Mixed Migration Centre

Social Networks in Refugee Response

What we can learn from Sudanese and Yemeni in Jordan

Introduction

A growing body of research has investigated the role of social networks in the social protection and integration of refugees and migrants.[1] Refugees and migrants use the resources "embedded" in their social networks (often referred to as social capital)[2] to survive and hopefully thrive.[3] Yet by and large, the refugee response in Jordan overlooks how social networks determine access to humanitarian assistance and impact the wellbeing of displaced people.[4] Drawing on research with Yemeni and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan,[5] this paper explains why humanitarian response actors should learn about and respectfully engage with the social networks of refugees and asylum seekers to better meet humanitarian needs.

1   Bilecen, B., Gamper, M., & Lubbers, M. J. (2018). The missing link: Social network analysis in migration and transnationalism. Social Networks, 53, 1–3; Bilecen, B., & Sienkiewicz, J. J. (2015). Informal Social Protection Networks of Migrants: Typical Patterns in Different Transnational Social Spaces. Population, Space and Place, 21, 227–243; Calhoun, N. (2010). With a little help from our friends: a participatory assessment of social capital among refugees in Jordan (Research Paper No. 189). Amman: UNHCR Jordan; Strang, A., & Ager, A. (2010). Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas. Journal of Refugee Studies, 23(4), 589–607; Stevens, M. R. (2016). The collapse of social networks among Syrian refugees in urban Jordan. Contemporary Levant, 1(1), 51–63; Uzelac, A., Meester, J., van den Berg, W., & Göransson, M. (2018). The untapped resource: Protecting and leveraging refugee social capital in protracted displacement. Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

2   Lin, N. (1999). Building a Network Theory of Social Capital. Connections, 22(1), 28–51.

3   Uzelac et al., Op Cit.

4   Calhoun, Op Cit.; Stevens, Op Cit.

5   Data provided by UNHCR Jordan, August 2018, cited in: Johnston, R., Kvittingen, A. & Baslan, D. (2019). Realizing the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Jordan from countries other than Syria, with a focus on Yemenis and Sudanese. Amman.

In this paper, after presenting the contextual background and methodology used, we discuss the following relational domains:

- bonding capital: the relationships among those in a refugee and asylum seekers community, through which people may get help solving problems and resources may be redistributed to the most vulnerable;

- bridging capital: the relationships with Jordanians, that give refugees and asylum seekers access to information and resources their compatriots lack; and

- linking[6] capital: the relationships with humanitarian organisations.

Social networks are a "set of actors and the ties among them" and social capital, is "access to and use of resources embedded in social networks."[7] The theory of homophily states that actors who are connected in a network tend to have similar characteristics. Consistent with this, denser and more closed social networks of Sudanese and Yemenis in Jordan tend to be made up of those of the same nationality. Relationships with those of different nationalities, especially Jordanians, tend to be more distant, sparse and open. Following from this, this paper refers to the resources Yemeni and Sudanese can access through their compatriots as bonding social capital and the

resources they can access through relationships with Jordanians as bridging social capital.[8]

Contextual background

Jordan hosts the second largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world per capita.[9] While international attention currently focuses almost exclusively on Syrians, 12 percent of the 753,376 persons of concern (PoC) registered with UNHCR are from other countries. In addition, Jordan hosts over two million Palestinian refugees.[10] Of the 90,807 PoC from countries other than Syria, 67,527 (74.4%) are from Iraq, 14,654 (16.1%) are from Yemen[11], 6,141 (6.8%) are from Sudan, 775 (0.9%) are from Somalia, and 1,710 (1.9%) are from other countries.[12] Most refugees and asylum seekers from countries other than Syria have settled in Amman, where they make up to 27 percent of UNHCR's caseload.[13] Despite this, the refugee response in Jordan focuses on the needs of Syrians, often excluding refugees and asylum seekers from other countries.[14] Unlike Syrian refugees they generally cannot apply for work permits[15] and often lack formal legal status in Jordan.[16] On top of that, as a number of recent studies have demonstrated, refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities are more likely than Syrians

6   Ager, A. & Strang A., (2008). Understanding integration: a conceptual framework. Journal of Refugee Studies, 21 (2), 166–191.

7   Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). Structural analysis in the social sciences. Social network analysis: Methods and applications. New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press; Lin, Opt Cit.

8   Lin, Opt Cit.

9   UNHCR. (2018). Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2018.

10   UNRWA. (n.d.) Jordan; Note: Palestine refugees are the responsibility of UNRWA, not UNHCR.

11   Historically, the Yemenis especially, migrated to Jordan for work. The Sudanese refugee population in Jordan began growing in the mid-2000s and the Yemeni population since 2014. More on this in Mixed Migration Platform (MMP). (2017). "Displaced Minorities Part I: Migration and displacement trends of Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and other migrants in Jordan." MMP Feature Article,

12   UNHCR. (2019, June). Jordan Operational Update.

13   Johnston, et al., Op Cit.

14   ARDD-Legal Aid, "Putting Needs over Nationality. Meeting the Needs of Somali and Sudanese Refugees During the Syrian Crisis" (Briefing paper, ARDD-Legal Aid, 2015); ARDD. (2016). "Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan."; Davis, R. A. Taylor, W., Todman & E. Murphy. (2016). "Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan: Hierarchies of Aid in Protracted Displacement Crises," Middle East Report, 286, Summer; Johnston et al., Op Cit.; Mennonite Central Committee. (MCC) (2017). On the Basis of Nationality: Access to Assistance for Iraqi and Other Asylum-seekers and Refugees in Jordan, Amman: MCC.

15   Sudanese and Yemenis do not directly benefit from the advocacy and incentives laid out in the Jordan Compact that give Syrians access to work permits.

16   "Unlike the special procedures that have been introduced to regulate Syrians' presence in Jordan, annual residency for Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese, and Somalis remain regulated by the standard and restrictive conditions of the Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs. A foreigner who falls under this legislation can be "legally present" up to three months after arriving in Jordan (one month initially and then for an additional two months if they apply for an extension) and can request a further three-month extension. After this, they are not legally present unless they pay overstay fines and/or receive a one-year residency." Johnston, et al., Op Cit., p. 15

to be impoverished, food insecure and have poorer health outcomes.[17] Under Jordanian laws and policies they are also afforded fewer rights.[18] Furthermore, as discussed below, they may also have different needs due to different population demographics – a much higher proportion are men of working age[19] – and social network characteristics.[20] The humanitarian community rarely analyses the impact of social networks on the ability of refugees to realise their rights. This paper demonstrates how social networks are integral to meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Methodology

Using grounded theory methods[21], this paper is based on qualitative analysis of ten focus group discussions with Sudanese and ten with Yemenis in July and August 2018. A total of 164 refugees and asylum seekers residing in Amman participated. These were administered using an Appreciative Inquiry[22] informed semi-structured protocol that conformed with globally accepted standards for ethical research. Data was also gathered from ethnographic observations of the Yemeni and Sudanese refugee and asylum seekers communities and the humanitarian community delivering services to those communities, and from a workshop and interviews with 22 humanitarian organisations.[23]

Bonding Social Capital

Social networks facilitate the redistribution of resources among refugees and asylum seekers

"We are managing to support each other. When someone from the community doesn't have income for the month, we together contribute to support that person," said a male Yemeni participant. Sudanese and Yemeni who participated in the research explained that the strength and nature of their relationships with refugees and asylum seekers of the same nationality – what is regarded as bonding social capital – helped them access information and resources. They talked of income being redistributed to those who were less well off in their communities. Community members shared housing with non-relatives. Many who did this were single men, however there were also cases of single women and unrelated families residing together. Further, those who may otherwise end up homeless were accommodated. Transnational social networks also facilitated sharing, with refugees and asylum seekers receiving and sending remittances to relatives abroad.

Social capital helps refugees and asylum seekers solve problems

Community members support each other in solving non-financial problems as well. Sudanese mentioned providing childcare; Yemenis talked about intervening in cases of domestic violence; and both communities spoke of how community

17   Johnston, et al., 2019; MCC, Op Cit.; World Food Program (WFP), & REACH. (2019). Jordan – Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment, 2018. Amman: World Food Program.

18   ARDD-Legal Aid, 2015, Op Cit.; ARDD-Legal Aid, 2016, Op Cit.; Johnston, et al., Op Cit.; MCC, Op Cit.

19   UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Iraqis Currently Residing in Jordan"; UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Others (excluding SYR/IRQ/YEM/SOM/SUD) Currently Residing in Jordan"; UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Somalis Currently Residing in Jordan"; UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Sudanese Currently Residing in Jordan"; UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Syrians Currently Residing in Jordan"; UNHCR. (2018). "Statistical Report on Registered Yemenis Currently Residing in Jordan."

20   Based on the most recently conducted studies, priority needs among Sudanese and Yemenis include: Quality housing and secure tenancy; Assistance with school registration, educational expenses, and safety from racialised violence at school; Protection of rights as refugees and asylum seekers; Protection of labour rights and employment skills development opportunities; Health services, including for mental health; Food security to close gaps in nutrition outcomes; Community cohesion and social inclusion. See: Johnston et al., Op Cit.; WFP & REACH, Op Cit.

21   Grounded theory method is a qualitative method that develops theory inductively using the ideas that emerge from the phenomena and context being researched.

22   Appreciative Inquiry is a solution-centred approach that identifies and amplifies existing strengths and past achievements in a community rather than confronting errors via conventional problem solving.

23   For further details on methodology, please see Johnston et al., 2019.

members use their "wasta"[24] with government institutions or humanitarian organisations to help friends access protection and services. Being part of a strong community, living close to one another, or going out together in public, provided members protection from Jordanian neighbours who were sometimes hostile. The strong bonding social capital of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers allowed them to organise a month-long, high-profile demonstration for their rights that engaged a substantial portion of the community in 2015. The demonstration received media attention but ended with hundreds of demonstrators being deported.[25]

Factors that strengthen bonding social capital

Participants of both nationalities spoke of positive intracommunity relations and the importance of being able to gather with others of the same nationality. Sudanese described how they self-organised. The research team observed qualified female, male and youth leaders with the capacity to quickly set up meetings, effectively run group gatherings, implement activities, and pass and collect information through community channels.[26] The Sudanese community's efforts have been supported by a number of Jordanian NGOs, such as Sawiyan, as well as INGOs, such as the Jesuit Refugee Service and Collateral Repair Project, who are trusted by the community and understand the community's dynamics. Sudanese participants appreciated them providing places to gather and opportunities to socialise, including recreation and arts-centred activities. Sudanese also tried to live close to other Sudanese.

Yemeni women already have a WhatsApp group that helps dozens of them stay in touch, share information about humanitarian services, and raise money for community members in crisis. Yet, Yemeni participants spoke of community organisation and cohesion as an aspiration

rather than a reality: "The Yemeni are not actually organised I feel." They asked for support to bring community members together, form community organisations and build leadership capacity.

Factors that weaken bonding social capital

"The relation between the Sudanese on the surface looks good, but from inside there are a lot of issues," said a male Sudanese participant. Some participants said that relations among community members were weakened by not having enough resources within the community to share. So, while social networks facilitate the redistribution of resources among refugees and asylum seekers, the overall scarcity of resources weakens ties among community members. Bonds were also weakened, particularly among Yemeni, by living far away from each other, not having the opportunity to meet, and not being organised as a community. While some Yemenis limited their interactions with other Yemenis by choice,[27] others merely lacked opportunities or the capacity to meet up; the financial costs of transport and entertaining others could be prohibitive. Conflict within families weakens bonds, for example sexual and gender-based violence, violence against children, and, among Yemenis, forced marriage.

Participants of both nationalities spoke of tensions within their communities that originated in their home countries along political, ethnic, social, economic and religious lines. There was sometimes distrust of community leaders who might derive personal benefits from liaising with humanitarian organisations. In the case of Sudanese these tensions extended to relations with their national embassy. Sudanese also reported incidents of harassment by embassy staff. As such, while Yemeni accessed their embassy for support, Sudanese said they did not, even for consular services.

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24 "Literally translating from Arabic to the English 'mediator' or 'go-between', wasta refers to the invocation of a trusted and empowered individual to help one with an issue or challenge. This could be the securing of a job, easing of a bureaucratic procedure, or tilting of an admissions process in one's favour. Wasta can sometimes involve a financial element (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1993, Rabo 2005) but it is more commonly rooted in common familial or social ties (El-Said and Harrigan 2009, Rabo 2005). It is this social element of wasta which demands its inclusion in the study of the effects of social networks in the Middle East." Stevens, Op Cit., p. 57.

25 Human Rights Watch. (16 Dec 2015). "Jordan: Deporting Sudanese Asylum Seekers: Police Take 800 From Protest Camp to Airport," Human Rights Watch; Williams, A. (2 Feb 2016) "Why Jordan is deporting Darfurian refugees," Foreign Affairs.

26 Much of this is not surprising as, despite the present government, Sudan has a very strong democratic tradition and experience with self-organising, from the community level to formalised institutions.

27 These were often women who were trying to avoid being socially sanctioned for violating community norms.

Bridging Social Capital

Bridging social capital when your community lacks resources and rights

Bonding social capital within the Yemeni and Sudanese communities serves many important functions, such as accessing and pooling resources. However, it cannot sustain Yemeni and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan. The ties that one forms with those outside of their community, with Jordanians especially, are usually weak. They are acquaintances with whom participants had limited contact and often little in common. However, they were important because they allowed Sudanese and Yemenis access to information and resources that those within their community did not possess. [28]

Employment is the classic example that shows the importance of weak ties. For refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan, ties between their community and the Jordanian host community are even more important because foreigners cannot independently own a business or employ people. Informal work can only be obtained through social networks.[29] This research and Calhoun's research on the social capital of Sudanese, Somali, and Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan[30] finds that ties to Jordanians are also important for renting a place to live. Participants frequently cited Jordanian property owners and shopkeepers as providers of loans and credit. If arrested – especially for work visa-related offences, to avoid deportation and be released from jail – Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and asylum seekers may have to secure a Jordanian sponsor who will pay a bond.[31]

Similarly, relations with Jordanian authorities are important. On the one hand, participants felt targeted and harassed by the police and Ministry of Labour officials who suspect them of working illegally. Yet refugees and asylum seekers appreciated the leniency police sometimes show when they are working informally and call them for help when they become victims of crime. Therefore, ties with the police may be important for their protection. The Yemenis and Sudanese see challenges their communities face with the police as reflecting their status as outsiders in the kinship-based system that influences the informal and even formal justice system in Jordan. For example, as reported by Sudanese and Yemeni participants:

- Refugee victims face difficulty reporting who perpetrated the crime, because they do not know the local kinship systems and who the perpetrators may be related to;[32]

- Police urge refugees and asylum seekers to mediate problems themselves, though refugees and asylum seekers lack the kinship networks to do so; and

- Refugee victims who go to the police may face retaliation by the Jordanian perpetrator's extended family.

Another example of ties was Yemeni and Sudanese students (and sometimes parents) who reportedly built relationships with teachers and administrators at schools. These ties proved crucial to allow students to enrol in and then succeed at school.

A theme that runs through all these examples is that Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and asylum seekers need Jordanians, not just for their financial resources, but because Jordanians have more rights. Though sometimes strong, these relationships are at the same time characterised by power asymmetry and were frequently experienced negatively by participants, for example, in the case of exploitation by property owners or employers. Participants of both nationalities expressed a desire to interact with Jordanians in settings where power differences were

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28   Calhoun, Op Cit.; Granovetter, M.S. (1973), "The Strength of Weak Ties," American Journal of Sociology 78, no. 6: 1360–80.

29   The formal system is similarly relationally determined. Under the Jordanian kafala system, migrants need a Jordanian employer to sponsor them for a work permit and need official approval to change employers.

30   Calhoun, Op Cit.n,b

31   In many cases the bond is raised by friends and family of the refugee, and the Jordanian sponsor paid. In other words, this may be an exchange of financial rather than social capital.

32   It is reported that police require the full name of a perpetrator from Sudanese and Yemenis who report crimes.

less pronounced, where they could connect with one another as human beings. As reported, this interaction has happened through arts, sports, at the mosque and at community activities during Ramadan.

Factors that weaken bridging social capital

Refugees and asylum seekers from countries other than Syria and Iraq have fewer personal and cultural ties with the Jordanian host community.[33] Sudanese and Yemeni participants in this research spoke of the difficulties they faced fitting into Jordanian society. The desire to be treated respectfully by Jordanians was strong. The Yemenis located the problem in limited relations with Jordanians, while both nationalities felt that racism, harassment, threats, and violence from Jordanians weakened these ties. Most concerning, they reported hate crimes: "My husband and cousin were attacked at our home. They said: 'We will not allow any Sudanese to remain here.'" Participants were particularly concerned about the racialised violence and harassment their children were subjected to at school. Sometimes this was committed with impunity:

"My daughter gets beaten up in school. A student chooses a black girl every day to beat. It was my daughter's turn. The Principal punished my own daughter. Violence happens in the schools and schools do not take it seriously. I had been to the UN to complain about my daughter facing violence in the school after another student's father threatened her and used physical violence. But the UN did not do anything. All that happened was that the father [of the abuser] got a chance to say that he did not want his daughter to study with black people."

In disputes that arise with Jordanians, Yemeni and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers have less power and fewer rights. Relations in the workplace, through business partnerships, and with property owners were sometimes experienced by the participants as exploitative. Both Yemenis and Sudanese spoke of employers failing to pay wages, humiliating them, threatening them, and treating them worse than employees of other nationalities. Physical violence by employers was also reported, particularly in the context of disputes. Some suspected property owners of overcharging them for utility bills.

Factors that strengthen bridging social capital

Despite the abovementioned negative experiences, participants expressed how bridges with Jordanians can be built and strengthened. They appreciated property owners being flexible with rent payments and shop owners being willing to sell on credit and would like to see this being practised more often. There was discussion about what refugees and asylum seekers themselves could do to engender respect, such as excelling in different spheres (e.g. education and sports), adapting and contributing to Jordanian society.

Suggested ways in which bridges with the Jordanian community could be built and strengthened differed by nationality. The Yemenis spoke of opportunities to interact with Jordanians being important: "Maybe if they get to know us, to know that we are good people," said a female Yemeni participant. On the other hand, Sudanese felt that addressing racism was most important. They felt the negative stereotypes about them could be challenged through educating Jordanians about the Sudanese community – Yemenis also had this idea – and showing that even though they are refugees and black,[34] they have much to contribute. Channels for strengthening bridges with the Jordanian community included interpersonal relationships, including friendships (especially between women) and intermarriage. School was the place where inclusion was most likely to occur. Relations were also built through borrowing money, renting property, being assisted with government procedures, and working for Jordanians.

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33   Calhoun, Op Cit.

34   Interestingly, while people in Jordan often assume that black people are non-Arab or at least non-Jordanian, Berhanu stresses that there are a considerable number in Al-Ghor (the Jordan River Valley) and among the Afro-Palestinian community. In a desire to assimilate and avoid discrimination they do sometimes bleach their skin and prefer to be called samra (brown) instead of sawda (black). Berhanu, K. (11 May 2018), "Constructions of Black Identities within Jordan," JYAN Blog Berkley Center

Linking with the Humanitarian Community

Perceptions of a complicated relationship

Sudanese and Yemeni refugees reported frequent contact with service providers. The examples they provided in the research suggest that their feelings about their relationship with the humanitarian community are shaped primarily by their contact with UNHCR. While many from these communities were well connected to humanitarian actors, they expressed concerns. The concerns that Yemeni and Sudanese refugees had, stemmed from the perception that they were not eligible for the same services as Syrian refugees, and concerns with the access to services. While both nationalities expressed these concerns during focus groups conducted as part of this research, the Sudanese have been publicly vocal about their dissatisfaction. The following sections detail some of these perceptions and examines whether they are consistent with existing analysis of the actual delivery of humanitarian services to Sudanese and Yemeni refugees. The research demonstrates that the quality of the relationship refugees have with humanitarian actors is as important as access to humanitarian services. It also demonstrates that refugee's perception of unfair treatment is likely shaped by a combination of factors.

Nationality-based assistance

One source of concern was the belief that, due to their nationality, Yemenis and Sudanese were being denied services and opportunities. Examples provided during focus group discussion suggest that this perception stems in part from the fact that most NGOs and humanitarian programs in Jordan only serve Syrians and Jordanians, and not refugees or migrants of other nationalities.[35] While alternative services are sometimes available to Sudanese and Yemeni refugees, research participants felt these were of lower quality or less generous than what Syrians could access, particularly in the case of medical care and cash assistance. In the case of cash assistance, concerns about inequitable access were also reported by humanitarian organisations interviewed for this research and by other research.[36] Analysis suggests that the dynamics of the Syrian crisis and resulting decision making by donors, the Jordanian government, the UN and other humanitarian actors led to this inequity.[37] As this research was being conducted, UN agencies had begun to acknowledge and taken steps to address some of these inequities by advocating for a "One-Refugee approach"[38] of serving all refugees equally regardless of nationality. However, at this time many INGOs and donors continue to deliver Syrian and Jordanian focused programming.

Opaque vulnerability criteria

The provision of targeted assistance within Yemeni and Sudanese communities, based on what refugees and asylum seekers perceive to be opaque vulnerability criteria, was identified as another source of tensions in the relationship. Community members sometimes saw themselves in competition with each other and felt resentment towards those who received support. Vulnerability-based targeting also appeared to contribute to the perception of inequity: those refused aid due to not fitting the vulnerability criteria may conclude that they are being refused aid because of their nationality.

Reliance on self-referral

Importantly, at the time of data collection, refugees and asylum seekers from countries other than Syria were not routinely assessed for cash

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35   ARDD (2015), Op Cit.; ARDD. (2016), Op Cit.; Davis, et al. Op Cit.; Johnston et al., Op Cit.; MMP (2017a), Op Cit.; MMP (2017b), Op Cit.; MCC, Op Cit.

36   Johnston et al., Op Cit.; MCC, Op Cit.; WFP & REACH, Op Cit.

37   ARDD (2015), Op Cit.; ARDD. (2016), Op Cit.; Davis, et al. Op Cit.; Johnston et al., Op Cit.; MMP (2017a), Op Cit.; MMP (2017b), Op Cit.; MCC, Op Cit.

38   For example, see UNHCR (2018), Nansen Award finalist gives girls in Jordan a sporting chance (10 Sep 2018): "UNHCR strongly advocates for a "one refugee" approach, in order for all refugees, regardless of their nationality, to have access to equitable protection, assistance and services.". Reference to the One-Refugee approach is also made in: Baslan, D & Leghtas, I. (2018). We Need to Help Jordan's Other Refugees (11 Oct 2018) and UNHCR (2019). UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan 2019-2020 (Sep 2019).

assistance like Syrians.[39] Rather, to receive cash assistance, participants reported that they had to approach UN agencies and NGOs directly.[40] Given this reliance on self-referrals it is likely that socially isolated Yemenis and Sudanese were falling through the cracks. Further, because of this reliance on self-referrals, a wide-spread belief had arisen among participants that services are not provided based on need but to those who are persistent. A female Yemeni participant explained: "I believe that because I went weekly to harass the UN, I got approval and monthly aid. Those who do not follow up regularly are ignored." Humanitarian organisations communicated that refugees and asylum seekers who have been frustrated in attempting to access sometimes life-saving services over months have become angry and desperate when interacting with their staff.

Access to services

Most concerns expressed by research participants were about the quality of service delivery. Examples of treatment by staff of humanitarian organisations included being told, "you Yemenis are not able to learn, you Yemenis give me trouble;" and "Jordan has become like a sewage system. All the dirt of Syrians, Yemenis and others pass through it." Even if isolated, these have a strong impact on community members and are communicated through social networks invigorating beliefs about racial discrimination and lack of respect from humanitarian organisations.

Other concerns voiced about the quality of service delivery were about organisations failing to follow up and communicate with refugees about their cases, including urgent protection issues. Refugees were also dissatisfied about the length of time they had to wait for assistance and for UNHCR registration processes that were simple to complete a few years ago.[41] They reported spending whole days waiting in the offices of organisations as well as months waiting for appointments and action to be taken. UNHCR has given assurances that individuals benefit from international protection while waiting for these appointments, but there are reports of the police detaining a number of refugees as they did not have an asylum seeking certificate in hand.[42] Hence, not having any documentation to prove status puts people at risk of detention. Lack of awareness about the services and assistance available for refugees and asylum seekers was also reported as a problem, especially among Yemenis.[43]

Opportunities to improve the relationship between refugees and the humanitarian community

The Sudanese and Yemeni participants felt that the bridging ties with organisations were stronger when services were delivered at community centres, environments that foster more personable, less hierarchical relations. [44] They spoke highly of NGOs who took a more community-centred approach and, for example, UNHCR's community centre

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39   The Jordan Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) explores different types of vulnerability dimensions across multiple sectors from a representative sample of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan. UNHCR does provide cash assistance to non-Syrian refugees, but assesses them not through the VAF but through different kinds of home visits: "Non-Syrian recipients of cash assistance are first assessed using the Vulnerability Home Visit Assessment, however scoring is determined through the Cash Assistance Eligibility Score Card, which identifies the most vulnerable families within the non-Syrian refugee community. The score card measures vulnerability in a variety of areas such as specific needs, education, and use of livelihood coping strategies. Due to the smaller size of the non-Syrian populations (Iraqi, Yemeni, Somali, Sudanese, etc.) the score card was determined to be a better methodology for ranking vulnerability." See UNHCR (2018), UNHCR Jordan Cash Assistance – Mid Year Post Distribution Monitoring Report for Refugees. WFP's Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment prioritised Syrians in their assessments but decided to also look at non-Syrians in their 2018 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment. See WFP & REACH, Op Cit.

40   Johnston et al., Op Cit.

41   Sudanese participants talked of waiting up to two months to get a first interview for an asylum-seeking certificate, and then five months to one year for refugee status determination. Yemenis also described waiting up to two months to get a first interview for an asylum-seeking certificate and six months to two years for refugee status determination, with some reporting waiting four years, and others never receiving it. At the time of publication, organisations working with these communities reported that the situation had worsened with first interviews for asylum seeking certificates being scheduled six months in the future.

42   Johnston et al., Op Cit.

43   There are a few possible explanations. Relevant to social networks, the research found that Yemeni are less close to each other. As such they may be less efficient at passing information to members of the community through social networks. Further, Sudanese have a much longer involvement with the humanitarian community, in Sudan as well as Jordan, than Yemenis. Also, many Yemeni are not registered with UNHCR and do not receive information through that channel.

44   Cf. Harrell-Bond, B. (2002). "Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees be Humane?" Human Rights Quarterly, 24(1), 51-85 and Walkup, M. (1997). "Policy Dysfunction in Humanitarian Organisations: The Role of Coping Strategies, Institutions, and Organisational Culture," Journal of Refugee Studies, 10(1), 37-60.

in Nuzha.[45] They also connected linking capital with humanitarian organisations with bridging capital with Jordanians, which makes sense given that most staff of humanitarian organisations are Jordanians. Along these lines they called for moving beyond project-based service delivery to programming that builds this bridging capital. For example, there was a desire to more often see humanitarian organisations working in and through community centres and other spaces where relationships can be developed and strengthened. They spoke of this approach also benefiting from, as well as strengthening, the bonding social capital within the Sudanese and Yemeni communities.

More research is needed with the staff of humanitarian organisations, and indeed Jordanians in general, to understand what drives a sometimes-negative treatment of Yemeni and Sudanese refugees. Based on a handful of conversations with front-line staff, feeling overstretched and under supported should be investigated as a contributing factor in a potentially unprofessional treatment of refugees.

Local partners are delivering a great share of humanitarian services in Jordan. The research identified both positive and negative experiences with national as opposed to international organisations. Regardless, movement towards the localisation[46] of the refugee response in Jordan could be an opportunity for improving the relationships refugees and asylum seekers have with local organisations. Capacity building with local organisations focused on building respectful relations with refugees and asylum seekers could institutionalise factors that strengthen this linking capital.

Conclusion

The analysis in this paper fills a knowledge gap about the perspectives of Yemeni and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan on the bonding social capital with their compatriots, the bridging social capital with Jordanians and the linking social capital with refugee serving organisations. It shows that bonding social capital facilitates the redistribution of resources to those who are most vulnerable and assists refugees and asylum seekers with solving a variety of problems. Sudanese report more bonding social capital than Yemenis. Bridging capital with Jordanians is weak for both nationalities due to cultural differences, limited contact and experiences of racism and exploitation. Some, though not all, Yemeni and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers appear well connected to humanitarian organisations, but overwhelmingly characterise the relationship negatively. Among the Sudanese, there is a risk of tensions again becoming as critical as when the demonstrations took place in 2015.

This paper also demonstrates that the presence of relationships is only part of the picture as the character of these relationships, whether positive or negative, are equally relevant.[47] To improve relationships, humanitarian organisations should invest in more frequent as well as more meaningful contact with the people they serve. This may also help humanitarian organisations attend to how refugees and asylum seekers feel about them and more clearly explain why and how they provide services. This is important as the nature and quality of relationships between refugees and service providers has an impact on the outcomes of humanitarian programmes, projects and activities. Above all, service providers need to realise that they are a part of, not apart from, the social networks of refugees and asylum seekers.

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45   A help desk operates from three days a week, enabling refugees to renew their documents and inquire about the status of their files without having to travel to the organisation's headquarters.

46   Cf. "The Grand Bargain Workstream 2: Localisation - More support and funding tools for local and national responders." At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the largest donors and humanitarian agencies signed the "Grand Bargain", committing to transform their practices and make the humanitarian ecosystem more efficient, effective and people-centered. Read more on the IASC website, https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc

47   Johnston et al., Op Cit.

Meanwhile, as humanitarian aid in Jordan declines, refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities may become increasingly reliant on personal relationships within their own communities and with Jordanians to meet their needs.[48] This requires a shift towards a more localised delivery of humanitarian aid.[49] Strong relations between host and refugee communities may help refugees and asylum seekers avoid some of the problems that lead to them needing continuous support. It may also strengthen community-based protection[50] and help them have their needs met within their own communities and neighbourhoods, rather than by a humanitarian organisation.

Recommendations

Research community

- Use Social Network Analysis, a mixed method which also allows for quantitative analysis, to research refugee response and the coping strategies of refugee communities;

- Conduct similar research with other refugees and asylum seekers within or beyond Jordan, to compare and generalise the findings where possible;[51]

- In future research investigate and incorporate the views of Jordanians, the general public, and those working for humanitarian organisations or authorities on the social networks of refugees;

- Further assess positive perceptions on social networks and how these could be operationalised and strengthened in programming,

Humanitarian community

- Commitment to a one-refugee approach, that guarantees all refugees and asylum seekers equal rights and access to services regardless of nationality;

- Programming that strengthens bonding capital among Yemeni and Sudanese. This could include:
  - capacity building in community organizing and leadership,
  - activities and organisations that bring community members together, and
  - processes to address intracommunity conflict;

- Programming that strengthens bridging capital with Jordanians. This could include:
  - raising awareness about the contributions of Sudanese and Yemenis in Jordan,
  - anti-racism training, and
  - programming that promotes social interaction between Jordanians and refugees of these nationalities;

- Programming and approaches that improve the relationship with humanitarian organisations. This could include:
  - capacity building for organisational staff in anti-racism and respectful relations with refugees and asylum seekers,
  - a comprehensive communications campaign to improve understandings and address misunderstandings about UNHCR processes, vulnerability criteria, and programmes,[52]
  - more effective processes for receiving and responding to community complaints,

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48   Stevens, Op cit.

49   Uzelac et al., Op Cit.

50   UNHCR. (2019). "Community based protection," UNHCR Emergency Handbook. UNHCR.

51   For example, the findings presented here differed from those of Steven's based on research undertaken in 2017 with Syrian refugees in Irbid, Jordan's second largest city. Unlike this study he found that bonding capital among displaced Syrians had declined since their arrival in Jordan and was no longer a significant source of material or emotional support. However, he identified similar uses of bridging capital, including loans and lines of credit from property owners and shop keepers and similar factors that explained the strength and weaknesses of bonds (i.e. scarce resources and physical proximity). Also, his participants' interpretation of "wasta" as an "informal process of correcting an aid system which they perceived as dysfunctional" is consistent with characterisations made by participants in this study. Stevens, Op Cit.

52   For an example of how UNHCR has done this in another context see: UNHCR. (2013). "Information for asylum-seekers and refugees in Egypt." Cairo: UNHCR.

- engagement of communities in designing, delivering and monitoring services, and

- delivery of services from spaces within the community.

Jordanian community

- Apply a one-refugee policy framework for Jordan, that guarantees all refugees and asylum seekers equal and improved rights and access to services regardless of nationality or status;

- Establish a communication campaign and national dialogue aimed at promoting the social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers;

- Seek ways to develop meaningful relationships with refugees who are hosted in the neighbourhood and help them realise their rights.

Donor community

- Support a one-refugee approach, that guarantees all refugees and asylum seekers equal rights and access to services regardless of nationality;

- Require grantees to analyse, engage respectfully with and monitor changes in social networks that results from their programming;

- Fund programming which builds strong and positive bonding and bridging social capital;

- Fund research on social network analysis that aims to understand the relational world of refugees and asylum seekers;

- Fund pilot projects on strengthening a community-centred approach in refugee response.