

Chapter 7*

An In-Depth Analysis of Women's Social Capital in Abu-Shouk Camp: A Quantitative Assessment

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Abstract

This study explores the complex social bonds among women in the Abu-Shouk camp, an internally displaced person camp in Darfur, Western Sudan, against the backdrop of the prolonged Darfur conflict. Social bonds are essential for women in the Abu-Shouk camp as they provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of community amidst the hardships of displacement. These bonds help them collectively guide daily challenges, fostering resilience and solidarity in the face of adversity. To examine these bonds, a robust research design was employed, including surveys to comprehensively assess various aspects of women's lives, including demographics, trust, solidarity, and women's empowerment. Findings reveal that trust plays a pivotal role, in influencing social relationships within the camp, as women show caution in various relationships. Moreover, education and age impact gift-giving behaviors, indicating potential avenues for stabilizing social ties. The study contributes valuable insights into the lives of women amidst conflict and displacement, emphasizing the centrality of trust and social bonds, and offering important implications for targeted interventions aimed at empowering women and promoting equitable decision-making within challenging contexts.

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1. Introduction

Wars and conflicts have far-reaching and devastating effects that impact everyone, whether these effects are tangible or not. While the direct consequences of conflict and war are evident, there are also intangible repercussions that people endure. Following the cessation of hostilities, those affected not only have to come to terms with the immediate consequences and the physical damage to their lives – such as loss of family members, jobs, homes, and land – but they also have to struggle with continuing ramifications that can sometimes be permanent. It has been over two decades since the conflict in Darfur began, yet the region in western Sudan continues to struggle with the pressing aftermath of this war. Abu Al-Shouq camp stands as a striking reminder of the enduring scars of this conflict, established to provide shelter for refugees displaced by the violence.

Since February 2003, Sudan's westernmost region, Darfur, has become a battleground for relentless warfare between various militant groups and the central government. This ongoing conflict has tragically revealed the use of rape against women and girls as a deliberate and systematic weapon of war. The Arab Janjaweed militia, alongside the Sudanese government, is reported to have employed sexual violence as a means of ethnic cleansing and to suppress the population's will (Khadka, 2017). Moreover, many women had lost their husbands, homes, communities and belongings; The conflict left many women and girls to shoulder the burden of caring for their families alone. This significantly increased their vulnerability and piled on responsibilities and workload. Meanwhile, many men and boys, traditionally the primary source of household income, tragically lost their lives protecting their loved ones.

Conflict and violence in Darfur have led to the breakdown of communities. Lives have been tragically lost, infrastructure lies in ruins, and essential health and education services have crumbled; in addition to the huge damage that has affected the environment (Mohamed, 2023).

The newly formed political tensions have fractured social bonds, severing the ties that once held communities together. This, coupled with the destruction wrought by the conflict, has significantly delayed socio-economic development in the region (Murithi, 2006). The armed conflict in Darfur stands as one of the most horrific in recent history. Both the United States and the United Nations have labelled it a "genocide" and the "world's worst humanitarian crisis" (Quach, 2004).

Despite the harsh realities of Darfur, women have built a powerful social network. This network acts as a crucial safety net for those facing domestic violence or assault. Within Darfur's close-knit communities, women often seek help from immediate family members to address social issues and improve their lives. However, some women extend their support system beyond family, seeking assistance from government organizations and NGOs. This willingness to explore options beyond traditional support networks highlights the women's adaptability and determination to build a better life. Women in Abu-Shouck camp, Western Sudan, spoke of the network's profound impact on their daily lives. Amna one of the women camp leaders stated: *"Many women in Darfur build a huge social network that helps women who are subject to domestic violence or rape."* Asia another camp leader collaborates to this; *"In Darfur, many women turn to their closely related family members for help or assistance to solve social problems or improve their social and economic situation. In contrast, others turn to the government and NGOs."*

Asia's and Amna's words underscore the efficacy of social structures and underlying attitudes in facilitating collective action. These examples illuminate the pivotal role of social trust, interaction, and reciprocity as wellsprings of social capital, shaping collective outcomes, both constructive and detrimental.

In recent years, the concept of "social capital" has garnered widespread attention across diverse disciplines. Originating from sociological foundations (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990), the idea of social capital has transcended disciplinary boundaries, finding applications in economics (Sobel, 2002; Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2000), and notably in political science (Putnam, 2000).

The famous aphorism "*It's not what you know, it's who you know.*" can summarize the conventional idea of social capital. Membership in exclusive circles often hinges on internal contacts. Likewise, when people go through a difficult time, they know that their family and friends are their first safety net. Similarly, people spend some of their happiest hours talking to neighbours, sharing meals with friends, and volunteering in community projects. Parents invest substantial time in community engagement, knowing full well that their children's intelligence and motivation are not enough to ensure a bright future for them. These principles extend beyond individuals to communities, where diverse social networks and civic associations empower collective problem-solving (Sanginga, Kamugisha & Martin, 2007), resilience in the face of poverty and vulnerability (Abdul-Hakim, Ismail, Abdul-Razak, 2010), and seize new opportunities (Dudwick et.al, 2006).

Conversely, the absence of social ties can be equally impactful. Office workers fear exclusion from crucial decisions, and ambitious professionals acknowledge the necessity of active networking for advancement in a new company. Poverty, in this context, is characterized not only by economic lack but also by the absence of specific social networks and institutions crucial for securing housing and employment (Dudwick et.al, 2006).

Social capital, as a concept, embodies both benefits and costs. Intuition and everyday language reflect its dual nature—social ties can be an asset or a liability. Parents fear the influence of peer pressure on their teenagers, recognizing the potential for harmful habits. Additionally,

close relatives, while a source of support, may overstay their welcome, prompting countries and organizations to establish nepotism laws addressing discriminatory practices.

Empirical evidence consistently supports these characteristics of social capital, emphasizing its crucial role in economic development and poverty alleviation (Grootaert, 2004). In a formal definition, social capital encompasses the norms and networks enabling collective action. Broadly, it refers to the internal social and cultural coherence of society, encompassing the norms and values governing interactions among people and the institutions in which they are embedded. Described as the glue holding societies together, social capital is indispensable for economic growth and human well-being. The seminal work of Robert D. Putnam in "Making Democracy Work" (1993) catapulted social capital into policy studies, business administration, economics, and sociology, underlining its profound implications for societal performance.

At the core of this exploration lies the recognition that social bonds are not merely relational intricacies but powerful agents of resilience. Women in Darfur, despite the adversities they face, have created a net of support, solidarity, and shared strength. These social bonds become a source of solace, a network for resource-sharing, and a collective force challenging the narratives of victimhood (Rabele, 2024).

This chapter explores the lives of women within the Abu-Shouk camp. The socio-cultural analysis in this chapter seeks to unravel the layers of social bonds shaped by conflict, shedding light on the transformative potential of community amidst adversity. The application of a social-cultural analysis of gender adds depth to our understanding, revealing how specific cultural nuances shape the multifaceted aspects of women's lives in this internally displaced person camp.

The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive portrayal of women's social bonds within the Abu-Shouk camp. To achieve this, the study examines the dynamics of bridging and

bonding social ties through the components of social capital, namely trust and solidarity, resource exchange, and participation in associations. These components serve as the threads weaving the fabric of social interactions, shedding light on the nature of relationships within the camp.

In the context of social capital, bonding social ties signify connections within the same group or community, while bridging social ties traverse boundaries between different social groups, classes, races, or other socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Through women's perspectives, this study aims to delineate what lies within and outside these groups, elucidating the social cohesion prevalent among women inside the camp. A high level of cohesion becomes indicative of robust social solidarity, both between and within groups.

The secondary goal of this research is to scrutinize women's autonomy in household decision-making, a pivotal aspect of their agency. Autonomy, defined as the ability to make decisions about one's concerns, extends to healthcare decision-making, playing a crucial role in shaping maternal and child health outcomes and serving as a tangible indicator of women's empowerment.

In this study, data was primarily collected through surveys conducted by trained data collectors. The questionnaire was thoughtfully developed to assess various aspects of women's lives, encompassing demographics, family bonds, trust, solidarity, resource exchange, women's empowerment, and participation in associations. The data collection process involved reaching out to ever-married women aged 18 and above within the Abu-Shouk camp, with the data collection taking place from February 2021 to April 2021. By merging sociocultural analysis with a focus on social bonds and autonomy, this investigation aspires to amplify the voices of women in Darfur.

2. Sudan context

Sudan, the third-largest country in Africa with an area of 1,861,484 sq. km, is situated along the Red Sea south of Egypt. In 2019, its estimated population was 42.51 million, consisting of Arab and African groups. While Arabic is the predominant language, the country boasts over 70 ethnic and linguistic groups, showcasing its rich diversity. Sudan is endowed with abundant natural resources, including silver, gold, natural gas, asbestos, chromite, gypsum, manganese, lead, zinc, and Arabic gum. It also features a thriving livestock sector, fertile lands, and a dynamic manufacturing industry. However, the nation faces environmental challenges related to desertification, climate change, and recurrent droughts and floods.

Over three decades of famine and civil war have left a profound impact on Sudan. Many medical facilities were destroyed, resulting in personnel shortages, a weakened health system, and imbalances in access to quality medical services between rural and urban areas. The prevalence of diseases such as sleeping sickness, malaria, tuberculosis, snail fever, gastrointestinal disorders, and AIDS is high, contributing to elevated infant mortality rates. Additionally, Sudan grapples with high poverty levels, with a reported global poverty prevalence of 36.1% in 2014 (Etang Ndip, 2020).

Amidst these challenges, conflicts have displaced numerous Sudanese people. Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan experienced two prolonged civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) rooted in northern dominance over mostly non-Muslim, non-Arab southern Sudanese. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 granted autonomy to the southern region, leading to South Sudan's independence in 2011. However, conflicts persisted, particularly in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, resulting in 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) requiring urgent humanitarian assistance.

In 2003, another conflict erupted in Darfur in the Western region of Sudan, leading to the destruction of over 400 villages and approximately 2.2 million people, being internally displaced. The severity of violence and displacement prompted the United States and the United Nations to label it as "genocide" and "the world's worst humanitarian crisis" (Quach, 2004).

2.1 The history of the Darfur conflict:

The conflict in the Westernmost Region of Sudan can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. Darfur was an independent state for hundreds of years till 1916 when it became incorporated into Sudan by the Anglo-Egyptian forces. Since that time, the Western region has faced many years of tension overgrazing and land rights between farmers from indigenous communities and nomadic Arabs. Darfur is currently divided into five states, Central, Western, North, East, and South Darfur.

Since their incorporation into Sudan, the Darfuri[†] people have been marginalized politically, economically, and socially. The situation worsened when former President Omar al-Bashir declared sharia as the law of the land after he took over power in 1989. This created hatred and resentment among the Darfurian people, who, in turn, took up arms against al-Bashir's government. In 2003, two rebel groups of Darfurians, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), started attacking government installations. They were blaming Khartoum for oppressing black Africans in favor of Arabs. In return, the Sudanese government supported raids and indistinctive military attacks by its Arab-backed militia, the Janjaweed. Hence, the current crisis in Darfur is the consequence of a long-standing civil war between government forces and different rebel groups who demand equal opportunity for the people of Darfur (Sikainga, 2009).

[†] Refer to people from Darfur Region.

2.1.1 The consequences of the conflict:

In the Darfur conflict, the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) bear the brunt of victimization, losing loved ones and being compelled to abandon rural homes for camps in urban centers or on the outskirts of towns, seeking protection from violence and necessities. According to UNAMID (2017), in 2016, 2.6 million IDPs were residing in 174 locations, including 33 gathering sites, 75 host communities, and 66 IDP camps. Life in IDP camps is challenging, with security concerns persisting, posing risks of gender-based violence, extortion, arbitrary arrest, and looting from security forces or armed militias (UNAMID, 2017). The movement of IDPs is severely restricted due to insecurity, limiting their access to essential services, utilities, and sources of livelihood.

Inside camps, IDPs face several challenges, including limited housing size and plots, inadequate fuel sources for cooking, difficulties accessing water and land resources, as well as health facilities. Finding employment is also challenging due to under-qualification for urban jobs. The increase in living costs alters consumption patterns, leading to a reduction in the number of meals per day. Rao (2023) exemplifies this shift in the Don Bosco camp in South Sudan. Before the war, women's lives revolved around domestic duties like farming, cleaning, and cooking. However, the conflict forced them to take on the mantle of family head, a stark contrast to her pre-war experiences. Tragically, this empowerment came at a heavy cost, as they also endured abuse during the war, a trauma witnessed by the children.

Women and children, constituting the majority of IDPs, are most affected. The conflict has exposed them to high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, with rape being used as a systematic weapon of war. Between January 2014 and December 2016, rape constituted 82% of total cases of sexual gender-based violence, involving 533 victims, 3 boys, and 530 women. The ages of the victims ranged from 2 to 70 years. Many victims face severe physical injuries,

HIV/AIDS, depression, phobic and panic attacks. Social stigma, lack of trust in authorities, and fear of reprisals hinder reporting, and even with evidence, formal prosecution is often neglected, leading communities to resort to traditional justice.

Women in the camps are also exposed to domestic violence by their Husbands. Domestic violence is frequently the result of gender role reversals. The enforced idleness and loss of status experienced by many men in the camps can lead to feelings of humiliation and frustration, which may manifest as violence against their wives. When the vulnerability of men remains unaddressed in times of war and conflict, it often displays in alcoholism and domestic violence. Shifting gender norms exacerbate violence against women, stemming from this vulnerability (Akala, 2024, p.142). It's noteworthy that men also endure sexual abuse in times of conflict, yet societal norms and the complexity of identity and masculinity often silence their voices, preventing meaningful discourse on the subject. Consequently, discussions surrounding war narratives and identity tend to overshadow these painful experiences. Disrupted identities and the upheaval of traditional gender roles during conflict often result in profound frustration. As a coping mechanism, men may resort to heavy drinking and domestic violence to grapple with their altered realities (Esuruku, 2011). Thus, the stress, deprivation, and uncertainty may cause men to take out their frustrations through violence on their wives (Ibreck, 2023).

Figure 1. Shows two displaced women working in brick-baking kilns in the camp.



Paradoxically, crises like the Darfur conflict can create space for unintended social change within Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. While conflict undoubtedly brings hardship, it can also disrupt traditional gender roles, compelling women to assume new responsibilities for which they may be unprepared, thereby challenging prevailing stereotypes and creating opportunities for transformative change. This shift in gender dynamics presents an 'opportunity for change,' breaking traditional molds and allowing women to enter decision-making spaces and participate in activities that were once exclusively reserved for men. The crisis becomes a catalyst for marginalized groups, providing a platform to challenge societal norms and embrace new roles.

As Brouder and Sweetman (2015) suggest, the crisis allows for a significant increase in women's roles, not only in contributing to household livelihoods but also in various capacities beyond the domestic sphere. This includes active participation in decision-making within community organizations and bodies, fostering increased visibility of women in leadership positions. The upheaval of conflict becomes a conduit for fostering new opportunities for leadership among women. Mansab (2023) highlights the misconception that women are not significant contributors to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Contrary to this belief, women have demonstrated their strength in these areas when allowed to participate. Central to feminist peace concepts is the principle of gender equality at all levels and aspects of peace processes. This includes integrating gender perspectives into policies related to security, peace, and development.

Examples from the experiences of Palestinian, Northern Irish, Algerian, and Zimbabwean women underscore the vital role women play in post-conflict negotiations. These instances emphasize that women are indispensable in navigating the complexities of conflict aftermath and in laying the foundation for a more sustainable and inclusive peace (Karam 2010).

Crucially, social capital plays a pivotal role in enabling women to navigate and capitalize on opportunities for change. The accumulation of social capital within IDP camps fosters a sense of shared humanity, where women collectively prioritize each other's well-being and welfare. This shared concern results in cooperative efforts, effectively dividing tasks to reduce vulnerability. Women actively contribute to each other's support during the settlement process in camps, and some take on the role of caring for children who may have lost their families. In essence, the stock of social capital becomes a powerful force that not only helps women cope with the challenges brought about by conflict but also facilitates their active engagement in reshaping societal roles and structures. Akala (2024, p. 143) emphasizes the concept of agency and resilience, which positions social actors as active participants in shaping their realities within social contexts. This framework challenges the portrayal of individuals solely as passive victims, particularly vulnerable populations like women in conflict zones. Instead, it acknowledges their capacity to adapt and reconstruct their lives in the face of adversity. Consequently, the limited narrative of women as powerless victims during war and conflict requires critical reevaluation.

Nevertheless, the resilience and survival instincts of Darfurian women are not a recent phenomenon. In the eighteenth century, women in Darfur have a historical legacy as leaders. An exemplar of this leadership is Miram (Princess) Zamzam, whose unique qualities allowed her to almost rule the entire country. Defined by outsiders like men, she successfully held all the lands acquired from defeated kings and controlled the region (O'Fahey, 2008). However, contemporary times have witnessed a transformation in these established patterns (Puente, 2011).

3. Overview of the Concept of Social Capital

Social capital, rooted in sociology, naturally emerges from a discipline that prioritizes methodological collectivism and structure over the individualism and agency emphasized in economic theory. Pierre Bourdieu (1985) is credited with the first modern use of the term, defining social capital as *"the aggregate of potential or actual resources linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition"*. Bourdieu's analysis is considered one of the most theoretically refined among those who introduced the concept in contemporary sociological discourse (Portes, 1998). His treatment emphasizes the gains individuals accrue by participating in groups and intentionally constructing sociability to create this resource. Bourdieu contends that the benefits obtained from group participation form the basis of the solidarity that makes such groups possible, identifying two key elements: the social relationships that allow access to resources and the quantity and quality of those resources.

Another significant contribution comes from economist Glen Loury (1987), who, in criticizing neoclassical theories on racial income inequality, introduces social capital as the impact of one's social position on the acquisition of human capital. Loury argues that individuals start life with "social capital," nontransferable advantages conveyed by parental behaviors, leading to differential access to opportunities for minority and nonminority youth. Loury's work sets the stage for Coleman, who further refines the concept, emphasizing the "role of social capital in generating human capital." Coleman views social capital as an accumulated history in the form of a social structure usable for productive purposes by individuals pursuing their interests (Sandefur & Laumann, 1998). Social structures, whether in the form of organizations or communities, consist of relationships that shape the productivity of social capital. Coleman's definition paves the way for relabeling various processes as social capital, encompassing

mechanisms, consequences, and the "appropriable" social organization facilitating its manifestation.

It is important to distinguish between recipients' motivations and donors in social capital exchange processes. Recipients seek access to assets, while donors, without immediate returns, have plural motivations that form the root processes social capital aims to capture. Coleman emphasizes the significance of closure in social relations for effective norms, where closure, or a lack thereof, influences the trustworthiness of social structures. Closed structures allow the proliferation of expectations and obligations, fostering trustworthiness. Coleman identifies factors such as obligation, expectation, trustworthiness, information channels, norms, and effective sanctions as components of social capital.

Beyond Bourdieu, Loury, and Coleman, many theoretical studies of social capital have emerged. Wayne Baker (1990) defines social capital as a resource derived from specific social structures and used to pursue individual interests. Maurice Schiff (1992) defines it as elements of the social structure affecting relations among people. Ronald Burt's (1992) structural hole theory offers a concrete interpretation, highlighting social capital as opportunities derived from network brokerage. Political scientist Robert Putnam (2000) emphasizes the importance of involvement in informal networks and civic organizations, distinguishing bonding and bridging social capital in homogenous and heterogeneous communities, respectively. Putnam's work, notably "Bowling Alone," underscores the impact of diminishing social capital on various aspects of American life.

Norris (2002) notes that Putnam's theory addresses both cultural (social norms) and structural (social networks) dimensions of social capital. Fukuyama (1995) broadens the discussion, defining social capital as shared informal values or norms fostering cooperation. Trust, a key

dimension of social capital, is rationalized as a calculation, while Piotr Sztompka (2007) deems trust the most precious type of social capital, classifying it into various types.

4. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive approach to thoroughly explore and analyze the social bonds and dynamics within the Abu-Shouk camp. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive depiction, unraveling the intricacies of relationships molded by the Darfur conflict. The central focus is on understanding how social capital plays a pivotal role in shaping the experiences of women within the camp. Through detailed descriptions, the study aims to illuminate the multifaceted interplay of social elements, shedding light on the transformative impact of the Darfur conflict on community dynamics within the Abu-Shouk camp, with a particular emphasis on the role of social capital in the lives of women.

The selection of Darfur as the fieldwork location is grounded in the unique circumstances it presents for analyzing and understanding the plight of IDPs affected by a large-scale armed conflict. Darfur serves as a particularly poignant case study due to the massive displacement of people amid a backdrop of government reluctance to provide support, intricately connected to the conflict itself.

The tragic conditions in Darfur, marked by widespread violence and the reported rape of women and children, underscore the urgency and significance of studying women's social bonds in this context. The extreme nature of the challenges faced by the IDPs in Darfur offers a valuable lens through which to explore the dynamics of social bonds during adversity.

Five major camps were established in North Darfur State in 2004: Abu Shouk, Halloof, Zamzam, Fatta Barno, and Kassab. Our fieldwork focused on the Abu Shouk camp. This selection was based on several key factors. Firstly, Abu Shouk is the oldest established camp,

offering a longer perspective on the situation. Secondly, it boasts the most diverse population among the camps, allowing for a broader range of experiences to be explored. Finally, Abu Shouk's accessibility facilitated our research endeavors. This strategic choice allows for a more in-depth and representative exploration of women's social bonds within the complex context of displacement and conflict in Darfur.

4.1 Quantitative study design

4.1.1 Designing the Questionnaire

A comprehensive self-reported questionnaire was carefully developed to systematically assess the intricate web of women's social bonds within the confines of the Abu-Shouk camp. This questionnaire was particularly crafted, from both the researcher's extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted from August 2021 to November 2021 and a thorough review of relevant literature on social bonds and community dynamics. This approach ensures the questionnaire encapsulates dimensions of women's social bonds.

The questionnaire was strategically designed to target ever-married women aged 18 and above residing in the Abu-Shouk camp, with a particular focus on those who arrived in 2004 when the camp was closed. This demographic focus was chosen to capture a representative sample of women who have experienced the complexities of marital life, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing social bonds within the camp.

4.1.2 Questionnaire Content

The questionnaires covered a wide range of topics ranging from women demographics, family bonds, trust and solidarity, resource exchange, women's autonomy, and participation in the association.

- ***Demographic characteristics:*** in this part, women were asked nine different questions. Questions were about their age, education level, material status, and occupations.

To indicate the women's age, two questions were posed: the year of birth and the current age. Both questions were posed to determine their actual age. To measure the level of education, a set of dummy variables was generated: Illiterate, literate, *khalwa*[‡], primary, secondary, university degree, and postgraduate.

Likewise, a set of dummy variables were represented to measure women's current occupation. Eight categories were distinguished based on women's interviews in August 2021. The categories are housewife, government employee, private sector employee, worker, freelance (working at any jobs that she can find), trader (selling different products), farmer, and student. Similarly, there was a set of three dummy variables that indicated a woman's marital status: married, widowed, and divorced.

Since many women don't live with their husbands, an additional survey question was included. Respondents were asked whether their husbands lived with them (all dichotomous; 0 = no, 1 = yes). If the answer is yes, the woman will be asked about the reason and the length of his absence.

Women were also asked, "*In which year they come to the*. As we mentioned before, the Abu-Shouk camp was closed in 2004; and after that, there were no new IDPs. This question aimed to distinguish between the internally displaced women and other women who arrived as wives or with their families. Additionally, two measures of heterogeneity were incorporated in this section: the place of displacement and ethnicity.

- ***Household characteristics***: this section contains nine questions about the individual in the household.
- ***Trust, solidarity, and resource exchange***: These parts were developed according to a logical model proposed by Dudwick et.al (2006) and Milczarek et al., (2015). It consists of 37 items relating to various aspects of cognitive and social capital, including four about

[‡] Traditional Sudanese school (study Quran, Arabic and Islamic jurisprudence).

interpersonal relations, eight about community solidarity, 11 about trust, and 14 about reciprocity.

- I. *Solidarity instruments*: The assessment of social capital involved two sections. The first section is about personal relationships. Four statements were used to measure this part: “*Real friends are hard to find in the camp,*” “*Almost everyone inside the camp is polite and courteous to you,*” “*Everyone here tries to take advantage of you,*” and “*People around here show good judgment on you.*” The second section measures community solidarity through seven statements. These questions allow for an exploration of both personal and communal dimensions of social capital within the Abu-Shouk camp.
- II. *Trust instruments*: measure the level of trust. The study used four questions. The first question is the change in the levels of trust since women came to the camp. The second question is about the level of safety that the women feel inside the camp. In this section, women were asked if they trust different types of people such as closely related families, neighbors, people from the same or different ethnic groups, people from the same or different living conditions, and people from the same or other political groups[§] (Calvo et.al, 2020). The last question group is to whom you turn for help or assistance – your family, relatives, neighbors, religious organizations, community leaders, NGOs, and government institutions (Kuehnast & Dudwick, 2004).
- III. *Resource exchange*: The study used a resource exchange matrix to look at what goods and services are exchanged in specific networks and the objective of such exchanges (Kuehnast & Dudwick, 2004). Kuehnast and Dudwick's matrix offers a valuable tool to investigate social trust. The matrix addresses questions: “*What do you give, and to whom?*” and “*What do you receive, and from whom?*”

[§] The living condition and the political group had been added to the questionnaire based on the results from then second phase of the data collection.

- ***Women's autonomy:*** The questionnaire comprehensively explored four dimensions of women's autonomy in decision-making. Participants were queried about their autonomy in women's health care, making major household purchase decisions, deciding about family money, and visiting their family or friends. Each question had three responses. Additionally, the survey included a question assessing the extent of a woman's ability to make life-altering decisions, with five response options.
- ***Structural social capital (participation in an association):*** Participants were asked about their membership in various associations to measure structural social capital. Assessing participation in associations is crucial as it serves as a tangible indicator of social capital. Involvement in such groups reflects the extent to which individuals are connected within their community, fostering networks that contribute to shared resources, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving.

4.2 Data Collection Process

To uphold the accuracy and reliability of the gathered data, the questionnaires were administered within the comfort of participants' homes, facilitated by a team of four trained data collectors carefully selected and prepared by the researcher. The training covered technical aspects of data collection and underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity, ensuring participants felt at ease throughout the survey. This commitment to cultural sensitivity, as emphasized by Dudwick et al. (2006), guided the crafting of survey questions and instruments, ensuring appropriateness and respect for diverse cultural contexts.

Moreover, the survey comprehensively addresses both structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital, incorporating assessments of norms and networks. This dual focus aims to provide an understanding of the collective potential for mutually beneficial action. Importantly, the survey aligns with local perceptions by incorporating activities that the community deems suitable for collective action, thereby capturing context-specific insights. Emphasis on

simplicity, including minimal skips, straightforward language, and clear coding instructions, facilitates ease of integration and participant engagement. Ideally, the survey is implemented through random sampling within the community of interest, enhancing representativeness and yielding broader insights into social capital dynamics.

In ensuring high ethical standards and research rigor, the study took several measures, including obtaining an official letter from the University of Al-Fāshr, securing verbal approval from the head of the camp administration, obtaining full verbal consent from participants, implementing confidentiality protocols, and conducting prolonged fieldwork, among other considerations.

4.2.1 Sample Design

In establishing the sample size, a careful approach was adopted, considering the unique nature and demographics of the camp. Additionally, figure 2 was employed to conduct a spatial distribution analysis. The figure facilitated the segmentation of the camp into discernible sections: the Westside, characterized by eight squares and 11 blocks, and the Eastside, distinguished by 28 blocks and nine squares. Within each square, a configuration of 23 houses and two public bathrooms was observed.

Figure 2. Abu-Shouk camp aerial view.



Considering this information, the calculated sample size was 407 women, with 88 houses on the Westside and 223 houses on the Eastside. To streamline the interview process, a random house was selected from each block and square, ensuring a representative distribution across the camp (e.g., Square One, Block One; Square One, Block Two; Square One, Block Three, and so forth). An observation during the ethnographic fieldwork revealed similarities in responses among women from the same block and square, indicating shared locality, familial connections, or relational ties. This insight validated the chosen sampling method, affirming its representativeness.

To mitigate data collection errors and enhance the precision of confidence intervals, the initial sample size was increased by 10%, resulting in a total of 455 respondents (see Table 1).

Table 1 The number of participants based on location.

<i>location</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>East camp</i>	355	78.02 %
<i>West camp</i>	100	21.98 %
<i>Total</i>	455	100 %

Before the commencement of the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted to assess respondents' interaction with the survey. The pilot study revealed valuable insights:

- **Difficulty Understanding the Questionnaire:** Some women encountered challenges comprehending certain aspects of the questionnaire, prompting the need for adjustments to enhance clarity.
- **Reluctance in Addressing Political and Trust Questions:** Respondents exhibited reluctance in responding to questions pertaining to trust in political groups. This prompted a reevaluation of the questionnaire's sensitivity to cultural and contextual nuances.

Recognizing the inherent challenges in fieldwork, a proactive approach was adopted to address limitations encountered during data collection. A comprehensive risk and contingency plan were implemented to navigate unforeseen challenges, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study. While limitations emerged, the research team diligently sought optimal solutions, demonstrating a commitment to robust data collection methodologies.

5. The outcome of the survey

Prior to analyzing data, the reliability of the collected data was carefully assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a robust measure of interitem correlations (see Table 2). This widely recognized measure is employed to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of a set of scale or test items (Chelsea Goforth, 2015).

Table 2 Reliability results

<i>Section</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>
<i>Solidarity, Trust instruments, and Participation in association</i>	0.82
<i>Resource exchange</i>	0.90
<i>Women empowerment</i>	0.71

Following the confirmation of data reliability, a comprehensive analysis was conducted utilizing descriptive statistics and cross-section analysis on Stata/MP 17.0.

5.1 Socio-demographic Variables

A foundational step in data analysis involves presenting key information about variables in the researcher's dataset. This includes percentages, averages, and variances, all of which are presented in a clear and interpretable manner. Table 3 serves as a valuable resource, offering descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics variables concerning 455 women currently married, divorced, or widowed in the Abu-Shouk camp.

To facilitate a more streamlined presentation, certain variables, such as age and family size of women participants, were condensed into ranges. Noteworthy patterns emerged from the data, shedding light on key aspects of the demographic landscape within the Abu-Shouk camp:

Based on the data, it is notable that among housewives in the Abu-Shouk camp, 25% are illiterate, while 30% have attained primary education. Additionally, findings reveal that 32% of married women experience separation from their husbands, with 69% of these husbands working outside the camp and 14% being deserted. A significant portion, 26%, has been absent for more than three years.

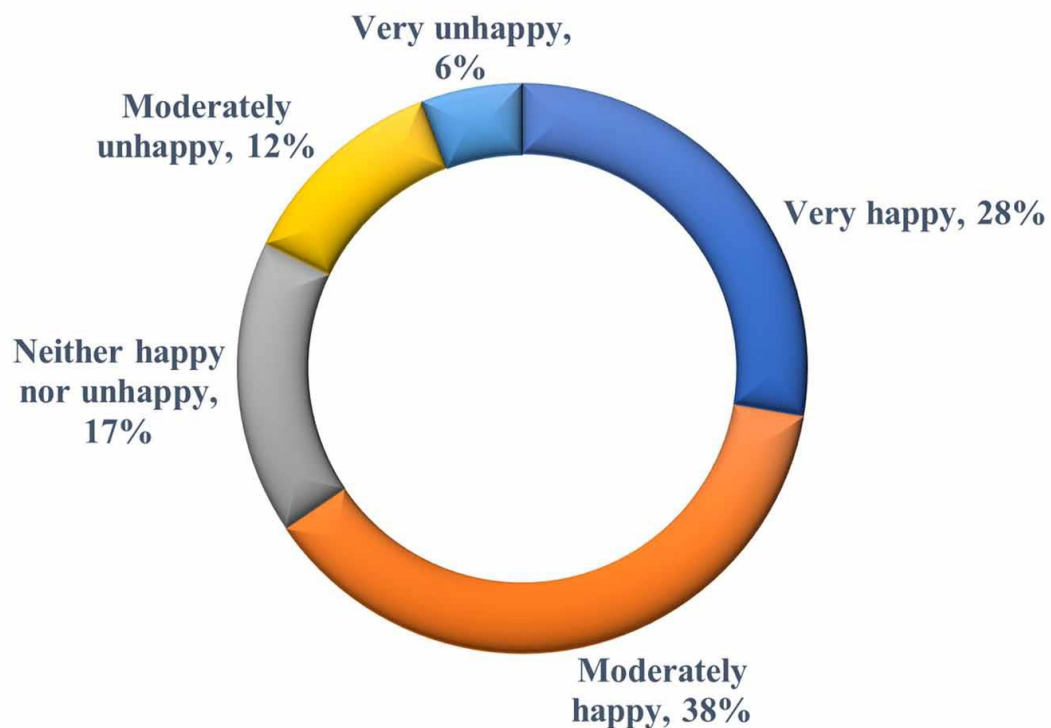
Table 3 Summary statistics

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Married</i>	87
<i>Widowed</i>	7
<i>Divorced/separate</i>	6
<i>Age categories</i>	
<i>16- 24</i>	24
<i>25- 32</i>	26
<i>33-40</i>	25
<i>>40</i>	25
<i>Family size</i>	
<i>1 - 7</i>	77
<i>>=8</i>	23
<i>Education level</i>	
<i>Illiterate</i>	19
<i>Basic education</i>	17
<i>Primary</i>	29
<i>Secondary</i>	21
<i>University degree</i>	13
<i>Current occupation</i>	
<i>Housewife</i>	70
<i>A government employee</i>	3
<i>Private sector employee</i>	0.66
<i>Worker (Freelance & trader)</i>	13
<i>Farmer</i>	8
<i>Student</i>	6
<i>Other</i>	0.44

The data also reveals a diverse range of geographical origins among women in the camp, with the majority hailing from Jebel Si (33%), Tawila (22%), and Korma (20%). This distribution highlights the camp's significant ethnic diversity, as residents belong to 25 distinct ethnic groups. Predominant ethnicities include Fur (59.34%), Tanjur (15.16%), Zaghawa (9.45%), and Barti (3.08%).

The survey outcomes reveal a striking trend in the subjective well-being of women within the Abu-Shouk camp. A significant portion of respondents do not consider themselves happy. Notably, the level of happiness varies across different age groups, as depicted in Figure 3. How happy do you consider yourself to be? Women between the ages of 28-40 and 41-53 express lower levels of happiness compared to their counterparts aged 16-27 and those aged 54 and above. These sentiments are rooted in the perceived limitations of life within the camp, hindering women from realizing their aspirations and life goals.

Figure 3. In general, how happy do you consider yourself to be



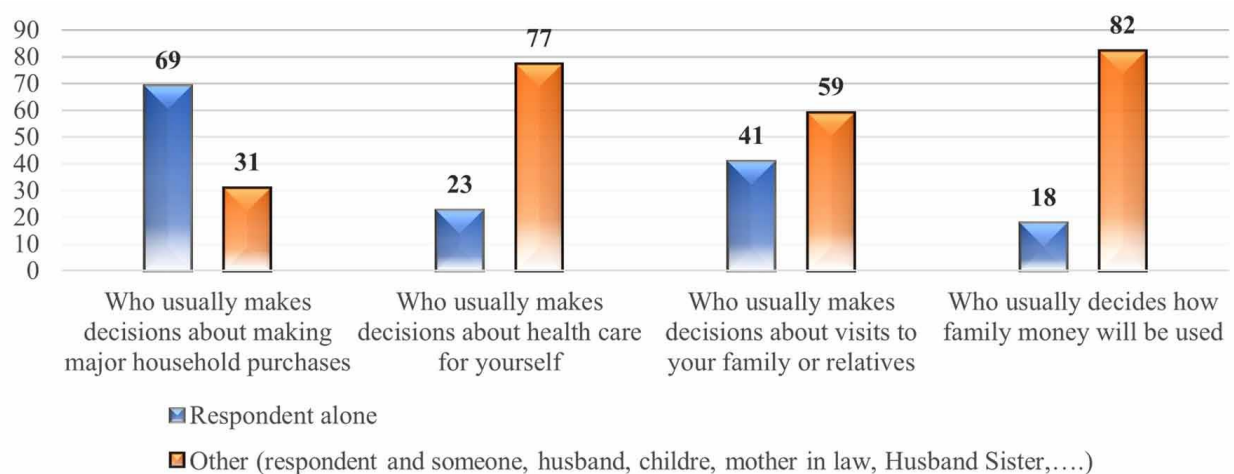
5.2 Women's autonomy:

Women's empowerment, as defined by the UNFPA (1994) and Kabeer (2010), revolves around fostering women's self-worth, autonomy in decision-making, and the right to influence societal changes. These definitions underscore two critical aspects of women's empowerment: the ability to make decisions impacting their own lives and exerting significant influence at the household and societal levels.

In the Abu-Shouk camp, 52% of women assert their ability to change their lives, with the majority falling within the age range of 16 to 40. This affirmation aligns with the essence of empowerment, where individuals perceive agency in shaping their destinies.

To assess the impact on others' lives, household decision-making serves as a pivotal dimension. Kabeer emphasizes that empowerment entails deserving control over resources and decisions. Despite the belief in their capacity to effect personal change, the data reveals a contrast: only 18% of women in the Abu-Shouk camp can unilaterally decide how family money is utilized (see Figure 4. Intra-household power and decision making). Furthermore, decisions regarding health status are seldom made independently, requiring involvement from others.

Figure 4. Intra-household power and decision-making



Examining the distribution among total respondents, almost half (47.25%) of ever-married women decide how family money is used, either autonomously or jointly with their husbands or others. This proportion contrasts with higher percentages in other decision-making dominions: 63.52% for personal healthcare decisions, 76.65% for family visits, and 80% for major household purchases.

Cross-tabulation results underscore significant associations between socio-background characteristics and the four types of women's decision-making:

- *Age-Related Decision-Making:* Participation in health care decisions increases with age, from 62% among women aged 16-27 to 66% in middle-aged women (28-40 and 41-50) and decreases to 51% among women aged 54 and above. Similar age-related patterns are observed for main household purchases (28%-32%-36%-32%), money spent (10%-21%-25%-24%), and family and friend visits (40%-45%-41%-27%).
- *Occupation and Household Size Influence:* Women in paid employment exhibit greater decision-making influence. Similarly, those with smaller family sizes (1-7) actively participate in decision-making across all outcomes.

These findings illuminate the interplay of age, occupation, and family size in shaping women's decision-making dynamics within the Abu-Shouk camp, providing valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of empowerment in this context.

5.3 Community Bonds: Trust, Relations, and Resource Exchange

This section explores the intricate web of trust and solidarity at the community level within the Abu-Shouk camp. It offers a deep analysis of the social relations among women, shedding light on the communal bonds that shape daily life.

5.3.1 Trust and Solidarity: Navigating Community Dynamics

At the core of community dynamics within the Abu-Shouk camp lies the interplay of trust and solidarity among women. Trust, defined as reliance on the integrity and character of others, is a foundational element of community relationships. Solidarity, extending beyond trust, encapsulates a collective commitment to shared values and mutual support Durkheim (2014, [1893]). This section aims to unravel these vital elements, explaining their contributions to the resilience and cohesion of the Abu-Shouk community. The analysis of this section aims to explain individual, public, and occupation-related trust and women's solidarity, and then compare these dynamics based on the camp's geographical divisions (East and West).

Figure 5. The change in trust levels within the camp since 2004.

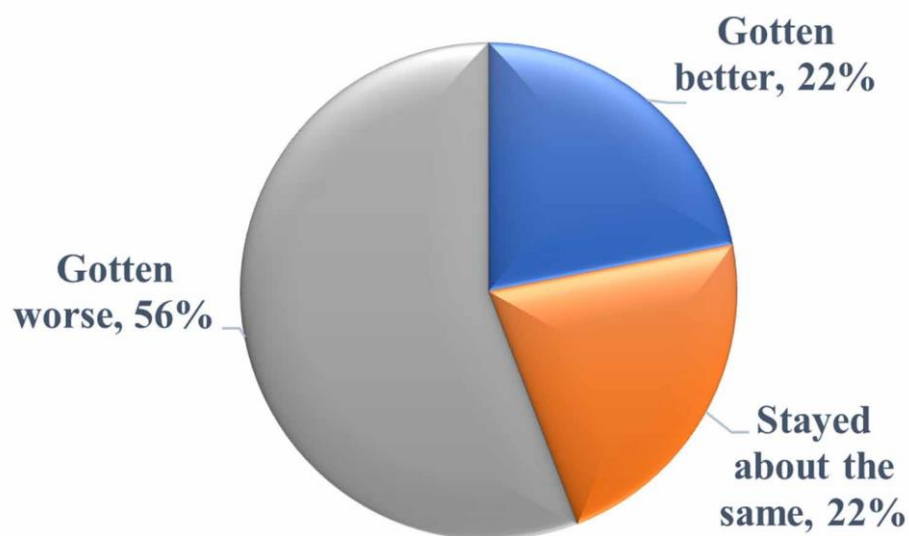


Figure 5. illustrates the change in trust levels within the camp since 2004, reflecting a belief among respondents that the level of trust has changed. This temporal shift is likely influenced by the economic and political landscape, as noted by Mohamed (2023). The dynamic nature of trust, responsive to economic fluctuations and political variations, has played a pivotal role in shaping the intricate fabric of relationships within the camp. As economic and political forces have induced shifts in alliances and affiliations, the contours of trust have adapted, revealing

the complex interplay of external influences on the internal dynamics of the community. Political divisions, in particular, have acted as a catalyst, segregating individuals into distinct groups and thereby influencing the ebb and flow of trust within the Abu-Shouk camp.

It is widely acknowledged that personal relationships are often idealized, with individuals holding distinct opinions on what constitutes a 'good person,' a 'good parent,' or a 'true friend.' While these idealized conceptions can foster judgment, real-life personal relations may deviate from these ideals, triggering diverse reactions. Notably, data reveals a reality within the Abu-Shouk camp—where politeness and good judgment prevail (61%), yet a significant percentage of women find it challenging to establish genuine friendships (53%), and there's a perceived risk of others taking advantage (52%).

The examination in this section extends to community solidarity, unearthing revealing statistics (see Figure 6. Personal relations and community solidarity). A notable 58% express skepticism about trusting fellow camp residents, while 69% believe mutual trust is lacking in lending matters, and 46% emphasize the need to be alert against potential exploitation. The political dimension further influences community solidarity, with 60% asserting a lack of unity among camp residents when dealing with rule of law institutions.

The level of general trust is significantly diverse in terms of education level. The vast majority of women with basic education (primary, secondary, and university degrees) say that people in the camp cannot be trusted (65%, 68%, and 70%, respectively). On the other hand, the majority of the women with no education or informal education have agreed that people in the camp can be trusted (59% and 52%, respectively).

Figure 6. Personal relations and community solidarity.

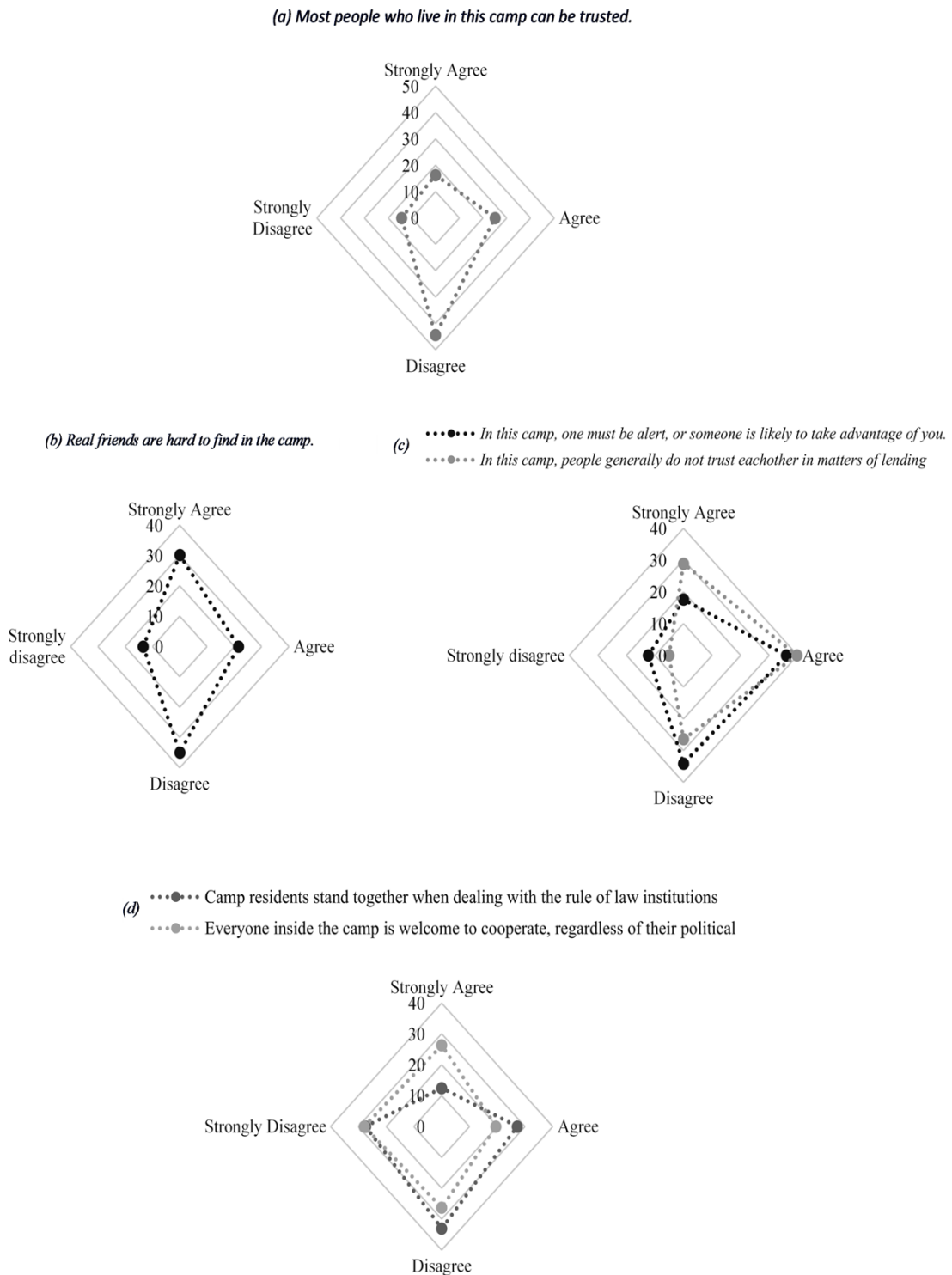


Figure 7 explores the social trust and coping strategies employed by women in the Abu Shouk camp. The survey results reveal a strong sense of trust within close family circles, with 83% of women reporting complete trust towards their immediate relatives. This trust diminishes when

considering broader social circles. Only 41% of women trust extended family members (relatives) and trust towards neighbors' dips even further to 36%. Interestingly, trust levels are relatively similar towards people from the same versus different ethnic and living conditions. However, political affiliation appears to be a significant dividing factor. A striking 63% of women reported distrusting others from the same political group, and this distrust intensifies further towards those from different political groups, with a staggering 70% expressing a lack of trust.

Figure 7. Women's general trust in both sides of the camp.



While women exhibit a notable level of trust toward their relatives, an intriguing pattern emerges as they tend not to turn to them when dealing with social issues such as relationship challenges, neighborhood concerns, or economic hardships. Surprisingly, women often turn to their closely related family or neighbor in these situations, indicating a unique perspective on the concept of family within the Abu-Shouk camp.

The rationale behind this phenomenon becomes clearer when we examine the perspective that women hold regarding their neighbors. For these women, the definition of family transcends mere blood relations. Instead, family is perceived as a community of individuals who coexist within the same physical space, share a common religion, and collectively endure life's challenges (Mohamed, 2023). This more inclusive definition shapes their support networks,

leading them to seek assistance from those who share their immediate living environment and common experiences.

Additionally, figure 7 sheds light on another intriguing aspect of women's coping strategies. The data illustrates that women in the camp never turn to community leaders when faced with social problems. The loss of trust in community leaders, exacerbated by incidents such as the loss of aid cards and perceptions of corruption, has contributed to a reluctance among women to seek guidance or support from these community leaders. This reluctance stems from a perceived bias in the community leaders' assistance, seemingly directed primarily towards family and friends. The findings underscore the importance of understanding the dynamics of trust and support networks within the camp's social fabric.

In the forthcoming section, the paper provides a comparative analysis, examining trust and solidarity levels between the East and West sides of the Abu-Shouk camp. The rationale behind this exploration is rooted in the characteristics of each side: the West, marked by remarkable homogeneity with a predominant Fur population (92%), and the East, distinguished by its diverse ethnic makeup. This comparative lens aims to unravel the potential influence of ethnic diversity on the dynamics of trust among women within the camp.

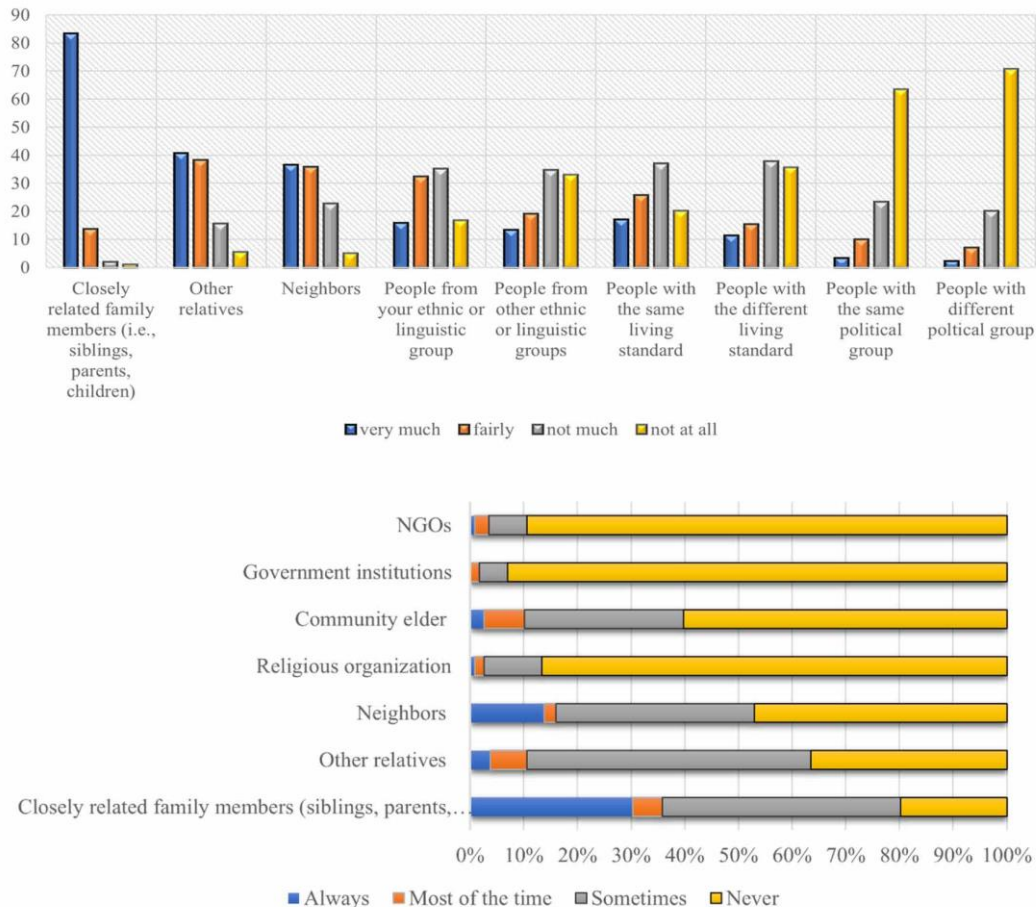
By juxtaposing these two camp sections, the study seeks to answer pivotal questions: Does the high homogeneity of the West foster greater trust and solidarity? Conversely, does the ethnic diversity of the East introduce unique challenges to trust dynamics among women?

This analysis shed light on the interplay between ethnic composition and social cohesion within the Abu-Shouk camp, contributing to understanding the factors shaping trust and solidarity among women in this distinctive community.

5.3.1.1 General trust and solidarity based on the location of the camp:

In exploring the fabric of trust within the Abu-Shouk camp, a distinct pattern emerges when comparing the East and West sides. Notably, over half of the women on the Eastside (55%) believe that most people who live in this camp cannot be trusted at all. Simultaneously, their Westside counterparts exhibit a similar cautiousness, with 73% of respondents admitting a hesitancy to place trust in others. This interesting parallel suggests an interplay of factors influencing trust dynamics within the camp. The diverse ethnic composition on the Eastside may introduce complexities in interpersonal relations, potentially impacting trust formation. In contrast, the Westside, characterized by a higher degree of homogeneity with the dominance of the Fur ethnic group, might foster a more cohesive social fabric that influences trust dynamics positively.

Figure 8. Women's social trust and coping strategies in solving social problems.

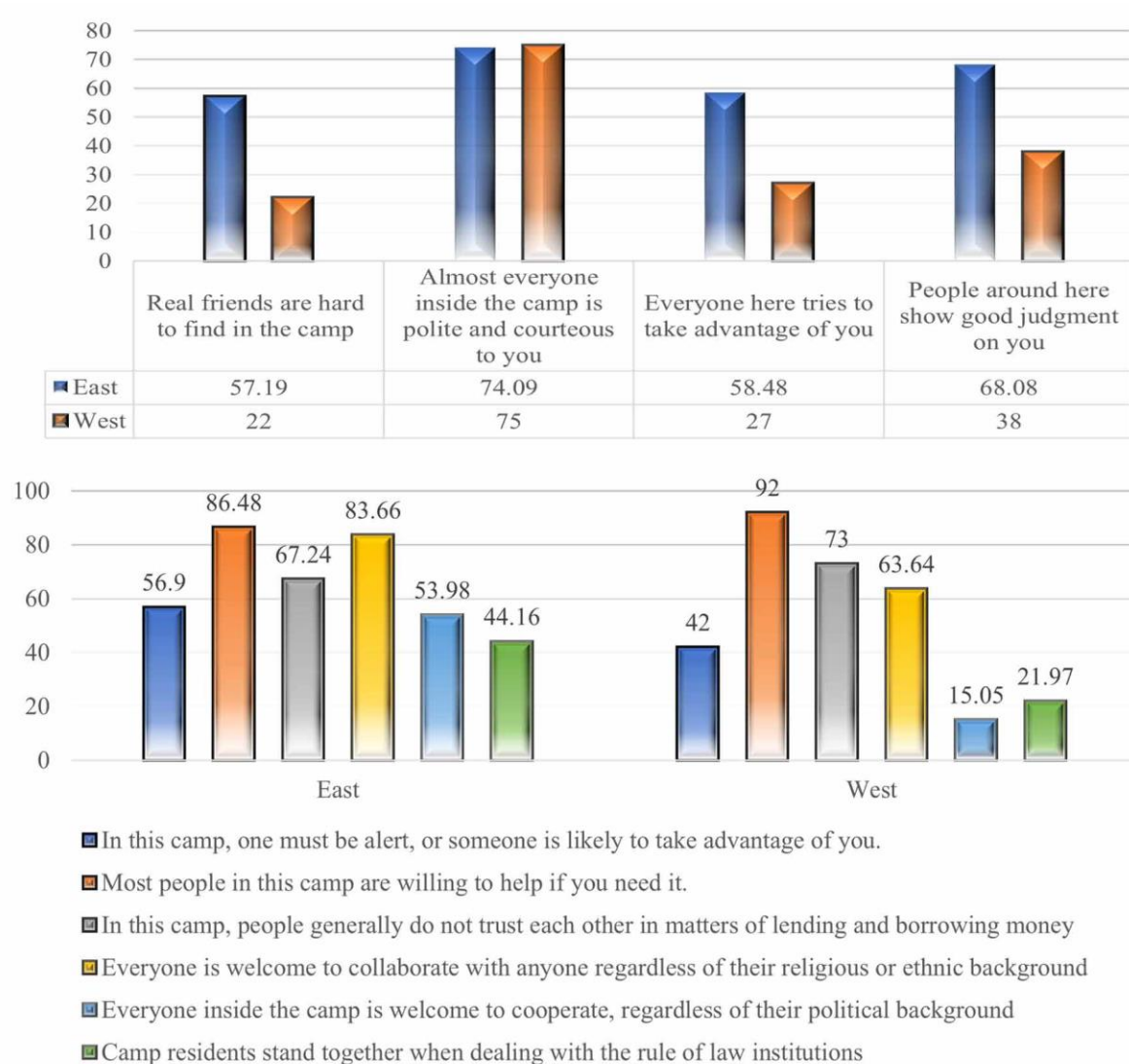


Examining deeper the intricacies of trust declarations, a nuanced narrative unfolds. Women on the Eastside, despite their initial skepticism, exhibit a more frequent inclination to declare trust in other people compared to their Westside peers (see Figure 8. Women general trust of the East and the West side of the camp). This suggests a complex interplay of trust dynamics, where the Eastside, despite harboring reservations, engages more actively in verbalizing trust compared to the seemingly more cautious Westside residents. Figures 9. Shows interpersonal relations and community solidarity. The figure provides a lens into the intricate tapestry of interpersonal relationships, exposing the divergent trust perceptions between the East and West sides of the Abu-Shouk camp.

On the Eastside, where the majority (57%) of women find it challenging to find genuine friendships within the camp, a paradoxical landscape emerges. While a substantial 74% acknowledge the prevalence of politeness among residents, and 68% attest to the community's collective good judgment, a notable 58% harbor a belief that everyone within the camp seeks to take advantage of them. These findings unveil a complex blend of positive and skeptical sentiments, reflecting the nature of trust dynamics among Eastside women.

Contrastingly, the Westside paints a different portrait. A mere 27% believe that everyone within the camp aims to take advantage, and only 38% perceive a widespread display of good judgment among residents. Yet, a striking 88% of Westside women assert that genuine friendships are easily forged within the camp, indicating a contrasting perception of social bonds.

Figure 9. Interpersonal relations and community solidarity.



As we set our focus on community solidarity, a shared perspective emerges on both the East and West sides of the Abu-Shouk camp. Women from both sides unanimously affirm a collective willingness to assist others when asked for help, fostering an atmosphere of shared support within the community. Additionally, there is a resounding consensus that collaboration is open to everyone, transcending religious or ethnic backgrounds, as depicted in Figure 9.

However, amidst this shared sense of solidarity, a notable divergence surfaces when it comes to trust in financial matters. Women on both sides acknowledge a prevailing lack of trust among

community members in lending and borrowing money. This insight suggests that, despite the communal spirit, financial transactions carry an undercurrent of skepticism and caution.

The impact of the political dimension on community dynamics becomes more pronounced on the Westside. A substantial majority of Westside women reveal a perceived lack of unity among camp residents when dealing with rule-of-law institutions. Furthermore, not everyone is considered welcome to cooperate in community endeavors, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Crucially, the data uncovers a compelling narrative about the influence of ethnic diversity on social trust among women. Contrary to expectations, women on the Westside, characterized by higher homogeneity, exhibit stronger social bonds than their counterparts on the Eastside. This revelation prompts a deeper exploration into the intricate interplay of ethnic diversity and community cohesion, showing the factors that contribute to the divergent trust dynamics within the Abu-Shouk camp.

5.3.2 Resource exchange: The gift giving.

Although there are almost no psychological studies on gift-giving, the related disciplines of social psychology and sociology present some interesting research findings. In general, reciprocity is assumed to be the rule in gift-giving, but this rule does not apply to specific gifts, like blood or organ donation. If at all, in these cases, reciprocity is experienced in a very abstract and indirect way. Reciprocity is, as if it were, delayed: if in the future, we could come to need organs or blood ourselves, we hope that other people will be as willing to give as we were (Komter, 2005).

This study used the respondents' definition of what they experience as gifts. The study is mainly interested in the sociological patterns of gift-giving and in the psychological motives underlying these patterns, and not primarily in the subjective definitions of "gifts" as opposed to "non-gifts," the study distinguished different giving objects, material and nonmaterial:

money, food, clothes, presents, care/help, and stay (letting people stay in one's house). Despite the differences between them, practices like a ritual or spontaneous gift-giving, offering help/care, or staying have one vital element in common: *all these types of gifts are imbued by the subjective experience of being given out of a free will* (Komter, 2005. p.39). They are not being dictated by any economic rule like barter or a fair exchange. The data show that more than three-quarters of the women appeared to have given some of these gifts, and more than half of the women report having received one or more of these gifts from others (see Table 4. Resource exchange).

Table 4 resource exchange.

	Do you give..... people who have THE same as you			
	give		receive	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Money	61.5	38.5	62.97	37.03
Food	90.14	9.86	79.91	20.09
Stay	58.45	41.55	56.64	43.36
Cloth	66.9	33.1	61.68	38.32
Help/care	86.38	13.62	82.2	17.8
Present	77.23	22.77	78.64	21.36

Table 4 shows a strong relationship between giving and receiving. Those who gave more were also the greatest recipients. Doing well has its reward. The table also shows that women received more than they gave. Suppose that this result reflects a factual truth and not some perceptual bias. In that case, the most plausible explanation is that an important category of gift recipients, men, and youth, is not included in the sample. But other interpretations are possible as well, for instance, the role of memory. Perhaps women have a greater consciousness of what other people give them than what they give to others.

Furthermore, there could be a perceptual bias: because women want to leave a great impression of themselves to the interviewer, one is inclined to exaggerate one's liberality. Contrariwise, women's discontent about what they have received from others leads to

underestimating it. Possibly they make conscious or unconscious comparisons between other people's resources and their own, which can explain their experience of discontent. In other words, some types of giving are not recognized as such by their recipients; for instance, some forms of received care may be overlooked because they are so "normal." A final classification can be what Pahl has called "*the general concern of people not to appear too dependent on others*" (1984, p 250). He found that people claim to do more for others than they receive. Thus, this corresponds with our results concerning the experienced imbalance between receiving and giving.

5.4 Participation in Association

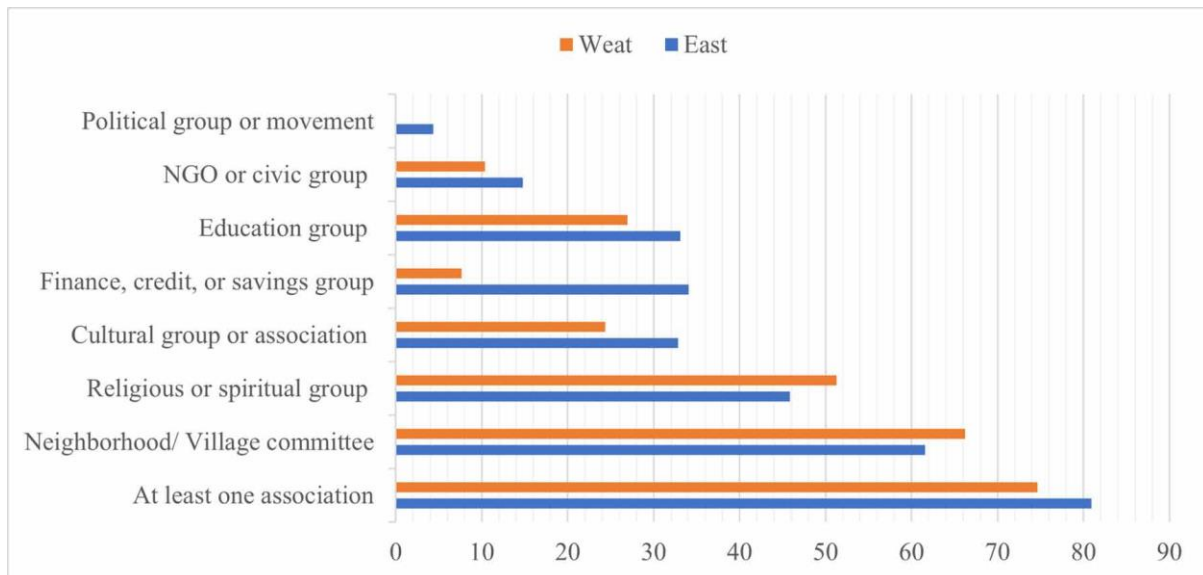
One of the most outstanding elements of the crisis is people's renewed interest in associations. The survey shows that 80% of the surveyed women reported taking part in associations. The primary goal of these regroupings is to create social solidarity between women's group members. Moreover, they are based on collaboration and tightening of the bonds among people sharing the same culture and sometimes the same political vision (Keho, 2009).

Table 5 Women's participation in different associations

<i>Participation in association</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>At least one association</i>	79.55	20.45
<i>Neighborhood/ Village committee</i>	62.61	37.39
<i>The religious or spiritual group</i>	47.03	52.97
<i>Cultural group or association</i>	30.97	69.03
<i>Finance, credit, or savings group</i>	28.25	71.75
<i>Education Group</i>	31.73	68.27
<i>NGO or civic group</i>	13.79	31.73
<i>Political group or movement</i>	3.53	96.47

Table 5 paints an interesting picture of who is and is not likely to participate in associations. As this table demonstrates, most women (62.61%) participate in neighborhood/village committees, while fewer participate in political groups or movements (3.53%).

Figure 10. Women's Participation Rate in Camp Associations (East vs. West).

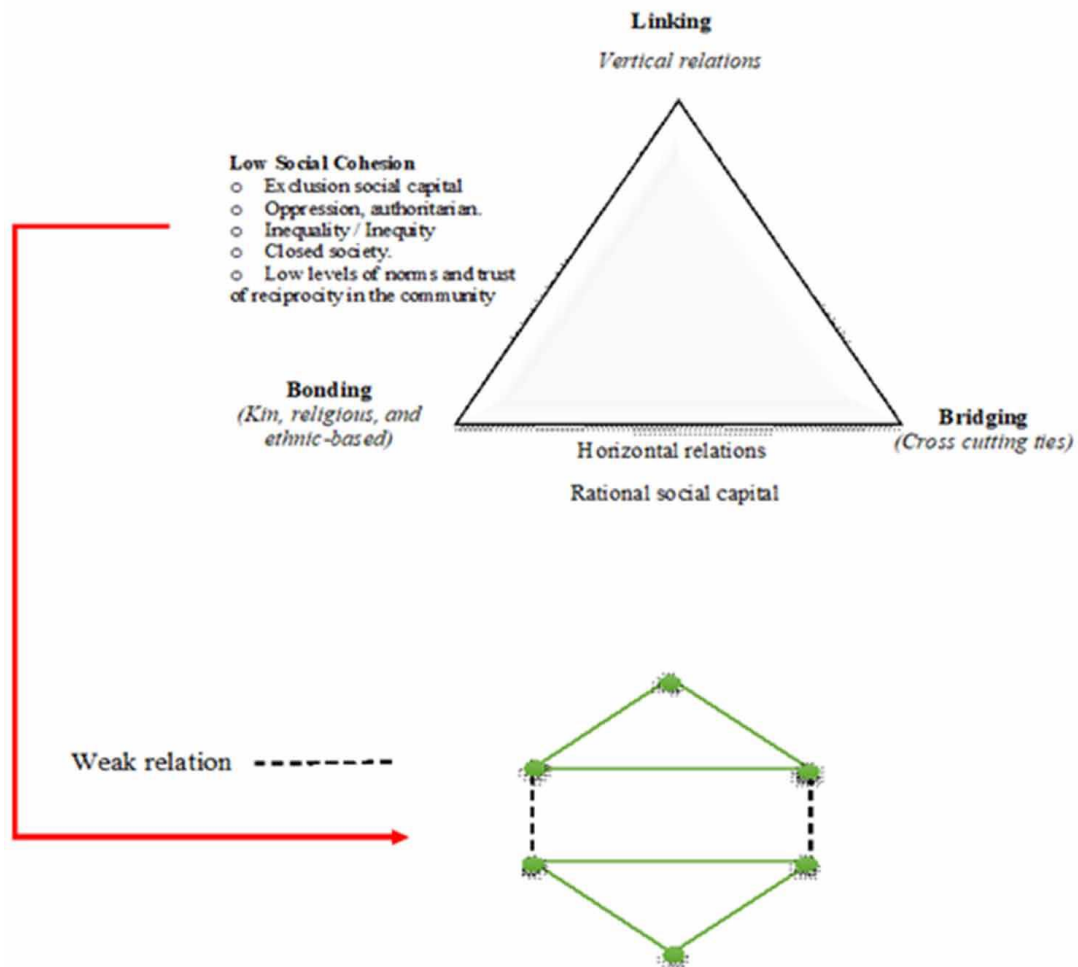


Comparison based on the women's location highlights some significant differences. Women in the Eastside of the camp are more likely to participate in associations. A lower level of social involvement is noted among women from the west side of the camp (see Figure 10. Women's participation in associations based on the camp location).

6. Social Capital Dynamics: Assessing Solidarity and Cohesion in Abu-Shouk Camp

The concept of social capital, encompassing bonding, bridging, and linking elements, plays a crucial role in shaping relationships within a society. However, the mere existence of social capital does not guarantee inclusive relations. Various factors such as wealth inequality, ethnic tensions, and weak civic engagement can contribute to a lack of social cohesion, impacting both horizontal (bonding and bridging) and vertical (linking) social capital.

Figure 11. The level of women's social cohesion inside the camp.



Our findings, supported by Mohamed's (2023) research and the quantitative data, suggest that women in Abu Shouk Camp primarily rely on collaboration within their close social support groups. This limited interaction with those outside their immediate circles is reflected in the lower social cohesion evident within the camp, as shown in Figure 11. The figure itself illustrates robust solidarity within these social support groups, evidenced by the high rates of collaboration reported in the survey. However, the survey data also reveals a decline in trust levels as social circles expand beyond close family, suggesting weaker connections with individuals outside this close-knit network.

Within the social support group, women exhibit high cohesion and structural unity. Members share strong, enduring, and direct relationships, indicating a high level of connectivity and

unity. This finding emphasizes the importance of understanding not only the presence of social capital but also its specific manifestations and impact on social cohesion within the camp.

7. Conclusion

This study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the social bonds among women and within their communities in the Abu-Shouk camp, an internally displaced person camp in Darfur, Western Sudan. Among these women, the study explores the intricate dynamics of social relationships shaped by the Darfur conflict. By unraveling the role of social capital in influencing these relationships, we aim to understand how social capital shapes the experiences of these women within the camp. In doing so, the study employed a carefully crafted research design, utilizing surveys conducted by trained data collectors. The questionnaire, thoughtfully developed, assessed various aspects of women's lives, including demographics, trust, solidarity, resource exchange, women's empowerment, and participation in associations. The data collection process involved engaging ever-married women aged 18 and above within the Abu-Shouk camp, with the surveys conducted in April 2021.

Analysis of the data reveals that trust is a fundamental element of social relationships within the camp, alongside established networks and social norms. This emphasis on trust is not surprising, as it demonstrably influences the cohesion of groups, families, and communities. Stronger social bonds, built on a foundation of trust, can contribute to enhanced socio-economic development by facilitating cooperation and resource sharing.

The survey further unveils that women in the camp exhibit caution in relationships, possibly stemming from the high level of diversity within. Specific barriers to trust were observed, potentially impacting the formation of social bonds. Interestingly, there is no significant difference between women on both sides of the camp regarding the "radius of trust," aligning with Fukuyama's findings that greater trust is often confined to family circles.

Educational and age disparities surfaced in the data, influencing gift-giving behaviors. Highly educated and younger women tend to give more, possibly linked to greater financial resources and evolving relational patterns. Additionally, the study sheds light on women's participation in household decision-making, emphasizing the need for intervention programs aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5). Older and younger women, with the least decision-making power, may benefit from involvement in decent employment and education, reducing dependency and promoting gender equality.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5) emphasize increasing financial resources to accelerate women and girls' equal benefits and empowerment. Various intervention programs exist to enhance women's household position in the Abu-Shouk camp, yet their situation still appears bleak. Older and younger women have the least decision-making power, which suggests involving them in decent employment and education to lessen their dependency on their family members and husbands. Employment and education have always empowered women and positively affected decision-making, including reducing the inequalities among men and women. Attention must be given to those women who do not attend school through non-formal education.

In conclusion, this study significantly enhances our comprehension of the intricacies within the Abu-Shouk camp, offering valuable insights into the lives of women grappling with conflict and displacement. It emphasizes the critical roles of trust, social bonds, and targeted interventions as crucial elements for empowering women and fostering equitable decision-making within this challenging context. In closing, this study contributes meaningfully to the scholarly discourse on conflict, displacement, and social dynamics. By illuminating the resilience of women and the vital role of their social bonds in the face of adversity, the research offers valuable insights into the complex interaction between these factors within an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp setting.

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