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Chapter 21
The "Civilisational Project" from Below: Everyday Politics, Social Mobility and Neighbourhood Morality under the Late *Inqādh* Regime

Before April 2019 and the fall of Sudan's National Salvation regime, from which the term *inqādh* derives, analyses of the Islamist movement were mainly undertaken through its internal development and progressive integration into the state (Sidahmed 1996; Gallab 2008; Musso 2016).[1] Through this dominant lens of analysis, the Islamist movement seems to be a political movement designed by the elites to expand their domination over society by various coercive means. Numerous works have paid attention to power relations within the movement and its penetration into different sectors of Sudanese society, especially the economy (Marchal 1995; Ahmed 2004; Verhoeven 2015). The approaches that have focused on intellectuals and well-known politicians (Ahmed 2004; Abdelwahid 2008; Berridge 2017) are essential in many ways because they reveal the heterogeneity of the Islamist elites and the internal contradictions within the movement.[2] One could then come to the conclusion that the *inqādh* regime (1989–2019) was first and foremost an elite construction imposed on a passive society through top-down strategies, but this perspective marginalises any analysis of the multiple forms the movement has taken in people's everyday lives.

On the other hand, with regard to the regime's brutality, it might seem provocative to analyse the "civilisational project" (*al-mashrūʿ al-ḥaḍārī*) imposed by the Islamists from the 1990s through the lens of the everyday, since many authors have pointed out its exceptional violence. Nonetheless, it can offer new ways of understanding the naturalisation of a political order in everyday life and its sway over society. Although the imposition of the regime's policies was unquestionably brutal

1 I dedicate this chapter to Mahadiyya, Asahweer and Bidur. I am immensely grateful to Najwa Abulbasher and Musa Adam Abduljalil for their kindness, help and hospitality.

By the term "Islamist movement", I am referring to the broad galaxy of political groups gathered around the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan under the Islamic Charter Front in 1964. For a detailed history of the structure of the Islamist Movement and the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan, see El-Affendi 1991 and Abdelwahid 2008.

2 I use the term "Islamist" as my informants or actors used it to describe themselves.

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and it used coercive means to establish its domination over society, the effects are less well-known in the long term, and are generally reduced to open conflicts or dichotomic understandings of resistance or obedience. Sudanese society under the *inqādh* has mostly been represented *through the dichotomic opposition of adhesion versus resistance to the regime*. As other scholars have underlined in different contexts, however, should we consider anything that goes beyond adhesion or resistance as their opposite (Pilotto 2016: 12)?[3] Are people adhering to the *inqādh* project if they do not openly resist? Does non-adhesion mean resistance?

This dominant approach fails to grasp the variety of reactions to the Islamist political project, considering the heterogeneity of the social groups in a regime that lasted for thirty years, especially the wide range of attitudes that the boundaries of adhesion or resistance cannot embrace. However, certain perspectives informed the hegemonic strategies used by the Islamist movement to consolidate its domination, and underlined the mutual appropriations and co-production of hegemony between the state and specific social groups (Chevrillon-Guibert 2013a; Musso 2015; Salomon 2016; Mahé 2017), including the most marginalised ones (Abdel Aziz Ahmed 2018; Abdul-Jalil 2018). These perspectives have gone even further, focusing on the multiple forms of subjectivation provoked by the *inqādh* regime's "civilisational project" to radically transform society and everyday life in accordance with the ideology spread by the National Islamic Front (*al-jabha al islāmiyya al-qawmiyya*, NIF) and later by the National Congress Party (*ḥizb al-muʾtamar al-waṭanī*, NCP), which was formed after 1999.[4]

I draw from the influence of these later works to contradict the elitist structure that is customarily used to analyse the *inqādh* regime, and look at the specific forms of socialities and local hierarchies shaped by the "civilisational project" and its integration into the everyday lives of "ordinary people".[5] I use this conceptual framework to understand how people living in the popular areas of Khartoum "actually clung" (Lüdtke: 4) to the Islamist regime on a daily basis.[6] The notion of "ordinary" here is a twofold one: first, it balances the sometimes extensive and dichotomic use of "subaltern" or "elite" as analytical categories, leaving the social classes open to

3 I was inspired by Pilotto's comment on the difficulty of analysing the agency of Palestinian workers outside the context of resistance shaped by the dominant nationalistic narrative.

4 The NIF was dissolved after the 1989 coup led by ʿUmar al-Bashīr and Ḥasan al-Turābī to be integrated into every level of state administration. It re-emerged under the banner of the NCP for the return of a so-called multipartyism promoted by the Constitution of 1999.

5 On the notion of ordinary people, see Lüdtke 1995: 4.

6 Initially this historiographical approach was anchored in the study of societies under totalitarian regimes. However, it has been increasingly used as a key in other contexts to go beyond a dichotomic understanding of the routinisation of domination and between consent and resistance: Geoffray 2015.

a more complex analysis.[7] Through a study of social practices and everyday socialities among low-ranking NCP members active at a neighbourhood level and their interactions with the inhabitants, I argue that the *inqādh* regime had profound effects on people's everyday lives, and caused considerable disruptions to social stratification by introducing new social groups whose status was ambiguous. I then illustrate how a political project translated into everyday experiences of power, and how it affected the meaning the inhabitants of popular neighbourhoods attributed to their existence.

This perspective draws attention to the many forms of expression and positions that affiliation with the NCP entailed in popular neighbourhoods in Greater Khartoum by focusing on two suburban areas where I carried out ethnographic research from October 2016 to September 2019. When I was in the first phase of my fieldwork, exploring the city to find the neighbourhood I could come regularly to for ethnographical purposes, I went to al-Fath on my colleague Hind Mahmoud's advice; she was already conducting fieldwork in this area on issues of education and youth vulnerability. I talked with one of her main interlocutors and I visited him three times in the beginning of 2017. But due to the breadth of al-Fath area and the few social bonds I had at that time,[8] I lacked a real anchorage and it seemed to me too hard to conduct an ethnography of everyday life in that context. It was finally by coincidence that I discovered two months later that my host mother in al-Fitihab, had a cousin living in a block of al-Fath 2.[9] This relation allowed me first to come to visit and then to be able to come at least twice a week to conduct ethnography during eleven non-consecutive months in two blocks (*murabba'*) of al-Fath 2.

Located on the extreme edge of North Omdurman, al-Fath 2 is attached to a sub-division of the Karari local government, one of the seven local governments in Khartoum State. The inhabitants have been designated as marginalised by the state, both because it provides them with very limited public services and as a result of the treatment afforded to them at the time the neighbourhood was planned (Mahmoud 2021). This state of marginalisation is explained by the term *muhammashīn* ("marginalised") used by the inhabitants of al-Fath 2 to define themselves. My second research area is al-Fitihab, which is located in the local government of

7 As Elena Vezzadini (2012) has shown, a social group can be defined as an elite while still occupying a subaltern position. By contrast, the social group I am studying here is neither a subaltern nor an elite group.

8 Al-Fath is composed of four main zones: al-Fath 1, al-Fath 2, al-Fath 3 and al Fath 4. Planning projects for al-Fath 5, al-Fath 6 and so on had already begun.

9 For the sake of anonymisation, I do not name this person, who welcomed me each time I went to al-Fath 2 as well as to the two blocks taken as case studies.

Omdurman. Its relationship to the state is more ambiguous, as it occupies a complex position within urban and social stratification that is not as marginalised as it is in al-Fath 2.[10] I lived in al-Fitihab from October 2016 to May 2017 after PhD student Ester Serra Mingot suggested me to live in the room she had rented from a family living in this neighborhood.[11]

I conducted regular observations and interviews both before and after the fall of the regime with forty NCP members involved in popular committees (*lijān sha'biyya*), volunteers in the Popular and Community Police (*al-shurṭa al-sha'biyya wa-l-mujtama'iyya*) (Berridge 2013; Revilla 2021) and representatives of the native administration, a system of local administration inspired by colonial rule and revitalised by the Islamist regime at the beginning of the 1990s (Casciarri 2009; Abdul-Jalil 2015). In order to move beyond the dichotomic analysis of the *inqādh* and its elitist bias, I first show the extent to which the claim of societal transformation has given rise to an intermediary "moral class" that embodies new lifestyles and has the task of implementing the Islamist project at a local level. This perspective makes it possible to more accurately understand the many contradictions the Islamist regime created. I then highlight the specific rationalities and government practices introduced by the civilisational project and endorsed by NCP members, which led to contradictory forms of appropriation.

The Formation of an Intermediary "Moral Class" Under the *Inqādh* Regime

The expansion of the organisational apparatus developed by the Islamist movement after the 1989 coup reshaped social stratification in popular areas, and gave a new status to local representatives of the regime, providing them with access to resources and new registers of distinction (Revilla 2020). I argue that the *inqādh* regime structured a specific moral class that "can be said to be created when the prescriptive elements of its ways of life stabilise: that is to say, when the members of the class adopt a codified life aesthetic in the form of behavioural obligations and prohibitions" (Bertrand 2005: 104).[12] The term "intermediary" does not refer here to the middle-class but rather to a specific kind of "control class" (*classe d'en-*

10 The complexity of social and urban stratification has been underlined in previous research. See, among many others: Franck 2016; Bakhit 2020; Casciarri in this volume.

11 See Mingot 2018.

12 My translation. Romain Bertrand borrows the notion from E. P. Thompson, 1963. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Gollancz.

cadrement in French, see Bihr 1989; Chevallier 2020) in charge of controlling and administrating the popular classes in the interests of the regime.

Islamist Revolution and Social Change

The respondents to my research cannot be classified as an elite or a local elite, since they do not hold significant political power in their hands. Although they cannot be categorised as subaltern either, they are the product of the contradictions of the Islamist regime, which shaped a new kind of popular class through its social policies. There are many different factors that drove this reshaping of social structure from below.

First, the notion of *tamkīn* was central to Islamist penetration into state structures after the military coup of 1989 and the disruption of social stratification. Coming from the Arabic word *makana*, and frequently translated in English as "empowerment", which implies an emancipatory horizon, it actually signifies an authoritarian force that strengthens or takes root in something until it becomes totally embedded. The tree, which became the official symbol of the NCP in 1998, is meant to be a metaphor that suggests that the more the Islamist movement grows roots in the Sudanese society, the more it is able to regenerate it. From this perspective, the followers and supporters of the Islamist movement were considered to be the only people who would be able to implement the civilisational project. The main purpose of the *tamkīn* policy was therefore to integrate these people into government jobs in order to bring about a radical transformation of society. Its primary consequence was mass dismissals of civil servants from the administration at all levels, and their replacement by Islamist followers and supporters.[13]

Second, the urbanisation of Khartoum led to a more extensive state hold on the newly-arrived population living in the peripheries of the capital. Of my forty respondents, five had fled the conflict in Darfur that had broken out in 2003. Eleven were from the Nuba Mountains and South Sudan and had arrived in Khartoum in the early 1980s after the outbreak of the war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (*al-ḥaraka al-shaʿbiyya li-taḥrīr al-Sūdān*, SPLM) and the Sudanese army. Thirteen were "northern poor"[14] from nomadic or *jallāba*[15] backgrounds who had become impoverished as a result of state incentives to settle, which led to their

13 See Anne-Laure Mahé's ongoing research on purges.

14 I would like to thank Anaël Poussier, who suggested me the use of this expression.

15 Northerners who migrated to Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains or Darfur since the 19th century. They were involved in commercial businesses and slavery, staying for several generations.

becoming invisibilised in the urban margins (Salih 1990; Casciarri 2014). Interestingly enough, seven of them, all of whom were men, had arrived in the peripheries of the capital from Darfur and the Nuba Mountains in the early 1970s, and had joined the police, army or security services, which demonstrates that integration into coercive institutions is also a factor in migration to the city. Finally, two had migrated to Khartoum looking for better healthcare for a close relative at the very beginning of the 2000s.[16]

Third, the urban policies implemented by the Islamist regime fluctuated between violent repression and expulsions, with measures being taken to provide newcomers to the city, whose arrival in Khartoum intensified in the early 1980s, with access to property, and to legalise former squatters' areas after they had been demolished (Denis 2005). The popular committee members interviewed in al-Fath 2 received plots of land in 2003 after the violent expulsions from al-Djikhis, close to the Ṣābrīn bus station, in the Karari local government area. Al-Djikhis was an "'*ashwāʾī*" constructed with very precarious materials and declared to be illegal by Khartoum state. Following their extremely violent eviction by the state, the inhabitants of al-Djikhis were forcibly displaced to the desert area in the Karari local district, on the extreme fringes of north Omdurman. As one of the former inhabitants of al-Djikhis, who is now settled in al-Fath 2, put it:

> The government left us in the desert of al-Fath for a year and three months with nothing. We were settled in the market square [*sūq 9*] without water, without electricity. We were supplied by truck. There were a few [humanitarian] organisations. It was very hard. They poured us there like dust, as if we were nothing!

Subsequently, the urban authorities of Khartoum organised the distribution of plots of land, and the former inhabitants of al-Djikhis finally had access to land, with a parcel of 200 square metres for each family to build a home. Although the location of the plots was extremely unfavourable because of the total absence of public services and al-Fath 2's remoteness (Mahmoud 2021), anthropologist Musa A. Abdul-Jalil (2018: 175) reminds us that "acquiring a plot of land is a dream for most newcomers to the Greater Khartoum conurbation, where rents are relatively high and there is no security of tenure, since all available houses are owned by individuals who can evict tenants at any time." Al-Fitihab has a more complex position in the social and

16 The two remaining respondents are one woman NCP member and one tribal representative from the Zanakha tribe, also an NCP member, both of whom were from Abu Said and ambiguously positioned on the social ladder. They had inherited land and benefited from deep social roots, but had become impoverished because their families had ceased their agricultural activities (see Franck 2007), and because of broader economic issues of the kind that affected those I have classified as "Northern poor".

urban landscape. Although it shares many similarities with al-Fath 2 in terms of planning and the legalisation of squatters' areas in the 1990s, reproducing the same *modus operandi* by the demolition of settlement areas that had been declared illegal (Franck 2016), it became more heterogenous because it attracted middle classes and intellectuals after a bridge was built in 2000 that created a direct link between the southern part of Omdurman and Khartoum.

Another factor that explains the reconfiguration of social stratification under the *inqādh* regime can be found in the relative democratisation of the university system as part of the civilisational project launched by the Islamist movement. With student numbers growing from 6,080 to 132,042 between 1989 and 2008, an increase that far exceeded the contribution from population growth, Laura Mann (2012: 97) classifies this phenomenon as an "education revolution". Many young people were given access to higher education as a result of the numerous universities created under the *inqādh* regime in the context of the Islamisation of knowledge (Medani and Nur 2020). A wide-scale affirmative action policy aimed at including students from remote areas and conflict regions was launched, albeit with very limited results (Tenret 2016). Far from being a merely clientelist strategy to provide services and co-opt large sectors of society, however, it must also be read as part of a social transformation designed by the civilisational project.

As Noah Salomon (2016: chapters 3 & 4) notes, the creation of a large number of universities reflects the break the Islamic movement intended to bring about from previous epistemological registers and modes of knowledge. The state's ambition was to propose a new model of higher education that integrated religious principles of knowledge into a university system that secular institutions were not seen to encompass. At the same time, the Islamic movement tried to break with previous Sufi modes of knowledge and education based on the *khalwa*[17] system, which embraces a specific ideal of political authority characterised by a vertical power relationship linking religious leaders to their followers, revelation and knowledge being embodied by the sheikhs. Conversely, the Islamist movement imposed a different means of accessing knowledge by creating an enormous university system of which the University of the Holy Coran was a representative. This investment in higher education was intertwined with religious registers and specific modes of legitimising Islam as the source of a specific kind of "modernity" (Berridge 2017). Its aim was to realise a project of "fundamentalisation of knowledge" (*taʾṣīl al-maʿrifa*) that encouraged dialectical methods of reasoning and learning as "new modes of knowledge production (. . .) that rethought such modern scientific inquiries" (Salomon 2016: 64) by

17 A place dedicated to religious devotion and contemplation, and for reading the Quran and training oneself to memorise. In Sudan the word *khalwa* came to designate a Quranic school.

integrating Islamic references. As a consequence, the Islamist movement reformulated the elitist registers of distinction that had been based on higher education and technocratic values by creating a new education system to legitimise the references at the core of its project, including modernity and knowledge power. While not all my respondents had had the benefit of higher education, all of them were able to offer it to their children.

The final major aspect that explains the fabric of a new segment of the popular classes created by the *inqādh* regime is their relationship with the public administration. The integration of subaltern groups through enrolment into the army and coercive institutions has been analysed previously, and is still relevant to understanding my respondents' social mobility (Vezzadini 2015; Revilla 2021). Eleven of the respondents are or were civil servants. Six had a direct involvement in coercive institutions, working as policemen or security personnel or having been soldiers. Four of the respondents were native administration representatives, sometimes after serving as policemen or soldiers or in the Popular Defence Forces (*quwwāt al-difāʿ al-shaʿbī*, PDF).[18] Others were teachers or civil servants in the Ministry of Health, or worked in local administrations (*maḥaliyya*). Even though their incomes remained low in most cases – from 1,200 to 1,500 SDG in 2019 – they accumulated skills and cultural capital and a broader knowledge of the state that transformed their social position into a situation of in-betweenness. These trends are meaningful for my respondents' trajectories, and I will now describe some of them in order to illustrate my argument more effectively and to clarify the biographies of my main interlocutors.

Al-Ḥasan: NCP, Popular Committee Member and Community Police Volunteer in al-Fath 2

Al-Ḥasan was born in El Fasher in 1977. He grew up in the main city of North Darfur and identified with the Tunjur ethnic group. He pursued a classic school career until he graduated from secondary school (*thānawī*), unlike his parents. He was therefore the first member of his family to have access to this level of education. After the 1960s, which were a crucial turning point for the spread of the Islamic movement in Darfur, the 1970s and 1980s were shaped by its growing influence in Western Sudan (Chevrillon-Guibert 2013b). The movement established bases in secondary schools,

18 The PDF was created by Jaʿfar al-Nimayrī's regime in the early 1980s to strengthen the Sudanese army in its war against the SPLA, the armed wing of the SPLM. See the chapter by Iris Seri-Hersch in this volume.

giving birth to the second generation of Islamist followers, to which al-Ḥasan belongs. At the beginning of the 1990s, he left El Fasher for Libya, where a significant Darfurian diaspora had developed commercial networks (Chevrillon-Guibert 2013a: 363–371). The Libyan market was an important one for Darfuri traders, who obtained supplies there and sent them to the Sudanese markets that were flourishing in Khartoum and Omdurman at the time (Chevrillon-Guibert 2013a: 432–521). These commercial networks enabled a large sector of the Western society to earn large amounts of capital, creating a business elite that later took part in the Islamic movement (Chevrillon-Guibert 2013a: 369).

Al-Ḥasan returned to El Fasher at the end of the 1990s to marry. His wife had difficult pregnancies, and the couple lost several babies. They decided to leave for Khartoum to look for better treatment and care. When the couple arrived in Khartoum state, they found accommodation in Umbadda, the most western peripheral suburb of Omdurman. Owing to intensive land pressures and rent increases, al-Ḥasan decided to settle in al-Djikhis. When he arrived in Khartoum in 2000, he decided to pursue his education, and started looking for a university education, many years after he had left school. Migration to Khartoum offered a powerful incentive because of the large number of university courses on offer in the capital. Al-Ḥasan registered at the University of the Holy Quran and Islamic Sciences in Omdurman. He chose to study Religious Sciences and Islamic law (*al-ʿulūm al-dīniyya wa-l-sharīʿa*) and to become a teacher of "religious sciences",[19] with the idea of playing a role of moral guidance, driven by educationalist aspirations. His university education helped shape a scholastic disposition in him to teach and to obtain a senior position at a local level, despite the pitifully small income he received from it: "I wanted to improve my general knowledge, to become an intellectual (*muthaqqaf*) and to contribute to education. Education is very important for development (*tanmiya*), and to achieve this, you have to participate in enlightening people *(tanwīr al-nās)*".[20]

Khadīja: NCP Member and Police Volunteer in al-Fath 2

Khadīja was born in 1967 near Marawi in the Northern Province (*al-wilāya al-shamāliyya*). She identifies with the riverine Shaygiya tribal group. She comes from a family of ten children, but lost her father when she was very young. She went to elementary school, and then her older brother took over as her guardian, and settled the family

19 This subject is compulsory from primary school to university. See also Seri-Hersch in this volume.

20 Personal interview with al-Ḥasan, al-Fath 2, September 2018.

on the outskirts of Omdurman at the very beginning of the 1980s. The area was in full urban development at the time under pressure from migration to the capital. Khadīja had a religious education in a *khalwa* for women. She was also socialised in the May Brigades (*katā'ib māyo*) and the Friends of the Police (*aṣdiqā' al-shurṭa*), which were major youth organisations during Nimayrī's May regime (1969–1985). She finished her education after high school (*thānawī*) and married in 1990, when she was 23. Her husband was called up to join the PDF in Southern Sudan against the SPLA, the Southern armed force that was fighting the Sudanese army, but he died shortly after arriving in South Sudan. She remarried a few years after his death, but her second husband "already had three wives, and it was only problems. I decided to leave and have my own house".[21] Khadīja freed herself from this situation and settled with close relatives in al-Djikhis in 1999. She met al-Ḥasan during the evictions from al-Djikhis by the Khartoum authorities in 2003. At the time of my fieldwork, she was in charge of the *khalwa* for women in her neighbourhood in al Fath 2.

Sulṭān Ibrāhīm: Native Representative and NCP Member in al-Fath 2

Ibrāhīm was born in a village near Kadugli in the second half of the 1950s. He had no more than a primary education, and he certainly had a disrupted one, since he cannot read or write easily in Arabic. Ibrāhīm arrived in Khartoum in 1975. Like the vast majority of the Morro, mostly present in the Nuba Mountains and with which he identifies, he is a Christian.

When he arrived in the capital, he went from job to job, cleaning markets or working on construction sites. Like many racialised young working-class men in the early 1990s, he was enrolled in the PDF. This paramilitary force mainly enlisted young men from working class and ethnically marginalised backgrounds. After his service in the PDF, Ibrāhīm was recruited by the internal intelligence services (*istikhbārāt*) and held various surveillance positions, always at a low level of responsibility, working as a guard. Although Ibrāhīm had a similar trajectory to that of another interviewee whom we introduce below (James), he did not succeed in converting his membership of the security apparatus into social capital. During the 1990s, he moved with his family to various neighbourhoods in Umbadda, moving from one informal area to another after being evicted by the state. He finally settled in al-Djikhis, and met Khadīja and al-Ḥasan before being given land in al-Fath 2.

21 Personal interview with Khadīja, al-Fath 2, August 2019.

In 2007, Ibrāhīm became *ʿumda*, which corresponds to the intermediate leadership position recognised by the policies of indirect rule inherited from British colonialism and reinstitutionalised by the *inqādh* regime. This delegation of authority involved appointment by a council of representatives of the Morro ethnic group validated by the High Council of the Customary Order of the State of Khartoum (*al-majlis al-ʿālī li-l-niẓām al-ahlī bi-wilāyat al-kharṭūm*), which was in charge of so-called customary affairs and the co-optation of local chiefs appointed on a tribal basis. Ibrāhīm received training from Khartoum State and the Karari local government. He received a monthly salary of 1,200 SDG for his local court services, and considers that he "works for free!"[22]

James: Security Services, Popular Committee Member and NCP Relations in al-Fitihab

James was chairman of the popular committee (*lajna shaʿbiyya*) of his block from 2006 to 2011, the year of South Sudan's independence and his departure from Khartoum.[23] Like many South Sudanese, he returned to the neighbourhood in 2013 when civil war broke out in South Sudan (Franck 2016). A Christian from Malakal, which is now in South Sudan, and where the Shilluk ethnic group with which James identifies is widely represented, he arrived in Khartoum in the early 1980s.[24] He settled in an informal housing area in a block that is now part of al-Fitihab. In 1983, he was recruited by the national security apparatus (*jihāz al-amn*) and was assigned to protection of the German Embassy until 1987. He was then transferred to the British Embassy, where he worked for ten years as a security guard. During district planning work performed by Khartoum State in the mid-1990s (Franck 2016), plots of land were distributed to civil servants like James. He gradually acquired official authority as a result of his initiatives in the first popular committee, in which he was in charge of the services section. He organised night patrols, mobilising the

22 Personal interview with Ibrāhīm, al-Fath 2, April 2017. 1,200 SDG amounted to a little more than 40 dollars at the time of the interview.

23 South Sudan acquired independence in 2011 following the referendum required by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005, which put an end to the conflict between the Sudanese army and the Southern rebels of the SPLM/A. Personal nterview with Ibrāhīm, al-Fath 2, April 2017.

24 On relations between Christians and Muslims in the marginalised districts, see Abdalla 2014. For an analysis of the co-optation of the inhabitants of Mayo by local institutions and the motivations for conversion to Islam, see Abdel Aziz Ahmed 2018.

young men of the block, and became an important local intermediary for the police. He also helped mobilise the local government of Omdurman to provide the block with basic services. With other members of the popular committee, James began to frequent the local cadres of the NCP at official ceremonies and to take part in meetings at a local government level in response to invitations to do so.[25]

In 1997, he left the national security services to work for a Turkish-Sudanese company, remaining there for just a year before going to work for the British humanitarian organisation Save The Children until 2002. He then found a job as local intermediary for United Nations Development Programme projects, where he remained until 2006. The skills he acquired in the state security apparatus, his knowledge of administrative procedures and the relationships he fostered enabled him to convert to the humanitarian sector. His trajectory is a good example of the mobility that could be achieved by low- and medium-ranking state security officers, and of the skills that could be put to use.[26] James became involved in numerous disputes when he was representing the Omdurman South administrative unit within the Southern Section of the NCP (Berridge 2021) and left the party. The reasons behind his departure and return can be explained by the authority relationships at a local level. The party organisations would create competition for access to administrative positions. Competition for recognition by an authority played a fundamental role in the NCP's internal cohesion. In the early 2000s, James and his supporters considered that they were not sufficiently integrated into the local government of Omdurman and that their "work" was not recognised enough. James returned to the NCP by obtaining the position of "peace coordinator" (*munāsiq al-salām*), and he became the national unity government's representative for Omdurman following the CPA in 2005. He became chairman of the popular committee of his block in 2006, a position he would leave in 2011 due to the loss of his Sudanese nationality (Vezzadini 2014) and his departure for Malakal. This story of relative independence should not suggest that the party was merely a receptacle for personal strategies: on the contrary, it defined its framework of action.

25 During the two interviews carried out with James in August 2017 and July 2018, he constantly stressed "these Muslim sheikhs" that he knew and that he "liked" to rub shoulders with at events organised jointly for the NCP.

26 This is by no means surprising in the light of the recruitment practices of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), a Sudanese state agency for which numerous state security workers supervise the activities of humanitarian organisations.

Grassroots Organisations and the Creation of Local Hierarchies

To implement the Islamist project in Sudanese society, the *tamkīn* strategy took shape through the multiplication of grassroots organisations under the control of the regime, especially at a local level. The "state of the masses" (*jamāhīriyya*) model developed in Libya inspired the *inqādh* after the coup of 1989, and the political order introduced by the Islamists shared many similarities with the "direct democracy" and conference system imposed by Muʿammar al-Qadhdhāfī (Lavergne 1997; Musso 2015). The popular committees and so-called "volunteer" structures were part of the mass and grassroots organisations implemented by the Islamist regime.

I will focus here on the neighbourhood level, since many institutions attached to the NCP framed the everyday socialities in popular areas. According to the "conference model" promoted by Ḥasan al-Turābī, popular committees represented the federal state at a neighbourhood level, and answered to the local government, which had an elected body whose members were appointed through members of the popular committees, but remained under the *muʿtamad*'s full control. The *muʿtamad* was appointed by the governor of Khartoum State and represented the highest authority at the local level, and was generally an NCP follower. Members of the popular committees were viewed as an outpost of the NCP. Based on a pyramidal structure and a logic of "participative democracy" (Lavergne 1997), these committees raised citizens' demands for services such as water supply or waste management, representing the lowest level of social welfare. The committee was composed of 10 to 20 members who were theoretically appointed by inhabitants of the same block (*murabaʿ*), but in reality were often pre-selected by the NCP, taking into account their ideological and political affiliations (Revilla 2020).

The committee was divided into different sections, some of which were dedicated to young people and women. These sections integrated volunteers who were involved in the Sudanese General Women's Union (*al-ittiḥād al-ʿāmm li-l-marʾa al-sūdāniyya*, SGWU) and the National Union of Sudanese Youth (*al-ittiḥād al-waṭanī li-l-shabāb al-sūdānī*, NUSY), which were themselves under the direct control of the NCP.[27] While it was theoretically necessary to have a membership card to be an NCP member, the volunteer organisations were open to everyone, and no one needed to be formally affiliated with the NCP to be included in them. Membership of a popular committee was not subject to membership of the NCP, even though the appointment processes were largely controlled by the party, as I have shown elsewhere (Revilla 2020). More than diluting partisan affiliations, the volunteer organisations

27 On the social policies implemented by the SGWU, institutional feminism and women's involvement in the Union, see Nur in this book. On the NUSY, see Abdalla 2017.

duplicated the administration bodies by orientating certain social policies toward targeted categories that they had to promote. The social anchoring of the NCP was ensured by superimposing "mass" organisations and party sections that were characterized as *amāna*, and which were supposed to represent the various interests of Sudanese society based around specific categories (women, youth, etc). At the same time, the NCP members' positions overlapped many mass organisations in order to achieve a monopoly of local representation.

The multiplication of mass and volunteer organisations affiliated with the Islamist movement made social stratification in popular areas more complex by giving official and administrative positions to "ordinary" citizens. Indeed, popular committees represented the first way of becoming involved in politics and later being co-opted by the NCP. Through the *tamkīn* policy, the lowest representatives of the state and NCP could then access higher administrative and political positions, especially in local government, by being appointed as local legislative conference members. Contrary to the argument proposed in many analyses of the link between neoliberalism and the *inqādh* regime that would induce the retreat of the state (Mann 2012), the political framework shaped by the Islamist movement actually intensified state control over society, with the NCP playing the role of a centralising force to control policies and co-opt the population. Members of the popular committees and mass organisations could receive special training, which provided them with feelings of competence and a disposition to do administrative work by obtaining certificates and validation. For example, members of popular committees in al-Fath 2 received special training to become judicial auxiliaries at the juvenile court of Omdurman, dealing with family and domestic cases.[28]

By means of administrative attestations and assistance, the popular committees and mass organisations facilitated access to the acquisition of technocratic and bureaucratic skills, which assisted recruitment into public administrations. Volunteers working with the Community Police received training that integrated them into the police authority; they also had a *de facto* authority to make arrests (Berridge 2013). Volunteer policewomen were permitted to attend workshops on family violence and childcare organised by the SGWU. Members of the popular committees also had the ability to provide certification to obtain social assistance, to be included in the microcredit system launched by the SGWU or to follow recruitment sessions organised by the NUSY. Members of the mass organisations formed a net woven by the *inqādh* regime, and supported the social ascent of individuals from marginalised areas such as al-Fath; as we have seen above, these neighbourhoods

28 *Barnāmij al-Maʿāwīn al-Qānūniyyīn: Maḥkamat al-Ṭifl Umdurmān*, 2011 (programme brochure consulted on 7 February 2017).

were the result of the forced displacement of people who had settled in illegal areas and camps, most of whom remained outside the realm of the provision of public services, and yet it is through this incorporation into the state that the Islamist movement framed a powerful system of political control, spreading its ideology and new lifestyles through the appropriation of *emic* representations of morality and authority.

Being "*Multazim*": The Islamist Appropriation of an *Emic* Notion of Legitimation

Whereas the Sudanese Arabic term *kōz* describes a corrupted version of the Islamist follower flawed by state appointments, being "*multazim*" categorises those who seek to perform a moral duty by taking on political responsibilities at a local level (Revilla 2020). The adjective *multazim* (*multazima* for women), means "to be engaged" or "under obligation", and being "disciplined". The same term can also be interpreted as a commitment to a superior, transcendental cause that requires being disciplined, or exerting a strong constraint on oneself in the service of a cause. *Multazim* also refers to asceticism and self-discipline: being able to serve the community and deserving to represent a group of individuals. It embodies an ideal of moral behaviour that has evolved through historical periods and political regimes. The term is directly connected to the word *iltizām*, meaning commitment.[29] In Medieval Islamic thought, it described a person who conformed to the law (*al-multazim bi-l-aḥkām*) (Fadel 2006: 328), and later an administrative figure in the Ottoman Empire in charge of collecting taxes. After the Second World War, it referred to the political commitment of a section of Arabic-speaking intellectuals and writers, giving rise to a specific form of Arabic political poetry (Martin 2016: 83).

It was not originally a religious notion, but in the Sudanese context it became associated with "being devoted to God", with asceticism and with a repertoire of self-representation. Although it progressively acquired ties to conduct that was viewed as religious, and to the adoption of a specific dress code, such as the *ḥijāb* for women and a beard and/or ankle-length trousers for men, in accordance with the Salafist clothing norms, it was actually far from being the only way of demonstrating *iltizām*. Some members of popular committees and local NCP affiliates adopted this manner of self-presentation without being labelled as *multazim*, and were recognised as legitimate representatives. In one of the blocks in al-Fitihab on the south-

29 See the entries for *iltizām* and *multazim* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. https://referenceworks.brillonline.com /browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2 (16 June 2022).

ern periphery of Omdurman, where there is a strong political influence of South Sudanese from Malakal (Franck 2016; Revilla 2021), the president of the popular committee appointed after the departure of the previous one, who left after he had lost his Sudanese nationality following the independence of South Sudan in 2012, was clearly showing off a stereotyped version of the Salafist model of self-presentation (wearing a beard and ankle-length trousers, not greeting people by shaking hands, keeping his distance from women, etc.). However, he was not recognised as legitimate as the former president had been, and was condemned because of his low standards of morality. A female inhabitant of al-Fitihab criticised him for not carrying out his administrative tasks and for not being easily accessible:

> James [the former president of the popular committee] was very active and his conduct was good with people. He mixed with them and had a superior morality. But Yāsīn [the new president] does not mix with people. With James, his morality with people [was] like that [she raises her thumb]. Which means that he was engaged with the people (*huwa multazim maʿa al-nās*), he lived well with the people. But Yāsīn puts himself in the top of a tower. His function should push him to be with the people (. . .) but he is busy with his own business, he is not even available to watch alcohol. He has a business here, a business there, he has an event here, he has his own "business". He is seeing himself with money, he does not need people.[30]

Another inhabitant backed this position up: "You can never reach him [Yāsīn] – he disappears (*huwa mukhtafī*). James used to enter houses directly, giving you the *zakāt*[31] directly and giving everybody their right, everybody, even the Christians before the independence of the South." Despite the fact that James was not an "Islamist" in the ideological sense of the word, the authority he embodied was typical of that of the popular elite shaped by the *inqādh* regime,[32] and underlined the moral foundation of political legitimation at a local level. It shows that the concept of *multazim* could apply to non-Muslims (James is Christian), and also demonstrates the symbolic meanings of being *multazim*, which is also linked here to the idea of treating people as equals and presenting oneself with modesty. The practice of equality is embodied by specific behaviour, demonstrating self-discipline and proximity to the people for whom one is responsible.

By using a concrete example of the progressive politicisation of *iltizām*, I show how under the *inqādh* regime it was also an element in the production of political representation and a primary source of local anchorage for the NCP. With the forced displacement from al-Djikhis in 2003 and the resettlement of its inhabit-

30 Personal interview with Najla, al-Mussalass, August 2018.

31 *Zakāt* can be defined as the institutionalisation of a charitable system of compulsory contributions as a form of tax. See Abdalla 2017.

32 James's trajectory has been documented in detail in Revilla 2020.

ants in al-Fath 2,[33] the main families in this informal area established a "solidarity fund" (*ṣundūq taḍāmun*) to form a collective body and collect money. The objective of raising this money was to make their time in the place where they had been forced to settle, which was not provided with public services like water or general electricity, secure. The group also had a representative function vis-à-vis the local government and the urban authorities of Khartoum State. It needed to appear to be an established interest group in order to have an influence in local politics and to be taken seriously by the ruling party.

Al-Ḥasan, who was a young married man at the time, took the lead in the representation of the group with other men, mostly fathers of families. Al-Ḥasan was ideologically close to the Islamist movement, but he did not formally enrol in the NCP until 2004, when all the members of the solidarity fund finally joined the party, thinking that they would be able to maximise their chances to obtaining land rights and public services in their area. The main objective of the solidarity fund was to ensure that the inhabitants of al-Djikhis would not be dispersed and mixed with Internally Displaced People (IDPs) through the procedure for distributing plots of land. The allocation of plots involved a draw (*qurā*) that distributed people randomly and scattered former neighbourhood communities. The urban authorities of Khartoum organised the allocation of land through a lottery system that was supposed to distribute plots transparently and to prevent ethnic segregation and clientelism (see Franck 2016). In fact, however, this system increased negotiation levels and the opportunities to bypass the regular land allocation process.

Through his involvement in the solidarity fund and the interactions he established with the local government, al-Ḥasan acquired "influence" (*nufūdh*). This influence was staged and co-produced by the local authorities, the NCP and the inhabitants. Al-Ḥasan had power over the local community and his authority was recognised by the state, since he was viewed as representing the inhabitants, and was seen by them as being able to defend their cause. The more influence al-Ḥasan acquired at a grassroots level by adopting representation positions, the more he appeared to the state authorities and the party that strove to co-opt him to be essential, and the more his position was reinforced among the inhabitants, as he seemed to be the only intermediary (*wasīṭ*) with the state, and his image was associated with public resources. He became a party member and popular committee representative, as the NCP and state institutions tended to co-opt individuals they perceived as already being recognised by their local communities. The repertoire of *multazim* was the central element of a "presentation of self" (Goffman 1959) that served to anchor the regime's appropriation of an *emic* concept of authority, and at

33 Two blocks in al-Fath 2 have been used as one of my main case studies: see Revilla 2021.

the same time its legitimation. This self-presentation as a disciplined and "engaged" individual gave birth to a belief – which was a factor of al-Ḥasan's symbolic capital from both sides[34] – in an intrinsic quality that legitimised his authority to represent the community and to be recognised by the party and the local authorities. Al-Ḥasan fitted in well with the NCP's standards of self-presentation and responded to the inhabitants' social demands for intermediation. He displayed the Salafist version of self-presentation, but unlike Yāsīn, he acquired consensus by engaging in grassroots politics.

Being *multazim* did not just refer to an individual and personal mode of self-expression: by extension it also implied devotion to the community. It suggested a certain self-imposed technique that people interpreted as a commitment to the community. It was sometimes assimilated with an external appearance that required a specific dress code, the *ḥijāb* for women and the intentional distancing between men and women, in accordance with a Salafist interpretation of Islamic norms. The classification went far beyond mere appearances, however: it established the moral qualities that legitimised authority. This notion could be embodied as much by a man as by a woman: in al-Fath 2, the two main representatives of the community committee responsible for gathering police volunteers were al-Ḥasan and a woman who had been appointed as *multazima*.[35] The notion of self-discipline was closely related to that of self-help efforts (*juhūd al-dhāt*), which was used by the regime as a category for public action to mobilise people at a grassroots level through popular committees and voluntary organisations under the direct control of the NCP (Baillard and Haenni 1997; Mahé 2017). It can help us understand this repertoire of legitimation, which linked a form of "government of the self" to the "government of others" (Foucault 2008).

The Shaping of the Everyday Under the *Inqādh* Regime

In this second section, I will illustrate the production by the Islamist regime of a "common sense" as specific localised rationalities through which everyday government practices and the understanding of power were interpreted. To put it in

34 Pierre Bourdieu (1991: 192) has defined symbolic capital as a form of "*credit* founded on *credence* or belief and *recognition* or, more precisely, on the innumerable operations of credit by which agents confer on a person (or on an object) the very powers that they recognize in him (or it)."

35 For a more detailed analysis of women's trajectories of authority in popular neighbourhoods, see Revilla 2021.

another way, I look at the interpretation and translation of the Islamist ideological project in everyday life, as it produced a specific form of knowledge and unpredictable representations that far exceeded its initial elitist framework (Gramsci 2011: 173, 186). The Islamist project gave rise to multiple appropriations, generating ambivalent relations to power that ranged constantly between attachment and attempts to self-distance.

"Our Duty is to Enlighten the Masses": The Popularisation of an Elitist Disposition

The Islamist movement has been carrying out its reformist political project of "enlightenment" (*tanwīr*),[36] which encompasses profound reforms in society and ways of life, since the beginning of the 20th century. After 1989, the year of the coup organised by the military and Islamist followers, the project took the form of a promotion of a "civilisational project". All kinds of social activities were impacted, including architecture, institutions, the arts and culture (Salomon 2016). The *inqādh* regime embraced a coercive version of social control and integrated a legalist interpretation of Sharia into public spaces. Dress codes for men and women and the criminalisation of many social practices were institutionalised by the Public Order Laws at the beginning of 1990s,[37] including, among many other things, the manufacture and consumption of alcohol and sex work (Berridge 2013). This set of rules and legal regulations embodied the policing measures adopted by the Islamist regime after 1989 to reshape social relations to comply with what was considered to be "legal" conduct. Its reformist ideas were interpreted by the regime through a coercive and legalist lens, in line with the transformations imposed by the state during and after colonial rule (Ibrahim 2008). Rather than a strict and limited representation of reformist ideas that would reproduce the regime's propaganda, it is necessary to understand what people actually did, not only from the abstract ideals of conduct inspired by the regime's ideology as spread through grassroots organisations but also from local concepts of morality. Investigating how reformist ideas actually materialised in everyday life enables us to analyse the sense people gave to the coercive version of Sharia imposed by the regime, and the social hierarchies with which the project connects. It makes it possible to focus on *emic* categories that are echoed by the idea of reforming conduct.

36 Al-Ḥasan: "*wājibna tanwīr al-jamāhīr*", personal interview, al-Fath 2, September 2018.

37 The Public Order Laws are a range of legal regulations that prohibited and criminalised many social practices. Their precedent was the September Laws imposed under al-Nimayrī's rule in 1983. See Ibrahim 2008.

In order to enforce what was presented as a "reformist" project and a condition for development and national modernisation,[38] the regime created a dense network of grassroots institutions to be responsible for implementing the coercive version of Islam promoted by the Islamist movement, which had been unleashed long before it came to power (Ibrahim 2008). Along with the creation of special police units like the Public Order Police (*shurṭat al-niẓām al-ʿāmm*), Popular and Community Police volunteers operated at a local level to "cleanse society of negative behaviour" (*tazkiat al-mujtamaʿ min al-sulūk al-salbiyya*).[39] The popular police volunteers had to report any offence committed against the Public Order Laws to the police and the public order courts (Berridge 2013). To understand the popular roots of reformist ideas, it is first necessary to understand what repertoires of action the Islamist political project implemented, and how it intertwined with local and *emic* concepts of social control and authority. A focus on overlapping definitions of morality makes it possible to appreciate how the Islamist version of righteousness became embedded in popular conceptions of social authority.

After its establishment in al-Fath 2, the community of al-Djikhis appointed the members of the popular committee and the volunteers in charge of surveillance. Al-Ḥasan became president of his housing unit's community committee, and was responsible for organising volunteer patrols. He was the principal intermediary between the people and the police, and monitored offences against the Public Order Laws and what was defined as "negative behaviour". Al-Ḥasan's role reformulated the function of the *muḥtasib*, which initially referred to the person responsible for market regulation. Derived from the notion of *ḥisba*, which means the obligation of every Muslim to "promote good and forbid evil", in cities under Islamic rule during the Medieval period, the *muḥtasib* was the market inspector in charge of controlling weights and measures and guaranteeing commercial transactions. His function gradually evolved into more direct tasks of social control and moral duties (Abu-Lughod 1987; Raymond 1989; Kerrou 2002: 311). The Islamist regime institutionalised *ḥisba* by the creation of the Public Order Police (Berridge 2013).[40] The surveillance of people's behaviour guaranteed by al-Ḥasan was anchored in local sociality and legitimised by the notion of *adab*. This is an Arabic term that denotes a form of civility, but it takes on a different meaning according to current dominant values and standards of distinction. It generally refers to the knowledge and "humanities" that must be acquired in order to be considered to be "enlightened". In the Sudanese case, more than having proper religious knowledge, it means demonstrating

38 Personal interview with Shaykh al-Karūrī, Al-Shuhadāʾ Mosque, Khartoum, September 2018.

39 2003 Local Government Act; 1998 Constitution 2003 (chapter 6). See also Berridge 2013.

40 W. J. Berridge recalls that the Public Order Police were essentially the institutionalisation of previous Islamist vigilante groups. For more detail, see Revilla 2021: 138–146.

total self-control, which is associated with the exercise of reason (*ʿaql*). Being classified as *muʾaddab* (fem. *muʾaddaba*) means having a sense of rules and decency relating to a situated rationality and an ability to govern oneself, and by extension others. It suggests the use of self-control of one's emotions and behaviour, and not losing oneself, always having measured reactions and never showing anger when dealing with everyday local affairs.

When al-Ḥasan was asked about the way he fulfilled his role of monitoring people's behaviour, he mentioned his own capacity for self-control and reason:

> Sometimes it's very difficult, especially when neighbours fight. You always have to control yourself (*tamsak nafsak*). You have to be calm, to speak with civility. . .You cannot take part or be aggressive, it's my responsibility (*waẓīfa*). When you have this responsibility, you have to be neutral (*muḥāyid*), you have to be higher (*aʿlā*) than that.[41]

Al-Ḥasan described his reaction as the use of reason (*ʿaql*), which stigmatises any form of dispute because any expression of disagreement or conflictuality was seen as a loss of rationality. The *adab* repertoire is akin to a "narrative of exemplarity" (Bertrand 2005: 114) that shapes hierarchies of conduct, traces the borders between social groups and status and establishes this form of management of emotions as the foundation for the government of others.

Transgressions against the regime's standard of morality are associated with an infringement of civility and are an irrational act. Individuals who do not conform to the repertoire of *adab* are associated with dirtiness, and civility is associated with rationality, cleanliness and modesty:

> The small problems, it is Sheikh al-Ḥasan who settles them. If there are bad people in the block, he watches them. He gets to know them and forces them to leave. If there are people making alcohol, he forces them to leave the block in order that the block does not become like what? In order to be a calm area, an area of humble people (*masākin*), without any disorder.[42]

There is no direct mention here of an abstract religious or political project, but rather a common expression of the assimilation between order and humbleness, which the NCP and the Islamist movement took advantage of to build a specific understanding of morality. The instrumentalisation of the notion of humbleness was linked to a localised rationality that associated calmness (*sākin*) with *adab* and social integrity. It also related to a specific perception of cleanliness: "Al-Ḥasan prevents some people, people from outside, from making the neighbourhood dirty (*yesakh-*

41 Fieldwork notebook, al-Fath 2, July 2019.

42 Personal interview with Taysīr, former popular committee volunteer, al-Fath 2, block 50, April 2017.

khnu), making alcohol, or other things like women living alone."[43] Drinking alcohol or living a lifestyle that was perceived as transgressing the moral rules enforced by the state and the regime came to be related to a form of dirtiness, which is classically a primary form of social hierarchisation (Douglas 1966). The function of this allusion to dirtiness was to trace social borders and preserve residential self-segregation. The reference to "women living alone", which implies prohibited sex work, was ambivalent, since some women actually "lived alone" without male guardianship but were very close to the NCP and grassroots organisations, which preventing them from being stigmatised (Revilla 2021: 506–511). Likewise, not all well-known consumers of alcohol were denounced and targeted by the committee members. Alcohol consumed at home was easier to ignore, whereas drinking in an open space or in other open places was associated with the idea of pollution and the moral staining of a neighbourhood area.

Much like the repertoire of *multazim*, the injunction to embrace *adab* can be analysed as a "technique of the self" that imposed implicit forms of regulating conduct, revealing a specific mode of distinction. The *emic* use of the notion of *adab* can be understood as a local appropriation of the ideological enlightenment project promoted by the regime through which certain social groups captured abstract ideas of Islamic reform as conceived by the *inqādh* and produced a specific sense from it. Of course, the *adab* repertoire exceeds the Islamist framework and it has taken on various meanings in different periods of time and political contexts. But since the Islamist regime tried to monopolise this register of authority to serve the political legitimation of NCP representatives in everyday life and to disqualify political competitors, it has to be considered as part of its civilisational project.

"Here People Are Like Birds, They Fly With the Wind": Between Attachment to the Regime and Self-Distancing

After 1989, the regime established numerous spaces for socialisation, especially at a grassroots level, that created local socialities and produced numerous forms of ambivalent attachment and efforts at self-distancing. This set of attitudes to power and the political sphere escapes the dualism that has usually been established between consent and resistance in the literature. The description below of the common socialities created in the context of grassroots regime institutions shows how it was possible for feelings of attachment and self-distancing to co-exist among NCP followers until the total uncertainty caused by the fall of the regime. In addi-

43 Fieldwork notebook, conversation with Fātiḥa, al-Fath 2, June 2018.

tion to giving access to training infrastructures, as mentioned above, the activities organised by members of the popular committees shaped specific socialities, providing members of the NCP or its affiliates with a feeling of being close to state institutions. The police volunteers organised community ceremonies on various occasions that had the main function of reasserting the authority of the state and the party. Their activities intensified during Ramadan, when many volunteers distributed food or small supplies like school furniture and clothes that conformed to the regime's moral standards (such as veils for women). They also organised food for prisoners jailed in police stations or central prisons to break the fast and helped with the organisation of annual circumcision ceremonies supervised by the Popular and Community Police. Throughout the year, the volunteers oversaw the night patrols that watched over the neighbourhood, which included men who were not members of the popular committees. These distributions and other activities were a source of excitement, a feeling of collectively offering a service to the society and participation in the creation of an atmosphere of friendship that strengthened relations among the members of the popular committees and created an attachment to the grassroots structures of the regime and cohesion among participants.

The same kind of sociality mechanisms was at play throughout the religious spaces promoted by the regime. The Organisation for Islamic Predication (*munaẓẓamat al-daʿwa al-islāmiyya*) has funded various structures in the new housing area since 2004. The women representatives of the popular committee, who were also involved in the Sudanese General Women's Union (SGWU), received financial support to build a *khalwa* exclusively for women. The same kind of religious place also existed for men in al-Fath 2. They represent a space for individualisation, as each participant comes to confront their everyday concerns about religious principles and develops a specific interpretation that aligns with their personal issues (Mahmood 2005). In 2018, the reading sessions at the *khalwa*for women in al-Fath 2 were led by the SGWU representative for the area, who was also one of the pillars of the community police volunteers.[44] She read the Quran and developed her interpretation of it so as to apply it to common everyday situations such as disputes with husbands, problems with children and family issues in general.

The *khalwa* was associated with a rationalised way of dealing with everyday and domestic issues, which was historically the case with Sufi orders (see McHugh 1994). Although it partially reproduced a previous model of governmentality endorsed by Sufi brotherhoods in certain cases, the interpretation given to it by people with ties to the regime apparatus differed greatly from Sufi models of rationalisation. One of the concepts spread among the institutions supported by the regime (through the Islamic

44 I followed the activities of the *khalwa* for women in al-Fath 2 between June and August 2018.

Organisation Call or grassroots organisations), which for my interlocutors was radically different from Sufi models of devotion, is *tawḥīd*. Unlike Sufism, which institutionalises an intermediary authority with God through the figure of the *shaykh* (pl. *shuyūkh*), *tawḥīd* reflects the call for monotheism and proclaims that God is unique and the sole legitimate divinity, removed from any form of mediation. Even though this assertion is actually considerably nuanced by historical works that show how Sufi congregations did in fact integrate *tawḥīd* into their own theoretical framework, my interlocutors systematically contrasted the space of the *khalwa* with the religious spaces led by Sufi *shuyūkh*, associating the latter with "subjection to authority", as one of my informants who participated to the animation of the *khalwa* put it:

> Allah *wāḥid* [she points her finger up], that is what we teach in the *khalwa*! We don't follow Sufism (*taṣawwuf*)! We don't follow the words of the *shuyūkh*, that let us think there is something other than God! No! Everybody is equal to God! No one can be between you and God! You cannot submit to a sheikh, you cannot kiss his hand! God does not allow it![45]

This restriction of the perception of *tawḥīd* is part of the Islamist movement's ideological work and propaganda that seeks to break the influence of the brotherhoods (the Khatmiyya and Mahdist followers affiliated with the Umma Party, among many others) over society by stigmatising them as religiously deviant. In the case of my interlocutor, adhering to *tawḥīd* was potentially a way of distancing oneself from the vertical authority system embodied by the brotherhood orders and subscribing to an abstract idea of power promoted by the Islamist movement, the NCP and the state (Salomon 2016). By setting out a new framework for religious practices and distancing itself from Sufi forms of devotion, the civilisational project transformed the modes of subjectivation, entailing a strong challenge to previous models of authority and a sense of equality.[46] Nevertheless, this rejection of Sufi brotherhoods has to be interpreted with care. From what I observed in al-Fath 2, certain Umma party members have maintained close ties with the NCP since the time they settled on the fringes of Omdurman,[47] underlining the high degree of flexibility of partisan affiliations. Moreover, the rejection of Sufi modes of legitimation has to be nuanced since the Islamist regime has tended to instrumentalise them for its own profit rather than really suppress them (Salomon 2016).

Paradoxically, by reframing previous modes of authority and local socialities, the anchoring of the civilisational project in people's everyday lives has produced strategies of detachment from the regime and the state, as people create an expres-

45 Personal interview with Khadīja, al-Fath 2, August 2019.

46 I subscribe here to Noah Salomon's (2016) main argument.

47 Personal interview with the *ʿumda* M. ʿA. Ḥ, al-Fath 2, February 2017.

sion of their own individuality out of the ideology. After the collapse of the regime, the popular committees were dismantled by the Governor of Khartoum State in April 2019, and by November 2019 the community committees linked to the Popular and Community Police had been suspended.[48] In most cases, it seems that the NCP members I had been in touch with were removed from any local position of power. Others tried hard to blur their previous party ties or hastened to convert to the new political forces involved in the transition, especially the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) (Revilla 2020). Some NCP members denounced the quick about-face of many of their comrades, and remained attached to the political project or adopted sarcastic stances: "Everybody says 'I am not NCP', everybody now turns back, the one who was in the section says 'now I have nothing to do with them'. See, the ones who were with them are now taking over their office here".[49] My interlocutor pointed out the local office of the NCP in al-Fath 2, which had been seized by the representatives of the native administration and painted blue to cover the previous green paint, which was the official colour of the Islamic movement. Another woman representative of the SGWU and police volunteer, although in opposition to many members of the NCP section, brought up the "development" (*tanmiya*) expanded by the *inqādh* regime:

> People don't remember! They don't remember who did the development! Who built the bridges! Remember there was no bridge in Halfaya! There was no bridge in al-Fitihab! There was no road to El Obeid! No roads before! No cheap houses before![50]

These words illustrate many of the contradictions the Islamist project produced. Although it was marked by exclusion policies and the institutionalisation of derogatory regimes for social groups who were considered to be minorities,[51] it also permitted some excluded groups to access housing and public services. In contrast to analyses that associate the *inqādh* with the retreat of the state, I argue that it actually reinforced the power and presence of the state through the broad networks of grassroots organisations the regime promoted. However, these attitudes cannot be interpreted as simple consent to the regime, since the above-mentioned interviewee was actually in open conflict with most of the members of the local NCP section.

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48 The decision to dismantle the popular committees was taken by army General Murtaḍā Warrāq on 21 April 2019.

49 Fieldwork Notebook, al-Fath 2, July 2019.

50 Personal interview with ʿĀ'isha, al-Fath 2, July 2019.

51 For example, the judicial system, which integrated derogatory regimes for specific tribal groups such as the Morro in al-Fath 2 but also existed for individuals who were perceived as Southerners (*janubiyyīn*): see Abdalla 2014; Abdel Aziz Ahmed 2018; Abdul-Jalil 2018.

The speed with which many individuals disengaged from the NCP after the fall of ʿUmar al-Bashīr shows the low level of support for the regime: "People won't contest what's happening, even the NCP people won't contest. Here people are like birds, they fly with the wind."[52] The notion of "wait-and-see curiosity" framed by Alf Lüdtke (1995: 198–251) may be a good way to characterise the relationship between the inhabitants of marginalised urban areas in Greater Khartoum and the state and the regime. This notion helps overcome the apparent passivity the upper, middle and intellectual classes often complain of with regard to disadvantaged and dominated groups as mostly uneducated and reducing any form of relationship to the state as clientelism.[53] It is also important to recall that the more privileged social categories can have exactly the same attitude towards the general uncertainty that characterises authoritarian modes of government. The ability to adapt to the regime's constraints and to appropriate its ideological representations cannot be hastily classified as an expression of consent: rather, it is an attitude of waiting to see what the state and regime have to offer in terms of material goods, and their ability to respond to immediate needs and create dedication and loyalty spaces as described above. However, these socialities generated individualisation processes, and despite the efforts of the regime and the NCP to depoliticise every form of public action, it paradoxically yielded a disposition in people to distance themselves from the official political arena, producing weak support for the regime when it collapsed.

Conclusion

During the summer of 2019, rumours were swirling among the inhabitants of al-Fath 2 about the arrival of Muḥammad Ḥamdān Dagolō, commonly known as Ḥemēdtī, the leader of the Janjaweed militia, which had been renamed the Rapid Support Forces (*quwwāt al-daʿm al-sarīʿ*) since their integration into the national security apparatus in 2013. At the end of Ramadan, everybody was talking about the sheep Ḥemedti would offer to the people of al-Fath for Eid al-Fitr, although there was no official information available. The word then spread that Ḥemedti would come to provide the connection to the electricity grid that people had been expect-

52 Personal interview with al-Ḥasan, al-Fath 2, July 2019; Gout 2019.

53 This was quite obvious in some of the declarations from the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) or the FFC depicting the marginalised neighbourhoods as more under NCP control than any other social class and needing "education", removing any form of agency from these categories of the population.

ing since the forced settlement in al-Fath in 2003–2004. The profusion of rumours indicates the distant image by which the state was represented for the people of al-Fath. While a racialised understanding of political affiliations might give the impression that because many people in al-Fath identify with the Darfur region or have this identity assigned to them they would "naturally" support Ḥemedti based on their regional or ethnic attachments, most of them had actually been the victims of the RSF, and the fieldwork I carried out from July to September 2019 showed that opinions were far from being homogeneous.

There was much discussion at the time about the RSF's participation in the dramatic killing of demonstrators in al-Qiyada on 3 June 2019. There were intense debates in all the everyday spaces: on public transport, in the streets, where tea was sold and among family members. The discussions were passionate and sometimes explosive, showing that the consent it was supposed Ḥemedti would be given would not be granted. The intense circulation of rumours underlines the fundamental dispossession of power that structured relations between the inhabitants of al-Fath and the state, as well as metaphors of everyday perceptions of domination as distant, intangible and unpredictable (Perice 1997; White 2000). In addition, the rumours that spread in July and August 2019 informed popular expectations from the transition authorities. This displays a certain "curiosity" that oscillated between enthusiasm and perplexity, with regard to both the revolutionary movement and Ḥemedti's forces. It also highlights their relative exclusion from the revolutionary process until the end of 2019, and reveals the specific issues they were facing. The creation of the resistance committee of Karari and its outposts in al-Fath may have since changed the dynamics, however, and new fieldwork needs to be conducted in order to answer this question. Although the *inqādh* regime impregnated the popular and everyday conceptions of power, the understanding of everyday life and common political representations goes far beyond the dichotomy of consent and resistance: they need to be analysed for themselves rather than to be seen through a normative lens.

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