

Landscapes of Trade, Conflict, Inequality, and Poverty at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

With 65 million displaced peoples globally, and with more than 15 million (ware)housed in permanent semi-urban spaces mainly in developing nations, the issue of sustainability of relief has become paramount. Recently, there has been a shift in relief perspectives: instead of encampment, refugees could generate sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their hosts. This talk will focus on the results of a multi-disciplinary project aimed at understanding and measuring the feasibility of such a shift at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya (pop. 210,000). Using ethnographic, econometric, archaeological, social network, and biological analyses, I (a) describe and model the complexities of the political, commercial, and social economies at Kakuma, (b) the intersections of these economies with structural violence of marginalization and endemic conflict, and (c) generate predictive analytics for the consideration of stakeholders. These results of integrative anthropological research have been acknowledged, desired, and (most importantly) funded by the World Bank. With current fears over the perceived loss of relevance of anthropology, I suggest that such integrative approaches have the greatest potential of regaining programmatic and public relevance.

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SHESC Building, Room 254
3:30-5:00pm
Free and open to the public



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