



## AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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**TITLE: SUDANESE YOUTHS ON THE MOVE:  
RELIGIOUS AND TRIBAL NETWORKS AS A MEANS TO FIND REFUGE**

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**ABSTRACT:** Young people in Africa are on the move: from rural to urban areas, from one country to another and from the continent across the Atlantic and Mediterranean into Europe. The Netherlands has been one of the favored destinations for Northern Sudanese since the military coup of 1989, when Sudan became an Islamist state. Based on extensive anthropological research in Darfur since the 1980s and Khartoum since the 2000s and more recent work among Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands, this paper will focus on the different reasons and opportunities young men from Darfur and from the Nile Valley (where the capital of Khartoum is located) have to leave for Europe. Although economic, political and ecological reasons are often prioritized in analyses of the push factors of this migration, socio-cultural aspects are hardly ever taken into account. In this paper the issue of a 'masculinity-in-crisis' is taken as a focus in order to understand why young men from Sudan embark on the journey to Europe. In addition, the diversity among Sudanese migrants, notably from Darfur and Central Sudan, are taken into account in looking into different networks both groups use in order to find their way to and in Netherlands society: to Darfur youths, their 'home' locality and ethnicity thereby prove to be important identities, while for specific groups from the Nile Valley, their religious affiliation to certain Sufi orders, in particular the Mukashfiyya Brotherhood, provide an important network to gain access to Dutch society.

### **AUTHOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:**

*Karin Willemse is Associate Professor at the Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam. She received her doctorate in cultural anthropology from Leiden University in 2001, based on her dissertation entitled *One Foot in Heaven: Narratives on Gender and Islam in Darfur, West-Sudan* (Brill, 2007). She conducted anthropological fieldwork in Darfur, Sudan (Jebel Marra, 1986-87; Kebkabiya 1990-95) and in Khartoum (2006-08): and more recently on Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands, in particular those from Darfur and the members of the Mukashfiyya Tariqa. She was Chair of the Netherlands Association of Feminist Anthropologist (LOVA). Till recently she was a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the Islam Research Project, a cooperative venture between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Leiden University. She worked with scholars from South Africa, Senegal, and Sudan and wrote extensively on her research in Sudan and South Africa, most recently "Zawiya, zikr and the authority of sheikh 'Al-Pepsi': The social in sacred place making in Omdurman, Sudan" (2013) and co-authored some chapters with Dr. Goolam Vahed of UkZN in the volume 'Chatsworth, the making of a South African Township'. She teaches and conducts research on African anthropology and history, notably on issues of gender and Islam, violence, urban youth and migration and she developed a method of con/text analysis to read all kinds of 'texts' (oral, written, visual, embodied) 'against the grain'.*