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KATARZYNA GRABSKA AND PETER MILLER

THE SOUTH SUDAN HOUSE IN AMARAT

SOUTH SUDANESE ENCLAVES IN KHARTOUM

ABSTRACT

This article presents our first reflections and impressions on two separate ethnographic fieldworks carried out between 2015 and 2016, and offers insights into a particular enclave of South Sudan in a Khartoum neighbourhood, Amarat. It discusses the wider issues that have emerged as a result of the separation of the two Sudans. In July 2011, South Sudan became an independent nation, and broke away from Northern Sudan. The break-up was a violent experience for the people of the two nations, and the dynamic changes that followed the separation of the two Sudans have affected the lives of people from the north and the south, as well as those who are considered to be 'Jenubeen' (Southern or South Sudanese) in the north and those who are considered to be 'Shageen' (Northern) in the south. With the political developments in the two nations and the introduction of new citizenship laws, Southerners have become foreigners in Sudan, while Northerners have lost their citizenship privileges in South Sudan¹. These political changes have had a profound impact on social, political, and economic reconfigurations, as well as on identity claims in the two nations.

In July 2011, South Sudan became an independent nation, and broke away from Sudan. This break-up was a violent experience for the people of the two nations. The dynamic changes that followed the separation of the two Sudans have affected the lives of people from the north and the south, as well

1. Babiker 2015.

as those who are considered to be 'Jenubeen' (Southern or South Sudanese²) in the north and those who are considered to be 'Shageen' (Northern) in South Sudan. With the political developments in the two and the introduction of new citizenship laws, Southerners have become foreigners in Sudan, while Northerners have lost their citizenship privileges in South Sudan³. The political changes have had a profound impact on social, political, and economic reconfigurations, as well as on identity claims in the two nations. Despite the widespread population movements that ensued – with those who are considered to be Southern Sudanese moving to South Sudan, and those who are considered to be 'Northerners' going to Sudan – and in the wake of the current civil conflict in South Sudan (which has been ongoing since 2013), increasing numbers of South Sudanese have either remained or become displaced in Sudan. These changes in the composition of the population, as well as the new political and economic arrangements between Sudan and South Sudan, have had a direct impact on the multidimensional transformations that have taken place in the Sudans in general, and in Khartoum in particular⁴.

In this article, we present our first reflections and impressions on two separate ethnographic fieldworks carried out between 2015 and 2016, and offer insights into a particular enclave of South Sudan in a Khartoum neighbourhood, Amarat. Our research is predominantly ethnographic, in that we followed different groups in several neighbourhoods in Khartoum in order to understand their everyday lives and practices and their identity politics. The notes we present below are based on in-depth interviews and life story interviews carried out with residents of Amarat and other South Sudanese currently residing in Khartoum. They are substantiated by our observation of and participation in everyday life in Amarat, as both of us resided there (for 3 months and 2½ years respectively) between 2014 and 2016. We are both anthropologists who have been working with the south and Southern Sudanese: Katarzyna Grabska has carried out researched among the Nuer population of South Sudan in Egypt, Kenya, and South Sudan (see Grabska 2014), while Peter Miller is currently finishing his Master's 1, with a specific focus on the Amarat neighbourhood and the marriage practices and identity politics within it.

We first introduce Amarat, a wealthy, first-class neighbourhood in Khartoum, underscoring its heterogeneous character and juxtaposing it as a metaphor for

2. We use the term 'Southern Sudanese' to denote those groups hailing from the south of Sudan before the emergence of independent South Sudan in 2011. It is a term used to denote those coming from, or identified as affiliated with, South Sudan. It should be noted that the Arabic translation, *Jenubeen*, is the same for the two politically different terms. This is also significant in that it offers an interesting insight into identity politics and practice in the two Sudans.

3. Babiker 2015.

4. See Casciarri et al 2015.

'Sudan'. The heterogeneous nature of the neighbourhood is used as an analytical basis for addressing questions relating to the categorization and use of urban spaces. Next, we situate the South Sudanese population in Amarat, stressing certain particular impacts of the 2011 separation on their lives. We then move on to describe their living arrangements, using a specific example of a 'South Sudanese house' in Amarat, which we believe symbolises the heterogeneity not only of the neighbourhood, but also of a particular South Sudanese enclave within this residential quarter. The house also serves as a metaphor for the predicament of the current situation of the South Sudanese in Sudan, as well as the ongoing civil conflict in South Sudan. The discourses of the residents of the house form the basis for our second analytical axis, which is to address the issue of identity transformations among urban migrants.

AMARAT: A "FIRSTCLASS" NEIGHBOURHOOD OF EMPTY HOUSES

Location of Amarat

Al-Amarat is a planned neighbourhood constructed in the 1960s on what was then the southern border of the colonial city of Khartoum⁵. Owing to the rapid, sprawling expansion of the city, Al-Amarat is now a central neighbourhood located to the west of Khartoum International Airport, bordered by two of

5. Alawad Sikainga, 1996.

the city's highways, Africa Street and Mohammed Nageeb Street. Categorized as a "first class"⁶ neighbourhood, Amarat was designed to accommodate a developing Sudanese upper class mainly composed of civil servants, and to symbolize a modern way of living in the newly-independent Sudanese capital with villas, gardens, paved roads, and shopping streets⁷. Although this population is still very much a presence in the neighbourhood today, its significance has been reduced due to the gradual commercialization of Amarat, with more and more residential buildings being turned into offices, company headquarters, and commercial businesses.

Having been categorized as a "first class" neighbourhood, Amarat tends to be left out of analyses of marginalized populations in Khartoum, such as the Southern Sudanese. In fact, the "first class" definition tends to suggest an economically and socially homogenous image of the neighbourhood as consisting of inhabitants with a privileged status, thereby camouflaging the diversity that exists within it. This official categorization of the city's various neighbourhoods conceals the diversity of the local situation. Others have noted that this type of official classification and categorization represents an imagined and socially constructed identity of an urban space that in reality is far from homogenous⁸. Through our ethnographic observations in Amarat, we have discovered a socially heterogeneous quarter that when analysed in all its complexity can serve as a metaphor for post-separation Khartoum and Sudan.

Amarat was once known as the neighbourhood where the expatriate community concentrated, due to the number of embassies, international organizations, and think-tanks present within it, combined with the Sudanese State's desire to ensure that foreign nationals live in first class areas. However, the presence of expatriates in Amarat has declined in past years, partly due to the expulsion of several aid organizations, religious groups, and individuals. The first wave of expulsions took place in 2009⁹ as a manifestation of the

6. Residential land classification in Khartoum began in 1906 with three classes: first; second; and third. This classification envisaged regrouping populations by income. In 1924, 'Native Lodging Areas', which were designed to accommodate temporary urban workers, were added. In 1947, the Towns and Land Scheme Act was introduced. It reinforced the division of housing into the above three classes, and added the criteria of plot size, building materials and duration of lease. The first class encompasses the most wealthy population group, which is able to afford the largest plots and the most modern construction materials. Plot size diminishes and building materials become more basic as the classification becomes lower. The current classification system comprises five classes (Elhoweris 2006; Sauloup 2011).

7. Denis, 2006.

8. See Gillette 2014; Sauloup 2011.

9. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/04/sudan-arrest-warrant-prof_n_171768.html (consulted on 21/03/16).

Sudanese government's response to Omar al-Bashir's indictment by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. Thirteen aid agencies working in Darfur, many of which had offices and/or personnel in Amarat, were the principal targets of this expulsion. The second wave came in 2012, after South Sudan's independence; this one focused more on Catholic religious groups (who were considered to be sympathetic to and collaborating with the South Sudanese population), foreign individuals, and a smaller number of aid agencies¹⁰. It is also worth noting that during the period of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), up until the period following the 2011 referendum on South Sudan's independence, there was a mass influx of personnel working for international organizations into Khartoum, many of whom lived and/or worked in Amarat. After the independence of the South, and with Sudan's more restrictive policies regulating the presence and work of international organizations, a number of UN agencies and international NGOs left the country, some moving to South Sudan. In addition to these two major exoduses, the country has been suffering from an economic crisis that has crippled the nation due to a loss in petrol revenues since South Sudan's independence and the economic sanctions imposed on the country following Omar al-Bashir's indictment by the International Criminal Court. These are some of the reasons that are consistently used to explain the number of empty houses and stalled construction sites in Amarat.

The wealthy Sudanese residents of Amarat, those who are generally associated with the neighbourhood, typically own their villas, which have been constructed by their families since the 1960s. They consider themselves, and are considered by some others, as belonging to one of¹¹the top strata of Sudanese society, and are therefore bearers of high levels of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Today's residents tend to come from families who had considerable social standing at the time of Sudan's independence, and often worked in previous governments as ministers or clerks, or for the State as doctors, engineers, and professors, among others. They are generally highly educated, with Master's or PhD degrees, the majority having frequented universities overseas, and therefore find themselves in positions that ensure a relatively high income.

Among this seemingly homogenous population one notices an ethnic diversity that is symbolic of the multi-ethnic composition of Sudan as a whole and the melting pot of Khartoum in particular. This 'ethnic diversity' among

10. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18296430> (consulted on 21/03/16).

11. It is important to underline the fact that Amarat is home to one of the Sudanese elites, who cohabit in the neighbourhood with an international elite. There are many others, for example the religious elite (who tend to live in Omdurman), the less wealthy intellectual elite, the elite connected to the government and civil service, etc. See Babiker Mahmoud, 1984.

this 'elite' class reflects a wider, and highly contested, issue in Sudan, however: the centralization and monopolization of power. Almost all Amarat's wealthy residents come either from groups that originated in the northern and Central Nile Valley areas of the country or from migrant communities who established themselves economically through trade during colonial times. The former category tends to include populations who identify themselves as Arab and/or Nubian¹², more specifically those who claim to be Jaaliyin, Shaigiya and Danagla; all these groups are synonymous with the monopolization of political, military, and trading power¹³. The latter category can be characterized as being made up of the dwindling Christian population, and consists of Copts from Egypt or Sudan, who make up the largest group, and Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christians from Greece and other Eastern Mediterranean countries, whose migration is associated with the nineteenth century expansion of the Ottoman Empire¹⁴.

These residents of Amarat express and maintain their domination through their symbolic capital¹⁵. Their enormous villas with their well-tended gardens are guarded behind three-metre walls, and their style is far cry from the typical Sudanese home, the *hosh*, a single-story mud and dung construction. They customarily employ several domestic workers – cooks, cleaners, drivers, guards, and gardeners – and their capacity to do so is another way of affirming their symbolic status as a privileged class, and yet the residents of Amarat, which was once an exclusive neighbourhood, are becoming more and more economically diverse. Luxury cars mix with more economic vehicles, a testament to the current heterogeneity of Amarat's residents; however, as the price of cars is high in Sudan (particularly the new models that can often be seen in Amarat), the mere fact of owning one implies a certain economic status. Cars are kept immaculately clean, suggesting that the cleanliness of one's car might be a way of distinguishing oneself from the generally dusty environment of the street. Cleanliness is also associated with maintaining moral standing, being proper –*adab* – and respected¹⁶. The way of life of the wealthier Amarat residents, enclosed in their private spaces behind walls topped with barbed wire,

12. The use of 'ethnic' identities is, of course, problematic from an anthropological point of view as it is linked to concrete racial origins instituted during the colonial time in Sudan.

13. Ryle, 2011, p.35.

14. James, 2011, p. 47.

15. 'Symbolic capital' refers to the concept coined by Pierre Bourdieu in his famous work, *La distinction*. It means the resources available to an individual that grant them honour and prestige through recognition by others. In our specific case, the villas, walls, luxury cars, etc., are all means by which certain Amarat residents can affirm their superior symbolic status vis-à-vis others (Bourdieu, 1979).

16. Fabos, 2008.

and their habit of travelling everywhere by car leads us to another vital point for understanding Amarat: the dichotomy of the use of space.

This dichotomy reveals people's symbolic status: those 'of the street' who live more in the 'public space', and those who can afford a 'room of their own', to paraphrase the words of Virginia Woolf, in private villas and behind walls. Their lives are much more in the public sphere, however, as they often represent the government and the international and business elites who actively participate in 'public' life. These residents are not often seen socializing in the street. Those who occupy the street—who work, socialize, and live in this public space—represent another fringe of the population: the marginalized. They also represent the peripheral regions of Sudan that have suffered from underdevelopment for years as the direct effect of the centralization of power and development¹⁷. They all share a history of more or less recent migration to Khartoum, often citing war, famine, and lack of opportunity as their reasons for coming to the capital. They arrive from South Sudan (some having returned during the period of peace, only to return when war broke out again), Darfur, South Kordofan, the Nuba mountains, and other border areas. There are also Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants, and refugees who arrive looking for luck, money, protection, and a better life in Sudan. They either work by providing services to the wealthy resident families or as labourers, or else they sell goods and provide services on the street to their peers and local residents for small profit. The two groups interact on a daily basis, and complement each other in their search for livelihoods and status. For example, those working on the street also offer services for the privileged classes of Amarat, such as washing cars, providing transport, and shining shoes. They also provide simple but necessary supplies such as cigarettes, street food, and phone cards¹⁸.

THE SOUTH SUDANESE IN KHARTOUM

Khartoum has for a long time been one of the major destinations for displaced and migrant populations from South Sudan¹⁹. According to the recent UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Rapid Assessment Report (2014), approximately 250,000 individuals of South Sudanese origin are estimated to have remained in Khartoum State following the secession of South Sudan in 2011. Of this population, 40,000 are estimated to be living in camp-like conditions in sites known as 'open areas', which were initially established as departure points in October 2010 following an announcement

17. City Limits, 2011.

18. See Sauloup 2011 and other literature on street vendors in Khartoum.

19. Assal 2004, 2006, 2008; Abusharaff, 2009; Bureau, 2011; De Geoffroy, 2009; Lavergne, 1999; Shultz, 2010; Aziz, 2013.

by the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) and the Commissioner for Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (CVHW) in Khartoum that individuals wishing to return to South Sudan should congregate at specific sites for an organized voluntary return.

Displaced South Sudanese have been returning to the South, with large numbers of them keeping up multiple residences in Khartoum and the South in order to minimize risks. Officially organized returns were initially implemented by UNHCR, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Sudan between October 2010 and the beginning of 2011, when returns ceased as resources were diverted to preparations for the referendum. A number of people subsequently remained stranded in these areas, which are devoid of infrastructure and working services. Since 2011, very few organized repatriations have taken place, and following the independence of South Sudan and the consequent changes in the legal status of individuals of South Sudanese origin in Sudan, more and more people have flocked to these sites.

Since the outbreak of the most recent civil conflict in South Sudan in December 2013, more than 522,000 refugees have fled their homes and scattered across four East African countries, including an estimated 150,000 in Sudan²⁰. Since February 2015 alone there has been a dramatic increase of over 10,000 South Sudanese refugees in Sudan due to renewed fighting in Upper Nile state²¹. Newly arrived displaced persons have joined existing communities in both open and residential areas. Following the crisis in South Sudan, the President of Sudan declared that the South Sudanese in Sudan (including those fleeing the current conflict) would enjoy the same status as Sudanese citizens in the country, in line with the existing signed – but as yet not enforced – Cooperation Agreement of 27 September 2012. As part of this agreement, Sudan and South Sudan ratified a Framework Agreement on the status of nationals of the other State and related matters that establishes favorable principles for the treatment by one State of nationals of the other. In particular, it provides for the Four Freedoms Agreement, which is intended to grant freedom of residence, movement, and economic activity to nationals of each State, and the right of nationals of one State to acquire and dispose of property in the other.

The lives of the majority of South Sudanese have been marked by displacement and uncertainty²², and for those who live in Sudan this uncertainty has increased since South Sudan's independence. No longer Sudanese citizens, they face many difficulties regarding access education and work, despite the Four Freedoms Agreement. These issues will be discussed in greater detail as a part of the discourses of the residents of the 'South Sudanese house'.

20. OCHA, 2015.

21. OCHA, 2015.

22. Horst and Grabska, 2015; Grabska, 2014.

THE 'SOUTH SUDANESE HOUSE' IN AMARAT

The South Sudanese in Amarat

Amarat would not seem to be an obvious place for the South Sudanese in Khartoum to live, and yet, against all odds, and contrary to the popular view of Amarat as a homogenous and privileged area, there are a number of South Sudanese residents in the neighbourhood. Their places of residence tend to be 'hidden' from the public eye in one way or another, but a long-term presence and knowledge of the area brings to light "what the eye refuses to see"²³. Some live in abandoned, crumbling, and derelict villas, often cut off from the ethnographer's eyes and the street by walls and fences. No longer used by those who were once privileged, but have suffered a sudden economic or political decline in their status, these villas have become a long-term residence for the displaced. The use of waste materials to board up holes in fences and walls alerts the inquisitive observer to the presence of inhabitants in houses that are otherwise perceived as 'empty'. These 'ghost' houses, which have often been empty for years and lack facilities, have been taken over by South Sudanese and other marginalized communities, who try to keep their presence discreet for fear of being evicted. Others live on construction sites with the permission of the owner in return for guarding the construction materials against theft. These sites often have no walls and clothes and blankets are hung on washing lines instead to provide a level of privacy. Children play amongst the concrete rubble, and the conditions are dire, with no running water or toilets. The sites are furnished with what little the residents have: some stools, a bed or two, and for some a television, the satellite dish on the outside wall of the construction site alluding to a presence within them. Others live in makeshift tents hidden away down small back alleys behind high-rise constructions (between Street 13 & 15, for example), using waste materials to build their shelters. One close informant who worked as a guardian for a wealthy Amarat family was given accommodation by his employers: it was a wooden shack roughly 2x3 metres on the street in front of the house.

Yet there are also well-to-do, well-established South Sudanese residents who have long-running connections to Khartoum. Some have studied there, or worked in the formal sector before separation, and have strong political connections. While the living arrangements of the South Sudanese in Amarat may be diverse, however, they all share the same status as foreigners, *agnabi*, vis-à-vis the Sudanese state.

Having established an overview of the social composition of post-separation Amarat and the living conditions of South Sudanese in this quarter, we will now analyse one house in particular. We see the house as a metaphor for

23. Kibreab, 1996.

the various South Sudanese enclaves in Khartoum, and the changing history of the house over the years as a metaphor for the changed status – and experience – of South Sudanese in Sudan.

The house

The house is a two-story building on Street 37 in a prime location opposite the Comboni School, which caters to many South Sudanese students. These days, it resembles an abandoned villa, but it has a particular status due to its historical past as the Council of Southern States before 2011. It became the South Sudanese Embassy for a brief period after separation, but when the new Embassy of South Sudan was opened in Riyadh, one of the Khartoum's new upscale, prestigious neighbourhoods, the house lost its standing. The building remains the property of the South Sudanese government, but it is no longer used for official functions. South Sudanese chiefs who live in the camps on the outskirts of the city meet there occasionally, as they have no other place for their gatherings. Over time, it has become a run-down guesthouse, hosting people who cannot afford accommodation and are referred there by the South Sudanese Embassy. Referral seems to be a pivotal element in determining who can and cannot live in the house, and reflects a number of contemporary South Sudanese dilemmas.

In the courtyard, there is a small garden where the residents of the house relax, eat, and meet visitors. On the left of the compound, there is a row of toilets and bathrooms, which are separated from the house. Some are locked. There seem to be separate toilets for women and men. The house has several

South Sudanese House

rooms, and we were told that some are shared and others are for individual use. Residents also sleep outside on the balconies when it is too hot in the summer. In the dilapidated courtyard, against the walls of the house, there are old banners identifying the South Sudanese Consulate. Chinese cartons have replaced parts of the missing fence. The electricity meters are located on the outside wall of the house: we noticed that they are all set at zero.

Neighbours refer to the house as the “Dinka house”, and its status as such is significant, as it reflects the underlying ethnic divisions in the current conflict in the South. While there is a Nuer man working as a guard, no Nuer people live there, and the fact that most of the residents are referred by the Embassy, and that most of the Nuer people who come to Khartoum do not go through the Embassy,²⁴ suggests that political divisions affect who has access to the house. While it has a specific status within the neighbourhood, it is fairly invisible to outsiders in the area. It is well integrated in terms of architectural style, and its dilapidated condition is similar to that of the neighbouring buildings. It remains, like the South Sudanese in the neighbourhood, invisible in a visible space.

During one of our joint visits to the house, we talked to a group of South Sudanese students who live there. Upon our arrival in the morning, we first met an elderly gentleman, who was most likely from the Dinka Twic group. He was sceptical, and refused to talk to us²⁵. Finally, we met ‘Mr. R’²⁶, who is ‘in charge’ of the house. He has been living there since 2011, and is therefore the longest-lasting resident of the house. He is in his fifties, and speaks fluent Arabic and some English, but he preferred to speak to us in English. This was also part of his identity performance and an element of how he positioned himself vis-à-vis others and us in the neighbourhood and the house. The co-author of this article, Peter, knows him, as he had befriended him in the neighbourhood.

The residents and their predicaments

The house is inhabited by diverse groups and individuals, all from South Sudan: there are older men, single mothers, and young university students, both male and female, and three families with children. At the time of our

24. See field notes Grabska 2016; on the general long-standing animosity between the Dinka and Nuer people, see Hutchinson 1996; Grabska 2014; Johnson 2004.

25. His disapproval of our presence was later confirmed by another incident. On his last day in Amarat, Peter wanted to say goodbye to the students. When he arrived, the man was standing outside the house. He told Peter that no students were around and that he could not go in. When Peter sat around the corner to have a coffee, he heard the students talking in the garden and even saw them through the holes in the wall.

26. All names have been changed. All interviews cited in the article were conducted by the authors between November 2015 and January 2016.

fieldwork, there were between twenty and thirty people living in the house. Below, we introduce some of the residents, those we spoke to and who shared their predicaments with us. We will present the views of these residents and the particular dilemmas they are faced with, both in the house and more generally in Khartoum.

'Mr. R' is the 'manager' of the house. Peter first met him through his other local contacts in Amarat. He was introduced to Peter as 'Mr. R'. He wears a shirt and watch, and his shoes are shined. Older men and men of social status in South Sudanese communities have their shoes shined frequently, in spite of the fact that they have little money to survive on. Having shined shoes could be interpreted as a sign of 'status' similar to the cleanliness of cars on the dusty roads of Khartoum. 'Mr. R' came to Khartoum in 2001 and formerly had an agricultural job of some kind. He has a wife and several children, and they all moved to Khartoum together. He told us that he was currently unemployed, and yet there must be some type of income that him and his family survive on. In accordance with the customary Dinka marriage obligations, Mr. R announced that he paid 100 cows for his wife in the South. The bride-wealth remains a powerful social obligation, and functions as a social insurance system in the South, where families honor cattle exchanges that constitute an important strategy for social bonding and livelihood. His brother worked for the government in the South before being "released" under unexplained circumstances, and his wife and children were with Mr. R in Khartoum, under his responsibility. Mr. R told us that the children do not go to school but later we learnt from the wife of his deceased brother that the children did, in fact, attend school. Mr. R is well-known in the area, and is sometimes referred to as 'Sultan', which could be a sign of his symbolic status, despite his economically impoverishment. It is most likely that he had some type of connection to the former Embassy in order to be able to move into the house.

The students: The four young female students came from Equatoria to study in Khartoum. The younger male students (aged between 25 and 30) are from Warrap, Jongolei, Northern Bahr Ghazal and Aweil. They speak good English, and have been in Khartoum for between one and two years. Some have government scholarships, while others get by on money from their parents. We were told that they did not have to pay rent, but had to buy their own food and cover other expenses (electricity and water).

George: George is 34 years old, and from Warrap. He first arrived in Khartoum in 1997 as his brother was here for education purposes. He had not even been there for a year when his father came to take him back to his village: "because parents do not want their children to stay away. They think they will behave badly", he told us. This reflects the control parents exert over their children, and how they keep them close *tocieng* (which in Nuer/Dinka signifies home, village, and community). He returned in 2010, but was not accepted at university. He then returned again in 2014, and has been in

Khartoum ever since. As he had no money, he finally obtained access to the house through someone he knew at the Embassy, and began to live there. He is studying first year chemistry at Nileen University, where some classes are held in Arabic and others in English. He told us that the students were struggling. When we arrived in the morning, he was the one who translated from Arabic and Dinka into English for us. He also put us in touch with Mr. R, who was in the area doing business. George is not married yet, although his eldest brother and sister are. The next oldest brother to him is not, meaning that that he does not yet feel any pressure to marry. He also explained why he is 'late' with his education: "Because of the problems in our country, we had to wait with our education, so I am a bit behind", he said.

Deng: Deng, who is 27, arrived in 2014 from Aweil. He used to live in a village and is married with one child. He travelled to Khartoum alone to study. He told us that because of problems in the South he had had to stop his education. "There are too many uneducated people in the South, and not enough universities", he explained. "We (students) had to spend two years doing nothing. We farmed a bit and helped our parents in the village". He arrived in Khartoum by air, and was very surprised when he arrived there: "There were a lot of buildings, and it looked very different from the village". But settling in was also difficult. He looked for a place to stay with a group of friends for some months, but they could not find anything, and he finally ended up in the house in Amarat. He is currently attending his first year of University, where he is studying geology and mining.

James: James, who is from Bahr Al Ghazal, is 26 years old and not married. He is a student at an Arabic-speaking university, and is also studying geology and mining. "My main problem is that the course is in Arabic. When I came to Khartoum in 2015, I did not speak this language. We are learning fast now. This is a problem not knowing the language. You just sit therein the class and you understand nothing."

Dut and Paul: Two other students living in the house. They are first-year students, and have been residing in Khartoum for a year.

The students whom we met at the house did not know each other before they arrived at the house, but they have forged a small community through their shared residence and experience as foreign students in Khartoum. When they arrived, they had nowhere to stay, and they all ended up staying there. When asked about what they think about living in Khartoum, or more specifically in Amarat, they all respond in a similar fashion: "We didn't choose to be here; we're here to study. We had nowhere to live so we came here", therefore showing a lack of any opinions about the particularity of the neighbourhood. This gives an impression of strangers coincidentally forming a community, with little experience of Khartoum outside the house.

Ayen: Ayen is a mother of three children. She has been in Khartoum for twelve years, since before independence. She wanted to return to the South and her luggage was even packed, but there was no transport. She finally

arrived at the house two years ago, in 2014. She moved there because her aunt had told her about it. Her husband works occasionally, doing daily work, but he does not live with the family in the house.

DISCUSSIONS IN THE HOUSE AND AMONG SOUTH SUDANESE IN KHARTOUM: BEING A FOREIGNER AND BEING JENUBEEN

The discussions and predicaments of the residents of the South Sudanese house accentuate the particular transformations in the identities of South Sudanese residents in Khartoum that occurred after separation. Their identities as foreign migrants on the one hand, and as *Jenubeen* on the other, are constantly reconfigured and renegotiated in the context of the changing legal status of the South Sudanese in Sudan, the political context in South Sudan, and the social and political relations among the South Sudanese in Khartoum. On the one hand, the South Sudanese have become foreign migrants in Sudan since separation, and we will show below how this new legal status affects their living conditions and their access to education, work and health services in the city, while on the other, the South Sudanese house also reveals the dilemmas and conflicts hidden behind the homogenous *Jenubeen* identity, and the impact of changing social norms and practices as a result of migration.

From being a Sudanese to being a foreigner in Khartoum: living conditions, education, and work

Living conditions and choices: "No power to go anywhere else"

The group of displaced South Sudanese resident in the house reflects dilemmas that are related to the current predicament of the South Sudanese in Khartoum. Access to housing for displaced South Sudanese residents is a major problem. Owing to high rents, lack of access to previous housing (as most of those who had owned property before separation sold it before moving back to the South), and lack of income, many South Sudanese are destitute. Some reside in makeshift shelters in camp-like conditions in the 'open areas' on the outskirts of Khartoum. The house seems to offer an accommodation option for those who cannot afford to rent their own place but have vital connections to the South Sudanese embassy. When we asked how he enjoyed living in the house, Mr. R responded that he had no power to go anywhere else, and so he stayed, suggesting that he would leave if he could. He also told us that the residents had no problems with the police or the Sudanese government, as the official status of the building as South Sudanese government property protected them.

Despite being in a privileged position in comparison with other South Sudanese, some of the residents complained that the South Sudanese government was doing nothing to help with the upkeep of the house, which is

covered with cracks. Any repair work or items that are needed depend on the inhabitants' collecting money and carrying out the repairs themselves, as they did in 2014 when they renovated a small area of the house, but they lacked the money to finish the job. They have to pay the council themselves for services like rubbish collection.

Access to higher education

All the students in the house reported that because they were foreign nationals, the government required that they pay higher tuition fees, making education at all levels inaccessible for many. Furthermore, to be able to sit the Sudan Certificate (the national diploma that enables admission to university) the government requires foreign nationals to pay a higher fee in hard currency in order to obtain an index number. One student (of Nuer origin, and not a resident of the house) who is hoping to sit the Sudan Certificate this year explained to us that in 2015 the price of obtaining an index number was US\$65, but it was raised to US\$150 for 2016. The obligation to pay in hard foreign currency is viewed by the Southerners as an extra barrier, particularly with the current economic crisis and the falling value of the Sudanese pound. Quite simply, this requirement makes obtaining an index number unaffordable for the majority of students, and therefore prevents them from having the opportunity to access university education. The positionality of the house's residents is also in relation to other South Sudanese in Khartoum. Although they do not seem to be well-off, the students must be from a certain social-class or standing in order to be able to travel to Khartoum (especially by air) and study. Some have scholarships from the government that pay their fees, while others rely on their parents (who also must be in privileged positions in the South to be able to afford to pay their sons' fees). This also illuminates the differentiated economic status of *nazeheen* – the displaced – as the South Sudanese are referred to by the Sudanese population.

Access to work: "There are no jobs for us in Khartoum"

"There are no jobs for us here in Khartoum", said James. "You do just day jobs, small jobs, whatever you have." Ayen looked concerned. She said that she could do any job – cleaning, selling tea, or whatever – but in reality there are few jobs, especially for women. She has no income and she can live in the house for free. The other woman who was living in the house, whose husband had passed away, does not work. She was shy and covered her face with her *tob* (a Sudanese cover) and refused to talk to us.

All the inhabitants of the house commented that earning money in Khartoum was a problem. As there is no work for men, they have to ask their parents to sell their cows in the South and send them money. This is

particularly difficult, given the current civil conflict and the economic deprivation in the South. They all share resources in the house, cooking together and dividing the little they have to survive among them.

These narratives exemplify the marginalized position of the South Sudanese in Khartoum. Before separation, a minority of Southerners, being citizens of Sudan, were able to take jobs in the formal sector and also had access, at least in theory, to health and education services. While the opportunities for work in the formal sector offered to Southerners were fairly limited even before separation, there were the international organizations, and the possibility of being employed by them existed. After separation, the international organizations terminated their formal employment contracts with the Southerners, who were replaced to a large extent by Sudanese citizens. Informally, however, some Southerners still benefit from their previous employment arrangements, and continue to work as guards, drivers, or office staff. The situation of the South Sudanese residents in Sudan changed after separation; as they are no longer citizens, they do not have the right to work, which confines them to the informal sector and increases their perceived insecurity in terms of accessing employment²⁷. One young man reported that he had been a driver in the South, but that his driving licence was not recognized in the North, and he could not obtain a work permit, leaving him no choice but to find day-to-day informal work. In Amarat, one sees South Sudanese, many of them young boys, working as car-washers, daily labourers, tea-sellers, clothes-washers, street-sellers (cigarettes, sugar-cane, and peanuts), and guardians. Many, however, are unemployed and looking for casual work, and the majority have no stable incomes and live from hand to mouth, from day to day. The students in the house, for example, navigate their precariousness by sharing their resources. Solidarity and sharing are vital in their strategies for navigating their marginal status in Amarat. People thus survive on informality and the social capital that they are able to generate, either as previous residents in Khartoum or through links to powerful networks of the South Sudanese government or North Sudanese citizens. This informality allows them to navigate the institutionalized constraints imposed on the citizens of both nations after separation.

Being Jenubeen: a social and political identity

The South Sudanese house also plays a role in cultivating a South Sudanese identity and in the sharing of daily lives with people from the same nation state in the middle of a foreign city. Similarly, as in refugee camps, the house serves as a metaphor for the formation of fictive kinship connections in exile²⁸.

27. Babiker, 2015; Vezzadini, 2014.

28. Grabska, 2014.

The students all told of meeting each other in Khartoum and forming their community through this house. They are mostly all around the same age (27), and are in Khartoum for the first time in their lives, suggesting that their lives have been less marked by migration. George is the exception, as he is the eldest (in his 30s) and has come and gone several times.

"We are Jenubeen" and social tensions among the South Sudanese in Khartoum

We asked: "How do you like Amarat? How do you like Khartoum? Is it different to live in Khartoum now as opposed to before separation?", but no one really replied to the question directly. They all said "... it's fine, like other places in Khartoum." This response suggests that the residents of the house feel that they do not have control over their lives in terms of where they can live, and yet at the same time, the fact that they are not in war zones in South Sudan underlies their privileged status vis-à-vis those who stayed behind.

Ayen elaborated her response: "It is no different. It is the same. Maybe now it is a bit more respectable, because before people would abuse you on the street, and now they just do not pay any attention to you. Everywhere in Khartoum are the same; there is no difference with Amarat."

Other men commented that it was now different, in the sense that they feel that they are South Sudanese. "*Jenubeen*", Ayen said proudly, "I am *Jenubeen*", and then she laughed. The sharing of a space with other South Sudanese in the house allows her and the others to reinforce their sense of being *Jenubeen* in their struggle with the Sudanese State.

Questions about identity raised suspicions among some of the respondents. One of the young students asked why we were interested in 'tribes' and 'ethnic origin'. Apparently, he felt that we were trying to make the point that only certain groups were living in the house, who were supported by the Government in Juba. We explained that we were interested in discovering how people identified themselves, and how they talked about themselves. The issue of 'tribes' and identification attracted the interest of the others. Deng, one of the other students, explained: "Before, tribes were identified by the language they spoke. Now, everyone in South Sudan talks about tribes. But the educated people know that this creates problems." This comment is a pertinent one, as the Second Civil War in the South (1983-2005) and the current conflict there (since December 2013) have both been described as having been generated by the 'educated' elites (*koor gaat duel gora*)²⁹. The comment from this student might signal that those in the house, the educated students, knew about the dangers of using 'tribalism' and ethnic divisions in generating conflicts, and thus wanted to distance themselves from the 'others', the

29. Jok and Hutchinson 1999; Grabska, 2014.

‘uneducated ones’ (or those who use that language), and redirect the blame for the current conflict in the South to the (Dinka dominated) government and the (Nuer dominated) rebels. George commented:

“Before, when the war was going on, we were all one. Before the independence of South Sudan, we did not pay attention to tribes. But now, since independence, people focus on tribes. They talk about tribes because there are problems between tribes in the South. The conflict is because of this. But here in Khartoum, at the university, people do not talk about this. They came here with a mission to complete their studies.”

Despite the ‘we are one’ discourse, access to the house exemplifies the current situation of, and social tensions between, the South Sudanese in Khartoum in general. Mr. R seems to be the guardian to the house: “If you want to come and live in the house, you need to ask Mr. R’s permission. And then after a while you also need to agree with these other people (the Embassy)”. While Mr. R’s status is difficult to decipher, he is obviously the gatekeeper of access to the house, giving him a somewhat privileged position, despite his apparent desire to leave if possible.

There was one more resident of the house who stood out as seemingly having a different status. We were told by other local residents that the old man in front of the ‘Dinka House’ was a Nuer, and that the rest of the residents of the house did not really like him. He had been a soldier, but works as a guard at the house, employed by the South Sudanese embassy, and sleeps outside. One informant warned against hanging around him too much if we wanted to maintain good relations with the others. We were also told that our access to the residents of the house had to be approved by Mr. R. This vignette gives an insight to the conflicts within the house as well as the politics of accessing the residents. The only Nuer associated with the house does not benefit from the same status inside the house as the others, sleeping outside and living on the margins. The practices and discourses in the house reveal the differentiated power position of the residents.

The ‘we are one’ discourse permeates both the discussions of South Sudanese displaced in Khartoum with reference to their previous status in Sudan, when ‘Sudan was one’, and the description of Southern Sudan as having been ‘one’ before separation. This type of discourse tends to hide the underlying tensions, inequalities, and conflicts that lurked under the surface of ‘we were one’ both in Sudan and in the South before separation. The history of the conflicts between north and south and the marginalization of southern citizens goes far back in time, and is exemplified by the first (1956-1972) and second (1983-2005) civil wars between them. The marginalization the southern groups experienced from the north tended to unite them, and yet conflicts among the various groups were also bubbling under the surface, and they came to a head in 1991 with a split in the Sudan People’s Liberation

Movement (SPLM). It was the Second Civil War (1983-2005), the discovery of oil in the Western Upper Nile region and the desire of the Khartoum government to control it, and the subsequent nine years of inter- and intra-ethnic fighting (1991-2000) between the Nuer (and Dinka) that devastated the southern communities and resulted in a collapse of local social and livelihood systems. The impact of the inter- and intra-ethnic violence, which was a result of the John Garang-Riek Machar split in 1991, marked a turning point in Nuer-Dinka relations and concepts of ethnicity and (gender) identity. The ethnicized violence crossed borders, and in 1996, fighting took place between Dinka and Nuer in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya as well as in Khartoum³⁰.

The use of the “we are all one as ‘Jenubeen’” and “we have no problems with these (Nuer or Dinka) people” discourse reveals the insecure, marginalized status of the South Sudanese in Khartoum as foreigners. As one of the Nuer informants commented:

“Here in Khartoum, we are no longer citizens. We are under the government of another state, of Sudan. We cannot fight among ourselves because this would endanger our stay here. We are guests in this country (in Sudan). This is why when we see Dinka gathering on the street, we, the Nuer, we do not fight them. We just avoid them by crossing the street to the other side.”

Thus, ‘we are one’ is used strategically to avoid further marginalization of the South Sudanese in Khartoum, while also acknowledging the changed position of Southerners within Sudan. But how would they position themselves in discussions and relations among themselves in the house? Or in South Sudan? What type of identities would then be evoked and mobilized to determine ‘who we are’, and how would ‘we are one’ then be understood?

Changes in social relations as a result of migration: “Marriage has been postponed”

Deng is the only one of the students in the house who is married. Bringing up the topic of marriage incites a great deal of chat, jokes, and laughter among the residents. The price of a bride is a central theme. With the current situation in the south, and their marginalized and impoverished situation in the north, young men are unable to marry officially. The bride price for Dinka people is usually very high, with the family of the groom having to pay some 100 to 150 cows to the family of the bride. While the cow-based bride price has been changing over the years with the increasing urbanization of South Sudan, changing economies and livelihood strategies, and the movement of young people to urban areas in the North, cows still constitute the main

30. Grabska, 2014; Jok and Hutchinson, 1999.

guarantee of a marriage. Although part of the bride price can be paid in money, the meaning of cows for the Dinka (and for the Nuer) people remains central to securing social bonds. In Khartoum, away from their families and networks, and with the lack of access to cattle and often to money, young men have had to put their marriage plans on hold. Cows have also become very costly, with the most expensive ones costing around US\$150 (3000 Sudanese Pounds). In Khartoum, people pay in money, but in the villages they still need to pay with cows and goats. Even in Juba, marriages are changing.

The “no cattle, no money, no marriage” discourse seems to reflect a certain delay in men’s accessing full adulthood. In Dinka custom, boys fully become men when they marry; this is when they acquire the status of respectable men, and later fathers³¹. The limited access to marriage because of the economic situation and the conflict in the south has put marriages on hold, or ‘on credit’. As one of the Nuer chiefs in Khartoum explained, “people are still getting married, but only by an agreement. The cows will be paid later at home, when we go back.”

EMERGING REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The ethnography we have presented here suggests two different sets of reflections. One relates to the use of space, and in particular the status of Amarat as a neighbourhood in the wider Khartoum. While it is a wealthy neighbourhood, its residents exemplify the diversity of nationalities, social status, and classes among the inhabitants of Khartoum. Our deeper investigation of the seemingly homogenous ‘wealthy’ composition of Amarat uncovers its heterogeneous composition, with some people struggling to survive, although not as much as in other neighbourhoods. The residents of the house also demonstrate the inequalities in the experiences of South Sudanese in Khartoum. They live rent-free, with access to running water and toilets, in a ‘villa lifestyle’, whereas other compatriots live in camps or *rakobas* in the industrial areas of the city.

The second set of reflections concerns the effects of the separation of South Sudan and the ongoing civil conflict in South Sudan on the displaced South Sudanese in Khartoum. The civil conflict has generated both new and old displacements to Sudan, and yet experiences in Khartoum are now fundamentally different due to the changed status of South Sudanese communities vis-à-vis the Sudan state. The changes in the identities of *Jenubeen* in Khartoum are twofold. One relates to institutional changes at a national level, with Southerners being deprived of their status of locals and becoming foreigners in Khartoum. This has a direct effect on their migratory trajectories and

31. Deng, 1972.

experiences. Southern Sudanese used to travel to Khartoum for an education, but after separation, and as foreigners, the cost of education has become very high for them, thereby blocking access for many, as they are now foreign nationals and are required to pay in hard currency. As this fieldwork reveals, however, some South Sudanese students continue to be able to carry on their studies, which demonstrates the diversity of the predicaments and migratory goals of the South Sudanese population in Khartoum. In addition, the lives of the people in the house also show the impossibility of accessing formal work and the very limited opportunities for informal employment, and hence, an increase in the insecurity of their livelihood.

The second change is that the 'we are one: we are *Jenubeen*' discourse exposes the hidden social tensions and transformations in identity politics among South Sudanese. The issues revolving around access to the house reveal social conflicts that affect the South Sudanese in the South as well as in Khartoum. While the process for gaining access to the house is hard to clarify, there appears to be an over-representation of Dinka with possible links to the South Sudanese government living there. While the adults may be out of work, they find ways to survive, with their privileged access to free accommodation. The students must also come from privileged background if they are able to afford university fees in Khartoum (which can be as expensive as US\$3,000 per semester), and must have connections in order to be accommodated in the house. This emphasizes the social inequalities that exist among the South Sudanese in Khartoum, with many not being able to access even basic education. The composition of the house and the relations within it also exemplify the inter-group conflicts that underlie the civil crisis in the south.

Lastly, the lives of the young residents in the house also reflect the effects of the ongoing civil war in South Sudan. Faced with protracted uncertainties³², the displaced South Sudanese in Khartoum are forced to postpone their lives and transitions. With restricted and late access to education, as well as limited opportunities to marry, and thus gain access full adulthood, the conflict brings disruptions to their life projects. At the same time, displacement offers some a chance to continue their education and escape social pressures to marry, thus contributing towards transforming certain social relations³³.

32. Horst and Grabska, 2015.

33. Grabska 2014, 2015.

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