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Beyond Space of Exception? Reflections on the Camp through the Prism of Refugee Schools

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Introduction

This article takes as a starting point an ordinary scene—boys and girls, in uniforms, hurrying as a school bell rings—that takes place in a less ordinary setting: a refugee camp. This scene is one we have seen almost every time we have visited a refugee camp across the African continent over the past 10 years. Anyone who arrives there early enough in the morning may actually witness it. Some may not even pay attention to it: children going to school every day has become, after all, such a widespread norm everywhere in the world that it might not surprise us anymore, even in a camp setting. On the contrary, others may see it as a surprising spectacle, for the camp is generally associated with an imaginary of humanitarian emergency, physical and mental suffering that both the media and, to a certain extent, academic research have contributed to build.

Striking and yet ordinary, the image of hundreds of refugee children on their way provides an interesting entry point to engage in social sciences debates on the nature of refugee camps, which have long been dominated by Giorgio Agamben's (1998) language of exception. First, it invites us to think of the camp as something more than merely a device of bare life and relegation that supposedly excludes refugees from any form of meaningful social existence. Indeed, the very presence of school systems in camp settings suggests that (re)including refugees in the social realm and addressing some of their social rights may also preoccupy humanitarian actors along with keeping bodies alive. Besides, this picture forces us to look at camp institutions in their articulation with other global concerns than the mere control of human mobility: if the formalization of school systems in camp settings is closely linked to the globalization of encampment policies as the privileged

means for hosting undesirable foreigners in contemporary societies, it is, indeed, also a consequence of the 'Education for All' consensus, which has made 'child victims of war' a new target population in the race to universalize access to schooling. As a result, in camps children are not only healed and fed, but also educated and sensitized in primary and sometimes secondary schools funded, coordinated and formalized by humanitarian agencies. At the crossroads of the proliferation of camps and the globalization of schooling, refugee children embody at once the paradigmatic figure of the innocent victim and hopes for a better world.

In this article, we argue that the delivery of schooling to refugees, as a widespread phenomenon in most camp settings around the world, is an insightful ethnographic site to capture not only what refugees are excluded from, but also what they are included into and thus to inquire into the multiple logics of governance that characterize the camp—apprehended here as a bureaucratic device of intervention. More specifically, it can bring into focus how logics of exception articulate with logics of normalization and how socio-political exclusion and confinement of refugees go hand in hand with projects of social transformation and political participation that project refugees as citizens both within and beyond the camp space. If these tensions have already been addressed in previous research, they have often been accounted for in terms of an opposition between the camp 'apparatus' described as a device of power based on logics of exception and bare life versus the ability of refugees to contest or transcend it, through political mobilization and multiple appropriations of camp space (Hyndman 2000; Agier 2008). In this article, we argue that such tensions are very much *inherent* to the camp apparatus itself, for it cannot be reduced to the single rationality¹ of the production of bare life. By exploring one specific segment of the camp—the school—and the ways it is governed, we will show that the camp, at least in sub-Saharan Africa, appears not as governed by a single humanitarian logic, but as a polyhierarchical administrative structure (Inheteven 2010), within which state and non-state authorities coexist and overlap with sometimes divergent rationalities. These multiple authorities simultaneously produce the exceptionality of the camp and of their inhabitants, attempt to reincorporate them in a 'normal' order of things (in the sense of reintegrating them in a national order as well as in a school order) and seek to transform them into ideal participating subjects. The camp apparatus, we argue, may therefore function as much as a device of exclusion from the political community of citizens as a laboratory of citizenship-making, projecting different forms of political subjectivities into schools. That the camp apparatus is invested with different rationalities also results from the multiple normative frameworks² at work within it, be it the refugee regime, the human rights regime, state or local regulations.

More generally, building on recent calls to go beyond philosophical approaches of the camp (Heins 2005; Ramadan 2013; Sigona 2015), this article advocates for the need to return to more empirically grounded and

situated approaches if we are to deepen our understanding of how camp institutions are shaped by both specific socio-political processes and global, circulating models not only of migration management, but also of social engineering. In this line of argument, we will draw on an ongoing ethnographic study in a Congolese refugee camp in Tanzania (*Nyarugusu*) which examines the everyday functioning of camp schools and the ways they are mobilized and invested with multiple goals and meanings by humanitarian actors, state authorities and refugee elites.³ In Nyarugusu, 12 primary and 4 secondary schools, financed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and managed on an everyday basis by refugees who work as teachers, inspectors and administrative school staff, have ensured the schooling of almost two generations of refugees according to the curriculum of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).⁴

The article starts with a brief overview of scientific debates on the nature of refugee camps, which have long been dominated and influenced by Agamben's language of exception, bare life and sovereign power. We will then move to our empirical case study and examine, in a second part, the complex interplay between logics of exceptionality and normalization which have led to the establishment and legitimization of a formal school system in Nyarugusu back in 1996–97 and which have characterized their concrete modes of governance since then. We will shed light on humanitarian actors, who, while playing a crucial role in re-establishing a Congolese school order in the camp, continuously try to transform it by introducing new norms of regulation and promoting a moral order based on child rights. We will show that Nyarugusu's camp schools, closely articulated to Tanzania's encampment policy, have offered for humanitarian actors and refugee staff alike a site to project different ideas of how to overcome encampment. At the same time, we will examine how these humanitarian actors, together with refugee school staff, attempt to act upon existing political orders by shaping children's political subjectivities and offering them very different models of thinking of themselves as right-bearers and participating subjects. While such projects of transformation circulate far beyond the school space, we will see that they are exacerbated there, for students are framed by humanitarian actors and the refugee elite at once as pure 'bare life' and potential agents of change on whom both an ideal community within the camp and an ideal political order beyond it can be projected.

Refugee Studies and the Camp: Exception, Bare Life and Sovereign Power

For the past 15 years, reflections in social sciences on the nature of refugee camps have been significantly influenced by the work of the philosopher Giorgio Agamben and his notions of 'state of exception', 'bare life' and 'sovereignty'. In a quest to understand the nature of the 'original' act of sovereign power in the Western world, Agamben sees the camp as the

paradigmatic expression of the sovereign power, defined as the capacity to proclaim the exception, to banish and to exclude certain individuals from any meaningful social existence (Agamben 1998: 179; 2005). For him, the camp realizes the *permanent* state of exception: on behalf of a declared state of emergency, individuals are submitted to a separate regime of power that suspends ordinary law for an indefinite time, deprives them of their rights as citizens and casts them as pure biological life. Agamben further argues that refugees are the pure expression of bare life, at least until they are re-codified into a new national identity (1998: 144). Displaced from their country of origin, and rejected in the margins of the nation-state system, refugees disrupt the fiction of continuity between the rights of the citizen and the rights of man established by Western liberal democracies (Arendt 1951), making of them 'the figure of the human [that] emerges from behind that of the citizen' (Redfield 2005: 341, quoted by Ramadan 2013: 68). For Agamben, humanitarian action can only apprehend human life as 'bare life', for it is only because refugees are excluded from the political realm that their pure life can be saved and become object of protection (1998: 145).

Whether embraced or contested, Agamben's political philosophy of the camp has largely framed the terms of the theoretical debates over refugee camps and humanitarianism, both in Anglo-Saxon and Francophone literature, but also across disciplines and often in a quite simplified understanding of Agamben's work. Researchers have indeed massively referred to Agamben's language of exception to describe a variety of situations from asylum reception or detention centres in the global north to refugee settlements, camps or townships in Africa, Asia or the Middle-East. The reason for this probably resides in the ability of such language to express a radical political critique of contemporary discriminatory practices against certain categories of populations. In Africa, in particular, the camp device has been described as part of a wider, worldwide humanitarian-military device of confinement of undesirable populations, producing figures of victimhood incompatible with the one of the citizen (Fassin and Pandolfi 2010). While recognizing the variability of its form and expressions in different geographical and political contexts, the camp and the 'humanitarian government' have also repeatedly been referred to as a device of 'extraterritoriality, relegation and exception' (Agier 2008: 299).

Inspired by Agamben's language to describe the nature of the 'humanitarian government', researchers have shown at the same time that camp life could never be completely reduced to bare life and refugees are not passive victims: they try to rebuild a socially and politically meaningful existence, assert visibility and dignity, and always invest camps with 'webs of signs, relations and affect' (Comaroff 2007: 209). In West and East African camps, Agier (2008: 221) analyses for instance how various forms of protest and contestation emerge *against* the 'humanitarian government', transforming what he first frames as victims back into political subjects. Other studies highlight that camp residents may transcend the confines erected by

encampment policies by incorporating the camp as one element of wider transnational webs of exchanges, migratory paths and coping strategies (Bakewell 2000; Horst 2006) or by transforming it into new urban margins fully integrated into the world economy (Jansen 2014). Refugees, at the same time, actively engage in constructing a strong and purified sense of national belonging (Malkki 1995a), transforming camps into highly politicized (Turner 2010) and sometimes militarized sites that contest their so-called ‘banishment’ from the political realm.

The camp has therefore often been depicted in terms of a tension between a device of exception and bare life on the one hand and refugees’ capacity to contest and transform it on the other hand. While insightful in many ways, this dichotomy has sometimes led to an over-simplification and homogenization of the camp bureaucracy itself by reducing it to one single rationality—one of bare life. It has, at the same time, tended to reify the polarized images of refugeehood implicit in humanitarian discourse, which oppose the figure of the victim-refugee to the one of the manipulative politicized refugees (Fresia 2007) instead of acknowledging that refugees are always already political subjects. Recent work has started to complicate this picture by showing that the camp device may not be as monolithic as is often assumed nor only governed to save and sustain biological life. In many cases, the camp itself is key to the process of refugees’ recognition as social and political actors (Agier 2014). In some cases, the camp device, by its very materiality and spatiality, provides the visibility refugees need to speak and act for themselves as a group in politically qualified ways, as Ramadan (2013: 68) shows for Palestinian refugees, and Sigona (2015: 15) for Roma in Italy. Likewise, Fresia (2014) retraces how Mauritanian refugee camps became the physical symbol of human rights violations and offered refugee leaders, through their daily contact with NGOs, the opportunity to have their claims for repair and justice heard. Beyond what can be seen as a simple side effect of the materiality of the camp, Turner, in his study of Burundian refugees in Lukole refugee camp in Tanzania (2001; 2014a; 2014b), actually goes further by suggesting that humanitarian actors themselves deploy efforts to empower refugees: for him, in addition to maintaining them alive, humanitarian actors indeed attempt, through ‘top-down transformative projects’, to prepare refugees to become what they frame as ‘universal’, ‘apolitical’ citizens upon return. For him, processes of domination at work within the camp cannot therefore be reduced to the negative power of ‘suspending law’ and biopolitics, but have also to be understood through the ‘biopower’ of empowerment projects.

To further explore the various forms of power the camp apparatus produces, recent research actually invites us to question the ways Agamben’s notion of ‘sovereign power’ have been used within refugee studies. While Agamben was actually concerned with undertaking an ontology of the original act of sovereign power, different analysts have questioned the ability of this notion to describe the type of power at work in the governance of refugee

camps (Heins 2005; Ramadan 2013). Looking at how camps are effectively governed in different regional settings and turning to a more empirical understanding of sovereignty (Hansen and Stepputat 2006), they have shown that different kinds and registers of sovereignty and authorities coexist and overlap within the camp device, making it difficult to reduce it to the mere expression of the power to banish (Oesch 2012; Ramadan 2013). In Senegal for instance, refugee camps were governed by multiple forms of authorities (centralized and decentralized state actors, international organizations, local NGOs, refugee associations, etc.) whose rationalities, area of influence, type of legitimacy and degree of involvement varied over time and did not always converge towards maintaining the exceptionality of the camp (Fresia 2009). The ethnographic exploration of some of the concrete dimensions of camp governance has also led recent research to tackle the issue of legal pluralism in camp settings: by looking at how the human rights regime articulates with local justice practice, the work of McConnachie (2014) questions, for instance, whether the recurrent framing of refugee camps as a spaces of ‘suspension of “ordinary law”’ may not obscure rather than illuminate the actual legal and normative orders at work within it.

Overall, as Redfield (2010: 190) rightly observes, ‘the theoretical portrayal of humanitarianism is overly clear in Agamben’s work’ for, in many cases, ‘neither sovereignty nor exception are so sharply drawn’. The so-called ‘state of exception’ may not only be difficult to encounter once confronted with the lived reality of camps in the field, but also blur precisely what demands specification for understanding camps as social and historical facts. It remains unclear who the institutional actors behind the ‘sovereign power’ involved in governing camps are. What are the rationalities and the normative frameworks through which they legitimize their action, and how do they articulate with each other? And finally, how do these rationalities concretely shape refugee subjectivities in multiple ways and contribute to the reproduction or transformation of their societies of belonging? As part of continuing efforts to unpack the camp apparatus, the remaining part of this article takes an empirical stance and explores one specific segment of it: the delivery of education services. A significant literature has actually developed on education in ‘crisis situations’ since the 1990s (Machel 1994; Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011), shattering the idealized image of schools as places of innocence. This important production of knowledge has mainly focused on the complex relationships between conflicts and schooling processes, in an attempt to better appreciate the potential benefits of education in terms of ‘protection’ and wellbeing of children versus its potential to perpetuate violence and conflict. Our perspective here will be slightly different as we will look at school mostly as a space of intervention by different camp authorities: this will serve as an entry point to deepen our understanding of camp dynamics of governance and the kinds of agency it enables. As such, we will build on Turner’s work, quoted above, as well as on Epstein’s (2012) recent work on the ‘pedagogical camp’, which both help us reflect on how

humanitarian actors attempt, in addition to keeping bodies alive, to transform refugees into 'ideal subjects' or 'agents of repair', reflecting international projects of post-conflict reconstruction and state-building.

A Public Good between Exception and Normalization

Nyarugusu camp was established in 1996 in a rural area of Kigoma region in north-western Tanzania, following the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees. Most of them fled from the eastern Congolese province of South Kivu during the first and second Congo Wars between 1996 and 2003 (Vlassenroot 2002; Thomson 2012: 188–89; Stearns 2013). Tanzania had since independence been widely known as 'one of the most hospitable countries of asylum in Africa, if not the world' (Milner 2009: 108), providing land for settlements, encouraging self-sufficiency, offering citizenship to 36,000 Rwandan refugees in 1980 (Gasarasi 1990) and tolerating the self-settlement of migrants who had not passed through the formal migration or asylum bureaucracy (Turner 2001). However, Tanzania's approach to refugee hosting underwent radical transformation during the 1990s crises in the Great Lakes region, when the Tanzanian government turned to a policy of encampment in the aftermath of the massive influx of refugees from Burundi, Rwanda and DRC, and under the influence of changed domestic and foreign policy interests (Rutinwa 1996; Chaulia 2003; Milner 2009). Under the 1998 Refugee Act, refugees were required to live in 'Designated Areas' and prohibited to work without a permit (almost impossible to obtain in practice) and local integration or naturalization no longer figured as possible durable solutions (Kamanga 2005: 108).

In 2007, the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has begun to close its camps and to push for the repatriation and resettlement of refugees (Thomson 2012). While Nyarugusu has been allowed to remain as the last camp, the MHA's tightened stance has translated into further restrictions on refugees' agricultural activities in the surroundings of the camp and on livelihood projects, and has led to the shutting down of the camp-based market (Women's Refugee Commission 2012). Meanwhile, schools were since the opening of the Nyarugusu camp excepted from this series of legal limitations, as the 1998 Refugee Act explicitly provided for the right of refugee children to primary and post-primary education (Kamanga 2005: 106). Once refugees were excluded from access to basic services on Tanzanian soil and confined to camps, schools were set up under the coordination of humanitarian agencies specifically for refugees. As we will see, the restrictive asylum policy was reflected in this institutional segregation, but also in the politics of curriculum, as students were to be prepared for repatriation by studying the Congolese school programme and by using French as a language of instruction. While the Tanzanian state retreated from many of the governmental functions it had assumed under the previous asylum policy, UNHCR's responsibilities as a 'surrogate state' (Slaughter and Crisp 2009) came to

encompass schooling.⁵ In this section, we first examine how UNHCR's intervention in the school system drew its legitimacy from the need to normalize the situation of children, who were framed in terms of a double abnormality, as at once 'out of place' and 'out of school'. Turning to concrete institutional arrangements and actual modes of governance of Nyarugusu's schools, we then analyse how the processes of normalization that we defined here as reintegrating children in a national and school order of things still remained imbued with marks of exceptionality, as schools are always subjected to be closed at any times and their management inscribed in a short-term temporality.

Legitimizing Intervention: Children Out of Place and Out of School

During the 1990s, at a time when UNHCR was taking on an increasingly proactive role in repatriation (Loescher *et al.* 2008: 48ff.), UNHCR's education policy was dominated the concept of 'education for repatriation'. The Tanzanian government adopted this principle, upon UNHCR's recommendation, after the arrival of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda in the 1990s (Bird 2003), thereby inscribing in schools the politically prescribed future mobility to the 'home' country. Tanzania's 2003 National Refugee Policy reads:

Considering that refugees will eventually return home and in order to make it easier for them to easily reintegrate in their societies, the government will allow provision of education to refugees in accordance with the curricula used in their countries of origin (MHA 2003: para 16).

Education for repatriation responded to the preoccupation that refugee children should eventually be able to reintegrate into their country of origin. Like other interventions directed at normalizing the mobility of displaced people, it was rooted in a state-centric, sedentarist perspective within which refugees are framed as anomalies in the national order of things (Malkki 1995b). Children were thus perceived as 'out of place', and teaching them the curriculum and language of instruction of their home country was depicted as a way to facilitate reintegration of students into the school system upon return and to 'provide a sense of security and identity' (Crisp *et al.* 2001: 25). While today the discourse in UNHCR's Education Unit in Geneva has evolved towards a more flexible approach (Dryden-Peterson 2011), formal education in Nyarugusu remains strongly anchored in the imaginary of national belonging.

To understand UNHCR's increasing investment in refugee education more generally, we need to look beyond the narrow confines of the refugee regime and bring into view the universalist quest of Education for All that was articulated with unprecedented strength in the early 1990s. Until the mid-1980s, UNHCR operations had provided partial financial and technical support for schools in refugee settings, but without defining an overarching

policy framework (Retamal forthcoming), and much of the resources were devoted to individual scholarships rather than to building education systems (Dryden-Peterson 2011). This changed dramatically when basic education was defined as a fundamental right in 1989 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and later was inscribed in international social policy through a series of global conferences on Education for All and through the Millennium Development Goals. In the process, refugees were constituted as a target group of a global agenda that marked them out—alongside internally displaced persons or victims of natural disasters—as excluded from education. Refugee children and youth thus became subject to the global endeavour of universal basic education and, in 2007, the United Nations have recognized education as the ‘fourth pillar’ of humanitarian intervention (Chelpi-den Hamer *et al.* 2010).⁶

While the idea of temporary but indeterminate economic and legal exclusion is acceptable in today’s refugee regime, it thus seems much harder to imagine that refugee children could be socialized outside of the school institution without suffering some kind of damage, as made explicit in a UNHCR publication on education: ‘Is there a need to do more than stop them dying? can displaced children and adolescents be kept in some kind of storage, without harmful long-term effects, until they can return home?’ (Crisp *et al* 2001: 7). While this expresses a concern with humanizing refugee camps, it is worth thinking about what is implied here: first, that taking children and adolescents out of ‘some kind of storage’ is not achieved by overcoming the contemporary refugee camps, but by putting children into schools; second, that keeping people ‘in some kind of storage’ is less problematic if these people are legal adults; and third, that it is the future—here the moment of leaving the camp without having been damaged—that should determine the rights of a person in the present. From these modes of legitimizing humanitarian intervention in schooling, we now want to turn to the institutional arrangements through which the work of normalization is temporarily carried out.

Institutional Arrangements: Traces of Normalization, Traces of Exceptionality

Turning to the concrete institutional arrangements in Nyarugusu schools, exceptionality at once enables and constrains the work of normalization. The 12 primary and 4 secondary schools in Nyarugusu refugee camp are today run through a range of governmental and non-governmental actors. During the first months after the camp was established, it was first refugees with experience in the Congolese education system (as teachers or administrative staff) who started organizing informal classes. After a few months, schools were authorized by the Tanzanian government and UNHCR took on the lead in the delivery of basic education. UNHCR currently pays monthly ‘incentives’ to refugee school staff (the equivalent of 15 USD), a form of remuneration generally justified with the principle of ‘community

participation' (Morris and Voon 2014: 7f). UNHCR moreover coordinates the activities of other institutional actors in the school field, and monitors indicators for access and quality (e.g. enrolment rates, attendance rates or student–teacher ratios). Meanwhile, UNHCR delegates most of the tasks of everyday administration of Nyarugusu's schools to an implementing NGO, which, in turn, relies heavily on refugees in virtually all positions of the school bureaucracy (teachers, inspectors, head teachers, administrative staff).

Humanitarian agencies have, to some extent, succeeded in Nyarugusu to re-establish the school norm and to reintegrate students through schooling into the national order of things. By setting up primary and secondary schools and having them formally recognized, they have contributed to establishing a routine of schooling and ensured access to basic education for a majority of children in the camp for almost two generations of refugees. Moreover, paradoxically, in a situation where refugees have lost the protection of the DRC state, students and education staff have become subjected through schools to the Congolese school bureaucracy. For one and a half decades, UNHCR has put significant financial and logistical efforts in having Congolese school inspectors bring the State Exams *TENAFEP* (end of primary) and *EXETAT* (end of secondary) from DRC to Nyarugusu. At the end of each school year, inspectors and representatives of the DRC consulate in Kigoma come to Nyarugusu to bring the state exams, to supervise its execution and then transport it back to the DRC for grading. The students who succeed at the *EXETAT* receive the *diplôme d'Etat*, the Congolese diploma for secondary school graduates.

However, the political exceptionality on which these institutional arrangements are founded remains latent, as the routine of schooling is inscribed in a short-term temporality. Big cracks in blackboards, broken desks and abandoned dilapidated classrooms show that, after the emergency has passed, donors are reticent to finance durable structures for protracted refugee situations. These shifting priorities of donors are often politically mediated: since 2007, Tanzania has closed 10 out of its 11 refugee camps and, in the process, instructed UNHCR's implementing NGO not to construct any further school buildings. This hints at how the universal norm of the schooled child is only ever temporarily sustained within the camp, as the productive power of education for repatriation goes hand in hand with the deductive power of constraining and ultimately closing schools. The necessary fragility of camp schools was became most apparent in 2009 in Mtabila camp: when the Burundian refugees were reluctant to leave, the Tanzanian MHA—which exercises formal political authority in the camp but usually remains invisible in the school field—decided to disallow formal schooling in order to incite people to repatriate (IRRI 2011: 6f). In addition to the constant possibility of closure, the concrete processes by which schools are reconnected to the DRC state bureaucracy equally remain markers of marginality, as textbooks, curricula and state diplomas tend to arrive from DRC with several years of delay or not at all. Besides, students in Nyarugusu who are lucky to

qualify for a university scholarship cannot currently make use of this opportunity because Tanzania has reformed its admission procedures and is no longer accepting their certificates.

The preoccupation of reintegrating refugees into a national order of things does not intervene solely at the end of the ‘refugee cycle’ when a durable solution has been found, but is itself part of the governance practices and the attempt to shape students’ socialization. Equally important is the attempt to insert children, at least partially, in a human rights order of things by integrating them into global efforts for the universalization of basic education. Nonetheless, such educational interventions remain legitimized by an initial framing of refugee children in terms of exceptionality, and ultimately remain structured by the politics of mobility and contingent on the diverse logics of actors that contribute to their temporary existence. It is thus precisely in the processes of inclusion that exceptionality becomes most palpable.

Transforming School Orders

UNHCR does not merely transfer resources by providing funding for classrooms, teacher incentives, school materials and for the circulation of exams and diploma, and then hand over schools to be governed by refugees. Rather, like other forms of global social engineering (Bierschenk 2014), it also introduces norms, categories and institutional mechanisms, projecting UNHCR’s discourses of protection and child rights into schools. In this section, we examine how the practices based on these discourses, while playing a crucial role in re-establishing school authority in the camp, have, at the same time, led to a redefinition of the terms of this authority by introducing new norms of regulations based on humanitarian principles that contest and disqualify pre-existing moral and administrative orders.

Re-Establishing School Authority

As pointed out above, Nyarugusu’s schools are financed and coordinated by UNHCR, but most of the everyday functioning is assured by refugee staff. Refugees, especially those who occupy the higher ranks of the school hierarchy (inspectors and administrative staff in the central Education Coordination office), play a crucial role in performing the presence of UNHCR and of the Congolese state in camp schools. During a meeting with a group of students’ parents, a school inspector set out to talk about children’s rights and explain its implications for how parents should support their children in schooling. He drew a circle on the blackboard of the classroom that served as a seminar room, and in the middle of the circle, he wrote the word ‘school’. He then put dots all around the circle.

Let’s speak about the influence of the environment on education. There are two types of influences: the positive ones, that help us reach our objective, and the

negative ones, that try to prevent us from achieving our objective. ... It is a battle between good and evil. It's that battle that manifests at school. There is coexistence of good and evil, and what we are trying to do here is to reinforce the positive influences in order to overcome the negative ones (Fieldnotes, 5 March 2013).

While the perception of the importance of schooling as an essential strategy for economic, social and political participation has been cultivated in eastern DRC both before (Dunkerley 2009) and after independence (Poncelet *et al.* 2010), parenting practices and the place assigned to the child within the family vary significantly according to social-economic origin (André and Godin 2014). When speaking to the parents of the negative influences on schooling, the inspector mentioned among other things 'bad mentalities', 'bad beliefs' and 'bad traditions'. Many of the examples of negative influences depicted parents who were not living up to what are considered their responsibilities from the point of view of school authorities: supervising the child or providing the necessities for schooling rarely taken in charge by humanitarian agencies, such as notebooks, uniforms or pens. The university-educated inspector thus translated child rights discourse essentially to problematize parenting practices associated with people of lower social backgrounds.

At other moments, the constitutive function of humanitarian agencies faded entirely into the background and school staff instead played their role as representatives of the Congolese state. During our fieldwork, the inspectors at the camp's Education Coordination office were approached by a group of refugees who suggested that classes of Civic Education (foreseen by the Congolese curriculum) should be complemented by additional, more in-depth classes on DRC history and patriotism. The group had been founded in order to sensitize the community about the complex Congolese political history that had brought them to the camp. Critical of the current Congolese government, which they perceived as unwilling or unable to defend the interests of its citizens against the incursions of the Rwandan neighbours and big Western powers, they felt that schools failed to convey to students the critical knowledge they needed to construct a better state upon return. However, the inspectors rejected the suggestion of adding content to what was already in the curriculum. They later explained to us that they were sympathetic to the group's objective, but that the process of determining what kind of knowledge was transmitted at school could not be short-circuited. In delineating the boundary of who could legitimately determine the contents of schooling, the inspectors reproduced the depoliticizing character of the camp, but did so by recurring to a language that reified the presence of the DRC state in Nyarugusu's schools.

School staff thus constructed their authority not only on the basis of recognition from the refugee community, but also through the web of institutions that converged for some time to stabilize these camp schools: the consent of the MHA for these schools to exist, UNHCR's injection of

resources and foregrounding of a children's rights discourse that reiterated the importance of schooling (and thus also of teaching) and the connection of schools to the Congolese school bureaucracy. However, as we will see, these different sources of legitimacy, while reifying school authority at the same time created significant tensions around the question of the moral and administrative orders according to which schools should be organized.

Transforming Moral Orders through School Regulations

Through UNHCR's intervention in the educational sector, children's rights discourse come to be entangled with norms that had previously been established in Nyarugusu by head teachers and inspectors with reference to the DRC school system. Towards the end of the school year, we were able to attend a number of deliberation sessions at a secondary school, where teachers decided collectively over whether students who had failed their camp-internal exams should nonetheless be admitted to the next grade. In the beginning of the session, when discussing the criteria to be applied, the head teacher reminded the teachers that 'social cases' would require special treatment, and that students who fail for the third straight time (which means exclusion in DRC secondary schools), according to UNHCR's instructions, should be promoted to the next class. When we asked him about this rule later on, he explained to us that UNHCR perceived refugee children and youth as traumatized and vulnerable and in need of protection. And he added: 'to us, these are schools, but to UNHCR, they are *de l'encadrement*' (here meaning 'supervision' and 'assistance'). Similarly, according to internal regulations set up by the (refugee-led) Education Coordination office, pregnant girls were to be banned from schools. This practice was contested by NGO and UNHCR officers, who explained that it amounts to 'double punishment': first due to an 'early pregnancy' and second through exclusion from school. When the education inspectors defended the schools' practice, referring to regulations in DRC and adding that even in Tanzanian schools this rule applied, he was turned down with the argument that 'international law trumps national law'. A member of the Education Coordination office later explained to us that inspectors coming from the DRC had severely criticized the refugee education staff in the past when they encountered that the special rules seemed to apply in the camp. These instances are indicative of how norms of inclusion and exclusion and institutional processes of selection in schools become redefined as issues of protection. The terms on which authority should be exercised at school shifted, as principles that established the thresholds of moral conduct (pregnancy equals exclusion) and achievement (repeated failure equals exclusion) are turned into illegitimate practices.

Teaching staff often perceived such norms as undermining both the socializing and the academic function of schooling: they felt that their authority was undermined, as students could now contest disciplinary measures or grades by reporting teachers at fault, not to the higher ranks of the school

hierarchy, but directly to the implementing NGO's office for Child Protection and Gender-based Violence. If the teaching profession had already become economically marginal—teachers called the incentives they received *du savon*, 'soap', to stress that it was barely enough to buy anything else but essential utensils—its moral authority was equally undermined, as the voice of students could weigh more than that of the teacher. In the same way as children's rights discourse was situationally used to mark out certain parenting practices as 'bad', it was extended now to cast a shadow of suspicion on school staff and their potential abuses of power. While such destabilization of social hierarchies was criticized far beyond school space, teaching staff also criticized humanitarian agencies' interpretation of child rights for substituting 'protection' for academic learning. During a teaching staff meeting, in a critique of humanitarian agencies' emphasis on schooling a maximal number of students and the implicit instruction of being less strict on criteria of examination, a primary school teacher pointed to the consequences of what he perceived as an increasing prioritization of 'access' over academic achievement:

The NGO that is managing us here is not interested in the formation of cadres, but only in its reputation in order to get money. They need a certain number of successes in order to get the money from abroad. ... Fifteen years from now, there will be no teachers in the camp. Because all of us who are here now will be old. Who will replace us? Will the money brought by the NGO replace us? (Fieldnotes, 28 March 2014)

The perception was that principles of protection grounded in children's rights norms, as projected into the school space, have become detrimental to the capacity of school to act as sites of production of elites. From this vantage point, the disempowerment of teachers also meant the disempowerment of the generation growing up in the camp.

Forging Political Subjectivities

Schools thus provide an entry point to apprehend the camp not only as a device for maintaining people alive in confinement, but as articulating broader processes of global social engineering and the specific objectives of humanitarian agencies. The projects of transformation that tie together the ambiguous reconstruction of Congolese schools under the banner of a new moral order manifest themselves yet in a different way on the level of everyday schooling practices. According to UNHCR's current Education Strategy, education enables refugees to construct 'healthy, productive lives and builds skills of self-reliance' (UNHCR 2012: 1). Moreover, education bears the promise of moulding refugee children into 'agents of social transformation, and is essential to understanding and promoting gender equality and sustainable peaceful coexistence' (*ibid.*). While such projects of transformation are not confined to school, they are exacerbated there, as students—more than

adults—are framed as innocent victims and as beings in formation, predestined to become agents of change. As we will show, schools are constructed in the camp as entry points for forging political subjectivities by offering ways for students to think of themselves as rights-bearing subjects. In and around schools, students are able to occupy subject positions that promise voice and allow for the articulation of claims, once around the notion of national belonging and once around the notion of community.

Deferred Citizenship and Politics of the Community

Next to a secondary school, minutes before classes are supposed to start, by-walkers suddenly freeze and turn silent. From afar, we see students standing in formation in the school court, chanting the Congolese national hymn. The hymn is followed by a song that enumerates all the provinces of DRC. ‘So they’ll know when they go back,’ the headmaster tells us. The ritual practice of the hymn is the rehearsal of national identity and the performance of statehood in schools. It is not a spontaneous emanation of refugees’ sense of belonging, but rather a way for school staff to flesh out the politically prescribed education for repatriation policy. It reflects the effort by humanitarian agencies and school staff alike to turn the camp into a place that young people will later leave fit for citizenship. This aim is translated as well into classrooms, where especially some of the older teachers seek to make students understand that their current status as refugees can teach them something about the importance of becoming good citizens. In classes of Civic Education, for instance, teachers are expected to instil in students a sense of patriotism. One student recalls a lesson that stuck with him, when his teacher explained:

A good citizen is ready to die for his fatherland. Lumumba, Laurent Desiré Kabila...: they all died for their fatherland. If people come to invade your country, who are you going to be? If you run away, you will be a person with no origin, a person with no natal country. You will always be a foreigner (Fieldnotes, 18 February 2014).

Citizenship itself is currently out of reach, but presented as a potentiality to be regained through the imaginary bridge of patriotism. This promise of citizenship is spatiotemporally deferred: it is *elsewhere*, probably in DRC or in a country of resettlement, and it is *later*, after the current moment of encampment, that students are expected to achieve political membership.

Minutes after students have entered the classroom, the school secretary hurries to pick five girls and boys to participate in a group discussion led by a UNHCR Protection Officer. The goal is for students to work in groups to identify problems they face at school, and in particular to come up with suggestions as to how to tackle these problems. When explaining the exercise to the students, the UNHCR officer insists on the participatory character of the process: ‘When you make recommendations [for improvement], I want to

know what is going to be your role and contribution, as students. There has to be engagement from everyone, not just the UNHCR' (Fieldnotes, 12 May 2014). The focus group is one of many instances—such as celebrations or meetings of NGO-led children and youth groups—where students are asked to speak up and to articulate claims. While these occasions are usually framed by humanitarian agencies, they served a wide range of functions: sometimes they served the immediate governance activities of UNHCR (as in the focus group that was supposed to help children mobilize themselves), while at other times they were unequivocally performative in character. What they had in common was the frequent problematization of the refugee 'community' as an obstacle to the realization of children's rights. A secondary school student who had won an international Children's Peace Prize wrote the following words on the occasion:

[P]arents are deeply indulged in harmful traditional practices which jeopardize children's rights. ... These kinds of parents are in front line to deprive kids' rights including the right to education. I would like to call upon the community to change and forget old traditions and customs which abuse children's rights. ... I and my fellow children will ensure parents/caretakers are educated on proper parenting so that they may refrain from this practice (Fieldnotes, 21 February 2014).

We do not want to dwell on the question of to what extent the student 'actually' held these views or merely learnt to use children's rights-speak in such a way as to make himself heard. What is significant to us is simply that this way of addressing problems not only appears in relations between humanitarians and refugees, or between school inspectors and parents, but can also be taken up by children. This instance is indicative of a political subjectivity turned inward in a two-fold sense: first, children are asked to become actors and thereby to bring into being their rights and, second, the subject to be addressed is to be found in the immediacy of students' 'community', in the here and now. Bolzman (2008: 27) reminds us that humanitarian actors' preoccupation with children inherit a history whereby the 'protection of the child was transformed from a private concern and brought onto the international stage'. Students in Nyarugusu speaking out and criticizing the community are able to be heard by inscribing their action in this process on a micro scale.

Schooled Subjectivities

Both of these sets of practices have in common that they set the stage—in markedly different ways—for students to claim rights and to understand themselves as agents of change. As we will see, suffering and loss represent a foundational moment of such agency, but students are not addressed here as victims or recipients of charity. In everyday practices in and around schools, they are offered ways for making sense of the hardship most of

them face in their daily lives, and for taking position to improve their situations. The politics of community and deferred citizenship are individualizing to the extent that they are predicated on students 'taking responsibility', appropriating certain attitudes to themselves and their surroundings, and possibly acting on it. Through the lens of governmentality, both can be read, like other instances of 'community participation' in refugee camps, as training for liberal citizenship and as a means of depoliticization (Turner 2001).

These political subjectivities are cultivated precisely on the ground of what has been cast as 'exceptional'. These spaces emerge not solely from humanitarian intervention and the production of refugees as bare life, but also through its imbrication with an already historically situated school institution, with its pre-existing hierarchies of knowledge. We have seen in the last section how schooling has become a yardstick of proper parenting, used by refugee inspectors to criticize practices in the refugee 'community' they perceived as 'harmful' to a schooled society. Humanitarian intervention reinforced these circuits of power in stressing the importance of children's rights, while extending this moralizing dynamic to education staff, who were now also constantly suspected of not living up to their responsibilities. It is against this backdrop of suspicion vis-à-vis teachers and parents that students could make their voices heard and could stand out as agents of transformation within their families and the community. Similarly, it is to the extent that the DRC figures as a spatially and temporally distant 'other' where citizenship has been lost, that ideas of reconnection, notably in the widespread notion of patriotism take shape—but again, it is the articulation of school ideology, positioning the child as in need of socialization into the nation-state, with encampment and loss of citizenship that creates these practices.

The way in which students occupy or reject these subject positions points to some of the underlying power relations that are not up for debate. Some of the students we followed rejected the notion that they owed anything to the DRC and would have preferred to stay in Tanzania, where they were born and raised—however, this imaginary of citizenship was not authorized within the current politics of asylum and thus could not be staged or cultivated in the same way as deferred Congolese citizenship. When finding the right tone, children's voices travel through institutional channels up the hierarchies, and sometimes into international public arenas, as in the letter quoted above. During the focus groups with UNHCR, the students carefully wrote down the different problems they encountered at school, such as: lack of uniforms, exercise books, pens and shoes; overly harsh punishments; or teachers asking for money or sexual favours in exchange for grades. But when the protection officer asked them to articulate solutions, several groups concluded that they needed UNHCR's help: 'We need uniforms, exercise books and pens.' In one group, the presenter added: 'Because our parents have a hard life and can't support us with all of this.' The UNHCR officer read children's request as a

sign of dependency created by the camp conditions, and later expressed frustration that children are not better prepared to take a more proactive role. In this instance, the UNHCR officer had failed to enrol children, and vice versa, children's voices had no effect beyond the act of expression.

Schools are strategic sites for humanitarian agencies today to make the camp appear as something more than a 'storage'—a preoccupation that translates into intense work of (re)codification into a national identity, as well as work of reforming the refugee community from within. Students are meant to play an active part in these endeavours, not only in an imagined future for which they are being prepared, but also in the day-to-day life of the camp. The camp device, while subduing certain kinds of political subjectivities (e.g. those expressed through party politics or addressing power relations between humanitarians and refugees), actively encourages students to adopt specific ways of conceiving of their rights, of making claims and contesting power relations (problematizing the community or the 'home' nation). In a kind of self-perpetuating logic, school is constantly renewed by different actors as a site of construction of problems (what are the obstacles to good schooling?) and as a solution (what problems can schools solve?). In a context where relief work is framed as both apolitical and devoid of 'development', schools provide one of the arenas in which refugees and humanitarian agencies alike can nonetheless project hopes for overcoming the stasis of encampment.

Conclusion

This article does not aim to propose a general conceptualization of the camp device. We do think, however, that looking at schools as a concrete ethnographic site can shed light on the complex interplay between some of the multiple rationalities, authorities and normative frameworks at work in the governance of camps. Refugee schools have the methodological advantage of being at the interface between two global phenomena—the globalization of the camp as the dominant mode of hosting displaced persons and the globalization of the school norm—thus rendering visible the entanglement of politics of mobility and politics of global social engineering. Likewise, going beyond the opposition between the rights of men and rights of citizens established in Agamben's philosophy, it forces us to examine the plurality of normative regimes at work within the camp device, which may at once legitimize the suspension of certain socio-political rights based on criteria of citizenship and reintroduce other types of social rights that go beyond the simple right to life. Moreover, refugee schools involve humanitarian, state and refugee actors in their management and regulations, and as such offer a suitable entry point to unpack the polyhierarchical structure of the camp. Yet, looking at such complexities should not lead us to lose sight of the deeply unequal power relations that take shape through schooling. We have seen the Tanzanian MHA and UNHCR and its implementing NGO were the driving

forces in governing camp schools: the MHA because it could determine the politics of curriculum and decide at any time of construction stops or even school closure; UNHCR and its implementing NGO because of their financial capacities and status as employers of refugee staff, as well as their ability to influence school regulations in an attempt to reconfigure power relations among adults and children.

Moving ‘beyond spaces of exception’ is a productive epistemological endeavour, as we have tried to show in the first part of this article. However, in our exploration of camp schools, we have refrained from abandoning completely any reference to exceptionality, in order to retain a sense of the legitimizing discourses on which the governance arrangements of camp schools take shape. Refugees are initially framed in terms of an anomaly in the national order—a framing that then articulates with other globalized orders (Education for All) and legitimizes projects of re-inclusion and social transformation. We have shown more specifically that logics of governance in Nyarugusu encompass at once the production of refugees as victims and agents of change, their partial exclusion from the political realm and their partial reincorporation into both a national order (reconnection to the DRC state) and a human rights order (ensuring the universalization of access to education). Exceptionality and normalization have thus to be understood as mutually constitutive. Our case study illustrates that the work of normalization does not necessarily happen, as it is often assumed, *after* encampment, once refugees are reincorporated into the national order of things through formal repatriation or integration programmes. Nor does it only take place through refugees’ coping strategies and informal activities that end up transforming the camp into new urban margins. The work of normalization begins already during encampment, to a large part under the direction of humanitarian actors, although remaining always unachieved and precarious.

Looking at schools, we have provided an empirical case study illustrating how this work of normalization was actually, for both humanitarian actors and teaching staff, also about spending significant time and energy in shaping an ideal moral and political order to be aspired for, both in the immediate everyday life of the camp and with regards to a future beyond encampment. Normalization was thus not just about intending to reconnect refugees to a national and school order: it was also about trying to transform them and their social institutions, and shape their political subjectivities according to a plurality of ideal models, whether embedded in a de-territorialized and de-historicized human rights order, or in a historicized national one. In Nyarugusu schools, such projects of transformation were made visible through the imbrication of the school order in different normative regimes: if school was, through the mediation of UNHCR, partially reconnected to the DRC state and to DRC school regulations, it became at the same time subject to new institutional norms based on humanitarian principles, which disqualified many of the pre-existing regulations. But projects of transformation were also made visible through attempts of constituting children as political

subjects, both as future nationals of DRC and as denationalized subjects, as bearers of individualized human rights to be claimed here and now against the community. 'Beyond spaces of exception', taken as a methodological entry point rather than an epistemological task, draws our attention to the work that different actors put into overcoming legal exclusion and its many side effects. This work manifests in and around schools in minute details of everyday life as well as in long-term projects of citizen-making.

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1. We use the notion of 'rationality' to refer to the principles guiding the ways the camp is being governed by different stakeholders.
2. We use the notion of 'normative frameworks' to refer to formalized and non-formalized regimes of law and sets of rules that regulate stakeholders' actions and decisions.
3. This case study is part of a wider research project carried out between 2012 and 2015, entitled 'Education in Spaces of Exception: The Social and Political Uses of Schools in Congolese Refugee Camps (Tanzania, Rwanda)'. The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) and directed by Marion Fresia and Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont.
4. We have carried out a total of 10 months of field research in Nyarugusu camp in 2013 and 2014. For the production of our data, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with students, parents, school staff, humanitarian aid workers and government officials. Moreover, in order to grasp the concrete practices and situated meaning-making that constitute schooling in the camp, we have spent extensive time observing the everyday life at primary and secondary schools (e.g. classes, breaks or technical and administrative school meetings). Finally, socializing in other spaces of the camp, such as gatherings of child advocacy groups, public celebrations, camp management meetings, church services, sports events or funerals, allowed us to develop a sense of the embeddedness of these schools in a broader social universe.
5. By contrast, in Liisa Malkki's (1995a) description of the mid-1980s Mishamo settlement, school governance was still largely in the hands of the Tanzanian state. The primary schools in the settlements 'followed an identical academic curriculum that was designed according to national standards by the Ministry of Home Affairs Education Coordinator and her staff in the camp' (*ibid.*: 132).

6. In UNHCR's Field Guidelines for '[s]afeguard[ing] the right of refugees to education and implement[ing] the six goals of Education For All (EFA)' is indeed at the top of a list of 10 'UNHCR Education Policy Commitments' (UNHCR 2003: v).

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