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Framing Violence: The Hidden Suffering and Healing of Sudan's 'Lost Girls' in Cairo, Egypt

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Framing Violence: The Hidden Suffering and Healing of
Sudan’s ‘Lost Girls’ in Cairo, Egypt

by

Ginger Ann Johnson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Keywords: Sudan, Lost Girls, photovoice, refugees, embodied suffering

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DEDICATION

For the amazing women in my family, past and present, who serve as a constant inspiration: Ruby Lanier, Rosenell Johnson, Bobbie Johnson and Angie McAfee.

For the incredibly talented cohort of female graduate students who each encouraged me in their own ways throughout our years together: Dr. Cindy Grace-McCaskey, Amanda Terry, Jaime Nodarse, Dr. Cecilia Vindrola Padros, Dr. Carylanna Taylor, Dr. Janelle Christensen, Anne Pfister, Dr. Kristina Baines, Dr. Jennifer Syvertsen and Dr. Shana Hughes.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the specific forms of embodied suffering war and its refugee aftermath brings to female Sudanese refugees currently living in post-revolution Cairo, Egypt in order to illustrate the suffering and healing enacted within everyday life. These women, displaced from the Second Sudanese Civil War, are what I label Sudan’s ‘Lost Girls.’ The theoretical framework I employ in order to discuss their lives is a critical medical anthropology perspective based on the mindful body. I engage anthropological literature on the body in order to better understand the embodied suffering, sexual violence, and refugee aftermath of war. My research seeks to do this through distinctly gendered analyses and equally importantly, visual analyses.

The research draws on historical news data collected through content analysis, contemporary qualitative data collected during fieldwork in the form of observation and interviews, with a particular emphasis on photovoice methodology. The work proposes that the humanizing aspect of emotions revealed by Lost Girls’ photography of their everyday lives in urban Cairo allows for critical analysis of the many and varied ways in which women’s ‘ordinary’ experiences of war have been hidden, the implications of this for international responses to their suffering, and areas for exploring new, non-emergency refugee policies based on more ethnographically informed, gendered contextualizations of ‘extraordinary’ violence.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: Lost Girl, Revealed.
“Few have thought to inquire about the fate of the ‘Lost Girls’…most have simply vanished from official records” (Matheson 2002).
Lost Girls, Hidden

I am going to tell you a story, a story not many have heard before regarding the lives of Sudan’s ‘Lost Girls.’ In telling you this story, I will discuss how political norms regarding the lives of women have hidden their suffering from our view. After I tell you the history of these Lost Girls, I will show you images, pictures of their contemporary daily public lives, taken by them, with the meanings explained in their own words in order to bring the reality of their current suffering to your attention, and to provide a visual frame to the human cost of war. Finally, I will present you with a second set of images, these focused on women’s private lives, again taken by them, in order to show you how individual histories of violence are woven into the present day healing strategies of refugee women in Cairo. In doing each of these things, I am asking you, the reader of their stories and viewer of their images, to see the specific ways in which women communicate their suffering through the violence they experience, and to realize that women’s attempts to heal and remake their worlds are worthy of not only our attention, but also our support.

This dissertation is an ethnography of the everyday lives of Sudanese women, displaced from the Second Sudanese Civil War, now living in Cairo, Egypt – what I label the Lost Girls of Sudan. The girls, now women, who participated in this study make up only a tiny fraction of the young female lives devastatingly disrupted due to the war. I encountered these survivors in Egypt. You may also find many of them throughout East Africa; Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Chad. I have chosen to focus on the lives of these women because their experiences have largely not been included in the conflict narrative of their country. The most well-known Sudanese displacement narrative is that of the ‘Lost Boys’ of Sudan—arguably one of the most well-known war stories worldwide. Who can forget the gripping images and narratives
about the thousands of Lost Boys seen walking across Sudan, bravely enduring attacks, hunger and forced military servitude to reach refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya? Yet it was not until over a decade later that the question began to emerge: Where have all the girls gone? The unknown lives of the Lost Girls of Sudan led one reporter to comment that they had “simply vanished from official records” (Matheson 2002). By the time this statement was made, media attention to the war in Sudan (and the subsequent international assistance that so often follows) had moved on to coverage of the aftermath of terrorist events occurring on September 11th, 2001 in the United States. The collective memory of Sudanese war will remain a male-dominated depiction of history as long as the experiences of its female citizens continue to remain untold.

Lost Girls exist. They bravely endured physical attacks, hunger and forced domestic and sexual servitude seeking refuge in other locales and countries. They deserve to have their experiences, past, present and future, included in the history of their nation. Though this dissertation will touch upon those past experiences that have influenced women’s journey North, my overarching goal is to describe the everyday lives of the Lost Girls of Sudan in the present – their concerns, experiences, hopes, fears, loves, frustrations, celebrations and remembrances. The emotional experiences that comprise their ordinary lives reveal both the multiple and enduring ways in which they have been victimized and the multiple and enduring ways they demonstrate daily agency through violence that continues in their lives. Documentation of their experiences, particularly women targeted by gender-based violence, is needed to understand they are neither complete victims nor total agents of change. These lives deserve much more than a footnote in history.
‘Refugee’ Terminology

This is not a refugee story. The term ‘refugee’ is a politically and legally laden term that emphasizes specific moments of extraordinary past violence in a person’s life that may allow (or deny) their eligibility for becoming a recognized refugee under accepted international standards (UNHCR 1951). As stated previously, this is a story about Sudanese women’s contemporary daily lives that touches upon past events in order to contextualize how they impact their present day feelings and actions.

In contemporary media usage, a refugee is typically any person who has fled their home from political, environmental, or economic disasters. Persons who flee their homes, but do not cross a border are internally displaced persons (IDPs). Politically speaking, persons fleeing disasters must cross a border into another country in order to be considered a refugee. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the only international agency mandated to protect refugee rights worldwide, defines a refugee¹ as any person who:

…owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR 1951:14).

¹ According to the 1951 Refugee Convention (as broadened by the 1967 Refugee Protocol) that UNHCR abides by.
The Sudanese women who comprise this research have all crossed an appropriate political border to reside outside their country of origin, and they have all been, past or present, recognized refugees of UNHCR. Over the course of my fieldwork with these women, as our relationship strengthened, I learned that several had closed files or suspected that their files were soon to be closed. A closed UNHCR file, for a formerly recognized refugee, is the demarcation between legal resident and illegal alien. Because I do not want to use potentially dangerous and divisive legal language as ‘official refugee’ and ‘former refugee’, I use refugee throughout this dissertation except where otherwise needed for clarification. My usage of the term, particularly as it applies to women with closed files, is in contention with the legal language of UNHCR.

When I say this is not a refugee story, I am specifically referring to my ethnography of women’s past and present lives that extends beyond the confining boundaries of official acknowledgement as to what constitutes, or not, an acceptable refugee narrative. Critically analyzing important information regarding women’s lives – a population of women I argue are both historically and presently hidden – is where I locate the uniqueness of my theoretical and methodological approach and the importance of my discipline in shaping the research design.

**Anthropology, Extraordinary Violence and the Role of the Visual**

As an anthropologist, I am not under the same restricting definition of refugee as that of UNHCR. Hayden contends that “it has remained impossible to define refugee in such a way that legal, ethical and social scientific meanings of the term could align” (Hayden 2006:472). While I understand her point, particularly in trying to interrogate problems revolving around UNHCR’s legal usage of the term, I nonetheless favor an anthropological definition of refugees as persons
who have undergone a violent separation from their State with legal, psychological, social and economic ramifications (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992).

With this definition, one of the most fundamental contributions anthropologists can (and have) made towards refugee research is problematization of employing a strict legal definition of refugee. For example, anthropologists documenting the similarity of experiences of internally displaced persons and those who cross political borders, have criticized justifying assistance for only those who were able to cross a border. Anthropological research in this area has increased attention to the situation of IDPs and pressured organizations such as UNHCR into incorporating these persons under their mandate (Chimni 2009; Nadig 2003; Turton 2003). You will see this anthropological concern reflected in my consideration of the totality of women’s experiences from the moment of their forced displacement, not just after they crossed a border from Sudan into Egypt.

By paying careful attention to how violence “descends into the ordinary” (Das 2003:301; Das 2007a) of women’s daily lives (i.e., those activities that may fall outside the purview of extraordinary violent refugee narratives), I analyze the gendered way in which ‘extraordinary’ versus ‘ordinary’ violence is privileged among international refugee organizations such as UNHCR. In taking this position, I link the differences in coverage of the extraordinary violent experiences of young Sudanese men and boys to the gross underreporting of the lives of young Sudanese women and girls experiencing systematic, structural, ‘ordinary’ violence during the Sudanese Civil War. Structuring my argument around juxtaposition of gendered dichotomies such as extraordinary/ordinary, male/female and collective/individual aids in interrogating assumptions often made regarding Sudanese women’s lives. These suppositions may hide or delegitimize women’s collective experiences of violence and suffering.
This theoretical approach guides the visual methodology that was used for this research. Visual methods provide a more accessible way of describing the everyday scenes of activity women may have difficulty describing due to the systematic delegitimization of their voices (both during the war and through the legalized process of becoming a refugee). Details of their lives, when provided, have tended to only receive attention when classified as extraordinary violence. Stated differently, Sudanese women’s daily lives have rarely been an object of concern, particularly in the years after violent conflict. During the war, they were most often referenced in connection to violent public rape(s). Contemporary legal questions surrounding their applications for refugee status reflect such past moments of extraordinary violence.

Anthropologist Veena Das has focused on women’s experiences with daily, ordinary violence through theoretically dense language focused on describing performative scenes of daily life (Das 2003; Das 2007a). Building on her work, I choose to focus on ordinary violence encountered by Sudanese women in Cairo through visual storytelling – by the research participants themselves. Using visual anthropological theory and methods in this manner moves beyond the formulaic way in which the Lost Girls and “refugee” women’s lives have been represented in order to access ethnographic particularities that illustrate the collective nature of their experiences with violence and the individual mitigation strategies they employ to heal from its effects. Readers will see each of these themes reflected throughout the following chapters of this dissertation.

Overview of Chapters

In order to contextualize the lives of the Sudanese women with whom I worked, Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of a contemporary history of Sudanese Civil Wars (largely a post-
colonial history), the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which officially split Sudan into two autonomous nations (Sudan and South Sudan), and how the genocide in Darfur was sidelined as a result of ‘peace.’ The situation in Darfur also has important implications for grievances Sudanese refugees in Cairo have expressed through protests outside UNHCR offices. These protests, specifically one deadly incident in 2005, are also discussed in this chapter within the larger context of urban Sudanese refugees, the Egyptian State, and the role of UNHCR. Finally, I outline why I chose to focus my research specifically on Sudanese refugee women in Cairo and the current violence they are subjected to as refugees and as women in Egypt. Though not a comprehensive retelling of Sudanese history (such is beyond the scope of this dissertation), the concise description of Sudan’s contemporary history of war and Sudanese/Egyptian/UNHCR relations in Cairo contained within this chapter does provide important details regarding women’s lives necessary for contextualizing my data. These are the details that have led to women’s forced displacement and those that currently impact their lives in Cairo.

The overarching critical medical anthropological gaze I employ in Chapter 3 is based on the ‘mindful body’ concept established by medical anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). I engage anthropological literature on the body in order to heed the call of former President of the Society for Medical Anthropology, Marcia Inhorn, to not turn away “from the brutal realities, the embodied suffering, the psychological devastation, the sexual violence, and the refugee aftermath of war” (Inhorn 2008:421).

Methodology for this research is described in Chapter 4, including my research strategy, questions, design and data analysis. In this chapter, I introduce St. Andrew’s Refugee Services (StARS), a refugee school located in downtown Cairo, as my primary research site as well as the
secondary sites where I conducted interviews and observations. The secondary locations were Refuge Egypt (providing refugees access to medical care), Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (providing refugees pro bono legal aid and psychosocial services), the African Hope Learning Center (providing refugee children educational programming) and Caritas (providing refugees housing and micro-financing assistance).

My research strategy consisted of both open-ended and semi-structured interviews, participant and direct systematic observation of behavior, content analysis of relevant media discussing Sudanese displacement, and finally, photovoice. Photovoice provides research participants with a camera to document their own lives. As a research method, photovoice has largely been developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris by combining Paulo Freire’s notion of “critical consciousness” (Freire 1973), feminist theory and documentary photography (Wang and Burris 1994; Wang and Burris 1997), though its creation has its roots within visual anthropology (Collier 1967; Pink 2001).

I envision each of these methods and theories as contributors to an overarching multi-layered visual qualitative approach to understanding the female Sudanese refugee experience. In keeping with this goal, the following research questions were addressed:

**Question 1:** How did the gendered war and migration experiences of Sudanese women and girls effectively hide their suffering?

**Question 2:** How do Sudanese women communicate their embodied experiences of war and its refugee aftermath?

In answering these questions, I engaged in an (overlapping) three-phase research design: Exploratory Phase I (August-October 2011), Exploratory Phase II (November 2011-February 2012) and Explanatory Phase (October 2011-March 2012). Exploratory research allowed me to
introduce myself into the daily rhythm of StARS, and recruit research participants by engaging in all four components of their refugee programming: adult education, children’s education, psychosocial and legal aid services. The explanatory phase allowed me to utilize these contacts for in-depth interviews and photovoice projects.

Chapter 5 presents the historical narrative of Walad (a transliterated Arabic word for boy), a Lost Boy and a composite character created through media content analysis. The Lost Boys of Sudan were a cohesive group of thousands of young men and boys displaced by the civil war who were seen walking thousands of miles across southern Sudan to reach refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya over a period of several years. The Lost Boys continue to receive widespread media attention and political assistance due to the highly visible suffering they experienced during the war. I use Walad’s well-known story to contrast with the largely unknown, unreported and un politicized displacement narrative of the Lost Girls of Sudan. The composite character of Imraa (a transliterated Arabic word for woman), created through personal interviews with Sudanese refugee women in Cairo between the approximate ages of thirty-one and forty-seven years old (i.e., children during the Second Sudanese Civil War), is one of those Lost Girls. In analyzing the distinctly gendered themes within the displacement experiences of Walad and Imraa, I seek to answer my first research question regarding why the lives of these girls and the suffering they experienced remained restricted from view during the war.

Chapter 6 provides a summarization of women’s displacement experiences out of Sudan and their contemporary living situations in Egypt. This chapter provides a succinct picture of women’s lives inclusive of both data of interest to their UNHCR interviewers, and those events of daily life women may not have communicated during their refugee status proceedings. This
chapter also foreshadows the dominant themes present within photographic data to be presented in subsequent chapters.

In *Chapter 7*, Imraa is a refugee women currently living in Cairo. Her photography in this chapter is presented as that of a typical day in her life, from her morning walk to her daughter or sibling’s school, to her return to her apartment at night after work. This day depicts her public experiences as a refugee woman navigating the streets of Cairo and is paired with her narration of key social details that often structure her day – harassing taunts by men, avoidance of crowded and potentially dangerous locations in the city, sympathy for women and children begging on the streets, and fear of attack at night. These habitual events detail the precarity of her life in Cairo as a refugee and as a woman.

The multiple photos presented in this chapter are difficult to view, not only in the subject matter depicted, but also in the composition of these images. Imraa’s fear of public spaces translated into a fear of her camera being seen in public spaces. As a result of concealing her camera while photographing her day (e.g., images taken from a camera quickly pulled out of a purse or images captured at hip level to hide the camera), these images are often blurry and skewed in angle. I term this ‘snapshot’ photography and consider these images an apt metaphor for Imraa’s public body in that she often attempted to hide her camera in a similar manner to how she attempted to hide her body on the streets of Cairo. In Chapter 7, I also briefly present the transcript of a video interview Imraa conducted with a friend who had recently been attacked by a Sudanese gang in Cairo who call themselves ‘The Lost Boys.’ I do this not only to highlight the dangers women face (from both Egyptians and Sudanese) in Cairo, but also to contrast her social experiences with those of men who use social cohesion as a method for targeting and attacking isolated women – and the media attention they gain by doing so.
A series of ten photo vignettes are presented in Chapter 8 closely corresponding with the displacement experience themes identified within the historical narrative of Imraa discussed in Chapter 5. The everyday, ordinary healing events depicted in this chapter are influenced both by Imraa’s past (as demonstrated by the captions about past experiences that are paired with each image set) and the present (as demonstrated by the contemporary nature of the photos themselves). This combination reveals, from a distinctly female perspective, how violence enacted against an individual body is carried forward into the everyday social experiences of women.

Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes each of the proceeding chapters and their individual contributions to the collection, analysis, and discussion of data presented. I reflect upon the particular importance of photovoice and my training as both a photojournalist and anthropologist in conducting this research. In my conclusions, I address four different audiences for this dissertation, specifically: (1) anthropologists engaged in refugee studies, (2) a generally interested audience of those who work with refugee populations (humanitarian aid workers, legal aid professionals, etc.), (3) international relations experts/political theorists, and (4) refugee policy makers such as UNHCR. Within my discussion of each of these four audiences, I relate how my findings contribute to critical medical anthropology literature on refugees as well as anthropology as a whole. For a UNHCR audience in particular, I outline twelve areas within their current policies towards refugees and women that, if addressed, could lead to more-well rounded care for suffering women and align with the agency’s stated mission for finding long-term solutions. Finally, I discuss the areas in which my research has already been disseminated and those I plan to seek out in the near future.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

Figure 2: Girl in the blue bra. Photo by G.A. Johnson.
The sign held by a protester in the foreground shows a censored news photograph of ‘the girl in the blue bra’ with text denouncing the dishonorable treatment of Egyptian women by police acting with force under the orders of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forced (SCAF). The now famous image was taken of a female protestor on December 17th in Tahrir Square after her abaya (a black robe-like dress covering women head to foot) had been ripped off by police forces revealing a blue bra beneath her covering. The image shows one police officer delivering a kick to the woman’s stomach as two other officers dragged her away from the square. In using the image of her body being dragged through Tahrir Square, protestors censored her uncovered chest in order to – as one woman stated – give her back modesty police took by force.
Contemporary History of Violence in Sudan

In the globalized world, where distinctions between displaced person and refugee is a political construct based on border crossings across frequently changing maps, a broad conflict perspective of Africa is essential. Given the persistent and consistently occurring conflicts plaguing contemporary North and East Africa where refugee movement between countries is common practice, it may even be imperative. In East Africa alone, millions of refugees are mobile across nation-state borders. In 2008, for example, 551,817 Somalia refugees left their country, the majority residing in Kenya; 8,220 Kenyans fled to Uganda; 57,954 Ethiopians left their country and 83,201 new refugee arrivals were admitted; 410,113 Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees fled primarily to Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt and Kenya with 181,156 arriving from Kenya, Central African Republic and Chad (UNHCR 2008). This rapidly changing movement of peoples within East Africa means that we must situate local conflicts within the whole of the region in a manner described by Mamdani as a ‘horizon’ perspective of global powers at work in local ‘patches’ of East Africa (Mamdani 2009). However, anthropologists have traditionally neglected grand theories of conflict in favor of locally organized ethnographic research.

Ethnographies of the particular, as they are referred to by Lila Abu-Lughod, have been the goal of anthropologists in studying the “effects of extra-local and long term processes [that] are only manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives” (Abu-Lughod 1991:160). From Malinowski´s celebrated Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Malinowski 1922) to Evans-Pritchard’s Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), ethnographies of the particular are a long-standing tradition in anthropology. Yet, the particularized knowledge of specific place, people and time that anthropologists excel at
describing in their ethnographies has undergone a contemporary push toward macro transnational processes and global flows. For example, where complex disasters affect several nations simultaneously. The diversity of populations facing complex emergencies similar to those in Sudan may make irrelevant the work of some anthropologists researching the particular without paying attention to the horizon. But who better to make the connection between geopolitical forces to specific populations than those anthropologists who have intimate knowledge of local practices in diverse communities?

The information presented in this chapter from Sudanese scholars of the late 19th century to the Africanist anthropologists working with Sudanese populations today, reflects the changes our discipline has undergone in one plagued-by-conflict region of Africa. Anthropologists of Sudan have carved out names for themselves in our discipline by becoming experts on a specific group of people, whether it be Nuer, Dinka, Kababish or Anuak. More recently, the research agenda they have taken on is not an ethnography of a people, but of events. Events such as political violence, poverty, hunger, and disease have dominated the descriptions of recent work by anthropologists focused on Sudan. The world as witness to some of the most brutal conflicts committed on Sudanese soil explains preoccupation with the brutal events of war, but this often renders the most marginalized populations invisible. This dissertation is an attempt to focus upon the situation of women leading their particular lives, while also paying attention to the successive waves of conflict that have influenced the trajectory of those lives.

Information presented here on Sudan also speaks to many, if not all, of the broader issues faced by other East African countries recently experiencing conflict: the continuing impacts of colonialism, political leaders who politicize ethnicity, demarcation between ‘natives’ and ‘settlers’, polarization of religious motivations (Lombard 2009; Mamdani 2009), and frequent,
brutal and widespread gender-based violence. Given the importance of the latter point as a destructive force in the lives of the women with whom I worked, it is important to reflect on how targeting women during war is contemporarily referenced in the literature as the use of ‘rape as a weapon of war.’

Women and War

The documentation of at least 40,000 cases in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993 has the dubious honor of being the first systematic effort to record war-related systematic rape (Hynes and Lopes-Cardozo 2000). Since this conscious-raising targeting of women’s bodies in the former Yugoslavia, citing statistics of civilian women who have been the targets of civil war is a common occurrence in conflict literature. During a single wave of violence by a rebel offensive in the Republic of Congo in 1998 on the capital city of Brazzaville, approximately 5,000 women were raped (Ward and Marsh 2006). A survey conducted with Rwandan women in 1999 found that 39 percent reported being raped during the 1994 genocide. Seventy-two percent of women also reported knowing someone who had been raped (Ward 2002). Similarly, at the height of the Kosovo War between August 1998 and 1999, approximately 23,000 to 45,000 Kosovar Albanian women are believed to have been raped (Hynes and Lopes-Cardozo 2000). Data collected in 2000 from Sierra Leon concludes that anywhere from 50,000 to 64,000 internally displaced women had been sexually victimized (PHR 2002). Nineteen percent of 1,575 Burundian women interviewed in 2004 by the United Nations Population Fund reported being raped; 40 percent had heard about or witnessed the rape of a minor (UNFPA 2005). During a five-month span between 2004-2005, Medicines Sans Frontieres (MSF) treated almost 500 rape victims in Darfur, Sudan. Their medical efforts in the region are ongoing at the time of this writing, with most MSF
doctors reporting that the number of women who have been raped is exponentially higher than those who have been treated (MSF 2005). An estimated 2 million women have been raped since the modern struggle for power between North and South Sudan (Women for Women 2010).

As a result of these overwhelming statistics, the term ‘rape as a weapon of war’ has emerged in literature of the last few decades as an effort to move away from a myopic view of the use of women’s bodies during war\(^2\) (ICTY 2008; ICTY 2013; Security Council 2008). This term rightly indexes the long-term devastation that sexual violence has for families and communities and is often a deciding factor in the forced migration of women who have lost a husband or face the shame of being labeled a rape victim in their community. Such is the power of this label that UN Special Rapporteur Radhika Coomaraswamy noted in a 1994 statement on violence against women that “such rape is the symbolic rape of the community, the destruction of the fundamental elements of a society and culture – the ultimate humiliation of the male enemy” (Mishra 2000).

That statistics and UN recognition of the political uses of women’s bodies during war, such as those cited above, only began to be discussed within the last 20 years is telling of how female experiences have been neglected historically. For sure, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not the first mass assault on women’s bodies. And though case studies on the appropriation of women’s bodies during war now dominates the literature discussing gender-based violence, they do little to add to theoretical understandings of why women, in particular, are frequently

\(^2\) Rape as a weapon of war was first recognized as a prosecutable crime against humanity when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia issued arrest warrants for soldiers in 1998 (ICTY 1998). The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1820 ten years after issuance of ICTY arrest warrants, recognizing the use of sexual violence as a systematic weapon of war (Security Council 2008). A 1907 Hague Convention was the first recorded international treaty outlawing sexual violence (sexual crimes were not prosecuted during the Nuremberg trials of World War II). Nor did the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, convened in 1946, recognize the use of ‘comfort women’ for Japanese soldiers (ICTY 2013).
stripped of legal protection during political violence. These studies also fail to highlight the
dynamic role of women during and after war and the political realities they face post-conflict. In
addition to rape as a weapon of war, several other terms frequently employed in the conflict
literature on Sudan deserve brief clarification.

**War Terminology**

The immediate post-colonial period in Sudan from the late 1950s to the 70s introduced
the common term ‘civil war’ to reference fighting between Northerners and Southerners – a
divisive strategy initially set in motion by British colonizers. Post-Bosnia and post-Rwanda, it
was more common to see conflict in Darfur (renewed usage of the term ‘Darfur’ rather than
Western Sudan itself telling of linguistic division of the country) referenced as ‘genocide’ or
‘ethnic cleansing’ or alternatively to see descriptions of southern ‘rebels’ fighting against
Northern invaders. Contemporarily, the use of ‘globalization’ is often paired with descriptions of
Sudan as an inclusive stand-in term for all things precipitating current and past violence in the
region, most especially as it concerns the distribution of oil reserves in the South and the
supposed stark religious divide between both hemispheres.

**Ancient Origins and Anthropological Inquiries**

Much of what is currently known as Sudan (the northern region above the newly
established nation of ‘South Sudan’) was part of the Kingdom of Nubia in the pre-colonial era.
The Nubian people who inhabited this area, as recovered from the archaeological record, were
participants in the Neolithic Revolution (Keita 1990). Both battle and trade were common
between the peoples of Upper Egypt and Nubia until Nubians came firmly under Egyptian rule
after 2000 B.C. (Shinnie 1996). The Egyptian/Nubian civilization of Kush prevailed in northern Sudan until war with the Roman empire in the 1st and 2nd century A.D. weakened the region (Török 1997). Christianity had replaced the old phaoronic religion by the mid 6th century throughout North and South Sudan (Welsby 1998), followed soon after by Islamization (of the North) after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century (Smith 1988). During the early 16th century through early 19th century, the Funj Sultanate of Sennar dominated most of Sudan. The Fur Sultanate to the west also rose to power during this period (Ryle, et al. 2011). The Funj people were previously practitioners of animism and Christianity; however, the Sennar monarchy officially converted to Islam in 1523. In 1896, the Egyptian re-conquest of Sudan began, with the assistance of Britain, under General Horatio Kitchener, Sirdar of the Egyptian Army (Ryle, et al. 2011). Anglo-Egyptian domination of Sudan was complete by 1899.

Though dozens of archaeological sites from the Kush Kingdom have been recovered from across the Sahara to Egypt, eastward to the highlands of Ethiopia and southward up the Nile (Edwards 2004), and forensic anthropologists have analyzed Nubian skeletons dating as far back as the 6th century, the first cultural anthropological forays into the Sudan (as it was frequently refereed to during the early 20th century as a reflection of its territory status) began with the work of ethnographer Charles Gabriel Seligman and his wife Brenda Z. Salaman (Herskovits 1941). From 1899-1956, Sudan was under the joint sovereignty of Britain and Egypt (itself under British colonization) in a rare international legal convention known as a condominium (Spalding and Beswick 2000). In a practice known as military slavery, Sudanese soldiers fought in battalions under English officers decades before the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, playing a significant role in Britain’s conquest of Egypt and Sudan (Spalding and Beswick 2000). Seligman began his fieldwork in southern Sudan in 1909 when the territory was
under this joint sovereignty contract between Britain and Egypt. During Sudan’s period as an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, the Sultanate of Darfur (Fur) was also incorporated into the territory after the British invaded the previously independent nation during WWI for fear it would fall under the influence of the Ottoman Empire (Prunier 2005).

Perhaps most famously known as the mentor of Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, Drilberg, Firth, Nadel, and Fortes, Seligman nonetheless is historically important in his own right by shifting the focus of British anthropology from the Pacific to Africa with his detailed accounts of ethnic and religious diversity in the region (Herskovits 1941). Evans-Pritchard has stated that Seligman “laid the foundations of all future studies” with Nilotic peoples (Evans-Pritchard 1940:vii).

If Seligman is known as the founding ethnographer of Sudan, then his student E.E. Evans-Pritchard can certainly be accredited with popularizing its peoples in a series of books that would later have a profound impact on anthropologists across the Atlantic and decades into the future. Evans-Pritchard began his fieldwork in Sudan in 1926 with the Azande resulting in his book *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Evans-Pritchard 1937). Later he would spent the bulk of his time as participant observer of the Nuer people of southern Sudan publishing his celebrated trilogy of work *The Nuer* (1940), *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer* (Evans-Pritchard 1951) and *Nuer Religion* (Evans-Pritchard 1956). British motivations in Sudan during most of Evans-Pritchard’s career operated under the belief that colonization brought a certain ‘moral improvement’ to the Sudanese character and peace between warring tribes. Sudanese scholar Talal Asad, a student of Evans-Pritchard at Oxford University, reflects:

*The historical process of constructing a humane secular society, it is said, has aimed at eliminating cruelties. Thus it has often been claimed that European rule in colonial
countries, although not itself democratic, brought about moral improvements in behavior— that is, the abandonment of practices that offend against the human. I want to propose, however, that in their attempt to outlaw customs the European rulers considered cruel it was not the concern with indigenous suffering that dominated their thinking, but the desire to impose what they considered civilized standards of justice and humanity on a subject population— that is, the desire to create new human subjects (Asad 2003:109-110).

Asad’s comments come not only post-Evans-Pritchard but also post-colonialism in Sudan. Diptee and Klein have made similar arguments to Asad, though specifically upon the use of childhood:

The colonial project brought a racialized dimension to childhood, and it was understood that at the very heart of the ‘civilizing mission’ there was a battle over African children. […] Colonialists understood that the future of Europe in Africa meant finding ways to control the next generation of Africans (Diptee and Klein 2010:4).

In actuality, British intervention in Sudan served to accomplish exactly the opposite of peaceful relations between tribes. Instruments of military power and victims of both British and Egyptian slavery, Sudan’s people were further subjected to divisive political policies under the condominium. Sudan’s political history under British and Egyptian rule is intimately tied to the enslavement of its peoples. It has been said that, “slavery in the Sudan and its trade is as old as time itself” (Collins 1999). The independence of Sudan in 1956 from British-Egyptian rule brought new inquiry into the question of slavery as a conflict between the North and South producing a (seemingly) reinvigoration of the slave trade (Hargey 1998). McLoughlin estimates that 200,000 enslaved persons still existed in Sudan by mid-20th century (McLoughlin 1962).
Though the Anglo-Egyptian condominium did bring about a certain measure of so-called ‘peace’ to Sudan, it also served to intensify tension between the North and South by facilitating greater control of Khartoum (the seat of Sudan’s power) over the southern hemisphere. British colonizers created this southern polity by administratively separating the two regions and restricting the movement of its peoples. At the end of British rule in Sudan in 1956, independence (largely under northern terms) was granted to the whole of Sudan (Spalding and Beswick 2000).

A near continuous thread of political violence running throughout Sudan’s contemporary history has made it nearly impossible for historians to agree on a definitive conflict timeline; however, the most frequently grouped together years – 1956-1972, 1972-1983 and 1983-2005 – represent the First Sudanese Civil War, the lead-up period to the second civil war, and the Second Sudanese Civil War (See Table 1 for a timeline of key events). The popularity of Evans-Pritchard’s work, both inside and outside academia, prior to Sudanese independence has played a role in international fascination with the peoples of Sudan during intense periods of fighting in the latter part of the twentieth century through the present.

Southern Sudanese rebelled in 1955 against a Khartoum-centric government by demanding greater representation and regional autonomy. This began a seventeen-year civil war that did not end until a peace agreement was signed in Addis Ababa granting southern Sudan partial self-governance (Spalding and Beswick 2000). President Nimeiri, who came to power in 1969 before the first civil war ended, was removed from power in a military coup in 1985. This was a period of intense peace negotiations in Sudan with several international governing agencies pushing their agenda on the civilian government formed after Nimeiri was ousted.
Table 1: Brief chronology of Sudanese conflict history. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899-1955</td>
<td>Sudan is under the joint rule of Britain and Egypt (condominium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Sudan officially gains independence from Britain and Egypt; Southerners have been rebelling against Khartoum since 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Civil war intensifies in the South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Jaafar Nimeiri leads the ‘May Revolution’ military coup and takes over the presidency of Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>The South becomes a self-governing region under the Addis Ababa peace agreement; first Sudanese Civil War ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>President Nimeiri declares Sharia Islamic Law (‘September Laws’) throughout all of Sudan; the South is divided into 3 separate regions; disputes continue over oil fields in the South; the 105th battalion, composed of southerners, mutinies at Bor beginning the Second Sudanese Civil War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-5</td>
<td>Devastating drought hits Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Nimeiri is deposed in a military coup and a transitional military council is established in Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Omar al-Bashir, a brigadier in the Sudanese Army, leads a successful military coup establishing himself as Chief of State, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), Prime Minister and Minister of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Omar al-Bashir appointed President of Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>al-Bashir re-elected President of Sudan in non-party elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>President al-Bashir re-elected. All other political parties boycott the elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-4</td>
<td>Reports of crimes against humanity and genocide in Western Sudan (Darfur) circulate in the international media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Second Sudanese Civil War officially declared over with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the primary concession from the North in the agreement is that the South will be allowed to hold an independence referendum in 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>President al-Bashir indicted by International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity in Darfur (arrest warrant is not executed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>President al-Bashir indicted by International Criminal Court for genocide in Darfur (arrest warrant is not executed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>South Sudan holds independence referendum with an overwhelming 98% of southerners voting to secede from the government of al-Bashir; ‘South Sudan’ official independence day is July 9th, 2011; Salva Kiir Mayardit, member of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement, declared president of South Sudan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political instability after Nimeiri was ousted eventually brought about the presidency of Omar al-Bashir, a brigadier in the Sudanese Army, through a coup executed in 1989 (Spalding and Beswick 2000). Today, Bashir continues to run the northern government of Sudan. He is the only sitting head of state ever indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity (indicted March 2009) and genocide in Darfur (indicted July 2010) (Gosnell 2008). His arrest warrants have yet to be executed despite the fact that he visited Kenya, an ICC signatory, in 2010 to attend a political party along with other East African dignitaries for the signing of Kenya’s new constitution. Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetangula, speaking of al-Bashir’s visit, stated “He is a head of state of a friendly neighbor state” (Maliti 2010).

Inspired by Evans-Pritchard’s ethnographies of the Nuer in the 1930, American anthropologist Sharon Hutchinson also conducted research in Sudan beginning in 1980 (just before the second civil war began). She has described interviews with Nuer men and women – a Sudanese indigenous group made popular in the writings of British anthropologist Evans-Pritchard – who felt a profound sense of ethnic pride in the fact that it was they who intensified conflict with the north in 1983. “This war really began,” they argue, “in our territories!” “It was we, Nuer, who first took up arms against the government” (Hutchinson 1996:4). Hutchinson’s Nuer Dilemmas is the result of several subsequent trips back to Sudan; however, soon after arriving home from her first round of fieldwork she discovered her principal field sites in Nuerland (Eastern Jikany Nuer and Western Leek Nuer) had been destroyed due to the war (Hutchinson 1996).

The lead up to this destruction during Hutchinson’s fieldwork can be traced back to four sentinel events in Sudan’s conflict history which occurred in the early 1980s: (1) the northern
government based in Khartoum attempted (unsuccessfully) to redraw political boundaries between the North and South to extend their power over oil resources, (2) Khartoum arrested and/or evicted many southerners from the capitol citing lack of work permits, (3) President Nimeiri switched the site of a proposed Chevron oil refinery from the South to the North, and (4) the government proposed to re-divide the South into three semi-autonomous regions – after southerners had fought a seventeen-year civil war to achieve autonomy for a ‘unified south’ (Hutchinson 1996:3-4).

**Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Darfur**

Jok Madut Jok, a well-known figure in American anthropology, was born and raised in southern Sudan, eventually moving to the United States to receive his PhD in anthropology from UCLA in 1996. A high school student in Sudan when the Second Civil War began, Jok’s professional career has been dedicated to ending violence in his homeland. According to the SSRC “as a black southerner and a member of the Dinka, a group targeted by Arab slave traders, Jok brings an insider’s perspective” to the subject of war in Sudan (SSRC 2010). Jok’s history of research has not been focused specifically on the Dinka but upon the topic of political violence in Sudan as a whole (Jok 1996; Jok 1998; Jok 1999; Jok 2001). He has acted as an advocate for peace in Sudan via independence from international powers in a manner similar to de Waal by speaking out against the unintended consequences of humanitarian aid. In a similar vein, he has also proposed that the methods by which ‘high level’ peace deals in developing countries are brokered by developed nations “has very little relevance to those who actually live in war” (Jok 2004). The high-level peace deal Jok was referring to is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
In 2005, the political parties of both the North and South finally agreed upon a long awaited and ambitious plan for peace. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) negotiated a cease fire, provided greater legitimacy to the southern government through increasing their share of oil wealth and established a deadline of 2011 for southerners to vote on a referendum for self-determination (Thomas 2009). That referendum was held on January 9, 2011 with 98% of southerners voting for secession. The official split between North and South happened six months later on July 9, 2011 – without agreement on an official border, debt responsibility, citizenship rights for northerners living in the South or southerners living in the North, or each nations respective oil rights (Assal 2011).

Yet, when South Sudan became a newly independent nation on July 9th, 2011 it was a day of celebration both in South Sudan and throughout its diaspora. In the weeks leading up to the historic vote for independence, journalists based in Juba quoted the often cited statistic of “2,000 displaced and refugee Sudanese arrivals” streaming into the capital to participate in the vote (Fick 2011). Many of those who returned to vote, left again shortly after celebrating their victory in winning independence from the North. UNHCR estimated South Sudan’s registered refugee population at 95,976 on April 8th, 2012, 159,881 on June 8th, 2012 and 216,481 by July 6th, 2012 – three days away from South Sudan’s celebration of its one-year independence anniversary (UNHCR 2012a).

Conspicuously absent for the peace negotiations was any mention of the genocide in Western Sudan (Darfur) happening concurrently with CPA negotiations. In order to provide a broad sense of how peace negotiations between the North and South of Sudan suppressed the situation in the West of the country (contributing to Sudanese refugee resentment in Egypt), I present a selection of headlining news stories in chronological order beginning in December
2003 from the Sudan Tribune to illustrate how international pressure for peace in Sudan further divided the county into North, South and West (Table 2). As Alex de Waal states, “fearing the north-south peace would be held hostage to an intractable conflict in Darfur, the international community made the talks between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) the priority” (de Waal 2006).

Table 2: Darfur separation from North-South peace negotiations in Sudan. The following selection of news segments – with headlines from the Sudan Tribune – were selected to provide a concise overview of how continuation of war in Darfur (Western Sudan) overlapped with the ‘peace’ process in Sudan.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress at Sudanese peace talks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese peace talks on Monday moved closer to an agreement to end the country's 20-year civil war, although doubts remained over its viability because of ongoing fighting in the west of the country… (December 15th, 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peace in the South is the cause of the war in the West</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just as the world began to breathe a sigh of relief that almost half a century of war between the north and south of Sudan seemed to be coming to an end a new and horrible war appears to have begun in the west. Peace is partly the cause… (June 8th, 2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Darfur overshadows the peace process in South Sudan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The crisis in the Sudan's western region of Darfur has overshadowed the peace process in the south of the country… (September 2nd, 2004)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sudan says Darfur rebels planning attacks</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sudanese government on Thursday accused rebels in the western Darfur region of planning an offensive to coincide with a peace deal that will end more than two decades of civil war in the country's south… (October 14th, 2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The fate of humanitarian assistance in Darfur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News obsession with the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami, and the easy headlining of an impending peace-signing ceremony in Nairobi between Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), have led to significantly diminished attention to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur… (January 4th, 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sudan’s VP and rebel leader sign comprehensive peace agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudan's vice president and the country's main rebel leader signed a comprehensive peace agreement to end Africa's longest-running conflict Sunday, concluding an eight-year process to stop a civil war in the south that has cost more than 2 million lives since 1983… (January 9th, 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Data presented here extracted from TABARI. See description of this data analysis process in Chapter 4.
We can see from the progression of news discussing Darfur in relation to the North-South peace agreement a subtle linguistic distance employed in naming the zone of conflict. Whereas in 2003, conflict in ‘west of the country’ was listed, names for this region quickly evolved into ‘Sudan’s western region of Darfur’ and finally just ‘Darfur’, as if Western Sudan were a separate autonomous region of Sudan or a different country altogether. Not only does this separation have important implications for neglect of widespread human rights abuses in the West, but also for how Sudanese refugees perceive their treatment in Egypt by UNHCR as unfair depending on how they are geographically categorized. At the time of this writing, Sudanese refugees continue to arrive in Egypt fleeing genocide in the West, a failing peace agreement in the South, and starvation warfare\(^4\) of oil rich areas in the North. An important benefit of content analysis of media from the Sudan Tribune (as presented above in Table 2 and below in Table 3) is a condensed review of Sudanese history allowing quick examination of key events and conflict terminology (e.g., ‘western region’ eventually shifting to ‘Darfur’).

**Sudanese War to Sudanese Refugees in Cairo: Why Egypt?**

Egypt is not the only country to receive Sudanese refugees. In addition to sharing a border with Egypt, the combined countries of Sudan and South Sudan share a political boundary

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\(^4\) Starvation warfare, as it has been employed by the Khartoum government in Sudan, entails blockage of food trucks to restock local markets, low-yielding crops due to farmers inattention in dealing with frequent bombardment by the Sudan Armed forces and expelling of humanitarian aid workers to help alleviate hunger.
with Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Depending on the political situation in each of these countries and their geographic location within Sudan, migrants forced to flee their homes can, and have, chosen each of these countries for refuge. The primary difference between travel to these nations, as opposed to Egypt, is ease of entry. Southern Sudanese in particular, through geographic proximity and long established UNHCR refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, have frequently chosen relocation first to the East or South. The decision to travel north, most likely through politically hostile environments in northern Sudan, in order to reach Egypt, is based on multiple factors. As data presented in later chapters will attest, Egypt is not often a country southerners seek out for immediate refuge, but one they reach after several years of travel (that may take them first to Ethiopia or Kenya) and after obtaining enough money to hire a smuggler to take them by land or down the Nile and across the Egyptian border.

By focusing solely on Sudanese refugees in Egypt – and by connection the historical context of forced migrants between the two countries – I am not attempting to provide a complete history on Sudanese refugees in general, or imply that Cairo, Egypt is their primary relocation point. That endeavor would be beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, by focusing on the daily life of Sudanese refugee women in Egypt, I am able to address how the displacement experiences of women in particular have been historically hidden, and (if given attention) what their embodied experiences of war and its refugee aftermath may reveal of the suffering and healing of ordinary life.

Because Egypt is, first, more difficult for southern women to enter due to geographic separation (over 2,000 miles separate the South Sudan border and Cairo) and increased travel/smuggling costs, and second, a more developed nation than its southern neighbors, it is
often viewed as a gateway country to the highly desirable developed nations of Europe, North America or Australia. This belief not only feeds false refugee expectations for resettlement out of Egypt, but also has strong implications for the type of person who attempts this journey. Women who make this journey are willing to take the time and financial commitment required for travel to Cairo because of a personal belief that they can achieve a stable and more peaceful future for themselves and their children. The aim of trying to gain a better understanding of women’s motivating factors for migration North shaped my research questions and is the primary reason why I choose to focus research upon Sudanese refugees in Egypt.

**Urban Sudanese Refugees and the Egyptian State**

As of 2009, UNHCR estimates there are 42 million refugees and displaced persons in the world today (UNHCR 2009). Sudan accounted for almost half a million of those refugees and over 7 million of its displaced persons (Rosenberg 2008; UNHCR 2009). Continued violence against women within Sudan (both structural and that which is directly tied to acts of war), paired with skepticism that the CPA and the independence elections to follow would prevent future wars, meant many women who ended up in Egypt after Sudanese Civil Wars I and II, remained there post-referendum. Despite the 2005 negotiated CPA, refugees have continued to apply for asylum with UNHCR in Egypt from 2006-2010 with relatively the same frequency as those recorded prior to 2005 (UNHCR 2003b; UNHCR 2006; UNHCR 2010). One female participant of this research who arrived in Cairo in 2007 stated that the CPA did not stop war, “it just made it more difficult for us to be recognized as refugees from a country considered internationally to be at peace.”
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR plays an important role in the lives of the refugee women with whom I worked. For this reason, agency policies, procedures and refugee programs play a large role in this dissertation. UNHCR is a United Nations agency established on December 14, 1950 in reaction to Europeans displaced by World War II. It was given a three-year mandate to assist refugees of the war and then, disband. By 1956 another human emergency situation arose from Soviet reaction to the Hungarian Revolution and, as indicated by UNHCR’s website, “any expectation [they] would become unnecessary has never resurfaced” (UNHCR 2013a). As drafted by the 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter 1951 Convention) and revised by the 1967 Protocol, the agency’s mission to protect refugees is based on principles of “non-discrimination, non-penalization, and non-refoulement” to be applied without discrimination to race, gender, religion or country of origin (UNHCR 1951:3).

Due to the humanitarian model UNHCR follows that often provides refugees their own space (e.g., camps), political status (e.g., refugees) and public services (e.g., education, health care, financial assistance), UNHCR has been dubbed a “surrogate state” for refugees (Slaughter and Crisp 2009:8). Wherever you may encounter descriptions of refugee/UNHCR interaction in the pages to follow, this can be conceptually understood as a relationship between citizen and polity. Perhaps this orientation of thinking will enable greater understanding of the difficult procedures asylum-seekers are willing to submit to in order to receive a chance at citizenship (i.e., refugee status) and the anger an disillusionment they express when this conferral does not result in long-term solutions for their suffering.

The relationship between refugees in Egypt and their surrogate State is, however, not an easy one. In the 21st century, UNHCR-Egypt’s caseload has more than doubled as ongoing wars in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East bring new waves of displaced persons to the border (Kagan 2002). Increased numbers of asylum-seekers paired with frequent office closings due to the Egyptian revolution are major contributing factors to UNHCR’s inability to provide refugees’ adequate support, protection from discrimination, and speedy and transparent application processes.
Today, UNHCR states there are 22,840 Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt (UNHCR 2011b). Non-governmental organizations working in the region place the figures much higher at anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 if the definition of ‘refugee’ were to be strictly employed without regard for the political and financial implications of publicizing these high numbers (personal communication, refuge NGO directors and staff). If the number of Sudanese migrants living in Egypt who do not fit the legal definition of refugee is taken into consideration, the figure soars to three million (USCR 2000). The vast majority of Sudanese refugees live in Cairo, the economic hub of the country, the headquarters for UNHCR-Egypt, and the location of refugee-oriented NGOs. Thirty-seven percent of the asylum-seeker and refugee population of concern to UNHCR are women and girls (Freedman and Jamal 2008). Given the total population of Cairo is well-over 10 million (Factbook 2012) this urban setting for refugees makes them both a population easily lost within the local populace and more difficult to distinguish from the urban poor.

The Egyptian government’s treatment of refugees as temporary fixtures within their borders, as the brief history presented below reveals, is reflected in the State’s lack of a national policy concerning refugee affairs. This is illustrated by their reactive, ineffective, fragmented, and often brutal solutions to incidents involving Sudanese nationals residing in the country. Most, if not all, of Egypt’s past and present policies related to refugees are premised on the idea that forced migrants are temporary migrants. That is, they are persons who are expected to soon settle in a more developed country or return to their country of origin. There are no refugee camps with their distinctive white, pitched tents and cook fires ringing Cairo. The Egyptian government has demonstrated repeatedly, most recently with their rejection of international aid to establish more permanent housing solutions for Libyan refugees, they are not a “camp
country” (Ensor 2010). Egyptian citizenship has also never been an option for Sudanese – even for the children born of refugee mothers while living in Egypt. Egyptian nationality is granted on the basis of descent (*jus sanguinis*). Sudanese live ‘integrated’ and largely invisible within the poor Egyptian suburbs of the country’s capital. Their presence in the city, when acknowledged publicly in the media, almost always follows the deaths of protesting Sudanese refugees. Life in Egypt as a Sudanese refugee is tenable at best.

Despite the harsh conditions that govern the lives of Sudanese refugees living in Egypt today, governmental attitudes toward these migrants has not always been so restrictive. Egypt and Turkey were the only non-Western members of the drafting committee of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees (and it associated 1967 Protocol) when legislation was first proposed (UNHCR 1951). Egypt is also a State Party to the Organization of African Unity’s Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. This convention progressively expands the definition of refugee outlined in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. The right to political asylum in Egypt for refugees is granted in article 53 of their Constitution. And though Sudanese have migrated to Egypt for economic opportunities for over a century, their numbers significantly increased after the signing of the Wadi El Nil Treaty of 1976 (see Table 1), granting Sudanese the right to reside in Egypt without a visa, as well as basic rights to education, health services, property ownership, and employment (Grabska 2006; Moulin 2007).

Ratification of the 1951 Convention was, however, not without its difficulty. Egypt placed several reservations on their stated commitment to refugees. These reservations denied refugees equal access to rationing (Article 20), public education (Article 22), public relief (Article 23) labor and social security (Article 24) as Egyptian citizens. When Egypt signed the
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (which lists children’s access to free education as a primary concern), their revocation of Article 22 of the 1951 Convention was called into question. In 1992, Egypt’s Minister of Education issued a decree (i.e., not carrying the force of law) stipulating that Sudanese, Jordanian, and Libyan children have the legal right to access free primary education. This decree was extended to refugee children of other nationalities in 2000.

The status of Sudanese refugee children in Egyptian public schools today is still unclear with many school administrators, both of refugee schools and Egyptian public schools, unaware that children of recognized refugees can access free public education by the State (personal communication with refugee school director, 11/3/2011). Additional Egyptian reservations severely restrict (or deny) non-citizens access to legal employment, free education and healthcare (Kagan 2001). In a 2005 interview, the Head of Egypt’s Department of Refugee Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contextualized the country’s reservations given Egypt’s swelling population and uncertain economic conditions. She further stated in the same interview that “real integration” was not possible for refugees in a “transitory phase” of life (Al-Sharmani 2005).

Despite growing anti-refugee government policies, Sudanese migration to Egypt continued unabated through the Second Sudanese Civil War (Badran 1995; Grabska 2006). Concurrent wars in the Horn of Africa in the 1990s added even greater numbers of African refugees from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan to Egypt’s growing population. As a direct consequence to this influx in the number of Sudanese asylum-seekers, the Egyptian government refused further participation in refugee status determination screenings in 1994 (allowing refugees legal residence) instead delegating this task entirely to UNHCR. Refugee status determination (RSD) in Egypt, as a wholly UNHCR activity, began in March 1994 (Grabska
Shortly after Egypt ceased RSD screening, a failed assassination attempt on then-President Hosni Mubarak (allegedly implicating Sudanese nationals) in June of 1995 provoked Egypt’s revocation of the Wadi El Nil Treaty (Grabska 2005). This eliminated the special protections Sudanese refugees had previously held, now exposing them to the same difficult living conditions refugees of other nationalities experiences due to Egypt’s existing reservations to the 1951 Convention.

Egypt’s solution to perceived refugee problems not only place significant restrictions upon refugees’ social, economic, health and legal security as non-citizens, but also adds a massive burden to UNHCR’s underfunded operations in Cairo. By refusing to screen Sudanese asylum-seekers for official refugee status, the government effectively forced UNHCR into the role of surrogate state as the sole provider of relief, schooling, and other social services (Slaughter and Crisp 2009; Sperl 2001). To contextualize the incredible responsibility facing UNHCR-Egypt offices in the 21st century, they received more individual refugee status determination (RSD) applications in 2001 than all of their agency offices worldwide (Kagan 2002). As Egypt rid itself of any long-term refugee involvement, UNHCR became the dominant “regulatory system” to fill the void, creating a new geography of power extending into the present day (Sassen 1996).

**UNHCR and Refugee Status Determination: Yellow Card, Blue Card, Closed File**

The daily reality of the hundreds of thousands of Sudanese migrants in Egypt in which inadequate access to employment, education, and health is a constant worry, is a situation somewhat improved for the 22,840 Sudanese asylum-seekers and refugees currently recognized by UNHCR. Refugee recognition (potentially) enables Sudanese greater access to free or low-
cost services through UNHCR’s implementing partners. In fact, Sudanese refugees, particularly women and children, have more access to schooling as refugees than they have in most areas of Sudan (Chrostowsky and Long 2013). Greater access to these services explains in part why so many forced migrants apply for refugee status; it does not clarify why so many applications are denied.

In the period from 1997 to 2004, 67,000 Sudanese applied for refugee status with UNHCR offices in Egypt. Of these asylum seekers, only 28,700 were recognized as refugees. Presumably, those 38,300 failed applicants failed to meet established UNHCR refugee criteria. During this same period, 20,000 Sudanese asylum seekers were rejected and 15,000 files were closed (Grabska 2005). In legal terms, a closed asylum-seeker or refugee file is the dangerous demarcation between legal resident and illegal alien. It firmly shuts the door on any possibility of resettlement out of Egypt and renews fear of indefinite imprisonment by Egyptian police or deportation back to Sudan.

Successful Sudanese asylum-seekers are issued a yellow card from UNHCR (Figure 3). If an asylum-seeker applies for refugee status and if they successfully complete the refugee status determination (RSD) process, they exchange their yellow card for a blue card and are free to pursue an application for resettlement out of Egypt\(^5\) (Figure 4). These cards, and the legal protection they provide, (arguably) protect refugees from deportation harassment by the Egyptian police.

\(^5\) This process may be slightly different for Darfurian refugees who can be (depending on the political climate) given *prima facie* refugee status and issued a yellow card with the same power as a blue card (i.e., making them eligible to apply for resettlement with a yellow card). The colored card system is also different for Iraqi refugees further adding to confusing UNHCR refugee policy in Cairo.
Figure 3: Example of ‘yellow’ card issued to recognized Sudanese asylum-seeker.

Figure 4: Example of ‘blue’ card issued to recognized Sudanese refugee.
The power of UNHCR’s regulatory system in addressing refugee issues critically rests upon three potential ‘durable solutions’⁶ they identify and pursue with refugees worldwide: (1) repatriation (refugees voluntarily return to their country of origin), (2) local integration (refugees continue to live in their current country of residence, hopefully as citizens), and (3) resettlement (refugees move to a third country, most likely developed, that agrees to accept persons based upon UNHCR’s recommendation and after their own screening procedures) (UNHCR 2011a). For Sudanese, ongoing civil war and the strong likelihood for future conflict, eliminates the first solution. Egyptian governmental policies prevent the possibility of citizenship and long-term success of the second solution. It is therefore easy to understand why so many refugees seek resettlement as the answer to many of their struggles; yet, resettlement is an outcome that less than 1% of all registered refugees will ever receive (GAO Report 2009).

Non-transparency of the RSD process – a process tied to migrant hopes for resettlement – paired with UNHCR’s continual pursuit of local integration as a durable solution in spite of the absence of resources needed for refugee long-term settlement and lack of cooperation by the Egyptian government, is ongoing cause for Sudanese confusion regarding UNHCR policies. In order to illustrate the complex and often confounding legal process Sudanese seeking UNHCR protection must navigate, I provide an example of my own experiences struggling to understand their policies and procedures regarding refugee determination processes.

Shortly after arriving in Egypt, I approached the director of StARS’s Resettlement and Legal Aid Program (RLAP), a refugee lawyer, to help answer my questions about the legal process of becoming a refugee. Her answer to my initial question, “Can you explain how refugees in Egypt officially become refugees?” started with a diagram she began to draw at 8:30

⁶ UNHCR has three durable solutions to end the situation of refugees In order of UNHCR preference: (1) Voluntary Repatriation, (2) Local Integration, and (3) Resettlement.
am on a Monday morning. Throughout the rest of this week, as she returned to her discussion of the refugee legal process, she would add layers (and several levels of complexity) to her drawing as she attempted to clarify for me each of the many steps potential refugees must take in becoming recognized by UNHCR. Her discussion of this process – and her final drawing – was not complete until that Friday afternoon (Figure 5). I ended up completing 40 hours of legal training in order to better understand the RSD process. This training concluded with the statement, “that’s how it works, in a nutshell” (personal communication with refugee lawyer, 10/06/2011).

After 40 hours of training on UNHCR policy and procedures, we had only scratched the surface of the complex legal process asylum-seekers and refugees have to navigate. This was a process that could change without warning depending on the political pressures placed upon UNHCR-Egypt offices as was the case in December 2011 when UNHCR staff notified refugee legal advisers in Cairo that resettlement applications from refugees with large families would be more favorably received. Their office had not met the 2011 quota for resettlement referrals due to persistent office closures caused by the Egyptian revolution and protesting Sudanese (personal communication with refugee lawyer, 1/12/2012). This abrupt shift in UNHCR procedure redistributed refugee applications for legal assistance by giving preference to those with families consisting of more than three persons. Applications from single men and women for legal assistance were subsequently moved to the bottom of the pile.

This incredibly complex refugee/resettlement process has important implications for women’s length of stay amidst the difficult living conditions of Cairo (the average length of residence in Cairo by women included in this study was approximately seven and a half years) as
RST interview UNHCR

YES

17 options
Picks 1
makes an RST referral

USA

ION case file
- sched.
int. w/ DHS

DHS officers

Interview

- med
- fp
- S.cult orient.

Movement
Unit

USA
**Figure 5: Two-page drawing depicting the refugee and resettlement application process.** Diagram illustrates the process a Sudanese refugee arriving in Egypt must go through in order to receive official refugee status and its associated benefits. In short, upon arrival in Egypt a potential refugee (asylum-seeker) must present himself or herself to UNHCR-Egypt office in Cairo. Registration with UNHCR, ideally, takes two weeks. Average registration time during the period of my fieldwork was approximately two months. If an applicant successfully registers as an asylum-seeker they are issued a yellow card. If a person wishes to pursue official refugee status beyond this point they must begin a new application process. This can take anywhere from four months to a year depending on scheduling constraints of UNHCR. Once an applicant completes a refugee status determination (RSD) interview with UNHCR (which is not guaranteed) they are either denied (and can make an appeal within 30 days) or they are accepted and issued a blue card. RSD decisions, during the period when my fieldwork was completed, were issued to refugee applicants between five and ten months after UNHCR interviews. In order to successfully receive refugee status a person must prove, among other things, that they have a well-founded fear of persecution from their country of origin.

Only after issuance of a blue card may a Sudanese refugee begin a new application process for resettlement (permanent resettlement to a country – other than Sudan or Egypt – that offers a path to citizenship). After submitting their application, a refugee can wait anywhere between 1-2 years (again based upon the standard wait time for UNHCR-Egypt during my fieldwork) to receive notification from UNHCR on whether or not they will receive a resettlement (RST) interview. In order to successfully receive resettlement, a person must make a case for why their current country of residence (i.e., Egypt) is not a durable solution. Though UNHCR considers it best practice to provide refugees with a reason for the denial of a refugee claim, they do not provide justification for RST denials. If a refugee receives a recommendation from UNHCR for resettlement, they must then apply to one of 17 accepting ‘third’ countries for acceptance. The United States accepts the largest percentage of refugees out of these 17 countries. A new application process must be started at this point, with each application specific to the country for potential resettlement. If UNHCR refers a refugee for resettlement, and if the country they refer them to accepts their application, movement out of Egypt can typically take between 6 months and 2 years depending on the level of security screenings typical to the country of resettlement (personal communication with refugee lawyer, 10/07/2011). Assuming that a potential refugee is successful at each stage of the application process, the length of time between arriving in Egypt and legally leaving Egypt for a third country of resettlement can range between approximately two and a half to six years. This proposed timeline, of course, increases if a person’s application is denied at any stage of the process, therefore, requiring additional steps for an appeal.
they attempt to navigate the UNHCR system. The complexity of this process has also been an important contributor to tensions between Sudanese refugees and UNHCR.

**Mustafa Mahmoud Protests**

The deadly events that occurred on December 30, 2005 in Mustafa Mahmoud Square in Cairo between Sudanese refugees, UNHCR and Egyptian riot police contextualizes the state of refugee affairs today in Egypt today. The extreme constraints UNHCR-Egypt operates under in a State and city predominately hostile to African refugees led to the protests described below by a Los Angeles Times reporter:

…Thousands of Egyptian riot police massed around the square early Friday and tried to force the demonstrators onto waiting buses. When they refused to leave, police fired water cannons and beat them with clubs. The clashes dragged on for hours; television footage showed the Sudanese fighting back with tent poles and bottles. Witnesses said at least one child, a young girl, was among the dead. "They didn't have to go that far," said Fathy Zayed, a 50-year-old Egyptian who said police beat the protestors mercilessly.

"There were women and children there." … All that remained at the square as evidence of their sit-in were heaps of blankets, still damp from the water cannons. Family photos lay across the ground, between children's' sandals and empty baby milk containers.

Scattered English language tutorial kits spoke to their hopes for a better life (Zayan 2005).

The difficult daily reality of Sudanese refugees in Egypt explains why so many seek resettlement to a third country as the durable solution for their situation. Non-transparency of the refugee process arguably explains why many may have unrealistic expectations of UNHCR capabilities to assist them in leaving Egypt. The Egyptian government’s abdication of
responsibility for refugee affairs further isolates UNHCR-Egypt as a popular target for unpopular policy decisions by placing them in the untenable position of being both judge and advocate on all matters concerning refugees.

In the fall of 2005 more than 3,000 men, women and children camped out in Mustafa Mahmoud Square across from UNHCR offices in Cairo to begin a protest that would last for over three months. Sudanese protestors primarily fell into one of three levels of classification by UNHCR: recent arrivals (yellow cards), recognized refugees (blue cards) and those refugees with ‘closed’ files (Azzam 2006). In the early morning hours of December 30th, 2005 approximately 4,000 Egyptian riot police (at least 1,000 more police than protestors) surrounded the square and charged the camp, killing at least twenty-seven protestors and injuring or illegally detaining hundreds more (Nkrumah 2005). The Mustafa Mahmoud protests were such a pivotal moment in Sudanese refugee history in Egypt that it has become a yardstick by which refugees mark their time in Cairo (i.e., the phrase ‘before Mustafa Mahmoud’ and ‘after Mustafa Mahmoud’ is a common time reference).

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan condemned the actions of Egypt’s police force on December 30, calling the incident “a terrible tragedy that cannot be justified” (Zayan 2005). Four days later UNHCR spokeswoman Astrid van Genderen Stort reminded reporters that UNHCR (Giri 2007) only asked the Egyptian government to intervene after several negotiations with Sudanese community leaders failed to convince them to leave the park, stating “we have to remember that for the past three months, we have exhausted all efforts to find a peaceful solution to this problem” (Allam 2005). Protestors in Mustafa Mahmoud Square, among other things, were demanding reinstatement of RSD (refugee status determination) interviews for southern Sudanese asylum-seekers that had been suspended since June 2004 in anticipation of the
Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the leaders of the SPLA (Giri 2007). RSD interviews symbolized a chance at official refugee status (blue card) and, therefore, a chance at resettlement. Specifically on their list of grievances was dissatisfaction with a non-transparent refugee process that discriminated against Sudanese on the basis of region of origin (i.e., separation of North, South and Western refugee seekers) (Giri 2007). Table 3 presents a collection of relevant news stories regarding this seminal moment in Sudanese refugee/UNHCR/Egypt relations.


<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Egyptian police denies using bullets against Sudanese refugees</strong></th>
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<td>An Egyptian security source has denied the report in the Sawt al-Ummah newspaper that police forces had used tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition during its attempts to end the gathering by a group of Sudanese objecting to the position of the UNHCR…(January 1st, 2005)</td>
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<th><strong>End up in Egypt’s slaughter</strong></th>
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<td>Egypt the country north of our country that pretends to be a close brother to Sudan has become a slaughterhouse for our mothers and our children what a shame. I am deeply shock and deeply concerned by the recent attack by Egyptian police on our brothers and sisters who were escaping from Khartoum's killing fields only to end up in a slaughterhouse in Egypt…. (January 1st, 2005)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Sudanese refugees death toll rises to 27 - embassy</strong></th>
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<td>The death toll from Egypt's violent clearing of a Sudanese refugees camp rose to at least 27 today as a presidencial spokesman expressed sorrow and garbage collectors moved in to clear the trash from a failed three-month protest…(January 1st, 2005)</td>
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<th><strong>UN agency blamed for Sudanese refugee deaths</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Arab and Middle East civil society groups are accusing a United Nations agency of collaborating with Egyptian police in action that caused the deaths of at least 25 Sudanese refugees in a downtown Cairo park on Friday…(January 1st, 2005)</td>
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<th><strong>Egypt dealt with Sudanese refugees with wisdom and patience - FM</strong></th>
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<td>Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit affirmed on Monday that Egypt dealt with the issue of Sudanese refugees at Mustafa Mahmoud Square in Muhandisin with wisdom and patience, in its capacity as a host country of the regional office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)…(January 2nd, 2005)</td>
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<th><strong>Egypt’s Sudanese despair after police end protest</strong></th>
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<td>Halima Baraka cried quietly on Monday as she recalled how she lost her 11-year old son in the panic that ensued when Egyptian police cleared a Sudanese refugee protest camp last Friday, leaving at least 27 dead…(January 2nd, 2005)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
As evidenced by these article excerpts discussing Mustafa Mahmoud protests outside UNHCR offices, the agency does not have a popular reputation among Sudanese refugees in Cairo. Their unpopularity grew when UNHCR decided to move its offices to a distant western suburb of Cairo (6th of October City) in the wake of this deadly protest. Efforts to make the organization much less accessible for refugees has resulted in increased travel times for refugees, increased money spent on bus fare (the metro train does not extend to 6th of October City) and increased insecurity as many must now travel at night in order to reach UNHCR offices early in the morning for a favorable place amidst long lines of expectant asylum-seekers and refugees. Deterioration of Sudanese refugee/UNHCR/Egyptian relations has only increased since Egypt’s
revolution began in January 2011 when UNHCR office closed for several weeks and many foreign staff left the country further delaying refugee/resettlement application proceedings.

**The Egyptian Revolution**

Egypt’s part in the Arab Spring\(^7\) protests of early 2011 did not evolve overnight. Egypt had been on edge for almost a year. Egyptian historians may convincingly argue that Egypt had been on edge since the early 1980s at the beginning of Hosni Mubarak’s presidency when state of emergency laws were implemented as a reaction to the assassination of his predecessor (Brownlee 2002). January 2011 Egyptian protestors, calling for the end to Mubarak’s 30-year reign, had several grievances, legal and political, against their government: lack of free elections and freedom of the press, food price inflation, police brutality, military law, state corruption, high unemployment and low minimum wages (to name a few). It was the combined effect of these grievances that led to the events of January 25\(^{th}\), 2011 when Egyptian frustration manifested in labor strikes, demonstrations and civil resistance across the country (Korotayev and Zinkina 2011).

Egypt’s Arab Spring caused repeated UNHCR office closings, delayed already backlogged refugee and resettlement interviews, and generally increased insecurity of refugees living in the midst of a revolution. When UNHCR pulled its foreign staff out of the country during the height of the revolution in January-February 2011 for security reasons, refugees were not able to follow (UNHCR 2011b). This was a pattern repeated throughout the later months of

\(^7\) The ‘Arab Spring’ was a wave of protests, demonstrations and wars that began in December 2010 in Tunisia when a fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire to protest government corruption. The furor created by Bouazizi’s death sparked a Tunisian uprising that quickly spread to Egypt in the spring of 2011 and several other Arab nations throughout 2011.
2011 as a reaction to periodic episodes of Egyptian social protest and served to further widen the
gulf between refuges and their surrogate State.

**Sudanese Women in Cairo**

For Sudanese women who are not granted *prima facie* refugee status, they must wait
weeks or even months in order to be given an appointment time for an interview to determine
whether or not they will be allowed to reside in Egypt under the protection of UNHCR. For
many single women in Egypt, this is a period of extreme uncertainty where they are without
employment, without access to necessary services, and potentially without housing as Egyptian
landlords often refuse to rent rooms when there is no male head of household (Al-Sharmani
2005). During this period of uncertainly, women rely on the generosity of other refugee families
for shelter, frequently living in cramped housing in poor Cairene neighborhoods (personal
communication with refugee psychosocial services worker, 10/18/2011). Should women
eventually achieve refugee status in Egypt (which is certainly not guaranteed) they may receive
greater access to special services depending on the workload and financial circumstances of local
non-governmental (NGO) refugee service providers. A very small percentage – less than 1% of
all registered refugees – who obtain refugee status may also qualify for resettlement to a third
country (GAO Report 2009).

Sudanese women face daily discrimination and harassment in Cairo in the form of
common taunts from passersby on the street such as *abd* (slave), *samara* (derogatory term for
black or dark/skinned persons) and *sharmuta* (prostitute). Such derogatory and often racially
based terms undoubtedly reference the long history of southern Sudanese slaves brought to
Egyptian markets throughout the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries (Badran 1995). At the
close of the 19th century, abolition came to Egypt on the tails of its British colonizers and seemingly at the behest of humanitarian organizations. Yet its close association with European ideas of civilization and morality forever tainted any human rights motivation with British imperialism. Meanwhile, racial interpretations of the morals of African women as discussed by both Egyptian slaveholders and British colonizers charged with manumitting slaves during this period, did little to dissuade the continuation of female enslavement – and the continued displacement of women from Sudan to Egypt – long after the majority of enslaved males were released. Gendered discussions of what would happen to the female freed slave of this time centered upon the state in which she lived – “a state of promiscuity hardly credible…rather to be called amoral than immoral” – as a result of her master teaching her little other than prostitution (Sikainga 1995).

The paternalism of British officials during the 19th century concluded that for the good of these poor (amoral) women, they must not be turned out on the streets of Cairo into a life of assured prostitution. This resulted in a lengthy and complicated legal process of manumission for enslaved women with master/concubine-owner/father-of-her-children given preference in Islamic courts for retaining them (particularly if she were the mother of his children). Female women and children who were successful in making the transition from enslaved to free person in Egypt were often sent to the Home for Freed Black Slave Women (also known as the Cairo Home for Freed Slaves) to prevent them from falling “back into the clutches of Muslim households, prey once more either to slavery, concubinage, or prostitution” (Powell 2003:154).

Despite the fact that liberated enslaved women were associated with prostitution in colonial documents, there is no data to support this linkage. This unfortunate and entirely unsupported, connection of single African women with prostitution continues to this day with
female study participants reporting frequent and aggressive solicitations for sex on the streets of Cairo.

Without question, life in Egypt has been more difficult for refugee women post-revolution. They occupy a confounding space with access to basic resources as refugees but few, if any, legal protection from violence committed against them. Women’s lack of legal protection and vulnerability to State power is demonstrated by the newspaper quote provided above describing the 2005 events of Mustafa Mahmoud. Before the Egyptian revolution in January 2011, women stated that the police force was generally ineffective in protecting them. Since the 2011 protests, with fewer police occupying the majority of Cairo’s streets as anti-police sentiment grows (Shukrallah 2011), refugee women note that their harassment has only increased. Ironically, it is the very commonality of violent sexual harassment of refugee African women in Egypt – so widely known among NGO workers that it often remains unspoken in an environment of mutual understanding – that prevents women from appealing to UNHCR for resettlement to a third country. If something becomes a common experience for refugees in Cairo then the collectivity of this experience places them all in a ‘less vulnerable’ position with UNHCR as it is no longer considered a unique occurrence. As stated earlier, the refugee resettlement process considers so few refugees in comparison to the population of need that only the top 1% - “the worst of the worst” – ever make it to the interview process (personal communication with refugee lawyer, 10/9/2011). The commonality of daily harassment, as an undisputed fact of life for refugee African women living in Cairo, excludes them from a claim of vulnerability due to everyday violence.

Refugee NGO staff in Cairo speak often and openly about their dissatisfaction toward UNHCR interviews (and NGO legal aid questionnaires that must conform to the policies of
UNHCR), particularly regarding the gendered nature of questions asked of women about their sexual history of abuse. Many refugee women believe their answers to these questions in particular, plays a large role in whether or not they receive asylum or resettlement out of Egypt. Given UNHCR-Egypt’s current trend in rejecting Sudanese resettlement claims, decisions by women to remain in Egypt are essentially a decision to endure racism, harassment, and sexual violence in favor of the perceived benefits of being a recognized refugee (personal communication with refugee lawyer, 10/9/2011).

In early November 2011, an International Office of Migration (IOM) representative in Egypt approached me about my fieldwork with refugees. The IOM’s presence in Egypt was originally established to assist third-country nationals displaced by the Gulf War. Today, one of their operational mandates is to provide transportation and logistical repatriation assistance to South Sudanese refugees who elect to return to their birth country. The IOM representative asked me specifically: Why are southern Sudanese women not going home? Her question came after a discussion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. She did not understand why so many women continued to live in the difficult conditions of Cairo when their country was now at ‘peace.’

Southern Sudanese refugee repatriation facilitated by international organizations such as UNHCR and IOM focus on safety concerns (“Are peace talks underway in the country of origin, or is there a likelihood they will be in the near future?”) and reintegration of refugees in local society (“Are the rights of refugees and returnees respected and their reintegration needs being met?”) (UNHCR 2004:30-32). While safety is certainly a part of women’s hesitancy in bowing to the pressure of post-CPA repatriation – a week after my conversation with the IOM representative, military aircraft from Sudan crossed the hazy border between North and South Sudan bombing Yida refugee camps killing at least twelve (Copnall 2011) – it is not the most
pressing concern for the single/widowed women spoken with for this study. War and violence have been more of a constant in their lives than peace and safety, even in their country of asylum. As I sit writing this paragraph today (November 23, 2011) violent protests in Tahrir Square over stagnant government reform post-revolution continue for the seventh day.

Many of the study participants able to be reached by phone this week have been unable to return to work due to the violence, their children who attend refugee schools downtown have not been to school for several days, medical and legal aid appointments have been canceled, and three women said they have not ventured outside of their apartments since the violence began for fear of being attacked on the streets. Women are being asked to leave a surrogate state that does not discriminate based on taboos associated with past violence (indeed confers belonging based on its existence) to a nation where their male relatives were killed or disappeared and their communities destroyed. These women have yet to experience a collective acknowledgement of their blamelessness in the breakdown of their communities and their bravery making a treacherous journey to another country for safety. They continue to be spoken of as either the carriers of community shame or perpetual victims. Repatriation decisions southern Sudanese women, acting as heads of their households, face contemporarily post-CPA is one that requires agency, not victimhood.

**Girl in the Blue Bra**

The brief history of Sudanese Civil War(s) presented in this chapter, precipitating a steady flow of refugees to Egypt, combined with key contemporary events impacting the daily lives of Sudanese refugees in Cairo, contextualizes the ethnography of refugee women’ past and present lives outlined in the chapters to follow. My retelling of Sudanese conflict history and
Sudanese/Egyptian/UNHCR political relations, though not comprehensive, highlights important events in the lives of these women that continue to impact their safety and well-being today.

The image and caption that began this chapter (Figure 2) – a protestor in the foreground shows a censored news photograph of ‘the girl in the blue bra’ with text denouncing the dishonorable treatment of Egyptian women – is a parallel story to the events that occurred between refugees, UNHCR, and Egyptian police in 2005 at Mustafa Mahmoud recounted earlier in this chapter. Both illustrate a population that is angry at the status quo in demanding visibility and political transparency. The Egyptian protestors who held up the sign of the girl in the blue bra, using gendered language to tell police they went too far in violating the valued modesty of their women, were making an important statement that violence against the female protestors who stood with them would not be tolerated. Given the wide media circulation of this image, the refugee women I worked with paid attention to this message as well – both to the police brutality demonstrated in the image itself, and to the collective outrage of Egyptian protestors from the event. When talking about this image after one of our photography classes in late December, one woman said to me, “if things can change for their [Egyptian] women, maybe they can change for us [Sudanese] too.”
CHAPTER 3: THEORIZING THE EMBODIED SUFFERING OF REFUGEES

Figure 6: Living death.
“I am living, but sometimes I feel like I am dead. Like there is a knife in my heart that I cannot pull out because it will kill me. But if I do not take it out, I cannot live.”
Introduction

The theoretical frame I have chosen to better understand the experiences of the Lost Girls is critical medical anthropology. Critical medical anthropology (CMA), as defined by Singer and Baer, is anthropology that “emphasizes the importance of political and economic forces, including the exercise of power, in shaping health, disease, illness experience, and health care” (Singer and Baer 1995). Two aspects of CMA that are of particular importance to this dissertation in discussing the refugee aftermath of war are: (1) viewing human health as influenced by social and political orders, not just biological givens, and (2) the “critical” component in making connections between each of these levels of analysis (Singer 1986; Singer 1989; Singer 1998; Singer and Baer 1995). Critical thinking into the gendered dimensions of health of the individual, social and political bodies of Sudanese refugee women, enables examination of the activities they perform to communicate suffering and to achieve a more healthy body post-conflict.

Particularly relevant to such efforts are Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock’s (1987) conceptions of the ‘mindful body’ as composed of three interrelated yet distinct views on the body: individual (phenomenal experiences of the body-self), social (the relationships of bodies to nature, society, and culture) and political (how bodies are regulated and controlled) (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). They advocate for a holistic anthropology of the body that engages the study of emotions as a promising area of inquiry “capable of bridging mind and body, individual, society and body politic” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:29). In this chapter I propose that anthropology has the theoretical and methodological tools necessary for linking the emotional experiences of war survivors to the larger cultural and political structures in which they are produced (Inhorn 2008; Nagengast 1994). By focusing on the experiences of Sudanese
refugee women, I seek to illustrate this through a distinctly gendered lens in order to demonstrate: (1) how inattention to women’s embodied experiences of war risks hiding their suffering within everyday ‘ordinary’ life (Copelon 2000; Kleinman, et al. 1997), and (2) how mainstream international relations (IR) literature (which shapes current refugee global policy) often omits women’s embodied experiences by inconsideration of gender as a useful tool to analyze ‘extraordinary’ male centric violence (Elshtain 2009; Peterson 2004; Sjoberg 2011). I argue that practitioners will not be able to achieve “more insightful pre-conflict preventive measures and more effective post-conflict rehabilitative measures” (Rose 2000:107) if women’s communication of daily, ordinary suffering continues to be ignored.

The mindful body theoretical framework includes the study of emotions as necessary for debunking assumptions of human life that ignore culture and reify “mind/body, nature/culture, individual/society” dichotomies as natural and universal (Schep-Hughes and Lock 1987:28). Applying this theoretical lens to women who have experienced State violence, allows the pain and suffering of war to be understood as a collective, not just personal, emotional response (Das and Kleinman 2001). Recognition of the social dimensions of pain has important implications for an organization like UNHCR to see the collective suffering of refugee women. This is especially important during protracted refugee situations, such as experienced by Sudanese women in Cairo, where the permanency of violence in their lives is not reflected in temporary policy approaches that privilege extraordinary, eventful violent life events (Das 2000b; Das 2007a; Kleinman, et al. 1997), thus downplaying the everyday structural violence that women also experience as a result of their refugee status.

The work of medical anthropologist Veena Das in exploring social suffering caused by violence, demonstrates the failure of political language to capture how women communicate
their emotional experiences of violence, and documents what their communication reveals about individual relationships to power and control – the body politic (Das 2003; Das 2007a). An anthropology of the body reminds us to “remain eclectic in our approach” (Lock 1993:148) for critically analyzing the motivational force emotions play in our daily lives (Lutz and White 1986; Rosaldo 1984). Through the use of an image-based approach to the body, with this dissertation I demonstrate the complementarity between medical and visual anthropology theoretical perspectives that incorporate careful analysis of human emotion. By utilizing photovoice—an approach able to communicate the complexities of women’s experiences (i.e., voice) that are not dependent upon narrative norms that have succeeded in suppressing those experiences (i.e., photography), I am able to demonstrate the importance of emotions as a “missing link” capable of connecting the phenomenal body-self of women to the socio-cultural environment that has contributed to their suffering (Schepere-Hughes and Lock 1987:28-29). This is a direct illustration of seeing the “suffering and healing that ordinary life revels” (Das 2007a:15), rather than solely hearing it in the way that refugees are normally asked to relate their experiences as they seek refugee status from State actors.

**Anthropology on the Embodied Suffering of Refugees**

*Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell (Rosaldo 1984:143).*

Barbara Harrell-Bond, founding director of the first refugee legal aid assistance program in Cairo, has stated that:

Of all the disciplines involved in the study of human behavior…anthropology has the most to contribute to the study of refugees. The relation runs in the other direction as
well; anthropology can also gain by recognizing refugees as falling within its disciplinary concerns (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992:6).

Almost two decades ago, Carole Nagengast stated, “to date, anthropology has not been in the forefront of the study of collective violence, terrorism, and especially violence in state societies” (Nagengast 1994:112). Marcia Inhorn declared at the end of her presidency of the Society of Medical Anthropology that anthropologists have “been faint of heart and lacking moral courage” in turning away “from the brutal realities, the embodied suffering, the psychological devastation, the sexual violence, and the refugee aftermath of war” (Inhorn 2008:421). Inhorn faulted medical anthropologists for not studying the immediate traumas of war as it is a discipline uniquely situated to study how violence is written upon the human body. She also noted the “thin” anthropological scholarship on the specific forms of embodied suffering created by war (Inhorn 2008:422).

To be sure, medical anthropologists have had a tepid past engagement with examining the intimate connections between war and human health, particularly given the brutal conflicts of the twentieth century that use civilian targets to increase social suffering and drive the war machine (Singer and Hodge 2010). Women’s bodies in particular, embedded in the social and political structures of their communities, have become the de facto weapon used to destabilize societies in conflict (i.e., rape as a weapon of war). Given this, the research space I carve for myself in engaging the understudied and under-theorized phenomena of the embodied suffering of war refugees is distinctly, and importantly, gendered. An anthropology focused on the body assists in this endeavor by exploring the importance of the body as a mediator of “all reflection and action upon the world” (Lock 1993:133). Anthropological understanding of experiences of violence tells us that any approach to the body necessitates a “theory of emotions” to “provide an
important ‘missing link’ capable of bridging mind and body, individual, society and body politic” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:28-29). Academic attention to emotions is not a new area of inquiry. The work of philosophers, sociologists, historians, psychologists, feminists and anthropologists on human emotion has featured prominently in literature of the last three decades (Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004; Douglas and Ney 1998; Lutz and White 1986; Rosaldo 1984; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). What anthropologists have importantly contributed to these studies is recognition that emotions tell us about more than just personal experience. Specifically, anthropologists have discussed that failure to understand the “communicative aspect of emotion” will prevent forging links “between the often dichotomized worlds of the rational and irrational, public and private, individual and social” (Lutz and White 1986:429). To this discussion I would add that failure to understand how daily suffering is experienced prevents understanding how the gendered and dichotomized worlds of extraordinary and ordinary violence are seen (or not) and responded to (or not).

Rosaldo argues that emotions, as “embodied thoughts” (Rosaldo 1984:143), are central to understanding how individual responses are reflective of culturally constructed social worlds. In this way, emotions say both “I am involved” and “we are involved” (Rosaldo 1984:143, emphasis in original). The work of Boellstorff and Lindquist on the communicative power of emotions provides this research the most salient argument for understanding how an organization such as UNHCR may come to ignore or dismiss embodied experiences of war as influential motivators of contemporary daily refugee life (Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004). In critiquing dominant psychological approaches to emotion that thoroughly investigate individual experiences while referring to cultural influences in abstract and general terms (i.e., as if that culture influences those members uniformly and universally), Boellstorff and Lindquist describe
how emotions are ignored when “methodological individualism” is paired with a “theoretical universalism” (Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004:437).

To the extent that refugee organizations such as UNHCR employ one definition of refugee to the millions it recognizes across the globe (Chapter 2), this policy (at least theoretically) is universal in its application. Douglas and Ney refer to this as “a strategy to avoid threats to objectivity” where “emptying the theoretical person of values and emotions is an atheoretical move” with the unintended consequence of creating unarticulated spaces where “there are no words for saying what is going on” (Douglas and Ney 1998:10). This voiding of emotions is reflected within the procedures UNHCR and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) interviewers utilize with refugees.

Agency interviewers often have extensive background knowledge of the countries of origin of the refugees they speak with. Their specialized training entails interview interrogation techniques to gain objective insight from the retelling of subjective experiences (DHS 2012; UNHCR 1995). Within this retelling, emotionally laden experiences of violence are unimportant (and potentially distracting) for distinguishing fact from fiction. For example, while working as a legal aid in Cairo preparing refugee statements for UNHCR, I worked with an elderly Iraqi woman whose two sons had been kidnapped at gunpoint by al-Qaeda militia prior to her fleeing Baghdad. She was seeking assistance for preparing an appeal to DHS due to her denial for resettlement on the basis of ‘lack of credibility.’ During her interview with DHS, she described breaking down into uncontrollable sobs when she described the kidnapping of her sons to the interviewer. She was subsequently asked to leave the interview room while she composed

8 DHS interviews refugees who will potentially be resettled to the United States. These interviews usually occur as a result of a referral from UNHCR.
9 The details of my experience preparing refugee testimonies to UNHCR will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
herself. When she returned almost an hour later to complete the interview, the first question she was asked: *What kind of guns were the men carrying?* There was no acknowledgement of her pain or her difficulty speaking of a tortuous moment from the recent past. The interview continued as if nothing had happened, and the interviewer acted as if she should be able to ignore the fact that guns were pointed at her sons’ heads in order to recover the specific detail asked for regarding her description of the weapon (I assume in order to determine if her description matched known al-Qaeda militia weaponry in Baghdad). There are several similar examples I learned in my interviews with women in Cairo I could describe.

As the above work of anthropologists studying human emotions foretells – emotions humanize. Emotions reanimate daily life (Lutz and White 1986), describe the motivating force behind human behavior (Rosaldo 1984) and act as a vehicle for understanding culture within specific contexts, not as a universal force with uniform applicability (Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004). The latter point is particularly important for seeing the connections between women’s experiences of extraordinary and ordinary violence. Abu-Lughod argues for the importance of focusing on the everyday lives of women in order to demonstrate how macro forces are “manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives” (Abu-Lughod 1991:160). It is here where I see anthropology making the greatest applied contribution to refugee studies (and vice versa): by not turning away from the embodied suffering and refugee aftermath of war. With a focus on acknowledging human suffering where it exists, in whatever form it may exist, the methods by which it is communicated can be related back to organizations (such as UNHCR) charged with alleviating its effects.
Individualizing Suffering

In UNHCR’s pursuit of a methodologically individualistic agenda (e.g., refugee status determination interviews) to theoretically universal populations (i.e., refugees), not only are emotions expelled from inquiry as non-objective data, but also the individualizing refugee process precludes connecting phenomenal experiences to their social and political motivators. Indeed, the very definition of refugee in use by UNHCR as a person unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin for persecution on the basis of “social group or political opinion” (UNHCR 1951) is an official designation of an individual severed from its social and political selves.

Let me provide a brief example of this distinction and how sectioning off the individual body from its socio-political connections risks hiding women’s suffering. Use of rape as a weapon of war in Rwanda in 1994 – less than two years after this terminology arose out of the Yugoslavian genocide that first recorded the systematic sexual victimization of thousands of women – has since been described as “inevitable for practically all females…nearly all the women and adolescent girls who survived the genocide are now living with the traumatizing memory of a brutal sexual attack that they had suffered or witnessed firsthand” (Donovan 2002:17). Yet this sexual violence, so pervasive it has been described as “inevitable” for Rwandan women, was not reported until almost a year after the violence began, and only then by one Belgian doctor who publicized “that women were presenting themselves in unusual numbers to bear the children of rape” (Copelon 2000:224). Rather than international humanitarian watch agencies or international aid organizations such as UNHCR first seeing how women were collectively being targeted during the war for political purposes, it was instead a doctor treating women on a case-by-case basis for pregnancy, not even sexual violence, who first began to see a
sharp increase in rape victims. The collective suffering of these women remained hidden from all
but a medical gaze focused on women’s individual health. Would we even know of their
suffering today if that doctor had not discussed what he had seen, and if his patients had not
sought out medical attention and discussed the circumstances regarding their forced conception?

This type of historical amnesia was repeated yet again with Sudanese women and girls
(discussed in more detail in Chapter 5): the individual suffering of pregnant women bearing the
children of rape was what was first seen (albeit months later) not the collective of Rwandan and
Sudanese women systematically targeted for sexual violence. These examples illustrate the
dangers of divorcing the person from their subjective experiences, where illness (i.e., suffering)
risks, “being medicalized and individualized, rather than politicized and collectivized” (Schepers-
Hughes and Lock 1987:10).

(Wo)man, the State, and War

Intimately related to women’s hidden suffering within everyday ‘ordinary’ life is a
distinction made within mainstream international relations (IR) literature and political
philosophy between public (economy/state) and private (domestic/conjugal) spheres. As
universal inhabitants of private life, women are not afforded the same political standing as men.
Anthropologists have been highly critical of positions like these that reify women’s private
life positions by refuting universalist assumptions through cross-cultural comparisons
(MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Rapp 1979; Rosaldo 1980; Strathern 1984; Yanagisako
1979). Their studies have served to reveal how women’s ‘natural’ experiences vary widely
within time and space, and the cultural specificity of how gendered labor is divided and
valued.
Feminist scholars have similarly contributed to this debate by noting that the work of social scientists on the cultural construction of gender is not reflected in mainstream IR literature that continues to neglect gender as a salient concept for interrogating political policy (Elshtain 2009; Waltz 1959). For example, in a 2009 article entitled ‘Women, the State, and War’ (referencing Waltz’s ‘Man, the State, and War’) Jean Elshtain explores whether changing the title from ‘man’ to ‘woman’ would change how war is conceptualized and theorized, arguing that this change would not significantly alter Waltz's argument (Elshtain 2009).

Carol Paterman noted in 1989 that political theory “for the most part remains untouched by feminist argument” (Paterman 1989:3). Feminist political scholars such as Rebecca Grant (Grant 1992), Cynthia Weber (Weber 1998), Spike Peterson (Peterson 2004), Christine Sylvester (Sylvester 2010), and Laura Sjoberg (Sjoberg 2011) have repeated this claim in the years since through their counter-analysis of how the structure of the State is gendered. The work of these anthropological and feminist scholars have all served to “make women’s perspectives visible” and as such have demonstrated the importance of nuanced discussions of women that are cognizant of how private life activities can (and often are) structured for social and political purposes (McKay 2004:155).

Dominant IR political philosophies, translated into dominant political policies, have been unwilling to engage discussions of how codification of the public/private dichotomy has hurt women, separated them from society, and led to one-sided political discussions that do not speak to their everyday needs. Not only is mainstream IR literature reflective of the gendered public/private division, their unexamined certainties regarding women’s lives inform how to
solve political problems, assuming what is natural for men and women according to ideals their earliest philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle upheld as universal, biological facts.

By engaging in research on the embodied suffering of refugee women and men, anthropologists can challenge universal assumptions of the body that political theories continue to uphold. This is a necessary endeavor given the 21st century policies of international aid organizations such as UNHCR that double down on the assumptions of mainstream IR literature in branding the function of women post-conflict as natural peacekeepers by highlighting their apolitical, private roles as the nurturers of future generations. To illustrate, in a UNHCR publication on female refugees, six reasons are listed for why women in particular should be included in the peace process following war. Four of those six reasons are reflective of dangerous assumptions of women’s perceived apolitical, biological nature:

1. “women are generally adept at building relationships…due to their social and biological roles as nurturers”
2. “women…usually weren’t the ones behind the guns”
3. “women – as second-class citizens – are not considered powerful enough to be dangerous”
4. “because women haven’t been allowed a place within power structures…local leaders can mobilize and set their own agenda outside the close scrutiny of political parties or official establishments” (Hunt 2002:10-11).

These assumptions reify the unexamined, so-called natural roles of women by highlighting the extraordinary violence they have been subjected to by their State (i.e., violence involving “guns” and “dangerous” male actors in positions of “power”). Instead of problematizing assumptions made regarding the roles of women in society or discussing the ordinary violence they are
subjected to daily before, during and after episodic mass State violence, UNHCR policies are instead built upon this problematic foundation. The result? A laundry list of reasons arguing for women’s inclusion in the peace process that could double as motivators for why their bodies can be systematically attacked in the first place. If you recall, rape as a weapon of war is horrifically effective in destabilizing communities when wielded by those who are able to “impoverish private life” by targeting women (Bulmash 1982:618). As long as such universalist political policies on women continue to circulate, illustrated by the UNHCR example above, reasons for women’s inclusion in post-conflict rehabilitative efforts will surface with no understanding of how their exclusion from pre-conflict political life continues the cycle of violence.

**The Social Dimensions of Pain**

By critically thinking of persons as inhabiting a body whose emotions reveal the motivating forces behind daily life, dichotomies such as mind/body, nature/culture, individual/society and extraordinary/ordinary are problematized through a theory of emotions that connects individual pain to “the well or poorly functioning social body and body politic” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:28). Stated differently, the mindful body is the point at which anthropologists can attempt to understand a person’s suffering through the intricate interactions between who is experiencing illness, their environment and the State – the individual, the social and the political (Henry 2006; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). This framework serves to debunk universal assumptions based on biological fallacies while also drawing out the collectivity of shared emotions in “merging” mind and body (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:28). This is what medical anthropologists Arthur Kleinman and Veena Das refer to as social suffering; the social dimension of pain (Das and Kleinman 2001).
The suffering war creates is incredibly complex. It cannot be contained within a single—phenomenally experienced—violent episode such as the burning of a house, the death of a husband or child, or the difficult journey to find safe shelter, but in the multiplicity of these episodes and their culminating effect upon human emotions over time. This is what Das describes as a violent event attaching “itself with its tentacles into everyday life” and folding itself “into the recesses of the ordinary” (Das 2007a:1). The anthropology of suffering, as the name implies, is the study of populations who are suffering from long term warfare, disease, disaster, death and displacement (Davis 1992). The theoretical perspectives taken on by anthropologists such as Kleinman, Das and Lock, who study human suffering, frame the compounding traumas of war as ‘ordinary’ violence (i.e., violence that is continual, everyday and expected), rather than ‘extraordinary’ violence (i.e., violence that is brief in duration, contained within a specific moment in time, and eventful).

‘Extraordinary’ Violence and Emergency Researchers

Responses to extraordinary violence dominates refugee assistance programs today (Boyden and deBerry 2004; Daniel and Knudsen 1995). Organizations who implement these programs are most often geared toward individual health care, and so employ the fast-paced triage methods of health professionals when working in emergency situations. This can be summed up as an imperative to diagnose quickly in order to treat quickly, and is exemplified most notably by UNHCR refugee policy. These policies view refugees as “a transitory phenomena of crisis and disorder, and thus only temporarily relevant” (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992:7). In reality, the ‘refugee cycle’ (Koser and Black 1999) in its contemporary form as falling within a humanitarian regime dominated by UNHCR, has been in continual existence (with a population size increasing by the millions) since the end of the Cold War (Harrell-Bond
and Voutira 1992; Koser and Black 1999). What this means for refugee populations in Cairo, at least among the women I worked, is that granting of refugee status is expected to be a lifelong conferral. Meanwhile for UNHCR it is a temporary fix until ‘durable solutions’ can be implemented (UNHCR 2003a).

For example, the majority of women participants in this research who were still recognized refugees with UNHCR, received financial assistance in the form of a small monthly stipend. The stipend amount differed slightly from person-to-person depending on how large their families were, but generally amounted to enough for women to pay half their months rent (in a shared apartment) or close to a months worth of food for a family of two (if no meat products were purchased). All of the women I spoke with who received this stipend from Caritas, a local NGO who partnered with UNHCR to distribute the funds, mentioned an inability to afford rent or food for their children without this money. According to women, approximately every eight to ten months Caritas would abruptly stop providing women financial assistance for a period lasting between two and four months. Women who wanted to continue to receive money after this ‘cut off’ period needed to reapply for funding assistance. Continuation of financial service was not guaranteed and was often not reinstated quickly (IRIN 2012). Refugee psychosocial workers openly discussed their disgust with this practice, stating it would panic

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10 Interview data collected from eight women place the dollar amount at approximately $30-60 USD per month provided in financial assistance. Women must travel to Caritas, located in a Cairene suburb next to Tahrir Square, to receive their funds.
11 On February 7, 2012 Caritas was forced to close its office and cease providing financial assistance to refugees for approximately a month further contributing to refugee insecurity. This closure was not based on a political policy of UNHCR, but upon actions by the Egyptian government that prevented Caritas from accessing its funds. Government action against Caritas is generally believed related to government raids on international, pro-democracy NGOs in December 2011 where Egyptian riot police closed 17 organizations and put 43 employees from these NGOs on trial for accessing “illegal foreign funds” (IRIN 2012).
women in leading to evictions and chronic homelessness when they were unable to pay rent during periods when stipends were withheld. According to one psychosocial worker:

This practice is stupid and pointless. It needlessly scares women. If they can find work, they work. Period. This has nothing to do with any ‘incentive’ provided by Caritas scaring them with hunger and homelessness (personal communication, psychosocial worker, 10/7/2011).

Despite the fact that refugees cannot legally work in Egypt, periodically withholding money was ostensibly practiced to encourage women to find long-term employment and attain self-sufficiency. This reflects UNHCR treatment of refugees as temporary populations in need with the conflicting reality of their permanent condition.

Given UNHCR’s temporary solutions applied to permanent urban refugee populations, ethical and methodological shifts away from emergency research must first be precipitated by a corresponding theoretical shift away from the emergency biomedical paradigm in response to extraordinary violence that dominates refugee policy today (Boyden and deBerry 2004; Daniel and Knudsen 1995). This theoretical and methodological shift would enable examination of everyday, ordinary violence in an effort to see human suffering in whatever embodied form it may exist. This is one of the aims of this dissertation – to examine everyday suffering, not just the extraordinary events.

In the same manner that anthropologists refuted politically defined distinctions between internally displaced persons and refugees on the basis of their similar experiences of violence (Chapter 1), anthropologists who focus on human suffering have challenged the notion that “the soft knife of everyday oppressions” (Das 2003:302) is an experientially different emotional trauma than, for example, extraordinary instances of war-related violence. It is extraordinary
violence – “the worst of the worst” – that UNHCR concentrates on for conferral (or not) of refugee and resettlement status (Chapter 2; personal communication with refugee lawyer, 10/9/2011). For refugee scholarship – in particular studies focused on women – this distinction is important for understanding what details of their violent experiences are considered politically and legally relevant, and those that are not. I say this is especially important for understanding the lives of refugee women because, as I demonstrate in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, so much ordinary, everyday violence is conceptually tied to women’s apoliticized experiences of private life. Medical anthropologist Paul Farmer has said that, “Everyone knows that suffering exists. The question is how to define it” (Farmer 1996:261). If a refugee woman’s ordinary experiences of violence do not meet definitions of political relevance, who will see their suffering?

*Silencing Ordinary Violence*

*Much of routinized misery is invisible; much that is made visible is not ordinary or routine (Kleinman, et al. 1997:xiii).*

In the previous sections, I use the mindful body to explore how women’s embodied suffering of war is seen (or not) and how this is related to mainstream IR political policies built upon gendered dichotomies such as mind/body, private/public, nature/culture, individual/social, and extraordinary/ordinary. In the sections to follow, I seek to illustrate how the life worlds of women – when conceptualized as experiencing ordinary violence as inhabitants of private, everyday life – remain un-theorized and unexplored in a political environment that privileges public, extraordinary experiences of eventful violence. I understand this as intimately related to UNHCR policies to empty “the theoretical person of values and emotions” consequently creating unarticulated spaces where “there are no words for saying what is going on” (Douglas and Ney 1998:10). That is, pairing together theoretical universals of the refugee experience with
methodological individualism to describe those experiences, will mean that violence that does not conform to the refugee master narrative will remain hidden. As stated in the introduction to the dissertation and elaborated on with data provided in Chapter 5, the history of Sudanese war and the peoples it has displaced is predominantly a masculine one. This is the dominant narrative of the country and will remain so as long as the experiences of its female citizens are left to languish in unarticulated spaces where “there are not words for saying what is going on” (Douglas and Ney 1998:10).

Anthropologist Bridget Hayden, in exploring the specific methods by which the UN definition of refugee prevents an adequate understanding of life, reminds us that an exclusive focus on extraordinary violence “is misleading if our purpose is to understand their [refugee] experience” (Hayden 2006:480). She goes on to describe an example of an El Salvadorian peasant critiquing international responses to the civil war:

You gringos are always worried about violence – but the violence done by machetes or machine guns…To watch your children die of sickness and hunger while you do nothing is violence to the spirit…Why aren’t you gringos concerned about that kind of violence? (Hayden 2006:480).

This man’s astute observation recognizes how people are treated based on differential priorities of what forms of violence are considered important.

In attempting to answer questions regarding the borders erected between extraordinary and ordinary violence, medical anthropologist Veena Das adds to our understanding of why women’s daily experiences are often not included in juridical-political narratives of State violence (Das 2003). This is a political view that ignores the work of women in maintaining the everyday as it is not considered important within discussions of resistance to extraordinary
violence (Das 2007a). For Das, an anthropology of suffering is one that attempts to render pain meaningful, and turning away from any form of societal pain (whether it be eventful or everyday) makes us complicit in its continuation. For this reason, Das is careful in describing and contextualizing women’s private suffering within the historical and political structures that govern their lives. Her work seeks to make women’s ordinary experiences of violence knowable through descent into their everyday lives.

Das’s book *Life and Words* (2007) carefully examines how extraordinary violence can be ‘folded’ into the everyday lives of those who survived, namely the thousands of raped women that resulted from the Partition Riots in India. By firmly locating the seeds of violence within the details of how everyday, ordinary lives are lived, Das describes how the boundaries between the extraordinary and the ordinary were erased (Das 2007a). In so doing, her ethnographies regarding State violence against women describe how the work of repairing and recreating are often left to women in particular who must ‘swallow’ poisonous violence through acts of witnessing that involve “really knowing not just by intellect but through the passions” (Das 2000a:222, emphasis in original). This knowing is accomplished not just by living through violence, but by living with daily violence; it is here where women’s agency, as witness, is most apparent. Das is in effect making the argument that violence is not something that interrupts ordinary life, but is instead grounded in the ordinary; therefore, attention should be focused upon daily life in order to make women’s suffering knowable.

While violent State actions against women may be commonplace, the distinct way in which they impact daily life also makes the experience impossible to describe using the political discourses of international legal dialogue (Das 2003). Das labels this “failure of the grammar of the ordinary” (Das 2007a:7) to appropriately describe “how concrete relations and abstract
relations are connected” (Das 2007a:3). Das’s description of the breakdown of language to communicate violent experiences folded into the everyday is essentially her contention that the everyday is eventful, and for the purposes of this dissertation, an essential element of my argument for focusing on everyday, ordinary violence in the lives of refugee women.

When speaking with the victims of sexual violence while working at the refugee legal office in Cairo, I witnessed a similar disconnection between the questions women were asked regarding extraordinary violence (i.e., reflecting theoretical universalism), that limited their ability to discuss personal ordinary experiences (i.e., methodological individualism). Women were asked to respond to testimony questionnaires about their experiences of sexual violence and torture; yet, lack of visible emotion displayed during the retelling of violent sexual histories – a monotone voice, an expressionless face, or a steady (if unfocused) stare – were frequently observed interview reactions. Common responses such as this example are perhaps why I heard, on more than one occasion, legal interns remarking on the ease with which women can recount their histories of sexual violence. I would argue it was not ease that dictated their responses, but a numbed relationship to words frozen by legal language and therefore unchained to emotional experiences. As stated by Das, it takes voice to give life to frozen words (Das 2007a:9).

Because Das equates much of our inability to see connections between the eventful and the everyday to the failure of grammar to make them known, her work explores scenes of activity that are not, or cannot, be told. Das’s form of literary analysis leads her down a dense explanatory path that requires the reader to follow carefully in order to grasp the nuances of the scenes of silence she describes. In this way, her point-of-view often becomes buried in complex theoretical explanations that surround the performative scenes she describes. I would offer that
there is a much more relatable and easier-to-digest form of communication that can, potentially, communicate embodied suffering to a wider audience: visual analysis.

**Theorizing Visual Anthropology: Seeing and Responding to Suffering**

*We are living through a great historical transformation in the imaging, and therefore perhaps also in the experience, of social adversity (Kleinman, et al. 1997:xiii)*

Applied visual anthropology has been defined broadly by Sarah Pink as “using visual anthropological theory, methodology and practice to achieve applied non-academic ends” (Pink 2007:6). This process usually entails engaging as a ‘cultural broker’ in representing one groups experiences to another (Pink 2007). The theoretical perspective underpinning contemporary visual anthropology provides a complementary perspective for seeing the emotional experiences of ordinary violence. Anthropology contributes to this debate through visually based research focused on “what is hidden behind the visible, what is said without speech, what is communicated despite silence” (El Guindi 2004:166).

A recent book by David MacDougall, *Film, Ethnography, and the Senses: The Corporeal Image* (2006) is reflective of the maturation between medical and visual anthropology theory highlighted within this dissertation. For MacDougall, the corporeal image is an alternative method for understanding how our embodied *seeing* shapes our understanding of the world (MacDougall 2006). Corporeality of “the actual physical presence of human beings” reflects they are not just individual bodies but also “a social and psychological presence” (MacDougall 2006:127). Data presented within this dissertation asserts that visual anthropological uses of photography in particular may most effectively show the bodily presence of women whose experiences with violence are often neglected.
Photography certainly has a history of bringing the immediacy of human experiences of violence to our attention. Who can forget the iconic image from 1972 of a young Vietnamese napalm victim running naked down the street after her clothes had been burned off? Or the first images of the Lost Boys of Sudan from the early 1990’s depicting thousands of malnourished boys walking to refugee camps in Kenya in near single file lines that stretched for miles? Or the firefighters from the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 erecting an American flag in front of the dusty wreckage of a collapsed icon? Images such as these remind us of the cost of war, the scale of human suffering, and the precariousness of life in regions that may be distant both geographically and culturally from us, the viewers of these scenes of violence.

However, visual methods provide not just an avenue for seeing extraordinary human suffering from the public displays of war described above, but also avenues for exploring the ‘soft knife of oppression’ and what our responses are to these ordinary events (Das 2003). For example, in her book *Frames of War* (2010), Judith Butler specifically discusses the case of the disturbing photos taken at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad (Graveline and Clemens 2010), asking readers to “consider the way in which suffering is presented to us, and how that presentation affects our responsiveness…how the frames that allocate the recognizability of certain figures of the human are themselves linked with broader norms that determine what will and will not be a grievable life” (Butler 2010:63-64, emphasis in original). In asking us to question when is life grievable, Butler is specifically referencing the ethics of photography in representing the daily suffering of these prisoners. I find her arguments highly useful in

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12 On April 28\textsuperscript{th}, 2004 *60 Minutes II* aired a news report on the psychological, physical and sexual torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad as revealed by the photography of their torturers. Their documentary, as well as an article in *The New Yorker* published soon after, displayed several graphic images of repeated torture committed by police who spurned the Geneva Conventions in their acts of cruelty.
application to how *seeing* violence directly may significantly impact responses to violence. Specifically, her discussion how broader norms that influence “what will and will not be a grievable life” (Butler 2010:64) determine how our gazes may remain restricted from seeing the suffering of those outside the frame – literally and figuratively.

Kleinman, Das and Lock similarly discuss exploring not only “what we represent” and “how we represent it” through photography, but also how seeing relates to the “master moral dilemma” of “what we will, or will not, do to intervene” (Kleinman, et al. 1997:xii). In a manner I find quite similar to Nagengast and Inhorn’s pleas for anthropologists to not turn away from the violence of war relayed earlier in this discussion, Butler, Kleinman, Das and Lock use imagery associated with the social dimensions of embodied pain to ask academics to revitalize their positions as cultural critics and not be complicit in violence by ignoring human suffering in whatever form – extraordinary or ordinary – is may exist.

**Conclusion**

If women’s bodies continue to be victimized daily, then assumptions made regarding those bodies should be interrogated – their individuality, their sociality and their political selves – in order to better understanding and more effectively respond to their suffering. The words that one Sudanese woman spoke to me, when describing the portrait she took of her friend that begins this chapter, illustrates this suffering poignantly. She told me, “I am living, but sometimes I feel like I am dead. Like there is a knife in my heart that I cannot pull out because it will kill me. But if I do not take it out, I cannot live.” She said these words to me at the end of one of our weekly classes where we discussed the images women had taken the prior week. I liked the way in which she had framed her friend, another refugee, and made a comment that the cross formed by the
curtains in the background was striking. “Was this framing deliberate?” I asked her. We had discussed composition of images briefly in our previous class on portraits. She responded in the negative. This was just the way that she always saw her friend when coming home after work – sitting on the couch, silent, staring at the wall. The photographer interpreted this image for me in terms of how she felt in Cairo and how she similarly interpreted her friend’s silence as acknowledgement of the same emotional experience (i.e., living but also dead).

Her image demonstrates a key theme in the data chapters to follow in that there are other ways, visual ways, to capture ordinary emotions of both suffering and healing that words alone cannot describe. For the photographer, the silence of her friend at the end of her workday indicated a space she needed to transition from suffering the ordinary violence of Cairo, to happily meeting her children at the door as they arrived home from school. She needed to distance herself, through silence, from the violence before greeting her children. I find myself thinking there is an incredible form of both victimization and agency contained within this silence – suffering and healing contained within the everyday.
CHAPTER 4: METHODS

Figure 7: Daily walk to work.
Today was our first photography class. Maelle and I finally decided Fridays would be the best day for women to travel to StARS given this is the mass prayer day for Muslims, so women usually have this day off work from their Egyptian employers. This is the first time that I have walked to St. Andrew’s on a Friday morning. The streets were still very crowded, but not with commuters trying to get to work. There seemed to be a younger, male crowd loitering around the end of the Zamalek Bridge. Three men followed me from the base of the bridge till I reached the gates of StARS. I learned a new word in Egyptian Arabic from them – *sharmuta* (prostitute). At the end of class when everyone was picking up their things to leave, a few women engaged me in conversation and asked me where I lived in Cairo. After I told them, I repeated what had happened on the walk to StARS. Three other women in the class stopped their conversations to listen. No one seemed surprised by what had happened. I learned *sharmuta* was a word they heard everyday.
Introduction to Research Participants and Fieldsite

I set out with the goal to conduct this research with a group of South Sudanese refugee women in Egypt with a history of violence. What I soon discovered was that each critical piece of my pre-established parameters for recruiting research participants – ‘South Sudanese’, ‘refugee’ and ‘history’ of violence – were very difficult factors to establish for essentially the same reasons. Violence has been such a constant in women’s lives that ‘South Sudanese’ is as mobile and fluid a term as the men and women who frequently cross its borders. Refugee is a legal concept firmly embedded in changing political ideologies, and a history of violence is a yet to be actualized concept. Yet, my struggle to place women in each category (perhaps imprecisely according to politically accepted criteria) was a mandatory step to follow in understanding the scenes of violence described herein.

Ultimately, I found it necessary to abandon the idea of selecting (or not) research participants based on their previous residence inside the official borders of South Sudan. Firstly, because South Sudan and Sudan have yet to negotiate an official border acceptable to both governments. Secondly, the men and women I worked with at StARS very rarely placed so finite a distinction on their citizenship. To ask them where they were from would be to receive the name of their tribal affiliation, not a national identity. This, of course, has macro implications for the emergence of South Sudan as a nation-state and how they will approach ethnic conflict and nationalism in the future.\(^\text{13}\) (Connor 1972; Helman and Ratner 1992-93; Simpson 1994; Young 2005)

\(^{13}\) For example, an often lodged complaint against now ‘failed’ African states, such as demonstrated by the decades-long civil war in Sudan, was the inability of governments to build nations out of ethnically and religiously diverse societies post-colonial independence (Simpson 1994; Halman and Ratner 1992-93). See Connor (1972) for a general discussion on how glossing over ethnic identity in the process of nation building has contributed to false expectations for unity. See Young (2005) for a specific example of how Connor’s concern’s were actualized during the ‘peace’ process between North and South Sudan in which authoritarian control of the
2005); however, for the specific purposes of selecting research participants what this essentially meant was my designation of choosing women based on their residence in ‘South Sudan’ was not nearly as straightforward in practice as it had seemed in theory. The recruitment of specifically South Sudanese women for this research produced a group of women from Abyei (its present-day borders still contested), the northern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile (both border South Sudan) and the southern states of Western Bahr al-Ghazal (borders Darfur) and Upper Nile (borders Sudan) and Central Equatoria (Figure 8). This diverse group of women – recruited with identification assistance from psychosocial workers at StARS and Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA) on the basis of their nationality as South Sudanese – was comprised of multiple ethnicities and religious ideologies (primarily Christian or Muslim). I later discovered that female research participants identified with the South not on the basis of borders, ethnicity or religion, but upon a shared history of being targeted by the Sudanese government in Khartoum. This is reflective of the fact that when research participants were recruited, it was done specifically by asking for southern Sudanese women.

This conception of identity is perhaps further complicated by the fact that, when asked, women would call themselves Sudanese (i.e., I am Sudanese; ana Sudanî). For example, during our first photography class together I asked if everyone in the room was southern Sudanese. Everyone agreed. I then asked if they would tell the class where they were from originally in South Sudan. Their answers to this question are reflected in Figure 8. Confused about the women who stated they were southern Sudanese, yet came from locations I knew to be in northern south was predominantly negotiated between the non-ethnically diverse top leaders of the northern President’s party, the National Congress Party (NCP), and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM). Young (2005) writes: “there is absolutely no reason to assume that the NCP and the SPLM come anywhere near representing 80% of the Sudanese people” (106). Lack of ethnic diversity in the top leadership of South Sudan has followed this trend post implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
Sudan, I asked these women what country they were from: “*ana Sudani.*” I then asked women who *were* from those regions of the south, what country they were from: “*ana Sudani.*” I expect that these responses will change in the near future as the newness of the South Sudanese independence from Sudan wear off, particularly if peace stabilizes and the citizenship status of southerners living in the North, and northerners living in the South becomes cemented in governmental policies (discriminatory or otherwise). However, for my fieldwork research period – that began just one month after South Sudan achieved official independence – I think women’s answers are reflective of a particularly fluid period of Sudanese citizenship.

Use of ‘Sudanese’ and ‘South Sudanese’ throughout the rest of this manuscript, therefore, is not necessarily reflective of political borders. ‘Sudanese’ will be used primarily to reference those events of the past (pre-Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and for ease of referencing the geographically diverse group of women interviewed for this research – particularly since the women themselves did not discuss ‘Sudanese’ and ‘South Sudanese’ according to political borders. ‘South Sudanese’ or ‘southern Sudan’ will be used when necessary to stress an important political or legal distinction between the North and South.

*Figure 8: Sudanese and South Sudanese bordering states.*

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I also eliminated the criteria of only working with women who were recognized refugees. All of the women who participated in this research, regardless of their status (yellow card, blue card, or closed file as described in Chapter 2) had a history of appealing to UNHCR for assistance in an attempt to gain access to the benefits of refugee status. Through my legal training with the Resettlement and Legal Aid Project (RLAP) at St. Andrew’s Refugee Services (StARS), I gained a great deal of respect for the work that refugee lawyers perform in Cairo; however, they can only perform their humanitarian aid within the legal boundaries of UNHCR policy and procedure (e.g., can they prove an asylum-seeker has a well-founded fear of persecution?). As an anthropologist, I am not under this same restricting definition of refugee and therefore chose not to limit participation to only those who have successfully navigated UNHCR procedure. For the purposes of my research, it was enough to know that these women had tried.

**St. Andrews’s Refugee Services**

St. Andrew’s Refugee Services (StARS), my primary fieldwork site, is a non-profit organization affiliated with St. Andrew’s United Church of Cairo, an interdenominational congregation housed in a stone cathedral built in 1908 and currently hosting seven congregations: an international English-speaking congregation, an Egyptian Arabic speaking congregation and five refugee congregations composed primarily of Sudanese from different sub-regions and tribal affiliations of Sudan. Located in downtown Cairo near Tahrir Square, StARS originally began in 1979 to educate refugees who were forced to migrate to Egypt due to ongoing civil war in their countries of origin and who otherwise would not have access to learning centers (Figure 9). The first refugees StARS assisted were from Sudan, and though this
trend continues today, StARS’s stated mission is to serve all refugees in Cairo, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or religion. StARS currently has a student population of approximately 220 (5-18 years of age) and an adult education program serving more than 600 refugees. In addition to general education classes such as Math, English, and Chemistry, children enrolled in upper level courses at StARS who identify as Muslim have the opportunity to take elective Islamic classes while Christians have options for religious lessons as well.

UNHCR-Egypt’s website categorizes StARS as one of its implementing partners in Cairo (UNHCR 2012b). As recognized refugees in Cairo gain access to free or low-cost services through UNHCR’s implementing partners, StARS educational programming is dependent in large part upon UNHCR financial support in the form of subsidies per student (for school-aged children between 6-18 years old). Due to UNHCR support, school fees are lower for children of recognized refugees than they are for refugee children whose parents lack official status (UNHCR 2011b), and more money is typically spent per pupil by refugee schools in Cairo than by either Egyptian or Sudanese public schools (Glewwe, et al. 2006; Schwarz 2000). Students whose parents lack official refugee status may still have access to refugee schools, though this is highly dependent on the individual policies of each institution and their ability to fund additional children who are not subsidized by UNHCR. UNHCR states that for the 2011/2012 academic year, every eligible refugee child would receive between $151 and $453 in school fees depending on the school and grade of the student, while Egypt spends approximately $226 per pupil per school year (Glewwe, et al. 2006). A study conducted by UNICEF in 2000 estimated the average minimal cost to educate students in South Sudan at $26.25 per student per year (Schwarz 2000).
Today, StARS also offers free psychosocial services and legal assistance through their Resettlement and Legal Aid Project (RLAP) in an effort to meet the contemporary needs of urban refugees. Teachers at StARS, both in the children’s and adult education programs, are either from abroad or the Horn of Africa countries where most refugee students originate (Sudan, Somalia & Eritrea) owing to StARS commitment to involve refugees in the administration and staffing of their programs whenever possible.

Figure 9. Location of StARS in downtown Cairo near Tahrir Square. Tahrir is the central meeting point of Egyptian protestors that increased women’s vulnerability walking to school. In recognition of this, educational programming at StARS closed down during the height of the revolution in early 2011 and has been forced to close several times since for reoccurring protests in the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012. Map courtesy of Google Earth.
Research Strategy and Questions\textsuperscript{14}

An ethnographic approach consisting of interviews, observation, content analysis and photovoice was employed. Interviews, both open-ended (Miles and Huberman 1984; Spradley 1979; Weller and Johnson 2001) and semi-structured (Ryan and Bernard 2000; Spradley 1979), allowed women to express their past histories, current concerns and future hopes. Observations were conducted at (or in the area immediately surrounding) Cairene refugee aid organizations, primarily StARS, but also including Refuge Egypt, AMERA, and the African Hope Learning Centre. Specifically, participant observation (de Munck and Sobo 1998; Miles and Huberman 1984) allowed for greater reflection on how women related to each other in these settings, while direct systematic observation of behavior concentrated on more minute details of how others reacted towards and viewed these women (Johnson and Sackett 1998; Szalai 1972). Content analysis of relevant media was used to illustrate those aspects of women’s lives most often reported by concerned actors of contemporary refugee affairs – international organizations, governments, humanitarian NGO’s and journalists, among others (Hoey 2001; PSEDP 2010). Photovoice captured how women viewed their urban world and their positionality in this environment by giving women control over showing those aspects of their lives they deemed most important (Collier 1967; Pink 2001; Wang 1999; Wang 2003; Wang and Burris 1994).

Open-ended and semi-structured interviews, participant observation, direct systematic observation, and photovoice are primary data sources and these methods were employed to help create an ethnography of the lives of Sudanese women in Cairo. Content analysis, drawing on secondary data sources, provided an important snapshot of public discourse on the Sudanese

\textsuperscript{14} Approval for this research granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of South Florida. IRB#: Pro00003425 (Appendix 1a and 1b).
refugee experience. I envision each of these methods as contributors to an overarching multi-layered visual qualitative approach of the female Sudanese refugee experience. In keeping with this goal, the following research questions\textsuperscript{15}, were addressed:

**Question 1:** How did the gendered war and migration experiences of Sudanese women and girls effectively hide their suffering?

**Question 2:** How do Sudanese women communicate their embodied experiences of war and its refugee aftermath?

These questions are my attempt to understand the embodied experiences of refugee women in order to locate the “suffering and healing that ordinary life reveals” (Das 2007a:15). Question 1 seeks to understand why the historical record of Sudanese displacement focuses on public, extraordinary violence thereby emphasizing the experiences of men and boys and absenting the experiences of women and girls. Here, I am reflecting international relations literature, presented in Chapter 3, reifying dichotomies between men and women (e.g., private/public, individual/social, nature/culture, and ordinary/eventful). Question 2 investigates how reification of these dichotomies not only hides the embodied suffering of women, but also suppresses ability to effectively respond to its existence. Failure to recognize how women communicate phenomenal experience to the current environment and State to which they now belong (as refugees) continues their isolation within private life. Here, I am reflecting on the communicative power of mindful body emotions, also presented in Chapter 3, for forging links between individual, social and political bodies.

\textsuperscript{15} Through the course of my fieldwork and subsequent data analysis, it became clear that my original research questions were inadequate to sufficiently address the complexity of women’s lives. The questions presented here, although different in final form that those presented in my research proposal, still seek to accomplish my original goal in crafting a comprehensive ethnography of the lives of Sudanese refugee women.
Collective Representations

In an attempt to craft an ethnography capable of discussing women’s experience of violence, past and present, it became clear that individual accounts were pivotal to forming a collective picture of their lives. Yet, presentation of these stories in detail and in isolation (as data presented in later chapters will reveal) would dissolve the anonymity promised women when they agreed to participate in this research. Therefore, in describing women’s experiences, I present their words as that of a composite character (condensing several stories into one), referred to as Imraa to protect the identity of women whose personal stories I have been entrusted, and to highlight my conclusions regarding the collectivity of women’s experiences (Angrosino 1998; Angrosino 2002; Narayan 2012). Use of composite characters in qualitative research has been addressed by several anthropologists, most recently Kirin Narayan (2012) and Michael Angrosino (1998). In accordance with Narayan’s (2012) caution that use of this ethnographic writing technique must “be done carefully so that these composites remain socially grounded even as they become fictional inventions,” a detailed strategy (discussed more in depth in the ‘Data Analysis’ section below) was employed for combining women’s stories.

An additional ethical strategy employed (in addition to the informed consent process which had been approved by USF’s Institutional Review Board) with this study was to preface all contact with new research participants with the knowledge that while I was an independent student researcher volunteering with the NGO StARS while in Cairo, I was also under contract from UNHCR to publish the initial findings of my research on their website. Given the tense history of relations between Sudanese refugees in Egypt and UNHCR, I had assumed (incorrectly) that this would present an important challenge I would need to overcome in an attempt to foster trust between myself and the women whom I worked. What I found instead was
that no refugee I spoke with demonstrated concern for this relationship. In fact, I found their general responses to this revelation either along the lines of “good, maybe you can make my situation known to them” or “you can try, but I’m not sure they care.”

**Research Design**

Data collected to answer my research questions progressed in a three-phase research design: Exploratory Phase I, Exploratory Phase II, and Explanatory Phase. Exploratory phases of research were used to develop a grounded hypotheses of women’s daily lives in a move towards “development of more meaningful theory and measures” (Johnson 1998:139). The explanatory research approach was used to test “elements of theory that may already have been proposed in the literature or that have been informed by exploratory research” (Johnson 1998:139). Additionally, visual based data collection methods (observation and photovoice) were prioritized in the research design.

**Exploratory Phase I (August-October 2011)**

As the violence Sudanese women experience (past and present) does not discriminate by age, the term ‘women’ in this article is not used to reference only those individuals who are 18 or older. Both participant and direct systematic observational data was obtained from women of all ages. Interviews were conducted with female refugees fourteen or older. Approximately 10 hours a day, five days a week (Sunday-Thursday) were spent at StARS throughout the fieldwork period with an additional three-hour time commitment on Friday mornings when photography classes were scheduled. Participant observation, or ‘hanging out’ (de Munck and Sobo 1998:41) when approached systematically and repetitively, such as by becoming a daily fixture at StARS, helped
me to “gain entry into their backstage life” in addition to allowing possible research participants
the opportunity to watch, meet, question and get to know me (de Munck and Sobo 1998:41).
This is a method of introduction into a new community that has worked well for me in the past
while conducting research in Kenyan primary schools and orphanages.

Specifically, daily participant observation was conducted at StARS through my
participation in four key areas of their refugee service provision: as a legal intern for the
Resettlement and Legal Aid Project (RLAP); a 4th grade and Senior 1 (i.e., students generally
between the ages of 15-18 years old) teacher for the Children’s Education Program (CEP); an
English teacher for the Adult Education Program (AEP); and a Photography teacher for
Psychosocial Services (photovoice data collection). As an intern at RLAP, I assisted refugees in
Cairo (predominantly Sudanese, Somali, Eritrean and Iraqi) prepare their resettlement
testimonies to UNHCR and, where appropriate, prepare refugee status determination (RSD)
testimonies if they had not yet completed the RSD process. The purpose of these testimonies
was a formal request for resettlement out of Egypt.

In my capacity as a legal intern, I was responsible for conducting intake interviews to
determine if a refugee met the basic criteria established by UNHCR for resettlement. If
successful through this stage, refugees were called back for multiple interview sessions while
their testimonies were prepared. In my participation and observation in resettlement activities –
overseen by two refugee lawyers working for StARS – I became intimately familiar with the
legal process refugees must navigate. From a procedural standpoint, this position provided me
with valuable insight into what information UNCHR deems important for establishing refugee
credibility, and those details considered unimportant. For example, while preparing the testimony
of a young Somali woman I took great care in documenting the details of her escape from prison
to Addis Ababa. This experience comprised nearly a page of text in my preparation of her final
testimony. When a staff attorney edited this document, her escape narrative was deleted and
replaced with one line of text. The explanation provided for this deletion was that these details
of her life were not important for establishing a well-founded fear of her return to Somalia. As
UNHCR-Egypt offices in Cairo were severely understaffed for the number of refugee requests
they were responsible for reviewing, testimonies provided to them by NGO’s such as RLAP
should be concise and targeted to specific agency policies. Therefore, it was enough to state that
this Somali woman was imprisoned for two years before escaping; details for how that escape
occurred were not important. Insight into legal procedures provided by this and similar testimony
editing episodes became very important for later structuring of interviews with my study
population.

For example, towards the end of the research period when I began to conduct lengthy
interviews with women, I noticed that when asking them about their communications with
UNHCR (Appendix 2), women would respond to this question in what felt like (after having
known and interacted with them for several months) a practiced manner. It was not that I thought
the information they were telling me was incorrect, it was more as if their persona changed while
telling their history of communications with UNHCR. Their manner towards me would often
change to a more formal tone (which was very different from most of our interactions together).
After this happened with the first few women I interviewed, I realized that their behavior (and
perhaps my own as well in asking follow-up questions related to violent experiences they had
communicated to UNHCR) reminded me of the women whose legal testimonies I helped to
prepare. By the conclusion of the multiple interviews I would conduct with individual refugees
while working at RLAP, they could recite their histories of violence to me in a very similar
manner to the women I interviewed at the end of my fieldwork period for documenting the displacement narrative and experiences of Imraa. They knew then, what I only came to realize much later: for a refugee with a recorded case file and testimony history with UNHCR, you need to be able to recite the ‘facts’ of your own history of violence without deviating, confusing or overwriting previous communications you have had with the agency. When I felt like the women I interviewed were changing their personalities in front of me; they were in a way changing their personalities. Instead of telling their history to me (Ginger), they were reciting it to a more removed interviewer, such as a UNHCR interviewer. Realization of this, led me to conduct a second interview with women whereby I read to them from their previous interview (this also served as a check to verify that I had recorded their details correctly) and asked women to elaborate on, correct, or add to anything I had recorded about their lives regardless of whether or not these details were ever told to UNHCR. This became particularly important for the themes I discuss within women’s photos presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

As a teacher at StARS, for both children and adults, I spent several hours each day in the company of men, women, teenage and child refugees in a much more relaxed setting that that provided through my work at RLAP. After conducting particularly difficult interviews with RLAP, I would often find myself walking outside to play soccer with some of my younger students in the StARS courtyard. My familiarity with names and faces from my class, provided moments for interaction outside of the classroom at lunchtime, recess and conversing with mothers and female adult students during the afternoon break when CEP classes ended and AEP classes were about to begin. I elaborate further on my role as a Photography teacher in the section describing photovoice methods.
Open-ended questions (with content analysis) were the qualitative method at the beginning stages of fieldwork as their combination was better suited for eliciting information to address past experiences (Spradley 1979). Participant observation, in combination with informal open-ended interviews, (Spradley 1979; Weller and Johnson 2001) during this period to gain general understanding of refugee lives progressed in three stages. Stage 1, ‘stranger stage,’ (learning the rules of society and social interaction); Stage 2, ‘acquaintance stage,’ (greater acceptance of my presence in daily activities of school life); and Stage 3, ‘intimate stage’ (acceptance of my presence and participation in daily activities outside of school context) (de Munck and Sobo 1998). This final stage of participant observation also identified a representative sample of students from diverse backgrounds (educationally and geographically) interested in participating further in research (de Munck and Sobo 1998; Jorgensen 1989; Whiting and Whiting 1973). The Psychosocial Services Directors of StARS and AMERA also assisted in the identification of individuals for recruitment. As both StARS and AMERA are refugee organizations in Cairo with good relationships among the refugees I spoke with; I felt that their support played an important role in lending credibility to my research.

Analysis of women’s images in Chapters 7 and 8 was heavily influenced by my participant observation activities at RLAP and through StARS educational programming. That is, these activities impressed upon me the importance of presenting a balanced picture of women’s lives, from the brutality of war to the pleasures of celebrating important milestones in a child’s life. In working closely alongside refugees in each of the four areas of StARS service provision, I was also able to experience how closely my volunteer responsibilities overlapped with each other. For example, children in my 4th grade class were cousins of a teenager in my photography class; a woman I interviewed at RLAP was a close relative of a man in my adult English class.
Looking back, I believe it was connections such as these that StARS provided me with through their open-door policy for volunteers that helped facilitate my research and lent credibility to my stated goals in wanting to understand all aspects of women’s lives in Cairo.

In addition to this, I engaged in a twice-daily form of participant observation when walking from my apartment to StARS (Figure 7). After learning of women’s fear in waking around Cairo alone (and making note of several admonishments directed at me to be careful outside by the women I worked with), I wanted to gain firsthand experience of what their travels may entail. My apartment in Cairo was located an approximately 45-minute walk from StARS, situated in the middle of Imbaba and Zamalek neighborhoods. These two regions of Cairo, divided by the Nile, are considered to be poor and wealthy locations of the city (respectively). In other words, walking from Imbaba, through Zamalek and into downtown Cairo where StARS is located provided the opportunity to experience a diverse range of Cairene neighborhoods on a daily basis. I usually made this walk once in the morning and again in the late afternoon/night in returning home. By doing this, I quickly learned what areas of my walking path where I was more likely to be verbally harassed, which areas to avoid altogether, and those areas where I was, for the most part, ignored. These experiences, while not replicating those felt by the refugee women I worked with, provided me with valuable insight I drew upon when conversing with and interviewing participants.

Field notes consisting of “jottings” (Emerson, et al. 1995), observations, diagrams of school and contact trees of informal interviewees (de Munck and Sobo 1998) were also data collected – particularly during participant observation and more focused periods of direct systematic observation of behavior. These were expanded upon by re-writing field notes more
fully at the end of each day or week to include my reflective remarks (Miles and Huberman 1984).

**Exploratory Phase II (November 2011- February 2012)**

Based on data collected in the previous phase, exploratory phase II selected a sample of 15 women who were part of initial observation and informal interviews for direct systematic observation of behavior while at school and in the immediate three block area that surrounds StARS in downtown Cairo (Johnson and Sackett 1998). Ten of these 15 women were also participants in my Friday photography classes (discussed below) as part of photovoice methodology. Of the five additional women who participated in semi-structured interviews (outside of the 10 photo class participants), three were mothers of the three teen participants of the photo class, and two were sisters of two adult participants. Direct systematic observation (DSO) built upon information gained during participant observation and interviews by constructing a systematic account of daily activity patterns not dependent upon interviewer memory or cultural expectation biases unconsciously introduced by participant observation (Szalai 1972). Previous research has revealed a strong bias toward men’s activities when participant observation is the only observation method practiced with women’s activities eight times less likely to be reported by anthropologists (Johnson and Sackett 1998:305). While I did not think this outcome would be likely of participant observation given the population of interest, I did desire a more structured and formal observational method in order to record not just women’s activities but also the activities and behavior of those in their immediate surroundings.

DSO utilized random-interval instantaneous sampling methods that were formalized and randomized (Johnson and Sackett 1998). DSO began with participants identified at StARS and
later expanded to include the daily activities of their friends, teachers, mothers, children and extended family members. DSO began in November 2011 and continued throughout most of the remainder of the study period. I estimate that over the course of these months more than 40 days were spent collecting DSO data (observation periods usually lasting approximately 5 minutes) with over 1,000 spot observations made. Careful attention was paid to who interacts with whom on a daily basis, how long and how often activities are performed and patterns in activity performance.

*Explanatory Phase (October 2011-March 2012)*

Insight gained during both exploratory phases of research yielded interview protocols addressing the research questions. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with the DSO participants for approximately 3-4 hours each. The majority of these interviews, due to their lengthy duration, were broken into two interview sessions with the exception of research participants aged 14-17 years (n=3) who only participated in one interview session. The first interview session tended to focus most upon women’s (or their families) history of communication with UNHCR while the second interview session tended to focus on their life experiences that were not touched upon in their UNHCR interview(s). Individual interviews were the chosen qualitative method at this stage of fieldwork due to increased familiarity with the past and present lives of research participants in general, and greater knowledge of the refugee legal system in particular. First interviews sessions were semi-structured while second interview sessions were a combination of semi-structured and open-ended questions as I wanted women to feel free to discuss a range of topics in their past and present lives that were not discussed during their UNHCR interviews (i.e., experiences that were probably not relevant for
establishing a refugee claim, but were of interest to my research questions regarding their daily lives) (see Appendix 2 for interview questions).

In addition to interviews with female research participants, informal interviews were also conducted with local refugee NGO workers. Discussions with persons from these refugee services providers in Cairo – St. Andrew’s Refugee Services (StARS), Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA), Refuge Egypt, African Hope Learning Center and Caritas – helped to clarify the services they provided, the difficulties their organizations encountered during the revolution and their views on violence against refugee women.

AMERA provides pro bono legal aid and psychosocial services for refugees. The organization began in 2000 and was the first legal service provider for refugees living in Cairo. AMERA remains the primary means for refugees in Egypt to obtain free legal aid for their asylum and refugee cases and maintains a working relationship with UNHCR and the resettlement legal team at StARS (i.e., RLAP). Refuge Egypt, a ministry of the Episcopal/Anglican Church (governed by the church diocese of Egypt) is a Christian agency that provides medical services, family support and livelihoods and capacity training for refugees in Cairo. Their provision of medical services in particular fills a vital gap among Egypt’s refugee population. Refuge Egypt operates a clinic at All Saint’s Cathedral in Zamalek, a clinic in Arba Wa Nus and Maadi and plan to open another soon in 6th of October (all of these neighborhoods are located in or around Cairo). African Hope Learning Center (AHLC) is a refugee school located in Maadi that also provides students with at least one meal a day. AHLC is distinct among the scattering of refugee schools in Cairo not in their student population (which is primarily Sudanese like StARS), but in the school curriculum they follow. AHLC does not teach the Sudanese curriculum, instead following a web-based program with a teaching methodology
that is distinctly different from a rote learning technique. Caritas, also a partner of UNHCR, is a non-governmental agency that provides social assistance programs to refugees such as assistance with housing and meeting the needs of those with physical disabilities. Caritas differs from most other refugee assistance organization in that they also provide direct financial assistance to refugees through micro-finance programs established in partnership with UNHCR.

A visual ethnography with Sudanese women engaged in daily activities at school, home, work and social functions was created by participants themselves through the use of photovoice in order to provide an image-based form of documentation (Wang 1999; Wang 2003; Wang and Burris 1994). Photovoice, a form of participatory action research (PAR), involves providing research participants with cameras to self-document their lives. Ten research participants from the DSO group were provided with digital cameras\(^\text{16}\) from October 2011-February 2012. Weekly photo classes at StARS allowed photographers to ask questions regarding basic image techniques and to download and discuss their weekly images. Classes were scheduled for Friday mornings\(^\text{17}\) as most women had this day off from their employers. However, Friday morning classes also presented a challenge, as this was also the day most associated with protests in downtown Cairo. Four scheduled photography classes were cancelled throughout the study period as StARS staff and I determined it would be unsafe for women to travel. On these days, women were called individually to let them know of class cancellation, to inquire about their safety and to answer any questions they may have regarding the current situation in Cairo. Specifically, during these calls, women would sometimes ask if there were any areas of the city we felt they should try to avoid.

\(^{16}\) Digital cameras came equipped with batteries and a 1 gigabyte flash card that would store approximately 325 images with camera settings set at the highest resolution.

\(^{17}\) Friday is the day of prayer Egypt, similar to predominantly Christian religious services held on Sunday’s in the United States.
Each week of class, women were given purposefully broad, general instructions in order to document their lives. For example, during ‘Week 1’ women were given instruction on basic camera operating functions (battery insertion, turning camera on, shutter location, etc.) and an assignment to “photograph people of importance to you” in order to get familiar with operating the camera. During ‘Week 5’ women were introduced to the video function on their cameras and asked to record a short clip of no longer than two minutes “interviewing a close friend or family member” (Appendix 3). Women were asked to take a minimum of 10 photos per week; the maximum limit per week was based only on the constraints of their digital camera (approximately 325 photos at the highest resolution setting). Each week, photos taken from the previous week would be saved on my laptop and the memory card reformatted. Photographers also assisted in data analysis as discussed in greater detail in the section to follow. All participants were given a CD with all of their images and a printed portfolio of selected work at the conclusion of research. Cameras were donated to StARS.

Photovoice was utilized not to supplement the research methodology, but to complement it. As Collier reminds us, use of photography as a data-collecting tool can be used to stimulate numerous lines of inquiry many anthropologists have yet to explore (Collier 1967). A visual ethnography of women’s daily lives as recorded by them, added a crucial viewpoint on women’s lives. The subjective nature of creating visual images paired with the objective nature of the photographs themselves created an important extension of the systematic observation methods employed with this research. The combination of systematic observation techniques with visual ethnographic research methods enabled me to take necessary steps toward ‘multivocality’ in presenting a more complete ethnography (Pink 2001).
Content analysis – a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts – of relevant online newspaper articles, media reports, Internet blogs and human rights organizational papers was conducted using TABARI (Text Analysis By Augmented Replacement Instructions) software with both English and Arabic query terms in order to identify patterns of violence against Sudanese women and to better understand how the media portrayed women’s lives (PSEDP 2010). When used for this specific purpose, I view content analysis as both an exploratory and explanatory data collection method. The collection of international media, through analyzing the online news database of the Sudan Tribune, was crucial for identifying popular descriptive patterns regarding the Sudanese displacement experience (Hoey 2001).

Note on Arabic Language

English is the official language of education in southern Sudan and at StARS; however, Sudanese Arabic was also spoken frequently by several participants (Mahmud 1982; Sandell 1982; USDOS 2010b). Women over the age of 17 (approximately) were more likely to speak Sudanese Arabic as their dominant language. English (to varying degrees dependent primarily upon length of time in Cairo) was spoken as a secondary language. Women under the age of 17 tended to speak Egyptian Arabic and English to a much greater extent (again, to varying degrees) than Sudanese Arabic. Women’s preferred language of communication (English or Arabic) was recorded on the day their cameras were distributed. These digital cameras had the option for instructions to be provided in multiple languages. When going over this function in class, women were asked what their language preferences were while I assisted them in setting up the camera to operate accordingly (i.e., camera operations described in English or Arabic). I made a note of
women who selected Arabic as the language format of their cameras. An interpreter assisted me when necessary during interviews. An interpreter was also present for all photography classes.

Prior to arriving in Egypt and throughout the course of fieldwork, I took formal Modern Standard and Egyptian Arabic lessons. While in Cairo, I received informal Sudanese Arabic lessons from the students in my Grade 4 class and the older teens that I worked with. However, due to the diverse language environment of StARS and my own lack of familiarity with Sudanese Arabic, a Sudanese Arabic speaking translator – a young Sudanese women fluent in English who had been a student at StARS for over a decade – was present during all photography classes and interviews not conducted in English for assistance when needed.

Data Analysis

Participant Observation and Open-Ended Interviews

Jottings, maps, diagrams, interview notes, and observations from participant observation and open-ended interviews were recorded daily in field notes and analyzed on an ongoing basis to produce contact summary sheets, document summary forms and a “start list” of codes based on initial observations (de Munck and Sobo 1998; Miles and Huberman 1984). At the end of each week, I would index and cross-reference these codes selectively based on information I deemed most important to answering my research questions. As has been noted by deMunck and Sobo (1998), my coding system for field notes was not created in an effort to represent “the ‘true’ structure of the process”, but because it offered “a framework for organizing and thinking about the data” (48). My intentions with these codes were to begin the process of reconstructing women’s lives by narrowing down the information that needed to be analyzed with subsequent
exploratory methods. These codes also helped me to identify the most appropriate locations to engage in direct observation.

**Direct Systematic Observation of Behavior (DSO)**

As a preface to beginning DSO, codes created from analyzing participant observation and interview data were organized into a narrative that outlined the activities women engaged in on a daily basis. My goal was to tell the story of a day in the lives of research participants through this start list of codes. This identified ‘cultural scenes’ (i.e., twice weekly walks to school, weekly or bi-weekly community meetings, trips to UNHCR offices or the home of employers) that were likely to yield the most salient systematic observation data. This is how I choose where and when to begin DSO (Spradley 1979). DSO data collected (i.e., number of interactions, time, repetition) were coded, quantified and entered in a Microsoft Excel file at the conclusion of each week for analysis in PASW Statistic 18 using cross tabulation tables and charts.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

With permission, interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and selectively transcribed using Microsoft Word and the playback functions of the .wav audio file of each interview. Selective transcription was utilized as a concession to practicality due to the extended length of most interviews. During each semi-structured interview session, I would have the list of codes created from exploratory research readily available. When any of these topics were touched upon during data collection, each code would receive a time stamp based on the recorders’ corresponding information. Time stamped audio sections were then transcribed and uploaded to ATLAS.ti using ‘frequency of codes’ and ‘word frequency’ analysis functions.
Variables such as gender, age, family status, and length of time in Cairo were also recorded in for each interviewee.

**Photovoice**

Given the large data sets produced by each photographer (women averaged approximately 500 photos each throughout the research period), analysis of images was ongoing during fieldwork and continued after I returned from Cairo. As each weekly photography class consisted of viewing women’s photos taken the previous week, spontaneous discussions of particular images was a natural and deliberate result of how classes were structured. Class discussions of images became even more pronounced as the weeks progressed and women became more familiar with each other and me. During each class, I would make note of which images produced the most discussion and/or which images corresponded to codes created during observation and interviews. Immediately at the conclusion of each weekly class, I would place the photos discussed during class in a file on my laptop with the photographer’s name, date, and a brief caption for each image. At the completion of research during photo-elicitation interviews, photographers chose a set of still and moving images (ranging from 5-50 still images and 1-5 moving images depending on how prolific each women was during the photography course) from my pre-selected photo sets to illustrate the ‘photostory’ they wished to tell about their lives in Cairo. Women were asked if there were any images not in my pre-selected photo folder that they wished to include, and if there were any images they wished to delete from consideration. Several women utilized both of these options.

After the completion of fieldwork (and an incredibly helpful suggestion from my advisor), I printed out all images contained within each woman’s folder and placed them on my
office walls with sticky putty. This left me with approximately 350 photos printed at 4x3 inches in size. This was done to further narrow down images for selection and analysis and to verify that my (with women’s additions) initial selection of photos for discussion during photo-elicitation interviews were reflective of the dominant themes of women’s photography. I lived with these images on my office walls for several months. While analyzing non-photo data or researching on another topic of relevance, my eyes would wander around the (at first) haphazardly placed images surrounding me. Perhaps an image of a child laughing would be placed next to a women sorting through garbage and my gaze would linger there. Or perhaps the lonely image of a woman’s shadow placed next to a candlelight community celebration on New Year’s Eve would hold my momentary attention. Over the course of several months, I migrated these randomly placed images into two distinct groupings on the wall. These groupings, and the themes they represent, form the basis of how Chapters 7 and 8 are organized.

Content Analysis

Data generated from content analysis tended to begin no earlier than 1995 and extended into August 2012, when data collection ended. Restrictions upon the beginning date of data collection were to be expected as use of the Internet for news publishing was not popular prior to its being decommissioned (i.e., restrictions removed for commercial traffic) in the mid-1990s. Keywords for context analysis inputted into the TABARI system were chosen based on identified patterns from exploratory research and a review of relevant literature. For example, in October of 2010, nine months before leaving for fieldwork in Egypt, I set-up a ‘Google Alert’ on my email account that would send me bi-weekly news stories related to current conditions in South Sudan. I did this in an effort to monitor the progression of independence from Sudan as outlined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This constant monitoring of up-to-date news
from Sudan provided me with the start list for frequently used words in the titles of these bi-weekly news updates. After arriving in Cairo and beginning fieldwork, I added to this list of frequently used words based on the exploratory phase of research (e.g., Mustafa Mahmoud, blue card, yellow card were added to the list during my first few months in Cairo). This list is therefore a combination of research I conducted prior to leaving for Egypt and data obtained while there (Table 4).

Table 4: List of terms initially used to program TABARI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sudan</th>
<th>Sudanese</th>
<th>southern Sudanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese refugees</td>
<td>protest in Cairo</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td>Mustafa Mahmoud</td>
<td>four freedoms legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969 OAU Convention</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mubarak assassination attempt</td>
<td>refugee status</td>
<td>refugee status determination interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 Convention</td>
<td>yellow cards</td>
<td>blue cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>police brutality</td>
<td>detention</td>
<td>refugee detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detention of Sudanese refugees</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These above words were cross-referenced through a unit-by-unit variable matrix (Ryan and Bernard 2000) in order to produce results of relevancy – with one important exception. I did not want to produce those results that were likely to only yield data on women. You will notice that nowhere in the keywords are women, violence against women, or female refugees listed to the exclusion of men. This was important in an attempt to create a dataset of non-gender biased relevant news stories for creating the composite stories presented in Chapter 5. I collaborated with Brant Tudor, a PhD student in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the
University of South Florida, who used this initial keyword list to set up an automated data collection and coding system using TABARI.

Online data mining using the TABARI software began with identification of relevant online news sources to follow initially: Pambazuka News, Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice, Al Ahram and Al Ahram Weekly, Al Akhbar, Al Gomhuria, Al Messa, Al Osboa, Al Wafd, Cairo Times, Egyptian Gazette, Sudan Tribune, IRIN News (Integrated Regional Information Networks), Juba Post and Reuters. In addition to this, TABARI software offers a filter for use with SQL (or Structured Query Language) databases such as LexisNexis that we utilized for data collection of relevant Sudanese news sources in order to include a broad range of actors (i.e., non-academic media to academic policy reports) in data analysis. This was accomplished by linking my student library account to the TABARI system. Output of data generated from TABARI were reviewed once in November 2011, again in December 2011, and for a final time in July 2012 in order to analyze and modify the search parameters to produce the most relevant results. For more information on this process please see Appendix 4.

Data collected by TABARI was presented in the following format: the original publishing date (in year-month-day format), the source of data, a unique ID number, and an article text segment containing one or more keywords. For example:

**000920 ID_SudanTrib-000040**

The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) announced that it would send home about 12000 southern Sudanese from Ethiopia next year. In a statement issued on Friday the refugees body said about the half of 26492 Sudanese refugees, 12000 refugees, agreed to be repatriated to Sudan in 2009.
This text segment was identified by TABARI as a relevant news article and pulled from the Sudan Tribune with an original publication date of September 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2000 (i.e., ‘000920’). A test run of the automated system in November 2011 revealed that the majority of data generated using our system was pulled from Reuters, LexisNexis, Al Ahram and the Sudan Tribune due to the frequency of published data via these sources. In November, TABARI returned: 2,641 articles from Reuters dating back to 2007; 5,947 articles from LexisNexis dating back to 1995; 5,545 articles from Al Ahram dating back to 2010, and 7,589 articles from the Sudan Tribune dating back to 1998. After analyzing these results, data collection was modified slightly and a second test of the system was run in December 2011 producing a significantly higher number of articles from regional sources (e.g., 19,000+ articles dating back to 1995 from the Sudan Tribune). Returned data were analyzed again for fit in July 2012 with the final configuration of the system completed in August 2012 with a combined total of over 67,000 individual textual segments from relevant news media.

Content analysis data presented in Chapter 5 was extracted exclusively from data returned from the Sudan Tribune TABARI query. This was done for two reasons: (1) practicality, given the amount of time it would take to analyze all data collected, and (2) relevancy, given that the Sudan Tribune frequently re-publishes international news media\textsuperscript{18} of relevance to Sudan providing justification for using this one media source as a lens for reviewing a contemporary history of Sudan. The Sudan Tribune is a non-government affiliated, non-profit website publication that began in Paris in 2003. It is published in both English and Arabic, with a goal “to promote plural information,

\hspace{1cm}
\textsuperscript{18} This was confirmed by multiple TABARI results of relevance returned that illustrated republished content from the Sudan Tribune from other news media sources analyzed.
democratic and free debate on Sudan” (Tribune 2013).

Composite Characters

The name of my composite character is based on transliteration of the Arabic word for woman (*Imraa*). Creation of her composite character involved the systematic condensing of several women’s stories into one master narrative based on selected themes. The resulting character is therefore fictional, yet crafted through real-life narratives collected from women during fieldwork and through systematic analysis of published online media.

I use composite characters throughout this work for three reasons: (1) to thoroughly anonymize the sensitive details of women’s violent experiences, (2) to reinforce the many similarities within their stories, and (3) to provide women with a collective narrative (both verbally and visually) that history has denied them. Upon the first point, given the level of detail and the specificity of violent scenarios women had entrusted me with during our interviews, I felt that providing pseudonyms alone would not suffice for protecting their identities particularly given my use of their images paired with past events in their lives (Chapter 8). However, the repetition and frequency with which women spoke about their experiences in Sudan, traveling (most often alone or while caring for young children) to reach Cairo and their treatment once reaching the city, allowed me to present a cohesive fictional person, based on individual experiences.

Because women’s experiences were so similar in regards to several themes and because these experiences have largely been suppressed (both historically and contemporarily as this dissertation will discuss), I felt it was important to provide readers of my work with a collective narrative upon which to view their gendered experiences of war and its aftermath.
However, this method is not without controversy. Several highly publicized cases using composite characters in violation of journalistic ethics (e.g., Cooke’s *Jimmy’s World* and Finkel’s *Youssouf Male*) are well-known. Uses of these characters in journalism provides important possibilities for literary exposition, but have been used erroneously by authors to falsify data. These authors have been neither explicit about their use of the method, nor forthcoming with how their character(s) were created. In contrast to these controversial cases, I do both, following a systematic and very detailed method from prior researchers, attending to the representativeness of details selected to constitute the composite individual story (Table 5).

Composite character creation for this work involved compiling threads (sentences or paragraphs of text) from women’s individual stories into a structured composite narrative based upon frequently reported or observed cultural scenes. As described by Kutsche, it is this structured organization that differentiates between ethnography and creative writing (Kutsche 1998). Prior to constructing the composite character description of Imraa, analyzed data from all methods were clustered around the research questions. When an aspect of women’s lives aligned with one of these questions, this piece of her story was added to a list of narrative data for potential use. Collected data were further grouped into larger information units (“meaning units”) according to topic. In a manner consistent with Creswell’s simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of narrative analysis (Moustakas 1994), each segment of story isolated in this manner was treated equally with the intention that a story arc of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements and experiences would be generated for a master narrative (composite) of thematically described aspects of women’s displacement experiences (Table 5).

Once this outline was established, a “textural description” of *what* had happened to women was written relying primarily upon content analysis and semi-structured interview data. This was
followed by a “structural description” of how the experience happened (relying primarily upon observation data) (Creswell 2007). These levels of description were then fused into one story line representing a composite character that captured the essence of multiple refugee lives. This process was repeated through the creation of the composite Lost Boy character depicted in Chapter 5 (more on this method under ‘Content Analysis’ and in Appendix 4).

Table 5. Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analyzing phenomenological data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Obtain a full description of the experience of the phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>From the transcripts (or content analysis) of the description of the experience of each participant, complete the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Consider each statement with respect to significance in describing the experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Record all relevant statements related to the research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>List each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement (i.e., meaning units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes established in codebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience (including verbatim examples)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Construct a textural (i.e., what was experienced) and structural (i.e., how it was experienced) description of the meanings of the experience into a common description (Moustakas 1994:121-122).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mobility: Context and Constraints

As these methods were chosen in order to capture the nuances of women’s daily lives from a range of concerned actors, I think it is important to also describe briefly how the refugees I worked with viewed my role as a researcher in Cairo and how this differed from my own expectations. The labels I had most expected and mentally prepared myself for – privileged, female, American, Christian\(^\text{19}\), foreigner – never became nearly as salient as the label of non-refugee. What singled me out most as non-refugee among the women I worked with was not that

\(^{19}\) In the Islamic dominant religious context of Cairo, it is a general assumption that if you are a foreign American women, particularly one who does not wear hijab, you are Christian.
I had not crossed a border to escape the level of violence they had, but my geographic mobility. A commonly stated desire of the refugees I worked with – cutting across gender, age, religion and nationality – was to exist somewhere other than Egypt. Egypt was not their final destination, but a waiting room of indeterminate length where many cling to the diminishing hope of resettlement that less than 1% of all registered refugees will ever receive (GAO Report 2009). Life in Egypt for these women was very often uncomfortable and unwelcoming and the only viable recourse they had out of this situation was resettlement or repatriation (voluntary return to a nation they had fled in fear).

I had flown into Egypt on a commercial jet, walked through airport security with only a cursory glance at my papers by security and would be able to leave the country whenever I chose in exactly the same manner. Refugees who frequently come into contact with Americans through humanitarian aid organizations and UNHCR were quite of aware of the significant difference in geographic mobility between an American passport and that of a Sudanese. An often repeated conversation with my Grade 4 class during geography lessons was indicative of this understanding even by children as young as 8-years-old. For example, when I first introduced myself to the class as their teacher for the semester I was asked a volley of questions in rapid succession that went something like this: How did you get to Egypt? Why would you want to leave America for Egypt? What was your trip like? Did you come by plane? What did the airport look like? Were there a lot of guards at the airport? How long will you stay? When will you leave? Why did you leave your family to come here? This line of questioning would frequently resurface throughout the semester as new topics related to world geography would emerge. What I found most striking in relation to children’s questions was the general assumption by all that my stay was impermanent. Even as young as some of my students were, they understood
foreigners as persons who would come and help them for a short period of time and then return to their homes. When I asked a 12-year-old student in my class, who had attended the school since she was 6-years-old, why she thought all foreigners would leave – a legitimate question I felt given the school’s director was a British women who had lived in Cairo for the entirety of her educational experiences – she replied, “Why would anyone want to live here unless they had to?”

Given the closure of UNHCR operations during the height of the revolution in January 2011 and subsequent removal of non-Egyptian personnel from the country, geographic mobility of non-refugee foreigners was vivid in the memory of many students who felt abandoned by those charged with their protection. This desertion was a frequent topic of discussion of the teens I worked with, male and female, as much more pressure is placed on older students to perform well in school and pass their final exams. Closure of UNHCR, cessation of its financial services and closure of StARS during periods of intense protests were all linked events that derailed children’s education, decreased their confidence in passing their Spring exams, and heightened the lack of geographic mobility they faced when left behind in Cairo by many foreign allies who could leave the country whenever they chose. Though I felt the adult women I worked with understood this dichotomy of refugee vs. non-refugee with regards to geographic mobility in much the same manner as the younger refugee girls spoken with, their reactions to my departure provided a marked contrast to the inquisitiveness of youth and sometimes anger from teens. Adult women were more likely to respond by saying, “Inshallah (God willing) I shall see you there someday.”

Simply put, my ability to leave Egypt, much more so than any other factor, made me an outsider among my chosen participants. This was not an issue where I could try to approximate
their experience as I attempted to do by walking to StARS (Figure 7). They were bound to remain in Egypt until something definite changed in their circumstances. I was not. Once reaching this conclusion, my method of addressing participant’s concerns, perhaps particularly my teenage friends, was to discuss my eventual departure as often and openly as possible in connection with the multiple ways I could be contacted after leaving Egypt. All of the women I worked with had my school information and my email address, and for those familiar with Facebook – typically the 14 to 18 year-olds – were invited to contact me this route. What I most wanted to avoid, was any research participant inquiring where I was after my departure. I discussed leaving Egypt in March in definite terms and generally found that women responded positively to this, especially the younger women, towards the end of my fieldwork. Instead of rolling their eyes or becoming non-responsive in class, they began to ask me questions such as: Was I looking forward to seeing my family? When would I finish my degree? Would I ever be coming back to Egypt after I graduated?

Recognition of my positionality in this context as that of non-refugee also allowed for greater reflection on how violence had permeated all aspects of women’s lives such that it was no longer extraordinary but expected. This knowledge was invaluable in executing a research strategy geared towards an ethnography of their daily lives. As I sought to understand hidden or ignored aspects of women’s daily lives, the violence they experienced in Cairo was always impermanent for me (as a non-refugee) and therefore anything but ordinary. Because of this, I constantly struggled with understanding what I believe were two very different ways of experiencing Egyptian political upheaval: refugee and non-refugee. It was this ever-present struggle for understanding that assisted me in data collection and analysis by forcing me to pay
attention to differential experiences of violence – of persons living in the same city – according to their ability to leave (or not) whenever they choose.

For example, I remember walking outside of a StARS office one night in October 2011 to the sounds of a large crowd of Egyptian protestors chanting for the martyrs of the revolution. Two other American staff from StARS joined me on the wall overlooking downtown Cairo as we watched the excitement of the protesting crowd march past the school gates. I may even have been smiling in wonderment at their fervor. I glanced behind me briefly to see a young refugee women attending night English classes frantically leave her classroom for sanctuary in the church. I’ll never forget the expression of panic on her face as she ran away from the school gates. What was a novel and extraordinary experience for me was, for her, a situation she fearfully endured.

A final point to note is that contained in the brief excerpt from my field notes at the start of this chapter (on my experiences as a foreign women frequently walking alone on the streets of Cairo). This is the worst example of aggravation I faced; it is the most innocuous kind of harassment the women who participated in this research dealt with on a daily basis. In the chapters to follow, we will see how the verbal and sexual violence Sudanese women face daily affects their lives and activities in Cairo.
CHAPTER 5: CROSSING SUDAN

Figure 10: Request for women’s return to South Sudan.
A southern Sudanese community leader visits a refugee church in Cairo in order to tell female members of the congregation to leave Egypt and return to South Sudan. “Daughters of the South,” he said, “Stop wasting your time here. Your country needs your help rebuilding. Our families and communities need you. It is your duty to return.”

Two weeks after the event I asked one of the female participants, a dancer on stage with the businessman, if she planned to return.

“No,” she said.
Introduction

In seeking to understand the contemporary lives of refugee women in Egypt, it is important to first analyze how and why they came to leave Sudan. This quickly became apparent to me after comparing women’s stories in crossing Sudan to the Sudanese history I thought I was already familiar with before my arrival in Cairo. Despite having a very exclusive focus on Sudanese women and girls with this research, I realize that the political history and context provided in Chapter 2, privileges the male displacement perspective. This commonly regurgitated Sudanese history focuses upon civil war between the North and South, political maneuvering by both the Khartoum government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the activities of soldiers, the large statistics involved in the numbers of citizens killed and displaced, and the common narrative of a group of Sudanese refugee boys who courageously fled the violence of civil war for safety in a neighboring country – the Lost Boys of Sudan.

It is easy to recount these details, as they were well-known, well-researched, and well-documented elements of Sudanese history. Yet, most of this historical data draws heavily upon the displacement experiences of men and boys. In seeking to focus upon those aspects of Sudanese history of relevance specifically to women, my task was more arduous. Why? In order to try and understand why we know so little about the experiences of Sudan’s women and girls (and why what we do know is based much more on speculation and rumors of rape), I use the public/private political framework (MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Rapp 1979; Rosaldo 1980; Strathern 1984; Yanagisako 1979) to reconstruct the narrative of Sudanese children displaced by war, and to interrogate why we could see the suffering of Sudan’s Lost Boys yet the experiences of the Lost Girls remained hidden for well over a decade.
The public life of men is often associated with economy, State, and politics, serving to reify their role in business, military and political life as universal. The private life of women is one assumed to be tied to their biological body-selves, associated with domestic life and therefore linked to the role of mother, wife and family caretaker. I use the private life of women argument of political and international relations literature (Elshtain 1981; MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Rosaldo 1980; Sjoberg 2011) to explain why their lives remained hidden from political and international gazes during the height of the Sudanese Civil War(s), as well as many years later. Therefore this chapter focuses on addressing the absence of women in the historical conflict narrative of Sudan.

**Part I: Media Representation of Lost Boys and Lost Girls**

*Walad – A Sudanese Lost Boy*

Upon review of content analysis data that returned a glut of news information on the displacement experiences of boys and very little on the experiences of girls, I realized I needed to carefully analyze this pronounced gender reporting bias. I create a composite character, a Lost Boy’s well-publicized narrative to contrast with the largely unknown, unreported and unpolticized displacement narrative of the Lost Girls of Sudan. Here I relate the experiences of “Walad” (a close approximation of the transliterated Arabic word for ‘boy’) a Lost Boy from Sudan displaced by the Second Sudanese Civil War. The common narrative of the life of Walad is told through content analysis of online media published by the Sudan Tribune (1995-2005) in order to highlight the ‘public’ nature of his displacement experiences. I reconstruct his narrative from the multiple newspaper sources collected from the Sudan Tribune (via TABARI) in order to show how the displacement experiences of Sudanese people during the civil war is constructed
through information filtered by media. Using the TABARI computer software program, over 20,000 news stories published in the Sudan Tribune from the last 17 years were collected. Of these 20,000+ articles, 2,419 published between February 28th, 1995 and January 10th, 2005 focused specifically on the Second Sudanese Civil War (79.9% of these articles originating from 2004 alone).

These figures are representative of both early uses of the Internet for news during its infancy in the 1990’s, and the explosion of media war-related content posted in 2004 – one year before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan would be finalized. I reviewed these 2,419 news sources for reference to displacement caused by the violence and 313 articles were discovered (the end date of January 10th, 2005 chosen as this was one day after the CPA was signed, see Appendix 5). These 313 stories were selected for further analysis in characterizing the displacement of Sudanese children and subsequently used to create the composite character of Walad presented below. His narrative is one I tell through the admittedly imperfect and biased gazes of the journalists and humanitarian aid workers who published the majority of news data regarding his life. The story I tell regarding the life of Walad would likely be different if told from the perspective of the individual children themselves displaced by war. Yet, by systematically constructing and analyzing the similar ways in which children and youth have been discussed (or not) in the media, valuable insight is gained into how the suffering of children in particular is constructed and represented on an international level.

The narrative of Walad began with analysis of the 313 stories returned by TABARI as relevant given the previously stated search parameters. The news stories were scanned for ‘displacement experience’ codes created during fieldwork (i.e., codebook) and through selective transcription and analysis of women’s interviews (i.e., Imraa) when they referred to their
childhood experiences. During analysis of TABARI data, one additional code was added to the list (SUR) as this was specific to the male displacement experience (i.e., Walad) (Table 6). Segments of text describing displacement experiences were labeled with their associated codes, highlighted in the TABARI program (for easy identification at a later date if necessary), and copied and pasted into a separate Word document. In addition to being grouped together by code, these text segments were organized temporally according to the historical record of Sudanese conflict (e.g., Sudanese refugee flight to Western Ethiopia, followed by expelling of refugees from Ethiopian camps, followed by their entrance into camps in northern Kenya, etc.).

Repetitive text segments were then deleted, pronouns were inserted to reflect a first person point-of-view (e.g., ‘boys stayed together and attended a school run by aid workers’ was changed to ‘I stayed with the boys and attended a school run by aid workers’), minor grammatical changes were made to increase readability and in creation of full sentence structures. Finally, sentences were collapsed into a single narrative.

Imraa – A Sudanese Lost Girl

In contrast to Walad’s displacement narrative, I present Imraa’s ‘private’ experiences. Imraa is no longer a displaced Sudanese girl, but a refugee women contemporarily living in Cairo, Egypt. Hers is not a story I could tell (even as a composite character) through content analysis of relevant media because of the utter lack of attention to her experiences. Other than rumors of her rape during the war, her story is not public knowledge. The only repetitive portion of her story I can convey cohesively through content analysis of the media data I collected is that she was one of the ‘some’ girls who had maybe escaped, maybe died, or maybe been enslaved by soldiers. Of those news stories analyzed from 1995-2004 that did mention her rape/enslavement,
one story published by UNHCR in 2002 focused on girl’s lives exclusively. This one story provides several explanations for why girls were, “forgotten in the hoopla about Sudan’s Lost Boys” (Nyabera 2002:8): (1) Sudanese cultural traditions demanded girls be fostered with refugee families instead of living alone or in groups with other children, (2) Sudanese girls were considered desirable by their adopted families for the bride price they would bring when married, and (3) as an important source for domestic labor girls often could not attend school regularly (Nyabera 2002:8). The few news stories returned by TABARI discussing the displacement of Sudan’s girls provide additional insight as to why the suffering of girls remained hidden through their forced domestic and sexual servitude for soldiers. Imraa’s narrative, presented below, supports this conclusion (see Appendix 5 for full listing of news stories returned by TABARI that support this conclusion).

I use these factors as examples of the “hidden” lives of girls and, by extension, history’s silence regarding the female displacement experiences of those girls who did make it to refugee camps with the boys. Because the composite character of Imraa could not be created through the media data I collected, I recreate her experiences from the displacement narratives of women interviewed in Cairo during my fieldwork between the approximate ages of thirty-one and forty-seven years old (i.e., children when the Second Sudanese War began). Creation of the composite character Imraa progressed in exactly the same manner as that of Walad with the exception that initial data for coding her narrative was retrieved from my interviews with women in Cairo, rather than media data collected by TABARI. The resulting narratives of Walad and Imraa are therefore fictional in their final execution (as presented below), yet based on factual information from the experiences of Sudanese refugee boys reported by the media, or the personally recorded narrative of refugee women living in Cairo.
Why Analyze the Life of Walad and Imraa?

The primary reasons I think it important to return to the historical, dominant media displacement narrative of Sudanese children is because: (1) the past experiences of these children continue to impact their lives today as refugees in important and distinctly gendered ways (as discussed in Chapter 7), and (2) the narrative of girls has been repressed for far too long. Imraa deserves to have her story told. In recognition that the displacement experiences of boys and girls are different, Walad and Imraa’s narratives are preceded by a Sudanese historical overview that privileges their specific, gendered experiences of war. Each character’s narrative is then followed by an analysis of key points in the story that reinforce a public male life/private female life of the Sudanese displacement experience, effectively hiding the lives and experiences of women crossing Sudan seeking refuge.

By recreating the narrative of Sudan’s Lost Boys through content analysis, I am emphasizing that their experiences were distinctly different from the experiences of girls. Through recreation of the narrative of Sudan’s Lost Girls though interviews I conducted with women in Cairo (more than two decades later), I am emphasizing that Imraa’s narrative could not be created through content analysis given the dearth of published information I could find about her life. Suppression of a collective female experience has important implications for the events in the lives of Lost Girls that led their isolation and displacement to Egypt.
Table 6: Displacement experience codes used with TABARI for creation of composite characters – Walad and Imraa. The themes collected and analyzed for creating the characters of Walad and Imraa are based upon historical experiences that led to the different displacement experiences of boys and girls – and so vastly different international attention and assistance dedicated to these children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code Description: Walad</th>
<th>Code Description: Imraa</th>
<th>Gender Differential (M/F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATK</td>
<td>...I and my brothers spent years moving... / ...tending cattle in the fields when the village was attacked...</td>
<td>...When our village was attacked, I was with two friends in their home...</td>
<td>Outside village during attack/Inside village during attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>...together we walked...walked to Ethiopia barefoot...</td>
<td>...the soldiers pointed their guns only at me.../...soldiers separated us so we did not get to speak.../...My husband did not come back</td>
<td>Group/Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...we continued to stay together...</td>
<td>...I met and married a Dinka man. I was about 15-years-old and wanted a home...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST</td>
<td>...boys...would use to teach us... / ...tried to take care of the younger boys...</td>
<td>...a women on the boat.../...Three elderly women taught me .../...two Sudanese women who let me stay with them...</td>
<td>Consistent assistance from group/Periodic assistance from strangers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIL</td>
<td>...SPLA soldiers found us...</td>
<td>...Rebel soldiers kidnapped me at gunpoint...</td>
<td>Military conscription/Military ‘wives’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU</td>
<td>...attended a school run by aid workers... / ...I finished my...education...</td>
<td>...I wonder if people with more education can remember better than me? I did not go to school...</td>
<td>Access to education/No or limited access to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>...chased with tanks across a crocodile-infested river.../ ...Lions followed...</td>
<td>...at night several men would rape me.../...They raped me and left.../...He attacked me...</td>
<td>Violence details known &amp; accepted, bravery emphasized in retelling/Violence details unknown &amp; must be proved, taboos emphasized in retelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued)

| SUR  | ...I was lucky. I survived...  
|      | ...also a blessing... / ...I realized I was just one of thousands... | N/A | Acknowledged survivor identity/ [No female equivalent code found] |
| RST  | ...accepted into a resettlement program... | ...and you don’t answer the same way... And then you get denied... | Accepted for resettlement/Denied for resettlement |
| MEM  | N/A | ...Should I remember this?... | [No male equivalent code found] /Repeated questioning of personal memory |
Nationalist movements have rarely taken women’s experiences as the starting point for an understanding of how a people becomes colonized or how it throws off the shackles of that material and psychological domination. Rather, nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope (Enloe 1989:44).

Figure 11: Unaccompanied minors. “Unaccompanied minors trekked hundreds of miles to reach Fugnido camp. They have become popularly known as ‘the lost boys of Sudan,’ … UNHCR / M. Amar / February 1989.” Image courtesy of UNHCR.
Part II: Walad and Imraa’s Stories

Walad’s Historical Context

In May of 1983, Sudanese President Nimeiri redrew the political boundaries of the autonomous region of southern Sudan into three provinces – Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria, and Greater Upper Nile – encompassing ten different states. This was a highly contested political boundary in the South as it reverted southern Sudanese provinces to their pre-1972 boundaries (Beswick 2004; Gurdon 1984). This unpopular action in the South was viewed as a method by which Nimeiri could divide the South, weaken the government, and exploit tribal tensions, particularly between Dinka (the largest tribe in southern Sudan) and non-Dinka. This decree was soon followed in September of 1983 by the equally unpopular introduction of Islamic Sharia Law to southern provinces dominated by Christian and animist beliefs (Gurdon 1984).

Coinciding with renewed tensions between the North and South in 1983 was an economic recession felt by both hemispheres as well as the beginnings of a severe drought that would reach its peak in 1988. Citing data from a displacement camp in Greater Upper Nile, along the North-South border, Alex de Waal has stated that the effects of the famine and its resulting disease in the South cannot be “over-emphasized” with recorded famine rates:

Five times higher than the worst of the Ethiopian refugee camps in the eastern Sudan in 1984-5, 18 times as bad as the worst camps in the Red Sea Hills at that date, 60 times worse than the overall death rate recorded for Sudanese famine victims in Darfur in 1985, and 90 times as high as the death rate in one village in the west African Sahel during the 1970s famine (de Waal 1993:158).
Nimeiri’s new laws and an economic recession compounded by massive foreign debt added to the list of grievances the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) had against the Khartoum-centric government of the North, fueling a new decade of civil war that coincided with perhaps the worst famine the country had experienced in recorded history. John Garang de Mabior, a southern Sudanese Dinka rebel soldier who had fought in the First Sudanese Civil War (later absorbed into the National Army after the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972), became leader of the SPLA (Gurdon 1984; Jok 2001).

The SPLA was formed with the full backing of the Ethiopian Dergue Communist regime so long as its military command remained under the control of Garang. At the time, Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam was fighting a proxy ‘cold war’ with Sudan. President Nimeiri was allied with the Reagan administration of the United States, while President Mengistu supported then leader of the Soviet Union, Chairman of the Presidium Yuri Andropov. President Mengistu provided Garang much needed support in his rebellion by giving the SPLA control over running Sudanese refugee camps along the border of Ethiopia and Sudan, therefore allowing southern defecting soldiers control over the shipment and distribution of international food aid to the camps.

There were three primary Sudanese refugee camps established in Ethiopia near its Eastern border with Sudan – Fugnido, Itang and Dima – with conservative estimates from June 1990 reporting a total population from each at 76,000+, 150,000+ and 20,000+ refugees respectively (HRW/A 1994). This ended in 1991 when Khartoum supported Ethiopian rebels, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), overthrew Mengistu. Some 250,000 South Sudanese refugees were forced out of Ethiopia by the EPRDF after the collapse of Mengistu’s government. Returning refugees were promptly bombed by the National Army upon
crossing the border, with survivors scattering throughout southern Sudan and northern Kenya (Jok 2001). A refugee camp in northern Kenya, Kakuma, was formed in 1992 to absorb many of the southerners who had escaped Ethiopia. Located 110km from the Sudanese border and 50km from the Ugandan border, Kakuma is situated in a semi-arid area “prone to recurring drought…low economic viability” and “characterized by high insecurity” (Ochola 2004:1). Its population size in May of 2001, was over 74,000 (HCDS 2001).

There emerged from the devastation of the Second Sudanese Civil War, arguably one of the most well-known and well-documented displacement stories of the modern media world – the Lost Boys of Sudan (Figure 11). There have been few refugee narratives in contemporary history that have captured international media attention, international refugee aid, and international advocacy efforts so completely and for such a sustained period of time as the life histories of these southern Sudanese children. Taking on the qualities of any celebrated mythology – spontaneous stories repeated by multiple authors of overcoming extreme obstacles, surviving against all odds, enduring violence and eventually overcoming adversity – the Lost Boys of Sudan is a narrative that contains powerful sub-currents of a masculine Sudanese identity tied to male strength, courage and bravery. Anderson argues that historically, it is these collective myths and narratives that are necessary for creating a feeling of communion between strangers (Anderson 1991). Mythology contains clues to a societies shared values, accepted truths and sense of identity and purpose. This observation certainly appears to hold true of the Lost Boys as many of these children, now adults in their thirties and forties, continue to be identified with the courageous children who fled the civil war in Sudan.
Walad’s Public Narrative

The war started again when I was about six years old. My father joined the SPLA and my brothers and I spent years moving with my mother to escape the fighting. A few months after the war began, we were living in Upper Nile. I was tending cattle in the fields when the village was attacked. I saw the smoke from the fires. I ran as far away from the village as possible. I found a large group of boys on the road and together we walked. Some of the boys carried books they would use to teach us when we sat down to rest. Most of our walking was done at night after boys started to die from thirst and hunger. After many months a group of SPLA soldiers found us. They gave us food and water and told us to go to the camps in Ethiopia. The officer said it was safe in Ethiopia, we would have a full belly and be able to go to school. We walked to Ethiopia barefoot and tried to take care of the younger boys, but hundreds died on the way.

In Fugnido, I stayed with the boys and attended a school run by aid workers. After about a year, SPLA put me in a segregated area of the camp for military training. UN workers were not allowed to stay in the camps after 3 pm each day. SPLA told them this was for security reasons, but really this was when we began our war training. By the age of 13, I knew how to use an AK47. They called us the ‘Jec Amer’ (Red Army), an army of child soldiers, trained to fight the communist Ethiopian military. When Ethiopian rebels overthrew the government we were forced from the camps at gunpoint, and chased with tanks across a crocodile-infested river back into Sudan. I was lucky. I survived. Many drowned during this time. More months were spent walking. Lions followed us and attacked. We walked for more than a year back through Sudan to reach Kenya.

Less than half arrived in Kakuma with shredded clothes and bellies full of grass. In Kakuma, I was not a soldier anymore, just a minor. All of us were just minors. The UN workers
didn’t know what to do with us, so we continued to stay together. They called us the ‘Lost Boys.’ Our lives were hard but also a blessing. In Kakuma, I realized I was just one of thousands who had suffered in this way. I finished my elementary and high school education in the nine years that I lived in Kenya. Years later, United States officials visited the camp and listened to our stories. I was accepted into a resettlement program and came to America in 2001. Many of my brothers were resettled with me. Two of them lived in the apartment the government provided us our first few months. In the United States, I have earned a college degree.

Analysis of Walad’s Public Narrative

The collective story of Walad is one I am able to tell as a composite character through content analysis of relevant media, simply because it has featured so prominently in the historical setting of Sudan’s struggles with sovereignty. Upon analysis of the refugee displacement narrative from the perspective of a Lost Boy, at a distance of nearly three decades, it is arresting to note the cohesiveness in how his story has been portrayed in the media. Walad’s past is public knowledge. And I can recount the narrative through a first person point-of-view because the boys themselves – specifically, their words – were a common addition to news stories regarding their displacement. As a large collection of boys in Kakuma, they were a highly visible population for aid workers, government officials, and reporters to interview regarding their life histories in reaching the camp. The stories these 20,000+ displaced children had to tell of an epic march in search of food, education and safety captured the attention of the world. In a collaborative effort between UNHCR and the US government, nearly 3,276 of these boys were resettled to the United States in 2001 – before most flights were halted due to the terrorist attacks on the World
Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The perspective of Walad is, of course, one of those 3,276 boys who left Kakuma for the United States.

Lost Boys in the US comprised a highly visible sub-population in the local communities of the 18 states that accepted them for resettlement (ORR 2005). It is perhaps unsurprising then that so much of our current understanding of the lives of these Sudanese boys comes from the perspective of those who have been resettled; yet, I think we can successfully infer that TABARI collected data on the Lost Boys is representative of the lives of the other 7,000+ children who made it to Kakuma.

In constructing Walad’s narrative, several themes emerged of relevance to how the experiences of boys differed in distinctly gendered ways from the girls’. What follows are these 10 themes, paired with my analysis of how they demonstrate the situational construction of gendered experiences of violent conflict.

...I and my brothers spent years moving... / ...tending cattle in the fields when the village was attacked...

Though not immediately apparent as a relevant theme in relation to my research questions for this chapter, upon further analysis of both male and female experiences crossing Sudan, the significance of this particular statement became apparent as a frequent beginning salvo to the Lost Boy narrative. Due to rising tensions between the governments of the North and South beginning again in 1983, the targeting of villages in the South with perceived ties to SPLA became unpredictably predictable. In an effort to minimize loss of financial resources (and undoubtedly loss of life), Sudanese families consisting of multiple wives and their children would often split up during this time with male children more likely to travel with a father or first
wife to locations considered ‘safer’ from Sudanese armies. Male children were more likely to have experience tending cattle or running small businesses and kiosks (i.e. financial enterprises that were transportable), while female children and successive wives contributed to family economies more commonly through domestic labor or working in the sorghum, wheat and sugarcane fields (i.e. non-transportable work). In the predominantly patrilineal and polygamous family structures of southern Sudan, common male displacement experiences within Sudan prior to migrating to Ethiopia are indicative of a generalized increased mobility of men and boys in the region. This was an exclusive mobility not afforded to most of their mothers and sisters (Cohler and Smith 2006; Lai and Thyne 2007). Walad’s description of tending cattle in the fields when his villages was attacked provides insight into how many boys were either able to recognize an attack and run for safety or were less likely to be living in the villages targeted for raids.

...together we walked...walked to Ethiopia barefoot...

By far the most commonly referenced detail of the boys’ narratives in crossing Sudan were the seemingly endless days spent walking together trying to reach destinations to the East and South they had only heard about. This piece of the narrative is representative of the cooperation for the sake of survival boys demonstrated. In coming together to form the large walking groups photographed extensively by journalists during the late 1980s and early 1990s, boys were showing, in a very literal fashion, the collectivity of their experiences (Luster, et al. 2008). The extended length of their journey, without even the basic amenity of shoes, is just one of the important elements of the Lost Boys saga to remind us of the many hardships that they faced and endured in their attempts to leave Sudan.
…boys...would use to teach us... / ...tried to take care of the younger boys...

Peer groups functioned as surrogate families boys relied upon for encouragement and support to sustain their long trek. A common refrain here was how older boy’s mentored and cared for younger members of the group. Mentorship was demonstrated by those boys with more years of schooling trying to teach what they could to younger children unable to continue in school due to their forced flight out of Sudan. These familial ties were reinforced by SPLA training once the boys reached Ethiopia in preparing children for a soldiers’ life (HRW/A 1994). ‘Unaccompanied’ and ‘minor’ boys in the refugee camps of Ethiopia were put into segregated military barracks with other boys. Though this practice was denied by SPLA members, military segregation was often done regardless of whether the boys had family members living in the camps (HRW/A 1994).

…SPLA soldiers found us...

Lost Boys were targeted by SPLA military propaganda (if not more forceful soldier recruitment measures) during their walk out of Sudan (Bixler 2005; HRW/A 1994; Rone 1995). SPLA soldiers told boys that in the refugee camps of Ethiopia they would receive food, shelter and an education. According to one Human Rights Watch/Africa report, “Often the boys left Sudan upon hearing from SPLA commanders of the educational opportunities available in the refugee camps in Ethiopia” (HRW/A 1994:11). Boys were organized by the SPLA into military units or battalions. These units comprised the Red Army, known to the SPLA as the army of young people aged 14 to 17 (approximately). Those who survived in the Red Army to reach adulthood, graduated to the SPLA. SPLA has said on many occasions (when they did admit to the existence of a child army), that children trained in Ethiopia were not sent into battle, reports
from February 1991 indicate anywhere from between 900 and 2,000 Red Army soldiers were massacred after being sent to battle Ethiopian rebels in Dembidolo (HRW/A 1994).

...attended a school run by aid workers... / ...I finished my...education...

As a highly visible group of children walking en masse to reach the relative safety of refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, the boys were not only an easy target for recruitment by the SPLA, but also for aid efforts by humanitarian workers. Even in the strictly SPLA controlled camps of Eastern Ethiopia, potential soldiers had access to camp schools run by the United Nations. Given that the Lost Boys, by most accounts, spent at least a decade in Kakuma, it is an unsurprising statistic to hear them describe completion of their primary and secondary school certificates. A report on the Lost Boys published by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 2005 revealed: 88.8% of the boys aged 16 and older were employed, 94.5% spoke English fluently, their average years of education including English before arriving in the US was 9.6 (a statistic which helps to explain both their English fluency and high rates of employment), and 71.3% had attended/were attending a degree granting school or university since their arrival (ORR 2005).

Learning of the employment success, English fluency and engagement in higher education of those boys resettled to the United States is a strong reflection of the length of time spent in refugee schools. Greater visibility in refugee camps not only translated to increased educational opportunities for the Lost Boys, but an increase in food security (at least in the first few years after arrival). Adolescent boys were recommended to receive at least an average ration of 2,500 calories a day plus biscuits to be distributed at schools. General refugee populations in
Kakuma at this time received on average 2,100-2,000 calories a day rations depending on the type of cereal mixture used (Jaspars 1998).

\[ \ldots \text{chased with tanks across a crocodile-infested river.../ ...Lions followed...} \]

This theme of overcoming extreme obstacles – tanks, man-eating crocodiles and lions – was the second most common refrain of the Lost Boy narrative. It is certainly a striking piece of the story in that it vividly exemplifies an extraordinary period of violence enacted in a very specific period of Sudanese history. Representing one of the foundations of any strong mythology in describing survival against all odds, frequent repetition of this segment of the story serves to focus attention on the magnitude of their struggles. While aid workers and NGO’s often referenced this theme in their attempts to describe the plight of the Lost Boys, boys themselves most often used these events as chronological markers (i.e., first tanks, then a dangerous river crossing, then more walking across a dangerous savannah). By the time boys managed to walk into Kakuma, less than half of their estimated population remained (Bixler 2005).

\[ \ldots \text{I was lucky. I survived...} \]

Trauma specialists have long known that how people are treated after traumatic experiences affects how they recover (Fontana and Rosenheck 1994; Maercker and Muller 2004; Solomon, et al. 1989). This recognition of a ‘survivor’ identity of the Lost Boys was frequently present in both the boys’ speech and that of the aid workers who assisted them in Kakuma. Acknowledging yourself as a survivor of war, rather than its victim is a deliberate mechanism of empowerment to reduce feelings of helplessness (Summerfield 1995). Boys’ survivor statements, recognizing they had overcome an incredibly difficult task in escaping Ethiopia, reinforced a
position of empowerment. As did their understanding that this was a task very few had accomplished given the high mortality rates of others attempting the same exodus. Aid workers in Kakuma – and the persistent waves of journalists who have covered the boys’ stories since – continue to reference Sudan’s Lost Boys as survivors. This form of social acknowledgement, rather than disapproval or rejection, potentially assists in recovery efforts by appreciating the unique experiences children overcame.

...we continued to stay together...

Similar to earlier pieces of the narrative where boys discussed teaching and caring for each other on the walk to Ethiopia, the above statement made after they had reached Kakuma was an important factor in determining the international attention, political support and direct contributions for their assistance that they were to receive as a highly visible population in the camp. If you recall, the population of Kakuma grew very rapidly after its beginning in 1992 to absorb Sudanese refugees coming from Ethiopia and southern Sudan. It was a much different camp setting than Ethiopia for the boys at Kakuma in that they were not supported by the Kenyan government in the same way that Mengistu’s government in Ethiopian facilitated aid to the camps (Kakuma is overseen by UNHCR). Without the control and preferential food aid provided by SPLA, boys could easily have been lost within the massive population of need in Kakuma. That they remained together in large groups after reaching Kenya is a crucial element of the male migration narrative in propelling their story onto an international stage.
…also a blessing... / ...I realized I was just one of thousands...

Social psychologist John C. Turner, stated in 2006 that psychology does not make us prisoners of social structures, but instead persons “capable of collective action to change social structures and in turn re-fashion our identities, roles, personalities and beliefs” (Turner 2006:41). Turner was making the argument that we need to rethink current dogma regarding social power in order to develop new theories of shared social identities that can create spaces for political change, attitudinal change and benefit individual psychological well-being. Though not wishing to overstate this point, I cannot help but to acknowledge that the Lost Boys’ understanding of their journey as part of a story shared by thousands, was a comfort that many expressed. What their collective identities served to accomplish, if nothing else, was to include each individually in a positive narrative of strength and bravery that encompassed thousands.

...accepted into a resettlement program...

Offered to approximately 40% of the boys who had made the journey to Kakuma, 3,000+ boys were resettled to the United States. This number is demonstrative of the power of the collective Lost Boy narrative in enacting change. Refugee resettlement is an outcome less than 1% of all registered refugees will ever receive (GAO Report 2009). In UNHCR’s priority list of ‘durable solutions’ to address refuge needs, resettlement falls last on the list. That the United States accepted thousands of Lost Boy survivors, the largest resettled group of unaccompanied refugee children in history, is an incredible suspension of normal UNHCR/US refugee policy (Corbett 2001). A much less widely publicized statistic –less than 3% of those boys were actually Sudanese girls – is a topic I will address when presenting Imraa’s story.
Seeing the Suffering of Lost Boys

To provide visual context for how the displacement experience of Lost Boys superseded seeing and responding to the suffering of Lost Girls, I provide a collection of images with their original captions from UNHCR’s online photo archive (Figure 12). These images, the earliest of which was taken in 1988, provide photographic evidence and acknowledgement of the difficult journey boys undertook in reaching refugee camps in neighboring states. They provide a snapshot of the vast visual record that currently exists of boys experiences of the war that helped to focus international efforts to provide them with food, shelter, education, medical assistance, resettlement, and of course, an international audience interested in the stories they had to tell.

Hidden Suffering of Lost Girls

In 2001, most of the Lost Boys had been in the United States for approximately a year. Their lives were just beginning to make it into popular American media outlets such as books, documentaries and TV specials when a question started to emerge: Why were only eighty-nine girls resettled with the thousands of boys who were flown out of Kakuma – less than 3% of the total resettled population? The media machine that pumped out stories of the boys at the beginning of the 21st century did not even begin to recognize how girls were excluded from their analysis, much less why this exclusion occurred. In a specifically Sudanese context, we see this with the wealth of information we have on the historical actions of the SPLA and it is certainly visible with the attention the Lost Boys received after their displacement. The admittedly fewer girls who made the arduous trip alongside the boys were only visible – to a much smaller extent – because they occupied space in the public, male, displacement discourse. They did this by displaying some of those seemingly ‘male’ characteristics that made them more visible by either
Figure 12. Lost Boys. (Top, Left) “Two Lost Boys playing. Many died of hunger, disease, animal attacks, those who survived wandered for miles before reaching Lokichokio transit centre in Kenya. UNHCR / P.-mountzis / July 1992.” (Top, Right) “Each Lost Boys has a similar story, they parents were killed during an attack of their village, leading them to begin their extraordinary exodus…boys had walked for 2000 km, an equivalent of hiking from Paris to Roma. Itang, Ethiopia. UNHCR / W. Stone / 1991.” (Bottom, Left) “Thousands of young people, some as young as seven or eight, were forced from their homes by the violence in South Sudan… UNHCR / P. Mountzis / July 1992.” (Bottom, Right) “Lost Boys prepare to be transferred to Kakuma camp in Kenya… the largest camp for unaccompanied minors in the world. UNHCR / B. Press / July 1992.” Images and captions courtesy of UNHCR.
joining the large groups of boys walking out of Sudan, attending school, or seeking assistance from aid workers in the refugee camps.

As the remarkably little data we have on the life of these girls attests, their occupation in the displacement narrative dominated by the experiences of boys, was not successful. Only one story, published by UNHCR in 2002, was devoted specifically to girls who had been displaced as a consequence of the Second Sudanese Civil War. One story among the thousands analyzed by TABARI. This article stated that the estimated 3,000 girls who arrived in Kakuma disappeared from official records due to absorption into foster homes where they became domestic servants or entered into “arranged” marriages whereby their adoptive parents would receive a dowry (Nyabera 2002). Those girls who never made it to Kakuma, may have been forced into a life of slavery or worse. Unfortunately, I am unable to locate any specific statistics on the lives of those girls who did not arrive in refugee camps.

The few news stories returned discussing Sudanese women’s displacement during the war (in combination with the displacement narrative of men and boys) and Imraa’s narrative (below) provides insight into why an only estimated 3,000 girls ever made it to Kenya (compared to the estimated 20,000 boys who began the journey to Ethiopia, with eventually half their numbers reaching Kakuma camp in Kenya). The only story of the life of these girls that I am able to tell with any specificity through news data returned by TABARI is much shorter than the Lost Boys: Some girls escaped with the boys; however, most girls died with their parents, were raped and/or have been enslaved. Young girls have been raped and branded, children abducted, and families burned alive in their huts by marauding rebels. Public mass rapes of women and girls have been reported, some by many at a time, in front of their soon-to-be-murdered husbands
and fathers. The Sudanese army is suspected of organizing airlifts of sex slaves to serve as ‘wives’ of government soldiers in Khartoum.

For contrast and comparison purposes to the visual record from UNHCR on the experiences of Lost Boys, I present one image of the Lost Girls within the agencies online archive (Figure 13). This image was taken in 2002, fourteen years after the first posted image of the Lost Boys and one year after the resettlement flights to the U.S. for displaced Sudanese children were halted due to the events of September 11th, 2001.

The timeframe of this image is reflective of those events that finally precipitated attention to the experiences of these girls (i.e., amid the media storm of attention resettled Lost Boys received in the U.S. questions arose as to what happened to Sudanese girls). The 2002 image shown below from UNHCR of only two girls reflects this distance in time from what we can see of the Lost Boy experience. That is, this is not an image that brings up the immediacy of the actions of boys in carrying their meager belongings across Sudan or the malnourished bodies that first arrived into Kakuma needing medical assistance. Instead, we see two, perhaps slightly perplexed girls, staring at the camera while standing in front of a sign that reads “Real Men Educate Their Women” as if to put an exclamation point on their femininity and inability to seek assistance without first gaining male permission.

Contained within this image is photographic evidence of my inability to collect data on Imraa’s early life – a life that received very little media attention. To try and gain historical insight into her experiences of the war to contextualize Imraa’s displacement narrative, I needed to investigate the collective experiences of Sudanese women prior and during the war: rape, forced enslavement, severe gender inequality. In short, I needed to do ethnography to find out
what happened to these girls, how they lived their lives, and how they eventually reached an urban location far removed from their early agricultural life in Sudan.

**Imraa’s Historical Context**

In the 22-year-long civil war Sudan experienced from 1983 until signing of the 2005 peace agreement, it has been estimated that 4 million families fled their homes; 2 million men, women and children died; and 2 million women and girls were raped (Women for Women 2010). Christian Solidarity International (CSI), an NGO working in Sudan to ‘liberate’ the enslaved, states on their website that “200,000 women and children have been enslaved since 1983” though it is unclear where this data originates (CSI 2012). In May 1999 Save the Children Fund (UK) pressured the Sudanese government to establish the Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWC) under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. Since 1999, they have assisted with the reintegration process for women and child ‘abductees’ (the government of Sudan objected to the word ‘slave’).

Current discussions of women, children and slavery in Sudan often reference the historical “age-old” practice of Muslim capture of non-Muslims based on 18th and 19th century interpretations of the Qur’an and the *hadith* (the sayings of Muhammad) allowing slavery within specific circumstances. The role of Islamic Sharia Law, reintroduced in South Sudan in the 1980s, along with the cover provided by the Second Sudanese Civil War is referenced with reinvigorating a

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20 This brief retelling of history provides necessary context for the narrative of Imraa I present below. The narrative I tell below is a composite of the life of ten refugee women between the approximate ages of thirty-one and forty-seven years old (i.e., children during the Second Sudanese Civil War), constructed through personal interviews. Imraa is a Lost Girl. Her private narrative is a result of the first in-depth I conducted with women during the explanatory phase of research.
The “illness” dimension of human distress (i.e., the social relations of sickness) are being medicalized and individualized, rather than politicized and collectivized (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987:10).

Figure 13. Lost Girls. “Many of the youngsters who survived the exodus from Sudan were girls. They were often absorbed into foster homes, becoming domestic servants cooking, cleaning, chopping wood and on occasion entering into 'arranged' marriages and fetching a dowry for their adoptive parents. Kakuma camp, Kenya. UNHCR / W. Stone / February 2002.” Image and caption courtesy of UNHCR.
centuries old practice of forcing women into slavery. However, as Tønnessen and Roald (2007) remind us, human trafficking in women is not simply a matter of religious subversion of women’s human rights. Simply put, when religious law (Sharia\(^2\)) or otherwise is interpreted liberally, women have rights; when it is interpreted conservatively, they do not. The role of customary law, more dominant in the South than Sharia post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement – indeed protected by the peace agreement – may even be more unforgiving to women in continuing to perpetuate unequal gender relations:

…civil rights and obligations are perhaps the most tangible and important in the daily lives of ‘ordinary’ Sudanese women. Yet, the CPA and the national interim constitution have not defined how the religious and tribal family laws that regulate women’s civil rights are being and should be formed and applied in today’s Sudan (Tønnessen and Roald 2007).

Post-CPA, the political space inhabited by Sudanese women is far from resolved. Sudan is currently ranked 85 out of 86 countries in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)\(^2\), a measure of underlying drivers of gender inequality using factors such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, violence against women (VAW)\(^3\) (Copelon 1998; Rose 2000; Watts and Zimmerman 2002), son preference,

\(^{21}\) Sharia is both the moral code and religious law of Islam with primarily three sources (depending on local Islamic practices and their interpretation): the Quran, and the examples set by the prophet Mohammed in the Hadith and Sunna. The manner in which Sharia law is applied contemporarily is highly debated between Islamic fundamentalists and modernists.

\(^{22}\) Data is not yet available for South Sudan as an independent nation.

\(^{23}\) Gender-based violence, or violence against women (VAW), is a worldwide occurrence with geographically and culturally specific manifestations including honor killings, acid throwing, female genital mutilation, dowry deaths, sex-selective abortion and rape as a weapon of war (Watts and Zimmerman 2002). Feminist scholars have been quick to note that VAW during war and violence committed during so-called peace are inextricably linked to structural gender inequality and insecurity (Copelon 1998).
restricted access to public space, land ownership and financial credit as ranking data (SIGI 2012). In 2009, Sudan was ranked 102 out of 102 by the SIGI. The 2011 Human Development Index score ranks Sudan 169th out of 187 countries with regards to gender inequality. Within this context, the presence of indirect (structural) forms of VAW of concern affecting the daily, ordinary lives of Sudanese women include (but are certainly not limited to) fewer household resources, domestic violence, high prevalence of rape and rape stigma, lack of political rights, forced and early marriage, limited access to education, forced labor, and general lack of economic opportunities (McKay 2004). This list is certainly not exhaustive but does illustrate the methods in which both direct and indirect forms of violence compromise women’s security during and after war.

Women in Sudan have restricted access to land, often only acquiring indirect land access through male family members (FAO n.d.). According to a 2010 US Department of State Human Rights Report and a 2003 UN report, domestic violence and sexual harassment are both common and widely accepted (ECOSOC 2002; USDOS 2011). Available data from a limited number of rape prosecutions has found that judges frequently require the sexual act to have been witnessed by multiple men, and under the law, rapists may escape punishment through marriage to the woman who their offense was committed against (Tønnessen and Roald 2007). This is reflective of laws written to protect men accused of rape, not to protect women from being raped (McGregor 2005). Abortion is not permitted in Sudan, even in cases of rape or incest (UNPD 2007).

A survey conducted in 2006 by the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) found that 36% of women were married before the age of 18, though this is culturally constructed Western ideal
where adulthood equals eighteen years of age that may not reflect social realities (see Chapter 1 ‘Terminology’ section where I problematize use of child vs. adult categories for defining the experiences of Sudanese women). According to the same survey by the GOSS, school attendance rates differed significantly between boys and girls, with girls’ attendance rates much lower, particularly in rural areas (GOSS 2006). As previously discussed, enslaving women and children has been present in Sudan since (at least) the 18th century. The US Department of State currently reports internal trafficking of women in Sudan primarily for forced labor and sexual exploitation (USDOS 2010a).

These statistics provide a glimpse into the context surrounding Imraa’s life before, during and after the war. You will notice at several points in her story below, Imraa’s words dissolve into ellipses (…) This indicates pieces of her narrative she added during our second interview, where upon hearing her narrative from the first interview repeated back, she elaborated or clarified segments of text – essentially adding more details to her experiences. At the conclusion of our final interview, I learned that these segments of text were often those regions of the self vital for communicating her bodily experiences – seeing, hearing, memory, emotion, speech – yet, not details that had been communicated to UNHCR during her refugee interview. I realized, through my work at RLAP, it was these missing pieces of the narrative that contained sections of her life that were viewed as “not important” for asylum, refugee and resettlement decisions; therefore, unimportant lines of inquiry for UNHCR gatekeepers to pursue. I will return to these missing segments of text by presenting a complete biography of Imraa’s life in the next chapter.
Imraa’s Private Narrative

…She had these papers on the desk with a list of questions to ask me. I only had a brief time to answer. Maybe 30 minutes? They wanted to know why I could not return home. I’ve been asked a lot of questions about proving why I cannot go home. I’ve been asked to describe with detail events that have happened to me a long time ago. I wonder if people with more education can remember better than me? I did not go to school. Maybe this is why my memory is bad.

I tell her men in Khartoum took my husband away and that they attacked me and told me to leave Sudan or they would kill me. They ask, “How was I attacked?” They beat me. “Anything else?” They raped me. “How many men?” Three. When asked what was the color of the uniforms of the men who raped me, I do not answer immediately. Did I say they were wearing uniforms? Should I remember this? I think maybe she thinks I’m stupid. I don’t understand why she asks this question. Should I lie? Will they think I am lying if I do not answer? Green, I tell her. His uniform was green. He only wore the jacket of the uniform. “What about the other men? What were they wearing?” They were wearing a jacket too. She pauses to write notes down on her paper…

I wasn’t very smart about how I answered my questions when I first arrived. I was not able to go to school as a girl. The missionary school was burned early during the second war. I didn’t understand how they wanted me to answer. Now I understand. I’ve done this many times now. They want you to give a lot of detail because they like to take notes so that when they ask you this question again, and you don’t answer the same way, they can show you their notes and say, “This is not what you said in your last interview.” And then you get denied.
I tell women who are new, whatever you say to them you better remember it. You go home and practice saying it so that you remember for the next time they ask. I started to tell my story starting from what happened in Khartoum, but they wanted to know farther back. They wanted to know what had happened before Khartoum. That was a long time ago. That was my first interview. I did eventually get my blue card, thank god, so they must have believed me a little. But I didn’t tell my story right, and now I cannot leave…

I have a lot of difficulty remembering other facts. I don’t remember the year this happened and I don’t know how old I was. Maybe seven? Armed rebels attacked my village near the northern border in approximately 1991. I was about eleven-years-old. My village was members of a minority tribe in southern Sudan. It was southern Sudanese rebels who attacked. Many living in my village were killed, including my mother.

My tribe was attacked many times when I was a young girl by both the Sudanese government and South Sudanese rebels. It was a long time ago and I was very young, but I remember that fighting was very common. When our village was attacked, I was with two friends in their home. We ran outside. Four rebel soldiers approached us and focused their guns on me. My two friends were able to escape. Rebel soldiers kidnapped me at gunpoint. The soldiers pointed their guns only at me…

They took me to a camp near the White Nile water but still close to my home village, I think. I was not the only girl they had kidnapped, but the soldiers separated us so we did not get to speak. I know there were a lot of darker skinned girls captured too. They acted as wives like me. I was forced to clean their clothes, cook meals for them, and at night several men would rape me. This happened everyday…
After I escaped, I made my way to the road next to the water and hid myself until the fishermen came close. I called out to the boat and asked for help. There was a woman on the boat and she made them stop. They took me to Malakal, the closest big city in the area, and gave me enough bus fare to make it to Kosti…

I could not return to my village after what had happened. I lived in Kosti for about two years, until I was around 14-years-old. Three elderly women taught me how to sell small things on the street and find work cleaning and cooking in people’s homes. I didn’t have any intentions to stay there that long, but I had nowhere else to go. Time moved very slowly.

When I heard there were more job opportunities in Khartoum, I left. Without money or accommodation, I barely supported myself in Khartoum by selling tea in the streets. I struggled to survive like this for about a year until I met and married a Dinka man. I was about 15 years old and wanted a home to live in…

My husband sold shisha on the streets. People who sold things on the street in Khartoum were asked by police to give money for the fighters. My husband refused to give them money because he said the Islamist fighters kill men in South Sudan and he did not want to give money to those who targeted his people. Sometime around 2001, three Sudanese men with guns entered our home in Khartoum and kidnapped my husband. They were not wearing uniforms, the police, so I don’t know exactly who they were, but they said they were taking my husband because he refused to give money to the fighters. I think they were police because my husband did not give them money previously. They demanded I give them money. I had no money to give them. I was badly beaten on the right shoulder and the side of my head with the back of a gun. I lost consciousness. Since this day I cannot hear very well out of my left ear.
They threatened to kill me if I did not leave Sudan. About a week later two policemen came back to our home looking for something in the house. My husband had returned but he left again without me. I do not know where he went. I do not know what the police were looking for. They raped me and left. I did not know what to do. My husband did not come back and I had no family. I went to the Al-Nasir suburb of Khartoum, a camp for southern Sudanese…

I didn’t want my children to grow up living there. Some students from African University told me I should leave Sudan and go to Cairo for assistance. They said I could find other Sudanese there who would help me. I paid an Egyptian smuggler 1,500 pounds to take me to Egypt. The smuggler took me through the city of Atbara by boat. He attacked me…

I stayed quiet, stayed on the boat and prayed to God that no one would find me, but Sudanese police at the Wadi Halfa Port arrested me because I did not have a passport. I stayed at the border for many nights before they let me continue on by boat. When in Egypt, I took a bus to Cairo. The driver took me to a church with Sudanese people who took me to UNHCR. This was in 2003. After I went through the asylum process my husband found me. He had been living in Egypt for many years before I arrived…

After we divorced, Sudanese people in the community tried to help me find other refugees in the city to stay with, but their apartments were very full and they did not have room for us. I wandered the streets without a place to sleep at night until finding two Sudanese women who let me stay with them for a few nights. They helped me to get a job as a housecleaner. This was before the revolution came.
Analysis of Imraa’s Private Narrative

Imraa’s displacement narrative is representative of a hidden population of Sudanese women separated from their birth communities, enslaved at an early age and largely isolated from assistance networks. Only one aspect of her story – rape – has seemed to capture the attention of the world. Most of the details of her life have not been repeated to interested reporters, but to an audience of one at UNHCR for the very specific purpose of proving a refugee claim and/or pleading a worthy case for resettlement. Imraa’s narrative was a private story told as an adult many years after her initial displacement. Imraa, like so many of those women and girls displaced during the war, never made it to the refugee camps in Ethiopia or Kenya with the boys. She did, however, eventually make it out of South Sudan to become an urban refugee swallowed within the massive populace of Khartoum, and later Cairene, slums. Her registration with UNHCR, her attempt at visibility, is the reason why I am able to describe and analyze a small portion of her life, particularly as it diverges from the male displacement narrative.

In putting together Imraa’s narrative, several themes emerged from the retelling of her experience crossing Sudan of relevance to my first research question (i.e., How did the gendered war and migration experiences of Sudanese women and girls effectively hide their suffering?). What follows are these nine themes paired with my analysis of how they are demonstrative of a distinctly female experience of displacement.

…I wonder if people with more education can remember better than me? I did not go to school…

As previously discussed, school attendance rates between boys and girls in southern Sudan differ significantly, with girls attendance rates much lower, particularly in rural areas such as where Imraa grew up. In addition to this, we know from analysis of common themes in the
boys displacement narrative, that children who are visible in refugee camps may often have the opportunity to continue their primary and secondary education as recognized refugees. Eighty-nine of the 3,276 previously discussed boys resettled to the United States were actually girls (less than 3% of the resettled population). A sampling of these girls were included in the same US Department of Health and Human Services report previously citing these Lost Boy statistics: 88.8% were employed, 94.5% spoke English fluently, average years of education before arriving in the US was 9.6, and 71.3% were attending a degree granting school or university (ORR 2005). The employment rate of the girls sampled was 38.5%. Other data reported for the males – English fluency, average years of education, and attendance in a degree-granting program – were not recorded for the girls due to insufficient data (ORR 2005). We can only surmise from the 50.3% difference in the girl’s lower employment rate from the boys, that these numbers were probably significantly lower as well. Adding to the data of why so few girls were resettled in comparison to the boys, researchers have noted that resettlement officers consulted Sudanese elders in the camps regarding who should be referred to the United States (DeLuca 2009). These elders argued for the boys, as they would be more likely to complete formal education and therefore more valuable to the rebuilding of Sudan.

For that population of displaced women (of unknown size) unable to reach refugee campus due to the specific circumstances of their displacement (such as enslavement), the option to continue their education (if it was ever begun) was never a choice. Evident in her speech patterns referring to herself as ignorant or mentally deficient in some way (i.e., memory) because of her lack of an education, we can understand this as an important issue Imraa uses to distinguish herself from others in a manner that impacts how her narrative is constructed.
...Should I remember this?...

The beginnings of Imraa’s self-editing of her story (i.e., mentioning those pieces of the story not told to UNHCR) would often happen during frequent questioning of her own memory during the retelling of her first interview experience. This is illustrated through the many questions she would ask herself after providing a response. Uncertainty about her own history was present in several different forms throughout her narrative. For example: an initial omission from the story because she didn’t understand UNHCR’s question; a lie based on fear of not being believed; a lie based on general amnesia regarding events that had happened in the distant past yet perception they should be remembered since a direct question was asked. I am sure there are other factors in operation here regarding Imraa’s ability to remember (and speak of) details of her past – not the least of which is personal trauma – however, the signs of this are not within my training. What I can surmise from Imraa’s interviews, are a persistent pattern of inability to answer many of the questions asked of her by UNHCR. She would often interpret this inability as a personal deficiency or ignorance for which she was to blame, rather than the work of time, persistent isolation (with few to share a memory of events), humiliation, trauma, biases of UNHCR interviewers, or refugee interview protocols (determining the structure and ordering of questions) that do not account for cultural or gender differences. Ultimately, it was this deficiency (she believed) that resulted in her denial for resettlement.

Whatever the motivation may be for those explaining to UNHCR why they cannot return home, Imraa is correct in believing questions regarding credibility factor into the official decision-making process. For a refugee appealing to UNHCR for asylum – preventing the possibility of deportation back to a location they have fled and necessary for securing life saving basic necessities – establishing credibility during their interview(s) is an incredibly important
undertaking. A 2002 study of refugee status determination decisions from UNHCR office in Cairo found that seventy-seven percent of rejections were ascribed to “lack of credibility” (Kagan 2003:369). International agencies such as UNHCR must rely heavily on testimony to determine refugee status as persons rarely flee a war zone with birth certificates and passports.

...and you don’t answer the same way... And then you get denied...

Sudanese refugee frustration with UNHCR-Egypt is well documented. If the sheer number of refugees in Cairo seeking asylum through an understaffed local office are not enough of a clue, the massacre at Mustafa Mahmoud Square in 2005 is certainly a deadly example of a history of miscommunication between Sudanese refugees, UNHCR and the Egyptian government (see Chapter 2). Imraa’s frustration with the refugee and resettlement process in Cairo is not a singularly feminine experience; however, her tension with repeating her displacement story to an Egyptian women after waiting in line for over 15 hours in order to speak to a UNHCR representative does provide clues to several elements of Imraa’s narrative that diverge from the collective male story that opened this chapter. Whereas displaced boys were a very visible sub-population in the refugee camp at Kakuma, women who journeyed to Cairo alone certainly did not have this level of visibility in a city with more than 10 million people, thousands of them (potential) refugees. Where the displaced boys were able to tell their experiences to an interested audience, as indicated by the multitude of information published about their lives, women’s experiences were largely overlooked during their travels out of Sudan. Once arriving in Egypt alone, they became one of thousands seeking assistance from UNHCR - one of the many Sudanese standing in line waiting to speak to a perceived unsympathetic listener.
…When our village was attacked, I was with two friends in their home…

Thinking back to the first theme analyzed for the Lost Boy narrative, his traveling experiences prior to displacement paired with a working role that often kept him outside the village is credited with his survival and escape from an attack on his village. This is contrasted with the female role, described by Imraa, as having been inside the village during the attack making her more vulnerable to capture. Her mother was also in the village and she was killed during the attack.

…Rebel soldiers kidnapped me at gunpoint…

In the limited information available regarding the abduction of women during the Second Sudanese Civil War, sources point to the enslavement of southern women by northern Arabs engaging in a practice that has been in force in Sudan for centuries (CSI 2012; Jok 2001; STC 2001; UNDP 1999). That much of this rhetoric originates from local Christian based NGO’s working in Sudan is unsurprising. Yet, powerful international organizations such as UNICEF remained silent on women’s enslavement for many years, bowing to political pressures discussing human trafficking as tribally based tradition. In my opinion, this has served to simplify an incredibly complex phenomenon with the outcome being that women who do not fit into this narrative (i.e., enslavement outside North/South and Muslim/non-Muslim context) continues to remain hidden. As illustrated by Imraa’s displacement experience, she was not initially captured by Sudanese soldiers, but by southern Sudanese soldiers (likely SPLA rebels) who used her race and her minority tribal affiliation as a pretext for taking her freedom and violating her body. When UNICEF did finally acknowledge slavery in Sudan (as such) in 1999, they did so through evidence presented by an NGO involved in the most simplistic retelling of
women’s long history of enslavement in Sudan: Muslim North vs. non-Muslim South. Where does Imraa, and the collective voice of multiple women that she speaks for, fit into this scenario?

…I met and married a Dinka man. I was about 15-years-old and wanted a home...

International organizations use statistics related to early marriage of women as an example of human rights violations that lead to early pregnancy, discontinued education and social isolation (UNICEF 2005). In the early 21st century, there has been an impressive amount of data collected correlating these variables, drawing academic attention to gender and development (Jenson and Thornton 2003; Mikhail 2002; Otoo-Oryortey and Pobi 2003; UNICEF 2005). The SIGI and Gender Inequality Index therefore, use forced and early marriage of women in surveys to record structural violence against women in Sudan. Imraa’s narrative regarding her early marriage clearly speaks to her desire for home and stability after several years struggling to support herself alone. That a displaced persons camp in Khartoum was her only available option for where she and her two small children could live once her husband had left, speaks toward a social isolation that extended into her marriage and beyond.

…the soldiers pointed their guns only at me.../...soldiers separated us so we did not get to speak.../...My husband did not come back

A continuous thread running throughout Imraa’s description of her displacement experience is her isolation from her community and support networks, significantly increasing her vulnerability to multiple attacks as evidenced by her history of violence. Initially separated from her friends and family when kidnapped by SPLA rebels as a child, this separation (particularly from other women) was enforced during her captivity. Though relieved during brief
periods when other women came to her assistance, she was predominantly responsible for supporting herself as a young teenager through the sale of small items and domestic labor. The family she started in Khartoum was broken apart when her husband was brutalized by Sudanese police and fled Sudan without her and their children once released from prison. Imraa was again left alone, though this time she had two small children to care for. Eventually arriving with her children in Cairo, she continued the pattern begun early on in her life of making a difficult migration isolated from family and community support networks.

...at night several men would rape me.../...They raped me and left.../...He attacked me...

Sexual violence against Sudanese women is a saturated concept in popular media. It is true of the news analyzed from the Sudan Tribune regarding the Second Sudanese Civil War and its aftereffects, that the most violent occurrences in people’s lives make it into the news most frequently. I believe this explains a lot of the details we know about the Lost Boys journey. Being chased by tanks, swimming across crocodile infested waters and preyed upon by lions are certainly unique and memorable events in a person’s life, not to mention sensational news. This preoccupation with violence is, at least partially, responsible for why rape is the most commonly reported aspect of Sudanese women’s lives. It was the only common thread of girls’ displacement experience that could be reported with any specificity as a collective theme from TABARI data. On this point it is important to note that there is an important difference between rape narratives in the media and those communicated to UNHCR. This is the difference between a narrative outside the legal system and one from within. Rumors of the rape of Sudanese women during war culled from TABARI data were not communicated by the women themselves, but through 2nd party radio broadcasts, medical doctors and public health officials, human rights
observers, and journalists. These stories provided general details regarding sexual violence to the
effect of: (1) it happened, (2) probably by multiple men, (3) probably to multiple women at a
time, and (4) probably in an extremely violent and public setting.

Reporting sexual violence in such a public and general manner as this also guarantees
that discussions of rape are folded into a larger narrative of war-related violence and
displacement. As a (non-legal) news element, these stories privilege the most violent and public
crimes committed (public rape, multiple rape, stranger rape) arguably robbing the story of
political impact by focusing on victim/rapist pathology rather than the gendered politics
underlying sexual violence directed specifically towards women (Lamb 1999; Wanzo 2009). For
Imraa, her construction of the rape narrative is intended for a much different, and certainly much
more private audience with UNHCR. This is a context where there is a legal burden upon
women to tell their violent histories with enough detail and specificity that they are found
credible and deemed to have a ‘well-founded fear of persecution’ (e.g., was the rapist wearing a
uniform or not?).

The detailed questions regarding her rape were not expected by Imraa during her first
interactions with UNHCR; however, we can see from later elements of her narrative that she
learned, through multiple interviews, how to structure the story with the requested detail and in
an appropriate time sequence (moving in time from past to present). In Chapter 8, through
analysis of pieces of her narrative not communicated to UNHCR (i.e., not required for proof of a
refugee claim and therefore without the imposed structure of legal language), the legalized
retelling of histories of sexual violence often omit those details of ordinary life – childrearing,
education, securing sustenance, conversation, healthcare, religious practices, formation and
sustaining of social networks – that I privilege as key identifiers for how women embody the suffering of war (Das 2000a; Das 2007a; Das and Kleinman 2001).

...a women on the boat.../ ...Three elderly women taught me .../...two Sudanese women who let me stay with them...

At several points in the retelling of her travels out of Sudan, Imraa’s narrative is interrupted by periods, often very brief, of gaining assistance from other women unfamiliar to her: a women on a fishing boat who forces the others on board to pick her up on the riverbank and carry her North; elderly women in a stop-over town who teach her how to support herself to survive; strange women who let her sleep with them for several nights while she looks for a job in a large and unfamiliar city. These were not connections Imraa had growing up, but ones she formed briefly through necessity for survival and then had to leave behind when she fled farther and farther North. This is quite a contrast to the male narrative, where large groups of boys fled together and were encouraged to stay together as soldiers, students, and unaccompanied minors in the refugee camps of Ethiopia and Kenya. And many were eventually resettled together in the United States. As we shall see in the next chapter, the group identity of the Lost Boy narrative, appealing to the revered Sudanese male displacement narratives focused on strength and bravery, is still being maintained decades later in a foreign metropolis such as Cairo. Meanwhile, many women are still struggling to escape their isolation.

**Gendered Displacement**

I have analyzed the public displacement narratives of two fictional Sudanese characters displaced by the Second Sudanese Civil War (Walad and Imraa) reconstructed through content
analysis of related media, and the privately recounted experiences of a composite of adult Sudanese refugee women.

Walad’s narrative is reflective of two key elements to explain why his story dominates public perception: (1) accepted public gender norms for males meant he was part of an easier-to-identify population in need, and (2) his experiences in escaping violence conformed to masculine constructions of agency and survival that engaged the Lost Boys in telling and retelling their history of violence to interested audiences. The collective memory of the nation, therefore, became one of male heroism. The discriminatory potential of this form of nationalism against women is such that signifiers of national culture are constructed through “masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope” (Enloe 1989:44).

Imraa’s narrative reflects the lack of attention she received as a hidden population of women. Her private life was only made visible through shocking acts of public violence such as rape. Imraa’s privately constructed narrative for a small audience at UNHCR illustrates the legally imposed structure of her story in order to meet the legal definition of refugee. Though UNHCR may be the only audience interested in women’s history of violence – indeed, the only organization/surrogate State (Slaughter and Crisp 2009) charged with their protection – this attention is bound by strict legal definitions. Women are required to confine their experiences with violence within these strict boundaries if they are to successfully prove a well-founded fear of persecution and receive refugee status.

Retelling a traumatic event in this context, such as rape, is not something geared toward making violence ‘knowable.’ Instead, it is meant individualize their histories in order to interrogate the violence narrative to (maybe) discover the point at which her fear of returning home becomes well-founded according to the law. This is a selective process through which a
woman’s rape at the hands of a Sudanese police officer or soldier (wearing a uniform) is an important detail in constructing her narrative; knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the birth of her two children is not. The female refugee experience is still being suppressed, even in the retelling of their lives, through the selective narration process that individualizes a collective experience.

One of the most striking features of the reconstructed narrative of Imraa is the limits of language in trying to understand the complexity of women’s experiences in leaving Sudan, and in continuing to remain in Egypt post-South Sudanese independence. This is what Das would refer to as “failure of the grammar of the ordinary” to narrate daily experiences of violence – particularly if these details are not considered politically or legally relevant for proving a refugee claim (Das 2007a:7). It is only through understanding her daily experiences as a refugee woman, that we can begin to disrupt myopic representations of Imraa that mainstream IR literature supports, and political policies (such as UNHCR’s interview procedures) implement. I have tried to show how the Sudanese media I analyzed reaffirms this myopia.

Through the picture painted above of the Sudanese men and women’s gendered experiences of war we can begin to see how the public lives of Lost Boys led to international visibility of their collective experiences of the war, and why the private lives of Lost Girls proved an effective construct in hiding and individualizing their suffering. Yet, as contemporary UNHCR treatment of refugees demonstrates, the above description of the hidden private life of Imraa is not just a scenario of the past. The personal violence she experiences today is only visible to the extent it is considered politically (legally) relevant. Those details of her life deemed unimportant for the complex legal process of conferring or denying refugee status remain unexplored, as do the assumptions that ground her body in private life.
Here, I am reminded of the image (Figure 10) and caption that began this chapter – *A southern Sudanese community leader visits a refugee church in Cairo in order to tell female members of the congregation to leave Egypt and return to South Sudan. “Daughters of the South,” he said, “Stop wasting your time here. Your country needs your help rebuilding. Our families and communities need you. It is your duty to return.”* In the introductory image, Imraa shows us a scene of a male authority figure standing on stage surrounded by women. He is imploring them to return home. Imraa was not unmoved by the event. She spoke often and openly about her love for her homeland, her support of South Sudan’s President, Salva Kiir, and her desire to leave the urban filth of Cairo. But she, along with every other woman included in this study, remains in Egypt.

Is it really surprising that appeals made to women to return to their duties of private life – without recognition from community leaders and international organizations of the embodied suffering they may face, again, within that domain – fail? When the southern Sudanese community leader implored Imraa and her female friends to leave Egypt and return to rebuild Sudanese families and communities, he did so from a gendered perspective that reinforced the natural private role of women as the same societal caregivers to which their previous experiences exposed them to violence, shame and isolation. When male community leaders in the Kakuma refugee camp argued for the resettlement of Lost Boys – as the most likely candidates to complete formal education and return to help rebuild Sudan – they did so from a perspective that reinforced the public role of educated men as future statesman. These gendered positions also protected the interests of those families who sheltered Lost Girls in the refugee camps as girls were a source of household labor when young and bringers of bride price once married. Such
views as these, unreflective of the need for a gendered analysis of war, do nothing to reveal the specific forms of embodied suffering women experience.
CHAPTER 6: A LOST GIRLS BIOGRAPHY

Figure 14: Lost Girl travel to Cairo.
“I wandered the streets without a place to sleep at night until finding two Sudanese women who let me stay with them…They helped me to get a job as a housecleaner. This was before the revolution came.”
Introduction

The following biography from Imraa represents the totality of interview and photovoice information collected for this dissertation regarding the past and present lives of the Lost Girls of Sudan. Combined textual data from Chapters 5, 7, and 8, succinctly presented below, represents women’s retelling of past and present moments of their lives during both of our life history interviews together. Information shared during our first interview, concentrating on the questions asked of women by UNHCR interviewers and their responses are presented below in italics. These are the specific phrases analyzed in Chapter 5 for comparison to the experiences of the Lost Boys. Information shared during our second interview, where I requested that women discuss life events not touched upon during UNHCR questioning (e.g. details not specifically told to refugee status determination interviewers), are presented below as underlined text.

Combined photographic data displayed here, foreshadowing what readers will see in Chapters 7 and 8, represent the six visual themes I identify in how women experience daily, ordinary violence. These images are presented and analyzed in Chapter 7 and are illustrated by the selection of photos seen on the right side of the page within this chapter. Women’s photography representing the ten visual themes I identify as demonstrative of their participation in healing mechanisms within everyday life are presented and analyzed in Chapter 8. These ten themes are the images the reader will see displayed on the left side of the page within this chapter. This comprehensive biography, recapping information presented in Chapter 5 and foreshadowing the data readers will see and read in Chapters 7 and 8, demonstrates the communicative power of an anthropology of the body focused on human emotions.
Lost Girls: The Complete Interviews

This is a big problem with Sudanese, you know, after the peace agreement. “Go home” you will hear Egyptians say on the streets. There is nothing left for me to go home to. And I could not stay in Khartoum. No one knows what will become of southerners in the North. You are not made to feel like you belong.

She had these papers on the desk with a list of questions to ask me. I only had a brief time to answer. Maybe 30 minutes? They wanted to know why I could not return home. I’ve been asked a lot of questions about proving why I cannot go home. I’ve been asked to describe with detail events that have happened to me a long time ago. I wonder if people with more education can remember better than me? I did not go to school.

Maybe this is why my memory is bad.

I tell her men in Khartoum took my husband away and that they attacked me and told me to leave Sudan or they would kill me. They ask, “How was I attacked?” They beat me. “Anything else?” They raped me. “How many men?” Three. When asked what was the color of the uniforms of the men who raped me, I do not answer immediately. Did I say they were wearing uniforms? Should I remember this? I think maybe she thinks I’m stupid. I don’t understand why she asks this question. Should I lie? Will they think I am lying if I do not answer? Green, I tell her. His uniform was green. He only wore the jacket of the uniform. “What about the other men? What were they wearing?” They were wearing a jacket too. She pauses to write notes down on her paper. I think maybe I should take notes about my life too. The
[psychosocial] workers have told me that when I feel sad, I should cry, not try to forget. They said I need to remember in order to improve my mental health. I cry a lot, but this treatment has not helped. I have gotten worse since coming to Cairo. I have fainted more than once.

Sometimes I think I need to vomit but nothing happens. I cannot relax.

I wasn’t very smart about how I answered my questions when I first arrived. I was not able to go to school as a girl. The missionary school was burned early during the second war. I didn’t understand how they wanted me to answer. Now I understand. I’ve done this many times now. They want you to give a lot of detail because they like to take notes so that when they ask you this question again, and you don’t answer the same way, they can show you their notes and say, “This is not what you said in your last interview.” And then you get denied.

I tell women who are new, whatever you say to them you better remember it. You go home and practice saying it so that you remember for the next time they ask. I started to tell my story starting from what happened in Khartoum, but they wanted to know farther back. They wanted to know what had happened before Khartoum. That was a long time ago. That was my first interview. I did eventually get my blue card, thank god, so they must have believed me a little. But I didn’t tell my story right, and now I cannot leave. The only clear memory I have before the rebel attack is when my father was murdered in front of me. I was hiding under the table when he was shot. We had to run away quickly and leave him behind. My mother wanted to return to wash his body and lay him down properly but my uncle would not let her return to the house. She said he haunted us after this because she did not care for his body.
I have a lot of difficulty remembering other facts. I don’t remember the year this happened and I don’t know how old I was. Maybe seven? Armed rebels attacked my village near the northern border in approximately 1991. I was about eleven-years-old. My village was members of a minority tribe in southern Sudan. It was southern Sudanese rebels who attacked. Many living in my village were killed, including my mother.

My tribe was attacked many times when I was a young girl by both the Sudanese government and South Sudanese rebels. It was a long time ago and I was very young, but I remember that fighting was very common. *When our village was attacked, I was with two friends in their home.* We ran outside. Four rebel soldiers approached us and focused their guns on me. My two friends were able to escape. *Rebel soldiers kidnapped me at gunpoint. The soldiers pointed their guns only at me.* Because of my light skin, told me that I was an Arab, not a daughter of the South. I told them I grew up in southern Sudan and spoke the same language as they did, but they did not believe me. They were stupid, stupid men. It was just an excuse they gave to hurt people.

They took me to a camp near the White Nile water but still close to my home village, I think. I was not the only girl they had kidnapped, but the soldiers separated us so we did not get to speak. I know there were a lot of darker skinned girls captured too. They acted as wives like me. I was forced to clean their clothes, cook meals for them, and *at night several men would rape me.* This happened everyday. I was able to escape when the camp was attacked at night many months later. On this night, very late around midnight it began to rain very hard. The rain was coming in through the window of my prison. The walls of the building
were not strong like cement. I shook the window hard and forced my way outside. The mud walls were weak because of the constant rain. The camp had dogs so I crawled on hands and knees very slowly and tried to stay away from them. The camp was attacked while I was crawling through the mud. When I heard the attack, when I saw the fire, I ran as fast as I could toward the water. I didn’t know where to go, but I did not stop. I made my way to the road next to the water and hid myself until I saw fishermen. I just wanted to leave and never come back.

After I escaped, I made my way to the road next to the water and hid myself until the fishermen came close. I called out to the boat and asked for help. There was a woman on the boat and she made them stop. They took me to Malakal, the closest big city in the area, and gave me enough bus fare to make it to Kosti. When I told them about living in Kosti, they asked me how many years I lived there. I could not remember. I don’t remember. Two years? Three? Nothing happened to me there to remember, to celebrate. My mind was gone.

I could not return to my village after what had happened. I lived in Kosti for about two years, until I was around 14-years-old. Three elderly women taught me how to sell small things on the street and find work cleaning and cooking in people’s homes. I didn’t have any intentions to stay there that long, but I had nowhere else to go. Time moved very slowly.

When I heard there were more job opportunities in Khartoum, I left. Without money or accommodation, I barely supported myself in Khartoum by selling tea in the streets. I struggled to survive like this for about a year until I met and married a Dinka man. I was about 15 years
old and wanted a home to live in. We had two children, my first husband and I. Our second was in my belly when he was kidnapped. I gave birth to her at the camp in Khartoum. No doctors, not like here. There were many problems during her birth so a woman in the camp was called to assist me. I fainted before she was born. They took her away. I never saw her.

My husband sold shisha on the streets. People who sold things on the street in Khartoum were asked by police to give money for the fighters. My husband refused to give them money because he said the Islamist fighters kill men in South Sudan and he did not want to give money to those who targeted his people. Sometime around 2001, three Sudanese men with guns entered our home in Khartoum and kidnapped my husband. They were not wearing uniforms, the police, so I don’t know exactly who they were, but they said they were taking my husband because he refused to give money to the fighters. I think they were police because my husband did not give them money previously. They demanded I give them money. I had no money to give them. I was badly beaten on the right shoulder and the side of my head with the back of a gun. I lost consciousness. Since this day I cannot hear very well out of my left ear.

They threatened to kill me if I did not leave Sudan. About a week later two policemen came back to our home looking for something in the house. My husband had returned but he left again without me. I do not know where he went. I do not know what the police were looking for. They raped me and left. I did not know what to do. My husband did not come back and I had no family. I went to the Al-Nasir suburb of Khartoum, a camp
for southern Sudanese. I lived here for a few years. There were students from African University who would come and help us, bring us food. I would stand in long lines for a food bag of rice, beans and oil. I had to divide it carefully so my children could eat every day. Foreigners tried to help us, but the Sudanese police always kicked them out. They said they were telling lies about us to people outside the country. Food riots were common. It was a very dangerous place.

I didn’t want my children to grow up living there. Some students from African University told me I should leave Sudan and go to Cairo for assistance. They said I could find other Sudanese there who would help me. I paid an Egyptian smuggler 1,500 pounds to take me to Egypt. The smuggler took me through the city of Atbara by boat. He attacked me. I prayed to God to give me strength. My children were with me. I had to live, I had to make sure they would get off this cursed boat. Good Jesus, hear me, I said. Never let me be parted from you. From the evil enemy, protect me.

I stayed quiet, stayed on the boat and prayed to God that no one would find me, but Sudanese police at the Wadi Halfa Port arrested me because I did not have a passport. I stayed at the border for many nights before they let me continue on by boat. When in Egypt, I took a bus to Cairo. The driver took me to a church with Sudanese people who took me to UNHCR. This was in 2003. After I went through the asylum process my husband found me. He had been living in Egypt for many years before I arrived. He moved into our apartment for a few months but I grew tired of his drinking and beatings. When we lived together in Cairo, he would take the money I had earned cleaning houses and spend it on alcohol. I stayed silent for a long time about the abuse, but I became desperate so I went to UNHCR to help me.
The final action he took was a brutal beating where he cut my face with a knife. The next day I went to UNHCR for help. Someone there called my husband and told him that if he did not stop beating me they would take his card away. UNHCR counseled my husband to stop drinking, hitting me and taking the money I earned as a housekeeper. He did not listen. I had three Sudanese men from my community help me to get him out of the apartment. We never lived together again after this day. After about a year and a half when I finally had an appointment with the court, I told the judge about my problems with my husband. The judge asks how were we married? Did our families approve? I told him it happened in Khartoum without my family there, that we were separated by the war. On the court papers it says the reason for our divorce was due to religious differences.

After we divorced, Sudanese people in the community tried to help me find other refugees in the city to stay with, but their apartments were very full and they did not have room for us. I wandered the streets without a place to sleep at night until finding two Sudanese women who let me stay with them for a few nights. They helped me to get a job as a housecleaner. This was before the revolution came.
CHAPTER 7: FROZEN WORDS

Figure 15: Night walk home.
Three Sudanese women walk to their apartment after a church service in Cairo, Egypt. “Why did you take this photo?” You asked about my daily life in Cairo. I am showing you. I try to walk with others when outside my neighborhood, especially at night. “Why?” It’s safer to walk together. “Sometimes.” Yes, you are right. Sometimes.
Introduction

Refugee women in Cairo appealing to UNHCR for assistance are familiar with being interviewed. Depending on how long they have lived in Egypt and how far they have gone in the refugee status determination process, they have likely told their story of fleeing Sudan on multiple occasions. As illustrated through Imraa’s retelling of her personal history in Chapter 5, this is a constructed narrative that emphasizes punctuated periods of violence in order to prove to UNHCR that she has a well-founded fear of persecution, justifying (1) her flight out of Sudan and (2) her inability to return (i.e., someone who should be officially recognized as a refugee). In addition to this, Imraa’s story also highlights how she has journeyed to Egypt alone, systematically isolated from her community, her friends, and her family through acts of war waged against her body and the violence she endured as a result of this loss. This is what Das refers to as women who have been “condemned to a social death” (Das 2007b:48). Imraa’s experiences crossing Sudan and her current life in Egypt continue to be hidden from media scrutiny, public life in Cairo, and UNHCR policies that do not privilege women’s ordinary experiences of violence. Women’s struggle for survival is only thrust into public life when acts of violence against them are committed publicly or when they make the incredible effort to become visible to an audience of humanitarian workers, interested journalists or UNHCR gatekeepers.

The shallow understanding of the lives of Lost Girls – at least in the collection of contemporary Sudanese news stories I analyzed – represents this difficulty women face in making themselves visible to an interested audience and the refugee policies based on ‘extraordinary’ violence that continue to emerge without recognizing how and why women are excluded from this focused gaze. The violence narratives women must tell to UNHCR in order to
receive access to basic services continues the trend of only emphasizing punctuated periods of violence to the exclusion of women’s daily experiences working through violence to maintain ordinary life.

With this in mind, this chapter focuses on women’s daily public experiences in a foreign locale hostile to single women, particularly refugees, by using a method (photovoice) meant to give life to words that have been frozen through the juridical-political process of asylum-seeking that does not attend to emotional experiences with everyday, ‘ordinary’ violence. As I hope to demonstrate through women’s images of their daily life to follow, a more complete picture is formed through understanding how collective violence against women leads to their current dangerous circumstances. In discussing their images shown below, women described to me their walk through Cairene streets in much the same way I heard women describe their daily circuit to collect firewood in Sudan and Kenya – speaking of violence against them as a “when,” not an “if” occurrence.

Though these photos are collected from the individual experiences of women, the cohesive pattern of behavior and isolation they illustrate enable their collection into a cohesive photo story of women’s daily experiences of ordinary violence. Just as the collective narrative of women’s stories in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 bear the imprint of both women’s individual experiences and how their combination forms a cohesive narrative of displacement from Sudan, the same is true of the photos presented here and in Chapter 8. Every individual photo in the pages to follow bears the unique imprint of its creator. No two people will ever photograph the same object or scene in exactly the same way, just as no two people who have experienced the same event will describe it in exactly the same way. Yet, by seeing patterns of violence within
women’s visual narratives, I am able to put them together in a way that, I hope, respects both the individuality and collectivity of their experiences.

These snapshots are not illustrators of punctuated moments of violence of importance to refugee claims but of the “soft knife of everyday oppressions” they must work through in order to make a life for themselves and their children (Das 2003:302). I use the term ‘snapshot’ here deliberately to reference a genre of accessible photography meant for the non-professional to document their personal lives. Snapshot photography is not intended to convey the technical expertise or aesthetic sensibility of the photographer, but the straightforward immediacy of a feeling or event. This aesthetic is captured through a medium not reliant upon speech, but upon emotional responses of women working to maintain everyday life.

Words alone, particularly ones that have been shaped by the legal language of UNHCR, may not always be up to the task of showing the complexities of women’s daily experiences with violence – the failure of grammar to adequately describe how violence can reach into every aspect of our lives and not let go (Das 2007a:7). I have therefore chosen the images that appear on the following pages in an attempt to illustrate the nuances of how suffering are written on women’s bodies and enacted in their daily lives. Where their words may fail, I let women’s images do the work of explanation.

Setting the Scene

The series of images to follow were primarily created in response to two photo prompts: (1) ‘urban landscape’ given on 11/11/2011, and (2) ‘daily travel’ given on 1/13/2012 (Appendix 3). I edited these snapshots as a typical day in women’s life in an effort to capture the dominant themes of their urban/daily photos, and to convey a sense of time, duration, and location of the
public activities they engage in repetitively. These visually arresting images, often grainy, blurry, with erratic framing and tilted horizons shot through trees, through windows, or from windows represent the disconnection women feel to the urban environment in which they now live. Though hinted at during our conversations, looking at these images conveys their emotional experiences with daily violence in a manner not dependent on words alone.

These images are presented as a cohesive photostory to illustrate a typical, ordinary day of life, based on how women felt walking around Cairo as described in our photovoice interviews. I pair these photos with captions provided by the individual photographers themselves describing their images. My analysis of images, based on observation and interview data, will follow the photostory. For the purposes of description and analysis, I group together the following visual narrative into six sections as there are several overlapping themes revealed by these images: Self-Portrait; Home; Disconnection, Doorways and Daily Harassment; Violence on the Streets; Poverty, Powerlessness and The Role of Religion; and Guarded Borders. Photos depict women’s desire to be seen as part of an urban landscape that ignores or harasses them by turn. This desire is complicated by women’s fear of the city that forces them behind walls and gates for safety and impacts how they plan daily travel to mitigate potential, and actual, violence. The connection between these two distinct, yet related, experiences of the city are evidenced by women’s desire to communicate their personal activities to an interested audience of other women. When looking at the photos to follow, remember that the typical day shown below – from waking in the morning to returning home at night – is representative of the collective (public) experiences of ten Sudanese refugee women. For every image displayed below, there are several (if not hundreds) more depicting similar experiences of shared suffering.

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24 See Chapter 4 for discussion of how photos were selected and analyzed.
One would need to hear the face as it speaks in something other than language to know the precariousness of life that is at stake (Butler 2004:151).

Figure 16. Self-portrait.
Figure 17: Home. “This is the space where we live. It is the largest room in our shared apartment. All families come together here. This is where everything in the home happens.”
I have trouble sleeping at night in this city. Sometimes I forget where I am when I wake up. I look out the window and see where I now live and it doesn’t feel real, sometimes, this landscape. Like I am not part of this place."
Figure 19: Doorways. “I do not have my own apartment in Cairo. We live with several other families. Egyptian landlords charge single women unfairly for rent. I’ve tried to shop at the market across the street, but the vendors there always charge me more than what the prices say.”
“It’s a very different part of the city where I work, much different from where I live.”
The family I work for now are nice. I clean and cook and watch their children. I am grateful to have this job. I was not employed for a long time after the revolution.”
Figure 20: *Daily Harassment.* “I feel unsafe here in Cairo. I am harassed on the streets by men. People in this city, they do not care. Last month, I was almost hit by a car and fell down. When I was on the ground, someone stole my bag. No one came to help.”
I walk to save money and to keep myself from the crowded metro as much as possible. My usual walking path takes me past burnt buildings and busted pavement from the [revolution] cement weapons.”
“When I leave work, I can’t avoid the metro. I must hurry to pick my children up.”
“On January 29, 2011, two Egyptian men attacked and raped me. The prisons were opened during the revolution, and there were a lot of criminals on the streets. I was on the street going to the market. The streets were very chaotic at this time. A lot of people were running around scared. It was light outside when the men attacked me – about 9 am. No police.

Two men on a motorbike came up to me and knocked me down. They raped me right there on the street. One man held me down while the other man raped me. They took turns like this.

This happened during daylight while there were Egyptian people around. No one tried to stop the men. No one helped me. I tried to report my attack to the police but no one was at the police station. I tried to report the attack to UNHCR, but they were closed too.”
“Sometimes during the week I travel far by bus, to work for an Egyptian family in their home. One day several months ago I was on this bus when the police stopped it and asked me for my passport. I gave them my blue card. The officer threw it in my face. He said he did not know what it was. We, Sudanese, were asked to get off the bus and stand in the street. Everyone was blindfolded and taken to National Security. My picture was taken and I was told that if I ever did anything, they would come for me because now they knew who I was and what I looked like. I was told to never speak of what happened.”
Figure 22: Poverty. “Women, children they have no power in this country either. They must beg for food, dig through garbage. Look at these children.”
“In this we are the same. This powerlessness. It is not good for people to be forced to behave this way. It takes something from you. Them who call us prostitute, they think because we are black female refugees we are prostitutes. We are not prostitutes. Their own women are forced to beg on the streets.”
Figure 24: The Role of Religion.
“A church close to where my children go to school offers refugees’ assistance and healthcare. I have bad health that has gotten worse since coming to Cairo. I had a procedure at the hospital for cervical erosion last year. This is what the doctors called it. They said I would be fine after the surgery, but the pain has gotten worse in the last few months. I’ve met a lot of women who need medical assistance, but Caritas [UNHCR partner] will only pay if you are a refugee.”
Figure 25: Guarded Borders. “I see Egyptian children playing outside and envy their freedom. My kids do not have this same kind of freedom. I fear for the safety of my daughter. I must watch her closely.”
“My children attend a refugee school. I don’t want them in an Egyptian school. They would be harassed. I don’t want my children in a classroom with 45 other students where I have to pay a bribe if I want them to have attention from the teacher. There is a guard posted at the gate of their school that looks out for them.”
“Figure 26: Violence on the Streets. “My daughter and I went to UNHCR very late at night because I needed to be there early for an appointment. On our way there to 6th of October, three Egyptian men on a motorbike came up to us. The driver of the motorbike stole my bag. He drove off and left the other two men behind. One of the men grabbed my daughter and one of them grabbed me. The man holding me tried to rape me but he could not get my skirt off. He became frustrated and cut me with a knife at my neck and then at my thigh trying to get my clothes off. When he saw that I was bleeding, he got scared and ran away. I went to the police to file a report, but they would not do anything unless I knew the names of the men who attacked me. They gave me bus money to go to the UN.

After this, I do not let my daughter travel anywhere unless she is in a large group of people. I cannot always be with her, especially when she goes to school. I always tell her to stay in the middle of the group you are with and do not get lost. Do not go anywhere in this city by yourself. She can only play when inside the walls of the community center and at her school. “
[Video interview conducted with friend who was attacked at her son's school on October 12, 2011 by members of the 'Lost Boys' gang in Cairo.]

Q: Your leg is in a state, isn't it?
A: I swear to Allah, thugs attacked me.
Q: Thugs?
A: Yes, Sudanese thugs.
Q: Sudanese or Egyptian?
A: Sudanese
Q: Sudanese?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you file a report?
A: I filed a report, but there was nothing done. There's nothing; there's no government. Even with this [broken leg], which I got at my son's school on the twelfth of October. They came to the school – four armed Sudanese boys from South Sudan. They attacked as they entered the school, and entered my son's class. The teachers left, and even the students left, and basically everyone left. And when those boys attacked the school, the children were crying and fainting, and the girls went into the bathrooms. I mean, it was total chaos in the school. And they were only four. I said I would report them so they targeted me. They attacked me in the street. They threw me down and broke my leg. I'm broken… They kicked me with their feet and hit me with their hands. They [thugs] led the director from the school, and the teachers were afraid for him – for his health and his person. The teachers said they couldn't bear this responsibility because they knew the director personally had other people and children in daycare to look after.
Q: Did the UN help you?
A: So the UN is just sitting there. They didn't do anything for me. I requested a lawyer. He came to me in the hospital, and said we’ll see what they'll give me in this, this country. That's how it is.
Q: All right. Thank you.
“After the attack, I stopped going to UNHCR for many months. It is so far away and you have to travel late at night to get a good place in line. I missed an important appointment with them because I didn’t want to go. But I have to go back now; they have stopped the funding to Caritas. I cannot afford rent without this money.”
Figure 27: Home.
Self-Portrait

How women chose to place themselves within the story of their day and how they compare and contrast their lives with other refugees they encounter is revealed through their self-portraits. There was a clear theme of portraits where women chose to place themselves within their landscape in a manner similar to those pictured above: by setting up a photo and having another person take the shot; by photographing the shadow they cast at different points during their daily travel; by holding the camera at arms length in front of themselves; or by following the footsteps of friends and relatives and capturing their personal daily experiences through the actions of others (such as pictured in the image that began this chapter). Every photographer in the class who participated in the urban landscape and daily travel photo prompts, placed themselves within their own visual narratives in one of these forms though this was never part of the general instructions provided during class.

You will notice that the opening photo to this sequence of images (Figure 16) begins with a woman staring directly at the camera. This brings to mind a theatrical convention known as ‘breaking the fourth wall.’ That is, when actors deliberately break the illusion of an imaginary wall at the front of their stage in speaking directly to an audience. Even knowing that these images would be carried forward to an unknown audience, many women unflinchingly used the camera for expressive self-portraits that demonstrate a visual demand to be seen as a part of their environment.

As revealed by the statue behind her, the opening self-portrait was taken in the middle of a square in downtown Cairo. It is in this square, at the convergence of several streets, where Egyptian protestors have frequently displayed their frustration with the government by gathering for public marches to collect crowds of people moving deeper into downtown Cairo (towards
Tahrir Square). In essence, it is an open-air location meant to reveal, rather than conceal its occupants. As a refugee women, choosing to situate yourself for a self-portrait in so public a location as this is an undeniable declaration of her residence in the city despite the harassment and intolerance she faces. Disparaging comments uttered by the woman behind her in the image is a visible (and literal) reminder of the opposition women encounter on a daily basis. The person instructed to take this image was the photographer’s daughter, her traveling companion in the city. Her direct stare into the camera is a challenge to anyone who would deny her right to live, work and raise her family in Egypt.

Given my methodological and theoretical emphasis on melding the dominant themes of women’s emotional experiences, this portrait serves as both a reminder of women’s daily actions to increase their visibility as individuals and how their lives in Cairo are part of a larger collection of experiences of Sudanese women. Through the portraits women took of themselves, or of other women as a reflection of themselves, I see both the individual presented in the frame and the collective woman she represents. This reminds of Rosaldo’s work on emotions as embodied thoughts that can say simultaneously both “I am involved” and “we are involved” (Rosaldo 1984:143, emphasis in original).

**Home**

Women’s living rooms are the social confluence of all of the families they live with in refugee neighborhoods in Cairo. This is the last room most women will see before leaving their apartment for work and the first room they will see when returning home. It is usually the largest room in the apartment, carefully decorated with beloved familial and religious objects. This
sanctuary is dedicated to welcoming images and objects women use to transition from the daily violence they experience in Cairo, to their familial role at home.

The living room is the only room where all social activities will take place; therefore, often all the women who reside in an apartment together concentrate their efforts on maintaining their shared room. If one of their children celebrates a birthday, their party will occur in this room; if dinner guests are hosted, they will be served in this room; if a midnight celebration is held to welcome the new year, they will gather in this room. During periods of intense protesting in revolutionary Egypt, this is the room where the residents of the apartment will stay together, behind locked doors, waiting for Egyptian fervor to subside once again so that they can resume their normal routine.

The room’s brightly colored walls and welcoming photographic shrines are a distinct departure from the often barren and discolored walls throughout the rest of the home. Photographic shrines, whether dedicated to a specific deity, ancestor, martyr, saint, or relative is a place of memory. It serves as a constant reminder of people who are of special importance. In the specific apartment depicted above, pictures of women’s children surround a romantic photograph of a new love carefully hung in the center of a wall. On the opposite wall hangs a photo of the Madonna and Child, a religious icon acquired in Cairo by another inhabitant of the apartment. In the corner, a small round table, belonging to yet another female roommate, sits covered in gold cloth. On top of this a photo arrangement following the lives and growth of her children and a plaque with a favored Bible phrase and a vase of carefully arranged flowers. A small pink dinosaur, a gift from her daughter, sits in the middle of the arrangement. After an upcoming New Year’s celebration, a partially consumed white tapered candle will be added to the arrangement.
The individual influences of distinct families are stamped upon this room; yet, each of the female heads of household contained within this apartment collectively shares this space. Domestication of this space, therefore, fulfills a need for sanctuary and celebration for both individual and social. The merging of these objects of importance in the same communal space (rather than in each of the individual rooms women shared with their children) reflects a desire to communicate and share personal memories.

**Disconnection, Doorways and Daily Harassment**

Through the entire collection of women’s snapshots, the vast majority display a strong disconnect between self and public society through depictions of frightening and violent encounters with strangers and avoidance of common areas of the city such as subways and frequently traveled streets. These public images are shot from windows, from the cover of trees, through bus, subway and shop windows, and from concealed cameras held at hip level, quickly pulled from a purse. This last type of snapshot, from a concealed camera, often produced images with tilted horizons and erratic framing evoking a sense of discomfort when viewed – reflective of the discomforting relationship women felt when occupying public Cairene spaces.

Upon first viewing these concealed camera images during our photography sessions, I was immediately struck by their haphazard composition. This was not a product of ignorance of camera functions (as evidenced by a sampling of beautifully composed, thoughtful images presented in the next chapter), but of a much different phenomenon. On most occasions, women did not feel comfortable carrying their cameras openly or taking pictures of Egyptian society without some form of barrier (window, bus, purse, etc.) between themselves and others. This sentiment was expressed to me in a variety of ways – “I’m worried someone will think I stole the
camera, and take it away from me”; “I don’t want to anger Egyptians”; “They will think I am spying”; “I don’t want to bring attention to myself” – that reveal a facet of women’s life in Cairo that brought about daily anxiety.

Women’s discomfort with publicly taking photos was not known to me when I assigned them the task of taking urban landscape or daily travel images. Only after seeing several similarly tilted or blurry outdoor images did I begin to tease women about their poor composition in class. To my surprise, I was correctly immediately by members of the class who demonstrated how they held the camera when walking outside (thus explaining the lack of purposeful composition of many of their images). One woman stood up and illustrated how she had perfected using her purse to shield her camera. Another women physically demonstrated how she liked to hold the camera at waist level and use the folds of her dress as a shield. A third woman mimed holding her camera in the cupped palm of her hand, quickly bringing it up to eye level to take a photo, and just as quickly returning her camera hand to her waist (all without ever revealing anything more than the lens of the camera through her split fingers). The women in class found these demonstrations quite funny, and often laughed at each other’s methods of concealment. I got the distinct impression they felt as if they were getting away with something by taking these street images in a city often unaccepting and hostile to their presence.

At the end of this class, I asked women to not take any pictures that made them feel uncomfortable or put them in a dangerous place (and repeated this sentiment at the end of most of our photography classes). Yet, I continued to receive similar photos of their experiences outside. When I asked one of the most prolific photographers in the class why she continued to take photos in this manner, she related that she liked seeing and discussing her experiences in class with other women. It was an experience of the city they shared, and like their laughter in class
over similar experiences concealing cameras, I believe they found comfort in reflecting on the collectivity of their experiences.

**Violence on the Streets**

Four of the above illustrated narratives of violence – all occurring on the streets of Cairo – serve as reminders that women face the possibility of violence daily from local Egyptians, State police and displaced members of their own country (such as the Lost Boys gang members). Before the Egyptian revolution in January 2011, women stated that the police were generally ineffective in protecting them with habitual harassment occurring in front of police officers on more than one occasion. Since the 2011 protests, refugee women note that their harassment has only increased with fewer police occupying the majority of Cairo’s streets amidst growing anti-police sentiment (Shukrallah 2011). At the time of the street attack depicted in Figure 20 (occurring in January 2011) the photographer was searching for an open market to purchase food. During that same time, all other female participants said they had not left their apartments for days (for some women, weeks) in fear of an attack on the streets. Violent protests in Tahrir Square over stagnant government reform post-revolution continued sporadically throughout 2011 and 2012 during my research. The very unpredictability of political demonstrations increased women’s stress while traveling. During these periods of unrest, many women’s children did not attend school, their medical and legal aid appointments were canceled, and they feared loss of employment as housecleaners and childcare providers if unable to show up for work when fearing to leave their apartments.

This insecurity is why one women felt compelled to document (through the video function of her camera) her friend’s violent encounter with a group of Sudanese gang members
when picking her son up at school. Women’s encounter with violence in public (i.e., outside their home, the gates of school, church and community centers) is expected. Women often discussed reminding their children to stay with groups of other children when traveling, or making special arrangements to avoid large crowds of Egyptians, or find traveling companions whenever possible in expectation that violence could happen at any time. Expectation of police involvement for crimes committed against refugee women by Egyptians is virtually non-existent. Yet, when this violence was brought inside a refugee child’s school, by members of their own community, one mother threatened to report them (prompting her attack) and followed through on this threat by requesting the legal assistance of a refugee lawyer. The opening few lines of her interview are particularly instructive when the viewer has knowledge of the violence African women face frequently from Egyptian men:

A: I swear to Allah, thugs attacked me.
Q: Thugs?
A: Yes, Sudanese thugs.
Q: Sudanese or Egyptian?
A: Sudanese
Q: Sudanese?
A: Yes.

The interviewer asks for clarification several times on the identity of her friend’s attackers. When she asks ‘Sudanese or Egyptian?’ we can contextually translate this to mean you mean it was Sudanese not Egyptian men who attacked you? Refugee women have a heightened expectation for violence outside their communities in the public realm of non-Sudanese. The fact that this attack came from members of her own community (boys governed by the same
surrogate State as other recognized refugees in Cairo) was what prompted the decision to seek visibility through legal attention. When women become recognized refugee of UNHCR, they are told they have equal protection under the law. At the time of my departure from Cairo in March of 2012, the woman who had been beaten in the street outside her son’s school had determined the identity of three of her attackers and was pursuing legal sanctions through UNHCR to have their refugee status revoked. Her outrage over an attack at her son’s refugee school, a location women mentioned repeatedly as a place where they could feel certain children were being protected, was an intolerable breach of the refugee community she considered herself connected to in Cairo.

The best-case scenario of her claim against her attackers would be revocation of their refugee status (citizenship) and deportation to South Sudan. She described the violence she suffered as affecting the lives of every parent and child who attended that school – a collective violence they realized as such through understanding the interdependency they faced as refugees with equal protection under the umbrella of UNHCR. That a hospital medical report, a refugee lawyer, a videotaped testimony of injury and independent refugee investigation into the attack by the victim of the attack (to discover the names of Lost Boy gang members) was first needed in order to gain the attention of UNHCR, demonstrates the significant effort required to make visible this woman’s experiences of insecurity.

The Lost Boys of Cairo

The lives of the Lost Boys of Cairo, who take their moniker from the group of displaced boys discussed in Chapter 5, demonstrate how preferential treatment of male violence continues among refugees in contemporary Egypt. The widely circulated narrative of the violent lives of
those boys who spent years walking out of Sudan has been internalized by a new generation of young Sudanese men displaced by contemporary war and insecurity in Sudan. The Lost Boys of Cairo are a dominant youth gang. Gang members are typically male, live in the suburb of Maadi, tend to have higher levels of education, and are often very violent in their attacks on other refugees (Covey 2010). A report in the Sudan Tribune states, “Mr. Dhal Noy Dhal of Awiel State and a student of St. Andrew’s School, and Mr. Juma of Central Equatoria, were seriously hacked with machetes all over their bodies and are now under intensive care in an Egyptian hospitals” as a result of a gang attack in June 2008 (Marial 2008). A 2008 article in Pambazuka News described the brutal nature of Lost Boy gang attacks in Cairo:

Attackers many times target knees and elbows with the intent to permanently disable the victims. The final blow is a machete to the forehead. These types of attacks do not comprise the majority, but occur frequently enough to be well known. The majority of attacks are cuts on the arms resulting from alley fights while trying to obtain money, mobile phones, or jewelry. The inflictions on the arms are the result of the victim attempting to shield himself from the machete when being swung towards his head (Forcier 2008).

The article goes on to describe the strategic, mission-like planning of attacks and the military language used by the Lost Boys in describing “civilian” casualties, “political allies”, violent “campaigns” against the “enemy” and attempts to stop violence as “peace treaties” “agreements” and “negotiations” (Forcier 2008). During my fieldwork, a relative of an adult student at the school had their hands cut off in a gang attack in Maadi. A Lost Boy attack on the refugee woman discussed above at her son’s school and subsequent kidnapping of the school’s director is
therefore typical of this gang’s normal methods of directing violence against members of their own refugee community in Cairo.

Lost Boys gang members, in essence, attempt to embody the role of celebrated soldier from which they derive their moniker. If the media attention they receive for their extraordinary violent activities is any indicator, they have been successful in capturing attention. Researchers at the American University in Cairo within the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies devote significant time and attention towards studying the incredibly violent activities of the Lost Boys (Covey 2010; Lewis 2011; Rothing, et al. 2006; Rowe 2009). They link the rise in Sudanese gang activity to the December 2005 protests outside UNHCR offices (as discussed in Chapter 2) that resulted in the murder of almost 30 refugees and imprisonment of hundreds more by Egyptian Security forces (Lewis 2011; Sharp 2007). Reasons cited for their gang activity align with those conditions that sparked the initial sit-in at Mustafa Mahmoud Square: lack of UNHCR protection and support, societal racism and discrimination, and a convoluted refugee application and decision-making process. Additionally, when UNHCR closed their office during the 2005 protests a church in the Abbasiya area of Cairo assumed many of their refugee responsibilities. Abbasiya is an area of Cairo the Lost Boys quickly claimed for their territory in order to capitalize on “the opportunity to extort money from Sudanese who had no other choice but to travel to the church to receive services” (Rothing, et al. 2006; Rowe 2009:66).

What the media and academic attention focused on the Lost Boys of Cairo in the years post-Mustafa Mahmoud reveal, is a continuation of the pattern of attention given to extraordinarily violent life events of Sudanese boys and men as discussed in Chapter 5. If the extreme measures one woman had to take in order to potentially gain attention for the violence she experienced is any indication, the life worlds of women are still often hidden within
institutional privilege of ‘extraordinary’ violence. The case example of the Lost Boys gang demonstrates continuation of gendered experiences of violence, continuation of women’s difficulty communicating their experiences of violence, and continuation of preferential attention given to extraordinary violence within the refugee aftermath of war.

**Poverty, Powerlessness and The Role of Religion**

Female participants in this research were a mixture of deeply devout Christian and Muslim women. However, as women in class did not treat each other dissimilarly, I would often forget their religious differences. I was reminded of this distinction when speaking with the photography class about December protests in Tahrir Square. This was a protest period with record numbers of Egyptian women participants. The previous week I had watched a group of Egyptian women in the square protesting police brutality against the ‘girl in the blue bra’ (i.e., as pictured in the introduction photo to Chapter 2) by holding up a censored picture of her attack while chanting “Da mish el islaam” (This is not Islam). I repeated this story to the class in order to describe the power of photography for influencing public opinion. Upon completing the story, a Christian member of the class remarked to me, “Da mish el maseehi” (This is not Christian), while the Muslim women in the class repeated “Da mish el islaam.” While not wishing to over generalize between Muslim and Christian Sudanese women, I cannot help but note the similarities in their responses to violence against other women. Both Muslim and Christian women used the same example of police brutality against Egyptian women to describe how these actions were against their respective religions. The violence experienced by the girl in the blue bra cut across both national and sectarian lines.
This sentiment was also repeated frequently in photos the class took of distressed women on the streets of Cairo – Egyptian and Sudanese. On more than one occasion I observed refugee women placing a small donation in the hand of an Egyptian woman who sat daily on the steps of the metro asking for assistance. When discussing one of her images of an Egyptian child begging on the streets, the photographer remarked on the similarity of their respective situations in that she too was made to beg for basic necessities at many points in her life.

Women’s snapshots also reveal a fascination with Cairene religious symbols, from the minarets of its multitude of mosques to (much fewer) crosses of Christianity. Within these images and their associated class discussions, there was neither expressed religious opposition nor intolerance to these symbols, simply an awareness of the traditions that unite and divide Egypt. Christian women were just as likely to photograph a skyline outlining the tower of a mosque, as Muslim women were to photograph a statue of Madonna. Both symbols were clearly present in their daily lives, but perhaps in particular for Muslim refugees frequently encountering unfamiliar Christian icons at the predominantly Christian-based refugee NGOs in Cairo. For example, StARS educational, legal and psychosocial services are funded and operated by Christian churches in the U.S. One of the very few NGOs providing refugee women direct access to healthcare, Refuge Egypt, is tied to the mission of the Egyptian Episcopal church which also doubles as its operational center. Caritas, the only NGO offering refugees financial assistance, is a Catholic-based organization. Though the presence of Islam in all of their lives was equally unmistakable given that no corner of the city was silent to the Imam’s daily calls; for refugees, particularly Muslim refugees who relied upon the services provided by NGOs, Christianity also played a significant role in their daily lives.
I propose that integration of both religious contexts in women’s daily life – in Muslim dominant Cairo and Christian dominant refugee NGOs – enabled their ability to recognize the similarity of their life experiences to that of others. Attempts to make visible (through photography) the numerous women and children encountered daily begging on the streets and sorting through garbage is evidence of the social barriers of religion and nationality these photographers dismantled in mourning their suffering. These vulnerable faces were ones photographers recognized and described through the lens of their religious backgrounds that emphasized such suffering should not exist (Da mish el islaam/ Da mish el maseehi).

**Guarded Borders**

The guarded boundaries of personal freedom experienced by urban refugees are perhaps best revealed by the location and timing of children’s play:

When viewed side-by-side the childhood experiences revealed by these contrasting images – Egyptian children playing outdoors versus refugee children hidden from the city by darkness and high walls – invokes the complexity of social isolation refugees face daily. This also contextualizes outrage over a Lost Boys gang attack that breached the gates of refugee children’s sanctuary.
This practice continues with the location of StARS behind twelve-inch thick and ten-feet high concrete walls. The walls are not just for show. They, along with the guard posted at their gates, provide mothers with increased confidence in where their children learn. Young students frequently use the protection provided by school walls to escape harassment on the streets of Cairo. For example, when coming back from a kiosk one morning situated directly across from the front gates of StARS, I heard a young Egyptian man yell out a commonly voiced sexual taunt to one of the teenage students on her way inside the gates of the school. When he made an aggressive movement of his hands towards her, she quickly slipped into the iron gates and surrounded herself with a circle of friends already inside. As another example: One morning in September while playing with a group of 4th graders, I climbed a set of outdoor stairs at StARS that leads to a small walkway overlooking downtown Cairo. Two girls followed me to continue our game of ‘I spy.’ One of the Sudanese guards at the school immediately yelled at the girls to “get down from there”. When I asked him what the problem was, he admonished me for “showing” the children to the Egyptians on the streets below. “We don’t want to show the Egyptians we are here,” he said. “Why,” I asked? “We don’t want to anger them.”

The frequency with which women photographed the contrasts between the experiences of their children inside their guarding barriers (school gates, church gates, apartment doors) versus those experiences of Egyptian children playing freely outside illustrates the insecurity that results from their inability to integrate with Egyptian society (i.e., UNHCR durable solution #2). The lives of refugee women and their children continue to be hidden behind the high walls and iron gates they are forced behind for protection.
Suppression of Ordinary Violence

This chapter is based on observations, presented in Chapter 5, that many female Sudanese refugees arrive in Egypt not in large groups as within the story of the Lost Boys, but in isolation having been separated from family and community through gender-based violence and gender-blind suppression of their displacement experiences (outside the notable exception of shocking acts of public violence such as rape). It requires great effort by these isolated women to increase their visibility and form new social relationships in order to decrease insecurity in their urban location. The photo and caption that began this chapter, describing the methods by which women attempt to decrease violence, is demonstrative of this point:

*Three Sudanese women walk to their apartment after a church service in Cairo, Egypt.*

“Why did you take this photo?” You asked about my daily life in Cairo. I am showing you. I try to walk with others when outside my neighborhood, especially at night.

“Why?” It’s safer to walk together. “Sometimes.” Yes, you are right. Sometimes.

This was a pattern of behavior that women often demanded their daughters follow as well. Women were able to form these semi-protective groups during activities that brought them together (church, clinic visits, etc.). However, in the many daily occasions when their paths diverged (walking to the market, to their employer’s home, to individual UNHCR appointments, to their children’s school) their bodies were exposed to violence. Avoidance of violence, therefore, became a daily exercise by which women carefully timed the location of their public activities whenever possible to decrease the possibility of an attack. Sometimes they were successful.

Women’s production of seemingly random, accidental and spontaneous street images, upon closer reflection, reveals several clues to their forced separation from larger society in
Cairo. We are left with a series of awkwardly composed snapshots, blurry scenes and tilted horizons taken from cameras revealed only at the moment of exposure and quickly concealed. Here, women’s cameras take on the same dysfunctional life as that of their bodies. Bodies quickly revealed in public only when necessary and only for the sake of functionality – “I don’t want to anger Egyptians”; “I don’t want to bring attention to myself.” These street images elicit a sense of discomfort on the part of both photographer and viewer. The collection of photographs depicted above captures the movement and chaos of urban refugee life in visual form by providing evidence of the emotional stress women encounter in their daily life. By using photovoice methodology to form a collective visual narrative, women’s experiences are revealed more completely than the parsed refugee narrative they have learned to memorize in communications with UNHCR.

The female participants in this research conquered extreme difficulties in reaching a foreign location to make themselves visible to an audience at UNHCR. Yet, within the juridical-political language of their surrogate State, women’s daily experiences with violence continue to be suppressed because of legal requirements demanding a structured narrative that privileges past periods of able-to-be-spoken-about events in order to prove victimization and convey the benefits of an officially-recognized refugee. These photos revel the struggles women face daily in a world that often does not recognize their right to exist in the public sphere. Women’s bodily experiences with everyday ‘ordinary’ violence continue to be suppressed, while the exceptionally violent and newsworthy actions of the next generation of Lost Boys continue to make headlines.
CHAPTER 8: EVERYDAY EVENTFULNESS: HEALING AND DAILY LIFE

Figure 28: “Take this bread, it is my body”
We are united.
Introduction

The past will always be a powerful presence in the present. We must never forget, but this does not mean that we must cling to the past, and wrap it around us, and live for it. We only look back in the past in order to have a better understanding of our present (Mda 2002).

If the images presented in Chapter 7 are illustrative of women’s suffering within ordinary life, the photos included in this chapter are demonstrative of the emotional strategies they employ – both individually and collectively – to heal from this pain. Though this chapter similarly relies on the power of visual communication to tell a story, the images presented here are profoundly different from the experiences displayed in the previous chapter. Those hastily exposed snapshots with their awkward compositions, tilted horizons and blurry scenes reflect the discomfiting scenes of begging, unemployment, loneliness, isolation, wealth disparity, defiance and despair captured through photography are reflective of women’s daily experiences avoiding or trying to mitigate violence. The photos presented below display the thoughtfulness, calm, pride, respect, control, love, humor, and joy they feel for those closest to them. They also illustrate sophistication in composition, exposure, timing, focus, color, contrast, perspective and detail. These were lessons touched upon during photography workshops women were able to implement during those moments when they felt most secure in taking time to thoughtfully capture an image. I have chosen to highlight the complexity of this communication by pairing these emotional scenes of activity with personal reflections from the individual photographers on their past experiences of violence that inspired the images presented below.

In Imraa’s displacement narrative presented in Chapter 5, there are several elements of her story not discussed during our first interview when she did not or could not verbalize her history of violence outside the refugee narrative memorized for UNHCR. With that in mind, additional details of each women’s narrative that resulted from our second interview together
(i.e., information presented in the complete biography provided in Chapter 6) serve as the contextualizing captions for the images presented below. These were details women only discussed when specifically encouraged to describe elements of their lives not reported to UNHCR and, I believe, were only reported in our second interview because I was a person who had frequently displayed an interest in their daily lives through the course of our photography class. Pairing together segments of women’s narrative describing past experiences with their contemporary images is, therefore, related to my understanding of how women experience everyday, ordinary life where a violent or traumatic event, “attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary” (Das 2007a:1).

I am fascinated by the concept of how past events of violence are carried forward through time to impact women’s current lives and what this reveals of the suffering and healing they experience within everyday, ordinary life. This understanding is a direct result of my choice to pair women’s contemporary images, and the specific way in which they were discussed during class and photo elicitation interviews, with women’s non-UNHCR derived narratives of emotional trauma and violence. I will elaborate below, before presentation of each photo narrative, additional description on how the photographer and I came to make these connections between past violence and present scenes of attempting to mitigate the physical and mental pain inflicted from those events. This can be seen as a merging of mind and body through the “communicative aspect of emotion” (Lutz and White 1986:429). Here, the everyday eventfulness or ordinary life revels how these women attempt to resist the continuation of violence in their lives and create spaces for healing as one who been subjected to the embodied suffering of war and lived to carry out the everyday activities that would sustain that life.
Setting the Scene

The series of images below were not created in response to any one photovoice workshop prompt as described in Chapter 7 and Appendix 3, but are representative of the kinds of images women took throughout photography class. I edited these photos to represent the range of social experiences they engaged in over the course of several months. Images are presented as individual scenes of activity that I then describe from the photographer’s perspective on what they reveal of her social world, from my own observations of the event, and/or from video footage. For the purposes of description and analysis, I label the following visual narratives: Family Introduction, Healing Dance, Saying Goodbye, Christmas Trees, The New Republic, New Year’s in Cairo, Fifth Birthday, Food Ceremony, First Communion, and Marriage Celebration. Each of these ten sections individually represent the ten women who comprised our photography classes. One theme that connects each of the ten image sections below are emotional moments of celebration and mourning women engage in both collectively and individually.

Family Introduction

In 1990, Handwerker wrote, “The birth of a child, is a political event” (Handwerker 1990:1). This is perhaps nowhere more evident than the birth of a refugee child in a nation that does not confer citizenship and one who is separated politically and geographically from the only nation that may. The Family Introduction scene below, taken by on 1/17/2012 and shown in class on 1/20/2012, is paired with a quote from the photographer discussing events that occurred a year prior of often voiced sentiments by Egyptians to “go home” after South Sudan’s official

25 Please see Chapter 4 for discussion of how photos were selected and analyzed.
separation from Sudan in 2011. This caption provides insight into how women escaped Sudan for Egypt in order to provide a better life for themselves and their children; yet, within the borders of Egypt they will never be considered citizens. Refugee bodies inhabit a legal grey space in which the only avenue for communicating violence and conferring benefits is UNHCR. The legal term for this state of affairs is, aptly named, ‘statelessness.’

Egypt has no domestic legislation pertaining to stateless persons, nor does it have nationality laws that would allow for these persons to become naturalized citizens. Egyptian citizenship has never been an option for persons from Sudan – not even for the children born of refugee mothers while living in Egypt. With the passing of the Child Act of 2008 in South Sudan “to extend, promote and protect the rights of children in southern Sudan” (Child Act 2008:11) registration of birth as a citizen of South Sudan was recognized as a human right. However, if voluntary repatriation is not a desirable solution for refugees, local integration in Egypt is not a legal option and resettlement is not offered, the only choice for a child born to refugee in Egypt, is addition to their mother’s UNHCR file and continuation of the refugee cycle.
This is a big problem with Sudanese, you know, after the peace agreement. “Go home” you will hear Egyptians say on the streets. There is nothing left for me to go home to. And I could not stay in Khartoum. No one knows what will become of southerners in the North. You are not made to feel like you belong…

Figure 29: Family Introduction.

She is only a few weeks old and has recently been christened with her given name. Her name means ‘luminous’ because of the light she has brought to her family. She still wears the pristine white gown and pink booties her mother dressed her in for church this morning. Her mother named Luminous on the seventh day after her birth, but today marks the official register of that name by the church. She will keep this name for the rest of her life; not even through marriage will it change.
Her older sister has been her dedicated photographer this day as her mother cannot stop touching her small cheek, smoothing the folds of her gown across her tiny stomach, or gently shaking her foot so that she will awaken and entertain her crowd of admirers. “Come closer,” the mother says to her four-year-old son standing by her side. He seems unsure about touching his baby sister, but cannot take his eyes off of her small form. Her elder sister, the photographer, alternately takes photos and videos of her mother, her brother and her baby sister. Officially, Luminous is neither Egyptian nor Sudanese. Without access to the government registration services of her country and confusing political powers of the newly created Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan, her birth has not been officially recorded. Later, her sister says, her name and photo will be added to the family’s UNHCR file, though they will wait until she is several months older and able to travel to distant UNHCR offices.

**Healing Dance**

From this second scene of activity, in Figure 30, *Healing Dance*, we see recovery of severe mental distress by the photographer’s mother. This healing goes beyond individual mourning experiences as prescribed by psychosocial workers in Cairo that only served to increase the physical symptoms of distress. Instead, the patient’s friends and daughter felt that her suffering needed to be acknowledged collectively in order to begin the process of healing. That is, private mourning needed to make way for public celebrations of her life and her importance to their refugee community in Cairo. *Healing Dance* was taken on 12/21/2011 and discussed extensively in class on 12/23/2011.
...I think maybe I should take notes about my life too. The [psychosocial] workers have told me that when I feel sad, I should cry, not try to forget. They said I need to remember in order to improve my mental health. I cry a lot, but this treatment has not helped. I have gotten worse since coming to Cairo. I have fainted more than once. Sometimes I think I need to vomit but nothing happens. I cannot relax.

_Eight women and a teenage girl [the photographer] fill the largest room of the tiny apartment. No men are present. All furniture has been removed from where the ceremony will take place with the exception of a round tray that sits on an overturned cardboard box in the middle of the floor. The box is covered with a white cloth and the silver tray sitting on top is piled high with an offering of fresh fruit, pine nuts and almonds. Of the nine women present, one_
is the leader of the ceremony, six women serve as dancers, drummers of the *tar* (tambourine) and rhythmic backup to the leader, and one young woman is the dedicated documenter of the event. The remaining guest is the reason the others are present. She is here to be healed of her mental illness; cured of her depression. The palms of her hands and tips of her fingers were carefully painted with henna the night before. She is to be the center of attention of her female friends and relatives present; their purpose, their music and their dancing all carefully constructed to convey concern for her mental suffering and to hasten her recovery.

The leader of the dancers sings to her patient, chanting with the rhythmic assistance of the other women present. The patient executes a series of quick circular turns with her eyes closed. She is smiling. As the singing and drumming picks up beat, her steps also increase in speed. She moves around the altar in the middle of the room with her friends and relatives dancing with her, cheering her on. Prior to the start of the ceremony, a chicken was purchased, killed and cooked. Its meat brought into the ceremony by the teen once she hears the tempo of drumming, singing and dancing reach a crescendo. The patient eats the sacrifice first and then offers the meat to everyone present. The ceremony ends abruptly and happily. Her consumption of the sacrificed meal a sign the proceedings are finished. To prevent a relapse of her mental illness, the leader reminds her patient to be attentive to her spirits and avoid negative emotions. The patient leaves to return to her own apartment. She is still smiling.

The scene described above is very similar to historical accounts of healing *Zar* rituals practiced throughout Egypt and northern Sudan. Practitioners of this ritual (overwhelmingly female) seek to please the possessing spirit (always male) that has disturbed their mental health. Kennedy, arguing that the psychosocial benefits of such ceremonies could be applied to the individualizing biomedical paradigm that dominates Western medicine, states the purpose of the
Zar ritual “is to cure mental illnesses through contact with the possessing spirits which cause such maladies…the zar is a last resort which has powerful therapeutic effects for several kinds of ailments. It seems particularly tailored for alleviation of the hysterias and anxiety-produced illnesses” (Kennedy 1978:185).

Historically, the ritual has been found throughout the Nile basin, from Alexandria to the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, practiced almost entirely as healing of women by women in strict patriarchal societies (El Saadawi 1997). Though officially banned by Islamic religious authorities, it is still known to occur by primarily Muslim women in Egypt and Sudan. This history is perhaps even more compelling when placed in the context of the above described healing ceremony – performed by a leader from the Nuba Mountains (Sudan) on a woman from Unity State (South Sudan), with several women in attendance from throughout Sudan and South Sudan. The ritual described above is significantly different from that documented by Kennedy, but it echo’s a practice found throughout North Africa for similar healing purposes.

Saying Goodbye

In Saying Goodbye, Figure 31, Imraa grieves the loss of a beloved friend in Cairo through a funeral ceremony complimentary to both old and new religious beliefs, and one that helps her lay to rest loved ones from the war. This image was taken on 12/13/2011 and discussed in class on 12/16/2011. It is paired with a quote from the photographer discussing her father’s death during a rebel attack on their village that occurred in approximately 1989.

During this attack, her mother was unable to care for the body of her husband as their family fled their village for safety. Her mother believed the ghost of her husband haunted her through the rest of her life (she died approximately three years later) due to her failure to
properly care for his body. Memories of her mother’s distress from this event are still vivid for Imraa over two decades later. She described her mother’s demeanor after the death of her father in detail during our 2nd interview, and believes her mother would have fought harder to survive another attack during the civil war had she not been suffering from living with the memory of her perceived unforgiveable error toward her husband.

The Imraa’s (the photographer) focus on the lack of burial rights performed by her mother reminded me of her detailed description in class of the religious ceremony surrounding the death of a friend, an elderly refugee women, within the Sudanese community in Cairo. Though she was describing the death of a friend, she indicated that her images she took on this day would bring her happiness as she looked upon them in the years to come. It brought her peace to know that her friend received a respectful farewell appropriate to her stature in the community. The image below, therefore, is not so much illustrative of a reckoning with the death of her father (this was mentioned only in passing), but as an acknowledgement to her mother that she was continuing to observe proper rituals of saying goodbye to family and friends.
…The only clear memory I have before the rebel attack is when my father was murdered in front of me. I was hiding under the table when he was shot. We had to run away quickly and leave him behind. My mother wanted to return to wash his body and lay him down properly but my uncle would not let her return to the house. She said he haunted us after this because she did not care for his body.

Figure 31: Saying Goodbye.

Her body is not present for the funeral. After passing away in her sleep three nights ago, the priest of her Episcopal church in Cairo arranged to have her body shipped to a local hospital. However, it does not matter where her body currently resides, says the photographer. Had she been present in a coffin, it would have been closed. Had she been buried in Sudan, dirt would have been pushed into her grave from mourners facing away from her burial site. It is not
important to look upon the dead before saying goodbye. What is important is holding a final ceremony and wishing her peace in heaven with her ancestors.

The deceased’s priest leads the requiem service consisting of the entry rite, opening anthems, scripture readings, a homily, communion and a final commendation. Christian missionaries in Cairo are aware of the animist religious backgrounds of many of the southern Sudanese refugees who arrive in Egypt. Christian services are frequently held in the dominant mother tongues of their parishioners: Dinka, Nuer, English and Arabic. The Book of Common Prayer is used by the priest to read select passages to the gathering. His words are meant to provide comfort and solace to her family and friends. She is not alone, he repeats. She is with her God and her family. Though the deceased spoke often of wanting to return to her homeland before dying she is now at peace, he affirms. Guests at the service sit, stand, or kneel at select points throughout the ceremony. They repeat the prayers of the priest in unison. After the final commendation, those present who feel compelled to do so approach the cloth covered altar at the front of the church to deliver flowers and say a silent prayer for her peaceful deliverance to Heaven. No funeral services are held in her apartment, though a goat will be sacrificed in her honor and its meat delivered to members of her family this night. Such a sacrifice is great indeed. The deceased was a respected elderly member of the community and she will be missed.
Christmas Trees

The scene below labeled *Christmas Trees* (Figure 32) was taken on 12/24/2011, shown briefly in class on 12/30/2012, and discussed in-depth during a photo elicitation interview on 2/18/2012 in which the photographer discussed her anger toward religious violence, both in Sudan and Egypt. It is paired with a quote discussing events that occurred in approximately 1991. In this image, the photographer, through the actions of women she lives with in a shared apartment in Cairo, demonstrate their solidarity with persecuted Coptic Christian Egyptians in Egypt. Her motivation for rejecting religious extremism is revealed within the historical caption that discusses how she was once targeted based on the pretext of perceived sectarian differences.

In the past, she was labeled as ‘Arab’ not based on her religion (she is Christian) but on her slightly lighter skin than others in her village; therefore, she had intimate knowledge of how the fervor of religious violence can seep into all areas of society. Figure 32 illustrates the photographer’s understanding of the dangers of living in religiously intolerant societies where social violence becomes the norm.

To provide important context for understanding the subtly of this image depicting a simple holiday scene between mother and daughter: On Sunday, October 9th, 2011 a procession of approximately 10,000 Coptic Christians marched through downtown Cairo in protest over an attack on a church in Aswan in late September. Accounts of how the violence began on Sunday night vary widely; however, most conclude that it started shortly after a group of protestors burned an image of Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces and *de facto* head of state in post-revolution Egypt. By the dawn of Monday, October 10th at least thirty-six Egyptians were dead, the majority of which were Copts, and hundreds of others were injured. This violence made the directors and staff of StARS
especially nervous for the safety of their students and teachers given the general intolerance of dark-skinned Sudanese refugees in the city, many of which are Christian or assumed to be Christian (particularly for women who do not wear hijab). A subsequent email from the school included a story of a church member who was trapped inside the walls of the school grounds for hours on Sunday night as they could hear crowds outside shouting “Misr islamiya” (Islamic Egypt). The school closed for two days. When they reopened on the third day following the violence, roughly half of the normal roster of students were in attendance.

The bombing of a church in Alexandria on January 1, 2011 killed at least 23 Coptic Christians and injured at least 97 others as they were leaving a New Year’s service (Fahim 2011). Four days after the attack, Al Jazerra News posted reports of Egyptian activists calling on “Muslims to form human shields in front of the churches as a gesture of solidarity” (Mohyeldin 2011). On January 7th, 2011 – the day that Coptic Christians celebrate Christmas – many Muslim Egyptians stood in front of church doors from Alexandria to Cairo protecting the Christian citizens inside as they attended Christmas mass. The slogan “we live together, we die together” was posted to church bulletin boards and distributed in flyers in urban areas of Egypt (El-Rashidi 2011). Many churches and Christian families (the photographer’s included) refrained from lighting their trees this year in mourning for the victims of Egypt’s sectarian violence.
...Because of my light skin, they [armed rebel soldiers] told me that I was an Arab, not a daughter of the South. I told them I grew up in southern Sudan and spoke the same language as they did, but they did not believe me. They were stupid, stupid men. It was just an excuse they gave to hurt people.

This is the second Christmas tree the little girl has seen unlit. Her mother’s employer, a Coptic Christian Egyptian family, gave her family a tree for her apartment this year. It sits prominently in the middle of a shared living room, decorated, like this one, yet without the lights turned on. The little girl runs her small fingers through the stiff branches of the synthetic tree that sits outside of her church. Picking up a section of the (non-functioning) strand of lights, she asks
if they will be turned on at night. The mother does not answer her daughter’s question, but instead reminds her that she can see the beautiful lights on the trees in the shopkeeper’s windows when they walk home.

The New Republic

*The New Republic* scene below (Figure 33) was taken on 10/9/2011 and discussed in class on 10/14/2011. It is paired with a quote from the photographer discussing events that occurred in approximately 1991. *The New Republic* caption tells us of her frantic search to escape Sudan, while her contemporary image illustrates celebration of its independence. The photographer’s self-described feelings of belonging at the South Sudanese independence celebration held in a church in Cairo are not tied to the reasons the event was held (a South Sudanese businessman’s call for women’s return to their country to help rebuild), but to the group of women she identified with in the crowd. “When I see Sudanese women, I know Sudanese women” she says. This statement stands in contrast to her early displacement narrative in which she was systematically isolated from other women during her enslavement and subsequently forced to escape alone. This isolation set the precedent for her arduous journey towards north Sudan, and eventually Egypt.
...I was able to escape when the camp was attacked at night many months later. On this night, very late around midnight it began to rain very hard. The rain was coming in through the window of my prison. The walls of the building were not strong like cement. I shook the window hard and forced my way outside. The mud walls were weak because of the constant rain. The camp had dogs so I crawled on hands and knees very slowly and tried to stay away from them. The camp was attacked while I was crawling through the mud. When I heard the attack, when I saw the fire, I ran as fast as I could toward the water. I didn’t know where to go, but I did not stop. I made my way to the road next to the water and hid myself until I saw fishermen. I just wanted to leave and never come back.

Figure 33: The New Republic.
The majority of the refugee crowd celebrating southern Sudanese independence documented this day are Sudanese women representing a diverse range of generations. The elderly southern Sudanese women in the room wear a *thobe* (top) consisting of a long bolt of fabric wrapped around the body. Women from the North usually wear a solid colored top wrapped loosely that extends to the ankles and finishes as a scarf draped across the head. This scarf can be lifted to cover the mouth and nose when needed and where appropriate in the company of men. Women from the South usually wear a shorter, tighter, more colorful patterned top that extends slightly below the knees and finishes by being thrown over the left shoulder. From a country that has recently split into two hemispheres, women’s clothing – their top – is both a unifying factor amid decades of forced separation and a symbol of diversity. Choice of clothing is a canvas for personality, a reflection of age, marital status, tribal affiliation, and religion. This is what the photographer means when she says she knows Sudanese women by sight.

**New Year’s in Cairo**

In the images labeled *New Year’s in Cairo*, Figure 34, two mirrored scenes of remembrance and social protest are depicted in the hours leading up to midnight on December 31st, 2011: Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square to remember the martyrs of their recent revolution, and refugees crowded into the living room of an elderly member of the community to remember those who died during the civil war. *New Year’s in Cairo* was taken on 1/1/2012 and discussed in class on 1/13/2012. It is paired with a quote discussing events that occurred in approximately 1992. Events such as those depicted in Figure 34 meant to honor the commonality of shared pasts, serve to both stabilize social groups through shared histories and create a
common memory of their collective experiences. As we learn from the caption, these were not activities Imraa engaged in while isolated in Kosti soon after her escape from sexual slavery. Without family or friends to share her time with or to celebrate the passing of time with, her mind “was gone.” Through her interactions with UNHCR and subsequent anxiety over being unable to provide a satisfactorily detailed description of her life, she attributed her amnesia to internal dysfunctions of her own, absent, mind. When I asked her to explain the image she took of her crying son on this night (also pictured below) she joked that when he was older she would show him this picture to remind him of his silly behavior. That is, she was creating memories for him to later look back on to remember his youthful activities that otherwise may be forgotten. This was a historical record she did not have as a young girl violently separated from her family due to war. The pictures she took of her young son in particular on this day are what led me to make the connection between her creation of visual memories for her son, to her own much different past experiences of isolation and forgotten personal history.
…When I told them about living in Kosti, they asked me how many years I lived there. I could not remember. I don’t remember. Two years? Three? Nothing happened to me there to remember, to celebrate. My mind was gone.
Today is December 31, 2011. The New Year will begin at midnight. On this day I witnessed an Egyptian crowd numbering in the thousands gathered in Tahrir Square to sing, dance and hold a candlelight vigil for the martyrs of the revolution. Many of those same pro-democracy groups that launched a presidency-ending revolt on January 25, urged Egyptians to the symbolic heart of the city on this night to remember the protestors who were killed during the violence and those who continue to be falsely detained by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

A much smaller gathering of refugees located several metro stops away from downtown, held their own candlelight vigil for those who died during decades of civil war between North and South Sudan. Those gathered in this room sing traditional Sudanese songs and Christian hymns to honor the memory of those they have lost in the war. As the countdown approaches midnight, tapered white candles are passed around the crowded room. Three children approach an elderly woman, holding out their candle-clasped hands to touch wicks, when the youngest in the group begins to cry. He is not as tall as his cousins that stand before him in line and becomes quickly frustrated. The elderly woman laughs, rubs his back affectionately and lights his candle. His childish frustration passes as quickly as it came. However, fat tears from his momentary upset still glisten on his cheeks. His mother, the photographer, seeing his distress, wipes his tears while whispering something only mother and child can hear. She takes her camera out of her purse and begins to coax him into a smile while the clock quickly approaches midnight. Behind her everyone stands and begins to sing the South Sudan National Anthem, “…let us stand up in silence and respect, saluting our martyrs whose blood cemented our national foundation, we vow to protect our nation, so Lord, bless South Sudan.” It is 2012 in Cairo, Egypt.
Fifth Birthday

With *Fifth Birthday*, celebration of the life of a young girl is seen alongside several birthday rituals learned through contact with foreign aid workers. The photographer, her mother, displayed great enthusiasm in taking on these newly learned and life affirming activities for her daughter. Her actions on this day are intimately tied to the suffering she experienced from the previous death of a child during her displacement. The *Fifth Birthday* scene below (Figure 35) was taken on 2/13/2012, just after the conclusion of photography classes. It is paired with a quote from Imraa discussing events that occurred in approximately 2001. I viewed this image for the first time on 2/17/2017 when visiting the family’s apartment for our 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview. Prior to the start of our interview, Imraa asked me to upload photos she took at her daughter’s birthday party on my laptop, as was our typical practice during class.

We scrolled through these images and the corresponding video she also took of the event for approximately 30 minutes before beginning our interview. During this time she described the events of her daughter’s celebration, from her selection of a fancy cake at a distant bakery (an extravagant purchase for the family), to singing “Happy Birthday”, to her daughter’s delight in opening presents. Her love for her daughter was evident in the pride she took in planning each of the details of this special day. I believe viewing these photos prior to our 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview stimulated her memories of a child she lost while living in a displacement camp in Khartoum and her communication of this event to me. I knew from our previous interview that she had married young after having been separated from her family during the war and that she had children from this marriage, but was unaware of that she had lost a child. When speaking of this death during our 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview she would frequently glance to my laptop screen, now dark from inactivity, though the last view visible on screen was of her daughter’s fifth birthday.
Today, this young girl is celebrating her fifth birthday. She is her mother’s second daughter; the first having passed away in a refugee camp in Khartoum approximately ten years prior. Her young cousins and the children of her mother’s friends are in attendance at the party. “How old are you today?” her mother asks in English. *Hamza* (five), she replies with a big grin in Arabic while reaching up to adjust the plastic party hat her elder brother placed on her head.
moments earlier. “Happy Birth Day” has been written in spray foam on the living room walls of their shared apartment. Balloons and tinsel garland hang from the ceiling fan and the four corners of the room where the young partygoers have gathered.

While sparklers are lit, her mother brings in a birthday cake from the kitchen carried on a green plastic platter. It is a circular chocolate cake decorated with paper umbrellas, candies wrapped in plastic and sliced sugared fruit. The birthday girl’s eyes noticeably widen as she looks at her cake. Later, she would tell her mother it was “almost too pretty to eat.” Her mother begins to sing the Happy Birthday song to her in English while the children in attendance join her. Most of the youngest guests do not know all of the words, but this does not stop them from enthusiastically shouting out sounds in beat with the melody. After the sparklers have finished, cake is passed around to all guests along with Sprite, Pepsi and Orange soda. The birthday girl laughs happily when presented with a small, white porcelain box in the shape of a heart, covered in tiny yellow and pink flowers. This is just the first of many presents she will receive on this day in celebration of her birth.

**Food Ceremony**

In the image *Food Ceremony* (Figure 36) yet another side of the suffering and healing revealed within everyday life is shown. Here, the photographer displays her joy in being able to welcome guests into her home while serving a special meal celebrating the traditional foods of her homeland that provide her comfort and continuity. This is contrasted by past experience in painstakingly dividing donated rice bags among her children in a displaced persons camp in Khartoum, and the distress she felt upon waking each day wondering if her family would have enough to eat that day. The *Food Ceremony* videos (Figure 36, top) were taken the week of
11/11/2011. The photograph below this was selected by the photographer during our photo-elicitation interview in response to my question if she wanted to select any images not currently in her photo folder for inclusion in the photo narrative (Chapter 4). These video/photo scenes are paired with a quote from the photographer discussing events that occurred in 2001.

Her discussion of events occurring in 2001 elaborated on dangerous living conditions in a Khartoum displacement camp for southerners where her normal routine in providing food for her family, and the daily rituals surrounding the preparation and serving of those meals, was halted due to the scarce food rations provided in the camps. However, those details were unknown to me when initially viewing her video of an all-female food ceremony in November 2011 (our 2nd interview was conducted in February 2012). It was the photographer who reminded me of the important contrast between the scenes of activity shown below and her previous experiences in Khartoum. Being able to cook for and serve her family and friends is an important contributor to her familial stability and the development and maintenance of social relationships.
I lived here [displacement camp in Khartoum] for a few years. There were students from African University who would come and help us, bring us food. I would stand in long lines for a food bag of rice, beans and oil. I had to divide it carefully so my children could eat every day. Foreigners tried to help us, but the Sudanese police always kicked them out. They said they were telling lies about us to people outside the country. Food riots were common. It was a very dangerous place.
A dinner guest in a typical Sudanese home will be greeted at the door with a glass of chilled fruit juice or hibiscus herbal tea as welcome. Sudanese women follow the Arabic custom of pouring water over the hands of guests with the excess being caught in a basin held by the hostess. Guests seat themselves on comfortable pillows that line the floor in front of a low table covered in a plain white cloth. With the exception of this covering, the table is left completely bare until the first course of dinner is served. Soup, usually a light broth consisting of vegetables, is served in individual bowls on a large porcelain tray. When all bowls are empty, dinner guests are given a small plate. The plate is empty. If the hostess’ house contains women of multiple generations (in an all-female dinner gathering) typically the younger adult female will serve her guests at the direction of the eldest female member of the household.

The first tray from the kitchen contains a stiff porridge made with wheat flour; the second dish a stew consisting primarily of okra and eggplant. Using the right hand, the hostess will gather a small ball of porridge together, dip it into the stew, ceremoniously pretend to take a bite of her food, and then, at the direction of the senior female of the house, distribute her offering to guests. This is a ritual that reflects an honor she is bestowing on her dinner guests to take the first bite of food she has carefully prepared for them. The completion of this ritual for all present is a signal to guests they may begin serving themselves. The main entree consists of several bowls of maschi (a tomato dish stuffed with rice or beef), a selection of cooked vegetables, and musalamiya (liver, flour, dates and spices). A flat bread made of corn (kissra), is used as a utensil in lieu of forks or knives to sop up the mixtures in each bowl. After dinner, coffee is poured from a small tin pot with a long spout, known as jebena. Coffee beans are fried in a pot over charcoal and then ground together with cloves and other available spices such as ginger and cinnamon. After being steeped in hot water, the coffee is then strained through a grass sieve.
First Communion

With First Communion, Figure 37, we see the photographer’s joy and pride in capturing an important milestone in her nephew’s life – the only son of a beloved sister, thought dead, she reconnected with in Cairo. This is illustrated in her careful documentation of a rite of passage in his life. This image was taken on 1/21/2012 and discussed in class on 2/3/2012. It is paired with a quote from discussing events that occurred in approximately 2002 where Imraa’s silent invocation of a favored prayer helped take her mind away from the progression of a violent attack. I had conducted my 2nd semi-structured interview with Imraa in her apartment the week prior when photography classes were cancelled due to on-going protests in Tahrir from the anniversary of the January 25, 2011 revolution. This is the interview when women typically discussed information not communicated with UNHCR during their refugee interviews.

This second interview resulted in my learning additional details of her life regarding an attack by a smuggler on her way to Egypt. During this attack, she described a mental recitation (a prayer) she thought of to give her strength. When looking at her image a few weeks later of her nephew’s first communion (documented with over a hundred photos) in which this prayer was recited, I asked if the words she had recited to me were learned after joining the Catholic Church in Cairo. This was after I had heard through several previous interviews with other women that it was not uncommon for them to intersperse past experiences of violence with religious language they acquired much later, potentially years later, after this violence had actually occurred. She answered “Yes” to my question and then proceeded to recite the entire Anima Christi, a medieval prayer to Jesus in the tradition of the Catholic Church. This prayer was part of her nephew’s contemporary communion ceremony, and helped her reshape a past traumatic experience into an event she endured through the comfort and strength provided by her religion.

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…I prayed to God to give me strength. My children were with me. I had to live, I had to make sure they would get off this cursed boat. Good Jesus, hear me, I said. Never let me be parted from you. From the evil enemy, protect me.

Figure 37: First Communion.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Thy wounds, hide me.
Separated from Thee let me never be.
From the malignant enemy, defend me.
At the hour of death, call me.
To come to Thee, bid me,
That I may praise Thee in the company
Of Thy Saints, for all eternity.
Amen

~Anima Christi
This is a holy day for her nephew. He is to receive the Eucharist for the first time. The priest of his Catholic Church reminds the predominantly Sudanese crowd of what Jesus has said, “take this bread, it is my body…drink this wine, it is my blood.” The ceremony is conducted entirely in Arabic with the exception of one word, often repeated by the crowd – Amen. At a signal from the priest, children leave their pews and form two lines on their way to the altar. A large statue of Madonna positioned in an alcove behind the priest greets the children when they arrive to solemnly stand in front of the gathered congregation. All child participants wear a white satin robe. Girls wear an additional white scarf tied securely around their heads.

After receiving his First Communion, the photographers’ nephew returns to his church pew, makes the sign of the cross, and kneels to prey. His aunt proudly follows him on the short walk to and from the altar, taking photos at each of his steps along the way. At the conclusion of the sacrament, two teenage boys at the altar turn to grab lit candles and then face each other. Simultaneously, they cup their hands protectively around the small flames as they move down the aisle. The only sounds echoing inside the cathedral are the priest’s prayers.

Marriage Celebration

_Marriage Celebration_ (Figure 38) illustrates a form of bodily adornment to convey identity and celebration. This image was taken the week of 12/18/2011 and shown briefly in class on 12/2/2011 as part of a series of images the photographer took of a friend’s wedding ceremony. It is paired with a quote from the photographer’s mother discussing events that occurred in approximately 2004. My 2nd interview with the photographer’s mother and 1st interview with her daughter occurred on the same day. During this interview, Imraa elaborated on a violent relationship with her ex-husband that had ended in divorce in 2004. A divorce
granted by an Egyptian court where she was represented by a UNHCR provided lawyer. She abruptly ceased speaking about her ex-husband as soon as she reached the point in their story where the divorce was finalized, and, knowing that I planned to interview her daughter next, switched to speaking about the beautiful photos her daughter had taken during our class. She specifically mentioned the many wedding scenes her daughter had taken between bride and groom (e.g., toasting each other, sharing cake, dancing, kissing, smiling at each other, etc.). She was glad that her daughter was in attendance at the pre-wedding henna party and later attended the ceremony. After the misery of her marriage, she had little desire to marry again, but wanted her daughter to have strong relationships.
…He moved into our apartment for a few months but I grew tired of his drinking and beatings. When we lived together in Cairo, he would take the money I had earned cleaning houses and spend it on alcohol. I stayed silent for a long time about the abuse, but I became desperate so I went to UNHCR to help me. The final action he took was a brutal beating where he cut my face with a knife. The next day I went to UNHCR for help. Someone there called my husband and told him that if he did not stop beating me they would take his card away. UNHCR counseled my husband to stop drinking, hitting me and taking the money I earned as a housekeeper. He did not listen. I had three Sudanese men from my community help me to get him out of the apartment. We never lived together again after this day. After about a year and a half when I finally had an appointment with the court, I told the judge about my problems with my husband. The judge asks how were we married? Did our families approve? I told him it happened in Khartoum without my family there, that we were separated by the war. On the court papers it says the reason for our divorce was due to religious differences.

Figure 38: Marriage Celebration.
The night before her wedding, relatives, friends and honored guests crowd into the mother of the bride’s living room. Mother and her daughter, the photographer, have been invited to the celebration through friends of her daughter. Everyone in the room is dressed casually in loose clothing. Upon entering the room, guests exchange hugs and kisses with the women already present, grab a small sweet from one of the many food platters scattered around the room, roll up the sleeves of their shirts or pants and find a seat on the floor. The tone is celebratory and teasing; the favored topic among the women – men. The groom’s mother recounts a funny story of how she was clumsily courted by her husband. Another guest provides a teasing summary of how she denied her first husband twice before she finally allowed her father to accept his proposal. As the room erupts into laughter, several of the youngest girls in attendance sneak into the bathroom to look at the white chiffon and rhinestone-encrusted dress hanging on the bathroom door.

The bride, expected to have the most elaborate henna patterns, is with the artist having the soles of her feet, legs, tops of her hands and forearms covered with intricate free-drawn designs. Once the artist has finished, the bride sits carefully for hours while the toothpaste like consistency of the henna dye dries on her skin. When she appears at her marriage celebration tomorrow in full make-up with deep black bridal tattoos she will be almost unrecognizable from the modest woman seated today enjoying the attention of her friends and relatives. In understanding that she cannot move for several hours while waiting for the henna to dry, her guests laughingly dance and sing to keep her entertained. A small child, perhaps four-years-old, brings her bastouza (an Egyptian sweet cake) with crushed pistachios on top. The photographer sits closely beside the bride and asks many questions about the man she will be marrying.
tomorrow. When the henna artist is finished with the bride, she asks her to paint the tops of her hands and forearms in a similar design.

**Life, Revealed**

Caruth states that history like trauma is “never simply one’s own…history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (Caruth 1996:24). In the above pages, I have presented several scenes of activity as recorded by refugee women photographers in Cairo. These scenes illustrate: traditional and newly acquired rituals, prayers and social customs women regularly invoke to create a sense of personal control and security; methods of communicating dissatisfaction and unrest through acts of social cohesion; and performances where clothing and individual bodily adornment communicate cultural identity (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). These contemporary, emotionally laden images, contextualized by personal and past experiences, descend into the everyday, ordinary life of Sudanese refugee women in Cairo. This “communicative aspect of emotion” (Lutz and White 1986:429) humanizes women who, as refugees, have been stripped of all but extraordinarily violent experiences that prove their claim for asylum and provide a level of protection by their surrogate State, UNHCR (Slaughter and Crisp 2009). The images above prioritize a distinctly female perspective of how violent events of the past are carried forward into the everyday.

These humanizing scenes also provide important depth for understanding the values and motivations for refugee women who are seeking to recreate their lives and heal from the traumas near daily violence continues to inflict upon them. These are not details communicated to UNHCR through a methodologically individualizing refugee status determination process that adheres to a universal, theoretically objective, definition of refugee. This definition prioritizes
extraordinary periods of violence thereby suppressing women’s ordinary, daily experiences of violence. Important additions to women’s refugee narrative such as those illustrated in the scenes above, would enable both seeing women’s embodied suffering of war and more effectively responding to its existence by listening to how women communicate what makes their lives livable. Both fall within the stated mission of UNHCR.

As I am reminded by Das, it is not that violence and suffering are expelled in the emotionally communicative scenes depicted above (as their captions about past experiences remind us), “but rather that everyday life is not expelled” (Das 2003:300). That is, instead of voiding refugees of emotion in reducing the sum of their lives down to those moments of extraordinary violence in which they may legally claim refugee status, perhaps a better tactic would be to try and understand the totality of their everyday lives (the mindful body) in seeking sustainable solutions to their suffering. This perspective would enable seeing far beyond isolated juridical-political sections of their narrative to seeing the shared life that is lived through the violence.

When the woman who said, “We are united” to describe the image that began this chapter, she did so within a lengthier discussion of the performance of a communal religious ritual that gave her comfort in reminding that everyone gathered were of the same body – “take this bread, it is my body…drink this wine, it is my blood.” The comfort this provided her in knowing she was part of a social body was a result of her everyday activities. Careful analysis of micro-level peace occurrences such as those illustrated here are necessary for understanding how the ritualized actions of daily life contributes to alleviating the effects of ordinary violence.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Figure 39: UNHCR-Egypt headquarters.
Distance of 6th of October City (the post-Mustafa Mahmoud location of UNHCR-Egypt offices) from the center of Cairo (approximately 40 kilometers) and study participants neighborhoods. Map courtesy of Google Maps.
Lost Girls, Revealed

While in Cairo, I had the opportunity to meet and have dinner with the Director of a refugee NGO based in the UK who assists Darfuri women living in refugee camps in Chad by providing them with food, water and occasionally healthcare services when doctors were able to visit the camps. During our discussion, she expressed to me her belief that her organization and others like it working in the region had failed to change anything substantial in the lives of the women they assisted. She described seeing women line up day after day to receive their food rations who were unable or unwilling to meet the eyes of those around them, and quickly retreating to their corners of the camp. She interpreted this as a sign of their victimization, their depression and, in general, a complete disassociation from their environment. Her description reminds me of what Agamben calls “bare life” – someone with biological life, but no political significance (Agamben 1995). The director believed that she would not last much longer in her position due to her mental fatigue in not effectively assisting women. Since our conversation in November 2011, she has retired.

What the Director was witnessing day in and day out, I believe, is something quite similar to what the photographer described to me when I was looking at her image that began Chapter 3: I am living, but sometimes I feel like I am dead. Like there is a knife in my heart that I cannot pull out because it will kill me. But if I do not take it out, I cannot live. That is, a woman who has been not only historically isolated, but transplanted from one dangerous location to another potentially as dangerous and, therefore, unable to engage in public life. Had I only been exposed to descriptions and images such as these (e.g., Chapter 7) without benefit of the celebration, mourning, and healing rituals of women’s lives (e.g., as seen and described in Chapter 8), I might have had a similarly despairing attitude regarding the women with whom I
worked. But I find my attitude toward these women more hopeful than desolate because I know that the photographer who took the image she described as representing a living death, is also the same woman who captured a Sudanese celebration welcoming the New Year, and the same woman who can gently coax the childish tears of her young son into a smile. These images reveal women’s attempts to heal and remake their worlds. Because it is Sudanese women who are most often tasked with sustaining and carrying out the functions of daily life, I see their efforts at maintaining the everyday as an achievement that should be recognized, recorded and given a place of prominence in retelling their own histories and the conflict history of their nation.

Summary of Chapters

In this dissertation, I have argued that the complexity of Sudanese women’s everyday experiences with violence – women I refer to as Lost Girls – has been historically neglected due to inability to see their collective suffering. Failure to acknowledge women’s social and political bodies leads to a reductionist understanding of their lives that may be incapable of seeing their suffering, much less effectively responding to its existence. This idea is encompassed within the mindful body argument of Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) exploring how “nature, society and culture speak simultaneously” through the communicative power of emotion. This dissertation explored women’s embodied suffering of war, specifically how their suffering has been ignored (Chapter 5), how it is maintained through ordinary daily violence (Chapter 7), and how women communicate and combat these experiences (Chapter 8).

With the Lost Boys and Lost Girls discussion of Chapter 5, we see how boys were forced into the public role of soldier, while women (as inhabitants of private life) were sexually
victimized in order to destroy family and community stability. Reproduction of the basic principles of public/private arguments created conditions in which both male and female bodies were exploited, yet in distinctly different ways. Understanding this dichotomy, problematized by the mindful body, assists in answering my first research question.

**Question 1:** How did the gendered war and migration experiences of Sudanese women and girls effectively hide their suffering?

My answer to this question is accomplished through interpreting how the refugee process further individualizes women and reinforces dichotomized understandings of the body. In addition, I explore how inclusion of gendered analysis of war would significantly impact how we see and interpret human suffering (Elshtain 2009; Sjoberg 2011). The gendered war and migration experiences of Sudanese women and girls described in Chapter 5 illustrate how their roles within private life are the definitive factor in targeting their bodies to “impoverish private life” (Bulmash 1982:618). Sexually violated women during the war and its aftermath should serve as important reminders of how divisive, dichotomized discourse may endanger women’s lives. As Butler notes, you must both see women’s daily suffering and grieve for its existence before this realization can begin (Butler 2010).

Horrific examples of women unable to escape civil war—Rwandan women, Sudan’s Lost Girls, and as I sit writing today, Syrian women—suggest that *seeing* the collective suffering of women targeted by war is certainly not guaranteed to create change. Political policies that section off women’s relationship to the family from their social and political relationships may be unable to recognize women’s embodied suffering of war (Inhorn 2008). Without this first
crucial step, necessary theory building regarding how women’s bodies are targeted in warfare will not occur, nor exploration of the most effective measures employed to respond to their suffering (Rose 2000).

One of the primary contributions of this dissertation is to inform both academics (anthropologists, political theorists, international relation experts, etc.) and interventionists (UNHCR, humanitarian aid workers, legal professionals, etc.) who focus on war of the importance of understanding women’s daily lives so that their suffering will not be ignored. This recounted history of the everyday experiences of the “vanished” (Matheson 2002) Lost Girls may serve as a cautious reminder of what is lost, what lives are lost, through inconsideration of the mindful body.

In presenting the emotional experiences of Sudanese refugee women in Chapters 7 and 8 (also illustrated in the completed Lost Girl Biography of Chapter 6) their public experiences dealing with ordinary, expected violence along with ongoing negotiation of past suffering through contemporary rituals of mourning and celebration are vibrantly illustrated. By visually interrogating women’s everyday lives, communication of suffering and healing is visible within their daily lives. Making important emotional connections between individual, social and political bodies is a necessary step in answering my second research question, accomplished by using the mindful body to connect the ‘bodies’ of refugee women through the communicative power of emotions (Schepet-Hughes and Lock 1987).

Question 2: How do Sudanese women communicate their embodied experiences of war and its refugee aftermath?
The women I worked with experienced isolating, individualizing practices in seeking refugee status, and these were women who were able to overcome extreme barriers in presenting themselves to a UNHCR audience. Refugee policies such as those Sudanese women experience in Cairo are theoretically universalizing while methodologically individualizing (Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004). These policies are exemplified by UNHCR application of one definition of refugee to Sudanese women who must then individually prove how they meet this definition. Becoming a recognized refugee therefore does not mean that women’s collective experiences of violence are now known. Instead, it is a testament to their ability to conform their life experiences to this individualizing definition, editing those details unimportant for refugee conferral, and to remember this static, disconnected, and incomplete picture of their lives in future communications with their surrogate State.

Women’s emotionally evocative images in Chapters 7 and 8 convey important motivational experiences of their lives (both to avoid violence and suffering and in seeking methods of healing) that are not communicated during the refugee process. Although each set of photographs is paired with figure captions from an individual woman explaining the meaning of the images, I edited them, as with Imraa’s narrative presented in Chapter 5, as a collective composite to demonstrate the similarities of women’s experiences in order to deconstruct and counteract the juridical-politically imposed refugee narrative of suffering. Recognition of the social dimensions of pain is vital for seeing the relationships between the individual, the social, and the political. Women’s emotional experiences, revealed in their photography if not their “official” stories, blurs the borders between these bodies by illustrating how phenomenal experiences of suffering and healing within everyday life are intimately connected to their socio-cultural environments.
Depicting women’s emotional experiences of suffering and healing outside the strict confines of UNHCR communication is the second important contribution of this dissertation. This agenda is pursued in order to: demonstrate the important animating details of life lost within this process (Lutz and White 1986); describe the motivating force behind human behavior (Rosaldo 1984); and illustrate how political policies are “manifested locally and specifically” among “individuals living their particular lives” (Abu-Lughod 1991:160; Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004). Keeping in mind how and why I answer these research questions, I believe there are four specific audiences who may benefit from this research. I will discuss this next in general terms and then provide specific recommendations for UNHCR on how this ethnography may better inform current refugee policy.

Implications of the Study: Potential Audiences and UNHCR Recommendations

By understanding women’s daily lives, particularly women who have suffered the horrors of war and its refugee aftermath, and by critically reflecting upon the ways in which their individual, social and political bodies suffer and heal from that violence, I believe we can avoid feelings of powerlessness experienced by the Director’s story related in the beginning of this chapter. By ‘we,’ I mean those who seek to better understand the lives of refugee women who have experienced the violence of war in order to provide them with assistance and support – the most likely audience of my research. I see this research as being of interest and potentially useful for three different audiences: (1) anthropologists engaged in migration, visual, gender, medical or childhood studies (2) a general interest audience of those who work with refugees, particularly women (e.g., humanitarian aid workers, legal aid professionals), and (3) international relations (IR)/political theorists, and (4) creators and implementers of refugee
policy (e.g., UNHCR). I have tried to speak to each of these potential audiences in the presentations and publications that have already resulted from this work (see section to follow), and will continue to address each in future dissemination of research results.

Critical research into the everyday lives of women who continue to suffer the physical and psychological effects of civil war has the power to push anthropological theory in new directions. Persons who are forced to flee violence must adapt, oftentimes radically, to new roles, social groups, institutions, environments and traditions. As noted by Harrell-Bond and Voutira, “documenting and interpreting the variety and diversity of human cultural phenomena is the work of anthropology” (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992:7). In this manner, I envision that an anthropology of the body focused on the ordinary emotional experiences found within daily life, could simultaneously hold together the macro (i.e., policy) and the micro (i.e., everyday life) levels of analysis for linking individual health to socio-cultural conditions. I have chosen to accomplish this through a distinctly gendered lens by working with women to support their expression of their experiences through the communicative power of photography. These are theoretical and methodological tools that can be applied across a wide range of contemporary anthropological research topics.

For the second group of potential readers, I would hope this work could provide renewed energy to support women’s lives. By seeing that the woman who lost her child painfully in a northern Sudanese refugee camp, who continues to struggle daily in Cairo to avoid violence, is also the same woman who took such pride in her daughter’s (her third live birth) fifth birthday celebration, perhaps others who work with women with a similar history of violence can see the agency within the victim. The enduring power of humanity revealed in this context serves as an important reminder to see human suffering and explore methods for responding.
With the data presented here, the logic behind IR specialists who support the notion that a gendered analysis of the State would not ultimately change the way in which we frame violence, may change. These theories could be called into question in seeing the dangers for women inherent in this dismissive and reductionist philosophy. After analysis of the gendered displacement experiences of girls and boys attempting to escape the Second Sudanese Civil War, I argue that a gendered analysis of States involved in violent conflict would change both how we theorize war (e.g., how we see and interpret human suffering) and how we respond to its victims.

And finally, for those involved in refugee policy – potential readers who seek to develop “more insightful pre-conflict preventive measures and more effective post-conflict rehabilitative measures” (Rose 2000:107) – exemplified by the durable solutions mandate of UNHCR – I have several recommendations potentially useful for this endeavor. The legal process of becoming a refugee is an isolated endeavor that considers women only on the individual body level so common to political philosophy. Even still, the process itself may further isolate women by establishing the boundaries of what violence is acceptable to speak of (i.e., that which may prove/disprove a refugee claim). This effectively alienates women from their own narratives outside the structured language of refugee law.

I do not assume it reasonable from a time management or budgetary perspective to put a camera into the hands of every forced migrant that crosses a border (though I certainly think a lot would be learned about their lives if this was done). It is possible and reasonable, however, to ask policy-makers to think of refugees as not just past victims, but also those who continue to experience the aftermath of war within their contemporary daily lives living outside of the cultural contexts to which they were born. In addition, these women are clearly not just victims, they exert incredible resilience and agency to survive and heal in their new location. If UNHCR
policies were not geared solely towards mapping the borders of individual, politically relevant experiences of violence, but instead were to also focus on their contemporary selves, what information could be learned to assist in finding sustainable solutions? How may the public image of the agency improve among the disaffected asylum-seeking and refugee population in Cairo? These are questions refugee policy makers need to ask themselves – how does this policy affect that body, or that individual. In essence these would be policies that understand the body as culturally and historically situated to enable critical reflection on that ways that refugees live, suffer, and heal in the everyday.

In consideration of this, I have twelve specific policy recommendations for UNHCR based on case examples from my research that question how understanding the contemporary body of refugees may significantly alter interpretations of their experiences. The examples provided below and meant to provide real-life scenarios for policy makers to critically analyze and evaluate in recognition that UNHCR should provide a model for governments to respond to – particularly those governments whose actions sparked the need for international assistance for its displaced populations. These case examples discuss refugees both in general and gender-specific terms:

1. Current methods for determining refugee status in interrogating potential refugees on a case-by-case basis for specific – politically and legally relevant – instances of violence, medicalizes and individualizes suffering. Disassociation of the individual body from its social and political bodies means, among other things, that an incomplete picture of refugee life is formed through disassociating individual experiences of violence from their social significance. When the IOM officer asked me, “Why are southern Sudanese women not going home?” (Chapter 2) she was
cognizant only of women’s violent experiences as refugees in Cairo, therefore, she was genuinely puzzled why women would choose to stay in Egypt rather than return to their new ‘peaceful’ nation of South Sudan. While daily violence in revolutionary Egypt certainly increased women’s desire to leave, it does not mean they cast their gaze back upon southern Sudan as a viable option for relocation. War and violence have been more of a constant in their lives than peace and safety. By understanding only specific instances of violence in women’s lives, UNHCR and its partners may be unable to see other aspects of their lives that affect women’s decision to stay such as increased educational benefits for their children, reformed community ties in Cairo, and inability to return to a nation that has yet to acknowledge their strength and bravery in fleeing dangerous situations (e.g., such as experienced by the Lost Boys). One-dimensional understanding of refugee life could severely handicap UNHCR’s ability to implement their own durable solutions.

2. UNHCR and their partners such as IOM seek to understand refugee motivations for returning to Sudan (or not), remaining in Egypt, or hopes for resettlement. They must see that refugee lives are not frozen in time. By looking at something so concrete and simple as women’s body adornment (e.g., “When I see Sudanese women, I know Sudanese women”) (Chapter 8), generational and cultural changes in women’s lives reflective of connections to their country of origin, and the distinct ways in which these connections have changed through contact with other women are revealed. This is also illustrated as women have adopted new methods of social healing. For example, the Healing Dance image presented in Chapter 8 is related to a historical ritual practiced among Egyptian women. Contemporarily, this ritual is seen performed by a woman from the Nuba Mountains (Sudan) on a woman from Unity State (South Sudan). By seeing these changes, UNHCR can more easily identify how women both feel pride in their
country during its burgeoning independence, while simultaneously having no desire to return. These feelings directly impact UNHCR’s ability to implement durable solutions.

3. Inclusion of only those past extraordinarily violent situations that prove or disprove a refugee claim (or only the present occurrences that would enable a resettlement claim for those who are already registered refugees) into UNHCR files, means that case workers will miss or disregard elements of women’s lives that contribute to suffering. For example, the traumatic death of a child never revealed in UNHCR communications as this event’s occurrence in a displaced persons camp in Khartoum was not important for proving a refugee claim for fleeing violence in South Sudan (e.g., “I fainted before she was born. They took her away. I never saw her”) (Chapter 8).

4. Women’s demonstrated ability to recognize the suffering of other women, transcendent of national and religious boundaries, signal important transitions into healing that policies and programs in the religiously diverse refugee environment of Cairo may be built upon (e.g., “Da mish el maseehi” This is not Christian / “Da mish el islaam” This is not Islam) (Chapter 7). The daily life of refugees in Egypt is one structured by familiarity with both Christian and Islamic symbols, sounds, rituals, prayers and beliefs. Practitioners of Islam dominate Egypt, while the majority of refugee NGOs are Christian exposing refugees to religious diversity on a daily basis. This experiential knowledge helped the women in my photography class see and interpret violent actions against a female Egyptian protestor as against both Christianity and Islam. This ability to mentally cross sectarian lines in order to see and mourn the suffering of other women could be
an important first step towards starting programs in Cairo to join refugee women from a range of diverse religious backgrounds.

5. It is important to understand that the gendered social relationships of refugees established prior to the war often continue in their country of asylum. This may contribute to Sudanese who join violent gangs in Cairo for, among other things, protection (e.g., Lost Boys) and the public isolation of women (e.g., “I swear to Allah, thugs attacked me. Thugs? Yes, Sudanese thugs. Sudanese or Egyptian? Sudanese. Sudanese? Yes”) (Chapter 7).

6. Paying attention to the political bodies of refugees, in particular how responses to power and control are negotiated, is important for predicting and appropriately responding to refugee feelings of anger and resentment such as what transpired at Mustafa Mahmoud Square in 2005. Initial local responses to the protest demonstrations (e.g., “We have to remember that for the past three months, we have exhausted all efforts to find a peaceful solution to this problem”) (Chapter 2) were unable to move past a punitive response to a collective refugee body united in their demand for the agency to implement more transparent and effective policies. This resulted in several refugee deaths and hundreds of police detentions, both of which are antithetical to UNHCR’s mission to protect and defend refugee human rights. Better understanding of Sudanese lives in Cairo, outside of the confines of the refugee status determination process, may have enabled an alternative response to the protestors (or potentially have prevented violence altogether).
7. Establishing UNHCR-Egypt headquarters in an isolated suburb of Cairo post-Mustafa Mahmoud, creates dangerous traveling conditions for single women in particular who must leave their apartments at night (often alone due to the individualized nature of refugee appointments) in order to reach distant agency offices early enough to get a favorable position in line (Figure 39). Though my research did not specifically map the locations where women had been attacked in the city, the frequency of statements indicating violence on the street while traveling to UNHCR suggest that criminals are aware of the specific paths of travel refugees must take late at night to reach 6th of October City and so stalk women along these paths. Rather than protecting refugees, as is the mandate of UNHCR, their reactionary change in office locations endangers women. It also establishes a policy of distancing UNHCR from the population it serves, a fact which has not gone unnoticed by refugee women whose safety was further threatened by the Egyptian Revolution who could not reach agency officials to appeal for help (e.g., “…I tried to report my attack to the police but no one was at the police station. I tried to report the attack to UNHCR, but they were closed too”) (Chapter 7). Distancing policies such as these further indicate an agency inability or unwillingness to consider the social and political bodies of refugees. UNHCR is the only political institution refugees have in Egypt to appeal to for help; their policies should reflect this.

8. Failure to recognize the collective suffering of women (e.g., Lost Girls) by individualizing suffering may further isolate them by falsely identifying their traumatic experiences of the body-self as specific to themselves as individuals, not as a result of their relationships to social and political forms of power and control. Not only does this reinforce societal taboos, such as the shame a rape victim may feel in voicing her ‘isolated’ experiences of rape, it may further repress
women’s ability to reconcile the past with the present if they are made to feel as if their responses to questions involving their rape are not satisfactorily answered (e.g., “I don’t understand why she asks this question?”) (Chapter 5).

9. Without recognizing how social and political bodies impact individual experience – even something so seemingly integral to our body-selves as personal memory – refugee credibility will continue to be determined not by the ‘truth’ or ‘lie’ response interviewers are looking for, but by the ability of refugees to prioritize their individual experiences decoupled from their environment. Refugee credibility, if you remember, is the determining factor for granting refugee status. Imraa illustrates this in frequently questioning her own inability to answer direct questions about her life (e.g., “Should I remember this?”) (Chapter 5). An RSD officer, cognizant of only individual body experiences, may interpret her halting answers to questions she cannot quickly or easily answer as a lie. An interviewer that understands her social body and the repeated forms of isolation it has experienced, may interpret an absence of memory as stemming from her lack of community to speak of these experiences; therefore, her memories of the event were not stimulated and cemented. An interviewer aware of connections between individual and political bodies may take her response to mean that within the life of one who has experienced frequent, daily violence, recovering a detailed memory of a specific episode of ‘contained’ violence is not so easy a task. Whatever the interpretation, all conclusions inclusive of the mindful body lead to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in how a body experiences and remembers violence.
10. In medicalizing and individualizing suffering, psychosocial workers who seek to assist refugees may be neglecting the most relevant collective healing mechanisms women utilize as members of a social body (e.g., “I cry a lot, but this treatment has not helped”) (Chapter 8).

11. The communicative power of emotion is lost within policies that strip the theoretical person (of the refugee) of the revealing power of these experiences. For example, take the refugee woman denied for resettlement who, when sent from the interview room after being unable to stop crying, was asked by the interviewer upon returning, “What kind of guns were the men carrying”? (Chapter 3). She understood her emotional outburst as distracting to the interviewer and unimportant for proving the credibility of her claim for resettlement. Her subsequent reactions to the interviewer in attempting to quell her emotional responses made her uncomfortable in his presence and of the opinion that he did not care about her suffering. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which this would not have affected her ability to answer his questions.

12. Finally, what each of the points above suggest, is the treatment of long-term social suffering of refugees as an emergency event, rather than the protracted complex disaster that characterizes the experiences of Sudanese refugees. Long-term treatment of war affected populations as an emergency situation, means that refugees will continue to be treated as temporary aberrations, rather than permanent or semi-permanent fixtures outside the borders of their country. Demonstrative of this permanence, Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya, where the Lost Girls and Boys of Sudan first walked to over 20 years ago, is still in existence today with a population of over 110,000 (UNHCR 2013b). Emergency methodologies follow ‘emergency’
situations. These are methods that dictate quick refugee interviews, life-altering decisions on credibility based on those interviews, and assistance programs geared toward addressing temporary needs. The latter point is illustrated by UNHCR’s implementing partner, Caritas, periodically withholding financial assistance in a misguided and potentially dangerous attempt to make refugees less reliant on long-term aid (e.g., “This practice is stupid and pointless. It needlessly scares women. If they can find work, they work. Period. This has nothing to do with any ‘incentive’ provided by Caritas scaring them with hunger and homelessness”) (Chapter 3).

Dissemination of Research Findings

Preliminary and secondary findings of this research have been distributed in the following four formats: (1) an open to the public lecture entitled “The waiting room: Daily life of forced migrant southern Sudanese women in Cairo” given at the American University in Cairo (AUC) in October 2011; (2) a gallery show featuring three images from each photographer (who were also present at the opening night of the exhibition to answer questions) held in March 2012 at the Art el Lewa Gallery in the Zamalek area of Cairo; (3) a report entitled “Frozen words: Memory and sexual violence amongst Sudanese refugee women in Cairo” published online in June 2012 by UNHCR’s New Issues in Refugee Research series; and (4) a book chapter entitled “‘There is violence either way so let violence come with an education’: Southern Sudanese refugee women’s use of education for an imagined peaceful future” in Refugees, Immigrants, and Education in the Global South, edited by Lesley Bartlett and Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher.

The Director of StARS will be given a copy of the final dissertation. Additionally, given the large amount of women’s images unable to be presented here due to space restrictions, I plan to seek out publishing opportunities dedicated to showcasing women’s photography. With
research participant approval, photographers will be listed as co-authors of such a proposed volume.

**Anthropology, Ordinary Violence and the Role of the Visual**

An anthropology of the body reminds us to “resist all pressures from the Other to produce tidy answers, and ‘Just So’ stories, remain eclectic in our approach, and be content with a body that refuses to hold still” (Lock 1993:148). This theoretical focus paired with the unique way I approach collection and analysis of visual data in order to understand women’s daily lives contributes to anthropological approaches to the body. In attempting to answer questions regarding the borders erected between ordinary and extraordinary violence (as well as between private and public bodies), Veena Das explicitly describes “failure of the grammar of the ordinary” (Das 2007a:7) to appropriately express “how concrete relations and abstract relations are connected” (Das 2007a:3). Once we are able to express these relationships – if we are able to do this – “we begin to see questions of scale and complexity in a very different light” (Das 2007a:3). An anthropology of the body concerned with emotional experiences of suffering and healing demonstrates the magnitude and complexity with which women experience ordinary violence in their daily lives despite a refugee narrative that continues to emphasize past moments of extraordinary public violence.

As I hope to have demonstrated in the proceeding chapters, **seeing suffering** is the crucial first step to take before effective responses can be created and implemented. Without seeing the presence of human suffering, we are left with a silence of speech that leaves entire populations, such as the Lost Girls of Sudan, out of the historical narrative of their country. The vital next step beyond seeing suffering, as Butler reminds us, is to grieve for the life that has experienced it
(Butler 2010). Grievability of life does not just result from seeing suffering, it results from
rejecting falsely simplistic dichotomous barriers, integrating bodies into society and seeing the
Other in ourselves. Visual methodologies focused on the body have the power to show us
suffering and grieve for the lives of those most affected by its existence. That is, we can let
images speak in a universal language where grammar may fail. Moreover, when this power
comes from the people who have experienced the specific forms of embodied suffering war
creates, a deeper, more complex picture of human life results: what Butler may refer to as
photographing “the frame itself” (Butler 2010:71).

Through the participatory visual methodology employed with this research, we see
images that proclaim both, “I have suffered” and “We are survivors.” The survivor status of these
women results not just from the fact that they live, but from the specific ways they attempt to
heal from suffering experienced within the everyday. Use of photovoice in the manner I have
employed places the power to show suffering – and healing – into the hands of those most
affected by its presence. This is one way forward towards addressing human suffering in order to
not become paralyzed with an individual’s pain as had the Director who began this chapter.
These women’s images, and the accompanying stories they tell, serve as a constant reminder of
the ordinary, everyday violence they have experienced. Their images allow others a way to see,
grieve and respond to the violence that Sudanese women in Cairo—a few of the Lost Girls—have
suffered.
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Caruth, Cathy  

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Helman, Gerald B., and Steven R. Ratner  

Henry, Doug  

Herskovits, Melville  

Hoey, Michael  

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Hutchinson, Sharon  

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Pateman, Carol  

Peterson, V. Spike  

PHR, Physicians for Human Rights  

Pink, Sarah  

__  

Powell, Eve Trout  

Prunier, Gérard  
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Rapp, Rayna

Rone, Jemera

Rosaldo, Michelle

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Rose, Laurel L.

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Simpson, Mark

Singer, Merrill

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—

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1995  Interviewing applicants for refugee status.  
  
  
2003a  Framework for durable solutions for refugees and persons of concern.  
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2012a  South Sudan: Registered refugee population.  

  
2013a  A global humanitarian organization of humble origins.  

  

UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
1951  Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees.  

  
2003b  Women refugees in Cairo: In a class of their own.  
http://www.unhcr.org/3e8da2101.html.  

  
2006  Deadline met for completing interviews.  
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2009  UNHCR annual report shows 42 million people uprooted worldwide.  
http://www.unhcr.org/4a2fd52412d.html.  

  

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UNICEF, United Nations Children’s Fund

UNPD, United Nations Population Division

USCR, United States Committee for Refugees

USDOS, U.S. Department of State


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Welsby, Derek A.

Whiting, B., and J.W.M. Whiting

Women for Women

Yanagisako, Sylvia

Young, John

Zayan, Jailan
Appendix 1a: IRB Expedited Approval for Initial Review

May 24, 2011

Ginger Johnson
Anthropology

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00003425
Title: When Peace is More Than the Absence of War: Understanding Women’s Daily Peace Restoration Rituals in North Africa

Dear Ginger Johnson:

On 5/24/2011 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above referenced protocol. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on 5-24-12.

Approved Items:
Protocol Document(s):

Johnson Proposal 5/18/2011 8:12 PM 0.01
Study involves children and falls under 45 CFR 46.404: Research not involving more than minimal risk.

Consent/Assent Documents:
Name Modified Version
Consent/assent forms: 1) Adult Women, 2) Parental Permission and 3) Children Verbal Assent ages 12-17 - all 3 granted a Waiver of Informed Consent and Assent Documentation

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR

296
56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.116 (d) which states that an IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent, or waive the requirements to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects; (2) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; (3) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and (4) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Schinka, PhD, Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Cc: Various Menzel, CCRP
    USF IRB Professional Staff
November 9, 2011

Ginger Johnson
Anthropology

RE: Approved Amendment Request
IRB#: MS1_Pro00003425
Title: When Peace is More Than the Absence of War: Understanding Women’s Daily Peace Restoration Rituals in North Africa

Dear Ms. Johnson:


The submitted request has been approved from date: 11/4/2011 to date: 5/24/2012 for the following:

Protocol Document(s):
Johnson Proposal(0.02)

1. Change in procedures: Addition of visual ethnography.
2. Change in protocol: Protocol revised to reflect addition of visual ethnography
3. Change in consent forms: New verbal consent form for photography; Revised adult, child and parental verbal assent/consent forms to include reference to the visual ethnography

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Cc: Anna Davis, USF IRB Professional Staff
Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview protocol for refugee women and girls
(1st and 2nd Interview)

1st Interview:
A. 12-17 years

1. How old are you?

2. How long have you lived in this community?
   Do you have relatives who live in Cairo too? Who? When did they arrive?

3. When did your family first come to this area?

4. Did you or your family participate in the southern Sudanese independence referendum and/or recent political protests? If so, how?

5. Did you or your family travel to or away from your current home before the referendum vote/political change? Why or why not?

6. Did you or your family travel to or away from your current home after the referendum vote/political change? Why or why not?

7. What conversations, if any, have you had with friends about the politics of your country? With family? With UNHCR?
   How many interviews have you or your family conducted with UNHCR? What was the nature of your communication with UNHCR interviewers?

8. What kinds of activities do you do here in Cairo?
   Has this changed since the revolution? If so, how?

9. Are these the activities you did before coming to live here?

10. Tell me about what your daily life is like here?

11. What do you usually do during school? After school?

12. Do you have any brothers or sisters who are living here too?

13. Are there any other children at school that you like to spend a lot of time with? Why?

14. Did you know any of these children before you came to live here?

15. Do you think you will live here a long time?
16. If you could talk to any children who come here in the future as soon as they arrive, what do you think is the most important thing they should know about daily life here?
   Do you think that life is violent here in Egypt? Dangerous?
   Do you think that life was violent in South Sudan before you left? Dangerous?
   Do you think that life is better in South Sudan after the referendum? Dangerous?

17. Are there any other questions or things you want to add that I have not asked you yet?

B. 18+ years

1. How long have you lived in this community?
   Do you have relatives who live in Cairo too? Who? When did they arrive?

2. When did your family first come to this area?

3. Did you or your family participate in the southern Sudanese independence referendum and/or recent political protests? If so, how?

4. Did you or your family travel to or away from your current home before the referendum vote/political change? Why or why not?

5. Did you or your family travel to or away from your current home after the referendum vote/political change? Why or why not?

6. What conversations, if any, have you had with friends about the politics of your country? With family? With UNHCR?
   If interviewed by UNHCR, when? How many times? About what?
   Can you describe why you left your home country, as discussed with UNHCR during your interview(s)?

7. Are there any other questions or things you want to add that I have not asked you yet?

All questions were not always asked of all participants; questions were not always asked in the same order; follow-up questions may have been asked depending on interviewee answers. Typical follow-up questions are included above as sub-questions.
2nd Interview:
A. 18+years

1. What kinds of activities do you do here in Cairo? Has this changed since the revolution? If so, how?

2. Are these the activities you did before coming to live here?

3. Tell me about what your daily life is like here?

4. What do you usually do during the day? After your children come home from school?

5. Do you have any other relatives who are living here too?

6. Are there any other women in the community that you spend a lot of time with? Why these women?

7. Did you know any of these women before you came to live here?

8. Do you think you will live here a long time? Why or why not?

9. If you could talk to any of the families who come here in the future as soon as they arrive, what do you think is the most important thing they should know about daily life here? Do you think that life is violent here in Egypt? Dangerous? Do you think that life was violent in South Sudan before you left? Dangerous? Do you think that life is better in South Sudan after the referendum? Dangerous?

10. Are there any other questions or things you want to add that I have not asked you yet?

Once the above 10 questions were completed, I then let women know that I would be reading a transcript to them from their previous interview (specifically answers to 1st Interview, 18+years, Question 6). I gave women directions that I wanted them to stop me at any time during my recitation if: (1) I misstated any aspect of their experience or (2) if there were any additional details of their experience they remembered while I was speaking (and they wanted to discuss this with me) regardless of whether or not these details were ever told to UNHCR. I told women that I would add these additional details to their narrative.

All questions and sub-questions were not always asked of all participants; questions were not always asked in the same order; follow-up questions may have been asked depending on interviewee answers. Typical follow-up questions are included here as sub-questions.
Appendix 3: Schedule and assignment list for women’s photography class

October 7, 2011: Introduction to Photography
Lesson: Cameras given out; Basic instructions on use
Assignment: Practice with camera by taking photos of family and friends

October 14, 2011: No Class
StARS closed due to protests from attack on Coptic Christians in Cairo on October 9th

October 21, 2011: Light, Light, Light
Lesson: Principles of light; White balance
Assignment: Experiment with camera by taking photos with different light sources (natural light, lamp, window, etc.)
Review of Images: Introductory to Photography

October 28, 2011: Portraits
Lesson: Shutter speed; ISO
Assignment: Portrait of someone you live with
Review of Images: Light, Light, Light

November 4, 2011: Video/Movie, Part I
Lesson: Basic video functions of camera
Assignment: Short video (1-2 min) of a friend of family member speaking about their week
Review of Images: Portraits

November 11, 2011: Urban Landscape
Lesson: Composition
Assignment: Photographing landscapes of Cairo you encounter daily
Review of Video: Video/Movie, Part I

November 18, 2011: No Class
StARS closed due to protests in Tahrir over opposition to a draft constitution granting greater powers to the military

November 25, 2011: No Class
StARS still closed due to demonstrations in Tahrir

December 2, 2011: Night Photography
Lesson: Long exposure; Steady camera positions
Assignment: Experiment with camera by taking photos at night
Review of Images: Urban Landscape

December 9, 2011: Video/Movie, Part II
Lesson: Sound quality do’s and don’ts
Assignment: Short video (2-5 min) of an event or activity that happens regularly
Review of Images: Night Photography

**December 16, 2011: Shadows and Reflections**
Lesson: Depth of field
Assignment: Photograph the shadows and reflections you encounter daily
Review of Video: Video/Movie, Part II

**December 23, 2011: Photostory, Part I**
Lesson: Macro functions of camera (close-up/detail photos)
Assignment: 3-picture package on the life of someone you know (overall, portrait, and detail shot)
Review of Images: Shadows and Reflections

**December 30, 2011: Photostory, Part II**
Lesson: Focal point
Assignment: Continue to expand on photo stories of the previous week
Review of Images: Photostory, Part I

**January 6, 2012: No Class**
Break for Coptic Christmas

**January 13, 2012: Daily Experience**
Lesson: Rule of thirds
Assignment: A day in the life (of you)
Review of Images: Photostory, Part II

**January 20, 2012: Self-Portrait**
Lesson: Timing function of camera
Assignment: Photograph yourself or set-up a photo that another person takes of you
Review of Images: Daily Experience

**January 27, 2012: No Class**
StARS closed due to on-going protests in Tahrir from anniversary of the revolution (January 25, 2011)

**February 3, 2012: Dealer’s Choice/ Make-Up**
Lesson: Clarification or elaboration on previous class lessons (as requested)
Assignment: Make-up of any previous assignments missed
Review of Images: Self-Portraits

**February 10, 2012: Review Day**
Lesson: No new lessons; review of previous classes
Assignment: No new assignments; schedule interviews for next two weeks
Review of Images: Past Assignments

**February 17-29th, 2012: Individual Review of Portfolios/Photo Elicitation Interviews**
Appendix 4: Guided steps through the TABARI data collection process*

1. Submit a CGI keyword query to the pre-selected online papers via their normal user interface.

2. Store all links (URLs) returned into a set (in order to avoid duplicates) and advance to the next results page.

3. When there are no more results pages, return to step 1 and repeat with a new (multi-word) search term.

4. After all the links returned for all the queries have been collected, download the web page data for each URL collected, one at a time.

5. Parse the web page (removing all extraneous html codes, menus, ads, etc.) leaving only the date, the title, the story and possibly a story lead where available.**

6. Output the date and a CG ID number in the TABARI format.

7. Append the story to the story lead (if present) and extract the first three sentences, discarding the rest of the text. URL is stored with this information to return to the news source when needed.

8. Format the text into 80 character column lines.

9. If the story text is over five lines long, remove the last sentence repeatedly, until the entire story text fits on five lines.

10. Output the truncated story text in the TABARI format.

11. Combine output from all sources into one file, sorting each article by date while applying a uniform source-centric numbering system to each story's ID.

11. Manually spot check and clean up final output in a text editor.

Steps 1-11 were performed by the software for each paper/news article electronically collected by TABARI. Collected data were grouped into larger information units (“meaning units”) identified by keywords. In a manner consistent with Creswell’s simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of narrative analysis (Moustakas 1994), each segment of story isolated in this manner was treated equally with the intention that a story arc of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements and experiences would be generated for a master narrative (composite) of thematically described aspects Sudanese displacement experiences.

*Brant Tudor, a PhD student in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the
University of South Florida, provided invaluable assistance through the collection and analysis of this data.

**All databases queries started data collection at Step 1 with the exception of LexisNexis. The LexisNexis database allows for the download of several hundred stories at a time in html format; therefore, text collected through this database started at step 5.**
Appendix 5: TABABI ID’s of Sudan Tribune stories analyzed for Walad

1995
950228 ID_SudanTrib-000001

1997
970105 ID_SudanTrib-000006
970506 ID_SudanTrib-000008

1999
990202 ID_SudanTrib-000024

2000
000606 ID_SudanTrib-000035
000920 ID_SudanTrib-000040
001028 ID_SudanTrib-000042
010911 ID_SudanTrib-000052

2002
020302 ID_SudanTrib-000070
020502 ID_SudanTrib-000074
020531 ID_SudanTrib-000075
020705 ID_SudanTrib-000079

2003
030311 ID_SudanTrib-000112
030523 ID_SudanTrib-000140
030716 ID_SudanTrib-000146
030723 ID_SudanTrib-000152
030806 ID_SudanTrib-000172
030912 ID_SudanTrib-000216
030928 ID_SudanTrib-000247
031016 ID_SudanTrib-000281
031112 ID_SudanTrib-000351
031125 ID_SudanTrib-000381
031217 ID_SudanTrib-000431

2004
040102 ID_SudanTrib-000478
040115 ID_SudanTrib-000520
040119 ID_SudanTrib-000538
040126 ID_SudanTrib-000571
040204 ID_SudanTrib-000597
040212 ID_SudanTrib-000612
040216 ID_SudanTrib-000626
040106 ID_SudanTrib-000491
040116 ID_SudanTrib-000521
040121 ID_SudanTrib-000547
040129 ID_SudanTrib-000583
040204 ID_SudanTrib-000598
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