

UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Discussion Paper 17

**REFUGEE SELF-SETTLEMENT VERSUS
SETTLEMENT ON GOVERNMENT SCHEMES:
THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES FOR SECURITY,
INTEGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF
ANGOLAN REFUGEES (1966-1989) IN ZAMBIA**

by
Art Hansen

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November 1990

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**United Nations Research Institute
for Social Development**
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

④ (41.22) 798.84.00/798.98.50
Fax (41.22) 740.07.91
Telex 41.29.62 UNO CH

ISSN 1012-6511

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UNRISD has been undertaking research on the social and economic problems of refugees for a number of years. The current work programme envisages research on two important but relatively neglected topics in refugee studies: the integration of returning refugees in the economy and society of their countries of origin, and the interaction - social, economic and political - between the host society and the refugee population. The case studies on the former topic are being carried out in Zimbabwe, Chad and Uganda. The latter topic is being studied in Mexico and Zambia. The present paper presents preliminary results of a large-scale study which was conducted in Zambia. The study was carried out by a team of researchers from the University of Zambia and co-ordinated in the earlier phase by Hanne Christensen, UNRISD and Art Hansen, University of Florida. This paper reports on the results of the field work undertaken by Hansen. It is hoped to publish in book form the results of the research done by the University of Zambia team.

This paper seeks to analyse the differences in the pattern of integration in host society and economy between two categories of Angolan refugees: the self-settled and the scheme-settled. The author is especially interested in measuring the social and economic welfare of refugees. He has thus collected information on the following five dimensions of refugee welfare: income and wealth, integration into host society, confidence and security, health and access to infrastructural facilities. This paper reports on findings concerning the first three aspects.

The analysis is based on the data collected by the author through interviews with the refugees in self-settled and scheme-settled areas and with the Zambian villagers. Hansen had done research in the same areas on two earlier occasions in 1970-1971 and 1979. He was therefore able to work with the same sample of respondents. In addition to the threefold division between the Zambian villagers and the two categories of refugees, the results are further disaggregated by gender thus providing useful information on the integration of women refugees in the host economy and society.

After a brief historical survey of the patterns of migration in the region, the author sets out the methodology used in the study. The bulk of the paper is devoted to presenting the empirical findings of the study. Refugees in settled schemes are on average younger, better educated and more wealthy. Their incomes are more evenly distributed than those of the self-settled. However, they are less self-reliant with regard to food. They are also less fully integrated into the host society in the sense that a higher proportion regard themselves as refugees and are so regarded by the Zambians, and nearly 60 per cent of the males would like to return to Angola.

This is in sharp contrast to the self-settled refugees who, to all intents and purposes, regard themselves as Zambians and do not wish to return home. However, unlike their brethren in the settled schemes, they continue to experience fear and insecurity about their future. This is in large part due to their uncertain status. Under Zambian law, refugees cannot be citizens of the country and must live in settlement schemes. Thus, one of the recommendations made by Hansen is that the refugees be permitted to acquire Zambian nationality after a certain period of residency. At the least, the government of the Republic of Zambia should issue a public proclamation of amnesty to long-term, self-settled refugees, thus legalizing their stay.

This paper contains a wealth of information which can illuminate the policy debate on the alternative modes of settlement of refugees and their implications for the host society. Apart from the financial and economic implications for the international community and the host country, considerations of equity also bear on the relative merits of different patterns of settlement of refugees.

Art Hansen is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Florida. He has worked in several African and Latin American countries and has written extensively on farming systems and on refugees and dislocated people.

November 1990

Dharam Ghai
Director

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Research Objectives and Questions

The objectives of this research were to better understand African refugee settlement and refugee-host interactions over time and to provide guidance to policy makers about the different results of two types of refugee settlement. To accomplish these objectives, this research examined the long-term consequences for Angolan refugees in Zambia of being self-settled or scheme-settled. The specific subjects of this study were Luvale-speaking Angolan refugees who arrived in the North-Western Province of Zambia between 1966 and 1972 and were still living in that Zambian province in 1989. Some of these refugees settled themselves in villages in Zambezi District along the Zambian-Angolan border, while other refugees were settled by the Zambian government in the Meheba scheme of Solwezi District. I spoke the Luvale language and knew the districts well because I had studied the area since 1970 and had lived there for more than two years. This research has obvious relevance for the refugee settlement policies of Zambia and other African host governments, the United Nations, and international aid agencies.

The basic research question was: Which refugees were 'better off' in the long term, those who settled themselves in existing Zambian villages and re-established their livelihoods on their own (without any direct government assistance), or those who were settled by the government (with international assistance) in an agricultural settlement scheme?

In order to address the basic question, other more specific questions also needed to be answered. What did it mean to say that someone was 'better off than someone else'? How could 'better off' be measured? What had been the specific consequences for refugees of one form of settlement or the other? What social and economic strategies were employed by refugees in the two areas? To what extent could assimilation or rejection processes be observed between local people and refugees? Were there psychological differences (in innovativeness, risk-taking, etc.) between refugees in the two settlement areas? How had settlement affected the refugees' desire to repatriate to Angola or remain in Zambia?

Being 'better off' meant approximately the same as being successful in life or having a better quality of life. Success and quality were multidimensional variables. To measure the successfulness or quality of life of refugees, I collected information along five dimensions: (a) economic, or wealth and income; (b) integration into the host society and economy; (c) psychological, or confidence and security; (d) health; and (e) access to infrastructural facilities.

This paper analyses data from the interviews that I collected from late May through early October 1989, focusing on three dimensions: economic, integration, and psychological. During those months, I interviewed 93 refugees in both locations, plus 53 Zambians from the border villages where self-settlement occurred. Each interview lasted about two hours and was conducted in the local language (Luvale). In this analysis, the interview data were complemented by my personal observations from the months that I lived in the villages and the scheme during 1989, and from my previous research.

Differences Revealed and Issues Raised

The research revealed significant differences in 1989 between the self-settled and scheme-settled refugees. In brief, most of the self-settled refugees had remained poorer materially, but all had become *de facto* Zambians, while the scheme-settled refugees had become richer materially, but many had remained Angolan refugees. None of the self-settled wanted to repatriate to Angola, whereas half of the scheme-settled wanted to repatriate. The self-settled considered themselves to be settled villagers (as did their local hosts) but continued to fear the Zambian government because the self-settled were afraid the government would involuntarily resettle them away from the villages. The scheme-settled did not show that fear but thought that their future residence depended upon the Zambian government. If they repatriated, it would not be a voluntary act, but one determined by the Zambian government.

These differences raised a number of important issues and questions that are discussed in this paper. There was a discrepancy among the dimensions of 'being better off'. The dimensions did not vary together and in the same direction, i.e., the overall quality of life could not be determined solely by measuring the economic factors of income and wealth. Scheme-settled refugees were economically better off, but were worse off in terms of their long-term integration into the host society. Self-settlement was shown to have some beneficial consequences. The research demonstrated the advanced integration of the self-settled refugees. They had pioneered a 'durable solution' on their own initiative. If self-settlement had advantages, why was it prohibited by law? If the self-settled had achieved integration and become *de facto* Zambians, why were they denied *de jure* citizenship? The more integrated refugees lived in the villages,

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