Living With War Aftermaths: Experience and The Health of The Lost Boys of Sudan

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In 1983, the Sudanese civil war broke out between the Northern Sudanese, mainly Muslims, and the Southern Sudanese, mostly Christians. Young boys fled their country after the government invaded their villages in the south. Many of their parents were killed or displaced. After fleeing this deadly war, the boys lived in insecure refugee camps, both in Ethiopia and Kenya. The term "Lost Boys" refers to those Sudanese youth whose families were lost during this civil war and who have lived their youths in exile. About 4,000 young Sudanese boys resettled in the US in 2000-2001. Currently, Salt Lake City is home to about 110 Lost Boys.

The "Lost Boys" had difficult experiences, due to this rampant civil war, and as a result they now exhibit a unique set of health problems. However, these health issues do not threaten the US public, and are related to past drinking of dirty water, reenacting memories and malnutrition. The boys commonly suffer from tuberculosis, parasites, gastrointestinal pains, traumas, and body injuries.

The objective of my study is to explore how the civil war has affected the current health status of the Lost Boys who have resettled in the US. To address this issue, I conducted a survey with 48 Sudanese Lost Boys living in Salt Lake City. In addition to the surveys, were testimonial interviews conducted with the three Lost Boys. The interviews address the experience and strategies. Findings suggest that the boys suffer health problems, but have applied several coping strategies, to confront their traumas. But most importantly, lack of health insurance had led to insufficient medical services, while in the US.