree to which they feel welcome (Murray, 2010). Soysal (2002) argues that a diaspora is where the past serves to invent and reshape the present and future in a constant way. In this regard, a diaspora represents a continuous process of the reification of homelands, collective memories, traditions, and ongoing longings. Chiang (2010) asserts that the situation of subordinated position the diasporas encountered by the establish social, political, and cultural dominant group of a host land encourages them to stick with their homelands' culture, tradition, and shared memories in order to establish a cultural solidarity. Racism can also be a real challenge to migrants' attempts to integrate. Hatoss (2012) reflects on how the physical characteristics of Sudanese migrants in Australia have singled them out such that

they are labeled as “others” in a socio-cultural context in which skin colour matters, which denies them the right to belong. It is important to notice here that although Hattos means South Sudanese migrants in particular, in many cases, the unavoidable enculturation process can be seen as one of the mechanisms migrants use to overcome such structural barriers by showing adaptation and developing a sense of familiarity with their new environment. However, this process of integration does not preclude them from maintaining their culture and way of life (Berry, 2005).

To Chiang (2010), the mobility of people across the world in the globalisation era is defining our world today, a situation that creates what Clifford (1997) calls “traveling cultures”, where people from different backgrounds and classes throughout their traveling signify different experiences and produce culture knowledge. However, as Röttger-Rössler (2018, p. 238) asks, “What does it mean emotionally to migrants to build up a new life in a foreign society while simultaneously staying in close contact with the persons and places left behind, and what does this in turn mean to their children?” It is obvious here that Röttger-Rössler is in search of an answer to the peculiarity and complexity of the migration phenomenon. In the case of Sudanese migrants’ lived experience in Australia, the question has been one of the triggers of this study, which explores how Sudanese migrants have exploited the community as a socio-cultural entity through which they reflect their cultural, social, and political activities, and whether these activities have facilitated the emergence and development of any diasporic identities, or merely worked to bring the homeland into exile.

Chapter Three

Research Design

Qualitative approach has been chosen to answer the research question: Have Sudanese migrants been able to develop any diasporic identity (or identities) since their arrival to Australia more than twenty years ago, and if so, in what form? A multi-method approach drawing on phenomenology and critical realism has been applied to investigate their lived experience in Australia and the influences both from homeland and realities of settlement in a new context have on their identity formations as a people or indeed as diverse people. The rationale provided under each section, phenomenology and critical realism have singled out methods that the study adopted to collect individual and group stories which demonstrate forces that influence attitudes and behaviours of the Sudanese migrants as individuals and groups. To do that, the study investigates the way Sudanese migrants have used the community as a socio-cultural space and for what purpose. Further, the study investigates the influence of the homeland's politics and way of life and their impacts on the Sudanese migrants' integration process in Australia.

3.1 Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 Aims of the study

The aims of the study are:

- To explore whether or not Sudanese migrants' feelings of belonging in Australia and integration have been affected by their privileged or disadvantaged socio-political experiences in Sudan before and after departure.
- To explore whether Sudanese migrants are developing a diasporic identity, or identities, using the cultural space provided by the Australian Multicultural Policy.

3.1.2 Objectives of the study

To achieve the above-mentioned aims, the study set some objectives for investigation.

- To investigate whether political activism among Sudanese migrants in Australia affects their intra-relationships and at the same time to what extent political activism influences the homeland's politics.
- To investigate gender issues in the wider Sudanese migrant community.
- To investigate whether Sudanese participants' affiliations and layers of identity rooted in the Sudanese psyche affect their settlement processes and intra-community relationships.
- To investigate whether such intra-community interactions are evolving distinct diasporas and attendant identities.
- To explore whether different class privileges or disadvantages which existed or still exist in Sudan could be drivers for forging new identities and diaspora patterns.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

Qualitative researchers seek a better understanding of social phenomena based on the lived experiences of a given society or groups of people in their interaction with the environment in which they live. To achieve that, the researcher needs to engage with individuals and groups through in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, and participant observations. "Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help us to understand the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are" (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009, p. 7). Qualitative research contributes to an understanding of the human condition in different contexts, and of a perceived situation (Bengtsson, 2016). Trainor and Graue (2014) write:

> The justification for the use of qualitative methodologies in…research is inextricably linked to the types of questions qualitative research best answers. Research questions that attempt to answer how or why a process or phenomenon occurs within complex contexts, where variables are difficult to control and measure, are particularly well-suited to qualitative methods of investigation.

Another reason to adopt a qualitative approach is because, as Creswell (2009) argues, a complex, detailed understanding of the issue is sought. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what the researcher expects to find or has read in the literature.

Drawing on the research questions above, this study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants in Australia. Further, the study investigates the socio-cultural space they share, in terms of social, cultural, and political activities the Sudanese migrants perform, and whether or not these activities help in developing a diasporic identity or mainly address the homeland's issues. Furthermore, the study investigates the influence of homeland-oriented activism and identity-contestation and to what extent they affect the wider Sudanese community's social interaction and their integration process in Australia.

3.3 Phenomenology

The study used a phenomenology approach to conduct this research. The purpose of using phenomenology as a methodological paradigm is to explore the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants in Australia. As a qualitative paradigm, phenomenology is more effective when it comes to generating data through in-depth interviews compared to other qualitative methodologies. According to Moran (2002), phenomenology acts as a nontraditional way of getting the truth of social phenomenon as experienced by the social agents themselves. According to Sokolowski (2000, p. 2), "phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience". Lester (1999) writes, "Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their perspectives, and therefore at challenging the structural or normative assumptions." From these perspectives, the phenomenological approach in this present study has been applied to explore the meaning of behaviour and interaction of Sudanese migrants in Australia and the impacts they have on their integration, on one hand, and their interrelationship with their homeland, on the other hand.

Having said that, giving the Sudanese migrants in Australia the chance to be heard and voicing their own stories by which they can reflect on their diasporic journey to Australia is the main purpose of this study. On many occasions, factors like language barriers and lack of self-representation have played a significant role in suppressing migrants' voices and turning them invisible. Spivak (1988) writes that this reduces migrants in post-modern times into "subalterns"; in other words, people who lack agency and the ability to speak on behalf of themselves.

Giving migrants the chance to reflect on the challenges they have encountered throughout their diasporic journeys is one of the most empowering tools that phenomenology can provide as a qualitative paradigm in sociology. In this regard, Sudanese migrants in Australia, like any incipient migrants, have their narratives to share. Given the opportunity to reflect on their own lived experiences by using phenomenological methods such as semi-structured interviews or focus groups can be more credible and informative than other methodologies.

3.4 Critical Realism

Along with phenomenology, the study also applied critical realism as a methodology to ensure rigor and effective analysis of the Sudanese migrants' behaviours and attitudes, with the goal being to reveal the influence of the underlying forces of such behaviours and attitudes and their impacts on the integration process of Sudanese migrants in Australia as well as their maintenance of an affiliation with their homeland.

Critical realism was brought into the research realm by Bhaskar in 1970s and 1980s (Fletcher, 2017) as a response to the limitations of positivism and constructionism, by emphasising the importance of ontology, in which human experience matters to the same degree as empirical science. Bhaskar (2013) argues that the observable, or empirical, domain is not enough in itself to explain the events of the world. Hence, there is scope to explore human experiences beyond the level of observation, and this can only be accomplished through causal interactions and analysis.

Critical realism does not deny the fact that knowledge is determined by the necessarily limited, and shared experiences of human beings; however, much of this world is beyond human beings' experience." Fletcher (2017, p. 182) writes, "The ability to engage in explanation and causal

analysis (rather than engaging in a thick empirical description of a given context) makes [critical realism] useful for analyzing social problems and suggesting solutions for social change." Bhaskar argues that confining reality to the observable empirical epistemology at the expense of ontological reality is committing an "epistemic fallacy". Owens (2011, p.6) carries the argument further, contending that neglecting unobservable causal structures and the role causal mechanisms play does not mean they are non-existent, or that their impacts cannot be realised.
The power of critical realism identifies itself in the insider view that the researcher gets to explore in identifying societies' structures that generate social events. As such, critical realism helps with investigating causal mechanisms and forces that drive societies to behave in a certain way.

Despite the effectiveness and suitability of phenomenology as a theoretical foundation to explore the lived experiences of individuals and groups, it has also been considered by social science scholars as being open to different interpretations and heavily reliant on subjectivity. To avoid such pitfalls, the study confined itself to the most robust part of the theory which is describing the lived experience of people, their imaginations, and the way they interact with others. The same thing can be said about Critical Realism. Many scholars have described CR as a too value-laden explanatory approach besides their skepticism about its accuracy in representing the external world. To avoid such pitfalls, the study benefited from the ability to deduction and induction the CR method provides to understand more than describe the hidden dynamics that govern the social behaviors and attitudes of the wider Sudanese community in Australia.

3.5 Participants

The Sudanese migrants in North America, Europe and the UK, have divided themselves along ethnic, political, and religious lines. The Sudanese migrants in Australia have divided themselves similarly. Accordingly, this study adopted purposive, otherwise referred to as non-random sampling technique (O'Leary (2008). According to O'Leary "Non-random samples can generate meaningful samples, and even credibly represent populations, if (1) selection is done with goal of representativeness in mind and (2) strategies are used to ensure that samples match population characteristics" (p.9). In line with this theoretical and methodological position, immigrants from

the Sudan were categorised in their sub-communities to collect the needed data, using in-depth interviews. The locations of these sub-communities can be roughly described as below:
The ethno-religious Coptic Community is predominantly located in East Melbourne; Fur and Zagawa ethnic groups from the Darfur region are located in Dandenong; the Nuba Mountains ethnic group is mainly located in Brisbane. There are also many offshoots political parties scattered in various Australian cities. The Sudanese Communist Party's leadership is in Tarneit, West Melbourne. The Sudanese Conference Party's leadership is in Brisbane. The Umma (Nation) Party's leadership is in Sydney. The Justice and Equity Movement's (JEM) leadership is located in Dandenong.
As a member of the wider Sudanese community, I have benefited from the social network I have created since my arrival in Australia. I have used various ways of communication to recruit participants from different ethnic, political, gender, and second-generation groups. Sub-communities' leaders, political parties' members, and liberal women's groups were approached via phone and email and through mutual friends.
Based on that, three to four individuals from each group were chosen as a sample for individual interviews.

Categorising the participants in terms of ethnicity, gender, politics, and religion has been helpful in generating different perspectives. For example, by interviewing participants from ethnic groups and who self-identified as liberal women, the study aimed to investigate whether those traditionally disadvantaged groups have found an opportune space to carve out an integrated and unique diasporic identity to compensate for the lack of recognition they endured back in Sudan. Further, interviewing political activists and members of religious groups has been helpful in exploring the issues of divided loyalties between the homeland and the "new" homeland, and how these issues have been managed and reflected in their interaction within the community, on one hand, and with the wider Australian society, on the other. Further, the study investigated how Sudanese migrants have used the cultural space in their communities' activities, and whether this space has been used for integration or mainly to maintain and sustain ties and bonds with the homeland.

For sampling and recruitment purposes, the study divided the Sudanese community according to their ethnic sub-communities, plus one group of liberal women. The Darfur, Nuba Mountains and Coptic communities represent the ethnic-minority groups, while the Sudanese community of the

Northerners represents the dominant group. This categorisation is designed to replicate the way the Sudanese migrants reorganised themselves in Australia. Similarly, the study investigated whether those from the class that had formed an advantaged elite in Sudan may still display observable privileges in terms of integration and resettlement in Australia compared to or contrasted against their disadvantaged counterparts.

The sampling also reached out to liberal and conservative women from the wider Sudanese community to compare their ongoing negotiation of identity in the new host land within a traditional patriarchal community. The study relied on an effective social network to recruit the participants from both sides to address the position of women in this new context.

As a matter of protection to the participants' identities, pseudonyms have been used for all participants instead of their real names.

3.6 Methods

Phenomenology and critical realism methodologies have been used to conduct the research. Phenomenology is a useful approach in exploring the lived experiences of any given group in the way they reflect themselves in daily life through socio-cultural behaviours and attitudes. Also, as an explanatory framework, critical realism is a useful approach in investigating the socio-cultural structures and causal mechanisms to address events and phenomena of a given society in an effective way. Having used critical realism, the study intended to go beyond the descriptive analysis of the wider Sudanese migrants' life to investigate the hidden forces that influence the dynamics of their socio-cultural patterns. In this regard, critical realism can be more effective in shedding light on the causal mechanisms and the influences they have on the social intra-relationships of the wider Sudanese community and the impacts on the integration process since their arrival to Australia.

In-depth individual interviews were conducted around major Australian cities where there were concentrations of Sudanese communities. The questions were designed to give individuals the

chance to define themselves, as well as to reflect on their lives both in Australia and in the homeland.

The findings of this study are based on 22 semi-structured interviews representing different categories: political activists, ethnic groups and self-identifying liberal women. All data were collected between February 2022 and January 2023. All semi-structured interviews were conducted in Arabic, and then translated into English by a NAATI-accredited translator.

The participants were drawn from the broader Sudanese population in Australia, mainly from Melbourne. The participants reflect the political, ethnic, and religious populations among the wider Sudanese community in Australia.

All semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the participants' responses were categorised and coded. The conceptualisations of these categories and their justifications were demonstrated throughout the study's chapters. The data presented here are generated from the participants' semi-structured interviews and are representative of significant coded patterns found in the interviews and the supporting literature review. The consent forms were handed to the participants for signing. All the participants signed the consent forms and returned them. Most of the data that was collected from the participants' semi-structured interviews is quoted directly, to reflect the lived experiences of the participants and the way the community as a socio-cultural space has been used and for what purpose.

3.7 Data analysis

Creswell (2007, pp. 147-148) writes:

> Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. In this regard, data analysis will be considered as an ongoing process of continuing building and revising.

Creswell (2009) argues that data gathering, and analysis should be simultaneous, and data should be organised categorically, chronologically reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded. Basit

(2003, p. 152) writes, "Qualitative data are textual, non-numerical and unstructured. Coding has a crucial role in the analyses of such data to organize and make sense of them." Codes are a process of categorising units of meaning from descriptive information to generate a deeper understanding about a social phenomenon under research. Raw data is not efficient by itself or helpful for giving a reader a deep understanding of a social world; it must be subjected to a thorough and systematic analysis to clarify a given situation (Basit, 2003). Hence, the main purpose of data analysis is to transform the collected data into a coherent outcome of the research. To this end, I manually coded the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Although manual coding was time-consuming, I opted for an immersion approach to research where I work with data closely to ground myself in research analytical practices. Thus, I decided to manually code the data.

3.8 Positionality and the role of the researcher

Collecting and analysing data is the primary role of the researcher in qualitative research. This task takes different approaches. In the present study, the author's perception of Sudanese migrants in Australia and how they organise themselves around political loyalties, ethnic and regional affiliations, and religious ideologies has arguably been shaped by the fact that I am a Sudanese migrant myself. Ethnically, I belong to the dominant cultural groups, who adopted the Arab-Islamic identity. This situation raises the issue of positionality as one of the qualitative research challenges because it could introduce biases. While my belonging to the Sudanese community identifies me closely as an insider, as a researcher my goals, individual experience, social class, social identity, and world view are different from those of the participants. As someone belonging to the dominant culture in a divided Sudan in terms of identity, my being secular in a religiously affiliated community and an individual in a communal society could have a direct impact on the research process and its outcome. To minimise biases, I have exercised reflexivity in terms of self-scrutiny and self-consciousness; as Bourke (2014) points out, reflexivity and self-scrutiny work as a reminder to maintain the distance the researcher needs to navigate safely through the project. One way I operationalised reflexivity and sensitivity is that I went to spaces where participants chose as safe places to have a conversation. Further, I did not interrupt. I allowed conversation to run even when they were long. I only brought them back to the topic by gentle reminders of the

topic of discussion when they veered off topic. Furthermore, I decided not to engage one from their communities to do interviews for me, because I wanted to hear firsthand their narratives. I based my decision on the fact that I am known to these community groups as I serve them as an Arabic interpreter in many walks of their life. I took it that rapport has been built over years. However, I allowed the participants' outlooks, views, and positions to be expressed without contradiction even when they were contrary to mine.

3.9 The ethical concerns of the research

Ethical issues are present in any research, and there are specific challenges when the subjects of the research are potentially vulnerable or marginalised groups. Getting information from minorities for research purposes has implications of power relations. Gaining access to the community, as mentioned, represents a challenge. According to Creswell (2009), some of these challenges are related to the boundaries the minorities set to maintain their cultures and ways of life, or because they do not want to expose themselves to “others” whom they do not know or with whom they do not share the same values. In this regard, Sudanese communities in Australia are not exceptional. Although, because I as a researcher was part of the wider Sudanese community, which could be seen as advantage, particular ethical considerations required attention to successfully carry out this project. In the case of the wider Sudanese community, vulnerability is one of the issues among many other factors that can be attributed to negative coverage by the Australian media in general. Addressing sensitive issues in interviews is another challenge I managed to avoid. Anecdotally, one can say that the Sudanese migrants, due to language barriers and their recent experience of immigration, prefer to be invisible. Being one of the community members, I conducted this research mindful of these sensitivities. Also, protecting the participants’ identities has been one of the ethical concerns of this study.

Informed consent and confidentiality have been dealt with carefully. As always, informed consent is an essential part of ensuring the integrity of any research; without it, the research as a whole will be considered unethical. Sharing awareness with the participants about the research has been the focal point of securing informed consent. Participants were aware of the purpose of the study and

why their participation was worthwhile. An ethics clearance from the Ethical Research Committee was obtained as the first step in conducting this research.

The interviews were conducted in Sudanese- Arabic language and then translated into English. As a researcher, I myself one of the Sudanese migrants in Australia and I speak the Sudanese-Arabic language as a mother tongue. Further, I am also a certified NAATI translator, however, and for purposes of impartiality and credibility, an accredited professional translator was hired to do the job of translation from Arabic into English. Being a member of the wider Sudanese community and speaking the same language has been very helpful in mitigating as much as possible the loss of meanings in translation. The same advantage can be also applied to the hired translator, who is from a Sudanese background.

Chapter Four

Political activism among Sudanese migrants in Australia

4.1 Introduction

This chapter casts light on political activism among the wider Sudanese community in Australia by exploring how political activists have used the socio-cultural space, and whether or not their activism has contributed to the cohesion of intra-relationships, on one hand, and the process of integration, on the other.

Participants who self-define as political activists and/or members of different Sudanese political parties reflected on their political activism as migrants, and what it meant to them to practice homeland politics in their adopted country, Australia. The participants represented three major political parties: the Sudanese Communist Party, the Sudanese Conference Party and the Umma (nation) Party. The interview covered various aspects of their political activism, both homeland-oriented, and non-homeland oriented, investigating the impacts these activities have had on the wider Sudanese community in terms of social cohesion, interrelationships with the wider Australian society, and the influence they may or may not have on homeland politics. Further, the interviews intended to explore why practicing homeland politics has been so important to those participants to the extent that they have created offshoot political parties in Australia.

All the participants who were categorised as political activists showed that they were committed members of one of the Sudanese political parties back in Sudan; hence, their political activism in Australia in one way or another was homeland-oriented.

The participants demonstrated a level of assertiveness in their direct involvement in homeland politics. Their responses were varied, and they gave many reasons to justify their political involvement. Responses were unanimous in their observation that migrants, everywhere, have a history of engagement in homeland politics. According to Sheffer (2003), migrants' involvement in homeland political activism could pose a threat to their homelands' governments. The analysis of the interviews suggested that the political activism of migrant Sudanese in host countries contributes to the complexity of the existing politics in the Sudan. The whole country has been

characterised by prolonged political instability since its independence in 1956 from the British colonisers.

The majority of the participants attributed their direct political activism to their personal experiences of torture and persecution throughout the last three decades, the period of the ousted Islamic regime, before they fled the country and resettled in Australia and other parts of the world. Given the fact that the majority of the participants had been politically active and members of the homeland's political parties before departure, and according to their responses, they have felt obliged to engage politically with their counterparts in the homeland. Although the majority stressed the importance of engaging directly in homeland politics, a few of them considered their activism unnecessary; instead, they regarded it as sheer nostalgia that gave them a sense of self-satisfaction, a perspective that will be discussed further in the chapter.

4.2 Political activism in Sudan: A historical background

Political activism in Sudan is as old as the modern state itself and has established and entrenched traditions. The prolonged political instability since independence from British colonisation in 1956 played a significant role in the development and institutalisation of this norm of "over-politicisation". For example, and according to Vezzadini (2015), the 1924 White Flag Revolution, which was Sudan's first organised urban political opposition against a ruling government (the condominium administration), was a mutiny by military junior officers under the leadership of Ali Abdullatif. The insurgents waged a war against the colonial government and demanded unity between Sudan and Egypt and for the British to depart the country. The second influencing event was the strike of the Sudan Railway Corporation workers' trade union in 1947 in Atbara city under the influence of the then-emerging Sudanese Communist Party (Sikainga, 2010). These two events have shaped political activism in post-colonial Sudan and motivated the rise of political parties, as well as, civil and student political formations.

Political activism is well engrained in Sudanese society and permeates the political history of modern Sudan. Recruiting and nurturing youths at an early age to join political parties is a norm in Sudan. According to Bishai (2008, p. 1), "Sudanese universities have historically been the incubators of political change in Sudan, and student unions in particular have retained a tradition

of vibrant – and sometimes violent – political activity". Further, the contested national identity has polarised and exacerbated political activism and turned it into a way of life (Lesch, 1998). Political activists from among Sudanese migrants in the last 20 years have shown great ability in organising themselves outside their homeland (Baird, 2013). Abusharaf (2002) observes that the first thing Sudanese migrants do wherever they go is to organise themselves politically and establish their political networks, linking them with the homeland's political entities. The tendency of Sudanese political activism, as the majority of the participants acknowledged, is homeland-oriented, and any interest in playing a role in bridging the interrelationships between the wider Sudanese community and the wider society in Australia has not been a priority.

The prevailing regimes in power since independence, which have been associated with repression, torture, and imprisonment for political opponents, have built a sense of resilience and persistence among political activists, given that they could be imprisoned at any time due to their political activism. Hence, daring to be a political activist in the Sudanese context has given such activity prestige, causing younger activists who had been subjected to torture in prisons to be regarded as public heroes and celebrities. As Bishai (2008, p.4) observes, "at the apex of political significance was the student union of the University of Khartoum which was unquestionably the proving ground for the privileged and predestined and thus the most significant collection of student voices in the country". According to Viorst (1995), the university in Sudan is a bellwether of the country's politics, with the student union's elections across the country's universities playing a significant role as an indicator of the country's political direction.

Nevertheless, in a politically polarised country like Sudan, as in many other countries, direct diasporic activism has not always been seen as benign, as many migrant activists think. Rather, many observers, particularly those who live within those countries and hold political responsibility for opposing dictatorships and mobilizing people against them, have considered it controversial. Conflicts between the perspectives of politically active migrants and their counterparts inside their home countries have taken place on many occasions. Reflecting on the political activism among the Sudanese migrants in the UK, Wilcock (2019, p. 181) observes that the "[u]ncompromising and democratizing stances are common incongruences between migrant and homeland activism, but they are neither essential nor exhaustive". Conversi (2012) argues that acting from a "safe distance" can make migrant activists look more radical in the way they demand change than those

opposing from inside, who are under constant surveillance by the regime's security apparatus and in danger of reprisals. Political opportunism is another area of dispute between factions.

Further, as Safran (1991) argues, migrants who return from advanced host countries usually do not settle for less, and their demands for change are too ambitious. While migrant activists believe that their direct involvement in homeland politics is an obligation to achieve democracy and political sustainability, many inside activists believe that migrant activists exaggerate their political influence for personal gains. Abusharaf (2010) reflected on the heated debates following the Darfur genocide in 2005, which had been based on who had the right to represent the Darfurians in their catastrophic situation in the homeland. The in-country Darfurian victims felt that their Darfurian counterparts in the diaspora tended toward self-interest and were profiting from the in-country Darfurians' ordeals. Amoui (2022) reflected on the rising dispute in South Sudan between those who lived inside the country and their counterparts' diasporas around the world. He indicated that most of the interviewees in his research described the South Sudanese diasporas as self-serving political opportunists.

The contribution of the Sudanese migrants during what it has been known as the December Revolution in 2019 – which ended the rule of the Islamist regime – has been acknowledged and praised by the whole nation and the various political parties in Sudan; nevertheless, the subsequent scramble for ministerial positions during the interim government that represented the Revolution, has been criticised fiercely as political opportunism. Later, the ministers were held responsible by in-country political opposition groups for the failure of the transitional period. The lukewarm reception the migrant activists tend to get from homeland political elites has much to do, as Abdile (2014) argues, with fear of the competition the migrant activists pose once they have gained experience, education, and skills in their host lands. While Abdile reflects on the Somali experience, his results can be generalised to Sudan.

4.3 Political activism as a call of duty

Participants in this study presented different reasons for their involvement in homeland politics. The majority considered their political activism as a duty, and many attribute this to the way they had been nurtured as political activists at an early stage of their time studying at universities, where

political parties are active in recruiting students. Many said that the reason they left Sudan was linked to their political activism back home, where they had been subjected to persecution or even imprisonment and torture by the Islamist regime.

Emad Hassan, a participant from the Sudanese Conference Party, reflected on his personal experience as a political activist in the homeland and why it is important for him to continue his activism in Australia:

> The main reason for leaving Sudan is the political persecution by the fallen regime, which ruled the country for 30 years, and its insistence on ruling the country in a way that does not match the nature of its composition as a diverse society. I do support my party and reach out as much as I can, because I believe that if things go well, the contribution of our party will be significant in bringing the whole nation together.

For Hashim Saleh, a member from the Sudanese Communist Party, political activism was a matter of belonging to the homeland and something that defines who is the person is, and what values and attitudes a one can hold and reflect. The following was his response:

> Being a political activist has much to do with social, cultural, and intellectual orientation. It reflects who you are and how you view things ontologically as a human being. There are many people who are not politically active, but they are still working hard to contribute significantly to a better future for their country.

The ways participants elaborated on the goals and motivations behind their political activism were varied. For some participants, political activism in Australia cannot be seen in isolation from who they are back in the day and what they became. The main goal of those participants is to continue their political contributions and pass on the knowledge and experiences they have gained throughout their migrant experience. Yousif Ali from the Sudanese Communist Party believed that political activism is not confined to specific spaces. He felt that as long as one considers himself a political activist, he is obliged to play this role, no matter where he is.

> Personally, because I am still a Sudanese, and the case of Sudan is central to me. Also, to be a political activist does not mean you have to be inside Sudan. You can still play a role from outside, particularly, in terms of financial support and solidarity. Furthermore, Communism is an

> international ideology, and being a communist means, you are part of a wider network of solidarity to help and raise the issues of justice, freedom, and equity across the world. In sum, I am still connected to what is happening in Sudan because I cannot escape my destiny.

Ahmed Sulieman believed that the ultimate goal one can achieve through political activism is to do everything that helps people in the homeland to have a dignified and decent life resembling his life in his adopted country. It is evident that moral values are the main motivation of his political activism:

> I think because I want to see my people back home enjoy the same level of freedom and civility I have here in Australia. As you know, I live here in a secular country, where my rights are protected by the law. I know my rights and my obligations. I want the same to my brothers, friends, and every Sudanese citizen to enjoy these rights. I want them to have the same level of wellbeing I have here in Australia. Most of the Sudanese back home do not know their rights and obligations. They live under constant political suppression. They live in poor situations deprived them from developing their skills and have a quality education, which I enjoy here. I am not a selfish person, which is why I want to contribute to change life in the homeland for the better.

Hashim Saleh believed that he cannot distinguish between what had happened to him as a political activist in the homeland, and his life outside it, because he believes the two experiences remain closely intertwined:

> It has much to do with my lived experience before I came to Australia. I have been tortured and imprisoned as a political opponent; hence, I cannot separate myself from politics back home. It is not just about me and my small family here in Australia, still I have a big extended family in Sudan, and I feel obliged to keep myself politically active for their rights, justice, and freedom.

The participants from the Sudanese Communist Party find their justifications in practicing political activism in the notion of Communism as an international ideology which seeks justice, equity, and freedom for all human beings no matter where they live. For them, as communist members, their

political activism is transnational. Ahmed Sulieman was among those who believe in the globality of their ideology and the right to practice it no matter where they live:

> First of all, you have the international human rights declaration, and these are global rights, hence, everyone on the planet has the right to enjoy them. From this perspective, you do not need to be a politician to embrace and promote these rights in every place in the world, even the homeland.

Motivated by his ideology as a communist, Hashim Saleh believed that the matter of human rights and justice is universal and beyond any locality:

> Political activism is important once you become a political activist, regardless of where your location is. It is a matter of defending the rights of people in freedom and justice. Such ultimate goals are universal and beyond geographical limitations.

4.4 Homeland-oriented and non-homeland political activism

While the majority of the politically active participants in this study demonstrated a strong focus on homeland politics, some, driven by different motives, were interested in joining an Australian political party. Their responses suggested that they did not intend to shift allegiance from their homeland parties; rather, their reasons included wanting to know more about, and be part of, Australian politics and culture. Despite their interest in participating in Australian politics, most of the participants, for different reasons, could not establish a role for themselves in the Australian political system.

Yousif Ali, a member of the Sudanese Communist Party, described his motivation to join the Australian Socialist Alliance Party as an attempt to become familiar with Australian culture and politics and to improve his English language:

> Before coming to Australia, I was a political activist. After six months from my arrival to Australia, I joined the Australian Socialist Alliance Party. Such political activities in Australia help the process of my integration and give me the chance to become familiar with Australian politics and way of life.

Adil Hassan, from the Sudanese Political Party, stated that he had been a member of the Australian Labor Party for a short period of time. Adil did not talk about whether or not he was active politically with the Labor Party and what kind of contribution he made during the time of his membership. He said:

> I used to be a member of the Labor Party. Also, I was approached by another party to be their candidate, and Senator John Madigan visited me twice in my home to convince me. However, due to personal circumstances I couldn't respond to their request.... Nevertheless, the increasing African population in Victoria should be taken seriously by the African communities themselves in terms of representation. The senate seat the Green Party have in the state is largely due to the African population's support.

Ahmed Sulieman reflected on his time living in Sydney, and how he used to have a connection with the Australian Social Alliance Party, visiting its office, attending its meetings, and borrowing books from the library. Ahmed did not discuss the exact nature of his relationship with the Australian Social Alliance Party, or whether or not he was a member:

> Back when I was living in Sydney, I used to have that kind of political activism. I used to go on a weekly basis to the Australian Social Alliance Party. I used to attend their meetings and political reflections on national and international matters. I used to borrow books from their library. You can say there was full integration because as a communist I share with them the universal belonging and attitude that transcends national identity. We are uniting for the good and the welfare of all human beings, not exclusively focused on our countries, as capitalism, in turn, encourages these tendencies. However, after moving to Melbourne, I wasn't able to have the chance to do the same here.

Hashim Saleh mentioned his closeness to the Green Party through some close friends who belonged to the party and kept him updated with information related to party activities. "The society here is different. Personally, I have some friends from the Australian Green Party, and this gave me the chance to follow from a close distance their political activities."

In the interviews, the participants discussed to what extent political activism has or has not influenced the political life of the homeland. Although many participants referred to their political activism as merely a show of nostalgia, the majority stressed that their political activism in their

adopted country has had a significant influence on the homeland politics, especially during the December 19th Revolution in 2019. The participants appreciated the role that Sudanese migrants all over the world had played to support the masses in the capital Khartoum during the time of the sit-in protests, which lasted more than a month and resulted in the downfall of the Islamist regime. Many participants asserted that fundraising, logistics, political advice, and political representation by many activists from the diaspora gave robust support to those on the ground.

Adil Hassan believed in the significant role the migrant political activists have played on the homeland politics:

> It has made a significant contribution as it happened during the Revolution back home. We used to go out and protest to draw the attention of the mainstream towards what is happening in Sudan. Also, financial support is decisive sometimes for the political parties back home. In this regard, no secret to say we are in the Sudanese Conference Party, rely heavily on the migrants' funding, because it is the only financial sources we have.

Jalal Wahbi, a Sudanese Communist Party member, believed that Sudanese migrants' influence on and contribution to the homeland's politics are immense and recognisable, and take different forms:

> It has a significant impact. We used to support financially the political opposition's activities there and mobilise Sudanese migrants around the world to influence the anti-regime movements back home. Also, we have benefited from our relationships with some Australian political parties like the Greens Party and the Australian Socialist Party to use their influence in the Australian parliament to raise the awareness about what is happening to our people in Sudan.

Emad Hassan believed that the money, skills, and financial support of Sudanese migrants around the world had a significant impact on the December Revolution in 2019:

> The influence of the Sudanese migrants has already proved itself in the December Revolution. The contribution of the Sudanese migrants around the world has a significant impact on the success of the Revolution that ousted the Islamist regime. I am not sure about their numbers, though I think it is hundreds of thousands, most of them forced to live outside the country while they were studying at universities or working. They invested their knowledge, money, and work experiences to support the Revolution

> and addressed parliaments of their host countries, appealing for sanctions against the regime.

The majority of the participants believed that, as they had been involved in politics for a long time, politics would always be part of who they were. Hence, it was not easy for those who had been activists to cease their political activity just because they had moved to another country. In contrast, other participants viewed their political activism in the diaspora as more or less a form of nostalgia, helping them to feel connected to the homeland and giving them a sense of self-satisfaction from the idea that they still had a role to play in their homeland's politics.

Adil Hassan was one of the participants who believed political activism in Australia is merely a "nostalgic" expression that will fade with time as integration inevitably progresses:

> In fact, the Sudanese political parties did not instruct migrants to practice politics. It was a matter of self-initiative. We, the migrants, initiated that, and the whole matter is more or less nostalgia rather than a serious political engagement. Later the political parties started to pay attention to this phenomenon and worked to build on it for more tangible benefit.

Like Adil Hassan, Isam Nour from the Umma Party considered activism to be a nostalgic behaviour rather than a necessity:

> To be honest, it gives me a sense of self-satisfaction, but I don't think it has any benefit for my country. It satisfies the nostalgia, and it eases the feeling of guilt of not being there; as you can see, it is all about me, not the country per se.

4.5 The formation of the offshoot political parties

In the course of resettling in Australia, Sudanese migrants established branches of some of their political parties in the homeland. These offshoot political parties have given the political activists the chance to link themselves with their main parties in the Sudan, and to keep in touch with political events while aiming to influence homeland politics. In their responses to the question of whether there is any need for offshoot parties in Australia, the majority of the participants believed that there is no need for such transnational political branches. Most of the responses highlighted

the difficulty of organising and run such branches in a different environment, besides the unnecessary competition that might cause tension in the wider community in a time when people desperately need to be united and in harmony. Emad Hassan articulated such a perspective:

> I discussed this matter before with my party, mentioning that there is no benefit we can get from establishing a branch here. As I said before, as political activists our role in the wider community could be more useful. We can invest in our knowledge and experience to raise awareness among the community members. Also, it is easier for us as activists from different parties to work together within one community. On the contrary, the existing of these parties here in Australia has caused unnecessary competition and tensions. The polarisation between these parties has a negative impact on the community's unity.

Isam Nour opposed the idea of offshoot political parties:

> To be honest, I am against this attitude. In my opinion, if you want to practice politics according to the Sudanese political conventions, you have to be there in Sudan. Logically, you cannot make the host land a place of your homeland political parties. The Sudanese political parties themselves do not have a heritage of dealing with the Sudanese migrants.

In contrast to the opinions mentioned above, a considerable number of the participants claimed that they could see the positive side the offshoot parties, ranging from fundraising to supporting their main political parties back home, besides the ongoing political activities they run to update and build awareness among the wider community about what is happening in Sudan and how people can support and contribute. Yousif Ali was one of those who value the important role his offshoot party has played:

> Reflecting on my own loyalty as an active communist, I can say yes, there is a necessity, because most of our activities aim to support our party financially. The [Sudanese Communist Party], unlike other, more right-wing parties, depends on its members' contributions. The other parties have their own sources to run their activities comfortably. That's the reason why we are more politically active in host lands compared to other parties – one can barely notice their activities.

Ahmed Sulieman believed that political activism is a matter of belonging to the homeland. To him, no matter how long a migrant life in Australia, they are still Sudanese. He said:

> it is not about necessary or not: The question is necessary to whom. Individuals? Yes, because they still belong to Sudan, the same way they belong to Australia. In fact, the majority are Sudanese who live in Australia. Their belonging to Australia is related to their current life in Australia, but when it comes to their culture and way of life, they are still tied to Sudan, especially in their political activism, which is part of who they are.

4.6 Political activism and integration

The study participants were asked what extent the political activism of the Sudanese migrants has or has not played a role in fostering the integration of the wider Sudanese community in Australia. Most of the participants acknowledged that the political activism they practice has not played a role in the community's integration, due to the nature of the activism they exert, which is mainly focused on homeland politics rather than trying to bridge the gap between the immigrant Sudanese community as a whole and the wider Australian society, despite the fact that some participants expressed interest in joining Australian political parties.

Yousif Ali attributed this attitude to the bad situation they had left behind in Sudan and the urgency they felt to do something about it, saying that this left no room for any other options not related to the homeland's issues:

> To be honest, I did not think of it before you asked me this question. However, I think the matter has much to do with the situation back home. The ongoing instability of Sudan in every aspect has no doubt affected the way the Sudanese migrants are weighing up their priorities. They feel more obliged to pay more attention and reach out to their families, relatives, and friends over there rather than focusing on their issues here in the host land. I think there is a sort of shortcoming when it comes to dealing with the social issues here in Australia; it is a reluctance rather than a denial.

Emad Hassan believed that Sudanese migrants' political activities are not intended to reflect their life in Australia and do not help them to integrate: "Generally, no, I don't think these activities

have anything to do with our life here. Honestly, we are lagging behind in our efforts to show more seriousness about our integration in Australia."

Hashim Saleh believed that the homeland political situation influences on migrants' priorities, including their process of integration into their adopted countries:

> To be honest, we do not have the privilege to use our political activism for integration purposes. The reason behind that is that, as Sudanese migrants, we have lots of issues in the homeland that need to be fixed. Hence, to achieve that, we have dedicated our souls and efforts to making things happen [in Sudan].

Most of the participants who engaged in political activism noted that in Australia, they had been exposed to a different political system to the one they were used to back in Sudan. The majority of the participants believed that there is an immense gap between the two political systems. Despite this generalisation, however, the responses were varied. Ahmed Sulieman put it this way:

> It is about the influence of the new ideas you start to sense here in Australia. I keep reflecting on these new ideas and discuss them with my friends and the party until we get to the point that these ideas became applicable. I will give you an example: nowadays we live the triumph of the December Revolution in Sudan, as you know. The Revolution borrowed many slogans not known before in Sudan, like "civility", which is now the slogan of the Revolution. If you go back before December, almost 90% of the Sudanese people would have had no idea what "civility" means. But as you can see, there is a kind of acculturation that has taken place since then. Today everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest man, knows what civility means; that is why they stick to it and fight fiercely for it, and are even ready to die for it. This would not happen without the influence of the interaction between those who are in the diaspora and people in the home.

Adil Hassan acknowledged that there is a conceptual gap in terms of political differences between the two countries; he admitted to what he called a "civilization gap":

> I am sorry to say it, but really politics in Sudan is backward. We are far behind; I am saying that despite the fact that I am a politically active person.... It is early for Sudan to be a democratic country and its political parties to practice a real politics…to reach the stages that Australia has reached; is not something can be achieved overnight. Bear in mind that

> Australia is a replica of western democracy. Democracy in Europe has taken more than six centuries of labor and suffering to be born and sustained.

4.7 Political activism and intra-community relationships

Exploring the impacts of the political activism on the wider Sudanese community's social cohesion is another way to examine the way the socio-cultural space has been used and whether such activities solidify social cohesion or increase the division of an already fragmented community. The participants' responses tended to suggest the latter. The majority of the participants believed that differences in political views have caused social tension among the political activists, which is reflected negatively in their social intra-relationships. Further, the political tension in the homeland has shaped the behaviours and attitudes of the activists in Australia. A considerable number of the participants mentioned the importance of avoiding political disputes in social life, while others referred to the difficulties of distinguishing between their political activism and social attitudes. As a result, they preferred not to build any social relationships with those who considered them political opponents.

Isam Nour was one of those who believed political activism hinders social cohesion. The influence of the homeland's political and ethnic divisions, as he suggested, have contributed to social tensions in the wider Sudanese community in Australia:

> Political activism has a significant impact on Sudanese migrants' social relationships because the political tensions have been transferred to their diaspora destination. Not just that, even the personal grudges that were embedded in ideological disputes have been transferred to Australia and are shaping the social and personal intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants.

Yousif Ali believed that the tension political activism causes in the diaspora is unavoidable:

> In the Sudanese diasporic context, yes, the difference in the political attitudes causes a lot of tension among them. This is unfortunately a reflection of the polarised political situation back home. Personally, I cannot find myself in any social relationship with anyone from the Islamists (NIF). In return, I know they hate us very much, and this for sure has crippled the wider Sudanese community's social activities and cut ties between the Sudanese migrants in Australia.

Adil Hassan believed that practicing homeland politics within the community causes significant damage to the social intra-relationships in the community:

> Definitely, practicing political activism within the community will damage the social ties among the community members, especially during political disputes. I believe the activities of the community must be social only. If people want to be political activists, they have to join the Australian political parties. In sum, I think political activism within the community is damaging.

In contrast, some participants did not think their political activism has any negative impacts on social cohesion. Not only that, but they also believed that exerting political activism within the community has brought more understanding between them as competitive activists and facilitates more collaboration and coordination in aiding people back in Sudan.

Jalal Wahbi believed the political activists in the diaspora do not cause social problems in the wider community: "It does not have a negative impact on our social relationships as a community. We know how to distinguish between politics and social life."

The divergence of perspectives in this theme's findings will be examined further in the discussion section.

4.8 Capitalist Australia in the eyes of the communist participants

Those who belong to the Sudanese Communist Party acknowledged that coming to Australia and living under a capitalist system for the first time had given them the chance to review and reflect on their theoretical understanding of capitalism from a Marxist perspective. Some of them appreciated the social security, free education, and health the government provides, which is something, according to their responses, they could not imagine in a capitalist system before coming to Australia. Having the chance, as Marxists, to be exposed to and live under a capitalist system for the first time had a significant impact on their perceptions as communists and migrants.

Ahmed Sulieman believed that the socialist aspect of the Australian political system more or less matched his expectations about the way a country should be run according to communist theory:

> To answer your question, I have to turn it around, so it will be easier to get to what I want to say. As you know, Australia is one of the countries with a capitalist system. When I arrived in Australia, I came as a communist. To my surprise, I found in Australia many things, like the right of getting accommodation and the welfare assistance when you are not working, the right of free education and the right to free health. These services do not exist in 100% communist countries. The second thing was, the government works hard to improve the wellbeing of people, although by [the citizens] paying taxes, but that is not an issue, because you feel the ongoing improvement in the services, which gives you an indication of how the taxpayers' money is used in a transparent way. If these things applied in Sudan, I think, it would reflect the "national liberal revolution phase", as theorised in the Communist Party Program.

Also, Hashim Saleh showed his appreciation for the social-insurance aspect of the Australian capitalist system, as something he never expected:

> As a leftist person I dedicated my whole life to fighting for justice, equality, social security, and welfare for everyone. This did not happen in Sudan, but I found it here in Australia, at least the social security. Australia provides free health and education for my children. I remember when I arrived in Australia, I took my son to see the dentist because he has teeth issues. The doctor told me he has to fix all my son's teeth. I thought this might cost me a lot of money, because I heard that dentist clinics are the most expensive thing in Australia, but the doctor told me the health system covering the expenses. This is something amazing.

Not all Sudanese Communist Party participants were satisfied with the Australian capitalist system. Jalal Wahbi criticised the system from a Marxist point of view:

> As I am a communist, Australian capitalist political system exposed itself to me in a way that makes it readable and interpretable from a Marxist point of view. Before I came here, things were a bit vague, because, as you know, Sudan is a preindustrial country, but here you can sense the capitalist pressure firsthand, and you are going to understand what class struggle means when you belong to the working class.

4.9 Commonalities and differences between Australia and Sudan as multi-cultural states

Some participants reflected on the similarity of the two countries in terms of cultural and ethnic diversity and the way each country manages its diversity. The prevailing opinion from the

participants tended to be appreciation and admiration for the way Australia has dealt with diversity in an inclusive way, while they condemned the failure of the successive Sudanese governments since independence to bring peace and co-existence to the country. Many responses included an appreciation of the level of peaceful co-existence that the multicultural space provides to minorities in such a diverse country. Emad Hassan reflected on the two different experiences.

> There is a similarity between Sudan and Australia; both of them are multicultural countries full of resources. The only difference is that in Australia they succeeded in building an open, free, and inclusive country, while we failed. This could be a motivation to learn from their experience and try to do the same.

Most participants expressed their satisfaction towards the power of the rule of law in Australia and noted that the absence of the rule of law is the main problem of Sudan. Emad Hassan reflected on his admiration for the rule of law in Australia:

> Before I came to Australia, and when I was to begin my adventure in politics, I used to read, theoretically, about the rule of law. Also, I remember my father and his generation at that time telling stories about the rule of law during British colonisation. It was only when I came to Australia that I started to sense the importance of the rule of law to the society and the state. Now, I cannot imagine a successful country without the authority of the rule of law.

4.10 Discussion

The study participants' responses reflected different perspectives on the influence of political activism on the wider Sudanese community in Australia. Only a minority of participants believed that political activism does not affect the social intra-relationships of the community members because they are united around the political agendas of the wider community as ex-refugees who fled the country under the suppression and persecution of the former Islamist regime. Rather, the majority acknowledged that political activism has caused tensions and hindered the intra-relationships of the wider Sudanese community. The fragmentation and disunity of the wider Sudanese community, in addition to the well-documented political tensions in the homeland and the impact of activism on social intra-relationships make political activism within the community

undesirable behaviour. This perspective was articulated convincingly by Adil Hassan from the Sudanese Conference Party, who believed that observing political activism in the host land has damaged the social intra-relationships of the wider Sudanese community –that the community is already fragmented, and political activism has made things worse. This "obsession with roots", as Wilcock (2018) argues, has much to do with the political activists' desire of imagining how the future of the homeland must be. Further, Wilcock (2018, pp. 372-373) notes that the motivations of the Sudanese migrants in the UK towards political activism are more or less an intention to play an important role in building the state of Sudan. From the participants' responses in the current study, one can argue that the same analysis could be applied to Sudanese political activism in Australia. According to Wilcock (2018), there are assumptions among the diasporas that their homeland needs their assistance. This notion was reflected in many participants' responses.

The interviews in this study also explored whether the Sudanese migrants in Australia intended their political activism to close the gap between the Sudanese community in general and the wider Australian society, or mainly to address home-oriented issues. The majority of the participants believed that their political activism was home-oriented, and for many it was an unavoidable obligation. However, the activists' journey of resettlement poses an ontological question regarding the issues of belonging and loyalty and the positionality of oneself as a migrant living daily life in the host land, on one hand, and a political activist devoting time and effort to one's homeland, on the other. The issue of divided loyalty among diasporas has been addressed largely through the field of transnationalism. Sheffer (2003) writes that different fields in academia have tried to unfold the complexity of the contested loyalties through which diasporas live. Political psychologists argue that the matter of whether to stick with one's ethno-national identity or switch allegiance to the host country is likely determined by the psychological needs of individual migrants. In contrast, constructionists argue that loyalty as indication of patriotism is something constructed by modern states, and a feeling of sentiment shared by all citizens of a given country whether they are a dominant group, ethnic minorities, or permanent diasporas. Baird (2013) writes that loyalty to homeland states itself at different levels; for example, in the form of sending money back home, reconciling between contested ethnic groups in the homeland, or supporting the homeland's political parties financially. Further, racism and marginalisation in host countries has been considered among the main reasons for maintaining loyalty to homelands. According to

Safran (1991), the myth of returning home, in some situations, is fed when the host land's policies cause diasporas to feel discriminated against and marginalised.

Most participants' responses suggested that they had never intended their political activism to close any gap between the Sudanese community in general and the Australian mainstream; rather, they meant solely to address homeland political and social issues as priorities. Nevertheless, a considerable number of the participants considered the lack of employing political activism for integration in Australia to be a deficiency that needs to be addressed. This can be attributed, as Demmers (2002) argues, to the fact that the members of the Sudanese diaspora are primarily refugees; hence, their opposition to the homeland government is inevitable.

Drawing on the data analysis, one can argue that whether participants meant their political activism to be a call of duty, moral obligation, ideological responsibility, or merely nostalgia, as they responded variously, the fact remains that homeland-oriented political activism becomes a norm and is practiced by individuals and offshoot political parties in many host countries, including Australia. Further, it has a significant influence on and direct implications for political, economic, and social life in Sudan. On many occasions political activism has played an instrumental role in mobilising the Sudanese migrants and appealing to them for their financial support, in addition to its ability to reach out to different political parties in Australia and other Western countries to raise awareness about the homeland regime's atrocities against political opponents in Sudan, as many participants confirmed. However, this practice of homeland politics is not always as benign as the migrant activists think. Evidence suggests that their influence has negative impacts in awakening ethnic radicalism and affecting polarisation in the political arena, both in the homeland and in the diaspora. Assal (2006) argues that Sudanese migrants' attempts to adapt to host lands have been characterised by ethnic, religious, and political divisions that cause or exacerbate severe polarisation in the homeland in turn. For example, participants from the Darfur ethnic community argued that the dominant group in the wider Sudanese community has always been indifferent towards what is happening in Darfur and do not show sympathy. For example, Abdelwahid Mohammed, from the Darfurian community, said:

> Given the fact that, as Darfurians, we had been persecuted by the Sudanese central government, as a result, when we came to Australia, we found the Sudanese community so indifferent towards our tragedy. At that point we

> decided to create our own ethnic community. As you can see, the division has much to do with politics rather than cultural or ethnic differences.

At a different level, also, one can argue that the dedication the political activists have shown towards their homeland's issues came at the expense of their life in the diaspora. As has been acknowledged by many participants, their political activism in one way or another was a home-oriented one, which it acted as another example of how the cultural space in the diaspora is used for purposes confined to obtaining and maintaining a sense of belonging to the homeland in exclusive way.

Based on this fact, one can argue that political activism, as one of many aspects of the wider Sudanese community's activities, has mainly intended to confine loyalty and belonging to the homeland, rather than working to contribute beyond the community boundaries, and it does not play any role in the integration process. Further, the heightened activism in Sudan and its implications in Australia have worked to increase division and disunity among the wider Sudanese community. Rather, splintered identities, as reflected in the formation of sub-communities in Australia, are mirroring the political, cultural, and social polarisation in the homeland.

Based on the findings of this chapter, one can argue that political activism is a predominant behaviour among the Sudanese migrants in Australia. A considerable number of the participants from the wider Sudanese community identified as dedicated political activists, linking themselves to their political parties in the homeland. The influence of their political activism and the impacts it has had on their intra-relationships within the community, as well as on their interrelationships with the wider Australian society, has been highlighted.

Homeland-oriented political activism is more common than host-country activism. Offshoot parties have been established in Australia and other host countries. Non-homeland political activism has not been a priority among the political activists. However, a few participants reported tentatively trying to reach out to the Australian political parties, but these efforts did not result in lasting involvement.

The participants' political activism had a significant impact on the wider Sudanese community's intra-relationships. The majority believed their political activism has caused unnecessary damage to the social intra-relationships among the members of the general Sudanese community. However,

and in contrast to this, some participants could see a positive side to their activism, in terms of building political awareness and social solidarity.

The participants indicated that their political activism had little or nothing to do with the Sudanese migrant community's interrelationships with the wider Australian society. Many participants believed that the purpose of their activism was to influence the homeland's political and social issues as a response to their feeling overwhelmed by their homeland's political and social problems, rather than to bridge the gap between them and the people of the dominant culture in Australia.

In the final analysis, this study suggests that the way Sudanese political activists in Australia have used the socio-cultural space has been twofold: first, on the local level, their political activism has negative impacts in the form of social disconnection, political polarisation, and increased the fragmentation of the community; their political activism has influenced the homeland's politics and social affairs. The significant contribution of the political activists in Sudan is massive, particularly during times of political unrest and when activists in the homeland have sought financial support, medical and humanitarian aid, and political advice. As many participants said during their interviews, the contribution of Sudanese migrants around the world, including those in Australia, during the Dec 19th Revolution 2018, in terms of mobilising people inside the country, fundraising, providing medical aid, and supporting political campaigns against the regime at that time, had a huge impact on the regime's downfall.

The interview data suggests that the nature of political activism among the wider Sudanese community follows a pattern of "we are here but still there"; a cultural behaviour through which the political activists use the community's socio-cultural space to maintain and solidify their political ties with their homeland's political parties and influence political decisions. Having said that, one can argue that political activism among the wider Sudanese community is mainly home-oriented, and designed to maintain ties with the homeland while, at the same time, reflecting a reluctance to contribute to the integration process or develop a sense of diasporic identity.

Chapter Five

Liberal women in the wider Sudanese community

5.1 Introduction

A sector of the wider Sudanese community self-identifies as liberal women. In this study, these women were grouped together to examine their lived experiences regarding intra-relationships as a distinctive group among the wider Sudanese community, and to determine the impact of such intra-relationships on integration into the host society. In Sudan, these participants belong(ed) to the middle and upper-middle classes. They enjoyed quality education and held professional roles. The majority already spoke fluent English before their arrival in Australia. One of the study's interests was to examine to what extent these factors have played a role in the women's integration into the Australian host society. Further, the study set out to investigate whether their liberal attitudes are accommodated in the wider Sudanese migrants' community' values. As part of this investigation study also looked at how the values and perspectives of Sudanese migrants adapt to an Australian secular and democratic context.

The chapter addresses the lived experiences of the liberal women in a majority pre-modern community, where social norms have been restricting women to a set of traditional gender roles and values consistent with the homeland's socio-cultural structure. The chapter discusses the kinds of negotiations that are involved in managing or navigating intra-relationships between the women and the wider Sudanese community in Australia. Further, the study explored the participants' experiences of interrelationship with the wider Australian society; particularly, whether their liberal values and attitudes are recognised as such.

5.2 Women's liberalism in Sudan: A historical background

The Sudan is predominantly a traditional society, where long-standing customs and Islamic values prevail. According to Sanderson (1963), family, religious brotherhood and tribe form the

fundamental structural pillars of society. Despite the influence of modernity in urban areas, traditional values remain strong. Liberalism for women, secularism, and democracy found their way to the country with the British colonisers (Osman, 2014). Since the country's independence in 1956, modernity and traditions, as two different sets of values, have been in constant conflict, and they have been the root causes of the ongoing political instability and cultural and social polarisation. As Ahmed (2008) argues, the emergence of secular elites in the early 1920s, who demanded national identity and equal citizenship to overcome sectarian and religious sub-identities, have been a threat to traditional and religious political leaders ever since. The overwhelming rise of secular political and cultural influence in the 1960s, particularly in the cities, had worried the sectarian and Islamic political parties. This situation has been exploited and used by the sectarian and Islamic political parties to mobilise traditional and conservative groups in their battle against their secular counterparts. The main goal of the anti-modernity allies since then has been to eliminate secularism from social and cultural life and to replace it with Islamic and traditional values. To achieve that, the alliance would have needed at that time to eliminate the Sudanese Communist Party, the stakeholder of modernity and progressive values. The party that emerged in 1946 has been the spearhead of Marxism and the promoter of secularism and modernisation (Warburg, 2013). The party has also been the political and social incubator for women's activism. Through the party's influence, women have been able to enter the public sphere. Under the influence of the party, Sudan's first grassroots women's organisation emerged, dedicating itself to advocate for women's rights in the social and political spheres (Hale, 2005). The Sudanese Women's Union was founded in 1952, under the leadership of Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, a member of the Sudanese Communist Party Sudanese Communist Party and a woman rights pioneer (Ibrahim, F. A., 1996). As Hale (2005, p. 36) stated, "The [Sudanese Communist Party] and its [Sudanese Women's Union] wing may have been one of the most successful parties and auxiliaries in contemporary Sudanese history, organizing in a number of fields conventional to communist parties." The 1964 democratic election had shown a significant rise in the secular forces at the expense of the Islamic and sectarian forces. Further, Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim had become the first woman to be elected as a member of parliament (Ibrahim, FA, 1996). The Sudanese Communist Party won many seats in the parliament despite its small size; as a result, there was panic within the conservative and Islamic forces. The massive success of the Communist Party in the 1965 elections sparked unrest and a reaction from its Islamic opponents (Warburg,

2013). As Ibrahim (2019, p.12) argues, “Hatred of the left after the October Revolution provided a catalyst for a culture war against secular, progressive, and communist movements in Sudan, and this remains a significant cause for the political paralysis that Sudan suffers even today.” In an unconstitutional act, the prime minister, Sadiq Al-Mahdi, the Umma ruling party leader, dissolved the Communist Party and expelled its members from the parliament under the pretext of combatting its atheism (Willis, El-Battahani & Woodward, 2009). Although the Supreme Court later ruled in the Sudanese Communist Party's favour, the government of Sadiq Al-Mahdi and the parliament overruled the decision (Warburg, 2013). The constitutional crisis that resulted from outlawing the Sudanese Communist Party led in 1969 to a military coup d'état. The rights women gained in the 1960s and early 1970s proved to be short-lived, even when the secular military regime replaced the democratic government after the 1969 coup. The unrelenting push by the Islamic and sectarian groups had enforced the military regime’s leader, Jaafar Nimeiri, to declare Sudan as an Islamic state in 1983 (Mansour, 1985). Women’s rights were severely curtailed. When the Islamist regime took over in 1989, it applied a harsh version of Islamic laws, enforcing a Salafist dress code and hijab on women and restricting their appearance in the public sphere. “In the name of the ideal woman, as morally central to the ideal family, women's behaviour is thus ideologically manipulated by male-controlled religio-political institutions” (Hale, 1992, p. 28). Subjugation of women in the last 30 years has taken many forms to break women’s resistance and promote traditional and conservative values instead. As Tønnessen and Al-Nagar (2023) point out, the Islamist regime has taken many actions in a backlash, attacking liberal women’s bodies violently to push them back into the private sphere. However, as Tønnessen and Al-Nagar (2023, p. 3) write, entrenched liberal values and feminist attitudes and principles have persisted with urban and educated women and across their grassroots organisations.

> Despite the backlash, Sudanese women are not absent from the public sphere. Although largely sidelined from formal politics, they found other spaces, online and offline, to organize away from established political elites in parties and social movements, including the older generation of women’s rights activists.

5.3 Caught between liberalism and conservatism: Experiences of liberal women

The liberal women participants in this study belong to the dominant cultural, social, and political groups in Sudan; they emerged from the middle and upper-middle classes. They pointed out that they had access to and achieved a high- quality education where they were exposed to Western culture, including the English language, at an early age. Most of them had English proficiency even before arriving in Australia. The educational qualifications and professional experiences of a considerable number of the participants in this group have been recognised in Australia; as a result, they held professional positions in the public and private sectors. Their responses reflected different aspects of their way of life and the degree to which they engaged with their community's conservative values, what kind of negotiations or confrontations they experienced, and the consequences they had to deal with. Although their responses varied, there was a consensus among them that they had been treated by their community leaders as a "threat" to the existing social order. Most of them described the intra-relationship between them and the rest of the wider Sudanese community's women as uneasy and noted that they tended to be labeled as troublemakers and community dividers. Community leaders, who were almost all male, used morally loaded labels to silence their dissent. One of the participants called that approach a "moral game" used to discredit them in society as a way to silence them and reduce their assertiveness – viewed as "rebellious voice".

On the individual level, the participants believed that Australia has provided them with the rule of law as well as space, which have given them the opportunity to express and define their rights, pushing back against the socio-cultural restrains they used to encounter back in Sudan. For some participants, to be exposed and live in a free society for the first time was an incredible experience and a chance to reflect on their identities as feminists coming from a different socio-cultural background that is in many ways opposite to the values and traditions of Western feminism.

The majority of the participants believed that their interrelationships with the wider Australian society have not been on good terms. Despite the fact that the majority of the liberal women have a high proficiency in English as "symbolic capital", which they considered as a key factor of integration and means of communication, the dominant Australian society has treated them as "other". The liberal women expressed a sense of disappointment; "otherness" seemed to negate the liberal outlook to which they ascribed.

5.4 What does it mean to be a liberal woman?

Although the participants' responses were varied in describing what "liberal women" means, they were unanimous on a set of characteristics that define liberal women: a sense of self-confidence and a tone of assertiveness in expressing their liberal attitudes, including the exercising of their human rights. The reason behind that might be found in the long history of the women's movement in modern Sudan since the early 1950s, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Although liberal women have always been a minority in a predominantly traditional and conservative society like Sudan, the influence of the women's rights movements and these women's continuous striving for improving their quality of life has had an effective impact on subsequent generations of women in Sudan.

Sawsan Zakaria, a feminist and a community leader, stated, "I consider myself a liberal woman, which means in my opinion a woman looking for her rights, as simple as that. In Sudan, the term "liberal", as you know, has a different meaning; it is close to an insult." Gada Awad, a feminist and a community leader, viewed liberal women as "women who enjoy every right in this world; I do what I want, whenever I feel I want to do it." Yousra Mubarak considered liberalism to be the attitude of taking the side of human rights and showing solidarity with people who struggle for their rights, no matter who they are, where they come from, or what class or race they belong to. She believed that her personal activities as a woman and public activities as a musician have been dedicated to the interest of women's rights. The following was her response when she was asked in what terms she defines herself as a liberal woman:

> …in terms of leaning and defining myself within the human rights frame. In the form of defending my rights as a woman and showing solidarity with any people's rights, no matter who they are. In the way I contribute towards whatever expands women's rights and establishes themselves positively in the society.

Najat Al-mahadi, a liberal and intellectual activist, believed that to be a liberal woman means to adopt a way of life that reflects one's beliefs and acting without fear:

> A liberal woman to me is someone adopting beliefs that reflect her choices and to be able to act according to those beliefs or ideas, not just to think of them. Also…to live without any fear of censorship.

5.5 The influence of the social privilege

The participants articulated that socially, they belong to the middle and upper-middle classes. In general, this provided them with a quality education in one of the elite schools or colleges where English is often taught at an early age. There was a consensus among the participants that their social strata and quality education have given them an advantage compared to the rest of the wider Sudanese community, in particular those who came from rural areas and war zones, where what education was available was poor, and life struggles affected their wellbeing. However, in the Sudanese context, the participants' membership in a bourgeois class did not mean that they were necessarily liberals. In fact, most of those from this class generally tend to lean towards traditional and conservative values. In their responses, the participants reflected on the impact of their social, educational, and professional advantages on their lived experiences in both the homeland and Australia.

Sawsan Zakaria, a feminist and community leader, acknowledged her social privilege, which stemmed from her membership in the dominant culture, in which physical features and skin colour matter. Mastering the English language was another source of advantage in Australia that many of her counterparts from the wider Sudanese community did not share. She commented:

> For example, my features give me an advantage wherever I go somewhere in Sudan compared to someone from the marginal regions of the country. If both of us applied for a job, I would be favoured. Unfortunately, I can say I belong to the privileged race, besides the fact that I come from an educated family, a privilege that many people do not have. Also, I came to Australia with fluent English and competitive work skills; that is why I got a decent job within a year of arriving, even before having enough time to integrate. I have been in touch with the white culture even before coming to Australia due to my education in foreign schools; hence, I know how to communicate and interact with them. Besides that, I am coming from a family that doesn't discriminate between males and females; that is why I was so confident when I came here, because I know that I can achieve equally the same way my husband can.

Gada Awad, a feminist and a community leader, believed that social privilege can provide an advantage in the resettling process. Nevertheless, she did not consider homeland privilege as the only determining factor of success in the host land:

> If you have a good quality of education or a sound profession back home, you will struggle less here. Another thing, there are some people who are open-minded by nature and willing to embrace new ways of life; in this regard, they can easily adapt themselves to the host land. In fact, the matter is a bit more complicated than we think.

Gada Awad felt that her social privilege back in Sudan and the advantages she possessed as a consequence have played a noticeable role in her process of adapting to Australia:

> Yes, they gave me some advantages. I came from a family very familiar with traveling overseas; that is why I didn't find any difficulties traveling and came here. Another thing: I am in regular communication with my family and extended family through social-media applications. All my family, aunts, and uncles have smart phones, and they know how to communicate using social media. I know many people in the community suffering from the fact that their parents are not familiar with the technology, and they can't communicate with them through social media.

Yousra Mubarak, a feminist and an artist, acknowledged that being a member of the mainstream back in Sudan was enough to be considered privileged; however, she did not believe that being privileged in the homeland has any impact on Sudanese migrants in general, because they are all considered black in the eyes of the Australian system:

> Unfortunately, it is a matter of fact that once you belong to the mainstream [in Sudan], then you have privilege. It is enough in Sudan to have a bit fairer skin colour and long hair and to speak Arabic to be privileged. Although this could have impact in Sudan, here in Australia we are all black. As migrants we are all struggling to overcome the structural racism and the systemic exclusion.

Najat Al-Mahdi a feminist and intellectual activist, believed that only English-language proficiency can be considered as bringing someone into the privileged class. However, having been relegated to a minority upon her arrival in Australia, Najat got the chance to see the moral side of the privileged experience, and the intersectionality of being a socially privileged feminist not related to the Western culture:

> Definitely, it helped me to build awareness about many things I used to take for granted; I mean the privilege I used to enjoy as someone from the

> mainstream compared with the pain the minorities back home have been going through. You start to realise the open doors you get as a matter of the privilege you have and the doors that shut in the faces of those from the minority groups, and to what extent you have been lucky. Another thing, which I think is important: as you know, I am a woman, but [when you are] part of the dominant culture, there are many women's issues you never paid attention to before, and you think this is "natural", but when I came to Australia, I started to see and sense these things in a different way.

5.6 A liberal woman in the eyes of the community's women

The liberal women participants also discussed to what extent their liberal attitudes affected their social relationships with the women in the wider Sudanese community who did not share the same liberal values. Most of the liberal women participants tended to point out that their intra-relationship with the wider Sudanese community in general was uneasy and challenging and required them to engage in compromise. Many felt that the disparities in perspectives and attitudes about women's issues in the host land and the predominant traditional gender role could be the reason for their disharmony.

Gada Awad found it very difficult to have a close relationship within the community the way she had in Sudan. She believed this was because her individual attitude contrasted with the dominant communal values in the wider Sudanese community:

> I miss the very close friendships the way I used to have in Sudan. Probably age has a role here. However, I mean that sort of attachment you used to feel with your best friends. Here it is difficult to get that kind of relationship, partly because of my liberal attitude. In this case the only way to get close friendships is to compromise your liberal attitude in exchange for acceptance. And when you get rid of your individuality, you accept being of the sheep. In sum, you have to compromise your liberal attitude.

Yousra Mubarak believed that the problem is that Sudanese society is conservative and does not respect differences, which, in her opinion, made conforming to the dominant conservative perspectives the only way to be accepted:

> As Sudanese, we are a very conservative society, and this strongly affects our rights as women and the way the families treat their girls and interfere in everything relating to them, starting from what clothes they have to wear to with whom they have to socialise and what kind of limitations they have

> to observe when it comes to interacting with boys in school or outside. Hence, socialising within the community is not an easy experience. Because you have to be very cautious when you talk and behave to avoid any misunderstanding. Despite that, I always hear some negative comments describing me as someone arrogant and living in her own world, just because they can't come to terms with my way of life. They don't like to show respect for differences. Honestly, I find it difficult to fit in, and also it is always difficult to socialise if there is no like-minded person at the moment when you are with them.

Najat Al-Mahdi brought a different opinion to the rest of the participants regarding her social relationships with the traditional and conservative women of the wider Sudanese community. She claimed that her liberal attitude has not been an obstacle in dealing with the rest of the wider Sudanese community's women. Instead, she said that these women had been very useful in helping her to resettle in Australia:

> In fact, I learnt more about Australia from the conservative women of my community. I found their lived experiences to be more useful than my English language. I learnt from the way they are struggling with the system. They opened many doors for me, more than the English language did. Those women happened to be in Australia prior to me. They had been through a lot of challenges since their arrivals. They learnt things firsthand through their lived experiences. For example, as mothers have children in schools, they needed to know many things and asking schools about many things they never experienced before their arrival to Australia. Their lived experiences have prepared me to navigate the school system for my children and I benefited a lot from that. Another thing, they have been so helpful in what they call "life hacks", like where to live and how to manage it economically. I found them very experienced in this matter.

Suzan Zakaria, a feminist, and a community leader believed the opposite of Najat Al-Mahdi's viewpoint about the possibility of a meeting point between her and the conservative women in the wider Sudanese community. Instead, she believed that the differences in attitudes make social interaction tense and uneasy:

> As you know, the Sudanese community is [made up of] pockets. There are many people from different backgrounds; some of them came from Arab Gulf States and some from other places. I have my group with whom I socialise. Sometimes they describe me as a fanatical feminist. They say it in a joking way, but I know they mean it. They think I am a fanatic in the beliefs I stand for, like women's rights and women's freedom. They keep

> telling me, "What do you want? You are okay. You eat well and dress well, and you don't struggle, so why are you creating all this fuss? Why do you think you have to be loud?" They keep telling me that every gender has its role, and every ship should have one captain, so stop creating problems!

Suzan attributed these women's behaviour to the influence of the patriarchal system in Sudanese society and the way women were appropriated within it, as well as the gender roles to which strictly adhered:

> They have been nurtured to accept this role. And when they get married, they bring this baggage with them, besides the direct influence of the husband; this makes things feel natural. Therefore, they will get rewarded if they conform to this situation with money or gold or just to have a comfortable life. Sometimes they ask me, "Why are you tiring yourself by taking the train every day going to work? You could just sit at home and enjoy your life and let the husband do the role of the breadwinner."

5.7 The situation of in-betweenness: Conservative or liberal within and outside of the Sudanese community

There was a consensus among the liberal women participants that their relationship with the wider Sudanese community's men was confronting to some degree. While the reasons behind that varied among participants, most attributed these struggling relationships to the conservative and patriarchal nature of the social structure and activities where gender roles are observed within the wider Sudanese community. Further, they reported that the increasing number of liberal women competing for community leadership positions has not been received well by the males of the community.

Gada Awad believed that the hostility against liberal women has much to do with the community conservative leaders who do not easily give up their privileges and status quo as men in a community with a patriarchal structure. She went into detail to describe her experience as a community leader at one point of her life as an immigrant:

> Given the fact that I worked in a hostile environment, where the conservative leaders can do anything to keep the status quo as it is… my working in the community was an uncomfortable situation for them. I am talking about the Northern community, whereas the majority are Muslims.

> They try to stigmatise you, especially someone like me who doesn't follow the dress code they impose on women in the community; I mean here the *thoub* and scarf, which they have labeled as a "national costume", which is not true. They can't relate these things to religion because they know we can challenge them; therefore, they use the culture as a tool of suppression. They used to benefit from the silence of the majority of women in the community. We don't have a loud voice of a recognised liberal women, like the Lebanese women, for example. Another thing they do is to play the moral game by labeling us loose and disobedient women, enforcing our whims on our "poor" men. In this situation, no matter what you do to compromise is not going to work. It is an uneasy situation, because, on the one hand, you want to be part of the community, and on the other hand, you don't want to lose your identity.

Yousra Mubarak believed that the biggest challenges that Sudanese women face are the conservative attitude of the Sudanese society and the biases of men against women, and how these biases affect women's rights:

> It is not an easy experience. Because you have to be very cautious when you talk and behave to avoid any misunderstanding. Despite that, I always hear some negative comments describing me as someone arrogant and living in her own world, just because they can't come to terms with my way of life. They don't like to show respect for differences. Honestly, I find it difficult to fit in, and also it is always difficult to socialise if there is no like-minded person at the moment when you are with them.

As someone standing out as a female musician within the Sudanese migrant communities, Yousra Mubarak believed that adopting liberalism is not something easy in a community that does not acknowledge and respect differences, a situation that has affected not just her social relationship, but her profession as a musician as well:

> …when it comes to my music, unfortunately, no appreciation at all. The reason doesn't separate from what I mentioned earlier: the lack of appreciation for differences and the obsession of molding. They want me to keep recycling what they know and are used to. To me as a musician, this is unacceptable and it shows a sense of disrespect, because it works to reduce me to merely a community local entertainer. This attitude is very perplexing.

Najat Al-Mahadi reflected on her own experience as a liberal woman in the Sudanese community. She believed that being a free woman has unavoidable consequences. To her, the issue of fitting in was always going to be a challenge for liberal women within a conservative community:

> There are minor issues. In fact, there is no direct clash, but there are some consequences, like not been taken seriously, or not being considered as a true representative of the "true" Sudanese woman; hence, not to be consulted about things related to family and children's issues. This is because you are different and represent different values that the community is not interested in. In sum, you are a threat.

Najat Al-Mahadi went further to describe her difficult experience, as a liberal woman, beyond the Sudanese community's boundaries, subjected to stereotyping and labeling by the wider Australian society. She tried to describe the situation of "otherness" in which a liberal migrant woman might find herself relative even to like-minded mainstream women:

> The mainstream already has perceived ideas about what it means to be a Muslim or belong to a different group; there are fixed ideas. Meanwhile, the matter is different…. It is a hard situation to be put in such boxes. I tell you this: I went to a protest, and it happened I expressed myself loudly; amazingly enough, this action brought a lot of praise to me by many women from the mainstream, because, as they said, this is something unusual from African women to speak out! This is untrue. As you can see, you have either been treated as someone exceptional and unusual doing things [that are considered] odd, or someone domesticated who fits the stereotype. This is an uneasy situation, because I want to involve myself with people and work with them, and at the same time, I don't want them to treat me as someone exceptional and unusual.

Gada Awad also reflected on the issues of the mainstream labeling and stereotyping of migrant women regardless of their differences in principles and attitudes. Particularly when it comes to women from Muslim communities, it seems like "one size fits all":

> The frustrating feeling has much to do with the labeling and stereotyping forms that are meant to put you in a certain box, regardless of who you are or what attitude you stand for. For example, being a Muslim woman is enough to put you in those boxes, even when you have showed a liberal attitude and have that history of women and gender activism back home. This is when you feel frustrated, and really caught in the middle. You feel you are an outsider in both contexts, here and back home.

Suzan Zakaria felt that the indifference of the wider Sudanese community towards any change in the interest of gender relationships is demoralising, and frustrated any efforts to establish healthy intra-relationships:

> Of course, the community has a role to play. To be honest, sometimes I feel the activities of the community are just like ticking boxes; for example, we did a seminar about domestic violence, and we did a seminar in women rights…etc. The funny thing, all these seminars were attended only by women, as if men are not part of the problem! And when the men learn about these women's activities, their reaction is indifference and arrogance.

5.8 Australian multiculturalism and women's empowerment

In principle, Australian multiculturalism is a policy framework designed to assist migrants to integrate while still maintaining their cultural characteristics in a way that enriches and encourages the diversity of the wider Australian society. However, not many migrants see the bright side of this framework in practical terms. Women's empowerment and the treatment of people of colour have always been contentious issues. As Vasta (1993) argues, the institutionalised marginalisation, exclusion, and informal racism by the Anglo-Australian mainstream have prompted resistance by migrants against assimilation; instead, they have assertively maintained their home cultures and languages. According to Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, and McDonald (2004), the set structures that underpin othering make it difficult for minorities to fit into Australian society. The liberal women participants reflected on their lived experiences within Australia's multicultural policy framework and whether or not this framework had empowered them as women. As mentioned above, the liberal women participants had belonged to the bourgeois class in Sudan, as part of which they enjoyed quality education and the ability to follow recognised professions. Furthermore, they were from the mainstream culture in Sudan, where race, religion, and language significantly shape the social hierarchy. There was a consensus among the participants that their belonging to the dominant group, as well as their educational credentials, had given them an advantage over those from Sudan's ethnic minorities. This perception is very consistent with research that states that higher education in Sudan does not represent the diversity of Sudanese society (Hamid, Thron & Fageeri 2020); instead, it represents a comparison between the privileged urban population and those from the peripheries, specially Darfurian women. These factors may have helped the liberal

women participants to establish their life in Australia more successfully in terms of system navigation and job opportunities than other Sudanese women, who needed to negotiate the language barrier and settle for unskilled jobs.

Gada Awad believed that Australian multiculturalism offers both positives and the negatives. The positive is freedom and full rights through the power of the constitution:

> Socially, although there is many issues around Australian multiculturalism, the sense of freedom and the full rights you enjoy as a citizen are something you have to appreciate because we lack these rights and freedom in Sudan. Having said that, and despite the fact that I come from an open-minded family whose members enjoy their freedom and rights, ironically, we couldn't enjoy these rights outside our home. On the contrary, in Australia these rights are secured and protected for any individual. In sum, more democracy and freedom are the only solution, from what I can see.

Reflecting on the negative side of the multicultural policies, Gada believed that policy-makers tend to assume that migrants can easily navigate the system, a situation that reveals a lack of proper knowledge about their lives prior coming to Australia:

> The system treats the migrants from where the mainstream stands, besides bits and pieces of information provided by the migrants about themselves. As I said before, I worked as a community leader, and from my own experience I can tell you: if you want to apply for a grant to be used for building awareness, or intellectual activities, likely, you will get nothing if not ignored. However, the matter is totally opposite if you applied for food or dance or music. This is how the system values your cultural contribution. They forget the fact that eating your own food, dancing, and singing your own music is not enough to give you access to the mainstream.

Najat Al-Mahdi believed that the only way to reconcile with multicultural Australia is to position oneself among other minority groups that experience similar injustices, including discrimination – the unhappy side of Australia:

> As I said, I started to reconcile with Australia recently during the Revolution in 2019, because this event opened the door to link myself with different allies like indigenous groups and social-justice groups. This happened when I started to relate not to the "lucky" land of Australia, as

> it has been called, but to multicultural Australia. I related myself to the history of Aboriginal people of Australia, the history of colonialism and struggle, the issues of social justice that confront refugees and migrants; this is where I can relate. These narratives of troubled Australia make me more connected to it as a Sudanese-Australian. This is what empowers me, because, to me, identity is about challenging, not just sitting and receiving.

Reflecting on her artistic activities as a musician, Yousra Mubarak felt disillusioned about Australian multiculturalism. She believed that racism and discrimination in Australia affect the very bases of fairness in relation to how migrants have been treated:

> This part is related to me as a musician facing ongoing obstacles to present my music in the mainstream venues, which are controlled and manipulated by the Anglo-Saxon industry. Although I achieved a lot of success and have been able to reach the wider audience of these venues, it is always difficult to maintain a foothold there without exploitation.

5.9 Discussion

The brief historical account of the Sudanese women's movement for liberation and rights that began this chapter is a backdrop to the position of liberal women as a minority destined to compromise their views, and to be subjected to scrutiny within the dominant traditional and conservative Sudanese society wherever they are. Sudanese liberal women in Australia, as part of the wider Sudanese community, are not exceptional. The study findings suggest that the conflict of values between them and the generally more traditional community was and still is the cause of misunderstanding and tension. The liberal space and policies for women's empowerment that Australia provides, along with the privilege they enjoyed in the homeland in terms of education and work skills, has given liberal women an advantage in Australia compared with their conservative and sectarian counterparts. It can be argued that this situation has the effect of deepening the perceived gap between them and the wider Sudanese community's leaders on issues of integration, individual liberation, and women rights within the community, as most of their responses suggested.

Having been a minority within their own community, and then experiencing being stereotyped and labeled by the Australian dominant culture, they have been put in a position of "in-betweenness" in terms of fitting in and belonging. Although the participants' responses showed some appreciation for multicultural Australia and the space it provides for freedoms and the empowerment of women, a considerable number of them felt skeptical and disillusioned about the systematic racism and discrimination they experienced in Australia on a daily basis.

The findings indicate that the participants had adopted practical steps to deal with their position as a minority within the wider Sudanese community and had also been drawn to identify with Indigenous Australia's issues as a minority as a means of belonging. The responses showed that some of the participants contested for community leadership positions in order both to give women in general a voice and to normalise their presence and behaviour. The participants suggested that their main work in this sphere was intended to decrease the patriarchal influence of the community across many projects to empower women through education opportunities, wellbeing programs, and emancipation from the community's male-oriented values. The challenges they encountered reflect the conflictual positions of both sides. For the community leaders who lean to the traditional and conservative values, liberal attitudes and feminist principles act as a threat to undermine their cultural characteristics and prevent them from being who they are. Hence, based on this notion, those self-identifying as liberal women are seen as a kind of Trojan horse, injecting Western influence and values into the community to agitate women against the settled gender roles and traditional values of the wider Sudanese society.

Other participants believed that the wider Sudanese community's male leaders fear losing their status as men in a liberal country like Australia and use their influence as leaders to project their fears onto the entire community, taking advantage of their feelings of isolation and marginalisation as migrants. Some of the participants accused the male leaders of pushing the wider Sudanese community to build a closed entity, disconnected from the wider Australian society.

In sum, one can argue that the nature of the intra-relationship between the liberal women and the rest of the community is dialectical and based on contestation rather than harmony. The participants' responses suggest that the liberal women adopt a position of openness and engagement with the wider Australian society, the rest of the Sudanese community prefer to remain an invisible community that derives its sense of security from maintaining a low profile and closed

boundaries. The battle concerns community representation and who has the right to obtain and practice it. Although the liberal women are a minority and occupy an uncomfortable position in the community, they have the advantage of communicating effectively, given their high proficiency in the English language and their professional networks, which facilitate their interactions with the government institutions that are designed to assist and empower women. Further, liberal women seem to be more familiar with the liberal and secular spaces that encourage women's rights, freedom of expression, and individual initiative than their counterparts in the wider Sudanese community who, due to cultural adaptation issues, tend to be both invisible and resistant to integration.

The dialectical nature of the relationship between the liberal women and the rest of the community, particularly male leaders of the wider Sudanese community, could open many possibilities for the community's orientation. First, the liberal women's push towards openness, inclusion, and reaching out to the wider Australian society, using practical means such as competition for leadership, might escalate the process of integration. Second, the ongoing tension could strengthen the tendency among the community members towards conservatism and encourage them to develop a robust resistance to any sort of change. Finally, the unresolved situation might inspire the liberal women to create their own body or take the issue of integration and belonging to the individual level.

In conclusion, the wider Sudanese community's tendency towards invisibility, is so far sustained and might continue for a period of time; however, the constant contestation between the liberal women and the majority conservatives may accelerate the integration process and encourage the development of new forms of diasporic identities on the individual level.

Chapter Six

The intra-relationships of the wider Sudanese community in Australia

6.1 Introduction

Dealing with the community as a cultural space where people can interact and share their culture, religious beliefs, customs, and traditions is one of the interests of this study. To do that, the study investigated the socio-cultural intra-relationships among the Sudanese migrants and the way they reflect themselves in their activities.

The importance of paying attention to the Sudanese intra-relationships within their cultural space has much to do with the peculiar situation of Sudan itself. Its peculiarity stems from the fact that it is one of the most fragmented countries in post-colonial Africa. Since independence, it has been plagued with civil wars, ethnic cleansing, and constant political instability. Many academic scholars have attributed this situation to the failure to build a consensual national identity in one of the most diverse countries in the world, as discussed in Chapter Four. Further, the legacy of slavery, the influence of religion in politics and the imposition of the Arabi-Islamic culture on the ethnic minorities as a national identity emerged as salient findings across the participants' responses.

To what extent the fragmented situation back home has or has not affected the intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants in Australia is one of the core themes of this study. To explore the social, cultural, and ethnic interactions of the wider Sudanese community in Australia, the study invited participants from a variety of sub-groups to reflect on their experiences with intra-relationships in Australia. Their comments suggest that the Sudanese diasporas in Australia are dividing themselves along ethnic, cultural, and religious lines. The emergence of ethnic communities such as the Darfurian ethnic community, the Nouba Mountains ethnic community, and the Sudanese Coptic community, provides evidence for these divisions.

All participants in this research were given the chance to express their views about the wider Sudanese community's intra-relationships and to discuss relevant questions to explore the consequences and impacts on such interaction on the social cohesion and integration. The

participants spoke at length about ethnic identity, ethnic affiliations, ethnic tensions, homeland racism, and cultural chauvinism.

To what extent the history of divisions in Sudan has or has not influenced the current intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants in Australia was a primary purpose behind the exploration of the social interactions within the wider Sudanese community. Although the prevailing responses support the idea that divisions back home have significant impacts on migrants' intra-relationships in Australia, the responses were varied. Most of the responses reflected the participants' own ethnic, cultural, and political positions. For example, participants from Darfurian and Nuba Mountains ethnic groups spoke about the history of racism, religion, and cultural supremacism to which they had been subjected back in Sudan, and the impacts those experiences had on their interaction with Sudanese migrants from the culturally dominant groups. These responses showed that that issues of identity, racism, and religious and cultural chauvinism overlap.

6.2 The chapter outline

Five themes emerged from the participants' responses:

- **The contested national identity** and its impacts on the wider Sudanese community's intra-relationships in Australia.
- **Ethnic tension**, as it has been highlighted in particular by the participants who belong to the ethnic communities.
- **The impacts of the history of racism and discrimination** in the homeland and its repercussions on the wider Sudanese community's intra-relationships in Australia.
- **The influence of religion** on the homeland politics and its impact on the Sudanese wider community's intra-relationships in Australia.
- **The advantage of ethnic identity** in Australia and its impact on the reunification attempts under one broader Sudanese identity.

Each of these interconnected themes will be discussed individually in this chapter to give a clear picture of the complex ways the homeland's divisions influence Sudanese migrants' intra-relationships in Australia.

6.3 The issue of national identity in Sudan

Agreement on the definition of identity as a political and social concept remains elusive among scholars (Fearon, 1999). Kehliy (2009) argues that identity is a dynamic concept that tends to change over the course of one's life. To Maalouf (2000), the complexity of identity as a concept comes from the role that allegiances and affiliations play, in a way that sharing some identity markers, such as religion, with a particular group might not be enough to be considered as sharing the group's identity as a whole, as in the case of Turks and Kurds. Kehily (2009) describes identity as a meeting place where social interaction tries to unify people around common cultural and value conventions. Deng (1995, p. 14) defines identity "as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, language and religion and to what extent this identification determines their participation politically, culturally, economically and socially in a given context". Wodak (2009) argues that, although national identity can be seen in the notion of cultural commonality, it can be also recognised through the attitudes that "other" particular people or groups.

The complexity of "identity" as a concept as well as a social practice is also related to the emergence of the nation-state, with national identity at the core of its existence. In the Sudanese context, national identity has always been an issue reflecting itself in prolonged civil wars, political instability, and cultural contestation (Miller, 2006; Abusharaf, 1997; Idris, 2012). The struggle in post-colonial Sudan to construct an inclusive national identity needs to be discussed to get a better understanding of the identity fragmentation of the Sudanese people, both inside Sudan and in the diaspora. In this regard, exploring the historical attempts of nation-building can be useful. Prunier and Gisselquist (2004, p. 108) write, "The country now called the Sudan is in fact an arbitrarily demarcated chunk of the African continent whose borders are loosely derived from the limits of Ottoman Egyptian expansion from 1821 onwards." Vhumbunu (2018) argues that the modern geo-political Sudan was created by the British colonisers, and before that the region consisted merely

of scattered kingdoms and scattered groups of tribes. Hence, the issue of identity was not a contested issue at that time; it was something engineered by the coloniser's policy of "divide to rule". "The first 'modern' state pattern to which the Sudanese were forced to adapt was that of nineteenth century Ottoman power. The Ottoman Empire had some features of the modern state, in that it minted currency, raised taxes, established customs, and maintained a professional army and an organized civil service" (Prunier & Gisselquist, 2004, p. 109). According to Deng (1995), the British colonisation of the Sudan came after a brief native revolution toppled the Turco-Egyptian colonial regime in 1885. This time, a colonial intervention, known as the Reconquest, led to the British-dominated Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899-1955), which ended slavery and nominally unified the country. The decision to administer the North and the South separately, however, reinforced Arabism and Islam in the North, encouraged southern development along indigenous African lines, and introduced Christian missionary education and the rudiments of Western civilisation as elements of modernisation in the South.

The literature indicates that the history of modern Sudan is the history of identity contestation. The failure to build a unified and inclusive national identity has come with a heavy price: a fragmented and dysfunctional country plagued with prolonged civil wars, ethnic tensions, and political instability. This raises the questions: to what extent have these factors affected the Sudanese migrants' intra-relationships, how have the participants who represent different ethnic groups sensed these factors, and how do they reflect them in their lived experiences in Australia?

Mohammed Keer from the Darfurian ethnic community believed that in an ethnically polarised country like Sudan, ethnic identity matters; he notes that adhering to his ethnic identity is encouraged and recognised in Australia and does not conflict with his Sudanese identity:

> Ethnic identity is very import to me. I have my own culture and heritage, and I have got many things giving me different feelings and I sense them in a specific way. Look, now we live in Australia, but are still maintaining our Sudanese culture and hoping to pass it to our children who were born here. Based on this logic, the Darfurian identity has the same meaning as the Sudanese one: belonging. And this is something very important to me.

Amjad Kamal, from the Coptic community, believed in a united Sudanese identity; nevertheless, he did not see this as a reason to give up his ethnic identity:

> Having showed my interest in seeing the wider Sudanese community reuniting doesn't mean that you have to undermine your ethnic identity. Every ethnic group has the right to feel proud of their culture and social heritage and to pass it on to their next generations. Even the Australian multicultural system encourages and supports people to do that. However, I don't agree with those who put their ethnic identity above the national one. Yes, I am Coptic, but first and foremost I am a Sudanese.

Abbaker Adam, from the Darfurian ethnic community, acknowledged the fact that the civil war in Darfur has complicated the issue of ethnic identity, and is something he could no longer take lightly:

> I consider myself a genuine member of the wider Sudanese community, though I consider that my ethnic background is my small family. I used to work in the advocacy field with many organisations back home. However, due to the civil war in Darfur, yes, ethnic identity became something that one has to be aware of. Nevertheless, and from my own perspective, I believe in our Sudanese identity more than anything else, although I am very aware of the complexity of the whole situation.

Abdelwahid Mohammed, from the Darfurian community, believed that the issue of national identity, the location of minorities, and the question of race and religion are factors standing in the way of coexistence and equal citizenship rights in Sudan.

> Given the fact that we had been persecuted by the Sudanese central government, as a result, when we came here to Australia, we found the Sudanese community so indifferent towards our tragedy, that that is when we decided to create our own ethnic community. As you can see, the division has much to do with politics rather than cultural or ethnic differences.

Habib George, from the Coptic community, thought divisions into ethnic communities, specifically in the case of the Coptic community, could be considered coincidences rather than deliberate actions.

> I am a Sudanese beyond anything else and 100% I reconciled with it and feel no conflict. Look, to be born a Sudanese, this is like you were born with lungs, you don't need to learn how to breathe. It is something that will always be there. At the same time, we need to get rid of the tribal and ethnic supremacies as "natural" causes of racism. In Australia no one is talking about tribes or ethnic supremacy. Even the atrocities that were once committed against the Aboriginals, the government publicly apologised to them.

Kodi Anan, from the Nouba Mountains community, said that the importance of ethnic identity comes from the care and encouragement that multicultural Australia has shown towards the Sudanese minorities.

> Yes, ethnic identity is important, because the Australian multicultural system encourages ethnic groups to organise themselves around social and cultural activities to develop their own voices. As individuals it is hard to achieve that. Nevertheless, as ethnic groups, we still didn't know how to use this cultural space and produce what it can give us – a reasonable recognition.

6.4 Ethnic tensions among the Sudanese migrants in Australia

The meaning of ethnicity as a concept is a subject of heated debate in academia. "In defining ethnicity, there is widespread consensus that it expresses ideas of common origins and ancestry, and that its distinctiveness becomes relevant only in relation to another identity, which is perceived as different" (Paglia, 2007, pp. 9-11). Mozaffer (2007) argues that cultural elements like religion, dress, and food can constitute ethnic identity in any given multi-cultural society. Contrary to popular belief and from a constructivist point of view, Roosens (1989) argues that ethnicity does not always stem from ancient tradition or nationality, but can be shaped, modified, recreated, or even manufactured in contemporary societies.

This section discusses the rise of ethnic tension in post-colonial Sudan from independence to the present day, and investigates the impacts of these ethnic tensions on Sudanese migrants in their intra-relationships in Australia. As one of the main markers of identity, ethnic divisions in Sudan have worked as obstacles of building a consensual national identity. The way the country was

formed and shaped by British colonisation has left a legacy in the form of political instability. Prunier and Gisselquist (2004, p. 110) write:

> The Sudanese, with their dry sense of humor, call their own country *laham ras,* or sheep's head, because every single morsel in a sheep's head looks and tastes different. The implication is, and rightfully so, that the country is a *hodge podge* of cultures, races, and languages. Unlike neighboring Ethiopia, which in many ways is just as heterogeneous as the Sudan, there is no unifying historical factor, no independent state tradition, and no nationally accepted concept of what constitutes the country.

Idris (2012, p. 324) writes about the lack of congruent unity among the diverse people who inhabit Sudan:

> Since its political independence in 1956, Sudan has witnessed the rise of armed ethnic and regional protest movements that have resulted in great human suffering and the largest number of refugees and displaced peoples in Africa. These protest movements have challenged the legitimacy of the independent Sudanese state, led by Arabized and Islamized elites at the pinnacle of power, to extend and define citizenship rights and responsibilities. In Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile, these movements are not only currently demanding equal citizenship rights, but they are also demanding recognition of special rights including claims to land, autonomous government, and the maintenance of ethno-national identities. They are thus opening up a debate about what citizenship entails, particularly in a multicultural context; how the current state reconciles competing claims of citizenship; and what kinds of viable institutional mechanisms are required for an effective relationship between the state, its citizens, and local power structures.

Similarly, Jok (2012) argues that the successive political regimes in Sudan have failed to construct an inclusive identity reflecting the diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups in the country. Instead, they created a national identity in their own image; an act that has brought prolonged civil wars and political instability. “Educated Northerners imagined a nation that took its territorial shape from the colony but its cultural shape from themselves. In writings and speeches, they affirmed Arabic and Islam as pillars of the nation” (Sharkey, 2003). The insistence on imposing Arab-Islamic identity as a national identity by the Northern elites, who inherited the country from the British colonisers in 1956, has brought the issue of ethnic politics to the surface since then.

“Racial, linguistic, and religious categories have become the basis for crucially important power relationship that has resulted in the peoples who live in the northern and central Nile Valley wielding disproportionate political and economic power” (Lesch, 1998, p. 14).

The way the British colonisers privileged the Arabic-speaking Northern riverain groups and the way these groups maintained and developed the inherited resources to their ends created huge discrepancies between their region and the rest of the country. This situation of “center-periphery”, as De Waal (2007, p. 5) states, makes Sudan “one of the most unequal countries in the world. National economic statistics are unreliable, but the best estimates are that about half the nation’s income and assets are in the capital, as well as about 75% of the country’s health professionals”. O'Fahey (1996) notices that the Southern Sudanese were the first marginalised group to reject the hegemony of the Northerners; their armed rebellion began in 1955, a year before Sudan received its independence from the British colonisers. According to Johnson (2011), “enforcing assimilation policy by the Northern elites in terms of Arabization and Islamization on the African ethnic groups of paralleling with the deliberate economic marginalization is one of the root causes of the South separation and the civil war in Darfur”. Beshir (1980) attributes the continuing political failure in Sudan to the policies that disregarded diversities and the acknowledged inequalities between the centre and the peripheries, and to the enforcement of assimilation to achieve a national identity.

The findings of the research proved that the wider Sudanese community in Australia has not been immune from the influence of the prolonged ethnic tensions back in Sudan. In fact, research has shown that many of these tensions have accompanied migrants to their host countries, whether in Europe, North America, or Australia. For example, Assal (2006) claims that disunity and ethnic and religious tensions are rife among the Sudanese migrants in Norway. According to Abusharaf (2002), the political activism and ethnic tensions among the Sudanese migrants in North America have caused disunity. In the UK, the legacy of historical divisions has taken ethnic and regional forms. “Within the broader U.K. Sudanese population, there are multiple associations who orientate towards to ethnic or regional ‘homelands’; for example, Darfur Union (regional), Massalit Community in Exile (ethnic), Nuba Mountains Solidarity Abroad (regional)” (Wilcock, 2018, p. 372). The participants in the current study gave many reasons for their adherence to ethnic identity while living in Australia; these will be discussed further throughout this chapter.

Like other participants, Mohammed Keer believed that the legacy of ethnic tensions back home has a significant influence on the intra-relationships of the Sudanese diasporas in Australia.

> I attributed this poor outcome to the divisions back home – the contradictions we live in there, reflecting themselves here. Sudan is a continent-state, with huge diversity, ethnically and culturally, besides the class and cultural struggles. So, what happened to those people from all walks of life when they came to Australia? They just divided themselves up the same way they used to do back home. This seems to happen "naturally". It happened to me when I came here, and I linked myself up to my ethnic identity, Darfur. Even the Northerners themselves, although they are the mainstream back home, due to the historical advantages they have got in terms of education and social progress, nevertheless, when they arrived in Australia, they linked themselves to their ethnic backgrounds.

Abbaker Adam spoke about how ethnic polarisation has reduced the chances for all Sudanese migrants to bring themselves into one wider community.

> In fact, flagging ethnic identity has an impact on the intra-relationships between the different Sudanese ethnic groups. It minimises the interaction between these communities, and it confines itself to individual initiatives. Unfortunately, this is the way it is. During the nine years I have spent here, I couldn't see much interacting between the diverse ethnic Sudanese groups in their events.

Similarly, Mohammed Keer reflected on his own experience in trying to bring the Sudanese diasporas together.

> At the beginning, there was an attempt to make the community a wider umbrella that included the whole Sudanese people, but for some reason, the idea did not work. A strong tendency towards ethnic identity started to take place. Hence, any group of people started to link themselves to those who shared the same language, culture, and place. This "natural" tendency started to create a sense of psychological barriers between them and the others, even within the wider ethnic group, like the Darfurians.

Abdelwahid Mohammed asserted that many issues prevent Sudanese migrants from coming together as one community regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.

> Personally, I tried twice to be part of the "Sudanese" community, but I didn't get the acceptance I expected. I remember at that time, the Sudanese community was divided into two communities: one named itself the Sudanese Council, under the leadership of Khalid Osman. I joined them, but as I said, I didn't find myself there either. We witnessed the ongoing power struggle in the "Sudanese" community, which was run by the Northerners at that time, and in all cases, we were treated as strangers. This attitude takes different forms: sometimes we feel overlooked, and in some cases, we hear it loudly that we are not welcomed by those who claim to be the original founders of the community. The indifferent attitude has also expressed itself by our not being asked to pay the membership fees.

Abdelwahid Mohammed continued, saying that the reluctance the Northerners have shown towards inclusive Sudanese community is one of the reasons why the minorities decided to walk away and create their own ethnic communities.

> In the last three years, I started to feel I am Darfurian more than Sudanese. The reason behind that is the attitude of the mainstream Sudanese. Even now the Northerners talk openly about how Darfur was not part of Sudan until 1916, when it was annexed to Sudan by the British colonisers.

In contrast, the Coptic ethnic group appears more tolerant than other Sudanese ethnic minorities in addressing the relationship between themselves as a minority and the mainstream. Despite their affiliation to their ethno-religious identity, they prefer to define themselves as Sudanese first, rather than Coptic. The Copts support the idea of one wider Sudanese community in Australia rather than the current sub-communities, which is in contrast to the perspectives of the other ethnic groups, who prefer to hold onto their ethnic identity in Australia. Responding to the question of why ethnic identity seems important in the diaspora, the Coptic participants stressed that the matter was a coincidence rather than something planned. They attributed the matter to the fact that they were the first Sudanese migrant group to arrive in Australia and merged themselves with the Egyptian Copts, who had already established a Coptic community before the Sudanese Coptics arrived. Habib George spoke about the Sudanese Copts' relatively early arrival in Australia:

> I am a Sudanese beyond anything else. But if you ask, why do we have a Coptic community? I will say it happened coincidentally because the Sudanese Coptic were the first Sudanese migrants to arrive in Australia. We have some of our members who arrived in Australia in 1965. I am not sure if there were any Sudanese from other ethnic groups who arrived as early as we did. There might be a handful of them scattered around Australian cities. However, we were the first big ethnic group to arrive. That is the reason why we created our community based on our ethnic identity. It was a spontaneous act rather than a planned one.

Najeeb Yohana, from the Coptic community, reflected on the days when there were only a few Sudanese migrants before their influx to Australia started in mid 1990s, and how they were in harmony at that time:

> As I told you before, at the time I arrived in Australia, there were very few Sudanese migrants…then the Sudanese people started to arrive, and their numbers have been growing since then. At that time, we used to gather on a regular basis and have family picnics, and our differences were not a problem at all. Our ethnic backgrounds did not get in the way of our association; we united socially as Sudanese migrants. Those moments of unity didn't last. There was not a tangible reason behind that to tell you. On the individual level, still we meet from time to time as old friends. Sometimes we even organise political protests reflecting what is happening back in Sudan. Also, if there is anyone who passed away from the wider community, I go and pay my respects.

Although the Coptic participants did not mention that they had been subjected to any kind of discrimination or racism, they did not show any hesitation to talk about the injustice and discrimination other ethnic groups have been through in Sudan. For example, Najeeb Yohana commented:

> First, we have to admit that the reason behind these ethnic tensions and civil wars in Sudan is injustice. There are many ethnic groups who have never been treated with fairness and they have been marginalised. I used to go on government duty to those periphery regions of Sudan, such as Darfur. I can tell you; those regions were left abandoned. They were totally behind and out of date. In sum, they were isolated, and left with no services or any kind of development. Despite this negligence, the government didn't let them alone. It killed them and destroyed their region.

Habib George also said that the way the ethnic minorities have been treated by the dominant groups is one of the main reasons to the unrest in the Sudan:

> The Darfurian people have suffered enough back home. They were killed and tortured and have been through a lot of atrocities. This could be a justified reason for them to exclude themselves from the wider Sudanese community and stick with their own ethnic identity. I think we are not good enough when it comes to fairness. What I mean by that is we are biased to some degree. We always find it difficult to tell the truth and be fair when it comes to testifying against ourselves or our loved ones.

Amjad Kamal, from the Coptic community, believed that the ethnic divisions are a sign of political immaturity; the politicians back home are responsible for it, and it is an indication of their self-interest attitudes.

> I think it is a sign of identity crisis. Unfortunately, these divisions reflect our tribal and ethnic divisions back home. We live a political and cultural immaturity even among our elites. The tone of tribalism is so high, and this is something bad. Our politicians prioritise their personal interests over the public interests. That could explain why everything is deteriorating: because the politician elites cannot come to agree upon anything related to public interest.

In contrast, a number of participants, including political activists, did not attribute the divisions among sub-groups of Sudanese migrants to ethnic tensions, either back in Sudan or in Australia. A considerable number of the Sudanese Communist Party participants expressed disbelief that ethnic tension was an issue and considered it more or less political propaganda that was a reaction against the discriminative policies adopted by the now-toppled Islamist regime during their 30-year rule.

Jalal Wahbi, a political activist from the Sudanese Communist Party, believed that the way the Sudanese migrants in Australia have divided themselves along ethnic, religious, and cultural lines is something normal and can be applied to any new migrants in their search for those who can share cultural proximity with them.

> I think it is natural when people come to a new environment and find themselves confronted by a new culture and new way of life. In this situation, they will try to find those who share with them the same language, values, and culture. But what is not natural, in my opinion, is to stay the same way after all this long time, and still stick with your ethnic identity instead of getting together as a Sudanese community…. I think the tendency comes from the fact that anyone who came to Australia had been received by one or a group from his family or extended family or those from his ethnic group. I don't think there are any identity issues here.

Adil Hassan, a political activist from the Sudanese Conference Party, criticised the way the Sudanese intellectuals interpreted the ongoing tension between the "centre" and "peripheries" in Sudan, attributing it to their misunderstanding of the theory of cultural analysis.

> It is a misunderstanding of the theory of cultural analysis and the way they tried to apply it to address the centre and periphery issues. Instead of using it to investigate and analyse the historical context of injustice and discrimination to see things from the big picture, naively they kept using it for division and polarisation. From my own point of view, I think the theory of centre and peripheries is based on how to manage social diversity in a multicultural society, because this is the main role of the state, and this is what Australia does. Even the Pan-Africanism ideology that they have tried to apply is in fact an inclusive approach, and it doesn't discriminate African people by race or skin colour.

Hashim Saleh, from the Sudanese Communist Party, denied any ethnic tension in Sudan, believing it to be an exaggeration that cannot be taken seriously.

> I understand why some ethnic groups created their own ethnic communities. They have legitimate political demands. Nevertheless, I don't think there are ethnic issues in Sudan. It is something manufactured by the British colonisers. I was born and grew up in a city where the population came from all ethnic backgrounds and still, they live in peace and coexistence.

Another factor in the prevalence of ethnic tensions among Sudanese migrants that a considerable number of ethnic participants raised is the lack of respect to their ethnic cultural and religious diversity from the dominant groups, both back in the homeland and in the diaspora. The participants' responses reflected the dilemma of post-colonial Sudan and its constant struggle to

reconcile between the national identity, built in the dominant groups' image, and recognition of the ethnic minorities, for which they have been fighting since independence. Sudan's leadership has used the Arabic language and Islam as instruments to assimilate the minorities of the country by force, which has given the culturally dominant groups a sense of supremacy associated with economic privileges (Spaulding, 1982). Sharkey (2003) argues that the feeling of Arab supremacy among the Northern elites was rife to the extent that they never showed any pride in their non-Muslim and non-Arabic culture. This trend prompted El-Tom (2006) to describe Darfurians as being considered "too black for the Arab-Islamic Project of Sudan". The insistence the successive governments in Sudan since independence in 1956 on creating a national identity in their own image has never stopped; in fact, they have continued to work tirelessly to make it happen.

Participants from ethnic minorities discussed the social intra-relationships between them and the culturally dominant group of the Sudanese migrants from an Arab-Islamic background, and whether the new environment in Australia has helped both groups to overcome their differences and agree to mutual trust and reconciliation.

Abdelwahid Mohammed believed that the respect and recognition of ethnic cultures is the only way for the Sudanese diasporas to overcome their divisions and live in harmony.

> If we don't recognise the cultural differences and respect the diversity, nothing will change. And this has to be real and noticeable on the ground and not as lip service. The cultural discrimination is already there. For example, the music of the centre, they call it Sudanese music; meanwhile, any music from the peripheries has been described as folklore! This is strange, and I don't know what sort of measurement they use to come up with such an absurd definition.

Abbaker Adam acknowledged that his lived experience in Australia had taught him a great deal about the possibility of living peacefully in a multicultural society:

> I have learnt a lot from my experience in Australia. I am not the same person I was before coming to Australia. The experience changed many things and ideas and I started to see things in a different way. I learnt the value of living with people from different cultures, languages, skin colours, and religions. It is something precious especially when you reflect

> on your own life and the background you came from. You come to the point and say to yourself, "We really need this experience back home where people can be able to share and appreciate their diversity and live in harmony." Ironically, this is not difficult, when you see the commonalities, we share in Sudan compared to the situation here in Australia.

Kodi Anan believed that only when Sudanese people get rid of ethnic chauvinism and the feeling of racial superiority towards each other that can they come together as Sudanese:

> Ethnic chauvinism is another social disease that affects our relationships as Sudanese. Every ethnic group has that supremacy feeling towards others. They don't want to understand we are all Sudanese and no one else can be closer to each of us than ourselves.... Sudan is the cradle of African civilisation. Anyone who was born and grew up in Sudan has the right to be a Sudanese. We all belong to this great country, and we have to be proud of it.

Habib George believed that encouraging and promoting cultural activities among the Sudanese migrants is the most effective way to bring them together and ease the tension between them:

> Using cultural activities as instruments to bring people together and working on the events based on cultural exchange, in a way that lets people from different ethnic backgrounds get the chance to know and test each other's culture, will bring recognition and appreciation, because cultural interaction is the most practical way of integration and understanding. Also, I think it is important to abolish all forms of traditional authority, like the native administration and tribal chiefdom. Although they have been useful in the past, nevertheless, they have been the source of problems in the modern state. Finally, the separation between religion and the state [should be introduced].

Isam Nour, a political activist from the Umma Party, believed that the problem has much to do with the history of Sudan's social development and its impacts on the way the Sudanese people imagine their life in and outside of the country:

> We are a product of nomadic institutions, which is why we have the tendency of belonging to tribal, clan, and ethnic institutions rather than

> belonging to the civil ones. We trust our nomadic institutions more than we do the state. Australia is an urbanised society; hence, you cannot fit in without submitting yourself to its urban conditions. We couldn't achieve any degree of unity among us because we want any sort of interrelations to submit to our nomadic conventions. From my own experience, I can say there are two reasons that prevent us from achieving any degree of social integration: the first one is that we don't feel any passion towards any urban socialising that causes us to deviate from our nomadic norms. The second is that we don't feel confident to engage in any social relationships based on the urban conditions.

Isam Nour's approach is essentialist rather than historical. His referring to the influence of the nomadic institutions on the Sudanese people ignores the fact that the Western-educated elites' failure to build a modern state has been the reason why people have no more faith in the state's modern institutions. Hence, their retreating to their pre-modern institutions is a survival strategy that comes naturally in such situations.

6.5 Islam and identity politics in the Sudan

According to Trimingham (1980), the presence of Islam in what is now called Sudan can be traced back for centuries; over that time, it has become one of the region's most salient cultural markers. The adoption of Islam by the Northerners of Sudan has played a significant role in emphasising their Arab genealogies as an imagined identity. "They did this in part because of the narrative they constructed of the civilizing effect that Arab-Muslims had and through their dominance as slave-raiders" (Pekkinen, 2009, p. 29). Spaulding (2000) argues that Arabic literature of the "imagined community", whether in writing or verbally, persisted from 1775 to 1922, and has contributed significantly to entrenching this perception.

The feeling of pride and supremacy the Northerners have derived from Islam has functioned as a political ideology to exercise their hegemony over the rest of the Sudanese population from different ethnic backgrounds who do not adopt the Arabic identity, whether they are Muslims or not. The statements of the political elites who inherited the country from the British colonisers in 1956 have made this very clear. Al-Mahjoub, a former prime minister who is considered one of the originators of Sudanese independence, emphasised in one of his speeches that only Islam and

the Arabic language can bring all Sudanese people together around a united identity. Despite his acknowledgement of the Sudanese people's hybridity and his recognition of their mixed races, he considered that Sudanese culture owed its superiority and uniqueness to the Arabs (Sharkey 2007). In addition, Fluehr-Lobban, (1990, p. 614) argues,

> Islam has long played a key role in forming the northern Sudanese identity and in providing political legitimacy to opposition parties and governments alike. The Mahdist state was the first modern Sudanese national entity, governing vast and diverse regions from a central capital at Omdurman, with a centralized legal and political apparatus and its own currency. It was also an Islamic state fashioned to revive the concept and practice of the early Islamic community of Muhammad and his companions.

Little (1995) demonstrates the significant role the Mahdist revolution in the 19th century played in linking politics and religion and building the northern Sudanese identity around Islam, a tendency has continued throughout the history of post-colonial Sudan. Assefa (1990, p. 2) writes, “Since the beginning of the Mahdi period, Islam has been the foundation of Northern Sudanese nationalism. The brand of Islam practiced in Northern Sudan has had strong connection with the Arab language and culture, so much so that identification with Islam has implied identification with Arab ethnicity.” Deng (1995) emphasises the importance of the key role Islam has played to enforce an Arabisation policy upon the minorities in Sudan and the influence it has in molding the national identity around the Northerners’ image. Ahmed (2007, p. 190) demonstrates that “a striking characteristic of the Sudanese political field is the powerful influence of religion. Most Sudanese are Muslims, and Islam is the principal base of legitimacy for the major political parties and their principal instrument of domination, but it is also the instrument of their rivalry”. Fluehr-Lobban (1990) argues that the contested policies of Islamisation and non-Islamisation between the centre and peripheries have brought to surface the negative history of slavery and exploitation, and at the same time, cast a doubt on the country’s future.

The Islamists’ seizing of political power in 1989 was a turning point in the modern history of the country. As De Waal (2007, p. 10) argues,

> The 1989 Islamist coup marked the most ambitious attempt to overcome this elite fragmentation. The succeeding years have not seen the kinds of

> revolving doors in and out of government notable under the previous regimes. In the early 1990s, the regime embarked upon an ambitious revolutionary project, displaying determination and energy that surpassed its predecessors.

According to De Waal (2007), the Islamists adopted a radical Islamic policy called the "civilisation project", which was intended to impose Arab-Islamic identity coercively on the whole country and make Islam a way of life. From a Marxist perspective, Hale (1999) observed a kind of contradiction in the middle-class Islamist portrayal of their positions on liberalism and conservatism. In Hale's view, Islamism is entirely concerned with identity manipulation and culture reconstruction by proclaiming an ideology of liberalism, to gain acceptance of the international institutions of capitalism, while, at the same time, maintaining a posture of anti-imperialism in the wider Islamic fraternity.

Clearly, the robust influence of Islam in Sudanese politics has been long-lasting and pervasive. However, as O'Fahey (1996) argues, the most recent version of Islamic hegemony brought by the Islamist rulers has created unprecedented polarisation. Ahmed (2007, p. 193) points out that "the link between religion and the state was politically confirmed by constitutional decree: 'Islam and the *sharia* are the fundamental authority of the Sudanese state and the foundation of its laws, of its organization, and of politics." The goal of the regime's civilisational project is "the Islamisation of society and the state'." According to Fluehr-Lobban (1990), the intention of the Islamists is to Islamise government institutions, including the legal structure, and imposing the Sharia exclusively as a holy law, thus turning the entire country into a religious state headed by a Muslim leader.

Despite the historical resistance the ethnic minorities have shown against the assimilative policies imposed upon them, the Islamists never stopped pushing the country into more conflicts and political unrest. According to Ahmed (2007), the disregard the Islamist regime showed to non-Muslims' rights is one of the root causes of the political unrest and the ongoing civil wars in Sudan. Simone (1994) argues that the Islamists' failure to achieve Islamisation rests in the fact that they have disagreed about whether a political approach or a theological approach is the most effective tool for their project.

Religion has been one of the factors, along with ethnicity, language, and identity, undermining any attempts to unify the Sudanese people around a consensual national identity. The insistence on homogenising a heterogeneous society like Sudan and annihilating its minorities' cultures has been one of the root causes of the prolong suffering the country has witnessed, a behaviour described by Harir (1994) as an ongoing recycling of the past.

The seizing of political power by the National Islamic Front (NIF) in 1989 took the ethnic polarisation and political unrest to unprecedented levels. The brutality the NIF showed in applying their version of Arab-Islamic identity on the minorities led to the secession of South Sudan in 2011 and vicious civil wars in the Darfur, Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile regions. The NIF also oppressed political opposition from those in the dominant culture who did not share their Islamist ideology. Hundreds of thousands were killed in those civil wars and millions displaced, and more than three million fled the country searching for asylum wherever it seemed safer than home.

Religion has also been used to influence the social, political, and cultural dynamics in Sudan for centuries. However, its direct influence in post-colonial Sudan is immense. Islam, in particular, is considered the most salient identity marker in modern Sudan. Therefore, any attempt to understand the political, social, and cultural events of the country since independence in isolation of its influence will be misleading. The insistence of the political elites since independence on imposing Islam on politics has caused national fragmentation, fragility, and political instability. Islam as a political ideology has caused a division among the larger Muslim groups of Sudan's population and turned them against each other to the point of causing genocide in Darfur, which has been internationally documented.

The interviews in the current study with many participants from different Sudanese ethnic and cultural groups investigated the influence of religion in the homeland and in the diaspora on their intra-relationships as migrants within the wider Sudanese community, and how they see the future of such intra-relationships both in their homeland and in Australia. Although not all the participants' responses showed an explicit role for religion in the social and political unrest, a considerable number believed that reducing the influence of religion on politics and acknowledging the social, cultural, and religious diversity of the country is the only way to achieve

unity and coexistence. Participants from the Darfur and Nuba Mountains ethnic communities, despite themselves being Muslim, complained more strenuously about their unpleasant experiences with the politicisation of Islam than did the Coptic participants.

Mohammed Keer believed the long history of using religion as a political ideology turns it into "symbolic capital" that brings privileges and advantages to those who belong to the Islamist movement, rather than those who share citizenship with them:

> Yes, religion has played a significant role in Sudan's political instability. Islam in general and the Islamists in particular in the last 30 years of their rule indicated to the Sudanese people that the only way to obtain privilege is to be, ideologically, an Islamist. That it means it is not enough to be a Sudanese to get equal treatment as a citizen. Your ideological belonging to the Islamists opens the door for you to get a job or facilitates many incentives that you might not get if you are not one of them…it is symbolic capital because your citizenship is not enough to be fully a Sudanese citizen. This situation causes a lot of problems and has affected the lives of most Sudanese people. For example, the non-religious people felt they were not wanted, and they have been isolated and excluded from society.

When he was asked what the solution might be, from his own perspective, to overcome such a divided situation, he responded that full citizenship and the recognition of and respect for the diversity of the society are the only way to achieve a better future:

> Just to recognise citizenship and to recognise and respect the ethnic and cultural diversity within the state's institutions. I lean with the example of multicultural Australia, as well as the USA, in how they have dealt with the national language in diverse societies. The way the English language has been adopted as the national language has not been at the expense of the other languages. In Australia, for example, even the Arabic language exists in every government institution, despite the fact that it is relevantly new to the country.

Abbaker Adam characterised the role of religion in the disunity as not a "big issue". He did not see religion as a source of either unity or division:

> I don't think religion is a big issue in the Sudanese dispute. In general, each group has the right to take their belief for granted and don't try to impose it on the others. Hence, I couldn't see it as a problem.

However, when he was asked what the best way might be to build a national identity for a country as diverse as Sudan, he immediately mentioned secularism as the only solution.

> A secular constitution is the best way to do that. An inclusive constitution based on citizenship regardless of one's religion, ethnicity and class. A constitution emphasising the rule of law for everyone. We are on the brink of collapse and if we don't act preemptively, it won't be a surprise to see many regions breaking away.

Amjad Kamal believed that the issue of religion has been exaggerated and put on the wrong side of the discussion. To him, the issue is political rather than religious:

> To be honest, I don't think religion is an issue in Sudan. I could be here a little bit opposite to those majority voices who believe religion is a problematic issue in Sudan. Yes, there are some regimes that tried to play the game of religion for political gain, like the recent Islamist regime and Nimeiri regime in its last period back in the 80s. However, in these two cases, you will find the majority who left the country are Muslims. I remember I was studying in England in 1981, and it was the first time I encountered many Sudanese arriving in Britain applying for political asylum. It was the first time ever to hear this terminology at that time, and to see what it means. What I am trying to say: it is politics, not religion, which divided the Sudanese people. As a devout Christian, I don't remember that I have been subjected to any discrimination due to my belief.

Abdelwahid Mohammed believed that the way Islam has been politically used has caused a huge amount of damage and turned it into a disputed factor that cannot bring people together.

> Religion is a problem because it has been used and abused by corrupt and criminal-minded politicians to suppress minorities. Nowadays many Darfurians have converted to Christianity. This is something new; we never had Christians among us before. And to my best knowledge Christianisation is increasing.

Abdelwahid Mohammed believed that religion and politics should not mix. In this regard, he admired the Australian political system, in which church and state are separate.

> Religion has caused our country significant damage. I can't understand what religion has to do with the banking system, education, or health. If

> you go to any Islamic hospital, you will find it runs as any other hospital in the modern world, there is nothing different. This is what I call the exploitation of religion for political ends. Personally, I think religion and politics must not mix. For example, here in Australia I feel very comfortable as someone not affected by the influence of religion. The Christians don't show any supremacy towards anyone who is not Christian. Meanwhile, in Sudan, Muslims feel they are better than Christians, pagans, and atheists. In sum, everyone in Sudan knows religion is a problem, but they like to keep their opinions in the closet.

Habib George believed that the successive post-colonial Sudanese governments committed a deadly mistake when they continued to empower the religious institutions and allow them to interfere in legislation and influence political decisions:

> Giving religion and religious scholars political power or generating legislation from religion is the most devastating thing you can do to coexistence in any country. Religion shouldn't have to mix with politics. I will give you an example: Indonesia is the most Muslim-populated country, more than 200 million, if I am not wrong; nevertheless, it is a secular country. Some people argue in a very naïve way by saying, "Do you want us to live without religion and with no belief?" It is not like that. Religion is a special relationship between the person and God; hence, you have the right to preserve it in the way you like. It is an individual and private thing. In Sudan, the religious *ulama* think they know better than anyone about any aspect of life, just because they have been trained to be religious scholars; that is why they are so arrogant and self-centric. And to be honest, this is the reason our brothers in South Sudan seceded and walked away by creating their own country…. The behaviour of political Islam in the last 30 years has been disastrous by all means. They justified their corruption, misgoverning, and atrocities under the name of Allah. During their time, we regressed more than 100 years from where we had been. I remember when I was young, religion was not an identity as it is now. Nowadays it has become salient, something you can smell in the behaviour when you go back and visit Sudan; this is something bad.

6.6 Racism, discriminations, and ethnic tension in Sudan

According to Sikainga (2011), the inherited legacy of slavery is another factor to be explored to unfold the political, social, and economic inequality between the Arab ethnic groups and the rest of the population. "Slavery and the slave trade left an indelible mark on Sudanese history, ravaging many parts of southern and western Sudan and leaving bitter memories" (p. 13). Abdel Salam

(2000) argues that racism is rife in Sudan and expresses itself on a daily basis. Furthermore, skin colour still has an important role to play among northern Sudanese in determining one's social stratum and economic privilege. "The history of slavery and exploitation is felt consciously by many Sudanese in their day-to-day interactions" (De Waal, 2007, p. **5**). Drawing on his experience as a South Sudanese politician who served as a minister at different times in Sudan, Alier (1990) attributed the failure of modern Sudan to create a national identity to the legacy of racial subjugation intertwined with a sense of supremacy from the Arab-Islamic groups of the North towards the Southerners and the rest of the African ethnic groups. The legacy of slavery is embedded in negative language connotations and social interactions. As Sharkey (2003) points out:

> The words *Sudan* and *Sudani*, or *Sudanese*, were indeed familiar and frequently used, but in the old sense of the original Arabic meaning "Black" as distinct from *Biddan* or "*white*". To Northerners, who regarded themselves as Arabs, being "Sudanese" meant being "Black," as the Arabic root of the term denoted, and being "Black," in turn, meant having low social status. Although blackness and low social status is usually derived from the condition or heritage of slavery, Northerners sometimes applied the term "Sudanese" to individuals who had come from one of the non-Muslim, non-Arabic-speaking areas that had historically been targeted for slave raids even if those individuals had never been enslaved.

In this sense, "the terms *Sudan* and *Sudani* are still sometimes used, especially by members of the older generation among the Northern Sudanese, with reference to the non-Muslim and non-Arabized sections of the population, particularly in the Southern provinces" (Abd Al-Rahim, 1970, p. 237). Spaulding (1982) demonstrates that giving slaves and their children peculiar names was not intended to assimilate them in the society; on the contrary, it was an act purposefully meant to distinguish them from the free community.

The legacy of slavery in Sudan extended beyond the slavery era. The process of integration and acculturation has been as complex as slavery itself. As Sharkey (1992) argues, being liberated from slavey does not mean breaking with the past, in most cases. Theoretically, it could give slaves, particularly male slaves, a feeling of freedom of mobility and little incentive to change their occupation. Makris (1996) writes that by adopting Islam as the religion of their masters, the ex-

slaves went through a process of Arabisation, in which they adopted Arab customs and the dominant culture's behaviour and language; nevertheless, they found it difficult to achieve social equality in the community that had once enslaved them. Sikainga (1996) argues that the emancipation of the ex-slaves has been a legal change, but on the social and economic levels has had little impact on their lives. Culturally, the ex-slaves are still considered inferior to the Northerners, and most of them are still at the bottom of the social and economic ladder.

This is not to say that the ex-slaves did not continue to strive to change their position from outsiders to insiders. Sharkey (1992) points out that slaves did not love slavery. "They have to come to terms with their enslavement and give up emotions and grief to continue their life. At some point the trauma of enslavement began to give way to social adaptation, until the veils of time reduced the former life to a mere memory" (Sharkey, 1992, p. 102). But to what extent has been being insiders given ex-slaves a chance to improve their life condition. Sharkey (1992) argues that ex-slaves showed a voluntarily assimilative attitude towards the former masters' values and way of life in order to give their own lives meaning.

Deng (2004) writes, "The abolition of slavery did not necessarily make the journey to equality in a post-colonial Sudan possible or help healing the past. The connection between slavery and humanitarian crises in modern Sudan is inherent in the atrocities associated with slavery, the resistance to it, and the tragic consequences on the victims and their communities." Sharkey (1992) argues that by conforming with the religious and moral values of their former masters, the ex-slaves were seeking acceptance and membership in the culturally dominant society that had once enslaved them. Although abolition in fact helped the process of re-humanising the emancipated slaves, at the same time it institutionalised their marginality in the social status quo (Sharkey, 1992).

Skin-colour is another aspect of racism that encapsulates the complexity of structural racism and discrimination in the Sudan. While the dominant ethnic groups of the country who link themselves to the Arabs genealogy have skin that could be considered black, they have never admitted their blackness. Abdel Salam (2000) points out that racism in Sudan is rife and expresses itself on a daily basis, and skin colour still has an important role to play in determining social strata and economic privilege among northern Sudanese. Sharkey (2007) attributes the denial of black skin among the dominant Arab groups to the legacy of slavery to which those from dark-skinned

African ethnic groups had been subjected in the past. Historically, the Arabs, or *Jellaba*, used to work as middlemen helping the Turco-Egyptian officials hunt men and women from the South, Nuba Mountains, and Darfur and exporting them to Egypt. They inherited the slavery business after the collapse of the Turco-Egyptian regime. The slavery trade flourished intensively after the *Mahdya* regime, the first indigenous central government in Sudan's documented history, took over in 1885 (Sharkey, 2007).

The stigmatisation of black skin colour among the Sudanese Arabs is phenomenal. To avoid being described as black, the Northerners invented the term "green" to define their blackness. According to Deng (2004), "green" has become a preferred colour of skin and a symbol of beauty in their poetry and songs. To them, as Mukhtar (2004) points out, the black person is the *abid* (servant), who belongs to the African ethnic groups from the South, the West, the Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile areas. Idris (2012) attributes this attitude to the enslavement practice in which the Northerners imposed cultural and social meanings on skin colour and benefited from religious differences to redefine the ethics and norms of the society and its polity. According to Deng, although the term "green" is merely a synonym of blackness, the meaning the Northerners projected on it makes it a colour of masters. Mukhtar (2004) attributes the behaviour to the inferiority complex Northerners feel towards the Gulf Arabs in the Middle East, who see the Sudanese Arabs as merely black *abid* (servants). The failure of full inclusion and recognition the Sudanese Arabs wished to gain from the Gulf Arabs has turned to self-hatred that expresses itself in an uneasy relationship between them and the ethnic minorities of the country, Mukhtar (2004) argues. O'Fahey (2006, p. 34) writes, "In Sudanese Arabic, there is an elaborate colour-coding vocabulary. These are topics that are only now beginning to be discussed. The reason for this reticence is slavery." Pekkinen (2009) points out that the Sudanese elites persistently resist the way the Arab world regards them as Africans. This notion is reminiscent of South Africa's apartheid colour code, which was the basis of privilege for the minority white elites and disadvantage on the part of the majority indigenous people, as Pirtle (2021) points out. For example, identifying with the religion of the elites did not allow the disadvantaged population access to the identity and privileges of the minority white population.

The legacy of slavery and racism has a significant role in the way the Sudanese migrants divide themselves along ethnic lines, even if it seems a "natural" tendency, as one of the participants

described. However, to what extent does this legacy continue to articulate itself, and how has it worked to intensify the ethnic tensions within the wider Sudanese community in Australia? To what extent has this undermined any attempts to overcome the past to create a more unified congruent community?

Mohammed Keer believed that the forced-assimilation policy adopted by the successive regimes in Sudan since independence have not been successful; instead, it has perpetuated the political and ethnic tensions.

> If we could succeed in creating one national identity with respect to our diversity in Sudan, the matter would be different. We could choose the Arabic language voluntarily, as a national language shared by the wider ethnic groups. Unfortunately, the way the Arabic language has been adopted hasn't produced inclusion. The minorities felt they had been excluded. This feeling of discomfort definitely has led to hatred of the dominant culture. It is not necessary for Sudan to adopt the Arabic identity as a national one; it is an inclusive Sudanese national identity that we all need. A national identity that recognises and encourages the diversity of the Sudanese people. If this had happened 40 or 50 years ago, we could now live in a different Sudan, and the South wouldn't have separated and created its own country, and we wouldn't have witnessed the conflicts that are happening now in Darfur. Also, the imbalance in development has always been a problem and a reason for unrest. The concentration of the wealth and infrastructure in the centre and the capital, Khartoum, widens the gap between the urban and the rural areas, which has resulted in ruralising the centre itself.

Abbaker Adam believed that the predominant ethnic chauvinism among the wider Sudanese ethnic groups reflects the situation back in Sudan.

> Racism has a negative impact and is the reason for not being able to create one wider Sudanese community for all of the Sudanese migrants. What is supposed to be a wider Sudanese community does not represent all Sudanese migrants. It has been hijacked by a group who are not willing to make it inclusive for Sudanese people.

Sawsan Zakaria believed that the forms of injustice and discrimination in Sudan affect the intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants in Australia.

> We do not like to talk or address our issues. In Sudan we are still discriminating between people according to their tribes and ethnic background. It is not enough to be a Sudanese to be treated equally according to constitutional rights, as happens here in Australia.

Yousra Mubarak, a musician and feminist, reflected on how belonging to the dominant culture is a privilege that has many benefits.

> Unfortunately, it is a matter of fact in Sudan that once you belong to the mainstream, then you are privileged. It is enough in Sudan to have a bit fairer skin colour and long hair and to speak Arabic to be privileged.

Abdelaziz Kuoa, from the Nuba Mountains ethnic community, reflected on his own experience with what is called the "Sudanese" community – in principle, an inclusive Sudanese community for all Sudanese migrants in Melbourne.

> The question of representation is always going to be there. I remember we were the first group from the Sudanese migrants to arrive the city of Perth in early 2002. At that time, we decided to overcome our ethnic identity as Nuba Mountains for the sake of the inclusive one, which is the Sudanese identity. We created a soccer team named for Sudan. We chose a uniform representing the whole country. Also, we decided to sing the national anthem before any game. However, and despite all these efforts, the entire Sudanese community could not help but to see us as merely a Nuba Mountains team! As you can see, it is more complicated than we think, sometimes, but we should not have to succumb to our frustrations. We have to keep trying relentlessly for an inclusive Sudanese identity.

6.7 The advantages of ethnic identity in Australia

Although ethnic division is a reality in the Sudanese-Australian migrants' context, not everyone considers it a curse. On the contrary, many participants from the Darfur and Nuba Mountains communities believed that ethnic identity is an advantage and privilege they never experienced back in Sudan. To them, getting an opportunity to build an ethnic identity as a benefit of the cultural space the Australian multicultural policies provide has been both healing and inspiring.

Although they did not feel any contradiction between being a member of an ethnic group and a Sudanese at the same time, they thought the recognition Australia gives to minorities and the

encouragement they receive to maintain and develop their own cultural identities is a privilege. As a considerable number of them commented that Australia had given them the chance to know themselves better for the first time and feel proud of who they are after prolonged suppression and deprivation in the homeland.

Abdelwahid Mohammed believed that the tendency to embrace one's ethnic identity as a Darfurian has much to do with the indifferent attitude from the dominant culture towards the injustices and grievances suffered by the Sudanese migrants before their departure for Australia.

> As you know, we had been persecuted by the Sudanese central government. As a result, when we came here to Australia, we found the Sudanese community so indifferent towards our tragedy that we decided to create our own ethnic community. As you can see, the division has more to do with politics than with cultural or ethnic differences. Later, we tried to build a wider Western suburbs community, including even the ethnic groups we are at loggerheads with back home, like the *Janjaweed*, in an attempt to overcome our political antagonism and maintain our Darfurian cultural identity.... I mean, through the Sudanese community it seems a bit difficult. In contrast, it has always been easier for us to address the Australian authorities regarding our people's suffering as a Darfurian community, because the Sudanese community on many occasions showed no desire to address our people's suffering in Darfur.

Mohammed Keer, another Darfurian, believed in the importance of ethnic identity as long as it gives them the opportunity to develop and practice their local culture peacefully.

> I have my own culture and heritage, and I have got many things giving me different feelings and I sense them in a specific way. Look, now we live in Australia, but we still maintain our Sudanese culture and hope to pass it to our children who are born here. Based on this logic, the Darfurian identity has the same meaning as the Sudanese one: the sense of belonging. And this is something very important to me.

Kodi Anan from the Nuba Mountains Ethnic Community valued the importance of ethnic identity within the Australian Multicultural Policy and the cultural role that it can play.

> Yes, ethnic identity is important because the Australian multicultural system encourages ethnic groups to organise themselves around social and

> cultural activities to develop their own voices. As individuals it is hard to achieve that. Nevertheless, as ethnic groups still we didn't know how to use this cultural space and produce what it can give us – reasonable recognition.

Having said that, nevertheless, Kodi Anan was able to differentiate between ethnic identity and ethnic community and where the harm can be when they mixed.

> From day one, I rejected the narrow definition of ethnic communities, because I know it is not going to help us unite in this country. I always encouraged the idea of the wider Sudanese community instead of these sub-communities. We missed the opportunity to create a very diverse and colourful community reflecting the richness of our skin colour, culture, and traditions. Unfortunately, we came with the packages of our divisions. We need to sit and address our shortcomings for the sake of our second generation. We have to help them live in harmony and get enough strength from their cultural background to establish themselves firmly.

Amjad Kamal believed that there is nothing wrong with adopting an ethnic identity as long as it is not in conflict with the national one. To him, it is a constitutional right represented in the Australian multicultural policy which encourages minorities to be proud of who they are:

> Every ethnic group has the right to feel proud of their culture and social heritage and to pass it on to their next generations. Even the Australian multicultural system encourages and supports people to do that. However, I don't agree with those who put their ethnic identity above the national one. Yes, I am Coptic, but first and foremost I am a Sudanese.

6.8 Discussion

This chapter has discussed the influence of homeland political, social, and cultural divisions on the intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community in Australia. The purpose has been to investigate whether Sudanese migrants have shown a desire to establish a new life in Australia by overcoming their ethnic tensions and historical divisions, and to explore the forms of diasporic identities they have developed, if any, and in what direction they have evolved.

The analysis of the interviews indicates that the homeland's divisions in terms of politics, culture, and religion have a significant impact on the Sudanese migrants' social intra-community relations in Australia. The political, religious, and cultural polarisations have hindered their intra-relationships are revealed in the development of sub-ethnic communities and rivalry in the area of political activism. So far, and according to the responses of the majority of the participants, all the attempts to unite the Sudanese migrants around one wider Sudanese community have not borne much fruit. Many factors such as racism, national and ethnic identities, and religion have played significant roles in perpetuating the fragmentation of the post-colonial institutions in the homeland; this has extended to undermine the social fabric at the public level. A psychological barrier between the ethnic minorities and the culturally dominant group has marked their social interactions, whether in the homeland or in host countries. These key factors need to be explained to have a better understanding about the difficulties Sudanese migrants in Australia encounter in forming and maintaining intra-relationships.

Adopting the Arabic language and Islam as a state strategy to coercively assimilate ethnic minorities under the pretext of building a unified national identity has been the root cause of the civil wars and political instability in Sudan since its independence (Johnson, 2003). The successive post-independence governments' relentless pursuit of the homogenisation of such a heterogeneous country has failed. Moreover, the damage inflicted in this pursuit has also exacerbated the social cohesion and coexistence among its people and divided them into two distinct parts: the culturally dominant groups and the rest of the diverse minorities. The intense imposition of Arabic culture and Islamisation through education and media institutions has worked simultaneously to both indoctrinate the dominant groups and give them a sense of racial and cultural superiority. They have internalised the idea that their cultural behaviour and attitudes are a yardstick of who is the "true" Sudanese and who is not. As Sikainga (2011, p. 13) argues:

> The adoption of an Arab descent became a mark of distinction and a base for social stratification. Those who adopted this form of identity came to view themselves as ethnically and culturally superior to the "non-Arab" and non-Muslim groups in the country's southern and western hinterland.

This status elevated people of the dominant culture as assets ready for use and abuse by the regimes whenever they encountered a rebellion from any of the country's ethnic minorities. In this regard,

three influential major events need to be highlighted to build some awareness about the complexity of the ethnic tensions among the Sudanese people in the homeland and the diaspora due to the consequences of the assimilative policies the successive governments have adopted since independence. A. A. Ibrahim (2001) reflected on the aftermath of a failed coup in 1976 orchestrated by the political opposition allies against the then-dictator Nimeiri, a military general. The allies consisted of the Umma Party, the National Islamic Party and the Democratic Union Party. The operation was supported and funded by the then-Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi. The allies invaded the capital, Khartoum, to oust the dictator. The capital was under their control for three days before the coup failed. The majority of the allies' forces were Darfurians, who formed the majority of the Umma Party's followers. During the fighting the government propaganda machine described the fighters as foreign mercenaries speaking broken Arabic or *rutana* (Arabic with a non-Arab accent). The government's radio and television stations continually reminded people to report on anyone who looked "suspicious" – that is, with African features and speaking broken Arabic or Arabic with an accent.

The second event took place when the Islamists seized power in 1989. They planned to put an end to the South Sudanese rebellion, which was being fought by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. To do that, the government made a shift from a political war discourse to a religious one. The state propaganda machine declared *jihad* against the *kuffar* infidels. Huge brainwashing campaigns to recruit young people from the Arab-Islamic North were conducted. Thousands of youths died before the "holy" war ended in 2005 and a peace agreement signed between the government and the rebels that gave the South the right of separation; this ultimately occurred in 2011.

During the third event, known in the international media as "Darfur genocide" between 2003-2005, hundreds of thousands of Darfurians were massacred, and millions displaced by the government's proxy militia *Janjaweed*, recruited mainly from nomadic Arabs of the region. By encouraging racism and hatred among the ethnic groups in region, the government propaganda machine successfully mobilised them to fight on behalf of the regime, a situation defined by De Waal as "rural decay", in which the neglected people of the abandoned peripheries can be a brutal weapon in the hand of anyone who gives them means of surviving.

The tragedy of these events reflects the complexity of the co-existence of Sudan's ethnic groups and the difficulty of finding any common ground between the ethnic minorities and the culturally dominant groups; rather, it is a "war of vision" where the expectations of the two sides are in absolute conflict (Deng, 1995). The dominant groups fight to sustain the status quo because the economic disparities are huge between them and those in the peripheries (De Waal, 2019). However, the most problematic factor lies in the fact that the dominant groups cannot see the national identity as anything other than their image after decades of investing in their cultural markers – language, religion, and way of life – as its exclusive representation. This attitude reflects itself as, in Barthes's (1973) terminology, "exnomination", in which dominant groups' ideas and behaviours are perceived as common sense and do not draw attention or require clarification. Also, according to Pratto and Stewards (2012), the existence of a dominant group in any stable society seems like a matter of fact, whether this dominant group is religious, ethnic, or racial, and that national states maintain this dominance based on institutionalising discrimination and allocating the best economic and educational resources to the dominant group's members.

Sudan's history of slavery is another the key factor that cannot be overlooked when examining the complexity of the intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants in Australia. It is true that slavery was abolished almost a century ago; specifically, by the British colonisers in 1926 (Sikainga, 1996). However, its ramifications still reveal themselves in many ways. Systematic discrimination based on physical features and skin pigmentation is still practiced. As one of the participants said, all you need in the homeland is to have a bit of fair skin and long hair to be privileged. Name-calling and mockery are common.

This chapter's examination of the troubled history of post-colonial Sudan raises a question: why do Sudanese migrants after more than two decades since their arrival to Australia still find it difficult to overcome their historical ethnic tensions and differences? And why could they not benefit from this new environment (Australia), which encourages unity and reconciliation, as many of the participants suggested?

The findings have shed light on these questions, despite the complexity and entanglement of what is historical and what is present in the context of the Sudanese migrants' intra-relationships in

Australia. For example, the concerns the ethnic minorities raised in their responses are concentrated around both historical and current grievances in which the dominant culture's policies have worked to annihilate their customs and traditions and deprive them of the right to sustain and maintain their way of life. As many of them pointed out, this attitude has built a barrier of distrust between them and those from the culturally dominant groups in the homeland and in the broader Sudanese community in Australia; the reason for this distrust has been the indifference that migrants from the dominant culture continually show towards the Darfurian and Nuba mountains' suffering in the constant civil wars and unjust policies back in Sudan. The past overlaps the present, causing what Franz Fanon (in Borossa, 2018), calls "narcissistic wounds", in which historical mistreatment and the atrocities of the present time combine with lack of acknowledgement by the culturally dominant groups, leaving psychological scars that stand in the way of any constructive solution. Having said that, it would be inappropriate to assert that all Sudanese migrants from the dominant culture are indifferent or in denial when it comes to acknowledge the minorities' injustices and grievances. In fact, a considerable number of the participants showed an awareness of the injustice and negligence to which the ethnic minorities have been subjected since independence. However, as Harari (2014), argues, it is important to differentiate between awareness and consciousness: the latter extends past mere acknowledgement that suffering exists to being able to express sympathy and compassion towards those who are suffering. The cultural supremacy the Sudanese migrants from the dominant culture feel and sense explains much about their indifference. As Wilson (2011) argues, the cultural tenets of a dominant group work to enhance and reinforce the status quo and patterns of inequality against other minorities, usually in a society ravaged by racism and experiencing an identity crisis. According to Wilson, sociologists have consistently underestimated the impacts of cultural forces when they aim to address and analyse the root causes of inequality and discrimination in societies characterised by injustice and racial supremacy. Cultural forces and social structural patterns of racism, discrimination, and asymmetrical political relationships between the centre and peripheries go hand in hand to simultaneously sustain the status quo and privileges of dominant groups and hinder any attempts to institute justice, power-sharing, and equality. In such situations, cultural forces can dictate people's attitudes and impose a certain way of dealing with each other. According to Visser (2003), cultural forces are embedded in the education, language, identity-perception, values, and political orientation of the dominant groups. In this regard, cultural forces

can be considered a conscious and subconscious reflection of the cultural tenets and national beliefs of the dominant groups. In the Sudanese migrants' context, it is evident that the wider Sudanese community struggles to find a way to help Sudanese migrants from all ethnic backgrounds overcome their political and cultural rifts or the narcissistic wounds caused by the history of slavery, racism, and systemic discrimination. It seems that both sides have succumbed to the influences of these factors, which act as hidden mechanisms that undermine any efforts to change behaviours and attitudes.

The interview data suggests that the influence of Australian multiculturalism in building an awareness of cultural actualisation adds another hurdle to the process of unifying a wider Sudanese community in Australia. Having lived in the shadow of the dominant culture for decades, a considerable number of the ethnic participants, particularly those from the Darfurian and Nuba Mountains communities, said that having the chance to create their own ethnic community helped them for the first time to gain self-understanding and a self-realisation of who they were. By moving to Australia, they could break away from the influence of the dominant cultural forces that had been used as *legitimising myths* that had been linked to a basic cultural cosmology to make them unquestionably true (Pratto & Stewards, 2012), including the political and economic forces once used to suppress and subordinate them for the benefit of the dominant groups.

In conclusion, the study findings show that the political divisions and ethnic tensions in Sudan have significant implications for the social cohesion, tolerance, and coexistence of the Sudanese migrants in Australia. While most of the participants expressed a desire to unite around a Sudanese national identity, they also described many real obstacles in the way of achieving this dream. Cultural forces from both sides seem to act as hidden mechanisms that sustain the political and ethnic polarisation between the two groups, increase the discord, and widen the divergence. Building the national identity based on the beliefs, language, and characteristics of the Arab Northerners has empowered them, but simultaneously jeopardised the minorities' identities and their ways of life. This situation has brought unrest and created psychological barriers between the two groups. That is why cultural forces on both sides are in conflict and cannot overcome the past.

Perhaps the most significant finding reported in this chapter is the way the ethnic Sudanese migrants have encountered Australian multiculturalism in its recognition of the rights of individuals and minorities to enjoy their cultural identities. The interview data suggests that this right, in the case of the Sudanese migrants from ethnic backgrounds, can be considered a game changer, because for the first time in their lives, they are receiving such recognition. Cultural actualisation and self-realisation have added a new dimension to who they are, as one of the participants said. However, perhaps this situation could be seen as another obstacle on any attempt to bring the Sudanese migrants under one umbrella in the future. Having consider the benefits that multiculturalism might bring to the ethnic communities in terms of symbolic and material recognition and support, it is interesting to imagine the Sudanese ethnic groups shifting their allegiance and back to helping create a wider Sudanese community in Australia.

In sum, this chapter set out to investigate the Sudanese migrants' intra-relationships in light of the challenges of ethnic tensions and political rivalries, and to determine whether the Sudanese migrants in Australia have been able to overcome the historical divisions back in Sudan in the interests of creating one inclusive national identity. Further, the chapter has explored what form of diasporic identity or identities the participants have created, if any, and how these identities might evolve. The evidence from this study suggests that the dynamic of social interactions among the Sudanese migrants in Australia has been subjected to the influence of the homeland's discord and reflected itself in forms of ethnic, religious, and political divisions. It is likely that this dynamic will encourage the persistence of the ethnic sub-communities as a de facto by which forms of diasporic identities will emerge and evolve around ethnicity, rather than the development of an inclusive and unified Sudanese diasporic identity.

Chapter Seven

The Sudanese migrants and the interrelationships with the wider Australian society

7.1 Introduction

Exploring the interrelationships between Sudanese migrants in Australia and the mainstream is another level of seeking to understand the way the Sudanese migrants use the cultural space as a wider community, and for what purpose. Although such interaction can take place between individuals as well as in a collective, this theme came out of the study's intent to investigate the Sudanese migrant community as a socio-cultural entity that reflects the plural activities of its members. Having said that, it is noteworthy to mentioned that the integration-related individual behaviours of Sudanese migrants have been discussed throughout (and in detail in Chapter 8). In this chapter, all the participants in the study responded to the thematic question: to what extent have or haven't the wider Sudanese community's activities been able to close the gap between them and the mainstream? The question had been designed to give the participants the opportunity to reflect critically on the role of the activities of the wider Sudanese community and whether or not they have been employed to close the gap between them and the mainstream. The responses were unique and diverse, reflecting different perspectives as they addressed the challenges and the root causes of what they considered shortcomings that affect the interrelationships between them and the mainstream, on one hand, and what could have been done better to improve the interrelationship, on the other. Although the responses were varied, the common denominator among all the participants was their acknowledgement of the community's reluctance to show interest in, or willingness to use its cultural space for, closing the gap or reaching out to the mainstream. The participants suggested different reasons for this. The majority of the participants believed that the disunity of the wider Sudanese community and its members' incapacity to overcome the inherited divisions back home have maintained these divisions in Australia and crippled any efforts to reach out and be part of the wider Australian community.

The responses of the participants can be categorised under five themes pertaining to the interrelationships between the wider Sudanese community and the mainstream. These five themes provide a scheme for analysis and discussion.

- The first theme relates to the significant role of **the prolonged political divisions** in Sudan in the interaction between the general Sudanese community and the wider society.
- The second theme has to do with l**eadership failure**; the responsibility is on the Sudanese community's attitude of invisibility and lack of competence.
- The third theme has to do with **conservative values** and what is referred to as a "nomadic mentality". Participants viewed these two Sudanese values as having a negative influence on Sudanese diasporas' efforts to integrate, or at least to actively contribute to the Australian mainstream.
- The fourth theme looks at the **role of language and culture** to connect or disconnect. The various levels of proficiency in the English language and the cultural distance of Sudanese cultures from the Anglo-European dominant outlooks form a gap between Sudanese community groups and the mainstream.
- The fifth theme singles out experiences of the **Coptic community**, reflecting their efforts to achieve rapprochement between themselves and the mainstream.

7.2 The influence of political divisions in the homeland

Attributing a significant part of the general Sudanese community's lack of interaction with the wider society to the disunity of the community itself due to the inherited divisions back home is very consistent with the abundant literature available, as I illustrate below. Many scholars have described Sudan as a dysfunctional country plagued with civil wars and ethnic and religious tensions since its independence from Britain in 1956. Simone (1996) argues that the dominant groups have insisted on building the national identity on their "own image" based on their singular identity. This identity is the main reason for the country's political and social instability. This insistence of the dominant group to subjugate all others to their form of identity has produced, as Lesch (1998) argues, a situation where identities are contested to the extent that a possibility to merge them into one national identity has not been given a chance. Having said that, one of the interests of this study is to investigate whether the Sudanese migrants outside Sudan, and in

environments that provide space and a means of reworking a common identity, can or do rise above the contestations that operate in Sudan, to forge an identity that would reflect the strengths of their diversity to contribute positively as part of the wider Australian social fabric.

Many participants found it ironic that the unity that many of them desired and even fought for in Sudan has not been reflected in the Sudanese migrant communities in host nations. As Abbaker Adam, from the Darfur ethnic community, observed,

> I think our mindset is based on denial. We don't learn from our mistakes because we think we don't make any mistakes. Racism, injustice, and disrespect to each other are there, but no one has the courage to admit them. If someone considers himself a victim to what was happening there in Sudan, ironically, when he came to Australia you see him started to act the same way his predators used to do; so, what kind of change are you going to talk about in this situation?

Emad Hassan from the Sudanese Conference Party also believed that the reason for the wider Sudanese community's failure in closing the gap has much to do with their disunity and the challenges associated with the way they fail to accommodate their differences or appreciate their diversity.

> If we look at the sort of the activities themselves, I think it will be far-fetched to think they can have any influence on the mainstream. The reason behind that is related to the way we have been brought up as Sudanese. We are struggling to accept each other, let alone to have influence on others. Our tribal and ethnic identities prevent us from overcoming our differences and coming together around a national identity. We couldn't benefit from the rich culture we have as a diverse country. If we succeeded in doing that, definitely, we would have a lot to share and contribute to the mainstream. Our diversity and richness in food, art, folklore, and culture are unique, and I doubt if they exist anywhere else. I travelled to many countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and I can say I never saw as a diverse and rich culture as we have in Sudan. All we need is to come together and appreciate what we have. Then, I guarantee you, we will have a significant influence on the Australian mainstream in an unprecedented way.

Mohammed Keer, from the Darfur Ethnic Community, attributed the reluctance to socialise with people outside the general Sudanese community to the same reason: divisions back home. He felt that the strong tendency toward ethnic division frustrates any efforts of unification:

> I attributed this poor outcome to our divisions back home. The contradictions we live in reflect themselves here. Sudan is a continent-state, with huge diversity, ethnically and culturally, besides the class and cultural struggles. So, what happened to those people from all walks of life when they came to Australia? They just divided themselves the same way they used to do back home. This seemed to happen "naturally". It happened to me when I came here, and I linked myself to my ethnic identity, Darfur. Even the Northerners themselves, although they are the mainstream back home, due to the historical advantages they have got in terms of education and social progress, when they arrived in Australia, they linked themselves to their ethnic backgrounds.

Kodi Anan, from the Nuba Mountains community, stated that Sudanese migrants need first to unify themselves before trying to reach out others. He believed that what prevented them from achieving this is what he called "mental slavery":

> I have to ask myself a question: have we been treated and valued as human beings by the country we came from? The answer is no. This painful truth has lasting impacts on our salient dysfunctionality as migrants in Australia and everywhere. This tendency of dividedness has become part of our characteristics, to the extent that it is very difficult to find any two Sudanese who agree about anything…. I am talking here about what I call the "mental slavery", which is a characteristic in any Sudanese person regardless of the degree of his skin colour. This situation makes it very difficult to get any mutual agreement or acceptance. As the saying goes, "a slave can't lead a slave"! We need to liberate ourselves first to be able to accept each other.

The phenomenon of disunity among Sudanese migrants is not confined to Australia. Abusharaf (2002) documented in an anthropological study about the Sudanese migrants in North America how political instabilities in Sudan have continued to create boundaries in the wider Sudanese community and significantly affected the social relationships among Sudanese migrant groups. Similarly, Wilcock (2020) writes that varied forms of political activism among the Sudanese

migrants in the UK and the disparities of their points of views on how to intervene in homeland politics have caused rivalry and tensions.

One can argue that having settled in national settings such as Australia, where diversity is celebrated, Sudanese migrants would appreciate the opportunity to reinvent their communities, drawing on their strengths and rich diversities. The findings so far do not indicate that communities have overcome their traditional differences and divisions to transform themselves into discernible community entities.

7.3 Community leadership

A considerable number of the participants held community leaders responsible for their poor performance and reluctance to reach out and interact with the wider Australian society. They offered various explanations such as incompetence, mediocrity, and self-interest to single community leaders out as the core problem of the community's poor performance and invisibility. Interestingly, the participants' responses did not demonstrate how those leaders had been elected to run the community, and why they were given the liberty to run it against the will of the community's members. Further, the participants seemed to play down the consequences of how Sudanese migrants have divided themselves along ethnic, religious, and political lines since their arrival, and the impacts of this on community leaders' performance. Such a division can be seen as an obstacle put in the community leaders' way and may have played a role in complicating any attempts they may have made to bring unity to the Sudanese diasporas, on one hand, and reaching out to the mainstream, on the other. Without enough information about the system of election for community leadership and what power they have, the participants' accusations remain ambiguous. A considerable number of the participants labelled community leaders as mediocre and lacking vision and noted that the leaders held full responsibility for failing to connect the general Sudanese community with the wider Australian society. Adil Hassan, from the Sudanese Conference community, believed that the community leaders were incompetent, and that their mediocrity was reflected in a lack of vision and creativity:

> We don't have leadership. I think our gathering as Sudanese became a problem in itself. There is no harmony. We are reflecting the same disharmony back home…. I attributed it to the same dividedness back

> home. If you look back to the country 200 years ago, you will find that Sudan was a confederation of many different kingdoms. We have been frozen across those 200 years.

Abbaker Adam believed that effective leadership could close the gap only if leaders are serious enough to accept government resources and services that have been provided for such purposes. He thinks such a disconnection between the community leaders and the government institutions has a negative impact on community activities in general, which is reflected in poor community outcomes:

> The community leaders should have a strong connection between them and the government institutions and try to benefit from the services and the funds the government provides to empower the minority communities, in terms of education, cultural exchange, and integration. Unfortunately, I don't see this kind of connection. Our leaders are very laid back, as if they are still living in their villages back home.

In contrast, some participants, in particular those who belonged to the ethnic communities, believed that multiculturalism in Australia has empowered them and raised their awareness about their uniqueness as ethno-cultural groups. To them, Australian multicultural policies have provided the space and resources to sustain and maintain their ethnic identities. This tendency, one can argue, has weakened the desire of many Sudanese ethnic groups to be part of the general Sudanese community. (Chapter Seven will discuss the intra-relationships and the ethnic identity within the general Sudanese community in more detail).

7.4 Conservative values

A considerable number of the participants considered conservativeness as one of the major factors that hinder the Sudanese diasporas' communication with the wider Australian society and a reason for their invisibility. The way the participants described a certain behaviour of the Sudanese members of the diasporic community as "conservative" was reminiscent of a literal interpretation of the Arabic word *muhafiz*, which means a strong adherence to traditional customs and values or religious morals, with a tendency to resist or reject change. However, for the benefit of the

discussion, the term "conservativeness" is going to be used as bearing the same meaning. This adherence to conservative values is also referred to as "nomadic mentality", as one of the participants said. This notion is underpinned by the practice of keeping communities invisible and unable to interact with the wider society. The "nomadic" mentality and conservative outlook of the Sudanese people is one of the main factors why the community does not as actively interrelate with the wider society as it could. Isam Nour, from the Umma Party, believes that the Sudanese people's nomadic background has left vestiges of a "nomadic" mentality that makes it hard for them to develop any sense of belonging to an urban lifestyle. He attributed their constant resistance to any forms of modernist behaviours and the unwavering rejection to any change to their premodern life to these nomadic characteristics:

> The Sudanese migrants came to Australia with their political, cultural, and religious divisions. That is why they did not show any kind of unity among them. They built their own shells, and each group confined itself to its shell, no connection, no communication with each other…. It is a matter of fact that you cannot achieve any process of integration while as a community you cannot accept each other. I attribute this attitude to the nomadic mentality of the Sudanese people. Still, we could not develop an urbanising attitude or feel comfortable living in urban cities. We do not know how to coexist and share space with others. Having said that, the main problem facing us as Sudanese migrants has much to do with the uncertainty about our life in Australia. This uncertainty expresses itself in different ways: very few Sudanese migrants have their own houses and very few pay taxes. What I am trying to say is, the core relationship between the Australian government and the Sudanese migrants is based on the rejection of citizenship in terms of rights and duties. The reason behind that is the nomadic mentality, in which returning back home is always a dominant feeling. Reaching such a level of disconnection, it is impossible to achieve any sense of belonging to the place you live in.

Isam Nour's response is somewhat similar to the ideas of a well-known intellectual Sudanese writer, Dr Al-Nour Hamad. In his metaphorical use of the notion of "nomadic mentality", Hamad (2020) equates nomadism with social backwardness. Hamad argues that structurally, Sudan has been dominated by a "nomadic mind" that hates modernity and ridicules it whenever it finds ways to do so. Modernity, in his opinion, suppressed this structure, which made a mockery of law, undermining civilization, its main target. Hamad goes on to explain that the "defeat of the nomadic mind does not mean it disappeared; on the contrary, it disguised itself and waits for revenge as history keeps telling us" (Hamad, 2020, pp. 9-10). He argues that nomadic behaviour can come in

different forms: secular, religious, and tribal. Hence, the Bedouin-urban dichotomy is longstanding and well-founded, withs an overlapping and ambiguous nature (Hamad, 2016, p.9).

Hamad's "nomadic mentality" thesis has caused a stir in intellectual circles in Sudan because many find it vague or obscure. A. A. Ibrahim (2021) is one of those who have criticised the way Hamad uses the term "nomadic" inaccurately to prove his own point of view. Ibrahim argues that nomadism as it has been represented in its pastoral activities is an important socio-economic sector. It has a significant role in the economy of modern Sudan; hence, it is absurd to hold it responsible for the country's social disunity and political failure.

Hamad clearly tried to demonstrate the vulnerability of modernism as a socio-economic and political system that should not to be taken for granted, particularly in countries like Sudan that have not yet gone a long way along the path of modernity. Hamad insisted that the use of the term "nomadic" was metaphorical, intended to describe a social phenomenon, and that he was not concerned with its epistemologically accurate connotations. This justification cannot detract from the controversy of the idea on which his book is based. Tolerating the "loose" meaning of the term, as Hamad stressed, does not change the essentialism and absolutism with which it overlooked the dialectical interrelationship between the modern state institutions and the whole society. As A. A. Ibrahim (2021) argues, Hamad insisted on essentialising the traits of nomadism to something immutable and not subject to any historical dialectic that can produce new forms of social or economic transformations similar to those that have taken place in most of modern societies.

In sum, the interview data suggests that many participants have internalised the persistent notion that the Sudanese people have unchangeable characteristics. In particular, Isam Nour's response indicated the extent to which Hamad's notion of nomadic mentality has influenced Sudanese migrants. Isam Nour did not give any attention to the civil history of the country as it has been represented in its trade unions, political parties, and civil society, or to the significant role these institutions have played in urbanising the society despite constant political instability (Saeed, Alshafie, 2022). The existence of offshoot political parties and the intellectual activity among the Sudanese migrants also negates the idea of the "nomadic mentality" of Sudanese migrants in Australia or elsewhere.

A considerable number of participants pointed out that conservativeness, the desire to keep distance, and the tendency to stay largely invisible and live in a closed community are reasons for the disconnection between Sudanese migrants and the mainstream. Abdelwahid Mohammed, from the Darfur ethnic community, believed that the general Sudanese community is reluctant to integrate, and that this attitude has started to have a negative impact on the behaviour of the second generation.

> We don't have an awareness of the importance of integration. I didn't see that any of the Sudanese communities have made any visit to one of the Aboriginal communities or the Russian community or to the Chinese community. Those communities were here before us, and they have achieved a reasonable degree of integration compared to us…. Dividing ourselves into small groups not only affects our integration as a first generation, but also affects our children's integration. From what I can see, they are less integrated than other migrants. I have never seen them in music concerts or sport learning centres or interacting confidently in the mainstream venues. We have neither passed some of our cultural tenets on to them nor left them to acculturate naturally in the mainstream. For example, my daughter could say "I want to go outside and don't want to wear *hijab*," but I insist that wearing the *hijab* is a must if she wants to go out.

Gada Awad, a feminist and a former community leader, believed that the main problem facing the community and preventing it from interacting with the mainstream is its conservative leaders and their insistence that the community's activities conform to their values:

> Look, I've been working in the community before, and I know very well the mentality of its leaders. They are all conservatives. That is what brings them together. They fight by all means to keep the community away from the mainstream. They think this is the right way to maintain their Sudanese way of life. Another thing, most of those conservative men have been here in Australia more than two decades; nevertheless, they are likely to go to Sudan and marry a woman from there. To them this is a preventive step to keep the community closed from any outside influence, and to maintain at the same time the Sudanese way of life, the same way they know and sense it. They desperately do that because they think the mainstream is a threat in terms of women rights and freedom and gives their children more rights than they should have. Given the fact that I worked in a hostile environment, where the conservative leaders can do anything to keep the status quo as it is, I can assure you, they are not willing for any change, and they don't have any desire to reach out and build any kind of relationship with the mainstream.

Yousra Mubarak, a liberal woman and a musician, has successfully reached out to the wider Australian society throughout her musical performances. She believes the Sudanese in general prefer to live in closed communities and distance themselves from others. She defined this attitude as a tendency of *ghettoisation*:

> As Sudanese migrants, we did not close any gap…I don't know why. All I can say is that this is a very sad and painful situation. I tried many times to think of why as Sudanese migrants we are so closed and can't open to others. Why are we preferring to ghettoise ourselves and are not willing to share our socio-cultural experiences with other migrant communities, or to reach out to the Indigenous people of Australia? Many questions keep crossing my mind all the time, to the extent that I decided to make a survey approaching women of the community who came first to Australia, to ask why they don't want to engage with different people or show solidarity with, for example, asylum seekers. Or why they don't want to step out of their bubbles and try to develop their education and skills. My intention at that time was to ask women how they spend their time during the day. And what do they like? etc. I think the Sudanese migrants have a ghettoisation tendency, and they prefer to live in a closed community?

Sawsan Zakaria, a liberal woman and a community leader, believed that there is an incomprehensible fear on the part of the Sudanese migrants that hinders their lives and prevents them from communicating with the wider Australian society. This fear, she believed, has built barriers between them and the dominant culture:

> I don't think [Sudanese community members'] activities are meant to close the gap between them and the wider Australian society, because they are scared by anything Australian. It is very weird. For example, you find the children of Sudanese families speak fluent English, while their parents have broken English; nevertheless, they are fine with that. Also, at the same time they don't want their children picking up or belonging to the Australian culture; they want them to be Sudanese. I think this fear is the main barrier preventing them from adapting themselves to the wider Australian society.

Similarly, Najat Al-mahadi, a liberal woman and civil activist, believed that the Sudanese diasporas are not willing to engage in any kind of activities to facilitate their integration. This attitude may be part of the migrant psychological adaptation to their new context and its culture

and outlook to life. In Najat's view, the Sudanese aloofness stems from their conservative values; she believed this behaviour helps them as "an avoidance strategy", as Matschke and Sassenberg (2007) argue. Sudanese migrants can hide and avoid any sort of frightening interaction with undesirable groups from the mainstream society:

> I think they don't feel interested in integration. Part of it is, I think they don't think that any benefits will come from such integration. I think they feel comfortable with the space they have created here or the sub-identity they have invented as Sudanese living in Australia, which I can define as Sudanese-Australians. This comfort zone seems very convenient to them, as within it they can live and socialise as Sudanese without being obliged to pursue any adaptation or interaction with the mainstream culture and can avoid other things that can be frightening to them like, for example, the LGBTQI+ community and how to deal with it. So, this comfort zone gives them the chance to hide themselves and avoid any challenges.

7.5 Language barrier and culture differences

Many of the participants considered the language barrier to be one of the salient factors in the disconnection between Sudanese migrants and the wider Australian society. The majority of the participants talked about their own struggles with language when they arrived. Lack of English-language proficiency has a significant impact on migrants in Australia, in terms of both communication and psychological adaptation. Gaining English-language skills indicates a greater acceptance of the host country's society comparing with those who do not gain these skills (Buchanan, Abu-Rayya, Kashima, Paxton, & Sam, 2018). The participants also attributed Sudanese migrants' unwillingness to reach out and interact with the Australian wider society to low English-language proficiency and culture differences. Dion and Dion (2001) cast light on the complexity of cultural adaptation among migrants in Canada and the psychological distress involved, particularly in relation to gender roles and families' expectations from women in the receiving countries. Low education and lack of mainstream-language proficiency can be a main reason for depression.

Casting light on his own experience, Hashim Saleh, from the Sudanese Communist Party, reflected on the low English-language proficiency he had struggled with during the first few years in Australia:

> At the beginning, yes, it was a real barrier. For example, I would struggle to get the correct name of one of the cooking spices if I went shopping, or I might find it difficult to describe to my doctor what I was suffering from. However, over the course of time I worked on learning the language; eventually, I overcame this barrier.

Jalal Wahbi, a member of the Sudanese Communist Party and a former community leader, gave an example of how low English-language proficiency can have a negative impact on migrants. "Absolutely. Until now, I was really struggling with the language. It prevented me from doing way better than I have so far. It limited my social contribution. It is a barrier."

Gada Awad believed that the language barrier can limit the capabilities of migrants, preventing them from fully integrating:

> Personally, yes, language was a barrier, although it is not the same issue right now. However, yes, it is a barrier, even myself, I still have a strong accent. Don't forget, we came to this country not at a young age. In terms of knowledge and information, I am okay, but in some areas, it can prevent you from fully interacting. As I mentioned, I work with the wider Australian community, including white Australians. Yes, I can say it is a big deal.

In contrast, a number of the participants, in particular those who spoke fluent English, believed that low English-language proficiency cannot be considered a barrier to interacting with the wider Australian society. Instead, they thought cultural differences are the main source of disconnection and can be a real barrier. Habib George, from the Coptic ethnic community, believed that it is cultural differences, not the English language, that hinders interrelationships with the wider Australian society. He asserted that the liberal values and way of life in Australia are in contrast with the traditional customs and values with which the Sudanese migrants were brought up.

> No matter the level of English-language proficiency the Sudanese person has, he still can communicate. Instead, I attribute the problem to the cultural disparities between us and the mainstream. For example, it is hard for us to accept our daughters having a boyfriend in an open manner who can come to the house and be welcomed by the family, while this thing is normal within the white culture. I am not here to judge or to tell who is right. I am just trying to demonstrate some of the difficulties of the integration process, including community activities.

Sawsan Zakaria could see the difference language can make in terms of privilege and life opportunities it provides; nevertheless, she believed that Sudanese migrants in general deeply fear contact with people from different cultures:

> I think language makes the difference. Hence, the similarities among those who are well settled and integrated are coming from a well-educated background and they are young…. I think language here can be seen as a significant deterrent along with religion: in this regard, Sudanese migrants feel afraid to be in contact with some people from different religions or visit them and eat their "not halal" food...etc. To be honest, all of us as Sudanese have that fear of trying something new. Even myself, I've been many times invited for camping, although I love camping but still, I feel uncomfortable going for it. Part of it is because I am scared of insects; besides, I am not familiar with sleeping on the ground. I attribute this behaviour to our psyche as Sudanese people; we are so attached to our ways of life. We like familiarity and confine ourselves to what we know. I think it has something to do with our culture.

In some responses, participants attributed the community invisibility to different reasons. Yousif Ali, from the Sudanese Communist Party, attributed the disconnection with the mainstream to the lack of diasporic experience among the Sudanese migrants, as well as the negative impact of the language barrier. The priority upon their arrival, as he mentioned, is to feel safe and connected with their culture, and to help families back home.

> At the beginning this wasn't the case. The interrelationship between them and the mainstream wasn't on the radar. The gathering was mainly to ease and compensate for the feeling of *gurba,* that is, loneliness and isolation. Also, don't forget the negative impact of the language barrier. Most of the Sudanese migrants who came here didn't get a chance to go and learn English. They were overwhelmed by their family's difficult financial situations. That's why their priority at that time was to get a job and send money back home. Having said that, the main goal for the gathering of the Sudanese migrants is not to interact with other people, but to feel safe and connected with their culture.

Jalal Wahbi believed that culture and religious affinities besides geographical proximity can have more influence on the way the community can reach out:

> To be honest, we are still struggling in this area. I have been working with the Sudanese community for a while, and I know very well this is a problematic thing. We showed some rapprochement with some Horn of Africa communities, such as the Eritrean community, the Ethiopian community, and the Somali community. Also, we recently started a good relationship with the Turkish community. I think Islam as a religion played a big role in this rapprochement...yes, religion is a determining factor. Besides that, there are geographical and cultural factors; that is why we feel close to the Horn of Africa communities. The Turkish community, with which we share the Islamic religion, has been very helpful to us when we ask for their assistance.

7.6 The experience of the Coptic community

In contrast to the participants' experiences reported above, the Coptic community seems to form interrelationships with the mainstream culture in a very different way to the general Sudanese community. The discussion section below will detail the reason behind the unique experiences of the Coptic community compared to other Sudanese ethnic communities. Najeeb Yohana, from the Coptic community, demonstrated how their interrelationships as a community with the wider society have worked positively to facilitate the process of their integration in Australia:

> Any work we do is intended to facilitate the process of our integration. For example, our Coptic church has an annual fair in Melbourne. We have in total about 17 churches. As you know, our Sudanese church is a member of the hierarchal Egyptian Coptic Church; therefore, we have large numbers of our Egyptian Coptic brothers who share the Coptic community with us. We have a huge religious community and school for our children. The fair the church holds is in coordination with the council. These kinds of social activities in the area have given us a good reputation and we receive regular funding from the council. The mayor usually comes and visits our events. Also, we have our own community, the Sudanese Coptic Association, which is a very active body and constantly gets government grants to run its activities and achieve its aims. We build credibility among the government funding bodies because we have a mission.

Many of the participants mentioned the influence of religion on Sudanese migrants' reluctance to interact with other communities. The relatively greater engagement of the Coptic community may be due to the fact that Australia's values are largely Judeo-Christian. This point is expanded on in the discussion section below.

7.7 Discussion

Attributing the dysfunctionality of the community and its invisibility solely to the historical divisions back home and to the attitudes of the community leaders in the receiving country is concealing the challenges the dominant culture has posed to the community members throughout their process of settlement. The issue of priority is another level of challenges that migrants encounter in their process of resettlement. Their interrelationship with the wider Australian society is not always a matter of priority. Instead, as Yousif Ali commented, at the time of arrival the priorities were to help the family back home and to overcome racism, isolation and the language barrier and to feel safe, rather than to reach out to other communities or interact with the mainstream. Further, the challenges of adaptation could result in a resistance to change, which some of liberal women participants interpreted as a sign of the conservativeness that they felt characterised the wider Sudanese community, or an attitude related to the "nomadic mentality" of the Sudanese people in general, as discussed below in more detail.

The self-identified liberal women participants agreed that conservative behaviours and attitudes are what have crippled the wider Sudanese community's social and cultural activities. They believe the prevailing behaviour turns the community into a closed society that values its self-monologue while avoiding any sort of communication and interaction with the mainstream. For some of them, it is a sign of a deeply entrenched fear the origins of which are hard to trace its origin. Najat Al-Mahdi believed that the community is not interested in or willing to make any sort of compromise, such as interactions with "undesirable" groups that espouse Australian liberal values, that can challenge its way of life. She asserted that conservative community leaders stand in the way of any change and feel threatened by working alongside liberal women in the community.

The Sudanese liberal women participants noted that they came from well-established high- or middle-class backgrounds. Further, most of them enjoyed a quality education and spoke fluent English, and many had skilled professions, in contrast to the rest of the community women. In their responses, they admitted that their privileges back home had given them advantages in Australia in terms of communication and job opportunities.

The liberal women's responses indicated that they were more clearly motivated to integrate and benefit from the life opportunities in Australia than other members of the community. As discussed

in Chapter 5, the conflicts between their perspectives and those of community leaders on how the community should be managed and directed have caused constant tension.

The tendency to label the invisibility of the community as conservativism does not necessarily reflect the collective attitude of the whole community, bearing in mind individual diversity in political, social, and intellectual principles and attitudes. The liberal women participants' inclination to essentialise the community's behaviour can be seen as a frustrated reaction towards the community initiatives that do not meet their expectations and their eagerness to reach out and interact with the wider society in order to maximise their life opportunities in general. In contrast, the way the community leaders exaggerate their traditional and religious values by imposing them on the community members, as the liberal women claimed, does not necessarily stem from conservatism. Confining the matter to conservatism can be regarded as a subjective underestimation of the complexity of the diasporic journey and its repercussions on the whole lives of individuals and communities. The participants overlooked the power relationship between dominant groups and migrants when they passed judgement on the wider Sudanese community's leaders and the "traditional" women of the community. The collected data from the interviews showed that the community leaders are diverse and adhere to various ideologies, including secular ones such as Marxism and cultural modernism. Thus, accusations of "conservatism" in this regard blur, rather than clarify, understanding.

The dialectical relationship between the dominant culture and the minority, in general, is an asymmetrical one that leans towards the mainstream. Sociologists and anthropologists have considered the fear of assimilation under the powerful influence of the dominant culture, along with language barriers, cultural differences, and civilisational gaps, to be among many challenges that diasporas encounter in their integration process in host countries. According to Hall (1994), the fear of assimilation and the influence of acculturation can trigger an instinctive resistance to any sort of cultural-identity expropriation. Berry (2005, p.705) points out, "[W]hen individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the separation alternative is defined. Here, individuals turn their back on involvement with other cultural groups and turn inward toward their heritage culture."

It seems that the liberal women participants tried to make a point by raising their concerns about the challenges they have faced from the patriarchal structure of the wider Sudanese community

leadership; however, it is obvious that they underestimated the challenges of socio-cultural adaptations that migrants encounter throughout their process of resettlement. As Safran (1991) argues, clinging to a specific way of life resembling the homeland culture can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to keep the idea of home alive until the day comes when migrants can return to the homeland. Chiang (2010, p. 33) argues that "the defense of communal interests often mobilizes the fantasy of a static culture and a frozen identity". It is how the diasporas' collective memory constructs and recreates imaginatively the homeland using traditions, customs, and rituals (p. 37).

Furthermore, the responses of the participants that related to language barriers and cultural differences emphasised the impact of low proficiency in the English language and unfamiliarity with the dominant culture as salient challenges preventing them from reaching out and interacting fully with the mainstream. This underlies a deep understanding of the complexity of what diasporism itself means. Even those participants who arrived in Australia proficient in the English language spoke of the difficulty they faced at the beginning to understand the Australian accent and the daily language. As Yousif Ali commented, "I decided to join the Australian Socialist Party once I arrived to overcome the language barrier by picking up the Australian accent and get used to the daily language." The language barrier has hindered communication and imposed psychological barriers and a noticeable misunderstanding between the Australian mainstream and minorities in general. The struggle to deal with a system requiring a significant level of communication in English is particularly difficult for those who came from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and those unfamiliar with the complexity of the sophisticated government system. A few participants believed that the formal language and its discourse have been assigned to white people and their issues exclusively. Najat Al-Mahadi was one of those who believed that the television news and programs did not speak to her, and that the language did not represent or reflect her needs, despite her fluency in English.

Language as it has been defined by Haviland, Prins, Walrath, and McBride (2008) is a system of symbolic communication producing mutual meanings agreed by society. A language barrier in its simplest form is where individuals and groups from different ethnic communities cannot communicate because they do not understand each other's language and there is no common language in place to facilitate their communication. In the migration context, the matter is more complicated, and its repercussions are beyond the struggle of communication and the desirability

of social interaction. Language in diverse societies embeds power relationships, through which the dominant culture can be terrifying to minorities who fear assimilation and acculturation under the pressure of using the dominant language and way of life. This could explain the hesitance migrants in general show in the host countries, as many studies suggest. Lack of English-language skills among migrants' families and individuals could cause, as Thomas (1995) argues, acculturative stress, which Lueck and Wilson (2010, p .47) define as "a reduction in mental health and wellbeing of ethnic minorities that occurs during the process of adaptation to a new culture". To decrease acculturative stress, as Doucerain, Varnaamkhaasti, Segalowitz, and Ryder (2015) argue, migrants require enough language proficiency to achieve a reasonable level of cross-cultural adaptation.

Sudanese migrants in Australia are no exception in this regard. The frustrations expressed by the participants who spoke fluent English due to what they perceived as the community's invisibility and lack of desire to interact with the wider Australian society do not consider the repercussions of the language barrier and how it can work against any attempts to achieve closeness towards the mainstream. Instinctively, the fear of assimilation can make the community withdraw into itself and resist any rapprochement with others, which works to draw boundaries between them and the mainstream. Simultaneously, exaggerating the cultural identity of the community members to avoid any threat can be caused by outside pressures as well. La As Spivak in Moore-Gilbert (2005), points out, lack of self-confidence, inability to approach and benefit from health care, job opportunities, and welfare services, and lack of voice are among many obstacles that confront migrants as they are relegated to the status of "modern subalterns" in their host countries' social ladders.

Many of the participants believed that the negative impacts of the language barrier cause less harm than cultural barriers. They felt that language acquisition can be gained across time and in different ways, such as education and inevitable interaction with the people from dominant culture; however, cultural differences seem difficult to deal with for many reasons. For example, one of the participants asserted that the reason of disconnection between the Sudanese community and the mainstream has much to do with the fact that Sudanese people are raised and shaped by communal and traditional values; hence, they cannot cope with Australian liberal and individual values, regardless of the level of English proficiency they have. The participant mentioned above who enjoys a prestigious profession acknowledged that he has many close friends who belong to

the dominant culture and that he is in a constant social relationship with them; nevertheless, he notes that his greatest joy is when he catches up with his community members and enjoys the culture and language. The majority of the participants emphasised the challenges posed by cultural differences, and in particular their concerns about liberal and individual values. As one of the participants observed, their second generation have been put in a perplexing situation due to the community's resistance to Australian liberal values. "We neither passed them some of our cultural traits nor left them to acculturate naturally in the mainstream. For example, my daughter could say I want to go outside and don't want to wear *hijab*, but I insist that wearing the *hijab* is a must if she wants to go out." (The impacts of cultural differences will be discussed further in Chapter Eight).

The participants' emphasis on community resistance to any attempt to get along with mainstream values meant that their way of life and cultural identity had never changed. However, their responses do not reflect the complexity of their situation as new arrivals doomed to live as minorities in their adopted countries, and the unnoticeable changes they have, in fact, been going through. The way people have interacted, either voluntarily or coercively, throughout the course of human history has left no doubt about the inevitability of culture change. As Haviland, Prins, Walrath, and McBride (2005, p. 395) argue, changes in even relatively stable cultures resulting from innovation, diffusion, cultural loss, and acculturation are the norm.

The assumptions that social groups may hold about the unchangeability of their culture have much to do with the gradual and unnoticeable nature of cultural change. Minorities' observations of their cultural identities under the influence of a powerful dominant culture makes them vigilant, and even combative, towards anything they perceive as a threat to their culture; nevertheless, change happens. As Voicu (2013) argues, culture is fluid and dynamic; it can both adopt and be adopted. According to Kilduff and Corley (1999, p. 3), "cultural capital can consist of values, skills, training, language, customs, life experiences, and other socially learned behaviours and attitudes acquired through intense interaction with members of a specific cultural heritage". These elements of cultural capital give every society its unique traits and characters, through which they shape individuals' characteristics and cultural identity. As Kilduff and Corley (1999) argue, migrants, like any social group, have their own cultural blueprints and uniqueness that differentiate them

from others in their host countries; however, communities tend to develop a hybrid culture over time through a long process of interacting with the mainstream.

Sudanese migrants in Australia are not immune to cultural change, despite their strong tendency to avoid any sort of interaction with the mainstream or trying to reach out by exhibiting and celebrating their own culture. As Ning (1997) argues, interacting with people from different cultures always brings some modifications and adjustment, because a new environment poses unexpected challenges that need different skills, like language and specific patterns of behaviour. The way exiles modify their cultural practices brings hybridity and a permanent change in their culture.

In contrast, the Coptic community can be regarded as a good example of how Sudanese migrants can, in some cases, be willing to adapt to their new environment. The Coptic community, unlike other ethnic Sudanese communities, has shown a great deal of willingness to interact with and reach out to the mainstream. Abusharaf (2002) writes that the Copts, a Christian sect originating largely in Egypt, had been subjected to constant religious persecution, particularly after the Muslims invaded and occupied Egypt. Their largest migrations into the Sudan region occurred during the Turco-Egyptian invasion of Sudan in 1821 and after British colonisation in 1898. During the latter wave, they came to Sudan as skilled workers, helping the colonisers to build the modern Sudan. As Abusharaf (2002, pp. 82-83) points out, "At the time, Egyptian Copts came to occupy leading positions as civil servants, financiers, clerks, and traders, and others arrived as craftsmen, weavers, leather binders, painters, carpenters, and tailors." The Copts inhabited the urban areas in the northern and middle regions of the country and became the backbone of the colonial state's bureaucratic system across two periods of colonisation. Few studies have examined the rise of the Coptic community as one of the most influential communities in modern Sudan, both pre- and post-independence. Despite more than 200 years of being part of the social fabric in Sudan, and enjoying full citizenship as Sudanese, the Copts remained keenly aware of their distinctiveness as a Christian religious community in a dominant Muslim society. Now, their concentration in urban areas and big cities, where religious tolerance and co-existence are a norm, helps them to maintain their economic and social status quo as a community. Their traditional roles over the last 200 years as part of the bureaucratic system have given them the advantage of maintaining and observing their interests as a community of elites. To maintain this position, they

continue to empower each generation with high-quality education and provide careers for them in the bureaucratic system and the private economic sector.

Despite the fact that they have an Egyptian background and maintain close ties with the Egyptian Orthodox Church, as Abusharaf (2002) observes, Sudanese Copts have never doubted their Sudanese identity, nor have they considered it as conflicting with their religious identity. There is a consensus among the participants that they are, first and foremost, Sudanese. As Habib George commented, “I am a Sudanese beyond anything else. Having said that, the creation of the Coptic community was a coincidence rather than a sign of ethnic fanaticism. We were the first Sudanese group to arrive in Australia, from what I know. We have been here since 1965.”

According to Abusharaf (2002), the first migration journey outside Sudan for the Sudanese Copts was during the time of former president Numerie (1969-1985), when their businesses and properties had been confiscated. The second large wave of emigration was related to the religious persecution to which they were subjected to once the Islamists seized power in 1989.

The available literature about the history of the Copts in Sudan and their long experiences in diaspora suggests that throughout centuries of unsettled diasporic journeys as minorities seeking to maintain their ethno-religious identity, the Copts have learned how to compromise and negotiate their cultural space. Benefiting from their history as modernity agents and skilled professionals in Sudan, they have succeeded in building their own urban characteristics that help them to integrate more readily than other ethnic Sudanese communities. Their traditional excellence in education and high-profile professions have always been their strongest resource to navigate their way and, to some degree, interact positively with dominant cultural groups in their adopted countries.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the interrelationships between the general Sudanese community and the wider Australian society by investigating the socio-cultural activities of Sudanese migrants as one of the aspects reflecting how and why they use the community as a socio-cultural space. The study findings show that, in general, the Sudanese community tends towards invisibility and drawing boundaries. The participants’ responses have suggested different reasons for this. Most of the participants believed that historical divisions in the homeland have been the salient root causes for, and the main reason behind, the persistence of these divisions in Australia.

A number of participants, particularly the group who self-identified as liberal women, considered the community's leadership as a source of division. Community leaders within the wider Sudanese community have been condemned as mediocre, conservative, and lacking initiative in reaching out to and interacting with other communities in Australia. The liberal women attributed such conservatism to the men's fear of Australian liberal values, which promote women's rights and individual freedom. However, other participants felt that the community leaders cannot be blamed, because they merely follow the communal and conservative values espoused by the majority of the community's members, who are not willing to be exposed to "others" or to interact outside the community's boundaries.

Also, a considerable number of the participants believed that language barriers and cultural differences have significantly affected the community's interaction with the wider Australian society. Those participants with English proficiency believed the issue is more complex than just a language barrier; instead, they feel that English expresses power relationships and gives privileges to the predominant population through the media and political discourses.

Culture differences are another factor the participants believed have much to do with the Sudanese community's disconnection from the wider Australian society. The majority of the participants acknowledged their struggles to come to terms with Australian liberal values, particularly individual freedom and women's rights.

Ultimately, the interview data shows that since their arrival in Australia, the wider Sudanese community has adopted an inward-looking attitude and strived for invisibility rather than reaching out and interacting with the wider Australian society. Such interaction remains minimal and circumstantial at best, and the interview data suggests that it is more an individual matter rather than a community matter. Thus, such interaction might not play a large role in the development of a diasporic identity among the Sudanese migrants in Australia.

Chapter Eight

Integration process and challenges

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the study explored the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants since their arrival to Australia more than two decades ago. To do that, the study examined the way the Sudanese migrants use the community as a socio-cultural space to reflect their diverse activities. Political activism and the formation of ethnic communities, as well as less-formal groups like liberal women, reflect the social dynamic of the community's members bringing the issue of integration to the surface for closer inspection. Hence, the main interest of this chapter is to discuss whether, and how, these activities and affiliations have influenced process of integration; what kind of challenges have hindered it; and to what extent the influence of homeland politics and way of life may have interrupted it.

Integration is the core theme of this research, as it reflects through its processes the challenges, suffering, ability and inability to adapt, torn loyalty between the adopted home and the homeland, feeling of in-betweenness, and desire for belonging that Sudanese migrant experience. The research also investigates the emergence of a diasporic identity or identities, if any, and in what form, as a response to these experiences.

8.2 Defining integration

Integration as a concept is relatively new in the field of sociology, reflecting the shift from assimilation policies once adopted by Western countries towards immigrants (Asselin et al., 2006). Gordon (1964) argues that integration will be a matter of time once a given migrant group has acculturated, in that the migrants have adopted the dominant culture's language, values, and some behaviours; this eventually and inevitably leads to assimilation, in a process called *structural assimilation*. Integration as a policy, as adopted by many Western countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, is a contextual concept rather than a solidly defined course of action. As a sociological term, integration has no a clear definition or precise interpretation. The difficulty

comes from the fact that, as Asselin, Dureau, Fonseca, Giroud, Hamadi, Kohlbacher, Lindo, Malheiros, Marcadet and Reeger (2006) argue, the complexity of integration stems from the interplaying among identification, acculturation, and social stratification, on which individuals' patterns of interactions are superimposed. The dynamic nature of integration makes it, as Heckmann (2004) writes, a process in which a group of people from a dominant social system interrelates and interacts with another group of people in a given social context. Sheffer (2013) defines integration as a continuous dynamic between migrants and the host country's society in which migrants adapt themselves to the socio-cultural environment of the host country, with the government creating a proper policy context that allows them to become part of society, while still maintaining the embedded memories that represent their ethno-historical entities. Esser (2010) argues that integration as a social pattern has four dimensions: acculturation, interaction, identification, and positioning. Kearns and Whitley (2015) note that language proficiency, education, and employment have been considered functional factors by which migrants' social integration improves over time.

Ahsan Ullah, and Kumpoh (2019) argue that these normative definitions of integration are no longer convincing. They write that the rise of globalisation and advances in the technologies of communication and transportation have created patterns of transnationalism by which migrants can intensify their connectivity with their homeland and form a trans-state entity in their host countries. This new situation has challenged old patterns of assimilation and integration, which are still reflected in the migration policies of host countries. Faist (2010) argues that this transnationalism results in the use of fields, social spaces, and formations to reflect the daily cultural transferring and retransferring of customs and activities to maintain the homeland identity.

The intention of this chapter is to investigate, based on the activities discussed in the previous chapters, the ways the Sudanese migrants have tried to establish their new life in Australia, what kind of mechanisms they have applied and developed to adapt themselves in their new environment, what challenges they have encountered, and to what extent they have or have not been able to integrate themselves as individuals and groups within the wider Australian society.

Drawing on the collected data generated from the participants' interviews, the study discussed the issues of integration in the context of the socio-cultural activities of the wider Sudanese community, and the way these activities have been able to interpret the lived experiences of its

members. Many themes that emerged from the participants' responses are set out in the following sections.

8.3 Defining integration from the participants' perspectives

The participants' responses suggest that integration in practice is no less complicated than its theoretical definition. The participants' perspectives were varied; nevertheless, they showed a reasonable awareness of what integration meant to them and how they had dealt with their integration experiences, whether as individual agents or in a collective manner. Creating a nuclear family in Australia, and having extended family and close relatives, further education, job opportunities, English proficiency, and liberal values are among the main factors in individual participants' willingness to integrate.

Ahmed Sulieman from the Sudanese Communist Party believed that legal and cultural convergence have a big impact on his growing sense of integration; this resonates with Esser's (2010) category of identificational integration as one the integrational dimensions he set out.

> As a legal practitioner by training, I know the Australian law agrees [that someone can have] dual citizenship. Hence, there is no conflict, given the fact that the two countries are not neighbours and there will be no conflict of interest. Personally, a sort of cultural hybridity is evolving, and I started to feel it. In short, I can say I belong to the two countries without feeling any conflict.

Amjed Kamal, from the Coptic community, believes that age and equal rights along with the presence of family and relatives can have a significant impact on the integration process. In his opinion, the influence of multiculturalism has become a game changer and is more effective on the ground than when he came to Australia in 1990s.

> I have Australian citizenship and, as you can see, life here is easier, besides the fact that I am now old enough to settle down and have a quiet life. This is not going to be difficult, as besides my family, I have many relatives and lots of close friends. Also, multiculturalism has become a matter of fact in Australia. I remember when I came to Australia in 1994 it was not like today. It was hard to notice any diversity on the street at that time. Everything was British: the food, clothes, and features. Today, Australia is a very colourful country. Plenty of different cultures in terms of food, costumes, languages, and entertainment. There is an immense change that has taken place in the last 20 years, and the influence of the migrant

> community on the mainstream is obvious. So, the integration process is working well, I think. The Sudanese migrants are no exception in this regard. Their process of integration is well noticed. You see them working in different sectors: tax office, Centrelink, hospitals and clinics as doctors and nurses, lawyers, social workers…etc.

Abbaker Adam, from the Darfurian ethnic community, believed that living in Australia has inevitable impacts on individuals in terms of ideas and personality, to the extent that they are no longer the same person they used to be.

> I live here on a daily basis and every day I get familiar with the way of life here. I learnt a lot from my experience in Australia. I am not the same person [I was] before coming to Australia. The experience changed many things and ideas and I started to see things in a different way. I learnt the value of living with people from different cultures, languages, skin colours, and religions. It is something precious, especially when you reflect on your own life and the background you came from.

Sawsan Zakaria, a feminist and a community leader, believes that migrating at a certain age, when one is more settled with who they are, can make one more willing to fit in a new culture and adopt to some degree its way of life:

> I am very comfortable in this regard. Probably, this has much to do with the fact that I came here old enough, and my Sudanese identity was well established; that is why I find myself willing to embrace another identity, the Australian one. Being a Sudanese, I think the Australian identity, definitely, is an addition to my Sudaneseness. Vice versa, coming to Australia with a different culture and language is also an addition to the Australian identity.

Kodi Anan, from the Nouba Mountains community, believes that assimilation is primarily the result of one's awareness of the existential decision they took to leave their homeland and resettle in a different culture and environment. To him, the time when one accepts this reality is the time one starts to adapt and integrate.

> Look, once you left your country, it is important to adapt yourself to match the new way of the country you are going to settle in. When the system here says: people are our business, that means the system that brought you

> here is going to work on you and your family in a way to get the most out of you as a migrant. In return you will get some benefits helping you to adjust and start your new life. Coming to this country as a refugee means you have fewer options than those who come as skilled migrants. The latter are well equipped and bring plans with them and know exactly what they want. Furthermore, diasporism means that you left behind your family law and all cultural yardsticks that you used to adjust your life and moral compass. You have to know and learn how to adapt and adjust your life in the host land, so you can survive and integrate.

Gada Awad, a feminist and a community leader, believed that understanding one's life choices and developing one's individual identity can help very much in adapting oneself as a migrant to the new culture:

> I am Australian because this is where I chose to live and resettled despite the ups and downs of such a relationship, which I explained before in one of my answers. The relationship between the two identities is overlapping based on the dynamic life and the ongoing dialectic and constant reflection I do through my diasporic journey and the back and forth traveling to and from the homeland. Due to the maturity of my age and lived experience, I can reflect on my own life and start to see things from different perspectives, especially the sensitive issues that related to religion, gender, and political attitudes. You start to realise that it is not necessary to do things collectively, as people used to go back home: you are now an individual and whatever decision you take represents who you are.

Yousif Ali, from the Sudanese Communist Party, believed that belonging as an aspect of integration is a process cemented by many social factors like familiarity to the new way of life, making a new family, and having children, in addition to job opportunities.

> In general, I think most of the Sudanese migrants in Australia have achieved some degree of integration – bear in mind integration itself has different stages. The first sign of integration, as I can see it, is the job stability most of them strive to get. That was not the case at the beginning. They were just trying to link themselves to any kind of job, no matter, casual or cash-in-hand. Now most of them have stable, full-time jobs as laborers or highly skilled professionals. Full-time jobs encouraged most of them to own houses. Another strong sign of integration is starting a family. Most of those who came Australia as individuals now have their own families and children born and growing up here. From this perspective, you can fairly say, they live the integration process on a daily basis. Personally, I think my belonging went through some stages. At the

> beginning, I was totally focused on establishing my life in this new environment. It took me, like, seven years to get the feeling of belonging to Australia. Then, I got married and now I have a child. All these things, as you can see, have worked to root me in Australia and give me the feeling of belonging.

For Yousra Mubarak, a feminist and musician, integration can be found in the universal values that all human beings share. Further, reflecting on her relationship as a mother with her children who were born and were now growing up in Australia, Yousra said that the challenges of raising them in a different culture from where she was born and grew up have been rewarding in helping her become more open to integrating.

> Look, I believe that human beings share universal values. So, whenever you go you have the chance to give and take what will definitely enrich your life experience and expose yourself to different modes of values. Having said that, my coming to Australia helped me to modify and change many things I used to take for granted. The biggest lesson was my children and the way they grew up here. The challenges of their upbringing teach me a lot of things. I have been subjected to a diverse way of values and attitudes since my coming here; this helped me to build a sense of awareness about my own values and the attitudes I hold, and I started to question and refine what seemed not suitable. I have become more open to accepting new values as long as I think they match my attitudes, and to getting rid of what I think no longer suits me.

The responses in this section reflected the various perspectives of the participants about what integration means and how virtually all the participants felt that it was based on their socio-cultural and class background. For some, age was a key-factor in dealing with such an existential experience in a realistic and effective way with less damage. The participants' responses also indicated that those who defined themselves as liberal women and those who had created nuclear families in Australia were more willing to embrace new ways of life and more ready to adapt.

8.4 Opportunities, the rule of law, and democracy as means of integration

The way host countries treat their migrants, whether with hostility or hospitality, Sheffer (2003) argues, has significant impacts on the migrants' integration. Showing hostility can encourage

migrants to stay invisible and live in closed communities, while welcoming attitudes could encourage them to reach out and feel confident to share their cultures and values. Australia is among those countries that have instituted policies that are intended, in principle, to encourage migrants to be part of the social fabric of the wider Australian society, beginning with policies enacted by the Whitlam government in the 1970s (Ho, 2013). “The political patronage and funding central to Australian multiculturalism led to the development of organizations and leaders whose task was not only to service the needs of specific ‘ethnic communities’ but to represent them in the wider political field” (Tabar, Noble & Poynting, 2003, p. 267). Many scholars argue that this claim is still far from reality. To them, racism, discrimination, and labeling of migrants still prevail, as parts of this chapter will illustrate. According to Ndhlovu (2013), the shift in migrants’ policies from assimilation to multiculturalism has not changed the notion that to be Australian means to associate oneself with Anglo-Australian cultural norms. Similarly, Vasta (1993) argues that despite the fact that Australian multiculturalism has acknowledged and recognised the country’s cultural diversity, Australian Anglo-Saxon values are still generally considered to provide the overarching framework of social cohesion. Vasta (1993) goes on to expose the contradiction of Australian multiculturalism as a liberating factor by providing the necessary services to migrants, but at the same time, under-funding programs so that the structural inequalities between the migrants and the mainstream are sustained.

How have the Sudanese migrants perceived and responded to Australia’s multicultural policies and its claims to give people a fair go in both job and life opportunities? Do they see these principles as motivating and inspiring them towards integration, or as discriminating against and excluding them? Australian multicultural policies at their best are a process rather than an established legal framework. According to Love (2021), it seems the quest for an effective method to tackle racism and discrimination, and to guarantee access and equity by emphasising multiculturalism, has been a priority of the federal government in the last decade. The participants’ responses varied in this regard; however, they have highlighted the overlapping elements of the relationship between migrants’ lived experiences and the impact of government policies on the integration process. Most of the responses reflected on individual experiences rather than collective ones.

Ahmed Sulieman showed his appreciation for the Australian political system in terms of the opportunities it provides to migrants. Reflecting on his own lived experience, he said that the opportunities Australia offers for education and financial security have significant impacts in his life as a migrant.

> To be honest, I feel indebted to Australia. It offered me educational opportunities in a quality way that I could not find even in my homeland or anywhere else. All resources and sources were available. The social welfare and the social benefit you get is saving you time so you can reach the goals you dedicated your life to achieve. The social support I got was so helpful.

Suzan Mubarak, a feminist and a community leader, believed that job opportunities and the fair-go system in Australia encourages migrants to settle and feel at home.

> For the time being, Australia is the best place to be, because of our careers, the quality of life, and the education of our children. I came here not that young; however, the fairness and the success I achieved in my career as a project manager, which matches my qualifications, won't be easy to achieve back in Qatar where I used to work. To me this is a hugely positive thing. Another thing, coming here at the beginning with my young children at that time and without my husband, who came later, created strong bonds between me and my children, because we had to be together all the time.

Abdelwahid Mohammed, from the Darfurian ethnic community, believed that Australia is the land of opportunity, where migrants can have a quality life. He also praised the Australian democratic system, in which corruption and mismanagement is minimal compared with where he came from.

> In my opinion, Australia is a welcoming country. It offers you as a migrant dignity, security, serenity, respect, and life opportunities. This country can help anyone to achieve his dreams if he is ambitious enough. Being hard-working is the key, due to less favouritism, discrimination, and biases than we have in Sudan. I so admire the democratic system in Australia. The peaceful transferring of power after every election period is amazing. They have a functional democratic system reflecting itself in the effectiveness of the government institutions. By comparison, we have a dysfunctional democratic system, relying on corruption and bribes to get votes. People vote for their sectarian parties to show loyalty, not to address problems or demand change for the better. The only thing I don't like about the Australian democracy is the compulsory voting. We are a free country, and everyone should have the right not to vote.

Habib George, from the Coptic community, believed that the protection of human rights by law and the life opportunities make Australia an ideal place to live.

> The most positive feeling I got from my lived experience in Australia is tranquility, a feeling you won't get in Sudan, because my rights are protected, and humanity is the standard. Finally, the opportunities and hard work are paying off: The harder you work, the more you achieve.

To Kodi Anan, the rule of law the equal rights given to all citizens are decisive factors for inclusiveness in Australia, along with the support that's available to establish a new life.

> In Australia the rule of law is the decisive factor in its political stability and social coherence. The rights of all citizens have been protected by law, regardless of which group one belongs to. The positive side is the quality of life in Australia. You always find people who love you and try to help you and create opportunities for you.

Emad Hassan, from the Sudanese Conference Party, brought up jobs and business opportunities available in Australia, and their impacts on migrants' settlement and integration. He believed that the success he has achieved in his business as entrepreneur has a significant impact on his own life in Australia in many aspects.

> I think I have got what I never dreamt about. I achieved a lot at the work level, to the extent that I feel sometimes I was a bit selfish, compared to the time I gave to my community. I focused and worked hard to establish a successful business that linked me with many people from the mainstream and helped me create job opportunities for more than 100 people. I got married and have my family here, and my children live a decent life and have a quality education. In general, I have got more than I thought I would get in my life.

8.5 Nostalgia and the desire to return to the homeland

Nostalgia and maintaining close ties to the homeland form another aspect of the integration challenges of Sudanese migrants. "Distance-shrinking" due to the communications-technology revolution, as Sheffer (2003) describes, has had a significant impact on keeping the relationships

between migrants and their homeland countries vivid and alive, bringing the home into exile and sustaining the longing to return home.

Like many migrants, the feeling of returning to where they came from continually occupied the souls and minds of the study participants, no matter how realistic these desires ultimately are. According to Berry (2005), in general, migrants tend to maintain their culture, heritage, and identities intact by distancing themselves from the influence of the dominant culture. This is because, as Lloyd and Vasta (2017) argue, home represents security, comfort, and belonging. Hence, in many cases, the idea of returning home serves to strengthen and increase the solidarity of migrant communities, although it has no practical implications, as Shuval (2000) argues.

Sudanese people, in general, appreciate communal relationships very much, whether these relationships are based on kinship, tribal, ethnic, or urban ties. According to Abu Sharaf (2002), Sudanese people consider their moving and living far from home as *ghorba*. The Arabic expression signifying more than the physical split or living in a far distance, its connotation embedded the psychological suffer of being far from the loved ones. "For the Sudanese, the ghorba evokes loneliness, loss, uprootedness, nostalgia, and yearning for the familiar. It refers to a psychological state as well, a sense of alienation one finds away from family and friends back home" (p. 128).

The following section will discuss forms of longings, affiliations, and the dream of returning home that appear in the participants' responses, as some of the participants – particularly those who consider diaspora as a temporary stop before returning back home feel a sense of in-betweenness and confusion.

Emad Hassan thought that feeling torn between settling in Australia or returning back to the homeland would last for a while before he ultimately settled down. Many factors that had emerged since his arrival to Australia were having significant impacts on his final decision.

> I keep asking myself: should I have stay here and consider Australia as a home, or return to where I came from? Until recently, I wasn't able to come up with a decisive decision. However, through the process of settling in Australia, I realised that the support the Australian system gives to newcomers and the welfare of life are more suitable for anyone looking for a second chance in his life. Furthermore, I learnt that home is not just a geographic map – no, it is more than that; it is where you can fulfil your dreams and have a productive life. I have been so lucky, by creating my own successful business, not just at a personal level, but on the way, it

> enables me to reach out and create job opportunities for my community. Now, as you can see, I am settled and have got married and have three children.

Ahmed Kamal, from the Coptic community, believed that being compelled to leave one's home is a destiny one has to live with as a reality.

> As I said earlier, sometimes you don't know where life takes you; hence, you always have to be ready for any change. Personally, I know how to cope with any new situation I find myself in. However, if there is any slim chance to go back and live in Sudan, I will not miss it, but I know life is no longer the same back home. The political and economic instabilities affected our whole life in a bad way. Unfortunately, in the last two or three years life has kept deteriorating, and all those good values we used to feel proud about have started to be eradicated. Being financially secure is not enough to live in Sudan, because life itself has lost its quality. You can't just turn a blind eye to the misery and impoverished life the majority live in. Political immaturity keeps causing us a lot of damage and puts the whole nation in despair.

Abbaker Adam found that the rhythm of life in Australia sometimes stirred up feelings and memories he associated with his homeland, causing mixed feelings of nostalgia and guilt.

> I think the difficult aspect of being a migrant is the disconnection with family and friends sometimes. Especially when you can't afford to go and pay respects to a loved one who passed away, without being able to be with your family at those difficult times. That is when you really feel guilty and sad. It is not a guiltiness feeling per se, it is more a compassionate feeling. For example, now we are in Ramadan, and we are fasting; I wish I could export this nice weather and all these quantities of food to my people back home to enjoy this important month. It is like that, if you understand what I mean.

To Suzan Mubarak, staying in Australia or returning back to the homeland had much to do with changes in circumstances. However, she believed that as she has gotten older, the way of life in Australia might not be suitable.

> For the time being, Australia is the best place to be, because of our careers, the quality of life, and the education of our children. However, when our children grow up and become adults and start their lives, what am I going

> to do when I get old? What kind of life is it going to be? Yes, I can go and visit my friends once a week and catch up sometimes with my workmates, so what? I would like to go back to spend the rest of my life in such an over-social pattern of life and the communal way of life we were used to.

Abdelwahid Mohammed, from the Darfurian ethnic community, believed that being cut off from the culture in which you were raised and by which you were shaped, as well as living in a household where your children have a different culture, and values intensifies the feeling of nostalgia.

> Let me be honest here: I wish I could go back and spend the rest of my life in the environment where I was born, grew up, and was raised within the culture I know and can feel. This is not possible due to the fact that I have children who are Australians rather than Sudanese. And from my own experience, I can tell you this is not something easy because I keep testing the conflict of cultures on a daily basis. I feel I have no control over my children, because they grew up in a different culture and rules. In sum, we live the conflict of values, if that makes sense.

Habib George, from the Coptic community, believed that aging and social connection have a significant role in triggering the feeling of wanting to return back to where he came from.

> It is something you miss here, and you sense it when you are living around people you know and the environment you are familiar with. Many times, I think of returning home, especially when I am at retirement age: I am now 72 years old and have no mortgage debt, and my children now are independent and have their own families. I feel like I want to go back and enjoy the social connection at this stage of my life, the way I used to live it back then. A couple of days ago, I was talking to my wife, and I said, "Why don't we divide our staying between Australia and Sudan; six months here and the rest there?" It will be good if we do that. If this happens, it will be something really good. I have lifelong friends and memories about the places and events I used to be part of.

To Najeeb Yohana, from the Coptic community, these strong bonds with the homeland were reflected in endless memories and nostalgia:

> I have historical bonds linking me to my people in Sudan. They are very strong ties, and I cannot even imagine they won't be there at any moment of my life. I am part of this land and part of its people. Let me tell you this:

> I have two wishes I keep close and dear. The first one is to visit Sudan and prostrate myself on the airport, putting my forehead against its tarmac. The second wish is to go and visit the graves of my mother and father where they rest in peace. This is to give you just a glimpse of what home means to us – fact that home lives in us; it is something you can't get rid of.

This study also investigated belonging as another aspect of integration (Esser, 2001). Like integration, belonging is an ambiguous concept due to its abstract nature and the various dimensions that constitute belonging at the practical level. According to Yuval-Davis (2006), belonging is an emotional affiliation reflecting the needs of individuals and collective groups for recognition, attachment and security within a given society. This emotion, as Svašek (2013) points out, has to be seen as a dynamic process by which migrants sense and interpret changes in the world and in their location through mobility. In this regard, Sudanese migrants are not exceptional in their feelings towards their adopted country and their homeland. However, the participants' responses were varied. The majority demonstrated a willingness to feel a dual belonging. However, a considerable number of the participants found it uneasy to compromise their loyalty to their homeland; this was particularly true for those who had been categorised as political activists, as their responses show.

Emad Hassan was a political activist who had been compelled to leave Sudan after he had been subjected to torture and persecution. He admitted that the circumstances that had pushed him to leave Sudan left him in a position of in-betweenness and significantly affected his sense of belonging.

> Let me be honest with you, I feel torn, and I feel the conflict of such belonging. As you know, I left Sudan in the late 1990s and early 2000s, like a hundred thousand Sudanese people after we had been persecuted and subjected to torture and atrocities by the Islamist regime. At the time of our arrival to Australia, the idea of resettling and staying for good wasn't on the radar at all. The idea was, "We are here for a temporary period of time until things get better back home, then we can go and resume our life." However, many things have happened, and many changes have taken place since then. The internal conflict never stopped. The same early idea of returning after my economic situation improves still plays in my mind. However, on the other hand, the question of what I am going to do there in a dysfunctional country while I have everything here in terms of a good and comfortable life is still popping up.

To Ahmed Sulieman, belonging can come out of an expression of gratitude for the welcome that Australia has shown towards Sudanese migrants. Further, he believed that as long as the Australian constitution acknowledges dual citizenship, belonging in Australia is not in conflict with his belonging to his homeland.

> The social and economic support I have got here is so helpful. As a legal practitioner by training, I know the Australian law permits dual citizenship. Hence, there is no conflict, given that the two countries are not neighbours and there will be no conflict of interest.

Amjad Kamal, from the Coptic community, believed that the constitutional rights that Australian citizenship gives to migrants has to be met with loyalty and sense of belonging.

> We used to take belongingness for granted back home. But it is not like that. It is a give and take, that is what gives it a value. Australia is a country of law and order. That means you have rights and duties you have to meet as a citizen. You feel you are treated equally and with fairness; that is what makes you feel you belong to this country. I can't say there is no racism or discrimination, this is happening everywhere in the world, and it is part of human beings' nature. But law here doesn't discriminate against you, and this is the core of justice. This fair treatment gives you a feeling of safety and security, and this is actually what you want from your country.

Habib George believed that how the host country treats migrants can be a decisive factor in whether they feel they belong or not. Reflecting on his own lived experience as a migrant in Australia, he asserted that Sudanese migrants have been welcomed and treated with fairness and respect.

> To a great degree I can say yes, I belong to Australia, due to many things: first of all, I didn't feel discrimination the way people are talking about it. I don't mean it is not there, but I can say it is not "harmful", if that makes sense. At the beginning, I wasn't happy when I was told I would have to sit for an exam to get my qualifications as a medical doctor recognised, given that other doctors from South Africa and Singapore are exempt from such an exam. However, when I sat the exam and passed the assessment and got a license as a general practitioner, I realised that this is just rules and regulations rather than anything else. Again, just to make it clear; I don't say there is no discrimination at all, but I think that even if it exists, it is harmless. In sum, there is a sense of fairness and justice that makes people feel dignified.

To Kodi Anan, belonging to Australia is an inevitable process a one cannot avoid while living in and interacting with the dominant culture. Hence, he believed that Sudanese migrants should have to adapt themselves when they move out of their country to start a new life somewhere else.

> Belonging to Australia became part of oneself as long as you live here, interacting and practicing your normal daily life. It is something you cannot avoid or deny. Look, once you leave your country, it is important to adapt yourself to match the new way of the country you are going to settle in.

For some participants, belonging can take different trajectories that could intersect with the white Australian identity. Moreover, seeking belonging and affiliation in the origins of Australia as a country belongs first and foremost to the Aboriginal people. Adil Hassan, from the Sudanese Conference Party, believed that adopting an Australian First Nations identity had a significant impact on his belonging to Australia.

> From the moment I thought about moving and living in Australia, I was very aware about the identity issues. That is why, when I arrived, I decided to go to the tents of Aboriginal people near the parliament building and participated in a smoking to baptise myself with this land. I believe in genealogy and all these kinds of things, and because Australia is the land of Aboriginal people, the black people, I feel I belong here, and I consider it the land of my ancestors, an idea that works to overcome the Anglo-Saxon influence. Not just that, but I went further to create a newspaper named [*Yarra-Nile Newspaper*], linking the two sacred rivers in Sudan and Australia, reflecting on the symbolic meaning of water in terms of life and wellbeing. Linking these two sacred symbols seems like the birth of a new identity. In sum, I have no regret about being here and adopting Australia as a new home.

Najat Al-Mahdi, a feminist and intellectual activist, noted that it took her a long time to feel she belongs to Australia, because she did not feel that the language used by the media speaks to her or addresses her issues. She only started to feel she belonged when she started to recognise aspects of non-white Australia's identity.

> I related myself to the history of the Aboriginal people of Australia, the history of colonialism and struggle, the issues of social justice that confront the refugees and migrants; this is what I can relate to. These narratives of "troubled" Australia make me more connected to Australia as a Sudanese-Australian. This is what empowers me, because to me, identity is about challenging, not just sitting and receiving.

8.6 Social status in Sudan and its impacts on migrants in Australia

This study examines the disparities in social and economic status among the Sudanese migrants in Australia and their impacts on the integration process. This chapter discusses to what extent privileges and disadvantages back home have influenced the lived experiences of each group. The study touched on the topic in Chapter Six when discussing the lived experiences of the self-identified liberal women by mentioning their social class and the influence it has in shaping their socio-political attitudes and individual characteristics. The following section will go further to highlight the extent to which the advantages and disadvantages in quality of education and skills have affected the integration of Sudanese migrants in Australia. The participants' responses varied significantly and reflected different perspectives.

Suzan Mubarak believed that coming from a privileged background could have significant impacts on the degree to which individual migrants integrate, based on their language proficiency and job opportunities, compared with the those who been disadvantaged back home.

> I came to Australia with fluent English and competitive work skills. That is why I got a decent job within a year of arriving, even before having enough time to integrate. I had been in touch with the white culture even before coming to Australia due to my education in foreign schools; hence, I know how to communicate and interact with them. Besides that, I come from a family that does not discriminate between males and females; that is why I was so confident when I came here, because I know that I can achieve equally the same way my husband can do. At the same time, to come from a marginalised group in Sudan, that could probably end up in you coming to Australia by boat or through the refugee scheme, but in my case, the story is different: I have got the privilege of a quality education and a comfortable life and the means to choose the way to immigrate and organise my life here. In comparison, those who are not privileged and come from a disadvantaged group find it harder to settle.

Najeeb Yohana reflected on his own lived experience as a highly educated Sudanese migrant when he came to Australia and how this situation affected his integration process in Australia.

> I had my master's and PhD degrees from the University of Khartoum, a prestigious university built and designed by the British colonisers. I am a federal government employee in Australia, so all my workday I was using English and involved with what was happening in Australia due to my position as a senior government employee.

Adil Hassan, from the Sudanese Conference Party, believed that quality education in the homeland, in which English was the language of teaching and the curriculum was based on that of Anglo-Saxon systems, offered a good environment where he could learn Western culture and gain a sense of familiarity towards it even before he moved to Australia and began to live within it.

> Personally, I studied at Khartoum University's School of Economy. I studied in English, and my lecturers were from England, Pakistan, and India. And there was an American lecturer teaching marketing. As you can see, the whole environment is designed to reinvent the way you think and the culture you adopt. That is why I think those who happened to study at Khartoum University feel no problem integrating [into Australian society] due to their mastery of the English language and the affiliation they developed as a result of the influence of the Anglo-Saxon curriculum. If you remember, during high school, we used to read classic books in the English literature, like *Arms and the Man*, *Flowers for Miss Harris*, and *Great Expectations*; and the last I think related to events that had happened in Australia. As you can see, the way of schooling at that time created strong affiliations and attractions and developed a sense of fascination with life in the West. I have had that feeling ever since, and it became a dream to go and live in Britain.

For some participants, homeland privilege was not always a formula for success and integration in host countries. Instead, they considered that disadvantaged groups could be more motivated to achieve in diaspora than those who had happened to be privileged in their homeland. Najat Al-Mahdi was among those who believed that privilege back home is not necessarily expressed in success of settlement and integration in host countries. Instead, she believed migrants need to have some specific qualities:

> I think those who show a desire to integrate are more willing to embrace new ideas and new values than others. They are risk-takers, and this is not something easy. Even me, although I consider myself a liberal woman, there is always a sense of fearing to lose who I am. In this regard, I think those who dare are more bold and more courageous to be part of the new life they chose. I was about to say, "mastering the language", but no, that is not accurate, because I know that for some people, the language wasn't a barrier for them to integrate; they learnt it much later, but nevertheless, they were more open to change.

She went on to challenge the prevailing idea that disadvantaged migrants are slower and less able to integrate compared with privileged migrants. She thought that coming from a privileged group back home could actually make an individual more reluctant to integrate:

> I noticed that people who came from rural areas, especially those who are minorities are more open to change. Part of it is because they escaped oppression, and to them, this is the place where you can create your own identity. They are keener to relate to the mainstream of Australia. They draw on what it has been called the "Australian dream", where people search for a better job and better education and want to enjoy life the way it has to be. Meanwhile, I noticed that people who came from an urban background have shown some resistance to integrating. I think because they came from a privileged background, hence, they don't feel they need to change. It seems like they convinced themselves that they are here to make more money and get a good education and have a good life, nothing much more than that. They don't want to answer any questions about identity. They feel the identity they related to is fine and complete and cool.

Yousra Mubarak believed that coming from a privileged social background back in Sudan is not automatically an advantage in the host country due to changes in perceptions of social strata and racism in Australia.

> No, I cannot see that any advantage here comes from our privilege back home. This could have an impact in Sudan, but here we are all black. We are all struggling to overcome the structural racism and the systemic exclusion as migrants.

8.7 Racism and discrimination in Australia

Many participants mentioned racism, whether in Sudan or Australia, in their responses. Racism was raised most frequently by those who belonged to ethnic minorities back home; a considerable number of liberal women also raised the issue of structural and interpersonal racism back home and its negative impact on their intra-relationships in Australia. Furthermore, many of the participants stated that they had been subjected to direct or indirect racism in Australia, due to their skin-colour or to other aspects of their appearance marking them as "others". This highlights the issue of visibility and invisibility and the way they are intertwined in the Australian multicultural system, as one of the participants asserted. Although a considerable number of the participants

showed a certain degree of satisfaction towards the way they have been treated in Australia and how Australian multicultural policies seem to be effective in reducing discrimination and bridging the gap between the mainstream and the minorities, other participants pointed out discriminative and racist attitudes and the tendency for some in the dominant culture to characterise them as "eternal migrants" or "others". This attitude, as Esser (2010) argues, could encourage migrants to resent any attempt at integration and instead prompt them to create and maintain ethnic boundaries in Australia.

Kodi Anan believed that the way migrants have been defined in Australia, with hyphenation, indicates exclusivity, and is a sign of racism. He thought that being given citizenship and a national passport is not enough to make someone a member of a society.

> Though you are an Australian citizen and hold an Australian passport, nevertheless, you are still defined with hyphenation in a way designed to remind you that you are "other" …. To be integrated in a society, first you have to be accepted. If you are not accepted then you can't integrate, because you will be singled out as "other". For example, as a black person, I always feel the system treating me as a visible person, not invisible, by which I mean that the system treats me as a different type of person…. Although I can't say everyone is a racist, because this wrong, as a black person wherever I go I am confronted by discrimination. It is obvious that this discriminative behaviour is related to my skin-colour, which singles us out as visible. That is why I say: it is too black to be white! Or it is too white to be black!

To Gada Awad, despite the fact that belonging to Australia is expressed in every aspect of an individual's daily life, sometimes there are moments when one feels as though they have been treated as a guest or a stranger, with a hint of "otherness" in the gaze of the people from the mainstream.

> The guest feeling comes when you experience the "otherness" gaze in a place full of white Australians, accompanied with discriminatory and resentful staring. The lost feeling has much to do with the labeling and stereotyping that are meant to put you in a certain box, regardless of who you are or what attitude you stand for. For example, being a Muslim woman is enough to put you in one of those boxes, even when you have shown liberal attitudes and have that history of women's rights and gender activism back home. This is when you feel frustrated, and really caught in the middle. You feel like an outsider in both contexts, here and back home.

Najat Al-mahadi believed that being relegated from being in the mainstream back home to being a minority in Australia is an interesting experience, and migrants can compare how they used to feel about life with how they feel in their current situation, in which a new awareness and knowledge have emerged. Someone coming from a privileged class back home might start to realise what it means to be deprived as a minority and to what extent this situation has affected their whole life.

> As you know, I am a woman. However, when you are part of the dominant culture in Sudan, there are many women's issues you have never paid attention to before, and you think this is "natural". But when I came to Australia, I started to see and feel these things in a deferent way…being a minority in Australia helped me to build awareness about many things I used to take for granted the privilege I used to enjoy as someone from the mainstream, compared with the pain the minorities back home have been going through. You start to realise the open doors you used to get due to the privilege you have and the doors that shut in the faces of those from the minority groups, and to what extent you have been lucky.

Yousif Ali believed that racism is rife in Australia, and something to which he had been subjected on different occasions. Yousif stated that being confronted with racism in Australia for the first time in his life had been a turning point. The experience encouraged him to think about racism conceptually to get a better understanding of it.

> I have been subjected to racism and discrimination constantly in my work. This is something that sucks. No matter how you try to overcome this negative attitude, it has the ability to affect your morale and reduce your self-confidence…. I started to pay more attention to racism. It was not an issue to me back in Sudan. I experienced it here firsthand, and it caused me suffering. This new situation encouraged me to dig deeply into the history of racism and the suffering of Black Americans and their history of struggle. Even identity-wise, I started to see myself more African than before, and I adopted Africanism as a way of life.

Yousra Mubarak believed that the coexistence Australia enjoys has been achieved by the will of the migrants who have looked desperately for the stable and peaceful life that couldn't be found in their homelands. She didn't believe that the Australian multicultural system has been helpful in this regard. She believed that her experience as a musician has been affected to some degree by the influence of white Anglo-Saxons on the music industry.

> The Australian political system is based on racism and exclusion, and I don't think it plays any positive role to achieve any level of coexistence. What you see here has been achieved by the will of the people who came here to have some stability and live in peace after they left their countries for different reasons…. Another thing is the negative impact of the Australian system with its structural racism, discrimination, and exclusion, which has kept us struggling on a daily basis to get our basic rights and live with dignity.

Adil Hassan believed that the existence of racism in Australia is not e a reason not to belong if one has a sense of identity and skills for dealing with racist behaviours.

> Even racism that might deter some migrants from admitting their Australian affiliation doesn't affect me. I have got that sense of resilience protecting me from such feelings. It is important to know who you are and where you come from.

Ahmed Balga, from the Nouba Mountains community, considered that Australia's multicultural policies are mainly focused on the celebration side of integration, rather than bridging the cultural gap and building mutual understanding.

> I think the Australian government does not show any serious efforts to help migrants integrate. You only get two or three sessions about the Australian way of life besides limited hours in English. I think there is a problem with multicultural policy. It is all about performative culture rather than cultural exchange for better understanding and true integration. Probably the language barrier influences this trend of a performative way of presenting our culture. If we speak good English, we may be able to show a better contribution in different aspects.

8.8 Communal values versus individuality and liberalism

The participants' responses indicate that Australian liberal and individual values often contradict the communal, traditional, and conservative values and way of life of the Sudanese migrants. Although responses varied, the majority of participants believed that Australian liberal values, particularly those concerning child-rearing and women's rights, have caused social anxiety and discomfort within the wider Sudanese community. These feelings of discomfort and anxiety are consequences of "acculturation distress" due to the effects of adjusting physically and

psychologically in a new culture (Milner & Khawaja, 2010). The influence of the dominant culture has significant impacts on the psyche of any group of new migrants. The interviews in this study clearly show Sudanese migrants' struggles to adapt to Australian liberal values in terms of individual freedom, religious freedom, women's rights, and children's rights. This section discusses the participants' perspectives and what mechanisms they have used to overcome acculturation distress and how they have attempted to fit in and feel reasonably comfortable in their new environment.

Emad Hassan spoke of concerns regarding individuality and individual freedom as salient markers of Australian identity, and their impacts on the second generation, noting that these effects intensified his desire to eventually return to Sudan.

> There is a fear that I started to feel when I saw my children growing up. As you know, Australia is a free country, and the system encourages individuality at an early age. Definitely, this attitude has a positive side for one's personality; however, it also has a negative side, if children misuse and abuse this individuality. This is where my concerns come from. I could be wrong and misinformed, but still I think they are genuine and reflect where I came from and what culture I was born and grew up within. I think, and based on many people's experiences around me, coming to the middle always works well. Hence, I feel obliged to direct them until they become adults, and then they can decide for themselves. Until that time, I will do my best to link them to their parents' culture, and this is what I did, actually, by taking them and spending a couple of years there to get them familiar with the culture, people, and the way of life. In sum, the conflict has always existed and keeps reflecting itself in different ways all the time.

Ahmed Sulieman believed that getting along with the Australian liberal values can be a factor in achieving integration without feeling disconnected from one's original community and homeland.

> First of all, the Australian way of life suits my life principles. I defend and support liberal life and human rights. Everyone has the right to do whatever he wants as long as his behaviour is not going to harm someone else. If you want to go to the bar, then go to the bar. If you want to go to the mosque, go to the mosque. If you want to lose yourself and wander aimlessly in the streets, just go and do it. Having said that, it is important to say, I am still connecting myself to my people back home, using social media on a daily basis, talking to my family and friends.

He went on to criticise the community's inherent fear based on assumptions that their children will lose their identities by exposing themselves to liberal and individual values.

> In some cases, intentionally or unintentionally, they work to distance their children from the mainstream under the pretext that the society is corrupt, and by saying that they usually judge boyfriend/girlfriend relationships or lesbian/gay relationships, although those kinds of relationships exist in any society. So, instead of escaping these situations, they should step up and face them. They should learn not to be afraid of mainstream culture. They have to be realistic and embrace it and try within it to find the best way to raise their children, instead of injecting and projecting their fear on their children, only to realise later that the children don't know how to belong to either his family or the mainstream.

Suzan Zakaria claimed that conservative Sudanese women in misinterpret gender equity and women's empowerment in an attempt to blur their inferior status within the social hierarchy. Further, she argued that their expectations of their children who were born and have grown up in Australia reflect their fear and confusion towards Australian liberal values.

> Most of the women in the wider Sudanese community are programed to the extent that they believe being beaten by their husband is acceptable, and not leaving the house without permission from their husband is acceptable. Not just that – I will tell you something thing: some of my women friends say to me that the Australian government encourages women to separate from their husbands. They came to this conclusion because the government gives them shelter and support in cases of domestic violence. They don't see it from a different perspective, and this is what I mean by saying they are programmed. They have a fear of anything Australian. It is very weird. For example, you find that the children of Sudanese families speak fluent English, while their parents have broken English; nevertheless, they are fine with that. Also, at the same time they don't want their children to choose or belong to the Australian culture; they want them to be Sudanese. I think this fear is preventing them from integrating into the wider Australian society.

Homesickness, cultural conflict, and intergenerational tension were Abdelwahid Mohammed's main concerns when he came to reflect on his lived experiences. "The negative side is that I found myself cut off from my culture and way of life; besides, I have no control over my children, because they grew up in a different culture and with different rules.".

Habib George believed that having a successful life and a strong sense of integration might not erase or reduce nostalgia for the homeland, especially when cultural disparities are not bridgeable.

To him, “lack of communal life, loneliness, being away from home, and social distancing” have been the most difficult part of his lived experience as a migrant.

Gada Awad felt that people’s social background back in Sudan can have a significant impact on their integration in Australia and the extent to which they can reconcile with Australian liberal values.

> The matter depends on where you come from. Bear in mind that Sudan itself is a hugely diverse country. In my opinion, the more you come from an urban and open-minded background, the more you are willing to integrate naturally here. I say that because, although I am very keen to hold dear my cultural background, this attitude never prevented me from living in Australia and enjoying the Australian part of me on a daily basis. However, for those who stick with their own culture and refuse to interact, usually they have their religious, social, and cultural prejudices. The two identities overlap based on my dynamic life and the ongoing dialectic and constant reflection I do through my diasporic journey and traveling to and from the homeland. Due to the maturity of my age and my lived experience, I can reflect on my own life and start to see things from different perspectives, especially the sensitive issues related to religion, gender, and political attitudes. You start to realise that it is not necessary to do things collectively, as people used to back home: you are now an individual and whatever decision you take represents who you are.

Najat Al-Mahadi believed that the indifference most of the Sudanese migrants show towards integration has much to do with their discomfort towards the Australian way of life.

> I think they feel comfortable with the space they created here or the sub-identity they invented as Sudanese living in Australia, which I can define as Sudanese-Australians. I think they are very aware of this impact; not just that, but I think, to some degree, they bet on it. They want to raise their children according to Sudanese values and prevent them as much as they can from developing mainstream characteristics – not to say, “Australian identity”, because the latter is a bit vague to me. In sum, based on what mainstream qualities their children have, such as the language and a culture of competitiveness, they want them to achieve economic success, not to adopt the mainstream culture and values.

Isam Nour, from the Umma Political Party, believed that the uncompromising attitudes of Sudanese migrant families towards the Australian dominant values and their insistence on confining themselves to their own cultural values could have negative consequences in the future.

> There is disconnection between families and their children, particularly teenagers, from what I can see. I attributed this attitude to the cultural gap that has started to widen between the first and the second generations. The reason behind that, from my own perspective, is the nomadic stubbornness and the lack of compromise to bring some mutual understanding between those families and their children. Thus, there are two outcomes from what I can see. The first is that children will play it down until they became adult and then disconnect themselves from their families and the wider Sudanese community. The second is worse, and this is when we succeeded in injecting our own fears from the mainstream into those children and nurturing them to the degree that they become weak and vulnerable.

8.9 Discussion

This chapter has explored the ways that Sudanese migrants in Australia have opted to deal with their situation as migrants and what compromises they have come up with to fit in, on one hand, and to maintain their socio-cultural characteristics, on the other. Further, the chapter has investigated the challenges and confrontations the dominant culture has posed to migrants, particularly the Australian liberal and individual values, which, according to the study participants, Sudanese migrants see as conflicting with the communal values and traditional customs of the homeland. These results can be further clarified by investigating the meaning of integration in this context.

The forms that integration can take differ from one country to another. In some cases, it can be designed to incorporate migrant groups into the mainstream way of life and values through the process of acculturation. In this regard, and according to Sheffer (2013), integration will be a two-way process of accommodation, in which the two parties influence each other, albeit not necessarily in equal way; this process affects the original traits of both cultures. To Ager and Strang (2004), integration stands on three pillars: public outcome, in which job opportunities, health, and education are provided; social connection, reflecting the ability of migrants to build and maintain social intra-relationships and interrelationships with the wider community; and personal competencies in developing language proficiency, familiarity with the mainstream culture, and life stability.

This is how the concept is conceived theoretically. However, how have the Sudanese migrants interpreted it cognitively and how have they felt and lived it in their daily lives? The participants'

responses reflected diverse understanding of, and multi-layers of meaning to, the concept. For some of them, job opportunities have brought some sense of belonging that made settling and starting a new life possible, whether in a professional sector or a small business. It is noteworthy that most of those who emphasised the importance of job opportunities were skilled professionals and highly educated, regardless of gender. Getting a job creates chances to reach out and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, including the mainstream, as many responses suggested.

Building families in Australia is another factor the participants believed affected their integration and sense of belonging to Australia. In this regard, marriage and starting a family can be a pathway to integration by forming roots in the adopted country (Ullah & Kumpoh, 2019). Coming to Australia in adulthood and working to adapt in such a new socio-cultural environment pushed most of the participants to intensify the relationships with their homeland in a search for belongingness. For many participants, creating a nuclear family in Australia has worked to influence their relationship with Australia and help to balance the affiliation between the two countries.

However, this step has two aspects: on the one hand, working hard to get a stable job, and planning for a permanent stay. Paying more attention to adaptation and getting along with some values of the dominant culture has increased with the addition of children to their families. However, having children in Australia raised concerns with some participants, who showed discomfort towards Australian liberal values and the way they conflicted with the participants' cultural values, particularly in the way they nurtured and disciplined children. To them, what has been called "children's rights" in Australian comes at the expense of their authority as parents. Fear of the influence of the dominant culture underlies why Sudanese migrants prefer to stay invisible, as many participants said. However, those who tended to be open to dialectical interaction with Australian liberal values, raising and nurturing their children in such a different culture has been a challenge that keeps them constantly revising the way they interact in turn with their children, who have been enculturated into the dominant culture, a situation that has increased their sense of belonging to Australia.

The conflict of cultures between the wider Sudanese community and Australian liberal values extends beyond the nuclear family's intra-relationships to touch the feasibility of living and resettling in an environment that endlessly challenges to one's way of life and established values.

Most of the participants expressed their discomfort with the "unfamiliar" individual life they now live, compared to the communal way of life from which they came. The fear of loneliness and lack of socialisation dominated most of the participants' responses. Although the responses in this regard varied to some extent, virtually all of them expressed nostalgia for the communal life in Sudan. This challenge comes from the fact that, as Karla and Khawaja (2010, p. 23) argue, "[i]n Australian culture, the person is seen as a self-contained unit, independent of others. This view is not shared by the Sudanese who, as a collectivist society, view the individual as part of a family or community". The reason behind this collectivity lies in the fact that Sudan in general is a premodern country, despite the pockets of urbanisation created by the British colonisers before independence in 1956. The social pattern persists where extended families, clans, ethnic gatherings, communal life, and total submission of individuals to societal authority as represented in family, clan, and ethnic hierarchy are the norm. In this regard, the lack of the social support the extended family provided in the homeland causes a sense of loss and feelings of displacement (Simich, Estec & Hamilton, 2010).

Given the context of communal life in Sudan, migrants have never experienced individuality as a pattern of life before moving to Western countries. This situation has created a feeling of in-betweenness, in which the feeling of "living here and still there" prevails among the Sudanese migrants, as the findings of this study suggested. The desire to return home is the most salient aspect of such a feeling of in-betweenness. Safran (1991) argues that migrants' looming idea of returning to their homeland is a myth, resembling in a theological way the Second Coming or afterlife. Nevertheless, while it does not necessarily mean that they prepare themselves for actual departure, in fact it is a defense mechanism they use to overcome the attitudes of exclusion and marginalisation they experience in host countries. Most of the participants expressed a yearning for social life and reconnecting to the way of life back home. For some, the barriers to returning to the homeland are the family they created in Australia, and the social insecurity and political instability back in Sudan. They also spoke of now feeling connected to and having a meaningful life in Australia in terms of job opportunities, quality education, and small-business opportunities. However, the question of what to do in old age, when their children are adults, still looms as an important concern. The answer for many of them is to return back to the homeland to enjoy the social life they miss in Australia.

The findings suggest that the ways the Sudanese migrants belong to Australia take different forms. In general, the participants agreed that they had a sense of belonging to Australia, although this might take different approaches. For some, the welcome and support Australians have shown has a significant role in their feeling of belonging to Australia. In this regard, belonging can be interpreted as gratitude, as some responses expressed. The equal rights professed in the Australian constitution and reflected in law and order played a significant role in some participants feeling they belonged to Australia. One of the participants noted that for those who had been naturalised as Australian citizens, belonging was an obligation rather than a choice. As Parker (1928) wrote, belonging is an unavoidable destiny when people decide to move out of their environment to live within a different culture and subject themselves to the influence of the dominant way of life in a daily basis: "One of the consequences of migration is to create a situation in which the same individual-who may or may not be a mixed blood-finds himself striving to live in two diverse cultural groups (p. 881)." The importance of Parker's theoretical contribution comes from the fact that he pioneered an exploration of the phenomenon whereas migrants feel caught in the middle, coining it "the marginal man". This situation, as one of the participants said, is inevitable and it needs to be acknowledged and accepted through a smooth process of adaptation. However, not every participant was willing to accept the white Australian dominant culture as the only form of belonging. For those participants, the dominant culture did not represent or speak to them. They only felt they belonged in Australia when they connected themselves to the Aboriginal people and diverse Australia, the "trouble" Australia, as one of the participants described.

To what extent privilege in the homeland can be converted into advantage in the host country is one of the areas this chapter highlighted. Quality education and skilled professions are indicators of class disparities and social injustice in Sudan. Usually those who belong to the middle and upper-middle classes in the urban areas have better chances to access quality healthcare, education, and job opportunities than those who live in the peripheries of the country. English proficiency is one of the areas reserved to those who study at an early age in prestigious English-language private schools and colleges, while those public schools and universities mainly study in Arabic. The participants who considered themselves lucky enough to have a quality education and skilled professions before coming to Australia acknowledged that their English proficiency and professional skills helped them to settle and adapt faster than they had expected. The reason behind

that, as some of them said, had much to do with their familiarity with the Western values and culture to which they had been exposed through Western-based education and work environments. However, these advantages do not necessarily result in faster integration than that experienced by less-advantaged Sudanese migrants. On the contrary, the responses from participants from ethnic groups in the previous chapters, who in fact represent the majority of disadvantaged Sudanese migrants, show that they found in Australia a second chance to reestablish their life and to benefit from opportunities in education and skills development of which they had been deprived in Sudan. "When you live in deprivation most of your life, you've got nothing to lose when you try something new that might change your life for the better," one of the participants commented.

Racism and discrimination intentionally deprive individuals and groups of their human rights and dignity (Olagookun, 2018). These attitudes as directed against the Aboriginal people and migrant minorities have been addressed widely in the Australian media and academic papers. As Olagookun (2018, p. 19) argues,

> despite Australia having a stronger human rights culture, racial vilification and discrimination in education and social domains remain subtle and complicated in discourses where inclusion is negotiated. The levels of systemic discrimination, which refers to a structural practice of limited representation of a minority group in industry, are almost farcical.

Many scholars consider racism and discrimination to be systemic in Australia, and they attribute that to the influence of the "doomed" White Australian Policy. As Hage (2012) argues, despite the fact that Australia has been one of the most diverse countries in the world due to its shift from the White Australian Policy to multiculturalism, it is still Eurocentric in many aspects of its identity. The insistence of using Anglo-Saxon values and culture as a yardstick to measure what is Australian and who is a "true" Australian creates a great deal of misunderstanding and a simplistic perception of minorities. As Gatt (2011) argues, the unsubstantiated fear of difference is fed by the right-wing media. This attitude has hindered the process of integration in many ways and encouraged many migrants to create closed communities and stay invisible. The Sudanese migrants in Australia are not exceptional in this regard. Despite the fact that most of them have shown gratefulness and appreciation to the welcomeness Australia has shown in receiving them, throughout this study, however, there are a considerable number of them never felt shy to reflect their discomfort and frustration towards the racism and discrimination they have been subjected to

in different forms throughout their lived experiences since their coming to Australia. Addressing racism by the Sudanese migrants is not devoid of peculiarity given the fact that racism and discrimination are entrenched attitude-behaviour and one of the most root causes of its constant civil wars and political instability since the country independence in 1956. For those, who already been subjected to racism and discrimination back in Sudan, the matter is often painful and frustrating. They thought by moving to a more liberal and equal society they would no longer suffer. However, to their dismay they have been found themselves visible and picked on based on their skin-colour, as one of the participants vented his frustration by saying; 'obviously, it is too black to be white in Australia'.

Sudanese migrants from the dominant culture reported mixed feelings of anger, perplexity, and contemplation in response to racism and discrimination. The majority believed that racism in Australia expresses itself in a form of systemic discrimination that takes energy to deal with and overcome it, as one of the participants commented. Interestingly, some of them found that the experience of being a minority for the first time, despite the pain they felt at the racism to which had have been subjected, inspired in them deep reflection and ethical questions, like: "What does it mean to be privileged back in Sudan?" and "How did you used to see and deal with those who were disadvantaged and less fortunate compared to you?", as one of the participants put it.

If integration is the willingness of migrants to voluntarily adopt some of the values and attitudes of the dominant culture while maintaining their cultural, social, and political identities (Morwaska & Wieviorka in Sheffer, 2013), how have Sudanese migrants in Australia dealt with the influence of the Australian liberal and individual values such as equal rights, women's rights, religious freedom, and children's rights? To what extent are they willing to compromise some of their values for the sake of integration? The participants' responses were mixed and reflected at some point their social backgrounds, marital status, and gender. For most of the married men, it is obvious that losing control over their children was the most concerning part of confronting Australian liberal values. Hebbani, Obijiofor, and Bristed (2010, p. 39) attribute this fear to the culture differences between the Australian and the Sudanese society, in which the Sudanese migrants "come from a traditionally collectivistic culture with strict gender roles and settle into a culture that is individualistic with comparatively fluid gender roles." To overcome this issue, they believed

that linking their children to the wider Sudanese community, where communal and religious values dominated, could influence them more than the Australian mainstream, a tendency defined by Sheffer (2013) as communalism, in which certain diasporas distance themselves by creating their own socio-cultural boundaries without fully disconnecting themselves from the dominant culture of the receiving country. However, some of the participants believed these attempts to be worthless and asserted that they have already caused damage and widened the cultural gap between the first and the second generations of the Sudanese migrants. However, these perspectives did not take into consideration "the cultural context of any behaviour including trauma and stress", as Milner and Khawaja (2010) argue.

Many of the participants noted that Sudanese migrants tend to regard women's rights with suspicion. Although women's rights have been embraced warmly by the self-identified liberal women, this has not been the case among the women of the wider Sudanese community. One of the liberal women participants asserted that more-traditional Sudanese migrant women believe that the laws and services designed to protect women in Australia against domestic violence are encouraging family breakup. This attitude can be attributed to the dominance of the patriarchal structure of the family household and the history of women's economic and emotional dependency within the communal norms of Sudanese society (Ibrahim, F., A., 1996). In this regard, as Hebbani, Obijiofor, and Bristed (2010) write, domestic violence in Sudan has been viewed as a family issue and that must be dealt with within the wider family. Women are expected to stay in their marriage for the sake of the children, while in Australia domestic violence is more serious and has legal consequences against perpetrators. The victims are often advised to leave the home for their personal safety.

In general, one can argue that Australia's liberal values and individualistic way of life work in contradiction with the communal values adopted by the majority of the Sudanese migrants in Australia, particularly at the collective level. As Sheffer (2013) argues, this stems from the fact that the community as a diasporic entity is not homogeneous due to the political, social, and economic heterogeneity of its members' backgrounds. Amersfoort (2004) writes that the matter is more complicated than the heterogeneity of the migrants' community; it also has much to do with the confronting nature of migration itself, in which migrants create entities to safeguard part of

their cultures in the first stage of their migration journey. These entities, in his view, tend toward conservatism, adopting defensive mechanisms and avoiding contact with the outside as much as possible. However, at the individual level, the matter is different. The community's maintenance of their boundaries is not always possible due to some individuals' desire to reach out and fulfil their needs and ambitions in being part of the wider Australian society. In this context, the liberal women can be considered to demonstrate this, based on the interest they have shown in maintaining and extending their rights beyond the coercive boundaries demarcated by the norms and values of the wider Sudanese community.

While migrants' willingness to integrate could depend very much on the reception that their host countries offer them, many factors have significant roles to play in encouraging or discouraging the process. In the case of the Sudanese migrants, despite the fact that the majority of respondents showed a great degree of satisfaction towards the way Australia had welcomed them, their integration process encountered difficulties. At the collective level, factors like Australian liberal values and individuality caused discomfort and a tendency towards invisibility. Further, the intensity of attachment to the homeland and the insistence to be part of its socio-cultural life in an attempt to ease the feelings of loneliness and cultural differences positioned a considerable number of them in a situation of in-betweenness. At the individual level, the scene seems a bit different. Most of the self-identified liberal women found in Australian liberal values a sense of empowerment and freedom that enhanced their gender identity. The same thing can be said about some individual men who showed interest in the liberal and individual values of the Australian society. However, it seems unclear whether the wider Sudanese community in its collective identity will be able to develop any diasporic identity in the foreseeable future or not. However, at the individual level, patterns of familiarity with the way of life throughout effective communication and work environments could hasten the process of integration among them.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study intended to explore the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants in Australia after more than two decades of settlement in an attempt to explore whether or not they have been able to develop a form or forms of diasporic identity (or identities). To do that, the study investigated the activities of migrants within the Sudanese community in a socio-cultural space established, in principle, to help migrants maintain their cultural characteristics while they contribute to Australia's multicultural society. The study intended to focus on the internal dynamics of the Sudanese migrant community in Australia through their socio-cultural activities, rather than on external factors, which mainly reflect the influence of the host countries as the main measurements of integration and belonging. By choosing an intra-community focus, the study intended to bring extra dimensions to the issue of immigration and settlement and the challenges associated with them.

By choosing phenomenology as a research design, by which the participants had the opportunity to bring up their narratives and reflect on their lived experiences, the study intended to centre minorities' voices and a sense of self-representation. Consistent with this approach, a considerable part of the study reflected the participants' responses, giving them the chance to interrogate different topics and cover as many aspects as possible of their lived experiences in Australia through their socio-cultural activities since their arrival to the country almost 20 years ago, and examine to what extent these activities influenced their integration process; whether these activities worked to confine their belonging and loyalties to their homeland or extended them to include their adopted home as well; and the degree to which such activities and the use of the community as a socio-cultural space have any impacts in developing any diasporic identity or identities within the wider Sudanese community, or mainly confined them to lives as a transnational group that has brought their home abroad.

9.2 Findings and key issues

Sudanese migrants are some of the most heterogeneous migrant populations in Australia: their identities revolve around ethnicities as well as their historical and socio-political status in the homeland. The major sub-categories of the community –the Nuba Mountains and Darfurian ethnic groups, the Copts, the elite Arab stock, and the more progressive groups, including those self-identifying as liberal women – remain distinct communities. The multicultural spaces provided by the Australian government, which celebrate diversity, have been an ideal atmosphere for the Sudanese migrants from ethnic minorities to continue to identify with their ethnic identities. This tendency has worked against the wider Sudanese community's wish to bring the Sudanese migrants under a wider umbrella that reflects their diversity and heterogeneity. Having said that, it is likely that any emergence of diasporic identities will evolve around ethnicity and individuality. The following section will demonstrate the struggles for adaptation and integration in which the Sudanese migrants have engaged through their lived experiences and the significant factors behind these struggles, based on the research findings.

9.3 The impacts of political activism

Chapter 4 examined political activism among the Sudanese migrants in Australia. The findings showed that political activism is very common among them, whether on an individual level or organisationally. Within this political atmosphere, there are a considerable number of committed political activists, representing their homelands' political parties. Many offshoots political parties have been created in different Australian cities with a homeland-oriented agenda. Participants cited various perspectives to justify this type of political engagement. However, the way they had been nurtured and exposed to different political ideologies during their university study were among their strongest motivations to sustain their commitments to their homelands' political parties, and to maintain their contact with and influence on the homelands' politics. The findings also suggested that practicing political activism within the wider Sudanese community was a cause of division and tension, given the fact that the community is already fragmented due to the prolonged political instability and ethnic tensions in the homeland. The majority of the participants confirmed

that their political activism is mainly concerned with what is happening in Sudan, rather than with Australian politics.

In sum, those migrants who engage political activism as an activity within the wider Sudanese community do so as an instrument to reflect their belonging to their homeland and a way to remain connected to their political allegiances as "still" being members of their political organisations in the homeland. This suggests that for Sudanese migrants, political activism in Australia is unlikely to play a role in the integration process. Instead, it enhances the notion of "we are here but still there" (Shefer, 2003). Researchers have noted similar attitudes regarding political activism in Sudanese migrants in the US, Canada, the UK, and Europe (Abu Sharaf, 2002; Baird, 2013; Wilcock, 2018; Assal, 2006).

9.4 Self-identified liberal women in the wider Sudanese community

Chapter Five shed light on a distinctive group of women within the wider Sudanese community: those who adopt liberal values and work for women's rights and gender equality. They are in a peculiar situation among the Sudanese migrants in Australia, most of whom are conservative and abide by patriarchal values and gender roles. According to the study findings, the majority of the liberal women participants came from a bourgeois class and had been privileged with quality education and the opportunity to practice skilled professions compared to other women of the community. Despite the fact that they were a minority among the wider Sudanese community members, they were not relegated to a marginal status or socially suppressed. In fact, their qualities, in particular their English proficiency, gave them a voice and linked them to the mainstream institutions concerned with women's empowerment. The findings also demonstrated their competition with men for community leadership and the influence they aimed to exert in relation to women's rights and women's liberation, particularly economic liberation, by encouraging the community women to work, and thus gain independence. The findings showed their discomfort about the racism, discrimination, stereotyping, and labeling they have encountered from the Australian mainstream, despite their adherence to the same common values of modern Australia. The findings showed that most of them found it difficult to fit into the patriarchal structure of the community or group themselves with its conservative women.

In sum, their evident adaptation to the Australian way of life and their effective connectivity to mainstream women's groups and institutions have given them an advantage in the integration process compared to their counterparts in the wider Sudanese community. Further, they are likely to create and develop their own identity if they fail in their attempts to make a significant change within the community towards reaching out to and greater visibility in the wider Australian society.

9.5 The intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community

Chapter Seven discussed the intra-relationships of the Sudanese migrants within the wider Sudanese community, investigating the factors that affected these intra-relationships and that caused migrants to project, consciously or subconsciously, their social, political, and cultural interactions in the homeland, whether in harmony or disharmony, onto their experiences in Australia. The study as a whole has discussed Sudan's difficulties in creating a consensual national identity, recognising ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, and establishing an effective political system that brings stability and co-existence. The study findings suggest that Sudanese migrants transfer most of their homelands' disputes to Australia, a situation has affected their intra-relationships significantly.

It is obvious that the contested national identity back in Sudan has a significant impact on any attempt to bring the diverse Sudanese migrants into one Sudanese community that incorporates the diversity of the country's people. This contestation has fed the tendency toward identity politics among the ethnic minorities and encouraged them to break away and create ethnic sub-communities.

Moreover, the study findings suggested that the history of slavery and discrimination against the ethnic minorities by the culturally dominant groups has been an obstacle that Sudanese migrants have failed to overcome to achieve a united community. The findings also suggested that the way religion has been "used and abused", as one participant said, as a political ideology, particularly in the last 30 years, has had a damaging impact at the level of social cohesion and the coexistence of the Sudanese people, both in Sudan and in the diaspora.

By supporting minorities and providing them with services to maintain and sustain their cultural characteristics, Australian multiculturalism, which aims to support migrants' integration into Australian society, paradoxically reduces the possibility of bringing the various groups of Sudanese migrants into one wider community. The findings suggested that the awareness that the

Sudanese ethnic migrants have gained for the first time since their arrival to Australia about the importance of maintaining and developing their ethnic identities has a decisive role in creating their ethnic sub-communities.

9.6 The interrelationships between the Sudanese community and the wider Australian society

Chapter Six explored the interrelationships between the Sudanese community and the wider Australian society. To do that, the study investigated the way Sudanese migrants use the community as a socio-cultural space, and whether this space has been used as a bridge to interact with other Australian ethnic groups or mainly as a closed boundary distancing them from other groups as well as from the mainstream. The findings proved that the wider Sudanese community tends to prefer invisibility and has difficulty reaching out to and interacting with the wider Australian society. The participants offered many reasons for this; in particular, they spoke about ethnic and political divisions in the homeland, mediocre and overly conservative community leadership, the language barrier, and cultural differences.

The findings confirmed that the ethnic, religious, and political divisions in Sudan have significant impacts on community cohesion in Australia, which makes it difficult to come together to solve any disputed issues. Also, a considerable number of the participants, in particular the self-identified liberal women, blamed the community leaders for a lack of community integration, questioning their ability to bridge the gap between them and the wider Australian society.

The participants' responses indicated that the language barrier is among the main reasons for the community's disconnection. Most participants believed that the lack of English proficiency, whether upon arrival to Australia or now, had a significant impact on their interactions with Australian institutions and the wider society. The findings also showed that Sudanese migrants fear the influence of the dominant culture: their concerns about losing their cultural identity or being subjected to any undesirable change under the influence of the dominant culture makes them seek invisibility and resent any attempt to compel them to interact with the wider Australian society.

In contrast to the general Sudanese community, the Sudanese Coptic community is unique in its willingness to reach out and be part of the wider Australian community. Many key factors have played a role in this. Their history as long-term migrants in Sudan – more than two hundred years

of living in Sudan as a minority – has developed their awareness of how to fit in and what kind of skills they need so as to continue empowering themselves. Quality education and economic power have always been their strengths, along with their willingness to integrate and be effective participants in any given situation.

In sum, the Sudanese community, with the exception of the Copic community, a struggle to interact with the wider Australian society. However, this trend does not necessarily apply to individuals; for example, many of the participants in this study recounted finding ways of interacting with and reaching out to the wider Australian society.

9.7 The Sudanese migrants and the integration process

Chapter Eight explored how Sudanese migrants have dealt with integration issues as they have attempted to establish themselves in a new environment, and what kinds of incentives and concerns have or have not affected their integration process. Integration, as Sheffer (2013) argues, is a two-way process by which any two interacting groups have the ability to influence each other, not necessarily in an equal way. This definition suggests that integration is inevitable once two cultural groups collide, but it is far from being straightforward. In the Sudanese migrants' context, the process has not been smooth or easy for many reasons. The language barrier has a significant impact on the level of communication and familiarity with the new environment. The findings confirm that this has pushed the majority of Sudanese migrants to intensify communication with people in the homeland using social-media technology.

The study findings indicate that parenting is one of the factors that has introduced tension and confusion among the Sudanese migrants. The majority of the participants found the Australian liberal way of dealing with children confronting to them as parents and in total conflict with their traditional values. However, others, particularly the self-identified liberal women, acknowledged that raising their children with such liberal values has given them the chance to feel that they belonged to Australia through the constant challenges their children behaviours posed them.

The "threat" of Australian liberal values is not limited to raising children; it is also evident, as the findings suggested, in Sudanese community members' concerns about individuality and individual rights. As a conservative society, Sudanese abide by traditional values and customs. Communalism and communal values are the salient characteristics of Sudanese society, in which kinship, extended family, and ethnic and religious relationships bind individuals in societal ties.

Individuality and individual rights thus act as a threat to their social cohesion, particularly when they are most in need of communal solidarity – that is, in the diaspora. Considerable numbers of male and female participants raised their concerns about aging in Australia without being surrounded by the people they used to know and the culture with which they are familiar. To them, plans to eventually return to Sudan are very important to their mental health and well-being.

In contrast, many participants felt that getting a job and creating a nuclear family linked them to Australia in a very effective way.

Many participants viewed racism and discrimination as obstacles in their path to belonging and integration. They noted that being treated as visible and singled out due to their skin colour or accent always brought feelings of otherness and being an outsider. Some of the liberal women participants found that labeling and stereotyping hindered their efforts to belong and integrate as they wished, despite their appreciation for the rights they enjoyed in Australia as women compared to Sudan.

In sum, the findings showed that Sudanese migrants' integration into Australian society has encountered many difficulties, including the language barrier, culture gaps, culture differences, racism, and discrimination. These difficulties, combined with differences in class, ethnicity, and individual personalities, resulted in differences for each participant. However, collectively, Sudanese migrants are still leaning towards creating closed boundaries and maintaining strong social, cultural, and political ties with their homeland.

9.8 Insights from the study

Many insights have emerged from the study:

- Contrary to the prevailing notion in Australian academia about the homogeneity of Sudanese migrants, the study revealed that they are a highly heterogeneous community that reflects huge ethnic and cultural diversity that accurately mirrors the homeland population.
- At the collective level, the study revealed Sudanese migrants' struggle to form one broad community representing all Sudanese migrants as Sudanese. Historical divisions caused by ethnic, religious, and political tensions have been the most prominent factors in the persistence of insular sub-communities. As a result, it is hard to imagine any collective Sudanese diasporic identity, at least in the foreseeable future.

- It is evident that Sudanese migrants have used the community as a socio-cultural space to maintain strong political, economic, and social ties with the homeland. Also, despite the struggles associated with Sudanese migrants' interrelationship with the wider Australian society, the findings here are more nuanced regarding the attempts by the liberal women and the Coptic community, for example, to reach out. Having said that, it is important to mention that the Sudanese Coptic community is unique in this regard compared to the other ethnic Sudanese communities.
- Ethnic identity is evolving steadily among most of the ethnic Sudanese migrants, who are benefiting from the Australian government services and resources provided to minorities. This trend will likely pave the way towards developing a diasporic identity based on ethnicity rather than national origin.
- Privileges and advantages in Sudan proved to matter also in Australia. Most of those who from urban middle and upper-middle classes who received a quality education, particularly women, have been able to navigate their way through the Australian system better than others. In this regard, English proficiency, training in a skilled profession, and familiarity with Western culture have been key factors in a more successful adaptation. However, in terms of integration the matter seemed ambiguous. In this regard, conservative values stemming from religious and traditional conventions have a prevailing influence among the majority Sudanese migrants regardless of their social or class status.
- Many Sudanese migrants consider Australian liberal values and individuality a threat to their entrenched communal way of life. It is evident that women's and children's rights are among many factors that have pushed the wider Sudanese community to be invisible and draw boundaries that hamper greater interaction with the wider Australian society. However, many liberal women and some individuals showed their appreciation for these values in their integration process.
- Finally, the study revealed that although external factors in migrants' integration process and their ability to adapt have received more scholarly attention, internal factors can have significantly positive or negative impacts as well.

In conclusion, by exploring the lived experiences of Sudanese migrants the way they themselves have articulated them, the study has been able to gain insights into many issues related to their

diasporic journey since they arrived in Australia. As I mentioned earlier, the personal and public are intertwined in this study, as I myself am a Sudanese migrant. Hence, the way the participants from the wider Sudanese community articulated their lived experiences reflected in one way or another my personal diasporic journey. Having been able to raise our voices up and represent ourselves is a liberating feeling that can move us, as migrants, one step away from being "modern subalterns"!

Also, by investigating the internal factors and their impacts on the Sudanese migrants' integrational process, the study has brought to light a significant dimension that has always been underestimated compared to the influence of the external factors (for example, racism, discrimination, hostility, and the language barrier). The importance of these internal factors reflects the complexity of the country itself, how this complexity has determined the way its people form and define themselves in any given situation, and to what extent these determinants influence their destiny. Having said that, I think it is worthy for any future academic researchers in diaspora studies to pay more attention to the ethnic and cultural diversities within some migrant communities and the extent to which such diversities could have significant impacts on their integration process and issues of conflicted loyalties. The Sudanese migrants in Australia who participated in this study have proven that the level of ethnic and cultural fragmentations in the homeland could complicate any attempts at reconciliation or reunification.

Finally, by reflecting on the lived experiences of the Sudanese migrants in Australia, the intention of the study is twofold. (1) To give the Sudanese migrants a voice to tell their own narratives and draw on the challenges and confrontations they have been through and the mechanisms they have come up with to overcome these situations (2) To highlight the diversity of the Sudanese migrants in terms of ethnicity and beliefs in order to give the Australian policy makers a better understanding rather than the prevailing assumptions that they are one harmonious group, which has been the case in the past.

9.9 Limitations of this Study

As acknowledged in the introductory section, there is no evidence to suggest that Sudanese migrants have been able to develop any kind of diasporic identity (or identities) due to many reasons have been demonstrated in the research. While this study cannot be said to be statistically representative for all the Sudanese migrants in Australia, yet it remains a substantial of common

stories shared by the participants. It is worthy to say that the participants whose lived experiences I drew on in this thesis were highly capable and knowledgeable communicators. This study works with only 22 participants of the wider Sudanese community across Australia. As such, the results can relatively be considered as a general commentary not a complete representation of all Sudanese migrants in Australia. Besides, the data collected are not expected to remain the same but as at the time of data gathering, the following data in this study are evidence of their lived experiences in Australia. In addition, as the participants spend more time in Australia, these experiences are bound to change even as their circumstances changes.

The study also limits itself to participants from the first generation. By implication, this means that the participants from the second generation of the Sudanese migrants were not included in this study despite the fact that their destiny in Australia in away or anther overlapping profoundly with the first-generation's diasporic journey.

9.10 Suggestions for further studies

- The challenges associated the second generation of Sudanese migrants in Australia were outside the scope of this research. Further studies exploring and investigating the interrelationship of the first and second generations of the wider Sudanese community in Australia will broaden the understanding of their diasporic journey.

- This research sought to investigate whether or not migrants from the Sudan are developing a common diaspora identity or not from their own interaction in Australia and their interaction with the Sudan. A suggestion for further research is that Government Multicultural offices and service providers that are in contact with peoples of the Sudan may be asked for their views regarding their integration in Australia, and the health of their attachment to the Sudan, given the Sudan remains a troubled part of the world. In other words, an investigation with other bodies needs to investigate which groups from Sudan have an attachment with Sudan or have disassociated themselves from Sudan based on how they view their identity before departure and after departure.

- Within the last decade, large numbers of skilled migrants from Sudan have come to Australia and become part of the wider Sudanese community. The majority are the second generation of the Sudanese host-workers in the Arab Gulf states who were born and grew up there. By coming to Australia, they are in the process of experiencing their second diasporic journey, albeit in a different socio-cultural context. Thus, their intra-relationships within the wider Sudanese community and the way they try to develop their diasporic identities merits further academic study.

- Finally, the outbreak of the civil war on 15 April 2023 in Khartoum brought war from the peripheries to the urban centre for the first time. The devastating war has almost destroyed the capital, the massive economic and political centre of the country. The war shows no signs of ending; on the contrary, it is spreading widely to reach out to other regions of the country. This unexpected situation has opened the door to many scenarios that could have significant impacts on the Sudanese migrants in Australia and elsewhere in the world. It is evident that owning properties and running small businesses in the homeland have been ways the Sudanese migrants have used to maintain their ties with the homeland, and to keep alive the dream of returning. Most of these assets are gone now that much of Khartoum has been reduced to rubble. This new reality will force Sudanese migrants to review their allegiance and belonging to both countries, an emerging situation that will need further study.

References

Abd Al-Rahim, M., 1970. Arabism, Africanism, and self-identification in the Sudan. In *The Southern Sudan: The problem of national integration* (pp. 29-46). Routledge.

Abdile, M., 2014. The Somali diaspora in conflict and peace-building: The Peace Initiative Programme. *Diaspora, development and peacemaking in the Horn of Africa*, pp.77-97.

Abdullahi, A. A., 2021. Lan Akoun Ra'awian Almarrah Al-Qadimah (*I will not be a nomadic next time*), Amazon Digital Publishing.

Abusharaf, R.M., 1997. Sudanese migration to the new world: Socio-economic characteristics. *International Migration*, *35*(4), pp.513-536.

Abusharaf, R.M., 2002. *Wanderings: Sudanese migrants and exiles in North America*. Cornell University Press.

Abusharaf, R.M., 2010. Debating Darfur in the world. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *632*(1), pp.67-85.

Ager, A. and Strang, A., 2004. *The Experience of Integration: A qualitative study of refugee integration in the local communities of Pollockshaws and Islington*. Research Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office.

Ahmed, A.G.M., 2008. *One against all: Tthe National Islamic Front (NIF) and Sudanese sectarian and secular parties*. Chr. Michelsen Institute.

Ahmed, E., 2007. Political Islam in Sudan: Islamists and the challenge of state power (1989–2004). In *Islam and Muslim politics in Africa* (pp. 189-208). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Alier, A., 1990. Southern Sudan: Too many agreements dishonored.

Anderson, B., 1998. Long-distance nationalism. *The spectre of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the world*, *58*, pp.74-88.

Assal, M.A., 2006. Somalis and Sudanese in Norway – Religion, ethnicity/clan and politics in the diaspora. *Diasporas within and without Africa: dynamism, heterogeneity, variation*, pp.165-94.

Assefa, H., 1990. Religion in the Sudan: Exacerbating conflict or facilitating reconciliation? *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, *21*(3), pp.255-262.

Asselin, O., Dureau, F., Fonseca, L., Giroud, M., Hamadi, A., Kohlbacher, J., Lindo, F., Malheiros, J., Marcadet, Y. and Reeger, U., 2006. Social integration of immigrants with special reference to the local and spatial dimension. *The Dynamics of International Migration and Settlement in Europe*, p.133.

Baird, S., 2013. Political attitudes in the Sudanese diaspora and the influence of region of origin.

Barthes, R., 1973. Mythologies. *The professional and the personal*. London: Paladin.

Basit, T., 2003. Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational research*, *45*(2), pp.143-154.

Bengtsson, M., 2016. How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus open*, *2*, pp.8-14.

Berry, J.W., 2005. Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *29*(6), pp.697-712.

Berry, J.W., 1992. Acculturation and adaptation in a new society. *International migration*, *30*, pp.69-69.

Berry, J.W., 2017. Theories and models of acculturation. *The Oxford handbook of acculturation and health*, *10*, pp.15-28.

Beshir, M.O., 1980. Ethnicity, regionalism and national cohesion in the Sudan. *Sudan Notes and Records*, *61*, pp.1-14.

Bhaskar, R., 2013. *A realist theory of science*. Routledge.

Bishai, L.S., 2008. *Sudanese universities as sites of social transformation*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

Borland, H. and Mphande, C., 2006. *The numbers of speakers of African languages emerging in Victoria*. Victoria University.

Borossa, J., 2018. Narcissistic wounds, race and racism: A comment on Frantz Fanon's critical engagement with psychoanalysis. In *Narcissism* (pp. 113-126). Routledge.

Bourke, Brian. (2014). *Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process*, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, USA.

Buchanan, Z.E., Abu-Rayya, H.M., Kashima, E., Paxton, S.J. and Sam, D.L., 2018. Perceived discrimination, language proficiencies, and adaptation: Comparisons between refugee and non-refugee immigrant youth in Australia. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *63*, pp.105-112.

Chiang, C.Y., 2010. Diasporic theorizing paradigm on cultural identity. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, *19*(1), pp.29-46.

Clifford, J., 1994. Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, *9*(3), pp.302-338.

Clifford, J., 1997. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Harvard University Press.

Creswell, J.W., 2007. Mapping the field of mixed methods research.

Creswell, J.W., 2009. Mapping the field of mixed methods research.

De Waal, A., 2019. Sudan: A political marketplace framework analysis.

De Waal, Alex., 2007. Sudan: *What kind of state? What kind of crisis?* Social Science Research Council, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

Demmers, J., 2002. Diaspora and conflict: Locality, long-distance nationalism, and delocalisation of conflict dynamics. *Javnost – The Public*, *9*(1), pp.85-96.

Deng, F.M. and al Bashir, A.A.R., 2004. Green is the color of the masters. In *The legacy of slavery and the crisis of national identity in modern Sudan. Paper presented at the 6th International Conference of Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*.

Deng, Francis M., 1995. War of visions: Conflict of identities in the Sudan. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Dion, K.K. and Dion, K.L., 2001. Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(3), pp.511-521.

Due, C., 2008. "Who are strangers?": "Absorbing" Sudanese refugees into a white Australia. *ACRAWSA e-journal*, *4*(1), pp.1-13.

Dunn, K.M., Forrest, J., Burnley, I. and McDonald, A., 2004. Constructing racism in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, *39*(4), pp.409-430.

El-Tom, A., 2006. Darfur people: Too black for the Arab-Islamic project of Sudan, Part I. *Irish Journal of Anthropology*, *9*(1), pp.5-11.

Esser, H., 2010. Assimilation, ethnic stratification, or selective acculturation? Recent theories of the integration of immigrants and the model of intergenerational integration. *Sociologica*, *4*(1).

Faist, T., 2010. Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, *11*.

Fearon, J.D., 1999. What is identity (as we now use the word)? Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University.

Fletcher, A.J., 2017. Applying critical realism in qualitative research: Methodology meets method. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *20*(2), pp.181-194.

Fluehr-Lobban, C., 1990. Islamization in Sudan: A critical assessment. *Middle East Journal*, *44*(4), pp.610-623.

Fozdar, F., Quicke, S.P. and Mickler, D., 2022. Are Africans in Australia a Diaspora?. *Diaspora Studies*, *15*(1), pp.87-117.

Gatt, K., 2011. Sudanese refugees in Victoria: An analysis of their treatment by the Australian Government. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, *35*(3), pp.207-219.

Gordon, M.M., 1964. *Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins*. Oxford University Press.

Hage, G., 2012. *White nation: Fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*. Routledge.

Hale, S., 1992. The rise of Islam and women of the national Islamic front in Sudan. *Review of African Political Economy*, *19*(54), pp.27-41.

Hale, S., 1999. Mothers and militias: Islamic state construction of the women citizens of Northern Sudan. *Citizenship Studies*, *3*(3), pp.373-386.

Hale, S., 2005. Activating the gender local: Transnational ideologies and "women's culture" in Northern Sudan. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, *1*(1), pp.29-52.

Hall, S, 1994 Cultural identity and diaspora. In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 227-237). London: Harvester, Wheatsheaf.

Hamad, A. 2020. Al-agl Al-ra'awi: fi estisa'a Alimsak be asbab Al-taqadoum *(The Nomadic mentality: In the difficulty of grasping the causes of progress)*. Al-Musawarat House for publishing and distribution.

Hamid, M., Thron, C. and Fageeri, S., 2020. Status and Trends in University Admissions for Women in Sudan: A graphical data analysis. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *2*(1), p.100076.

Hancock, B., Ockleford. E. & Windridge, K., 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Trent Focus Group.

Harir, Sharif., 1994. Recycling the past in the Sudan: An overview of political decay. *Short-cut to Decay, The Case of the Sudan.* Nordiska Africainstitutet, Uppasla (The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies).

Hatoss, A., 2012. Where are you from? Identity construction and experiences of "othering" in the narratives of Sudanese refugee-background Australians. *Discourse & Society*, *23*(1), pp.47-68.

Haviland, W.A., Prins, H.E., Walrath, D. and McBride, B., 2008. *Cultural anthropology: The human challenge*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning Inc.

Hebbani, A., Obijiofor, L. and Bristed, H., 2010. Intercultural communication challenges confronting female Sudanese former refugees in Australia. *Australasian Review of African Studies, 31*(1), pp.37-61.

Heckmann, F., 2004. Illegal migration: What can we know and what can we explain? The case of Germany. *International Migration Review*, *38*(3), pp.1103-1125.

Hiruy, K. and Hutton, R.A., 2020. Towards a re-imagination of the new African Diaspora in Australia: Superdiversity, interconnectedness and cultural brokerage. *African Diaspora*, *12*(1-2), pp.153-179.

Ho, C., 2013. From social justice to social cohesion: A history of Australian multicultural policy. *"For those who've come across the seas": Australian multicultural theory, policy and practice*.

Hugo, G., 2009. Best practice in temporary labour migration for development: A perspective from Asia and the Pacific. *International migration*, *47*(5), pp.23-74.

Ibrahim, A. A., 2022. The nomadic mind: I won't be a nomad next time (Arabic Edition). Amazon Kindle.

Ibrahim, A., A., 2001. Al-Marksiah wa Masa'lat Allugah fi Alsudan (*Marxism and the issue of language in Sudan*). Khartoum: Azza House for Publishing and distributionDistribution.

Ibrahim, F.A., 1996. Sudanese women's union: Strategies for emancipation and the counter movement. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, *24*(2-3).

Ibrahim, L., 2019. Dismantling the Sudanese dictatorship: How urbanization in Khartoum paved the way for democratic reform. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University.

Idris, A., 2012. Rethinking identity, citizenship, and violence in Sudan. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *44*(2), pp.324-326.

Johnson, D.H., 2011. *The root causes of Sudan's civil wars: Peace or truce*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

Jok, K.M., 2012. *Conflict of National Identity in Sudan*. University of Helsinki, Department of World Cultures, UNIGRAFIA Helsinki University Print.

Kearns, A. and Whitley, E., 2015. Getting there? The effects of functional factors, time and place on the social integration of migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *41*(13), pp.2105-2129.

Kehily, M.J., 2009. What is identity? A sociological perspective. : ESRC Seminar Series: The educational and social impact of new technologies on young people in Britain. London School of Economics.

Kiir Amoui, G. and Carver, F., 2022. Perceptions about dual citizenship and diaspora participation in political, economic, and social life in South Sudan. *DIASPORA*, *22*(1), pp.123-135.

Kilduff, M. and Corley, K.G., 1999. The diaspora effect: The influence of exiles on their cultures of origin. *M@ n@ gement*, pp.1-12.

Lesch, A.M., 1998. The Sudan: contested national identities. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lester, S., 1999. An introduction to phenomenological research.

Little, D., 1995. Belief, ethnicity, and nationalism. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, *1*(2), pp.284-301.

Lloyd, J. and Vasta, E. eds., 2017. *Reimagining home in the 21st century*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Love, S., 2021. Multicultural policy since 2010: a quick guide. *Research Paper Series*, *22*.

Maalouf, A., 2001. *In the name of identity: Violence and the need to belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Makris, G.P., 1996. Slavery, possession and history: The construction of the self among slave descendants in the Sudan. *Africa*, *66*(2), pp.159-182.

Malwal, B., 1990. The agony of the Sudan. *Journal of Democracy*, *1*(2), pp. 75-86.

Mansour, K., 1985. Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May. London: KPI.

Matschke, C. and Sassenberg, K., 2010. The supporting and impeding effects of group-related approach and avoidance strategies on newcomers' psychological adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *34*(5), pp.465-474.

Miller, C., 2003. Linguistic policies and language issues in the Middle East. Islam in the Middle Eastern Studies: Muslims and Minorities, JCAS Symposium Series 7, Osaka, Japan, pp.149-174.

Miller, C., 2006. Language, identities and ideologies: A new era for Sudan. 7th International Sudan Studies Conference, University of Bergen.

Milner, K. and Khawaja, N.G., 2010. Sudanese refugees in Australia: The impact of acculturation stress. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, *4*(1), pp.19-29.

Moore-Gilbert, B., 2005. Spivak and Bhabha. In *A companion to postcolonial studies* (pp.451-466). Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing.

Moran, D., 2002. *Introduction to phenomenology*. Routledge.

Mozaffar, S., 2007. The politicization of ethnic cleavages: Theoretical lessons with empirical data from Africa. In ECPR Workshop on Politicizing Socio-Cultural Structures: Elite and Mass Perspectives on Cleavages. Helsinki, Finland.

Mugaddam, A.H., 2013. *Language policy in the Sudan: From independence to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).*

Mukhtar, A.B.A.A., 2004. The crisis of identity in Northern Sudan. *Race and identity in the Nile Valley: Ancient and modern perspectives* (p.207). Trenton, NJ: African World Press.

Murray, K.E., 2010. Sudanese perspectives on resettlement in Australia. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, *4*(1), pp.30-43.

Ndhlovu, F., 2013. "Too Tall, Too Dark" to be Australian: Racial perceptions of post-refugee Africans. *Critical Race & Whiteness Studies*, *9*(2).

Ning, W., 1997. Postcolonial theory and the "the "decolonization" of Chinese culture. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, *28*(4).

Nunn, C., 2010. Spaces to speak: Challenging representations of Sudanese-Australians. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *31*(2), pp.183-198.

O'Leary, Z. (2005) *Researching real-world problems: a guide to methods of inquiry*. Los Angles, SAGE.

O'Fahey, R.S., 1996. Islam and ethnicity in the Sudan. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, pp.258-267.

Olagookun, O., 2018. Negotiating Identity and Belonging for Young African Australians. Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University.

Osman, A., 2014. Beyond pan-Africanist agenda: Sudanese women's movement, achievements and challenges. *Feminist Africa*, *19*, pp.43-57.

Owens, J., 2011. An introduction to critical realism as a meta-theoretical research perspective. Center for Public Policy Research.

Paglia, P., 2007. African conflicts and the role of ethnicity: A case study of Sudan. *African Economic Analysis*, *42*, pp.1-42.

Park, R.E., 1928. Human migration and the marginal man. *American Journal of Sociology*, *33*(6), pp.881-893.

Paul, L., 2013. Transylvanian Saxons' migration from Romania to Germany: The formation of a "return" diaspora? Doctoral dissertation, Loughborough University.

Pekkinen, J., 2009. Sudanese elites: How the riverain groups achieved political dominance and their impact on the Sudanese state. *African Studies Program Paper*, pp.1-33.

Pirtle, W.N.L., 2021. Racial states and re-making race: Exploring coloured racial re-and de-formation in state laws and forms in post-apartheid South Africa. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *7*(2), pp.145-159.

Pratto, F. and Stewart, A.L., 2012. Group dominance and the half-blindness of privilege. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(1), pp.28-45.

Prunier, G. and Gisselquist, R.M., 2004. *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press; World Peace Foundation Publications Ltd.

Roosens, E.E., 1989. *Creating ethnicity: The process of ethnogenesis*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Röttger-Rössler, B., 2018. Multiple belongings. On the affective dimensions of migration. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, (H. 2), pp.237-262.

Saeed, A., 2022. Algabilah wa Alsiassah fi Alsudan (*Polity and tribe in Sudan*). Khartoum: Al-Maktabah Al-Wataniah.

Safran, W., 1991. Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, *1*(1), pp.83-99.

Sanderson, G.N., 1963. The modern Sudan, 1820–1956: The present position of historical studies. *Journal of African History*, *4*(3), pp.435-461.

Sharkey, H.J., 1992. Domestic slavery in the nineteenth-and early twentieth-century northern Sudan. Doctoral dissertation, Durham University.

Sharkey, H.J., 2003. *Living with colonialism: Nationalism and culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Vol. 3). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sharkey, H.J., 2008. Arab identity and ideology in Sudan: The politics of language, ethnicity, and race. *African Affairs*, *107*(426), pp.21-43.

Sheffer, G., 2003. *Diaspora politics: At home abroad*. Cambridge University Press.

Sheffer, G.G., 2013. Integration impacts on Diaspora–homeland relations. *Diaspora Studies*, *6*(1), pp.13-30.

Shuval, J.T., 2000. Diaspora migration: Definitional ambiguities and a theoretical paradigm. *International Migration*, *38*(5), pp.41-56.

Sidahmed, A.S., 2000. [BOOK REVIEW] Politics and Islam in contemporary Sudan. *Journal of Third World Studies*, *17*(2), pp.268-270.

Sikainga, A.A., 1996. *Slaves into workers: Emancipation and labor in Colonial Sudan*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Sikainga, A.A., 2010. Organized labor in contemporary Sudan: The story of the railway workers of Atbara. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *109*(1), pp.31-51.

Sikainga, A.A., 2011. The paradox of the female slave body in the Islamic legal system: The cases of Morocco and Sudan. *Hawwa*, *9*(1-2), pp.215-233.

Simich, L., Este, D. and Hamilton, H., 2010. Meanings of home and mental well-being among Sudanese refugees in Canada. *Ethnicity & Health*, *15*(2), pp.199-212.

Simone, A.M., 1994. *In whose image? Political Islam and urban practices in Sudan*. University of Chicago Press.

Sokolowski, R., 2000. *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge University Press.

Soysal, Y.N., 2002. Citizenship and identity: Living in diasporas in postwar Europe? *PUBLIC WORLDS*, *10*, pp.137-151.

Spaulding, J., 1982. Slavery, land tenure and social class in the northern Turkish Sudan. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *15*(1), pp.1-20.

Spaulding, J., 2000. The chronology of Sudanese Arabic genealogical tradition. *History in Africa*, *27*, pp.325-337.

Spivak, G. C., 1990. *The postcolonial critic: Interviews, strategies, dialogues.* New York: Routledge, 1990.

Spivak, G.C., 2003. Can the subaltern speak? *Die philosophin*, *14*(27), pp.42-58.

Sudanese. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(3), pp.363-381. **[Author? Article title?]**

Suny, R., 1993. *The revenge of the past: Nationalism, revolution, and the collapse of the Soviet Union*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Svašek, M. ed., 2013. *Emotions and human mobility: Ethnographies of movement*. Routledge.

Tabar, P., Noble, G. and Poynting, S., 2003. The rise and falter of the field of ethnic politics in Australia: The case of Lebanese community leadership. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *24*(3), pp.267-287.

Thomas, T.N., 1995. Acculturative stress in the adjustment of immigrant families. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, *4*(2), pp.131-142.

Tønnessen, L. and Al-Nagar, S., 2023. Women, revolution, and backlash: Igniting feminist mobilization in Sudan. *Politics & Gender*, pp.1-6.

Trainor, A.A. and Graue, E., 2014. Evaluating rigor in qualitative methodology and research dissemination. *Remedial and Special Education*, *35*(5), pp.267-274.

Trimingham, J.S., 1980. The influence of Islam upon Africa. London: Longman.

Ullah, A.A. and Kumpoh, A.A.Z.A., 2019. Diaspora community in Brunei: Culture, ethnicity and integration. *Diaspora Studies*, *12*(1), pp.14-33.

United Nations Development Programme, 2009. Human Development Report 2009. http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2009

Van Amersfoort, H., 2004. Gabriel Sheffer and the diaspora experience. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, *13*(2-3), pp.359-373.

Vasta, E., 1993. Multiculturalism and ethnic identity: The relationship between racism and resistance. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, *29*(2), pp.209-225.

Vezzadini, E., 2015. *Lost nationalism: Revolution, memory and anti-colonial resistance in Sudan* (Vol. 31). Martlesham, UK: Boydell & Brewer.

Vhumbunu, C.H., 2018. Reviving peace in South Sudan through the revitalised peace agreement: Understanding the enablers and possible obstacles. *conflict trends*, *2018*(4), pp.3-11.

Viorst, M., 1995. Sudan's Islamic experiment. *Foreign Affairs*, pp.45-58.

Visser, D., 2003. Cultural forces in the making of mixed legal systems. *Tulane Law Review*, *78*, p.41.

Voicu, C.G., 2013. Cultural identity and diaspora. *Philobiblon*, *18*(1), p.161.

Warburg, G., 2013. *Islam, nationalism and communism in a traditional society: The case of Sudan*. Routledge.

Weiner, M., 1992. Security, stability, and international migration. *International Security*, pp.91-126.

Wilcock, C., 2018. Mobilizing towards and imagining homelands: Diaspora formation among UK Sudanese. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(3), pp.363-381.

Wilcock, C., 2019. Why are migrant campaigns different from homeland campaigns? Understanding belonging in context among UK-Sudanese activists. *Global Networks*, *19*(2), pp.179-196.

Wilcock, C.A., 2020. Hybridising diasporic resistance to homeland peacebuilding: A case study of UK Sudanese activists and Sudanese peace. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *46*(11), pp.2443-2461.

Willis, J., El-Battahani, A. and Woodward, P., 2009. *Elections in Sudan: Learning from experience*. Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute.

Wilson, W.J., 2018. Being poor, Black, and American. In *Social Stratification* (pp. 347-357). Routledge.

Wodak, R., 2009. *Discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh University Press.

Yuval-Davis, N., 2006. Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, *40* (3), pp.197-214.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

In-depth Individual Interviews

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:
We would like to invite you to be a part of a study 'Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan'.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Abdulkhalig Alhassan, as part of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) study at Victoria University (VU) under the supervision of Dr Charles Mphande and Dr Mario Peucker. All details of the project are included in the information to participant sheet we have provided to you.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, ____ (participant name)

of ____(surburb)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:

Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan, being conducted at Victoria University by:

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow

Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Peucker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by student researcher and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Interview via Zoom
- Maximum one hour in duration
- Audio only from interview recorded
- The secure storage, transfer and destruction of my data will be undertaken in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: ____

Date: ____

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researchers:

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow
Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Peucker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix B: Information to participants involved in research.

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate.

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled **'Diaspora in the making in Australia: Investigating socio-cultural factors among communities from Sudan'.**
This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Abdulkhalig Alhassan, as part of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) study at Victoria University (VU) under the supervision of Dr Charles Mphande and Dr. Mario Peucker**.**

Project explanation

This doctoral study aims to explore whether or not the influence of homeland's politics and socio-cultural ways of life have their impacts on the integration process of the diaspora communities from Sudan in Australia. The study also will investigate the intra-relationships among the diverse Sudanese Communities as well as the interrelationship between the wider Sudanese Community and the mainstream culture.

What will I be asked to do?

You have been invited to participate as a member of the wider Sudanese Community across Australia, whether you are part of one of its ethnic communities or political parties. The interviews and focus discussions groups will seek to investigate the influence of homeland politics and socio-cultural ways of life among the Sudanese diaspora in Australia and the impacts they may or may not have on their integration, interrelationships with the mainstream and the intra-relationships.
Being part of this study is voluntary. If you want to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in an interview or to be part of a focus discussions groups to reflect on your experience as a diaspora. The interview and the discussions will last between 45-60 minutes and will be conducted at a mutually convenient time via Zoom or other places of your choice. If you agree, we would like to audio-record the interview.

What will I gain from participating?

There is no direct benefit to you in this study, however, you will have the opportunity to share your perspectives and represent yourself as a diaspora has the right to be heard. Your participation will help building a theoretical understanding about the wider Sudanese diasporic Sudanese Community, which it will contribute to the diaspora field. Participating in the research might help

raising some awareness among the Community about the challenges and realities of their new situation as new migrants to Australia.

How will the information I give be used?

The information will form the basis of the student researcher's doctoral thesis. The information may also be used to address the knowledge gap in the diaspora studies and Australian Multicultural studies to some extent. In addition, your contribution through this research will help providing a different awareness. This study is trying to explore the complexity of the diasporic experiences of the Sudanese migrants in Australia in terms of integration and the issue of loyalty. This knowledge may benefit various stakeholders which include researchers, academic institutions, and those with similar experiences of diasporism as Australia. Data collected from you will also be used to form the basis of journal papers and articles to communicate findings and recommendations to the Australian Multicultural Institutions.
We will keep your information for 5 years after the project is completed. After this time, we will destroy all of your data.

The secure storage, transfer and destruction of your data will be undertaken in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The personal information you provide will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws, any health information collected will be handled in accordance with the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic). Subject to any exceptions in relevant laws, you have the right to access and correct your personal information by contacting the student researcher.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

Risks to participants in this study are minimised through the use of procedures consistent with ethical research design and with adequate safeguards so that participants are not unnecessarily exposed to risk. If, as an outcome of involvement in the project, participants experience any distressful memories, emotional breakdown or personal discomfort triggered by interviews, then in such circumstances, interviews may be halted and referral to specialised counselling services will be done. Participants may contact Dr. Charles Mphande
(03 99194755, charles.mphande@vu.edu.au). In case where an adverse event may happen, participants will be asked if they wish to continue in the research, however, they can cease their participation in the study. Participants will also be offered the opportunity to contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Charles Mphande for clarification of any issues or further information.

In the case where an adverse event may happen, participants will be asked if they wish to continue with the research and always can cease the interview if desired. Participants will also be offered the opportunity to contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Charles Mphande for clarification of any issues or further information.

How will this project be conducted?

Participants will be invited by email, phone or skype which will reiterate the project information. Consent will be confirmed again at the beginning of the interview. Interviews with the Sudanese Community participants may be conducted in person, whereas questionnaire will be completed.

Who is conducting the study?

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow
Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Peucker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.
If you have any queries or complaints about the way, you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix C: Arabic translated consent form

إستبيان بالموافقة للمشاركة في بحث يختص بالمهاجرين السودانيين باستراليا

معلومات للمشاركين في البحث

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في هذا البحث الاكاديمي بعنوان **(مسيرة المهاجر السوداني بأستراليا: تأثيرات الواقع الثقافي والسياسي للوطن الأم على حياة المهاجرين السودانيين باستراليا).**

يقوم بهذا المشروع البحثي، طالب البحوث (عبد الخالق الحسن) كجزء من مشروع الدكتوراة في الفلسفة بجامعة فكتوريا تحت أشراف الدكاترة: دكتور شارلس إمفندي، والدكتور ماريو بيوكر.

أنا.. (أسم المشارك)

من.. (العنوان)

بهذا أنا أشهد أنني أبلغ من العمر 18 عاما وما فوق، وأنني طوعا أعطي موافقتي بالمشاركة في هذا البحث المعنون:

(مسيرة المهاجر السوداني بأستراليا: تأثيرات الواقع الثقافي والسياسي للوطن الأم على حياة المهاجرين السودانيين باستراليا)، والذي تقوم بتنفيذه جامعة فكتوريا بواسطة الآتية أسمائهم:

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow
Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Puecker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

بهذا أنني أشهد أن كل مواضيع البحث بما فيها من مخاطر محتملة أو غير محتملة، اضافة للاجراءات التي سوف تصاحب البحث قد تم شرحها لي بشكل واضح من قبل الباحث، وبهذا أنني طوعا قد قبلت المشاركة في هذا البحث عن طريق الوسائل الآتية:

مقابلات عن طريق الفيديو لا تتجاوز فترة الحوار ساعة واحدة.

يتم تسجيل المقابلة صوتيا فقط.

تخزين المعلومة يتم وفقا للقانون الاسترالي للسلوك والمسئولية البحثية

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

كذلك أشهد بأنني أعطيت الفرصة الكاملة للاجابة عن تساؤلاتي، كما أنني فهمت أنه يمكنني الانسحاب متى ما شئت من هذا البحث، من غير ما يترتب على ذلك أي شيء ضدي. كما تم اعلامي بأن المعلومات التي سوف أدلي بها سوف تحفظ طيء الكتمان والسرية.

التوقيع:..

اليوم:...

أي تسأول بخصوص مشاركتك في البحث، نرجو التواصل مع الآتية أسمائهم من الباحثين:

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow
Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Peucker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

أية تساؤلات تتعلق بالبحث يمكن توجيهها للمشرف الرئيسي على البحث والموضخ أسمه وعنوان أعلاه. أما ان كانت لك شكوى ضد الباحث نتاج عدك رضاك بالمعاملة التي تلقيتها أثناء الحوارات، فيمكنك مراجعة الجهة المختصة حسل العنوان أدناه:

the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Translated by: Mohammed Abu-Eissa
National Accreditation Authority
For Translation and Interpreting (NAATI)
Practitioner ID: CPN7LG23L

Appendix D: information to participants involved in research.

معلومات تخص المشاركين في البحث

أنت مدعو للمشاركة

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في هذا البحث الاكاديمي بعنوان **(مسيرة المهاجر السوداني بأستراليا: تأثيرات الواقع الثقافي والسياسي للوطن الأم على حياة المهاجرين باستراليا).**

يقوم بهذا المشروع البحثي، طالب البحوث (عبد الخالق الحسن) كجزء من مشروع الدكتوراة في الفلسفة بجامعة فكتوريا تحت أشراف الدكاترة: دكتور شارلس إمفندي ودكتور ماريو بويكر.

شرح للبحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة في الدكتوراة لاستكشاف وفحص الاثر السياسي وتأثيرات الانماط الثقافية والاجتماعية للمهاجرين السودانيين بأستراليا وعلاقة ذلك باندماجهم في واقعهم الجديد، من جهة، وعلاقاتهم فيما بينهم من واقع اختلافاتهم الاقليمية، العرقية، الدينية والثقافية، من جهة أخرى.

ما هو المطلوب مني عمله؟

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في هذا البحث، اذا كانت سودانيا مقيما باستراليا، وتمثل جزءا من مجتمع المهاجرين الاستراليين من أصول سودانية، بغض النظر عن انتمائك الاثني، السياسي والثقافي. خلال انخراطك في البحث، سوف سيتم عمل مقابلة أو مقابلتين معك، تتراح مدة كل منهما ما بين 45–60 دقيقة. سيكون الحوار متمحورا حول تجربة الهجرة وتحديات الاندماج وتأثير الاوضاع السياسية والاجتماعية في السودان على ذلك، وكيفية التعامل معها من واقع التجربة الشخصية. بعد اطلاعك على المعلومات المقدمة عن البحث، نتوقع مشاركتك. متى ما اقتنعت بالمشاركة في البحث، نرجو منك التوقيع بالموافقة وارجاع الاستمارة الى طالب البحث.

ماهو المكسب الذي سوف اتحصل عليه من المشاركة؟

ليس هناك منفعة مادية مباشرة للمشاركة في هذا البحث، ومع ذلك، فإن البحث يوفر لك فرصة كمشارك في أن تدلي برأيك كمهاجر، من حقه أن يُسمع صوته ويعبر اصالة عن نفسه بالتحديات التي تواجهه في وطنه الجديد، وكيفية المؤامة في الولاءات بين الوطن الأم والوطن المتبنى. كذلك، يمكن لمشاركتك أن تساهم في وضع اطار نظري يعمل على توسيع وتعميق مفهوم الهجرة كظاهرة اجتماعية وتحدياتها التي تواجه المهاجر، وهذا يعمل بدوره في رفد علم اجتماع الهجرة بتصورات ومفاهيم جديدة تساعد على تطويره، بما يحقق الفائدة العامة.

كيف سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي سوف أتبرع بها؟

هذه المعلومات سوف تشكل القاعدة الاساسية لهذه الدراسة البحثية لنيل الدكتوراة. سوف تساعد هذه المعلومات في تقليص الفجوة المعرفية في علم الهجرة باستراليا، خصوصا جاليات القرن الافريقي، مما يساعد أهل الاختصاص في التعرف على تعقيدات واقع هؤلاء المهاجرين والعمل على سد الثغرات التي تقف عائقا في سبيل إندماجهم. أيضا تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تضيء التعقيدات المصاحبة لعملية الهجرة نفسها بما في ذلك مسألة تعدد الانتماءات والتأثير السياسي والثقافي والاجتماعي للوطن الأم على علائق الكميونتي السوداني بالثقافة المهيمنة في استراليا.
التخزين الآمن للمعلومات، واستخدامها والتخلص منها فيما بعد، يتم وفقا لـ(القانون الاسترالي المختص بمسئولية السلوك البحثي). سوف يتم الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات التي سوف تدلي بها لمدة 5 أعوام من اكتمال البحث، بعدها يوف يتم التخلص من كل المعلومات المخزنة.

ماهي المخاطر المحتملة للمشاركة في هذا البحث؟

ليست هناك مخاطر تذكر يمكن أن تصيب المشتركين في هذا البحث الذي يتقيد تماما بالاسس والمعايير الاخلاقية للبحوث، مما يضمن سلامة المشترك في البحث من أي مخاطر محتملة. لو لأي سبب تعرض الشخص المشارك لاي توتر أو ضغط نفسي نتاج استدعاء ذكريات مريرة تسببت في انهيار نفسي أو عدم راحة نفسية نتاج اللقاءات التي سوف نجريها معه، وقتها سوف يتم ايقاف الحوارات معه، وعرضه الى مختص نفسي للمساعدة إن لزم الأمر. يحق للمشاركين الاتصال بالدكتور (شارلس أمفندي) بوصفه المشرف الرئيسي على البحث متى ما اقتضى الأمر. (03 99194755, charle.mphande@vu.edu.au)
للشخص المشارك الحق في مواصلة البحث أو الانسحاب متى ما رأى ذلك. الشخص المشارك له الحق ايضا في الاتصال بالمشرف الرئيسي للبحث الدكتور (شارلس أمفندي)، متى ما أراد توضيحا لبعض المسائل أو لمزيد من المعلومات.

ماهي وسائل المشاركة في هذا البحث؟

سيتم التواصل مع المشاركين في البحث عن طريق الايميل والتلفون وبرنامج اسكايب. سيتم التأكد من موافقة المشترك مرة ثانية قبل بداية الحوار معه.

أدناه عناوين الاشخاص الذين سوف يشرفون على البحث:

Dr Charles Mphande
Chief Investigator
Coordinator Graduate Program
International Community Development
Vitoria University
Tel: 03 99194755
Email: charles.mphande@vu.edu.au

Dr Mario Peucker
Senior Researcher Fellow
Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities (ISILIC)
Victoria University
Tel: 0468389466
Email: Mario.Peucker@vu.edu.au

Abdulkhalig Alhassan
Student Researcher
Victoria University
Tel: 0403187477
Email: abdulkhalig.alhassan@live.vu.edu.au

أية تساؤلات تتعلق بالبحث يمكن توجيهها للمشرف الرئيسي على البحث والموضخ أسمه وعنوان أعلاه. أما ان كانت لك شكوى ضد الباحث نتاج عدك رضاك بالمعاملة التي تلقيتها أثناء الحوارات، فيمكنك مراجعة الجهة المختصة حسل العنوان أدناه:

the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Translated by: Mohammed Abu-Eissa
National Accreditation Authority
For Translation and Interpreting (NAATI)
Practitioner ID: CPN7LG23L

Appendix E: Arabic Questionnaire

إستبيان (الناشطين السياسيين)

أسئلة تمهيدية للمشاركين:

* كم من المدة عشت بالسودان؟
* في أي جزء أو أقليم تنتمي بالميلاد؟
* منذ متى أنت باستراليا؟
* هل تتصل بانتظام بالسودان؟ هل تستخدم الايميل في مراسلاتك للسودان؟

البلد المستضيف، الاندماج وقضايا الانتماء:

الاسئلة في هذا القسم مصممة لفهم علائق المهاجرين السودانيين باستراليا وعلاقتهم بالثقافة المهيمنة، وأثر ذلك على الاندماج وقضايا الانتماء نحو الوطن الأم والوطن المتبنى.

* لأي مدى تشعر بانتماءك لاستراليا؟
* ما هو معدل قراءتك للصحف الاسترالية ومشاهدة الاخبار بالتلفزيون الاسترالي؟
* هل تعتقد أن اللغة الانجليزية تشكل عائق بينك وبين انخراطك في المجتمع الاسترالي الكبير؟
* هل تقبلك لنمط الحياة باستراليا يشعرك بالاحساس الذنب؟
* هل هناك أي شيء في استراليا غير من وجهة نظرك في القضايا السياسية في السودان؟
* لأية مدى تعتقد أنك متصالح مع فكرة أنك سوداني واسترالي في ذات الوقت؟
* لأية درجة تعتقد أن أنشطة الكمبيونتي السوداني تقرب المسافة بين السودانيين في المهجر والمجتمع الاسترالي الكبير؟

الاحزاب السياسية والنشاط السياسي:

أعضاء الاحزاب السياسية السودانية باستراليا:

* هل انت عضو ملتزم بواحد من الاحزاب السودانية؟
* هل تنظم أو تشارك بصورة فعالة في الاحداث التي تجري بالسودان؟
* لماذا تعتقد أن النشاط السياسي بالمهجر مهم لك؟
* لآية درجة تعتقد أن النشاط السياسي بالمهجر له تأثير على الواقع السياسي بالسودان؟
* هل تعتقد أن ممارسة النشاط السياسي من داخل الكميونتي السوداني له تأثير مضر على انسجامه وتماسك عضويته، ولماذا؟
* هل تعتقد أن ممارسة النشاط السياسي شرط لازم لتأكيد الولاء للسودان؟

* هل لاحظت نشاطا للاحزاب السودانية باستراليا؟
* اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم، لماذا تعتقد أن اعادة توطين الممارسة الحزبية السودانية باستراليا ضرورية؟
* هل هذه الاحزاب ناجحة في استقطاب عضوية جديدة من الناشطين السياسيين؟
* ما هو تأثير هذا النشاط السياسي على الاستقرار والاندماج باستراليا؟
* لماذا تعتقد أن لعب دور أساسي ومباشر في سياسة الوطن الأم مهم بالنسبة لك؟
* لأية درجة تعتقد أن التنافس السياسي بين الاحزاب في استراليا يؤثر على العلاقات الاجتماعية فيما بينهم؟
* كمهاجر، هل تعتقد أن ممارسة النشاط السياسي الموجهة نحو الوطن الأم لا يمكن تجنبه؟
* هل تعتقد أن دارفور أو أية أقليم آخر قد يكون عرضة للانفصال كما حدث مع جنوب السودان من قبل؟
* كشخص من الاقلية الاثنية، هل تؤيد مثل هكذا قرار أو تشجع عليه؟

Translated by: Mohammed Abu-Eissa

National Accreditation Authority
For Translation and Interpreting (NAATI)
Practitioner ID: CPN7LG23L

Appendix F: Arabic Questionnaire

إستبيان (الاقليات الاثنية)

أسئلة تمهيدية للمشاركين:

* كم من المدة عشت بالسودان؟
* في أي جزء أو أقليم تنتمي بالميلاد؟
* منذ متى أنت باستراليا؟
* هل تتصل بانتظام بالسودان؟ هل تستخدم الايميل في مراسلاتك للسودان؟

البلد المستضيف، الاندماج وقضايا الانتماء:

الاسئلة في هذا القسم مصممة لفهم علائق المهاجرين السودانيين باستراليا وعلاقتهم بالثقافة المهيمنة، وأثر ذلك على الاندماج وقضايا الانتماء نحو الوطن الأم والوطن المتبنى.

* لأي مدى تشعر بانتماءك لاستراليا؟
* ما هو معدل قراءتك للصحف الاسترالية ومشاهدة الاخبار بالتلفزيون الاسترالي؟
* هل تعتقد أن اللغة الانجليزية تشكل عائق بينك وبين انخراطك في المجتمع الاسترالي الكبير؟
* هل تقبلك لنمط الحياة باستراليا يشعرك بالاحساس الذنب؟
* هل هناك أي شيء في استراليا غير من وجهة نظرك في القضايا السياسية في السودان؟
* لأية مدى تعتقد أنك متصالح مع فكرة أنك سوداني واسترالي في ذات الوقت؟
* لأية درجة تعتقد أن أنشطة الكمبيونتي السوداني تقرب المسافة بين السودانيين في المهجر والمجتمع الاسترالي الكبير؟

الاثنية والانتماء:

* هل تعتقد أن الهوية الاثنية مهمة؟ ولماذا؟

* لأية درجة تعتقد أن انتمائك لكميونتي اثني له أثر على علاقاتك بالكميونتي السوداني العريض باستراليا؟

* هل تعتقد أن التوتر الاثني الحادث بالسودان له تأثير على علاقاتك الاجتماعية بالكميونتي السوداني العريض باستراليا؟ اذا كانت الاجابة نعم، فمن أية منظور؟

* هل تعتقد أن التوتر الناشب بالسودان له دور في تقسيم السودانيين باستراليا على أسس عرقية وثقافية ودينية؟

* من منظور هويوي، كيف تعرف نفسك؟

* كشخص من خلفية إثنية، ما هو العنصر الابرز من عناصر الهوية الذي يربط انتمائك بالسودان الكبير؟

* لأي درجة تعتقد أو لا تعتقد أن تدخل الدين في السياسة اضر باستقرار السودان السياسي؟

* في تقديرك ما هي الوسيلة التي يمكن أن تساعد في بناء هوية قومية توحد بين الاثنيات المتنوعة للسودان؟

Translated by: Mohammed Abu-Eissa
National Accreditation Authority
For Translation and Interpreting (NAATI)
Practitioner ID: CPN7LG23L

Appendix G: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE (self-identify liberal women)

In-depth Individual Interviews

Initial questions about the respondent:

1. How long did you live in Sudan?
2. How many years have you lived in Australia continually?
3. How often have you travelled to Sudan since you came to Australia?
4. How often, on average, do you speak by phone with people in Sudan?

Host land, integration and issues of belonging

The questions of this section are designed to help understanding to what extent the Sudanese migrants in Australia working out their relationship with the host land, and how they manage the issues of belonging and loyalty towards the homeland and the host land, and whether or not this process affecting the level of their integration.

1. To what extent do you feel you belong to Australia?
2. How often do you read newspapers or watch television news from Australia?
3. Do you think your English language is a barrier from getting involve in the mainstream activities?
4. Some people feel uneasy, even guilty, to accept and adopt the Australian way of life. What is your experience?
5. Is there anything about living in multicultural Australia that you think could change social and political outlooks of people from the Sudan?
6. To what extent do you think you reconcile with the idea of being a Sudanese and Australian at the same time?

7. To what extent do you think the Sudanese community's activities close the gap between the Sudanese migrants and the mainstream?

Prominent liberal women and gender issues

There is a considerable number of self-identified liberal women who are part of the wider Sudanese communities across Australia. Most of them are well educated with respected work experience and recognizable professions. In a conservative and traditional community like the Sudanese one, their appearance in public life and the gender issues and radical politics they adopt, puts them in negative light. They have played significant roles in their communities, given their professional skills. The researcher will investigate their 'in-betweenness' situation in the Sudanese wider community and the way they deal with it. The questions below are designed to highlight the complexity of their lived experience.

1. Do you describe yourself as a liberal woman? If yes, can you explain what it means to you to be a "liberal woman"? a) what has been your experience when you use that label of "liberal woman" in the wider community? b) what has been your experience in the mainstream community when they learned that you identify yourself as a "liberal woman"?
2. Do you see the wider Sudanese Community well settled or settling down in Australia? If yes, do you see yourself as one of those? What is common among those who are well settled or are settling down? If no, are there any group you can point out find it hard to settle down? What are their activities? What are their characteristics? Are there any things in common among them?
3. In the Sudan, would you be classified as someone from a privileged class/group?
4. How do you look at the Australian multiculturalism/diversity working for you as somebody who has come from diversity which has not been experiencing cohesion in Sudan?