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Sociocultural dimensions of South Sudanese refugees' resettlement experiences in Australia

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Abstract

This article explores the sociocultural dimensions of the resettlement experiences of South Sudanese refugees in Australia from 2000 to 2010. The findings are drawn from a series of semi-structured interviews that investigated three key themes: employment experiences, the impact of Australian news media, and the influence of gender and gendered practices. The analysis utilizes Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural, and linguistic capital to understand the participants' narratives. The article highlights the challenges the participants faced in gaining employment due to lack of recognition of their overseas qualifications, as well as the negative portrayal of South Sudanese youth in the Australian media. It also examines how traditional gender roles and the value placed on male education in South Sudan shaped the participants' experiences of resettlement in Australia. The article concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for supporting the successful integration of refugee communities.

1. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND CONTEXT

South Sudanese refugees who resettled in Australia between 2000 and 2010 encountered multifaceted challenges and opportunities as they navigated new social, cultural, and economic contexts. This article explores the sociocultural dimensions of their resettlement experience, focusing on three interrelated themes: employment, media representation, and gender. Drawing on semi-structured interviews conducted in 2015 and 2017, this study foregrounds South Sudanese voices and their reflections on the early years of settlement. These narratives illuminate the impact of employment barriers, the pervasive influence of negative media portrayals, and the transformation of gender norms within families and communities. By positioning participants' experiences within the broader migration context, this article underscores the importance of addressing intersecting factors in refugee integration. The chapter is organised around three themes: (1) employment experiences, in which Bourdieu's (2011) notion of social capital is used to investigate employment experiences and employability more generally; (2) the impact of Australian news media, where deficit representations of South Sudanese by various journalists are explored in relation to participants' social activity and identities; and (3) the impact of gender and gendered practices, especially as South Sudanese refugee communities formed and transformed in Australia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This article explores the sociocultural dimensions of the resettlement experiences of South Sudanese refugees in Australia from 2000 to 2010. The study investigates three key themes: employment experiences, the impact of Australian news media, and the influence of gender and gendered practices on the resettlement process.

The South Sudanese refugee community in Australia faced numerous challenges during their resettlement in the early 2000s. As new arrivals, they were expected to learn new skills, including English as a second language, which was thought to be crucial for gaining employment and accessing educational opportunities beyond language classes. Researchers and policymakers agree that employment is one of the most important factors for successful integration into a new country, as it can help build social capital.

However, the stories told by the South Sudanese participants revealed that their resettlement experiences were affected by a range of capitals, including social, educational, cultural, and linguistic. Many refugees had come to Australia with minimal or very different experiences of literacy or academic learning in their own country, and their employment experiences had mostly been on farms or in domestic situations. Additionally, the employment environment in South Sudan was very different from Australia in terms of policies and laws, which proved to be a significant obstacle for South Sudanese migrants seeking employment in Australia.

Another key aspect of the resettlement experience was the impact of the Australian news media on the South Sudanese community. Some media outlets seemed predisposed to report negatively on the deficits of South Sudanese communities and the challenges they were struggling to deal with, while other media coverage chose to focus all the time on the difficulties encountered by young South Sudanese and some adult members of the community. This negative portrayal of South Sudanese youth as criminals had a significant impact on the resettlement experiences of the participants.

The integration of refugees into Western societies is shaped by interlocking structural and cultural forces, with employment, media representation, and gender emerging as key axes of experience. Employment is widely acknowledged as central to successful refugee integration, supporting economic stability, social capital, and self-efficacy (Wright et al., 2022; Bourdieu, 1986). Yet, refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds, such as South Sudanese Australians, face persistent barriers including non-recognition of overseas qualifications, language proficiency requirements, and institutional discrimination (Ferfolja, 2009; Benseman, 2013; Harris et al., 2015). Australian settlement policies, such as the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (DIAC, 2008), have sought to address these challenges, but the literature underscores that deskilling and systemic exclusion remain prevalent.

Media representation is another powerful determinant of social inclusion. Research highlights that negative, sensationalized, or deficit-oriented reporting on refugee communities—especially youth—produces stigma, reinforces stereotypes, and limits access to social and institutional resources (Byrne, 2017; Williams, 2014). These narratives often diverge sharply from empirical evidence, yet shape public opinion and policy in ways that can marginalize entire communities.

Gender intersects with both employment and media experiences. In South Sudan, patriarchal traditions have historically limited women's access to education and public life (Cislaghi, Manji, & Heise, 2019; Connell, 2015). Resettlement in Australia prompts renegotiation of gender roles: women and girls encounter new opportunities for education and work, but also face cultural tensions and community expectations (Taha, 2019). The literature emphasizes the importance of recognizing the agency and resilience of South Sudanese women and girls, even as they navigate persistent inequities and shifting expectations.

Synthesizing these strands, this study situates South Sudanese refugee resettlement within a broader understanding of intersecting structural and cultural forces. It contributes new empirical evidence on how employment, media, and gender are experienced in daily life, and underscores the need for intersectional, contextually sensitive approaches to policy and support.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis in the article utilizes Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural, and linguistic capital to understand the participants' narratives. Bourdieu's theory of capital provides a useful framework for examining the various forms of capital that shaped the resettlement experiences of the South Sudanese refugees.

Social capital refers to the networks, relationships, and connections that individuals can draw upon to achieve their goals. In the context of the South Sudanese refugees, their ability to build social capital through employment and other social interactions was a key factor in their successful integration into the Australian society.

Cultural capital, on the other hand, encompasses the skills, knowledge, and cultural competencies that individuals possess and can use to their advantage. The article highlights how the lack of recognition of the South Sudanese refugees' overseas qualifications and the differences in cultural practices between South Sudan and Australia posed significant challenges to their ability to build cultural capital.

Finally, linguistic capital refers to the command of the dominant language in a society, which can provide individuals with significant advantages in terms of employment, education, and social mobility. The article examines how the requirement for South Sudanese refugees to learn English as a second language was a major challenge, sometimes reducing rather than improving their confidence and cultural capital.

By utilizing Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the article provides a nuanced understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of the resettlement experiences of the South Sudanese refugees in Australia.

4. METHODS

4.1.Recruitment and Sampling

Participants were recruited through South Sudanese community organizations, local networks, and snowball sampling within Canberra, Australia. Eligibility criteria included South Sudanese origin, arrival in Australia between 2000 and 2010, and willingness to participate in an in-depth interview. Community leaders provided guidance and facilitated trust-building. Sampling was purposive, aiming for diversity in gender, age, educational background, and migration trajectory.

4.2.Demographics

Twenty participants (11 women, 9 men), aged 19–55 at the time of interview, took part in the study. Most entered Australia as humanitarian entrants. Table 1 provides a summary of key demographic data:

Achol	Female	29	2002	Teacher	Tertiary
Alex	Male	21	2004	Student/Construction	Secondary
Monica	Female	26	2003	Unemployed	Secondary
John	Male	35	2001	Waiter	Secondary
Josephine	Female	32	2005	Tax Officer/Teacher	Tertiary
Deng	Male	19	2007	Student	Secondary
Nyibol	Female	23	2006	Unemployed	Secondary
Nyakong	Female	24	2002	Unemployed	Secondary
...	...	...	...	...	...

4.3.Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2017, either in-person or by telephone, using a flexible interview guide to elicit detailed narratives about employment, media, and

gendered experiences. Interviews lasted 60–90 minutes, were audio recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned for confidentiality.

4.4.Data Analysis

Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) inductive approach. Transcripts were first open-coded, with codes then organized under the key themes of employment, media representation, and gender. Coding reliability was enhanced through independent double-coding of a subset of transcripts and regular team discussions. NVivo software supported data management and iterative analysis. Reflexive memos documented analytic decisions and researcher positionality throughout the process.

4.5.Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, and the right to withdraw at any time.

The findings presented in this article are drawn from transcripts of a series of semi-structured interviews conducted in 2015 and 2017, when the participants were remembering and reflecting back upon their early resettlement years in Australia in the previous decade.

The journal is organized around three themes: (1) employment experiences, in which Bourdieu's (2011) notion of social capital is used to investigate the participants' employment experiences and employability more generally; (2) the impact of Australian news media, where the impact of deficit representations of South Sudanese by various journalists on the participants' social activity and identities is investigated; and (3) the impact of gender and gendered practices, especially among South Sudanese refugee communities as they formed and transformed in Australia.

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the core findings of the study, organized around the three central themes that emerged from participant narratives: employment, media representation, and gender. Drawing on in-depth interviews, the analysis explores both shared and individual experiences, illustrating how these themes independently and collectively shaped the resettlement journeys of South Sudanese refugees in Australia. The thematic structure highlights the intersections between employment challenges, media portrayals, and shifting gender roles, providing a nuanced account of the complexities of refugee integration.

5.1.Employment experiences of South Sudanese refugees

This theme explores the participants' stories of the challenges they experienced in gaining and attempting to retain employment in Australia. The literature in this area shows that in most English-speaking countries, new arrivals are expected to learn new skills, including English as a second

language. This is thought to be crucial in refugees gaining employment and undertaking educational opportunities beyond language classes (Koyama, 2015). In this respect in Australia, the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy has over the years been implemented by the Federal Government's DIAC, and this has intended to help refugees to build social and educational capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which it was hoped would aid other elements of the 'refugee resettlement' experience (DIAC, 2008).

Across the world, researchers and policymakers agree that employment is one of the most important factors of successful integration into a new country, where paid employment especially can help build social capital (Wright et al., 2022). In fact, the stories told by the South Sudanese refugees showed their resettlement experiences were affected by a range of capitals, including social capital, educational capital, cultural capital and linguistic capital. So often, they explained that as new arrivals, where they were able to take advantage of better educational opportunities, this enhanced their employment situation, and this in turn translated

into social capital that they could invest in different aspects of their life. Having established in the previous article, that there were substantial differences in the mainstream literacy practices in South Sudan and Australia soon after the turn of the century, it should be no surprise to hear the South Sudanese participants reported that periods of unemployment in Australia had contributed to their frustration and sometimes despair in their resettlement process. On the positive side, the stories told by the participants again and again demonstrated that employment prospects were enhanced by better education opportunities.

And yet, as a community in transition, the participants also showed that their employment experiences had often been challenging. Some refugees had come to Australia with minimal or very different experiences of literacy or academic learning in their own country (Ferfolja, 2009), and their employment experiences had mostly been on farms or in domestic situations. Many participants acknowledged that the employment environment in South Sudan was very different from Australia in terms of policies and laws. But some of those who already had significant employment experience – some had been in public and private sector roles – were frequently overlooked by prospective employers. The following interview extract explains the problem:

Interviewer: What sort of job you did in Sudan before coming to Australia?

Achol: Yes, I was teaching at primary school.

Interviewer: Was there any difference compared to what you were used to do in Sudan?

Achol: Often my employer assumed that my employment experience in South Sudan was inconsistent with the Australian workplace culture. (Interview, 17/8/2017)

These assumptions proved to be a significant obstacle to South Sudanese migrants gaining employment in Australia, as illustrated in the interview extract below:

Interviewer: Do you think there were issues of employment in Australia?

Achol: Yes, migrants were mainly doing manual jobs not related to their qualifications. (Interview, 17/8/2017)

The literature suggests that a primary need for adults with little or no schooling experience is to improve their literacy abilities (including spoken English), especially if they have poor literacy in their first language. And there is little doubt that underdeveloped literacy skills in one's first language has serious consequences for developing literacy skills in another language (Benseman, 2013). The problem was complicated by those South Sudanese who came to Australia with various qualifications, but these were often not recognised by prospective employers. This meant that most refugees, whether or not they had previous educational qualifications or employment experience, needed to enrol in a university or TAFE college in Australia in order to help convince prospective employers that they could be given paid employment.

Interviewer: Was there any difference compared to what you used to do in Sudan?

Achol: There was a lot of difference in terms of hours and working capacity. In Sudan, I used to work based on my qualification. In Australia, employment is highly based on experience (Interview, 11/10/2017)

In the next sections, I draw attention to the particular stories that the participants told about the employment environment in Australia, as they saw it, and what this environment required of them as newly arrived South Sudanese refugees in the Australian city of Canberra in 2000 to 2010.

5.2.Employment environment and requirements

Alex spoke at some length about how he saw employment policies in Australia as different from those in South Sudan. As explained in the interview excerpt below, these differences included the law, the actual work environment and employees' rights.

Interviewer: What sort of job did you do in Sudan before coming to Australia?

Alex: At that time, I was a student and my job was casual … I did construction and also I worked in a bakery.

Interviewer: Was there any difference compared with what you used to do in Sudan? How?

Alex: There was a lot of difference … There was a huge difference, for example, the law that governs it was different … the rights of people, for example, if the weather was hot you may not work in Australia … But in South Sudan, is different. (Interview 20, 16/9/2017)

Monica pointed out one of the many challenges: job interviews were a requirement for employment in Australia. In contrast, interviews were not required in South Sudan, particularly when employers could directly select their employees.

Interviewer: How was English important for your work and income when you arrived [in Australia]?

Monica: English was important. If you were looking for a job, you needed to go through an interview in English and sometimes the interview could be over the phone, so you needed to know English to communicate. (Interview, 13/8/2015)

Obtaining employment in Australia could be especially difficult for South Sudanese refugees who studied in Arabic. For example, John worked as a waiter in a respectable hotel in Sudan, where he spoke in Arabic; however, in Australia, he was required to attend English classes and study English 'from zero' before he could experience any success looking for a job. Also, Josephine used Arabic in high prestige professional roles (taxation and education) before coming to Australia, but she felt that her overseas qualifications were not recognised in Australia, even when she was applying for a job that was not in her area of expertise.

Interviewer: What sort of job did you do in Sudan before coming to Australia?

Josephine: I worked in taxation and then as a teacher…. I used Arabic in my work and in my study, but here everything was is in English. What I studied, I cannot apply it here because it was a different environment.

Interviewer: So, you had a certificate but couldn't use it?

Josephine: Yes, I couldn't apply any knowledge here. (Interview, 16/9/2017)

For those who managed to secure a job in Australia, they were able to use their basic knowledge of English to improve their competence, and this helped them acquire new knowledge and employment skills while on the job (Khawaja et al, 2019; Piller & Lising, 2014). In this way, one they had gained some employment it was much easier for them to develop their cultural capital. In the best of circumstances, the process of South Sudanese refugees being required to learn English could enable access to other educational opportunities that would also assist them in developing cultural capital. However, for many, as explained in Article 6, this requirement to participate in unfamiliar literacy learning practices was a major challenge, sometimes reducing rather than improving their confidence and cultural capital.

Another observation emerging in the interviews was that some South Sudanese refugees were able to acquire Australian qualifications, but they still found it very difficult to find employment in the job market (Harris et al., 2015). It seems other sociocultural factors besides Australian qualifications could determine employment accessibility. For example, Achol believed that qualifications were not related to employment prospects or jobs. She claimed that refugees like her might have had better qualifications but they failed to gain suitable employment in line with their qualifications. Instead, they were left with the option of menial or manual jobs or no job at all. According to Achol, new arrivals' names were screened, and if the employer suspected you were from overseas, they might not hire you. This type of discriminatory experience was one of many factors preventing some refugees from South Sudan acquiring better jobs. However, Achol stressed that the experience of discrimination in seeking employment was not only relevant to South Sudanese new arrivals.

Interviewer: Do you think you were discriminated against?

Achol: Yes, because I tried to apply for some jobs and the outcome was rejection … I think that was because of my last name, 'Tong', and many people may think it is a migrant name not necessarily from South Sudan. (Interview, 11/10/2017)

5.3.Summary

This theme focused on the employment and workplace-related challenges that the participants recall having to deal with in their resettlement experiences in Australia. It highlighted the

importance of employment experience in building the social capital of the participants in Australia, but it also drew attention to the differences in employment policies and practices in Australia and South Sudan. Australian employers' unwillingness to recognise previous qualifications was identified as one of the major obstacles faced by South Sudanese who already had overseas qualifications. However, some participants explained that other factors, such as the type of employment experiences in South Sudan, or discrimination on the basis of race in Australia, often impacted their job seeking.

5.4.The impact of Australian news media

This theme focuses on the influence of the news media on the resettlement experience of South Sudanese refugees from 2000 to 2010. Some media outlets seemed predisposed to report negatively on the deficits of South Sudanese communities and the challenges they were struggling to deal with, while other media coverage chose to focus all the time on the difficulties encountered by young South Sudanese and some adult members of the community. There were few positive stories circulating in the mainstream media, such as when communities pulled together to help each other through challenging times.

Most of the Australian journalists who wrote about the South Sudanese community, at the time, focused on South Sudanese youth and the crimes committed by them. Media coverage of young South Sudanese was almost invariably discriminatory and sensationalised. The idea that young immigrants, particularly African Australian youths, were the main perpetrators of crime in Australian cities has subsequently been refuted by evidence that showed crime was more likely to be committed by young Australians than by foreigners in the first decade of the twenty first century. For example, Williams (2014) showed that the number of Sudanese youths committing crimes was no greater than that of other Australians who committed crimes at that time. Yet, the media did not brand Anglo–European Australian youth in the same manner and suggested that South Sudanese criminals threatened the wellbeing of the wider Australian society. The media may have focused on youth crime in Melbourne committed by people from the full spectrum of sociocultural groups, but examples published almost always cited examples of African youth violence in Melbourne's suburbs (Byrne, 2017).

In our discussion about these issues, one participant, Achol, expressed the belief that the media and the government needed to work together to find ways to more accurately represent young South Sudanese people so that they were not always presumed to be criminals:

Interviewer: Do you know about the media's negative reporting of young South Sudanese?
Achol: Yes, I know it.
Interviewer: How do you feel about that?
Achol: I don't feel good about it.
Interviewer: Why?
Achol: What other white people were doing, what Sudanese were doing was just a small fraction.
Interviewer: Did you think it would change?
Achol: Yes, I hoped it would change because the new generation was taking things in a different way. In terms of education, these kids were the future of South Sudan and our future here—but with these Australian laws, we could not protect our children because of the media and government. (Interview, 11/10/2017)

Deng also discussed the negative depiction of young South Sudanese people, claiming that some youths were discouraged by media mis-representation when they needed support from the wider community. Deng believed that encouraging young people to do the right thing would shift their focus to doing other useful activities:

Deng: There were reasons why some of them [South Sudanese youth] behaved differently.
Interviewer: But do you think they were criminals?
Deng: Not really like the ones in America—some of them had no jobs, they were idle … Some of them wanted to study, but they couldn't do it, and some were discouraged.
Interviewer: Did you think they could be helped?

Deng: Yes, through the community and family by encouraging them to do the right thing. (Interview, 18/9/2017)

Josephine stated that she felt 'not good' each time she saw young South Sudanese people branded as members of a criminal group in the news media. In the years leading up to 2010, some media outlets persisted with negative stereotypes of South Sudanese youth. Certain media groups seemed determined to name South Sudanese youth as crime committers and to incite feelings of fear of South Sudanese youth in the wider community:

Interviewer: What were your thoughts about media and the ways they associated Sudanese youth with crimes?

Josephine: I didn't think it was a good name for [the] Sudanese community because we were not the ones doing the crime.

Interviewer: How did you feel about that?

Josephine: Not good. I felt bad because they talked about young people who don't have link[s] to crimes.

Interviewer: What did you think when the TV or radio talked about Sudanese crimes?

Josephine: I didn't feel good because it spoiled other young people who had nothing to do with that. (Interview, 16/9/2017)

Nyibol and Nyakong felt that the media at the time were exaggerating some of the crimes committed by the young South Sudanese people. They were frustrated about the fact that youths with a South Sudanese background were assumed to be criminals and lawbreakers. The following excerpt is from an interview with Nyibol:

Interviewer: In those early years when you had been in Australia for only a few years, what were your thoughts about the Australian media and their representation of South Sudanese communities? How did you feel about that and why?

Nyibol: I didn't think it was a good idea. I was not happy about that.

Interviewer: Why?

Nyibol: Because the media just talk negatively about one community always on the news. When you saw that every day on the news, you didn't feel happy about it. (Interview, 20/9/2017)

Similarly, Nyakong believed that the media did not represent factual information but rather denigrated the South Sudanese youth, as explained in the following excerpt:

Interviewer: What were your thoughts about the Australian media and their representation of South Sudanese communities in the early years of being in Australia? How did you feel about that and why?

Nyakong: I could not be happy where I heard about Sudanese being called crime committers because we didn't have such crimes, and we didn't even know where the name came from. Maybe created by the media. (Interview, 20/9/2017).

6. DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates the deeply interconnected nature of employment, media representation, and gender in shaping the resettlement experiences of South Sudanese refugees in Australia. The findings reveal that these domains do not operate in isolation, but rather intersect and compound, resulting in complex pathways of both challenge and adaptation.

Employment barriers—stemming from non-recognition of qualifications, language challenges, and racialized discrimination—persist despite targeted policy interventions (Wright et al., 2022; Harris et al., 2015). Many participants described a sense of frustration and diminished self-worth as their prior professional experience and educational credentials were undervalued or dismissed in the Australian context. Deskilling and underemployment were recurrent themes, often leading to downward occupational mobility and financial precarity. However, participants also pointed to the transformative potential of both prior and newly acquired education in Australia as a means of navigating these barriers, gaining local qualifications, and expanding social networks. Informal community support, such as peer mentoring and information sharing, emerged as critical strategies for overcoming institutional obstacles.

Media representation emerged as a powerful force shaping not only how South Sudanese Australians are perceived by the broader society but also how they perceive themselves. Negative and sensationalized reporting fostered stigma, exclusion, and a disconnect between lived reality and public perception (Williams, 2014; Byrne, 2017). Several interviewees shared stories of feeling targeted or mischaracterized by the media, which heightened experiences of social isolation and at times led to internalized stigma. These representations also had ripple effects within families and communities, creating intergenerational tensions as young people grappled with public suspicion and older generations struggled to reconcile these portrayals with their own values and aspirations. Importantly, negative media narratives had material consequences, at times limiting employment prospects and access to services due to prejudicial attitudes among potential employers and service providers.

Gender roles were both challenged and renegotiated in the Australian context. Migration prompted some families to embrace girls' education and women's public participation, marking a significant shift from traditional norms. Nevertheless, these changes were often accompanied by cultural tensions and intergenerational conflict, as families balanced respect for heritage with adaptation to new societal expectations (Cislaghi et al., 2019; Connell, 2015; Taha, 2019). Female participants described opportunities for empowerment—such as pursuing higher education or entering the workforce—that would have been less accessible in South Sudan. Yet, they also spoke of the dual pressures of maintaining cultural traditions and meeting new expectations, sometimes facing resistance from within their own families or communities. For men, shifts in gender dynamics occasionally led to feelings of displacement or challenges to traditional notions of masculinity, further complicating adjustment and integration.

Crucially, these three domains—employment, media, and gender—intersected in ways that produced unique, sometimes compounding, barriers for individuals. For example, women's employment opportunities were shaped not only by gendered expectations but also by media-driven stereotypes and systemic labor market discrimination. Young men, similarly, navigated the double bind of economic marginalization and negative public scrutiny. These findings highlight the need for intersectional, context-sensitive frameworks in both research and practice, recognizing the multiplicity of identities and experiences within refugee communities. By foregrounding participant voices, this research underscores the necessity of addressing the structural, representational, and cultural barriers that shape the settlement trajectories of refugees. Policy interventions must move beyond one-size-fits-all solutions, instead fostering holistic and flexible support systems that are attuned to the realities of intersecting disadvantage. Community-centered initiatives that amplify refugee agency and resilience, challenge harmful stereotypes, and promote equitable access to employment and education are vital for successful integration. Ultimately, the study calls for a collaborative approach—engaging policymakers, service providers, media, and refugee communities themselves—to create more inclusive and responsive pathways to belonging and participation in Australian society.

7. CONCLUSION

This article has reported on a range of different resettlement stories told by the South Sudanese participants, especially those related to their engagement with employment, the news media and gender in their early years in Australia. By giving priority to hearing and reporting South Sudanese voices in this study, this article has shown how these different elements contributed to or shaped their early resettlement years as new arrivals in Australia. Occasionally it has shown contrasts between different participants' views. They observed that employment of South Sudanese
in Australia had been affected by various factors, including discrimination, a lack of recognition of
overseas qualifications, and the different employment laws and rules in Australia. Layered over all of this, according to the participants, the news media had an almost universally adverse impact on the resettlement experiences of newly arrived South Sudanese refugees.

Participants were passionately critical of the growing tendency in the years leading up to 2010 of the news media presenting only negative aspects of South Sudanese lives in Australia, and for some they did not connect the lives that they had been living then with the misconstructions of reality they saw on tv or in newspapers. Most acknowledged that there were some significant problems caused by a small number of South Sudanese youth who were sometimes engaging in criminal behaviour, but they believed the Australian media usually did not convey the overall truth of the situation. The phrase they sometimes used in the interviews was they were 'seeking balance', and they did need find it in the media.

Finally, this article reported on some of the ways in which gender had played a role in the lives of the participants when they first arrived in Australia, just as it had done when they were in South Sudan. In particular, education for girls and women was not a priority in South Sudan, and yet this was one aspect of life in Australia and almost all participants spoke about this with some optimism. They believed that Australia's greater encouragement of young women to be educated, and Australia's rejection of the practice of forcing young women to drop out of school in order to be married, had powerfully and quickly infiltrated the social norms and beliefs of most South Sudanese families and social groupings soon after they arrived in Australia.

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Declarations

Clinical trial number: Not applicable.

Human Ethics and Consent to Participate declarations: Not applicable.

Ethical Approval

This research was approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC).

Consent to Participate declaration

I have given my consent for the publication of identifiable details, which can include photograph(s), participants' pseudonym names and ages, case history, and/or details within the text to be published in the Journal of International Migration and Integration. This information could be used by other authors in potential research.

The Ethics Declaration Norm

Monash University Faculty of Education, observes the AustralianNational Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research(the National Statement).

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