Silent Sufferings of Sudanese Refugee Women in Egypt:
An Advocacy for Global Protection

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This study explores the lived experiences of Sudanese women residing in Clarkston Georgia, USA who fled war and conflict in Sudan and sought refuge in Egypt. This qualitative research illustrates the main challenges that these women experienced in Egypt, such as racial discrimination, gender-based violence, economic hardship, police brutality, and legal protection gaps. Their being female, belonging to the black African race, and displacement status added to their vulnerabilities, which further isolated them from the Egyptian society. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and discussions in focus groups with 20 Sudanese refugee women who were resettled in Clarkston, Georgia, exposed the psychological residues that their struggles took in Egypt and elicited deep psychological trauma. However, now resettled in the U.S., many women felt security, and came upon access to resources, avenues for education and work-undoing their lives with dignity. The study, therefore, calls for legal protection at the international level, gender-sensitive refugee policies, and deeper global cooperation that can guarantee protection and rights for refugee women. Guided by theories of feminism and human rights, this research provides important lessons in systemic reforms of mechanisms for the protection of refugees to meet special needs of refugee women worldwide.

Keywords: Sudanese refugee women, human rights, Egypt, United States, racial discrimination, gender-based violence

Introduction

Background of the Study

Decades of conflict have plagued Sudan, which in both political instability, ethnic divisions, and competition for resources, has resulted in the displacement of millions of people. The Darfur crisis, civil wars between northern and southern Sudan, and the continuous political unrest have resulted in the displacement of millions of people (Yahaya, 2019). Besides conflicts, women have to confront violence, sexual assault, and forced migration. As social structures disintegrate during wartime, making women particularly vulnerable as the primary caregivers, additional burdens accrue from securing food and shelter.

The instability in the socio-political and economic spheres has driven many women out of Sudan to seek asylum in neighboring countries like Egypt. However, due to geographical proximity and historical ties between the two neighbors, Egypt constitutes a major destination for Sudanese refugees (Ibreck & Seeka, 2022). Their adjustment to life in Egypt, however, has proven quite torrid. Refugees in Egypt face systemic challenges

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emanating from issues related to racial discrimination, marginalization in legal matters, and limited access to education and job opportunities.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Aim. This research aims to explore and document the experiences of Sudanese refugee women in the United States while they were refugees in Egypt. It tends to discuss those particular challenges faced by these women, which are very typical of their lifestyle in the modern Egyptian host country. Similarly, an examination is made of how the intersections of gender, race, and refugee status shape everyday life and limit organizational access to resources and opportunities.

Objectives. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

• To identify the key challenges that Sudanese refugee women face in Egypt, focusing on issues such as racism, economic hardship, and legal obstacles.

• To evaluate the role that gender plays in shaping their refugee experience, including how cultural norms and societal expectations compound their vulnerability.

• To assess the adequacy of international and national protections for refugee women and advocate for stronger gender-sensitive legal frameworks.

Research questions. The research questions of the study are as follows:

• What are the main challenges Sudanese refugee women experience in Egypt?

• How does gender play a role in shaping their refugee experience?

• How can global advocacy and legal frameworks better protect and empower refugee women?

Significance of the Study

This study is crucial for understanding the intersectionality of gender, race, and refugee status, particularly in the context of Sudanese women living in Egypt. The research brings a nuanced understanding of those kinds of challenges refugee women go through as causes because of how the factors come together in compounding their vulnerabilities: discrimination, economic exclusion, and lack of legal protection (Ibreck & Seeka, 2022). The results will add to global advocacy by providing empirical evidence that underlines the need for reforms in refugee law and policy (Taha, 2021).

Structure of the Thesis

The research first gives an Introduction that comprises background information on the study, its purpose, objectives, and significance. The literature review has focused on the Sudanese conflict, refugee experiences in Egypt, and the theoretical framework related to it. Further, the Methodology describes the research design adopted for this research, qualitatively precise data collection and analysis. Thus, Results and Discussion provide the key findings of the work, followed by a Conclusion that draws on policy implications along with lessons for future research.

Literature ReviewThe War in Sudan

Historical context. Most of the history of Sudan has been plagued throughout by persistent political instability, ethnic divisions, and resource-based conflicts which have engendered numerous civil wars. The First and Second Sudanese Civil Wars started respectively in 1955 and 1983 and ended in 1972 and 2005, respectively. Letube (2018) stated that it stemmed from cultural, ethnic, and religious friction between the majority Arab-Muslim north and the African-Christian south. Such conflicts have led to the deaths of millions of people and the

displacement of millions more. The crisis in Darfur added to their agony; accusations of ethnic cleansing, rape, and mass murder has been levied against government-back militia groups known as the Janjaweed. The war in Darfur displaced close to 2.7 million people and many more to neighboring countries like Egypt for safety (Olanrewaju, Joshua, & Olanrewaju, 2020).

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 formally put a finish to the Second Civil War and led to the independence of South Sudan in 2011 (Mokgola, 2019). Nevertheless, tensions continued to simmer, unresolved political and ethnic conflicts still being a reality, especially in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile (Zambakari et al., 2019). The continuing instability has forced hundreds of thousands of Sudanese—nearly all of them women and children to seek refuge in Egypt, where they face new challenges regarding lack of legal status, discrimination, gender based violence, and integration (Ibreck & Seeka, 2022).

Impact on women. These conflicts have taken the highest toll on the women of Sudan, who have become victims of violence, exploitation, and displacement since the government and rebels took to arms. Baithalu (2018) stated that sexual violence has been employed as a war instrument wherein, in areas of conflict, women have been subjected to rape, abduction, and forced marriage. War has catapulted so many women into becoming their families' sole caretakers, adding by the trauma of loss and violence (Ibreck & Seeka, 2022).

However, for the physical violence, there is a great degree of cultural disempowerment of Sudanese women in wartime. Whereas women in Sudan traditionally have been excluded from all levels of both public and private power, conflict deepens such inequalities (Tønnessen, 2019). Displacement further undermines their social status, as they often lose the support systems of family and community and face new cultural challenges in host countries like Egypt (Tønnessen, 2019).

Cultural Dynamics of Sudanese Women

Sudanese gender norms. In the conservative Sudanese setup, there is a great deal of interrelationship between gender roles and cultural and religious beliefs. Atteya (2021) stated that this means that women are usually put in positions where they will have to attend to domestic duties such as household management, child-rearing, and childcare while men are normally considered the breadwinner. Most social structures in Sudan would normally respect or uphold patriarchal authority, wherein women are given minimum decision-making powers both in the public and private domains. These traditional roles have changed greatly with the displacement caused by conflict (Abdalgader, 2024). However, when families have to flee due to war and turmoil, sometimes the women end up being the primary caregivers and providers, especially in cases of male members getting killed, going missing, or being injured and/or put in prison, hence unable to contribute (Tønnessen, 2019).

Effect of migration on cultural identity. Their migration to Egypt further complicated the gender dynamics of Sudanese women, who challenged traditional norms and cultural identities (Yusuf, 2022). Structural supports necessary in transitioning from Sudan to Egypt typically occur within community-based structures, such as extended family networks or local religious and tribal communities. This process is often followed by social isolation for Sudanese refugee women in Egypt, due to the limited access to familiar systems and protections (Mohamed, 2020). However, despite their race and refugee status, women from Sudan are usually the most marginalized in Egypt, who become particularly vulnerable in various informal labor arrangements since they do

not possess any basic legal rights, including the right to employment and to receive particular social services (Mohamed, 2020).

Migration to Egypt

Push and pull factors. Due to reasons of distance and cultural and historical affinities, Egypt has become a common destination for Sudanese refugees. Sudan and Egypt are neighbors that enjoy long-standing connections, and its strategic position as the gateway between Africa and the Middle East makes Egypt an accessible destination for fleeing Sudanese families (Fehrmann, 2021, Habib 2021). The presence of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) support and a perceived wider space for stability and more opportunity than Sudan contributes to encouraging migration (Mohamed, 2020).

Egypt, however, is fraught with danger. Most Sudanese refugees, particularly women, have to cross dangerous terrain and hostile borders. However, women, in particular, face an increased risk of sexual violence and conditions of forced labor if they happen to migrate alone without any male guardians or family members (Habib, 2021). Racial abuses and mistreatment against Sudanese women, especially those with darker skin, are a common experience, with many in the general public referring to them derogatorily as "black" or "black monkeys", "country spoiler". This element of racism does not help their legal status of being refugees, seriously impeding access to work, healthcare, and educational services (Habib, 2021).

Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist theory. While feminism is a theoretical framework that elaborates on how gendered power relations increase risks for refugee women, especially within patriarchal societies like Sudan and Egypt, it highlights cultural and institutional mechanisms of discrimination against women, placing them in positions vulnerable to exploitation and violence with reduced accessibility to rights and resources (van der Heide, 2019). This theory thus provides an elaboration on the added burdens refugee women bear as compared to men in a displaced society (Habib, 2021).

Human rights theory. Human rights theory stands in critique to the limitation of international frameworks for refugees' protection about women's protection. While general conventions under which the 1951 Refugee Convention features impose broad protections, they often fail to reflect specific experiences of gendered violence and legal marginalization that women refugees experience (Fehrmann, 2021). Intersectionality looks at how these various identities overlap—in this case, gender, race, and refugee status—to multiply discrimination against Sudanese women in Egypt (Herder, 2023). These women are not only experiencing gendered oppression but also living racial discrimination and marginalization as refugees, placing them in a unique disadvantageous position regarding access to social services, employment, and legal protection (Habib, 2021).

Legal Frameworks for the Protection of Refugee Rights

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol form the basis of international protection for refugees by securing their rights from, among many other rights, nonrefoulement (Rahma et al., 2020). However, the Convention does not contain any gender-sensitive provisions, thus leaving refugee women at a gross disadvantage. Refugee women in Egypt are particularly vulnerable to such gender-specific challenges as sexual violence and economic exploitation (Fehrmann, 2021). While international frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 proclaim life and security entitlements, none of them work effectively in host countries like Egypt to ascertain their enforcement. Lack of accountability further exacerbates refugee women under protection.

Regionally, the Kampala Convention, which systematically addresses internally displaced persons, fails to consider the unique challenges that face refugee women and offers them minimal protection against gender-based violence (Scrittori, 2023). In Egypt, the domestic legal system, while a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, also provides little to no protection for refugee women. Without domestic enforcement mechanisms, Sudanese refugee women cannot be legally protected, especially against racial discrimination and sexual violence (Ibreck & Seeka, 2022).

Such a gap creates an urgent need for a gender-specific international convention to address the vulnerabilities of refugee women (Taha, 2021). The UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women should be developed as a legally binding convention to ensure protection that is sensitive to gender across the world. Global precedents, such as the U.S. (Fehrmann, 2021) Refugee Act of 1980, draw significant models for the protection of vulnerable groups like women and offer insight into how international frameworks can be adapted to center-gendered experiences of displacement and comprehensive protection.

MethodologyResearch Design

Qualitative approach. This qualitative research study has been designed to explore the lived experiences of Sudanese refugee women who have resettled first in Egypt and then in Clarkston, Georgia. Qualitative research into scarred social issues like displacement has a value of its own, as one can delve deep and nuancedly into how individual and personal experience, perspective, and emotion are influenced. This becomes particularly effective in eliciting subjective realities among refugee women, whose voices are usually lost in quantitative studies. Qualitative study can provide the identification through narrative data of recurring themes and patterns for experiences of racism, gender-based violence, economic hardship, or legal challenges faced by refugee women.

Qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, are flexible to be sensitive to traumatic and other forms of exploitative experiences. This approach has deepened the understanding of the problems faced by Sudanese women as refugees both in Egypt and in the United States.

Sampling strategy. This section employs purposive sampling, which is a method in which selected participants are purposely chosen because they possess those characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The samples that were used in the study were resettled Sudanese refugee women aged 18 years and older who are residing in Clarkston, Georgia (Fasika, 2018). These are selected based on the guideline that Clarkston hosts one of the largest populations of resettled Sudanese refugees in the United States of America, hence an ideal location for research into the experiences of transition into the United States. Focusing on women 18 years and above, different life stages that will be addressed will include young adults, middle-aged women, and older people, who probably face different potential challenges. This purposive sampling strategy enables the research to cover participants with direct experience with the very process of forced displacement and how their gender status and refugee conditions shape their resettlement experiences.
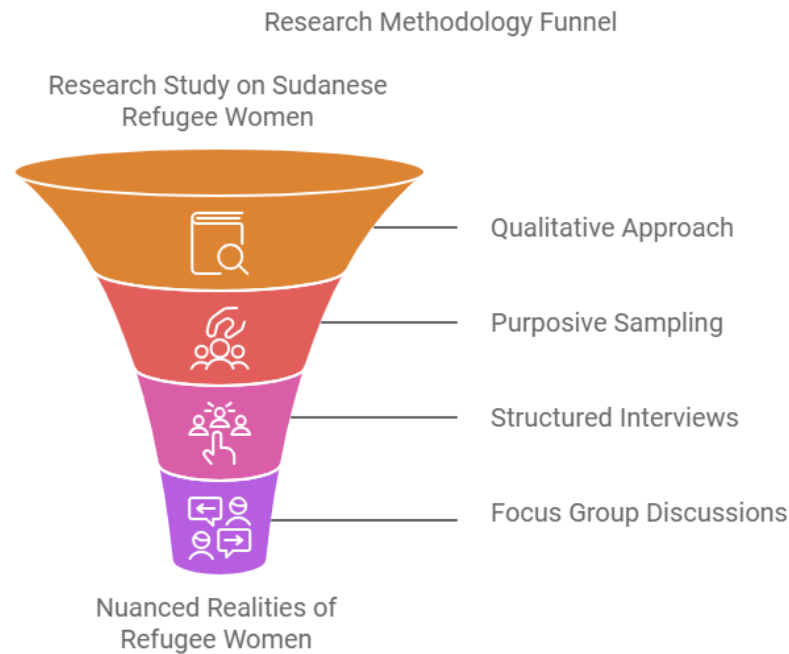
Research Methodology Funnel

Research Study on Sudanese
Refugee Women

Qualitative Approach

Purposive Sampling

Structured Interviews

Focus Group Discussions

Nuanced Realities of
Refugee Women

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews. The data for this study were collected from a total of 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Sudanese refugee women who were resettled in Clarkston, Georgia. Interviews have been selected as a primary means of data collection to allow an in-depth exploration of personal experiences, especially for sensitive topics such as gender-based violence, discrimination, and economic hardships faced in Egypt and during resettlement (Auma & Charles, 2023). Semi-structured interviews ensured flexibility by giving participants freedom of expression while ensuring that key topics were addressed: questions focused on three aspects in line with the research objectives:

• Challenges in Egypt: What kinds of social, economic, and legal difficulties did you face as a refugee woman in Egypt?

• Gender dynamics: How did your gender influence your experiences, particularly in terms of discrimination, safety, and access to resources?

• Legal and social support: What forms of support, if any, did you receive from international organizations or host governments in Egypt, and how did they affect your life?

Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to an hour, depending on their pace, and was conducted either in person or via video call at the participant's convenience. With informed consent, interviews were recorded and then transcribed for thematic analysis (Fasika, 2018).

Focus group discussions. In addition to individual interviews, two focus group discussions were conducted. Each discussion group consisted of six to eight Sudanese refugee women who were resettled in Clarkston after some time in Egypt (Oedingen et al., 2020). However, the discussion groups allowed the researcher to capture collective experiences and reflections on shared struggles such as racism, discrimination, and challenges with their integration into both Egyptian and U.S. societies. However, it was a group setting in which participants interacted with one another by comparing experiences and giving deeper insights into common themes related to

legal marginalization and cultural disempowerment. Focus groups were especially helpful in the discussion of community-level challenges and the social networks of Sudanese women in exile. Participants were encouraged to reflect on how their personal stories connect to larger patterns in refugee experiences (Rahma et al., 2020). Each session was two hours long, guided by open-ended questions that facilitated conversation (Fasika, 2018).

Demographic data. In context, all respondents were asked to fill in a short questionnaire with demographic information before the individual interview. Key variables included age, marital status, academic background, employment status, length of time spent in Egypt, as well as the years since resettling to the U.S. (Halaweh, Dahlin-Ivanoff, Svantesson, & Willén, 2018). The demographic data place into context the responses about the interview and focus groups, since such a large number of factors, like age and level of education, were contributing to the different issues or difficulties the participants reported.

Ethical considerations. This research followed strict ethical guidelines to ensure that participants did not suffer any form of harm, dignities were upheld, and privacy was maintained. This paper is a fall out from approved study by Kennesaw State University Institutional Review Board IRB-FY24-521. Similarly, this is considerate of ethical treatment of respondents, considering the sensitive nature of exploration into issues of displacement, trauma, and gender-based violence (Friedrich-Nel & Ramlaul, 2020). All participants were thoroughly informed of the purpose of the research and the type of questions they would be asked, and how the data would be used before they took part in the study. Data accrued in this regard, such as interview recordings and their transcripts, were kept under tight security and accessible only to the principal researcher (Tiidenberg, 2020). However, the overview of the traumas they faced in life could give rise to some psychological distress; but this research was particularly careful not to ask questions that could elicit such reactions by focusing primarily on their future goals and dream exercises. Nonetheless, the availability of psychological support services was brought to their attention in case they might need any help after the interviews or focus group discussions (Rahma et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis. Qualitative thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and recurrent themes in data, was thus applied to analyze data from interviews and focus group discussions. Interview and focus group transcripts were read and coded in-depth. Meaningful segments of text were identified from each transcript relating to the objectives of the study, including those on experiences of racism, economic hardship, gender-based violence, and legal challenges (Wilson, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2018). It is at this level that these codes were put together into broader themes whereby key trends began to emerge through which Sudanese refugee women experience their displacement and resettlement in Egypt and Clarkston.

Thematic analysis identified several themes which were recurring:

• Racism and discrimination: Racial abuse and exclusion in Egypt were consistently reported by participants, often along lines of gender and refugee status.

• Economic hardship: Many women highlighted their struggles to find stable employment, both in Egypt and after resettlement.

• Legal marginalization: Lack of legal status and protection in Egypt was a central issue affecting access to healthcare, employment, and safety.

Framework for analysis. The findings interpreted from perspectives of feminist theory and human rights theory showed that feminist theory was important in understanding how gendered power heightened the

vulnerability of Sudanese women refugees significantly, especially on issues of sexual violence, exploitation, and economic dependency (Hay, 2021). It has been able to light up how patriarchal systems in both Sudan and Egypt are blighted by limited access to resources and autonomy among women. Human rights theory soon started to fill the gap in providing a critique of the existing international refugee frameworks that pointed out the gaps in legal protection that refugee women face when trying to realize their rights to safety, dignity, and access to services in host countries (Rahma et al., 2020).

Software used. The NVivo software was utilized to organize and manage the qualitative data. Thus, NVivo helps the researcher systematically code and categorize the transcripts in such a way that recurring themes across different interviews and focus groups can be identified and compared (Kara, 2022). The advanced query features in the software allow the exploration of specific patterns relating specifically to gender, race, and refugee status, thus giving a structured approach to analyzing this volume of data collected (Hay, 2021).

Results & Discussion

Demographic Overview

The participants in this study consisted of 20 Sudanese refugee women, all aged 18 and older, who have now resettled in Clarkston, Georgia, after experiencing displacement in Egypt. The demographic data gathered from these women were thus able to place their socio-economic background, experiences of migration, and current life circumstances in perspective, hence shedding light on the challenges experienced both in Egypt and the U.S. (Atari-Khan et al., 2021). This table depicts the heterogeneity within the participants' group, especially those relating to educational heritage and employment status during the time spent in Egypt. Some of them went through a great deal of formal employment, but most were engaged in either the informal sector or unemployment, which revealed the economic struggle of living in Egypt for people with refugee status**.**

Visual representation of key demographic data. To further illustrate the demographic data, visual aids such as pie charts and bar graphs are provided below:
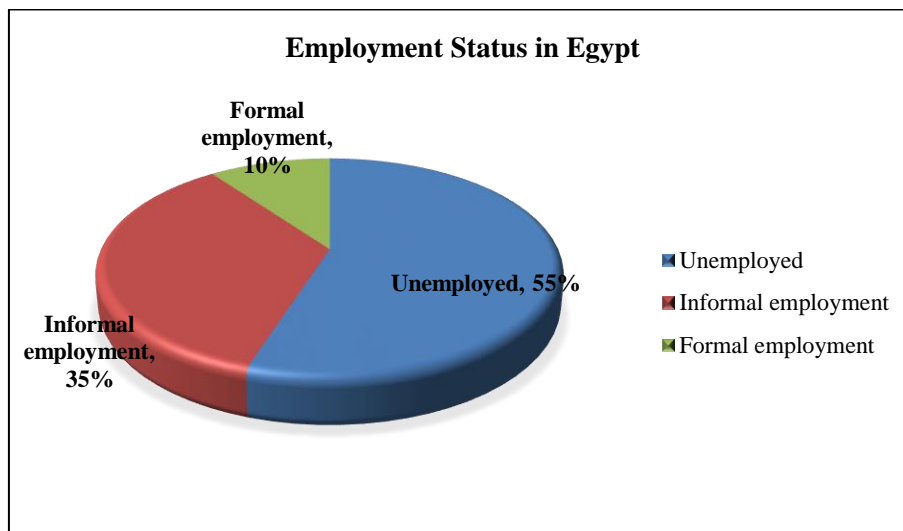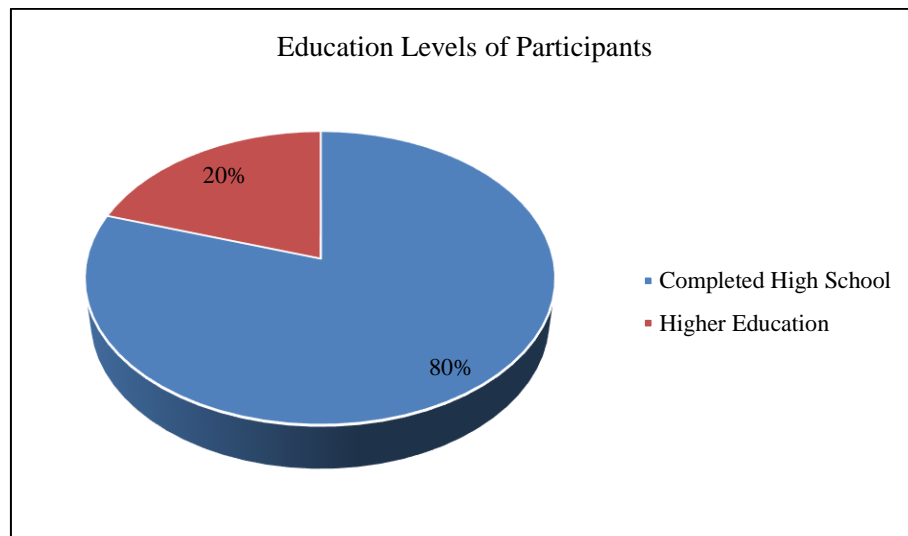

Figure 2. Employment status in Egypt.

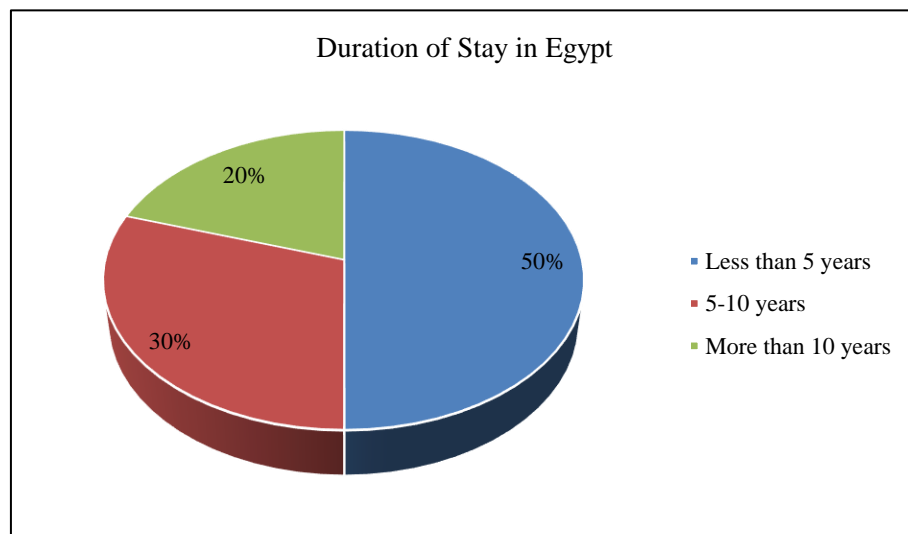*Figure 3.* Education levels of participants.

Figure 4. Duration of stay in Egypt.

Figure 2: Employment Status in Egypt: Among Sudanese refugee women in Egypt, the majority 55% were unemployed, while 35% worked in informal jobs; only 10% were formally employed. This shows significant economic hardship. Figure 2: Education Level of the Participants: Most of the participants reported limited formal education: 40% had some high school, 30% had completed high school, and only 20% had pursued any higher education that would have opened options for them. Figure 3: Duration of Stay in Egypt: The fact that half of the participants had lived in Egypt for less than five years, another 30% stayed between 5-10 years, and 20% stayed for more than 10 years, denotes that the protracted condition of their displacement is very serious (Hay, 2021).

Key Themes Identified

Racism and discrimination in Egypt. One of the most pervasive challenges faced by Sudanese refugee women in Egypt included racial and gender-based discrimination (Dean, 2020). The dark complexion of women from Sudan often made them targets of racist abuses on the streets. Many participants shared accounts of being verbally harassed and sometimes even physically assaulted for reasons to do with their race and status as refugees.

One participant, identified as Milinda Brown, stated, "In Egypt, they call the Sudanese women black monkeys. They treated us as if we were less than human".

Apart from racial abuse, respondents also reported marginalization based on gender. Most of the time, public space was not a safe place for Sudanese refugee women, and Egyptian men usually targeted them for sexual harassment. Ralia Nelson shared, "I couldn't walk down the street without fearing for my safety. Men would say horrible things, sometimes even touch us, and there was nothing we could do". The combination of racial and gender discrimination left Sudanese refugee women feeling isolated and powerless, with no institutional recourse to address their grievances (Dean, 2020).

The legal status of non-citizenship in Egypt aggravated the situation of women from Sudan. Many mentioned that even police intervention did not take place, even in cases where violence had been committed against them. Mutiat Muri reported, "The police did nothing even if we reported harassment. They treated us like criminals, not victims". In this context, the lack of protection under the law signifies a really difficult circumstance for Sudanese women to report abuse or seek justice. Friena Ramon explained, "We were on our own. No one was interested in what happened to us, even the police". The legal vacuum around them gives way to discrimination and abuse with impunity, further marginalizing Sudanese women in Egypt.

Economic hardships. Another recurring theme was also the level of economic difficulties facing Sudanese refugee women in Egypt. As one said, "Life in Egypt is all about money. You can't do anything if you don't have money". Further, the high cost of living in Egypt exacerbated the economic insecurity. Loretta Gabriel reported, "I worked as a cleaner, but they paid me almost nothing. I could barely survive on the money I earned". Due to a lack of economic opportunities, most of the women of Sudan were caught in the web of poverty. Analysis of those themes reveals the multidimensional marginalization of Sudanese refugee women, whereby inter-sectional racism is merged with a lack of legal protection and economic hardship to further increase their vulnerability.

Trauma and psychological impact. The emotional scarring of the refugee experience in Egypt had yet to be completely erased among many Sudanese women now resettled in the United States. The participants experience in an unaccommodating host country such as Egypt exposed them to instances of gender-based violence which led to a sense of insecurity, inflicting severe psychological stress on them. Participants often mentioned being helpless and isolated as their daily humiliation reduced their self-worth. Nelly Ibrahim shared, "Those name tags in Egypt still make me feel incapable". The cumulative effect of these stressors manifested in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and trauma, as women struggled to survive in an environment where they were constantly dehumanized. Mano Adams mentioned, "I felt invisible, like no one cared if I lived or died". This emotional toll had a lasting impact, even after resettlement in the United States (Atari-Khan et al., 2021).

Resettlement in the U.S. and opportunities. For most of the interviewees, resettlement to the U.S. was a turning point in their lives, whereby new possibilities for education and finding jobs opened up and provided a feeling of security. While there were challenges regarding adjustment to the new country, the women emphasized the striking difference between their experiences in Egypt and those in the United States. Abuke Joseph stated, "When I came to America, I saw a lot of difference. They treat you with respect and provide security". The ability to access education and employment in a legal and safe environment gave the women a sense of empowerment and hope for the future.

In the U.S., many women found that their basic human rights, such as freedom from harassment and access to healthcare, were protected. Loretta Gabriel shared, "Here, I feel safe. I can walk on the streets without being

harassed, and my children can go to school". Resettlement provided these women with opportunities to rebuild their lives, far from the dangers and discrimination they faced in Egypt (Atari-Khan et al., 2021).

Critique of Existing Legal Frameworks

Although international refugee protection laws protect refugees from specific forms of persecution, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, important gaps in protection against other forms leave many women, especially in host countries such as Egypt (Atari-Khan et al., 2021). Many of the Sudanese refugee women lived without any recognition of a legal status throughout their stay in Egypt and are hence easily exposed to exploitation, harassment, and abuse without any meaningful avenue of recourse. The Egyptian legal system protects very few rights of refugee women, mainly because there is little law regarding the rights of refugees. Mutiat Muri reported, "We were harassed on the streets by Egyptian men, and when we went to the police, they did nothing, saying they won't prosecute their citizens for us". This proves that more vigilant protection is needed that considers the specific gender-related risks that women refugees have to endure.

It is, therefore, high time that international organizations like the UNHCR have a greater say in seeing to it that these protections are respected among host countries (Habib, 2021). The UNHCR should also make specific conventions that would protect women refugees from sexual harassment and economic exploitation. Friena Ramon said, "In Egypt, we were made to feel invisible, both by the law and by the society". Without these reforms, refugee women will continue to be relegated to the margins of custom and convention, biding their time in self-perpetuating cycles of poverty and violence.

ConclusionSummary of Findings

This current study has explored the lived experiences of Sudanese refugee women in Egypt and has described a series of challenges they face in pursuit of safety and stability. Racial discrimination was one such predominant aspect, where many have been exposed to various abuses—be it verbal or physical—against their dark skin and refugee status. This was further exacerbated by gender-based discrimination whereby women in Sudan were victims of sexual harassment and abuse in public places. Their vulnerability in these areas was further heightened by a lack of legal protection, thereby leaving them with little or no ways of combating these instances of exploitation and violence. The economic hardship added to their inability to get any employment on legal terms further degraded their poverty into a marginal existence of low-paying, informal jobs where most were grossly underpaid or even forced to work for nothing. The accumulated burden of these challenges contributed much to the emotional blows that left many with profound psychological trauma.

Policy and Advocacy Implications

The findings of this study bring into focus the dire need for better international protection for refugee women, especially in contexts such as Egypt, where refugees have no rights nor legal status whatsoever thereby increasing their vulnerabilities and susceptibility to citizen perpetuated violence against them. Probably the most critical gap within the existing refugee protection regime is that the legal protection measures do not consider the gender dimension; they are often blind to the problems faced by refugee women who are often grappling with multiplicity of marginalizations on diverse fonts. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol therefore need another Protocol with clear provisions that protect refugee women against gender-based violence and exploitation, with legal recourse to that effect in any host country (Habib, 2021).

On the other hand, the reform of international refugee law needs to be considered with increased cooperation

between UNHCR, international organizations, and the host country about effectively implementing enforceable international conventions and realistic resettlement programs that address the immediate needs of refugee women in Egypt without exposing them to further harm and vulnerability.

Future Research Directions

More research will be necessary to interpret the relationship between psychological trauma and social reintegration among Sudanese refugee women. Understanding how trauma interferes with their potential to become part of a new society is essential for establishing the need for legal reforms and developing mental health interventions. Furthermore, long-term research into the resettlement experiences of Sudanese women in the U.S. will go a long way toward assessing the long-term effects that resettlement programs have on economic stability, mental health, and social empowerment for resettled refugee women in the United States.

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Appendix

Table 1

Initial Coding Table

Responses	Identified Initial Codes
"In Egypt, they call the Sudanese women black monkeys. They treated us as if we were less than human."	Racism, Verbal abuse, Racial discrimination
"I couldn't walk down the street without fearing for my safety. Men would say horrible things, sometimes even touch us, and there was nothing we could do."	Sexual harassment, Gender discrimination, Fear of violence
"The police did nothing even if we reported harassment. They treated us like criminals, not victims."	Lack of legal protection, Police inaction, Vulnerability
"We were on our own. Nobody cared what happened to us, not even the authorities."	Abandonment, Legal neglect, Government indifference
"Life in Egypt is all about money. If you don't have money, you can't do anything."	Economic hardship, Financial dependency, Survival struggle
"I worked as a cleaner, but they paid me almost nothing. I could barely survive on the money I earned."	Underpayment, Informal labor exploitation, Economic exploitation

Table 2

Theme Development

Research Objective	Responses	Initial Codes	Sub-themes	Final Themes
Objective 1: To identify the social and legal challenges faced by Sudanese refugee women in Egypt	"In Egypt, they call the Sudanese women black monkeys. They treated us as if we were less than human."	Racism, Verbal abuse, Racial discrimination	Social marginalization	Racism and Discrimination
	"I couldn't walk down the street without fearing for my safety. Men would say horrible things..."	Sexual harassment, Gender discrimination	Gender-based violence	
	"The police did nothing even if we reported harassment."	Lack of legal protection, Police inaction	Legal neglect	Lack of Legal and Social Protection
Objective 2: To assess the economic challenges and survival strategies of Sudanese refugee women	"Life in Egypt is all about money. If you don't have money, you can't do anything."	Economic hardship, financial dependency	Economic survival	Economic Hardships
	"I worked as a cleaner, but they paid me almost nothing."	Underpayment, Informal labor exploitation	Labor exploitation	

Table 3

Summary of Key Themes and Participant

Theme	Participant Code	Quotes
Racism and Discrimination	P2	"In Egypt, they call the Sudanese women black monkeys."
	P5	"I couldn't walk down the street without fearing for my safety. Men would say horrible things, sometimes even touch us, and there was nothing we could do."
Lack of Legal and Social Protection	P8	"The police did nothing even if we reported harassment. They treated us like criminals, not victims."
	P4	"We were on our own. Nobody cared what happened to us, not even the authorities."
Economic Hardships	P6	"Life in Egypt is all about money. If you don't have money, you can't do anything."
	P9	"I worked as a cleaner, but they paid me almost nothing. I could barely survive on the money I earned."

Table 4

Demographic Breakdown of Participants

Demographic Variables	Details
Age Range	18-25 years: 8 participants; 26-35 years: 5 participants; 36-45 years: 7 participants
Marital Status	Married: 12; Single: 6; Widowed: 2
Number of Children	No children: 6; 1-2 children: 8; 3 or more children: 6
Length of Stay in Egypt	Less than 5 years: 10; 5-10 years: 6; More than 10 years: 4
Education Level	No formal education: 2; Some high school: 8; Completed high school: 6; Higher education: 4
Employment Status in Egypt	Unemployed: 11; Informal employment: 7; Formal employment: 2

Table 5

Corresponding Participant

Pseudonym	Corresponding Participant (P#)
Muna Peters	P1
Milinda Brown	P2
Mano Adams	P3
Friena Ramon	P4
Ralia Nelson	P5
Abuke Joseph	P6
Nelly Ibrahim	P7
Mutiat Muri	P8
Loretta Gabriel	P9
Sawsan Musa	P10
Joy Dongo	P11
Juliet Maraji	P12
Tumerah Ismail	P13
Yvonne Farouk	P14
Faridah Iman	P15
Ereisi Yusuf	P16
Angel Idris	P17
Mary Sweba	P18
Esther Iresi	P19
Barbara Abdul	P20