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# Multi Identity Conflict: A Case Study of Sudanese Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Jordan

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Running head: MULTI IDENTITY CONFLICT: CASE STUDY ON SUDANESE REFUGEES

MULTI IDENTITY CONFLICT: A CASE STUDY ON SUDANESE REFUGEES AND  
ASYLUM SEEKERS IN JORDAN

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PIM 74

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts  
in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro,

Vermont, USA

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Advisor: Professor John Ungerleider

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### **Abbreviations**

BHN – Basic Human Needs

BHNT – Basic Human Needs Theory

CRP – Collateral Repair Project

FG – Focus Group

INGO – International Nongovernmental Organization

IGO – Intergovernmental Organization

JD – Jordanian Dinar

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

NGO – Nongovernmental Organization

PA – Participant A

PB1 – Participant B1

PB2 – Participant B2

PC – Participant C

PD – Participant D

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

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## ABSTRACT

This inquiry was completed as part of the requirements for earning a master of the arts degree in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation for the student William Clifton at SIT Graduate Institute. It was an independent practitioner inquiry based on the methodology of Grounded Theory that utilized qualitative research by way of in depth interviews and a focus group to understand how the identity shaped the experience of Sudanese migrants living in Jordan. In addition to these qualitative methods, a review of the literature was conducted on Sudanese populations in Sudan and in outside communities to help guide the process and provide information to compare as well as information about how these populations were treated by their host countries, with principal emphasis on the country of Jordan. The purpose of the research was to gain better understanding of this under researched minority population, to explore ways that identity conflict can affect them from various ways related to their identities, and to gather information about their level of institutional support and how that can be changed to further contribute to their well-being. The findings indicated that the participants expressed Geographical, Ethnic, and Religious Identities while also experiencing Racial Discrimination and Ascribed Identity. In addition, the participants expressed their reasons for coming to Jordan, described their livelihoods and institutional support. The author then wrote a 9 track diplomacy plan as a type of holistic intervention to serve the needs of that population.

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## Introduction

In a world where conflicts have kept national and state boundaries in flux, particularly in the MENA region, traditional ideas about identity have been remained similarly dynamic. Sen comments that “identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence...and yet identity can also kill—and kill with abandon” (2006, p.1). One can be at peace with their identity, which may have a constellation of pieces including religious, professional, tribal, and more. However, one may also face conflict on multiple fronts in a large part due to these various parts of these identities. Crenshaw’s intersectionality theory provides a useful lens to understand how individuals may face a variety of threats due to any parts of their identity being associated with a minority status (Crenshaw, 1993). Any group of people that faces serious conflicts that threaten several parts of their identity are likely to find themselves in high vulnerability positions. Fleeing from one conflict only to find oneself in another one is one such way that people encounter simultaneous identity conflicts.

In Amman, Jordan where I completed my practicum, there were a number of refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants attempting to make new lives for themselves whether through establishing permanent residency in Jordan, waiting to be resettled with the help of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), or even simply being frozen in uncertainty because of lack of resources to mobilize for the next step. The vast majority of migrants into Jordan have been refugees and asylum seekers from neighboring Israel/Palestine and Syria, with over

6 million (citation) people from those countries dwarfing the native Jordanian population. Other populations hail from Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and others.

While the Syrian crisis has been referred to as the “worst humanitarian crisis of our time” and has received a great deal of worldwide support and attention, other crises such as the conflict in Yemen and the ongoing conflict in Sudan have received less, particularly the conflict in Darfur in the Arab media (The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2009). As a result, institutional support for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from less publicized areas has been lacking. Furthermore, the massive deportation of silently protesting refugee and asylum seekers from Sudan revealed possibly even institutional and societal hostility to some groups. The reasons for protesting given to press were “what they viewed as discrimination in provision of humanitarian assistance and resettlement services” (“Jordan: Deporting Sudanese Asylum Seekers | Human Rights Watch,” 2015). The result of that mass deportation was an even further increased vulnerability in the Sudanese refugee population as families were separated and already fragile family livelihoods were further threatened. This prompted my interest in gathering more information about that population, understanding the factors behind their hardship, and understanding how their identities affected their experience, but it also prompted me to volunteer to help alleviate the situations of that community.

The research was carried out with flexibility to help understand the many facets of identity that Sudanese migrants perceive, but there is particular emphasis in understanding how potentially race, ethnicity, and religion shape their decisions and experience. Understanding who they were, a population that appeared to be

invisible, was integral to understanding what their experience would be. Toward the goal of providing benefit for the research population, the research has also functioned as way to discern what kind of institutional support this group has in the host community of Jordan, whether that support is adequate and well-targeted, and what gaps can potentially be filled.

## **Literature Review**

### **Sudanese Identity**

Discussing a topic as complex as that of identity has the potential to go into a daunting number of directions. However, Tajfel's social identity theory can provide a flexible and valuable framework to understand part of the question of identity (2010). He describes it as "that *part* of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance tied to that group" (Tajfel, 2010). Within this framework he acknowledges that *salience* of memberships in different groups varies and may change over time. I would propose that any individuals or groups of people that migrate to other areas are likelier to feel more changes in salience of membership to groups as they interact with groups that are different from theirs.

The traditional full name of Sudan in Arabic is *bilad as-sudan* meaning 'land of the blacks' ("HISTORY OF THE SUDAN," n.d.). It is a strong reminder that this component of racial identity is not a new development. Whether this black identity comes from within, from the outside, or some combination of both, it is undeniably salient. The Sudan Embassy comments that "Ethnicity is difficult to trace outright in the modern Sudan due to generations of intermarriage between various indigenous

and immigrant groups” (“The Sudanese People,” n.d.). With over 570 recorded tribes and the influx of immigrations particularly from the Arab world, unpacking these identities is no simple task. Furthermore, a national identity for a political state whose borders are in the midst of change through civil war and conflict can become problematic (Waal, 2013).

Some scholars observe that Sudan is an Afro-Arab nation that has been going through a process of “arabization” (Lobban, 1983). This characterization acknowledges African and Arab identities, but needs further refinement to categorize the true depths of identity. One Sudanese writer protests what seems to be a Western fixation with race, “Ascribed to the Sudanese body is a rich constellation of meaning, a mosaic of identity that is often compromised upon its translation into Western racial constructs” (Habibala, 2015). However, populations’ abilities to self-determine ethnicity and race can be compromised by external factors such as migrating to countries or communities where a less nuanced perspective is taken or where their own perceived identity is different from what is ascribed to them by their new host society. Sen notes that *competing* identities can eliminate *choice* or agency in determining one’s own identity and that often one experiences “difficulty in being able to convince *others* to see us in just that way” (Sen, 2006, p.6). Though race is social construct, it has real implications for the people in societies that perceive others within that construct.

### **Arab Identity**

The term Arab is widely considered by scholars to be an ethnolinguistic category. What that means is that the Arab ethnicity often considers origin such as

nation or tribe as well as language as signifiers for that social identity. Kindel was surprised to learn in Jordan that speaking Arabic is consistently considered as important as geography and religion to Arab identity (Kindel, 2012). What may have perhaps been considered a community and culture existing on the Arabian Peninsula spread quickly and expanded its boundaries of inclusion during the expansion of Islam (Smart & Denny, n.d.). While literature and experience show that the concept of Arab identity varies across communities, speaking Arabic, adhering to a set of shared customs, and coming from an “Arab” community are a basis.

It is also important to note that tracing Arab ancestry is often done with patrilineal genealogical traditions, which de-emphasize and sometimes eliminate entirely the matrilineal heritage (King, n.d.). In a sense, the previously described *Arabization* of Sudan can be understood as a cultural process that recognizes a sort of Arabizing that assimilates the indigenous cultures of Sudan while also spreading Islam. Marriage for women outside of Arabic and Islamic cultures is often either against cultural norms or outright forbidden (King, n.d.). As such, this lends to a greater tendency of Arabization.

For writer Habibala, a member of the Sudanese diaspora community, she expressed her experience with her Arab identity feeling under threat because of her appearance and other communities rejecting that Arab identity:

My early childhood was spent living in a few Arab countries and facilitating the racism I endured even then, was the understanding that my darker skin-tone threatened my claim to Arabness. That to be authentically Arab, it was not enough to speak Arabic or have facets of Arab culture deeply syncretised into my own – I would have to necessarily not be visibly Black... It was not until I was in my mid to late teens that I was forced to understand “Black” and “Arab” as

ontologically separate. This was as a result of my introduction to the Western concept of “race” (Habibala, 2015).

This is not an uncommon occurrence for self-identifying Arabs to have that identity called into question by appearance. Former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was often attacked by his detractors on the basis of not looking “Arab” enough, as he was born to Nubian parents. Nubians face a considerable amount of discrimination in Egypt still today (Diab, 2012). It is also noteworthy that Nubians are a significant part of Sudan’s population. Simply what is considered ethnically and culturally Arab varies in its interpretation and acceptance.

### **Religious Identity**

It is difficult if not simply unrealistic to talk about Arab identity without speaking about the major influence that Islam has had over Arab culture. Though Islam certainly transcends the Arab ethnicity, many of its most important figures and scholars have been considered Arab (“Islam & Arabs: History,” n.d.). However, just as in Jordan, Sudan, and other countries that claim an Arab culture, it is still common to find other religious communities. Aside from the different variants of Islam, such as Shia and Sunni, other Abrahamic religions are found such as Christianity. Moreover, indigenous cultural and religious beliefs tend to get routed in local practice of transcendent religions. Whether it is concepts such as *Jinns*, often malevolent but at least mischievous spirits whose origins predate Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, or traditions and beliefs from indigenous and tribal religions in Africa, Islam in practice tends to absorb preceding cultures of the communities it inhabits (“Chapter 3: Traditional African Religious Beliefs and Practices,” 2010).



### **Host Population Context and Institutional Support**

The host population of Jordan has seen a massive growth since the Palestinian refugee crises as well as other recent crises around the region. As of the 2016 census the population was listed at just over 9.5 million people with Jordanian citizens making up approximately 6.6 million. The other 30% considered Non-Jordanians does not even take into account the Palestinian Jordanians who were granted citizenship earlier or married into the Jordanian population, but this number is also in the millions. Jordan is very much a nation of refugees. Though the census puts the Syrian population at approximately 1.3 million, the number has been fairly difficult to reliably verify (“UNICEF Jordan - Media centre - Jordan Population and Housing Census 2015,”; World Bank, n.d.). However, this large number has placed a strain on an already strained Jordanian infrastructure and inflamed societal tension (Dubbaneh, 2016).

Jordan is a country of first asylum for many refugees and asylum-seekers. As in Egypt, “Refugees often become ‘stuck’, however, blocked by the inability to gather the funds needed for travel, or by hazardous travel conditions or shifts in the immigration policy of destination countries”(Jacobsen, Ayoub, & Johnson, 2014). There is no doubt that many refugees in Jordan are similarly stuck, but institutional policy from the government and the UNHCR and larger INGOs toward the Sudanese specifically may increase the likelihood that this very vulnerable group will get stuck. Lucente reported the experience of one asylum seeker, “The protestors make several claims against the UNHCR, including an alleged lack of significant

resettlement. ‘People spend a long time—sometimes four to seven years—without resettlement’” (2015).

Aside from long resettlement times, Sudanese asylum seekers are unable to work because “Many Sudanese lack the legal refugee status needed to obtain such permits” (Lucente, 2015). Sudanese protestors cited numerous other reasons including racism, inability to provide education for their families, and violence against them in the streets. However, the UNHCR denied providing preferential treatment to other groups like Syrians, citing both higher average salaries and resettlement success rates for the Sudanese over the Syrians. However, with larger INGOs such as Mercy Corps and Save the Children working specifically with the Syrian crisis, it is understandable the Sudanese asylum seekers could perceive general institutional neglect (Lucente, 2015). The Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers also face unique challenges related to being urban refugees, such as needing to pay for monthly rent and heating that camp-based refugees are not burdened with.

Williams describes a grizzly scene the night the Sudanese protestors were apprehended for deportation:

Early in the morning of December 16, Jordanian police rounded up 950 Sudanese refugees living in Amman. Their hands were bound, and they were forced into buses, which shuttled them off to an empty military warehouse...Jordanian authorities, in coordination with Sudanese embassy officials, responded with beatings, tear gas, and live bullets. Detainees were wounded and injured, mothers and children became severely sick from the tear gas, and families were forcibly separated (2016)

It was also reported that those who were successfully deported back to Sudan were rounded up immediately and taken to a secret detention center in Khartoum. Those

remaining faced the trauma of that night, the separation from their families, and threats to their livelihoods. From here, the primary research inquiry was then undertaken.

### **Inquiry Design**

#### **Methodology**

1. Interviews
2. Focus Group
3. Grounded Theory

#### **Literature Review**

The literature review set out to gain knowledge of the participant population and how elements of the research question could be understood or modified.

The literature review consisted of a review of scholarly articles on the Sudanese population in the country and on migrant Sudanese populations. This was done to provide context for the proceeding research on the research topic. The topics of Sudanese, African, and Arab identity were explored to give further context before proceeding with preliminary analysis. In addition, articles on identity and conflict were reviewed to help provide some frameworks for analysis. Due to the paucity of academic study on the Sudanese migrant population in Jordan, it was important to review UN documents, NGO reports, and news reports to gain a better understanding of that population.

**Interviews**

Semi-structured in depth interviews were conducted with *Darfuri* Sudanese migrants who were either refugee or asylum-seekers. These migrants were selected with the assistance of other workers who had gathered more experience and built up trust with the migrants and were able to locate participants willing to participate and in relatively safe mental states to participate. Two of the participants were female and three were male, which was deliberate in an attempt to have different gendered voices included and to understand any unique issues related to gender. Participation was completely voluntary, followed strict protocols of informed consent, protected the identity of the participants, and gave the option for termination at any point during the process from the participants. The interviews gave the participants wide latitude to tell their stories and included sub components 1-4. Questions were open-ended and participants were allowed to decline answering any questions with which they were uncomfortable. Participants received identity codes in transcripts and findings to protect their identities. For English speakers, interviews were conducted in English. For interviews with Arabic speakers, a trusted interpreter with experience conducting qualitative research on vulnerable populations at the graduate level was used. No inducements were offered to research subjects for their participation and all participants were adults.

**Focus Group**

A focus group was held with local aid workers and volunteers who work with Sudanese beneficiaries. They had the opportunity to share their perspective from their observations of and work with the Sudanese migrant community in Jordan.

Information gathered from this focus group provided data about subcomponents 1-6 of the research. The focus group members were not from a vulnerable group and therefore needed fewer research protocols to ensure their safety. Their participation in the focus group was voluntary and they were given the opportunity to opt out of participation at any point during the process. All members were adults and it was a mixed gender group.

### **Data Analysis Method**

Coding was the first stage of analysis of the primary data. The transcripts taken from the recordings were coded using grounded theory methods including in vivo coding, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). NVIVO software was used and codes were created first in vivo. Then they were organized into open codes or nodes and the nodes were grouped into larger node categories and then common themes were revealed. Recurring themes were categorized, compared, contrasted, and analyzed. In addition, Basic Human Needs Theory (BHN), Galtung's Violence Triangle, Social Identity Theory, and Feminist Theory such as Intersectionality were used as frameworks and lenses to further analyze data and provide suggestions for interpretation. In addition, the findings were compared back to data from the literature review to ascertain the depth of significant new findings from the inquiry.

### **Limitations of Study**

The most significant limitations to the research fall under the broad categories of budget, time, scope, and sampling. The budget presented a significant limitation in that the inquiry was self-funded by the researcher and that assistance,

particularly in translation and interpretation required volunteers or very modestly paid staff. Similarly, the researcher also had to balance time in employment with the inquiry process, which put competing demands for the researcher on time spent in that process.

The scope and sampling of participants in the inquiry also presented a challenge. The broad topic of identity conflict is well studied, but qualitative information gathering presented unique challenges related to the combination of the ability to conduct research within a realistic scope that also required a very subjective sampling process. For example, the participants selected for the interviews had time, were in relatively better social circumstances, and were chosen based on a perceived “less vulnerable status.” Potential participants who may have been more representative of the proposed population were removed from consideration, because the researcher did not want the inquiry process to potentially cause harm to them as human subjects.

A final limitation to the primary research process is that the Sudanese participants were selected from a small volunteer group. Though the population is estimated to be between 2000-3000, sampling came from beneficiaries of the volunteer organization as opposed to a larger population sampling. The experiences of the participants in the sample were likely to be different from a sampling of participants in the wider population that may have experienced more positive outcomes in migrating to Jordan than the selected group which were beneficiaries of an aid focused organization.

Methodological limitations to the practice of grounded theory including it being inductive and generative are that in its philosophy, theory must come from the data and not from the researcher, yet the subjectivity of the researcher will have an effect on the selection of data, participants, and interpretation of the theory (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). For this inquiry, the researcher had been in contact with the research population and listened to their experiences in the context of working with their community. Therefore the researcher could not escape the informal construction of theories to explain some of the phenomena experienced, but made a genuine effort to allow the data guide the formal theory generation in the findings and interpretation.

A critique of the coding is that it breaks up narratives and has the potential to quantify qualitative information. During the data analysis phase, coding techniques were limited in their ability to show depth of emotion, feeling, or salience expressed in the data. As such, finding trends relating to the appearance of certain threads of data still presented limitations regarding the depth. For example, a participant could express a large degree of significant feeling or salience about one topic for a short time, but broken down into codes would be difficult to capture the depth of its significance to the participant. Conversely, expressing other ideas repeatedly that are more comfortable to the participant could appear more frequently, but also have less significance to their experience.

A logistical limitation to the research was finding a quiet place to conduct the interviews. Many of the participants had small children nearby who would make noises periodically, which created difficulty in translating and transcribing for the

research support staff member. Some words were simply inaudible, but meaning was still able to be constructed from the interviews. Accessibility was important to the research process and going into noisy homes filled with chaos and children was necessary in order to allow participation of interview participants.

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

I, William Clifton, am a self-identifying Black or African American male. I was saddened on the deepest levels of my being that such a vulnerable population received so little attention and support. Before the research process, I got involved in volunteering and assisting this population, because I thought “who else will help these people? If I will not help, who will? I cannot turn my back on them. There are so many problems in this region but I will own this one. I will do what I can to change this.” My decision to not only volunteer for but also research the Sudanese refugee and asylum-seeker population was deliberate in that I wanted to be part of efforts to raise awareness of and ameliorate their situation. I consider even choosing research topics to be an act of advocacy and it is my hope that this research will provide benefit to my research participants, my volunteer organization, and any other organizations that would find this material valuable.

## **Inquiry Findings**

### **National and Geographical Identity**

There was a strong expression of a Sudanese identity in all the participants. Statements such as “I am Sudanese” from PB1 and from PB2 “and me as well we say Sudani...I mean in Sudan.” PC stated “And Sudan originally, our origin is Sudanese.” PD stated “[I am] a mother, Sudanese” and similarly PA “I’m from Sudan.” As the

country of Sudan experienced the civil war separating Sudan and South Sudan and an ongoing conflict in the Darfur area, the question of whether that national identity would be as salient loomed before the inquiry, but the participants still expressed Sudanese identities, regardless.

In addition to the national identity, regional or geographical identities were also expressed. PA made several references to Darfur including being “from the Darfur region” and “Darfur State.” He used statements such as “in Darfur, we don’t ask,” linking himself to the characteristics of the area. In like fashion, PC made a social link saying, “Especially as Darfurians, we’d go anywhere.” PB1 stated plainly that she was “from the Darfur area” while PB2 mentioned coming to Jordan “after the troubles that happened in Darfur.” In her interview, PD did not make any specific mention to Darfur.

In summary, the participants all expressed national identities related to Sudan. Most of the participants also expressed regional identities related to Darfur. The frequent use of “we” appeared to show a social connection to those categories in the participants.

### **Racial or Ethnic Identity**

The participants all expressed a tie to African identity. Some such as PA and PD saw themselves as Afro-Arab. PD stated that she was “Sudanese Arab African.” PA provided a more in depth reflection describing a dual identity stating for example, “We as a Sudan are a mix between Arab and African” and “To be honest I felt; we in the past used to think that we in Sudan; we are Afro-Arab.” PB1 described

a more ambiguous duality that leaned closer to African stating, “We are originally African. I mean some people say we are Arab some people say we are African. The majority feels they belong to the Africans. We have customs I mean like this our skin tone is not white. Our people’s skin tone is dark dark.” FG Jacob commented that in his conversations “some of the Sudanese that I talk to, mainly identify as African.” PC described himself and his family as strictly African thusly, “We are originally from Sudan from the tribes of *zinji*<sup>1</sup> origins, meaning non arab.” PC also highlighted his previous experience with racial tensions in Sudan stating, “As for over there; the troubles in Sudan brought us here; because in Sudan, and especially the government sees that it has to eradicate the entire zinji race; and as long as is called an Arab country, it has to get rid of them.”

Generally the research participants divided themselves into two ethnic or racial categories. Some of the participants identified themselves as African and *not* Arab, while other participants identified as Afro-Arab or African Arab.

### **Racial Discrimination and Ascribed Identity**

Upon coming to Jordan many of the Sudanese population, particularly those self-identifying as Afro-Arab, experienced a shift in their own identity. PD describes how her identity has been called into question, “I see my identity; sometimes I see it

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<sup>1</sup> *Zinji* is widely considered to be a racial slur for blacks or Africans in Arabic. Historically it referred to the East African slaves who were brought to Arabia centuries ago. However, nowadays, it can apply to anyone of black African origin. Some within the community use the word as a way to take power back from it. Using it is similar to using the word *nigger* in English.

rejected amongst them. Sometimes I see it as an Arab living amongst them...sometimes by color ya samra ya samra<sup>2</sup> [Hey tan one. Hey tan one]"

PA describes a much more negative and salient experience of identity ascription with "Now I'm in the street. Passers by talking to me; erm.. You black you what I mean always." In addition to the comments in the street, he spoke about him and his family being attacked:

There is a looking down. With all due respect T, you may be part of the system of the country; but there is a looking down. I mean just like I just told you; in the mosque they ask me; are you Muslim? Do you speak Arabic? And I'm talking to them in Arabic I mean. The look even we see sometimes on the street; they throw rocks at us. They throw garbage at us...I mean they beat us. They beat us. I told you that a while ago, my son M goes to nursery; there was an old man aged around 60 years old beat him with a hose" [pointing to scar on his young son's head received from the assault].

He describes how his experience has questioned his own identity, "We came here we found we are[...] we have no relation at all with the case of Arabism or even Islam I mean."

PB2 provides a vivid account of how his experience with race in Jordan has deeply affected him:

They weren't accepting for me. My psyche is not comfortable. I mean they say there's a society, western society for example. They say there is no racism against color. They say western society for example doesn't doesn't by colour doesn't discriminate by color and doesn't.. I mean erm.. The racism you feel no such thing. That's why my psyche is not comfortable. There [in the West] and no one calls you *abu samra*. You'd walk in the street comfortable. Feeling confident that you're just like him. A human a human.

Along with the emotional pain he has recounted his wife, PB1, recounts a similar experience to discrimination based on the color of her skin:

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<sup>2</sup> *Abu Samra* is considered a racial epithet in Arabic. It literally means "Father of Tan" or "Father of Dark." Sometimes, simply *samra* is used.

I'm even thinking of being ashamed of my color. Even sometimes I go out they stare at me on the street as if I'm not human or such. I see my color I don't know; threatening or what? I mean I feel like a stranger a lot...Even when I'm walking down the street they say Abu Samra and don't know why.

PC commented that "You find some problematic issues[..] confusing questions, like *ya abusamra* [hey father of darkness] like that like that. I mean the problematic issues are clear" and states how his children received such questioning as "I mean you know we are different to the children. Here they ask them *abu samra* your hair is short."

All of the participants mentioned some degree of racial discrimination. The self-identifying Afro-Arab participants appeared to express an ascribed identity that reflected a change in their identity.

### **Tribal Identity**

Most of the participants expressed identity related to their tribes. PA recounted tremendous losses back in Darfur, where dozens of members of his tribe were massacred including close family members and how he felt a responsibility to his tribe to keep fighting to preserve their legacy and seek justice for them. PB2 reported "In regards to life. Life in Sudan is different. I mean when you're with the tribe, all the tribe when you're with the tribe; life is more pleasant."

PC worries about his family and tribe similarly, "The biggest problem we face here in Jordan? That my family are in Sudan or another country and now I'm here. These are the biggest problems that we face. I mean like for example these are my kids on this occasion; I mean one wouldn't know my tribe or don't know their family."

Some of the participants expressed tribal identities and lamented separation from those identities, whereas others mentioned tribal identities without appearing to experience salience.

### **Religious Identity**

The majority of participants indicated both a reverence for other religious faiths and its importance in their lives. PA described encounters dealing with religious identity as perplexing in Amman, after a very different experience in Sudan. He mentioned that in Sudan there never seemed to be a need or desire to affirm publicly one's religion, whereas in Amman he was frequently asked even in Mosque if he were Muslim. This appeared to be an example of the salience of religion increasing when in the context of the Jordanian and Amman Muslim community. Religious identity appeared to be change or be called into question for most of the participants and larger population after experiences they had in Jordan.

### **Migration to Jordan**

Participants expressed a combination of reasons for choosing to come to Jordan. One of the most significant of these reasons was for obtaining medical care.

PC explains:

On this occasion I went to Jordan while I was ill for treatment in hospital. And it is well known that Jordan is one of the advanced countries in kidney treatment...there is no other country. If you go to Dubai they wouldn't allow it. Even if you went to any other country you're not allowed especially, *Darfurians*. On this occasion I went to Jordan it was fine....It's the easiest country I chose which I can go to with my children. On this occasion it was for treatment. Me personally my target was to be admitted in Jordan.

FG Jessica further confirmed this through a review of the organization's documents stating, "From what I've seen I think every single form that had any kind of detail about why they came said that they came for medical reasons." FG Jacob also confirmed, "You hear a lot about people coming here for medical reasons." PB2 recounted,

I said from Al-jazirah. They sent us on the way through a contact they knew; they took our fingerprints and photographed us and issued us with a passport. And they got us a visa to Jordan for medical treatment. Because you can't just go.

For him, medical treatment, though important also served as his and his family's means of getting to Jordan through a legal means. FG Jessica observes that this creates a self-selecting population with serious medical problems

Although Egypt is also a common destination for Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers, FG Rory notes that there is also tension for Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt as well in the following:

So Jordan for a number of reasons. A lot went to Chad, Egypt, Jordan. From what we heard, if you go to Egypt, Egypt is a potential third country resettlement so you could get resettled in Egypt. But Egypt isn't very good. So a lot of them.. There's a lot of tension with Egypt and Sudan right now so a lot of them that went to Egypt and didn't stay there for very long.

Generally, medical reasons appeared to be the most consistently appearing factor for migrating to Jordan in the research population. Obtaining medical visas was important not only as means to leave Sudan, but also because most were experiencing health problems.

### **Employment and Livelihood**

Work also emerged as an important part of the participants' experience, both in identity, but also in dignity and hardship. PA described himself immediately as an "educator" in response to the open-ended question asking him about what his identity was. Similarly, PB1 and PB2 revealed farming as part of their identities stating respectively, "I mean I am Sudanese and...I mean I care about agriculture and there you see the animals and give them water and food" and "Ok I am B2. I'm Sudanese. Erm...I'm a farmer I mean. Even in Jordan here as well still a farmer I mean. My description is farmer."

In Jordan, work was also a struggle for the participants. The Sudanese that came to Jordan as refugees or asylum seekers PA commented that "I mean we are also not allowed to work in Jordan at all." PC captures his experience with work in the following:

Because for example we are not permitted to work right or not right? If you do work; they send you away and questions (inaudible). Unless you work in hiding.. I mean (inaudible). So all of this one may be able to (inaudible) there is an exchange of (inaudible) and god knows best.

PB1 described how health problems disrupted her husband's ability to work and as well as her ability to care for him, "To be honest our problem is all in him being ill. In some cases, he goes to work, he gets weak there so they take him to A&E even I went through sickness; Once he was homebound for 15 days. I mean he couldn't move."

Participants admitted settling for very low paying work just to make ends meet, often in more than one job. PB2 summarized his attitude toward work, when he was physically able as:

After I came back from work; I mean I'm not shy. I'm not shy. I'm not ashamed. I told them if you have any work, call me. Don't bring someone else. I'm near. I mean they call me; I knock [on] the door. 'There's work? You wanna work?' Yes. They send us to the depot; mattresses, chairs. They say wipe them. Sometimes they give me 2JDs. Sometimes they don't. It's ok. No problem.

This type of exploitation and withholding of payment commonly occurred in the research population as confirmed by the interviewees and the observations of the focus group participants.

Some of the participants reported positive or affirming experiences from working. While all of the participants reported some experience of racial discrimination, some reported their experiences with employment with pride about their perceived identities. PC shared:

Now yes. (inaudible), we as a society (inaudible) so much I tell people that I'm comfortable. Personally I mean someone said to me that the Sudanese are selfless and such and such, even in the past. Even at work if somebody has work they'd rather hire a Sudanese with them. For them the Sudanese are trustworthy and that's important to them. So Jordanians in general, they deal with us; as a people we didn't experience any problems from them.

Some of the participants reported greatly improved circumstances because of their ability to work and make a living. PD reflected, "Life conditions here are very difficult. But thank god now I'm working; I can help myself, can help my son. Thank god."

Generally, experience with work and livelihood were both positive and negative in the participants. Most encountered some form of exploitation or discrimination at work, but some expressed positive experiences in being able to work. The ability to gain autonomy, whether temporarily in waiting for resettlement

or for integrating in society, revealed work as a powerful vehicle for emotional and material improvement. However, their medical problems also hindered some of their abilities to support themselves.

### **Institutional Support**

The participants expressed a range of emotion regarding the level of institutional support they were receiving. PA describes a very unpleasant experience with regard to support from the UNHCR and other organizations:

Sorry, something else, I don't know, is it part of the message or not? I mean, most of us, I speak for myself; most of the Sudanese, when they come to Jordan; really suffer. They come hanging all their hopes on the UNHR. Clear?. But what's absolutely disappointing; this is a message, if it reaches any other sector; people must deliver it. The UNHCR are completely unaccountable. Just like the young man whose operation was 5500 JD. Clear? Some guy's disease costs 500 or 400...And we got nothing. With the support of youngsters with 10 and 20 we covered the cost of hospital. So these are cases the UN needs to be on top of . There have to be funding organisations, NGO's or otherwise. But sadly there aren't any. There is no support.

PB2 on other hand, is more gracious about institutional support. He remarks about the *mission*<sup>3</sup> and help from the volunteer group, "Thank god this help from the mission and yourself. Thank God...we're paying rent...buy medication and move."

PB1 and PB2's most immediate concerns expressed for additional support were about preparation for winter.

The medical infrastructure, though expensive for the refugees and asylum seekers still proved to be critical institutions for this population, which the findings reveal are plagued with medical problems. PC explains:

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<sup>3</sup> Many of the participants simply refer to the UN and the UNHCR as *the mission*.

No it wasn't like that. On this occasion I went to Jordan while I was ill for treatment in hospital. And it is well known that Jordan is one of the advanced countries in kidney treatment. There is no other country...if you go to Dubai they wouldn't allow it...even if you went to any other country you're not allowed, especially Darfurians. On this occasion I went to Jordan it was fine.

And PC also reflected on the difficulty of having such much reliance on small scale volunteer groups "to be honest some people volunteered and got us cartons, but they don't commit and doesn't last long...and thank god there are kind people like you...."

Educational institutions represent some of the biggest institutional support gaps that the participants mentioned. When PD mentioned trying to get her child into public school the ministry told her, "no the priority is for Jordanians." She mentioned private school being a large expense for her. PA explained that the cost of nursery for his son was 30JD (approx. \$18) which in the context of a 220JD (approx. \$300) salary from the UNHCR is a very large expense. Sometimes CRP gets them coupons to help offset costs, but they are not always consistent. In addition, most of the participants expressed concern about the safety of their children in the schools.

The participants mentioned mostly that they were grateful for institutional support, but most, particularly PA commented that that support was insufficient. Educational institutions also represented large expenditures in the participants.

### **Interpretation**

The interpretation of the data collected from the inquiry will utilize several conflict, humanitarian, development, identity, and psycho-social theories, lenses, and frameworks to provide a *trans-disciplinary* analysis and a set of sector level and individual recommendations. Galtung's Violence Triangle, Basic Human Needs Theory (BHNT), Social Identity Theory via Tajfed, Williams' Theory on Identity Conflict, Bartal, and others.

The experience of racial discrimination was shared by all the interviewees and observed by focus group participants in varying degrees of saliency. Using Galtung's Violence Triangle, one can see this as cultural violence against the Sudanese population in Jordan, which helps legitimize the direct violence inflicted on them by a small minority of the host population (Galtung, 1990). This othering of the Sudanese denies the right of the self-identifying Afro-Arabs to their dual African and Arab identities, making them feel isolated from both. Ethnic minorities such as the Sudanese population are highly vulnerable on multiple fronts, especially considering their high incidence of medical issues. In addition to this identity conflict related to their ethnicity, the research participants from the Sudanese population also felt isolation from their Muslim identities.

Several Basic Human Needs appeared to be frustrated in the refugee population. Their decision to go to Jordan was largely goal-seeking behavior to address their needs of safety, security, and welfare. They left horrific affronts to their humanity and existence that drove them to separate themselves from what was left of the fabric of their familial and tribal social systems in Darfur. They found

themselves in Jordan for a variety of reasons, with medical issues near the top, which was often experienced by parts of the host population as competition for finite resources and job opportunity, rather than an opportunity to provide refuge for a group of highly vulnerable people. Furthermore, especially in certain urban areas, identity needs of vulnerable Jordanian population were satisfied in the goal-seeking behavior of isolating and sometimes engaging in role defense against the Sudanese refugees.

The need for recognition of the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers manifested in their need satisfying behavior of protesting in front of the UNHCR. This appeared to generate conflict within the host population, at least within the security and/or political apparatus, which saw their protesting as potentially dangerous. The lack of coverage in the media about their vulnerable status and reasons for migrating to Sudan probably exacerbated this misunderstanding.

The rapid and violent deportation of their group also had the effect of re-traumatizing virtually the entire Sudanese refugee and asylum-seeker population in Amman. Yoder speaks of:

Later sounds, sights, smells, or even dynamics that we experience which are similar to the original trauma can cause time to collapse and the trauma memory to come back vividly and unbidden. These are called intrusive memories. We respond as if the event is happening now. Consequently, survivors seek to avoid these triggers or reminders of what happened, so that they don't experience frighteningly vivid intrusive memories or flashbacks. This can cause them to withdraw from life (2005, p.21).

This population has experienced tremendous direct violence back in mostly the Darfur area, losing family, being tortured, being sexually assaulted, and other

atrocities. The experience with the police in Amman caused many of them to withdraw from life, frozen in fear, and unable to leave their homes for months. And the coordinated assault likely contributed to the reliving of large-group trauma which has the effects of “shock, chaos, survivor guilt, and preoccupation with images of death and destruction” (Yoder, 2005, p.28).

PA displayed many of the signs of large group trauma and it seemed to affect his core identities in many ways. He showed a remarkable self-awareness of going from a high intensity conflict in Sudan to the indignity of slow grinding racial conflict and frequent exploitation:

The challenges are many seriously on this occasion. We came from oppression and stress of problems in our areas. I mean over there hit us with weapons and otherwise.. But we came here and are hit and assassinated on a daily basis. Imagine Miss. T when I came from Sudan I didn't have this white hair... we here one of us days dies ten times and 20 times a day. Everyday. Over there one can die once with a bullet. But here you die everyday. I mean sometimes you work with someone; I mean you're driving a cart. One says brother I will not give you the money.

The lack of opportunity to work legally in Jordan also represents a form of structural violence against the Sudanese population (Galtung, 1969). This inability to participate in legal work opens the Sudanese population up to exploitation in the informal economy by not only depressing their earning wages, but making them vulnerable to unethical employers that would withhold payment to the Sudanese. Furthermore, the large amount of health problems reported by the Sudanese population puts them further at risk of direct harm from inability to afford treatment while also threatening their livelihoods, creating a vicious cycle of harm and exploitation.

Additionally, findings from the Focus Group revealed that there is a general misunderstanding of why the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers are in Jordan. Unlike other groups, which have had formal and public recognition from the government and are sometimes placed in large camps, such as the Syrian refugees, the Sudanese arrived fairly quietly at the airport with medical visas and requested asylum without much ceremony. FG Jacob made the observation that:

The fact that there isn't a clear understanding of the darfur identity and there's the race aspect; puts them at a completely different challenge than other refugees. And again that they're not seen as refugees but economic migrants; automatically economic migrants are bullied in this community; so I think erm.. And then given that the protest happened at unhcr; it was seen by a lot of Jordanians as, we're accepting all of these refugees here; and look what they do. They go on protests, you know and that was blown out of proportion like given a lot of erm. Coverage on it. They were saying that they're about to start violence...you know what I mean all of that...Jordanians don't really understand what's going on.

This lack of understanding contributes to a mistrust of the Sudanese refugee and asylum seeker population in Jordan. Mistrust is one of conflict theorist Bar-Tal's socio-psychological barriers to conflict resolution (Bar-Tal, 2013). It "permits individuals to carry out negative, violent, defensive behaviors as retribution for harm already done. But it may also lead to preemptive violent acts to deter the rival with the intention of preventing harm" (p. 298).

For all of the Sudanese, the reported racial discrimination likely resulted in a salience in their African identities as they suddenly found themselves, African and Afro-Arab part of the same out group (Tajfel, 2010). PD faced the hard realities of intersectionality of being woman and an ethnic minority, "to be honest my

experience here, I as a woman it's difficult for me to live here. Very difficult. Life conditions here are very difficult" (Crenshaw, 1993)

### **Recommendations for the Sector**

In order to transform the conflict experienced by members of the Sudanese refugee and asylum seeker population in Jordan, a multi track diplomacy strategy is recommended ("Multi-track Diplomacy," n.d.). In this approach, multiple levels of engagement from government, organizations, business, education, and civil society would be coordinated to provide maximum benefit to the target population.

**Track one – government.** More action via track 1 diplomacy toward the Jordanian government and the UNCHR are crucial for any successful intervention to work. It is instrumental for the Sudanese refugee population to get much needed assistance in meeting their basic needs whether through direct material support or granting possibilities for legal work within the country. It is a way to reduce structural violence toward this population (Galtung, 1969). In addition, as the specter of deportation still looms greatly over many of them, assurances from the government and improved legal status would greatly increase their ability to become self-sufficient and take away leverage that has been used to exploit their situation by predatory employers in the informal sector. Both the Jordanian government and the UNHCR would need to be engaged to change the official status of this population, which will provide support for the intervention on other tracks. In addition, a medical task force was proposed in the focus group that would address the deteriorating medical conditions of the at risk cases, many of which could be solved with modest efforts and resources. Multi identity conflict must be

taken into consideration by institutions giving assistance to refugees. UN and humanitarian institutions often have special provisions for women and children. Making special efforts toward integration of vulnerable minority populations should also be made a priority.

**Track two – professional nongovernmental.** Many NGOs and INGOs hold to humanitarian principles such as the two core beliefs outlined in the Sphere Standards where “those affected by disaster or conflict have a right to life with dignity and, therefore, a right to assistance; and second, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict” (Sphere Project, 2011, p. 4). Most of the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers are fleeing brutal conflict and carry with them injuries and illness that have been a direct result of that conflict. Both NGOs and government should be reminded and engaged about commitments to “proactive accountability to humanitarian action, in particular accountability to affected population” (Sphere Project, 2011, p. 10). Though the Sudanese refugee and asylum seeker population is very vulnerable in Jordan, it is also a much smaller population than that of the other refugee groups and can be better served with very modest budget allocations and programming sent its way. Along with that engagement, better coordination between organizations currently serving that population, such as The Collateral Repair Project and the UNHCR, would help ensure that the most vulnerable cases are attended to in a time-sensitive manner.

**Track three – business.** With a rise in social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility in the private sector, business can play a unique role

in complimenting institutional support (Martin & Osberg, 2007). With Track 1 support from government and Intergovernmental organizations such as the UNHCR, local businesses could hire the refugee and asylum seekers legally without fear of repercussions or raids from government. Larger organizations with corporate social responsibility departments could also allocate funding to sponsor at risk families or implement sustainable micro projects that provide livelihood opportunities for the target population. For example, many of the refugee and asylum seekers are displaced and experienced farmers whose skills could be put to use in the agricultural sector.

**Track four – peacemaking through personal involvement.** The volunteer group where the researcher is involved has had some successes in addressing the highly vulnerable cases quickly with food packages, medical care, non-food items such as clothing, winterization campaigns, needs assessments, and other ad hoc initiatives. Because of its size, it is able to act quickly and help fill gaps from institutional support, while sharing information where appropriate with larger organizations such as the Collateral Repair Project, the UNHCR, and UNICEF. Its donations come largely through small private donations as well as the time and expertise of its volunteers. In addition, some of the volunteers have been able to link the activities of their respective organizations with the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers. The group has also been more active on social media, trying to bring light and awareness to the Sudanese/Darfuri population in Amman. As with any volunteer group, however, time and commitments of the members fluctuate due to members' outside obligations and funding is never assured.

Continuing work toward integrating Sudanese beneficiaries into open projects and initiatives that do not have restricted funding has the potential to increase their visibility and raise awareness of their situation, while also connecting them to material resources and helpful social networks. This could provide them opportunities for work and better societal integration, even if only for the short term. It also has the potential to reduce the cultural and direct violence that this group has had to endure.

**Track five – research, training, and education.** Encouraging responsible and ethical research of the Sudanese diaspora with the goal of improving should be another goal. Part of the goal of this research project was to give participants a voice to help address their justice needs of story-telling, truth-telling, and empowerment (Yoder, 2005). Providing concrete recommendations based on a thorough analysis can perhaps modestly push the academic and policy discourse in way that provide answers toward providing for their Basic Human Needs. Furthermore, introducing peacebuilding principles into training and education, especially in schools, has the power to transform the experience of not only other refugee populations, but also the host society by building empathy, understanding, and a positive way forward. While this is certainly underway in Jordan, less publicized and vulnerable groups like the Sudanese population should be integrated into these types of initiatives and programing.

**Track six – activism.** Getting more organizations related to advocacy involved can help provide a watchful eye and provide strong allies to this community that is in desperate need of them. Human Rights Watch and other rights

focused organizations can advocate for policy at governmental and intergovernmental institutions to meet. Changing structural or institutional violence requires pressure on these institutions. Activism can occur from any of tracks and be targeted to any of the tracks.

**Track seven – religious and faith based initiatives.** Most of the Sudanese research participants reported having a Muslim identity and many attend mosque. Reaching out to mosques in areas where the refugee and asylum-seekers are staying has the potential to make experiences in the mosque more welcoming and less alienating. Religious leaders can set powerful and symbolic examples to the attendees of their services by publically reaching out to welcome the refugees and asylum-seekers, but also soliciting donations and volunteers to help them socially and materially. For those of other faiths, like Christians, similar outreach to churches and other faith-based organizations can occur. Religion based advocacy can help foster transcendent identities between the Sudanese refugees and host population that can make encounters enriching and positive as an alternative to conflicting and isolating.

**Track eight – funding and donors.** Funding is constantly at risk in the social sector in Jordan, especially now with a precarious world economy, donor fatigue, and austerity measures tightening the belts of institutional budgets. Donors should be gently reminded of the failure of the donor apparati in the Sudan conflict. “Donor Fatigue” appears to be expressed as a reason to restrict funds to the greater Sudanese crisis, whether in country or in the diaspora. However, it should be framed as a general failure to this population that very much lacked a donor involvement.

Crisis fatigue should not be conflated with donor fatigue. Whether the target is to engage individual donors, foundations, or government donors such as USAID, outreach should be done in a way that shows funders that their money is being put to good effect. Each request for funds should have a strategy behind it that matches the interests and expectations of the prospective donors.

**Track nine – media and communications.** During the focus group, the strategy of a national recognition of the Sudanese population was proposed which could have the result of raising awareness, reducing suspicion of their presence in Jordan, and reducing the instances of exploitation of this group. Though this change in national recognition must occur at the track 1 level of government, an accompanying media strategy must be executed. Many people in the host population of Jordan simply do not know why the Sudanese and Darfuri are in Jordan. Challenging preconceived notions about their presence, i.e. as highly vulnerable refugees vs. economic migrants, could alleviate conflict, provide opportunity for reconciliation, and establish a better relationship between the groups. Increasing awareness of this population and its reasons for seeking refuge in Jordan could change public opinion and help mobilize more support for them.

### **Conclusion**

In spite of the bleak picture that the findings appear to paint, many of the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers reported improvements in their situations and feel safer than they did in Darfur. PC reported, “In Jordan? To be honest the problems here ...problems here are simple.” PB1 stated, “after the war seriously I mean harder than here. When I saw the war I mean it’s harder than here. Here the

salaries and circumstances and that but over there are killings and divisions and destruction for children.” While many face very dire circumstances in Jordan, they have had some success integrating and have reported receiving welcoming acts of kindness from their neighbors. FG Jessica noted that one Sudanese family was checked on fed by their neighbors multiple times a week. PD appeared to triumph over culture shock and negative circumstances, “No now I feel, I know their accent. I know their habits; many things about them. I felt that I become part of this society.”

A lot of the worst experiences in these cases with the host population occur in areas that are already known to be violent. Those living in hostile neighborhoods, encountering threats such as were reported by FG Jabob “I will throw them all off this mountain” need basic levels of support to relocate to areas where they will have greater safety. There is a tremendous amount of welcoming and hospitality in Jordan that these refugees and asylum seekers can tap into. As was mentioned, a lot of the problems they face only require modest resources to alleviate. For many of them, they were escaping genocide and ethnic cleansing, with all traces of their culture and presence were being rendered invisible in Darfur. As global and local communities, we must assure that they are not also made invisible in the places where they seek refuge where our shared humanity should be reason enough to care for them and integrate them into our on societies.

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