

Leisure as Burden: Sudanese Refugee Women¹

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A central question for leisure research in general and research on women and leisure in particular is the concern for the meanings of leisure. Scholars maintain that leisure's meaning is specific to individuals, culture, and time and that research should be grounded accordingly. As a means to broaden the context for thinking about the meaning of leisure, we report on the results of fieldwork conducted in December 1994 among Sudanese women in a refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya and thereby open an area of leisure research that has been invisible previously. From our case data, leisure related themes emerged surrounding time, changing roles, and the impact of assistance on the quality of everyday life for refugee women.

KEYWORDS: *Women, refugees, case study, leisure meaning, Sudan, personal experience method*

Kakuma, Kenya. " 'Ber raar' get up, come meet with the professors from the United States." It was early afternoon and Aker and the camp men who had led us thus far through the refugee camp stirred the women from inside their gatati. Aker Duany, from southern Sudan, was our guide and interpreter. We had spent the morning visiting a refugee camp for mainly Sudanese but also Ethiopians, Somalians, Rwandans, Ugandans, and Zairians. The site, crowded with the mud and thatch huts of over 60,000 refugees, stood in contrast to the sparsely populated desert we'd crossed that morning. Now, with equatorial sun pressing down, we were about to meet with 45 Sudanese women who would describe for us their daily lives in the refugee camp. (field journal, 16 December 1994)

Leisure's meaning in daily life is complicated. "It cannot be defined clearly and comprehensively by any single concept or dimension. It involves freedom, but in the sense of action rather than lack of constraint. It includes decision, but always in a social as well as time and space context. It is focused on the experience, but with a history and future orientation. It is motivated intrinsically, but not without long-term meanings and intentions. It is existential and social, immediate and processual, personal and political" (Kelly, 1996, p. 414).

Studies reported in leisure journals typically conceptualize leisure in ways similar to Kelly. The meanings of leisure to North American populations are expressed in these journal pages as what people do or are interested in doing during a particular amount of time left over from obligations, and how they feel about it. Age groups, ethnic groups and genders are

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compared—as are persons in particular life conditions such as families and persons with disabilities. Studies from urban and wilderness locations explore leisure's utility as a tool for education, marketing and therapy. What emerges from this kaleidoscope of research is a complex web of understanding on leisure's meaning—intrinsically motivated and freely chosen immediate experience within a social, political, and time context.

While these meanings of leisure certainly seem relevant for the populations reported in journals about Western society, are they universal? Scholars maintain that leisure's meaning is specific to individuals, cultures, and eras and that research should be grounded accordingly. How applicable are these leisure meanings to people in other cultural and circumstantial contexts?

To begin to understand leisure's meaning in cultures other than developed Western societies, we report the results of fieldwork conducted recently with women in an African refugee camp. Due to official restrictions on our time at the site, our report does not provide a formal case study; rather our work is an example of what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) labeled "personal experience method." This is a journalistic narrative based on field observation and interview notes. The result is advocacy for broadening the context for leisure research and expanding leisure research to individuals and cultures that are not customarily in focus.

Background: A World Uprooted

Violence of war and terrorism, tension of political and religious ideological differences, poverty, ecological degradation, disregard for human rights are the realities of the contemporary world that continue to fuel refugee flows. Today over 20 million refugees live outside their own countries and another 20 million are displaced within their own country (Martin, 1992). This refugee count is double that of ten years ago (Cole, Espin, & Rothblum, 1992). Most of the world's refugees live in developing nations whose already fragile resources and infrastructure can barely sustain the needs of their own citizens. Some stay for prolonged periods in the country of first asylum, others are forced to move almost daily; most never return home and have little choice but to rebuild their lives where they are.

Root causes of mass flight are a complex mixture of social, economic, ethnic and political factors. Distant observers often view refugee movements as unexpected emergencies requiring short-term solutions. To the contrary, refugees are a logical result of usually predictable breakdowns in socioeconomic and political structures. They require long-term solutions linked to development initiatives (Cole, Espin, & Rothblum, 1992).

A focus on refugee women in particular is essential to these solutions because over 80% of adult refugees are women (Cole, Espin, & Rothblum, 1992) and refugee women face more extreme hardships at all stages. Not only do they face loss of housing and sources of food for their children, but they are also frequent victims of torture, rape and other forms of physical

and sexual abuse. Because husbands and fathers are likely to be away fighting in a war, held as prisoners or dead, women often bear full responsibility for rebuilding family, community and cultural life. Experts on world development have consistently emphasized the critical and often hidden role of women in developing economies.

The contemporary civil war in Sudan is one example. Much of this northeast African country's history as a sovereign state is that of armed conflict (Daly, 1993). In a country of over 500 different ethnic groups, the central government defines Sudanese nationality as Arabic. Since independence from Great Britain in 1956, the government seated in northern Sudan has pursued the twin policies of Islamization and Arabization of the Black African, Christian south (Duany, 1994). The most recent insurrection against these policies began in June 1983 when factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudanese government went to war.

In the ensuing decade, in the south, major roads have been mined, bridges and railways have been destroyed, and water transport routes rendered inoperable. Manufacturing has ceased, schools have been converted to army camps, and local markets have disappeared. Soldiers have razed villages and looted the countryside. Government run health, education, and welfare programs have vanished. This war, together with tribal conflicts and record food deficits that led to famine, have claimed the lives of more than 500,000 people; over 250,000 people died in 1988 alone when famine was exploited as a political weapon (Zutt, 1994). Surviving southern Sudanese fled to Ethiopia, Zaire, Egypt, Uganda, and Kenya (Rotor, 1992). The changed lives of these refugees, particularly the women, helped us explore an uncustomary meaning of leisure.

In the Field

We had anticipated our refugee camp visit before we left the United States by interviewing Sudanese expatriots and by gathering printed materials. Our first contacts in Kenya provided additional information, as we met in Nairobi with African and non-African employees of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working to provide nutritional and health aid to Sudanese in both southern Sudan and Kenya. We learned details of the political situation and about efforts related to provision for the basic needs of the southern Sudanese still in Sudan as well as the Sudanese refugees.

In December 1994 we flew on a relief plane sponsored by ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Organization) from Nairobi, Kenya to Lokochokio in the north Kenyan area near the southern Sudan border. We were housed by Across, an NGO, sponsored by a world consortium of Protestant churches that provides health services for both exiled and in-country Sudanese refugees. The Across compound is adjacent to the United Nations relief center, called Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). OLS is a logistics, communications, supply, and transport base serving over 200 UN and NGO staff (those working for UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the World Health

Organization, Save the Children, International Red Cross, and 30 other organizations) (Operation Lifeline Sudan Southern Sector, 1994).

We spent six days in Lokichokio. We attended daily UN security and food drop briefings, interviewed ten NGO officials and employees, examined UN documents and news releases, interviewed two UN High Commission for Refugees officials, and attended training sessions on research methods for conducting refugee needs assessments in southern Sudan. All briefings, interviews, and documents were in English.

We secured permission from United Nations officials to spend one day at the Kakuma refugee camp. Accompanied by Aker Duany, a Sudanese woman, and a Kenyan jeep driver, we were allowed to travel through the restricted area and arrived at the control post for the camp by 9:00 a.m. Our entrance into the camp was delayed by a census-taking operation, but by 9:30 a.m. we were allowed to enter. We were required to leave the jeep outside, however, and thus walked to our destinations within the seven mile long camp.

During our day in the Kakuma refugee camp we made direct observations, conducted individual interviews with three male and two female southern Sudanese refugees, and held four focus group meetings. The focus group sessions lasted between 20 minutes and one and one-half hours and were with groups ranging in size from six to 42 participants; three of the four meetings were with all women's groups. Interviews and focus group meetings took place in refugee homes (*gatati*), the elementary school, and bamboo-shaded central gathering places. Interviews and focus group meetings were conducted in English as well as through English-translated Arabic and Nuer (a Sudanese language).

We kept both hand written and audio recorded field notes. Additionally, we took over 70 photographs. After returning to Lokichokio we began to classify the raw data. Aker Duany, our Sudanese guide and interpreter, provided additional information and validated key tentative understandings. In the United States we further analyzed the data by searching for patterns, seeking linkages between patterns, and drawing our own tentative conclusions. As a confirming strategy, we deliberately sought disconfirmation of our tentative findings through continued discussions with Aker and study of additional United Nations and relief organization documents.

If time and circumstances had permitted, we would have taken a case study approach to this project. Jurisdictional and financial constraints, however, robbed us of this luxury. The UN officials granted us only a one day visit to the camp. Nonetheless, we retained as many elements as possible of case study procedures. Our preparations for the visit, data collection and validation system, and search for data patterns mirrored those recommended for case studies by Stake (1994). We also employed Lincoln and Guba's (1986), as well as Eisner's (1995), techniques to ensure validity in descriptive research. For example, we used vivid description to facilitate vicarious participation of the reader in the situation. We also sought consensual validation (Eisner, 1995) by interviewing refugees and other informants—nonrefugee

Sudanese, United Nations administrators, and relief workers both inside and outside the camp. Government documents and other reports as well as our own observations, helped triangulate (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) what we heard from the refugees themselves. Finally, Aker Duany, a Sudanese woman, served as a key informant and peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

What resulted is a snapshot of life in a refugee camp. Our approach might be described as a kind of literary journalism. We applied literary techniques to build images of life in the Kakuma camp and we report from intense, yet brief immersion. However, unlike journalism we added scholarship, in this case theoretical explanations of leisure, to provide a framework for interpretation of themes that emerged. This technique is used increasingly in educational research as a means of presenting humans in actual problematic settings (Bruner, 1987; Eisner, 1991; Donmoyer, 1990, 1993). Barone (1987, 1993) provides effective examples of literary journalism applied in educational research. His writing differs from standard reporting of research in that observations are described in conjunction with relevant literature. Insights and connections to general knowledge are blended with description (rather than held separate) in a manner that reflects the researcher's own interpretive process.

A Day in Kakuma Camp

Kakuma refugee camp is located on the dusty edge of the small Kenyan desert village of Kakuma within 100 km. of the southern Sudanese border. There, an estimated 63,000 men, women, and children primarily from Sudan, but also Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and Zaire, are refugees from civil war, famine, tribal wars, and religious oppression. Some of our interviewees had been refugees for as long as six years; others for only a few days. Many were overcoming war-inflicted injuries, all were suffering the deaths and/or displacement of family members and had no sense of when their normal lives could be restarted. Despite a common stereotype that these were destitute people from subsistence villages moving to a similarly destitute existence in another country, some we interviewed had been college professors, lawyers, school teachers, and nurses prior to their refugee condition.

Kakuma is one of the more cared-for refugee camps in East Africa with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and numerous nongovernmental relief agencies providing basic food and health services. In spite of this support, water was rationed and available at only certain times of the day, and food, while sufficient in quantity, consisted of only oil and UNIMIX (a combination of wheat flour, white sugar and dry skim milk fortified with Vitamins A and D, which is mixed with water and oil before cooking). Additionally, sorghum was rationed to those with special needs, such as pregnant and nursing mothers and young children (Kahn, 1994). Communicable and other diseases were widespread because of malnutrition and unsanitary conditions.

The refugees live in mud huts with thatched roofs that they call gutiya (pl. gatati). Within the seven square mile compound they are arranged into several large clusters by nationality and tribe. Within these clusters, smaller groupings of gatati resembled the village arrangements we had observed throughout northern Kenya. The difference was that this small village arrangement replicated itself tightly as far as the eye could see. In one such village our escorts took us to speak with the wife of a leader of a South Sudanese rebel faction.

We are invited into the gutiya. At first the room is completely dark because of the contrast with the bright noon desert sun outside. Soon our eyes adjust. The gutiya is made of mud walls and a thatched roof; with dimensions of about 15' by 20' it is one of the better homes. The family was important enough to be given two gatati worth of building supplies. Blue cotton is draped by string across the one window. Six women sit on two cot beds they brought from Sudan; we are graciously seated on two wooden chairs quickly rushed in from another gutiya. The elder woman speaks first and carries the conversation. The younger women occasionally chime in. The babies do not cry or get restless. A young girl sleeps fitfully on one of the cots behind two of the women; we are told she has malaria. Men peek in the open doorway often to see what we are doing, but do not interrupt. Some of our discussion is translated by Aker and some is spoken in English. Soon Aker sends out for water for us. Word comes back that there is no water—the truck is gone. (field journal, 16 December 1994)

We had difficulty determining an appropriate place to begin interviews with people living in the starkest of circumstances. For numerous moments we simply listened to what our interviewees and focus group members wanted to tell us. Mostly they talked about their current lives. They wanted us to hear about their families and their hopes for peace. They worried with us about their children. They complained of the hot weather and showed us where they fill their water jugs twice a day. We asked them how they spend their time and about their feelings. We did not ask directly about the role of leisure. In fact, it was not until we began to search for patterns in our field notes that we realized a leisure meaning in their daily life experiences.

In focusing our analysis on the lives of refugee women three themes emerged that could be associated with leisure: abundance of time, changing roles, and assistance dependency. While it was not our original intention to define leisure in this context, the lesson of broadened understanding through each theme is useful in expanding leisure's meaning.

An Abundance of Time

The camp, although densely populated, was quiet as we walked from one living area to another (with the exception of the entourage, sometimes numbering 40 or 50, all boys and men who followed us). Unlike the Turkana tribe people living nearby, we observed no daily living activities in the camp. In the surrounding Kenyan villages we had observed food preparation, fuel gathering, animal herding, bartering, and casual conversation throughout

the day. By contrast, the camp seemed deserted. To meet and talk with women, we had to seek them in their gatati. Inside we still observed no activity. We saw no household, laundry, or food preparation chores. The children did not seem to want attention; babies did not cry or fuss. We observed only one woman preparing a meal for her family even though our visit extended through meal times.

In general, research on refugee and displaced women describes as typical that women remain responsible for domestic activities (Martin, 1992), but in Kakuma we witnessed very little such activity. While the gatati were tidy and clean, the few material possessions consumed only a few minutes of care. No work was being done, nor was there play. The entire day, walking through miles of living areas of over 63,000 refugees, we saw only three incidents of children playing.

Thus the first theme that emerged was the deadening experience of unlimited and aimless time. To confirm our interpretation we asked Aker. She replied:

They don't have anything. . . They wanted to talk to you guys to bring them materials for sewing. A lot of them don't read or write. . . majority of them, and even those who read, you know, don't have materials. So it [time] is really being wasted . . . they just get up and then cook for the children and that's it. (journal notes, 19 December 1994)²

We had noticed many people sleeping as we walked among the gatati and looked in doorways. When we asked if there is a regular pattern of sleep during the day (e.g. a routine) we were told that everybody sleeps anytime they want, mostly all day. Women interviewees frequently told us how time seemed to drag on; even for newly arrived refugees, time felt elongated.

Changing Roles

“Things are no longer as they used to be! You have to face up to things and adjust to the situation” (woman interviewee, field notes, 16 December 1994). Family and community structures were profoundly affected by their refugee status and camp conditions. The people of Kakuma moved there not because they wished to make better lives for themselves in other places but because they were forced to leave to avoid death. Families were typically separated during flight. All the southern Sudanese women at Kakuma had lost one or more family members to the civil war or to starvation, leaving them with neither intact nuclear families nor extended ones. In contrasting her former life with her current one a woman lamented, “You have self esteem when you are contributing to something, you are caring for your family, you are helping, you know, your members of family. . . . you are doing something

²According to UNICEF (1994) statistics the literacy rate for Sudanese women is 12 percent.

worthwhile, something that can engage you” (woman focus group participant, field notes, 16 December 1994).

They also found themselves living in very close proximity to strangers. Used to stable, familiar and mostly small villages, they now had to cope with 63,000 other refugees in a large encampment where members of different tribes were expected to live side by side. For example, we were prohibited from entering one zone that housed southern Sudanese refugees at Kakuma because the people living there (Dinkas) were the traditional tribal enemies of the Nuers who escorted us.

United Nations demographic profiles (UNICEF, 1994) indicate that women refugees typically become heads of their households with no husband, older children, or parents to help. In intact refugee families as well, women have to deal with changes in female/male roles; gender-based role and responsibility distinctions almost disappear. Even if women retain some of their traditional domestic responsibilities, men almost always are unable to fulfill their traditional roles of hunting, fishing, and tribal leadership. This loss of role often results in domestic violence (Martin, 1992). Aker talked about the South Sudanese men who had lost their roles as hunters and herdsmen. “The tradition will be going to the field. When the woman does these things, getting the food, getting the firewood, getting the water. . . the man cannot go hunting so they just sit there” (journal notes, 18 December 1994).

In African societies, women and men play distinct roles, have access to different resources, and bear differing responsibilities. As in any society, the role women play is key, and the status of women is a significant indicator of the level of justice in that society. Among the South Sudanese, especially the Nuer, women have traditionally had a major role in bringing conflicting parties together in order to maintain stability in their villages. Now, with this civil war, the women are displaced from their warring husbands and brothers and cannot help broker peace (Duany, in press).

An example of their changing role under refugee conditions at Kakuma was learned during our women-only focus group sessions. Participants frequently and forcefully spoke of their objections to the civil war: “All the women want peace” and “Who are they fighting for? It is not for us—for we want peace. It is for a crazy kind of male pride only.” These women were frustrated by their inability to perform their traditional peace-keeping role. In the focus groups the women explained new efforts by southern Sudanese women both in-country and in refugee camps to organize themselves in order to regain their role in determining their country’s destiny.

The women now are trying to come together from all groups in the south. . . now who is the one suffering more? Who is now in the camps? Who is now losing the loved ones, the children? It is the woman. So for us the intervening in this country, women have to come as one group from all parts of the south, and have one voice (women in focus group, field notes, 16 December 1994).

As it stands now, displacement has robbed these women of their key roles, both within their families and within their society. They feel powerless where they formerly had responsibility.

The Dependency of Assistance

"Because we have no power, we are like your children, and as your children we feel that you our parents are displeased with us" (male interviewee, field notes, 16 December 1994).

Long-term care is obviously expensive in economic terms, worldwide the price is almost \$60 billion a year (Martin, 1992). Each month in Lokichokio alone the UN oversees the movement of about 3,700 metric tons of food and non-food cargo into southern Sudan (United Nations, 1994).

Although there is no doubt that survivors of the Sudanese civil war have been helped by such expensive relief aid, relief is also expensive in human costs. Relief results in dependency. Relief feeds and sustains the victims, but it cannot address the root causes or provide the ultimate solution to the disaster. Refugees must simply wait for the benevolence of others; they are not allowed to provide for themselves if they want to remain eligible for relief aid.

This realization has produced interest by officials in exploring new, development-oriented programs for refugees (Kahn, 1994). With the aim of enhancing the economic independence of refugees in camps, as well as easing the burden of refugees on their host country, relief workers attempt to rely on education and self-help training. But it is not easy. We learned about this difficulty through the issue of raising livestock at Kakuma. The refugees, in an attempt to supplement food rations for themselves, bought goats from the local Turkana people and began to raise them. Before long "the Turkana came in the night and shot all the goats" (woman interviewee, field notes, 16 December 1994). We were told the local Turkana viewed such animal husbandry efforts on the part of the refugees as competition with their own local enterprises.³

Thus through no particular fault of the refugees or the relief agencies, a dependency is created. Although the goal is to develop means by which refugees can establish their own agricultural initiatives and educational systems, the political and economic realities of host countries as well as the simple solutions envisioned by well-meaning benefactors create difficulties. "These are people of the Nile. . . the children like to swim and play in the

³The refugees had been settled in the poorest area of Kenya. The local Turkana tribes-people are nomadic people who base their subsistence on eating spear hunted meat and drinking the animal blood. They also raise livestock for milk and butter. Arable land, water, and work opportunities are insufficient for both the Turkana and the refugees. It is not possible to assist refugees without developing opportunities for locals as well. In fact, a hope of the Kenyan government in permitting the refugees' entry and selecting the site for the Kakuma camp is that the Western sponsored aid and development for the refugee camp will also serve as an economic boost to their own citizens located in the surrounding area.

river. They like to fish and hunt and grow vegetables. All that would be possible if they were located in a camp near a river" (female interviewee, field notes, 16 December 1994). Instead UNIMIX continues to be trucked to the desert camp near Kakuma from Lokichokio and children wear the cast-off clothes of their peers from half way around the world.

The women with whom we talked seemed particularly troubled by this dependency. Frequently in the focus groups and interviews they spoke of the importance of education. "We are insisting on education. Yes we have bad nutrition and many of the children are orphans. This is why we must have education" (focus group participant, field notes, 16 December 1994). The women recognized that in order to better their situations they must be given the "tools," the know-how to make for themselves. This vision of the solution arose in spite of, or perhaps from, the daily realities of disease, injury, hunger, and death.

Relief agencies create dependency as an humanitarian response to such realities, but the refugees had another view. Aker spoke of a time when she brought cloth material from her church in the U.S. to some women in the camp, "All different colors. . .cotton. . .for the women to use. And when we went back. . .they said 'Hey look, I made my dress' " (field journal, 18 December 1994). This kind of aid not only meets the refugees' needs for clothing, but provides purposeful and creative activity for women. Through her own efforts she again provides for her family.

Discussion: An Uncustomary Leisure Meaning

In literature examining displaced people in situations similar to these refugees, leisure activity served an important element in survival. For examples see Grabowska (1989) and van der Merwe (1992) who discussed activities of prisoners of war and Eisen (1988) who examined the play of children in ghettos and concentration camps during World War II. Play, sport, and games prevailed in these conditions to combat boredom, distract from the horrors of daily life, and psychologically protest against oppressors. Our conclusions differed.

Our conclusions also differed from the general Western literature on leisure's meaning. As previously summarized from Kelly (1996), Western thought considers leisure as freedom to choose particular actions that create meaning in life. Leisure is intrinsically motivated immediate experience that has the potential for self-actualization and human development. Leisure exists in a context of free time. For example, Neulinger (1974) focused on leisure as a perception of experience, including freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) identified certain environmental conditions under which a heightened feeling of involvement may occur. One of these conditions is a maximization of human potential through a match between ability and requirement levels of the action. Citing the origins of such perspectives of leisure, in classical Greek writings leisure provides for becoming human and creating humanizing opportunities for

others. One of the many contemporary conclusions from this thinking is that leisure provides a realm for self-expression and self-development (Kelly, 1983; Samdahl, 1988; Shamir, 1993). Further, Pieper (1963) argued that leisure is the very basis of culture; it is the context for celebrating the past and present of civilization and moving it forward. Our conclusions differed from these behavioral and philosophical interpretative foundations as well.

From our day at Kakuma Refugee Camp, particularly focused on Sudanese women, we filtered our understandings of the daily life through an alternative leisure lens. Abundance of free time, changing roles, and dependency formed our themes. Although our perspective is uncustomary to both refugee and leisure literatures, we consider this vantage point a useful addition to understanding the fabric of leisure meaning.

For the Sudanese refugee women leisure does not mean self-fulfillment and creative action. It holds none of these contemporary leisure meanings. For them leisure is burden. An abundance of meaningless free time, a thwarting of traditional role activities, and a dependency on others have stolen self-expression and become major enemies of their daily life and culture. Unending hours stretch into days and years without self-directed actions for becoming human. To us, the refugee women we observed and interviewed seemed to consider this burden as life-threatening. The burden of their severe conditions renders their lives without purpose and without personal meaning. In the face of displacement, having meaningful choices in life becomes not simply a "quality of life" issue, but an essence of life problem. Simply having cloth with which to sew clothing for themselves and others, for example, represented much more to them than a leisure activity for filling time. It symbolized "freedom as self-determined action. . . of being and becoming. . . existentially creative of the self and socially creative of the culture," descriptors used recently to frame leisure's meaning (Kelly, 1996).

Several useful concepts exist in the leisure research literature for discussing our conclusion that leisure is burden. One is the concept of boredom. For example, Csikszentmihalyi's research over the years has consistently maintained that full and competent immersion in a challenging activity is rewarding and conversely negative feelings of boredom are experienced when one is not totally involved in pursuits (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). The concept of leisure boredom, first proposed by Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) may also be useful. Do our field notes document what could be considered extreme cases of leisure boredom? For the women refugees at Kakuma life is an unending expanse of ennui, a routine of lethargy. Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) described leisure boredom as meaningless leisure routine. One of the circumstances they delineated was free time forced on individuals who do not have sufficient leisure skills and resources. In fact, they maintained that free time has the greatest potential of all human arenas to produce feelings of boredom (Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1990).

While we focused on women in the refugee camp, we do not suspect the conclusion of leisure as burden is different for men in such conditions. Referring to Western generated literature on women and leisure, the themes

of inequality and constraints, of lack of entitlement to leisure, of fragmented home-based leisure, and of the combining of leisure and role obligations that emerged from that research (Henderson, 1990) seem similarly irrelevant to both women and men refugees. Further, our interview and observation interpretations might be used to conclude that the daily life experience of these refugees could be enhanced by having the very things Western literature considers problematic, particularly leisure intertwined with role obligations.

Ultimately we view our field study and accompanying interpretations as an introduction of new questions into the exploration of leisure's role in human experience. Is the contemporary notion of leisure as self-fulfillment useless under conditions of poverty and displacement? Does this reintroduce leisure's link to social class? Does abundance of free time describe the 'haves' differently from the 'have nots' and in an inverse way? Is leisure as burden an idea applicable to other populations (such as persons who are unemployed) living with abundant free time, role losses, and forced dependency? What is the place of leisure in solving such problems; is it an essential and central role or a supporting one?

When asking such questions as these within the context of the plight of the South Sudanese refugees, leisure seems either more vital or more extravagant. Considering the devastations of war, displacement, starvation, and poor health for three million Sudanese women and children adjusted the lens of understanding differently for us than we were accustomed. Our interviewees spoke desperately about making and monitoring peace; they also spoke passionately about the lack of meaning in their everyday lives. They taught us that a life must always go beyond the satisfaction of food and shelter needs and that a basic in life is also the opportunity for creative action. Does that mean leisure?

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