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Ambiguous
boundaries
between exclusion
and inclusion.

Experiences from
the Meheba Refugee
Camp (Zambia)

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INTRODUCTION

Refugee camps are often created and portrayed as places of exclusion where “supernumerary” (Bauman 2004), “undesired populations” (Agier 2011) are concentrated. And yet, experiences from the Meheba Refugee Settlement show that the reality is rather more complex, providing evidence of the ambiguous line between inclusion and exclusion involving refugees and the neighbouring population.

In order to better “care, cure and control” – in United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) terms – internationally displaced individuals and communities, the humanitarian aid regime often enacts a set of international legal frameworks and provides basic services and infrastructures which find their sum in the “refugee camp”. Albeit in different ways and to different degrees, humanitarian settings usually provide protection, food provisions, access to basic health care and education, economic opportunities as well as training programmes. In the context of rural Sub-Saharan Africa, these are elements often absent in the refugees’ places of origin but also sometimes virtually non-existent among the marginal populations in villages and towns near refugee camps. In contrast, once in a refugee camp, displaced individuals see the suspension of key fundamental rights such as the right of movement, the right of assembly, the right to work, among other limitations, as we shall see below. Indeed, refugees do not enjoy the same rights and freedoms – nor have the same duties – national citizens, or even regular immigrants, do. But to what extent do national states provide their citizens with similar resources and entitlements outside a refugee camp?

At the crossroads between humanitarian and state rationales, within the “liminality” (Malkki 1995a) embodied by the camp, emerges the paradox between the inclusion of the excluded – the refugees who live a “suspended life” (Agier 2011) in a sort of “campzanship”¹ (Sigona 2015) –, and the exclusion of the supposedly included – that is, the citizens belonging to a socially and politically defined community and that supposedly fulfil the “national order of things” (Malkki 1995b).

1 Campzanship: an attempt “to capture the specific and situated form of membership produced in and by the camp, the complex and ambivalent relationship of its inhabitants with the camp and the ways the camp shapes the relationship of its inhabitants with the state and their capacity and modes of being political (Sigona 2015, 1)”.

Although sociopolitical divisions and hierarchies among refugees in camps – sometimes taking form as dynamics of inclusion and exclusion – have been highlighted by different authors in different contexts (Powles 2000; Veroff 2009; Turner 2010; 2014; Agier 2011). The fact is that similar dynamics between refugees and the local population in their relationship with the camp has been overlooked (Malkki 1995a; Jansen 2014). In this regard, the experiences of refugees and local citizens in the Meheba Refugee Settlement is an interesting case study, which brings about insights into the ambiguous boundary between inclusion and exclusion among these two rather heterogeneous groups. Thus, in order to understand the dialectical inclusion/exclusion complementarity the humanitarian logistics entails, and before introducing a set of ethnographic accounts from the Meheba Refugee Settlement that illustrate the phenomenon, it is necessary to theoretically frame the nature of the camp.

Designed by the UNHCR alongside (inter)national governments and organisations – the “international community” –, refugee camps are “extraterritorial spaces” (*hors-lieu*) by their very nature (Agier 2002; 2011; 2014; Bauman 2004). Challenging any Euclidian continuity, camps are often managed by the UNHCR offices in Geneva, in conjunction with the so-called implementing partners² whose headquarters are located, say, in The Hague or New York. If, on the one hand, the plight of the camps and their inhabitants is usually determined in important decision centres across the world; on the other, camps are often set in inhospitable, unpopulated and hard-to-access areas, on the periphery of the periphery.

Equally noteworthy is the common absence of their representation in the official national cartographies, therefore suggesting the non-existence of refugee camps. By taking cartography as ontology, illustrated in a common institutional quest for “invisibility” (Harrel-Bond and Voutira 2007), the non-representation of camps is a form of denying the existence of such places and their respective inhabitants (Anderson 2006 [1983], 173; Neto 2016). Nevertheless, this does not mean that camps do not play a key role at the sociocultural and economic level – thereby creating new centres – or that camps cannot be integrated in the national cartography at a certain point in time (Agier 2011), closing the circle of a protracted state of “liminality” (Malkki 1995a).

2 Implementing partners are the associate governments or non-government agencies that carry out institutional arrangements in line with the larger organisation's goals and objectives.

In addition, refugee camps are usually enclosed places – fenced, geographically and/or socially demarcated –, and therefore physically and symbolically separated from the national territory. A clear line between the refugee camp and the “outside world” is evident at different levels: a dividing line that not only configures a boundary in an anthropological sense: a double recognition between refugees and the “others”, or between citizens and the “others”. It is a more or less visible physical border – a defined and demarcated space –, but also a legal one – knowing how international legal frameworks³ and specific local refugee acts rarely coincide with national laws applied to citizens. Notwithstanding the existence of specific rights and duties in camps, legal measures might be changed, reframed, suspended – or simply not enforced (Veroff 2009) – in a more or less arbitrary fashion. In this sense, the camp illustrates the physical manifestation of a continuous “state of exception” (Agamben 1995; 2005), which alongside its extraterritorial character, configures a “space of exception” (Bauman 2004; Agier 2011). At the same time, the camp enacts a set of boundaries at the social, economic, cultural, political and legal level. These nevertheless configure sites of contact, of potentially fruitful conflict, of mediation and interaction between the inside and the outside (Barth 1969; Mezzadra and Neilson 2012). And yet, although similar in its operational principles, each refugee camp is one of a kind (see the many cases in Agier 2014). In spite of their exceptionality, camps are not exclusively composed by ever evolving “walls and fences” but also of flickering “doors and windows” (Diken and Laustsen 2005).

In order to examine how different boundaries between inclusion and exclusion are continuously – and ambiguously – forged in the Meheba Refugee Settlement, I will start by providing a brief background to the camp and outline past and present divisions among the refugee community. I will then present a set of experiences portraying the struggles and interactions between Zambians and refugees, which have the humanitarian infrastructure at their core.

Last but not least, given the size and heterogeneity of Meheba, any effort to grasp its complexity as a whole would be easily defeated. Thus, by using the term “experiences”, I intend to focus on specific cases and situations I came across and that inform of period in which fieldwork was conducted between

3 Namely the Refugee International Law, to a large extent based on the 1951 UNHCR Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol, among other regional treaties and protocols, and overlapping national bills/acts concerning refugees. For the case of Zambia, see the 1970 Refugee Control Act, which was repealed and replaced by the Refugees’ Bill in 2017.

the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and, more recently, Somalia.⁴ As a consequence, the camp would experience five expansions defined in three specific areas: *Old Meheba* (1971-85), *New Meheba* (1985-1995) and *New Extensions* (1995-2002) (see Figure 1.2).

The main road of the camp starts from the road connecting Solwezi and Mwinilunga. It is in the form of a fishbone and articulates the different blocks. The eight blocks or zones of the camp, from A to H, subsequently split into perpendicular roads (67 from Block A to E, of roughly 1 km distance from each other); and from Rd 68 to 125, Blocks F, G and H, the settlement is organised in *villages*. Meheba does not have a clear demarcated perimeter, apart from an entrance gate whose control is erratic. Instead, its limits are marked by natural elements – the rivers that flank the eastern and western slope of the camp – and by social boundaries – demarcated by the edges of the inhabited areas and/or agriculture fields.

The agricultural character⁵ and continuous flow of refugees largely explain the Meheba dimensions, now covering an area of approximately 720 square km (roughly 35 km long by 15-25 km wide).

In 2001-2002, the camp registered its population peak of more than 50,000 refugees – of which 90% were Angolans (WCRWC 2001). Between 2011 and 2013, the official number was roughly 18,000 refugees (UNHCR/GRZ 2014), and – though expected to decrease – almost 20,000 as of October 2017 (UNHCR 2017). The end of the conflict in Angola, in 2002, and the subsequent repatriation process; the transference of Congolese refugees coming from the Northern Province camps (Mwange and Kala) closed in 2010; as well as the end of refugee status for Angola and Rwanda nationals, in 2012, certainly had an impact on Meheba's demographics. Recent UNHCR data indicates that Congolese now constitute the most representative group⁶.

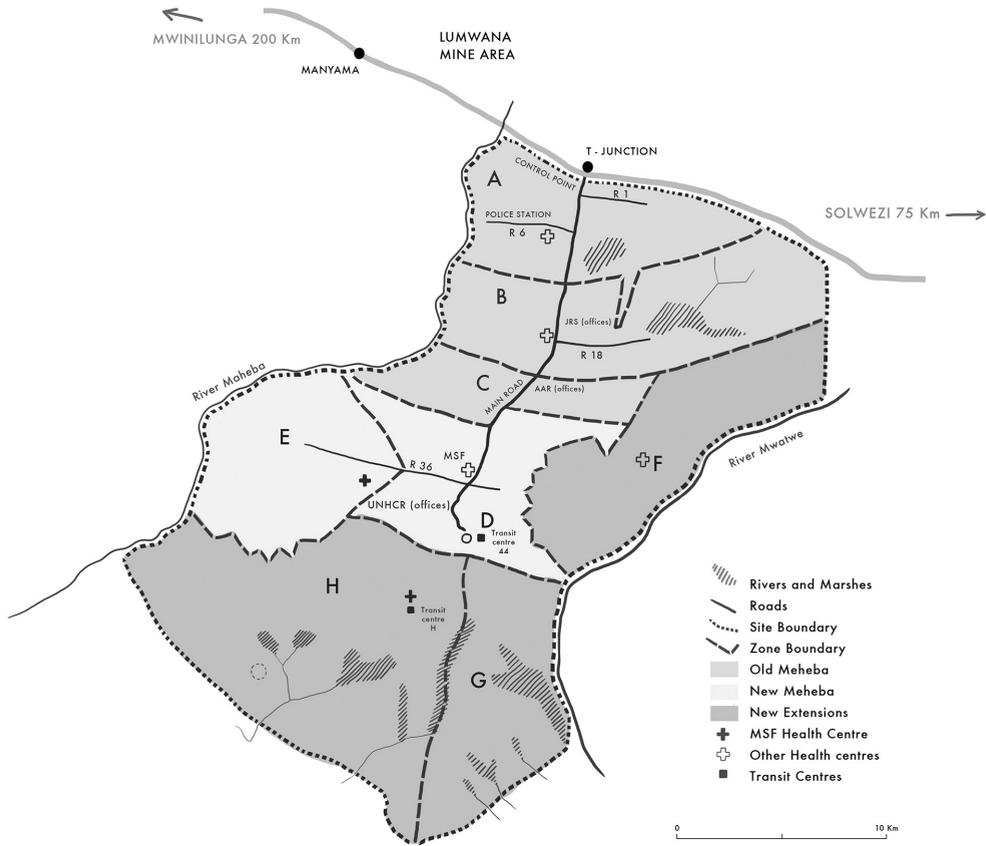
4 UNHCR 2013 census informed about the presence of other less representative nationalities such as the Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Sudan and Namibia (UNHCR 2013).

5 According to the UNHCR, Meheba is not a camp but a settlement. In a settlement, each household is allocated a plot of land with the aim of facilitating self-reliance (UNHCR 2013). I will refer to Meheba either as a camp or settlement in the same way refugees and UNCHR staff did.

6 As of October 2017, the total number of Congolese refugees stayed at 8,286 (UNHCR 2017). The displaced Congolese, however, are not a homogeneous community. In spite of sharing the same country of origin, Congolese refugees come from different parts of the DRC. The oldest Congolese communities arrived from the Kasai and Katanga during 1990s, whereas the most recent come mainly from the Kivu, Eastern Congo.

Figure 1.2

Meheba refugee settlement map (as of 2015, adapted from Agier 2011, UNHCR 2017 and Google Maps)



Still, access to the number of Zambians living in the camp continues to be limited to those officially married to refugees – 196 to be statistically accurate (UNHCR 2017). Not included in the official figures are those who work for the camp's administration and civil servants (whose offices are located in Rd 36), the police (whose barracks and offices are located in Rd 6), individuals occasionally involved in the UNHCR programmes (some living in nearby towns and staying occasionally in the UNHCR Lodge in Rd 36, others actually living in the camp), as well as all those who live in Meheba but are not directly linked to the bureaucratic-humanitarian activities. In fact, since the early 2000s, that economic opportunities arising from the neighbouring – and ever-growing – Lumwana Mine have attracted people, some of whom have settled in Meheba.

In 2014, the camp was undergoing profound changes, much as the result of a recently approved urban masterplan – promoted by the Lumwana mine – and due to refugee resettlement. The new masterplan was devised to host many of the Lumwana staff, the required services and facilities, and was planned to take over a considerable area from Blocks A, B and C (Neto 2014).⁷ The on-going resettlement programme, essentially involving former Angolan and Rwandan refugees who refused repatriation and qualified for local integration, was taking place in the more peripheral areas of the camp, in Blocks E, F, G and H, and has been conceived to also host some 4,000 Zambian families (UNHCR 2017).

Over time, the organisation of the camp would not only reflect the outbursts of violence, the presages of peace but also the more recent local integration and *development* processes, which led to the opening, peopling, emptying, abandonment or re-organisation of each block.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION WITHIN THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY

While not the main purpose of this paper, it is nevertheless important to summarise a set of situations that involve economic, political, social and spatial aspects illustrating different dynamics of exclusion and inclusion within Meheba's diverse refugee community.

In 2002, Michel Agier observed how the social stratification within the camp was linked to the chronology of the place. The several generations of refugees were “sociologically” organised according to the moment of arrival and split into *settled*, *recent* and *new arrivals*. The level of autonomy, the housing and social hierarchy were intimately linked to the length of stay and location in the camp (2011, 121). By then, Agier also perceived a “logic of inclusion in domination”, where social relations were almost “normal”. In other words, they were unequal but inclusive, as one would find in a village or community, where the longstanding inhabitants preserved a set of privileges and status, having a protective and dominant role regarding the recent refugees (Agier 2011, 126-127). Since then, however, the population numbers, characteristics and distribution have undergone profound changes, leading to different social dynamics and a rather more complex spatial panorama. Even though a “logic

⁷ According to recent information from Meheba, the masterplan implementation is currently at a standstill.

of inclusion in domination” was still evident in the period from 2012 to 2014, some of the actors had shifted.

First of all, there were striking differences between those who lived in or close to the more urbanised areas (near the entrance gate, along the main road, in Road 6, Road 18 and Road 36) and those located in the camp’s more peripheral, rural areas. Though differences in material conditions – most visible at the housing level – were sometimes evident between *settled* and *new arrivals*, the fact is, given the size of the camp, to live in a more urbanised area meant better infrastructures and access to markets, to different agricultural produce, to clinics and schools. Some of the populations living in the more peripheral pockets, however, actually preferred to stay away from the central areas. The voluntary exclusion from the wider social dynamics in the camp was deliberate and essentially supported by a set of sociocultural arguments. In Block B, G and H, there were groups from Angola who preferred to stay apart, these being still visibly traumatised by their experiences of war violence. From the contact I had, this was not only a way to keep the cultural system and family structure in place but, in their view, was also a self-protection strategy. Refugees from Burundi and Rwanda (mainly Hutu) presented another noteworthy feature. Living chiefly in Zone G and on the periphery of Zone D, these kept contact with the other groups to a minimum – essentially regarding trade and the exchange of agricultural surplus (Neto 2016, 99; for possible reasons why, see Malkki 1995a).

Ancient tensions between Angolan refugees – supporters or sympathisers of MPLA or UNITA⁸, and whose location in the camp reflected those regional, political and sometimes ethnic divisions –, became largely diluted over time (Agier 2011, 123; Powles 2000, 15; 2002, 100; Veroff 2009, 62, 64). In reality, these no longer involved clear forms of inclusion/exclusion, quite the contrary. In 2012, most of the several Angolan refugee communities were united and – though unsuccessfully – demanded the right to vote in the then upcoming Angolan elections.⁹

8 MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) were the main opposing parties during the conflict that ravaged the country. The armed conflict between them worsened considerably after independence in 1975, lasting until the end of the war in 2002.

9 Although refugees are not entitled to vote in their countries’ national elections nor in those of the hosting country, Meheba refugees can elect road and block leaders. Since 2010, after the protests by a Congolese group against corruption (see below), those new elections have been suspended.

If most of the ancient Congolese groups (mainly those coming from the Kasai region in the DRC) had economic ties with the Angolan communities (with most Angolans being involved in farming and the Congolese in trade) and inter-marriage was common, the same was not true among the several Congolese communities. Indeed, tensions between the DRC nationals were recurrent, as mutual suspicion and avoidance between groups coming from the Kasai, Katanga and Kivu regions was evident, resulting in divisions and conflicts along regional and ethnic lines (see note 6).

Moreover, religion was an issue at times. Whereas most of the communities in Meheba attended Christian churches (Baptist, Methodist, Adventist, Catholic, The Church of the Pastor Brahmam, etc.), Somali refugees professed Islam and were therefore looked on with some suspicion. The existence of pig farms, namely in Zone H, unwittingly excluded Somalis, who alluded to these as “dangerous” areas.

Furthermore, the local integration process, involving former Angolan and Rwandan refugees, suggests that these will be set apart from the remaining displaced community and probably will not be able to benefit from the same humanitarian resources. The inclusive local integration process will therefore largely mean a renewed form of exclusion.

These and other aspects were and are at the core of dynamics of (in)voluntary inclusion and exclusion among the several refugee groups – aspects reflected in, or arising from, socioeconomic, political and cultural expressions, and fairly evident in the space. Still, the situation between refugees and Zambians and between the camp and the outside is the point that undoubtedly warrants more attention.

LEGAL ASPECTS

During my fieldwork, several refugees overtly contested the presence of Zambians in the camp. Most complaints were not necessarily directed at the bureaucratic-humanitarian staff, but towards those who worked in the Lumwana mine and lived in Meheba, and, most of all, towards those who, though being Zambians, pretended to be refugees. Some refugees argued that there were several “impostors” in Meheba, and that they, the true refugees, were the ones really suffering and, therefore, exclusively deserving of humanitarian support. The entitlement to the camp – and by extension to humanitarian aid

– as a result of a recognised suffering was a strong exclusionary argument in relation to non-refugees. According to an elder Angolan refugee, from Block B, and whose words could resonate elsewhere: “We suffer and the camp is all we have left... and then we see these individuals trying to take advantage and seize the few existent opportunities... these are spongers (*aproveitadores*)... Once life was easier here, there was room for all, but lately things have become more and more difficult, everything is scarce now.”

Curiously enough, Zambian citizens gave similar accounts about refugees who, unwilling to enter a refugee camp – which would confirm them as *de facto* refugees – pretended to be local citizens and sought integration in border villages (Hansen 1979a, 1979b; Bakewell 2000, 2007; Silva 2011; Neto 2017a, 2017b).

It was widely known that there were “illegal refugees” living in the camp.¹⁰ Even if that included the cases of new refugee arrivals who did not go through the normal registration procedures – mainly concerning those coming from the DRC and being *de facto* refugees nonetheless. There were also cases of Zambian nationals who declared themselves refugees and/or had purchased refugee ID cards. Corruption in the camp was perceived as endemic and a group of Congolese refugees who had protested against it – and against the living conditions and the absence of some fundamental rights – had faced deportation.¹¹ Political freedoms are dramatically limited within camps and refugees are not supposed to meet and discuss, let alone to demonstrate (for the laws then applied to refugees in Zambia, see RCA 1970).

In early 2010, the camp’s management was handed to the GRZ, while remaining under the supervision of the UNHCR. Since then GRZ members, the Refugee Officer (RO) and the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) staff have been under investigation. Beyond the selling of gate passes to refugees (required to leave the camp for a maximum period of 30 days) and of refugee ID cards, there was also the suspicion that names had been added for ineligible food distribution, and that records that could enhance better resettlement opportunities for specific individuals were deliberately changed. Perhaps, this was not a recent phenomenon, as official data and statistics seem to have

10 See, for instance: “Refugees at Meheba occupy UNHCR offices to protest corruption”, American Embassy in Lusaka (22/02/2010) available at <http://wikileaks.wikimee.org/cable/2010/02/10LUSAKA110.html> visited on 26th October 2017.

11 Idem.

disappeared and/or been manipulated since the camp's early days (Hansen 1990; Bakewell 2012, 12).

According to one Zambian, a member of the GRZ administration staff and who lived and worked in the camp, the major concern was not necessarily related to corruption as a whole – even if that was seen as an issue –, but rather to specific individuals who, having purchased ID cards, had been residing in the camp ever since. Such accounts uncovered the existence of individuals suspected to be criminals, thieves and rapists – many of them Zambian citizens –, who in order to avoid being caught and brought to justice sought refuge in the camp. The camp was a hideout and protection came from insertion into a different legal framework, which was not actually enforced (Veroff 2009). This served both refugees and humanitarian aliens residing in the camp alike, and illustrates the materialisation of what Turner (2010) has called the *politics of innocence*. The moment the humanitarian regime constructs the figure of the refugee as “bare life” (Agamben 1995), it holds that all refugees are “apolitical”, “innocent” and “pure victims”, without “agency”, “roots” and a “past” (Turner 2010, 160). Arguably, such a framework encompasses virtually all inhabitants of camps, whether refugees or not. Although the vast majority of refugees had indeed gone through many hardships and either witnessed or had been victims of violence in all its forms, it is also true that some refugees were the perpetrators themselves. Inasmuch as refugee camps neutralise the lives of its inhabitants, former soldiers and guerrilla fighters – who have most likely committed crimes and atrocities – live side by side with their victims. For better or worse, the exceptional nature of the camp enacts a selective exclusion from national jurisdiction(s). Likewise, other non-refugees grabbed this opportunity offered by the camp. Indeed, it seems important to acknowledge how supposed criminals and troublemakers also bypass the law by seeking refuge and settling in humanitarian spaces.

EDUCATION

During the 1970s and 1980s, Hansen observed how the existent services and facilities, as well as the overall material conditions of those living in Meheba, were significantly better than those in the surrounding villages or towns (Hansen 1990). At that time, international stakeholders provided financial and logistical humanitarian support, which kept Meheba running and in shape.

However, after the end of the conflict in Angola, in 2002, the humanitarian funding and respective activities steadily diminished.¹² As a result, most of UNHCR's implementing partners gradually left Meheba, meaning that infrastructure maintenance and a set of training and food programmes and other services almost came to a halt (UNHCR 2013), leaving the roads to deteriorate, and the schools and clinics in disrepair. Other facilities, like the library or the Women's Centre, were no longer available. Such circumstances certainly had an impact on the overall quality of life in the camp. And yet, what Hansen had observed a few decades earlier was, to a large extent, still true. Meheba still had several schools (from Primary to High School), and the continuance of education was probably the most obvious aspect in this regard.

Thus, apart from current and former "refugee children" – mainly Angolans who, after being repatriated, returned from time to time to enrol their children and/or younger siblings in the Meheba schools –, the presence of Zambian youngsters too was hardly surprising. In the same way refugees are attracted to better camps and/or try to keep some link with humanitarian settings in the hope of further opportunities, the local population were drawn to the camp (Horst 2006; Jansen 2014; for Zambia specifically, see Ferguson 1999).

During the camp's golden period – that is, until the emergency was considered over in the early 2000s – Western teachers and skilled volunteers were a common presence in Meheba. In 2012-2014, the situation was rather different and most of the teachers were Zambians or refugees trained while in the camp. In spite of the infrastructural decline and the lack of notebooks and schoolbooks, schools had many Zambian students coming from as far as Livingstone, Lusaka, Kitwe and Solwezi, whose parents preferred that their sons and daughters studied at Meheba. Despite their noticeable presence, systematic data with regard to the number and origin of Zambian students at Meheba's different schools was virtually non-existent.

According to the Head of School in Rd 36 (the largest school, and which included primary and secondary), to study in Meheba was relatively inexpensive, even if that did not mean it was accessible to all.¹³ Still, for

12 In 2014, the Norwegian based NGO, Refugee Alliance, was the sole organisation active in Meheba, with four volunteers whose role was to carry out school activities and assist at the Block D clinic.

13 According to the Head of School, in 2014, the Basic School (the seven first years) was free; in the Secondary School (8th and 9th grades) fees were 65,000 kwacha (roughly 11€) per year; and the High School (10th and 12th grades), only in Zone A, had a fee of 85,000 kw (approximately 14€) for each of the three terms.

Zambians, it was not the comparatively low fees that mattered most when choosing to enrol their children in Meheba's schools. As the Head of School remarked, children in the camp lived in peace and in harmony with nature¹⁴, they could play and run freely, and were not separated by sex or nationality. There was less danger compared to urban environments, and teaching standards were above the national average. The Head of School at the time shared the dream of a Rwandese refugee and teacher: that one day Meheba could have its own university (from camp to *campus*?).

As far as the ambiguity between inclusion and exclusion is concerned, education was certainly among the most illustrative cases. In spite of being located at the "end of the world", or in the "middle of nowhere" – as some Zambians and refugees living outside the camp used to say –, Meheba was, in fact, an educational centre providing schooling for refugees and Zambians alike. However, the interaction between refugee and non-refugee students was not always easy going.

The plight of Cabazo, 15, from Chingola (Copperbelt Province, Zambia) is illustrative of the dynamics between inclusion and exclusion among refugees and Zambians. His mother was a nurse in the Block B clinic and Cabazo, after attending school, also performed different paid tasks helping other members of the Zambian administration. Yet, Cabazo resented his condition in the camp. Despite being in Zambia, he "was not from there". His words were insightful: "I don't know how to play football¹⁵, and my schoolmates don't want me to play with them... I don't speak English well and I am not a good student... And they [the refugees] believe I have more things than they do... They don't like me because I'm not a refugee, because I'm not from here, because I don't belong here...".

The extraterritorial dimension of the camp – which under the aegis of the humanitarian government turns the refugee into the autochthonous of the enclave – confirms Cabazo as an outsider, a foreigner in what would be his national territory in "normal" circumstances. Mirrored dynamics of exclusion and inclusion unfold at every opportunity. The local animosity

14 UNHCR has established several rules aimed at protecting the natural environment. Garbage collection is mandatory and UNHCR authorisation is required to fell trees. However, this does not mean that such rules are necessarily followed by refugees or enforced by the authorities.

15 Football constitutes an important event and activity in the camp. Usually during the weekends matches take place opposing different communities (e.g. the Angolans vs the Congolese) or multi-national teams opposing different blocks or roads.

towards presumed allochthonous, that is, to non-refugee inhabitants, external to the humanitarian realm, is fed by the transformation of power structures. This is most evident in the access to education, but also to property and jobs and which amounts to a set of inclusionary and exclusionary practices and behaviour.

SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS

In contrast to Zambian nationals, refugees cannot own property – whether the houses or shops they themselves have built or the farming land assigned to them, sometimes decades ago. It does not mean, however, that refugees do not (il)legally sell “their” houses – this being a common practice upon repatriation. In addition, refugees are not officially entitled to work, a legal interdiction that, as some refugees pointed out, promoted labour exploitation. For the refugees who collaborated in Meheba’s humanitarian activities, conducted by a given NGO or the UNHCR, the maximum earnings were not more than 50\$US. Instead, Zambians could earn at least four times as much for the same task, inevitably causing a profound malaise. Not to mention that there were refugees working in the nearby Lumwana mine, while others worked in the plots of Zambians – mainly belonging to miners or to those involved in the administration staff, who had bought or rented land in Meheba –, and whose labour situation was not substantially different.

The impact of changing demographics and new economic dynamics in and around Meheba was perceptible. This resulted in real estate speculation, increased food prices and directly affected the livelihoods of refugees: circumstances that could not but create social unrest.

Furthermore, until 2014, refugees used to sell their harvest surplus in order to obtain certain products, but the camp’s overall economy remained exchange-based. Likewise, the *vulnerables*¹⁶, who were provided with food packs by the humanitarian agencies, also exchanged part of them in order to have a more varied diet and/or to obtain other essential products. However,

16 In humanitarian terms, the vulnerables group consists of single mothers, families with many children, orphans, the elderly and/or refugees with some form of handicap. In the case of Meheba, they are also those who arrived recently or had not attained self-sufficiency were included. As of 2011, UNCHR data indicated that roughly one third of the camp’s population was still receiving food provisions (UNHCR 2011).

not only did repatriation lead to the decline in food production, but the presence of miners contributed to skyrocketing prices. This meant that refugees were no longer capable of buying some of the agricultural produce that they themselves were growing. Moreover, instead of continuing to provide goods and food provisions to the *vulnerables*, UNHCR was planning to introduce a cash/voucher system in the settlement, so that targeted beneficiaries would be in “the position to purchase food of their own choice” (UNHCR 2013, 5).

The paradox is nevertheless interesting, as inclusion in the money economy, leaving aside an economy predominantly of exchange, of barter-trade, represented exclusion from the economy in itself (Bauman 2004).

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, I have tried to portray a constellation of different situations that illustrate the ambiguous boundaries between inclusion and exclusion among refugees and the local population in their relation to the refugee camp. At their core, one can find sociocultural, economic, legal and political aspects enhanced by the extraterritorial nature of the camp.

As a dialectical process, the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion go hand-in-hand, meaning that – humanitarian or state – subjects are neither fully included nor fully excluded. They are never fully insiders nor fully outsiders, and continuously oscillate in “zones of indistinction” (Agamben 1995), with the camp being emblematic of this.

The paradox between the inclusion of the excluded, and the exclusion of the supposed included is an ever evolving process of transformation that cannot but bring about change – even if through conflict. By including the excluded – in this case, refugees and/or aliens –, humanitarian policies unwittingly create new forms of exclusion. Paradoxically then, the excluded are a sort of humanitarian aliens. Yet, such circumstances do not go uncontested or remain static, as “the outsider is not only the subject to exclusion but also becomes a key actor in reshaping, contesting and redefining the border of citizenship” (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012, 71) – and/or “campzenship” (Sigona 2015). The expected closure of the camp in the foreseeable future (UNHCR 2017) will mark the moment of its opening, that is, its integration in the territorial continuity (Agier 2011; UNHCR 2017). To observe and

understand how new dynamics between inclusion and exclusion will evolve in Meheba, as the local integration process moves forward, will certainly be a necessary and significant endeavour.

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