

Social Integration of Migrants Youth (A study of Nuba Migrants Families in Khartoum State)

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the social integration process among Nuba youth, specifically those from migrant families born in Khartoum State. The Nuba group refers to the people of South Kordofan in Western Sudan, who are currently experiencing ongoing conflict. A purposive sampling method was employed to select a total of 120 male and female Nuba youth participants. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews utilizing a pretested questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that these youth live in challenging conditions marked by high rates of illiteracy, unemployment, and social isolation, leading them to develop their own lifestyle, which renders them vulnerable to exploitation and violence. Additionally, the results indicated that the social integration of Nuba youth with the host community is limited, despite changes in their socio-cultural practices and the adoption of a lifestyle that differs from that of the Nuba group.

Keywords: Migration, Migrant Youth, Social Integration

INTRODUCTION

The concept of integration is characterized as a method of uniting individuals into a cohesive entity, facilitating their inclusion within a community. Integration is achieved when social cohesion is present, indicating that a minority group interacts with a larger population. Recent migrations of the Nuba group have led to a significant number of families residing in an isolated community near Khartoum, experiencing minimal integration with surrounding communities. The Nuba ethnic group discussed in this research comprises black Africans from Western Sudan, specifically the area known as the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan State. This region has endured a prolonged civil conflict since the 1980s, which concluded with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. The conflict forced thousands to abandon their homeland, seeking refuge in various regions both within and outside the country in pursuit of safety and improved living conditions. A significant portion of these migrants has settled in Khartoum State, particularly on the outskirts of Khartoum City (Bello, 2008). Research conducted by Daoud and Bello (2014) revealed that the social capital among Nuba groups was substantial, serving as a strategy to mitigate their poverty and vulnerabilities. Many Nuba children born in Khartoum have transitioned into youth, yet there is limited data regarding their livelihoods, particularly concerning their integration with the host community. Therefore, this study aims to explore the integration of Nubian youth within host communities by examining the socio-economic circumstances of rural youth migrants and their social and cultural adaptation to the new environment.

Specific objectives:

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To analyze the socio-economic conditions of Nuba youth who were born and raised in Khartoum State.

- To assess the transformations in social and cultural practices among Nuba youth.
- To evaluate the adaptation of Nuba youth to the prevailing new culture.
- To investigate the extent of integration between the Nuba community and the host population.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in 2015 within the Jabraona squatter area of Omdurman Locality, located in Khartoum State. This squatter settlement is primarily populated by individuals displaced by various civil conflicts across the nation, particularly from regions such as Darfur, Eastern Sudan, the Blue Nile, and the Nuba Mountains. A targeted sample of 120 respondents, specifically from the youth demographic of the displaced Nuba community, was selected for the study. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews using a pre-tested questionnaire, which served as the primary tool for gathering information relevant to each participant. The questionnaire was delivered orally due to the low literacy levels among the respondents.

The remainder of the paper is structured into three sections. The first section presents the study's findings. The second section provides a discussion of these findings. The final section offers conclusions and recommendations.

RESULT

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that the interviewed youth were predominantly under the age of 20. The study aimed to include both male and female participants; however, the absence of females during the fieldwork was notable, as they were engaged in work, unlike their male counterparts who were often idle. The literacy rate among the migrant youth was concerning, with 57% classified as illiterate and 43% possessing only a limited level of education.

any work, particularly among males, where only 33% were employed in low-paying, marginal jobs, primarily as domestic workers, all of whom were female. Additionally, 10% of male youth were involved in seasonal casual labor. The study also highlighted that 17% of the fathers of these youth were unemployed, while their mothers were similarly employed in marginalized, low-paying positions. The families of the targeted youth were relatively new arrivals in Khartoum, with 72% having migrated within the last 25 years. Only 25% of these families owned their homes, while the remainder resided with extended family members. The findings indicated that the families were generally large, with 80% having between ten and twelve members, and 72.5% living in extended family arrangements. Furthermore, 73% of the youth identified their neighborhood as predominantly consisting of the Nuba group.

Table (1) Socio Economic characteristics of Youth Migrants

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
18-20	80	67
21-23	40	33
Total	120	100 %
Gender		
Male	77	64
Female	43	36
Total	120	100 %
Education		
Illiterate	68	57
Primary education	38	32
Secondary education	16	11
Total	120	100 %

Occupation		
Not working	70	58
Domestic servants	30	25
Casual labor	12	10
Tea seller	8	7
Total	120	100 %
Father occupation		
Casual workers	100	83
Not working	20	17
Total	120	100 %
Mother occupation		
Domestic servant	89	74
Tea seller	31	26
Total	120	100 %
Year of family migration		
Less than 25 years	86	72
26-30	30	25
More than 30	4	3
Total	120	100 %
Ownership of the house		
Owned house	40	33
Rented	44	37
Lived as extended family	36	30
Total	120	100 %
Family Size		
7-9	23	19
10-12	57	47.5
More than 12	30	33.5
Total	120	100 %
Types of family		
Extended	87	72.5
Nuclear	33	27.5
Total	120	100 %
Neighborhood		
Majority Nubian	88	73
Other migrated tribes	32	27
Total	120	100 %

Changes in Social and Cultural Practices among Migrant Youth:

A significant indicator of the evolving social culture among Nuba youth is the limited use of their local language; 69.2% communicate primarily in Arabic, while 25% utilize both local and Arabic languages. Traditionally, the Nuba community is characterized by communal living and shared meals; however, a notable percentage of youth have altered their dietary habits, as reflected in the findings. The Nuba are renowned for their traditional sport, Musara, which has been practiced for generations. Nevertheless, youth born in Khartoum have shifted towards engaging in modern sports. Furthermore, 93% of the youth listen to national music and songs, yet only 47% participate in Nubian arts and festivals. The adoption of modern communication technologies is prevalent among the youth, with all possessing mobile phones and 45% utilizing the internet. (See Table 2)

Table (2) Changes in the Social and Cultural Practices of Nuba Youth

Changes of Youth Social and Cultural Practices	Frequency	Percentage %
Language Use		
Local language only	7	5.3
Arabic	83	69.2
Both	30	25
Total	120	100 %
Food habits		
Eat only Nubian food	3	2.5
Changed to host community food	117	97.5
Total	120	100 %
Sports		
Nubian Sports	20	16.6
Football	90	75
Volley ballt	10	3.4
Total	120	100 %
Entertainment		
Listen to national music and songs	100	83.3
Use only local music	20	16.7
Total	120	100 %
Participated on Local Organization		
Yes	35	29.2
No	85	70.8
Total	120	100 %
Participate on Nubian arts and festivals		
Yes	56	46.7
No	64	53.3
Total	120	100 %
Use of Mobile		
Yes	120	100
No	0	0
Total	120	100 %
Use of Internet		
Yes	55	45.8
No	65	54.2
Total	120	100 %

INTEGRATION

The research revealed a limited degree of integration among youth with other communities, despite evidence of social change and the adoption of new lifestyles. The analysis presented in Table Three examined the factors contributing to this restricted integration. Political engagement among the youth was notably weak, with 95.8% reporting no participation in political activities. Cultural integration with other tribes was also minimal, as only 15% reported any cultural interactions. Furthermore, a mere 18.3% of the youth indicated having friendships with individuals from other tribes. The youth exhibited a tendency to isolate themselves from their Nuba groups, with 31.7% of those interviewed maintaining relationships with the older generation of the Nuba community. Only 20% of the youth had regular contact with their homeland in South Kordofan, while a significant 91% had never visited their place of origin. Among the youth interviewed, 50%—predominantly males—spent their time socializing with their Nuba peers, engaging in activities such as playing or using the internet. In contrast, 45.8% of the majority female respondents reported being too occupied with work to engage in social activities. Only 4.2% dedicated some time to community service, and a mere 5% of the youth interviewed participated in voluntary work.

Table (3) factors contributed to restricted integration

Factors of integration	Answers	Frequency	Percentage %
Involvement in political Activities	Yes	15	4.2
	No	105	95.8
	Total	120	100 %
Cultural integration with other tribes	Yes	18	15
	No	102	85
	Total	120	100 %
Relation with old generation	Good relation	38	31.7
	No relation	82	68.3
	Total	120	100 %
Friends	From Nuba group	98	81.7
	From other tribes	22	18.3
	Total	120	100 %
Participation on voluntary work	Yes	6	5
	No	114	95
	Total	120	100 %
Use of time	Play with friends	60	50
	Community work	5	4.2
	I do not have time	55	45.8
	Total	120	100 %
Contact of youth with their home land South Kordofan	Yes	24	20
	No	96	80
	Total	120	100 %
The visit of Youth to their place of origin	Yes	10	8.3
	No	110	91.7
	Total	120	100 %

Challenges faced by youth in Khartoum State:

A significant portion, specifically 43.3%, of the youth did not provide a response to our inquiry regarding the challenges faced in Khartoum. This reluctance may stem from concerns about security. Among those who did respond, 34.2% reported difficulties in securing employment, 8.3% indicated issues with access to water, 10% encountered transportation challenges, and 2.5% cited safety concerns related to crime. Notably, fewer than two percent of respondents reported experiencing harassment by authorities.

Table (4) Difficulties experienced in Khartoum

Difficulties experienced in Khartoum		
Did not reply	52	43.3
Finding work	41	34.2
Lack of access to water	10	8.3
Lack of transportation	12	10
Crimes	3	2.5
Harassment by government	2	1.7
Total	120	100

DISCUSSION

The study's findings revealed a limited degree of integration among youth from migrant families residing in the outskirts of Khartoum State. The analysis of social changes among these young individuals clearly demonstrated their adaptation to a lifestyle that significantly differs from their traditional Nuba way of life. O'Reilly and Benson (2009) noted that migrant youth often experience a sense of conflict as they navigate between adopting

the new lifestyle of the host communities and achieving full or partial integration with them. High levels of illiteracy among these youth, coupled with restricted access to education, have been identified as significant barriers to their integration. Numerous research studies emphasize that providing migrant children and youth with access to education is essential for fostering social integration (Anisef, Paul, and Kenise M. Kilbride, 2004; Belkhodja, Chedly, 2006). Education serves as a fundamental element of social integration, particularly for young migrants. Achieving high levels of educational success enhances the prospects for employment and social inclusion, as individuals develop essential skills and embrace the shared values of their host society. (Benson, M. and O'Reilly, K. 2009) The findings from interviews with youth regarding social and cultural transformations revealed a significant disconnection from their Nuba communities. Many of these individuals altered their dietary practices, and only a small number were proficient in the local Nuba language. Their involvement in Nuba cultural festivals and sports activities was notably restricted. Furthermore, the absence of interaction with their homeland exacerbates their vulnerability, resulting in a diminished network of interpersonal relationships with peers and family from their place of origin (Boyd, Dominic, 2006). The findings of the study revealed that migrant youth often face lower levels of skill development, unskilled labor, and irregular employment situations, which may lead to increased risks of abuse, exploitation, discrimination, social exclusion, and unemployment. Furthermore, migrant youth did not engage in voluntary work. Volunteering serves as a means of social participation, allowing immigrants to contribute significantly to their communities as active citizens in the integration process (Aguado, A. 2007).

Several studies (Boyd, Dominic, 2006; O'Reilly, K. and Benson, M., 2009) have indicated that integration failure may stem from migrants' resistance to change; however, these findings were contradicted by the research, which revealed that youth migrants exhibited a significant degree of socio-cultural adaptation and embraced new lifestyles. The social interactions among the interviewed youth were notably limited, as most did not form friendships with peers from different tribes. This lack of social connection hindered the integration of youth from migrant families. It is widely recognized that social interaction plays a vital role in the integration process. Through social contacts and the environment fostered by such interactions, individuals cultivate a sense of belonging within a specific social context (Son, J. & Lin, N., 2008). Additionally, the limited political engagement of youth has been identified as a contributing factor to their lack of integration. It is posited that the political involvement of immigrants is a critical aspect of the integration process; increased political participation correlates with enhanced integration within the democratic framework (Berger, M., Galonska, C. & Koopmans, R., 2004).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the displaced youth from the Nuba group in Khartoum State, originating from families that have migrated and resettled in the outskirts of the State, face significant challenges including illiteracy, unemployment, social isolation, and vulnerability. These circumstances have led them to develop a lifestyle that renders them susceptible to exploitation and violence. The research indicates that youth migrants are not fully integrated into their host communities, which diminishes their potential contributions and leaves many opportunities associated with migration unexploited. It is therefore essential to acknowledge and emphasize the beneficial effects of robust, collaborative, and comprehensive migrant integration practices on social cohesion, economic resilience, political stability, and the overall development of both the host community and the nation.

The study concludes that there is no singular integration model that can be universally applied to generations of migrants and the societies that receive them. Integration may occur variably across different sectors of society. Nonetheless, it is imperative to undertake collective efforts aimed at enhancing the social and economic conditions of migrants while promoting equality and cohesion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The process of integration is a prolonged and ongoing endeavor that necessitates a variety of policy measures implemented at various stages and aimed at multiple target groups.
- Enhance civic, cultural, and political engagement while encouraging dialogue to support active citizenship, which includes consultation and advisory roles at all levels.

- The interactions involved should adhere to the principle of equality. Establishing social networks that acknowledge differences is crucial for the integration process.

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