Southern Sudanese Women in the Diaspora

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the ways in which southern Sudanese women in the African Diaspora are undergoing certain transformations of their gender roles as mothers, daughters, and wives. People's identities in the diaspora can be regarded as a constant process of negotiation between the traditions of their homeland and the traditions of the host society. This paper investigates the relationship between ideologies of male domination and Sudanese women's actual status in the family and society. Indeed, immigrants' identity is affected by the host society's gender roles. This paper also provides an analysis of the role and importance of Christianity in the lives of southern Sudanese women. Indeed, it will be argued that religion is the main avenue for women's integration into US society and thus comes to constitute an important dimension of their understanding and experience of citizenship as a sense of belonging.

This is particularly relevant to the context of my fieldwork, for religion plays a central role in the lives of Americans in the South. The paper is based upon eight months of an anthropological fieldwork focused on southern Sudanese living in northeast Florida. During this period I met with several men and women from the Sudanese community in Northeast Florida, but conducted in-depth interviews with one Sudanese women about the myriad aspects of her life associated with resettlement, social and gender role changes, and Christian religious identity. Pseudonyms are used to protect individuals' anonymity.

Suggested Citation